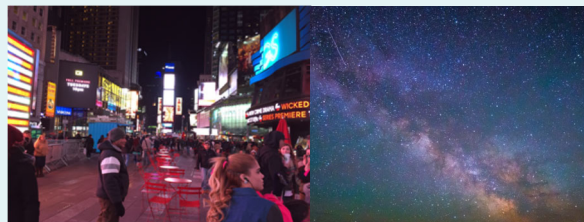




RSA TODAY

News for New York State's
Rural Schools

March 2019



I don't live in New York,

I live in New York

"Communities Committed to Educational Excellence"

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YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD BUT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING... PLEASE DON'T!

COMMENTARY: The governor's announcement that the State Budget may not contain language to legalize marijuana use comes as welcome news. Not because marijuana might be a gateway drug and not because we want to ignore the longstanding issue that enforcement of existing marijuana laws has disproportionately affected minority and impoverished communities. Those issues need attention. It's good news because rushing headlong to get marijuana legalization into the state budget put our need for cash before our responsibility to enact sound public policy.



Society has never gotten a firm grip on addressing the consequences of legalizing people's vices. Whether its alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, gambling or "weed", our government has never succeeded in preventing legal adult participation from trickling down to kids. We were about to make the same mistake again. The State Budget wouldn't have put in place the kind of counseling, social services or enforcement needed to allow adults to use it in appropriate settings without exposing kids to at the very least an expectation that "legal" means "OK."

Colorado legalized marijuana and has seen a dramatic increase in the number of driving while impaired arrests and employee disciplinary cases. Why? Because people heard "legal" and thought it was "no holds barred" on marijuana use. It was still illegal to drive while under the influence, still inappropriate to come to work impaired, but the state had said it was legal, so in the public eye, it must be OK. Our neighbor Massachusetts recently legalized recreational marijuana use and I personally witnessed hundreds of people wait hours in zero degree weather, children and pets in tow, to purchase it at the state dispensaries. New York was about to put a new law in place without accounting for issues like what a child is supposed to do if their parents are consistently smoking in the home, or what schools are supposed to do when student availability of marijuana is no further away than the nearest 21 year old...or what they're supposed to do if Mom and Dad haul them off to spend their Saturday afternoon freezing in line for hours to get their high?

Every spring, proms and graduations become community wakes for victims of alcohol related accidents. Opioid abuse has shocked and horrified the nation and created a tran-

sient school population. Vaping has single handedly reversed the previously improving trend toward child nicotine addiction. Ask any county social service agency what a new casino means to local divorce, alcohol, drug use and domestic violence rates. The fact is, in our feverish quest for new revenue sources, our society has been unable to prevent harm to families and kids in particular. We put harmful things just out of reach and assume that “don’t touch!” will be enough to do the trick. It’s more than nonsense. It’s irresponsible governing.

Your Rural Schools Association has joined the New York State PTA and law enforcement agencies in opposing the legalization of marijuana because there is no excuse for making the same harmful mistake over and over again. NYSSBA’s Tim Kremer is fond of saying “The best indicator of future performance is past performance.” New York State has never shown an ability to prevent social harm when it decides to regulate a formerly illegal activity. There’s no reason to believe that this hastily conceived money grab will be different. As they say, you can change the world but if you don’t know what you’re doing...please don’t! Unless and until our state leaders arrive at a plan to keep marijuana and its social impact away from students, we need to keep the law the way it is.

David A. Little, Esq.
Executive Director
Rural Schools Assn. of NYS

WASHINGTON WATCH



Coming later than most had expected, the federal administration and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos have announced a broad school choice initiative, Education Freedom Scholarships. According to the department’s announcement, “Education Freedom Scholarships will expand and improve the education options available to students across the country by injecting up to \$5 billion yearly into locally controlled scholarship programs that empower students to choose the learning environment and style that best meets their unique needs.” Translated, the program is a tax credit program similar to the previously proposed Tuition Tax Credit legislation defeated regularly in New York State.

In exchange for “contributions” to not for profit entities supporting private, parochial and charter schools, the donor would receive a corresponding tax credit on their federal income tax. In reality, the contributions would likely equal the amount of tuition, as the private school would then provide a “scholarship” in the amount of the donation to the child of the donor. Similar efforts in New York State met with opposition, not only from public school advocates (out of a fear that the tax credits would reduce state funds available for education aid) but from constitutional scholars fearing state sponsorship of religious instruction.

