Education System Resilience & Innovation Initiative

REBUILDING STRONGER

Learning from the COVID Interruption to Build an Educator Workforce & Education System for the Future of Colorado

February 9, 2021

Interim Report of the Education System Resilience & Innovation Initiative

From June 2020 – January 2021, more than 80 stakeholders from across Colorado's education ecosystem and private sector met to identify opportunities to learn from the challenges presented by COVID and the innovations developed by leaders across the state responding to their local communities' needs. This report includes the interim recommendations for state and local leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 system interruption was felt in every aspect of Coloradans lives from how we shop and gather with friends to how business is conducted and how we take in entertainment. Perhaps the impact felt most suddenly and with potentially the most long-term implications was in our education system. In the span of a few days, our early childhood education (ECE), K-12 and higher education systems underwent one of the most tectonic shifts in how teachers delivered instruction, how students learned and how parents were required to engage in their children's education. The interruption has highlighted and exacerbated multiple layers of existing inequities at all levels of education. As educators, community leaders, families and the private sector all stepped up to address the challenge, there have been remarkable examples of innovative approaches, bold thinking and, through it all, opportunities to learn from what has gone well and what is clearly in need of change.

What educators, school leaders and system leaders are continuing to experience and learn as a result of the interruption may provide additional lessons for general improvements to all aspects of our education systemsrom how we structure and support the teaching workforce to how instruction is delivered. Through six months of regular meetings, discussing challenges and successes being experienced across the state, a diverse coalition of stakeholders has identified a series of system-level changes at the state and local level to seize on the lessons learned, to strengthen our education system for the future, to improve outcomes for our students to and better support our educators.

BACKGROUND

As state and local education leaders appropriately continue to focus on immediate needs of students and educators during the abrupt shift to remote instruction as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, a number of educators and leaders expressed the belief that it was critical to begin a parallel effort looking at the future of education in Colorado. That's why Keystone Policy Center (Keystone) and the Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) worked with many of these leaders to form the **Education System Resiliency and Innovation Initiative (ESRII)**, a broad coalition and research initiative focused on strengthening the teacher workforce, improving educator supports for teacher practice and instructional delivery, and identifying additional systemic shifts that could build off of learning from the current disruption. The explicit aim in this initiative is to strengthen educator practice, to capture long-term improvements, to propel the profession forward and to improve the delivery of instruction to all students in the state's diverse communities, contexts and conditions.

To advance these conversations effectively, with a focus on actionable outcomes and recommendations, we engaged and convened a diverse group of stakeholders from within and outside of education systems. Keystone and PEBC partnered to undertake this initiative with a focus on three primary streams of inquiry with associated recommendations as an outcome of the project:

1. **Educator Workforce:** Exploration of opportunities for reimagining the educator workforce and the role of teacher to reduce non-instructional burdens on teachers, strengthen and diversify

the educator workforce, provide additional pathways into the profession and roles and pathways within the profession.

2. **Teaching & Learning:** Exploration of best practices, innovations and emerging approaches to instructional delivery including models for other than full-time in-person instruction, use of technology, competency based progression and examining the strengths, challenges and innovations surfaced through the statewide shift to remote delivery of instruction.

3. **Training & Supporting Great Teachers:** Discussion and examination of changes, improvements or shifts in how we train and support new and veteran teachers through lens of lessons learned during the COVID-19 system interruption and in light of other recommendations developed for shifts in the educator workforce and in teaching and learning.

Throughout each of these streams of inquiry, education system leaders, educators and officials also explored innovations developed out of necessity or opportunity during the system interruption and those that have promise but have stalled or had limited support or adoption. The result is a comprehensive set of recommendations for system level changes at the state and local levels.

A BOLD & HOPEFUL VISION FOR THE FUTURE

From the first meeting of the ESRII, the word "hopeful" dominated conversation when members were asked their thoughts about the future of education in Colorado. Many spoke of the need to "be bold" and, recognizing how many students, educators and families found themselves in a much different, often uncomfortable new reality, called this the moment to seize the opportunity to chart a path forward that did not seek to return to what was but rather sought to rebuild a better, stronger, more personalized education system for students and a prestigious, rewarding profession for educators.

To stay true to the vision laid out by members, participants were not asked initially "What should we change?" Instead, participants focused their initial conversations on the hopeful, aspirational question "What would this look like if we - as a state - re-imagined this boldly, focused on students and the educators who support them?" Having articulated the desired end state, members then explored what barriers exist to achieving the ideal state of education, examples of such a system or approach and how we might be able to field test different approaches in ways that built upon past work where possible, charted bold new directions where necessary and remained rooted in strategies designed to address persistent inequities in the system(s) while recognizing and respecting the unique local factors that must inform approaches to education. ESRII supported a variety of micro-pilots and field studies in the fall of 2020 to explore some of the ideas raised which are described in Attachment B.

The outcome from over six months of conversations among more than 80 stakeholders is found on the following pages. These recommendations are offered as a starting point not an end point. Members of ESRII are excited to share these with state and local leaders and are equally excited to act on these at the local level and to support a continuous cycle of learning to strengthen the work going forward.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The ESRII members identified opportunities for system-level change in each category of the coalition's areas of focus. Contained in this report are the recommendations for each including the goal of the proposed action as well as the role of the state, the local role (district/CMO, school, community) and potential pilots or learning opportunities associated with each recommendation. The recommendations developed and further detailed in this report are:

Educator Workforce

Recommendation #1: Expand pathways into the profession.
Goal: Bring additional expertise; Expand pool of new teachers; Diversify workforce

Recommendation #2: Expand pathways and roles within the profession
Goal: Elevate profession; Improve retention; Reduce burden on teachers.

Recommendation #3: Enable Alternative Staffing Structures
Goal: Empower local leaders to develop staffing models that reflect local needs and context

Teaching & Learning

Recommendation #1: Support Individualized Student Progression
Goal: Shift focus to support different learning styles & competency based progression

Recommendation #2: Support Differentiated Student Assessment
Goal: Emphasis on student learning, culturally responsive education and assessment to inform instructional decisions

Recommendation #3: Expand Teacher Empowerment for Instruction

Goal: Empower teachers to teach what, how & in ways that meets student needs.

Recommendation #4: Rethink School Day, Week & Calendar
Goal: Flexibility to meet needs of students & maximize time use

Recommendation #5: Expand use of Learning Pods
Goal: Provide equitable access to additional learning time & opportunities

Recommendation #6: Expand Course Offerings & Access
Goal: Expand courses available to students and increase equity of access

Teacher Training & Supports

Recommendation #1: Strengthen Ed Prep Program <-> District/CMO Partnerships
Goal: Ensure every school system has a higher ed / ed prep partner

Recommendation #2: Establish Online/Virtual Communities of Practice (LEAs, IHEs, EPPs)
Goal: Provide opportunities for teams of teachers to collaborate with a focus on peer feedback for learning and growth of practice.

Recommendation #3: Strengthen Connection between EPP/PD & Evolving Economy/Workforce

Goal: Help teachers better understand the world they are preparing students to enter

Recommendation #4: **Invest in Mentoring as PD for Teachers & Leaders**
Goal: Strengthen Educator Practice & Expand Career Pathway Opportunities

Recommendation #5: **Invest in Mental Health Supports for Educators & Students**
Goal: Improve educator retention & practice; Support students' mental health needs

Other System Changes

Recommendation #1: **Support Locally Developed Transparency & Performance Systems**
Goal: Empower families, communities & school systems to establish locally developed frameworks of school performance
Recommendation #2: **Utilize Federal Funds including COVID Relief to Drive Innovation**

Goal: Support innovations in approaches to teaching/learning, structure of the educator workforce & training/support of educators.

