

Rural Schooling: Necessity is the Mother of Innovation



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Heritage Room

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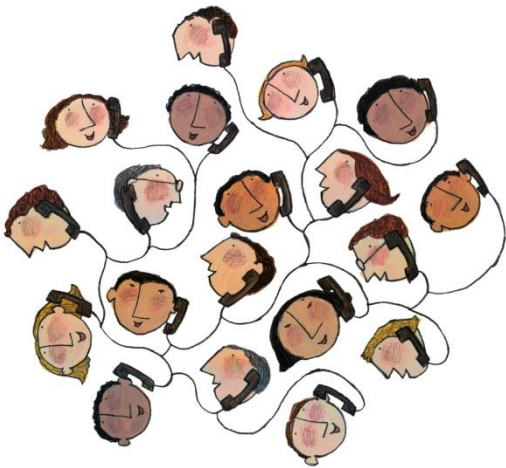
Let's Talk About It....



WHO DO WE HAVE IN THE AUDIENCE?

WHO HAILS FROM A RURAL COMMUNITY?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?



Rural Definitions



- **41 Rural Fringe:**

- ≤ 5 miles from an urbanized area, or
- ≤ 2.5 miles from a urban cluster

- **42 Rural Distant:**

- > 5 miles but ≤ 25 miles from an urbanized area, or
- > 2.5 miles but ≤ 10 miles from an urban cluster

- **43 Rural Remote:**

- > 25 miles from an urbanized area, and also
- > 10 miles from an urban cluster

Urban Areas Defined

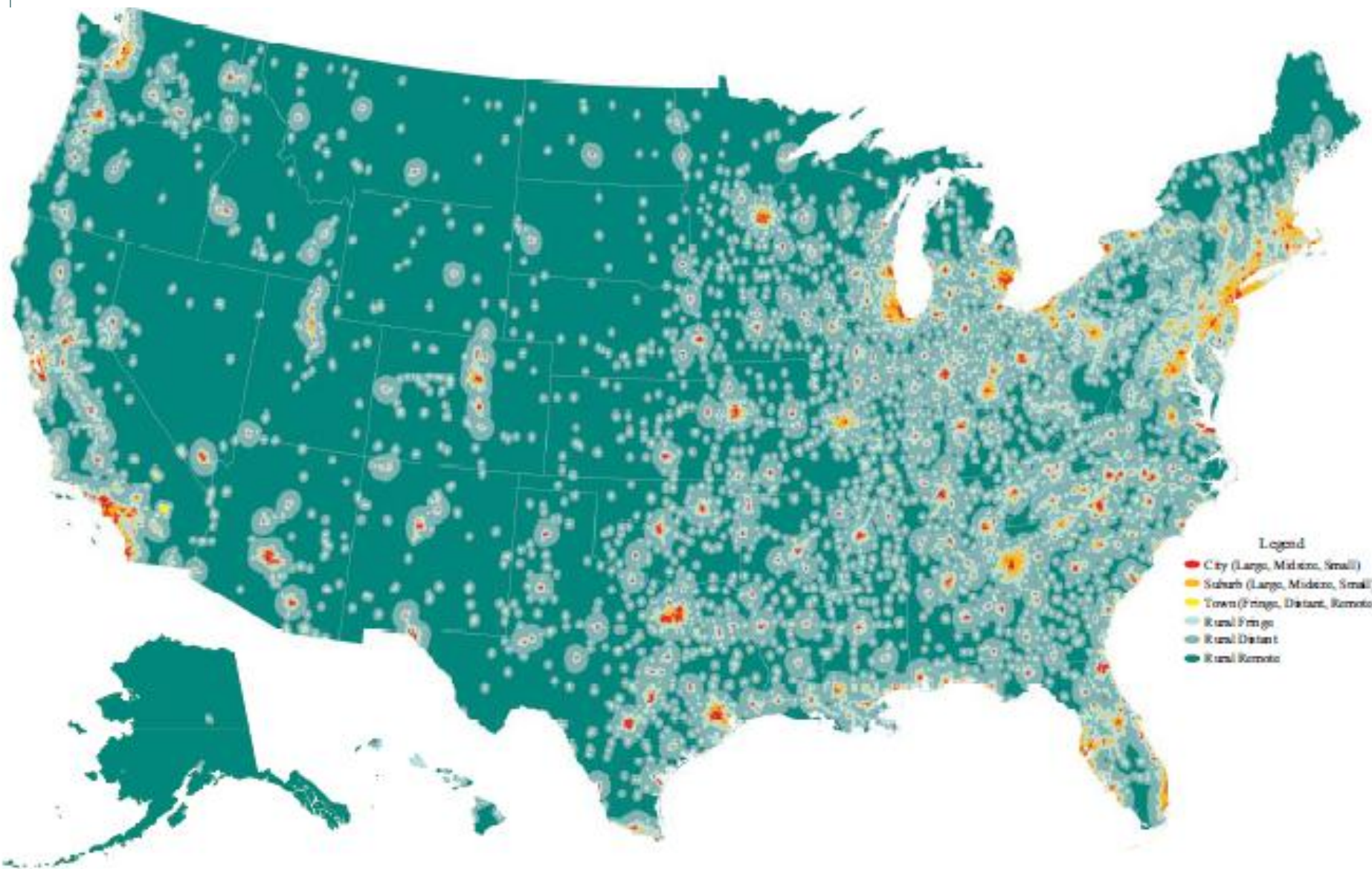


- **Urbanized Area:**

- Central core and adjacent densely settled territory containing at least 50,000 people

