DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 392 RC 017 988

AUTHOR	Spears, Jacqueline D.; And Others
TITLE	Accommodating Change and Diversity: Linking Rural Schools to Communities. A Report of the Ford Western Taskforce.
INSTITUTION	Kansas State Univ., Manhattan. Rural Clearinghouse for Education and Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Jul 90
NOTE	81p.; For a related document, see ED 326 362.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Case Studies; Economic Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Entrepreneurship; *Rural Development; *Rural Education; Rural Environment; *Rural Schools; *School Community Programs; *School Community Relationship; Social Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Educational Diversity; Nebraska; South Dakota

ABSTRACT

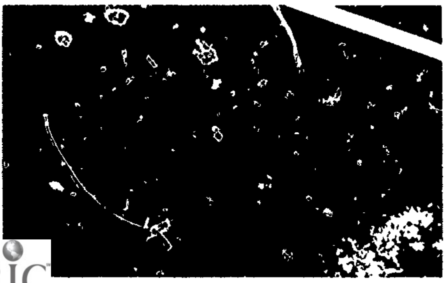
Rural America has been experiencing dramatic changes and is becoming an increasingly diverse society. To explore the process by which rural schools define and work towards change, case studies were conducted on two rural schools that have established unusually strong links with their communities. Information was collected by personal interviews with school personnel, students, and community members. The two case study sites, Belle Fourche, South Dakota, and York, Nebraska, developed programs to consistently work with the community. Both communities are struggling, however, facing increased social and economic needs at a time when fiscal resources and the population are decreasing. Belle Fourche uses the entrepreneurial curriculum as a vehicle to link the school to community development efforts; York has broadened a community education effort to coordinate social services for lifelong learning among the community's adults. In relation to the case studies, the document also reviews the decade-old themes that the rural school should be involved in local development. It focuses on (1) the reciprocal benefits for educational and economic development between the school and the community; (2) involvement of rural schools in community social services; and (3) rural schools' active role in lifelong learning for community adult members. A list of resource persons, a case study framework and questions, and a 45-item bibliography are included. (ALL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 328 392

Accommodating Change and Diversity: Linking Rural Schools to Communities

Ford Western Taskforce
Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development



RC 017988

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Jacqueline Spears
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

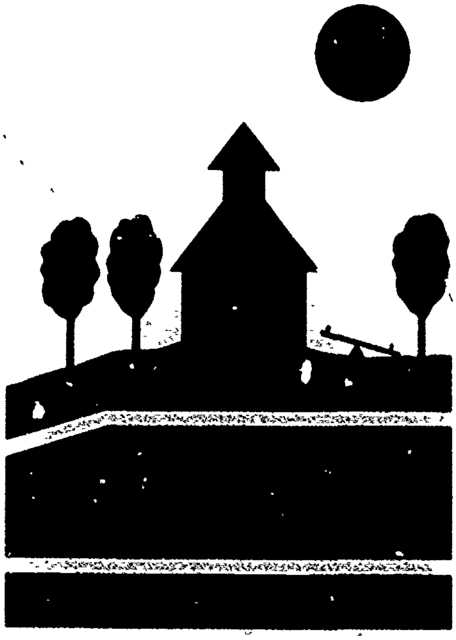
U S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Accommodating Change and Diversity: Linking Rural Schools to Communities

A Report of the Ford Western Taskforce

Jacqueline D. Spears
Larry R. Combs
Gwen Bailey

Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development
July 1990



ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

Table of Contents

Foreword v

Introduction 1

Framework for the Study 3

Case Studies 11

Belle Fourche, South Dakota

York, Nebraska

Rural Schools and Community Development 29

Rural Schools and Social Services 37

Rural Schools and Lifelong Learning 45

Resources 53

Appendix 72

4

Ford Western Taskforce

Ray Barnhardt
College of Human and Rural
Development
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Weldon Beckner
National Center for Smaller Schools
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX 79409

Kathryn S. Begaye
Arizona State Department
of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Ignacio R. Cordova
Scholes Hall
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Juliet Garcia
Texas Southmost College
880 Fort Brown
Brownsville, TX 78520

Daryl Hobbs
University of Missouri at Columbia
812 Clark Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Dick Jonsen
Western Interstate Commission
on Higher Education
P.O. Drawer P
Boulder, CO 80302

Paul Nachtigal
Mid-Continent Regional
Educational Laboratory
12500 East Iliff Avenue, Suite 201
Aurora, CO 80014

Lenora Plothow
1254 N. 1220 West
Provo, UT 84604

Peg Portscheller
Minot Public Schools
215 2nd Street SE
Minot, ND 58701

Armondo Valdez
10 Jordan Avenue
Los Altos, CA 94022

Bobby Wright
Center for the Study of Higher
Education
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Helen Zongolowicz
P.O. Box 314
Tohatchi, NM 87325

Foreword

Work on this publication has been a journey through the many small communities that dot the western landscape. For the most part, land west of the Mississippi River is characterized by wide open spaces. Communities are small and dispersed, many separated by as much as one hundred miles. States with some of the lowest population densities—Idaho, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, to name a few—are found here.

Rich natural resources have historically been the region's strength. Whether it be ores found beneath the ground, forests harvested above the ground, or livestock and grains nurtured by the ground, land has offered the base upon which most states developed their economies. While the region has not endured the persistent poverty characteristic of the rural South and much of Appalachia, it has had its share of problems. Boom and bust cycles lead to fluctuating populations. States west of the Mississippi include more than two-thirds of the counties experiencing either rapid growth or population decline during the past decade. Those facing population decline, much of the Midwest and Northwest, struggle with resources—searching for a broader economic base with which to stabilize their communities.

Through the eyes of educators, we have caught a glimpse of the role schools can play in this search. Whether it be creating new businesses, supporting community development, coordinating social services, or broadening the knowledge base of adults, rural schools have found ways to help, improving the relevance and quality of education offered to community youth in the bargain. Efforts have tightened the link between school and community, enabling the school to reexamine its responsibilities to the local culture as well as to the broader society.

For a number of reasons, rural schools have struggled. Limited resources, models of schooling that are often more urban than rural in their design, an uneven political playing field—all have combined to limit both the resources and flexibility of rural schools. As we began this project, we were dismayed by the defensiveness of rural educators and seemingly impenetrable conflicts that surfaced in nearly any conversation about rural schools. Finally, we set the past aside!

In setting the past aside, we began seeing a different world—a world of possibilities, a world of immense creativity, and a world that understands local differences. This report is one of two designed to share what rural schools *can do.* Rural schools offer an educational environment in which change can occur more easily, adult-child linkages are more visible, and school-community linkages are more natural. Rural schools need to take advantage of these strengths, working towards restructuring that may well be more easily accomplished than in a larger district.

A number of people contributed to this publication and deserve a hearty round of thanks. Peter Stanley, Director of the Education and Culture Program at the Ford Foundation, supported the creation of the Western Taskforce and offered encouragement as we struggled to define a focus for its work. Barbara Hatton, Deputy Director of the Education and Culture Program at the Ford Foundation, joined us early in the project and offered valuable advice. Both Peter and Barbara continually challenged yet empowered us.

Full Text Provided by ERIC

The Ford Western Taskforce offered a valuable forum within which to explore issues related to rural schools and was responsible for selecting the focus of both research groups. They also reviewed early drafts of the reports, offering us the benefit of their considerable experience in education. We thank them for their leadership.

The Rural School Organization Focus Group, a working committee appointed by the Ford Western Taskforce, provided most of the guidance for both the research and this publication. In many respects, these are the true leaders in the field. Each has a deep commitment to rural education and experience in working with schools in a variety of states. Our sincere thanks go to them for their help!

Finally, the schools themselves were generous in both time and information shared. Research efforts of this type ultimately depend on the willingness of individual schools and their staff to teach us about their community and school. We hope that this report offers them a chance to acknowledge their success as well as a resource with which to discover what might yet be possible.

Jacqueline D. Spears
July 1990

Rural School Organization Focus Group

Weldon Beckner
National Center for Smaller Schools
Texas Tech University
Box 4560
Lubbock, TX 79409

Paul Dingeman
Principal
Belle Fourche High School
Belle Fourche, SD 57717

Gloria Gregg
Center for Community Education
250 Reid
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59717

Harry Kujath
Community Education
Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Randy Morris
Black Hills Special Services
Cooperative
P.O. Box 218
Sturgis, SD 57785

E. Robert Stephens
EDPA—College of Education
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Notice of Nondiscrimination
Kansas State University is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, handicap, religion, age, sexual preference, or other nonmerit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities, and employment, all as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries, including those concerning Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, has been delegated to Jane D. Rowlett, Ph.D., Director, Affirmative Action Office, 214 Anderson Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506-0104, (913/532-6220).

7521-1090-2,500

Introduction

Nearly a century ago, rural America—its people and its vast natural resources—lay at the heart of an emerging nation. Farm income accounted for about one-fifth of the Nation's gross national product, with other natural resource-based incomes making additional contributions. More than sixty percent of the population lived in rural areas, on farms or in communities of less than 2,500. Thousands of small communities dotted the landscape, serving residents and farms within a few miles' radius. Communities were culturally homogenous, reflecting the immigration and settlement patterns of the century before. Nearly half the population was engaged in farming and agricultural work, leading to a shared understanding of what it took to make a living. People met their needs, indeed lived out their entire lives near where they had been born. Rural took on a meaning distinct from urban, describing differences in livelihood, values, opportunities, lifestyles, and education in addition to density of population.

As this century gives way to the next, rural America finds itself changed. A little more than one-fourth of the Nation's population now lives in rural areas. Many small communities have disappeared, as regional shopping centers, county medical facilities, and consolidated schools serve people's needs. Migration, from urban centers as well as from the countryside, has altered the cultural character of surviving communities, making them far more heterogeneous. Less than three percent of the rural population is engaged in farming. Seven separate descriptors classify the economic character of nonmetropolitan counties, only two of which refer to natural resource-based activities. Improved transportation and communication technologies have greatly reduced isolation, offering rural populations access to the operas in New York, markets in Chicago, ballets in Houston, restaurants in nearby urban centers, congressional deliberations in Washington, DC, and football games in San Francisco. Distinctions between rural and urban have faded, as rural economies diversify and rural people are extended access to education, national affairs, and the mass culture.

What persists in rural America is a *culture of small places*—a set of values and behaviors that reflect an environment in which individuals are noticed. Nachtigal (1982) points out a number of characteristics of this culture—more frequent and intense social interactions, informal patterns of communication, and the value placed on generalists rather than specialists. Another is respect for local context. After struggling to piece together resources and build consensus, rural citizens understand well that what has worked in their community may not work in a neighboring community. Differences are acknowledged and accepted as a necessary consequence of small size and limited resources.

This culture of small places, its attention to individuals and respect for local context, became the focus of a two year research effort into educational change. Under the direction of the Ford Western Taskforce, staff at the Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development at Kansas State University explored rural schools in states west of the Mississippi River. The design of the study was selected to match what we believe to be the needs of rural schools—information on a wide range of practices as well as closer looks at how schools define and work towards change. Two characteristics of modern life—change and diversity—provided the framework. This study summarizes research into how rural schools are responding to the economic and social change underway in rural communities. Another examines how ru[illegible] schools are adapting to the ethnic diversity present in our society.

The information presented is not intended to be prescriptive, nor is its utility restricted to rural educators. We do hope that the study stimulates rural schools to initiate change, selecting practices and strategies that acknowledge and build upon local needs and resources. But we also believe that the experiences in rural communities have much to contribute to broader work in school reform. As urban schools begin their own restructuring, we hope that what the culture of small places has to share will prove empowering.

References

Nachtigal, P.M. (1982). *Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Framework for the Study

Change and diversity—no two words better describe the challenges facing the nation and its educational system. Characterized as a transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, the past decade has witnessed a significant restructuring of the American economy, sounding an alarm for a better educated work force. Growth in minority populations coupled with their low high school graduation and college attendance rates has sounded yet another alarm. In an economy where access depends on education, those whom the educational system fails may find themselves condemned to poverty.

Economic restructuring and increased ethnic diversity have led to calls for improved schools. This study explores a number of efforts to restructure rural schools. Its methods and approach grew out of research into schools and economic restructuring, a series of deliberations involving the Rural School Organization Focus Group, and a perspective towards rural practice implicit in the work of the Rural Clearinghouse. This chapter reviews the background for the study and presents the research design used to collect and interpret efforts at rural school change.

Schools and Economic Restructuring

The release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 marked the beginning of efforts to support sustained educational change. Initial reforms, most of which led to state mandates aimed at improving quality, met with mixed success. Increases in student test scores were often accompanied by increased dropout rates, especially among minority youth. A second reform movement is now taking shape, based on a series of reports that address far more complex issues (Green, 1987). As economic restructuring continues, educators and community leaders alike are recognizing that schools need to become substantially different places.

Restructuring for the Information Age

For some time, social theorists have argued that industrialized nations are moving into a new stage of development, referred to as post-industrialism, advanced industrialism (Bell, 1973; Brzezinski, 1970), or more recently the Information Age. Characterized by the use of sophisticated technology, dependence on knowledge resources, expansion of public services, and increased interdependence of sectors, the Information Age creates a new context for education.

Given that a fundamental purpose of schooling is to prepare young people for the world of work, schools have been influenced by the way in which work is done. Throughout the Industrial Age, the Nation's work has been accomplished largely by factories. Punctuality, obedience, and the ability to perform repetitive tasks have all been essential to the productive factory. Standardization of products, specialization of tasks, and centralization of decision-making were common strategies for organizing.

It should come as no surprise that schools have incorporated these characteristics. Schools are large. The curriculum is standardized. Students learn by practicing skills, often in a rote and seemingly unconnected fashion. Power has shifted from the local community to the state, centralizing authority.

The Information Age ushers in a new way of doing business, a new way of working. Businesses point to the need to customize rather than standardize products, manage rather than be part of an assembly line, and collaborate with rather than compete against others. Moreover, the commodity now valued is knowledge, not natural resources or products that can be manufactured from those natural resources. Traits valued in this new environment include flexibility, creativity, and the ability to work effectively with others. Intellectual skills needed include the ability to solve problems, communicate clearly, as well as locate and process information. Since adults are likely to change jobs several times throughout their lives, skills and motivation for lifelong learning are also important. In order to respond to these changes, schools need more than a little fixing up—they need to be fundamentally restructured.

While we have no model of a restructured school, McCune (1987) and others have articulated many of the changes needed—decentralization, increased participation of teachers in curricular matters, emphasis on teaching methods of processing and applying information, and greater use of community resources. This effort to open up the system and allow more diversity in educational practice can be seen as a response to the need to better serve a more diverse population. But it also enables teachers, school administrators, and communities to become more deeply invested in the process of change.

Schools need to move beyond current knowledge, teaching students how to acquire and apply new knowledge rather than memorize existing knowledge bases. Teachers need to move beyond mechanical methods and hierarchical curricula, inviting students to develop skills within the context of information and explore subjects in an interrelated fashion. Varied learning environments and instructional methods will replace the standardized school day and curriculum. Site managed schools with shared decision-making will become common. Competence, rather than credentials or position on an organizational chart, will need to guide the division of labor. In short, schools must develop structures that enable them to customize the learning process to the needs of the learner and help students develop the thinking and problem solving skills needed in the Information Age.

School Restructuring in Rural Environments

Industrial models of schooling have always seemed dysfunctional in rural environments. Once schooling took on the character of factories, relying upon concepts of mass production to lower costs and increase efficiency, small schools have been at a disadvantage. Centralization of authority, with its emphasis on top-down decision making, conflicts with the consensus building style found in small towns. Specialized curricula prepare youth to leave, ignoring the need for generalists or the "jack of all trades" in rural environments. Standardization of the curriculum insists upon similar programs, more equipment, and common outcome measures. Moreover, quality is linked to quantity—more books, more programs, more equipment, and even more courses as curricula became increasingly specialized.

Despite their perceived limitations, rural schools have contributed much to urban growth, providing a steady stream of skilled young people valued for their strong work ethic. While rural schools will always bear some responsibility for preparing young people to participate in the broader society, the industrialized model of schooling seems to have tipped the scales too far in support of this role. Standardized curricula make little mention of the local environment, leaving young people ignorant of their community and how it works. Specialized curricula train young people for jobs that exist only in urban areas, ignoring the fact that generalists are most needed in rural settings. And as rural communities turn to entrepreneurship as a source of economic development, schools train young people to be employees, not business creators. Because the industrial model of schooling has prevailed, rural schools have found themselves drawn further away from their communities.

Change in rural areas offers an opportunity to rethink the balance between local and societal needs. Rural communities have not been isolated from the economic restructuring that has accompanied the transition to the Information Age. While rural communities had been working to diversify their economies since the early 1960s, they had become increasingly dependent on manufacturing. When industry moved overseas and natural resource-based economies collapsed in the 1980s, rural communities found themselves on the *down* side of too many curves. Rural outmigration has resumed with a vengeance. An eroding tax base makes it difficult to maintain the infrastructure, including basic human services. The continued exodus of rural youth to jobs in the cities strip communities of their most valuable resource. Economic and community development have become more than merely desirable—they have become crucial to survival.

Given the sense of urgency surrounding rural efforts to adapt to change, rural schools now have the opportunity to rethink their structure. Among rural educators, there is almost universal agreement that rural schools need to be more tightly integrated into their communities. Given the diversity of rural communities, this integration can occur in a number of different ways—through the curriculum, through partnerships with other agencies, or through service to the community. Educational reform which acknowledges the changing demands made by the Information Age, but from within the context of the local community, offers a valid strategy for balancing local and societal responsibilities.

Work of the Rural Clearinghouse

Another factor contributing to the design of the research effort is the Rural Clearinghouse itself. Formed in 1987 to continue the work of the Action Agenda Project, the Rural Clearinghouse works to improve rural adult access to education. This work takes the form of: (1) maintaining communication among a broad network of rural educational providers, (2) collecting and disseminating information on effective rural practice, and (3) advocating rural needs with policy makers and educational associations. Over the course of time, the Rural Clearinghouse has developed a perspective that drives much of its research and development efforts.

Character of Rural Practice

Early research into postsecondary education led to the realization that most rural institutions have expanded missions. During the farm crisis, for example, rural schools organized programs to teach computer management techniques to farm families. Rural community colleges often provide the leadership for local economic development efforts, a role taken on by professional planners or business leaders in urban areas. Regional colleges may find themselves organizing literacy programs or offering enrichment activities for the local schools. The limited resources present in rural communities require that most rural schools and colleges take on a larger mission, offering expanded programs or serving a more diverse student population.

Another characteristic of rural practice is the need to localize programs and strategies. In postsecondary and nonformal education, the most enduring programs are those that grow out of community needs and are built around community resources (Hone, 1984). Community members take an active role in shaping the programs developed and controlling the extent to which outside resources are called upon. Although rural schools are more restricted by state mandates and often required to import programs, their administrators still use much the same language in describing what works. For the most part, programs are more effective if community members see a clear need and pitch in to help.

Because of these characteristics, rural practitioners make different demands of the information collected to support effective practice. The expanded mission means that rural educators profit from networks broader than just their tier in the educational hierarchy. Localized programs mean that practitioners need access to a wide range of program ideas and a description of the local context under which the ideas succeeded or failed. Differences in local circumstance mean that programs that work well in one community may fail in another; and conversely, those that fail in one community may succeed in another. Given a wide range of program ideas and the necessary contextual details for the programs that have been tried, rural practitioners match and/or modify ideas to fit the local setting.

Character of Rural Environments

While most distinctions between rural and urban environments have faded, what we have come to call a *culture of small places* persists. Smaller communities quite naturally result in more intense social interactions and more limited resources. Fewer resources mean that most people need to be generalists rather than specialists, that agencies serve broader needs or clientele, and that projects need to be designed with the strengths of existing staff in mind. More intense social interactions mean that individuals are held accountable for their behavior (P. M. Nachtigal, personal communication, November 20, 1990). Small towns are friendly places because people have to interact with one another on a daily basis and pleasant behavior facilitates these long-term relationships. Cooperation and collaboration are more common because the person you don't help today may be the person you need help from tomorrow. Of course, these intense social interactions also have a dark side, as rigid social class structures can be an outcome as well.