SYSTEM CHANGES

The recommendations contained in this report focus on changes at both the state and local system level. This focus is based on the belief that system-level changes are necessary to create the conditions for bold action at the local level and that the transformational changes sought will be far more sustainable if they are part of system level changes in policies, regulations and practices than if they exist only through waivers, exemptions or pilot programs. In making recommendations for state action, there was broad consensus that the appropriate role of the state in most cases is to create the conditions for success at the local level, to provide support and resources needed at the local level and to facilitate collaboration and learning among educators and system leaders from across the state. While an appropriate role for oversight was identified for most recommendations, ESRII members emphasized oversight only insofar as it can be a mechanism of support and broadly discouraged the adoption of significant new compliance and enforcement regimes.

In many cases, members identified specific actions to be taken by state or local leaders to create the conditions necessary to allow and empower local leaders – whether at the school system or building level – to take actions that move the vision and goals identified forward. The actions range from policy changes through legislation, regulation or local school board action to expansion of supports and reallocation of resources at the state agency or local system level to facilitation of collaborative opportunities, convening of groups for deep-dives into topics and development of partnerships across education and private sector leaders and organizations.

A number of the recommendations do carry fiscal implications. Members were conservative in making recommendations that call for additional funding or shifts in funding uses. Accordingly, strong in believing that where included, the funds are both necessary and bring with them the potential for significant, sustainable impact for students and teachers.

EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

The Problems We are Working To Solve

The current structure of the educator workforce leads to challenges both recruiting diverse candidates into the workforce and retaining educators. Colorado is a national leader in pathways to teaching with 22 traditional and 24 alternative programs. While Colorado has this wide variety of pathways into the profession as well as recruiting programs, there remain challenges attracting candidates from diverse personal and professional backgrounds as well as some barriers to entry for those with established careers or expertise in other fields. The scope of responsibility for many teachers places a wide array of non-instructional burdens on teachers which can negatively impact retention, lead to burn-out and limit the amount of time teachers are able to focus on student interaction, instructional planning, collaboration with peers and their own professional development.

As currently structured, the teaching profession is one of the few professions in which we ask the newest teacher to take on the same responsibilities as the most experienced teacher and with few exceptions, there are limited opportunities to "work and learn into" that level of responsibility and rarely any support staff. Within the profession, pathways to advancement that allow teachers to continue engaging with students are limited as most opportunities for advancement lead to administrative positions outside of the classroom. Finally, despite the increasing use of technology and emote instruction, there are few if any opportunities for exceptional teachers or those with specific expertise to extend their reach to students outside of their school building.

Why do we think a single role of "Teacher" is the only role that should exist? What if we created new roles and new pathways that would let a local artist, scientist or computer programmer come in and teach part-time to share their specific expertise? Or created pathways to help paraprofessionals – who are often deeply connected to the community – to become teachers? What if we deconstructed "Teacher" into multiple roles that could either draw on discrete skills and knowledge or serve as a progression to the ultimate role of Teacher? What if a great teacher in one corner of the state could provide instruction to students across the state? Are there things we can learn from the university professor structure or other professions?

In what other profession do you enter with the maximum level of responsibility in your job or with being handed some of the toughest assignments in your first year? There is no apples-to-apples comparison, but let's consider a few other professions in which the consumer has limited say in their service provider: Aviators don't start their career as the Pilot of a 777 making trans-Atlantic runs. If they're lucky – after advancing from a single prop to twin-prop and ultimately a jet – they'll serve as First Officer in a commuter jet. As their skills advance and they spend more time in the cockpit, they may move up to Pilot or they may move to a more challenging aircraft. Firefighters don't start as the Captain who is responsible for a multi-unit response to a high-rise structure fire. They start as part of a team and as they master their profession they can advance or they can choose to specialize – paramedic, training officer – or to continue in their role as a firefighter with additional expertise like haz- mat or swift water rescue. All of these professional positions also include multiple support roles with specific roles, trainings & responsibilities from the firefighter and driver/engineer on a firetruck to the purser, flight attendant & first officer in aviation. All of these professionals collaborate to provide the needed service for the public consumer or customer.

Desired End State

The teacher workforce should be re-imagined. The future workforce should be diverse and knowledgeable enough for schools to be able to build instructional teams that, collectively and individually, ably meet the needs of the students in the school. It must allow for school leaders to utilize adults in the community who can contribute toward a child's education, including policies that provide for greater diversity in both pathways into the profession and roles within it. The future of the Colorado educator workforce should be as diverse as the students it serves, reduce non-instructional burdens on teachers, draw on the expertise of adults throughout the community and across the state and provide meaningful opportunities for advancement for educators.

To accomplish this, we should reimagine the role of teacher and the workforce itself to:

1. Expand "Teacher Support" positions that allow certain non-instructional burdens to be taken on by others including those working toward becoming a teacher or specific support positions;
2. Expand and strengthen the pathways and positions that allow adults with subject matter expertise to teach on a limited basis under specific circumstances and conditions while also raising awareness of these options among school system leaders and communities;
3. Expand pathways for exploring and developing skills to become a teacher including opportunities for high school students, college students not enrolled in ed prep programs and those in other careers;
4. Develop career pathways designed at local level with support from the state that allow teachers to grow within profession without having to go into administration or school leadership roles;
5. Establish a system for exceptional teachers to extend their reach to both students and other teachers beyond their own school, district or CMO.

Colorado's leaders have already taken important steps in updating our educator licensure system and that work should continue with renewed commitment and openness to bold changes. With the benefit of the lessons we have learned over the past nine months and with the additional challenges we now see in the profession, we also should step back and consider whether the existing structure of the educator workforce makes sense, is the best structure and whether a one-size fits-all approach is right for every school and every community.

Some districts have recently acted to advance these types of innovations. And the truth is, a lot of this may be possible within existing policies and the authorities granted to local leaders if they are willing to think and act boldly and if they have the support of state officials.

Educator Workforce Recommendation #1
Expand pathways *into* the profession
Goal: Bring additional expertise; Expand pool of new Teachers; Diversify workforce

State Role or Action

A. Establish mechanism (fund) through legislative action and in partnership with private sector and philanthropic community for covering living costs for incoming teachers in exchange for filling high-needs positions. *A model for this can be seen in CMC's program and partnership(s).*

B. Revise statutes authorizing Adjunct Instructor to expand subject matters covered, reduce restrictions on adjunct authorizations and expand opportunities for schools to employ "Adjunct Teachers" under a license that allows adults with subject matter expertise to teach on a limited basis under specific circumstances. Legislative action may be necessary to revise adjunct instructor requirements, such as SB 19-216 which allows computer science teachers or through a roll-up of these and other related statutes into a single revision to licensure or other statutes and should consider adjunct teaching as both a stand-alone role and as a pathway to a professional teaching license;

C. Support the creation of a private sector partnership network and pool of private sector experts credentialed as post-secondary instructors and approved under standards for Higher Learning Standards and CTE instruction;

D. Leverage state and state secured federal workforce development funds/programs to create programs for professionals to explore opportunities in education and, particularly, newly created non-teacher roles including those developed during system interruption such as those in learning pods as well as paraprofessionals, and other non-instructional roles with and without pathways to becoming teachers.

