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TALENT INITIATIVE

# Building Your Educonomy

*A Case Study: The Homegrown Talent Initiative*



COLORADO  
SUCCEEDS

# Welcome & Introductions

## Your Presenters:



**Katherine Novinski**  
*Director,  
Career-Connected Learning*



**Madison Knapp**  
*Director, Strategic Partnerships*



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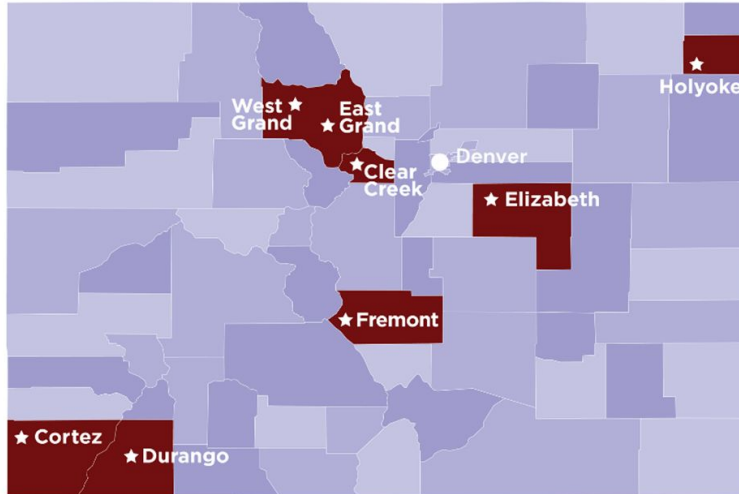
# Framing Context

HTI: From Pilot to Scale

# Homegrown Talent Initiative

The Homegrown Talent Initiative (HTI) is a **statewide partnership that supports regional cohorts of rural communities to develop career-connected learning experiences for K-12 students.**

To better prepare students for life after graduation, schools and communities strategically focus on skill development, work-based learning experiences, and flexible programming that align student interests and local industry needs.



***educonomy*** - collaboration among K-12, higher education, and local industry partners to benefit their students, communities, and economies

# HTI's Original Goals

- **Improve the lives of rural students and their communities**
  - Develop and test community-designed solutions, and set them up for lasting success
  - Change the narrative around what's possible in rural communities in Colorado
- **Empower rural communities to be champions of systems-level change**
  - Identify and spread exemplars and best practices
  - Capture lessons learned for communities involved
- **Build momentum for future career-connected initiatives across the state**
  - Illustrate and refine the Career-Connected Continuum theory of change
  - Capture lessons learned for key stakeholders

# Designed for Systems Change

## Five BIG Assumptions Built into the Design:

1. **Diverse Experiences:** Students benefit from opportunities to explore multiple pathways and build professional competencies in a wide range of work environments.
2. **Mutually Beneficial Partnerships:** Businesses are more likely to sustain engagement in education partnerships that bring them tangible self-serving value.
3. **Locally Driven:** Each region is different and the local education, economic and human capital context will naturally lead to different programs being the right fit.
4. **Networked Learning:** Rural communities can be inspired by, learn from and adapt good ideas from the work of one another.
5. **Resources & Supports:** With some design support, teams of local K-12, higher education and business partners can co-create sustainable programs that are good for their young people, their local businesses and their education systems.

# Homegrown Talent Initiative

\$4M+

## Phase 1: Explore & Design

July 2019 – June 2020

- Profile of a career-ready graduate in the local community
- Community goals
- Focus area(s) for career-connected learning experiences
- Solutions to prototype / pilot

## Phase 2: Implementation

July 2020 – June 2021

- Piloting of community designed solutions for sustainable career-connected learning
- Evaluation of pilot execution, outcomes, and impact

## Phase 3: Scale & Sustain

July 2021 – July 2022 & Beyond

- Identification and scaling of sustainable, impactful program models and experiences.

