



# Special Education Support in Small/Rural School Districts

COSA Event Session 2, 2022



# Overview

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Introductions

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Small Schools Rock

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ODE Supports

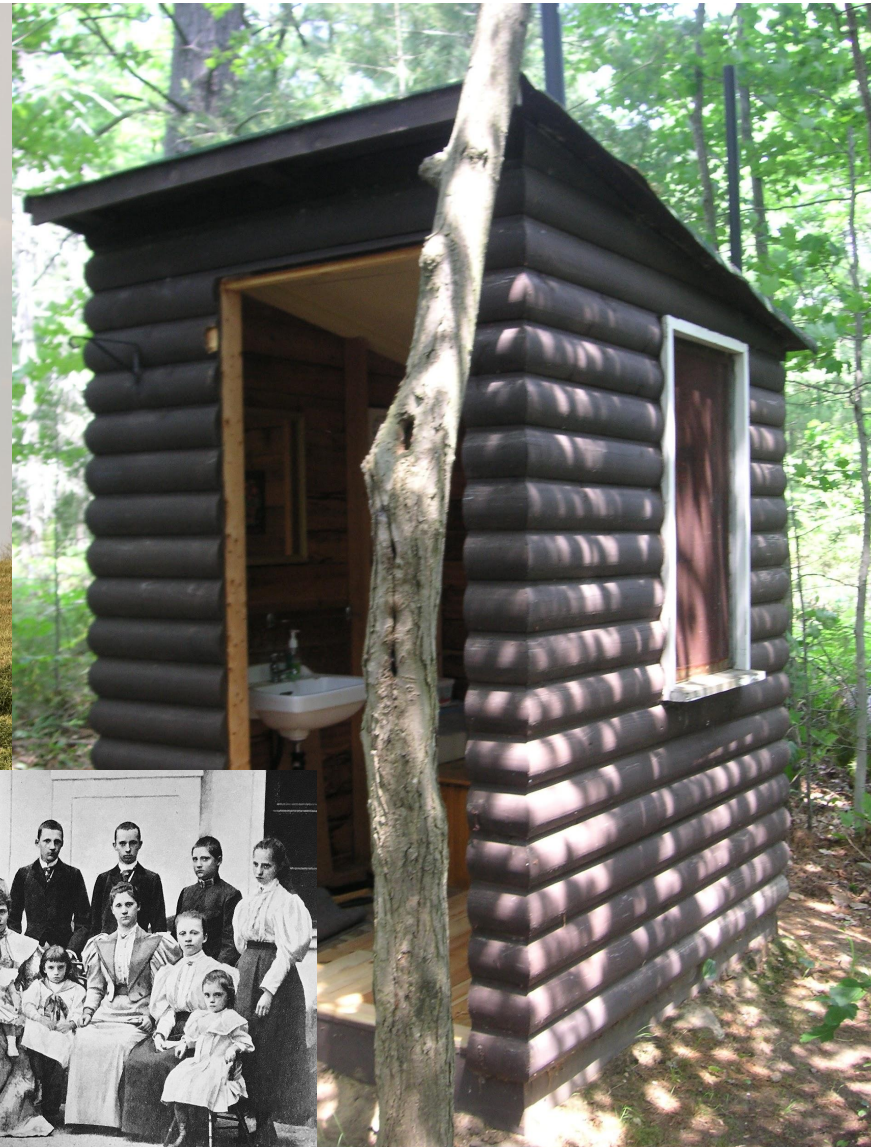
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Regional/ESD/Other Connections

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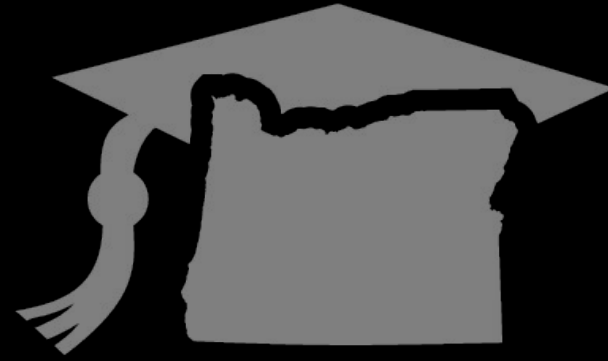
All-Star Panel/Ask the Experts











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# Smaller school support strategies

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## The trend:

1. Feelings of isolation and limited intervention teams are a barrier to rural school districts. Many are geographically removed from the the resources in their county or non-profit personnel that assist children, adolescents and families.
2. A limited response to needs and timeliness from skilled providers.
3. The needs are similar to larger regions and the assumption that rural does not have low incidence or high needs populations in comparison further dividing the resources.
4. Financial provisions to support the hiring of skilled interventionists is difficult.
5. The previous positions once developed and budgeted for have never been changed to match the escalation needs or changing paradigm of student needs.
6. All things falling under the guise of FAPE as needs increase and others fail - the reality is that all other county or agency supports are **voluntary** services, schools are **mandated** and this is often abused.
7. The attempts of outside practitioners and non-school staff asking for schools to assess and qualify without knowing the facts or how systems work.



# Small Rural Recovery and Improvement Strategies

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Mental health and behavior support roles from within:

1. Itinerant SEL Coordinator who is operative and “boots on the ground.”
2. PBIS and the reboot to address the old, the new, and the in between (Dr. Dale).
3. Parapro Academy and follow up ParaPro 101.
4. Sensory rooms, carts, and trained staff use of the materials.
5. First Hour Needs training
6. Agency collaboration with focus on agencies coming to the table with resources-not supervision (guise of FAPE).
7. Reassess the success of what is working and sunset the ineffective.
8. Build around what you need now, not what was designed in the past.





# Supporting SEL, Mental Health & MTSS in Small/Rural School Districts



# The Power of One

How 1 student, 1 staff member makes a HUGE difference in a  
small/rural school district

# Questions that impact a small/rural school significantly:

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## STUDENTS

- What happens when a student with significant medical needs moves into your district?
- What happens when...
- What happens when...

## STAFF

- How do you recruit new staff to your area?
- How do you retain the staff you already have?
- What happens when you can't find enough subs?
- What happens when you don't have related service providers to support students and serve them safely?
- What are professional development options and onboarding options for staff?



# Thank you for your time and energy!



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