



# NATIONAL FORUM TO ADVANCE RURAL EDUCATION



Photo Credit: SeanPavonePhoto

Photo Credit: Chattanooga Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Register by November 3**

**REGISTER NOW!**  
**JOIN US NOVEMBER 16-17, 2023 • NEW: Pre-Conference, November 15, 2023**

Chattanooga Marriott Downtown • Chattanooga, TN



Learn more at [www.nrea.net/Convention\\_and\\_Research](http://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research)  
[#RuralEdForum](https://twitter.com/RuralEdForum)



# JOIN US IN-PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

The National Forum to Advance Rural Education is one of the country's leading rural education conferences. The event is designed to create an environment for collaboration and innovation with a diverse community of attendees from across the United States.

Join us for the opportunity to discover and experience the latest rural innovations, best practices, research, and more.

## A HYBRID EVENT

The 2023 National Forum to Advance Rural Education will be hybrid again this year. A hybrid event allows attendees and presenters to select the format that works best for them.



### IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

*Join us for inspiring  
keynotes, high-*

*quality professional learning,  
and networking with experts  
and practitioners from around  
the country—all in-person in  
Chattanooga. In-person  
attendees also have access to all  
on-demand sessions.*



### VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

*Join us virtually  
and watch and*

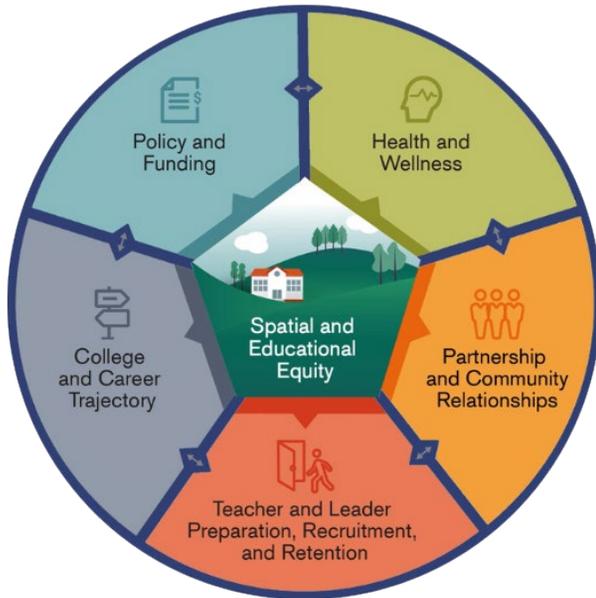
*engage from your office  
or at home. You'll have  
the opportunity to join us  
for livestreamed general  
sessions and access to 50+  
on-demand sessions.*

## 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 YOU CAN EXPECT



This year's event will explore the six themes of NREA's Rural Research Agenda

*Designed in Collaboration with NREA's Research and Higher Education Committee*



2 days of in-person learning



150+ Learning sessions (live and pre-recorded)



Inspiring keynotes & speakers



24/7 Access to on-demand learning



Networking opportunities



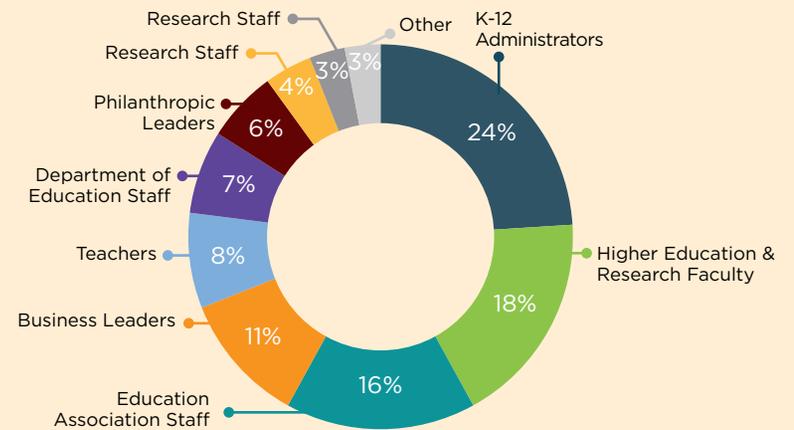
Opportunity to earn contact hours

## 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

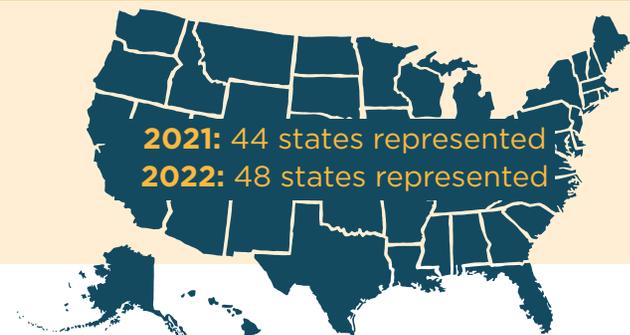
### ATTENDEES



### ATTENDEES BY TITLE



### ATTENDEES BY STATE



# NEW FOR 2023!

## PRE-CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 15, 1-4 P.M. RAISING RURAL: POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

- *Do you use data to inform educational strategy, instructional practices, or policy decisions?*
- *Are you seeking to make data more meaningful and actionable for your stakeholders—educators, families, community leaders, policymakers, etc.?*
- *Are you seeking to connect data and information to tell a story about your strategic vision, priorities, and impact?*

**If you answered YES to one or all of these questions,** you should plan to attend the 2023 Raising Rural: Policy, Practice, and Research Pre-Conference.

The National Rural Education Association is proud to present this NEW pre-conference to explore components of NREA's rural research agenda and highlight impactful programs in education and our communities. Here's what you can expect:



Engaging panel discussion with rural researchers



Connect and network with hundreds of rural education leaders from across the country



Hear from leading research and policy advisors and practitioners leading change in their communities



8 learning sessions (choose 2)

Whether you're a rural administrator or educator, a research, policymaker, business or community leader, this event is designed for anyone seeking to make research and data more relevant, accessible, and actionable for their stakeholders.

### SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

- 12-1 p.m. **Registration & Welcome Refreshments**
- 1-2:30 p.m. **General Session: Closing the Research-Practice Gap**
- 2:40-3:10 p.m. **Learning Sessions** (Choose 1 of 4)
- 3:20-3:50 p.m. **Learning Sessions** (Choose 1 of 4)
- 4-4:15 p.m. **Closing**
- 4:30-6 p.m. **Early Registration & 2023 Welcome Party**

### REGISTRATION — Register by: November 3

**PRE-CONFERENCE ATTENDEE, NOVEMBER 15** \$100

Learn more and register at [www.nrea.net/Convention\\_and\\_Research](http://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research)

**REGISTER EARLY!  
SPACE IS LIMITED TO 200 ATTENDEES  
FOR PRE-CONFERENCE.**

Learn more at [www.nrea.net/Convention\\_and\\_Research](http://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research)  
**#RuralEdForum**

## PRE-CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 15

# GENERAL SESSION

1-2:30 P.M.

**Room:** Plaza A&B

### CLOSING THE RESEARCH-PRACTICE GAP:

#### How Do We Make Research and Data Relevant, Accessible, and Actionable?

Being able to understand, translate, and tell a story with data and research is a valuable and necessary skill—particularly to clearly understand the issues, barriers, and opportunities confronting rural education and rural communities.

Hear from researchers and education leaders from across the country who will discuss how to make research and data more relevant, accessible, and actionable for rural practitioners, communities, and policy makers. Panelists will examine NREA's 2022-2027 Rural Research Agenda and explore:

- Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) and what they look like in a rural context.
- The conditions to develop rural RPPs.
- How equity plays a role in research collaboration.
- How to utilize research and data to tell stories that address the questions practitioners, state education agencies, and policy makers have about their students, schools, and communities.

## PANELISTS

**Jennifer Ash:** *Director, National Center for Rural Education Research Networks, Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University*

**Cat Biddle:** *Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Maine*

**Loni Crumb:** *Associate Professor, Counselor Education Program, East Carolina University*

**Annah Rogers:** *GRAD Partnership Lead, The University of West Alabama*

**Susan Schroth:** *Operations Director, North State Together*

**MODERATOR: Taylor McCabe-Juhnke:** *Executive Director, Rural Schools Collaborative*

## PRE-CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 15

# LEARNING SESSIONS

2:40-3:10 P.M.

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

### Rural Student Success: A Collaborative Approach

**Presenters:** Taylor McCabe-Juhnke, Rural Schools Collaborative; Susan Schroth, North State Together; Annah Rogers, The University of West Alabama  
As part of a new national initiative, The GRAD Partnership for Student Success, Rural Schools Collaborative is working with two regional hub partners, North State Together and University of West Alabama, to launch pilot cohorts of participating schools in California and Alabama. The 20 diverse rural schools received a matched support grant and technical assistance to implement new student success systems to help rural students reach on time graduation. Student success systems use research-based data and indicator frameworks to help address pandemic learning loss and support a holistic student-centered learning approach. Hear about the first year of the pilot project and explore best practices for creating high quality student success systems in rural schools.

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

### Condition of Education in Rural Areas—Data from Education Across America Resource Hub

**Presenter:** Xiaolei Wang, National Center for Education Statistics  
The Education Across America: Cities, Suburbs, Towns, and Rural Areas website is designed for those who are interested in the condition of education in different geographic locales in the United States (i.e., cities, suburbs, towns, and rural areas). This website includes data produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that cover all locales. Using data from this resource hub, representative from NCES will present the condition of education in rural areas, and highlight differences in educational experiences and resources, as well as student outcomes, between rural/urban status (i.e., locale). The representative will also explore the resource hub that is available for stakeholders to gather data important to them and their communities.

## PRE-CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 15

# LEARNING SESSIONS

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

### **Effective Partnerships in Service with Rural Communities**

**Presenters:** Rebecca Houston and Nichelle Shuck, CARE Corps, Rural Education Institute East Carolina University; Frances J. Herring, Lenoir County Public Schools; Rodney L. McNeill, Greene County Schools; Julie Cary, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain; Tracy L. Cole, East Carolina University Community School

Learn more about the AmeriCorps program at East Carolina University, Collaborative Action in Rural Education (CARE) Corps. The program's goal is to create equitable, resilient spaces in schools and communities through partnerships and service pathways of tutoring, teaching, and mental health support within rural communities. The program's goal is to engage over 100 AmeriCorps members in service to over 3,500 youth in Eastern North Carolina. Receive an overview of how program staff develop partnerships and engages members in national service. Hear about implementation lessons from year one of CARE Corps service curriculum and how they will build on future forums that will focus on the rural cultural wealth framework, equity, and resilience for AmeriCorps volunteers serving in Eastern North Carolina.

**Room:** East-West

### **Still Leading Rural: Listening Some More**

**Presenters:** Sarrah Grubb, Indiana University Kokomo; Jim LaPrad, Western Illinois University

In light of our role as the EDIT committee focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and knowing that school administrators as practitioners have met many challenges over the course of the past two years, we are hosting as co-participants this listening session to inform not only the NREA EDIT team's charge, but all session participants regarding how rural leaders characterize the important work that needs to be done.

## 3:20-3:50 P.M.

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

### **NCES EDGE: Advancing the Social and Spatial Context of Education**

**Presenters:** Doug Geverdt and Annie Maselli, Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Are you interested in using social and spatial data in your practice and/or research? Location is a fundamental dimension of education in the U.S., so the National Center for Education Statistics' Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (NCES EDGE) program designs resources about the social and spatial context of education to help better understand educational inputs, processes, and outcomes. This presentation will provide an introduction to the EDGE program and its demographic, geographic, and economic data collection. If you'd like to learn more about federal education data resources for local schools and school districts, and more about using maps to visualize spatial dimensions of educational data, then this is the session for you. Questions are welcomed and attendees are encouraged to follow along with free, web-based examples and GIS tools.

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

### **Responding to Spatial Equity Challenges Through Rural Innovations**

**Presenters:** Erin McHenry-Sorber, West Virginia University; Catharine Biddle, University of Maine; Sara Hartman, Ohio University; Kessa Roberts, Utah State University; Sarah Schmitt-Wilson, Montana State University; Pamela Buffington, Education Development Center

Spatial equity is a central challenge highlighted in NREA's Research Agenda; however, the use of this term is relatively new to rural education. Learn about spatial in/equity and how it affects the practice of rural teachers and educational leaders. Examine spatial equity challenges raised through the development of NREA's 2022-2027 Rural Research Agenda. Learn about innovative responses to spatial in/equity across rural schools, and engage in a conversation about spatial equity challenges and how to develop plans to address them in collaborative working groups.

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

**FY 2023 Updates from the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)**

**Presenters:** Leslie Poynter, Group Leader, Rural Education Achievement Program; Staci Cummins, Program Officer, Rural Education Achievement Program  
The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) will provide an overview of the annual grant program for rural schools, a summary of the fiscal year (FY) 2023 awards, as well as new resources on allowable uses of funds for both school and state grantees. The presentation will also include new data on how rural schools have used REAP funds since 2021, which will provide insight into the needs and priorities of small, rural schools across the country. The presentation will also include time to ask questions and engage with Department staff and learn about other funding opportunities available from the Department serving rural communities.

**Room:** East-West

**Why Are Registered Apprenticeships in Teaching Spreading Across the Country?**

**Presenters:** David Donaldson, National Center for Grow Your Own; Laurie Matzke, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction  
The U.S. Department of Labor approved the occupation of K-12 teacher as eligible for registered apprenticeship in November 2021 with the first program approved in January 2022. Fast forward one year, and registered apprenticeships were in 16 states as of January 2023. With national attention focused on registered apprenticeships to address the teacher shortage crisis, learn more about the spread of programs nationally and what it looks like in a specific state context (North Dakota).

# GENERAL SESSIONS

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16



### KEYNOTE: DR. JOE SANFELIPPO

Superintendent, Fall Creek School District, Fall Creek, WI

Under Dr. Sanfelippo's leadership, the Fall Creek School District was named an Innovative District in 2016 and 2017 by the International Center for Leadership in Education. Joe has authored multiple books, including the best-selling, *Hacking Leadership: 10 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Learning That Teachers, Students, and Parents Love* and his latest, *Lead From Where You Are: Building Intention, Connection, and Direction in Our Schools*. He was selected as 1 of 117 Future Ready Superintendents in 2014 and 1 of 50 superintendents as a Personalized Learning Leader by the U.S. Department of Education in 2016. *Education Dive* named Joe their National Superintendent of the Year in 2019.

### GENERAL SESSION: REPORT LAUNCH & INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION WHY RURAL MATTERS: MAKING REPORT DATA APPLICABLE & ACTIONABLE



2023 REPORT  
**Raising Rural**

Join the National Rural Education Association, in partnership with the Rural School and Community Trust for the launch of the *Why Rural Matters: 2023* report. The 2023 edition is the 10th in a series of reports analyzing the contexts and conditions of rural education in each of the 50 states and calling attention to the need for policymakers to address rural education issues in their respective states. Over its 20-year history, the report has provided guidance and direction to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Join this interactive general session to learn more about the report, key findings, state-by-state dashboard, and how you can make the report data applicable and actionable in your own state.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

### GENERAL SESSION: (NOT) BELONGING AND INCLUSIVITY IN RURAL EDUCATION

Rural schools work—but they may not always work equally well for all students. In this engaging discussion, Join panelists Dr. Sweeney Windchief, Dr. Shaneka Williams, and Dr. Jeff Carlson who will examine discuss and explore the place-based nature of inclusivity in rural education, describing both challenges to belonging in and across rural schools and pointing to promising practices and moments of hope for the education of all rural students.

