



Changing Federal Education Policy New Realities for Rural Schools

Ozarks Teacher Corps Winter Seminar

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Issues and Trends

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- Changing Role of Federal Education Policy
- Old and New Realities of Rural Education
- High-Poverty Rural Schools

Changing Federal Role

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- Passive Supplemental Funder
- Activist Policy-Leverage Funder

Federal Funding

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“Entitlement” Funding by Formula...

If you are eligible, then funding

To **“Conditional Entitlement”** by Formula...

If you are eligible and if you use standardized testing, then funding

And **“Discretionary Competitive Grants”**...

If you meet policy pre-conditions we set, propose changes based on research, operate at a large scale, and write a good proposal, we will provide funding based on a budget you write. Limitations apply.

Current Funding Reality

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- Smaller or larger federal role
- More or less flexibility
- Competitive Grants

Key Issues in ESEA Reauthorization

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- Formula v. Competitive
- Punitive Accountability v. Incentivizing Accountability
- One-Time v. Growth
- Overly Prescriptive v. Flexibility

Key Issues in ESEA Reauthorization

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- Assessing Special Learners
- Early Childhood Education
- Health/Wellness/Total Child
- Turnaround Models/School Improvement

Rural Education Focus

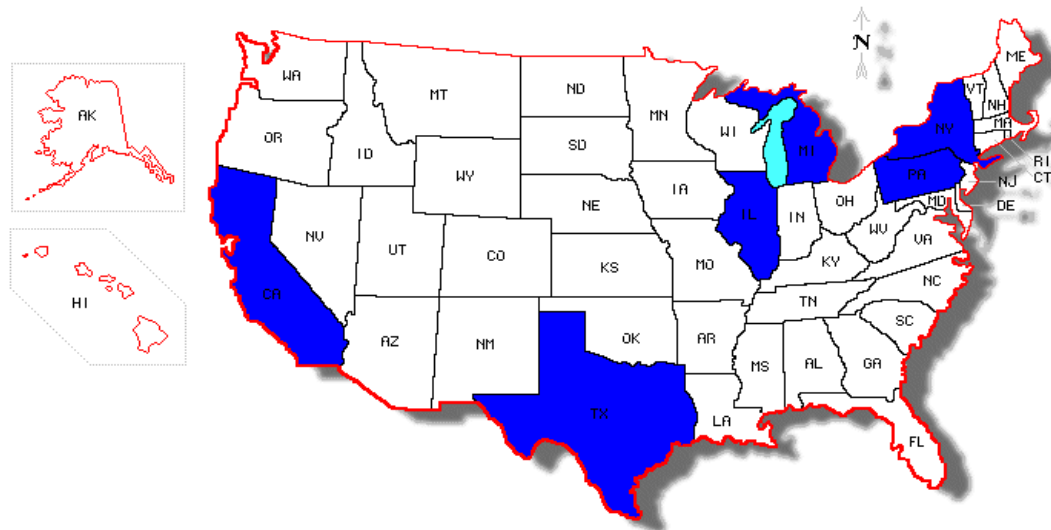
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- White House Rural Council
- Multi-agency working groups have started discussions
- Participants are appointed by their agencies, and coordinated by White House Domestic Policy Council

Large Rural Student Populations

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Some of the largest rural student populations are in populous urban states where rural people constitute a small demographic – and political -- minority



