



## Rethinking Special Education Partnerships, Support, and Flexibility: Implications for Policy and Practice

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# Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services: RETHINK

- **Address** deeply embedded and complex issues
- **Question** systems that do not facilitate the kind of improvement we know is necessary
- **Confront** structures that limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- **Change** policies and practices that put the needs of a system over the needs of the individual
- **Challenge** mindsets that appear intent on preserving the status quo

# Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services: RETHINK

- **Support**
- **Partnership**
- **Flexibility**

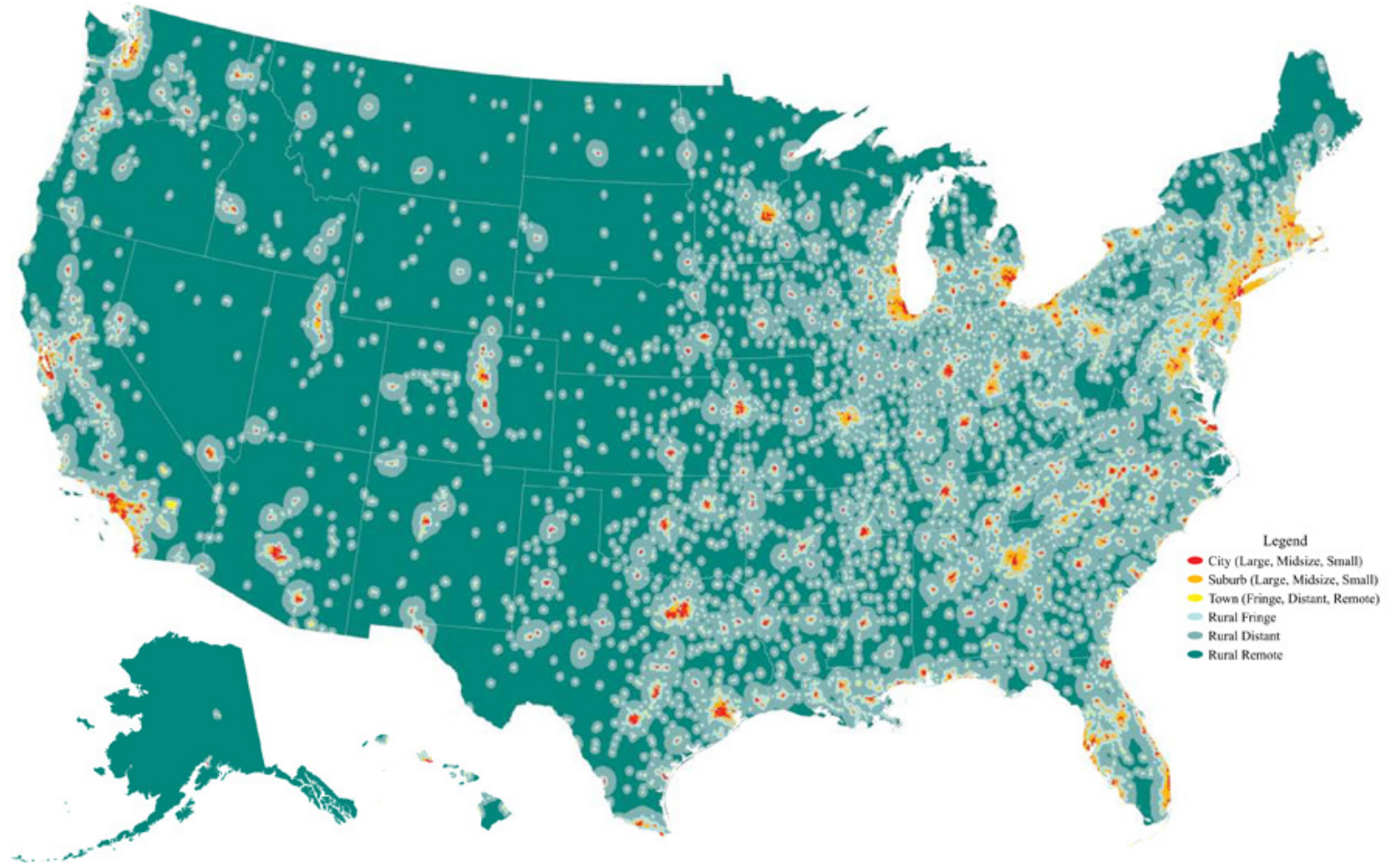
# The Current Status

## At the National Level...

9.7 million students enrolled in rural school districts (greater than 1 in 5 students nationally)

Of the rural students:

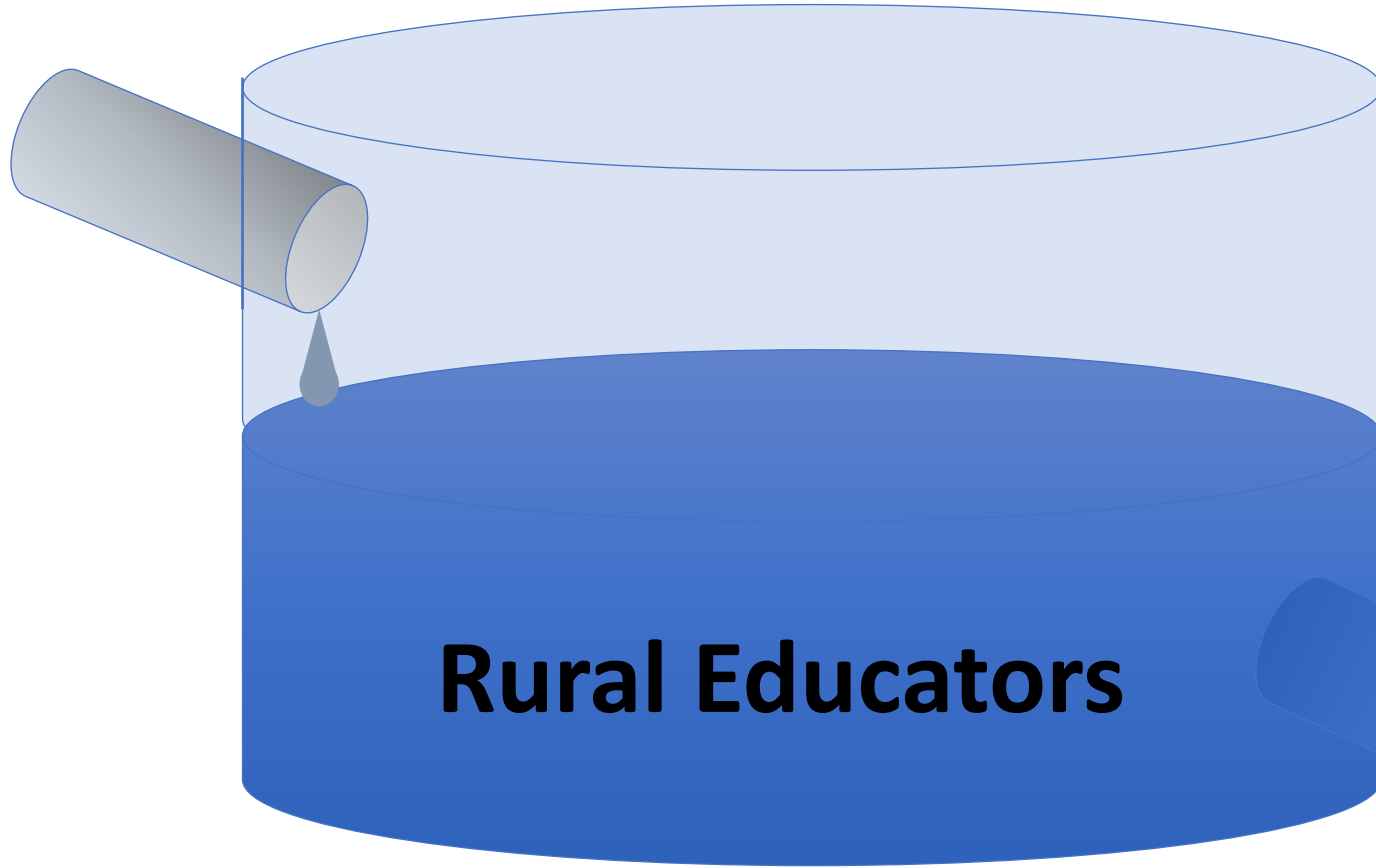
- 2 in 5 live in poverty
- 1 in 4 is child of color
- 1 in 8 has changed residence in the last year



