WRM 2011-12

New Realities for Rural Schools

Coalition for Community Schools National Forum

May 10, 2012

San Francisco, CA

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President, Organizations Concerned about Rural Education
Rural Education Focus

- White House Rural Council

- Multi-agency working groups have started discussions

- Participants are appointed by their agencies, and coordinated by White House Domestic Policy Council
Large Rural Student Populations

Some of the largest rural student populations are in populous urban states where rural people constitute a small demographic – and political -- minority.
The highest concentrations of rural disadvantaged and minority students are in small rural states where rural people are a demographic majority or a large minority.
Rural is More Eastern than Western

70 Percent of rural students go to school in states east of the Mississippi

There are more students in rural schools in North Carolina than in Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming combined...by nearly 100,000.
Important New Realities of Rural Education

- Number of rural students is increasing
- Rural share of national enrollment is increasing
- Rural schools are becoming much more racially and ethnically diverse
Rural School Enrollment Growing

Millions of Students

- 2004-05: 10.5
- 2008-09: 11.7

Graph showing the increase in rural school enrollment from 2004-05 to 2008-09.
Rural Enrollment Growing Fastest Among Minority Students

While all rural enrollment increased 11%, non-white enrollment increased 31%.
Rural Childhood Poverty is Concentrated in Distinct Regions Within and Among States

900 school districts with the highest disadvantaged student rates in locale codes 32, 33, 41, 42, and 43.
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High Rates of Disability

Disability Status

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000

Note: Alaska and Hawaii are not to scale.
Low Levels of Education

High School Graduates

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale
Rural Challenges in Shaping Education Policy

- Concentrated rural poverty
- Small scale, high fixed costs
- Isolation
- Undiversified local economies with low-paying, low-skill jobs
- Inadequate housing
- Medically underserved areas
- Inaccessible social services
- Very little public transportation
- Minimal public facilities
Rural Challenge
Hiring and Retaining Top Quality Teachers

- Small schools, tight budgets mean small faculties -- more course preparations are therefore required of each teacher.
- More course preparations mean teachers must have and maintain multiple certifications.
- Fewer nearby professional development opportunities.
- Fewer aides, special services providers, and support personnel.
- Teachers and leaders are professionally and personally isolated. -- often the most highly educated people in the community.
High-Poverty Rural Schools

- Getting to equity in Title I formula
- Leveling the playing field in competitive grants
- Becoming relevant in the most challenged rural places
- Finding answers through rural research and analysis
## Variation in Title I Funding Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In...</th>
<th>Where the Title I eligibility rate is...</th>
<th>And the number of Title I students is...</th>
<th>Is worth this much to the federal government:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, MS</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>$1,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens, NY</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>58,060</td>
<td>$2,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, NY</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14,769</td>
<td>$2,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallup-McKinley, NM</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>6,258</td>
<td>$1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albuquerque, NM</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18,371</td>
<td>$1,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland, TX</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9,002</td>
<td>$1,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edcouch-Elsa, TX</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2,998</td>
<td>$1,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee County, VA</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>$1,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax County, VA</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10,034</td>
<td>$1,935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weighting Student Count

- Not all disadvantaged children are counted equally

- “Weighting system” artificially inflates the eligible student count by counting some Title I students more than once

- Objective: Send more money per Title I student to districts with “high concentrations” of poverty
Leveling the Playing Field in Competitive Grants

- Lack of program development staff capacity
- Common preference for large scale projects in the grant guidelines
- Weak rural education research infrastructure to support projects that are uniquely designed to address the problems of rural schools.
- Weak regional education service sector
- Digital divide
Community School Alternative

- Offers services that assure children are ready for school
- Addresses the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of students,
- Engages parents and families in the student’s education,
- Provides after school programs serving both academic and recreational needs
11.4 million students 23% of U.S. public school students

9.6 million 20% are enrolled in districts classified as rural

1.8 million are in rural schools located in non-rural districts

Rural students comprise majority enrollment in three states, Mississippi, Vermont, and Maine, Thirteen states, one in three public school students is enrolled in a rural district (NC, SD, SC, AL, TN, ND, KY, WV, NH, AR, GA, IA, and MT)

More than half attend school in 11 states, including some of the nation’s most populous and urban states (TX, NC, GA, OH, FL, TN, VA, NY, PA, MI, and AL)
Growth in Rural Enrollment

- Between 2000 and 2009 rural school district enrollment increased by more than 1.7 million students, growth rate of more than 22 percent

- Rural enrollment increased from 17.4% to 20%

- Enrollment in non-rural districts increased by only 673,000 (1.7%)

- Seventy percent of the net increase in enrollment during the period 2000-2009 was in rural districts
More than one in four rural students are children of color

Range among states is large, 3.2% in Rhode Island to 82.6% in New Mexico. 80% of rural students of color in 18 states

Minority students make more than half of the rural student population in four states (NM, AK, AZ, and CA) and more than one in three in nine (in descending order: LA, TX, FL, MS, NC, SC, OK, GA, and DE)

Nearly four percent are English Language Learners (ELL) -- up to 18.1% in California. Most ELL’s are in the West, with the exception of Florida and North Carolina

Forty-one percent are eligible for federally subsidized meals (ranging from 7.9% in CT to 80% in NM) - more than half live in poverty in ten states (NM, LA, MS, AR, OK, KY, SC, WV, AL, and GA)
Policy Contexts Influencing Rural Education

- Rural school districts nationally spend on average $11.06 on instruction for every dollar spent on transportation.

- Considerable variation among states - West Virginia spends only $6.92 on instruction for every transportation dollar spent - nine states spend more than double — AK, VT, NE, TX, NC, OK, CA, TN, and GA.

- Large organizational scale is characteristic in the South - 11 of 14 states with the largest rural schools and districts are in the Southeast - two in the Mid-Atlantic.

- Many are states where countywide districts and regional high schools are the norm. The lowest ranking states are mostly in the Great Plains and the West, with small independent districts.

- Average salary expenditure per instructional FTE in rural districts is $56,159 - ranging from $40,675 in North Dakota to $85,842 in New Jersey.
Rural Education Outcomes

- Rural high school graduation rate is 77.5 percent - 60% in Louisiana to over 96% in New Jersey, 95% in more rural South Dakota*

- NAEP** outcomes for rural students are most affected by the socioeconomic status of the school population

- Educational policy context and relative importance of rural education in the state are less related to outcomes

*US Department of Education "Cumulative Promotion Index" Christopher Swanson Urban Institute
http://www.urban.org/expert.cfm?ID=ChristopherBSwanson

**NAEP National Center for Educational Statistics US Department of Education
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/paedata/
Put the Cachet in Rural Education Research

Establish an Office of Rural Education Policy (S.946) within the U.S. Department of Education to:

- Better focus rural education aspects of current programs.
- Review existing and proposed policies for relevance to and impact on rural education.
- Commission high-quality scholarly research to inform education policy makers on rural issues.
Thank you

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