### Evaluation & Learning

Business / Industry Partner Support

Coalition & Movement Building

Communications & Advocacy Support



# Key Elements of the Model

## **K-12 SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Design Thinking, Graduate Profile, Structures & Dispositions

## **POSTSECONDARY & CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING**

Continuum from Exposure to Experience

## **INDUSTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Cross-Sector Partnerships, K12 Alignment w/ Workforce

# After 3 Years... What We Saw:



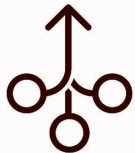
- ❖ All 8 communities developed or expanded internship programs
- ❖ 300 students participated in an internship during SY22-23



- ❖ All 8 communities increased concurrent enrollment and certification opportunities
- ❖ Year-over-year growth in student participation and obtainment



- ❖ Over 500 business partners engaged across the cohort



- ❖ All 8 communities leveraged aligned funding, programs, and policies  
→ *ILOP, CDIP, Path4Ward, Local Mills/Bonds, RISE Education Fund, Rural Coaction*

# From Pilot to Scale: The HTI Network

CRPE  
REINVENTING  
PUBLIC EDUCATION

How Eight Rural Districts Came Together to Redefine Postsecondary Success in the Midst of a Pandemic

OPINION

**First Person: How Colorado's Homegrown Talent Initiative Is Boosting the 'Educonomy' in 8 Rural Communities to Help Students Succeed**



## Rural Coaction



### State Invests in Career-Connected Learning for Rural Districts

Work-Based Learning | JUNE 29, 2022

Rural school districts across Colorado have been awarded \$15 million through the Colorado Department of Education's [Rural Coaction](#) grant program. This program is designed to "increase student access to and engagement with student career pathways and career-connected learning" through collaborative partnerships among rural districts, BOCES, and other local education providers.

Colorado Succeeds applauds the state's investment in career-connected learning and postsecondary and career pathways for rural students. Last year, we championed a [letter to the State Board of Education](#) urging them to use COVID-19 stimulus dollars to invest in career-connected learning and support high school re-engagement strategies. The letter was signed by 14 rural school districts and 7 advocacy groups, and influenced the creation of Rural Coaction.

## Opportunity Now Colorado



### Grant Program

Apply for Opportunity Now Colorado – an \$85 million grant program catalyzing transformative change for Colorado's workforce.

HB22-1350 Grant Program funded through the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)

