DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 935 RC 017 638

AUTHOR Carroll, Sue Ellen
TITLE Rural Education Problems: Current Status and Future Focus.
INSTITUTION Louisiana Coll., Pineville.
SPONS AGENCY BellSouth Foundation, Inc. Atlanta, GA.
PUB DATE 15 Jan 90
NOTE 78p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Assessment; Educational Attainment; *Educational Change; Educational Demand; Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; Financial Problems; Literature Reviews; Population Trends; *Public Policy; Rural Areas; Rural Economics; *Rural Education; *Rural Schools; Teacher Shortage

ABSTRACT

This literature survey examines rural problems and potential improvement strategies that have emerged on the agendas of rural educators and policymakers. The report discusses diverse rural conditions, demographic shifts, economic changes, technological improvements in education, increased demand for reform in curriculum and classroom management, teacher shortages, low educational attainment, financial support, and current federal and state rural education policies. Historically, states have taken responsibility for education, with the Federal Government acting to insure equal opportunity and to disseminate new approaches. Rural people are culturally diverse, but generally hold a relationship with the land and natural resources. Population growth and composition affect the wealth of the economy, career opportunities, tax collection and allocation, teacher availability, and accessibility of potential partnerships. New demands on rural teachers are high, and their retention poses a problem. Rural schools' curriculum and classroom management have also been subject to change due to public pressures for reform. The sparsity of rural population means education is more expensive than it is elsewhere. Financial support for rural schools remains a problem, and rural America continues to have a disproportionate share of educational deprivation. Rural youth generally enter school later, they progress more slowly, and leave earlier. Positive changes will not be possible unless governments and private foundations address the fundamental problems and causes underlying these deficiencies. The document concludes that rural educators must build on the strengths of diversity, learn to use technology effectively, use community resources, and build effective partnership programs. The document includes a bibliography with approximately 60 entries. (TES)

RURAL EDUCATION PROBLEMS
CURRENT STATUS
AND
FUTURE FOCUS

BY

SUE ELLEN CARROLL

LOUISIANA COLLEGE
PINEVILLE, LOUISIANA

SUBMITTED TO
BELL SOUTH FOUNDATION

Rural Education Problems
Current Status
and
Future Focus

BY

Sue Ellen Carroll

Louisiana College
Pineville, Louisiana

Submitted to
Bell South Foundation

January 15, 1990

This report was prepared pursuant to a Grant Proposal submitted by Louisiana College to Bell South Foundation. Dr. Thomas Kelly, Chairman of the Department of Education, reviewed this report in an editorial capacity. Points of view or opinions, however, do not represent the official view or opinions of Louisiana College or Bell South Foundation.

ABSTRACT

Problems and potential rural improvement strategies have recently emerged higher on the agenda of educators and policy makers. Rural diversity, shifts and composition of population, economic changes, technological improvements in education, increased demand for reform in curriculum and classroom management, teacher shortages, low educational attainment, financial support, and the Federal and States' current policy on rural education are investigated in this report by a review of the literature. Rural education is a complex issue. Educators and policy makers need to become more aware of how changes in one area affect and force changes in other areas. For example, population growth and composition affects the economy. The wealth of the economy affects career opportunities, tax collection and allocation, teacher availability and retention, and accessibility of potential partnerships. Positive changes in rural education will not be possible unless the fundamental problems which caused the deficiencies are addressed. The willingness of the Federal and State governments and private foundations, such as Bell South Foundation, to focus on solving problems and the underlying causes of these deficiencies will be the determining factor in improving education in rural areas. As rural educators we must build on the strengths of diversity, learn to use technology effectively and efficiently, use community resources, and build effective partnership programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rural America

RURAL AMERICA

Understanding rural education is enhanced by understanding the context in which it operates (Culter, 1988). Rural schools are designated as rural because they are located in less populated areas of America. Population of an area determines classification. Most Federal organizations classify rural areas as places with less than 2,500 residents; nonurbanized places with fewer than 5,000 or 5,500 or 50,000 residents; and nonmetropolitan communities with a population under 8,000 and a work force that is primarily agricultural. However, the U.S. Bureau of the Census defines "urban" as all places with a population of 2,500 or more, and then classifies all that remains "rural". If numerical definitions are difficult to standardize, the other characteristics of rural are impossible to fit into neat categories (Parks & Sher, 1979).

Characteristics of Rural America

Rural America is commonly pictured as having farms and farmers, but according to Rural Economic Development in the 1980's: A Summary (1987) only about 9 percent of the people now living in rural areas are farmers. Farm workers make up only 8 percent of the workforce in rural areas.

Sher (1977) points out that rural people, rural communities and rural conditions are so diverse as to provide evidence in support of nearly any characterization. Rural America is far too heterogeneous and complex to fit simplistic definitions or stereotypes. Sher continues by

pointing out fishing villages in Maine, coal company towns in Appalachia, farm communities in Iowa, Delta counties in Mississippi, recreation communities in Colorado, American Indian reservations in South Dakota, small college towns in Minnesota, migrant settlements in Texas, retirement communities in Florida, and native villages in Alaska are all composed of rural people. People in different urban areas have more in common with one another than do residents of these diverse locations.

A very large portion of the general population is classified as rural. According to the 1980 census 59.5 million Americans are classified as rural. Rural schools make up 67 percent of all schools with a rural student population of 33 percent of all students (Worthington, 1984).

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory reports in May, 1988 there are now 16,123 school districts in the U.S. Of these 16,123 districts, 11,850 or 74 percent of the total districts are small-school school districts which have fewer than 2,500 students. Approximately 51 percent of all school districts are both rural and small.

Diversity is the common ingredient of rural America. There are often great differences among rural communities in terms of economic base, socioeconomic characteristics, political traditions, and community values even within the same county, State or region (Sher, 1978).

Besides the fact of diversity, defining rural America is complicated further by attitudinal differences. In a town of

400 residents, the "rural people" are the ones living some distance outside the town. In the county seat of 4,000, the people in the small town are considered rural. Similarly, the people who live in the county seat are thought of as rural by the people living in the capitol city (Sher, 1978).

Generally the layers of bureaucracy found in large urban/suburban communities are lacking in small communities. Communication can be more direct and verbal transactions can be used instead of written communiques. The validity of information is likely to be based as much on who said it as what was said. Social relationships are more personal and tightly knit; people are known as individuals, with multiple roles. Running the town business is a part-time job; construction workers still have multiple skills, doctors, when available, are general practitioners; business people tend to be entrepreneurs, not employees of large retail chains. Values tend to be more traditional, with more family structure intact, although this is changing in communities where in-migration is taking place. Traditionally communities are homogeneous in terms of race and socioeconomic status. Time may be measured by the seasons rather than just by the clock (Nachtigal, 1982).

When rural America is mentioned in conversation, it conjures up images as diverse as each individual. Some think of friendly thriving communities, others are reminded of isolated and ill-equipped homes. A survey of communities show the contradictions. Elmore, Alabama, once a thriving

community with a small two-teacher school, now has declined to a few old homes and a generation of older residents. The country store, gas stations, drug store, train station, and other symbols of a thriving community are all gone. Conversely, Bell Buckle, Tennessee, a small rural town, is thriving as a tourist attraction. They have turned their liabilities into economic assets. The old country store features handmade items which readily sell to tourists. Other old buildings are preserved as treasures of the past. The incongruity is a matter of personal interpretation, for some people rural is a place to flee from, for others, it is a place to escape to.

Historical Overview

When a law was enacted requiring towns to establish and support schools in 1647 in Massachusetts, they were divided into local districts. This concept spread, and the district containing a single, one-room school became the established pattern in northern and central parts of the country, with settlers carrying the same system West. In the South, school districts were organized into county school districts (Mitzel, 1982).

Development of education in urban and rural areas was being widely noted in 1897. At this time the National Education Association appointed a committee on rural education, called the Committee of Twelve. Their report was the first major impetus to the idea of consolidating small schools and transporting pupils at public expense. This idea

was reinforced in the 1900's by the Country Life Commission appointed in 1909 by Theodore Roosevelt. It is astounding to realize at this time in history, special preparation for teachers in rural schools was emphasized in addition to support for high schools (Mitzel, 1982).

By legislating policy on narrow aspects of rural education, the Federal government kept separated the crucial function of education from other social and economic programs in rural America. As the Federal government became more involved in the educational arena, the need arose to have a central administrative clearing house. At this time, 1867, Congress created the Department of Education. Various changes were made reducing the importance of the department through the years, until it gained status as a department of its own under President Carter (Mitzel, 1982).