Source: *Why Rural Matters 2013-2014, Johnson et al. 2014*

# The Problem: Not Enough Educators To Meet Needs

**Less In**

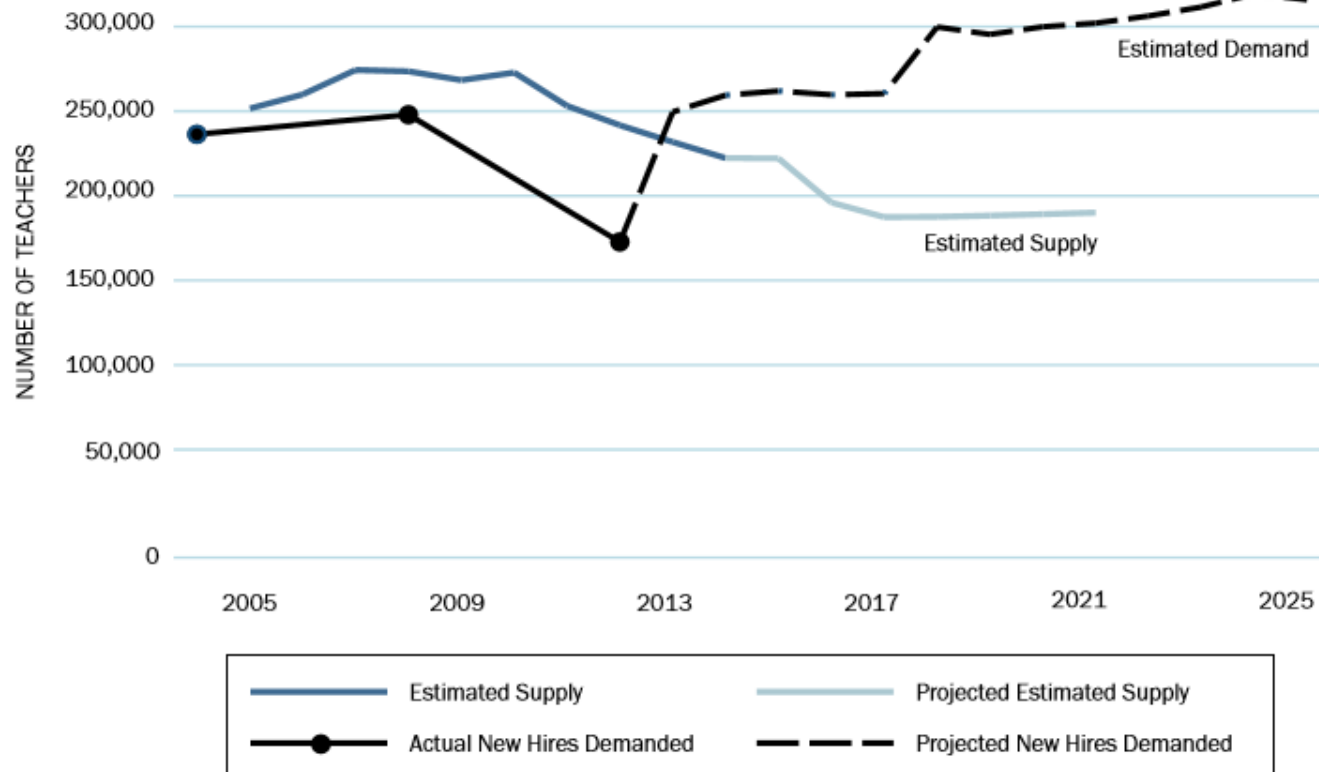


**Rural Educators**

**More Out**

# National Teacher Shortage

**Figure 1**  
**Projected Teacher Supply and Demand**

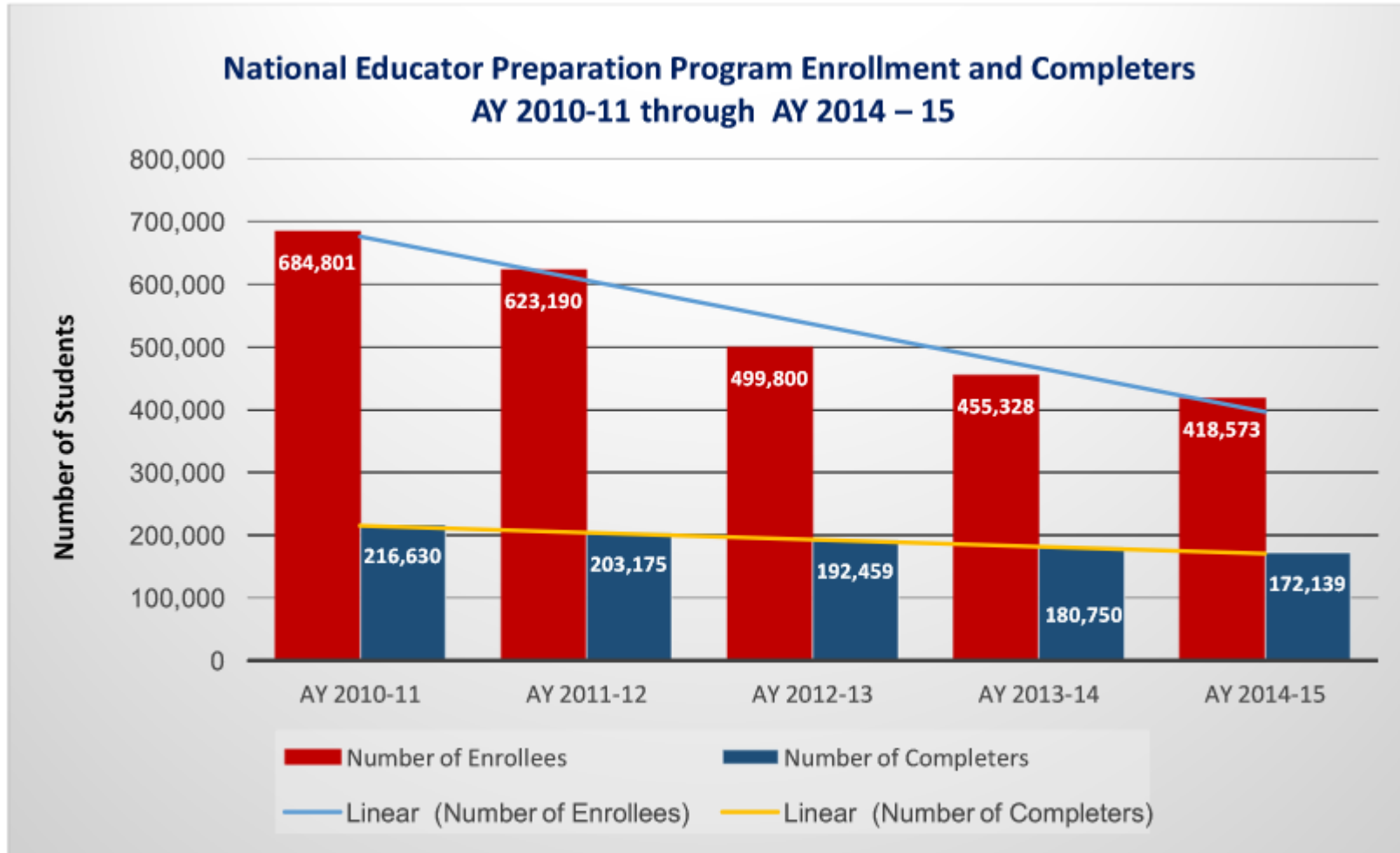


Source: *A Coming Crisis in Teaching?*,  
Sutcher et al. 2016

Note: The supply line represents the midpoints of our upper- and lower-bound teacher supply estimates (see Figure 10 for full analysis).

Source: U.S. Department of Education, multiple databases (see Appendix A).