For the Rural Clearinghouse, two features of this environment are of special interest. The first is the extent to which close parent-child and adult-child linkages are more natural and easily supported by the community. Those advocating educational reform are pointing to close parent-child linkages (such as those needed to support intergenerational literacy) and educational programs that link the conceptual structures we teach more closely to the experiences they are meant to organize. For decades, rural science teachers have used the laboratory provided by the environment to teach science concepts. Recent programs that introduce the community as a focus of study or link schools with community services (McREL, 1989) involve students with real-life projects and simultaneously generate information valuable to adults. To the extent that society continues to see these reforms as valuable, they offer powerful strategies for dealing with the educational needs of adults as well as making schools more effective places for children.

The second feature of interest is the way in which the more intense social interactions mediate change. Educational change which outstrips the value and knowledge structures of parents ultimately drives a wedge between families and the school, sometimes disempowering parents altogether. Change often ends up being superficial, since parents are unable to support or build on what is being accomplished in the schools. The more intense social interactions in rural areas require that rural school administrators attend to parental and community needs. Understanding the ways in which rural practitioners accomplish change, educating the adults of the community in advance or deliberately integrating them into the change process itself, is important to building more effective change strategies.

Design of the Study

As mentioned in the introduction, this study evolved from preliminary research into schools and economic restructuring and was guided by the Rural School Organization Focus Group. Conversations with rural educators suggested that there were plenty of problems—rural schools considered inferior by state departments of education and state policies considered inappropriate by rural schools. Our review of the literature suggested that there might be some solutions. Interest in restructuring schools coupled with the urgency being felt in economic and community development is creating an opportunity for educational change. Consequently, we turned directly to locating promising rural school practices.

The design of the study incorporated most of the features of rural practice outlined in the preceding section. The character of rural environments meant that we needed to look for practices which strengthened the connection between school and community. The diversity among rural environments meant that practices needed to be placed within the context of the local community's needs and resources. In order to be valuable to rural practitioners, we needed to cast a rather broad net, searching for a wide range of practices rather than a few exemplary programs. And finally, the character of rural environments meant that we needed to explore in some detail the process by which community schools defined and worked toward change, paying particular attention to parent-child or school-community linkages. The result was a two stage research effort.

Case Studies

In an effort to explore in some detail the process by which rural schools define and work toward change, the Rural School Organization Focus Group proposed two case studies. A common format was prepared to guide the process by which information was collected (See Appendix). The case study author visited with school administrators, teachers, board members, students, parents and community members in collecting and verifying the information. When available, information documenting the outcomes of the practices was also collected. Draft case studies were prepared and reviewed by Rural Clearinghouse staff and the Western Taskforce. Revisions were then made to clarify the local context or add detail helpful to understanding the process by which change occurred.

Review of Rural School Practices

The second stage of the study explored the range and depth of efforts to restructure rural schools. The research process involved: (1) establishing a structure from which to systematically inquire about rural school practices, and (2) sampling rural schools in states west of the Mississippi River. Each of these steps is described in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

The structure used to both collect and report information was adapted from conversations with rural educators and researchers. While there are clearly a number of different ways in which rural schools can strengthen their link with the community, three broad categories were cited most frequently.

- Rural schools as contributors to community development. As rural communities explore strategies for stimulating local community growth, rural schools have become involved in a number of ways. Examples range from extracurricular activities that are community-related to full fledged school-based economic ventures.
- Rural schools as the focus of social services. The current model of specialized social service agencies is both inefficient and inappropriate to rural community cultures. The rural school could facilitate the delivery of some services or become a partner in providing others. Examples include using the school cafeteria to support Meals on Wheels programs for the elderly or using vacant classrooms to house community day care programs.

- Rural schools as a lifelong learning center. As our economy becomes more tightly coupled to information and technology, adults find themselves needing access to continued education. The rural school can provide some programs or facilitate the delivery of other courses by colleges and universities. Examples include schools using satellite courses in foreign languages to simultaneously serve adult and high school learners or the use of school facilities for adult education activities.

Two of these strategies have been well documented in the literature. Sher (1977) and his work with school-based development enterprises reports businesses being established within the school as a learning experience and then spun off into a community business owned and operated by a local resident. McREL (1989) has explored curricula that use the community as a focus of study, offering a broader spectrum of activities. The rural school as a lifelong learning center traces its beginnings back to the community education movement. More recently, work in community education has included suggestions that schools become community centers—one stop shops for a range of human services (Hillenbrand, 1980).

Rural schools in states west of the Mississippi River were surveyed in a three stage process. Initially, the network created during our inquiry into rural school organization was used. This network included university faculty, state department of education staff, rural school administrators, and members of both the Rural School Organization Focus Group and Western Taskforce. All were asked to identify rural schools known to be introducing changes consistent with any of the three models. These schools were contacted. After information on their programs had been collected, these schools were then asked to identify other rural schools to contact. This process was continued until all suggestions were exhausted. Approximately fifty rural schools were identified through this process.

In an effort to insure that this information was reasonably complete, a two stage mail survey process was designed. A simple one page survey exploring rural school restructuring efforts was mailed to all schools with enrollments of less than 1,000 in the target states. Of the 5,770 surveys mailed, approximately 600 were returned with restructuring interventio , marked. Of those returned, about ten percent included detail sufficient to warrant a telephone interview. The remaining schools were sent a two page survey requesting more detail. Only twenty were returned and followed-up with a telephone interview. All together, the mailed survey process identified an additional sixty rural schools that were included in the analysis.

Information on rural school practices illustrative of these three models was collected by Rural Clearinghouse staff using telephone interviews. Rural school administrators typically volunteered information on one or two local practices. Staff then asked for further background on how the practice had been introduced, exploring the process by which change had been initiated. The three models were then used to check for other practices and, if any were identified, both the practice and the process by which it had been introduced were explored.

The information collected through the telephone interviews was compiled into individual narratives which described the local community, the practices currently in place in the school, and the process by which these practices had been introduced. These narratives were then organized and evaluated by the Rural School Organization Focus Group in terms of: (1) the model reflected by the practice, and (2) depth or sophistication of the intervention. Practices from approximately sixty schools were retained in the analysis summarized in the chapters that follow.

The remainder of this publication presents and interprets the information collected through both the case studies and survey of rural school practices. Chapter 3 presents extended case studies for two rural schools and explores the process embedded within their stories. Chapter 4 surveys practices descriptive of rural school efforts to become involved in community development. Chapter 5 explores ways in which the rural school can act as the focus of social services. Chapter 6 concludes our survey of rural school reform, exploring modifications that enable the school to function as a lifelong learning center. And finally, Chapter 7 includes contacts and resources helpful to rural schools interested in introducing similar adaptations.

References

Bell, D. (1973). *The Coming of Post-Industrialist Society.* New York: Basic Books.

Brzezinski, Z. (1970). *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era.* New York: Free Press.

Green, J. (1987). *The Next Wave: A Synopsis of Recent Education Reform Reports.* Denver: Education Commission of the States.

Hillenbrand, B.F. (1980). Community education: A way for counties to improve services. *Community Education Journal*, 7, no. 3, pp. 2-5.

Hone, K. (1984). *Serving the Rural Adult: Inventory of Model Programs in Rural Adult Postsecondary Education.* Manhattan, KS: Action Agenda Project.

Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL). (1989). *What's Noteworthy on Rural Schools and Community Development.* Denver: Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

McCune, S. (1987). Directions for restructuring schools for the future. *Redesigning Schools: A Vision for the Future.* Denver: Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Sher, J.P. (Ed.). (1977). *Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Case Studies

In an effort to explore the process by which rural schools define and work towards change, we conducted case studies of two rural schools considered to have established strong links with their communities. Given the diversity among rural environments, it is extremely important to examine these links from within the context of each community. Questions of who initiated the change, how the adults in the communities were involved, and how the practices were shaped by existing resources, are important to understanding how to support similar reforms in other settings. In addition, the case study format allowed us to describe more completely the extent to which linkages can be established across the entire school or community environment. This chapter introduces the two sites, presents the case studies, and explores themes common to the process of change.

Background Information on the Sites

Sites were identified and selected by the Rural Clearinghouse staff. Initially, we sought examples for each of the three strategies—community development, social services, and lifelong learning. In many cases, however, we found examples which blended two or more of the strategies. Consequently, we selected sites which offered the most integrated examples, regardless of whether they blended approaches. Two sites were selected—Belle Fourche, South Dakota and York, Nebraska.

A common protocol was developed to insure that complete and comparable information was collected from each site. This protocol explored all aspects of the school environment and specifically probed school-community and parent-child linkages. Information was gathered from administrators, faculty, students, parents, and community members. Both case studies were authored by Larry R. Combs, a staff member with the Rural Clearinghouse.

Belle Fourche is located in north central South Dakota, nestled along the edge of the Black Hills about 60 miles northwest of Rapid City. A town of about 4500, Belle Fourche is located at the confluence of two rivers. Despite its picturesque setting, the town does not depend much upon tourism. Surrounding towns. such as Spearfish, are located in even prettier settings and have had greater success in capturing a share of both the tourism and retirement markets. Farming, ranching, sheep, cattle and mining form Belle Fourche's economic base.

York is a larger community, supporting a population of about 8000. Located in southeastern Nebraska, York lies about halfway between Grand Island and Lincoln, a few miles north of the interstate highway. While the town lies in the heart of American farmland, only about one-sixth of the population is engaged in agriculture or agriculture-related businesses. For the most part, York has made the transition from farm community to regional service and trade center.

Both case study sites are drawn from the Midwest. While their economies are in the process of becoming more diversified, both have deep roots in the culture and values that enabled small family farms to prosper. People are independent and self-reliant. This sense of "I can do it myself!" spills out into the community, as people generally believe that the community can solve its own problems. There is a strong commitment to education, partly because schools are important social institutions and offer proof of the vitality of the community. A conservative ethic permeates decisions and attitudes. While this conservatism often works against efforts to adapt to change, it also insists that all the community's resources be valued. Social programs and strong schools are not unusual, as the community works to protect and develop every resource it has.

The two case study sites offer similar environments but different approaches to change. Both schools are considered excellent—consistently developing young people who score above average on standardized tests and pursue postsecondary education of one form or another. But both communities find themselves struggling—facing increased social and economic needs at a time when fiscal resources and the population are dwindling. These case studies tell the story of how two rural schools have become more tightly linked to their community, partly in response to the stress being experienced by both.

The path chosen by each has been quite different, however. Belle Fourche used the curriculum as a vehicle by which to link the school to community development efforts. York has broadened a community education effort into linkages which coordinate social services and encourage lifelong learning among the community's adults. While neither Belle Fourche nor York has become the restructured school envisioned by some, each has, in its own way, taken a step in that direction.

An Entrepreneurial Curriculum
Belle Fourche, South Dakota

A Case Study Prepared by Larry R. Combs

By nearly any indicator, Belle Fourche would be seen as an effective school. Students score well above the national average on standardized tests and many go on to some form of postsecondary education. Attendance is excellent and dropout rates are well below the national average.

But as the local economy worsened, the principal and staff at Belle Fourche began asking themselves about their success. Class after class, student after student left Belle Fourche—some for jobs in the city and others for postsecondary education and then jobs in the city. If the community believed that life in Belle Fourche was worth preserving, then why were so many young people leaving? How could the school offer better support to the community yet also prepare students for a broader society? Could the school become part of the community's efforts to solve its economic problems? The story of Belle Fourche is the story of how the school has begun responding to those questions—for themselves as well as for the community.

The Community

Belle Fourche, South Dakota is a rural community of approximately 4,500 inhabitants located at the northwestern edge of the historically rich, scenic Black Hills. Located about 60 miles northwest of Rapid City, Belle Fourche serves as the county seat for Butte County, a county of about 9,200.

Despite its location, Belle Fourche is not a tourist town. Much of its economic base centers around agriculture. Known as the wool shipping capital of the Nation and South Dakota's second largest livestock market, Belle Fourche derives much of its economy from livestock production. Mining and processing of Bentonite, a self-porous clay, is the other major economic contributor. In addition to the two natural resource-based sectors, Belle Fourche serves as a regional retail sales center and health services provider. Health services alone employ more than 150 people.

Despite its diversified economy, Belle Fourche has shared the hardships of many rural communities. Drought, the farm crisis, the loss of a local bank and area livestock sales yard, farm/ranch foreclosures, and the inevitable loss of vigor in the local business economy have all had a numbing effect on the town. Community leaders, school personnel, and community members alike spoke about significant changes taking place in rural America—changes which directly impact their community and lifestyle. Increasing numbers in the elderly population; the need to diversify rural economies; the outmigration of rural youth; and the increase in rural social problems were among the many problems cited. Despite the problems and uncertain economic times, people in the community continue to believe that life in small town, rural America is worth preserving—that it offers a lifestyle worth passing on to the next generation.

The School

Belle Fourche High School (BFHS) is a traditional high school with an enrollment of about 325 students, grades 9-12. The student body is predominantly Anglo, with a minority population of only 9.5 percent. Thirteen percent of the high school students are provided reduced-price lunches and another 23 percent are eligible for free lunches, a reflection of the economic problems being felt throughout the community. A little more than half the students move on to some form of postsecondary education upon graduation, many with distinction. Among the 80-100 graduates each year, Belle Fourche has produced a Rhodes Scholar and averages one or two military academy appointments each year. Those who do not pursue postsecondary education either join the military or gain immediate employment.

A two story facility houses the gymnasium, cafeteria, combined library/media center, classrooms, industrial arts complex, and an administrative suite. The faculty consists of one principal, one athletic director/teacher, one counselor, and 27 classroom teachers. Four custodians, three cooks, two secretaries, and a part-time school nurse complete the school staff.

The school's curriculum is traditional, but comprehensive. Structured in a departmentalized fashion, the curriculum offers courses in English, history, languages, science, mathematics, art, music, etc. Students are scheduled in a trimester system, with each trimester lasting twelve weeks. Most classes are structured in a school-centered, teacher-centered format. Local citizens sit on the school's curriculum committee and community advisory committees are used by the Home Economics and Mechanics/Construction Trades programs.

Seeds of Doubt/Opportunities for Change

Despite their success, the school's principal, Paul Dingeman, and some of the teachers began to feel uncomfortable. BFHS was doing a good job of educating students to leave. Success after graduation was defined as leaving Belle, generally for an urban environment, and often out of state. Students felt that there was little opportunity for earning a living in Belle Fourche. Additionally, they graduated with little knowledge about the community which had nurtured them. Students graduated with a sense of where they were going, but with little understanding of where they had been.

Moreover, some teachers felt frustrated with what they called the "shucks and darn attitude." Summed up best by the debate coach, Mrs. Jean Helmer, teachers found the students believing that they couldn't compete with kids from the big city. They "had no sense of cultural identity," apart from those who had grown up on farms. In frustration, Mrs. Helmer initiated a Historiography class, anxious to help students understand the culture in which they had been raised as they were developing skills in interviewing, researching, and writing.

The McREL Rural Community Development Project

In 1987, the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) invited schools in South Dakota to join a rural school-community development project. Using the concept that the community could serve as a focus of study, schools were invited to design a project of local relevance and then work collaboratively with other rural schools in implementing their project. The McREL project, under the direction of Dr. Paul Nachtigal and in cooperation with the Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, offered guidance, direction, training, technical assistance, and time to share with fellow educators around the common theme of involving schools and students in community development. Eventually eight schools joined the project, including Belle Fourche High School.

In designing the Belle Fourche project, Mr. Dingeman and the teachers decided to take an entrepreneurial approach. For some time, economic development specialists have been recommending that communities grow their own businesses by nurturing local entrepreneurs. Conventional schooling, however, offers little help to those who would like to develop those skills. Belle Fourche decided to try to embed entrepreneurial concepts in the curriculum, asking students to practice many of these skills as part of the courses they took. They decided to start with the most challenging part of the curriculum—language arts and social studies. If those courses could be modified to accommodate entrepreneurial skills and focus learning on the community, they reasoned, the other parts of the curriculum could easily follow.

The Belle Fourche Entrepreneurial Curriculum

The BFHS project assumes that it is in the best interests of both the community and students if the curriculum enables young people to explore their community. If communities expect to grow and prosper, those interested in staying in the community must be allowed to learn about the community and the economic opportunities that lie within it. Structured properly, these experiences can help students develop entrepreneurial skills—a sense of independence and responsibility for making things happen as well as an understanding of the economic environment in which businesses must operate. Students who decide to leave the community will still have the necessary courses, but will leave with a better understanding of their community and a set of skills that will be as valuable in urban environments as they are necessary to rural communities. Over the past two years, two new courses have been created. Four existing courses have been modified to fit the entrepreneurial philosophy, and the home economics program is planning modifications for the 1990-91 school year.

Research and Development is a new course designed to provide students with learning situations which encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills, strengthen cognitive and problem solving skills, learn to work effectively in a group setting, and experience creating and owning a business. The course may be taken for English or Social Studies credit and is structured around a project defined and undertaken by each group of students.

In 1988-89, students conducted a survey of school needs, discovering that there was interest in establishing a school store. Building and incorporating the store as a business became the year's project. Students in 1989-90 decided to lease the store to other organizations within the school. Consequently, the group's activities focused on learning about contracts, leasing, and ultimately about group dynamics as they chose a new direction for the remainder of the year. Depending on the project selected, activities outside the classroom include conducting both school and community surveys, linking with the local Chamber of Commerce, publishing the community survey results in the local paper, setting personal and group goals as well as evaluating outcomes. Students gain a great deal of experience in conducting surveys, analyzing and synthesizing survey information, and evaluating the information in terms of future actions.

Enrollment in this course is by faculty nomination. Students are nominated based on creativity, facility with upper level thinking skills, and demonstrated strengths in at least two of the seven forms of intelligence identified by Howard Gardner: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. Those nominated attend a meeting, where the nontraditional nature (student-centered, student-directed, community centered, unstructured, no formal textbook) of the class is explained to the students. Students must then write a formal letter of application. Some choose not to apply, often because they are uncomfortable with the non-traditional nature of the course.

A faculty committee of four teachers screen the applications. Candidates are not eliminated because of grade point average, learning disability, or other educational handicaps; nor are students who excel academically given priority. Faculty make selections based upon their assessment of the extent to which the student could profit from the unstructured, problem-solving environment. Twenty-seven students were selected for the first year of the course, representing a wide range of interests and a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. The course is designed so that students have the opportunity to participate for a maximum of 3¹/₃ years and is open to students from grades 9-12.

Rural Economics was added to the curriculum in 1989. In this course, students learn about the local political process, conducting and analyzing economic surveys, as well as strategies for building consensus. The students are currently making preparations to enter Belle Fourche for a Gold Community award, a process that will involve a substantial survey and analysis of the community and its strengths.

This course is based on the assumption that the best way to teach young people about history and government is to provide them learning opportunities which focus on local history and government and then tie that knowledge to the national and international scene. Students not only learn the content taught in a conventional course, but gain first-hand knowledge and experience with their local community. Students are drawn into local political issues such that discussions often spill over into the home, helping adults become more aware of their community as well.

Advanced Creative Writing is a traditional honors course with selective enrollment, based on a B average in Creative Writing I or a portfolio of original writings. In the past the student products (poetry, stories, etc.) were produced in book form and sold on a pre-order basis to family members and friends. In an effort to incorporate entrepreneurial skills into the course, students are now required to do the layout, binding, and marketing of the book. Students work with local citizens and community businesses in marketing the product. Local community authors serve as guest lecturers throughout the course, as well as guest critics of the completed book. Students not only learn and practice the skills required to publish a book, they learn the importance of cooperation and group process skills. In addition, they have an opportunity to interact with community members in both an educational and business setting.

