

Making a big impact in rural school districts

Humboldt County School District, Nevada

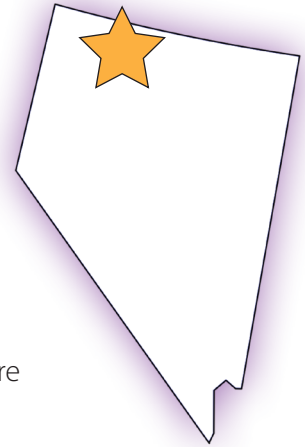
Population: 17,000

Median household income: \$67,000

Percentage of adults who have a 4-year college degree: 45% below the national average

Unique challenges: The predominant industries, agriculture and mining, offer high-paying professions. However, community leaders recognize the need to plan for a future where those jobs are not as stable or plentiful.

How they're implementing LENA: In 2017, Colby Corbitt, Principal of Winnemucca Grammar School, happened to see a story about Providence Talks on NBC Nightly News and set out to learn more. In 2021, they recruited 10 families from the two child care centers in Winnemucca for a LENA Home program, with plans to scale to 30 families in their second year. Initially, they're using Title I funding, with the intention of using ESSER funding in the near future.



“ We're not an impoverished community, but we have what I call 'educational poverty.' Families have never gone beyond high school, but they're making an exceptional wage. They don't really push school on their kids, and they don't get a lot of time with their kids. One goal is to increase the time they spend with their kids, to increase the time they spend talking with their kids, and teaching them the value of education so we have more well-prepared kids. ”

— Colby Corbitt, Principal at Winnemucca Grammar School

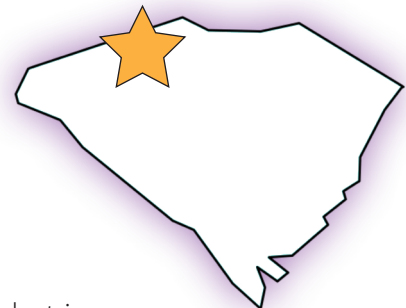
Cherokee County School District, South Carolina

Population: 54,000

Median household income: \$36,000

Percentage of adults who have a 4-year college degree: 40% below the national average

Unique challenges: The poverty rate is high (20.5%), and the predominant industries are manufacturing and retail. Economic development revolves around beautifying the county's greenways and waterways, making them an attractive stopping point for travelers on Interstate 85 (Cherokee County lies between Charlotte, N.C., and Greenville and Spartanburg, S.C.). Also important: establishing a public transportation system to increase residents' access to the county's services.



How they're implementing LENA: In 2015, the district secured a grant to improve 4-year-old kindergarten readiness through LENA Home. The following year, they added LENA Start to its program offerings. In 2021, they also implemented LENA Grow as professional development for their 3k teachers. They have served over 350 families.

“ Our work with LENA started as a way to educate parents on how they can become kindergarten ready. But even when LENA Grow came in, the parents started to come to us and say, ‘Can we be a part of this?’ ... Our district has very low DIAL-4 scores for kids entering 4K. They’ve historically fallen below the 24th percentile. For the children whose teachers did LENA Grow, their language and literacy scores have shot up to the 52nd percentile.

— Lisa Blanton, Coordinator of Early Childhood Education, Cherokee County School District ”

Bourbonnais 53 District, Illinois

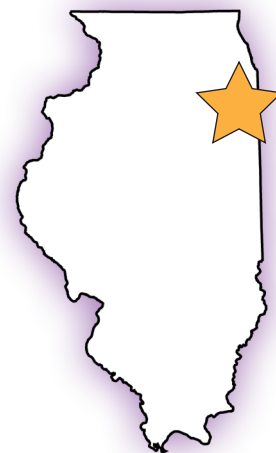
Population: 23,000

Median household income: \$66,000

Percentage of adults who have a 4-year college degree: 10% below the national average

Unique challenges: Bourbonnais’s proximity to Chicago has translated into consistent growth in economic development. Still, according to research conducted by the Erikson Institute, 32% of households in Bourbonnais live in poverty and 28% of students are vulnerable in at least one domain.

How they're implementing LENA: In 2018, Jim Duggan, Assistant Superintendent for Bourbonnais 53 District, discovered a strong relationship between KIDS scores (for children entering kindergarten) and MAP scores (for children completing kindergarten). As a result, he set out to devote more resources to earlier school-readiness interventions, expanding Title I funding in parent outreach and education from 1% to 10%. In 2019, the district implemented both LENA Grow and LENA Home and has served over 130 families.



“ We control a lot in terms of how resources are allocated to close achievement gaps, and if we could spend the same dollar on a 3-year-old and have a greater impact than we can on a 7-year-old, we have that responsibility. That readiness dollar spent on a family, instead of just impacting just one student with an intervention, you’re impacting everyone in that household and potentially multiple generations of people in that household.

— Jim Duggan, Assistant Superintendent, Bourbonnais 53 District ”

Demographics from [statisticalatlas.com](https://www.statisticalatlas.com).



For more information, contact:

LENA | 5525 Central Avenue | Suite 100 | Boulder, CO 80301-2820
303-441-9085 | info@lena.org | www.LENA.org

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