- **Urban Cluster:**

- Central core and adjacent densely settled territory that is between 2,500 and 49,999 people



The Rural Numbers



- 7,757 Districts
- 31,026 Schools
- 858,000 Teachers
- 11, 251, 481 Students

Why Rural Matters



- 56% districts are rural
- 32% public schools are rural
- 21% state funds to rural schools
- 19-25% students attend rural schools
- 41% rural students are in poverty
- 22% rural students are minority
- 69% rural high school students graduate

The Rural School and Community Trust
nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/



- Founded in 1966
- Denver-based
- ~120 employees
- Training,
resources,
research, &
evaluation
- Nationally &
internationally

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning



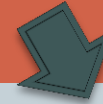
McREL: Two Focus Areas

Teaching and Learning



- ▶ Curriculum and Instruction
- ▶ Standards and Assessment
- ▶ Learning 24/7

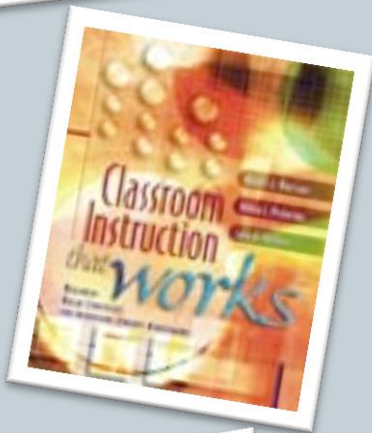
Leadership and Systems



- Leadership Development
- School and Systems Improvement



Types of Work



- ▶ Research
- ▶ Evaluation
- ▶ Development
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Technical Assistance
- ▶ Consulting

Structure of the McREL Portfolio



		Types of Work			
		Research	Evaluation	Development	Services
Lines of Work	Curriculum & Instruction				
	Standards & Assessment				
	Learning 24/7				
	Leadership Development				
	School & Systems Improvement				

Funding Sources



Work is funded by:

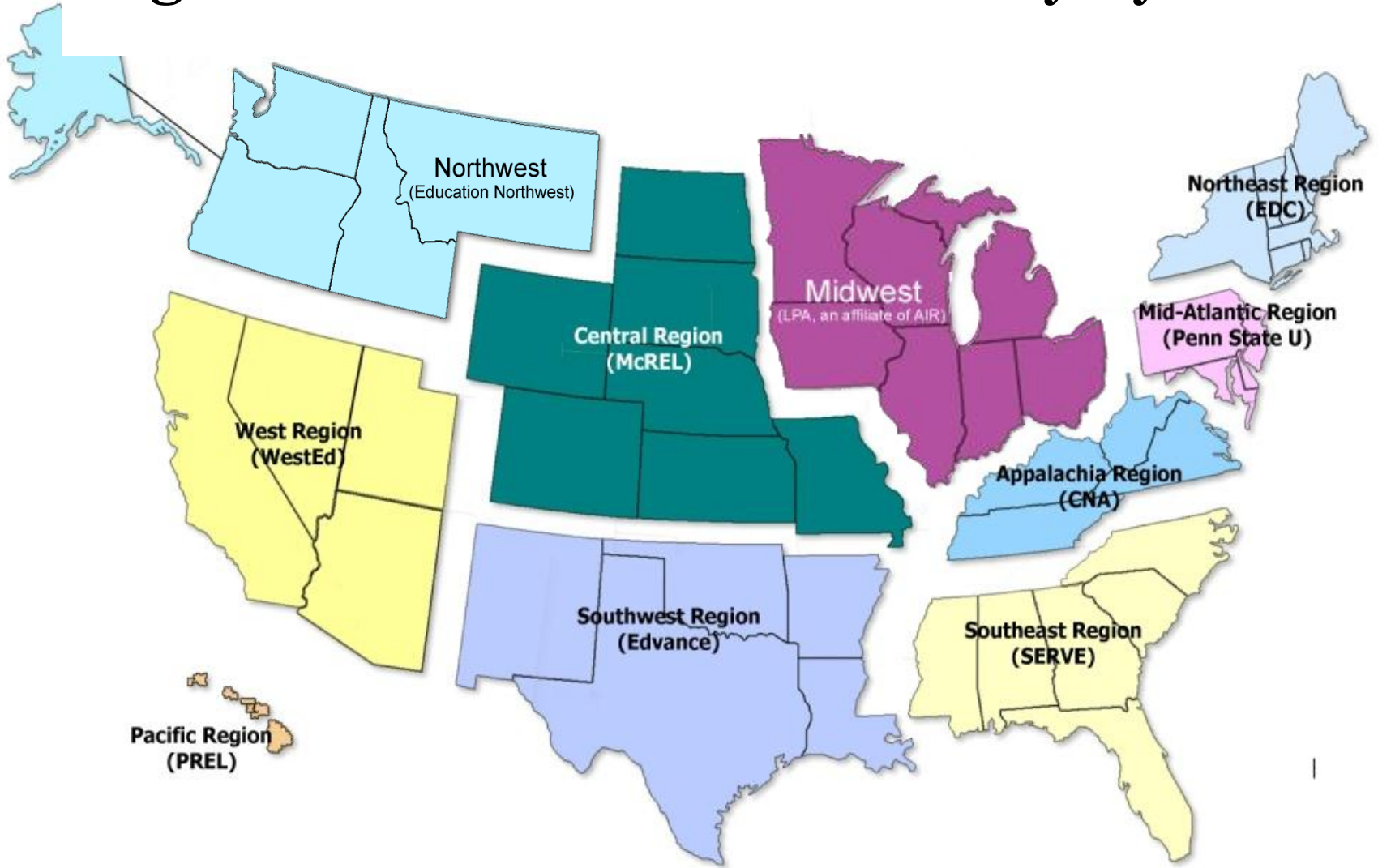
- Contract revenue
- Grant revenue
- McREL net assets from:
 - Fees on contracted services
 - Product sales
 - Royalty income





