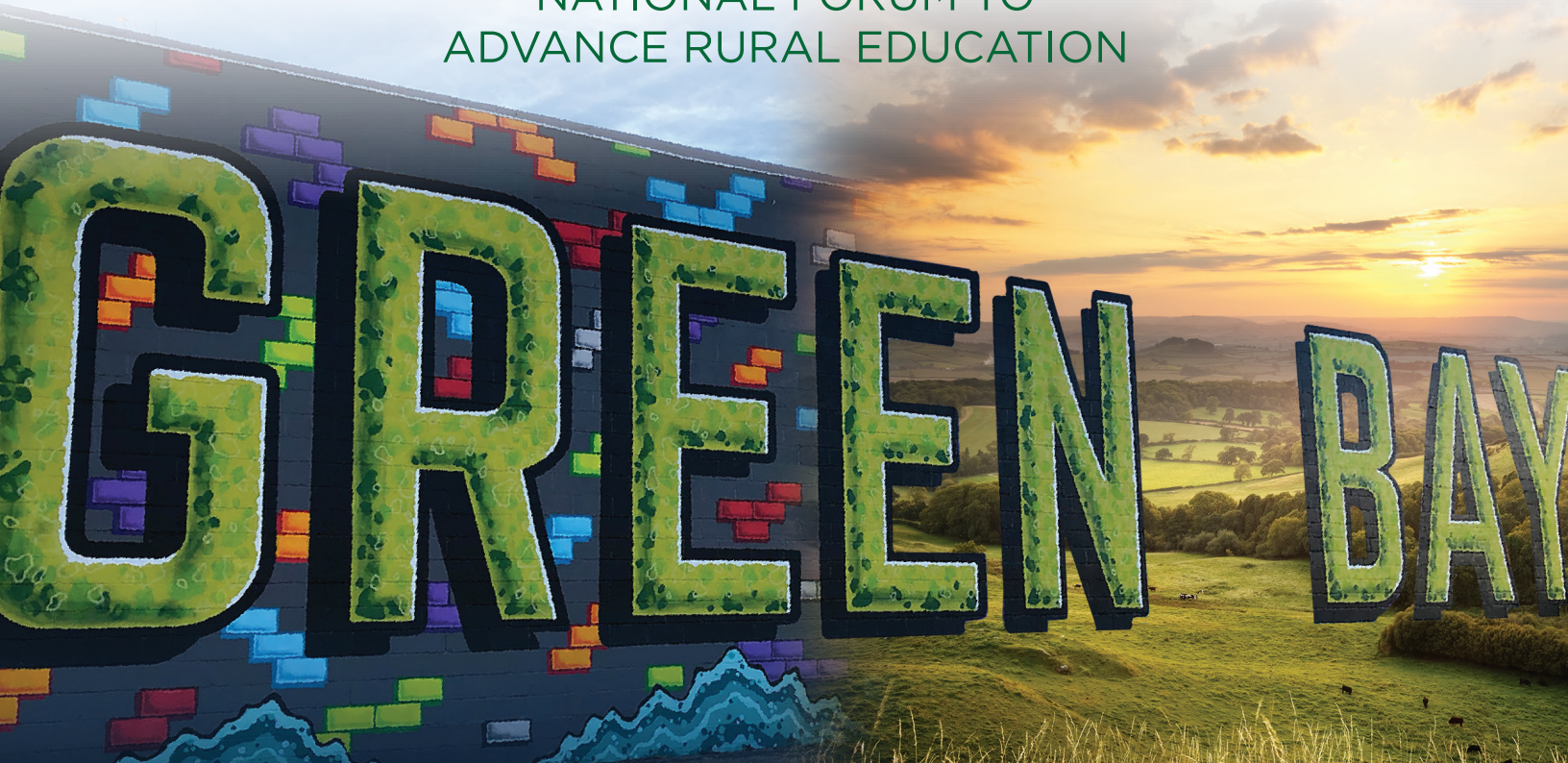




NATIONAL FORUM TO
ADVANCE RURAL EDUCATION



October 20-21, 2022 • Hyatt Regency, Green Bay, WI

JOIN US IN-PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

Hosted by:



In partnership with:



Learn more at www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research

#RuralEdForum

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“A CAN’T MISS
EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN 2022”

GETTING SMART

“BEST EDUCATION
CONFERENCES TO ATTEND IN 2022”

UTR CONF UNDER THE RADAR



Learn more at www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research

#RuralEdForum

ONE EVENT—TWO WAYS TO ATTEND

The 2022 National Forum to Advance Rural Education will be hybrid again this year, which means we will host an in-person event and provide the option to attend virtually. A hybrid event allows attendees and presenters to select the format that works best for them.



IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

We're excited to bring you inspiring keynote sessions, high-quality professional learning, and networking with experts and practitioners from around the country—all in-person in Green Bay. Registering for our in-person event also gives you access to all on-demand sessions.



VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

Looking for a more flexible option to engage with us? Join us virtually and watch and engage from your office or at home. You'll have the opportunity to join us for livestreamed general sessions and access to 50+ on-demand sessions.

RAISING RURAL: A FAIR CHANCE AT A GOOD LIFE

This year's event theme will build upon last year's theme, *Raising Rural: A Fair Chance for a Good Life*, which will explore creative and cooperative action around three strands: community, agency, and creativity.



COMMUNITY

How can rural living be economically prosperous and environmentally sustainable?



AGENCY

How can rural learning advance self-determination and inclusive opportunity?



CREATIVITY

How can rural partnering respect community identity and generate creative responses to mutual challenges?

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Rural district, building, and teacher leaders
- Business, civic, and community leaders
- State department of education leaders
- Local, state, and national boards of education leaders
- Established collaboratives/networks of education, business, and community organizations
- Economic development leaders and venture capitalists
- Rural and non-rural education associations
- Philanthropic organizations
- Leaders from institutes of higher education
- Others interested in strengthening rural education, economic/workforce development, and civic/community engagement efforts

WHAT TO EXPECT



2 days of
in-person learning



Access to
on-demand learning



Learning sessions
(live and pre-recorded)



Inspiring keynotes
& speakers



Networking
opportunities



Opportunity to earn
contact hours

MEANINGFUL CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Whether you're an in-person or virtual attendee, we know you want meaningful opportunities to connect with speakers, exhibitors, and other attendees. That's why we've designed several new event features that help increase engagement and communication for all attendees.



Livestreamed General Sessions: All general sessions, including keynote sessions, panel discussions, and the award ceremony will be livestreamed in real time.



In-person and Virtual Exhibits: We are excited to host exhibitors in-person at this year's conference. Most of our exhibitors will also have a virtual booth and offer the opportunity to schedule one-on-one or small group sessions virtually.



Surprise and Delight Features: Everyone likes a gift and we have a few creative and fun ideas up our sleeves for in-person and virtual attendees.

NEW FOR 2022

EARLY REGISTRATION & WELCOME PARTY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 5 - 7 P.M.

Join us on Wednesday evening to grab your registration materials, have a few snacks and drinks, listen to music, connect with exhibitors, and meet other conference attendees! Experience the fun, energy, and excitement before the official conference begins.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



ERIC SHENIINGER

Author & Senior Fellow on Digital Leadership,
International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE)

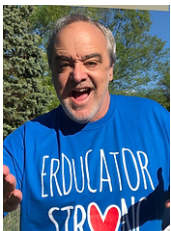
Eric works with schools throughout the world helping educators meet and exceed their potential to improve outcomes for learners. Prior to this, he was the award-winning principal at New Milford High School. Under his leadership, his school became a globally recognized model for innovative practices. Eric has emerged as an innovative leader, best-selling author, and sought-after speaker. His main focus is using research and evidence-based practices to empower learners, improve communications with stakeholders, enhance public relations, create a positive brand presence, discover opportunities, transform learning spaces, and help educators grow professionally in the digital age.



BENJAMIN WINCHESTER

Rural Sociologist

Ben has been working in and for small towns across the Midwest for over 25 years. Ben is trained as a rural sociologist and works as a Senior Research Fellow for the University of Minnesota Extension. His applied research on economic, social, and demographic topics surrounding a theme of “rewriting the rural narrative” is a new way of looking at rural America. He recently received the international Rural Renewal Research Prize in 2021 for this work. He was a founding employee at the Center for Small Towns, an outreach and engagement program at the University of Minnesota, and specializes in community development, demographic analysis, data visualization, and moving communities away from anecdotal data.



GERRY BROOKS

Principal & Motivational Speaker

Gerry Brooks is a veteran educator in Lexington, Kentucky. His educational experience includes six years in the classroom, two years as an intervention specialist, and 12 years as an administrator. He is a passionate public speaker whose focus is on encouraging teachers to improve their instruction through personal climate and culture strategies. He desires to help administrators focus on how to lead all staff in a positive and constructive manner. His following on social media has developed through humorous videos that focus on real-world educational experiences. He is currently followed on social media sites by over 500,000 people.

FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE

This year, we will feature rural educator and student voices from across the country to share their perspectives on rural education, life in rural communities, current opportunities and barriers they face, and more.



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

5 - 7 p.m.	Early Registration & Welcome Party
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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration & Breakfast
8:30 - 10 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Remarks General Session
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.	Learning Sessions
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Learning Sessions
12:30 - 1 p.m.	Lunch
1 - 2 p.m.	General Session
2:15 - 3:15 p.m.	Learning Sessions
3:15 - 3:30 p.m.	Snack Break
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Learning Sessions
4:30 - 6 p.m.	In-person Attendee Reception

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

7:30-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:45 a.m.	Welcome Remarks General Session
10 - 11 a.m.	Learning Sessions
11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Learning Sessions
12:15 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 - 2 p.m.	General Session & Closing
2 - 3 p.m.	Team Planning & Networking

HOTELS

If you plan to attend the 2022 National Forum to Advance Rural Education and have not booked your hotel, we encourage you to move quickly! **Hundreds of educators have already registered and the conference hotel, the Hyatt Green Bay, is now sold out!**

DON'T WORRY: THERE ARE NEARBY HOTEL OPTIONS

The following hotels are within one mile of the Hyatt Green Bay.

- **Hampton Inn Green Bay Downtown** • 20` Main Street, Green Bay, WI 54301 • 920-437-5900 • [Reserve here](#)
- **Hotel Northland** • 304 N Adams Street, Green Bay, WI 54301 • 920-393-7499 • [Reserve here](#)
- **Quality Inn & Suites Downtown** • 321 S Washington Street, Green Bay, WI 54301 • (877) 474-9572 • [Reserve here](#)

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, THE ADDRESS FOR THE EVENT HOTEL IS BELOW:

Hyatt Regency Green Bay • 333 Main Street, Green Bay, WI 54301 • (920) 432-1234

CANCELLATION POLICY

All changes, substitutions, and cancellations must be made in writing by emailing nfare@nrea.site. Refunds will only be given for cancellations received in writing at least 10 days prior to the event date (by October 10, 2022). Cancellations received after October 10, 2022 will receive a refund less a 50 percent fee to cover administrative costs. No refunds will be given for "no shows." In the event that in-person gatherings become impossible due to federal, state, or local mandates or regulations, "In-Person" registrations will automatically become "Virtual" registrations and the difference in registration fees will be refunded to the registrant by the Organizer. Voluntary changes from in-person to virtual attendance must also be made by October 10. Alternatively, registrants may cancel per the cancellation policy outlined above.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the event team at nfare@nrea.site.

REGISTRATION

Register by: **October 7**



IN-PERSON \$400

Includes morning/afternoon refreshments and lunch, and access to all in-person and on-demand sessions until November 30, 2022



VIRTUAL \$200

Includes access to livestreamed general sessions and 50+ on-demand sessions until November 30, 2022

Learn more and register at

https://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:15-11:15 A.M.

More Than a Practicum: Building a Rurally-responsive Teacher Preparation Curriculum

Presenters: Jessica Brogely and Edina Haslauer, University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Room: Grand Ballroom A

Learn more about a new rural responsive teacher education program which prepares future teachers to successfully work in rural contexts by understanding the assets and challenges that exist in small communities. From its inception at the administrator level, to the faculty-led development of coursework, to the impact on student learning, engage in a conversation about the role of teacher preparation programs' impacts on rural schools and communities, and the ways in which the program can be replicated in other contexts.

Critical Conversations Around Race in Rural Communities

Presenters: Tevis Harris, Wilson Preparatory Academy/ECU Rural Education Institute;

James Knight, Wellcome Middle School, Assistant/ECU Rural Education Institute

Room: Grand Ballroom B

Explore issues related to equity, social justice, and race in rural schools and communities and examine attitudes surrounding race as it exists in rural and minority communities. Hear more about value and belief systems and participate in an analysis to reflect on the impact of these systems in rural spaces. Engage in contemporary issues of race in rural spaces and consider the narratives that invade and cause inequities on a micro and macro level. Engage in commitment sparring to unearth action steps used to dismantle, undo, liberate, and heal rural communities.

Higher Performance Leadership: Become. Build. Lead.

