



roci
RURAL OPPORTUNITIES
CONSORTIUM OF IDAHO

The Supply and Demand for Rural Teachers

DAN PLAYER

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Webinar aims



1. Provide a brief overview of the general public teacher labor market
2. Illustrate trends over time for rural and non-rural schools
3. Provide context for Idaho's teacher labor market
4. Offer a few recommendations that arise from the analysis
5. Take questions



Primer on teacher trends

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) raised concerns about large-scale teacher shortages due in part to the requirement of highly effective teachers in every classroom

The retirement of baby boomers has further heightened concerns of a looming teacher shortage

Thus far, a nationwide shortage of teachers has not materialized

“...the dearth of qualified teachers is largely a myth.”
(Podgursky 2006 in Education Next)

Shortages are localized



There are some shortages...

...In particular subjects

- Math
- Science
- Special education

...In particular schools

- High poverty
- Low parental involvement
- Low support from school leadership

What about rural schools?



More isolated

Fewer community amenities (shopping, etc.)

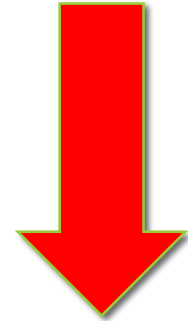
Fewer opportunities for specialized teaching

Greater pressure in the community to be a teacher 24x7

Better connection to parents and community

Lower cost of living

Greater access to outdoor amenities





What we do know

1. Teachers tend to teach near where they grew up
2. Teachers tend to work in the same type of school (rural, urban, suburban) in which they grew up
3. Rural regions have lower college-going rates than suburban or urban communities

Therefore, rural areas may face a smaller pool of potential teaching candidates than other non-rural areas



This study

Uses four waves (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011) of the Schools and Staffing Survey, a nationally representative survey of public districts, schools, and teachers

- Roughly 8,000 schools per wave
- Roughly 30,000 teachers per wave

Survey covers school structure, teacher background, teacher attitudes, teaching practices, etc.



Defining Rural

Urban schools: Inside cities with a population of at least 100,000

Suburban schools: In urbanized territories outside urban areas

Town schools: In urban clusters within 35 miles of urban areas

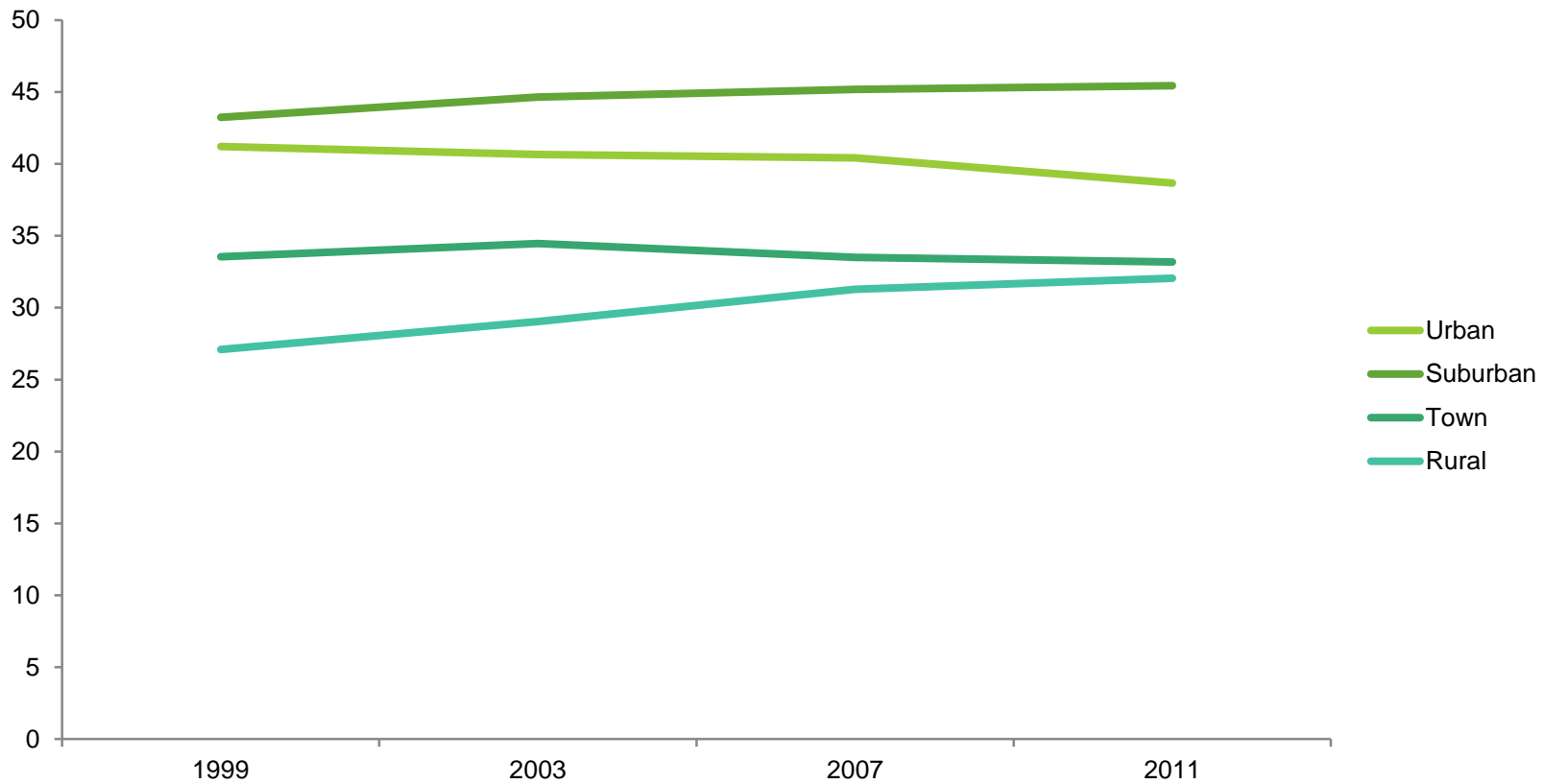
Rural schools: In census defined rural areas at least 2.5 miles from urban clusters

- Rural fringe: rural area 2.5 to 5 miles from an urban cluster or urban area
- Rural distant: rural area 5 to 25 miles from urban area
- Rural remote: rural area at least 25 miles from urban area

