Center for Education Policy Research
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Local school district to join Harvard center on rural education
The National Center for Rural Education Research Networks will address chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment

Cambridge, MA (July 22, 2019)— Today, LaFayette Central School District joins 50 rural schools as a part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN), an initiative of the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education, the district will have the opportunity to apply the Proving Ground model of evidence-based improvement to address chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment.

"Students who are chronically absent are at-risk for falling behind and ultimately dropping out," says Jeremy Belfield, Superintendent of Schools at LaFayette Central School District in New York. "As part of our work with the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks, our district hopes not only to learn from other rural districts but also to share with them ideas for promising evidenced-based practices that will help students feel welcome, successful, and supported."

NCRERN will produce tools for identifying students most at risk for absenteeism and being unprepared for college as well as change management resources designed to guide rural schools in addressing chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment. Throughout the five years, the Center's member districts will collaborate on shared challenges, learning from each other to guide future work on school improvement.

"The network brings together our expertise in strategic management and analytics and our partners' expertise in supporting rural students," says Bi Vuong, Proving Ground director and NCRERN interim director. "We are excited to have the opportunity to collaborate with districts committed to learning with us and sharing their expertise with each other."

Applicants were chosen based on alignment between the district's strategic goals and the work of the Center, capacity to utilize data for decision making, commitment to continuous improvement practices, and geographic distribution. The following districts from New York will join the rural education center:

> Andover Central School District; Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District; Broadalbin-Perth Central School District; Canastota Central School District; Cato-Meridian Central School District; Crown Point Central School; Fallsburg Central School District; Fredonia Central School District; Gouverneur Central School District; Gowanda Central School District; Greenville Central School District; Hammondsport Central School; Harpursville Central School District; LaFayette Central School District; Lyndonville Central School District; Mexico Central School District; Monticello Central School District; Pulaski Academy & Central School District; Randolph Central School District; Salmon River Central School District; Sandy Creek Central School District; Sharon Springs

Central School District; Sherman Central School District; Susquehanna Valley Central School District; Taconic Hills Central School District; Thousand Islands Central School District; Unadilla Valley Central School District; Webutuck Central School District; Wells Central School District; Windsor Central School District

"The districts selected to be part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Network deserve congratulations," said Capital Region BOCES District Superintendent Anita Murphy. "Their selection represents a uniquely valuable opportunity for them to bring the power of evidence and the Proving Ground improvement model to bear on some of the most pressing issues facing rural districts including chronic absenteeism and college readiness and enrollment. I look forward to learning alongside our districts as they work to improve student outcomes together."

Funding: The Institute of Education Sciences is awarding $10 million to support the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN); it is being cost shared by IES (91%) and the Center of Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University and its partners, New York and Ohio (9%).

About NCRERN leadership: Thomas J. Kane is an economist and Walter H. Gale Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, as well as faculty director of the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR). Douglas O. Staiger is the John French Professor in Economics at Dartmouth College. Christopher Avery is the Roy E. Larsen Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. Bi Vuong, Proving Ground Director (CEPR), will act as interim director of the Center.

About the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University: The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University seeks to transform education through quality research and evidence. CEPR and its partners believe all students will learn and thrive when education leaders make decisions using facts and findings, rather than untested assumptions. Learn more at cepr.harvard.edu.

About Proving Ground: Proving Ground, a CEPR initiative, works to make evidence-gathering and evidence-use an intuitive part of how education agencies conduct their daily work. Proving Ground utilizes a continuous improvement framework to help agencies rapidly identify and test solutions to specific challenges. Learn more at provingground.cepr.harvard.edu

About the Institute of Education Sciences: The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is the independent and non-partisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Their mission is to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public. Learn more at https://ies.ed.gov.

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