Presenters: Aaron Malczewski and Colleen Timm, Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7

Room: Grand Ballroom C

Everyone speaks. Not everyone is heard. Everyone has a leadership voice and the ability to lead others, but most people don't know their leadership voice or how to use it. Learn about the 5 Voices: Pioneer, Connector, Guardian, Creative, or Nurturer. Come and learn how you, your team, and organization can be transformed when everyone is empowered to operate securely in their own voice and learns to value the voices of others.

Rural STEM Teacher Preparation and Retention: Lessons Learned from 3 NSF Projects

Presenters: David Long, Morehead State University; Devon Brenner and Diana Outlaw, Mississippi State University; Paul Adams, Fort Hays State University

Room: Grand Ballroom F

Rural schools continue to seek to address rural teacher workforce challenges, particularly in STEM fields. Learn about strategies used and lessons learned in three National Science Foundation funded projects, including results from a nationwide study of 14 teacher preparation programs, the design of a three-semester rural focused rural seminar course in Kansas, and case studies from Appalachia that illustrate the challenges of rural retention and graduates' rationales for selecting teaching jobs. Following an overview of each project, session attendees will discuss driving questions and engage in interactive problem solving to consider solutions for the rural teacher workforce.

REAP-ing Rewards Through ESEA Flexibility

Presenter: Daniel Weeks, Maine Department of Education

Room: Grand Ballroom G

Get an in-depth look into the flexibility that ESEA allows through Title V: The Rural Education Achievement Program (or REAP). Network and brainstorm funding solutions for some of their biggest needs and leave with clearly identified next steps that will allow them to begin advocating with their local and state leaders to access the flexibility this federal statute provides them.

Pathways for Paras: School/Community Partnerships for Developing Future Teachers

Presenters: Jon Turner and Reesha Adamson, Missouri State University

Room: Grand Ballroom H

The lack of highly qualified teacher applicants is a growing challenge faced by rural schools and the highest area of demand is in special education careers. “Pathways for Paras” is a U. S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship program created by Missouri State University which allows local schools to partner with higher education institutions to help qualified para-educators complete their teaching degrees in special education in two years. A true partnership, approximately half of the course work is taught by qualified local educators with no tuition cost. The program uses a “earn while you learn” model, which allows para-educators to complete course work while continuing to work in schools. Most educators, in partnership with their local schools and the U. S. Department of Labor, can complete their teaching degree at little to no cost while continuing to earn a salary.

Contemporary Issues of Queerness in Rural Schools

Presenter: Clint Whitten, Virginia Tech

Room: Riverview 1

Recent state and local legislation across the nation has demonstrated the growing push back against Queer representation in public schools. Presented by an openly Queer teacher in a rural-surrounding county, explore issues surrounding Queerness in educational spaces, particularly in rural areas. Learn how to help rural educators find creative ways to advocate for Queer youth and faculty. Through rich conversations, we will address public concerns over displaying of Pride symbols in classrooms, providing space for Queer voices in the curriculum, and engaging faculty in critical conversations that address Queerness and rurality.

Teach Your Students & Build Your Workforce

Presenters: Andrew Woolfolk, Doug Straley, Bo Bundrick, and Kenny Bouwens, Louisa County Public Schools

Room: Riverview 2

Located in the heart of rural central Virginia, Louisa County Public Schools boasts one of the Commonwealth’s most in-depth and prestigious Career & Technical Education programs, offering more than 50 different courses and giving students the chance to earn certifications in 14 different career clusters. Each year, hundreds of students participate in exciting, hands-on programs, such as firefighting, auto mechanics, construction, cosmetology, welding, field turf management, culinary arts, and more. Through Virginia’s inaugural Registered Apprenticeship Program, students not only gain valuable experience, but also earn a paycheck. Learn more about how students are not just preparing to graduate, but also preparing to be the next generation workforce.

GYO + Apprenticeship = Success

Presenters: Renee Murley and Kim Wingate, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Room: Riverview 3

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga representatives will share how they are currently collaborating with the Tennessee Department of Education, the Labor Department and regional school districts to incorporate an apprenticeship into their current Grow Your Own programs. The presentation will demonstrate their collaboration among various partners to meet the needs of districts across the southeast to address the teacher shortage.

Collaborative Partnership Strategies: ABC's of Partnership Building for Early Childhood

Presenters: Michelle Hartman, Pawnee Independent School District; Bernadine Martinez, Power Your Potential Professional Development; Max Thompson, Retired Superintendent

Room: Meeting Room B1

Research from across the U.S. shows that effective Pre-K programs help students start kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed, boost early literacy and academic achievement, and reduce grade retention and provision of special education services. Even if your state is not funding full day Pre-K or other early reading and mathematics strategies, find out how partnerships with Head Start created a high-quality program to meet the needs of eligible 3-4 year olds that are economically disadvantaged and/or English Language Learners.

REACHing for Solutions to the Rural Teacher Shortage

Presenters: Susan Hester, Jan Miller, Sara Reynolds, and Reenay Rogers, The University of West Alabama

Room: Meeting Room B2

Through the support of a 2020 U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Partnership Grant, the University of West Alabama is preparing residents for teaching positions in rural and high-needs schools with confidence and skills. Receive an overview of Project REACH, along with information from instructional coaches and residents. This project is easily replicated and delivers qualified teachers ready to take on the challenges of 21st century rural classrooms. Student stories will warm your heart and renew your passion for teaching as a calling, not just a profession.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:15-10:40 A.M.

Rural Community Asset Mapping: Innovative Field Experience for Prospective Teachers

Presenters: Jayne Downey, Nick Lux, and Jennifer Leubeck, Montana State University

Room: Ballroom A1

This study examines the impact of an early rural field experience where pre-service teachers collaborate with K-8 students to develop digital rural community asset maps (R-CAMs). Findings reveal: 1) how collaboration with rural K-8 students to produce R-CAMs impacts PSTs' understanding of rural students, rural schools, and rural communities; 2) impact on PSTs' interest in pursuing a career in a rural community; and 3) how a technology-rich R-CAM field experience in a rural context supports PSTs' understanding of best practices in technology integration.

Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire: From Rural Athletic Director to Administrator

Presenter: Barry Kamrath, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Room: Ballroom A2

Explore research from a study of rural school administrators who transitioned from the position of athletic or activities director. This stressful position (AD) often carries similar responsibilities to those of school administrators, and it is common for athletic directors to transition into other school leadership roles. This study provides insight into the transition from AD's to building-level school administrator by examining leadership characteristics and traits consistent with individuals who have made the transition. This mixed methods study gathered perceptions from six currently seated high school principals (former AD's) through two-stage interviews and compared the interview data with responses from a corresponding survey that gathered data from a state-wide sample of principals who had also transitioned. Implications for rural school districts, university school leadership preparation programs, and the administrators themselves will be shared.

Connecting Corporate Foundations and Rural Youths' Educational Experiences

Presenter: Heidi Fahning, Purdue University

Room: Ballroom A3

The influence of corporate foundations on the privatization of education and general education reform has been widely researched within the United States and globally (Moeller, 2018). However, the impacts of corporate investment on youths' educational experiences and related sense of belonging has not been as thoroughly investigated in rural American contexts. In many rural towns in the American Midwest, major employers invest heavily in the education system. This investment opens up opportunities for youth and subtly shapes who belongs in the community. This paper focuses on the effects of a corporate foundation on the educational experiences of diverse youth within a rural town in the American Midwest.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:50-11:15 A.M.

Why Teach Here? A Typology on Characteristics of Desirable Districts

Presenters: Robert Mitchell, Kristi McCann, and Grant Clayton, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs

Room: Ballroom A1

Discover a new instrument that determines the various characteristics that make some school districts more appealing for classroom teachers to work at than others. By examining the impact issues, such as salary, four-day weeks, and district performance status and its impact on hiring and retaining teachers, we understand the levels of importance teachers place on specific district traits. If you want to find out why there seems to be a lack of interest for teachers working in your schools, this session is for you.

Negotiating Community and Inclusion for Rural Students with Disabilities

Presenter: Katie McCabe, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs

Room: Ballroom A2

National statistics have demonstrated persistent, segregated placement rates for students with disabilities who require extensive support needs (ESN). However, researchers have begun to explore the influence of school locale on special education placement decisions. Using narrative inquiry, this research examined how special education placement decisions for students with ESN are influenced by rural the context. Findings revealed conflicts among narratives about inclusive educational experiences and showed how dimensions of community (i.e., history, trust, and beliefs about independence) influenced inclusive education practices.

NREA's 2022-2027 Research Agenda: Presenting Rural Stakeholders' Perspectives of Pressing Research Priorities

Presenters: Sarah Hartman, Ohio University; J. Kessa Roberts, Southern Methodist University; Catharine Biddle and Pam Buffington, University of Maine and Education Development Center; Erin McHenry-Sorber, West Virginia University; Sarah Schmitt-Wilson, Montana State University

Room: Ballroom A3

NREA's Research and Higher Education Committee is pleased to present the National Rural Education Association Research Agenda - 2022-2027. The new research agenda is responsive to and reflective of the diverse people that rural America represents. With equity and access at the center and supported by five additional themes - college and career trajectory, community partnerships and relationships, health and wellness, policy and funding, and teacher/leader recruitment, retention, and preparation - the new agenda emphasizes the importance of viewing rural research priorities in an intersectional and holistic manner. Attendees are invited to engage in a discussion of the strengths and implications of the new research agenda.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

Cultivating Rural Teacher Resilience to Prevent Burnout

Presenters: Alissa Sasser and Kermit Gilliard, Georgia Department of Education

Room: Grand Ballroom A

Burnout and compassion fatigue are at an all-time high in the field of education. Many educators often overcommit and over help without understanding the nature of this behavior or the detrimental effects it can have on their professional effectiveness, as well as their personal well-being. These challenges are compounded for rural educators who are expected to support the many non-academic challenges encountered by students. Engage in a conversation about the most common stressors that contribute to the burnout of rural teachers and provide participants with practical strategies to draw upon the grit and resilience of rural educators.

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Supports for Rural Families

Presenters: Tobin Novasio, Lockwood Schools; Michelle Bartsch and Anne Brown, Cook Center for Human Connection; Tam Larnerd, Hope Squad

Room: Grand Ballroom B

This session will share valuable tools our district has identified to support students and parents as they face evolving and increasing mental health challenges, especially living in areas with limited services. Two of the resources we will explore include: Hope Squad, a school-based peer-to-peer suicide prevention program, now in over 1,000 schools in the US and Canada and ParentGuidance.org, a resource for parents working to support students. We will also share how our district has partnered with the non-profit, Cook Center for Human Connection, to leverage these tools to address the mental health needs of students and their families.

A Remote Learning Redesign to Address Teacher Shortages

Presenter: Andrew Easton, Nebraska ESU Coordinating Council

Room: Grand Ballroom C

Across the country, teacher shortages are a critical issue, especially in rural communities. Explore a creative approach for districts to address staffing concerns by sharing teachers via distance learning. Learn more about how Nebraska is connecting classrooms of in-person learners to remote teachers in order to expand course offerings while saving money in the process.

Reading Rural: Building Community, Agency, and Creativity in Literacy Classrooms

Presenters: Devon Brenner, Mississippi State University; Karen Eppley, Penn State University, Chea Parton, University of Texas; Rachel Kuehl, Virginia Tech

Room: Grand Ballroom F

Learn about ways to increase representation of rural life in the literacy classroom by exploring resources for educators including: 1. The Whippoorwill Award for Rural Young Adult Literature and criteria for critical analysis of representations of place in texts, 2. LiteracyinPlace.com, which provides lists of rural children's literature and resources for teaching rural texts, and 3. The Center for Rural Education at Virginia Tech's resources for place-focused reading and writing instruction with extensive lists of texts set in rural places for early elementary, middle grade, and young adult readers.

Developing Networks to Connect Leaders Across Communities and States – Rural Leaders Network

Presenters: Jaime Festa-Daigle, Lake Havasu Unified School District/Arizona Rural Schools Association; Melissa Sadorf, Stanfield Elementary/Arizona Rural Schools Association

Room: Grand Ballroom G

Learn about organizations that have come together as the Rural Leaders Network to support rural education in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. Learn more about their mission to improve leadership practices, create a community of practice, and design a space where rural leaders can learn from their peers to improve their schools. Leave with the tools needed to develop your own rural leadership network that can be used to engage leaders across geographic boundaries to provide the support that all rural leaders can benefit from. This session is intended for anyone who is interested in leveraging the power of leadership to solve problems and improve outcomes for rural students.

Engaging Families to Support Multilingual Learner Success in Rural Schools

Presenters: Jen Daniels and Edith Nava, WIDA/Wisconsin Center for Education Research

Room: Grand Ballroom H

Discover information and resources for rural educators who are working with multilingual learners and their families to build a culture of success in their schools and classrooms. Consider and generate creative suggestions, such as strengthening home-school connections, fostering positive cultural identification, and building on community and family funds of knowledge for instructional planning. Access a Padlet for sharing resources with each other that will remain accessible for one month following the conference.