Historiography I & II are trimester courses in which students conduct primary and secondary research about their community and the surrounding area (Historiography I); and advance to publishing and marketing the product(s) in Historiography II. Students must enroll in both courses. Prerequisites for enrollment are a passing grade in Basic Grammar and Composition and Typing I. The courses may be taken for either English or History credit.

Students learn skills in the area of research, interviewing, and writing. Additionally, the students learn and practice the necessary entrepreneurial skills to publish and market their work. In conducting research, students have the opportunity to interact with community members. This process creates a sense of community in the students as well as strengthening the link between the school and community. Additionally, students must make oral presentations on their writings, providing them with public speaking experience. *A Look at Belle Fourche*, the first product from this activity sold out!

Journalism is designed to teach students the skills needed for writing news stories, feature stories, and editorials. The ultimate goal is for student articles to be published in the local paper. Consequently, students rewrite their articles until they meet publication standards and grades are not assigned until the article is publishable. A cross curriculum connection is maintained as students are expected to be able to type and use a computer in order to prepare articles for publication. Students who enroll in the course must have received passing grades in Basic Grammar and Composition and Typing I.

For the student, this course provides an opportunity to learn and write about the local community. In so doing, students not only provide a service to the community, but develop a personal sense of community and community awareness. Conversely, the community is provided an opportunity to interact with students in a positive and educational manner, creating a stronger school-community link. Perhaps of most value to the student is the opportunity to judge his/her performance in terms of real-life expectations. Teachers point out the extent to which students take their writing assignments more seriously and the different environment created when students seek faculty help in order to satisfy the editor.

After experiencing success with these first efforts, teachers became interested in making modifications in several other parts of the curriculum. A few are described briefly.

Photography and Art classes have collaborated with the Social Science and Language Arts classes in conducting research for a Main Street Project. Photography students take pictures of downtown businesses. Based on research into the original intent and purpose of the structure conducted by Social Science and Language Arts classes, art classes develop drawings of the downtown buildings. These drawings will be made available to the downtown businesses for use in Main Street, a project designed to renovate and revitalize the downtown business area.

This project has allowed students to interact across several disciplines—art, photography, language arts, and the social sciences. Additionally, students are learning about their community and community members are learning about their history.

Home Economics is exploring strategies to create real learning experiences for their students. Ideas being explored include involving classes in the school lunch program—making students responsible for planning and preparing meals. In addition, the classes could become involved in cost analyses, nutrition analyses, marketing skills, etc.

Program Impact and Outcomes

Due to the relatively short time these programs have been in operation, there has been little opportunity for formal evaluation of measurable educational outcomes. School personnel maintained records of the participants in the Research and Development class. All participants selected the first year had average or above intelligence, as measured by conventional tests. Of the twenty seven selected for participation the first year, approximately one-half would be classified as at-risk as a result of a dysfunctional family, socioeconomic status, past attendance history, motivational problems, or a combination thereof. The attendance and academic achievement of all but one of the at-risk students increased after becoming involved in the program.

Since the inception of the project, attendance has increased by 2.9 percent and the drop-out rate has decreased from 6.5 percent to 4.3 percent. Although it is rarely possible to establish cause and effect, both the teachers and Mr. Dingeman attribute this change to the various programs implemented in the last two years and the impact they have had on the school and community environment.

This project has had a significant impact on the Board of Education, inducing them to revise the school district's mission statement. The mission statement will include a component that addresses the need for the curriculum to have links to the community and will directly incorporate entrepreneurship and experiential learning as desired outcomes. In the words of the Board President, the changes "initiated in Belle Fourche is just the first step toward . . . making the school a community school, one which serves the community beyond just K-12 educational needs."

Other outcomes attributed to the project are more difficult to substantiate, either because they were not measured or because current school indicators would not detect them. Interviews were conducted with the Principal, Superintendent, President of the Board of Education, teachers participating in the McREL project, and a random selection of students and parents involved in the classes. A survey probed teacher perceptions among those not directly involved in the McREL project. In addition, interviews with a random selection of parents and community members probed perceptions among those not directly involved in the project. The paragraphs that follow summarize perceived outcomes in the school, for the students, and for the community.

The Principal, Superintendent, Board President, and teachers were among those who spoke most directly to the changes that occurred in the school. The Principal pointed out that both teachers and students became involved in developing the curriculum. In fact, McREL resources were critical to helping teachers learn how to develop a curriculum, rather than simply adopt a textbook. The Principal, Superintendent, and Board President agreed that the success of the project will influence future staffing decisions. Teachers committed to a more open style of teaching, including experiential learning, will be sought. The Principal, Board President, and teachers involved in the project all mentioned that the project had changed definitions of how and when learning takes place.

Teachers involved in the project reported that they felt more willing to change, take risks, and tolerate setbacks. About half of the teachers not involved in the project reported that the school environment had made them comfortable with trying new things out in their own classrooms. Teachers involved in the project pointed out that their role in the classroom shifted, such that they found themselves behaving more like facilitators. While the role demanded that they work harder, most felt more comfortable with the student-teacher relationship that resulted.

Student outcomes were articulated by the Principal, teachers and students involved in the project, as well as parents of students involved in the project. All spoke of the extent to which students had an increased sense of being part of the community, of contributing positively to the community. Teachers, students and parents alike pointed out that the students were clearly more interested in learning and assumed more responsibility for their own learning. The Principal and students both pointed out that they had improved their organizational skills and ability to work effectively in group settings. The Principal pointed out that many of the students had improved their communication skills, developed the art of diplomacy, and strengthened their leadership skills.

Students and their parents pointed out that the learning activities were clearly more relevant and more real. Students reported that they were now aware that staying in Belle Fourche or returning to Belle Fourche after postsecondary education was an option. They began to see a place for themselves. More than 75 percent of those participating had an improved sense of self-esteem, as measured by a locally developed instrument. Teachers did add, however, that not all students coped well with the more open structure of these classes. Some simply returned to conventional classes.

Finally, the Principal, Board President, teachers, and community members mentioned community outcomes. While all acknowledged that communication between the school and community had always been strong, all pointed out that those linkages seemed even stronger. Teachers not involved in the project suggested that community members seemed more willing to serve on committees, volunteer, and be generally more supportive of school efforts. The Principal and teachers involved in the project pointed out that adults were now more aware of community activities and politics.

The Board President pointed out that both the Board and community had changed its image of what a school could be, citing specifically that he now realized that the school could help the community help itself. The Principal pointed out that community projects, such as the Gold Community analysis and Main Street efforts, might never had been undertaken had it not been for the students. He went on to point out that there had been a significant change in the way the community viewed students:

> Many feelings adults have about kids are just that they are not to be taken seriously. After some have worked with the students and found out that they are good thinkers and form their own opinions about issues, the adults are now taking students as real people, with something to offer.

Elements that Supported Change

Interviews with the Principal, Superintendent, President of the Board of Education, community members, and teachers explored the school environment that had existed prior to the McREL project and the role of the various participants. All agreed that the school enjoyed strong support from the community and was tolerant of experiments. If the new methods didn't work, parents simply responded, "so what—you don't know until you try."

Within the context of strong community support, the Principal had apparently established a climate that supported change. Teachers reported that they enjoyed an open, collegial relationship with the administration and felt safe experimenting with new strategies. All agreed that the Principal had been the sparkplug, the impetus to get the project underway. The McREL project had helped the school focus its efforts and provided resources, training, and support. In addition, McREL offered external validity, adding credibility and value to the school's image of change.

But finally, it was the teachers and students who did the real work. Their energy, trust in one another, and commitment to trying something new made it work. The Belle Fourche story is truly one of a shared vision!

The information for this case study was drawn from several sources, including personal interviews with the Principal, Paul Dingeman, BFHS faculty, Board members, students, and community members. All interviews were conducted during the Fall, 1989. Other information was gathered from the publication *Creating a Curricular Environment to Develop Entrepreneurial Skills in Today's Rural Schools: One District's Approach* published in Fall, 1988 and presented at the National Rural Education Association annual conference held in Bismark, North Dakota, September 1988. Sincere appreciation is extended to the members of the Belle Fourche High School and community, who so graciously gave of their time to assist in the preparation of the case study.

Where the Best Begins
York, Nebraska

A Case Study Prepared by Larry R. Combs

Like many other rural and urban communities, York initiated a community education program in the mid-1970s. Unlike most, the York program is not only alive and well in 1989, but is expanding its program to include the delivery of social services not traditionally considered within the scope of the public school. These programs set the York School District and the traditional York community education program apart.

The Community

York, Nebraska is a rural community of approximately 8,300 residents located in southeastern Nebraska. York serves as the county seat for York County, which includes a population of 15,200. Interstate 80, a federal interstate highway which cuts across Nebraska from east to west, is located three miles south of town. The usual array of fast food restaurants and motels line the interstate highway. Aside from this development, York is a typical midwestern regional retail and service center. The downtown area has an array of locally owned businesses serving the needs of the local community and surrounding area.

According to 1980 labor statistics, York's labor force is 20 percent professional, 17.5 percent retail trade, 17 percent agriculture, 12.6 percent manufacturing, 6.7 percent construction, and 5.8 percent public utilities. The remainder of the labor force works in various other occupations/trades, each less than 5 percent of the total work force. From 1981 to 1987 (as recorded by the Nebraska Department of Labor) the nonfarm employment sector increased by approximately 13.3 percent, evidence of the growing importance of York as a regional service center.

York is a relatively progressive community. There are five public-supported parks, a municipal swimming pool, and numerous other recreational facilities available for public use. The public library rivals libraries found in communities much larger than York. Municipal buildings and facilities are well maintained and attractive. The Chamber of Commerce produces promotional material on the community in a high-gloss and professional format. A promotional video, *York, Where the Best Begins*, reflects the pride local citizens take in their community.

The Schools

Three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school serve a total K-12 enrollment of approximately 1300. Three private elementary schools serve another 330 students. The school population is predominantly Anglo, with only 5 percent minority enrollment. Approximately 160 families, accounting for 25 percent of the student enrollment, are blended or single-parent families.

Community Education Program

The York Community Education Program was established in 1974, using grant money available from foundation, federal, and state sources. Part of a wave of community education programs developed across the nation in the early to mid 1970s, the program is directed by the York School District and serves adults in the York community and from surrounding farms. When external sources of funding disappeared, revenue to support the program shifted to local sources, principally the school district budget and revenues generated from fees.

Programs established include the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE), GED Program, and Community Programs designed for both vocational and avocational purposes. Enrollment for the ABE/GED program typically averages about one hundred students annually. Enrollments in the community programs approach 1,000 and are generally evenly split between vocational and recreational courses.

ABE/GED is structured in a fairly traditional manner. The Adult Basic Education program offers English as a Second Language, reading, mathematics, writing, functional living skills, and citizenship preparation at two levels: Level IA which serves those with basic skills at the 5th grade or below and Level IB for adults whose basic skills are between the 6th and 8th grade level. The GED Program serves those who have skills at the 9th grade level or above. In the average year approximately 40 percent of the participants are working in Level IA, 40 percent in Level IB, and 20 percent in the GED Program.

Community Programs include both avocational and vocational offerings, although the distinction sometimes loses meaning in a rural setting. Avocational programs are designed to meet the personal, recreational, or social needs of the community and are offered on a break-even basis. Fees generally range from $3.50 to $7.00 and community members often teach on a volunteer basis. Vocational programs are designed to meet the formal educational, vocational, and professional needs of community members. These courses are typically offered on both a credit and noncredit basis. In 1988/89, a total of 107 classes were offered, enrolling 935 participants.

The menu of courses offered in a given semester or year is developed from information collected in a number of different ways. Community members themselves are surveyed to identify course needs. Accurate records are maintained on course enrollments, acceptance, and need. Courses with a high demand are repeated as needed. Instructors are also asked for program ideas or to identify needs that are not being met. Community members themselves, many of whom have a skill they would like to share with the community also become a source of information tapped in program planning. People with an interest in sharing a personal skill develop courses which are then offered through the community education program. Seasonal needs, such as lawn and garden care, are acknowledged and used in program planning. Finally, community social needs identified by the York Resource Council and other community groups provide useful information in program planning.

Avocational courses cover a broad spectrum of topics and activities. Numerous art and craft classes are offered in cooperation with three local businesses, along with several classes taught by individuals. Approximately 50 arts and crafts classes were offered in the fall, 1989 term. The courses ranged from Beginning Oil Painting, Quilting (how to make quilts), Beginning Spinning from Sheep to Yarn, Hat (hat decorating and mounting), and Silk Flower Sweatshirts are but a few of the courses offered. Many of the activities are seasonal, focusing on holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The community education program cooperates with local health agencies and practitioners in developing and delivering courses on health and health related issues. CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), Multimedia First Aid, and Culinary Hearts Kitchen (preparing low fat, low cholesterol foods) were three courses offered in the most recent term. Other courses develop personal skills and knowledge. Courses such as Hunter Safety (in cooperation with the York County Extension), Bicycle Repair and Maintenance, Estate Planning and Probate, and Handling Small Power Tools speak to common needs for information or skills.

Vocational programs include formal courses that are offered through agreements with nearby institutions. Southeast Community College, located about 85 miles southeast of York, provides ongoing programs, offering local residents the opportunity to take courses for college credit without leaving the community. Additionally, courses are offered through the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and Kearney State University on an as-needed basis, depending on availability of instructors. Courses offered last fall include Business Math with Machine Applications, Political Science 120, and Introduction to Psychology. The school district serves as a facilitator, identifying community needs and making local arrangements with the colleges.

Additionally, the community education program links with local individuals, businesses, and social service agencies (such as the local hospital, York County Extension, York Parks and Recreation) to provide courses which enhance the vocational and professional skills of the local work force. Welding, ABC Farm Record Keeping, Electronics, Nursing Assistance Basic Training Course (used to meet the state certification requirement for nurses aides), and Food Service Training Program Classes (needed to obtain a state food handler's license) were a few of the courses offered in the Fall, 1989 term. People take courses to improve an existing skill or learn a new skill, often for job advancement or to obtain a new job. Local employers will often pay tuition for current employees.

The *Business Connection* links local businesses in order to define and organize training seminars. The school district has a history of business connections, having assisted the community in attracting Sunstrand Industries (aircraft parts) several years ago. The community education program now offers Customized Training Service Workshops based on the needs of local businesses identified through discussions and surveys. Currently, workshops are being offered in computer usage, telephone techniques and etiquette, and real estate training. School facilities are used, and school personnel direct the seminars, when appropriate. The seminars are usually conducted on Saturday.

In addition to providing a valuable link between the business community and the school, the program brings school personnel into direct dialogue with members of the business community. These interactions give teachers the opportunity to hear businesses talk about the skills their employees need.

The York Resource Council

In 1977, Stuart Wiley, the principal of one of the elementary schools, became director of the community education program. Although the program was well established and accepted in the community, it was fairly traditional. Mr. Wiley felt that the program needed to reach deeper into the community and respond to the many problems created by the economic restructuring underway in rural communities such as York.

At that time, the community had no mechanism for bringing together the various social service agencies, civic organizations, and the school, all of whom often found themselves dealing with similar problems. Mr. Wiley decided to explore creating a council that could facilitate communication among the various agencies and enable them to focus resources on common problems. Invitations were sent to various agencies. Of the thirty plus organizations invited to the initial meeting, all but two attended. All are still actively involved in the council, ten years following that initial meeting.

The York Resource Council membership includes local agencies involved in social service delivery (hospitals, mental health, senior citizen groups, government programs, advocate groups, etc.); civic groups (Lions, Scouts, PTA); the Ministerial Alliance; Police Department; local news media; as well as others. Membership is not limited to York community members and agencies, as various state and regional social service agencies participate as well. This involvement creates a link between the local community and regional/state agencies, allowing local needs to be articulated more effectively to regional and state agencies and enabling these same agencies to share information on program availability, funding, etc.

The Resource Council is very informal. There are no dues, by-laws, rules or regulations. Regularly scheduled brown bag luncheons are held each month in the Superintendent's office. The number of participants range from four to twenty-five. In keeping with the informal structure, attendance is not required. Minutes are recorded and distributed to each member of the Council. The Community Education Director serves as the facilitator and mutual contact point for the various members and agencies involved in the Council. Members of the Council contend that this lack of structure and formality is what enables it to function. Those involved are able to have open and frank discussions regarding community needs. From these discussions, solutions are developed which are mutually acceptable to the various agencies, and the community at large.

While the York Resource Council is not a programming council, a number of programs have been created in response to discussions held by the council.

Meals on Wheels is a program designed to provide meals for the elderly and handicapped. Established by the school district prior to the formation of the Resource Council, the program had to be shut down each summer much to the dismay of its patrons. The program was then passed around. The school district, a small local college, and various church organizations have each had a turn at operating the program. Through dialogue and concerted efforts by the York Resource Council, the local hospital was identified as the institution best able to provide the year-round manpower and facilities needed to stabilize the program. As a result the local hospital now handles the program. Today the program serves approximately 40 lunches daily, on a year-round basis.

Busy Wheels offers dependable and inexpensive transportation for the elderly and handicapped, enabling them to conduct routine personal business many people take for granted (medical appointments, shopping, entertainment). The Resource Council played an active role in recognizing the need for the program and working with various social service agencies to obtain funding. The project now employs two paid drivers and has several volunteer drivers. The needs of approximately 900 community members are being met in a dependable and inexpensive manner (.50 one way fare/$1.00 for local service all day).

Before/After School Childcare was identified as a need by the Resource Council. In this case, the school developed a licensed childcare program for school age children. Local citizens are trained in nutrition, health care, and how to develop educational activities for the children. They are then hired as staff. Initially, three separate programs were established in the three grade school buildings. It soon became apparent that this was not cost effective. The three separate programs were merged into a single program offered at a central site. Students in the program are bussed to the site after school; most parents bring them to the site in the mornings. Although most people involved in the program (educators and parents alike) were reluctant to operate the program from a central site, most now agree the decision has provided some hidden benefits. Students from the three grade schools have an opportunity to socialize prior to entering middle school. In addition, students who typically walk to school gain experience in riding the bus, especially in assuming responsibility for being to the bus stop on time and obeying bus rules and regulations.

School personnel are currently exploring the possibility of expanding the hours of operation to more effectively meet the needs of working parents. In addition, some community members have proposed that the program be expanded to include preschool children. This option is being explored, as the school district assesses both the needs of the community and the ability of local childcare providers to meet those needs. Given the way the childcare program has been structured, it not only responds to the childcare needs of the community, but it also offers training and jobs for citizens in the community.

Enrichment Programs in the school have gradually been dropped, many as a victim of declining enrollments or inadequate budgets. The elementary orchestra program was dropped because of declining enrollments and the lack of an instructor. The gifted program for K-5 was also dropped a few years ago. With the help of the Resource Council, alternatives have been organized within the community.

Community education now offers both violin and basic keyboarding programs for children aged four to twelve. Those interested in playing the violin take lessons at minimal cost during free periods before or after school. Group instruction in piano keyboarding is provided as well. Electronic keyboards are used and costs are minimal. Local piano instructors believe the program provides an inexpensive way for parents to determine if their youngsters are interested in pursuing piano instruction before purchasing instruments and arranging private lessons.

The gifted program is now offered by volunteers trained through *Omnibus Omaha,* a gifted program offered to the elementary grades in the Omaha, Nebraska school district. Gifted students and their parents are surveyed to identify their needs and interests for enrichment. Based on the interests expressed, the volunteers are trained to deliver specific learning units to the students. Typically, these units include topics such as electricity, journalism, chemistry, and genealogy. Community resources have been matched with a school need, enabling the gifted program to be continued. In addition, the community volunteers have an opportunity to learn a bit more about a wide range of topics!