E. Provide resources including trainings, exemplars, facilitated communities of practice and roadmaps for local implementation of above;

F. Provide resources to CDE to raise awareness of standards for professional development and direct supports for micro-certifications and other opportunities for educators to "upskill" and develop the knowledge or instructional skills needed for shifting structures and content-bases necessary;

G. Develop standards for IHE courses for new roles including Adjunct Teacher and Teacher Support positions (see Recommendation 2) through 4yr and 2yr institutions;

H. Establish program through legislative action to utilize public funds for pathways to teaching programs for concurrent enrollment in year four of high-school and as years 5-6 (e.g. early college) including designation of agency for oversight of program;

I. Authorize year-round, increased financial aid for non EPP students to become teachers.

Local Role or Action

A. Partner with EPPs to provide opportunities for student teachers from State Role A above and commit to priority hiring

B. Design roles that reflect expanded opportunities and work with building leaders, community leaders, families and private sector to identify subject needs, experts and the future local landscape;

C. Identify, recruit and maintain relationships with private sector partners and create teaching opportunities as discussed in State Role D above.

D. Engage with CDE, CDHE and other officials to provide input on the roles, pathways and programs discussed above;

E. Engage with district/CMO staff to develop roles, pathways and programs that reflect local needs and context for new positions and pathways;

F. Work with CDE, CDHE, SBOE and IHEs to establish programs discussed in State Role H & I above.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Adjunct Teacher: Program to recruit adults from community with specific expertise to teach under a licensed teacher. Could include focus areas (STEM, CTE) including a program developed with a multi-member cohort of adjuncts. Pilot could be for individual school or school system or could be a collaboration of multiple schools across different districts and/or CMOs.

Guest Lecturers: Regional (single or multi-LEA/CMO) initiative to create a database of guest lecturers by topic, availability & expertise. Recruit & inform community of opportunity (and address substitute/non-HQT status)

HS Concurrent: LEA partnership w/IHE to provide HS Juniors/Seniors opportunity to begin exploring pathways into ECE & K-12 education via concurrent enrollment.

Educator Workforce Recommendation #2
Expand pathways and roles *within* the profession
Goal: Elevate profession; Improve retention; Reduce burden on teachers.

State Role or Action

A. Working with stakeholders, develop the standards, requirements, trainings and operational framework for a statewide corps of teachers.

B. Provide resources to CDE to support development of model Career Pathways for Educators and direct support to BOCES, LEAs, CMOs or individual schools designing and implementing such career pathways that expand opportunities for career advancement;

C. Through legislative action, identify funds to support the previous efforts and those recommended above to create an incentive program for establishing local career pathways for educators and financial incentives for participating educators;

D. Examine licensure rules to identify strategies for streamlining opportunities for candidates to earn a dual-endorsement in high-demand subject areas (e.g. STEM and Computer Science) with goal of removing barriers and providing incentives for candidates to earn endorsements in high-need subject areas;

E. Remove any unnecessary barriers to employing additional adults in classrooms providing support to teachers or providing supports and services other than instruction to reduce non-instructional burdens on teachers;

F. Appropriate funds for advancing a Guest Lecturer program and database that is supported at state level and managed at local level and provide resources for CDE to utilize the licensing system to oversee and manage development of the Guest Lecturer program and database, including providing access and instruction to local leaders to use at their local level.

G. Minimize any statutory, regulatory or systems of practice that restrict teachers from concurrently providing instruction to students in more than one district;

H. Explore with local system leaders the need for a statewide corps of teachers or an independent body to employ the growing number of substitute teachers who often do not qualify for benefits.

Local Role or Action

A. Engage with CDE, CDHE and other officials to provide input on the roles, pathways and programs discussed above;

B. Engage with district/CMO staff to develop roles, pathways and programs that reflect local needs and context for each;

C. Conduct outreach to local community to identify potential Guest Lecturers to be included in database and to raise awareness of new roles created (Adjunct, Teacher Support).

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Jr. Teacher Role for IHE Students: LEA/CMO + IHE partnership w/non-instructional roles for college students to support teachers, families and/or students. Could be students in EPP tool for recruiting non EPP students or to bring other expertise.

Non-Instructional Roles: Pilot to create non-instructional roles that focus on: a) reducing non-instructional burdens on teachers and/or b) bring specific complementary expertise (e.g. technology, family support etc.). Roles may or may not be intended as pathway to becoming a teacher.

Advanced Teaching Roles & Pathways: Staffing structures or roles that allow highly skilled teachers to advance into classroom, instructional or other teacher-supporting roles other than administration. *Also see Invest in Mentoring in Teacher Supports*

District/CMO-Wide, Regional or Statewide Opportunities: Creation of roles for exceptional teachers and/or teachers with specific expertise to expand their reach to students beyond their own school via remote instruction, rotating schedule or other concepts. Could include a cohort from multiple buildings, LEAs or CMOs.

Hybrid Teacher Roles/Schedules: Creation of role for educators in parallel with hybrid learning models and/or alternative staffing structures that would allow educators to work three days in classroom and remaining days in a leadership role within their school or district supporting other educators.

Educator Workforce Recommendation #3
Enable Alternative Staffing Structures
Goal: Empower local leaders to staff in ways reflective of local needs and context

State Role or Action

A. Remove unnecessary barriers to non-teachers providing support to teachers to reduce burdens;
B. Support, participate in or convene a statewide workgroup to explore Reimagining the Role of Teacher to identify non-instructional roles that could be developed at local level. Outcome would be to provide guidance and state support to LEAs/CMOs designing such roles;
C. Support, engage and leverage existing programs including but not limited to TEACH CO, Troops to Teachers and others.

Local Role or Action

A. Engage with CDE, CDHE and other officials to provide input on the roles, pathways and programs discussed above;
B. Engage with district/CMO staff to develop roles, pathways and programs that reflect local needs and context for each;
C. Conduct outreach to local community to identify potential Guest Lecturers to be included in database and to raise awareness of new roles created (Adjunct, Teacher Support)

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

None identified at this point. Multiple pilots could be developed by local leaders and stakeholders that are based on the unique local context and needs.

TEACHING & LEARNING

The Problems We are Working To Solve

Colorado has difficulty attracting and retaining teachers. As we know, retention will solve for recruitment when we are able to develop a systemic solution to retaining and developing educators. Colorado's educators report the following variables impact their willingness and ability to retain in the profession: a rigidity of academic structure, including curriculum driven decision-making and "one size fits all" Professional Development; an overemphasis on standardized testing and unintended, correlated consequences; a lack of time for teachers to collaborate on planning, differentiation and assessment, including a lack of opportunity to team teach; and a system that is based on inputs rather than competencies.

An additional problem that negatively impacts Colorado's teacher workforce is the current lack of diversity in the profession, and in the pipeline. We know many of the variables that lead to this dearth of diversity: many teachers report low job satisfaction, the low status of the profession, the low compensation and the lack of community of teachers of color. The ripple effect in the system is that many students of color, who don't see themselves represented in their teachers, are not currently interested in exploring teaching as a profession.

Additionally, we know that many teachers of color who enter into educator preparation programs do not graduate from the programs or enter the profession. As we know, COVID has exacerbated these negative attributes in the environment. Teachers are now asked to put their lives on the line for the profession. This is an increasingly difficult request for professionals who, even in pre-COVID times, experienced low job satisfaction, low status and low compensation. Additionally, the cost and time necessary to achieve credentials are reported to be a barrier for many teachers, and especially teachers of color.

