

Welcome to

Improving Outcomes for Students in Rural Areas: The Promise and Challenge of Educator Networks



The webinar will begin promptly at 1:00 PT/4:00 ET

The webinar will begin soon. While you wait, please share the following in the chat box: **your name, role, organization, and location.**



Improving Outcomes for Students in Rural Areas



The Promise and Challenge of Educator Networks



Today's facilitator



**Nettie
Legters**

REL Northwest

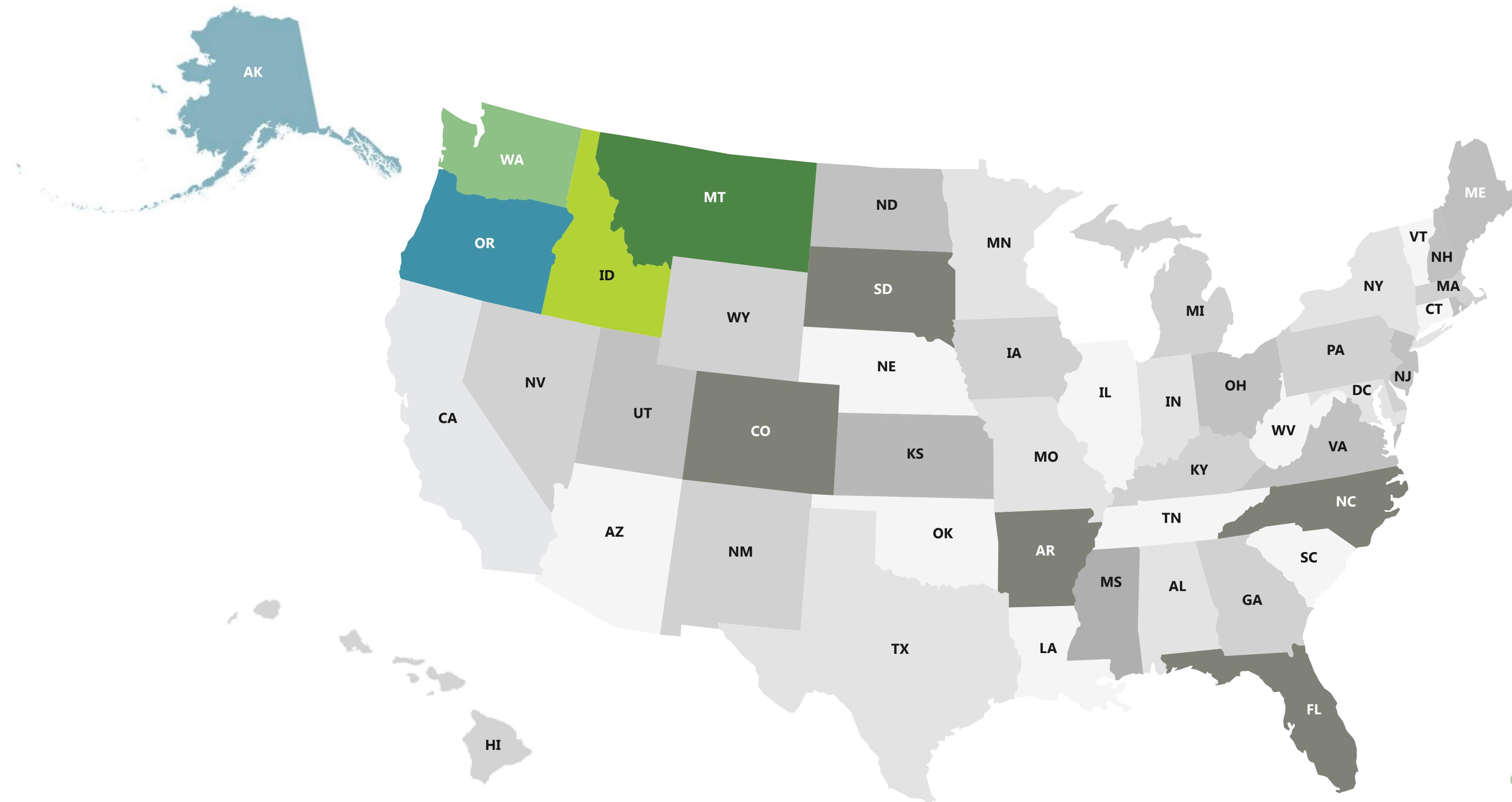
About REL Northwest

Regional educational laboratories (RELs) partner with practitioners and policymakers to use data and evidence to help solve educational problems that impede student success. We do this by:

- Conducting rigorous research and data analysis
- Delivering customized training, coaching, and technical support
- Providing engaging learning opportunities



Our region



Poll question: Who's in the room today?



- a) State education agency staff member
- b) Teacher
- c) School administrator
- d) University staff/faculty member
- e) Other

Agenda



- 1** Welcome and research overview
- 2** Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement (NW RISE) Network
- 3** Vermont Rural Partnership
- 4** Ohio Appalachian Collaborative
- 5** Final comments
- 6** Close

Today's speakers



Danette Parsley

NW RISE Network at
Education Northwest



**Karen
Martin**

Denali Borough
School District



**Margaret
MacLean**

Vermont Rural
Partnership



Brad Mitchell

Ohio
Appalachian
Collaborative

Session goals

- Learn about common challenges rural school systems face and how educator networks can help address them
- Increase understanding of rural educator networks as a strategy to improve college and career readiness outcomes
- Explore strengths and challenges of a network approach to improving education in rural areas

Understanding rural education in the U.S.



- More than 40 percent of all schools and nearly half of all school districts are rural
- Close to a third of all students attend rural schools

Johnson, J., Showalter, D., Klein, R., & Lester, C. (2014). *Why Rural Matters 2013–2014: The condition of rural education in the 50 states*. Arlington, VA: Rural School and Community Trust.
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED556045>

Understanding rural education in the U.S.

- 25 percent of rural students live in poverty
- It is not uncommon for child poverty to exceed 50 percent in rural areas across the U.S.



