Why Rural Matters 2013-2014

The Condition of Rural Education in the 50 States

Jerry Johnson, Ed.D.
Daniel Showalter
Robert Klein, Ph.D.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

A report of the Rural School and Community Trust

May 2014

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The **Rural School and Community Trust** is a national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving communities. Our mission is to help rural schools and communities grow better together. Working in some of the poorest, most challenging places, the Rural Trust involves young people in learning linked to their communities, improves the quality of teaching and school leadership, and advocates in a variety of ways for appropriate state and federal educational policies, including efforts to ensure equitable and adequate resources for rural schools.

Why Rural Matters 2013-14:

The Condition of Rural Education in the 50 States

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Rural School and Community Trust
4301 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 822-3919

www.ruraledu.org

Introduction

Why Rural Matters 2013-14 is the seventh in a series of biennial 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.

While it is the seventh in a series, this report is not simply an updating of data from earlier editions. We have deliberately altered the statistical indicators and gauges from one report to the next to call attention to the variability and complexity of rural education. Our intent is not to compare states in terms of their differing rates of progress toward an arbitrary goal. Rather, our intent is (1) to provide information and analyses that highlight the priority policy needs of rural public schools and the communities they serve, and (2) to describe the complexity of rural contexts in ways that can help policymakers better understand the challenges faced by their constituencies and formulate policies that are responsive to those challenges.

In 2010-11 (the school year used in this report), 9,765,385 public school students were enrolled in rural school districts.[i] That is just over 20% of the nation's total public school enrollment. Meeting the needs of nearly ten million children is a challenge and an obligation that demands and deserves the nation's attention. Meeting that challenge and fulfilling that obligation require that we examine issues from multiple perspectives in order to develop informed understandings that move beyond simplistic notions about rural schools and their communities.

The Data

The data used for ***Why Rural Matters 2013-14*** were compiled from information collected and maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Census Bureau. All data used here are available to the general public and may be downloaded in tabular formats.[ii]

Rural is defined using the 12-item urban-centric NCES locale code system released in 2006. Rural schools and districts used in the report are those designated with locale codes 41 (rural fringe), 42 (rural distant), or 43 (rural remote). Earlier versions of Why Rural Matters (i.e., those preceding the 2009 version) used a combination of school-level and district-level data. Improvements in the urban-centric locale code system (specifically, assigning district-level locale based upon the locale where the plurality of students in the district attend school) make it possible for us to be consistent and use districts as the unit of analysis for all indicators derived from NCES data. This is particularly important because policy decisions impacting rural education (e.g., REAP funding) are made using district-level designations of rural status. Moreover, local policies to address many of the issues discussed in this report tend to be crafted at the district level.

Why Rural Matters 2013-14 includes a Socioeconomic Challenges gauge, not featured since the 2007 report. Examination of broad social and economic contexts that influence education is both timely and important as rural areas struggle to recover from the economic downturn of 2007-08.

Why Rural Matters 2013-14 includes an additional section on early childhood education. Unlike the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge, this topic has not been included in any previous versions of Why Rural Matters. In times of economic struggle, young children are often the

hardest hit both in terms of the challenges they face and the resources made available to them and their families. This section highlights the early childhood education context as one important lens through which to view the challenges and opportunities characterizing rural America.

Why Rural Matters 2013-2014 uses data only for regular public education agencies (local school districts and local school district components of supervisory unions). We excluded charter school-only districts and specialized state- and federally-directed education agencies focused primarily on vocational, special, or alternative education.

Gauging Rural Education in the 50 States

We framed the report around five gauges measuring for each state: (1) the Importance of rural education, (2) the Diversity of rural students and their families, (3) Socioeconomic Challenges facing rural communities across the nation, (4) the Educational Policy Context impacting rural schools, and (5) the Educational Outcomes of students in rural schools in each state. The first four gauges include five equally weighted indicators and the final gauge (Educational Outcomes) includes four, for a total of 24 indicators.[1] Instances where data were not available are denoted with "NA."

The higher the ranking on a gauge, the more important or the more urgent rural education matters are in a particular state. The gauges and their component indicators are as follow:

Importance Gauge

- **Percent rural schools**
- **Percent small rural school districts**
- **Percent rural students**
- **Number of rural students**
- **Percent of state education funds to rural districts**

Student and Family Diversity Gauge

- **Percentage of rural minority students**
- **Number of rural minority students**
- **Percentage of rural IEP (Individualized Education Plan) students**
- **Percentage of rural ELL (English Language Learner) students**
- **Percentage of rural household mobility**

Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge

- **Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma**
- **Rural adult unemployment rate**
- **Rural median household income**
- **Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible**
- **Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced priced lunches**

[1] We intended to include rural high school graduation rate as a fifth indicator in the *Educational Outcomes* gauge; however, the data were not yet available for use at the time of the report.

Educational Policy Context Gauge

- **Rural instructional expenditures per pupil**
- **Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures**
- **Median organizational scale**
- **State revenue to schools per local dollar**
- **Salary expenditures per instructional FTE (Full Time Equivalent)**

Educational Outcomes Gauge

- **Rural grade 4 NAEP scores (math)**
- **Rural grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)**
- **Rural grade 8 NAEP scores (math)**
- **Rural grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)**

Some of the indicators used in this report are the same as in previous versions but several are not. Therefore, year-by-year comparisons of state rankings are not advisable because of their potential to mislead. The possibilities for assembling indicators to describe the context, conditions, and outcomes of rural schools and communities are virtually unlimited. We acknowledge the complexity of rural America generally and of 50 individual state systems of public education, and we recognize that perspectives offered by the indicators used here represent only one of many good ways of understanding rural education in the U.S.

For each of the five gauges, we added the state rankings on each indicator and then divided by the number of indicators to produce an average gauge ranking.[iii] Using that gauge ranking, we organized the states into quartiles that describe their relative position with regard to other states on that particular gauge. For the Importance, Socioeconomic Challenges, and Educational Policy Context gauges, the four quartiles are labeled "Notable," "Important," Very Important" and "Crucial." For the Student and Family Diversity and Educational Outcomes gauges, the four quartiles are labeled "Fair," "Serious," "Critical" and "Urgent." To help identify and quantify relationships between and among indicators, we also conducted bivariate correlation analyses for the indicators within each gauge.

Finally, we combined the five average gauge rankings to determine an overall average ranking[iv], which we term the **Rural Education Priority** ranking.

Certain states have retained a high rural education priority ranking from year to year despite the fact that we use different indicators and gauges. For these states, rural education is apparently both important and in urgent need of attention no matter how you look at it.

One final caution from earlier reports is worth repeating. Because we report state-level data for most indicators, our analyses do not reveal the substantial variation in rural contexts and conditions within many states. Thus, while an indicator represents the average for a particular state, in reality there may be rural regions within the state that differ considerably from the state average. This is especially true for indicators like poverty and ELL status, since demographic characteristics such as these tend not to be distributed evenly across a state but are concentrated variously in specific communities within the state. In the case of such indicators, the statewide average may not reflect the reality in any one specific place, with far higher rates in some places

and far lower rates in others. Consider Indiana, for instance. With English language learners comprising 2.0% of the rural student population, the state ranked 24th in the country. However, 29% of the students in Indiana's West Noble District were English language learners. Take Connecticut, the state with the lowest percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced priced lunches. Although the state average is only 11.8%, the rural district of Sprague has a free and reduced lunch rate of 36.2%--three times the state average. It is our hope in such cases that the presentation of state averaged indicators will prompt more refined discussions and lead to better understandings of all rural areas.

Changes to the Report in This Edition

In an effort to refine and better reflect our thinking about the contexts and characteristics of rural education, we made some changes from previous reports with regard to the selection and configuration of indicators and gauges. **Why Rural Matters 2011-12** included 25 indicators organized into five gauges: Importance (five indicators), Student and Family Diversity (five), Educational Policy Context (five), Educational Outcomes (five), and Longitudinal (five). The current report includes 24 indicators organized into five gauges. The major differences from the previous report to this one are the replacement of the Longitudinal gauge with the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge and the absence of a high school graduation rate indicator (as noted, the data were not available for computing the indicator).

The Student and Family Diversity gauge contains one minor adjustment: "Percentage of rural student poverty" has been replaced by "number of rural minority students" since the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge seemed the most appropriate place for a measure of student poverty. Although the diversity gauge already includes an indicator for the percentage of rural minority students, the addition of the absolute number of rural minority students helps provide a more comprehensive picture of the demographics across each state.

The Socioeconomic Challenges gauge appears for the first time since Why Rural Matters 2007. It uses five indicators to characterize the challenges facing rural communities. This gauge differs from the other gauges in that three of the indicators provide data from outside of the K–12 education system. Classrooms and school buildings are part of a complex context. The adult graduation rate, the unemployment rate, and the median household income of rural areas across the state shed light on the ways that distribution of resources frame contexts in which education is situated. The Socioeconomic Challenges gauge also includes two indicators that measure poverty based on eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches and for Title I funding (two measures that we construe, respectively, as representing breadth and intensity in the level of poverty among the relevant populations).

Notes on Report Methodology

Readers who are familiar with Why Rural Matters 2011-12 should consider the following points when reviewing this report.

First, the quartile categories used to describe a state's position on the continuum from 1-50 are arbitrary, and are used merely as a convenient way to group states into smaller units to facilitate discussion of patterns in the results. Thus, there is very little difference between the "Urgent"

label assigned to Georgia based on its ranking of 13th on the Student and Family Diversity gauge and the "Critical" label assigned to Washington based on its ranking of 14th on the same gauge.

Second, again in this report we use regional terms loosely. The intent is to recognize nuances in regional identities and to represent more clearly the contexts within which we discuss specific relationships between individual states and shared geographic and cultural characteristics. With this intent, a state like Oklahoma may be referred to as a Southern Plains state in some contexts and as a Southwestern state in others. That is because Oklahoma is part of regional patterns that include Southern Plains states like Kansas and Colorado, but it is also part of regional patterns that include Southwestern states like New Mexico.

Third, the ranking system should not be interpreted to suggest that rural education in low priority states does not deserve attention from policymakers. Indeed, every state faces challenges in providing a high quality educational experience for all children. The highest priority states are presented as such because they are states where key factors that impact the schooling process converge to present the most extreme challenges to rural schooling, and so suggest the most urgent and most comprehensive need for policymakers' attention.

Results

The data for each state and state rankings for each indicator are presented in the charts and figures, which begin on page 42 of this report. The results for each indicator are summarized and discussed below. To provide some context and to aid in making comparisons, national level results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. National Rural Statistics

Importance Gauge		**Educational Policy Context Gauge**	
Percent rural schools	32.9%	Rural instructional expenditures per pupil	$5,826
Percent small rural districts	49.9%	Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures	$11.71
Percent rural students	20.4%	Median organizational scale (divided by 100)	3,531
Number of rural students (median = 141,632)	9,765,385	Ratio of state revenue to local revenue	$1.17
Percent state education funds to rural districts	22.9%	Salary expenditures per instructional FTE	$57,791
Student and Family Diversity Gauge		**Educational Outcomes Gauge**	
Percent rural minority students	26.7%	Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)	242.87
Number of rural minority students (median = 23,176)	2,611,30	Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)	223.22
Percent rural ELL students	4	Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)	286.01
Percent rural IEP students	3.1%	Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)	267.13
Percent rural mobility	12.8%		
	11.6%		
Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge			
Percent rural adults with high school diploma	85.4%		
Rural adult unemployment rate	6.6%		
Rural median household income	$57,987		
Percent rural students who are Title I eligible	19.3%		
Percent rural students eligible for subsidized meals	46.6%		

Importance Gauge

Importance Gauge Indicators

For this gauge, we used both absolute and relative measures of the size and scope of rural education to characterize the importance of rural education to the well-being of the state's public education system as a whole. In the following, we have defined each of the indicators in the Importance gauge and summarized state and regional patterns observed in the data.[v]

- **Percent rural schools** is the percentage of regular elementary and secondary public schools designated as rural by NCES. The higher the percentage of schools, the higher the state ranks on the Importance gauge.

The national average for the percentage of rural schools across the states is just under 33%, but states vary considerably from a low of 6.5% in Massachusetts to a high of 75.3% in Montana. Half or more of all public schools are rural in 15 states (in descending order, Montana, South Dakota, Vermont, North Dakota, Maine, Alaska, Wyoming, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Arkansas,

West Virginia, Iowa, New Hampshire, Mississippi and Kansas) and at least one-third of all schools is rural in 15 other states. In general, states with a high percentage of rural schools are those where sparse populations or challenging terrain make it difficult to transport students to consolidated regional schools in non-rural areas, and those where there has been less push to consolidate or successful resistance to consolidation. Predominantly urban states on the east and west coasts and in the Great Lakes region have the smallest percentages of rural schools.

- **Percent small rural school districts** is the percentage of rural school districts that are below the median enrollment size for all rural school districts in the U.S. (median = 533 students). The higher the percentage of districts with enrollments below 533, the higher the state ranks on the Importance gauge.

At least half of all rural districts are smaller than the national rural median in 21 states—Montana, North Dakota, Vermont, Nebraska, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Maine, Alaska, California, New Hampshire, Oregon, Kansas, Arizona, Missouri, Idaho, Washington, Illinois, Massachusetts and Texas. States with few or no small rural districts are located primarily in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, regions that are characterized by consolidated county-wide districts. West Virginia, where more than half of all public schools are in rural communities, does not have a single small rural school district because all 55 of the state's school districts are countywide systems.

- **Percent rural students** is a measure of the relative size of the rural student population, and is calculated as the number of public school students enrolled in rural districts, whether they attend rural schools or not, divided by the total number of public school students in the state. It excludes students attending rural schools that are not located in districts that NCES designates as rural. The higher the percentage of rural students, the higher the state ranks on the Importance gauge.

Just over 20% of all public school students were enrolled in districts classified as rural in 2010-11. In only three states were more than half of all students enrolled in rural districts–Vermont (57.5%;, Maine (57.2%), and Mississippi (56.5%). In thirteen other states, over one-third of all students were enrolled in rural school districts—in descending order: North Carolina, Alabama, South Dakota, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, West Virginia, North Dakota, Iowa, Georgia, Montana and New Hampshire. These states are concentrated in five regions–Northern New England, the Mid-South Delta, the Great Plains, the Southeast and Central Appalachia. States with the lowest proportional rural enrollments are primarily urban coastal states in the East and West, and arid or mountainous Western states where the population resides mostly in cities and rural areas are very sparsely populated.

- **Number of rural students** is an absolute as opposed to relative measure of the size of the rural student population. The figure given for each state represents the total number of students enrolled in public school districts designated as rural by NCES. The higher the enrollment number, the higher the state ranks on the Importance gauge.

More than half of all rural students in the U.S. attend school in just 11 states, including some of the nation's most populous and urban states (in order of rural enrollment size: Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Alabama and Michigan). The four states with the largest rural enrollments—Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and Ohio—serve more than one–fourth of all rural students in the nation. North Carolina alone has more rural students than the eight Northern and Southern Great Plains states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma – combined.

- **Percentage of state education funds going to rural schools** represents the proportion of state PK-12 funding that goes to school districts designated by NCES as rural. State funding as defined here includes all state-derived revenues that are used for the day-to-day operations of schools. Thus, capital construction, debt service, and other long-term outlays are excluded. The higher the percentage of state funds going to rural education, the higher the state ranks on the Importance gauge.

It is no surprise that states ranking high on percent rural schools and percent rural students also rank high on this indicator (i.e., the larger the proportion of rural schools and rural students, the larger the proportion of funding that goes to them). Far less of a factor but still worth noting is that some state funding formulas include provisions intended to address additional costs associated with smaller school districts. These provisions vary considerably in design and effectiveness from state to state.

Importance Gauge Rankings

To gauge the importance of rural education to the overall educational system in each state, we averaged each state's ranking on the individual indicators, giving equal weight to each (see Table 2).

Table 2. Importance Gauge Rankings

How important is it to the overall public education system of the state to address the particular needs of schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural education issues in their state.

Table 2. Importance Gauge Cumulative Ratings							
CRUCIAL		VERY IMPORTANT		IMPORTANT		NOTABLE	
ME	9.4	SC	18.2	MN	25.4	LA	31.4
VT	9.8	NH	18.4	WY	25.8	OR	33.0
SD	11.6	MO	18.4	IN	25.8	WA	34.0
OK	13.6	AK	18.8	WI	26.4	DE	36.0
NC	13.8	GA	19.8	NM	26.8	FL	36.6
MS	14.0	KS	19.8	AZ	27.6	CT	36.8
MT	14.0	NE	20.0	CO	27.6	NJ	38.4
ND	14.2	WV	21.4	MI	28.4	NV	40.6
KY	16.0	ID	22.0	PA	28.8	MD	41.0
TN	16.2	VA	23.2	IL	29.2	UT	41.4
AL	16.2	OH	23.8	NY	30.4	MA	42.0
AR	17.0	TX	24.6	CA	31.2	RI	43.8
IA	17.8					HI	NA

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

The top quartile in the Importance gauge is shared by states in the Prairie/Plains (South Dakota, Oklahoma, Montana, North Dakota and Iowa); the South (North Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas); Northern New England (Maine and Vermont); and Central Appalachia (Kentucky and Tennessee).

The seven Northern New England and Prairie/Plains states hold six of the top eight positions because they generally score high on all of the indicators except number of rural students, on which none of them ranks higher than 19th (OK). Four rank in the bottom quartile. All are states with smaller student enrollments overall, so the total number of rural students is smaller even though the percentage of rural students is high.

The six southern states, including the Central Appalachian states of Kentucky and Tennessee, are clustered toward the bottom of the top quartile because all rank 33rd or lower on percent small rural districts. With the exception of Arkansas (20.1%), small rural districts comprise less than 7% of all rural districts in these states. Bigger rural schools and districts are the general rule in this region, primarily as a result of school and district consolidation.

Over half of all rural students (5.6 million, or 57%) are in states ranked in the top quartile for the number of rural students indicator but only three of those states (North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama) are among the top quartile in the overall Importance gauge; five others (Texas, Georgia, Ohio, Virginia and South Carolina) are in the second quartile.

Five of the 13 states with the largest rural student populations rank below the median on the overall Importance gauge. These five states – California, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois – have large urban populations that dwarf even a relatively sizable rural population. They rank low on the Importance gauge despite ranking high on the number of rural students indicator

simply because they rank low on almost every other indicator in the gauge. For example, they average a ranking of 38th on the percent rural students indicator and none of them ranks higher than 31st on that indicator (Michigan).

Student and Family Diversity Gauge

Student and Family Diversity Gauge Indicators

Each Why Rural Matters edition has examined the role of student diversity in rural education. Achievement gaps associated with economic status, race and ethnicity, resource allocation, English Language Learner (ELL) status, special education (IEP, or Individualized Education Plan) status and transience (i.e., residential stability) are widely discussed in the research literature and acknowledged in educational policy. In the Student and Family Diversity gauge, we compared rural student and family characteristics across the 50 states on terms that policy makers often define as relevant to state and national education goals. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Student and Family Diversity gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.

- **Percent rural minority students** represents the number of rural minority students (per NCES categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, African-American, Hispanic, and Two or More Races) divided by the total number of rural students in the state. The higher the percentage of rural minority students, the higher the ranking on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

This indicator tells us about the relative size of the rural minority student population in each state. Educational research and state and federal accountability systems have disaggregated data that disclose notable gaps in the academic opportunities and outcomes of minority students as compared to White students, but efforts to address these gaps are often inadequate or non-existent. Identifying the states with the largest relative rural minority student populations calls attention to where the need is greatest for policy action to close these gaps.

