



Education Unscripted & Xplored Transcript

Episode 5 | Rural Realities: Attracting and Supporting Educators in Small Communities

Kari Vogelgesang (00:07):

Welcome back to Education Unscripted & Xplored with Kari and Mark, where we talk honestly about what's working, what's strained, and what's evolving across K through 12 and higher education.

Mark McDermott (00:19):

We ground our conversations in research, lived experience, and the real conditions educators and schools are navigating every day, especially when the solutions aren't simple.

Kari Vogelgesang (00:30):

Today's conversation is super exciting. We're joined by a guest who lives in the realities of rural education every single day. He is an amazing colleague and somebody that has evolved over time into a close friend of mine. His name is Jason Wester. He's the superintendent of West Burlington Community School District, and we are so happy that you're with us here today, Jason.

Mark McDermott (00:58):

Thanks for being here, Jason. And maybe before we dive in, if you don't mind, just give us a little bit of background about your history and then what your role is now, please.

Jason Wester (01:09):

Sure. I think what I like to start out with is I got my undergraduate from the University of Northern Iowa, my master's from Western Illinois, and then my EDD from the University of Iowa. So I said really when I introduced myself to my staff is I attended the only two important universities in the state of Iowa. And so no, I'm excited. I started my educational career as a teacher and a building principal in Muscatine. Served six years as a superintendent in Tipton, Iowa. And then my wife and I moved down to the West Burlington area where we've been for the last two years. And so I feel fortunate to work with an incredible staff. We have a lot of fun, but we also work hard to make sure that we make a difference in kids' lives, both instructionally and emotionally, and try to meet those needs that wherever they fall on that continuum of SEL and instruction.

Kari Vogelgesang (02:10):

Well, we really, like I said, we really appreciate you taking the time to be here with us. We know how busy you are. I know that you are very passionate about what you do and you are just in absolutely everything across the district and your community. So I think you're just a really great role model for school administrators and teachers and community members. So thanks for pausing and being with us. I do want to say before we go any further, and as always, the views expressed here are our own and not those of the University of Iowa or the College of Education here at the University of Iowa.

Mark McDermott (02:47):

Thank you for that disclaimer, Kari. You welcome. We always got to work that in. You are welcome. Jason, my first connection was going to be my dad was a high school teacher, then a principal, then a superintendent at a smaller district. I grew up in Trayr at North Tama and go Red Hawks. And so that was going to be my first connection, but then I didn't even realize my daughter was a leatherneck. So I spent a little time going to basketball games in Macomb, Illinois as well. Yeah. So go western. Yeah. So let's dive in a little more serious business here. Talking a little bit about, one of the things that is often in the news, often gets discussed is teacher shortages. And a lot of times when we're talking about teacher shortages, educator shortages, the focus will be on the urban schools, the larger school districts, because just raw numbers, they'll have more openings and those sorts of things.

(03:39):

What could you tell us maybe a little bit about, from your perspective, what are maybe people missing out in that conversation when it comes to the rural districts and the smaller schools?

Jason Wester (03:50):

I think the biggest thing is, and then the narrative and the \$50,000 and 62 made a huge difference. And I think you guys hopefully are seeing it in the pipeline at the university level. But when the narrative that's out there is that we've got 99% of our positions filled, and that's probably a true statement. But what the continued conversation doesn't go into is the fact that people are serving in areas that they didn't go to school for. They're getting what we call a class B. So they're not certified in that area, but they have X number of years to get that endorsement. And so we may have somebody that's teaching high school science that had some science classes that would give them a threshold to get a class B or an executive director's decision to serve in that position one year so then they can get enough coursework to get that class B.

(04:48):

We're having to share more positions with other districts. So we have sharing agreements with Danville, we have sharing agreements with Burlington, and we have sharing agreements with Madiapolis schools

where we're sharing staff because all of us can't fill that position. We're offering alternatives at the high school level to meet some CTE requirements. The shortage of FCS teachers, family consumer science teachers says, okay, we can't find any of those, but if we offer safety, like a safety class, public safety, we can meet that requirement by the state. So while the pipeline is getting better and we're filling positions, it might not be with the best person. Like when I was an elementary principal in Muskegon, if we would have a third grade opening, we'd have 30 to 40 applicants for that position. And now if we have a third grade opening, we might have five to seven candidates.

