



2025 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

One in five students attends a rural school. Rural schools provide education critical to future productive citizenship for children and youth in rural communities. Rural schools and higher education institutions play important roles beyond teaching and learning as the economic and social hearts of the communities they serve. America can thrive when rural communities thrive, and rural communities cannot succeed without strong preK-12 and postsecondary learning opportunities.

As the oldest (1907) education association representing rural educators, the National Rural Education Association (NREA) supports education opportunities for students from early childhood through postsecondary education to include federal support for early childhood education, K-12 education, and a wide range of postsecondary education opportunities.

RURAL SCHOOL FUNDING

- NREA urges Congress to sustain and, where possible, increase funding to Title V, Part B of ESSA, the **Rural Education Achievement Program**, with a specific increase to the Rural Low-Income School program.
- NREA supports investments in the **Secure Rural Schools Programs (SRS)** that provides critical funding for districts impacted by federal lands. NREA supports long-term dedicated SRS funding for 5-10 years and retroactive appropriations to ensure no disruption in funding.
- NREA requests that Congress fully fund the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. To honor the commitment to support the education of students with disabilities, Congress should act immediately to restore full funding to IDEA.
- NREA opposes efforts to privatize or redirect federal funds to privatize education such as voucher programs, attempts to incentivize federal tax credits for donations to private schools, and proposals to create educational savings accounts for K-12 students.

RURAL EDUCATION DATA AND RESEARCH

- NREA expresses strong support for continuation of the **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**. This will ensure collection and reporting of data about all schools including low-income and rural schools (**including locale codes**). NREA believes that accurate identification of rural schools is necessary to guide federal investments in rural schools and communities.
- Data is essential to understand those practices that support rural students and advance rural education.
- NREA supports continuing and increasing federal investment in data-driven **rural education research**.

RURAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

- NREA supports increased access and funding to **career and technical education (CTE)** programs in high school and post-secondary education to ensure a healthy rural workforce.
- NREA supports the reauthorization of **the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** and the **National Apprenticeship Act**. WIOA increases the availability of services and supports in schools so students have access to youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.
- NREA supports the preservation and expansion of **federal grant and loan forgiveness programs that support the preparation of teachers** and other school personnel, especially those that encourage individuals to work in rural districts and communities.