

# 2022 IMPACT REPORT

COLORADO  
SUCCEEDS

Great Schools are Good Business



# REFLECTIONS FROM LEADERSHIP

## Members, Partners, and Stakeholders—

We started 2022 by declaring it the “Year of Talent” because while the conversation around the critical challenges of Colorado’s talent pipeline isn’t new, the pandemic made the need to address it more important than ever.

**At Colorado Succeeds, we believe every student should graduate from high school with a diploma, a high-quality career-connected learning experience, and a path to a postsecondary credential with market value.** We are linking arms with partners in education, business, and government from across the state to ensure learners have clear pathways to economic mobility, and that business has the homegrown workforce they need to thrive.

To amplify progress, we supercharged our efforts. We broadened our scope to formally include postsecondary education. **What started as a K-12-focused organization now covers a policy and implementation agenda spanning the full education continuum from early childhood through career.** We also expanded the team, adding capacity in policy, advocacy, and program implementation.

The “Year of Talent” was all about laying the groundwork for big bet investments in education and workforce development, aligning stimulus dollars toward the state’s most pressing needs, and removing the artificial silos between education, business, and government to ensure we are all moving toward the same goals and achieving collective impact.

We have been able to do this through the enduring leadership of the business community and the continued support of public and private philanthropy, and for that, we are grateful. We are proud to share our collective accomplishments from the past year, and we look forward to building on them in the year ahead.



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Colorado Succeeds



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# VISION AND MISSION

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 that 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.

# 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

## Shaping Public Policy

**300+** hours at the Capitol

- + **13** business leaders testified on priorities
- + **41** business, civic, and advocacy groups signed onto stimulus spending priorities

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**16/17** bills supported by Colorado Succeeds were signed into law

## Supporting Policy Implementation

- 70+** school district partnerships
- + **12,573** industry credentials earned by learners in 2022
- + **500+** business partnerships statewide

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**190,000+** learners directly benefiting from new education and workforce development policies

## Driving Collective Impact

- 880** business and civic leaders convened
- + **45** partnerships with aligned business and education groups
- + **50** state and national speaking engagements

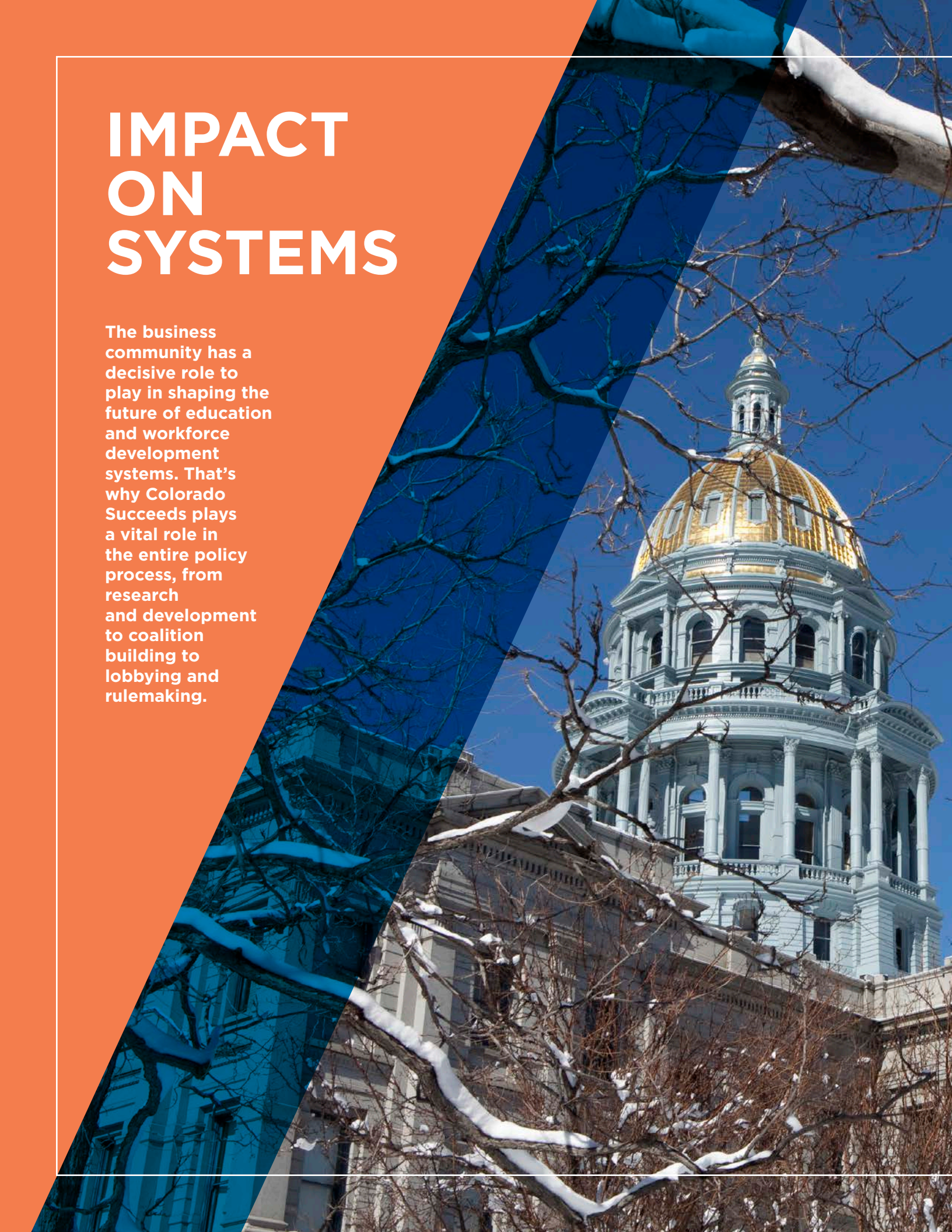
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**1** comprehensive advocacy strategy that increased awareness and demand for innovative solutions