Nationally, 26.7% of rural students are children of color. The range among states is very large--from 4.6% in Rhode Island and New Hampshire to 82.5% in New Mexico. Seventy-five percent of rural students of color attend school in the 17 states with rural minority student rates above the national average.

Nearly 69% of all rural minority students in the U.S. are concentrated in the 13 states where they make up one-third or more of the state's rural student population. In four states—New Mexico, California, Alaska and Arizona— rural minority students make up more than half of the rural student population. In nine other states, more than one–third of rural students is a student of color (in descending order: Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia and Delaware).

States vary considerably with regard to the racial and ethnic composition of their rural minority student populations. One of the states with the largest percentages of rural minority students (Alaska) has a rural population predominantly comprised of Alaska Natives. Others, like New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma, rank high because of combinations of Hispanic and American Indian populations. In the South, states rank high primarily on the basis of their sizable African-American populations (Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, North Carolina and Florida). California's rural minority student population is predominantly Hispanic.

- **Number of rural minority students** is an absolute as opposed to a relative measure of the size of the rural minority student population. The figure given for each state represents the total number of minority students (per NCES categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic) enrolled in public school districts designated as rural by NCES. The higher the enrollment number, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

Sixty percent of all rural minority students in the U.S. attend school in just eight states (in descending order of enrollment size: Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, California, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida and Arizona). The three states with the largest rural minority enrollments—Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia—serve one-third of all rural minority students in the U.S. Texas alone has more rural minority students than the 29 lowest ranking states on this indicator – combined.

- **Percent rural ELL students** represents the number of rural students who qualify for English Language Learner (ELL) services, expressed as a percentage of all rural students in the state. The higher the percentage of rural ELL students, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

Nationally, 3.1% of rural students are English language learners with state percentages ranging from 0% in Vermont to 23.4% in New Mexico. Eighteen states have ELL rates above the national average (in descending order: New Mexico, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Nevada, Idaho, North Carolina, Florida, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Delaware, South Carolina, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana and Arkansas). Data are missing for California, which historically ranks near the top on this indicator. States ranking high on this indicator have large Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan Native populations living in rural areas. The majority of the highest ranking states are in the West, with only four states among the top quartile (North Carolina, Florida, Delaware and South Carolina) located east of the Mississippi River.

- **Percent rural IEP students** represents the percentage of rural students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) indicating that they qualify for special education services. The higher the percentage of IEP students, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

Students with Individualized Education Plans require additional services only partly supported by supplemental federal funds, placing additional responsibilities on state and local funds. It is generally the case that higher poverty rates correlate with a higher incidence of IEPs, but these state rankings do not support that hypothesis. Among the top quartile for rural IEP rates, only two states (Kentucky and West Virginia) rank in the top quartile on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge while six rank in the bottom quartile on that same gauge (Wyoming, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Illinois).

- **Percentage of rural student mobility** represents the percentage of households with school-age children who changed residences within the previous 12 months, per U.S. census figures. Mobility disrupts consistency in teaching and learning and has been associated with lower academic achievement in the research literature. The higher the mobility rate, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

Nationally, slightly more than one in nine rural students has changed residence in the past 12 months, ranging from a low of 4.1% in Connecticut to a high of 21% in Nevada. Western states rank highest on this indicator. Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Colorado and Hawaii make up the top five. In all, eleven 12 of the top 13 states are west of the Mississippi River (the exception is Florida, with a mobility rate of 15.7%).. The eastern states with the highest rural mobility rates are Florida (15.7%) and Georgia (13.0%). States with the lowest mobility and the most stable rural households are located in the Northeast, including New England, and Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland in the Mid-Atlantic. Among the lowest quartile, only North Dakota (8.8%) and Wisconsin (8.4%) are west of the Mississippi, and Minnesota (9.0%) is bisected by it. England, and Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland in the Mid-Atlantic. Among the lowest quartile, only North Dakota (8.8%) and Wisconsin (8.4%) are west of the Mississippi, and Minnesota (9.0%) is bisected by it.

Student and Family Diversity Gauge Rankings

To gauge the diversity of rural students and families in each state, we averaged each state's ranking on the individual indicators, giving equal weight to each indicator (see Table 3).

Table 3. Student and Family Diversity Gauge Rankings

How important is it to the overall public education system of the state to address the needs of diverse populations in schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address diversity issues in rural communities in their state.

Table 3. Student and Family Diversity Gauge Ratings							
URGENT		**CRITICAL**		**SERIOUS**		**FAIR**	
FL	8.8	WA	18.8	TN	25.4	OH	30.8
CO	11.5	WY	19.6	UT	25.4	ND	31.8
AZ	12.0	MS	20.0	LA	25.4	WI	33.0
OK	12.2	AR	21.0	SD	25.6	WV	33.2
TX	12.8	AL	22.2	KY	26.6	MD	33.4
NM	14.2	KS	22.4	NE	27.4	IA	34.0
NC	14.4	VA	22.4	MN	27.4	ME	34.4
SC	14.8	IL	22.6	NJ	27.4	MA	37.4
CA	15.0	DE	23.6	NY	27.8	NH	38.8
NV	15.2	MT	23.8	MO	29.8	RI	39.4
AK	15.6	IN	24.0	MI	30.2	CT	40.4
OR	18.2	ID	24.6	PA	30.6	VT	46.4
GA	18.4					HI	NA

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

States in the top quartile (i.e., the highest priority quartile, labeled urgent) on the Student and Family Diversity gauge are clustered in the Southeast, the Southwest, and the West Coast. Among the indicators, percent rural minority students and percent rural ELL students most closely parallel the overall gauge ranking, with 10 of the 13 top quartile states for the gauge also scoring in the top quartile on each of those indicators. Number of rural minority students and percent rural mobility were also closely related to the overall gauge ranking with eight of the 13 states in the top quartile also in the top quartile on those indicators. By contrast, only one of the states in the highest priority quartile also placed in the top quartile in terms of the percentage of rural students who qualify for special education services (i.e., IEP students). More than half of the states in the gauge's top quartile are below the national median for the percentage of students qualifying for special education services (i.e., most of the states with the largest minority student enrollments and highest rates of ELL students and student mobility have the lowest rates of students qualifying for special education services).

To investigate the relationships among the different indicators, we ran bivariate correlation analyses among the rankings for these five indicators and found that special education rates were negatively correlated to all the other indicators and ranged in strength from moderately weak (at $r = -0.28$) to moderately strong (at $r = -0.43$). All other correlations between indicators on this gauge were positive and strong ($r > .50$ for all). We also investigated the relationship between the Student and Family Diversity indicators here and the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge indicators, and found the same pattern: all diversity indicators were negatively correlated with the indicator percent IEP students. These results parallel those obtained from similar analyses conducted for Why Rural Matters 2011-12. Thus, we now even more strongly suspect that rural special education rates reflect the unwillingness and lack of capacity to deliver the services more than the incidence of need for the service.

Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge

Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge Indicators

Socioeconomic challenges represent the strongest and most consistent threat to high levels of student achievement. Moreover, the negative effects of socioeconomic stress manifest in multiple ways. For instance, family income level is closely related to the level of preparedness for children entering school, while the educational level of adults in a community is closely related to both community economic well-being and community support for education. In this section, we define each of the indicators used in the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.

- **Percent rural adults with a high school diploma** represents the percentage of rural adults age 25 and older who have earned a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau. The lower the percentage of diploma-holders, the higher the state ranks on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge.

This indicator tells us about the level of educational attainment among adults in a state's rural areas. Where there are low levels of adult educational attainment, there is likely to be less local capacity to support public schools. This indicator may also be interpreted to suggest that adult educational attainment rates reflect historic patterns in the quality of public education in rural communities in the state.

Rural residents in Central Appalachia, the Southeast, and the Mid-South Delta are least likely to graduate from high school. Eleven of the 12 states with the lowest percentage of rural adults with a high school diploma form a contiguous region from Virginia to Arkansas. Other states in the region are, in order from lowest to highest rate, Kentucky, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, West Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina. The lone state among the top 12 that is not located in the region is New Mexico. On average, the rural adult high school diploma rate among these states is under 81%. States with the highest rates are primarily located in the Northeast and the Great Plains.

- **Rural adult unemployment rate** represents the percentage of rural residents age 16 and older who are in the labor force but are unemployed, as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau. The higher the rural unemployment rate, the higher the state ranks on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge.

Given the relationship between education/training and job security, it is perhaps not surprising that many states with lower rural adult high school diploma rates also have higher unemployment rates. South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and Kentucky all rank in the top 13 here. Other states with higher rates of unemployed rural adults are in the Great Lakes Region (Michigan, ranked as the highest priority with a 10% unemployment rate); the Northwest (Oregon); and the Southwest (Arizona). States with the lowest rates are located

primarily in the Northeast and the Great Plains, again highlighting a pattern with regard to educational attainment. States with higher rates of adults with high school diplomas have lower rates of rural adult unemployment.

- **Rural median household income** represents the median income level for households in rural areas, as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau. Importantly, this indicator is not just a measure of poverty; it also presents a relative assessment of the level of economic distress and economic well-being among rural residents and within their communities. The lower the rural median household income, the higher the state ranks on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge.

Nearly all of the states identified as facing severe socioeconomic challenges on one or both of the previous two indicators also rank high on this indicator. There are exceptions, though. Arizona, Alaska, and California have high rural unemployment rates; yet, rural median household income for all three states is above the national median. Oklahoma and Montana have fairly low unemployment rates among rural adults (5.4%, 29th lowest in the U.S. for Oklahoma and 6.3%, 29th lowest in country for Montana), but a very low median household income. This might suggest a lack of high paying jobs, a sizable population of working poor among rural people in the state, rapid out-migration by frustrated workers, very high levels of low-earning self-employment or a combination of these and other factors.

- **Percent rural students who are Title I eligible** represents the percentage of rural children ages 5-17 who meet the criteria for school districts to receive Title I funds on their behalf. The vast majority qualify because their family income falls below the federal poverty line. Less than 4% qualify based on other criteria such as being in foster care. The higher the rural Title I eligibility rate, the higher the state ranks on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge.

Rankings here parallel those for the next indicator (percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced meal rates) to some extent, but not entirely. Free and reduced meal rates are considerably higher than Title I eligibility rates because the income requirements at 185% of the federal poverty line capture "near poverty" families whose incomes are low enough to compromise their ability to feed their children adequately as well as those meeting federal poverty definitions. Accordingly, we can consider meal rate as a measure of the breadth of poverty in the student body, and Title I eligibility as a measure of the depth or intensity of poverty and closely related challenges. In four states (New Mexico, Louisiana, Kentucky and Mississippi) more than one in four rural children qualifies for Title I assistance. In fifteen other states (more than half of which are in the Southeast, Central Appalachia, and the Mid-South Delta), more than 20% of rural children are Title I eligible. Rural Title I eligibility rates are lowest in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes regions.

- **Percent rural students eligible for free or reduced meals** represents the percentage of students in rural elementary or secondary schools who are eligible to participate in federal free or reduced-price meal programs. The higher the subsidized meal eligibility rate, the higher the state ranks on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge.

Subsidized meal rate is one of the most common measures of student poverty used by education researchers. It is not without limitations, however. Participation rates are subject to conditions that are unrelated to poverty levels, including the willingness of families to apply for assistance and the aggressiveness with which school officials secure applications. In general, the subsidized meal rate closely parallels other measures of socioeconomic challenge used in this analysis. As noted in the discussion of the previous indicator, however, it represents a broader measure of family income stress by including students in families with incomes low enough to threaten the family's well-being. In the case of both subsidized meal rates and Title I eligibility, moreover, statewide averages tend to mask concentrations of severe poverty within regions of the state and in specific communities. Indeed, individual school districts have Title I eligibility rates as high as 60% and % subsidized meal eligibility rates as high as 100%.

More than half of all rural students are eligible for free or reduced meal rates in sixteen states: in descending order and ranging from 81.8% to 50.8%, New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kentucky, Florida, California, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Oregon, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Idaho. In Why Rural Matters 2011-12, we reported nine states with rural free and reduced meal rates above 50%, with the highest (New Mexico) at 65.9%. Rates are lowest among rural students in predominantly urban Northeast states.

Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge Rankings

To gauge the level of socioeconomic challenges among rural areas in each state, we averaged each state's ranking on the individual indicators, giving equal weight to each indicator (see Table 4).

Table 4. Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge Rankings

Given the socioeconomic conditions in the state's rural schools and communities, how urgent is it that policymakers develop policies that target educational needs associated with socioeconomic challenges? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The lower the score, the more important it is for policymakers to address socioeconomic related educational issues in that state.

Table 4. Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge Ratings							
URGENT		CRITICAL		SERIOUS		FAIR	
MS	4.2	OK	16.6	OH	26.4	NE	36.2
KY	5.2	CA	17.0	VA	26.6	IL	36.6
SC	6.2	MO	18.0	NV	26.8	MN	37.0
NM	6.6	MI	18.8	HI	27.0	VT	37.2
AL	6.8	AZ	19.6	PA	29.2	MD	38.6
LA	7.8	ID	21.4	DE	30.6	IA	39.4
AR	9.2	AK	23.0	ND	31.6	WY	39.6
WV	9.8	MT	23.8	WI	32.8	NJ	41.8
NC	9.8	WA	24.2	NY	32.8	RI	41.8
TN	10.2	TX	25.0	UT	34.2	CO	42.8
GA	11.0	ME	25.4	KS	35.0	NH	44.4
FL	11.4	SD	26.2			MA	44.8
OR	16.0	IN	26.2			CT	47.2

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Eleven of the 13 states in the top quartile on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge are clustered in a contiguous region from Central Appalachia to the Mid-South Delta (Mississippi, Kentucky, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida). The remaining two highest priority states (New Mexico and Oregon) are in the Southwest and Northwest, respectively.

The next highest quartile shows no immediately discernible regional pattern, with states from the Southwest (Oklahoma, Arizona, and Texas); the West, Northwest, and Far West (California, Idaho, Alaska and Washington); the Midwest (Missouri); the Great Lakes (Michigan and Indiana); the Great Plains (Montana and South Dakota); and New England (Maine). The third quartile is also varied with no obvious patterns, while the fourth quartile shows Northeast and New England states clustered near the bottom (i.e., representing the lowest priority with regard to socioeconomic challenges).

The indicator that is most closely associated with this overall gauge ranking is the percentage of rural students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals. The indicator with the weakest association (based on the results of a bivariate correlation analysis) is the rural adult unemployment rate. As a whole, then, our gauge emphasizes the breadth of poverty over measures of its depth and severity and measures of more general forms of economic distress. Also worth noting, the rural free and reduced meal eligibility rate is the only indicator that directly reflects the K-12 student population and not the population at large.

Educational Policy Context Gauge

Educational Policy Context Gauge Indicators

For this gauge, we used indicators that describe characteristics of the public schooling system that are the result of policy decisions. Moreover, we focused attention on policy decisions that are highlighted in educational research as influencing student achievement and other measures of

student well-being. Illustrating variations in state policy contexts thus can be interpreted to suggest, in relative terms, the extent to which current policies are helping or hindering rural schools and students. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Educational Policy Context gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data. Hawaii is excluded from this gauge because its organization as a statewide district makes analysis impossible. On each indicator, the higher the ranking (closer to #1), the greater the concern that the policy context is not optimal for rural education.

- **Rural instructional expenditures per pupil** represents the state's total current expenditures for instruction in rural public school districts divided by the total number of students enrolled in those same districts. The lower the rural per pupil expenditures, the higher the state ranks on the Educational Policy Context gauge and the greater the concern about rural education policy.

This indicator allows us to make comparisons among states with regard to the amount of money, per pupil, that is spent on teaching and learning in rural schools. The national average of $5,826 per pupil is much closer to the low end of the range ($4,271 in Arizona and $4,349 in Idaho) than to the high end ($11,061 in New York and $10,885 in Alaska).[vi] Sixteen other states join Arizona and Idaho in spending less than half of the amount that New York spends per pupil for instruction in its rural school districts (Utah, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida, California, Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Arkansas, North Carolina, Kentucky, South Carolina, Missouri, Ohio and Texas).

The highest spending states are either states with very small rural districts (Alaska, Wyoming, Vermont, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Montana and Maine), or Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic urban states with a relatively small rural education sector (New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maryland and Massachusetts).

- **Ratio of instructional expenditures to transportation expenditures** is a measure of how many dollars are spent on teaching and learning for every one dollar spent on transporting pupils. The lower the ratio, the more money that is being channeled toward transportation and away from teaching and learning, and the higher the ranking on this indicator.

Variations in pupil transportation costs are affected by unavoidable issues related to geography and terrain, but they also result from policies and practices related to the size and location of schools and school districts, personnel, and the length of students' bus rides. This indicator is an important factor in the educational policy context because extraordinary transportation costs are a burden that shifts money away from programs and resources that directly impact student learning.

On average, rural school districts nationally spend about $11.71 on instruction for every dollar spent on transportation, but there is considerable variation among states. At the low end, West Virginia spends only $7.40 on instruction for every transportation dollar spent; at the other end of the spectrum, twelve states spend more than double that—Alaska ($27.08); Texas ($18.17); Nebraska ($17.89); Oklahoma ($17.41); California ($16.46); Vermont ($16.13); North Carolina ($15.75); South Carolina ($15.76); Georgia ($15.56); Tennessee ($15.23); Colorado ($14.48); and Arkansas ($14.12). Six of these 12 states are among the top 10 in terms of the percentage of rural districts with enrollments below the national median (in descending order, Vermont, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado, Alaska and California).

Regional patterns are not immediately apparent for this indicator, and comparisons of states with similar geographies and terrains reveal substantial differences. South Dakota, for example, spends over $4 more on instruction per transportation dollar than its neighbor North Dakota; North Carolina spends nearly $6 more on instruction per transportation dollar than its neighbor Virginia. Nor is the relationship between spending on instruction and transportation a function of the overall per pupil spending on instruction—i.e., we used bivariate correlation analysis to investigate the relationship between these two indicators, and determined that there was no statistically significant relationship.

The most likely factor influencing the ratio of instructional spending to transportation spending is school size. A small catchment area means lower transportation spending, even in geographically large districts. The state with the lowest ratio (West Virginia) has only countywide districts, many serving isolated mountain communities. Transporting students who are dispersed across many isolated communities to a single school has doubtless been a factor in the state's having the nation's lowest ratio of instruction to transportation spending per pupil.

By contrast, many of the states with the highest ratio of instruction to transportation spending are states with very small schools in cluster settlements. Among the top quartile on this indicator are six states that rank in the top quartile on the percentage of rural school districts that are below the national median enrollment size, or in the bottom quartile on the median organization scale indicator, or both (Colorado, Vermont, California, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Alaska). Maintaining many small schools in geographically small districts or in sparsely populated large districts where most of the population is concentrated in clusters of small towns helps keep transportation spending from eroding classroom spending.

- **Median organization scale** is a measure that is intended to capture the combined effects of school and district size. We computed the organizational scale for each rural school by multiplying the total school enrollment by the total district enrollment. For simplification in reporting, we then divided the result by 100. The figure reported for each state is the median for the organizational scale figure for every rural school in the state. The larger

the organizational scale, the higher the state scores (the greater the level of concern) on the Educational Policy Context gauge.

School and district size exert influence over schooling and schooling outcomes both individually and in combination with one another. Specifically, larger school and district size has been linked with undesirable schooling outcomes--particularly among impoverished and minority students. Further, larger districts exacerbate the negative influence of larger schools and vice versa. By including this indicator, we are seeking to provide a relative measure of the scale of operations for rural education in each state.

