



Rural Centered  
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A Monthly Newsletter from the  
Colorado Center for Rural Education



## Hosting Teacher Cadets at Your School Can Help You Solve a Teacher Shortage

Teacher Cadets is an established grow-your-own teachers program that was founded in 1985 by the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement. Colorado implemented the program in 2001 and is now training students in 26 schools throughout the state.

We spoke with Christine McConnell, the coordinator and lead trainer for the Colorado program, to learn more about how they are helping high school students prepare for a career in education.

## How Students Get Involved

Teachers and principals identify academically gifted students with leadership potential and ask them if they'd like to participate in the two-semester Teacher Cadet program. Juniors and seniors who have a 3.0 GPA or higher and obtain at least three letters of recommendation from teachers are eligible for the program. The course is an elective honors course with the option to concurrently earn college credit.

The classroom portion of the program is based on an approved Teacher Cadet curriculum and the book "Becoming a Teacher." The content is separated into three distinct parts: experiencing learning, experiencing the classroom, and experiencing the teaching profession. Students study the growth and development of the learner and the historical, social, political, philosophical, cultural, legal, and economic forces that shape the U.S. public school system.

The high school students work face to face with elementary, middle school, and high school students for 50 hours under the supervision of a trained and certified teacher. Those hours count toward the requirement of 800 clock hours of field experience for pre-service teachers in Colorado. All Teacher Cadet programs offer concurrent enrollment and give students the opportunity to become [TREP scholars](#).

"Teacher Cadets are surprised by how deeply they understand education as a result of the experience," said McConnell. "It also sets them apart in their college classes because they can talk about their hands-on experience in the classroom."

McConnell recounted a story of one student who said she'd been waiting to be a Teacher Cadet for eight years. "When I was in elementary school, a Teacher Cadet helped me with my math facts every day; I want to do that for other students," she told McConnell.



## How Schools Get Involved

Once a principal decides to implement the program at their school, they recruit one or more teachers to deliver the content and one or more teachers in the school district to act as mentor teachers in their classrooms.

“It costs next to nothing for schools to host the program,” said McConnell. “Between [Carl Perkins grant funding](#) and grant money available through the Colorado Department of Education, your costs are covered.” (The Carl Perkins Grant provides federal funding to states to improve both secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs.) “And if schools don’t have the resources or enough candidates to offer it every year, they can choose to offer it every other year,” she added.

Teachers who want to become Teacher Cadet mentors or teach the curriculum to students attend three days of training to learn how to deliver the curriculum. In order to be able to offer concurrent enrollment credits to students in the program, the mentor teacher must have a master’s degree in education.

McConnell said, “Teacher Cadets fits so well with the rural grow-your-own-teachers initiative. You’re recruiting from your own schools in communities where the students already have relationships and family ties. Our experience is that graduates return to within a 60-mile radius of their hometown to teach.”

## Thinking Ahead Helps to Alleviate The Teacher Shortage

Gleason invites you to email her at [teacherleadership@colorado.edu](mailto:teacherleadership@colorado.edu) to schedule a call to discuss your interest in the program and how their staff can help you find professional development money to assist with the cost of the program. They are also willing to partner with school districts and BOCES to build communities where teachers support each other.

Colorado Teacher Cadets has 34 active programs in 26 Colorado school districts. They’ve certified 22 additional teachers who are not currently teaching but can offer the program in any school they choose. “There are different ways to implement the program based on what a school needs,” said McConnell. For example, one person at a BOCES could be certified to deliver the program virtually for all students in the covered districts.

The Colorado-certified teachers function as a consortium, McConnell noted. They act as a team and go through the curriculum step by step with teachers who are getting the initial training. “It build community among the teachers,” she said. The program also offers support four times in their first year of delivering the curriculum and training twice a year for thereafter in STEM, recruitment, and other topics.

“We are so excited about this opportunity for kids to be exposed to the teaching profession as juniors or seniors,” said McConnell. “I’d love to grow Colorado Teacher Cadets and help teachers and administrators see how it can become part of their school, BOCES, or district.”

To learn more and hear from students who have participated in the program, visit the Colorado Teacher Cadet [website](#).

## Upcoming Application Timelines

**Rural Inservice Educator Stipend** applications for fall 2024 accepted:  
May 1, 2024, through August 31, 2024

**Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend** applications for spring 2025 accepted:  
July 1, 2024, through October 31, 2024

Visit TEACH Colorado's **Financial Aid and Scholarship Information** page for information about additional scholarships.

For financial aid available to in-service and aspiring educators, download the **Colorado Department of Education's Educator Recruitment and District Supports flyer**.

## Featured Partners

Learn more about our [featured partners](#) and how they are helping to solve the teacher shortage in rural Colorado.



The University of Northern Colorado offers [teacher preparation programs](#) that combine online and in-person learning on the Greeley campus and in Denver at the [Center for Urban Education](#). UNC offers award-winning faculty with a passion for teaching and the career-ready experiences that come from attending a four-year research university.

Robert Fulton, PhD | Director

