June 17th

Dear URSA Board Member,

Ivan and I have been working to analyze and write-up the data for the first draft of the URSA Rural High School project. The draft report includes the following three sections: A report of the data from the Superintendents' and Principals' questionnaires, A report of the information from the Senior Survey -- comparing rural seniors' responses with those from urban/suburban settings, and a review of the yearly reports to patrons from the rural districts. We have not yet written an executive summary nor a hard-hitting conclusions section for the report. There are two reasons for this. One is that we have simply run out of time before we needed to get something out to you for the meeting next Tuesday in Heber. The second is that we need your input on what needs to be featured and what conclusions are important to state. While we can certainly do this from our perspective alone, we feel that it will be a much better document if we work together with you to make these decisions.

We look forward to meeting with you to review what has been written and discussing the next two sections -- the executive summary and conclusions -- with you.

Thanks,

Adrian Van Mondfrans for Adrian and Ivan
Members of WIRE's evaluation team attended several meetings of the URSA board. In these meetings the issues which were to be addressed by the study were discussed. In the early stages of the evaluation the primary responsibility for the development of the instrumentation and process was subcontracted to Spectrum. As the evaluation unfolded, concerns were raised by members of the URSA board that the Spectrum team, while personable and apparently competent in other areas, were simply not familiar with the rural schools issues. Thus, the primary load of the evaluation shifted to Adrian Van Mondfrans of BYU and WIRE and Ivan Muse of BYU, who also served as a WIRE consultant.

During the early stages of the study, while Spectrum was still active in the evaluation, they arranged for site visits to a number of rural high schools in order to observe first hand the various aspects of their programs, and to hear the concerns of the principals and others directly regarding the challenges of the rural high schools. Tom Shuster, Eric Gee, and other members of the Spectrum team directed the visits, while Adrian and Ivan attended several school visits as team members. These visits helped the evaluation team better understand the distances involved, the issues the schools were dealing with, the nature of the resources available at the schools, etc.

After the site visits by the Spectrum team, an initial version of a questionnaire for the superintendents, principals, counselors and others was created. This was shared with the URSA board for review and comment. The Directors of WIRE received a copy for review after the URSA board meeting, and therefore had not reviewed it before it was shared with URSA board members. The response to the questionnaire by the URSA board members was sufficiently negative that the shift in responsibilities mentioned above occurred. Another meeting was held to review with Adrian and Ivan the issues of the URSA board members. With their experience in the site visits, their review of the initial instruments created by Spectrum, and the information from the meeting with the URSA board Adrian and Ivan created two new instruments, one for the rural superintendents, and one for the rural high school principals. (See Appendix A)

**Study Instrumentation**

These two new instruments were reviewed by the URSA board, changes were suggested to several items, including new wording and additional issues were added. The meeting also addressed how best to distribute the questionnaires and encourage the respondents to complete and return them. It was decided that the board members and a member of the
evaluation team would attend the next meeting for each of the regional service centers where the superintendents of the rural districts should be in attendance. The superintendents would be given a packet of questionnaires to be completed by the superintendent and each high school principal in their district. The dates and locations of the next scheduled service center meetings were determined and who would attend each meeting to distribute the questionnaires, encourage the superintendents to distribute them to the principals, and to speedily complete and return them.

Two of the four meetings for the regional service centers were not held as planned. The packets which were to be distributed at the two meetings not held were distributed either in person by Ivan or by mail. The packets for the Tooele district, which is not served by a regional service center were also mailed.

By the end of March only 20 (77%) of a total of 26 districts had returned the superintendent's questionnaire and 30 (65%) of the 46 high school principals had returned the principal's questionnaire. To achieve this level of return the evaluation team had sent follow-up letters or faxes to each superintendent or principal who had not returned their questionnaire by the expected date of March 15. In addition, if they had not responded by March 25, Ivan called them. We also faxed or mailed out approximately 15 additional questionnaires to districts and high schools where the questionnaires previously distributed were reported as lost or not received.

Both Ivan and Adrian worked to get a few more questionnaires returned during the early part of April, 1998. These efforts yielded 2 more district and 4 more principal questionnaires. Thus, the final count of questionnaires was 22 of 26 districts (85%) and 34 of the 46 high schools (74%). The data from these questionnaires was analyzed and are included in this report.

