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ABSTRACT

Begun in June 1984, the national study utilized questionnaires from 461 rural education researchers and practitioners to provide the first empirical data for prioritization of rural education research needs. Since conducting and supporting rural education research are clearly federal functions, the study was prepared for dissemination to federal agencies and elected officials and designed to focus on activating the research agenda and acting on its implications. Respondents rated 46 research questions and prioritized 13 themes. Nine research clusters were thus identified and rank ordered: rural school effectiveness, governance and finance, staff training needs (technology as a resource), teaching styles and incentives, field-based personnel preparation, preservice preparation, personnel recruitment and retention, school-community interaction, and rural versus non-rural factors. Rural practitioners and researchers were in agreement in prioritizing the importance of the clusters. Twelve recommendations/ implications are given that should be addressed by the federal government in support of efforts related to the prioritized clusters. Nineteen tables provide information on: ranking of questions within clusters by "importance to the field" and "personal interest"; respondents' positions, institutions, and general/special education orientation; number of respondents by federal region and general/special education orientation; detailed information about rankings; and regional differences by clusters. The rural education research questionnaire is appended. Numerous tables and the survey instrument are included. (BRR)

Establishing A National Rural Education Research Agenda

February, 1985

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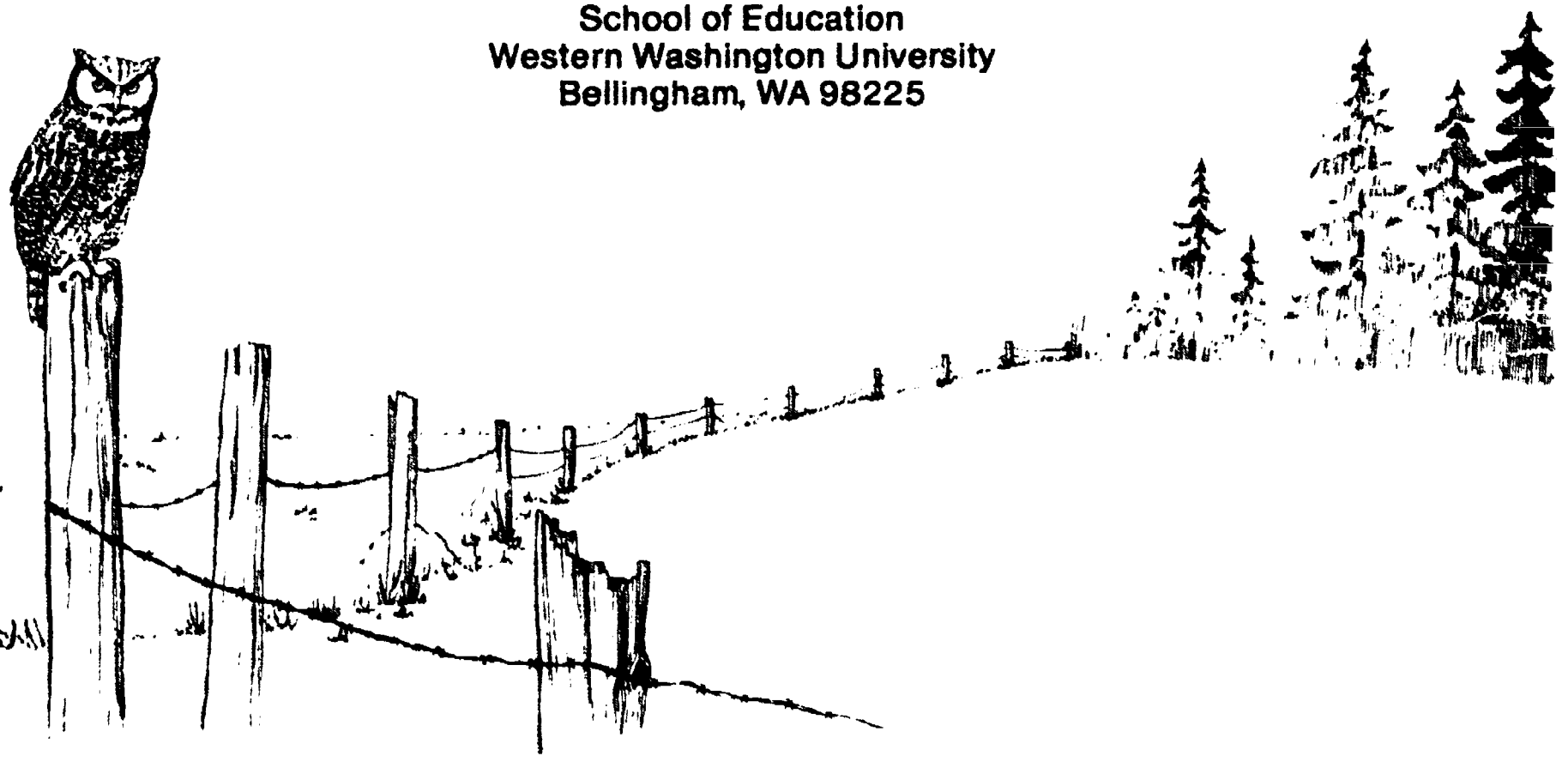

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENDA VIA EMPIRICAL DATA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesizes a national study providing the first empirical data to prioritize rural education research needs. A geographically representative national sample of 461 rural education researchers and practitioners contributed to this effort. The study involved rating 46 research questions and prioritizing 13 themes and concluded with a cluster analysis. Nine research clusters were identified and were rank ordered as listed below:

Rural School Effectiveness
Governance and Finance Issues
Staff Training Needs; Advanced Technologies as Resources
Teaching Styles and Incentives
Field-Based Personnel Preparation
Preservice Preparation (ethical issues, curriculum, methods, logistics)
Personnel Recruitment and Retention
School-Community Interaction
Rural vs. Non-rural Factors

A key strength of the entire analysis is the homogeneity of responses and prioritizations. Although personal research interests varied, as would be expected, rural practitioners and researchers across the country clearly agreed when prioritizing the importance of the clusters of research issues for the field of rural education.

Because the field now has empirical data initiating a national rural education research agenda, the Federal Government should sponsor research efforts related to the prioritized research questions. The recommendations outlined in this document are designed to focus on the Federal role in activating this research agenda and acting on the implications of the study. Each recommendation is related to the 1983 legislative mandate requiring that the Federal Government provide equitable information, services, assistance, and funding for rural schools.

The major recommendation emanating from the study is that the Federal Government facilitate coordination and collaboration of efforts so that the entire list of research clusters and questions will be addressed. Other recommendations center around fostering interagency responsibility and collaboration, initiating appropriate legislative actions requiring greater accountability at the state level, supporting collaboration between rural policy makers and implementors, sponsoring research related to the creation of equity for rural schools and improving achievement of rural minorities, coordinating relevant data collection and dissemination, sponsoring relevant national forums, issuing reports regarding progress in addressing the national rural education research agenda and ameliorating acute rural personnel

shortages, stimulating the use of advanced technologies to solve rural research problems, and funding research studies which involve profiling rural school practices that are effective in specific rural subcultures.

This study was conducted by the National Education Research Consortium, which is composed of rural researchers and practitioners representative of the United States. Through formal and informal linkage systems, research needs are identified and relevant studies are facilitated by the Consortium. (For example, expertise, data pools, and other research elements are shared, data samples are bartered, literature is reviewed, and research designs are collaboratively reviewed.)

Because the National Rural Education Research Consortium has a computerized network in place to accomplish its objectives and has clearly demonstrated its ability to conduct/facilitate relevant research, it is recommended that the Federal Government make full use of its potential in accomplishing its rural education research tasks.

