



# RSA TODAY

News for New York State's Rural Schools

November 2016

Rural Schools Association of New York State



I don't live in New York , I live In New York !

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**Andrew McCrea**, Producer of "American Countryside"

## Oscar Award Winning Broadcaster Andrew McCrea RSA 2017 Summer Conference Speaker

Andrew McCrea has been called "Today's Charles Kuralt". He is an Oscar Award winning broadcaster. He is also an author, school board member and third generation farmer in St. Joseph, Missouri. In a recent address to the attendees of the National Rural Education Association conference in Columbus, Ohio, Andrew quoted Rosabeth Kantor of the Harvard Business School. "Change is disturbing when it happens to us. It is exhilarating when it is done **by** us." He used the example of guide dogs to suggest that we should learn to view our circumstances from a new perspective-that of another. For instance, a guide dog's toughest task isn't learning to get across the street safely. She already has a survival instinct. Her toughest task is getting her charge under a low hanging tree limb that she doesn't have to worry about herself.

McCrea said that our rural schools excel as a result of attention to relationships and urged us to focus on the power of little things, like remembering the names of students' family members and saying students' names repeatedly so that they feel the value of personalized attention. He suggested that rural schools don't necessarily lose their best students, but they often lose their risk takers; the potential entrepreneurs. McCrea focused on the importance of letting students know that we want them back in our communities. If we want them to return after college or the military, we need to express that and not leave it to chance. He used one community's example of giving their students' mailboxes with their names on it, saying that they want them to return and put them up in front of their new house when they come home. Community leaders and business leaders should meet with students about expectations on returning to the community.

"It takes the square root of a community to change it. 10 out of 100, 100 out of

10,000” according to McCrea. Use parent presentations regularly in the classroom; about what they do professionally. Use teacher-developed after school programming. Have the school pay dual enrollment costs with the expectation that you return and give back to the community that helped you get started. Start a community development fund with donations made by community members, raising the community up by its own bootstraps.

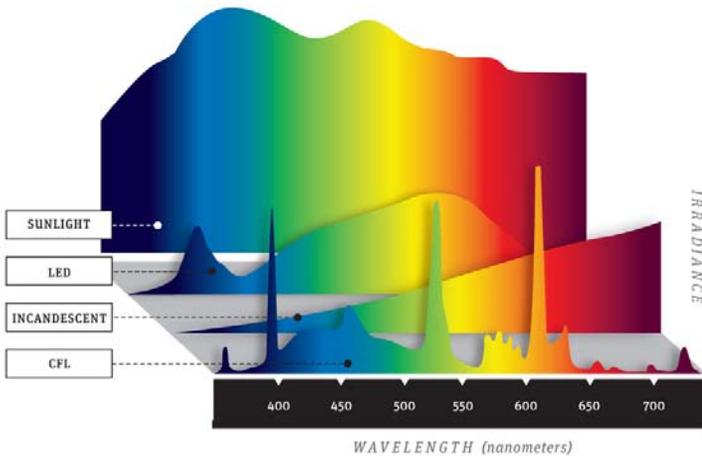
Here is Andrew McCrea’s mantra. VIP: Our rural schools and communities should tap into **Values, Interests and the Purpose of the Community**. Foundational organizations in the community need to talk to each other: Hospital must talk to school, that must talk to the Chamber of Commerce, that needs to work with churches and volunteer firefighters, etc. Student-retiree interaction is also important. Non relatives of differing generations no longer interact (except perhaps at church.) High school and college students need to be linked on projects. These interactions form a student’s bond to his or her home community and increase the likelihood that they’ll return; either to teach or simply to work and raise their own family.

