



Colorado's Future Educators



Future Educator Honor Roll 2023

"Educators are training the next generation of artists, engineers, scientists and health professionals that will power our economy and enliven our communities. They truly make all other professions possible. We want all teachers and administrators—and especially our young educators—to know Coloradans support and appreciate their invaluable work."

-Dr. Angie Paccione
Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education



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2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Adams State University



Chasey Blach

Elementary Education

Chasey is from Yuma, a small agricultural community in Colorado. She decided to pursue education because of three reasons: Her four younger siblings, her momma, and her own teachers—they encouraged and pushed her through a tough and painful time during high school and she will never forget that. Throughout her time at Adams State, Chasey consistently demonstrated her commitment to education through her work in classrooms and service in Adams State University's Agribusiness club. Admired by her professors and peers for her professionalism and willingness to go above and beyond for her students, Chasey graduates Magna Cum Laude and plans on continuing her teaching career with the Center School District in Center Colorado.



Angel Guerrero

Secondary English Language Arts

Angel was born in Colorado and lived most of his life in Fort Collins. He moved to Alamosa in 2019 to attend Adams State University (ASU) and began his journey in education as a secondary education major in English. Throughout his time in the educator preparation program at Adams State, Angel has demonstrated consistently high levels of passion for teaching and learning that has inspired his peers, professors and students throughout the San Luis Valley region. Through his role as president of the Adams State University Educators of Tomorrow club, Angel also went above and beyond to promote service across campus to support teaching and learning. Angel's passion for literature and writing has inspired many of his students during his student teaching at Center Consolidated School District where Angel has also been a key role model of success within the broader Center community.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado Christian University



Christine Adkins

Elementary Education

Christine has lived in Ohio her entire life and has been married for 14 years and has one child, 11 years old. Teaching has always been a dream of hers, but when she began college, she was unable to stay longer than a semester. Twenty years later after having a career in canine training, she was diagnosed with cancer in 2021. She says that God has healed her and given her a new direction in life with a new career goal. Her faith has called her to be a teacher. She says that she is called to love and care for all children through ministry. Christine has a heart for teaching and was an exemplary student.



Kerstin Conquest

Special Education Generalist

In June 2022, Kerstin started a MAT Literature Specialist program at Colorado College to obtain her CALT licensure in the summer of 2024. She is also enrolled at Colorado Christian University to obtain her alternative license for special education generalist. She will continue and graduate with her master's degree in special education in the Spring of 2024. She is a mother of four kids, and has been married to her husband for more than 21 years. Two of her children have dyslexia, as well as her husband. Through her children and husband struggle, she is driven to understand and help others struggling with what others may do so easily. Kerstin has a heart for teaching Special Education. Her natural ability to meet the needs of her students is outstanding. She can understand specifically what a child needs to succeed at their level and differentiates instruction to meet those needs.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/J2rZer0UE0M>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado Christian University



Emily Doeden

Elementary Education with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Endorsement

Emily is from Fargo, North Dakota and is graduating with licensure in elementary education with a K-12 endorsement in culturally and linguistically diverse education. Emily is excited to be a 5th-grade teacher at Arma Dei Academy in the fall. Throughout her time at CCU, Emily was an integral part of the women's golf team that competed at Nationals. She was also a leader for Fellowship of Christian Athletes and led worship for chapel. Emily displays a passion to teach and watch students grow in confidence. Emily is a gifted educator who constantly seeks to grow and improve in order to help her students succeed. She teaches with enthusiasm and great excellence along with a relational style.

Video clip: https://youtu.be/9_q6dMgcLLM



Alex Rockensock

History Education

Alex graduated high school in Owatonna, MN. After high school, Alex joined the Air Force and served in San Antonio, TX and Colorado Springs. Currently, Alex lives with his wife in Arvada. Alex chose to become an educator because he felt called to serve his community and work with kids. Throughout his Air Force career, he was a volunteer youth leader and started a youth program at the Air Force Academy. He has been in the Air Force for more than 10 years and continues to serve in the reserve. In addition to this, he was named Colorado Christian University's School of Education Outstanding Graduate for 2023.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/6RtVq9w0BuQ>