- One of 10 regional laboratories
- Serves seven-state region
- Assess regional needs and conduct fast response R&D projects
- Implement long-term RCT field studies to determine effectiveness of interventions
- Participate in cross-laboratory initiatives
- Disseminate research findings and related information
- January 2006 – January 2012

Regional Educational Laboratory System

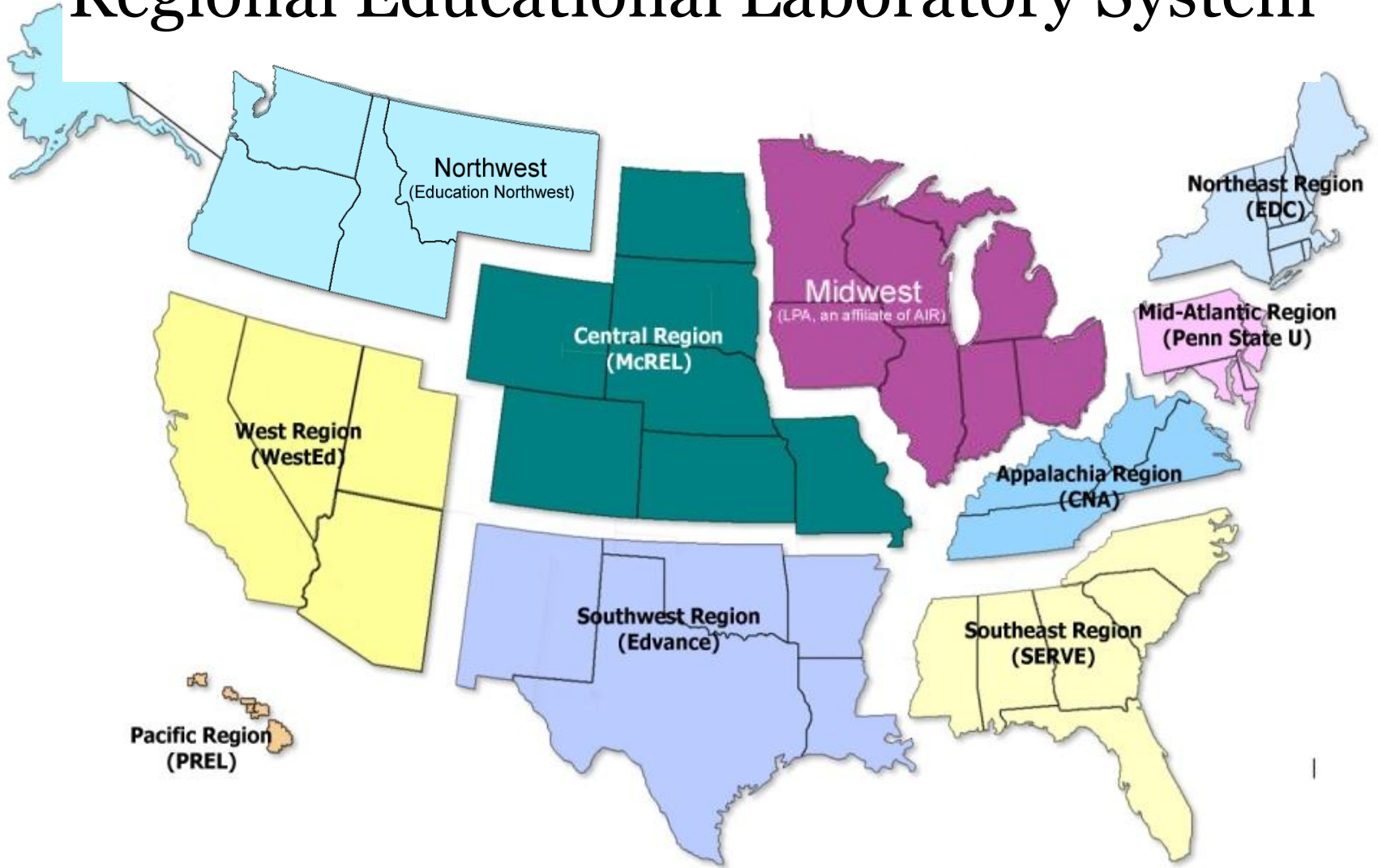


Regional Educational Laboratory System

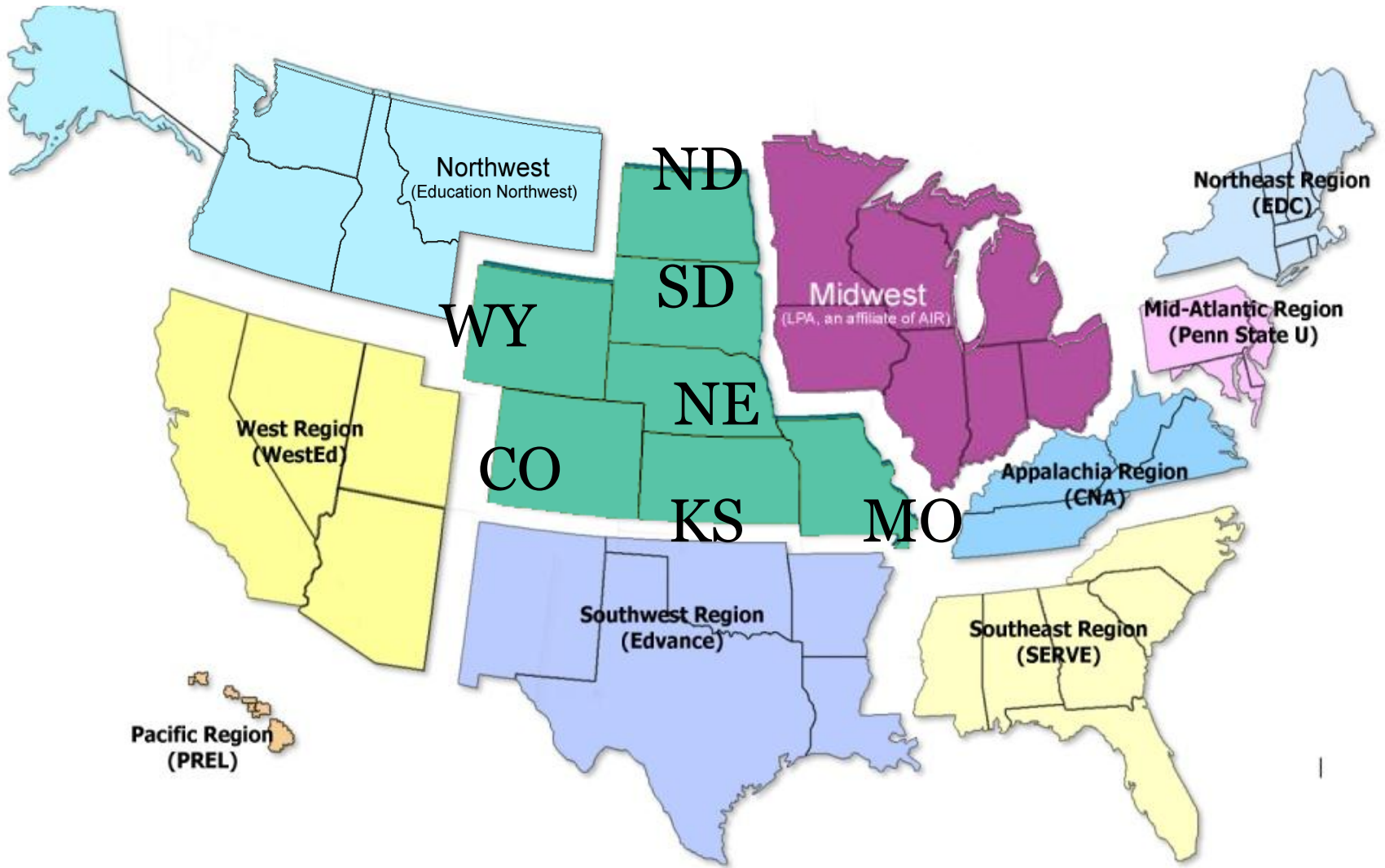


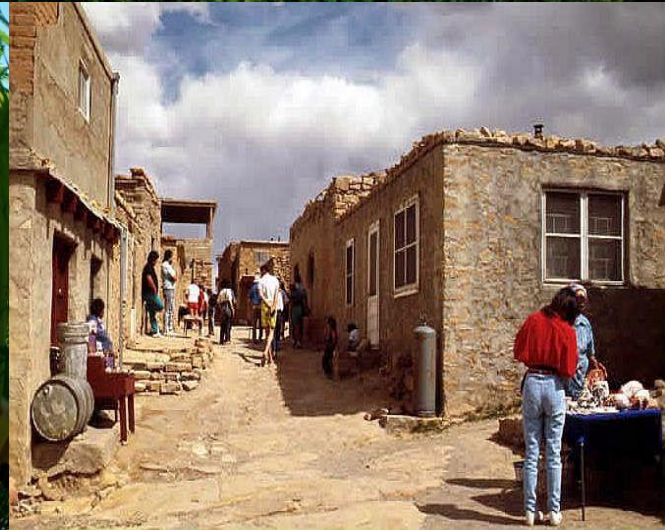
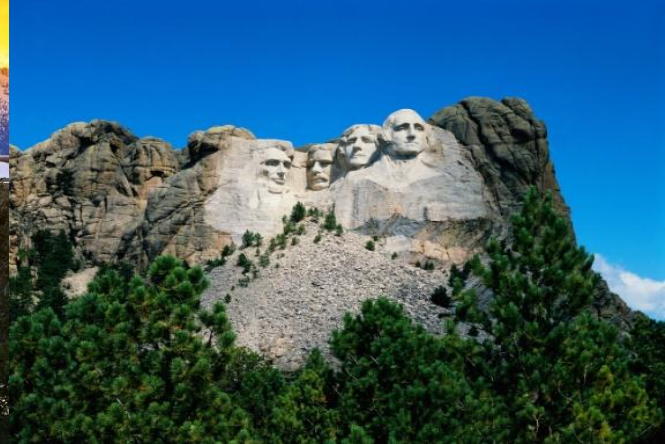
To serve the educational needs of designated regions, using applied research, development, dissemination, and training and technical assistance.