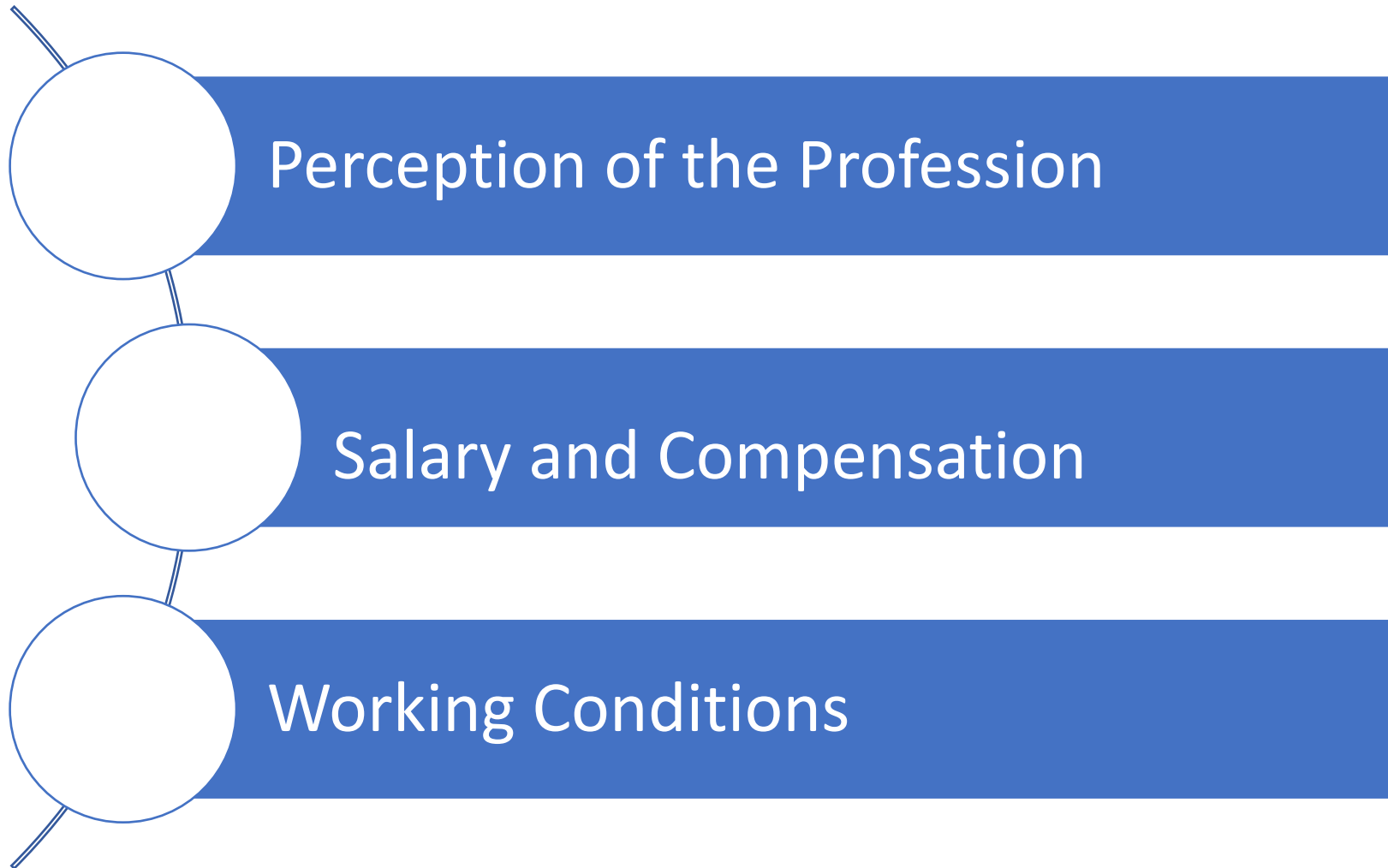
# National Teacher Preparation Trends



