



National Center for **Research** on
Rural Education (R²Ed)

Advancing Rural Education Research: Results from the R²Ed Conference

Gwen Nugent and Gina Kunz
Susan Sheridan, Mary Hellwege &
Maureen O'Connor

CONNECT

2013

INFORM



ADVANCE

APRIL 3-4
OMAHA

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

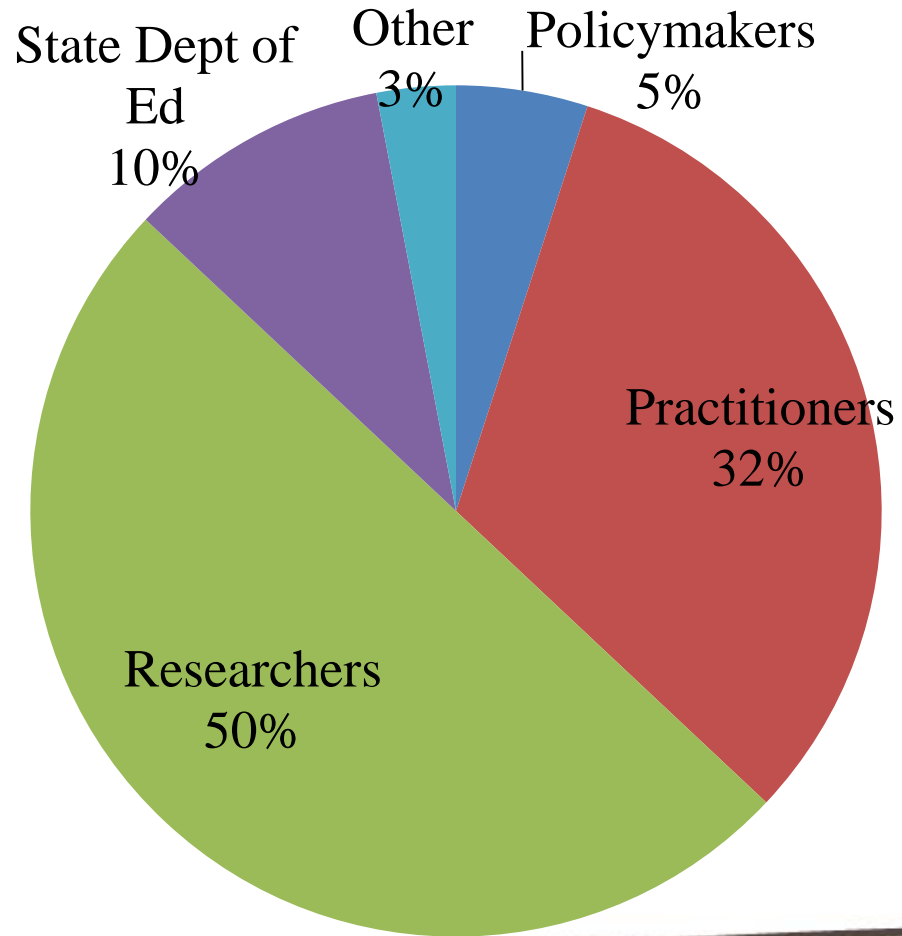


Conference Goals

- Assemble education researchers, practitioners and policymakers from across the country
- Foster dialogue about research-supported influences of teaching, family engagement, community involvement, school environment and contextual factors on the academic success of rural students
- Provide a research platform for exploring current issues and future directions of rural schools and education policy
- Feature presentations, roundtable discussions, open panels and a conference-specific Twitter feed



Conference Attendees



Conference Format

- Researcher and panel presentations focusing on influences on rural student academic success
 - Teacher
 - Community and family
 - Contextual
- Conference attendees participated in small group discussions focused by guiding questions, e.g.
 - *What have we learned from past research and what can we learn from future research regarding three key influences?*
 - *How do we meet the challenges associated with rural research?*
 - *What are immediate next steps for rural education research, practice and policy?*
- Designated note takers at each table



Themes from Qualitative Analysis of Notes

- Defining and accounting for the rural context
- Influences on student outcomes
- Interdisciplinary research partnerships
- Future directions and research dissemination



Defining and Accounting for the Rural Context

- Lack of consistent definition of “rural”
 - Need for meaningful criteria
 - Need to identify contextual variables
 - Need to consider commonalities as well as differences



Influences on Student Outcomes

- Lack of unified definition of and methods for measuring student success
- Myriad influences on student success not traditionally considered in research
- Importance of teacher professional development



Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships

- Need for partnerships among LEAs, regional service units, state agencies, higher education, local school boards, families, communities, researchers, and policymakers
- Need for more “authentic” partnerships
- Need to develop ways to maintain communication



Future Directions

- Need to get research into hand of consumers
- Need for comprehensive research agenda with multiple rigorous methodologies
- Future topics
 - Community-related variables
 - Empowering families to be involved in research
 - Evaluating sustained impact of professional development



Contact Information

Gwen C. Nugent

gnugent@unlnotes.unl.edu

Gina M. Kunz

gkunz2@unl.edu

National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed)

Website: <http://r2ed.unl.edu>

