

Rural Education Collaborative Newsletter - Holiday Edition 📁



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NC Rural Education Collaborative Updates

Reflecting, Celebrating and Giving Thanks This Holiday Season

As we enter this holiday season, we are reminded of the strength, compassion, and creativity that define North Carolina's rural education community. This time of year invites us to pause and reflect on the connections we've built, the challenges we've overcome, and the countless ways our educators and partners continue to lift one another up. Whether in school buildings or local communities, your dedication shines brightly, reminding us that the heart of rural education is—and has always been—rooted in people supporting people. From spirited school events to small acts of kindness happening each day, this is a time to honor the traditions, relationships, and resilient spirit that make rural North Carolina shine. Thank you for all you do for our students—may this holiday season give you the rest and joy you so richly deserve.



Theresa and Nancy have been busy planning for 2026 and preparing exciting new things for the Collaborative. More updates will be shared in January, but for now, we hope this newsletter highlights upcoming events and celebrates the great work happening across our rural schools.

Upcoming Events

Join Us for a Webinar!

Attending to the Mental Health and Wellness of Rural School Administrators

January 29, 10am

Rural school administrators juggle multiple roles—supporting staff and students, responding to community needs, meeting accountability expectations, and navigating mental health challenges. These demands often leave little room for personal wellbeing, contributing to stress and burnout.

In this session, led by Loni Crumb, a Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Tevis Harris, a K–12 School Administrator, participants will explore evidence-based strategies to strengthen self-care and long-term professional resilience. Topics shared will include peer support, mentoring, new-leader programs, and boundary setting, along with other practical approaches that promote work-life balance and wellbeing. Participants will also engage in breakout discussions to connect with fellow leaders and share what's working in their rural districts.

Register Today!



Join Us for a NC Rural Schools
Community of Practice
Conversation

January 29, 10AM

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT US: ATTENDING TO THE
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF RURAL
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

Speakers: Loni Harris & Tevis Harris

Register now at: bit.ly/NCRuralAdminMH

Brought to you by the
North Carolina Rural Education Collaborative



In Case You Missed It!

Did you miss the [Why Rural Matters: A look at NC webinar?](#)

This webinar focused on the data from the [National Why Rural Matters report](#) with a specific focus on the North Carolina data. During the webinar Dr. Jerry Johnson, one of the authors of the national report, shared the data and the critical mission of drawing attention to the urgent need for policymakers, educators, and communities to address rural education challenges and opportunities in North Carolina. The analyses and data presented in this webinar can be used to inform policy discussions, guide decision-making, and inspire action. We hope you will join us recording View the recorded session and explore the national report to compare states using the links below.

[Why Rural Matters: A Look at NC Recording of the Webinar](#)

[Why Rural Matters 2025: People, Place, & Possibility \(Full National Report\)](#)

Spotlight on Rural Education: News & Inspiration from Across NC

NC Rural Education Collaborative Featured in EdNC

If you missed this in the Thanksgiving rush, take a moment to check out the November 20 EdNC article spotlighting the NC Rural Education Collaborative: [What is the NC Rural Education Collaborative?](#) We appreciate EdNC highlighting our work!

Other Great News

Curious about the Impact of Dual Enrollment in Rural Communities? Explore this first brief, [An Overview of Dual Enrollment Policies in Three Southern States](#), published by MDRC. Julie Edmunds, the Early Childhood Research Center Director at SERVE co-authored the first publication from this study, which is exploring data beyond the more traditional research on student participation, to deepen our understanding of the impact. The study includes data from Alabama, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

In early November, Getting Smart featured this article, [One Year After Helene: WNC Schools Anchor Recovery in Resilience](#) by Wes Davis, focused on the work of the WNC Resilience Project. Highlighting the work of Canton Middle School (Haywood County) and Madison County Early College High School, the article describes the process of the networked schools in the WNC Resilience Network to seize this Helene Recovery moment to extend beyond recovery to reimagine school.

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Want to get in touch?

You can reach Theresa Gibson & Nancy Mangum for information about the Collaborative via our email: ruraledcollaborative@appstate.edu

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