

Crossing Boundaries



Technology, transportation, and teacher recruitment—all school communities tackle these issues. But that doesn't mean the solutions are one-size-fits-all. In fact, the specific challenges—and solutions—for schools in a beach town, a rural community, or in a suburb or exurb can be quite distinct. This magazine issue takes a deep dive into the elements that influence access and opportunity that cross boundaries of school type.

You will notice that while the articles in this issue of *Principal* address challenges and solutions for various communities, we pay close attention to the special needs of rural schools, with a focus on what's working. According to "Out of the Loop," a recent report by the National School Boards Association, "Poverty, isolation, and inequities are exacerbated for rural students by the lack of attention to the unique needs of this considerable population."


Equal access is top of mind for Todd Nesloney, who leads a rural school in Navasota, Texas. "I want my students to get the same sort of experiences an urban or suburban student would, even though we're not close to museums [and don't] have easy access to high-speed internet," he says. Nesloney constantly reflects on how to provide students with experiences that will garner the same levels of learning as other students in the country. "And more importantly, how do I grow students that will lead—and not just follow—the experiences of others?"

Nesloney is not alone in seeking access for rural students, who make up nearly 20 percent of the nation's students, according to NSBA's Center for Public Education. Here's a sample of what is working for other leaders of rural schools:

- "The internet and web-based tools are the ultimate equalizer, in my opinion. There are so many resources available." —*Dan Butler, Epworth, Iowa*
- "We are a school of rural poverty and my hope is that we can lift our kids out of poverty and put them on a trajectory to be prosperous in life." —*Victoria L. Day, Gouverneur, New York*
- "It is important to pick out the pieces that may work for our community, and also keep in mind that we are in a league of our own. Not all practices and research can span all school types." —*Jennifer Truitt-Lewis, Fort Huachuca, Arizona*

Regardless of the type of school community that you lead, I hope you will be able to take Truitt-Lewis' advice and translate the numerous strategies, resources, and best practices offered in this issue of *Principal* into your own leadership journey.

—*Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.*

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON MENTORING & PLCs

- A roundup of digital technologies, including Voxer
- How to get the most out of principal coaches and supervisors
- Bolster your leadership team through mentoring



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