# IMPACT ON SYSTEMS

The business community has a decisive role to play in shaping the future of education and workforce development systems. That's why Colorado Succeeds plays a vital role in the entire policy process, from research and development to coalition building to lobbying and rulemaking.





## Each year at the Capitol, Colorado Succeeds defends every student’s right—regardless of their zip code, race, or family income—to:

- ▶ Attend a high-quality preschool as a three- or four-year-old;
- ▶ Attend a high-performing school K-12; and
- ▶ Earn a postsecondary credential aligned with their interests and market demands.

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## This past year, Colorado Succeeds advanced legislation focusing on all three policy goals.

### Early Childhood Education

Implementing a robust universal preschool system in Colorado by focusing on choice, access, and accountability, one that:

- ▶ Supports all preschool models, including public, private, and in-home providers
- ▶ Streamlines services through a single unified family application
- ▶ Centers accountability and transparency by sharing data across state agencies

### K-12 Education

Increasing the number of high-quality public schools and ensuring equitable funding by:

- ▶ Improving educator professional development supports and evaluation process
- ▶ Making improvements to the school accountability framework and public access to data
- ▶ Supporting targeted increases in public funding toward learners with the greatest need
- ▶ Allocating \$17M to fund state-authorized charter schools equitably

### Postsecondary Education & Workforce Development

Innovating higher education and work-based learning by allocating federal stimulus dollars toward accelerating career pathways to high-wage, high-growth careers, including:

- ▶ \$90M for *Opportunity Now*, a state grant program that brings higher education together with industry to create better pathways for learners
- ▶ \$3M in incentives for employers looking to start or scale high-quality career-connected learning opportunities for youth or adults
- ▶ \$3M for the creation of a more robust state data system that tracks long-term success measures like employment outcomes and earnings
- ▶ \$1M for the creation of stackable credential pathways that lead to degree attainment



***“Working with Colorado Succeeds to ensure our education system is meeting the demands of the moment is crucial. We’re studying how to blur the lines between high school, postsecondary, and workforce, prioritizing students in policy decisions, and investing in collaboration among business and education.”***

—Colorado House Speaker Julie McCluskie (D-Dillon), Colorado Succeeds 2022 Policymaker of the Year

# IMPACT ON LEARNERS

The business community knows that policies are only as good as their implementation. That's why Colorado Succeeds plays a role in both, first passing policy and then supporting educators and partners on the ground.





## More than 190,000 learners directly benefited from Colorado Succeeds supported programs in 2022, made possible by the policies we championed over the years.

### Homegrown Talent Initiative

Launched in eight rural school districts in 2019 by Colorado Succeeds and the Colorado Education Initiative, this model connects the educational experience with the demands of the local workforce. Through its continued success and recent state funding, the program expanded to a network of more than 70 districts in 2022, impacting over **20,000 learners** statewide by building career-connected learning experiences in high-growth careers in their community and the state.