Student populations in rural communities are changing

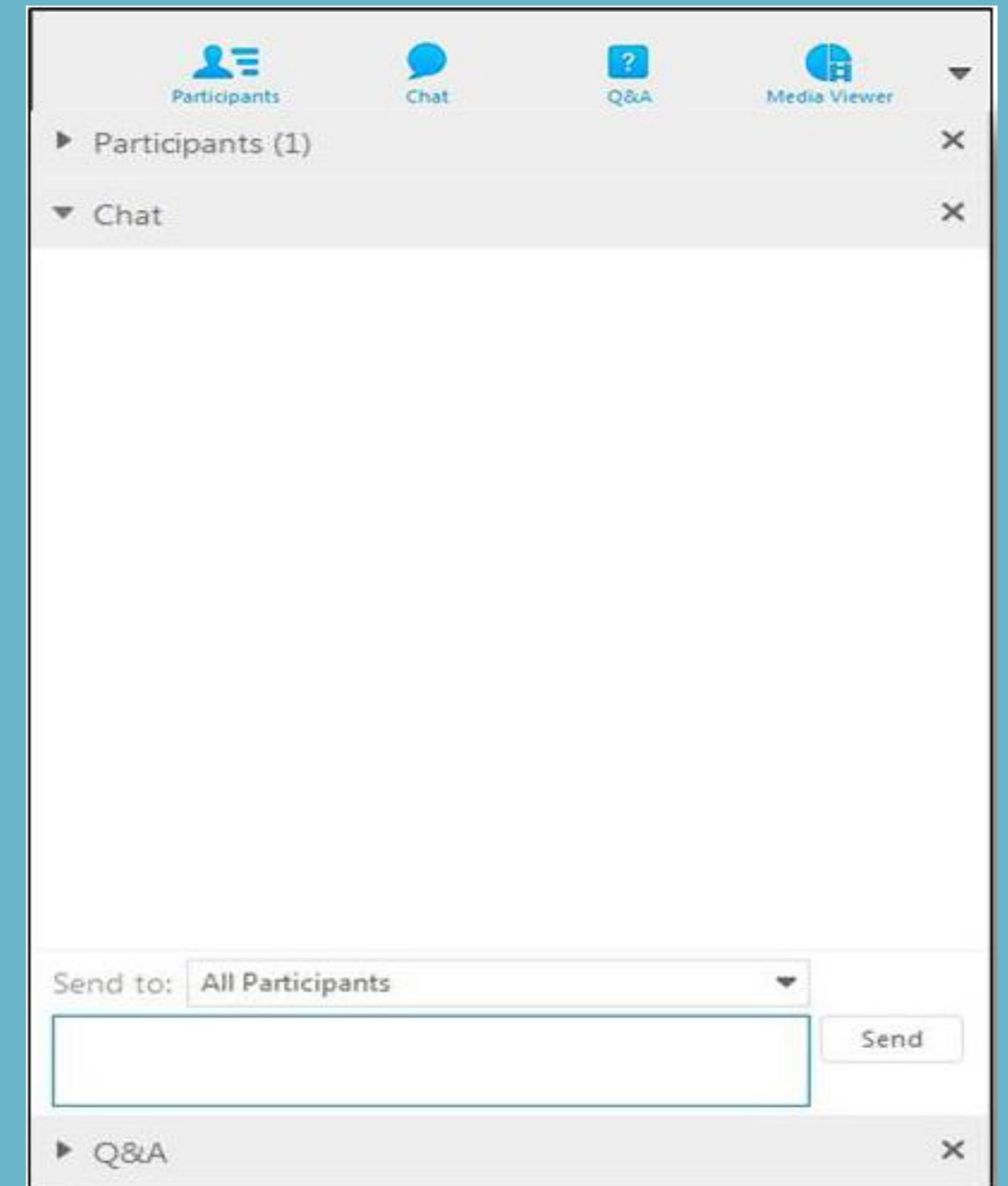


- The number of rural students has increased by 4 million since 1999
- 83 percent of this growth is from racial and ethnic minority populations



Use the Chat feature:

**What do you think is
the biggest challenge
facing rural educators?**



Rural educators face specific challenges

- Poor infrastructure
 - For example, inadequate and unreliable Internet access
- Human capital shortage
 - Individuals wear many hats
- Few opportunities for professional development and collaboration
 - "I'm a PLC of one"



What response is needed for rural schools and students to thrive?

Education change networks

- Networks can improve student achievement
- Studies of education networks in rural areas primarily done in other countries
- Research on rural education networks, or collaboratives, in the United States is emerging

Hargreaves, A., Parsley, D., & Cox, E. K. (2015). *Designing rural school improvement networks: Aspirations and actualities.*

Rural education collaboratives (RECs): A growing conversation

What are RECs?

- Two or more rural school districts with a shared commitment to a common purpose
- Visible, active, established, and organized
- Focus on improving practice by pursuing real solutions that create value for rural students
- Clear about intended outcomes and metrics
- A peer-to-peer learning network—**not** just a service organization

National field scan

What is the status of RECs
in the U.S.?

How many are there, where are they, what do they do, how are they organized, and what outcomes do they report?

- **Method:** Web search, document review, and short phone and email interviews
- **Product:** Database with descriptive information on the membership, organization, and reported outcomes





REC strategies

- Resource sharing
- Advocacy
- Curriculum design
- Scaling up programs and best practices
- Preparing students for college and career
- Holistic/comprehensive approach combining all of the above



In addition to the national field scan, we conducted four REC case studies



- Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement (NW RISE) Network
- Ohio Appalachian Collaborative
- Vermont Rural Partnership
- Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium

Method: Document review, phone and in-person interviews, and direct observation of collaborative activities