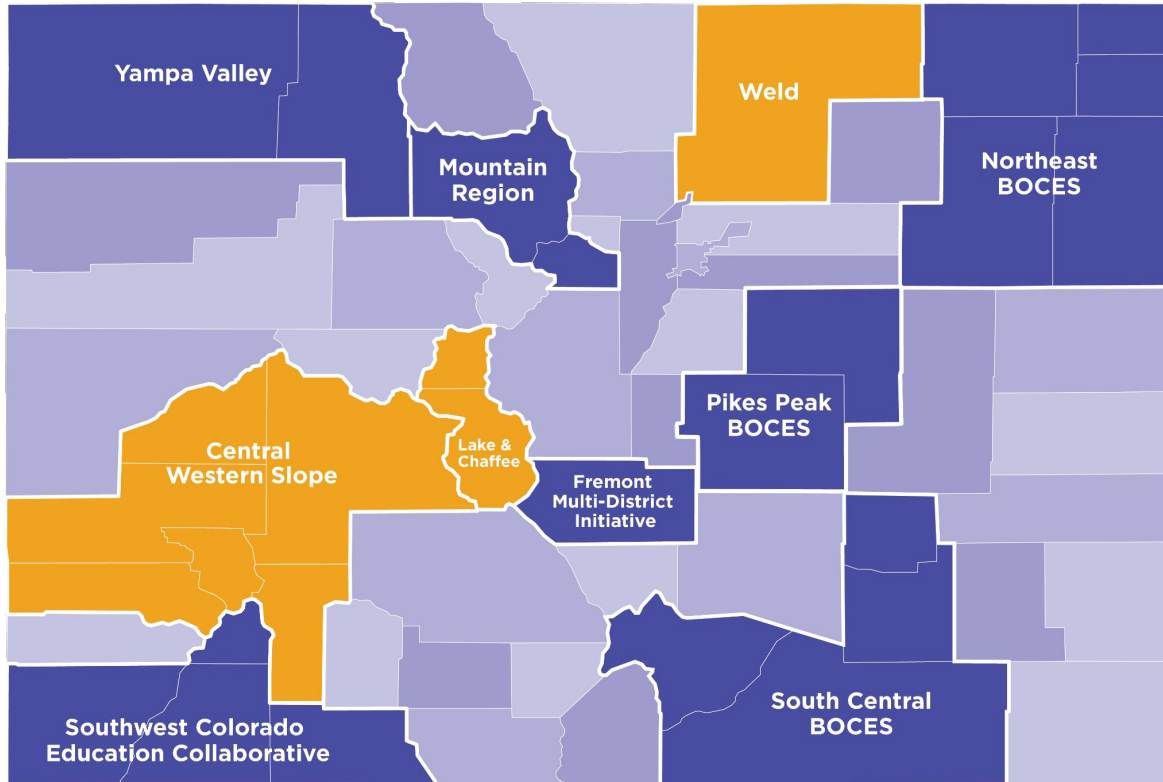


COLORADO  
Office of Economic Development  
& International Trade



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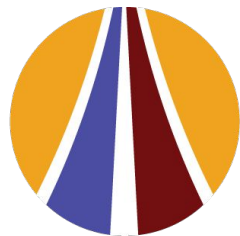
# Advocacy Leads to HTI Network Expansion



**60+ Districts!**

This unprecedented expansion of rural networks creates an opportunity for dramatic expansion of community-driven career-connected learning in Colorado with **regional** and **national** implications.

# Radical Collaboration at Scale





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# So, why do you care?

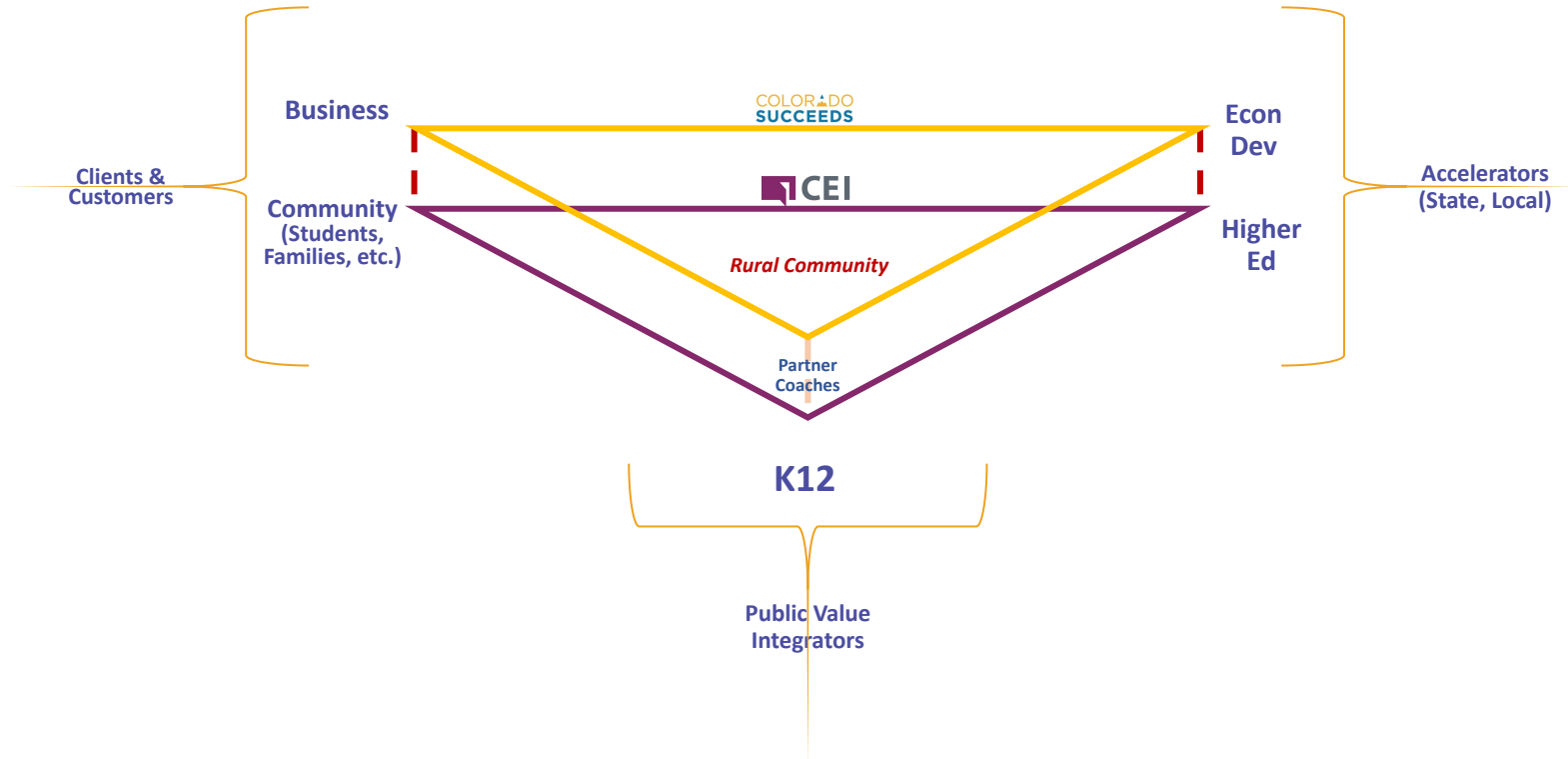
Cross-Sector Partnerships & The Educonomy

