

Rural School Definitions

NCES uses four categories, that are then broken out by local. You can look at the definitions here:

<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/definitions.asp>

According to NCES definitions our school districts break out as follows:

State or jurisdiction	Total	City			Suburban			Town			Rural		
		Large	Midsized	Small	Large	Midsized	Small	Fringe	Distant	Remote	Fringe	Distant	Remote
United States	13,491	190	178	396	2,497	342	246	536	1,076	874	1,582	3,145	2,429
Idaho	115	0	1	4	1	3	2	3	10	16	10	28	37

State Definition:

33-319. RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS – RURAL PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS. (1) A school district shall be considered a rural school district if it meets one (1) of the following two (2) criteria:

(a) There are fewer than twenty (20) enrolled students per square mile within the area encompassed by the school district’s boundaries; or

(b) The county in which a plurality of the school district’s market value for assessment purposes is located contains less than twenty-five thousand (25,000) residents, based on the most recent decennial United States census.

(2) A public charter school shall be considered a rural public charter school if the school district in which the public charter school is physically located meets the definition of a rural school district, pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. A public charter school that is also a virtual school shall be considered a rural public charter school if over fifty percent (50%) of its enrolled students reside within school districts that meet the definition of a rural school district pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

Other State Definitions

Colorado: A Colorado school district is determined to be rural based on the size of the district, the distance from the nearest large urban/urbanized area, and having a student enrollment of approximately 6,500 students or fewer. Small rural districts are those districts having a student population of fewer than 1,000 students. Rural school districts represent critical aspects of Colorado’s education system. Colorado has 147 Rural School Districts.

Oregon: Uses NCES and USDA Definitions and then breaks it up by urbanicity and income status.

Montana: Further break out rural schools by rural and small or rural and low income (Rural Low Income Schools – Federal Program).