

ELEVATING RURAL COLORADO

BUILDING A THRIVING TOMORROW BY INVESTING IN
K-12 EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REFLECTING ON FIVE YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP AND GROWTH



OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

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WHY THIS REPORT

State and national leaders have celebrated Colorado’s progress in advancing career-connected learning as a model for igniting partnerships between education, industry, and government to ensure equitable pathways for all Colorado learners. Over the past five years, the collective visions and investments of state government, philanthropic organizations, and school districts have built on each other to create a story of funding, policy, and partnership that has evolved from single school district bright spots to powerful regional and economic endeavors that are poised for breakthrough success.

This is especially true in rural Colorado. With significant investments and expansion of career-connected learning, the possibilities in rural Colorado have reached a pivotal moment. Coalesced around desires to create pathways of opportunity for students and families that lead to living wages, connect learning to in-demand jobs, and spur community-driven change, these collective efforts represent a turning point in rural Colorado’s history that could lay the foundation for lasting shared prosperity.

This paper focuses on the local efforts, state programs, and federal resources that have combined to create this catalytic opportunity in rural education and economic development, including insights about the roles of policy and funding in creating current conditions for success as well as ongoing barriers to inform Colorado’s next phase.

WHO WE ARE

The four organizations of [Colorado Education Initiative \(CEI\)](#), [Colorado Succeeds \(CS\)](#), [Empower Schools](#), and [Lyra Colorado \(Lyra\)](#) came together in support of rural Colorado school districts within the context of these investments. This paper provides a snapshot of on-the-ground efforts supported through collaborative partnerships with these organizations to underscore the interplay between philanthropy, state policy, and local practice and promote shared learning about this work.

The logo for Colorado Succeeds, featuring the text "COLORADO SUCCEEDS" in a bold, sans-serif font. A small mountain range icon is positioned above the letter "A" in "COLORADO".

COLORADO
SUCCEEDS

The logo for the Colorado Education Initiative, consisting of a purple square icon with a white shape inside, followed by the text "Colorado Education Initiative".

Colorado
Education
Initiative

The logo for Homegrown Talent Initiative, featuring a circular icon with a sailboat design in yellow, red, and blue, followed by the text "Homegrown TALENT INITIATIVE".


Homegrown
TALENT INITIATIVE

The logo for EMPOWER schools, with "EMPOWER" in blue and "schools" in a smaller font below it. A horizontal bar with seven colored segments (orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, red, orange) is positioned between the two words.

EMPOWER
schools

The logo for Lyra Colorado, featuring the word "lyra" in a lowercase, serif font, followed by a stylized star icon.

lyra

A background image showing a man on the left and a woman on the right. The man is looking towards the woman, who is holding a small bowl and working on a project. In the foreground, there is a large, circular, metallic object, possibly a motor or a piece of machinery, with various wires and components.

COLORADO EDUCATION INITIATIVE, COLORADO SUCCEEDS, EMPOWER SCHOOLS, AND LYRA COLORADO DEVELOPED THIS PAPER TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WORK, IMPACTS, AND INSIGHTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED AND ARE EMERGING IN RURAL COLORADO EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO PLACE THESE EFFORTS IN CONTEXT AMID GROWING STATE MOMENTUM, OFFERING IMPORTANT REFLECTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS, FUNDERS, AND EDUCATION LEADERS ENGAGING IN COLORADO'S CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING SPACE.

Note: It is important to note that Colorado is fortunate to have a robust ecosystem of partners leading in this space, and this report is by no means exhaustive or reflective of this complete landscape. Our organizations join several others that play critical roles in resourcing, supporting, and championing the expansion of career-connected learning statewide, including organizations, initiatives, and school districts beyond those highlighted here. We invite ongoing additions to the lessons learned and reflections offered here from other partners.

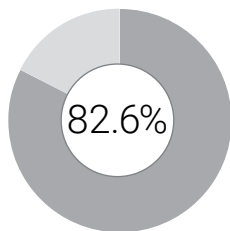
BACKGROUND:

WHY RURAL MATTERS

Rural communities and school systems have assets that play important roles in advancing educational and economic possibilities that are often diminished in deficit-based frames about rural contexts. Additionally, these smaller contexts can achieve scaled results quickly, and now offer lessons for larger systems.

