

April 11, 2006

Issue: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Federal Impact Aid statute are scheduled for reauthorization in 2007. Already, there are numerous challenges to the program in an atmosphere of intense competition for federal dollars. The meaningful effects of Impact Aid to communities such as Camden are substantial. Reauthorization language must be scrutinized carefully to ensure the integrity of the program is maintained and that intended benefits are realized by school districts facing the challenges of serving a federally connected population.

One representative challenge to the Impact Aid program is the revision proposed by the Republican Study Committee's Contract with America - Renewed. The proposal eliminates funding for students of active duty military and civilian workers working on, but living off, federal property and for those students living in federally subsidized housing. The proposed formula recognizes only students whose parents live and work on federal property. This proposal eliminates a significant portion of the federally connected students presently served in Camden County and would reduce FY'06 funding by **\$3,797,942**. This loss is equal to 25% of Camden County's **\$15,408,814** tax digest for education. Obviously, the results of such a loss would be devastating to Camden County.

If proposals such as the one described reduce funding for education, local taxpayers will face a greater tax burden to meet rising costs, and threats to educational programs set in place to meet the President's challenge to produce the next generation of Americans able to *compete on a global level*. By failing to provide funding for these children, the federal government will be going back on a promise made 57 years ago to provide for children of military families and penalizing federally connected districts at a time when they can least afford to do so.

We hope you will seek input from the educational leadership in Camden County as Impact Aid is reauthorized and invite you and your staff to use Camden County Schools as a resource on any issue concerning education. We hope our names and email addresses will become common knowledge among staff who evaluate the effects of legislation on schools in Georgia

Action:

We respectfully request that you consider the implications of ESEA reauthorization to Georgia school districts and fight any measure that would compromise Camden County Schools and an entire community whose educational programs are so heavily impacted by a military presence.

Camden County Schools
311 So. East St, Kingsland, GA 31548
912-729-5687 or 912-729-8360

Dr. Will Hardin
Assistant Superintendent
Whardin@camden.k12.ga.us