



Printable Edition

Note: This resource includes all articles from the August 2010 Rural Policy Matters newsletter.

Facts and Figures About States With the Highest Percentage of Schools in Rural Communities

Question: Which state has the highest percentage of schools located in rural communities?

Answer: South Dakota (76.9% of schools are located in rural communities), followed by Montana (74.9% of schools are rural); North Dakota (72.1% of schools are rural); Vermont (71.3% of schools are rural); and Maine (67.4% of schools are located in rural communities).

Districts Headed by African-American Superintendents Lose Funding to Number-Weighting

Ninety-three high-poverty rural school districts headed by African-American superintendents received almost \$8.2 million less Title I funding in school year 2008-09 than they would have received if the formula for distributing these funds did not contain a provision that favors large districts over small districts.

The provision, known as "number weighting," artificially inflates the count of eligible students in a district based on the sheer number of disadvantaged students, even if they constitute a small percentage of all students in the district. Low-poverty large suburban districts gain at the expense of small, high poverty rural districts.

These 93 African-American superintendents each serve one of the 900 rural districts with the highest student poverty rates among rural districts. That means that more than 10% of these so-called "Rural 900" high-poverty rural districts are headed by an African-American. These 93 constitute more than one-fourth of all 371 African-American superintendents in the nation. Only about 2.6% of all school districts nationally are headed by an African-American.

The average poverty rate in these 93 Rural 900 districts is 39%, more than double the national average poverty rate.

The largest total loss among African American-led Rural 900 districts due to number weighting was \$360,800 suffered by the Greenville Public School District in Mississippi, which has a 51% student poverty rate. The largest loss per disadvantaged student among African American-led Rural 900 districts was the \$300 loss suffered by Covert Public Schools in Michigan, with a student poverty rate of 48%.

Among states, the hardest hit by number weighting was Mississippi, where 36 Rural 900 districts led by African Americans lost \$2.8 million to number weighting. The average poverty rate in these districts is 44%.

Among all 170 rural and small town districts headed by an African American (whether in the Rural 900 or not), losses due to number weighting totaled \$11.1 million. These districts have a student poverty rate of 27%, about 50% higher than the national average rate of 18%.

Rural districts are by no means the only African-American-led districts that lose funding due to number weighting. Rochester, New York (over \$2.6 million lost), Buffalo, New York (\$2.1 million lost), Flint, Michigan (almost \$2.0 million lost), Springfield, Massachusetts (about \$1.8 million lost), and East St. Louis, Illinois (over \$1.4 million lost) top the list of number weighting victims among African-American-led districts.

This story was originally posted on the blog of the Campaign for Formula Fairness.

Join the campaign to fix the inequities at www.formulafairness.com.

Take Advantage of Congressional Break to Contact Representatives

The Congressional recess means that most U.S. senators and members of the House of Representatives are in their home districts. It's a great time to contact them and tell them that they should fix the formulas that distribute Title I funding so that all poor children get equitable access to federal funding, no matter where they live.

You don't have to be an expert on Title I issues to contact your representative.

Here's what you need to know: Title I is the main federal program that provides funding to school districts to improve education opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth. Beginning in 2002, the formulas used to distribute funding to school districts were changed to provide more money for each poor student in larger districts than in smaller districts. Because of these "number weighting" provisions, high-poverty smaller districts are losing funding to low-poverty larger districts. That's not fair and Congress should make it right by fixing the formulas.

You can find [contact information](#) for your U.S. Senators and Representative and more information about what to say at the website of the Campaign for Formula Fairness at www.formulafairness.com.

If you want to learn more about Title I, how districts in your state are faring as a result of number weighting, or what else you can do, you will find plenty of information on the Formula Fairness website.

It's easy to make a positive difference by exercising your responsibility as a citizen.

Get involved today!

Coalition Releases Document Calling for "Opportunity to Learn" for all Students

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

On July 28th, a coalition of eight civil rights organizations issued a "[Framework for Providing All Students an Opportunity to Learn through Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.](#)"

The Framework is a strong statement calling for a shift in federal policy to emphasize accountability for states and the federal government to provide equity and educational opportunity for all children.

Calling access to high-quality education a "fundamental civil right," the Framework asserts that the federal government's role is to create and support a "fair and substantive opportunity to learn for all students, regardless of where and to whom they were born."