- + **Sense of Community and Identity:** Rural communities are steeped in tradition, culture, and a shared sense of identity. These factors can create a unique school environment where students, teachers, and parents are deeply engaged and feel a sense of belonging.
- + **Schools are the Hub:** Schools in rural areas greatly influence their communities. As strong schools often lead to strong communities, rural schools have a huge opportunity to make innovative changes that can impact growth throughout their regions.
- + **Smaller Class Sizes:** Students in rural schools have a chance to receive more personalized attention from their teachers through smaller class sizes. Teachers can, in turn, build stronger relationships with their students, which can lead to better student outcomes.
- + **Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking:** For generations, rural communities have thrived on small, local businesses and community ties to bring about change. Rural leaders are often adept at taking risks and leading from a place of locally-driven innovation.
- + **Agility of Rural Schools:** Rural school districts have the advantage of being able to implement faster, adapt, and move forward with sustainable change. There is ripe opportunity to learn from smaller systems.

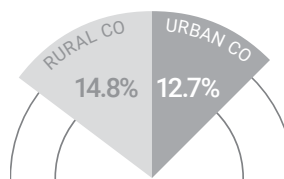
At the same time, rural communities experience unique challenges and ongoing trends that require elevated attention, investment, and partnership. More than 90% of jobs that pay a family living wage in Colorado require some sort of postsecondary training¹. While Colorado is a highly educated state, there are large gaps in which Coloradans hold a degree, with the greatest gaps for students of color and those from rural communities. Historically, rural students have lacked access to career-connected learning that provides the foundation necessary to access jobs that pay a livable wage. However, efforts like those featured in this paper are proving what's possible in rural Colorado communities, building a thriving tomorrow by investing in education and economic development.



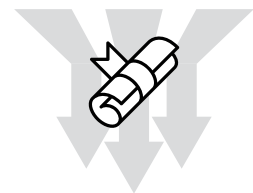
82.6% of Colorado's 178 school districts are rural or small rural²



1 in 6 attends a rural school (about 140,477 students)



The poverty rate in rural Colorado is 14.8% as compared to 12.7% in urban Colorado³



Fewer than half of rural Colorado's high school graduates go to college, a rate that's slightly lower than the state average⁴

¹ Colorado Workforce Development Council, [2023 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report](#).

² Colorado Department of Education, [Rural and Small Rural Designation](#).

³ [Colorado Rural Education Collaborative](#).

⁴ Colorado Department of Higher Education, [2023 Pathways to Prosperity: Postsecondary Access and Success For Colorado's High School Graduates](#).

COLORADO CONTEXT: KEY STATE AND PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENTS



Diverse sets of district and statewide leaders began convening in 2019 to build local infrastructure between rural education systems and economic development through two opportunities: the [Homegrown Talent Initiative \(HTI\)](#) and the [Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative \(SWCEC\)](#). Focused on what has been called the “[educonomy](#)” – the blending together of education and economic development – these efforts involved deep partnerships with business and industry and required new cooperation between K-12 and postsecondary education, fundamentally embracing the “[big blur](#)” popularized by Jobs for the Future (JFF).¹

From their founding, both HTI and SWCEC began rooted deeply in the context of local community assets and needs, cultivating and solidifying partnerships between often siloed organizations. In each case, philanthropic funding of local and national foundations invested in the early visions and work to launch collaboration, including the Daniels Fund, Walton Family Foundation, Gill Foundation, Adolph Coors Foundation, El Pomar Foundation, and an anonymous funder for HTI, and Gates Family Foundation for SWCEC.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a critical inflection point in the trajectory of these early efforts that paved the way for replication, scale, and regional collaboration. Amid enormous disruption, communities partnered to amass resources, respond to emerging needs, and recenter priorities. **In the years that followed, an important and reciprocal relationship emerged between local school district leadership and state-level policy – with districts driving vision, implementation, and advocacy; policymakers learning from and responding to this work with significant state investment; and increasing districts, regions, and postsecondary, workforce, and community leaders leveraging state investment to expand local engagement and impact dramatically.**

Under the leadership of Colorado’s Governor Polis, the legislature, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), Colorado invested historic American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER), and Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding in competitive grants to support equity and innovation to address the COVID-19 crisis, expand access to career-connected learning, and increase alignment across education and workforce systems – including:

- ~\$57.5M through the [Response, Innovation, and Student Equity \(RISE\) Education Fund](#) (initially launched in 2020 with funding through 2024);
- ~\$15M through the [Rural Coaction Grant](#) (initially launched in 2021 with funding through 2024); and
- ~\$85M through [Opportunity Now](#) (initially launched in 2022 with funding through 2026).