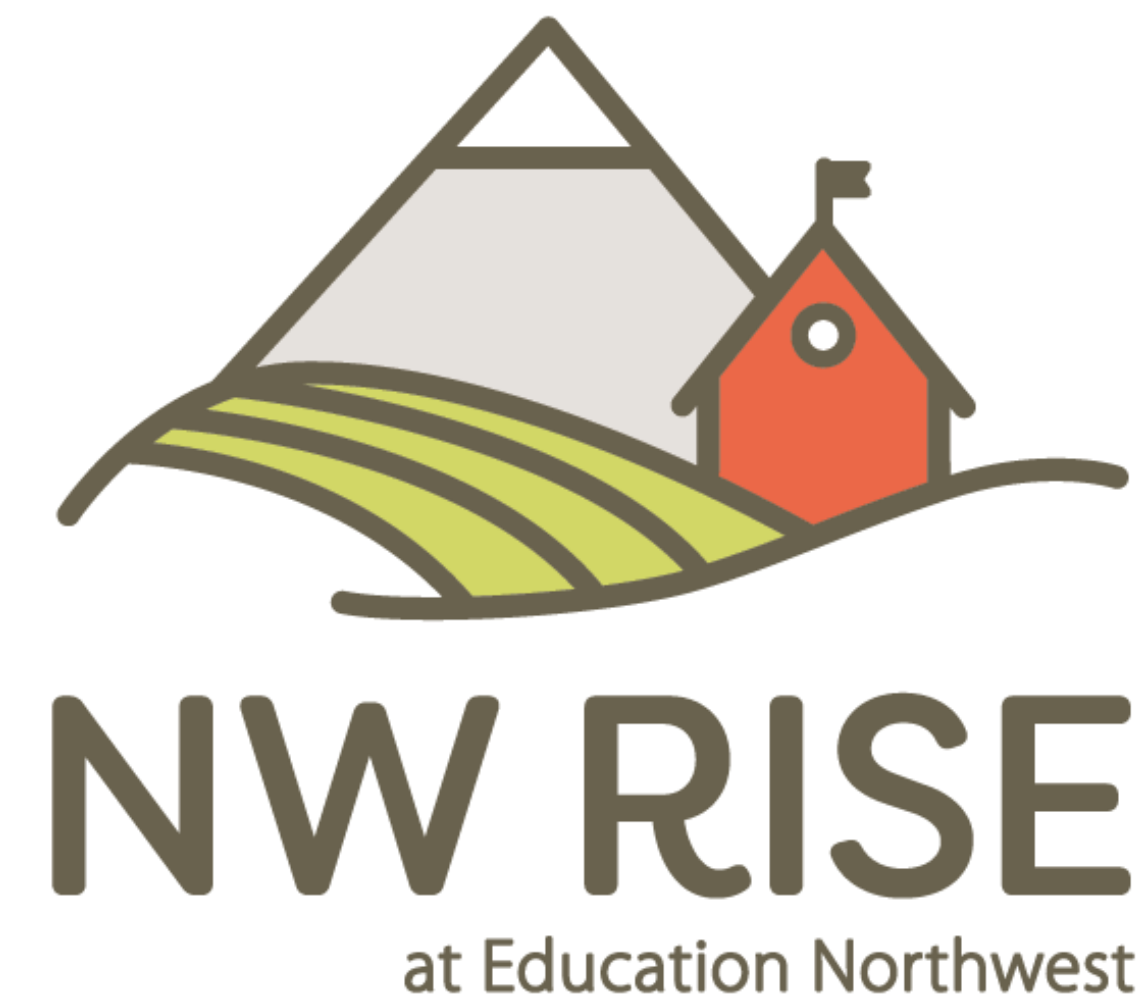
Battelle for Kids. (2016). *Generating opportunity and prosperity: The promise of rural education collaboratives*



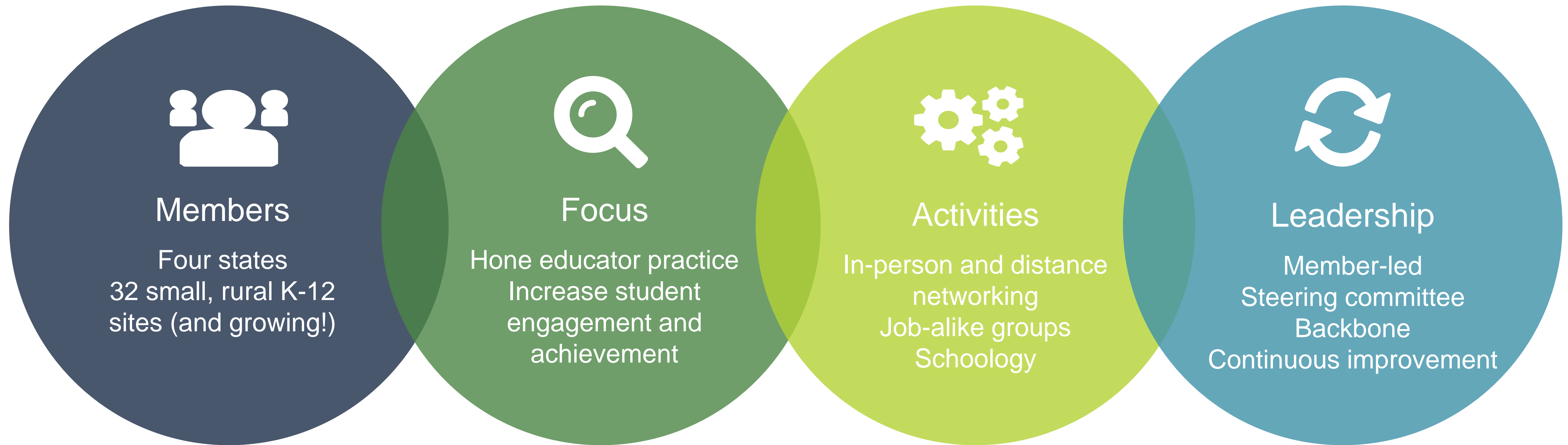
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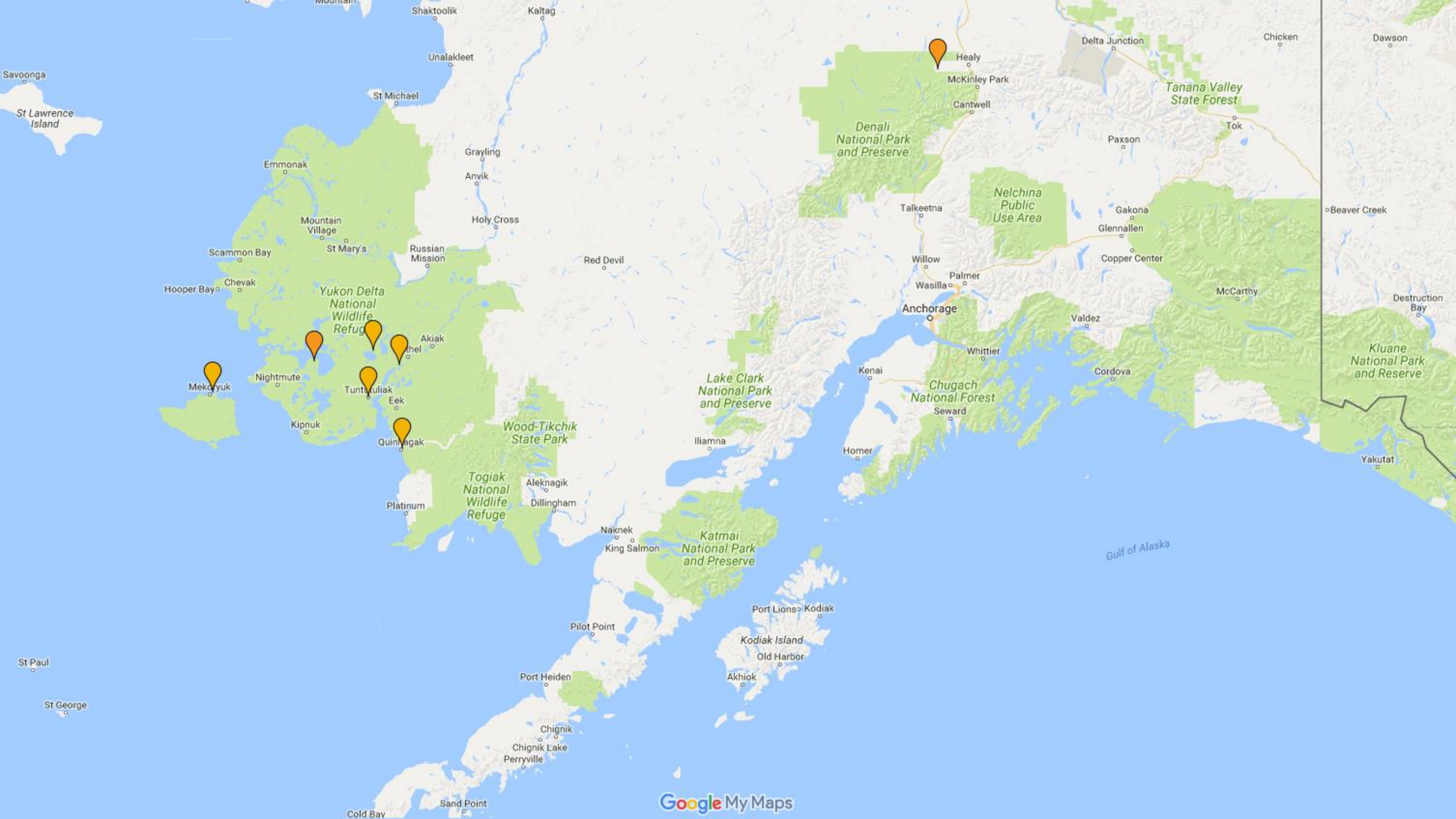


