# Designing and Scaling for Educational Impact in Rural Communities - Transcript

Rebecca Griffiths ([00:00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KqM6XJvtjlIhT7JRaAjvURON_-01VxoF_UjeFnYRYazc423Elce9Qj4ZmMs81IFZsZQ8odBsk_-fSv8Wl37dPhTvc5Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.09)):

Thank you all so much for joining us today. I especially want to acknowledge that some of you may be missing part of the solar eclipse and we really appreciate your commitment to rural education during this national phenomenon. Before we dive in, I'd like to share a brief bit of background about the LEARN Network and why we were established, why we're bringing this panel together.

([00:00:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/h5suFojr2tSeRpvS9iggY09dCpGS2f_kp2I0XKl0eqPkhABM30BgaeWZgkTYbk3YnQ0DGg969wvke1vY81xWCAM69eY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=25.41)):

Educators seeking to improve student outcomes are frequently urged to use evidence-based products and practices, but we know this is harder than it sounds for teachers and district staff. First, there is a basic question of what constitutes evidence. Then there are barriers to use of evidence such as that a lot of research is too theoretical. It is maybe incomprehensibly written with a lot of jargon. It may be conducted in different settings with different kinds of students than those served by educators. And this particular mismatch is especially problematic for rural districts given that researchers tend to seek out large districts with lots of schools and students when conducting experimental studies.

([00:01:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/iTT05f3lM-InSmRo8scJSC68pQVmXH7IuIj5vWtIKymjUsTbG7Xda__YFnfeNmZXmIfWVgzs3msnFgbIB0W64EcKNc4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=69.48)):

Meanwhile, researchers are constantly developing and testing all kinds of innovative interventions, programs and curriculum materials, which they of course, hope districts will use. Many of these show promise of being effective in pilots. But researchers typically lack the skills and organizational context to spread these innovations to a critical mass of educators and students, leaving their potential unrealized and unfortunately wasting a fair bit of energy and resources that goes into developing these very promising interventions.

([00:01:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/JYx0Gxmk7hV9BaWfkwDlhG7ZmEiJLZt43kWqcDTtt8lUSfJ2LINYF5MnM9j1vSTFRRfZN_Px_BarQ22bk4ti2zbotEQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=101.31)):

To address these challenges, the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences established the LEARN Network, which is led by our team here at SRI International. The LEARN Network provides capacity building to researchers and product developers in designing, testing and transitioning evidence-based products and programs so they have the potential for widespread and equitable reach and impact. The network also seeks to help practitioners access and use evidence-based products and programs to accelerate learning.

([00:02:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hG53Fnp24_84lXSMV0FoYOZ6p-YraFlhg4UZn21iHXeLCv2a5GhpEKH-hWHY-uaRUjQvVLRw9mcUBBbOv8G0GvApvFI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=134.01)):

Today we have the privilege of engaging in a conversation specifically centered around designing and scaling programs and products in rural schools and districts. We will be joined by rural leaders and experts from around the country who will speak to the nuanced needs of rural communities and share strategies for program and product design and development that foster rural school engagement and facilitate sustainable scaling to rural schools. Our esteemed panelists will shed light on the connection between increasing rural schools access to evidence-based programs and how these programs, when designed correctly, can support equitable educational opportunities for all students.

([00:02:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/km8h9lvbO3GtC8Zr-DlqCcKVW9W0-ORv0OVB2cPdpks6yE5baJZ6RSpjlELITAPjyQIp7PaE0vrevWiMvvvsoBRonNI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=175.05)):

Now, I would like to introduce our moderator for today's panel. Victoria Schaefer. Victoria leads the Regional Education Laboratory for Appalachia or REL Appalachia with a passion for the region, a commitment to improving the lives of its people, and a strong sense of place and how history shapes the context in which schooling occurs. Victoria offers over 20 years of experience in education, including five years leading, training, coaching and technical support activities for REL Appalachia before becoming director. Having lived experience as both a classroom teacher and a researcher, Victoria brings firsthand knowledge of the importance of bringing evidence-based practices to the region's highest priority needs. Her grassroots perspective of the day-to-day life of educators and students drives a commitment for creating relevant and useful materials based on solid research. We are delighted to have her lead this panel today. Victoria, I will pass it to you.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:03:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MON_mSkf5_vQCgc0P_94SRaupQXjm2gRb5NlHKJ7M_DtQGXCunQJplIKidcWvVasdwKtlgwcsze-Y8zvIukD6ESJv3Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=237.84)):

Great. Thanks so much Rebecca. And thank you all, those of you at the LEARN Network, for arranging to support this panel and this conversation today, which is a really important one and long overdue. And thank you to all of you who have chosen to join us this afternoon. We are grateful to have you with us as well. If you're here, I'd like to make the assumption that you have a pretty strong interest in learning more about how to engage rural schools in education research. And I'm also going to sort of make an assumption that all of you who have joined us probably have a range of familiarity with rural education. I suspect that some of you may have many years of experience working with rural schools and that others of you could be fairly new to rural education.

([00:05:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/NEDEAEUiesabmJLm3glBYwLwddl8-j7i63sf6EOvdtNvkHGmK0CNpL2UZhM7uibKoPw1iXmRiWsRknBlx1i0JvSzsC0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=300.78)):

In the last 20 years, we have witnessed what I would like to think of as a new level of seriousness on the part of our federal government, in particular, in its efforts to prioritize research with rural schools and districts. Current law requires that certain programs actually designate a certain percent of funds to rural education. The percentage is often about 25%.

([00:05:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gf-GrRTvQWUY1Jpo92_1FyG0CseiKae5hDmz0FHB-Fk1oKB2SIU0C6ZR9PxRpZrVeA9bU4Srs1TBc3qoQyEdrFFPIC0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=332.25)):

Two examples that I'll highlight include the US Department of Education's Education Innovation and Research grant program, the EIR grant program, which you may have heard about or perhaps you yourself are an EIR grantee, and the Institute of Education Sciences Regional Education Laboratory Program of which I direct one of the 10 labs. And Rebecca mentioned that just a moment ago in her introductory remarks.

([00:06:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hbINH9evzBT8MDnkC278Aptr-AD_XID-n2HTC1DB5ilfjth3WR0IhYvlfvZYbKZMAk2mRpdB2Qj6N-a0k3eqPAcPeYE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=363.51)):

So as I sit back and reflect and think about that, these are requirements for recipients of federal program dollars, another way to think about it is that these are federal investments in research. These send a big signal to all of us, and it's a signal that our panelists and perhaps all of you who are joining us already know, and that's that we don't have enough education research conducted in and with rural schools and in rural settings.

([00:06:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/B1xH5oGIL3rDnbJl09xx4jOCirydD4VbJiqq_uzRFsKEoPtRk71BnW1IR2dxWXgK3RwkhPm5-SGLn6uPx0lSH2mZ5gg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=402.27)):

I think the reasons for such an oversight as this lack of enough research with rural schools and rural communities, I think those reasons are probably pretty complicated. I think they include things like cost considerations alongside things that are as simple as convenience and ease of access to the study sites.

([00:07:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/umyaFX__535mga0guIZlKbiZUotuptZBoT827kLbU-i2eanQxnrUuN1bVYCJ_dN6j8LGE8tPqNAn4IJ408OSdwnSS6c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=427.83)):

Regardless of the reasons though, we can do better. Our students and our educators deserve better. The panelists you're going to hear from today have a demonstrated commitment to rural education. Please take a minute, if you haven't already, to read their bios. We've shared them with you so that you have a chance to know a bit more about all of their professional credentials that are what brought them to the table today. And I want you to have a way to follow up with them if you have questions or want to learn more outside of our time together.

([00:07:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ozg7Yp7nyGWa5tuPVs3LLJMOHk4hm8b52DP4EtP6x-U0OcJB5KyUeWylWMOblE4LpcQEmMngQm1bsnP4ZVuBJ1cnbp4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=469.05)):

So let me take just a moment to tell you a bit about each one of them and how I know them and why they're selected as one of our panelists today. All of them have personal and professional ties to rural schools and communities. As I like to think about it, they know rural from the inside out. They have hard-earned knowledge about rural ed and their knowledge is now accompanied by a priceless wisdom about why rural really matters.

([00:08:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xh2KkB_XOezkkRl38uCa0wJ-5Ei0wSCrFUICX3WnszPgtzU6-3FnNiCdXiHlWE92ez6t36F86ky_Ers8NR-aRc-u2KA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=506.46)):

So I'll start with Tom Farmer. He is chair of the Department of Foundations of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. So as you might guess, he's based in Virginia. Tom in particular is joining us because he was PI for the first federally funded education research center dedicated to rural education, and that started back in 2004. Tom brought first-hand rural education experience to the table, which was much needed at that time, but he also brought the technical skills to lead experimental studies in rural schools across multiple states.

([00:09:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/TG7IGLjGaLubU6009dh4nlsOG6YNeVdkN2glRFOKapisNOqSNr8eZ19svoFzdWmFTYuBoq97iFDcCPSYnXjj43KBBP4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=551.94)):

Linda Friedrich joins us, based in California. She's director of literacy at WestEd. Linda has been PI, as has Tom, for multiple studies. Linda's expertise in particular is in literacy and writing. And she's been working for at least the past 15 years that I know of with an intentional focus on rural schools and districts all across the United States. She, like Tom, has worked shoulder to shoulder with rural educators, learning with them about what rural educators and rural students need.

([00:09:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-gULjJcC4GfZL05jPAqW9iAVW-_qkVOrhPNQek04eH_Xib04xMJeLJIAmtQzAn40xl96745bLc0yQrNgxW9YCOTqJFY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=593.76)):

Darris is based in Pennsylvania. He's an associate professor in Educational Foundations, Organizations and Policy at the University of Pittsburgh. And he's also executive director for rural and community-based education in the School of Education there at the University of Pittsburgh. Another thing you should know about Darris is that he sits on the board for the National Rural Education Association. So he brings that national lens to this conversation. He has prioritized equity as part of his work. And he researches how economic, educational and social conditions shape pathways to and through post-secondary education for first generation college students, rural students, Black students, and/or students from low income backgrounds.