The Utah State Office of Education provided an analysis of the Senior Survey data. The survey requested students to indicate their experiences and post secondary intentions. The data was analyzed in terms of rural and urban responses. Three rural districts had not returned their data by the 1st of June. Items of interest on the survey included the students' future plans, adequacy of high school experiences, academic courses taken in school, and the quality of these courses.
School district reports to their patrons were also collected. These reports characteristically contain information about student test scores, enrollment trends, academic course offerings, budget reports, and other pertinent information. These data were also analyzed for this report.

The District Superintendent's Questionnaire Data

The superintendent questionnaire required the completion of a number of items regarding the operation of the school program. Of the 26 superintendents receiving questionnaires 22\(^1\) were returned. This represents a viable return for reporting purposes.

The district superintendents were asked if they replaced, or hired new teachers in their district the 1997-98 school year. Three districts did not hire any new elementary teachers. However, the rest of the districts (19) did. The average number of new elementary teachers hired across districts was 3.65, or approximately four new elementary teachers per district. One superintendent indicated that the district hired 20 new elementary teachers. The mode, or most frequently marked response, was 2 new elementary teachers hired in the district.

The percentage of the elementary teachers who were hired this last year ranged across districts from zero percent to about 20%, or up to one-fifth of the elementary teachers in one district. One superintendent marked 100% new hires. Either this was a mistake, or the district was small and a small number of new hires could replace all the elementary teachers in the district, or something rather dramatic happened. Our best guess is that it was a mistake. The same superintendent indicated that all of the secondary teachers in the district were also new hires. The average percent of elementary teachers across the districts who were new hires (discounting the 100% response) was just over 7%. This is not a very high figure. This shows considerable stability in the teacher corps in most districts.

How many elementary teachers applied for each open position announced by the districts? The number of applicants per position at the elementary level, as reported by the superintendents ranged from 3 to 50 (discounting one respondent who marked 100), with a mean of almost 19 (mean=18.65) applicants per position.

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\(^1\)Because the last two questionnaires came in so late, and did not differ from the other questionnaires already received in any significant ways, the analyses were performed on 20 questionnaires only.
Thus, with an average of about 4 (3.65) positions open at the elementary level across these rural districts, and an average of almost 19 applicants per position it is no wonder that the superintendents indicated that replacing elementary teachers in these rural districts was half way (mean =1.56) between "no concern" (a one on the scale) and a "minor concern" (a two on the scale). The pool of possible elementary teachers in the state appears very full, making it relatively easy for these rural districts to secure the new hires they need.

At the secondary school level the picture is more complex. With the different content areas it is not the overall supply of available secondary teachers, but the specific supply of teachers in each content area which is of importance. Further, since the rural districts differ considerably in terms of their distance to larger metropolitan areas, location of the school, the size of the community where the school is located, and other factors may make the hiring situation more difficult for one school than another. This issue will be considered in more detail when the data from the principal's questionnaire is reviewed. However, a general picture of the applicant pool per position is outlined in this section.

Only one rural district indicated that they did not hire a new secondary teacher last year. The average number of new secondary teachers hired across the districts was 5.80. Regarding the percent of secondary teachers hired new in the district, one superintendent responded with 100% and another with 81%. These two outlier responses skew the mean considerably. Dropping these two outliers results in a mean percentage of new secondary teachers across the remaining 15 districts (three districts did not respond to this item) of 11%. That is, on average about 11% of the secondary teachers across the rural districts were new hires. Again, this is not an extensive number. However, particular academic areas such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, foreign languages, etc. may be more difficult to fill than other areas.

The superintendents indicated that the average number of applicants per position varied from 2 to 30, depending upon the type of position, and the location. The average number of applicants per position was 9.70. While this is certainly fewer than the average number of applicants for elementary positions (about twice as many -- 18.65), the real problem may be the relative scarcity of applicants in particular content areas. To further illuminate this point, the questionnaire asked superintendents to indicate what percent of the applicants had the proper credential (actually stated in the negative form). Their responses ranged from zero applicants without the proper credentials (academically prepared) for the position that was open to 75% without the proper credentials. On average, about a fourth (27.4%) of
the applicants at the secondary level did not have the proper credentials (they may have had one or more, but not all the credentials needed for the position open). Several superintendents indicated that they simply did not consider anyone without the required credentials for the positions which were open. Thus, there may well have been other teachers interested in the positions offered, but who were not considered candidates by the districts because of their lack of appropriate academic training.