The range on this indicator is dramatically wide: Florida, the highest ranking state, has a median organizational scale that is more than 937 times larger than the lowest ranking state, Montana. Large organizational scale is concentrated in the Southeast and contiguous areas in the Mid-Atlantic and Central Appalachia where countywide districts and regional high schools are the norm (Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi and Kentucky). Among states in the top quartile on this indicator, only Nevada is west of the Mississippi River. The lowest ranking states are mostly in the Great Plains and the West, where the norm is small independent districts serving distinct communities.

- **Ratio of state revenue to local revenue** in rural districts is a measure of dependence on local fiscal capacity and an indirect measure of the extent to which state revenue is a significant factor in equalizing revenue per pupil across communities of varying levels of wealth and poverty. A low ratio means a relatively small amount of state aid and an increased likelihood of inequitable funding. The lower the ratio, the higher the state scores on the indicator.

This indicator needs to be read with a great deal of caution because it does not take into account whether either state or local revenue is adequate to support schools. A high ratio of state to local revenue may mean the funding system is equitable only in that it provides inadequate funding levels everywhere. A low ratio is a clearer signal that the school funding system relies too much on local fiscal capacity and, whether minimally adequate or not, is very likely inequitable. The reader should also recall that these data relate only to the proportion of revenue from state versus local sources in the rural districts of a state. Including the non-rural districts would likely alter the numbers considerably, in part because the industrial and commercial property tax base per pupil is usually lower in rural areas. In addition, much of the agricultural or forest land values in rural areas are withheld from the school tax base or their revenue yields are reduced by various forms of abatements and preferential assessments.

The national average ratio of state to local revenue in rural school districts is 1.17, meaning state government supplies $1.17 in funding to rural districts for every $1.00 allocated from local tax revenues. This represents a decrease of 11% (from $1.31 to $1.17) since our last reporting of this

measure in Why Rural Matters 2011-12. Rhode Island has the lowest ratio with rural districts receiving only $0.30 of state funding for every dollar of local revenue they receive. There are only a few rural districts in Rhode Island; however, and they are mostly high-wealth districts. Nebraska has the second lowest state/local revenue ratio at $0.41. Among the states with a large rural education sector, Nebraska's rural districts get the lowest level of state aid relative to local tax revenue. Vermont gets the most state with a ratio of $10.41.[vii]

The highest ranking states on this indicator (specifically, the states with the lowest level of state aid relative to local revenue) fall into two distinct groups: Northeastern states with relatively low levels of rural poverty and high levels of rural property valuation (Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Massachusetts); and Midwestern/Great Plains states with low to moderate levels of rural poverty and a largely agricultural property tax base in rural areas (Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, South Dakota and Iowa). The first group includes many states that spend relatively high levels per pupil in their rural schools. All five are among the top quartile for the rural instructional expenditure per pupil indicator. Five of the seven in the second group are relatively low spenders; they rank in the bottom half in rural instructional expenditure per pupil. Pennsylvania and Florida are the only states among the top quartile on this indicator that do not clearly fit in either of these two groups.

The lowest ranking states (the states in which rural schools get relatively high levels of state revenue compared to local revenue) are more difficult to categorize. Six of the leading 13 are in Appalachia, the South, or Southwest, some with mostly countywide rural districts (Kentucky, Alabama, West Virginia and Tennessee) and others with smaller independent rural districts (Arkansas and New Mexico).

> **Salary expenditures per instructional FTE** in rural districts is the total dollar amount spent on instructional salaries divided by the total number of instructional staff members, and is used here as a proxy for average teacher salaries. The lower the rural salary expenditure per FTE (or full-time equivalent, a measure that accounts for staff who only work part-time or who are assigned to more than one school), the higher the state's ranking on the Educational Policy Context gauge and the more urgent the concern for the condition of rural education.

In many states, rural school districts are simply at a competitive disadvantage in the market for teachers. There are many factors in this challenge, but lower teacher salaries are certainly among them.

Nationally, the average salary expenditure per instructional FTE in rural districts is $57,791, ranging from $40,865 in Arkansas to $88,049 in New Jersey.

States with the lowest rural salary expenditures according to this indicator are primarily in the Southeast and the Midwest/Great Plains (in order from lowest salary: Arkansas, Florida, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Mississippi, Missouri, Kansas, Idaho, Montana, Alabama and Nebraska). Eight of these states rank in the top quartile on the Importance gauge.

States with the highest rural salary expenditures are located primarily in the Northeast, the West, and the Mid-Atlantic (in ascending order from lowest salary in the group: Nevada, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Virginia, California, Washington, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Wyoming, Maryland, Connecticut, Alaska and New York). Nine of these are among the 12 states with the lowest percentage of students attending rural districts and in the bottom quartile on the Importance gauge. Only Virginia, New Hampshire, and Alaska rank in the upper half among states in terms of percentage of students attending rural school districts.
Rural teachers seem to be paid better in states where they represent a small portion of a largely urban teaching force.

Educational Policy Context Gauge Rankings

To gauge the extent to which the educational policy context is favorable or unfavorable for rural schools, we averaged each state's ranking on the individual indicators, giving equal weight to each (see Table 5).

Table 5. Educational Policy Context Gauge Rankings
How crucial is it for policymakers to address the policy context of their state as it relates to the specific needs of schools serving rural communities. These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural educational issues within that state.

Table 5. Educational Policy Context Gauge Rankings

CRUCIAL		VERY IMPORTANT		IMPORTANT		NOTABLE	
FL	10.2	UT	21.8	ME	24.2	MT	29.0
AZ	15.2	VA	21.8	NJ	24.8	MI	29.2
AL	17.0	CO	22.0	MD	24.8	NE	29.4
MS	17.4	GA	22.4	OR	25.0	KS	30.4
IL	18.2	SC	22.4	DE	25.2	NY	31.2
IN	18.2	NV	22.4	IA	25.4	CA	31.8
LA	19.2	NC	22.6	OK	26.4	MN	32.0
MO	19.4	ND	22.8	MA	27.2	NM	32.8
TN	19.6	RI	23.0	NH	27.6	WA	33.8
OH	19.6	ID	23.2	CT	27.6	WY	37.0
KY	20.0	AR	23.4	WI	28.0	VT	43.4
PA	20.0	SD	23.8			AK	47.2
WV	20.8	TX	23.8				

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

The indicators that contribute most to the crucial ranking of the states in the top quartile are ratio of instructional to transportation expenditure (seven of 14 are in the top quartile on this indicator); rural instructional expenditures per pupil (six of 14); and median organizational scale (six of 14). The 13 Crucial states vary most in their ranking on the ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures indicator, ranging from number one West Virginia to number 40 Tennessee, with an average ranking of 16.

Five states in the top quartile are in the South or Southwest (Florida, Arizona, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana). Four each are in the Prairie/Plains Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Ohio) and Appalachia (Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and, at least partially, Pennsylvania).

Six states in the top quartile for the gauge rank 30th or lower on the indicator state dollars per local dollars—in descending order: Alabama, Mississippi, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia. These are states where school funding systems depend relatively more on state than local sources of revenue. In these states, the average contribution from the state ranges from $1.56 (in Mississippi) to $2.67 (in Kentucky) for every dollar of local revenue.

These low rankings on the state aid indicator are overcome by high rankings on most of the other indicators in this gauge. All six of these states rank 15th or higher on the organizational scale indicator, reflecting their tendency to favor large schools and large districts. All of them but Louisiana and West Virginia rank 14th or higher on instructional expenditures, all but Tennessee and Mississippi rank 16th or higher on the ratio of instructional to transportation spending, and all are below the national median on salary expenditure per FTE instructional staff.

At the bottom of this gauge are four Great Plains states (Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska and Montana); two Midwestern states (Minnesota and Michigan); two Northeastern states (Vermont and New York); two Far West states (Washington and California); and one Southwestern state (New Mexico). Their low ranking collectively is most attributable to their high per pupil instructional expenditures. Seven of the 12 are in the bottom quartile on that indicator and another four are in the third quartile. Ten of the 12 are also in the bottom half on the organizational scale indicator. New York at 21st and Michigan at 24th are not far from the bottom half. In general, these are states with relatively small schools and districts and stronger investments in public education overall

Educational Outcomes Gauge

Educational Outcomes Gauge Indicators

This gauge includes indicators describing student academic performance on national assessments. As noted earlier, we intended to include rural high school graduation rate as an indicator but were unable to because the data were not available. In this section, we define the

indicators in the Educational Outcomes gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.

- **Rural NAEP Scores.** The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is administered and compiled by the U.S. Department of Education and offers assessment data for state-by-state comparisons, including comparisons of rural school districts as a sub-group within states. We considered student academic outcomes as measured by average rural district reading and math scores at the 4th and 8th grade levels on the NAEP. The lower the average score on each of these four indicators, the higher the ranking (the greater the concern) on the Educational Outcomes gauge.

The results vary so little among the four NAEP indicators that we discuss them here as a unit. Eight states rank in the highest priority quartile (i.e., the quartile with the lowest rural NAEP scores) on all four NAEP indicators: New Mexico, West Virginia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Hawaii, Tennessee, Arizona and Oklahoma. Alabama, Arkansas, Oregon and South Carolina rank in the top quartile on three of the four NAEP indicators and narrowly miss on the fourth. California ranks in the top quartile on two indicators and no better than 26th on the other two. Rural students in these thirteen states consistently performed poorly on NAEP at both grade levels and in both subject areas.

Nine of these states are in the top quartile on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge, and three more are just outside the top quartile (with rankings of 14, 15, and 18). The thirteenth state (Hawaii) could not be ranked on that gauge because its organization as a single statewide district does not permit us to calculate the necessary indicators.

There is a similar homogeneity in the states whose rural students score highest on NAEP assessments. Eight states rank in the bottom quartile (i.e., highest scores, least cause for concern) on all four indicators: Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, New Hampshire, Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Most of these states score low on the Importance gauge and very low on the Student and Family Diversity gauge. Kansas, Minnesota, and Rhode Island score in the bottom quartile on three of the four indicators; Delaware and Texas on two; and California, Montana, Virginia and Washington on one. California is the only state with rankings in both the highest priority quartile (8th grade NAEP math scores are 8th lowest performing and 8th grade NAEP reading scores are 11th lowest performing) and in the lowest priority quartile (4th grade NAEP math scores are 7th highest performing).

Educational Outcomes Gauge Rankings

To gauge the educational outcomes associated with rural schools in each state, we averaged each state's ranking on the four indicators, giving equal weight to each (see Table 6).

Table 6. Educational Outcomes Gauge Rankings

Given the educational outcomes in each state, how urgent is it that policymakers take steps to address the specific needs of schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural educational issues within that state.

Table 6. Educational Outcomes Gauge Rankings

URGENT		CRITICAL		SERIOUS		FAIR	
NM	2.3	SD	18.3	VA	25.8	MN	35.3
WV	2.5	NV	19.0	ME	26.5	OH	38.3
MS	3.8	NC	19.3	IN	27.3	PA	39.3
HI	4.8	FL	20.0	IL	27.5	KS	39.5
AL	7.0	ID	20.0	IA	27.8	RI	40.5
LA	7.0	CA	21.8	WY	28.3	CO	42.3
AZ	9.0	MO	22.3	NE	29.3	NH	44.3
OK	9.3	WA	23.8	ND	29.5	CT	44.8
TN	9.3	MI	24.8	TX	30.3	MD	45.8
OR	9.5	KY	25.3	MT	31.0	NJ	46.3
SC	10.0	UT	25.3	DE	31.3	MA	47.3
AR	10.5	NY	25.5	WI	32.3	AK	NA
GA	16.0					VT	NA

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

As described in the preceding narrative, patterns in rural performance on the NAEP assessments are remarkably consistent across the assessed grade levels and subject areas. The result is a very clear demarcation of higher and lower-performing states in the gauge rankings, with obvious regional patterns (i.e., lower performing states are clustered in the Southeast, Southwest, Central Appalachia, and Mid-South Delta; higher performing states are clustered in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes region.

Rural Education Priority Gauge

Finally, we averaged the cumulative rankings on the five gauges (Importance, Student and Family Diversity, Socioeconomic Challenges, Educational Policy Context, and Educational Outcomes) to create priority rankings that reflect the overall status of rural education in each state. The rankings for the Rural Education Priority Gauge are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Rural Education Priority Gauge Rankings

Rankings here represent the combined average ranking for each state on the five gauges (Importance, Student and Family Diversity, Socioeconomic Challenges, Educational Policy Context, and Educational Outcomes). The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the greater the need for policymakers to address rural education issues within that state.

Table 7. Rural Education Priority Gauge Rankings							
LEADING		MAJOR		SIGNIFICANT		NOTABLE	
MS	6.0	NM	17.2	IL	25.8	DE	32.4
AL	8.2	MO	18.8	ND	26.8	WY	32.8
SC	10.6	SD	19.2	OH	27.4	NY	34.2
NC	11.2	OR	20.8	CO	27.8	VT	35.0
AZ	12.2	ID	21.2	WA	28.6	WI	35.4
OK	12.6	IN	21.8	UT	29.2	MN	35.8
TN	12.6	VA	22.0	MI	29.4	NH	37.6
AR	14.4	TX	22.4	PA	30.6	NJ	39.0
GA	14.4	NV	23.2	KS	31.2	MD	40.8
FL	14.6	AK	24.3	IA	32.2	RI	41.2
KY	15.0	CA	24.6	NE	32.2	CT	44.2
LA	16.4	ME	24.6			MA	44.8
WV	17.0	MT	24.6			HI	NA

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

While the states ranking in the highest priority (termed "Leading") quartile on the Rural Education Priority gauge are essentially the same as those reported in our Why Rural Matters 2011-12 report, the regional patterns that have been present throughout the seven reports in this series have become, if anything, even more apparent.

One state that was in the Leading quartile in 2011-12 dropped into the second (termed "Major") quartile this year – Alaska (from 7th to 23rd). The other highest priority states from the 2011-12 report are again ranked in the Leading quartile for 2013-14. The geographic concentration of these states in the south is dramatic and comprehensive: all of the states ranked in the top quartile are below the 39th parallel (a line running approximately from Washington, D.C. through Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Reno); with the exception of Kentucky, they are all below the 37th parallel.

Nearly all of the states in the Leading quartile have been there one or more times in previous reports. Many have been there in every report. Despite changes in the indicators and gauges used to measure and prioritize rural education needs, these are the states that consistently surface near the top.

Seven of the 13 states in the Major (i.e., next highest priority) quartile share a border with states in the Leading quartile. South Dakota, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, Maine and Montana do not.

The third highest (or next lowest) priority quartile (termed "Significant") is more mixed, with states from the Mid-East, Mid-West and Upper Mid-West, Great Plains, Prairie, Mountain West and Northwest. These states are spread out across the interior of the northern half of the continental U.S. None are in the south and only one (Washington) borders the sea.
The lowest priority quartile (termed "Notable") shows a more consistent regional pattern. Nine of 12 are clustered on the East Coast, running from the Mid-Atlantic to New England (Delaware,

Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont). The remaining three Notable states are Wyoming, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

None of the highest ranking states on the Rural Education Priority gauge rank in the top quartile on all five underlying gauges. Three of the highest ranking states (Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee) rank in the top quartile on four of the five underlying gauges, and the remaining ten rank in the top quartile on three of the five underlying indicators. The Socioeconomic Challenges gauge most closely parallels the rankings on the Rural Education Priority gauge, with 11 of the 13 states in the Leading Quartile on the Rural Education Priority gauge also placing in the top quartile on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge. Ten of the Leading quartile states on the Rural Education Priority gauge placed in the top quartile on the Educational Outcomes gauge; eight placed in the top quartile on the Educational Policy Context gauge; seven on the Importance gauge; and six on the Student and Family Diversity gauge.

In the Notable (bottom) quartile on the Rual Education Policy Priority gauge, no state ranked in the bottom quartile on all five underlying gauges and only four states (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Maryland) ranked in the bottom on four. Here too, the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge most closely parallels rankings on the Rural Education Priority gauge. Nine states ranking in the Notable Quartile on the Rural Education Priority gauge also ranked in the bottom quartile on the Socioeconomic Challenges gauge. Eight states that rank in the bottom quartile on the other four gauges also rank in the bottom quartile on the Rural Education Priority gauge were Educational Outcomes, 8; Student and Family Diversity, 7; Importance, 6; and Educational Policy Context, 4.

As in past reports, there were a few cases where states ranked very high or very low on one gauge but consistently the opposite on other gauges. Two examples: West Virginia ranked 41st on Student and Family Diversity but eighth on Socioeconomic Challenges, 13th on Educational Policy Context, and second on Educational Outcomes. Vermont, on the other hand, ranked second on the Importance gauge and no higher than 41st on any other gauge. West Virginia's public schools serve a relatively homogenous rural student population characterized by high levels of socioeconomic challenges and low levels of academic performance. In Vermont, rural education is important but schools and communities, in general, are not stressed or distressed.

Conclusions and Implications

Over 9.7 million students are enrolled in rural school districts, more than 20 percent of all public school students in the United States. More than two in five of those rural students live in poverty, more than one in four is a child of color, and one in eight has changed residence in the previous 12 months.

The scale and the scope of rural education in the United States continues to grow. We have reported increases in the total rural student population in the past five editions of Why Rural Matters, with growth rates that exceed those of non-rural districts as measured by both short term

and longer range trends. The trend continues, with total rural student enrollment increasing by 136,884 students from 2008-09 to 2009-10 while non-rural student enrollment decreased by 54,162. In terms of absolute numbers, these enrollment shifts are relatively small of course; as part of a longer trajectory, however, they attest to the continued and expanding salience of rural education for the nation's public education system as a whole.

Moreover, the demographic characteristics of the rural student population continue to shift, with rural schools becoming increasingly diverse and serving larger populations of students that schools have historically not served effectively (i.e., the students for whom performance is described in terms of achievement gaps). The percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced priced meals increased from 41.0% to 46.6% from 2008-09 to 2010-11 (an increase of nearly 603,000 students). Likewise, the percentage of rural minority students increased over that same time period by 127,151 (a 5.1% increase). Less dramatic but still noteworthy, the percentage of rural students qualifying for special education services increased from 12.1% to 12.8% (an increase of nearly 85,000 students).

These trends should make it increasingly difficult for policy makers to ignore the challenges faced by rural schools and the students they serve, or what those challenges mean to state and national goals of improving achievement and narrowing achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups.

Still, the invisibility of rural education persists in many states. Many rural students are largely invisible to state policy makers because they live in states where education policy is dominated by highly visible urban problems. Consider this. In 16 states, one-third or more of all public school students are enrolled in rural school districts. On the other hand, more than half of all rural students live in just 11 states. Only four states (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee) are in both of these categories, however (i.e., in a state with large proportional and absolute rural student enrollments). The majority of rural students attend school in a state where they constitute less than 28% of the public school enrollment, and one in three are in states where they constitute less than 20%.

The Bottom Line

Growth in rural school enrollment continues to outpace non-rural enrollment growth in the United States, and rural schools continue to grow more complex with increasing rates of poverty, diversity, and students with special needs. These trends, while widespread, are most intense in the South, Southwest, and parts of Appalachia. Moreover, they are trends that have proven consistent throughout the report series and irrespective of changes in the specific indicators used.

Rural education is frustrating to those who wish it would conform to the oversimplifications that have long held sway in the discourse of policymakers and the public in general. Those oversimplifications do not stand in the face of the mounting evidence that rural education is becoming a bigger and even more complex part of our national educational landscape. As that evidence mounts, it is becoming impossible to ignore the national relevance of these students, families, schools and communities.