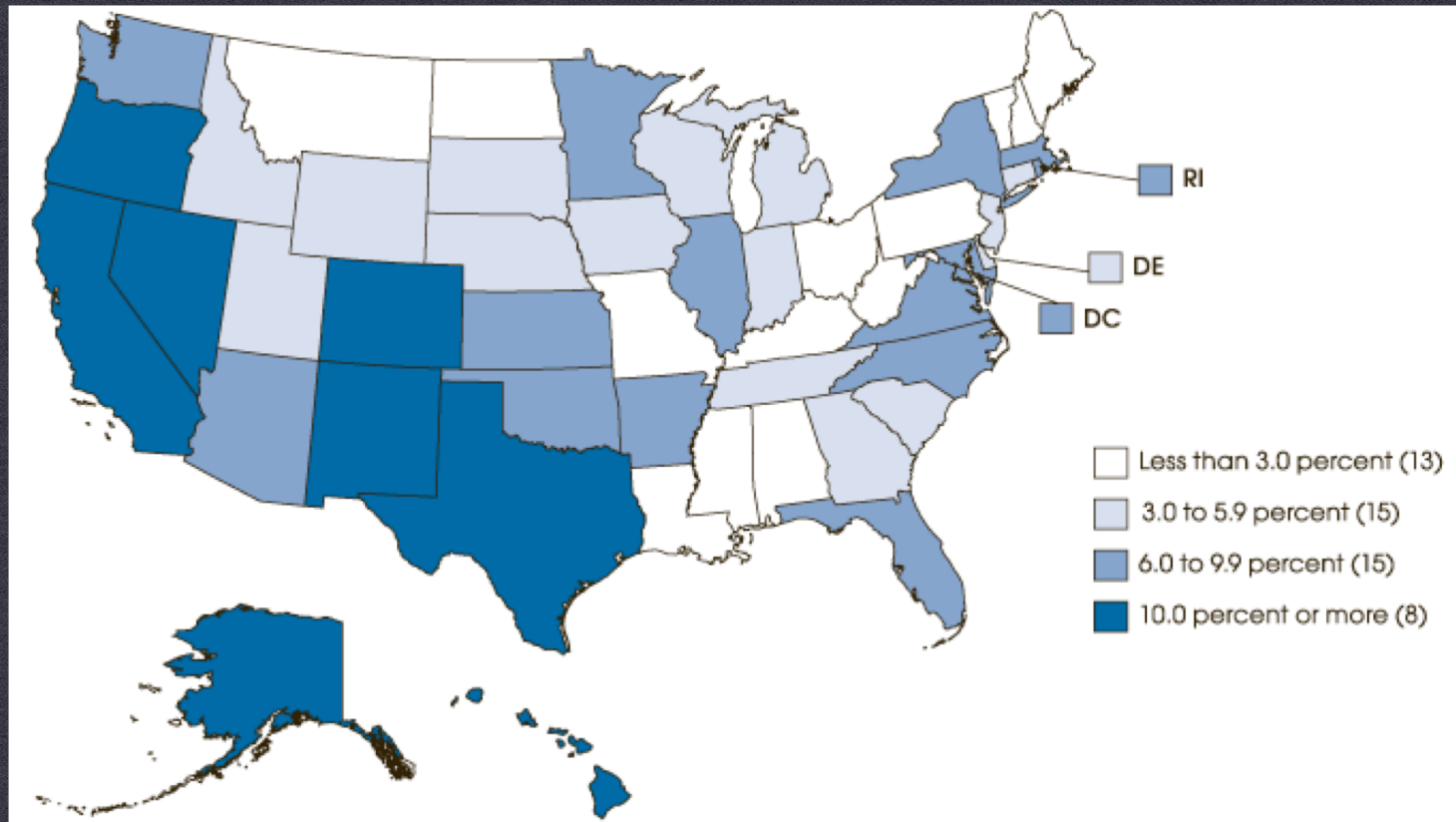
Source: *Teacher Shortages Across the Nation and Colorado, CDHE 2017*

