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Sarah Abernathy, Executive Director of the Committee for Education Funding, Honored with Friend of NAFIS Award

Washington, D.C. – March 23, 2026 – The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) is pleased to announce that Sarah Abernathy, Executive Director of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), has received the Friend of NAFIS Award. The award, presented at the 2026 NAFIS Spring Conference, recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Impact Aid Program and the students it serves.

Impact Aid reimburses school districts for lost local revenue caused by the presence of nontaxable federal property, including military installations; Indian trust, restricted, and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, laboratories, and other federal buildings and property. The program helps ensure students in impacted communities have access to a high-quality education.

Abernathy has dedicated nearly three decades to public service in education and federal budget policy. Since joining ACG Advocacy in 2016, she has led CEF in analyzing federal education budgets, coordinating advocacy for robust education funding across national organizations, and guiding meetings with Congressional staff. While advocating for federal education investments broadly, she consistently highlights Impact Aid as a critical program that supports districts heavily reliant on federal funding due to tax-exempt properties, ensuring it remains part of the national conversation on education funding.

A trusted partner of NAFIS for many years, Abernathy has been instrumental in helping staff and members navigate complex budget proposals and appropriations dynamics, providing both private counsel and timely briefings at conferences and advocacy fly-ins. Her guidance has strengthened NAFIS's voice in engaging Congress on behalf of federally connected students.

Prior to joining CEF, Abernathy spent 18 years on the House Budget Committee Democratic staff, focusing on education, social services, and job training, collaborating closely with Members of Congress, the Administration, and the Congressional Budget Office to advance education and public service programs.

"In Washington, D.C., strong partnerships matter, and Sarah exemplifies exactly that," said NAFIS Executive Director Cherise Imai. "She listens, engages thoughtfully, and elevates the voices of the organizations working every day to support our school districts and the students they serve. For her partnership, leadership, and ongoing support of the Impact Aid community, we are proud to recognize her today."

The entire NAFIS Family congratulates Sarah Abernathy on this well-deserved honor and thanks her for her dedication to and advocacy for Impact Aid and the students it serves.

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The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) represents approximately 1,100 federally impacted public school districts that together educate nearly eight million students across the nation. Federally impacted school districts are those located on or near nontaxable federal property, including military installations; Indian trust, restricted, and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands; federal low-income housing facilities; and national parks, national laboratories, and other federal buildings and property. These school districts receive Impact Aid, a federal education program that reimburses school districts for the lost local revenue and additional costs associated with the presence of federal property. To learn more, visit www.nafisdc.org.