



DEVELOPMENTS IN RURAL EDUCATION POLICY & RESEARCH September 2014

Funding Opportunities for Rural Education

American Indian/Alaska Native Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships

The Department of Health and Human Services is offering \$14.3M to expand Early Head Start (EHS) programs for low-income American Indian/Alaska Native infants and toddlers. Grants may be used to expand the number of slots in existing EHS programs or to assist organizations in building partnerships to provide high-quality, comprehensive, early childhood services.

Applications are now open to public entities (including states), Native American Tribal Organizations, federally-recognized Native American Tribal Governments, non-profit organizations (including community-based and faith-based organizations), and for-profit agencies that meet the eligibility criteria defined in section 645A of the Head Start Act. Priority will be given to fund partnerships between EHS programs and community centers.

Application deadline: October 6, 2014

Application information can be found [here](#).

A brief overview of the EHS program can be found [here](#).

Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation Grants

The Benedum Foundation, which has a regional focus on West Virginia and rural Southwestern Pennsylvania, has an open-application education grant program. Though the foundation is “interested in any significant opportunity to improve education,” specific areas of interest include: teacher quality, arts education, and career education programs.

The Benedum Foundation accepts applications on a rolling basis.

Application information can be found [here](#).

A brief overview of the foundation’s education program can be found [here](#).

Research, Commentary, or Other Developments in Rural Education

The Role of Postsecondary Institutional Urbanicity in College Persistence

P. Johnelle Sparks, Anne-Marie Nuñez
Journal of Research in Rural Education
[Article](#)

Though prior research has focused on how a student’s rural origins influence their college education, little analysis has examined how the location of higher education institutions may

affect postsecondary outcomes. In this paper, the authors posit that there are several ways in which a rural location may impact a student's college experience: students may be housed more closely together, have fewer off-campus internship and job opportunities, and see fewer examples of those who have turned their college degree into employment opportunities. Because of the limited amount of data and previous literature on this topic, the authors chose to look at student persistence at rural institutions as well as provide their readers with background on the characteristics of students attending these institutions.

The researchers found that there was no significant difference in persistence for students attending rural institutions. The overview of the student body that they provide may provide some insights into this finding. Students at rural colleges and universities are less likely to be first generation students, less likely to work outside of school (full or part-time), and significantly more likely to report higher levels of social and academic integration in their campus community than students in urban or suburban schools.

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Contexts of School Districts and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies: Rediscovering Equity in Education Policy and Urban Planning

Robert Mark Silverman

Leadership and Policy in Schools

[Article](#)

This article examines the argument that there is a link between school reform and neighborhood revitalization, which the author noted is often plagued by the question of whether education or housing policy should be the focus of redevelopment strategies. The author hypothesized that if a relationship between housing prices and school reform exists, it is likely most pronounced in suburban districts, less so in rural and urban districts.

The author looked at the relationship between school quality, community demographics, and housing values in New York State (excluding New York City) from 2006-10 at the district level. Four of the eleven independent variables used in the model were correlated with the value of housing in rural districts. Two of these variables, the percent of the total population enrolled in public schools and the percent of the local source district revenue, were correlated with higher median housing values. The two other variables, percent of the population living below the poverty line and per-pupil expenditures, were correlated to lower rural housing values.

These results suggested that rural districts with higher property values are larger and relatively affluent, able to better finance their local schools. The results also indicate that work to improve housing markets in rural areas should be tied to work to alleviate rural poverty and to promote equitable state funding for rural schools.

In Rural Alaska, High Teacher Turnover Still Vexes

Michelle Theriault Boots

Alaska Dispatch News

[Article](#)

This news article focuses on the high costs of teacher turnover in rural Alaska as well as the difficulty of recruiting teachers to isolated communities. Seventy-five percent of teachers are recruited from out-of-state and 50 percent of those working in some rural communities have left

in recent years – the average only 30 percent. The effects of this problem are seen in student performance, with less than half of the students in the five highest-turnover districts proficient in reading compared to more than 85 percent of those in the five lowest-turnover districts.

The article looks at potential solutions to the turnover problem in Alaska, such as increasing the number of “homegrown” teachers, helping new teachers integrate into the local community, and paying more competitive salaries.