



# Colorado's Future Educators



## Future Educator Honor Roll 2024

"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



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Higher Education



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Department of Education

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Adams State University



**Joylyn Kinnie**  
Elementary Education

It's never too late to finish accomplishing your goals in life. Joylyn joined Adams State University's online program where she has worked toward earning her Elementary Education degree with an emphasis in CLD. With the help of the advisors at Adams, and the administration at Holyoke Elementary, Joylyn received her Teacher of Record (TOR). Joylyn is thankful for the support of her family, friends, staff at the Holyoke School District, and instructors at Adams State. Joylyn has been an outstanding candidate in our program. She continuously models best practices in instructional design and student engagement and has fully dedicated herself to her students and community by becoming a Teacher of Record (TOR) during her final year of her program.



**Breck Smith**  
Elementary Education

Breck was born and raised on a small family farm located in Grand Junction. One of the reasons she chose to become an educator was due to the high quality teachers she had growing up. Breck completed her program in fall 2023 by serving as a Teacher of Record (TOR) for a middle school (6th grade) math position and continues in that role to this day. The classes, district, and school gave her an opportunity to grow while earning her degree in education. Breck is looking forward to growing in her personal education as she begins a Masters program in K-12 Integrated Curriculum this April. Breck exemplifies the values of the School of Education at Adams State with her strong dedication to her students and passion for making a difference.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado College



Video clip: <https://youtu.be/xVk9STxKBGI>

### **Vanessah (Ness) Klaers**

Secondary Science

Ness is from the Twin Cities in Minnesota, but came to Colorado in 2019 to pursue higher education in environmental sciences and education. They are finishing the MAT program at Colorado College, and hope to teach environmental sciences at the middle and high school levels. Their experience as a low income college student inspires them to make education fun and accessible to every learner. They believe in hands-on, student centered, inquiry based learning experiences to instill curiosity and passion for learning in their students. Ness loves to learn and consistently consults literature and mentors to improve their practice. They are also a fluent spanish speaker and work to connect spanish speaking families to their school communities. Ness believes in education for liberation, and equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to create positive change in their communities.

## Colorado Mesa University



### **Molly Ostrowski**

Art K-12

Molly Ostrowski was born and raised in Englewood, Colorado. She earned her bachelor degree in Art and Design from UNC Greeley, and a K-12 Art Education license from Colorado Mesa University. Molly's journey to pursue an education career sparked from former teachers' involvement. Her high school art teacher saw her potential as an artist and understood her learning style which helped her in other subjects. Molly was inspired by family members who were teachers. After seeing the impact that they made within the community, it inspired her to do the same.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado Mesa University



### **Janie Pulsifer**

Early Childhood Special Education

Janie is from Pueblo, Colorado. In high school, she was intrigued by the special education classroom and spent majority of her time as a teacher aid as well as participated in many internships to grow in her knowledge of becoming a special education teacher. Throughout college, she has been a full-time student as well as worked for a day program that serves adults with direct needs. Janie was on the Dean's and President's List in for exceptional grades. As a soon to be graduate of the Early Childhood Special Education program at Colorado Mesa University, Janie is eager to begin her future as a special education teacher and to continue serving those with direct needs as well as follow her passion to learn and grow each day as an educator.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/2OUVoA4nrfc>

## Colorado Mountain College



### **Heidi Cardenas**

Elementary Education and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education

Heidi is graduating from Colorado Mountain College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education. As a little girl, she had a profound aspiration to pursue a career in education, and this nomination serves as a validation of the dedication and effort she has invested in realizing this dream. She is thankful to the educators who played an instrumental role in shaping her journey, instilling in her a commitment to excellence, and fostering her passion for teaching. Heidi is proud to that her academic endeavors have earned her a position on both the Future Educator Honor Roll and the Presidents and Deans Honor List. These accomplishments reflect her passion for teaching. Heidi is eager to channel her passion for education into making a meaningful difference in the lives of future generations of students.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/Kyuza6EalZA?feature=share>

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado Mountain College



### **Jennifer Harris**

Elementary Education and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education

Jennifer is a single mother to a wonderful son who is autistic, transgender, and has ADHD. In 2019, Jennifer began a long-term substitute teaching position, which revealed the perfect career match for her. Teaching aligns seamlessly with her personality; she enjoys both the responsibilities and rewards it brings daily. After Jennifer's first year, she was inspired to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Education starting the following summer. She continued working as a long-term substitute while managing a full course load at Colorado Mountain College. She earned her Teacher of Record license last fall and is slated to graduate this May. Jennifer plans to commence her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Adams State University in June.