Desired End State

The teaching and learning experience should be driven by the needs and interests of students, facilitated by teachers who reflect the diversity of their students, who are empowered with the autonomy they need to be viewed as the professional decision-maker for what transpires in the classroom. Students should be able to move fluidly through their educational experience in a competency-based system that allows them to progress when they are able to demonstrate proficiency. Teams of teachers collaborating together with diverse groups of students that stay together in learning pods/communities over periods of years will have the ability to design and structure the daily and year-round learning experiences for their students based upon student needs and interests.   Hands-on, experiential and community-based projects will provide relevant and authentic learning experiences through which students will demonstrate their learning. Formative assessment for learning will dominate the assessment environment with appropriate standardized assessments at regular intervals to hold learners and teachers accountable for the mastery of the Colorado State Standards. Teachers working in this setting would earn compensation commensurate with the heightened responsibility and the year-round nature of the work. Working in this innovative environment will provide the autonomy, accountability, and responsibility correlated with high levels

of achievement and satisfaction among teachers and learners. Given our current system disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents are seeking new and exciting opportunities for their children that they may not have been as open to prior to the disruption. Now is the time to think differently about our teaching and learning systems to support public education in new and exciting ways.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #1
Support Individualized Student Progression *Student Autonomy: Place, Pace, Time*
Goal: Shift focus to support different learning styles & competency based progression

State Role or Action

A. Conduct a comprehensive review, with the goal of identifying any gaps, needs for funding and exemplars to elevate, of competency based education including the extensive body of resources developed by CDE and CEI and the assessments in use or developed through innovation zones, district efforts and CEI supported actions. Review should include available assessments, process for approving models for competency based progression through courses and grades, and supports or training resources for school leaders and educators in best practices for competency based, differentiated instruction and advancement;
B. Through legislative action, revisit seat-time and course hour requirements to provide mastery based advancement;
C. Through legislative action, revise ties between "count day" and school funding to shift to a "students served" model that considers other than full-time students, competency based progression, and locally developed models that impact students counted through current models;
D. Work with IHEs, PD providers, professional associations and system leaders to develop guidelines and best practices for culturally responsive practices & those that address implicit or unconscious bias in differentiated instruction;
E. Formalize and expand opportunities for high school students to test out of courses via IHE partnerships;
F. Incentivize partnerships between LEAs/CMOs and IHEs to enable students to earn transferrable credits even if their school does not offer concurrent enrollment (generally or in specific course);
G. Ensure there are no unnecessary limitations or unintended consequences for schools or students when students seek to enroll in a variety of courses across different schools and learning providers;
H. Expand authorized uses of early college / HS year 5-6 funds and concurrent enrollment offerings for pathways to high skill careers including certificates and credentials.
I. Expand the Innovative High School Opportunities Pilot ("seat time pilot") so that more than the current five districts can have the same level of flexibility and freedom from tracking hours;
J. Provide support to CDE and CDHE to ensure the continued collaboration between ECE, K-12 and Higher Ed to create seamless transitions across competency levels throughout the P-20 system(s).

A. Engage community leaders and families to identify needs, goals and aspirations for individualized student progressions;

B. Develop culturally responsive approaches that reflect local context in individualized progression programs;

C. Establish partnerships to support student learning experience and interests including culturally diverse and relevant opportunities;

D. Conduct robust outreach and engagement to solicit input, establish long-term buy-in and among stakeholders and program sustainability;

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Competency based progression: Design & offer opt-in for a program providing competency based progression through a set of courses. Could include a full "horizontal" of multiple courses in one or more grade levels or specific verticals of course sequence (e.g. language, STEM, CTE etc.).

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #2
Support Differentiated Student Assessment
Goal: Emphasis on student learning, culturally responsive education and assessment to inform instructional decisions

State Role or Action

A. Provide support to local leaders in conducting review of assessment regimen to minimize duplicative or unnecessary legacy assessments and to incorporate local assessments of student growth and achievement;

B. Support local officials & collaborations in the development & use of formative assessments;

C. Expand support for CDE's assessment unit to continue their internal work, expand support of local leaders and to convene a statewide work-group to develop best practices relating to locally developed assessments and assessment strategies including incorporation of culturally responsive elements and approaches.

Local Role or Action

A. Support educator collaboration in the design and development of measures of student learning including formative assessments, capstone grading and other assessment strategies focused on individual learning & knowledge demonstration;

B. Engage students, families and communities in developing best practices for the implementation and use of diverse measures of student learning;

C. Provide professional development focused on differentiated student assessment, culturally responsive education and the use of multiple assessment approaches to inform instruction.

Formative assessments: Use of formative assessments for differentiated instruction, course pace & grading within a cohort in one or more classes or schools with possible use of capstone grading. Would be best if included significant PD + opportunities for teacher collaboration.

Fall Micro-Pilot Feature: ***Dillon Valley Elementary***

ESRII supported a team of educators at Dillon Valley Elementary School in Summit County, a dual language school, who are identifying best practices in delivering culturally responsive instruction across learning environments (in-person, hybrid, and virtual), specifically focusing on how they are providing instruction to English Language Learners.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #3
Expand Teacher Empowerment for Instruction
Goal: Empower teachers to teach what, how & in ways that meets student needs.

State Role or Action

A. Expand the support maintenance of statewide resources bank including video exemplars, coursework and other materials that teachers can draw upon and learn from for use in their classrooms including The Lab at CEI, resources for CDE to provide such supports and other statewide or regional aligned efforts;
B. Convene a statewide task-force of educators to identify unnecessarily burdensome state (and federal) requirements or programs that limit educators' ability to tailor instruction to local, individual and classroom needs.

Local Role or Action

A. Engage educators to identify and understand local policies, practices and systems that limit teacher autonomy or empowerment in delivering instruction that meets student needs and school context.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Resource Development Think Tank: Cohort of educators and other expert stakeholders developing and aggregating resources to support State Role Item A above.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #4
Rethink School Day, Week & Calendar
Goal: Flexibility to meet needs of students, maximize time use and address exacerbated inequities

State Role or Action

A. Revise the single count day and full-time student standard and measure for funding based on students served;
B. Ensure that systems allow hybrid school weeks, such as those that include in-person and remote instruction, are considered in revisions, waivers or pilots of alternative approaches to count-day.

A. Engage families and communities to identify needs, interest and goals relating to alternative school year, week or day options to mitigate learning loss and inequities;
B. Work with educators and professional associations to develop staffing structures, models and where appropriate, salary structures, to support alternative school year, week or days;
C. Build on recommendations in Educator Workforce section above to create roles necessary to support alternative school year, week or day.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Adjusted Week: Build on hybrid instructional models with alternatives to Mon-Fri instruction. Could be shortened week, alternate days etc. with designated days for teacher collaboration or other activities on off days. Could also be combined w/competency based to provide targeted support to students at differing levels.

Learning Blocks: Program to allow students to go "in depth" on limited number of courses for shorter periods vs. all courses for a full semester.

Non-Agrarian Calendar: Opt-in track developed with community to offer school calendar that replaces extended summer break with shorter breaks throughout the year.

