



# RURAL NET

November 3, 2016

## Custer County Engages Students and Community to Attract Teachers

Custer County School District has launched a community-based initiative to attract teachers. Through a partnership with a local bank, the

District is converting an un-occupied preschool building into four apartments in an effort to attract teachers to their rural community.

Students enrolled in the District's building trades classes are doing the work and the District expects to rent the apartments for \$500 per month. The students are in the demo phase of the project this Fall and the District anticipates having two apartments ready for occupancy by July 1, 2017.

**For more information contact Superintendent Mark Paylor at: <mailto:mpayler@gmail.com>**

## Wiggins Exposes Students to Exciting Manufacturing Career Opportunities

Wiggins School District's TRAIN-cation program exposes students to the exciting manufacturing career opportunities available to them right in their own backyard. The program is designed to expose students to manufacturing careers in their region and teach them additional soft skills that will help them in any career they choose to pursue.

By taking the kids to visit the facilities and experience the work first-hand, program leaders hope to eliminate the stigma associated with

manufacturing careers and show students that there are exciting and sustainable opportunities available to them in their community. Last summer, during the first year of the program, the students visited:

- \* Wisdom Industries (Merino)
- \* ICS Integrated Chassis Solutions (Fort Morgan)
- \* Barry E. Walter Sr. Company (Fort Morgan)
- \* Morgan Community College

All involved agree that the program was a great success and plan to expand to include more students and businesses next year.

**For more information contact Josh Gibbs, Jr/Sr Counselor, at <mailto:gibbsj@wiggins50.k12.co.us>**

# Rural Districts Use State Supplemental Learning Program to Increase Opportunities for Students

Rural districts around the state have been using the supplemental on-line courses offered by Colorado Digital Learning Solutions, a state supported program, to increase opportunities for their students. Here are just a few examples of the innovative ways districts are using this resource:

## **De Beque School District**

The De Beque School District is using the supplemental online courses to allow high school students to access elective courses like Fundamentals of Aviation Science and Game Design that would never be available in a small rural district. Students are also accessing courses like Sociology, English 10, Pre-calculus, and Physical Science. Additionally, De Beque has enrolled an entire eighth grade class in U.S. History to allow their local instructor additional planning time. The local teacher works in conjunction with the online instructor who manages the course content while the local instructor provides support as needed during the class period, providing a “blended learning” experience for the students. The middle school program is designed to help students become familiar with and accustomed to participating and succeeding in an online and blended learning classroom. The district thinks this approach will prepare students be successful in online learning options as they

progress through high school. Superintendent Alan Dillon said: “CDLS has significantly and positively expanded our MS and HS programing options. Our students are able to access content that speaks directly to them and their aspirations!”

## **West Grand Schools (Kremmling)**

West Grand School District is working with CDLS to fill the need of offering student’s electives like Economics and Psychology that a small school district finds hard, if not impossible to support with instructors locally. Additionally, West Grand is offering the opportunity for some students to accelerate and progress through courses faster than a “normal” schedule might allow. Superintendent and high school principal Mike Page stated that “the state supplemental online program through CDLS is giving West Grand, a small rural district on a 4-day week, the flexibility to provide students access to high quality and rigorous courses that would normally be out of

reach for a district of their size”.

## **Garfield School District Re-2 (Rifle)**

Rifle High School was unable to have a local teacher support the Physics course locally so they enrolled students in the CDLS online Physics course. The Rifle physics students all meet during the last period of the day where they have access to the online course and are supported locally by a para-professional with a science and physics background. The paraprofessional collaborates with the online instructor and is able to assist the students locally and support a strong “blended learning” experience for the students.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For a course catalog and registration information visit:

<http://www.coloradodls.org/>

# Blended Learning Grant offers Rural Districts Access to Consulting and Professional Development

The Colorado Empowered Learning Grant is a state supported program offering consulting services and professional development for districts interested in implementing blended learning. The grant covers 50 hours of free consulting services, professional development, access to a digital content warehouse and free training for teachers who want to create online courses. The grant will be awarded to at least 6 rural districts.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The grant application and related information can be found at : [www.ilearncollaborative.org](http://www.ilearncollaborative.org)

## GOCO's School Yard Initiative Grant Applications Due January 10

Great Outdoors Colorado School Yard Initiative (SYI) grants help schools, which apply in partnership with their local governments, construct outdoor spaces where kids enjoy unstructured play and outdoor learning. Applications are due January 10, 2017 and will be awarded in spring 2017. Find the application and tips on the GOCO Website:  
<http://www.goco.org/grants/apply/>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you plan to apply for an SYI grant, please email Erika Meyer at [emeyer@goco.org](mailto:emeyer@goco.org). to talk through your project and application.