Panel Sponsored by:



**SWEENEY WINDCHIEF**

Associate Professor in Education,  
Montana State University



**SHENEKA WILLIAMS**

Professor & Chairperson,  
Department of Educational Administration,  
Michigan State University



**JEFF CARLSON**

Advisor, T-Mobile Education Team



### KEYNOTE: HAMISH BREWER

Speaker, Best-selling Author, Transformational Change Catalyst, and Business Consultant

Hamish is a powerful and positive disruptor who transcends the status quo and typical norms in leadership and education. Mr. Brewer is a globally recognized advocate who built his reputation on results and performance, becoming affectionately known as the relentless, tattooed skateboarding principal with his galvanizing message to, “be relentless” and his high-octane delivery style. Mr. Brewer served as an award-winning principal at the secondary and elementary school levels. Under his leadership, his elementary school was recognized as a Nationally Distinguished Title 1 School, and Hamish has since gone on to turn around one of the toughest middle schools in the state of Virginia. Hamish is also the best-selling author of, *Relentless: Disrupting The Educational Norm*.

# SCHEDULE & REGISTRATION

## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

### PRE-CONFERENCE • WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

12-1 p.m.	Registration & Refreshments
1-2:30 p.m.	General Session
2:40-3:10 p.m.	Learning Sessions
3:20-3:50 p.m.	Learning Sessions
4-4:15 p.m.	Closing
4:30-6 p.m.	Early Registration & 2023 Welcome Party

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

7:30-8:30 a.m.	Registration, Breakfast & Poster Presentations
8:30-10 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Remarks Keynote: Dr. Joe Sanfelippo
10:15-11:15 a.m.	Learning Sessions
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Learning Sessions
12:30-1 p.m.	Lunch
1-2:30 p.m.	General Session: Awards & Rural Teacher of the Year Keynote: Why Rural Matters Report Launch & Panel
2:45-3:45 p.m.	Learning Sessions
4-5 p.m.	Learning Sessions
5-6:30 p.m.	In-person Attendee Reception & NREA Silent Auction

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

7:30-8:30 a.m.	Registration, Breakfast & Poster Presentations
8:30-9:45 a.m.	Welcome Remarks General Session: Perspectives on a Fair Chance at a Good Rural Life Panel
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.	Keynote: Hamish Brewer Closing Remarks

Note: All times are Eastern Standard Time (EST). Times are subject to change.

## REGISTRATION — Register by: November 3

**PRE-CONFERENCE ATTENDEE, NOVEMBER 15** \$100

**IN-PERSON ATTENDEE, NOVEMBER 16-17** \$400

*Includes morning/afternoon refreshments and lunch, and access to all in-person and on-demand sessions until December 31, 2023*

**VIRTUAL ATTENDEE** \$200

Learn more and register at [https://www.nrea.net/Convention\\_and\\_Research](https://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research)

## HOTELS

If you plan to attend the conference and have not booked your hotel, we encourage you to move quickly! The conference hotel, the Chattanooga Marriott Downtown, is **SOLD OUT! Don't worry! There are nearby options.** Visit <https://www.nrea.net/Convention-Research-Symposium-Hotel> to view additional options.

For planning purposes, the event hotel is:

### CHATTANOOGA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN

Two Cartner Plaza, Chattanooga, TN 37402 • (423) 756-0002

## CANCELLATION POLICY

All changes, substitutions, and cancellations must be made in writing by emailing [nfare@nrea.site](mailto:nfare@nrea.site). Refunds will only be given for cancellations received in writing at least 10 days prior to the event date (by November 6, 2023). Cancellations received after November 6, 2023 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 November 6.

**QUESTIONS?** Email [nfare@nrea.site](mailto:nfare@nrea.site).

# EXPERIENCE CHATTANOOGA

Known as the Scenic City because of its surrounding mountains, ridges, and valleys, Chattanooga has something to offer everyone. Whether you're a fan of MoonPies and Coca-Cola, a history buff, a lover of the great outdoors, or someone who likes trying local restaurants and bars, you can find it here.

Take time away from the conference by experiencing all that Chattanooga has to offer, including these nearby attractions:



## RUBY FALLS

Ruby Falls is the tallest and deepest underground waterfall open to the public in the United States. A guided cave tour that is sure to add to your Instagram photo collection.



## INCLINE RAILROAD

Come and board the steepest incline railroad in the United States. Surrounded by the historic St. Elmo neighborhood, it is a great place to spend the evening and take a walk for some Clumpie's Ice Cream after the journey.



## ROCK CITY

The world-famous Rock City with a panoramic view of seven states, as well as sporting beautiful gardens and a swinging bridge. There is even a Starbucks right across the street for a relaxing coffee when you have completed your tour.



## TENNESSEE AQUARIUM

The Tennessee Aquarium is located just minutes from the Marriot Convention Center and can be accessed by the free trolley that will drop you right at the main doors. The aquarium is right on the waterfront, so it is a great place to spend a relaxing evening after a long day at the conference.



## HUNTER ART MUSEUM

The Hunter Art Museum is close to the famous Chattanooga walking bridge and the Lookouts Baseball Stadium. It boasts a permanent art collection as well as special collections throughout the year and is a must-see attraction while visiting the Chattanooga area.

To learn more, visit <https://www.visitchattanooga.com/plan/visitor-center/>.

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

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

### **How Can I Get There from Here? Lessons and Suggestions for Helping Students Find a Path to Success**

**Presenters:** Valerie Rutledge and Abeer Mustafa, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

So many times, a young person may have a general idea about the future but may not have any specific understanding of what it takes to get to that goal. The unknowns may involve issues such as access, funding, and simply lack of knowledge of possible options. Engage in a conversation and sharing of ideas about how to help students begin to plan post-secondary directions based on their resources, interests, and backgrounds. Learn more about successful programs, particularly considering the number of young people opting for a gap year or deciding not to continue their education.

### **Power of Partnerships: Rural School Systems and a Four-year Institution**

**Presenters:** Kim Wingate, Jason Gordon, and Stephanie Brennan, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; Rhonda Pendergrass, Rhea County School System

**Room:** Meeting Room 3

Discover how two local education agencies (LEAs) have partnered with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's School of Education to develop pipelines of qualified teachers and strategies on how to develop your own local partnerships. Hear more about Tennessee's System Apprentice Grow Your Own (GYO) initiative and how these partnerships have continued to improve and expand. Gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities within the partnerships from the school administrator and university administrator perspectives and engage with presenters in an interactive Q&A format.

### **Developing Academic Programs for Grow Your Own Cohorts**

**Presenters:** Cheryl Lambert, Amber Button, and Erica Boone, Austin Peay State University

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

Learn more about the process for developing academic programs for grow-your-own rural cohorts of college students. Academic programs activate the power of community college partners providing 60 credit hours of course work before enrolling in Austin Peay to complete their teacher residency program. Once accepted, students work as teacher residents in their rural home school, receive a salary from the school district, and graduate with a K-5 teaching degree/license, with a SPED endorsement. Tennessee's Austin Peay State University and Clarksville-Montgomery County School System Teacher Residency program became the first registered apprenticeship program for teaching in the United States in January 2022. Tennessee is also the first state to sponsor Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship programs, which are designed to address teacher shortages and build the talent pipeline.

### **Recognizing Risk and Providing Mental Health Resources to Rural Communities**

**Presenters:** Jenna Trowbridge and Michelle Bartsch, Cook Center for Human Connection; Tobin Novasio, Lockwood Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 5

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 5 students have contemplated suicide and 1 in 10 have tried. Sadly, suicide rates in rural communities are 45% higher than in metro areas. Those numbers are steadily increasing. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that 65% of rural counties do not have practicing psychiatrists and 47% do not have practicing psychologists. Gain perspective on the statistics and the latest research regarding mental health access for high-risk and native populations in rural areas. Learn how to recognize students in need of support and no-cost, accessible solutions that have helped increase mental health access and the impact they have made.

### **Reimagining Rural: Three Districts, One Mission**

**Presenters:** Apryl Kidd and Brent Comer, Mitchell Community Schools; Jimmy Ellis, Orleans Community Schools; Kindra Hovis, Shoals Community School Corporation

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

Learn about the unique partnership between three rural Indiana school districts and how this collaboration is reimagining rural education. The Collaboration of Shoals, Mitchell, and Orleans Schools (COSMOS) has created new college and career pathways by leveraging partnerships and the sharing of teaching staff and resources. These initiatives are not only providing new opportunities for all COSMOS students and teachers, but also promoting community prosperity economically and academically.

### **Connection 101: With Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators**

**Presenters:** James Stradling and Jess Horlacher, Indian Trails Career Cooperative

**Room:** Meeting Room 7

Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers are sometimes left in the dark or feel overlooked. Discover processes for integrating CTE teachers into your faculty. Professional development is immensely important for new teachers and Indiana has established systems for new teachers to get support and mentoring. Gain ideas on ways to garner new teachers and keep them from feeling overwhelmed. Also, learn how to incorporate administrators and counselors into the CTE world and techniques for having them be CTE advocates in their schools.

### **More Than a Hotspot: Integrating Connectivity into Academic Outcomes**

**Presenter:** Jeff Carlson, T-Mobile for Education, K-12 Advisor

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Many schools provided hotspots or connected devices to students due to the pandemic. Learn how school leaders can use internet connectivity to increase digital access and student outcomes.

### **You Got The Keys, Now What? Help for New Rural Leaders**

**Presenter:** Melissa Sadorf, ARSA and NREA

**Room:** Meeting Room 9

Behind every successful rural leader is a kitchen sink cabinet and access to resources. Personal and professional growth and development do not stop once new leaders get the school keys. In fact, it is vitally important that rural leaders create a network of support that they can lean into when they need help with the many hats they are required to wear! Discover the unique challenges and opportunities that exist in rural settings and gain strategies and practical guidance on how to get set up for success.

### **Partnerships, Community Relationships and Collaborative Leadership**

**Presenters:** Hobart Harmon, Kansas State University; Jerry Johnson, Dennis Barber, and Tristyn Daughtry, East Carolina University

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

Collaborative leadership (CL) behaviors can support planning and implementation of education-business partnerships in rural areas. Learn how collaborative leadership is enabling undergraduate students in the Miller School of Entrepreneurship at East Carolina University (ECU) to support business development in a rural region. Explore the Collaborative Leadership Readiness Tool, developed by the Collaboration Lab in the College of Education at ECU, and engage in a conversation to reflect on education-business partnership projects and CL experiences.

### **Cultivating and Sustaining Research-Practice Partnerships in a Rural**

#### **Context: Exploring Conditions for Success**

**Presenters:** Jennifer Ash, Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University; Pam Buffington, Education Development Center; Kristina Hesbol, University of Denver; Kent Seidel, University of Colorado Denver

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

Explore the unique opportunities and challenges of establishing and sustaining research-practice partnerships (RPPs) in rural contexts. RPPs offer a valuable strategy to help bridge the gap between research and practice in education and to promote more effective, evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning. Bringing together a diverse group of individuals, including researchers and practitioners, this session will feature an interactive dialogue to share experiences, insights, and strategies regarding RPPs in rural areas. Panelists will reflect on the conditions necessary to establish RPPs that foster ongoing, reciprocal interactions and joint decision-making between researchers and practitioners, to improve educational outcomes and enhance the use of research evidence in practice.

### **Conducting Critical Rural Education Practice: Rural Spaces as Multi-identity Contexts**

**Presenter:** Jenay Willis, University of Pittsburgh

**Room:** Meeting Room 12

Rural spatial inequity—stemming from issues, such as distance to resources, isolated networks, and concentrated poverty—impacts rural populations' educational access and attainment around the U.S. Scholars have shown how spatial inequity creates a student identity of “rurality,” or hailing from and/or residing in a rural region and what that geographic sense of place means for students. However, rural spaces are not monolithic and rural students' educational experiences vary based upon additional identities they hold along with rurality (e.g., class, race, sexuality, gender, disability, and more). Discover how rural spatial inequity manifests and shapes rural student identity in education and how participants can utilize theoretical frameworks (e.g., intersectionality, cumulative disadvantage, and multiple identity theory) to consider the nuanced ways rural spatial inequity manifests due to rural populations' additional identities.

### **Building Leadership Capacity to Create and Sustain Rural Innovation**

**Presenters:** Brett Alessi, Empower Schools; Mike Gonzalez, Rural Schools Innovation Zone; Heather McGregor, Texas Education Service Center 8; Allen Pratt, National Rural Education Association; Amelia Reeves, Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas

**Room:** Meeting Room 16

Rural communities are often the drivers of innovation. LeadRural is a fellowship piloted in Texas in 2022 to highlight the exciting work happening around the state and inspire others to catalyze new approaches in their own communities. Hear from LeadRural Fellows who will discuss the impact this fellowship had on their work, with a special emphasis on a particular innovative strategy: formal rural collaboratives that bring together multiple school districts, higher education, nonprofit and industry partners to expand college and career opportunities for students that are aligned to regional workforce needs. Gain insights from LeadRural Fellows, as well as an executive director in Texas leading one of these rural collaboratives with promising early results. NREA will share how they are trying to bring innovative approaches and build leadership capacity in Tennessee.

### **Raising Rural: Rural Educators' Learning as the Pathway to Improved Student Outcomes**

**Presenters:** Victoria Schaefer, SRI International; Susan Courey, Young Academic Music and Computational Thinking; Sarah Jenness and Cydni Burton, Jobs for the Future/Lone Star STEM; Janice Littlebear and Keiko Herrick, Supporting Teachers in Alaska's Remote/Rural Regions (STARR); Janet Nimer, LEAF to STEM; Amanda Adams and Alicia Belcher, Professional Learning by Choice Community (CHOICE); Karen Mix, CS4NOrCal

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Rural educators hold one of the most important keys to rural students' outcomes and they need support for ongoing professional development to improve teaching and learning. The Federal Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program invests in examining the effectiveness of leading ideas for how to improve educator learning and support ongoing professional growth. EIR also prioritizes funding for grantees who focus on addressing the needs of rural schools. EIR grantees partner with rural schools across the nation to address educators' professional learning needs across varied content areas. Learn about cutting-edge programs, opportunities for engagement, and take-home strategies to use right now.

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

# 20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS

### 10:15–10:40 A.M.

#### **“We’re Just The Beginning Of What’s Possible”:** Rural Grow-Your-Own Teacher Program

**Presenters:** Maria Coady, Rachel Montesinos Jorro, Micaha Dean Hughes, Jodie Roberson, and Mary Estrada, North Carolina State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Learn more about an innovative grow-your-own teacher education program in a rural North Carolina school district that faced a 20% teacher turnover rate. The study asked, How do rural students experience a grow your own education program? This study is framed by place-conscious education (Greenwood, 2019; Gruenewald, 2003) and rural cultural wealth (Crumb et al., 2022). These theories underscore the importance of place and equity in rural students’ transitional experiences, specifically the transitions from high school to college to early career. Using a thematic analysis approach and qualitative analytic software, data consisting of individual interviews, focus groups, field notes, and archival data including images and reports were analyzed. Hear about key features of the grow-your-own teacher education program, including relationships, rural resilience, and social and familial perceptions of teaching, and discuss findings with respect to teacher education and equity, grounded in rural cultural wealth.

#### **Reading and Writing Place: Connecting Rural Schools and Communities**

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

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Explore examples of student work that developed an understanding of the nuances of place. Moreover, learn about the implications related to the impact a critically placed curriculum has on students’ connection to place in their writing.

