

## Rural School Sustainability: Linking Research, Knowledge Dissemination, and Practice

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

**SINCLAIR - Building Enduring Partnerships**

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The paper presents an analysis of the concepts of rural school consolidation and rural school sustainability found in three journals (Journal of Research on Rural Education, The Rural Educator, Australian and International Journal of Rural Education) and three regular conferences (National Congress on Rural Education [Canada], Rural Special Interest Group at American Educational Research Association, and International Symposium for Innovations in Rural Education) focused on rural education. It links the topics of study and knowledge mobilization found in these sources to the results of a study that examined the work of rural teaching principals in rural, remote and northern schools in the prairie provinces in Canada. The paper discusses major concerns related to rural school sustainability as well as practices initiated by rural schools and/or rural school districts that support rural school sustainability. We argue that reshaping conversations to focus on rural school sustainability rather than school consolidation may minimize the anger, defensiveness and secrecy involved in current school review processes, even if it can never completely erase the anxiety of these kinds of conversations. It may also offer up possibilities to reshape how schools are organized, promote authentic engagement in long-term planning and decision-making by the multiple parties invested in rural schooling, and reconsider how teaching and learning is provided in rural communities.