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

– Steve Maraboli



# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado Mountain College - Alternative



### **Gabriela Alvarez Espinoza**

Elementary Education

Gabriela was born and raised in Mexico City. Her first career choice was Pedagogy, but she only completed the first semester as she was accepted into the National Theater School in Mexico. After finishing her studies, she went to France to specialize in Theater Studies. It was there that she met her life partner, and they traveled to Carbondale, Colorado, where he found work. After three years, they decided to return to Europe, where Gabriela pursued her love for education and completed a postgraduate degree in Theater and Education. In 2021, they returned to Colorado, where Gabriela began her teaching career at Basalt Elementary School as a kindergarten teacher in Spanish. She also started her program to obtain a teaching license in Colorado at CMC. Gabriela believes that teaching is the noblest way to serve her community, and it is a profession that allows her to be a lifelong learner. Gabriela is forever grateful for the opportunity to do what she loves and for the people who have supported her.



### **Maya Chiodo**

Elementary Education

Maya Chiodo studied Environmental Studies and Writing at the University of California, Santa Barbara for her undergraduate education. Following graduation in 2019, she pursued journalism in Denver until the summer of 2021, when she began working in outdoor education at Keystone Science School. Based on her experiences with the local community and the campers and students she interacted with during her time there, she decided to begin the Alternative Certification program for Elementary Education at Colorado Mountain College and began working at Silverthorne Elementary School. She now teaches English in second grade at Silverthorne Elementary School and feels that she has found her place in the world of education. She hopes to see more dual-language schools established in Colorado and loves how the model supports so many more students and their ability to find success in the classroom.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado School of Mines



### **Virginie Genevet**

Science

Virginie is French, coming from Nice, South of France. Virginie is an amazing physics teacher! She has 10 years of experience teaching physics and chemistry in the French public school system and is currently earning her Master's degree and Colorado Science Teaching License. She has excelled in her studies at Mines even while getting more comfortable with English. She has a wonderful classroom presence that makes learning science fun! Virginie loves teaching and helping her students succeed.

Video clip: [https://youtube.com/shorts/BY\\_UICwWb0w](https://youtube.com/shorts/BY_UICwWb0w)



### **Liz Ruzicka**

Science

Liz is originally from Steamboat Springs, Colorado. While pursuing a Bachelor's in Engineering Physics at the Colorado School of Mines, she discovered her passion for teaching and fulfillment from being in a classroom greatly surpassed the confines of the laboratory. Viewing education through a scientific lens, she approaches it as an ongoing process of data collection and iterative design, tailored to meet the diverse needs of students and propel them toward growth. Her academic journey has also been enriched by the opportunity to pursue minors in Public Affairs and Teaching alongside her degree, courtesy of the prestigious Daniels Fund Scholarship awarded to Liz in 2020. Liz is an outstanding future teacher! She is easily the strongest teacher candidate I've seen in the classroom in my 14 years of working with future teachers. She has excellent skills in teaching practices, content, and student relationships.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Colorado State University



**Leah Dunphey**  
Music Education

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/IFcgxt7DBUM>

Leah is from Monument, Colorado. Leah is among the top music education students we have ever had at CSU. Her engagement with the community really sets her apart. She has taught in the CSU SPUR Music Lab and served in over eight different leadership roles in the CSU Trying-on-Teaching/Middle School Outreach Ensembles program that serves our broader music education in rich ways. She was recently recognized with the 2024 CSU Exceptional Achievement in Community Engaged Learning (student category) for her work in serving hundreds of K-12 musicians in our community. Leah's ability to engage students, create meaningful and lasting connections to enrich students lives, and to always embrace a growth mindset are prime examples of how she redefines the bar for what teaching excellence in her generation looks like.



**Mackenzie Shanley**  
Family & Consumer Science (FACS)

Video clip: [https://youtu.be/t\\_NAsf5B8ZE](https://youtu.be/t_NAsf5B8ZE)

Mackenzie is from Fort Collins, Colorado. Growing up in a single parent home, Mackenzie Shanley was met with challenging times during high school years. She found her home away from home in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department. As a result, Mackenzie chose to follow in her FCS teacher's footsteps and become a FCS teacher. Mackenzie continued to work at her job at a childcare center all through college and is very excited about the opportunity to teach one section of Child Development in her student teaching semester at Rocky Mountain High School. RMHS was where her FCS journey began, and she now has come full circle student teaching at her home high school to complete her undergraduate program. She loves building relationships with students and believes she can provide a safe and supportive space for her students to continue to develop their future selves.



# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## DCSD Alternative Licensure



**Melissa Ellerson**  
Elementary Education

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/2LBIhr1WhEs>

Melissa returned to school later in life, and proudly graduated from California State University. In November 2020, her family relocated to Highlands Ranch. Melissa Ellerson is a standout alternative licensure teacher! She's like a magnet for Kindergarteners, effortlessly connecting with them and making learning fun. Her confidence in her teaching shines through, making her a natural leader in the classroom. Melissa's always up for learning new things, staying open-minded and bringing fresh ideas to the table for her team. With her knack for working with little ones, her confidence, and her eagerness to keep growing, Melissa's had such a successful year. She has built strong and positive relationships with her students and is able to get the most out of them each and every day.



**Regina Luber**  
Secondary ELA

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/3XUUkSwsnkY>

Gina Luber is a Colorado native and is proud to be a student in the inaugural class of Douglas County School District's Alternative Licensure Program. Before becoming a speech communications teacher, she worked as a Television News Segment Producer at KWGN-TV (Channel 2) and a Television News Writer at KDVR-TV (Fox31). Gina is a shining example of what Alternative Licensure can bring to a school community through the unique perspectives that teachers in this pathway offer. As a first year teacher, Gina has created exceptional learning experiences for her students. Her commitment to ongoing growth and development is commendable, as she consistently refines her pedagogical strategies. Beyond her professional acumen, Gina's genuine care for students shines through, earning her students' love for the class and fostering long-lasting connections with kids.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center Alternative Program



### **Aubrie Robinson**

Secondary Social Studies

Video clip: [https://youtu.be/wJyA\\_be9K7U](https://youtu.be/wJyA_be9K7U)

Aubrie is currently the Societies & Cultures Fellow at Eagle Rock School & Professional Development. She is originally from Minneapolis, MN and graduated from Hamline University with a concentration in Sociology. Aubrie will be pursuing her Master's degree in the Fall of 2024 in Educational Policy and Foundations. Aubrie has a passion for working with youth and a desire to make a positive impact on their lives. This led her to pursue education to teach in a structured environment that empowers and lifts up student voices within the classroom. Aubrie views education as a tool students can use to advocate for themselves and for others. Through this, Aubrie has gained an understanding of how crucial it is to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment. She wants to grow in her craft of teaching by continuing to gain classroom experience and seeking out higher education.

## East Central BOCES Alternative Licensure



### **Olivia Isenbart**

Elementary Education

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/DVmkUs1xEDg>

Olivia Isenbart was born and raised in Stratton, Colorado and is currently in her first year of teaching 1st grade at Stratton Elementary. Olivia's love for helping and serving others is one of the main reasons she decided to pursue a career in education. Without such supportive and loving teachers growing up, Olivia believes she would not be the person or educator she is today. In May of 2023, Olivia graduated with honors from the University of Northern Colorado and moved back home shortly after getting her first teaching job. Olivia Isenbart sets high expectations for her first graders and for herself. She leads, guides, listens and talks with her kids as her classroom environment is safe, positive and conducive to learning. Olivia is kind, compassionate and she genuinely cares about her students' well-being and successes. Stratton School District is fortunate to have Olivia as a teacher, she will positively impact lives of students for many years to come.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Friends Teacher Preparation Program



Video clip: <https://youtu.be/b45lO64TM>

### **Dilek Eccles**

Elementary Education

With a background in Journalism and Mass Communications, Dilek discovered her love for teaching in her work with Japan America Society of Colorado. In her own words: "Children are more in need now than ever of consistency, reliability, responsibility and freedom to express themselves without judgment. A classroom setting is one place where children can receive the care they need, while learning and growing from teachers and their peers. Education requires impassioned teachers and I have found myself falling more in love with the profession, even with its increased demands, more and more every minute I spend inside classrooms." Dilek is a natural teacher who has marvelous relationships with her students and keenly considers each of her lessons. She is impeccably organized, collaborates beautifully with her mentor teacher, and exudes the feeling of being in her natural habitat in a classroom.



