Closing the Achievement Gap in Rural Districts

SDSSA: Dan Leikvold, Superintendent, Lead-Deadwood Schools

REL Central: Shelley Billig, Stephany Brown

Tea Area School District: Jennifer Nebelsick Lowery, Superintendent

ASBSD/SASD Conference – August 4, 2016
Agenda

• Introduction (Dan Leikvold)
• Closing the Achievement Gap in Rural Districts (Shelley Billig)
• South Dakota Approach (Shelley Billig)
• The Success Story of Tea Area (Jennifer Nebelsick Lowery)
• Small Group Activity (Stephany Brown)
• Debrief and Closing (Dan Leikvold)
INTRODUCTION

Dr. Dan Leikvold
Superintendent, Lead-Deadwood Schools
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN RURAL DISTRICTS

Dr. Shelley H. Billig
REL Central
Fast Facts

True or False?

Rural districts comprise more than half of all of the districts in the United States.
Look at the distribution of rural districts! — School Year 2010-11 (NCES, 2013)
Fast Facts

True or false? Rural schools have higher percentages of students who score proficient and advanced than urban schools.
2011 NAEP reading achievement
4th grade (NCES, 2013)
2011 NAEP reading achievement 8th grade (NCES, 2013)
2011 NAEP Math Achievement 4th grade (NCES, 2013)
2011 NAEP Math Achievement 8th grade (NCES, 2013)
Fast Facts

• True or false?

Rural students are less likely to graduate than their urban peers.
Freshman Graduation Rate, Entering 2008-09 (NCES, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>67.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>80.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>79.9</td>
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</table>
The good news....

• Rural districts are doing rather well. Students are generally doing better than their urban counterparts and slightly less well than their suburban counterparts.
The not-so-good news

- Most rural districts still have a relatively large achievement gap between FRL and non FRL students.

- Achievement gaps for rural districts are nearly the same as for urban districts and in some regions, surpass urban districts (Rural Trust, 2013).
Decision points and considerations for identifying rural districts that have closed student achievement gaps

Michael J. Culbertson
Shelley H. Billig
RMC Research Corporation

Rural districts have long faced challenges in closing achievement gaps between subgroups of students. This brief describes key decision points and considerations for decisionmakers interested in identifying rural districts that have closed academic achievement gaps. Examining practices in these districts may suggest activities associated with making achievement gains and narrowing achievement gaps that can be systematically investigated. Examples from recent work with rural stakeholder groups in Colorado and Nebraska are used to highlight key issues in the identification process.

http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?
pubid=REL2016130
Figure 1. Trend lines for any given district average information across years to reduce variability in academic achievement measures from year to year.

Students scoring proficient or advanced on Colorado achievement tests in a sample district (percent)

Math

Reading

South Dakota Rural Achievement Gap Closure Indicators

- Which subgroups?
  - Economic disadvantage (FRL)

- What’s rural?
  - All SD districts

- Which measures?
  - Dakota STEP: Math, Reading, Science

- Time: 2006-07 through 2012-13 (7 years)

- Analysis: Trends over time

- Additional criteria?
  - Achievement could not decrease
  - At least 25% FRL
  - Graduation rate > 83% (state average)
South Dakota Results

5 districts narrowed/closed the gap in two content areas:

- Gettysburg (reading, science)
- Montrose (math, science)
- Hamlin (math, science)
- Tea Area (math, science)
- Faulkton (math, reading)

No districts narrowed/closed the gap in all three content areas (math, reading, science). Only several closed in reading.
TEA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA

Tea Area 41-5
Math

Tea Area 41-5
Science
http://teaschools.k12.sd.us/

Tea Area School District

Superintendent of Schools:
Dr. Jennifer Nebelsick Lowery
Tea Area School District

Characteristics

- Tea Area School District is 13 years old
- Serves JK-12
- Includes Addresses from Tea, Sioux Falls, Harrisburg, and Lennox
  - A majority of Tea residents work Sioux Falls.
- 26 square miles
  - Smallest K-12 District per square mile in South Dakota
- 16th Largest School District in South Dakota
  - Over 1650 students (2016-2017)
  - Over 200 employees
Tea Area School District
Characteristics Continued...

Note:
Certified Staff members have grown from 41 to 104.
Challenges

- Finances

### South Dakota Analysis of Capital Outlay Based on Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current CO /student</th>
<th>Current CO - Debt/ student</th>
<th>CO Levy 2014</th>
<th>CO $2.50 /student</th>
<th>CO $3.00 /student</th>
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<tr>
<td>Min</td>
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<td>-$432.78*</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$55.64</td>
<td>$66.77</td>
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<td>Q1</td>
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<td>$1,628.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>$5,244.88</td>
<td>$5,244.88</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$9,029.80</td>
<td>$10,835.76</td>
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</table>

| TASD      | $587                | $234                       | $2.50        | $590              | $708              |

- Infrastructure
- Growth
Tea Area School District

*District Leadership: Strategic Planning*

**Mission**

*To educate and empower each student for success in a global society.*

**Board Approved Focus Areas**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Achievement</th>
<th>Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>Community Relations</th>
<th>Fiscal Accountability/$ Financial Planning</th>
<th>Facilities/Growth Management</th>
<th>Climate</th>
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</thead>
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Tea Area School District

**District Leadership:**

**Strategic Planning**

Board Approved District Goals

Goal 1: All Students at Tea Area are future Titan Graduates

Goal 2: Future Titan Graduates are articulate, fluent, and analytical readers at or above grade level who are ready to apply skills in the real world.

