

Why Rural Matters

The Rural Alliance

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Presenter:

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Rural School and Community Trust
www.ruraledu.org

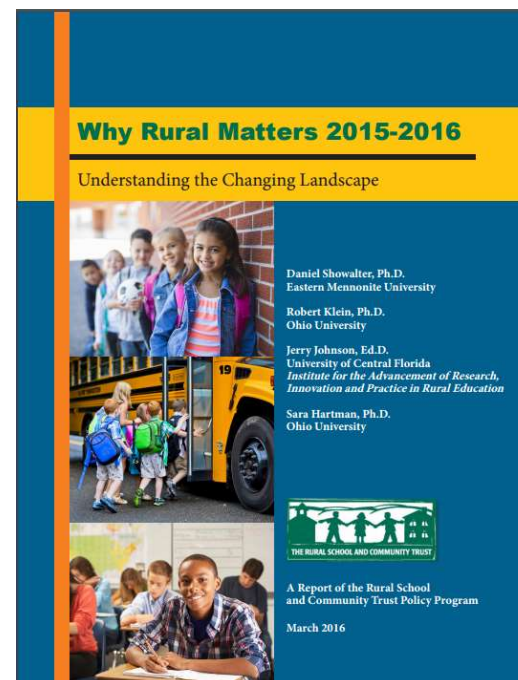


- We're a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization

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www.ruraledu.org

Why Rural Matters 2018-19

- 1st report in series published in 2001
- 9th edition
- Published November 2019
- In-depth, 50-state report



Many Thanks to Our Sponsors:



How U.S. Census Defines Rural:

- **Rural, Fringe:** Rural territory less than/equal to 5 miles from urban area, or less than/equal to 2.5 miles from urban cluster.
- **Rural, Distant:** 5 to 25 miles from urban area, or 2.5 to 10 miles from urban cluster.
- **Rural, Remote:** More than 25 miles from urban area and more than 10 miles from urban cluster.

Urban Cluster = 25,000-50,000

Urban Area = 50,000+

Our Data Sources

- Common Core of Data (NCES)
- Nation's Report Card – NAEP Data (NCES)
- American Community Survey (U.S. Census)
- *EDFacts* (U.S. Department of Education)
- Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Dept of Ed)

Why Rural Matters in the U.S.

- Nearly 7.5 million students were enrolled last year in *rural school districts*--nearly one in seven public school students in the U.S.
- About one in six of those rural students were living below the poverty line.
- Most rural students represent small share of students in many states.

Why Rural Matters in the U.S.

- More than 9.3 million students attend a rural school.
- That's nearly one in five U.S. students.
- More rural students **than in the nation's 85 largest school districts *combined*.**

Why Rural Matters in the U.S.

- In 12 states, at least half of public schools are rural: **Montana, South Dakota, Vermont, North Dakota, Maine, Alaska, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Wyoming, New Hampshire, Iowa, and Mississippi.**
- At least one-third of schools are rural in 14 other states.

Why Rural Matters in the U.S.

- About half of rural students in the U.S. live in 10 states.
- **Texas** has the most rural students (694,000)
- Followed by **North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Alabama, and Indiana.**

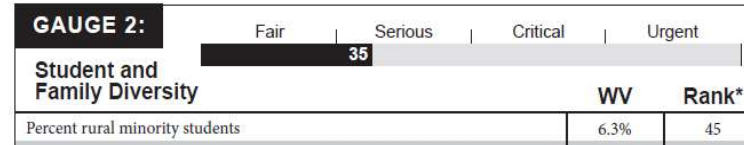
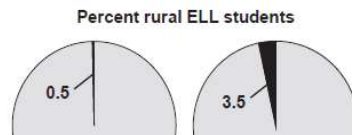
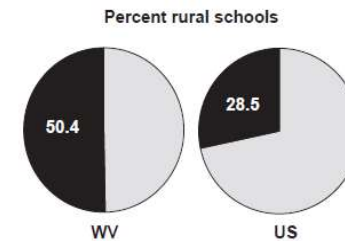
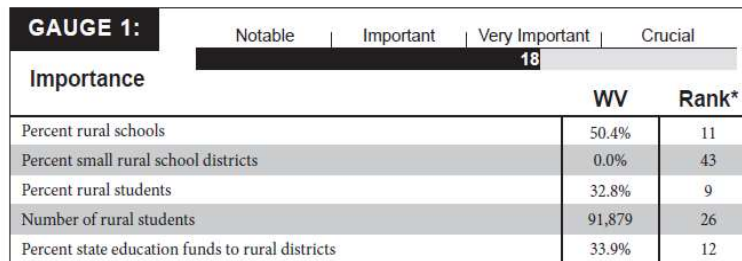
Why Rural Matters in the U.S.

- A majority of rural students live in states where they're less than 25% of enrollment.
- National median enrollment for rural districts: only 494 students.
- In 23 states, half of rural districts enroll fewer than 494 students. In **Montana, North Dakota,** and **Vermont**, 90 percent of rural districts have fewer than 494 students.

State-By-State Data, Analysis

WEST VIRGINIA - With one in three students attending school in a rural district, and over half of the schools located in rural areas, West Virginia continues to be more “rural” than average. The state’s rural students are more likely to be White, English-speaking, and on an individualized education plan than the national average. West Virginia’s statewide consolidation efforts have resulted in large schools, large districts, and burdensome transportation costs for rural districts. Although West Virginia’s rural students are less likely to take AP courses and college entrance exams, there is tentative evidence that minority students and students in poverty graduate at a relatively high rate compared to their counterparts in other states.