“ Cross-sector partnerships encourage a unique mindset and broader vision of what's possible; a permanent state of adaptive, agile change, which is not the norm in public education. The intellectual capital we have gotten from them is invaluable.

– HTI Superintendent



# The Educonomy





What does  
*educonomy*  
mean to you?

# What does *educonomy* mean to you?



# Thriving Rural Educonomies Across Colorado

Strategic Vision



N



Multi-Level Commitment

Innovative Solutions

W



E

Aligned & Integrated  
Systems

Local & Regional  
Collaboration



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S

Shared Sustainability

Continuous Improvement

Learner-Centered &  
Equity-Driven

**That sounds nice in theory...**  
**... but what about in practice?**

**When we ask educators about  
business and community partners,  
what do you think we hear most?**

**Industry needs to tell us what they need –  
*courses, credentials, skills***

**Employers say they do not have time to teach  
workplace and communication skills.**

**Business leaders don't have the time  
to help us.**

**They had a bad experience and are now  
hesitant to take on interns.**

**When we ask business and community partners about supporting their schools and students, what do we hear?**

**I never get invited into the school or classroom to share about my company or career opportunities.**

**We don't know who to contact to get involved.**

**I didn't know they had a pathway aligned to my sector.**

**I need homegrown talent. Period.**



# Building Bridges

**Education and business DO NOT speak the same language...  
how can we bridge this gap?**

- Shared Vision & Outcomes
- Awareness & Communication
- Coordination & Collaboration



**THIS takes capacity that many schools lack, particularly in rural communities...**

# Your Role as Cross-Sector Partners

**Co-Creators**  
**Mobilizers**  
**Demand-Builders**  
**Capacity-Adders**  
**Supporters**  
**Sustainers**  
**End-Users**



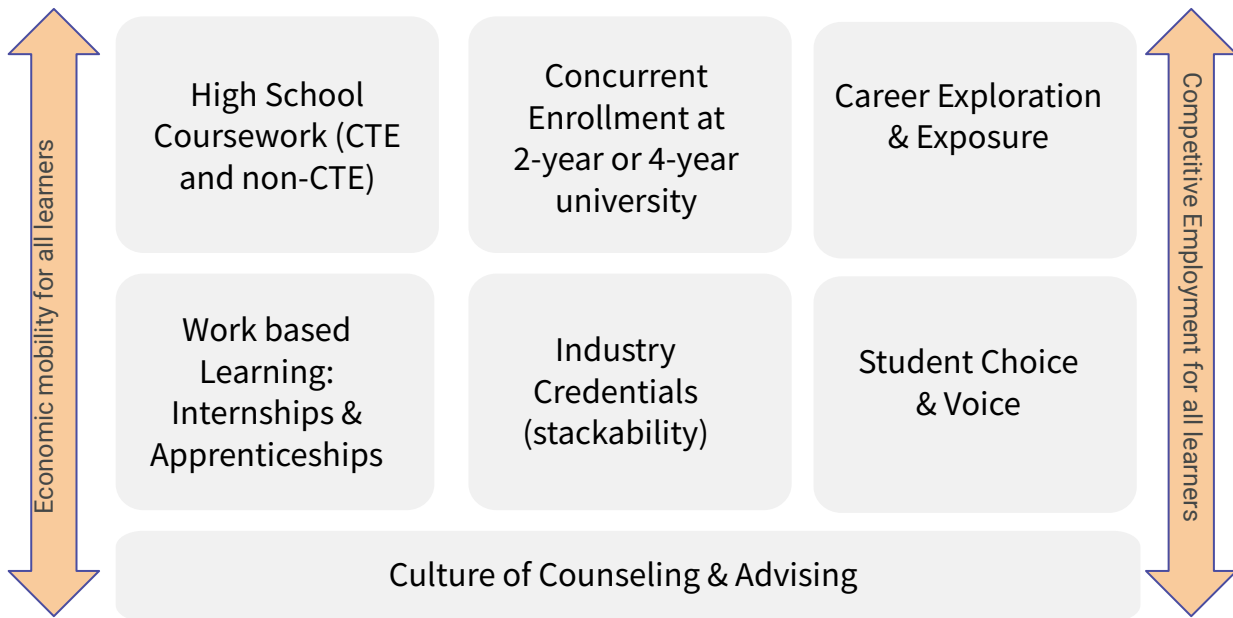
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# Your Role