A further issue beyond the credentialing concern is whether or not housing is available and/or affordable in those rural areas which employed newly hired teachers. On a three point scale, with 1 = "not a problem", 2 = "somewhat difficult", and 3 = "very difficult", the average rating by the superintendents of how difficult finding appropriate housing would be for a new teacher in the area is 2.25, between somewhat difficult and very difficult. This might also be a barrier to securing the teachers needed at the secondary level. Superintendents stated that some teachers had left their district because of the difficulty of finding adequate housing. Affordable housing is an issue when new teachers earn around $22,000 a year. Further, in many rural areas there simply is no housing available for rent or purchase. Descriptors such as "very few homes to rent", "high prices for homes for sale", "housing and rental shortage", "limited and expensive", "extremely limited", "very scarce due to growth", etc. all give the flavor of their comments. However, a few superintendents indicated that housing was both available and modest in cost in their community.

Many of the schools are located quite a distance from larger communities which might offer more housing options. For example, ten of the superintendents indicated that the closest large shopping area is between a hour and three hours round trip away from the school hiring new teachers.

The following table shows the number of districts who hired teachers in each area, how much of a concern it was to secure teachers in each area, and provides an evaluation commentary to portray the data in prose form.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Problem Areas: Teacher Recruitment</th>
<th>Yes, we hired</th>
<th>No, we didn't</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Evaluation Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replaced elementary teachers</td>
<td>17, 85%</td>
<td>2, 10%, 1 missing response</td>
<td>Mean=1.56, SD=.78</td>
<td>While most districts replaced elementary teachers, they were not very concerned about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced special education teachers</td>
<td>10, 50%</td>
<td>8, 40%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=3.56, SD=1.26</td>
<td>Half the districts replaced special education teachers, and they were definitely concerned about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced secondary social science teachers</td>
<td>6, 30%</td>
<td>12, 60%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=1.67, SD=.78</td>
<td>About a third of the districts replaced social science teachers, but this was a minor concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced secondary laboratory science teachers (e.g., Chem., Physics, etc.)</td>
<td>6, 30%</td>
<td>12, 60%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=3.33, SD=1.07</td>
<td>About a third replaced lab science teachers, and this was of some concern to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced other science teachers</td>
<td>8, 40%</td>
<td>10, 50%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=2.77, SD=1.23</td>
<td>Forty percent of the districts replaced other science teachers, and this was of some concern to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced computer/technology teachers</td>
<td>6, 30%</td>
<td>13, 65%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=3.57, SD=1.22</td>
<td>About a third of the districts replaced teachers in this area, and this was a definite concern to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced secondary mathematics teachers</td>
<td>9, 45%</td>
<td>9, 45%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=3.29, SD=1.32</td>
<td>About half of the districts replaced math teachers, and this was of some concern to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced secondary English teachers</td>
<td>7, 35%</td>
<td>11, 55%, 2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean=2.29, SD=1.20</td>
<td>About a third of the districts replaced English teachers, and this was a minor concern to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Use the following scale: 1=not a concern, 2=a minor concern, 3=some concern or problem to us, 4=a definite concern or problem to us, and 5=a major concern or problem to us.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Missing Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replaced language teachers (e.g., Spanish, German)</td>
<td>3, 15%</td>
<td>2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean= 2.40, SD= .97</td>
<td>Only three districts replaced language teachers, so this was a minor concern to most districts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced home economics teachers</td>
<td>6, 30%</td>
<td>2 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean= 2.91, SD= 1.04</td>
<td>About a third of the districts replaced home ec. teachers, and this was of some concern to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced manual arts teachers (auto, welding, wood shop, etc.)</td>
<td>5, 25%</td>
<td>1 missing response</td>
<td>Mean= 3.09, SD= 1.38</td>
<td>While only a fourth of the districts replaced manual arts teachers, they indicated that this was of some concern to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replaced business teachers</td>
<td>5, 25%</td>
<td>1 missing response</td>
<td>Mean= 3.11, SD= 1.17</td>
<td>A fourth of the districts replaced business teachers, and this was of some concern to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
<td>9, 45%</td>
<td>10 missing responses</td>
<td>Mean= 3.11, SD= 1.69</td>
<td>Nearly half the districts replaced teachers in other categories, and finding them was of some concern.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table one shows several interesting trends. The hardest teachers to replace are those in the computer/technology area (Mean= 3.57), special education teachers (Mean= 3.56), secondary lab sciences -- chemistry, physics, etc. -- (Mean= 3.33), and secondary math (Mean= 3.29). The easiest teachers to replace are elementary (Mean= 1.56), secondary social science (Mean= 1.67), and secondary English teachers (Mean= 2.29). It is clear that these data reflect both national and local data in terms of which areas teacher shortages and surpluses exist.

