

Why Rural Matters 2011-12

The Condition of Rural Education in the 50 States



Marty Strange, Policy Program Director
Jerry Johnson, Ed.D.
Daniel Showalter
Robert Klein, Ph.D.



**A Report of the Rural School
and Community Trust Policy Program**

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The Rural School and Community Trust is a national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving communities. Our mission is to help rural schools and communities grow better together. Working in some of the poorest, most challenging places, the Rural Trust involves young people in learning linked to their communities, improves the quality of teaching and school leadership, and advocates in a variety of ways for appropriate state and federal educational policies including efforts to ensure equitable and adequate resources for rural schools.

Why Rural Matters 2011-12

The Condition of Rural Education in the 50 States

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Introduction

Why *Rural Matters 2011-12* is the sixth in a series of biennial reports analyzing the contexts and conditions of rural education in each of the 50 states and calling attention to the need for policymakers to address rural education issues in their respective states.

While it is the sixth in a series, this report is not simply an updating of data from earlier editions. On the contrary, from one report to the next, we have deliberately altered the statistical indicators and gauges to call attention to the variability and complexity of rural education. Our intent in these reports is not—as it is in many state-by-state analyses—to compare states in terms of their differing rates of progress toward an arbitrary goal. Rather, our intent is (1) to provide information and analyses that highlight the priority policy needs of rural public schools and the communities they serve, and (2) to describe the complexity of rural contexts in ways that can help policymakers better understand the challenges faced by their constituencies and formulate policies that are responsive to those challenges.

In 2008-09 (the school year used in this report), 9,628,501 public school students were enrolled in rural school districts—20% of the nation's total public school enrollment. Meeting the needs of more than 9.6 million children is a challenge that demands and deserves the attention of a nation. It is also a challenge that calls for looking at issues from multiple perspectives in order to develop informed understandings that move beyond overly simplistic notions about rural schools and the communities they serve.

The Data

The data used for *Why Rural Matters 2011-12* were compiled from information collected and maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Census Bureau. All data used here are available to the general public and may be downloaded in tabular formats.

To define “rural,” we used the 12-item urban-centric NCES locale code system released in 2006. Rural schools and districts used in the report are those designated with locale codes 41 (rural fringe), 42 (rural distant), or 43 (rural remote). While early versions of *Why Rural Matters* (i.e., those preceding the 2009 version) used a combination of school-level and district-level data, improvements in the urban-centric locale code system (specifically, assigning district-level locale based upon the locale where the plurality of students in the district attend school) have made it possible for us to be consistent and use districts as the unit of analysis for all indicators except for the percentage of rural

schools and the percent change in number of rural schools. This consistency is particularly important because policy decisions impacting rural education (e.g., REAP funding) are made using district-level designations of rural status.

Because our longitudinal gauge includes indicators that use data from years prior to 2006 (when the new locale code system was introduced) it was necessary to back-code in order to assign locales to school districts for those earlier years. To do so, we recoded the earlier data following the same basic methodology as the current rural classification system. Under the current system, a district's locale code is determined by the locale category (city [locales 11-13], suburb [locales 21-23], town [locales 31-33], and rural [locales 41-43]) of the school(s) where a plurality of students are enrolled. When we compare rural and non-rural school districts using the 2008-09 data, we are comparing (1) districts where the total number of students enrolled in schools designated as rural (locale 41, 42, or 43) is greater than the number of students enrolled in any of the other three locale categories (city, suburb, or town) with (2) districts where the total number of students enrolled in any one of the other three categories (city, suburb, or town) is greater than the total number of students enrolled in rural schools. To identify rural districts for years prior to 2006, we followed the same procedure using the school-level locale codes that were in effect at that time. Thus, for years prior to 2006, rural districts are those where the total number of students attending schools designated as locale 7 or locale 8 (i.e., rural) is greater than the total number of students attending schools in any one of the other three categories (i.e., locales 1 and 2 [city], locales 3 and 4 [urban fringe], or locales 5 and 6 [town]).

As in earlier versions of the report, *Why Rural Matters 2011-12* uses data only for regular local education agencies (local school districts and local school district components of supervisory unions). Thus we exclude charter school-only districts and specialized state- and federally-directed education agencies focused primarily on vocational, special, or alternative education.

Gauging Rural Education in the 50 States

We frame the report around five gauges measuring for each state (1) the Importance of rural education, (2) the Diversity of rural students and their families, (3) the Educational Policy Context impacting rural schools, (4) the Educational Outcomes of students in rural schools in each state, and (5) the Longitudinal changes that have occurred in each state

in certain key areas. Each gauge is comprised of five equally weighted indicators—thus 25 indicators in all. Instances where data were not available are denoted with N/A.

The higher the ranking on a gauge, the more important or the more urgent rural education matters are in a particular state.

The gauges and their component indicators are as follows:

Importance Gauge

- Percent rural schools
- Percent small rural school districts
- Percent rural students
- Number of rural students
- Percent of state education funds to rural districts

Student and Family Diversity Gauge

- Percent rural minority students
- Percent rural ELL students
- Percent rural IEP students
- Percent rural student poverty
- Percent rural household mobility

Educational Policy Context Gauge

- Rural instructional expenditures per pupil
- Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures
- Median organizational scale
- State revenue to schools per local dollar
- Salary expenditures per instructional FTE

Educational Outcomes Gauge

- Rural high school graduation rate
- Rural grade 4 NAEP scores (math)
- Rural grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)
- Rural grade 8 NAEP scores (math)
- Rural grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)

Longitudinal Gauge

- Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09)
- Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09)
- Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09)
- Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09)
- Change in rural students as a percentage of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09)

While some of the indicators used in this report are the same as in previous versions, several are not and so overall year-by-year comparisons of a state's ranking are not advis-

able because of their potential to mislead. The possibilities for assembling indicators to describe the context, conditions, and outcomes of rural schools and communities are virtually unlimited. We acknowledge the complexity of rural America generally and of 50 individual state systems of public education, and we recognize that perspectives offered by the indicators used here represent only one of many good ways of understanding rural education in the U.S.

To illustrate the problematic nature of comparing a state's ranking on one report with the same state's ranking in another year's report, consider Washington, a state that ranked 23rd in terms of overall rural education priority in 2009 (within the second quartile, which we termed the "Major" priority category). By contrast, in the 2011 report, Washington ranks in the fourth quartile as 42nd in terms of rural education priority, a change partly due to the new fifth gauge (Washington was ranked in the second quartile on the Concentrated Poverty gauge, but ranks in the fourth quartile on the Longitudinal gauge). To interpret Washington's large drop in rural education priority concern as a "success" might mean overlooking the issues of severe poverty that may still exist in rural pockets around the state.

Indiana, on the other hand, is a state that moved from below the national median at 32nd in terms of overall rural education priority to a ranking of 18th (within the second quartile, which we termed the "Major" priority category). Much of this shift between the two versions of the report can be attributed to the change in gauges. Indiana ranked in the third quartile on the Concentrated Poverty gauge, but has been one of the most volatile states in terms of Longitudinal change in rural areas. Rather than interpreting this change as Indiana "climbing 14 places," attention should be focused on the fact that Indiana's student population is increasingly rural, and that the poverty rate is growing among these rural students. Making good policy choices for America's rural school children requires carefully considering the full state profile and the story told by each indicator.

For each of the five gauges, we added the state rankings on each indicator and then divided by the number of indicators to produce an average gauge ranking.ⁱ Using that gauge ranking, we then organize the states into quartiles that describe their relative position with regard to other states on that particular gauge. For the Importance, Educational Policy Context, and Longitudinal gauges, the four quartiles are labeled "Notable," "Important," "Very Important," and

ⁱ Gauge rankings are not calculated for states that have fewer than three of the five indicator rankings present. These instances are denoted with an asterisk and a clarifying note.

“Crucial.” For the Student and Family Diversity and Educational Outcomes gauges, the four quartiles are labeled “Fair,” “Serious,” “Critical,” and “Urgent.” It is important to note that these categories are intended to be descriptive in only the most general way. There is little substantive difference between a “Crucial” ranking of 13 and a “Very Important” ranking of 14.

Lastly, we combined the five average gauge rankings to determine an overall average rankingⁱⁱ, which we term the Rural Education Priority ranking.

Certain states have retained a high rural education priority ranking from year to year despite the fact that we use different indicators and gauges. For these states, rural education is apparently both important and in urgent need of attention no matter how you look at it.

One final caution from earlier reports is worth repeating. Because we report state-level data for most indicators, our analyses do not reveal the substantial variation in rural contexts and conditions within many states. Thus, while an indicator represents the average for a particular state, in reality there may be rural regions within the state that differ considerably from the state average. This is especially true for indicators like poverty and ELL status, since demographic characteristics such as these tend not to be distributed evenly across a state but are concentrated variously in specific communities within the state. In the case of such indicators, the statewide average may not reflect the reality in any one specific place, with far higher rates in some places and far lower rates in others. It is our hope in such cases that the presentation of state averaged indicators will prompt more refined discussions and lead to better understandings of all rural areas.

New and Revised Gauges and Indicators

In an effort to refine and better reflect our thinking about the contexts and characteristics of rural education, we made some changes from previous reports with regard to the selection and configuration of indicators and gauges used. *Why Rural Matters 2009* included 25 indicators organized into 5 gauges: Importance (5 indicators), Student and Family Diversity (5), Educational Policy Context (5), Educational Outcome (5), and Concentrated Poverty (5). The 2011 report also includes 5 gauges, each comprising 5 indicators (for a total of 25 indicators). The major difference from the previous report to this one is the replacement of

the Concentrated Poverty Gauge with the Longitudinal Gauge. However, there have been a few other changes made among the indicators, and these are described below.

The Educational Policy Context Gauge contains one minor adjustment: the new indicator “state revenue to schools per local dollar” replaces the 2009 *Why Rural Matters* indicator “inequality in state and local revenue per pupil.” This improved indicator measures the extent to which rural school funds come from the state versus local communities, with a measure of \$1 indicating equal amounts of money coming from the state and local communities, greater than \$1 indicating more state than local support and less than \$1 indicating more local than state support. Rural schools that rely more heavily on local support are subject to greater variation in support based on local economic conditions, property tax base, and industrial tax revenues. Such states are likely to have greater disparities from one location to another based on local conditions.

The Educational Outcomes Gauge was revised considerably from the 2009 report, dropping two indicators characterizing rural students’ NCLB proficiency in reading and math and two composite (math and reading combined NAEP scores at each of two grade levels) and replacing them 4 NAEP scores that separately report math and reading results at grade four and grade eight. The rationale for this change was twofold: (1) states vary widely in their standards for proficiency, making the NCLB data difficult to analyze and report, and (2) considerable variation in NAEP scores across grade levels and subject area strongly suggested the value in considering the individual scores (i.e., grade 4 reading, grade 4 math, grade 8 reading, grade 8 math) separately.

The Longitudinal Gauge appears for the first time in *Why Rural Matters 2011-12*. It uses five indicators to characterize changes occurring over time (absolute change in the number of rural students, percent change in the number of rural students, percent change in the number of rural Hispanic students, change in percentage of rural poverty, and change in rural students as a percentage of all students). For each indicator, we compared data from its first year of availability to 2008-09 data. Two indicators in particular—change in rural Hispanic populations and rural poverty—showed sporadic state reporting at first, so we compared 2008-09 data with the first year of reliable data from each state. On the other three indicators, we were able to use 1987-88 data to understand two decades of change in the key indicators.

The locale coding system changed significantly in 2006, making it inaccurate to compare raw “rural” data collected under the two distinct definitions. One solution would

ii Priority rankings are not calculated for states that have fewer than four of the five indicator rankings present. These instances are denoted with an asterisk and a clarifying note.

have been to use the 2005-06 school year data as the most recent data for the longitudinal comparisons. However, we felt that this would not provide an adequate examination of current trends, especially with regards to the burgeoning rural Hispanic population. Thus, to span as many years as possible while preserving consistency, we recoded the earlier data according to the current rural classification system. In other words, for any given year, a district's locale was determined by which of the four locales (city, suburb, town, rural) contributed the most students. For example, a district with 3,000 students in suburban schools, 2,000 students in town schools, and 4,000 students in rural schools would be coded as a rural district for the purposes of this comparison.

Notes on Report Methodology

Readers familiar with earlier editions of *Why Rural Matters* will note the following considerations when reading the 2011 report

First, the quartile categories used to describe states' position on the continuum from 1-50 are arbitrary, and are used merely as a convenient way to group states into smaller units to facilitate discussion of patterns in the results. Thus, there is very little difference between the "Urgent" label assigned to Mississippi based on its ranking of 13th on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge and the "Critical" label

assigned to Louisiana based on its ranking of 14th on the same gauge.

Second, again in this report we use regional terms loosely. Now, as then, the intent is not to confuse or obscure meanings, but to recognize nuances in regional identities and to best represent the contexts within which we are discussing specific relationships between individual states and shared geographic and cultural characteristics. With this intent, a state like Oklahoma may be referred to as a Southern Plains state in some contexts and as a Southwestern state in others. That is because Oklahoma is part of regional patterns that include Southern Plains states like Kansas and Colorado, but it is also part of regional patterns that include Southwestern states like New Mexico.

Third, the ranking system should not be interpreted to suggest that rural education in low-priority states does not deserve attention from policymakers. Indeed, every state faces challenges in providing a high-quality educational experience for all children. The highest priority states are presented as such because they are states where key factors that impact the schooling process converge to present the most extreme challenges to schooling outcomes, and so suggest the most urgent and most comprehensive need for attention from policymakers.

Results

The data for each state and state rankings for each indicator are presented in the charts and figures on pages 28–77. The results for each indicator are summarized and

discussed below. To provide some context and to aid in making comparisons, national level results are presented in Table 1.

| Table 1. National Rural Statistics | | | |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| Importance Gauge | | Educational Outcomes Gauge | |
| Percent rural schools: | 33.0% | Rural high school graduation rate: | 77.5% |
| Percent small rural districts: | 49.9% | Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math): | 240 |
| Percent rural students: | 20.2% | Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading): | 222 |
| Number of rural students (US Median = 131,129): | 9,628,501 | Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math): | 284 |
| Percent state education funds to rural districts: | 20.4% | Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading): | 264 |
| Student and Family Diversity Gauge | | Longitudinal Gauge | |
| Percent rural minority students: | 25.8% | Change in absolute rural enrollment (median = 9,880): | 1,735,666 |
| Percent rural ELL students: | 3.7% | Percent change in rural enrollment: | 22.2% |
| Percent rural IEP students: | 12.1% | Percent change in rural Hispanic enrollment: | 150.9% |
| Percent rural student poverty: | 41.0% | Change in percent rural students in poverty: | 9.8% |
| Percent rural mobility: | 12.7% | Change in rural students as a percentage of all students: | 2.6% |
| Educational Policy Context Gauge | | | |
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil: | \$5,657 | | |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures: | \$11.06 | | |
| Median organizational scale (divided by 100): | 5,203 | | |
| Ratio of state revenue to local revenue: | \$1.31 | | |
| Salary expenditures per instructional FTE: | \$56,159 | | |

Importance Gauge

Importance Gauge Indicators

Absolute and relative measures of the size and scope of rural education help to define the importance of rural education to the well-being of the state’s public education system as a whole. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Importance Gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.¹

■ **Percent rural schools** is the percentage of regular elementary and secondary public schools designated as rural by NCES. The higher the percentage of schools, the higher the state ranks on the Importance Gauge.

The national average is 33% but states vary considerably on this indicator, from a low of 6.6% in Massachusetts to a high of 78.6% in South Dakota. More than half of all schools are rural in 15 states (in order, South Dakota, Montana, Vermont, North Dakota, Maine, Alaska, Nebraska,

Wyoming, Arkansas, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Iowa, Mississippi, New Hampshire, and North Carolina) and at least one in three of all schools is rural in 15 other states. In general, states with a high percentage of rural schools are those where sparse populations and/or challenging terrain make it difficult to transport students to consolidated regional schools in non-rural areas. Predominantly urban states on the East and West coasts and in the Great Lakes region have the smallest percentages of rural schools.

■ **Percent small rural school districts** is the percentage of rural school districts that are below the median enrollment size for all rural school districts in the U.S. (median = 537 students). The higher the percentage of districts with enrollments below 537, the higher the state ranks on the Importance Gauge.

At least half of all rural districts are smaller than the national rural median in 22 states (Montana, North Dakota, Vermont, Nebraska, South Dakota, Oklahoma,

¹ Hawaii is excluded from most of the indicators throughout this report because its organization as a single statewide district makes district-level data unavailable for rural communities.

Colorado, California, Alaska, Oregon, Maine, Kansas, New Mexico, Missouri, Washington, Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Texas). States with few or no small rural districts are located primarily in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic—regions that are characterized by consolidated county-wide districts. West Virginia, a state where over half of the schools are in rural communities, does not have a single small rural school district thanks to a decades long state effort to consolidate local schools in countywide rural districts.

■ **Percent rural students** is a measure of the relative size of the rural student population, and is calculated as the number of public school students enrolled in rural districts, whether they attend rural schools or not, divided by the total number of public school students in the state. It excludes students attending rural schools that are not located in districts that NCEES designates as rural. The higher the percentage of rural students, the higher the state ranks on the Importance Gauge.

Just over 20% of all public school students were enrolled in districts classified as rural. In only three states were over half the students enrolled in rural districts—Mississippi (54.7%), Vermont (54.6%) and Maine (52.7%). In thirteen other states, over one-third of all students were in rural school districts (in descending order, North Carolina, South Dakota, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, North Dakota, Kentucky, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, and Montana). These states are concentrated in five regions: Northern New England, the Mid-South Delta, the Great Plains, the Southeast, and Central Appalachia. States with the lowest proportional rural enrollments are primarily urban states on the East Coast and West Coast and in arid or mountainous Western states where the population resides mostly in cities and rural areas are very sparsely populated.

■ **Number of rural students** is an absolute—as opposed to relative—measure of the size of the rural student population. The figure given for each state represents the total number of students enrolled in public school districts designated as rural by NCEES. The higher the enrollment number, the higher the state ranks on the Importance Gauge.

More than half of all rural students in the U.S. attend school in just 11 states, including some of the nation's most populous and urban states (in order of rural enrollment size, Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Alabama). The four states with the largest rural enrollments—Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and Ohio—serve one-fourth of all rural students in the U.S. North Carolina

alone has more rural students than the Northern and Southern Great Plains states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma—combined.

■ **Percentage of state education funds going to rural schools** represents the proportion of state PK-12 funding that goes to school districts designated by NCEES as rural. State funding as defined here includes all state-derived revenues that are used for the day-to-day operations of schools (thus, capital construction, debt service, and other long-term outlays are excluded). The higher the percentage of state funds going to rural education, the higher the state ranks on the Importance Gauge.

It's no surprise that states ranking high on percent rural schools and percent rural students also rank high on this indicator. In general, most states provide a slightly disproportional amount of funding per pupil to rural districts (based on comparing the percentage of each state's funding that goes to rural districts with the percentage of the state's students that are enrolled in rural districts). This is probably because many state formulas take into account the higher fixed costs per pupil of small districts, and because in the most rural states, rural poverty levels are high, another factor considered in many state funding formulas. This relationship between percent rural students and percent of state funding deteriorates in most states where the percentage of rural students is very low, however. That may be because rural poverty is relatively low in many of these states, and state funding formulas that take poverty into account will deliver less to rural districts for that reason. And this relationship is not universal among states with high percentages of rural students. In Mississippi, for example, 54.7% of students attend a rural school district but only 47.2% of state funding goes to these districts. And only New Mexico and Louisiana have higher rates of rural student poverty than Mississippi.

Importance Gauge Rankings

To gauge the importance of rural education to the overall educational system in each state, we average each state's ranking on the individual indicators, giving equal weight to each (see Table 2).

The top quartile in the Importance Gauge is shared by states in the Prairie/Plains (South Dakota, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Iowa), the South (North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi), Northern New England (Maine and Vermont), Central Appalachia (Kentucky and Tennessee), and the Pacific Northwest (Alaska).

The seven Northern New England and Prairie/Plains states hold six of the top seven positions because they score gen-

Table 2. Importance Gauge Cumulative Rankings

How important is it to the overall public education system of the state to address the particular needs of schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state’s score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural education issues in their state.

| Crucial | | Very Important | | Important | | Notable | |
|---------|------|----------------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| VT | 10.0 | AR | 18.0 | TX | 24.6 | OR | 32.0 |
| ME | 10.4 | NE | 18.6 | WY | 25.6 | WA | 32.0 |
| SD | 10.8 | KS | 19.0 | WI | 26.2 | CA | 32.6 |
| MT | 13.0 | NH | 19.0 | IN | 26.4 | FL | 34.0 |
| NC | 13.4 | SC | 19.2 | NM | 27.4 | NJ | 37.8 |
| ND | 13.4 | MO | 19.6 | AZ | 27.6 | CT | 38.2 |
| OK | 13.8 | GA | 20.2 | CO | 27.6 | DE | 40.4 |
| MS | 14.0 | WV | 21.2 | MI | 27.8 | MD | 40.4 |
| AL | 17.0 | ID | 22.6 | IL | 29.4 | NV | 40.4 |
| AK | 17.2 | VA | 23.0 | PA | 29.4 | UT | 41.2 |
| KY | 17.2 | OH | 23.6 | NY | 30.4 | MA | 42.4 |
| IA | 17.6 | MN | 24.2 | LA | 31.0 | RI | 43.2 |
| TN | 17.6 | | | | | HI | N/A |

Note: numbers are rounded

erally very high on all the indicators except the “number of rural students,” on which none of them ranks higher than 19th (OK) and four rank in the bottom quartile.

The five southern states (including the Central Appalachian states of Kentucky and Tennessee) are clustered toward the bottom of the quartile because all rank 35th or lower in the percentage of small rural districts. Mississippi ranks highest on that indicator among this group with only 5.7% of its rural districts below the national median in enrollment. Bigger rural schools and districts are the general rule in these states, primarily as a result of school and district consolidation.

Over half of all rural students (5.5 mil. or 57%) are in states ranked in the top quartile for the “number of rural students” indicator. But only three of those states (North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama) are among the top quartile in the overall Importance Gauge, and only two more (South Carolina and Georgia) are in the second quartile. Eight of the 13 states with the largest rural student populations rank below the median on the overall Importance Gauge.

These eight states—California, Texas, Florida, Virginia, and four contiguous Mid-East States, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—are large states where the heavy

urban population dwarfs even a relatively large rural population.

They rank low on the Importance Gauge despite ranking high on “number of rural students” indicator simply because they rank low on almost every other indicator in the gauge. For example, they average a ranking of 33rd on the “percentage of rural students” indicator, and none of them ranks higher than 18th on that indicator (Virginia).

These eight states provide schooling to 3.5 million rural students (36%). By contrast, the 13 states in the top quartile of the Importance gauge serve 2.6 million (27%).

Student and Family Diversity Gauge

Student and Family Diversity Gauge Indicators

Each *Why Rural Matters* edition has examined the role of student diversity in rural education. This is because of the well-settled conclusion that socio-economic factors affect both student and school academic achievement. The “achievement gaps” between students based on economic status, race and ethnicity, language, intellectual capacity measured in a variety of ways, and transience (i.e., residential stability) are widely discussed. We set aside for now the issue of whether we are measuring achievement that matters when we measure these gaps. In the Student and Family Diversity Gauge, we are comparing rural student and family characteristics across the 50 states on terms that policy makers have often defined as relevant to state and national education goals. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Student and Family Diversity Gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.

Percentage of rural minority students represents the number of rural minority students (per NCES categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic) divided by the total number of rural students. The higher the percentage of rural minority students, the higher the ranking on the student and family diversity gauge.

This indicator tells us about the relative size of the rural minority student population in each state. Educational research and state and federal accountability system have disaggregated data to disclose sizable differences in the academic performance of minority students as compared to white students, but policies to address gaps are often inadequate or non-existent. Identifying the states with the largest (relative) rural minority student populations calls attention to the states with the greatest need for policy action to support the closing of achievement gaps based on race/ethnicity.

Nationally, 25.8 percent of rural students are children of color. But the range among states is very large, from 3.2 percent in Rhode Island to 82.6% in New Mexico. Eighty percent of rural students of color attend school in the 18 states with rural minority student rates above the national average.

Rural minority students are becoming more concentrated in certain states. In four states (New Mexico, Alaska, Arizona, and California) white students make up less than 50% of the rural student population and students of color collectively make up more than 50%. More than one in three rural students is a student of color in nine other states (in descending order, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Delaware). In WRM 2009, there were eight states with at least one-third but less than half of their students in rural districts. Georgia has been added to that list of states. Over 69% of all rural minority students in the U.S. attend school in these 13 states that either are majority-minority or have a rural minority student rate of over one-third. In WRM 2009, 12 states had that high a concentration of rural minority students and they constituted only 58% of all rural minority students.

States vary considerably with regard to the racial and ethnic composition of their rural minority student populations. One of the states with the largest percentages of rural minority students (Alaska) has a rural population predominantly comprised of Alaska Natives. Others like New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma, rank high because of combinations of Hispanic and American Indian populations. In the South, states rank high primarily on the basis of their sizable African-American populations (Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Florida). Perhaps the nation's most ethnically diverse state, California's rural minority student population is predominantly Hispanic.

■ **Percentage of rural ELL students** represents the number of rural students who qualify for English Language Learner (ELL) services, expressed as a percentage of all rural students in the state. The higher the percentage of rural ELL students, the higher the state ranks on the student and family diversity gauge.

Nationally, 3.7 percent of rural students are English Language Learners, but the range is from zero percent in Vermont to 18.1 percent in California. Eighteen states have above the national average ELL rate. States ranking high on this indicator have large Hispanic and/or American Indian/Alaskan Native populations living in rural areas (in order, California, Alaska, Texas, and Arizona). Data is missing for several states, including New Mexico which his-

torically leads in this indicator by a wide margin over all other states. Most of the high ranking states are in the West, with only Florida and North Carolina among the top quartile located east of the Mississippi River.

■ **Percentage of rural IEP students** represents the percentage of rural students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) indicating that they qualify for special education services. The higher the percentage of IEP students, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge.

Students with Individualized Education Plans require additional services only partly supported by supplemental federal funds, placing additional responsibilities on state and local funds. It is generally believed that higher poverty rates correlate to a higher incidence of IEPs, but these state rankings do not support that hypothesis. Among the top quartile (in this case, 14 states because three tie for 12th place) in rural IEP rates, only two (KY and WV) rank in the top quartile in rural student poverty rates while six rank in the bottom poverty quartile (Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island).

■ **Percentage of rural student poverty** is the percentage of students who qualify for federally-funded free or reduced priced meal programs. The higher the rate of rural students eligible for subsidized meals, the higher the ranking on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge.

Subsidized meal rates are the most commonly used measure of student poverty in educational research. It is a measure with recognized limitations however—participation rates are affected by factors that are unrelated to poverty, including student and families' willingness to apply and schools' efforts to secure applications. Participation rates are generally lower in the upper grade levels than the rates in lower grade levels predict. It is nevertheless the most widely accepted approach to describing economic stress among student populations.

Forty-one percent of rural students nationwide participate in federally subsidized meal program, ranging from 7.2 percent in Connecticut to 80 percent in New Mexico. More than half of all rural students face poverty in ten states: in descending order, New Mexico (80%), Louisiana (69%), Mississippi (63%), Arkansas (58%), Oklahoma (57%), Kentucky (57%), South Carolina (57%), West Virginia (53%), Alabama (52%) and Georgia (52%). In WRM 2009 we reported the first nine of these ten as having rural poverty rates above 50% (and in almost the same order). Georgia is an addition. These are essentially contiguous southern and southwestern states (the addition of Tennessee at 47% student poverty would make them a solid block). The lowest

Table 3. Student and Family Diversity Gauge Rankings

How important is it to the overall public education system of the state to address the particular needs of schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address diversity issues in rural communities in their state.

| Urgent | | Critical | | Serious | | Fair | |
|--------|------|----------|------|---------|------|------|------|
| FL | 8.2 | LA | 18.0 | VA | 23.8 | NY | 30.4 |
| OK | 8.3 | MT | 18.0 | KS | 24.2 | NJ | 32.0 |
| NM | 11.0 | SD | 19.2 | ND | 26.0 | PA | 32.0 |
| AZ | 11.8 | CO | 19.5 | NE | 26.0 | RI | 33.7 |
| AK | 12.0 | ID | 20.4 | WV | 26.2 | WI | 34.0 |
| NV | 13.0 | AR | 20.6 | TN | 26.4 | OH | 34.4 |
| CA | 13.8 | KY | 20.8 | IN | 26.6 | MA | 35.8 |
| SC | 14.8 | NC | 20.8 | MI | 27.8 | MD | 36.0 |
| OR | 16.0 | DE | 21.0 | IL | 28.0 | IA | 36.4 |
| TX | 16.2 | UT | 21.8 | MO | 28.2 | NJ | 37.8 |
| AL | 17.0 | WY | 22.0 | ME | 28.3 | CT | 42.0 |
| GA | 17.2 | WA | 22.8 | MN | 30.2 | VT | 43.8 |
| MS | 17.5 | | | | | HI | N/A |

Note: Numbers are rounded

rural poverty rates are in predominantly urban Northeastern states and some Midwestern states.

■ **Percentage of rural student mobility** represents the percentage of households with school-age children who changed residences within the previous 12 months, per U.S. Census figures. Mobility is a measure of economic stress that disrupts consistency in teaching and learning and has been associated with lower academic achievement in the research literature. The higher the mobility rate, the higher the state ranks on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge.

Nationally, one in eight rural students has changed residence in the past 12 months, from a low of 5.5 percent in Connecticut to a high of 21.8 percent in Nevada. Western states rank highest on this indicator—Nevada, Arizona and Alaska lead. Eleven of the top 13 states are west of the Mississippi River. The Eastern states with the highest rural mobility rates are Florida (16.4) and Georgia (15.7%). States with the lowest mobility/most stable rural households are located in the Northeast, including all of New England and Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland in the Mid-Atlantic. Among the lowest quartile, only North

Dakota (9.0%) and Wyoming (8.8%) are west of the Mississippi, and Minnesota (8.7%) is bisected by it

Ten of the 13 states in the top quartile on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge lie entirely south of the 37th parallel and the other three (California, Oregon, and Alaska) are on the Pacific Coast. Among the indicators, “percent rural minority students” carries the most weight, with nine of the 13 top quartile states for the gauge also scoring in the top quartile on that indicator. But poverty and mobility were also heavy contributors with eight of 13 in the top quartile also in the top quartile on those indicators. By contrast, only two of the states in the top quartile also place in the top quartile in terms of the percentage of rural students who receive special education services. In fact, another five of the states in the gauge top quartile are in the bottom quartile for the special education indicator.

We ran correlation statistics among these five indicators and found that special education rates were negatively correlated to all the other indicators (ranging from $r = -0.24$ for poverty to $r = -0.55$ for ELL). All other correlations between indicators on this gauge were positive and generally above $r = 0.5$ (except the correlation between poverty and ELL, which was $r = 0.23$). We suspect that the special education rates reflect the willingness and capacity to deliver the services more than the incidence of need for the service.

Educational Policy Context Gauge

Educational Policy Context Gauge Indicators

For this gauge, we use indicators that describe the characteristics of the public schooling system that are the result of policy decisions. And we focus on policy decisions that are highlighted in educational research as being closely related to student achievement and other measures of student well-being. Illustrating the variations in state policy contexts suggests—in relative terms—the extent to which current policies are helping or hindering rural schools and students. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Educational Policy Context Gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data (note: Hawaii is excluded from this gauge because its organization as a statewide district makes analysis impossible). On each indicator, the higher the ranking (closer to #1), the greater the concern that policy is not optimal for rural education.

■ **Rural instructional expenditures per pupil** represents the state's total current expenditures for instruction in rural public school districts divided by the total number of students enrolled in those same districts. The lower the rural per pupil expenditures, the higher the state

ranks on the Educational Policy Context Gauge and the greater the concern about rural education policy.

This indicator allows us to make comparisons among states with regard the amount of money, per pupil, that goes toward teaching and learning in rural schools.

The national average of \$5,657 per pupil is much closer to the low end of the range (\$4,169 in Idaho) than to the high end (\$10,300 in Alaska and \$10,214 in New York).² Joining Idaho are 13 other states that spend less than half of the amount Alaska or New York spends per pupil for instruction in its rural school districts (Arizona, Utah, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Mississippi, Indiana, Colorado, Illinois, Arkansas, Florida, Ohio, Missouri, and North Carolina). Twelve of these 14 lowest spending states are below the national average in Total Taxable Resources Per Capita (TTRPC), a measure of state fiscal capacity annually estimated by the U.S. Treasury Department for use in various federal funding formulas. Only Colorado and Illinois among these states are above the national average in TTRPC.

The highest spending states are either states with very small rural districts (Vermont, Wyoming, Alaska, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Maine), or Northeastern urban states with a relatively small rural education sector (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, and Delaware). Ten of these twelve are well above the national average TTRPC. Only Vermont and Maine are below the TTRPC national average.

■ **Ratio of instructional expenditures to transportation expenditures** is a measure of how many dollars are spent on teaching and learning for every dollar spent on transporting pupils. The lower the ratio, the more money that is being channeled toward transportation and away from instruction, and the higher the ranking on this indicator.

Variations in pupil transportation costs are affected by unavoidable issues related to geography and terrain, but also result from policies and practices related to the size and location of schools and school districts, personnel decisions, and the permissible length of bus rides for students. This indicator is an important factor in the educational policy context because extraordinary transportation costs are a burden that shifts money away from programs and resources that directly impact student learning.

2 This indicator is not adjusted for geographic cost, which in the case of Alaska is significant. However, the next highest spending state is New York, with only slightly less per pupil expenditure on instruction and a rural cost of living that is not dramatically different from most lower-48 states.

On average, rural school districts nationally spend about \$11.06 on instruction for every dollar spent on transportation, but there is considerable variation among states. At the low end, West Virginia spends only \$6.92 on instruction for every transportation dollar spent; at the other end of the spectrum, nine states spend more than double that—Alaska (\$27.52), Vermont (\$16.62), Nebraska (\$16.59), Texas (\$16.53), North Carolina (\$16.11), Oklahoma (\$15.52), California (\$15.00), Tennessee (\$14.73), and Georgia (\$14.73). Six of these nine states are in the top half among states in percentage of rural school districts that are below the median enrollment size for all public school districts in the U.S. Five are in the top nine on that indicator (in descending order, Vermont, Nebraska, Oklahoma, California, and Alaska).

Regional patterns are not immediately apparent for this indicator. Indeed, comparisons of states with similar geographies and terrains reveal substantial differences: North Dakota spends nearly \$4 less on instruction per transportation dollar than its neighbor South Dakota; North Carolina spends well over \$6 more on instruction per transportation dollar than its neighbor Virginia. Nor is the relationship between spending on instruction and transportation a function of the overall per pupil spending on instruction. The correlation between these two indicators is a relatively weak 0.22. The most likely factor influencing the ratio of instructional spending to transportation spending is school (not necessarily district) size. A small catchment area means lower transportation spending, even in geographically large districts. West Virginia has only countywide districts, many serving isolated mountain communities. The state pressed for closure of many of the schools in these districts and urged consolidation into single countywide high schools. Transporting students dispersed across many isolated communities to a single school has doubtless been a factor in having the nation's lowest ratio of instruction to transportation spending per pupil.

By contrast, many of the states with the highest ratio of instruction to transportation spending are states with very small schools in cluster settlements where smallness is either necessary or preferred. Among the top quartile on this indicator are six states that rank in the top quartile on the percentage of rural schools that are below the national median enrollment size, or in the bottom quartile on the median organization scale indicator, or both (Colorado, Kansas, California, Nebraska, Vermont, and Alaska). Many small schools in geographically small districts or in sparsely populated large districts where most of the population is concentrated in clustered small towns keep transportation spending from eroding classroom spending.

■ **Median organization scale** is a measure that captures the combined effects of school and district size. We compute the organizational scale for each rural school by multiplying school enrollment by district enrollment. For simplification in reporting, we then divide the result by 100. The figure reported for each state represents the median of organizational scale figures for every rural school in the state. The larger the organizational scale, the higher the state scores (the greater the level of concern) on the Policy Context Gauge.

School and district size exert influence over the schooling process both individually and in combination with one another. Specifically, larger size has been linked with undesirable schooling outcomes, particularly among impoverished and minority students. By including this indicator, we intend to provide a relative measure of the scale of operations for rural education in each state.

The range on this indicator is dramatically wide: Florida, the highest ranking state, has a median organizational scale that is more than 5,000 times larger than the lowest ranking state, Montana. Large organizational scale is characteristic of the South; 11 of the top 14 states on this indicator are in the Southeast and two others in the Mid-Atlantic. Many are states where countywide districts and regional high schools are the norm. Among the top quartile on this indicator, only Nevada is west of the Mississippi River. The lowest ranking states are mostly in the Great Plains and the West, where small independent districts prevail.

■ **Ratio of state revenue to local revenue** in rural districts is a measure of dependence on local fiscal capacity and an indirect measure of the extent to which state revenue is a significant factor in equalizing revenue per pupil across communities of varying levels of wealth and poverty. A low ratio means a relatively small amount of state aid and an increased likelihood of inequitable funding. The lower the ratio, the higher the state scores on the indicator.

This indicator needs to be read with a great deal of caution because it does not take into account whether either state or local revenue is adequate to support schools. A high ratio of state to local revenue may mean the funding system is equitable only in that it provides inadequate funding levels everywhere. A low ratio is a clearer signal that the school funding system relies on local fiscal capacity and whether minimally adequate or not, is very likely inequitable. The reader should also recall that these data relate only to the proportion of revenue from state versus local sources in the rural districts of a state. Including the non-rural districts might alter the numbers considerably, in part because the industrial and commercial property tax base per pupil is usually lower in rural areas, and because much of the agri-

cultural or forest land values in rural areas are withheld from the school tax base by various forms of preferential assessment

The national average ratio of state to local revenue in rural school districts is 1.31, meaning state government supplies \$1.31 in funding to rural districts for every \$1.00 they generate from local tax revenues. The low is Rhode Island, where rural districts receive only \$0.31 for every dollar of local revenue they produce. There are only a few rural districts in Rhode Island, however, and they are mostly high wealth districts. The second lowest state/local revenue ratio is Nebraska, which at 0.45 is the state with a large rural education sector that gets the lowest level of state aid relative to local tax revenue. The state where rural schools get the most state aid relative to local tax revenue is New Mexico with a ratio of 5.98.

The highest ranking states on this indicator (meaning the lowest level of state aid relative to local revenue) fall into two distinct groups: Northeastern states with relatively low levels of rural poverty and high levels of rural property valuation (Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Massachusetts); and Midwestern/Great Plains states with low to moderate levels of rural poverty and a largely agricultural property tax base in rural areas (Nebraska, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Iowa, and Colorado). The first group includes many states that spend relatively high levels per pupil in their rural schools (all five are among the top nine in rural instructional expenditure per pupil) while five of the seven in the second group are relatively low spenders in their rural schools (they rank in the bottom half in rural instructional expenditure per pupil). Pennsylvania is the only state among the top quartile on this indicator that does not clearly fit in either of these two groups.

The lowest ranking states (the states in which rural schools get relatively high levels of state revenue compared to local revenue) are more difficult to categorize. Seven of the leading 13 are in Appalachia, the South or Southwest some with prominent countywide rural districts (Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, and West Virginia) and others with small independent rural districts (Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico). Eight of the 13 (including all seven of those in the South, Southwest and Appalachia) rank among the 25 states with lowest levels of salary expenditure per instructional FTE (see below) and all are below average fiscal capacity states.

■ **Salary expenditures per instructional FTE** in rural districts is the total dollar amount spent on instructional salaries divided by the total number of instructional staff members, and is used here as a proxy for teacher salaries.

The lower the rural salary expenditure per FTE (or full-time equivalent, a measure that accounts for staff who only work part-time or who are assigned to more than one school), the higher the state's ranking on the Policy Context Gauge and the more urgent the concern for the condition of rural education.

In many states, rural school districts are simply at a competitive disadvantage in the market for teachers. There are many factors in this challenge, but low teacher salaries is certainly among them.

Nationally, the average salary expenditure per instructional FTE in rural districts is \$56,159, ranging from \$40,675 in North Dakota to \$85,842 in New Jersey.

States with the lowest rural salary expenditures according to this indicator are primarily in the Southeast and the Midwest/Great Plains (in order from lowest salary: North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Nebraska, Montana, Alabama, Idaho, Kansas, and Florida). Seven of these rank in the top quartile on the Importance Gauge. All but Nebraska and South Dakota are below the national average in state fiscal capacity per capita.

States with the highest rural salary expenditures are located primarily in the Northeast, the West, and the Mid-Atlantic (in ascending order from lowest salary in the group: Nevada, Delaware, Washington, Wyoming, Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, California, Maryland, New York, Alaska, Connecticut, and New Jersey). Nine of these states are among the 11 states with the lowest percentage of students attending rural districts and in the bottom quartile on the Importance gauge. Only Virginia and Alaska rank in the upper half among states in percentage of students attending rural school districts. Only Wyoming, Virginia, New York and Alaska are not in the bottom quartile on the Importance Gauge. All of these states are above the national average in state fiscal capacity per capita.

Rural teachers seem to be paid better in states where they represent a small portion of a largely urban teaching force, where there is relatively high fiscal capacity.

The indicators that contribute most to the "crucial" ranking of the states in the top quartile are "rural instructional expenditures per pupil" (8 of 13 are in the top quartile on this indicator); "ratio of instructional to transportation expenditure per pupil" (8 of 13); and state expenditures per instructional FTE (6 of 13). The 13 "Crucial" states vary most in their ranking on the median organizational scale indicator, ranging from #1 Florida to #47 North Dakota with an average ranking of 21st.

Table 4. Educational Policy Context Gauge Rankings

Given the educational policy context in each state, how crucial is it that policymakers take steps to address the specific needs of schools serving rural communities. These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural educational issues within that state.

| Crucial | | Very Important | | Important | | Notable | |
|---------|------|----------------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| FL | 12.6 | CO | 20.6 | RI | 24.8 | NH | 29.6 |
| IN | 15.4 | UT | 21.0 | IA | 25.2 | MA | 30.4 |
| AZ | 15.8 | KY | 21.2 | NJ | 25.4 | MN | 30.6 |
| IL | 16.0 | NV | 21.8 | GA | 26.0 | NY | 30.8 |
| LA | 17.0 | ID | 22.0 | DE | 26.4 | KS | 31.4 |
| ND | 17.0 | SD | 22.2 | ME | 26.6 | CA | 31.8 |
| MS | 17.6 | VA | 22.8 | OK | 26.6 | WA | 32.2 |
| AL | 18.4 | SC | 23.4 | OR | 26.6 | NM | 32.4 |
| MO | 18.6 | MD | 23.6 | NE | 27.8 | WY | 34.6 |
| OH | 19.0 | AR | 24.4 | WI | 28.6 | VT | 42.4 |
| TN | 19.4 | NC | 24.4 | CT | 29.2 | AK | 47.2 |
| WV | 19.6 | TX | 24.6 | MI | 29.2 | HI | N/A |
| PA | 19.8 | | | MT | 29.2 | | |

Note: Numbers are rounded

Five states in the top quartile are in the South or Southwest (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi) and five are in the Prairie/Plains Midwest (Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, North Dakota and Ohio). The other three are Appalachian (Tennessee, West Virginia, and at least partially, Pennsylvania).

Six states in the top quartile for the gauge rank 30th or lower on the "state dollars per local dollars" indicator, in descending order, Louisiana, Arizona, Mississippi, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Alabama. These are states where school funding systems depend relatively more on state than local sources of revenue. In these states, state revenue amounts to between \$1.73 (in Louisiana) to \$2.51 (in Alabama) for every dollar of local revenue.

These low rankings on the state aid indicator are overcome by high rankings on most of the other indicators in this gauge. All six rank 15th or higher on the organizational scale indicator, reflecting the tendency of these states to favor large schools and large districts. All of them but Louisiana and West Virginia rank 17th or higher on instructional expenditures; all but Tennessee and Mississippi rank 15th or higher on the ratio of instructional to transportation spending; and all are in the top half on salary expenditure

per FTE instructional staff. In these states, centralized funding systems have produced large schools in large districts with transportation costs eating up instructional resources, resulting in low teacher salaries and low instructional spending in rural schools. In some respects, these states demonstrate why some rural school advocates distrust centralized school funding systems. They may produce a more equitable distribution of a less adequate level of funding.

All five of the Prairie/Plains states in the “Crucial” quartile rank 21st or higher on the state/local revenue indicator, and 18th or lower on the organizational scale indicator—smaller schools and smaller independent districts in states whose funding systems depend heavily on local revenue. All five are in the top quartile with low instructional expenditures per pupil, but only Missouri and North Dakota rank in the top quartile due to low teacher salaries. Except for North Dakota, these are big states where urban and suburban competition for teachers is intense and where rural districts must depend on local tax dollars to attract teachers. They may cut corners on other instructional expenditures.

It should be noted that all of the top quartile except Illinois and North Dakota are below the national average in total taxable resources per capita. These are predominantly low fiscal capacity states.

At the bottom of this gauge are five Northeastern states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont), three Great Plains states (Montana, Wyoming, and Kansas), three Far West states (Alaska, California, and Washington), two Midwestern states (Michigan and Minnesota) and one Southwestern state (New Mexico).³ Their low ranking collectively is most attributable to their high instructional expenditure per pupil. Seven of the 14 are in the bottom quartile on that indicator, and another four are in the third quartile. But 11 of the 13 are also in the bottom half on the organizational scale indicator (and Massachusetts at 21st and Michigan at 24th are not far away from the bottom half). Nine of the 14 have above average statewide fiscal capacity (Kansas, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, and Vermont do not). In general, these are states with relatively small schools and districts, high instructional expenditures, and relatively strong fiscal capacity.

