Executive Summary

Experts predict that many of the jobs available in the year 2030 have yet to be invented. Further, 47% of all US jobs are at risk of elimination in the next 20 years due to high automation with lower-wage jobs being 20 times more likely to disappear than jobs at the higher end of the pay spectrum. Those who thrive in this new reality will have to be highly agile, creative, critical thinkers, comfortable with diverse environments, and open to a future far more fluid than that to which we are accustomed.

Currently, 76% of jobs in Colorado require some kind of postsecondary degree, yet only 23 of every 100 high school graduates earns a college degree in six years. The COVID-19 pandemic created urgency around re-engaging high school students who have fallen behind on graduation requirements and college and career readiness.

Research tells us that students who receive mentorship from caring adults and who feel confident and hopeful about their ability to succeed are most likely to be engaged in school.

There are many ways to help support students in gaining more postsecondary credentials. Work-Based Learning (WBL) provides students with opportunities to learn, and feel confident in foundational skills used in the workplace through participation in applied programs such as internships or apprenticeships. Career and Technical Education (CTE) is career-oriented coursework, or the ability to earn credit through industry partnerships, which provides students with the opportunity to obtain skills-based certifications or credentials. Concurrent Enrollment (CE) provides students the opportunity to take college-level coursework and experience college faculty and curriculum while still in high school. Importantly, WBL, CTE, and CE connect young people with mentors and role models who serve as outlets of encouragement and support.

Fast Facts to Consider:

- Only 1 in 4 CO high school graduates enrolls immediately in a postsecondary education and completes a credential six years later. (CO Talent Pipeline)
- Students who took Concurrent Enrollment classes were 50% more likely to attend college. (Colorado Evaluation and Data Lab) and 26% of students who took Concurrent Enrollment classes graduated in four years.
- According to CCCS (Colorado Community College System), only 17% of CCCS students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions, 13.7% for first gen students. (CCCS Strategic Plan)
- Among our fastest growing population, Latino/Hispanic, only 1 in 5 have a credential beyond high school. Colorado ranks 50th in the nation in the divide between the percentage of adult Latino/Hispanic Coloradans who have earned an associate or bachelor’s degree and percentage of degree-holding non-Latino/Hispanic whites. (CO Talent Pipeline)
- College continues to be extremely unaffordable. In-state undergraduate tuition increased 68% (or 83% on an FTE basis) in the past 10 years.
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. A regional approach must be taken to ensure that talent pipelines are responsive to the needs of a region, that programs are built with equity and access in mind and that resources are shared beyond school, district, and municipal boundaries.

School districts, institutions of higher education, and industry partners must collaborate in developing programming aligned to getting more students access to CTE, CE, and WBL. Given this momentum and the opportunity the region has in increasing postsecondary attainment for students and the economic prospects of young people, The Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, and The Weld Trust contracted Colorado Succeeds to better understand the Education to Employment Landscape in Northern Colorado. These, and many other partners, are interested in supporting the Northern Colorado region and its young people in achieving postsecondary success through partnership and opportunities offered by schools and partners. The exponential growth of these discrete programs and interested partners has highlighted the need for more coordination as well as shared understanding of programming assets and gaps.

Through an asset mapping project, the partners sought to define these programs and organize them into an understandable, shareable resource. Facilitated conversations and a landscape analysis were conducted by Colorado Succeeds over the past three months, resulting in recommendations around strategic regional opportunities.

This report includes:

- Key insights from stakeholder interviews with Aims Community College, Colorado State University, Front Range Community College, and University of Northern Colorado
- Key insights from stakeholder interviews with Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development and Employment Services of Weld County
- Landscape analysis of key opportunities for the region
- Labor market data for the region [August 2022]
- Key recommendations for collaboration based on asset maps, labor market data and landscape analysis

Acknowledgments
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. Colorado Succeeds thanks the Northern Colorado Community Foundation, Fort Collins Area Chamber and The Weld Trust for their support and engagement throughout this project. In addition, thank you to 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.
Introduction

To complete the study, Colorado Succeeds divided our work into three sections:

1. Performing a regional landscape scan to develop an asset map and definitions tool outlining the programs, partnerships, and opportunities available to young people in Northern Colorado aligned to college and career pathway development.
2. Gathering input from multiple stakeholders on the unique needs and considerations given Northern Colorado’s local context.
3. Synthesizing findings and developing key recommendations for strategic opportunities and next steps.

Figure 1

The primary research consisted of stakeholder interviews in which we sought to have broad geographic representation. In total, 25 interviews were conducted.

Table 1: Regional Stakeholder Engagement

Combining what was learned through the regional scans, the partner interviews, and focus groups, a series of recommendations were developed, including prerequisites for success for leveraging diverse stakeholders across K12, higher education, and business/industry to build cross-sector partnerships and relevant work-based learning experiences aligned to postsecondary opportunities and in-demand workforce pathways.

Northern Colorado: K20 and Higher Education Partners
**Top Growing Industries**

- Construction
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Government
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Wholesale Trade
- Educational Services
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Utilities

**Top Industry GRP**

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Government
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
- Finance and Insurance
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Utilities
- Information
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Educational Services
Weld Economic Overview
Source: Lightcast Q2 2022 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

Economy Overview

344,469
Population (2021)
Population grew by 48,139 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 48,789 people over the next 5 years.

125,373
Total Regional Employment
Jobs grew by 8,485 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 12,764 people over the next 5 years.