### **Suzie Harris**

ECE

Suzie has been in the Longmont area for many years and is extremely dedicated to the care of young children. So committed, that she has been involved with early childhood education since 2006 as a director and teacher. To immerse yourself in the Friends' program and pursue a master's degree as well, is no small feat as many of us know firsthand. However, to also be the lead teacher in a classroom while doing so, is something truly challenging. Suzie has persevered through multiple staffing shortages in her room and still managed to keep her eye on the end game of preparing her students for kindergarten. Suzie is one of the most passionate people in terms of her commitment to education and lifelong learning. Her focus is on constant refinement of her instruction and she meets each student where they are in their development.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Metropolitan State University Denver



### Danial Chavez

Elementary Education

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/t28DvAnXwZc>

Growing up in Denver, Colorado, Danial faced academic challenges due to undiagnosed dyslexia. Despite the hidden nature of his struggle, he possessed a deep understanding of the difficulties associated with learning differences. Motivated by his own experiences, he made the decision to join the Marines, seeking to minimize the impact of his struggles on his life. Driven by a desire to make a meaningful difference, he later pursued a career in education, with a focus on supporting students facing similar challenges. Danial has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to his academic and professional growth, exhibiting passion, dedication, and a strong work ethic in his pursuit of a career in education. Danial's passion for making a positive impact in the lives of others is visible in all aspects of his work in education. He wants to be the teacher he never had.



### Lukas Saskowsky

Secondary Mathematics

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/63kTr-GkQUk>

Lukas was born in Anchorage, Alaska and grew up in Washington state. After earning his degree in Aerospace Engineering, Lukas began his professional work life in 2019 as a Propulsion Design Engineer and System Analyst for a large aerospace company. After two years in this work, he realized his true calling and passion came from the classroom not the control room. Lukas yearns for his "students to dream big and exceed their own expectations" so in the fall of 2023 he began a year-long study of teaching and learning as an alternative licensure candidate with MSU Denver. He will complete his licensure program in May and will continue his education by pursuing a graduate degree in mathematics this fall while serving as a middle school math teacher for Douglas County School District. Lukas consistently pushes himself to elevate his craft with the goal of impacting every student he teaches to the greatest extent possible. Lukas approaches his work with humility, is uniquely present for each of his students as individuals, and deeply valued by the school community he serves.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Metropolitan State University Denver



### **Candice Stangle**

Special Education

Candice is originally from South Dakota. She has been teaching Affective Needs at Summit Elementary in the Cherry Creek School District for two years while completing the Alternative Licensure Program at Metropolitan State University. She graduates in May with her Master's in Education. Candice may be new to teaching, but her insight and disposition is that of a seasoned teacher. She is held in high regard by her co-teachers and is a key player within her teams, offering strategies, and motivating activities which are used throughout the day with all students. Candice thinks relationships are key to success. Each day brings new opportunities to build relationships, engage in learning in different and meaningful ways and make an impact on the lives of her students.

## Morgan County School District Teach Today



### **Chad Heltzel**

Secondary ELA

Chad is originally from Indianapolis, Indiana. Chad decided to pursue education in part out of a love of English he indulged through creative writing, being a tutor in his college writing center, and as an editor of his high school and college literary magazines. Chad completed an M.F.A. in Creative Writing at Texas State University and a Ph.D. in English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he worked as a graduate teaching assistant and assistant director of the UIC First-Year Writing Program. Originally planning to be a college professor, he had the opportunity to teach concurrent enrollment courses at a charter school in Chicago, where he realized he could help prepare students for the challenges of college reading and writing. Chad has since taught a variety of English courses and concurrent enrollment classes, and he won a peer-recognized achievement award from his network.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/6Moh0qCuTA4>



# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Morgan County School District Teach Today



### **Angel Paclar**

Special Education

Angel is a J1 teacher from the Philippines. She is currently loving her teaching career as a Special Education Teacher at Pioneer Elementary School in Fort Morgan, Colorado. Angel loves her career path and seeing students grow, succeed, and overcome challenges. Her favorite aspect of the job is when she can celebrate the varied successes of students, whether big or small wins, making them soar to their greatest potential. Angel is a conscientious new teacher who brings some experience from another country. She is thoughtful in all that she does and takes responsibility for her own learning and the success of students in the classroom. She is dependable and is willing to learn new things, take feedback, and try new ideas.