3 There are 14 listed in the bottom quartile because of a three-way tie between Connecticut, Michigan, and Montana for 36-38th place.

4 See www.urban.org/publications/410934.html for a detailed description of the methodology.

5 As well as usual, Hawaii, which we are unable to compute on many indicators because it operates as a single statewide district

Educational Outcomes Gauge

Educational Outcomes Gauge Indicators

This gauge includes indicators describing student academic achievement as measured by national assessments and by schools’ success in graduating high school students. In this section, we define each of the indicators in the Educational Outcomes Gauge and summarize state and regional patterns observed in the data.

- **Rural high school graduation rate** is measured using the Cumulative Promotion Index model developed by Christopher Swanson of the Urban Institute.⁴ The lower the rural graduation rate, the higher the state ranks on the Educational Outcomes Gauge and the more serious the concern for the policy environment

There is considerable debate among researchers about the best approach to computing graduation rates, and none of the many approaches are considered definitive. It is generally believed that state self-measures of the graduation rate are inflated. The Swanson model accounts for year-to-year retention en route to graduation, as opposed to simply dividing the number of graduates in a given year by a denominator serving as the presumed number of potential graduates.

This year, we were unable to compute results for Maine, Nevada, and South Carolina⁵. This is a significant limitation because South Carolina has often appeared at the top of this indicator with the lowest rural high school graduation rate.

On average nationwide, the rural high school graduation rate is 77.5 percent. But as in past reports in this series, the range on this indicator is wide—from 60% in Louisiana to over 96% in New Jersey (or 95% in more rural South Dakota). The most urgent quartile on this indicator includes mostly states from the Southeast, Southwest and Appalachia. Two Intermountain states (Colorado and Utah) as well as Alaska also break the top 13. Among these, only Alabama, Alaska, and New Mexico rank in the top quartile in the Importance Gauge, but seven rank in the top quartile on the Student Diversity Gauge.

It should be noted that three states for which we cannot calculate a score on this indicator—Hawaii, Nevada, and South Carolina—score high enough on all other indicators in this gauge to rank in the top quartile on the gauge. It is likely that these states also have low graduation rates. States with the highest rural graduation rates are primarily those with very low levels of student and family diversity, especially in the Prairie/Plains. The exception is California

which ranks seventh in terms of rural student and family diversity and has a 95% rural graduation rate.

■ **Rural NAEP Scores.** We turn now to student achievement outcomes as measured by average rural district reading and math scores at the 4th and 8th grade level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The lower the average score on each of these four indicators, the higher the ranking (the greater the concern) on the Educational Outcomes Gauge. The NAEP is administered and compiled by the U.S. Department of Education and offers assessment data for state-by-state comparisons, including comparisons of rural schools as a subgroup within states.

The results from indicator-to-indicator vary so little on these four indicators that we discuss them here as a unit

Eight states rank in the top quartile in all four indicators: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and West Virginia. California and South Carolina rank in the top quartile on three of the four indicators and narrowly miss on the fourth. Oklahoma ranks in the top on three and ranks 18th on the fourth. Georgia ranks in the top quartile on two indicators and no better than 16th on the other two. Arkansas ranks in the top quartile on two indicators and no better than 19th on the other two. Rural students in these thirteen states were consistently poor performers on NAEP at both grade levels and in both subject areas.

Nine of these states are in the top quartile on the Student Diversity Gauge, two more are in the second quartile on that gauge, and Hawaii would be in the top quartile if it were not organized as a single state district and therefore could not be ranked on that indicator.

There is a similar homogeneity in the states whose rural students score highest on NAEP assessments. Seven Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states are in the bottom quartile (i.e., highest scores, least cause for concern) on all four indicators: Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. These are mostly states scoring low on the Rural Importance Gauge and Very low on the Rural Student Diversity Gauge. Colorado and Ohio score in the bottom quartile on three of the four indicators; Kansas, Minnesota and New York on two; and Wisconsin on one.

Dropping the state test scores as indicators in this gauge and relying instead on all NAEP scores bumped Georgia, Arkansas, and Nevada into the top quartile from the second, third, and fourth quartiles respectively. Also, using NAEP only allowed us to score Hawaii because NAEP

Table 5. Educational Outcomes Gauge Rankings

Given the educational outcomes in each state, how urgent is it that policymakers take steps to address the specific needs of schools serving rural communities? These rankings represent the average of each state's score on five indicators. The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the more important it is for policymakers to address rural educational issues within that state.

| Urgent | | Critical | | Serious | | Fair | |
|--------|------|----------|------|---------|------|------|------|
| MS | 3.4 | CA | 17.8 | MI | 25.6 | CO | 34.6 |
| NM | 3.8 | TN | 17.8 | ME | 28.3 | WI | 34.6 |
| AK | 4.4 | OR | 18.0 | DE | 28.4 | NY | 35.6 |
| HI | 4.8 | ID | 19.0 | UT | 28.6 | OH | 36.4 |
| LA | 5.4 | NC | 19.2 | MT | 29.6 | KA | 37.8 |
| WV | 5.6 | VA | 20.2 | RI | 30.2 | MN | 38.8 |
| AL | 6.4 | KY | 20.4 | SD | 31.4 | PA | 40.6 |
| AZ | 6.4 | WA | 21.0 | IN | 32.2 | VT | 41.2 |
| SC | 10.3 | TX | 22.2 | IA | 32.8 | MD | 42.2 |
| GA | 11.4 | FL | 22.8 | ND | 33.2 | NH | 42.4 |
| AR | 14.6 | WY | 24.6 | NE | 33.4 | M | 44.8 |
| OK | 16.0 | MO | 24.8 | IL | 33.8 | NJ | 47.0 |
| NV | 17.3 | | | | | CT | 47.2 |

Note: Numbers are rounded

scores are at the school level (Hawaii operates as a single statewide district). It also entered the top quartile.

Tennessee, Kentucky and Washington moved from the top to the second quartile. New York dropped all the way from the top to the fourth quartile, a leap that is accounted for by changing the indicators to eliminate state performance indicators, which are more rigorous in New York than in most states. The inclusion of state test scores in our previous report punished New York (and Washington) Nine of the 13 states ranking in the top quartile on the Outcomes Gauge also rank in the top quartile on the Student and Family Diversity Gauge. Five rank in the top quartile on the Policy Gauge. Only four rank in the top quartile on the Importance Gauge. Alabama and Mississippi scored in the top quartile on each of these other three gauges, while Alaska and Oklahoma scored in the top quartile on the Diversity and Importance gauges and Arizona was in the top quartile on the Diversity and Policy gauges.

It appears that outcomes for rural students are most affected by the level of socio-economic diversity, and that both policy and the relative importance of rural education in the state are less related to outcomes.

Longitudinal Gauge

This gauge measures the extent to which states' educational systems are becoming more (or less) rural in character and whether the state's rural districts are more or (less) stressed by socio-economic challenges in school year 2008-2009 than they were in school year 1999-2000.

Longitudinal Gauge Indicators

■ **Change in number of rural students (1999-2000 through 2008-2009).** This indicator measures the change in the number of students in rural school districts in the state. The larger the increase, the higher the ranking on this indicator because rural education is becoming a larger absolute part of the state's education system.

There was a net national gain in rural student enrollment from school year 1999-2000 through 2008-2009 of over 1.7 million students, about 70 percent of total public school enrollment increase nationally for that period. In all, 31 states increased rural enrollment a combined total of nearly 2.2 million while 18 states had combined losses of nearly 450,000 rural students. The top quartile states on this indicator had a combined increase of over 1.8 million, with Texas leading with a gain of over 369,000. The top quartile states were mostly in the South, Southwest, and Appalachia (only California and Illinois were not). The top five states on this indicator (in this order: Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arizona) had rural student enrollment gains of over 1.1 million, more than half the total gain of all gaining states.

Ten of the 18 states that lost rural enrollment are in New England (all six states) and the Northern Plains (North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana), although the largest net rural enrollment decline was in Michigan (declining nearly 78,000). Interestingly, five of the top six states on the Importance Gauge lost enrollment (in descending order of losses: Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Vermont, and South Dakota) and seven of the 13 ranked in the bottom quartile on the Importance Gauge also lost enrollment (in descending order of losses: Massachusetts, Washington, Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island and Utah). The five high-importance states losing enrollment each lost fewer than 15,100 rural students. Four of the seven low-importance states were among the top six losing enrollment, each losing over 43,800 students.

■ **Percent change in rural enrollment (1999-2000 through 2008-2009).** This indicator measures the rate at which rural enrollment in the state is changing. The higher the rate, the higher the ranking on this indicator because rural education is growing more rapidly.

Nationwide, rural school district enrollment grew by over 22 percent from 1999-2000 through 2008-2009. This compares with a 1.7% enrollment increase among all non-rural districts.

In eight states, rural enrollment more than doubled. For the most part, sharp percentage increases were experienced in states that have a high absolute number of rural students.

Eighteen states experienced a declining rural enrollment during this time period, ranging from a high of minus 64.3% in Massachusetts to a low of minus 1.5% in Utah. Among the 13 with the sharpest rates of decline in rural enrollment, 12 were also among the top losers in number of rural students (only Rhode Island among the top percentage losers was not among the top number losers, for the obvious reason that there are very few rural students in Rhode Island. About half of these are small-population, sparsely settled states that rank relatively high in percentage but low in number of rural students in 2008-09.

Ten states appear among the top quartile in both the number and percentage rural enrollment growth indicators (Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. All of these states are in the Southeast or Southwest except California.

■ **Change in rural percent Hispanic enrollment (1999-2000 through 2008-2009).** This indicator measures the rate at which Hispanic enrollment in rural districts is changing. The higher the rate the higher the ranking on the indicator because rural education is becoming more diverse and rural districts must respond to a wider range of socio-economic challenges.

Rural Hispanic student enrollment increased nationally by 150 percent over the time period, and by more than 200 percent in each of the top 13 states. Only Massachusetts, a state with a very low number of rural Hispanic students, experienced a decrease.

Among the top quartile on this indicator, rural Hispanic enrollment grew from a low rate of 209 percent in Maryland to a high rate of 578 percent in West Virginia. Except for Arizona, all of these states started the period with a relatively low base Hispanic enrollment in rural districts. Still, the rate of growth is impressive. In declining order, the states with the highest rate of rural Hispanic student enrollment increase between 1999-2000 and 2008-2009 are: West Virginia (578%), Mississippi (530%), South Carolina (447%), Illinois (437%), Alabama (397%), Kentucky (367%), Alaska (334%), Arizona (325%), Virginia (296%), North Carolina (293%), Arkansas (277%), Georgia (231%),

and Maryland (209%). These are primarily Southeastern and Appalachian states.

The states in the lowest quartile in the rate of rural Hispanic enrollment growth are mainly in Northern New England, the Great Plains, and the Pacific Northwest. But even in some of these states, the growth over 10 years was 26–80 percent

■ **Percent change in rural students living in poverty (1999–2000 through 2008–2009).** This indicator measures the rate at which the level of student poverty in rural districts is changing. The change is measured in percentage point gain or loss; that is, if the rural districts' student poverty rate increases from 25% to 30%, the indicator would report a five percentage point gain (not a 20% gain in percentage points, as in $[30-25]/25$). The higher the rate, the higher the ranking on the indicator because rural districts are facing greater socio-economic challenges. Poverty is measured by eligibility for federally subsidized meals.

The percentage of rural students living in poverty increased over this time period by 9.8 percentage points, from 31.2 percent to 41.0 percent. Rural districts in 42 states experienced an increase in the percentage of rural students living in poverty, from a low of 0.3 percentage points in Connecticut and Rhode Island to a high of 28.7 percentage points in Arizona (more than doubling the 1999–2000 rate). In 20 of these, the increase was at least five percentage points.

The poverty percentage point increases were largest in the Southwestern states of Arizona (28.7) and New Mexico (24.0); the Southern states of Louisiana (13.7), Georgia (11.2), and Arkansas (8.9); and the Mid-Western states of Michigan (13.2), Indiana (9.5), Ohio (9), and Missouri (8.3). Nevada (10.4), Alaska (8.9), Maine (8.2), and Oregon (7.8) round out the top quartile.

More than other indicators in this gauge, the poverty rate tends to be cyclical, and the beginning and end of the period are merely two points in time, not necessarily indicative of a continuous trend. Start and end points that are fairly close might indicate stability over time, but it is also possible that within the range of dates there were high or low extremes that are masked by similar start and end points. However, when the movement from start to end dates is very large, it likely represents a significant trend.

This fact coupled with the fact that five of those states in the top quartile of this indicator are also in the top quartile for poverty rate in 2008–09 (Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oregon) evidences a deepening of rural poverty, especially in the South and Southwest. It is particularly notable that the two sharpest increases

(Arizona at 28.7 percentage points and New Mexico at 24 percentage points) occurred over a truncated time period as the earliest data we could get for meal rates for these state was from 2002–03.

The poverty rate in rural school districts declined in only six states, from a low of minus 0.9 percentage points in North Dakota to a high of minus six percentage points in North Carolina (there were no data available for Tennessee and Hawaii). These declines were in some states with high poverty rates (Mississippi and West Virginia) as well as in states with relatively low poverty rates (all ranking between 22 and 33 on the rural student poverty indicator). But in general the declines were too small to warrant notice as a trend, although the six percentage point decline in North Carolina might offer some encouragement

■ **Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999–2000 through 2008–2009).** This indicator measures a change in the share of a state's total student enrollment that is in rural districts. The change is measured in percentage point gain or loss; that is, if the rural districts' share of a state's enrollment increases from 20% to 25%, the indicator would report a five percentage point gain (not a 25% gain in percentage points, as in $[25-20]/20$). The larger the increase in share, the higher the ranking on this indicator because the performance of rural students is becoming increasingly important to the overall performance of the state's educational system.

Rural enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment nationally increased 2.6 percentage points over the time period, increasing in 28 states overall and by more than six percentage points in 15 states. The largest gain in enrollment share was 19.7 percentage points in Tennessee; the smallest was 0.2 percentage points in Indiana. Again, leading gains in rural enrollment share are mostly in the South and Southwest (only Alaska and Minnesota among those in the top quartile are not in those regions). Six of those in the top quartile are also in the top quartile in the "percentage of rural students" indicator in the Importance Gauge, and five are also in the top quartile on the "number of rural students" indicator in the Importance gauge. Many of the states where rural students' share of enrollment is growing fastest are also states where they are high in percentage and large in number.

Rural enrollment share declined in 21 states during the period. The lowest rate of decline was minus 0.2 percentage points (Colorado) and the highest was minus six percentage points (Washington). Every New England state is losing rural enrollment share (and all but New Hampshire are in the bottom quartile). Among the five New England states in the bottom quartile are Maine and Vermont, both

in the top quartile on the percent rural students indicator, and Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, all of which are in the bottom quartile in percent rural students. Other prominent regions where rural enrollment share is dwindling are the Northern Plains (Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota), the Pacific Northwest (Oregon and Washington), and the Mid-Atlantic (New Jersey and New York). Seven of the states in the bottom quartile (losing rural enrollment share fastest) are also in the bottom quartile on the number of rural students indicator, and seven (not the same seven) are in the bottom quartile on percent rural students indicator. Ten of the 13 states where rural enrollment share is falling fastest are states where either the number or the percentage of rural students, or both, is low.

Table 6 shows the cumulative ranking on the indicators in the Longitudinal Gauge. The top quartile states are all in the South and Southwest, except for Alaska. The top quartile represents a contiguous block of states running from Virginia to Arizona, excepting only Texas, which ranks 15th, barely missing the top quartile.

Tennessee deserves special attention here. On two indicators, there is no data for Tennessee (percent change in rural Hispanic students and percentage point change in rural student poverty). Ordinarily, we would not rank a state with data for two of five indicators missing. But we made an exception here because on the other three, Tennessee ranked 4th, 2nd, and 1st.

Among the other top quartile states, Arizona and Georgia ranked in the top quartile on all five indicators, earning them a gauge ranking of 2nd and 3rd respectively. South Carolina, Alabama, Alaska, Mississippi, and North Carolina were in the top quartile on four indicators. All of them except Alaska missed the top quartile only on the percentage point change in rural student poverty indicator. Alaska missed the top quartile only on the increase in rural student enrollment indicator where it ranked 26th. Arkansas, New Mexico, and Louisiana made the top quartile on three indicators included in the Longitudinal Gauge, and Florida and Virginia ranked at the top on two indicators.

In the bottom quartile on the Longitudinal Gauge are four of six New England states (Maine ranks 37th and New Hampshire ranks 36th, missing the bottom quartile by one and two rankings respectively). Northern Plains states North Dakota and Montana are also in the bottom quartile. North Dakota and Connecticut both ranked in the bottom quartile on all five indicators in the gauge.

We should note an interpretation issue with respect to the Longitudinal Gauge. The gauge indicators that reflect growth in the number of rural students and their share of

Table 6. Rural Longitudinal Gauge Rankings

A high ranking on the Longitudinal Gauge means that rural education in a state is growing absolutely; is growing at a faster rate than other states; is growing as a share of the state's total enrollment; is experiencing increases in rural student poverty; is experiencing increases in Hispanic student enrollment; or some combination of the foregoing. Taken as a whole, a high ranking on this gauge means that rural education is becoming more important to the overall performance of the state's elementary and secondary education system, and that it presents growing socio-economic challenges.

| Crucial | | Very Important | | Important | | Notable | |
|---------|------|----------------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| TN | 1.0 | KY | 15.8 | MD | 24.6 | OR | 35.0 |
| AZ | 4.0 | TX | 15.8 | WY | 25.8 | VT | 35.0 |
| GA | 6.2 | IL | 18.6 | NV | 26.8 | UT | 35.4 |
| SC | 6.2 | OH | 18.8 | CO | 27.2 | MI | 35.8 |
| AL | 8.0 | CA | 19.4 | KS | 27.6 | NE | 36.8 |
| AK | 12.0 | MN | 20.0 | NY | 27.8 | ND | 41.0 |
| AR | 12.4 | IN | 20.6 | WI | 29.6 | NJ | 42.0 |
| NM | 13.4 | OK | 21.0 | WV | 30.0 | MT | 42.4 |
| LA | 14.2 | IA | 21.2 | SD | 30.2 | WA | 42.4 |
| MS | 14.8 | MO | 22.2 | PA | 30.8 | RI | 43.0 |
| FL | 15.0 | DE | 22.4 | NH | 31.6 | MA | 45.0 |
| NC | 15.2 | ID | 23.8 | ME | 34.0 | CT | 45.4 |
| VA | 15.6 | | | | | HI | N/A |

Note: Numbers are rounded

the state's total enrollment are ranked so that "more is better." That is, the bigger the number and the faster the growth rate, the higher the ranking, reflecting the need for policy makers to pay more attention to rural schools and students. However, this discriminates against states where economic stress in rural areas is causing declining enrollment, giving these state a lower ranking on the longitudinal gauge. Many states in the Great Plains and Northern New England exemplify this reality. The rural schools and students in these states need attention, too.

Rural Education Priority Gauge

Finally, we average the cumulative rankings on the five gauges (Importance, Student and Family Diversity, Educational Policy Context, Educational Outcomes, and Longitudinal) to create priority rankings that reflect the overall status of rural education in each state. The rankings for the Rural Education Priority Gauge are presented in Table 7.

While the states ranking in the top (termed "Leading") quartile on the Rural Education Priority Gauge have changed very little compared to our Why Rural Matters

Table 7. Rural Education Priority Gauge Rankings

Rankings here represent the combined average ranking for each state on the five gauges (Importance, Student and Family Diversity, Educational Policy Context, Educational Outcomes, and Longitudinal). The higher the average ranking (i.e., the closer to ranking number 1), the greater the need for policymakers to address rural education issues within that state.

| Leading | | Major | | Significant | | Notable | |
|---------|------|-------|------|-------------|------|---------|------|
| MS | 7.6 | NM | 17.6 | CO | 25.6 | MN | 32.8 |
| AL | 7.8 | TX | 19.2 | MT | 25.6 | PA | 32.8 |
| AZ | 9.2 | ID | 19.8 | OR | 26.2 | MI | 33.6 |
| SC | 11.6 | VA | 20.0 | ME | 26.4 | WA | 34.6 |
| LA | 13.8 | WV | 20.2 | OH | 26.8 | WI | 34.8 |
| AK | 14.4 | SD | 20.6 | IA | 28.0 | VT | 36.0 |
| OK | 14.4 | NV | 21.4 | DE | 29.4 | MD | 36.4 |
| AR | 14.6 | MO | 22.0 | WY | 29.6 | NH | 36.8 |
| GA | 14.6 | IN | 23.0 | UT | 30.6 | NY | 37.2 |
| FL | 15.2 | ND | 23.0 | NE | 30.8 | RI | 38.6 |
| NC | 15.4 | CA | 24.4 | KS | 31.4 | NJ | 40.2 |
| KY | 15.8 | IL | 24.8 | | | CT | 45.0 |
| TN | 17.0 | | | | | MA | 45.4 |
| | | | | | | HI | N/A |

Note: Numbers are rounded

2009 report, the regional patterns that have been present throughout this entire series of reports have become, if anything, even more clear.

Two states that were in the Leading quartile in 2009 dropped barely into the second (termed “Major”) quartile this year—New Mexico (from 5th to 14th) and Idaho (from 13th to 16th). They were replaced by Georgia (up from 15th to tied for 8th) and Arkansas (up from 22nd to tied for 8th). These changes, attributable in part to changes in the data for these states and in part to changes in indicators used, make the South, Southwest and Appalachia the regions with the clearest need for policymaker attention to rural education. All of the states ranked in the top quartile, except Alaska, are below the 39th parallel (a line running approximately from Washington, D.C. through Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Reno). But for Kentucky, they would all be below the 37th parallel, which tellingly does not go near any large city.

Most of the states in the Leading Quartile have been there one or more times in our previous reports. Many of them have been there in every report. No matter how we change the indicators and gauges used to measure high priority rural education needs, these states consistently surface near the top.

Moreover, nine of the 12 states in the Major quartile border states in the Leading quartile. Only Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota do not.

The regional pattern extends as well to the third quartile (termed “Significant”) and even more so to the fourth quartile (termed “Notable”). Nine of the states in the Notable Quartile are clustered in the Northeast, three are in the upper Midwest (Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin) and the other is Washington.⁶

Only the two highest ranking states on the Rural Education Priority Gauge—Mississippi and Alabama—rank in the top quartile on all five underlying gauges. Among the five gauges, the newest one, the Longitudinal Gauge, contributes most to the highest rankings on the Priority Gauge. Eleven of 13 states in the Leading Quartile on the Priority Gauge also placed in the top quartile on the Longitudinal Gauge. The Educational Outcomes Gauge had nine top quartile states in the Leading Quartile on the Priority Gauge; the Student and Family Diversity Gauge had 8; the Importance Gauge 7; and the Policy Gauge 6.

In the Notable (bottom) quartile on the Priority Gauge, only Massachusetts ranked in the bottom quartile on all five underlying gauges and only Connecticut and New Jersey ranked in the bottom on four. The Diversity Gauge contributed most to low ranking on the Priority Gauge. Nine states ranking in the Notable Quartile on the Priority Gauge also ranked in the bottom quartile on the Diversity Gauge. The number of states ranking in the bottom quartile on the other four gauges and also in the bottom quartile on the Priority Gauge were: Outcomes, 8; Importance, 6; Longitudinal, 6; and Policy, 5.

The Policy Gauge thus contributed least to both high and low ranking on the Priority Gauge.

There were cases where states ranked very high or very low on one gauge but consistently the opposite on other gauges. Two examples: Florida ranked first on Diversity and Policy Gauges but 41st on the Importance Gauge, while Vermont ranked first on the Importance Gauge and in the no higher than 37th on any other gauge. In Vermont, rural education is important but not stressed or distressed. In Florida, rural education does not measure up as highly important, but there are issues the state needs to address.

⁶ The Notable Quartile has 14 states, one of which, Hawaii, is actually unranked because as a single district state there is no rural data on most of the indicators. We include 13 ranked states in the Notable quartile because Pennsylvania and Minnesota, tied for 37th on this gauge, were placed in the Notable rather than Significant Quartile.

Conclusions and Implications

Over 9.6 million students are enrolled in rural school districts, over 20 percent of all public school students in the United States. Another 1.8 million students are enrolled in rural schools that are not in districts classified as rural. Together, these 11.4 million students who attend either rural schools or rural districts comprise over 23% of public school students. Of those attending schools in a rural district, two in five live in poverty (and that rate has increased by nearly a third in nine years), one in four is a child of color, and one in eight has changed residence in the past 12 months.

Moreover, both the scale and the scope of rural education in the United States are growing. Between school years 1999–2000 and 2008–2009, rural districts (excluding rural schools in non-rural districts now) enrollment increased by well over 1.7 million students, a growth rate for the period of over 22 percent. During the same time period, non-rural enrollment increased by only 673,000, a 1.7 percent increase. Seventy percent of the national school enrollment increase was in rural districts. As a result, the rural share of national public school enrollment increased from 17.4 percent to 20 percent.

Rural enrollment increases were not universal, but were widespread among the states. In all, 31 states increased rural enrollment by a combined total of nearly 2.2 million while 18 states had combined losses of nearly 450,000 rural students. To a large degree, sharp percentage increases in rural enrollment were experienced in states that have a high absolute number of rural students. Among the 13 states in the top quartile in percentage increase, eight are in the top quartile in number of rural students: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

These enrollment gains were particularly strong in the most rural states in the South and Southwest. Ten states are among the top quartile in both the number and the percentage of rural enrollment growth indicators (Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas). All of these states except California are in the Southeast or Southwest. The top five states with rural enrollment increases—Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arizona—had a total gain of over 1.1 million, more than half the total gain for all states that gained rural enrollment.

It is also clear that rural minority students are becoming more concentrated in certain states. Nationally, 25.8 percent

of rural students are children of color. But the range among states is very large, from 3.2 percent in Rhode Island to 82.6% in New Mexico. Eighty percent of rural students of color attend school in the 18 states with rural minority student rates above the national average. In four states (New Mexico, Alaska, Arizona, and California), white students make up less than 50% of the rural student population and students of color collectively make up more than 50%. More than one in three rural students is a student of color in nine other states (in descending order, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Delaware). Over 69% of all rural minority students in the U.S. attend school in these 13 states where students of color represent more than one third of the rural student enrollment. Two years earlier, 12 states had that level of rural minority student concentration and they constituted only 58% of all rural students of color.

All of these developments make it increasingly difficult for policy makers to ignore the challenges that rural schools and the students they serve present to state and national goals of improving achievement and narrowing achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups.

Still, the invisibility of rural education persists in many states. Many rural students are largely invisible to state policy makers because they live in states where education policy is dominated by highly visible urban problems. Consider this. On the one hand, there are 16 states in which over one-third of public school students are enrolled in rural school districts. On the other hand, more than half of all rural students live in just 11 states. But, only four states are in both of these categories—Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Most rural students attend school in a state where they constitute less than 27 percent of the public school enrollment, and a third are in states where they constitute less than 20 percent.

It is ironic that rural education seems “important” not where rural people are, but where urban people are not.

The Southern Hegemony

There has been a considerable consistency in the final priority rankings of states throughout the *Why Rural Matters* series. Changes we make in selected indicators usually has some effect. Moving from “declining enrollment” as a measure of instability to “rural mobility” for example, gave higher profile to states where people are moving to (or within) rural areas and lower profile to states where they

were moving from rural areas. The use of the Longitudinal Gauge for the first time in this report tended to reinforce that effect

But despite such shifts, many states simply gravitate to the top of the Priority Gauge each year. They are mostly in the South, Southwest, and Appalachia. This year, that tendency hardened. All of the states ranked in the top Priority Gauge quartile, except Alaska, are in Appalachia, the South, or the Southwest and nine of the 12 states in the second quartile border states in the top quartile. Only Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota do not

We note, however, that the Southern hegemony is least apparent in the Importance Gauge. Five of the top six ranking states are not in the South or Southwest or Appalachia. That is because in many states where rural education is relatively large in scale and scope—the factors in the Importance Gauge—it is not very diverse, student poverty rates are modest, conditions are not intensifying over time, and student outcomes are strong. Many top quartile states on the Importance Gauge—Iowa, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont—rank much lower on almost every other gauge. For many people—too many people—these states seem to be what they imagine rural America to be: mostly white, reasonably well-off, wonderfully uncomplicated, and withering away in a global economy. That myth is part of what keeps rural education on the margins of national debate about education policy. These classic Yankee and Prairie/Plains states are simply an important part of a much more varied, complex and challenging rural America that education policy makers must better understand.

The Special Education and Poverty Dichotomy

Our findings here are striking. Among states, higher rates of special education identification in rural school districts may have more to do with the willingness to identify these students and to pay for the services they require than it has to do with the actual distribution of students who should have these services. The top quartile states on the special education indicator include only two states in the top poverty quartile, but six states in the bottom poverty quartile. This is contrary to the widely accepted view that high rates of poverty correlate with high rates of special education. If the rate of special education need is indeed higher in high poverty rural areas, it is not reflected in high rates of actual delivery of rural special education services. Moreover, this dichotomy is not readily explained by the states' fiscal capacity. Among both the top and the bottom quartile on the special education rate indicator, there are five states with above the national average fiscal capacity and six with below the national average. We suspect that special educa-

tion rates reflect the willingness to deliver the services more than the incidence of need for the service.

Spending and Fiscal Capacity

While fiscal capacity does not seem to impact rural rates of participation in special education, the same cannot be said of many indicators in our Policy Gauge.

Differences in state fiscal capacity, as measured by the Treasury Department's annual calculation of each state's Total Taxable Resources Per Capita, seem related to many of the indicators in the Policy Context Gauge. Four of the five indicators in this gauge involve revenue and expenditure patterns.

All of the top quartile states on the Policy Context Gauge except Illinois and North Dakota are below the national average in state fiscal capacity. On the other hand, nine of the 14 states ranking in the bottom quartile on this gauge have above average statewide fiscal capacity. Rural districts seem to fare better on the indicators in our Policy Gauge when the state enjoys higher levels of fiscal capacity. For example, states with the lowest rural salary expenditures are primarily in the Southeast and the Midwest/Great Plains. Of the 13, all but Nebraska and South Dakota are below the national average in state fiscal capacity. On the other hand, states with the highest rural salary expenditures are located primarily in the Northeast, the West, and the Mid-Atlantic. All these states are above the national average in state fiscal capacity per capita.

In general, rural teachers are paid less than teachers in other locales, but there are nuanced differences among the states with respect to rural instructional salaries. Rural teachers seem to be paid better in states where they represent a small portion of a largely urban and suburban teaching force, and where there is relatively high state fiscal capacity. All of the 13 states spending the most on rural instructional salaries per FTE are above national average on fiscal capacity. Twelve of the 14 states spending the least per pupil on instruction in rural districts are below the national average in state fiscal capacity.

States with centralized school finance systems (heavy reliance on state aid and lower reliance on local revenue) tend to have larger rural schools and districts in the South but smaller schools and districts in the North. Those in the South tend to have low levels of salary expenditure per instructional FTE and low fiscal capacity.

States with the most decentralized school finance systems are either low poverty Northeastern states with high fiscal capacity or Prairie/Plains states with low to moderate levels

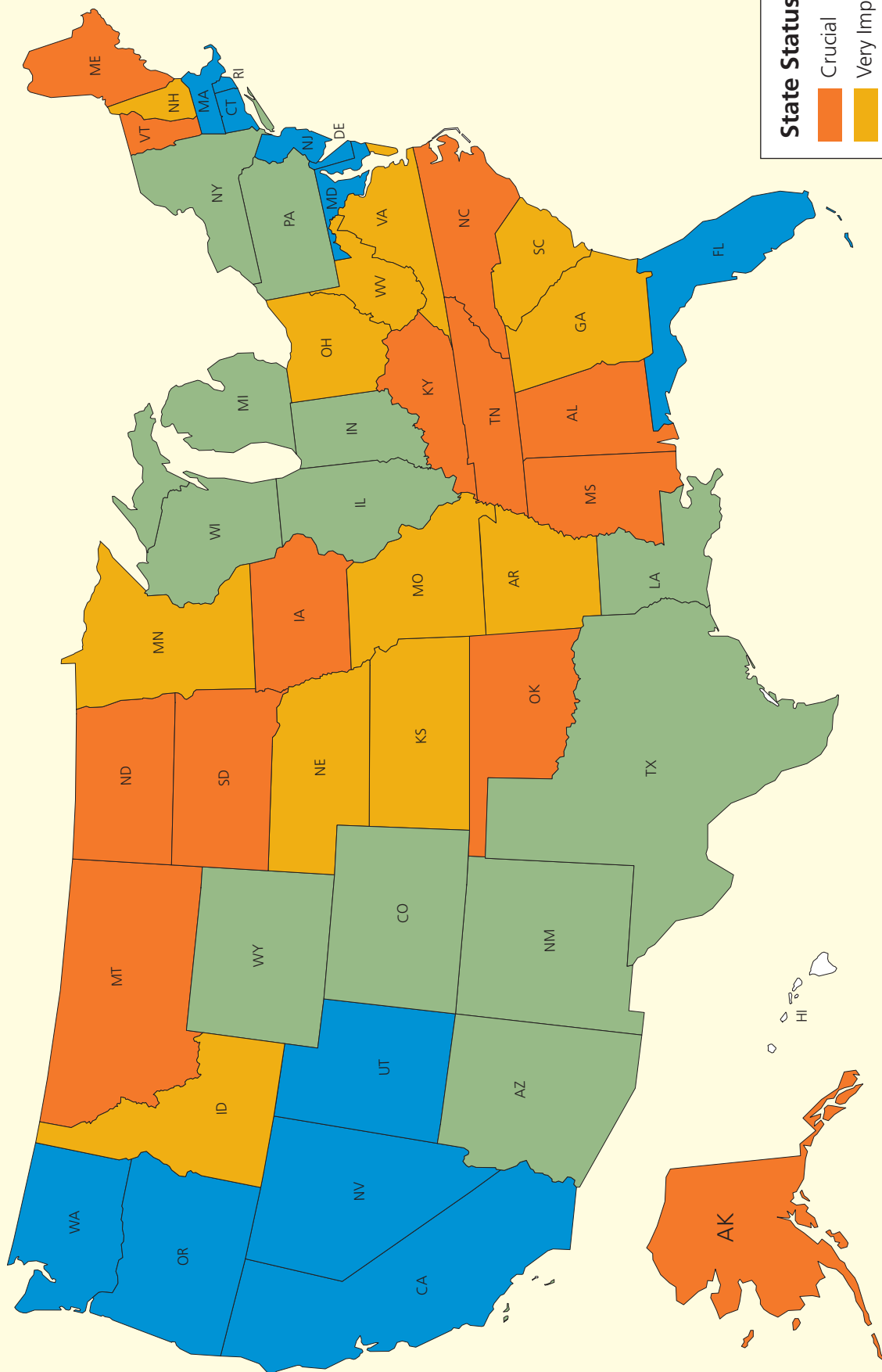
of rural poverty and mostly above average fiscal capacity. The first group includes many states that spend relatively high levels per pupil in their rural schools, while most of those in the second group are relatively low spenders in their rural schools.

The Bottom Line

Growth in rural school enrollment is outpacing non-rural enrollment growth in the United States, and rural schools are becoming more complex with increasing rates of poverty, diversity, and special needs students. Moreover, these trends, while widespread, are most intense in the South, Southwest, and parts of Appalachia. And they are now trends that track back to 1999-2000, at least

Rural education frustrates some who wish it would conform to its image of simplicity. Its geographical dispersion, its small and decentralized institutions, its isolation, and the cultural conservatism of many of its communities make rural education a conundrum to reformers and policy makers whose experiences and concerns are so often focused on urban education. Now, as the evidence mounts that rural education is becoming a bigger and even more complex part of our national educational landscape, it is becoming impossible to ignore. The day of closing our eyes and hoping it will just go away are ending. New, more thoughtful policy reforms customized to meet the challenges of rural education in all of its dimensions and manifestation are needed.

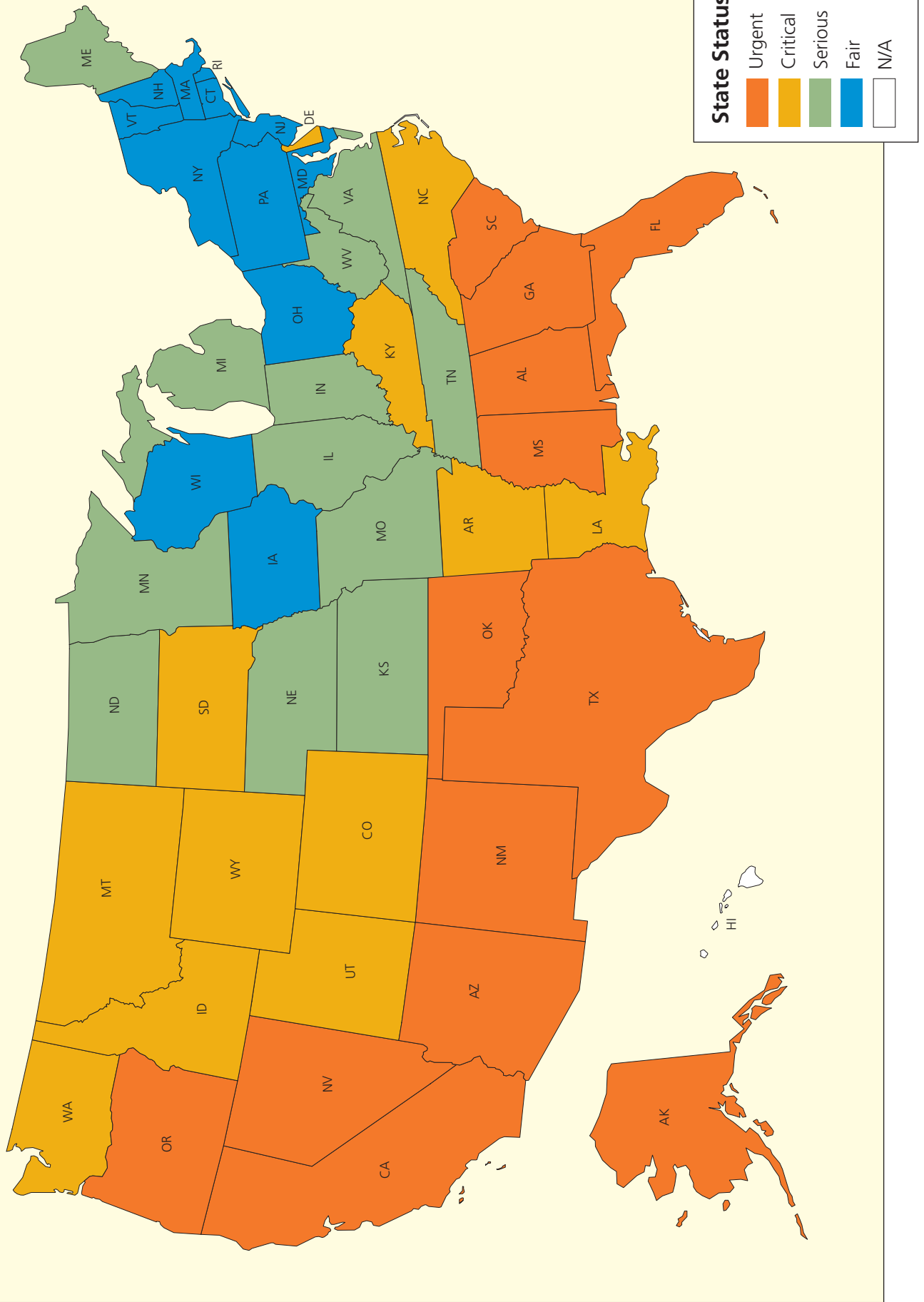
Importance Gauge Rankings



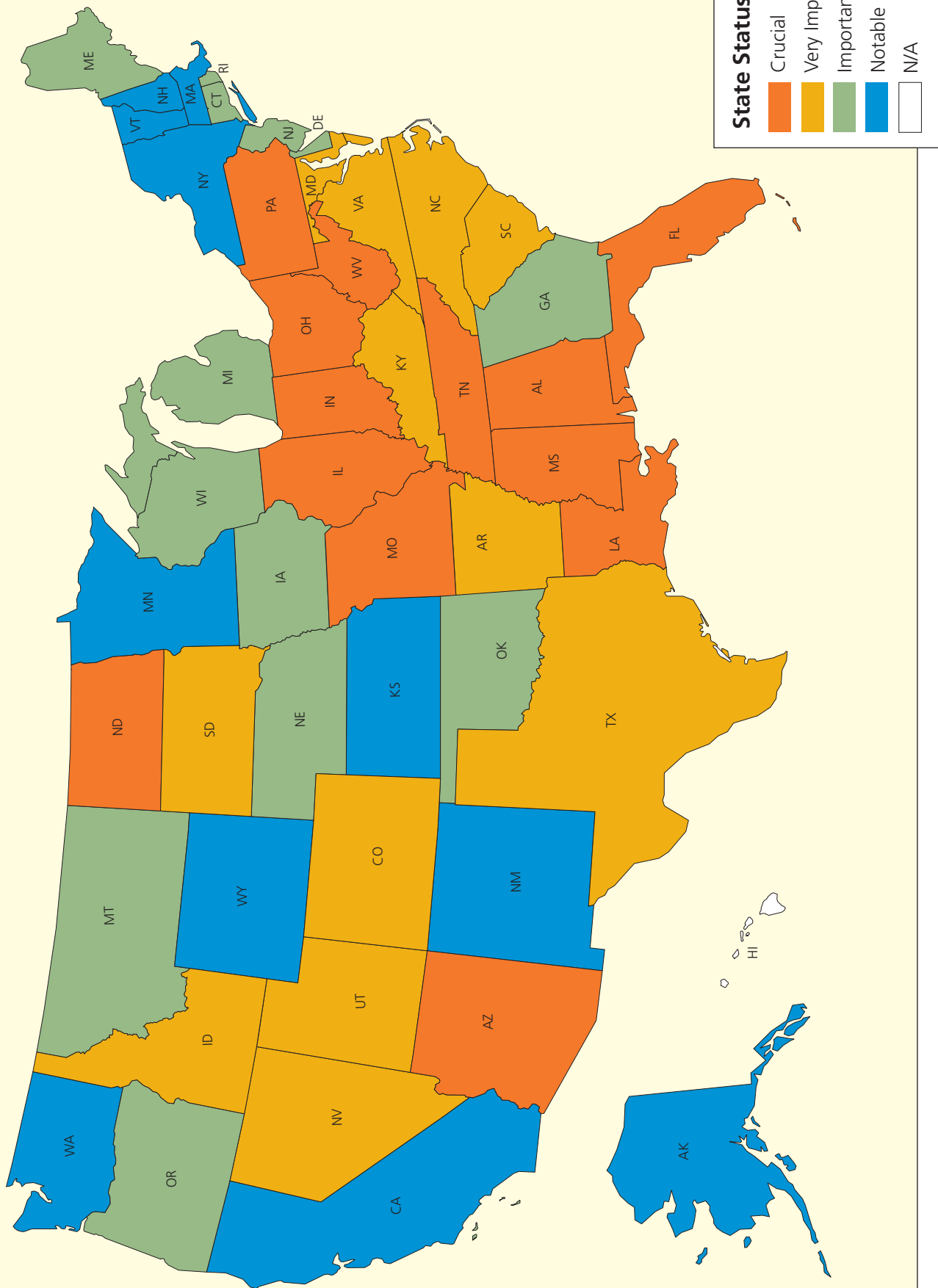
State Status

- Crucial
- Very Important
- Important
- Notable
- NA

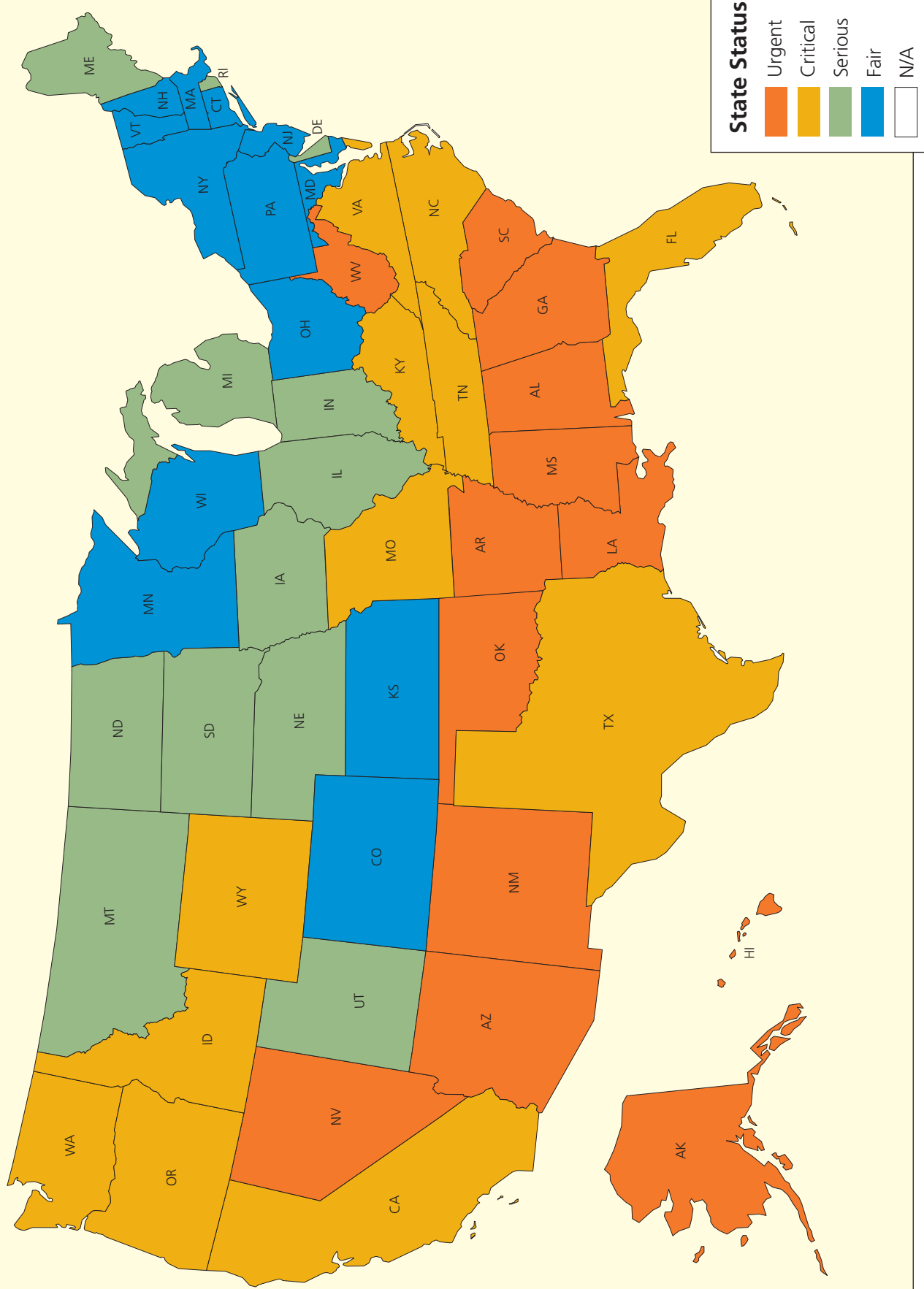
Student and Family Diversity Gauge Rankings



