



Director: J. Spencer Clark
Assistant Director: Lori Goodson
Email: ruraled@ksu.edu
Website: Rural Education Center

December 2020

Grants bring robots, drones to rural schools

In the past year and a half, the Rural Education Center (REC) has worked to rethink and reshape its goals and the projects designed to help reach those goals.

And while much has been accomplished, three successful grant applications for a total of nearly \$1 million tops the list...especially when they include robots and drones.

TRSST, the first USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant the REC received, totaled \$146,014. It brings 38 double robots and other equipment to eight rural school districts.

RESET, the REC's second DLT grant, was for \$451,480, adding 10 more districts and 103 more robots.

A third grant, the REC's first National Science Foundation grant, was awarded in August. SOARING is for \$339,573 and focuses on bringing drones to rural schools to encourage students' interest in geo-science careers.

That brings the REC's grant total to \$937,067 to help rural schools thrive.



The student teacher (on the iPad) who started our robot journey.

And more grants are in the works.

A third DLT grant, ARCTEST, is under review and builds upon the two earlier grants. This one is for \$999,470 and would provide 300 robots to an additional 35 districts. And other grant applications are in various levels of completion.

Stay tuned.

Goals for 2021

- Create Ed Astra program to encourage students to become teachers and return to their rural hometowns.
- Host second Rural Education Summit.
- Top \$2 million in received grants for the year.
- Develop a collection of courses for rural schools to be taught through the REC.
- Co-author a book on rural education.
- Begin a student journalism/creative writing site for rural schools.

Rural PDS Formed

The Rural Education Center has established a Rural Professional Development School network to help address rural schools' most pressing needs, provide a forum to share best practices, explore grant opportunities and highlight accomplishments.

The eight districts also are part of the Kansas State Department of Education's school redesign project: **Ashland USD 220; Clay County USD 379; Dighton USD 482; Haviland USD 474; Lakin USD 215; Liberal USD 480; Pratt Skyline USD 438; and Twin Valley USD 240**, which serves **Bennington and Tescott**.

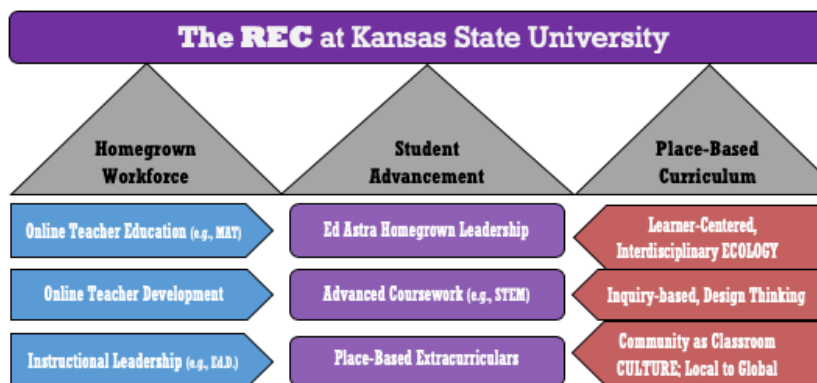
Drawing on its award-winning Professional Development School model with school districts in the Manhattan area, the rural network provides a collaborative forum designed specifically for rural schools.

The seeds for the network were sewn when representatives from the partnering rural districts met following the center's inaugural Rural Education Summit in 2019.

KSU Rural PDS Network

USD #215 LAKIN	USD #240 TWIN VALLEY	USD #438 SKYLINE	USD #480 LIBERAL
USD #220 ASHLAND	USD #379 CLAY COUNTY	USD #474 HAVILAND	USD #482 DIGHTON

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY College of Education
Rural Education Center



A few more of the REC's achievements

Among the developments over the past 18 months:

- Created a REC logo and further developed the website.
- Created banners for the new Rural PDS district.
- Created and published the first issue of the REC newsletter, *Rural Crossroads: CONNECTIONS*.
- Spencer Clark, Lori Goodson, and Eileen Wertzberger presented at the NREA's virtual National Forum to Advance Rural Education: 21st Century Education in Rural America on Nov. 12 and 13, 2020.
- Spencer Clark and Lori Goodson co-authored a book chapter on rural school staffing with Jerry Johnson.
- Held the first ever Rural Education Summit on the KSU campus in Summer 2019. An even larger event planned for 2020 was canceled due to Covid-19.
- Began discussions to serve as a hub for USDA projects based in Kansas.
- Worked on creating a brief promotional video for the REC with Rusty Earl.
- Spencer Clark, Lori Goodson, and Eileen Wertzberger had a proposal accepted for a chapter in an upcoming book, *The Middle of Somewhere: Rural Education Partnerships that Promote Innovation and Change*.
- Accepted the generous donation of a large collection of rural texts and research materials from Jackie Spears for our growing REC library.