$74.2K
Median Household Income (2019)
Median household income is $11.3K above the national median household income of $62.8K.

Takeaways

- As of 2021 the region's population increased by 16.2% since 2016, growing by 48,139 people. Population is expected to increase by 14.2% between 2021 and 2026, adding 48,789 people.
- From 2016 to 2021, jobs increased by 7.3% in Weld County, CO from 116,888 to 125,373. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 0.7% by 6.6%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate decreased from 66.0% to 63.7% between 2016 and 2021.
- Concerning educational attainment, 18.5% of Weld County, CO residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (1.8% below the national average), and 9.1% hold an Associate's Degree (0.4% above the national average).

Feedback from Business Community

- A designated "Work-Based Learning Coordinator" role is needed within companies (or sectors) to help support this work—complementary to the school role.
- Students and families need to better understand the workforce programming and opportunities that exist outside of the traditional higher education pathways—there are a variety of industry-certified, non-degree programs that can be earning potential right out of high school.
- College for All mindsets are creating a two-track system, elevating professions and pathways that are outside of a traditional college model is important across the region to ensure that living-wage jobs and careers that do not require a four-year degree are seen as viable pathways.
Larimer Economic Overview  (Full Report)
Source: Lightcast Q2 2022 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

Top Growing Industries

Industry Jobs Growth

- Government
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Wholesale Trade
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Information
- Utilities

Top Industry GRP

Gross Regional Product

- Manufacturing
- Government
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Construction
- Retail Trade
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Wholesale Trade
- Finance and Insurance
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Information
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Educational Services
- Utilities
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
#### Larimer Economic Overview

Source: Lightcast Q2 2022 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

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**Economy Overview**

- **Population (2021)**: 367,150
  - Population grew by 27,756 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 29,583 people over the next 5 years.

- **Total Regional Employment**: 190,062
  - Jobs grew by 12,679 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 22,396 people over the next 5 years.

- **Median Household Income (2019)**: $71.9K
  - Median household income is $9.0K above the national median household income of $62.8K.

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**Takeaways**

- As of 2021 the region's population increased by 8.2% since 2016, growing by 27,756 people. Population is expected to increase by 8.1% between 2021 and 2026, adding 29,583 people.

- From 2016 to 2021, jobs increased by 7.1% in Larimer County, CO from 177,384 to 190,062. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 0.7% by 6.4%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 65.3% to 68.7% between 2016 and 2021.

- Concerning educational attainment, 28.2% of Larimer County, CO residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (7.9% above the national average), and 9.4% hold an Associate's Degree (0.7% above the national average).

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**Feedback from Business Community**

- I would love to see expansion of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities increase in other parts of our healthcare system including social services, management and healthcare administration.

- We currently tap into existing structures and resources to help facilitate career connected learning partnerships (P-TECH).

- School schedules and transportation remain major barriers to students participating in our work-based learning opportunities.

- We would like to expand virtual experiences/informational interviews, etc. to reach rural communities, which would address some transportation challenges.
Strategic Assets in the Region

Weld and Larimer Counties are made up of more than 14 school districts and four higher education providers. Each has unique assets and supports for their communities. In the Appendix of this report there are individual asset maps for each partner, including what programming or opportunities the region could benefit from sharing and/or learning from. Throughout the interview process, interviewees offered detailed examples of how existing organizations were successfully operationalizing Education to Employment key functions and commented on gaps where new or scaled programs would be useful. This report is not intended to replace or ignore those current programs or strategies. Colorado Succeeds believes there are strategic opportunities for growth and alignment based on the existing partnerships.

Integrating K12, Higher Education, and Workforce

Weld & Larimer Regional Partnerships

- Robust Sector Partnerships: “Northern Colorado and its counties of Weld and Larimer are known for a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among a set of diverse industries. Consistently ranked nationally as one of the best places to live, work and pursue lifelong learning, this region is a thriving hub of both commerce and culture.” —Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)

- The Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, The Weld Trust, and Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development are all supporters of work-based learning and strategic K20 Education to Employment Pathway planning across the region. As they continue to share resources and set the tone for statewide best practices, these entities will continue to promote a healthy and innovative education to employment ecosystem.

College and Career Readiness Software Platform

- College and career readiness software platform expansion and the K12 Work-Based Learning Business Liaison position is a huge win for this region.

Strategic CTE/CE Pathway Expansion:

- Weld and Larimer Counties’ school districts have robust CTE programming that is attuned to local workforce needs, meeting regularly with industry leaders to understand the alignment of the CTE curriculum with the labor market.

Student Access & Equity

- Many school districts across this region have 24% to 30% minority student populations, ranging up to Greeley-Evans with 70%. There are more than 100 students across Larimer and Weld counties who leverage the Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT)—a fifth-year high school program that allows students to participate in concurrent enrollment the year after 12th grade.

- School districts and institutions of higher education that are intentional about engaging English language learners and bi-literate families have more diverse participation rates across concurrent enrollment, career and technical education and work-based learning programming.

- By integrating diversity benchmarks into strategic planning, school districts and institutions of higher education can track and improve access and outcomes for traditionally underrepresented students.
Landscape Recommendations

Northern Colorado’s K20 Pathways to Employment would benefit from four key recommendations:

1. Collaborate on programming to strategically use limited resources and converge around a regional talent agenda—identify and streamline duplicative programming to avoid recreating.
2. Make it as easy as possible for students and businesses to navigate.
3. Create strategic pathway expansion that benefits students in the short- and long-term.
4. Utilize and share regional data to understand demand, outcomes, and resource allocation.

