

# **Rural Education Research & Implementation Center (RERIC)**

## **Wisconsin Center for Education Research**

### **University of Wisconsin-Madison**

State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Rural Schools,  
Libraries, and Communities  
October 2, 2019  
Stanley-Boyd School District

Andy Garbacz & Craig A. Albers

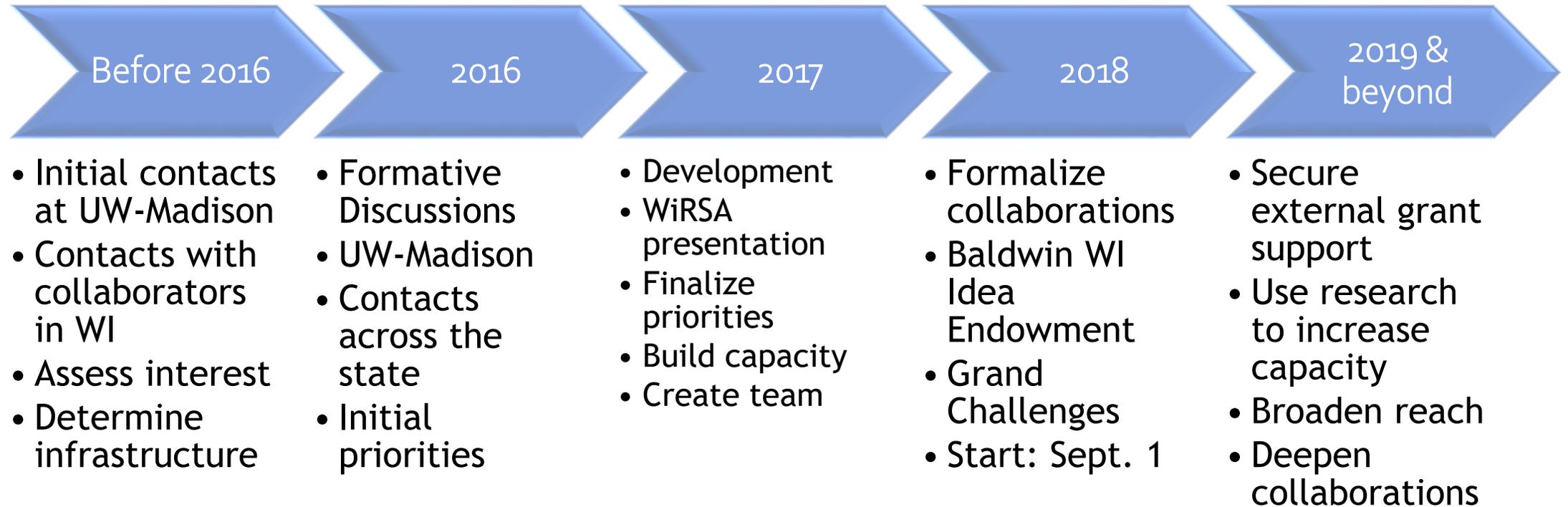


**Wisconsin Center for  
Education Research**  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Agenda

- Journey and current status of RERIC
- Overview of RERIC's mission and current research strands
- Summary of research activities
- Summary of outreach activities
- Planned Year 2 activities
- Vision for expanded opportunities in rural education throughout Wisconsin

# RERIC's Journey



# Mission & Initial Research Priorities

## Mission

- Conduct rigorous, sophisticated, and interdisciplinary research that is **responsive** to needs identified by rural schools and communities;
- Promote implementation of **evidence-based** practices in rural school settings;
- Facilitate **engagement** among researchers, practitioners, families, and youth to maximize educational outcomes and general well-being



# Mental and Behavioral Health

# FOCUS Partnerships: Enhancing Mental & Behavioral Health in Rural Wisconsin Communities



# Activities



- Conduct focus groups in rural schools/communities



- Build FOCUS Partnership intervention program based on data/information from focus groups



- Receive feedback from key stakeholders regarding the FOCUS Partnership intervention program



- Revise FOCUS Partnership intervention program



- Implement in rural schools and evaluate program



- Dissemination

# Focus Group Highlights

- Barriers to services
- Facilitators of service provision
- Necessary intervention components

# Building Partnerships to Promote Mental Health for Children and Youth in Rural Wisconsin

- **Funding as a Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Seed Project**
- **Investigators: Craig Albers, Brad Carl, Andy Garbacz**
- **Partnership with the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance**
- **Purpose: Examine youth mental health needs and existing school mental health practices in rural Wisconsin communities to develop recommendations for enhancing rural school mental health**