Regional Educational Laboratory System



Central Region Educational Laboratory Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning







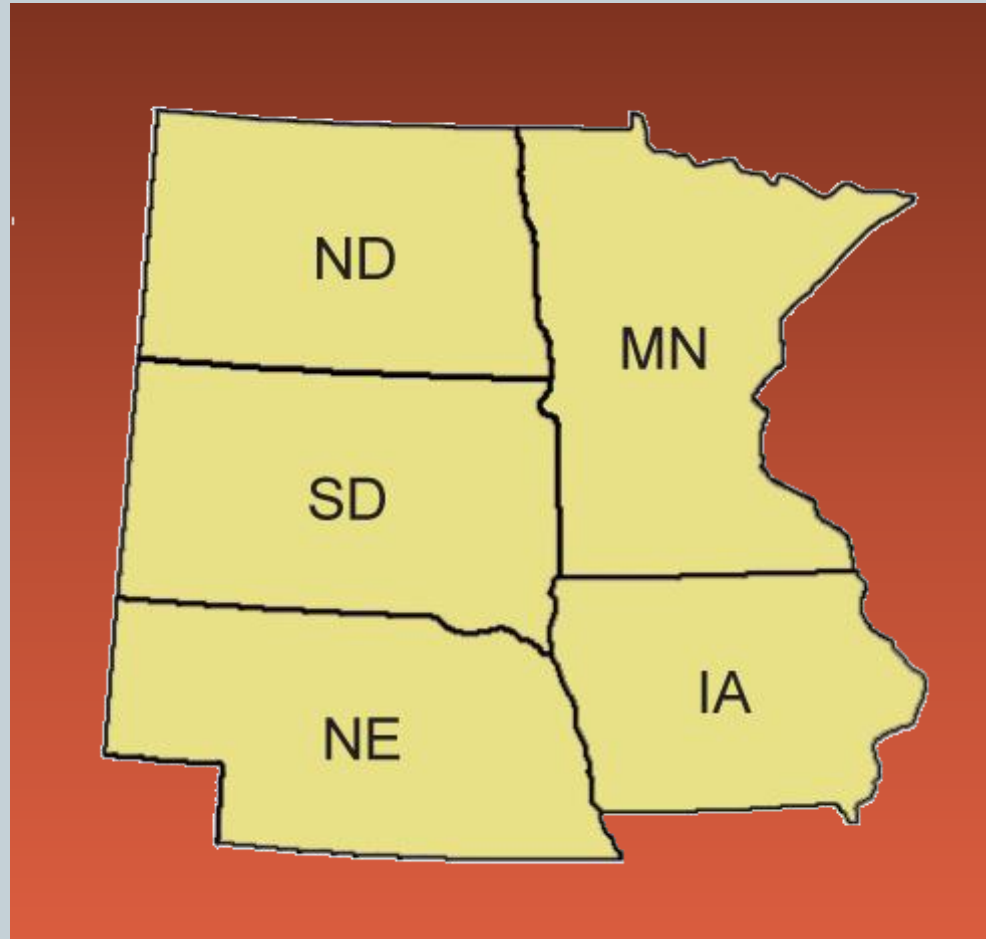
North Central Comprehensive Center

U.S. Department of Education



- One of 16 regional technical assistance centers
- Provides research-based services to five-state region
 - build states' capacity to implement NCLB and help districts and schools achieve the goals of the law
 - improve state's access to resources, information, and services that help districts improve schools and student performance
- July 2005 – September 2012

North Central Comprehensive Center Region



McREL Rural Agenda



- Mobility of rural students
- High performing rural schools
- Teacher preparation
- Teacher recruitment and retention
- Four day week
- Supplemental Education Service in rural areas
- Native American and special populations
- English Language Learner (ELL) study

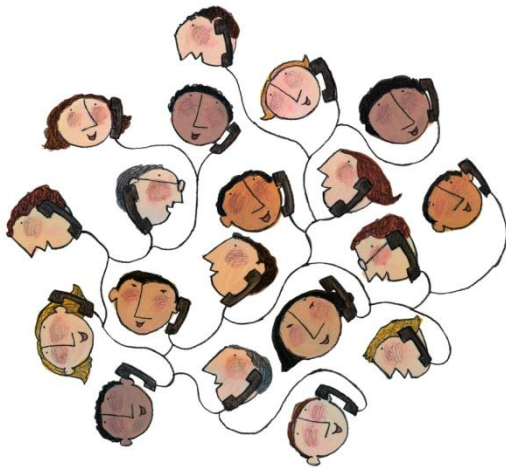
Let's Talk About It...



**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
RURAL RESEARCH
LITERATURE?**

**IS THE RESEARCH HIGH
QUALITY AND RIGOROUS?**

**WHAT TOPICS ARE
COVERED?**





A Review of Rural Education Research

Are We
Making
Progress?



Body of Rural Research

The Big Picture



Sparse body of strong
rural research studies

Few rural researchers

Limited funding for rural
research



History of Rural Research Reviews



- DeYoung – 1987
- Harmon, Howley, and Sanders - 1996
- Khattri, Riley, and Kane – 1997
- Kennapel & DeYoung – 1999
- McClure & Reeves – 2004
- Arnold, M, Newman, J.H, Gaddy, B.B & Dean, C. – 2005
- Dexter, Hughes, and Farmer – 2008
- Lawrence – 2009

Condition of Rural Education Research

Arnold et al.