Strong Schools, Strong Communities, Strong Collaboratives

Presenters: Kim Kaukl, Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance; Kirk Banghart, Generation Schools Network; Jon Andes, Eastern Shore of Maryland Education Collaborative; Pam Doyen, Western Maine Education Collaborative; RSU 56 superintendents

Room: Riverview 1

Learn how to launch, build, and sustain a multi-district education collaborative to address critical current challenges for more productively and equitably on the path to rural prosperity. Topics of discussion will include educator workforce, student disengagement, and school to work transitions.

Creating Teacher-Talent Pathways to Schools in Rural West Texas

Presenters: Doug Hamman, Donna Brasher, and Shawn Mason, Texas Tech University; Larry Daniel, University of Texas Permian Basin

Room: Riverview 2

Dire warnings of teacher shortages are coming true in schools and systems across the United States. For rural schools in Texas, shortages have been the norm for decades. The West Texas Rural Education Partnership (WTREP) created an inter-organizational system with four universities, seven community colleges and more than 40 rural school districts in West Texas to provide a pathway for teacher talent into rural districts. Hear about the successes of WTREP, review essential strategies for delivering educator preparation in and for rural schools, and discuss the challenges that remain.

The Peace Tree Project: A New Unity, Growing Together

Presenters: Nels Huse, Menominee Tribal Enterprises; Brad Larrabee, Maple Northwestern & Iron River Schools; Jessica Marchant, Southern Door Schools; Linzi Gronning, De Soto Schools

Room: Riverview 3

Hear from the Menominee Tribal Leader and representatives from some of the schools that participated in the Peace Tree Project—a collaboration between the Menominee Tribal Enterprises and Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Schools. A number of WiRSA schools around the state held ceremonies involving students, staff, community members, and members from the Menominee Tribe where a tree was planted to serve as a representation to treat the surrounding environment better and to encourage citizens to pick up after themselves and help the environment. Right now, America is in turmoil and there seems to be fighting between everyone, over anything. The Peace Tree will be a call for peace and unity of all Americans.

The Promise of Curriculum: Designing Equitable Learning for Rural Students

Presenters: Michelle Ring-Hanson, Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7; Lance Grishaber, Denmark School District

Room: Meeting Room B1

Rural districts continue to seek ways to connect students with rigorous, relevant, and equitable curriculum that promotes learning and achievement. The Denmark School District partnered with Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7 (CESA 7) to design a curriculum development system that focuses on best practices in teaching and learning while addressing the unique needs of our rural district. Presenters will share their experiences in designing a model that embraces commitments to universal instruction and focuses on the shift from learning by chance to learning by design. Using a systems-approach to curriculum honors our promise to provide the highest level of educational programming that ensures student success within school and beyond.

Building New Teacher Pipelines: Lessons Learned from Two Rural-Serving Universities

Presenters: Boyce Williams and Annika Many, Frostburg State University; Susan Hester and Sara Reynolds, University of West Alabama

Room: Meeting Room B2

Frostburg State University and the University of West Alabama recently launched teacher residency programs targeting rural districts in Maryland and Alabama. These programs seek to create a new teacher pipeline and develop teacher leaders. Hear from panelists about how they created their teacher residency programs in partnership with rural district partners and their many lessons learned from the first three years of implementation. Panelists will discuss how they built their leadership teams, characteristics of strong residency programs, the types of support provided, and how they have prepared for and addressed uniquely rural issues.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:30-11:55 A.M.

Reading and Writing Place: Connecting Schools and Communities

Presenters: Erika L. Bass, University of Northern Iowa; Amy Price Azano, Virginia Tech

Room: Ballroom A1

Explore findings from a study focused on nonfiction/memoir writing with two rural schools in two states—one in rural Appalachia and one in the rural Midwest. Discuss findings on how students connected to place through memoir writing and how place affects students' life stories. Discuss implications for teachers who wish to implement a place-infused curriculum.

Rural Renewal: Math Teachers Developing Practice Through Shared Classroom Videos

Presenter: Abe Wallin, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

Room: Ballroom A2

Teaching at the secondary level in rural areas means that teachers wear many hats and there is limited overlap between course responsibilities. This fact can lead to professional isolation. Video clubs hold the key to helping rural teachers examine practice and find common ground to improve instruction system-wide. Learn more a year-long study where a secondary math team engaged in multiple video clubs focused on improving student engagement in all courses. Hear more about findings and strategies for running your own video club.

Beyond Practicums: Undergraduate Research Experiences as Pathways to Rural Realities

Presenters: Kathleen Gillon, Catharine Biddle, and Eklou Amendah, University of Southern Maine

Room: Ballroom A3

Increasing attention has been given to pre-service practicum experiences in rural communities to introduce teacher candidates to rural school realities and the unique assets of rural communities. However, without thoughtful design, they may end up reinforcing stereotypes or deficit views of rurality as students are primarily exposed to rural schools as organizations rather than embedded in communities. This study explores rural research experiences as another way for undergraduates to engage with rural places and people that promotes understanding of and meaningful connection with the assets and people that make rural communities great places to live and work.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 12:05-12:30 P.M.

A Rural Book Study with Rural Teachers: Impacts on Conceptions on Rural Teaching

Presenters: Erika L. Bass, University of Northern Iowa; Anthony “Skip” Olson, Manson-NW Schools

Room: Ballroom A1

Discover findings from research conducted with teachers in a rural school in Iowa. Teachers participated in a rural book study, met once per week, and discussed the reading. Findings related to retaining and recruiting high-quality teachers and how understanding ruralities can affect teaching decisions will be presented.

Cultivating Pathways for Rural Women in STEM Careers

Presenters: Abe Wallin, Jesse Mossholder, and Uzeyir Ogurlu, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

Room: Ballroom A2

Demand for STEM-qualified workers continues to grow at unprecedented rates and new technologies have expanded these opportunities to rural communities. The underrepresentation of women in STEM has long been documented, but not completely addressed. Failing to act now means another generation of young, rural women may miss out on an opportunity to support themselves and their communities. This study examines how embedding social and emotional learning (SEL) pedagogy into STEM content impacts the confidence of middle school girls from rural contexts. This presentation offers findings and best practices learned from this study.

Rhetoric or Change? Rural College Student Success and State Policy

Presenters: Darris Means and Jenay Willis, University of Pittsburgh; Bryson Henriott, University of Georgia

Room: Ballroom A3

Using a participatory approach, learn how organizations are studying how state policy and context shape rural college student success. For this study, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina serve as cases. Data have been collected and analyzed from each state via legislative records and newspaper articles. Reflecting a participatory approach, the team plans to produce research-based products that can be used to address the challenges identified in the study (e.g., op-eds, policy reports).

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20**60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 2:15-3:15 P.M.**

Grow Your Own: Are You Really, Though?**Presenter:** Leah Luke, Educators Rising-Wisconsin**Room:** Grand Ballroom A

While superintendents, principals, and HR professionals scramble to fill teaching vacancies through 101 creative means, future teachers patiently sit in high school classrooms waiting to be noticed. If your high schools are not yet supporting these future teachers, come learn how one rural Wisconsin teacher developed partnerships with various stakeholder groups to bring Educators Rising to the state. Strengthening the high school-to-educator prep program pipeline is a critical component of addressing the teacher shortage—and one that deserves much more attention. Engage in a discussion about how you are supporting rising educators in your high schools.

Governing for Excellence in Rural Schools**Presenters:** Ben Niehaus, Patti Vickman, and Cheryl Gullicksrud, Wisconsin Association of School Boards**Room:** Grand Ballroom B

How well rural leadership teams carry out their governance responsibilities often determines the quality of the education that children receive. With schools serving as the “heart” of rural communities, leadership teams are in a unique position to ensure their partnerships with the community have the common focus of educating ALL children. Explore what the research says about how high-quality board governance impacts student opportunities and achievement, and the importance of communicating effectively with school-community stakeholders. Best practices, which have enabled rural boards and superintendents to become highly effective decision makers and leaders will also be shared.

Expecting Excellence. (No, I’m Serious) Expect. Excellence.**Presenter:** Brandi Varnell, RN Health Science Instructor, Sultan High School**Room:** Grand Ballroom C

Join a rural high school teacher and 2019-2020 NREA Rural Teacher of the Year for a lively and thought-provoking session on strengthening personal connections, while inspiring and challenging rural high school students to engage and achieve high levels of academic and personal success. Hear about stories of success (and failure) in providing a rigorous curriculum while stepping outside the norms in the rural high school classroom. Discover valuable lessons and strategies and hear the voices of her students, both past and present, as they speak about the value of their rural high school experience.

Supporting Rural Teacher Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention—REL Midwest**Presenters:** Daniel Frederking, Natalya Gnedko-Berry, and Laura Checovich, American Institutes for Research**Room:** Grand Ballroom F

For the past five years, the Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Midwest convened a research alliance with the goal of improving teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention within Michigan and beyond. Explore the research and resources that REL Midwest generated in this realm, including reports, videos, documentaries, strategic planning resources, and more. These resources will be introduced to inform rural educators’ efforts to better understand and act upon the issues they face as they work to address teacher vacancies.

Our Shared Humanity: Multicultural Story in the Rural ELA Classroom

Presenter: Erik Borne, Hinckley-Big Rock High School

Room: Grand Ballroom G

Reflect on whose stories are showcased and shared in your curriculum and whether these represent the current culture in and out of students' communities. Ideas for inspiring students to critically think about identity, diverse voices, how texts (multimedia) provide mirrors in which they see themselves and sliding glass doors to understand worlds outside theirs will be shared. Leave with engaging multicultural text titles, learn strategies to immerse students in these stories, and hear student testimonials about why this is so important in the rural ELA classroom—because if not here, where? If not now, when?

Collaborating Toward Innovative Alternatives to Rural School Consolidation

Presenter: Jessi Riel, Auburn University

Room: Grand Ballroom H

Driven by industrial models, consolidation has been historically used as a panacea whenever rural schools experience declining enrollment and financial distress. For decades, researchers touted the benefits consolidation would bring districts. However, recent research has shown that students may or may not experience academic and social benefits, and communities often experience extremely negative social and economic effects. Explore the range of impacts associated with rural school consolidation, the inappropriateness of an industrial model for education in the 21st century, and the necessity of generating innovative solutions to the issues rural schools face.

Soaring Our Way with STEAM: A PreK-12 Experience

Presenters: Jessica Meacham, Brenda Shimon, and Chris Peterson, Southern Door County School District

Room: Riverview 1

Discover PreK-12 experiences which foster skill development for new and innovative career pathways for students and empower adults in rural communities. Examples of hands-on, relevant project-based learning which foster 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity will be highlighted. Ideas for community engagement, school business partnerships, and grant writing will show how the district garnered necessary resources to establish elementary, middle, and high school Fab Labs. Learn how networking, curriculum writing, and professional development play a key role in the district's success.

A Rural School-University Collaboration: Partnering for Rural Education Development

Presenters: Nicole Miller, Devon Brenner, Amanda Tullos, Kathleen Alley, and Kim Smith, Mississippi State University

Room: Riverview 2

The Partnership School is a unique university-school district level partnership. Partnership School is a public middle school serving 6th and 7th grade students, physically located on the campus of Mississippi State University, but wholly operated by the Starkville Oktibbeha School District. Learn how a university has navigated the development of a partnership with the rural district and hear what they are planning for the future to partner for rural education development.

Learning Big From Little: How Small Rural Schools Transform Learning

Presenters: Robert Mitchell, Campo School District/University of Colorado-Colorado Springs; Nikki Johnson, Campo School District, Abby Pettinger, Vilas School District; Kristi McCann, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs

Room: Riverview 3

Examine the unique approaches small schools (with less than 100 students PK-12) take to provide outstanding learning opportunities for students. Leaders from two of Colorado's smallest school districts will provide insight into their approaches and generate new ideas for educators and leaders from larger rural environments. Focusing on individual students, community connections, and statewide resources are essential components of outstanding schools.

Growing Corn to Pay for College and Reduce Student-Loan Debt

Presenters: Wade Callaway and Kimberly Conyers, Gruver ISD, Derik Grotegut, Ag Partners, LLC/GISD School Board; Chad Logsdon, Logsdon Farms; Matt Messer, Gruver ISD Board; Kimberly Irwin, HS Business/Technology Teacher/Farm Scholarship Program Coordinator

Room: Meeting Room B1

Volunteers in and around Gruver, Texas, a small rural community in the North-Central Texas panhandle, have raised millions of dollars for the graduates and employees of Gruver ISD through its innovative Gruver Farm Scholarship Program. The money is generated annually by planting, growing, harvesting, storing, and selling a corn crop on irrigated land the district owns. Roughly \$500,000 per year is raised and then given to graduates of Gruver High School, as well as employees of GISD, so they can pursue the careers they wish (college, trade school, etc.).

Leading Rural: Is Anybody Listening?

Presenters: Sarah Grubb, Indiana University Kokomo; Michelle Rasheed, University of South Carolina - Aiken; Kristin Brown, Lyford CISD (TX); Mark Scott, North Greene Unit District #3 (IL)

Room: Meeting Room B2

In light of our role as the committee focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and knowing that school superintendents as practitioners have met many challenges over the course of the past two years, this listening session will inform not only the NREA EDIT team's charge, but all session participants about how sitting rural superintendents characterize the important equity work that needs to be done moving forward post-pandemic.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 2:15-2:40 P.M.