([00:10:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/glelge3lNagzDQ1Uxb0m6dH37aFyhesU7AN1zvsPjgvdocXFxuPP2dFRXvG9ps9IZeYohKxOio2yc_VfZx2y5g5WYPk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=653.76)):

And last but not least, we're joined by Melissa Sadorf, who is a superintendent of the, excuse me, of the Stanfield Elementary School District in Arizona. She's also the current president of the National Rural Education Association. So while Melissa lives and works in Arizona, she's able to join us today, giving voice and elevating the voice of people in the role that she plays, that superintendents all around United States who serve rural students. And they're all serving diverse populations of rural students. And we're grateful for Melissa, Darris, Linda, and Tom taking time today to share their knowledge, experience, and wisdom.

([00:11:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/H7ZweIpK3b7iLHQI1wSsocd4mMykZFf3g8TClgY92b8DAkUmjNgrOqW3MHhg7gjsz83QwQhZkGeoAivZSgZ5d3GpKTo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=708.63)):

I'm really glad that Rebecca mentioned that we have the eclipse happening about right now in North America. I'm a trained researcher and I just want to point out that there is a correlation between the opportunity to convene this set of esteemed panelists and a total eclipse of the sun, which is pretty rare. I know that I can't make the leap and say that correlation is causation, although I really would like to, because this really is a special group of people and I think this conversation and the message messages that they're going to bring are pretty profound and long overdue. And as it happens, we did schedule this panel a very long time ago. So I just can't help but signal there's a strong correlation here between a total eclipse of the sun and this opportunity, which has never happened before, to hear from these four people at the same time.

([00:12:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/jYQGwrkgXOZPg-SkSQE5tw2Xrd-NybK5KN0ZJBHFKDJvFy3n3y_PhiVvfyPC8dXrK97nRLt1Yioy4_8j0hrDqSec8Lo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=774.93)):

So with that, I'm going to turn to Darris, who is going to do a little bit of stage setting with some facts and figures that extend a bit of what I'm saying. So Darris, I'm going to turn to you. Thank you.

Darris Means ([00:13:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7kJ8KPVG29WFs4VmVyLeSDzon3VoCyQia9W8hvobHn9GHwLOZqk0GynSSFGFNc3trunCSMOkL3Jr_dYE3Adf5VGoKVU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=791.28)):

Thank you, Victoria. And good afternoon everyone. So I want to set the stage around what we know about rural education. I'll start here with the fact that three out of five school districts, public school districts in the US, are rural school districts. About 57% of school districts are rural school districts. And then when we think about schools, one in three public schools in the US are rural schools. So that's that next slide there, Aaron.

([00:13:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0_uBn-1pkQsWLKeC0o2dp3nBPSvHB1rEEV5ZJW_dNxC4wkS5tGBeX3Zt0JRODD8zQv3otWvaW2NXb1EmFEp120jTvLo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=828.09)):

And finally, I will share that in the US, there are 9.5 million public school students in the US, which equates to about one in five public school students in the United States. And according to the Why Rural Matters report, there are more students in rural public schools than the 100 largest school districts combined. So between thinking about the number of rural school districts, rural public schools, the number of rural students, it's clear to me that rural education is a significant part of the story about education and learning in the US.

([00:14:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xtfJj1NHj9F_LWovHLgEFcCnSrATzrRF3WZe8bNhD-DcTF36GP8veRV5eW6jOdSqz2i3FDuPPCD5zTQjKZunsVDopys?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=869.16)):

With that being said, I do believe it's pretty important for us to understand that rural schools, districts and students are not a monolith. So there are small rural school districts and schools, there are larger school districts and schools. There's a wide range of economic contexts in which schools and districts are located. And there's a wide range of racial and ethnic diversity across rural communities in the US. So for example, we know that one out of four public school students in rural schools identify as native, indigenous, Black, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or multiracial. So I'll stop there with the context about rural schools.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:15:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/nVNMiaosmElqPaUVsVsKXWbRWar1dShxV5ACCFrUVPTBSbdRV1Qwb2itdIbb0rIzlcQ6D8fpETRMMU5sqRehpZIzuDk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=914.37)):

Thank you, Darris. I think that's all really helpful to have all of us be reminded. And then all the folks who are joining us today, that there are a lot of rural students, a lot of rural schools in the United States, and they are a diverse population. So I'm going to just look to your colleagues, Darris, our other panelists, and ask if anyone wants to further add anything to the context before we dive into questions. Tom?

Thomas Farmer ([00:15:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YYxx6MXg0yQOt69tK-kO3v_ZAfch0D3nSlwoDHATxcWjcJEwofShHNqRtxmrDao1WV24Cdo-Vd3qY8WxNeaXg5XJ4oo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=947.25)):

Yes, Victoria. I think it's really important as we think about rural research and evidence-based practices that we really do center that concept of diversity and think what it really means. As Darris was telling us, 57% of districts are rural, 20% of students in the country are rural. That means that they're really spread out across very, very diverse places. I've done work across the country. No matter where you go, the first thing they'll probably say is, "Did you have any difficulty finding us?" And then the second thing they'll say is, "There's no other place like us." And that's a really critical thing for us to be aware of, is that each rural district and each school has their own culture, their own resources, their own strengths and their own needs. And when we think about evidence-based practices, we often try to identify something that's one size fits all. But as we think about doing research in rural areas, we really have to figure out how do we conduct that research and how do we develop programs that can really be tailored to be relevant to the schools and really responsive to their needs.

Linda Friedrich ([00:17:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/l9i8ikZjxYBBDxsRQcXFiQlMrgGRTCejBn6TLblCOjwbhHN4fyHo6pxLfO7-wf7T3witregpgjhw5AXmxGHx-THduUE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1037.55)):

Victoria, I'd love to build on what Tom was saying and especially this theme of there's no place like us. One of the privileges that I've had in working across so many rural communities in probably 20 or more states is really seeing the unique assets and gifts that each place brings to the work. I'm thinking about some of the resources that live beyond the walls of the schools.

([00:17:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0QvSukaD-g_TfLhIgcGOFZlQMZtKFx1IK3QwFsxpvxkgxrNMuD7shJpNE1DHkYm2-bVph2dQBDbRVc8WvFyrIPuWBn4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1070.37)):

So in one of our projects, we were working from educators everywhere from rural Montana to rural Mississippi. In rural Montana, the teachers really reached out to their local newspaper to their local historical settings and that enhanced their literacy work. In rural Mississippi in the community, the teacher was able to reach out directly to the mayor and the city council to come and talk with the students about both some of the things that were exciting that were happening in the community and some of the challenges that the community faced so that those middle and high school students could actually engage in the real work of their communities. And I think really understanding the richness of the communities that surround the schools and districts speaks to exactly that theme that Tom was talking about. There's no place like us and the gifts and resources in the community make a huge difference.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:19:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dF89dOwqc8S10kI5AvqkbOdtZLQXCNZNjeZn_AsIR6VLrSrbLGVR9Flhyrlt7x7Qkn_JlkjaiBlfFvZMmJIg7SXQ3G8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1143.48)):

Thank you, Linda. Thank you Tom for adding more. All right, so I think what we'll do is dive in and get started right now with our questions.

([00:19:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9m-LqhG92iKRcaIQ_eJUmJCwlXLdwM4cXvH3P9xewiVEq-eod3n0z-028xAJ11fourKMR7McBU3nb2B5L_hfEwDv9Os?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1158.51)):

So Tom and Linda, all three of you actually have paved the way for this. I want to share that about a month ago, I attended a conference and it was a conference for state and local education leaders hosted by the US Department of Education. There was a strand of presentations that focused on equity. And early in the day, one of the presenters set the tone with the following quote. And it just struck a chord with me so I want to share it today. "If it is about us without us, it isn't for us." And that just resonated so deeply. And I thought about rural schools and rural educators and students when I heard that quote.

([00:20:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ns52a3kajfspmPs2CvyBdJfPyv_ooSdCy9zEBwPSnY6IKrXCPRZ6721EfSp4uOO1-6nEts6byFx0lsFBudrr7Z7nZ3c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1212.84)):

So we know that ESSA requires that schools that have federal funds use evidence-based innovations, and that's what we're talking about today. What does the research show works and how to get that in the hands of rural schools? And ESSA also requires a focus on equity and really creating equitable learning conditions and opportunities for all students. And so my question is, can we start today with hearing your thoughts about why and how having rural schools use evidence-based programs or products relates to or connects back to that emphasis on equity? And so Darris, I'd like to have you maybe answer that question first if I could turn to you.

Darris Means ([00:21:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/yPWG1ET-kyrF8DBsNKYPbLAI67UD17JtPlRoZ8fuaRBYUCGaIL5ZpBN1bvReTjildvyr9Yv2b8VzOOdRrq_FfmS-bxA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1263.75)):

Absolutely. So I'm going to set the stage again for what we mean by equity and why it's so critical when we're talking about rural schools and communities. We know from scholarship that where you live, where you attend school are equity and justice issues that we need to pay attention to. Unfortunately, it's often overlooked when we're talking about issues around equity and justice. So when I think about spatial equity and justice, they attend to the lack of access to resources and opportunities again based on where one lives or where one attends school.

([00:21:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/WY_ARxaIapVxk1rOVjc3womnIrPKVpnXAgrKlfiNHmBmbes9ZyNWDm59XoNyqIgYs1Ng3r6bPlxajcCSPlNYWzpFEZE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1303.02)):

So when we're thinking about spatial inequities and how it impacts student learning development, there's this need to focus on how can we engage better with rural communities while at the same time addressing critical issues and recognizing the assets and resources that already exist in rural communities. And in particular when thinking about evidence-based programs or products, they can be a critical resource for addressing and promoting equity in rural schools.

([00:22:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EQEDc8CL60Tp9bsc3dYLLku1NTMn-0y8WQOOqswaKuTdX1gnEtlUCSEBkfHuX5Ayh459BEYEurGeY5_04uAsAY7pFrk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1334.58)):

So just to give you some more context about spatial inequities, we know that rural schools and districts can experience some systemic spatial inequities when it comes to providing access to resources and opportunities for rural students that are not at the fault of the schools or districts, but again, a reflection of systemic challenges. So for example, we know from scholarship that from the Why Rural Matters report, about 14% of rural age students live in poverty. We know that in rural schools, they sometimes struggle with access to school counselors and psychologists. I think the ratio from the Why Rural Matters report is for every school counselor or psychologist in the rural school, there's 310 students. And we also know that rural students are less likely to enroll and graduate from post-secondary education.