Summer School or Other Out of School Programs: Incorporate summer school, winter break or afternoon blocks after regular school day as options or part of reconfigured school year.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #5
Expand use of Learning Pods
Goal: Provide equitable access to additional learning time & opportunities

State Role or Action

A. Through legislative action, establish standards, agency authority for oversight and guidelines including for equitable access and staffing requirements (e.g. licensure) of Learning Pods when provided by or using any district funds or resources;
B. Share best practices, exemplars and provide support to districts, CMOs or communities providing or exploring the use of learning pods to supplement in-school and/or remote instruction;
C. Explore and determine in partnership with involved stakeholders, the need for licensing or other professional standards for adult roles in managing, hosting or providing instruction through learning pods.

Local Role or Action

A. Engage community to identify needs, goals and interest in learning pods;
B. Collaborate with community partners to develop programs with emphasis on equitable access and responsiveness to community needs;
C. Work with educators to establish opportunities for support or leadership of learning pods.

Existing learning pods and variations of the approach all present learning opportunities including

Edgewater, Adams 12 and others. There may be additional opportunities to learn from graduating high school students to gather their perspectives.

Comprehensive Teaching & Learning Pilot

Combined Strategy Pilot: Establish a multi-age, competency-based cohort of students and teachers that would extend over time. Team teaching would include collaboration, student and teacher designed learning experiences, formative assessments. The pod could be led by a diverse workforce and would allow teachers the flexibility to make decisions.

> **Fall Micro-Pilot Feature: *Edgewater Collective***
>
> *Edgewater Collective, a community nonprofit in Jefferson County, established "pathway pods" as an inclusive, equitable way for students in their community to receive tutoring and after-school enrichment opportunities during the COVID disruption. Edgewater has a long-term vision of developing a pathway into education careers for high-school students who are employed at EC as tutors, and we provided funding to support capacity-building and supports to ensure tutors have a meaningful experience and opportunities to learn more about careers in education.*

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #6
Expand Course Offerings & Access by Removing Geographic/Institution Limitations
Goal: Expand courses available to students and increase equity of access

State Role or Action

A. Establish, through legislative action, a funding mechanism to ensure that student home districts are not penalized and other providers of courses are appropriately compensated or funded.

Local Role or Action

A. Identify courses that could be offered to students enrolled in other school systems and the process for enabling their participation;
B. Conduct a gap analysis to identify courses that may be of interest to students that are not currently offered by the district or CMO;
C. Establish partnerships with other districts based on mapping of courses and gaps in offerings to ensure maximum access for all students.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Regional and Cross Region Collaboratives: Collaboration among districts, IHEs and non-profits to conduct course offering and gap analysis, map complementary offerings and establish partnerships to provide additional course access to students.

TEACHER TRAINING & SUPPORTS

The Problems We are Working To Solve

As we re-envision both how Colorado's educator workforce is structured, and propose shifts in teaching and learning aimed at injecting a new urgency around equity, we need to think through the implications for how we:

● Bring individuals into the teaching profession, and

● Continuously provide authentic professional development that improves teaching practice and focuses on the following buckets of need:

○ Strong supports for teacher wellness and mental health in both prep and ongoing PD/induction

○ Competency-based opportunities for growth,

○ Peer-led and supported

○ Incentives for roles such as mentoring that align with differentiated pathways into leadership roles in classrooms, schools, and districts that move beyond "administration only"

○ Partnerships/collaborations focused on improving school performance through teacher efficacy.

Desired End State

Closing the connection gaps between teacher preparation programs and districts: We envision an ecosystem/end state where each of Colorado's 178 school districts has an intentional, collaborative partnership with a CO institute of higher education, and an alternative licensure provider, that includes multiple avenues into teacher licensure that are driven by community needs, education workforce goals, and aligned to local priorities/strategic goals around building a strong bench for local ed. workforce needs.

Strengthening Teacher Professional Development Supports: Broadly speaking, we want to construct a more holistically supported system of PD for educators - including self-directed, job-embedded, competency-based learning opportunities that are meaningful for educators (ie, not just a piece of paper) - and that provides flexibility of delivery for individual growth, to ensure that educators are getting the proper exposure/training/connections to the world that they are preparing students for, in ways that make sense for who they are as individuals, where they are in their careers, and what their future goals are. These could be higher-ed based opportunities; district-based/embedded PD; include an increased focus on micro-credentials delivered in partnership with industries; and in additional creative ways.

We envision a statewide network of PD focused on the different regions of the that includes opportunities for both local and statewide learning networks, PLCs, and the like to support continued professional growth, increase connections between educator affinity groups, and support best practice sharing both within and across systems.

We believe that the arc of development for teacher prep is a shared responsibility between prep providers and districts - a continuum from preparation through teacher induction that can be strengthened through a renewed focus on growth vs. compliance when designing an integrated and symbiotic "handoff" of supports for emerging educators from their prep program to their district-based induction.

Last, we believe that these newly imagined and diverse supports for educators will help to better sustain them within the profession so that they can focus on what's most important - teaching students and leading classrooms in order to provide every student with high-quality educational experiences that are meaningful to them and set them up for success once they graduate from the system.

> **Teacher Training & Supports** Recommendation #1
> **Strengthen Ed Prep Program <-> District/CMO Partnerships**
> **Goal:** Ensure every school system has a higher ed / ed prep partner

State Role or Action

A. Through legislative action, provide funding to support induction including support for local efforts and to CDE to provide and disseminate recommendations for what makes a high-quality induction program for all participating teachers including guidance/resources to support induction plans with a growth orientation (vs. compliance driven).
B. Expand efforts to connect and foster collaborative partnerships between educator preparation programs and districts.

Local Role or Action

A. Identify and publicize any and all teacher preparation pathways active within each district - including both higher ed and alternative licensure – in order to provide clarity and transparency into teacher pipeline development efforts, identify any potential gaps/needs, and ultimately to adequately and sustainably build a bench of new educators to meet community needs;
B. Re-think Teacher Induction to ensure quality control of what's offered and the ability to help new teachers and support them with wraparound services.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Learning Opportunities

There are several existing programs in the state that effectively bring new talent into the teaching profession We should, as a coalition and eco-system, continue to learn from the these (and others statewide and national examples).

Potential Pilots

Expanded State Supported Induction PLCs: In addition to the formal review and approval of local induction programs, CDE supports local program staff through regional professional learning communities (PLCs) and resources based on current research. CDE hosted one virtual PLC meeting and two in-person PLC meetings in spring 2020. More than 100 individuals attended these PLC meetings combined, representing 48 districts, 4

BOCES and 13 charter schools. Professional learning communities' participants engage in collaborative problem-solving and sharing of best practices.

Workgroup on Clinical Experience Pay: Convening a statewide group encompassing EPPs/LEAs to address ways that they can partner to find creative ways to ensure that candidates are paid for clinical field experiences in order to 1) Identify efficiencies that new models can surface so that programs are less expensive and candidates can receive funding for their clinical experiences and 2) identify the gap that needs to be met.

Pathways into Teaching Profession: Convening a statewide group encompassing EPPs/LEAs, and local/state workforce entities to a) identify creative partnerships to ensure teacher candidates have equitable access to paid clinical field experiences; b) identify ways prep models can efficiently transition to models that are less costly for candidates (cost savings = funding for clinical experiences); and c) identify the gap that needs to be met and design process for meeting existing needs.

Prep to Induction Continuum: Design an updated and tightly integrated handoff from a EPP to district induction to a) identify outcomes from prep program that align/overlap with district induction plans for Y1; b) identify clear role(s) for both EPP/district in both final year of prep/1st year of induction aligned toward how to best support graduating students in making the transition to the teaching profession.