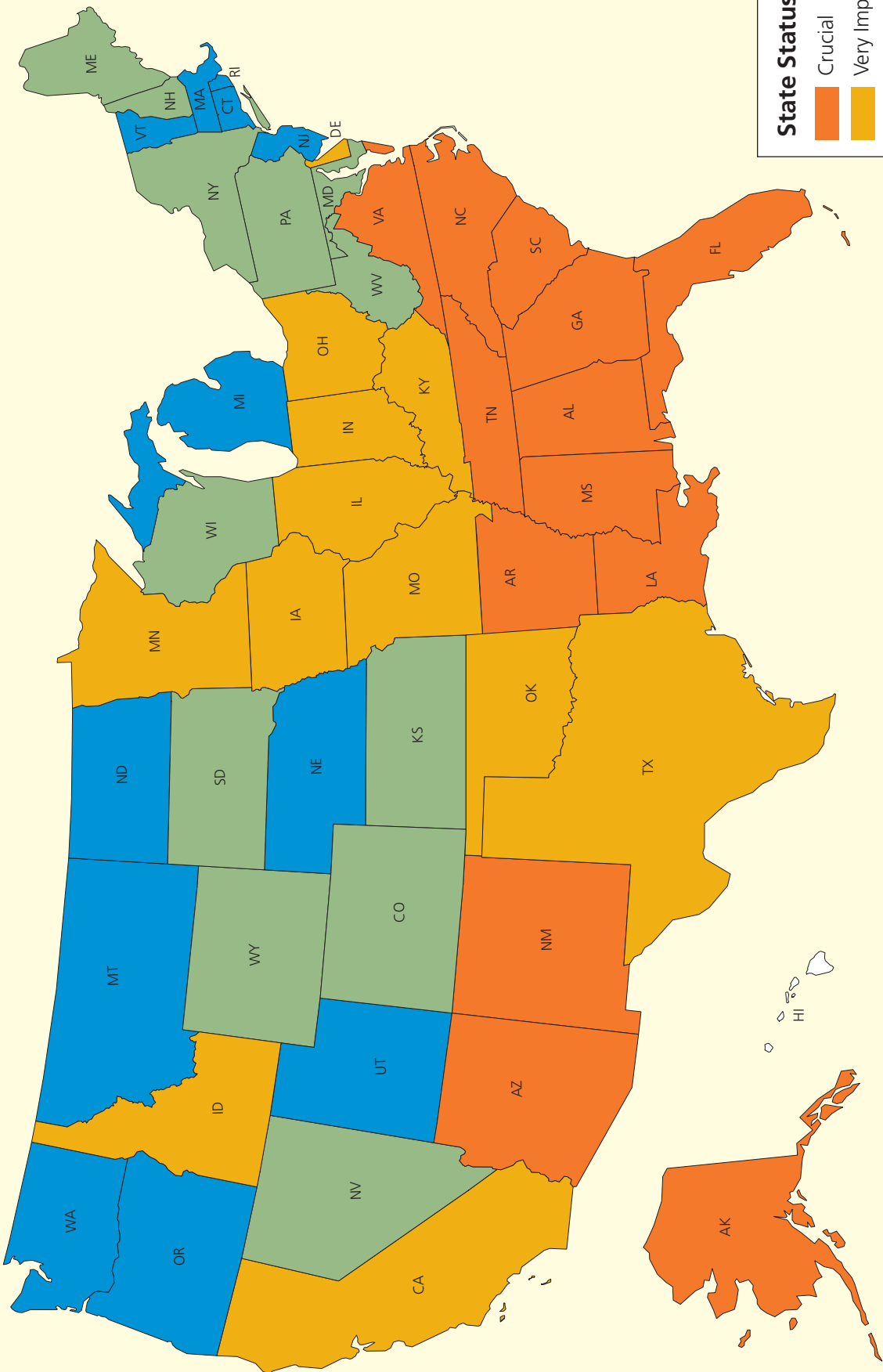
Educational Policy Context Gauge Rankings



Educational Outcomes Gauge Rankings



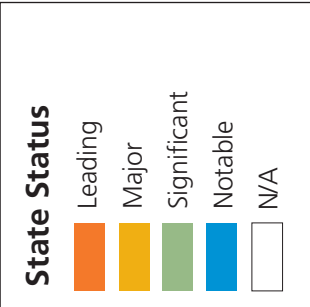
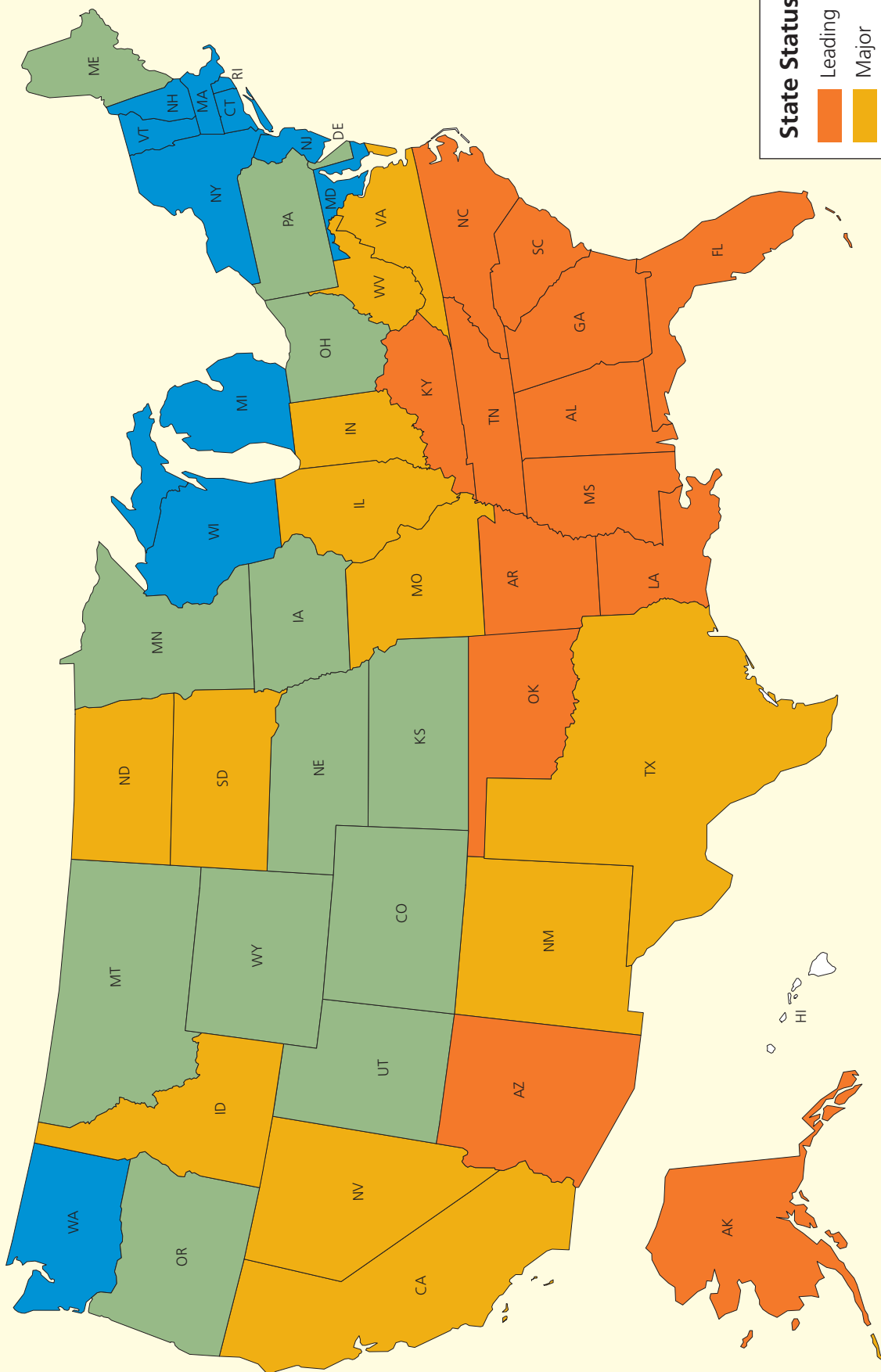
Longitudinal Gauge Rankings



State Status

- Crucial
- Very Important
- Important
- Notable
- N/A

Rural Education Priority Rankings



ALABAMA is the nation's 2nd highest priority rural state according to our ranking system. Four of every ten students attend rural schools, one of the largest proportional rural student enrollments in the nation. More than half of the state's nearly 300,000 rural students live in poverty. Rural schools and districts are among the nation's largest, and instructional spending and instructional salaries are lower than in most other states. Rural high school graduation rates and NAEP performance are near the bottom nationally. Rural schools and students are growing in number, with the rural Hispanic student population increasing at nearly three times the rural US rate.

PRIORITY RANKING

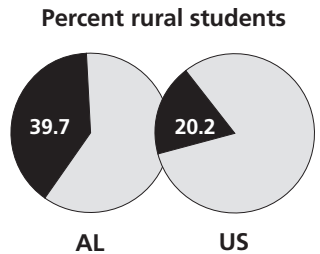
2

GAUGE 1:

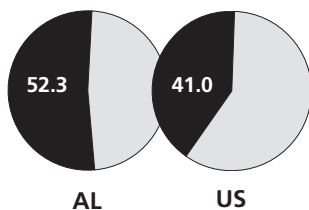
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance

| | AL | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 49.1% | 18 |
| Percent small rural districts | 1.5% | 41 |
| Percent rural students | 39.7% | 7 |
| Number of rural students | 295,906 | 11 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 43.0% | 8 |



Percent rural school poverty



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity

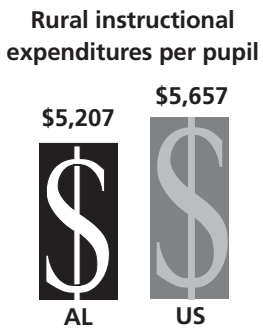
| | AL | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 28.1% | 17 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.0% | 25 |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | 52.3% | 9 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.0% | 17 |

GAUGE 3:

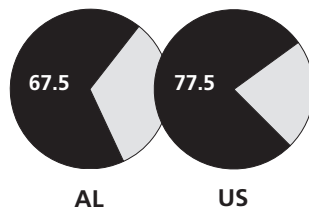
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Educational Policy Context

| | AL | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,207 | 17 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.60 | 15 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 27,186 | 9 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.51 | 41 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$48,791 | 10 |



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes

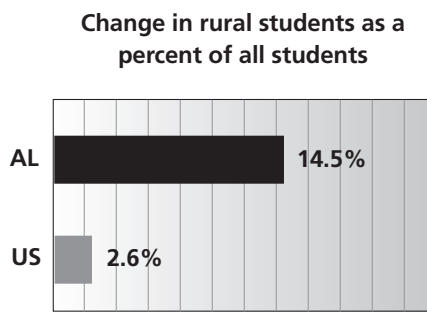
| | AL | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 67.5% | 7 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 228 | 3 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 218 | 13 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 269 | 3 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 255 | 6 |

GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge

| | AL | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 111,106 | 26 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 57.7% | 6 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 397.0% | 5 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.1% | 18 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 14.5% | 4 |



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

28 WHY RURAL MATTERS 2011-12

ALASKA - Almost two-thirds of Alaska's schools are located in rural areas, and these rural schools serve high percentages of ELL students, minority students, and families who have changed residence in the previous 12 months. Even with rural instructional expenditures and salary expenditures that are among the highest in the nation, Alaska has the nation's lowest rural NAEP reading scores in Grades 4 and 8 and comparatively low rural NAEP math scores in both grades. Also of note, increase over time in the poverty rate among rural students in Alaska is greater than all but eight other states.

PRIORITY RANKING

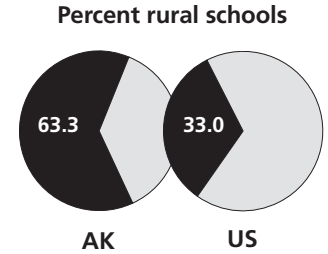
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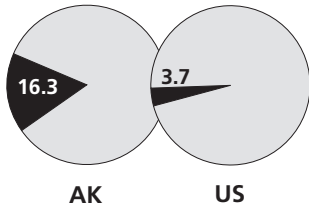
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 10

| | AK | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 63.3% | 6 |
| Percent small rural districts | 69.8% | 9 |
| Percent rural students | 28.6% | 19 |
| Number of rural students | 37,265 | 42 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 42.5% | 10 |



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 5

| | AK | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 71.7% | 2 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 16.3% | 2 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.3% | 35 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 43.4% | 18 |
| Percent rural mobility | 17.5% | 3 |

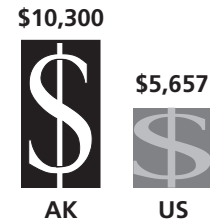
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

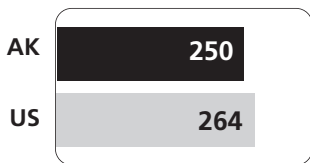
Educational Policy Context 49

| | AK | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$10,300 | 49 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$27.52 | 49 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 883.9 | 43 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$5.03 | 48 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$79,670 | 47 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 3

| | AK | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 69.8% | 11 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 228 | 2 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 197 | 1 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 273 | 7 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 250 | 1 |

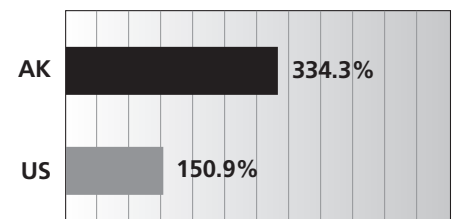
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 6

| | AK | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 9,530 | 26 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 45.0% | 10 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 334.3% | 7 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 8.9% | 9 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 9.2% | 8 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


ARIZONA - Arizona's rural students represent a fairly small proportion of all public students in the state, but they are one of the nation's most diverse student populations. More than half of all students are minorities, nearly half live in poverty, one in five has changed residences in the previous 12 months, and one in ten is a non-native English speaker. Spending on instruction is the nation's second lowest at more than \$1,300 per pupil below the national average. Outcomes are poor, with fewer than seven in ten students graduating and rural NAEP scores below those of nearly all other states. The percent change in the number of rural students is higher than in any other state.

PRIORITY RANKING

3

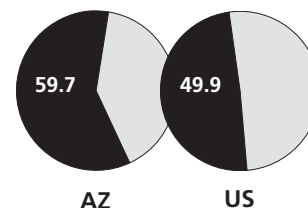
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

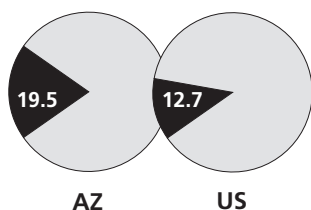
Importance 

| | AZ | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 29.5% | 35 |
| Percent small rural districts | 59.7% | 16 |
| Percent rural students | 17.7% | 35 |
| Number of rural students | 172,828 | 22 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 21.8% | 30 |

Percent small rural districts




Percent rural mobility



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | AZ | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 55.3% | 4 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 9.1% | 4 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.0% | 37 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 48.7% | 13 |
| Percent rural mobility | 19.5% | 2 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

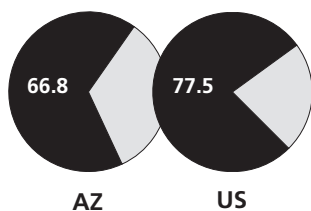
Educational Policy Context 

| | AZ | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,249 | 2 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$8.72 | 9 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 12,632 | 15 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.79 | 31 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$53,732 | 22 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | AZ | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 66.8% | 6 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 227 | 1 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 209 | 3 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 276 | 10 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 259 | 12 |

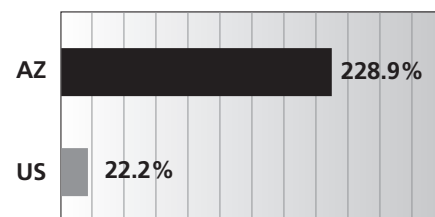
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | AZ | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 143,576 | 26 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 228.9% | 1 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 324.9% | 8 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 28.7% | 1 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 13.5% | 5 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


ARKANSAS - More than one-third of all students in Arkansas attend rural schools, and more than half of all schools serve rural communities. The poverty rate among rural students is fourth highest in the US, and nearly 14% of all students have experienced a residence change in the previous 12 months. Instructional spending and salaries are among the lowest in the nation, with only four states spending less on instructional salaries. Outcome measures are below the national median across the board, with the lowest rural NAEP scores coming at the 8th grade level. The most notable demographic changes over time are growth in the number of Hispanic students and an increase in the level of rural poverty.

PRIORITY RANKING

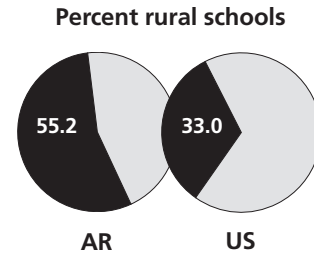
9

GAUGE 1:

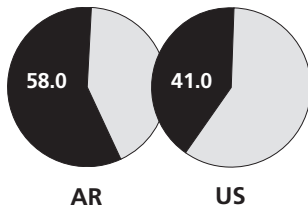
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | AR | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 55.2% | 9 |
| Percent small rural districts | 22.0% | 33 |
| Percent rural students | 35.5% | 13 |
| Number of rural students | 168,427 | 23 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 39.9% | 12 |




Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | AR | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 17.2% | 27 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.7% | 21 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 11.4% | 40 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 58.0% | 4 |
| Percent rural mobility | 13.7% | 11 |

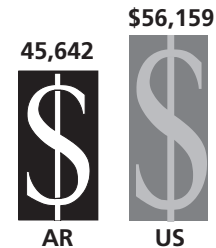
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

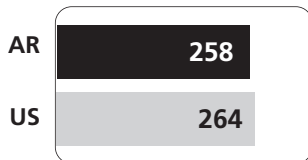
Educational Policy Context 

| | AR | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,915 | 10 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$13.18 | 40 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 3,062 | 29 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.00 | 38 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$45,642 | 5 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | AR | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 76.3% | 19 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 240 | 19 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 218 | 14 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 278 | 12 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 258 | 9 |

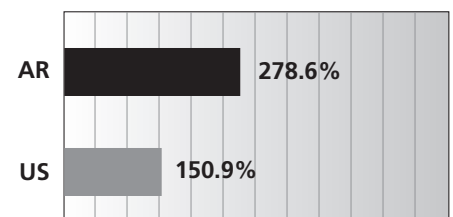
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | AR | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 41,649 | 19 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 32.9% | 14 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 278.6% | 11 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 8.7% | 10 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 7.4% | 11 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

CALIFORNIA has one of the nation's lowest percentages of rural schools and students, but one of the highest percentages of small rural districts and the 13th largest absolute rural student enrollment. Moreover, the state educates the largest percentage of rural ELL students in the nation and one of the highest percentages of rural minority students. The state's rural high school graduation rate is higher than most states, but all of the rural NAEP scores in Grades 4 and 8 are below average. From 1999 to 2008, the state's number of rural students has increased substantially, with only nine states showing more absolute growth. California remains important as a rural state given its Student and Family Diversity indicators and the below-average NAEP scores.

PRIORITY RANKING

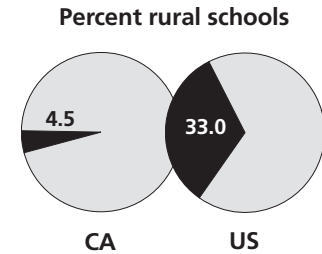
24

GAUGE 1:

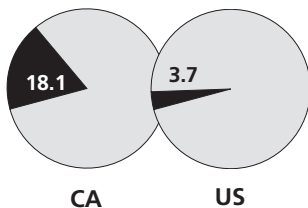
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 40

| | CA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 15.0% | 47 |
| Percent small rural districts | 69.9% | 8 |
| Percent rural students | 4.5% | 48 |
| Number of rural students | 278,906 | 13 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 5.3% | 47 |



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 7

| | CA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 55.3% | 4 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 18.1% | 1 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 8.7% | 44 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 47.3% | 14 |
| Percent rural mobility | 15.1% | 6 |

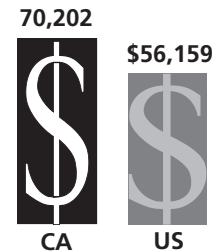
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

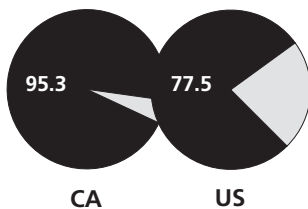
Educational Policy Context 44

| | CA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,367 | 20 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$15.00 | 43 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 5,243.5 | 24 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.55 | 28 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$70,202 | 44 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 14

| | CA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 95.3% | 44 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 235 | 11 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 215 | 8 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 277 | 11 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 262 | 15 |

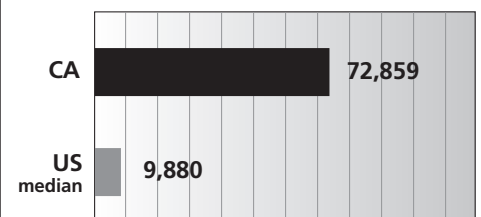
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 18

| | CA | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 72,859 | 10 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 35.4% | 12 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 109.6% | 29 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.7% | 21 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 1.1% | 25 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


COLORADO - One third of Colorado's schools are rural, while only 14% of its students are. Colorado schools and districts are smaller than in most other states, but enroll a high percentage of rural minority and ELL students. Rural expenditures per pupil and teacher salaries are among the lowest in the nation. Colorado's Educational Outcomes indicators represent a mixed bag of results: only five states had lower rural high school graduation rates but Colorado scored significantly higher than average on Grade 4 and 8 NAEP scores. Longitudinal indicators are all about average, except for the percent change in number of Hispanic students, which is half the national average.

PRIORITY RANKING

26

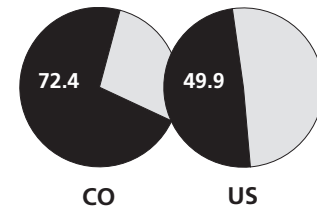
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

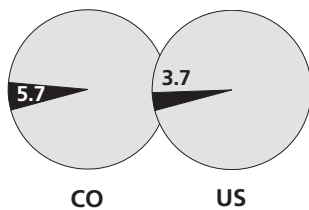
Importance 

| | CO | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 33.6% | 30 |
| Percent small rural districts | 72.4% | 7 |
| Percent rural students | 14.0% | 37 |
| Number of rural students | 113,555 | 28 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 13.4% | 36 |

Percent small rural districts



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Student and Family Diversity



| | CO | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 30.0% | 14 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 5.7% | 10 |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | 27.4% | 42 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.9% | 12 |

GAUGE 3:

Educational Policy Context

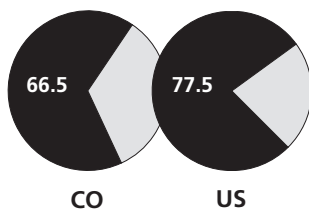


| | CO | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,820 | 8 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.39 | 37 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 2,254.2 | 31 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.91 | 13 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$49,322 | 14 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Educational Outcomes



| | CO | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 66.5% | 5 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 245 | 35 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 232 | 46 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 294 | 46 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 41 |

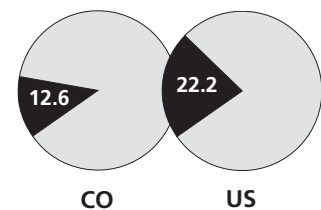
GAUGE 5:

Longitudinal Gauge



| | CO | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 12,469 | 24 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 12.6% | 24 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 83.9% | 34 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.3% | 25 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -0.2% | 29 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

CONNECTICUT - Connecticut's rural districts constitute only 16.5% of the state's schools and serve just over 65,000 students. Rural household mobility and rural student poverty are lower than in any other state. Expenditures on rural instructional salaries rank second only to New Jersey, and state funding support relative to local support is weak. Rural Connecticut students have, on average, the highest overall NAEP scores of any state. The total number of rural students in Connecticut has been nearly halved since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

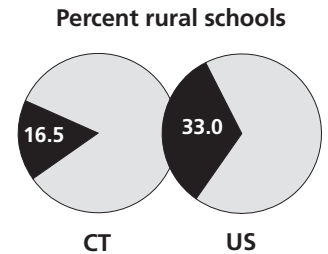
48

GAUGE 1:

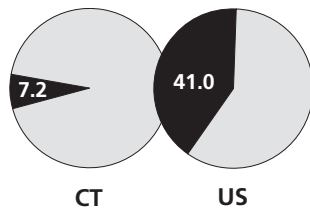
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 43

| | CT | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 16.5% | 46 |
| Percent small rural districts | 39.3% | 28 |
| Percent rural students | 12.3% | 40 |
| Number of rural students | 65,098 | 37 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 11.1% | 40 |



Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 48

| | CT | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 9.2% | 36 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.7% | 37 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 11.6% | 39 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 7.2% | 49 |
| Percent rural mobility | 5.5% | 49 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

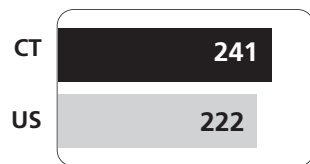
Educational Policy Context 36

| | CT | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$8,604 | 44 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.93 | 28 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 5,897.9 | 23 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.49 | 3 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$82,259 | 48 |

State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 50

| | CT | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 86.5% | 37 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 256 | 50 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 241 | 50 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 300 | 49 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 282 | 50 |

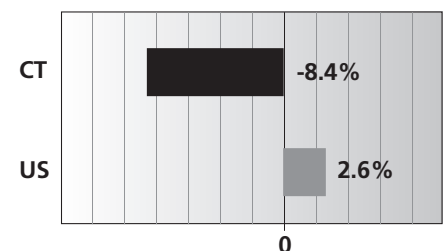
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 49

| | CT | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -43,878 | 44 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -40.0% | 47 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 1.8% | 46 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 0.3% | 41 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -8.4% | 49 |

Change in rural students as a percent of all students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

DELAWARE - With fewer than 28,000 students in rural districts, Delaware has one of the lowest absolute rural enrollments in the nation. However, the rural student population includes a relatively high percentage of minority and special education students, as well as a high proportion of English Language Learners. Rural schools and districts are large on average and transportation costs relative to instructional costs are the third highest in the US. The rural high school graduation rate is slightly below the national average. Since 1999, the state's rural Hispanic student population has increased by 183%.

PRIORITY RANKING

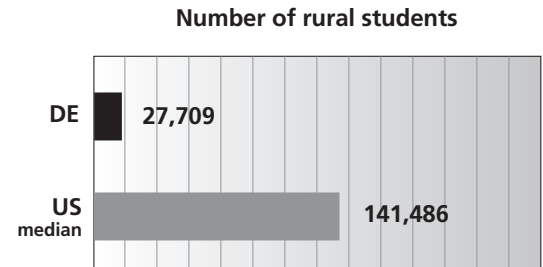
32

GAUGE 1:

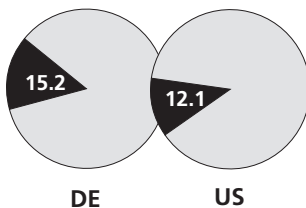
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 44

| | DE | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 23.4% | 41 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 25.2% | 26 |
| Number of rural students | 27,709 | 46 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 6.0% | 46 |



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 22

| | DE | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 36.1% | 13 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 4.4% | 14 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 15.2% | 12 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 32.0% | 32 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.4% | 34 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

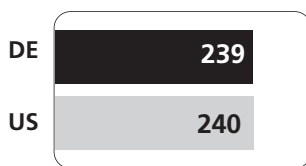
Educational Policy Context 30

| | DE | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,846 | 39 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$8.03 | 3 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 37,167.3 | 6 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$3.53 | 46 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$62,782 | 38 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 28

| | DE | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 75.9% | 18 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 239 | 16 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 227 | 40 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 289 | 31 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 37 |

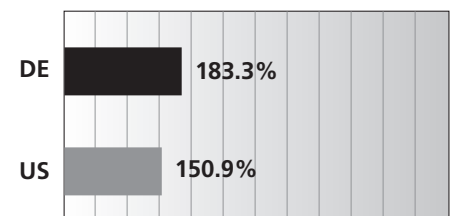
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 24

| | DE | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4,939 | 28 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 22.2% | 20 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 183.3% | 14 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.3% | 32 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.3% | 18 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

FLORIDA's absolute rural student enrollment is one of the nation's largest at more than 384,000 (though they represent less than 15% of public school students) and ranks as the most diverse rural student population in our report. Nearly half of all rural students live in poverty, more than 40% are minorities, and 15% qualify for special education. Rural mobility is higher than in all but three other states, and the rate of English Language Learners is higher than in all but seven other states. Rural schools and districts are the nation's largest, instructional spending and salaries are low, and state contribution to public education costs is weak. Outcomes are slightly below average, with the exception of high school graduation rate (at eighth lowest in the US). Absolute and proportional growth of rural students is dramatic.

PRIORITY RANKING

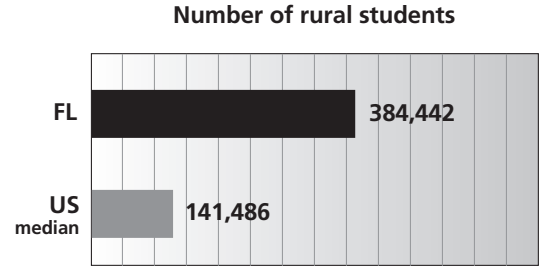
11

GAUGE 1:

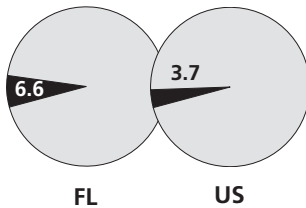
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 40

| | FL | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 18.2% | 44 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 14.7% | 36 |
| Number of rural students | 384,442 | 5 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 9.8% | 42 |



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 1

| | FL | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 42.1% | 7 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 6.6% | 8 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 15.3% | 11 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 49.7% | 11 |
| Percent rural mobility | 16.4% | 4 |

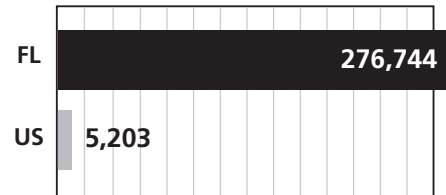
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

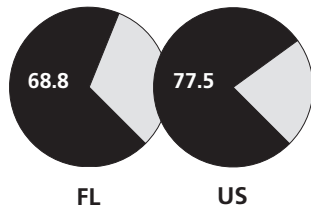
Educational Policy Context 1

| | FL | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,962 | 11 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.59 | 23 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 276,744 | 1 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.98 | 15 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$49,193 | 13 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 23

| | FL | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 68.8% | 8 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 243 | 30 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 34 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 285 | 22 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 264 | 20 |

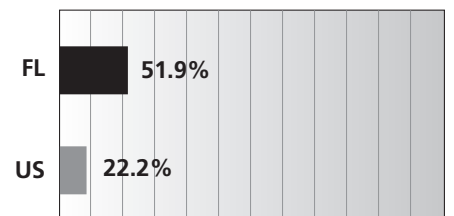
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 11

| | FL | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 88,325 | 8 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 51.9% | 8 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 159.7% | 18 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.0% | 19 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.8% | 22 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

GEORGIA - Nearly 575,000 students attend rural schools in Georgia, the third largest absolute rural student enrollment in the nation. Poverty and mobility rates are among the highest in the US, as is the percentage of minority students. Only three states have larger rural schools and districts than Georgia. Rural NAEP scores are near the bottom nationally, and just over six in ten rural students graduate from high school (only Louisiana's rate is lower). The rate of growth for rural students is dramatic, and the rate of growth in the rural Hispanic student population is among the highest in the nation.

PRIORITY RANKING

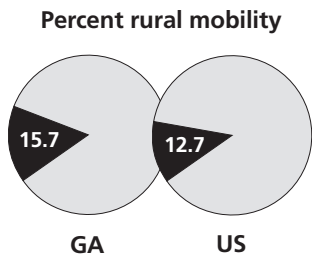
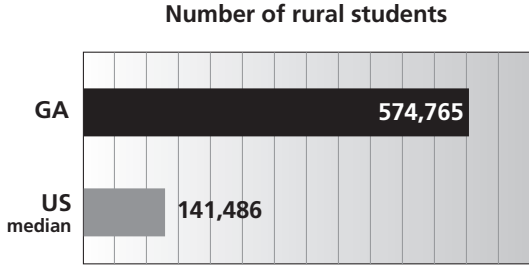
9

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 20

| | GA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 37.0% | 27 |
| Percent small rural districts | 3.5% | 39 |
| Percent rural students | 34.8% | 14 |
| Number of rural students | 574,765 | 3 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 34.3% | 18 |



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 12

| | GA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 36.9% | 12 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.8% | 19 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 11.4% | 40 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 51.6% | 10 |
| Percent rural mobility | 15.7% | 5 |

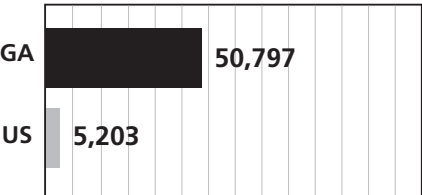
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

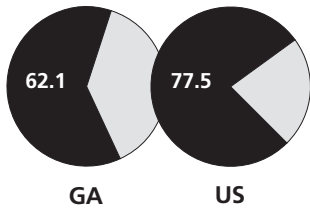
Educational Policy Context 29

| | GA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,058 | 31 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$14.71 | 41 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 50,797 | 4 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.32 | 26 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$57,315 | 28 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 10

| | GA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 62.1% | 2 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 237 | 12 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 219 | 16 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 278 | 13 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 260 | 14 |

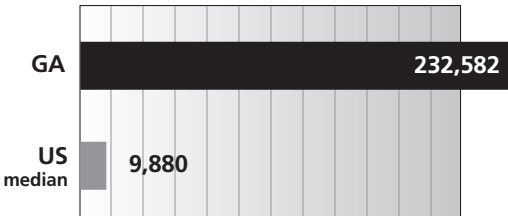
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 3

| | GA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 232,582 | 2 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 67.8% | 5 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 230.5% | 12 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 11.2% | 5 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 10.8% | 7 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

HAWAII is the only state where public schooling is organized as a single local education agency, making it impossible to differentiate by locale at the district level. However, the information which is available is presented below. One-fifth of the schools in Hawaii are located in rural areas and rural household mobility is very high at almost 15%. NAEP performance in rural areas is lower than nearly all other states. Due to data limitations, Hawaii is excluded from four of the five gauge rankings, and is not part of the overall state ranking.

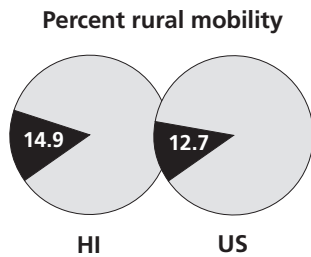
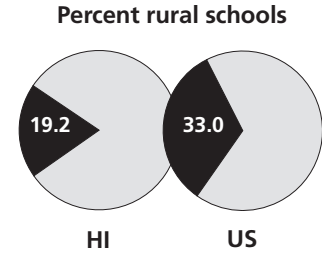
PRIORITY RANKING
N/A

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance

| | HI | Rank* |
|--|-------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 19.2% | 42 |
| Percent small rural districts | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural students | N/A | N/A |
| Number of rural students | N/A | N/A |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | N/A | N/A |



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity

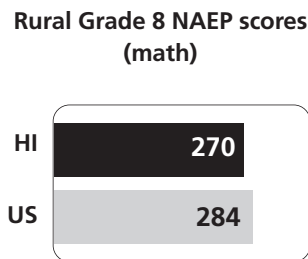
| | HI | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural ELL students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural mobility | 14.9% | 8 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Educational Policy Context

| | HI | Rank* |
|---|-----|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | N/A | N/A |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | N/A | N/A |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | N/A | N/A |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | N/A | N/A |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | N/A | N/A |



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes

| | HI | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | N/A | N/A |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 232 | 7 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 210 | 4 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 270 | 4 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 254 | 4 |

GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge

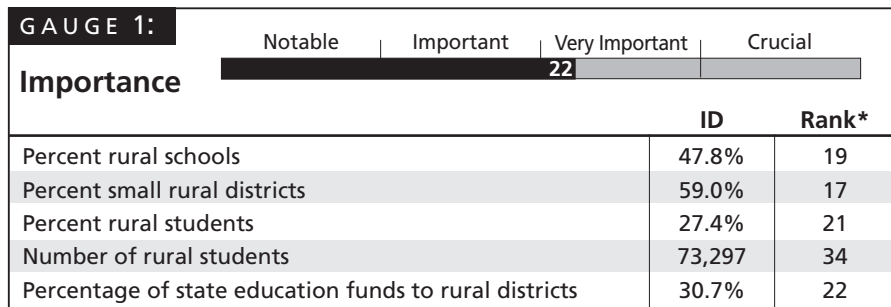
| | HI | Rank* |
|--|-----|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |

* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

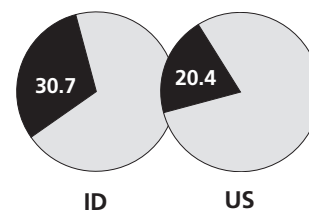
IDAHO is ranked in the second-highest priority category on all five gauges, and is above the national average on four out of five Importance indicators. One in five rural students in Idaho is from a minority population and only five states educate a higher percentage of rural ELL students. No state spends less on instruction per pupil, teacher salaries are low, and educational outcomes hover around the national averages with the notable exception of the Grade 4 Reading average that is among the nation's lowest. Indicators measuring demographic shifts over time all rank near the national averages, with exception of change in percent rural poverty, where Idaho shows an increase of 5 percentage points.

PRIORITY RANKING

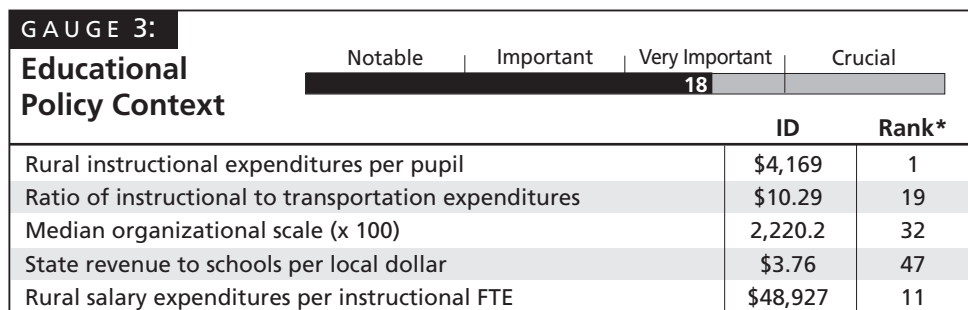
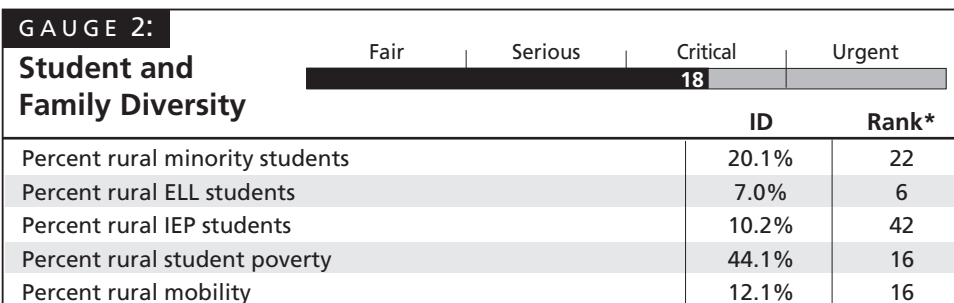
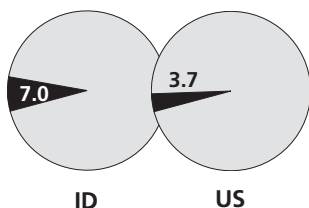
16



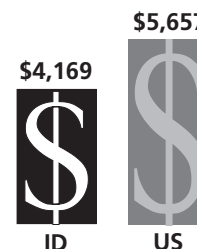
Percentage of state education funds to rural districts



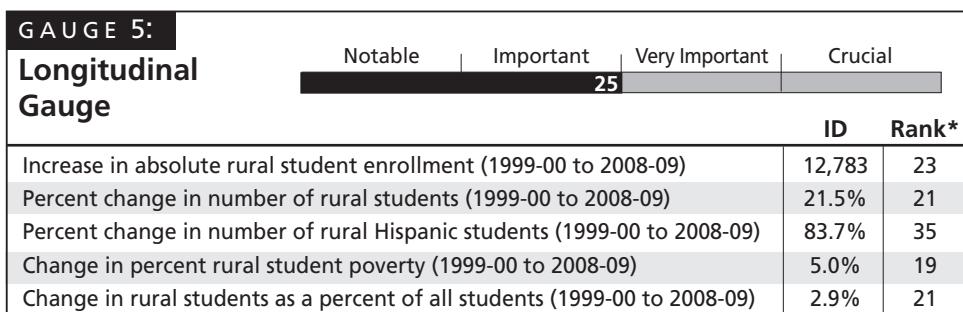
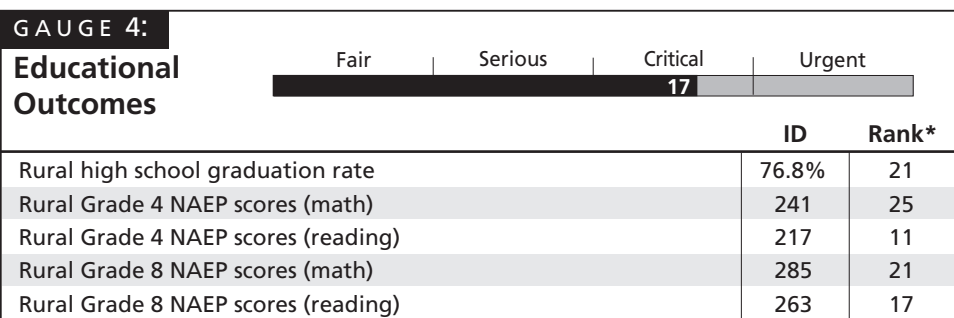
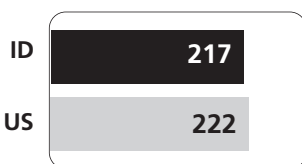
Percent rural ELL students



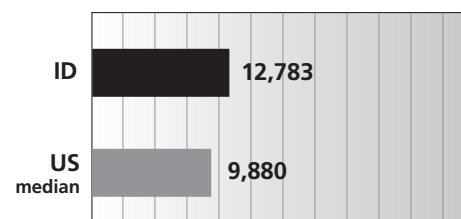
Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)



Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


ILLINOIS has one of the largest absolute rural student enrollments, but rural students make up only one in seven public school students in the state. Rural students in Illinois have one of the highest IEP rates in rural America, have higher rural high school graduation rates, and higher than average NAEP performance at Grades 4 and 8. The state spends among the nation's lowest per pupil on instruction and only West Virginia has a lower ratio of instruction-to-transportation spending. The most notable change in the state's rural demographics is the 437% increase in the rural Hispanic student population.