**PRIORITY
RANKING**
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How We Rank the States

- **Overall Priority Ranking**
- **5 Main Gauges:**
 - Importance
 - Diversity
 - Achievement/Outcomes
 - Policy
 - College/Career Readiness

Top 10 Highest Priority States

- **1. Mississippi**
- **2. Alabama, North Carolina (tie)**
- **4. Oklahoma**
- **5. South Dakota**
- **6. West Virginia**
- **7. Georgia**
- **8. South Carolina**
- **9. Louisiana**
- **10. Florida**

How Washington stacks up

- **Overall Priority Ranking:** 26th highest-need state (right in the middle)
 - More than 1 in 5 public schools are rural (21.5%)
 - Nearly 2 of 3 rural districts are small (64.5%, the nation's 15th-highest rate), median size of rural districts in the state is 621 (8th smallest in U.S.)
 - Relatively few rural students: 77,300
 - 18th-highest rural community poverty level

How Washington stacks up

- **High rate of rural student mobility**, (14.3%, nation's 3rd-highest rate). Only AZ, NV higher.
- **Spending: \$6,410 per rural student**, (24th highest). Montana is about \$650 higher.
- **Educator pay about average**, (lower than NV, OR).
- **Relatively high achievement for rural students**, (just above average), but similar to rest of state.
- **Rural students in poverty have large achievement gap**, (only MS, MD worse).

How Washington stacks up

- **Nation's lowest rate of rural students taking SAT or ACT (16%) Why?**
- **Low graduation rate for rural students (83.2%, nation's 7th-lowest rate, lower than MS)**
- **Low rate of rural students in Advanced Placement courses (4.7%, 15th-lowest rate—similar to AL, NM)**
- **Slightly lower rate of students in dual-enrollment (distance, small districts?)**

How the Western States Stack Up

- **Nevada** 23rd overall, highest mobility rate (18.7%), bottom 5 in AP and dual enrollment
- **New Mexico** 21st overall (tied with ND), nation's highest rural poverty rate (30%), lowest achievement rates
- **North Dakota** 21st overall (tied with NM), \$7,500 per student
- **Texas** 18th overall, 6th lowest in SAT/ACT, 9th lowest in spending (\$5,386)

Rural Student Achievement in U.S.

- The gap in achievement between rural students *in poverty* and rural students *not in poverty* was greatest in **Maryland, Mississippi, and Washington.**
- Narrowest in **Pennsylvania, Arkansas, and Montana.**

School Funding in Rural America

- **Average spending on instruction of each rural student in U.S.: \$6,400**
 - Highest statewide averages in **Alaska** (\$14,400) and **New York** (\$13,200)
 - **33 states on average invest less than half the amount Alaska does for each rural student**
 - Lowest state averages in **Idaho** (\$4,118) and **Oklahoma** (\$4,737).
 - **Texas** also relatively low (\$5,386).

School Funding in Rural America

- Many states provide a larger proportion of funding for rural districts because of the higher costs for many small and rural schools.
- But 12 states provide *less funding* proportionately, including **Nebraska, Vermont, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Massachusetts, California, and Ohio.**
- Many states in Midwest/Great Plains invest relatively high amounts on instruction for each rural student, but \$3,500 less than most in Northeast.

School Funding in Rural America

- Even adjusted for comparable local wages, average educator salaries in rural districts vary widely.
- **Kansas** had the nation's lowest average: \$54,454, **Alaska** the highest at \$102,736.
- Lowest average salaries for rural educators: **Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Florida, Missouri, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Arizona.** Highest in **Alaska, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Wyoming.**

Rural College/Career Readiness

- **Only 9.5% of the nation's rural students passed Advanced Placement (AP) courses.**
 - Compared with 19% of all U.S. high school students, 18.8% urban, 24.1% suburban.
 - Highest rural-student rates: 33% in CT, 23% in MD.
 - Lowest: ND (0.6%), NE (1.0%), NV (1.1%), KS (1.3%), LA (2.2%), MO (2.5%), and MS (3.8%).
- Dual enrollment: **Nearly 1 in 4** rural students in U.S. 50% in **Idaho**, 40% in Iowa, Indiana, Kansas.

How the Western States Stack Up

- **11th highest-need state: Arizona**
 - 75% of its districts small
 - 2nd-highest rural child poverty rate, 23.3%
 - 2nd-highest rural mobility rate, 14.4%
 - 5th-lowest per student spending (\$4,917)
 - Graduation and ACT/SAT rates in nation's lowest 5 states

How the Western States Stack Up

- **27th highest-need state: California**
 - 220,000 rural students
 - 2/3 of rural districts very small
 - Diversity: 1/2 of rural students children of color
 - 10th-highest mobility rate (12.3%)
 - 14th-lowest per student spending (\$5,464)
 - 1 in 10 pass AP exams

How the Western States Stack Up

- **Oregon** 17th overall, 7th highest mobility rate, in bottom 3 on graduation, SAT/ACT
- **Hawaii** 2nd-lowest achievement
- **Idaho** 20th overall, high poverty, lowest per student spending in U.S. (\$4,118)
- **Montana** 28th overall, 3 of 4 schools are rural, 95% of rural districts small

Lots more data and details:

- *Why Rural Matters* is out now!
- Follow us on Twitter: **@ruraltrust**
- Spread the word: Help to further educate our state and federal policymakers, our own communities

Rural School and Community Trust
(www.ruraledu.org)

Thank you!

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Questions and Discussion