Program Impact and Outcomes

What began as a simple community education program has grown into what many refer to as a *cradle to grave* philosophy of education. Interviews with school district personnel (the Board of Education, school administrators, and teachers) and community identified: (1) evidence of increased linkages between the school district and community, (2) benefits to the school district, and (3) benefits to the community.

Increased linkages between the school district and community are evident in the extent to which facilities are now shared, personnel support both community and K-12 needs, and the extent to which the schools are active in responding to community needs. School facilities are made available for the ABE/GED Program and Customized Training Service Workshops. When school personnel began planning for a computer laboratory, they sought advice from local businesses to insure that both the design and placement of the facility made it accessible for adult use. School personnel are shared with the community education program, as many teachers conduct workshops for the Customized Training Service Program. Finally, the school district played an active role in initiating Meals on Wheels and Before/After School Childcare programs and continues to be active in efforts to attract industries to the community.

For the school district, a number of outcomes are directly attributable to the community education program. The Board of Education, school administration, and teachers have adopted the philosophy that schools need to support the lifelong learning needs of the community. The district's mission statement officially charges schools with meeting the needs of those beyond K-12 as well as the traditional K-12 population. Teachers and administrators confirmed that their attitudes regarding adult learning and lifelong learning were probed as part of the hiring process. Community education has been totally integrated into the school budget. Board policy was revised to encourage public use of the school facilities for educational, recreational, and social purposes. Outside entrances for the computer lab were created to insure public use of the facilities during as well as after the school day. Finally, community resources have been instrumental in maintaining the school's music and gifted programs.

Tangible benefits to the community are evident in the businesses and jobs created. While weaving or stained glass courses are called avocational or recreational learning, students often treat them as serious business. Several local businesses were created because of community education classes. The local stained glass shop is owned and operated by a former school district art teacher who simply volunteered to teach stained glass classes in response to community need. Interest in this craft grew to such a point that the instructor now operates a stained glass shop on a full time basis, along with continuing to offer instruction through the community education program. One of the participants in a spinning course developed skills such that she now owns and operates a sweater shop in the community. A participant in an upholstery class now operates an upholstery shop.

Several of the programs created out of the discussions held by the York Resource Council have created jobs. The Busy Wheels program employs two drivers and the childcare program offered training and jobs for several local residents. A strong community education program with linkages to nearby colleges played an important role in attracting Sunstrand Industries. Local businesses point to the Customized Training Service Workshops as factors which make their businesses more effective and productive.

The efforts to extend use of school resources to the community have also led to other changes. Many, if not most, school districts and communities see the school and school day as open only to K-12 students; the community education courses restricted to adults. As the schools have become more a part of the community, this distinction has gradually softened.

Adults in the community are allowed to take classes at the high school, on a space available basis. Many adults have audited classes to acquire a new skill or as a refresher for seldom used skills. Conversely, community education programs are not restricted to adults. There are recreational programs designed specifically for the younger children, gymnastics and piano being two such programs. But high school students are allowed and often encouraged to take community education courses along with the adults in the community. High school students enroll in courses for college credit on a regular basis. In addition, they often take non-credit courses to develop a vocational skill such as welding or electricity; or to learn a craft such as stained glass, oil painting, or weaving.

In Summary

The York experience suggests that strategies which better link the school to the community can pay off in a variety of ways. Clearly, the community education program has a long history of reaching out to the adult population, organizing classes using the community's own resources but also acting as a broker in bringing outside resources into the community. The creation of the York Resource Council has enabled the community education program to expand that link as it not only takes on new roles but also acts as a catalyst in organizing community resources to respond to emerging social needs.

While the more efficient use of community resources is itself a meaningful goal, this linkage between school and community has a even more powerful payoff. As adults find themselves needing access to education throughout their working lives, the York school district demonstrates how schools can become lifelong learning centers for their community. The conventional school environment is enriched as students see adults in learning roles, and teachers maintain closer connections with the real world through teaching both adults and young people. The community is enriched as school-community linkages enable adults to be more supportive of classroom learning and increased contact with young people encourage respect and acceptance across the generations. And finally, the young people themselves gain a realization that learning is indeed a lifelong process—a process they will be able to take with them no matter where they go. These are the intangibles, the benefits mentioned but difficult to document through traditional measures.

The information for this case study was drawn from personal interviews with the administration, faculty, Board members, students, nd community members. All interviews were conducted during the Fall, 1989. Sincere appreciation is extended to the members of the York community, who so graciously gave of their time to assist in the preparation of the case study.

Themes in Rural School Restructuring

These two case studies describe rural schools which have established unusually strong links with their communities. Despite the many threats to sustained change—staff turnover, limited resources, or confining state regulations—these schools have been able to define and work toward educational change. Moreover, they offer examples of how tighter links with the community can benefit both the school and the community. In comparing the two sites, a number of themes emerge.

Sustained Community Support

Change has accelerated at both Belle Fourche and York, especially over the past two years. It is important to realize, however, that this change was built upon sustained community support. Board and community members in Belle Fourche express confidence in the high school, pointing out that it has consistently done a good job in educating their young people. Communication between the school and community is open and largely informal, allowing problems to be resolved relatively quickly. Parents are actively involved in school activities. Similarly, the community education program and schools in York enjoy strong community support. Enrollments are high. Local taxes support a substantial fraction of the administrative costs for the community education program and the board consistently refuses to cut its budget.

This community support seems important for a couple of reasons. First, it creates an environment it which it is safe to experiment. Both Paul Dingeman and Stuart Wiley pointed out that they felt comfortable with trying things out. While parents or community members did not always share enthusiasm for new programs, most felt that the school's past success had earned it the right to explore new ideas. To be sure, not all programs met with immediate success and some led to angry protests. But open and informal communication enabled the conflicts to be resolved without weakening the base of community support. Community members were able to recognize and acknowledge unanticipated benefits from the new programs.

Second, the support provides stability during which change can be sustained. Both spoke of the extent to which community resources filled gaps—professionals who helped students with projects or adults willing to take on the gifted program. York described the extent to which their hiring practices and planning processes now reflect community needs, suggesting that change has permeated both the school and its mission. Belle Fourche is now working to revise its mission to reflect its focus on entrepreneurial skills. The stability provided by the community enabled the school to experiment and then consolidate those changes which seemed most meaningful.

Leadership Aware of Broader Problems

Both communities point to the leadership offered by school officials, Paul Dingeman at Belle Fourche and Stuart Wiley at York. What these two leaders shared was the realization that the fate of their school and community were linked. In reflecting on the programs developed at Belle Fourche, Paul Dingeman pointed out that he had nagging doubts about just how successful the school was. Despite the conventional indicators of both his and his school's success, he found himself asking whether this was what both the community and young people deserved. Stuart Wiley echoed these feelings, pointing out that he initiated the Resource Council because he was convinced that the school needed to somehow reach deeper into the community. Both administrators have been able to lead their schools into sustained reform simply because they were aware of and concerned about the broader problems with which rural communities are dealing.

Both administrators were successful in sharing their vision, involving others in developing strategies to better serve the community Paul Dingeman was able to recruit and work with teachers in developing the entrepreneurial curriculum. Stuart Wiley created the Resource Council to draw others into the work, inviting their help in responding to community needs. In small communities, this sense of shared leadership helps the community *own* the program and insures that local resources will be made available to the effort.

Change is Possible Within Existing Constraints

Our initial research into rural school organization revealed an overwhelming feeling of frustration and anger among many rural school administrators. State departments of education were increasing state requirements, in search of excellence. Rural school administrators were struggling with budgets and resources, in search of survival. The extent to which administrators felt constrained by requirements and lack of resources was obvious.

Both York and Belle Fourche offer hope that rural schools can find their way around these barriers. The programs developed at Belle Fourche have been introduced from within the existing curriculum using existing teachers. Some support has been required, primarily to offer teachers assistance in modifying their programs and administrators a support group with which to work through problems. But these efforts have cost only a few thousand dollars and the school has not significantly increased its budget. Similarly, York has been able to develop a substantial community education program using tax monies that amount to less than one percent of the school district budget. The creation of the York Resource Council and the interactions among agencies that this organization supports has been responsible for helping the schools develop even tighter links with their community. For the most part, neither the budget nor staffs have increased.

While policies are always a problem, neither school appears to have found them overwhelming. Paul Dingeman points out that policy issues are continually raised—do these new courses meet state guidelines or what about liability? While state curriculum guidelines are restrictive, they are not necessarily prescriptive. Teachers have always been able to document the manner in which their new programs address existing state requirements. Similarly, liability will always be raised as a concern by local boards. The Belle Fourche experience suggests that liability need not restrict students from using the community as the focus for learning experiences. As long as parents are informed, teachers know where the students are and what they are doing, and the activities can be a demonstrated part of the school curriculum, then liability is not an issue. York points to much the same experience when asked about use of school facilities for other purposes. As Paul Dingeman points out, "In today's environment, it is inevitable that school administrators and boards will be sued. The question is not will I be sued, but will I win. As long as the school is deeply engaged in educating its young people and is responsible in the way in which it approaches the public trust, schools have nothing to fear."

Change Takes Time

While many of the programs described in the case studies are recent, both these schools have been involved in some type of reform for some time. Belle Fourche had been gradually working to involve students in experiential learning for nearly ten years. The McREL project simply enabled them to expand more rapidly and with better focus. York has been involved with community education since the 1970s. The creation of the York Resource Council took place after the school had gained experience in working with the community and began to realize some of its problems. Minimally, four to five years are required to initiate and then stabilize programs that work effectively. Given the time the reforms take, schools are advised to start sooner rather than later!

Linkages Impact Schools

Given the enormous change underway in society, the call for restructured schools seems undeniable. The need for young people who are better able to solve problems, seek out and organize new information, communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, work effectively in group settings, and pursue learning on a lifelong basis is clear. Given the enormous inertia in schools, however, most question whether such restructuring will ever occur.

These two case studies demonstrate the extent to which involving rural schools more directly in the life of the community can help accomplish significant change. In Belle Fourche, students are more involved with school and are developing many of the skills cited in the restructuring literature. Once teachers began thinking about the curriculum in terms of the local community, they found that they thought about teaching in an entirely new way. Since they themselves had not mastered information about the local community as part of their training, they had to become co-inquirers with their students. Students became more active in and responsible for their learning. Teachers discovered that they had more to share than just knowledge. What teachers found they had gained in their own education was an understanding of the *process* by which people learn and the *standards of quality* that are required. When they started helping students understand the process and meet the standards, teachers found teaching to be an entirely new experience.

The changes at York are less obvious but no less important. Some programs, such as the music program and K-5 gifted program, would not exist were it not for the community's involvement. Teachers and parents point to a number of other benefits. Teachers actively involved with adult learning and linkages with businesses find that they integrate these experiences into their traditional classrooms. High school students who see adults working to master some of the same skills begin to realize the seriousness of education. Young people who see community members teaching as well as learning realize that knowledge is something to be shared in a lifelong process. The openness of the educational system communicates respect for the learner and the value placed on learning, regardless of age.

Linkages Impact Communities

Both communities find they have profited in largely unanticipated ways. In Belle Fourche, the curriculum's focus on the community has drawn adults into community issues and helped adults see young people as more mature and responsible members of the community. York finds that the community education efforts directed in conjunction with the schools meet economic as well as recreational needs.

Because the school projects have focused on the community, Belle Fourche has profited from the information gathered and more intense interest in community problems. Resources, in the form of students and the energy they bring to tasks, are enabling the community to move forward with community development efforts more rapidly. Parents find themselves discussing community issues and concerns around the dinner table. Community leaders find their decisions challenged by informed and articulate young people. Community members and parents alike are realizing that they have much to learn and that their children can be partners in that process. With increased school involvement in the community has come increased enthusiasm and pride in the community.

York can trace community benefits in a number of ways. The community education program directly supports the economic environment. New businesses have been created, existing businesses profit from the training offered through the Business Connection, and community members have gained employment through the Busy Wheels and childcare programs. The strong ABE/GED program and formal courses offered through community education help insure that a well educated work force exists in the community. Attention to social needs insures a high quality of life and attractive community for retirees. And the close connections between the schools and community education assures that the limited financial resources of the community are used efficiently. The efficiency lost due to the small size of the rural school are easily offset by the efficiency gained when these same resources can be used by the community at large.

Documenting Outcomes

Neither case study found it easy to document outcomes. Belle Fourche successfully tracked some indicators, but for the most part found that the press of implementation left little time for evaluation. Some goals, such as building information processing skills or increasing understanding of the local culture, have no instruments with which to measure outcomes. Others, such as encouraging some young people to return following postsecondary education, will need time to evaluate. York pursues goals that are even more difficult to measure. Attitudes toward lifelong learning, adult renewal that supports the local economy, and increased respect across generations are among the outcomes mentioned for which the only evidence was individual perceptions.

Our experience in listening to community members and school staff describe the outcomes they value led us to two conclusions. First, the restructured schools described by McCune and others will clearly require a different strategy with which to measure outcomes. While some social indicators, such as attendance or dropout rates, can provide early guidance, what the restructuring literature suggests is that schools begin to accomplish quite different purposes. Different purposes require different measures of school effectiveness.

Second, efforts to link rural schools to their communities require measures that capture adult as well as student outcomes. Indicators must be developed which are sensitive to the capacity of an innovation to impact the community as well as the quality of education offered to young people. Current indicators are fundamentally tied to industrial models of schooling and cannot guide restructuring efforts, especially those that may be most meaningful to rural schools.

Both case studies offer insight into what is possible in small places. While there will always be some tension between the need for schools to prepare young people for a broader society and the desire to have young people remain in the community, Belle Fourche is trying to find a better balance. And in many respects, the experiences most important to helping the community survive are also the experiences most valuable to helping students develop the concepts and skills they will need in later life, regardless of where that life might be. While the broader society will always find specialized social service agencies a more efficient way to deliver services, York appears to have found a way to insure that those services are blended in ways more meaningful to small communities. In many respects, the stronger link between the school and community needs creates a stronger base upon which attitudes of lifelong learning can be built.

Both school systems have found themselves taking on characteristics of restructured schools. Belle Fourche has broadened its instructional methods, offering both traditional and experientially based learning opportunities. Students in the entrepreneurial courses find themselves actively involved in collecting, organizing, and communicating information, not simply memorizing it. They also gain experience in shared decision making and group processes. York has created an open learning environment, one in which adults can access education at a variety of times throughout their lives. While schools still look like schools, students and adults in these communities are sharing both formal and informal learning opportunities in new ways.

Rural Schools and Community Development

Arguments that rural schools should become involved in local development have been made for more than a decade. Experiments have been underway since 1982, first in counties plagued by persistent poverty in the rural South and more recently in the Midwestern farm belt. Our research in states west of the Mississippi River identified a number of other efforts. This chapter reviews the arguments, both economic and educational, for involving schools in community development and explores some the ways rural schools are initiating this type of activity.

Rural Schools and Economic Development

Strategies for involving rural schools in local development make sense for a number of reasons. First, rural schools and their communities are undeniably linked. Community taxes support the school and the continued existence of the school is seen as vital to the survival of the community. Beyond this obvious linkage, economic and educational thinking offer additional arguments.

Economic Development

The notion that education is connected to economic development is hardly new. Schultz (1961) is credited with demonstrating the relationship between economic productivity and quality in the work force, as measured by level of educational attainment. The concept that human capital is a variable capable of influencing economic development has been eagerly embraced and is certainly fundamental to calls for restructured schools. For the most part, however, human capital remains useful as a global, not local concept.

A number of factors limit the extent to which rural community contributions to education serve as an investment in its economic future. Hobbs (1986) points out that being able to capitalize on your own investment in education often means being mobile. Communities gain a return on their investments only if youth remain in the community or in-migration balances out-migration. The extent of rural youth outmigration suggests that most rural communities have been subsidizing urban economic development rather than strengthening their own human resource base.

A second factor is the extent to which schools currently socialize young people to become good employees within a bureaucratic structure. McCune (1987) and others have acknowledged that the current school environment emphasizes fragmented tasks, conformity to an organizational structure, and dependence on the next layer of authority. These social orientations are at odds with the social and business environment of small towns. Rural communities are small enough places that economic development cannot proceed independently of community development. Community efforts to build an infrastructure, develop housing, or direct scarce resources to an economic venture are decided upon through intensely personal interactions that require skills in group processing and shared decision making. Moreover, economic development strategies in rural areas now emphasize business development as much as business recruitment. Entrepreneurial skills are far more valuable than the organizational skills currently implicit in the school environment.

While no one advocates closing the borders to insure that all a community's investment fuels the local economy, many do suggest that there are ways in which the concept of human capital can be made more local. Hobbs (1986) outlines features of knowledge-based rural development, including the notion that adult training be linked more closely to local economic development objectives. Sher (1977) proposes that the school's resources be used to incubate businesses which act as training environments for high school students before being launched as independent economic ventures. McREL (1989) suggests that schools which involve students in community projects enable students to give something back—information helpful to local development efforts, a renewed sense of pride, and in some cases themselves. Young people who thought there was no future in the community discover a place—staying to start a business or returning after postsecondary education.

Educational Outcomes

Arguments for involving rural schools in community development are made even more compelling by current calls for restructured schools. Many of the educational outcomes attributed to these early projects suggest that the activities offer useful alternatives to conventional models of schooling. The school-based business enterprises reported by Sher and the Research and Development course introduced at Belle Fourche High School (see case study in Chapter 3) have been successful in reaching some at-risk students, offering them a learning environment more compelling than the traditional classroom.

Teachers at Belle Fourche report that their students took more responsibility for their own learning, developed an understanding of how to function as a group, and engaged in critical thinking and problem-solving activities. Wiggington (1985) has long argued that learning which occurs within an experiential context builds a better bridge between the concrete and abstract. Belle Fourche points to the seriousness with which students approach learning when they realize the outcome is for real—an article published in the local newspaper, a business that needs to make a profit, or a report to be made to the local Chamber of Commerce.

These educational outcomes are not necessarily specific to the rural context. To be sure, many of the school activities or businesses respond to local needs. But reaching at-risk students, encouraging students to take more responsibility for their learning, involving students in higher order thinking and problem solving, or teaching effective group processing skills are outcomes embraced by nearly all schools, rural or urban. Moreover, the skills gained are valuable ones, useful in a wide range of adult contexts. Linkages which make sense to the local community also appear to make sense educationally.

Current Strategies

As mentioned earlier, recent interest in linking rural schools to community development can be traced to Sher's (1977) work in school-based economic development. Especially compelling in communities plagued by persistent poverty, linking education directly to a future business makes education worth the effort to young people who see no future for themselves. Nachtigal's work in the Midwest (McREL, 1989) introduced a broader strategy, suggesting that schools make the community a focus of study. Eight schools in South Dakota formed a pilot project. Similar efforts are now underway in other states served by McREL. Our research into states west of the Mississippi River identified a number of independent projects as well.

Efforts to organize these many programs into some sort of structure led us to propose three separate strategies:

- **Curriculum Development:** A school's response to community development involves incorporating some aspect of the community into the school's curriculum. In all other respects, the school is conventional.
- **School-Based Business Enterprise Development:** This approach involves curriculum development but has a specific outcome—the development of a school-based business or involvement of students directly in the world of work.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Student and/or school personnel are involved in a community development activity that may or may not take place with school support. Consequently, the linkages are often informal.

Each of these strategies is defined and illustrated in the sections that follow.

Curriculum Development

One strategy for involving the rural school in community development is to introduce curricular changes that accomplish this linkage as a part of the school day. One of the case study sites, Belle Fourche, used such a strategy by incorporating entrepreneurial skills into conventional courses and adding a new course entitled Research and Development. While schools normally initiate curricular changes, we found examples in which the community had been the initiator. In fact, who initiated the activity—school or community—serves as a useful structure within which to describe the programs.