# Preliminary Findings

## Rural school practitioners identified the following:

- Strengths for promoting mental health
  - Partnerships with outside organizations to provide school-based services
  - Small class sizes facilitate developing strong relationships with students and families
  - School mental health training
- Barriers for promoting school mental health
  - Staff stretched too thin
  - Lack of access to mental health professionals
  - Parent discomfort

# Preliminary Findings

- Approximately 40% of rural school practitioners reported that families must travel more than 30 miles to access mental health services, compared to 20% of non-rural school practitioners
- Relative to non-rural practitioners, rural school practitioners reported that schools have less capacity (e.g., knowledge, skills, resources) to meet youth mental health needs
- Rural and non-rural practitioners report affordability and lack of health care coverage are primary reasons why youth with mental health needs do not receive support

# Teacher Preparation, Recruitment, & Retention

# Teacher Pipeline: Practitioner Perspectives on Rural School Recruitment

## Research Questions

- **How have current rural educators in Wisconsin experienced their professional preparation? In what way have their experiences prepared them (or not) to work in a rural context?**
- **In what ways can teacher narratives provide insight into the challenges and needs in rural teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention?**



**WHO:**

35 Rural Teachers  
with STEM Interest or Focus  
&

Education Researchers, UW Faculty,  
Legislators, DPI, & other Rural Stakeholders

**WHAT:**

Rural Teacher Panel Q&A

STEM-Themed Breakout Sessions from  
Education Faculty & Staff

Wisconsin Public Television Presentations

Saturday Science Field Trips on UW-Madison  
Campus

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual

**Teacher  
Speakout!**

**WHERE:**

13<sup>th</sup> Floor of Educational Sciences Building  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

**WHEN:**

Friday, November 15: 9-5pm  
Saturday, November 16: 8-12pm

**WHY:**

Center educator perspectives and knowledge  
in research processes; bridge research-  
practice divide for rural schools; deepen and  
sustain engagement with rural educators

&

Bring positive, asset-based attention to rural  
schools at UW-Madison

# Equity and Diversity



UW-MADISON RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH & IMPLEMENTATION CENTER

## FOCUS ON: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

### Rural schools in Wisconsin serve many students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

These families include long-established American Indian populations as well as new immigrant groups. In fact, new immigrant families made up three-quarters of the population growth in rural areas between 2000 and 2010.

Diversity has always existed in rural Wisconsin but the pressing needs of recent demographic changes have strained schools and communities in providing adequate and appropriate supports for these families. Given their geographic isolation, rural schools often lack access to sufficient bilingual resources and services for new linguistically-diverse students. For some of these families, intergenerational poverty and lower education attainment create further challenges in bridging cultural and linguistic divisions.

The Rural Education Research and Implementation Center aims to integrate cultural and linguistic diversity within its approach to serving rural schools. The Center will address this aim in several ways:

- collaborating with educational administrators of tribal nations to identify their students' needs,
- advocating for cultural responsiveness in schools,
- and increasing access to educational resources to better support culturally and linguistically diverse students.



The mission of the Rural Education Research and Implementation Center is to conduct rigorous, sophisticated, and interdisciplinary research that is responsive to needs identified by rural schools and communities; promote implementation of evidence-based practices in rural school settings; and facilitate engagement among researchers, practitioners, families, and youth to maximize educational outcomes and general well-being.

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## RURAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN WISCONSIN

Many of Wisconsin's rural schools have recently begun to serve increasing numbers of English language learners (ELLs). Others have long histories of serving these students. What do we know about rural ELLs? How are they similar to and different from urban ELLs and rural English-proficient students? How much time do rural ELLs need to attain English proficiency?

### Language

Spanish and Hmong are the most common native languages in both urban and rural areas.

- Native Spanish speakers account for 58% of rural ever ELLs and 52% of urban ever ELLs. 9% of rural ELLs are native speakers of Hmong, compared with 15% of urban ELLs. 34% of rural and 32% of urban ELLs speak an other or unknown language.

### Demographics

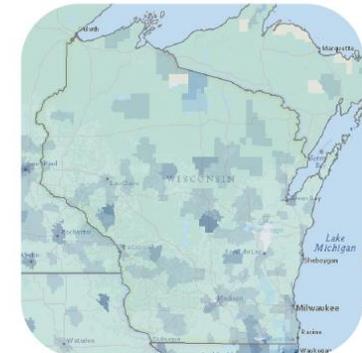
Rural ELLs differ significantly from their non-ELL peers in terms of race/ethnicity and income.

