RSA NEWS
June 2014 Issue #2

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A Call for Unity and a Call for Action:
RSA Member School Boards Asked to Adopt Resolutions To End Gap Elimination Adjustments in 2015-16 State Budget and Appoint a Berger Style Commission for Reforming School Funding

As the legislative session winds down in Albany the RSA is disappointed to report that a bill calling for the ending of Gap Elimination Adjustments over the next two budget cycles (2015-16 and 2016-17) has come out of Committee and is likely to be acted upon in the Senate before the session ends. That Bill was sponsored by Education Committee Chair Senator John Flanagan. The Bill stipulates that 60% of the approximately $1B in continuing GEA’s would be phased out as part of the 2015-16 budget cycle with the balance (40%) to be addressed in 2016-17. Albany insiders advise us that the legislation reported out of Senate Committee is assessed to have no chance of being enacted into law as this session winds down. Instead, it is a classic one house Bill—aimed at making it look like the Senate is doing something about GEA’s in advance of this fall’s election cycle.

RSA Boards Asked to Adopt Resolution to End GEA’s in 2015-16 State Budget

The NY State Rural Schools Association feels it is critical to convey strong opposition to continuation of Gap Elimination Adjustments beyond next year’s budget in advance of November’s elections. The RSA is asking every member school district to develop and pass a resolution at their Annual Reorganization Meeting (or as soon after as practical) calling for the end of the GEA as part of the 2015-16 budget. We had a solid response to a similar request made last spring which called for ending the GEA’s as part of
the 2014-15 Budget. Based upon feedback received from legislators, we know resolutions local districts adopted last spring made an impression upon our legislative representatives. Unfortunately, that impression was not enough to get the legislature to address what would have been a $1.6B GEA restoration in the face of other statewide priorities. Similar to last spring, we offer a resolution template, and access to a database developed by our colleague Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium (see links at end of this article). The data from the SSFC database will permit each district to modify the resolution template with updated data to reflect their GEA status.

Passage of A Second Resolution Calling for Berger Type Commission Also Requested
A second priority for legislative action from the NY State Rural School Association has been a call for a Berger-style Commission to take on the issue of school funding equity. A national study completed by Dr. Bruce Baker, of Rutgers University, that compared school funding systems for all fifty states gave New York a grade of A on two critical school funding measures—Funding Adequacy and Statewide Effort. That same study gave New York a grade of F in the category titled, Funding Distribution. Spending large amounts of money while distributing funds through seriously flawed, and heavily politicized allocation formulas is inefficient, wasteful and contributes to wide disparities in the opportunities students are provided across the state.

The RSA had hoped that the NY State Education Reform Commission would address the need for reforming school funding. While the Reform Commission’s Final Report noted, “Perhaps the most consistent and persistent issue raised during the course of our work was the level and method of financing of public education in our state,” the Commission chose to “kick the can down the road.” The Commission’s decision not to address this topic was made despite hearing testimony from Syracuse University’s, Maxwell School of Public Policy Professor, Dr. John Yinger, who stated: “With one important but seemingly temporary exception (implementation of the Foundation Formula) the policy choices made by New York State over the last 15 years have made funding disparities worse. Moreover, without dramatic changes in education funding policy, these disparities are on track to widen substantially in the years ahead.”

While the Reform Commission failed to take on the issue of inequitable distribution of state funds the Commission did conclude that the issue of state funding of schools was, “important enough to justify its own task force review.”

Again, to make the development of a resolution calling for a Berger-style Commission on school funding more convenient for members we have developed a template resolution. This resolution employs language directly from the RSA’s 2014 Legislative Position Paper.

RSA’s Timing & Strategy Laid Out for the Upcoming Year
With this being an election year we believe there are three separate time periods for which we must develop an effective legislative strategy. Those three time periods are:

1. The time period between now and the November elections (June to early November),
2. The time period for attempting to influence the Executive Budget proposal (October to December),
3. The time period for attempting to influence the Legislative Response to the Executive Budget (January to Adoption).