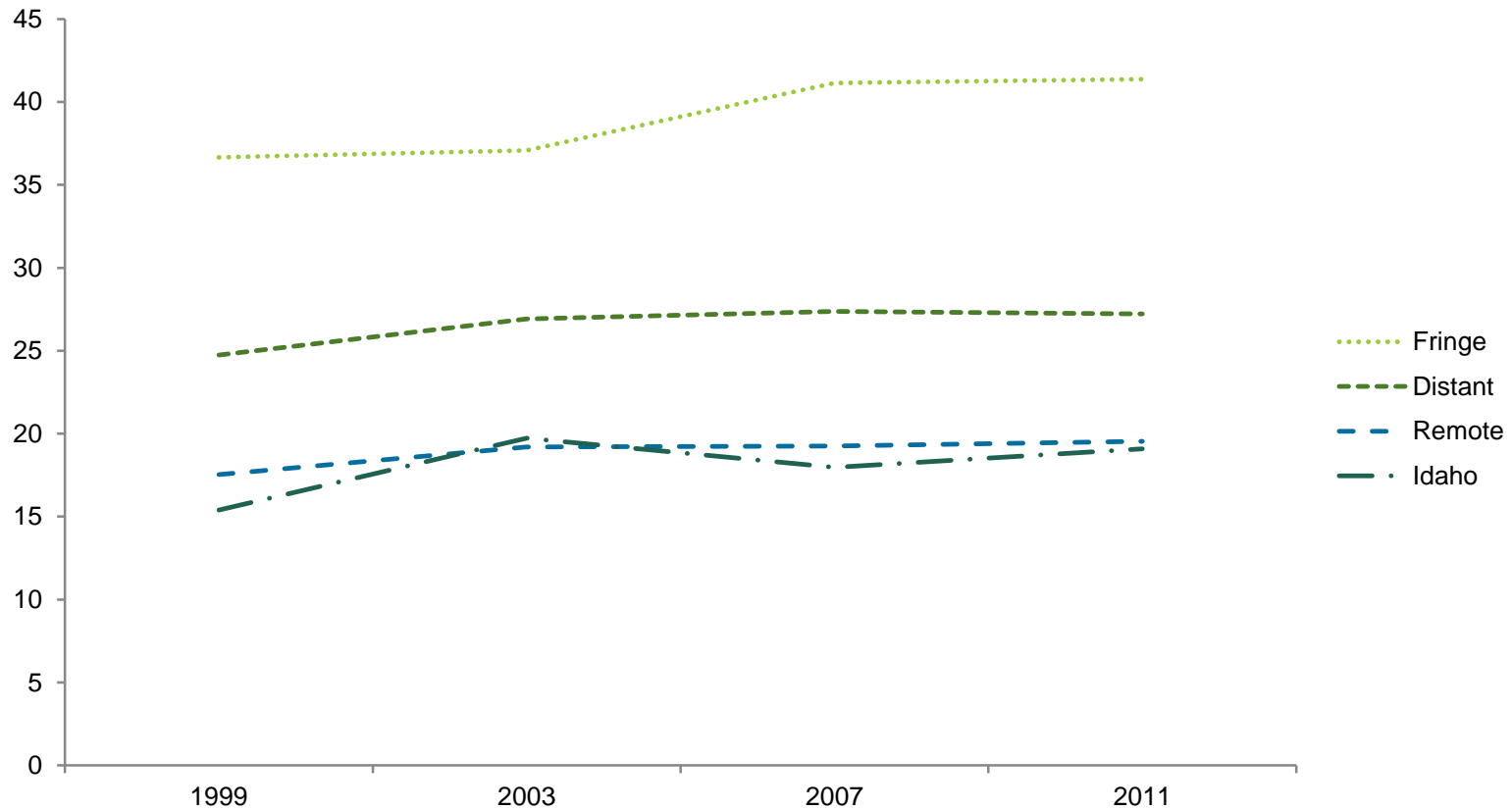


Teacher Vacancies

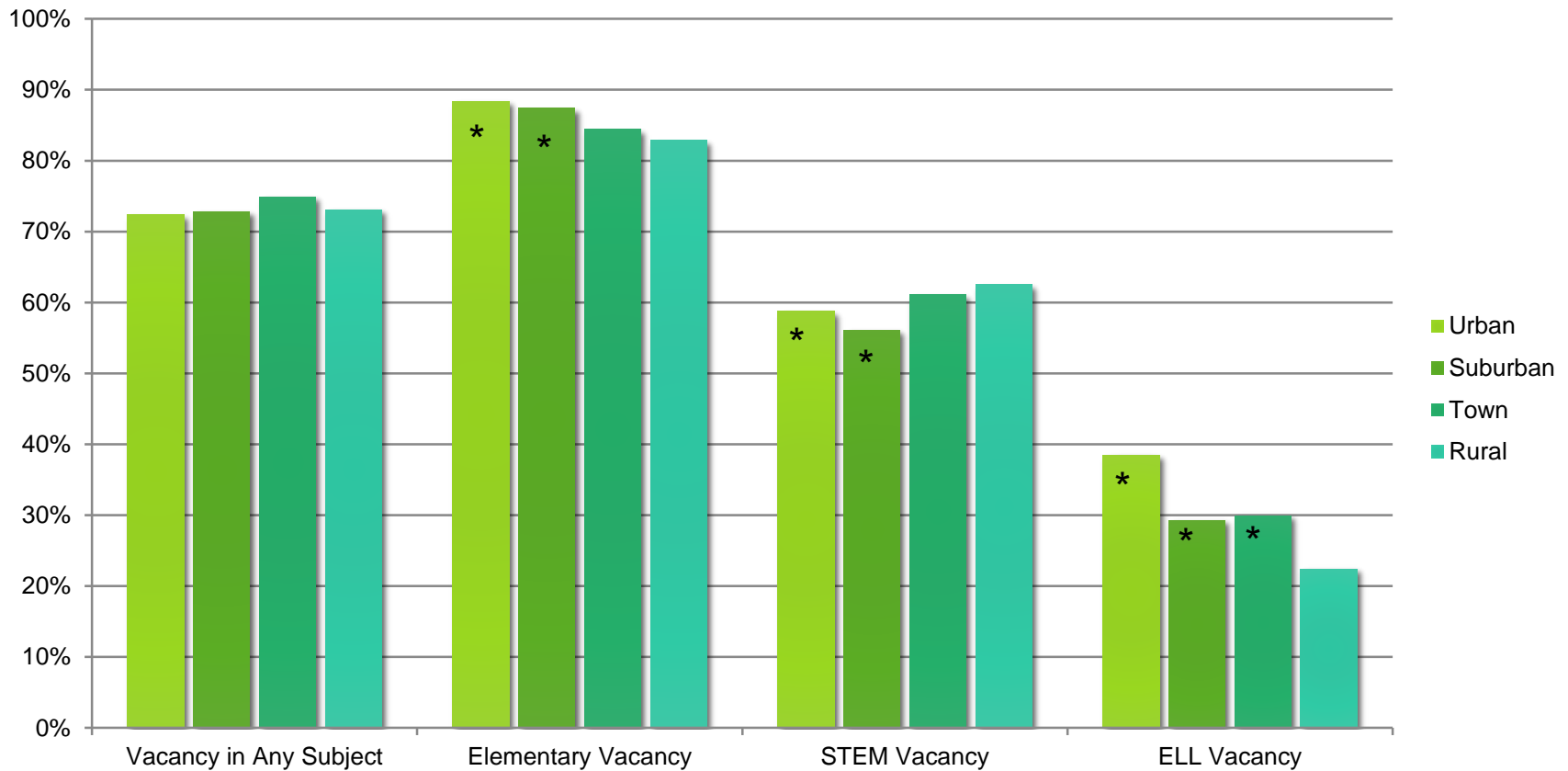
Trends in teachers per school



Teachers per school in rural areas

