

# 2021 Impact Report



**COLORADO**  
**SUCCEEDS**  
Great Schools are Good Business

# Reflections from Leadership

As we reflect on 2021, a phrase that continues to come up is 'learner-centered.' Colorado Succeeds' deep focus on the whole learner—from preschool to post-secondary, permeates all areas of the work.

- ▶ Through **Policy** we allowed learners to redefine their fourth year of high school to better prepare them for college or career.
- ▶ Through **Program Implementation** we expanded learner access to high-quality career-connected learning experiences, and
- ▶ Through **Collaborative Investment** we funded over a dozen schools and programs working to enhance the learner experience.

By championing policy, supporting its implementation, and investing in its success, Colorado Succeeds creates the conditions for system transformation that redefines the educational landscape to meet the diverse needs of today's learner.

Being learner-centered means this work must be done with a focused lens on equity and inclusion. By directly engaging with learners, families, and the broader community, we are co-creating solutions that work for everyone.

It is our pleasure to share this report on Colorado Succeeds' impact over the past year. Your investment, leadership, and support make this work possible. We hope you take pride in what we've accomplished together and are invigorated for what's to come.

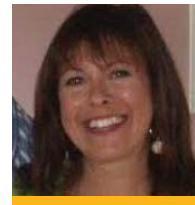
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## Mission & Vision

**At Colorado Succeeds, we believe great schools are good business.**

**We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of business leaders working to ensure all of Colorado's children are educated to their greatest potential, and all of Colorado's businesses have the talented and innovative homegrown workforce they need to thrive.**

**We apply our business expertise, influence, and capital to improve Colorado's schools. Together with educators, policy leaders, and community partners, we create change, invest in what's working, and scale success.**

# 2021 By the Numbers

## Shaping the Movement

**\$200M+** in federal stimulus dollars steered toward education and workforce priorities



**91%** of polled parents placed a high importance on investing in career-connected learning *and*

**87%** said they would enroll their learner in these experiences, signifying a fast-growing demand

**24,757** credentials obtained by learners through the Career Development Incentive Program to date including **4,800** across **48** school districts in 2021

**17** companies participated in the Work-Based Learning Community of Practice to start or scale their own efforts

**\$4,100** in funding now available for each low-income learner who wishes to graduate early and apply that funding to post-secondary and career pathways

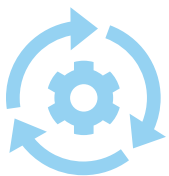
## Informing Public Policy

**100%** of the **14** bills supported passed out of session; **2** bills opposed were defeated or amended favorably

**200,000+** signatures gathered to get Proposition 119 on the state ballot



## Supporting Successful Implementation



**\$728,000** stewarded to fund **14** schools, programs, and districts funded through The Succeeds Prize and the Homegrown Talent Initiative

**8** communities supported in leveraging **\$6M** in public and private dollars for career-connected learning development and implementation

## Harnessing Business Leadership

**10** new companies joined Colorado Succeeds' business coalition

**206** business leaders actively engaged in unique advocacy opportunities



# Impact through Policy & Advocacy

**Through state policy, Colorado Succeeds can improve the education landscape for every learner in Colorado, and 2021 saw significant steps toward a more equitable and relevant system.**



## Top Legislative Victories

### Learners Provided with Expanded Access to Relevant and Engaging Educational Experiences

- ▶ Gives high school students flexibility and resources to personalize their senior year, fast-track graduation, and pursue post-secondary pathways, as well as seat time flexibility for districts to offer out-of-school learning
- ▶ Gives learners critical information on high-demand careers and their labor market value to inform their own pathways
- ▶ Provides grant funding for learners who have a four-day school week and wish to enroll in programming on the fifth day

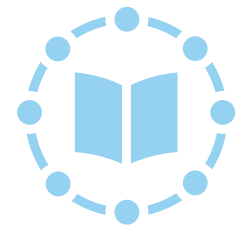
### Youngest Learners Prioritized Through the Creation of a New Department of Early Childhood

- ▶ Required the new department to be created through a stakeholder process which includes business
- ▶ Creates a grant program to support workforce development and capacity to meet the demand in early childhood education