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/go21ZvcClbE>

## Northeast Colorado BOCES Alternative Teacher Licensure Program



### **Audree Edwards**

Elementary Education

Audree Edwards is a 6th grade ELA teacher for the Haxtun School District in Haxtun, Colorado. Audree attended Colorado State University and received a bachelor's degree in Human Development & Family Studies in 2011. As a working mom, she went back to school and attained her Master of Social Work degree through Western New Mexico University in 2018. Prior to teaching, Audree worked as a school social worker for eight years. She chose to get into the classroom teacher role because she loves being able to make connections with students and foster the positive relationships that students need to be successful. Audree works tirelessly to ensure that she is utilizing the strategies that she has learned to make learning clear to her students

Video clip: [https://youtu.be/NqUjq-jl\\_5o](https://youtu.be/NqUjq-jl_5o)

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Northeast Colorado BOCES Alternative Teacher Licensure Program



### **Kimberly Irwin**

Elementary Education

Kimberly Irwin was raised in Sterling, Colorado and is currently teaching fourth grade in the same community where she grew up. Despite the fact her bachelor's degree is in accountancy, she has always been interested in the field of education. This led to her pursuing teaching as a profession by becoming a candidate in Northeast Colorado BOCES Alternative Teacher Licensure Program. She has decided to pursue education because the acquisition of knowledge is so meaningful and there are constant opportunities to make a positive impact. She seeks out every opportunity to learn how to best support her students, and works diligently to provide effective, research-based instruction to her students daily.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/B0ZYIUklw7A>

## PEBC Teacher Residency



### **Maddy Nelson**

Elementary Education

Maddy Nelson was raised in Atlanta. City Year took her to California, then she moved to Denver to be with family. Maddy's mom was a teacher and thus she was always around the classroom and education. Maddy was drawn to working with youth from a young age. She initially found a love for coaching and teaching kids through Americorps. Maddy Nelson is a resident at Slavens Elementary in Denver Public Schools. Her teacher identity in the classroom and her instructional intuition have grown tremendously this year. Most notable has been her growth in ability to scaffold instruction. She easily and willingly reflects and takes action on feedback. She has garnered strong trust and respect from her mentor. The demands of her PEBC work have been met in a timely manner through a commitment to being proactive and using time management skills.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Relay Graduate School of Education



### **Jenae Jiner**

Elementary Education

Video clip: [https://youtu.be/2lmm\\_R-T6pU](https://youtu.be/2lmm_R-T6pU)

Jenae Jiner was raised in Denver, Colorado. Upon graduating college she was accepted into the Criminal Justice master's program at the University of Northern Colorado. But spiritually Jenae knew that her purpose was within the education system. After moving back to Denver, CO. Jenae applied for a fellowship position as a math fellow. After three months of shadowing she was hired as a lead teacher. Jenae combines her own love for learning with teaching and believes it is important children are taught the foundational skills of leadership, citizenship and community. With tenacity, resilience, determination and having her roots engraved in the soil of the mile high city she will embrace and educate each student as a Colorado future educator.



### **Luis Zamora**

Secondary Science

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/xVe-67N5llk>

Luis Zamora's hometown is Sun Valley, California, and it was there that he fell in love with teaching through coaching football directly out of high school. His goal to use education to have a lasting effect became apparent when he tutored his student-athletes. In Luis' last year of coaching, the squad maintained a GPA of above 3.0, and won many league titles and a city championship. He boldly decided to join Teach for America in Pueblo, Colorado, so he could continue pursuing his love of teaching. Luis is an amazing teacher candidate who is doing great things for his students in Pueblo. He is passionate about becoming an excellent teacher and does a great job working to balance being a full time teacher and graduate school student.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## South Central BOCES Alternative Licensure



### **Leah Ferrendelli**

English

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/iLiCzybP5o>

Leah Ferrendelli is originally from Springer, New Mexico and now lives in Hoehne, Colorado. Her work as a substitute teacher inspired her to pursue a path in education and use her knowledge she had acquired over the years working in healthcare to support her students in their education journey. As a registered nurse and a certified birth doula Leah has worked as an adjunct instructor for the nursing program and feels that everything that she has learned through these experiences can help students to understand the importance and value in their education, no matter what path they take after graduation. Leah is a shining star. She is the teacher candidate who has all her requirements done, before anything is due. She is an overachiever and go getter, all while raising 4 young children.