### 10:50–11:15 A.M.

#### **Grow Your Own Teacher Strategies in Rural Schools**

**Presenters:** Jenny Seelig, NORC at the University of Chicago; Brad Carl, Wisconsin Center for Education Research at UW Madison

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

NREA’s Research Agenda identifies teacher and leader preparation, recruitment, and retention as critical areas for future research. Utilizing an asset-based approach, learn more about a diverse set of strategies that rural school districts implement to address staffing challenges in one midwestern state. The study is based on the underlying assumption that rural districts are not waiting on policymakers to solve this challenge, but instead are creating their own affordable and effective solutions. This research has two aims: 1. Document strategies that are already occurring to develop a conceptual map of inputs and mechanisms that address rural educator shortages; and 2. Provide a deeper dive into one national program that has taken root in recent years in several schools, rural and otherwise, Educators Rising. This program is being implemented in 30 states and provides promising activities intended to attract high school students into education.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

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

**Raising Rural: A Balanced Approach to Rural Youth's College and Career Preparation**

**Presenters:** Victoria Schaefer and Deborah Jonas, SRI International

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

An essential part of raising rural youth is preparing them for their futures. How well does your district or school prepare all students for college or careers? Do you take a balanced approach that includes support across four key dimensions of preparation—academic, social-emotional, financial, and logistical? Many districts successfully prepare students academically but could benefit from suggestions for strengthening other types of support. Learn about all four types of preparation and specific strategies to take home and apply right away. Hear the research behind this balanced approach and engage in an activity to reflect on how well your school or district is supporting students in preparation for college or careers, including how you can measure students' preparation in different ways.

**Lessons from the Field: Educational Equity for Rural Students**

**Presenters:** Daniella Hall Sutherland, Clemson University; Jenny Seelig, NORC; Loni Crumb, Eastern Carolina University; Alex Red Corn, Kansas State University

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

Rural schools often serve as the heart of their local communities, educating children for a fair chance at a good life. In theory, rural education should be inclusive and excellent for all students. Yet U.S. politics have become increasingly polarized, pushing schools into the forefront of partisan culture wars over curriculum, instruction, and school materials. Educators and leaders must navigate these challenges while striving to create equitable, inclusive schools for all children. Explore key lessons from a comprehensive national study on race and rural educational equity and engage in breakout groups to collectively share local goals, challenges, and expertise.

**Beyond Asset Mapping: Exploring Rural College Student Connections to Place**

**Presenters:** Karen Schreder, Brynna Garcia, Bethany Regnani, and Servando Melendez, California State University Chico

**Room:** Meeting Room 5

The experience of rural students at universities, their experiences before university, and the transition to college is of great interest to rural-serving universities. Strengthening partnerships with the communities and creating spaces on campus for rural students is important to retaining students from rural communities. Learn more about a Student Ambassadors project that began as a community asset mapping by reaching out to high schools and personal contacts. Students will be using this information to participate in changes that will benefit their home communities. Learn more about the research questions being explored, including: What does it mean to them to identify as rural? What does it look like to bring the rural experience(s) to their college peers? How have their rural experiences hindered or supported their journey to university? In what ways could the university support rural students while in college and in returning to their home communities?

**School-based Health Centers: Expanding Access to Care for Students in Rural Georgia**

**Presenters:** Mary Lauren Salvatore and Ruth Ellis, Georgia Department of Education

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

School-based health centers are a unique and modern approach to primary healthcare that are designed to meet students where they are: in school. As a result of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds awarded to the Georgia Department of Education during the pandemic as well as the generosity of the Governor's Office, an initiative was established in the 2021-2022 school year to expand the number of school-based health centers in rural counties across the state. In Georgia, there are 65 counties (out of 159) without a pediatric physician, noting a significant need for this type of service. Learn about the collaborative approach to implementing school-based health centers in two rural school districts.

### **A Network of Networks: Supporting Rural Schools and Students**

**Presenters:** Janet Boyle, Jeremy Eltz, Tracy Butler, and Krista Hensley, CELL, University of Indianapolis

**Room:** Meeting Room 7

The Rural Early College Network (RECN) has used a unique approach to help 20 rural Indiana high schools implement the early college model and strengthen career pathways. RECN is a federal EIR project in its fourth year of a five-year timeframe. Five RECN high schools serve as mentor schools because they have implemented high quality early college programs. Each mentor school has three partner schools that they and CELL coach toward early college implementation. All RECN schools quickly connected during the pandemic as they collaborated to solve common issues. Relationships have solidified as schools meet twice a year in quads (mentors + 3 partners) and as a full network of 20 schools. Other subgroups have formed along the way to meet emerging needs—teacher credentialing, school size groups, middle school, PTECH. Learn about the lessons learned and tools being created in RECN that are replicable in other rural regions.

### **Advancing Rural Education Through Dynamic Advocacy**

**Presenters:** Larry Daniel, The University of Texas Permian Basin; Deborah Koolbeck, National Education Association

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Rural schools maximize their potential to serve students well when they are appropriately resourced and when educational policies align with their local mission. School leaders are advantaged when they know how to communicate with public policymakers who hold the key to releasing funding and creating sound laws and regulations supporting their schools. This session features experienced advocates who understand how to present ideas to policymakers for maximum opportunity to make a difference. Panelists will share principles for working with policymakers, developing messages for maximum advocacy impact, and building political networks to support rural education. Panelists will also outline steps for building a strategic plan for advocacy, along with a template for translating the plan into specific actions.

### **The IA Pathway: Addressing the Teacher Shortage at Home**

**Presenters:** Rae Ette Newman and Angela Vossenkuhl, Eastern Oregon University

**Room:** Meeting Room 9

How do you address the teacher shortage in rural and isolated school districts that lie far from higher education institutions? The College of Education at Eastern Oregon University developed the Instructional Assistant (IA) Pathway to combat this issue head-on. This undergraduate initial teacher licensure program was designed for the Oregon Instructional Assistant. Via hybrid courses and an experience-valued student teaching experience IA Teacher Candidates are allowed to remain in their position throughout their entire program. Learn about this program and how it was developed to provide candidates with course textbooks, a modified program application process, a diverse classroom, and a collaborative learning environment without having to leave the classroom.

### **Ready for Industry: A Success Story by the Tennessee Board of Regents**

**Presenters:** Tachaka Hollins and Thomas Sewell, Tennessee Board of Regents

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

Discover the strategies that the Tennessee Board of Regents is using to enhance the student experience and foundations in their Community and Technical Colleges. With Ready for Industry (RFI), students now have access to self-paced courses that bridge the gap between standard education and the real-world knowledge needed to succeed in five major industries. Not only does RFI help students understand and select the perfect industry for their career path, but it also helps them to understand essential industry terminology and processes so they will be more productive on the job. This platform features 15–20-hour courses in the high-demand industries of healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, information technology, and construction, and complements existing technical training programs.

### **Meet the Editors: Writing and Reviewing for The Rural Educator**

**Presenters:** Devon Brenner, Mississippi State University; Erin McHenry-Sorber, University of West Virginia; Catharine Biddle, University of Maine; Amy Price Azano, Virginia Tech

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

The Rural Educator, official journal of NREA, publishes three kinds of articles: peer reviewed research articles and reviews of research and editorially reviewed, practitioner-authored promising practice articles. In this interactive workshop, journal editors will describe the aims and scope of the journal and provide an overview of the review process and criteria for publication. Participate in the opportunity to talk about potential ideas with the editors and learn how to serve as a reviewer for the journal.

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

**Presenter:** Wade Owlett, Wellsboro Area School District

**Room:** Meeting Room 12

Using our rural story as a springboard for shaping education reform can give us insight into our past and secure our future. NREA's former teacher of the year will revisit his 2018 presentation, Six Truths of Living in a Rural Community, which will focus on the importance of innovation, parent involvement, and at-risk students. Examine research and engage in discussions centered on developing and connecting our rural story. This story starts with those of us who can influence the narrative at its heart, which starts with you.

### **Peer-to-Peer Review as a Promising Rural School Improvement Practice**

**Presenters:** Kristina Hesbol and Kent Seidel, University of Denver

**Room:** Meeting Room 16

Rural educators collaborated with the University of Colorado Denver to develop tools for collecting evidence of student learning. The Student-Centered Accountability Project (S-CAP) was designed by rural Colorado school leaders committed to taking a comprehensive approach to state accountability and local responsibility for improving deeper learning. Evidence collected at these site visits by diverse teams provides an innovative process to disrupt inequity, shifts the paradigm from accountability to responsibility, and develops place-based ownership of systemic improvement for every student. This process shifts the evaluation paradigm from a top-down, punitive process to engaging different stakeholders (rural teachers, leaders, students, families, and Board members) in a continuous cycle of improvement and innovation supported by a network of peers. S-CAP evidence tools include surveys, classroom observations, and focus groups, nuanced for each rural site. Instead of reproducing competing narratives, this process supports a shared vision for systemic improvement throughout rural communities.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:30-11:55 A.M.**

**Finding a Home: Housing as Teacher Recruitment and Retention Policy**

**Presenter:** Kevin Read, University of North Dakota

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

As part of a broader study on teacher recruitment and retention, researchers from the University of North Dakota's Initiative for Rural Education, Equity, and Economic Development (I-REEED) found that housing emerged as a key theme in the data from administrators and teachers in diverse rural settings. Examine the following research questions: 1. How, if at all, do rural teachers and administrators relate housing to teacher recruitment and retention? 2. How do levels of remoteness, as defined by NCES locale, inform the connection between housing and teacher recruitment/retention for administrators and teachers? Educators represented in this study proposed different solutions based on the type of rural district. Importantly, more rural communities described a greater need for community action to ameliorate the challenges associated with the lack of local housing.

**Placing Identity: Imagined Future Selves in a Rural College Access Program**

**Presenter:** Wendy Pfrenger, University of Mississippi

**Room:** Plaza Room B

Discover findings from a study of participants' narrative identity in a rural Southern post-secondary opportunity program (PSOP). Consider how PSOPs might center place in framing goals and metrics, as well as implications for supporting students in accessing a variety of community capitals.

**Exploring Queer-Related Policies on Rural English Language Arts Teachers' Practices**

**Presenters:** Clint Whitten, Josh Thompson, and Karin Kaerwer, Virginia Tech

**Room:** Plaza Room C

Explore the findings from a study exploring Queer-related policies in relation to rural English Language Arts (ELA) teachers' practices. Working from an equity stance, the research team developed an online questionnaire, with an optional interview, for secondary ELA teachers located within a rural region nestled in the Appalachian Mountains. Hear about key experiences and understandings from rural ELA teachers about policies that adversely affect Queer students and educators. Following the discussion on conceptual framework, research design, and findings, explore practical implementations for addressing rural Queer salience within state and local policies.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 12:05-12:30 P.M.**

**Novice Teacher Recruitment and Retention in South Dakota**

**Presenter:** Nicole Schutter, Northern State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

As our nation continues to fight the teacher shortage crisis, rural areas face these challenges in a different context and on a different scale—where resources are scarce, and an entire department can rest on one teacher’s shoulders. Walk through novice rural teachers’ lived experiences, including successes experienced and challenges faced. Explore and discuss the factors relating to teacher recruitment and retention, particularly new teachers, in South Dakota. A variety of strategies and recommendations to recruit and retain teachers at the school and district levels will be shared.

**Dual Enrollment Rural Students: Pathway for College, Perceptions, and Impressions**

**Presenters:** Nicolae Bordieanu, Berkeley County School District, Hengtao Tang and Holli Bice, University of South Carolina

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

This mixed-methods action research study aimed to investigate the impact of new technology-enhanced dual enrollment math courses on rural student perception of college courses, postsecondary education, and students’ perception of dual enrollment courses. The innovation of this action research study was the technology-enhanced dual enrollment math course. Unlike the college prep traditional course, the innovation introduced new technology tools to students and then integrated those tools into the course units. This course used six educational technology components. The findings from both data sources converged to develop a comprehensive understanding of rural high school students’ perception of technology-enhanced dual math courses. The practices of teaching dual enrollment math courses at a rural high school helped the administrators and colleagues understand the importance of change and explained the conditions under which the new practices occurred.

**Understanding Rural School Counselors’ Experiences Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices**

**Presenters:** Tameka Grimes and Amanda Walters, Virginia Tech; Jennifer Kirsch, East Tennessee State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Rural school counselors are on the front lines, meeting students’ needs to help them have a good chance at a fair life. These services are particularly important when students have faced trauma, yet limited research exists documenting the experiences of rural school counselors using trauma-informed approaches. Explore the results of a recent study documenting the strengths and struggles of rural school counselors addressing trauma and acquire strategies for supporting their work.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 2:45-3:45 P.M.**

**Equity is the E in STEM**

**Presenters:** Cindy Moss and Aimee Tait, Defined Learning; Brandi Stroecker and Becky Ashe, Tennessee STEM Innovation Network

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

Learn how the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network/Tennessee Department of Education is partnering with Defined Learning to bring STEM and computer science to rural students across Tennessee. Hear about the rollout, professional learning, and implementation that has occurred in their three-year partnership. The mission of this group is to provide learning experiences that prepare these rural Tennessee students to be ready to succeed in the world of work beyond K-12 education. Providing teachers with high quality resources and professional learning opportunities is critical to the success of this work.

**How to Get Immediate Relief for Staff + Students Struggling With Mental Health**

**Presenter:** Charle Peck, Thriving School Community

**Room:** Meeting Room 3

There is a mental health crisis in our school system, especially among those in rural settings. Teachers are burned out. Students are stressed out. Parents are checked out. School leaders are overextended as they struggle to meet their students' mental health needs and retain staff. The future of student achievement depends on how we respond, so it's essential to do something different now. Instead of fixing the problem with new products and extensive overhauls, which adds more to our to-do list, learn how to utilize the best resources you already have in place. Gain practical tools to effectively improve the well-being of your whole school community, starting with you. There are myriad ways to infuse this into everyday practice to meet the needs of all staff and students.

**Empowering Teacher Leaders to Support Rural Schools**

**Presenters:** Ashley Kazouh, Public School Forum of North Carolina; Meg Turner, Appalachian State University; Theresa Gibson and Nancy Mangum, Ledge EDGe Learning

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

Too often, geography and resources serve as barriers to community building and professional learning opportunities for rural educators. To address these barriers, the Public School Forum of North Carolina, Appalachian State University, and Leading EDGe Learning have partnered to offer the Rural Teacher Leader Network (RTLN). The network brings together a diverse group of educators to strengthen their practice, foster community among rural districts, and grow their leadership skills. Learn how this is making a difference for North Carolina educators and hear about strategies that RTLN is using to grow the leadership and advocacy skills of the network members.

**Funding Afterschool: Leveraging Federal Pandemic Relief Dollars for Rural Programs**

**Presenters:** Alexis Steines Rao, Afterschool Alliance; Katie Landes, Georgia State Afterschool Network

**Room:** Meeting Room 5

Engage Every Student is a bold call to action from the U.S. Department of Education and several national partners to provide high-quality out-of-school time learning opportunities for every child who wants to participate. All students should have the supports they need to realize their full potential. Afterschool and summer learning programs are a critical part of that support. Through the American Rescue Plan, school districts, cities, and states have funding and an unprecedented opportunity to partner with high-quality expanded learning programs to support students' well-being and academic growth. Hear how rural afterschool and summer learning programs are leveraging federal pandemic relief funds to support and expand valuable out-of-school time opportunities in their communities. Learn how strategic partnerships, funding opportunities, and sustainability plans can be utilized to support students when school is out.