([00:23:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ONyqPl3hBXHLDReQzjaRymiSImy1mww_2xKRri24Zr0ASMXvQUmFMuVeSxnDq-HCcTeJF6aBOF4njo88wNFH3Zip6vE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1389.39)):

But when I talk about rural education and educational challenges, it's also important to recognize that interconnected with other structural challenges, so everything from broadband access that's available in rural communities to thinking about the increasing number of rural hospitals that are closing across rural communities in this country. So again, evidence-based products or programs can serve as critical resources to address some of these disparities in terms of providing more access to learning resources and opportunities for rural schools, students and districts. And again, at the same time, the critical need that as we do this work, that we recognize the unique needs and opportunities in each rural community, recognizing that there's a diversity of rural communities. So I'll stop there in terms of setting a stage of understanding more about spatial inequities and injustices.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:24:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0DCAoJDAgVmrrKivit45kKv2PLu04cdE5RDa0HgWmMM7i9x5bIx4kXrTqZjMsfYSnk9a0AKxop9ZvPEhSSon532dJPY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1445.19)):

I really appreciate that stage setting and your answer to that question, you bringing up spatial inequities. I appreciate that. Melissa, you in particular are uniquely situated as a superintendent and in your role as president of NREA. What are your thoughts in response to that question and even what some of what Darris did?

Melissa Sadorf ([00:24:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/b9F1g2ZK1Ejp663jfdI6za6CeqOm9qUZOEOMySrKL3Q08eG0tzyYGnXoB9ixZX2VFs-NDnoJvWlltsXPQEbyZu1EThg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1470.24)):

Sure. Thank you. Darris, you did a great job in framing what I want to talk about, which really at the core of it, we can talk about how rural innovates out of necessity. And a lot of it is the gaps that some of those communities are dealing with in terms of the assets that they're able to rely on, and so being nimble and being flexible around how things are rolled out or what they look like in practice when they're being put in place in a rural school.

([00:25:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/LImb9FTdzpsPcLpq_8HfuKlX-csYObUHAwaWZROuaN5auRCRWrMN-r_HflAIhjvv2jtX-EZ-guWY4RTKOdJ7CRs_qRM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1501.05)):

From a national perspective, what I would share is again, that idea that rural is not a monolith and that context of the school and its people and the teachers and the leadership of that community really do play a part in anything that's going on there. I think it's also important to note that being culturally aware is very important. What are the needs of that community? Who lives in that community? What background and gifts do they bring to the school doors? And so, it's up to the school to really take a good look at what the needs are and assess really what is the thing that's needed or what is the program or product that we might be considering to meet the needs that we have, and then prioritizing what those needs are, what's the most important thing that we need to attend to first using data that we're collecting to drive those decisions that are being made when we're making choices.

([00:25:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/RWgOh_McT-Y2j6H9GSAKrkAu54T3Fs79gIXeGdBuURwG5FR2VkMgZlNsduyQYGPkceq3pjpzE8I-PlcXxPXmeHdft6I?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1559.55)):

And that use of data and having that ground, any of our conversation, leads to transparency, it leads to accountability and it also is a big part of that continuous improvement cycle that we all are living in as leaders that operate schools, being strategic about what those things are.

([00:26:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/V0DTYcUF3HqIGWqT7_hfYGqJnHGChitGVUhI2yKjX4i-5GjEqaKinAlle_DyY0L_v-wQOXGZWKE1S0Wu8zN8bwPxTpM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1580.55)):

The other thing I think is important to note is that all of these are happening with the lens focused on the student and what's good for the students that we serve in our schools. If it's not in the best interest of our students, we don't want to do it. So being very intentional about where that focus lies. And then as a leader, not just in Arizona, but really across the country, we have to be looking at the return on investment. So is what we're doing really getting the outcomes that we want to have happen? And if it's not, then we need to do course correction. Is it looking at tweaking? Is it looking at doing something different? Is it starting over?

([00:27:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bDHN727FK_2e4dQfk_nFJp7XTijeRp0kJQwKHLPj97AsWEcfEOm6n96B17yVZQdr-dJLbGwfQbGEcxcRn5t-5VyaOUk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1622.19)):

In my personal work as a superintendent, my day-to-day day job, there is an intersection between that evidence base that you were talking about as it relates to us, Victoria, and that equity piece that Darris brought to the conversation. And my particular community, I have a very diverse population, 20% of my students are Native American. And so that is something that I take into consideration when I'm making decisions and when I'm bringing in people for input in our different stakeholder groups. And 65% are Hispanic. They come to school, over half of them do not speak English or they have limited English. And so those things are things that I need to be considerate of when I'm looking at what I'm going to be doing for programming.

([00:27:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bOWtJS7euJk8AntnpZ3ahxNFRLbjoGyX45KqKUzuEccWRuwXDyaJg0ZT7lnG3bkjDrx4t9qkdaMlu5DVQ5ZUuZ3sjdY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1672.5)):

Those access issues that there is talked about really do matter. So is it a language issue? Is there broadband that we need to take into consideration? How does it align with our mission and vision and our improvement goals is also something that's important. And so leaders do really need to be paying attention to those many solutions that they're encountering, being aligned with where they want to take those students, what kinds of things they already have in place and how they might interact with each other.

([00:28:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8vY2OH7hk9Byy_itv_gWWJ_PF8sQuLfoKTF0wqeiMZXlSl9mCVcVLfKkc0BjRkjrDB7apyijiPyN3ZxSNZjmqyg4WQw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1706.94)):

And then I think I'll end with one of the things that, as I'm doing my research around whatever initiative or product or anything that I'm considering is that there tends to be a very urban centric lens that those things are looked at through. What that means is, it is my job as a rural leader to ensure that I reframe the research and find out is it flexible enough to meet the needs of my students and my community so that I'm getting the outcomes that I think I'm going to get when I'm moving forward in that decision making process.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:29:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9bUHXN7E_iV0EDKDLLWShygl0022C2s6fkEjetb0BsYH5o5ACePPWN21i9VJIOB3TouiWpJ2-LgHOuslBsUlkn8VCOA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1747.89)):

Thank you, Melissa. Thank you both. I'm going to pivot now and shift the conversation a bit to now talk about designing and developing evidence-based innovations relevant for rural schools. The question I want to raise is, how do we design and develop in ways that foster rural school engagement? And in particular, I want to look to Linda and Tom. And Linda, I think I'll start with you. Do you want to share a little bit in response to that question?

Linda Friedrich ([00:29:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kkCgOTVwmHNnO8oG7un3JKvjdOB_-b0wMvZuosagYxvgaTrAlW16HS7vCQtRSUPq7b_tBtimCW7ybD6rGB4179mlrsg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1787.79)):

Yes, Victoria, thank you. I'd like to talk a little bit about work that I did when I was at the National Writing Project building and developing the college career and community Writers program. We thought a lot about this question of fostering engagement around the design process. It started both with our staff and with building a leadership team that would really design this project. So of those of us who were in senior leadership roles on the staff, three of us had significant experience as students and educators in rural communities in different parts of the country. In addition to that, the National Writing Project is really a network and has 160 sites across the country that are housed in universities and led by teachers and academics. And so we very consciously, as we were considering the leadership team, brought in rural educators to be part of that design process.

([00:31:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/p2UpJ1snO3pp2zCqrBitzZ8iSHE4qcebUxgKp1wQHc-QsWNaYsl2K-ywDKGw06Ixos_n6LuyTi6b8g9RiT72ehpLKpU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1867.86)):

The second thing as we were building this project is that we understood that the rural communities where we would be working would be diverse in all of the ways that Darris, Melissa, and Tom have alluded to. And so, instead of starting with one state or a couple of places, because we had this broad national network, we were able to bring in rural districts from 12 states and they were incredibly diverse both in terms of demographic factors but also in the kinds of industry they had, the kinds of strengths that they had, and the kinds of challenges that they were facing.

([00:31:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/JaGidm3Aw-KJoAY6XgF1ZcemH2MDQrhapFyGZ4aLmKubPFQ9D4l-jH60Sejs4pX__WwYEdmsWTSC1TJgIBN5XzDrBco?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1914.12)):

The third thing that we really thought about was that the professional learning was all offered by our local writing project sites that were housed in relatively nearby universities. Now that said, the universities didn't always have existing relationships with the districts that they were about to serve. So the fourth thing that we did in the design process was to build in what we referred to as an assets and needs review, where the members of the universities started out by talking with and getting to know the communities where they were working. They talked with teachers, they talked with students, they did some surveys, they did interviews, they spent some time on site showing the kind of work that they were going to do and then built in opportunities to have ongoing relationships. So we really emphasize the importance of relationships. And then all of that information got fed back into the national program so that we could build in some of the responsiveness and flexibility to the national program that was present there in those local communities.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:33:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/f2rk9A7VpibnOfWhNEsT-Me2DIMkZZrOcKwpINslL4JckMu6EpLu4SB2l_qA9jyY3KZSr7KSr1UJG5WgV4bcI8SVPOs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2000.25)):

Thank you very much, Linda. I myself am taking notes listening. Thank you. I appreciate that, your four points. So Tom, I'm going to transition over to you. What would you say?

Thomas Farmer ([00:33:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Rfy8t4CsRz14-VwB9cJcueeU0cL03aohkg8fw8wRdcmqfNLvnIdtyxQRy6TBz9L8KN86h_TT5LOisShUkKv5rCDCfb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2013.93)):

Sure. I just want to add a bit to the layers that Linda's already described with regards to being responsive and engaging the local community in a variety of ways and then also go back to the diversity and equity issues that Darris and Melissa were talking about that when you go into rural areas, it's not only that there's no other place like them, but they'll oftentimes tell you that we have a really broad range of student needs here. We often don't have a critical mass of students who all have exactly the same need, but instead we have one of everything. And kind of as Melissa was saying, that diversity really necessitates innovation to figure out that in many respects, that folks in rural areas really have to be general specialists. They need to figure out how do you do and innovate with what you have on the ground in ways that are really meaningful to you.