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (2015). *Higher Education Act Title II Reporting System*.

# Obstacles to recruitment







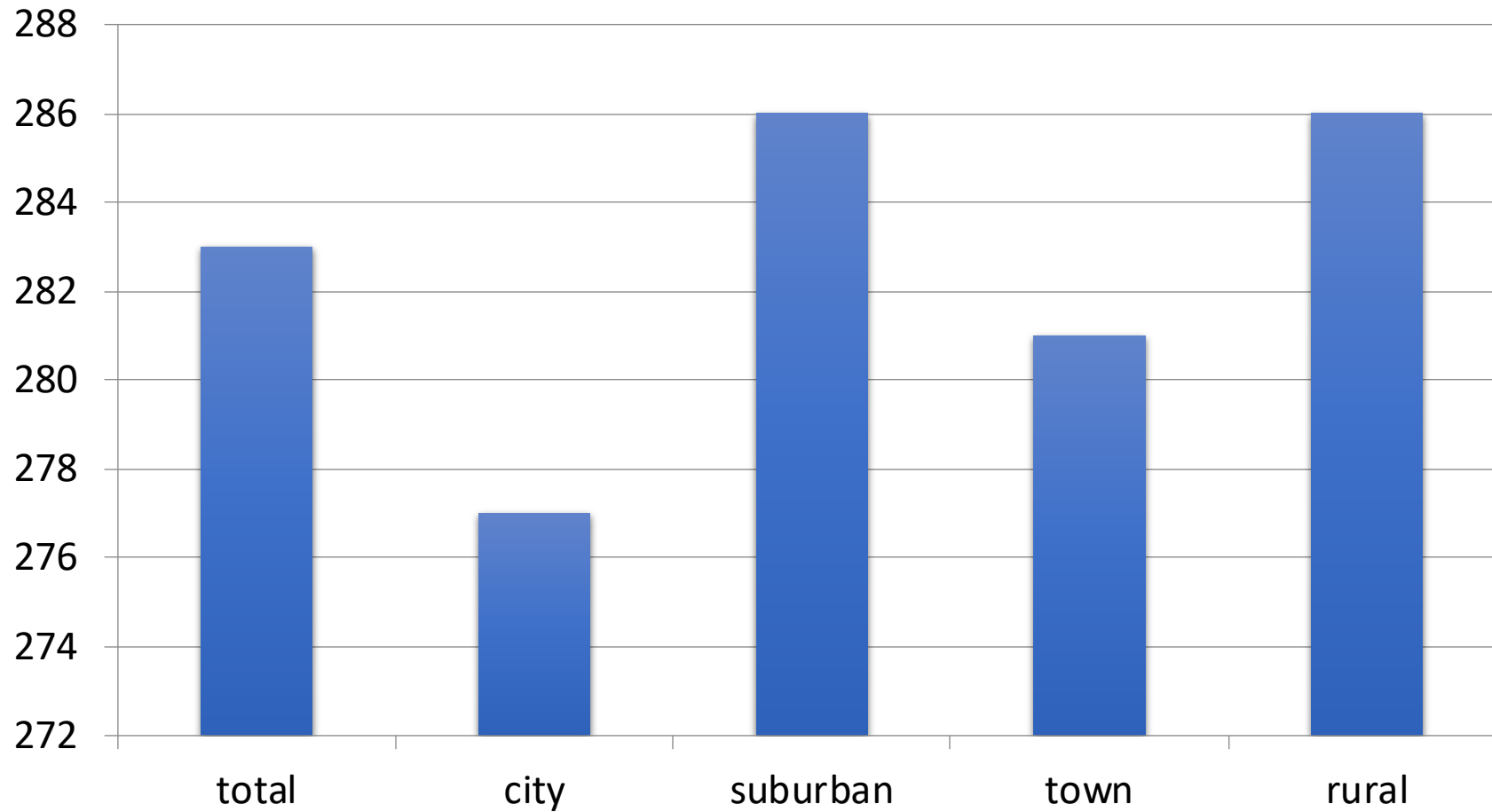
### Percent of ELL's in public schools 2011-2012 (NCELA)

