



DEVELOPMENTS IN RURAL EDUCATION POLICY & RESEARCH

November 2014

Funding Opportunities for Rural Education

No new developments

Research, Commentary, or Other Developments in Rural Education

Gearing Up to Teach the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics in Rural Northeast Region Schools

Kirk Walters, Aubrey Schoepner Torres, Toni Smith, Jennifer Ford
REL Northeast and Islands, November 2014

[Article](#)

This study focuses on the implementation of Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM) in the rural Northeast. Together with the Rural Northeast Districts Research Alliance, the Research Education Lab Northeast and Islands focused on two questions: 1. What are states and districts doing to help rural teachers? 2. What challenges and needs do educators in selected rural northeastern region districts face as they prepare to implement the CCSSM?

While administrators at the state and district level in the four states studied (Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont) have hosted professional development workshops, created websites, and hosted regional meetings focused on helping teachers with the standards, only eight percent of teachers in these states believe they are “well prepared” to implement the standards. Interviews with state-level administrators found that they had not created specific supports or resources for rural teachers. Instead, teachers find support from colleagues at regional meetings and professional development workshops. Unfortunately, most of these workshops (which 60 percent of surveyed teachers have participated in) focus on content knowledge, rather than developing skills or familiarizing teachers with CCSSM resources.

Teachers in the rural northeast appear to struggle most with implementation. Though only 58 percent of surveyed teachers have read the standards carefully and understand them well, 91 percent believe that they have integrated elements of CCSSM into their teaching. The extent of implementation varies, with some teachers reporting that they are teaching one CCSSM-aligned lesson and others incorporating multiple units into their classes. An additional challenge to implementation is presented by the lack of quality resources, with 75 percent of administrators reporting that they have struggled to find CCSSM aligned curricula.

Based on the findings from their survey of state and district level administrators and rural teachers, REL Northwest and Islands proposed several next steps to help guide implementation efforts:

- Teachers should have more opportunities to meet and share resources both within and across schools as well as across districts and states

- Further research should be conducted on available CCSSM-aligned resources and a system should be developed for evaluating these resources

Perceptions of Safety by On Campus Location, Rurality, and Type of Security/Police Force: Case of the Community College

Robert C Patton, Dennis E Gregory

Journal of College Student Development, July 2014

[ERIC Abstract](#)

Researchers surveyed the 11,161 students enrolled in Virginia's community college system in order to gain an understanding of perceptions of on-campus safety. With media discussions of college crime rising in recent years, the authors hypothesized that the national attention may have changed the way students felt about crime, and in particular violent crime. They wanted to understand what crimes students were afraid of falling victim to and where they felt most and least safe on campus based on their demographic group, age, the type of security personnel present on their campus, and the location of their school.

The authors found significant differences between students' perceived safety at rural and urban campuses. They also write that there were differences in students' perceived safety within the rural areas (using three USDA ERS RUCC codes). Finally, they note that the single campus with the highest perceived safety is a rural school, where the security force consists of a part-time night security guard. However, they say very little about these findings or what they mean.

While the authors seek to examine the effects of rurality on perceptions of campus safety and observe differences between urban and rural campuses, they do not provide an analysis or potential explanations for why rurality affects student perceptions of safety.

Using Digital Stories to Understand the Lives of Alaska Native Young People

Lisa Wexler, Kristen Elinton, and Aline Gubrium

Youth and Society, July 2014

[ERIC Abstract](#)

Researchers used multimedia projects (digital stories) to better understand how rural Alaska Native (Inupiaq) youth respond to the tensions of growing up in a world that has changed dramatically from the time of their parents and grandparents. Though there is a significant body of research on how identity struggles are linked to health and social problems among native youth, little work has been done that looks at how these young people may be creatively responding to these tensions.

In order to address this gap, the researchers created a set of digital storytelling workshops in 12 rural schools in northwestern Alaska, a region with a predominantly Native population. The only potential incentive for participation in the workshops was a DVD of the student's story at the end of the five-day workshop.

The researchers focused on Inupiaq youth in middle in high school in northwestern Alaska, analyzing over 270 of their digital stories. Each story consisted of a three to five minute visual narrative, combining still images, video, voice recordings, music, and text. Sixty of these stories

were coded as thematic exemplars or outliers and tagged as noteworthy. A final 31 stories were then selected for further coding. These 31 stories were chosen based on themes as well as the students' gender, age, and residence (videos were selected from all 12 villages participating in the project).

The formal coding process was designed to examine specific Inupiaq values such as family, humor, love for children, and responsibility to the tribe. Though 91 percent of the videos featured family and friends as a central theme, the researchers found that these mostly included older relatives, babies, or peer-group friends, with a significant lack of young adults (20-30 years old) in the videos. The three broad themes featured in the 31 exemplary videos were: important relationships (often inter-generational), self-representations, and areas of achievement. Boys' sites of achievement focused on the outdoors while girls' were more likely to include scholastics and supporting others (video footage of a cousin's graduation).

While the researchers did not look at issues of rurality, their examination of digital stories has interesting implications for work with native youth. The researchers found that the themes highlighted from the videos point to a need to look beyond traditional public health models that focus on the individual and instead turn to interactions between members of the community. Future research should also look to better understand and interpret the lack of young adults in the digital narratives.

The Effects of Increased Learning Time on Student Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes: Findings from a Meta-Analytic Review

Yael Kidron, Jim Lindsay
REL Appalachia, June 2014

[Article](#)

Researchers conducted a meta-analysis of studies that have sought to measure the effect of increased learning time on student outcomes. In particular, researchers asked, "are increased learning time programs effective for students in urban/suburban/rural schools?" Though there are over 7,000 studies on increased learning time, only 30 met the meta-analysis' requirements for scientific rigor, defined here as a research design capable of yielding strong evidence about the outcomes of the program or intervention.

The meta-analysis included studies that showed positive academic effects from increased learning time as well as some that showed no positive effects from these programs. The researchers conclude that there is no program that meets the needs of all students. Overall, the researchers found that there was a lack of research on extended learning programs in rural areas. Several of the studies included in the meta-analysis included rural schools, but none focused on the intersection between rurality and increased time. In fact, no recent studies on rural education met the researchers' criteria for scientific rigor.

The researchers suggest that one factor contributing to the lack of rural education research may be the lack of access to community-based resources in rural areas, compared to suburban and urban areas. These resources, such as partnerships with higher education institutions or local nonprofits, help support extended learning time programs. Limited access to these resources means fewer programs can be included in studies – scientifically rigorous or not.

The authors suggest that future research should look at whether the effects of these programs that have been observed in urban and suburban settings cross over to rural communities as well.