[\(05:57\)](#):

And so when you have a smaller pool, you might not have that rockstar superstar, you may get somebody to fill a position rather than somebody that is going to have an incredible impact long term on the student experience. So the ability to fill positions is getting easier, but there's a lot of logistics involved in it. And I think the candidate pools, and again, kudos to recognizing that we need to focus on teacher pay, that people want to get paid what they're worth. I mean, if you're going through a university program, you could potentially exit with \$100,000 in student debt. And if you were starting out a few years ago at 32,000 as or 38,000 as a starting teacher to pay off those student loans, you may be looking to go into the private sector where you could start out at 75 to 100,000, and then you're losing some pretty good people because the people I know in the private sector, a lot of them will say, "We don't really care what that degree is in, as long as you have that degree and you've got the ability to set goals, work through a program, and you have the ability to learn." And those people, just like in education, when we interview people, we look for talent as opposed to credentials because we can teach them and give them the tools they need to be successful.

[\(07:33\)](#):

And so we're competing not now just with surrounding districts, we're also competing in the workforce with private industry. So I think that was a long answer to a pretty simple question, but I think that it reflects the challenges that we're facing in education.

Kari Vogelgesang [\(07:55\)](#):

Absolutely. No, I think it was a really comprehensive answer. And I think you brought up a few points that I want to circle back to that I think are really good points that people don't always think about. You talked about when you have openings in your district and you're choosing from just a handful of candidates and what can end up happening then when you have a smaller number, a smaller pool to draw from what can end up happening is you're not getting like these really highly qualified candidates and teachers in your classroom. I'm wondering then about recruitment. I oftentimes think about this for rural districts. I was born and raised in Iowa, raised in a rural community myself, and I know that that recruitment piece can be so challenging for rural districts. Teachers talked a lot to us about how, well, my spouse won't be able to find employment or they won't be able to provide enough programs that we want for our own children, so on and so forth.

[\(09:01\)](#):

Can you speak to us a little bit about that recruitment? Are you trying to do something a little bit different to attract and recruit teachers in West Burlington that maybe some people aren't? Do you have new and fresh ideas for us?

Jason Wester [\(09:16\)](#):

I think the one thing that we need to do is it's important to tell our story that there's some people that are drawn to a rural experience because we don't have some of the challenges of larger and urban

districts. We don't have some of the behavioral challenges. We don't have some of the politics. But what we can do is say that right now as the superintendent, I know every teacher's name. I can walk down the hall and talk to every teacher and be able to call them by name. I know all the paras, I'm in the kitchen, I know every single custodian. So I know of when you only have a staff of 160 total employees, you get to know them personally. You can say, "Hey, how was the fishing over the weekend?" Or, "How's your mom doing?" I know that you've had to take some sick leave because of some of those challenges that she's facing.

[\(10:13\)](#):

So I think that you can streamline some of the things that get lost in the organizational structure in an urban district. And so I think that there is some people that are going through your program, Northern Iowa, the other university and the state that want to work in a smaller district where they know the people they work with on a personal level and they're just not an employee number, they're an actual person. And I think that how you tell your story is important because if you don't tell it in a way that promotes your district and can advocate on those points that I just touched on, somebody else is going to tell it and it's not going to be probably as favorable as the narrative that you can tell.

Kari Vogelgesang (11:07):

I think that is beautiful advice. I really, really do. I think you just, it's not just about spinning it, but it's a truth and something that I think people can be really drawn to, especially in this day and age right now, like slowing it down, being more personable, really getting to know your community. These are all really great selling factors for going into, to go into a rural community.

Mark McDermott (11:33):

Yeah. Well, and we have to talk a lot with our students about the fact that part of the discernment process for them is not just thinking the situation you grew up in is the only situation you could teach in, right? That there are opportunities out there in different sorts of school districts that you might be interested in. That's part of the reason we have to try to give them varied experiences, those sorts of things. Yeah.