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENDA VIA EMPIRICAL DATA

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education has become increasingly concerned about the effectiveness of rural schools and has committed resources to improve rural education. One aspect of the Department's efforts has been a search by its Intra-Agency Committee on Rural Education to expand the data base of rural education research and to establish a National Rural Education Research Agenda. The Intra-Agency Committee has been meeting for some time, attempting to delineate how the Federal Government can best be a resource to rural education researchers.

This report synthesizes a study providing the first empirical data to prioritize rural education research needs. A geographically representative national sample of 461 rural education researchers and practitioners contributed to this effort. This study involved rating 46 research questions and prioritising 13 themes and concluded with a cluster analysis.

One objective of the Department is to expand the data base on the condition of rural education and improve the accessibility of rural education research and demonstration information to rural practitioners. A great deal of data is available, but Department officials have described accessibility as "haphazard and uneven at best." However, much needed information is not available, and this study involved the development and prioritization of a rural education research agenda.

As indicated in Tables VI - VII, the respondents in this study are representative of rural America. Rural practitioners and researchers were the respondents and, in fact, signed their names and addresses so that they can be linked with each other for future rural research projects.

This report is designed for dissemination to the Intra-Agency Task Force on Rural Education, the Federal Interagency Committee on Education, and to the U.S. Congressional Rural Caucus and Congressional offices that have requested copies. The recommendations are designed to focus on the Federal role activating this research agenda and acting on the implications of this study. (Federal concerns were differentiated from State-level concerns for the purpose of delineating appropriate Federal roles in improving rural education. Thus, these recommendations focus on legislated Federal roles.) As stated in the Department's "Rural Education and Rural Family Education Policy for the '80's," signed by the Secretary of Education in 1983, Federal responsibilities regarding rural education research include the following:

-expanding the data base on rural education,
-providing technologies to disseminate relevant information,
-coordinating the consolidation of available research on personnel shortages and additional needs for analysis by the Secretary's Rural Education Committee,
-supporting an annual national forum,
-providing technical assistance,
-disseminating information regarding national concerns (using a variety of existing dissemination sources),
-maintaining collective relationships with major organizations that foster information sharing and input for rural education planning and program development,
-collaboration with officials in the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Labor, and other agencies related to rural education,
-collecting data which focuses on information relating to regional designations; goals of rural education and

rural family education; surveys of rural curricula; test score comparisons; tax base/student ratios; characteristics of effective rural programs and institutions and descriptions of intermediate service agency delivery systems.

-monitoring Department program regulations; eligibility and evaluation criteria; subregulatory directives; and administrative policies to ensure equity for all LEAs, regardless of size, location, or condition,

-identifying and developing special programs available for rural individuals with disabilities,

-collecting data to assist rural education in improving the achievement of minority students and children of migrant workers.

Conducting and supporting rural education research are clearly Federal functions, although the Federal government typically should not fund state-specific research. As an example, data analysis designed to address identified research needs dealing with aspects such as acute rural teacher shortages concerns all states with significant rural populations (virtually every state). Thus, the acute problems of recruiting and retaining qualified rural staff and related personnel preparation needs are legitimate Federal concerns. On the other hand, "fine tuning" of curriculum may be a clearly identified need but is not viewed in these recommendations as a Federal role. Focusing research on national concerns will be supportive of states. Other implications of the research agenda can be addressed through other vehicles (such as the National Rural Education Research Consortium).

Regarding the Federal role in demonstration projects, funded demonstration projects must be innovative, of national consequence, and tied to an adequate plan of dissemination. These recommendations were written from the point of view that "innovativeness" is a time-limited phenomenon.

The overall thrust of these recommendations is related to the legislative mandate that the Department of Education "deliver an equitable share of the information, services, assistance, and funds available from and through the Department, to rural areas" (page 1 of the Secretary of Education's August 23, 1983, report).

In 1982, the Department created the Intra-Agency Committee on Rural Education in response to Section 206 of the Department of Education Organization Act (PL 96-88). Section 206 directed the Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education to "provide a unified approach to rural education and rural family education through the coordination of programs within the Department and to work with the Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE) to coordinate related activities and programs of other Federal departments and agencies." The FICE is an interagency committee established by executive order, and the Secretary of Education was established as the liaison with this group. One of the priorities of FICE is rural education.

Methodology

The study was conducted by the National Rural Education Research Consortium. The Consortium is composed of rural researchers and practitioners representative of the United States. Through formal and informal linkage systems, research needs are identified and relevant studies are facilitated. (For example, expertise, data pools, and other research elements are shared, data samples are bartered, literature is reviewed, and research designs are collaboratively reviewed.)

The Consortium was initiated in 1982 and "piggybacks" its meetings with related national rural education-related activities. The questionnaire for this study was designed after 46 research questions/issues were delineated by a meeting of the Consortium (in conjunction with the U. S. Department of Education-sponsored National Rural Education Conference in June of 1984). This meeting involved a geographically representative body of rural practitioners and university faculty, regional resource personnel, and state education agency personnel interested in rural education research.

Thirteen themes of research interest were generated from the 1978-84 work of the National Rural Project (funded by the U. S. Department of Education) and during 1984 meetings of the Consortium. The themes varied from teacher training methodologies to addressing rural personnel attrition and shortages to local governance issues. (See questionnaire in Appendix A.)

Using these 13 themes as a framework, 46 research questions were generated during a June 1984 meeting of the Consortium. (This meeting was held in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education-sponsored National Conference on Partnerships in Rural Education.) The next logical task was to prioritize the 46 research questions to identify which areas were perceived to be of greatest importance to the field of rural education. Questionnaire designers assumed that researchers and practitioners who responded might differ in their degree of personal interest in a certain research question and how important they felt each question was to the field of rural education. Thus, the instrument was designed to force respondents to differentiate between these two areas. Each respondent was instructed to rank order the 13 themes (from highest to lowest interest/importance), using two columns. The first column reflected personal research interests and the second column noted how important respondents felt it was that research be conducted on each topic, regardless of their personal research interests.

The questionnaire then requested that respondents score each of the 46 research questions generated by the Consortium, using a five-point scale ranging from "unimportant" to "critically important." Two separate columns were designated for each

respondent to note how important it is that research be conducted on each topic (by someone). The first column clearly asked for the respondent's "personal research interest," and the second column asked the "importance of research for improving rural education."

Approximately 1,500 questionnaires were mailed to potential respondents (a geographically representative mailing list of rural educators, administrators and researchers) from October 30 to December of 1985. A total of 461 questionnaires had been received by the January cut-off date for computer analysis. (A small number of questionnaires have been received after the cut-off date and are available for review by interested parties.)

The next task involved clustering the research questions/issues so that empirical research themes could be determined. The cluster analysis technique differentiated "importance to the field" and "personal interest," and nine research clusters were determined by this computer analysis.

The 461 questionnaires were also coded according to the position of each respondent, the place of employment (institution), type of position, federal region, and whether the person's primary training and experience had been in general or special education. Analyses were then conducted to delineate significant differences in response to these categories.

A key strength of the entire analysis is the homogeneity of responses and prioritizations. Although personal research interests vary, as would be expected, respondents in this study are clearly in agreement. Analysis of variance clearly indicated that rural practitioners and researchers across the country were in agreement in prioritizing the importance of the clusters of research issues to the field of rural education.

All raw data (completed questionnaires and computer printouts) are available in the Consortium headquarters and may be reviewed by interested parties. In addition, computer tapes could be sent to the U. S. Department of Education for perusal by their personnel, upon request.

Table I below depicts the nine clusters that emerged from this empirical analysis. The means of all the questions within a cluster were gathered and a mean of these means was computed, thereby obtaining a mean score for each cluster. The clusters were then ranked according to these scores, and the main discussion of the questions is based on these clusters and how they were ranked.

Table I illustrates the mean ranking of questions within each cluster by "importance to the field" and Table IV by "personal interest." Table III depicts questions related to each cluster in "importance of research to the field" and Table V depicts questions related to each cluster regarding "personal interest" of respondents.

