

NOVEMBER 2014

BREAKING NEW GROUND IN RURAL EDUCATION

Paul T. Hill



• TABLE OF CONTENTS •

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	i
INTRODUCTION	1
MEANINGS OF “RURAL”	5
THE LINKS AMONG PLACE, EDUCATION, AND OPPORTUNITY	7
TENSIONS BETWEEN STUDENT-FOCUSED POLICIES AND PLACE-BASED NEEDS	9
PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP: A RESOURCE AND A BARRIER	11
GETTING RURAL EDUCATION THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES	15
ENDNOTES	17

• ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS •

The Rural Opportunities Consortium of Idaho (ROCI) was launched by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation of Boise, Idaho during the summer of 2013. Since then, Bellwether Education Partners and a task force of experts led by Dr. Paul T. Hill have been working to foster a better understanding of the issues that affect rural education, inform policy discussions, and bring attention to the unique needs and circumstances of rural school children. A series of reports, published over the next year, will examine issues including migration, technology, human capital, economic development, postsecondary enrollment and persistence, and more. Papers will be posted online at www.rociidaho.com/research-publications.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Paul T. Hill is a research professor at the University of Washington Bothell and former director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which studies alternative governance and finance systems for public K-12 education. His most recent books are *Learning as We Go: Why School Choice is Worth the Wait* (Hoover Institution Press, 2010) and *Strife and Progress: Portfolio Strategies for Managing Urban Schools* (Brookings, 2012). His book, *Fixing Urban Schools* (Brookings, 1998) is a primer for city leaders and foundations on strategies for transforming failing public school systems. He is also the author, with Lawrence Pierce and James Guthrie, of *Reinventing Public Education: How Contracting Can Transform America's Schools* (University of Chicago Press, 1997). Hill was the 2007 recipient of the Thomas B. Fordham Prize for Distinguished Scholarship. He is the chair of the ROCI task force.

ABOUT ROCI • RURAL OPPORTUNITIES CONSORTIUM OF IDAHO



ROCI brings together some of the nation's best thinkers to conduct research on the challenges of rural education and identify innovations, programs, and models to address them. This effort will inform a national body of work on rural education and explore implications for increasing the educational attainment and economic competitiveness of Idahoans and Americans.

ABOUT JKAF • J.A. AND KATHRYN ALBERTSON FOUNDATION



The J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation is a private, family foundation in Boise, Idaho, committed to the vision of limitless learning for all Idahoans. To move toward this vision, the Foundation invests pro-actively in large-scale initiatives. Its three focus areas are 1) Career Readiness; 2) Learning Choices; and 3) Leadership Investments.

ABOUT BELLWETHER EDUCATION PARTNERS



Bellwether Education Partners is a nonprofit dedicated to helping education organizations—in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-need students. To do this, Bellwether provides a unique combination of exceptional thinking, talent, and hands-on strategic support.

• INTRODUCTION •

Americans worry about their children. Are they learning enough in school to support themselves as adults? Can they hope to maintain a standard of living as good as that of their parents? Will today's children experience America as the land of opportunity for capable people, whatever their backgrounds? Can they sustain our democratic traditions? In recent years, these worries have focused most intensely on African American and Hispanic children in our big cities, who enter first grade at a disadvantage and fall further behind the longer they are in school.

Children in rural areas are as isolated as urban minority children from the mainstream economy, and from the higher education that is the gateway to the best jobs.

But in terms of sustaining an opportunity society, and thus our national health, Americans are missing a bet. Children in rural areas are as isolated as urban minority children from the mainstream economy, and from

the higher education that is the gateway to the best jobs. And there are vast numbers of them. Even today, after the dramatic rural-to-urban migration of the mid-20th century, more children attend schools in remote rural and small-town areas (5.6 million) than in the 20 largest urban school districts.

There are three reasons why rural education should become a priority for federal and state governments and for philanthropies concerned with education.

