

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 22, 2010

Dear Colleague,

Please join us in writing the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee requesting the Committee provide the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) with \$300 million in fiscal year 2011.

REAP, which was authorized in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, provides funding and flexibility to rural school districts through two sub-programs:


- The Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) provides districts with flexibility to combine funds from ESEA-authorized programs to better leverage the funding. The initiative also includes a grant component, in which eligible districts benefit from up to \$60,000 in additional federal funding, based on enrollment. *School districts in 42 states benefitted from SRSA funding in the 2009/2010 school year.*
- The Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS) provides states with funding to help high-poverty rural school districts meet critical educational needs. *Forty-one states received RLIS funding for allocation to qualified districts in the 2009/2010 school year.*

In many rural school districts, federal formula programs, which are based on population, do not produce adequate resources to carry out the programs' objectives. In addition, small and rural school districts often forgo competitively awarded education dollars because they lack the capacity to compete.

REAP recognizes these inequities and awards funding to qualified districts through formulas designed to level the playing field for small and high poverty rural school systems. REAP's dedicated funding stream and flexibility to combine funds provide rural school districts with needed resources to undertake significant reform. Especially given state budget cuts, increased REAP funding is critical to helping rural districts withstand funding shortfalls. Also, more funding would provide a necessary cushion for rural districts should the proposed emphasis on competitive funding be included in a reauthorized ESEA.

We encourage you to join us in support of funding for REAP. If you would like to sign this letter, please contact Caitlin Brosseau in Senator Conrad's office at 4-2043 or Nikki McKinney in Senator Collins's office at 4-2523 by April 14, 2010.

Sincerely,



Kent Conrad  
United States Senator



Susan Collins  
United States Senator