**Look for Andrew McCrea at the 2017 RSA Summer Conference at The Otesaga in Cooperstown!**



## **NEW SCHOOL LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY MEANS BIG DISTRICT SAVINGS**

*By: Karl Stewart*



LED lighting is the newest technology that is lowering costs across a wide variety of products from TVs to parking lots, to phones to classrooms. It’s an acronym that stands for a Light Emitting Diode (meaning an electric circuit that glows.) It requires much less electrical usage and lasts much longer than other lights, as there are no real components affected by the environment (like a filament or gas from a fluorescent bulb.) But as its use becomes more common, we are discovering that LED is much more than lower costs and longevity. A dairy study in Michigan found that milk production is 8% higher under LED lighting. Volume of light is much higher, so dark spots in a parking lot are reduced.

Most importantly for us, a study in Colorado found that student’s test scores were 25% higher under LED lighting. Attention was more focused and completion was accomplished more quickly. Students acknowledged that their school surroundings were more enjoyable. This is likely due to the fact that light curves of LED are much closer to natural sunlight. Fluorescent lighting has ‘spikes’ that cause headaches, fatigue and other light sensitivity issues. LED has the additional advantage of containing no mercury (like CFLs and Fluorescents.) The tubes are made of plastic instead of fragile glass.

Too good to be true? Nope, but are savings sufficient to make it worth the switch for rural school districts? As it turns, out the answer is “probably”, perhaps even if you’ve already upgraded your lighting. Let’s dig into that for a minute. A typical 4 foot fluorescent tube consumes 32 watts of energy per hour. By switching to an LED your school’s consumption is reduced to 12 watts. Now multiply that figure times 4000 tubes in a district, times 10 hours per day, times 200 days per year. In one typical RSA member’s district, that added

up to \$66,137 per year. To a small district like OESJ, Superintendent Dave Halloran said it was a no brainer. On top of that the Utility kicked in \$51,000 to help pay for the upgrade. Between the electricity savings and the utility's incentive payment, the lights will be paid off in 2.8 years. No other upgrade has that kind of a return on investment. With the tubes lasting 10 years, the district will be able to bank over \$500,000 after the project pays for itself. That's money the school can use for other important programs and projects.

Technology shifts allow for some big idea thinking. One RSA member district wants to be more of the center of their community. The school needed a place for their cross country team to run and cross country skiing would be nice for the students and the community in the winter. But running electricity over half a mile was cost prohibitive due to the cost of wiring. LED lighting though, because of its low electrical demand, could run on batteries. Placing a fixture on a tree eliminated the need for poles and the batteries could be recharged by solar power. The lighting fixtures come with motion sensors so that the trail is lit only when in use. Finally as LED is a circuit, a digital camera can be added at various points throughout the trail for added safety. Students and community alike can walk their dogs, jog or walk in a safely lit, secure trail area. Running team, community cross country skiing and walking, all for \$3000. For the district, it's a community relations bonanza.



RSA is partnering with Integra LED to bring more effective, efficient lighting to member districts and with it, tremendous financial savings. No school district needs its funds freed up like our rural schools. Lighting conversions can be accomplished with no capital project, no initial payment of school funds. Payment of the lights (after reductions for incentives from the utility) is done through your normal electricity bill. Better lighting, better educational outcomes and lower costs. For our rural schools, it's truly time to see the light!

For more information how LED can help your school, please visit [www.integraled.com/rsalightingforschools](http://www.integraled.com/rsalightingforschools)

Editor's Note: Your Rural Schools Association and Integra LED are partners in saving your district money through decreased energy use. This combination of utility company incentives, ability to repay without a capital project and the tremendous savings of LED lighting itself, combine into a tremendous opportunity. Your RSA is proud to work with you and Integra LED to realize these savings for you!



**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S CORNER**  
**RESEARCH NEWS FROM CORNELL**

Greetings,

I am pleased to present to you an opportunity to collaborate with a Cornell researcher on a study!

Dr. Gretchen Rymarchyk,  
Deputy Director RSA

Professor Tom Hirschl teaches in Development Sociology with an emphasis on the intersection between technological progress and social crisis. He has worked with Professor Mark Rank at Washington University in St. Louis to create a tool that estimates one's likelihood to experience poverty, given certain demographic characteristics.