Generally it was accepted that States were responsible for educating its citizens. In the 1870's and 1880's, several bills were introduced in Congress that would have given the Federal government control over education, none of these passed. However, education of freed slaves and American Indians was generally accepted as a function of the Federal government (Mitzel, 1982).

The Hatcht Act of 1887, which created the experiment stations, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which created the Cooperative Extension Service, the Purnell Act of 1925, which funded social science research, the Resettlement Administration Act of 1933, which became the Farm Security

Administration, and later the Farmer's Home Administration, all provided institutional mechanisms for assisting in the further development of rural areas (Powers & Moe, 1982).

In the following decades the focus was on enriching instruction and curriculum, continuing reorganization of districts, and equalizing the money spent on each pupil.

The Federal government under the National Defense Education Act of 1958 financed workshops and institutes for teachers in the late 1950's and in the 1960's. Federal involvement in rural education increased, but it was not until 1965 when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act went into effect that real impact was felt. Money was poured into low-income school districts providing preschool opportunities for culturally deprived children from poor families, funding of library and classroom materials, establishing regional laboratories for educational research, and teacher training and expanding work-study programs for poor and middle-income families. In the first year alone, more than 4 billion dollars were aimed at the goal of providing equal educational opportunities for all children and young adults (Mitzel, 1982).

In 1969, a rural task force was formed in the U.S. Office Of Education, but it had little impact. The U.S. Task Force on Rural Development (1970) called for national growth policy that would locate new industries in thinly populated areas in order to broaden the tax base to aid in the development of rural schools. In 1972, the Rural Developmen-

Act was unsuccessful in trying to coordinate rural policy (Edington, 1980).

In 1979, the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education sponsored eleven regional roundtable discussion groups so that rural constituency could consider twenty eight recommendations developed earlier in the National Rural Education Seminar. In effect, the rural participants validated the 28 education recommendations as feasible. If the degree of agreement by the rural constituency to specific recommendations indicated their priorities in a Federal initiative, the regional groups called for the Federal government to: (1) examine Federal financing formulas and other funding mechanisms to provide local flexibility in rural districts, (2) establish the rural research agenda with the rural constituency, (3) provide additional support for transportation, facilities, and delivery systems to rural areas, (4) enable and encourage rural districts to combire funding from various programs, (5) support communication networks to share information among rural educators, and (6) support broad base vocational education programs in rural areas (Jacobsmever, 1980).

For the first time in its existence the National Institute for Education included research funds for rural education as one of its priorities in 1980/81. The Rural Development Policy Act of 1980 was reported by President Carter as the culmination of an effort by Congress and the Administration to fashion a process for building sound and

comprehensive strategies for the development of rural America. This was a major piece of rural legislation. (Mitzel, 1982).

The Reagan administration made an effort to relinquish much of the Federal responsibility for education to the States. Historically the responsibility for the education of its citizens had been the responsibility of the individual States (Mitzel, 1982). The Department of Education's Rural Policy for the 1980's was presented at the 75th conference of the Rural Education Association. The policy is fully described in this paper in the section entitled Reform Efforts, Current Policy and Future Focus.

Aware that strong rural schools continue to be vital to education, Congress in the fall of 1986 appropriated funds for a rural education initiative. The Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement sponsored a national symposium on rural education in the Spring of 1987 to help guide development of that initiative. Nationally known experts presented papers on education in rural America from a variety of perspectives and practitioners described promising educational practices in rural settings. The position of the Federal government is noted as being a disseminator of new and improved approaches to rural education (Manno, 1989).

Rural education issues are confronting State legislatures as a consequence of the realization that local communities often cannot, and the Federal government

apparently will not, marshall the resources necessary to correct past problems. Since the constitutional system designates education as a State, rather than a Federal or local responsibility; State legislatures must address the problems of providing quality educational opportunity for its rural citizens (Sher, 1978).

Summary

The term "rural" is relative, and the key to definition and understanding is not in numbers of people but in relationships between people and between people and the land (Mitzel, 1982).

A thorough understanding of the nuances operating in rural communities is of utmost importance in the understanding of how education fits into this complex structure labeled rural America.

Historically States have had the responsibility of educating its inhabitants. Increased budgets and increased control over schools has been the recent posture of States. The Federal government is chiefly concerned about equal opportunities for all citizens. Its role is mainly a disseminator of new and improved approaches to education.

Education and Rural Development in the South

EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH

Introduction

Prior to 1980, the South seemed to be on the road to success. Steady industrial growth, educational investments, income improvements, and extensive agricultural modernization appeared to at last be on the verge of being matched in reality with the talk of promoters that encouraged a move to the South (Cobb, 1982) as cited in Billings (1988). It took substantial deterioration of economic conditions before the leaders of the region were aware of what was happening. Leaders were often focused on other issues primarily because the media centered its attention on the plights of large scale unemployment in Northern industrial cities, the declining value of the dollar, and trade and budget deficits. Mass closing of Southern rural plants, persistent double digit rural unemployment, and the contrast of the surging Southern cities, with population and job growth based on service and high-tech industries, dramatized the predicament of the rural South. It had prepared for a manufacturing economy that was fading fast (Billings, 1988).

Deliberations on how best to respond to the problems of rural society in the U.S. forces us to address the problems of the rural South. The South has the highest proportion of any region in America of its residents living in nonmetropolitan areas (Beaulieu, 1988). Decisions that affect

the economic development of the area also affect the educational opportunities in the rural South.

Current Status

On nearly all measures of economic well-being the rural South emerges as the most ill-equipped region in America. The South placed highest on the following: the number of banks who discontinued financing on their farm loans, the percentage of farmers who went out of business or who declared bankruptcy, the percentage of farmers who were loaned up to their practical limit, and the number of farmers with delinquent Farmers Home Administration loans (Beaulieu, 1988).

Farmers with the highest dependence on off-farm employment are in the Southern region of America. Off-farm employment is more important to Southern farm operators than to those in other areas of the country as 82 percent of Southern farms are small in scale, with annual sales of less than $40,000. Additionally, in contrast to other regions, the rural South has the lowest median family income, the highest rates of unemployment, the highest levels of poverty, and the highest rate of functional illiteracy (Beaulieu, 1988).

Educational attainment is the lowest of any region in the U.S. The proportion of college graduates in the rural South is 40 percent below national averages. Of the 489 counties in the U.S., having the lowest proportion of its adults with a high school education, almost all are located in the South. Functional illiteracy is much higher in the

South than the rest of the nation. Nearly 25 percent of the adults in the South have less than an eighth grade education (Beaulieu, 1988).

Beaulieu (1988) states these factors provide the basis for asserting that the rural crisis now impacting our country is most prevalent in the rural areas of the South.

The critical building block for the vitalization of the rural South is educational reform. Deficits in education will limit resource development and regional economic progress in the South (Deaton & Deaton, 1988).

Conditions that were once favorable to economic growth; low taxes, low wages, and unregulated environmental factors, are now viewed as a real threat to the economic growth. Today intelligence is replacing proximity to markets as a more important factor in plant location. Businesses are increasingly willing to trade higher taxes for better schools and services. These attitudes are offset however, by declining rural property values, diminishing Federal support, and increased competition for States resources. The new criteria for economic growth are good schools, cultural amenities and a skilled work force (Rosenfeld, 1988).

Emphasis on education changes the perspective about communities. Education and skill training changes the income earning power of people. These individuals search for better jobs. Firms search for individuals with better training and skill. An emphasis on education leads to changes in the dynamics of many communities. Some grow, some remain static,

and others die as a result of educational options (Schertz, 1988).

Many rural educators suggest it would be in the best interest of the Federal government to assist education (Horn, 1985). The benefits of education accrue to the nation as a whole. Inadequate education means wasting resources. Poorly educated people are not able to hold jobs that produce goods and services. In many cases, these poorly educated people have a claim on Federal expenditures for farm programs, food stamps, and unemployment compensation. Better education can mean more products, services, and higher income in future years that can raise the nation's standard of living and competitiveness (Schertz, 1988).

Summary

Educational improvements will not automatically come to those who need it most unless the fundamental problems which caused the lack of educational achievement are addressed. The rural areas with the most limited resources, are the places afflicted with the most pervasive problems -- substandard health care and nutrition, teenage pregnancies, inadequate housing, and structural unemployment. Unless action is taken, these disadvantaged children of today will become the non-productive welfare-dependent adults of tomorrow. With more at-risk families than the rest of the nation, the South must now make an effort to break the cycles of poverty and dependency. Education is the key to breaking this cycle (Winter, 1988).