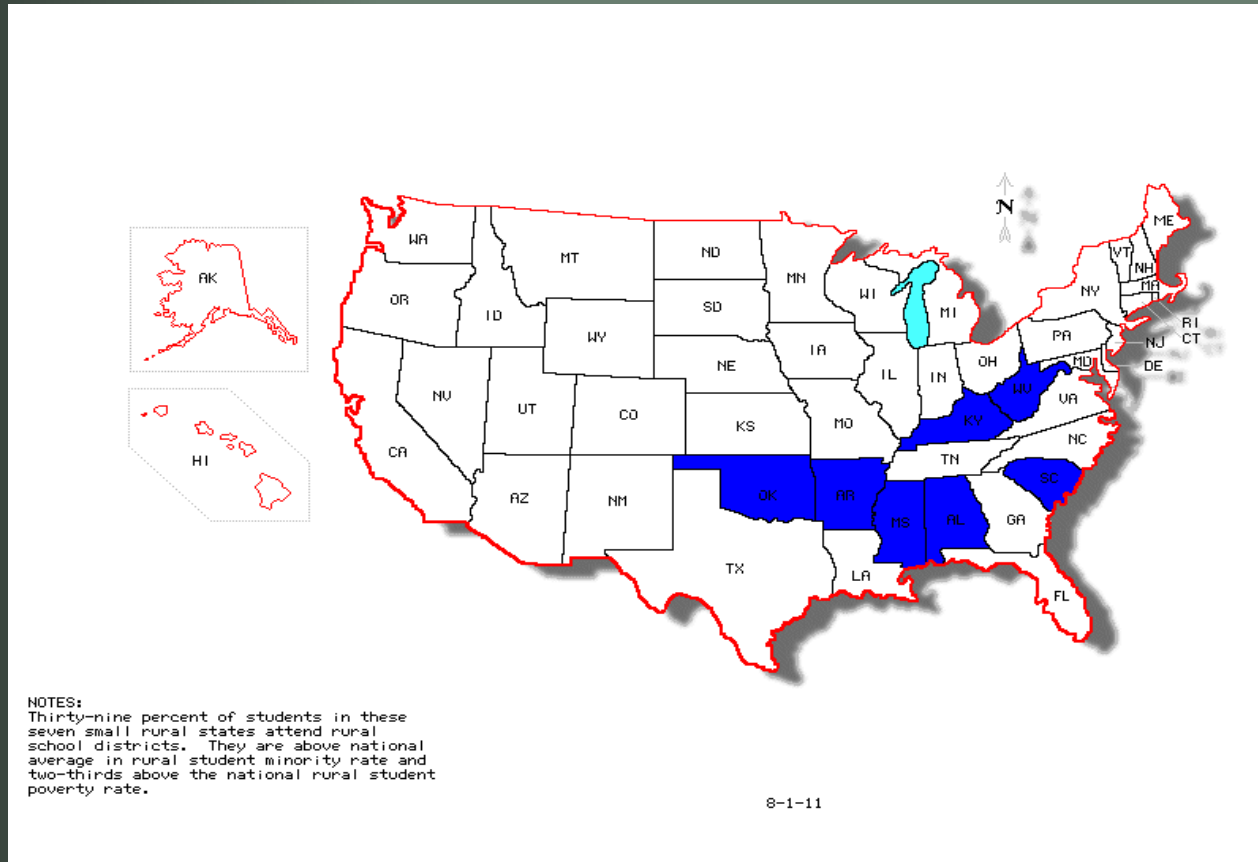
NOTES:
These six heavily urban states have 25% of enrollment in rural districts nationally, but rural students only constitute 13% of students in these states.

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Rural Disadvantaged and Minority Students

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The highest concentrations of rural disadvantaged and minority students are in small rural states where rural people are a demographic majority or a large minority