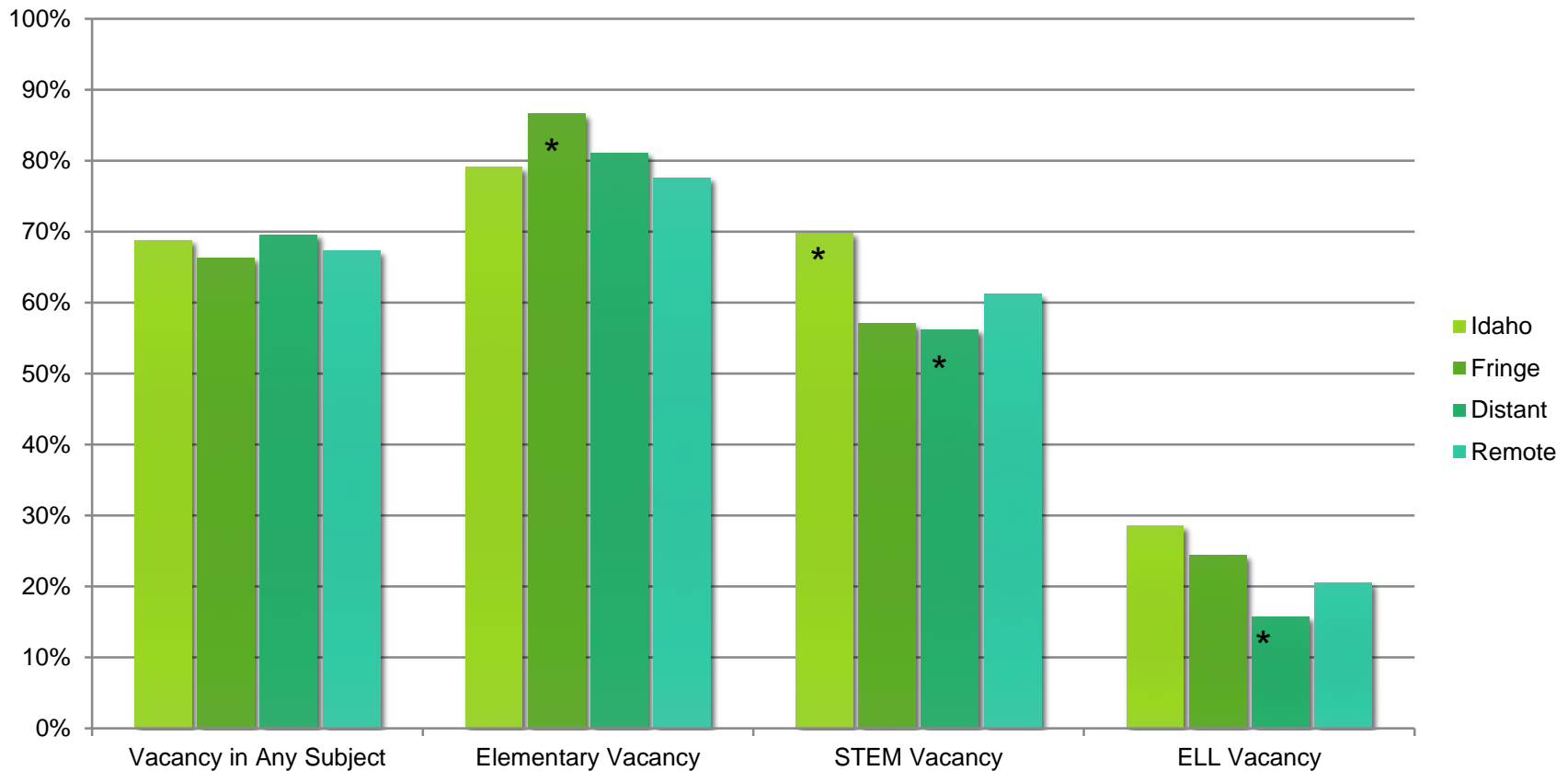


Vacancies



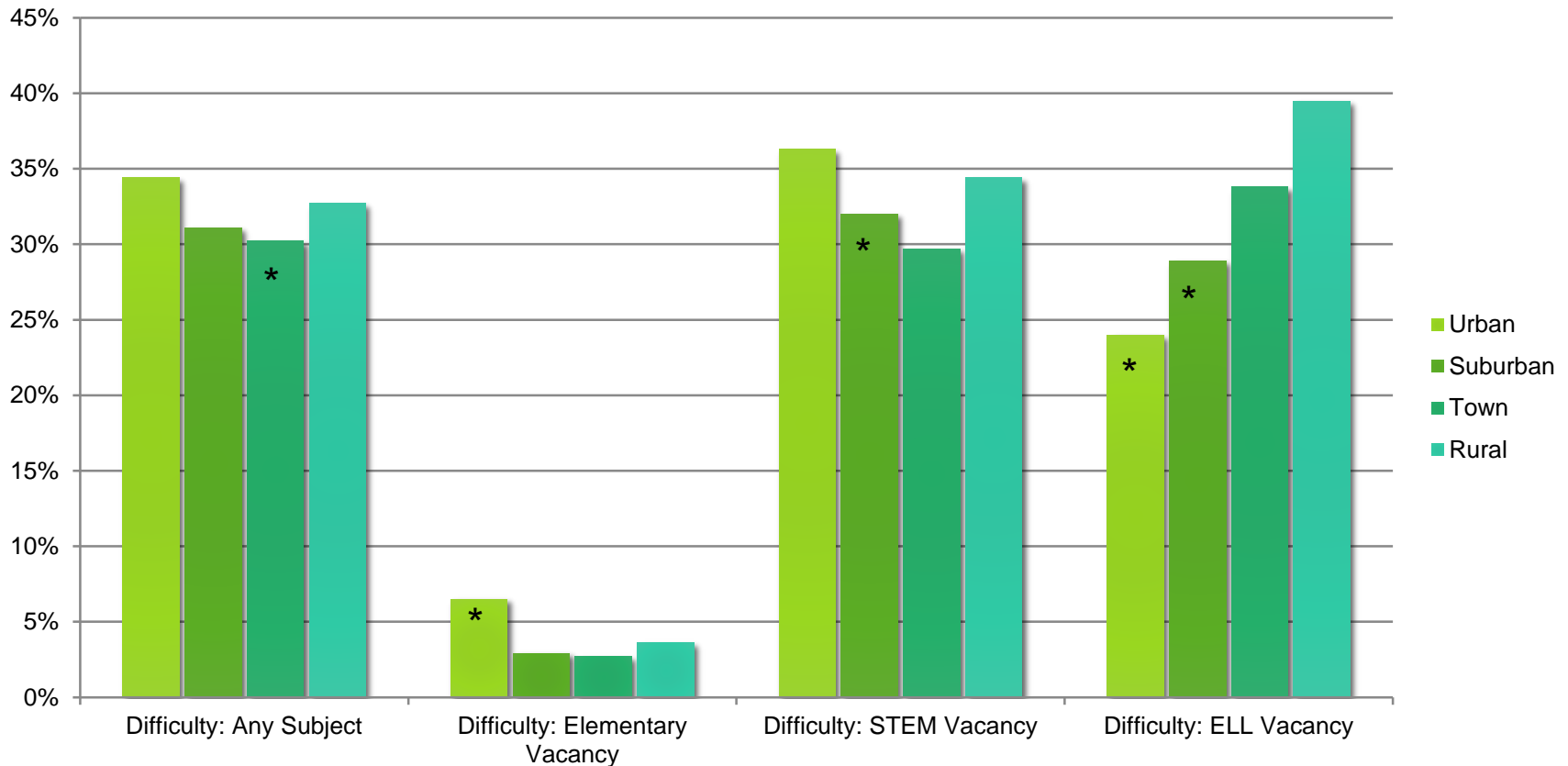
* Indicates different from rural at $p < .05$