About the NW RISE Network



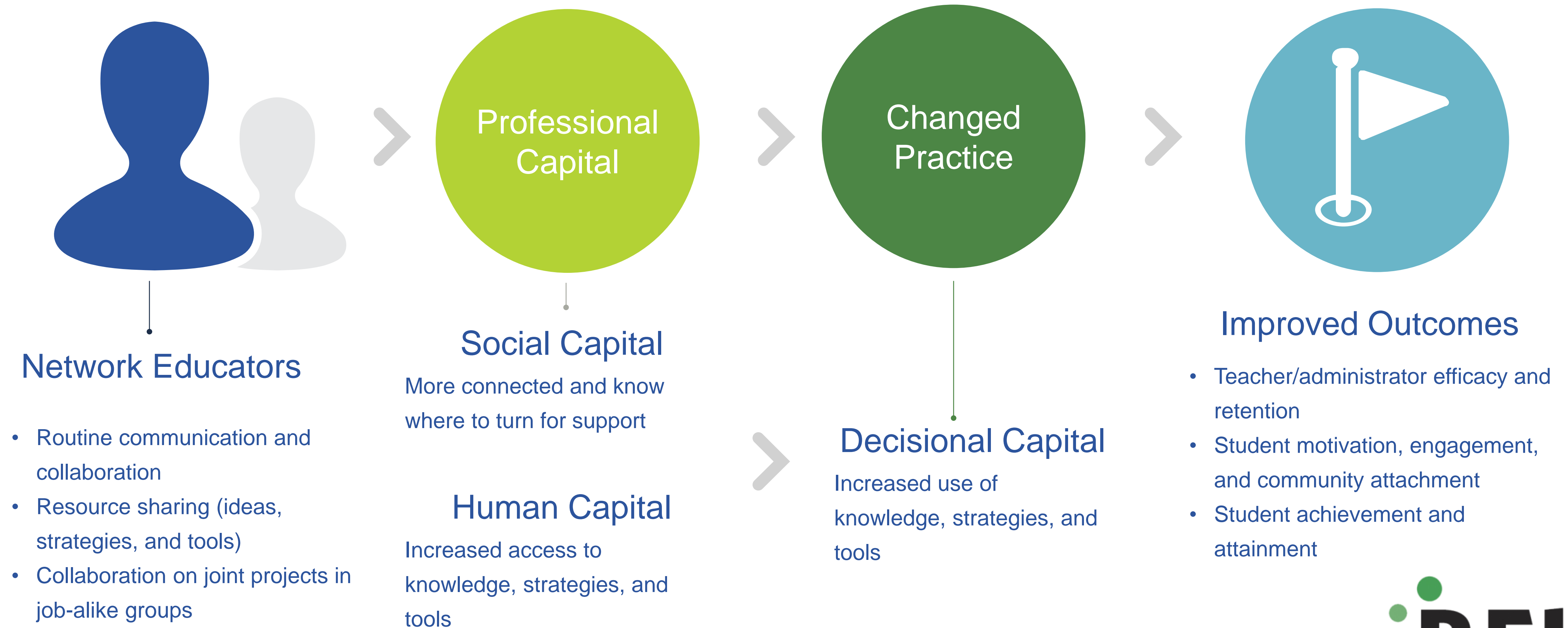
The Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement (NW RISE) Network convenes teachers and leaders from some of the Northwest's most isolated and remote communities to learn from one another, share strategies to meet their unique challenges, and spread best practices of the region's rural schools.