The superintendents stated that the issue in finding special education teachers is twofold -- a very limited pool of possible candidates, and many of the candidates lack one or more of the endorsements the districts are seeking. "Had a position open in November. Still can't find a replacement." "Could not find one specialty." "Lack of ... applicants with the qualification we are seeking." These and similar comments illustrate the concerns of the superintendents in finding and hiring special education teachers.

Similarly, in replacing secondary science teachers the superintendents pointed to the same problems. They also stated that besides not being able to choose from several candidates,
or not having candidates with the proper credentials, a further problem is that in the science area it is hard to find teachers with multiple endorsements to cover several different science courses. "Small schools require one person who is endorsed in many different areas. This is difficult in math and science areas. Also, in many of the vocational areas." It was also noted by the superintendents that it is very hard to find math teachers who have level 3 and 4 endorsements, especially level 4 endorsement. When a math or science teacher is found, they must often teach 3 or more preparations, creating difficulties in preparing for multiple classes. Hence, more specialized positions with fewer preparations that are available in urban high schools are usually more attractive to them.

Replacing computer/technology teachers was also an area of difficulty. Comments included: "Combination of teacher and technician is difficult [to find]." "Lack of applicants in this area is a concern. Higher pay in private industry attracts these people."

Other comments illustrating the nature of the difficulties superintendents have in finding suitable candidates for the positions they have open in their districts include the following:

Language teachers -- "Fewer well-qualified, fluent speakers available." Home economics teachers -- "Few applicants." Manual arts teachers -- "We require special training." "We have a high quality program now and couldn't replace with the same quality." Business teachers -- "No applicants qualified." Other teachers -- ESL teachers: "ESL major a problem." "Bilingual/ESL/Navajo culture is a special need of the district. Difficult to complete with other states with higher pay scales." Music teachers -- "Few qualified applicants." Band teachers -- "No applicants with endorsements." Clearly, these rural districts have significant challenges in meeting their curriculum needs through hiring teachers with the proper endorsements. The problems are not in one isolated curriculum area, but exist in several areas which require extensive technical or scientific training. "We are so remote that we have a difficult time in attracting 'blue chip' applicants. We usually can look at only 2 or 3 choices when filling a position."