First, schools in rural areas educate millions of students. One student in 10 is educated in a remote or fringe district. In half of the states, rural students make up more than a quarter of the student total population. In six states (Mississippi, Vermont, Maine, North Carolina, South Dakota, and South Carolina), more than 40 percent of the students are rural. There are only eight states in which rural children make up less than 10 percent of the student population (Maryland, New Jersey, Utah, Rhode Island, Nevada, California, Massachusetts, and Hawaii). Moreover, rural student populations in many states include high proportions of the minority and poor students whose education has long been the primary focus of federal policy and major philanthropies. In 18 states, more than 25 percent of rural students are African American or Hispanic; in 24 states, more than 40 percent of rural students are poor.

Second, the talents of the most capable rural young people are seldom fully developed. Despite the fact that rural students on average perform better in high school and graduate at a higher rate than students in big cities (79.9 percent vs. 64.1 percent), they are less likely to attend college (33.4 percent vs. 48.1 percent) and far less likely to enroll in graduate and professional programs (3.2 percent vs. 7.6 percent) after college.¹ At a time when the US economy is suffering from a shortage of highly skilled individuals (and from high unemployment among low-skilled workers), the loss of large numbers of extremely capable young people from rural areas is a serious matter.

Caroline Hoxby and Christopher Avery have written about the existence of untapped sources of talent in the United States, especially among young people from low-income families and areas remote from major cities.² They critique elite colleges and universities, which compete with one another for a tapped-out population of highly capable students in metro areas while overlooking the large pool of equally adept students elsewhere. They conclude, “[T]he number of low-income, high-achieving students is much greater than college admissions staff generally believe.” These students “come from districts too small to support selective public high schools, are not in a critical mass of fellow high achievers, and are not likely to encounter a teacher or schoolmate from an older cohort who attended a selective college.” If the pool is to be expanded, it must be found in places, including rural areas, that previously have not been mined for extremely capable students.

Across the board, young people in rural areas are much more likely to be idle—meaning not engaged in education or training, not working, and not earning regular income.

The talents of gifted young people in rural areas are not the only ones being wasted. Across the board, young people in rural areas are much more likely to be idle—meaning not engaged

in education or training, not working, and not earning regular income. This problem is especially acute for high school dropouts and for Native Americans. Living in the West or Southeast, or being African American or Native American in a rural area, is a risk factor for idleness. Being a dropout from a low-income family is a lethal combination: nearly half of young people with these attributes (48.5 percent) are idle.³

Third, rural communities matter to all Americans, not just as sources of talent but also as indispensable places. Though the country has changed since Jefferson and de Tocqueville described rural areas as the main source of its strength, these regions are still where the American ideals of self-governance by small groups of neighbors and local problem solving through collective action are most openly practiced, and where the links among community, work, production, and human health and survival are the most transparent. Rural areas complement the big cities, where things are more abstract, impersonal, and pressured. Many individuals raised in rural communities could live anywhere they want, and choose to avoid cities. Other Americans seek refuge from cities by moving to rural areas when telecommuting or retirement make it possible.

The imperatives that have made big-city schools such a topic of investment and ferment are as great for schools in rural and remote areas. And yet, despite the efforts of many who have worked tirelessly to improve opportunities for rural-area children, rural education has remained on the back burner. The reasons for this relative neglect are many:

- Rural areas are distant from major media markets, making rural education much more difficult for newspapers and TV to cover.
- There is no dramatic civil rights connection. Though rural students are disproportionately African American in the Southeast, they are mainly white elsewhere. The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the West is a recent phenomenon and has not yet connected with a civil rights agenda.
- Domination of federal policy by urban concerns has led to concentration of federal program funds in metropolitan areas.
- Specific policy on rural areas has been relegated to the states, which in turn have set their own priorities in line with federal policy and funding.
- A mismatch exists between the education-reform solutions favored by the dominant national philanthropies—for example, school choice and competition—and what is possible in low-density rural areas.

Thus, the low priority placed on rural education is built into the ways various institutions work. Consequently, rural education issues are not accorded serious consideration.

How to move rural education issues to the front burner? That question motivates the work of the Rural Opportunities Consortium of Idaho task force. We hope to show that all Americans have a stake in the success of rural education, and to give elected officials and philanthropists practical guidance on how they can make a positive difference.

This paper and the series it introduces is written for audiences who have not been paying much attention to rural education issues. These include federal and state officials, philanthropists, and private citizens who care about public policy—often called the “NPR audience”—and whose interest must be captured if the problems are to be addressed seriously.