## CDE Adds New "Check-all" Feature in RANDA

Users of the Colorado Performance Management System (RANDA) now have a new feature available to them called the "Check All" feature. Users can check a rating level with one click while still having the flexibility uncheck practices within each level as necessary to accurately reflect each educator's practice.

Check All feature webinar link:  
<https://enetlearning.adobeconnect.com/p19s722o2pf/>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Dawn Pare if you are interested in using this feature, which will be available as of November 8<sup>th</sup>:  
[Pare\\_D@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Pare_D@cde.state.co.us)

## Executive Update

**Finance/Funding.** The Governor's 2016-17 budget was released Tuesday and, not surprisingly, the news is not good. As with last year's budget, the request requires numerous balancing actions to match revenues and expenditures. The strategies to close the \$500.1 million gap include:

- Not fully funding enrollment and inflation in K-12 education by \$45.4 million; thereby growing the Negative Factor by this amount to \$876.1 million;
- Transferring \$15 million from the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program to the Public School Fund;
- Reducing the maximum allowed collections of the Hospital Provider Fee by \$195 million, thereby preventing state revenue from exceeding the TABOR limit and eliminating the need for taxpayer refunds; and
- Reducing expected transportation transfers by \$109 million this year and next;

The funding plan also restores the full 6.5 percent budget reserve in the General Fund.

Election day is less than one week away and we will know much more about the future of k-12 funding, the Hospital Provider Fee and other legislative issues including assessment, accountability and BEST once the balance of power in the General Assembly and the State Board of Education have been decided.

**Read more about the Governor's budget proposal for K-12:**

<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2016/11/01/colorado-schools-would-see-funding-increase-in-2017-under-hickenloovers-proposed-budget/> - .WBqehqOZM6g

**Read more about how the education debate could shift if the Democrats retake Colorado's Senate:**

<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2016/10/31/heres-how-the-education-debate-could-shift-if-democrats-retake-colorados-senate/> - .WBh716OZOu5

## Rural Advocacy Receptions

Over 250 individuals registered and/or attended the Rural Alliance's Rural Advocacy and Networking receptions, which were held last month in Brush, La Junta and Burlington. We were glad for the opportunity to honor our legislative champions: Senator Jerry Sonnenberg, Senator Larry Crowder and Representative Jon Becker. We are grateful to all of the other elected officials, educators and state and rural leaders who attended the events and shared their hopes and concerns for our rural students and communities. A huge thank you to our sponsors-whose generous support made the events possible: **American Petroleum Institute; Viaero Wireless; University of Colorado, Boulder; University of Denver School of Education.**

Schedules are full and we have decided not to hold any additional Advocacy Receptions prior to the start of the legislative session on January 11, 2017.

Over the coming weeks, we will be building out our infrastructure to support our growing Rural Advocacy Network and revamping our website to highlight our rural partners and facilitate timely and effective communications on policy issues as they arise.

We will launch the Advocacy Network and detail our 2017 legislative priorities at the annual breakfast meeting at the Broadmoor during CASB's Annual Convention. Be sure to join us!

## **SAVE THE DATE**

**Rural Alliance Annual  
Breakfast Meeting**

**Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 AM - 9:30 AM**

**Broadmoor Hotel  
Colorado Springs**

Colorado Rural Schools Alliance  
1200 Grant Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203  
(720)771-7515  
[mmurphy@coruralalliance.org](mailto:mmurphy@coruralalliance.org)  
[www.coruralalliance.org](http://www.coruralalliance.org)