PRIORITY RANKING

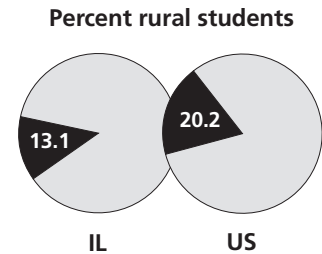
25

GAUGE 1:

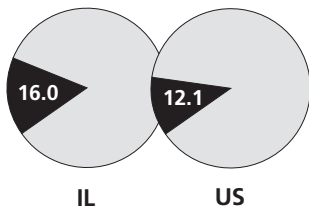
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | IL | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 24.0% | 40 |
| Percent small rural districts | 56.3% | 18 |
| Percent rural students | 13.1% | 38 |
| Number of rural students | 278,166 | 14 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 12.7% | 37 |




Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | IL | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 15.2% | 29 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.1% | 24 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 16.0% | 10 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 24.3% | 44 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.5% | 33 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

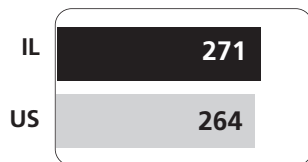
Educational Policy Context 

| | IL | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,910 | 9 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$7.72 | 2 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 1,744.2 | 37 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.67 | 5 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$57,110 | 27 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | IL | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 88.0% | 39 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 242 | 29 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 224 | 31 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 286 | 27 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 43 |

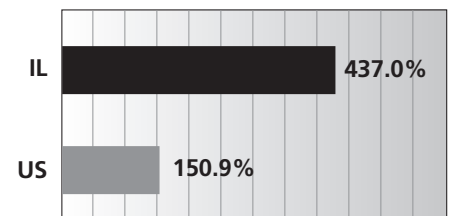
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | IL | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 64,185 | 12 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 30.0% | 16 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 437.0% | 4 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 0.7% | 38 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.4% | 23 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students

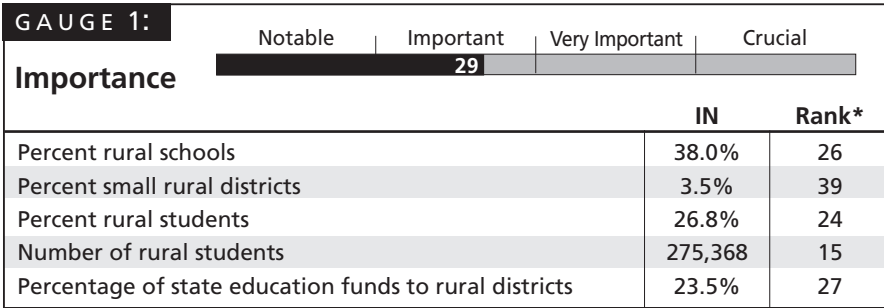


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

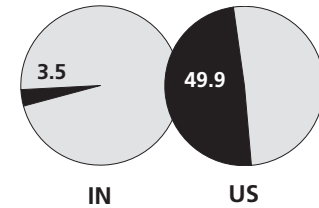
INDIANA ranks second on the Educational Policy Context gauge, with low per-pupil expenditures and a low ratio of instruction-to-transportation expenditures. The state's rural schools enroll a high percentage of students with special educational needs and a relatively small percentage of minority students. Indiana's rural NAEP scores are all slightly above national averages but two of ten students fail to graduate from high school. Indiana's rural Hispanic student population saw a larger-than-average increase in the percentage of rural students in poverty from 1999 to 2008.

PRIORITY RANKING

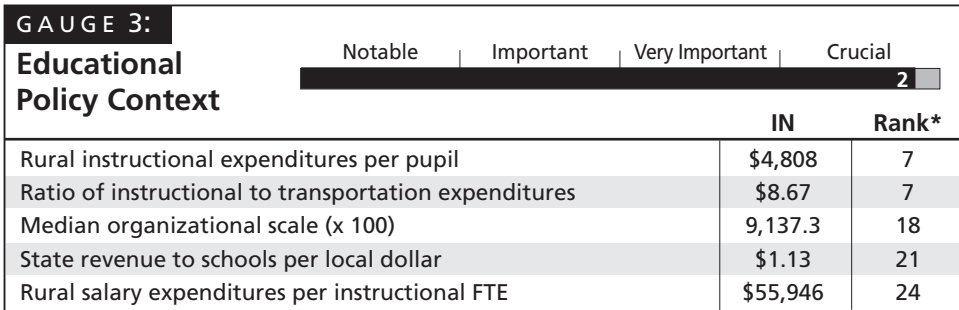
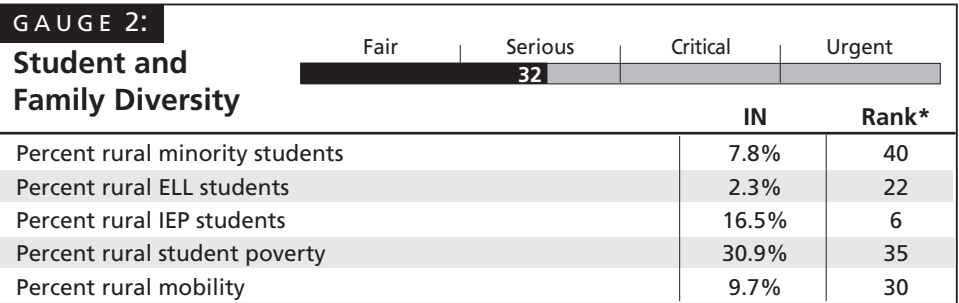
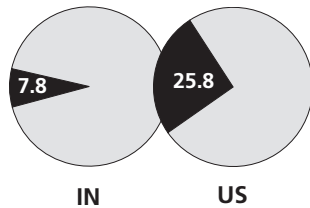
22



Percent small rural districts



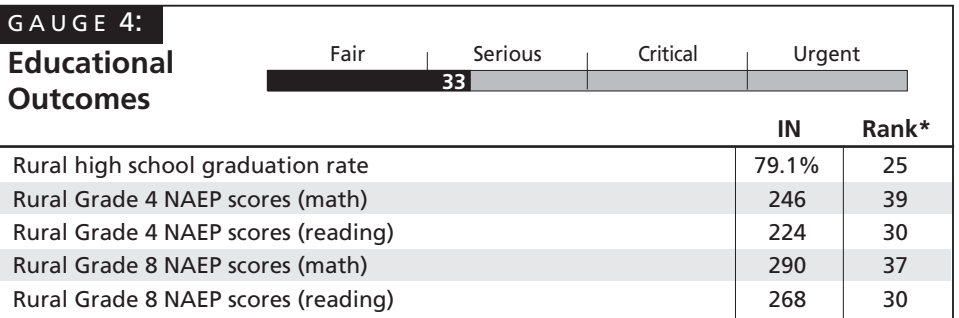
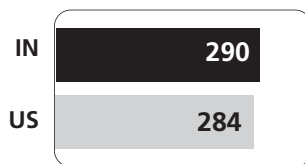
Percent rural minority students



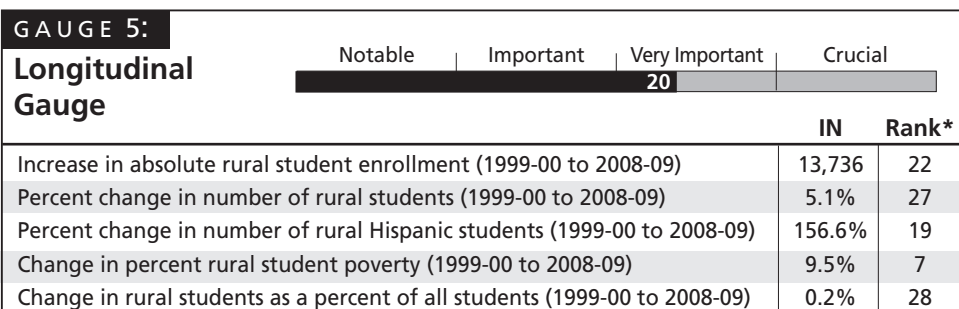
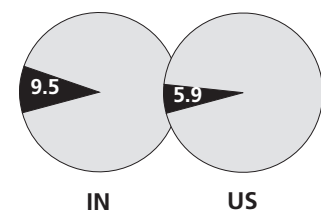
Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


IOWA - Over half of Iowa's schools are located in rural districts, and these schools serve nearly one in three of the state's public school students. Student and family diversity indicators are all at or below the national median. Rural schools and districts in Iowa are smaller than those in most other states. State contribution to school funding relative to local funding is well below the national average. Rural NAEP performance hovers around the national median in all areas, but rural students graduate at a very high rate. Iowa's student population has grown increasingly rural at nearly double the national rate in the years since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

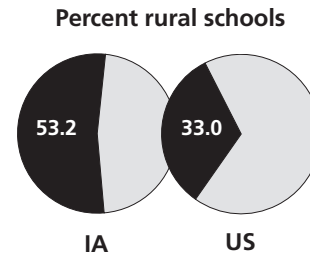
31

GAUGE 1:

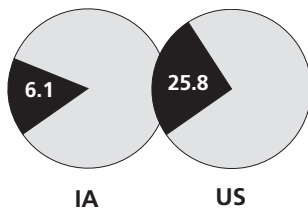
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | IA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 53.2% | 12 |
| Percent small rural districts | 51.9% | 21 |
| Percent rural students | 34.3% | 15 |
| Number of rural students | 167,152 | 24 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 34.8% | 16 |




Percent rural minority students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | IA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 6.1% | 46 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 1.3% | 30 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.7% | 33 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 27.4% | 42 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.6% | 31 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

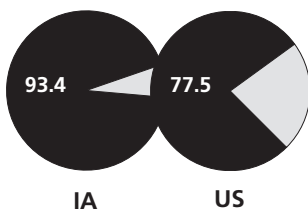
Educational Policy Context 

| | IA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,395 | 22 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.34 | 36 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 1,370.6 | 40 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.84 | 12 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$50,418 | 16 |

State revenue to schools per local dollar




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | IA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 93.4% | 43 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 246 | 37 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 223 | 23 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 287 | 28 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 268 | 33 |

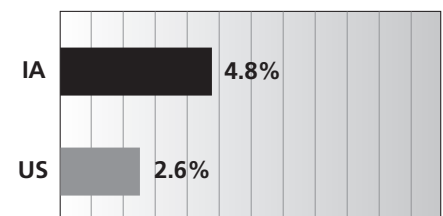
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | IA | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 19,682 | 20 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 13.4% | 23 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 154.5% | 20 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.9% | 27 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.8% | 16 |

Change in rural students as a percent of all students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

KANSAS - Approximately half of all public schools in Kansas are in rural areas, with two out of three districts reporting enrollments below the national median for rural districts. Student and family diversity indicators are all close to the US median. Instructional salary expenditures per FTE are more than \$7,000 below the national average, and educational outcomes are above average in reading and even higher in mathematics. Since 1999, the rate of rural student poverty has increased by more than 6 percentage points.

PRIORITY RANKING

36

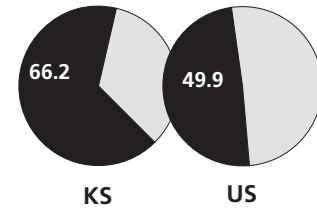
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

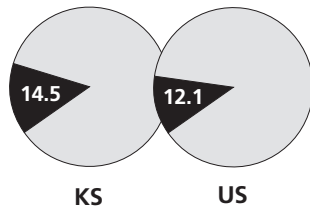
Importance **16**

| | KS | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 49.8% | 16 |
| Percent small rural districts | 66.2% | 12 |
| Percent rural students | 28.0% | 20 |
| Number of rural students | 131,920 | 26 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 31.1% | 21 |

Percent small rural districts



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity **27**

| | KS | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 11.9% | 31 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.8% | 19 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.5% | 17 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 34.5% | 29 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.2% | 25 |

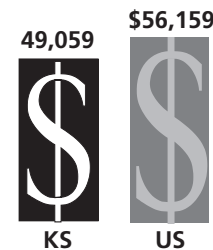
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

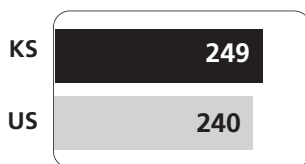
Educational Policy Context **43**

| | KS | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,112 | 32 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.73 | 38 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 923.4 | 42 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.83 | 33 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$49,059 | 12 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes **42**

| | KS | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 83.5% | 32 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 249 | 44 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 36 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 291 | 41 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 270 | 36 |

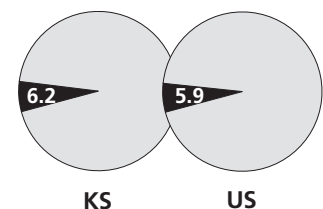
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge **30**

| | KS | Rank* |
|--|-------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4,487 | 29 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 3.5% | 30 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 73.0% | 37 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 6.2% | 15 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 0.6% | 27 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


KENTUCKY - Just under half of all schools in Kentucky are rural, and only nine other states serve a higher percentage of rural students in their public schools. Rural enrollments are characterized by high rates of poverty, rural mobility, and students qualifying for special education services (highest in the nation on special education rates). The educational policy context does little to help, with large schools and districts, high transportation costs, and low levels of instructional spending. Educational outcomes are a mixed bag, with some rural NAEP scores at or above national averages but the nation's 12th lowest rural high school graduation rate. Rural schools and students are growing in number, with dramatic growth in the rural Hispanic student population.

PRIORITY RANKING

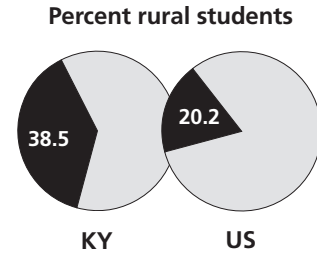
13

GAUGE 1:

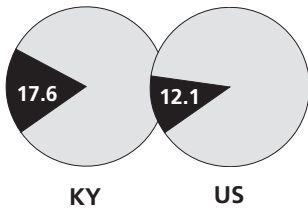
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | KY | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 49.8% | 16 |
| Percent small rural districts | 5.4% | 36 |
| Percent rural students | 38.5% | 10 |
| Number of rural students | 157,637 | 17 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 43.9% | 7 |




Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | KY | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 6.5% | 43 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.6% | 40 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 17.6% | 1 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 57.1% | 6 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.4% | 14 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

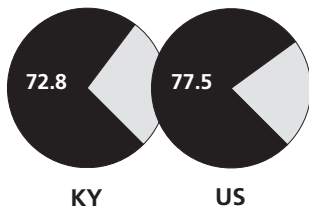
Educational Policy Context 

| | KY | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,114 | 15 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.05 | 11 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 14,515 | 12 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$3.07 | 45 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$54,718 | 23 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | KY | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 72.8% | 12 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 240 | 17 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 33 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 280 | 16 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 267 | 24 |

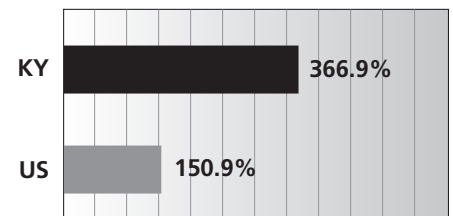
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | KY | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 53,582 | 13 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 24.2% | 19 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 366.9% | 6 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.0% | 26 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 6.0% | 15 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students

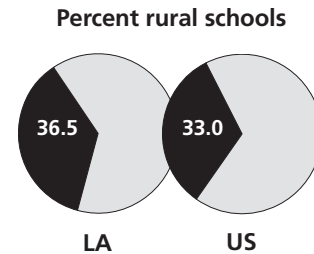
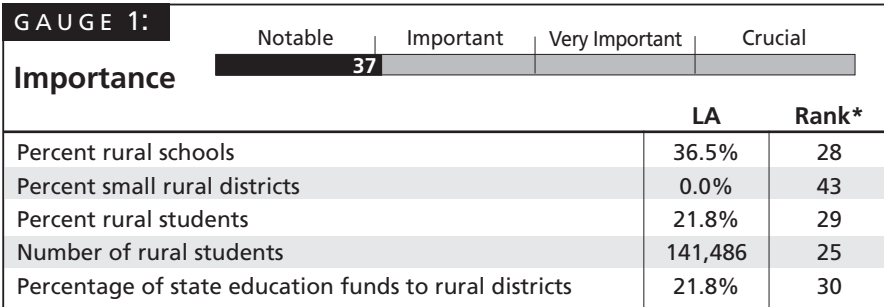


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

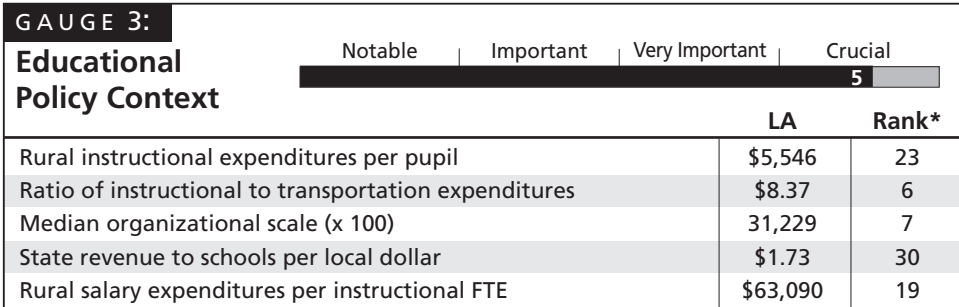
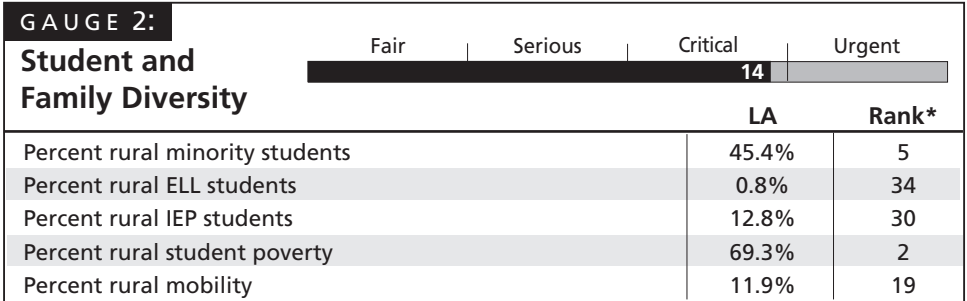
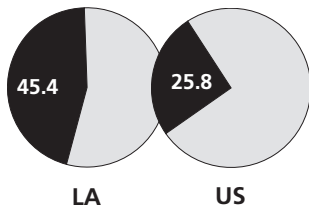
LOUISIANA's rural students represent a fairly small proportion of all public students in the state, but they face substantial challenges. Seven in ten rural students live in poverty, 45% are minorities, 13% are non-native English speakers, and more than one in ten has changed residences in the previous 12 months. Spending on instruction relative to transportation is low, reflecting the large enrollment size of rural schools and districts in the state. Outcomes are poor, with only six in ten students graduating (the nation's lowest rate) and rural NAEP scores near the bottom. The rate of growth in the total number of rural students is noteworthy, as is an increase in their poverty level.

PRIORITY RANKING

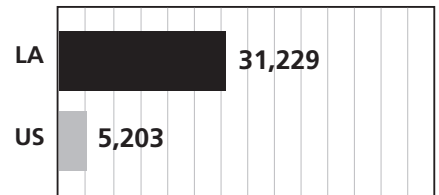
6



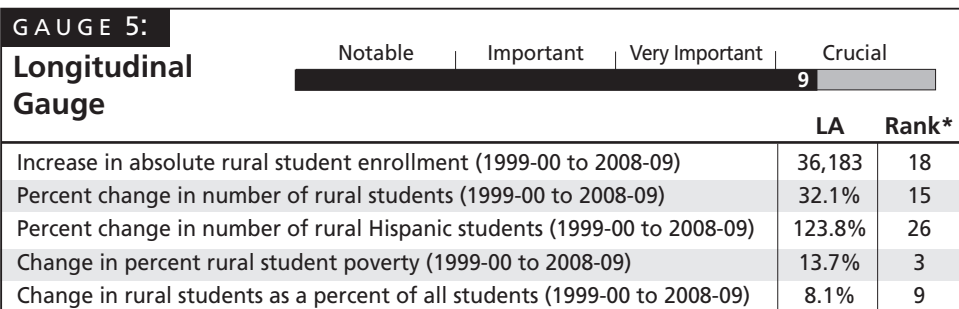
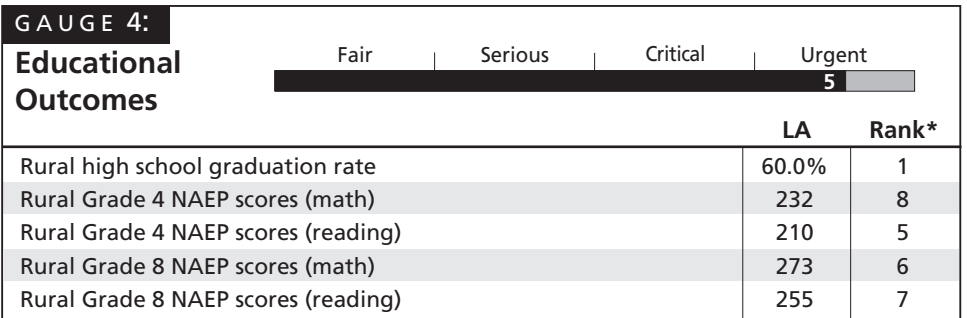
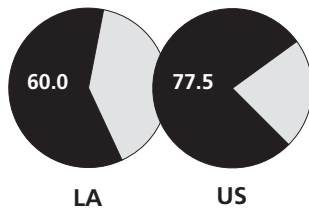
Percent rural minority students



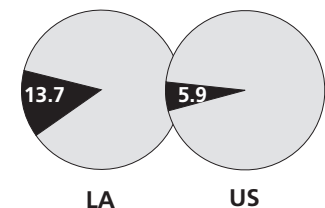
Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural high school graduation rate



Change in percent rural student poverty

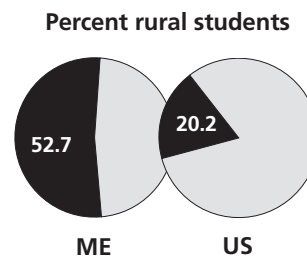
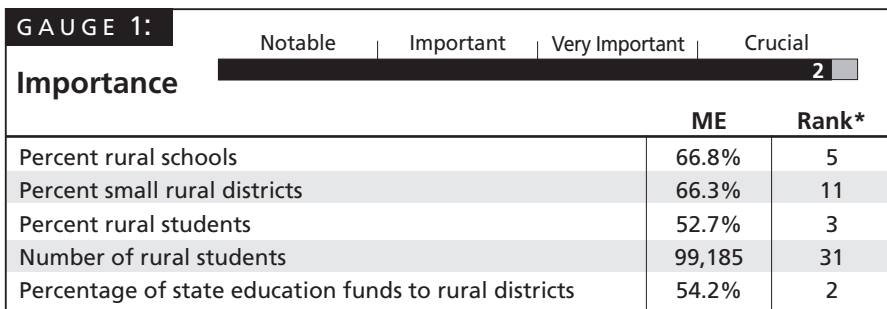


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

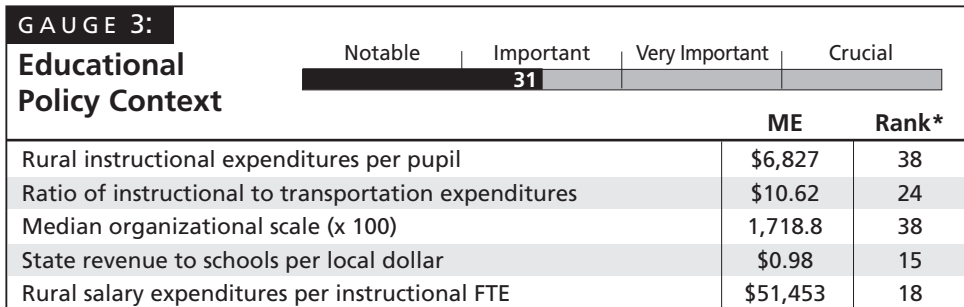
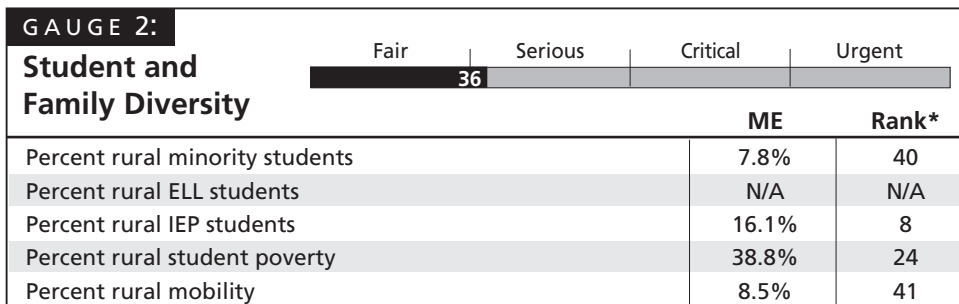
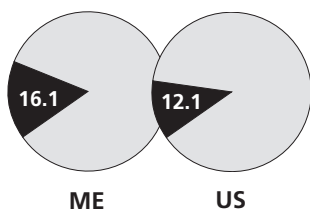
MAINE ranks second highest for rural importance, with more than two-thirds of its schools and more than half of its students in rural communities. Maine serves a large percentage of rural students with special educational needs. Rural students in Maine score close to the median in NAEP math and reading scores in grades 4 and 8. Only Vermont spends a greater percentage of state education funds on rural districts. Moreover, from 1999 to 2008, Maine saw an increase of 8.2 percentage points in the rate of rural students in poverty, as compared with a 5.9 percentage point gain during the same time period for the nation as a whole.

PRIORITY RANKING

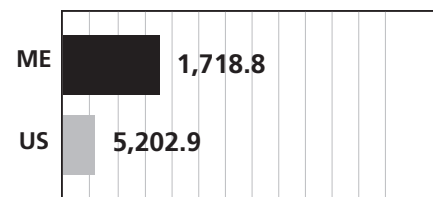
29



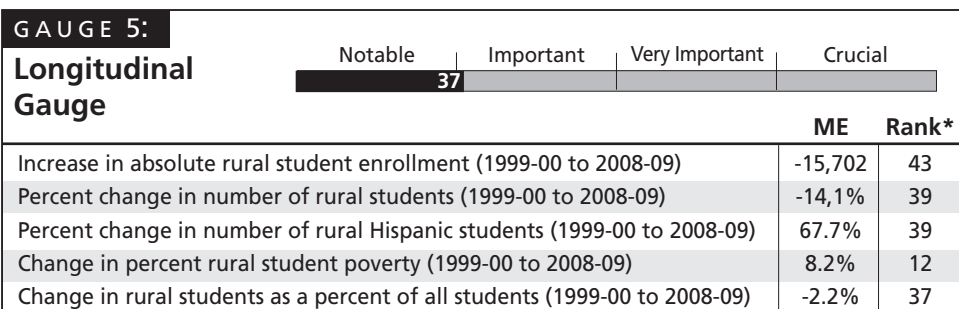
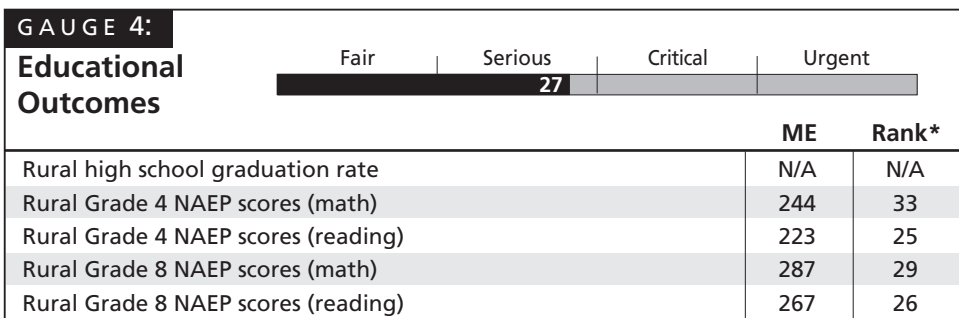
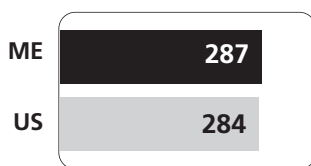
Percent rural IEP students



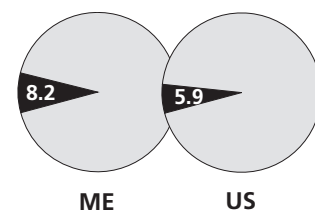
Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

MARYLAND - With fewer than one in ten students attending school in a rural district (none of which is small by national standards), Maryland is not a very rural state. More than one in five students in rural districts are minorities. Most striking in the educational policy context are the extremely large rural schools and districts, second in size only to Florida. NAEP performance in rural districts is among the nation's highest, although the graduation rate in these same districts is below the national average. The total number of rural Hispanic students has increased by more than 200% since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

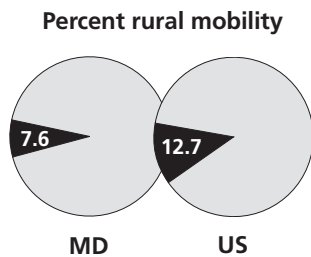
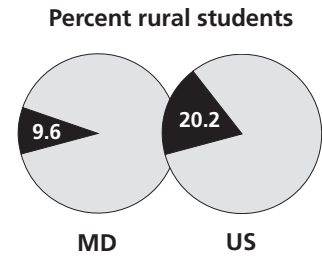
43

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 44

| | MD | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 18.6% | 43 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 9.6% | 43 |
| Number of rural students | 81,260 | 32 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 10.0% | 41 |



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 45

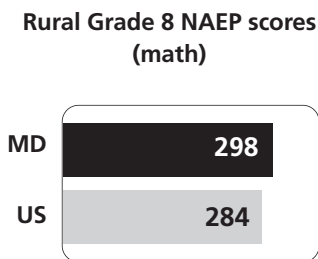
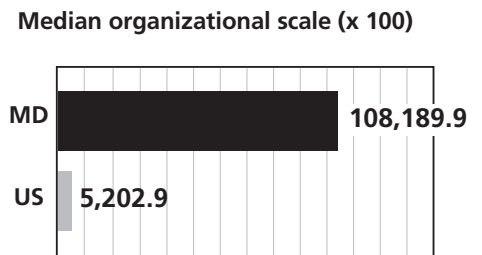
| | MD | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 22.6% | 20 |
| Percent rural ELL students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural IEP students | 11.9% | 38 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 28.3% | 41 |
| Percent rural mobility | 7.6% | 45 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Educational Policy Context 22

| | MD | Rank* |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$7,095 | 40 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.73 | 17 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 108,189.9 | 2 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.94 | 14 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$70,682 | 45 |



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 46

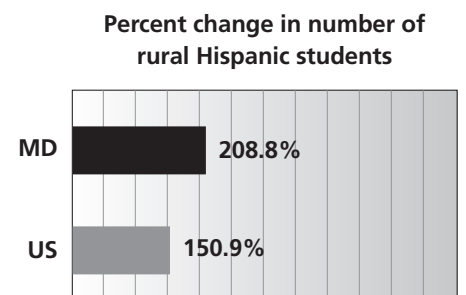
| | MD | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 77.3% | 22 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 253 | 48 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 236 | 47 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 298 | 48 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 273 | 46 |

GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 26

| | MD | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 6,323 | 27 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 8.5% | 26 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 208.8% | 13 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.4% | 31 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 0.8% | 26 |



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

MASSACHUSETTS - With 4.3% of its students enrolled in rural districts and an absolute rural student enrollment of less than 35,000, Massachusetts is ranked as the least rural state. Rural student poverty is very low, but one in six rural students qualifies for special education services. Rural schools and districts are above average in size, and receive less state revenue relative to local revenue than most other states. Rural NAEP performance rivals Connecticut for highest in the US, although Massachusetts's rural high school graduation rate is lower. Massachusetts is one of only three states to report a sizable decrease in rural Hispanic student population over the past 9 years.

PRIORITY RANKING

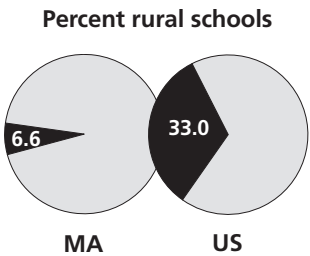
49

GAUGE 1:

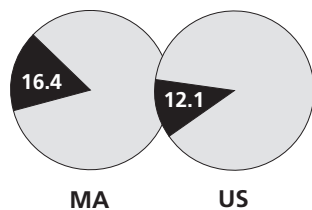
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 48

| | MA | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 6.6% | 50 |
| Percent small rural districts | 53.5% | 20 |
| Percent rural students | 4.3% | 49 |
| Number of rural students | 34,080 | 44 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 4.0% | 49 |



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 44

| | MA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 7.0% | 42 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.6% | 40 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 16.4% | 7 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 14.0% | 47 |
| Percent rural mobility | 7.8% | 43 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

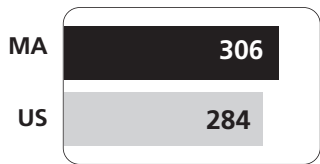
Educational Policy Context 40

| | MA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$7,473 | 41 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.98 | 39 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 7,509.1 | 21 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.76 | 9 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$67,148 | 42 |

State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 48

| | MA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 79.8% | 27 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 254 | 49 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 237 | 49 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 306 | 50 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 280 | 42 |

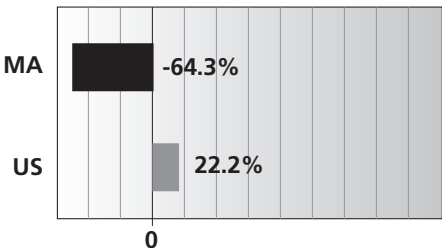
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 48

| | MA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -61,284 | 48 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -64.3% | 49 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -45.5% | 47 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.1% | 18 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -7.4% | 48 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


MICHIGAN - Over 300,000 students attend rural schools in Michigan, one of the largest absolute rural student enrollments in the nation. Nearly four in ten rural students live in poverty, and the percentage of students qualifying for special education is slightly above the US median. Total rural instructional expenditures are below the national median, but expenditures on instructional salaries are relatively high. Rural high school graduation rates and NAEP performance are near the national average. Perhaps the most crucial finding for Michigan is an increase of about 13 percentage points in the rural poverty rate over what it was 9 years ago.

PRIORITY RANKING

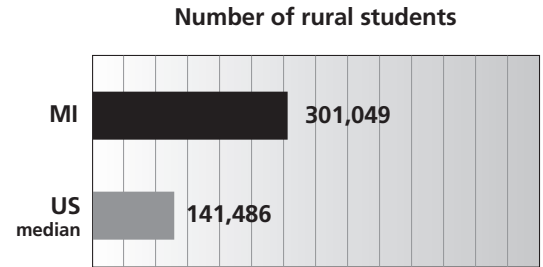
39

GAUGE 1:

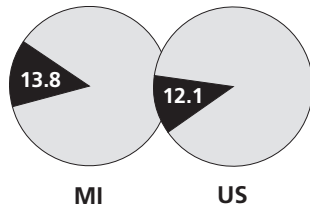
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | MI | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 30.6% | 34 |
| Percent small rural districts | 31.9% | 30 |
| Percent rural students | 19.8% | 32 |
| Number of rural students | 301,049 | 10 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 19.6% | 33 |




Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | MI | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 12.1% | 30 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 1.1% | 32 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.8% | 23 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 37.9% | 26 |
| Percent rural mobility | 10.0% | 28 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

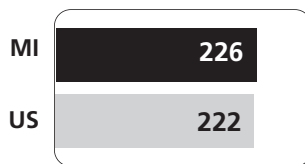
Educational Policy Context 

| | MI | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,249 | 19 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$11.43 | 30 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 4,617.3 | 25 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.88 | 36 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$60,411 | 36 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil




Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | MI | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 78.6% | 24 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 241 | 24 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 39 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 284 | 20 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 266 | 21 |

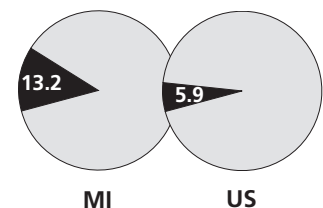
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | MI | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -78,777 | 49 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -20.6% | 42 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 17.8% | 42 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 13.2% | 4 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -3.3% | 42 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

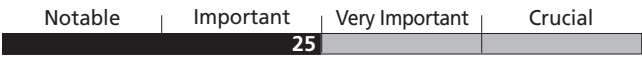
MINNESOTA serves a rural student population of over 200,000, more than one-fourth of all students in the state. Rural household mobility is a full four percentage points below the national average, but the number of students qualifying for special education services is above average. Rural transportation expenditures are high relative to instructional spending, but state contributions to rural districts amount to almost \$3.00 for every local dollar of revenue. Educational outcomes are high, especially in math, and the rural graduation rate is above average. Over the last 9 years, the total number of rural students has increased by over 25%.

PRIORITY RANKING

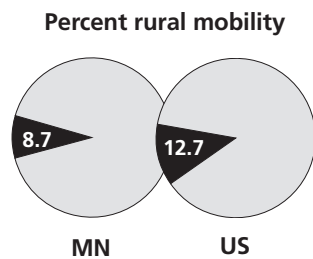
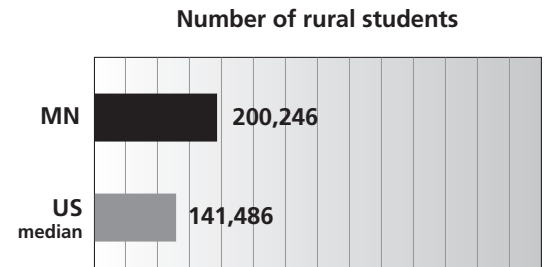
37

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial


Importance 

| | MN | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 43.9% | 22 |
| Percent small rural districts | 41.7% | 26 |
| Percent rural students | 25.0% | 27 |
| Number of rural students | 200,246 | 20 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 24.0x% | 26 |



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | MN | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 11.6% | 32 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 1.6% | 26 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.3% | 19 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 31.1% | 34 |
| Percent rural mobility | 8.7% | 40 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

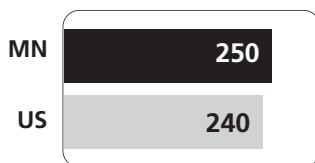
Educational Policy Context 

| | MN | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,754 | 26 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.80 | 18 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 2,215.2 | 33 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.83 | 43 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$59,844 | 33 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures




Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | MN | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 85.6% | 36 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 250 | 45 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 38 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 293 | 44 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 268 | 31 |

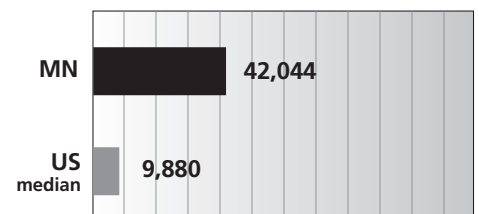
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | MN | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 42,044 | 15 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 26.3% | 18 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 141.8% | 21 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.1% | 33 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 6.7% | 13 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


MISSISSIPPI - The highest priority rural state according to our ranking system, Mississippi is near the top on all five gauges. More than half of all schools are rural, and no other state serves a higher percentage of rural students in its public schools. Rural enrollments are characterized by high rates of minority students and low-wealth students. The educational policy context does little to help, with instructional spending levels below all but five other states and the nation's seventh lowest instructional salary expenditures. Results reflect that context, with rural schools performing poorly on all five outcome measures. Rural schools and students are growing in number, with dramatic growth in the rural Hispanic student population.

PRIORITY RANKING

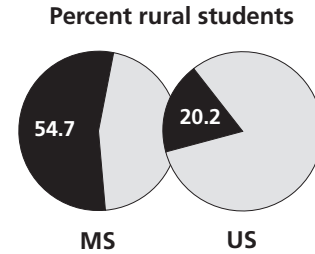
1

GAUGE 1:

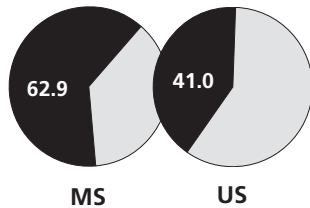
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | MS | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 51.2% | 13 |
| Percent small rural districts | 5.7% | 35 |
| Percent rural students | 54.7% | 1 |
| Number of rural students | 268,862 | 16 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 47.2% | 5 |




Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | MS | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 40.6% | 8 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 1.2% | 31 |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | 62.9% | 3 |
| Percent rural mobility | 10.0% | 28 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

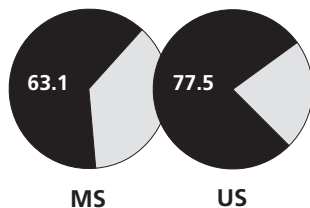
Educational Policy Context 

| | MS | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,578 | 6 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$11.27 | 29 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 14,296 | 25 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.83 | 33 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$46,313 | 7 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | MS | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 63.1% | 3 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 230 | 4 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 214 | 7 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 264 | 1 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 252 | 1 |

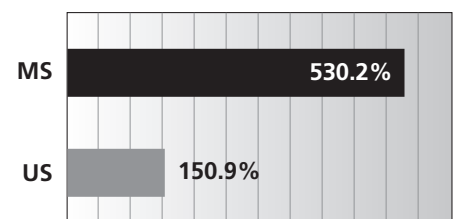
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | MS | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 68,373 | 11 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 34.1% | 13 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 530.2% | 2 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.7% | 45 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 14.6% | 3 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


MISSOURI - More than one in four students in Missouri is enrolled in a rural school district. The state is above the national average on each importance indicator with a large absolute student population and a high percentage of small rural districts. Rural minority and ELL enrollments are among the lowest proportionally in the US. Missouri scored lower than average on every Educational Policy Context indicator, with only two states paying lower average teacher salaries. Educational outcomes for Missouri's rural students were close to average with slightly higher than average rural high school graduation rates. Longitudinal indicators show an increase of 8.3 percentage points in the rural student poverty rate over the past 9 years.

PRIORITY RANKING

21

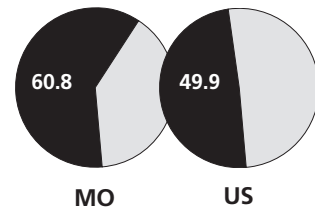
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

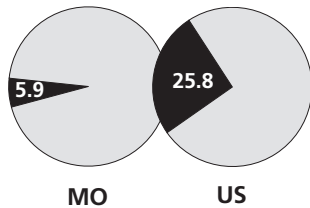
Importance 

| | MO | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 46.3% | 21 |
| Percent small rural districts | 60.8% | 14 |
| Percent rural students | 27.1% | 23 |
| Number of rural students | 241,979 | 18 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 30.7% | 22 |

Percent small rural districts




Percent rural minority students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | MO | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 5.9% | 47 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.6% | 40 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.8% | 23 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 44.0% | 17 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.4% | 14 |

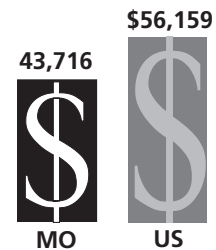
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

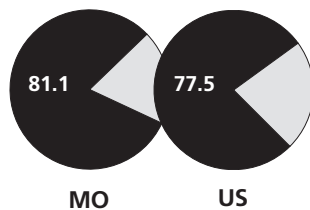
Educational Policy Context 

| | MO | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,996 | 13 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.85 | 27 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 1,656.1 | 39 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.78 | 11 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$43,716 | 3 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

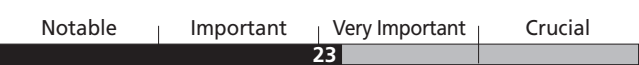
Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | MO | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 81.1% | 30 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 241 | 20 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 32 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 284 | 19 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 266 | 23 |

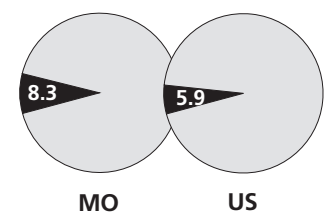
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | MO | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 9,880 | 25 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.3% | 28 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 138.2% | 23 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 8.3% | 11 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 1.4% | 24 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

MONTANA - No state has a higher percentage of small rural districts and three out of four schools in Montana serve rural communities. Rural student populations show high mobility rates and a large percentage of rural ELL students. Montana's rural schools and districts are among the nation's smallest and teacher salaries are low, consistent with bordering states. Educational Outcomes are close to national averages with the exception of higher than average Grade 8 NAEP scores. With a decline of nearly 24%, Montana has had one of the nation's most substantial decreases in rural student enrollments since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

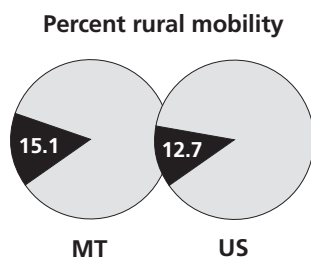
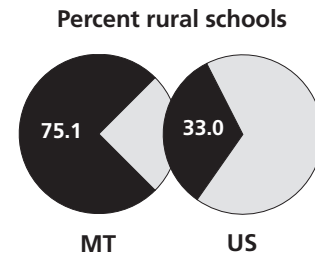
26

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance **4**

| | MT | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 75.1% | 2 |
| Percent small rural districts | 96.3% | 1 |
| Percent rural students | 33.9% | 16 |
| Number of rural students | 48,013 | 40 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 44.0% | 6 |



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity **14**

| | MT | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 19.7% | 23 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 4.8% | 12 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.1% | 29 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 41.4% | 20 |
| Percent rural mobility | 15.1% | 6 |

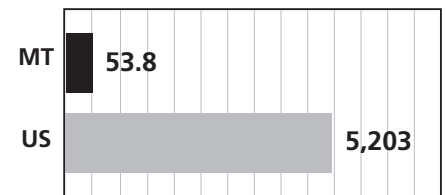
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

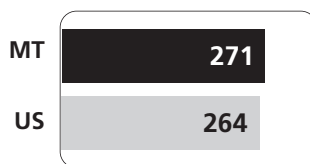
Educational Policy Context **36**

| | MT | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,592 | 36 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.65 | 25 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 53.8 | 49 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.42 | 27 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$47,738 | 9 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes **30**

| | MT | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 79.4% | 26 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 241 | 21 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 223 | 26 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 290 | 36 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 39 |

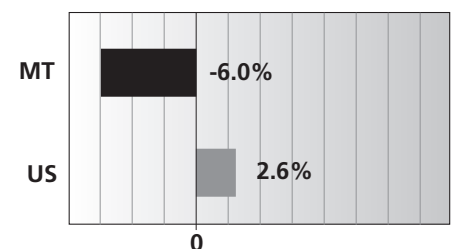
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge **45**

| | MT | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -15,093 | 42 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -23.9% | 44 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.9% | 44 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 1.8% | 36 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -6.0% | 46 |

Change in rural students as a percent of all students

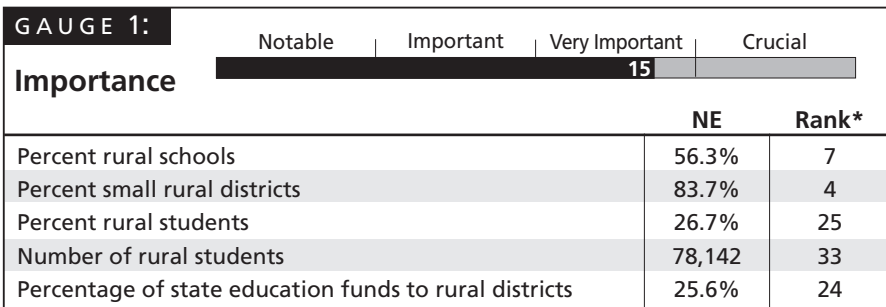


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

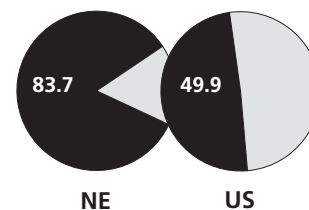
NEBRASKA - Over half of Nebraska's public schools are located in rural districts, and five of six rural school districts enroll fewer than 537 students. The percentage of rural students who qualify for special education services is higher than all but 11 other states. Expenditures on instructional salaries are low, and the state's contribution to school funding is lower than in any state except Rhode Island. The state's rural high school graduation rate is above 90%. Nebraska has experienced substantial decline in the number of rural students over time.