- Collected 498 abstracts – coded into 108 topics
- 168 were rural in context, e.g. setting, only
- 106 used a comparative design and were rated on quality

Top 10 Topical Areas

Arnold et al



- Programs and strategies for special needs students
- Instruction
- School safety and discipline
- Student life and work planning
- Factors influencing academic achievement
- Students' attitudes and behaviors
- Leadership
- Staff Recruitment and retention
- Teacher preparation and development
- Teachers' beliefs and practices

Five Clusters of 30 Topics

Arnold et al



- Teaching and learning 91
- Schools and communities 44
- Education policy 30
- Student growth and development support 27
- Organization of schooling 18

“The results of the literature review . . . confirm that the condition of rural education research is poor . . . there is no topic with a sufficient body of research . . . “

Arnold et al (p.16)

A View of Quality Coladarci



- Describe the rural context
- Frame a rural research question
- Make the rural argument
 - **Provide compelling justification for rural conclusions**
 - **Make a contrast between rural and non-rural**
- Study a rural phenomenon

*Improving the Yield of Rural Education Research:
An Editor's Swan Song - 2007*

A Review: Are We Making Progress?

Cicchinelli and Barley



1. Determine if the topical focus of rural research has shifted since 2005?
2. Are the studies focused on rural issues?
3. Do more recent studies meet Coladarci's criteria related to quality?

The Search for Rural Studies

322 studies found



291
electronic
searches

31 requests
for AERA
papers

Screened to
59 articles

13 authors
responded

72 papers
reviewed

62 articles met criteria

Top 10 Topical Areas

Cicchinelli & Barley



- Factors influencing academic achievement*
- Teacher preparation and development*
- **Characteristics of rural schools***
- Student life and work planning*
- **Curriculum**
- **Teacher and staff characteristics**
- Education leadership
- Teachers' beliefs and practices
- **School and community**
- Staff recruitment and retention