([00:34:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/RJlpZanN_0Isrc-98ck_H89WjM8gUMlsBZxlmgcils4Co65Vt1JDEsngUOfq2644jh-oLduUYmmdxZjeLeRgR9MWzA4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2084.64)):

And for me, when I started 25, 27 years ago now doing a project in south central rural Alabama, very, very... The density was less than 10 people per mile. So a school district that was 920 miles big in terms of land area in one high school and one middle school. And so we were working with them. We learned very, very quickly that the evidence base really didn't make a lot of sense for them the way it was structured. And so we worked with them, we worked with the community leaders there, our advisory board, and we developed a process that now call directed consultation. And that process is really one where we're focusing on how do you learn with and from the community to create the outcomes and that learn that build from the evidence base, but that really flip it where we're trying to tailor the evidence base to the community rather than expecting the community to, in some way, adapt to the evidence base.

([00:36:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zOoSYkbpydRVZikCFLGpJ0htPb-55ZukVYAdm5vZ6qSe6Uh39bQaxcely5VXTqoEMYBtSLAJaFKytKieajI_qR_ncX0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2166.99)):

And so to do that, we really very much as Linda was saying, as Melissa was talking about, we go in, we sit down with the teachers, parents, students, administrators, we talk to them about what they think is really working and what their strengths are, what their needs are, what their resources are. We do observations. And then with the directed consultation process, we really focus in on where do they think the leverage points are, what are the data they're already collecting, how are they using those data and how can we help them link those data, their strengths, their needs, and really identify aspects of the evidence base in ways that we can tailor it to them. And so through this process of directed consultation, it's not one of how do we help them pick up and adopt the evidence-based, but rather how do we help them adapt the evidence-based to their needs.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:37:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VxA-p3qgTu-dPkLoAexwOsYvZEtFBRwcMLO0RIc9iCbn8Y_f_oS_LtTbeFxdvtwYrouYn4gUoxu10afTBcsKVMCK0z8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2246.76)):

All right. I love this Tom. You're like foreshadowing and building the bridge to where we're headed in this conversation, so I love it. So before we go on though, I'm going to pause and look if any of our panelists have anything they want to say before we transition to what all the researchers here are familiar with fidelity of implementation. Anything before we move there?

Linda Friedrich ([00:37:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/JJbvTkYfYU1AI7oW3A4X1Ag2u_qys8SgAi761PLLlpXRsu9fU9yw7DMuCeU_xJY4npxMfs_SYH0dAs2JCzpJArEmFPY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2274)):

Victoria, I think this offers a little bit of a bridge. So in that work that I collaborated on with the National Writing project, we often thought about integrity of implementation rather than fidelity of implementation. And so we really worked from the beginning to build a lot of flexibility into the work. So in order to meet some of the research standards, we had a certain number of hours, we asked for a focus on argument. And then we really left a lot of room for the university partners and the districts to figure out how can this work, what are the questions that are argument for middle and high school students is actually a great place to leave a lot of room for the community because you can speak to the issues and questions and opportunities and really gain a lot of insight into the diversity of opportunities. So we also had a focus that spoke to creating that.

([00:39:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5EktCy_b6vUCt_mru7Bkwu-BLaGEi94Bao297Mn94mzhFr2y4jAv-r_vRrRyaD5gqc6PFYMwE2bgERUuKobl-3YZPZE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2351.52)):

I think the other thing that we thought about with implementation integrity was Melissa's point earlier about the importance of return on investment. So we built systems into the professional learning that engaged teachers in looking really systematically at their students' writing to see what was working, to see what wasn't, what they as teachers needed to adjust, what the university of partners needed to adjust so that the professional learning for the teachers was working. And then we as a national group, what did we need to develop in order to further support things. So we really used data systems that we built specifically into the program to guide decision making at all levels of the program down to the individual students and up to the national project.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:40:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/QhyQgjOCuaps0h7vLVmUthFi6XOinRTpm4Ch1LaVJXgvXQZhBVMj4Vv8nQ6mgbhnI85hKT_NLzBoIgWUaOyTkv3OejU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2410.14)):

Okay, I appreciate that too. Thank you, Linda. So I want to do a quick recap for all of our listeners. So I asked the question, how do we design and develop in ways that foster rural school engagement. And what I am hearing from two of our folks who have spent two decades out and about in rural all across the country is, and I'm going to recap in ways that may not be as elegant and eloquent as Tom and Linda, but what you're saying is you meet people where they are and you go and you say, "The first thing I need to do is learn from you and understand you and your needs and what's great about where you are and then what some high leverage points might be." So that's what I'm hearing as a big recap.

([00:41:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/mpb_rrQgMZTdqPTrUq2R_Z2QJWdU71kFkVtUf2cWqZWl2_HnAHUP2xO4mJfIOixhJZWhU94fmJendSOpV1YTz3YkGU0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2466.9)):

And then the other point is the nice transition to where we're going to go, which is neither of you said you bring an off the shelf product and then you go and you force-feed it and demand a conforming locally to some sort of standard that you're setting absent conversations with the very people who you are there to support. So we, on the research side, hear so much, and sometimes I feel like we face a lot of pressure to implement with the doubt that we are being asked over and over again to set up systems and processes that track and monitor to make sure that the people that we're working with in the field are implementing the product or the evidence-base that we're bringing in ways that align perfectly to the evidence as we've proven it so far, documented it elsewhere.

([00:42:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/HWKVjVXG7xsc2BZsqqGJEt_EKyBVT_NkOZCVPNF65MFGWufzy_zB3oIIDcQ409DXbaqbbcIIxN8fyBZmifmTYw0TeKk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2530.08)):

And so you've already been talking about this a bit, you've been talking about what I frame as adapting in ways that allow for customization in the local context, adapting in ways for rural schools that work for them. So can you now offer some specific strategies for how to allow adaptations while also knowing that you are implementing with fidelity? Because we all know your funder is going to be asking about that. And Tom, I think I'll start with you this time.

Thomas Farmer ([00:42:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/WBdsLurQEYV3cGcOzeKhU9lwGJEEY5TnzhyyFGDXD69ySeMAImXPXeu8RZpW_NYzGNUzlnzww_HWFntc_Ra3wc4AZ98?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2574.09)):

I think it goes back to, for me it's in some ways it's an evidence-based process rather than an evidence-based practice that you're doing in a very scripted manualized standard way. So back to Melissa's point about using data and understanding how the district uses data is really, really important in my head. Giving you a real, real quick snapshot that one thing that always resonates for me is back 35 years ago I was helping a rural teacher with a student with really serious emotional behavioral problems and that she was a third grade teacher, she had 27 students, no assistant, and she had three academically gifted students, seven students with IEPs and then everyone else. And she's like, "I've got so many different needs here and I don't know exactly how to respond to them." She's like, "I'm a really good teacher, but I find myself just teaching to the middle, hoping everyone can get something."

([00:44:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Z0Nuh9mQ0PhfnvQowbGI7A5iCJ_mLbtq4hOX2lH4N8ZXIOM-K2wWcsaCMdYhsuvzeM7mnxY0O4-_LLPRtX2AJuAAx4A?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2649.6)):

And I think that with regards to using evidence-based programs, we've got to be very careful that we're not asking teachers to teach to the middle. That back to your point, Victoria, that that whole idea of adaptation is critically important. So we really do need to figure out what are the practice elements of evidence-based programs. And the concept of practice elements is just simply identifying what are those things that are typically standard and found in most evidence-based programs that address a particular area. And then from there, using data to work with those practice elements that are then most effective for the specific students that teachers are working with. I think we've got to be very, very careful that we don't expect teachers to do everything in exactly the same way with all their students because if we do, we get back into that equity issue of you're not reaching some students if you are just focusing on one thing.

([00:45:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/CfaLAABTT2IbTzts7fpj4f5U91wwkqtmcuTLts_WrHFa8al1QwJZfE37aK2qyb98OK7Hu3GTENtpfm8R--BDvuNL6sQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2723.85)):

So it really does get back to what Melissa was talking about, and Linda as well, with regards to figuring out what's on the ground, what are the needs, and then how do we use data, but how do we link that to the evidence base. It's beyond us here, but in the process that we call directed consultation, that's exactly what we're doing. We're looking at how we impact the capacity of the school, the teacher and the students to really optimize their pathway towards success.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:46:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8NCXHXxlldaqA5OebrOgdQjfRS9Ri4f6Rus2NyyFYeH9l-Jo_JdrDUowLE6dM5ZRR7pcqjrTSuBNtAIQR3jCrpKxbRg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2764.08)):

Okay. Thank you, Tom. That really resonates. So Linda, I'll turn to you. How do you hear Tom and what would you add or say differently?

Linda Friedrich ([00:46:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/6F5itzv770qEHOwRYGWogc5oqE0gFBVUSHHNG5cu2N22FrXoQvQlr5CGcYeKBVm-IEYftI-Xas9nbPXlAQZqnMULSMQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2776.35)):

What Tom is saying really resonates with me. And I think that attention to data, both the formalized data that schools and districts collect all the time and really attending to what is happening and having some systematic ways to attend to what's happening with when students in real time really speaks to that ability to be flexible and to adapt, as Tom was saying, that there's nothing like what teachers are seeing in their classrooms and then marshaling that to be able to really make a difference for your students as they learn and grow and to recognize places where they just need some more support.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:47:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xIPlBnmDXqgmxWTGMBB--Fs-OkRqt9QaiFtHqv7f8pxlLO2EnduCp2cUH6adxUScYaqLo1auD4jUOWEk_h-i_Jg0jQg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2831.61)):

Okay, I hear you. I hear you.

([00:47:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/p6Wbq7P0RijNPQWJJ3qRgz3Og0XatBSHBTW4WTC7mKALDQZdMmKaFKdbL7CP4uuPr2rAg5ggXgzGjCYE8OnVVCS2rhs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2835.54)):

All right, so I think we have time for one more question along the lines of like, thinking about how we design and develop for rural, with rural, from the very beginning. And so I really do want to focus on the very beginning and say let's not wait until the very end to think about developing and designing interventions, if I can use that term, for rural schools. So how do we do that from the very beginning? For the people who are here listening today and joining us, what's the secret sauce of keeping rural in mind from the beginning or starting with the rural? I think you've touched on it some. So I think let's go back to Linda. Linda, what would you say?