Andrea Sheeks Suarez

Spanish

Andrea is a Spanish teacher at Fruita Monument High School in Fruita, Colorado. She is also a student at Colorado Christian University, currently enrolled in the M.A. in curriculum instruction with alternative licensure emphasis. She has a bachelor's in Spanish Hispanic studies. She has always been passionate about language and the importance of learning a different language, and also the science of the language. Her future plans are to complete her doctorate in Spanish linguistics. Andrea is an outstanding teacher candidate in our Alternative License program. She has excelled in all areas, including instructional management, classroom management, assessment, and teacher qualities.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado Mesa University



Michaela Dangler

Elementary Education

Michaela is a Grand Junction local who attended Colorado Mesa University to pursue a degree in elementary education. At the university, she played varsity soccer, achieving the status of Academic All-American two years in a row. Michaela Dangler was selected to be one of CMU's Outstanding Teacher Candidates because she exemplifies what it means to be both a life-long learner, and she is a skillful teacher beyond her short experience in the teacher education program. She is a natural with students as she creates an engaging learning environment meeting a variety of diverse needs. Michaela is a joy to work with and she brings positivity to any situation she might encounter.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/auQCtS6nQf0>



Brooke Paine

ELA

Brooke is from a small town in Southern Colorado called Blanca. She has spent all four years of her college career attending Colorado Mesa University, where she will graduate in May 2023 with a double major in secondary education with an emphasis in English, and in English literature. Brooke comes from a long line of educators starting with her great-grandmother and continuing through both her parents and her older brother. She often says that teaching is in her blood, and she would not have it any other way. Brooke knows that all students are able to do great things, and if she is able to help them set and achieve their goals through teaching, then there is no finer profession in the entire world.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/fwP5kMJ1oso>

**“Education is improving the
lives of others and leaving your
community and the world better
than you found it.”**

– Marian Wright Edelman

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado Mountain College



Clayton George

Alternative Social Studies

Clayton is from Louisville, KY. He lives in Leadville with his wife of 10 years and two kids, Sutton (7) and Harper (4), and he's the 7th-grade social studies teacher at Lake County High School. After a long career in the baseball industry, he reacquainted himself with a passion for teaching and coaching. He gets extreme satisfaction out of helping kids realize their potential while teaching them social studies. He also coaches cross country and track, which aligns with his hobbies of trail running and racing ultramarathons. He's excited to continue his growth as an educator in his community. Clayton joined his staff at Lake County Intermediate School in mid year and jumped right into our program and has done a wonderful job.



Hollis Magee

Alternative Elementary Education

Hollis grew up outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is her eighth year in education. Prior to arriving in Aspen, she worked at an International Baccalaureate (IB) primary school in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. She decided to pursue teaching because of the impact that her teachers and education had on her and wanting to give that back to her communities. While working internationally, she was inspired by the inquiry-based learning and teaching style. She is grateful that she made the decision to pursue teaching. Her class and school community bring so much joy every day. We are so impressed with the work Hollis Magee has done in our program, her kindergarten classroom position in Aspen School District and how she interacts with our Alternative Candidate Cohort.

“What we instill in our children will be the foundation upon which they build their future.”

– Steve Maraboli

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado Mountain College



Angelee March

Elementary Education and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education

Angelee chose to return home to Colorado to pursue a degree in education after teaching in Mexico for over four years. It was there that she fell in love with education, with the hope that it brings for tomorrow, and with the creative possibilities that are a part of every moment in the classroom. Since then and while finishing her degree, she has advocated for bilingual and immigrant students and families within her community, taken her students abroad, and worked to help her students broaden their perspectives for a better future. What she loves about teaching is that she will never have all of the answers or the perfect lesson plan, that she will always have mentors around her that she can lean on, and that she can continue to learn and grow alongside her students every day. Angelee is our first candidate to graduate from our Leadville campus. She is also a teacher of record with Buena Vista School District. We are proud of her work as a bilingual teacher as well as the advocacy work she has done for multilingual students in her district.