Four states, 32 sites



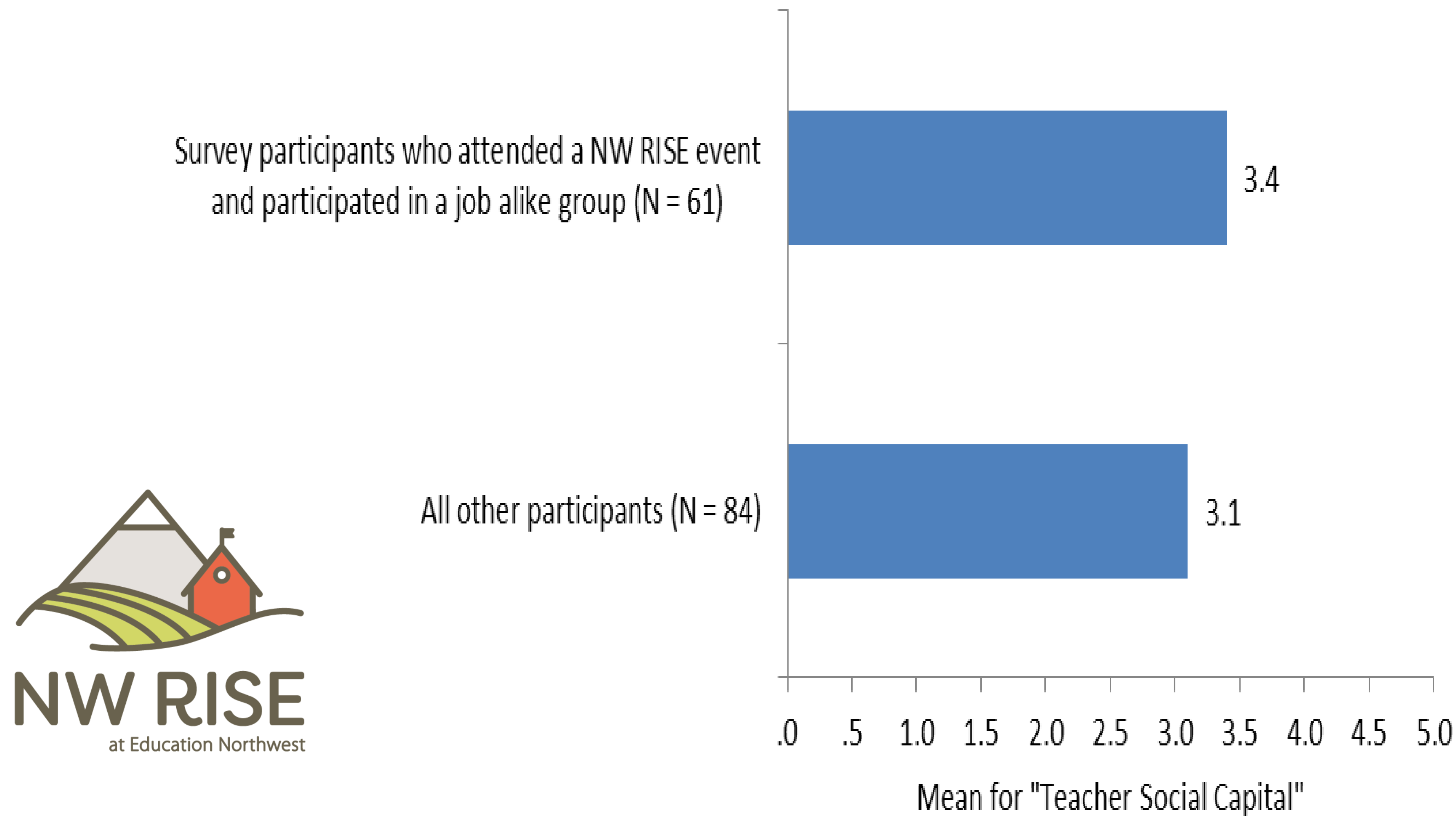
NW RISE's premise

Challenge: Rural educators have limited opportunities to collaborate with role-alike peers to improve practice



Growing professional capital

Social capital is higher for members who participate in NW RISE events and job-alike groups



I do feel that there is a network now of like professionals that I can rely on for ideas, guidance, and general support.

In the same way that research shows that students should learn to take control of their own learning, NW RISE engages educators in taking the same responsibility and running with it.

I feel completely invested in the work because it comes from my interests and desires for PD.

I am more positive and feel like I can solve issues as they arise, whereas I would have just shrugged my shoulders before.

It opened up my world. I've been isolated for so many years.

Job-alike projects: What members do

Video Study



Video of students at work in each teacher's own classroom launches authentic professional discussions about student learning.