### **Dalley Gibson**

Agriculture

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/AtsFVh4neEM>

Dalley Gibson is the ag education instructor for Crowley County Jr./Sr. High School in Ordway, Colorado. Her very own ag teacher inspired her in high school to become an agricultural educator myself. After graduating from West Texas A&M University in December 2021, her dream finally came true after coming home and being hired at her alma mater to teach agriculture. Aside from teaching, she is a certified equine massage therapist and has the pleasure of working on equine athletes all over southern Colorado. Dalley has been one of our teacher candidates who consistently engages in our co-hort sessions. She goes the extra mile in everything she does. She is a positive and inspiring member of our cohort. Dalley obviously loves teaching and her students love her.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## University of Colorado Boulder



### **Emily Gillette**

Elementary Education (with CLD Endorsement)

Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/CwquD-xaHdc>

Emily is a first-generation college student from Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Her decision to pursue education stems from her belief that school was where she found true success. Through hard work, she achieved a 4.0 GPA and financed her college education independently, leading her to fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher. Emily is passionate about instilling in her students the same joy, determination, and belief in their capabilities that school instilled in her. She is excited about creating a positive classroom environment, building strong relationships with her students and empowering them to reach their full potential. She is extremely thoughtful, reflective, and continually strives to improve her practice. Emily's instructors and those who work with her in the field regularly share how she is becoming an incredible teacher!



### **Morgan (Mo) Rains**

Secondary English Language Arts

Video clip: [https://youtu.be/0dk977YoE\\_I](https://youtu.be/0dk977YoE_I)

Morgan was born and raised in Colorado, graduating from Lakewood High School and then from the University of Colorado, Boulder three times over with a BA and MA in English Literature and now an MA in Education with a Secondary English Language Arts teaching credential. She has always loved reading and learning, but her biggest passion is helping others; naturally, she believes that teaching is the best way to support our future and improve our lives. She became an educator to make a difference, to inspire a love for learning for a new generation, and to help shape the future leaders of tomorrow. Mo's teaching practice is guided by deeply rooted commitments to equity, justice, community, and care for students. Mo is a beloved and valued colleague in our School of Education community, and we are so eager to see what amazing things they do as they enter the profession as a first-year teacher.



# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## University of Colorado Colorado Springs



### **Sally Quick**

Secondary English

When Sally began her higher education journey, she wanted to be an archaeologist because of her passion for people, diversity, and learning about the past. She received my BA in Anthropology and planned to get her MA in Anthropology when COVID hit. She couldn't do her fieldwork, but knew she wanted to finish her master's and reach her ultimate goal: teaching. Salley always knew she wanted to be a teacher, so she just took a detour and is now finishing up her MA in Education with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction. Sally currently teaches eighth grade English at Mountain Ridge Middle School and loves it! Teaching allows her to pursue her love of diversity, reading, and writing by teaching students.



### **Jessica Read**

Secondary Science

Jessica lived in Southern California her entire life and worked in the Biotech Industry doing pharmaceutical research as a Biochemist and working in the field of proteomics and mass spectrometry for 20 years. About 4 years ago Jessica and her husband decided to move to Colorado so they could have a better work/life balance and have more time to mountain bike, ski and enjoy the outdoors with their two dogs. Since the biotech industry is so small in Colorado, she decided to start substitute teaching and found that she really enjoyed being in the classroom and interacting with students. Jessica is now teaching 7th grade science at Jenkins Middle School in Colorado Springs and she hope to continue teaching for many years to come in Colorado.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## University of Colorado Denver



### **Abigail Mekonnen**

Elementary Education

Abigail grew up in Centennial, Colorado. She got her start in education as a tutor for other Ethiopian families in her neighborhood. Abigail has been a member of our NxtGEN Undergraduate 4-Year Residency program, working as a para-educator intern and now a professional year resident in professional development schools in both Denver Public Schools. Her passion for teaching inspires others and her connection to students continues to be a great strength. She also believes in the strong connection between school and home and enables many of our multilingual families to feel at home because she speaks three languages. Along with this, she truly understands sheltered English and is able to translate and scaffold many classroom directions and lessons to accommodate second language learners



### **Luz Moreno**

Elementary with CLDE Added Endorsement

Luz considers herself to be from Boulder, Colorado; El Paso, Texas; and Aurora, Colorado. She comes from a family of teachers, most notably her grandparents, who passed down an innate love for learning and pride in education. Luz has been a member of our NxtGEN Undergraduate 4-Year Residency program, working as a para-educator intern and now a professional year resident in professional development schools in both Denver Public Schools and Cherry Creek School District. She has been an outstanding leader serving as president of BESO (Bilingual Education Student Organization). She has worked with dedication to bring students together in teacher education to learn more and take action to advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse students and families, bilingual education programs, and educational equity. Luz is a dedicated leader and passionate advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse education.