¹ Jobs for the Future, [The Big Blur: An Argument for Erasing the Boundaries Between High School, College, and Careers—and Creating One New System That Works for Everyone](#).



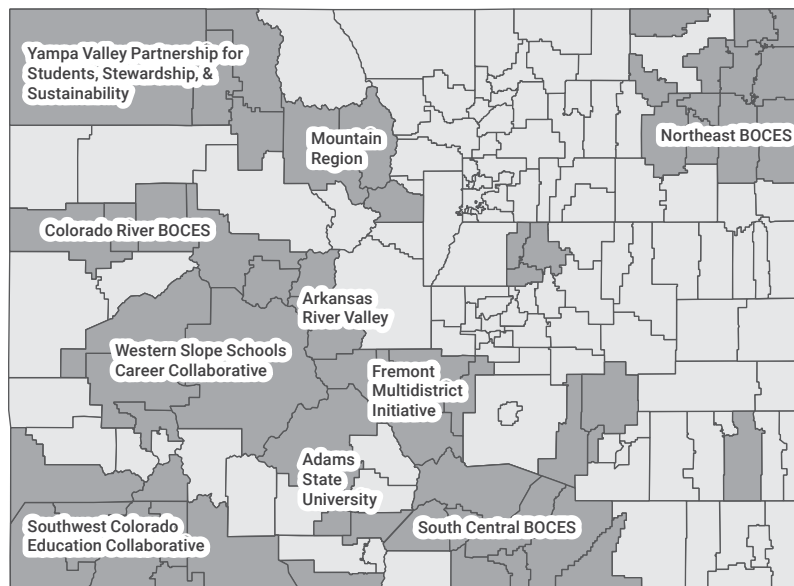
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADVOCACY

See [letter from 13 Colorado school districts and seven partnering organizations to CDE in 2021 calling for investment in rural education and career-connected learning through ESSER III funds](#). CDE launched Rural Coaction in fall 2021 in response to this letter and other requests from rural leaders, providing grants to expand regional career-connected learning integration aligned with letter recommendations, with priority for building regional educator pathways to grow their own talent.

Since 2019, the work initially spurred by HTI and SWCEC has grown into 65 school districts across 10 rural regions that have leveraged state and federal funding to drive local impact in rural Colorado, driving the advancement of Colorado's Big Blur.

	2019	2020–2021	2021	2022	2023–2024
FUNDING SOURCE	PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING	RISE 1 AND 2	PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING	RURAL COACTION RISE TURNAROUND	OPPORTUNITY NOW ROUNDS 1 AND 2
Number of School Districts	12	21	27	60	65
Number of Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)	2	6	9	18	
Number of Regional Collaboratives	1	3	5	9	10

Note: data specific to efforts that involved partnership with CEI, CS, Empower Schools, or Lyra; see list of school districts, IHEs, and regions by funding effort detailed in the appendix.



This historic investment from local, state, and federal leaders was powerful signaling. It showed rural students they matter and that their futures are important. It showed state-level philanthropic funders a return on investment in their early funding. And it often provided the spark needed to engage local business, community, foundation, and other organizations in the sustainable partnership and shared ownership that would follow.

The following sections summarize key insights from five years of partnership and growth through these efforts that are paving the way for redesigning education systems and revitalizing economies in rural Colorado.

STUDENT AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS



All of these rural collaboratives are focused on improving the lives of rural students by promoting relevant and dynamic skill development and real-world learning experiences that meet workforce needs and create sustainable and innovative futures for rural Colorado communities.

PATHWAYS

Each collaborative is designing and expanding equitable access to student-facing pathways that engage students in innovative careers meant to bolster the regional economy. Pathways that are being co-designed within regions include:

- Agriculture
- Automotive
- Building Trades
- Computer Information Systems
- Education
- Energy
- Environmental Sustainability
- Green Construction Trades
- Health Sciences/Healthcare/Medical
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Natural Resources/Water
- Outdoor Education

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Pathways focus on stackable coursework to promote economic mobility for students, including the components below. All districts are focused on increasing year-over-year student participation in this work, with support for counseling and advising, student voice and choice, and specific recruitment of students traditionally furthest from opportunity.