### **Ready, Set, Go: Preparing Students for Success**

**Presenters:** Debbie Brown and Elvin Browne, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

Preparing students to transition from high school to college is a goal of all college access programs. Collaboration between key parties and a well-documented plan is imperative for successful college admission. Learn how to create effective postsecondary transition plans and receive a list of key partners essential for successful postsecondary transition, a transition planning guide, and sample transition plans. Engage in discussions about different types and components of transition plans, collaborate on activities and resources that reinforce student transitioning, and participate in an exercise allowing you to create a transition plan.

### **Identify, Intervene, and Prevent: National Center for Rural School Mental Health**

**Presenters:** Lou Ann Tanner-Jones, University of Missouri; Carol Ewen, University of Montana

**Room:** Meeting Room 7

Nearly 20% of school-age children and youth experience serious mental health issues, yet few receive services—a situation exacerbated in rural settings. Rural communities are incorrectly perceived as having fewer mental health needs given their small populations and low residential density. This, along with their geographic isolation and scarce resources, has resulted in limited mental health service options for rural youth and their families. The pandemic only worsened the situation and increased the number of students in need of support. The National Center for Rural School Mental Health is an IES-funded program that works to enhance the capacity of rural schools to identify, prevent, and intervene in youth mental health concerns. In partnership with rural schools, we are developing a comprehensive set of teacher and student surveys, tools, interventions, and professional development materials to help identify, prevent, and intervene in mental health concerns among students.

### **Take Rural Advantage to the Next Level: Innovate, Create, and Elevate**

**Presenters:** Elizabeth Colton, Crane Middle School; Kaitlin McGill, Heritage Middle School

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Innovation education builds community partnerships. Everyone can create and innovate when they are given the opportunity and challenge. Discover how to use CTE and STEM programs to leverage and create community partnerships. By innovating and creating in the classrooms, we will elevate our schools and rural communities. Examples of programs and the critical community relationships that are built with them will be shared. Community Share, Apple Education, FIRST robotics, Girls Who Code, Invention Education, CTE and other STEM programs are just a few that can be used as a vehicle to elevate the rural schools' voice with challenge-based learning.

### **Revitalizing STEM Education in the Alabama Black Belt**

**Presenter:** Chester Niklas, The University of West Alabama

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

Discover the UWA Black Belt STEM Education Institute (UWA-SEI) and other programs implemented by the University of West Alabama, which aim to revitalize rural STEM education, build rural partnerships, grow strong rural leaders and educators, provide quality professional development opportunities to rural teachers, and ignite rural student excitement for STEM learning opportunities. Specifically, Project GROW serves rural East Mississippi and West Alabama through character education that creates community among current and future students, teachers, and rural leaders. UWA-Teach aims to increase the number of math and science teachers in Alabama through a shortened pathway to STEM certification for any STEM major. The UWA-SEI aims to revitalize STEM education in the Alabama Black Belt Region through the Collective Impact Approach. Partnerships in this endeavor include Learning Blade, NMSI (National Math and Science Initiative), NSTA (National Science Teachers Association), Hammer Math, Betabox, VEX Robotics and S.C.O.R.E. (Southeastern Center of Robotics Education), and We Build it Better.

### **Implementing Queer Affirming Curriculum in K-12 Rural Schools**

**Presenters:** Clint Whitten and Josh Thompson, Virginia Tech

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

Operating under the assumption that all classrooms have Queer students, this session will highlight ways in which rural teachers can implement a rural Queer salience within their curricula in order to co-generate an inclusive and affirming learning space for Queer students. As two former openly Queer middle and high school English teachers, we will highlight anti-Queer policy, traumatic place histories, Queer community engagement, and resources that emphasize the importance of celebrating rural Queerness in K-12 educational spaces. The goal of this session is to further a rural Queer discourse through dialogue by sharing lived experiences and classroom resources.

### **Pathways Without Borders: Transcending Economic, Education, and Community Jurisdictions**

**Presenters:** Brad Mitchell, Education Consultant; Tasha Werry, Building Bridges to Careers

**Room:** Meeting Room 12

Participate in a highly interactive and relevant session about successful ways to mutually grow local, regional, and cross state talent for rural prosperity. Emphasis will be placed on three labor markets particularly crucial right now for the future of many rural communities, including growing and retaining entrepreneurs, educators, and health professionals. Discover lessons learned from statewide and cross state pathways without borders efforts (e.g., Appalachian Regional Commission), and regional efforts within and across states (e.g., Building Bridges to Careers). Gain insights from the voices and perspectives of dynamic young leaders committed to advancing a pathway without borders strategy.

### **Empowering Rural Education: Learning Blade for Middle School Career Exploration**

**Presenter:** Sheila Boyington, Joshua Sneiderman and Scott Mains, Learning Blade; Chet Nicklas, UWA Black Belt STEM Director

**Room:** Meeting Room 17

Discover the transformative power of Learning Blade programs and the critical importance of middle school career exploration in rural education. Explore how Learning Blade supports STEM/CTE/CS education in rural schools across the U.S. while introducing students to diverse career possibilities. Hear about real rural education success stories with an emphasis on the importance of early career exploration.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 2:45-3:10 P.M.**

**Chartering a Spatially Just and Equitable Rural Education Research Agenda**

**Presenters:** Daniella Hall Sutherland, Clemson University; Jenny Seelig, NORC; Loni Crumb, Eastern Carolina University; Alex Red Corn, Kansas State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Rural educational leaders, practitioners, organizers, and policymakers are often excluded from research on educational equity. This study is an interdisciplinary multi-method national analysis designed to address the need for equity-oriented scholarships. Using focus groups, asset mapping, and systematic literature review, we constructed a rural educational equity agenda for future research, practice, and policy initiatives to facilitate inclusive excellence in rural communities. We will present our actionable agenda to improve rural educational equity, including 1. Teacher and leader training for diverse rural learning environments, 2. Recruitment for a diverse educator workforce, 3. Systems issues and advocacy: law and policy, curriculum, student support, college and career pathways, technology infrastructure, 4. Relationship building and collaborations across local/regional economies and community assets, 5. Individualized intersectional identities and lived experiences, and 6. Geospatial, place-based, diverse lived experiences and communities.

**Remote Mentoring: Reducing Isolation to Retain Rural Teachers**

**Presenters:** Jennifer Luebeck and Jayne Downey, Montana State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Rural classrooms are increasingly staffed by new and underprepared teachers who lack experience with the content and grade level they are assigned, possess limited knowledge of effective pedagogy, or both. In 2022, Montana State University launched a statewide mentoring initiative that offers such teachers partnership with a veteran educator, membership in a virtual community of practice, and continuous growth via collaborative professional learning. Over 100 rural teachers were matched with mentors in the first year; they are participants in research that characterizes essential and effective components of the remote mentoring paradigm. Surveys, progress reports, focus conversations, and archived online materials have produced data illuminating rural teacher concerns, how solutions emerge through mentoring, and how mentoring partnerships evolve. In this session we discuss how our findings inform the design and delivery of the initiative, as well as implications for remote and in-person mentoring in other settings.

**Getting Schooled in the Deep South: Making the Case for an Integrated Curriculum**

**Presenters:** Sheneka Williams, Darren Dubose, and Jonathan Hill, Michigan State University

**Room:** Ballroom C

Discover the reimagining of school integration without repositioning bodies in buildings. By employing a kitchen-table talk methodology, we respond to the question: How might school integration remain possible in rural communities in the Deep South? Through storying our lived experiences in rural Black communities in the Deep South, we use those experiences to rethink school integration as curriculum and offer insights for rural education researchers and practitioners.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 3:20-3:45 P.M.**

**Mapping a Rural College and Career Readiness Research Agenda for Education Scholars and Leaders**

**Presenter:** Phillip Grant, Clemson University; J. Kessa Roberts, Utah State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Receive an overview of the efforts to establish a rural college and career readiness (CCR) research agenda based on what is currently known in the field. The six research priorities are: investment in secondary advanced curricular offerings, inquiries of postsecondary aspirations, innovative post-graduation ccr and mental health support from k-12 schools, curricular connections to the local job market, roadmaps to local and external careers and entrepreneurship, and understanding CCR resource distributions for minoritized rural populations. Hear more about each priority, the current state of research, and recommendations for future studies. Finally, the authors will discuss the implications of the research agenda considering the National Rural Education Association's current research agenda, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the importance of addressing rural students' unique needs and challenges.

**Strengthening Rural Partnerships Through Pre-service Teacher Mentoring**

**Presenter:** Stephanie Oudghiri, Purdue University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

This narrative inquiry examines the mentoring experiences of two groups of preservice teachers—juniors as mentors and freshmen as mentees—at a large, research-intensive midwestern university. Using culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002) as a theoretical frame, we investigate how preservice teachers collaboratively plan and deliver social justice-focused, interactive read-alouds to community partners in rural settings: students in a predominantly Latinx kindergarten classroom, and children in the same community in library read aloud sessions. Results show that group planning is beneficial to both mentors and mentees as discussions including questions and explanations reshape thinking and strengthen understanding. Further findings show that mentoring helps better prepare freshmen for the rigors of a teacher education program.

**Rural Teacher Preparation in the State of Alabama**

**Presenters:** Avington Medeiros and Eva Marie Kane, Troy University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Rural teacher recruitment and retention is a matter of interest for Alabama as policymakers look to understand teacher shortages in rural schools across the state. This qualitative, multi-case study examined the ways in which teacher preparation programs in Alabama prepare preservice teachers to teach in rural settings. By identifying how teaching in a rural setting is represented within teacher preparation programs, more can be learned about the intentional efforts to prepare preservice teachers for a career in rural schools.

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

# 60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 4-5 P.M.

### Revitalizing a Community Vision of Hope and Opportunity

**Presenter:** Walter Leipart, School District of Gilman

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

Thriving rural communities occur when schools and communities work together to develop a vision of hope and opportunity. The Community Economic Analysis for Rural Wisconsin Communities program is a joint effort between the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to bring a structured community economic development strategic planning program to rural Wisconsin communities. Hear from school districts who identified opportunities and strategies to move the community and school forward. Using a flexible strategic planning process to build on existing strengths the districts partnered with their communities to develop a strong, inclusive local leadership team, to create an action plan and expand the working relationships with local and state partners to explore funding options and support the implementation of the plan. See how this process has led to a Portrait of a Graduate that re-engages an entire community.

### What Does the 5th Day Look Like on a 4-Day Week?

**Presenters:** Sarah Wisdom, New Bloomfield Public Schools; Jon Turner, Missouri State University

**Room:** Meeting Room 3

The four-day school week is becoming a common strategy in rural schools to recruit and retain high quality teachers. This transition to the shorted school week opens important opportunities for a newly envisioned fifth day of learning. Learn about the possibilities of the fifth day and how to make the most impact. Engage in discussion and spark your interest and ideas about how to help with staff recruitment and retention.

### Building Capacity Through Teacher Leadership

**Presenters:** Jason Bell, Amber Grabowski, Carol Hambright, and Danielle McClary, Polk County Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

Empowering teachers who want to lead without leaving the classroom can multiply the school's capacity to offer meaningful professional development while also creating foundational support for teacher retention. Polk County Schools (TN) created a Teacher Leadership Academy to offer more impactful professional development opportunities for all teachers while also empowering the teacher leaders who want to lead without leaving the classroom.

### Creating Innovative Schools: K-12 Career Labs and Community Partnerships

**Presenters:** Ginger Christian, East Tennessee State University; David Little, Washington County Schools; Brittany Seybert, Niswonger Foundation

**Room:** Meeting Room 5

School culture and climate capture beliefs and behaviors that transform schools through the power of STEAM in a rural school setting. Learn about an innovative partnership between an institute of higher education, a nonprofit organization, and a small, rural K-8 school in East Tennessee. Learn about Sulphur Springs School's (SSS) journey from a traditional school model to career and tech labs throughout K-8 with the guidance of East Tennessee State University and the Niswonger Foundation. SSS, a Title I school, transformed one idea into a school-wide initiative where teachers gained expertise in coding, robotics, digital arts, and STEM labs. Their teachers went on field trips to the high school to learn about career technical classes and then expanded learning experiences to align to high school concentrations. SSS's innovative STEAM model connects the power of community partnerships, grant funding, and expertise from business and researchers to create STEAM Champions in the community.

### **Cooperative Extension: Your Educational Partner in Rural America**

**Presenters:** Justin Crowe, Justin Rhinehart, and Janet Fox, University of Tennessee Extension

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

Cooperative Extension, an outreach component of the Land-Grant University system, has been keeping it rural for over 100 years. From school gardens, workforce development, financial literacy, nutrition education, and much more, Cooperative Extension has been engaged in educational outreach across the nation, making a difference for youth and families in rural communities for more than a century. Extension serves as a connector to high-quality, standards-based curriculum that meet the educational needs of rural students through 4-H youth development. Through Family and Consumer Economics, students in rural communities are educated through research-based, experiential programming for families and communities in key areas such as health, economics, safety, nutrition, and human services. Programs in agricultural and natural resources provide students of all ages with programming in horticulture, animal science, economics, and food science. Community and economic development specialists partner with municipalities to improve broadband access and decrease the digital divide in rural communities.

### **Design Your Neighborhood: Building Equitable Communities With Rural Youth**

**Presenters:** Katy Morgan, The University of the South; Melody Gibson, The Civic Design Center

**Room:** Meeting Room 7

As rural communities evolve, civic engagement and understanding of the built environment will be crucial to the quality of our growth. To address this need, the Civic Design Center has developed Design Your Neighborhood (DYN), an innovative, web-based curriculum of activities that engage youth with the planning and design of their communities. Participate in a DYN activity called story mapping in which presenters analyze the assets, opportunities, and challenges in a fictional rural community. Then, explore design-based strategies for increasing equity in rural areas and lead participants through spatially representing the changes they have planned for their community. Engage in a discussion about the logistics of facilitating DYN with youth in rural communities.

### **Partners in Care: Expanding Access to School Health Through Telemedicine**

**Presenters:** Sheila Freed, Avel eCare; Liz Tofteland, Central Regional Education Association

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Partnerships are powerful. They bring together different organizations to leverage their unique attributes and values to solve problems and achieve results. Six years ago, CREA approached telemedicine provider Avel eCare with an issue—they had schools who were having trouble meeting the health needs of their students due to geographical challenges. Avel School Health had the ability to provide this service through telemedicine, and the partnership was born. It first started by offering virtual nurse services to schools and has since expanded to include behavioral health services. Explore what worked well with this partnership, and how through ingenuity, collaboration, and embracing new technologies, schools can help close care gaps and ensure every student has access to the support and services they need.

### **Why Rural Matters 2023: Centering Equity and Opportunity**

**Presenters:** Daniel Showalter, Eastern Mennonite University; Jerry Johnson, East Carolina University; Sara Hartman, Ohio University; Robert Klein, Eastern Illinois University; Karen Eppley, Penn State University

**Room:** Meeting Room 9

Receive highlights of the recently released Why Rural Matters 2023 report. This national policy report examines public data on the importance of health of rural education within each of the 50 states on a variety of indicators. In addition to preserving valuable measures from past reports, such as rural importance, student and family diversity, and educational policy context), several new measures related to spatial equity, including access to broadband, mental health professionals, public preschool, and health insurance have been added. The session will be split into mini sessions in which the authors of the report will address national themes in rural education, result highlights, the impact of the pandemic on rural areas, and an alignment between the report and the NREA's rural agenda for the next five years.

