

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Colorado Commission on Higher Education

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NEWS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS WITH K-12 TO IMPROVE EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

Federal grant to assist rural educators, improve teacher quality

Denver – The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) recently announced an effort to extend professional development and college coursework to educators in small, rural school districts, with the goal of boosting K-12 student achievement by improving teacher quality throughout the state.

The effort is being funded by more than one million dollars in federal grants, known as the Improving Teacher Quality Grants, to fund partnerships between institutions of higher education and school districts. The grants are part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, formerly known as No Child Left Behind.

“Studies consistently tell us that the greatest potential to influence children's education is a teacher,” said DHE Executive Director Rico Munn. “That is why this partnership is so important. The more that higher education and K-12 can work together to help our teachers through professional development, the more we are helping our students succeed.”

School districts that will benefit from the partnerships include Montezuma-Cortez RE-1, Monte Vista C-8, and North Conejos RE-1-J in the southwest part of the state; Trinidad 1, Huerfano RE-1, Rocky Ford R-2, and Pueblo 60 in the southeast part of the state; Weld County S/D RE-8 to the north; and Adams County 14 and Adams-Arapahoe 28J (Aurora) in the metro area.

Four of these districts failed to meet federal guidelines for qualified teachers and annual student progress for three consecutive years. All of the districts serve student populations, 20% of which come from families with incomes that fall below the federal poverty line.

Projects at Colorado colleges and universities to receive grant funding include:

- The CSU School of Teacher Education and Principal Preparation, as well as the College of Natural Sciences, which will partner with ten high-needs rural and urban high schools to increase thirty science teachers' knowledge and qualifications.
- Metropolitan State College, which will continue its fifth year of math courses, using Web technology and distance education to increase the amount of information available to 150 K-12 math teachers, particularly those who are teaching outside of the content area in which they have their college degree.
- Regis University's Masters of Arts in Education program, which will partner with Aurora Public Schools to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) professional development to 46 teachers and administrators.
- The University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Colorado School of Mines, and Pueblo District 60, which are all partnering to improve how 120 teachers assess students' progress and use test results to make decisions about how best to educate students.

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