Rural Early Child Development: Issues and Opportunities

Recent research on early child development reveals that "achievement gaps" are evident during infancy.[viii] Primary pathways for vision, hearing, language and emotional control reach peak development before an infant's first birthday, and a child's vocabulary can quadruple between the ages of one and two.[ix] Early learners who are not ready for kindergarten are at higher risk of grade retention, intervention, remediation, and special education.[x] Education policy has traditionally operated under the assumption that elementary schools will fix problems that are rooted in early infancy; however, efforts to mitigate these effects require intense human and fiscal resources and produce uneven results.[xi] The toll on children, their families, and the community is great. We begin here by introducing several key issues related to early child development in an effort to capture the complexities associated with ensuring equitable and adequate resources for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. We follow that discussion with a descriptive look at the characteristics of the rural early childhood population in the 50 states, and follow that with a brief overview of existing programs and information sources related to rural early childhood issues.

Economic and social prosperity.[xii] Investing in early child development from prenatal care through preschool directs resources to the origin of many problems and offers a root solution to develop better economic and social outcomes. Economist James Heckman notes that the rate of return on investment in quality early childhood programs is 7-10% per annum (i.e., for every dollar spent on early childhood education, particularly for the neediest children, the return is $7-10 in decreased special education costs, improved academics and productivity, and lower social costs like prison and welfare). Such investments are cost-effective, promote productivity, and reduce inequality to create lasting economic prosperity. In short, then, policymakers face a choice: pay now, or pay more later. Moreover, the greatest returns are realized when investments are made in the lives of vulnerable children from birth. Many rural families lack access to information, resources, income and skills to provide essential early child development experiences. Programs that emphasize both cognitive and social skill-building, especially those that target low-income households, are a rural community's best investment.

Early care and education data.[xiii] The absence of appropriately detailed data about early child development and the inability to link data across programs make it difficult for researchers to answer critical policy questions and produce actionable findings. To assess status and progress and ensure that policymakers are attentive to needs, researchers and activists need data that can be disaggregated by locale within individual states. For example, gaps in currently available data prevent researchers from investigating the number of early learners served in publicly funded programs, the characteristics of existing programs, and the quality of the early care workforce. . Many states are developing coordinated early childhood education data systems as part of their Race to the Top initiative. It is important that they design those systems to speak to the critical questions that can inform policy formation and program replication, and provide stakeholders with facts and figures to support advocacy work.

Teen parenting.[xiv] In 2010, the birth rate among teens in rural counties was almost 33% higher than the rate in non-rural counties. Rural teens often lack access to health clinics that offer contraception and counseling. Teen mothers are least likely of all maternal age groups to receive

prenatal care or graduate from high school. They are at a higher risk for pregnancy complications, substance abuse, and depression, and are more likely to live in poverty. Babies born to teen mothers are more likely to be premature and can face a myriad of life-long health and developmental problems. Additionally, only around two-thirds of children born to teen mothers earn a high school diploma, compared to 81 percent of children born to adults. Economic and environmental factors facing teen fathers also impact the early development of their children. Children of teen parents start school with lower educational performance, score lower on standardized tests, and are twice as likely to be placed in foster care and repeat a grade as their peers born to older parents.

Adverse early experiences.[xv] Strong, frequent, and prolonged adversity such as the accumulated burdens of poverty can activate a child's toxic stress response during the most sensitive time of brain development. Young children may be saddled with the damaging effects of toxic stress on learning, behavior, and health across their lifespan. Early exposure to circumstances that produce persistent fear and chronic anxiety, such as economic instability, caregiver substance abuse, and domestic violence can have lifelong consequences by disrupting the developing architecture of the brain. Fortunately, these early life experiences and the challenges to development they present can be prevented, diminished, reversed or significantly mitigated through the provision of structural supports and high quality interventions. The influence of these stressors on a child's life opportunities is not intractable. When appropriate supports and interventions are in place, the brain and other organs can recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

Mental health.[xvi] A child's mental health is central to enabling him or her to function within the community. Research has found that a secure attachment, or healthy emotional bond, between an infant and a primary caregiver is important to the child's emotional development. Children born to a mother who suffers from postpartum depression are more likely to lack this attachment and are therefore at increased risk for delayed or impaired cognitive, emotional, and linguistic development. Maternal depression, experienced by 20% of women, threatens a mother's emotional and physical ability to foster a healthy relationship with her child. Children's mental health affects how they socialize, how they learn, and how well they meet their potential. Children of depressed mothers are more likely to experience long-term mental health problems. The male children of mothers with postpartum depression have been found to be more cognitively delayed than girls and display more outwardly violent behavior. Shortages of primary care providers and mental health professionals in rural areas limit the likelihood that new mothers will be screened and treated for depression.

Breastfeeding rate and duration.[xvii] Infants who were breastfed for three months or more show significantly higher scores on language and intelligence assessments as adults than those who were not breastfed. Breastfeeding provides a critical support for infants' immunologic, nutritional, physical and cognitive development. Studies demonstrate an association between breastfeeding and improved vision, higher IQ, and better cognitive functioning. Children who are breastfed during early infancy are less likely to suffer from many common illnesses affecting young children. Mothers who breastfed their children for at least three months were significantly less concerned about their child's language and motor skill development at age six than those who never breastfed. Breastfeeding mothers also report higher rates of mother-infant attachment and bonding, feelings of maternal empowerment, and confidence. Research reports indicate that only half of mothers in Mississippi (the state ranked as the overall highest priority for rural

education in this report) ever breastfed, compared with over 90 percent of women in California and Idaho (states ranked as the 24th and 18th highest priority for rural education in this report). In general, mothers living in rural areas are significantly less likely to breastfeed than non-rural mothers and mothers in the Southeast Region of the U.S. (both rural and non-rural) are less likely to breastfeed than mothers in other regions.

Childcare quality and affordability.[xviii] More than half of children under age three spend part or all of their day in the care of someone other than their parents. In 35 states and the District of Columbia, the average annual cost for center-based care for an infant was higher than a year's in-state tuition and fees at a four-year public college in 2011. Whether the person caring for an infant, toddler, or preschooler is a parent, relative, or childcare provider, caregivers assume responsibility for creating an environment that will shape the growing child's brain architecture for all future learning and success. They have also stepped into a role characterized by little or no job training and with high rates of stress, feelings of isolation, and depression. The caregiver may receive low or no pay, health care, retirement or other employee benefits while increasing their exposure to infectious disease. Infant and child care providers change jobs at higher rates than food service workers. Caregiver stress and depression negatively impacts early brain development. The associated inconsistent, passive, and unresponsive caregiving results in diminished returns for caregivers, young children, and the community.

Early disparities.[xix] Patterns of differential performance in learning and social-emotional development emerge as early as nine months after birth and become increasingly evident over time. Early detection and connection to services lead to positive outcomes, but families and care providers often do not recognize and address the early signs of developmental or behavioral concerns. Preschool children are expelled at more than three times the rate of K-12 students. African-American children are expelled at even higher rates, in part because of the absence of early intervention but also as a consequence of limited caregiver proficiency and cultural competency.

High-quality early intervention programs can prevent the development of poor functioning later in life; however, only 3.7% of eligible children are receiving Early Head Start services. The Individuals with Disabilities Act includes early intervention programs for families with infants and toddlers with risk conditions. An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is the precursor to the Individual Education Plan (IEP). While the number of young children eligible for but not receiving early intervention services is unclear, those who do participate make the move to kindergarten with relative ease. Studies have shown that at kindergarten, 32% of the former early intervention participants were no longer considered to have a disability.

The issues described above impact rural communities educationally, socially, and economically. The science of early child development calls for an examination of policies and practices employed within communities to ensure all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers thrive. Public education's growing reliance on the strong emotional, social, and intellectual capabilities of entering students means that success in school depends greatly on the community's ability to support the well-being of its youngest citizens.

Table 8 presents Census data describing the characteristics of the rural population ages birth to five in each of the 50 states.

Table 8. Characteristics of Rural Children Ages Birth to Five

State	Number of rural children age 0-5	Percent rural children age 0-5	Percent rural minority children age 0-5	Percent of families with children age 0-5 who are below the poverty line	Percent of single mother families with children age 0-5 who are below the poverty line
Alabama	130,946	43.9%	17.4%	23.1%	55.3%
Alaska	19,851	36.7%	44.9%	15.6%	40.2%
Arizona	119,187	26.6%	29.2%	9.9%	26.4%
Arkansas	89,852	45.5%	17.0%	21.0%	53.3%
California	229,218	9.0%	37.5%	10.7%	34.5%
Colorado	75,251	22.1%	14.1%	7.3%	44.3%
Connecticut	21,923	11.2%	7.0%	3.2%	28.8%
Delaware	11,327	20.5%	11.7%	12.6%	56.0%
Florida	175,689	16.4%	20.9%	14.6%	38.0%
Georgia	204,162	30.3%	25.3%	17.8%	43.8%
Hawaii	8,643	9.8%	74.1%	42.1%	75.5%
Idaho	45,662	38.5%	11.1%	17.2%	38.5%
Illinois	117,325	14.2%	12.1%	10.6%	46.6%
Indiana	135,088	31.5%	9.5%	11.5%	53.7%
Iowa	80,770	40.8%	10.5%	9.2%	38.6%
Kansas	57,873	28.6%	15.3%	14.5%	53.9%
Kentucky	116,993	41.9%	4.7%	24.2%	56.5%
Louisiana	96,197	30.7%	27.9%	21.0%	49.9%
Maine	40,773	61.6%	5.0%	19.1%	61.3%
Maryland	44,424	12.2%	16.0%	5.4%	20.6%
Massachusetts	28,224	7.8%	7.9%	3.6%	20.8%
Michigan	147,931	25.4%	7.5%	16.0%	51.4%
Minnesota	115,356	32.7%	13.1%	11.2%	52.4%
Mississippi	101,711	49.5%	31.9%	21.2%	49.7%
Missouri	120,690	31.6%	6.3%	17.1%	53.1%
Montana	26,942	44.6%	16.9%	13.8%	45.8%
Nebraska	40,490	30.9%	14.8%	11.1%	51.2%
Nevada	48,140	26.0%	32.8%	8.5%	36.6%
New Hampshire	27,413	40.5%	NA	9.2%	35.7%
New Jersey	34,052	6.4%	21.1%	7.0%	19.7%
New Mexico	34,313	23.8%	38.6%	15.5%	22.7%
New York	124,108	10.7%	5.5%	15.8%	48.7%
North Carolina	255,142	40.7%	29.2%	17.5%	50.6%
North Dakota	19,455	42.1%	20.4%	16.7%	70.7%
Ohio	169,288	23.9%	5.5%	15.6%	54.3%
Oklahoma	92,184	34.9%	36.7%	18.3%	49.8%
Oregon	41,891	17.6%	22.0%	17.0%	33.4%
Pennsylvania	162,276	22.5%	5.1%	13.3%	47.8%
Rhode Island	5,156	9.3%	21.3%	15.7%	50.1%
South Carolina	127,104	42.0%	36.4%	19.5%	52.1%
South Dakota	28,659	48.9%	20.7%	12.5%	35.3%
Tennessee	147,259	36.8%	11.0%	20.9%	57.4%
Texas	459,515	23.5%	26.4%	11.4%	41.7%
Utah	57,118	21.8%	10.6%	13.3%	69.8%
Vermont	18,038	58.6%	NA	16.7%	42.5%
Virginia	124,513	24.5%	18.5%	11.2%	43.5%
Washington	77,135	17.6%	21.8%	13.7%	52.5%
West Virginia	58,300	56.0%	7.4%	25.2%	67.1%
Wisconsin	113,973	32.6%	9.0%	12.5%	45.5%
Wyoming	12,842	32.9%	8.4%	15.1%	81.2%

The patterns here closely parallel the findings reported from the main analysis: in sum, and not surprisingly, the states where we see sizable populations of rural K-12 students, rural minority students, and rural students facing economic distress are home to large numbers of young children not-yet-enrolled in school who share the same characteristics. Of the 13 highest priority (Leading) states according to the primary analysis, to *Relevant Sources of Data and Information* and *Relevant Initiatives*], two (North Carolina and South Carolina) rank in the top 13 on all five measures reported here. Two others (Mississippi and Alabama) rank in the top 13 on four of five measures, and seven others (Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana and West Virginia) rank in the top 13 on three of five measures. The challenges do not start at kindergarten, and the need for attention from policymakers is clear and apparent from an early age; moreover, as seen in the results reported in the *Educational Outcomes* gauge (where 10 of these 13 highest priority states are in the lowest performing quartile), the lack of attention in the form of effective programs and services has impacts that last far beyond a child's early years.

In the following sections, we highlight (1) relevant sources of data and information regarding early childhood education issues, and (2) relevant early childhood education initiatives.

Relevant Sources of Data and Information on Early Childhood Issues

The following are organizations, institutions, and federal programs providing data, research, and related information on issues related to early childhood development (ECD). Some, but not all, explore rural specific issues of ECD policy and practice.

Centers and Institutes

FrameWorks Institute
The FrameWorks Institute applies rigorous social science research in framing the public discourse about social problems. Their work brings clarity to organizations striving to expand their constituency base, to build public will, and to further public understanding of specific social issues. FrameWorks offers numerous research reports and reframing advice for those seeking to influence public attitudes and policy preferences. FrameWorks has produced 17 quantitative and qualitative reports of research exploring how advocates communicate with the public and policymakers about early child development.

Ten comprehensive reports describe the institute's extensive investigation of how Americans think about rural America and related issues, from access to health care to economic development. In an ongoing multi-year, multi-disciplinary study, FrameWorks is exploring how communications about early child development influences public attitudes and policy preferences. Future work that merges the institute's evolving advice on reframing early child development with guidance on how America thinks about rural issues could enhance efforts to ensure equitable and adequate resources so that all infants, toddlers and preschoolers in rural communities can thrive.

Harvard Center for the Developing Child
The Center's work promotes the core belief that healthy child development is the foundation of economic prosperity, strong communities, and a just society. The Center uses science to enhance

child well-being through innovations in policy and practice. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child is the Center's flagship initiative on translating science into policy, while The National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs provides evaluation research to undergird the Center's efforts to explain why public investments should be made in the early childhood years and what those investments should be.

Economist James Heckman

Nobel Laureate James Heckman is an expert in the economics of human development. His work promotes the value of investing in early child development to reduce deficits and strengthen the economy. Dr. Heckman's educational materials teach advocates how to make the case for effective early childhood education and its wide-ranging benefits to individuals, society, and economic growth. Video and print resources encompass social-emotional, early learning, family support, economic growth, health outcomes and return-on-investment themes. State-specific summaries show how investment in quality early childhood development can strengthen the economy of states with large rural populations.

National Center for Children in Poverty State Profiles

This suite of tools from the Mailman School of Health at Columbia University helps in planning projects to improve the well-being of low-income children and their families. Tools include economic profiles for children; state-based policies that significantly affect children, adolescents, and family economics by state; an income needs calculator and state-by-state budget calculator; and a *wizard* that creates custom tables of national- and state-level statistics about low-income children. Data on areas of interest such as parental education, parental employment, marital status, and race/ethnicity—among many other variables—are included, and all are easy to use. Data are aggregated from multiple sources, with the goals of providing practitioners and advocates information about emerging challenges and insights for turning research into practice; giving policymakers information to make good decisions; and supplying facts, trends, and policy developments to help the media accurately report about the realities faced by low-income children and families in the U.S.

Kids Count State Profiles

Kids Count data are collected from reliable sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and aggregated with state data to create a tool to identify children's needs. The site allows users to conduct web-based searches for data within a single state or territory, and includes community-level data by location or topic. Users can create profiles, maps, rankings, line graphs, or raw data to identify or confirm a program need. The site provides practice models, ideas, and case studies for stakeholders seeking to improve conditions for children or families, native-born or immigrant, at risk or below the poverty line.

Federal Technical Assistance for Early Learning

Federally Funded Early Childhood Technical Assistance Projects

This site lists a variety of technical assistance resources from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Selected Technical Assistance Resources

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)
The center promotes the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities.

The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (CONNECT)
CONNECT is working with the early childhood community to create a series of web-based professional development resources that focus on and respond to challenges faced each day by those working with young children with disabilities and their families.

Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO)
ECO promotes the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA)
The clearinghouse is designed for those involved in the education of early childhood English language learners (young ELLs), including parents, educators, and policy makers. It is intended to enrich the knowledge base and educators' understanding of the changing demographics of the young ELL population, issues relating to parents and families of young ELLs, and policy issues.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)
This is a central source of information on infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and research-based information on effective educational practices for individuals with disabilities. http://www.nichcy.org/

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)
NECTAC supports the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Center for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy Center)
The center provides national leadership and technical assistance to states to support IDEA early intervention and early childhood special education state programs in the development or enhancement of coordinated early childhood longitudinal data systems.

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI)
NPDCI works with states to create a system of professional development for early childhood personnel to support the inclusion of young children with disabilities in settings with their peers.

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)
TACSEI takes the research that shows which practices improve the social-emotional outcomes for young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities and creates FREE products and resources to help decision-makers, caregivers, and service providers apply these best practices in the work they do every day.

What Works Clearinghouse: Early Childhood Education
The clearinghouse includes reviewed curricula and practices designed for preschool or center-based child care with 3- to 5-year-old children.

Longitudinal Studies

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) program
The ECLS used NCES data to complete three longitudinal studies that examine child development, school readiness, and early school experiences.

The National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS)
NEILS is a national study of infants, toddlers, and their families receiving early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES)
NHES provides descriptive data on the educational activities of the U.S. population and offers researchers, educators, and policymakers a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the United States.

Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study—PEELS
This study followed over 3,000 children with disabilities as they progressed through preschool and into their early elementary years.

Relevant ECE Initiatives

Improved educational outcomes start with quality early childhood education from birth to age five. High quality ECE programs can help close achievement gaps, increase school readiness, and build a solid foundation for success in K-12education, postsecondary education, careers, and life in general. Here we highlight relevant ECE initiatives that provide support for children, families, and communities.

Several core federal programs connect early childhood education to desirable K-12 outcomes and beyond, including:

Early Head Start and Head Start
Early Head Start (prenatal-age three) and Head Start (ages three-five) are federal programs designed to meet the developmental needs of low-income children from birth through age five. Head Start programs provide funds directly to local grantees rather than to states, and services are delivered through center-based, home-based or combination programs. Activities focus on healthy prenatal outcomes, intellectual, social, and emotional development, and healthy family functioning. Outcomes include statistically significant, positive impacts on standardized measures of cognitive and language development, increased parental involvement, and decreased disciplinary incidents in school. Unfortunately, fewer than 5% of families eligible for Early Head Start participate in the program.

Although rural areas are likely to have disproportionately high child poverty levels, few rural communities receive federal Head Start funds. Those who do often struggle to comply with

federal performance requirements that are difficult to achieve in sparsely populated rural settings. To address this, the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services examined the unique challenges faced by rural Head Start programs and reported its findings and recommendations in a 2012 Policy Brief. The Committee recommends the alignment of funding streams and eligibility criteria for the federal Child Care Development Block Grants and Head Start as a way to improve child development outcomes for rural communities.

Schmit, S., Matthews, H., Smith, S. & Robbins, T. (2013). *Investing in Young Children: A Fact Sheet on Early Care and Education Participation, Access, and Quality.* Fact Sheet. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty; Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

US Department of Health and Human Services, National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services. *Challenges to Head Start and Early Childhood Development Programs in Rural Communities*. Policy Brief December 2012. Retrieved from http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/rural/publications/headstartearlychildhood2012.pdf

Early Learning Challenge

Over $900 million in federal funding has been awarded to state-level programs aimed at improving early childhood education by building more robust, effective and coordinated early learning systems. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant program recently awarded four-year grants ranging from $37.5 million to $75 million to six states: Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont. These join the 14 states (California, Delaware, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington and Wisconsin) that have already received close to $633 million dollars to promote school readiness for children with high needs.