Vacancies: rural



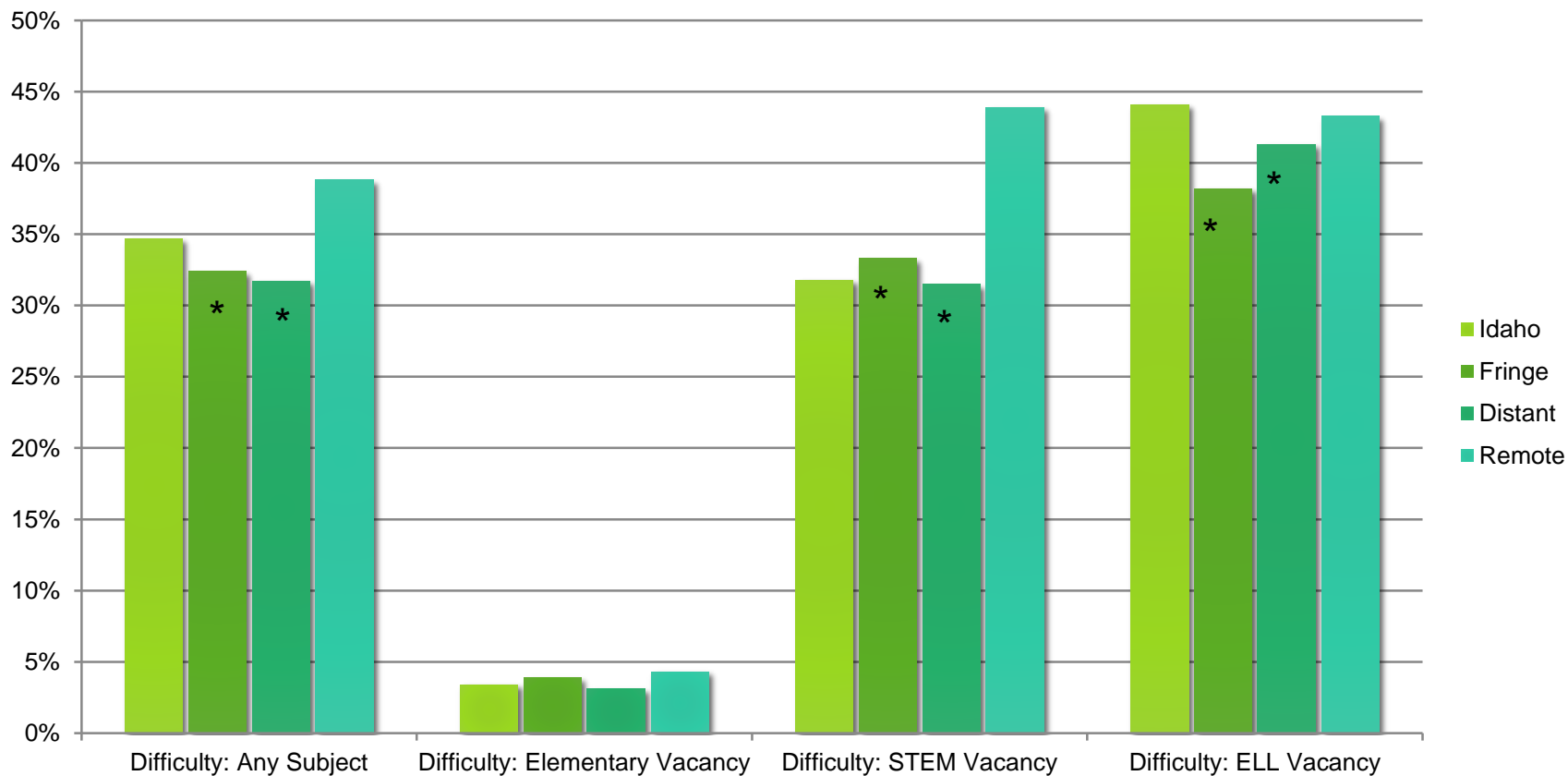
* Indicates different from remote rural at $p < .05$

Difficulty filling vacancies



* Indicates different from rural at $p < .05$

Difficulty filling vacancies: rural



* Indicates different from remote rural at $p < .05$

Summary



Rural schools had fewer vacancies to fill

After accounting for school size, vacancies occurred at roughly the same rate across school types

No large differences in the expressed difficulty of filling vacancies across school types

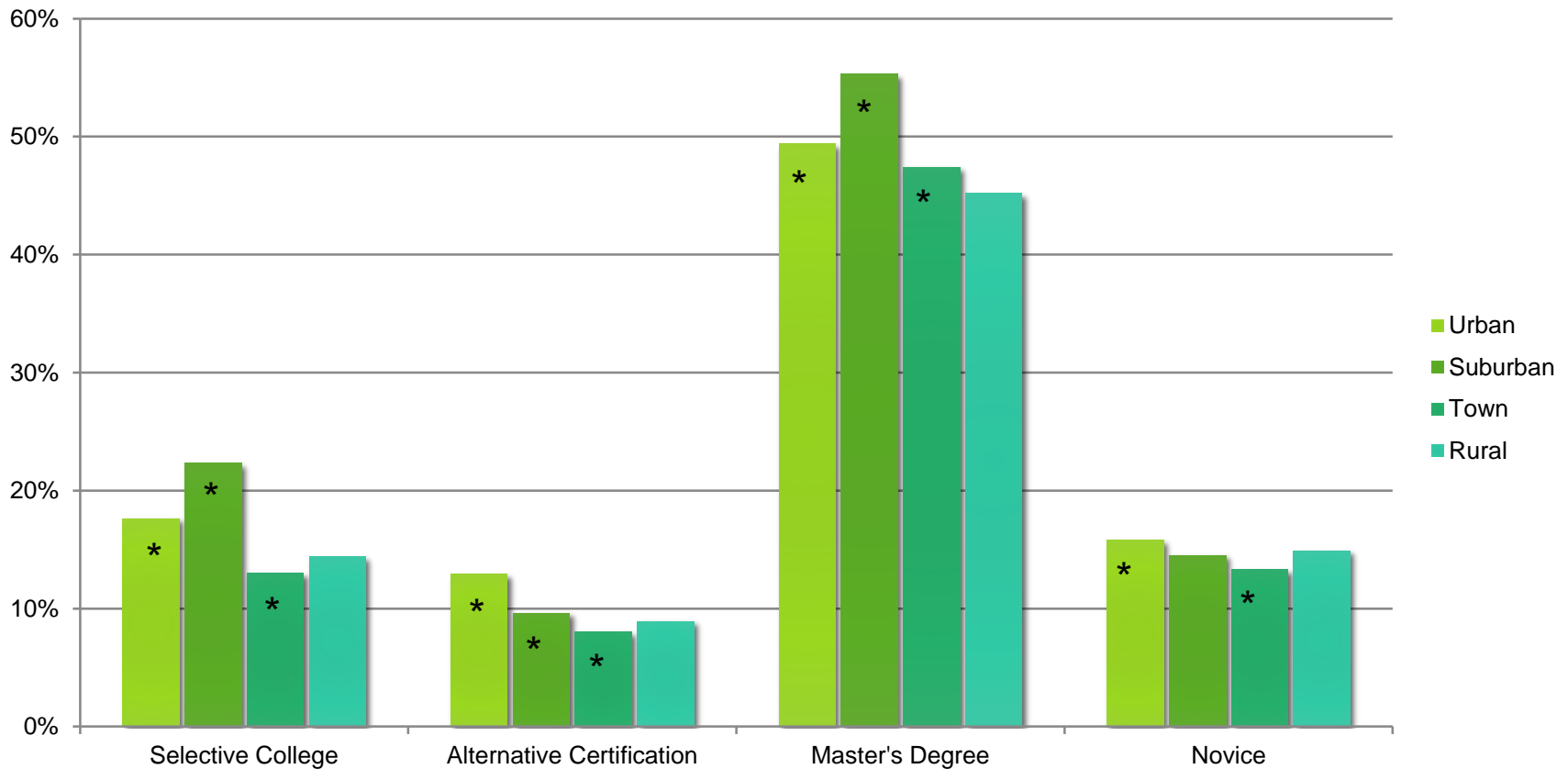
The greatest difficulty for rural schools came in filling ELL and STEM vacancies