Build upon existing supports for rural educators: Design a program that builds on the support of Rural Teaching Fellowship stipend as outlined in HB18-1002 or the incentives and opportunities of SB18-085 which provides financial incentives for educators in rural districts. The Rural Teaching Fellows program) provides $10,000 scholarships for teacher candidates, with 50% of the funding coming from CDHE and 50% matched by the candidate's IHE or rural district *and a number of districts have utilized aspects of SB18-085 to support "grow your own" programs.*

Incentives for EPP/LEA Partnerships: Develop an incentive-based mechanism to drive deeper partnerships and collaboration between LEAs/EPPs (ex: providing seed funding to LEAs with specific/entrenched teacher shortage challenges to develop partnerships with EPPs)

Creative Partnerships: Look to identify ways EPPs/industry can partner to foster opportunities for partnerships to drive increased participation in teacher prep programs for candidates to teach specific and in-demand endorsement areas.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #2
Establish Online/Virtual Communities of Practice (LEAs, IHEs, EPPs)
Goal: Provide opportunities for teams of teachers to collaborate with a focus on peer feedback for learning and growth of practice.

State Role or Action

A. Work with IHEs and other EPPs to expand statewide online communities of practice (COPs) including an advisory committee to identify COP topic interests among educators, future educators, school leaders and other school support personnel;

B. Provide resources for CDE and CDHE to actively engage with and support COPs including participation of Department personnel, PD resources and national best practices and exemplars.

A. Promote COPs discussed above and encourage participation by staff including identifying on-the-clock time for engaging with COPs as part of professional development;
B. Collaborate across LEA/CMO, BOCES and other networks to create virtual COPs/PLCs to supplement those discussed above and/or until their establishment.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Statewide, online PLCs: Groups composed of early career teachers, alt. teachers, induction participants, SSPs, mentors. To strengthen and encourage participation, explore opportunities to provide mini-grants or stipends to participating educators.

Fall Micro-Pilot Feature: ***Periscope Project***

ESRII provided funding to support a partnership between La Veta and Aguilar School Districts - adjacent, rural school districts in Southern Colorado - intended to improve both districts by providing educators opportunities to work together and learn with and from one another.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #3
Strengthen Connection between EPP/PD & Evolving Economy/Workforce
Goal: Help teachers better understand the world they are preparing students to enter

State Role or Action

A. Establish, in collaboration with the Governor, CDE, CDHE, DOLA, OEDIT, other state leaders, early colleges and organizations such as CareerWise, a "Preparing Students for Jobs of the Future" advisory council (or sub-group of existing council(s)) to advise PD providers and EPPs and to foster partnerships between school systems and employers;
B. Create a statewide database, accessible by local system leaders, of private sector, non-profit and government employers who are willing to partner with local educators to provide "externships" for educators, to visit schools or otherwise partner with schools and school systems to help new and veteran educators better understand the world in which they are preparing students to succeed.

Local Role or Action

A. Create opportunities for educators to network with and spend time with local or regional employers and other leaders to better understand future workforce dynamics;
B. Designate a district staff person to establish and maintain employer relationships both for career partnerships for students *and* for educator-employer partnerships.
C. Identify opportunities for educator and school leader participation in community workforce conversations;
D. Actively invite and engage local and regional employers to participate in school system conversations beyond career pathways to foster close partnerships and feedback systems.

Upskilling Educator Workforce Workgroup. Pilot and/or working group to establish best practices for creating partnerships in co-design between K-12, Higher Ed, and industry including examination of:

i)   What are building blocks of programs/partnerships that sets everyone up for success?

ii)   How do you identify all players to get them all to the table?

iii)   What does it take to have a teacher "ready" to be a part of this work *(student-->career pathways that do not include teachers have a gap that we need to understand better)*

iv)   How to embed *mentorship* (for students/teachers/industry?) as we know mentoring is a key component

Learn from Existing Partnership Models: Identify skill attainment and industry awareness programs outside of education that could be built upon to develop opportunities for educators. Partnerships such as the Space Round Table, which includes opportunities for educators to participate in externships could be a model for additional public-private partnerships to provide teachers experience in the state's primary workforce sectors.

Teaching & Learning Recommendation #4
Invest in Mentoring as PD for Teachers & Leaders
Goal: Strengthen Educator Practice & Expand Career Pathway Opportunities

State Role or Action

A. Invest and expand upon successful programs such as Principal Leadership Institute, and invest in developing teacher mentors via Mentor Teacher Endorsement throughout the state;

B. Establish incentives within the teaching profession for educators to gain peer mentoring skills, earn mentoring endorsement, move up on career ladder based on developing these competencies (unrelated to an admin. license) and provide support to CDE's ongoing efforts to maintain and support CDE's Mentor Resource Bank;

C. Work with IHEs and other stakeholders to ensure access for all educators to Mentor Teacher courses and professional development.

Local Role or Action

A. Explore ways to provide stipends for mentor teachers and other incentives through local budget, ballot measures, philanthropic or other grants;

B. Establish partnerships between districts/BOCES and IHEs/nonprofits to leverage growth of mentor teacher development to meet local and regional needs. Consider opportunities for all educators within and across systems – from novice teachers to master teachers – to collaborate and engage in reflective practice, have productive conversations focused on solving problems and improving outcomes for all students.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Teacher Mentor Role: Pathway within profession for experienced educators, or recently retired teachers/leaders, to serve as a mentor to alternative and early career teachers. Intent should be

providing a pathway for skills development/career advancement separate from administration. Would ideally include financial incentives embedded (stipends, pathway to mentor endorsement for teachers; matching funds for districts)

Virtual PLCs for Mentor Skills development: Paired with above, development of regional/statewide PLCs for mentor capacity development and connection

Principal Learning Institute (PLC structure): Facilitated, virtual PLC for new and emerging school leaders; individual mentorship and support for principals; inter-regional collaborations and expansion for sustainability; aligned w/ and major component of Principal Induction Program

Partnerships between LEAs/BOCES, IHEs, and nonprofits to leverage growth of mentor teacher development: Developing mentor teacher capacity, especially in rural areas with critical workforce needs, is essential both for increasing teacher retention and for providing practicing educators with skills and leadership opportunities beyond pathways into administration. Pilots/partnerships with an emphasis on mentor skills development provide a wide latitude of benefits across school systems and foster greater collaboration between districts, universities, and nonprofits/workforce centers.

Online, local/statewide PLCs: For mentor teachers and school leaders, particularly those in rural/isolated communities where opportunities to connect/grow alongside peers need strengthening/additional supports

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Teaching & Learning Recommendation #5
Invest in Mental Health Supports for Educators & Students
Goal: Improve educator retention & practice; Support students' mental health needs

State Role or Action

A. Elevate awareness of CDE's SEL Remote Learning Resources and provide resources for CDE to support local efforts to adapt, adopt and implement based on local needs and context;
B. Convene statewide workgroup on best practices and resources for supporting both educator and student mental health;
C. Maintain a resource bank of mental health related professional development courses, resources for educators (and other employees) and trainings for local leaders including The Hub, Colorado Crisis Services and others and increase awareness of these among local leaders and educators.

Local Role or Action

A. Prioritize and emphasize improved mental health supports for teachers, students, and families;
B. Provide professional development for teachers, district/school leaders around SEL and trauma-informed practices for educators and students;
C. Ensure access to no-cost and accessible mental health support services for educators (in-building or otherwise);
D. Explore ways to include self-awareness and advocacy into coursework in educator preparation to support emerging educators developing skills such as boundary setting, self-advocacy, creating work/life balance, understanding group dynamics, and tools for navigating difficult conversations.

