

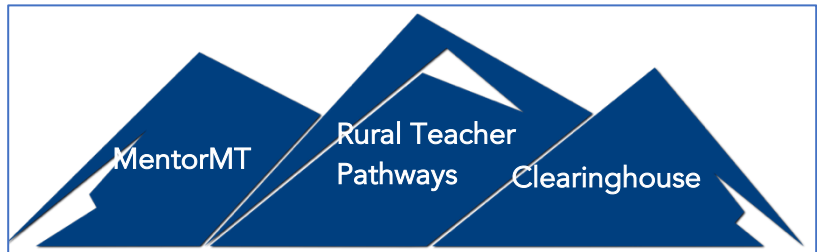


ASPIRE

Advancing Support, Preparation & Innovation in Rural Education

As our nation faces a teacher shortage of crisis proportions, rural communities in Montana have experienced increased difficulties recruiting and retaining well-prepared teachers.

The **ASPIRE** project, housed in **MSU's Center for Research on Rural Education**, has launched three initiatives to build a comprehensive approach for reducing the rural teacher shortage and ensuring that all students have well-prepared teachers.



The 2-year *Advancing Support, Preparation, and Innovation in Rural Education (ASPIRE)* project is funded by a \$1.5 million grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. The project's three initiatives represent a far-reaching effort to address the critical shortage of teachers in rural Montana, strengthen the teaching profession across the state, and ensure equitable instruction for Montana's students, regardless of location.

1. **Rural Teacher Pathways** -- strengthening rural options in teacher preparation
 - Sophomores: 4 days visiting and teaching lessons in a rural school
 - Juniors: 1 full week of immersion in a rural school and community
 - Seniors: 15 weeks of rural student teaching
 - 140 preservice teachers are projected to participate
2. **MentorMT** – support and skill-building for underprepared K-12 teachers
 - Grade-level and subject-area mentoring for teachers who have limited teacher preparation and/or a provisional teaching license
 - 75 practicing teachers are projected to participate
3. **Licensure Coursework Clearinghouse** -- increasing access to MT EPP coursework
 - A centralized, web-based portal to program and coursework information
 - Streamlines licensure or added endorsement from all 10 Montana EPPs