Child Care Development Block Grants

Formula grants are awarded to states to provide childcare subsidies for working low-income families. The grant supports efforts to improve childcare quality through improved standards, monitoring, and transparency. Funds are intended to reduce waiting lists and expand access to care. The published Child Care and Development Fund Allocation tables show the amount of funding awarded to State, Territory and Tribal grantees based upon Congressional appropriations for each fiscal year.

Maternal and Child Health

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) is a federal policy initiative to improve health and development outcomes for at-risk children. The program facilitates collaboration and partnership at the federal, state, and community levels through evidence-based home visiting programs. Grantees must demonstrate improvement among eligible families participating in the program in six benchmark areas:

- Improved maternal and newborn health;
- Prevention of child injuries, child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, and reduction of emergency department visits;
- Improvement in school readiness and achievement;

- Reduction in crime or domestic violence;
- Improvements in family economic self-sufficiency; and
- Improvements in the coordination and referrals for other community resources and supports.

The Tribal MIECHV program mirrors the state program, with the goal of supporting the development of happy, healthy, and successful American Indian and Alaska Native children and families through a coordinated home visiting system that begins before birth.

Several different home visiting models are utilized as part of these initiatives:

Healthy Families America
Healthy Families America is a national program model built on a set of "critical elements" designed to promote positive parenting, enhance child health and development, and prevent child abuse and neglect for overburdened families. Expectant parents and families with children birth to age five participate voluntarily in the program and receive home visiting and referrals from highly trained staff.

The Nurse-Family Partnership
The Nurse-Family Partnership is a nurse home visiting program designed to improve the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income, first-time parents and their children. Each participating mother is partnered with a registered nurse early in her pregnancy and receives ongoing nurse home visits that continue through the child's second birthday.

The Parent-Child Home Program
The Parent-Child Home Program is a national early childhood literacy, parenting, and school readiness program for families with children aged 16 months to four years who are identified as at-risk due to poverty and/or other barriers to school success. The program is intended to strengthen families and prepare children for academic success through intensive home visiting focused on building the quality parent-child verbal interaction that is essential to cognitive and social-emotional development, school readiness, and school success.

Parents as Teachers
This evidence-based early learning program operates in all 50 U.S. states and six other countries. Certified parent educators provide home visits, routine health and developmental screenings, and resource referrals as needed. Rural interests are addressed through replication of the Family and Child Education program in 22 Bureau of Indian Education schools. Called BabyFACE, the program serves the needs of very rural American Indian parents from the prenatal period through infancy and toddlerhood. Challenges to program implementation include high transportation costs and unreliable internet access, which affected parent educators' access to curricula and other data.

Other non-federal programs also contribute to child well-being and support families and communities in providing quality ECE experiences:

Zero to Three: National Center for Infant, Toddlers and Families
ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. The comprehensive website offers "one-stop shopping" for extensive practical and timely information on all aspects of early development—social, emotional, intellectual, language and physical—as well as advocacy, policy, and national training institutes.

Relevant initiatives of ZERO TO THREE include:

Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment for States
This self-assessment checklist is based on research about effective policies and best practices in states. The assessment lays the foundation for building an effective state-wide early childhood development system.

Early Steps to School Success
Save the Children's Early Steps to School Success (ESSS) provides early childhood education services to rural children from birth to five years of age; education services to their parents through home visits and parent-child groups; and ongoing staff training to community-based early childhood coordinators (home visitors). Active in 73 sites in 10 states, ESSS enrolls 20 pregnant mothers or children up to age three at each site and 30 enrollees from ages three to five . ESSS sites are located in Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, Arkansas and Arizona.

Text4Baby
Text4baby provides free, frequent, and age-appropriate information to parents of babies via text message and has reached over half a million people since its launch in 2010. Available in English and Spanish, the service provides registered users with three action-oriented text messages per week, from the early stages of a woman's pregnancy to the child's first birthday. Messages offer tips on issues such as safe sleep, immunization, nutrition and exercise, as well as information about maternal health and supports. Evaluation data indicate that mothers using Text4Baby were less likely to miss important doctor's appointments, and that two-thirds of subscribers had conversations with a doctor about information contained in a Text4Baby message.

Help Me Grow
Help Me Grow connects at-risk children with available services. Families and providers of child health, early care, and social services often have difficulty recognizing early signs of developmental or behavioral concerns and finding programs to address identified needs. Through comprehensive physician and community outreach and centralized information and referral centers, families are linked with relevant programs and services. Seven states with large rural populations have established partnerships with *Help Me Grow*. (WV, IA, KY, AL, SC, LA, CO).

UPSTART (Utah Preparing Students Today for a Rewarding Tomorrow).
The state-funded UPSTART program places technology in the home to offer a strong, individualized academic program for preschool children. The UPSTART Program recognizes the home and parents and other caregivers as key educational resources. The home provides the benefit that education can take place seven days a week without the need to travel for access to

instruction. Parents and caregivers can provide the motivation for children to ensure that they spend the necessary time on program materials. Launched in 2009, UPSTART reached over 7,000 Utah homes in its first five years. It received a federal i3 grant in 2013 to expand its intervention throughout 18 rural Utah districts.

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[i] Because locale is determined at the district level, there are some rural schools in non-rural districts and some non-rural schools in rural districts.

[ii] The NAEP results shown in the *Educational Outcomes* gauge can be found on the Nation's Report Card site, Census data on rural areas can be found on the American Community Survey site, and the rest of the data can be found on the Elementary/Secondary information system site.

[iii] Gauge rankings are not calculated for states that have fewer than three of the five indicator rankings present. These instances are denoted with an asterisk and a clarifying note.

[iv] Priority rankings are not calculated for states that have fewer than four of the five indicator rankings present. These instances are denoted with an asterisk and a clarifying note.

[v] Hawaii is excluded from most of the indicators throughout this report because its organization as a single statewide district makes district level data unavailable for rural communities.

[vi] This indicator is not adjusted for geographic cost, which in the case of Alaska is significant.

[vii] Vermont's ratio of $10.41 is dramatically higher than all other states (New Mexico is second highest at $4.72). The extreme value is most possibly an artifact of the way data is reported relative to Vermont's state funding system, but other data and analyses suggest that state arguably has the most equitable system of school funding in the nation (thus, the value might be exaggerated, the ranking is most likely correct).

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State & Priority Rank	**Alabama** **Priority ranking: 2**
Narrative	Alabama is the nation's second highest priority state according to our ranking system. With increases in both the number and percentage of rural students (four of every ten students attend rural schools) the state now ranks fifth for the proportion of rural to non-rural students. Rural schools and districts are among the nation's largest, and instructional spending and instructional salaries are lower than in most other states. Rural NAEP performance is the lowest among the states in fourth grade math and second lowest in eighth grade math. Socioeconomic challenges indicators call attention to the high percentage of rural adults without a high school diploma and multiple other indicators of economic stress and distress.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 10 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 48.7% rank 17 2. Percent small rural districts: 1.5% rank 41 3. Percent rural students: 42.2% rank 5 4. Number of rural students: 311,661 rank 10 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 44.0% rank 8 Graph: Percent rural students: 42.2% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 18 Fair/ Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 27.9% rank 17 2. Percent rural ELL students: 2.0% rank 24 3. Percent rural IEP students: 11.1% rank 43 4. Number of rural minority students: 86,800 rank 10 5. Percent rural mobility: 12.3% rank 17 Graph: Number rural minority: 86,800 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 5 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 79.1% rank 3 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.5% rank 8 3. Rural median household income: $44,146 rank 5 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 24.5% rank 7 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 55.1% rank 11 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 79.1% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 3 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,014 rank 9 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.09 rank 16 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):19,389 rank 7 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $2.08 rank 41 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $51,729 rank 12 Graph: Median organizational scale:19,389 v. US median 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 5 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 230.58 rank 1 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 221.55 rank 18 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 270.44 rank 2 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 258.80 rank 7 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 230.58 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Alaska** **Priority ranking: 23**
Narrative	Almost two-thirds of Alaska's schools are located in rural areas. These schools serve high percentages of English Language Learner students (one in five); minority students (almost three in five); and families who have changed residence in the previous 12 months. Rural instructional expenditures and salary expenditures are among the highest in the nation, as is rural median household income; yet, Alaska has the nation's third highest rural unemployment rates.
Gauge 1: Importance	**Gauge rank: 17 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial** 1. Percent rural schools: 62.1% rank 6 2. Percent small rural districts: 69.0% rank 10 3. Percent rural students: 28.1% rank 22 4. Number of rural students: 36,989 rank 42 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 39.2% rank 14 Graph: Percent rural schools: 62.1% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	**Gauge Rank: 11 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent** 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 57.4% rank 3 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 21.2% rank 2 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 12.1% rank 37 4. Number of rural minority students: 21,220 rank 26 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.6% rank 10 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 21.2% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 20 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.8% rank 29 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.6% rank 3 3. Rural median household income: $66,353 rank 41 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 19.0% rank 20 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 45.7% rank 22 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.6% v. US median 6.5%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	**Gauge Rank: 49 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial** 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $10,885 rank 48 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $27.08 rank 49 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):856 rank 44 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$3.98 rank 47 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $84,981 rank 48 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures:$ 27.08 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	**Gauge Rank: NA Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent** 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): NA 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): NA 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): NA 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): NA Graph: NA

