



October 6, 2009

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The Honorable Lynn Woolsey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2263 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20215

Dear Representative Woolsey:

In addition to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization that Congress will be considering during the next 18 months, the California Small School Districts' Association (SSDA) recommends amendments during their reauthorizations to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Telecommunications Act, and the Child Nutrition legislation.

The following are SSDA's recommendations in these issue areas:

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

SSDA supports the fulfillment of Congress' promise to pay 40 percent of the National Average per Pupil Expenditure for every child in special education. Mandatory funding of IDEA is the only way to ensure that Congress reaches this goal. (S 1652 and HR 3578)

**Child Nutrition Programs**

SSDA supports efforts to develop a new definition of nutritional value in conjunction with appropriate exceptions for fundraising, school-sponsored events and classroom celebrations.

SSDA supports efforts to increase the reimbursement rate for child nutrition and school lunch programs. In addition, SSDA would support the elimination of the reduced price lunches and the inclusion of those students under the free lunch program.

SSDA supports the use of cross-eligibility between federal programs for the purposes of enrollment in order to increase efficiency in the program and maximize the programs' abilities to better identify and serve all eligible students.

SSDA supports efforts for the creative expansion of 'farm to school' food programs and efforts.

**E-Rate**

SSDA strongly supports maintaining E-Rate as an element of the Universal Service Fund. The E-Rate serves an important role in increasing the connectivity of rural schools to the internet and helping to bridge both the digital and geographic divides that impact rural schools. SSDA supports increasing the current \$2.25 billion funding cap for the program to meet increasing demand for technological services in schools

SSDA supports a streamlined application process that encourages more rural school districts to apply for E-Rate support. SSDA believes in accountability within the E-Rate program but opposes any changes to the program that would increase participation costs to local school districts. Increases in paperwork within the application process often prevent rural districts from applying. School districts already have fiscal accountability requirements that they must meet for their states.

SSDA believes the Universal Service Fund should be permanently exempt from the Anti-Deficiency Act.

**Broadband Access**

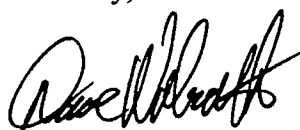
SSDA believes success in the program should focus on the level and quality of the connectivity. Connectivity is important but so is the speed and reliability of the connectivity in order to ensure access for the end result of high-quality distance learning services.

**Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act**

SSDA recognizes the challenges of rural school districts located in federal forest counties and supports the safety net created in the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self Determination Act. However, we believe that schools in federal forest communities should have greater funding stability, therefore, SSDA proposes the creation of a standalone program to provide a consistent source of funding to make up for the lack of taxing authority on federal forest lands.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David L. Walrath