**An Example: Pathways and Career-Connected Learning**

# What do we mean when we say “pathway”?

**Each pathway is clearly defined with the components below, leading to a specific and meaningful outcome for students.**



## Reflect

- **How is your work currently touching one of these elements?**
- **How could you work more closely with districts and your higher education partners to open up these opportunities to students?**

## Stages of the Career-Connected Learning Continuum (i.e., pathway)

**Definition**

**Program Model Examples**

### Self-Identity and Career Awareness

Help students across diverse backgrounds develop awareness of their strengths, interests, and values, as well as careers and training opportunities

- Preference questionnaires
- Aptitude surveys
- Career fairs and presentations
- Classroom speakers

### Educational and Career Pathways Exploration

Provide students with more in-depth learning of their strengths, interests, and values as well as, careers, and training, often through interaction with professionals or in a work environment

- Mentoring
- Job shadowing
- Worksite tours
- Capstones

### Essential and Technical Skills Development

Develop relevant skills and provide necessary credentials and social capital tied to workforce demands and opportunities

- K-12 institutions
- Traditional higher education
- Bootcamps
- Technical colleges

### Career Entry and Progression

Provide students with opportunities to gain actual work experience that supports development of job skills and offers a clear path to a sustainable career

- Apprenticeships
- Internships

**Business ROI**

#### Self-Identity and Career Awareness

- Visibility with customers (students/parents)
- Test products or ideas
- Gain problem-solving insights

#### Educational and Career Pathways Exploration

- Visibility with customers
- Morale building for team members
- Low stakes leadership opportunity for new leaders
- Talent scouting for future employees

#### Essential and Technical Skills Development

- Visibility with customers
- Test products or ideas
- Gain problem-solving insights
- Morale building
- Low stakes management/supervision opportunity for new managers
- Talent scouting

#### Career Entry and Progression

- Bring a new perspective or digital native skills to team
- Morale building
- Low stakes management/supervision opportunity for new managers
- Talent scouting

# COLORADO'S WORK-BASED LEARNING CONTINUUM

Work-based learning is a continuum of activities that occur, in part or in whole, in the workplace, providing the learner with hands-on, real world experience.

## LEARNING ABOUT WORK

Career awareness and exploration helps individuals build awareness of the variety of careers available and provides experiences that help inform career decisions.

- Career Counseling
- Career Planning
- Career Fairs
- Career Presentations
- Industry Speakers
- Informational Interviews
- Mentoring
- Worksite Tours
- Project-based Learning

## LEARNING THROUGH WORK

Career preparation supports career readiness and includes extended direct interaction with professionals from industry and the community.

- Clinical Experiences
- Credit-for-work Experiences
- Internships
- Pre-apprenticeship
- Industry-sponsored Project
- Supervised Entrepreneurship Experience

## LEARNING AT WORK

Career training occurs at a work site and prepares individuals for employment.

