



National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed)

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln has received a nearly \$10 million five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences to establish the nation's only National Center for Research on Rural Education at UNL. This center's cutting-edge research will address the unique needs of rural education to improve student learning in reading, science and math.

Many factors can limit rural teachers' access to formal professional development programs and informal peer mentoring needed to sharpen their classroom skills. Researchers will identify the most effective ways to provide professional development and other supports to teachers in rural schools who have often have limited access to the human, informational and material resources necessary to offer state-of-the-art classroom instruction. The center also will provide national leadership and expertise to focus on unique rural education needs.

Researchers will work closely with schools across rural Nebraska. More than 500 Nebraska teachers will participate in this research through training, one-on-one coaching and practicing new research-based methods in their classrooms.

Potential Impact: This research will guide improvements in professional development and instructional practices in rural schools across Nebraska and the nation. Nationwide, nearly 10 million children attend school in rural settings. In Nebraska, almost 30 percent of students attend rural schools; 87 percent of all school districts are considered rural. At least 5,000 Nebraska students will benefit from their teachers' involvement in this research.

Title of Grant: The National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed)

Project start date: July 1, 2009

Award amount: \$9,997,852 total over five years

Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences

Location: The center will be housed within UNL's Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools as part of the College of Education and Human Sciences

Principal Investigator: Susan Sheridan, Willa Cather Professor and professor of educational psychology

Co-investigators: Todd Glover and Gina Kunz, research assistant professors, and Gwen Nugent, research associate professor, all with the Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools; and James Bovaird, assistant professor of educational psychology.



Key Collaborators: Jon Pedersen, professor of teaching, learning and teacher education, and Allen Steckelberg and Guy Trainin, both associate professors of teaching, learning and teacher education.

National Research Advisory Board:

Nationally/internationally known individuals with expertise in specific content areas and research related to rural education: Sharon Vaughn, University of Texas, reading; John Staver, Purdue, science education; Craig Howley, Ohio University, math education; Caitlin Howley, Rural Education Center at Edvantia, rural education; and Ed Shapiro, Lehigh University (Pennsylvania), response to intervention.

State Leadership Advisory Board:

Individuals who hold significant leadership positions in Nebraska, who have particular expertise and investment in quality education in rural settings, and who can represent stakeholders at various levels: Marge Harouff, interim commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education; Mark Norvell, president, Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association; Mike Dulaney, executive director, Nebraska Council of School Administrators; Mark Aten, superintendent, Overton School District; and Kathy Fimple, director of State Teacher Quality Programs, Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.