



NEWS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORTS K-12 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Grant awarded to CU-Colorado Springs, school districts to improve teacher quality

Denver – The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) has awarded \$290,000 in federal funding to the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) to support their work with Harrison School District 2 and Colorado Springs School District 11 in training educators of young English language learners.

The Improving Teacher Quality grants are designed to support partnerships between institutions of higher education and school districts. The grants are part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and are distributed to states for disbursement.

A total of six institutions applied for the latest round of funding, which was focused on addressing the specific literacy needs of English language learners in grades pre-kindergarten through 3. The sole awardee was notified Feb. 1.

The DHE has awarded more than \$800,000 in the federal grants in recent months, with the goal of improving K-12 achievement by boosting teacher quality.

Eight institutions applied during a previous funding round in November. The DHE then awarded nearly \$600,000 in federal funding to three recipients. Two of the institutions – Metropolitan State University of Denver and the University of Northern Colorado – received support for their work with rural teachers in math. The third recipient, the University of Colorado Denver, received support for its partnership with Aurora Public Schools to address early literacy and language development in young English language learners.

Colorado has seen rapid growth in the number of English language learners in its K-12 schools, with the state Department of Education reporting a more than 250 percent increase since 1994. Most of that growth has been in the elementary grades.

In its grant application, the UCCS College of Education said work with its two district partners will include “a sustained program of workshops, discussions, online resources, an intensive summer institute and structured observation sessions” for teachers. The project also calls for “the valuing of students’ identities” as emerging bilingual learners.