Service Centers

Various services are needed, or desirable, to support the educational efforts of the district. In Table Two below each of the possible service areas are listed. The superintendents were asked to indicate if specialists are available in their district, from where they are available (the organization which houses the service provider and issues their paycheck), and any special concerns about the efficiency or effectiveness of the services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services offered</th>
<th>Yes or No</th>
<th>Where are these personnel housed and by whom are they paid?</th>
<th>% of time allotted to district</th>
<th>Special problems and concerns about efficiency and effectiveness, i.e. travel, shared position, recruitment, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech and hearing specialists</td>
<td>Yes, 19 or 95%</td>
<td>Dist. -45%, Service Ctr. -10%, Contracted out -20%, Sch.-based -20%, Miss. -5%</td>
<td>Mean= 69%, Range 2 - 100</td>
<td>Limited time. Extensive travel. Need more services than one person can provide. Scheduling problems across schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological services</td>
<td>Yes, 17 or 85%</td>
<td>Dist. -25%, Serv. Ctr. -15%, Sch.-based -20%, Soc. Serv. -15%, Contracted out -20%, Miss. -5%</td>
<td>Mean= 59%, Range 1 - 100</td>
<td>One person shared among 4 schools. Scheduling problems across schools. Need more services. Inconsistent availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media specialists</td>
<td>Yes, 13 or 65%</td>
<td>Dist. -35%, Sch.-based -15%, Soc. Serv. -5%, 1/2 day -5%, Missing - 40%</td>
<td>Mean= 95%, Range 50 - 100</td>
<td>Only aides at the elementary level. Provide a good service but are trained like certified staff. No certified specialists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapists</td>
<td>Yes, 11 or 55%</td>
<td>Dist. -10%, Serv. Ctr. -10%, Contracted out -40%, 1/2 day -5%, No one or Missing -35%</td>
<td>Mean= 11%, Range 0 - 25</td>
<td>Travel is a big problem. Can’t find anyone to hire. Contract out for services. Travel time is very expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School nurses</td>
<td>Yes, 18 or 90%</td>
<td>Dist. -45%, Serv. Ctr. -5%, Soc. Serv. -15%, Contracted out -15 %, Other or missing - 20%</td>
<td>Mean= 39%, Range 1 - 100</td>
<td>Used only for screening. Part time -- inconsistent quality and service. Share with county. Isn’t in schools enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapists</td>
<td>Yes, 10 or 50%</td>
<td>Dist. -15%, Serv. Ctr. -10%, Contracted out 30%, Sch.-based 5%, No one or missing - 40%</td>
<td>Mean= 10%, Range 0 - 30</td>
<td>Need one, but can’t find one to hire. Contract services. Only 15 hours per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education services</td>
<td>Yes, 20 or 100%</td>
<td>Dist. -55%, Sch.-based -30%, Contracted out -5%, Serv. Ctr. -5%, 1/2 day -5%</td>
<td>Mean= 92%, Range 30 - 100</td>
<td>Difficult to replace when quit or retire. Hard to find. Not sufficient for work load. Not in the school as much as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for the severely handicapped</td>
<td>Yes, 16 or 80%</td>
<td>Dist. -50%, Serv. Ctr. -15%, Sch.-based -15%, Missing -20%</td>
<td>Mean= 70%, Range 20 - 100</td>
<td>Hard to find qualified people to staff units. Isn't in the school as much as is needed. Travel extreme for students to get services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers and sociologists</td>
<td>Yes, 9 or 45%</td>
<td>Dist. -10%, Serv. Ctr. -5%, Sch.-based -10%, Soc. Serv. - 15%, Contracted out - 5%, No one or missing -55%</td>
<td>Mean= 44%, Range 0 - 100</td>
<td>Located outside district so availability is limited. Shared contract. Hired on soft money so don't know future availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant and report writing</td>
<td>Yes, 9 or 45%</td>
<td>Dist. -30%, Serv. Ctr. -10%, No one or missing -60%</td>
<td>Mean= 27 %, Range 1 - 100</td>
<td>Responsibility shared among the staff. No trained grant writer. Too little time. We use whomever we can find to help us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that all (100%) the districts responding provide special education services. Most districts provide these services at the district (55%) or school-based (30%) level. The service center provides special education services for one district. Another district superintendent indicated that his/her district only provided 1/2 day service in this area. One district contracted out with an outside agency or person for this service. This service is mandated by law, so one would expect that it would be provided. However, the fact that the most prevalent agency to provide the service is the district office suggests that it may be difficult for students across all the schools in the district to receive adequately the services they need, especially at the more outlying schools. Further, the superintendents reported that on average they have such services available 92% of the time with one district reporting that they had such services available only 30% of the time, and another only 50% of the time. The rest reported that some level of service is available 100% of the time, but it is not clear if the level of service available is sufficient. Since national statistics indicate that around one in ten students need such services, it is important that they be available. It is
still a concern that the amount of service available, even with the districts providing all that
they can afford, may still be too little to meet the need.