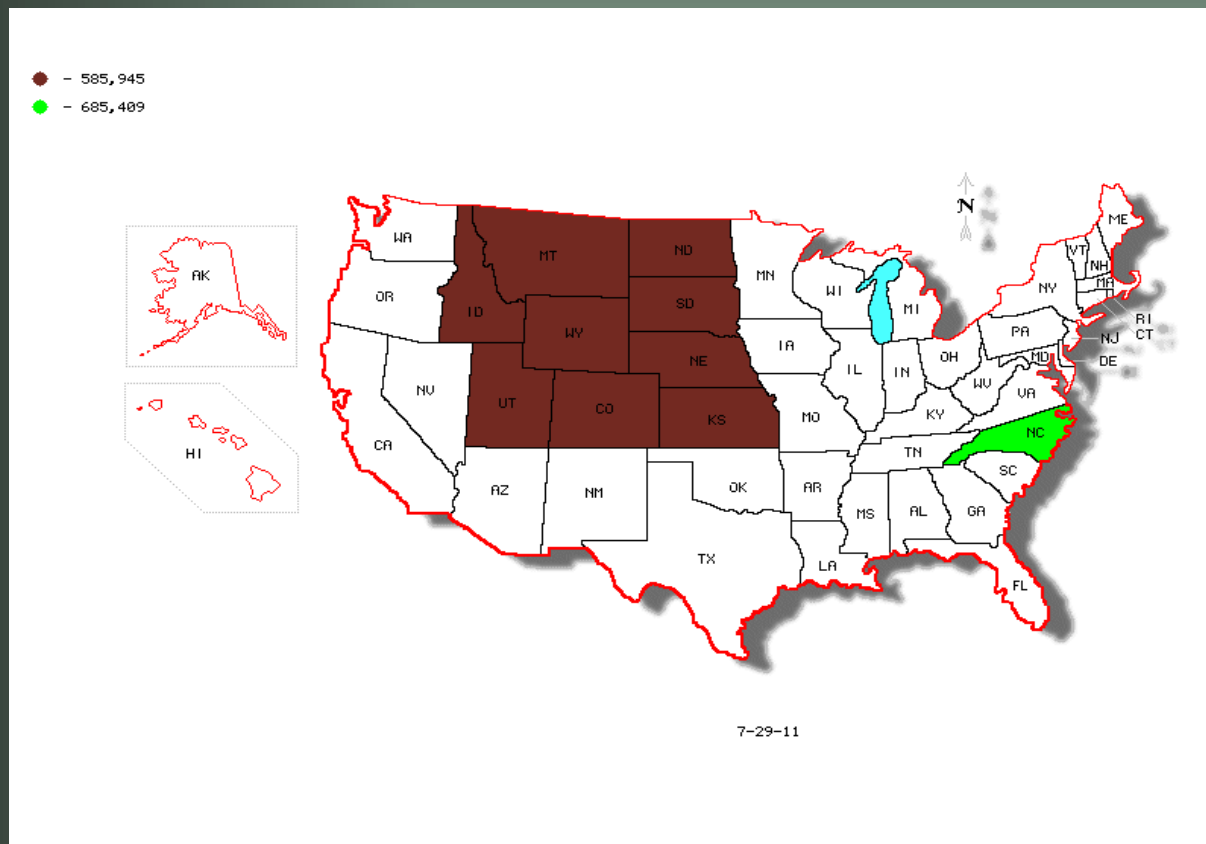


Rural is More Eastern than Western

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70 Percent of rural students go to school in states east of the Mississippi

There are more students in rural schools in North Carolina than in Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming combined...by nearly 100,000.



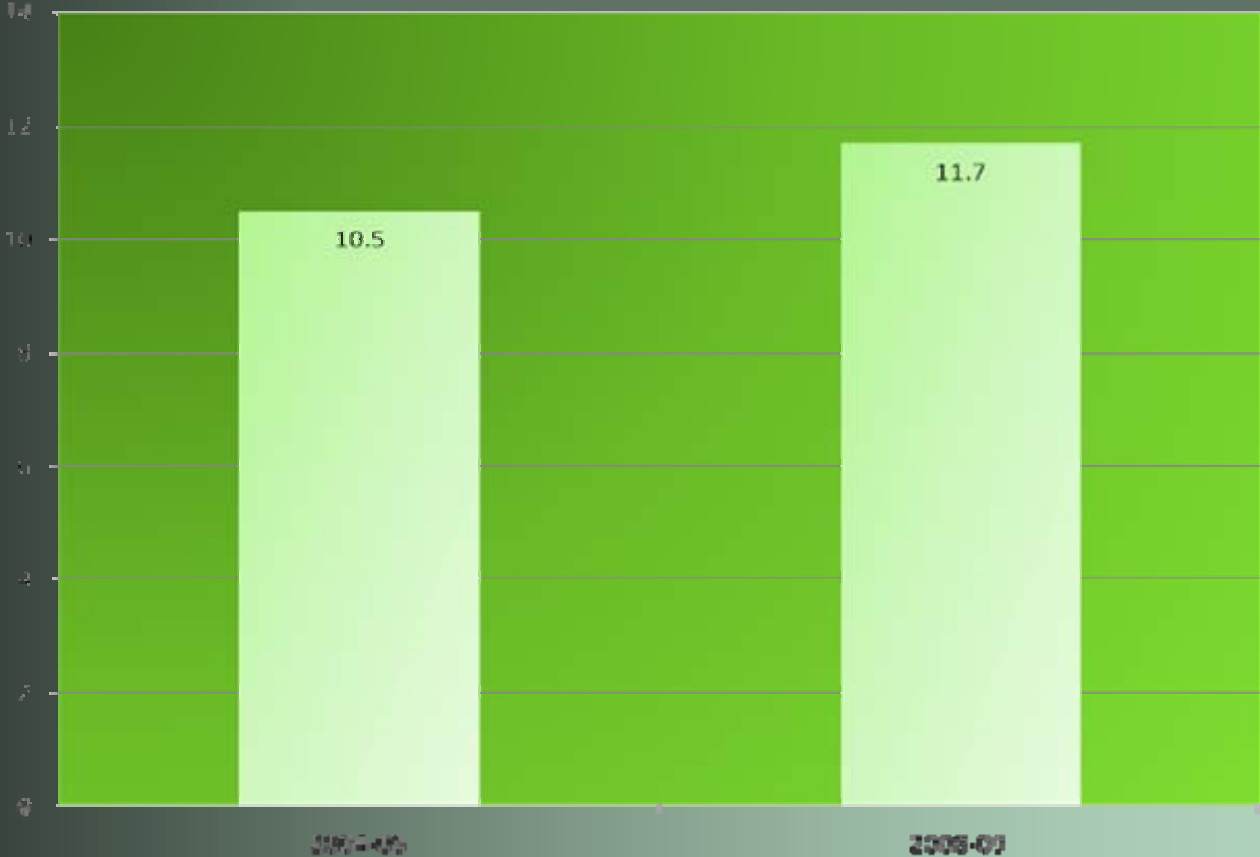
Important New Realities of Rural Education