Liz Parra

Elementary Education and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education

Elizabeth is from Glenwood Springs, Colorado. She is a mother of three children and her hobbies include photography, hiking, and reading. She became a teacher because she has a passion for education and social justice. Her desire is to practice culturally responsive teaching by embracing diversity, cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds of all students. She will be graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education and several endorsements including; culturally linguistically diverse education K-12, bilingual education specialist K-12, and Spanish K-12. She is proud to say that she has earned a place on Colorado Mountain College's President's List for her excellent academic performance. Liz has been a strong bilingual candidate in our program who has overcome many barriers to complete our program and is the recipient of both the Rural Teaching Fellowship Stipend and the HB 1220 Stipend and we feel that she embodies what supports are in place to put excellent multilingual and multicultural candidates in the classroom and diversify the workforce.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado State University

Leah Dunphey

Music Education

Leah attended Centaurus High School. She decided to pursue education because her experiences have nurtured her passion for music and a love for teaching. She has been awarded many accolades and awards related to music. She is an exemplary student and role model for educators!



Nealani "NeNe" Elliston

English Education

Nealani "NeNe" is a teacher candidate in the secondary English Education program at Colorado State University. She is an exemplary teacher candidate who attends to the needs of students, pursues equity and justice-oriented teaching, and creates classroom community among colleagues and secondary students alike. NeNe contributed to the creation of a classroom community via her participation and consistent push for her classmates to examine their teaching decisions through an explicitly antiracist, anti-oppressive, justice-oriented lens. NeNe's classmates hold her in high regard and they built a community together.



Madison Kubala

Music Education

Madison was born and raised in Fort Collins. There are three core reasons why she chose to pursue music education. First, she enjoys helping other people. She finds the most fulfillment in a career where she can engage in acts of service for others, to promote the betterment of human society. One of the best ways to do this is to nurture the growth, development, and flourishing of children. Her second reason is that she loves working with kids. And finally, she pursued music education because she is passionate about playing, preserving, and promoting music.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Colorado State University Pueblo



Hannah Moulton

Elementary

Hannah is from Westcliffe, Colorado, and will graduate from CSU Pueblo with honors this spring. She has known that she's wanted to be a teacher since she was 10 years old. It was at this age that she turned her family's living room into a "classroom" and attempted to teach her younger brother how to read. She loves working with children because of their positive energy and refusal to limit their ideas. Next school year, she will be teaching 2nd-grade in Ignacio, Colorado. Hannah is a quiet leader who works hard and excels in the classroom. She is adept at planning, connecting with kids, and sharing her love of education with students. She is one of our top recent program completers.



Jocelyn Sanchez

Elementary

Jocelyn is from Pueblo and is finishing her education degree at Colorado State University Pueblo. She is student-teaching in a kindergarten classroom. She is inspired by many of her own teachers and professors to become an educator in the same community where she grew up. While pursuing her degree, she has maintained summa cum laude (4.0 cumulative grade point average), is a Kane Family Foundation scholar, worked as a teaching assistant/supplemental instructor for the RDG 355 Linguistics class at CSU Pueblo, gained valuable experience while completing fieldwork in many local elementary classrooms, and is the 2023 Threlkeld Prize for Excellence recipient at CSU Pueblo. She looks forward to making an impact in her community as an elementary educator. Jocelyn is one of the most outstanding teaching candidates we have had in our traditional program. She recently won the award for the top graduate at CSU Pueblo for this academic year, so not only is she outstanding in her own field but across the university.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/cichb-SDSMM>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Teach Today - Fort Morgan School District



Liz Ferguson

Elementary Education

Liz is from Fort Morgan, Colorado. She has always loved working with kids and has worked with them and their families for several years. She decided to transition into teaching because she believes education is important and wanted to help instill a love for learning. A professional accomplishment is that she has survived her first year of teaching! Liz brings great experience with her as she transitions into a teacher role in the classroom. Ms. Ferguson teaches kindergarten and is so patient and understands the needs of young children. She manages her class well and all students have the opportunity to be successful. They are engaged in their learning and have created a community environment in the classroom. Liz is not afraid to try new instructional strategies in her classroom and has solid routines in place that increase student learning time.