Community-Initiated Change

Community-initiated change occurs when the community asks the school to respond to some need or create a new program. Typically, businesses or community leaders approach the school to ask for its involvement. The outcomes of such a request vary, but we found examples of schools helping maintain local businesses, training workers for local jobs, and/or initiating a community service.

A school district and community have joined together to maintain the local newspaper in Pacific Grove, California, a town of 15,000 along the Pacific coast. Pacific Grove's journalism class now works with the community newspaper, enabling students to gain experience with a local business and providing the newspaper with additional help. Students are writing on computers, editing their work, selecting photographs, and doing preliminary layouts. Newspaper staff members share their expertise during classes conducted at the school as well as on site at the newspaper offices. The newspaper absorbs all production costs.

Both the school and the newspaper report advantages: increased newspaper audience, increased enrollments in the journalism course, and resolution of financial problems for both the newspaper and the school (in maintaining the journalism program). In addition, the newspaper staff find that they have much to learn from as well as share with the students. Communication between the school and community businesses has improved as well. The publishing company has been pleased with the arrangement and is now offering a similar opportunity to students in Carmel, California. The Pacific Grove High School partnership has expanded to include six other schools in the Pacific Grove Unified School District.

ERIC Full Text Provided by ERIC

School districts in Tonganoxie, Kansas and Carrizozo, New Mexico have developed training programs for local workers. Tonganoxie has a metal building manufacturing company that offered to help the high school expand its metals and welding shop. Materials were provided through the manufacturing company at low cost. In exchange, the school trains employees for the manufacturing company. Meanwhile, the school has also been able to expand the curriculum offerings at the high school. Likewise, Carrizozo, New Mexico has developed a meat cutting laboratory that complements the larger facilities at a local meat packing plant. Local patrons bring animals to the miniature processing plant for butchering. Students gain experience in slaughtering and processing the meat for home use. Both the school and local meat packing business are benefiting from this joint effort. Students interested in staying in the community are able to train for local jobs.

School districts can also initiate community services through their curriculum offerings. Annapolis, Missouri, is a town of about 375 located deep in the Ozark Hills. The town has no newspaper, so the mayor asked the school if it could help in distributing a community newsletter. Through the Business program, the Future Business Leaders of America Club took on the responsibility of typing and distributing a newsletter to the entire community every two weeks. Students have developed a new awareness of the activities of their community. The community profits from the increased communication. Ties between school and community have been strengthened and a new communication network created.

School-Initiated Change

Schools also initiate curricular changes, typically through the efforts of individual teachers but sometimes through school-wide efforts, such as that described in the case study of Belle Fourche. For the most part, these strategies select some aspect of the community as a research focus, enabling students to gain experience in research methods as they collect information helpful to the local community.

A teacher in the Linn, Kansas school district decided to involve the accounting class in the research needed to develop a business plan. The class surveyed local businesses to determine what businesses existed, what businesses were duplicated, and what new businesses were needed or could be supported in a town the size of Linn (about 500 residents). Based on information from the survey, students then selected a hypothetical business to start. Procedures for starting a business with a bank loan were contrasted with those that were required to sell shares. Mock loan papers and corporation papers were completed. Oral reports and a field trip to the local bank concluded the activity. Students learned a great deal about what is involved in starting a business as well as about their own community. Local business owners and bankers were delighted to be asked for information and advice.

Cabool, Missouri is a town of 2100 in southern Missouri. The school conducted a survey to develop a resource book that identifies community members willing to share their skills with students. This resource book allows local experts, generally with business backgrounds, to be paired with students who want to gain more information about the expert's field. This pairing has been important in allowing students and local business people to share ideas, experiences, and perceptions of their community. In addition, teachers can easily link local resources with curricular needs, involving community residents in a wide range of activities.

The Moab, Utah School District has taken a different approach. The school has an Outdoor Education Project, which organizes the science curriculum around the natural surroundings of the area. In response to the growing tourism industry, Moab's new science curriculum will be supplemented by two courses, Introduction to Career Marketing and Hospitality Services. A third course on Entrepreneurship will be introduced next year. Located near Arches National Park and

Canyonlands National Park, Moab feels that its science curriculum can easily be linked to activities which support local economic development and is working hard to help students gain the skills needed to start their own businesses.

Entrepreneurial courses are being introduced in a number of rural schools, including Presho, South Dakota; Linn, Kansas; Moab, Utah; and Winchester, Kansas. Hard hit by the decline in natural resource-based economies, many of these communities were encouraged to develop home-based businesses as one strategy for helping families survive. Gradually, many rural communities have realized that it is also a strategy for community survival. New business development will probably become a more significant economic development activity than business recruitment.

School-Based Business Enterprises

Some schools have moved beyond curricular adaptations and involved students directly in the world of work. These projects range from work study credit for students employed by local businesses to the creation of independent, non-profit businesses within the school.

The high school in Stanton, North Dakota offers credit for experience in the real world of work. A community of 700 in central North Dakota, Stanton created a school-business link that offers students a wage and work experience. The program is coordinated by a classroom teacher. Students must have senior standing with grades that indicate they will successfully complete their high school education.

Another school district, Glenns Ferry, Idaho, is providing work study experience for students with a definite philosophy in mind. This community has decided that the best way to enhance economic development is to accentuate positive features of their community rather than chasing smokestacks. Blessed with recreational activities, natural environmental beauty, a quaint small town atmosphere, and easy access to an interstate highway, this town of about 1400 in southern Idaho has much to build on. Placing students in the work force and giving them hands on experience with local businesses allows students to explore local options before graduation. The work study program has found widespread support in the community.

The Las Animas, Colorado School District turned the school yearbook into a non-profit business. Deeply in debt and of poor quality, the yearbook was dropped from the school curriculum by the principal. The community was outraged and called a meeting to solicit support from students and community members to reinstate the yearbook. Approximately 140 students and 70 community people volunteered to do whatever was needed to save the yearbook. In anticipation that the school-community group would eventually assume responsibility for the yearbook, the business teacher developed a class to train students in entrepreneurial skills. In the meantime, the principal discovered that the course qualified as a vocational offering, generating state funds sufficient to cover about one-third of the annual yearbook costs. The yearbook is now operated by the students as a non-profit business. It has developed into a community yearbook, serving as a publicity piece for the community as well as the school. The yearbook includes pictures and editorials that reflect the positive community attitude that turned the project around.

Raising money for school events and activities usually finds students selling candy or magazines to the community. In the Dietrich, Idaho School District, the business teacher sensed that the community was growing tired of door-to-door sales. The teacher decided that students should start their own business. Now, Dietrich High School grows plants in the school's greenhouse. The plant sales generate money that was once raised in traditional door-to-door format. Following the success of the greenhouse, the students have begun to raise mealworms to sell to fish bait companies. The school is presently exploring other entrepreneurial opportu- ties. Students raise the needed money and learn valuable skills in the bargain.

Sometimes communities simply fall into entrepreneurial activities. Columbia School District in Hunters, Washington is just such a community. A phone call from the state game department asked whether the school could find something to do with baby pheasants. The school said yes, agreeing that the Future Farmers of America (FFA) would raise the baby pheasants until they were old enough to be released into the immediate area. The purpose of the activity was to make the community attractive to hunters from metropolitan areas. Later the FFA entered the commercial fish business, raising and releasing rainbow trout in area streams. These two activities have exceeded everyone's expectations. The agricultural classes in Hunter have now become directly involved in wildlife management. The FFA received the Building Our Community state award and was also nominated this past year. The increase in tourism has created jobs and has been a boom to the local economy. One gas station in town has grown to three and a new mobile home/recreational vehicle park has been built.

These entrepreneurial activities have also improved community pride. Located in an economically depressed area and populated by substantial numbers of Spokane Indians, Hunters had long felt the despair of poverty. The recent success has completely altered the community's sense of future. Although no formal evaluation has been done, local leaders claim that more students are going on to college with a larger percent of them receiving scholarships. Several students are attending college to work in wildlife management. The principal believes that athletics has also been affected. A school with traditionally poor teams has won three state championships in the last three years. The defeated dying town attitude has changed to "we can and will survive."

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are characterized by school personnel or student involvement in community activities, with or without the school's support. Many times these contacts are informal, as in the case of Annapolis, Missouri. Annapolis maintains a Community Betterment Program which encourages people to informally get involved in community activities. School personnel and students have both been represented on this board. Teachers, administrators, and school board members in numerous rural school districts are also involved in chambers of commerce, health boards, governing bodies, or community agencies that help build strong communities.

Extracurricular activities can also include school personnel or student involvement in a program or project that contributes directly to community development. The school's artist-in-residence program provided such an opportunity for Okemah, Oklahoma Middle School. Middle School students presented a live concert with the artist-in-residence to raise money for a local scholarship fund. These students went on to make and sell their own recordings. Proceeds from the sales were used for community enrichment projects.

The Brewster, Kansas School District formed a unique partnership with the community that is presently idle but will hopefully continue. In an attempt to lure a 20-district special education cooperative board to their town, citizens formed a school-community partnership. Brewster developed a public relations brochure and packaged a proposal to house the special education cooperative. Brewster lost the bid but the superintendent, who spearheaded this drive, would like to use this approach to perhaps attract business enterprises. Although the school-community partnership is presently inactive, the superintendent hopes that after the group recovers from the rejection. it will see the benefits that this effort has had on the community.

Full Text Provided by ERIC

While it is true that some school personnel will participate in community activities as a matter of choice, schools need to be sensitive to the need to send clear signals supporting community involvement. We found schools using a number of strategies: providing release time for school personnel and students, offering financial support to community groups, or extending community access to school facilities.

Several school districts allow release time for school personnel and students to serve on committees that are working on community projects. Prairie High School in Cottonwood, Idaho allows a student to sit on the Cottonwood Community Development Committee with full voting privileges. In addition to allowing this student release time, the school also encourages the student representative to take two to four friends to the meeting as observers. Jefferson Community School District in Iowa has encouraged and recognized faculty involvement in community affairs.

Schools also support extracurricular activities by financial remuneration in one form or another. Dietrich, Idaho purchased two extra computers, one of which was placed in the only downtown store. Linked to the school computer's hard disk, this computer offers local citizens access to electronic mail/bulletin board services. Uses range from simple electronic mail to farm equipment advertisements. School personnel in Hugo, Colorado have had their dues to local business and professional associations paid by the school district. This has created an excellent school/business relationship and has consequently allowed at-risk students to be placed in some local jobs that might not have been available without this school/community link. The Upsala, Minnesota School District donated land to the city for a community recreation facility. The result has been an indoor recreation facility that supports the community and surrounding area. a collaborative effort that benefitted both the school and community.

Schools also show their support by allowing organizations to use their facilities. Faced with declining attendance at Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, Monterey, Louisiana has incorporated children's activities and performances into their meetings. They have also provided community speakers at their PTO meetings, two efforts to increase interest and attendance. Crownpoint, New Mexico High School has developed the Troubleshooter Leadership Club, designed to involve students in various service activities. The students worked with the local planning board in naming the streets of the town. The Club has also dealt with issues related to drug abuse, the town's physical plant, and working with special education students. This Club has been instrumental in identifying and working on issues not addressed by other local groups.

The Cusick, Washington School District played a key role in attracting a new 300 million dollar lumber mill operation. The school offered space for negotiations between the community and industry and will similarly make space available for job interviews as well as training seminars for the new employees. The school has made it clear that it will work with the lumber mill anyway it possibly can.

One final strategy for linking schools with local development efforts is to involve school board members, school personnel, and students directly in community planning. Since many of these planning committees are in formative stages, we know little about their impact, influence, or success.

One community, Tonganoxie, Kansas, established a planning community eight years ago, offering us some insight into the benefits. Emphasis in Tonganoxie has been placed on teams. The church, bank, school, and post office are all considered important components to involve in community planning. The Tonganoxie planning committee surveyed the residents, discovering that 95 percent of the citizens would prefer to work in Tonganoxie rather than commute to a nearby town for employment. Backed by the Chamber of Commerce, the town has taken this survey seriously. In the last eight years, Tonganoxie has added an office partition company, a trailer manufacturing company, a veterinary supply company, a metal building manufacturing company, and most recently a bowling alley. As mentioned earlier, involvement in this planning effort has enabled the school to respond to specific training needs, such as those identified by the metal building manufacturing company.

Another impetus to community planning activities has been mandated community advisory committees in some states and efforts to regionalize in others. In response to Iowa's mandate, Lytton Community Schools established a Community Advisory Committee consisting of educators, community leaders, and others. The committee's purpose is to assist the school board in goal setting. Reeder, North Dakota schools participate in a regional planning process. Six counties, four in North Dakota and two in South Dakota, are currently looking at the extent to which local machine shops could be converted to high tech operations, thereby creating 50 new jobs. Linkages between schools and these planning efforts enable the region's educational resources to be made available to local development efforts.

Clearly, rural schools have found a variety of strategies by which to become involved in local development efforts. Whether it be through the curriculum, through school-based business enterprises, or through extracurricular activities for either the staff or the students, these strategies insure that the community's educational efforts can better match community needs. In the bargain, students gain valuable educational experiences!

References

Hobbs, D. (1986). Knowledge-based rural development: Adult education and the future rural economy. *Proceedings 1986: National Invitational Conference on Rural Adult Postsecondary Education.* Manhattan, KS: Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development.

Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL). (1989). *What's Noteworthy on Rural Schools and Community Development.* Denver: Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

McCune, S. (1987). Directions for restructuring schools for the future. *In Redesigning Schools: A Vision for the Future.* Denver: Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Schultz, T.W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *American Economics Review, 51(1),* pp. 1-17.

Sher, J.P. (Ed.). (1977). *Education in Rural America. A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Wiggington, E. (1985). *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Rural Schools and Social Services

The involvement of schools, both rural and urban, in the delivery of social services is hardly a new concept. Schools have always offered some services—vision and hearing tests, vaccinations for highly communicable diseases, and counseling for a variety of purposes. What is explored in this research is involvement that moves beyond the children being served by the school. Can rural schools become involved in the provision of social services to a broader clientele in ways that are educationally meaningful to the community? While relatively few examples of integrated programs exist, a number of schools have been exploring linkages.

In Search of a Better Way

Strategies for involving rural schools in the provision of social services make sense for a variety of reasons. Needs for services are growing exponentially. Urban models for service delivery assume populations large enough to support the specialization and, to some extent, duplication across several agencies. Schools can offer access to additional resources—facilities, shared professionals, or faculty/student time. In addition, there seem to be educational reasons for such linkages.

Growing Needs

The need for effective social service programs in rural America is compelling. A cursory study of rural demographics and economics reveals the following changes taking place:

- An aging population—an increasingly larger proportion of older rural Americans.
- Increasing cultural diversity.
- Increasing need for economic diversity.
- Increasing numbers of single parent and blended families.
- Increasing social problems which accompany a changing society—drugs, crime, and health care concerns are three of the major issues confronting rural America.
- Increasing adult education needs and demands related to the skills necessary to function in the Information Age.
- A decrease in rural isolation brought about by communications technology, creating more awareness of national and international issues.
- A widening economic gap between the rural *haves* and the rural *have-nots*.
- An increasing number of rural families and children living at or below the poverty level.

These are but a few of the social issues facing rural America as we approach the 21st Century. The harsh reality is that rural communities must cope with social problems more similar to urban social problems than they are different. The difference lies not so much in the need, as in the mechanisms available to cope with those problems.

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

For the most part, social service delivery strategies are patterned after models used in urban settings. A wide range of agencies, each staffed by trained professionals, delivers services and helps clients through the bureaucracy. While some would question whether such a system serves anyone well, it is clearly difficult to maintain in sparsely populated regions. In order to be cost effective, the agencies must regionalize, forcing clients to drive long distance to access services. Nearly all agencies complain of the difficulties in recruiting professional staff to rural sites. And in some cases, rural people are reluctant to access the services that are available, believing they can make do or hesitant to become involved with state or federal bureaucracies.

The farm crisis during the mid-1980s offers us a glimpse into strategies that are perhaps better suited to rural environments (Spears, 1987). Faced with an enormous number of families needing assistance ranging from sophisticated legal and financial advice to food stamps to stress counseling, communities found that conventional barriers between service agencies needed to be dissolved. Hotlines or umbrella agencies were created to offer families a single point of contact. Community agencies began meeting weekly in an effort to define needs and pool resources. Active collaboration and linkages between programs became the preferred mode of operation. Mental health programs, for example, found they had better success reaching those in need if they were linked to legal and financial counseling programs—linked with places farm families were most likely to contact first. Moreover, many of the programs found trained volunteers or community leaders far more effective at reaching those in need than the specialized professionals.

While the farm crisis created an extreme environment, in doing so it may have stimulated delivery strategies that better match rural communities. Small communities cannot support dozens of separate agencies, each staffed with trained professionals knowledgeable about a particular specialty. The hotlines or umbrella agencies better reflect the more integrated character of rural community life. Collaboration and linkages among agencies are more efficient. Generalists, not specialists, offer the better points of contact, in part because they see the whole problem and not just one dimension of it. In short, integrated programs that rely upon local people as the first point of contact are often more appropriate and effective in rural settings.

Educational Benefits

Schools offer one strategy for better integrating social services in rural communities. And as illustrated in the examples presented in this chapter a number of rural schools have begun to explore such a role. Undoubtedly their activities can strengthen community support of the school and insure that community resources are used more efficiently. But the arguments for rural school involvement in the social services are made even more compelling by suggestions that the linkages may have educational payoffs.

The alarming growth in illiteracy rates and increased drop-out rates have convinced many that it is not possible to treat educational problems separately from the social context in which they have emerged. Sticht and McDonald (1989) argue persuasively that literacy is an acquired skill handed down from one generation to another. Efforts to intervene with just children ignore the enormous role parents and communities play in shaping both the values and language experiences of the child. Similarly, programs for at-risk students are beginning to acknowledge that drop-out rates must be treated from the context of the social and family problems which contribute to them. School involvement in the provision of social services increases the likelihood that more integrated programs can be developed.

Schools currently involved in projects report a number of direct educational outcomes. Programs that bring elderly community members into contact with young people offer enormously rich learning opportunities. Information once passed along through extended families can again be made available to young people. Issues of grief, death and dying, the process of aging, can also be addressed from within the framework of experience. In addition, the experiences and wisdom gained from a lifetime of work can become valuable parts of classroom lessons.

Teachers point to the increased sense of responsibility and independence developed by students who become involved in community service activities. Students learn a great deal about themselves as well as about what it takes for a community to be able to respond to the basic needs of its members. For the most part, adult learning that occurs as a result of these programs has not been documented. But experience with rural school involvement in community development suggests that adults also gain information and knowledge from linkages with schools. Strategies which make sense to the local community also appear to make sense educationally.

Current Strategies

Schools can take on a variety of roles in facilitating the integration of social services in rural communities. At the one extreme, some have proposed that schools become one stop centers for all a community's social services—offering facilities for and perhaps leadership to an integrated social service delivery strategy. At the other extreme are more modest efforts to simply coordinate agencies or introduce programs that link young people to social needs being felt in the community. These modest efforts are the more common.

Research conducted into rural schools west of the Mississippi River identified a number of programs which link schools to the social needs of a community. Efforts to organize these programs into some sort of structure led us to propose four categories: (1) The School as Catalyst and Linking Agent; (2) The School as Facility Provider; (3) The School as Service Provider; and (4) Student Involvement. Each of these strategies is defined and illustrated in the sections that follow.

The School as Catalyst and Linking Agent

By virtue of their position in the community, rural schools can focus considerable attention on community needs. Consequently, they can be extremely effective catalysts or linking agents. Examples include schools convening resource councils, participating in collaborative efforts or creating social programs that are eventually taken over by other agencies. In some cases, children are the direct beneficiary. In others, more general community needs are addressed.