Teacher Characteristics

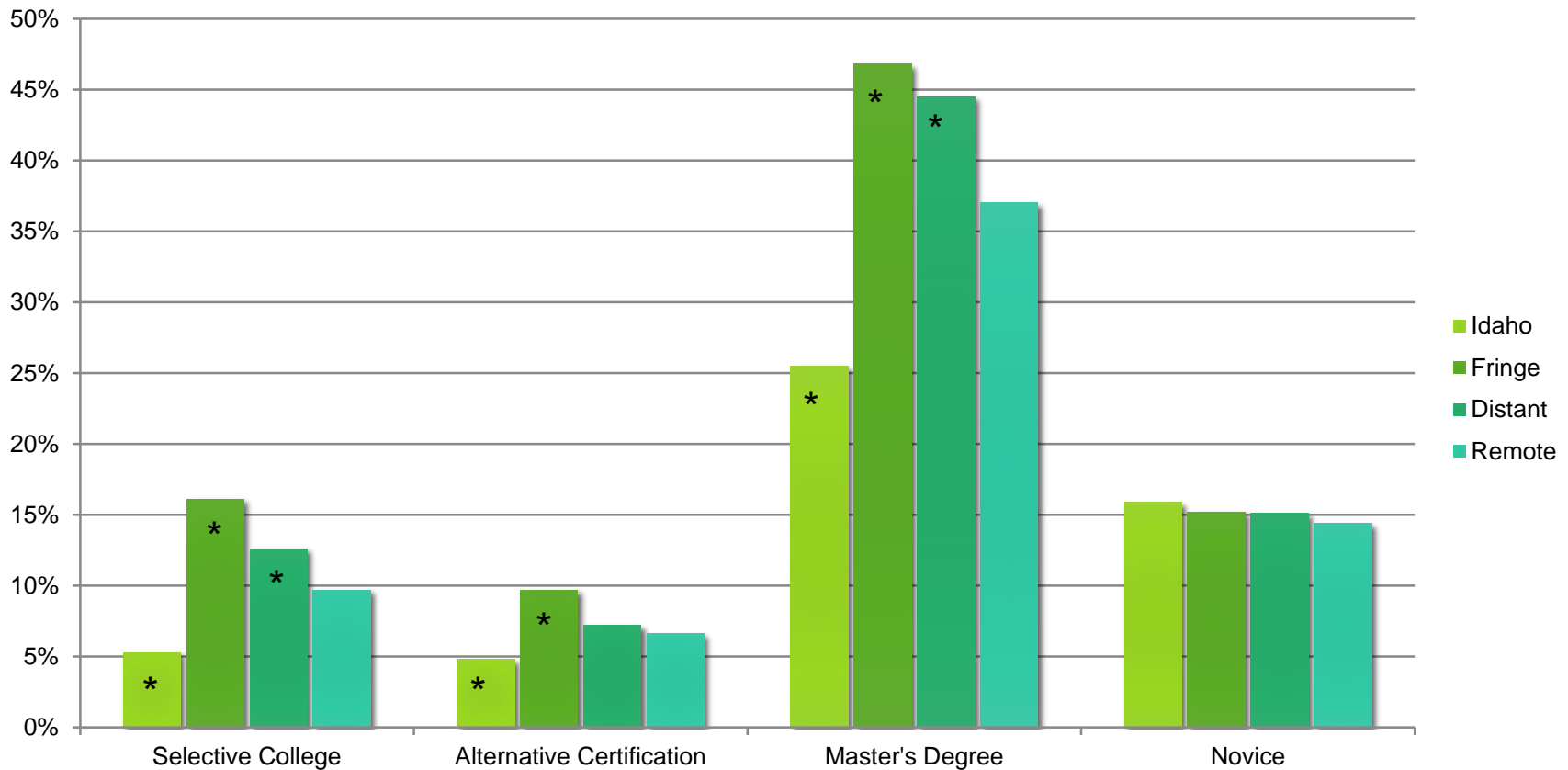


Teacher Characteristics



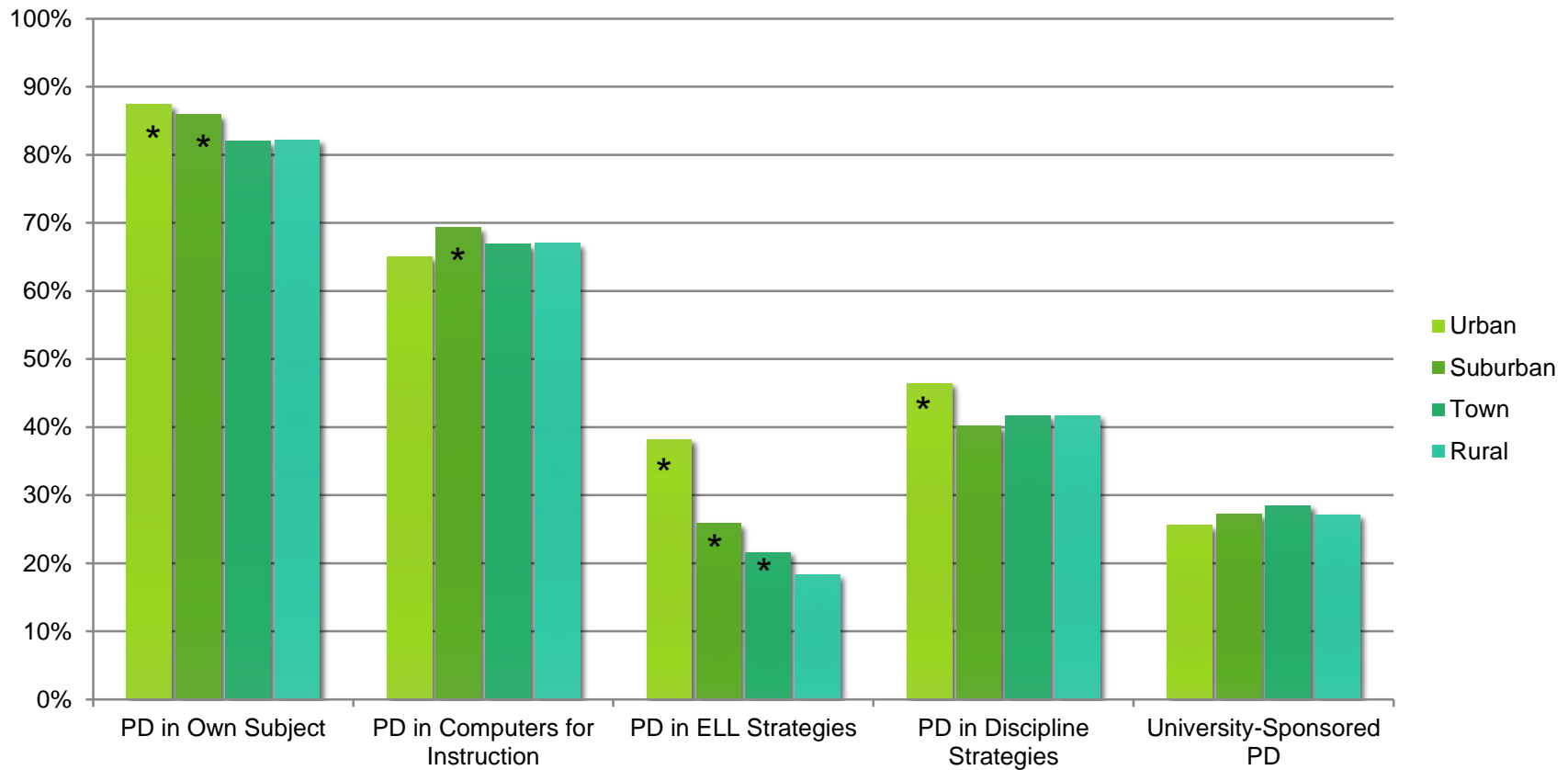
* Indicates different from rural at $p < .05$