PRIORITY RANKING

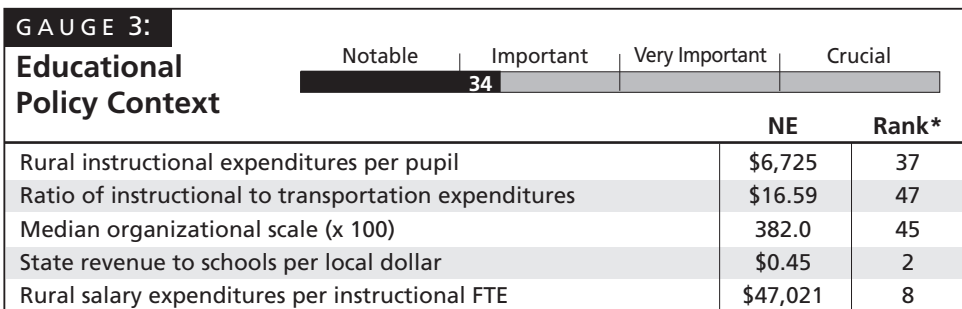
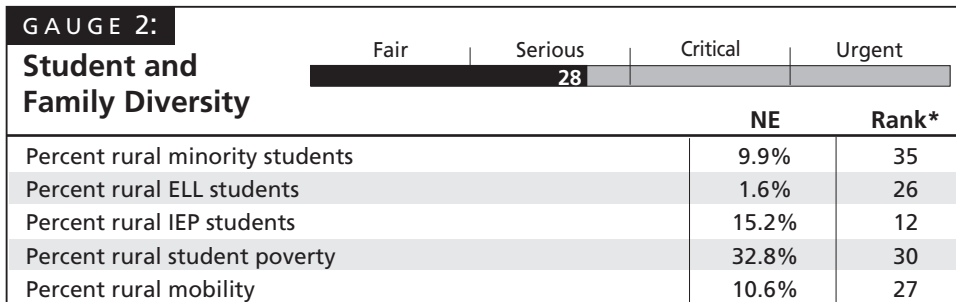
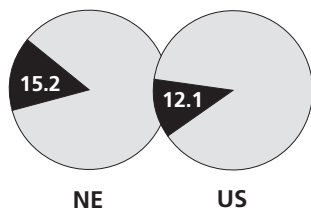
35



Percent small rural districts



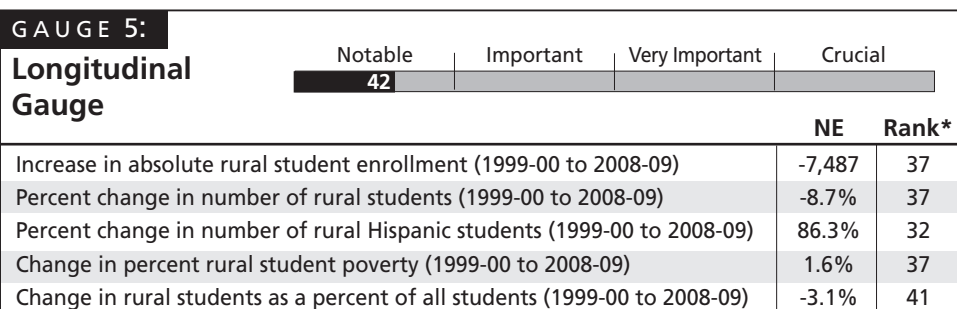
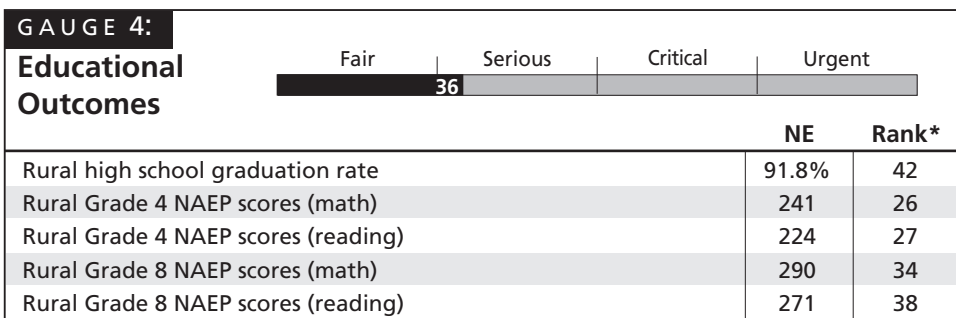
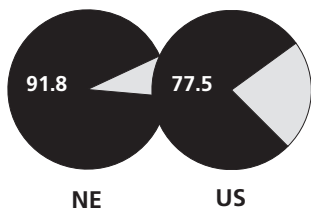
Percent rural IEP students



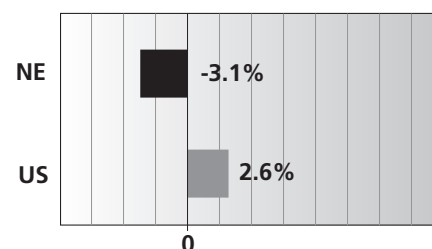
State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural high school graduation rate



Change in rural students as a percent of all students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

NEVADA - With most state residents living in urbanized areas, Nevada is one of the nation's least rural states. The rural student population is diverse, with four in ten students living in poverty, three in ten students identifying as minorities, and one in twenty qualifying for ELL services. Nevada has the nation's highest rate of rural mobility. The policy context is problematic, with larger rural schools and districts than in all but seven other states, high transportation costs, and meager state fiscal support. Outcomes range from below average to near the bottom nationally. The number of rural schools and rural students is growing, and the rural student poverty rate has increased more than in all but five other states.

PRIORITY RANKING

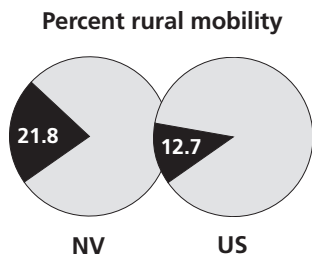
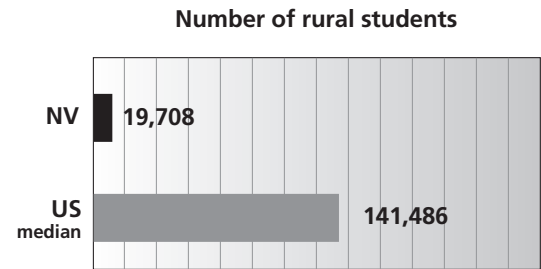
20

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 44

| | NV | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 28.9% | 36 |
| Percent small rural districts | 33.3% | 29 |
| Percent rural students | 4.6% | 47 |
| Number of rural students | 19,708 | 47 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 8.5% | 43 |



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 6

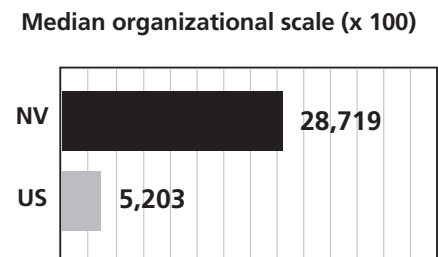
| | NV | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 29.9% | 15 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 5.3% | 11 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.9% | 15 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 40.7% | 23 |
| Percent rural mobility | 21.8% | 1 |

GAUGE 3:

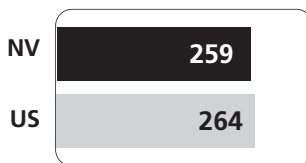
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Educational Policy Context 17

| | NV | Rank* |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,825 | 15 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.49 | 14 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 28,719 | 8 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1,24 | 22 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$60,3493 | 27 |



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 13

| | NV | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | N/A | N/A |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 241 | 22 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 222 | 21 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 280 | 15 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 259 | 11 |

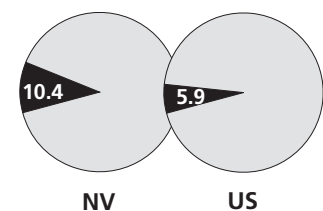
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 28

| | NV | Rank* |
|--|-------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 656 | 31 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 3.5% | 30 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 84.6% | 33 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 10.4% | 6 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.3% | 34 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Just over half of New Hampshire's schools are located in rural areas and one in three students is enrolled in a rural district. Rural poverty and mobility rates are among the lowest in the nation. The educational policy context is favorable, with the exception of weak state support relative to local contributions. New Hampshire's rural students score higher than most other states on both math and reading NAEP tests. The absolute number of rural students in the state has decreased slightly in the past 9 years.

PRIORITY RANKING

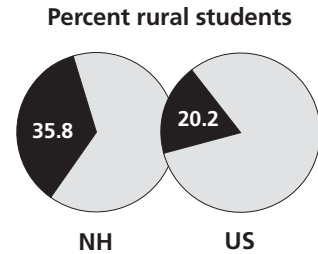
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GAUGE 1:

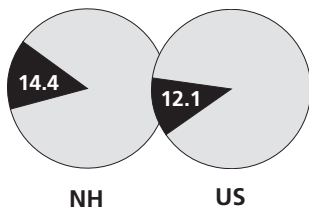
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 16

| | NH | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 51.0% | 14 |
| Percent small rural districts | 55.1% | 19 |
| Percent rural students | 35.8% | 12 |
| Number of rural students | 70,491 | 36 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 37.6% | 14 |



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 47

| | NH | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 9.2% | 36 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.4% | 43 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.4% | 18 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 17.2% | 45 |
| Percent rural mobility | 7.2% | 47 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

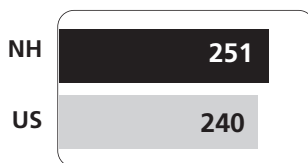
Educational Policy Context 39

| | NH | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$7,899 | 42 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.02 | 32 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 2,079.4 | 36 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.63 | 4 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$60,372 | 34 |

State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 47

| | NH | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 80.4% | 29 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 251 | 47 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 230 | 44 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 294 | 45 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 275 | 47 |

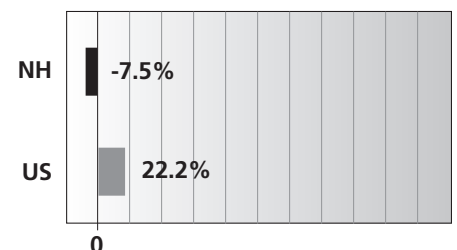
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 36

| | NH | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -5,365 | 34 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -7.5% | 36 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 120.4% | 27 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.6% | 29 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.1% | 32 |

Percent change in number of rural students

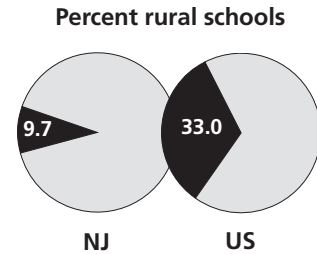
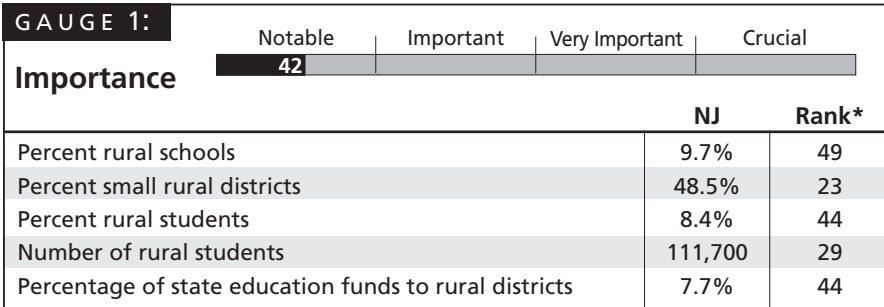


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

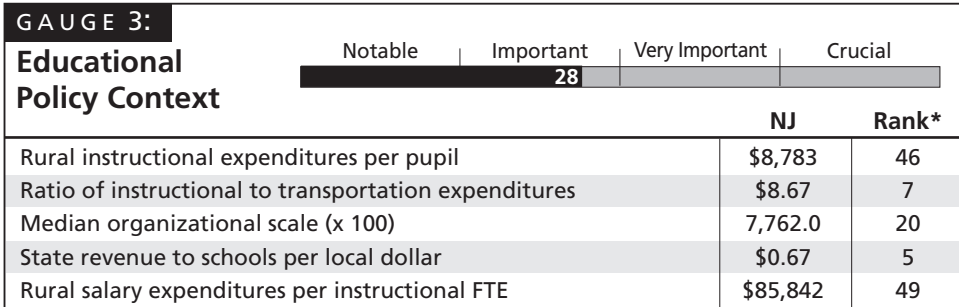
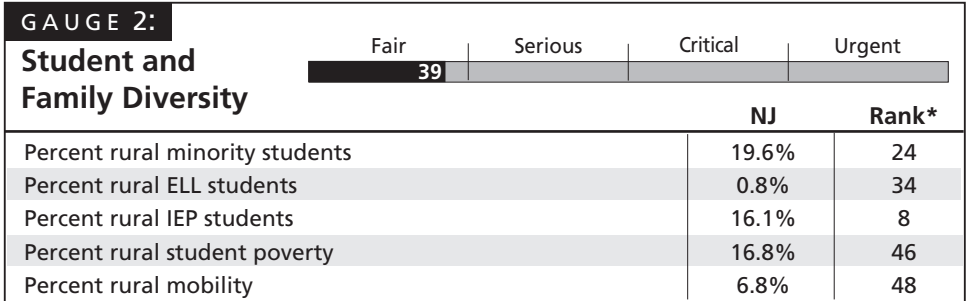
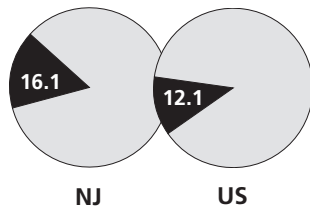
NEW JERSEY - Fewer than one in ten of New Jersey's schools are located in rural areas, but they serve more than 100,000 students. Rural student mobility and poverty rates are low in comparison with other states, but the percentage of rural students qualifying for special education services is among the nation's highest. Transportation costs are high in relation to instruction costs. Rural high school graduation rates and NAEP performance is higher than nearly all other states. The total number of rural students in New Jersey has decreased more sharply over the past decade than in all but four other states.

PRIORITY RANKING

47



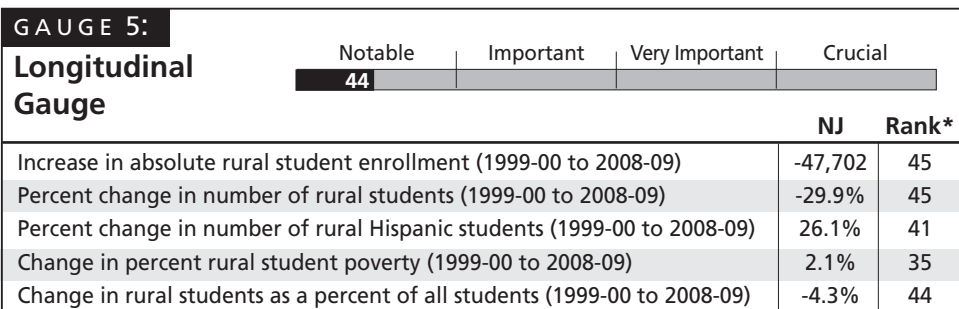
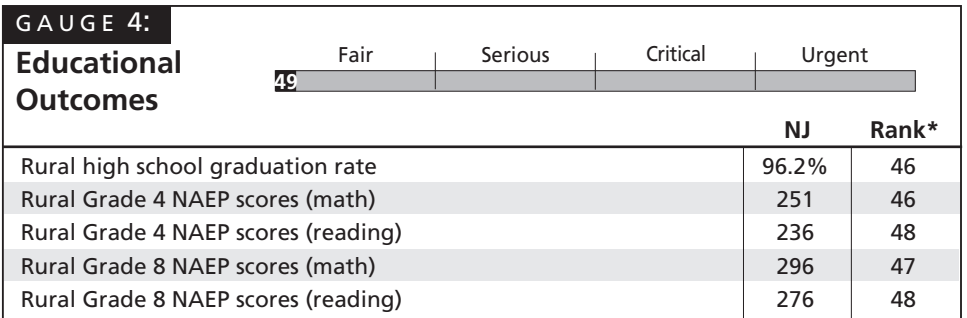
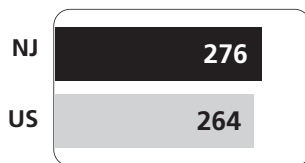
Percent rural IEP students



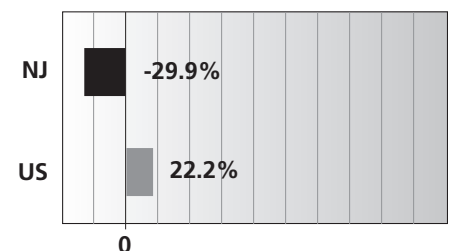
State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


NEW MEXICO's rural students make up only about one-fifth of all public students in the state, but they are one of the nation's most diverse rural student populations. Eight of ten rural students are minorities, eight in ten live in poverty, nearly 14% are English Language Learners, and more than one in ten has changed residences in the previous 12 months. The educational policy context is favorable for the most part, but educational outcomes are poor, with fewer than seven in ten students graduating and rural NAEP scores below those of nearly all other states. The most notable demographic shift over time is an increase in the poverty rate among rural students, the nation's second largest increase.

PRIORITY RANKING

14

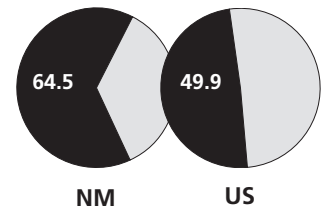
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

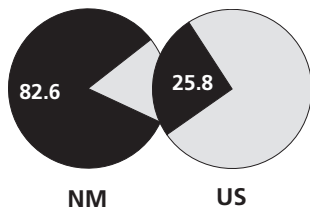
Importance 

| | NM | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 39.6% | 25 |
| Percent small rural districts | 64.3% | 13 |
| Percent rural students | 21.6% | 30 |
| Number of rural students | 70,900 | 35 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 18.5% | 34 |

Percent small rural districts




Percent rural minority students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | NM | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 82.6% | 1 |
| Percent rural ELL students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.7% | 25 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 80.0% | 1 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.0% | 17 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

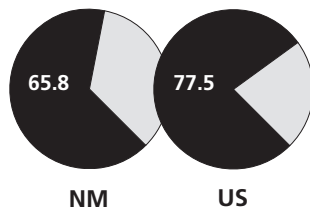
Educational Policy Context 

| | NM | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,115 | 4 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.37 | 21 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 2,137 | 34 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$5.98 | 49 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$55,999 | 29 |

State revenue to schools per local dollar




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | NM | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 65.8% | 4 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 230 | 5 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 204 | 2 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 273 | 5 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 254 | 3 |

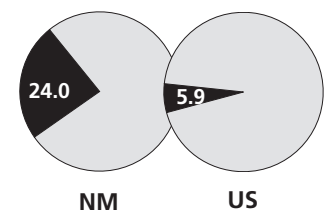
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | NM | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 24,126 | 19 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 53.0% | 7 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 115.7% | 28 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 24.0% | 2 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 7.4% | 11 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

NEW YORK enrolls almost 350,000 students in rural districts, constituting 12.9% of students in the state. Relative to the rest of the country, New York's rural student population is not very diverse, with the exception of the high percentage of students qualifying for special education services. Instructional spending and teacher salaries in rural areas are very high, and transportation costs are high relative to instructional spending. Educational outcomes rate better than the national averages. Of note, the number of rural Hispanic students in the state has grown by more than 176% in the past decade.

PRIORITY RANKING

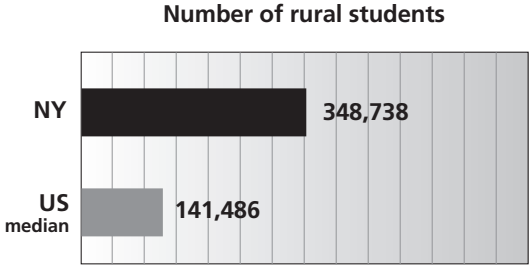
45

GAUGE 1:

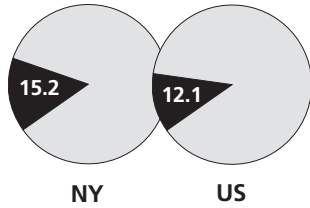
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 36

| | NY | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 18.1% | 45 |
| Percent small rural districts | 29.7% | 31 |
| Percent rural students | 12.9% | 39 |
| Number of rural students | 348,738 | 8 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 22.9% | 29 |



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 38

| | NY | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 10.3% | 34 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.8% | 34 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 15.2% | 12 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 30.7% | 36 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.1% | 36 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

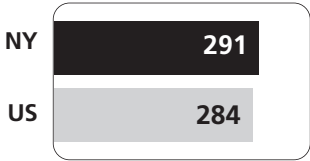
Educational Policy Context 42

| | NY | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$10,214 | 48 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$8.80 | 10 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 4,447.5 | 26 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.28 | 40 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$77,997 | 46 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 40

| | NY | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 81.5% | 31 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 245 | 34 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 228 | 41 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 291 | 40 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 268 | 32 |

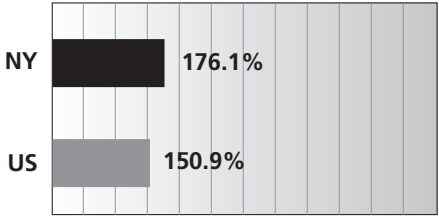
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 31

| | NY | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 13,856 | 21 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.1% | 29 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 176.1% | 15 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 2.6% | 29 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -5.7% | 45 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


NORTH CAROLINA - One of the nation's most rural states in terms of proportional and absolute student populations, more than half of the state's public schools serve rural communities. Rural minority students and rural ELL students make up a larger percentage of the total student population than in all but eight other states. Schools and districts in rural North Carolina are among the largest in the US, and instructional expenditures are among the nation's lowest. Outcome measures range from average to near the bottom, with mixed results on NAEP and a rural graduation rate below that of most other states. The increase in number of rural students is dramatic, and proportional growth in the rural Hispanic student population is the tenth largest in the nation.

PRIORITY RANKING

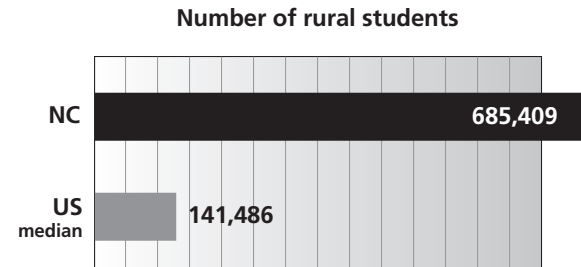
12

GAUGE 1:

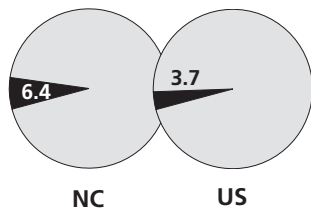
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | NC | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 50.2% | 15 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 47.2% | 4 |
| Number of rural students | 685,409 | 2 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 49.0% | 3 |




Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | NC | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 40.5% | 9 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 6.4% | 9 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.8% | 30 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 31.5% | 33 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.3% | 23 |

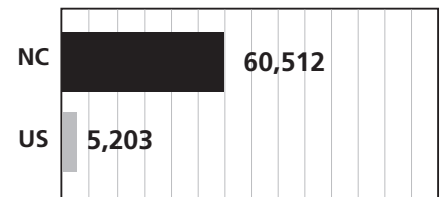
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

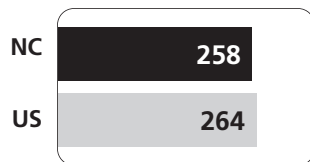
Educational Policy Context 

| | NC | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,010 | 14 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$16.11 | 45 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 60,512 | 3 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.12 | 40 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$53,572 | 20 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | NC | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 75.1% | 16 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 243 | 31 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 219 | 15 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 285 | 24 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 258 | 10 |

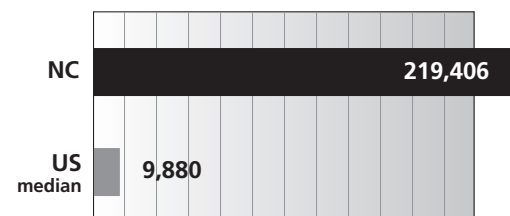
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | NC | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 219,406 | 3 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 46.6% | 9 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 292.7% | 10 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -6.0% | 48 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 11.2% | 6 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


NORTH DAKOTA - Despite an overall priority ranking of 22, North Dakota ranks fifth on both importance and educational policy and context. Nearly three in four schools are rural and only Montana has a higher percentage of small rural districts. North Dakota's rural schools and districts are among the nation's smallest and have low minority, mobility, and poverty rates but higher than average percentages of ELL and IEP students. Teacher salaries are the absolute lowest in the nation and districts face the challenge of high transportation costs and a significant dependence on local dollars over state dollars. The state is above the national average on all Educational Outcome indicators, but longitudinal indicators suggest substantial population losses in rural communities.

PRIORITY RANKING

22

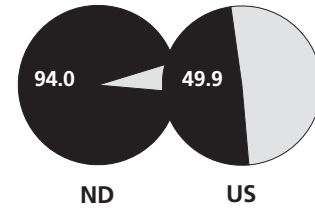
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

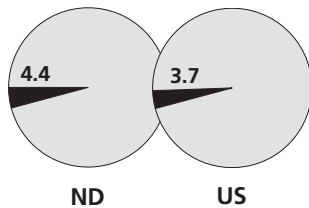
Importance  5

| | ND | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 72.4% | 4 |
| Percent small rural districts | 94.0% | 2 |
| Percent rural students | 38.6% | 9 |
| Number of rural students | 36,508 | 43 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 42.6% | 9 |

Percent small rural districts



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Student and Family Diversity



| | ND | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 17.9% | 26 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 4.4% | 14 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.5% | 26 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 36.5% | 27 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.0% | 37 |

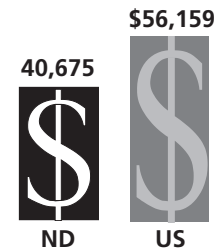
GAUGE 3:

Educational Policy Context

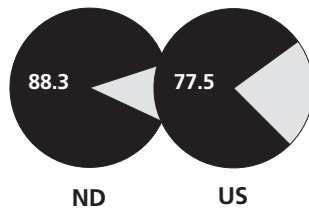


| | ND | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,707 | 25 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$8.14 | 5 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 215.2 | 47 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.70 | 7 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$40,675 | 1 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Educational Outcomes



| | ND | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 88.3% | 40 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 243 | 32 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 224 | 28 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 291 | 39 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 268 | 27 |

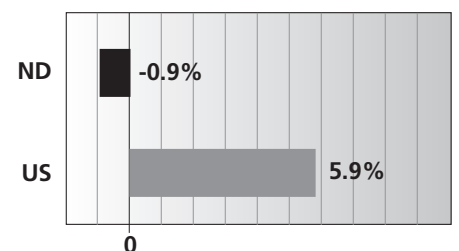
GAUGE 5:

Longitudinal Gauge



| | ND | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -10,147 | 39 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -21.7% | 43 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 45.9% | 40 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -0.9% | 43 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -3.0% | 40 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

OHIO - Nearly half of a million Ohio students are enrolled in rural school districts, the fourth largest absolute rural student enrollment in the country. The rural student population is relatively homogenous, ranking below the US median on every diversity indicator. Educational policy issues are of crucial concern, with spending at less than \$5,000 per student in rural districts and high transportation spending relative to instructional spending. Rural graduation rate and NAEP scores all exceed the national median. The poverty rate among rural students grew by 9 percentage points between 1999 and 2008.

PRIORITY RANKING

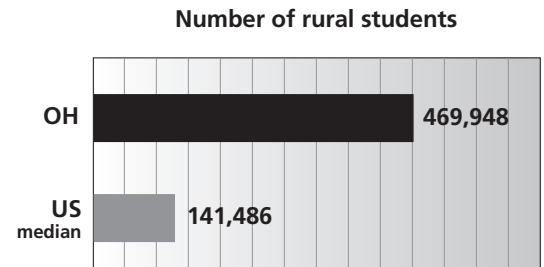
30

GAUGE 1:

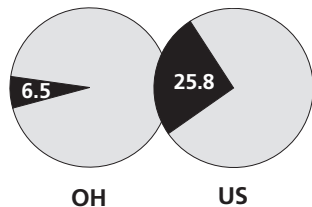
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance **24**

| | OH | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 30.8% | 33 |
| Percent small rural districts | 5.9% | 34 |
| Percent rural students | 27.2% | 22 |
| Number of rural students | 469,948 | 4 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 25.0% | 25 |



Percent rural minority students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity **43**

| | OH | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 6.5% | 43 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.8% | 34 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.5% | 26 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 29.6% | 38 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.6% | 31 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

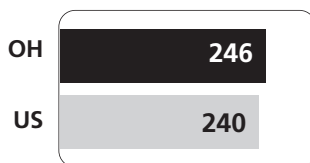
Educational Policy Context **10**

| | OH | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,974 | 12 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.26 | 12 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 6,501.0 | 22 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.06 | 19 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$57,665 | 30 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes **41**

| | OH | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 84.5% | 35 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 246 | 40 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 37 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 287 | 30 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 40 |

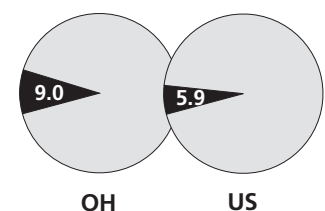
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge **17**

| | OH | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 40,653 | 17 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 9.5% | 25 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 126.1% | 24 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 9.0% | 8 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 3.6% | 20 |

Change in percent rural student poverty



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


OKLAHOMA ranks high in terms of rural importance, with more than half of all public schools serving rural communities and nearly one-third of all students attending school in a rural district. Seven of ten rural districts have enrollments below the national median. Nearly six in ten rural students live in poverty, nearly four in ten are minorities, and more than 14% have changed residence in the previous 12 months. Instructional spending and salaries are low, but schools and districts are moderately sized and the state contribution to school funding is above average. Rural NAEP performance is below that of most other states, but rural graduation rates are above the national median. Of note, increase in the proportional size of the rural student population is greater than in all but nine other states.

PRIORITY RANKING

7

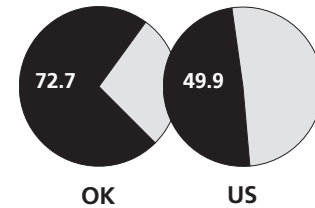
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

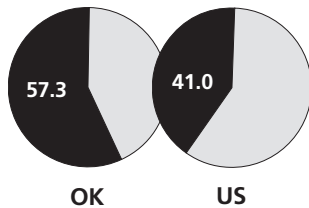
Importance 

| | OK | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 53.9% | 10 |
| Percent small rural districts | 72.7% | 6 |
| Percent rural students | 31.3% | 17 |
| Number of rural students | 201,964 | 19 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 34.4% | 17 |

Percent small rural districts




Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | OK | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 37.6% | 11 |
| Percent rural ELL students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | 57.3% | 5 |
| Percent rural mobility | 14.3% | 9 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

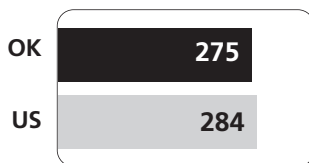
Educational Policy Context 

| | OK | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,483 | 4 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$15.52 | 44 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 859 | 44 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.96 | 37 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$44,363 | 4 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | OK | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 80.1% | 28 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 237 | 13 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 220 | 18 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 275 | 8 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 260 | 13 |

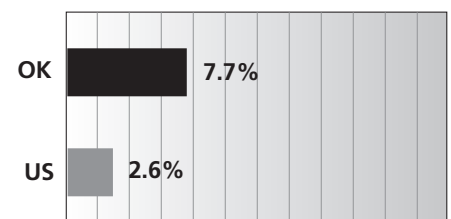
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | OK | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 53,539 | 14 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 36.3% | 11 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 95.9% | 31 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 0.6% | 39 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 7.7% | 10 |

Change in rural students as a percent of all students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


OREGON - One in ten students in Oregon attends a rural school. Yet Oregon's rural school students make up one of the largest rural ELL populations in the US and rural poverty rates are high, leading to an Urgent ranking on the Student and Family Diversity indicator. The state has a low ratio of instructional-to-transportation spending and scores close to average on Education Policy Context and Educational Outcomes measures. The state's 7.8 percentage point increase in the rural student poverty rate from 1999 to 2008 is nearly two percentage points above the national average.

PRIORITY RANKING

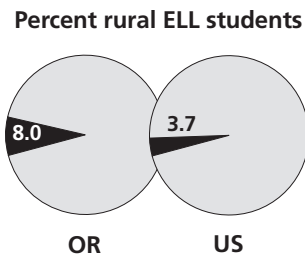
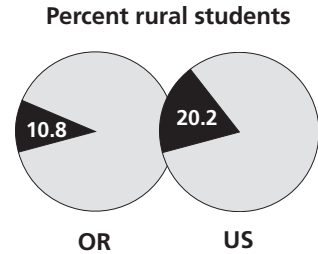
28

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial


Importance 

| | OR | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 31.4% | 32 |
| Percent small rural districts | 66.7% | 10 |
| Percent rural students | 10.8% | 42 |
| Number of rural students | 60,895 | 38 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 12.3% | 38 |



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

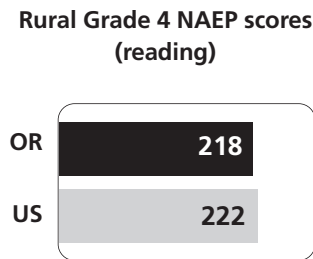
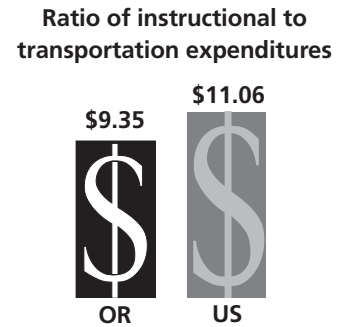
| | OR | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 24.3% | 19 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 8.0% | 5 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.9% | 21 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 49.4% | 12 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.3% | 23 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial


Educational Policy Context 

| | OR | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,856 | 23 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.35 | 13 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 2,592.0 | 30 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.81 | 32 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$57,536 | 29 |



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

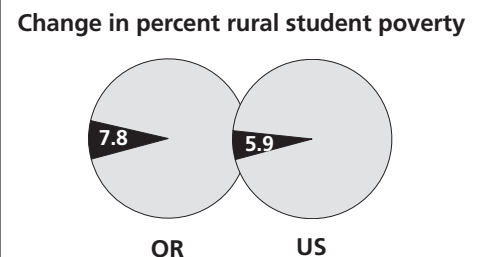
| | OR | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 78.2% | 23 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 238 | 15 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 218 | 12 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 284 | 18 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 266 | 22 |

GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | OR | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -12,261 | 41 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -17.0% | 40 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 15.3% | 43 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 7.8% | 13 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -2.6% | 38 |



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


PENNSYLVANIA has one of the nation's largest absolute rural student populations and a very large percentage of rural students with IEPs. Pennsylvania's rural students perform well above average on all Grade 4 and Grade 8 NAEP scores and graduate from high school at a higher rate than their peers nationally. Only three states spend fewer dollars on instruction per dollar spent on transportation, but Pennsylvania ranks in the top half of states for teacher pay. The state has seen a higher than average percentage increase in rural Hispanic students from 1999 to 2008 though it ranks low on percentage of rural minority and ELL student percentages relative to other states.

PRIORITY RANKING

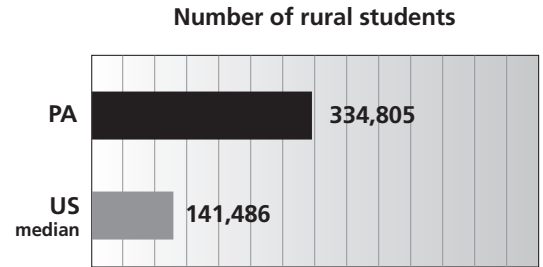
37

GAUGE 1:

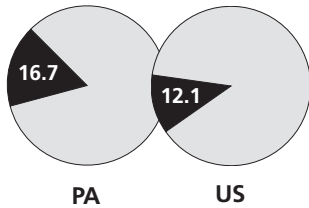
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | PA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 28.1% | 37 |
| Percent small rural districts | 4.0% | 37 |
| Percent rural students | 19.8% | 32 |
| Number of rural students | 334,805 | 9 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 21.5% | 32 |

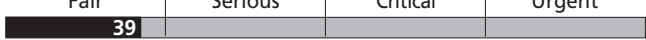


Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | PA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 8.3% | 38 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.7% | 37 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 16.7% | 5 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 29.6% | 38 |
| Percent rural mobility | 8.1% | 42 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

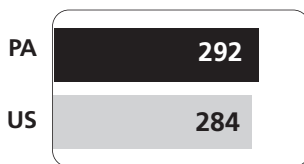
Educational Policy Context 

| | PA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$6,278 | 35 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$8.13 | 4 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 8,795.6 | 19 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.76 | 9 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$59,829 | 32 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | PA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 84.0% | 33 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 247 | 41 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 228 | 42 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 292 | 43 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 272 | 44 |

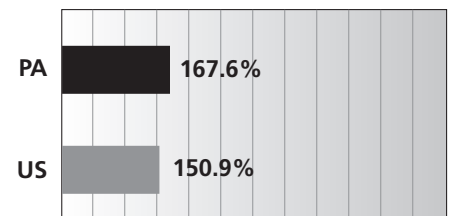
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | PA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -53,335 | 46 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -13.7% | 38 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 167.6% | 17 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.3% | 17 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.9% | 36 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students

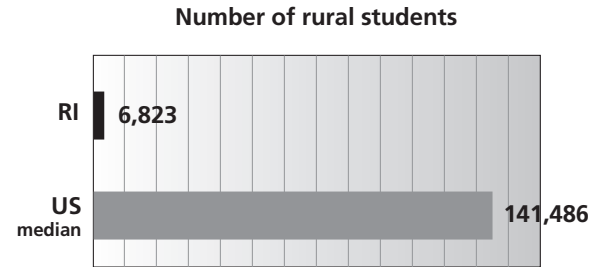
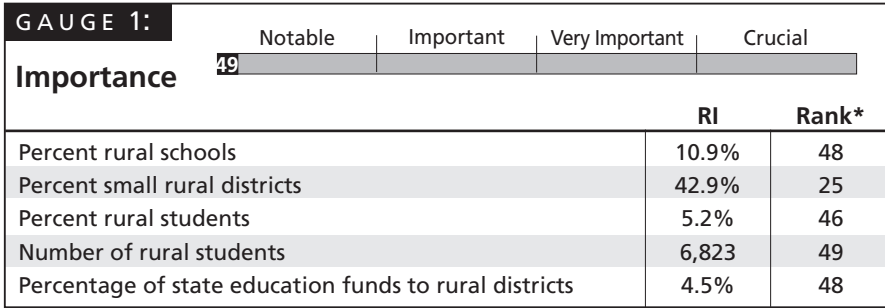


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

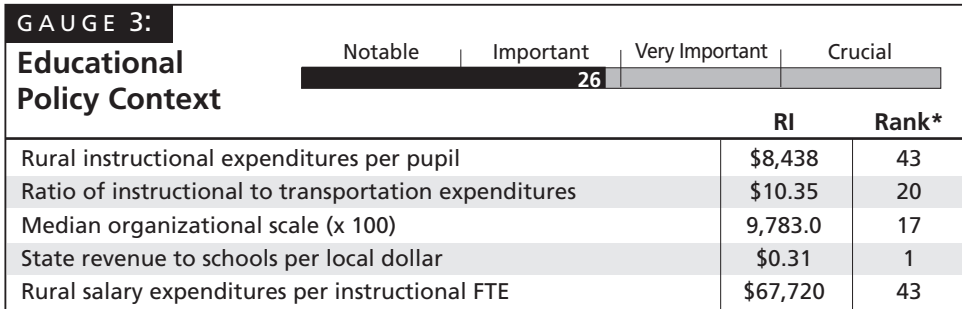
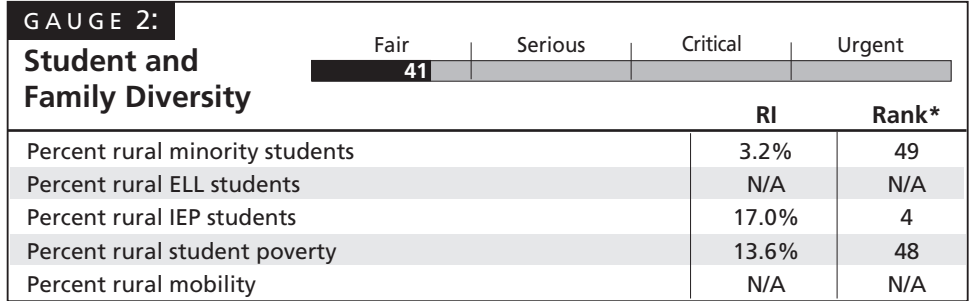
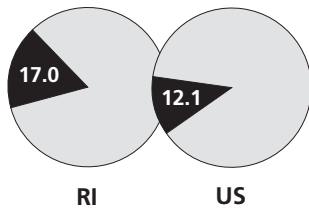
RHODE ISLAND is the least rural state in the US, with only about one in twenty students enrolled in a rural district, and only about one in ten schools located in a rural area. Rural poverty is low relative to other states and minority students constitute only 3% of the student population, but the percentage of rural students qualifying for special education services is very high. States contribute only \$0.31 for every dollar of local revenue, the lowest level of state contribution in the nation. Rural educational outcomes are very high among fourth graders, but only average among eighth grade students. Of note, the total number of rural students is only about half of what it was in 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

46



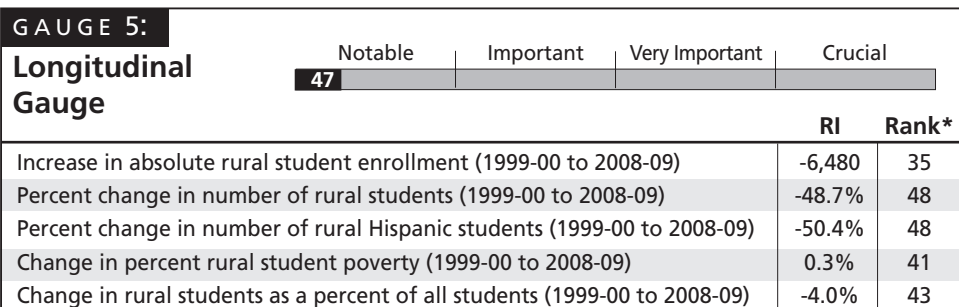
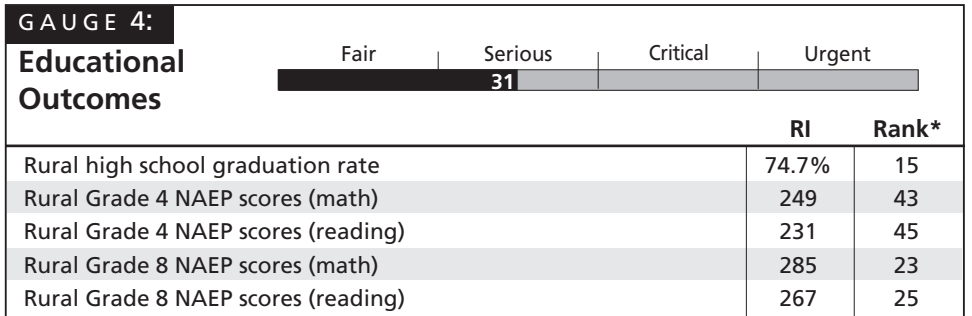
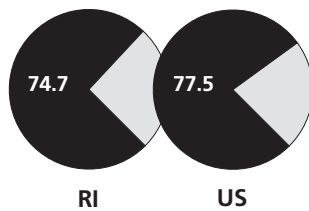
Percent rural IEP students



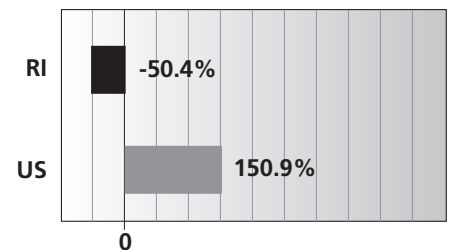
State revenue to schools per local dollar



Rural high school graduation rate



Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

SOUTH CAROLINA - Four of every ten students in South Carolina attend rural schools, one of the largest proportional rural student enrollments in the nation. Nearly six in ten of the state's 285,000-plus rural students live in poverty, four in ten are minorities, and 15% are English Language Learners. Rural schools and districts are among the nation's largest, and instructional spending is well below the national median. Rural NAEP scores are near the bottom nationally. Over time, the total number of rural students increased more than in most other states, and the rate of growth in both rural students and rural Hispanic students is among the nation's highest

PRIORITY RANKING

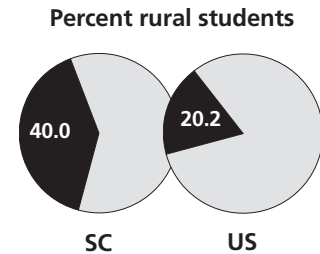
4

GAUGE 1:

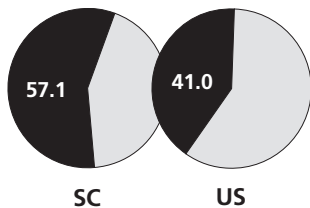
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance **18**

| | SC | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 46.6% | 20 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 40.0% | 6 |
| Number of rural students | 285,442 | 12 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 36.5% | 15 |



Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity **8**

| | SC | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 40.5% | 9 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 3.6% | 17 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.6% | 16 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 57.1% | 6 |
| Percent rural mobility | 10.9% | 26 |

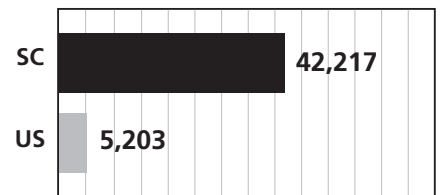
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

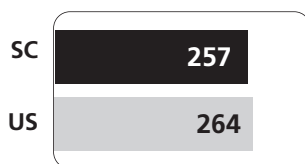
Educational Policy Context **21**

| | SC | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,238 | 18 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.26 | 34 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 42,217 | 5 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.31 | 25 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$60,376 | 35 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes **9**

| | SC | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | N/A | N/A |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 235 | 10 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 216 | 9 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 280 | 14 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 257 | 8 |

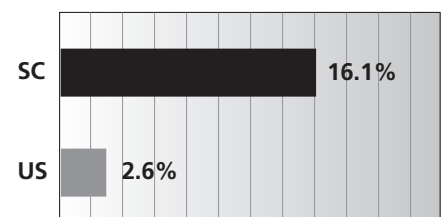
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge **3**

| | SC | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 125,972 | 6 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 79.0% | 4 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 446.9% | 3 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.8% | 16 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 16.1% | 2 |

Change in rural students as a percent of all students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

SOUTH DAKOTA - Ranking as the nation's third most rural state, South Dakota has the highest percentage of rural schools and among the highest percent of rural students and small rural districts. South Dakota's rural schools and districts are small in organizational scale, show close to average Student and Family Diversity and graduate all but one in twenty rural students. Only one state pays a lower salary and South Dakota relies more heavily on local dollars than most. Measured longitudinally, South Dakota is characterized by substantial loss of rural students, increases in the proportion of rural Hispanic students, and increases in the proportion of students in poverty.