Table VI indicates respondents' positions, institutions, and a general or special education orientation.

Table VII depicts the number of respondents according to federal region and general or special education orientation.

Table VIII illustrates which research themes were ranked highest by all respondents, using the mean of the rankings. Mean rankings for the research themes, according to "personal interest" and according to "importance to the field," are both included in this table.

Tables IX and X give more detailed information about how the themes were ranked. They indicate the tallies of the number of persons who recorded a certain number for each theme.

General and special educators generally agreed on the importance of each theme. At least there were no significant differences between the patterns of their responses to most themes. There were six exceptions, however, and these are illustrated in Table XI.

There were significant differences between the responses of special educators and of other educators on four clusters about personal research interest and on five clusters regarding importance of research to the field. The criterion chosen for significance was $p < .05$ from analyses of variance run separately for each cluster. In these analyses, a single score for each individual which was derived from the mean of that individual's responses to all the questions in the cluster, was used. Individuals were classified as special educators or general educators, so this constituted a simple two-group analysis for each cluster, one equivalent to a t-test. If an individual did not respond to a question, that individual was omitted from the analysis resulting in a loss of five or ten percent of the 461 subjects for each cluster. Tables XII-XV illustrate these differences.

Table XVI-XIX illustrate regional differences by clusters.

RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research agenda has generated long and short-range goals for policy and practice at all levels. These center around fostering interagency responsibility and collaboration, initiating appropriate legislative actions, supporting collaboration between rural policy makers and implementors, sponsoring research related to the creation of equity for rural schools and improving achievement of rural minorities, implementing relevant data collection and dissemination, sponsoring educational forums, issuing reports regarding progress in meeting the national rural education research agenda, and ameliorating the acute personnel shortages in rural schools.

Because the field now has empirical data initiating a national rural education research agenda, the Federal Government should support research efforts related to the prioritized research clusters. Suggestions follow.

1. The enhancement of rural education should be an interagency responsibility with significant involvement of the Department of Education. Congress has recognized that rural education involves all disciplines and that past approaches have been fragmented. Standard categories of education (e.g., elementary vs. secondary), do not reflect the way that educational services are delivered in many rural settings. A holistic approach should be implemented, and relevant agencies such as the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, Commerce, and Transportation should be involved. Many of these departments have been engaged in rural activities in the past, and the Department of Education activities to improve rural education should be collaborative and utilize past efforts. (For example, the Rural Development Policy prepared by an advisory group to the Department of Agriculture should be analyzed to determine the potential for interagency coordination.)

Rural education was one priority of the FICE committee (established by executive order and discussed above) which involved multiple government agencies. Relevant activities already accomplished by FICE should be assessed for their viability as resources to this thrust. The Department's Intra-Agency and Interagency Committees should communicate and work cooperatively. Thus, it is recommended that the various offices related to rural education form a consortium or partnership to fund research and demonstration efforts that holistically address issues in rural education.

Collaborative activities, ranging from sponsoring national conferences to jointly funding research proposals or developing new combinations of interdistrict collaboration, should occur. Each government branch should adopt appropriate rural foci, and an entity such as the Department's Interagency Rural Task Force (FICE) should facilitate coordination and collaboration of efforts so that the entire list of research clusters and questions will be covered.

Within the Department of Education, authority should remain at the Secretary's level vs. splitting the aspects of the research agenda between branches. This will facilitate better communication between branches and keep any recalcitrant agency from impeding total progress. It is recommended that all agencies develop a statement of work, initiate appropriate RFPs, and commence their efforts.

2. The Department's "Rural Education Policy for the '80's" states that rural schools should receive an equitable share of the information, services, and assistance available from and through the Department of Education and its programs. Two-thirds of all schools are rural and current services and fiscal allocations are not equitable. It is clearly the responsibility of the Federal Government to address this issue and find solutions to identified problems.

   Research should be supported which focuses on determining what constitutes "equity." (Because increased funding is required to operate remotely located rural programs, "equal funding" frequently does not create "equity.") Research should also be funded to determine what would create equity (e.g., research assessing alternate tax and other structures). Thus, adequate federal resources should be made available to address the current inequities of rural school systems. These resources should include expertise, technical assistance, collaborative data gathering, information dissemination, and other Federal responsibilities outlined above as well as fiscal

support. Financial support should not be limited to funding for research RFPs, but should include funding for forums addressing the issue of equity. The Federal Government should also agree on basic issues so that Federal employees will "speak the same language" when making field presentations. (Such presentations contribute to consciousness raising as well as drafting of legislation).

Given the current limitations of Federal funding, it is obvious that funding cannot be readily made available to address every question that is part of a given research cluster. Because the study culminated in prioritisation of the research questions under each cluster, the Department could initiate action by funding a certain number of prioritized problems.

3. Because rural students across the nation typically receive resources/experiences that are inequitable to those of their non-rural peers, the Federal Government should require that each state have an entity charged with the task of improving rural education. Each state body should be requested to provide recommendations for federal legislative and other actions. The state-level recommendations should be utilized by the appropriate Inter- and Intra-Agency Committees.

4. The Federal Government should routinely and efficiently collect data so that rural vs. non-rural differences in funding and educational quality may be determined. Analysis should be feasible for even very small districts (e.g., those under 300 ADA). A meeting/forum should be held with all Federal Government agencies involved in data collection and distribution. Relevant field personnel should also be involved. It should be discerned what relevant data are currently collected by the Federal Government, and data collection processes should be systemized (e.g., data required to receive grants and contracts or funding for schools). One goal of the meeting should be to ascertain what additional data need to be collected so that the critical elements of this research agenda can be addressed.

5. Relevant data which has been collected by the Federal Government (e.g., NCES data or U.S. Census data tapes) should be assessed regarding potential relevance for rural research. Currently available data should be made accessible to rural research projects. Existing external data collection sources should be optimally used (e.g., data collected through ERIC and data collected and submitted by local and state education agencies). Particular attention should be devoted to the relevance of survey questions so that the data submitted can

become useful for efforts addressing the rural education research agenda. Information should also be sought regarding how the National Council on Education Statistics and other appropriate governmental units can assist in gathering data that can be used by researchers addressing the crucial elements in this national research agenda.

6. Options for data dissemination via advanced technologies should be fully explored (e.g., electronic networking). Research projects and processes that involve the use of advanced technologies for solving problems of rural education and for conducting research in isolated rural communities should be supported.

7. Because of the sparsity of quality data analysis/availability of data regarding appropriately serving minority populations, the Federal Government should sponsor studies to discern best practices of improving minority achievement.

8. This study clearly indicated that policy makers (e.g., superintendents) and policy implementors (e.g., principals and teachers) tended to agree on priorities for rural research. This indicates that there are excellent opportunities for collaboration between universities, public schools, and state education agencies. The Federal Government should actively support such collaboration. Collaboration in service delivery is much more essential in rural areas than in non-rural areas, and it is imperative to identify the most effective ways to deliver collaborative services (related to policy making, administration, coordination, training, etc.)

   The Federal Government should incorporate wording in the authority for grants and contracts that will bring about interdisciplinary studies and other efforts. This should include studies involving partnerships of university and field personnel.

9. The Federal Government should also support projects designed to determine effective partnerships between rural schools and established rural delivery systems (e.g., county extension agencies), rural civic organizations, and the private sector.

   Examples of this would be jointly funded projects to develop new combinations of inter-district cooperative models, studies to determine how to build stronger rural school-community-private sector partnerships, and investigations of alternate uses of personnel.

