



Policy Solutions for Better Career-Connected Learning

Expand experiential learning opportunities for students in high school by removing burdensome seat-time requirements
(SB19-216; High School Innovative Learning Pilot)

Background

- ▶ Colorado's per pupil count process for school finance is tied to seat-time requirements based on demonstrating a minimum number of teacher-pupil instruction and contact hours. A certain number of contact hours must be met to receive full-time funding. If documented hours fall under a threshold, the district receives less funding.
- ▶ **Districts fear that students who spend significant time out of the classroom in work-based learning and experiential opportunities might fall below this threshold causing the district to lose money.** Further, the documentation challenges of accurately tracking students' time inside and outside of the classroom can limit the ability to offer experiential opportunities.

Policy Solution

- ▶ SB19-216 allows participating districts to count the students enrolled in the experiential programs outlined in the district's plan as full-time students, regardless of the actual amount of time the students may spend in the classroom.
- ▶ The pilot starts in 2020 with five school districts (fewer than 5000 high school students) and will then scale to include all districts by 2025.
- ▶ Nearly half of Colorado's school districts do not have part-time students and will be automatically eligible. Under this new pilot, they will no longer be required to track hours of students participating in experiential learning.

How does it help students?

- ▶ **Transferable skills:** Experiential learning opportunities outside of the classroom help students build transferable critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students must have opportunities to acquire essential skills for success in both the workforce and postsecondary education.

Want to learn more about ways to prepare agile learners through policy?
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Incentivizing industry credentials aligned with in-demand jobs and industries in Colorado’s high schools (*HB16-1289, Career Development Success Program*)

Background

Students would benefit from greater opportunities to build more relevant, rigorous, and transferable skills through high quality career-connected learning in high school. Giving students hope and different pathways enables them to explore who they are and what they can add to their community. Furthermore, as costs for higher education continue to rise with uncertain outcomes, it is critical to look for ways to preserve pathways for all students to thrive.

Policy Solution

The Career Development Success Program was authorized in 2016 to provide incentive payments to school districts and charter schools based on the number of qualified industry-recognized certificate programs aligned with in-demand industries, internships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and advanced placement computer science courses completed. In its first two years:

- ▶ **The program received requests for completion of nearly 9,000 industry credentials and courses.**
- ▶ 37 school districts (35% rural) in Colorado reported students who completed qualified industry credential programs under the program.
- ▶ **This is a nearly a 40% increase in school district participation over the 2016-2017 school year, when 27 school districts participated.**
- ▶ School districts spend the incentive money to help more students obtain industry credentials, including covering the costs of credentialing exams and transportation costs to job sites.

How does it help students?

- ▶ **Attain Postsecondary credit.** Completing an industry certification is often taught in a postsecondary setting leading to college credit in high school. We know that blurring the lines between high school and college accelerates postsecondary credential completion.
- ▶ **Brings relevancy and rigor back to learning.** Industry certifications and work-based learning opportunities bring relevancy back to the learner experience. The learner is outside of the classroom and experiencing different potential career pathways. Broader career exposure helps students better understand the diverse opportunity pathways available.