Recommendation #1: Collaborate and Converge Around a Regional Talent Agenda

What we heard:

► There is some amount of CTE, and career connected learning programming happening across the region that is focused on the talent needs of the community, but by and large, each school district or higher education provider is offering these programs in silos and through individual partnership agreements.

► Business stakeholders are looking to “aggregate” the number of Industry Advisory Boards they are asked to participate on.

► A desire for regional chambers of commerce (across Weld and Larimer counties) to serve as “intermediaries”—providing “connective tissue” between the business community, school districts, and higher education interested in expanding strategic work-based learning opportunities. This could help “aggregate” the number of requests employers receive from disparate locations (multiple schools and districts across the region) and encourage a localization of work-based learning opportunities in individual chamber’s “back yard.”

► K12 leaders acknowledge that they cannot and should not build duplicate programming but collaborate and share resources to develop strategic partnerships. Leaders described ways in which this already happens through smaller agreements around concurrent enrollment or some CTE cross-district course enrollment.

What we recommend:

Identify the talent sectors, roles or course sequences that could be built across the region to ensure cross district enrollment or specialization within certain districts or campuses.

For example, could one district or higher education institution be a Healthcare Hub, one district a Construction Hub, another district a Manufacturing & Agriculture Hub. Students in the early grades could visit the hubs and with industry experts to understand the different pathways and career opportunities in Northern Colorado.

Create “Regional Centers of Excellence” to reduce duplicative/competing CTE programs, such as Construction, Hospitality/Food Production, and Animal Science. Also utilizing industry facilities and existing workforce programs in partnership with school and higher education buildings could create more aligned programming.

Regional labor data shows these talent gaps, which could be foundational for forming regional centers of excellence across Larimer and Weld counties:

► Healthcare
  • Nurses (RN, LPN, CNA; 11,787 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
  • Health Technologists & Technicians (726 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
  • Medical Assistants (660 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
Information Technologies
• Software Developers (955 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
• Computer User Support Specialists (499 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
• Computer Systems Engineers/Architects (482) job postings; Jun to Aug 2022

Manufacturing
• Laborers & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers (1,622 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
• Industrial Engineering Technologists & Technicians (817 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)
• First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers (229 job postings; Jun to Aug 2022)

A centralized/shared CTE Center for the entire region, or several facilities throughout the region, would be transformational, as transportation for current programming at workforce training sites and colleges can be prohibitive.

What specific actions the region could take next:
1. Convene K12, higher ed, and workforce/industry partners in these key sectors to understand current program offerings and limitations.
2. Utilize the “School Programs Asset Map—CE/CTE/WBL Database” included in this report, to identify regional opportunities for program collaboration, expansion, and new program development, aligned to local employers’ needs.
3. Identify policy opportunities or barriers to shared programming across the region to establish how districts, higher education, or workforce programs are currently working together to offer students opportunities across schools and sites.
4. Meet with other industry intermediaries to identify leading employers and companies able to support expanding programmatic partnerships.
5. Disseminate industry specific information to middle and high school students around the various in-demand jobs in the region and the opportunities for workforce pathways including registered apprenticeships, industry certifications, boot camps, or other non-traditional postsecondary pathways. Support schools and districts in including those programs in site visits, career fairs and other venues where students are learning about postsecondary pathways.

Recommendation #2: Make it as easy as possible for students and business to connect

What we heard:
• There are ongoing efforts to staff and support intermediaries and district teams to ensure coordination with the local business community, such as work-based learning coordinators or K12 Navigators/Liaisons.
• Many stakeholders cited the need for each high school to employ dedicated WBL Coordinators. At present, there are disparate approaches across school districts (and higher education) to building out capacity for these crucial roles—some coordinators are focused full time on WBL, while others split their time between WBL, teaching, and other responsibilities.
• Most of the Larimer County School Districts interviewed are fully immersed in the same college and career readiness software platform. This provides a universal platform for optimizing the build out of work-based learning opportunities across the region and not just based on district lines. Several people pointed out that adoption and use continue to need a focused and strategic role within the region.
• All of the higher education partners in the region use the same career readiness software platform.
What we recommend:

- Employers do not see district or school boundaries; they are looking for partnerships and talent across the region. Universal platform adoption will help ensure that these partnerships and opportunities can be provided to students in the larger district as well as the smaller regional districts. There are best practices in terms of shared agreements, electronic paperwork, standardized school schedules, course credit, and paid internships that will be important to codify as regionally as possible.

- Industry sectors and regional intermediaries can help standardize resources and career information that will help pathway build out be more accessible across the region. Sharing of labor information, hosting regional pathways opportunities, and engaging employers in sectors will continue to ensure that students across the two counties have access to experiences and information.

What specific actions the region could take next:

1. Identify the gaps in current personnel for Weld and Larimer Counties' school district and higher education providers to ensure coverage across all partners and opportunities for shared roles between smaller organizations and/or grant opportunities for coordinator roles.
2. Leverage a two-county talent plan to connect workforce systems with K20.
3. Celebrate the talent and workforce MOU between Larimer and Weld Counties and continue to build off this existing framework.

Recommendation #3: Create strategic pathway expansion that benefits students in the short- and long-term

What we heard:

- Concurrent enrollment is a pathway strategy that most districts in the region use to help students access college coursework and enter postsecondary opportunities.

