

## **Making Connections: Dropout Prevention in Rural Schools**

**Wednesday, September 9, 2015  
Filming 2:00–5:00 p.m. Eastern Time  
Indianapolis, Indiana**

### **Draft Agenda**

2:00–2:02 p.m.

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

**Lisa Shimmel**, Communications Lead, REL Midwest

Ms. Shimmel will provide an overview of the regional educational laboratories and REL Midwest in particular, discuss the goals of the taping and television program, and briefly introduce the moderator.

2:02–2:05 p.m.

#### **Event Overview**

**Jenny Scala**, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Ms. Scala will provide a high-level overview of the current research into rural dropout prevention. Her introduction will include insights into a federally funded project that supports dropout prevention practices in rural states and districts. She also will introduce the panelists.

2:05–2:21 p.m.

#### **National Efforts to Address Rural Dropout Prevention**

**John Hill, Ph.D.**, Executive Director, National Rural Education Association

Dr. Hill will provide the national perspective on dropout prevention challenges and strategies. He will lead a discussion around the unique challenges that rural districts face in relation to decreasing student enrollment, capacity building, and limited funding. In addition, Dr. Hill will highlight trends seen across the country related to rural dropout prevention.

2:21–2:37 p.m.

#### **Case Study: Jennings County Schools**

**Terry Sargent, Ph.D.**, Superintendent, Jennings County Schools

Dr. Sargent will provide local context from Jennings County Schools on efforts to help rural students persist through high school. He will describe the district's response to low graduation rates, including enhanced vocational opportunities, development of an alternative school, and a shift in policies that act as barriers to high school completion.

2:37–2:53 p.m.

**Dropout Prevention Research in Rural Contexts**  
**Caitlin Howley, Ph.D.**, Fellow, ICF International

Dr. Howley will offer examples of how rural districts leverage school-community collaboration, adult mentor/advocates, active learning strategies, and career, technical and accelerated education institutes to support students who are at risk of dropping out. In addition, she will detail recent research looking at promising practices that support dropout prevention efforts in rural contexts.

2:53–2:55 p.m.

**Concluding Remarks**  
**Jenny Scala**, Senior Researcher, AIR

Ms. Scala will review briefly the topics discussed during the program, refer audience members to resources that they can consult for additional information, and thank audience members and viewers for their attendance and participation.