### Learner Needs are Centered by Protecting Public School Choice and Measuring Learning

- ▶ Defeated legislation that would have removed a charter school's right to a fair appeal
- ▶ Required specific state assessments to assess learning loss and redirect resources accordingly
- ▶ Ensured a state accountability audit was fair and balanced, with a focus on how the system can better reduce gaps in educational achievement





## A Unified Showing of Support

Fourteen school districts and seven organizations signed on to a letter of support sent to the Colorado State Board of Education on how to best use education stimulus dollars to maximize impact. These recommendations resulted in \$17.4M for career-connected learning. Additional investments made by the state, supported by Colorado Succeeds, include: \$30M for high-dosage tutoring and out-of-school learning, \$119M toward early childhood education, and \$100M for credential attainment and career-technical education.



## An Inclusive Policy-to-Practice Feedback Loop

Colorado Succeeds partnered with over a dozen education and community-serving organizations to identify barriers and innovative solutions to inform our policy agenda. Groups like Transform Education Now, African Leadership Group, Colorado Youth Congress, and Young Invincibles—along with educators and district leaders—provide invaluable thought leadership in ensuring policies are learner-centered and incorporate diverse perspectives.

*“The work that Colorado Succeeds does is so critical. You can’t be what you can’t see. By doing internships or apprenticeships and boosting our economic pipeline, we’re also reducing youth violence. The synergy between education and business is so powerful; investing in students and showing them a way toward their future is so meaningful.”*

—Senator James Coleman



# Impact through Program Implementation

Passing policy is only the start of creating real change for learners, which is why Colorado Succeeds supports policy and program implementation through various regional and statewide initiatives.



**Homegrown**  
TALENT INITIATIVE

A joint effort between Colorado Succeeds and the Colorado Education Initiative, the Homegrown Talent Initiative (HTI) launched its third year of supporting rural districts expand career-connected learning and pathways for learners.

HTI districts are partnering with their local communities and business leaders to implement new career-connected learning models and provide expanded and more relevant post-secondary opportunities for learners:

- ▶ **Clear Creek:** Increasing career and technical education and certificate offerings, as well as capstone projects and career exploration
- ▶ **Elizabeth:** Partnering with local businesses for internships and apprenticeship opportunities, adopting a flexible schedule to better support students, and expanding certificate courses
- ▶ **Fremont RE-2:** Building relationships among students and businesses through work-based learning while investing in professional development for educators
- ▶ **East & West Grand:** Exploring and identifying students' professional interests and career pathways through internships while supporting career entry and progression
- ▶ **Holyoke:** Introducing internships and capstones as part of curriculum and creating career pathways with input from students and local employers
- ▶ **Durango:** Enhancing work-based learning opportunities for students that align with their career interests with the needs of the local workforce
- ▶ **Montezuma-Cortez:** Restructuring graduation requirements to better align with career pathways, student interests, and course offerings

Visit [HomegrownTalentCO.org](https://HomegrownTalentCO.org) to learn more about each community.

*"In 28 years of working in education, the support, training, and accountability offered through HTI has been the most meaningful and impactful thing we've done for student learning opportunities."*

—HTI Superintendent

## Governor's RISE Education Fund Grant Implementation in the Yampa Valley



Colorado Succeeds served as the planning and design support partner to Hayden and South Routt school districts who received \$1M+ from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund to address economic and educational equity gaps through innovative approaches. The districts are collaborating and sharing resources to create relevant career-connected pathways and hands-on learning experiences to revitalize their educonomy.

## Colorado SyncUP Challenge

Colorado Succeeds served as a challenge partner in ZOMA Lab's \$5M grant initiative aimed at funding education and employer partnerships that create opportunities for young Coloradans to build meaningful careers. We identified and supported applicants in crafting their proposals and look to support ongoing implementation.



## NoCO IgnitED

Together with OtterCares and MindSpark Learning, Colorado Succeeds hosted a two-day event for educators and employers in Northern Colorado to think differently about student entrepreneurship, learn from best practices, and strengthen partnerships between districts and industries. This event concluded with a design sprint to put these ideas into action in the year ahead.