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- Number of rural students is increasing
- Rural share of national enrollment is increasing
- Rural schools are becoming much more racially and ethnically diverse

Rural School Enrollment Growing

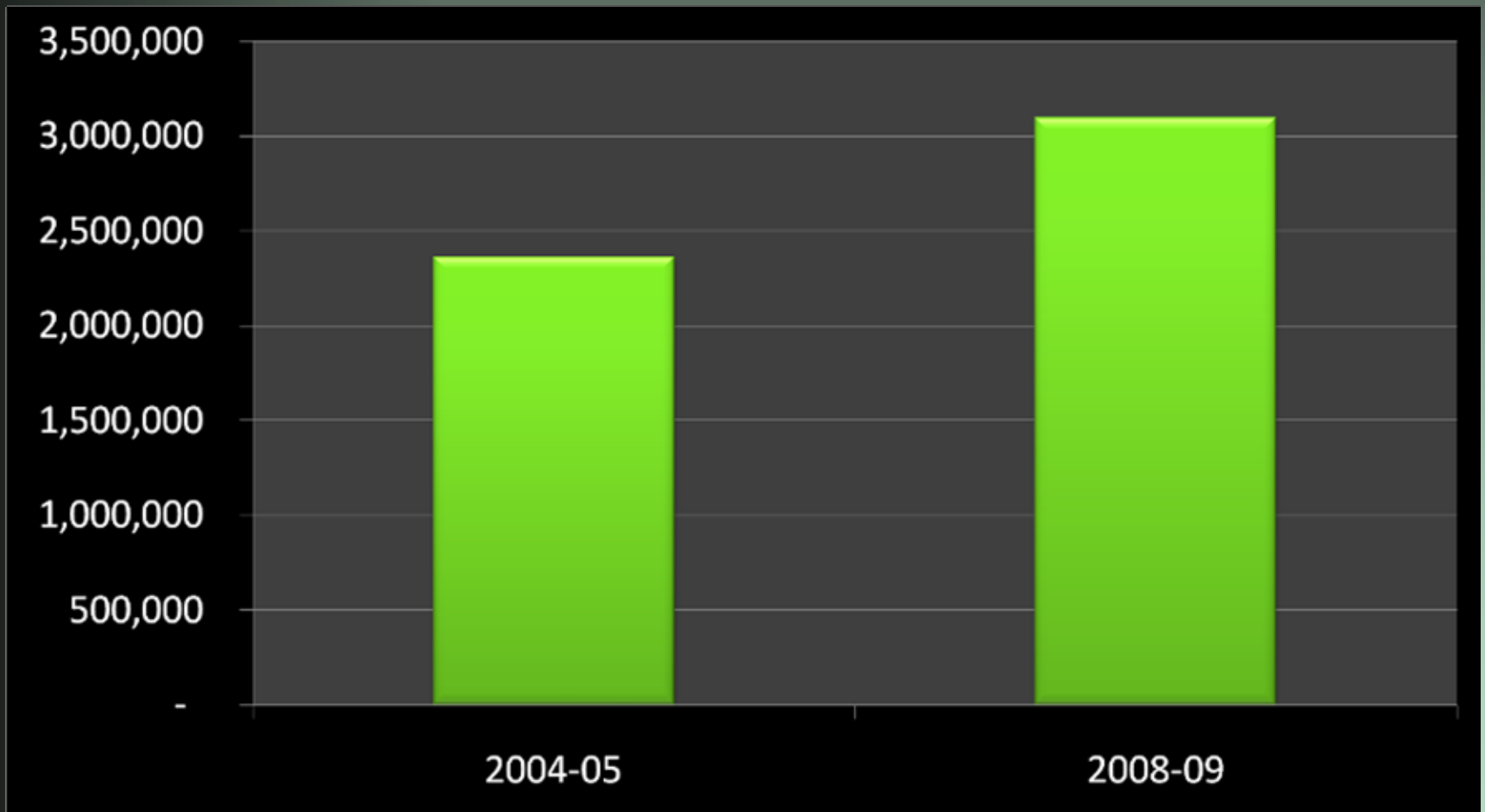