Jason Wester (11:57):

And just to piggyback that on Mark, is that one of my favorite human beings and administrator I was fortunate to work with and that you know as well and that currently serves as a principal at your school or your son's district is that he made the comment to me is, "Mo money, no problems." And that I think that that can also be a recruiting tool, that just because that initial paycheck is going to be bigger and what is that cost benefit analysis to say, what is happiness, peace of mind, having a personal connection with the people you work with, what is the dollar value to that? So I think that when you can talk to students, student teachers, you can talk to prospective candidates that sure, you can go over to a surrounding district that may have a five to 10,000 student population, and you may get another \$700 a month, but what is that toll going to take on not having that connection at the workplace that you get out of bed and look forward to going and seeing and being part of a community and feeling a sense of community.

[\(13:21\)](#):

So I don't know that you can quantify a dollar amount to what that connection is. And so I think it's important as young people go, and I was one of those young people at many moons ago, is that initially we knew, my wife and I, we wanted to be part of a community that we felt we had a connection to. And

I think that as candidates go and it's become more so now, is when they interview, they're interviewing us just as much as we're interviewing them. And with this shortage, it's important that I think in that interview process, you're able to establish that connection so they can decide, "Hey, this is a good fit. It may not be the same dollar, but I feel like I've connected to the people that I interviewed with, not only the building leader or the district leader, but I'm also feel like I connected to the community and this is a place that I, when I wake up in the morning, I don't dread going to work.

[\(14:29\)](#):

I look forward to going to work."

Mark McDermott (14:30):

Yeah, that's maybe a good segue to sort of a bigger picture question. We've talked a little bit about the specifics of recruitment and making sure you have the educators. Talk maybe, Jason, just more in general about education and your experience over the course of your career. What have been some of the things that you would see as shifts that are different now than they were five or 10 years ago?

Jason Wester (14:57):

And I'm not saying this in a disparaging way at all. I think our folks in Des Moines are doing the best they can to serve the communities that they represent. But when I first got in education, there was a big emphasis on local control, that the duly elected board members were responsible for representing and instilling the values of that community into their board policies. And over the past few years, it seems like there's been a shift that Des Moines is having more of a role in influencing local policies related to instruction, accountability. We just talked about it, like even to the point where they want to be able to legislate the ability of how people collect money at sporting events, saying that you have to have a cash option. Well, if a board has made a decision that they want to go cashless for efficiencies for auditing purposes, that should be a local decision.

[\(16:02\)](#):

But we've got legislatures now talking about this is not going to be something local districts can decide, but we're going to tell you you have to do this. So I think the biggest shift for me is that the role that legislature has played in local decision making by duly elected boards and building and district leaders.

Mark McDermott (16:26):

This will get me in trouble with my mom. I'm not trying to minimize what you just said, Jason, but I actually, when that bill was first proposed, I asked my mom if she was the impetus for that, because I can absolutely see Linda McDermott showing up at a game having only cash and the people saying, "Nope, you got to have a credit card." And saying, "Wait a second." But I'm not taking away from- That was

Jason Wester (16:51):

An example, and I don't ... And just so you know, for the record, we are not a district that only is cashless, but I know that if a district and a board has made that decision, I don't know. Again, it goes back to the idea of local control and knowing the board knowing their community.

Mark McDermott (17:10):

There's reasons that they've made a decision that they've thought about deeply. Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Kari Vogelgesang (17:14):

Yeah. No, I agree with that. Side note, I went to a wrestling meet recently at a high school and it was cashless. I was fine with that. I took out my phone and did the thing, right? But I also was like, "Yeah, I can see some people walking in here." You're going

Mark McDermott (17:31):

To have to teach my mom.

Kari Vogelgesang (17:33):

Yeah. Yeah. I can see that happening.

Jason Wester (17:36):

Maybe that was a poor example.

Kari Vogelgesang (17:37):

No, it was a great example. I just think it's a funny one too.

Mark McDermott (17:40):

It's funny that you said that

Kari Vogelgesang (17:42):

Because- I know it was a great example.

Mark McDermott (17:43):

I did tell my mom once, I call it the Linda McDermott bill, but yeah, I don't think she appreciated my humor.

Kari Vogelgesang (17:49):

I also was out of practice sitting on bleachers. I had to sit there for a while and boy, that is not fun. Takes a while. Those days are over for me. Okay. When we're thinking about right now, because we're really wanting to try to highlight some of the really spectacular things about rural communities and teaching in a rural district, but we're also trying to work through some of the challenges for sure that are barriers to getting teachers to come to rural districts and to stay in rural districts. So when you're thinking about these two things, what are your biggest worry for rural districts right now? And then also on the flip side of that, what are you most excited about for rural school districts?