## Learning Dollars Initiative

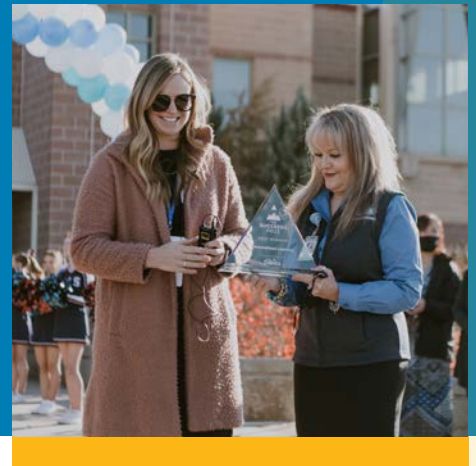
Colorado Succeeds partnered closely with RESCHOOL Colorado to provide 900 low-income learners with a stipend to support their out-of-school learning. This effort served as a pilot test for the Learning Enrichment & Academic Progress (LEAP) Program that was defeated on the state ballot, but still serves as a first-of-its-kind learner-centered funding model.





# Impact through Business Leadership

**Business engagement and support spanned all areas of Colorado Succeeds' work this year, from informing and testifying on behalf of legislation to providing learners with career advice. Here are some big moments for business leadership over the past year:**



## Work-Based Learning Community of Practice

Colorado Succeeds convened 17 member companies and 30 participants across a variety of industries to discuss the challenges and opportunities in starting or scaling work-based learning experiences, with an aim on learning from one another and exploring solutions to common barriers.

## Member Taskforces

- ▶ **The Early Childhood Education & Care Advocacy Taskforce** established a list of business priorities for the creation of the new Department of Early Childhood Education and participated in government committees to inform the process.
- ▶ **The Reimagining High School Advocacy Taskforce** informed and advocated for a bill that expands access to career-connected learning experiences by providing learner flexibility and choice over their fourth year of high school and exploring incentives for businesses to provide these kinds of opportunities.
- ▶ **The Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce** continues to inform and monitor the organization's goals in addressing systemic inequities in education.

## Virtual Career-Connects

Twenty Colorado Succeeds members offered their time and insights to support rural students with their career exploration journey. These micro-mentoring opportunities were popular among members and students alike.

***“Colorado Succeeds is the best organization for business to get involved in workforce development efforts in the state. I work within the public sector and consistently, Colorado Succeeds is leading all major conversations in the space.”***

—Joe Kuntner, Managing Director, Public Sector, Slalom





The Succeeds Prize hit the road, visiting six exemplars in education—recognizing and rewarding them with \$15,000 each.



### Action Zone in Aurora Public Schools

This community school model serves as both a school and community hub for student and family wraparound resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and a healthier community.

Presented by  Janus Henderson INVESTORS



### Warren Tech

Warren Tech is a beacon for career and technical education for JeffCo Public Schools and neighboring mountain communities, by offering 37 career-centered programs that stretch students' entrepreneurial and career potential. WT students gain high school, concurrent, and post-secondary credit while earning industry credentials and certifications through rigorous and relevant work-based learning experiences.

Presented by  Ball



### Clear Creek School District

A rural community once reliant on the mining industry is now reimagining their entire “economy” by aligning their students’ pathways with the growing outdoor and tourism industry and other growing needs in the community. The district is partnering with the community to identify and create pathways to ensure students have high-wage, high-growth career opportunities in the community.

Presented by  ttec

Watch segments on each winner by searching **The Succeeds Prize** on [9NEWS.com](https://www.9news.com)

### Greeley-Evans School District

Students in District 6 are engaged along a career-connected learning continuum starting in elementary school where they explore careers and work with peers to lead their own project-based learning. The development of these soft skills and passions then feed into their high school years where they can pursue an impressive array of career pathways made possible in partnership with the local community and industry partners.

Presented by  Davita

### Colorado Youth Congress

This multi-year program brings students from all diverse backgrounds together to solve complex systems-level problems and enact real change. CYC engages its students in 250 hours of intensive leadership development, relationship building, research and advocacy skills, and career development. CYC students expand their own self-agency as well as their social capital to help them solve real world challenges.

Presented by  slalom

### Mile High Early Learning

A long-time provider of high-quality early childhood education in Denver’s most under-resourced communities, MHEL knows that the only way to scale services is to develop talent. Educating both young children and adults, MHEL has become the region’s gold standard for closing the early childhood education gap, by empowering practitioners, families, and students alike.

Presented by  PNC

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