Kelsey Winner

Elementary Education

Kelsey was born and raised in Bailey, Colorado and moved to Chadron, Nebraska when she was 12. She is a first-generation college graduate and is the first in her family to pursue a career in education. Kelsey was a physical education major at Chadron State College for four years but once she stepped into a general education classroom, she knew that this is what she wanted to do. She loves being such a large part in her students' education. She is coachable and is not afraid to ask questions and uses mentoring time with instructional coaches to clarify teaching and gain new insights. Ms. Kelsey Winner was nominated for her natural ability to connect with students in the classroom as well as for her positive mindset she has in the classroom and school. Ms. Winner understands what it takes to be a master teacher and displays those qualities early on in her career. In her classroom you will find students actively engaged in their learning. Ms. Winner never misses an opportunity to continue to grow professionally.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Fort Lewis College



Petrina Sullivan

Early Childhood

Petrina is from Kayenta, Arizona. She is a young Diné woman looking to bring her teaching expertise and experience back to her hometown. After receiving her associate of arts degree from Utah State University, she transferred to Fort Lewis College in hopes of learning from the best teacher education department. She also hopes to combine what she is learning from this program with her father and Nali Hastiin's (paternal grandfather) teachings in the classroom. Also, she thanks her professors, they have molded her into the best teacher she can be, and she hopes to continue to learn from you all. Ahehee' (thank you). Petrina has been selected because of her exemplary work designing creative and nuanced learning activities for students. Her instructors find her to support an environment of support and high standards in her cohort, and appreciate the example she sets of insightful design of lessons and learning activities. She has an unusually astute understanding of how to structure engaging and differentiated instruction.

Friends School Teacher Preparation Program



Mindy Justice

Elementary Education

Mindy lives in Erie, Colorado, with her husband, four children, and the world's most mischievous Labradoodle. After working as an instructional paraprofessional for several years at a school in Lafayette, Colorado, she decided to pursue a long-held dream of having her own classroom. She describes herself as curious, open-minded, and passionate about learning. She just accepted a position as a kindergarten classroom teacher for the upcoming school year, and could not be more excited to share her love of learning with her future students. Mindy is an incredible teammate to her colleagues and cohort members, regularly seeks feedback on her practice, regularly models being a risk-taking learner for her students, and supports her students as they learn and grow in their own learning journeys.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/Fzk0pJ-hjBc>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Friends School Teacher Preparation Program



RaeAnn Pollard

Elementary Education

Born and raised in Longmont, Colorado, Rae is proud to call herself a Colorado native. She graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder with a BA in ecology & evolutionary biology. It was during her last summer of college working as a camp counselor for Keystone Science School that she knew she wanted to pursue teaching. The camp combined her love for the outdoors and working with children. Education allows children to discover the possibilities the world has to offer and as an educator, she wants to be a part of supporting children in their journey through life. Rae has great instincts about teaching children, reading their energy and responding to their needs with a deep trove of strategies. She demonstrates patience, calm, connection and respect with and for children. She is naturally reflective on her practice.

PEBC Teacher Residency



Sean Bigley

Elementary Education

Sean was born and raised in beautiful Colorado. He originally wanted to be a high school social studies teacher due to his love of history. However, he discovered his passion for teaching younger students through his work at an elementary school. Over the course of the PEBC Teacher Residency program, Sean has shown tremendous resilience and personal and professional growth. "I put the work and personal drive into the program, really pushing the limits of what I thought was possible for myself by gaining employment from the school that hosted me for my residency. I'm finishing this year with a new sense of accomplishment, confidence and belief that I didn't have at the start of this whole journey," says Sean. As an educator, Sean is not afraid to have fun and show kids the silly side of his personality. This makes him relatable and approachable to students while also holding them accountable to the high expectations he has set in the classroom. Sean takes great lengths to ensure that his planning is comprehensive, thoughtful, and culturally responsive.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

Regis University



Geoffrey Hardin

Secondary English, CLDE

Geoffrey was born in South Carolina and moved to Colorado nine years ago. His business degree from the University of South Carolina helped him start his own business and work for many great companies such as Tesla. However, he wanted something more meaningful. He pursued education because both of his grandparents were lifelong educators and were a huge inspiration to him. Regis University provided him with an excellent education, prepared him for a new career, and honored him with the Excellence in Teacher Licensure Award. He is an excellent student teacher. Geoff has an amazing handle on how to handle high school students, he is very reflective and wants to master the art of teaching, and his lessons are designed to impact his students' lives.