The document specifically praises certain components of the Administration's *Blueprint for Reform*, including the goal of increasing post-secondary attainment in the U.S. But it also provides sharp and cogent critiques of many aspects of current federal efforts and proposals, including increased emphasis on competitive grants, experimental proposals for programs that do not meet the scope of challenges in low-income communities, and promotion of ineffective approaches for turning around low-performing schools and districts.

The Framework calls for universal high-quality pre-school; access to highly effective teachers for all students; and community schools that offer wraparound services, engaging instruction, and adequate supports. It advances six major principles to "strengthen the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and ensure that the federal government provides the support necessary to protect every child's civil right to a high-quality education."

The six principles, each of which are delineated with specific recommendations, include:

- Equitable opportunities for all;
- Utilization of systematically proven and effective educational methods;
- Public and community engagement in education reforms;
- Safe and educationally sound learning environments;
- Diverse learning environments;
- Comprehensive and substantive accountability systems to maintain equitable opportunities and high outcomes.

The Framework's discussion of each of the principles and their accompanying recommendations present clear statements of the harm currently being done to students by circumstances, misguided policies, and the failure of states and the federal government to meet both existing and needed requirements for providing equitable resources, especially for students in racially and economically segregated schools.

For example, the document calls many of the current reform proposals " 'stop gap' quick fixes" that are not used in affluent communities and that fail to make effective systemic change. In addressing the need for highly effective teachers, the Framework outlines a variety of authentic strategies to increase the supply of teachers prepared to work in challenged communities; and in a clear reference to federal grant criteria that require states to tie teacher evaluations to student test scores, the Framework makes a strong statement that teacher effectiveness measures must avoid deterring teachers from working in high-need schools.

One of the strengths of the Framework is the way it positions communities as an important source of renewal for schools. Rather than blaming low-income areas or promoting merely technocratic or imposed "solutions" for the systemic problems that compromise educational and economic opportunity for low-income children and children of color, the Framework advances a variety of public policy approaches to renew and strengthen communities, involve parents in devising and implementing school reform strategies, and provide the kinds of services and opportunities that enable communities to survive and support their children.

The document calls good communities “the foundation for great schools” and it recognizes public schools as “critical community institutions especially in urban and rural areas.” It warns against the disruption and harm done to communities and students when schools are closed, and it makes specific recommendations to avoid school closure. “No turnaround model should be adopted without accounting for community, health, and social services that have been of should have been provided at the school but may not be available to families elsewhere in the community.”

Framework sidesteps the issue of “number-weighting,” a provision in several of the federal Title I formulas (authorized under ESEA) that sends more money for each disadvantaged child to larger districts than to smaller districts. And, some of the more specific examples and strategies the document proposes are better suited to urban than rural areas. But the clear-sighted value the document places on the importance of community, its clarion call to support the democratic participation of low-income residents in the governance and shaping of public institutions in their communities, and its strong statement of a federal obligation to promote genuine equity are essential philosophical underpinnings for any efforts to strengthen educational opportunity and improve schooling in low-wealth communities of all sizes and locations.

“Framework for Providing all Students an Opportunity to Learn” deserves serious consideration by everyone concerned about public education and the state of our democracy.

You can read Framework at

http://naacpldf.org/files/case_issue/Framework%20for%20Providing%20All%20Students%20an%20Opportunity%20to%20Learn%202.pdf.

Education Week Launches Rural Blog

In June, [Education Week](#), launched a new blog devoted to rural education. In the opening post, writer Mary Schulken describes her youth growing up on a North Carolina tobacco farm and attending all twelve grades at the same small rural school.

The [blog](#) has covered a range of topics familiar to rural education advocates and important for policy makers interested in better serving rural students, including technology, federal school “turnaround” requirements, teacher distribution and training, and Title I funding inequities.

We are glad to see that *Education Week* is devoting specific coverage to the “challenges and policies affecting America’s rural schools.”

Read the Rural Education blog at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rural_education/. Please note: Education Week places some restrictions on online access for non-subscribers.

School Discipline: An Occasional Series on Developments in School Disciplinary Policies and Practices

Texas Internal Report Confirms Special Ed Students Punished More Often

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

The agency responsible for education oversight in Texas has confirmed that students receiving special education services are much more likely to be harshly disciplined by schools than are other students.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) found that for every 100 special education students in Texas, there were 55.8 in-school suspensions and 25.1 out-of-school suspensions in the 2007–2008 school year, compared to 33.2 in-school suspensions and 12.1 out-of-school suspensions for students not in special education.