As part, explore overlap or possible amendment to include in Behavioral Health Requirements under SB 20-1312.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

Expanding Partnerships and Opportunities to Address Wellness for Teachers and Students: Invest in and/or develop additional programs such as DU's Center for Rural School Health and Education and other rural peer-assisted network models that focus on comprehensive health and wellness planning and implementation in schools.

Fall Micro-Pilot Feature: *Mental Health*

ESRII partnered with the Colorado Education Association on a series of focus groups with practicing teachers to understand both the effect of the COVID-19 disruption on their mental health, and produced a report with our findings.

OTHER SYSTEM CHANGES

In the course of the ESRII coalition's work, members identified a variety of needs for system-level change or opportunities to broadly support the vision of the ESRII work that fell outside the current three focus areas of the initiative. A number of those may become areas of exploration in 2021. Two specific ideas are timely and sufficiently relevant that we include them here and urge state and local leaders to consider taking action on them along with the recommendations in each focus area.

Other System Changes Recommendation #1
Support Locally Developed Transparency & Performance Systems
Goal: Empower families, communities & school systems to establish locally developed frameworks of school performance

State Role or Action

A. Revisit, amend as needed and fully fund the intent of SB10-204 to support a local accountability system grant program to supplement the state accountability system that may include additional indicators of student success other than those in the state performance framework. Programs or efforts should build upon and springboard from existing programs rather than duplicate them;
B. Provide support to local officials & community leaders in convening groups of educators, families and other stakeholders to develop a local accountability or performance system that provides transparency to families while reflecting local context;
C. Provide resources, best practices and instruments or tools for assessing various measures of student success as identified and measured at the local level.

Local Role or Action

A. Convene a broad, diverse group of stakeholders including educators, school leaders, parents and other members of the community to develop measures of student success framework;
B. Identify needs, resources and tools for measuring the items identified in A above.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

LEA Developed Performance Framework: District development of alternative performance framework through convening of stakeholder group to identify community priorities for data collection, measures of success and school performance;

Multi-System Cohort Framework: Build on the S-CAP approach of six rural districts who are using school review processes to provide feedback based on the interests and needs of communities. Cohorts could include geographically contiguous cohorts or cohorts based on district and student population profiles;

Statewide Cohort & Workgroup: Statewide cohort that could leverage S-CAP, the consortium of alternative education campuses (AEC) doing aligned work and national efforts to identify, explore efficacy, challenges and strengths of various measures. Outcome could be a report on the various measures and a statewide resource-bank of measures and tools for their use.

Other System Changes Recommendation #2
Explore Non-State Budget Funds including Federal COVID Relief Funds, Private Sector & Philanthropic Collaboration to Drive Innovation
Goal: Support innovations in approaches to teaching/learning, structure of the educator workforce & training/support of educators.

State Role or Action

A. Utilize federal COVID-19 relief funds including the RISE Fund to support innovations in competency based progression, alternative school week or year approaches and other individualized, community driven approaches to K-12 education;
B. Convene private sector and philanthropic leaders to discuss establishing an incentive grant program to the innovations discussed above;
C. Direct grant officers in the Executive Branch, in CDE and other state offices to explore all federal grant programs in and outside of education that could be used to support the innovations discussed in A above and elsewhere in this report.

Local Role or Action

A. Support state efforts to secure federal, private sector and philanthropic funds.

Potential Pilots, Field Studies, Learning Opportunities

N/A

NEXT STEPS

ESRII members are excited to share this report and the recommendations contained in it with state and local leaders. The group is optimistic about the potential for sustainable change, to improve student outcomes, address many of the inequities that have been exacerbated by the COVID system interruption and to elevate the teaching profession through changes that can improve teacher retention while also contributing to reducing the teacher shortage in Colorado.

Although the changes recommended in this report are at the system level, how individuals act on them will be critical to success in achieving the goals and end-state identified by ESRII members. For this reason, members have unanimously expressed their desire to continue working as a group.

In the months ahead, ESRII intends to:
- Develop guidance and best practices for implementing the recommendations in this report;
- Provide technical support to members and others implementing the recommendations;
- Support a second cohort of pilots and field studies to test and learn from different strategies, structures and approaches to acting on the recommendations;
- Continue and expand engagement with state and local leaders and organizations studying, supporting and advancing system-level changes in education;
- Explore local and state progress in the group's areas of focus to engage in a continuous cycle of learning and of informing actions by state and local leaders.

ABOUT US

Keystone & PEBC's History of Success

Keystone and PEBC have a proven track-record of partnering to tackle significant policy issues and areas of practice in education. Most recently the two organizations collaborated to lead the Colorado Educator Preparation Innovation Coalition (CO EduPIC). CO EduPIC convened key stakeholders involved with the training, employment and support of new teachers together with educators, experts in the field, government leaders and business leaders in a multi-phase initiative. These stakeholders began meeting in the fall of 2015 in an effort to improve classroom readiness of new teachers and strengthen the teacher pipeline through innovation, autonomy & accountability. CO EduPIC's work led to multiple pilots of new partnerships between education preparation providers (EPPs) and school systems focused on improving the classroom readiness of new teachers and strengthening the relationship between EPPs and schools. Funded by local philanthropic organizations including The Denver Foundation and Rose Foundation, the $250,000 supported CO EduPIC's work that led to the passage of HB 1189 which provided $600,000 in funding to expand residency pilots and CO EduPIC members developed pilots received more than $500,000 from federal and other grants, a return on investment of more than **5x the support received from the philanthropic community**. As importantly, the work of CO EduPIC led directly to legislation to expand and improve teacher pathways while creating an ongoing form of collaboration among EPPs statewide for the first time in state history. CO EduPIC continues to convene stakeholders and has now expanded its scope to explore early career supports and induction.

About Keystone

The [Keystone Policy Center](#) and the [Center for Education Policy](#) (Keystone and the CFEP) have been at the forefront of efforts to expand access to quality education, improve student outcomes, and plan for the challenges of an evolving global economy. [For the past 15 years, Keystone has partnered](#) with government agencies, communities, and stakeholders to develop planning and response strategies for disruptive events like natural disasters and pandemics.

The Keystone Policy Center was founded in 1975 by Robert W. Craig — a visionary, scholar, and mountaineering legend — to independently facilitate the resolution of national policy conflicts. Today, the Keystone Policy Center leads the ascent as a trusted guide in surmounting policy obstacles. An independent, not-for-profit organization, we bring together public, private, and civic sector leaders who have diverse perspectives but share a common desire to find lasting solutions to significant policy problems. Keystone does not advocate for any single position; rather, we help groups unearth a line of sight from contention to collective action. In this age of polarized debate on nearly every major topic in public policy, we offer a refreshing yet proven blueprint for progress. Over the past 40 years, Keystone has built a portfolio of substantive work in energy, environment, education, health, and agriculture. Keystone has accomplished this work with a series of complementary approaches that reflect the diverse strategies utilized in leadership and successful issue resolution.

About PEBC

PEBC strives to create schools and systems worthy of our children. Forged in Denver nearly four decades ago, the Public Education & Business Coalition represents a convergence of stakeholders keen to uplift learning opportunities for each and every student. Today, PEBC collaborates with teachers, schools and districts nationwide catalyzing high quality instruction. PEBC's origins date back to 1983 and the release of the Nation At Risk report by The National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission believed that the public education system was failing to meet the national need for a competitive workforce. With funding from the Ford Foundation, several communities created local education funds to concentrate efforts on quality teaching initiatives.