### **Building Career Pathways in Construction for Native American Students in Rural Schools**

**Presenters:** Casie Wise, National Indian Education Association; Glenda Butterfield-Boldig, Bowler Public Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

This session highlights the Catalyze Grant funded partnership between the National Indian Education Association, Bowler School District, and Core Learning (a digital CTE courseware provider) to develop a middle to post-high school pathway project that seeks to increase the number of Bowler School District students who obtain a degree or certification for construction trades to serve three Native American nations: Menominee, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Ho-Chunk. Hear how building community relationships and innovative connections are critical for supporting rural students. The project utilizes virtual reality, CTE online courses, a mobile construction lab, a community Council of Partners, and dual enrollment with College of Menominee Nation to provide student access to a living wage career, fill a workforce gap, and address the tribal housing crisis.

### **Developing Localized Curriculum Through Public/Private Partnerships**

**Presenter:** Adam Cheeseman, Doddridge County Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

Perhaps one of the greatest and most innovative concepts Doddridge County Schools (WV) has initiated is the creation of several localized curriculums. In conjunction with national partner, JASON Learning, the district has partnered with key regional businesses and business leaders, to develop state-approved, localized curricula with industry. Doddridge County students receive specialized education in engineering, broadband internet development, diesel mechanics, and HVAC and then are ensured employment upon graduation and completion of the required certifications with the business partner. Localized curricula provide a very relevant, relational, and rewarding experience for students as they seek to become college and career ready.

### **NREA Rural Research Agenda Mixer: Applying the Research Agenda to Your Rural Context**

**Presenters:** J. Kessa Roberts, Utah State University; Sara Hartman, Ohio University; Sarah Schmitt-Wilson, Montana State University; Erin McHenry-Sorber, West Virginia University; Pamela Buffington, Education Development Center, Inc.; Catharine Biddle, University of Maine

**Room:** Meeting Room 12

Engage in a robust discussion of NREA's Rural Research Agenda for 2022-2027. Learn more about and discuss the research agenda's core theme of spatial and educational equity and its five supporting themes (i.e. college and career trajectory; community partnerships and relationships; health and wellness; policy and funding; and teacher/leader recruitment, retention, and preparation). Participate in roundtable dialogues pertaining to the research agenda's themes in relation to their specific rural context in order to provide opportunities to share promising practices that may work across diverse rural places.

### **Developing CTE Graduation and Aligned Workforce Pathways in Rural Washington**

**Presenter:** Kimberly Hetrick, Career Connect WA Initiative; Caitlin Harrison, Jefferson Healthcare; Ashton Meyer-Bibbins, University of Washington Student

**Room:** Meeting Room 16

In May 2017, Washington Governor Jay Inslee launched the Career Connected WA Initiative with the goal of connecting 100,000 Washington youth with career-connected learning opportunities that prepare them for high-demand, high-wage jobs. Hear about the challenges, opportunities, and successes experienced in rural and tribal communities as local stakeholder partners strategize to meet the economic workforce demands. Learn about the Career Connect WA Initiative, career and technical education (CTE) graduation pathways, career explore/prep/and launch work in healthcare, and a regional plan to elevate rural voice and collaborations among various industry sectors. Dual credit, industry recognized credentials (IRCs), and worksite learning will be addressed as ingredients to mitigating the silver tsunami and launch students on pathways toward high-demand, family-sustaining wage careers.

### **Moving the STEM/CTE Conversation to Student Workforce/Career Development**

**Presenters:** Bill Nelson and Mike Hines, Trane

**Room:** Meeting Room 17

Our energy ecosystem is being overhauled and multiple federal and other funding opportunities come with it. It will require a trained and educated workforce to transform communities across the country, including all rural areas. Authentic learning takes place when students engage in real-world problem solving using the high-tech tools of industry. Enhancing your classroom instruction with the science of energy and energy-related careers and providing engaging STEM activities that demonstrate scientific concepts and promote sustainability will take students in the right direction. Learn how high school students can complete industry-recognized certifications in data analytics, moving them a step ahead of the competition in the workforce.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 4-4:25 P.M.**

**Challenges Faced by Female Superintendents: Implications for Superintendent Certification Programs**

**Presenters:** Michelle DeWitt, Lyford CISD; Guang Zeng, Rosie Banda, and Scott Elliff, Texas A&M Corpus Christi

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

The present study focused on female superintendents serving in rural school districts in the Rio Grande Valley, home to some of the poorest cities in the nation on the border of Texas and Mexico. It is also a region with the highest concentrations (93.53%) of the Hispanic population (RGV Health Connect, 2023). Unfortunately, this southern part of Texas also has the highest percentage (e.g., 76.1%) of at-risk students in the state (Texas Education Agency, 2023). To lift the students and their families out of perpetual poverty and to give the kids a fair chance for a good life, it is imperative that we do all that is within our power to improve the quality of public education. Increasing the talent pool (e.g., increasing women's participation) of the superintendent position would be critical in achieving that goal.

**Preparing Teachers of Emergent Bilinguals in a Rural Midwestern Community**

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

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Explore findings from a study conducted with preservice ELL teachers participating in an intensive, week-long rural field placement. Engage in a discussion about the affordances and constraints, as well as findings related to preparing preservice ELL teachers for rural contexts.

**Caring With and Caring For Rural Kindergarten Students**

**Presenter:** Stephanie Oudghiri, Purdue University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Utilizing Swanson's (1991) middle-range theory of caring and Gay's (2018) culturally responsive caring served as the theoretical frameworks, this year-long narrative inquiry, examines the experiences of one rural kindergarten teacher who works with and cares for minority and low-income students. Navigating the personal and professional self, this teacher employs an ethic of care to support students' social-emotional and academic needs. This study addressed the following questions: 1. How does a rural teacher describe her work with minority and low-income populations? 2. How does a rural teacher negotiate the space between a professional and personal identity? 3. How does a rural teacher define and demonstrate an ethic of care?

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 4:35-5 P.M.**

**Building Rural Educational Leaders' Capacity in a Community of Practice**

**Presenters:** Theophile Muhayimana and Mary Sult, University of Northern Iowa; Denise Schares, Fort Dodge Community School District

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Discover rural educational leaders' perceptions of the outcomes from the 2019 Leadership Camps (LCs). The latter helped educational leaders meet as a Community of Practice (CoP) where the participants' interactions contributed to learning with and from one another, reducing perceived isolation, and increasing self-efficacy. After offering a brief background to the LCs, presenters discuss the need and relevance of the study and delve into emerging themes that include interaction and professional networking, self-efficacy, a better understanding of leadership standards, and reflective practices. The presenters conclude by shedding light on the vital importance of rural educational leaders' capacity within a CoP. Learn about insights on how the approach offers rural educational leaders various opportunities to grow, including collaboration, promoting professional conversations, and creating a community for reduced isolation, which will likely enhance their job performance and satisfaction.

**On, For, or With? Research Approaches to Rural Teacher Identity**

**Presenter:** Kaycee Rogers, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Rural school-communities are experiencing significant teacher shortages in language education (world language, ESL, bilingual). Often these teachers are on their own as the only teacher in their position in rural schools and districts. Identity, agency, and positionality are all factors that contribute to a rural language teacher's job satisfaction and sense of belonging. In this research review presentation, prevalent research approaches to rural teacher identity will be shared, which generally speak for or about rural language teachers. Suggestions for community engaged research practices with rural language teachers will be shared in order to elevate the voices and experiences of practicing language teachers. Research collaborations and

professional development opportunities that position rural language teachers as specialists with agency to share their knowledge and expertise in rural school communities may aid in the retention of rural language teachers and their satisfaction in their roles.

**What Can TPPs Do to Help Prepare STEM Teachers for Rural Classrooms?**

**Presenters:** Diana Outlaw and Devon Brenner, Mississippi State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Rural STEM teacher shortages continue to be a pressing problem in the U.S. with no comprehensive solution on the horizon. We are asking how Teacher Preparation Programs (TPP) play a role in a teacher candidate's (TC) decision process to accept a rural teaching position. As part of a large National Science Foundation-funded collaboration, the TPR2 project (Teacher Preparation for Rural STEM Teacher Persistence and Retention) seeks to understand what features of TPPs factor into TCs' decision processes. TPR2 is surveying six cohorts of pre- and in-service teachers at three career phases: 1. Student teaching, 2. First semester after program completion, and 3. After the first year of teaching. With a deeper understanding of the TPP features that positively or negatively influence TCs to teach rural, TPR2 will make recommendations to rural-serving TPPs about what specific programmatic steps they can take to increase recruitment, retention, and persistence of rural STEM teachers.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

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

### **Student Mental Health, Addiction, and Vaping Cessation**

**Presenters:** Christine Rockwood and Mark Bloodworth, Tennessee Department of Education; Melinda McCartt, Oneida Special School District

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

Explore national, state, and district-level data on the negative impact of e-cigarettes and the use of vaping products. The purpose of this presentation is to raise awareness among educators, student health advocates, and the community about school-based interventions aimed to decrease the incidence of mental and behavioral health disparities associated with the use of e-cigarettes. Learn about a tiered approach for high school behavioral interventions, treatment services, and support for vaping addiction in a rural school district.

### **Don't Panic! Teaching and Leading in Education in The World of Generative AI**

**Presenter:** Jason Neiffer, Montana Digital Academy

**Room:** Meeting Room 3

The year 2023 is poised to become the Year of Mainstream Artificial Intelligence (AI), with generative AI tools revolutionizing various aspects of our lives. These cutting-edge technologies present unique opportunities to reshape education and cultivate future-focused students and adults. Explore the potential of AI tools as powerful allies rather than replacements for educators. Discover how to leverage AI to enhance your teaching capabilities and empower your students to excel in an increasingly AI-driven world. Address common concerns, deepen your understanding of AI's potential in education, and uncover new opportunities for your school. Learn how to navigate the future of learning and embrace the superpowers AI can offer to educators and students alike.

### **Maine's Rural Aspirations Project: Connecting Rural Students to Rural Vitality**

**Presenters:** Sherry Pineau Brown and Catharine Biddle, University of Maine; Korah Soll, Rural Aspirations Project

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

What happens when rural schools and community leaders engage as partners to design educational opportunities that empower students to contribute to the vitality of their regions? Learn how a small organization in Maine, Rural Aspirations Project, is leading the development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning that value the heritage of working communities and invite students to apply their learning in the context of relevant problems and opportunities facing rural community and economic development. Through these partnerships, Rural Aspirations expands opportunities for rural youth, builds a platform for college/career readiness through place-based and project-based learning, and connects youth to a sense of belonging and mattering in their communities. Learn about the empowering, engaging, and system-changing interdisciplinary work that Rural Aspirations has brought to dozens of schools in Maine.

### **Elevate and Celebrate Rural Education**

**Presenter:** Allison Nys, National Rural Education Association

**Room:** Meeting Room 5

Join Discovery Education to learn about engaging free resources to elevate and celebrate rural education. Bring your students to places across the globe with our exciting virtual field trips. Connect learners to industry experts in engineering, agriscience, sports medicine and more through free resources in STEM Careers Coalition. Build local to global community awareness by helping your students see rural careers centered around the problems they want to solve. Learn about instructional strategies and dynamic resources to ignite curiosity in your classrooms while celebrating rural education!

### **Promoting a More Just, Vibrant, and Sustainable World: Place-based Education**

**Presenters:** Leslie Cook, Teton Science Schools; Alison Mercier, University of Wyoming

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

Place-based education connects learning and community to increase engagement, learning, and community impact. Learning about places promotes equity and access in education by making learning relevant and connected to learners' daily lives and experiences. The University of Wyoming (UW) is the one higher education institution in Wyoming, and their commitment to place-based and rural education is deep because of how rural the state is. Teton Science Schools' (TSS) mission is "inspiring curiosity, engagement, and leadership through transformative place-based education." This approach to place-based education considers economic, cultural, and ecological lenses of place on a spectrum of scales from self and community to national and global place. In this session, learn more about TSS' and UW's place-based approach, the six place-based education principles, and ideas for bringing these principles to action in your classroom or community.

### **Future-Ready Students, Future-Ready Schools**

**Presenters:** Joe T. Wood and Christy Smith, Hardeman County Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Hardeman County is one of the 10 most distressed counties in Tennessee. Hardeman County School's Future Ready initiative is a comprehensive career readiness and K-12 career development district plan. It includes post-secondary credit or credentials for every student through innovative partnerships with higher education institutions and industry. This includes the development of high school coursework to address SEL that align with essential workplace skills. A focus on developing a talent pipeline through a personalized strengths-based approach based on student aptitude and interest. The increase in career advising capacity through the NREA micro-credential and K-12 Career Development Framework is also a key component.

### **Preparing Teacher Candidates for Rural School Teaching Amid a Challenging Landscape**

**Presenters:** Sara Hartman, Jacqueline Yahn, and Brian Brady, Ohio University

**Room:** Meeting Room 9

No matter their locale, all teacher preparation programs should be preparing teacher candidates to teach in rural schools. Preparing teacher candidates to live and teach in rural communities requires that teacher preparation programs depict rural schools from a strengths-based perspective. Yet, the images and messages that often depict the rural United States in mainstream media outlets can make this challenging. Engage in conversation and discuss the political landscape that currently impacts teacher preparation, as well media portrayals of rural people and communities, and explore solutions-focused conversations for preparing teacher candidates to teach in rural schools.

### **Collaborating to Provide Support and Resources to Latino/a Parents, Family, and Community Members**

**Presenters:** Pedro Silva Espinoza, Kansas State University; Zayra Espinoza, USD 475

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

Learn about a case study conducted with Latino/a parents and families and explore resources and types of support P-16 school administrators and teachers can provide to be more effective and inclusive. Hear about the feedback from parents regarding engagement and involvement of Latino/a parents, families, and community.

### **The Sweet Taste of Literacy: Empowering Rural Districts to Thrive**

**Presenter:** Amy Denty, Georgia Department of Education: Office of Rural Education and Innovation

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that allows us to communicate effectively and make sense of the world. Literacy is the foundation that enables all learning. Georgia's Office of Rural Education and Innovation is helping rural school districts prosper, connect, and thrive by offering literacy professional learning grounded in evidence-based practices. As teachers experience their own professional growth and see the impact on their students, they develop greater self-efficacy and a more positive teacher identity, which can influence teacher retention. Learn about a model of literacy professional learning and how it is impacting rural districts across Georgia.

### **Self-determined Learning, Mental Health, and Student Success**

**Presenters:** Kirk Banghart and Katie Peyton, Generation Schools Network; Mike Nicholson, Learning InspirEd

**Room:** Meeting Room 12

Now, more than ever before, rural schools are looking for ways to effectively support students academically and social-emotionally. The pandemic exacerbated mental health issues across the country—from rising rates of depression and anxiety to academic struggles for almost all student groups. What if the solution for how to support students was...STUDENTS! This student-centered session explores how by putting students in the driver seat of schools, we can better learn about their needs and empower them as leaders to address their needs.