- The course offerings and types of concurrent enrollment courses offered vary widely across the region. Several interviews pointed to a lack of coherence around course offerings and the opportunity to be more strategic with concurrent enrollment funding, partnerships, and awareness for students.

- Some Guaranteed Transfer credits, such as CSC 118, are being rejected by 4-year colleges.

- Credentialing and retaining high school instructors to teach CE courses is not equivalent across districts/high schools—resulting in disproportionate and disconnected course/pathway options in urban schools compared to rural schools.

- Transportation is a critical barrier for Concurrent Enrollment students who want to take courses on a college campus.

- Aims Community College reimburses schools for the cost of sending Weld County high school students to their college campus to take CE courses. Front Range Community and Morgan Community College are not permitted to do this currently.

- School districts and community college partners should find creative solutions to eliminate book costs and student fees for CE students attending classes on a college campus.

- Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program (ILOP): ILOP enables participating Local Education Providers (LEPs) to offer high school students learning experiences outside of the classroom, including Concurrent Enrollment.

- A credentialed community college instructor who teaches CE courses for a given high school, is prohibited from being hired full time by the very same high school to teach the very same courses, because they do not have a “secondary teacher’s license.”
What we recommend:

- As a region, focus on strategic concurrent enrollment pathway expansion through a “College Launch” Micro Credential. The recommended courses: English 121; History 121; Math 121; Literature 115. If all four of these CE courses cannot be offered internally at a given high school, establish agreements between districts to collaborate and provide access between schools.

“College Launch” Micro Credential

These four General Education college requirements are recommended for all students interested in pursuing a Bachelor’s degree—in-state or out-of-state. Career Pathway Specialization Options (CHOOSE ONE): Business, Healthcare, Technology, Construction Management, Behavioral Health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Grades 9 &amp; 10</th>
<th>Grade 11</th>
<th>Grade 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8th Grade English</td>
<td>English I English II</td>
<td>CE: LIT 1015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td>Geometry + CE: MAT 1340—College Algebra</td>
<td>Algebra II Trigonometry/Calculus</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>World History</td>
<td>CE: HIS 121—US History US Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Chemistry Physics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These micro credentials represent the first full semester of college course requirements, saving students and families thousands of dollars in tuition costs. The specialized courses are customized to the economic needs of Northern CO.

- Set a regional goal for all Larimer and Weld Counties’ concurrent enrollment students (pursuing non-CTE programs): graduate from high school with a 12-Credit “College Launch” Micro Credential from Front Range Community College and/or Aims Community College. This equates to completing an entire semester of college coursework, while in high school—which would save families thousands in tuition. These courses ensure “Guaranteed Transfer” credits in the state of Colorado and according to Transferology, they are likely to transfer to out-of-state four-year institutions as well. Seek funding resources either locally or at the state level to help support this goal.

- An additional option is for students to obtain a “College Launch” Micro Credential with distinction (15-credits). This recognizes students who complete all four General Education courses (above) and at least one specialized course that prepares them for high demand northern Colorado pathways including “Pre-Med/Pre-Dental,” “Business & Computer Information Systems,” “Construction Management,” and “Behavioral Health.” These are all strategically aligned pathways to Front Range Community College, Aims, CSU, and UNC degree programs.
## “Career Launch” Micro Credentials—Concurrent Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 9–12</th>
<th>Stackable Credentials</th>
<th>Typical Occupational Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Certified Nurse Aide (Grade 12)** | • NUA 1001—Nurse Aide Health  
• Care Skills  
• NUA 1070—Nurse Aide Clinical  
• Experience  
• NUA 1071—Advanced Nurse Aide  
• Clinical | • Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)  
• Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)  
• Nursing AAS (RN)  
• Bachelor Science in Nursing (BSN) | An LPN generally spends one year earning a practical nursing degree to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN), and an RN typically spends two to four years earning a professional nursing degree to become a registered nurse (RN). You must earn an associate degree in nursing and/or a BSN, meet the requirements for licensure and pass the examination. |
| **Automotive Tech (Grades 9–12)** | • ASE 1001-Shop Orientation  
• ASE 1060-Engine Repair  
• ASE 1091-Engine Rebuild  
• ASE 1062-Engine Service  
• ASE 1070 Lab Experience I | • Engine Mechanical Certificate  
• Associate of Applied Science in Automotive Technology | After the first year of the Aims automotive repair degree program, you’ll gain the technical skills to find a part-time job while you continue earning your automotive service technology degree. Instructors facilitate this work experience to show you what it’s like to work in an automotive repair shop. You’ll also build a resume and portfolio to show to prospective employers after you graduate. |
| **Welding Certificate (Grades 9–12)** | • WEL 2030—Pipe Welding I (required)  
• WEL 2031—Pipe Welding II | • Welding Certificate (Arc, Pipe, Metal Fabrication)  
• Associate of Applied Science (AAS)  
• Welding Technology | • Fabricator  
• Pipe Welder  
• Welding Inspector  
• Maintenance Technician |

### What specific actions the region could take next:

1. Audit current school district concurrent enrollment courses to see gaps in above strategy.
2. Package a “College Launch” and “Career Launch” micro credential separately. The College Launch micro credential consists of **English 121; History 121; Math 121; Literature 115**. The “Career Launch” micro credentials include Certified Nurse Aide, Automotive Technician Certificate, Welding Certificate, Phlebotomist, etc.