- Rural ELLs are much more likely to be from low-income households. 82% of rural current ELLs are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to 34% of rural non-ELLs.
- ELL status often aligns with race and ethnicity in rural areas. 74% of current rural ELLs are Latino and 15% are Asian, while 91% of rural non-ELLs are white and non-Latino.
- Latinos constitute a larger proportion of rural ELLs than urban ELLs. 74% of rural current ELLs are Latino, compared with 68% of urban current ELLs.

### Mobility

Student mobility is generally similar among rural ELLs, urban ELLs, and rural non-ELLs - with a few key differences.

- Most students in all three groups are stably enrolled. 94% of rural current ELLs, 96% of urban current ELLs, and 98% of rural non-ELLs were enrolled at the same school throughout the school year.



Blue shading shows districts where a larger proportion of students speak a language other than English at home (Source: ACS 2012-16, ACS-ED Maps)

- Rural ELLs have spent the least amount of time in Wisconsin schools. 34% of rural ever ELLs have been enrolled in Wisconsin schools for at least 10 years, compared with 38% of urban ever ELLs and 47% of rural non-ELLs. On average, rural non-ELLs have been enrolled in Wisconsin schools one year longer than rural ELLs.
- Many rural ELLs may be formerly non-rural ELLs. Among 12th grade ever ELLs enrolled in an urban, suburban, or town school, 84% had never been enrolled in a rural school. Among 12th grade ever ELLs enrolled in a rural school, only 41% had always attended a rural school, suggesting that ELLs are moving into rural areas from more urbanized ones.

A "current ELL" is a student currently formally classified as an English language learner. An "ever ELL" is any student who has ever been classified as an ELL, including current ELLs. A "non-ELL" is a student who has never been classified as an ELL.

# Outreach

# School Districts with Various Levels of Engagement



# Speaker Series



RURAL  
EDUCATION  
SPEAKER  
SERIES

## Wisconsin's Demographic Changes: Impact on Rural Schools and Communities

Tuesday, November 13, 2018. 11:30-1pm  
Educational Sciences, Room 259  
1025 West Johnson Street

Rural areas of Wisconsin face challenges in maintaining population size due to an aging population and declining numbers of children and young adults. This presentation illustrates these demographic shifts and their effects on rural schools districts, as well as businesses, social services, and housing.

**Sarah Kemp**, Researcher with the UW-Madison's Applied Population Laboratory (APL), examines rural school issues, student enrollment projections, redistricting, and demographic change in inner-ring suburbs.

If you have any questions please contact the RERIC office at [rerik@wcer.wisc.edu](mailto:rerik@wcer.wisc.edu)



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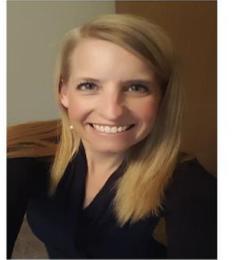
## Rebecca Collins

*State Director of Student Services/  
Prevention and Wellness Team, Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction*

**Tuesday, April 30, 2019  
12:00 – 1:30 pm**

Educational Sciences, Room 253  
1025 West Johnson Street

**Lunch provided while it lasts**



## Statewide Efforts to Support Student Mental Health in Rural Communities

**Rebecca Collins** will share work supported by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to help improve student mental health, with an emphasis on rural settings. Approaches include leveraging federal and state funding streams and partnerships to advance innovation across the state.

If you have any questions please contact the RERIC office at [rerik@wcer.wisc.edu](mailto:rerik@wcer.wisc.edu)

**Mutual Survival: Education Reform and Economic Change in Rural Wisconsin**

Jennifer Seelig  
Rural Education Research & Implementation Center

**Mutual Survival:  
Education Reform & Economic Change  
in Rural Wisconsin**

Dr. Jennifer Seelig  
Assistant Director, Rural Education Research & Implementation Center  
Wisconsin Center for Education Research

# Vision for Expanded Activities in Rural Education Throughout Wisconsin

- Establish research-community partnerships
- Enhance statewide networks
- Promote joint preparation and training activities
- Build interconnected (home-school-community) services
- Advance equitable school and community systems

# Vision for Expanded Activities in Rural Education Throughout Wisconsin

- What is your vision for rural education in Wisconsin?
- How can RERIC help promote your vision through research, implementation, and policy?

# Feedback and Communication

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