Rural Teacher Shortage: the challenge & innovative solutions

The Voice of Rural Schools and Communities!
The challenge...

- In the SREB region, 11,600 fewer candidates completed teacher preparation programs in 2018 than in 2013, and 15 of 16 states saw declines in completion.

- Nationally, only about 20% of teachers stay in the profession long enough to become vested.

- In many states, teacher pay has not recovered from pre-recession levels.

- Rural teachers avg. $33,200, compared with their suburban counterparts, who earned $40,500.

- By the end of their third year, 50% of principals have left the field.

- The paradox of raising standards and while combating an increasing workforce gap.
Solutions in Rural Communities...

Grow your own strategies (GYO)

- **Globe Unified School District (Arizona)**
  - Identify talented, non-certified staff such as paraprofessionals and Head Start workers and support them in obtaining certification. “Identify people that have the knowledge and technical skills; then we help them with the pedagogy side.”—Superintendent Jerry Jennex
  - The district pays student teachers 50% of a first-year teacher’s salary, covers health insurance, allows participation in state retirement system, and counts student teaching as one year of service

- **Stanfield Elementary School District (Arizona)**
  - Recruits current non-certified staff members and offers to pay for them to complete a credential in education. In exchange, the new teachers commit to teaching in the district for three years. “There is a level of mutual respect because it’s an investment on both sides...the board’s resources and the person’s time and effort.”—Superintendent, Dr. Melissa Sadorf

- Arizona passed legislation in 2017 allowing LEA's to create and implement a locally based educator preparation program
Solutions in Rural Communities...

- Teacher recruitment in middle and high school by engaging positively with education professionals (South Carolina)

- Financial incentives...good for hiring, mixed results for retention

- Expanded professional development opportunities and/or graduate school tuition

- Teach for America (TFA)
  - Teacher placement
  - Rural School Leadership Academy
“I Am a Rural Teacher” gives voice to rural teachers

1. Teacher-To-Teacher Conversations
   Teachers may join the public Facebook group called "I am a Rural Teacher!," where they can share photos, stories, curriculum ideas, and teaching experiences. [Join our group](#).

2. Advocating for Rural Teachers
   “I am a Rural Teacher!” narratives showcase the perspectives of rural educators. Read the [viewpoints and recommendations](#) of rural teachers.

3. Rural Teacher Recruitment Efforts
   Our [RTC Network](#) and related efforts are committed to purposeful teacher recruitment strategies with an emphasis on social justice and inclusive community development.
Bellwether Education Partners blog series

How Much Do You Know About Rural Education? Part 4: Reversing the Teacher Shortage Trend