### Recommendation #4: Utilize and share regional data to understand demand, outcomes, and resource allocation

**What we heard:**

- Only one in five Latino/Hispanic Coloradans, Colorado’s fastest growing population, has a credential beyond high school. Colorado ranks 50th in the nation in the divide between the percentage of Latino/Hispanic and white Coloradans who have earned a postsecondary degree ([CO Talent Pipeline](https://www.colorado.gov/ctp)). NoCo’s business community knows that having a diverse workforce is crucial for competing in the fast-moving global economy.
- Providing an increasing number of opportunities for underrepresented students in Larimer and Weld Counties, to register for and complete concurrent enrollment courses is paramount. Collecting baseline data on how many of these students are currently enrolled in CE and creating strategic goals to enroll proportionate numbers (to school demographics) is crucial to remaining economically competitive, moving forward.
What we recommend:

- Track Employment Data: Track and measure what happens to students who elect not to go to college following their high school graduation. Do they enter the workforce? Take a gap year? What is their economic mobility five years following graduation?
- A universal college and career readiness software platform across the region could become transformational in providing job placement and economic mobility tracking data that can complement a longitudinal education to workforce database.

What specific actions the region could take next:

- Partner with the Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development team and the Employment Services of Weld County team to collect unemployment and wage progression data in five-year increments for high school graduates.
- Expand the Higher Education Return on Investment Report to include data and outcomes from K12 and postsecondary career and technical education programs. This will fill a critical gap in understanding how well these programs are serving learners and communities across the NoCo region.

Summary

The Northern Colorado workforce ecosystem is poised to accelerate and scale more efficient and effective K20 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. A regional approach must be taken to ensure that talent pipelines are responsive to the needs of a region, that programs are built with equity and access in mind and that resources are shared beyond school, district, higher education, and municipal boundaries.

In order to implement any of the above recommendations, the region must continue to ensure students, families, and educators understand the local labor market demands and opportunities. If students are to reach their full potential, then a wide variety of opportunities and pathways must be available to them. Importantly, these options must include traditional and non-traditional training programs, industry-aligned certifications, apprenticeships, concurrent enrollment, and partnership inside and outside of traditional institutions of higher education.

The Fort Collins Area Chamber, Northern Colorado Community Foundation, and The Weld Trust are well-positioned to convene, activate and guide key regional stakeholders across this talent continuum, ensuring a regional approach to streamlining K20 Pathways to Employment for homegrown talent, and positioning Northern Colorado for prosperity in today’s economy, while cultivating the agile workforce needed for the future.

1 Age of Agility Report, America Succeeds
2 Achievement gap and coronavirus, McKinsey
3 Make a Difference, Show Students You Care, Gallup® Business Journal
Appendix A:  
NoCO School Programs Asset Map—CE/CTE/WBL Database

NoCO K20 Pathways Searchable Program Database

Appendix B:  
Asset Mapping Resources—Regional Economic Report Library

Economy Overview—Weld County
Economy Overview—Larimer County
Region Industry Snapshot—Healthcare
Region Industry Snapshot—Information Technology
Region Industry Snapshot—Manufacturing
Region Job Posting Analytics—Healthcare
Region Job Posting Analytics—Information Technology
Region Job Posting Analytics—Manufacturing
# Appendix C: List of Organizations Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Raymond Chard, Associate Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ault-Highland RE-9</td>
<td>Rob Ring, Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briggsdale RE-10</td>
<td>Cathi Fulton, Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Early College</td>
<td>Collin Turbert, Principal</td>
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<td>Colorado State University</td>
<td>Albert Bimper, Chief of Staff</td>
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<td>Colorado State University</td>
<td>Sam Boren, Associate Director of Experiential Education</td>
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<td>Eaton RE-2</td>
<td>Marcy Sanger, Director of Student Services</td>
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<td>Estes Park</td>
<td>Ruby Bode, Superintendent</td>
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<td>Fort Lupton RE-8</td>
<td>Alan Kaylor, Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Range Community College</td>
<td>Marty Goldberg, Director of Concurrent Enrollment</td>
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<td>Front Range Community College</td>
<td>Aparna Palmer, Vice President of Larimer Campus</td>
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<td>Front Range Community College</td>
<td>Nicholas Spezza, Dean</td>
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<td>Greeley 6</td>
<td>Anthony Asmus, Assistant Superintendent</td>
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<td>Greeley 6</td>
<td>Jennie Schilling, Director of Student Support &amp; CTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J</td>
<td>Rebecca Albert, CTE Director/Safety and Security Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larimer County (EWD)</td>
<td>Kelsey Baun, Regional Talent Program Manager</td>
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<td>Larimer County (EWD)</td>
<td>Jacob Castillo, Director</td>
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<td>Larimer County (EWD)</td>
<td>Sandra Jackham, Work-Based Learning Navigator</td>
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<td>Platte Valley RE-7</td>
<td>Jeremy Burmeister, Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poudre</td>
<td>Tanya Alcaraz, Assistant Director, Career &amp; Innovation</td>
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<td>Poudre</td>
<td>Scott Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent</td>
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<td>Poudre Futures Lab</td>
<td>Scott Elias, Director of Career &amp; Innovation</td>
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<td>St. Vrain Valley Schools</td>
<td>Hilary Sontag, Executive Director of Advancement &amp; Strategic Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Susan Scott, Business Community Coordinator</td>
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<td>University of Northern Colorado</td>
<td>Pete Lien, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Northern Colorado</td>
<td>Nancy Matchett, Associate Provost</td>
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<td>University of Northern Colorado</td>
<td>Colleen Sonnentag, Dean of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valley RE-1</td>
<td>Johan van Nieuwenuizen, Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weld County</td>
<td>CeCe Majchrowski, Employment Services, Deputy Director</td>
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<td>Weld County</td>
<td>Karina Amaya-Ragland, Employment Services, Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weld County</td>
<td>Andrew Yost, Employment Services, Work-Based Learning Navigator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weld County School District RE-3J</td>
<td>Rebecca Langlois, Executive Director of Assessment &amp; Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weld RE-4 (Windsor-Severance)</td>
<td>Michelle Smith, CTE Coordinator/Community Partnerships</td>
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# Definitions & Nomenclature

