



ARKANSAS RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

ADEQUACY TESTIMONY, NOVEMBER 4th and 5th, 2019



White House Conference on Rural Education

“IT’S IN THE INTEREST OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PRESERVATION OF OUR COUNTRY THAT WE FIGHT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR RURAL SCHOOLS.”

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, 1944



ADEQUACY AND EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS

- EACH COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPECTS AND IS COMMITTED TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS IN ARKANSAS
- YOU KNOW AND CONTINUE TO LEARN OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS



LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

YOU HAVE THE UNIQUE COMBINATION OF ABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS AND DEVISE SOLUTIONS FOR THOSE KNOWN ISSUES, AND PROVIDE WISDOM FLEXIBILITY AND GUIDANCE TO ADDRESS FUTURE ISSUES




AREA'S COMMITMENT

- WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU BY PROVIDING DATA AND PRACTITIONER EXPERTISE
- WE REPRESENT 85% OF DISTRICTS AND APPROXIMATELY 375,000 STUDENTS
- RURAL EDUCATORS SHOW UP EVERY DAY AND DO THE WORK, MAKING POSSIBLE THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE
- WE COVET FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY. FREEDOM TO CONNECT WITH THE WORLD AND THE FLEXIBILITY TO CREATE, FAIL AND GROW
- WE HAVE A STORY WORTH FIGHTING FOR WHICH BEGAN MANY GENERATIONS AGO, THAT STORY OF RURAL SMALL TOWN LIFE



FOUR AREA RECOMMENDATIONS


1. FLEXIBILITY IN SPENDING TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUALIZED NEEDS IS CRITICAL. UTILIZE THE MATRIX AS A FUNDING MODEL NOT A SPENDING MODEL.



2. FUND TEACHER SALARY INCREASE FOR STRUGGLING DISTRICTS. CURRENTLY DISTRICTS OPERATING AS EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE FACE TWO CHOICES, ASK FOR A MILLAGE OR CUT CURRENT SALARIES BEYOND THE MANDATED 15 YEARS.



3. PROVIDE FUNDING FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF SO
DISTRICTS MAY EXCEED MINIMUM WAGE



4. FUND THE CURRENT STANDARDS AND ANY
FUTURE STANDARDS YOU ADOPT



CONCLUSION

CHALLENGES: INADEQUATE AND LIMITED RESOURCES, WEAK AND ERODING LOCAL ECONOMY, FINANCIAL INSECURITY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS, EDUCATOR TALENT SHORTAGE, SCHOOL FIXING EFFORTS.



CONCLUSION (cont.)

STRENGTHS: COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE,
RESOLVE TO GET THE JOB DONE, WILLINGNESS TO
WORK TOGETHER TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES,
AND ESPECIALLY OUR UNITY IN THE INTEREST OF
DEMOCRACY AND THE PRESERVATION OF OUR
COUNTRY