



National Center for **Research** on
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Rural Education Research Digest

Beesley, A., Moore, L., & Gopalani, S. (2010). *Student mobility in rural and nonrural districts in five Central Region states* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2010-No. 089). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Previous research has shown that students who enter and exit school at unexpected times (e.g., highly mobile students) experience more difficulty in educational settings. Specifically, highly mobile students typically have less academic success, higher dropout rates and more behavioral difficulties. In the present study, student mobility rates were calculated for five states in the Central Region of the United States. These rates were then compared across geographical settings (i.e., city, suburb, town and rural). Rural locales were also examined based on their proximity to more populous areas (i.e., fringe, distant and remotely rural). The present study sought to determine the rates of student mobility in the Central Region states and identify the areas in which mobility was most prevalent.

To determine the rates of student mobility and compare across locales, data on student mobility were collected from all districts in the five states of interest (Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming). Student mobility across states could not be compared, as each state differed in terms of reported data; however, within-state comparisons were made regarding district type (i.e., urban or rural). Levels of district mobility were determined by comparing the percentage of mobility in the district to that of the entire state.

Results of this study showed that the districts with the highest student mobility in each state tended to be located in rural areas, contain higher percentages of students eligible for free- or reduced-lunch, and reside in close proximity to American Indian reservations. However, results did not show a consistent pattern across rural locales regarding levels of mobility. In Wyoming, rural districts had higher mobility than those in a city or town; similarly, districts in rural areas or towns of North Dakota showed higher student mobility than city or suburban districts. The present study described student mobility data across five Central Region states; however, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding reasons for student mobility. Future research could examine trends across various regions of the country and seek to examine mobility among specific groups (e.g., American Indian students).