In prior years the RSA has focused our effort and energy on the January-March budget deliberation timeframe. We feel very strongly that the best way to impact the 2015-16 budget cycle is through a unified and timely call for action with all RSA member school districts enacting and forwarding these two resolutions to their local elected representatives (with copies forwarded to key state leaders). Again, the most effective time period to place pressure upon legislators this year is during the months that lead up to elections. The wording of these resolutions, and the accompanying correspondence, is direct and strong. The correspondence we provide you to accompany your resolutions calls into question the Legislature declaring a state surplus—and enacting statewide tax cuts while GEA’s put in place to address the state’s budget deficit are continued! The letter points out that under these circumstances the state “tax cuts” recently enacted are really “tax shifts” causing your school district to rely more heavily on New York’s unpopular property tax!

In next month’s newsletter we will provide “talking points” for a follow-up meeting with your local legislators! Please act now—we speak most strongly when we act in unity!

Resolution Calling for End to GEA’s in 2015-16 State Budget
Data Base for Locating Your District’s GEA Data for Above Petition (Enter District BEDS Code at Top & Refer to Cell G4)
Resolution calling for Berger Style School Funding Reform Commission
Draft Accompanying Letter with Addresses for Key State Leaders (for mailing copies of petitions)
A Word from the Executive Director…Dr. Bruce Fraser

We are pleased to share with you that Dr. Joseph Rotella, a member of the Rural Schools Association Board of Directors has been appointed to the position of Associate Director of Business and Community Relations for SUNY Oswego. We are also pleased to share with you that one of the first things Joe did after starting his new duties is to request an invoice be sent to him so that SUNY Oswego could become the first Higher Education institution to join our organization over the time that I have served as Executive Director. Joe is an idea person—and in one brief phone call he shared three, or four very creative ways he felt that the RSA and SUNY Oswego could work together. One of the most positive aspects of my conversation with Joe was when he shared with me that he intended to continue to serve as an At-Large Member of our Board of Directors.

Plans Continue for Outreach to SUNY Host Communities:

As he moves into his new position with SUNY Oswego we have asked Dr. Rotella to consider working alongside of Tim Hayes (Supt. At Geneseo and RSA Legislative Committee Chair) and Gary Mix (Deputy Director of RSA and former Interim Superintendent at Oswego CSD) as we attempt to set up regular meetings among the communities that host upstate SUNY campuses. With Cortland, Oswego, and Oneonta recently becoming RSA members (joining similarly situated long term RSA members Potsdam, Fredonia, and Geneseo—and lets not overlook long term RSA members Morrisville-Eaton and Alfred-Almond that now host SUNY campuses offering four year SUNY degrees) we have a great nucleus for addressing common issues in these host communities. This initiative provides us a solid rationale for reaching out to Plattsburgh and Brockport to become RSA members. Issues from START-Up NY’s impact on host communities; to student teaching arrangements; to how districts students can benefit from higher education partnerships will be explored in an upcoming meeting.

Conference Interest High—Day Trip and One Day Attendance Options Encouraged

We have been very pleased with advance registration for our Annual Conference scheduled for the Otesaga Resort in Cooperstown on Sunday, July 13th through Tuesday, July 15th. Rooms at the resort are sold out—and Cooperstown is a popular summer tourist destination making housing options elsewhere in the area difficult to locate. We feel we have a high interest program that will benefit any rural leaders who can attend. As such, we encourage using the one day conference enrollment option for those in the Central New York region that can make the conference into a day trip. We also want to make people aware that our plans for Tuesday morning include a one hour forty five minute interactive session with Regent Dawson and Commissioner King. Comments on this session from those in attendance last year included, “This was truly a two way conversation,” and, “We deeply appreciate that the Commissioner directly addressed our question—and that we even had time for follow up questions.” We are not the biggest Conference offered statewide, but there are real advantages to being smaller and focused upon the needs of our members!