Linda Friedrich ([00:48:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-XWGDCq4whnwlzyUoTJMb0zpLqA5-C_ZNIZe2R4GABi4GwerBfmWDffGykAR8J4IanCVTl4BikWCeVv1AcQW15ep7_Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2895)):

So one of the things that we both at the National Writing Project and then in work that I'm doing now at WestEd is that rural communities both have lots of strengths and some rural communities are facing huge challenges around the teaching and administrative workforce and lots of turnover. And that makes providing all the supports and education that rural communities want to do to an excellent degree really challenging.

([00:48:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZXZsY-RJzE6ZBVniDQRN7_ixhSPWUSbyjOith6zN-kWsy85FD7v1oMfxSZqui8TnhSGKQPiaA-CdirAXtb2Byo2ZrNY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2934.24)):

So as I've learned over the years and thought about this, one of the things that we've really, in both my work at the National Writing Project and at WestEd have built in from the very beginning, is to engage people up and down the school system as part of the program so that everybody is aware of what the work is, where things can be flexible, and then to really invest some resources in the development of teacher leadership capacity.

([00:49:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/L0oBzM3rIYVagpBK8Ev0kU8K0VdbikyPnJEU0dXh9FNRP4Oe5MMxz7-EvsQXrzm6ewsrfFu5Pg9aYzzhKkKEoTf_4gw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2969.64)):

Some teachers are long time members of their communities. When you can invest in teacher leaders to do that work, they have the respect of their teaching peers, they know their students and their students' learning strengths and needs and then can be really great resources. And beyond that, we have often brought, in the work that I do at WestEd as well as in the National Writing Project, that some of those teacher leaders who get the additional formal training, both are bringing things back to their community. And then we've been able to bring them into national leadership, which then brings that rural perspective into leading the program into bringing in some of the kinds of flexibility and adaptability that we've been talking about here today. So that it's really that human piece and thinking about sustainability from the very beginning.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:50:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MZoPHB60qIIEaSOlZdV4I6hJAVM_nt5bWNotZk2OTdPG6lbWheL3PbCCG7OyIxmEe-LjKI_EyKTwpciqfocqW58rs4U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3040.23)):

I love it. I love it. So Tom, do you have anything to add?

Thomas Farmer ([00:50:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/yYJuZWm9nvT8DYabtTnkfX1hwacaH8BS4acnGTpuvLrFoEEGGHu-GrKFUHmRm4Z53_eZ8_X2LUhi2AxOaJAzlZG8SCI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3045.18)):

Yeah, I think Linda really covered it very well. I think a couple of points to really bring out and amplify is, from the very beginning, and Melissa was saying this, that do you have the right people at the table? Do you have folks in the community or folks even at the regional or state level understanding the need of the school, the needs of the place? Because as researchers, once we go in and do our work, we're going to be gone. Sustainability is about creating structures, creating processes, and creating relationships.

([00:51:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/pLHayPOeiNHoYbg0XsQMXthOvTYgOTxoCPeioRj_pPl34QUdxHwv2Fp2QLl5ZztKNrH85ELV8fBSYaoz01uTvcbTklI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3091.14)):

One of the things that I would like to see us think about, and I understand the importance and value of doing randomized control trials but I think the other side of the equation, is that in many respects that we could learn so much by working with rural areas by figuring out how can they work with a rail or working with the training and technical assistance centers or state level centers and how do they collect and use their data and how do they develop those relationships and really truly work with diversity in ways that are truly equitable.

([00:52:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YcRdui8tRQlnsEx7xgxF7A6TGrCCQBVGES8DUb6HQ8qO6vTHfVNKWpnPtUl_6UY9QjJ7O9GIIf0JQMDwoVbcrglbOQ8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3136.71)):

So I think that part of the issue as Linda and Melissa and Darris have laid out so well, it's about seeing the rural communities as they are, their strengths, their needs, the potential challenges and barriers they have, but then that I've never been to a rural place that wasn't ready and wanting to innovate. They're all very focused on our kids are our future and we're going to do what it takes. And so, if we would take the time to structure our research in ways that can make sure that we're learning from them and with them rather than going in and trying to get them to learn something from us, I think that we could have lots of very innovative research that wouldn't only impact what's happening in rural areas, but that would really be relevant to education very broadly focused.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:53:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_mzMqhdivgU-UyYN-x15VL82b3FeJmHojqziBDzn0pZzjOBnJlLdbdAuai28Q-1bmoBIY0x9OivCe8p9O0eLT1dwDBE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3204.81)):

All right. Thank you. So before we transition away from this topic, I'm looking to my colleagues here. Darris and Melissa, either of you have something. Darris you're coming off. Yes, please.

Darris Means ([00:53:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/nezCqof0tZyebpAjU75h3VcHcQEca_7Y06NLXYtW9ikg3wb4joyTSQzKmgneNJjACj7twyzmgYSNHz4GcJMveQKJdAU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3218.61)):

Yeah, the one thing I would just to build upon what's been shared already is just to caution what I view as drive-through approaches where you are thinking you're headed to at McDonald's, you're driving through, it's very quick, it's very fast, but it's not a deep engagement with the people or places. So really being careful about these drive-through approaches that come across as you're assuming that everything already, that you're using cookie cutter approaches because these fast approaches can be very superficial and often not very effective.

([00:54:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ARsid2p-e_MKt_zsiRWvGi1-PrYF9RCAatOpjaD7g_0mk98wTKBoxFohiYDOC3s4Lfqusg4Z1KUxMsOxXMPBkn4J9B0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3254.79)):

And so some of the things that I've learned and that's been shared already is that focus on building relationships and how key that is, spending time listening and learning and then finding an opportunity for collaboration while considering those unique needs and resources available in each community. And finally, one of the things that I've started thinking more about is this idea of asset mapping. So what are the assets and resources that are exists in communities and how those can be leveraged as we're thinking about how the work can be sustainable and the most effective.

Victoria Schaefer ([00:54:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zhDLmi7MoruqND_a7iSQJa9SPwhep0VDKpP8CVhbeobmKFXgn7yGsQ3DwnlREl_QQYJSBj02SDY0PYhbzAjlntxm-Bc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3290.04)):

I appreciate that very much. Melissa?

Melissa Sadorf ([00:54:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/OcsH17UBcLvv5e1AspYJ1drArgmtc6GJMZkRWGjjElTAG78lQUCsV6zP7uRShBZAuZL8PJv4oDzCKZjYUTF3YNkp5ho?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3293.04)):

I have just two quick things that I want to make sure that I touch on and it really does fall in line with what Darris, Linda, and Tom have already said, but I think it bears repeating that teacher voice needs to be at the table because they're the ones that are going to be rolling out whatever it is and they need to be involved in that process. And then the other thing I think is important and nobody has highlighted it, even though we've talked about it, is the student voice. And so, are we engaging our students with all of these things that we're putting in place for them to ensure that they're a part of that process as well?

Victoria Schaefer ([00:55:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/C7qr2d4Z3GT4PVljyw1ua3mJTaMEWAabHAb2bQz6f_H6OgFNy5fPUF3pwba91onqxzvzGYfnzVx9Cv1JFEFirEPZLyE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3334.02)):

I love it. I appreciate you bringing that up. I want to acknowledge that I do see the question in the chat. And Stephen Johnson, we are going to come back to your question as soon as we finish our discussion here. And I want to invite others. As we are discussing and talking through things, feel free to go ahead and put your questions in the chat or in the Q&A, whatever the opportunity is for you. We invite those questions and we are going to be turning to the questions in just a few minutes. But if you're like me and you want to make sure you remember your question, go ahead and put it in the chat because we're going to turn to them in just a minute.

([00:56:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/HjAlq5yUQJ8NuAngYklUpoAYlz7YWfhY-47RfcsYgAk1SIM7EZEQYCluKengzjMWpXbW7LpRTm0QaxruuQB-Xix8dFM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3376.47)):

Okay. So we are going to transition our discussion now. So we've been looking at the issue of thinking about designing and developing with the end in mind, scaling to rural schools and doing that thinking from the start. So I want to transition us now to focusing on things that already exist. So there are a lot of evidence-based practices and products out there right now. What would it take? How do we scale those two rural schools? And I'm wondering what is your advice about how to scale evidence-based program and products that already exist to rural schools? That's one of the questions. And I'm also wondering what factors are most important to rural districts and schools when they're thinking about selecting a new product or program.

([00:57:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/mE8assku9Me-G4bc57F6rAzsrCAsip7kibInb6E0l0ThbFNXsWfOGLc0Cbp2j4kGnTGzn6dlQJ1DbBExt_dzCFcPlDs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3442.92)):

And given, Melissa, I think it's you who are superintendent, I think you're the best suited to answer that last question. What factors are most important to you and to your colleagues when you're thinking about selecting your new product or program to address a need? Let's start with you and start right there.

Melissa Sadorf ([00:57:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3h8mZLPzQfgl6Ba9tyit2-YAGn8esywwI5305lHUVbU2WfT95U1fA_nlxdXMjMC0UiiMtXvbV83YWJ01lYOsE9s0BWU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3463.68)):

Sure. Well, first I would want to make sure that whoever or whatever we were considering implementing in our district, we had a robust stakeholder group that was meeting and having these conversations so that, again, you can get that input from everyone that's going to be impacted by this decision that we're making.

([00:58:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/duEzqcR2ll5x2q4AKY7MRLoKfvXqKzmelJ7H9laO7RfpMAmn9_FBKCHNn7Bcck4BA7nB3O8ilDv4RqOHFjByY6Io4dI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3485.64)):

There's six things, Victoria, that I would suggest that people take a look at if they're in that leadership role and having those conversations. The first is what is the research and what is the evidence that's available around that particular product and where was it done? Again, things tend to be pretty urban-centric, and so I would want to know if this was a product that was put in place in an urban district and had urban outcomes in their evidence. So that would be something that I would be looking at. And then, is there any data that shows that this product or this service could have some positive outcomes for diverse populations? That's another thing I would want to know.

