

National Center for Rural Education Research Networks

About This Opportunity

The Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University has been awarded a \$10 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education to launch the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN) to expand Proving Ground's model of evidence-based decision making and continuous improvement. With rural districts, Proving Ground will address the challenges of chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment.

Key Questions

What will participating districts receive?

- **Peer Networking Opportunities.** Districts will:
 - Join a national network of rural school districts working together to solve issues related to chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment.
 - Learn from experts and peer districts on evidence-based practices.
 - Engage in joint problem-solving sessions with NCRERN staff and their peer districts.
- **Strategic Advice and Hands on Assistance.** Districts will:
 - Participate in three regional meetings focused on transforming evidence into action, including building capacity to identify challenges, determining resource alignment, and strategizing potential ideas to pilot to improve student outcomes.
 - Participate in an annual convening in which they will have access to experts and work with their peer districts to identify common problems and strategize on common solutions to test.
- **Data & Analytic Support.** Districts will:
 - Gain access to a district-level dashboard which will give district leaders insight into their patterns of chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment for their district, as well as network-wide data.
 - Receive support to implement joint pilots.

NCRERN will cover the costs of managing and maintaining the network, developing the tools, and hosting the annual convening.

What is the cost to districts? What will districts be responsible for?

We view relationship between participating districts and Harvard as a true collaboration. Therefore, it is expected that districts who agree to be a part of NCRERN will do the following:

- Actively engage in all NCRERN activities,
- Participate in three regional meetings annually,
- Attend annual conference with other peer districts,
- Co-develop and pilot interventions, and
- Ensure the superintendent or member of the leadership team is fully engaged in the work.

The financial cost to participate in NCRERN is \$0 during the life cycle of the Center (5 years). However, districts will be responsible for travel costs to the regional meetings and annual convening. Travel costs are estimated to be approximately \$2,700/annually per person or \$8,100/ annually for a team of 3. We



have found that the most effective problem-solving teams included a mixture of leadership and program staff (3-5 members).

What are CEPR's data protocols?

CEPR follows all FERPA rules for student data privacy and security, and has not had a data breach since our founding.

What are the focus areas of the work?

This work will largely focus on three key topic areas: (1) chronic absenteeism and (2) college readiness, and (3) college enrollment.

How can interested districts participate?

Districts interested in joining NCRERN can apply here.

[New York Application](#)

[Ohio Application](#)

About the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University

The Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) is a unique partnership among districts, states, foundations, and university-based researchers designed to leverage the overwhelming amount of available school-, teacher-, and student-level data to address previously intractable policy questions in education and improve educational outcomes for all students. CEPR currently partners with 76 school districts, 22 charter management organizations, 17 state departments of education, and 32 educational non-profits.

About Proving Ground

Proving Ground, a CEPR initiative, works to make evidence-gathering and evidence-use an intuitive part of how education agencies conduct their daily work. Proving Ground utilizes a continuous improvement framework to help agencies rapidly identify and test solutions to specific challenges. To date, district partners working with Proving Ground have identified, designed, and implemented interventions that have effectively reduced student absences. Learn more at provingground.cepr.harvard.edu.