Teacher characteristics: rural

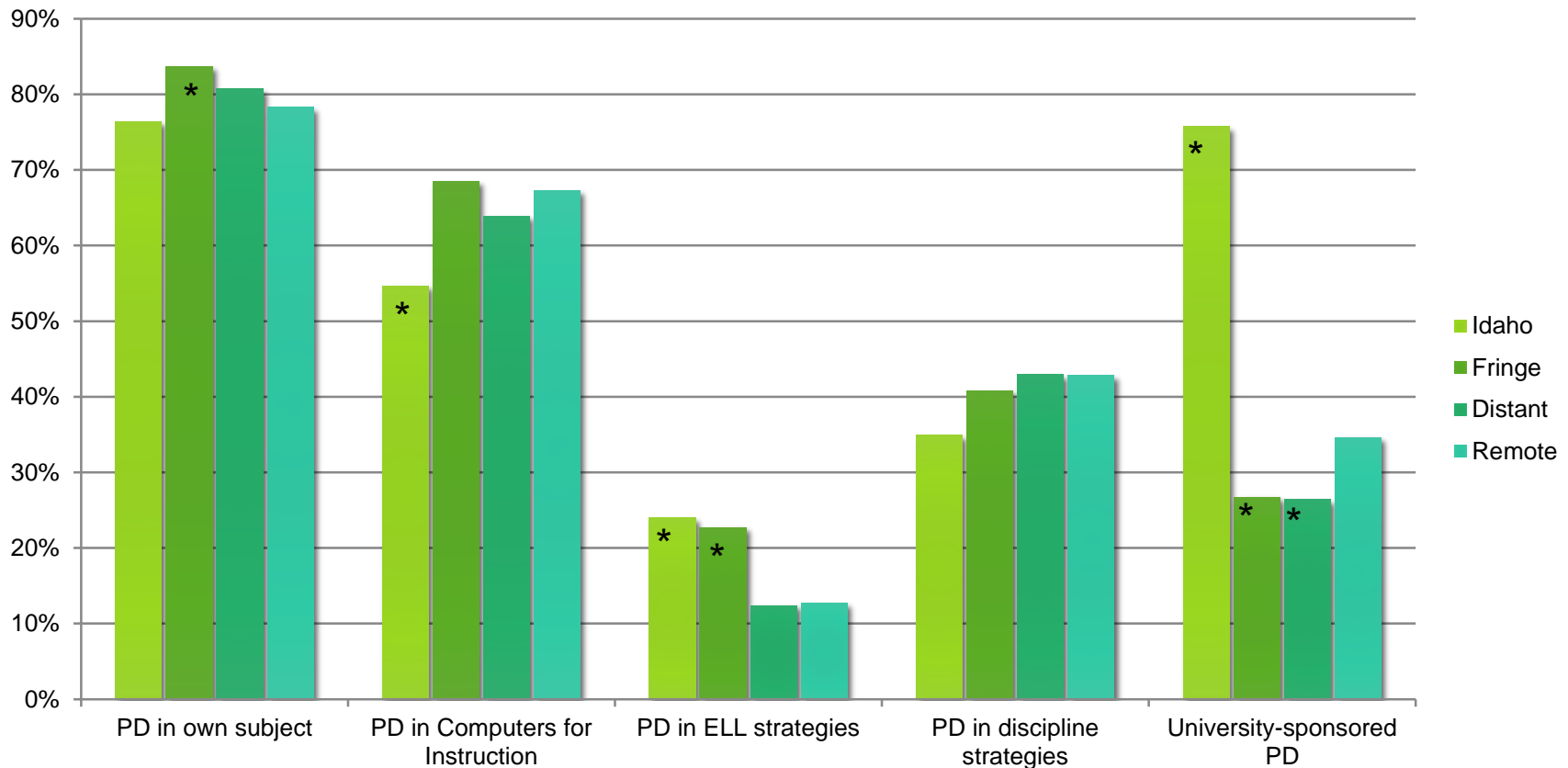


* Indicates different from remote rural at $p < .05$

Professional Development



Professional Development: rural



Summary



Teachers in rural areas are less likely to have graduated from a selective college or to hold a master's degree, and the difference is quite pronounced in Idaho

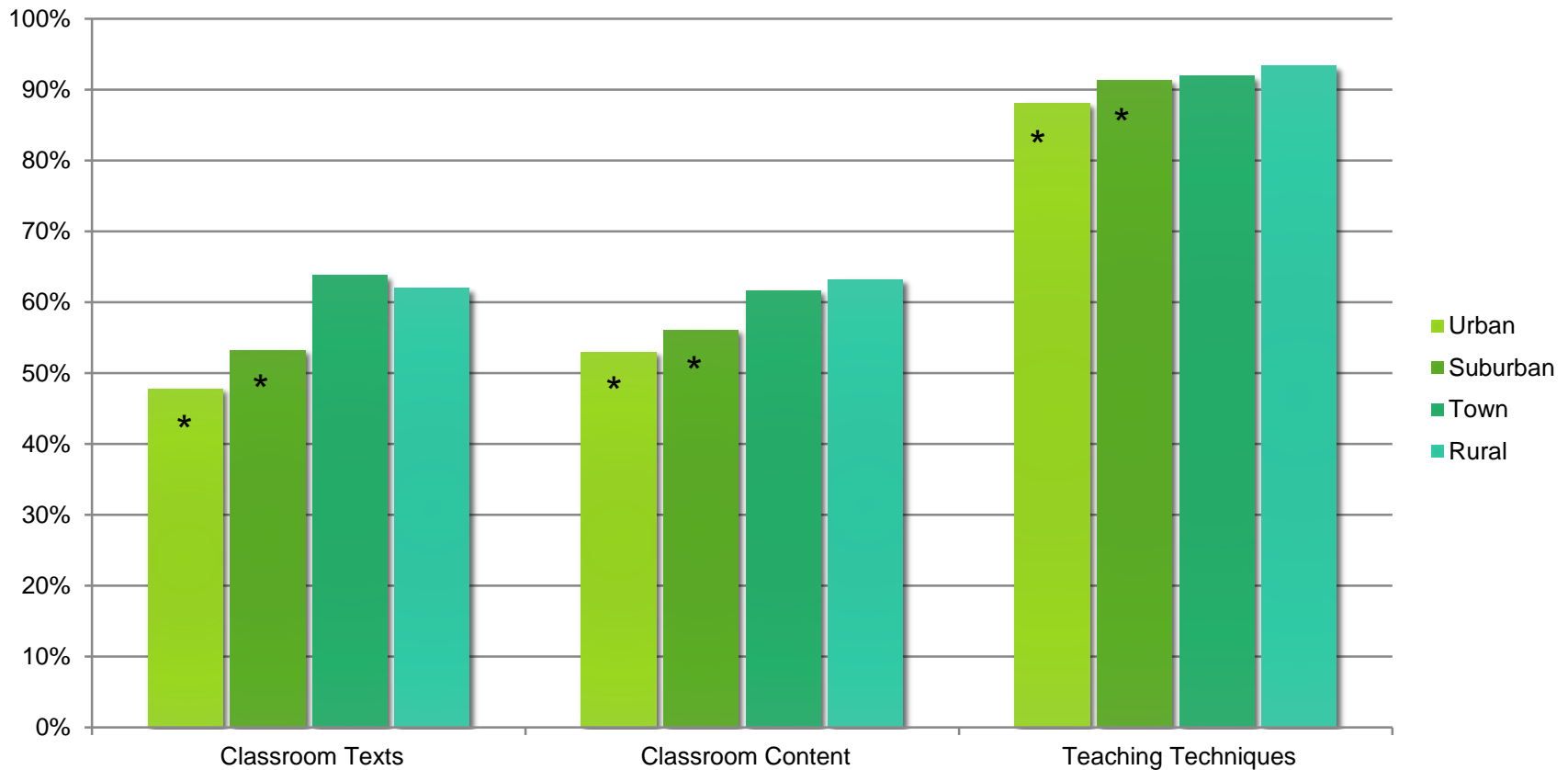
There is not much evidence to suggest big differences in teacher experience in rural and non-rural areas

Rural areas participate in less professional development (PD) on average, but have as much access, if not more, to university sponsored PD.