([00:58:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZZeBD1Ws1o0FMIVzCf7iwqAcLuLVOAP2QLEbP1cX7BbdMiWiOHvG3Jq4cly4VrlkV6Dk2KCEP9vHmbY9nPhZ3roanG4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3528.24)):

As far as functionality, who is it meant to serve? We typically are targeting a particular group of students when we look at new products. And so, can it be used for different subgroups? Is this a very specific product or is it something that could be used more generally across multiple grade levels or core content areas? Is there somebody that's currently using it that I could talk to? Especially if they're in a rural community, I would want to know what their satisfaction level was. And then we've talked a lot about fidelity, but what does it look like? Fidelity of implementation for that particular product, what does that look like and how then does it translate to my rural community?

([00:59:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/xbu1Bl4sboUki1HVnv3QDEt5QEAhFtxS__RPu7EUm8v-W83OJa19sf_u8zCxAzD6q0td07nR9Tl1ELAD_Gq7J8ZD-Ho?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3576.12)):

As far as resources, number one for me is the professional development, and Linda talked a little bit about that, as did Tom. What do teachers need to know in order to implement this program? And is it something that's going to be a heavy lift at the start? Is there ongoing professional development as we go through the use of this year over year? How often do things change? And professional development might be needed for those different tweaks during the year as well. And how does rurality impact that professional development? Do they come to me? Is it all web-based? What does that look like? Is it asynchronous? I'd want to know that. Are there consumables? And what's the replacement cycle? Because that's something I need to factor into my budget. And that's also something that teachers need to know that they're going to be getting new content, new product as the years progress.

([01:00:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0kUVaFJ_L9_kKOLIZBwZSIOAwTrnPJgpXHH6g31GqL-wNpW5FIF8Nvnmo2vCCVQ8CmkoXwGTR_Z2z4QHSg_o9HGtZDI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3640.44)):

Are the materials available in multiple languages? And because I have a diverse population that speaks multiple languages, that's something that I know is going to impact my decision. Are they in different formats? Is it paper only? Is it web-based? Is it adaptable? And is it responsive, again, to that cultural context for my diverse population?

([01:01:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/4gYYCqEcO6IJrMr8bvktQ32rhjMWpFN47afIKEZ4ipJe5IZZpAMHEX9aH2kkksj-MEFRjPb3UHlpznzGHAEhnB3e3-4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3665.76)):

As far as need, who is the target population that we're working toward and what are their current skill gaps? And also what are their strengths? And how does this product intersect with those? What are the outcomes short and long-term for the program that we should anticipate to see?

([01:01:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EOHFvIJ67bH-_89rJu1ho-GTJn-rv-rimpdJM5XWq6D7OqdLdny5sjig1ijUJCcNClKgvuL7tJsJudYheN55yX7akps?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3688.08)):

We've talked a lot about fit, as far as does this fit in a rural setting. And so there's also facets to that. Is it aligned with my schools and my district's overall mission, vision and goals? Is it going to move the needle for those things for my students? And how is it going to intersect with other programming that I have in place, or will it? And if it doesn't, is that important that it does?

([01:01:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BOinYev01Z68cJr9CSiaOkp4Irfh59oGTBs6FJysOn2hgVwIJJmZOThSQ8JLJi3d8cq5D01qmBVRPb-Cw2TsYvjyTII?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3715.47)):

Can it be adapted? If it's not something that can be adapted to a rural setting, it's a non-starter. And so that's something that needs to have that flexibility built in.

([01:02:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/luWHMLsiCzNgWNdSFcSC5XP4DYs-kJ8jY-PocrNkAmN7gwGAmTM-a6j9nlwlWWvItJFwOVQsBkN_wubAoiZBa5HAPog?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3725.94)):

And then the last thing is capacity. Again, sustainability, which leads back to the budget conversation. I'm spending money potentially year over year to maintain a product. And so I want to know that that sustainability is something that I can build into my budget. What's the administrative burden for implementation and monitoring of this product? How will that data be collected and then monitored? Who's responsible for that? And then, what's needed in terms of facilities or technology or communication systems in order for that product to work in a rural community?

([01:02:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vUGJdHKa6qfzAflpn_sOGNpgO7ur4yxTu9w1-wT-szKQYfvWTm4EG_C6RIPWPXW2VtOJ0Ltg9M-B0MAYtYBuVHcuf-w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3767.43)):

So those are some of the things that I'm looking at as far as feasibility of a product in my rural community. And if there are parts of a program that might be feasible, is it something that I can do an a la carte? Can I take this particular thing because this will work and put it in place with other programming that already exists? That flexibility is pretty important in terms of meeting the needs of my students and my staff as well as my rural community.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:03:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vJ59HJ5MZb_Kp72_BRbwniuGaJSI-k6xfwNVmpBG44avM6VK0plhKb2QethmPYWxPpiWT2SHhF7W9nVh-NwydlfNn80?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3796.98)):

Wow. Melissa, you have really just laid it out very clearly. Thank you so much. That was point, point, point. So all the researchers listening just heard it that you and other superintendents like you want to know the answers to those questions and probably as briefly as possible, make it as easy for you to understand in their materials what the answers to those questions are. So thank you, I appreciate that.

([01:03:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/d223kjmnWwQrfqWX8lyaoRUbsOAvovEM3BTbg-tAcMDu9VrY16nFLkbNcYl010btkJRl4sPCdAvAArafx-bORum1l0M?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3828.27)):

Now Darris, I'd like to turn to you. You may indeed have a little bit of a different perspective, but I want to start with that question. What's your advice about how to scale evidence-based programs and products that already exist to rural schools? So I'm circling back. What are your thoughts?

Darris Means ([01:04:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/6rFzLT4-Ox4nH7wqOrohM9rcmno7Zhgc1lkVMYCMaDWtkffXtB7-iC1edHZU5cGrliQCq2F8ZKsiZboufdZbat4UM-Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3851.1)):

Yeah, so I'm going to just flip it from the perspective of a researcher building upon what Melissa shared. I do think some of the most important things to do as you're engaging with rural districts or schools is to spend time learning more about those communities, learning more about the needs and finding opportunities to collaborate. I think that's critical when you're thinking about opportunities to scale. And also I believe it's really important to be very clear about what are the opportunities, what are those benefits, short-term and long-term for students, for faculty, staff. I think those are really critical things to consider when thinking about scaling.

([01:04:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/f7nAIpVxMLIbLn_xLaaO52Rz359X28NI_4ivYqo8enNsXGO0n-QxaPp0jN2_P9xi7MQinTdZHf7cYdJ6_r8jv29FONk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3897.9)):

And the final thing that I will offer is thinking about sometimes you may not have those relationships in those communities, but thinking about are there ways where you have a relationship facilitator, someone who already has connections in those communities, who can give you insights into those communities, gives you insights into what's worked, and also insights into the possibility of making connections with other folks in that community. So I think it's really important to think about how do you first learn about these communities, how do you find opportunities to connect with the communities, and then how do you spend time listening and learning as you prepare to scale.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:05:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5oq2jsohp3jtP2zK5wsAXV3D8lDiCVUMhx273wnfuAOeBdDdLdVFlcjPz2zsFZG_H90pf86KWFHAWRPKd3EnAmho6Wo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3943.23)):

Well said. I appreciate you adding all of that, Darris. So we have maybe just a couple of seconds left before we turn it and open it wide to questions. So Linda or Tom, either one, do you have anything to add before we open it up to questions?

Linda Friedrich ([01:06:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/T2oAw1G5eS0qsnPWwcdiqVpNPFQJRItnSN2VCflQOvHcPNTtGgbFwenSWtBJxHISbfFNYX-8Z5DK1DB6tEdo98Q6SXI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3961.98)):

No.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:06:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zSX5lCwEpcQ02qBCgEgGX-SxZjt0N1oF9ZowZubhgXpUeavLb0nKzPurkRDVBjQ3uMBU1rn0NOVsY3Du8WbcRcYfRAc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3962.04)):

All right. Well, thank you all. I think you've given our guests a lot to think about. We know that we have one comment and one question already in the chat. So I'm going to invite people to please go ahead and enter other questions right now. I'm going to review the comment and I think maybe we have two questions. So I just want to acknowledge that someone wrote in and said they would love to have the list. I'll say Melissa's list, and I see that my colleagues have said yes. We'll get to work on that. So Melissa's list is going to be forthcoming so stay tuned.

([01:06:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Xw9RCSP32i1Lu5O_jM58vGyAaLQ9Hb1c63kRQpweeRA-Ll99AoASxc48wCS3HKgn65ELEoe_Ab1BzvW9We-AXcRqbSs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4009.74)):

So then we'll go back to Dr. Steven Johnson, who asked almost a million-dollar question. "As a researcher, how do you gain the trust of those rural schools and communities who have a deeply valued tradition and perceptions of educational research and what they perceive works in their local community?" I know in different ways all of the panelists have danced around this a bit. Darris just did a little bit. Who wants to tackle this first? How do you gain the trust?

Darris Means ([01:07:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/WIcNi5ETf6bWlGu7Mng3usI4XMxUNQrdSe_0dt5FIZ7D5XVf6M0laUlBBKUVo-Rvpae4S8bJ4h68V90fccwXdQ7QlnE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4045.62)):

I'm happy to start.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:07:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/99ivWOsXRxaF7eeI_YFsDEx06QpHGDSgWOJsvWrDHez9273YUBnzmLJlyCFHKoc8cf0uI5h2hQYpfl07Mwe2JKwfaOQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4047.78)):

Darris, please. Pick up maybe where you were because you were right there, at it.

Darris Means ([01:07:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/FuGanUcjrViD6PfJTQkn8OB2XBa9e7lz-sOPpRSyBbxGxJbAnt_H8js0UlY4h1Vjjjwhfdg1TdVq8shjCpR5027GL-M?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4051.8)):

Absolutely. So early in my career, I remember engaging in some scholarship focused on rural Black youth and pathways to higher education. I started that research with an idea that never work, where I was doing cold calls and asking different schools and districts, "Would you be interested in the study?" And it finally dawned on me, "This approach is not going to work." And so what happened was I actually identified people who already had a trusting relationship with the school districts I was trying to reach. And so I met with those individuals and they facilitated the opportunity to connect with rural districts in the state of Georgia.