Millions of Students



Rural Enrollment Growing Fastest Among Minority Students

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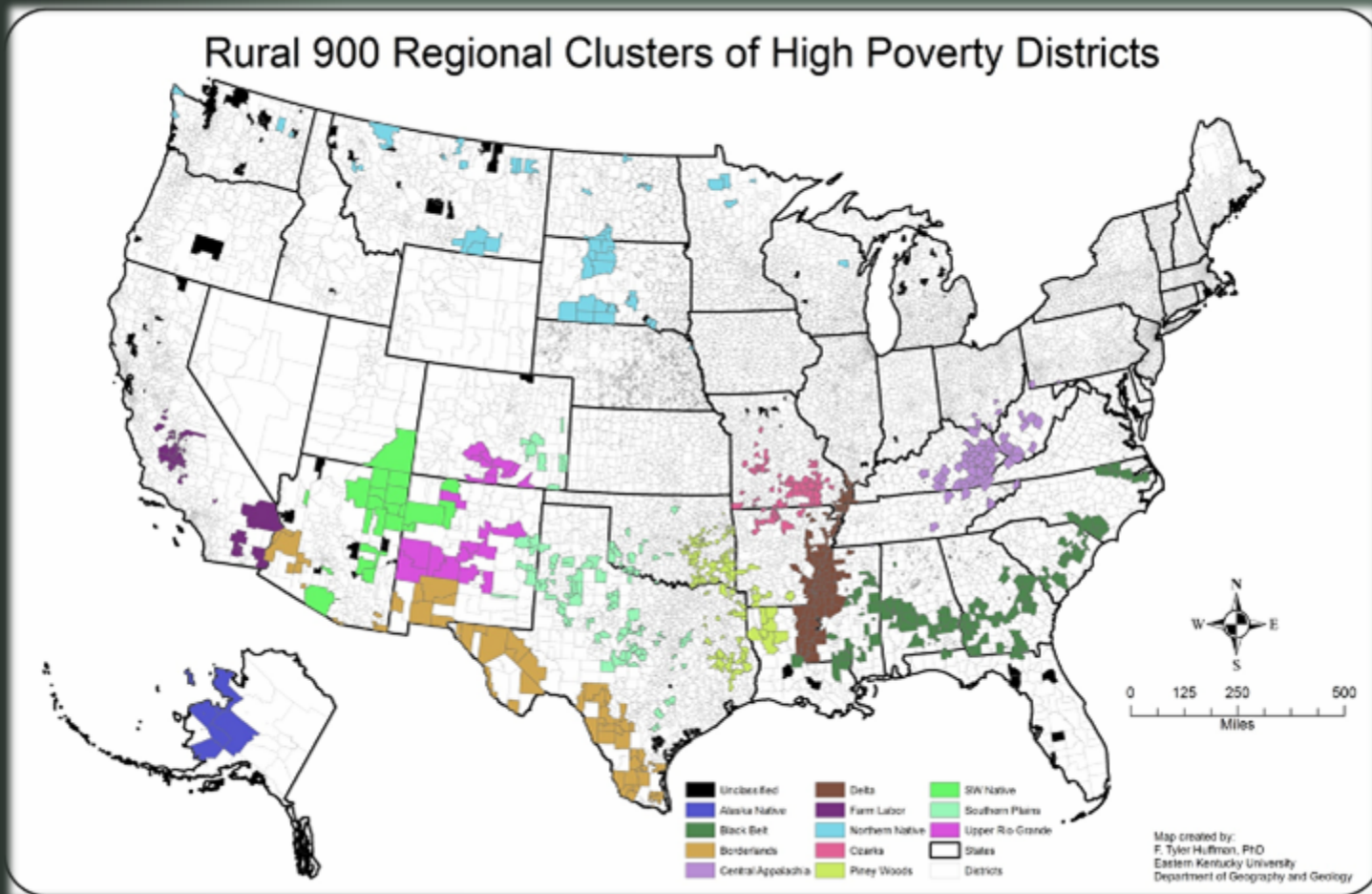
While all rural enrollment increased 11%, non-white enrollment increased 31%.