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<th>WBL Opportunity</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Colorado Examples</th>
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<td><strong>P-TECH</strong></td>
<td>Innovative partnerships between a <strong>school district</strong>, a <strong>community college</strong> (s), and one or more local <strong>high growth industry employer</strong> (s). Students begin in 9th grade and go through 14th grade for a total of 6 years, receiving both a high school diploma and an industry-recognized associate degree, in addition to gaining relevant workplace skills.</td>
<td><strong>Denver Metro</strong>&lt;br&gt;► <strong>EC@N-STEM, Adams 12</strong>: Partnership between Adams Pikes Peak&lt;br&gt;► <strong>Cañon City High School</strong>&lt;br&gt;► <strong>Power Tech—James Irwin Charter Schools, Colorado Springs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Industry Credential</strong></td>
<td><strong>Certification issued</strong> by an occupational or industry group to demonstrate competency or completion of training for a particular job category.</td>
<td><strong>Northwest</strong>&lt;br&gt;► <strong>Salida School District Construction Trades Program</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Capstones</strong></td>
<td>The culminating exhibition of a project, performance, or structured experience that demonstrates learning of pre-determined outcomes. Colorado’s Graduation Guidelines provide a unique opportunity for local districts to identify the competencies students will demonstrate and be assessed on.</td>
<td><strong>► Roaring Fork Schools Capstones</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Project Based Learning</strong></td>
<td>A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by <strong>working for an extended period to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>► Olander School for Project Based Learning</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>► Multi-disciplinary projects</strong></td>
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*Capstones and Project Based Learning are low-touch opportunities for businesses to support educators in developing projects that address real problems.*
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| **Educator Externships** | Educator Externships offer a unique professional development opportunity connecting the classroom to the workplace. They provide an experience (ranging from job shadowing to longer internship/apprenticeship opportunities) in which educators spend time in a workplace to learn through direct experience about trends, skill requirements, and opportunities in industries related to their subject area to enrich and strengthen their teaching and bring relevance to student learning. | Denver Metro  
▸ DPS CareerConnect Teacher Externships  
▸ STEMpath: mindSpark Learning |
| Internships | An opportunity in real world environments for exposure to the requirements of a particular occupation or industry, the work environment, and the behavioral expectations for success on the job. Such experiences are not expected to provide formal training for occupational skills, though some may be learned. | Denver Metro  
▸ Medical Career Collaborative, Children’s Hospital Colorado, and Denver Health  
West Central  
▸ The Pinhead Internship Program |
| **Youth Apprenticeship** | An employer-driven model and form of experiential learning that combines on-the-job learning as a paid employee with related classroom instruction to increase an apprentice’s skill level and wages. | Denver Metro  
▸ Pinnacol Assurance, CareerWise Colorado |
| Job Shadowing | A work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the workday as a shadow to a competent worker. Virtual Job Shadowing is a digital version of job shadowing that allows an individual to observe an occupation using videos. | Pikes Peak  
▸ Parkview Health |
| Additional Career Awareness and Exploration | Helps individuals build awareness of the variety of careers available and provides experiences that help inform an individual’s career decisions. | Northeast  
▸ Northeast Colorado Manufacturing Partnership (NECOM) |
About Colorado Succeeds

Colorado Succeeds brings business, government, and education leaders together to create, invest in, and scale what is working and put pressure on the education system to ensure all students have access to high-quality experiences that are relevant, rigorous, and result in multiple pathways to success. The mission is to ensure all of Colorado’s learners are educated to their greatest potential and businesses have the homegrown workforce needed to thrive. The vision is that by 2030, all Colorado students will graduate with a high school diploma, a postsecondary credential, and a career-connected learning experience.
Student Enrollment

1,013 (PK12)
346 Minority Students (34%)

Demographics

- 667 White
- 306 Latino/Hispanic
- 6 American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 2 Asian
- 2 Black/African American
- 30 Two or more races

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- University of Northern Colorado

Stakeholder Feedback

- We have strong CTE programs in agriculture, construction/welding, and animal/plant science.
- Our glaring weakness is that only 25 percent of our students choose to go on to a bachelor’s degree program following high school.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- Highland High School students aged 16 and older can participate in Highland Works, a program designed to allow students to be employed in various jobs around the district, including food service, transportation monitors, crossing guards, snow removal, and summer grounds/maintenance.
- A centralized/shared CTE Center for all Weld County students would be transformational, as transportation for current CE programs at Aims and work-based learning locations can be prohibitive.
Student Enrollment