Demographic Shifts

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

Introduction

Information on demographic composition, in addition to that on population size and change, is important in planning for the future. Age composition, household structure, and educational attainment are particularly important to nonmetropolitan educational policy (Brown, 1989). The trends in migration, economic development, and education are intricately linked, each influencing the other.

Population Shifts

Rural Economic Development in the 1980's A Summary reports since the beginning of the 1980's the population shifts have resulted in a marked turn away from rural areas. For example, between 1985 and 1986 approximately 632,000 people moved out of nonmetro areas. This is a larger outmovement than the average of either the 1950's or 1960's, and is a real turnaround from the 1970's when there was a great influx of population to the rural areas. Population decline and outmigration are concentrated in the Plains and Western Corn Belt, but have recently spread to the Great Lakes region and parts of the South.

Educational Impact

Population shifts impact educational systems. Educational policy should not be separated from its sociodemographic context. Changes in the kinds of people and in the number of people living in various areas affect the need and demand for educational services (Brown, 1989).

Although the size of the nonmetropolitan population is stagnant or declining, its composition is changing in ways that will affect educational services. Rural areas have proportionally more youth than do urban areas, but the overall aging of the population will affect both areas, cutting the demand for elementary and secondary education and increasing the demand for lifelong learning opportunities (Brown, 1989).

The industrial transformation of rural economies and the associated worker dislocation will increase the need to retrain workers and assist employees. Formal classroom education will decline as the need for continuing education and worker retraining grows. Continual retraining will be necessary if workers are to retain their ability to be hired. A highly qualified workforce is important to rural economic development (Brown, 1989).

Orientations toward education is linked to the age of migrants. New migrants who are often younger, better educated and from urban areas may have different values, attitudes and orientations toward education. They often value participation in local decision-making. When migrants are primarily older retirees, effects on education may be different. Retired persons on fixed incomes are less likely to support bond issues and increased taxation for education, Voth & Danforth (1979), as cited by Ross & Green (1979).

Changes in household structure are important for predicting what services the local community will need. More

traditional family living arrangements continue to characterize nonmetropolitan areas. Rural areas have a higher proportion of married-couple households with minor children, a smaller proportion of single-parent families, and a much lower proportion of people living alone (Brown, 1989).

Summary

The size of population, its growth and composition, the industrial and occupational structure of the economy, the general level of socioeconomic well-being of the economy and the links tying urban and rural communities and their economies together have changed and continue to change. The changing size and composition of the rural population both determines and results from economic conditions (Brown, 1989).

Rural Teachers

RURAL TEACHERS

Introduction

Teachers are a key component in the schooling of rural students. Rural teachers are important and influential in the development of students. Problems in attracting and retaining rural educators have increased. A review of the literature reveals rural teachers have different occupational interests, perceive characteristics of teaching situations somewhat differently, and may need different occupational incentives to attract and retain them in rural areas (DeYoung, 1978).

Current Status

Teachers in rural areas, especially in small rural schools, may be accountable to the community in ways unimaginable in cities and suburbs. Rural teachers still tend to come from the communities in which they teach or from communities which are similar (Sher, 1978).

Muse, Hoppe & Parson's study (1975) as cited by Sher (1978), provided evidence to suggest that the rural teacher is still often the rural woman returning home to teach the next generation. She is far better educated academically and socially than the previous generation. She has usually remained in touch with the rural community where she grew up and is aware of the basic concerns and values of the rural community.

The Muse, Hoppe & Parson's (1975) study reported that

teachers find that "community cliques, gossip, and small-town talk" are a major disadvantage to living and working in a small community in a key role as a teacher.

Campbell (1985) states acceptance of a teacher by the community is a critical factor in retaining outstanding teachers. Teachers of rural schools are often requested to teach Sunday School, participate in clubs and other activities, even when their time is limited and the need for a change is paramount.

Rural teachers need to be flexible and resourceful. Often rural teachers are required to teach more than one subject and more than one grade level with a wide range of abilities. Rural teachers are often required to direct a variety of extracurricular activities. They are expected to be knowledgeable about materials and resources and requisition procedures for these as well as to supervise and assist students taking correspondence courses and perhaps even to supervise and/or teach satellite courses (Muse, 1980; Horn, 1985; Jess, 1988).

Some teachers have to handle multiple grades and teach every period. There is limited preparation time, if any, especially as teaching content is just one of the many jobs teachers are required to handle. Some teachers are asked to collect lunch money keeping records of which students gets free lunch, reduced price lunch, or which pupil pays full price. This daily activity of collecting lunch money in addition to collecting snack and supply money plus periodic

collection of workbook money, and other record keeping not related to teaching is a burden. Collecting money and record keeping unrelated to teaching is almost overwhelming, especially to teachers who have little or no experience.

All teachers, but especially teachers in small rural schools, are in constant contact with parents. Rural parents want to be involved with the activities of their children. Parents often use teachers as counselors in settling problems among family members or helping students in overcoming problems which can affect learning. For example, teachers often meet in individual and group sessions with students and/or parents and counselors to discuss orientation procedures, divorce ramifications, motivational issues, discipline problems, and a multitude of other concerns including academic progress.

Some educators indicate materials designed to incorporate rural resources would be beneficial. Even if the rural teacher had the resourcefulness and time to design rural-oriented materials, problems would still have to be solved. Most schools are so locked into State and county/parish guidelines, there is little time left for the enriching experiences these rural-oriented materials would add to the lives of the students.

Training Programs

Teacher training programs have paid little attention to the needs of rural teachers. Since flexibility is permitted in meeting specific requirements in most teacher education

programs, one would expect to see teacher education programs that are designed specifically for rural educators. Nationwide there are few institutions that offer special training for rural teachers (Larsh, 1983). A national survey of teachers in small schools, conducted by Dunne & Carlen (1980) as cited by Larsh (1983) showed 64 percent of the responding teachers had no appropriate training for teaching in small schools.

Rural training programs should give teacher trainees an opportunity to experience the values inherent in country living and teaching. Rural teachers and administrators need to be given the professional development activities and inservice training to improve their skills and abilities. Training received by teachers should prepare them to teach students regardless of the location and size of the community (Muse, 1980).

Attraction and Retention Factors

Turnover rate for rural teachers is very high. Several reasons teachers are choosing to leave the teaching profession, in both urban and rural settings are listed as follows: inadequate pay, stress, burnout, poor working conditions (paperwork, non-teaching duties, etc.), lack of administrative support, student behavior, retirement and little adult interaction. This information was provided in a report entitled "Concerns of Professionalism: Salaries,

Moonlighting and Teacher Attrition", reported in the September, 1989 Alabama School Journal. Previous studies reviewed by Ernest & Tishler, who conducted the study discussed in this article, indicated low salaries and high career dissatisfaction in Alabama, Texas and Tennessee affected teachers decisions to leave the profession. The reasons listed are in the order of percentages of greatest dissatisfaction.

The Alabama School Journal reported one in three Alabama teachers were seriously considering leaving the profession. Those who expressed probable career changes were mature, experienced, and highly educated. As inadequate compensation and poor working conditions hinder the profession's ability to retain teachers; those same factors hinder the profession's ability to recruit new talent, especially in rural areas.

Rottier, Kelly & Tomhave (1983) chose to address stress factors which relate to teacher burnout, another major reason teachers leave the profession. The study stated environmental stress factors to be poor resources, inadequate teaching facilities, a large number of classroom interruptions, poor school organization, excessive paperwork, and decreasing job mobility. Many of these factors are present in teaching situations in rural schools.

Matthew & Carlson (1987) reported reasons teachers chose teaching positions in rural schools. The report revealed reasons rural teachers had accepted their present position

were as follows: pace of living, cost of living, and size of school. Teachers in urban settings rated social/cultural opportunities, community involvement opportunities, continuing education opportunities, professional autonomy, reputation of the school district, and access to tenure higher on the scale of importance than did rural teachers. Those accepting positions in rural school districts were seemingly more concerned about settling in the community, whereas their counterparts in suburban and urban settings seemed more concerned about their professional future.

Starting salary and fringe benefits are the major consideration for both rural and urban teachers. A sense of support is another reason for considering a position. For teachers in rural settings, the support from parents/community is important; whereas the urban and suburban teachers thought support from administration was more important (Matthew & Carlson, 1987).

Increased certification requirements may result in the decertification of some teachers who have previously taught some courses and may limit the number of new teachers with multiple certification.

Increased certification requirements may also affect the attraction and retention of teachers. Often those individuals who are motivated to obtain multiple certification are those motivated achievers, not only as teachers, but also as instructional and administrative leaders. They are interested in the economic and status rewards associated with excelling

in a job. Small, rural and economically disadvantaged school systems cannot successfully compete to attract those motivated teachers. Increased certification, therefore, limits the pool of multiple-certified teachers which are the very type teacher that is required to effectively staff a small school (Forbes, 1985).