10. The Federal Government should solicit information regarding progress in addressing the ne-

tional rural education research agenda established by this study and in meeting rural personnel shortages. This information should be included in the Department's annual report to Congress which is required by law. This yearly report should relate progress in improving rural education related to an established format (i.e., rural school problems and goals of the Federal Government) so that a systematic evaluation of progress is possible. This report should include a section regarding progress in meeting this rural education research agenda and address rural personnel shortages. This information should not only be disseminated to the U.S. Congress, but to relevant professional organizations and agencies.

11. The Department of Education is required by law to sponsor an annual forum regarding rural education. The Department should sponsor national conferences and facilitate regional forums to assess progress in meeting this national rural education research agenda and facilitate sharing of reports of relevant studies. Conferences should include mechanisms for state/regional problem-solving or networking based on the "state-of-the-art" at the time of the conference.

Because the annual national conference is required in part as an accountability mechanism for the Department's Rural Education Policy Statement for the '80's, conference topics should include reports of the assessment of the usefulness of Census and other governmental data, identified best practices for rural schools including those to enhance minority student achievement, successful interagency efforts, and other topics covered above.

12. Legislation requires that data collection center upon effective school practices. Current dissemination efforts (e.g., National Diffusion Network and Joint Dissemination Review Panel), if they bracket successful practices for rural and non-rural settings, frequently erroneously assume either that an urban model can be transported to a rural setting or that one rural model will be effective in a number of rural subcultures. The Federal Government should support research studies profiling rural school practices that are effective in specific rural subcultures (e.g., socioeconomic, geographic population sparsity, and other bases). In addition, current practices also assume that a rural school will ask for information/data relevant to its subculture. An alternate model should be proposed for information dissemination. Research projects which are applied in nature and emphasize demonstrations of effective processes and dissemination of findings useful to rural practitioners should be supported.

TABLE I

RESEARCH CLUSTERS REGARDING "IMPORTANCE TO THE FIELD"

Cluster		Ranking of Means (Scale 1-5)
I.	Rural School Effectiveness	3.78
II.	Governance and Finance	3.56
III.	Staff Training Needs; Technology as a Resource	3.52
IV.	Teaching Styles and Incentives	3.50
V.	Field-Based Personnel Preparation	3.39
VI.	Preservice Preparation (ethical issues, curriculum, methods, logistics)	3.34
VII.	Personnel Recruitment and Retention	3.26
VIII.	School-Community Interaction	3.26
IX.	Rural vs. Non-Rural	3.13

TABLE II

QUESTIONS IN EACH CLUSTER (REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH TO THE FIELD)

I. Rural School Effectiveness
Cluster Mean: 3.78

Question	Mean
12	3.37
20	4.15
21	4.06
22	3.80
23	3.54

II. Governance and Finance
Cluster Mean: 3.56

Question	Mean
28	3.79
29	2.86
38	3.81
39	3.27
40	3.88
41	3.75

III. Staff Training Needs; Technology as a Resource
Cluster Mean: 3.52

Question	Mean
1	3.41
5	3.93
6	3.24
4	3.48

IV. Teaching Styles and Incentives
Cluster Mean: 3.50

Question	Mean
34	3.80
42	3.12
43	3.53
44	3.76
45	3.21

Table II
Questions in Each Cluster, cont'd

V. Field-Based Personnel Preparation
Cluster Mean: 3.39

Question	Mean
11	3.53
16	3.19
17	3.42

VI. Preservice Preparation (ethical issues, curriculum, methods, logistics)
Cluster Mean: 3.34

Question	Mean
2	3.41
3	3.11
13	3.09
14	3.04
15	3.82
18	3.59
19	3.29

VII. Personnel Recruitment and Retention
Cluster Mean: 3.26

Question	Mean
7	3.73
8	3.03
9	3.01

VIII. School-Community Interaction
Cluster Mean: 3.26

Question	Mean
10	2.93
24	3.60

Table II
Questions in Each Cluster, cont'd

IX. Rural vs. Non-Rural
Cluster Mean: 3.13

Question	Mean
25	3.31
26	2.82
27	3.17
30	3.30
31	3.29
32	2.64
33	3.14
35	2.86
36	3.19
37	3.09
46	3.67

TABLE III

QUESTIONS (IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH) RELATED TO EACH CLUSTER

Cluster I. Rural School Effectiveness (3.78)
Questions: 12. What educational procedures and curricula work are accepted in very small schools (under 300 ADA)?

20. How can we best measure the effectiveness of rural schools?

21. What makes a rural school effective? How does this differ from criteria that make non-rural schools effective?

22. What are qualitative and quantitative measures of effective school leadership in rural America? How are these different from those of non-rural settings?

23. What are characteristics of effective collaboration?

Cluster II: Governance and Finance (3.56)
Questions: 28. What are effective alternate financing systems for rural schools?

29. How do appropriate legal procedures differ for rural versus non-rural schools.?

38. What are the effects of various service delivery systems for special education?

39. What are the differences in state policies for rural and non-rural environments?

40. What impact do federal and state mandates have on rural school funding?

41. How does one determine cost-effective factors of rural service delivery? What are some of these factors?

Cluster III: Staff Training Needs; Technology as a Resource (3.52)
Questions: 1. What kinds of supervision, practicum facilities and observation strategies are cost effective in various types of rural areas (e.g., remote areas versus small clustered towns, etc.)?

5. How can rural factors such as low incidences of handicaps, transportation problems, and other elements be resolved through the use of new educational technology?

6. Since little actual in-depth psychological testing is done in rural areas, what kinds of programs and tests should be developed and available for use by rural educational staff?

4. What is the need for generalists to meet rural educational needs to serve a range of ages?

Table III
Questions(Importance of Research) Related to Each Cluster,cont'd

Cluster IV: Teaching Styles and Incentives (3.50)
Questions:
34. What are effective ways of serving rural gifted students? How does one identify gifted rural students who are culturally disadvantaged?

42. What are differences in teaching styles and effectiveness of rural teachers who come to the job from out of the state/ region?

43. What are the incentives of pay for rural teachers and administrators? Should any rural pay incentives be developed (e.g., in the very smallest districts)?

44. What are incentives for the development of innovative rural school programs?

45. How does the use of other governmental units (rather than LEA or local school districts) effect efficiency? How do they effect school direction?

Cluster V: Field-Based Personnel Preparation (3.39)
Questions:
11. How can LEAs, regional service centers, and other organizatons assist in rural practica and practica supervision?

16. When should videotape, laser discs, or other technologies be used in place of field-based experience in rural preservice preparation?

17. What is the cost effectiveness of using different techniques (given equivalent outcomes in rural preservice preparation)?

Cluster VI: Preservice Preparation (ethical issues, curriculum, methods, logistics) (3.34)
Questions:
2. How can preservice students be prepared to work with ethnic minority, bilingual, migrant, and other populations in rural areas?

3. What curricula are currently offered at different levels of personnel preparation for rural school systems including BA, MA, Ph.D.?

13. Should personnel preparation programs prepare quality graduates from less than superior students?

14. What are the differences in the length and type of training required to reform quality graduates out of less than superior students?

15. What technical and human skills and knowledge should be included in a rural training program?

Table III
Cluster VI, cont'd
Questions: 18. How can training programs balance the need to provide "state of the art" quality role models, practicum experience, etc., with the need to expose students to the realitites of rural schools?

19. How can logistical problems (e.g., travel costs, housing, etc.) of supervising rural remote preservice practica best be addressed?

Cluster VII: Personnel Recruitment and Retention (3.26)
Questions: 7. What are the best procedures to recruit and retain rural special education staff? Regular education staff?

8. What kinds of procedures used by business and other non-government and government agencies (e.g., Peace Corps) for training, recruiting, and retaining personnel could be used in rural preservice preparation?

9. What specific education roles need to be filled in distinct geographic areas? (Are certain handicapping conditions more prevalent in one area or another?

Cluster VIII: School-Community Interaction (3.26)
Questions: 10. For what roles should local rural citizens/teachers be recruited? What roles should be filled by outsiders?