The second most frequently offered service was for speech and hearing specialists (19 of
the twenty districts reporting indicated that they had such services available). Nearly two-
thirds of the districts offered these services at either the district (45%) or the school-based
(20%) level. One-fifth of the districts contracted out for speech and hearing services. The
rest of the districts either secured their speech and hearing services from their service center
(10%) or did not report on this issue (5%). Once again, it is unreasonable to expect that
each school will have their own speech and hearing specialist. Even when they are school-
based, the specialists may serve more than one school. The average amount of time these
services were reported as available is 69%, with a range from 2% to 100% of the time.

The third most available set of services was for school nurses (18 of the twenty districts
indicated that school nurses were available in their schools). However, even though 18
districts indicated that school nurses were available, the average percent of time the
superintendents indicated they were actually available was only 39%, with a range from 1%
to 100%. Thus, across all districts more than half the time a nurse is not available.

Spreading such services out across all the schools in a district may well mean that access to
nurses by individual students is very limited.

Psychological services were listed as the fourth most available services across districts with
17 districts indicating that such services were available to their students. About half the
time the service was located in the district (25%) or a school-based (20%) location. Service
centers were the source of the service in 15% of the districts, 20% contracted out for the
services and one district (5%) did not respond. These services were available an average of
59% of the time, with a range of 1% - 100%. With national organizations writing that one
child in 20 or more is in need of help in this area, it is probable that the present level of
service is not sufficient to meet the actual need.

Social workers and sociologists and grant and report writing services were the least
available services in these districts with only 9 of twenty districts (45%) indicating that they
were available in their district. Physical therapists (10 of 20 districts, or 50%) and
occupational therapists (11 of 20 districts, or 55%) were the next least available services.
The superintendents also responded to the questionnaire by indicating other services which they either received from the service centers or which they wish they received. Other services received, and the comments of the superintendents about them, include: "special reading help -- excellent"; "library media materials -- excellent"; "audio visual repair and equipment -- excellent"; "driver ed. programs -- excellent"; technology specialist -- average -- distance is a problem"; "technology support and information -- excellent"; "curriculum specialists and leadership -- excellent"; "some grant writing support"; "planning and inservice support"; and "help with the asbestos program -- excellent". As can be seen from the above lists, the services which are provided rural school districts through the regional service centers are very diverse, support areas of need which are difficult to meet at the district level, have an impact on the curriculum and the training of teachers, and provide materials which cannot be provided on a cost-effective basis at the district level.

Administrative Replacements

Along with the issue of the availability of teachers in these rural districts is the possible concern that administrative roles might be difficult to fill with qualified personnel. The superintendents were asked if there were teachers in their district, not presently serving in administrative roles, who have administrative certificates. One-half (50%) of the districts have and one-half do not have teachers with administrative certificates from whom they might chose to replace administrative needs in their district. The replacement of administrators may still be a problem even in those districts where one or more teachers have an appropriate certification, because the district might not find these possible candidates attractive for their needs. In addition, the number of teachers with administrative certificates in the ten rural districts which have at least one qualified teacher is relatively small, ranging from two districts with one such teacher, two districts with two, three districts with three, two districts with four, and one district with six teachers with administrative certificates. The other rural districts without teachers with administrative certificates are in a more difficult situation. They will have to identify and entice candidates from outside their district to fill any administrative vacancies. The hazards of this process are evident in securing individuals who will "fit" the rural expectations, who will want to live in the area, or who are not just using the position as a "stepping stone" to a larger urban district.

Fourteen of the 20 district superintendents indicated that they were aware of additional teachers in their district who were presently pursuing administrative certificates. Five
district superintendents indicated that they were not aware of any teachers pursuing certificates, and one did not respond to the question.

More than half of the district superintendents who indicated that someone in their district was currently pursuing an administrative certificate responded that only one teacher in their district (mentioned by 15% of the superintendents) or two teachers (mentioned by 40% of the superintendents) were presently enrolled in an administrator training program. One superintendent indicated that three teachers were enrolled in a program and two indicated that four of their teachers were. Thus, the pool of existing certificated potential administrators or near-term potential administrators is relatively small when viewed in the light that last year twelve districts replaced administrators -- seven districts replaced one, three districts replaced two and two districts replaced four administrators. Of these, seven came from outside the district, and the rest from within the district. If the principal is the key to a well-functioning and educationally sound school, the selection of a well-trained, effective administrator is a must. It may be that school districts will have to pre select and prepare teachers in their districts to receive the administrative credential and serve as a pool for future administrative openings.

