

# Education Pathways to Employment

Northern Colorado 2022



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# WELCOME



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# Acknowledgements

- *The Northern Colorado Community Foundation, Fort Collins Area Chamber and The Weld Trust contracted Colorado Succeeds to conduct a landscape analysis and asset map outlining the programs, partnerships, and opportunities available to young people in Northern Colorado aligned to college and career pathway development—**a true regional collaboration.***
- *We thank all participating districts, business leaders, higher education institutions, and partners for ensuring this report captured the wide range of opportunities and experiences learners may access in Northern Colorado.*



## This Report Includes

- › Key insights and assets from stakeholder interviews with the regions K12 school districts
- › Key insights and assets from stakeholder interviews with Aims Community College, Colorado State University, Front Range Community College, and University of Northern Colorado.
- › Key insights and feedback from the business community
- › Key insights and assets from stakeholder interviews with Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development and Employment Services of Weld County
- › Recommendations for next steps based on the landscape analysis



# Today's Program

- › **Key Highlights & Takeaways**
  - › Colorado Succeeds
- › **Review Each Recommendation**
  - › Local Expert Reflections
  - › Audience Polling
- › **Overall Reflections from K12 and Workforce**
  - › Poudre School District & UC Health
- › **Current Work Happening & Next Steps**
  - › Ft. Collins Area Chamber of Commerce



## Key Highlights & Takeaways

- › Opportunities abound to leverage an engaged and eager business community
- › Exemplar K12 pathways in the region to help drive scale and advance connections to postsecondary and employment opportunities
- › Intentional conversations about equity & access can help drive resources and programming to young people who aren't yet participating in these experiences
- › The report serves as a snapshot – and likely doesn't capture ALL the work happening – but hopefully helps drive a conversation and looks at the assets the region has to work from



# Recommendation 1

## Collaborate & converge around a regional talent agenda

### › **What We Heard**

- › Business stakeholders are looking to “aggregate” the number of Industry Advisory Boards they are asked to participate.
- › A desire for intermediaries to provide “connective tissue” between the business community, school districts, and higher education to expand career-connected learning opportunities.

### › **Possible Next Steps**

- › Identify Talent Sectors and create aligned sequencing – use sector partnership model to build
- › Regional Centers of Excellence to reduce duplication
- › Utilize Report’s School Program Asset Maps to identify collaborative opportunities and pilots

### › **Local Reflections**



## Recommendation 2

### Make it as easy as possible for students & business to connect

#### › **What We Heard**

- › Some (not all) districts have staff dedicated to coordinating between schools and businesses to provide students with work-based learning experiences (WBL Coordinators/Navigators)
- › Many districts in Larimer County and some in Weld are using the same career readiness platform; and all higher education partners are using the same platform – building consistent systems for employer engagement

#### › **Possible Next Steps**

- › Shared platforms are the first step; sharing best practices in terms of MOUs, electronic paperwork, and other systems can make it easier to engage across districts and reach into new communities that don't have staff.
- › Identify gaps in personnel and opportunities for grants or other funding/shared roles that could help coordinate across districts or region

#### › **Local Reflections**





# MENTIMETER

## What excites you the most about a regional talent agenda?



# MENTIMETER

What are the primary barriers the region needs to address?

Mentimeter



## Recommendation 3

### Create strategic pathway expansion that benefits students in the short - and long -term

- › **What We Heard**
  - › Concurrent enrollment is the most leveraged pathway program across the region
  - › Course offerings vary widely and in many cases aren't connecting to specific industry-aligned pathways or to transferable credit
  - › Barriers to access and expansion continue to hinder programming, such as transportation, teacher credentialing, fees and other costs.
- › **Possible Next Steps**
  - › Consider a College Launch Micro-Credential with industry specialization
  - › Audit concurrent enrollment courses and transferability across the higher education institutions districts partner with
- › **Local Reflections**
  - › Student Experiences



## Recommendation 4

### Utilize and share regional data to understand demand, outcomes, and resource allocation

#### › **What We Heard**

- › Concerns about equity gaps in the region and the business community's investment in having a more diverse talent pipeline
- › Interest and efforts in collecting baseline data and collaborating on opportunities for outcomes data sharing

#### › **Possible Next Steps**

- › Partner across K12, higher education, and workforce development to understand existing data collection efforts and opportunities for collaboration across siloed systems to look at aggregate data collection for the region.
- › Create plans for tracking employment and outcome data for students after high school and utilize regional talent agenda convenings to review the data together

#### › **Colorado Succeeds Reflections**

- › Statewide Efforts
- › National Efforts



# Summary

- The Northern Colorado workforce ecosystem is poised to accelerate and scale more efficient and effective Education Pathways to Employment.
- Stakeholders are engaged and motivated to continue strengthening partnerships between the business community, school districts, chambers of commerce, nonprofit intermediaries, postsecondary, and local government support systems.
- Aligned and accessible programming that will truly move students to and through postsecondary programs that lead to economic mobility will not happen on their own.



# Observations from Education and Industry



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# NEXT STEPS



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# THANK YOU!



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