24. How can we secure greater community involvement in rural school systems?

Cluster IX: Rural vs. Non-Rural (3.13)
Questions: 25. How do local school objectives and expectations differ from community and student expectations of rural areas?

26. In what ways are the concerns in #25 different from those of non-rural areas?

27. What are differences in attitudes and self-concepts or rural versus non-rural students?

30. What non-schooling influences are significant for rural schools?

31. What differences does school board composition pose for effective rural school functioning?

32. What aspects of rural teacher education should come from psychology or anthropological science?

33. What cross-cultural skills are needed to effectively function in rural schools?

35. What are differences in rural adult learning (younger and mature populations)?

Table III
Cluster IX, cont'd

Questions: 36. What differences, if any, are there in the education of students who leave and those who remain in the rural community? What type of person leaves and what type of person remains?

37. What are the effects of participation in extracurricular activities in rural communities?

46. What are impacts of local rural culture on learning and behaving?

TABLE IV

QUESTIONS IN EACH CLUSTER
(REGARDING PERSONAL RESEARCH INTEREST)

I. Rural School Effectiveness
Cluster Mean: 3.43

Question	Mean
12	2.97
15	3.50
20	3.74
21	3.70
22	3.48
23	3.19

II. Delivery of Services
Cluster Mean: 3.13

Question	Mean
4	3.12
6	2.87
38	3.40

III. Rural Preservice Practica Issues
Cluster Mean: 3.11

Question	Mean
5	3.51
11	3.25
16	2.87
17	2.91
18	3.24
19	2.86

IV. Governance and Finance
Cluster Mean: 2.96

Question	Mean
28	3.11
29	2.38
31	2.81
39	2.81
40	3.24
41	3.13
43	3.02
44	3.40
45	2.70

Table IV
Questions in Each Cluster, Cont'd

V. Preservice Preparation
Cluster Mean: 2.92

Question	Mean
1	3.01
2	2.91
3	2.83

VI. Rural vs. Non-Rural
Cluster Mean: 2.87

Question	Mean
24	3.19
25	2.91
26	2.50
27	2.99
30	2.99
32	2.32
33	2.71
34	3.30
35	2.54
36	2.83
37	2.77
42	2.87
46	3.33

VII. Personnel Recruitment and Retention
Cluster Mean: 2.75

Question	Mean
7	3.22
8	2.64
9	2.58
10	2.57

VIII. Quality Graduates
Cluster Mean: 2.67

Question	Mean
13	2.71
14	2.62

TABLE V

QUESTIONS (PERSONAL RESEARCH INTEREST) RELATED TO EACH CLUSTER

Cluster I. Rural School Effectiveness (3.43)
Questions: 12. What educational procedures and curricula work are accepted in very small schools (under 300 ADA)?

15. What technical and human skills and knowledge should be included in a rural training program?

20. How can we best measure the effectiveness of rural schools?

21. What makes a rural school effective? How does this differ from criteria that make non-rural schools effective?

22. What are qualitative and quanitative measures of effective school leadership in rural America? How are these different from those of non-rural settings?

23. What are characteristics of effective collaboration?

Cluster II: Delivery of Services (3.13)
Questions: 4. What is the need for generalists to meet rural educational needs to serve a range of ages?

6. Since little actual in-depth psychological testing is done in rural areas, what kinds of programs and tests should be developed and available for use by rural educational staff?

38. What are the effects of various service delivery systems for special education?

Cluster III: Rural Preservice Practica Issues
Questions: 5. How can rural factors such as low incidences of handicaps, transportation problems, and other elements be resolved through the use of new educational technology?

11. How can LEAs, regional service centers, and other organizations assist in rural practica and practica supervision?

16. When should videotape, laser discs, or other technologies be used in place of field-based experiences in rural preservice preparation?

17. What is the cost effectiveness of using different techniques (given equivalent outcomes in rural pre-service preparation)?

Table V
Cluster III, cont'd
Questions: 18. How can training programs balance the need to provide "state of the art" quality role models, practicum experiences, etc., with the need to expose students to the realities of rural schools?

19. How can logistical problems (e.g., travel costs, housing, etc.) of supervising rural remote preservice practica best be addressed?

Cluster IV: Governance and Finance
Questions: 28. What are effective alternate financing systems for rural schools?

29. How do appropriate legal procedures differ for rural versus non-rural schools?

31. What differences does school board composition pose for effective rural school functioning?

39. What are the differences in state policies for rural and non-rural environments?

40. What impact do federal and state mandates have on rural school funding?

41. How does one determing cost effective factors of rural service delivery? What are some of these factors?

43. What are the incentives of pay for rural teachers and administrators? Should any rural pay incentives be developed (e.g., in the very smallest districts)?

44. What are the incentives for the development of innovative rural school programs?

45. How does the use of other governmental units (rather than the LEA or local school districts) effect efficiency? How do they effect school direction?

Cluster V: Preservice Preparation
Questions: 1. What kinds of supervision, practicum facilities and observation strategies are cost effective in various types of rural areas (e.g., remote areas versus small clustered towns, etc.)?

2. How can preservice students be prepared to work with ethnic minority, bilingual, migrant, and other populations in rural areas?

3. What curricula are currently offered at different levels of personnel preparation for rural school systems including BA, MA, Ph.D.?

Table V
Questions (Personal Research Interest) Related to Each Cluster, cont'd

Cluster VI: Rural vs. Non-Rural
Questions: 24. How can we secure greater community involvement in rural school systems?

25. How do local school objectives and expectations differ from community and student expectations of rural areas.

26. In what ways are the concerns in #25 different from those of non-rural areas?

27. What are differences in attitudes and self-concepts of rural versus non-rural students?

30. What non-schooling influences are significant for rural schools?

32. What aspects of rural teacher education should come from psychology or anthropological science?

33. What cross-cultural skills are needed to effectively function in rural schools?

34. What are effective ways of serving rural gifted students? How does one identify gifted rural students who are culturally disadvantaged?

35. What are differences in rural adult learning (younger and mature populations)?

36. What differences, if any, are there in the education of students who leave and those who remain in the rural community? What type of person leaves and what type of person remains?

37. What are the effects of participation in extracurricular activities in rural communities?

42. What are the differences in teaching styles and effectiveness of rural teachers who come to the job from out of the state/region?

46. What are impacts of local rural culture on learning and behaving?

Cluster VII: Personnel Recruitment and Retention
Questions: 7. What are the best procedures to recruit and retain rural special education staff? Regular education staff?

8. What kinds of procedures used by business and other non-government and government agencies (e.g., Peace Corps) for training, recruiting, and retaining personnel could be used in rural preservice preparation?

Table V
Cluster VII, cont'd
Questions: 9. What specific education roles need to be filled in distinct geographic areas? (Are certain handicapping conditions more prevalent in one area or another?)

10. For what roles should local rural citizens/teachers be recruited? What roles should be filled by outsiders?

Cluster VIII: Quality Graduates
Questions 13. Should personnel preparation programs prepare quality graduated from less than superior students?

14. What are the differences in the length and type of training required to reform quality graduates out of less than superior students?

TABLE VI

Number of Respondents According to Type of Position and Special or General Education Orientation

	Special Educators	General Educators	Total Respondents
Public School Administrators	50	115	165
College or University Administrators	17	29	46
Public School Teachers	11	4	15
College or University Faculty	37	61	98
State Department of Education Officials	21	9	30
Independent Educational Unit Members	20	24	44
Other or Unidentified Position	32	31	63
	188	273	461

TABLE VII

Number of Respondents According to Federal Region and Special or General Education Orientation

Federal Region	Special Educators	General Educators	Total Respondents
1	19	13	32
2	7	16	23
3	18	20	38
4	24	13	37
5	24	42	68
6	12	27	39
7	18	29	47
8	18	30	48
9	12	14	26
10	31	63	94
	183	267	*450

*The total numbers of "general educators," "special educators," and "total respondents" differ in the two tables above because 11 respondents were from Canada. Thus, no "federal region" was indicated for these respondents.