PRIORITY RANKING

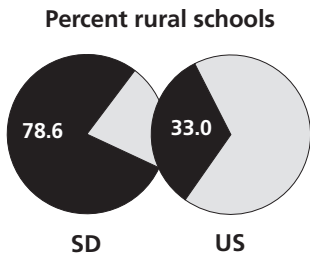
19

GAUGE 1:

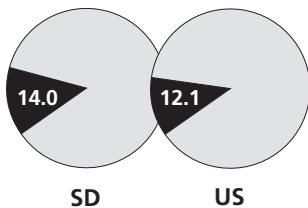
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance

| | SD | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 78.6% | 1 |
| Percent small rural districts | 80.7% | 5 |
| Percent rural students | 42.5% | 5 |
| Number of rural students | 53,760 | 39 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 47.6% | 4 |



Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity

| | SD | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 20.8% | 21 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 3.5% | 18 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 14.0% | 20 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 38.2% | 25 |
| Percent rural mobility | 12.9% | 12 |

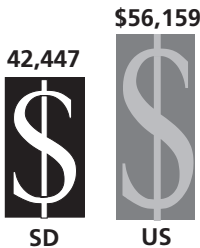
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

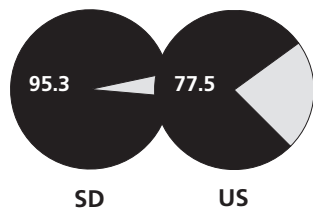
Educational Policy Context

| | SD | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,375 | 21 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$12.07 | 33 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 204.0 | 48 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$0.70 | 7 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$42,447 | 2 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes

| | SD | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 95.3% | 44 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 242 | 27 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 220 | 19 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 289 | 32 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 270 | 35 |

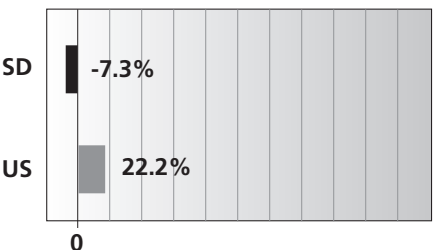
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge

| | SD | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -4,176 | 33 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -7.3% | 35 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 124.8% | 25 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.6% | 23 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.8% | 35 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


TENNESSEE - More than 375,000 students attend rural schools in Tennessee, nearly four out of every ten public school students. Rural schools and districts are among the nation's largest, rural instructional expenditures are lower than in all but four other states, and instructional salaries are the sixth lowest in the US. The rural high school graduation is above the national median, but rural NAEP scores are well below. Growth in rural student enrollment as a proportion of the state's total public school enrollment is greater than in any other state.

PRIORITY RANKING

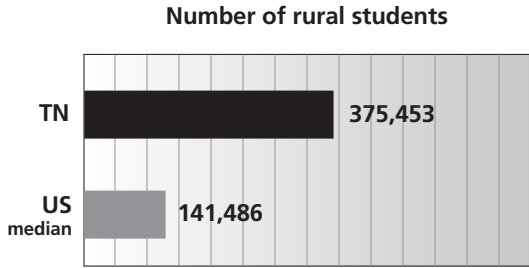
5

GAUGE 1:

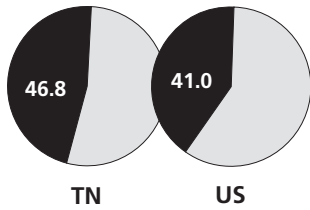
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | TN | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 41.9% | 23 |
| Percent small rural districts | 3.7% | 38 |
| Percent rural students | 38.7% | 8 |
| Number of rural students | 375,453 | 6 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 39.6% | 13 |




Percent rural student poverty



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

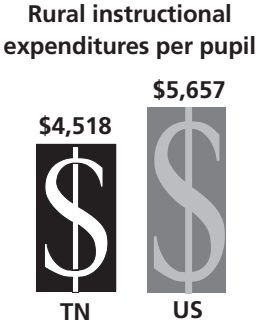
| | TN | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 11.6% | 32 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 1.5% | 29 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.4% | 34 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 46.8% | 15 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.5% | 22 |

GAUGE 3:

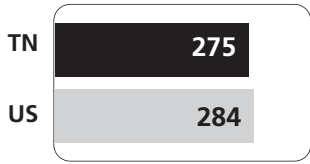
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Educational Policy Context 

| | TN | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,518 | 5 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$14.73 | 42 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 26,091 | 11 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.83 | 33 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$45,983 | 6 |




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

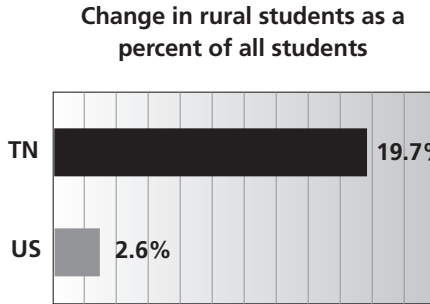
| | TN | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 86.9% | 38 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 234 | 11 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 220 | 17 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 275 | 9 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 263 | 16 |

GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | TN | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 205,663 | 4 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 114.4% | 2 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | N/A | N/A |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 19.7% | 1 |



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

TEXAS - More than 834,000 students attend rural schools in Texas, the largest absolute rural student enrollment in the nation and more than the combined total rural enrollments of 17 other states. ELL and mobility rates are among the highest in the US, as is the percentage of minority students. The policy context ranks at the midpoint among states; of note are low instructional spending levels and a weak state contribution. Educational outcomes are below national averages for the most part, but not dramatically so. Texas has experienced the nation's largest increase in the absolute rural student population over the past nine years.

PRIORITY RANKING

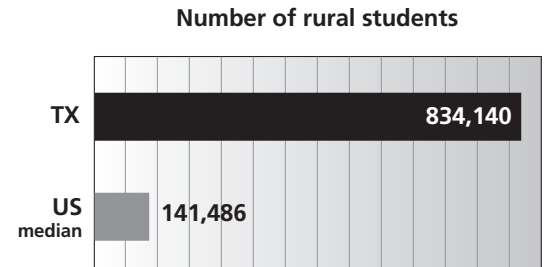
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GAUGE 1:

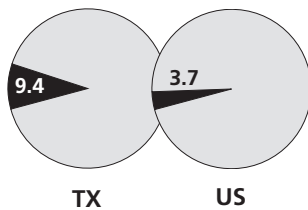
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 26

| | TX | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 31.9% | 31 |
| Percent small rural districts | 51.3% | 22 |
| Percent rural students | 18.0% | 34 |
| Number of rural students | 834,140 | 1 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 17.9% | 35 |



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 10

| | TX | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 43.9% | 6 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 9.4% | 3 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 10.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 42.6% | 19 |
| Percent rural mobility | 13.9% | 10 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

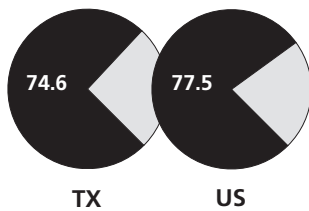
Educational Policy Context 25

| | TX | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,192 | 16 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$16.53 | 46 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 4,272 | 27 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.03 | 17 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$51,351 | 17 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 22

| | TX | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 74.6% | 14 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 241 | 23 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 220 | 20 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 290 | 35 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 264 | 19 |

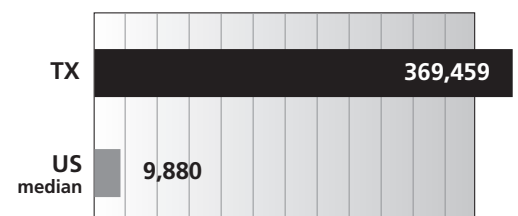
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 14

| | TX | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 369,459 | 1 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 79.8% | 3 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 138.5% | 22 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 0.6% | 39 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 6.3% | 14 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

UTAH - A very small percentage of students are enrolled in rural school districts in Utah, but one-fourth of all public schools are located in these districts. At nearly 5% of the rural student population, only 11 states report higher rates of English Language Learners. Instructional spending is extremely low and the rural schools and districts are larger than the national median. Fewer than seven in ten rural students graduate from high school. In the years since 1999, the rural poverty rate has decreased slightly, and the number of rural Hispanic students has grown by over 70%.

PRIORITY RANKING

34

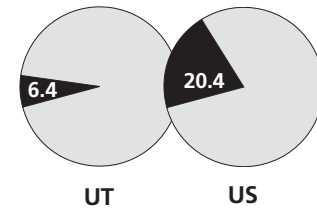
GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

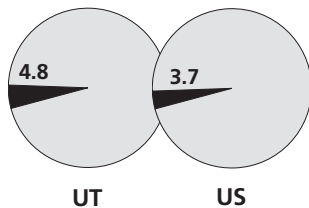
Importance 47

| | UT | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 24.2% | 39 |
| Percent small rural districts | 23.5% | 32 |
| Percent rural students | 5.9% | 45 |
| Number of rural students | 31,167 | 45 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 6.4% | 45 |

Percentage of state education funds to rural districts



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 23

| | UT | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 16.2% | 28 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 4.8% | 12 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 13.2% | 28 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 41.0% | 22 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.9% | 19 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

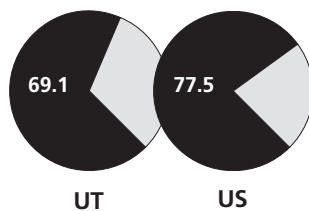
Educational Policy Context 15

| | UT | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$4,471 | 3 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$11.83 | 31 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 11,156.3 | 16 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.57 | 29 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$56,968 | 26 |

Rural instructional expenditures per pupil



Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 29

| | UT | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 69.1% | 10 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 246 | 36 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 224 | 29 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 286 | 26 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 271 | 42 |

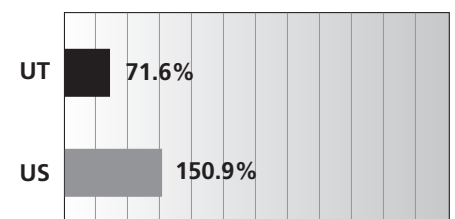
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 40

| | UT | Rank* |
|--|-------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -475 | 32 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.5% | 32 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 71.6% | 38 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.7% | 45 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -0.8% | 30 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

VERMONT - With four of five indicators ranking third or higher, Vermont rates as the nation's most rural state according to our importance gauge. The percentage of rural minority students is among the nation's lowest, as is the percentage of English Language Learners. Instructional spending is high overall and relative to transportation costs. NAEP performance is strong and the rural graduation rate exceeds the national average. While rural student enrollment is decreasing, both rural Hispanic student enrollment and rural student poverty rates have increased.

PRIORITY RANKING

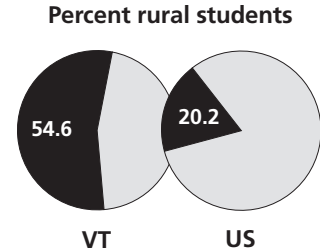
42

GAUGE 1:

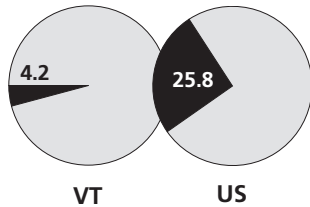
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 1

| | VT | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 73.7% | 3 |
| Percent small rural districts | 90.9% | 3 |
| Percent rural students | 54.6% | 2 |
| Number of rural students | 47,784 | 41 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 55.6% | 1 |



Percent rural minority students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 49

| | VT | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 4.2% | 48 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.0% | 44 |
| Percent rural IEP students | N/A | N/A |
| Percent rural student poverty | 29.9% | 37 |
| Percent rural mobility | 7.3% | 46 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

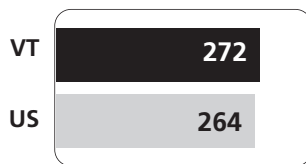
Educational Policy Context 48

| | VT | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$8,651 | 45 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$16.62 | 48 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 324.0 | 46 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.81 | 42 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$59,785 | 31 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures



Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 45

| | VT | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 84.1% | 34 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 248 | 42 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 229 | 43 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 292 | 42 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 272 | 45 |

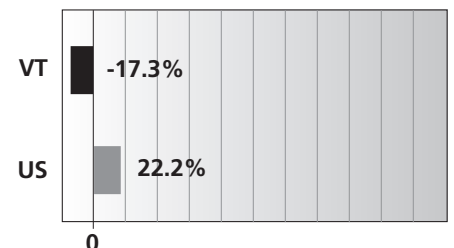
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 38

| | VT | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -9,974 | 38 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -17.3% | 41 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 78.5% | 36 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.7% | 21 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -2.8% | 39 |

Percent change in number of rural students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


VIRGINIA has the seventh largest total rural enrollment in the nation at nearly 360,000 students (nearly three of every ten students). Percentage minority and special education enrollments are above the national average. Virginia's rural schools and districts are among the largest in the US, with higher than average rural salary expenditures and lower than average transportation costs. Despite average NAEP scores, the state has a low rural high school graduation rate. Since 1999, the rural Hispanic student enrollment has grown by nearly 300%, and the increase in rural poverty over the same time period is above the national average.

PRIORITY RANKING

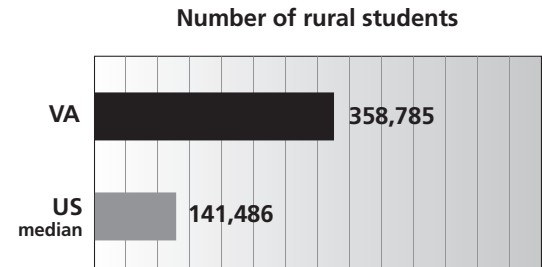
17

GAUGE 1:

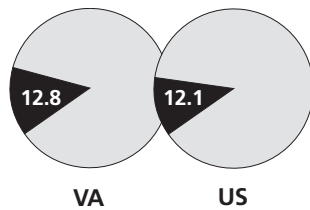
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | VA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 36.2% | 29 |
| Percent small rural districts | 1.3% | 42 |
| Percent rural students | 29.4% | 18 |
| Number of rural students | 358,785 | 7 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 33.8% | 19 |




Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | VA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 26.5% | 18 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 2.3% | 22 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.8% | 30 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 35.1% | 28 |
| Percent rural mobility | 11.6% | 21 |

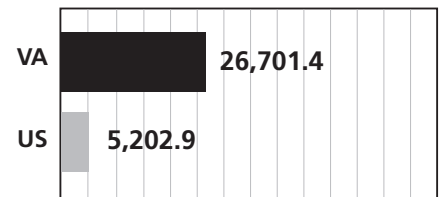
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

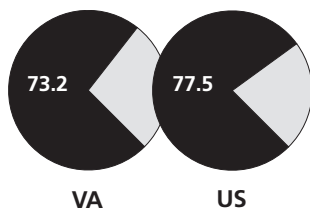
Educational Policy Context 

| | VA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,780 | 27 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$9.72 | 16 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 26,701.4 | 10 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$1.11 | 20 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$67,053 | 41 |

Median organizational scale (x 100)




Rural high school graduation rate



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | VA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 73.2% | 13 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 240 | 18 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 226 | 35 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 283 | 17 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 263 | 18 |

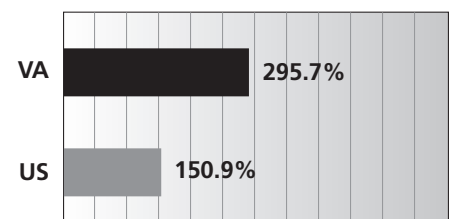
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | VA | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 76,497 | 9 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 26.7% | 17 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 295.7% | 9 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.5% | 24 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 4.1% | 19 |

Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

WASHINGTON - With Washington's population concentrated in urban areas, only one in nine students is enrolled in a rural district. The percentage of rural minority students is higher than all but 15 states, and the percentage of rural English Language Learners is the seventh highest in the country. Expenditures on instructional salaries in rural areas are more than \$10,000 higher than the national average. Rural educational outcomes are well below the national median in the fourth grade, but slightly above the median at the eighth grade level. Washington ranks low on indicators measuring demographic trends, with one of the smallest percentage increases in rural Hispanic students since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

40

GAUGE 1:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

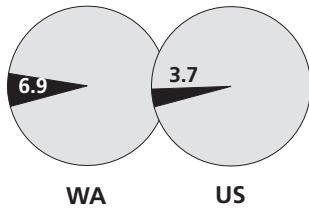
Importance 38

| | WA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 26.7% | 38 |
| Percent small rural districts | 60.4% | 15 |
| Percent rural students | 11.2% | 41 |
| Number of rural students | 116,053 | 27 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 11.4% | 39 |

Percent small rural districts



Percent rural ELL students



GAUGE 2:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 25

| | WA | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 29.0% | 16 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 6.9% | 7 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 12.2% | 36 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 41.4% | 20 |
| Percent rural mobility | 9.3% | 35 |

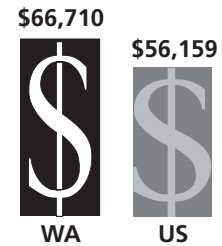
GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

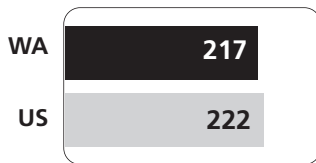
Educational Policy Context 45

| | WA | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,632 | 24 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$10.80 | 26 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 3,160.3 | 28 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.98 | 44 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$66,710 | 39 |

Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE



Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading)



GAUGE 4:

Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 21

| | WA | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 76.5% | 20 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 237 | 14 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 217 | 10 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 289 | 33 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 268 | 28 |

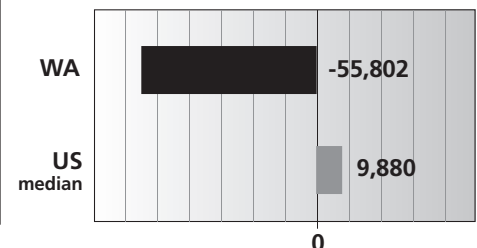
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 45

| | WA | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -55,802 | 47 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -33.4% | 46 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 5.8% | 45 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (2002-03 to 2008-09) | 2.8% | 28 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -6.0% | 46 |

Increase in absolute rural student enrollment



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent


WEST VIRGINIA - More than half of West Virginia schools are in rural areas and more than a third of the state's students attend rural schools. Its rural schools and districts are among the largest in the US, and transportation costs are the nation's most burdensome. Rural student poverty rates and the percentage of students qualifying for special education are high, while average teacher salaries are among the lowest in the US. Three in ten rural students in West Virginia do not graduate from high school, and NAEP scores in math and reading are among the nation's lowest, with only one state scoring lower on NAEP Grade 8 math. Since 1999, proportional growth in the rural Hispanic student population is higher than in any other state.

PRIORITY RANKING

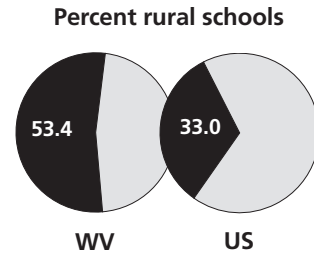
18

GAUGE 1:

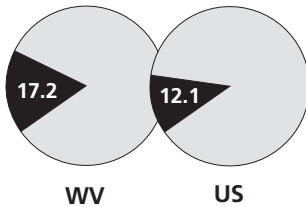
Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Importance 

| | WV | Rank* |
|--|---------|-------|
| Percent rural schools | 53.4% | 11 |
| Percent small rural districts | 0.0% | 43 |
| Percent rural students | 37.6% | 11 |
| Number of rural students | 105,874 | 30 |
| Percentage of state education funds to rural districts | 41.2% | 11 |




Percent rural IEP students



GAUGE 2:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Student and Family Diversity 

| | WV | Rank* |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent rural minority students | 6.2% | 45 |
| Percent rural ELL students | 0.7% | 37 |
| Percent rural IEP students | 17.2% | 3 |
| Percent rural student poverty | 52.5% | 8 |
| Percent rural mobility | 8.8% | 38 |

GAUGE 3:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

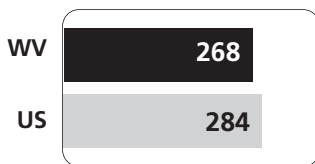
Educational Policy Context 

| | WV | Rank* |
|---|----------|-------|
| Rural instructional expenditures per pupil | \$5,856 | 29 |
| Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures | \$6.92 | 1 |
| Median organizational scale (x 100) | 12,670.3 | 14 |
| State revenue to schools per local dollar | \$2.01 | 39 |
| Rural salary expenditures per instructional FTE | \$50,067 | 15 |

Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures




Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math)



GAUGE 4:


Fair | Serious | Critical | Urgent

Educational Outcomes 

| | WV | Rank* |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rural high school graduation rate | 68.9% | 9 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (math) | 230 | 6 |
| Rural Grade 4 NAEP scores (reading) | 212 | 6 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (math) | 268 | 2 |
| Rural Grade 8 NAEP scores (reading) | 255 | 5 |

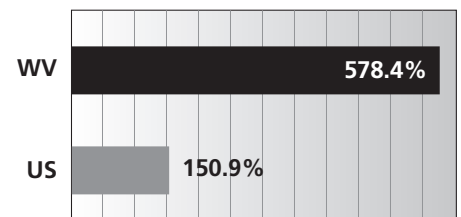
GAUGE 5:

Notable | Important | Very Important | Crucial

Longitudinal Gauge 

| | WV | Rank* |
|--|--------|-------|
| Increase in absolute rural student enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -6,486 | 36 |
| Percent change in number of rural students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -5.8% | 34 |
| Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | 578.4% | 1 |
| Change in percent rural student poverty (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -4.3% | 47 |
| Change in rural students as a percent of all students (1999-00 to 2008-09) | -1.1% | 32 |

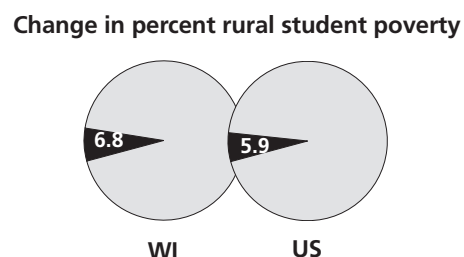
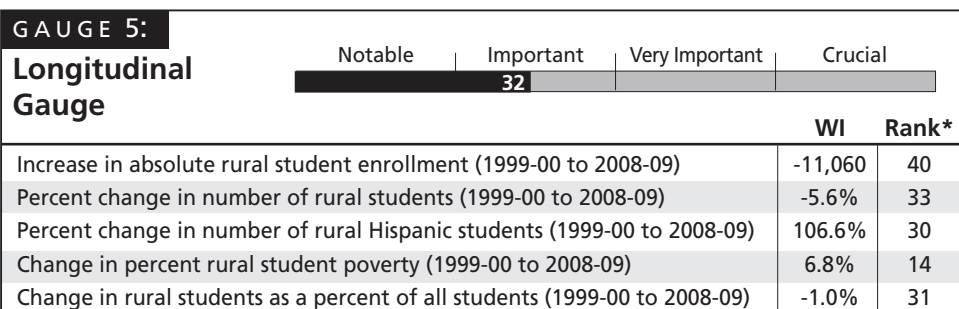
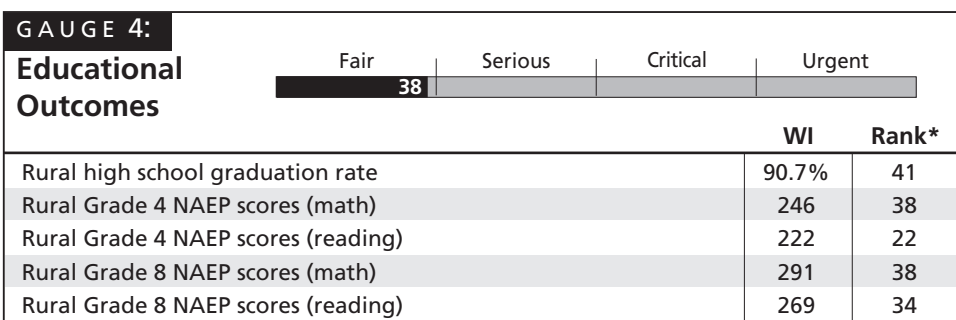
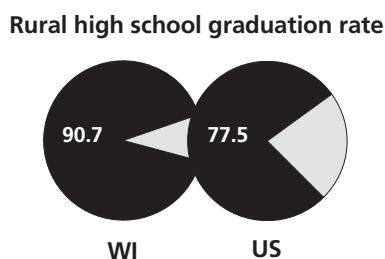
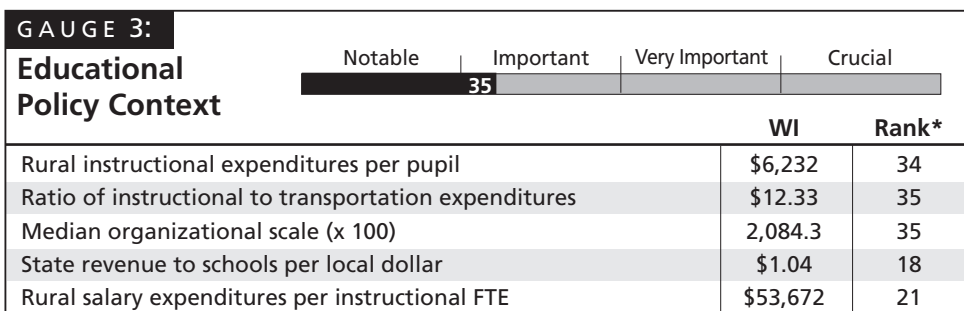
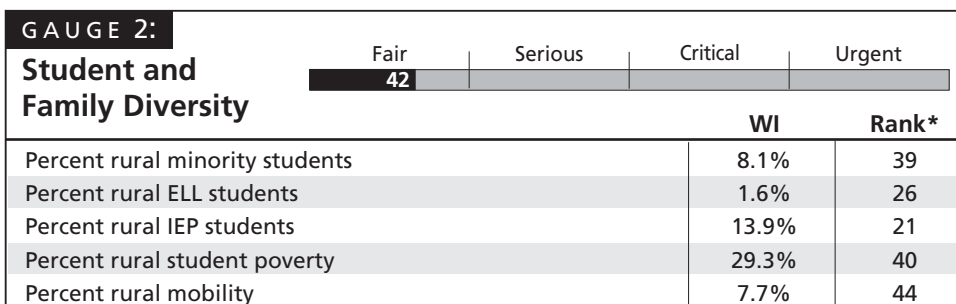
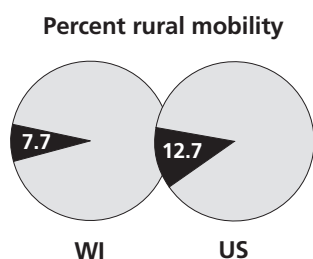
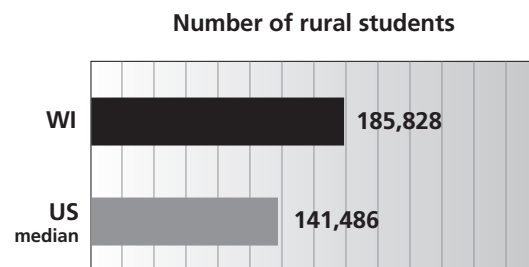
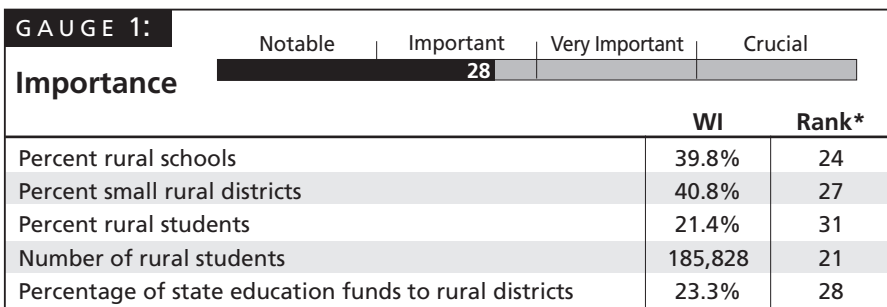
Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

WISCONSIN - Although it ranks near the middle on all indicators of rural importance, Wisconsin's absolute student rural enrollment exceeds the US median by more than 40,000 students. Rural poverty and rural household mobility are both very low relative to national averages. The educational policy context is close to the US median in all areas. The 90.7% rural high school graduation rate is well above the national average of 77.5%. Over the past decade, there has been a relatively large increase in the poverty rate among rural students.

PRIORITY RANKING
41

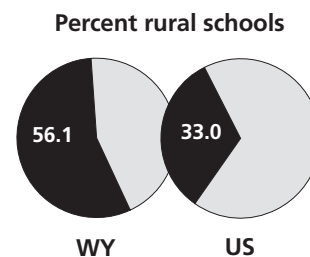
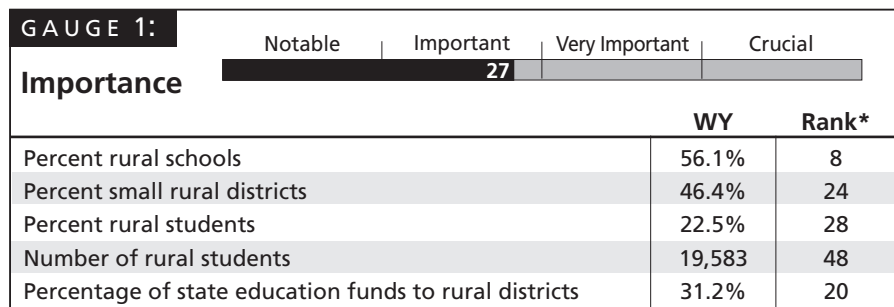


* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

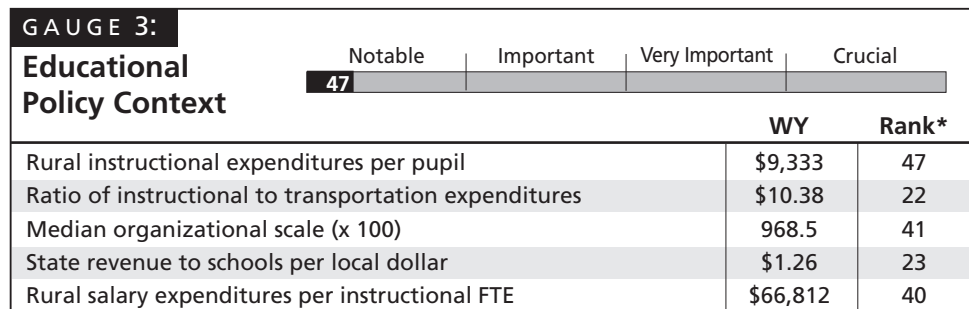
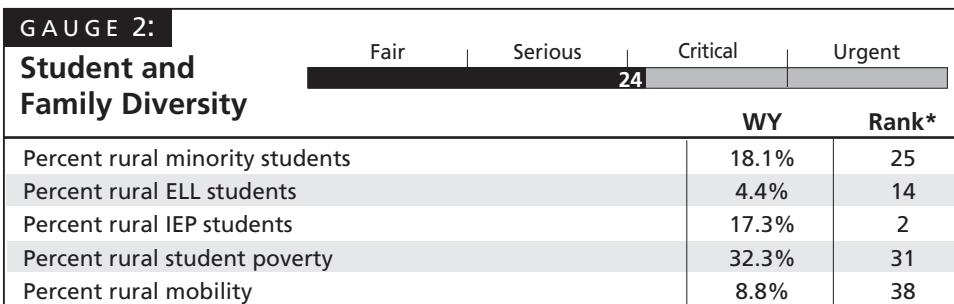
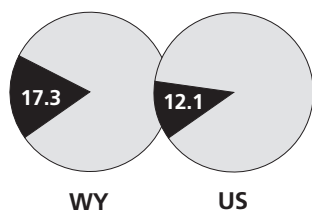
WYOMING has the third smallest absolute rural student enrollment in the US with fewer than 20,000 students. Only Kentucky has a higher percentage of rural students who qualify for special education services, and the percentage of English Language Learners is relatively high. The Educational Policy Context is positive overall, although pupil transportation costs relative to spending on instruction is above the national median and the level of state contribution to education costs is above the national median. Of note, the number of rural Hispanic students in Wyoming grew by nearly 172% in the years since 1999.

PRIORITY RANKING

33



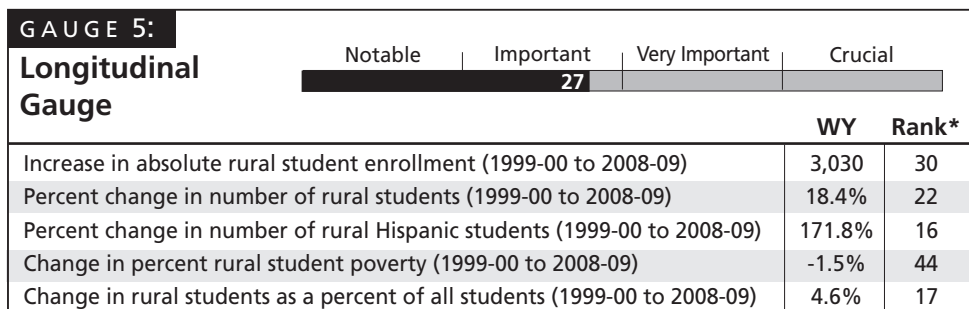
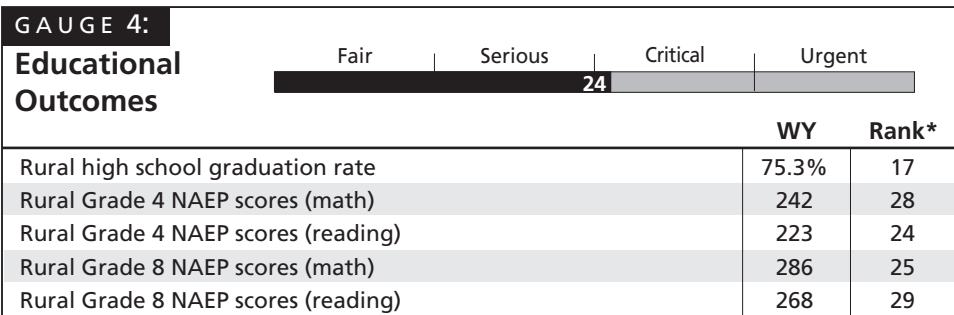
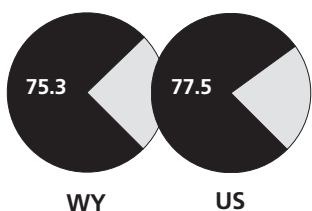
Percent rural IEP students



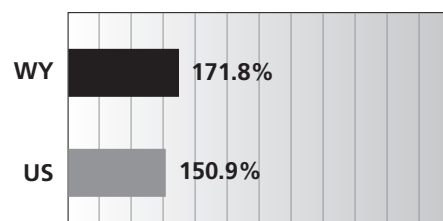
Ratio of instructional to transportation expenditures



Rural high school graduation rate



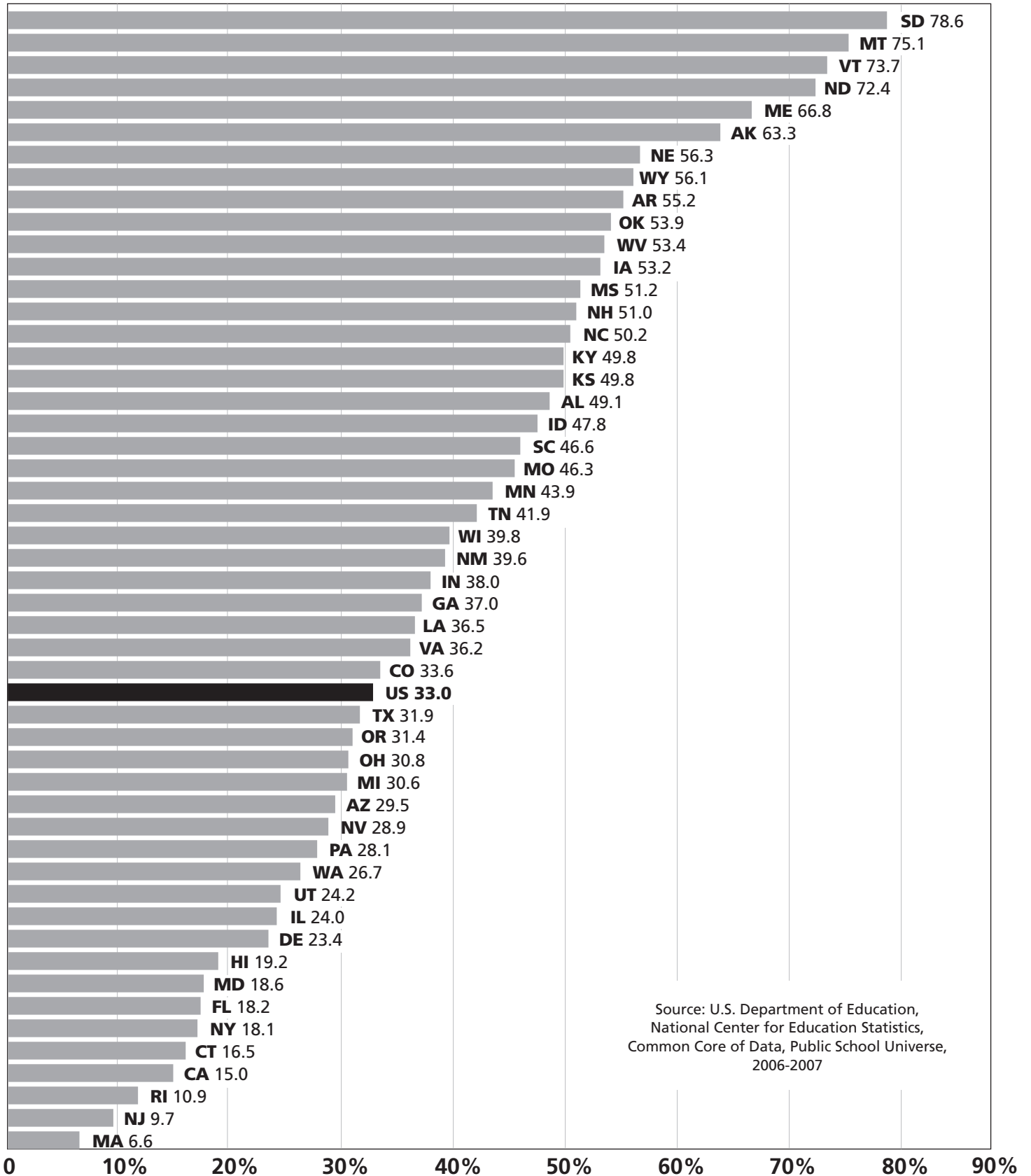
Percent change in number of rural Hispanic students



* A rank of 1 is most crucial or most urgent

Percent Rural Schools

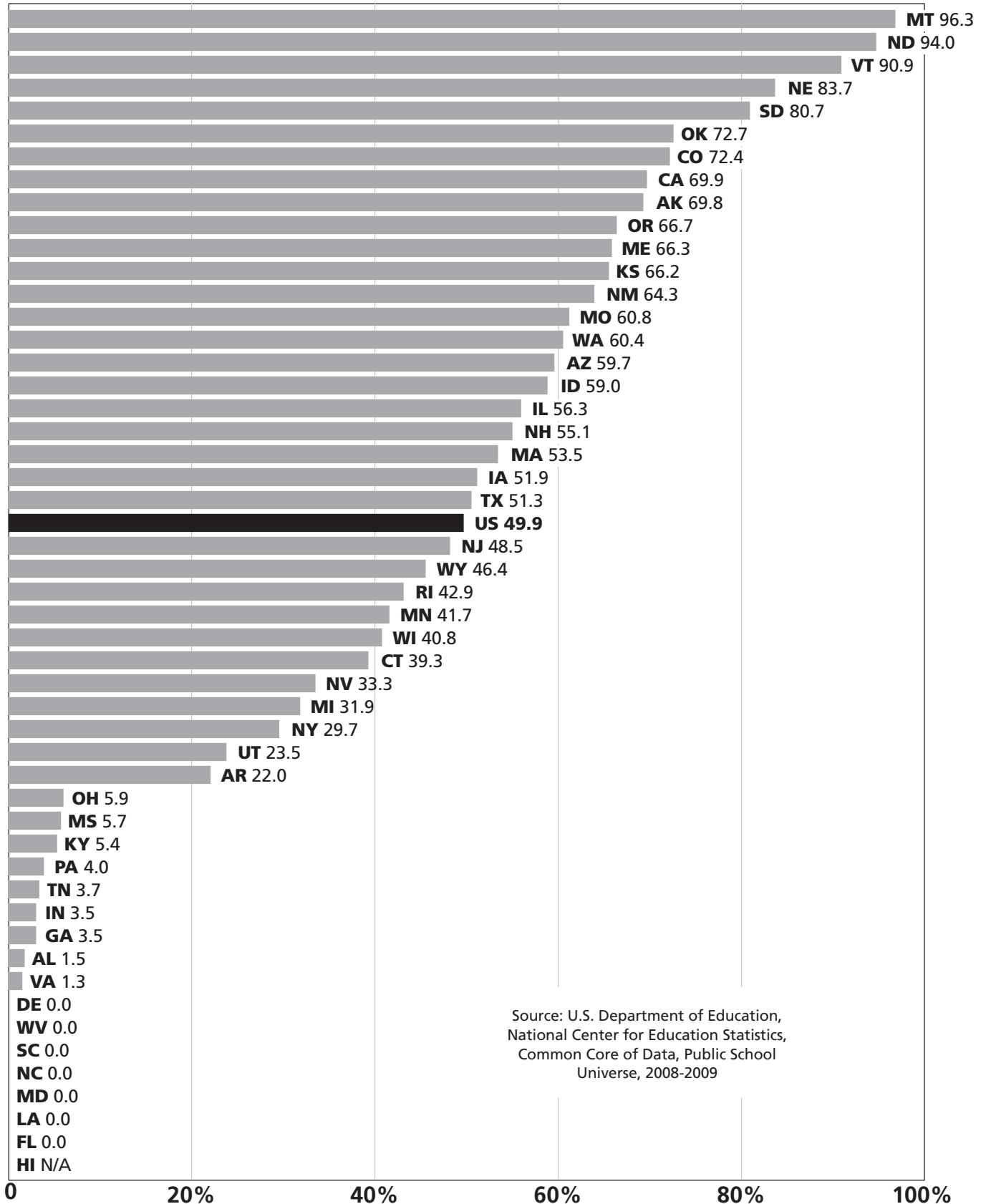
The number of public schools designated as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics, expressed as a percentage of the total number of all public schools in the state.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public School Universe, 2006-2007

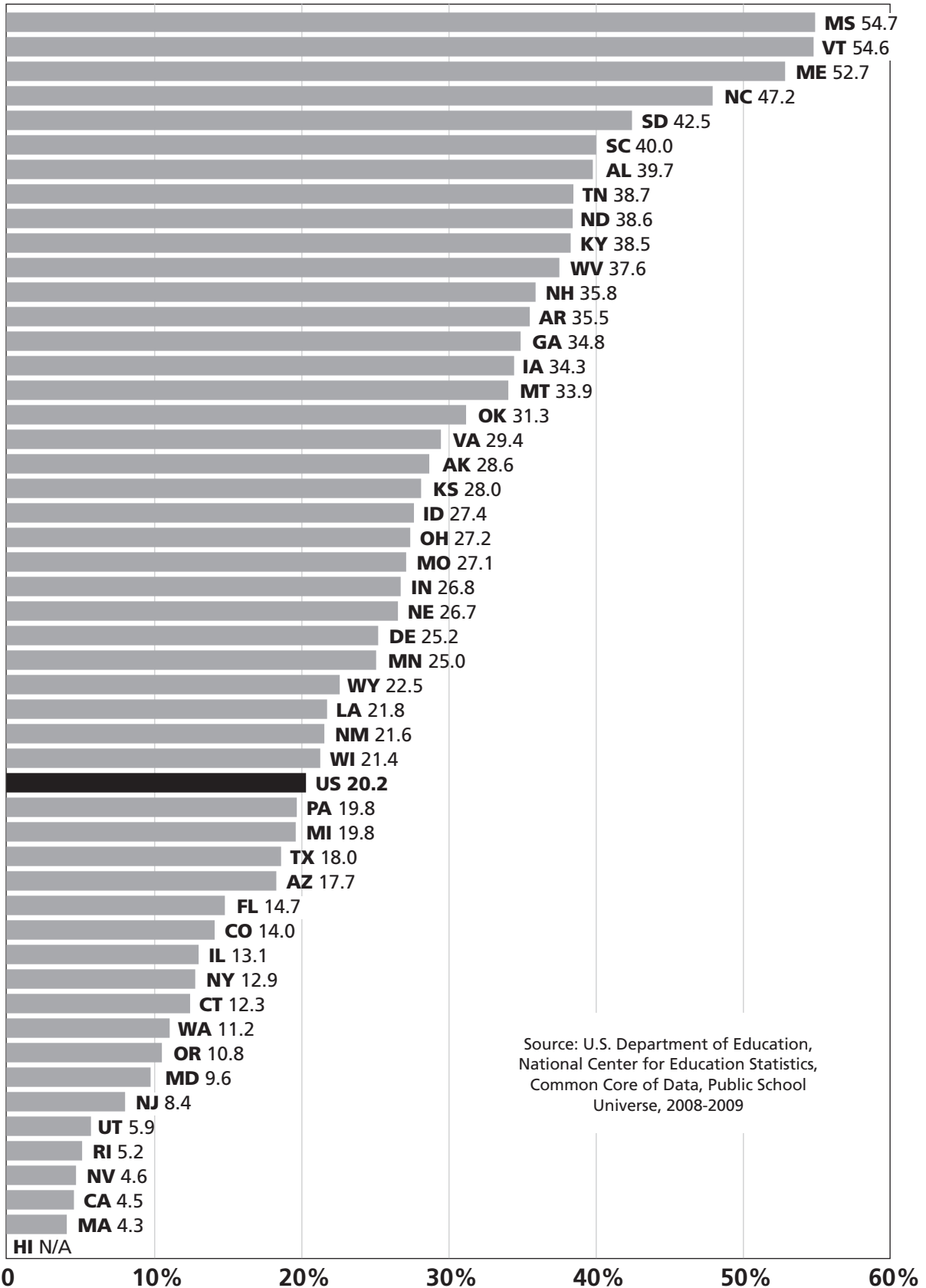
Percent Small Rural Districts

The number of rural public school districts with an enrollment below the national median for rural school districts, expressed as a percentage of all rural school districts in the state.



