

# Supporting Rural Schools & Communities

November 5-6, 2009  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

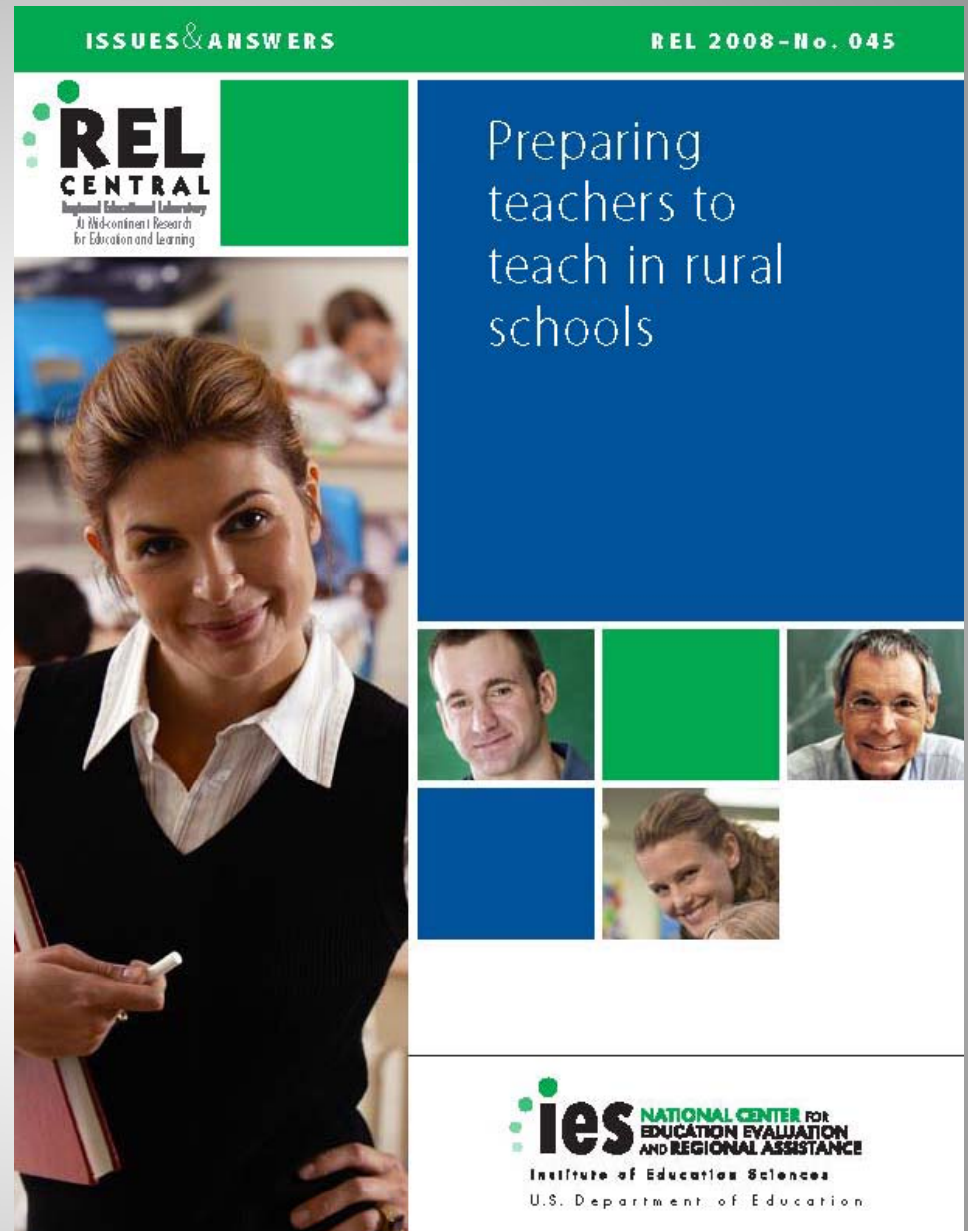
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**Preparing Teachers to Teach in Rural  
Schools**