In the unlikely event that Congress would support funding for this program, it would surely face a constitutional challenge, under the Establishment of Religion Clause. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the plan is that it comes two years after Betsy DeVos took the helm of the US Department of Education. Given her strong advocacy and support for the privatization of education in her home state prior to being appointed US Secretary of Education, most observers thought she would quickly begin attempts at the federal level. Had she done so immediately on taking office, she would have found a more supportive political environment in Congress. With the last election’s change in House leadership to the opposing political party, efforts to fund “school choice” are likely to face significant challenges.

In early April, RSA Executive Director Dave Little and RSA Federal Liaison Heather Zellers will travel to Washington, D.C. as part of the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition. They will meet with New York State’s senators and House members to relay support for federal rural education programs and opposition to this latest administrative proposal.

RURAL SCHOOLS SUMMIT FEATURES PRACTICAL INNOVATION

Finding concrete ways to help New York State's rural schools can be a daunting task. Declining student enrollment, a diminished local economy and a financial inability to expand the instructional program to meet the demands of employers and higher education have often proved challenging for rural school leaders. To help meet these challenges, your Rural Schools Association recently held its March Summit in Albany to highlight practical, helpful programs, backed by state funding.

Held each year in conjunction with the New York State Council of School Superintendents Winter Institute, this year the Rural Schools Summit featured overviews of two new state initiatives, as well as hands on stories of their value in school districts: Community Schools and the Farm to School Nutritional Program.



Windsor Superintendent and NYS-COSS Superintendent of the Year, Dr. Jason Andrews inspires attendees at the RSA March Summit.

The Community Schools approach takes available school space and melds it with health care, vision, dental, mental health, after school activities, summer learning and other programs to better serve rural students and their communities. The symbiotic design allows schools to house and coordinate needed services for students, while often providing communities with programs that would otherwise be inaccessible. For instance, students desperately need dental care. Missing school to receive it creates academic challenges, as well as logistical issues for parents who must miss work to transport students to appointments. How much better academically if the student simply goes from class to the dentist in school, receives services and returns to class?

Helping to steer a board coalition, RSA helped secure \$250 million in state education aid to support Community School programming. Superintendents and others attending the summit first heard an overview of how Community Schools benefit rural schools and the communities that support them, then from Dr. Jason Andrews, New York State Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Andrews relayed how Windsor Central School District leverages community and higher education partners to advance academic achievement for its rural school.

New York State is a national leader in the Farm to School field, providing school grants for equipment and a per meal funding incentive to increase the rate of locally grown foods in schools. Offering obvious health benefits, as well as boosting the community's agricultural economy, Farm to School has already provided two rounds of funding to school districts. At the summit, school leaders talked with experts from the American Farmland Trust, then heard from rural school superintendents from Chautauqua County who have received state funding to revamp their school menu, purchase food processing and storage equipment and educate their staff and students on the value of better nutrition through locally grown foods. Here again, RSA helped lead the advocacy group to include Farm to School in consecutive state budgets.

Rural schools have become masterful at making the most of available resources. Community Schools and the Farm to School Program are two of the newest and most beneficial ways of improving the lives of rural children; great new resources in the battle to revitalize our rural communities and empower our students.

PLAYGROUND PHYSICS

EXCITING NEW GATEWAY TO STEM FOR RURAL STUDENTS

Physics is one of the gateway course into higher level STEM education, but relatively few students have sufficient opportunities to learn it in school. Only 63% of high schools in the U.S. offer physics course and only 41% of high school graduates actually take physics (compared with biology, where virtually all students participate.) Most students who do take physics come from low need school districts and higher socio-economic backgrounds.



Ever hear of the New York Hall of Science? Housed in the old 1964 World's Fair Visitor's Center in Queens, the Hall of Science is a fascinating, hands on educational experience. Recently the Hall of Science received a federal grant to develop a physics app to bring interactive science activities to rural middle schools.

Recognizing the need to bring physics instruction to a much broader array of students, the New York Hall of Science recently received a \$2.8 million US Department of Education grant to develop and implement a physics “app” that supports New York State’s learning standards. Specifically geared to the needs of rural students, the app (called Playground Physics) allows movement videos done on smartphones and personal tablets to be measured and graphed according to the core physics concepts of force, motion and energy. Each student records an activity of interest, then analyses the app-generated calculations embodied in the activity. Everything from a cartwheel to a volleyball game can serve to teach important scientific concepts.