TABLE VIII

Themes for a National Rural Education Research Agenda Rank According to Means

Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education		Personal Research Interest		Themes
Rank	Means	Rank	Means	
1	5.12	3	5.62	*Rural School Effectiveness
2	5.43	1	5.14	*Curriculum Development Needs & Issues
3	5.84	2	5.26	*Inservice Training
4	6.30	5	6.07	*Preservice Teacher Training
5	6.36	8	7.02	*Personnel Recruitment and Retention
6	6.40	4	5.99	*Service Delivery Model
7	7.33	9	7.21	*Use of Advanced Technology
8	7.35	10	8.16	*Rural Education Cost Effectiveness
9	7.35	7	6.86	*School-Community Interaction and Partnerships
10	8.01	6	6.70	*Teaching and Leadership Styles
11	8.15	12	8.78	*Alternate Funding System
12	8.53	11	8.28	*Characteristics of Rural and Non-Rural School Students
13	9.07	13	9.31	*Federal and State Policies and Legal Procedures

TABLE IX

Frequency of Rankings of Each Theme According to Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education

Theme	Highest Ranking										Lowest Ranking			Mean of Rankings
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Rural School Effectiveness	100	46	44	40	34	21	26	33	27	30	14	19	9	5.12
Curriculum Development Needs and Issues	48	56	43	55	52	42	32	31	19	19	24	13	10	5.43
Inservice Training	54	50	53	45	47	40	42	33	28	30	24	5	12	5.84
Preservice Teacher Training	45	47	41	39	34	32	31	31	38	37	24	27	17	6.30
Personnel Recruitment and Retention	36	32	52	42	36	43	29	34	27	39	31	21	19	6.36
Service Delivery Model	53	35	41	40	35	39	34	31	24	24	22	35	30	6.40
Use of Advance Technology	24	31	30	36	35	41	42	31	30	39	31	33	35	7.33
Rural Education Cost Effectiveness	29	35	25	29	38	23	34	37	47	33	37	40	35	7.39
School-Community Interaction and Partnerships	16	24	33	40	36	39	49	41	41	32	35	40	15	7.35
Teaching and Leadership Styles	13	25	28	30	36	37	40	33	42	29	50	36	39	8.01
Alternate Funding System	27	28	21	18	31	30	31	32	43	40	53	53	34	8.15
Characteristics of Rural/Non-rural School Students	20	24	25	21	14	29	23	35	35	40	45	52	76	8.53
Federal and State Policies and Legal Procedures	20	15	16	16	19	25	23	35	29	45	42	55	102	9.07

TABLE X

Frequency of Rankings of Each Theme According to Personal Research Interest

Theme	Highest Ranking									Lowest Ranking				Mean of Rankings
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Curriculum Development Needs and Issues	50	53	53	49	53	33	30	22	19	19	16	15	5	5.14
Inservice Training	47	53	46	53	47	34	42	31	23	13	22	7	2	5.26
Rural School Effectiveness	76	33	37	35	40	30	32	32	31	27	21	10	8	5.62
Service Delivery Model	57	43	47	38	36	24	26	31	18	25	17	26	32	5.99
Preservice Teacher Training	49	40	40	40	29	38	30	32	35	32	21	13	22	6.07
Teaching and Leadership Styles	23	35	44	35	31	41	41	41	33	17	35	25	16	6.70
School-Community Interaction and Partnerships	18	24	31	40	37	53	40	39	34	33	27	21	20	6.86
Personnal Recruitment and Retention	23	33	28	32	28	38	36	38	36	47	30	26	20	7.02
Use of Advanced Technology	23	43	31	28	39	37	27	21	37	34	30	27	38	7.21
Rural Education Cost Effectiveness	15	29	23	13	29	18	33	43	34	44	45	53	40	8.16
Characteristics of Rural/Non-rural School Students	27	24	20	22	17	29	27	22	26	56	41	44	68	8.28
Alternate Funding System	11	18	18	22	14	21	32	25	51	34	48	67	51	8.78
Federal and State Policies and Legal Procedures	17	11	15	19	16	19	15	29	36	28	53	64	95	9.31

TABLE XI

Themes on Which Special and General Educators Differed

Special and general educators tended to agree on the themes, both according to personal interest and according to general importance, with the following exceptions.

Rural School Effectiveness--Personal Interest

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	49	22	25	21	27	17	20	25	15	8	9	8	3
Special Education	27	11	12	14	13	13	12	7	16	19	12	11	5

$\chi^2 = 26.27$ $p = .0098$

Advanced Technologies--Personal Interest

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	18	29	20	20	23	22	13	13	20	15	23	9	19
Special Education	5	14	11	8	16	15	14	8	17	19	7	18	19

$\chi^2 = 25.70$ $p = .0186$

Service Delivery Models--Personal Interest

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	26	18	23	24	22	13	18	17	14	16	8	22	26
Special Education	31	25	24	14	14	11	8	14	4	9	9	4	6

$\chi^2 = 30.76$ $p = .0021$

Preservice Teacher Training--General Importance

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	22	20	28	21	22	19	21	17	25	22	15	23	5
Special Education	23	27	13	18	12	13	10	14	13	15	9	4	12

$\chi^2 = 26.68$ $p = .014$

Alternate Funding Systems--General Importance

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	14	11	14	11	20	12	23	23	22	29	28	27	9
Special Education	13	17	7	7	11	18	8	9	21	11	25	26	9

$\chi^2 = 29.06$ $p = .016$

Table XI

Curriculum Development Needs & Issues--General Importance

	High 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Low 13
General Education	33	40	22	38	32	26	15	11	10	9	11	7	6
Special Education	12	18	21	17	20	16	17	20	9	10	13	6	4

χ^2 22.11 $p = .036$

TABLE XII

Clusters Showing Significance Difference Between Special and Other Educators

Personal Interest Clusters	Mean of Responses to Items in Cluster		N	F	P
	Gen Ed	Spec.Ed			
I	3.51	3.28	410	6.60	.01
III	3.04	3.28	417	9.19	.003
VI	2.73	2.94	411	5.63	.02
IX	2.87	2.71	415	4.16	.04

TABLE XIII

Importance to the Field Clusters					
I Rural School Effectiveness	3.8	3.70	438	5.30	.02
II Governance/ Finance	3.50	3.64	441	4.48	.03
III Training/ Technology	3.45	3.61	440	6.34	.01
VII Recruitment & Retention	3.17	3.37	438	6.91	.009
IX Rural vs.Non-Rural	3.20	3.04	441	6.92	.009

TABLE XIV

MEAN RESPONSES OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND OTHER EDUCATORS TO QUESTIONS IN OTHER CLUSTERS (NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS)

Personal Interest Cluster	Mean Gen. Ed	Mean Spec. Ed.	F	P
II	2.97	3.10	1.84	.18
IV	3.08	3.03	.27	.60
V	3.06	2.94	1.70	.19
VI	2.93	3.04	1.93	.17
VIII	2.90	2.84	.46	.50

TABLE XV

Importance to the Field Clusters				
IV	3.54	3.44	2.30	.13
V	3.44	3.31	3.54	.06
VI	3.32	3.39	.89	.35
VIII	3.27	3.26	.0004	.98

TABLE XVI

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN RESPONSES BY FEDERAL REGIONS ACCORDING TO GENERAL IMPORTANCE CLUSTERS

General Importance Cluster #1

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.83	30
2	3.97	23
3	3.56	36
4	3.65	36
5	3.96	61
6	3.66	37
7	3.77	45
8	3.93	48
9	3.63	24
10	3.77	89
Within Cluster Total	3.79	429