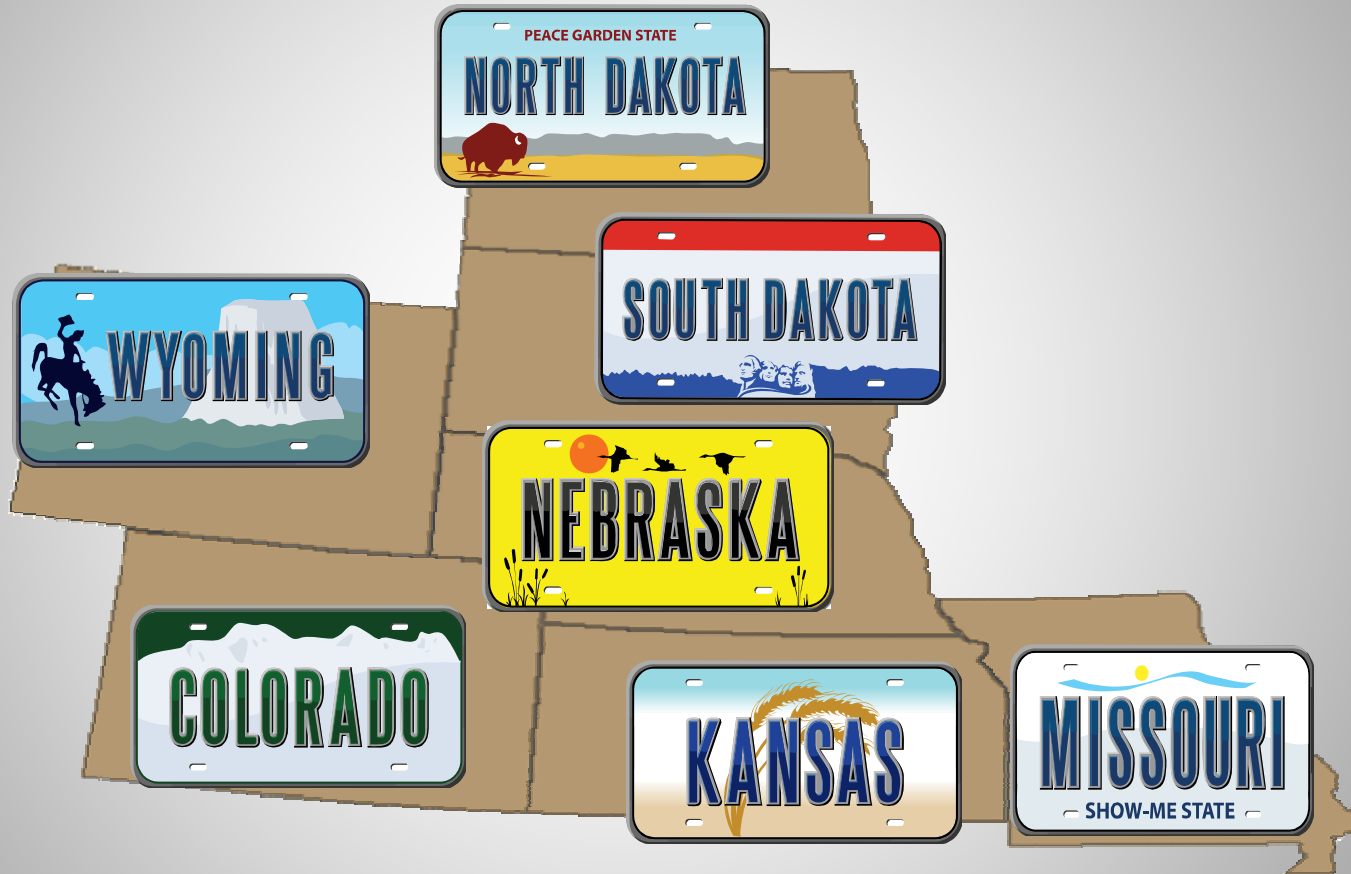
**The IES report -  
REL 2008-No. 045**



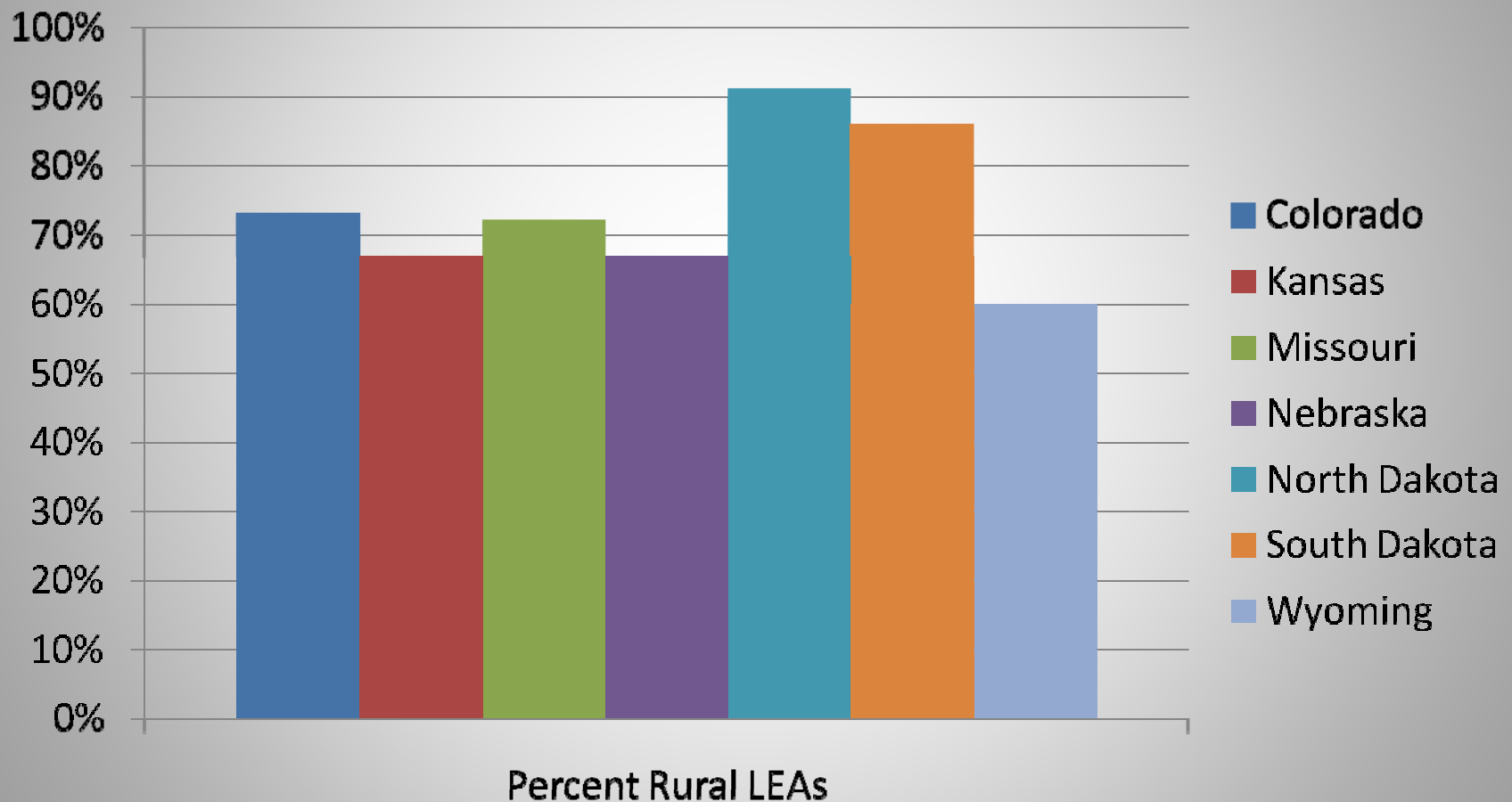
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McREL

# Context: the Central Region



# *How Rural is the Central Region?*

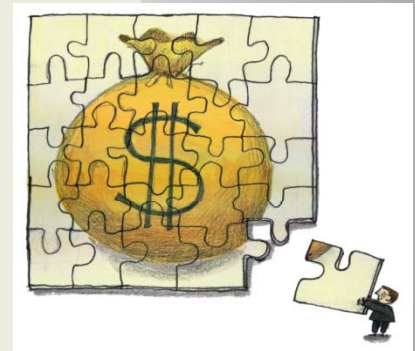


# Need for the Study

- From regional administrators we heard of the need to recruit new teachers
- But rural administrators have lost valuable flexibility in making hiring decisions (Eppley, 2009)

- “massive exodus” of baby boomers retiring -  
- demand is greatest in high poverty and rural schools” - Duncan

- Inequities in district funding mean rural districts often cannot offer competitive salaries



- The incentives for teaching in a rural district are different and unfamiliar

## Particular Rural Shortage Areas:

English as a second language,  
Special education,  
Mathematics and science  
(Provasnik et al, 2007)

# Research Question

*What do teacher preparation programs in the Central Region do to prepare teachers for rural settings?*

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt. In the background, a computer monitor is visible, and the overall scene is brightly lit, possibly by natural light from a window.