- + **Career Pathway Development:** Increasing number of students:
 - Completing two or more completed courses within a career and technical education (CTE) pathway and/or career cluster pathway;
 - Obtaining industry certifications/credentials; and/or
 - Earning college credit through concurrent enrollment.

- + **Career Awareness and Exploration:** increasing number of students participating in a career awareness or exploration work-based learning activity (e.g., site visit, guest speaker, job shadow, and self-identity navigation)
- + **Career Preparation:** increasing number of internship opportunities and of students completing internships

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GROWTH

Importantly, regional collaboratives improve individual school district systems/outcomes – e.g., program quality, equipment – while also developing structures to facilitate sharing of students across districts to widen access to opportunities. While building regional systems and scaling student travel takes time, regional work helps improve the quality of and participation in existing programs.

- Over 550 business partners have been engaged in the work
- State-of-the-art mobile learning labs with shared cross-district equipment

MAKING HEADLINES!

CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING IN RURAL COLORADO

- [Into the Multidistrict Initiative: Fremont County students take advantage of different pathways for success, *Cañon City Daily Record*, Sept. 2023](#)
- [Northeast BOCES and member school districts receive \\$1.5 million from Opportunity Now Colorado grant program to address workforce issues, *Holyoke Enterprise*, Aug. 2023](#)
- [Bayfield nonprofit brings career pathways to students in rural areas, *Durango Herald*, Oct. 2022](#)



INSIGHTS ACROSS IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



Integrating career pathways at a regional level has been a potentially transformative opportunity for rural communities. Across efforts, rural school districts leading this work have engaged in several strategies to start, scale, and create conditions to sustain their success.

LEAD WITH LOCAL VISION

Notably, each effort began by local leaders deciding to come together to imagine new ways to offer more opportunities for students within regions aligned with labor market needs. Regional visions and goals became an important catalyst to drive shared partnership across K-12, postsecondary, and workforce.

PARTNER ACROSS SYSTEMS AND SECTORS

The initial philanthropic funding enabled new collaboration by entities that do not typically partner. School district leaders, school board members, students, families, local business owners, local government officials, and postsecondary partners came together to build unique plans to provide real-world experiences and skill development for students based on the strengths and needs of local communities - creating positive impacts on educational and economic outcomes.

BUILD SHARED REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Many rural collaboratives have built shared regional infrastructure to coordinate region-wide access to college and career pathways and work-based learning, often held by a centralized structure or “intermediary.” Primary models include:

- Coordinating through the regional Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) – *key examples include Northeast BOCES, Pikes Peak BOCES, Colorado River BOCES, and South Central BOCES, building on the cohort-based HTI model*
- Forming a dedicated nonprofit – *key examples include [Fremont Multidistrict Initiative \(FMI\)](#), [Western Slope Schools Career Collaborative](#), and [Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship, & Sustainability \(YVPS3\)](#), building on the SWCEC model*

This shared infrastructure creates “win-win” situations for each local school district, creating real pathways for students and communities to experience their fuller regional educonomy, multiplying opportunities for students and communities beyond existing boundaries, and creating conditions for work to endure beyond the life of any single grant or individual.

LEVERAGE ENABLING STATE POLICY

Colorado has adopted [several state policies to promote and support career-connected learning](#) in local school districts beyond the large state funding programs that brought new attention and resources to this work starting in 2020.

Armed with a shared vision, rural school district leaders were better positioned to leverage existing policies to advance their work, often by applying for competitive state grants that were enabled through policy. Eligible/awarded school districts receive funds to support costs required to initiate career-connected learning work, including:

- Staffing and personnel
- Educator professional development, training, and certification
- Coaching and technical assistance
- Course equipment and materials
- Student participation fees
- Convenings and events

ADOPT ALIGNED LOCAL POLICY

Several rural school districts have changed their schedules, updated graduation requirements, and expanded concurrent enrollment offerings to enable increased student engagement in career-connected learning experiences – all changes made possible through local policies under the direction of the local school board.