### Path4Ward

In 2021, Colorado Succeeds supported legislation allowing high school students to graduate early and use a portion of their state school funding toward their postsecondary education or training programs. Less than a year later, **113 learners** have already taken advantage of this program, with many more to come.

### Career Development Incentive Program

Created in 2016 to better align incentives with outcomes, Colorado Succeeds passed legislation that awards \$1,000 to a school for every recognized industry credential earned by a student. Recognizing its value, Governor Polis allocated an additional \$1.8M to the program in his 2022 budget. Over 44,000 credentials have been earned through the program, including **12,573 credentials** in 2022, with demand increasing each year. Colorado Succeeds will strongly advocate for the program's reauthorization in 2023.

### Concurrent Enrollment

Colorado Succeeds has a long history of supporting concurrent enrollment expansion to increase credential attainment for learners. In 2022, Colorado Succeeds helped some of the state's largest school districts in closing equity gaps in access through technical assistance and policy support in partnership with the Colorado Education Initiative. **More than 53,000 learners** participate in concurrent enrollment statewide.

### Early Childhood Education & Full-Day Kindergarten

Colorado Succeeds supported the expansion of universal preschool and full-day kindergarten. Both will help the state's future workforce and economic development by ensuring all children have access to high-quality early learning experiences. Universal preschool is set to begin this coming school year and will affect **92,000 children, and save Colorado families an average of \$4,300 per year** on childcare. The expansion of full-day kindergarten will reach an additional **13,000 children**.



***“The traditional school day was difficult for me, especially while trying to care for my son. After graduating early from high school, the Path4Ward program helped me enroll at Aims Community College, using my scholarship dollars toward a radiology degree and ultrasound technician career.”***

—Eve, Learner, Aims Community College

# IMPACT ON BUSINESS

The business community is critical in leading and supporting workforce development solutions that meet their current and future talent needs.







**Colorado Succeeds' expansion into postsecondary and workforce development has ushered in a new wave of business engagement, amplifying the insights and acumen of employers to inform the higher education system and improve career pathways. Business has played a significant role in informing funding, setting a vision, and scaling solutions.**

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### **Allocating Funding toward Priorities**

In 2021, Colorado allocated \$95M in federal stimulus dollars as a one-time cash infusion to bolster the state's higher education system. Shortly after that, the state legislature empowered a task force of education and industry leaders from across the state to compile findings and release their recommendations on allocating dollars to support learners best.

Colorado Succeeds and its members participated in this task force, influencing the process, and are now convening stakeholders around solutions and initiatives to deliver upon the task force's recommendations.

### **A Collective Call to Action**

In March, Colorado Succeeds joined forces with the Colorado Business Roundtable to host business leaders and college presidents for a conversation on how industry and higher education can work together to create a more agile and relevant system that meets the individual needs of each learner and the demands of the workforce.

This conversation kicked off critical action steps, ultimately leading to the release of a report, *Unlocking Our State's Potential: One Million Credentials of Value for Coloradans*. This report outlines Colorado's postsecondary challenges and opportunities for business advocacy and leadership and has already received endorsement from over 26 business organizations across the state.

*"The Colorado Chamber's Business Leaders Survey identified many challenges employers are facing including workforce shortages and a talent pool that meet current workforce demands. We look forward to working with state leaders and our partner Colorado Succeeds to ensure these issues receive the attention that job creators are seeking."*

—Loren Furman, President & CEO, Colorado Chamber of Commerce

### **Seeding & Scaling Workforce Solutions**

With the opportunities identified and the funding in place, Colorado Succeeds and industry leaders got to work building out pathway prototypes, working across institutions and nontraditional learning providers, and developing applications for seeding and scaling new talent development solutions, focusing on the fastest-growing industries like construction, healthcare, information technology, and aerospace.

*"The construction community has joined forces with Colorado Succeeds, Associated General Contractors, the Colorado Community College System and four-year partners across the state to map out a new framework for an associate degree that meets the needs of the current workforce. It's some of the most exciting work I've been a part of to build upon existing training that further connects high school students to a career path and a paid degree. This collaborative work addresses the talent gap in construction and is pioneering for the state, Coloradans as well as other industries."*

—Karla Nugent, Founding Partner, Weifield Electrical Contracting

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