The idea is to leverage children’s natural play and connect those actions to the concepts of physics, as well as engaging students’ emotions and translating them from an informal to a formal learning setting. Middle school is the focus of this program, given that middle school often determines a student’s attitude toward science and the courses they select in high school. Playground Physics consists of the digital tool, a physics curriculum and professional development for educators. The six week program is designed to be used alongside any existing middle school science curriculum, aligning with the Next Generation Science and New York Science Learning Standards.

Students film movement of their choice, then use the app to apply scientific principles. The instructional program is designed to improve educational outcomes through open ended exploration, imaginative learning and personal relevance. Simply put, it’s fun to use and it encourages deeper engagement in all of the STEM areas. The grant will support 10,000 middle school students’ engagement with physics.

Having been proven effective in significantly increasing students’ physics achievement in a randomized control trial in New York City schools, the program now moves to 50 rural schools in New York State, with an eye toward nationwide implementation. Your RSA serves on the program’s Advisory Board to ensure it meets the needs of rural schools. Several rural districts and BOCES are already participating.

For more information on Playground Physics, call 718-699-0005 or go to nysci.org.



FORMER RSA LEADER OF THE YEAR

TAKES ON NEW CHALLENGE

BY: MOLLY ISRAEL

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Catharine Young, New York state senator representing western New York and a staunch advocate for agriculture and economic development statewide, has been named director of the [New York State Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture](#) at [Cornell AgriTech](#). She will begin work in her new role March 11.

The Center of Excellence launched in September 2018; its mission is to grow New York's food, beverage and agriculture economy by serving as a hub for New York businesses to connect with the expertise and resources they need to innovate, grow and thrive. In the few months the Center of Excellence has been in operation, its team has engaged with more than 50 companies, providing mentorship and guidance to help food and agriculture startups raise more than \$12.3 million in 2018.

"Agriculture and food manufacturing are two of upstate New York's largest job creators, and Catharine Young has significant experience integrating farm business with food processors and championing initiatives that support the food and farming sector to push our region's economy forward," said Jan Nyrop, associate dean and Goichman Family Director of Cornell AgriTech. "We are very fortunate to have someone of Sen. Young's caliber to step into this role with a strong vision, statewide network and proven track record of growing businesses."

Young (R-57th) served with distinction in the New York State Legislature for almost two decades, representing most of the western Southern Tier and parts of the western Finger Lakes region. In a variety of leadership positions for six years in the New York State Assembly and 13 years as a state senator, she rose to become the first woman to chair the influential Senate Finance Committee. In the state Legislature, Young also served as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee and founded the Legislative Wine and Grape Caucus.

She sponsored legislation to create the New York State Council on Food Policy, of which she was also a member, and chaired the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. Within her district, Young helped expand many food and agriculture businesses including Fieldbrook Foods and Nuovo Castelli Cheese.

Young expressed gratitude for her time in public office, saying the decision to accept her new role wasn't an easy one.

"It was a very challenging decision to leave my service in the New York State Senate because I care so deeply about the people and issues facing my district," she said. "However, this new role will provide me with more direct opportunities to make progress in one of the industries that is closest to my heart.

"I grew up on a dairy farm," she said, "and know firsthand some of the challenges that those in the food and agriculture industry face and the opportunities that innovation, technology and business partnerships can bring to the industry. I am thrilled to continue making a difference in this new and enhanced statewide capacity."

Young said she is excited to join the Cornell University family: "I have had the privilege to work with Cornell University on a multitude of projects, especially as Agriculture chair and Senate Finance chair and as a former ex-officio member of the College of Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council. Cornell is a world leader in agriculture and a natural fit for pursuing the mission of the Center of Excellence."

"The Center of Excellence has the potential to make a tremendous impact on our state's economy," said Tom Schryver, executive director of Cornell's Center for Regional Economic Advancement. "With her leadership, I am confident that we will see more food and ag companies, more jobs and more leading-edge, ag-tech innovation in our state."

This article appeared in the Cornell Chronicle



FFA students from Pine Plain and Unadilla Valley gather around their state legislator in the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol Building in Albany.