State & Priority Rank	**Arizona** **Priority ranking: 5**
Narrative	Arizona's rural students represent a fairly small proportion of all public school students in the state, but they are one of the nation's most diverse student populations. More than half of all rural students are minorities, one in five has changed residences in the previous 12 months, and one in 20 is a non-native speaker of English. Per pupil instructional spending is more than $1,500 below the national average and the lowest in the nation. Outcomes are relatively poor, with rural NAEP performance in the bottom fifth of all states. Rural educational efforts are accompanied by high adult unemployment rates. Nearly one in five students is eligible for Title I services.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 31 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 29.3% rank 34 2. Percent small rural districts: 63.6% rank 15 3. Percent rural students: 19.8% rank 33 4. Number of rural students: 186,824 rank 23 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 21.9% rank 33 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 63.6% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 3 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 56.1% rank 4 2. Percent rural ELL students: 5.1% rank 11 3. Percent rural IEP students: 12.2% rank 35 4. Number of rural minority students: 104,766 rank 8 5. Percent rural mobility: 18.4% rank 2 Graph: Percent rural minority students: 56.1% v. US 26.7%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 18 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 86.3% rank 19 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.1% rank 11 3. Rural median household income: $59,638 rank 33 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 20.5% rank 18 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 48.3% rank 17 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.1% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 2 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,271 rank 1 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.63 rank 19 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):4,881 rank 18 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.95 rank 16 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $56,028 rank 22 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil:$4,271 v. US median $5,827
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 7 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 236.41 rank 9 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 214.62 rank 8 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.11 rank 11 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 259.02 rank 8 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 214.62 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Arkansas** **Priority ranking: 8**
Narrative	More than one-third of all students in Arkansas attend rural schools, and more than half of all schools in the state serve rural communities. Poverty indicators are among the most severe in the nation. The state has the fourth lowest rural median household income in the US, one-quarter of its rural students are eligible for Title I, and nearly two-thirds are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches. Instructional spending is among the lowest in the nation, and rural teachers are paid less than their counterparts in any other state. Student mobility remains a concern, with 14% of students having changed residences in the past 12 months. Outcome measures are below the national median across the board; eighth grade performance on the NAEP math assessment was the fifth lowest in the nation.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 12 Notable/ Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 53.9% rank 10 2. Percent small rural districts: 20.1% rank 33 3. Percent rural students: 39.4% rank 10 4. Number of rural students: 187,225 rank 22 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 41.3% rank 10 Graph: Percent rural students: 39.4% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 17 Fair/ Serious/ Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 21.0% rank 24 2. Percent rural ELL students: 3.3% rank 18 3. Percent rural IEP students: 11.5% rank 41 4. Number of rural minority students: 39,287 rank 16 5. Percent rural mobility: 14.0% rank 6 Graph: Percent rural mobility: 14.0% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 7 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 82.0% rank 10 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.8% rank 21 3. Rural median household income: $42,667 rank 4 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 24.7% rank 6 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 62.0% rank 5 Graph: Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 24.7% v. US 19.3%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 24 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,198 rank 12 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $14.12 rank 38 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 2,836 rank 27 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.79 rank 39 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $40,865 rank 1 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE:$40,865 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 12 Fair / Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 239.08 rank 14 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 218.15 rank 11 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.12 rank 12 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 257.92 rank 5 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 257.92 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**California** **Priority ranking: 24**
Narrative	California has one of the nation's lowest percentages of rural schools and students, but one of the highest percentages of small rural districts and the seventh largest absolute rural student enrollment. Moreover, the state educates the second largest percentage of rural minority students in the nation. California's instructional expenditure per pupil dropped from $5,367 in *WRM 2011-12* to its current figure of $4,979, making it the eighth lowest in the nation. Rural student NAEP performance in the eighth grade is in the bottom fifth of states, with only seven states scoring lower in math. More than one-half of California's rural students are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches and one-quarter are Title I eligible. High adult unemployment and other socioeconomic challenges further compound the situation.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 37 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 16.2% rank 45 2. Percent small rural districts: 66.5% rank 11 3. Percent rural students: 5.6% rank 46 4. Number of rural students: 341,491 rank 7 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 6.7% rank 47 Graph: Number of rural students: 341,491 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 9 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 61.3% rank 2 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: NA 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 8.8% rank 47 4. Number of rural minority students: 209,216 rank 4 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.9% rank 7 Graph: Percentage of rural minority students: 61.3% v. US 26.7%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 15 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 85.4% rank 17 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.9% rank 5 3. Rural median household income: $70,882 rank 44 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 23.1% rank 11 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 56.3% rank 8 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.9% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 43 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,979 rank 8 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $16.46 rank 45 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 1,722 rank 32 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.60 rank 33 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $70,686 rank 41 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,979 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 19 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 249.17 rank 42 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 223.50 rank 26 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 277.51 rank 8 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 260.80 rank 11 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 277.51 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Colorado** **Priority ranking: 30**
Narrative	One-third of Colorado's schools and 14.7% of its students are rural. The schools and districts are smaller than those in most other states, but enroll a high percentage of minority and English Language Learner students. The state has the fourth highest rural mobility rate, with 14.6% of students changing primary residence in a 12-month period. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil and teacher salaries are among the lowest in the nation. Colorado has a high percentage of rural adults with high school diplomas, a low unemployment rate, and relatively low figures for rural student poverty. Educational outcomes are relatively high. The changing rural demographics will continue to be important to the state.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 31 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 33.3% rank 30 2. Percent small rural districts: 70.6% rank 7 3. Percent rural students: 14.7% rank 36 4. Number of rural students: 122,491 rank 27 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 16.4% rank 38 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 70.6% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 2 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 31.0% rank 15 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 5.2% rank 10 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: N/A 4. Number of rural minority students: 37,944 rank 17 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 14.6% rank 4 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 14.6% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 47 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 92.1% rank 48 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.4% rank 38 3. Rural median household income: $70,226 rank 43 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 12.2% rank 42 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 31.2% rank 43 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 92.1% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 16 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,032 rank 10 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $14.48 rank 39 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 2,157 rank 28 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.97 rank 18 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $52,635 rank 15 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,032 v. US $5,657
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 43 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 249.12 rank 41 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 230.99 rank 42 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.08 rank 43 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 275.27 rank 43 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.08 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Connecticut** **Priority ranking: 48**
Narrative	Connecticut's rural districts constitute only 16% of the state's schools and serve just over 68,000 students. Rural household mobility and rural student poverty rates are lower than in all but one other state. Instructional expenditures per pupil are relatively high, and state funding support relative to local support is weaker than in all states except Rhode Island. Rural Connecticut students have relatively high NAEP performance.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 43 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 16.0% rank 46 2. Percent small rural districts: 47.0% rank 23 3. Percent rural students: 12.8% rank 38 4. Number of rural students: 68,105 rank 35 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 10.6% rank 40 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 47.0% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 48 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 11.2% rank 34 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.8% rank 40 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 11.9% rank 40 4. Number of rural minority students: 7,611 rank 39 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 6.0% rank 49 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 6.0% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 50 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 93.2% rank 49 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.2% rank 40 3. Rural median household income: $91,302 rank 49 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 5.7% rank 49 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 11.8% rank 49 Graph: Rural median household income: $91,302 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 35 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $9,006 rank 46 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.57 rank 18 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,035 rank 25 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.41 rank 2 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $78,577 rank 47 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.41 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 45 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 249.06 rank 40 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 234.08 rank 44 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 298.60 rank 47 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 284.17 rank 48 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 284.17 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Delaware** **Priority ranking: 38**
Narrative	With fewer than 31,000 students in rural districts, Delaware has one of the lowest absolute rural enrollments in the nation. However, the rural student population includes a relatively high percentage of minority and special education students, as well as a high proportion of ELL students. One-third of rural students identify as non-White. Rural schools and districts tend to be large and transportation costs relative to instructional costs are among the highest in the nation. Two in five rural students in Delaware qualify for free or reduced priced lunches and the median household income is more than $10,000 higher than the national rural average.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 41 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 23.7% rank 41 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 25.5% rank 26 4. Number of rural students: 30,511 rank 46 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 27.3% rank 24 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 0.0% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 22 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 37.7% rank 13 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 4.2% rank 13 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.1% rank 20 4. Number of rural minority students: 11,506 rank 35 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.1% rank 37 Graph: Percentage of rural minority students: 37.7% v. US 26.7%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 32 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 85.7% rank 18 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.0% rank 32 3. Rural median household income: $63,593 rank 40 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 13.6% rank 36 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 41.3% rank 27 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 85.7% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 31 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,681 rank 33 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.96 rank 9 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 23,133 rank 5 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$2.51 rank 43 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $64,537 rank 36 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 23,133 v. US median 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 36 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 242.55 rank 22 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.91 rank 37 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.41 rank 28 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 272.62 rank 38 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 242.55 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Florida** **Priority ranking: 10**
Narrative	Florida has one of the most diverse rural student populations in the nation. More than half of all rural students live in poverty, more than 40% of rural students are minorities, and a relatively large percentage of rural students are English Language Learners or qualify for special education services. Almost one in 10 adults is unemployed in rural Florida, and rural mobility is higher than in all states except Arizona and Nevada. Florida's rural schools and districts are the nation's largest, instructional spending and salaries are low, and state contribution to public education costs is weak. Educational outcomes are slightly below the national median.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 42 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 18.9% rank 42 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 10.2% rank 41 4. Number of rural students: 267,738 rank 17 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 11.4% rank 40 Graph: Number of rural students: 267,738 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 1 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 41.7% rank 7 2. Percent rural ELL students: 5.7% rank 9 3. Percent rural IEP students: 14.3% rank 18 4. Number of rural minority students: 111,526 rank 7 5. Percent rural mobility: 15.7% rank 3 Graph: Percent rural mobility: 15.7% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 12 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 85.2% rank 16 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.0% rank 4 3. Rural median household income: $54,040 rank 21 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 23.5% rank 9 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 56.4% rank 7 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.0% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 1 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,945 rank 7 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.86 rank 30 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 48,742 rank 1 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.77 rank 11 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $42,591 rank 2 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $42,591 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 17 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 240.37 rank 16 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.56 rank 36 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.33 rank 14 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.11 rank 14 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.11 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Georgia** **Priority ranking: 8**
Narrative	More than 580,000 students attend rural schools in Georgia. Only Texas and North Carolina educate more rural students. Poverty and mobility rates are among the highest in the US with half of rural students living in poverty. Low rates of earned high school diplomas and high rates of unemployment characterize rural adult populations in the state. Only three states have larger rural schools and districts than Georgia, and rural NAEP performance is near the bottom nationally.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 18 Notable/ Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 37.0% rank 27 2. Percent small rural districts: 3.5% rank 40 3. Percent rural students: 34.9% rank 14 4. Number of rural students: 581,490 rank 3 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 38.5% rank 15 Graph: Number of rural students: 581,490 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 13 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 37.8% rank 12 2. Percent rural ELL students: 2.9% rank 19 3. Percent rural IEP students: 11.0% rank 44 4. Number of rural minority students: 220,041 rank 3 5. Percent rural mobility: 13.0% rank 14 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 220,041 v. US 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 11 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.2% rank 6 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.0% rank 12 3. Rural median household income: $50,690 rank 15 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 22.2% rank 13 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 56.0% rank 9 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.2% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 17 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,712 rank 22 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $15.56 rank 41 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 30,106 rank 4 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.04 rank 19 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $57,596 rank 26 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100):30,106 v. US median 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 13 Fair / Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 239.24 rank 15 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 221.62 rank 19 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.20 rank 13 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.92 rank 17 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.20 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Hawaii** **Priority ranking: N/A**
Narrative	Hawaii is the only state where public schooling is organized as a single local education agency, making it impossible to differentiate by locale at the district level. However, the information which is available is presented below. Rural household mobility is very high at almost 15%, and nearly one in six schools is rural. NAEP performance in rural areas is lower than in nearly all other states, with the absolute lowest score in fourth grade reading. Despite median household incomes close to the national median, rural adult unemployment remains a concern. Due to data limitations, Hawaii is excluded from four of the five gauge rankings and is not part of the overall state ranking.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: N/A Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 15.9% rank 47 2. Percent small rural districts: N/A 3. Percent rural students: N/A 4. Number of rural students: N/A 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: N/A Graph: Percent rural schools: 15.9% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: N/A Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: N/A 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: N/A 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: N/A 4. Number of rural minority students: N/A 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 14.4% rank 5 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 14.4% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 30 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.8% rank 38 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.9% rank 13 3. Rural median household income: $57,744 rank 30 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: N/A 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: N/A Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.9% vs. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: N/A Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: N/A 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: N/A 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):N/A 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: N/A 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: N/A Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: N/A
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 4 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 234.63 rank 7 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 207.25 rank 1 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 277.03 rank 7 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 256.76 rank 4 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 207.25 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Idaho** **Priority ranking: 18**
Narrative	Idaho is ranked in the second highest priority category on all five gauges and is above the national average on four out of five Importance indicators. Only five states educate a higher percentage of rural English Language Learners and only Arizona spends less on instruction per pupil in rural districts. Teacher salaries are low and schools draw heavily on state dollars relative to local dollars. Educational outcomes hover around the national averages. More than half of Idaho's rural students live in poverty.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 22 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 46.3% rank 21 2. Percent small rural districts: 60.0% rank 17 3. Percent rural students: 29.4% rank 18 4. Number of rural students: 78,192 rank 32 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 31.9% rank 22 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 60.0% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 25 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 22.0% rank 23 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 6.2% rank 7 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 9.9% rank 45 4. Number of rural minority students: 17,207 rank 32 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 12.7% rank 16 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 6.2% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 19 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 87.5% rank 23 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.4% rank 27 3. Rural median household income: $52,272 rank 16 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 17.6% rank 25 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 50.8% rank 16 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 50.8% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 23 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,349 rank 2 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.99 rank 23 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 1,586 rank 35 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$3.27 rank 46 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $50,796 rank 10 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,349 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 17 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.35 rank 19 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 222.37 rank 22 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 282.82 rank 18 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 265.42 rank 21 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 282.82 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Illinois** **Priority ranking: 27**
Narrative	Illinois has one of the largest absolute rural student enrollments, but rural students make up only one in seven public school students in the state. Rural students in Illinois have one of the nation's highest rates of rural students qualifying for special education services, and higher than average NAEP performance at Grade 8. Only West Virginia spends fewer dollars on instruction per dollar spent on transportation. Teacher salaries are below average and rural schools in Illinois rank near the bottom on state revenue per local dollar. More than one in four rural students in Illinois qualifies for free or reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 35 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 23.8% rank 40 2. Percent small rural districts: 57.9% rank 19 3. Percent rural students: 13.4% rank 37 4. Number of rural students: 279,403 rank 13 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 17.0% rank 37 Graph: Number of rural students: 279,403 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 21 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 16.5% rank 27 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.2% rank 22 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.4% rank 12 4. Number of rural minority students: 46,021 rank 15 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.1% rank 37 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.4% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 39 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 89.6% rank 32 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.4% rank 27 3. Rural median household income: $60,922 rank 36 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 11.5% rank 44 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 27.2% rank 44 Graph: Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 11.5% v. US 19.3%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 5 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,645 rank 21 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.47 rank 2 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,383 rank 39 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.66 rank 8 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $55,890 rank 21 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.47 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 29 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math):241.25 rank 18 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 224.37 rank 28 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.85 rank 32 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 270.11 rank 32 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math):241.25 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Indiana** **Priority ranking: 19**
Narrative	Indiana ranks fifth on the Educational Policy Context gauge with large districts and schools, low per-pupil expenditures, and a low ratio of instruction-to-transportation expenditures. The state's rural schools enroll a high percentage of students with special educational needs and a relatively small percentage of minority students. Indiana's rural NAEP performance is around the national average as are measures of poverty and socioeconomic challenges. Policy issues remain the most significant challenge for Indiana and the state's quarter of a million rural students.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 27 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 38.4% rank 25 2. Percent small rural districts: 4.7% rank 39 3. Percent rural students: 26.6% rank 24 4. Number of rural students: 272,112 rank 16 5. Number of rural students: 25.6% rank 25 Graph: Number of rural students: 272,112 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 24 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 8.9% rank 38 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.0% rank 24 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% rank 5 4. Number of rural minority students: 24,251 rank 24 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 10.3% rank 29 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 25 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 86.6% rank 20 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.8% rank 21 3. Rural median household income: $57,461 rank 29 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 15.4% rank 30 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 37.9% rank 31 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 37.9% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 5 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,111 rank 11 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.88 rank 7 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 6,512 rank 15 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.47 rank 30 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $58,493 rank 28 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.88 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 28 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 246.22 rank 35 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 222.75 rank 23 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.34 rank 27 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 266.98 rank 24 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 246.22 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Iowa** **Priority ranking: 36**
Narrative	Over half of Iowa's schools are located in rural districts. These schools serve more than a third of the state's public school students. Iowa has among the highest percentage of rural students with relatively few minority and English Language Learner students and low rates of students qualifying for special education services. School districts depend heavily on local dollars and pay teachers among the lowest salaries in the United States. Rural NAEP performance exceeds the national median for three of the four assessments. Rural Iowa is characterized by low unemployment and rural poverty rates although one in three students qualifies for free or reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 13 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 53.2% rank 12 2. Percent small rural districts: 49.6% rank 22 3. Percent rural students: 35.7% rank 13 4. Number of rural students: 177,208 rank 24 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 33.9% rank 18 Graph: Percent rural students: 35.7% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 43 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 7.8% rank 41 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.4% rank 30 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 12.8% rank 31 4. Number of rural minority students: 13,837 rank 34 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.7% rank 34 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.4% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 43 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.8% rank 38 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.0% rank 47 3. Rural median household income: $56,110 rank 27 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 12.0% rank 43 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 31.5% rank 42 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.0% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 32 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,808 rank 24 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $13.53 rank 36 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,210 rank 40 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.68 rank 10 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $54,578 rank 17 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.68 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 30 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.42 rank 30 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 222.31 rank 21 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 289.21 rank 33 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 268.43 rank 27 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 222.31 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Kansas** **Priority ranking: 35**
Narrative	Half of all public schools in Kansas are in rural areas, with two out of three districts reporting enrollments below the national median for rural districts. Rural school districts are also comparatively small and teacher salaries are among the lowest in the nation. Instructional salary expenditures per FTE are more than $7,000 below the national average. Student and family diversity indicators are all close to the US median and educational outcomes are above average. Kansas has low adult unemployment and student poverty rates although almost two in five students are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 18 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 50.0% rank 15 2. Percent small rural districts: 64.3% rank 14 3. Percent rural students: 28.3% rank 21 4. Number of rural students: 136,691 rank 26 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 30.5% rank 23 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 64.3% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 19 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 15.0% rank 30 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.9% rank 19 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.5% rank 17 4. Number of rural minority students: 20,453 rank 27 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 11.8% rank 19 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.5% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 37 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.2% rank 36 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.3% rank 45 3. Rural median household income: $55,226 rank 24 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 12.9% rank 40 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 39.1% rank 30 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.3% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 41 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,274 rank 31 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $13.76 rank 37 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):912 rank 41 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.61 rank 34 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $48,477 rank 9 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $48,477 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 41 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 249.47 rank 43 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 228.01 rank 40 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 293.63 rank 40 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 271.35 rank 35 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 249.47 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Kentucky** **Priority ranking: 11**
Narrative	Just under half of all schools in Kentucky are rural; only six states serve a higher percentage of rural students. Not very diverse in terms of race or language, the state has very high rates of students qualifying for special education services and those who changed residences in the previous 12 months. Kentucky's schools and districts are relatively large, and transportation costs are high relative to instructional spending. Spending on students and teacher salaries are in the bottom third of the nation. Educational outcomes are mixed with math performance below average and reading performance above national averages. No state has a higher adult unemployment rate, and only two states have lower median household incomes or lower percentages of students eligible for Title I.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 9 Notable/ Important/ Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 47.9% rank 18 2. Percent small rural districts: 6.3% rank 35 3. Percent rural students: 41.1% rank 7 4. Number of rural students: 276,653 rank 15 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 46.3% rank 5 Graph: Percent rural students: 41.1% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 30 Fair/ Serious/ Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 6.5% rank 45 2. Percent rural ELL students: 1.1% rank 33 3. Percent rural IEP students: 16.1% rank 8 4. Number of rural minority students: 18,070 rank 30 5. Percent rural mobility: 12.3% rank 17 Graph: Percent rural IEP students: 16.1% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 2 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 78.0% rank 1 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.9% rank 13 3. Rural median household income: $42,106 rank 3 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 26.3% rank 3 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 58.9% rank 6 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 78.0% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 11 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,222 rank 14 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.06 rank 10 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):9,113 rank 13 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $2.67 rank 44 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $55,717 rank 19 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures:$9.06 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 23 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.35 rank 19 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 224.48 rank 29 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 282.64 rank 17 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 271.40 rank 36 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 282.64 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Louisiana** **Priority ranking: 12**
Narrative	Louisiana's rural students make up a fairly small proportion (21.6%) of the state's public school enrollment. Only five states serve a higher percentage of rural students listed as minorities (41.8%). Per pupil spending on instruction is low relative to spending on transportation, a consequence of historic underinvestment, consolidation, and large enrollment sizes. Only New Mexico has higher percentages of students eligible for Title I or reduced priced lunches, and only Kentucky has a lower percentage of rural adults with high school diplomas. So, despite being a relatively small percentage of the population, rural students in Louisiana face significant challenges, evidenced in large part by poor performance on NAEP assessments.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 38 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 35.0% rank 29 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 21.6% rank 30 4. Number of rural students: 141,632 rank 25 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 23.7% rank 30 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 0.0% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 26 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 41.8% rank 6 2. Percent rural ELL students: 0.8% rank 40 3. Percent rural IEP students: 12.0% rank 38 4. Number of rural minority students: 59,218 rank 13 5. Percent rural mobility: 10.2% rank 30 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 59,218 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 7 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,010 rank 29 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.78 rank 4 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):14,108 rank 10 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.39 rank 28 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $57,455 rank 25 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.78 v. US $11.71
Gauge 4: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 5 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 233.10 rank 4 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 212.79 rank 5 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 278.68 rank 9 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 260.21 rank 10 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 233.10 v. US 242.87
Gauge 5: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 6 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 79.0% rank 2 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.7% rank 23 3. Rural median household income: $47,326 rank 10 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 27.2% rank 2 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 69.7% rank 2 Graph: Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 27.2% v. US 19.3%