They would like to introduce this to high school students and measure its impact on their attitudes around poverty, and need some test groups. If your school district might be interested, contact me as soon as possible – and know that *if your students see this tool ahead of time, they are ineligible for the study.*

I have also provided some writings from Dr. Hirschl describing the study and the tool in his own words, and some links to further information on the professors and their work.

Also, I am providing a link to a very brief (less than 5 minutes of your time) survey for us to learn about the state of affairs in rural NY for recruiting and retaining teachers, so Dave can take the information to Albany to support the needs of rural schools. Please take the time to complete it, and feel free to forward the link to others who can provide more information. [https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3kKHARPyqSCh0AB](https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3kKHARPyqSCh0AB)

If you have any questions about the survey or how it will be used, never hesitate to contact me.

Warmly,

Gretchen Rymarchyk  
[gkr1@cornell.edu](mailto:gkr1@cornell.edu)  
607-254-3557

Seeking High Schools to Collaborate on a Study of Poverty and Economic Inequality

Cornell Professor Tom Hirschl is looking for partners to collaborate on a research study assessing student attitudes toward poverty and economic inequality. The research follows up from his co-authored book *Chasing the American Dream* (2014, Oxford University Press), and involves a test/retest design in high school classrooms. Students will be asked a set of questions related to attitudes toward inequality, randomly assigned to treatment versus control groups, then tested again. To compensate students and the school, Professor Hirschl will provide the study data for use in high school curriculum (math, statistics, social studies, and consumer science), will provide a workshop to staff and/or students about how student attitudes compare to national attitudes and what can be done to improve student experiences. In addition, a small cash payment will be made for course budgets.

\*\*If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Gretchen Rymarchyk at [gkr1@cornell.edu](mailto:gkr1@cornell.edu) or 607-254-3557.

More from Dr. Hirschl:

The poverty risk calculator (URL "[riskcalculator.org](http://riskcalculator.org)") is a powerful tool that can provide insight into some of the more important dynamics of American poverty. The intended audience for the calculator is broad. We anticipate that it will be used by many different groups in order to delve further into the subject of American poverty. Such groups include community associations, high school classes, religious congregations, advocacy organizations, college students and their professors, policy think tanks, the engaged citizenry, and many others.

It turns out that the problem of poverty has historically been viewed in the United States as primarily affecting someone else. In particular, poverty has often been seen as a problem that affects minorities and the so-called underclass. As a result, the poor have been marginalized as falling outside the mainstream. In the public's perception, the divide between "us" (the nonpoor) and "them" (the poor) has been wide.

Yet what if it was the case that for many people, the "us" and "them" are one and the same? In other words, although the percentage of the population who are poor at any one time is relatively small, what if across the course of a lifetime, many people experience poverty? Such information could alter the perception of American poverty in at least two ways. First, such information breaks down the divide between the poor and the nonpoor. It suggests that for many of us, we are in fact both. Second, if a sizeable percentage of the population experiences poverty, it would imply that impoverishment is the result of failings at a systemic level. Rather than individual fault, widespread poverty could indicate problems at an economic and/or policy level.

Our recent book, *Chasing the American Dream*, looked further into the economic ups and downs of Americans. We found that while nearly everyone we interviewed believed in the reality of the American Dream, they nevertheless had encountered considerable economic turmoil throughout their adulthood years in pursuit of that dream, and 54 percent experienced poverty or near poverty between ages 25 and 60.

All of this work indicated that poverty across a lifetime was widespread. Yet how could we make this information more personal and direct? This was the genesis for the idea behind the poverty risk calculator. We decided that we could take our approach and data, and transform it into a tool that anyone could use in order to estimate their risk of poverty. Furthermore, such a tool could show people how their risk might vary depending on changes in their demographics. The result has been hundreds of hours of work and analyses going into the development of the poverty risk calculator. We believe that this tool has the ability to transform the discussion of poverty in America. It provides a personalization of poverty based upon scientific research that has not been possible in the past. As such, it opens a new window into one of America's most vexing problems.

Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician, once said referring to the action of a lever, "Give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the earth." We hope that we are providing you with one such lever on which to move the world.

More information on Tom Hirschl: <https://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/people/thomas-hirschl>

More information on Mark Rank: <https://sociology.wustl.edu/people/mark-rank>

NYTimes article: [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/opinion/sunday/calculate-your-economic-risk.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/opinion/sunday/calculate-your-economic-risk.html?_r=0)

The book won an award: <http://cornellcals.tumblr.com/post/138480962495/professor-hirschls-book-wins-coveted-social-work>

## WINDSOR SCHOOLS HONORED FOR CLASSROOM INNOVATIONS



(Photo: Provided photo)

Beginning in elementary school, students at the Windsor School District are working with robotics and learning code. Even the youngest students have access to iPads.

That sort of technological innovation led Windsor to be recognized as an "exemplar" district for 2016-2017 by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning's, or P21, 21st Century Learning Exemplar Program.

"It's an objective, third party validation and recognition for the great work that our teachers and students are doing every day," said Dr. Jason A. Andrews, the superintendent of Windsor School District. "I think it shows the commitment of the district for preparing students to be successful and enlightened, whether they're college bound or not."

According to P21's website, the nonprofit was founded in 2002 as a "coalition bringing together the business community, education and policymakers to position 21st century readiness at the center of U.S. K-12 education and to kick-start a national conversation on the importance of 21st century skills for all students."

"It is very parallel to what our beliefs are and what our goals are," Andrews said.

The U.S. Department of Education founded P21 along with Ken Kay, Diny Golder-Dardis, AOL Time Warner Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation, the National Education Association and SAP.

The district has yet to receive their welcome packet from P21 and does not know the exact details of what the partnership will bring. However, Andrews is looking forward to the organization's conferences and what the access to materials, programs and partnerships with other schools that the organization will bring.

"It's an opportunity to engage with other like-minded schools, to engage with these business partners who are a member of the P21 organization, to connect with them for additional resources and ideas and opportunities with that partnership as well," Andrews said.

The district applied to be a P21 exemplar district in fall 2015 and were visited by representatives in spring 2016. Windsor was evaluated on six areas of designation: evidence of commitment to college, career and life readiness, educational support systems and sustainable design, engaged learning approaches, equitable student access to 21st century learning, evidence of student acquisition of 21st century knowledge and skills, and partnerships for sustainable success.

"All learners deserve to grow in a 21st century learning environment," said P21 Executive Director Helen Soulé in a statement. "It is P21's vision for the innovative practices in education exhibited by all P21 Exemplars to be replicated across the country and the world."

Sixteen other schools were chosen as exemplar schools.

"I think one of the things certainly they saw a great deal of innovation from our teachers, engagement from our students, and certainly there is great evidence of the partnerships that we have with higher education and the community and business partners," Andrews said. "They saw technology innovation and they were able

to see it at all buildings and at all levels. I think real applicable learning, so it was hands-on and relevant. Not the traditional ‘sit in rows and listen to lectures.’”

A case study of Windsor and the other exemplar schools will be released by P21 in the spring. The evaluation and recognition came at no cost to the Windsor district.

“People are really working incredibly hard. And that’s what this is all about,” Andrews said. “Individual people that are just incredibly dedicated and spend just incredible amount of time beyond the school day trying to develop these types of innovative programs.”

