

# School News & Notes

## Examining Rural Education



(NAPSA)—A new study highlights the condition of rural education in each state. The report finds that in some states, rural schools are able to build upon their strengths, while in others, rural schools and students are treated as if their success does not matter much.

### A Growing Issue

In large, predominantly urban states, rural students are largely ignored, according to the study, called “Why Rural Matters 2005.” Even though these rural students face relatively fewer challenges than those in other states, they have weak student performance and receive little attention. The report was prepared by the Rural School and Community Trust.

“It appears that these states have adopted an urban large-school model for their rural communities and that it is producing mediocrity in outcomes for students who should do better,” the report notes. Indeed, some states face tougher challenges in their rural areas, but manage to produce high student outcomes.

### Smart Solutions

The report found that in some states, rural schools are building on their strengths, beating the odds and overcoming significant socioeconomic challenges to produce high-performing students—even, according to the study, “while threatened by a changing policy environment.” It suggests that pol-

icymakers must build upon these strengths while addressing any weaknesses. It suggests states:

- Support small schools.
- Provide more money for teaching low-income students from poor families and those learning English.
- Buffer schools against loss of revenue due to declining enrollment.
- Emphasize and encourage distance learning.
- Help communities build multiuse facilities that can serve as schools, health clinics, social services agencies and more.

The report also emphasizes that state policy should encourage multi-age classrooms, schools that enroll students of many ages, and other measures that “fabricate the advantages of large scale schools without losing the intimacy, accountability and engagement that are the blessings of small schools.”

### How The States Rank

According to the study, rural schools in the following regions are most in need of attention: Mississippi River Delta, parts of the Southeast and Southwest, and Central Appalachia. Rural schools that rank high in student performance, relative to poverty and other challenges, include schools in Nebraska, Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming.

For a complete list of state rankings, visit the Web site [www.ruraledu.org/whyruralmatters](http://www.ruraledu.org/whyruralmatters).