General Importance Cluster #2

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.63	30
2	3.83	23
3	3.54	36
4	3.37	36
5	3.65	62
6	3.55	38
7	3.57	45
8	3.44	48
9	3.45	24
10	3.43	89
Within Cluster Total	3.56	431

General Importance Cluster #3

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.49	31
2	3.55	23
3	3.60	36
4	3.82	36
5	3.50	62
6	3.45	38
7	3.54	45
8	3.43	47
9	3.75	24
10	3.40	89
Within Cluster Total	3.52	431

TABLE XVI

General Importance Cluster #4

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.55	30
2	3.60	23
3	3.60	36
4	3.54	36
5	3.36	62
6	3.64	38
7	3.49	45
8	3.38	48
9	3.47	24
10	3.49	87
Within Cluster Total	3.50	429

General Importance Cluster #5

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.02	30
2	3.54	23
3	3.54	36
4	3.35	36
5	3.21	61
6	3.69	38
7	3.44	45
8	3.49	48
9	3.39	24
10	3.33	88
Within Cluster Total	3.39	429

Note: Cluster #5 is statistically significant.

General Importance Cluster #6

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.41	30
2	3.48	23
3	3.41	36
4	3.40	36
5	3.16	63
6	3.54	38
7	3.30	45
8	3.27	48
9	3.56	24
10	3.37	89
Within Cluster Total	3.36	432

TABLE XVI

General Importance Cluster #7

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.22	30
2	3.43	23
3	3.18	36
4	3.46	35
5	3.08	62
6	3.42	38
7	3.34	45
8	3.23	47
9	3.35	24
10	3.15	89
Within Cluster Total	3.25	429

General Importance Cluster #8

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.22	30
2	3.04	23
3	3.49	36
4	3.33	36
5	3.25	61
6	3.48	38
7	3.07	45
8	3.20	48
9	3.13	24
10	3.31	88
Within Cluster Total	3.26	429

General Importance Cluster #9

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.14	30
2	3.32	23
3	3.19	36
4	3.11	36
5	3.07	62
6	3.17	38
7	3.13	45
8	3.06	48
9	3.11	24
10	3.21	89
Within Cluster Total	3.15	431

TABLE XVII

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN RESPONSES BY FEDERAL REGIONS ACCORDING TO PERSONAL INTEREST CLUSTERS

Personal Interest Cluster #1

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.44	27
2	3.45	22
3	3.06	31
4	3.18	34
5	3.59	60
6	3.53	31
7	3.30	47
8	3.66	44
9	3.34	23
10	3.48	84
Within Cluster Total	3.43	403

Personal Interest Cluster #2

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.83	27
2	3.07	22
3	2.86	30
4	3.16	34
5	3.14	61
6	3.07	30
7	2.99	46
8	3.05	43
9	3.07	23
10	2.92	84
Within Cluster Total	3.01	400

TABLE XVII

Personal Interest Cluster #3

Region	Means	Respondents
1	3.13	28
2	3.18	21
3	3.11	32
4	3.58	35
5	3.12	61
6	3.17	30
7	3.07	47
8	3.09	45
9	3.17	23
10	3.08	85
Within Cluster Total	3.15	407

Personal Interest Cluster #4

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.96	27
2	3.04	22
3	3.02	31
4	3.00	34
5	2.94	61
6	3.24	31
7	3.09	46
8	3.15	44
9	3.26	23
10	3.09	84
Within Cluster Total	3.07	403

Personal Interest Cluster #5

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.64	27
2	3.18	22
3	2.93	30
4	2.85	33
5	2.99	60
6	3.20	31
7	3.10	47
8	3.12	43
9	3.03	23
10	3.06	84
Within Cluster Total	3.02	400

TABLE XVII

Personal Interest Cluster #6

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.94	27
2	3.17	22
3	2.88	31
4	2.98	34
5	2.88	62
6	3.26	31
7	2.93	47
8	2.96	44
9	3.08	23
10	3.03	86
With Cluster Total	2.99	407

Personal Interest Cluster #7

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.70	27
2	2.92	21
3	2.54	31
4	2.88	33
5	2.64	61
6	3.09	30
7	2.89	47
8	2.90	44
9	3.01	23
10	2.85	84
Within Cluster Total	2.83	401

Personal Interest Cluster #8

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.70	27
2	2.50	22
3	2.67	30
4	2.97	33
5	2.79	60
6	2.93	30
7	2.87	47
8	2.81	44
9	2.89	23
10	3.14	84
Within Cluster Total	2.88	400

TABLE XVII

Personal Interest Cluster #9

Region	Means	Respondents
1	2.76	27
2	2.85	22
3	2.76	31
4	2.85	35
5	2.69	61
6	2.82	30
7	2.71	46
8	2.77	44
9	2.82	23
10	2.99	86
Within Cluster Total	2.81	405

TABLE XVIII

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN RESPONSES BY COMBINED REGIONS ACCORDING TO GENERAL IMPORTANCE

General Importance Cluster #1

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.77	89
1	3.76	89
2	3.66	73
3	3.88	106
4	3.93	48
5	3.63	24
Within Cluster Total	3.79	429

General Importance Cluster #2

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.43	89
1	3.65	89
2	3.63	74
3	3.62	107
4	3.44	48
5	3.45	24
Within Cluster Total	3.56	431

General Importance Cluster #3

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.40	89
1	3.55	90
2	3.63	74
3	3.51	107
4	3.43	47
5	3.75	24
Within Cluster Total	3.52	431

General Importance Cluster #4

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.49	87
1	3.58	89
2	3.59	74
3	3.42	107
4	3.38	48
5	3.47	24
Within Cluster Total	3.50	429

TABLE XVIII

General Importance Cluster #5

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.33	88
1	3.36	89
2	3.52	74
3	3.31	106
4	3.49	48
5	3.39	24
Within Cluster Total	3.39	429

General Importance Cluster #6

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.37	89
1	3.43	89
2	3.47	74
3	3.22	108
4	3.27	48
5	3.56	24
Within Cluster Total	3.36	432

General Importance Cluster #7

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.15	89
1	3.26	89
2	3.44	73
3	3.19	107
4	3.23	47
5	3.35	24
Within Cluster Total	3.25	429

General Importance Cluster #8

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.31	88
1	3.28	89
2	3.39	74
3	3.17	106
4	3.19	48
5	3.13	24
Within Cluster Total	3.26	429

TABLE XVIII

General Importance Cluster #9

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.21	89
1	3.21	89
2	3.14	74
3	3.09	107
4	3.06	48
5	3.11	24
Within Cluster Total	3.15	431

TABLE XIX

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN RESPONSES BY COMBINED REGIONS ACCORDING TO PERSONAL INTEREST CLUSTERS

Personal Interest Cluster #1

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.48	84
1	3.30	80
2	3.35	65
3	3.46	107
4	3.66	44
5	3.34	23
Within Cluster Total	3.43	403

Personal Interest Cluster #2

Regions	Means	Respondents
0	2.92	84
1	2.91	79
2	3.12	64
3	3.07	107
4	3.05	43
5	3.07	23
Within Cluster Total	3.01	400

Personal Interest Cluster #3

Regions	Means	Respondents
0	3.08	85
1	3.14	81
2	3.39	65
3	3.10	108
4	3.09	45
5	3.17	23
Within Cluster Total	3.15	407

Personal Interest Cluster #4

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.09	84
1	3.00	80
2	3.12	65
3	3.01	107
4	3.15	44
5	3.26	23
Within Cluster Total	3.07	403

TABLE XIX

Personal Interest Cluster #5

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.06	84
1	2.90	79
2	3.02	64
3	3.04	107
4	3.12	43
5	3.03	23
Within Cluster Total	3.02	400

Personal Interest Cluster #6

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.03	86
1	2.98	80
2	3.11	65
3	2.90	109
4	2.96	44
5	3.08	23
Within Cluster Total	2.99	407

Personal Interest Cluster #7

Region	Means	Respondents
0	2.85	84
1	2.69	79
2	2.98	63
3	2.75	108
4	2.89	44
5	3.01	23
Within Cluster Total	2.83	401

Personal Interest Cluster #8

Region	Means	Respondents
0	3.14	84
1	2.63	79
2	2.95	63
3	2.83	107
4	2.81	44
5	2.89	23
Within Cluster Total	2.88	400

Note: Cluster #8 is statistically significant.