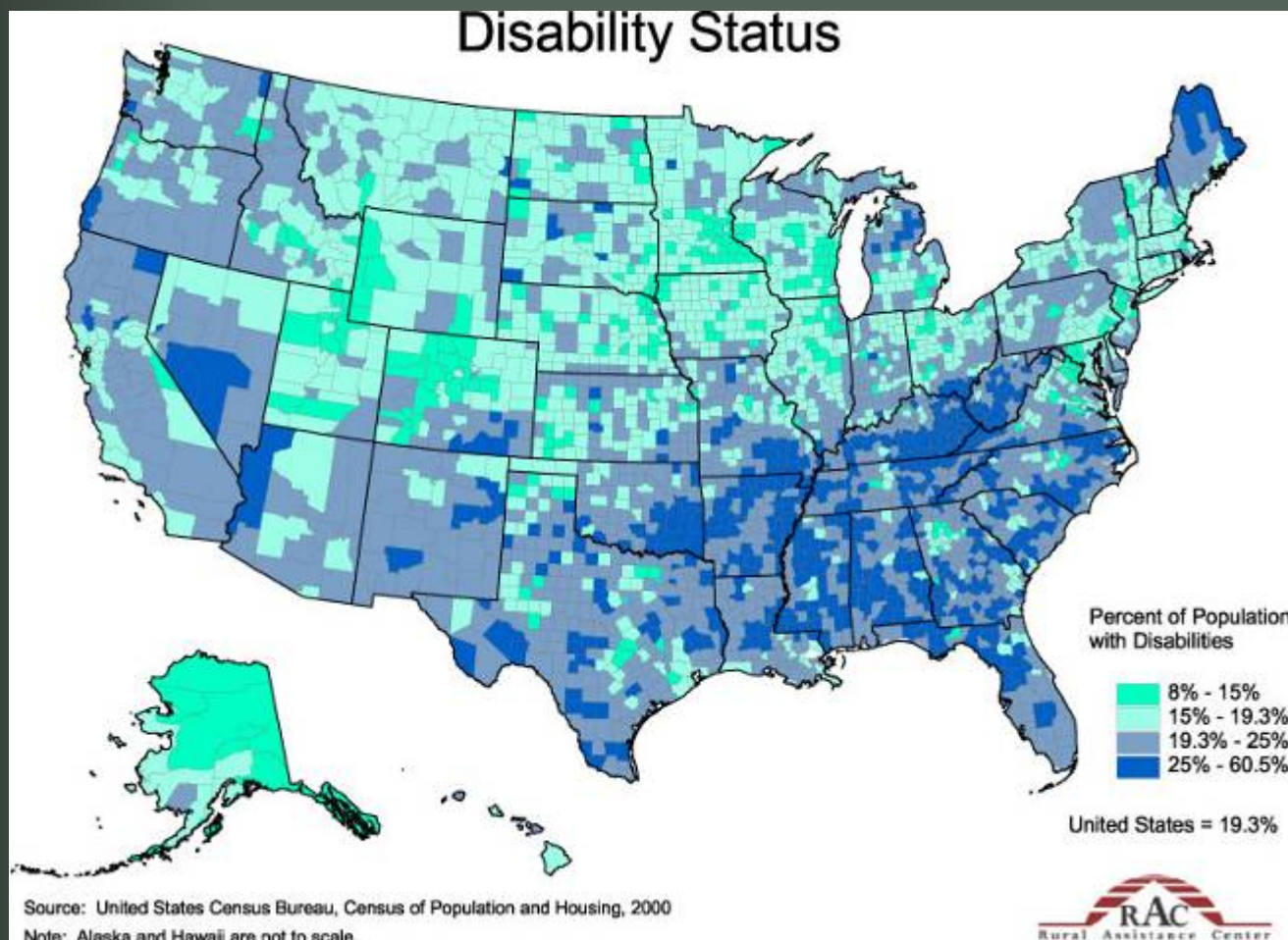
Rural Childhood Poverty is Concentrated in Distinct Regions Within and Among States