Maggie Gilroy , [pressconnects.com](http://pressconnects.com) | [@MaggieGilroy](https://twitter.com/MaggieGilroy)



## STUDENT PHOTO CONTEST

The greatest feature of our rural schools is the natural environment and the communities within it. It surrounds us and shapes our lives. Our students have a unique relationship to the land and the people around them. It’s time to show off their world. RSA Today regularly features photos of rural New York State. We’d like to showcase the photos of our rural students that highlight the landscape, their community and their school. The top ten photo contest winners will be awarded prizes of \$100 scholarships and we will publish all winning photographs in future issues of RSA Today.



### Give US Your Best Shot!

Simply send us your favorite photos to [dal295@cornell.edu](mailto:dal295@cornell.edu). Put Student Photo Contest in the subject line. Attach the photo file and tell us your name, school district and where the photo was taken. You can describe the photo anyway you’d like, but please keep it to caption length.

**YOU CAN HELP SHOWCASE WHAT’S GREAT ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL, YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR AREA!**



## COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS: THE ELECTION'S IMPACT ON NEW YORK'S RURAL SCHOOLS

By Dave Little  
RSA Executive Director

The recent surprising election has created a wave of both exultation and fear, excitement and near despair. As a great nation, we will sort it out over time, but in the short term, we need to assess whether and how this election will affect rural education in our state. Political scientists can hardly contain themselves in their attempt to explain the phenomenon.

Perhaps a delayed reaction to the economy (which has improved dramatically in recent years but has omitted many folks in its recovery.) Maybe people wanted to avoid a political dynasty or were offended or anxious by candidate ethics. Maybe it was a balance of concern for additional gun control and official emails over a candidate's insensitivity and lack of experience.

The pundits will tell you that America almost always elects the candidate of the opposing party after two terms of the other. Maybe it was gender, race or merely political miscalculation. Did the Democrats pick a candidate that failed to attract mainstream party members, while not being extreme enough to excite fringe groups? We'll leave all of that for CNN and Fox News to debate ad nauseam. My own assessment puts another factor at the forefront. There is broad agreement that in this election, Rural America spoke loudly. The economically disadvantaged in these geographic areas demanded to have their issues addressed. I believe that rural Americans felt alienated from the status quo and that they anticipated the continuation of that status quo under Hillary Clinton. They felt left behind and ignored. While the overall economy was better, there were still few jobs (particularly for those without college or job related certificates) in their communities. The cities might be doing better, but things were still stagnant in their back yard and they were angry. They mobilized in numbers that are unmatched in our generation. That act of social rebellion only took their vote of protest and they voted for Donald Trump despite 56 percent of his supporters saying they were either concerned or outright scared of the prospect of his actual presidency. They were sending a message, knowing that to do so might well have unintended consequences. It was a risk, a cry for help and a demand that someone pay attention. It was the same defiance and zeal we've seen in property taxpayers and anti-testing parents.

New York State was divided but (matching voter enrollment) went Democratic. The president-elect's nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos has little if any connection to public education. She is a voucher proponent, political operative and contributor. Her nomination potentially signals major changes in the administration's approach to public education, but legislatively embedded programs may hamper such a shift. The vote upstate was more heavily in favor of Donald Trump but as a state, we were more divided than most. What we know about Donald Trump's agenda for public education is pretty straightforward, but perhaps less viable in terms of policy than of politics. Simply put, he wants to use existing federal funds to pay for vouchers instead of existing federal programs. \$20 billion worth, going out of Title 1 and special ed and into paying private and parochial schools to educate students in traditionally unsuccessful schools. He favors competition between the private and public schools and hopes the poor public schools simply die by attrition in the face of competition. He feels the system would be less costly and more efficient as a result. He has not said how the loss of federal funding (which for New York would amount to two years' worth of Education Aid increases) would affect our struggling schools' ability to compete.

Congress is unlikely to entertain a wholesale rewrite of the recently enacted Every Student Succeeds Act, but they may well pass a law prohibiting the USDOE and its Secretary of Education from expanding regulations beyond the bare language of the statute (as they have thus far attempted to do in a number of areas.) Eliminating the USDOE would obviously free up the new administration to reallocate some existing federal funding, but most programs are firmly written in law and paid on a multiyear cycle. Suffice it to say that the federal role

in public education is likely to be in flux and a battle for funding awaits us.