Read more:

Coverage of the report:

- www.texastribune.org/texas-education/texas-education-agency/special-ed-students-disciplined-twice-as-often/

See the statistical report here:

- www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c530/handouts10/0616-TEA-IDEA.pdf

The Texas Senate is also studying the effects of school discipline policy on the criminal justice system:

- www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/6980895.html

Congressional Action on Corporal Punishment in Schools

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

Just prior to the Congressional recess, U.S. Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) introduced the “Ending Corporal Punishment in

Schools Act" that aims to eliminate the use of corporal punishment in schools. Congressman Phil Hare of Illinois is also a co-sponsor of this legislation.

Corporal punishment remains legal in 20 states and, according to US Department of Education data, is disproportionately used against African-American students and students with disabilities, often with devastating results for the students. (See RPM coverage of this issue at www.ruraledu.org/articles.php?id=1968)

Rep. McCarthy held a hearing on the issue in April. Among the statistics presented were numbers about how many students are physically disciplined (over 220,000 in 2006–2007) and how many seek medical treatment as a result (10,000 to 20,000).

The bill includes a number of important protections for students, including, but not limited to:

- Banning corporal punishment in public schools and private schools that serve students receiving federal services;
- Requiring states to submit plans to the Secretary of Education describing their policies eliminating corporal punishment and making school personnel and parents aware of the ban;
- Allowing for the withholding of federal funds for failure to comply with the Act;
- Creating a grant program, in which the Secretary may award grants to state educational agencies to improve school climate and implement school wide positive behavior support approaches (PBS); and,
- Instituting a National Assessment to be carried out by the Secretary to determine compliance with the Act and to identify best practices, including training models that emphasize positive behavior supports.

Read more:

Coverage on the bill's introduction:

- <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/bullying/bill-to-ban-corporal-punishment.html>
- www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2010/06/29/bill-to-end-school-corporal-punishment

Letter supporting the legislation signed on by a number of national student advocacy and disability organizations:

- www.aclu.org/files/assets/Sign-on_Ltr_Supporting_Ending_Corp_Punishment_in_Schools_Act_FINAL.pdf

Despite growing concern about the use of physical punishment by schools, at least one district is considering implementing it some schools:

- www.foxnews.com/us/2010/06/24/tx-commissioner-wants-corporal-punishment-war-zone-schools/

North Carolina District Takes Steps to End Zero Tolerance

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

The Wake County (Raleigh) School District in North Carolina has decided to amend its discipline policies that automatically remove students from school for lengthy terms in favor of alternative discipline strategies aimed at keeping students in school.

The length of a long-term suspension for students, which has typically been the remainder of the school year with no exceptions, will become flexible and principals will have discretion over how long the suspensions should last. The move is important, in part, because Wake County policy had previously required automatic long-term suspension for more offenses than state law required. It is expected that the county will end long-term suspensions for all offenses other than the four offenses for which long-term suspension is mandated by state law.

In addition, the Board has also agreed to consider recommendations of a group of educators who have been meeting for about six months to develop solutions to the problem of student exclusion. The educators' initial action plan includes recommending that 80% of Wake County Schools implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, a discipline approach proven effective in reducing school disciplinary problems, and that the district replicate the practices of school systems with low discipline rates for African-American males.

Read more:

Local coverage:

- www.newsobserver.com/2010/08/11/623477/wake-schools-to-ease-zero-tolerance.html#storylink=misearch
- <http://blogs.newsobserver.com/wakeed/wake-moving-away-from-zero-tolerance-policies#storylink=misearch>

Rural School Funding News

RSFN Special Series: Financing Rural Schools: Characteristics of Strong Rural School Finance Systems

In this series, Rural School Funding News is reviewing general principles of school finance and sharing information about school funding systems that support rural schools and their unique characteristics and needs. While there are no easy answers to questions about how to fund schools, especially in this economic climate, we hope that these articles will provide you promising practices, ideas for advocacy, and guidelines that are easily transferable in your analysis and work on your own school finance systems.

If you are new to the series, you can review a brief introduction to the subject and discussion of Characteristic 1: A Strong Foundation Formula, [here](#); Characteristic 2: Effective Use of the Judicial System, [here](#); and Characteristic 3: Fair Accounting for Cost of Living and Geographic Differences, [here](#).