Annika Zenk

Elementary Education, CLDE, SPED

Annika was born and raised in Greeley, and teaching has always been a passion. Growing up with a younger brother, she had lots of practice teaching him everything she was learning in school. She believes that teaching is one of the most service-oriented and selfless professions there is and it challenges you to continually put the needs of students before your own. Throughout her time at Regis, she competed on the Regis Cross Country team, received a minor in Spanish, and has been on the Dean's List every semester. She is thankful for the education and opportunities she has received through Regis University and looks forward to where her education degree takes her in the future. Annika is an excellent student, athlete, and all-around person--all professors and clinical placement mentors (and principals) note that she is stellar in her content and pedagogy. She has worked hard on her Spanish skills so that she can work in a bilingual school.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Colorado Boulder



Samantha Babin

Secondary Science

Samantha grew up in Texas, studied public health at UT Austin, and received high honors upon graduation. She was on the path to becoming a medical doctor before discovering a passion for secondary science education. Samantha is currently a finalist for the prestigious Knowles Fellowship and is in high demand for science teaching positions on the Front Range. Samantha is one of the strongest candidates in the rigorous CU Teach MA + licensure program. A proud science educator, Samantha has a deep commitment to teaching for equity and justice and meeting the diverse needs of individual students. While teaching, Samantha demonstrates a calm and caring disposition that endears her to her students and colleagues. Samantha is apt in using a variety of evidence sources and educational research to identify what is going well in her teaching, alongside critically examining teaching practices that she could improve.



Annalee Victoria Reavis

Music Education

Annalee is from Denver, Colorado and believes that music education teaches trust, character, empathy, and community. She chose music education to instill these aspects into students' experience, as well as use music as a tool to further a quality education for all. Annalee will graduate in Spring 2023 from CU Boulder with a bachelor of music education degree and a minor in business. The music education faculty collectively selected Annalee for this nomination based on past and current excellence in academic and teaching activities, and potential for outstanding contributions as a music educator. For the past four years, Annalee has been an outstanding student and leader in the music education program at CU Boulder. Annalee is curious, engaged, collaborative, positive and highly self-motivated. In addition to fulfilling program requirements for the Bachelor of Music Education program, Annalee has been involved in enrichment programs such as the Middle School Ensemble program, operas and musicals, which are intended to offer students opportunities for early career development outside of program requirements.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/UgWY8aKkKBg?feature=share>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Colorado - Colorado Springs



Melanie Bustillos

Elementary Education, K-6

Melanie earned a bachelor of arts in psychology from the University of Colorado Boulder. While attending CU Boulder, she was actively involved in CU Teach where she taught STEM to local 3rd-graders. This experience solidified her desire to become a teacher. She is currently in the Elementary Initial License Certificate program at UCCS. She was awarded the Colorado Rural Teaching Fellowship and teaches kindergarten at a local rural school. Her family lives in a rural area so she understands the challenges rural communities face. She is inspired by their resiliency, innovative problem-solving, and resourcefulness. At her school placement, she tutors under the READ Act and co-teaches a STEM club. Melanie has been in a long-term sub position all year while passing all Praxis exams with flying colors and maintaining an A in all coursework.



Miranda Mowers

Social Studies

Miranda is a student at UCCS and teaches high school in Colorado Springs. She aspires to encourage students to love the acquisition of knowledge and learn skills like patience, empathy, perspective taking, and positive communication. She is a mom of two boys who keep her very busy and encourage her to reach greater heights. The social sciences are a huge passion of hers as they include how we think, why we think, and how we can change and be better. She is excited to pursue a career where she can encourage students to have a positive response toward school and reach their goals. Miranda has exceptional teaching skills, strong content knowledge and academic promise.



Amanda Przymus

ELA

Amanda is a Colorado native living in Colorado Springs and working in the same community that she grew up in. She is a mother of two amazing boys and a wife to an amazing man who has supported her through this madness. She was inspired by countless teachers from her youth who supported and encouraged her to be her best self. They still inspire her today. It may have taken her 20 years to get here, but the opportunity to pass on the knowledge and love that she received from those teachers is priceless. She is proud to call herself a Widefield graduate and now a Mesa Ridge Grizzly! Amanda has been a standout in the UCCS Alternative Licensure Program. She is also a tireless advocate for her students, in the words of her mentor, "a rockstar."