Top Five Rural Topics

Then and Now



2005

2010

Programs/strategies for
special needs students

Factors influencing academic
achievement

Instruction

Teacher preparation and
development

School safety and discipline

Characteristics of rural
schools

Student life and work
planning

Student life and work
planning

Factors influencing academic
achievement

Curriculum

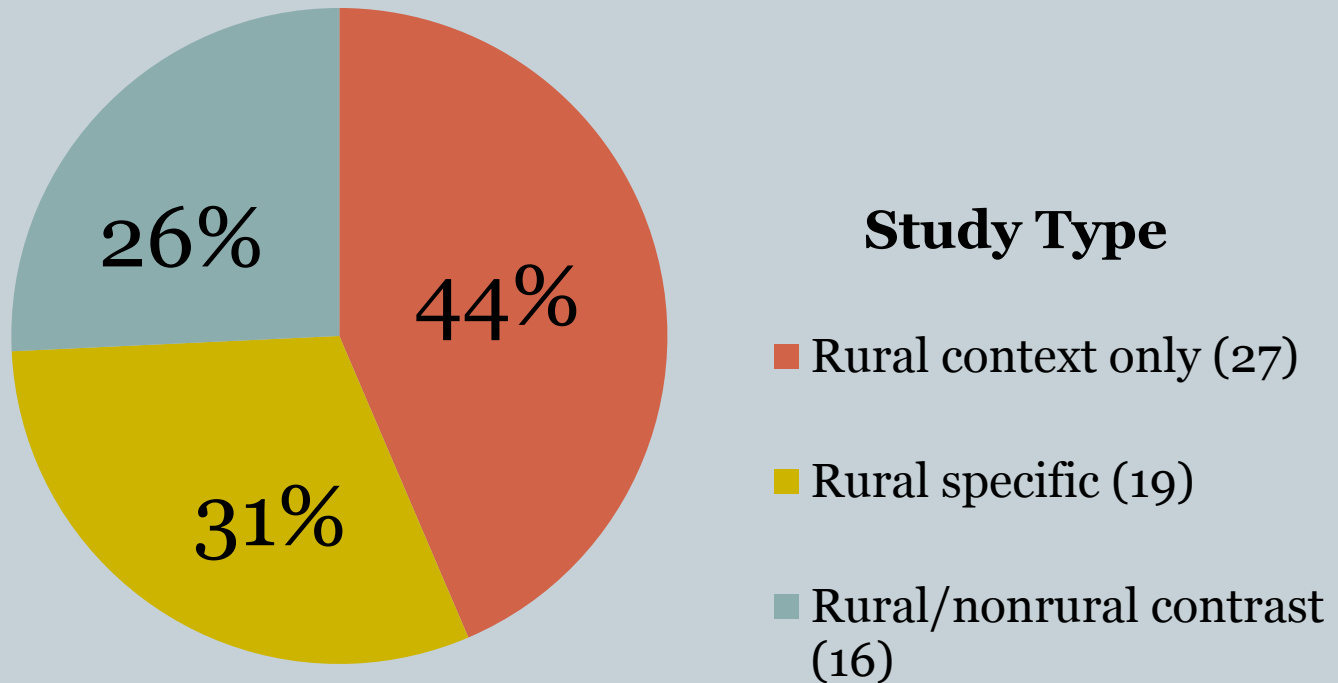
Coding for Rurality



- Rural context only
- Rural specific
- Rural – non-rural comparison

Results

From 62 studies

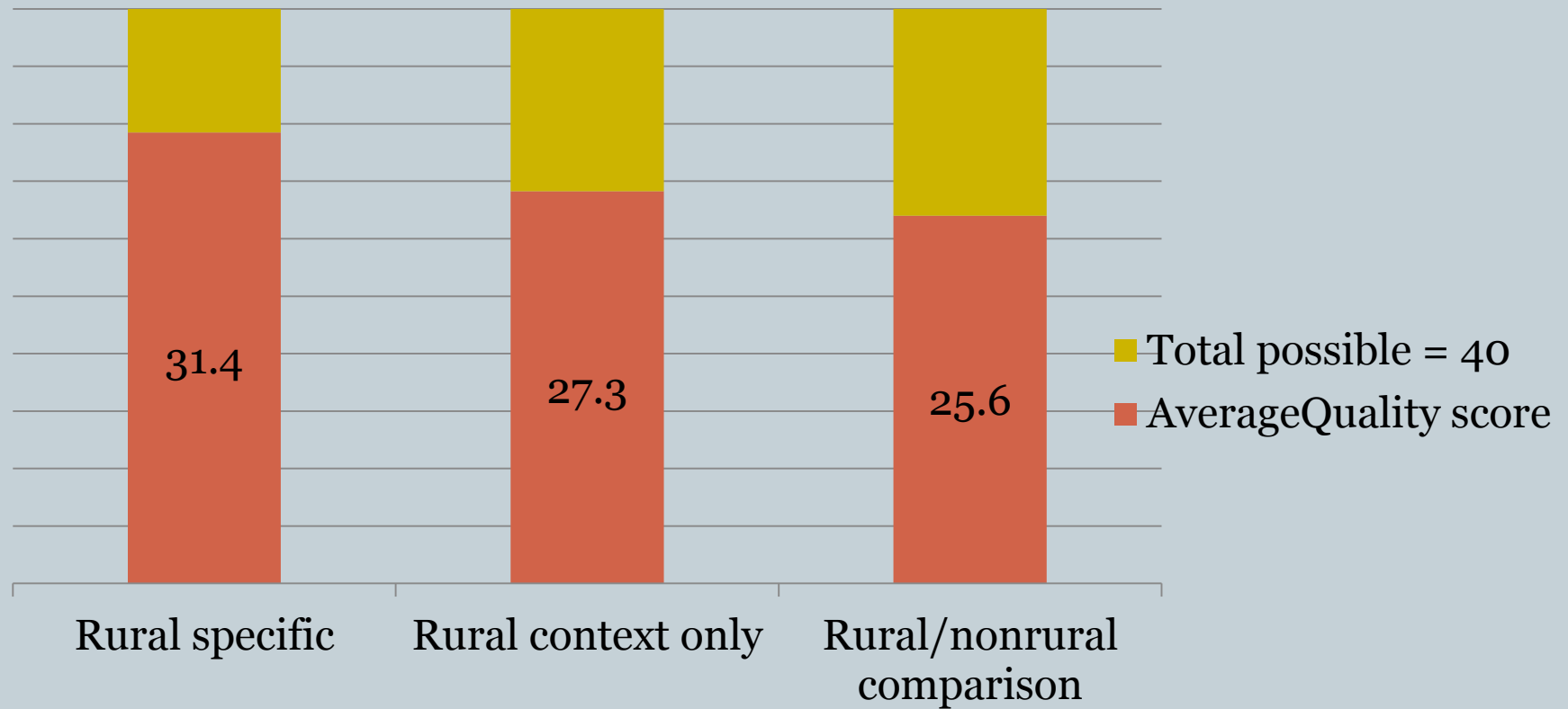


Coding for Quality



- Objectives or purpose
- Perspective or theoretical framework
- Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry
- Data sources, evidence, objects or materials
- Results and/or substantiated conclusions
- Scientific or scholarly significance of the study
- Relevance to education
- Potential to promote development of new skills/knowledge

Mean Quality Score by Type of Study



Studies with Rural Questions



Rural specific	19	of	19
Rural/non-rural comparison studies	4	of	16
Rural context only	0	of	27
<hr/>			
Total with rural focus	23	of	62

Rural Research Questions Illustrated



Rural question

How does the percentage of teaching assignments filled by highly qualified teachers vary in rural districts in New York?

Non-rural question

What are the greatest challenges impeding effective education of ELLs across the state?

Characteristics of the 23 Rural Studies



- 10 quantitative designs
 - 4 contrast rural and non-rural
 - 5 use statistical controls
 - 2 examine interactions
- 13 qualitative designs
 - 1 contrast rural and non-rural
- Topics
 - Student life and work planning
 - Factors influencing academic achievement
 - Teacher preparation and development
 - Education leadership
 - Student attitudes and behaviors
 - Teacher beliefs and practices

Conclusions and Actions



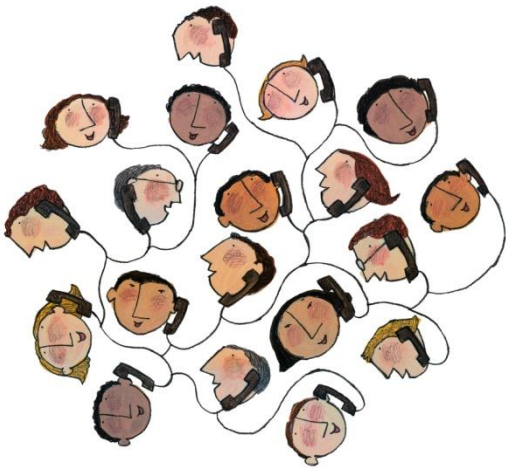
- Studies merely conducted in rural settings continue to inflate the apparent literature base
- Topics have shifted toward “systems” questions
- Both quantitative and qualitative need to be more rigorous
- Rural researchers need to set a more focused research agenda to guide the field

Let's Talk About It....



WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR K-12 EDUCATION?

AND FOR RURAL EDUCATION IN PARTICULAR?