- Apprenticeship
- On-the-job Training
- Employee Development

Education Coordinated

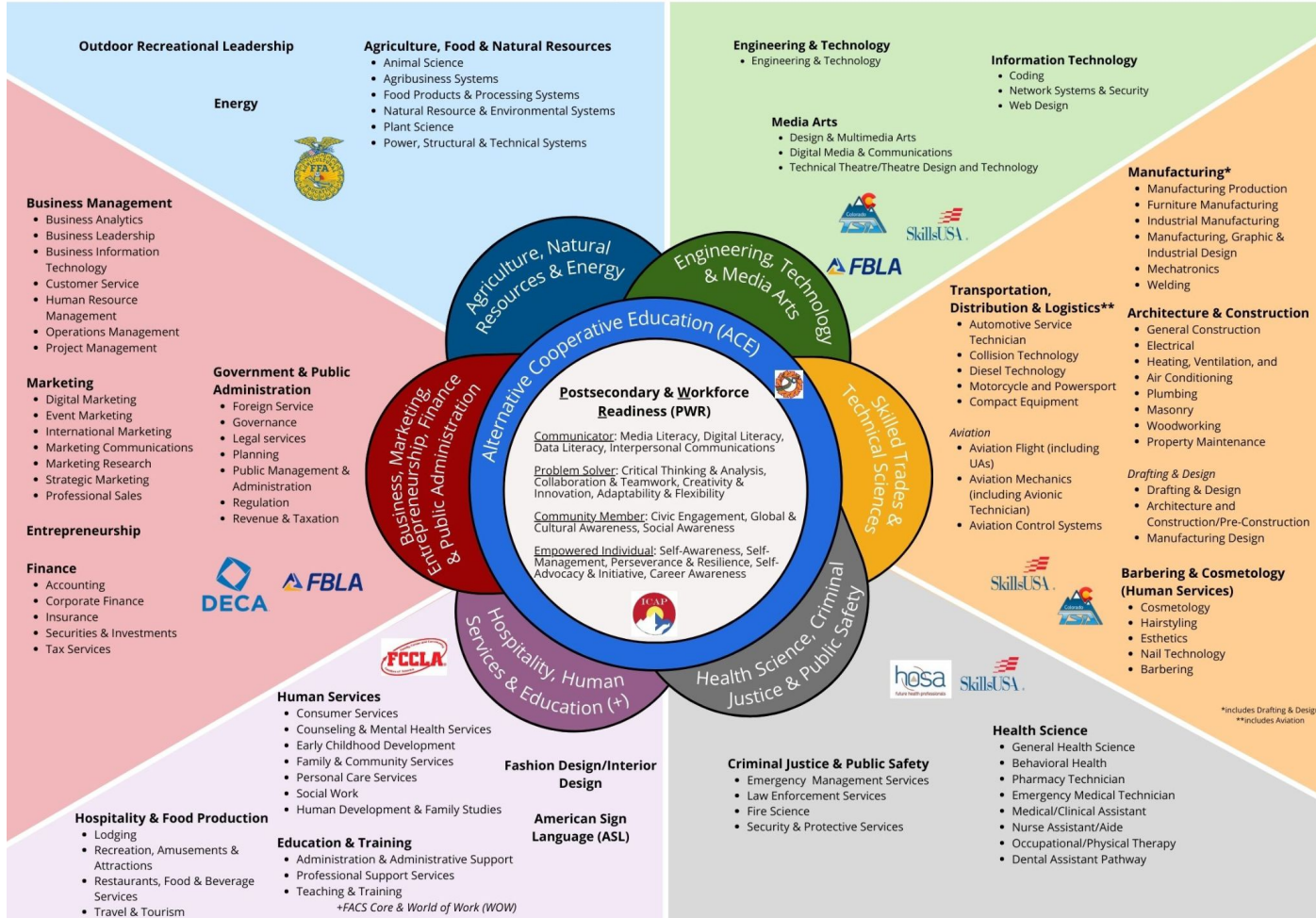


Business Led

## OUTCOMES:

Skilled Talent for Business + Meaningful Careers for Students & Job Seekers





# Building Shared Regional Pathways

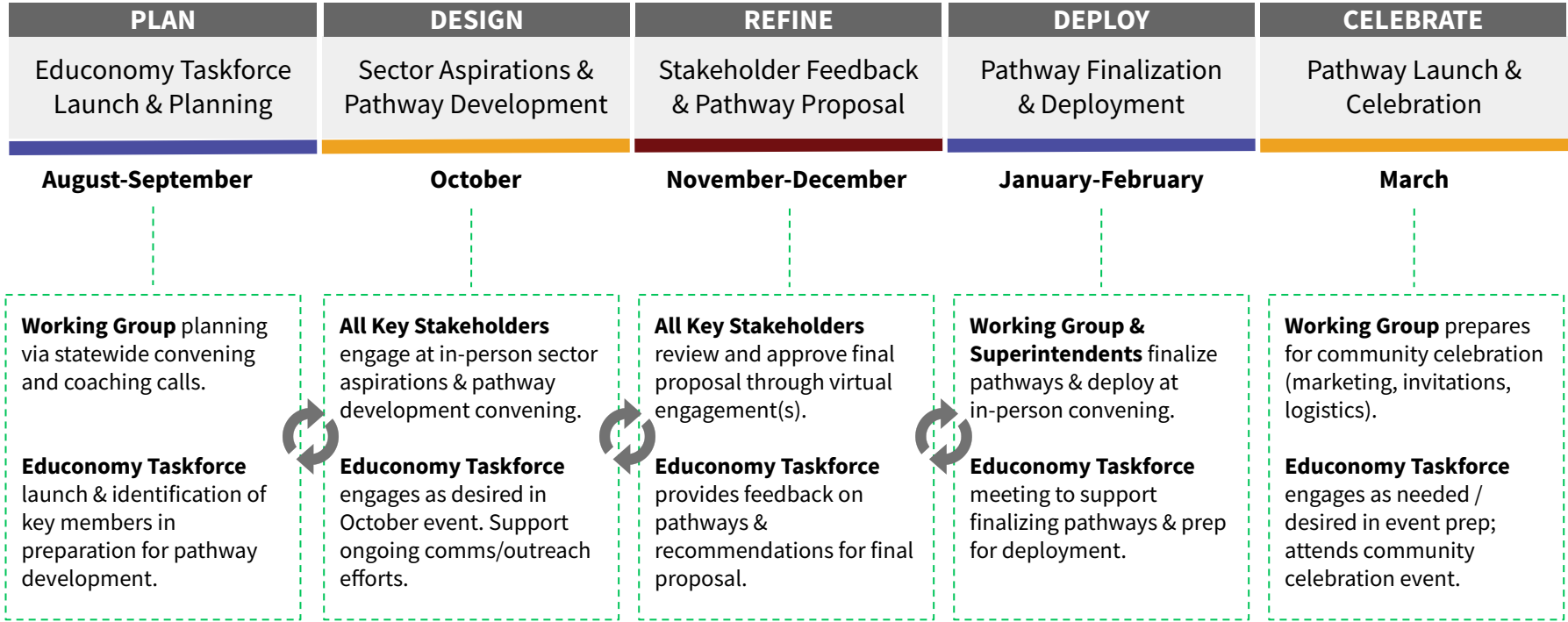
In partnership with K12, Higher Education, business, students and families...to meet the labor market demand in the region and open up equitable access to students across the region.

Region	# Districts	Agriculture & Environmental	Computer Information Systems	Construction Trades	Educator	Healthcare
<b>Fremont County</b>	3					
<b>Northeast Colorado</b>	12	<i>Every district has, so do not need to share regionally.</i>				
<b>Southwest Colorado</b>	9					
<b>Yampa Valley</b>	4				Phase 2	





# Community Co-Created Regional Pathways



FEEDBACK | COLLABORATION | VALIDATION | ALIGNMENT



# Southwest Regional Aspirations - Example

## The Southwest Region Aspires To:

What are our shared goals for community and economic growth? What are our hopes and dreams for each field or industry?

### Health Sciences

- Actively work toward a diverse workforce in all levels of the system
- Have the knowledge, skills and expertise to provide strong, culturally responsive access to both behavioral and physical health care for all SW Colorado residents
- Prioritize a strong foundation/survey of the occupations and fields that are available, with the development of comprehensive speciality areas
- Addresses the healthcare workforce crisis in the SW

### Educator

- Provide valuable experiences to help students explore and answer their own self-generated questions
- Allow educators who to do what they do best by leveraging a co-teacher model that focuses on the whole educator and their strengths
- Promote educators as facilitators that have fluidity in area specialties
- Embed culturally responsive education practices so that all students and staff can thrive
- Support educators to meet the growing SEL and academic needs of students through the use of innovative and engaging technology.
- Elevate the perception of the education profession as a viable career
- Represent our communities and students in our educator workforce
- Ensure that our educators will be prepared for best practices (theoretically and pedagogically-ready)

### Building Trades

- Have a clear and reliable workforce pipeline
- Supports green and sustainable building
- Foster generalist skill sets, with transferable skills across professions
- Include regulation from the state on construction trades quality of worker via recognized credentials/certifications
- Have strong industry investment in K12 education
- Educate its K12 teachers in current industry standards.