Here at home in New York State, the election has had a less dramatic but perhaps no less profound impact. The Assembly remains firmly within Democratic control, while the Senate Republicans added one to their narrow majority. They have wisely indicated that they will continue to work with the Independent Democratic Caucus to ensure they have the votes to pass their agenda (but no doubt allowing some flexibility to the IDC on their key agenda items in order to maintain the partnership.) School Choice advocates heavily contributed to retaining the Republican Senate Majority and they will want to be heard, legislatively. The governor was unsuccessful in efforts to gain a Democrat majority, which would have solidified him as the state's political and policy leader. Despite this, he may well advance what he believes to be a nationally focused agenda here at home, positioning himself for a 2020 presidential run. Public education does not appear to be poised at the top of that agenda.

While the state rests in the moratorium of APPR, no one is likely to want to stir the hornets' nest that was the anti-testing/teacher evaluation/standards debacle. We are in the middle of the governor's election cycle; a time when governors take the opportunity to lower education funding in favor of those agencies that have been frozen (in order to fund public education leading up to election.) In New York, state agencies have bitten the bullet for three years of frozen budgets in order to make room for 5 and 6% education aid increases. The GEA is gone and legislators may well say "You wanted GEA gone and we did it. Now it's someone else's turn." State revenue is stable but there are no surpluses and the decade old Foundation Aid formula is in desperate need of revision to account for poverty and other student needs. It's not an enticing recipe for continued improvement.

Our state's loyalty to the Shares Agreement that provides a certain percentage of aid to the three major geographic areas of the state, as well as our need to fund Reimbursable Aid (Transportation, BOCES, Building and Special Education Aids) gives our leaders little leeway for aid reform. Finally, in our haste to proclaim the new direction and message that a Trump victory brings and prior to rushing headlong into policy based on that public pronouncement, we need to keep in mind that substantially more people in this country voted for Hillary Clinton. While the Electoral College vote should not be as close and while Trump won the majority of states, he did not win the popular vote. To other nations, that appears inconsistent with our democratic ideology. Here at home if we are to move forward with badly needed new public policy it means that we need to recognize the need for social healing and political coalition building. It means we need to begin working together to explain the needs that were so dramatically demanded on Election Day. Campaigning and governing don't have much in common and both our federal and state governments are at a point where governing is crucial.

For better or worse, America finally picked a side by choosing one party to both hold the White House and lead Congress. That typically leads to an ability to pass legislation, but that window could be brief (particularly if Members of Congress see the new president's agenda as too extreme to support their reelection a mere two years away.)

On Election Day, our rural communities demanded the attention they require. Having demanded that attention, it's now up to all of us to prove our case and offer productive policies. If it is a new day in America, then we must seize that day for our students, our communities, our state and our future.



## Youth Suicide in Rural America

### *The Next Runaway Train?*

By Howard Goode

#### **What is happening in Our Rural Communities?**

Just about anyone you ask will tell you that suicides are more prevalent in the big city than in rural areas. The reason is simple. The quicker pace, greater pressures, stress and tension are just too much for some to bear.

But what if that just wasn't true? *As a matter of fact, it's not.* A surprising new report published in [Jama Pediatrics](#) finds just the opposite: The youth suicide rate is decidedly higher in rural communities. And it continues to climb!

In a close look at 67,000 deaths between 1996 and 2010, the authors of the report found that the suicide rate in rural areas in the United States was *double* in comparison to urban areas (among adolescents and young adults), with no significant difference between men and women.

#### **Where to lay the blame?**

Considering that over half of these suicides were gun related (coupled with the fact that there is a greater percentage of gun ownership in rural areas) would suggest that gun availability is the culprit. Perhaps we must better educate parents on how to keep their guns safely out of the hands of their children.