Percent Rural Students

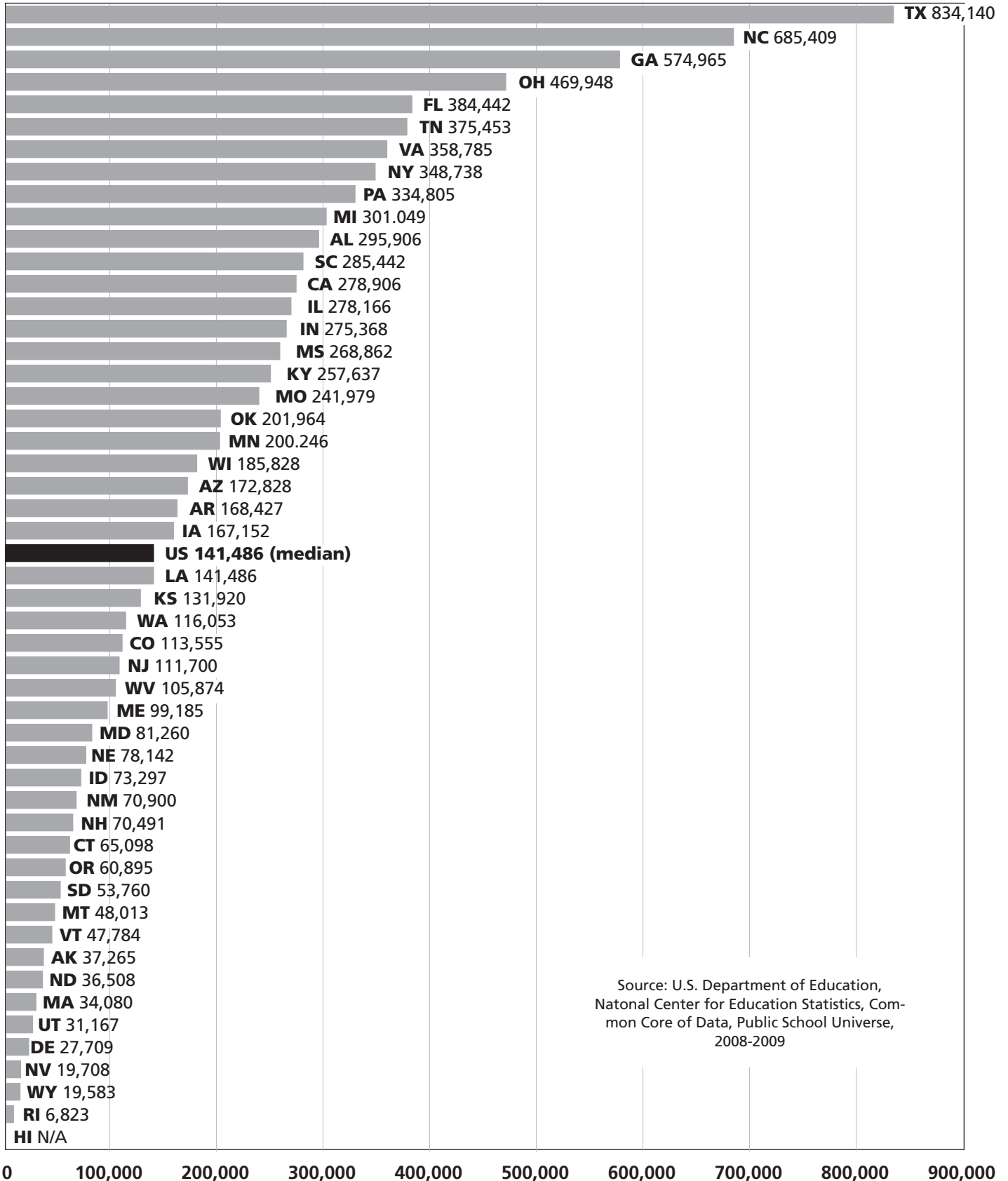
The number of students attending school in public school districts classified as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics, expressed as a percentage of the total public school enrollment in the state.



Source: U.S. Department of Education,
National Center for Education Statistics,
Common Core of Data, Public School
Universe, 2008-2009

Number of Rural Students

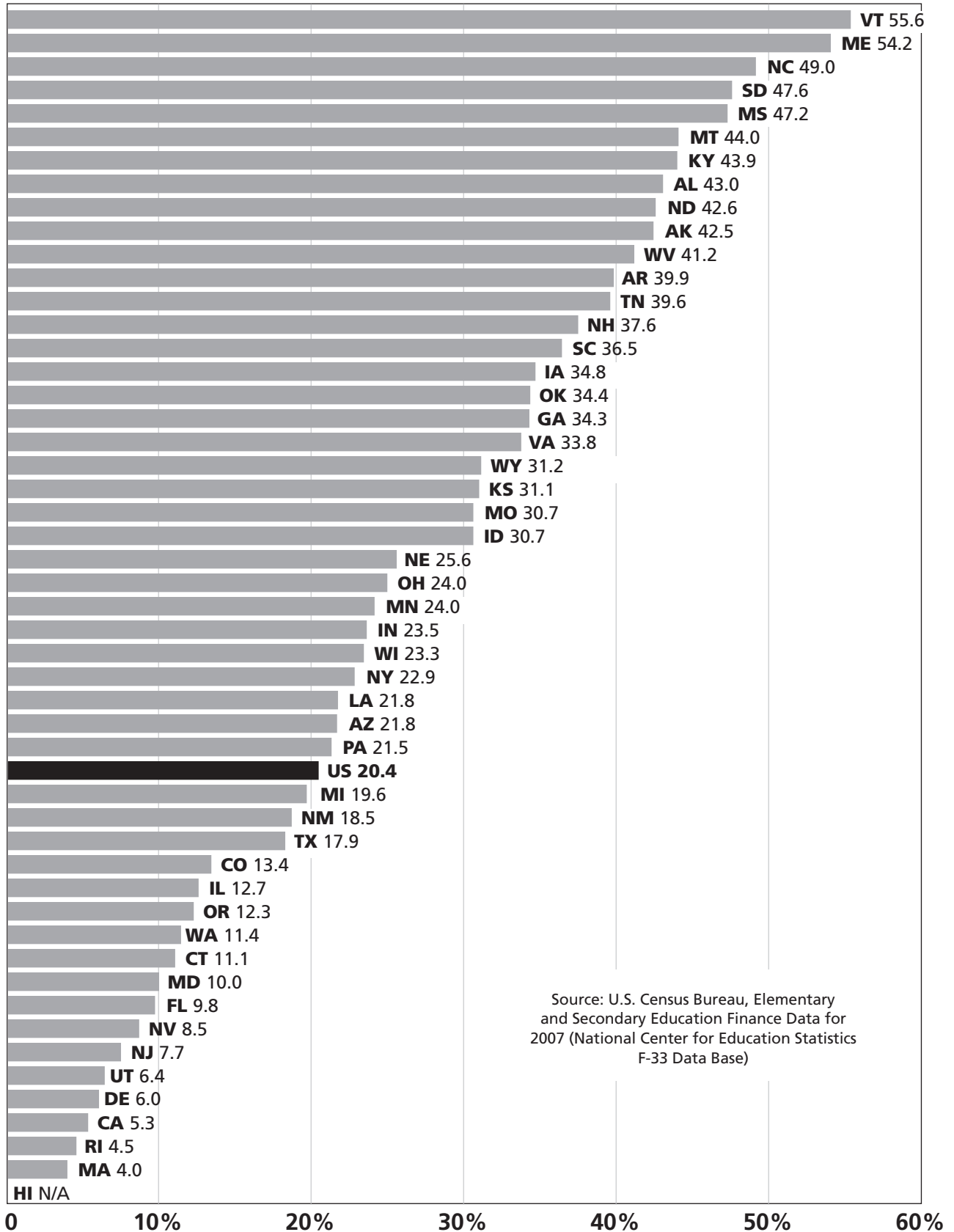
The total number of students attending school in public school districts classified as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public School Universe, 2008-2009

Percentage of State Education Funds to Rural Districts

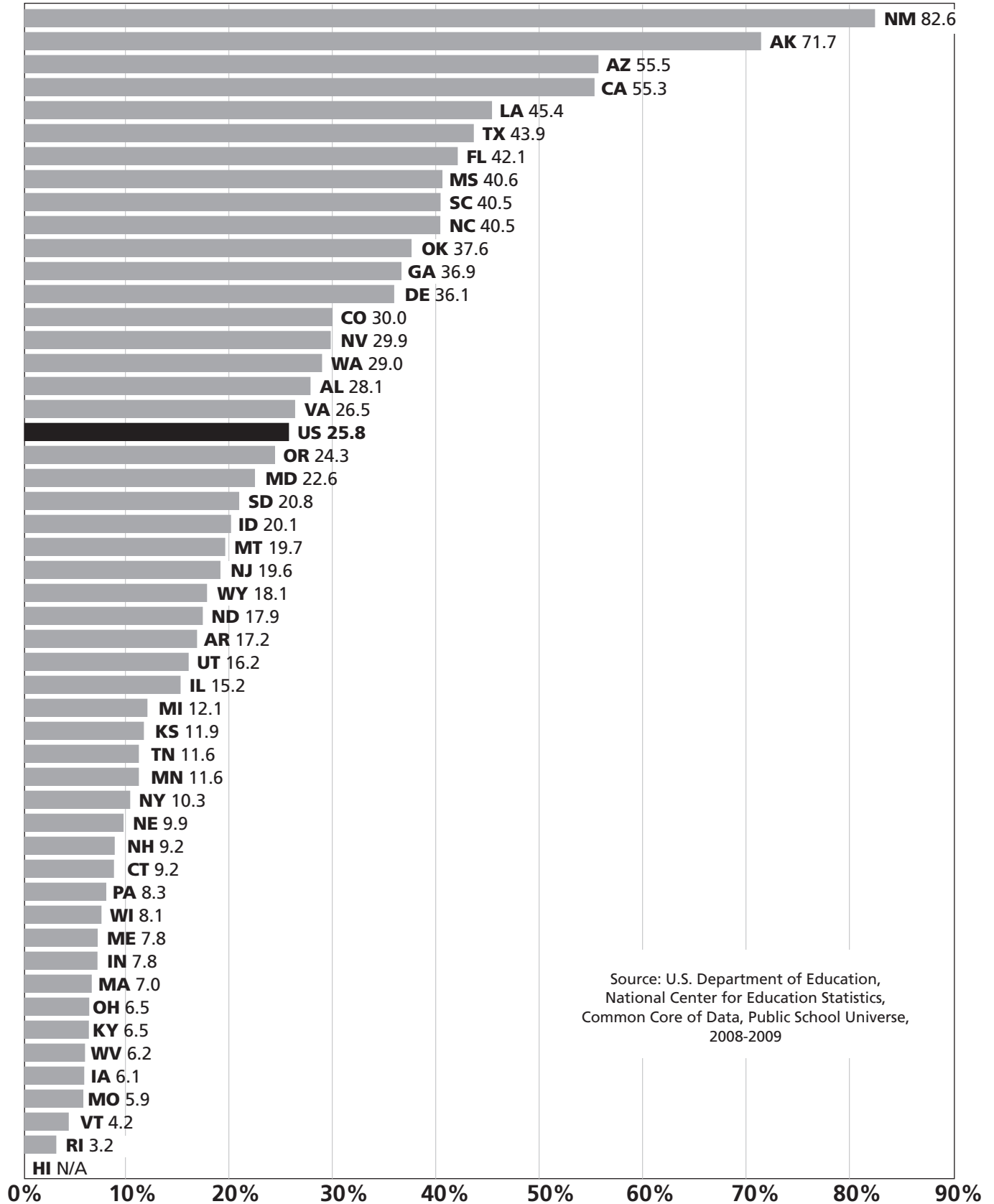
State education funding going to rural school districts, expressed as a percentage of state education funding to all public school districts in the state.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Elementary and Secondary Education Finance Data for 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics F-33 Data Base)

Percent Rural Minority Students

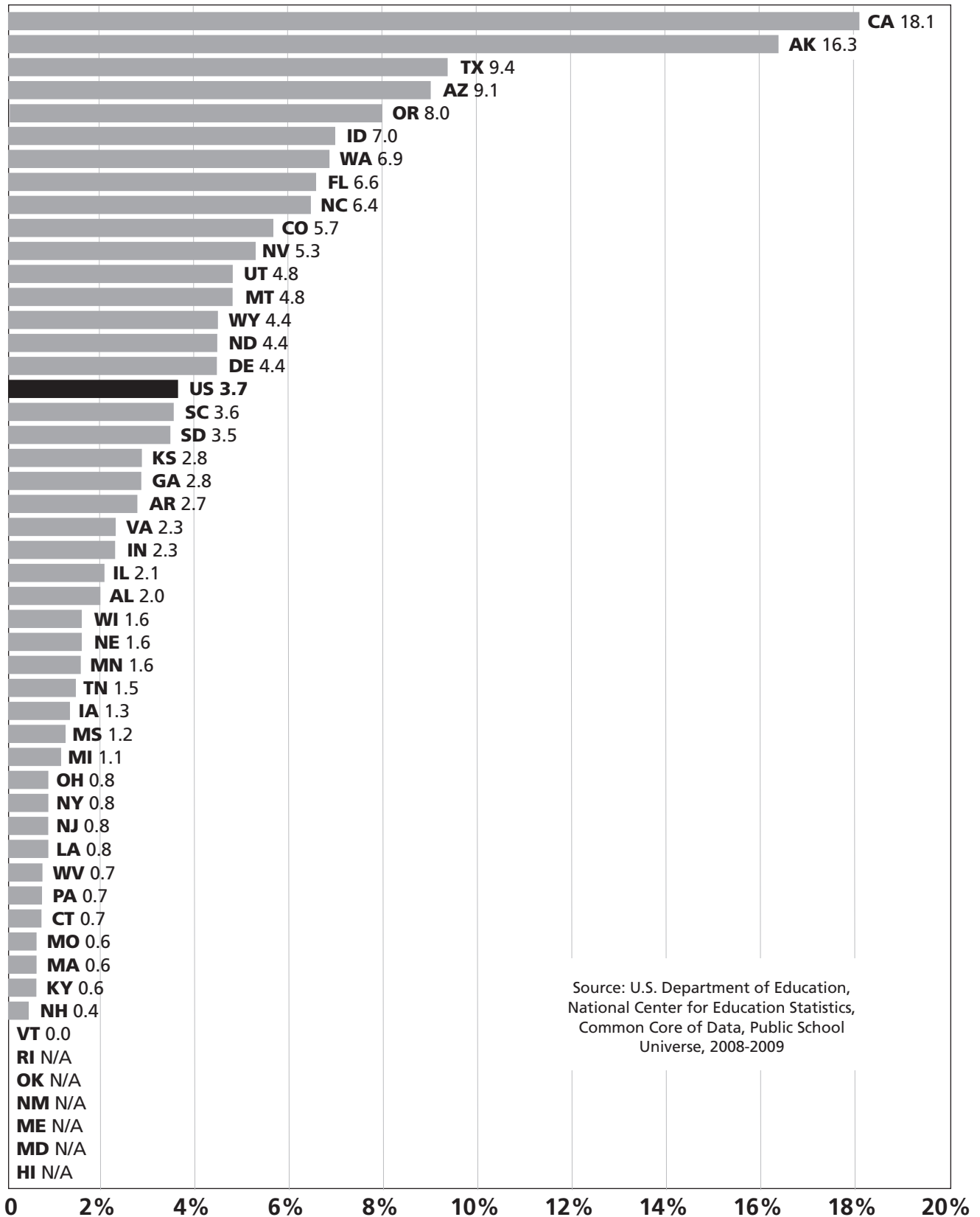
The number of rural public school students classified as minorities according to the National Center for Education Statistics, expressed as a percentage of the total rural public school student enrollment



Source: U.S. Department of Education,
National Center for Education Statistics,
Common Core of Data, Public School Universe,
2008-2009

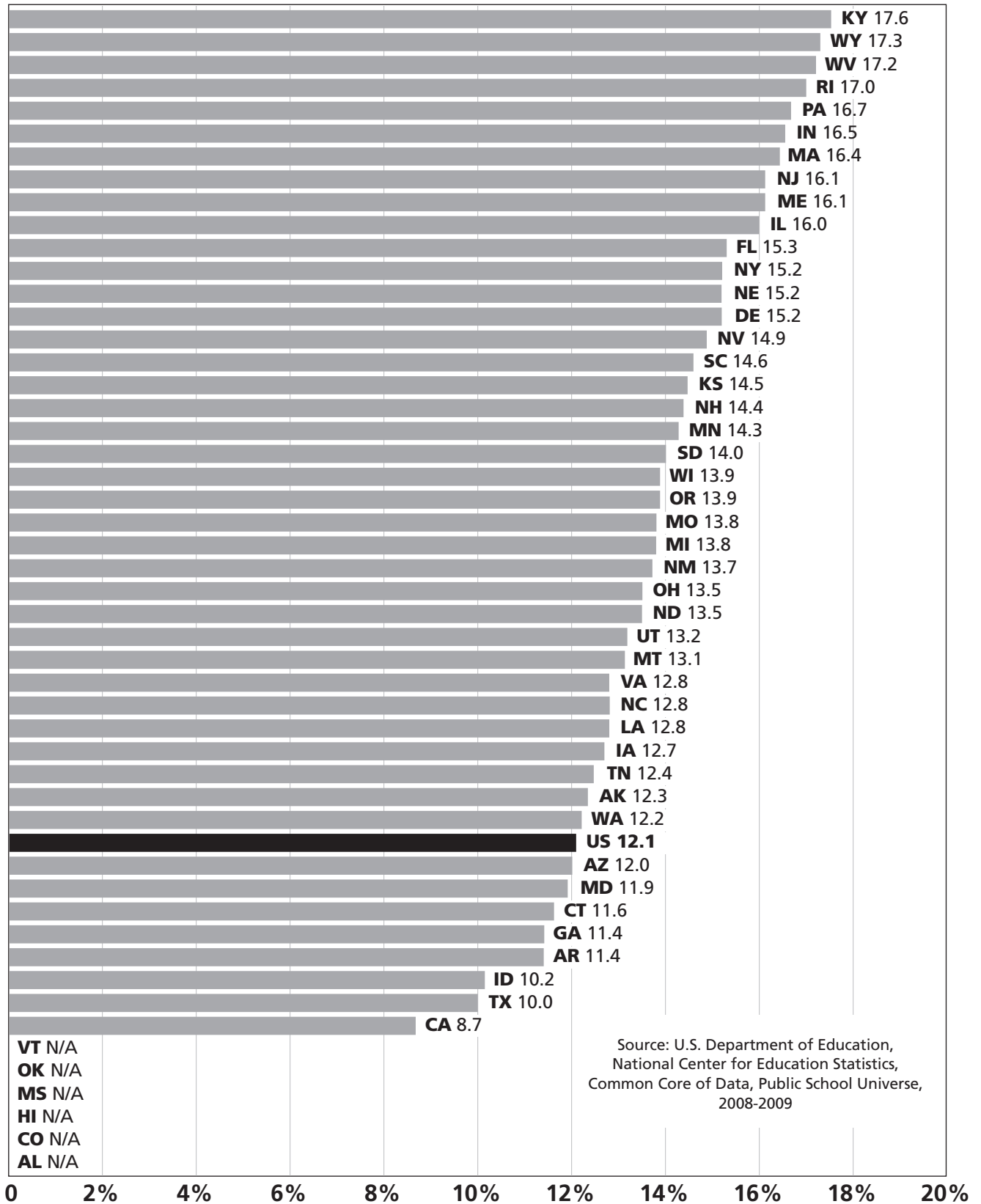
Percent Rural English Language Learner (ELL) Students

The number of rural public school students classified as English Language Learners according to the National Center for Education Statistics, expressed as a percentage of the total rural public school student enrollment



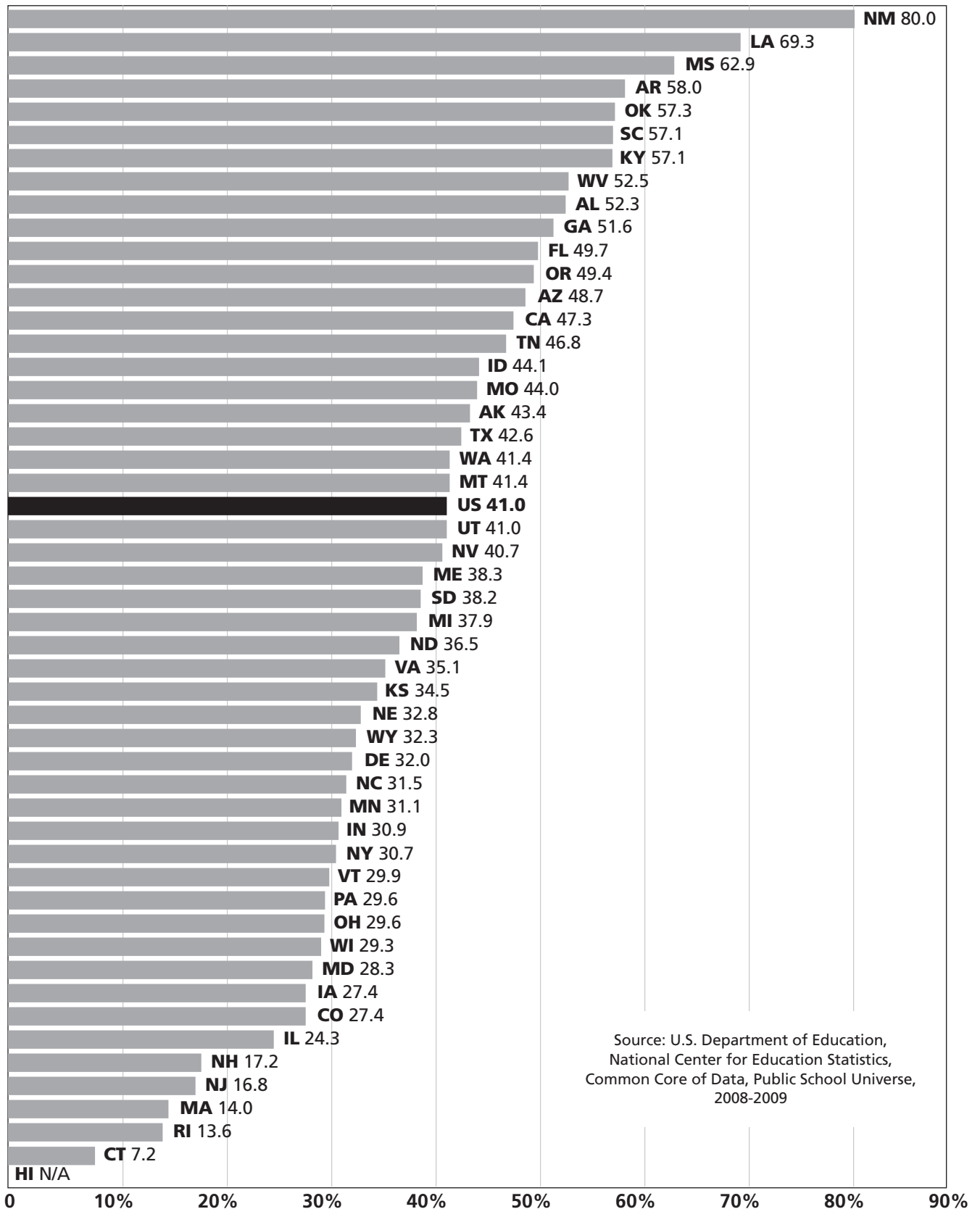
Percent Rural Special Education (IEP) Students

Number of rural public school students qualifying for special education services, expressed as a percentage of all rural public school students in the state.



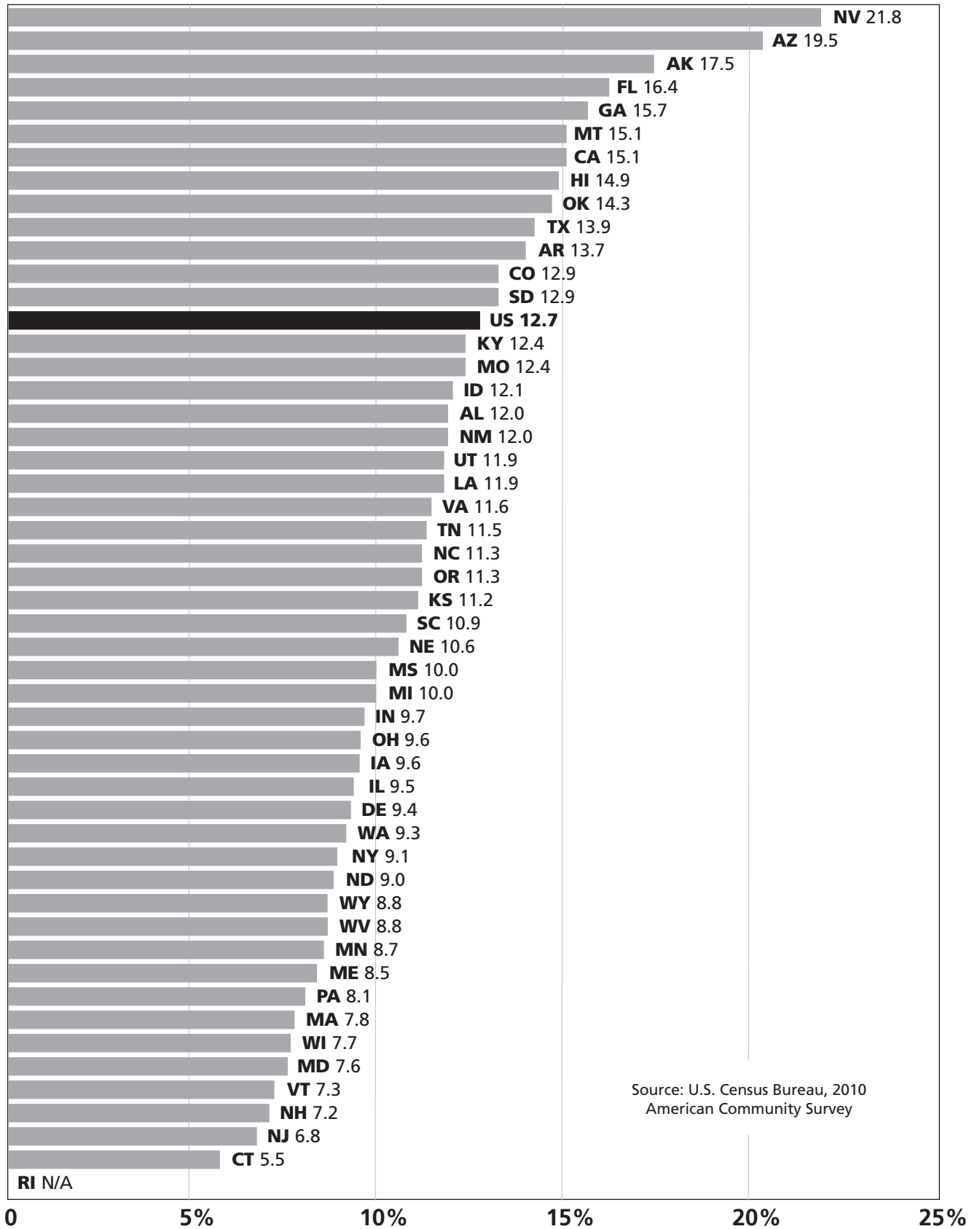
Percent Rural Student Poverty

Number of rural public school students qualifying for free or reduced meals, expressed as a percentage of all rural public school students in the state.



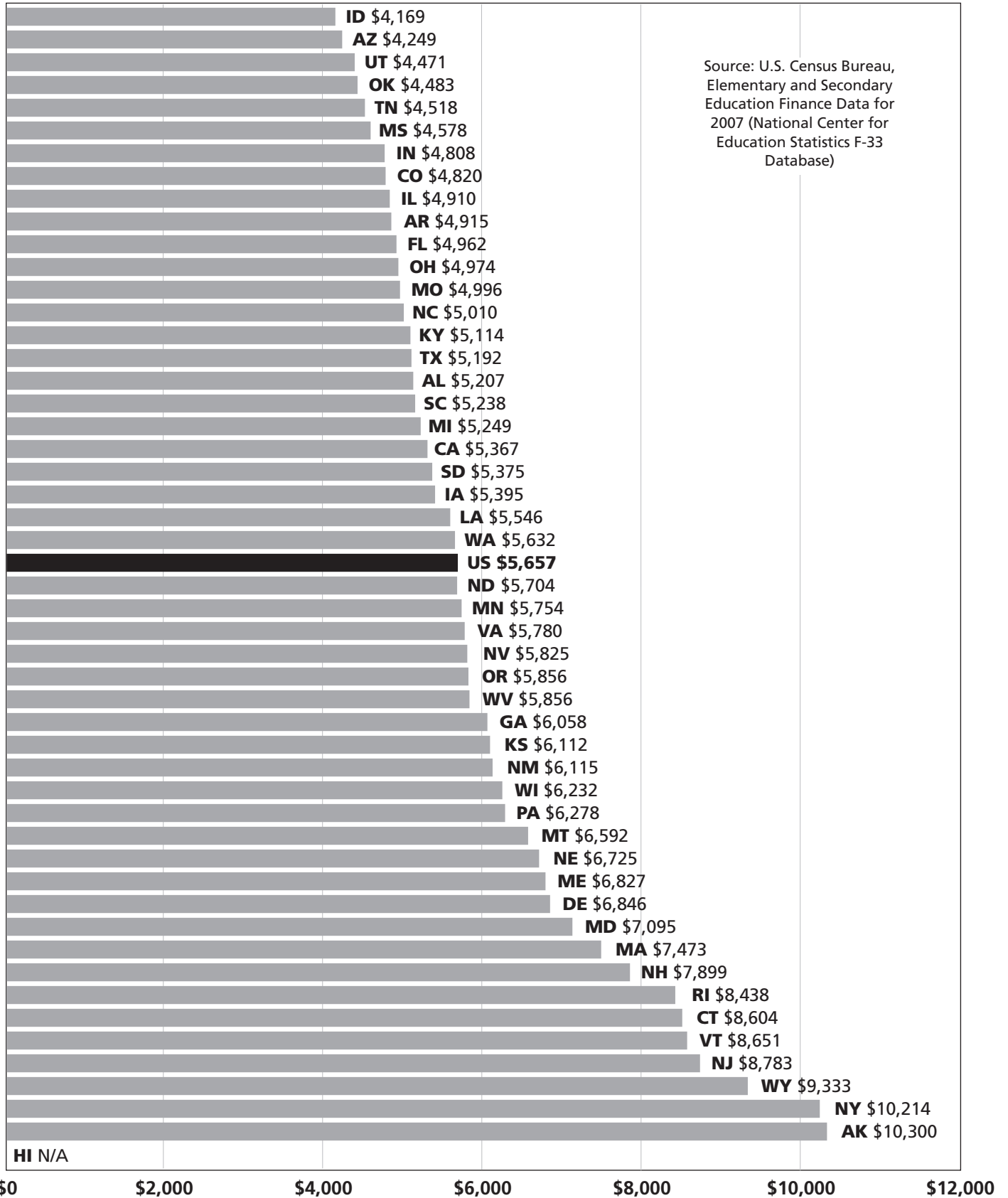
Percent Rural Student Mobility

Number of rural children aged 5-17 in households that have changed residence in the previous 12 months, expressed as a percentage of all rural children aged 5-17 in the state.



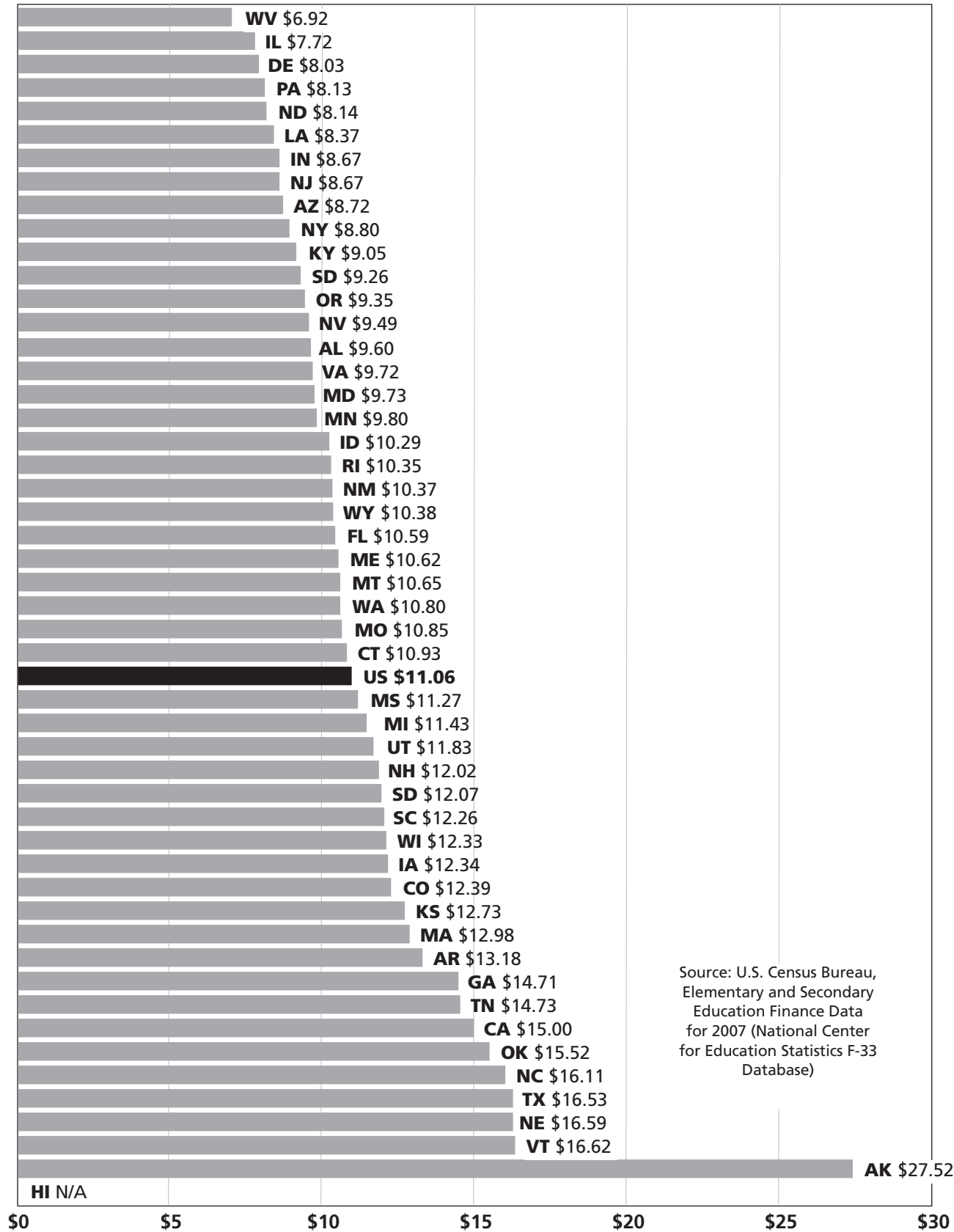
Rural Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil

Total current expenditures for instruction in rural public school districts, divided by the total number of students enrolled in those school districts.



