



## The Importance of Schools in Rural Communities

- Research suggests that students in small schools tend to outperform their peers in larger schools (all other variables being equal)
- The removal of a school from a community can have a significant negative effect on the social structures of a community
- Small rural schools often serve as centers for civic education and community employment--the school is one of the institutions that binds together smaller communities
- Community schools bring people together for social activities, unite people for a common purpose and provide a collective identity to community members
- The presence of a school in small rural communities is associated with much higher property values
- Rural communities with schools are economically more viable
- Rural communities that are supported by the presence of a school are economically and civically more robust
- Schools are a crucial part of a rural community and its development
- 52% of small school principals report either no or minor discipline problems; only 14% of big school principals report the same
- Student tardiness and absentee rates are lower in small schools
- Small schools are manageable: administrators know their students and the families; disciplinary problems are often detected and resolved earlier
- Small schools have a significantly greater ability to graduate students than do larger schools
- U.S. Dept. of Ed. shows that rural school dropout rates are substantially lower than those in urban areas and are nearly equal to those in affluent suburban schools
- Small rural schools add value to student learning and community cohesion
- Extracurricular participation rates are higher and more varied at small schools; alienation from the school environment is lower. Participation in extracurricular activities is a significant indicator of academic success and is often a determinant of attendance and dropout rates. It is also correlated with positive attitudes and enhanced social behavior

# **Resolution In Support of MA Rural Schools**

**Strong local communities are the best habitat for excellence in education and education is the responsibility of the whole community.**

**WHEREAS**, All children should have access to equitable and equal educational opportunities, regardless of where they live.

**WHEREAS**, All students should be engaged in excellent academic programs that guide them to understand the place where they live and help to build stronger and better communities.

**WHEREAS**, Schools should be accessible to students' homes, governed by people they serve with leadership that reflects the composition of the community, financed to ensure excellent outcomes, maintained, and designed for full community participation.

**WHEREAS**, Teachers should be prepared to instruct and lead in a rural setting, content and culturally competent, able to connect learning with place, and compensated fairly.

**WHEREAS**, Assessment should be designed to inform and influence learning and instruction, measuring student progress and teacher performance using multiple methods.

**WHEREAS**, Technology should be used to increase interaction between and among local places, with universal access to telecommunications services.

**THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the (NAME OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE) commits support of the MA Rural Schools Initiative.

## References

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