TABLE XIX

Personal Interest Cluster #9

Region	Means	Respondents
0	2.99	86
1	2.79	80
2	2.83	65
3	2.70	107
4	2.77	44
5	2.82	23
Within Cluster Total	2.81	405

APPENDIX A

Modified Delphi Survey

YOUR RESPONSES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED!

HERE ARE THE INSTRUCTIONS:

The following thirteen themes of research interest and the descriptors for each theme were generated from the 1978-84 work of the National Rural Project and during 1984 meetings of the National Rural Education Research Consortium.

Please rank order these main themes, beginning with #1 (the topic you feel is of highest interest or importance) and ending with #13 (the topic of least interest or importance). Use the first column to rank <u>your personal</u> research interests. Column two should be used to note how important you feel it is that research be conducted on each topic regardless of your level of personal research interest.

National Rural Education
Research Consortium
National Rural Development
Institute
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Name: _____ B3
Address: _____
_____
Telephone: _____
SpecialNet User Name (If any): _____
Position: _____

THEMES FOR A NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENDA

(Rank order each column with
#1 = highest interest/importance
and #13 = least interest/importance)

Your Personal Research Interest	Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education	
_____	_____	Preservice teacher training
_____	_____	Inservice training
_____	_____	Personnel recruitment and retention
_____	_____	Rural education cost effectiveness
_____	_____	Rural school effectiveness
_____	_____	Alternate funding systems
_____	_____	Characteristics of rural and non-rural school students
_____	_____	Curriculum development needs and issues
_____	_____	Teaching and leadership styles
_____	_____	Federal and state policies and legal procedures
_____	_____	School-community interaction and partnerships
_____	_____ _____	The use of advanced technologies
_____	_____	Service delivery models

RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The items below are questions related to each of the thirteen themes above. Please score each question, using the scale listed below. The first column score should reflect your personal interest in researching each question. The second column should be used to note how important you feel it is that research be conducted on each topic (by someone).

Scale:
1 - Unimportant
2 - Of limited importance
3 - Important
4 - Very important
5 - Critically important

Your Personal Research Interest	Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education	
_____	_____	1. What kinds of supervisior practicum facilities and observation strategies are cost effective in various types of rural areas (e.g., remote areas versus small clustered towns, etc.)?
_____	_____	2. How can preservice students be prepared to work with ethnic minority, bilingual, migrant, and other populations in rural areas?
_____	_____	3. What curricula are currently offered at different levels of personnel preparation for rural school systems including BA, MA, Ph.D.?
_____	_____	4. What is the need for generalists to meet rural educational needs to serve a range of ages?
_____	_____	5. How can rural factors such as low incidences of handicaps, transportation problems, and other elements be resolved through the use of new educational technology?
_____	_____	6. Since little actual in-depth psychological testing is done in rural areas, what kinds of programs and tests should be developed and available for use by rural educational staff?
_____	_____	7. What are the best procedures to recruit and retain rural special education staff? Regular education staff?
_____	_____	8. What kinds of procedures used by business and other non-government and government agencies (e.g., Peace Corps) for training, recruiting, and retaining personnel could be used in rural preservice preparation?
_____	_____	9. What specific education roles need to be filled in distinct geographic areas? (Are certain handicapping conditions more prevalent in one area or another?)

Scale: 1 - Unimportant
2 - Of limited importance
3 - Important
4 - Very important
5 - Critically important

Your Personal Research Interest	Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education	
_____	_____	10. For what roles should local rural citizens/teachers be recruited? What roles should be filled by outsiders?
_____	_____	11. How can LEAs, regional service centers, and other organizations assist in rural practica and practice supervision?
_____	_____	12. What educational procedures and curricula work are acceptal in very small schools (under 300 ADA)?
_____	_____	13. Should personnel preparation programs prepare quality graduates from less than superior students?
_____	_____	14. What are the differences in the length and type of training required to reform quality graduates out of less than superior students?
_____	_____	15. What technical and human skills and knowledge should be included in a rural training program?
_____	_____	16. When should videotape, laser discs, or other technologies be used in place of field-based experiences in rural preservice preparation?
_____	_____	17. What is the cost effectiveness of using different techniques (given equivalent outcomes in rural preservice preparation)?
_____	_____	18. How can training programs balance the need to provide "state of the art" quality role models, practicum experiences, etc., with the need to expose students to the realities of rural schools?
_____	_____	19. How can logistical problems (e.g., travel costs, housing, etc.) of supervising rural remote preservice practica best be addressed?
_____	_____	20. How can we best measure the effectiveness of rural schools?
_____	_____	21. What makes a rural school effective? How does this differ from criteria that make non-rural schools effective?
_____	_____	22. What are qualitative and quantitative measures of effective school leadership in rural America? How are these different from those of non-rural settings?
_____	_____	23. What are characteristics of effective collaboration?

Scale: 1 - Unimportant
2 - Of limited importance
3 - Important
4 - Very important
5 - Critically important

Your Personal Research Interest	Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education	
_____	_____	24. How can we secure greater community involvement in rural school systems?
_____	_____	25. How do local school objectives and expectations differ from community and student expectations of rural areas?
_____	_____	26. In what ways are the concerns in #25 different from those of non-rural areas?
_____	_____	27. What are differences in attitudes and self-concepts of rural versus non-rural students?
_____	_____	28. What are effective alternate financing systems for rural schools?
_____	_____	29. How do appropriate legal procedures differ for rural versus non-rural schools?
_____	_____	30. What non-schooling influences are significant for rural schools?
_____	_____	31. What differences does school board composition pose for effective rural school functioning?
_____	_____	32. What aspects of rural teacher education should come from psychology or anthropological science?
_____	_____	33. What cross-cultural skills are needed to effectively function in rural schools?
_____	_____	34. What are effective ways of serving rural gifted students? How does one identify gifted rural students who are culturally disadvantaged?
_____	_____	35. What are differences in rural adult learning (younger and mature populations)?
_____	_____	36. What differences, if any, are there in the education of students who leave and those who remain in the rural community? What type of person leaves and what type of person remains?
_____	_____	37. What are the effects of participation in extracurricular activities in rural communities?
_____	_____	38. What are the effects of various service delivery systems for special education?
_____	_____	39. What are the differences in state policies for rural and non-rural environments?

Scale: 1 - Unimportant
2 - Of limited importance
3 - Important
4 - Very important
5 - Critically important

Your Personal Research Interest	Importance of Research for Improving Rural Education	
_____	_____	40. What impact do federal and state mandates have on rural school funding?
_____	_____	41. How does one determine cost effective factors of rural service delivery? What are some of these factors?
_____	_____	42. What are differences in teaching styles and effectiveness of rural teachers who come to the job from out of the state/ region?
_____	_____	43. What are the incentives of pay for rural teachers and administrators? Should any rural pay incentives be developed (e.g., in the very smallest districts)?
_____	_____	44. What are incentives for the development of innovative rural school programs?
_____	_____	45. How does the use of other governmental units (rather than the LEA or local school districts) effect efficiency? How do they effect school direction?
_____	_____	46. What are impacts of local rural culture on learning and behaving?

47. Other research topics which are of interest to you:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____