44% of America's ELL students live in rural communities.  
 33% America's towns (< 2,500) enroll ELLs

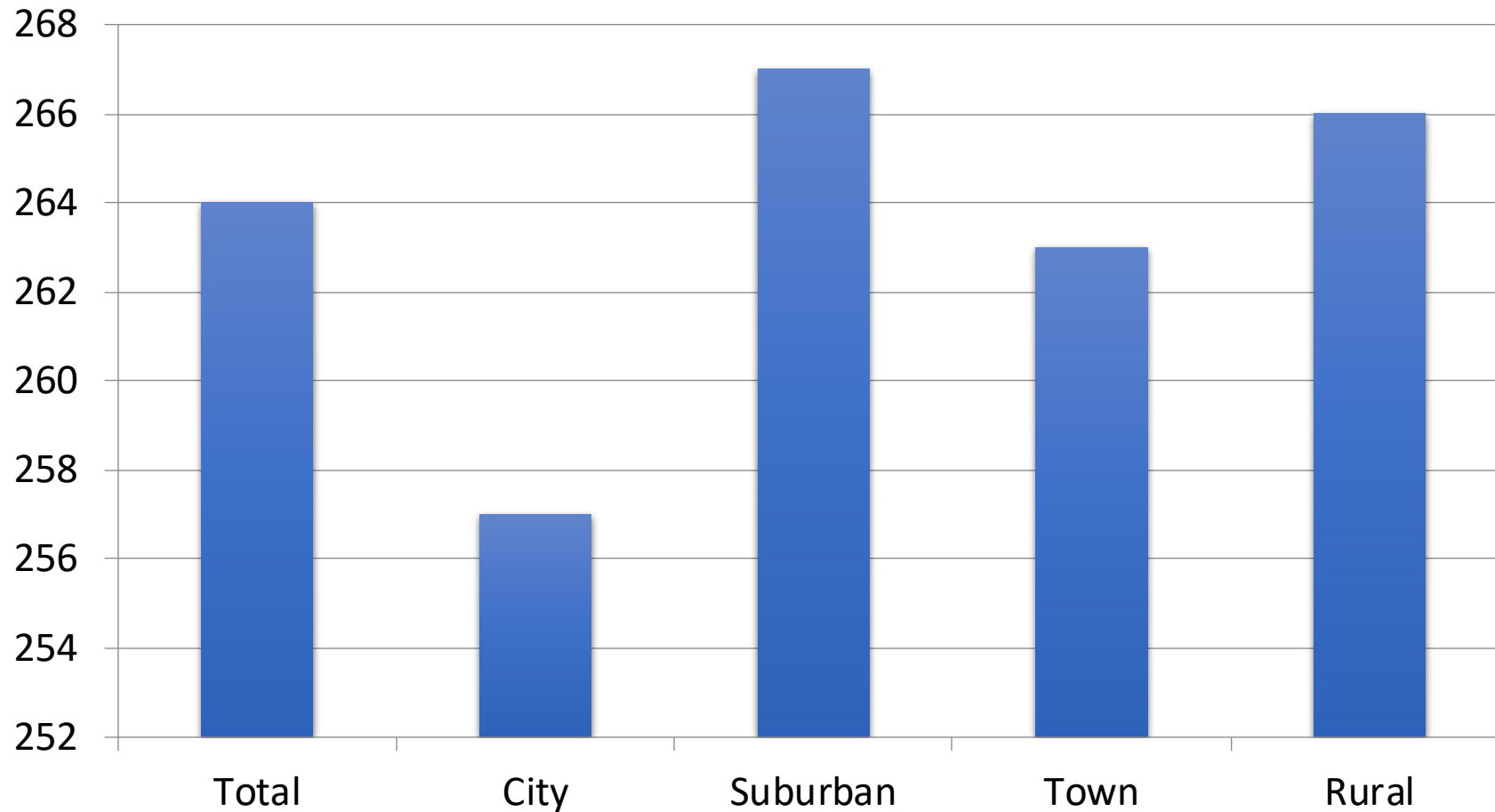
How are our rural schools doing?