Jason Wester (18:36):

Okay. Well, first of all, and again, this is ... I'm trying not to be political. And I think that, again, I prefaced it with legislatures are doing the best they can in Des Moines to do what they can for the communities they serve. I think the biggest challenge for us over the years has been what's happening with the AEAs. When you, with the AEA structure, it used to be, I use the analogy, it used to be a buffet where regardless of the district size, you could go and you could go back and get as much as you want as often as you want, and you could get whatever you wanted. So if we had a high need for literacy support, no

matter the size of the district, you could have literacy support on a regular basis. And the bigger districts supported that because of their flow through dollars.

[\(19:32\)](#):

So if I was like here in West Burlington, Burlington is getting so much money that used to flow directly to the AEAs as part of legislation, and all the districts would have their flow through dollars, and then there was a big pot of money that could go there, and that would support their entire staff. And then all the districts would benefit because of the amount of money that was going to AEAs, especially from those larger districts. So when that money went back to the districts and not at AEA, it became more of an a la carte, and it was a paper service. And so West Burlington, our AA money that we get 100% of now is only \$54,000. And so when you're a consultant, you're paying almost \$1,000 a day, you're having to pick and choose, go through that menu and pick those all the card options.

[\(20:32\)](#):

And so you're having to say, okay, who is my consultant going to be? Does that person have professional capital with our staff that if they come in and provide professional development for them, are they going to say, yes, 100% I agree with this, or is it somebody that doesn't have that capital with them? And if that capital doesn't exist, where are you going to spend those dollars? Do you just kick it straight back to AEA? And then if you don't kick it straight back to them, they're having to make staffing decisions. And so I think the biggest challenge for smaller districts, rural districts, is navigating that AEA funding bill and having to continue to provide services related to staff professional development and professional learning related to literacy, numeracy, social studies, science, social work, and all those things. And how do we equip our teachers with the skills they need to provide that educational experience that's at a high level that competes with those dollars that a more urban district, instead of 54,000, they're getting two million or half a million and are able to say, "I want this person here one day a week for the entire year." And so I think that it's created a class system that if it's where the haves have all they want, continue to have all they want, or you're in a rural district and you're having to be very strategic in how you're spending those AEA dollars and getting the support to support the teachers at the classroom level to support those kids.

Kari Vogelgesang [\(22:15\)](#):

I tell you what, I think that was just a beautiful way of explaining to people why this change in the way that we're funding AEAs and how those dollars are being pushed to the district and how you're able to use them. I think you did a really good job of explaining the issue with this change. I think a lot of times people have a hard time understanding why it's such a big deal, but I do think that the thing that we've heard across the board, particularly from school administrators and even educators, but school administrators in particular is like, it's just creating more of a discrepancy between urban and rural districts.

Jason Wester [\(23:01\)](#):

Can I put more caveat into that in conversation and I should have led with that, is I think that for too long, and when it was first talked about as the AEs got on the legislative radar, there was a lot of pushback and not wanting to come to the table and work together. And so the AEA administrators that I've talked to, and they're all great human beings, and they all in hindsight say, "We knew we needed to make some changes. If we would've come to the table and worked together, we could have come up with something that worked for everybody and we would do it with them rather than having it done to us." And I think it's the same thing that happened with the educational savings accounts. I think that was

a priority for a number of legislatures in Des Moines and they had some ideas and they wanted to say, I think at one point it was like just \$2,400 a year and like, let's come to the table and work together and be part of the solution rather than doing it with them rather than having it done to them.

[\(24:12\)](#):

And I think that as educators and school leaders, we need to be more cognizant in the future if there are things that are prioritized by, in Des Moines, that we need to be part of the solution and work together and because I think the legislatures that I've talked to have all said, if the pushback hadn't been there and you would have come to the table with an open mind about how we can make the system better, that we could have come up with a solution that what didn't seem as draconian as what it ended up as. So I think that there's culpability on both sides that we need to be open to change in education and we need to be open to new ideas. And I think that the idea is we're going to continue to do this because we've always done it this way, is not going to be an effective strategy to land in a place that's workable for both sides.

[\(25:13\)](#):

Yeah.