Further Information on Shared Superintendent Arrangements (http://sharedsuperintendent.wordpress.com/)

We again congratulate member school districts for success on their budget votes last month! However, now it is time for district leaders to learn as much as possible about the mandate to develop a district efficiency plan that can document a 1% saving over each of the next three local budget cycles. This may be a greater challenge for school districts that have really tightened their belts each of the last four years. We hope this new budget challenge does not force rural school districts to consider shared Superintendent arrangements when those arrangements are not in the best interests of school districts and stakeholders! We want RSA members to be aware that a proposal we authored to present on the topic of what shared Superintendents had learned during their first year working in that role has been selected for inclusion in next October’s NYSSBA Annual Conference. We are also pleased to share with you a fine web-site with solid information on the challenges shared Superintendents face. Again, the view of the RSA is that sharing a district leader (particularly during challenging times when NY districts are burdened by significant new mandates) should be viewed as a last resort for any district—not a preferred option. We also note that this is an issue that district leaders need to become knowledgeable about! Under the tax freeze legislation that mandates a plan for sharing services and improving efficiency, Superintendents may find that a retirement (or professional advancement) for a leader of a neighboring district is all that separates them from needing to engage in a community wide discussion on this topic. We acknowledge this topic is potentially controversial within our membership. That said, some organization within the education community needed to provide leadership in studying this controversial topic. The RSA seems to be the most appropriate organization for assuming leadership in this area!
2nd Reminder—RSA Co-Sponsors Breakfast Forum in Conjunction with NYSSBA Conference

We had a great initial response to the Breakfast Program we will co-sponsor in NYC during the NYSSBA Conference. This year, as an alternative to a separate RSA Breakfast Event we will be partnering with Dr. Timbs’ organization, the Statewide School Finance Consortium, and two other organizations very concerned about school funding equity (REFIT—a consortium of low wealth Long Island districts and the Mid-Hudson School Study Council). This event will feature Dr. Michael Rebell, the lead Attorney for the NYSER legal challenge to the NY State school funding system. Others who have been invited to participate in a panel discussion will include Elizabeth Lynam, from the Citizens Budget Commission, and Larry Levy, from Hofstra University’s Suburban Studies Institute. The Breakfast will be held on Monday, October 27th from 7:15AM-8:45AM at Rosie O’Grady’s Manhattan Club, a restaurant immediately adjacent to the convention site. The RSA has only been allocated fifty seats for this event (total seating is limited to 225 people) so please register promptly! The flyer and registration form can be found on the next page.

October remains a long way off but tickets for this event are limited—we encourage you to register ASAP to assure you are not closed out!

RSA Membership Update

We are pleased that our membership has grown over the past several years and wish to share with Rural Schools Association member school districts our membership goals for 2014-15 (our membership goal for the past year had been 300 districts):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Goal</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Renewal</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts (including BOCES)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We believe that membership renewal is a strong indicator of organizational health and viability and must be monitored closely. Our 98% renewal rate goal is very difficult one to meet given the turnover that occurs in rural district leadership. Our analysis of membership patterns shows that we frequently lose a member district the year after a new Superintendent is appointed. I have asked RSA Board members to make it a goal to recruit one new district from their region each year. The credibility these Board members have provided representing the RSA has helped us grow our membership over recent years. We also believe that the use of highly credible regional representatives like Dick Rose, Gary Mix, and Tom Marzeski has helped boost membership. Our first membership renewal letter went out just after district budget votes. We make our first appeal as early as possible—so that districts can consider payment from current fiscal year funds if they find that option convenient. Our letter to non-member districts is slightly different than the one requesting renewal. That correspondence notes that we are a “niche” organization able to focus intently upon the unique needs of rural school districts. We also remind potential new members that our organization’s voice in advocacy is amplified through the addition of new members!

Pre-K Grant Applications Made by Almost Fifty RSA Districts

I am pleased to note that almost fifty RSA districts filed intent to submit a UP-K grant application with NYSED. We will be tracking how the $40M in state funding included in this year’s budget for UPK programs outside of NYC ends up being distributed. We know that rural districts are operating with minimal administrative support and had wondered how many member school districts would be able to complete the UPK Grant Application. We remain concerned how members will put together programs given NYSED’s late date for notification of approval for funding.