Secondary math

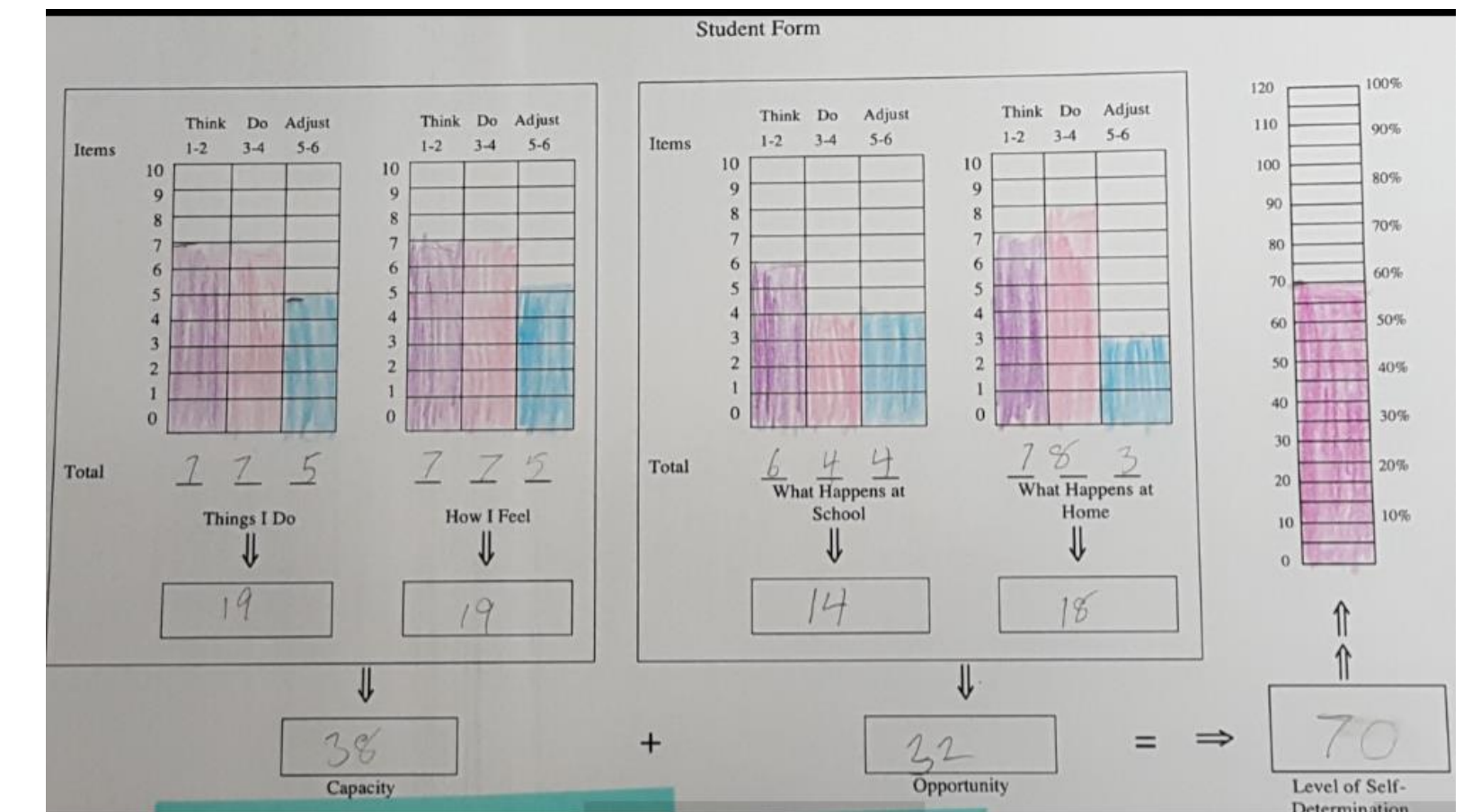
Student problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and perseverance skills



High school

English language arts

Lyric analysis and informal argumentative writing



Special education

Student self-advocacy and self-determination

"Job-alike group activities are self-formed, so the work is very specific to the group's needs."
– NW RISE member

Student-to-student collaboration and connection

- Connections with students across the Northwest to extend learning beyond the walls of our classrooms
- Enhanced cognitive and emotional engagement to learning experiences
- Authentic audiences to share learning, thinking, and products



Teacher-to-teacher collaboration and connection



- Connecting with passionate educators sharing problems of practice that resonate across contexts
- Strengthening expertise by sharing knowledge, as well as pedagogical thinking and practices
- Increasing collective efficacy outside the walls of school buildings

Learn more



Website

and video

<http://nwcc.educationnorthwest.org/nw-rise-network>



Research

Peabody Journal of
Education article

<http://bit.ly/2tr1gnt>

Case study

<http://bit.ly/2tqok5l>



Blogs

Shanker Institute

<http://bit.ly/2uDiMEem>

Education Northwest

<http://bit.ly/2tHg5h3>



Twitter

@NWCompCenter

#NWRISE



Visit

Check out the next NW

RISE convening!

Post Falls, Idaho

(November 9-10, 2017)



Got a question?

Use the Q&A feature
in the bottom right
corner of the screen.
Please ask “All
Panelists.”

Participants (2) x

Chat x

Q&A x

All (0)

Ask: All Panelists

Send



**Margaret
MacLean**

Vermont Rural Partnership



Vermont Rural Partnership

A Grassroots Coalition of Vermont Small Schools

- Established in 1996, 36 member schools, 5,000 students PK-12
 - Has leveraged over \$5 million and distributed it to schools within that time frame from multiple sources
- Promotes student voice, engagement, and leadership
- Supports the development of authentic, place-based learning
- Develops strong school-community connections and collaboration
- Tells our stories through assessment and documentation of the impact of our work



Activities and benefits

Annual cycle of activities tied to the seasons

- Fall: Principal retreat and meeting of grant teams
- Winter: Mini-grant development and peer-review process
- Spring: Annual conference