Mark McDermott [\(25:14\)](#):

Do you think we've mentioned on every episode of this podcast that when it comes to these issues in education, it's not a simple, "Here's the right answer, here's the wrong answer." And I think what you're saying, Jason, like everything you're talking about is sort of highlighting that idea of we've got these complex issues, we're all working on them. It would be great if there was this manual and we said, "Do it this way and it's going to be great for everybody, but if you do it this way, it's going to be terrible for everybody." And that's just not the reality. There's just so much complexity to all of these issues.

Kari Vogelgesang [\(25:52\)](#):

It's so

Mark McDermott [\(25:53\)](#):

True. Nuance, complexity, all of that. Yeah.

Kari Vogelgesang [\(25:55\)](#):

Yeah. We talk about this every episode, Jason, how we hear these soundbites coming through the media, social media, on whatever news outlet of your choice. And when I listen to these soundbites, and I know Mark, you're the same way, I just cringe because I know they only get 30 seconds or 20 seconds or a minute, but it oversimplifies it and you're not able to truly ... The population, the communities aren't truly able to understand the complexity of the whole thing and the decisions that are being made and the impact of those decisions. I had faculty senate yesterday and general counsel came and kind of walked us through looking at different scenarios and judging these scenarios with regards to our first amendment rights and academic freedom. And at the end of the ... And we did this for an hour and a half, and at the end of that session, really what I walked away with, well, it always depends on facts and context.

[\(27:00\)](#):

There is no simple answer to any of these scenarios and any of these issues that come up. And it reminded me of our podcast today, which is we always subtle on that. Sometimes we hear things and

we think that's a terrible decision, but we're making this judgment without all of the facts and all of the context.

Mark McDermott (27:18):

Yeah. So here's the other thing that happens, Jason, on our podcast. Mark will start asking a question and just sort of wander off and then come back and hope that there's a question in there. So I'm building off of this idea of complexity and then trying to bring it into a very specific scenario for us in our teacher ed program, but then I think related to what you do. One of the things that we have always done, as long as I've been here, is we have not allowed students to student teach at their home school where they attended school, right? There's a lot of conversation right now amongst my colleagues in roles like mine about maybe changing that because of data that's showing high percentage of students coming back to their home schools to teach once they get done. And so, that's a very specific issue for us, obviously, but this idea of we don't want to put a student in a situation where, especially if they're doing secondary ed maybe as a student teacher and they're pretty familiar with the students they're teaching or their teachers are treating them more like a student.

Jason Wester (28:29):

I get it. Yeah.

Mark McDermott (28:30):

But what do you think about that?

Jason Wester (28:32):

I think, again, I was a terrible high school student. I think I graduated with a 2.0 grade point average and spent as much time in the principal's office as I did anywhere else. And so do I think I would have done well? Fortunately, I was an elementary, middle school major, and so I think I would have been okay, but I think that as we look at how we recruit people and we look at the cost of higher ed anymore, I student taught in Clinton, which was just far enough away from us to teen that it wasn't going to be feasible for me to live at home. And so you have some added expense with the cost of an education. And I know there's some talk about stipends for teacher, I mean, in those internships and stuff, but

[\(29:23\):](#)

Especially at the secondary level, I mean, you put a 20-year-old kid in there with potentially somebody that they were at a party with a freshman and that person's a sophomore or junior, what is the relationship? What is the dynamic? And I think that it gets too close, but if there's other locations within the district, especially larger districts, I think it could work. But again, you talked about complexity, I don't know that there's a simple answer to it. Maybe it's like within a 30-minute commute. I mean, you can't it be at the high school level, it can't be in the same community, but we're going to work hard to probably try to find you something within a 30 mile radius.

[\(30:11\):](#)

But I think cost has to be a factor in that when you're having to pay for rent, you're having to pay for groceries, you're having to go back and hit your seminar classes and stuff. So I think that it would be great, but I recognize that especially at the secondary level, that when you have 21 year olds going and student teaching with people that are still colleagues or may have spent time on the same band or co-curricular activities, how do you all of a sudden separate that friend group from the professional lens? It's the same thing I think with teachers that become administrators going back and being an

administrator in a building that they were a teacher at. And I've had to talk to a number of administrators is all of a sudden you can be friendly with people, but you can't be their friends because now you're evaluating them. You're not going to be going over to the local, you're not going over to Mickey's on Friday after work and having beer and burgers.