### Tourism & Hospitality

- Offer many opportunities for residents to get paid to do what they love.
- Support self-care and personal sustainability of the workforce
- Leverage new seasonal residents to contribute to the regional economy
- Balance technological advancements in the industry with the importance of human interaction.

Southwest Colorado  
Education Collaborative



### Environmental

- Provide local youth with the opportunities and skills needed to secure jobs in the natural resource industries essential to the southwest region
- Be responsive and adaptive to the impacts of natural disasters on the economic resilience of southwest Colorado communities
- Promote policies and education to ensure the ongoing sustainability of traditional industries through innovative approaches to food production/distribution, energy, forestry, fire science, transportation, agriculture, and wildlife, and fish management
- Empower future generations by investing in the lasting resilience of watersheds, forests, and communities across the diverse southwestern region

Regional Sector Aspirations are co-created statements that answer the questions:

- “What do we want for the future of our community in X sector?”
- What do workers in [ ] sector need to have in our community?
- What are our regional goals for this sector?
- What is the ideal future state of this sector?

# Pathways Materials

 CTE CLUSTER:  
**Educator**

Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative

Through the Educator Cluster, you will be able to explore courses that prepare you to work in an early childhood classroom or courses that prepare you to become a teacher. For each pathway, you have the option to take up to 4 courses in sequence and work towards earning an industry credential and college credits before you graduate from high school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PATHWAY			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Career Pathways</li><li>Education Exploration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Intro to ECE</li><li>Guidance Strategies for Young Children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Infant and Toddler Theory &amp; Practice</li><li>Intro to Early Childhood Lab Technique</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Practicum</li></ul>

<b>Industry Credentials</b>	Child Development Associate (CDA)
<b>Higher Ed Opportunities</b>	<a href="#">Pueblo Community College</a> <a href="#">Fort Lewis College</a>
<b>Potential Career Outcomes &amp; Median CO Starting salaries</b>	



**Notes on Access**

- Talk to your counselor about how you can access these courses.
- You may be able to take the courses at your high school, through a virtual format, or by traveling to a different high school in the region.
- Consider participating in one of the education pathways today, as your region is in need of great early childhood teachers and K-12 classroom teachers.

Explore more at [My Colorado Journey](#)



Through a community driven process, we have developed a clear vision for each of the shared pathways, including:

- Course sequences of 3-4 courses that can receive CTE program approval
- Aligned concurrent enrollment courses, when possible
- Relevant industry credentials, when they exist
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Career outcomes in the community that can be obtained through participation in this pathway
- Next steps to take to continue in this pathway after high school graduation

# How to Engage in Your Educonomy

## Career-Connected Learning & Pathways Development

	Low Touch	Medium Touch	High Touch
Career-Connected Learning	<p>Host students for a site visit to explore the careers available at your company.</p> <p>Serve as a guest speaker or participate in a career fair.</p>	<p>Offer paid internships.</p>	<p>Support on-the-job training and apprenticeships.</p>
Pathways Development	<p>Validate sector selection, aspirations, and pathway development → <i>Do they align with your workforce / economy's needs?</i></p>	<p>Participate in an “Educonomy Task Force” to inform the process, provide feedback along the way.</p>	<p>Collaborate with K12 and Higher Ed to building stackable pathways that are industry-driven that fill your hiring needs.</p>

# How to Engage in Your Educonomy

## Sustaining Efforts

- **Policy Levers:** Better understand what exists and/or what could be a legislative solution to remove barriers, incentivize schools, students, and business, and encourage collaboration.
  - *Career Development Incentive Program* ([CDIP](#))
  - *Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program* ([ILOP](#))
  - *Work-Based Learning Incentive Program* ([WBLIP](#))
- **Workforce Intermediaries:** Connect with workforce centers, chambers of commerce, and economic development council's to understand their key priorities, how they might lend capacity, and what resources are available for the work (they know about all the \$\$!)
- **Infrastructure:** Explore tools and systems that can add structure and sustainability to these efforts, such as a WBL platform or creation of a new organization to house the work.
- **Equity:** Keep learners centered. Demand access for all. Adopt skills-based hiring practices.

# Reflection & Questions

- What are you taking home with you?  
What is your action item TODAY?
- What do you want to be true for your educonomy in 5 years?
- What barriers will you need to clear,  
levers to pull to get there?

# Connect with us!



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**THANK YOU!**

[www.HomegrownTalentCO.org](http://www.HomegrownTalentCO.org)



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