• MEANINGS OF “RURAL” •

Traditionally, rural is defined in two ways: objectively, in terms of size of place and distance from major cities, and subjectively, in terms of community feeling, intimacy, and interdependency among individuals and families.⁴ These two definitions can, but don't always, identify the same places as rural.

Figure 1 summarizes the objective measures linked to size of place and remoteness. These allow a place to be unambiguously designated rural or not rural based on census and geographic data. It is much more difficult to apply the subjective definition of rural without knowing a place intimately. Some places fit the data-based definition of rural but have lost, or never had, the sense of community, due to population differences, economic tensions, or political divisions. Similarly, there are some communities too near cities to fit the data-based definition of rural, but that nonetheless retain a strong sense of community and other subjective aspects of “ruralness.”

By any definition, rural places are heterogeneous. Aside from size and distance from major settlements, rural areas differ in population composition and diversity; economic base; current trajectory of growth, decline, or stability; political cohesion; and history.

We and others who work on rural education are always challenged to generalize when possible but not to blur important distinctions among rural places.

Rural areas with diverse populations also differ in whether these are integrated—residentially or in schools—or segregated. Rural African American populations in the South are often set apart from

the white populations,⁵ which is also true of newly settled Hispanic migrants in the South and West. However, some rural areas have been racially integrated for a long time, or, as Gary Orfield reports, are integrating more rapidly than cities.⁶

We and others who work on rural education are always challenged to generalize when possible but not to blur important distinctions among rural places. In our work, we try to avoid painting all rural areas with the same brush and steer clear of generalization when it would be misleading. Of course we are not the only ones to face this challenge, as much of the literature and policy writing about rural education tries to base general statements on particular cases.

Different task force members use different definitions of “rural,” depending on the data and research methods available to them. They are free to use the definition of rural that best matches the problem they discuss, but they clearly say which one they are using and why.

OBJECTIVE DEFINITIONS OF RURAL

• Figure 1 •

The US Census Bureau defines a rural area in terms of negatives: it is neither a city with a population of 50,000 or more, nor a cluster of towns and cities with a minimum of 2,500 people each and a maximum of 50,000 people combined. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) starts with the Census Bureau definition and then delineates three kinds of rural areas:

1. **FRINGE:** Less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
2. **DISTANT:** More than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
3. **REMOTE:** More than 25 miles from an urbanized area and also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

These definitions are necessary, especially for analysts using hard data to track economic and population changes. But, as subsequent papers will illustrate, rural is more than simply an attribute of place. It is an attribute of people who do certain kinds of work, on farms and in extractive industries. It is also a set of attitudes, about tradition, close-knit community, a relaxed pace, and a preference for recreation in wild and unpopulated areas. These ways of being rural are not perfectly associated with the hard-data-based distinctions used by the Census Bureau, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), or NCES. People can be “rural” in attitude and modes of employment even if they live in technically urban places (e.g., metropolitan counties) that contain undeveloped areas and small towns.

• THE LINKS AMONG PLACE, EDUCATION, AND OPPORTUNITY •

Because they are small and not economically diversified, rural communities can experience abrupt declines. Certainly, they are not alone in this; there are also big cities, like Detroit, that struggle to recover from a change in the market for a commodity or good they produce.

Rural places, however, are especially vulnerable to changes in climate, economic activity, and tastes for recreation. Currently stable farm communities can be threatened by climate changes that raise temperatures and reduce rainfall. Communities based on mining and other extractive industries can be wiped out by changes in demand or depletion of resources. Other rural areas once too cold or dry for key crops will gain population and wealth as the former places decline.

As future papers from this task force will show, in rural areas there are very tight links among the welfare of a particular business, the numbers of children in school, the willingness of nervous taxpayers to pay for education, and the challenges faced by district and school leaders. Unlike in many urban areas, where the economic changes can balance one another out and schools are not the most important local employer, rural schools can feel the effects of small changes immediately. And, of course, the performance of K-12 schools can also affect the community's ability to attract and keep businesses and the educated people needed to staff them.

Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas write about the “hollowing out” of some economically declining rural communities via a downward spiral in which the most talented leave and those left behind are not educated to their full potential. For such communities—and they are numerous, though not typical—Carr and Kefalas show that rural schools prepare the

ablest to leave for universities and urban careers, but simultaneously neglect the education of children likely to stay. Over time, the remaining rural population becomes less skilled and less adaptable than will be needed for the communities to survive.⁷

Where it happens, rural community decline can have dire effects on children, as the tax base dwindles and the best-educated professionals, including teachers, must find jobs elsewhere. This process took place decades ago in the rural South and upper Midwest, where loss of jobs and population left many communities poor and with weak schools.

The “hollowing out” phenomenon is far from universal. Many rural places have stable or growing economies and attract educated people, including young people who complete higher and graduate education and want to return to their home communities. As Petrin, Schafft, and Mee show, in many rural communities it is the ablest students—those who get the most attention from teachers and are likeliest to take the most demanding courses in school and have access to the best colleges—who are most interested in returning home to live.⁸ This is particularly true in rural communities that are growing economically. Thus, contrary to Carr and Kefalas, whether able rural students contemplate returning home or “getting out of here” is more a consequence of the state of the local economy than a cause of it.

Of course, economic and population growth can bring serious challenges. This is now evident in the West, where the numbers of poor immigrant families have increased. As former itinerant workers settle in rural localities and commute to work as far as a few hours’ drive from home, new, isolated Hispanic communities with many children are appearing. Numbers of new Hispanic students can overwhelm the existing schools, and some communities lack the money or intellectual capital to educate them well. Children in such environments could be doomed to under-education and poverty, putting their communities at risk of becoming isolated enclaves of impoverishment.

In sum, children in rural areas are numerous, important as a source of sorely needed talent, but isolated and vulnerable. Moreover, as subsequent papers will show, rural children, and the adults charged with educating them, are not well supported by federal or state policies.

In sum, children in rural areas are numerous, important as a source of sorely needed talent, but isolated and vulnerable.

• TENSIONS BETWEEN STUDENT-FOCUSED POLICIES AND PLACE-BASED NEEDS •

For good reason, debates about education reform normally focus on outcomes for students. There is no essential difference between a student's private interest and the public interest in her obtaining the education needed to become a competent, self-directing adult who is able to participate fully in the nation's community, economic, and political life. Government policies are made to serve broad purposes and can't expressly accommodate every local context. That is why federal programs like those authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and most state categorical programs, identify students, not places, as their beneficiaries.

However, exclusive concern with student benefit leaves out something important: the country and the individual both have a stake in whether K-12 education helps particular localities remain decent places to live and work. It matters—economically, politically, and culturally—whether a city like Detroit can recover from its economic and social decay. In the same way, it matters whether education contributes to the health of rural areas, home to a valued American way of life.

There is also no better way to motivate a student than by linking what she is learning to the real-world concerns of people in the place where she lives. This is as true of urban as of rural students, who too often do not understand their hometown's cultural assets, or how local people make a living, or why their city is home to some industries and not others.

Education should expand, not limit, horizons. This means helping rural students understand the relative opportunities and benefits of staying in or returning to rural communities, and of moving elsewhere. It also means educating all children well enough so they have

real choices—for example, whether to seek higher education or enter full-time work, and whether to live in their communities of origin or in places with different economic and cultural opportunities.

Similarly, state requirements for teacher certification, class size, and seat time often ignore the needs and capacities of remote areas that have few students in a grade and few college graduates who are not already teaching.

Most federal and state policy initiatives are formulated for urban areas and can be poor fits for rural areas. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) concentrates funding on disadvantaged children in dense urban areas; consequently, rural areas get much less for each disadvantaged child they serve. Similarly, state requirements for teacher certification, class size, and

seat time often ignore the needs and capacities of remote areas that have few students in a grade and few college graduates who are not already teaching.

A tightly knit group of rural education scholars argue for greater attention to place in rural education. This can mean using local environmental and economic issues as foci for teaching and projects, and making sure students understand their hometown histories and values. These prescriptions for pedagogy, which could apply equally well to education in the cities, don't necessarily conflict with the national press for common standards and assessments.

