



NATIONAL FORUM TO  
ADVANCE RURAL EDUCATION

## RAISING RURAL VOICES

National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition

### NFARE Pre-Conference Program

October 19, 2022 | 1:00-4:50pm



**Thank you for attending the first  
National Rural Education Advocacy  
Coalition Pre-Conference event!**

We're excited to bring together leaders from across  
the nation to share success stories and inspire  
a grassroots movement for rural kids!

- with gratitude to our contributing sponsors -



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THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

# EVENT SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022

1:00-1:45p

Welcome Reception & Refreshments

Hosted by Trane

*Location: Second Level, Outside Grand Ballroom H*

1:45-2:05p

Opening Welcome

Ray Patrick; President, NREAC  
Allen Pratt; Executive Director, NREA

Keynote: The Rural Partners Network

*Location: Grand Ballroom G*

2:05-2:30p

Rural Education Data Resources

Presented by the U.S. Department of Education

*Location: Grand Ballroom G*

2:35-3:00p

Roundtable Session 1

1. Higher Education and Rural America are Facing a Watershed Moment
2. Fostering Rural Resilience and Economic Development through School-University-Community Partnership
3. Valuing and Communicating what Matters to Rural Stakeholders with Social Return on Investment: An SROI Analysis of an Appalachian High School Internship Program
4. Policy Playbook: Findings & Recommendations
5. Making a Compelling Case for Fair Funding
6. Telling The Story: Championing your school to raise awareness about needs
7. Leading Through Service: Increasing Influence without Lobbying

*Location: Grand Ballroom F & Grand Ballroom H*

## Building Successful Coalitions in Rural Communities for Public Education Advocacy

Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom H, Table 6

*Denise Gaumer Hutchison, Wisconsin Public Education Network*

The Wisconsin Public Education Network team and local rural partners will walk participants through how to successfully build coalitions through community engagement, education and empowerment to provide a consistent advocacy team to benefit public education and the children, families and education professionals in those public school districts.

WPEN representatives will explain how local advocacy teams work with community partners in building community coalitions. WPEN will provide information on how to build teams, train teams and provide resources for community teams to be successful in advocating for their public school districts.

Local rural teams will be present to share their experiences in developing their community coalitions. There will be time for questions from the audience and the audience will be engaged throughout the session with outreach questions.

## Federal Legislative Outlook - What to know for the next Congress

Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom H, Table 7

*Tara Thomas; AASA Policy Analyst*

This session will provide an overview of what to expect in the next Congress and discuss opportunities to advocate for issues important to rural education.



# PRE-CONFERENCE ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

## Higher Education and Rural America are Facing a Watershed Moment

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom F, Table 1**

*Lori Pence, Purdue University - College of Education & College of Engineering*

It has been 160 years since the Morrill Land Grant College Act was passed and rural students continue to enroll at four-year universities at lower rates than their non-rural peers. The lower matriculation rate has implications for a fair chance for a good life because a college education can provide an individual with greater employment options, higher income potential, and improved health and quality of life. Recommendations and implications from a single case study in Indiana exploring the perceptions of rural high school students regarding college and how higher education and businesses can enhance educational aspirations for rural students.

## Fostering Rural Resilience and Economic Development through School-University-Community Partnership

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom F, Table 2**

*Loni Crumb, East Carolina University, Rural Education Institute*

The presenters will discuss the vitality of cultivating partnerships with institutions of higher education, local schools, businesses, and community organizations to improve access to education, various aspects of healthcare, and other essential resources for youth and their families living in rural communities across the US. In addition, this session will highlight social justice advocacy interventions that have the potential to reduce the impact of poverty and ongoing concerns in rural communities. This session is for motivated rural leaders who are committed to building interdisciplinary collaborations.

## Valuing and Communicating what Matters to Rural Stakeholders with Social Return on Investment

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom F, Table 3**

*Allison L Rickett, Ohio University Social Value Ecosystem & Building Bridges to Careers*

This session investigates program outcomes of a program in Appalachia using Social Return on Investment (SROI) as a comprehensive framework for measuring and communicating social, environmental, and economic impact. In this case example, the SROI framework is used as a systems approach to quantifying complex ripple effects in the ecotone of a Learning Ecosystem, a theoretical model that includes the environment as a key stakeholder of an ecological approach to education. SROI values outcomes sourced through democratic process with stakeholders and communicates changes in the universal language of money, allowing for communication of outcomes that matter to rural community viability.