Update: RSA Search for New Executive Director

As I compose this message, we have reached the Cornell imposed application deadline (June 16) for submitting applications for the RSA Executive Director position. Our Selection Committee, made up of RSA Board Chair Ed Engel, Cornell Professor Dr. John Sipple, RSA Board Vice Chair Gordon Daniels, RSA Policy and Long Range Planning Committee Chair Jim Loomis, and RSA Regional Board Representative Lin King have been busy screening applications and setting up interviews. Interest has been high in this leadership position, and I have been reassured that selection will come from a diverse and capable pool of applicants. We remain hopeful that a new Executive Director will be available to make introductory remarks to those attending our Annual Conference in Cooperstown, July 13-15.
An opportunity to hear the most current information on the politics, economics and legal matters involving the state’s funding of public education.

October 27, 2014 7:15-8:45am
Rosie O’Grady’s
800 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. New York, NY
Cost: $45.00 per person

Featuring Panelists

**Michael Rebell**
Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity at Teachers College

**Larry Levy**
Executive Dean, National Center for Suburban Studies, Hofstra University

**Elizabeth Lynam**
Vice President and Director of State Studies, Citizens Budget Commission

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**RSA Registration Form / Invoice ~ Trustee and Superintendent Breakfast Forum**

October 27, 2014 7:15-8:45 am
Rosie O’Grady’s (Seating is Limited)
800 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. New York, NY
Cost: $45.00 per person

District: ____________________________
Trustee Name (s): ____________________________

__________________________
__________________________
__________________________

Superintendent Name: ____________________________

Reservation Deadline - August 1 or until program is full.
Please return completed form with check to:
Rural Schools Association
113 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University,
Ithaca, NY 14853
Email: NAM33@cornell.edu TEL: (607)255-8709 FAX: (607)254-2896
Cancellation refunds cannot be granted after 10/15.
“New York State spends the most per pupil of any state…”
What Governor Cuomo and Legislators Don’t Want You to Know…

♦ Data from the NEA’s Annual Ranking of States shows that for 2012-13 NY State Ranked tied for 30th nationally—and below the US Average for the percent of K-12 Education Revenue from state sources (see below left). The burden of PK-12 education falls more heavily on local property tax payers than upon NY State!

♦ The NYSED Chart (lower right) shows that over the past decade NY State’s share (%) of PK-12 total education expenditures has fallen from 48.7% to 39.7%. New York State’s shift of burden back onto local taxpayers disproportionally hurts low property wealth school districts. The steep drop in State share (see graph) over recent years reflects the impact of GEA’s that were imposed to help the state deal with it’s budget gap. State leaders now tell us they have a surplus—but the GEA remains at about $1B in the 2014-15 state budget!

♦ A comparative study of our nation’s fifty school finance systems gives NY letter grades of A in two categories—Funding Level (ranked 2nd) and Effort (ranked 3rd). Those national rankings are negated by the fact that our state is provided a letter grade of F in the Funding Distribution category (ranked 42nd nationally). Spending large amounts of money through flawed distribution formulas is highly inefficient!

♦ While local taxpayers are paying the majority of the costs (and an increasingly larger share of the total burden of supporting K-12 education), NY State continues to impose costly new mandates on local school districts. Over recent years mandated testing costs; the expense of training staff for the Common Core Curriculum; costs of purchasing materials to support Common Core instruction; and the costs of implementing mandated new staff evaluation procedures have placed greater burdens on local property tax payers.

♦ Local school district budget votes are the most democratic procedure by which any government expenditures are approved in NY State. Voters strongly affirmed proposed local budgets this May. Tax caps and Tax Freezes need to be viewed as gimmicks that attempt to deflect criticism for increased local property taxes away from the Governor and legislators. If NY State wants to lower property taxes—and improve the quality of local education it is time for the state to pay for at least 50% of K-12 costs and to reform the way state aid is allocated to school districts! **IT IS TIME FOR STATE-WIDE SOLUTIONS!**
TCPN Contracts Now Available in New York

Legislation now allows local governments, municipalities, and school districts to utilize national cooperative purchasing contracts. TCPN offers purchasing strength that helps New York government organizations save time, cut costs, and avoid compliance worries. TCPN's contracts leverage the purchasing power of over 37,000 actively engaged government entities. All contracts are competitively bid and awarded by a single government entity – Region 4 Education Service Center. TCPN monitors contracts through third-party audits and regular reviews to ensure vendor accountability.