But to some scholars, place-based education has a more radical meaning: resisting state testing and curriculum requirements meant to prepare students for global economic competition.⁹ Convinced that such policies represent corporate colonization, they urge rural educators and parents to resist externally imposed standards, tests, and performance accountability.¹⁰ These scholars would prefer that the rest of the country leave rural schools alone and let enlightened rural educators focus on educating children in ways that motivate them to “reinhabit” rural environments in an egalitarian, non-oppressive, and environmentally sensitive way.

Readers will readily see that our work comes from a different premise—namely that rural children should be well enough educated in a standard way to have a choice about whether they attend and complete mainstream universities, and should be free to choose what work they do and where they live. To attain this freedom, young people need to appreciate their home places and see opportunities for good lives there. But to be free in these ways also means they need education that broadens, rather than narrows, their horizons.

• PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP: A RESOURCE AND A BARRIER •

The difference between the objective and qualitative definitions of “rural” is a major cause of tension between federal and state policy and the needs of particular rural places. Statutes establishing federal and state funding programs use broad census and place definitions to describe the areas that will be eligible for support, and to set conditions for receipt of funds. There are always well-founded complaints, and not just from rural areas, that policies don’t recognize important differences among places and are inappropriate or counterproductive in some.¹¹

The Rural School Problem today, as portrayed by many scholars in the field, is that rural schools have endured 100 years of assault from outside reformers in search of the “one best system” ... and that this assault continues to this day. Not only are rural schools faced with trying to piece together and capitalize on the remnants of their remaining uniqueness, but they must do so under a barrage of ongoing reforms that seek to integrate rural schools into a national system of schooling ... At issue is the complex question of who the schools should serve—the local community, the larger society, or some combination of both?¹²

The literature on rural education strongly critiques major state and federal policies as inappropriate for rural areas. Policy, and the general discourse about rural areas, is seen as characterizing them as “backward and deficient within a rapidly changing and urban-oriented society.”¹³ As a result, some claim, rural students and adults alike seem to have learned that to be rural is to be subpar.¹⁴ Such criticism is of long standing, at least as old

As early as the early 1990s, the “systemic reform” movement—which sought to create common standards for all schools and universalize school practice by aligning curriculum, instructional materials, teacher training, and assessment—caused rural scholars to raise strong objections.

as the rural school consolidation movement.¹⁵ Though criticism has become especially strong since enactment of NCLB, it also applies to earlier policy initiatives such as statewide standards and teacher certification.

As early as the early 1990s, the “systemic reform” movement—

which sought to create common standards for all schools and universalize school practice by aligning curriculum, instructional materials, teacher training, and assessment¹⁷—caused rural scholars to raise strong objections. These focus on standards that reflect requirements for university admission and graduate participation in the national economy, rather than returning to their communities of origin.¹⁸ Objections also target university-based teacher training and “professionalization,” seen as weakening teachers’ community ties while privileging people with “outside” skills and perspectives, as well as “subvert[ing] intellect and feeling.”¹⁹ As a respected commentator writes, “These changes have transformed educators and educational leaders from autonomous, responsive practitioners into technocrats enacting sets of prescribed, rationalized tasks. That is, ‘if it doesn’t raise test scores, it is not relevant to my job.’”²⁰

These criticisms have been amplified since enactment of NCLB in 2002. Articles in rural education journals frequently characterize NCLB as a neoliberal policy based on the belief that “the well-being of society is most effectively achieved by enhancing entrepreneurial individualism and maximizing individual freedom of choice via privatization.”²¹

The rural-focused attack on NCLB is best summed up by Kai Schafft, who argues that educational reform typified by standards, testing, and choice for families in low-performing schools “has increasingly led rural school administrators to see community improvement and educational improvement as competing and opposing priorities, a zero-sum game.”²²

Rural scholars are not alone in criticizing NCLB on many of these grounds.²³ In general, the tension between national standards and local (even neighborhood) particularism shoots through our national discourse about the roles of government and philanthropy in education. Though critics in the rural education literature argue that NCLB ignores the distinctiveness of rural schools and communities,^{24, 25} most of their objections have exact parallels in more general attacks on the law, specifically that it