# Average 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP math scale scores for all states in US combined, 2011



# Average 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP reading scale scores for all states in US combined, 2011

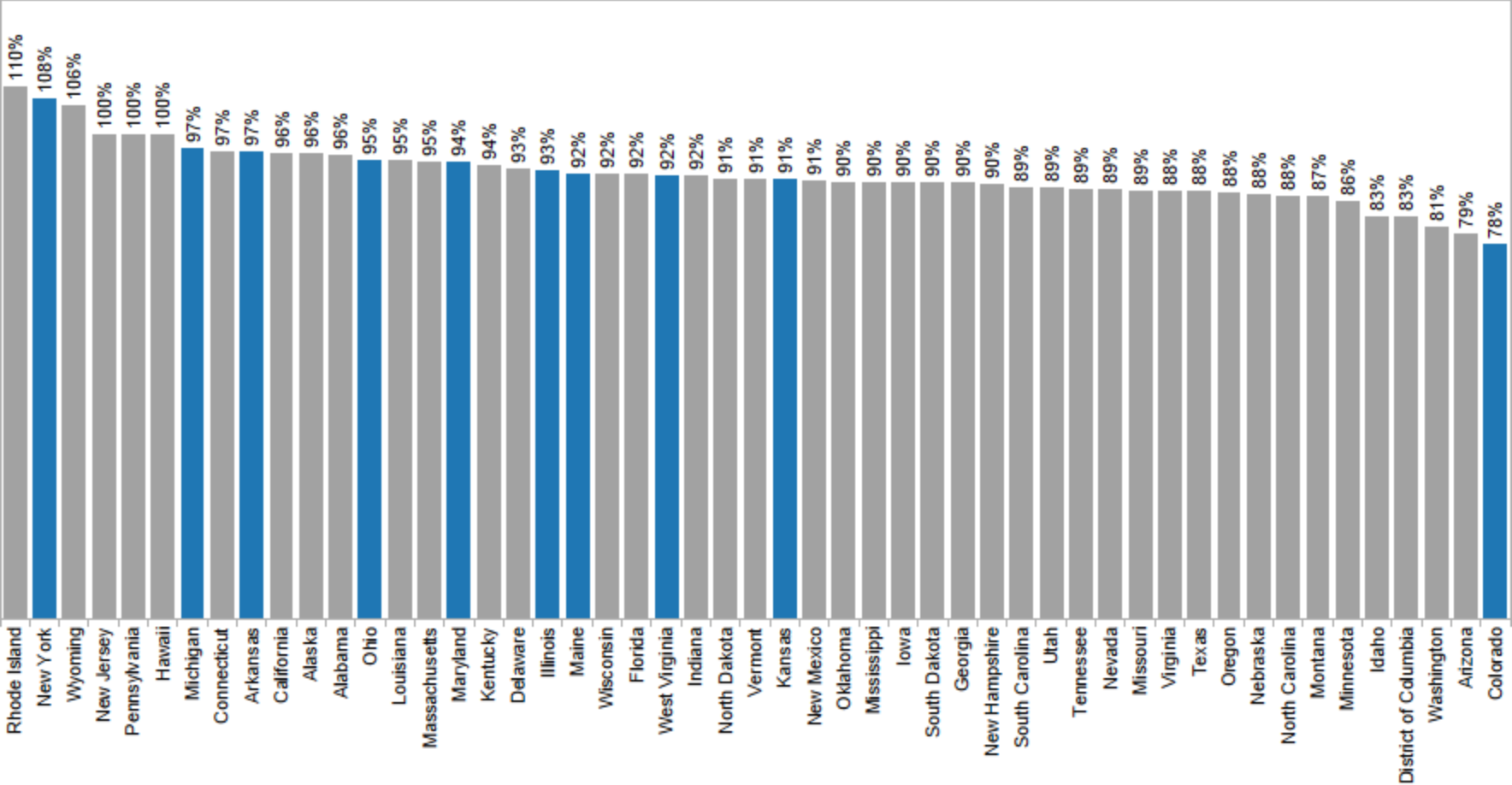


# Exit Factors

## Non-retirement reasons cited for leaving teaching profession

- Personal life circumstances (e.g. pregnancy or childcare) (37%)
- Pursuit of a position other than a K-12 teacher (28%)
- Dissatisfaction with teacher accountability and evaluation measures (25%)
- Dissatisfaction with support preparing students for assessments (17%)
- Dissatisfaction with teacher as career (21%)
- Need for higher salary (17%)
- Lack of influence over school policies and practices (13%)
- Lack of autonomy over the classroom (13%)

# Resource Allocation: Competitive Wages



Source: Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

# Policy Recommendations

- Clarify federal and state government roles in rural education
- Address rural diversity through meaningful strategies and solutions
- Adopt comprehensive recruitment programs
- Promote multiple pathways and routes to educator preparation
- Ensure that salaries and benefits are competitive for rural educators
- Provide incentives and support for ongoing professional development
- Empower University-Rural School District Partnerships to ensure comprehensive systems for locating, preparing, and supporting educators in rural communities
- Elevate the status of educators and the education profession!



# Thank you

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