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Colorado Denver



LaTierra 'LT' Greene

Elementary Education

LaTierra or LT was born in Boulder but was raised mostly in Commerce City, graduating from Adams City High School. After graduating high school, she briefly studied psychology for children and adolescents, but quickly entered the workforce after accepting an opportunity to work for Human Services helping adults and families in poverty. This is where her passion for helping underrepresented children resurfaced as she consistently thought of the hardships of growing generations. She decided to become an educator to provide a safe place for students at school, be a role model for students of color, empowering all students to create their own path and succeed beyond their believed potential, as well as change the status quo of our country's inequitable education system. Despite having a family throughout her journey to become an educator, she has received numerous accolades for her academic achievements and leadership, is part of four honor societies as well as CU Denver's Bachelor's to Master's program. She's built a strong support system within the CU Denver community and plans to continue "reaching for the stars" as she encourages her students to do.



Kaegan Tinder

Secondary Social Studies

Keagan was born in Denver and grew up in Lakewood. She comes from a family of educators and from a young age, always saw herself pursuing teaching. She discovered her love for education at Front Range Community College and eventually pursued her BA in psychology from CU Denver. Upon completion of that degree in 2022, she returned to obtain her MA in teaching secondary social studies. She was drawn to teaching because of the love that she developed for education through her college experience and the drive to be the teacher that she wishes she had. She was drawn to social studies because she believes that we live in a time where it is more essential than ever that our kids grow up with the skills needed to better understand and navigate the world that they will soon play a huge part of. Keagan Tinder is an amazing graduate teacher candidate finishing his Master of Arts in Teaching Social Studies Education at CU Denver this spring. Keagan completed his undergraduate degree at CU Denver along with a minor in teacher education and then pursued the Master's degree for licensure. Throughout his time in the program, he has demonstrated an incredible passion for learning and growing as a teacher. He seeks to build strong, caring relationships with his students and his colleagues alike.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Colorado, Alternative Licensure Program



Nathan Woodroof

Secondary Math

Nate is a high school math teacher at The Vanguard School in Colorado Springs. He loves helping students make discoveries in mathematics and seeing their eyes light up when they make a connection that helps them solve a problem. He believes in his student's innate curiosity and desire to bring order out of disorganization, and he enjoys utilizing these traits to help his students engage in and enjoy mathematics. He received Vanguard's "Rookie Teacher of the Year" award in 2018 and uses this as motivation to continue to improve his teaching. When he's not teaching, he can be found performing in local community theaters around the Springs. Nate has been a standout candidate in our program and in his school. When I spoke with his principal he had nothing but good things to say about his teaching but also his student relationships. Nate will be an outstanding educator for a long time.

University of Colorado, Denver ASPIRE to Teach



Mark Maulis

Elementary

Mark was born and raised in Arvada, Colorado. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Regis University in 2011. Prior to becoming a licensed teacher, he worked as a substitute teacher for Jefferson County Public Schools, as a remote learning coach, and as a private K-12 mathematics tutor. Mark chose to become an educator to help students build positive growth mindsets toward mathematics and education. From the outset, Mark was centering his student's voices throughout instruction, asking them to make sense of the material and process their thoughts verbally with their peers. He artfully mixes in his own modeling throughout these lessons, adding in support when necessary, but quickly getting back to students leading the way. In addition, after being introduced to Universal Design for Learning, Mark immediately put into action the UDL principles including more visuals, interactive support, and relevant material to increase access to the content. He continues to explore how UDL can inform his teaching and, importantly, how his students connections to each other will strengthen as a result.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/1iuJ3ysE6bg>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Colorado, Denver ASPIRE to Teach



Mary Kate Naylor

Social Studies

Mary Kate is a middle school social studies teacher originally from Yorba Linda, CA. After spending six years working in a corporate environment, Mary Kate felt like she lacked purpose in her career and longed for an opportunity to make more of an impact. She began her journey in education as a substitute teacher in both DPS and DCSD, and fell in love with the profession. These experiences led her to pursue teaching as a candidate in CU Denver's alternative licensure program, ASPIRE to Teach. Mary Kate is a natural at fostering healthy relationships with students, and working with her students to develop a positive classroom community. She brings a creative spin to her lesson planning, and always finds ways of making the Social Studies content come to life for her students through engaging, challenging, and collaborative learning experiences. Along with these aspects of her teaching, Mary Kate has consistently demonstrated an eagerness to learn and grow as an educator.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/bXAZ-p637R8>