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

Characteristic Four: Recognition of the Benefits of Small Schools

An important principle of rural school funding is that size matters. Schools should be small enough so that every child is known, and known well, by teachers, administrators, and other adults in the school. Small enough so that every child's participation and contribution is needed and wanted. Small enough so that important decisions about the school and its policies can be discussed by faculty, community members, and parents and implemented by mutual consent.

Research confirms that small schools have higher graduation rates, higher rates of parental involvement, fewer disciplinary and safety problems, much higher levels of student participation, and better school climate. Smaller schools are also associated with significantly higher student achievement levels, especially for low-income students. And, research on school construction demonstrates that small schools cost no more to build, per student, than larger schools. (You can check out research references on school size in the [Consolidation Fight-Back Toolkit](#) on the Rural Trust website.)

School finance policy can either embrace or reject the value of small schools through specific provisions in the funding formulas.

Funding systems in about half of the states include size provisions that acknowledge the higher costs per pupil that often occur in small schools or small districts. These provisions may provide additional funding in the form of per-pupil weights, grants, protections for districts with declining enrollment, or other hold harmless measures. For example, Oregon and Vermont provide supplemental grants for rural districts. Texas and Kansas use fixed student weights (extra per pupil funding) for schools below a certain enrollment. And, Colorado has a variable cost factor that recognizes the different expenses of small schools.

Additional research is needed to determine the real effect of these funding mechanisms and whether they are a meaningful benefit for small and rural schools.

Often the legislative history of these factors reveals that they are merely political cover, creating the appearance of providing more support for rural schools than is needed or equitable. For example, in some states size factors in the funding formula are not rationally related to costs or to specific rural realities, like the need to raise teacher salaries to levels of urban and suburban teachers.

In some states the language used to describe small school factors carries negative connotations or the factors might apply only to certain schools. For example, you might hear the term "necessarily small" to describe schools in very sparsely populated areas, the implication being that small schools should only exist when distance requires it. You might also hear small school weights described as "subsidies," suggesting that small schools are receiving unwarranted support, possibly at the expense of other schools.

Many states, including states with small school factors of various kinds, also promote school or district consolidation through their funding formulas. Many states offer financial incentives of various sorts for schools or districts that voluntarily consolidate. Some states cut portions of their funding for schools or districts below specific enrollment thresholds to make it difficult for small schools and districts to survive.

States that promote consolidation often use language like "economies of scale" or "optimal school size." It is important for rural education advocates to understand that there is no optimal size for schools or districts. Optimal size depends on a variety of site-specific conditions. Good schools come in all sizes.

Likewise, economies of scale are often figments of idealized scenarios intended to promote consolidation, and usually they don't account for *diseconomies* of scale or new expenses, like increased transportation costs and higher dropout rates, associated with actual rural consolidation. Research demonstrates that projected savings from rural consolidation rarely materialize. Further, while annual per pupil operating costs of larger schools may appear lower, a closer examination of all costs usually reveals a different picture. For example, analyzing costs *per graduate* typically reveals that small schools and districts are highly efficient and successful.

Importantly, some states now adjust costs for schools of all sizes, on the theory that costs change continuously across the entire spectrum of school size. Large schools have additional costs, too — costs related to effective communication, student behavior management, dropout prevention, and personnel management.

A close examination of language in your state's school finance system can indicate the direction your state policy leans on the consolidation issue. Policy language may imply that small schools should be eliminated or tolerated only in certain circumstances. Or, language may communicate that small schools are important learning environments that the state needs in order for its educational system to thrive.

As in all successful advocacy campaigns, maintaining a clear message and managing the discussion is a major task when working to achieve size factors that adequately support rural schools. In school finance litigation, courts demand a rational basis for funding systems, so it is important to understand the issues affecting different kinds of rural schools in your state. The Rural Trust is also

working to find clearly defensible standards for funding rural schools in the variety of circumstances in which they exist.

"Smallness" is an educational asset to schools — not an expensive luxury, not a necessary evil — but an essential part of a quality education system.

Wyoming Debates Funding Accountability

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

Wyoming's school finance process is unique in that it requires the state to recalibrate the funding model every five years. (See the June RSFN at www.ruraledu.org/articles.php?id=2507) To this end, the Wyoming Select Committee on School Finance has been meeting since the spring to evaluate the current model's accuracy in measuring the cost of a quality education and its fairness in distributing funds to districts.

