

SUPPORTING RURAL EDUCATION

More than 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 access to a rigorous, well-rounded education – particularly in remote areas.

The President's 2013 budget request and *Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* consider the specific needs of rural schools and aim to support them in preparing students for success in college and careers.

- **\$179 million in dedicated formula funding to improve rural education.** The budget maintains funds for the Rural Education Achievement program (REAP) to ensure that rural districts receive extra formula funds to support their 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.
- **Excellent Instructional Teams programs (\$2.9 billion).** This significant investment will support efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain effective educators, including in rural and other high-need schools. These efforts may focus on math, science, special education, and other subjects where rural schools have teacher shortages. We will also make it easier for teachers to teach multiple subjects by defining teacher quality not exclusively based on paper credentials, but on effectiveness in the classroom. This will help rural schools keep effective teachers in the classrooms in which they are needed most.
- **Effective Teaching and Learning for a Complete Education program (\$427 million).** Funds will promote improved instruction based on college- and career-ready standards in literacy; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and other subjects including through the use of technology to deliver content. Funds could support rural districts that use distance education to expand access for students to a well-rounded education.
- **School and community collaboration (\$1.4 billion).** Our proposal 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 (\$534 million).** Funds will continue to support subgrants from States to districts to help low-performing schools implement rigorous interventions that bring about dramatic improvements in student achievement and school performance. Rural schools received almost one-quarter of the over 1,200 subgrants awarded by States under this program in fiscal year 2009 (despite constituting one-fifth of eligible schools), and in fiscal year 2010, preliminary data from 37 States and the District of Columbia show that rural schools received nearly 20 percent of subgrants.
- **Increased flexibility in the use of funds.** Under the new accountability system, the reauthorized ESEA will offer greater local flexibility in designing interventions in schools that are not meeting their performance targets, so that rural communities will be able to decide what works best for their schools.