University of Northern Colorado, Center for Urban Education



Athziri Ayala Rivera

Early Childhood Education

Athziri has served as a paraprofessional in the Denver Public Schools for more than 6 years including summer school teaching. She is bilingual and bicultural and she has a deep understanding of learning and teaching. She is looking forward to teaching because she will be able to make such a big difference in the lives of the children and families that she serves. Athziri is a brilliant teacher and a caring and compassionate person.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/N99kOP8mDj0>

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Northern Colorado



Kayla Kascak

Early Childhood Education

Kayla is from Thornton, Colorado, and is graduating in the spring with her bachelor's degree in early childhood education from UNC. From a young age, Kayla has always loved children and has been fascinated with the way that children think and express curiosity. With more exposure inside the classroom, she knew that teaching was just for her. Being able to be an impactful adult in a child's life, drives her to be the best role model for her students. Kayla has maintained a high GPA and has recently received an academic excellence award; which 15 out of 1500 students in the education program received. The profession is so fortunate to welcome Kayla Kasack into its ranks of incredible teachers. While Kayla has demonstrated that she has a rock-solid understanding of the standards and content that she will teach, her true north is always those individual students in front of her. As Kayla champions young children, she also lifts others in the profession with encouragement and support.



Ashley Phelps

Early Childhood Special Education /
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist

Ashley resides in Westminster where she is a preschool teacher in the Mapleton Public School District. She began her journey in early childhood education five years ago as a paraprofessional and is about to complete her second year as a lead teacher. Through her undergraduate experience as a Division I student-athlete she learned the importance of discipline, perseverance, and stamina which she has carried into her personal and professional life. Her heart is fulfilled every day when she gets the opportunity to inspire young learners and create a positive inclusive environment for learners of all kinds! Ashley has demonstrated exceptional work throughout her Master's program and maintains a 4.0 GPA. Ashley is passionate about working young children with and without developmental delays and their families and is committed to providing developmental, growth, and learning supports in her classroom. Her ability to model expectations and success, and to be a role model for young learners and other teachers is unparalleled.

2023 Future Educator Honor Roll

University of Northern Colorado



Aquay Turner

K-12 Drama Theatre Arts

Aquay, a K-12 theatre education senior at the University of Northern Colorado, will receive her teaching certification and CLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Endorsement in Spring 2023. She is a dynamic teacher, who ensures that every student she encounters uses theatre to address 21st-century skills, SEL (Social Emotional Learning) and DEIA (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion/Accessibility) initiatives. The nationwide teacher shortage has affected every field, including theatre, and the need for BIPOC teachers is crucial. Aquay is dedicated to ensuring students who look like her see their potential. For example, she hopes to not only teach theatre skills that encourage her students to be active participants in social change, but also to pass the baton by inspiring them to enter the field of education. Her work in standards, assessment, and lesson planning is impressive, and she has consistently stood at the top of her class. Her openness and flexibility make her a welcome team player in any school district.

Video clip: https://youtube.com/shorts/Fw8QNOvtB_g?feature=share

Western Colorado University



Shelby Alm

Elementary Education

Shelby's mentor said that she was "the most committed student teacher I have ever had. Most days she arrived before me and stayed hours afterwards." She wholeheartedly embraces the challenges of a new classroom. She stepped up and acted as a long term sub when her mentor had to be out. She constantly takes initiative, leading parent meetings, planning and implementing instruction based on formative data that she had "expertly administered" Shelby is a true educator and will shine in the future.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/uU22vUBJYdc>



Christine Stephan

Special Education

Chris was previously a zoologist who made the transition to special education. While earning her license, she has been the head coach of girls volleyball. Chris serves in a severe needs classroom. She makes all of her own materials, oversees a job skills coffee shop for her students. Chris also has arranged limos to go to prom, takes her students to community experiences. She is currently managing with a shortage of 8 EA's and somehow has managed to do it all!



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