

SUPPORTING RURAL EDUCATION

Nearly half of all school districts and about one-third of all public schools are located in rural areas. These schools serve approximately 20 percent of the nation's students. Rural schools have unique needs and face unique challenges. They may have difficulty recruiting and retaining effective teachers and providing students in these communities with access to a rigorous, well-rounded education – particularly in remote areas.

The President's 2014 budget request considers the specific needs of rural schools and aims to support them in preparing students for success in college and careers.

- **Dedicated formula funding to improve rural education (\$179 million).** The budget maintains funds for the Rural Education Achievement program (REAP) to ensure that rural districts receive extra formula funds that are crucial for these schools. It also maintains other critical formula programs that support schools in rural areas and elsewhere, including College-and Career-Ready Students (formerly Title I), Effective Teachers and Leaders State Grants, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act formula programs, Indian Education, and Migrant Education.
- **College and Career Readiness (\$1.4 billion).** The budget supports a new High School Redesign competition, which will fund district partnerships with (i) postsecondary institutions and (ii) business, industry, non-profits or community based organizations to redesign high schools. Redesigned high schools will ensure that students graduate from high school with college credit and career-related experience, putting them on a path to career and college success. Special consideration will be given to partnerships that focus on areas with limited access to quality career and college opportunities, such as rural districts. Coupled with a reauthorized Perkins Career and Technical Education program, which will better align high school programs with the needs of employers and with the demands of higher education, more rural students will have access to high quality high schools that offer college level coursework and career related experience.
- **School and community collaboration (\$1.8 billion).** The President's budget request supports schools and communities working together on their shared responsibility to support student success. Under the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program, the Promise Neighborhoods program, and the strengthened 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, districts and community-based organizations will have the flexibility to design a variety of projects based on their specific local needs. This flexibility will enable rural communities to implement programs that increase or expand learning time and community supports that address the unique challenges rural schools face.

- **School Turnaround Grants (\$659 million).** The program will continue to fund grants to states and subgrants from States to districts to help low-performing schools implement rigorous interventions that bring about dramatic improvements in student achievement and school performance. The President's 2014 budget request increases funding for the program by \$125 million. These additional funds will be used to strengthen the capacity of school districts to reform low-performing schools. Part of these funds could also be used to expand the School Turnaround AmeriCorps initiative, a partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service that places AmeriCorps members in low-performing schools to support their school turnaround efforts.. Since 2009, rural schools have received nearly one-fifth of the over 1,400 subgrants awarded by States.
- **Technical Assistance (\$51 million).** Our proposal would continue to make improvements to technical assistance and support through 22 comprehensive technical assistance centers to help increase State capacity to assist districts and schools in meeting student achievement goals. This is particularly important in rural states with small administrative teams, small schools, and high-need students. In competitive programs, we will continue to leverage technology to provide greater access to technical assistance and support.
- **Increased flexibility in the use of funds.** Under ESEA flexibility, rural districts have greater local flexibility in using Federal funds to intervene in struggling schools, so that rural communities can decide what works best for their schools.
- **Leveling playing field in competitions.** We will continue to put in place safeguards to ensure rural participation in grant competitions by using tools that include shorter pre-application processes, using absolute and competitive priorities, and encouraging partnerships and consortia applications.