



Appalachia Rising


CNA Education reviewed more than 275 studies written over the past 20 years (1995–2015) on education in the area dubbed “middle Appalachia”— mostly contiguous portions of Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. No such review has been done since 1983.





Research Findings


 **High school graduation rates** exceed the national average, but overall educational attainment lags the rest of the nation.


 **Cultural attitudes** toward advanced education influence college aspirations and enrollment.

 Youths have **few role models and little support** for pursuing higher education.

 The **role of educator** is a respected position to which many aspire because it enables them to enjoy a viable career in their home region.

 Teaching to externally generated, **rigorous academic standards** that may not resonate with all local residents is a challenge.

 The **high obesity rate** is a concern because of the relationship among obesity, general fitness, and academic performance.

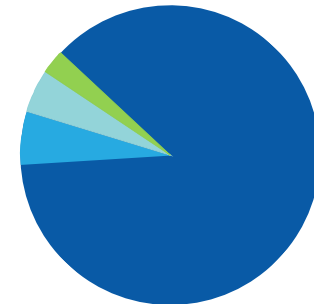
 State and regional **colleges and universities** have played a pivotal role in education improvement efforts.

About the Region

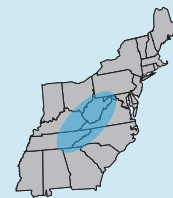
Population 9,053,102



Race
3% Other
5% Hispanic
6% Black
86% White



Poverty Rate



25.3% of middle Appalachia students live in poverty...



...compared with **20.8%** nationwide.

Graduation Rate

High school graduation rates exceed the national average.



79.2%


76.5%


50% 75% 100%


What Now?


“ Our hope at CNA Education is that this review will provide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers with critical information to understand and begin to address education challenges unique to middle Appalachia through data-informed initiatives. ”


Implications

 **College and career readiness** efforts should be closely aligned with current and future career opportunities and regional community development needs.


 **Educator preservice and inservice programs** should focus on teacher content knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science; and recruiting local teacher candidates in hard-to-staff content and program areas.

 **Curriculum and instruction** might be made more challenging, relevant, and engaging through the integration of place-based approaches with the teaching of rigorous academic standards.

 **Systemic capacity** can be enhanced by building on partnerships and lessons learned from prior initiatives. Particular consideration should go to involving parents and community leaders to ensure relevance and buy-in.

 **Health and wellness issues** are emerging in the region around childhood obesity and substance abuse. Educators will need guidance on effective programs for addressing them.

Further Research Needed

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- Programs supporting students from Appalachia in enrolling and persisting in college.
 - Career and technical education (CTE) programs.
 - Improving teacher and leader effectiveness through recruitment, development, and state improvement initiatives.
 - Implementation, impact, and sustainability of curriculum and instruction improvement initiatives.
 - Implementation and impact of technology to improve access to quality curricula and materials.
 - Characteristics of effective, sustainable community partnerships to improve education.
 - Health and wellness issues.

Read the full report at www.cna.org/centers/ipr/education/publications.

For other reports on the Appalachian region, Visit Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia at CNA at www.relappalachia.org.