Preparing Teachers of Emergent Bilinguals in a Rural Midwestern Community

Presenters: Aliza Fones and Erika L. Bass, University of Northern Iowa

Room: Ballroom A1

Discuss and share collaborative research conducted as part of a week-long, place-based, rural field experience with pre-service English language learner teachers in a linguistically diverse community. Explore findings constructed from student journals and group reflections, related to pre-service teachers' conceptualizing of what it means to be a teacher of emergent bilinguals in a rural setting. Engage with and discuss how to partner with rural schools, teacher preparation programs, and community organizations to help prepare future teachers for teaching in linguistically diverse, rural settings.

Effects of CTE on Rural School Academic Success

Presenters: William White and Reenay Rogers, University of West Alabama

Room: Ballroom A2

The purpose of this study is to examine the difference between rural Career and Technical Education (CTE) students and non-career and technical students relative to college/career readiness and graduation rates in rural schools, including how the demographic factors, gender, and race, affect them. Over the years, CTE has evolved, offering an assortment of hands-on training programs designed to mimic the needs of a growing global society through workplace simulation, making learning relevant in rural schools. Students enrolled in CTE are more likely to graduate high school with the skills needed to meet business and industry's high-wage, high-demand workforce needs.

Rethinking Rural Reform: How Short-Term Solutions Ignore Causations

Presenters: Darrin Ross and Rebekah Buchanan, Western Illinois University

Room: Ballroom A3

Rural reform measures often involve stimulating private business growth or establishing competitive grant programs in the hopes of revitalizing communities. However, as population levels continue to decrease along with vital socioeconomic necessities, it seems unlikely that these issues will disappear with such short-term solutions. 'Band-aid' level programs and legislations do little to address the macro-level concerns of rural communities and schools. This research aims to critique the popular approach to rural reform. Instead, we suggest measures that directly address the impacts that capitalism, corporatization of agriculture, and federal and state funding have on rural communities and schools.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 2:50-3:15 P.M.

Language Program Leadership Development in Rural School Districts

Presenter: Jen Daniels, WIDA-Wisconsin Center for Education Research

Room: Ballroom A1

Learn how language program leaders interpreted policy into practice in eight very different rural school districts and notice how certain types of leadership and leadership strategies aligned with academic success for multilingual learners. The analytical framework proposed by this grounded theory study supports needs assessment and strategic planning within rural school districts to maximize resources and build teacher leadership. Participants will have opportunity to consider ways to adjust support for effective leadership of programs for multilingual learners within existing resources and structures in ways that best fit their local contexts.

Rural Student Perceptions of Career Technical Education for a Better Future

Presenters: Marlon Murray and Reenay Rogers, University of West Alabama

Room: Ballroom A2

Career Technical Education is an avenue for “raising rural” by building equity in people, reinforcing the concept of self-determination, and providing opportunities for all to advance their position in life. Join this session to learn about rural students’ perceptions of CTE.

The Relationship Between Land Conservation and Publicly Funded School Budgets In Vermont Towns

Presenter: Jackson Watts, Hanover High School

Room: Ballroom A3

Land conservation has many benefits related to preserving natural spaces and hedging against atmospheric carbon and potential global warming. However, the erosion of the tax base poses potential challenges for the rural schools in areas with conserved land. Learn about work that revealed no clear relationship between per pupil spending and amount of conserved land. Examine the effect of land conservation on schools in rural Vermont.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 3:30-4:30 P.M.

Rural Innovation: Perspectives from the U.S. Department of Education

Presenters: Alice Kinney, Staci Cummins and Leslie Poynter, Rural Education Achievement Program, U.S. Department of Education; Carter Volz, Education Innovation and Research, U.S. Department of Education

Room: Grand Ballroom A

The U.S. Department of Education's Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) and Education Innovation and Research program (EIR) will share their overlapping perspectives and opportunities for rural grant applicants. REAP and EIR will discuss how educational stakeholders at federal, state, and local levels can leverage program funding to support new and innovative educational practices; sustain, replicate, and scale existing, evidence-based practices; and build the evidence base on effective educational practices to improve rural achievement. REAP and EIR will also share grantee perspectives, including non-profit organizations, LEAs, and SEAs who pioneer creative and research-supported solutions to the challenges rural communities face.

The Junior Field Study - A Bridge from Urban to Rural Classrooms

Presenters: Dave Dallas, Tara Gekas, Rae Ette Newman, Angela Vossenkuhl, and an EOU Junior Field Experience Student, Eastern Oregon University

Room: Grand Ballroom B

The Junior Field Study program in Eastern Oregon's College of Education provides students from our urban satellite program in Gresham a unique opportunity to observe and experience multiple rural classrooms over a two-week period in May. Selected students conduct interviews, reflect on observations, and learn about the opportunities to teach in a rural location away from the metro Portland area. Students are based in one of six rural locations and, through grant initiative and funding, are allowed to participate in this program without any out-of-pocket costs.

Online Learning in Rural Schools—Voices from the Field

Presenters: Jason Schmidt, Wisconsin Virtual School/CESA 9; Sami Mantyla, Wisconsin eSchool Network; Janice Mertes, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Room: Grand Ballroom C

Unprecedented access to quality online learning has led to more opportunities for rural students to access content that may not be available locally. Facilitated by members of the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative, this panel discussion will highlight successful rural programs which incorporate high-quality online learning into their offerings to provide students with options that meet the specific needs of their communities.

Creative Partnerships to Fill the Gaps in Rural Districts

Presenter: Jill Woerner, AFS-USA

Room: Grand Ballroom F

What are the gaps in your rural school environment? Do you need more of any of the following: diversity, enrollment, global preparedness for students, intriguing professional development, or direct access to classrooms abroad? See how your rural community can help you access all of these without a financial investment. Non-profit and university partnerships can bring these to you in one package..

The Top Five Ways to Bring Rural Life into Your Curriculum

Presenter: Karen Beerer, Discovery Education

Room: Grand Ballroom G

Learn about free resources you can use to bring rural life into your curriculum. Take students on virtual field trips to dairy farms or engage them in STEM activities focused on “glocal” sustainability problems. Learn how to provide your students the opportunity to explore rural careers that will help them think about the problems they want to solve as they get older. Discuss how rural educators have used these resources and embedded them into their standards-aligned curriculum. You will walk away with resources and strategies you can use tomorrow.

Growing a Rural Teacher Workforce 1 Para at a Time

Presenters: Margaret Buckton, Rural School Advocates of Iowa; Kristopher Byam, Iowa Department of Workforce Development; Kimberly Lingenfelter, Cherokee Community School District

Room: Grand Ballroom H

Iowa’s Governor Reynolds announced last January the state’s Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program to grow the teacher workforce two ways: 1. high schoolers become paraprofessionals while in school, earning and learning along the way to a credential, and 2. existing paraprofessionals combine on-the-job experience, university study and support to obtain a teacher’s degree. Rural School Advocates of Iowa created a consortium of smaller, rural high schools who individually lacked the requisite minimum number of students to participate in the teacher-prep program, to allow Western Governors University, to provide competency-based, online college coursework, mentoring and on-the-job experience at their rural schools.

The Words Between Us: Racial Fluency in Rural Classrooms

Presenters: Alys Dickerson and David Daniel, American Players Theatre

Room: Riverview 1

Teachers from local districts in rural Wisconsin started turning to American Players Theatre (APT) looking for help in discussing race in their schools. In response to this demand, APT developed The Words Between Us, a residency program that uses literature to develop racial fluency in rural Wisconsin classrooms. In this session, led by a team of teaching artists, participants will engage in new ideas, techniques, and exercises designed to help foster discussions about race in their classrooms.

Black Leadership in White Rural Schools

Presenter: Jamon Flowers, University of Georgia

Room: Riverview 2

Research that examines African American principals’ experiences and practices beyond an urban school context is limited. Learn how 12 African American rural principals described, perceived, and interpreted their experiences of leading predominantly White schools and developed a framework that includes place-based and culturally responsive tenets for transformative leadership in rural school settings. This research challenges educators and policymakers in two ways to: 1. shift from a sole urban perspective, and 2. consider how race and context continue to inform African American principals’ experiences, meaning-making, and opportunities.

Leading Through Service: Increasing Influence without Lobbying

Presenter: Ryan Cantrell, Idaho Rural Education Association

Room: Riverview 3

As an affiliate who is prohibited from lobbying by state statute, the Idaho Rural Education Association (IREA) builds positive relationships throughout our state by means of service-oriented partnerships. Positive relationships encourage school administrators and local legislators to seek input when educating themselves on topics of concern related to rural Idaho education. See how the IREA builds influence and develops community trust through a service mindset.

Good News. Bad News. Effectively Managing School District Finances in a Rising Interest Rate Environment.

Presenters: Tami Olszewski, Jerry Dudzik and Jeff Seeley, Ehlers

Room: Meeting Room B1

Amid ongoing reports of inflation, economic instability, and Federal Fund interest rate increases, are you concerned about the financial stability of your school district? Fear not! While these factors deliver good news and bad news from a financial management perspective, there are a number of best practices school districts can leverage to maintain stability and drive planned initiatives forward. Explore the impact rising interest rates have on planned capital projects, banking and investing practices, and financial management strategies—and learn how you can to use current market conditions to your district's advantage! This is a perfect session for superintendents, business officials, finance directors and staff, or board members.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 3:30-3:55 P.M.

Lessons learned from creating K-8 computing pathways in KY Appalachia

Presenters: Emi Iwatani, Quinn Burke and Pati Ruiz, Digital Promise; Traci Tackett, Bit Source; Aileen Owens, ThroughlinesEdu

Room: Ballroom A1

This paper reports on a three-year (2019-22) research practice partnership (RPP) between East Kentucky's Floyd County Schools and Pikeville Independent School District with local start-up Bit Source, national non-profit Digital Promise and Pittsburgh's South Fayette Township School District. The RPP collaborated to create a vertically-aligned K-8 course-of-study (or "pathway") in computational thinking. These districts in Eastern KY share urgency, hope, and vision that computing education could vitally support economic redevelopment in Appalachia. The paper reports the formation and evolution of the RPP, the resulting pathways after three years, and implications for other rural districts looking to create computing pathways.

Check Yes or No: Predicting Referendum Outcomes

Presenter: Rob DeMeuse, School Perceptions

Room: Ballroom A2

Does winning a football championship improve the chances a referendum will pass? Explore myths about whether your local voters will approve a tax hike to fund their schools. Learn how frequent and substantial referendums are, understand which factors actually affect referendum outcomes, and examine communities that did not vote the way one would have expected.

Tearing Down the School Walls: Critical Place-Conscious Leadership in Rural Appalachia

Presenters: Erin McHenry-Sorber and Ashley Leggett-Bradley, West Virginia University; Daniella Hall Sutherland, Clemson University

Room: Ballroom A3

In this exemplar case study, learn about the successful critical place-conscious leadership practices of a rural Appalachian elementary principal. The principal's success is attributed to the establishment of trust with individual families and redistribution of power between the school and community members. In this power realignment, the principal positions community members, regardless of their status within existing power structures, as experts whose work is critical to the success of the school. In turn, the principal has garnered widespread community buy-in to respond to greater spatial inequities. This iterative cycle has, over time, created a community fiercely committed to the school's success.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 4:05-4:30 P.M.

Student Achievement in Rural America

Presenter: Douglas Gagnon, SRI Education

Room: Ballroom A1

Explore the achievement landscape across the U.S. between rural and non-rural places, and within rural places. Engage in a short discussion of historical and cultural contexts that relate to achievement across place. Discover important achievement patterns in two grade-subject combinations (4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) across locale, region, income, and race/ethnicity. Important trends over time and disparities are documented. Engage in a discussion of the three most salient findings and their implications.

Accessible Education and the Mindsets of Rural Communities

Presenter: Emily Norman, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point EdD Program

Room: Ballroom A2

Rural schools, particularly in the Midwestern region of the United States, are experiencing closures and consolidations. Simultaneously, rural cultures are seeming to experience a shift away from placing importance on public education in their communities. This study explores potential relationships between the cultural perceptions (mindsets) of public education and the access (perceived and distance related) to public education in rural, Midwestern areas. The study aims to find if there is an impact on cultural importance of education via the level of accessibility to education.

Rurally Responsive Place-Based Teacher Education Program: A Sequential Evaluation

Presenters: Douglas Adams and Edina Haslauer, University of Wisconsin Platteville

Room: Ballroom A3

As teacher educators guided by the Wisconsin Idea in the state, there is a belief in the responsibility to attend to the diverse needs of rural communities. In the research we ask, "How can our School of Education train teachers who, through an engagement with a rurally responsive place-based pedagogy, help to provide access to high-quality educational opportunities throughout Wisconsin's disparate rural communities?" Learn more about the initial data collection of a longitudinal study that assesses the effectiveness of the recently implemented rurally responsive place-based curriculum.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:00-11:00 A.M.

