

During the 2024 legislative session, Colorado Succeeds was proud to champion a slate of transformative and bipartisan policies in partnership with the business community to ensure more Coloradans have access to the education that will help them reach their full potential. Key accomplishments include:

Updating Colorado’s public school funding model to prioritize student needs—for the first time in thirty years

The last time Colorado underwent a major rewrite of its school finance formula, the internet wasn’t a part of our daily lives. The formula was confusing, inequitable, and not focused on student needs.

After dozens of failed efforts to rewrite the formula over the last thirty years, Colorado Succeeds participated in a 2023 legislatively-directed School Finance Task Force, which released its recommendations in December 2023. This session, we supported a bipartisan group of legislators to finally rewrite the model based on the task force’s recommendations.

The new model will be simpler, prioritize the students with the most needs, and invest more than \$500 million to increase funding for every school district in the state. For districts systematically underfunded for decades, this new formula will have a tremendous impact taking critical steps to put students first in our funding model: increasing funding specifically for students who are at-risk, learning English, or receiving special education services.



100%
of Colorado
students
(881,464)
will receive
more funds
for their schools
beginning
in 2025



“Somewhere out there is a cure for cancer, and it’s probably not in a Pfizer lab—it’s in a second-grade classroom...We are not betting enough that it is in the mind of an English Language Learner or the mind of a student in a poorer district. We need a greater bet on our poor districts and those that struggle, and I believe that will, in the long run, benefit everyone because it ensures that these school districts can provide our next generation of teachers, nurses, research scientists, and the other professions on which we all depend.”

—MICHAEL MATHEWS, President, Greeley-Evans School District Board

Investing in our understanding of where Colorado's high school graduates end up through data transparency



All students in Colorado should be able to graduate on a path toward economic success and mobility by accessing meaningful college credit, an industry credential, or a quality work-based learning experience. Colorado Succeeds championed the Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-Based Learning Integration Task Force in 2022, which made key recommendations for realizing this goal.

In 2024, Colorado Succeeds worked with the legislature to lay the foundation for the Task Force's recommendations by investing in a statewide data system to help make education and workforce data more accessible and to gather essential data on the costs of delivering these programs. This information will allow us to work with lawmakers in future years to build a sustainable system allowing all Colorado students access to these opportunities.



**\$5
MILLION**

**investment
to bring five
state agencies
together,
linking data
from more than
six sources**



"It is not the job of a school, organization leader, department, or legislator to hide keys to opportunity. It is our job to make sure students have access to every door. It should be our mission to ensure that those doors are transparent. This bill creates a critical tool for ensuring that families and students can access critical information."

—TERAY ESQUIBEL, Executive Director, Ednium: The Alumni Collective

Collaborating with other statewide business organizations across a multi-year workforce policy agenda

Workforce continues to be a top issue for businesses. In Colorado, while 95% of jobs require education beyond a high school diploma, fewer than 30% of Colorado’s homegrown talent get the credentials they need. This year, Colorado Succeeds partnered with the Education to Employment Alliance to pursue policies that align with the five recommendations in their report “Maximizing Human Potential and Economic Mobility for Coloradans.”

Critical was the passage of legislation for industry-driven talent development plans in seven regions across the state. Another policy will provide tax incentives for employers who start apprenticeships, and two other policies will create more connections between apprenticeships and traditional education pathways.



“Today’s learners and employers are looking toward new models that allow learners to access work experiences during their education. However, it’s not easy for companies like ours to adopt this model. This bill acts as an apprenticeship catalyst, sparking interest in helping employers like us become part of the solution for our talent challenges.”

—MICHELE CARTER, Senior Chief of Staff, Slalom



**\$15
MILLION**

invested in
companies
that offer
apprenticeships,
leading to more
than 3,500
additional
apprenticeships
each year



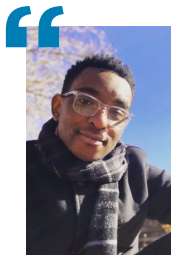
Improving the Student Bill of Rights to ensure college credit is transferable and transparent

Increasingly, students are graduating from high school with college credits or industry-recognized credentials that they want to apply to their future postsecondary education. Today's students are also highly mobile, moving across institutions. Unfortunately, too often, students have to start over and are asked to retake similar coursework. Estimates suggest that when students transfer, typically less than half their credits apply to their program, and just 13% of students who transfer from a two to four-year institution in Colorado complete their degree.

This session, Colorado Succeeds worked with bipartisan legislators in both the House and Senate to support a bill championed by the Department of Higher Education. This legislation strengthens Colorado's Student Bill of Rights, ensuring students have the right to have prior coursework recognized at a new institution, generating more transparency about how the system is working, and giving students recourse when their credits are not accepted.



18,000
Colorado
transfer
students
gained
new rights



"Here's the reality of it: despite our state's continuous commitment and dedication to improving outcomes, particularly for students furthest from opportunity, the ever-changing transfer landscape, coupled with the complexities of navigating Colorado's postsecondary ecosystem during the pandemic, has exacerbated many of the challenges that learner/earners are facing today."

—LARRY BLACKSHEAR, Transfer Student