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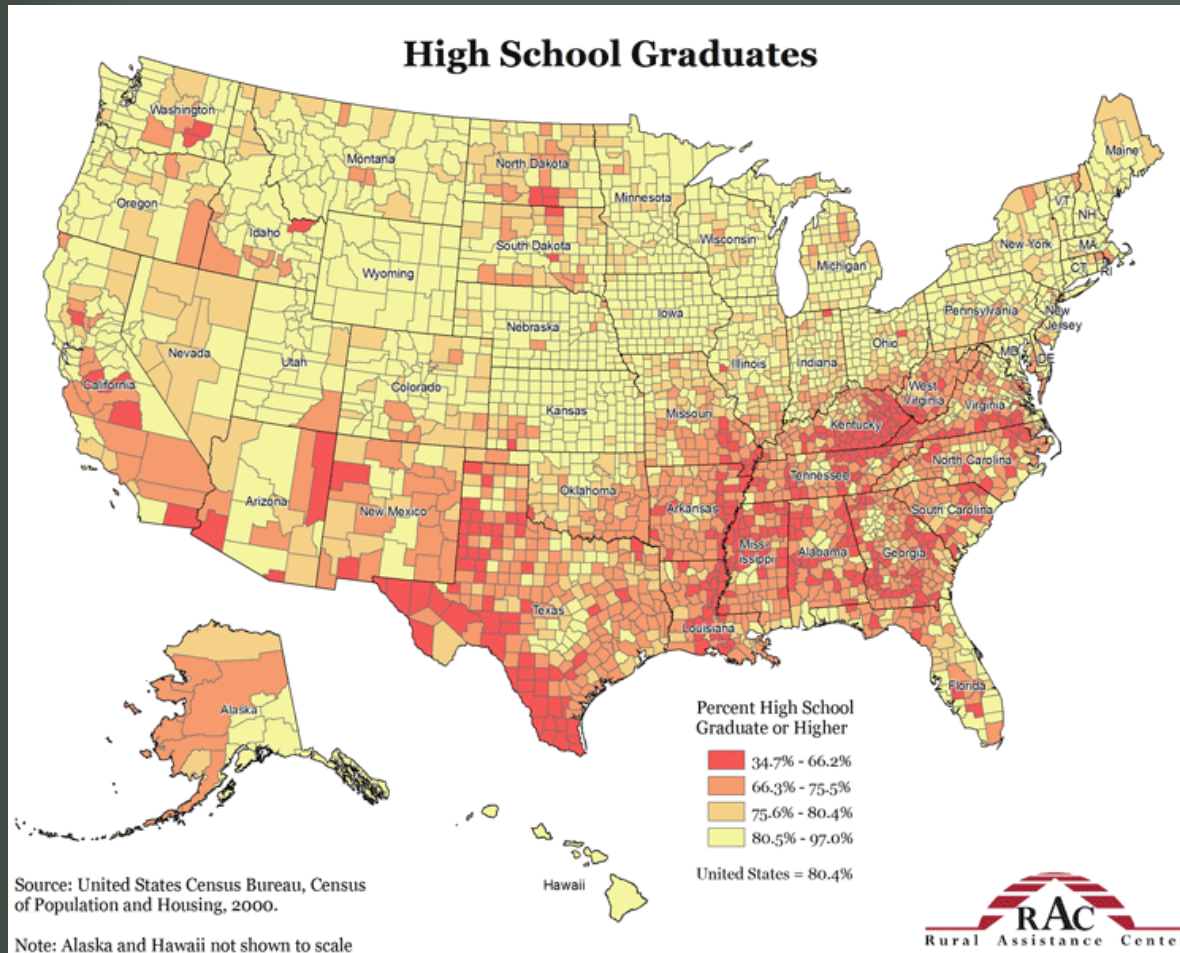
900 school districts with the highest disadvantaged student rates in locale codes 32, 33, 41, 42, and 43.