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/RYuADg3Ecxg>

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## University of Northern Colorado



Video clip: <https://youtube.com/shorts/P6hip7VB39Y>

### **Patience Cruise**

Elementary Education with CLD Endorsement

Patience was raised in Greeley, Colorado and decided in the 3rd grade that she was going to become a teacher. Throughout the years it was still her passion but could not come into fruition until much later in life. Though, she would argue that her experiences leading up to this moment will have helped her become a better educator for her future students. Patience was inducted into the PTK All-Colorado Team and presented with an Aims Community College Emerging Leader Award in 2022. Patience is a natural teacher who displays critical thinking skills and the ability to provide developmentally appropriate pedagogy to her students. Her passion and dedication to the profession are truly commendable, and she exemplifies what it means to be a UNC teacher candidate.



Video clip: <https://youtu.be/FpMeigF9KZ8>

### **Mirella Lamar**

Special Education Generalist

Mirella is from Wheat Ridge, Colorado. In her junior year of high school, she took an opportunity to be an intern at a respite care company for individuals with disabilities called Megan's Place, LLC. This internship changed the trajectory of the rest of Mirella's life. It was the place where she found a deep passion for working with individuals with disabilities. Throughout her coursework, Mirella consistently went above and beyond course expectations. Her excellence has continued in her student teaching experience where she has shown leadership skills within the area of behavior. Currently, Mirella is collaborating with stakeholders to share important knowledge and skills and enhance the school's implementation of evidence-based practices that may support social, emotional, and behavioral skills. Mirella is eager to further pursue her passion by becoming a special educator and continuing to build connections with her students.

# 2024 Future Educator Honor Roll

## Western Colorado University



Video clip: [https://youtu.be/wSVM1zgFH\\_s](https://youtu.be/wSVM1zgFH_s)

### **Brittani Desotelle**

Elementary

Brittani most exemplifies thoughtfulness, responsiveness, and commitment to her students. She is a wonderful teacher who has great relationships with her students and is using creative strategies to engage her students in mathematics. Brittani includes all levels of students in the learning and scaffolds the lesson seamlessly so students feel safe and successful in their learning. She is clearly committed to the profession and the teaching math in a fun way with her 6th graders by showing up with an engaging lesson everyday in her classroom. The students have fun in math class!! She is amazing with diverse students and adjusts their work to match their ability levels. When extra support is needed in other classrooms, in the school, or with after school activities she always tries to help out.



### **Jennifer Sands**

Special Education

Jennifer was born and raised in Mobile, Alabama, and moved to Colorado in 2019. She will be graduating from Western Colorado University this month after completing the Initial Special Education Licensure Program. Next year she plans to work as an SSN High School teacher. Jennifer is an essential part of our team. She has taken on the responsibilities of a teacher, with planning, IEP development, and classroom management, all while also supporting the program with her paraprofessional responsibilities. Jennifer brings excitement and joy to teaching, and demonstrates curiosity and passion for the teaching profession. She has become a well-spoken leader, supporting paraprofessionals, planning instructional activities, monitoring IEP goal progress, building rapport with students and staff, and developing effective classroom management skills.

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## Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation 2-Year Completers

**Brenda Avalos-Hernandez**

**Azeneth Meza-Cabral**

**Daniela Avila**

**Weston Niedens**

**Katherine Cannady**

**Sarah Poindexter**

**Arely Caro**

**Christian Pool**

**Bryan Hillman**

**Avery Shreffler**

Video clip: <https://youtu.be/j9k8ZBFxb0A>

**Sarah Starbuck**

**Savannah Hood**

**Hannah Stringfellow**

**William Huff**

**Alissa Tedesko**

**Aubrey Iversen**

**Tanya Valles-Aguilera**

**Cindy Garcia**

**Isabella Valentine**

**Nevaeh Gomez**

**Ava Weeks**

**Tristian Guerin-Lautenschlager**

**Vann Whitson-DeHerrera**

**Jenavieve Jones**

**Jacquelyn Lomeli-Marmolejo**



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

– Marian Wright Edelman



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