Goal 3: Future Titan Graduates can apply mathematics and scientific thinking in real life situations through effective communication and collaboration at or above grade level.

Goal 4: Future Titan Graduates are civic leaders engaged in the community through action and service.
### Evaluation Matrix for Principals

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<th>1-3 Years in District</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>R. 2</th>
<th>Formal 1</th>
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<th>SLO</th>
<th>Summative</th>
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<td>Name</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>4 + Years in District</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Formal 1</th>
<th>Goal Meeting</th>
<th>Mid Year</th>
<th>Goal Review</th>
<th>SLO</th>
<th>Summative</th>
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Common Vocabulary

Using Assessment in Instruction (3d):

Danielson identifies the following **key indicators** in 3d:

Using Assessment in Instruction

- Teacher paying close attention to evidence of student understanding
- Teacher posing specifically-created questions to elicit evidence of student understanding
- Teacher circulating to monitor student learning and to offer feedback
- Students assessing their own work against established criteria

Tea Area School District
Organizational Structure and Climate:
Organizational Culture

Climate & Staffing

• Addition of Counselor for each Building
• PBIS – Positive Behavior Interventions & Support
• SAT – Student Assistant Team Development
• Professional Development On-Going New Teacher In-service
Tea Area School District
Teaching and Learning Practices:
Curriculum & Professional Development

**Essential Guides:**
- Power Standards
- Objectives
- Syllabus (6-12)
- Standard Based Report Card (Elementary)
- Common Assessments
  - Pre/Post
Tea Area School District

**Teaching and Learning Practices: Curriculum**

**Math**
- South Dakota Counts Training
  - CGI – Cognitively Guided Instruction
- Investigations Pilot & Implementation K-5
- CPM – College Preparatory Mathematics & Implementation
- 70 minutes
- SLO
  - Unit pre/post for all 3-6

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<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Pre</th>
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</table>

**Average Growth** 0

**Average Growth** 0
Tea Area School District

Teaching and Learning Practices: Curriculum

**Science**
- STEM Implementation & Planning
- Collaboration with Sanford Education Outreach
- CTE Academy
- STEM Days
- Project Lead The Way – Launch
Tea Area School District
Teaching and Learning Practices:
Curriculum & Professional Development

Technology:
• 7-12 Chromebook 1 to 1
• Ipads
• Technology Integrationist

Curriculum Highlights:
• Curriculum & Assessment
• PLTW Launch
• STEM
• Differentiation
• Honors
• Titan Hour
Tea Area School District
Teaching and Learning Practices: Assessment

Next Steps:
• PRE/POST Unit Assessments (Consistent)
• NWEA/MAP Implementation
• Professional Learning Community Conversations
  • About Teaching & Learning
Q & A:
Superintendent Lowery
ACTIVITY

Stephany Brown
REL Central
COLORADO TOOLS

• The Colorado Framework for Rural District Excellence is based on the urban research literature, refined by rural practitioners.

• Note that these are district practices.
Categories/Group Assignments

• **Teaching and Learning**
  – Curriculum; instruction; assessment; professional development

• **Leadership and Governance**
  – Instructional leadership; district governance; strategic planning; and performance/accountability

• **Organizational Structure and Climate**
  – Human resources; financial resources; organizational structure; organizational culture
How to Read the Framework

• The indicator is the umbrella statement. The elements add up to the indicator.

EG - INDICATOR C-1. The district has a rigorous, effectively articulated standards-based curriculum and sufficient materials and curricular supports to implement the curriculum effectively.

• The district has a core academic curriculum that has rigorous student performance expectations defined for each content area.
• The district ensures that all teachers and students have standards-aligned instructional materials, including technology, needed to implement the curriculum in all content areas and all grade levels.
• The district provides effective curricular supports, such as scope and sequence or pacing guides, and ensures that teachers can effectively teach the curriculum at the appropriate level of depth in the time available.
With your table partners, address the following:

• Please review and discuss with your table colleagues:
  – Which of these do you think is the most critical for gap-closure?
  – What’s missing (if anything?)

Please appoint a note-keeper. We will debrief!
DEBRIEF AND CLOSING

Dan Leikvold
Rural Education Research Alliance
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THANK YOU!