RSA recently joined with over 300 school leaders as they met with state representatives at Longwood Middle School to discuss educational funding needs in the state budget



Dr. Gretchen Rymarchyk,
Deputy Director RSA

Deputy Directors Corner

Research News from Cornell

Virtual Field Trip Opportunities at the Seward House Museum



"AFTER A MAN HAS BECOME GREAT AND FAMOUS, HIS FRIENDS AND BIOGRAPHERS FIND, OR FANCY THEY FIND, ALL MANNER OF WONDERFUL THINGS HE SAID AND DID IN HIS YOUTH, INDICATING HIS EARLY PRESCIENCE OF HIS FUTURE GREATNESS." —SEWARD, JUNE 27, 1872

The Seward House Museum, located in Auburn, New York, is excited to collaborate with the Rural School's Association of New York to offer digital field trips to the Museum. Field trips have been demonstrated to have a profound impact on students, specifically those in rural and high-poverty areas (Greene, Kisida, Bowen, 2014.) However, despite the proven benefits, it can be difficult to find both the time and funding needed to schedule a field trip. We hope that by providing remote learning opportunities students can experience cultural institutes such as the Seward House in an accessible manner, which benefits teachers and students alike.

Built in 1816, the historic house, which now serves as a museum, offers curriculum tie-ins for grades 4,5,7,8, and 11, with a tour narrative focused on American history during the 19th century. The house belonged to Secretary of State William H. Seward who served on President Lincoln's cabinet during the Civil War and who proctored the purchase of Alaska; the house itself also served as a station on the underground railroad, and has ties to the women's rights movement as well. Throughout the tour students will be able to see and interact with the docent giving the tour on screen, and they will see the Museum and its contents as if they were there in-person.

The tours are customizable and can be tailored to focus on the needs of your curriculum and classroom, and can cover a range of topics: local, state, and national politics; 19th century living and travel; the Civil War; progressive movements of the 19th century such as immigration and education reform; and the campaigns to end slavery and increase women's rights.

A resource kit has also been developed for 4th and 5th grade classrooms, which contains pre- and post- visit activities that develop and check for understanding. The resource kit also list the NYS Social Studies standards achieved through a tour and can be found on our website.

If you're interested in scheduling a digital tour of the Museum, more information can be found on sewardhouse.org, or feel free to reach out directly by email to outreach@sewardhouse.org, as well as by phone at 315-252-1283.

Podcast: John Sipple and the 'Almighty Dollar' Project

Development Sociology Graduate student [Peter Fiduccia](#) sits down with Professor of Development Sociology, [John Sipple](#), to

discuss the core inspirations for his upcoming book project, 'The Almighty Dollar'. The conversation focuses on his time working as an external monitor appointed by New York State to study and mediate in the highly conflicted community of East Ramapo, New York; the subject of which has been widely publicized by ["This American Life"](#).

Gain access to the podcast at [this link](#).

Economic Revitalization

In your registration packets in July, and in a special emailing on August 23, 2018, you received a [summary report](#) on an article titled [*The Economic Status of Rural America in the President Trump Era and Beyond \(Goetz, Partridge & Stephens, 2018\)*](#). This article looked at what the research is saying about what works and what does not for rural economic revitalization in a variety of rural contexts (agricultural, manufacturing, resource extraction, etc.).

One promising strategy for economic revitalization entails a grassroots process of claiming **local** ownership over the **local** resources, instead of selling resources to outside companies who then turn around and make several times more money after processing and re-selling. [Here is an example](#) of a coal community that used electric cooperatives to switch to clean energy and keep wealth inside the community.

Recently, Ben Fink came to campus to talk about his work with [Appalshop](#), and relationship building, as a catalyst toward community revitalization, also in eastern Kentucky. His context is irrelevant, really; anyone can begin a process of listening, identifying common values, and making connections that help communities that feel stuck in economic decline work together – across differences – to capitalize on their strengths and become more together than any of them could individually. I encourage you to read more at the links below, and imagine how a Community School, especially in its early formation, could make the most of an approach like this.