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Analysis of Initial Budget Votes:
Less Reason to Turn-out in Opposition to Local Budget

The percentage of local school districts statewide that passed their budget on May 20th increased this year to 98.15% (versus a 95.27% pass rate in May 2013). Across the state, the percentage of voters casting ballots to support passage of their local budget rose to 70.48% (from 65.26% in 2013)—correspondingly, the percentage of local voters casting ballots in opposition to their local budgets dropped from 34.74% in 2013 to 29.52% this May. Passage of new state legislation that assures local tax payers a rebate check (that holds their school property taxes flat) if their local district’s proposed budget remained below their calculated levy cap appeared to undermine motivation to turn out and vote in opposition to local budgets. Statewide, voter turnout fell from 703,999 in May 2013 to 647,224 this year (-56,775 voters or 8%). Interestingly, the number of voters turning out to support their local budget fell very slightly (by 3,259 or -0.7%). In contrast, the number of voters turning out to vote against local budgets fell by much higher numbers (-53,516, or -21.88%).

Higher Number of Over-ride Attempts Successful in 2014

It was feared that districts proposing a local budget higher than their tax cap would face additional challenges in obtaining the 60% support needed to pass an over-ride this year. Districts where residents approved a 60% plus over ride made homeowners ineligible for state rebate checks covering increases beyond their prior year school property tax. Based upon this additional obstacle to passing an over-ride, it is notable that a higher number of districts (13 of 22 districts, or 59%) seeking 60% voter support were successful this May than in 2013. Voters only approved one-in-four (25%) of over-rides put before votes in 2013 (7 of 28 passed at 60%). While voter turnout statewide fell by 8% when compared with May 2013, voter turnout for the twenty-two districts seeking over-rides increased by almost 44%. The Chart below compares percentage increase in voter turnout for districts statewide with voter turnout patterns for districts seeking (and districts passing vs defeating over-rides).

| Change in Voter Turnout May 2013 to May 2014 (Statewide and For Districts Seeking Over-Ride) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| % Change Yes Vote | % Change No Vote | % Change Total Vote |
| Statewide (All Districts) | -0.71% | -21.88% | -8.01% |
| Seeking Over-Ride (22) | +33.7% | +62.5% | +43.8% |
| Over-Ride Success (13) | +41.6% | +20.7% | +34.0% |
| Over-Ride Defeated (9) | +20.9% | +144.0% | +61.0% |

Notable differences in voter turnout patterns exist between districts that were able to pass an over-ride versus those where the over-ride was defeated.

Analysis of Results for RSA Member Districts

Rural Schools Association member school districts had a slightly lower pass rate than the state as a whole (97%--with six of two-hundred seventy-six budgets voted down). Eight member school districts sought over-rides with four of these districts obtaining the 60% supermajority required for passage. RSA member districts had a slightly higher percentage of voters support their proposed budget (71.75%) than was achieved by districts statewide (70.48%). While “Yes” votes statewide rose from 65.26% in 2013 to 70.48% this year (an increase of 5.22%) the percentage of positive votes in RSA member districts rose by a slightly smaller 3.55% (from 68.2% in 2013 to 71.75% this year).

Analyzing results for RSA members (data for districts that were RSA members for both years) showed that voter turnout trends closely paralleled the trends shown for the state as a whole. The drop in voter turnout from May 2013 to May 2014 was composed almost completely of those casting no votes.

Voter Turnout Comparison—RSA Member Districts (Member During Both 2012-13 & 2013-14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Change Yes Vote</th>
<th>% Change No Vote</th>
<th>% Change Total Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voters Supporting Budget</td>
<td>85,018</td>
<td>84,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters Opposing Budget</td>
<td>39,627</td>
<td>33,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Votes Cast</td>
<td>124,645</td>
<td>118,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The New York State Rural Schools Association represents approximately one of every eight public school students enrolled in NY State. We believe every one of those students has a right to a sound basic education. We are committed to equitable funding for all students who attend New York school districts.

