

our SHARED American
future must include a
THRIVING rural landscape



**RURAL SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE**



strengthening the bonds between rural schools and communities through
PLACE-BASED ENGAGEMENT • RURAL PHILANTHROPY • DEVELOPING TEACHER-LEADERS

Message from the Chair

I want to thank everyone who helped us successfully launch the Rural Schools Collaborative in 2015-16. We are proud of our first full year's accomplishments, and we remain committed to the belief that a **sustainable American future will depend on a thriving rural landscape.**

Strengthening rural schools and communities requires hard work and persistence, and it is this determination that drives our Grants in Place program, partnership building, and emerging efforts to elevate the rural teaching profession. However, we need your assistance to keep moving forward. I sincerely hope you will consider helping us as a volunteer, storyteller, or donor.

This report recognizes the dedication and passion of many people and organizations. I know you join me in thanking them for their generosity and support.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renee Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Renee Carr
Chair, Rural Schools Collaborative
Fox, Arkansas



Our Stories

Rural Schools Collaborative partners worked together in 2015-16 to strengthen the bonds between rural schools and communities. This included building regional capacity, developing teacher-leaders, and supporting place-based engagement.



READ MORE OF OUR STORIES AT ruralschoolscollaborative.org



Black Belt Teacher Corps

The Rural Schools Collaborative made a modest planning grant to the University of West Alabama College of Education, which resulted in an Alabama state funding appropriation to establish the **Black Belt Teacher Corps**. This program prepares teacher-leaders for service in the west Alabama region and helps inform us on how to advance the rural teacher corps concept. Additionally, UWA received a \$3 million Teacher Quality Partnership grant from the U.S. Department of Education to serve “high-need” rural communities.

The Rural Teacher Corps: A Stakeholder Dialogue

A \$10,000 planning grant allowed the Rural Schools Collaborative to partner with Dakota Wesleyan University in hosting **The Rural Teacher Corps Project: A Stakeholder Dialogue** (above). More than 60 educators, future rural teachers, and advocates from nine states made their way to Mitchell, South Dakota last June, where they addressed an essential question: “How do we work together to strengthen the recruitment, preparation, and placement/retention of future rural teachers?” An event summary is available at ruralschoolscollaborative.org/rural-teacher-corps

Above: University of West Alabama students, faculty, and administrators participated in “The Rural Teacher Corps Project: A Stakeholder Dialogue”

Grants in Place

The Rural Schools Collaborative's cooperative 2016-17 **Grants in Place** program grew to award more than \$105,000 to 33 projects, which will engage students in 54 communities and seven states during the current school year. The grants involve 60 different teachers and were supported by 22 funding partners. In addition, we enjoyed highlighting the innovative work of every single one of the 35 inaugural Grants in Place recipients from our organizational launch year.

Place-based education gives meaning to learning, strengthens the bonds between school and community, and instills pride and wonder in the cultures and histories of rural places and small towns.

Rural Schools Collaborative "Grants in Place" encourage teachers across the country to engage their students in learning with a public purpose.



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