[Kentucky Communities Unlock their Cultural Wealth to Lead the Way Forward.](#)

[After Coal, a Small Kentucky Town Builds a Healthier, More Creative Economy.](#)

[As coal jobs left, this Appalachian arts and culture institution gave residents reasons to stay.](#)

ICYMI (In Case You Missed It) Facebook posts since we last saw you:

3/5/2019: [Research: School Field Trips Give Significant Benefits](#)

3/4/2019: "Visiting museums helps students develop an appreciation of the history that surrounds them in New York, while also allowing teachers to meet NYS Social Studies standards. The Seward House Museum in Auburn, NY is offering virtual tours of their Museum to help make these benefits as accessible as possible - no matter where your school is located." Zachary Finn, Seward House Museum [WEBSITE](#)

2/28/2019: YES!! NY Rural school win! Please never hesitate to contact your representatives to let them know what's going on - yours could be the call that changes their mind! [Reed Backs Mental health Funding After Finger Lakes Superintendent Says District Has Crisis](#)

2/28/2019: In honor of National FFA Week, which was last week:



“

Hats off to the team that
highlights the National Blue and
Corn Gold across New York State!

KELSEY O'HARE, CORNELL COLLEGIATE PRESIDENT
DR. JEFF PERRY, CORNELL CFFA ADVISOR

2/27/2019: Again, National FFA Week was last week. In recognition:

“

...The NY Agricultural Education Outreach Staff,
located on Cornell's main campus, assist the FFA
State Officer Team in developing programming for
students and teachers alike. If it were not for this
team of individuals, New York State FFA would not
be able to accomplish their mission; to make a
positive difference in the lives of students by
developing their potential for premier leadership,
personal growth and career success through
agriculture education...

KELSEY O'HARE, CORNELL COLLEGIATE PRESIDENT
DR. JEFF PERRY, CORNELL CFFA ADVISOR

2/27/2019: A lot of us were on Winter Break last week, Feb 16-23. It was also National FFA Week. We have a couple of quotes we will be sharing with you this week, that our grad students put together. Here is the first one:



In celebration of National FFA Week, it is important to praise the professionals that support both current and new FFA Chapters across New York State. These individuals interact with agriculture education and FFA chapters across the state; from the shores of Long Island to the shores of Lake Erie...

KELSEY O'HARE, CORNELL COLLEGIATE PRESIDENT
DR. JEFF PERRY, CORNELL CFFA ADVISOR

2/26/2019: You can bet your Rural Schools Association is plugged into this initiative! Keep teaching tech to your students - in a few years, there will be jobs using technology to optimize NY's agriculture! [Digital ag is Cornell's newest radical collaboration initiative](#)

2/25/2019: This might be a good Upstate NY resource to keep an eye on for career exploration, community-based learning, community revitalization, and community school-type partnerships: [Upstate Venture Connect](#)

2/15/2019: Please get this information out to as many families as you can!

[Announcing NY Children's Medicaid System transformation: A Discussion with Children and Families.](#)

2/14/2019: Finland outpaces the US on many education measures. What are they doing in grade school that we are not? Here is a South Carolina Superintendent's perspective: [Lessons from Finland: Pickens County School District](#)

2/13/2019: A new and powerful research partnership, thanks to John Sipple, to tap into our rural schools to look at interventions for chronic absenteeism, college readiness, and college enrollment. Congratulations John, and we eagerly look forward to updates on your progress! [Cornell Partners in center to tackle rural schools' challenges.](#)

2/12/2019: Some good information about Head Start and Early Head Start: [Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships Annotated Bibliography.](#)

2/11/2019: New CaRDI Research & Policy Brief Series: [Addressing Rural Housing Challenges: What the USDA Can Do.](#)

2/8/2019: Encouraging story about innovation, peer support, and mental health in a low income school district. They did a nice job of basing this on some solid evidence, but please remember to read the whole article, including the weaknesses, and know that we need lots of follow up measures before we can say it worked. ['You can get through the worst': School lets teens lead approach to suicide, sex assault.](#)

2/7/2019: See RSA Executive Director's testimony from yesterday at 9h34min
mark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxwaHtFpCeg>



YOUTUBE.COM

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2019-2020 Executive Budget Proposal: Elementary/Secondary Ed.

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2019-2020...