**RSA Chart of the Month:**

The Chart below was used in a presentation recently given by Cornell University Professor Dr. John Sipple. The reaction by the audience (made up of representatives of local Towns, City and County Governments) again emphasized that most individuals in New York State do not grasp the inequities inherent to the STAR program. Unfortunately, the recently adopted Tax Freeze rebate provision is anticipated to have an impact very similar to STAR. Expect that much larger rebate checks will be sent to homeowners in communities with high wealth than to individuals from low wealth regions of our state.

**Total STAR Aid by N/RC Categories**

STAR Is Not How One of Every Six Dollars That Flow From Albany to NY State School Districts Should be Allocated

**An Excerpt from the RSA’s 2013 Legislative Position Paper:**

“STAR is a politically popular but not well understood component of NY’s school finance system. STAR is very regressive—favoring high wealth (primarily downstate) districts at the expense of low wealth, upstate school districts. As such, it is questionable why any upstate legislator would support STAR in its current form.”
Why Rural Matters:  
Rural Schools and Community Trust Updates Bi-Annual Report

The Rural School and Community Trust updates their report titled, Why Rural Matters, every two years. This report provides useful data that allows us to compare the status of New York’s rural schools with our rural counterparts across the nation. Because much of the data provided in this national publication is updated in each edition of the document this report also permits us to identify emerging trends.

Nationwide Comparison of Rural Enrollment Characteristics:
Compared with the rest of the nation New York has a smaller percent of our schools, and school district that are considered rural. Rural enrollment in New York represents 12.2% of the states total public school enrollment versus 20.4% nationwide. New York minority students make up a smaller percentage of rural district enrollment (10.3%) when compared to minority enrollment nationwide (26.7%). A higher percent of rural student in NY are provided Special Education support (15.2%) when compared to students receiving similar support nationally (12.8%). A lower percentage of NY’s rural students meet the criteria for Federal Title I funding (14.3%) than students nationally (19.3%), while about 13% fewer NY state rural students qualify for free lunch (33.2% vs. 46.6%). New York’s 326,558 rural students continue to rank our state eighth highest nationally in total number of rural students enrolled!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Rural Matters 2013-14</th>
<th>Comparison: NY vs. USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Schools</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Small Rural Districts</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Students</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Minority Students</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural ELL Students</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural IEP Students</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Mobility</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Title I Eligible (Rural)</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Adults-HS Grads</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Unemployment</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Rural Students</td>
<td>326,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Median Household Income</td>
<td>$ 58,202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recent Trends—NY State Rural School Data 2008-2014:

New York State data from the last three bi-annual, Why Rural Matters, report are compared in the Chart below. Be wary of the reported drop in rural enrollment as the report for 2013 is based entirely upon Federal Census designations of rural school districts. In prior years some schools had their enrollments reported as being rural despite their district being classified as a Town or Suburb for Census purposes. The data show that the percent of Free/Reduced Lunch eligible rural students has steadily grown—along with the percent of rural students needing ELL support. The increase in the percent of minority students attending rural districts seems to have stabilized. The plateauing of minority student enrollments may well be associated with decreased student mobility over this span of years. We are pleased the report shows that NY's rural districts have been the recipient of an increased share of state aid (23.2% vs. 19.4%) between 2009 and 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Rural Matters 2013-14</th>
<th>How Has New York Changed Over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Student</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent State Educ. Funds to Rural</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Minority Students</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural ELL Students</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural IEP Students</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Rural Mobility</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Instructional Expend/Stud.</td>
<td>$11,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Enrollment</td>
<td>326,558</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data for 2013 are analyzed only including Districts considered Rural by Federal Census Categories. For 2011 and 2009 some rural schools located in districts not considered Rural by Federal Census criteria are reflected in state totals.

Summary—Why Rural Matters in New York:
The Rural Schools Association is always very concerned about messaging. We feel it is important to constantly communicate these three core reasons why Rural Schools Matter in NY State:

1. The NY State Rural Schools Association represents approximately one out of every eight of the students enrolled in New York’s public schools, and
2. New York’s ranks 8th when the number of rural students enrolled in our nation’s fifty states are compared.
3. Every student enrolled in a NY State Rural School has a right to a “sound basic education” guaranteed to them by New York’s Constitution!

Finally, strong rural schools are an essential element required to maintain a positive quality of life in New York’s rural communities!