State & Priority Rank	**Maine** **Priority ranking: 24**
Narrative	Maine ranks highest of all states for rural importance with more than two-thirds of its schools and more than half of its students in rural communities. No state devotes a higher percentage of state education funds to rural districts. A large percentage of rural students have special educational needs. Rural students in Maine score close to the median in NAEP math and reading in fourth and eighth grades. While Maine is in the top half of states in per pupil spending, it ranks in the bottom third for both rural salary expenditures and state revenue per local dollar. Poverty indicators place Maine near the national median, but more than two in five students qualifies for free or reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 1 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 67.5% rank 5 2. Percent small rural districts: 69.1% rank 9 3. Percent rural students: 57.2% rank 2 4. Number of rural students: 107,961 rank 30 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 59.5% rank 1 Graph: Percent rural students: 57.2% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 44 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 4.7% rank 47 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.9% rank 36 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.6% rank 11 4. Number of rural minority students: 5,033 rank 43 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.5% rank 35 Graph: Percentage of rural minority students: 4.7% v. US 26.7%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 24 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.0% rank 33 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.5% rank 25 3. Rural median household income: $50,521 rank 14 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 15.6% rank 29 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 41.9% rank 26 Graph: Rural median household income: $50,521 v. US $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 27 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,061 rank 37 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.71 rank 22 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,804 rank 31 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.89 rank 15 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $54,475 rank 16 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.89 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 27 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.78 rank 32 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 221.07 rank 17 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.22 rank 26 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 269.46 rank 31 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.78 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Maryland** **Priority ranking: 46**
Narrative	Only 8.6% of Maryland's public school students attend schools in rural districts (none of which is small by national standards). More than a quarter of those students (26.1%) are minorities. Schools and districts are second in size only to Florida. Salaries, instructional expenditures per pupil, NAEP performance and median household income are among the highest in the nation. Yet, more than a third of Maryland's rural students qualify for reduced-price lunches. These measures, coupled with the heavy dependence on local vs. state dollars, suggest the need for careful attention to matters of equity within the Educational Policy Context.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 46 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 18.9% rank 42 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 8.6% rank 43 4. Number of rural students: 73,261 rank 34 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 8.7% rank 43 6. Graph: Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 8.7% v. US 22.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 42 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 26.1% rank 19 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.2% rank 32 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 11.2% rank 42 4. Number of rural minority students: 19,124 rank 28 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 7.3% rank 46 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 11.2% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 42 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 89.4% rank 31 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.1% rank 42 3. Rural median household income: $82,652 rank 46 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 12.9% rank 40 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 35.7% rank 34 Graph: Rural median household income: $82,652 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 28 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,867 rank 42 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.51 rank 17 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 38,736 rank 2 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.96 rank 17 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $75,475 rank 46 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 38,736 v. US median 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 46 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 255.16 rank 46 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 238.13 rank 46 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.29 rank 44 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 280.71 rank 47 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 280.71 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Massachusetts** **Priority ranking: 49**
Narrative	With 4.2% of its students enrolled in rural districts and an absolute rural student enrollment of less than 34,000, Massachusetts is ranked as the least rural state. Rural student poverty is very low, but one in six rural students qualifies for special education services. Rural schools and districts are above average in size and receive less state revenue relative to local revenue than in all but five states. Educational policy is the only gauge registering above fair/notable, indicating that challenges to rural education are still present. Rural NAEP performance rivals Connecticut for highest in the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 48 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 6.5% rank 50 2. Percent small rural districts: 51.1% rank 20 3. Percent rural students: 4.2% rank 48 4. Number of rural students: 33,066 rank 44 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 3.7% rank 48 Graph: Percent rural schools: 6.5% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 45 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 8.3% rank 40 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.7% rank 42 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.8% rank 10 4. Number of rural minority students: 2,749 rank 47 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 6.2% rank 48 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.8% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 49 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 93.2% rank 49 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.1% rank 31 3. Rural median household income: $83,673 rank 48 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 8.1% rank 48 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 17.2% rank 48 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 93.2% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 34 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,212 rank 38 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.38 rank 26 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,090 rank 23 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.62 rank 6 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $73,409 rank 43 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.62 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 48 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 258.42 rank 48 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 240.08 rank 48 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math):303.73 rank 48 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 279.49 rank 45 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math):303.73 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Michigan** **Priority ranking: 33**
Narrative	Over 305,000 students attend rural schools in Michigan, one of the largest absolute rural student enrollments in the nation but just one in five of all its public school students. More than four in ten rural students live in poverty and no state has a higher rural adult unemployment rate. Total rural instructional expenditures are below the national median, but expenditures on instructional salaries are relatively high. Rural school and district size is near the national median, the state's contribution to equalizing local revenue capacity is more substantial than most states, and pupil transportation costs are low relative to instructional spending. Rural NAEP performance is slightly below the national average.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 33 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 30.5% rank 33 2. Percent small rural districts: 31.2% rank 31 3. Percent rural students: 21.0% rank 31 4. Number of rural students: 305,313 rank 11 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 19.7% rank 36 Graph: Number of rural students: 305,313 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 36 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 10.3% rank 35 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.0% rank 35 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 13.1% rank 29 4. Number of rural minority students: 31,499 rank 20 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.8% rank 32 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 31,499 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 17 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.8% rank 29 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 10.0% rank 1 3. Rural median household income: $52,905 rank 18 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 18.9% rank 21 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 44.8% rank 25 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 10.0% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 39 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,560 rank 19 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $12.78 rank 33 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,081 rank 24 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.71 rank 37 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $63,087 rank 33 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil:$5,560 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 22 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.04 rank 17 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 225.37 rank 32 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 285.39 rank 22 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 268.59 rank 28 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.04 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Minnesota** **Priority ranking: 43**
Narrative	One-quarter of Minnesota's students attend rural schools, and a relatively high percentage of these students have special needs. The state share of revenues (relative to local) is in the top third in the nation and rural transportation expenditures are high relative to instructional spending. Educational outcomes are at or above the national averages, especially in math. The state has relatively low poverty rates; yet, more than a third of the state's students are eligible for reduced-price lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 26 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 38.0% rank 26 2. Percent small rural districts: 44.3% rank 24 3. Percent rural students: 24.5% rank 28 4. Number of rural students: 195,335 rank 21 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 24.1% rank 28 Graph: Number of rural students: 195,335 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 31 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 11.9% rank 32 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.0% rank 24 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.6% rank 16 4. Number of rural minority students: 23,176 rank 25 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.0% rank 40 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.6% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 40 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.9% rank 40 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.6% rank 36 3. Rural median household income: $59,853 rank 34 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 13.0% rank 39 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 35.6% rank 36 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.9% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 44 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,255 rank 30 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.65 rank 21 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,689 rank 33 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$2.48 rank 42 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $63,115 rank 34 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.65 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 38 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 247.25 rank 38 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 223.20 rank 24 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 295.94 rank 42 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 271.62 rank 37 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 223.20 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Mississippi** **Priority ranking: 1**
Narrative	The highest priority state according to our ranking system, Mississippi is near the top on all five gauges. More than half of all schools are rural. Only Maine and Vermont serve a higher percentage of rural students or have a higher percentage of state education funds going to rural districts. Rural enrollments are characterized by high rates of minority and low-wealth students. The educational policy context does little to help, with relatively large schools and districts, the nation's seventh lowest teacher salaries, and the fifth lowest instructional spending level. Results reflect that context with rural schools performing poorly on NAEP and posting the nation's lowest eighth grade math score.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 6 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 51.5% rank 14 2. Percent small rural districts: 5.7% rank 36 3. Percent rural students: 56.5% rank 3 4. Number of rural students: 277,329 rank 14 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 56.7% rank 3 Graph: Percent rural students: 56.5% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 16 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 41.1% rank 8 2. Percent rural ELL students: 1.1% rank 33 3. Percent rural IEP students: 13.3% rank 28 4. Number of rural minority students: 113,908 rank 6 5. Percent rural mobility: 10.9% rank 25 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 113,908 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 1 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 79.2% rank 4 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.5% rank 8 3. Rural median household income: $40,558 rank 2 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 25.9% rank 4 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 65.5% rank 3 Graph: Rural median household income: $40,558 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 4 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,600 rank 5 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.94 rank 31 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):11,987 rank 12 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.56 rank 32 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $47,643 rank 7 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil:$4,600 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 3 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 233.14 rank 5 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 213.29 rank 6 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 268.81 rank 1 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 254.37 rank 3 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 268.81 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Missouri** **Priority ranking: 15**
Narrative	Over a quarter million students in Missouri attend rural schools in relatively small districts. These districts show low percentages of minority and English Language Learner students but high mobility rates with one in ten students changing primary residences in the 12 months preceding data collection. Missouri is in the bottom third of states for instructional expenditures per pupil, receives relatively little from the state to equalize local revenue capacities, and has low teacher salaries. Educational outcomes for rural students are close to average. Poverty is a challenge for Missouri's rural communities, given low median household income and the fact that one in five of Missouri's rural students is eligible for Title I funds.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 15 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 46.4% rank 20 2. Percent small rural districts: 60.7% rank 16 3. Percent rural students: 29.2% rank 19 4. Number of rural students: 261,736 rank 18 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 33.4% rank 19 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 60.7% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 35 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 6.9% rank 43 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.9% rank 36 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 13.4% rank 27 4. Number of rural minority students: 18,045 rank 31 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.2% rank 12 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 13.2% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 16 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 84.3% rank 14 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.7% rank 23 3. Rural median household income: $47,329 rank 11 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 20.4% rank 19 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 45.3% rank 23 Graph: Rural median household income: $47,329 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 8 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,307 rank 16 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.61 rank 28 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,406 rank 38 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.65 rank 7 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $47,677 rank 8 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.65 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 20 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 243.56 rank 25 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 220.76 rank 16 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 283.62 rank 19 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 268.75 rank 29 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 220.76 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Montana** **Priority ranking: 24**
Narrative	Montana has the highest percentage of rural schools and small rural districts among all of the state in the US. A third of the state's students attend rural schools. Rural student populations are highly mobile and a large percentage of them are English language learners. Montana's rural schools and districts are the smallest in the nation. Teacher salaries are low, consistent with bordering states. One in five students is eligible for Title I funding and the median household income is below the national median.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 6 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 75.3% rank 1 2. Percent small rural districts: 96.1% rank 1 3. Percent rural students: 34.5% rank 15 4. Number of rural students: 48,798 rank 41 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 41.2% rank 12 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 96.1% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 23 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 22.9% rank 22 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 3.8% rank 16 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 12.4% rank 33 4. Number of rural minority students: 11,157 rank 36 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.2% rank 12 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 3.8% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 21 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.2% rank 36 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.3% rank 29 3. Rural median household income: $49,274 rank 13 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 20.7% rank 17 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 45.1% rank 24 Graph: Rural median household income: $49,274 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 38 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,238 rank 39 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $10.64 rank 20 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):52 rank 49 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.26 rank 26 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $51,101 rank 11 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $51,101 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 35 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.37 rank 21 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 224.29 rank 27 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 289.50 rank 34 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 273.71 rank 42 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 241.37 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**Nebraska** **Priority ranking: 36**
Narrative	Over half (55.0%) of Nebraska's public schools are located in rural districts; five of eight rural school (84.9%) districts are "small." A high percentage of rural students qualify for special education services. Instructional salary expenditures are low, and the state contributes to rural school funding at a lower rate ($0.41 per local dollar) than any state except Rhode Island. No state has a lower adult unemployment rate; yet, one-third of state's rural students qualify for reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 20 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 55.0% rank 8 2. Percent small rural districts: 84.9% rank 4 3. Percent rural students: 25.3% rank 27 4. Number of rural students: 75,499 rank 33 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 23.9% rank 29 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 84.9% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 31 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 11.6% rank 33 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.6% rank 28 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.8% rank 14 4. Number of rural minority students: 8,767 rank 38 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 11.1% rank 24 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 8,767 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 38 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.4% rank 43 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 3.1% rank 49 3. Rural median household income: $54,076 rank 22 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 14.5% rank 34 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 36.6% rank 33 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 3.1% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 40 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 6. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,690 rank 40 7. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $17.89 rank 47 8. Median organizational scale (x 100): 370 rank 45 9. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.41 rank 2 10. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $52,047 rank 13 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.41 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 32 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 243.73 rank 26 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.30 rank 33 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 287.92 rank 25 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 270.25 rank 33 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 270.25 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Nevada** **Priority ranking: 22**
Narrative	With most if its residents living in urbanized areas, Nevada is one of the nation's least rural states. The rural student population is diverse, with a third of students identifying as minorities and a relatively high percentage of English Language Learner students and students with special needs. Nevada has the nation's highest rate of rural mobility with more than one in five students changing primary residences in the year preceding data collection. The policy context is problematic, with large rural schools and districts, high transportation costs, and meager state fiscal support. Outcomes show below average reading performance and only nine states have a lower performance on eighth grade math. High adult unemployment rates and an accompanying high median household income suggest a struggling rural middle class. Almost half of rural students are eligible for reduced priced lunches.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 45 Notable / Important/ Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 28.7% rank 36 2. Percent small rural districts: 42.9% rank 25 3. Percent rural students: 3.9% rank 49 4. Number of rural students: 16,890 rank 48 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 7.8% rank 45 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 42.9% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 10 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 32.7% rank 14 2. Percent rural ELL students: 6.3% rank 6 3. Percent rural IEP students: 14.8% rank 14 4. Number of rural minority students: 5,522 rank 41 5. Percent rural mobility: 21.0% rank1 Graph: Percent rural mobility: 21.0% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 29 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.0% rank 33 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.8% rank 15 3. Rural median household income: $71,237 rank 45 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 18.4% rank 23 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 47.9% rank 18 Graph: Rural median household income: $71,237 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 17 Notable/ Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,942 rank 27 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.50 rank 14 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):13,599 rank 11 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.15 rank 23 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $64,551 rank 37 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 13,599 v. US 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 15 Fair / Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.76 rank 31 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 220.24 rank 15 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 279.42 rank 10 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 265.30 rank 20 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 279.42 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**New Hampshire** **Priority ranking: 44**
Narrative	New Hampshire's 66,000 rural students comprise one of the most homogenous rural student populations in the nation. Less than one in 20 students self-identifies as non-White and only about one in 250 qualifies for English Language Learner services. Only five states have a lower mobility rate among rural households with students. Rural districts pay teachers well and the instructional spending per student is high, but districts receive only $0.60 from the state for each local dollar raised. Educational outcomes are strong in both math and reading and the rural adult population in New Hampshire, on average, is experiencing low unemployment and high incomes.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 15 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 53.0% rank 13 2. Percent small rural districts: 66.4% rank 12 3. Percent rural students: 34.5% rank 15 4. Number of rural students: 66,838 rank 36 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 38.1% rank 16 Graph: Percent rural schools: 53.0% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 46 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 4.6% rank 48 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.4% rank 46 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.9% rank 9 4. Number of rural minority students: 3,105 rank 46 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 7.6% rank 45 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.9% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 48 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.5% rank 45 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.9% rank 43 3. Rural median household income: $68,722 rank 42 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 8.3% rank 47 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 22.3% rank 45 Graph: Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 8.3% v. US 19.3%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 35 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $7,723 rank 41 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.32 rank 25 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 1,809 rank 30 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.60 rank 4 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $64,895 rank 38 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.60 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 44 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 253.34 rank 44 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 232.32 rank 43 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.49 rank 46 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 277.01 rank 44 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.49 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**New Jersey** **Priority ranking: 45**
Narrative	One in 12 New Jersey students enrolled in a rural district. The state's absolute rural student population has increased by about 7% since our previous report two years ago. Only 6.6% of households with rural students have changed residences in the past year and less than 1% of rural students in the state are English language learners. Instructional spending on rural students and teachers is high, but the transportation expenditures relative to instructional costs are higher than all but four other states. New Jersey's rural students score very high on standardized math and reading tests. Most of the state's rural adult population has a high school diploma or better, and the state boasts a rural median household income of over $93,000, higher than any other state in the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 44 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 10.6% rank 48 2. Percent small rural districts: 41.7% rank 28 3. Percent rural students: 8.5% rank 44 4. Number of rural students: 119,350 rank 28 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 8.0% rank 44 Graph: Number of rural students: 119,350 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 31 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 23.5% rank 21 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.7% rank 42 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% rank 5 4. Number of rural minority students: 28,025 rank 22 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 6.6% rank 47 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 45 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.7% rank 47 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.3% rank 18 3. Rural median household income: $93,032 rank 50 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 8.4% rank 46 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 19.4% rank 46 Graph: Rural median household income: $93,032 v. US $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 28 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $8,949 rank 45 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.85 rank 5 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 2,950 rank 26 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.60 rank 4 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $74,100 rank 44 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.60 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 47 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 255.38 rank 47 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 239.84 rank 47 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 296.38 rank 45 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 280.49 rank 46 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 255.38 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**New Mexico** **Priority ranking: 14**
Narrative	Although New Mexico is not a very rural state according to our importance gauge, its rural student population is nuanced by extreme diversity and poverty. New Mexico enrolls a higher percentage of rural minority students than any state in the country and almost one in four rural students is an English Language Learner. Over 80% of the students in rural districts are eligible for free or reduced priced meal plans. By comparison, Louisiana has the second highest percentage of student poverty in the US at less than 70%. State revenue exceeds local revenue by almost a 5:1 ratio for rural districts, indicating a substantial effort at equalizing resources. Only Vermont districts receive a higher state proportion. On average, NAEP performance by New Mexico's rural student population is the lowest in the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 30 Notable/ Important / Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 41.5% rank 23 2. Percent small rural districts: 70.4.% rank 8 3. Percent rural students: 20.1% rank 32 4. Number of rural students: 66,518 rank 37 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 21.2% rank 34 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 70.4% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 6 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 82.5% rank 1 2. Percent rural ELL students: 23.4% rank 1 3. Percent rural IEP students: 13.1% rank 29 4. Number of rural minority students: 54,873 rank 14 5. Percent rural mobility: 10.8% rank 26 Graph: Percent rural ELL students: 23.4% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 4 Notable / Important / Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.4% rank 8 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.8% rank 15 3. Rural median household income: $46,811 rank 8 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 34.9% rank 1 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 81.8% rank 1 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 81.8% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 45 Notable / Important/ Very Important/ Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,980 rank 28 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.74 rank 29 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,436 rank 36 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $4.72 rank 48 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $56,378 rank 23 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $56,378 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 1 Fair / Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 231.38 rank 2 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 209.61 rank 2 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 273.43 rank 4 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 253.09 rank 1 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 253.09 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**New York** **Priority ranking: 40**
Narrative	Despite having the largest urban area in the nation, the state of New York still enrolls more than 325,000 students in rural districts. New York's rural student population is relatively homogenous; only one in 10 students identifies as non-White and fewer than one in 100 are English Language Learners. On average, New York spends more per rural student ($11,000) and rural teacher ($88,000) than any other state in the nation. Rural NAEP performance among fourth grade students is relatively low, but is well above the national median in both math and reading by eighth grade. Overall, the socioeconomic challenges facing rural New York students and adults are less severe than those facing their rural counterparts across the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 36 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 17.5% rank 44 2. Percent small rural districts: 31.9% rank 30 3. Percent rural students: 12.2% rank 39 4. Number of rural students: 326,558 rank 8 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 23.2% rank 31 Graph: Number of rural students: 326,558 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 34 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 10.3% rank 35 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.9% rank 36 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.2% rank 13 4. Number of rural minority students: 33,769 rank 18 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.1% rank 37 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 15.2% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 34 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.6% rank 27 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.3% rank 29 3. Rural median household income: $58,207 rank 32 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 14.3% rank 35 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 33.2% rank 41 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 33.2% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 42 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $11,061 rank 49 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.11 rank 12 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,608 rank 21 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.22 rank 25 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $88,049 rank 49 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.11 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 25 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 237.53 rank 10 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 221.92 rank 20 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.68 rank 31 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 273.62 rank 41 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 237.53 v. US 242.87

State & Priority Rank	**North Carolina** **Priority ranking: 4**
Narrative	North Carolina enrolls over 700,000 students in rural school districts, and nearly 300,000 of those rural students self-identify as non-White. Instructional expenditures on students and on teacher salaries are below the national averages, but transportation absorbs a relatively low proportion of the district budgets. Rural students' performance on NAEP math assessments hovers near the national median; reading performance is significantly lower, perhaps due in part to the high percentage of English Language Learner students in the state's rural districts. With 8.6% of rural adults unemployed and a median household income well under $50,000, adults and students alike are encountering grave socioeconomic difficulties throughout the state.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 5 Notable/ Important/ Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 49.2% rank 16 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 49.2% rank 4 4. Number of rural students: 712,529 rank 2 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 51.3% rank 4 Graph: Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 51.3% v. US 22.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 7 Fair/ Serious/ Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 40.6% rank 9 2. Percent rural ELL students: 6.1% rank 8 3. Percent rural IEP students: 12.6% rank 32 4. Number of rural minority students: 289,641 rank 2 5. Percent rural mobility: 11.6% rank21 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 289,641 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 8 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 82.1% rank 11 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.6% rank 7 3. Rural median household income: $47,248 rank 9 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 23.7% rank 8 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 53.1% rank 14 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.6% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 20 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,209 rank 13 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $15.75 rank 43 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):38,157 rank 3 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.61 rank 34 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $55,721 rank 20 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 38,157 v. US 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 16 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 243.48 rank 24 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 219.71 rank 14 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 286.21 rank 23 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.88 rank 16 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 219.71 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**North Dakota** **Priority ranking: 28**
Narrative	North Dakota is a state of extremes. It ranks eighth in terms of the size and scope of its rural education system, but ranks below the national average in terms of diversity and socioeconomic challenges. Rural students perform above the average for educational outcomes. Almost all of the state's 34,000 rural students attend school in a district that is smaller than the national median. Of these rural students, one in seven identifies as non-White, one in 12 has moved residences in the past year, and one in 40 qualifies for English Language Learner services. Although expenditures per rural student exceed the national average, teacher salaries in rural districts are lower than in every state except Arkansas and Florida. The unemployment rate among adults in rural areas is the lowest in the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 8 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 71.8% rank 4 2. Percent small rural districts: 94.4% rank 2 3. Percent rural students: 36.6% rank 12 4. Number of rural students: 34,473 rank 43 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 41.3% rank 10 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 94.4% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 39 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 14.8% rank 31 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.4% rank 21 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 13.9% rank 24 4. Number of rural minority students: 5,108 rank 42 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 8.8% rank 41 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 8.8% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 33 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.2% rank 24 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 2.9% rank 50 3. Rural median household income: $53,650 rank 19 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 15.7% rank 28 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 35.5% rank 37 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 2.9% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 21 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,449 rank 32 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.89 rank 8 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):201 rank 47 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.20 rank 24 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $44,033 rank 3 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $44,033 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 33 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 243.79 rank 27 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 224.92 rank 31 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 290.00 rank 35 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 267.63 rank 25 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 290.00 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Ohio** **Priority ranking: 29**
Narrative	Over one in four Ohio students is enrolled in a rural school district. The absolute rural student population is higher than in any state except Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia. There are over 33,000 minority students enrolled in Ohio's rural school districts, but this comprises only 7.5% of the rural students in the state. Rural districts generate nearly the same in local revenue as they receive from the state. NAEP performance among rural students is quite strong in both math and reading. Ohio ranks near the average in terms of socioeconomic challenges facing its rural students and adults.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 24 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 31.7% rank 32 2. Percent small rural districts: 7.6% rank 34 3. Percent rural students: 27.3% rank 23 4. Number of rural students: 451,617 rank 4 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 25.5% rank 26 Graph: Number of rural students: 451,617 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 38 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 7.5% rank 42 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.9% rank 36 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 13.7% rank 25 4. Number of rural minority students: 33,705 rank 19 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.8% rank 32 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 33,705 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 27 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 87.2% rank 22 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.2% rank 19 3. Rural median household income: $56,061 rank 26 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 16.4% rank 27 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 35.4% rank 38 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.2% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 9 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,405 rank 17 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.43 rank 13 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 4,580 rank 19 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.04 rank 19 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $60,967 rank 30 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.43 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 39 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 247.19 rank 37 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.97 rank 38 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 293.52 rank 39 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 273.10 rank 39 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 273.10 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Oklahoma** **Priority ranking: 6**
Narrative	Most of Oklahoma's 200,000-plus rural students are enrolled in school districts smaller than the national median district size. The educational policy context is favorable to rural districts in Oklahoma, but the state ranks high on the remainder of our gauges. Relative to the US, students in rural Oklahoma are highly mobile. Rural schools are poorly funded, and only two other states have higherrates of rural students with special needs. NAEP performance scores are low and six in 10 rural students are eligible for free or reduced priced meal plans. The unemployment rate is low in Oklahoma's rural areas, but so are the median household income and the percentage of adults with high school diplomas.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 4 Notable/ Important/ Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 54.3% rank 9 2. Percent small rural districts: 70.7% rank 6 3. Percent rural students: 31.8% rank 17 4. Number of rural students: 209,542 rank 19 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 35.3% rank 17 Graph: Percent rural schools: 54.3% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 4 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 39.2% rank 11 2. Percent rural ELL students: 1.9% rank 27 3. Percent rural IEP students: 16.6% rank 3 4. Number of rural minority students: 82,223 rank 11 5. Percent rural mobility: 13.8% rank 9 Graph: Percent rural IEP students: 16.6% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 14 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 85.0% rank 15 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.4% rank 38 3. Rural median household income: $47,939 rank 12 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 21.7% rank 14 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 62.3% rank 4 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 62.3% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 33 Notable / Important / Very Important/ Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,576 rank 4 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $17.41 rank 46 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 879 rank 42 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.63 rank 36 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $45,240 rank 4 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,576 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 8 Fair / Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 238.07 rank 12 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 217.80 rank 10 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 276.36 rank 6 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 259.96 rank 9 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 276.36 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Oregon** **Priority ranking: 17**
Narrative	Two-thirds of Oregon's rural school districts have student populations that are smaller than the national median for rural districts. Although a relatively low percentage of Oregon students attend school in a rural district, one out of every 14 rural students is an English language learner; only three states have a higher percentage of English Language Learners. Oregon's rural families change residences at a higher rate than those of most states, which may be a contributing factor to the relatively low NAEP performance by rural Oregon students. Almost 9% of rural adults are unemployed, and over half of the rural students qualify for government-subsidized meal plans.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 39 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 29.2% rank 35 2. Percent small rural districts: 65.3% rank 13 3. Percent rural students: 11.0% rank 40 4. Number of rural students: 61,395 rank 38 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 13.3% rank 39 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 65.3% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 12 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 25.0% rank 20 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 7.4% rank 4 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.1% rank 20 4. Number of rural minority students: 15,378 rank 33 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.0% rank 14 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 7.4% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 13 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.6% rank 27 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.8% rank 6 3. Rural median household income: $53,974 rank 20 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 21.6% rank 15 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 53.8% rank 12 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.8% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 30 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,567 rank 20 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.86 rank 6 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,434 rank 37 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.55 rank 31 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $61,153 rank 31 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.86 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 10 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math):233.53 rank 6 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 212.15 rank 4 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 280.88 rank 15 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 262.82 rank 13 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 212.15 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Pennsylvania** **Priority ranking: 34**
Narrative	Pennsylvania enrolls more than 300,000 students in rural districts. Very few of these students are English language learners, but one in six receives a specialized education plan. Rural districts spend one dollar on pupil transportation for every $8.50 spent on instruction (the nation's third highest transportation burden), a financial drain compounded by the relatively small revenue provided by the state. Pennsylvania's rural students score well above national averages on both math and reading assessments, and a smaller proportion is eligible for free or reduced priced meal plans. Rural adults in Pennsylvania rank below the national average in diploma rate and median household income but also experience a lower unemployment rate.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 34 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 28.2% rank 37 2. Percent small rural districts: 5.1% rank 37 3. Percent rural students: 18.8% rank 34 4. Number of rural students: 314,507 rank 9 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 24.5% rank 27 Graph: Number of rural students: 314,507 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 37 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 8.5% rank 39 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.6% rank 45 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.7% rank 2 4. Number of rural minority students: 26,833 rank 23 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 7.9% rank 44 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.7% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 31 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 86.8% rank 21 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.9% rank 33 3. Rural median household income: $55,196 rank 23 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 15.4% rank 30 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 33.4% rank 39 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 86.8% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 11 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,939 rank 36 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.50 rank 3 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 5,242 rank 17 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.80 rank 12 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $62,739 rank 32 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $8.50 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 40 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 248.33 rank 39 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 228.09 rank 41 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 292.28 rank 37 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 273.25 rank 40 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 228.09 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Rhode Island** **Priority ranking: 47**
Narrative	With 5.1% of its students enrolled in rural districts and an absolute rural student enrollment of less than 7,000, Rhode Island is among the least rural states. Rural student poverty is very low, but one in six rural students qualifies for special education services. Rural schools bear substantial transportation expenses and receive only $0.30 in state revenue for each local dollar, less than any other state in the US. Rural NAEP performance at the fourth grade level is among the best in the nation, although performance at the eighth grade level slips closer to the national average.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 49 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 10.2% rank 49 2. Percent small rural districts: 42.9% rank 25 3. Percent rural students: 5.1% rank 47 4. Number of rural students: 6,593 rank 49 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 3.3% rank 49 Graph: Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 3.3% v. US 22.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 47 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 4.6% rank 48 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.3% rank 47 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.6% rank 3 4. Number of rural minority students: 304 rank 49 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 4.1% rank 50 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.6% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 46 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.5% rank 45 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 6.5% rank 25 3. Rural median household income: $82,708 rank 47 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 8.7% rank 45 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 17.4% rank 47 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.5% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 22 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $8,395 rank 44 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.09 rank 11 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,944 rank 20 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.30 rank 1 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $66,782 rank 39 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.30 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 42 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 253.69 rank 45 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 236.94 rank 45 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 293.23 rank 38 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 271.16 rank 34 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 236.94 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**South Carolina** **Priority ranking: 3**
Narrative	South Carolina ranks as the third highest priority state in terms of the need for policymakers' attention to rural education, behind only Alabama and Mississippi. The high priority ranking stems mostly from the diversity of the state's student population and from the severe socioeconomic challenges facing families in rural areas. Of every 100 students in South Carolina, 40 attend school in a rural district, and 16 of those identify as minority students. Students in the state's rural schools performed among the lowest third of states in the US in math and fared even worse in reading. South Carolina adults in rural areas face the second highest unemployment rate in the nation, with almost one in 10 unemployed.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 14 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 47.8% rank19 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 40.6% rank 8 4. Number of rural students: 290,347 rank 12 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 42.2% rank 9 Graph: Number of rural students: 290,347 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 8 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 40.2% rank 10 2. Percent rural ELL students: 4.2% rank 13 3. Percent rural IEP students: 14.2% rank 19 4. Number of rural minority students: 116,735 rank 5 5. Percent rural mobility: 10.7% rank 27 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 116,735 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 3 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.5% rank 9 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.7% rank 2 3. Rural median household income: $45,098 rank 6 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 25.0% rank 5 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 56.0% rank 9 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 9.7% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 17 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,274 rank 15 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $15.66 rank 42 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 22,809 rank 6 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.10 rank 22 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $57,804 rank 27 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 22,809 v. US 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 11 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 237.82 rank 11 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 213.90 rank 7 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 281.21 rank 16 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 258.35 rank 6 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 258.35 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**South Dakota** **Priority ranking: 16**
Narrative	Despite an overall priority ranking outside the top quartile, South Dakota ranks as the third most rural state as measured by our importance gauge. Three in four schools are rural and only Montana has a higher percentage of small rural districts. South Dakota's rural schools and districts are among the nation's smallest and have a relatively high percentage of English Language Learners. Teacher salaries are the fourth lowest in the nation and districts face a significant dependence on local dollars over state dollars. Fourth grade students in rural districts performed relatively poorly on recent NAEP reading and math assessments; however, eighth grade students did considerably better than rural students nationwide. At 4.5%, the unemployment rate among rural adults is one of the lowest in the country.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 3 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 75.1% rank 2 2. Percent small rural districts: 78.9% rank 5 3. Percent rural students: 41.2% rank 6 4. Number of rural students: 51,781 rank 39 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 44.9% rank 6 Graph: Percent rural schools: 75.1% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 29 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 20.7% rank 25 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 3.8% rank 16 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.1% rank 20 4. Number of rural minority students: 10,715 rank 37 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 10.2% rank 30 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 3.8% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 25 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.3% rank 25 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.3% rank 45 3. Rural median household income: $52,478 rank 17 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 21.1% rank 16 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 40.7% rank 28 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.3% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 25 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,778 rank 23 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $12.98 rank 35 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 190 rank 48 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.67 rank 9 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $45,240 rank 4 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $45,240 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 14 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 238.67 rank 13 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 217.67 rank 9 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.55 rank 29 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 266.91 rank 22 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 217.67 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Tennessee** **Priority ranking: 6**
Narrative	Only four states have more students enrolled in rural school districts than Tennessee. Rural Tennessee districts are similar to the rest of the nation's rural districts in percentages of minority students, English language learners, and students whose families have recently moved. However, instructional salaries in the state are extremely low, as are per-pupil instructional expenditures. Tennessee adults in rural areas suffer from high unemployment, low educational attainment levels, and low household incomes relative to their counterparts around the US.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 10 Notable / Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 41.9% rank 22 2. Percent small rural districts: 4.8% rank 38 3. Percent rural students: 39.8% rank 9 4. Number of rural students: 393,211 rank 5 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 44.6% rank 7 Graph: Number of rural students: 393,211 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 26 Fair/ Serious / Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 15.1% rank 29 2. Percent rural ELL students: 1.6% rank 28 3. Percent rural IEP students: 12.0% rank 38 4. Number of rural minority students: 59,437 rank 12 5. Percent rural mobility: 11.7% rank 20 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 59,437 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 10 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.3% rank 7 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 8.2% rank 10 3. Rural median household income: $45,576 rank 7 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 22.5% rank 12 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 53.0% rank 15 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 81.3% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 9 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,743 rank 6 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $15.23 rank 40 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 16,349 rank 9 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $1.71 rank 37 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $47,560 rank 6 Graph: Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $47,560 v. US $57,791
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 8 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 235.90 rank 8 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 219.13 rank 12 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 275.66 rank 5 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 262.21 rank 12 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 275.66 v. US 286.01