DEDICATED LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

Implementing high-quality career-connected learning work and partnership must be an explicit and dedicated priority of leadership and staff roles. Many schools and districts identified a Work-Based Learning Coordinator role with the primary function to lead and support this work, including district and school-level work to establish and maintain programs in partnership with IHEs (e.g., Concurrent Enrollment) and industry partners, regional work to engage in multi-district collaboratives.



POLICY

SPOTLIGHT

Rural school districts commonly engaged in the following policies or policy-enabled grants to support costs of initiating and advancing career-connected learning work:

STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

- Career Development Incentives Program (CDIP) (HB 18-1266; SB 21-119; HB 23-065)
- Carl D. Perkins Act
- Career and Technical Act (C.R.S. 23-8-101; HB 08-1079)

POLICY-ENABLED GRANTS (COMPETITIVE GRANTS)

- Concurrent Enrollment Expansion and Innovation (CEEI) Grant Program Act (SB 19-176)
- Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program (ILOP) (SB 19-216)
- Opportunity Now (HB22-1350)
- Path4Ward (SB21-106)
- Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) (HB 15-1270)
- State Counselor Corps Grant Program (C.R.S. 22-91-101, et seq; SB 14-150; HB 19-1187)

PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

Rural leaders have partnered with external organizations to bring expertise and credibility to career-connected learning components, including the partners of this report. Key supports include:

- + **Managing start-up work** to establish cross-district partnerships, e.g., stakeholder engagement, data analyses, working agreements, project management (*work supported by Empower, CEI*)
- + **Building industry partnerships** that bring workforce and economic development expertise and capacity to the design and implementation of learning components across the career-connected continuum (*work supported by Colorado Succeeds, Lyra for environmental sustainability*)
- + **Designing and implementing career pathways** that bring to life student learning opportunities aligned to regional goals and workforce needs, including identification/articulation of courses and building out of regional internship models to comprise pathways (*work supported by CEI, Lyra for green economy, jobs, and skills*)
- + **Developing shared governance structures** that bring to life cross-district components, including established boards of directors with formal agreements and decision-making and cost-sharing models (*work supported by Empower*)
- + **Advocating for aligned policy and practice** to build awareness about policy opportunities with local school districts and promote learning and responsiveness with state legislators, agencies, and advocacy organizations (*work supported by Colorado Succeeds, CEI*)
- + **Facilitating ongoing learning** that helps Colorado school districts, policymakers, and funders, learn from and replicate successful efforts, identify strengths, and understand growth areas for continuous improvement (*work supported by CEI, Empower, Colorado Succeeds*)

ZOMA Foundation, The Weld Trust, and Xcel Energy Foundation have provided critical investments to enable expanded career-connected learning supports alongside the growing network of rural school districts engaging in this work.

LEARNING



SPOTLIGHT!

THE RURAL SCHOOLS INNOVATION ZONE (RSIZ)

Partly inspired by a learning visit to the RSIZ, the SWCEC came together around a shared vision of ensuring all students in the region have access to high quality college and career pathways. Empower has supported several rural Colorado school districts to visit, learn from, and replicate components of this model and early outcomes.

First-of-its-kind partnership and early outcomes: The RSIZ is a nonprofit organization designed as a sustainable collaborative between five school districts and five IHEs in South Texas to provide rural students high-quality opportunities for postsecondary success. The RSIZ leads the work of five academies, with each district high school offering a specialized academy focused on a specific career pathway open to any student. This work is dramatically increasing certification opportunities, the percentage of students earning industry credentials and completing a dual credit course, and CTE allotment across districts.

Advancing new policy and promise for rural Texas: Building on successes of the RSIZ, the Texas legislature passed HB 2209 in 2023, a historic step toward education equity in small and rural districts. This bipartisan bill established incentives for multi-district Rural Pathway Excellence Partnerships (R-PEP), enabling districts with less than 1600 students to partner to collaborate with education and industry partners.

ONGOING BARRIERS



Rural school districts face ongoing barriers to sustaining and expanding equitable access to high-quality career-connected learning work. While resources provided through policy and grant programs have proved essential to launch and grow rural partnerships, the competitive nature of many of them means that resources are not available to all districts and are short-term – both of which can undermine long-term transformation efforts without other sustainable infrastructure.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

The Rural Coaction grant program has allowed more multi-district regional collaboratives to exist in rural areas to accelerate the sharing of career-connected learning opportunities for students, such as access to CTE pathway courses and work-based learning opportunities and the ongoing staffing of this work. Rural school districts need sustainable funding to deepen the implementation of and scale regional career-connected learning efforts beyond two-year grants.

