

March 11, 2024

To: Colorado House Committee of Education
Representative Barbara McLachlan, Chair; Representative Matthew Martinez, Vice Chair;
Representative Jennifer Bacon; Representative Mary Bradfield; Representative Eliza Hamrick;
Representative Anthony Hartsock; Representative Meghan Lukens; Representative Rose Pugliese;
Representative Tammy Story; Representative Don Wilson; Representative Mary Young
From: Dr. Irene Martinez Jordan, AARP Volunteer Advocate
Re: SB24-099 PERA

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Irene Martinez Jordan. I am an AARP Advocacy Volunteer, representing its 670,000 Colorado membership. I am a retired Denver Public Schools educator and am under the PERA Retirement Plan.

AARP Colorado promotes a Colorado where 50 and older have the financial resources and opportunities to match their longer life expectancy. We advocate for PERA, our state retirement system, to remain strong for all older Coloradans, as well as their children and grandchildren. We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all as we age and protecting earned income benefits.

AARP Strongly Supports SB24-099 as amended in the first chamber, which would add superintendents and principals to the list of retired employees who may be hired without a reduction in retirement benefits by a rural school district in an emergency when other means or recruiting for the position have failed.

School districts struggle to attract and maintain highly capable superintendents. * Rural principals' turnover is both frequent and problematic. Short superintendent and principal tenures have negative consequences for schools and student achievement.

During the 2022-2023 school year rural districts started needing to fill 21.5 positions. Three districts were able to hire retired principals for 2.5 of the positions. The other positions were filled by 14 alternative candidates, individuals who have degrees either related or not to an education degree, but are in training to get a principal or superintendent license. Two were filled by emergency candidates. At least 2 positions were left unfilled, forcing some principals to cover two schools or trying to run their school and doing the superintendent position.

Except for the positions covered by the 2 retirees, this is extremely negative for students and teachers. Retired principals and superintendents already possess the knowledge and experience to run a school or district. They can lead and help teachers with curriculum and instruction and know how to handle emergency situations. They know how to create a positive school culture and how to support students with necessary discipline and activities that motivate students and teachers.

Not all retired principals and superintendents will want to work these demanding positions but those that do will provide rural school districts with a wealth of leadership, knowledge, positive roll modeling and the ability for a rural school district to have positions filled so that all staff can focus on their own jobs to increase student achievement.

Retirees are highly qualified and can be a great resource to school districts. Please vote yes on SB-099.

Thank you for your time and your hard work for all the people of Colorado.

Dr. Irene Martinez Jordan
720-270-1688

**School Leadership Review, v14 n2 Article 7 2019*

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1269628>

****Rural School District PERA Employee Retiree (“Critical Shortage”) Report, BR17-1176, Dec. 2020**

https://www.copera.org/files/7769cd4d5/Critical+Shortage+Report_1-21.pdf

*****Colorado’s Educator Shortage Survey Results for the 2022-2023 School Year**

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/edshortage-surveyresults>

House Education

03/18/2024 Upon Adjournment

SB24-099 PERA Employment after Retirement for Rural Schools

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Dawn Fritz For Colorado Parent Teacher Association	<p>Colorado PTA Supports Senate Bill 99.</p> <p>PTA believes that every child must be provided with a well-rounded, high-quality education that will ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity and should not be denied to any child. We believe, this bill is necessary to ensure that Colorado students have appropriate educational opportunities. One of Colorado PTA's highest priorities is advocating for more support for educator recruitment.</p> <p>PTA recognizes that educational opportunities for students in public schools are dependent on the quality of instructional programs and personnel; therefore, we support programs and policies for the recruitment and retention of talented and committed educators. We believe that allowing retired principals and superintendents to work in our rural schools would benefit our students and schools.</p>



March 2024

To: House Education Committee

Re: SB24-099--Public Employees' Retirement Association Employment after Retirement for Rural Schools

Dear House Education Committee Members:

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.

AAUW recognizes that we have a serious shortage of educators throughout Colorado, but especially in our rural areas. We also note that women make up a substantial percentage of Colorado's educators, including retired teachers and administrators. Over the past few years, the General Assembly has allowed retired teachers to be re-hired in rural districts without losing their hard-earned PERA benefits. It only makes sense to add superintendents and principals to the list.

AAUW of Colorado strongly supports SB24-099 and requests your YES vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Su Ryden
AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

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American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.