# Creating the Sample

Materials from websites of 120 institutions were screened for rural content

# What did we look for?

Five program components believed to support rural teacher preparation



# Program components (sources)

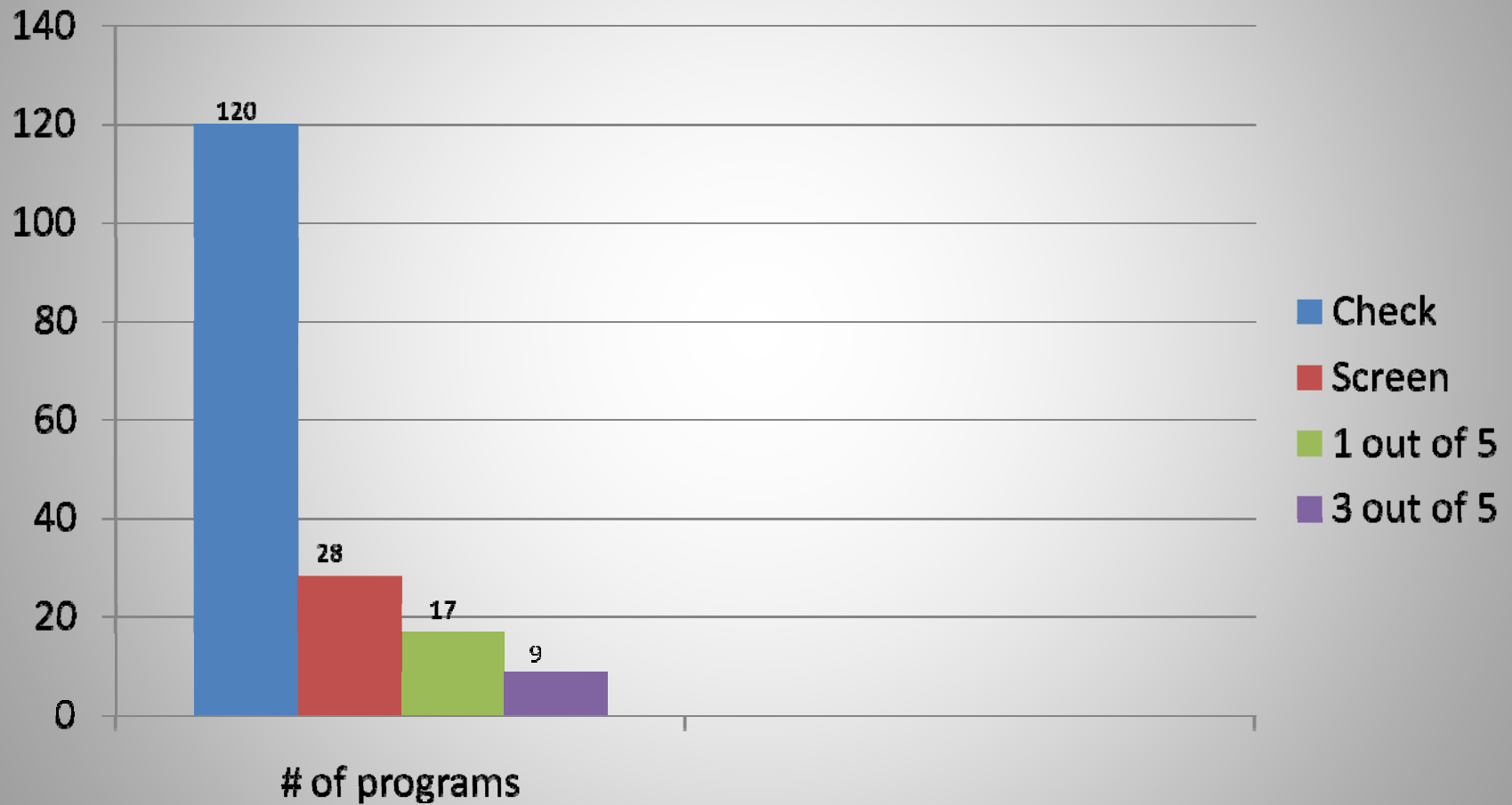
## Components to assist rural based teachers and prospective teachers:

1. Options for obtaining multiple-subject certifications  
– Barker & Beckner (1987)
2. Access to teacher preparation for prospective rural teachers – Monk (2007)

## Components to prepare teachers to choose a rural setting:

3. Recruitment of prospective teachers in rural areas – Monk (2007), Boyd et al. (2005)
4. Practice-teaching placement in rural schools  
Barker & Beckner (1987), Monk (2007)
5. Courses focused on rural issues – Barker & Beckner (1987)

# Programs we found



# Nine Institutions Interviewed:



**Colorado:** Adams State College, Mesa State College

**Kansas:** Pittsburg State University, Wichita State University

**Missouri:** Southeast Missouri State University

**Nebraska:** University of Nebraska (Lincoln) (Kearney)

**North Dakota:** Minot State University, University of North Dakota (Grand Forks)

## *Interview questions - -*

- What are the characteristics of the rural program?
- Do you plan with knowledge of specific needs for teachers in rural schools?
  - By level and location
  - In shortage areas
- How do you track your graduates?
- What do you do to better prepare teachers for rural schools?

# So what did we learn?

Findings presented by component  
Illustrated with examples from one program

# *The First Component*

Options for obtaining  
multiple-subject  
certifications

# Adams State College



# Options for obtaining multiple-subject certifications

- Partnering Across Regions to Nurture Equity and Relevance (PARTNERS)

Prepares rural in-service teachers for dual endorsements in special education, literacy, language, and culture

Masters level – 60 graduates (2003-2007)

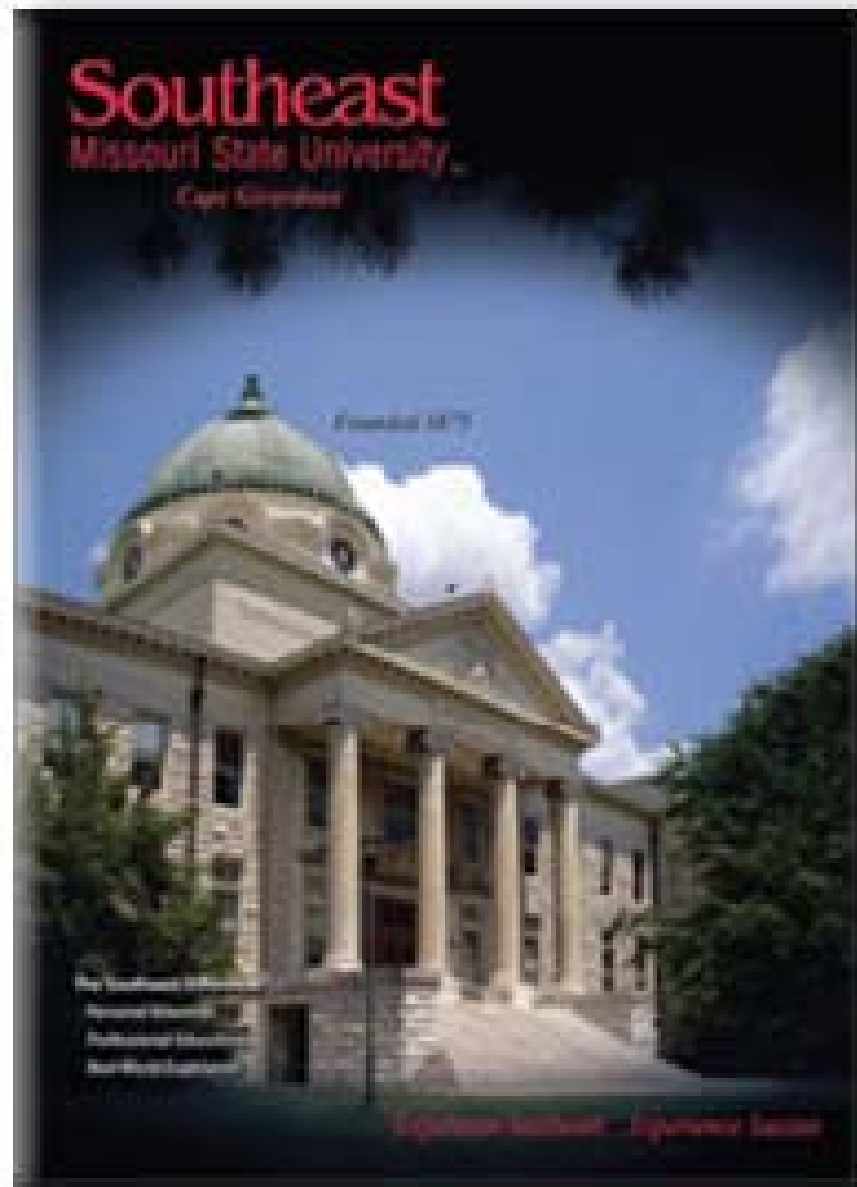
Distance learning and onsite classes on weekends