Additional optional opportunities offered annually

Benefits: Mini-grants for teachers, networking, role-alike groups, support

Example of a mini-grant:
Quebec bread ovens



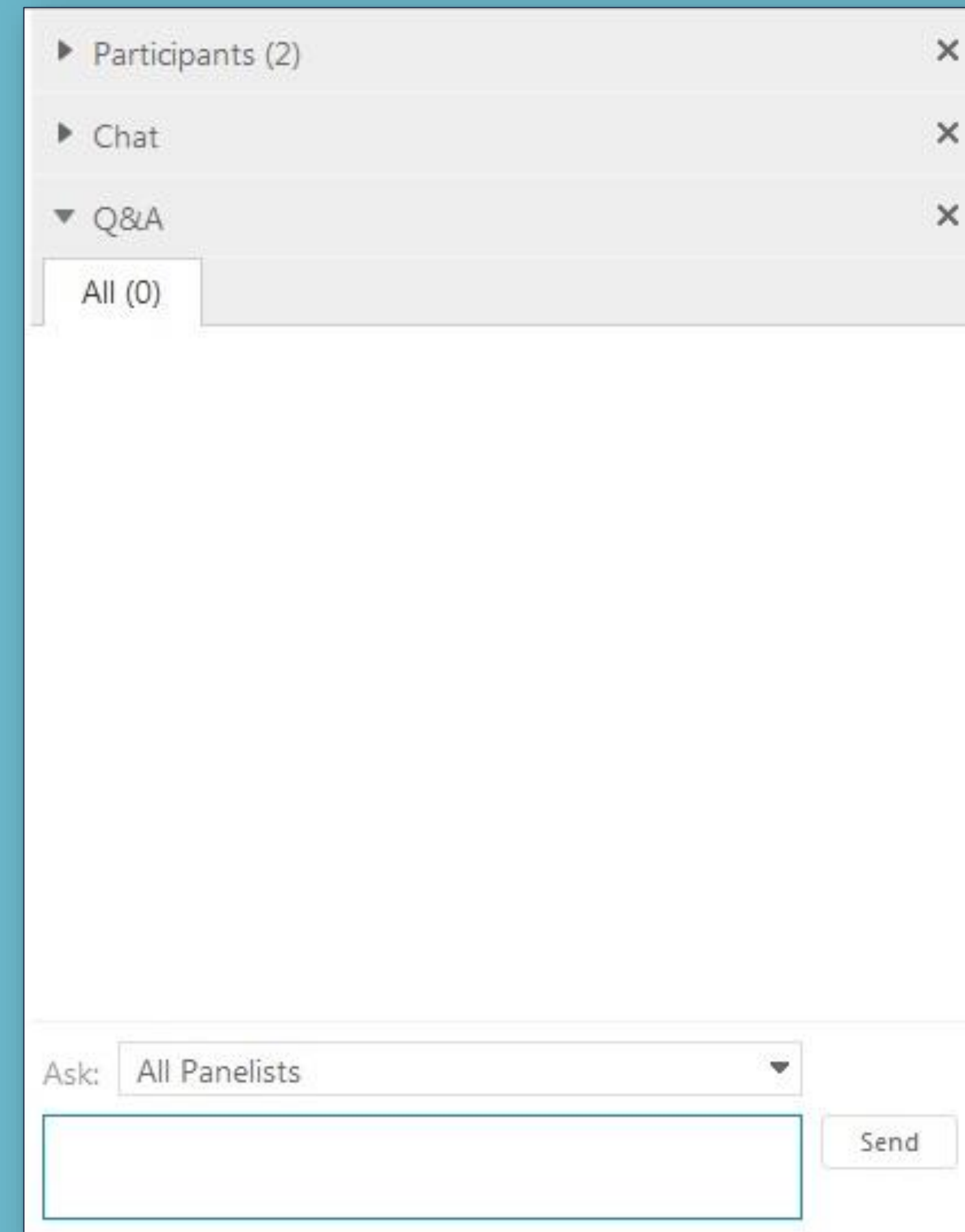
Lessons learned

- Place-based projects and curriculum build academic and applied learning skills
- Building ownership on multiple levels is important
- Staying connected is essential; we have a monthly electronic newsletter
- Consider the immediate concerns or issues schools face and connect people with resources and one another to solve them
- Create “buddy schools” to promote more localized, cross-school collaboration when initiating similar projects



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The screenshot shows a user interface for a Q&A session. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Participants (2)', 'Chat', and 'Q&A'. The 'Q&A' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a dropdown menu labeled 'All (0)'. At the bottom of the interface, there is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Ask: All Panelists' and a 'Send' button.



**Brad
Mitchell**





The three P's of RECs

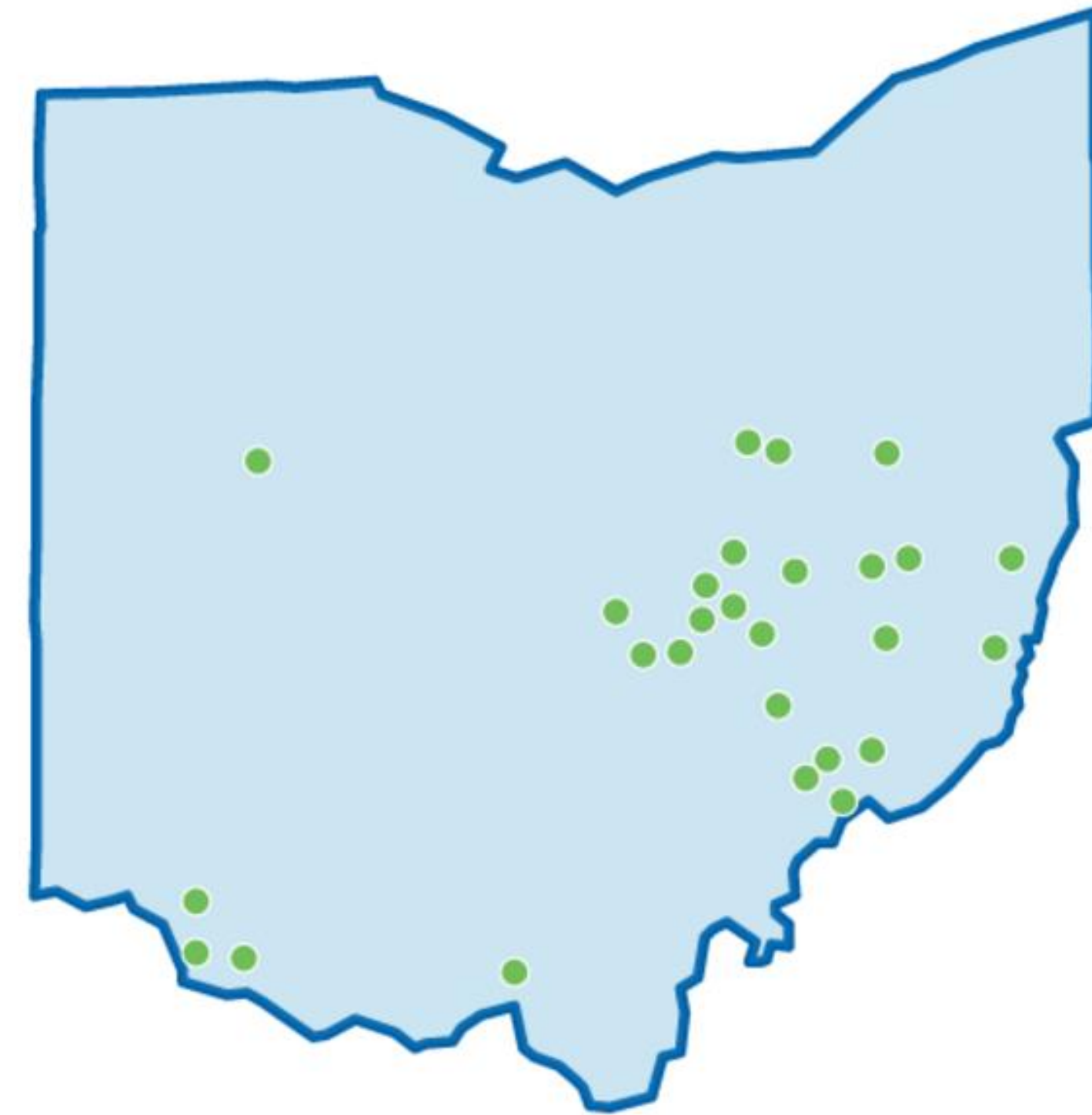
Place-based

Peer-based

Pedagogical-based

The Ohio Appalachian Collaborative story

- » Established in 2010 with **21 rural districts**
- » Expanded in 2013 to serve **27 rural districts**, impacting:
 - **98 school buildings**
 - **3,200 teachers**
 - **48,000 students**—52 percent living in poverty