Several superintendents commented on the difficulty of finding good secondary principals. "Good secondary principals are hard to find anywhere." "We cannot find good secondary principals. They don't apply [to our district]." One superintendent of a very small district commented: "Only one of three of our principals is credentialed. We mostly use the best qualified teachers to double as teaching principals." And, as pointed out earlier, these districts "lack access to staff development opportunities", even when they are provided "financial support to work on certificates". Thus, "retirements will impact us so and our positions will likely have to go to 'outsiders' if they are available". However, as one superintendent pointed out, "We can't pay administrators what large districts do so we have difficulty attracting those with the visionary education philosophy we would like."

Additional Financial Opportunities

The superintendents are in a very important role with respect to securing additional financial resources for their district through outside grants and contracts. The usual situation is that the larger the school district, the larger the school district staff, and the more people and greater the specialized expertise which can be used to write and administer grants and contracts. Many programs require that proposals and reports be written to secure funds.
even though the money is available on a formula basis. This places a burden on small districts with small staffs, since they have access to just as many funding programs as large districts, but do not have the staff to pursue as many opportunities as they would like to. Thus, across funding programs some of these rural districts applied and succeeded in being funded, others applied and did not succeed, and yet others did not even apply for the funding available to them through various programs. For example, the following programs were listed by one or more superintendents as programs in which they had interest but did not pursue funding: curriculum grants, year 2000 grants, At Risk and Youth in Custody funding, driver education grants, Centennial School grants, Teen Pregnancy, FACT community grants, Character Education, School to Work, Technology grants, talent search grants, and others. The list of funding opportunities which one or more districts did not pursue is long and varied.

The reasons given for not pursuing these possible funding programs, however, are relatively similar across districts. The superintendents made these comments: "There are a number of grants that we could apply for. However, we do not have the personnel or the manpower to supervise or report on the grants. It is not just getting grants, but adequate follow through that is also a big problem." "We couldn't apply because we did not have a certified media person," or in another case, "lacked a full-time counselor." "The time and availability of well trained people to write is always a problem. The few of us who work and administratively staff a smaller district are 'up to our armpits' in grants all the time and can't develop enough time to take on more!" Such challenges limit the number and complexity of the grants and awards these rural districts can apply for, and consequently limit the resources available to help meet the needs of the students and teachers in the districts. This appears to be an area in which rural districts are at a significant disadvantage.

Nevertheless, even with the disadvantages of small staffs, most of the superintendents indicated that their district had received some additional funding from state or federal sources in addition to the regular funding programs. The range of funding was great -- one superintendent indicated that his district had received only $25,000 while another indicated that his district received approximately $7,500,000. The next highest figure was $3,694,807. On average these rural districts received over $800,000 in additional state and federal funding. If the two highest figures are not included, since they are so different from those reported by the other districts, the average amount is approximately $141,500.
This figure is a more accurate estimate to use in gauging the impact of additional funding through grants and special programs on most of these rural districts.

**Responses Regarding the "Small School Formula"**

Several superintendents indicated that the small school formula is helpful for meeting their basic needs. "The rural schools formula is our salvation. We couldn't exist without it." "Without the small schools formula we could not function." However, most superintendents suggested additional needs and factors that could be taken into account to help their schools function better. "When all things are considered, we have adequate for our needs. We have no auditorium, track swimming pool or [other] nice-to-have items, but we are fortunate to have needed facilities."

The superintendents made pointed suggestions regarding the small schools formula. These include: "Formulas are not equitable -- need strong base allocations before per-student allocations are assigned." "The small school formula needs to expand the enrollment limit. For example, a 475 student limit at high schools does not provide the funding to get us anywhere close to equity with larger schools." "[The] small schools funding program cuts off schools too quickly. Longer windows are needed. Raise the upper limit." One need that is not being met by the formula is the provision of curriculum and other specialists in the rural districts. "Curriculum specialists are needed for rural districts. More help is needed for technology and planning;" "Not sufficient to meet needs for counselors and specialists." Another important factor to consider is the isolation and distances associated with the rural schools. "The utility costs to run schools on the reservation are far and above the rates we are charged in our other schools in the county." "The formula doesn't account for the great distances we travel." "If the formula is to be kept as "small schools", size and distance to the next community should be additional factors in the formula."