Initially PEBC's focus was on supporting teachers with literacy and reading comprehension instructional practices. In 1997 PEBC staff published the ground-breaking book *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop* which drew thousands of teachers to Denver wanting to work with and observe PEBC staff applying literacy best practices in their own classrooms. The organization expanded its efforts to coach teachers nationally, and created its highly-respected PEBC Lab Classrooms. In 2004 PEBC expanded its focus to include professional learning in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) instructional best practices and launched the PEBC Teacher Residency program (formerly the Boettcher Teacher Residency merged with Stanley Teacher Prep in 2015). Today, PEBC has grown into an organization with an unrivaled reputation for its teacher residency programs, professional development model, its publications, and the expertise of its staff. PEBC is headquartered in Denver, CO, and works both locally and nationally. Its Board is comprised of business executives, school superintendents and a variety of community and professional organizations.

Attachment A: ESRII Membership

A multi-discipline, diverse stakeholder group helped to shape the recommendations in this document and support the outputs from the process. The partial list of participants included below is intended only as a representation of the diversity of voices included and is not a complete list of all participants nor is it intended as a formal endorsement by any organization.

Partial List of Participating Individuals

Sen. Bob Rankin	Colorado State Senator, District 8
Rep. Julie McCluskie	Colorado State Representative, District 61
Dr. Katy Anthes	Commissioner, Colorado Department of Education
Dr. Angie Paccione	Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
Angelika Schroeder	Chair, Colorado State Board of Education
Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser	President & CEO, Colorado Mountain College
Amie Baca-Oehlert	President, Colorado Education Association
Rebecca F. Holmes	President & CEO, Colorado Education Initiative
Karolina Villagrana	Educator
Kendra Carpenter	Dillon Valley Elementary School, Principal
Bree Jones	Superintendent, La Veta School District
Frank Reeves	Superintendent, East Grand School District #2
Wendy Wyman	Executive Director, Mountain BOCES
Bret Miles	Executive Director, Colorado Association of School Executives
Cheri Wrench	Executive Director, Colorado Association of School Boards
Jesus Escarcega	Co-Chair CO Assoc. for Latino/a Administrators and Superintendents
Harvey Rude	Director, Colorado Center for Rural Education
Liz Qualman	Director of Teacher Education, Colorado Mountain College
Landon Pirius	Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs, CO Community College System
Dr. Brittany Lane	Director of Educator Preparation, CO Department of Higher Education
Leslie Colwell	Vice President, Education Initiatives, Colorado Children's Campaign
Mark Sass	Colorado Executive Director Teach Plus
Dan Schaller	President, Colorado League of Charter Schools
Lee Wheeler-Berliner	Managing Director, Colorado Workforce Development Council
Dana Sorensen	Sr. Director of Professional Learning, PEBC
Kellie Lauth	CEO & President MindSpark Learning
Judy Perez	CEO, iLearn Collaborative
Annette Konoske-Graf	Senior Program Manager, TEACH Colorado
Mark Tapy	Apprenticeship Program Manager, Pinnacol Assurance
Lorne A Jenkins	CEO of Mini Money Management
Harris Rollinger	Volunteer, Energize Colorado
John Farnam	Chief of Staff, Morgridge Family Foundation

Stream of Inquiry	Pilot Partner/Project Description	Pilot Discoveries
Educator Workforce	*Edgewater Collective - Pathway Pods* ● ESRII provided funding to Edgewater Collective (EC), a community nonprofit in Jefferson County, to support EC's "pathway pods" as an inclusive, equitable way for students in their community to receive tutoring and after-school enrichment opportunities during the COVID disruption. ● Edgewater has a long-term vision of developing a pathway into education careers for high-school students who are employed at EC as tutors ● Funding supported capacity-building and materials to ensure tutors have a meaningful experience and opportunities to learn more about careers in education.	Micro Pilot Report Takeaways: ● EC built an online tutoring program to support students and families in a virtual after-school environment ● Working toward implementing an "Acceleration Academy" in summer 2021 to help students begin to catch up in math and literacy ● EC plans to create opportunities for HS tutors to co-lead lessons in elementary classrooms in the spring semester, so they can experience what it is like to be a teacher. The hope is that these experiences and the time to reflect on them with teacher coaches will provide an opportunity for high school students to imagine themselves as teachers one day. ● EC looks to build additional experiences to help these high school students discern what the teacher pathway to college and back looks like and provide them the resources to succeed.
Teaching & Learning	*Dillon Valley Elementary School - How to Ensure Access to High Quality Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Learner Instruction During a Disruption* ESRII provided stipends for 4 teachers at Dillon Valley Elementary to support digging into a problem of practice: ● Best practices in delivering culturally responsive instruction	Micro Pilot Report Takeaways: ● Student ownership of their own learning drove this project ● Increased ownership led to greater awareness and focus to their work ● Teachers noted an increased awareness of the 5 language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing, metacognition) among students

	across learning environments (remote, in-person, hybrid) ● The teachers focused on bringing language awareness to students and noting the impact it had on their learning	
Training & Supporting Great Teachers	Mental Health Focus Groups ESRII, in partnership with the Colorado Education Association, hired a facilitator to conduct educator focus groups with teachers from communities throughout the state in order to better understand educator mental health challenges/needs: ● Total of 3 focus groups with broad cross-section of educators across Colorado's school districts (~22 teachers in 3 different focus groups, representing urban, suburban and rural school districts) ● Gain better understanding of teacher mental health needs in this current moment	[Micro Pilot Report](#) Takeaways: ● Reacting to the pandemic teachers are anxious, stressed and experiencing mental health challenges ● No one felt prepared for the challenges of teaching in a pandemic ● Identified need for additional mental health supports in schools for teachers and students, especially in rural communities. ● Additional points of emphasis were suggestions for professionalism and self-awareness coursework in Ed. Prep Programs, to support development of skills in self-advocacy, boundary setting, group dynamics, and holding difficult conversations
Training & Supporting Great Teachers	Periscope Project - La Veta School District and Generation Schools Network Part of the [Student-Centered Accountability Program (S-CAP)](#) ESRII provided funding to support a partnership between La Veta and Aguilar School Districts - adjacent, rural school districts in Southern Colorado - intended to improve both schools by providing educators opportunities to work together and learn with and from one another by:	Report *(Expected Spring 2020 to allow for project completion);* some initial findings include: These opportunities for cross-district collaboration have resulted in: ● Greater confidence among educators; an increased sense of belonging & motivation for educators; higher expectations and greater aspirations among educators and for students; and the

	• Exploring alternate perspectives through peer observations; sharing ideas, strategies, tools, and resources; engaging in reflective practice and providing one another contextual feedback; having productive conversations focused on solving wicked problems and improving outcomes for all students. • Funding is also intended to support the buildout of a peer network among teachers in additional school districts that already participate in S-CAP, establishing and driving three job-alike peer networks across 14 S-CAP school districts January-June 2020	beginnings of more project-based, student-led learning • Educators have built relationships with peers who understand their context and their challenges – the peer network reduces rural isolation and builds professional capital (comprised of human, social, and decisional capital) Challenges • How to build effective relationships quickly, use time intentionally, function in a virtual world, and measure progress towards explicitly stated goals. Spring 2020 Project Details • This micro-pilot will establish and drive three job alike peer networks across 14 S-CAP school districts January – June 2021.