# *The Second Component*

Access to teacher

preparation for prospective  
rural teachers

# Southeast Missouri State University



# Access to teacher preparation for prospective rural teachers

- Partners with community colleges – allowing them to offer an associate's degree in teacher education
- Extended Studies Department – offers distance courses to prospective teachers
- Blended courses combine distance and campus

# *The Third Component*

Recruitment of  
prospective teachers in  
rural areas

# University of Nebraska Kearney



# Recruiting prospective teachers in rural areas

- Post-baccalaureate teacher certification
  - keep your day job while earning a teacher certification
- 3 sequential six-hour online classes - then student teaching –
- Minimum four semesters total

# *The Fourth Component*

Practice-teaching  
placement in rural  
schools

# Wichita State University



## Practice-teaching placement in rural schools (7/9 are located in rural areas)

- Note: Wichita State is not rurally based
- Partners with rural districts
- 40% of elementary education majors experience teaching in a rural school

# *The Fifth Component*

Courses focused on  
rural issues

University of North Dakota

# About UND



# Courses focused on rural issues

- Sociology of Rural Life

# *Shortage Areas*

Mathematics and Science

# University of Nebraska - Lincoln



# Mathematics and Science

- Math in the Middle – 130 middle school teachers – to enhance content knowledge; become intellectual leaders
- Strong rural focus
- 12 distance courses, 25 months, one or two intensive 5-week summers

# *Shortage Areas*

Teaching English as a  
Second Language

# Mesa State College



# English as a Second Language

- Endorsement as part of masters program
- “taking this to the rural areas”

*Shortage Area*

Special Education

# Minot State University



# Special Education

- Special Education Resident Teacher Program – graduate coursework online; practicum and mentor – masters level
- Undergraduates – bachelors in education with specialization in mental retardation

# Summary

| Rural Component   | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Central Region Teacher Preparation Institutions – rural focus | 17/120 | 14%     |
| Three or more components supportive of rural placement        | 9/17   | 53%     |
| Options for multiple certification - pre or in-service        | 3/9    | 33%     |
| Online courses – pre or in-service                            | 7/9    | 78%     |
| Recruit from rural areas - preservice                         | 4/9    | 44%     |
| CRITICAL SHORTAGE AREAS                                       |        |         |
| Math and Science  | 2/9    | 22%     |
| English Language Learners (rural focus)                       | 3/9    | 33%     |
| Special Education (rural positions)                           | 3/9    | 33%     |

## Some further thoughts . . .

- Teacher preparation institutions need to recruit aggressively from rural areas – at all levels/backgrounds (Monk, 2007 “grow your own”)
- They need to partner with rural districts to arrange accommodations for enrolling
- Practicum experiences should enable the student to encounter the community not just the classroom (Todd & Agnello, 2006)

## Continued . . . .

- Offer opportunities for multiple certification
- Rural LEAs need to assist with local recruitment and arrangements that accommodate
- Principals should consider the positive attraction of the rural working conditions (Bacolod, 2007)
- National policymakers must take into account the rural teaching context (Eppley, 2009)

## Selected References

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- Todd, R.H. & Agnello, M.F. (2006). Looking at rural communities in teacher preparation: insight into a P-12 schoolhouse. *The Social Studies*