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NAFIS Supports Passage of Every Student Succeeds Act

(NOVEMBER 30, 2015, WASHINGTON, DC) -- Today, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives released the conference report for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) applauds this tremendous bipartisan, bicameral effort to replace the nation's outdated Federal K-12 education law, including Title VII - Impact Aid.

NAFIS strongly supports the Impact Aid policy changes included in ESSA. The NAFIS membership, legislators, and their staff should be commended for their tireless efforts to bring these important changes to fruition that will strengthen the Impact Aid program for all federally impacted school districts. ESSA includes a set of critical policy improvements for Title VII Impact Aid:

- Makes permanent technical and formula changes to Federal Properties that have already reduced subjectivity in the program and increased the timeliness of payments.
- Eliminates the Federal Properties "lockout" provision that currently prevents eligible federally impacted school districts from accessing Impact Aid funding.
- Adjusts the Basic Support formula to ensure equal proration when appropriations are sufficient to fund the proration formula (Learning Opportunity Threshold).

- Includes provisions, such as a hold harmless, to prevent funding cliffs and provide school districts sufficient time to adjust to significant changes to their federally-connected student enrollment.

NAFIS is encouraged ESSA increases, in aggregate, the authorized funding level for Impact Aid, however, we are very concerned it is stagnant for the first three years of the four-year authorization. Impact Aid is unlike any other education program. As a reimbursement for the loss of local tax revenue that is a direct result of Federal activities, this program supplants rather than supplements local dollars. NAFIS encourages Congress to uphold its obligation to federally impacted school districts by increasing funding for Impact Aid through the Appropriations process.

Congress must pass ESSA before the end of the year to ensure the positive policy changes made to Impact Aid can go into effect. At the same time, we urge Congress to continue to prioritize Impact Aid in the Appropriations process by providing annual funding increases. Both policy and funding support are critical to the successful implementation of the Impact Aid program and to maintain the Federal Government's obligation to federally impacted school districts and the students they serve.