### **Fired Up for Rural Education**

**Presenter:** Aric Bostick, Aric Bostick Leadership Training, LLC

**Room:** Meeting Room 16

Rurality represents a space of educational inequality in which 8.9 million (1 in 6) U.S. children live and learn. Many rural students face issues of isolation and poverty, and their schools face teacher shortages and 85% of persistent poverty comes from rural counties. Thus, well-trained, emotionally invested, and fired up rural school educators are needed now more than ever. Discover examples of essential strategies to practice and to keep in mind when trying to build relationships with rural students, educators, and families that can make a difference, and most importantly help educators invest and attach to their rural schools and communities.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10-10:25 A.M.**

**Recruiting and Retaining Community Partners at a Rural High School**

**Presenters:** Britton Wolfe, University of Maine; Elizabeth Sanborn, Sacopee Valley High School

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) are a personalized, inquiry-based, community-based, career learning pedagogical strategy geared toward helping high school students refine and focus their career exploration learning through internships, apprenticeships, job shadow experiences, and other hands-on experiences outside of traditional classroom methodologies and timeframes. ELO is an initiative which is part of a broader trend toward school-community partnerships. This dissertation study used an exploratory case study approach to gather and analyze the experiences and perspectives of community partners in a rural context. Specifically, research questions focused on the factors which caused community partners to want to volunteer in this capacity and the factors which are necessary to keep them engaged as stakeholders. Ideally, insights gained from this research will be beneficial to education and community partnership programs which seek to benefit a wide range of rural students.

**Raising the Floor: Analyzing Implementation of Indiana Teacher Pay Policy**

**Presenter:** Kristie LeBeau, Cornell University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Indiana recently passed a new teacher compensation policy requiring all public school districts to pay their teachers a minimum of \$40,000 by the 2022-23 school year (Ind. Code § 20-28-9-26). Despite its neutral language and financial support, the policy targets rural districts, as 95% of rural districts were below the minimum at the time legislation was recommended. However, because state aid is heavily tied to enrollment, rural districts losing significant enrollment may experience enhanced fiscal stress in reaching this requirement. To explore how implementation of this policy varies across rural districts, I conducted interviews with superintendents across the state in districts experiencing varying financial and enrollment situations. Hear how fiscal and relational pressures impacted rural school leaders' decisions and highlight important implications for policymakers when introducing future policies surrounding teacher pay.

**Leveraging Community Capital During a Pandemic: Rural Superintendents' Successes**

**Presenters:** Timothy Thomas, James Madison University; Amy Price Azano, Virginia Tech; Hobart Harmon, Kansas State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

This study gives voice to school division (district) superintendents in revealing how superintendents utilized resources and relationships in the rural community to support leadership success during the pandemic. The study's primary research question was, how did rural superintendents' leadership leverage social capital to accomplish success/positive change during the pandemic? Two secondary questions also guided the study: 1. How did the rural context influence this success? and 2. How did rural leadership influence this success?

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 10:35-11 A.M.**

**Summer Learning: Elevating Rural Voices**

**Presenter:** Kristen Cuthrell, East Carolina University; Loni Crumb and Robbie Quinn, East Carolina University; Otis Smallwood and Linda Bulluck, Bertie County Schools; Karen Roseboro, Tyrrell County Schools; Brent Williams and Frances Herring, Lenoir County Schools

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Learn how university researchers partnered with districts and the state department of education to conduct a multi-case qualitative study around summer learning opportunities post-pandemic. An interdisciplinary team of researchers will share how they developed semi-structured, qualitative interview protocols, demographic surveys, and photo-elicitation prompts with school district partners during the research design phase. District partners will share perspectives on the research-practice partnership. The findings signify that attention should be given to the overall summer program structure within rural contexts, including student and staff recruitment, engaged curricula across PK-12 levels, and involvement of community stakeholders and organizations for supplemental learning experiences (e.g., field trips).

**Exploring efficacy and Resources Across Rural and Town Teachers**

**Presenters:** Shea Ferguson, Alyssa Raygoza, Angela Starrett, and Beatrice Quiroz, University of South Carolina

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Rural and town communities in South Carolina are experiencing increased rates of teacher turnover. Teacher retention is influenced by factors such as school climate and individual efficacy levels in teaching. This study explores teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and what supports are most needed to improve teacher satisfaction. Findings from the study demonstrate efficacy levels did not differ between rural and town communities or within rural and town by locale code (i.e., fringe, distant, remote). However, supports most needed to improve teacher satisfaction were noted and, in some instances, differed by location. In terms of practical implications, this study provides district leaders and administrative personnel with insights into what supports are needed to increase teacher efficacy and job satisfaction and the importance of considering the location in decision-making.

**Rural Superintendent, Parent, and Cyber Director Responses to Cyber Charters**

**Presenters:** Karen Eppley, Annie Maselli, and Kai Schafft, Penn State University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom C

Perhaps because of exposure to virtual learning during the pandemic, cyber charter enrollment has exploded across the United States, a trend acutely experienced by rural districts. While at least 21 states permit virtual charter schools, Pennsylvania rural districts are uniquely affected by cyber enrollment due to small school budgets and cyber funding formulas in the state. This study presents findings about parents' decisions to enroll their children in cyber charters and rural superintendent and cyber charter director response to enrollment trends. This study's findings can potentially inform rural district response to rising cyber charter enrollment in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. By understanding effects, responses, and gaps, the results can be informative to district leaders as they develop strategic responses and innovative practices to provide viable education options to rural communities in the face of increasing cyber charter enrollment.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
**60-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:15 A.M.–12:15 P.M.**

**Don't Forget About Us: Tending to the Mental Health and Wellness of Rural School Administrators**

**Presenters:** Loni Crumb and Kristen Cuthrell, East Carolina University, Tevis Harris, Wilson Preparatory School; James Knight, Pactolus Global School

**Room:** Meeting Room 2

Rural school administrators are multi-skilled leaders, who hold various roles and responsibilities aimed at championing the educational and professional success of their staff and students. Varied by school level and location, leaders in these roles may face additional pressures to raise achievement scores; handle student discipline; attend to the needs of the rural community; address regulations from federal, state, and local entities; as well as manage both teacher and student mental health crises. Consequently, their own wellness needs go unmet, resulting in decreases in physical and psychological health, work efficiency, and career burnout. Explore how rural school administrators can utilize evidenced-based strategies to promote self-care and build long-term professional resiliency, and discuss approaches, such as peer support groups, consultation and supervision, new leader support programs, boundary setting, and other strategies that promote work-life harmony and wellbeing for novice and veteran administrators.

**Statewide Alignment Between College Access and Workforce Development Strategies**

**Presenters:** Duane Gregg and Mitch Currey, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Room:** Meeting Room 3

Since 2019, Tennessee has secured over 24,000 new jobs and nearly \$13 billion in capital investment in rural counties. Tennessee has invested over \$90 million in the Governor's Investment in the Vocational Education (GIVE) program to support rural workforce development through career and technical education (CTE). Additionally, Tennessee has invested over \$12 million since 2018 in the Supporting Postsecondary Access in Rural Counties (SPARC) initiative. This is a targeted initiative to engage local constituencies and education stakeholders in these rural communities that

have historically struggled in the area of postsecondary access and success. Along with statewide college access initiatives such as GEAR UP, Advise TN, and CollegeforTN; GIVE and SPARC have been utilized to foster long-term regional partnerships between Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), community colleges, industry, economic development/workforce agencies, and K-12 to identify and address skills gaps in local workforce pools.

**Raising Pay: Impact on Recruitment and Retention**

**Presenters:** Erin Lair and Regina Sampson, Baker School District 5J; Ellen Sheratt, Teacher Salary Project

**Room:** Meeting Room 4

Hear about the success of a district's recent decision to set a new minimum salary for teachers at \$60,000. Learn about the positive impacts that this change has had on the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators in the district. Additionally, examine the ripple effects of this change on the community and student outcomes. Be inspired to consider implementing similar policies to invest in your educators and improve student success. Leave with practical insights and strategies for implementing a minimum teacher salary increase in your own districts.

**How Great Administrators Lead During a School Crisis**

**Presenters:** Timothy Taylor, Small School Districts' Association of California; Jose Gonzalez, Planada School District; Nicole Newman, Wheatland School District; Eric Bonniksen, Placerville Elementary School District

**Room:** Meeting Room 6

Dive into the in-depth data of rural students' perceptions of Career Technical Education. Using a cross-sectional survey, nine rural schools in Alabama from both Black Belt schools and rural schools that were not located in the Black Belt will assess their postsecondary outcomes.

### **Rural Students Perceptions of Career Technical Education for a Better Future**

**Presenter:** Marlon Bernard Murray, Hale County College & Career Academy

**Room:** Meeting Room 7

This session will provide educators with in-depth data of rural students' perceptions of Career Technical Education. Using a cross-sectional survey, nine rural schools in Alabama from both Black Belt schools and rural schools that were not located in the Black Belt will assess their postsecondary outcomes.

### **Addressing Climate Change in Rural Colorado through Transformational Educational Opportunities**

**Presenters:** Elizabeth Harbaugh, Mary Seawell, and Royce Hinjosa, Lyra Colorado

**Room:** Meeting Room 8

Communities across rural Colorado acutely experience the pressures of climate change on their economies, livelihood, and way of living as a whole. With this, Colorado's students feel enormous urgency to learn about and prevent the impacts of climate change on the local and global levels. To meet this need, Lyra Colorado launched Climatarium to expand initiatives that create transformational educational experiences for youths to address the emerging impacts of climate change within their unique local contexts. Lyra will share perspectives from K-12, higher education, and community partners currently working to promote community resilience, create economic stability and provide postsecondary pathways for rural students.

### **Constructing Robust Rural School Brands and Connecting with Community Stakeholders**

**Presenters:** Jason Lee, University of North Florida; Jerry Johnson, East Carolina University

**Room:** Meeting Room 9

How rural schools construct and communicate academic messages significantly impacts stakeholder perception. Accordingly, effective academic brand management is vital in the ever-changing rural education landscape. Rural school leaders must strategically employ academic branding ingenuities that formulate, reinforce, and differentiate a robust academic brand identity. Branding involves creating distinction, adding value, and evoking meaning through stakeholder associations. Explore a multi-disciplinary approach and brand identity framework that examines educational brand elements

and touchpoints and supplying an integrated approach for delivering visual attraction, consistency, and distinctiveness. Learn how the framework highlights the link between integrated brand identity elements and rural school brand image, personality, and reputation. This presented model and brand identity audit guide aids in developing and nurturing appropriate institutional brand identity for rural schools as they pursue and promote excellence while acquiring greater recognition and positively influencing stakeholder relations.

### **Creating a Rural High School Career Academy from the Ground Up**

**Presenter:** Noel Schmidt, Rock Ridge Public Schools

**Room:** Meeting Room 10

Two rural school districts in Minnesota agreed to cooperatively build two elementary schools and one high school based on 21st century skills and career academies. Then they voted to consolidate, creating the new Rock Ridge Public School District. Working extensively with local community and business organizations, the district, in one of the poorest areas in Minnesota, raised over \$2.8 million in donations, passed a public \$178 million bond vote in two separate school district elections, and created relationships with over 100 local business organizations for the student career pathways. Part of this resulted in students constructing the new baseball and softball dugouts and storage buildings. It also included a health care organization opening a full orthopedic clinic on the high school site and working with students who are interested in the Health Care Academy. How did two rival school districts work together and create two elementary schools and one of the most incredible high schools in the nation? Come and find out.

**Thriving Together: Successful Partnership Between Schools and Law Enforcement**

**Presenters:** Peter Gretz, Fluvanna County Public Schools; Captain Von Hill, Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office

**Room:** Meeting Room 11

The relationship between schools and local law enforcement doesn't need to be controversial or confrontational. Using a focus on a shared vision for education and learning, these partnerships can thrive and provide critical support and opportunity for students and families. Learn about the transformational partnership between Fluvanna County, Virginia's schools and Sheriff's Office and the people and programs that have made it such an exemplary success.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:15-11:40 A.M.**

**Raising Rural Together: Measuring Equity of Opportunity Within/Between Communities**

**Presenters:** Hope Casto, Skidmore College; Kristie LeBeau and John Sipple, Cornell University

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Discover how community leaders react to and use a school-community framework tool in conversation, bringing in multiple perspectives and sources of evidence to consult during the decision-making process. In sum, we find minor differences in responses across income and workplace, but more substantial differences across districts. This suggests real community-level differences in how opportunities are conceived and implemented. These findings demonstrate the use of the school-community framework to allow school and community leaders to understand school employees' and community members' shared and differing understandings of the purpose of schooling, as well as the perceived efficacy and equity of the opportunities provided for students.

**Understanding the Relationship of Place-Based Workforce Development on Adolescents' Rural Aspirations Across Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

**Presenters:** Angela Starrett, Matt Irvin, Christine Lotter, and Jan Yow, University of South Carolina

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Building off of previous research that shows place-based workforce development in rural science and mathematics classes is associated with higher efficacy beliefs, STEM career interests, and rural community aspirations in adolescents, this session seeks to expand on previous results to determine whether place-based workforce development is a culturally responsive pedagogy regardless of gender or race/ethnicity. Results reveal that place-based workforce development in rural mathematics and science classes positively relates to efficacy beliefs, STEM career interests, and rural community aspirations regardless of gender and race/ethnicity. Results also suggest rural mathematics and science teachers should reach past content to include local STEM-related assets and needs to cultivate STEM trajectories in rural youths.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
**20-MINUTE IN-PERSON SESSIONS • 11:50 A.M.-12:15 P.M.**

**Calling on Our Community: Rural Black Students' College-Going Culture Experiences**

**Presenter:** Jenay Willis, University of Pittsburgh

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom A

Explore the roles of the broader rural community and youth participatory action research (YPAR) as a practice in supporting rural Black students' college-going culture experiences. Using a YPAR approach, rural Black students served as co-collaborators to create and implement an action plan to support their access to higher education while drawing upon a racial analysis and a spatial analysis. Gain knowledge about how to support rural Black students as change agents and knowledge holders of their own lived experiences to increase their access to higher education. Additionally, implications for policy and future research will be addressed which offers ways to support this student population in increasing their presence in higher education.

**What Will I Be? Where Will I Go?**

**Presenters:** Alyssa Raygoza, Angela Starrett, Shea Ferguson, and Matt Irvin, University of South Carolina

**Room:** Plaza Ballroom B

Research suggests rural youth may face uncertainties around post-secondary education and have fluctuating feelings of attachment to the community in which they live. The purpose of this study is to investigate rural youths' educational expectations and the role that demographic and identity factors play. Results reveal that gender and racial differences are evident in what rural youth expect to attain in their highest level of education. The findings also offer a strong push back to the rural brain drain narrative, providing insight for educators on how rural attachment and community aspirations can serve as support factors in youth's educational trajectory.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 & FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

## POSTER SESSION PRESENTATIONS *(In-person only) - 7:30-8:30 A.M. (each day)*

Poster sessions offer an abbreviated way to engage with presenters to learn about research and/or promising practices in rural education. Posters will be on display throughout the event; however, presenters will only be available at designated times.

### **Rural Science Teacher Recruitment and Retention Study**

**Presenters:** Earl Legleiter, Matthew Clay, and Paul Adams, Fort Hays State University

The purpose of this study was to identify factors inherent in western Kansas' rural school districts that attract and retain secondary science teachers.

### **The 2023 Whippoorwill Award for Rural Young Adult Literature: Announcing the Winners**

**Presenters:** Devon Brenner, Mississippi State University; Erika Bass, University of Northern Iowa; Chea Parton, Literacy in Place

The 2023 Winners of the Whippoorwill Award represent a variety of genres with diverse characters from rural settings across and outside the U.S. Learn more about the award and the complex ways that authors are portraying rural places and people and elevating the value of rural spaces, knowledge, cultures, and histories.