What's Your Story? Communicate Compelling Stories to Galvanize Rural Communities

Presenters: John White, JLW Communications, LLC; Stuart Packard, Small School Districts Association of California

Room: Grand Ballroom A

The former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach at the U.S. Department of Education joins the Superintendent of Buttonwillow Union School District (CA) to engage educators and partners in a discussion about using storytelling to drive progress and increase support for rural school districts. Learn strategies for communicating in ways that instill community pride and move people to action. Rural schools can do more than simply keep families informed. Leave with intentional, effective, and consistent storytelling strategies to increase agency among students and families, attract partners, and support positive social impacts in rural communities.

Zero Barrier Partnerships for Rural Pathways to Prosperity

Presenters: Brad Mitchell, Independent Consultant; Kirk Banghart, Generation Schools Network; Glen Lineberry, Arizona Student Opportunity Collaborative

Room: Grand Ballroom B

Learn about zero barrier solutions to help students build and mobilize social capital and get access to the high school courses they need to realize their postsecondary aspirations. This workshop will be guided by leaders from the Colorado Rural Education Collaborative (CREC) and the Arizona Student Opportunity Collaborative (AzSOC). The CREC will share its work on toolkits and dashboards students and schools can use to develop social capital. The AzSOC is a cost neutral solution for rural school districts to provide every student access to every course needed for successful postsecondary matriculation and career entry. Together, they are working on shared zero barrier solutions to college and career pathways for rural youth.

Building Your Political Toolkit: Innovative Rural Leadership Practices to Navigate Education Politics

Presenters: Daniella Sutherland, Clemson University; Jennifer Seelig, NORC at University of Chicago; Erin McHenry-Sorber, West Virginia University

Room: Grand Ballroom C

It is essential for rural education leaders to navigate increasingly politicized school environments in order to provide an equitable education for their students and a respectful work environment for their staff. Education draws upon cultural values and economic hopes for future generations, making it inherently political. Acknowledging this challenging environment allows for a focus on developing political engagement toolkits for rural school leaders. In this structured workshop, participants will learn promising, innovative practices school leaders are using to develop alliances with state agencies, regional/local organizations, and community members and apply these strategies to their own local contexts.

Connecting K-12 Students to High-Demand Careers through Socially-Inspired Activities

Presenters: Jared Bigam, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Amy Baldwin, Oakbrook Middle School; Patrick Hawke, Kuna Middle School; James Wilson, Lincoln Junior High School

Room: Grand Ballroom F

All students deserve robust STEM/CS/CTE experiences allowing them to explore the connections between academics and high-demand, high-wage 21st century careers. Learn how rural schools across the country are successfully integrating two unique career exploration programs, Career Blade (K-12) and Learning Blade (5-9) into the school day, providing equitable access to STEM/CS/CTE learning experiences. Learn how districts are using career lessons connected to solving important social issues to build student interest.

Partnering with Purpose: Building a Teacher Pipeline and Supporting Indigenous Students

Presenters: Rick Ericson, Bayfield School District, Edina Haslauer, University of Wisconsin Platteville School of Education

Room: Grand Ballroom G

As the University of Wisconsin Platteville's School of Education works to develop culturally responsive teachers, especially as it relates to Act 31 (requirement of pre-service teachers to understand the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin's 11 federally recognized tribes), the School District of Bayfield is working to recruit certified teachers who are representative of the student demographics, as well as familiarizing and connecting non-Native teachers with the culture of its majority Anishinaabe students. Receive background information about Act 31 legislation, as well as a timeline of the partnership; highlighting its inception, implementation, and expansion.

Why Does Equity Matter Here?

Presenters: Kent Smith and Milaney Levenson, CESA 10: CORE Service

Room: Grand Ballroom H

Is your community concerned about CRT, race, or equity? Despite being framed as an urban issue, systemic inequities are also evident in rural settings. Equity work has recently come into question, frequently without a deep understanding of the purpose. Successful equity work ensures that ALL students feel safe and connected to their school. This is best accomplished with in-depth data review, authentic stakeholder input, and documented action steps. Learn about a model for equity action in systems, useful activities to begin the process, and hear about the story of this work in a district.

Supporting Students Experiencing Trauma: Handle With Care in Your Community

Presenters: Hannah Kelly, Douglas Gagnon, and Victoria Schaefer, SRI International; Andrea Darr, West Virginia Center for Children's Justice

Room: Riverview 1

Educators across the country need resources to help them support students experiencing trauma, as challenges like the pandemic, racial injustice, economic downturns, and the opioid crisis, among other things, have presented students with an unprecedented set of circumstances that few other generations in history have had to deal with simultaneously. Learn how to bring the community together to support students using the freely available Handle With Care (HWC) program, which connects first responder agencies, such as law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services, and schools. Presenters share tips on how to leverage the strengths of rural communities and encourage schools to sustain efforts toward supporting students experiencing trauma.

Multigenerational "Peptocs:" Creative Exercises for Mitigating Teacher and Student Burnout

Presenters: Laurie Allen and Valerie Rutledge, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Room: Riverview 3

Inspired by the "Peptoc Hotline" created by West Side Elementary School in Healdsburg, California, this session explores an adaptation of this public art project through audio-recorded mantras and letters written from a variety of perspectives and characters. Explore examples from a rural high school and a kindergarten class and discover what happened when this activity became a part of staff development. Each activity was completed and shared between students and teachers, generating encouraging responses across multiple generations navigating trying times together.

Going Rural in Georgia: The Founding of a 2022 Movement

Presenters: Gary Wenzel, Bronwyn Ragain-Martin, Kermit Gilliard, and April Aldridge, Georgia Department of Education

Room: Meeting Room B1

The Office of Rural Education and Innovation (REI) sprang from seeds planted by Georgia's School Superintendent Richard Woods and Georgia Department of Education's Chief of Staff Matt Jones, whose roots were in rural Georgia. Early County Schools Superintendent Dr. Bronwyn Ragan-Martin, located in the remote southwestern region of the state, was hired to lead the new movement as Deputy Superintendent. Grady County Schools Superintendent Dr. Kermit Gilliard and Decatur County Schools Curriculum Director and Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instruction Supervisors President Dr. April Aldridge soon joined, as did Dr. Gary C. Wenzel, with more than twenty years of experience at the Georgia Department of Education in School Improvement. The REI Team will trace the inspiration and development of the movement to the present day, as well as initiatives in the areas of teacher recruitment and retention, instruction, technology, and partnerships.

Improving School Facilities in Rural Localities: Zip Code Shouldn't Matter

Presenters: Keith Perrigan and Pete Gretz, Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of VA

Room: Meeting Room B2

Rural Virginia, like other rural localities in America, is suffering a school facility crisis. Virginia has over \$25 Billion in recognized need related to our aging school buildings. The state has not provided any financial assistance for school infrastructure since 2009 and has used the state fund set aside for school construction to support the teacher retirement fund. Through collaboration, advocacy, and innovation, a coalition has worked with the General Assembly to restore school construction funding to the state budget for the first time in over a decade. Explore the creative and collaborative approach that included press conferences, op-eds, a statewide Crumbling Schools Tour, and bipartisan partnerships that led to our successful advocacy.

Strategies to Support Students and Educators Experiencing Trauma

Presenters: Hannah Cheever and Nancy Perez, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia/SRI International

Room: Meeting Room B3

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia staff will share resources and strategies to help educators, school administrators, district and state leaders, and relevant community organization representatives support students and educators experiencing trauma, including trauma associated with COVID-19, social and racial injustice, and natural disasters. Learn about available resources, participate in an interactive group discussion, and leave the session ready to identify and implement evidence-based strategies to promote inclusive and equitable delivery of trauma-informed services and supports. Implementing these strategies can increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for all students and educators.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10-10:25 A.M.**

All Hands on Deck? Superintendent Resource Utilization During Crisis Schooling**Presenters:** Maria Frankland and Catharine Biddle, University of Maine**Room:** Ballroom A1

Discuss superintendent decision making around mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) during the crisis schooling period associated with school building closure in spring 2020. Because superintendents typically are not proficient in these domains, district-employed school counselors may have been able to provide the expertise needed to better understand the issues and support students and families. Data show that school counselor involvement was lowest where it was needed most—in rural school districts. This points toward inequitable opportunities for rural students to obtain the mental health and SEL support they needed during crisis schooling.

Competition and Organizational Climate in Rural Schools: A Case Study**Presenters:** Heather Olson Beal, Stephen F. Austin State University; Charisse Gulosino, University of Memphis; Susie Cox, University of Louisiana-Monroe; Brent D. Beal, The University of Texas at Tyler**Room:** Ballroom A2

Explore findings from a case study that explores the relationship between teachers' perception of the competitiveness of their school and organizational (workplace) climate. The primary research question is: Do schools in rural areas improve their organizational climate when faced with competition for students? Study findings are valuable for policymakers as they determine the extent and form competition for students will take in the future.

Rural States' Use of Federal Government Terminology Related to Federal Student Aid and Postsecondary Accreditation: A Toolkit**Presenter:** Valerie Lefor, University of North Dakota**Room:** Ballroom A3

The nature of understanding both federal financial aid and accreditation processes may be complex. Both approaches involve complicated terminology that is not easily understood. In the United States, state governments have responsibility for education oversight, but their work is informed by the federal government. It is essential for students to understand federal aid and accreditation, especially for those who wish to consider options following high school that may lead to a college pathway. This presentation will explain how 43 high school websites were reviewed for information regarding federal student aid and postsecondary accreditation information and the resulting Rural Educator's Toolkit that provides useful information on federal student aid, postsecondary accreditation, and preparing for college.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:35-11 A.M.

COVID-19's Impact on Leadership for Educational Equity in Rural Pennsylvania School Districts

Presenter: Annie Maselli, Penn State

Room: Ballroom A1

Using a mixed methods approach combining state-level data, interviews with district leadership, and case study analysis, this research examines how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational equity and district responses along fiscal, spatial, instructional, and racial/ethnic lines across rural Pennsylvania school districts.

Finding Rural Solutions: Suggestions from Rural Alabama Educators

Presenters: Annah Rogers, Reenay Rogers, and Jan Miller, The University of West Alabama

Room: Ballroom A2

Discover findings from a study that focuses on the ways in which public policies impact rural schools in unique ways. After discussing the ways in which policies affect rural teachers and their students, presenters will make suggestions for policy improvement at the federal, state, and local levels. Findings are driven by conversations with and surveys of teachers from rural Alabama communities.

Education for a Good Life: Geographic Distributions of Dual Enrollment Opportunity in Rural America's Two-year Public Postsecondary Institutions

Presenters: Jerry Johnson, East Carolina University; Hobart Harmon, Kansas State University

Room: Ballroom A3

Two decades of growth in dual enrollment, also accelerated during the COVID pandemic, demands attention to equal opportunities available in rural areas. Hear how presenters use the IPEDS database to explore geographic equity of dual enrollment availability offered by two-year public postsecondary institutions in rural America. Shifts in economies and demographic changes across rural America present substantial equity challenges. In this study, presenters seek to provide a first description of the extent to which dual enrollment offerings in two-year public postsecondary institutions vary in different rural locales, in designated economic regions, and by race enrollment.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:15 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

Educating Rural Students in a State Focused Urban System

Presenters: Stuart Packard, Small School Districts Association of California/Buttonwillow Union School District

Room: Grand Ballroom A

Learn the story of how a small rural school became recognized by its state department of education for meeting the needs of its community, even though those expectations had been established and designed with urban schools in mind. The programs and experiences that have earned respect will be shared.

Redefining Ready: A Diploma by Design

Presenter: Colleen Timms, CESA 7

Room: Grand Ballroom B

Rural schools have a proven track record of nimbly redefining the delivery of education in America's schools. Now is the time to implement innovative measures to fully leverage opportunities for the further advancement of student outcomes and to tell the compelling story of innovation and success. Learn more about the research-based metrics that are changing the landscape of education and unlocking the potential of educators and students alike.

Addressing Rural School Staff Shortage by Thinking Outside the Box

Presenters: Doug Parker, Big Foot Union High School; Jim Brewer, Clinton Community School District

Room: Grand Ballroom C

The shortage of teachers, support staff, and administrators has created turmoil in schools across America. Thinking outside the box can help districts develop talent, as well as recruit staff with multiple certifications. Maybe the best solution is to hire an independent contractor? This session will provide examples of what we have done to address hard to fill positions and look to the future every day.

Exploring Rural Communities with PBS Learning Media

Presenters: Jami Hoekstra Collins and Michael Hartwell, PBS Wisconsin; David O'Connor, Education Consultant American Indian Studies Program and Wisconsin DPI

Room: Grand Ballroom F

Environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous rural communities are featured in PBS Learning Media: Wisconsin First Nations-The Ways and Molly of Denali and. Learn more about these enriching bilingual resources that offer learners opportunities to develop media literacy skills and discern informational text. This multi-media collection explores the perspectives of historical and contemporary tribal members of Wisconsin's First Nations, as well as indigenous Alaskan people in Molly of Denali to recognize similarities and differences regarding rural communities in a shared pursuit of learning.

