



CCSESA

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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December 9, 2014

Office of Representative Kevin McCarthy

U.S. House of Representatives

2421 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman McCarthy:

On behalf of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), a statewide association representing all California county superintendents of schools, I am writing to urge you to support 2015 funding for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS). SRS provide important funding for hundreds of California schools and thousands of California students.

SRS provides critical funding for California schools and county offices of education. Although California is home to some of the largest cities in the U.S., the state also has one of the biggest rural student populations in the country-- rural California districts and county offices serve more than 220,000 students and 40% of California school districts have fewer than 1,000 students. Before SRS was passed in 2000, funding for these schools had dropped dramatically due to declining timber sales and court-imposed restrictions on extraction. Students were severely impacted as ~~and~~ education professionals were laid off, extracurricular programs were eliminated, and desperately needed repairs were postponed. Without continued funding for SRS, California's rural schools will once again be forced to make programmatic cuts that will inevitably disadvantage the students in these rural communities.

SRS funds help even the playing field for rural schools and county offices of education.

Because of their remoteness, rural California schools face significant financial, administrative and infrastructure challenges. As one of the geographically largest states in the union, the cost of student transportation in rural California districts is more than two times greater than the national average. Connecting schools to essential technology services is substantially more difficult and more costly in California's rural, mountainous areas. Furthermore, despite adopting cost-saving techniques such as consortiums and regional service models, construction and facilities costs are still often greater, utilities are more expensive, and vital student services are often more costly to provide in rural California regions. Without SRS dollars to even the playing field, California's rural students will fall farther and farther behind their urban and suburban counterparts.

As an advocate for all of California's students, CCSESA urges you to support both short term (i.e. fiscal year 2015) and long-term funding for SRS. Please contact us if we can provide additional information on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Peter Birdsall

CCSESA Executive Director