### **“I Don't Know that We've Given Them an Opportunity:” A Rural Case Study of the Bridge Between Community and Induction**

**Presenters:** Kristina Bell and Michael Coleman, Virginia Tech

This poster seeks to understand if and how new teacher induction programs are attentive to the realities of community adjustment (Lemke, 1994) and what supports are offered to new teachers as they navigate their rural environments.

### **Should Effort Count? Effort-weighted Grades as Predictors of High School Readiness**

**Presenters:** Haley Kidd, Knox County Schools; Barry Kamrath, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Views on grading practices in school across the country can vary wildly. Some schools require grades to only represent content mastery, while others allow teachers leeway to incorporate non-content factors, such as behavior, punctuality, and homework completion. This mixed-methods study examines the extent to which effort-weighted grades (grades that contain factors beyond content mastery) issued by middle school teachers in one rural school are accurate predictors of readiness for the next grade level.

### **University-School District Partnerships: Supporting Special Education Teacher Candidates through Clinical Experience Rotations Across Urban, Suburban, and Rural Settings**

**Presenters:** Jason Gordon, Jennifer Lynberg, and Kim Wingate, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga

As part of an ongoing university-school district partnership, supervised clinical experience rotations were intentionally designed and facilitated to support preservice teacher candidates' field readiness for programs providing a continuum of direct services to support students with disabilities across multiple community settings (i.e., rural, suburban, urban). The partnership supported preservice teachers with a broad scope of clinical experiences across diverse community settings (i.e., rural, suburban, and urban) and direct services for students with disabilities.

### **Strategies for Success: Conducting Federal-Level Evaluations in Rural Settings**

**Presenter:** Shanan Chappell Moots, Old Dominion University

This poster presentation will share practical, real-time solutions to common obstacles experienced in project implementation and evaluation of federally-funded projects occurring in rural settings and will focus on strategies used to overcome and/or prevent these challenges in a “lessons learned” format.

### **Co-designing AI+Art Educational Technologies with Multidisciplinary Rural Teachers: Enthusiasm and Anxiety**

**Presenters:** Joseph Wiggins and William Causey, Katabasis, Inc.; José Blackorby, WestEd

Learn about a series of co-designed sessions with middle school Art and Technology teachers from three rural counties to design an AI+Art curriculum that could be implemented in rural educational spaces. We report on the codesign process and insights gathered from these co-design sessions, both what activities worked well for generating discussion and what activities need improvement.

### **Examining Teacher and Student Perceptions of Intersectional Rural Identities and Barriers to STEM/CS Engagement in Rural Schools**

**Presenters:** Jorge Parra, Katabasis, Inc.; Lauren Wong and Sarah Emily Wilson, WestEd

This work aims to help understand how intersectional rural identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, cultural, disability) interface with technology identities, and how these components impact interest in future STEM or CS careers. By examining the impact of these intersectional perspectives, we can begin to address spatial inequities that might be alleviated to support rural schools and students.

### **Rural Students' Pursuit of College Education**

**Presenter:** Corey Pevitz, Monmouth College

This poster presentation will explore the current research on college attendance patterns of rural high schoolers while critiquing the current proposed practices suggested by scholars. The presentation will describe recommendations from the literature, suggest additional practices, and highlight the need for further research.

### **An Analysis of Virginia's Rural Serving Institutions**

**Presenter:** Valerie Lefor, University of North Dakota

This project aims to enhance the understanding of Rural Serving Institutions (RSI) (AARC, 2022) in Virginia. By conducting a closer analysis of data in a single state location, the trends, commonalities, and details pertinent to this state will be analyzed to bring attention to the data supporting rural students.

### **Revolutionary Love and Re-Constructing and Re-Invigorating Our Course**

**Presenter:** Sarrah Grubb, IU Kokomo

The Revolutionary Love Project (founded by Valerie Kaur) was used as a “catalyst” for higher education students to re-imagine their future work as teachers. This work led to students re-constructing their syllabus, coursework, and class work to meet their own needs AND course outcomes.

### **Teacher and Leader Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention**

**Presenters:** Janet Stramel, Paul Adams, and Earl Legleiter, Fort Hays University  
The Fort Hays State University Noyce Scholar program prepares STEM teachers to teach and lead in rural, high-needs schools. This poster focuses on what we do to help retain teachers by building a community of individuals who teach in rural schools.

### **Next Chapter: How Tennessee 4-H is Providing a Fair Chance at a Good Life**

**Presenter:** Lori Blanchard, Tennessee 4-H

Next Chapter is a college and workforce readiness program offered to 8th-12th graders that promotes student success as participants prepare for life after graduation. This unique partnership with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville connects students state-wide with the resources, scholarships, and skills for a successful transition into their “next chapter.”

### **IDRONE AIS: Drone Workforce Development for Native American Youth education and student success in rural settings**

**Presenter:** Jae Ryu, University of Idaho; Kevin Sekaquptewa, American Indian Services; Jisong Ryu, Interstate Drone League

The Interstate Drone League (iDrone) took place in Blanding, Utah during the summer 2022 to engage Native American 7th-9th graders to enter STEM disciplines for their future STEM career. The iDrone program was integrated into the existing program known as AIS PREP (American Indian Services Pre-Freshman Engineering Program) to promote drone workforce development for Native American youth. Learn more about this program and how students used this technology to explore technical solutions for answering their research questions.

## VIRTUAL 60-MINUTE SESSIONS

### **Four Cornerstones for Building More Effective and Engaging Rural Classrooms**

**Presenter:** Harvey Silver, Thoughtful Classroom/Silver Strong & Associates; Robert Wilson, Hall County Schools (Georgia)

Research and experience tell us that a successful learning environment is more than a well-managed classroom. Explore the four cornerstones of effective classrooms—universal, research-based foundations for building more effective and equitable learning environments that engage all students in deep learning—and acquire instructional tools that all educators can use right away to enhance teaching and learning in any classroom.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices for Rural Schools**

**Presenter:** Cassandra Hebert, Committee for Children

Learn about the effects of adversity and trauma on learning, how to create a safe and supportive learning environment, and practical tips and resources to help educators support students who have experienced trauma.

### **Supporting an Authentic Sense of Place through Rural Literature**

**Presenters:** Tammy Parlier, Tammy Hines, and Wendy Snow, Longwood University

Are the books in your library or classroom representative of rural life and settings? Or does your collection promote stereotypes regarding the life experiences of those living in rural areas? Learn how one rural-based university evaluated its own children's library collection for authentic representations of rural life and discover their plans to support rural educators in strengthening students' connections to the sense of place when authentic rural-based literature is more readily available.

### **Bridging Home and School Literacies: Considering Assets**

**Presenters:** Stacy Gray and Amber Garbe, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
All students deserve the opportunity for meaningful literacy instruction within a respectful and empowering learning environment that fosters their self-worth and academic advancement. The formation of partnerships between homes and schools offers a powerful vehicle to inform culturally sustaining literacy instruction (Anderson et al., 2017; Galindo & Sheldon, year; Moll, year). Discover opportunities to identify and elevate authentic literacy experiences at home and in the classroom with the goal of empowering participants to brainstorm ways to bridge home/school literacies for their own student populations.

### **Art Therapy and Counseling Pipeline: Undergraduate to Graduate Degree**

**Presenter:** Susan Ridley, West Liberty University

To address the growing need for mental health providers in West Virginia, WLU initiated a 3+2 Bridge program to help students transition from undergraduate to graduate art therapy and counseling degree. The Bridge program saves students time and money and supports them in their educational journey. The graduate program teaches students about the healing power of art, as well as counseling skills to prepare them for work in the healthcare field. The ATC program provides the education needed for credentials as an art therapist and licensure as a counselor. Postgraduate supervision hours are required for both credentials.

### **Play Higher: Using Virtual Reality to Engage Students in Career Pipelines**

**Presenter:** Megan Gandy, West Virginia University

Career pipeline programs encourage students to consider a profession by exposing them to the basic components of that field. Learn about gamification and a new virtual reality game experience called Play Higher: Behavioral Health. This game educates users on the career field of behavioral health and the profession of social work by immersing users into the first day on the job of a behavioral health social worker. It is ideal for grades 8-12 and first-year college students and can easily be integrated into career trajectory curricula and programming.

### **Rural Partnerships Tackle Digital Equity Solutions**

**Presenters:** Melissa Strovers, Grinnell College; Jill Harris, Grinnell Education Partnership; Janet Stutz, Educational Consultant; Liz Hansen, Grinnell Newburg School Foundation

Access to affordable internet service for low-income families in rural Grinnell, Iowa is complicated. Utilizing a strong network and creative partnerships built via the collective impact model, the Grinnell Education partnership is harnessing the power of community. Bringing together an anchor institution, non-profits, the school district, the city of Grinnell, an internet provider, and the Administration's Internet for All initiative collectively is ensuring equitable access for K-12 students to continue learning by providing free internet.

### **Rural Education and AI: Questions and Considerations**

**Presenters:** Elizabeth Wargo and Juhee Kim, University of Idaho; Jeff Simmons, Idaho Digital Learning Alliance; Randy Jensen, American Falls School District

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing, and so too is rural education. Learn what AI has to say about rural education and what rural educators have to say about AI and the opportunities and challenges of using tools such as ChatGPT as grounds to consider the implications of AI for rural learners, teachers, leaders, and researchers.

### **Effective Mentoring: Training Together Virtually to Support and Retain Teachers**

**Presenters:** Matthew Hunter, Rangely School District; Carrie Clark, Colorado River BOCES

The link between teacher retention and good mentoring is well researched and clear, yet rural schools face unique challenges when finding and supporting qualified mentors. One solution to this problem is to provide training to experienced teachers to develop the skills necessary to effectively mentor new teachers. The Colorado Department of Education has created a grant program in which experienced teachers undergo intensive training to become mentors for new teachers in their district. Learn more about the process, benefits, and challenges faced by a cohort of mentor teachers representing four rural western Colorado districts.

### **Enhancing Education Equity: The Power of Online Learning Partnerships**

**Presenters:** Cindy Hamblin, Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance; Jeff Simmons, Idaho Digital Learning Academy; Amanda Williamson, Georgia Virtual School

Discover the potential impact of partnerships between online learning programs and rural schools in addressing the challenges of providing equitable education opportunities in rural communities. Dive deeper into the benefits and challenges of such partnerships and learn about successful collaborations through examples.

### **School Leaders' Perceptions of Preparation for Rural Southern Schools**

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

Explore the lived experiences of school leaders in a rural southern region of the United States to better understand their educational leadership preparation program experiences and how training shaped their current leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This phenomenological analysis discovered three overarching research themes that were expressed: 1. Practical leadership lessons, 2. Meaningful leadership mentorship, and 3. Community-centered education needed. The findings centered around the theme, practical leadership lessons, provided support for learning best when assigned tasks that related to the day-to-day operations of being a school leader.

### **Creating Equity-Based Pathways for Rural, Low-Income Paraeducators**

**Presenters:** Gloria Delany-Barmann and Carla Paciotto, Western Illinois University

Explore initial findings of a mixed methods, equity-based research project focused on an alternative pathway to postsecondary education for rural, low-income and first-generation college paraprofessional educators in rural Illinois. The study examines the ways in which the Paraprofessional Teacher Education Option is creating conditions (policies, practices, structures) that facilitate the attainment of a postsecondary degree (BA in Education) and teacher licensure (Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Special Education) for rural, low-income paraprofessionals with diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Engage in a conversation about how to reimagine public postsecondary education institutions as central sites for untapping the talents of low-income and diverse communities.

### **The Grant that Laid the Golden Egg-How to Manage ESSA Grant Compliance for Outstanding Results**

**Presenter:** Kish Russell-Yoguelet, Kish Russell Grants & Compliance  
Ever wonder if a grant-funded program is worth its weight in gold? Discover key information to strengthen understanding of the essential ESSA compliance success criteria to understand how your federal grant funded programs measure up. This session is based on the book, *Compliance by Design*, which will provide useful tips, recommendations, and examples of best practices in managing complex grant compliance requirements and to improve programs to achieve exceptional results for special populations. Learn how to ask the right questions to reveal the gold within their ESSA funded grant programs.

### **Raising Rural: Rural Educators' Learning as the Pathway to Improved Student Outcomes**

**Presenters:** Cindy Guerrero, Texas A&M University; Jennifer Knudsen, TERC; Laura Peticolas, Sonoma State University; Amy Patterson and Wynta Carter, Urban Arts  
Rural educators hold one of the most important keys to rural students' outcomes and need support for ongoing professional development that improves teaching and learning. The Federal Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program invests in examining the effectiveness of leading ideas for how to improve educator learning and support ongoing professional growth. EIR also prioritizes funding for grantees who focus on addressing the needs of rural schools. EIR grantees partner with rural schools across the nation addressing educators' professional learning needs across varied content areas. Learn about these cutting-edge programs, opportunities for engagement, and take-home strategies you can use right now.

### **Student Support for Every Child: Addressing the Out of School Factors First**

**Presenters:** Jillian Lain, Alex Cipoletti, and Margaret Smith, Marian University, Center for Vibrant Schools  
Schools are grappling with more out-of-school factors than ever before. Up to two-thirds of a child's life is spent outside the classroom, thus academic and quality of life outcomes are increasingly impacted as these factors persist and evolve. In many places, schools lack a system to serve all students and their needs of today and tomorrow. Learn why and how addressing out-of-school factors in your student support strategy is the way of the future and explore a unique case study of a rural school in Indiana tracking these issues by utilizing community supports and services.

### **Building Bold Leaders for Careers in Rural Broadband**

**Presenters:** Josh Seidemann, NTCA: The Rural Broadband Association; Jim Larson, Arizona Western College  
Careers in the broadband industry encompass a wide range of opportunities, including communications network design, engineering, and construction, as well as roles supporting telehealth, IoT, and cybersecurity. Learn how the telecom industry and educators can work together on efforts, including curriculum development, internships, and esports to increase awareness of leadership roles in this sector.

### **Ya Can't Get Theah From Heah-And Other Myths From Country to College and Beyond**

**Presenter:** Alysha Hearn, VHS Learning  
How exposing high school students to career pathways using online education at a pivotal age can open up a world of possibilities for college majors and career discoveries otherwise unavailable to them.

### Reaching Rural Students with Summer Resources and Reading Enrichment

**Presenter:** Kathrina O’Connell, Bemidji State University

This promising practice highlights five summers of equity and enrichment-focused literacy learning for middle school students in rural Minnesota. Discover the actions taken by a sixth-grade teacher to transform the school’s summer school program, eliminating punitive and deficit undertones to create an engaging and motivating learning opportunity. Steps taken to achieve equitable access to transportation, nutrition, and books will be outlined, as well as research-based best practices at the core of the new curriculum. The transformed program now serves as a bridge that connects school years, while reducing summer learning loss.

### Safe Harbor for Homeless and Foster Students: Best Practices for Small/Rural LEAs

**Presenters:** Aleia Lund, Joyce Willey, and Jessica Ibarra, Wheatland Union High School District

Small and rural LEAs face unique challenges when it comes to identifying, connecting, and supporting students with housing instability and those who are in foster care. Wheatland Union High School District’s Safe Harbor program offers an innovative way to support homeless and foster youth within a rural community and has been recognized by the California Department of Education for its effectiveness. Best practices that will be discussed include early identification of eligible youth, use of SIS data to track student outcomes, student connection, transportation, mental health support, collaboration with community agencies, and the use of a community school model to best support at-risk youth.

