



2021 Advocacy Agenda

The **Mission** of the Colorado Rural Schools Alliance is to advocate on rural issues and increase awareness of the unique strengths and challenges in Colorado's rural schools and communities.

Board Priorities

The Rural Alliance Board is committed to ensuring adequate and equitable access to quality education for all students in rural Colorado and has identified the following priorities for the 2021-22 school year:

1. **Funding:** Increasing revenue and ensuring equity for rural schools.
2. **Opportunity:** Enhancing economic and workforce opportunities for rural students
3. **Accountability:** Ensuring accountability works for rural schools.

Legislative Priorities

I. Funding

- The Rural Alliance supports increased funding for special education students and programs to support our severe needs students. Any such funding will free up dollars from districts' general funds for use for other purposes.
- The Rural Alliance supports revisions to the at-risk factor in the school finance funding formula to include monetary and non-monetary measures.
- The Rural Alliance supports additional revenues and other supports for rural schools and communities to address critical mental health/healthcare/educational support needs. The best use of such funds should be determined at the district/local level.
- The Rural Alliance will work to generate additional, sustained revenues for public schools.
- The Rural Alliance supports increasing the spending capacity of the BEST program.
- The Rural Alliance supports universal preschool and will advocate to ensure the transition is adequately funded and appropriate for rural schools and communities.

II. Opportunity

- Rural school districts are experiencing critical educator shortages and must have resources to design grow your own and other programs to attract, retain and support the development of educators in their communities. The Rural Alliance will advocate for legislation bringing resources to support rural districts in designing/expanding proven recruitment and retention programs.
- The Rural Alliance will advocate for legislation that increases capacity in the areas of innovation and locally driven efforts designed to increase workforce development and/or work-based learning opportunities for students.

III. Accountability

- The Rural Alliance supports legislation ensuring a transitional return to State accountability while still providing for accountability and support for school districts.
- The Rural Alliance advocates for greater flexibility for districts to implement accountability measures that provide a more accurate picture of the work in their districts as well as timely and meaningful data for their teachers and communities.