- forces local educators to narrow school curricula to focus on tested subjects;
- drives out teaching about local history and culture;
- can lead to firing of teachers who, though not conventionally well-qualified, provide necessary links to community culture and history;
- imposes a climate of fear and self-protection on teachers and principals;
- holds out false promise of options for families in localities where no real schooling alternatives are possible;
- introduces the possibility of competition and job insecurity to localities where it is already extremely difficult to hold onto teachers;
- imposes the agendas of national politicians and philanthropists (including privatization) on localities whose assets and needs they do not understand;²⁶ and
- subordinates the aspirations of communities to the goals of maintaining American global dominance.^{27,28}

The one critique of NCLB that distinctly reflects rural concerns is that it imposes impossible specialization requirements on small rural schools where most teachers must cover many subjects.

Rural sociologists and education scholars are not alone in accusing NCLB's framers of trying to replace community-governed public education with corporate-provided, profit-oriented, business-run schools. Critics of New Orleans schools post-Hurricane Katrina hit many of the same themes, particularly about imposition of cosmopolitan standards, cultures, and people on tightly knit neighborhoods where, even if schools were not high-performing, parents and neighbors felt respected and secure.²⁹ Other authors sum it up by saying that "neoliberal designs on rural teaching recreate educators as agents for multinational corporations."³⁰

These concerns are probably more intense in the academic literature than anywhere else. Even in that literature, it is clear that some groups of parents in rural areas are eager to have their children prepared for life and work outside their community of origin. This is true even for those who might hope their children, or at least some of them some of the time, will return to the rural life.³¹ For such parents, preparing young people to work as professionals or skilled workers in a dynamic world economy is not the same as molding them to meet the needs of a particular firm.

In the same literature condemning policies that impose universal expectations on rural schools, many rural educators clearly acknowledge that students must be prepared to choose among many possible life courses. This surely reflects educators' concern for the futures of the children they teach, in ways recently documented by Petrin, Schafft, and Mee.³² It could, of course, also be a consequence of the professionalization of educators that authors like Theobald and Howley decry.

As Woodrum demonstrates, rural localities are seldom as homogeneous or united as some rhetoric would suggest.³³ Many contain a number of "communities" defined variously by ethnicity, income, occupation, and connections to the outside world. These communities are sometimes in conflict. Policymakers in Washington, DC, or state capitals might take actions that please or strengthen one set of such "communities" within a rural place while displeasing or weakening another. This is equally true of scholars who take sides in favor of traditional rural ways of life and against greater integration with the broader society and economy. As Kannapel and DeYoung, writing about the future of research on rural schools, conclude,

As for rural school reformers, they may have to abandon some ideas of rebuilding communities and schools of the past, and focus on how to build the communities of the future. The industries and technologies that created many of them no longer exist, but new industries and technologies may provide opportunities to regroup and move forward. Both brands of reformers should also give some serious thought to where they stand on the issue of the intrinsic value of intellectual pursuits. Education aimed at rural economic development is as anti-intellectual as education aimed at global economic competitiveness.³⁴

Similarly, Kai Schafft poses the big question for the future of scholars concerned about rural schools: "How do we prepare ourselves and our children to live lives that are local and global?"³⁵

• GETTING RURAL EDUCATION THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES •

The issues defined here deserve more attention, and more resources, than have been devoted to them. This not a new discovery; the facts presented above have been

Rural education has remained a back-burner issue for top national policymakers and philanthropies.

available for years, and many individuals and organizations have worked hard throughout their careers to improve rural education. However, rural education has remained a back-burner issue for top national policymakers and philanthropies.

For those who know rural education issues, the initial research by the task force will break some new ground and go over some old. There is extensive academic literature about rural schooling, covering everything from district leadership and financing to methods of instruction.³⁶ Much of it has real relevance to the problems defined here, but it usually stays inside the rural research community. Our work builds on and translates that body of work, without forcing readers to take a crash course in the literature. It breaks new ground in several ways.

In the research to come, task force members:

- put the problems of rural education in a broad context, considering how it interacts with trends in economic development, links between education and personal income, and community changes being driven by the aging, urban-to-rural migration, and the settling-out of formerly itinerant agricultural workers;
- explore new ways that rural schools can recruit and keep talented educators, make imaginative uses of the money they receive from state and local sources, and exploit technology to increase student engagement and school performance; and
- examine the regulatory and political constraints that can prevent imaginative problem solving in rural education, and suggest how they can be overcome or removed.