### How Does Your Trauma Impact Your Teaching?

**Presenter:** Stacy G. York Nation, Go Be You, LLC

Engage in activities that explore our own past history. Examine how these same activities can also be used in the classroom setting to connect, create safety, and build relationships with students. All of this is based on neuroscience and brain development.

### Everywhere is Within Walking Distance

**Presenters:** Fanni Liu Coward, Alyson Mitchell, Sherre Heider, and Amy Hickman, Texas Tech University

A major challenge faced by rural communities to attract teacher talent is the access to post-secondary education due to distance. The university education is structured in a way that is often unable to accommodate place-bound individuals. The challenge of remote sites for participation in teacher preparation such as recruiting, course work, and student teaching supervision has been an unmovable obstacle for many. Research often described the struggles in this “third space” when the universities and school communities’ partner with each other as well. Learn about a model and outcomes of a four-year university partnering with rural school districts to create a pathway to recruit and cultivate teacher talent. This model is a grow-your-own solution plus distance and going the distance. The necessary structure established to make this model work and the experiences of the personnel involved in this “third space” will be shared.

### Maximizing Funding Resources for Small and Rural Schools

**Presenter:** Marcia McCaffrey, TeachUNITED

Did you know there is currently \$195 million in funding available to small and rural schools nationwide through the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)? Rural and small schools often face resource challenges such as limited federal program allocations due to enrollment-based formulas. The good news is that small and rural schools have access to a unique set of spending options through REAP that can help your school manage resources for its most important asset—your teachers. Learn about 1. What types of solutions are a good fit for REAP funds; 2. How to tap into several flexible spending options through REAP; 3. How to use funding to build internal capacity, rather than dependency on recurring expenses over time.

### **Advancing Family-School Partnerships to Promote Rural School Mental Health**

**Presenter:** Andy Garbacz, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Discover the alignment and integration of an evidence-based approach to family-school-community partnership systems and practices within a multi-tiered system of support in rural schools. A context for family-school-community partnerships and youth mental health in rural schools will support articulation of a multi-tiered framework to promote integration of partnership-centered practices. Resources and implementation materials will be reviewed to support rural school staff implementation and sustainment of family-school-community partnerships in rural schools. Outcomes on youth mental health, family wellness, and school staff wellness will be reviewed.

### **A National Model for Principal Preparation using Service Learning and Servant Leadership Pedagogies**

**Presenter:** Hal Holloman, East Carolina University

Discover the redesign process for a university-based principal preparation program that is grounded in strong service-learning and servant leadership pedagogies. Receive an overview of the service leadership framework for leadership preparation which starts with authentic service-learning opportunities for our principal preparation candidates in local schools. Principal preparation candidates complete service leadership projects (SLPs), and serve and support real improvement efforts, as they collaborate with their school partners. Hear about the value-added design components and impact data from the partnership experiences of implementing this innovative leadership preparation program in collaboration with local school districts.

### **Vitality Coaching: Promoting a Vitality Mindset for You and Your School Community**

**Presenter:** Hal Holloman, East Carolina University

Learn what burnout is, how to diagnose it in ourselves, how to see it in others (i.e., students, parents, teachers, other staff, and community members), and what vitality is, and steps we can take to promote vitality on a daily basis for ourselves and others. Learn how burnout decreases student engagement, parent engagement, our emotional enjoyment, and our sense of professional accomplishment. Discover how recognizing and choosing a vitality mindset will increase employee, student, and parent engagement, and a culture of accomplishment. Consider how professional language can either promote burnout or promote vitality. The best practice language framework for promoting vitality will be shared and discussed.

### **Next Generation of Leaders: Replacing Ourselves with a Come Here or a From Here**

**Presenter:** Jon Andes, Salisbury University

Leadership is critical to the success of our students. Leading rural schools and school systems presents unique challenges. We need leaders who possess the skill set to engage rural communities building on rural values, beliefs, and norms to maximize educational opportunities for every student. We need leaders who understand the unique challenges of leading rural schools and school systems. To be a successful leader of a rural school or school system, you need to understand the soul of the rural community. Explore the unique nature of rural attributes needed to succeed in rural, process to recruit, mentor, and support emerging leaders, and share successful models.

### **A Free STEM Research Program: Junior Science and Humanities Symposium**

**Presenter:** Andrea Malenya, National Science Teaching Association

Engage your high school students in STEM! Learn how high school students can earn scholarships and expand their horizons through JSHS. This is an opportunity for all high school students in the U.S. to compete for regional and national-level university scholarships with their original STEM research.

## VIRTUAL 20-MINUTE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

### **Reimagining Classrooms with LIVE Instruction for All Students**

**Presenters:** Nicolette DiPietro, Scott Cooper, and Roxie Mitchell, Colorado Classrooms LIVE

Explore the effectiveness of streaming live math teachers into middle school and high school classrooms across Colorado with the intention of scaling the project to connect more qualified teachers of all disciplines with more K-12 students. Discover the findings specific to rural schools and learn practical, short-term and long-term recommendations supported by this pilot project.

### **What Makes Rural Teachers Stay?**

**Presenters:** Richard Hoberg, Diana D'Amico-Pawlewicz and Kevin Read, University of North Dakota; McKenzie Rabenn, University of Wisconsin, River Falls

Drawing from data from across rural districts in North Dakota, this session offers an analysis and discussion of rural teacher perspectives that unpacks concepts of community and place as well as the reasoning behind teachers' decisions to stay in rural places or leave them.

### **Taking STEM Career and College Pathways to New Heights**

**Presenters:** Elizabeth Wargo, Juhee Kiim, and Jae Ryu, University of Idaho; Maeve Nevins Lavtar, City of Sandpoint

Land-based STEM learning opportunities hold great potential for promoting equity, justice, and sustainability in rural areas. Using a mini-ethnographic case study approach, this research presentation provides insights into the iDrone Watershed camp experience that allowed students and community partners to clarify future workforce needs and related STEM career and college pathways using a co-mentoring approach. As such, this presentation of our study highlights a promising framework that supports learning together about rural futures.

### **University/District Partnerships to Prepare Future Rural Special Education Teachers**

**Presenters:** Nikki Logan, Sydney Bueno, Sarah Beaulieu, and Yue Li, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

Given the teacher shortage and its effects on rural schools and special education programs, communities will need to collaborate in unique and effective ways. Learn about the challenges specific to rural school districts, how one teacher preparation program created several field experience collaborations with rural school districts and examine survey data from cooperating teachers and university students who participated in such collaborations. Based on a review of rural education research and on the results of the survey, the presentation will conclude with recommendations for creating mutually beneficial relationships to help create a pipeline for future rural special education teachers.

### **Beyond The Bell: Extracurricular Work of Teachers in Rural Schools**

**Presenter:** Holly Marcolina, University at Buffalo

Public high schools and their associated extracurricular organizations are a standard component of life in rural America. An educator's contribution to a rural school community in the form of extracurricular leadership is undocumented. Framed by the four elements central to a sense of community (McMillan, 1996; McMillan and Chavis, 1986), this multi-site critical ethnography captures how teacher-led extracurricular activities in rural schools foster a sense of community among teachers, students, and the greater public. Sharing insights from interviews with teachers, the "remarkable complexities" (van Manen, 2017, p. 779) of teachers' work outside the classroom is revealed.

### **A Rural Book Study with Rural Midwestern English Teachers**

**Presenter:** Erika Bass, University of Northern Iowa

Examine a rural-focused book study as professional development for rural teachers in a midwestern state. Explore findings related to implications and effect on teacher practice, as well as the power of targeted professional development.

### **Understanding College Path Decisions of Rural Tennesseans**

**Presenters:** Kinsey Simone, Darek Potter, Janet Isbell, and Shawn Hinkel, Tennessee Technological University

The importance of continued efforts to understand educational aspirations and attainment of rural residents was underscored in the National Rural Education Association's (2022) latest call for research. Receive an overview of and findings from a qualitative case study which sought to understand how rural Tennesseans accessed and persisted, despite challenges and changes within their communities, in postsecondary attainment. Study findings provide stakeholders with a better understanding of rural high school graduates' perspectives about accessing and navigating college, the role other adults had on their journeys, and pathways and supports they had versus those they lacked. Study findings may be useful to high school administrators and guidance counselors as they consider how to prepare and counsel rural students for career decisions and how to develop better rural-centered career information.

### **Developing Positive Reading Identities in Rural Middle School Students**

**Presenter:** Carrie Tholstrup, Fort Hays State University

Results of a 13-week study conducted in a rural PreK-12 building reveal factors that impact rural middle school students' reading identities and how teachers and other school personnel can support the development of positive reading identities that will lead to greater academic and life success.

### **Critical Rural Theory in Education: Conceptualizing a Scholarly Turn**

**Presenters:** Catharine Biddle, University of Maine; Erin McHenry-Sorber, West Virginia University

Learn about the use of critical rural theory to frame rural education research. Such conceptualization will include a discussion of the trajectory of rural education research and its increasing emphasis on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice and the possibilities for connection to other critical fields of inquiry, including urban-focused research.

### **What Does Computational Thinking Have to do with Appalachian Ingenuity?**

**Presenters:** Emi Iwatani and Merijke Coenraad, Digital Promise

For many rural teachers and students, the notion of computational thinking sounds like a novelty and nice-to-have from far away cities, rather than an essential competency relevant to their local context. However, two Appalachian school districts, in a research practice partnership, have begun to look for connections between rural heritage stories and computational thinking, to help students grow as community problem solvers. The team has collected several local ingenuity stories and began to analyze what the local flavor of ingenuity is, and direct tie-ins to computational thinking. The stories have been inspiring, but it takes some thoughtful interviewing to identify the exact connections to computational thinking. Hear about the first round of research findings and think with us about ways to move forward so we can ground computing education in local rural contexts.

### **Testing Technology-Delivered Professional Development: Addressing Rural Student Behavioral Needs**

**Presenter:** Amanda Witte, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP) is an individualized intervention wherein parents and teachers, with guidance from a consultant, engage in collaborative problem-solving to enhance students' prosocial skills. Experimental research has established TAPP's efficacy for students with behavioral and social-emotional concerns. Unfortunately, TAPP is not always accessible in rural communities where trained TAPP consultants may be limited. Virtual professional development (VPD) offers promise for increasing access to TAPP. Discover preliminary evidence for TAPP VPD, wherein local school specialists receive training and coaching in a virtual environment. Preliminary results indicate that relative to their peers, school specialists who received TAPP VPD report greater knowledge and self-efficacy. Relative to controls, students who received TAPP demonstrated better social-behavioral outcomes and their parents and teachers reported more positive relationships with one another. This approach may provide rural educators with flexible and effective resources to help them serve their communities.

### **The New Majority Minority: Shifting Linguistic Landscape of an Immigrant Latino Rural Coastal Community**

**Presenters:** Maria Coady and Jodie Roberson, North Carolina State University  
Rural communities in the United States are a dynamic and evolving geographic and social space. Scholars of rural education continue to capture population changes and shifts in rural communities across the country, noting significant social transformation occurring in remote rural locales (Johnson, 2022; Slack & Jensen, 2020). Immigrant newcomers have reversed troubling depopulation trends and contributed to thriving local economies. The appearance of new languages (in either print or oral forms) into existing community spaces that were traditionally monolingual can be contentious, as language ideologies—that is people's views about languages and language use—extend to their views of speakers of those languages (Ruiz, 1984). This study aims to contribute to important conversations about the linguistic resources that immigrants increasingly bring to rural communities and disrupt negative views and stereotypes about speakers of those languages.

### **Examining Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Implementation in Rural Schools**

**Presenter:** Andy Garbacz, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Explore findings from a study that examined implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in rural schools within a Midwestern state. This project was conducted in the context of an interagency collaboration between a statewide organization and a university. Discover findings that suggest factors that facilitate sustained implementation of PBIS—specifically the role that consistent and sustained fidelity play. Learn about contextual factors, such as student enrollment and district size. And the implications for state and regional technical assistance for supporting school implementation of PBIS, as well as the implications for supporting rural schools through an interagency collaboration.

### **The Disjunction Between Rural Teacher and Administration Perceptions of COVID-19**

**Presenter:** McKenzie Rabenn, University of North Dakota

The literature on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted teacher retention in rural spaces is sparse. In this research study, rural teacher and district leader perceptions of the pandemic were examined and found an interesting divergence in how these two groups experienced the pandemic. This disjuncture, which was commonly perceived as a lack of support, may contribute to a worsening teacher workforce if not addressed.

### **Living and Leading Rural School Communities: Voices from Principals**

**Presenter:** Paige Raney, Spring Hill College

This study explores the needs and lived leadership experiences of rural school principals as leaders in rural, community schools. Understanding principals' leadership experiences and needs will provide a foundation in which their leadership capacity can be strengthened to support rural teachers and students.

## HOSTED BY



**NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NREA)** is the voice of all rural schools and rural communities across the United States. NREA was originally founded as the Department of Rural Education in 1907. It is the oldest established national organization of its kind in the United States. Through the years it has evolved as a strong and respected organization of rural school administrators, teachers, board members, regional service agency personnel, researchers, business and industry representatives, and others interested in maintaining the vitality of rural school systems across the country. Learn more at [nrea.net](http://nrea.net).



**THE RURAL SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE** is a national nonprofit launched in 2015 to build sustainable rural communities. With a keen focus on place, teachers, and philanthropy, RSC's mission is realized through a number of concerted efforts, including the I Am A Rural Teacher Project, Rural Teacher Corps, Grants in Place, and Impact Philanthropy. RSC is powered by a small, dedicated staff and board, as well as Regional Hub Partnerships. Learn more at [ruralschoolscollaborative.org](http://ruralschoolscollaborative.org).

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**TENNESSEE RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (TNREA)** is committed to helping strengthen and transform rural education in the state of Tennessee. Successful rural schools play a vital role in the economic development of Tennessee's communities. Helping students access opportunities to prepare them for college and careers can attract jobs regionally and statewide. By doing this, rural schools can create a talent pipeline for current students to stay in their communities and be tomorrow's teachers and leaders. Bottom line: when rural students are successful, we all benefit. Learn more at [tnrea.org](http://tnrea.org).



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA** is a national model for metropolitan universities. In collaboration with our many regional partners, we offer an experiential learning environment with outstanding teaching scholars in bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs. UTC's vision, mission and values are centered on engaging students, inspiring change and enriching our community. Learn more at [utc.edu](http://utc.edu).

"I love this conference each year and I will continue to attend."

"This is the most down to earth, unassuming and frankly, fun group of conference goers I have experienced."

"My favorite and most important conference every year."

# THANK YOU SPONSORS



PREMIER:

**T Mobile**™



LearningBlade®  
STEM and Computer Science Career Awareness



GOLD:

BILL &  
MELINDA  
GATES  
foundation



SILVER:



A Union of Professionals



BRONZE:



ctia



COPPER



FRIENDS OF RURAL



CENTER FOR RURAL EDUCATION  
VIRGINIA TECH

“This event was the best conference I have attended as a rural school administrator.”

“As always, I love coming to this conference! I repeatedly tell people it feels like my conference home.”

Learn more at [www.nrea.net/Convention\\_and\\_Research](http://www.nrea.net/Convention_and_Research)  
[#RuralEdForum](https://twitter.com/RuralEdForum)

## INTERESTED IN PARTNERING WITH US?

Learn more at <https://www.nrea.net/Convention-Research-Symposium-Sponsors>  
or contact Allen Pratt, Executive Director, NREA at [allen-pratt@utc.edu](mailto:allen-pratt@utc.edu).