PER-PUPIL FUNDING SHARING

Rural school districts struggled with allowable uses of state funding to partner with other school districts to execute shared learning, whether through regional collaboration or virtual learning. Staff capacity and concerns about reporting requirements prevented districts from seamlessly being able to execute local partnerships or capitalize on the inherent possibilities that partnerships provide.

SEAT TIME FLEXIBILITY

By expanding student engagement in learning outside of school, career-connected learning challenges traditional notions of seat time that drive how 1) Colorado schools and districts are funded

and 2) how students earn credit requirements toward high school graduation. While some rural school districts have been selected to participate in ILOP to support this work – providing full-time funding for students who would otherwise be counted as part-time – this waiver is currently only available to a small number of districts. These tensions threaten the scalability and sustainability of current efforts and limit the overall impact.

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

Navigating, applying for, and reporting on the various and often siloed grant programs run by multiple state agencies that provide resources for school districts to engage in career-connected learning cause barriers to rural school districts' ongoing participation in this work. While these challenges are not unique to rural districts, they have significant impact on rural administrators' access to opportunity and capacity to fulfill expectations beyond the program and partnership work to implement career-connected learning.

HIGH SCHOOL QUALITY MEASURES

Districts leading this work in rural communities commonly surface challenges to scaling and sustaining career-connected work caused by the failure of the current system to acknowledge or encourage career-connected learning experiences and outcomes. While work is needed to develop shared perspectives about how Colorado's K-12 accountability system should change, there is tension between the lack of alignment in secondary measures and how districts are rated and funded for school improvement.

LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

Colorado school districts need access to stronger outcome data to know if their career-connected learning efforts are effectively supporting students to access living-wage jobs and to be able to make data-based decisions about programs that need bolstering or improvement. While not unique to rural school districts, not having these systems creates barriers to understanding the success of multi-district collaboratives, enabling continuous improvement, and evaluating the impact of the state's investments.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAVIGATION

Historic relationships and agreements between school districts and postsecondary providers has created a lack of understanding about the full range of options that are available to rural students. While the recent elimination of service areas presents new opportunities for rural school districts to expand partnerships, navigating the community college system has limited rural school districts' expansion of concurrent enrollment offerings more broadly.

TRANSPORTATION COSTS

Students need transportation services to access courses/ CTE pathways from a neighboring school district, internships, or offsite concurrent enrollment. Rural school districts have unique transportation needs from urban and suburban districts to expand equitable student access to these opportunities.

MAKING HEADLINES!

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS IN COLORADO POLICY

- [Toward the Big Blur: Momentum and Progress in Colorado](#), *Jobs for the Future*, June 2023
- [With better policies – and a little help – career-relevant education can move from the exception to the rule in schools](#), *Center on Reinventing Policy Education*, November 2022

LOOKING AHEAD



There is great optimism about the staging of funds, growing cross-sector partnerships, and regional implications of the work featured through this paper for redesigning education systems and revitalizing economic development in rural Colorado. Collectively, these efforts are:

- + Empowering rural communities as champions of systems-level change in education;
- + Accelerating momentum for career-connected initiatives in other districts across the state;
- + Changing the narrative around what's possible in rural Colorado communities; and
- + Building a powerful future for rural students.

2024 presents additional inflection points for this work as much of the first and second waves of funding from competitive grants expire and as state and local leaders determine what's next for districts and regions that received investment as well as those that did not. The [final recommendations](#) of Colorado's Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-Based Learning Integration Task Force (1215 Task Force) reinforce statewide priorities that would advance opportunities and address barriers to scaling and sustaining career-connected learning in Colorado.

The past five years of regional partnership and growth provide a strong foundation of insights and impacts and offer valuable resources to inform Colorado funders and policymakers leading in this space.

APPENDIX

Participating Rural Districts by Career-Connected Learning Effort

The list below shows expanding rural school district engagement in career-connected learning effort across initiatives over time, specifically for efforts that involved partnership with CEI, CS, Empower Schools, or Lyra. For a full list of grantees participating in each initiative, see <https://www.colorado.gov/governor/risefund>, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/esser-ruralcoaction>, and <https://opportunitynow.co/resources/>. *Districts listed with an asterisk have already been named as part of a prior initiative and are not numbered.

PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING

Homegrown Talent Initiative (HTI)

1. Clear Creek RE-1
2. Durango 9-R
3. East Grand 2
4. Elizabeth
5. Fremont RE-2
6. Holyoke Re-1J
7. Montezuma-Cortez RE-1
8. West Grand 1-JT

Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative (SWCEC)

9. Archuleta
10. Bayfield
*Durango
11. Ignacio
12. Silverton

Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) partners:

- Fort Lewis College
- Pueblo Community College Southwest

Fremont Multidistrict Initiative (FMI)

13. Fremont RE-1 (Cañon City)
*Fremont RE-2 (Florence Penrose)
14. Fremont RE-3 (Cotopaxi)

IHE partners:

- Colorado State University Pueblo
- Pueblo Community College

Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship, & Sustainability (YVPS3)

15. Hayden RE-1
16. Moffat County RE: No 1
17. South Routt RE 3
18. Steamboat Springs RE-2

IHE partners:

- Colorado Mountain College
- Colorado Northwest Community College

RISE ROUNDS 1 AND 2

Adams State University (IHE)

19. Alamosa
20. Center
21. Monte Vista
22. Mountain Valley
23. Sargent
24. Sierra Grande
25. South Conejos

*Clear Creek RE-1

*Colorado Mountain College (IHE)

- * inclusive of East Grand 2
- * inclusive of West Grand 1-JT

Elizabeth School District

*Elizabeth

26. Elbert 200
27. Kiowa C-2

*Fort Lewis College (IHE)

- *SWCEC (see above)

Metropolitan State University of Denver (IHE)

- *inclusive of Elizabeth
- *inclusive of Holyoke

Northeastern Junior College (IHE)

- *inclusive of Holyoke

RURAL COACTION

COLLABORATIVES

Arkansas River Valley

28. Buena Vista R-31
29. Lake County R-1
30. Salida R-32

IHE partners:

- Colorado Mountain College

*FMI (see above)

Mountain Region

- *Clear Creek RE-1
- *East Grand 2
- *West Grand 1-JT

IHE partners:

- Red Rocks Community College

Northeast BOCES

31. Akron R-1
32. Buffalo RE-4J
33. Frenchman RE-3
34. Haxtun RE-2J
*Holyoke Re-1J
35. Julesburg Re-1
36. Lone Star 101
37. Otis R-3
38. Plateau RE-5
39. Revere School District
40. Wray RD-2
41. Yuma 1

IHE partners:

- Northeastern Junior College
- Morgan Community College

South Central BOCES

42. Aguilar Reorganized 6
43. Branson Reorganized 82
44. Crowley County RE-1-J
45. Custer County School District C-1
46. Fowler R-4J
47. Hoehne Reorganized 3
48. Huerfano Re-1
49. La Veta Re-2
50. Lamar Re-2
51. Manzanola 3J
52. Primero Reorganized 2
53. Trinidad 1

IHE partners:

- Adams State University
- Lamar Community College
- Otero College
- Trinidad State College
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs

*SWCEC (see above)

Additional districts participating with SWCEC under the Rural Coaction grant that focuses on moving toward membership by 2024

54. Dolores County RE No.2J
55. Dolores RE-4A
56. Mancos Re-6
*Montezuma-Cortez RE-1

Tribal representation on the SWCEC board:

- Southern Ute Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Western Slope Schools Career Collaborative (WSSCC)

57. Delta
58. Gunnison
59. Montrose
60. Ridgway

IHE partners:

- Colorado Mesa University-Montrose
- Western Colorado University
- Technical College of the Rockies

*YVPS3 (see above)

RISE TURNAROUND

*South Central BOCES (see above)

OPPORTUNITY NOW

ROUNDS 1 AND 2

*Colorado Mountain College (IHE)

Colorado River BOCES

61. Aspen School District
62. Debeque 49
63. Garfield 16
64. Garfield RE-2
65. Roaring Fork Schools

Colorado Rural Talent Network

- *FMI (see above)
- *SWCEC (see above)
- *YVPS3 (see above)
- *WSSCC (see above)

*Northeast BOCES (see above)

*South Central BOCES (see above)

*SWCEC (see above)

