

Closing the Achievement Gap in Rural Districts

Agenda

March 4, 2015

Objectives

Participants will gain understanding of:

- Research results related to teaching and learning practices for closing the achievement gap in rural districts;
- “Adapting Science for Kids” (ASK) professional development program as a strategy that utilizes adapted science inquiry activities to build student reading, writing, and language arts skills while learning science; and
- Supporting special education services for rural adolescents.

- 1:00 p.m.** **Shelley Billig from REL Central at Marzano Research** will provide the welcome, and an overview of the Rural Education Research Alliance and related projects.
Xin Wang and Emma Espel from REL Central at Marzano Research will provide an overview of the webinar goals, anticipated outcomes, and speaker introductions.
- 1:15 p.m.** **Jim Shymansky and Charles Matthews** will summarize 20+ years of work with local and regional groups of K–6 teachers to develop a strategy that utilizes adapted science inquiry activities to build student reading, writing and language arts skills while learning science. Their contribution will consist of three parts: (1) a summary of the 20+ history of the on-site and at-a-distance ASK professional development, (2) the research strategies and outcomes associated with the 20+ years of ASK professional development, and (3) a summary of the anticipated future for the ASK research and professional development.
- 1:40 p.m.** **Question-and-answer session** moderated by the facilitators.
- 1:50 p.m.** **Thomas Farmer** will focus on issues in the delivery of special education services for students with disabilities in rural school districts. Building on a series of studies conducted by the IES-funded National Research Center on Rural Education Support, three areas that are of high concern for rural districts will be addressed: supporting the retention and professional development needs of special education teachers in rural districts; factors that may impact high-school completion and postsecondary preparation of rural adolescents who are receiving special education services; and a universal model, developed from a cluster randomized trial, designed to help general education teachers create classroom contexts that are supportive of all students including students with disabilities.
- 2:15 p.m.** **Question-and-answer session** moderated by the facilitators. This session will incorporate questions about the current state of rural education achievement gaps and research as it relates to practitioners. This time will also be an opportunity to solicit questions and comments from participants.
- 2:25 p.m.** **Shelley Billig** Closing