

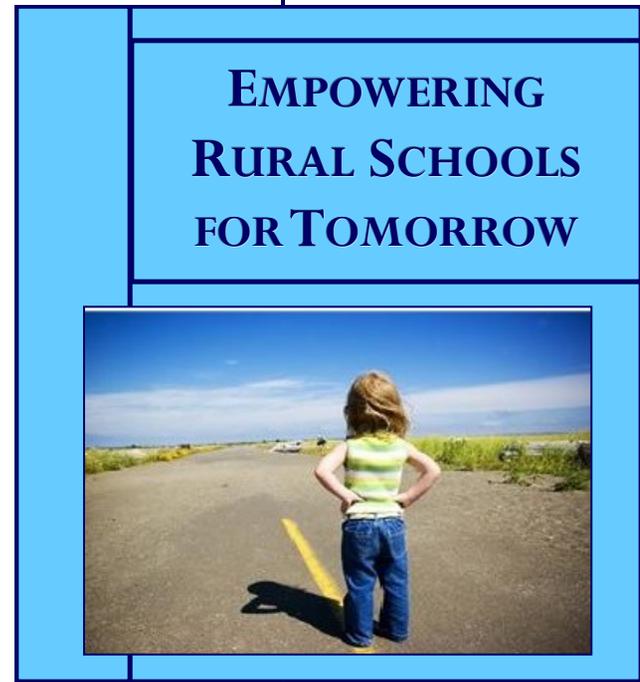
Thursday, November 14--Day 2, cont.

- 11:30 - 12:00 **Speaker's Task Force on Rural Schools**--Rep. Rob Swearingen, Rhinelander, Task Force Chair
- Rural schools received much attention in the 2013-15 budget debate resulting in the formation of a legislative Task Force on Rural Schools charged with examining the challenges being faced in rural schools and developing recommendations for remedy. This session will focus on the work done to date and will seek input from conference participants.
- 12:00 - 1:15 **Lunch**
- Introductions**
- Keynote Speaker: Mike Thompson, Wisconsin Deputy State Superintendent of Schools**--DPI Rural Initiatives
- WiRSA Annual Awards Presentation**
- Rural Support Staff Member of the Year
 - Rural Teacher of the Year
 - Rural Administrator of the Year
 - Rural Board of Education Member of the Year
 - Rural Advocacy Award
- 1:15 **Conference Adjourns**
- 1:30 - 2:00 **WiRSA Annual Membership Business Meeting**

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The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance presents . . .



A conference for administrators, board members, teachers, CESA employees, higher education professionals, public library administrators, elected officials and citizens interested in rural school and community issues.

NOVEMBER 13 - 14, 2013
STONE CREEK INN, ROTHSCHILD, WI

Conference Schedule

November 13 - Day 1

- 9:00 Conference Registration
- 10:00- **Life After Vouchers: Expansion, Accountability & Outcome--Impact for Rural Schools**--Jeff Pertl, DPI Policy Analyst and Deven Carlson Asst. Professor of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma whose research analyzes the operations and effects of educational and social policies.
- 11:30 This presentation will focus on the recent statewide expansion of school vouchers and future impact on rural schools. The presentation will identify important issues to consider in policy conversations regarding school voucher expansion and will summarize Dr. Carlson's previous research on those issues. In particular, Dr. Carlson will present his research on the characteristics of individuals who participate in Milwaukee's school voucher program and the stability of their participation. He will also address issues related to the student achievement of voucher recipients as well as the role of accountability in a school voucher program.
- 11:30 Lunch
- 12:30 - **Power of Technology in Rural Schools**--Katie Morrow, Apple Distinguished Educator and National Presenter, O'Neill, NE.
- 2:00 Prepare to be inspired to make our classrooms of today better places for our students' futures. By focusing on critical components of Choice, Challenge, and Community, you will see how to transform the learning environment with simple steps towards progress. Whether a classroom teacher, technology integrationist, or school leader, this session will offer motivation and practical advice towards making learning more relevant, meaningful, and applicable for all students in rural schools.
- 2:00 - **Understanding the Skills Gap, and What You Can Do for Your Students**--Dan Conroy, VP of Human Resources & Talent Management, Nexen Group, and Andy Hennes, Manager of Staffing and Workforce Development, OEM Fabricators.
- 2:45 How can we have a Skills Gap when there is record unemployment? What has changed so dramatically, and what lies ahead? What can we do to position our students for rewarding careers? We will answer these questions and provide ideas for the way forward.
- Employers struggle to find qualified candidates now, and future demographics will exacerbate this problem. Will there be enough talented and technically educated individuals available for these high paying jobs? We will discuss how the job market has changed and the role that education plays. Whether it's CNC Machinists, Precision Welders, or Engineers, these high paying Gold Collar Careers are right in our backyards, and they strengthen our communities and our schools. We all have a stake in this dilemma and it is up to us to do something about it!

November 13 - Day 1, cont.

- 3:00 - **The Future of Rural Public Schools in Wisconsin**--Senator Kathleen Vinehout, Alma, WI, Senate Education Committee Member
- 4:30 **Panel Commentary** - John Forester, SAA; Dan Rossmiller, WASB; and Jerry Fiene, WiRSA
- Q & A**
- 4:30 Reception
- 5:30 Dinner
- 6:15 - **Happy in the Middle of Nowhere**--Using anecdotes drawn from his books and a few he picked up while shooting the breeze down to the local feed mill, New York Times best-selling author, humorist, and rural Wisconsin resident **Michael Perry** speaks with heart about why living—and attending school—in "the middle of nowhere" is the best thing that ever happened to him.
- 7:15
- 7:30 Reception

November 14 - Day 2

- 7:30 Continental Breakfast
- 8:00 - **Attracting and Retaining Our High Performing Educators**--Helen Ryley, Lead Consultant-Educational Services, Benchmark One; Author and National Consultant on Organizational and Teacher Performance.
- 9:30 This session focuses on attracting, developing and retaining peak performing educators and effectively developing all staff. Take home tips, tools, and solutions to: finding and leveraging time and resources; attracting, developing, and engaging high performing staff; and aligning and involving the entire community in pursuing a culture of educational excellence, particularly, in times of decreasing budgets and limited staff .
- 9:45 - **Whole Grade Sharing in Rural School Districts**--Rick Pederson, Sumner/Fredericksburg, Iowa School Districts Superintendent.
- 11:00 Superintendent Pederson will explain how whole grade sharing works in Iowa, the various opportunities and challenges it presents, and how it has transpired in the Sumner and Fredericksburg School Districts. Financial incentives from the State make this a viable alternative to reorganization and still allow local control to determine a school district's future. Like all good things, this does not necessarily come easy—but at least in his districts' cases, was well worth the effort.
- 11:00 - **WI Rural Education Center: UW Oshkosh, Rural Schools & Community Partnerships**--Fred Yeo, Dean of Education & Human Services, UW Oshkosh.
- 11:30 This session focuses on how K-12 school districts and rural communities can utilize university collaborations to retain more graduates in their communities.