Global Readiness in Indiana Towns (GRIT)

Presenters: Jeremy Eltz, Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning; Jill Woerner, AFS Intercultural Exchange

Room: Grand Ballroom G

Global Readiness in Indiana Towns (GRIT) is a unique collaboration between Indiana University, the University of Indianapolis, and AFS-Intercultural Exchange to increase the global readiness of rural schools. This program prepares and develops school staff, students, and communities to accept foreign exchange students. Embracing cultural differences and global thinking helps build an inclusive environment and prepares students for the diverse workforce they will likely experience in the future. Learn how to prepare your students for a global economy, increase your Average Daily Membership (ADM), access free, high-quality professional development for your faculty, engage various community stakeholders, and bring cultural and linguistic diversity to your school.

Be the Bridge: Why Communication is Essential for Rural Schools

Presenters: Joelle Doye and Mitch Wainwright, Mineral Point Unified School District; Luke Francois, Waterford Union High School

Room: Grand Ballroom H

Mineral Point Unified School District and Waterford Union High School are Wisconsin rural schools with under 1,000 students yet prioritize full-time communications professionals. Learn the benefits this position can bring to your district, suggestions to build support, and the results that will make your district not want to live without it. Communication efforts are often sporadic and put on the back burner due to the already full plates of staff. The President of the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association, along with her current and former superintendents, will speak about the vital importance of having a unified voice in telling your school's story to help build a bridge of trust and transparency between school and stakeholders.

Supporting Rural Leaders to Improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Presenters: Kirk Banghart, Generation Schools Network/Colorado Rural Education Association; Katie Peyton and Olivia Bachicha, Generation Schools Network

Room: Riverview 1

Expand your JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) skills. While there are many entry points for schools and districts to address these issues, the conversation can be challenging for everyone, especially amidst today's socio-political climate. Discover tools administrators can use to identify the right entry points, having done their own work to better understand the issues in their systems. Hear more about a theory of change that can improve DEI in rural systems, without subjecting any individual to shame for their having "of" or "lack of" factors that manifest privilege.

Student Forum—Promote the Conversation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Presenters: Jeffrey Jacobson and Students, We Are Many: United Against Hate

Room: Riverview 2

Hear how students in several Wisconsin school districts are promoting school and community conversations around the appreciation of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will share successes and challenges as they seek to promote safe and supportive school and community environments for all kids and families. The students will also share a "road map" for other groups who are interested in joining in a movement called We Are Many—United Against Hate.

Redesigning Education to Create a World Class Collaborative System in a Rural Setting

Presenters: Lance Bagstad, School District of Arcadia; Mike Beighley, Whitehall School District

Room: Riverview 3

The school districts of Arcadia, Blair-Taylor, Independence, and Whitehall embarked on a mission to create a four-district cooperative that would enhance educational opportunities, assist the districts with financial stability, and serve the overall employment need for west-central Wisconsin. Through district collaboration, strong business partnerships, and partnerships with post-secondary education systems, they have built a system that is creating a world-class education model in a rural setting, while targeting regional stability and growth. Learn about the process used to develop these partnerships, including creating the mission, vision, and core values; creating a joint powers agreement; growing business partnerships; developing youth apprenticeship opportunities; creating career pathways and dual credit classes; developing a career-tech educational center; and more.

Your Survival will Depend on Filling Your Staffing Needs!

Presenter: Steven Johnson, Fort Ransom School District

Room: Meeting Room B1

What positive narrative would you want a prospective teacher or family to know about your community or school? Does your community honor the position of educator? Explore proven strategies to strengthen recruitment, preparation, and retention for outstanding rural teachers and community leaders. Schools and their rural communities must work together to develop plans to meet their staffing needs. The session will be led by a practicing superintendent with over 45 years of experience in rural schools.

Youth Apprenticeship: Badger Style!

Presenters: Tom Martin, Cooperative Education Service Agency 3; Jennifer Johnson, Northeast Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship/CESA 7

Room: Meeting Room B2

Since the early '90s, the Wisconsin State Youth Apprenticeship Program has evolved to become the Country's best! Come and hear how two of their rural consortiums approach preparing their region's students to become as career and life ready as possible. Topics include keys to related instruction, alliance building, career coaching, and innovative practices. Be sure to bring questions for discussion during this very interactive hour.

Modern Band: Revitalizing Rural Small School Music Programs

Presenters: Shawn Tieg and Joe Campbell, Nezperce School District

Room: Meeting Room B3

Having a thriving music program is important for developing school culture and enhancing student creativity. However, quality traditional music programs are increasingly hard to sustain in small schools. "Modern Band" is a new student-centered approach to music education that engages students, reflects the culture of students and community, and is effective in any size school. Learn how modern band class works and how to launch a similar program in their district. See how the modern band approach can revitalize your school's music program in ways that are relevant to today's students.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:15-11:40 A.M.

Innovative Solutions for Empowering Teachers and School Leaders

Presenters: Jennifer Stevens and Amanda Adams, Virginia Ed Strategies; Jennifer Fox, Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR); Jennifer Dubey and Casey DeFord, Teach For America: Rural School Leadership Academy

Room: Ballroom A1

Learn innovative strategies for empowering and developing teachers and school leaders. Three federally-funded grant programs will share details of their inspiring work with rural teachers and leaders all across the United States. Topics include: improving school climate/culture, new ideas for leadership development, and teacher autonomy for professional learning. Leave with key takeaways to apply right away.

"A People Left Behind": Food Insecurity in Alabama's Black Belt

Presenters: Brandon Renfroe, Reenay Rogers, and B.J. Kimbrough, University of West Alabama

Room: Ballroom A2

In 1967, Robert Kennedy toured the Black Belt as part of the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty. Visibly moved by what he saw, he described residents of the region as "a people left behind." Over 50 years removed from the Civil Rights Movement, Black Belt citizens in many ways are still a forgotten people. A recent study on food security among public school students in the region measured rates of Very Low Food Security at over 11 times the national average. This is more than a statistic; it is a call to action.

The Diversity of Rurality: A Case Study of Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural North Dakota

Presenters: Caitlin Brecklin, McKenzie Rabenn, and Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz, University of North Dakota

Room: Ballroom A3

Across the country, rural schools often face hiring challenges of having and retaining fewer qualified applicants. In North Dakota, only three school districts are considered "urban" according to the U.S. Census. This means that every other locale - approximately 166 districts - is considered "rural." In this study, learn about ways various school leaders across North Dakota are attempting to address teacher shortages through district and school level recruitment and retention policies and practices.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:50 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

Research Review: Language Education, Family Engagement in Rural Latinx Communities

Presenters: Kaycee Rogers, Diego Román, Clarissa Gomez, and Rachel Santiago, University of Missouri

Room: Ballroom 2

The expansion of Latinx communities into rural areas highlights a need for research specifically exploring Latinx rurality, particularly in education. Schools have significant potential to implement culturally responsive pedagogy to promote student outcomes and agency. Learn more about a study that reviewed education literature in relation to rural Latinx youth, with a particular focus on family-school partnerships, English Learner instruction, and environmental education; the state of Wisconsin was used as an example of research findings in action. Findings highlighted culturally responsive practices and areas for further exploration to best support rural Latinx youth.

Rural Matters: Teacher Talent Pipelines for Rural Districts

Presenter: Donna Brasher, Texas Tech University

Room: Ballroom A3

Teachers have the power to change the lives of their students. Despite this widespread belief in the value of teachers, there is a crippling shortage of teachers in the U.S. The teacher shortage is not limited to one state or region. However, children in high-poverty schools, and in particular, rural high poverty schools are disproportionately affected by the teacher shortage issue (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The mounting public opinion about the failure of public education and shortcomings of teachers, accompanied by the stress created by working in under-resourced schools has encouraged some to examine root causes of the current situation.

VIRTUAL 60 MINUTE SESSIONS

Preparing Rural Teachers to Teach All Students

Presenter: Amanda Rudolph, Stephen F. Austin State University

How can teacher education programs prepare new teachers to be inclusive in a rural school? What are the challenges to promoting social justice and tolerance for teachers in rural schools? What challenges do teacher educators face when preparing rural pre-service teachers to be more inclusive? Experiences from teacher educators at a rural regional comprehensive university will be discussed. Strategies and approaches to preparing new teachers to move into rural schools as successful professionals will also be shared.

Text Sets in Social Studies: A Tool to Develop Student Agency

Presenters: Amber Garbe, UW-Stevens Point; Jenna Cramer, Instructional Coach; Dr. Stacy Gray, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Text sets are a tool to drive inquiry and agency for our K-12 learners. Explore a framework for developing text sets, or curating multiple resources around a social studies topic, to drive inquiry and agency, incorporate multiple perspectives, and boost civic engagement. Reflect on current practices when selecting texts to be used within the social studies classroom, discuss the process of evaluating, selecting, and using diverse texts, and receive links to resources that will help build text sets.

It's More than a Book: Publishing Student Writing

Presenters: Anna Griffin and Gabi Oliveira, 826 National

How can you shine a light on the words of young writers in your community? Explore the power and possibility that comes from publishing student writing and centering the voices of young authors in the community. Hear key findings from 826 National, the largest youth writing network in the U.S., and their report on publishing student writing and learn how to practically engage in the publishing process with your students.

Using Digital Media to Build Strong Early Literacy Skills

Presenters: Barbara Culatta and Lee Ann Setzer, Brigham Young University

Digital media can play an important role in solidifying early literacy skills. Personalized digital books, associated with free or low-cost curricular resources, can raise children's skills, and be effectively implemented in rural schools. Open-ended, personalized digital tools can allow children to interact meaningfully with peers, teachers, and community members. Learn how to evaluate the pedagogical soundness of early literacy apps; interweave child-created digital books with children's real-life experiences; and monitor children's skill attainments, engagement, motivation, and interactions.

Proven Strategies to Build Equitable Access in Rural Communities

Presenters: Cindy Hamblin, Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance; Jason Neiffer, Montana Digital Academy; Christina Lewis, VirtualSC; Jolene Montoya, Idaho Digital Learning Alliance

Equitable access to quality educational resources via the Internet, course offerings not available locally, and qualified instructors for advanced placement or high-level math, science, or foreign languages are just a few of the many challenges faced by rural districts. As a result of the pandemic, addressing gaps in learning has added to the list of challenges for all districts. Hear from a panel of online learning leaders as they discuss innovative strategies for addressing these educational challenges. Tactics covered will include datacasting, supporting the development of district level online programs, and resources to address learning gaps and enhance course access.

I Don't Have to Move to Become a Principal?

Presenters: Darcy Pietryka, Westat; Ebony Love, Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency's Principal Resident Grant Program provide LEAs with an opportunity to increase the number of well- prepared, diverse instructional leaders by building sustainable leadership pipelines and growing quality principal residency programs. Increasingly, this program has supported rural districts and EPPs in their journey to recruit, prepare, and retain excellent administrators. Hear from TEA, EPP, and district partners as they describe their experiences and resources.

Rural Writing: Teacher Leaders Advancing the Teaching of Writing

Presenter: Dorothy Suskind, Longwood University

Through writing, people claim their identity and find their voice on the page. The mission of the National Writing Project is to create a network of teachers, professors, writers, researchers, and community members to work together to advance the teaching of writing in K-12 schools. NWP operates under the philosophical framework that exceptional teachers of writing write and read. Hear about the story of the Southside Virginia Writing Project at Longwood University, a small rural college in Virginia, and how it developed a cadre of teacher leaders to advance the teaching of writing in rural schools.

Blame it All on My Roots: Teaching Math Through Music

Presenter: Lana Israel, Muzology

Pioneered by memory expert, Dr. Lana Israel and Garth Brooks's long-time manager Bob Doyle on Music Row in Nashville, Muzology uses instructional music videos to teach math. The program works to trigger memory, emotion, motivation, and attention—four areas of the brain critical to successful learning. "We created Muzology because we knew that while many students struggled with learning, those same students knew the words to countless hit songs," Israel said. "So, with support from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, we assembled a team of curriculum experts and hit songwriters to create a comprehensive series of instructional music videos." Learn more about the brain science behind music-based learning.

Preparing Rural Teachers for Urban Environments: Principles, Partnerships, and Praxis

Presenters: Susan Foster, Barbara Martin, Brian Johnson, and Stephen Marlette, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Discover one program's approach to preparing teacher candidates from rural backgrounds for urban environments through principles, partnerships, and praxis. Candidates study foundational principles preparing them for learners from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Candidates create reciprocal relationships with families through a cultural-historical approach and accommodate learners from diverse language and dialectal backgrounds. Candidates also apply recent neuroscientific research on adverse childhood experiences and brain plasticity. Partnerships with urban schools historically underrepresented in candidates' clinical experiences support inclusion. Teacher candidates practice implementing culturally responsive pedagogy, reflect on personal cultural competency, and are provided opportunities to build their credentials and extend their service and learning through volunteering.

What's Changed and What has Stayed the Same? Appreciating Rural

Presenters: Elizabeth Wargo, Jeff Simmons, and Juhee Kim, University of Idaho; Natassia Hammer, Lake Pend Oreille School District

To say rural education has changed is an understatement. Use appreciative inquiry to compare two successful rural school improvement cases—one high-tech distance online and one in-person low-tech. Appreciative inquiry allows participants to co-construct an understanding of changes that have supported rural education opportunity and quality. Learn how to consider changes within your own rural context.