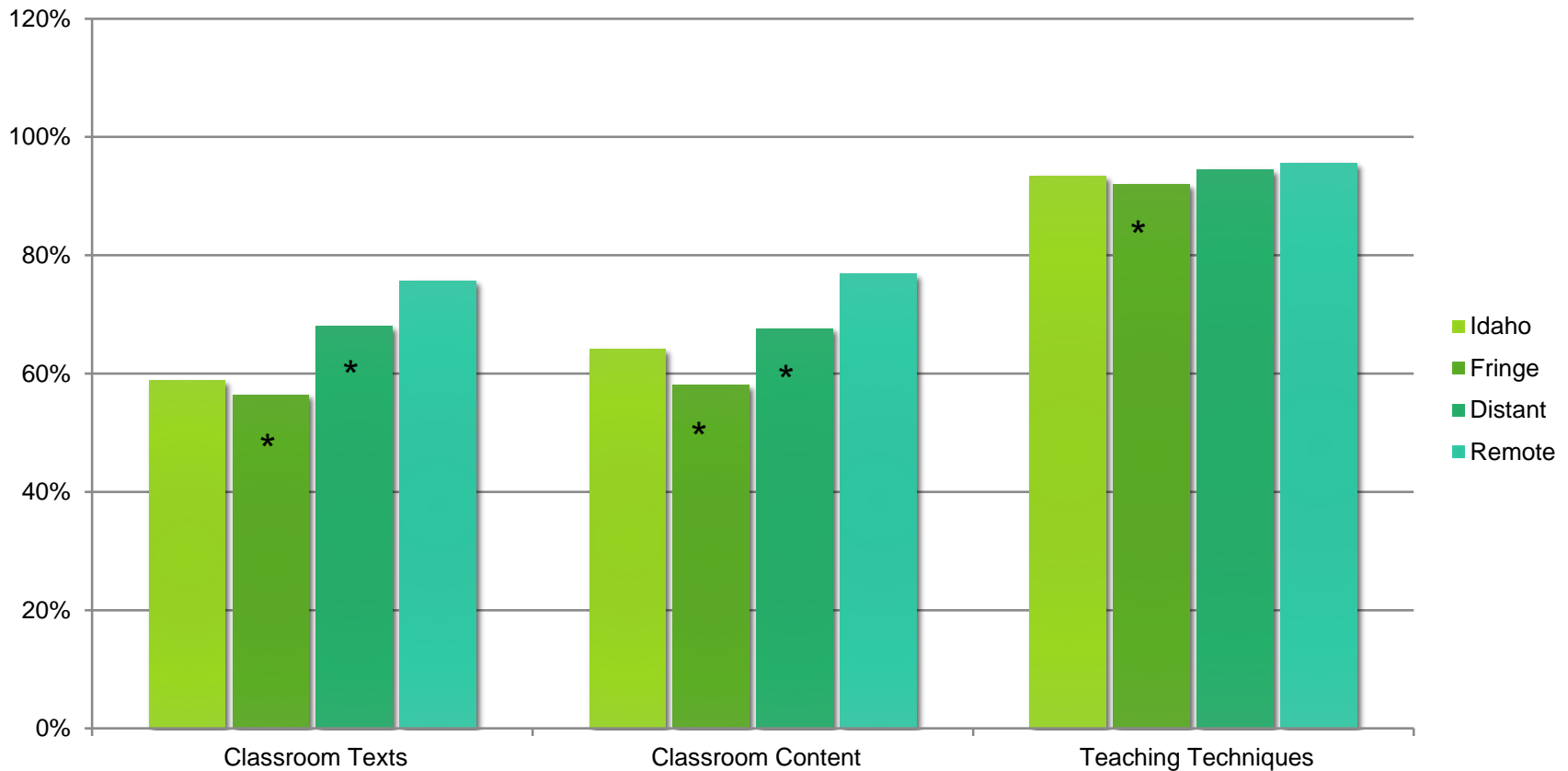
Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher influence in classroom decisions



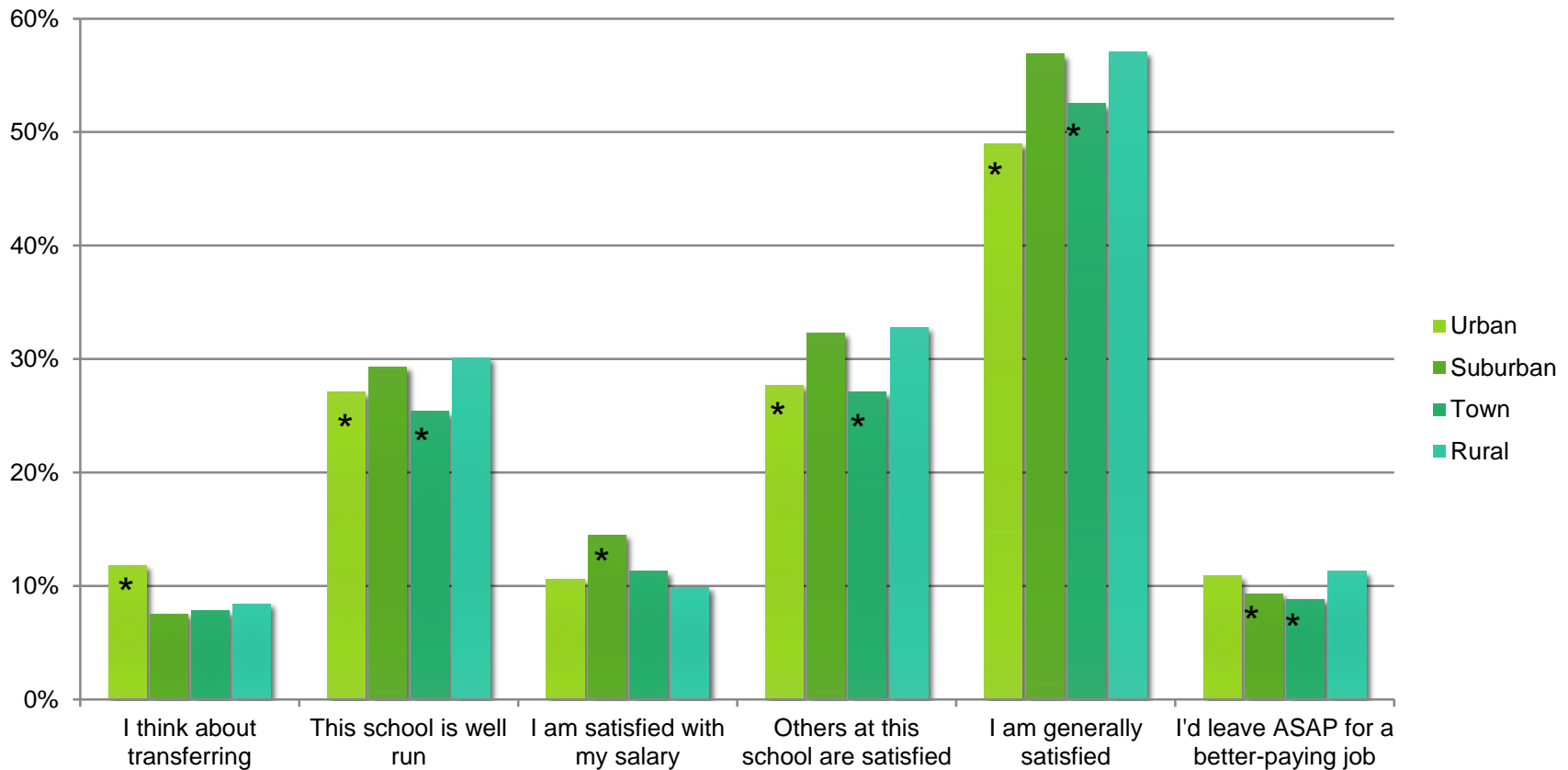
* Indicates different from rural at $p < .05$