#### **But this may be too simplistic!**

If we want to solve this problem, we need to dig a little deeper. Unfortunately, Rural America as a whole lags far behind in its connections to mental and other health related programs (including educational programs.) Lack of financial resources sometimes restrict much needed health curricula. As a result, many times psychological disorders with potentially drastic consequences such as anxiety and depression go under-diagnosed. As a result, adults in a position to help (such teachers and parents) are often unaware of a child's emotional state; a recipe for disaster! We need much more than to simply lock up the guns. We need to increase mental health awareness and education.

#### **The Rural Personality**

We all know that the classical "Rural Personality," which manifests itself through the virtues of self-reliance and strength is a source of tremendous pride in Rural America. Ironically this may prove to be a significant hurdle for those in need of mental health services. The stigma of weakness associated with mental health problems may be hijacking help for those who need it most.

#### **The Pain of Isolation**

The real question we must ask is "what is so unique about Rural Youth as compared to their urban counterparts"? *Interestingly, geography is a key factor.* Living further apart from each other reduces critical interac-

tion with peers and limits social networking. Finding themselves isolated socially can be a catalyst for loneliness, anxiety, and depression; at times with an unexpected, fatal result.

Unfortunately, although the Great Depression was nearly ninety years ago, many rural areas still suffer from weaker economies. These economies offer fewer jobs and consequently encourage the youth to move to metropolitan areas in the hope of finding better opportunities. So a vicious cycle is created, resulting in even greater alienation and hopelessness for those remaining behind.

### **The Help Just isn't Available**

And yet, perhaps the most heartbreaking problem of all is that there just aren't enough therapists. While it may be hard to believe, the fact is that the preponderance of the therapist shortage happens to be in rural communities- upwards of 85%. Sadly, over half of the counties in Rural America lack any professional mental healthcare worker whatsoever- psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker!

The result is that those with mental health problems must get in the car and drive quite far to find someone who can help. Understandably this not only delays and postpones the necessary intervention by a professional, but at times precludes it altogether.

### **The Solution that is Gathering Steam**

[Teletherapy for Rural Schools](#) may be the answer for many students. By connecting the therapist to the client over the internet through video conferencing, the geographic barriers instantly evaporate! As teletherapy becomes more popular and accessible, we can expect to see more of our rural youth find the help they so desperately need (and consequently) those deplorable suicide rates will begin to reverse course.

## **RSA AT 2016 NYSSBA CONVENTION**



Rural school leaders recently convened in Buffalo for the Rural School Summit, held in conjunction with the New York State Schools Boards Association Convention and Education Expo. Here, attendees come together for the convention's opening kick off celebration.

Which twin has the Toni? The RSA Booth at the NYSSBA Education Expo was visited by dozens of friends, those who were interested in RSA and potential business partners. Then, there was the one visitor that stopped the show. Here, the city of Buffalo's mascot stops to chew the cud with RSA's Dave Little.

## RSA AT 2016 NYSSBA CONVENTION



Over 200 rural school leaders attended the first Rural School Summit, held in conjunction with the annual NYSSBA convention. Attendees were offered six highly topical presentations over the course of the day.



RSA Executive Director Dave Little played the "man behind the curtain" as the announcer for the opening celebration.



Folks dropping in to the RSA Booth were treated to RSA's video presentation, bumper stickers, note pads and brochures about our work, but it was the people who got the most attention. Here RSA's Dave Little, Deputy Executive Director Dr. Gretchen Rymarchyk and RSA Board Chair Lin King mull over partnership offers from neighboring vendors visiting the booth.



Part of the value of gathering together is the opportunity to catch up with longtime friends and colleagues. Here RSA's director is flanked by REFIT Immediate Past President Susan Lipman and NYSPTA Executive Director Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky-both energetic and charismatic crusaders for kids!