

# EDUCATION IN APPALACHIA

## SOME CONTEXT...

- According to the 2000 Census, 76.8% of Appalachian adults were high school graduates (compared to 80.7% of the non-Appalachian population). However, on 64.1% of the population in Central Appalachia graduated from high school, the lowest rate of any Appalachian area. The numbers are similar for college graduates - 25% for non-Appalachians, 17.7% for Appalachians, and 10.7% for Central Appalachia (Pollard, 2003)

Selected Metrics on Educational Progress			
State	NAEP reading 2009 % of students at or above basic	4-year high school graduation rate 2007	Estimated college enrollment rates of recent HS grads-Fall 2008
KY	72%	76%	60%
MD	70%	80%	64%
TN	63%	73%	69%
VA	74%	76%	66%
WV	62%	78%	59%
U.S. AVG	66%	74%	63%

Source: Southern Regional Education Board, 2010 Progress Report on the Challenge to Lead Goals for Education. [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org)

- Title I attempts to address discrepancies in education funding by providing additional funds, but there are a number of problems with the program (“Title I Inequalities in Plain Language”, 2010)
  - Funding is based on per-pupil spending, which puts rural schools at a disadvantage
  - Title I tries to target districts with high poverty rates by “weighing” some students. However, this benefits schools with a large number of students, regardless of the area’s poverty rate
- Rural districts also face issues with regards to teacher salaries. Rural salaries tend to be lower, leading experienced teachers to take jobs elsewhere and leaving inexperienced or low-performing teachers in rural classrooms (“Title I Inequalities in Plain Language”, 2010)
  - Effective teachers can raise student achievement, decrease dropout rates, and help close the achievement gap (Jerald, Haycock, and Wilkins, 2010)
  - However, there is a lack of adequate measures of teacher quality and effectiveness
- In addition, there is an increasing trend toward using competitive grants as a means to access federal money, which puts schools without the staff or capacity to write grants, especially those in Appalachia, at a disadvantage

Sources: Hall, Daria and Natasha Ushomirsky. “Close the Hidden Funding Gaps in Our Schools.” Education Trust, March 2010. PDF File. 27 May 2010; Jerald, Craig D, Kati Haycock, and Amy Wilkins. “Fighting for Quality and Equality, Too.” Education Trust, Nov 2009. PDF File. 27 May 2010; Johnson, Jerry and Marty Strange. “Why Rural Matters 2009: State and Regional Challenges and Opportunities.” Rural School and Community Trust, Sept 2009. PDF File. 26 May 2010; Pollard, Kelvin. “Appalachia at the Millennium: An Overview of Results from Census 2000.” Population Reference Bureau and ARC. June 2003. PDF File. 25 June 2010. “Title I Inequities in Plain Language.” Rural School and Community Trust, 30 Oct 2009. Web. 27 May 2010.

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## FROM THE FIELD...

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**Challenges**

**Opportunities**