- 186 (PK12)
- 25 Minority Students (13%)

Demographics

- 161 White
- 20 Latino/Hispanic
- 5 Asian
- 1 Two or more races

CTE Pathways & CE Courses

(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- Front Range Community College
- Northeastern Community College

Stakeholder Feedback

- We are very strong in our Agriculture, Family & Consumer Sciences and Business CTE programs.
- However, a major barrier that we experience is attracting and retaining qualified business instructors.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- Utilizing our “work/study” hours at the beginning & end of the school days would be optimal for catalyzing more work-based learning opportunities.
- Creating a construction/trades program and/or partnership with regional employers would be a promising pathway option.
Colorado Early College
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

1,162 (PK12)
22% Minority Students

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Demographics

- 13.9% Latino/Hispanic
- 3.3% Two or more races
- 3% Asian
- 1.2% Black/African American
- 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 0.2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Front Range Community College
- Snow College
- Red Rocks Community College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Colorado State University
- University of Northern Colorado
- Colorado School of Mines

Stakeholder Feedback

- 70 percent of CEC-Larimer students obtain Associates Degrees prior to graduating from high school.
- Top wish list includes more funding across high schools for dedicated WBL Coordinators, supporting the expansion of "Regional Advisory Boards" and robust Xello utilization and buildout—how might we make the new K12 Work-Based Learning Business Liaison permanent?

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- Utilize a “career pathways” sophomore level class for career exploration and connecting to mentors in industry—key is teaching students how to access and maximize Xello.
- Could have school counselors more holistically use Xello to facilitate ongoing college and career conversations.
Eaton RE-2
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

1,994
(PK12)

577
Minority Students (29%)

Demographics

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

► Aims Community College
► University of Northern Colorado

Stakeholder Feedback

► We are very strong in welding, construction, engineering, and agriculture, which reflects our community.
► Transportation is a perpetual barrier, so we’re excited about building out our tech programs/pathways via the newly formed relationship with Tech Smart.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

► We offer six CTE programs including: Agri, Business, Computers, FCS, Industrial Arts and STEM. We also offer Auto Technician Service, Auto Collision Repair, and Aviation through Aims Community College.
► We have adopted Tech Smart, a unique coding and computer science curriculum, which is a growing program at our school.
Fort Lupton
RE-8
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

2,482
(PK12)
1,775
Minority Students (72%)

Demographics

- 37 Two or more races
- 19 Asian
- 15 American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 13 Black/African American
- 2 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Front Range Community College

Stakeholder Feedback

- We have CTE programs in Business and STEM.
- We have a CTE woodworking and metal tools lab that currently sits empty, because we cannot find instructors—this is a huge barrier for our district, as we lose teachers to metro Denver school districts routinely.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- Our school could be a hub for carpentry, flatworks, and masonry.
- We would also like to build out advanced manufacturing and electrician/trades programs, however finding instructors is extremely difficult. An industry professional externship program would be hugely beneficial if industry could provide a visiting instructor to train our students.
This year's Summer Career Exploration Program served 125 students completing 150 hours of work-based learning.

We have a unique Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship partnership with Vestas.

P-Tech: Business Partner: Greeley-Weld Habitat for Humanity; FCI Constructors; Vestas Blades America, Inc. Degree/Pathway: Associate of Applied Science in Building/Construction Site Management/Industrial Technology

The new CTE Center opens in Fall 2023. Programs currently slated include IT/Cybersecurity, Early Childhood Education, Cosmetology, Welding and Construction.
Student Enrollment

3,783 (PK12)
1,330 Minority Students (35%)

Demographics

2,453 White
1,167 Latino/Hispanic

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- University of Northern Colorado
- Colorado State University

Stakeholder Feedback

- We have 14 state-approved CTE pathways, multiple Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) participants and 20 plus CE courses supported in the building with HS teachers.
- We have excellent engineering/tech and construction programs, as well as software coding programs.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- In Weld RE-5J schools, from Preschool to Postsecondary, students are exposed to career options and pathways offered by the district.
- Each individual student in the district will have a customized 4-year academic and career plan, based on interest and aptitude.
- Excellent health science and fire science CTE opportunities available for students.
Platte Valley
RE-7
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

1,078
(PK12)

443
Minority Students (41%)

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

► Aims Community College
► University of Northern Colorado

Demographics

16 Two or more races
4 American Indian/Alaskan Native
3 Asian
2 Black/African American

418 Latino/Hispanic
635 White

Stakeholder Feedback

► We have CTE programs in business, finance, accounting, agri-business, and information technology, including several industry recognized certifications.

► Lockheed Martin is a valued partner, and we take pride in offering Intro to Engineering, CAD, Robotics, Advanced Robotics, and Cyber Security

Unique Asset/Opportunity

► We would love to continue building out health and construction CTE pathways.

► We have a diverse student body, and we are proud to have agri-business programs as well as high quality finance and accounting courses available through the “high school of business” curriculum.
Poudre
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

29,941
(PK12)

8,445
Minority Students (28%)

Demographics

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

► Colorado State University
► Front Range Community College

Stakeholder Feedback

PSD was a Colorado Succeeds Prize Winner a few years ago, which helped to incubate the redesign of the WBL website. Additionally, Poudre was able to upgrade to and implement Xello, a career readiness software platform, which offers robust WBL functionality and connectivity with regional employers.

