



*Pennsylvania Association for Rural and Small Schools  
and  
Penn State's Center on Rural Education and Communities*

***2024 Building Community through Rural Education Award***

Pennsylvania's rural schools are characterized by their closeness to community. People involved in rural education understand all too well that a strong relationship between rural communities and their schools is vital to ensuring both school effectiveness and community vitality. Schools, as key institutions in rural areas, have crucially important roles to play – not only in providing first rate education, but also in strengthening the social bonds that hold rural communities together and helping to make them viable, healthy and vibrant places to live. These roles have grown only more critical at a time when many rural schools and communities together face a series of challenges including changing labor markets, tightening school budgets and rural out-migration.

Because of this, the *Center on Rural Education and Communities* (CREC) based within the Pennsylvania State University's College of Education, and the *Pennsylvania Association for Rural and Small Schools* (PARSS) announce the 2024 annual *Building Community through Rural Education Award*. CREC and PARSS will select one award-winner and two honorable mentions, recognizing rural schools or districts that have distinguished themselves through innovative practices that contribute to the educational experiences for the students they serve, while reaching out to the broader community in which they are located. Note that *qualifying schools or districts must be PARSS members to qualify*.

This recognition will be presented jointly by CREC and PARSS at the PARSS Annual Meeting in April in State College, Pennsylvania. The recipient school or district will receive a plaque and will be the subject of a PARSS and PSU press release. In addition, the district will be featured on the websites of both CREC and PARSS to highlight the innovative, community-building practices of Pennsylvania's rural schools.

**The winning entrant will receive a \$500 award and an engraved plaque, and the two honorable mention finalists will each receive \$250 plus an engraved plaque recognizing their work. Each of the schools recognized by the award will be asked to make a BRIEF presentation to the PARSS membership at the Annual Meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**



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*Qualifying schools or districts must be PARRS members to qualify.* Schools/districts are encouraged to self-nominate. Complete the following and return it to Dr. Kai Schafft at Penn State's Center on Rural Education and Communities by email submission.

Please write "BUILDING COMMUNITY AWARD" in the subject line.

Nominations will be accepted until **Friday, February 23, 2024**. The award recipient will be announced two weeks before the PARRS Annual Meeting in late April.

1) Name of school or district: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Principal/superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Person making nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

4) Contact information (ph number/e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_

5) In an attached statement, please briefly describe innovative practices your school/district has engaged in that have both strengthened social and learning environments as well as the community in which your school/district is located. We are particularly interested in how these innovative practices have strengthened education and community in light of particular challenges facing your rural community and/or schools. Please feel free to include any additional supporting materials (e.g., brochures, curricula, multimedia, etc.) that provide additional information about these efforts.

***Return by email to:***

[kas45@psu.edu](mailto:kas45@psu.edu)

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