PERCEPTIONS HELD BY SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS OF A RURAL, SMALL K-8 SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN APPALACHIA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS HELD BY SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS OF A RURAL, SMALL K-8 SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN APPALACHIA: A CASE STUDY.

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This qualitative study examined stakeholders’ perceptions relative to a rural, small school located in southern Appalachia. Using a background questionnaire, seven stakeholders were selected to tell their stories and share their perceptions of a rural, small K-8 school. All interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and followed up by the researcher. The research vehicle for this study was a case study utilizing the naturalistic inquiry method.

Using the Constant Comparison Method of analysis, four major findings emerged: (a) The positive influences that a rural, small school environment has on schooling, (b) The negative impact that inadequate funding has on a rural, small school, (c) The lack of preparation of students for high school and higher education, and (d) The positive influence of strong principal leadership in the school.

This study added to the knowledge base of rural, small K-8 schools and created future research questions relative to the health and well being of rural, small schools.