In the forthcoming research, task force members move from the general—the economic, political, and policy context for rural education—to the specific problems faced by rural schools and how they might be solved.

• ENDNOTES •

- 1 Four-year graduation: large cities 64.1%, rural 79.9%, suburban 80.7% total enrollment in colleges and universities large cities 48.1, rural 33.4, suburban 43.0 Enrollment in graduate and professional programs urban 7.6, rural 3.2, suburban 5.9 for males 6.8, 2.2, 5.0
- 2 Hoxby, Caroline and Christopher Avery, The Missing "One-Offs:" The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low Income Students, Paper presented at the Spring 2013 Brookings Panel on Economic Activity, Washington D.C. March 21-22, 201.
- 3 Snyder, Anastasia and Diane McLaughlin, Rural Youth are More Likely to be Idle, Durham NH, The Carsey Institute, Fact Sheet #11, Winter 2008
- 4 See Eppley, K. (2009). Rural schools and the highly qualified teacher provision of No Child Left Behind: A critical policy analysis. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 24(4). P. 5. "Rurality" as a social and cultural construct (as opposed to a bureaucratically-delineated category) implies a deep connection to place; the rural place is much more than simply a backdrop to one's life."
- 5 Carr, S. (2012). In Southern towns, 'segregation academies' are still going strong. The Atlantic. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/12/in-southern-towns-segregation-academies-are-still-going-strong/266207/>
- 6 Orfield, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2008). The last have become first: Rural and small town America lead the way on desegregation. Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project.
- 7 Carr, Patrick and Maria J. Kefalas, *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America*, Beacon Press 2009.
- 8 Petrin, Robert, Kai A. Schafft, and Mee, Educational Sorting and Residential Aspirations Among Rural High School Students: What Are the Contributions of Schools and Educators to Rural Brain Drain? *American Educational Research Journal* April 2014, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 294–326.
- 9 See Howley, Craig, The Meaning of Rural Difference for Bright Rednecks, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. Vol. 32, No. 4, 2009, pp. 537–564. The author writes: "[Rural schooling shares the miseducative purposes common to American schooling in general (i.e. purposes associates with sustaining American global economic domination). He also urges rural educators to prepare students for work lives that... might include self-provisioning, neighborly mutuality and cooperation, improvisation and reuse, invention and use of appropriate technology, small-scale enterprise ("cottage industry"), biodiverse farming, logging with horses, refusal of bad schooling, and so forth."
- 10 David A. Gruenewald The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place, *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 3–12
- 11 Kannapel, P., & DeYoung, A. (1999) p67-79.
- 12 Kannapel, P., & DeYoung, A. (1999). The rural school problem in 1999: A review and critique of the literature. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 15(2), 70
- 13 Schafft, Kai A., Conclusion, in Schafft, K. and A.L. Jackson. *Rural Education for the Twenty-First Century: Identify, Place, and Community in a Globalizing World*, University Park PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010, p. 275
- 14 Theobald, Paul and Kathy Wood, Learning to be Rural: Lessons from History, Schooling and the U.S. Corporate Media, in Schafft and Jackson 2010 p. 17
- 15 Bard, J., Gardener, C., & Wieland, R. (2006). National Rural Education Association report: Rural school consolidation: History, research summary, conclusions, and recommendations. *The Rural Educator*, 27(2), 40-48.
- 16 Woodrum, A. (2004). State-Mandated Testing and Cultural Resistance in Appalachian Schools: Competing Values and Expectations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 19(1).
- 17 Kannapel, P. (2000). Standards-Based Reform and Rural School Improvement: Similarities, Differences, Prospects for the Future. Charleston, WV: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

