

Rural Programs

WORKING DEFINITION



"School has a National Center for Education Statistics code 31–43 and/or area has population less than 50,000 with density less than 1,000 per square mile."

The California AfterSchool Network Rural Committee is dedicated to advance professional dialogue about the unique challenges, promising practices, and policy recommendations to improve conditions and access to rural after school programs. Under California AfterSchool Network's mission to promote and support after school programs, the first Rural Summit was held in January 2010 from which it became apparent that After School programs in rural areas have their own unique opportunities and challenges.

Rural areas of California offer a rich variety of topography and are conducive to diverse ways of life. As the Committee began its work they noted that there was limited quantitative information pertaining to rural after school programs in California. One stumbling block was the lack of a definition of rural that would capture the environments of after school. To forward the Committee's work it was determined that the Committee needed to have a working definition of "Rural" from which to identify sites to:

- Collect appropriate data.
- Conduct affective advocacy
- Communicate with funders
- Support sites effectively
- Influence policy and procedures
- Tell the "Rural AfterSchool story"



California's Rural Students

- "California educates the largest percentage of rural ELL students in the nation."
- California has "one of the highest percentages of rural minority students."
- "All of the rural NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scores in Grades 4 and 8 are below average"
- California has "one of highest percentages of small rural districts."

Source: *Why Rural Matters* — 2011-2012. The most current data available.



*44 are rural
counties and
approximately
13% of CA's
population resides
in rural areas.
80% of California's
landmass is
designated rural.*

*Source: California State
Rural Health Association*



CONNECT. CONVENE. INSPIRE.

Rural Programs – Working Definition

CAN Rural Committee

During Rural Summit II in January 2011 we conducted Learning Communities to begin the list of Rural characteristics. It was apparent that the list went beyond population counts and geographic borders. The Summits also revealed that programs in rural areas often felt unheard and isolated and sometimes felt “left out.”

Therefore, the CAN Rural Committee embarked upon a 2 year project to work with the providers, advocates and stakeholders in order to find or craft a definition that would be inclusive of all the areas that have traditionally identified with a rural environment. Work included:

- Research of definitions of rural utilized by various fields (i.e. health, census, etc.)
- Surveys of programs to indicate which “rural” aspects with which they most identified
- Review and comparison of existing data from CDE, School Accountability Report Cards, Census Bureau, and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
- Informal observations and queries to field test the proposed rural definition
- Analysis of existing data on after school sites

The CAN Rural Committee felt it was extremely important for the Committee's rural definition to be carefully crafted to help unite programs and to be a useful tool for the after school field in general.

Rural Committee Co-chairs

Susan T. Maschmeier

Healthy Start and After School Director, South Bay Union School District

Amy Worley

Faller Site Supervisor, STEM Coordinator, Afterschool Education and Safety Program, High Desert Leapin' Lizards, Inc.

For more information on California AfterSchool Network's
Rural Subcommittee, go to:

www.afterschoolnetwork.org/rural