Clearly, the small school formula is needed. However, the program is viewed by most superintendents as barely sufficient to offer a very basic program to their students. They express additional needs which the formula, in its present form, does not meet.

For example, in the area of school buildings: "We have a lot more buildings per capita. We are small and spread out so our costs are very high based on our population." Additional bonding for new buildings or facilities is viewed by several superintendents as a big problem. "We need help from state or private sources to accommodate growth." "We
have relocatable units at 6 of 7 schools in spite of just competing a major building effort 16 months ago. "We have mostly old but serviceable buildings. Additional bonding is out of the question because of small tax base." "Bonding becomes a political time-bomb when it occurs year after year." "We are bonded 'til year 2014, and yet need capital improvement money. Repair and upkeep is a major problem."

Indeed, most rural superintendents pointed to operations and maintenance costs as a major problem in rural districts. "O&M costs kill us because we get no 'economy of scale.'" "We can't afford to hire a maintenance supervisor. Much of our maintenance work is contracted out. This is more expensive because of our location with our older schools. We spend a lot to maintain them which takes money from educational programs." "Generally, every dollar of new money that comes in goes for salary. This gives us nothing to catch up in other much needed areas." Keeping roof and parking lots is more than we can afford let alone adding to the infrastructure." "Aging buildings create serious money problems."

A related problem is how to handle O&M for new buildings within the present funding limits. In a large district adding another elementary school may constitute adding one-twentieth or one-fortieth to the district's overall O&M costs. In a rural district, adding a new building may add one-fifth or one-tenth to the overall costs involved in operating and maintaining the buildings. This is a significantly greater challenge for the rural districts to meet.

Another area of concern to the superintendents is the cost of transportation in the rural districts. One point out that his busing costs in a very small district are about the same as those in the Salt Lake City District. A review of the busing costs and how they are paid may be needed to address the felt need of the superintendents that their districts are not getting the help they need in proportion to the costs of transportation.

The Principal's Questionnaire Data

Thirty-four of the 46 rural high school principals responded to the questionnaire. The information they provided is summarized in this section of the report.
School Size

The size of the rural secondary schools included in the analyses ranged from 56 to over a thousand students. The average size was 382 students. However, more than half (19, or 56%) included grades 7 and 8, and 31 (or 91%) included grade 9 as well as the traditional 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Thus, the relatively small student body at some schools becomes an even more difficult curriculum and teacher assignment problem when the students came from more than the usual three high school grades. Of course, most urban/suburban high schools are larger, and only include the three traditional high school grades.

The number of students on free or reduced lunch (a rough measure of Social Economic Status -- SES) ranged from 15 to 283 students with an average of 84 in each school. The percent of students on free or reduced lunch ranged from 6% to 90% with an average of 35%. However, a number of students who might qualify for free or reduced lunch do not take advantage of the opportunity to qualify. To get a better idea of the SES levels of the students the principals were asked to indicate the number and percent of students in addition to the above who would qualify. The number of students who in the opinion of the principal would qualify for free or reduced lunch at each school, ranged from 3 to 292 with an average of 109, somewhat higher than the number who had actually gone through the process of qualifying. The percent who in the opinion of the principals would qualify for free or reduced lunch ranged from 2 to 90 with an average of 43%, again higher than the percent who had actually qualified. These figures indicate that the rural high school population of Utah comes from homes with relatively less income than the state norm. Thus, they have potentially less financial resources to support enrichment educational opportunities which might involve school fees, or out of pocket expenses for educational opportunities away from the public school arena.

Financial Issues

The principals were asked if their schools were a "necessarily existent" small high school qualifying for additional financial resources per student. Of those who responded to the question (5 out of 34 did not respond) more than half indicated that they were (15, or 52%). Most of the principals at these 15 schools chose not to respond to the questions of how much they received under the formula, or whether or not they felt that the funding was adequate. Of the 6 who responded, two-thirds indicated that they felt that the funding was