BigFuture: Helping Students Choose What's Right for Them

Presenters: Greg Rafal and Richard Green, College Board

Hear from a panel of students and educators in rural communities about preparing for life after high school, using BigFuture from College Board. BigFuture is a free, personalized, mobile-friendly guide to help students explore careers, plan for college, and pay for college. When students complete specific steps on BigFuture, they can become eligible for monthly drawings for \$500 and \$40,000 scholarships. Students who are economically disadvantaged have an even greater chance to win. Join the conversation about how BigFuture is evolving and share your feedback about how BigFuture can best support rural students on their paths to life after high school.

Assessing and Addressing Social Determinants of Education

Presenters: Eyrarn Fiakpui, findhelp; Valerie Holmes, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana

The success of students and the community in which they live are intertwined, and barriers to student achievement, like housing and food insecurity, are best addressed through partnerships that promote equity and lift up the entire community. Hear from Ivy Tech Community College, the largest higher education institution in Indiana, and findhelp, the largest U.S. social care platform, will present data and strategies to address the social needs of students and reduce inequality in rural communities. Learn more about assessing basic needs, initiatives to address those needs, and best practices to collaborate with community organizations to support student success.

Educator Preparation in Rural Areas: Creating Valuable Field Experiences

Presenters: Heather Olson Beal and Lauren Burrow, Stephen F. Austin State University

Learn about the three types of field experiences in which pre-service teachers in the Community Responsiveness and Engaged Advocacy in Teacher Education (C.R.E.A.T.E.) program track at Stephen F. Austin State University engage in preparation for their formal clinical teaching experience, including: service-learning partnerships with community organizations, pairings with local mentor families with school-aged children, and engaging in community events outside of their comfort zone. Hear about pre-service teachers' perceptions and take away lessons from these field experiences, and learn about additional field experiences that could be available in rural areas.

Artists in the Classroom: Increase Engagement Through Arts Based Analysis

Presenter: Jason Paris, Cherokee Public Schools

Perpetually deprioritized, the fine and performing arts unlock student potential, and foster deeper connections to course content and communities. Inherently inclusive, the arts provide students a voice and sense of agency. Better yet, by incorporating simple arts-based activities and analyses, teachers of any subject can improve student synthesis, turning passive learners into highly engaged scholars. High School (OK) Fine Arts Director, Jason Paris, will demonstrate quick and easy arts-based activities and lessons that focus on creating flow-states, incorporating content, and empowering students to find their own artistic voices, no matter the subject of study.

Rural Roads to Opportunity: Showcasing Health Science Mentorship and Leadership

Presenters: Jessie Barnett and Kristin Oslecki, The University of Minnesota Rochester; Megan Schimek, Pine Island Public Schools

This is designed for those seeking ideas, inspiration, examples, and innovation in rural learning. Learn about a near peer mentorship program between rural high school students and diverse college students in Minnesota. Students in the program explore health science and leadership through experiential and place-based learning, as well as collaborative outdoor field experiences. Explore a multitude of curricular examples and ideas for engaging students in hands-on learning, descriptions of how virtual mentorship can bridge the “geography challenge” associated with rurality, and share a showcase of student learning artifacts and materials displaying diverse opportunities for students.

Engaging Stakeholders to Address Critical Needs in Rural SEAs

Presenters: Jobi Lawrence, Westat; David Lee, West Virginia Department of Education

Hear from a panel on how the West Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Region 5 Comprehensive Center, has engaged stakeholders and community-based partnerships to address the critical shortage of mental health professionals and to better meet the mental health needs of students and prepare educators who serve them. Information about the needs sensing process and the convening of a statewide think tank will be shared, along with how to apply this to any state context.

Appalachian Stewards, Not Outlaws

Presenter: Joe Brehm, Rural Action

Rural Action, a non-profit organization based in rural, Appalachian Ohio, created a curriculum for 4th-6th grade centered on a famous native plant called American Ginseng. The curriculum was created partly in response to the television show, Appalachian Outlaws, which glorified ginseng poaching and enforced awful stereotypes of rural Appalachia. Learn how ginseng, a culturally popular plant, is being used to teach about food webs, symbiosis, conservation, and environmental stewardship. Learn more about ginseng, the ecosystem of which it is a part, history and lore around the plant, and rules and regulations about harvest. Explore the lesson plans in the curriculum, the outcomes, and ideas for how this strategy could be applied to other regions and local species or cultural assets.

Bushwhacking: Untethered and Authentic Learning for Our Children

Presenter: Joseph Pounds, Forest School Teacher Institute

Taking Wendell Berry’s advice about finding hope on the ground under our feet, peek into a conversation between a multi-state cluster of rural educators who are taking Pre-K thru 1st grade students outdoors and into their community. Hear from a teacher, preschool director, superintendent, forest school founder, mother of a child with special needs, and child development specialist as they discuss how they are collaborating with community partners to address the need for quality childcare and how to help children feel a connection to their community.

Design for Learning

Presenter: Lauren Heil, friEdTech

Teachers are designers! Great design increases access for all, making for a more equitable classroom experience for students and adults. Discover basic design principles that will improve the way students interact with and learn from classroom materials.

Head Off Destructive Behaviors At the Pass

Presenter: Lelah Moseley-Haywood, Education Service Center Region 20

Do you spend more time corralling students than teaching them? Are you neglecting some students while dealing with disruptive behavior from others? Receive relief from the frustration with a proven approach to managing the classroom. Learn how to decrease disruptive behavior and office referrals, increase academic performance, and discover 5-9 additional hours per week for actual instruction. Hear how teachers are reenergized and why administrators love this approach because they no longer referee low-level student misbehaviors. Discover how implementing positive regard for students, clarifying expected behavior, personal accountability, and eliminating conflict dramatically improves the atmosphere of the classroom!

Virtual STEAM: Remote Summer Enrichment Opportunities for Rural Middle Schools

Presenters: Lori Goodson and Todd Goodson, Kansas State University

Learn about an innovative summer enrichment series of events which brings hands-on discovery activities to rural middle school students. These engaging opportunities are delivered remotely in partnership with local facilitators in school settings.

Impact and Process: The Story of a Networked Improvement Community

Presenters: Lori Vandeborne, Ann Webber, Chris Brandt, and Juan D'Brot, Region 5 Comprehensive Center

Learn about a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) process for solving problems of practice and introducing new initiatives in education. A NIC helps to build and sustain a culture of improvement by engaging an education community across different levels (district, school, classroom) and establishing cross-agency partnerships. Implementing a NIC allows educators to understand what works, for whom, and under what conditions. The NIC consists of eight key steps that can be completed from beginning to end, or as separate components. This makes a NIC approach versatile and easily modified to fit a school or district's needs.

The Importance of Inclusive Literature

Presenters: Mariah Pfundheller and Jacqueline Liesch, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Imagine a world where all students feel valued and accepted, where they feel part of a community as they learn and grow together. Educators have the agency to empower students to engage in rigorous discourse that will lead to understanding and acceptance. Learn how to think critically about which texts are incorporated into your teaching and classrooms, and discover how you can help expand the lenses through which your students see the world.

Low Effort, High Impact Accessible Content Tips for All Learners

Presenters: Meri Tunison and Larissa Zompolas, WI Virtual School (CESA 9)

There are benefits for ALL students when we proactively design learning environments and resources that are accessible. Armed with simple but effective best practices, educators can begin to remove barriers to learning with online content. These improvements will benefit all learners, including students with disabilities, language needs, and varying learning styles. Designing accessible resources requires time, resources, and knowledge to implement, which is why low-effort, high-impact tips that can help any educator or team get started are highlighted.

Everyone Can Learn a Language

Presenter: Olivia Grugan, Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08/WOL

Who is "good" at languages? Dig deep into the fixed mindset about what it takes to acquire a language. Consider which students are receiving the benefits of world language classes. Then, discover strategies for districts who want to realistically offer a variety of languages to all students.

Practical Communication Strategies to Create Stronger Family Relationships

Presenter: Patricia Weinzapfel, Patricia Weinzapfel Communications

The pandemic brought it home. We now know that it's essential to partner with families and help them understand teaching and learning. But the language used can be complicated, and full of jargon and acronyms. An authoritative tone can feel off-putting to parents and caregivers, and the amount of information provided to families can be overwhelming. It's no wonder families sometimes tune out or give up. Learn how to recognize effective and ineffective family communications and discover tips and techniques to improve school-home communication.

REACH: Smithsonian American Art Museum's Initiative Serving Your Rural Needs

Presenters: Peg Koetsch, Smithsonian American Art Museum; Christy Mock-Stutz, Helena Middle School, Montana; Mike Mitchell, Mount Pleasant Schools

Discover how the Smithsonian American Art Museum's (SAAM) distance learning initiative, Rural Engagement in Art, Culture and History (REACH) can build connections with, and spark insights about, community identity while developing creative responses to mutual challenges. Educators from Montana and Tennessee will introduce SAAM resources and programs that they have tested, implemented, and adapted to strengthen teachers' professional development and to build students' interdisciplinary knowledge, critical thinking skills, and visual literacy.

Project AccelerUs: Engaging and Retaining Students Through Vision-Led Innovation

Presenter: Ray Dick, Global Learning Accelerator

Project AccelerUs is a cloud-based, no-cost collaborative challenge program bringing students of diverse backgrounds together to envision a different future and find solutions to our biggest, real-world problems of today. Students complete a six-step learning cycle in which they learn proven vision-led innovation methodologies and develop mindsets and skillsets valuable for lifelong success. Along the way, students discover their Ikigai, or their reason for being. Project AccelerUs is offered at no cost for schools to keep access available to all districts so all students can benefit from an authentic learning opportunity.

Elevating Rural Voices Through Community Learning Exchanges

Presenters: Robert Quinn, Sheresa Blanchard, Kristen Cuthrell and Laura Levi-Alstaedter, East Carolina University
Presenters from East Carolina University's Rural Education Institute (REI) will describe the concept of Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs) as they are conducting them in three rural county school systems in North Carolina. CLEs (Guajardo et al., 2015) are assemblies held within the local community in which students, families, school personnel, and other stakeholders meet to exchange ideas and strategies that sustain positive school environments and school safety, and to foster progressive community change. Learn about the conversations with stakeholders through CLEs to discern to what extent school extension programming in a rural context impacts student learning and engagement.

Using the Adult Learning Framework to Improve Professional Learning Experiences

Presenters: Shauna Harps, Westat; Amy Lamitie, AEM Corporation

Explore Region 5 Comprehensive Center's Adult Learning Framework and related resources to build participant awareness of adult learning principles and considerations for planning, implementing, and continuously improving professional learning experiences. Walk through a multi-step process for creating experiences that are grounded in adult learning theory and learn about complementary tools and resources that can be applied across school or district contexts and locales.

From Challenges to Opportunities: Rural Partnerships Addressing Pandemic-Related Learning Loss

Presenters: Tammy Parlier and Wendy Snow, Longwood University

The pandemic disrupted traditional educational landscapes requiring indelible change in best practices for literacy instruction and teacher preparation. Developing flexible and sustainable instructional delivery methods in this new and largely uncharted territory presented unique challenges and opportunities for rural schools. Learn how one university graduate program pivoted during the pandemic to provide literacy intervention services to rural Pre-K-12 students via an online format. Learn how ongoing partnerships with rural school divisions continue to capitalize on the lessons learned during the pandemic to address pandemic-related literacy learning loss through supplemental literacy instruction.

Student Agency: Community Identity Through Local Design Exhibitions

Presenter: Tim Thomas, College of Education, James Madison University

Which feedback tools can educators use that encourage learners to devise creative responses to local challenges? As schools move away from standardized assessments, an increasing array of problem- and project-based lessons can amplify learner's agency. Discover performance-based assessments that feature curriculum-based inquiries. Educators can guide projects that utilize design techniques and promote well-being in the locality. Assessment tools from this session will connect learners with stakeholders to discuss creative possibilities through community-based scenarios.

What Does it Take to be an Online Teacher?

Presenters: Cindy Hamblin, Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance; Rich Copeland, Georgia Virtual; Sarah Warnick, Virtual Virginia; Jeff Simmons, Idaho Digital Learning Alliance

The National Standards for Quality Online Teaching (<https://nsqol.org>) provides a framework for teachers seeking to improve their online pedagogy, as well as districts pursuing professional learning, support, and best practices for instructional staff teaching online. Explore the National Standards for Quality (NSQ) and learn from leaders in the field whose responsibility is to prepare teachers for online instruction, provide coaching and mentoring opportunities, and monitor the online learning classrooms.

Sustainable Energy Increasing Opportunities for Rural American Communities

Presenters: David Thornton, East Central University; Mark Nanny and Claire Burch, The University of Oklahoma; Nirmitee Sanap, East Central Oklahoma, Graduate Student

Learn how East Central University and the University of Oklahoma are partnering through a National Science Foundation grant bringing rural schools/communities, sustainable energy industries, researchers, and educators together into a mutually beneficial network. This creative approach provides endless benefits for rural communities through an offered Research Experience for Teachers. As sustainable energy industries and opportunities develop in rural areas, local economies can benefit. Rural-area STEM educators, students, schools, communities, and industries all benefit. Increased agency for rural students culminates through increasing self-determined choices, which now include quality rural career paths.

America's Philosophical and Operational Fundamentals Improve and Unite America

Presenter: Jack Kamrath, American Heritage Education Foundation

In every endeavor, there are essential, indispensable fundamentals that must be taught, learned, and implemented for the endeavor to have any opportunity for success. If these fundamentals are ignored, success is impossible. As a nation based on ideas and ideals, the failure to define, teach, instill, and execute America's philosophical and operational fundamentals is placing America on an unalterable path to its internal destruction.

Building Educational Bridges to Rural Economic Resilience

Presenters: Joshua Seidemann and Shirley Bloomfield, NTCA: The Rural Broadband Association
Rural vitality thrives on partnerships. Local and regional industries play an important role collaborating with educational leadership to develop curriculum opportunities that align with area needs. These partnerships can leverage the power of online instruction paired with hands-on learning to grow local talent and opportunities for rural youth. These strategies are also transferrable to returning students and veterans for new career paths or “upskilling.” Learn how rural broadband providers work with industry and educational institutions to develop local talent for area industries, and how these efforts can build rural growth and sustainability.

The Rural-Urban Connection: Establishing a Common Voice Through the Arts

Presenters: Kay Cowan, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; Cecily Honeycutt, The Baylor School, Chattanooga; Stephanie Lewis, South Pittsburg High School

Discover the outcomes of a rural-urban partnership established through grants provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). The funded workshops have addressed common academic needs of students from urban and rural school systems in Tennessee through arts-integrated instruction and have allowed students from diverse backgrounds to access information through the common language of the arts. The workshops have positioned teachers and students served by the grants to build from areas of strength, to communicate their understandings with one another, to broaden their understanding of concepts, and to arrive at creative solutions to topics studied.

Supporting Rural Special Educators from their Beginning and Beyond

Presenters: Melissa Jones-Bromenshenkel and Kathryn Havercroft, Eastern Illinois University

Learn about ideas and approaches used to support rural special educators as they complete their pre-service preparation program and enter the field of teaching. Cohort models, hybrid courses, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and a university-facilitated induction program make up the creative framework that seeks to provide the needed bridge from preparation to practice with the ultimate goal of high-quality teaching and long-term retention of these important professionals.

Designing a System that Grows High School Students—Even through COVID

Presenters: Nathan Morris, Cross County School District; Mindy Searcy, Cross County School District; Stephen Prince, Cross County High School; Nicole Bolen, National Institute for Excellence in Teaching

Cross County High School students in rural Arkansas have not only improved their graduation rate from 77% to 95% over the past few years, but they also were one of few schools in the state to increase student performance on state assessments from 2019 to 2021. Empowering students to be successful starts with empowering teachers to meet the full range of students’ needs. Come learn practical strategies and relevant tools to build teacher capacity from Cross County leaders and national non-profit experts, all of whom have collaborated to create a pipeline where teachers and students can thrive.

Cultivating Joy, Healing, and Transformation: Youth Agency by Design

Presenters: Nicodemus Ford and Monica Ng, Pivot Learning

Learn about the partnership between Humboldt County Schools and Pivot Learning as to facilitate youth leadership aimed at healing and joy-filled learning environments. Use a Data Gathering and Reflection Tool to center joy and healing in their own spaces and leave with a sense of inspiration and optimism for the journey ahead.

Using Emotional Intelligence To Overcome Challenges and Promote Well-Being

Presenter: Nicole Elbertson, Yale University Center for Emotional Intelligence

Yale University Center for Emotional Intelligence has trained 3,000 schools across the nation and world, including district and school leaders, teachers, students, and families on how to be smart about our emotions to live better lives. Walk through the simple acronym, RULER, to practice five emotion skills (recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating) backed by research to help students and the adults in their lives cope with the challenges of today and thrive in their lives in and out of school.

What If? Leveraging the Science of Learning to Improve Student Outcomes

Presenter: Tammy Pawloski, Francis Marion University

Life with limited access to key resources can create barriers, but what if educators can have a prominent and positive impact when the science of learning is used to inform pedagogy? Explore the brain-based 'whys' behind best practices and learn how this knowledge can be used to guide authentic and explicit educator moves. Take away evidence-based and budget-neutral strategies grounded in neuroscience and offered in a practical context. Gain access to 25 best practices, each designed to remove barriers, de-escalate challenges, and elevate the engagement necessary for school and life success.

VIRTUAL 20 MINUTE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

Uncovering the Diversity of Rural-Serving Institutions

Presenters: Andrew Koricich, Appalachian State University; Vanessa A. Sansone, University of Texas at San Antonio
Explore work that adds nuance to our understanding of rural-serving colleges and universities. Specifically, examine the representation of minority-serving institutions that are also rural-serving, as well as how rural-serving institutions are serving regions facing economic and demographic distress. These results underscore the role rural-serving institutions play in advancing racial and economic justice.

Enhancing Rural Pre-Service Educators' Competency Through Effective Feedback and Mentoring

Presenters: Elizabeth Wargo, Taylor Raney, and Juhee Kim, University of Idaho
Feedback is a crucial element in the educational process and is considered of utmost importance for learning. This study will identify the needs of pre-service principals and explore perspectives for enhancing opportunities to practice feedback. A consistent with mixed-method exploratory case design, a creative pre-service opportunity is identified and described. These findings can initiate change in how pre-service teacher and leader preparation programs at universities develop educational leaders' authentic feedback competency and collaborate to maximize opportunities for pre-service principals to provide feedback to new teachers. Results will build awareness in rural educators through empowerment with skills about seeking, receiving, and handling feedback further improving their feedback process in clinical practice.

Online and Hands-on Applied STEM Learning: Towards a Place-conscious Approach

Presenters: Elizabeth Wargo, Jae Hyeon Ryu, and Juhee Kim, University of Idaho
Research points to the promise of place-based and online education opportunities in ways that matter for rural equity, justice, and sustainability. This study assists the field by illuminating an under-explored area of STEM education — those serving rural students that are online and hands-on. Consistent with a mini-ethnographic case study approach, insights are shared that explicate the importance of providing rural students with place-conscious applied STEM opportunities.

Politics and Religion: Exploring Rural Parents' School Choices During the Pandemic

Presenters: Heather Olson Beal, Lauren Brewer, Chrissy Cross, and Amber Wagnon, Stephen F. Austin State University

While there is a large body of research exploring the rationale of urban and suburban parents for choosing schools for their children, we know little about how rural parents choose schools for their children. This study explores the relationship between parents' political ideologies, their religious affiliation, and the schooling decisions they made for their children during the pandemic. Findings have important ramifications for educators and policymakers who wish to enhance rural schooling.

Positive Results for Children During the Pandemic: Save the Children

Presenters: Jeff Holt and Ying Zhang, Save the Children

Discover how Save the Children's rural education programs adapted to the pandemic to improve school-age children's literacy. Every school year since 2003, Save the Children U.S. Programs has provided in-school, afterschool, and summer literacy programming in high-poverty, rural schools. The pandemic presented significant challenges for both traditional and supplemental instruction in rural areas. In March 2020, Save the Children staff quickly adapted programming, expanded services, and, importantly, continued evaluation and monitoring activities which are critical to the understanding implementation and program impact. Learn more about program features, data collected during program operations, and student performance results.

Inequities. Inequalities. Injustice: Providing Rural Students with Sufficient Educational Opportunities

Presenter: Jesse Bulluck, Texas Tech University

North Carolina is home to the second largest number of rural students in the country, with over 568,000, yet most are not receiving a sufficient education. For decades, students in North Carolina schools have experienced inadequate resources, which means students are not receiving the best education possible. In 1994, five school districts decided to sue the state for failing to uphold the constitutional mandate to provide a sound, basic education to all students (Tiller, 2005). Ultimately, the case ended with a decision in favor of the schools (Leandro v. State, 1995).

Why They Stay: The Experience of Long-tenure Rural Superintendents

Presenter: John Wilfred Cwikiel, Beaver Island Community School

The rural superintendency is complex, demanding, and essential to the smooth functioning of America's public schools. In rural districts, where the superintendent is often the only administrator and the school district is the heart of the community, the superintendent's role takes on greater importance. Much of the literature focuses on factors that drive superintendent turnover. This research identifies those factors that contribute to superintendent retention, especially in rural school districts that typically suffer from greater rates of turnover. In so doing, this research generates knowledge that will foster leadership stability and promote student achievement in America's rural schools.

The Impacts of School Closure on Rural Communities in Canada: A Review

Presenter: Mike Haynes, University of Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

In rural Canada the issue of school closures and consolidations due to low enrollment and heightened fiscal constraints has become a contentious and highly charged emotional issue for citizens and communities. Hear about the findings of a review of the literature that synthesizes the major effects of school closure on rural Canadian communities. Socio-economic impacts, implications for students, closure-related policy, and other overarching themes identified in the rural school literature are explored. With rural viability and prosperity in mind, future research needs and policy directions focusing on the community-level impacts of school closure in the Canadian context are examined.

Analyzing the Impact of Leadership Styles on Student Achievement

Presenters: Mike Howard, St. Clair County School System; Denise Knight, The University of West Alabama

The purpose of this study was to analyze leadership styles to discover which leadership style had the most significant positive and negative impact on student academic achievement in rural high schools in Alabama. Northouse's Leadership Style Questionnaire with a quantitative method of analysis was used to test the null hypotheses. This study attempted to reveal if a significant difference in student academic achievement existed based on the school leader's leadership style, their years of leadership experience, and their gender. The survey was distributed to 24 superintendents and 57 principals in rural high schools and rural school systems in Alabama.

Adaptive Leadership Practices for Rural Education

Presenter: Ryan Crane, University of Maine

Rural school leaders face the daunting challenge of responding to their community's concerns with limited resources; especially when compared to larger, more serviced school districts. Consequently, the rural administrator must be capable of wearing multiple hats and have the capacity for divergent thinking in order to fill the gap between the unique needs of stakeholders and available community resources. Approaching these challenges through an adaptive lens can help school leaders build stronger community relationships and tap into existing expertise to meet current and future challenges.

Reimagining Community-Based Learning Experiences

Presenter: Stephanie Oudghiri, Purdue University

The purpose of this presentation is to illuminate experiences from a community member, teacher educator, and qualitative researcher in a small, rural, Midwestern community. Specifically, learn about the challenges and triumphs of redesigning an undergraduate teacher education course that includes a rural community-based learning experience for preservice teachers. Research findings from this project are expected to increase opportunities for faculty to expand partnerships with community-based organizations throughout Indiana, therefore exposing future educators to a wider variety of educational settings.

Rural Adolescent Wellbeing, Social Media Participation, and COVID-19

Presenters: Stephen Bunn, Michal Paul, and Stacey Rutledge, Florida State University

This study sought to answer the research question: What is the relationship between rural adolescent reported happiness on the personal well-being index and the ways in which they utilized social media during the COVID-19 global pandemic? We seek to understand how rural students uniquely experienced social media during the pandemic and to understand whether these effects were experienced equally by student subgroups, by choice of social media platforms, and by intended activity. We do not restrict our inquiry to either positive/negative effects, but observe the relationship between rural adolescent online behavior, remote education, online informal learning, and wellbeing.

Relationship Between Principal Attrition and Academics in High-Needs Rural Schools

Presenters: Summer Pannell and Brian Uriegas, Stephen F. Austin State University; Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Georgia Southern University

Learn about recent research on the relationships between principal attrition and academic factors in high-need rural schools. The study explored the relationships between principal attrition and the following academic factors as graded by the state accountability reports: school's overall accountability score, student growth, grade-level readiness, literacy rates, and closing achievement gaps. Hear more about implications for practice based on these findings.

Inclusive Practices for Rural Students with Complex Support Needs

Presenters: Nikki Howard and Katie McCabe, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Rural schools can be challenged with limited resources and personnel to provide an equitable education for students with disabilities. Examining inclusive practices in a rural school exposes the inequitable placement decision-making process for students with disabilities, particularly those with students with disabilities who have complex support needs (CSN; McCabe, 2021). This research is conducted to create a comprehensive description of inclusive practices in general education classrooms in one rural school district in Colorado. Classroom observations and staff interviews are utilized to identify areas for professional development and provide implications for best practices to include students with CSN in rural general education settings.

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WISCONSIN RURAL SCHOOLS ALLIANCE (WRSA) believes in strong schools and communities. Our priorities are to provide a unified voice for rural schools at the local, state, and federal levels, celebrate the incredible achievements of rural schools, and curate research, news, events, and resources for rural educators, including our annual WiRSA conference. WiRSA began in 2008 as a group of CESA and district leaders who recognized that rural school districts were not well-represented or significantly discussed at the state level. We did not see these schools, staff, or students receiving the recognition they deserved. We began by hosting annual conferences from 2008 to 2011 to promote rural education and highlight success stories. In 2012, we officially formed our organization and began accepting memberships. We continued the annual conference and steadily grew our membership to over 168 public schools out of 310 rural districts, 10 colleges and universities, and 10 CESAs, as well as dozens of individuals and businesses.

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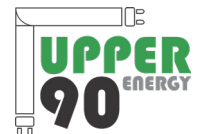
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