Currently, each of Wyoming's 48 districts receives a different amount of school funding, based on the formula. Funds are distributed as block grants that provide local districts extensive local control in how spending decisions are made.

This month, Governor Freudenthal called on lawmakers to require greater "accountability" for districts. The Governor's challenge is similar to the recommendations of school finance consultants, Allan Odden and Larry Picus, who are working with the state in the design of the funding system. Odden and Picus have suggested that the system incorporate a framework of rewards and sanctions — including pay increases, freezes, and personnel dismissals — for districts based on designated academic benchmarks.

In a letter to the Committee, Freudenthal takes the recommendation further by suggesting that funding be tied to student performance. His recommendations emphasize district explanations of how they use their funds, particularly when districts choose to spend money in ways that do not reflect the funding model. Districts with lower academic outcomes could be forced to justify their spending choices or lose some of their spending flexibility.

The issue of performance pay for teachers — basing pay on the test scores of students — is becoming an increasingly prominent part of the education policy landscape, but there is little consensus on appropriate measures of performance and even less research on how performance pay programs would impact rural schools.

The federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant program emphasizes tying teacher evaluation and pay to student data as part of the selection criteria for state grants. Wyoming decided not to participate in the second round of RTTT competition. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jim McBride characterized the federal grant as urban-centric and said that Wyoming could develop its own reform initiatives that reflected its unique needs.

Read more:

Local coverage of Freudenthal's letters to the Committee:

- http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/article_df998e5e-9b8b-11df-95b1-001cc4c03286.html
- http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/article_021f57de-a0d1-11df-a14e-001cc4c03286.html

Governor Freudenthal's letters to the committee:

- <http://governor.wy.gov/Media.aspx?MediaId=1262>
- <http://governor.wy.gov/Media.aspx?MediaId=1268>

Editorial on recalibration process:

- http://trib.com/news/opinion/editorial/article_6ff1c757-462a-5f39-ac9d-912e6ac8ce77.html

McBride on Race to the Top:

- www.basinsradio.com/basin/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6165:wyoming-will-not-seek-phase-ii-race-to-the-top-funds&catid=40:state&Itemid=73

Class Size Caps Are Subject of Ballot, Lawsuits in Florida

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

Florida's Constitutional Amendment 8, passed in 2002 to cap class sizes, is scheduled to go into full effect this school year. But another initiative on the ballot this November could significantly alter the law. That current initiative is the subject of a lawsuit filed by the Florida Education Association against the Secretary of State and Department of State.

Amendment 8 caps enrollment in core courses at 18 students in Grades K–3, 21 students in Grades 4–8, and 25 students in Grades 9–12. The caps have been phased in over several years. Beginning this school year no classroom in a core subject can exceed these limits. Florida's constitutionally-mandated class size limits are the most stringent in the nation.

Supporters of the caps claim that the caps ensure manageable class sizes in all core subjects in all schools for all students. Some critics

argue that the caps are too expensive, while others support the idea of caps but claim the absolute classroom-level limits are impractical because one additional student moving in to a school can trigger the necessity of hiring a new teacher, moving many students between classrooms or even schools, and straining local budgets.

Opponents of the strict caps have put a measure on the November ballot that would revise the amendment to raise the caps to 21 students in K–3, 27 in 4–8, and 30 in high school. It would also allow districts to meet the cap by keeping average class sizes in each public school below the limit.

The FEA is seeking to remove Amendment 8 from this November’s ballot, claiming that its language is misleading and fails to advise voters of its true effects. According to the FEA complaint, the Florida constitution requires that the state provide necessary funding to meet the numeric class size goals, and the change in the language is in effect a state funding reduction for schools.

The 2002 law fines districts that exceed the caps and fines are re-distributed to compliant districts. Lawmakers recently tripled the financial penalties for districts out of compliance with the class size law, sparking separate lawsuits. Lawmakers also moved up the compliance checks for schools from February to October, which some supporters of the current caps claim was a political move to motivate voters to repeal the limits in November.

Rural districts, especially those with declining enrollments, have expressed concerns about the cost of implementing the class size limits at a time when the state’s funding for education has been dropping steadily. The 2002 class size amendment was passed largely along geographic lines, with more rural northern Florida voters opposing the measure and more urban southern Florida counties supporting it.