Ratio of Instructional Expenditures to Transportation Expenditures

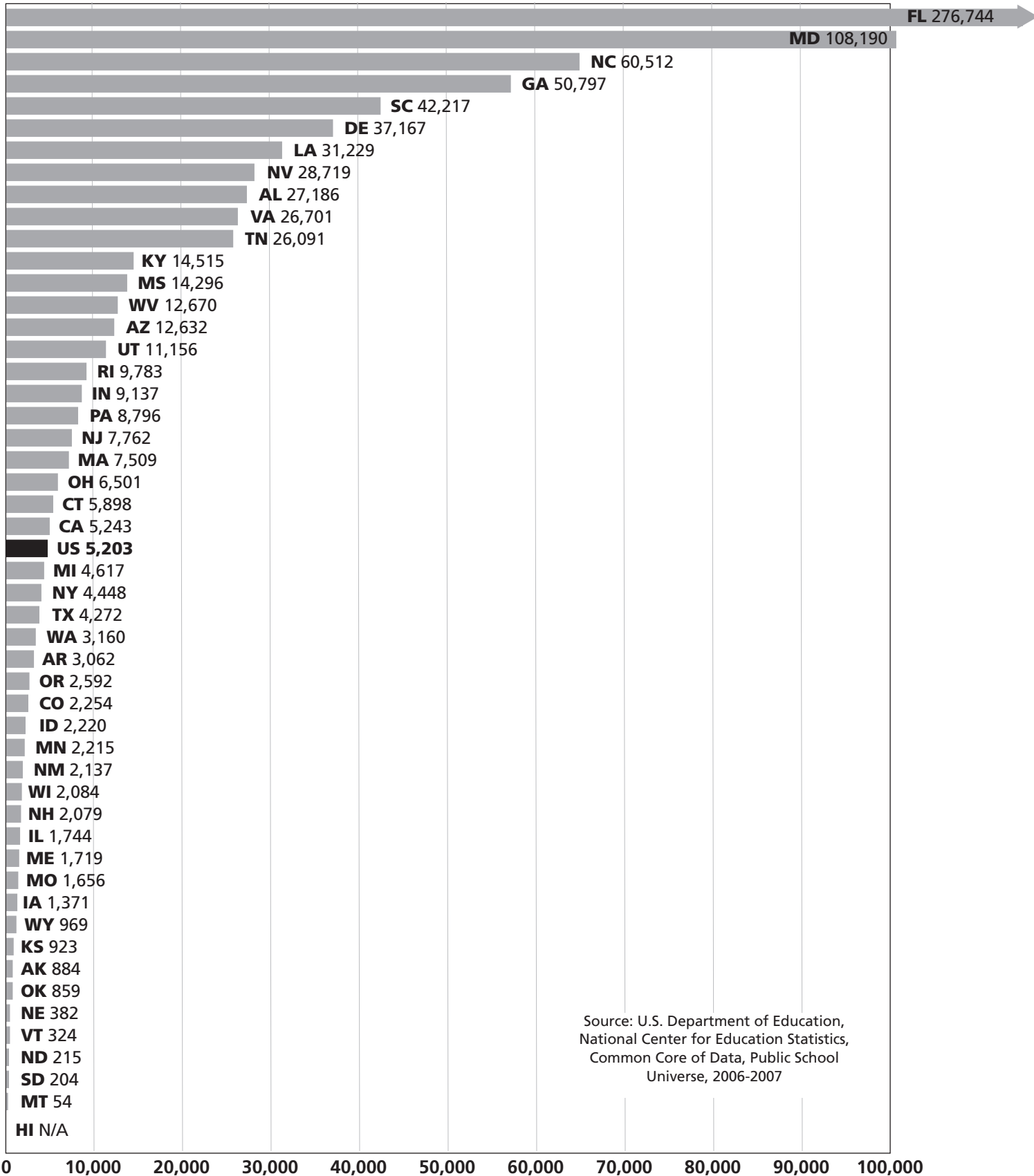
Ratio of total current expenditures for regular education instruction to total current expenditures for regular education pupil transportation (i.e., total dollars spent on instruction for every dollar spent on pupil transportation).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Elementary and Secondary Education Finance Data for 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics F-33 Database)

Median Organizational Scale among Rural Schools

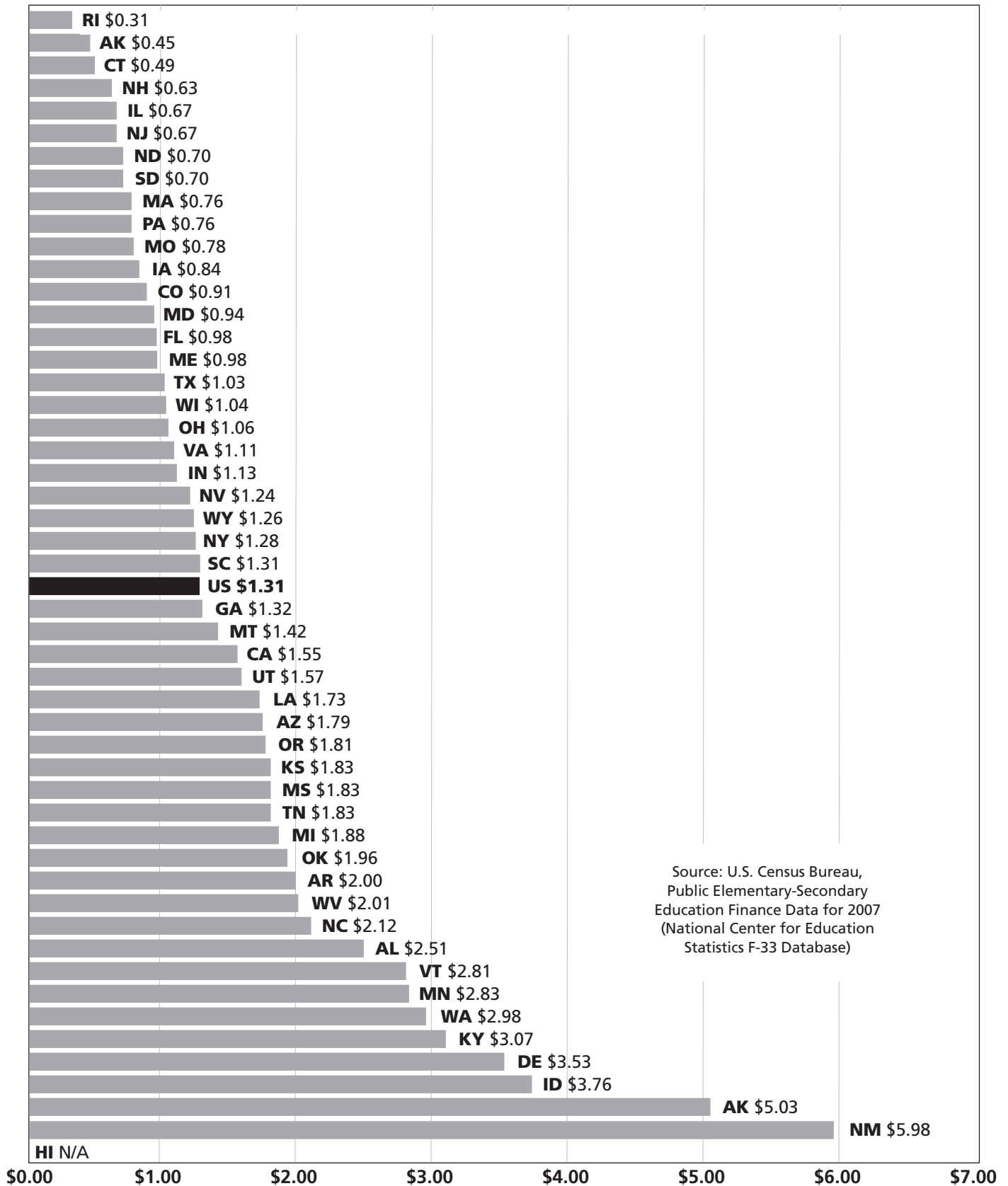
The state median for rural schools on the organizational scale indicator (computed by multiplying the total school enrollment by the total district enrollment). Note: for simplification, the indicators were divided by 100.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public School Universe, 2006-2007

State Funding Contribution per Local Contribution

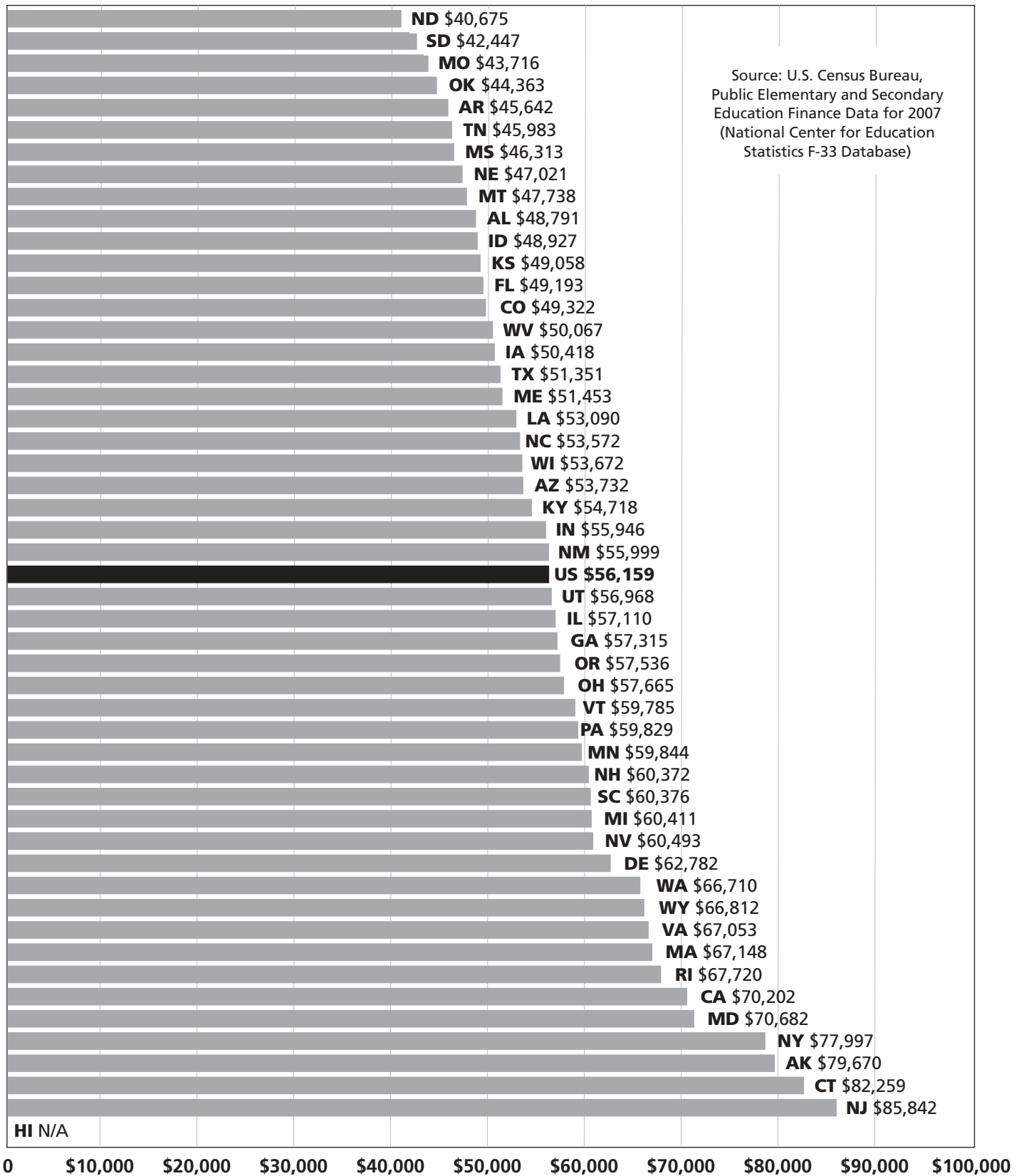
State funding contribution per local funding contribution for rural school districts
(i.e., total state dollars provided for every one dollar in local funding).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
Public Elementary-Secondary
Education Finance Data for 2007
(National Center for Education
Statistics F-33 Database)

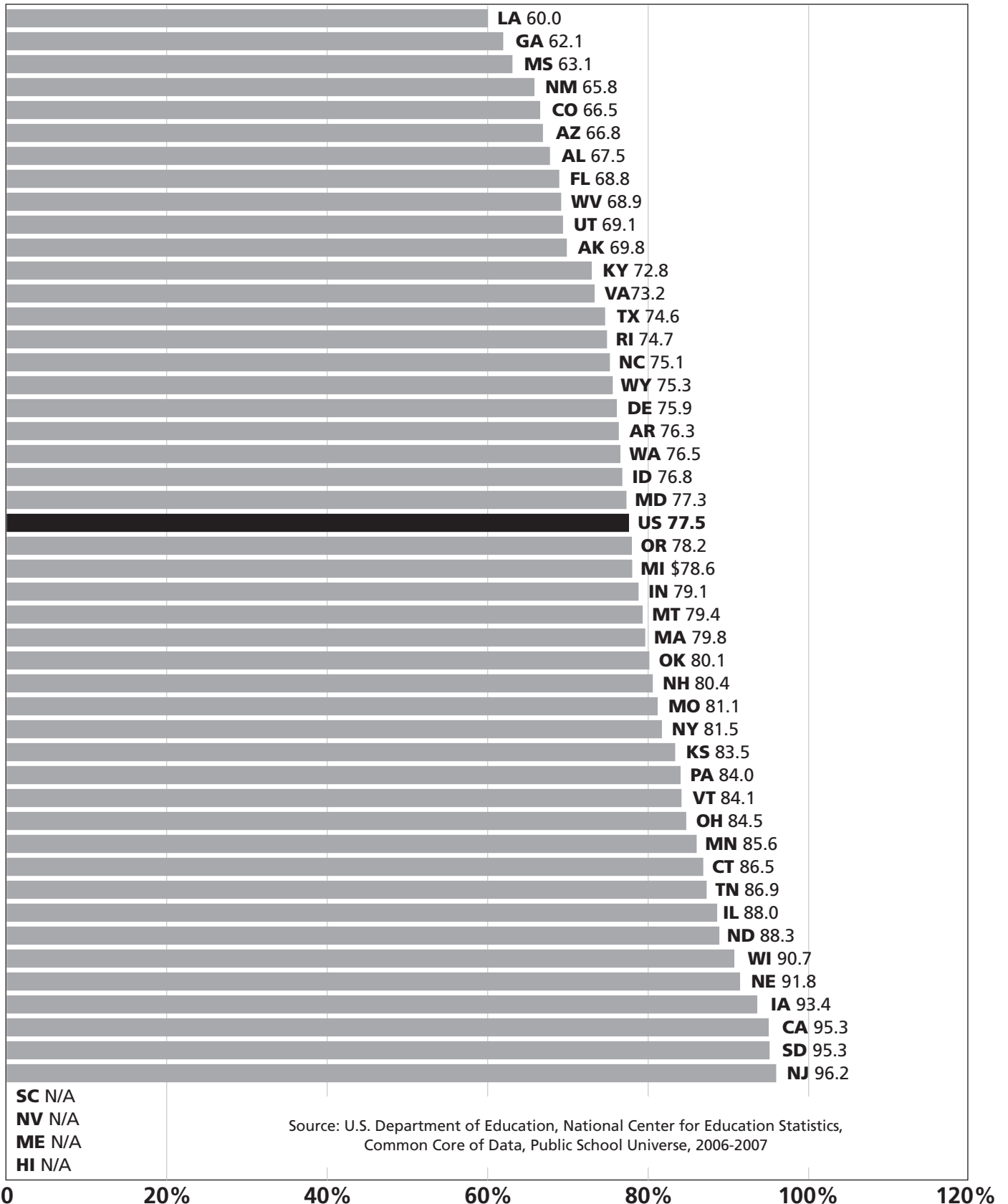
Salary Expenditures per Instructional Staff Member (FTE) In Rural School Districts

Total current expenditures for instructional salaries, divided by the
total number of instructional staff members.



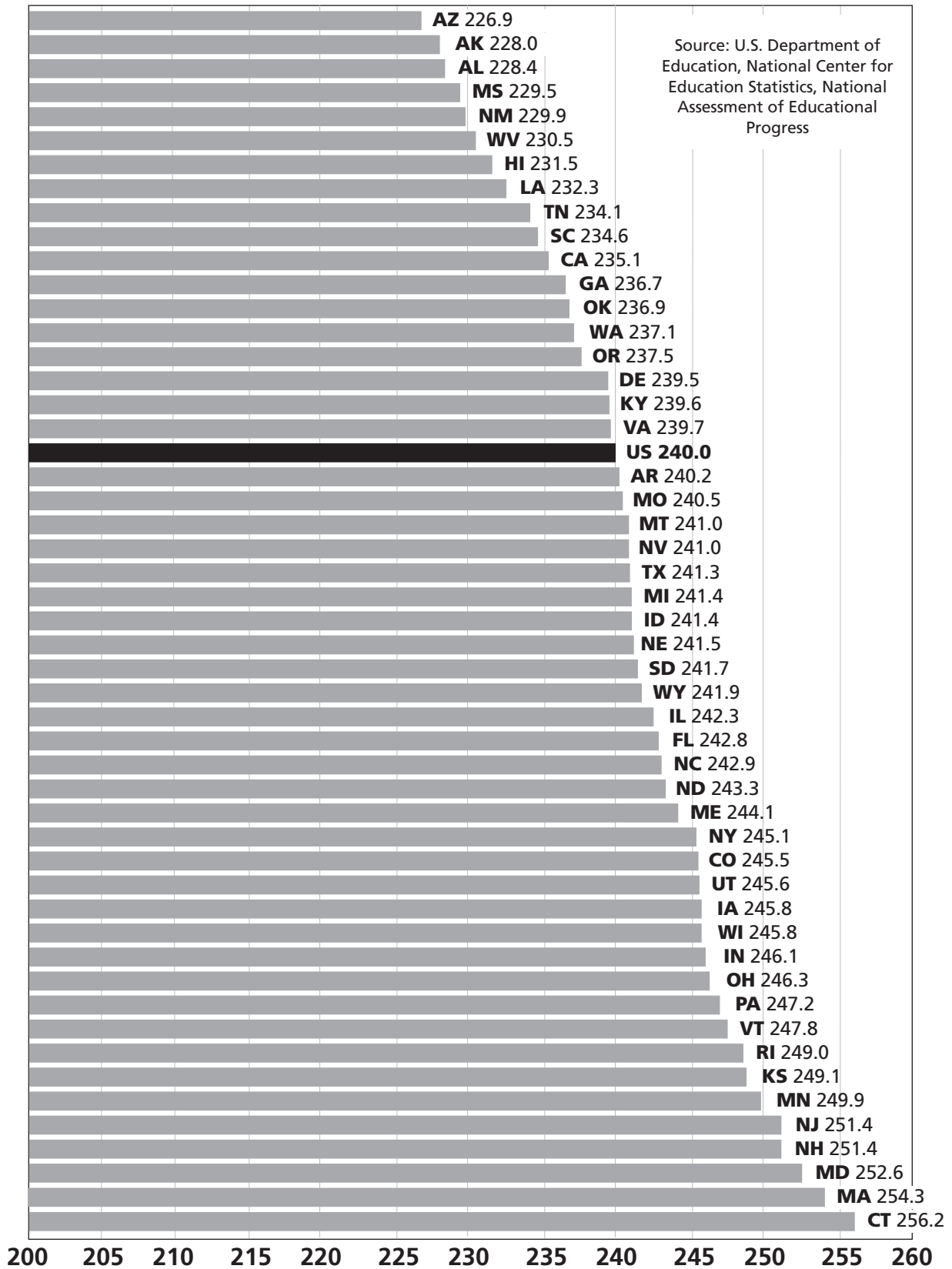
Rural High School Graduation Rate

As calculated using Swanson's cumulative promotion index (CPI) model that calculates percentages of annual grade promotions (9th to 10th, 10th to 11th, 11th to 12th, and 12th to graduation) and multiplies all four percentages.



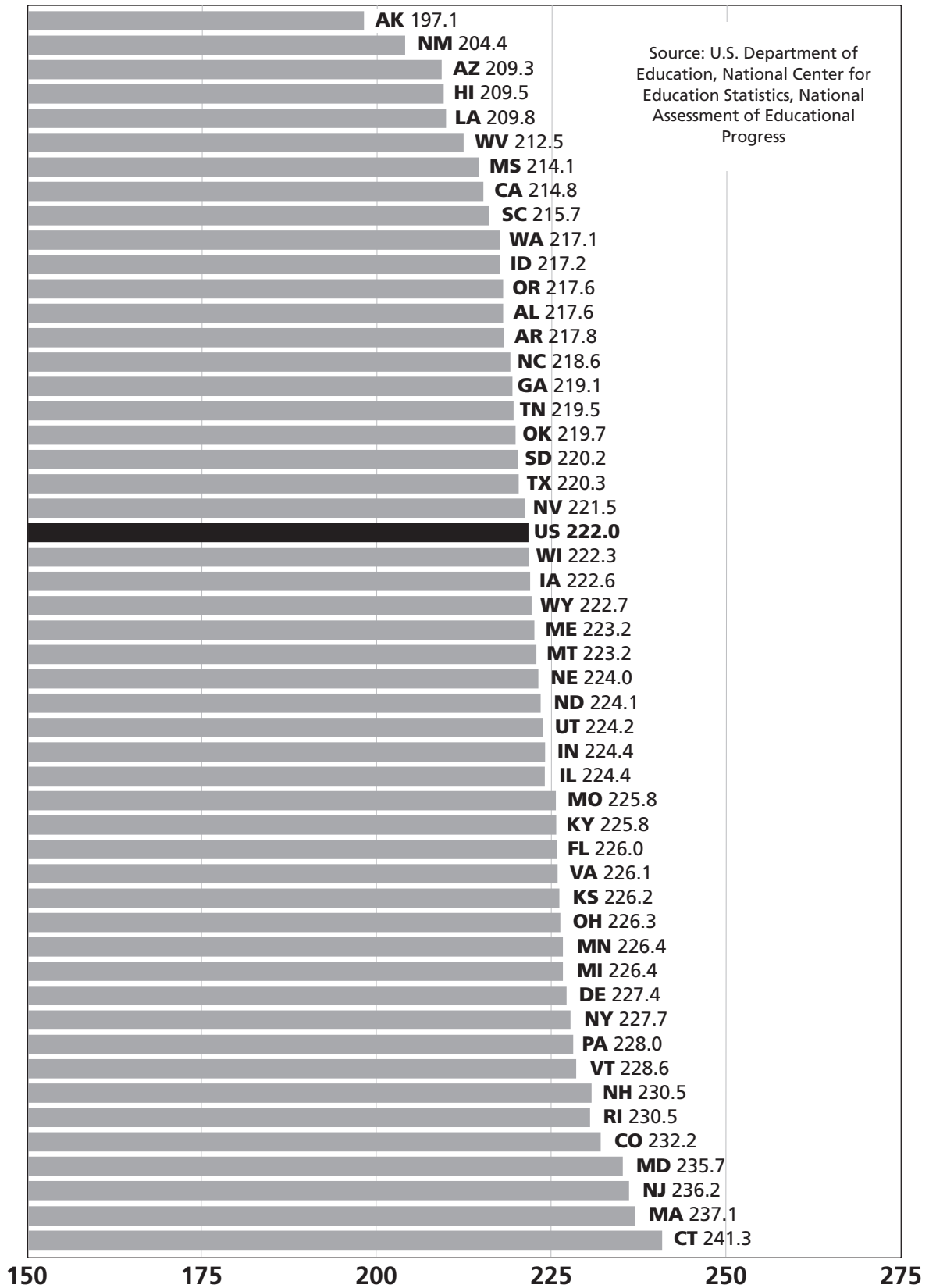
Rural Grade 4 NAEP Scores (Math)

The mean score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math assessment administered to students in grade 4, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education for the sample of rural schools in each state.



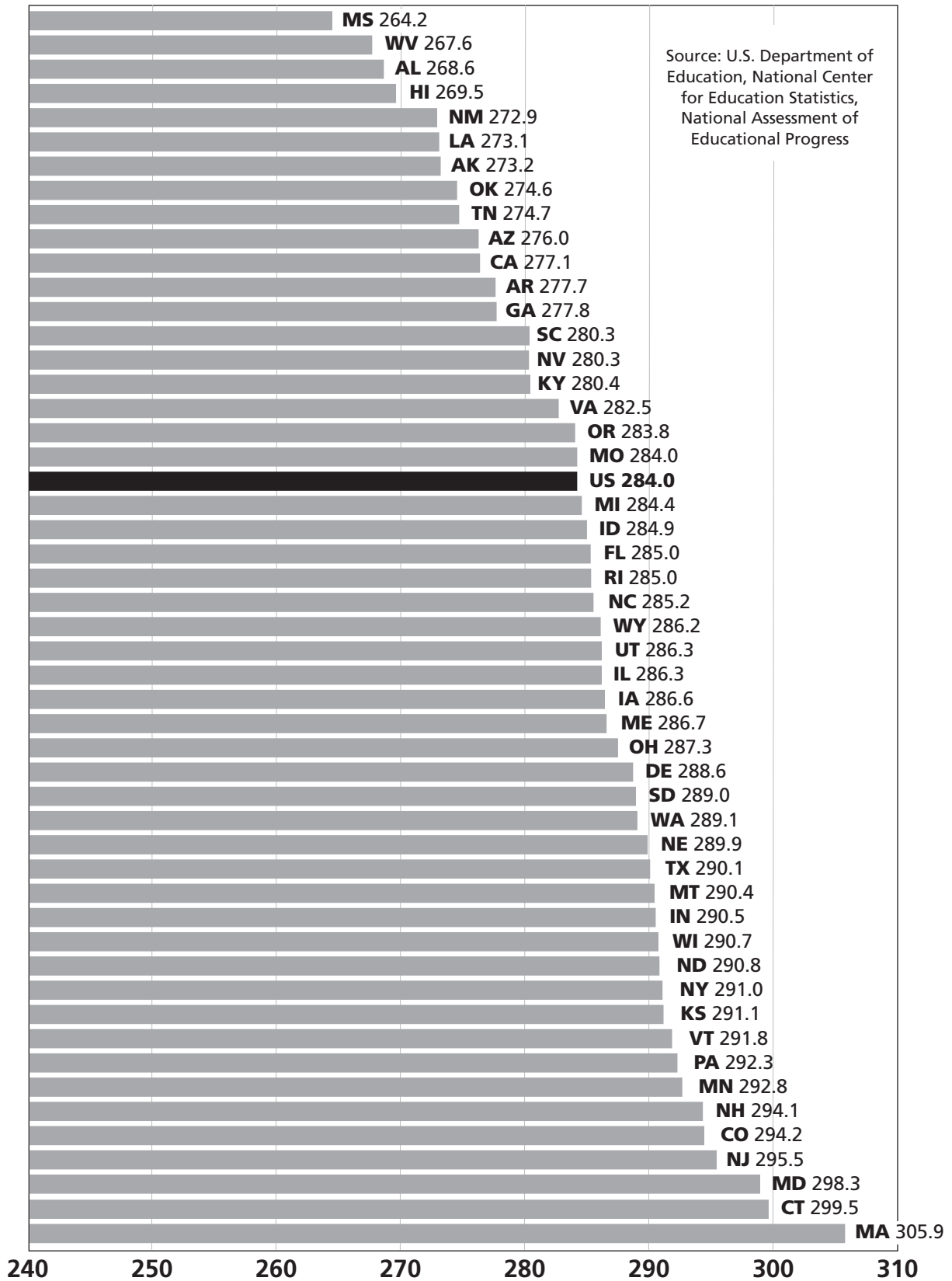
Rural Grade 4 NAEP Scores (Reading)

The mean score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment administered to students in grade 4, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education for the sample of rural schools in each state.



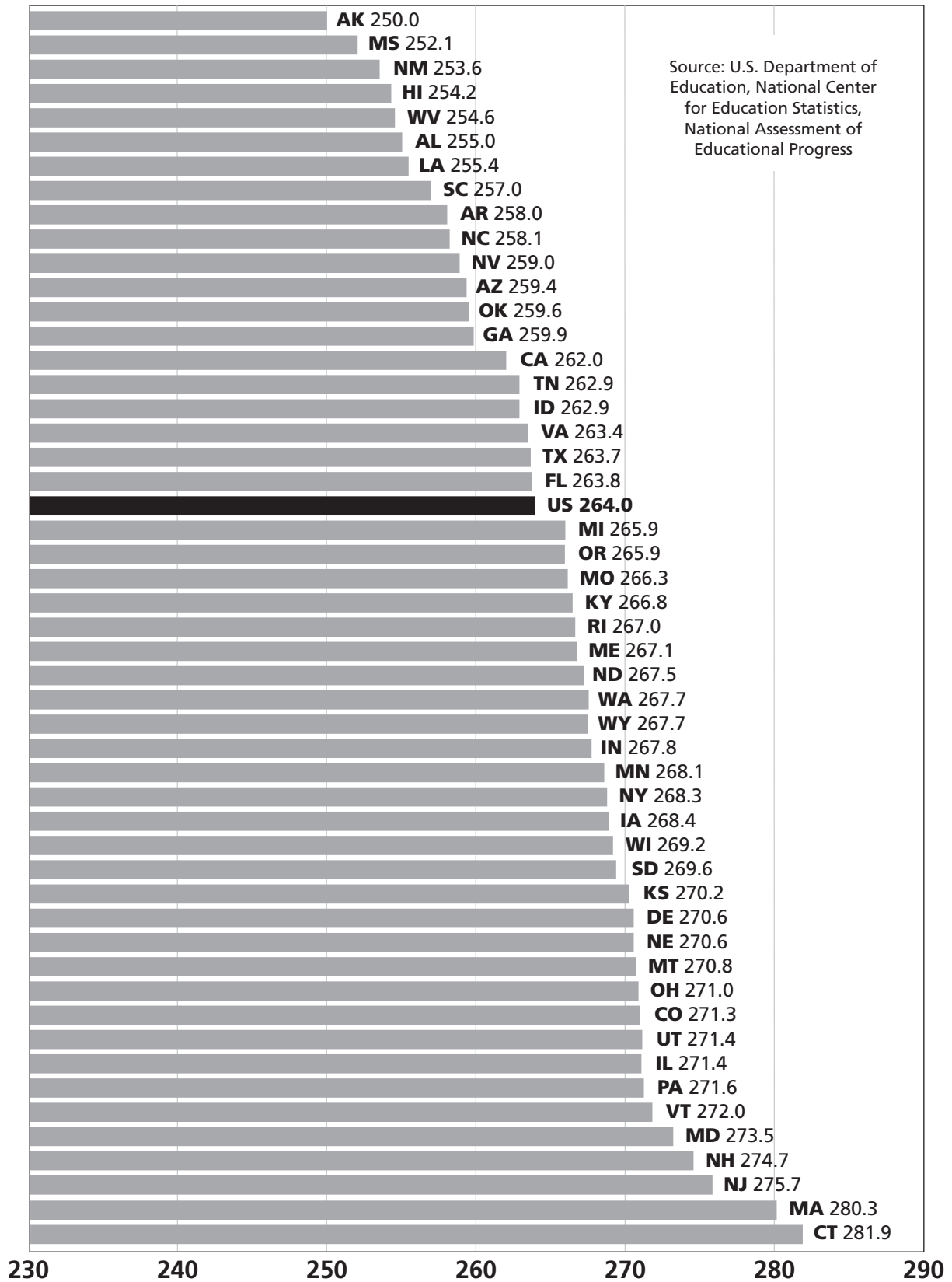
Rural Grade 8 NAEP Scores (Math)

The mean score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math assessment administered to students in grade 8, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education for the sample of rural schools in each state.



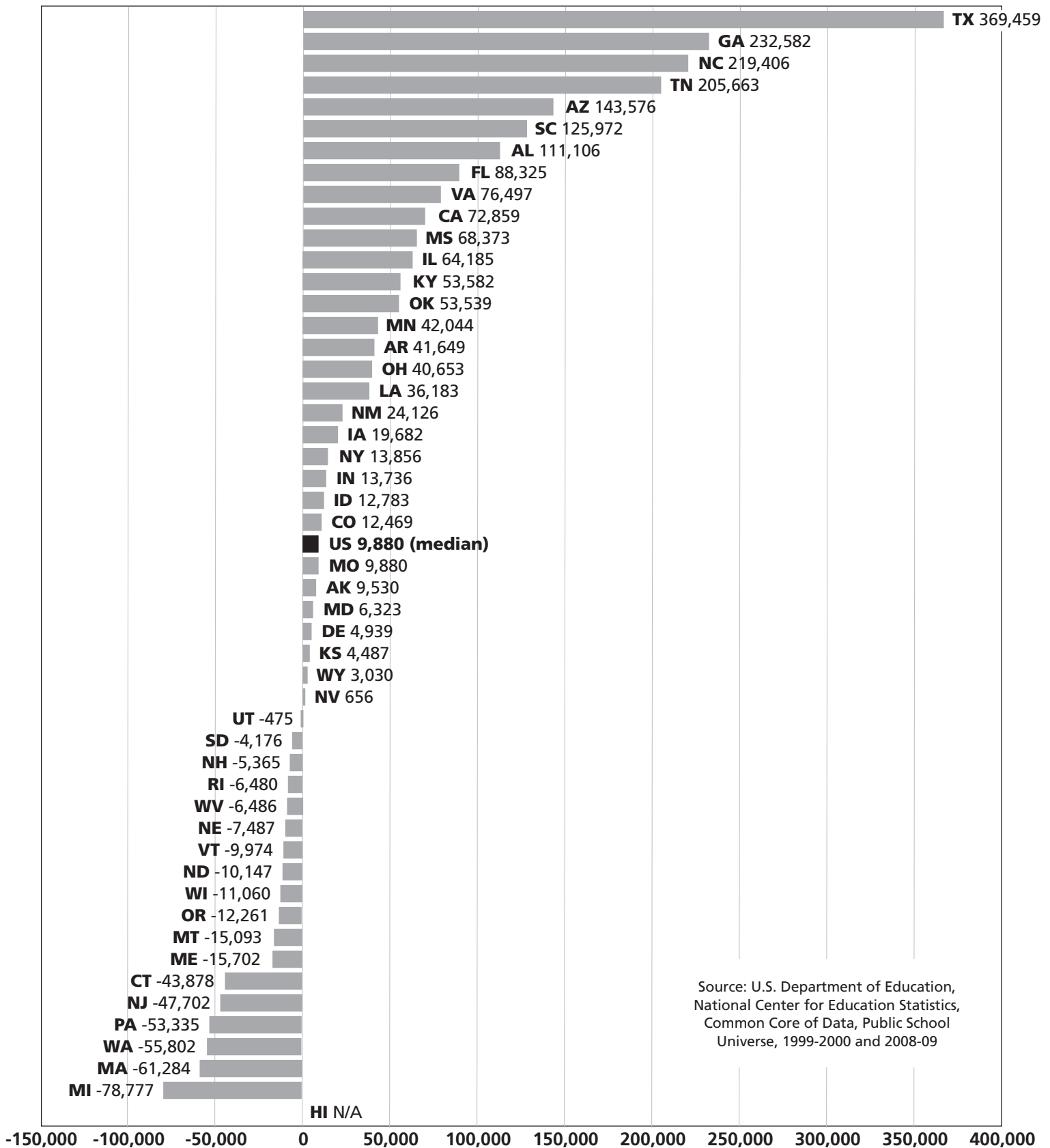
Rural Grade 8 NAEP Scores (Reading)

The mean score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment administered to students in grade 8, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education for the sample of rural schools in each state.



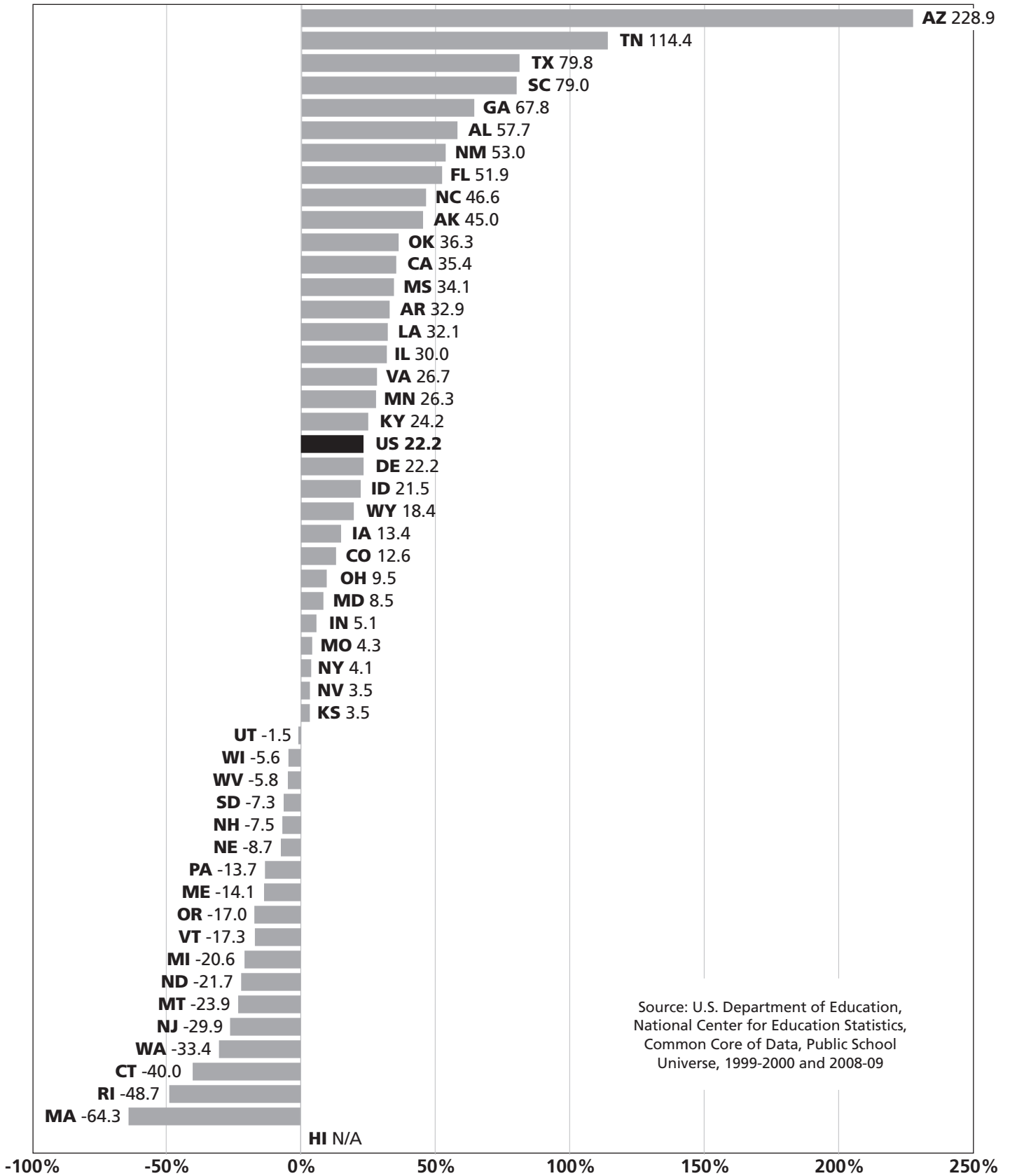
Change in Total Rural Student Enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09)

The absolute change from 1999-00 to 2008-09 in the number of rural students in each state (i.e., the total rural enrollment in 2008-09 minus the total rural enrollment in 1999-00).



Percent Change in Rural School Enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09)

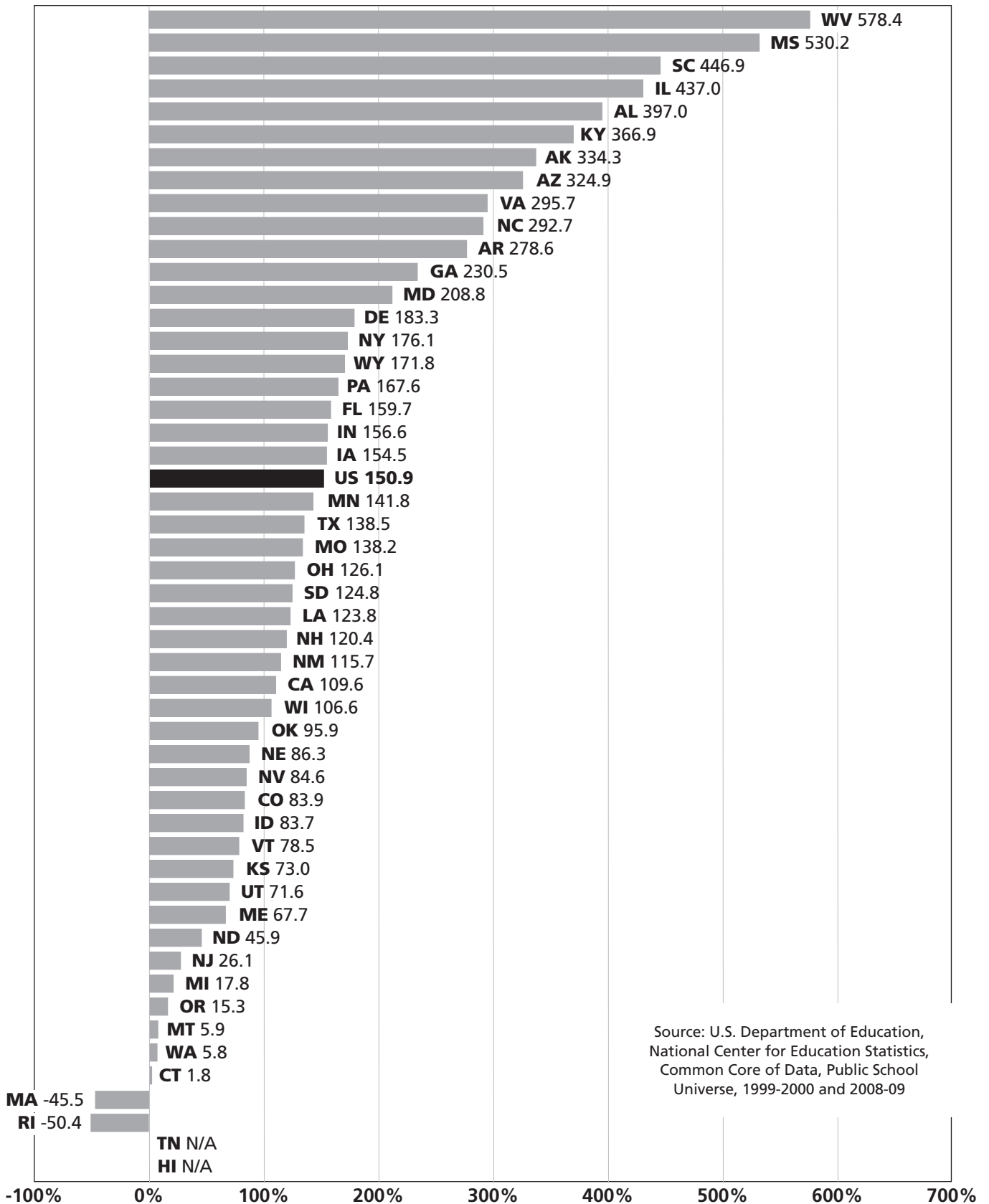
The percent change from 1999-00 to 2008-09 in the number of rural students in each state (i.e., the absolute change in enrollment over that time period divided by the 1999-2000 enrollment).



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public School Universe, 1999-2000 and 2008-09

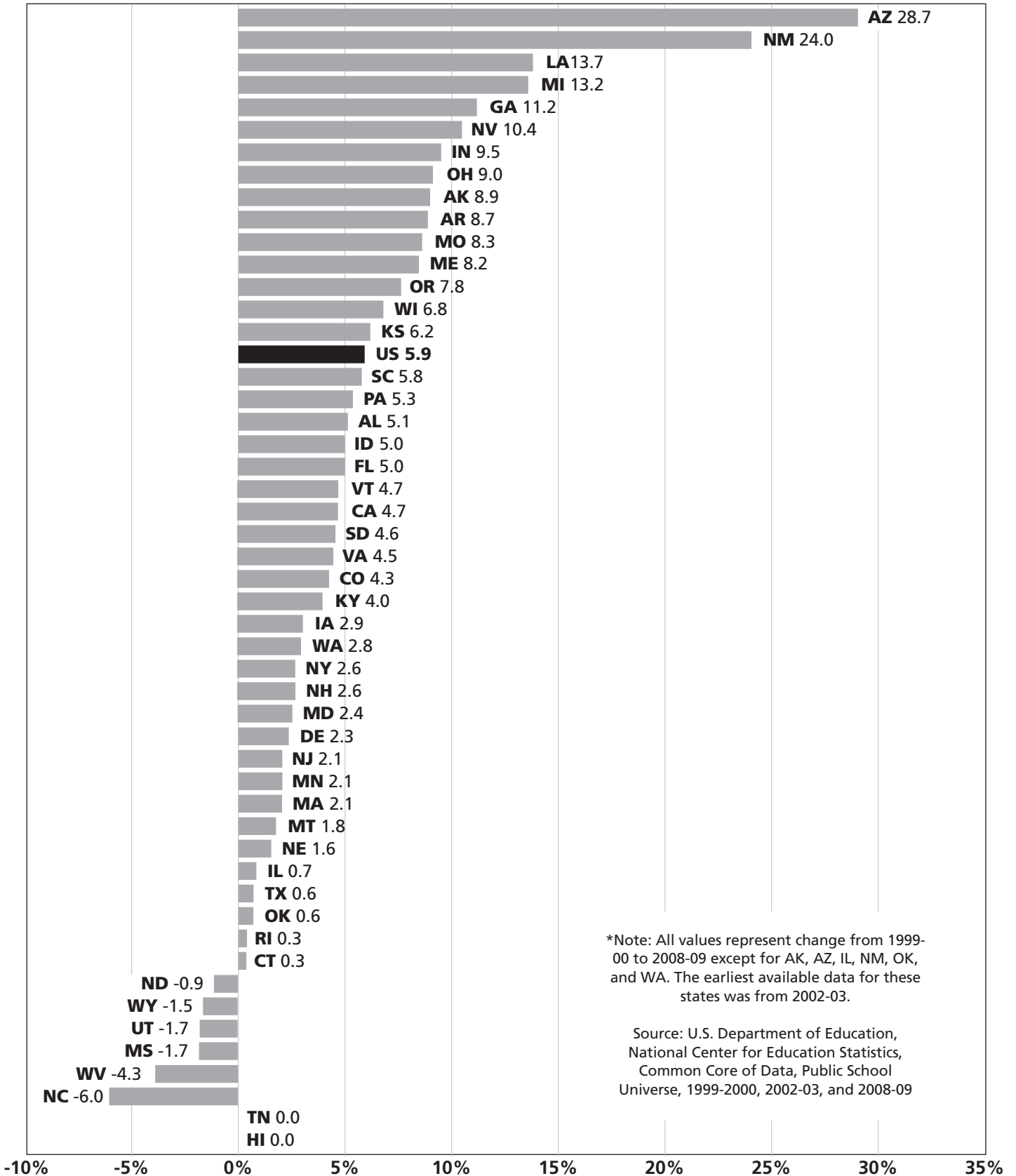
Percent Change in Rural Hispanic Student Enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09)

The percent change from 1999-00 to 2008-09 in the number of rural Hispanic students in each state (i.e., the total change in enrollment over that time period divided by the 1999-2000 enrollment).



Change in Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Meals (1999-00 to 2008-09, 2002-03 to 2008-09*)

Change in the calculated percentage of rural students eligible for free meals (i.e., the 2008-09 percentage minus the percentage from the baseline year—either 1999-00 or 2002-03).

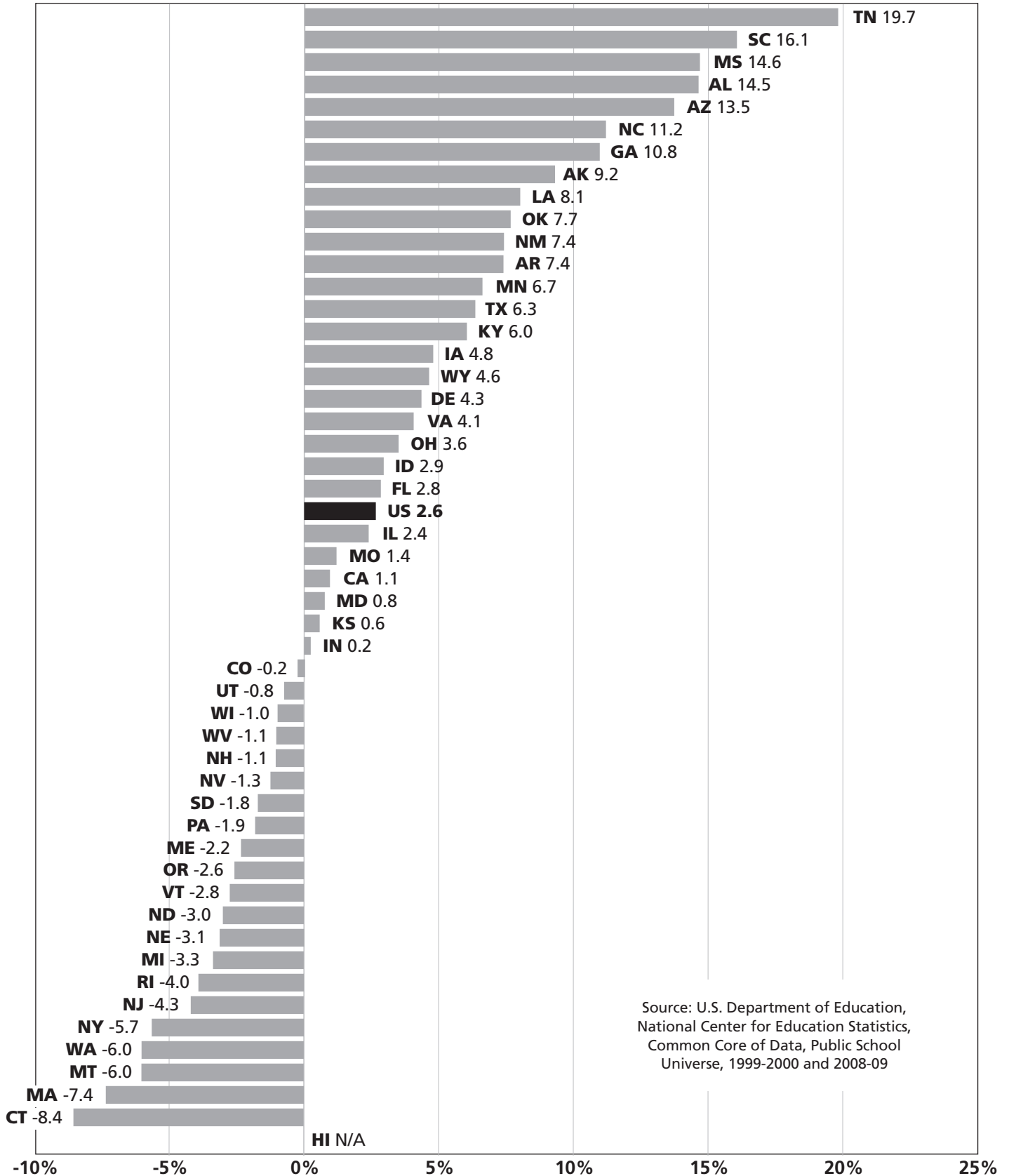


*Note: All values represent change from 1999-00 to 2008-09 except for AK, AZ, IL, NM, OK, and WA. The earliest available data for these states was from 2002-03.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public School Universe, 1999-2000, 2002-03, and 2008-09

Change in Rural Student Enrollment as a Proportion of Total Student Enrollment (1999-00 to 2008-09)

Change, from 1999-00 to 2008-09, in the calculated percentage of rural students in each state (i.e., the percent rural students in 2008-09 minus the percent rural students in 1999-00).



Source: U.S. Department of Education,
National Center for Education Statistics,
Common Core of Data, Public School
Universe, 1999-2000 and 2008-09