In York, Nebraska and Havre, Montana the local directors of the community education program served as catalysts for bringing social service delivery agencies, civic organizations, and governmental agencies together to form a local resource council. The council identifies local needs and the appropriate resources to meet those needs. The purpose is not to create programs but to serve as a catalyst for linking community needs with available resources.

Child Protection Teams have been established in Moab, Utah and Worland, Wyoming. These teams link the school and other crucial social service agencies with parents in order to more effectively deal with the at-risk student. The result has been a stronger three-way communication link between the school, social service agencies, and parents. The needs of the individual student are more easily identified and responded to than they had been prior to the creation of these teams.

ERIC Full Text Provided by ERIC

In other examples, the school served as a catalyst for creating social programs. Meals for the elderly was the most common example, but recreational programs (Arts and Crafts Shows, Local Heritage Days) were also mentioned frequently. In an effort to create awareness regarding the need, the school would initiate the program. Once awareness was established, the program was taken over by other social service agencies and/or civic organizations.

The School as Facility Provider

Making school resources available for community use is a second strategy used by many rural schools. School buildings are an obvious resource—offering space and furnishings for a variety of purposes. Other equipment, such as computers or copying equipment, can also be valuable. Community resources are used more efficiently and adults can often be drawn into nonformal learning activities or school projects. In addition, shared facilities often enable schools and social service agencies to collaborate with one another more easily.

Faced with losing the facility which housed the county nurse, county library, food bank, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, and a host of other organizations, Bowie, Arizona turned to the school district for help. School enrollments had declined considerably in the last few years, leaving the school district with a vacant building. The school district (with strong community support) turned the building over to the various agencies. Not only were the needs of the organizations and community met, but a stronger, more powerful link has been established between the schools and other community organizations. In addition, the process of establishing proof of liability met with unanticipated benefits. Liability often poses a barrier in joint ventures. Larger organizations (schools, Chambers of Commerce, Lions Clubs) have little trouble meeting liability codes, while smaller organizations (volunteer programs, senior citizen groups, etc.) often find it impossible. In order to overcome the liability barrier, smaller organizations now operate under the umbrella of larger organizations, resulting in a bonding between organizations which have traditionally felt they had little in common.

In Tabiona, Utah the county nurse serves as the primary health care provider for the local population. In an effort to make her accessible to community members, the local school provides facilities for her to conduct blood pressure checks, give immunizations, and do routine patient screening which does not require a licensed physician. This not only provides a much needed medical service for the community, but also offers the opportunity for local citizens to come to the school, strengthening the school-community link.

Like many rural communities, Las Animas, Colorado was in need of a community building to house social service agencies, a senior citizen center, youth activities, and assorted other agencies and activities. The school district, again like many rural school districts, had a vacant building due to declining enrollments. The school district and community agreed to share this building as a Community Building. The school district maintains ownership of the building, leasing space to agencies at a nominal fee to recoup custodial and maintenance expenses.

The School as Service Provider

Many rural schools are involved in preparing food for senior citizens, and in some cases delivering that food (commonly known as Meals on Wheels programs). In Battle Creek, Iowa the school cooks prepare the food, while community volunteers deliver the meals. In Willow Creek, Montana a small group of senior citizens eat lunch at the school, and then deliver lunches to shut-ins. This provides an opportunity for the senior citizens to be in the school and visit with the young people, a pleasure for both age groups. In Brewster, Kansas the senior citizens have a van with which to pick up and deliver the school prepared lunches. In Dietrich, Idaho the students take turns delivering lunch to a shut-in who lives a couple of blocks from the school. Other senior citizens are invited to the school for lunch on a regular basis.

These are but a few of the many Meals on Wheels programs identified. Some of the programs were initiated by school personnel who observed a need; other programs were established at the request of the community. In many rural communities, the school is the only institution with a facility capable of producing the lunches. In addition, it purchases food in large quantities, an absolute necessity if costs are to be kept reasonable and affordable.

Childcare is becoming an increasingly important social issue in rural America, as well as urban America. Rural schools are beginning to respond to this issue in unique and different ways. In Diagonal, Iowa the school adopted an all-day, 5-day a week kindergarten in response to the needs of the working mother. Additionally, the school district implemented a 2-day a week pre-school for 3-5 year olds ($30 per week). The program was established not only to assist the working mother with child care, but to provide socialization and educational opportunity for pre-school children in their formative years. In Winchester/Nortonville, Kansas the school district operates a traditional pre-school at the Nortonville Elementary School site. York, Nebraska provides before and after school childcare for school age children. West Concord, Minnesota has started a pre-school in order to prepare students for first grade, and to identify developmental and learning problems prior to entering the regular school classroom.

Food service and childcare are but two, albeit dominant, social service programs rural schools are beginning to investigate and implement. Others include parenting classes, community drug and alcohol awareness, crime prevention, drivers training for the elderly to assist in reducing insurance premiums, and a host of other programs designed to meet specific local social issues.

Student Involvement

Adopt a Grandparent programs provide unique opportunities for students to become involved in intergenerational learning situations, as well as provide companionship for senior citizens. The programs range from informal, loosely structured programs to highly structured programs embedded in the curriculum. In Battle Creek, Iowa second and third grade students (as part of the school curriculum) visit the local nursing home on a regular basis. In Lytton, Iowa the grade school children write to senior citizens in the local nursing home and provide entertainment for the nursing home. The senior citizens, in turn, come to the school to read to the grade school students.

In Pine Hill, New Mexico a foster grandparent program has been established to link the Navajo heritage and traditions to the Ramah Navajo School. The foster grandparents serve as a support group for the school and are used as guest speakers in classes. Evansville High School (Evansville, Minnesota) uses the adopt-a-grandparent in the 9th grade Home Economics classes. Students go to the nursing home at least once a week during the class hour. In Chiloquin, Oregon the National Honor Society sponsors a program in which students visit adopted grandparents on a regular basis. In both programs, long term relationships can develop between student and grandparent, often continuing beyond the school year. Additionally, students are taught about grieving and coping with death, should one of the students lose an adopted grandparent.

Adopt a Grandparent programs are not unique, but they are essential. With the graying of rural America, it is important to have mechanisms in place to link young people and the school with a group that is not only a valuable human resource, but is quickly becoming a dominant force in society—the senior citizen. Such programs not only create a valuable link and resource for the school and children, they fulfill basic needs for the senior citizens, offering them companionship and a sense of purpose.

Other programs also involve students in providing a social service. In Evansville, Minnesota, the students in Home Economics classes receive training in infant care. Following the instructional unit, parents bring infants to the school so that the students can receive practical, first hand experience at childcare. Similar programs exist in other rural schools.

Dexfield Community Schools (Redfield, Iowa) has established Project Victory to meet the needs of the at-risk student. Students are provided before and after school tutoring and assistance with basic study skills. Parents must sign a contract to show their support for the program. The program serves as an effective home-community partnership designed to improve the chance for success of the at-risk student.

The alternative school, once considered an urban adaptation, is now a reality in rural Colorado. Seeing the need to provide an alternative for the at-risk and nontraditional student, the principal of Las Animas High School successfully collaborated with five area rural high schools in developing an alternative high school. Rural students once forced to drop out of school for personal or social reasons now have alternative. A similar project is being explored in rural South Dakota.

Several programs involve students in the political process. Klamath County High School in Chiloquin, Oregon offers students first hand experience with the judicial system. At the request of the local judge, a teen court was established. Students serve as the jury for actual legal proceedings and pass binding judgments on the cases they hear. The local judicial system has some of its load lifted and students explore a wide range of issues regarding acceptable behavior, fair treatment before the law, and societal views toward crime. The Mayor's Youth Council of Cabool, Missouri is a cooperative project between the school and community designed to provide an opportunity for high school students to become involved in the community. Students (approximately 30-35 per year) attend city council meetings, assist with community betterment projects, provide lawn care and snow removal for the elderly, and provide a variety of other services as local need dictates.

In Battle Creek, Iowa, high school seniors over the age of 18 are trained as volunteer ambulance drivers. Although the school doesn't operate the program, they cooperate to the extent that students involved in the project carry beepers to school when they are on call. If the students need to make an ambulance run during the school day, the school facilitates making up work missed. In the same town, a program was established to link high school students with persons in a local group home. The high school students involved in the program (STAR—Students Teaching for Academic Readiness) are volunteers and use their study hall hour and personal time for the project. The project offers high school participants the opportunity to provide a service and assists the group home in meeting social needs.

Clearly, rural schools have found a variety of strategies by which to become involved in responding to community social needs. The vision and the programs which result need not be complex and cumbersome. They can be as simple as linking with local senior citizens through an Adopt A Grandparent program or as complex as creating a regional alternative school to meet the needs of at-risk students. The school can simply make its facilities available for community use at night or decide to adapt its curriculum to build on the learning experiences provided through community service. Social services provide one strategy by which rural schools can be more closely linked with the community, a strategy which benefits the community and leads the school to explore new ways of educating young people.

References

Spears, J.D. (1987). *Education's Response to the Rural Crisis: Model Programs in the Midwest.* Manhattan, KS: Action Agenda Project.

Sticht, T., & McDonald, B. (1989). *Making the Nation Smarter: The Intergenerational Transfer of Cognitive Ability.* San Diego, CA: Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Inc.

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

Rural Schools and Lifelong Learning

Involving rural schools in lifelong learning struck a familiar chord among rural schools contacted in this study. Of the approximately 600 responses to the initial survey, over 460 schools/districts identified themselves as being involved in some form of lifelong learning or what many referred to as community education. Most were somewhat conventional, using school facilities to support recreational or adult basic education opportunities. A few, however, were exploiting distance technology or linking adult and child learning in interesting ways. This chapter examines the arguments for involving schools in the provision of lifelong learning and explores both traditional and innovative programs offered by rural schools.

The Learning Community

The notion that learning is a lifelong process has been a part of rural life for almost a century. The creation of land grant universities in the late nineteenth century and addition of the Cooperative Extension Service in the twentieth century built a network that continues to support both formal and nonformal education. The community education movement involved schools more directly in the provision of both recreational and adult education. The current transition to the Information Age has brought with it the need for increased access to education for adults of all ages. Both the purpose and character of the adult population needing access to education continue to broaden.

Changing Needs for Education

Arguments that eventually led to the creation of land grant universities and the Cooperative Extension Service were primarily economic. Research directed at agricultural productivity linked with nonformal educational structures proved an effective strategy for helping farm families become more productive as well as stimulating rural development. However, the extent to which rural economies have become less dependent on natural resources has broadened the educational needs of rural communities and individuals beyond this original mission. Community development and diversified strategies for local economic development have become increasingly important.

The community education movement of the late 1960s added a school based dimension to adult education in rural areas. Although not all community education programs are affiliated with public schools, the linkage is especially common in rural areas. The concept that the school could become a lifelong learning center for the entire community, making the resources of the school available to more than children, matched the rural need to use its resources wisely. Although based on an expansive view of lifelong learning, most community education programs found a niche in recreational learning and programs offering adults a second chance at mastering the basic skills and content taught in the public schools. While many rural adults profited from the opportunity to complete their high school diploma or improve basic skills, most community education programs responded to social rather than economic needs.

During the past decade, rural adults have felt increasing pressure to return for vocational or postsecondary training. The economic transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age has dislocated workers, first in natural resource-based fields and more recently in manufacturing, as firms abandon rural communities for cheaper labor overseas. In addition, rapid technological change demands that a number of professionals have access to new technologies or research in their respective fields. Rural communities near postsecondary institutions have been able to access these educational resources—either through the outreach efforts of the institutions or because individuals are willing to commute. Community education programs often coordinate these efforts, serving as a broker for postsecondary offerings. Despite these efforts, many communities and rural adults lack access to postsecondary education. Rural hospitals need nurses and rural women need jobs, for example. But without access to the formal training required, community needs and human resources continue to go unmatched.

Predictions are that postsecondary education will become increasingly important. Characterized by the use of sophisticated technology, dependence on knowledge resources, and expansion of public services, the Information Age creates both an increased demand and new context for education. Blakely (1978) points out that: (1) adults will seek entry into educational programs periodically throughout their lives; (2) educational programs will need to be dispersed rather than centralized, eliminating the time and space constraints that limit access; and (3) formal and nonformal educational providers will develop stronger linkages and collaborative strategies. As rural economies diversify, rural communities will need access to a broader and broader array of educational resources. Indeed, profiles of rural adult learners already show few differences in reasons for pursuing postsecondary education and types of degree programs desired, when compared to urban populations (McCannon, 1985).

Implications for Rural Schools

The changing economic environment clearly creates a new context for education—one which supports the vision of lifelong learning first expressed by the community education movement. Educational goals will become driven more by economic needs. Efforts to link educational resources to local development will increase, such that educators will need to do more than simply deliver standardized programs. The information presented, concepts introduced, and skills developed will need to be tailored to the local community's development efforts. And the limited resources that characterize rural communities will continue to require that schools use existing resources to meet broader needs. While this new context imposes new demands on education, it also creates opportunities for rural schools to explore new ways of organizing.

Schools currently involved in efforts to respond to adult needs report a number of outcomes from early experiments. The farm crisis prompted a number of rural schools to introduce programs for farmers or farm families, usually courses in computer record keeping and marketing techniques aimed at helping families become better managers of their farm operations (Spears, 1987). Teachers who became involved in these programs talked about the extent to which working with adults has influenced their choice of content in programs for high school students. Working with adults who are dealing with real-life problems helped teachers keep curricula more relevant and enabled them to relate content more directly to local conditions.

Other efforts cite outcomes common to programs which bring adults and young people together in learning situations. York, Nebraska found that allowing adults to participate in high school courses had a positive impact on the classroom environment and students. Adults helped high school students realize how important and relevant classes were to their futures. Moreover, the adults bring a vast array of experiences from which to draw, making classroom discussions more lively and interesting. Schools who have been able to deliver college classes through community education programs point out that the college classes enrich the offerings available to high school students as well, expanding the high school curriculum far beyond what would ordinarily be possible. Some programs attack the intergenerational effects associated with illiteracy, pointing out that both parent and child learn more rapidly when the learning experience is shared. When schools begin to experiment with creating a learning community, many find that the quality of what they have been offering to young people is enhanced. Linkages between the school and the community's broader educational needs enable the school to better reflect the more integrated character of rural life.

Current Strategies

As mentioned earlier, more than 460 schools/districts identified themselves as being involved in either lifelong learning or community education. The majority of these programs were relatively conventional. Although the school may have served as a broker or coordinator of programs for adults, most had not integrated these services with the traditional programs made available to the community's young people. A few programs, however, had taken the next step and were exploring integrated strategies for serving children and adults. Before examining both types of programs in detail, it is important to clarify the distinction made in this research between traditional community education and lifelong learning models.

Community education typically refers to traditional programs structured within the traditional framework of the local school and community. Programs center around local social and educational needs, typically arts and crafts, handyman skill development, adult basic education, GED programs, and some courses for college credit. These programs are generally operated in the evening, as an add on to the regular function of the local school. Many, if not most, community education programs focus on adult social and educational needs, with little consideration given to pre-school age children and young people in grades K-12. And in many communities, traditional programs have not had any mechanism by which to link with community development efforts or monitor the changes being felt by the community.

As used in this report, lifelong learning expands the concept of community education to include pre-school age children, school age children, and older adults engaged in a much broader range of contexts. The lifelong learning concept is less concerned with maintaining separate structures (evening classes only, ABE/GED Programs) than it is with how a school and community can use these traditional structures to meet the needs of a changing rural society. People think of education as being on-going, responding to needs from cradle to grave. Programs are not confined to a school, with K-12 students receiving their dose of education from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and adults receiving their dose from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Lifelong learning is less concerned with who is teacher, where education takes place, and what constitutes education than it is with meeting the needs (social, educational, economic) of a changing society in a formal and informal structure. Age boundaries, social boundaries, and traditional structures are crossed and reshaped as the needs of the learner and the community changes.

Traditional Community Education Programs

The majority of responses to our survey came from traditional community education programs. These describe an important first step schools often take in embracing the concept of lifelong learning. Because so many of the programs were similar, we have chosen to describe them in general, making no references to specific schools. We found two broad types of community education programs: (1) independent, self-contained local programs, (2) programs with a community college or postsecondary education link. Each is described in more detail below.

Independent Local Programs

Independent, self-contained local programs are generally designed to meet local social and basic educational needs. Most of these programs emphasize sharing knowledge and skills—craft or handyman skills such as quilting, stained glass, oil painting, basic automotive repairs, basic plumbing and electrical skills, etc. Additionally, some programs offer formal training for local adult basic education (ABE) needs and GED needs. These formal programs are generally administered at the local level but funded by a combination of federal and state monies allocated through the Adult Basic Education Act.

In most cases, the rural school functions as a linking agent. The school identifies local needs, often through a combination of formal surveys and informal conversations. The school then identifies local expertise and courses are designed and offered. Courses are typically offered in the evening, using school facilities. Most programs are for adults only, with little thought given to creating intergenerational learning experiences. The programs often serve an important social function in the community, and can sometimes result in the creation of local businesses based upon an art or craft mastered as part of the community education program.

Community College/Higher Education Link

Some programs focus only on the formal educational needs of adults: ABE (adult basic education for adults with literacy levels below 6th Grade level); GED (graduate equivalency diploma programs for adults functioning at the 7th grade or above who aspire to receive a high school diploma or its equivalent); and courses for local adults who desire to receive college credit. While the ABE and GED programs may be offered locally, the college level programs are arranged through linkages with an area community college or four year college. Collaboration with these colleges offers adults the opportunity to obtain college credit without leaving the local community. For the most part, however, complete degree programs are not available. Colleges simply offer individual courses.

The school serves as the linking agent and facilitator, identifying local needs and working with the colleges or universities to design and implement programs which meet those needs. The ability to establish such a program at the local level often depends on the location of the community and the technological infrastructure of the region and state. Communities closest to community colleges or universities have the best opportunity to establish such programs. Additionally, communities, regions, and states which have invested in a technological infrastructure (fiber optics, satellite up/down links, telecommunications) have a better chance of participating in such programs.

Although few, there were some schools whose lifelong learning program focused only on ABE, GED, and for-credit college courses, with little in the way of programs for local social needs. The majority include both informal educational activities (arts, crafts, handyman skills) and formal educational activities (ABE, GED, and for-credit college courses).

Lifelong Learning Programs

Relatively few schools identified programs that integrated community and school lifelong learning needs, but those we were able to identify are interesting. While most of the programs seemed highly unique, we did try to categorize them in terms of the circumstances or opportunities that led to their creation. Three broad categories are suggested, programs that emerged from: (1) effective use of technology; (2) cooperation and collaboration; and (3) seizing the moment.

Effective Use of Technology

Because of isolation, short supply of teachers, and small class sizes in higher level courses, many rural schools have found it necessary to invest in technology (fiber optics, computers, satellite television, etc.). Some rural school districts use this technology to meet not only the needs of K-12 students, but also the needs of the adult population within the community.

Tabiona, Utah (population 600) serves as a telecommunications center for the region, linking with five other school districts and communities via satellite and telephone wires. The center has decided to lay fiber optic cable to enable it to communicate with the Roosevelt Vocational Center and Utah State University. Local residents will eventually be able to obtain an undergraduate degree without leaving the local community.

Three years ago Upsala, Minnesota (population 400) installed one of the first fiber optic interactive television systems for educational purposes in a rural community. Upsala uses the fiber-optic system to meet the needs of the adult learner, receiving college level courses, agriculture economics workshops, and a host of other activities. Recently, the school librarian decided to take advantage of existing technology to convert the school library into a community library, in conjunction with the local phone company and the local school district. The local telephone company (which also handled installation of the fiber-optics system) built a building to house the school-community library and company offices. The library is operated by the school librarian 20 hours per week and is connected via fiber-optics with the regional library in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The school staffs the library with the school funded librarian; the telephone company builds and maintains the building for the library and its offices; and all local citizens benefit from the final product.