Unique Asset/Oppportunity

► PSD offers an innovative program in healthcare—a “Medical Office Assistant Certification.” Once students have taken a few core courses, they begin work in local medical/dental offices. From here, students gain a clearer understanding of the multiple health pathways available to them and may select one that fits their skills and interests, including Emergency Medical Technician; Certified Nurse Aide and Dental/Medical Assistant.

► A “Top Two” wish list for Incentive Funding is to: a) pay CE teachers at the high schools a stipend. b) eliminate textbook costs and campus fees for CE students that travel to a Community College campus for CE courses.
St. Vrain Valley Schools
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment
(Weld County)

13,216
(PK12)
30.4%
Minority Students

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Demographics

69.58% White
23.01% Latino/Hispanic
3.28% Two or more races
2.99% Asian
0.79% Black/African American
0.21% American Indian/Alaskan Native
0.14% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- Front Range Community College
- University of Colorado—Colorado Succeed

Stakeholder Feedback

- Frederick students have the opportunity to earn a no-cost Associate Degree in Biochemistry through the P-Tech program in partnership with Aims Community College.
- Would it be possible for regional Chambers of Commerce to serve as a local intermediary to aggregate and expand work-based learning opportunities for districts and business in their unique communities?
- Collecting more data on how many CTE students persist and complete their credentials in Biochemistry, Certified Nurse Aide, and others, would be hugely impactful.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- All Weld County students have access to St. Vrain’s Innovation Center and Career Elevation and Technology Center (CETC).
- Mead High School students have access to an Energy Academy, which provides postsecondary coursework and work-based learning experiences in the energy industry.
- Erie High School students have access to an Academy of Engineering and Aerospace, which provides postsecondary coursework and work-based learning experiences in aerospace and engineering.
Thompson
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

15,291 (PK12)

4,554 Minority Students (30%)

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Demographics

- 10,737 White
- 3,511 Latino/Hispanic
- 615 Two or More Races
- 165 Black/African American
- 160 Asian
- 89 American Indian/Alaskan Native

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Front Range Community College
- Aims Community College

Stakeholder Feedback

- Utilizes the “Regional Workforce Plan” to continually develop CTE offerings.
- Collaborated across districts to produce NoCo Inspire and unique WBL Alliance website dedicated to streamlining Employer access to secondary and postsecondary WBL partnership opportunities.
- Would like to see NoCo Inspire continually drive WBL opportunities across county lines.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- Thompson Career Campus: Construction-Skilled Trades, Health Sciences, IT & Cybersecurity, Manufacturing.
- Build out an IT & Cybersecurity “College Launch” Micro Credential leveraging CE courses.
- Aviation—Poudre Futures Lab expressed interest in partnering more closely with Thompson to build out Aviation Technology and Maintenance specializations.
Valley RE-1  
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

1,892 (PK12)
1,123 Minority Students (59%)

Demographics

26 Two or more races
5 Black/African American
3 Asian
2 American Indian/Alaskan Native

CTE Pathways & CE Courses

(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- University of Northern Colorado

Stakeholder Feedback

- Transportation and broadband continue to be barriers for concurrent enrollment and work-based learning program expansion.
- We have wonderful partnerships with both Chevron and The Weld Trust to provide our students strategic access to enhanced career exploration opportunities.
- We partner closely with Aims Community College to provide Nurse Aide students the opportunity to complete their CNA credential.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- A unique “maker-space” for design/trades students to access innovative technology.
- We are poised to be a construction/trades “hub” as we continue to add programs in that space.
Student Enrollment

2,693 (PK-12)
1,331 Minority Students (49%) 

Demographics

1,362 White
1,212 Latino/Hispanic
24 Black/African American
24 Asian
7 American Indian/Alaskan Native
2 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
62 Two or more races

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)

- Aims Community College
- Morgan Community College

Stakeholder Feedback

- We have 14 state-approved CTE pathways, offer students the opportunity to earn high demand industry certificates and have more than 20 CE courses taught in the building by our High School teachers.
- We have strong community support with robust local advisory boards and partnerships with local businesses.

Unique Asset/Opportunity

- We offer concurrent enrollment through Aims Community College (at all three campuses) including Customer Service Leadership, Med Prep, Agri, Precision Agri, Animation, Audio and Radio Repair, Graphic Design, Auto Collision and Auto Service Tech.
- We have a Work-Based Learning Coordinator that oversees internal and external internships.
Weld RE-4
(Windsor-Severance)
ASSET DATA MAPPING

Student Enrollment

8,104 (PK12)
1,906 Minority Students (24%)

Demographics

6,198 White
1,442 Latino/Hispanic
264 Two or More Races
96 Asian
66 Black/African American
27 American Indian/Alaskan Native
11 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

CTE Pathways & CE Courses
(At High School)

Asset Map: Program Index

Higher Education Partner(s)
- Aims Community College
- Colorado State University
- Front Range Community College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver

Stakeholder Feedback
- Desire to expand WBL program by adding a dedicated WBL Coordinator.
- District has solid CTE Advisory Boards and regular engagement with Industry Sector Partnerships which leads to robust CTE programs.
- Utilize the CTE Regional Needs Assessment results to drive CTE programming.

Unique Asset/Opportunity
- Offer onsite concurrent enrollment options and industry certifications in Welding and Culinary pathways.
- Partnership with Aims Community College allows students to engage with Career Academy Programs on the Aims Campus in pathways that extend Weld RE-4 CTE pathways and/or provide access to additional programs.