[\(31:23\)](#):

One of the best pieces of advice when I became a principal was one of the principals, everybody used to go after a football game over to the head coaches place or one of the coaches and then you'd sit around and you'd have beers. And I said, "God, you just made a walkthrough. You walked by, congratulated everybody and you left." And he said, "It's pretty hard to sit and drink beer with somebody on Friday night and have to call them in and tell them that they're going to be on a performance improvement plan on Monday morning." So I think that,

[\(31:53\)](#):

And that's hard for adults that have already gone through administrator training, have already been a teacher, but asking an undergrad to go and put them, being able to separate the idea that you can be friendly with somebody, but you can't be friends anymore. And I think that you create a power dynamic that's really hard for putting that undergrad in a situation where you have the potential that you're setting them up for failure rather than success. So I can see both sides of it. And I think there's some logistics that can be worked out, but I definitely think the cost of higher ed anymore is something that also needs to play into that conversation.

Mark McDermott [\(32:36\)](#):

Yeah. I agree. Agreed. Yeah.

Kari Vogelgesang [\(32:39\)](#):

Okay. We're going to leave on a positive note. So my final question for you, I'm actually kind of going back to what I asked earlier, which was the second part to one of my questions is, what are you most excited about moving into the next year, two years, three years, five years, 10 years down the road in education? It doesn't even have to be specific to rural education and rural communities if you don't want it to be, but what keeps you going? What really excites you? And you can't say the students, like that's an obvious-

Jason Wester [\(33:18\)](#):

No, but I would say the thing that I'm most excited about is that the lens of what success after high school looks like has transformed from when I was in school, it used to be, my parents would always say, "Hey, you can't get that D because you need to have at least a two point to get into a state university." The expectation was always the only path to success was going to college. And I think the thing that I'm most excited about right now as we've adopted our portrait of a graduate and looking at those competencies and making sure that academically prepared learner, a citizen of character and wellbeing, somebody that has good communication and collaboration skills, and having that idea of transforming our school experience into multiple pathways for success after graduation, knowing that college, junior college, apprenticeship, internships and work going right into the workforce are pathways to success.

[\(34:30\)](#):

That through our welding program and our woodworking program and our CTE experiences, kids are coming out with internships that they're doing while in high school and walking into full-time \$60,000 a year jobs. The thing that I'm most excited about is kudos to the legislature. We talked about some of the

challenges they've created, but the idea that they've put a focus on IJAG, work-based learning, CTE, and multiple pathways to success after high school, rather than just that tradition that probably most of us sitting at this table experienced when they were in high school and going through the system.

Kari Vogelgesang (35:14):

That is a beautiful answer. We also talk a lot about this too, Jason, and I agree with you a thousand percent. I think this is one of the good things that's come out of some of our legislation and a focus that I am really happy to see, not just school administrators, but educators and parents in our communities really embracing. I think we did some unintentional damage to children, to some of ... And I can even think of some of my own peers growing up, making them believe that the only way they could be successful and their only worth was around their grades and if they got into college and what college they got into. And that's just so untrue and so unfair.

Mark McDermott (35:59):

Yeah.

Kari Vogelgesang (36:00):

Okay. Well,

Mark McDermott (36:01):

I'm going to just say thanks before Kari wraps it up. I feel very fortunate that I got to teach at a pretty small school, a sort of medium-sized school, and a large school and experience lots of different situations. But I also feel very ... I'm very proud of the fact that I went to a smaller rural school when I was a student. And I very much appreciate you joining us today, Jason, but also more so appreciate everything you're doing as a leader and promoting the needs of your students, the needs of your faculty, the needs of your staff. And just the way that we hadn't met until today, but the way I hear you talking about your role, your job, the things that you do, to me, you're exactly the right kind of leader that we need in places like West Burlington and in smaller rural districts, but really any district in the state.

[\(36:51\)](#):

So thanks for everything you do to support everybody that you're working with.

Kari Vogelgesang (36:55):

Yeah. And if you're listening from a rural community, we just want you to know that we really do see you, that your work matters and it's shaping the future of education in ways that oftentimes go unnoticed. We hope that you tune in for our next episode. And as always, if you have ideas for topics or questions you'd like us to explore, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at btlc@uiowa.edu or scsmh-main@uiowa.edu. And as always, we are forever cheering you on.