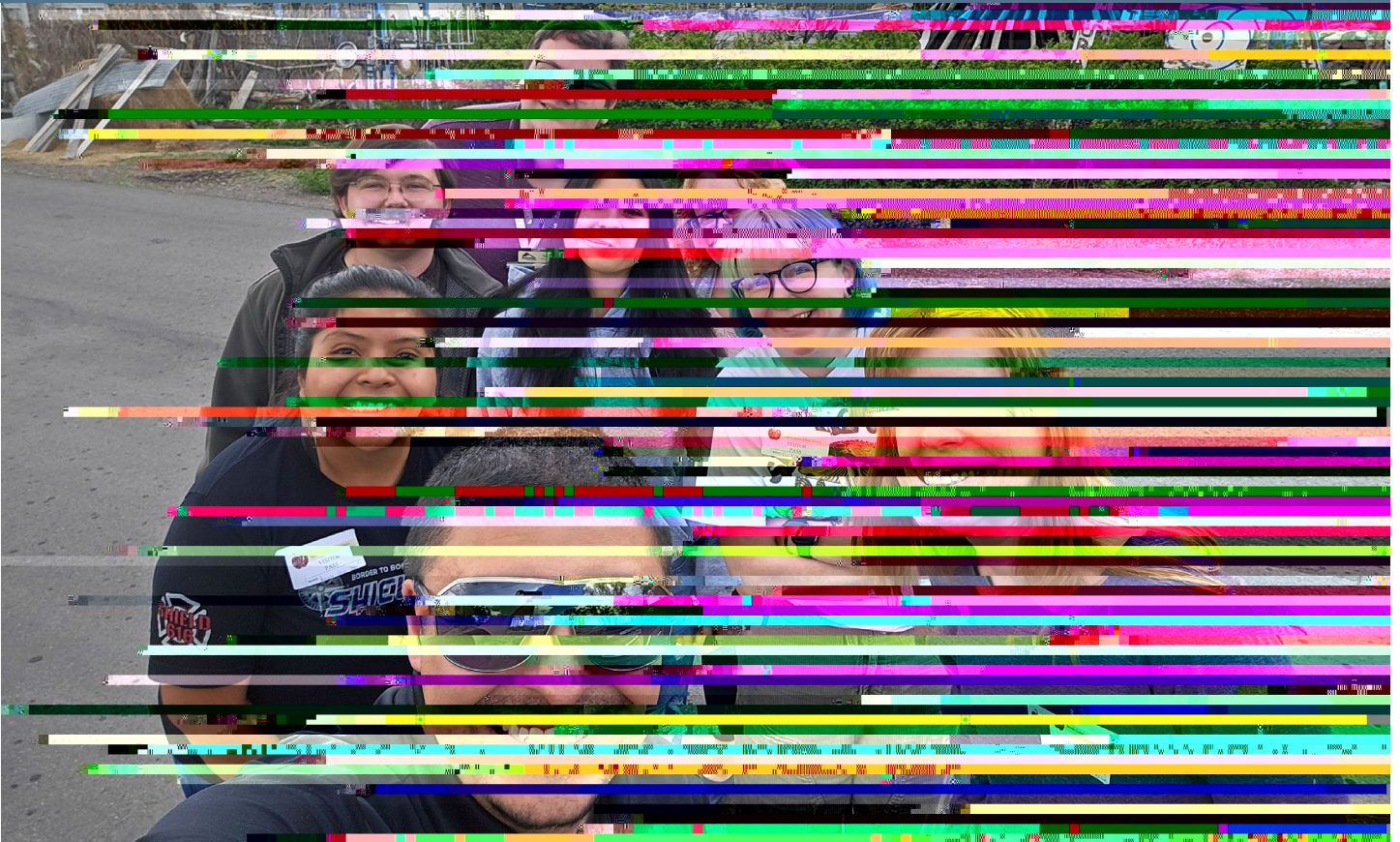


Rural Centered  
June 2024

A Monthly Newsletter from the  
Colorado Center for Rural Education



*Dr. Curtis Garcia, Director of the School of Education, accompanies students and faculty on a rural immersion tour of school districts in the San Luis Valley*

## Adams State U: Improving the Future of Rural Schools

This month we explore the teacher preparation programs at [Adams State University](#) and how they inspire future educators to teach in Colorado's rural school districts. We interviewed Dr. Curtis Garcia, Professor of Education and the Director of the [School of Education](#), to discuss the school's approach to teacher prep.

# Dedicated to Future Rural Educators

who embrace diversity, facilitate change, and contribute to the learning and inclusion of all students, particularly in rural regions. They want to foster educational leaders who actively participate in school improvement and facilitate school reform while fostering collaboration and cooperation among multiple stakeholders.

*The vision of the School of Education at Adams State University is "to leave a legacy by elevating the teaching profession and building strategic community partnerships that promote relationships, inclusivity, innovation, and lifelong learning for future generations of educators."*

That hasn't changed in the 103 years they've been in existence. Adams State started as a teachers' college with a mission to provide teachers for nearby rural districts. The school is located in the San Luis Valley in the south central part of the state. The entity became a university 15 years ago.

"The School of Teacher Education was one of the largest in the state," said Garcia. "We have

# Teacher Prep is Changing, A Lot

While the mission has stayed the same, the way they provide education has changed. While the model used to be 100% face-to-face learning in brick-and-mortar classrooms, it has shifted toward remote learning over time, especially after the pandemic. Currently, they provide 80% of their curriculum online, and the number of traditional students is shrinking all the time.

traditional programs and alternative programs, and students can combine their programs with master's degrees. "We're responding directly to the needs of school districts," said Garcia.

suitable to people who want to be working professionals while completing their degrees. They are time," Garcia said.

Adams State focuses on high-quality teacher training, but they are also mindful of the cost of program in the state.

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*Adams State elementary education teacher candidate, Hannah Blevens, engages students in small group instruction during her student teaching at Mountain Valley Elementary School in Saguache, Colorado*

## Thinking Ahead

high school? That's where Project SERVE comes in, which stands for Supporting Early Retention of Valley Educators.

Through Project SERVE, Adams State has partnered with high schools to create regional cohorts of high school students who are interested in teaching. It's a grow-your-own initiative that starts with high school principals and teachers identifying potential future educators, with the intent of diversifying the demographics of teachers. They focus on the people they think will stick around—the ones who are true locals with deep roots and who are going to stay.

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they traveled to meet with administrators at the Colorado Department of Education. They met the commissioner and toured the capitol, which let them see a side of the system they probably never would have otherwise. The school districts pay for the cohorts to get together for lunch or dinner, where the high school teachers encourage them and cheer them on.

Project SERVE has doubled the number of Hispanic students applying to the School of Education at Adams State. Garcia encourages other rural school districts to create similar cohorts and high

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