Other effective uses of technological advancements are reflected in the use of satellite television/videotapes and computers. Jefferson, Iowa uses an in-school television room for receiving, via satellite, classes the adult learner can take for college credit. In Plevna, Montana the school district tapes German classes transmitted via satellite for use by local students. Other schools make space available to adult learners who may want to participate in satellite delivered courses.

Many rural school districts saw the need for adults to receive computer literacy training. In Willow Creek, Montana the superintendent, considered to be the local computer expert, opens the school building two nights a week and works with adults interested in learning how to operate computers and computer software packages. DeWitt, Nebraska uses school-owned computers to train local farmers and business persons in computer based management. In York, Nebraska the recently completed high school computer lab was designed and built in consultation with the business community and adult learning community. The lab has outside access for evening and weekend classes and seminars, keeping the needs of adult learners clearly in mind.

The mushrooming technological advancements have been a boon for rural school districts, and in particular for creating a lifelong learning environment. Technology makes it possible to meet the needs of the K-12 student in a more efficient manner, particularly in higher level, advanced secondary education courses. Once the technology is in place, it can easily serve adult learning needs. Technological advancements have opened new avenues for the place-bound adult learner, as well as provided an efficient vehicle for the progressive rural school to begin to build a community learning environment.

Cooperation and Collaboration

Some school districts have seen lifelong learning programs as an opportunity to establish linkages with other local agencies. In Havre, Montana an Interagency Council was established to cut down on duplication, fill gaps, and coordinate services within the community. Membership in the council consists of local civic, social, and governmental agencies. As described in the case study presented in Chapter 3, York, Nebraska operates the York Resource Council through its community education program. The Council identifies local educational and social needs and then helps link community resources with those needs. In both instances, these linkages have led to improved social services to the community as well as impacted the traditional school curriculum. These examples were discussed in more detail in the chapter dealing with social services.

Other schools/communities cooperate with local businesses to meet the changing needs in the work place. In Tonganoxie, Kansas the school was successful in cooperating with local businesses and government to attract a new industry (metal building manufacturer) to this small town of 2,000. The school offered initial start-up training for employees and continues to provide competent employees for the future. The company has in turn provided materials for expansion of the industrial arts department within the school. Schools in DeWitt, Nebraska and Rockdale, Texas also link with local businesses. The schools and businesses share expertise when possible, and the schools often receive equipment from the local business which can be used for both K-12 and adult education.

School and business collaboration, within the context of lifelong learning, serves a three-fold function. Initially, it provides the community and school with the opportunity to attract local businesses (such as in Tonganoxie, Kansas). Second, such collaboration allows for the school to learn from the business community, to understand the needs of the work place in the local community, and to initiate programs to meet those needs. Third, but not least, such collaborative efforts add power to the process of learning. Learning becomes more than books and memorization. It takes on relevance and significance when students see the extent to which knowledge and skills are valued in the work place.

Seize the Moment

Many of the lifelong learning activities identified in this study fall into what we came to call *seize the moment*. Often these activities were serendipitous and unplanned, stemming from an event that could be taken advantage of by a creative administrator or teacher.

In Cottonwood, Idaho the school district adopted a new elementary math program which involved the use of computers. Most parents were not familiar with either the new math program or computers. School personnel seized this opportunity to invite parents, along with their children, to the school for evening demonstrations about the math program and the computers. This simple idea enabled parents to learn about computers and their children's new math program, and to do so with their children. The students had the opportunity to observe that learning is a lifelong task. These parents will now be better able to work with their children in support of the school's curriculum.

In Dietrich, Idaho the school was able to purchase a used computer at a very nominal price. Although the school did not need the computer, it was purchased and placed in the local (and only) store. Adults were provided minimal training on the computer. The computer now serves as a local billboard for the farmer wishing to sell hay, the local businessman needing part time help, and a host of other services and activities. The school has helped the community explore a new environment, namely the use of technology to support communication.

In Las Animas, Colorado the principal attempted to eliminate the yearbook, since it was losing money each year. When students and parents protested this move, the yearbook became a community project. Adults and students work side by side in the production of the yearbook, learning together about how to design, produce, print and market it. In this same community, the principal was successful in getting the state Supreme Court to conduct court in the region for one day. Through the school and local civic organizations, students, parents, and community members were provided educational background on the state and federal court system and then allowed to watch the Court in session. Families found they much to discuss around the dinner table!

Some school districts (Pine Bluff, Wyoming and York, Nebraska being but two) reported that adult learners were allowed to take classes during the regular school day. Such activity was usually done on a spontaneous, space available basis. The power of such a simple concept is obvious. For the adult learner, it provides the opportunity to obtain a skill or refresh a skill for little or no cost. For the high school student, the presence of an adult learner in the classroom attests to the relevance of learning, particularly for the course involved. For the school, it provides a mechanism for meeting the needs of the local adult learner in a relatively inexpensive manner. For all concerned, it provides opportunities for intergenerational learning activities which are not available in the traditional K-12 classroom.

The simplicity and success of many of the seize the moment activities is a powerful testament to the value of school-community linkages. Although most of the programs in this section functioned basically within the confines of the traditional community education structure, something (an event, need, crisis) or someone (administrator, teacher, community member) provided the opportunity and leadership to move the traditional program into a more integrated lifelong learning activity.

Both community education and lifelong learning programs offer valuable ways for rural schools to develop stronger linkages with their communities. In many rural areas, local community education programs offer the only real mechanism for informal or formal adult education programs. If the community education program is able to take on a larger role, acting as a broker or coordinator for college level courses, then an even broader series of opportunities present themselves. Futurists predict that the boundaries separating formal and nonformal education, public school and adult education needs, young people and adults, will one day be blurred. In the interests of responding to community needs, some rural schools are leading the way.

References

Blakely, E.J. (1978). *Community Development Research: Concepts, Issues and Strategies.* New York: Human Sciences Press.

McCannon, R. (1985). *Serving the Rural Adult: A Demographic Portrait of Rural Adult Learners.* Manhattan, KS: Action Agenda Project.

Spears, J.D. (1987). *Education's Response to the Rural Crisis: Model Programs in the Midwest.* Manhattan, KS: Action Agenda Project.

Resources

This section includes schools cited in the research, contacts made by the Rural Clearinghouse staff during the course of gathering information for this study, and references which were helpful in understanding both school and community perspectives regarding educational change. We have included them here for those who might like to continue to explore strategies for rural school reform.

School Contacts

Arkansas

David G. Watts, Principal
Mountain Pine High School
P.O. Box 1
Mountain Pine, AR 71956
(501) 767-6917

K-12 Enrollment: 665

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

High school houses the senior citizen center and the first step program for early childhood education.

Arizona

Bruce Brown, Superintendent
Bowie U.S.D. #14
P.O. Box 157
Bowie, AZ 85605
(601) 847-2545

K-12 Enrollment: 112

- Community Development
- Social Services

School-Chamber of Commerce cooperation. School provides facilities for various county services. School is active in working with community to bring industry to the area.

California

Dr. Vicki Lambert
Pacific Grove High School
o15 Sunset Drive
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(408) 646-6590

- Community Development

School's journalism class has developed a partnership with the community newspaper. Students write, edit, and mentor with the newspaper staff. The newspaper prints and produces the paper.

Colorado

Robert Houska, Principal
Genoa-Hugo School
Box 247, 220 W. 7th
Hugo, CO 80821
(719) 743-2428

K-12 Enrollment: 228

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Project Lead compiled list of community members who are resource people. Active community-school cooperation. Counselors assist in social service issues. Community college uses school for community education classes.

Fred Smith, Principal
Las Animas High School
300 Grove Avenue
Las Animas, CO 81054
(719) 456-0211

K-12 Enrollment: 880

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Yearbook is a small business owned and operated by students (community service publication). School is trying to transform a closed school into multi-use community building. Alternative school for dropouts.

Idaho

Mike Williams, Principal
Prairie High School USD #242
P.O. Box 158
Cottonwood, ID 83522
(208) 962-3901

K-12 Enrollment: 411

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Community development committee includes students in decision making with board members. Night classes offered occasionally by the school.

Wayne Perron, Superintendent
Dietrich High School USD #314
Box 428, 406 N. Park
Dietrich, ID 83324
(208) 544-2158

K-12 Enrollment: 151

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School provides computer access to electronic bulletin boards. Seniors raise funds for senior trip by entrepreneurship. Senior citizens come to school for lunch weekly. School facilities are used for community education.

Jerry Waugh, Principal
Jefferson Community High School
101 E. Sunset
Jefferson, IA 50129
(515) 386-2188

K–12 Enrollment: 1,000

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Teachers sit on industrial development commission. School-business partnerships provide services/goods reciprocation. Community college affiliation and community education, including a television classroom.

Larry Peppers, Principal
Kanawha Junior & Senior High School
Box 130
Kanawha, IA 50447
(515) 762-3261

K–12 Enrollment: 210

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Community Development Corporation is headed by a teacher and brings new business to the area. Community education is linked with a community college.

Dave Clinefelter
Lamoni Community Schools
202 N. Walnut
Lamoni, IA 50140
(515) 784-3342

K–12 Enrollment: 446

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Superintendent is president of Economic Development Corporation. School-community cooperation created a juvenile foster home. Planning a vocational training center. Operates program for preschoolers at risk. School offers adult education classes.

Al Carr, Superintendent
Lytton Community Schools
Lytton, IA 50561
(712) 466-2233

K–12 Enrollment: 165

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Advisory committee developed to link school to community. Students assist and entertain elderly. Television network used for instructional purposes and adult education.

Jerry Waugh, Principal
Jefferson Community High School
101 E. Sunset
Jefferson, IA 50129
(515) 386-2188

K-12 Enrollment: 1,000

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Teachers sit on industrial development commission. School-business partnerships provide services/goods reciprocation. Community college affiliation and community education, including a television classroom.

Larry Peppers, Principal
Kanawha Junior & Senior High School
Box 130
Kanawha, IA 50447
(515) 762-3261

K-12 Enrollment: 210

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Community Development Corporation is headed by a teacher and brings new business to the area. Community education is linked with a community college.

Dave Clinefelter
Lamoni Community Schools
202 N. Walnut
Lamoni, IA 50140
(515) 784-3342

K-12 Enrollment: 446

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Superintendent is president of Economic Development Corporation. School-community cooperation created a juvenile foster home. Planning a vocational training center. Operates program for preschoolers at risk. School offers adult education classes.

Al Carr, Superintendent
Lytton Community Schools
Lytton, IA 50561
(712) 466-2233

K-12 Enrollment: 165

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Advisory committee developed to link school to community. Students assist and entertain elderly. Television network used for instructional purposes and adult education.

Byron D. Clemsen, Principal
Dexfield Community Schools
1104 Grant
Redfield, IA 50233
(515) 833-2331

K-12 Enrollment: 481

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Adult education classes include everything from GED to college credit classes. Monthly community newsletter. At risk program: Project Victory. Students volunteer in businesses.

Scott Clark, Principal
Waterloo #11
Waterloo, IA 50701
(402) 779-2646

- Lifelong Learning

School addresses an illiteracy problem in the community.

Kansas

Jean S. Lavid, Superintendent
Brewster U.S.D. #314
Box 220
Brewster, KS 67732
(913) 694-2236

K-12 Enrollment: 149

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Superintendent serves on the Brewster Development Committee which is attempting to attract business to the town. School provides lunches for senior citizen center. Recreation and education outreach programs use school facilities.

Bernard White, Principal
Ell-Saline USD #307
414 East Anderson
Brookville, KS 67425
(913) 225-6633

K-12 Enrollment: 352

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School makes lunches which senior citizens may purchase at the school. Community education is operated by school personnel and the school serves as the facility.

Irma Jean Blaha
Clifton-Clyde High School
616 North High
Clyde, KS 66938
(913) 729-3867

- Community Development

Future Business Leaders of America are contacting past residents of the area in an attempt to bring businesses and retirees back to the community.

Business Teacher
Linn High School
Linn, KS 66953
(913) 348-5341

- Community Development

High school offers an entrepreneurship unit where students learn firsthand about business by studying local businesses and creating a fictitious business of their own.

Dr. Stephen G. McClure
Tonganoxie USD #464
P.O. Box 199
Tonganoxie, KS 66086
(913) 845-2153

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

School-business cooperation: school provides trained employees for a metal building manufacturer which in turn supported expansion of high school shop. City is trying to get into manufacturing and distribution.

Fred Irwin, Principal
Jefferson High School USD #339
5th and Main
Winchester, KS 66097
(913) 774-8515

K-12 Enrollment: 444

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School implemented an entrepreneur class as a link to the community. Jefferson High School operates a preschool. Community education is community college based, but offered at the school.

Louisiana

Richard Reese, Principal
Vernon Parish High School
Leesville, LA 71446

- Lifelong Learning

An extensive community education program exists here. School district started the Meals on Wheels program, which the community later took over.

Edgar Gibson
Monterey School
P.O. Box 127
Monterey, LA 71354
(318) 386-2214

- Community Development

Parent Teacher Organization has programs that involve students and guest speakers. So many attend that the meetings are used for community information. Community involvement to the maximum!

Marty Harris, Principal
Ward III High School
Rt. 1
Winnsboro, LA 71295
(318) 435-4749

K-12 Enrollment: 325

- Lifelong Learning

Adult vocational classes in Agriculture, Business and Home Economics.

Minnesota

Tom Shea, Principal
Evansville High School, USD #208
123 2nd St. North
Evansville, MN 56326
(218) 948-2241

K-12 Enrollment: 320

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School programs include Adopt a Grandparent and infant care, both which involve the community. Community Education Program was started by the schools with a state grant and serves community needs.

Brian Doty, Principal
Upsala High School
Box 190
Upsala, MN 56384
(612) 573-2176

K-12 Enrollment: 450

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Principal serves on the Chamber of Commerce. School donated land to the city for a community recreation facility. Upsala uses fiber-optic television (nationally recognized) in community education and area communications.

Raymond Six, Principal
West Concord Community Schools
West Concord, MN 55985
(507) 527-2211

K-12 Enrollment: 440

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School district sponsors a community education program, driving course for people over 55, and a preschool. Community education courses and video television are sponsored by the school.

Missouri

Douglas Funk
South Iron Schools
Box 218
Annapolis, MO 63620
(314) 598-4241

K-12 Enrollment: 352

- Community Development
- Social Services

Community betterment program encourages people to get involved in improving their community. School does a biweekly community newsletter, is part of a drug free consortium, and sponsors a parents as teachers program.

Vicki Woods, Principal
Cabool High School
P.O. Box N
Cabool, MO 65689
(417) 962-3153

K-12 Enrollment: 950

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

School brings in locals who lecture/demonstrate on areas of their expertise. Students assist the community in making the area a better place to live (Mayor's Youth Council).

Montana

JoAnn Erikson
Community/Adult Education Director
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-4356

- Lifelong Learning

Havre uses the Interagency Collaboration Model in organizing and implementing community as well as community education activities. The program in ongoing and successful.

George Bailey, Superintendent
Plevna Community Schools
Plevna, MT 59344
(406) 772-5666

- Lifelong Learning

Schools involved in providing satellite enrichment programs for adult and K-12 learners.

Rus Steinebach, Superintendent
Willow Creek #15
P.O. Box 198
Willow Creek, MT 59760
(406) 285-6991

K-12 Enrollment: 65

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School provides Meals on Wheels to elderly. School-community cooperation completes tasks to improve the community. School opens computer laboratory/education to the community.

Nebraska

Marshall Adams, Superintendent
DeWitt Public Schools
RR #1, Box 164A
DeWitt, NE 68241
(402) 683-2015

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

School-community relationship: school sponsors senior citizen days, community does fund raising for school, night school is offered by the school, and school-business li[illegible] exist.

Stewart Wiley, Director
York Community Education Program
York, NE 68467
(402) 362-4202

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Community Education Program has social service components. Provides child-care before and after school, transportation for elderly and handicapped. School-business cooperation in training personnel for industry.

New Mexico

Mel Holland, Principal
Carrizozo Public Schools
P.O. Box 99
Carrizozo, NM 88301
(505) 648-2346

- Community Development

School district (through the vocational agriculture department) has developed a meat cutting lab where students have hands-on experiences and locals can have their livestock processed.

Jodie Wallace, Principal
Crownpoint High School
Drawer D
Crownpoint, NM 87313
(505) 786-5664

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

Troubleshooter Leadership Club involves students in service activities and community projects. School works with social services regarding at-risk students. Community college uses school for community education.

Ann Mae Pino, Director of Education
Ramah Navajo Board
P.O. Drawer H
Pine Hill, NM 87357
(505) 775-3256

K-12 Enrollment: 400

- Community Development
- Social Services

School teaches skills which allow students to return to the reservation following postsecondary education. A foster grandparent program is also ongoing.

North Dakota

Ron Stammen, Superintendent
Divide County Schools
P.O. Box 197
Crosby, ND 58730
(701) 965-6313

- Lifelong Learning

School has done work in fiber optics and satellite education, developing programs for adult learners and K-12 settings.

R. Stein
Reeder Public High School
P.O. Box 248
Reeder, ND 58644
(701) 853-2311

- Community Development

Special committee (from 6 counties in North Dakota and South Dakota) formed to study how the areas nearby could be economically assisted. Task force looked at using local machine shops as high-tech operation, consequently creating 50 new jobs.

ERIC Full Text Provided by ERIC

Gerald Quintus, Principal
Stanton High School
Box 40
Stanton, ND 58571
(701) 745-3212

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Cooperative effort: school and business/farmers give students credit for work in the business world. Offers television education to public for college credit.

Oklahoma

Jerry Maloy, Principal
Byng High School
P.O. Box 2509
Ada, OK 74820
(405) 332-4282

- Social Services

School district operates a preschool. Helps facilitate Meals on Wheels. Works with local Indian culture. Extensive adult education program.

Gene Benson, Principal
Coyle Community Schools
Box 287
Coyle, OK 23027
(405) 466-2242

K-12 Enrollment: 313

- Community Development

District is attempting to restructure the vocational agriculture curriculum to aid economic development.

Carolyn S. Price
Okemah Public Schools
2nd and Date Street
Okemah, OK 74859
(918) 623-1631

- Community Development

Scholarship funds raised by live concert given by Arlo Guthrie and Larry Long in Woody Guthrie's memory. Recordings are sold to perpetuate funding for Okemah seniors.

Oregon

Chris Yeager, Principal
Chiloquin High School
P.O. Box 397
Chiloquin, OR 97624
(503) 783-2321

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School and local judicial system provide a student court for juvenile offenders. National Honor Society sponsors Adopt a Grandparent. School works with local medical clinic. Evening classes offered for community.

Susan Wilt, Principal
Riddle High School
Riddle, OR 97469
(503) 874-2251

K-12 Enrollment: 560

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

School has a mentorship program with the community. Community organizations and community education use school facilities.

South Dakota

Paul Dingeman, Principal
Belle Fourche High School
706 Jackson
Belle Fourche, SD 57717
(605) 892-3355

- Community Development

Community development approach through core curriculum. See Case Study in text.

Robert G. Braun
McIntosh School
Box 417
McIntosh, SD 57641
(605) 273-4227

- Community Development

Local improvement board began with an effort to provide ambulance/EMT service for the community. It is now trying to find funding to start or expand businesses. Business education courses are taught at the high school.

Chris Anderson, Superintendent
Lyman County Schools
Presho, SD 57568
(605) 895-2579

- Community Development

District is part of the McREL Project developing entrepreneurship education programs. Students learn entrepreneur skills while the community benefits.

Texas

E. Lopez
Webb Consolidated ISD
P.O. Box 86
Bruni, TX 78344
(512) 747-5323

- Community Development

Webb ISD contracted with Pan American University to survey availability of jobs. Results will determine what training will be offered for residents. Industrial development is being studied.

Raymon Puente
Rockdale High School
Rockdale, TX 76567
(512) 446-3471

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

Active community education program. Community does fund raising for school equipment and to supplement salary fund. Business-school cooperation exists with the local Alcoa Plant.