The need for additional teachers and difficulty in retaining already trained and experienced teachers poses a major problem. According to The Condition of Education (1988) published by the U.S. Department of Education, the projected annual demand for new hiring of elementary school teachers in public schools in expected to jump between 1988 and 1989 and then to stabilize somewhat through 1997. The projected annual demand for secondary school teachers, is expected to increase rapidly from 1988 until 1995 before declining. Demand is expected to swell more than 35 percent by 1995, when it will peak. Most of this increase is due to the necessity of hiring almost 80 percent new teachers at the secondary level between 1988 and 1995.

Over half of the public and private high school principals surveyed by the U.S. Department of Education (1988) reported that their schools had trouble hiring fully qualified teachers in physics, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, and foreign languages. Rural high school principals were more likely to report difficulty in recruiting qualified mathematics, biology, earth science, special education, and general science teachers.

Perceptions of what constitutes a qualified teacher vary depending on one's role in the education chain. Rural school administrators need generalists, college faculty insist on teaching content areas to prepare specialists (Horn, 1985). The best rural teachers may be the ones who are able to cope with sparsity, utilize community resources, invent curriculum materials and are oriented toward children, not content (Sher, 1978).

Summary

Rural teachers are one of the most important factors in an effective education formula. Because of their flexibility and resourcefulness, they are often required to teach multiple grades, prepare enriching curriculum materials, be involved in extracurricular activities, while receiving inadequate pay, working under stress which might include poor teaching facilities, excessive paperwork, and little professional training or support.

The predicted need for teachers plus the rising dissatisfaction of some teachers will pose a problem for rural educators unless a solution is found to appeal to occupational interests and simultaneously provide financial incentives to attract and retain teachers to rural areas.

Curriculum
and
Classroom Management

CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The movement toward increased services, reduced class size, higher standards, accountability, competency-based curriculum and expanded learning opportunities for students will most likely continue to impact rural schools for the next few years. Trends reflecting concerns related to learning of thinking skills, efficient use of instructional technology, projected teacher shortages, increase in early childhood and life-long learning education programs will provide additional challenges and opportunities for rural schools (Forbes, 1985).

If education fails to prepare the youth of America for the kind of world in which they'll be living as adults, it will have failed in its purpose, no matter how many millions of people happen to graduate (Georgiades, 1979).

Teacher

The most significant person in the process of schooling is the teacher. Changes in curriculum implies a change in students' behavior. One can develop exciting designs for models and programs, but ultimately; the programs are no better, no stronger, than the teachers. Improving curriculum requires improving teaching and the quality of teachers (Georgiades, 1978).

For additional information concerning rural teachers, see section on Rural Teachers of this report.

Reform

Most States have approached reform to bring about improvement in schooling generally by setting forth mandates which determine the number of units in academic and complementary courses required to graduate. The length of the school day, the school year, and the length of periods within a day have been set in legislation in many cases. Passing grades, in every course taken by a student, is mandatory before a student can participate in extracurricular activities in a few States. These legislated mandates set parameters that are important to heed within the realm of local determination. School issues are community issues in rural areas. Local boards, administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders must reach a consensus insofar as possible on what the instructional goals of their students will be in the light of the State and Federal guidelines (Campbell, 1985).

Reform movements, in many cases, have caused greater pressure on rural schools. Reform efforts require additional course work to be completed before graduation from high school. University admission requirements are becoming more stringent. Loss of financial benefits, offered by some institutions, to students who were unable to complete certain requirements because advanced courses or foreign languages were not offered at the rural school is another barrier to rural students.

Rural schools have not been able to keep pace with State mandated high school requirements. Rural students should have options to take courses to fulfill graduation requirements, university or business requirements as well as to pursue personal interests. Geographical location of a student's residence should not be the determining factor in the availability of courses (Campbell, 1985).

Content

Content of a course is the substance taught in the course. Content can be derived on the basis of the district's goals and expectations. It is important that teachers be involved in the process of developing content to be included in the curriculum (Campbell, 1985).

Textbooks are an important part of content. Textbooks should be chosen on the basis of the goals and objectives which have evolved at the community level. This process is very difficult and time consuming even with the most dedicated teachers and administrators. Since textbooks chosen by any district will be influenced by the large textbook adoption States, mainly Texas, supplementary materials should have both a State and community emphasis (Campbell, 1985).

Textbook controversies frequently occur. Indoctrination versus critical thinking, on the one hand, and parental versus nonparental control of children's values seems to be the way endorsement of school control by support communities can be interpreted. A vast grey area of uncertainty embraces the issue of the school and its responsibility to different

community publics and to varied ideals. Legally the schools belong to the State; traditionally they are controlled by cities and local communities (Peskhin, 1978).

Management

Due to low pupil/teacher ratios, rural management is more likely to be learner-centered with strong emphasis placed on individualized and small group instruction. Small schools have greater potential to allow teachers to emphasize such teaching methods as discussions, oral reports, independent study, simulations, essay tests, etc. Multi-grade teaching is a common practice. Cross-age mixing of students allows younger students exposure to lessons and expectations of older students and also provides opportunities to receive personalized tutoring from them (Barker, 1986).

Delivery of courses to rural classes has changed in some rural schools due to telecommunications and computer technologies. Because of their small size and flexible adaptive natures, rural schools are becoming innovators in applications of technology and in networking. One such program using telecommunications to transcend space is the Louisiana School's telelearning Project. It provides advanced academic courses to students in thirteen schools throughout the State. This program was found to be a special service to rural systems and/or systems without gifted/talented programs at the secondary level. Since many schools can be on-line at a single time, participating systems can offer the classes to very small groups of students who then have an opportunity of

individual assistance to facilitate positive interaction (Lewis, 1989).

Summary

The last decade has been filled with criticisms of education. There needs to be a purposeful, planned, and sequential change or ultimately the education of our youth will be found outside the traditional school system (Georgiades, 979).

Schools traditionally are thought of as places for the education of youth. Pressures and aspirations for education experiences to enhance social mobility, greater earnings, and a better life do not contradict the conservative tendency to maintain continuity between generations. Schools basically transmit rather than modify critical matters of belief and outlook. People generally settle for a quality and type of schooling which suits them even though it may not promote to the fullest their child' personal development and social mobility. The school's noneducative community-maintenance function is a very important in rural schools (Peskhin, 1987).

Rural Youth

RURAL YOUTH

Introduction

Approximately 1/2 of the rural population is under 25 years of age. Of these approximately 30 percent live in the South. Rural youth are a large and significant part of the population. All rural areas are not homogenous; most rural residents are not farmers; they do not live in isolation from popular culture and their households are not universally composed of large, extended families (Howell, 1989).

Rural youth are frequently stereotyped. Labels that carry a negative connotation and represent an urban "put down" of rural residents are frequently used to describe rural youth. Among those names are "hicks", "rednecks", "plow-boys", and "crackers". (Cosby & Charner, 1979; Howell, 1989; Tindall, 1976). In terms of culture, rural Americans may still be somewhat isolated, but are in the mainstream of popular culture. The penetration of mass communication has put rural youth on a par in popular culture with their peers anywhere in the United States.

Rural areas are no longer free from what had been traditionally known as urban problems - drugs, alcohol, teen pregnancy, teen violence and school drop out.

Educational Status

Rural youth have a tendency to enter school later, progress through school more slowly, leave school earlier, attend postsecondary institutions less frequently, and participate less frequently in adult education programs than

does the rest of the population (Parks & Coke, 1979).

Drug and Alcohol Use

The Condition of Education (1988) published by the National Center for Education Statistics reports trends in the use of drugs and alcohol by high school seniors. According to the report, drug and alcohol abuse, which interferes with the thinking process vital to learning, is widespread among American students. Use of such substances generally begins in adolescence, and now even at earlier ages. While alcohol and illegal drug use declined in the 1980's, still 6 out of 10 students nationwide had tried an illicit substance by the time they were seniors.

The rise in cocaine use has been particularly dramatic in the last 10 years. In just four years, from the class of 1975 to the class of 1979, the proportion of students reported using cocaine in the past year doubled, going from about 6 percent to 12 percent. Annual cocaine use peaked at 13 percent and dropped to about 10 percent in 1987. There is evidence that the inexpensive and highly addictive form of cocaine called "crack" has not followed the general decline in usage.