State & Priority Rank	**Texas** **Priority ranking: 21**
Narrative	With nearly 900,000 rural students, and growing at a rate of 30,000 students per year in recent years, Texas is poised to become the first state with over one million students in rural school districts. Almost half of these students identify as a minority, and one in 14 is an English language learner. Rural schools and districts are slightly larger than the national median; yet, transportation costs relative to instructional costs are the lowest in the continental US. The percentage of rural adults in Texas with a high school diploma is slightly less than the national rural average, but the unemployment rate (5.7%) is almost a full percentage point below the national average of 6.6%.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 25 Notable/ Important / Very Important/ Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 32.6% rank 31 2. Percent small rural districts: 50.2% rank 21 3. Percent rural students: 18.6% rank 35 4. Number of rural students: 894,086 rank 1 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 20.8% rank 35 Graph: Number of rural students: 894,086 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 5 Fair/ Serious/ Critical/ Urgent 1. Percent rural minority students: 44.9% rank 5 2. Percent rural ELL students: 7.3% rank 5 3. Percent rural IEP students: 9.3% rank 46 4. Number of rural minority students: 401,314 rank 1 5. Percent rural mobility: 13.9% rank7 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 401,314 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 23 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 84.1% rank 13 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.7% rank 35 3. Rural median household income: $59,931 rank 35 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 18.9% rank 21 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 46.7% rank 21 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 84.1% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 25 Notable/ Important/ Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,454 rank 18 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $18.17 rank 48 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 3,290 rank 22 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.81 rank 13 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $55,323 rank 18 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar: $0.81 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 34 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 246.77 rank 36 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 223.23 rank 25 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 294.30 rank 41 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 265.20 rank 19 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 265.20 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Utah** **Priority ranking: 32**
Narrative	Spending on teaching and learning for the approximately 32,000 students enrolled in Utah's rural school districts is the third lowest in the nation, with only Arizona and Idaho reporting lower instructional expenditures per pupil. Rural fourth graders score relatively well on NAEP reading and math assessments, but fall below the national average by eighth grade. The socioeconomic outlook for the average rural adult in Utah is brighter than for rural adults in most other states, although almost half of rural students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch plans based on family income.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 47 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 24.1% rank 39 2. Percent small rural districts: 23.5% rank 32 3. Percent rural students: 5.8% rank 45 4. Number of rural students: 31,851 rank 45 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 7.1% rank 46 Graph: Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 7.1% v. US 22.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 26 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 15.7% rank 28 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 4.9% rank 12 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 14.1% rank 20 4. Number of rural minority students: 5,008 rank 44 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 11.3% rank 23 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 4.9% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 36 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.4% rank 43 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.6% rank 44 3. Rural median household income: $62,881 rank 38 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 17.1% rank 26 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches:47.5% rank 20 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 4.6% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 14 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,552 rank 3 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.96 rank 32 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 6,376 rank 16 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.42 rank 29 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $58,977 rank 29 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $4,552 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 23 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.35 rank 29 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.35 rank 34 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 284.85 rank 20 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 264.77 rank 18 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 264.77 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Vermont** **Priority ranking: 41**
Narrative	With almost six in every ten Vermont students attending school in a rural district, only Maine is more rural as measured by our importance gauge. Rural Vermont districts are well-funded, small, and mostly White. Only one in 12 households with school-aged children has changed primary residences over the past year. Median household income in rural Vermont surpasses the national median by less than $500, but the population, on average, fares much better than rural adults around the nation on other socioeconomic indicators.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 2 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 72.5% rank 3 2. Percent small rural districts: 91.8% rank 3 3. Percent rural students: 57.5% rank 1 4. Number of rural students: 51,062 rank 40 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 57.7% rank 2 Graph: Percent rural students: 57.5% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 49 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 4.8% rank 46 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.0% rank 48 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 0.2% rank 48 4. Number of rural minority students: 2,476 rank 48 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 8.6% rank 42 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 0.2% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 41 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.0% rank 41 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.2% rank 40 3. Rural median household income: $56,479 rank 28 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 13.4% rank 38 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 33.4% rank 39 Graph: Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 33.4% v. US 46.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 48 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $8,048 rank 43 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $16.13 rank 44 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):331 rank 46 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$10.41 rank 49 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $64,439 rank 35 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar:$10.41 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: N/A Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): N/A 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): N/A 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): N/A 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): N/A Graph: N/A

State & Priority Rank	**Virginia** **Priority ranking: 20**
Narrative	Virginia is home to more than 350,000 rural students, 26.2% of whom self-identify as non-White. Instructional expenditures per pupil are on par with the national average, but rural districts in Virginia spend a disproportionately high amount on transportation. Rural fourth grade students in Virginia score above the national average on both English and math assessments, but lag behind the nation's rural population in both subjects by the time they reach eighth grade. Although Virginia has one of the least educated rural adult populations, it boasts one of the lower unemployment rates.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 23 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 35.8% rank 28 2. Percent small rural districts: 1.3% rank 42 3. Percent rural students: 28.8% rank 20 4. Number of rural students: 356,649 rank 6 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 32.6% rank 20 Graph: Number of rural students: 356,649 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 19 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 26.2% rank 18 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 2.2% rank 22 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 12.2% rank 35 4. Number of rural minority students: 93,602 rank 9 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 10.5% rank 28 Graph: Number of rural minority students: 93,602 v. US median 23,176
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 28 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 82.5% rank 12 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.8% rank 34 3. Rural median household income: $55,910 rank 25 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 14.7% rank 33 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 39.8% rank 29 Graph: Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 82.5% v. US 85.4%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 14 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,827 rank 25 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $9.89 rank 15 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 19,362 rank 8 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.09 rank 21 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $68,499 rank 40 Graph: Median organizational scale: 19,362 v. US MEDIAN 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 26 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 243.83 rank 28 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 227.84 rank 39 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 285.03 rank 21 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.12 rank 15 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 263.12 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Washington** **Priority ranking: 31**
Narrative	Only one in ten Washington students attends school in a rural district, with the majority of these districts having fewer students than the national median. Though already high in recent years, Washington's percentage of English language learners in rural areas has swollen to third in the country behind only New Mexico and Alaska. Competitive teacher salaries and strong state funding position Washington as one of the most stable states in terms of rural educational policy. The median household income in rural Washington exceeds the national median by over $5,000, but unemployment rates in rural areas are also high.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 40 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 26.4% rank 38 2. Percent small rural districts: 59.0% rank 18 3. Percent rural students: 10.1% rank 42 4. Number of rural students: 105,104 rank 31 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 11.2% rank 41 Graph: Percent small rural districts: 59.0% v. US 49.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 14 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 29.0% rank 16 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 8.0% rank 3 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 12.4% rank 33 4. Number of rural minority students: 30,464 rank 21 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 11.6% rank 21 Graph: Percentage of rural ELL students: 8.0% v. US 3.1%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 22 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 88.3% rank 25 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.6% rank 17 3. Rural median household income: $61,730 rank 37 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 18.4% rank 23 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 47.7% rank 19 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.6% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 46 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $5,874 rank 26 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.40 rank 27 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):1,907 rank 29 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$2.81 rank 45 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $70,870 rank 42 Graph: State revenue to schools per local dollar:$2.81 v. US $1.17
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 21 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math):242.72 rank 23 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 219.54 rank 13 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 291.27 rank 36 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 266.95 rank 23 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 219.54 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**West Virginia** **Priority ranking: 13**
Narrative	Decades of consolidation have left West Virginia with no small rural districts and the highest transportation burden of any state in the nation. The state has few minority students or English language learners attending rural schools, but nearly one in six rural students are identified as having special needs. Only rural New Mexico has lower average NAEP performance on reading and math. The median household income among rural adults is the lowest in the country; yet, the unemployment rate is just over the national average.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 21 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 53.8% rank 11 2. Percent small rural districts: 0.0% rank 43 3. Percent rural students: 39.3% rank 11 4. Number of rural students: 110,892 rank 29 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 41.0% rank 13 Graph: Percent rural students: 39.3% v. US 20.4%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 41 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 6.8% rank 44 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 0.7% rank 42 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% rank 5 4. Number of rural minority students: 7,546 rank 40 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 9.5% rank 35 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 16.3% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 8 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 79.8% rank 5 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 7.1% rank 20 3. Rural median household income: $40,240 rank 1 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 23.2% rank 10 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 53.7% rank 13 Graph: Rural median household income: $40,240 v. US median $55,986
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 13 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,936 rank 35 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $7.40 rank 1 3. Median organizational scale (x 100):7,307 rank 14 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.85 rank 40 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $52,603 rank 14 Graph: Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $7.40 v. US $11.71
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 2 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 231.38 rank 2 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 210.46 rank 3 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 273.10 rank 3 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 253.33 rank 2 Graph: Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 253.33 v. US 267.13

State & Priority Rank	**Wisconsin** **Priority ranking: 42**
Narrative	The absolute and proportional sizes of the rural student population in Wisconsin are near the US median. These students consistently perform above their rural counterparts in other states on all of the NAEP assessments included in this report. Rural households are relatively stable, with only one in 12 rural students having changed residence in the 12 months prior to data collection. Wisconsin ranks just within the top third of the nation's rural areas on most of the indicators related to educational policy and socioeconomic challenges.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 29 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 39.4% rank 24 2. Percent small rural districts: 41.9% rank 27 3. Percent rural students: 22.6% rank 29 4. Number of rural students: 195,566 rank 20 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 22.1% rank 32 Graph: Number of rural students: 195,566 v. US median 141,632
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 40 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students:9.6% rank 37 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 1.3% rank 31 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 13.7% rank 25 4. Number of rural minority students: 18,685 rank 29 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 8.4% rank 43 Graph: Percentage of rural mobility: 8.4% v. US 11.6%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 34 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 90.0% rank 33 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 5.6% rank 36 3. Rural median household income: $57,818 rank 31 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible:15.4% rank 30 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches:35.7% rank 34 Graph: Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible:15.4% v. US 19.3%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 37 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $6,717 rank 34 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $12.81 rank 34 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 1,682 rank 34 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$0.85. rank 34 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $57,300 rank 24 Graph: Median organizational scale (x 100): 1,682 v. US median 3,035
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 37 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math):245.38 rank 34 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.53 rank 35 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 288.65 rank 30 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 269.12 rank 30 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 226.53 v. US 223.22

State & Priority Rank	**Wyoming** **Priority ranking: 39**
Narrative	Although the absolute number of rural students in Wyoming is small relative to the national median, it has grown by over 15% in the past two years. More than one in every six rural students has an individualized education plan, the highest percentage in the nation. Wyoming schools and districts are some of the smallest in the nation, and a relatively large amount of funding is dedicated to instructional expenditures. Educational outcomes of rural students are on par with rural students nationwide, and the socioeconomic outlook for the rural adult population is relatively strong.
Gauge 1: Importance	Gauge rank: 27 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percent rural schools: 55.6% rank 7 2. Percent small rural districts: 40.0% rank 29 3. Percent rural students: 26.3% rank 25 4. Number of rural students: 23,312 rank 47 5. Percentage of state education funds to rural districts: 32.1% rank 21 Graph: Percent rural schools: 55.6% v. US 32.9%
Gauge 2: Student and Family Diversity	Gauge Rank: 15 Fair/ Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Percentage of rural minority students: 18.9% rank 26 2. Percentage of rural ELL students: 4.1% rank 15 3. Percentage of rural IEP students: 17.5% rank 1 4. Number of rural minority students: 4,404 rank 45 5. Percentage of rural mobility: 13.3% rank 11 Graph: Percentage of rural IEP students: 17.5% v. US 12.8%
Gauge 3: Socioeconomic Challenges Gauge	Gauge Rank: 44 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Percentage of rural adults with high school diploma: 91.1% rank 42 2. Rural adult unemployment rate: 3.7% rank 48 3. Rural median household income: $62,898 rank 39 4. Percentage of rural students who are Title I eligible: 13.5% rank 37 5. Percentage of rural students eligible for free or reduced lunches: 36.8% rank 32 Graph: Rural adult unemployment rate: 3.7% v. US 6.6%
Gauge 4: Educational Policy Context	Gauge Rank: 47 Notable / Important / Very Important / Crucial 1. Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $10,194 rank 47 2. Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: $11.04 rank 24 3. Median organizational scale (x 100): 870 rank 43 4. State revenue to schools per local dollar:$1.26 rank 26 5. Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE: $74,622 rank 45 Graph: Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: $10,194 v. US $5,826
Gauge 5: Educational Outcomes	Gauge Rank: 31 Fair / Serious / Critical / Urgent 1. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.84 rank 33 2. Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (reading): 224.73 rank 30 3. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (math): 286.76 rank 24 4. Rural Grade 8 NAEP performance (reading): 267.73 rank 26 Graph: Rural Grade 4 NAEP performance (math): 244.84 v. US 242.87