High Rates of Disability



Low Levels of Education



Rural Challenges in Shaping Education Policy

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- Concentrated rural poverty
- Small scale, high fixed costs
- Isolation
- Undiversified local economies with low-paying, low-skill jobs
- Inadequate housing
- Medically underserved areas
- Inaccessible social services
- Very little public transportation
- Minimal public facilities

Rural Challenge

Hiring and Retaining Top Quality Teachers

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- Small schools, tight budgets mean small faculties -- more course preparations are therefore required of each teacher
- More course preparations mean teachers must have and maintain multiple certifications
- Fewer nearby professional development opportunities
- Fewer aides, special services providers, and support personnel
- Teachers and leaders are professionally and personally isolated. -- often the most highly educated people in the community

High-Poverty Rural Schools

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- Getting to equity in Title I formula
- Leveling the playing field in competitive grants
- Becoming relevant in the most challenged rural places
- Finding answers through rural research and analysis

Variation in Title I Funding Rates

In...	Where the Title I eligibility rate is ...	And the number of Title I students is...	Is worth this much to the federal government:
Philadelphia, MS	41%	569	\$1,246
Queens, NY	16%	58,060	\$2,371
Rochester, NY	36%	14,769	\$2,070
Gallup-McKinley, NM	37%	6,258	\$1,320
Albuquerque, NM	17%	18,371	\$1,764
Garland, TX	16%	9,002	\$1,610
Edcouch-Elsa, TX	61%	2,998	\$1,491
Lee County, VA	33%	1,251	\$1,488
Fairfax County, VA	6%	10,034	\$1,935

Weighting Student Count

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- Not all disadvantaged children are counted equally
- “Weighting system” artificially inflates the eligible student count by counting some Title I students more than once
- Objective: Send more money per Title I student to districts with “high concentrations” of poverty

Leveling the Playing Field in Competitive Grants

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- Lack of program development staff capacity
- Common preference for large scale projects in the grant guidelines
- Weak rural education research infrastructure to support projects that are uniquely designed to address the problems of rural schools.
- Weak regional education service sector
- Digital divide

Full-Service Community School Alternative

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- Offers services that assure children are ready for school
- Addresses the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of students,
- Engages parents and families in the student's education,
- Provides after school programs serving both academic and recreational needs

Finding Answers Through Rural Research and Analysis

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Review of published journal articles on rural education 1991-2003 found:

- Only 21% (106) used comparative research design
- None used experimental design
- Of the 106 comparative research design studies, only 10 were rated high-quality, 48 medium, 48 low-quality.

American Educational Research Association 2011 Annual Conference

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- In 2,000 multi-presentation sessions, about 40 papers or posters addressed rural education.
- About one-fourth were about rural education in other countries
- 13,000 conferees, about 30 participated in the Rural Education Special Interest Group meeting.
- “There is no cachet in studying rural areas...If you are studying rural communities or rural problems you are not getting any cachet or the attention [you would get] studying other places.”
-- Mark S. Schneider, Vice-President, American Institutes of Research and former Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Put the Cachet in Rural Education Research

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Establish an Office of Rural Education Policy (S.946)
within the U.S. Department of Education to:

- Better focus rural education aspects of current programs.
- Review existing and proposed policies for relevance to and impact on rural education.
- Commission high-quality scholarly research to inform education policy makers on rural issues.

Thank you

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