## Policy Playbook: Findings & Recommendations

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Grand Ballroom H, Table 4**

*Taylor McCabe-Juhnke, Rural Schools Collaborative*

As part of the Rural Imperative Initiative, funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 5 regional organizations supported teachers to create regional 'Policy Playbooks' on local, regional, and national recommendations. Five major themes emerged across all groups:

- Teacher Recruitment & Retention
- Rural Education Funding
- Broadband/Technology Access
- Mental Health
- Housing & Transportation

The 5 organizing partners were The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (Appalachia), The University of West Alabama (Black Belt), Arizona Rural Schools Association (Borderlands), Missouri State University (Rust Belt), and CSU-Chico and North State Together (Northern California). These regional rural teacher caucuses strengthen teacher advocacy and connected policy to place.

## Making a Compelling Case for Fair Funding

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Grand Ballroom H, Table 5**

*John Humphries, Association for Equity in Funding*

Too many rural educators know the challenge: funding falls short of meeting the unique needs of our students. AEF has been working to improve fairness in funding for 3 decades. This session will provide a model for research-informed advocacy applicable to any state. We will share the latest studies as well as successful methods for working with budget decision-makers in your state. Find out how you can make a fair funding difference!

## Telling The Story: Championing your school to raise awareness about your needs

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Grand Ballroom H, Table 6**

*Nicole Assisi, Thrive / Small School Districts Association California*

Why do some schools and ideas get more attention and resources than others? Often it isn't because of a difference in program quality but rather because of more effective storytelling. Use the power of social media, storytelling and community building to promote your work. Learn to harness resources, build belief in your program and shift the status quo by sharing more about what rural education means to you and how it shapes the needs of your community. Build a public presence, empower your community to do more advocacy, recruitment teachers and get the resources you need.

## Leading Through Service: Increasing Influence without Lobbying

**Session 1 - 2:35-3:00; Grand Ballroom H, Table 7**

### *Ryan Cantrell, Idaho Rural Education Association*

As an affiliate who is prohibited from lobbying by state statute, the Idaho Rural Education Association builds positive relationships throughout our state by means of service-oriented partnerships. Our positive relationships encourage school administrators and local legislators to seek our input when educating themselves on topics of concern related to rural Idaho education. Come see how the IREA builds influence and develops community trust through our service mindset.

## Improving School Facilities in Rural Localities; Zip Code Shouldn't Matter

**Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom H, Table 4**

### *Keith Perrigan; Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of VA*

Rural Virginia, like other rural localities in America, is suffering a school facility crisis. Virginia has over \$25 Billion in recognized need related to our aging school buildings. The State has not provided any financial assistance for school infrastructure since 2009 and has used the State fund set aside for school construction to support the teacher retirement fund.

Through collaboration, advocacy, and innovation our Coalition has worked with the General Assembly to restore school construction funding to the State Budget for the first time in over a decade. This session will explore the creative and collaborative approach that included Press Conferences, Op-Eds, a statewide Crumbling Schools Tour, and bipartisan partnerships that led to our successful advocacy.

## FAFSA Frenzy - Creating a college going culture that works!

**Session 2 - 3:05-3:30; Grand Ballroom H, Table 5**

### *Jason Bell; Gear Up and Polk County Schools TN*

Understand how a school-wide FAFSA plan and senior capstone project changed the college going culture at Polk County Schools in Tennessee. Learn from the experience of two rural high schools and how they implemented school specific programs to change the college going culture and increase FAFSA completion rates at their schools. Tennessee has increased its FAFSA rates over 20 percent since 2014 and maintained a FAFSA rate over 80 percent.

We will share many of the statewide resources, initiatives, and resources that have been utilized by schools in TN to increase their FAFSA and college-going rates.

**3:05-3:30p**

## Roundtable Session 2

1. Higher Education and Rural America are Facing a Watershed Moment
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3. Valuing and Communicating what Matters to Rural Stakeholders with Social Return on Investment: An SROI Analysis of an Appalachian High School Internship Program
4. Improving School Facilities in Rural Localities; Zip Code Shouldn't Matter
5. FAFSA Frenzy - Creating a college going culture that works!
6. Building Successful Coalitions in Rural Communities for Public Education Advocacy
7. Federal Legislative Outlook - What to know for the next Congress

**Location: Grand Ballroom F & Grand Ballroom H**

**3:35-4:25p**

## Panel Discussion

- Office of Rural Education and Innovation; Georgia Department of Education
- Ryan Cantrell, Idaho Rural Education Association
- Keith Perrigan, Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of Virginia
- Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center in Washington

**Location: Grand Ballroom G**

**4:30-4:50p**

## NREAC Advocacy ToolKit + Closing Remarks

NREAC Advocacy ToolKit: Hailey Winkleman

Closing Remarks: David Ardrey, Executive Director, Association of Illinois

**Location: Grand Ballroom G**

**5:00-7:00p**

## Conference Welcome Party & Reception

**Location: See your NFARE materials**