([01:08:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3nPS3rw5eGgAIR7r2WK2RATMy7s2izr5EZ5IVLotW5rL11SKY39XZucjwKZspWRLRxqbMbA9K0yli_NxkQhXsXzA2a4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4099.29)):

I think what was really important for me as I did that work, so having a facilitator to make those connections. But the second big piece for me as an educational researcher is really thinking about what's the mutual benefit. So what are the outcomes and opportunities for the students. And so what's the opportunities for the school districts? How would you address administrative burden that Melissa mentioned already? And so it was very important for me that I provided some opportunities for the school district, for youth and family within those schools.

([01:08:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/mBi55IabZSuB99REViRpkA9gfOZfweB3EbCzoUMnPLN3xEY7NjsrXK5LFwyLhNqgijp8CzySybTNuS7U7tWu7O4Qi-w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4135.95)):

So for example, I paid each school district to help facilitate the research project in doing interviews with rural Black youth. I paid the students to participate in the study. I worked with the school counselor and offered to do presentations about pathways to higher education for students and families. I also made sure that I gave a report back to the schools about my key findings. So I tried to find opportunities where it didn't feel like I was coming in and leaving really quickly. And in fact, when I think about the work that I've been doing in Georgia, that work has been ongoing for about seven years. So now with some of the school districts, I've seen the folks a lot over the course of seven years because I've worked with their schools several times on various projects. And I do find that as soon as you do the work where people can trust you, I think it does open the doors for you to continue those relationships with particular school districts and schools.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:10:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Bp68SyK-5zk6rfMnGQynH3lyFhvObz39Nd_43szNgqJANpctJC3ST8K8jnE5Xczen9uSZaNhi9Uv_mOE-zd-S1dhWeE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4200.42)):

Thank you, Darris. Tom, I see you coming up.

Thomas Farmer ([01:10:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ywn89qPwfIklt98a7FfYoObE2Y5RwCBkDTT7sJJekJh1fxcZX_1dv4s2GHPMWTQnl1wJkpTQOpTaQiDQFvaoGag7MHQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4202.52)):

Yeah, I think an important thing for us to think about is that trusting relationship for doing research versus helping a district trust you with regard to adopting or using or taking on an evidence-based intervention. And I think that in some ways the research process versus the process of actually consulting and working with the school can go hand in hand, but not always. And so sometimes the things that we view as how do we do this to allow us to do research is different from how do we go in and we're working and developing a partnership, and that we're not there as researchers anymore, but we're part of a team that we're invited in. And that's really a different perspective.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:11:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/HtNE8bkFGH-At7f-K7sAumF1QiWuFL7Bfzuqwa0LLOYLsTZyAbt0yYufULZ1QrgOIS42_CkRTIgsZ9oFQvI-7VSLWIs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4263.72)):

Okay. Appreciate that too. Melissa, I see you want to speak up.

Melissa Sadorf ([01:11:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hYMKM0RVOyU2L_aFHxP9vCucErDAbYbcXx1XdE2NXpZyvIQuDNUG3Qnq3O-aFjjCfvQ3yso0KP0EOYAfVq8Qulf6hVk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4269.57)):

Sure. And I appreciate that both Darris and Tom spoke to the relationship piece. I think as a practitioner, what I'm looking for is a partner, as you said Tom, a partner that's going to come in and start off by listening. Not start off by selling, but really figuring out what it is I need, what my students need, what my staff needs, and really ensuring that whatever the focus of our conversations is, it's not about the sale, it's about the relationship building that you're doing. Because ultimately, what you're trying to do with this product is help students. And in order to do that, we need to be working hand in hand to ensure that whatever it is that ends up happening with programming or initiatives at the school is targeted toward improving those students' outcomes. So I appreciate the partnership aspect of both of your answers, Darris and Tom.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:12:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/AKL2Yo6hsGbQxeuxQmD_rnUZGXbq8Nz5i35aBSWBpeSK-7UdJ3lD92PnobO8awgQ4ENeZa05b7odl_7f5bGOeZgqB8Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4331.31)):

Thank you. Linda, do you have anything to add before we go to the next question?

Linda Friedrich ([01:12:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7w5MXWno748a0x39UmFUupzI-HIsCH5Y77PgswYfmYDYmneU6ZwZegtd-YVWRmgaG4HDHQ391eolyoBV-1eADcEg_gY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4334.49)):

I don't think so.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:12:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MfNnCq32NV5PVZD9EpDMyu0HhDaSMUTQPSTMcbU6MO4eTmTc65_TgCt_vq6E4zPDVnWO6jpbDTG5XUVfAMKoM5jMWZo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4338.84)):

Okay. Well, I see that we have a question about scaling. So Liz Wargo asked, she commented, "Hey, this is about scaling." Right it is. So she says, "Can you list the essential components of scaling given the diversity and uniqueness of each context?" So that's a great question and a hard one. So I'm going to just look to my colleagues here on the panel. Who wants to tackle this first? Essential components of scaling given the diversity and uniqueness of each context.

Linda Friedrich ([01:12:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/aaBSSSE_k_BO8abr6IWXbNOjg1LhqTg31tjkBWHD28MOjPnIJ-DogYWTd3_Yfj8FpRvmrDqhePSEYuW9s0dnFE3KjJg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4379.46)):

So I can start. And hopefully my esteemed colleagues will have things to add in. As I think about questions of scale, I think one of the keys has been embedded across some of our answers, which is really thinking about who are the local partners on the ground who can do some of that relationship building, connecting, can be listening to the needs and then really thinking about. So that's one. Two is to really think about what are the essential components of the work that you're doing, whether it's a professional development program, whether it's a product, and really be very clear about, "These are the things that are essential and here are a variety of ways that we can get to those essential components." And so then thinking about that as you're doing outreach, because both having the relationship and clarity about what's essential allows you to work in partnership with rural communities to say, "Is this a fit? Here are the ways in which we can be flexible to do that."

Victoria Schaefer ([01:14:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/A4yz2J940yXptWQCJSRJyT7XBOSMrW0YepSgANDyTl1kWf63YCvuDUqgr9QxyAC7yHCSSPr2BOfpXd9RdFQkBtWX0CU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4469.82)):

Thank you, Linda. Others who want to add essential components?

Thomas Farmer ([01:14:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/wDkB-0u6N5zY1k2Vmt31-riBxxpy6ZSLYS8NpYeOejh9okSDPp96wnoBxenToeRtDcjZwYsUNqYZmt8jHUslMbRNCCQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4476.27)):

I think in many respects, Melissa's list that she gave us that how do you operationalize that in a way that helps you both be responsive but also tailor so that you understand those essential components, but you do it in a responsive way across many, many different places.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:15:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/rcJFsjHEd8r3hXuT2N5dD5APfE1rjoej8JcNv993Mkzu1ZyU5PY16XQn9C0adaJUdzBYuR0F4CUvpfMKt5KKDkNdZ-o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4503.72)):

All right. Thank you, Tom. Melissa or Darris, anything to add before we go to our next question? All right-

Linda Friedrich ([01:15:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/PJsCQbOBL4OuZEtGx9GLVNj2T9YQUrv2O7PaAA0tfxiB3t9-pm9pSUn4wsybYXhZE2most28YRlvHtUJkXFcKGold4w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4511.19)):

And Victoria, I just noticed that Maya had a comment about scaling that is sort of connected to this. I don't know if you wanted to go to the questions in order, but...

Victoria Schaefer ([01:15:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KX3TJImh6CZC2YXBRYNRBAU0qQjnVasivUDNFLU-02UsMEzIMAOAsJQJvTENyncMuwc3wvGEku1bxXhNOJ96Afazck4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4525.47)):

Okay, thank you. So I had not scrolled down that far yet. So are you talking about related to this, "Interested in any reflections you have about how to measure long-term impact and what signs you look for"?

Linda Friedrich ([01:15:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dQ7Jl7RKnrIl9dqhvQh_vCGea1UXOJ_h8jyrvXSgUUfhhZjsC49WwngaC60B7UDETpC1wf6O4Z07_f83ojpFZmVXOi0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4539.39)):

I was looking at the very next one, partners in the scaling process.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:15:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EpRJ1HAfjainrqw-9qZvSQKQss4mhRGNfos5p55U_WBRT5o8mF7N-ErHfn8lxonLYPhtJgaviEoKJcJrWAFmWptpHXo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4545.81)):

I don't know if I see that.

Linda Friedrich ([01:15:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kNj0RvbC9xhnJgHDPstlyusfEk_J1oDQoK9MAqHptYwIE-fhvW4tbsJ8CEk1HFZsqjOJkISlUgXy5MlHcnoLaEzUq-U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4548.15)):

It says, "Also would be interested in any particular reflections on how to engage educators as active partners, not just in implementation, but in the scaling process."

Victoria Schaefer ([01:16:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/QlwJoXf1pWAqIw89ntRLxePkxVGZcmQk-yh1XiB1WSo65xJ6YNVTzxtmszr6i-3YOsWCx3s1x6AGaOeeoPyBVfBLLZo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4563.54)):

Okay. Can you repeat that, Linda, and be our facilitator for a minute. Thank you. I'm lost, so thank you.

Linda Friedrich ([01:16:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/nBpjPNrxMDsfyiRe7asPsIyH78U0snzm43OKQas_BgDIPkeQTAPGfNSymLmGxeJuFCYpRKhkPYACxpkbc8mLfWl8SHA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4571.76)):

Yes. So, "Also would be interested in any particular reflections on how to engage educators as active partners, not just in implementation, but in the scaling process and particular considerations for how to do this in the rural context."

Victoria Schaefer ([01:16:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-Le3k2bjvFft_F07rmqIh0ZPY58FV5CdDIcqpdnQQg6JEidTHqmfVhNNzlbYciJKH7PC5zr32zskm5tMBTsLyp_ZNl4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4588.47)):

Thank you so much. I see it now. Anyone want to comment there? Go ahead.

