



**WASHINGTON WATCH
FEDERAL NEWS
FOR NEW YORK'S RURAL SCHOOLS**

RSA Lobbies for Direct School Bailout

Today your RSA reached out to United States Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, requesting a significant direct bailout of rural schools to offset anticipated cuts to state education aid. In addition to the letter, RSA has spoken with senior staff to both senators. A copy of our letter is presented here:

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand,

You should be proud of your rural schools. They are accomplishing the nearly impossible challenge of turning traditional educational instruction to remote learning, instantaneously and without sufficient resources.

They were ordered to continue student learning in their homes, provide meals to all who needed them and to provide childcare services to healthcare workers. They have done that and more. By coming together (even as they were physically distanced), your rural schools are doing what they always do; taking care of their communities and leading by example. They have been creative, innovative and dedicated.

Despite the lack of internet access in many of their communities, despite insufficient state resources to provide even the state mandated curriculum in many instances, despite the inability to find certified teachers and their myriad other challenges, they press on. Until now.

New York State has understandably cut aid to all of its public schools (by the additional amount provided by the federal government.) Thank you for this aid, as without it our schools would all be starting from a deficit. Sadly, as we move forward in restarting the economy, our schools know that we are likely to receive aid cuts that will devastate rural schools far more than any others. The Great Recession created an exodus from rural New York State that now prevents communities from sustaining public education without significant external financial resources. With the state temporarily unable to fulfill its mission, we look to you for the help we need to preserve the future of our children.

Simply put, your rural schools need significant additional federal aid. We need it directly from you to the local schools and not have it passed through the state. The flat total aid amount alone will result in inflationary cuts to programs and services. New federal aid must at the least offset further state aid cuts and (we pray) help us retain the vital instruction and services our increasingly impoverished children require.

Please insist on significant direct aid to schools in new federal legislation to address the pandemic. Thank you as always for your leadership.

*Yours,
David A. Little, Esq.
Executive Director
Rural Schools Assn. of NYS, Inc.*

Special Education and Grant Use During COVID-19

As federal education officials work through the many questions arising from the pandemic, we at your Rural Schools Association are doing our best to provide you with timely and useful information. This alert relates to two vital federal efforts; special education and the use of grant programs during these extraordinary times.

First, next Monday is the date for a webinar on providing special educational services during school closures. The second item provides a fact sheet on the use of grant funding during this time. I hope you find them both useful. May thanks to RSA National Issues Liaison Heather Zellers for providing this information.

Stay strong, folks!
Dave

REGISTER NOW-FEDERAL SPECIAL EDUCATION WEBINAR

April 20 for a VR100 Webinar — Innovation Strategies from VR

Following up on to our April 8 "[Save the Date](#)" bulletin, you can register now for the VR100 series Webinar to be held on April 20th from 1:30–3:00 EDT. Please join OSERS Acting Assistant Secretary and RSA Commissioner Mark Schultz, five State VR Agency Directors, and the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center ([WINTAC](#)) as they present on innovative strategies to deliver services to individuals with disabilities by distance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is the registration information:

When: Monday, April 20, 2020 from 1:30 to 3:00 PM EDT

Topic: VR100 Series Webinar — Innovation Strategies from VR during COVID-19 Pandemic

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LKMXUp81SMSPnAtoULRuLw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

We hope you can join us!

Questions and Answers on the Use of Grants During This Emergency

[Fact Sheet Final - Fiscal questions- 4-8-20 .pdf](#)