- 18 DeYoung, A. J., & Lawrence, B. K. (1995). On Hoosiers, Yankees, and Mountaineers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77 (2), 104-122
- 19 Theobald, P. and C. Howley, Public Purpose and the Preparation of Teachers for Rural Schools, *The Teacher Educator*, 33 (3) 150-164. For a more sanguine view of the effects of common academic standards for all teachers see Monk, D. H. (2007). Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers in rural areas. *Future of Children*, 17(1), 155-174.
- 20 Schafft, 2010, p. 280.
- 21 Schafft, 2010, p. 278
- 22 Schafft, 2010, p. 281
- 23 See Ravitch, Diane, 2011, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, New York, Basic Books. See also Guisbond, Lisa, Monty Neill and Bob Schaeffer, 2012, *NCLB's Lost Decade for Educational Progress: What Can we Learn from This Policy Failure?* 2012, Jamaica Plain MA, National Center for Fair and Open Testing, and Nichols, S. & Berliner, D. 2007. *Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America's Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- 24 Powell, D., Higgins, H. J., Aram, R., & Freed, A. (2009). Impact of No Child Left Behind on curriculum and instruction in rural schools. *The Rural Educator*, 31(1), 19-28.
- 25 Eppley, K. (2009). Rural schools and the highly qualified teacher provision of No Child Left Behind: A critical policy analysis. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 24(4).
- 26 Butler, T., & Edmondson, J. (2012). Sustaining a rural Pennsylvania community: Negotiating rural literacies and sustainability. In K. Donehower, C. Hogg & E. E. Schell (Eds.), *Reclaiming the rural: Essays on literacy, rhetoric, and pedagogy* (pp. 223-237). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. See also Corbett, M. (2010). Wharf talk, home talk, and school talk: The politics of language in a coastal community. In K. A. Schafft & A. Y. Jackson (Eds.), *Rural education for the twenty-first century: Identity, place, and community in a globalizing world* (pp. 115-131). University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- 27 See Theobald, P., & Howley, C. (1998). Public purpose and the preparation of teachers for rural schools. *Teacher Educator*, 33(3), 150-164. [National standards] enlist even rural backwaters in the national effort to safeguard the global economic dominion of the U.S. political economy"
- 28 Edmondson, J., & Butler, T. (2010). Teaching school in rural America: Toward an educated hope. In K. A. Schafft & A. Y. Jackson (Eds.), *Rural education for the twenty-first century: Identity, place, and community in a globalizing world* (pp. 150-172). University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- 29 See Johnson, Cedric, ed., *The Neoliberal Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, Late Capitalism, and the Remaking of New Orleans*, Bloomington, University of Minnesota Press 2011
- 30 Edmonson and Butler 2010, p. 162.
- 31 For evidence that many rural young people experience conflict between their career and income aspirations and their attachments to their places of origin, see Hektner, J. M. (1995). When moving up implies moving out: Rural adolescent conflict in the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 11(1), 3-14. See also Seal, K. R., & Harmon, H. L. (1995). Realities of rural school reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(2), 119-125.
- 32 Petrin, Robert, Kai A. Schafft, and Mee, Educational Sorting and Residential Aspirations Among Rural High School Students: What Are the Contributions of Schools and Educators to Rural Brain Drain? *American Educational Research Journal* April 2014, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 294-326
- 33 Woodrum, A. (2004). State-Mandated Testing and Cultural Resistance in Appalachian Schools: Competing Values and Expectations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 19(1). See also, Corbett, Michael, Wharf Talk, home Talk and School Talk, the Politics of Language in a Coastal Community, in Schafft and Johnson 2010.
- 34 Kannapel and DeYoung 1999, p. 71
- 35 Schafft, 2010, p. 286
- 36 Kai Schafft, a 2013-2014 member of the Task force, is the editor of the main journal in the field, the *Journal of Research in Rural Education*. Another key practitioner-oriented journal is *The Rural Educator*, published by the Rural Education Association.

© 2014 ROCI • RURAL OPPORTUNITIES CONSORTIUM OF IDAHO •



This report carries a Creative Commons license, which permits noncommercial re-use of content when proper attribution is provided. This means you are free to copy, display and distribute this work, or include content from this report in derivative works, under the following conditions:



Attribution. You must clearly attribute the work to ROCI, and provide a link back to the publication at <http://www.rociidaho.org/>.



Noncommercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes without explicit prior permission from ROCI.



Share Alike. If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a license identical to this one. For the full legal code of this Creative Commons license, please visit www.creativecommons.org. If you have any questions about citing or reusing ROCI content, please contact us.