



Ready for the Future Career Preparation in Rural Communities

About the Documentary

Students in rural communities face unique opportunities and challenges as they explore and prepare for careers and college. In partnership with Twin Cities PBS and the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest Career Readiness Alliance, REL Midwest created a 30-minute documentary that addresses the alliance's interest in learning about career readiness opportunities for rural students in Minnesota, as well as the research on preparing rural students for careers. The documentary features two evidence-based career readiness programs in rural Minnesota: [Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities](#) in Wadena and [Scrubs Camp](#) in Mankato. The documentary features Paula Palmer, director of Career and College Success at the Minnesota Department of Education; Susan Therriault, director of the College and Career Readiness and Success Center at the American Institutes for Research; and John Sipple, an associate professor at Cornell University.

When students are hands-on—applying their learning to areas they are interested in, whether it will be related to their career or not—this would be the best education we could offer.

– Paula Palmer,
Director of Career and College Success,
Minnesota Department of Education

Intended Audience

REL Midwest created this documentary as a tool for teachers, counselors, school leaders, state and local education agency representatives, and industry representatives to learn about evidence-based approaches to support students as they prepare for careers and college. The documentary focuses on examples from Minnesota, but the information and evidence shared in the program offer important learnings for people and groups based outside the state. REL Midwest hopes viewers will watch the program and use the following questions as a starting point for a discussion on how to support students' career and college preparation in rural areas.

Discussion Questions

- What concepts or themes from the documentary resonate with you?
- What were your reactions to the approaches and research presented in the documentary? Are there promising approaches that the program did not address?
- What challenges do you see in preparing students from rural areas for careers and college? What are possible ways to overcome these challenges?
- What approaches to preparing students from rural areas for careers and college have worked in your state, district, or school?
- Are there other ways that K–12 education, higher education, and industry can work together to prepare students from rural areas for careers and college?

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. Visit the REL Midwest website to learn more: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/default.aspx>.

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