Teacher influence in classroom decisions: rural



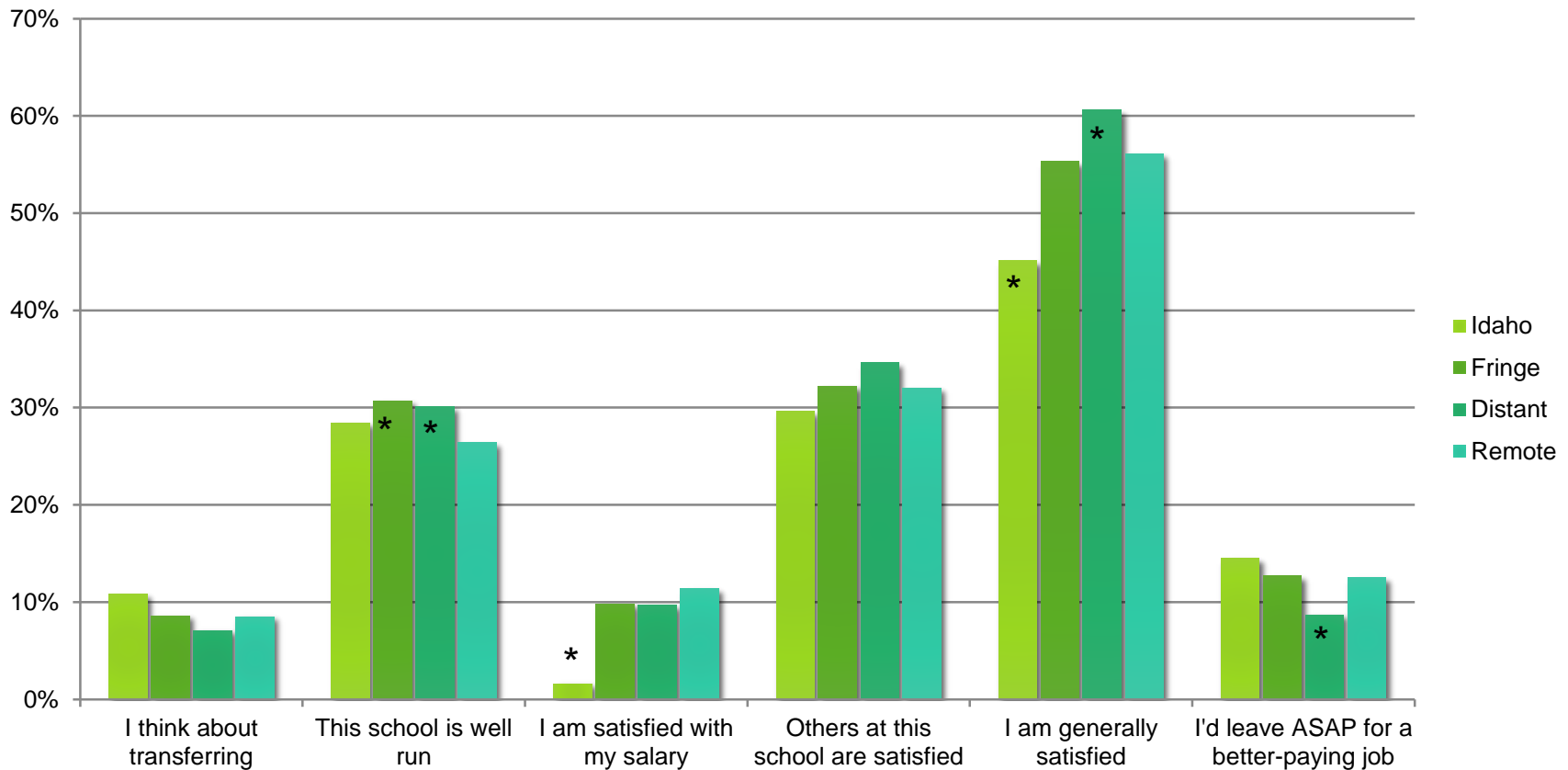
* Indicates different from remote rural at $p < .05$

Teacher job satisfaction



* Indicates different from rural at $p < .05$

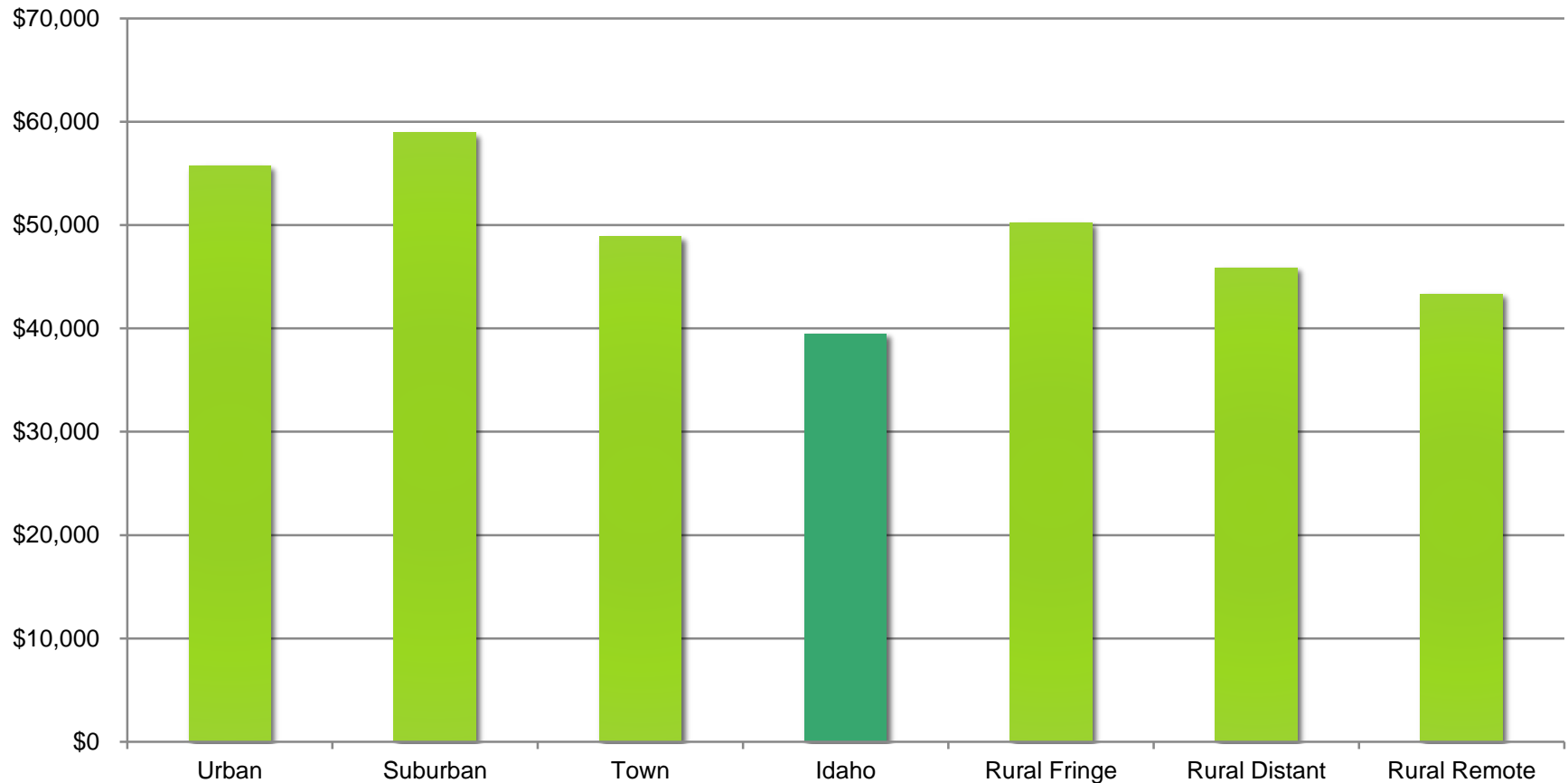
Teacher job satisfaction: rural



* Indicates different from remote rural at $p < .05$



Total school earnings



Summary



Rural areas may offer more autonomy and flexibility than other places

Teachers in rural areas are as satisfied, and often more satisfied, than their non-rural counterparts

The area of greatest concern appears to be with salary

Idaho teachers express significantly lower satisfaction overall than other places



Takeaways

1. Not much evidence of more pronounced difficulty filling vacancies in rural areas
2. Teachers in rural areas are different on observable characteristics than teachers in non-rural areas
3. Teachers in rural areas appear to feel more control and autonomy in their classrooms
4. On the whole, teachers in rural areas appear to be at least, if not more, satisfied with their jobs than others
5. The area of greatest discontent among rural teachers appears to be with salaries



Recommendations

Focus on recruiting and retaining quality in targeted ways

Examine the role of salaries, and other financial incentives, in recruiting teachers

Explore innovative recruiting initiatives that emphasize the desirability of teaching in a rural community