Tom Martin, Principal
Grant County High School
439 S. 1st E.
Moab, UT 84532
(801) 259-8931

Utah

K-12 Enrollment: 1,402

- Community Development
- Social Services

Outdoor education project is an attempt to involve students in a community development business. School-social service cooperation has created a child protection team.

Robert Park
Duchesne/Tabiona Public Schools
P.O. Box 446
Tabiona, UT 84072
(801) 848-5035

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School works with the county economic development director to get economic development news to the community. School is community health center. Tabiona is the educational telecommunications center for the area.

Al Robinson, Principal
Cusick High School USD #59
Box 270
Cusick, WA 99119
(509) 445-1125

Washington

K-12 Enrollment: 300

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

School works with new industry and county officials in developing educational vision for the county. County-wide committee established to study and create plans for Lifespan education.

Fred Pflugrath, Principal
Columbia USD #206
Box 7
Hunters, WA 99137
(509) 722-3311

K-12 Enrollment: 260

- Community Development
- Lifelong Learning

FFA raises pheasants and trout to release locally resulting in excellent tourism benefits. Schools offer community education and space for community meetings.

Wyoming

Gary Datus, Principal
Pine Bluff Schools
7th & Elm
Pine Bluff, WY 82082
(307) 245-3682

- Lifelong Learning

School allows adults to take classes with students during the regular school day. School also has an archaeological dig that uses an experiential learning format.

Barry Remmel, Principal
Washakie County Schools
Worland, WY 82401
(307) 347-2412

- Lifelong Learning
- Social Services

School is a member of the child protective agency. Adult education program operates in the school and is run through a community college. Community uses school's open gym.

Organizational Contacts

Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL)
ERIC/CRESS
Todd Strohmenger, Director of Small Schools Program
1031 Quarrier Street
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
(304) 347-0400

AEL serves the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. AEL has built a regional information base on rural schools. AEL has been actively participating in the study and development of educational programs to involve the rural school in community development.

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative
Randy Morris, Director
P.O. Box 218
Sturgis, SD 57785
(605) 347-4467

A special services cooperative formed to allow member school districts to pool their resources for providing special education. The cooperative has done extensive work in developing and operating businesses through the educational cooperative. Cooperative personnel served as in-state coordinators for the McREL Rural Schools and Community Development Project.

Center for Community Education
Gloria Gregg, Director
250 Reid Hall
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59717
(406) 994-4731

The Center for Community Education addresses many rural education issues. Dr. Gregg has worked extensively in the research, planning, implementation, and evaluation of rural school and community lifelong learning programs.

Center for Rural Education and Small Schools
Robert Newhouse, Director
124 Bluemont
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
(913) 532-5886

The Center has worked extensively with rural schools throughout the state of Kansas. Through the efforts of the Center, rural school computer consortium clusters have been developed and implemented. The Center will assist McREL with developing a Rural Schools and Community Development Project in the state of Kansas.

Heartland Center for Leadership Development
Vicki Luther and Milan Wall, Co-Directors
941 "O" Street
Suite 920
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 474-7667

The Heartland Center has worked extensively with rural communities, organizations, and individuals in the development of programs for rural community survival.

Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL)
Paul Nachtigal, Director of Rural Education
12500 Iliff Avenue
Aurora, CO 80014
(303) 337-0990

McREL serves the states of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Paul Nachtigal has developed an extensive knowledge and research base regarding rural schools and rural education issues. The Rural Schools and Community Development Project was designed and piloted by McREL under the direction of Paul Nachtigal and Toni Haas. McREL has been actively involved in the development of rural school clustering.

National Center for Smaller Schools
Weldon Beckner, Director
College of Education
Texas Tech University
Box 4560
Lubbock, TX 79409
(806) 742-2371

Under the direction of Weldon Beckner, the Center has been actively involved in developing, planning and implementing strategies for rural schools regarding the effective schools research. Dr. Beckner is currently collaborating with the Rural Clearinghouse (Kansas State University) on a pilot project involving rural schools in the community development process.

Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis
Daryl Hobbs, Director
University of Missouri
812 Clark Hall
Columbia, MO 65211
(314) 882-7396

Daryl Hobbs has been involved in research and written extensively on the topic of rural schools and the changing rural economic environment. Dr. Hobbs has addressed the issue of restructuring rural schools to meet the changing social and economic needs of the rural community.

REAL Enterprises Federation
Jonathan Sher, Director
658-B Old Lystra Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 929-3939

REAL works to support the development of school-based economic enterprises as part of the rural school curricula. REAL, under the direction of Jonathan Sher, has developed and piloted several school-based business enterprises in the south and southeastern United States. REAL is currently involved in a grant to assess the academic, social, and economic impact of school-based businesses.

Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory (SEIL)
Alean Miller, Program Manager for Rural Education
P.O. Box 12748
200 Park, Suite 200
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2748
(919) 549-8216

Another of the federally funded regional laboratories active in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. SEIL is involved in research regarding the rural school and the community development process.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 7870
(512) 476-6861

Federally funded regional laboratory serving Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. SEDL has done extensive research and program development regarding the rural school and the staff development process, programs for developing critical thinking skills, and cooperative arrangements for the development of rural educators. The lab is currently involved in a project regarding the role schools can take in delivery of social services to the community.

University of Maryland
E. Robert Stephens
Department of Education Policy, Planning, and Administration
3112F Benjamin Building
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 454-5776

Dr. Stephens has done research and published extensively in the area of economic, educational, policy, and social issues which impact rural education.

Bibliography

American Association of School Administrators. (1981). *Creative Ideas for Small Schools.* Washington, D.C.: Author.

Banathy, B. (No date). Improvement of transformation. *Noteworthy.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Beckner, W. (1987). Effective rural schools: Where are we? where are we going? how do we get there?. Paper presented *National Rural Education Research Forum,* Lake Placid, NY.

Byrne, R., & Powell, E. (1976). *Strengthening School-Community Relations.* Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Cuban, L. (No date). Constancy and change in schools. *Noteworthy.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

DeLargy, P.F. (1986). School-based enterprises: Rural education through action learning. *Educational Considerations, 13* (2), 12–14.

Dillman, D.A., & Hobbs, D. (Eds.). (1982). *Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980s.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Drabenstott, M., & Gibson, L. (Eds.). (1988). *Rural America in Transition.* Kansas City, MO: The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Missouri.

Emery, M.E. (1987). *Education and the Rural Economy: A Directory of Educational Models for Economic Development.* Pullman, WA: The Northwest Action Agenda for Rural Postsecondary Education.

Forbes, R.H. (1985). *State Policy Trends and Impacts on Rural School Districts.* Washington, D.C.: National Rural Education Forum.

Harl, N. (1985). *The Changing Rural Economy: Implications for Rural Education.* Washington D.C.: National Rural Education Forum.

Hobbs, D. (1986). Knowledge based rural development: Adult education and the future rural economy. *Proceedings 1986: National Invitational Conference on Rural Adult Postsecondary Education.* Manhattan, KS: Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development.

Hobbs, D. (1987). Innovation: The key to rural school improvement and rural revitalization. Revision of paper presented at the *National Rural Education Research Forum,* Lake Placid, NY.

Horton, D. (1989). *A Primer on Entrepreneurial Education for Community Educators.* Pullman, WA: Washington Center for Community Education and Economic Development, Washington State University.

Hutchins, C. L. (No date). School-year 2000: An international seminar on creating effective schools of the future. *Noteworthy.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Jacquart, M., & Newlin, J. (No date). *Rural Schools Source Book: Exemplary Programs, Practices, and Resources for Rural Educators.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Jess, J. D. (1985). *Local Leadership and Quality Rural Education.* Washington, D. C.: National Rural Education Forum.

John, D., Batie, S. S., & Norris, K. (1988). *A Brighter Future for Rural America? Strategies for Communities and States.* Washington, D. C.: National Governors' Association.

Joint Economic Committee of Congress. (1986). *New Dimensions in Rural Policy: Building upon our Heritage.* Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.

Korsching, P., & Gildner, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Interdependencies of Agriculture and Rural Communities in the Twenty-first Century.* Ames, IA: The North Central Center for Rural Development.

Lick, D. W. (1985). *Rural School Partnerships with Higher Education and the Private Sector.* Washington, D. C.: National Rural Education Forum.

McCune, S. (1986). *Guide to Strategic Planning for Educators.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McLaurin, S., & Coker, R. (1986). Notes Toward the Establishment of Educational Partnerships in Rural Communities. *Proceedings 1986: National Invitational Conference on Rural Adult Postsecondary Education.* Manhattan, KS: Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development.

Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL). (No date). *Redesigning Rural Education: Ideas for Action.* Aurora, CO: Author.

Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL). (No date). *Rural Schools and Community Development.* Aurora, CO: Author.

Nachtigal, P. M. (Ed.). (1982). *Rural Education: In Search of a Better Way.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Naisbitt, J. (1982). *Megatrends.* New York: Warner Books.

National Association of Towns and Townships. (1988). *Growing Our Own Jobs: A Small Town Guide to Creating Jobs Through Agricultural Diversification.* Washington, D. C.: Author.

National Rural, Small Schools Task Force. (1988). *End of the Road: Rural America's Poor Students and Poor Schools.* Washington, D. C.: The Council for Educational Development and Research.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1989). *Rural Education: A Changing Landscape.* Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H., Jr. (1982). *In Search of Excellence.* New York: Warner Books.

Pulver, G. C. (1986). *Community Economic Development Strategies.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Extension Services.

Reich, R. (1983). *The New American Frontier.* New York: Basic Books.

Sederberg, C. H. (1987). Economic role of school districts in rural communities. *Research in Rural Education, 4,* 125-130.

Sher, J. P. (Ed.). (1977). *Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sher, J. P. (Ed.). (1981). *Rural Education in Urbanized Nations: Issues and Innovations.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sher, J. P. (1988). *Class Dismissed: Examining Nebraska's Rural Education Debate.* Hildreth, NE: Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association.

Smith, L. M., Prunty, J. J., Dwyer, D. C., & Kleine, P. F. (1984). Reconstruing Educational Innovation. *Teachers College Record, 86,* (1), 20-33.

Stephens, E. Robert. (1988). The changing context of education in a rural setting. *Occasional Paper 26.* Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Stoddard, S., Wall, M., Luther, V., & Baker, K. (1988). *Schools as Entrepreneurs: Helping Small Towns Survive.* Lincoln, NE: Heartland Center for Leadership Development.

Tweeten, L., & Brinkman, G. (1976). *Micropolitan Development.* Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

Unruh, G. G., & Alexander, W. M. (1974). *Innovations in Secondary Education (2nd ed.).* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.

VanTil, W. (1978). *Secondary Education: School and Community.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company.

Wall, M., & Luther, V. (1988). *20 Clues to Rural Community Survival: A Community Case Study Project.* Lincoln, NE: Heartland Center for Leadership Development.

Wiggington, E. (1985). *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience.* New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday.

Appendix

Case Study Framework and Questions

General Data

Community:

- Geographic Information—location/ruralness
- Economic—resources, status, history
- Demographic—age/ethnic
- Community History—development-past/present
- Leadership
  Who
  Power Structure
- Unique Features

School:

- Size—student population
- Size—geographic size of district
- Ethnic characteristics
- Personnel Characteristics/Demographics
- Unique Features

Structural Questions

Origin of the Innovation:

- Was the innovation the "product" of an external change agent (i.e., University Personnel, State Department Personnel or Consultants)?
- The "product" of a local visionary leader or change agent?
- A combination of both an external and internal change agent?

Leadership:

- Was the leadership for planning and implementation the innovation from internal sources?
  who?
  how?
  why?
- Was the leadership for planning and implementing the innovation from external sources?
  who?
  how?
  why?
- Was the leadership a combination of internal and external?
  who?
  how?
  why?
- Has the planning and implementation of the innovation resulted in a change regarding
  who leads?
  how they lead?
  who makes decisions?
  shared decision making?

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

Planning:

- Were external persons involved in the planning of the innovation?
  who?
  how?
- Was the planning done entirely by local persons?
  who?
  how?
- Was the planning a result of both internal and external expertise?
  who?
  how?
- Who provided the leadership for the planning process? why?
- How was the faculty involved in the planning process?
- How was the community involved in the planning process?
- How were students involved in the planning process?
- How long was the planning process component?
- What did the planning process cost?

Implementation:

- Who provided leadership for the implementation process? How? Why?
- Who "controlled" the implementation process?
- How long did it take to implement the program?
- How much did it cost to implement the program?

Educational Data

Mission Statement:

- Is the innovation part of the overall school district mission?
- Was the innovation blended with the current mission statement?
- Did the innovation require restructuring the mission statement?

Curriculum:

- Is the innovation part of the curriculum?
  How?
  Where?
  Who?
  Why?
- Was the innovation a "packaged" program, developed with expertise from outside the school district?
- A locally generated program based on local expertise and local need?
- A program generated from a pre-existing "packaged" program combined with local expertise and need?
- Did the innovation require restructuring the existing school curriculum?
  How?
  Who?
- Did the innovation require that both educators and community rethink and restructure how the school should go about the business of educating?
- If so, why?
- Was additional funding required to implement the innovation?
- Was additional equipment required to implement the innovation?

Instructional:

- Was it necessary to alter teaching strategies to implement the innovation?
  - how?
  - where?
  - who?
- Was the perception of "how and where" education takes place altered as a result of the innovation?
  - how?
  - who?

Staffing:

- Did implementation of the program require:
  - restructuring existing positions?
  - adding personnel?
  - in-service training for existing personnel?
  - on-going staff development upon full implementation?
  - who (within the professional faculty) was affected by the innovation? how? why?

Assessment and Testing:

- How is the innovation evaluated?
- Who evaluates?
- When is it evaluated?

Policies:

- Are there current policies which served as barriers in planning and implementing the innovation?
  - local?
  - state?
- What changes in current policies were necessary to accommodate the innovation?
  - local?
  - state?
- What was the impact of the innovation on current policy?
  - local?
  - state?

Sub-Group Components

Administration:

- How was your role changed as a result of the innovation?
  - as the recognized building leader?
  - with the faculty?
  - with the community?
  - with the students?
- How has the role of the school as a K-12 institution changed as a result of the innovation?
- How as the role of the school . critical institution within the community changed?
- Has the innovation resulted in the school being recognized as a positive force in the overall community development process?

Faculty:

- Were you involved in the planning and implementation process for this innovation?
- Has the innovation resulted in a positive change in your relationship with the following (if so, how?):
  - school administration
  - school board
  - students
  - community members and community at-large faculty (other teachers)
- Has the innovation resulted in a change of your perception regarding "how and where" education/learning takes place? how? why?
- How has your role changed?
- How has the role of the school changed?
- How has the role of the community changed?
- Did the innovation result in a more positive school-community link? how?

Students:

- Has your view of your local community changed as a result of this program? how? why?
- Do you believe involvement in this program allows for you to learn in a more "real" and positive manner? how? why?
- How has your relationship changed with the following groups as a result of this program:
  - teachers
  - principal
  - community members
  - parents
  - peers
- Do you think this program has made a positive contribution to the local community? how?
- Has involvement in this program provided you with knowledge which would help you stay in a rural community when you reach "adulthood?"

Community:

- Were you involved in the planning process? how?
- How has this program changed your perception of the local school?
- How has this program changed your perception of "when and where" learning/education takes place?
- Do you believe this program has helped you, as a community member, to establish a stronger relationship with any of the following groups (if so, how?)
  - teachers
  - school administration
  - school board
  - students
  - community members

The Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development

The Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development is a national effort to improve rural access to continued education. Governed by a National Steering Committee, the Clearinghouse serves the complete range of educational providers including schools, colleges and universities, community colleges, cooperative extension, libraries, community based organizations, and community/economic development corporations. Its work includes:

(1) disseminating effective models for serving rural areas.
(2) facilitating the development of effective educational models in response to selected rural problems.
(3) providing forums for the exchange of information among educational professionals.
(4) developing regionally organized and supported networks.
(5) advocating rural needs with educational associations, state and federal policy makers, and other relevant publics.

The Rural Clearinghouse publishes a newsletter, The Rural Adult Education Forum. In addition, a number of publications have evolved from the project's efforts on behalf of rural adult postsecondary education. To receive subscription information for the Forum or a list of Clearinghouse publications, please contact:

Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development
Division of Continuing Education
Kansas State University
College Court Building
Manhattan, KS 66506-6001
(913) 532-5560

National Steering Committee

Rusty Garth
Counsil of Independent Colleges
Washington, DC 20036

Sally Ihne
Brainerd Community Colllege
Brainerd, MN 56401

Richard Jonsen
Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education
Boulder, CO 803-1-9752

Roger McCannon
Univerity of Missesota-Morris
Morris, MN 56267

Mary McClure
Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20500

Catherine Rolzinski
Youth Services America
Washington, DC 20004

Douglas Treadway
Southwest State University
Marshall, MN 56258

Bobby Wright
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Carol Zippert
WACC; Institute for Human Development
Eutaw, AL 35462

Publication Order Form

Please check the items you wish to order!

Rural School Reform

_____ **Change and Diversity:** Multicultural Practices in Rural Schools. (August 1990). Price: $12.00

_____ **Change and Diversity:** Linking Rural Schools to Communities. (August 1990). Price: $12.00

_____ Set of Two Publications: $20.00

National Conferences

_____ **Proceedings 1986:** Second Invitational Conference on Rural Adult Postsecondary Education. A conference synthesis summarizes conference sessions, lists the priorities adopted by the participants, and includes executive summaries of three position papers. Position papers examined education and economic development, collaborative strategies, and the use of distance technology. Price: $3.00

_____ **Proceedings 1985:** Four Regional Conferences. This publication synthesizes the successes and concerns expressed by rural providers at the four regional "Serving the Rural Adult" conferences held in the spring of 1985. Price: $2.50.

_____ **The Kansas City Initiative:** Proceedings on the National Invitational Meeting on Rural Postsecondary Education. This conference proved to be the forerunner of the Action Agenda Project. The report looked at the future, past burdens, practical questions, and creation of an Action Agenda. Price: $1.50.

Program Inventories

_____ **Education and the Rural Economy:** Program Development for Adult Learners. (October 1987). Conference proceedings, including a description of exemplary models linking education to rural economic development. Price: $8.00.

_____ **Education's Response to the Rural Crisis:** Model Programs in the Midwest. (September 1987). Descriptions of 80 illustrative programs developed in response to the farm crisis offer insight into rural adult needs and program structures designed to meet those needs.
Price: $15.00.

_____ **Inventory of Model Programs in Rural Adult Postsecondary Education.** (October 1984). Descriptions of 54 illustrative programs across the entire range of educational providers offer rural adult educators access to information about programs that work. Price: $8.00

Other

_____ **A Demographic Portrait of Rural Adult Learners.** Data from NCES augmented by studies at six rural sites paints a demographic portrait of the needs, characteristics, motivations, and participation patterns of rural adult learners. Price: $5.00.

_____ **Barriers to Rural Adult Education:** A Report of the Northwest Action Agenda Project. (September 1986). Data collected from interviews with educational providers and rural adult learners in seven states builds a picture of the educational needs of rural adults and barriers to their participation in educational programs. Price: $5.00

_____ **Report from the Appalachian Regional Steering Committee on Rural Postsecondary Education.** (August 1986). A steering committee representative of six states and a wide range of adult education providers examined the barriers to rural adult participation in education and developed strategies for responding to those barriers. Price: $5.00

_____ **Total Enclosed:**

_____ Payment enclosed (make checks payable to **Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development)**

_____ Institutional invoice enclosed

Send to:

Name _____________________

Mailing Address _____________________

____

____

Return to:
Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education
and Development
Division of Continuing Education
Kansas State University
College Court Building
Manhattan, KS 66506-6001

KSU

KANSAS
STATE
UNIVERSITY

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC