

Notes from FLISA Advocacy Committee
January 30-31, 2025 FLISA Winter Meetings

Present: Christine Walker, Craig Hutcheson, Sally Crowser (sally.crowser@k12.sd.us), Mike McElduff, Mary Ticknor, Tom Schneider

From the list of FLISA-funded school districts who receive at least \$80,000, we have identified approximately 24 non-participatory school districts within 18 different legislative districts to target. Our plan is to work with the Messaging Committee to prepare informational packets for distribution to these congressional offices during the spring NAFIS conference in March.

We plan to draft a general letter template with help from the Messaging Committee to use as a cover letter that would go with the packet of materials. We are hopeful that the cover letter could be personalized with specific pertinent information.

We are looking at using our FLISA meeting at the March NAFIS conference to have FLISA members help the Advocacy Committee deliver the informational packets to the congressional offices who do have constituent school districts visiting them. If someone is already going to a particular House building, for example, that person might also be willing to take a packet of information to a congressional office that we've identified as not being visited during the NAFIS conference.

Also we are considering sending a letter to the superintendent and board president of the non-participatory school districts informing them that we have provided FLISA packets to their representatives.

So we're starting small in March, we can review how it went during our June summer FLISA meeting and then decide how to proceed for the September NAFIS conference.

We've decided our role as the Advocacy Committee within the FLISA organization, which itself exists for the purpose of advocacy, is information-sharing with members of Congress who aren't regularly communicated with by our FLISA members.

What does the Advocacy Committee want to accomplish:

- Between now and the March NAFIS Conference?
 - Add name of education staffer and his/her contact information for each of the targeted congressional offices on the spreadsheet – Mary
 - Add location of DC office on the spreadsheet – Mary
 - Work with Messaging Committee about what materials should go into a packet of information that we will leave at the targeted congressional offices – Mary and Mark
 - Work with Messaging Committee to draft cover letter template that would be included in the packet of information - Mary and Mark
 - Figure out physically copying materials and assembling packets
 - Develop general directions for our FLISA members who are going to take packets to targeted congressional offices

- Between March and our June FLISA meeting?
 - Follow up emails to the targeted offices

POTENTIAL LETTER TO A DISTRICT THAT IS NOT A MEMBER:

Subject: Eligibility for Federal Impact Aid Through FLISA

Dear Superintendent [Last Name],

I am reaching out to inform you that your school district may be eligible to receive **federal Impact Aid funding** through membership in the **Federal Lands Impacted Schools Association (FLISA)**. This funding is designed to support districts like yours that experience a loss of local tax revenue due to the presence of **federally owned, tax-exempt land** within their boundaries.

What is FLISA?

FLISA is a national organization that advocates on behalf of school districts that qualify for **Impact Aid under Section 7002** of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**. Our mission is to ensure that the federal government fulfills its obligation to provide financial assistance to districts that cannot fully generate local property tax revenue due to federal land ownership.

Why is FLISA Important?

By joining FLISA, your district will gain:

- **Access to Additional Federal Funding** – Your district could receive approximately [\$ Amount] in federal Impact Aid funding.
- **A Stronger Advocacy Voice** – FLISA works directly with lawmakers to protect and increase funding for impacted districts.
- **Collaboration with Similar Districts** – Membership provides valuable networking and shared resources with other federally impacted schools across the country.

Next Steps

We encourage you to explore this opportunity and determine how **Impact Aid funding** could benefit your district's students, programs, and overall financial stability. We would be happy to connect you with FLISA representative to schedule a time to discuss the details further and guide you through the process of joining FLISA.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or to express your interest in learning more. Thank you for your time and commitment to your district's students and community.

POTENTIAL LETTER TO FLISA MEMBERS WHO WE WANT TO BE MORE ACTIVE

Subject: Strengthening Our Advocacy Efforts – Your FLISA Membership Matters

Dear Superintendent [Last Name],

As a **current FLISA member**, your district benefits from **federal Impact Aid funding**, receiving approximately [**\$ Amount**] annually to help offset the loss of local tax revenue due to federally owned, tax-exempt land. However, in order to protect and potentially **increase this funding**, we need **stronger participation and advocacy** from all member districts.

Why Your Engagement Matters

FLISA plays a critical role in securing **Impact Aid under Section 7002** of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**. Without continued advocacy and unified representation, **this vital funding could be at risk**. Engaging with **FLISA and NAFIS conferences** strengthens our ability to:

- **Protect and increase Impact Aid funding** by ensuring our collective voice is heard in Washington, D.C.
- **Educate lawmakers** on the financial challenges faced by federally impacted districts.
- **Collaborate with other districts** to develop strategies that maximize our funding opportunities.

Call to Action

We encourage you to **become more involved** by attending **FLISA and NAFIS conferences**, participating in advocacy efforts, and helping us continue to fight for the funding that directly benefits your students. **Your district's voice is crucial to our success.**

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need additional information on how to become more actively engaged. **Together, we can ensure that Impact Aid remains a reliable and growing source of funding for our schools.**

Thank you for your continued membership and support.

POTENTIAL LETTER TO CONGRESS MEMBER OR SENATOR

Subject: The Importance of Impact Aid – Supporting Federally Impacted Schools

Dear [Congressmember/Senator's Name],

On behalf of the [School District Name] and the **Federal Lands Impacted Schools Association (FLISA)**, I want to highlight the **critical importance of federal Impact Aid** and urge your support in ensuring its **full funding**. As a member of Congress representing a district that includes a **FLISA-member school district**, your leadership in advocating for Impact Aid is vital to the success of students and families in our community.

What is Impact Aid?

Impact Aid, under **Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, provides essential funding to school districts that lose local tax revenue due to the presence of **federally owned, tax-exempt land**. This funding is **not supplemental**; it is a **core operating budget resource** that supports student programs, instructional staff, technology, and infrastructure. Without full funding, federally impacted districts **struggle to provide equitable educational opportunities** compared to non-impacted districts.

Why FLISA Matters

FLISA represents **Section 7002 Impact Aid districts**, which specifically serve communities affected by **military installations, national parks, federal research facilities, and other tax-exempt federal lands**. Our district, [School District Name], receives approximately [\$ Amount] in **Impact Aid funding** annually. These funds are critical to maintaining quality education and ensuring that **federally impacted students receive the same opportunities as their peers** in non-impacted districts.

The Need for Full Funding

Despite the **federal obligation** to support districts that cannot generate local tax revenue, Impact Aid **remains underfunded**, leaving many districts scrambling to make up for lost revenue through budget cuts, increased class sizes, or reduced programs. We urge you to join the **bipartisan call to fully fund Impact Aid** by:

- **Advocating for full funding of Title VII Impact Aid in the federal budget**
- **Joining the Congressional Impact Aid Coalition** to support long-term solutions for federally impacted schools
- **Ensuring that federal obligations to our schools and communities are met**

Your Leadership Matters

Your support for full Impact Aid funding will directly benefit [School District Name], the students and families we serve, and many other school districts in your congressional district and

across the country. This is not just an **education issue**—it is a matter of **federal responsibility** and **educational equity**.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to discuss how you can further support Impact Aid and help ensure that **federally impacted students receive the resources they deserve**.

Thank you for your time and commitment to education.

Sincerely,