In some states these figures are substantially higher than national averages. For example, a national survey taken in 1986 and reported in Preparing Louisiana Youth for the Twenty-First Century : An Agenda for School Improvement reported in Louisiana over 90 percent of high school seniors had used alcohol, 50 percent had used marijuana and 17

percent had used cocaine. This poses a serious problem.

Drop Out Factors

Various factors are associated with youth dropping out of school. Poor academic performance best predicts who will drop out. Teenage pregnancy is another major reason for students to drop out of school. In addition, a factor called "pushout process" all influence students tendency to drop out of school before graduation.

Teenage pregnancy is a major reason for youth dropping out of school. In Louisiana, for example, in 1986 there were 13,115 births to teenage mothers. That number accounts for 16.8 percent of all births in the state. Louisiana births to unwed mothers is 285.4 per 1000 births compared to the national birth rate of 220.2 per 1000. The children of teenagers have a greater infant mortality rate, and greater percentage of developing severe childhood illnesses, birth injuries, and neurological defects. This is a health problem with educational implications. (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1989).

A Ford Foundation Report (1988) reported in Preparing Louisiana Youth for the Twenty First Century: An Agenda for School Improvement states the mother's school attainment is an extremely important influence on a child's school readiness. The report indicates that the mother's level of schooling is more important than either marital status or an addition of $10,000 to a family's annual income.

The decision to leave school may also be influenced by

the "pushout process". Three school elements with a tendency to push students out are listed as follows: an unsupportive school or classroom climate with inadequate personal attention for at-risk students, an ineffective principal, and a lack of appropriate programs for the at-risk students. "At-risk" is defined in this report as children who are: born in charity hospitals, born to teenage parents, born into single parent home, born to families with incomes less than $15,000, and born into families with at least one parent who does not have a high school diploma (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1989).

Economic Implications

The South has the largest number of rural areas, rural youth and problems. Rural economy, rural youth and rural education are interconnected. The transition from manufacturing and agriculture toward information and service industries will demand an increasingly talented work force. Insufficient talent in the labor pool will discourage newer industries with jobs from investing in regional economy (Johnson & Scurlock, 1986) as cited by Howell (1989). The lack of jobs will contribute to talent drain, with youth abandoning the rural South for urban areas. This is a continuing cycle that must be broken. This paper addresses the economic implications of concern to rural youth in the section Rural Development in the South.

Summary

Focusing on rural youth without changing the social

structure will not significantly alter the cycle described by Howell (1989). Rural education is a complex issue. A blend of interventions based on understanding of rural education, rural political economies, and rural youth seems most promising (Howell, 1989).

School Finance

SCHOOL FINANCE

Introduction

The problem of financial support for rural schools has always been a problem in America. Although the status of rural communities ranges from debilitating poverty to affluence, most rural communities are relatively poor in both property wealth and income compared to urban and suburban areas (Mitzel, 1982).

The major financial considerations affecting the rural small schools are teacher recruitment and retention; quality, quantity and current relevance of curricular materials; supplemental sources of instruction (museums, theaters, libraries, laboratories, etc.); supplemental services (curriculum specialists, counselors, etc.); quality of facilities; cost per student; and local, State and Federal allocations (Mitzel, 1982).

The cost per pupil to provide qualified teachers, curriculum materials, facilities, and supplemental services is frequently twice as high as in small and/or rural schools as it is to supply equal benefits to urban or suburban schools (Mitzel, 1982).

State and Local Financial Support

The financing of American schools traditionally has been the responsibility of the State. Local school districts have borne the majority of the cost. Only in recent years has the combined State and Federal contribution to school

expenditures risen to an almost equal share to the local contributions in some States (Kennedy, 1988). The level of financial support for education coming from local sources varies from practically zero in the centralized educational system in Hawaii to nearly 90 percent in New Hampshire with its strong tradition of local autonomy (Sher, 1978). The State of Louisiana provides 60 percent of funds, while the Federal government provides only five percent and local districts provide the additional 35 percent (Charles Sherwood, personal communication, October 18, 1989). Federal support does vary from State to State, as an example, Mississippi received 23 p. cent of its support from the Federal government. New Hampshire, Michigan and Connecticut receive less than four percent of total operational funds from the Federal government (Sher, 1978).

The tendency in all States is toward increased support Augenblick & Nachtigal (1985). Kennedy (1988) reports the national average for State aid is now 50 percent.

Some local school districts have difficulty raising funds to supplement the State and Federal allocations. One of the most important sources of income is property tax. There is debate on this issue. Some observers argue that the property tax poses a hardship on rural citizens who tend to be "property rich" and "income poor". Some districts have a high assessed property value and a low income per pupil. Rural areas rarely have an industrial property base to offset the burden on personal property and they are genuinely

impoverished by any standard. Relying on local property taxes as a major revenue source of rural schools is neither equitable or economically sound (Sher, 1978).

In recent years, some States tied the financing of education to the severance tax on energy production. Three of these States, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Texas, that tied financing of education to the severance tax on energy production have suffered a decline in income with the drop in the demand for coal and oil in recent years. The drop in value of agricultural land prices in the mid-west has been another example of decreased income; thereby reducing property taxes that would have supplemented local districts (Augenblick & Nachtigal, 1985).

Expenditures for public schools have grown and continue to increase. Current average cost per pupil has risen from $1,917 to $3,173, a rise of nearly 66 percent from 1979 to 1983 (Augenblick & Nachtigal, 1985). The national average cost per pupil in 1987 was $3,977 (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1989).

State support for schools has become more important than ever. The steady increase in the proportion of all school revenue provided by States set the stage for some of the actions taken by States recently. State governments are increasing their control over the educational system. Fundamental changes in the educational system, at least those mandated by State legislatures, are more difficult to implement in States that provide a relatively small share of

the school revenue (Augenblick & Nachtigal, 1985).

Higher Cost Factors

The most important and unique feature of rural education finance lies in the higher cost associated with sparsity of population. Higher costs that arise as a consequence of sparsity must be regarded as one of the economic facts of rural life rather than as evidence of wastefulness or as costs which can be erased by stricter expenditure controls (Sher, 1978).

A primary example of these higher costs involves transportation. Relatively few students live in walking distance of the school. Most of the students are bused from an area of more than 50 square miles. Longer distances and poor roads increase costs (Sher, 1978).

The cost of specialized programs and services is also higher in rural schools d e to sparsity. Rural schools usually have such a low incidence of students with a particular problems or special need. It is impossible to provide the appropriate programs economically (Sher, 1978)

Population sparsity requires schools to spend a greater proportion of funds on energy cost, administrative overhead, equipment and materials, as well as maintenance and construction of school facilities. There are certain minimum fixed costs schools have to bear regardless of their enrollment. Fewer students over which to spread these costs increase the per-pupil cost in rural areas (Sher, 1978).

Larger rural schools have experienced vandalism, a

problem seldom experienced in small schools. Vandalism has caused financial adjustments in the increased cost of security systems, rising insurance costs and other security protection costs (Sher, 1978).

Another major problem is the inability of small rural schools to pay competing salaries to ad inistrators, faculty or staff. Rural schools will not be able to attract and hold excellent teachers until they pay wages comparable to urban areas.

Distribution of Funds

There is great diversity in the funding programs of the States which affect rural education. Elements of State plans generally can be divided into major categories: (1) eligibility - guides or requirements by which it is determined that a school or school district is eligible to receive special assistance; and (2) a. stance - the methodology and formulas that determine how that special aid is allocated to eligible schools and districts (Wright, 1981).

Eligibility

Eligibility factors include the following: student enrollment, instructional units, and/or number of teachers, population density/sparsity, isolation, and effort. Often the elements are interrelated (Wright, 1981).

Enrollment is a key factor in determining eligibility. Some examples of variation are described as follows: Four of the States have a district level enrollment factor. Special

aid is provided by Arkansas for the districts with less than 350 students, by Texas for districts with less than 1,000 pupils, by California for districts with 2,500 or less in average daily attendance, and the State of New Mexico for districts with fewer than 4,000 average daily membership. (Wright, 1981).

Two States have multiple enrollment categories covering elementary and secondary schools. Arizona has a level for schools with 0-100 students and for schools with 101-500 students. Kansas has four levels for the number of students enrolled. The categories are from 0-200, from 200-399, from 400-1,599 and for 1,600 and over (Wright, 1981).

A second eligibility factor in some States is the number of teachers or instructional units in a school or district. Special aid is furnished to one-teacher schools in Kentucky, North Dakota and Wyoming. Arizona provides additional aid to schools with four or less teachers (Wright, 1981).

Georgia makes special provisions for elementary schools with less than six teachers and for middle or secondary schools with less than ten teachers (Wright, 1981).