Linda Friedrich ([01:16:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/LjNj2ubM6oXfOYGan3UcutERjVcWg2SIIy8skzZbrRwQ-PE5Byzjr_nwz33sw2RxkuCv2JdOOSLzsNTQxB6nkLhCt6o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4594.98)):

I'll just add, so I think this goes back to something that we were talking about earlier and really thinking about building leadership and enhancing existing leadership in rural communities that often those folks can then come in and play a role in both continuing in their community and potentially serving as consultants and facilitators of national things. So in work that WestEd is doing with rural North Carolina schools, we chose a rural teacher from Pennsylvania to be our lead facilitator. She's stayed in her high school and then has really been a facilitator. And when she's in rural communities, she is very much able to listen for the things that are unique to that place and then be somebody who can talk about how did I as a rural teacher address the unique needs of my students. So really thinking about are there consulting roles that folks from the rural communities can play and be thought partners with other rural communities.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:17:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/1uFkPdsodp1RD7GqyAtmY4XBITNW_jPhbzBpL_Qa25RoT-McXmRlNq2E0iqf-S8Up1Tdy1I8jngMv3DXYjXiix7kjLM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4678.86)):

Okay. Anybody else want to jump in on that before we move on? Okay. So thank you, Linda, and thank you for pointing that out.

([01:18:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8CXK1gc5I1vulawntHB7zt40GIAX_6h9dbTWAtqxj3WrW6L7eic9NClFwOV-zD6dTbth59IRodJC7LLFo2Dvq3GzB8I?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4692.39)):

So I was going to move next to the Carrie Freeman's question, which is, "To what extent do rural educators work together in networks to solve problems of practice? And how might we leverage networks to support scaling," so this is a connection back to scaling, "of evidence in rural communities if resources for working with individual schools and districts are limited?"

Melissa Sadorf ([01:18:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XIZSOKjSizccdnWN19zwqdM_ucNJOQxmHhIqP2Y_NnUeImQkVvwAg6_AI4dvtBwM5J72s8VX8VCX3lNFiR81COHKStM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4720.74)):

So I can answer the first question or at least start with the first question, and that is yes, I think that one of the things that leaders in rural communities need to be intentional about is creating those networks of support because you are potentially so isolated in your rural communities. And it is important to be able to look outside of your community to get input, to get ideas, to bounce ideas off of someone, whether it's about things that you're planning on implementing or just issues of problems of practice, challenges, barriers that you're having to face and solve.

([01:19:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kgYdCT0RRCTVYIhkKQpfLO5AITU3p8IGHXbB8kc-27oYEdR9SCmZ33ithsfCgK7Zd4jAzdXgSZiJt3yOdjMV5E8H07Q?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4761.42)):

One of those of course is the National Rural Education Association. We are a national organization that is a place where leaders can go and network with each other, learn from each other. We have an annual conference where we have almost 700 people that get together and do just that. They talk about rural research, what's current in the field, what are some of the problems of practice that leaders and teachers are having to face, and how can those best be solved? So that's one place.

([01:19:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/4br1Y1Iai5ZM_1Ab0LOlGy6DHCTK7-PHb_PkEIPlk-1wshTwaz1N2iVUvv6XK2-nzDFKBEW6EhwGR-5xMnSb-Ct5Cr4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4795.14)):

Additionally, NREA has 42 state affiliates. And so there are states as well as 240 colleges and universities that are affiliated with NREA. And they do the same thing at state level. And so again, on a smaller scale, an opportunity for leaders to get together and to communicate with each other.

([01:20:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/o2UNRdOFIyid361Ci2TTE4zxhyJlKBZxy4Pdis11daISgGHiq4OG8U-0pIw3hEx5l2TWP3vBFm1ChF2B2r4Qep1TMxE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4816.8)):

Regionally, Victoria has mentioned the REL that she's associated with an Appalachia, but there are in each region of the country an opportunity to get involved with what the REL is doing. As Victoria mentioned, 25% of those funds have to be targeted toward rural. And many do have communities of practice that are focused on supporting LEAs and SEAs in their rural work. And so that's another place where you can go and get that support as you need it. So there are places that you can go, and I do think it's important for us to be aware of what those things are and to take advantage of them when you find them.

Thomas Farmer ([01:21:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/E9TKZwCq3lWBFkpNT-r-55YSMn_DTf791kboxiMp0c_AbB9-JaWxMky6ZQhC56qAeVo2omEPG75vHMpXmOiBl_hqDtw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4864.53)):

Melissa, I'd like to pose a question to you and to the rest of the panel and the audience as well, that I think as you laid out that networking, helping teachers not feel isolated is very important and being able to identify constituents across different areas outside of their own area can be very helpful for them. At the same time, when we've tried to do that, and often it's been adjacent or very close districts, that you might have either a building level administrator or a central office administrator who's hesitant because they're concerned that as their teachers are talking to others outside the district, that they may get poached or they may get told about things that are resources that aren't available to them. And I'm just wondering, do you both see that and do you have ways that we can help folks feel comfortable in expanding beyond their local community?

Melissa Sadorf ([01:22:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/-8JJvJXYkJa1RVV3qRPvrxClYz8FVyEfZo91uxPalhAkiv3Xyav5loST_9x8H23qD_jLV7RagDOpknwn_-OQCuiTT-U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4939.53)):

Sure. Well, I don't think it's a well-kept secret that we have a teacher recruitment and retention issue in our country, especially in rural communities. And so it's interesting the framing of your question, Tom, because I think that it doesn't matter whether you're doing outreach with your colleagues and peers or not, that's always a potential concern that the district next door is doing a stipend for pulling people under contract and you're not. Or they just got new technology and had a grant to be able to do that and you don't.

([01:22:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/jl2ALoyegU2MDhH70Nx4LqR0l97CWOHOWO6LvhBK9NFuV81Io6nYlJXCQh2tCnTG4pHAdz3UuGw7PY5F4TQvLCwRLUw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4976.94)):

So in a way, I think that unfortunately right now we're in a world in education where we're having to be competitive with each other. And I do see networks of support in those communities of practice as being a way to somewhat overcome that competitiveness and kind of realign the conversations to what can we do to support each other and what can we do to ensure that a rising, what is it, the rising tide raises all ships. I mean that's really where we are in rural education. We need to be supporting each other and doing excellent work in all of our schools because all of our students deserve that. And so those networks are, I think, very important as a vehicle to have those conversations happen and that idea sharing to happen. So I would encourage leaders that if they have that perspective, potentially they're overlooking some things that they might be able to gain from it by not participating.

([01:24:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/wqo3j0pFeaQEBo9foP4uFuVugr-SPwwTkwTNhw_idgmhQn_Ho_1X2rL4rMobBCeb6odcDp7xBwXyEPLUWPceInixFdM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5040.69)):

So hopefully that answers your question, but I get the context. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there right now as far as getting not just teachers, but even our classified staff under contract right now. It's very competitive.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:24:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/AcVp7J9wG6qVWPseqydRcoYNi1e2jLxfLeUT1lBoqYtG76Sp2kL7ND9uuTzHPVT-YA9MC-6zW08ay4gPIYnfNBQDat8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5056.02)):

All right. Tom, did you want to say something really quickly before I move to the next one?

Thomas Farmer ([01:24:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BihDk7sPeME783xPYtP4Nk_Y-QQuvkQIOKFoWlTcIByIMYhHnLVvKgOL0zWE8skf3vds3hh9aD2baW8PQ11sf4NqEPc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5061.72)):

No, you can move forward. I was just going to say thanks because I agree very much with what Melissa was saying.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:24:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/s_o0oSwb5tPyF7B2C4jAeBpAt-uiBV93Y3hwCksPStiDH4cD5LrgMWjNzq0l4ExAw1OkBtuvI6XuxxRQzrNOAKTknOo?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5070.51)):

Okay. All right. So I think we only have about a minute or two left and there are at least two things that are unaddressed. I want to acknowledge that Maya again has asked about what I think of as short, medium, and long-term outcomes. She gave a shout-out to long-term, but she also said, "What signs do you look for along the way?" And so I'll just ask if anyone could take 30 seconds or so to shed light on. What do you look for?

Melissa Sadorf ([01:25:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/yS1fMhO-cnWnblSH7mlVJVA6hznT3Z_yxMK4XyYIr-rQzApVHpQGNX1SxhqX-L9PWIOibsrSln8gktXYj8xASavdW5c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5104.83)):

Well, I can talk from a practitioner's perspective. Short term, what I'm looking for is our academic assessment data. Are we seeing gains? Are we getting student growth? Is the initiative doing what we intended for it to do? And we usually have some kind of pre data that we're looking at and then we test throughout to ensure that we've got student growth and that product or services doing what it was intended to do.

([01:25:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/S1E6YQjyVlskvXZ2iY9tdIeSP0_5XcmwvSOV8HveUhijhemNH5swRJ6P-JzCz0rZ_orE2DfeZxDD1ImRt5xE-wUEm0k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5133)):

As far as long-term impact, I would say that it's similar, but we are also looking at other factors. Maybe we're looking at a cultural shift in pedagogy with our teacher core, our teachers doing things differently as a result of having gone through the professional development that the product might have embedded in it. And are we seeing some sustainability and some consistency in some of the data that we're getting out of our.

([01:26:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XoQJFBRSN1h4qaugT6mm-chAaf_GW5cLfLBCzci09BLxqBqqUUQHkvrITelwUlChuZM-YvoD7D5dnYF6XbFPLtFj2bk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5162.76)):

I think it's also important for me to survey the teachers that are working with the product. Are we seeing, from the teacher perspective, what we had intended to see and what is their satisfaction with using the product or are there gaps that they would like to see addressed potentially? And what would those gaps be filled with? Those are some of the things that I'm looking for.

Victoria Schaefer ([01:26:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/x8vN3RVYRmdpxA3z50N4ZnxjsIYePJ0wFXcxQGlLmUuO0zdy9Q4wJruvWO2xkY4MKmOm2wrx6zKvdzbaUS5IG8jIyFk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5192.7)):

All right. Thank you Melissa. So I want to respect everyone's time. I know we didn't get to every question, but I want to thank our guests and thank our panelists and I'm so grateful you spent the afternoon together and with me.