The OAC's current focus

Shared dual-enrollment system

Personalized learning pathways for grades 6-12

Shared professional learning community for educators



focused on



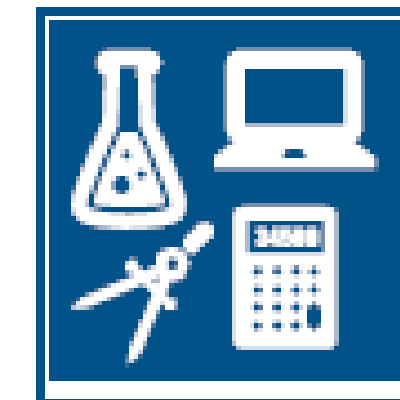
Arts &
Communications



Business &
Entrepreneurship



Health &
Human Services



Science, Technology,
Engineering, &
Math (STEM)

Three “duh” lessons



- Lasting change comes from within



- Each participant gets more than they give



- Trust is the currency that matters most

Rural challenges

LEAD

Change the rural opportunity and prosperity mindset from a deficit to an investment perspective.

INNOVATE

Solve critical rural challenges related to:

- Educator shortages
- Dual enrollment
- Personalized learning
- Learning productivity
- ESSA implementation

SERVE

Secure resources to connect and develop rural education collaboratives and networks.

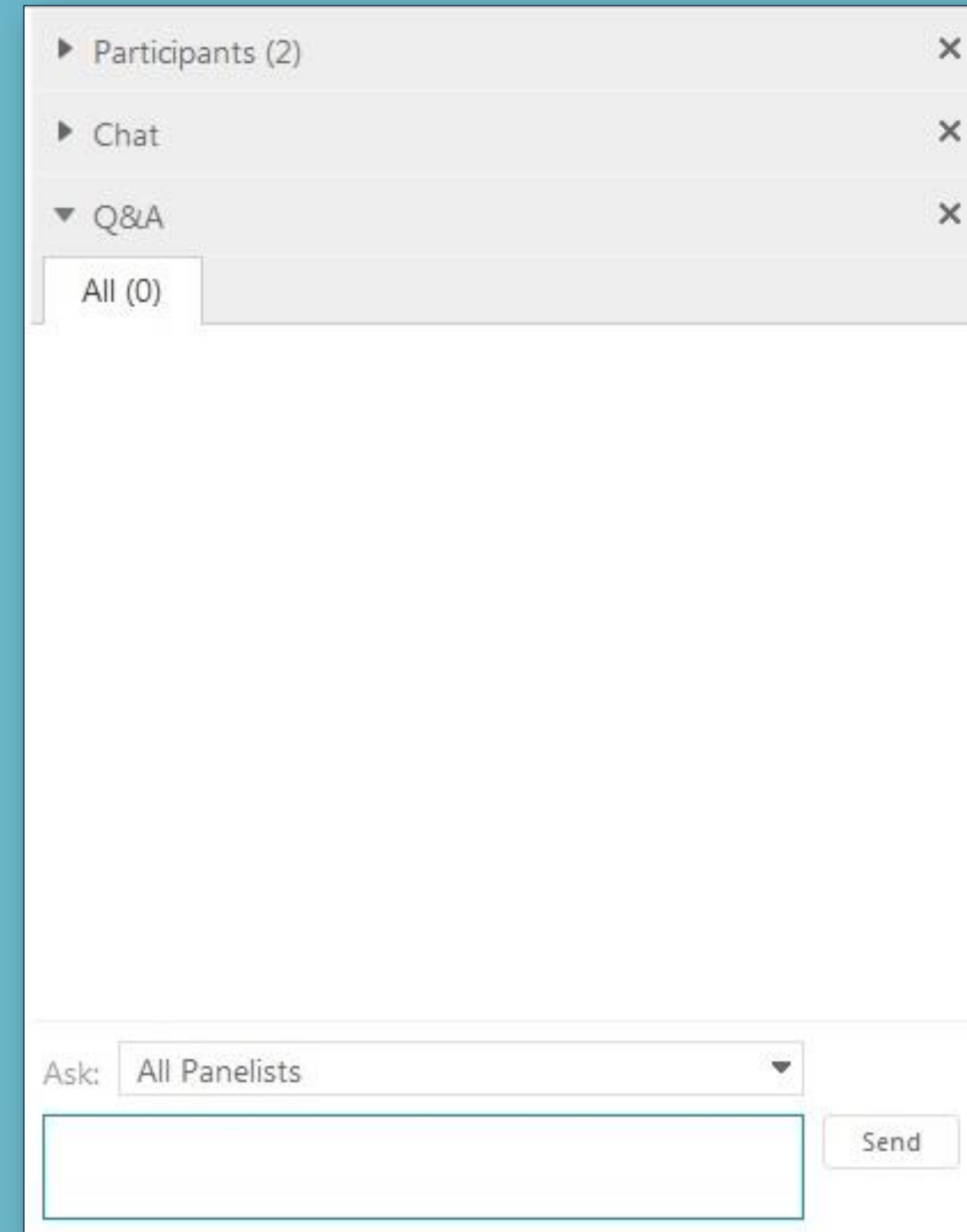
CONNECT

Make the annual Rural Education National Forum a 24/7 platform to connect rural collaboratives, leaders, and initiatives.



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Thank you for participating!

Learn more

- NW RISE Network:
nwcc.educationnorthwest.org/nw-rise
- Vermont Rural Partnership:
communityworksinstitute.org/vrp
- Ohio Appalachian Collaborative:
battelleforkids.org/OAC

Contact Nettie Legters at
Nettie.Legters@educationnorthwest.org
for information about the research evidence.

We will notify you via email when a recording of this webinar is available.



Contact us



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