

Serving Gifted Rural Students Through Sustainable Programs: Partnering to Increase Advanced Learning Opportunities

Tuesday 3 August 2021 - Parallel Session 1 - 11.30am to 12.30pm (GMT+1)

FRASER - Building Enduring Partnerships

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Rural communities struggle when their “best and brightest” leave for college or opportunities elsewhere, often due to limited job prospects at home. An investment in place-based gifted education can upend this outmigration trend by identifying students who may be “missed” by traditional assessments, allowing talented students to see themselves and their communities in the curriculum. Providing advanced instruction to more rural students equips them, as adults, to meet challenges in their hometowns with innovative solutions. In a previous large-scale study, Promoting PLACE in Rural Schools, researchers used local norms on multiple measures to identify a larger pool of rural third- and fourth-grade students to participate in gifted programming. Across two years, students were taught using a place-based language arts curriculum that helped students develop their rural identities while thinking in creative ways. Students in the treatment condition—those who were identified with local norms and who received place-based instruction—outperformed control students on post-assessments of reading skills, illustrating the benefits of the approach. To share these promising practices with other rural communities, the Appalachian Rural Talent Initiative was designed to help districts in five Appalachian states build sustainable gifted programming using the Promoting PLACE model. Conference attendees will learn how our efforts are improving educational equity in rural places and will be given an access to a website (built as part of the initiative) where teachers can obtain and share resources for teaching rural gifted students and connect with others doing this important work.