Read more:

Local coverage of lawsuit:

- www.pnj.com/article/20100725/NEWS01/7250327/1006/NEWS01/Educators-look-to-block-cuts--class-size-plan
- www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/fl-class-size-lawsuit-07-23-10-20100723.0.6937293.story

Rural district leaders discuss the class size law:

- www.cfnews13.com/article/news/2010/august/135111/Osceola-feeling-pinch-of-new-class-size-law
- www.ocala.com/article/20100523/articles/5231014?p=1&tc=pg

Suburban Palm Beach perspective:

- www.palmbeachpost.com/news/schools/class-size-law-poses-dilemma-for-schools-611034.html?imw=Y

Read the FEA complaint here:

- www.meyerbrookslaw.com/documents/FEA%20vs%20DOS/Complaint - Filed 7-23-10.pdf

Ohio Governor Faces Criticism Over Education Claims

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

Ohio Governor Ted, campaigning four years ago, promised to “fix” school funding, a goal that has eluded Ohio policymakers, advocates, parents, and other stakeholders for years. Strickland, now running for reelection, is touting his success on education funding, pointing to a new school funding formula enacted last year and claiming increases in overall school funding levels.

His critics, however, point out that the formula is not fully funded and that the increases for schools are a result of the infusion of federal stimulus dollars.

But William Phillis, the leader of a coalition of schools that sued the state over the funding system in 1991, has praised the new structure, claiming that the new model, when funded, will meet state constitutional standards and Ohio Supreme Court rulings. In four separate decisions, the Court ruled the system unconstitutional, but those orders went largely ignored by the legislature, and the Court eventually ended its jurisdiction over the case.

The new formula is an “evidence-based” model, meaning that the state selects and funds only educational methods that are supported by research on best practices. Another important feature of the system is that, when fully funded, funding for Ohio schools will be based on need-determined evidence rather than what is available in the state’s annual budget. An advisory council is meeting to study ways to implement the new plan within the current economic context.

Read more:

Local coverage:

- www.dispatchpolitics.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2010/07/19/copy/stricklands-schools-fix-lacks-funds.html?adsec=politics&sid=101

Fact-checking on Strickland’s claims about education funding:

- www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2010/07/ted_strickland_claims_ohio_inv.html

Editorial defending Strickland's plan:

- www.dispatch.com/live/content/editorials/stories/2010/07/24/dont-knock-new-plan-for-funding-schools.html

Kansas Responds to Threat of Lawsuit

Editor's note: Links are free and current at time of posting, but may require registration or expire over time.

A forthcoming school finance lawsuit in Kansas is already having an impact, despite that fact that the suit has not yet been filed.

Schools for Fair Funding notified the state earlier this summer of its plans to file a new lawsuit. Since then the State Board of Education has voted to increase its school funding proposal to the legislature. Board members voting for the increase referred to the move as "funding the law" while those who opposed it argued that the legislature would likely reject the proposal outright.

Both Kansas gubernatorial candidates have weighed in on funding issues, as well. Republican candidate Sam Brownback, currently a U.S. Senator, has said the formula needs to be reformed and made more transparent and that he wants to "end the cycle of litigation." Democratic candidate State Senator Tom Holland has said he would maintain the constitutional obligation for equitable school funding placed on the state and has accused Brownback of supporting versions of the formula that were in place when an earlier school finance lawsuit was filed. Brownback has denied this claim.

Read more:

Coverage on Kansas State School Board:

- <http://www2.liworld.com/news/2010/jul/13/state-board-education-recommends-471-million-incre/>

Coverage on gubernatorial candidates' positions on school funding:

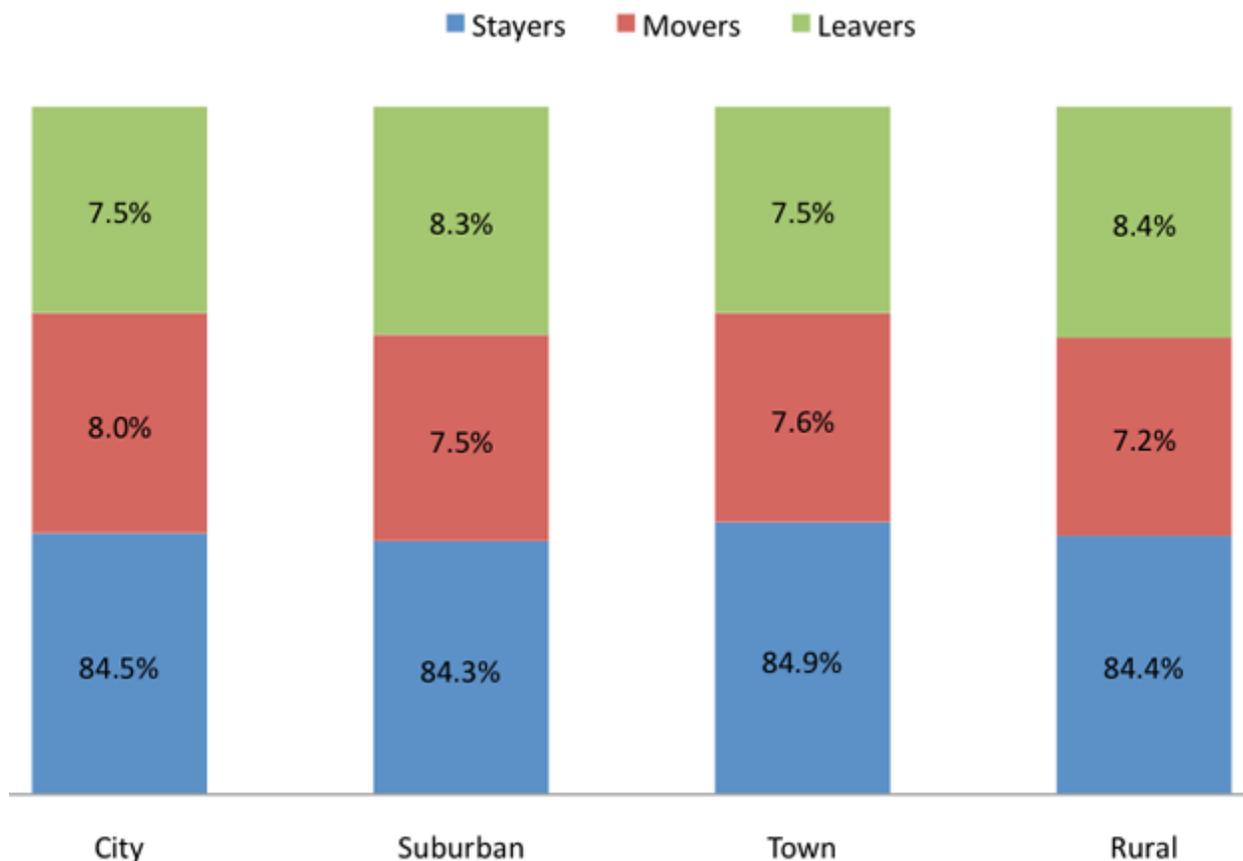
- http://cjonline.com/news/local/2010-08-01/analysis_ed_funding_big_issue
- http://cjonline.com/news/state/2010-08-17/holland_on_ed_finance_vouchers

Campaign statements on school funding:

- www.brownback.com/news/2010/aug/17/brownback-campaign-announces-road-map-kansas-educa/
- www.tomhollandforkansas.com/page/education



Teacher Mobility by School Locale, 2008-09



NOTE: "Stayers" are 2008-09 teachers who were teachers in the same schools in 2007-08. "Movers" are 2007-08 teachers who were teachers in different schools in 2008-09. "Leavers" are 2007-08 teachers who were no longer teachers in 2008-09.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2010). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results of the 2008-2009 teacher follow-up survey*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010353.pdf>

Rural Policy Matters is published monthly by the Rural School and Community Trust. For subscription information visit http://www.ruraledu.org/cms.php?action=keep_connected.

Comments, questions, and contributions for *Rural Policy Matters* should be sent to:

Policy Program

Marty Strange, Director
 41 Graham Street | Bethel, VT 05032
 Phone: (802) 728-5899 | Fax: (802) 728-2011
 E-mail: policy.program@ruraledu.org

Robin Lambert, Editor
 E-mail: editor@ruraledu.org

National Office

1530 Wilson Blvd., Suite 240 | Arlington, VA 22209
 Phone: (703) 243-1487 | FAX: (703) 243-6035
 E-mail: info@ruraledu.org