Population density or sparsity is another key element in the eligibility determination in some States (Tron, 1980). Kansas has a cost-density formula which it applies to determine the amount of State aid to be allocated for transportation. Nebraska's eligibility requirements include a population factor of less than four persons per square mile. Sparsity factors are used in Nevada's assistance program.

Oklahoma divides the "average daily haul for the next preceding year" by the "area served for the same period" to obtain an assistance factor. Pennsylvania uses a sparsity factor of less than 50 people per square mile and modified sparsity factor of 50 to 100 individuals per square mile. Texas utilizes categories of districts having an area of less than 300 square miles and those having more than 300 square miles which is tied to its eligibility of 1,000 or less (Wright 1981).

Isolation or distance from other schools is another eligibility factor for some States including Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Minnesota, Georgia, and Maine. Pennsylvania provides aid if distance and road conditions must make transporting children unfeasible. North Carolina, in cases where geographic conditions prohibit consolidation, grants eligibility. Utah aids for isolation by classifying them "Necessarily existent small rural schools" (Wright, 1981).

Some States require districts meet a minimum financial effort in order to be eligible for special assistance to small schools (Wright, 1981).

Assistance

Assistance is the mechanism for allocating financial aid to eligible schools and districts. There are three primary groupings; minimum support levels, added weightings for basic support, and size adjustments. Some of the methods States use to add extra funds to the basic support formulas are: Alaska has special formulas for rural and isolated schools,

Arkansas's average daily membership is increased by specific percentages. Arizona support level weights are adjusted for enrollments which are low. Colorado has a system of "bonus pupils" for schools with low enrollments, adding a certain amount of funding for each bonus pupil. Kansas uses the four enrollment categories to determine the "budget per pupil". Nevada's formulas provide for additional program units to small schools. North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Utah have formulas that vary slightly to meet their needs (Wright, 1981).

Several States, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, South Dakota and Washington set minimum support levels, so that schools with low enrollments are granted more than they would have earned under the regular formulas (Wright, 1981).

Size adjustment provisions are made in the following States: Connecticut, Maine, North Carolina, Texas, Washington and Wyoming. This special provision allows for special funding to be allocated because of size (Wright, 1981).

Louisiana is one of the several States that still does not have any provisions to provide special funding for isolated rural and/or small schools. State funds are allocated on the basis of average daily enrollment figures that are submitted to the office of the Superintendent of Education on October 1 of each year. Number of administrators, teacher units, and staff are based on these enrollment figures (Charles Sherwood, personal communication, October 18, 1989). The School Finance Advisory Committee

proposes a recommendation that provides a per pupil allocation be weighted to reflect differences in cost among grade levels, types of students and geographic areas of the State (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1989).

Summary

Financial support of rural schools remains a problem. Federal, State and local agencies have the responsibility to ensure that students are not penalized because of the location of their residence.

The cost of furnishing equal opportunities to rural students is higher. States that do not have funding programs with special allowances for sparsity or population, isolation factors or special education needs should consider changes in eligibility and assistance formulas in determining financial allocations, if equal opportunities are indeed offered to rural students since cost per pupil can be twice as high for small and/or rural schools as it is for urban or suburban students.

Reform Efforts, Current Policy and Future Focus

REFORM EFFORTS, CURRENT POLICY AND FUTURE FOCUS

Introduction

There is a basic belief that most rural schools have the capacity to improve. It requires only the right combination of local initiative, external assistance, creativity, and the will to provide children with the best education possible (Sher, 1978). The key to the equation is the balance of local initiative, external assistance, creativity and the will to change. A need must be realized before positive action is taken.

The problems, issues, and developments in rural education are quite complicated and the subject of continued concern and debate among rural educators and citizens. The literature on rural education is diverse and of uneven quality and the interpretation of the problems, issues and developments depends on one's historical, political, and economic background (DeYoung, 1987).

Reform Efforts

Discovering what should happen to improve rural education is very difficult. Blanket solutions are not feasible because of the diversity of rural communities. What may be appropriate for one setting does not fit another situation (Gjeltan & Nachtigal, 1979).

Reorganization in rural areas has frequently taken the form of consolidation, combining two or more attendance units. Consolidation has been promoted to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency has usually been associated

with economy of scale; a school with a concentration of pupils is cheaper to operate and Federal and State funding is usually provided on the basis of the number of students (Mitzel, 1982).

Reorganization in rural areas can cause high transportation costs, problems in disposing of assets and liabilities of old districts, and costs in procuring funds for the new facilities and difficulties in raising local money because of dependency on property taxes. Some negative aspects of consolidation is loss of local control and decline in the quality of community life (Mitzel, 1982).

There is disagreement of whether bigger schools are better, or whether there are advantages to being small. The relative advantages and disadvantages of local control, the value of maintaining the communities versus the arguments for efficiency and effectiveness and the proper balance between the good of the individuals/local communities versus the good of society are value issues. One's values determines the shape of the desirable reform and the appropriateness of strategies to bring about that reform. What is clear in rural reform is that successful interventions must have a high degree of congruity with the cultural setting of the community as well as with perceived educational needs (Gjelten & Nachtigal, 1979).

Gjelten & Nachtigal's effectiveness study (1979) of currently practiced rural education reform strategies revealed successful strategies are highly congruent with

community cultural setting and perceived needs. This study examined strategies that hypothesized that rural education would improve if: (1) it had access to the same kind of services available in urban settings; (2) teachers were better educated; (3) the community was more directly involved in the education decision process; (4) model exemplary systems using large amounts of Federal money were created to bring about comprehensive change; (5) more rural schools adopted proven educational practices; (6) better leadership were available; (7) schools were kept in the local community; (8) the curriculum focuses on the local community; (9) students are better prepared for the options available to them outside of their community; and (10) the community improved.

Based on the information collected and analysis of the case studies it is believed that positive change depends on a combination of (1) a sufficient hurt or perceived need; (2) outside spark, an awareness of what could happen; plus (3) individuals with a commitment to the community which goes beyond career, the school, or the specific reform strategy (Gjeltan & Nachtigal, 1979).

Nachtigal's report Improving Rural Schools (1980) and comprehensive report Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way (1982) compiled the findings and analysis of 13 case studies. The cases were chosen to provide examples of particular strategies and also to represent the diversity that characterizes rural America. These case studies were the

subject of the combined Gjeltan & Nachtigal effort to discern what reform strategies are most effective and long lasting.

Current Policy

Policymaking for rural schools involves stakeholders in the Federal government, citizen organizations, private foundations, State legislatures, State education departments and local boards of education. Who makes policy for rural America and who might be responsible for implementing changes is probably related to the proportion of funding provided for education by each stakeholder. Initiatives to improve rural schools might begin at the Federal level, but they are not likely to be very effective unless supported at the State and local level. The State share of the education budget has increased, while the Federal share has decreased (Meyers, 1988). A better mechanism for policy input at the Federal and State levels is needed. The primary responsibility for education rests with the State (Edington, 1980).

Focus on the Future is a publication presenting the results of more than two years study and consensus building regarding rural policy. It reflects the input of approximately 700 rural leaders, 50 States and 28 national organizations and agencies, and faculty from 20 land-grant universities. This input was collected from four regional rural development policy workshops held in 1988 in Minneapolis, Syracuse, Birmingham and Reno (Knutson & Fisher, 1988).

The conclusion of the workshops was that current rural

development policy is not adequate, is not reflective of rural needs, and is not comprehensive. The current rural development policy is limited in scope to two series of sectorial programs and a series of national programs with rural dimensions that are not really tailored to meet rural needs.

The sectorial programs are directed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers a host of rural programs, the largest of which are the domestic farm or commodity programs which are designed to bolster farm income and prevent decline in farm numbers and agribusiness activity. Many rural areas now depend on industries other than agriculture. USDA administers extensive rural lending programs through the Farmers Home Administration and the Rural Electric Administration. These rural leaders thought the potential of this lending had not been focused on dealing with rural business development and intrastructure issues.

Programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Labor, the Economic Development Administration, the Small Business Administration and the Department of Education directly affect rural development. The main problem with these national programs was the lack of focus on rural programs with specific needs pinpointed.

The group expressed the opinion that two major rural

concerns, rural education and rural health are not addressed by current policy or are discriminated against. Throughout the rural South, expenditures on rural education are far below average despite State governments providing an above average share of school funding. The lack of help now, will result in the government paying more later in social welfare programs.

The participants in the regional development workshops, as reported in Focus on the Future (1988) stated there needs to be a balance between the building the capacity of people to deal with their problems, physical intrastructure and job creation. Programs are needed to build the capacity of rural residents to cope with change. This will require emphasis on education, health care, and leadership.

Federal Government's Rural Education Policy for the 1980's

The Department of Education activities in support of rural education and details of the Department's rural education policy for the 1980's was presented at the 75th annual conference of the Rural Education Association held in October of 1983 (Worthington, 1983).

The Department remains committed to programs to help urban youth and adults. An effort is being made to provide programs that address the educational needs of rural and small town youth and adults. Those educated in rural areas must be provided with the basic educational tools to enter an increasingly complex workforce. To meet this goal, the Department of Education adopts the following policy.

Rural education shall receive an equitable share of the information, services, assistance and funds available from and through the Department of Education and its sources.

To the extent that resources are available, the Department of Education is prepared to take the following initiatives:

The Department will assist educators and administrators on all levels interested in developing outreach and volunteer programs with the active support and interaction of parents, teachers, civic groups and the business community to improve the delivery of educational services of rural communities.

The Department will work to expand the data base on the condition of education in rural areas, and will provide the necessary technologies to disseminate the information relevant to curriculum, organization, personnel and support services needed for educational institutions serving rural communities. Data collection will focus 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. To disseminate information to educational institutions and programs serving rural communities, including rural school districts, the Department will utilize State Departments of Education; ERIC/CRESS; the Rural Education Association and other professional and service organizations; national advisory councils; youth organizations; intermediate units; American Education Magazine; and, county and local agencies.

The Department, with appropriate control staff will closely monitor Education program regulations, eligibility and evaluation criteria, subregulatory directives and administrative policies to insure equity for all LEA's regardless of size, location or condition. Monitoring will focus on reducing complexity of criteria for funding; reducing complexity of application and reporting procedures and forms; and reducing unrealistic requirements in general while insuring competent and enlightened staff monitoring.

The Department will assist in identifying and developing special programs available for handicapped individuals located in rural areas.

The Department will provide personnel to coordinate the consolidation of available research on shortages and

additional needs for analysis by the Secretary's Rural Education Committee. Research will focus on effective practices and characteristics of effective rural programs and projects.

The Department will include rural institutions in demonstration and pilot projects, and will involve cross sections of rural communities in educational technology planning.

The Department will provide consultative and technical assistance to rural educational entities as a means to improve the quality of education in rural areas. To facilitate communications, the Department will support initiatives such as an annual national forum; a monthly newsletter; and utilization of extension services and existing organizations of extension services and existing organizations for dissemination of information.

The Department will assist in improving public sector/private sector collaboration by coordinating networks at local, regional, State and Federal levels.

The Department will assist rural education in improving the achievement of black students, American Indian students, children of migrant workers and other minorities. To this end, the Department will focus on data concerning rates of graduation from high school and college, including secondary and postsecondary vocational institutions and programs; gains in functional literacy, changes in college enrollment and achievements in adult education.

The Department will assist individuals and families in rural areas with family education programs and services through vocational home economics education, an established delivery system, as a means of improving quality of rural family education (Bell, 1983).

The Federal government's rural education policy for the 1980's states rural education shall receive an equitable share of the information, services, assistance and funds available from and through the Department of Education (Bell, 1983). The policy primarily states the role of the Federal government will be as a data collecting and disseminating agency. Funds, which are required to make certain

positive changes so that equal opportunities are available to rural students, have not been adequate or directed to specific rural needs. The Education and Rural Development in the South section of this paper discusses this need for Federal intervention.

Future Focus

The Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory has collected ideas for the future in an informative booklet entitled Redesigning Rural Education. These ideas either are being implemented or have already been implemented in rural small schools with success. The ideas are divided into three levels. Level one alternatives can be implemented by a single school district without changing the existing organizational structure. Level two alternatives are more complex, requiring the cooperative effort of two or more districts and/or changes in existing organizational patterns. Level three alternatives require design changes in the mission, organization, and operation of the school.

Level 1 Alternatives are as follows: correspondence courses, multiple class teaching (teaching more than one subject to different pupils in the same class period), micro-computers for instruction, simulations, data access ..., and multi-age groupings. Other Level 1 alternatives suggested are more effective use of existing staff, use of conference phones to bring in outside resource people, satellite instruction for full classes or curriculum enrichment, using the community as a resource (contracting with local

businesses for career exploration and vocational training, community volunteers to serve as experts for special content areas or as teacher aides), and providing resources for the community (opening the school early so people can walk and exercise, sharing the kitchen facilities for food services for the community, operating a joint community/library, using school buses as transportation for the elderly).

Level II Alternatives are: share instructional staff with neighboring schools, coordinate buying and sharing specialized instructional materials, share students for specialized courses, alternative scheduling arrangements (block scheduling to eliminate study halls), traveling classrooms for subjects needing special facilities, inter-active television for sharing courses, and gifted student or special interest seminars involving neighboring schools.

Level III Alternatives require major redesign. These alternatives include redesigning the curriculum into broad integrated content areas about topics critical to the 21st Century (energy, ecology, technology and change, international cooperation), rethinking the mission of the public schools to include rural economic development, and in some communities the delivery of health and welfare services, redefining the role of teachers and administrators consistent with the restructured mission and curriculum, integrating technology into the program where appropriate, creating

educational infrastructures at the State and intermediate agency level which will facilitate and support quality rural schools.

Level III Alternatives will require changes in policy and regulations for the redesign of schools. Most States have provisions for experimental programs. Some States not only exempt pilot schools from all existing regulations, but provide additional resources to explore more effective ways of achieving quality education (Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory).

Partnership arrangements with the private sector and higher education promise new avenues for rural education to meet future obligations. Activities vary depending on school and partner needs, interests and resources. Effective partnerships develop relationships fostering trust, enhancing communication, exchanging information, while fostering a sense of participation in future events. Positive images for the school and community are created and enhanced. Successful partnership activities include classes for students at business sites, adopt-a-school program, pre-service/inservice teacher education courses, computer literacy programs, and use of community resources. There are as many successful projects as there are problems. (Lick, 1985; Department of Education, 1984; Miller & Miller, 1979).

Summary

Rural America continues to experience a disproportionate

share of the education and economic deprivation that exists in America. Though gains have been made, rural communities continue to lag behind the rest of America in educational achievement and economic well-being (Worthington, 1983).

Parks, Ross & Just (1982) state education has seldom been improved by a process where theoretical studies are conducted in isolation from school settings and the findings then somehow applied. School improvements most often occur when those with the highest stakes - students, teachers, administrators, parents, and concerned citizens - are the ones who plan, choose, and participate in experimental innovations. There is no "one best system" to improve rural schools due to the diversity of location, attitudes, economic structure, and political traditions.

Failure in improvement often occurs when one or both of two conditions exist; local people do not perceive the problem that reformers identify, or there is an inadequate national support for innovations until they are firmly in place (Parks, Ross & Just, 1982).

Change is a complex process. Transplanting promising practices, developed and validated in one site, to another site that is deficient does not guarantee the same or similar results. Rural schools interested in implementing ideas that show promise should: (1) clearly define the nature of the improvement - including anticipated outcomes, the roles and responsibilities of service providers and personnel of the local school, (2) assess the conditions that are likely to

hinder the improvement effort and develop plans to cope with these possible barriers, (3) identify and address problems rather than their systems, and (4) select strategies that either directly or indirectly enhance the local school's capacity to improve and accrue resources for improvements (Kane, 1988).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Augenblick, John & Nachtigal, Paul M. (1985). Equity in Rural School Finance Paper presented at the National Rural Education Forum, Kansas City, Mo., August 12-14, 1985. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 258 788)

Barker, Bruce O. (1986). The Advantages of Small Schools. ERIC Digests (Report No. RC 015 607) Las Cruces, N.M.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 265 988)

Beaulieu, Lionel J. (1988). The Rural South in Crisis: An Introduction. In Lionel J. Beaulieu (Ed.) The Rural South in Crisis: Challenges for the Future (pp. 1-11). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Bell, T.H. (1983). Rural Education and Rural Family Education Policy for the 80's. In Robert Worthington, A Rural Education Policy for the 80's, Paper presented at the Annual Rural Education Association Conference, Manhattan, Ks., October 16-18, 1983. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 234 977).

Billings, Dwight B. (1988). The Rural South in Crisis: A Historical Perspective. In Lionel J. Beaulieu (Ed.) The Rural South in Crisis: Challenges for the Future (pp. 13-27). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. (1989). Preparing Louisiana Youth For The Twenty-First Century: An Agenda For Improvement (Part I: Goals and Initiatives). Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State Department of Education.

Brown, David L. (1989). Demographic Trends Relevant to Education in Nonmetropolitan America. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 19-30). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Campbell, Anne (1985). Components of Rural School Excellence, Paper presented at the National Rural Education Forum, Kansas City, Mo., August 12-14, 1985. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 258 783)

Cobb, James C. (1982) The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development 1936-1980. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Cosby, Arthur & Ivan Charner (Eds.). (1978). Education and Work in Rural America: The Social Context of Early Career and Achievement. College Station: Texas A&M University.

Culter, Steven (1989). Observations of a Rural Legislator. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.) Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 1-3). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

DeYoung, Alan J. (1987). The Status of American Rural Education Research: An Integrated Review and Commentary. Review of Educational Research, 57(2), 123-148.

Dunne, Faith (1983). Good Government vs. Self-Government: Educational Control in Rural America. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 252-256.

Dunne, Faith & William S. Carlsen. (1981). Small Rural Schools in the United States: A Statistical Profile. Unpublished manuscript, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

Edington, Everette D. (1981). Rural Education: Key Policy Issues. In B.J. Chandler (Ed.) Standard Education Almanac (pp. 334-340) Chicago: Marquis Academic Media.

Forbes, Roy H. (1985). State Policy Trends and Impacts on Rural School Districts (Report No. RC 015 369) Washington, D.C.: Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 258 787)

Forbes, Roy H. (1989). Rural Education and the Reform Movement. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 37-41). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Ford Foundation. (1988). Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills Poor Families, and Our Economic Future (pp. 35-38)

Georgiades, William. (1978). How Good is Your School. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Georgiades, William. (1979) Curriculum: Do or Die. In Don Miller & Barbara Miller, (Eds.) Time and Resource Management For Small Schools (pp. 34-37), (Report No. RC 011 178) Austin, Tx.: National Educational Laboratory Publishers, Inc., (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 167 305)

Gjelten, Tom & Nachtigal, Paul (1979). Improving Rural Education: Some Ideas for the Future (Report No. RC 011 351) Denver, Colo.: Education Commission of the States. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 172 979)

Hobbs, Darly (1985). Bridging, Linking, Networking the Gap: Uses of Instructional Technology in Small Rural Schools, Paper presented at the National Rural Education Forum, Kansas City, Mo.; August 12-14, 1985. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 258 786)

Hobbs, Daryl L. & Don A. Dillman (1982). Research for the Rural United States. In Don Dillman & Hobbs, Daryl J. (Eds.) Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980's (pp. 1-9). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Horn, Jerry G. (1985). Recruitment and Preparation of Quality Teachers for Rural Schools, Paper presented at the National Rural Education Forum, Kansas City, Mo., August 12-14, 1985. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. Ed 258 785)

Howell, Frank M. (1989). Rural Education Reform and Rural Youth in the United States: Some Thoughts with Special Reference to the South. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 9-16). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Jacobsmeyer, Donald J. (1980). Rural Education Initiative. A Report on the Regional Rural Roundtables (Report No. RC 011 969) Washington D.C.: Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 184 735)

Jess, James D. (1989). A Local School Perspective. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.) Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 43-46). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Johnson, Kenney & Marilyn Scurlock. (1986). The Climate for Workers: Where Does the South Stand?. Southern Changes 8 (Nos. 4-5), 3-15.

Kane, Cheryl Chase (1989). Implementation of Promising Practices: Necessary Conditions. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 55-60). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Kennedy, Jack L. (1989). An Education Writer's Reflections on Rural Education. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education, A Changing Landscape (pp. 47-51). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Knutson, Ron & Dennis Fisher ("Compiled by"). Focus on the Future: Options in Developing a New National Rural Policy. College Station, Tx.: Texas A&M University.

Larsh, Ed (1983). Touch and Go In Lincoln County. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 263-269.

Lewis, Gail (1989). Serving the Gifted in Rural Areas. Roeper Review, 11 (4), 195-198.

Lick, Dale W. (1985). Rural School Partnerships with Higher Education and the Private Sector, Paper presented at the National Rural Education Forum, Kansas City, Mo., August 12-14, 1985. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 258 789)

Manno, Bruno V. (1989). Introduction. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (p.iii). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Matthes, William & Robert Carlson (1987). Why Do Teachers Choose Rural Schools? The Education Digest, 11, 27-29.

Meyers, Herman W. (1988). Improving Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness in Rural Schools: Implications for Policymakers. In Joyce D. Stern (Ed.), Rural Education: A Changing Landscape (pp. 61-67). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory. Redesigning Rural Education: Ideas For Action. (Department of Education Contract Number 400-86-0002). Aurora, Co.: Author.

Miller, Don, & Miller, Barbara (1979). Time and Resource Management for Small Schools (Report No. RC 011 178) University Park: New Mexico State University, ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 167 305)

Mitzel, Harold E. (Ed.). (1982). Rural Education. In Harold E. Mitzel (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (Vol. 4), (pp. 1627-1635). New York: Mac Millan.

Muse, Ivan (1980). Training Teachers For Rural Areas. Compact, Fall, 6-7, 35.

Muse, Ivan, Robert J. Parsons & Edward Hoppe (1975). A Study of Rural Teachers and the Rural Schools as Perceived by School Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and Students. Salt Lake City, Ut.: Mimeographed.

Nachtigal, Paul M. (1980). Improving Rural Schools. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Nachtigal, Paul M. (1982). Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Parks, Gail A. & Gordon Hoke (1979). Federal Education Programs and Rural Development Needs: An Unrealized Potential, Paper presented at the Rural Education Seminar, College Park, Maryland, May 29031, 1985. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 172 970)

Parks, Gail Armstrong, Peggy J. Ross & Anne E. Just (1982). Education. In Don Dillman & Hobbs, Daryl J. (Eds.), Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980's (pp. 185-195). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Parks, Gail & Sher, Jonathan P. (1979). Imaginary Gardens? Real Problems: Analysis of Federal Information Sources on Rural Education (Report No. RC 011 208) University Park: New Mexico State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 167 318)

Partnerships in Action. Building Partnerships for Quality Education in Rural America. (1984). Paper prepared for distribution at the National Conference on Building Partnerships for Quality Education in Rural America, Washington, D.C., June 28-30, 1984. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 251 286).

Peskhin, Alan (1978). Growing Up American. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Powers, Edward O. & Edward O. Moe (1982). The Policy Context for Rural-Oriented Research. In Don Dillman & Hobbs, Daryl J. (Eds.), Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980's (pp. 10-20). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Rosenfeld, Stuart A. (1988). The Tale of Two Souths. In Lionel J. Beaulieu (Ed.) The Rural South in Crisis: Challenges for the Future (pp. 351-377). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Ross, Peggy J. & Green, Bernal (1979). Impacts of the Rural Turnaround on Rural Education (Report No. RC 011 218) University Park: New Mexico State University. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 168 759)

Rottier, Jerry, William Kelly & William K. Tomhave (1983). Teacher Burnout - Small and Rural School Style. Education, 104, 72-79.

Schertz, Lyle P 1988). Improvements in The Rural South; They Won't Come Easy. In Lionel J. Beaulieu (Ed.) The Rural South in Crisis: Challenges for the Future (pp. 365-374). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Sher, Jonathan (Ed.). (1977). Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, Boulder, Co.: Westview.

Sher, Jonathan P. (1978). Revitalizing Rural Education: A Legislator's Handbook (Report No. RC 011 133) Washington, D.C.: National Rural Center. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 168 750)

Staff. (1989, September 29). Teachers List Reasons For Leaving Profession. Alabama School Journal, P.1.

Stern, Joyce D. (Ed.). (1988) The Condition of Education (Vol. 1). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Tindall, G.B. (1976). The Ethnic Southerns. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press.

Tron, Ester, (1980). Public Schools' Finance Programs, 1978-1979. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

United States Department of Agriculture. (1987). Rural Economic Development in the 1980's. (Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 533). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Voth, Donald & Diana Danforth (1987). Attitudes of Arkansas Toward Schools. Arkansas Farm Research, XXVII(6),9.

Winter, William F. (1988). Charting a Course for the Rural South. In Lionel J. Beaulieu (Ed.) The Rural South in Crisis: Challenges for the Future (pp. 358-364). Boulder, Co.: Westview Press.

Worthington, Robert M. (1983). A Rural Education Policy for the 80's, Paper presented at the Annual Rural Education Association Conference, Manhattan, Ks., October 16-18, 1983. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 234 977).

Wright, Lyle O. (1981). Special Funding for Small and/or Isolated Schools (Report No. RC 012 498). Las Cruces, N.M.: Utah State Office of Education & ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 200 342)