



# COLORADO RURAL SCHOOLS ALLIANCE

## 2020 Advocacy Agenda

The **Mission** of the Colorado Rural Schools Alliance is to advocate on rural issues and promote a collective voice to increase awareness of the unique needs and challenges of 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 2019-20 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 equitable revisions to the school funding formula and working collaboratively to find short and long-term solutions to the school funding crisis which may examining Colorado's current complex constitutional and statutory spending and tax policies.
- The Rural Alliance will work to secure sustained funding for Rural schools until the Budget Stabilization Factor is eliminated.
- The Rural Alliance advocates for increasing the spending capacity of the BEST program.
- The Rural Alliance supports additional revenues and other supports for rural schools and communities to address critical mental health/healthcare needs.
- The Rural Alliance and its members will work with the legislature to find short and long-term solutions to the school-funding crisis, which may include lowering current statutory reserve obligations and examining Colorado's current complex constitutional and statutory spending and tax policies.

## **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 teachers 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 current accountability system relies too heavily on state assessments. 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.