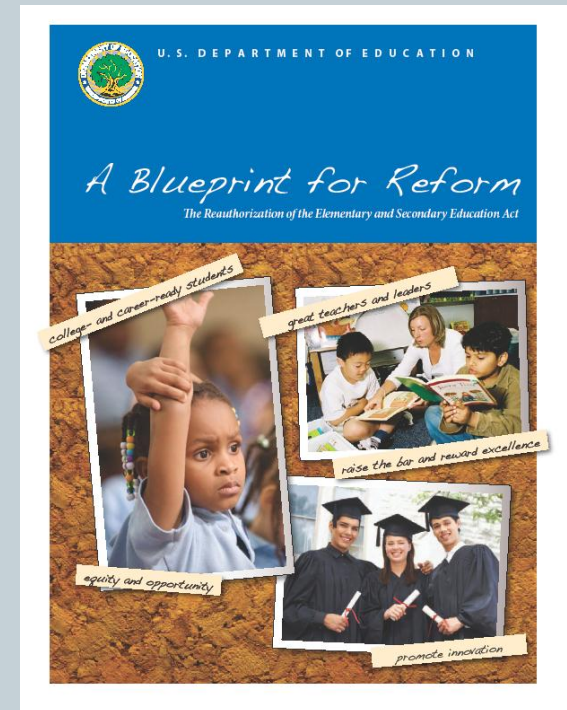


A Blueprint for Reform

Reauthorization of the ESEA



- Outlines a federal role in education
- Guides shared work with parents, students, educators, business and community leaders
- Presents a strategy for providing America's students with the world-class education they need and deserve



Arne Duncan, *Secretary of Education*; Carmel Martin, *Assistant Secretary, OPEPD*, March 2010



U. S. Department of Education Reform Priorities



- College- and Career-Ready Students
- Great Teachers and Great Leaders
- A Complete Education
- Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners
- Successful, Safe and Healthy Students
- Fostering Innovation and Excellence



Blueprint for Reform Priorities

College- and Career-Ready Students

- Support college- and career-ready standards, prepare college- and career-ready students
- Reward progress and success
- **Turn around the lowest-performing schools**

Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School

- **Recruit, prepare, develop, and reward effective teachers & leaders**
- **Support bold action to increase the number of effective teachers and leaders where they are needed most**
- **Strengthen pathways into teaching and school leadership in high need schools**



Blueprint for Reform Priorities

Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners

- **Improve programs for ELLs and encouraging innovative programs and practices**
- **Build the knowledge base about what works**
- **Maintain and strengthen formula grant programs for Native American students, other special populations, and rural districts**
- **Meet the needs of students with disabilities**

A Complete Education

- **Strengthen instruction in literacy and science, technology, engineering, and math**
- **Support teachers and students in teaching and learning to more rigorous standards**
- **Improve access to well-rounded education in high needs schools**
- **Expand access to college coursework and other accelerated learning opportunities in high-needs schools**



Blueprint for Reform Priorities

Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students

- **Provide a cradle through college and career continuum of supports in high-poverty communities**
- **Support programs that redesign and expand the school schedule and provide high-quality afterschool programs**
- **Use data to improve students' well-being, and increase capacity to create safe, healthy, and drug-free environments**

Foster Innovation and Excellence

- **Provide incentives to states and districts willing to take on ambitious, comprehensive reforms**
- **Develop, validate, and scale up promising /proven strategies to improve student outcomes**
- **Expand educational choice within the public system by creating high-performing new schools**

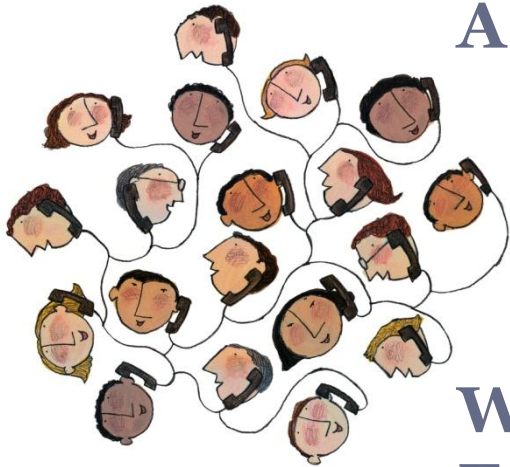
Let's Talk About It....



**WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF
A RURAL RESEARCH AGENDA?**

**KEY RURAL ISSUES TO
ADDRESS?**

**WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INNOVATION IN RURAL
AREAS?**



Toward a Rural Research Agenda



- Use of longitudinal data sets to answer questions
- Policy studies to promote quality teachers and teaching
- School and district leadership studies of effectiveness
- Best practices for graduating career- and college-ready students
- Assuring opportunity and equity for all rural students
- RCTs of interventions for “struggling” rural schools

Priorities vs Research Available



Priority Reform Areas

- College- and Career-Ready Students
- Great Teachers and Great Leaders
- A Complete Education
- Needs of Diverse Learners
- Successful, Safe and Healthy Students
- Foster Innovation and Excellence

Top Research Areas

- Curriculum
- Factors influencing academic achievement
- Teacher preparation and development
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Education leadership
- Student life and work planning

Opportunities for Innovation in Rural Settings



- Rural school reform effectiveness
- Diversity and equity in rural settings
- Impact of special programs: RttT; I3;
- Value and nature of community involvement
- Autonomous school options to charter schools
- Effectiveness of on-line and distance learning options

Final Thoughts for a New Start?



Contact Us

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Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools



Rural Support Resources

REL Central

http://www.mcrel.org/our_work/REL.asp

Center on Innovation and Improvement

<http://www.centerii.org/>

What Works Clearing House

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

IES Practice Guides

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>

National Center for Education Statistics

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/>