2/7/2019: Southern tier and northern border need support! One page report on NY households with computers and broadband: [Patterns of connectivity in New York State: Households with computing devices and broadband internet.](#)

2/5/2019: I love seeing how we can weave together solutions for kids! [Building Protective and Promotive Factors in After-school](#)

2/4/2019: [Gather Around! Survey of Rural Schools and Communities.](#)

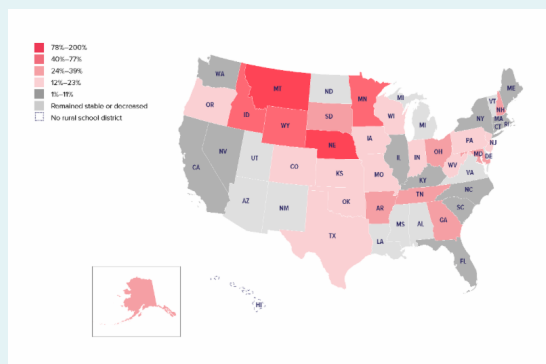
2/4/2019: Happy Black History Month, and welcome to the Black Lives Matter Week of Action. You don't have to have children of color in your school or classroom in order to teach equity. Some ideas for your school: [Black Lives Matter at School: How to Participate.](#)



Rural Student Homelessness Growing at 4x the National Rate

Student homelessness is on the rise dramatically across rural America. An estimated 1.4 million students are homeless across the country—a 3% increase nationwide since the 2013-14 school year. But during that same time, student homelessness grew by 11% in rural communities.

ICPH explores this side of the national homelessness crisis in a new report, *Student Homelessness in Rural America*. In this latest analysis, ICPH examines data from the U.S. Department of Education to gain a deeper understanding of the scope of rural student homelessness and what its rapid growth means for America's rural communities.



This growth is not confined to any one region. Since school year 2013-14, rural student homelessness increased in 38 states, 14 of which saw increases at more than twice the national rural growth rate. In 15 states, the number of rural homeless students grew even as total rural student enrollment declined.

The steep climb in rural student homelessness may be due in part to better identification practices at the school level. Increased identification means these children are more likely to receive resources they need, but it also reveals the underlying crisis of housing instability faced by many rural communities.

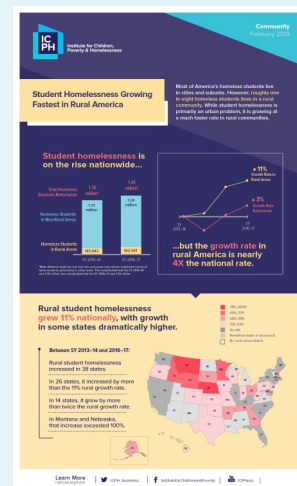
Though the homeless student population continues to be predominantly urban, policy responses often leave rural homeless students—who face fundamentally different challenges than their non-rural peers—undercounted and underserved. Any approach to student homelessness that ignores the local dynamics of the issue erases the one in eight homeless students who live in rural America.

[Explore The Report](#)

Quick Look: Student Homelessness in Rural America

Take a quick look at student homelessness in rural America with ICPH's new infographic, which provides an overview of the number of homeless students in rural and non-rural areas, the growth rate of student homelessness nationally vs. in rural communities, and a state-level breakdown of where rural student homelessness is growing and by how much.

[See the Infographic](#)



Tell Us About Rural Student Homelessness

ICPH wants to hear from those individuals and organizations working in rural communities. Share your perspectives about the reality of rural student homelessness by taking a quick survey.

[Take the Survey](#)

News You Can Use!



Mental Health Association of NY Press Release re: Online Training for School Staff
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4f7b4b_0eb2e33a7aca44109ea2b234f2e0f198.pdf



Phyllis Moen,
University of Minnesota

Changing How We Work: “research on the mismatch between outdated work-time and career/retirement scripts and 21st century workforce and economic realities.”

https://soundcloud.com/doingtr/ep-26-changing-how-we-work-with-phyllis-moen-university-of-minnesota?utm_source=CCE+Campus+Connections&utm_campaign=df219ca976-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_03_06_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_35e637ecd8-df219ca976-88348965



Decoding Worker “Reliability”: Modern Agrarian Values and Immigrant Labor on New York Dairy Farms[†]

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ruso.12267>



Addressing Rural Housing Challenges: What USDA can do1

<https://cardi.cals.cornell.edu/sites/cardi.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/RPB-Jan2019.pdf>



GOALS

- ✓ Increase efficiency
- ✓ Reduce costs
- ✓ Maintain quality

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For more information on these NYSSBA school services partners or others, contact Archa Wachowicz, Deputy Director of Business Development at 800-342-3360 or archa.wachowicz@nyssba.org



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