

ARIZONA RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Don German
Executive Director
PO Box 306
Salome, AZ 85348
Office (928) 859-4501
Cell (602) 499-0501

ESSA – Rural Arizona Schools Concerns

1. **Teacher Shortage** – Flexibility with informing parents in rural areas that the reason they have a non-certified teacher or an under certified teacher to begin the school year. Greater flexibility is needed in the use of Title II funding to help with recruitment and retention.
2. **Increased Broadband** – rural districts need increased broadband to be successful in meeting the goals set by ESSA to give assessments online and to be able to use the blended learning model to make up for the shortage of highly qualified teachers.
3. **Choosing the Right Assessments for Schools** – not just in choosing a rigorous test but also take into account affordability. It is the understanding by some school leaders that the U.S. Army is willing to help with the cost of certain assessments.
4. **Affordable Access** – to quality Professional Development
5. **Understanding/Defining** the holistic approach to ELA/Math
6. **School Profiles** – we need fair and accurate measures to evaluate schools and districts. Test scores alone do not tell the whole story. Careful thought, consideration, input and feedback must be completed before the factors used to determine school rankings are determined.
7. Title I should be determined by the school poverty rate, not by census data.
8. Backpack funding should not occur in federal or state funding.
9. More resources are needed aimed at early childhood education.
10. Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility – let the districts decide where to use their resources to improve student achievement. A one size fits all approach does not work. The state should set guidelines, but each individual school and district should develop plans that fit inside those guidelines.
11. We don't want to change the standards we just want a fair assessment and a fair amount of time to bring about improvements for low performing schools.
12. The assessment, by menu approach may sound good, but how will we insure that there is a level playing field for rural schools.
13. Rural, one building, districts are not given any consideration when ADE looks at paperwork burdens, assessments and labeling.

ARIZONA RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Don German
Executive Director
PO Box 306
Salome, AZ 85348
Office (928) 859-4501
Cell (602) 499-0501

It is especially important that we encourage a shift away from the woefully inaccurate American Community Survey numbers employed by the U.S. Census Bureau to calculate census poverty. In addition we encourage an effort to maintain some of the positives that we risk losing. The current approach does provide a high level of flexibility. Schools can apply Title II funds to Title I needs and so on. The more flexible "School-Wide" plan also provides schools with greater flexibility in applying Title I based services towards supplementing the educational program they provide for all of their students. Efforts to maintain and expand the flexibility already in place should be encouraged.