



COLORADO
Department of Education

Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot

Legislative Report

Submitted to:

The Colorado Department of Education Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness: Andy Tucker, Director and Erica Ryan, Postsecondary Programs Specialist Joint Education Committee of the General Assembly

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Executive Summary

In 2019, [SB19-216](#) created the High School Innovative Learning Pilot Program, hereafter known as the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program or ILOP. This program enables participating Local Education Providers (LEPs) to offer their 9th through 12th grade high school students a variety of learning experiences that usually occur outside of the classroom. Per statute, these learning experiences should be designed to enrich students' education and support them in successfully transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or the workforce.

Innovative learning opportunities may include work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships or residency programs, enrollment in postsecondary courses taught on college campuses, competency-based learning or capstone projects, and other learning experiences that are designed to help students develop and demonstrate personal, entrepreneurial, civic, interpersonal, and professional skills as described in CDE's [Essential Skills Required in the Colorado Academic Standards](#).

Participating LEPs are allowed to count their part-time high school students who participate in the LEP's Innovative Learning Pilot as full-time students regardless of the number of instructional or teacher contact hours each student receives.

Over the past two years of implementation, twenty seven education partners in Colorado have been accepted into the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot and have been implementing career-connected learning programs for students. In order to be accepted into ILOP, education partners submitted innovative learning plans that were reviewed by the Colorado Department of Education's competitive grants department. Education partners' participation in the program is renewed annually with the submission of implementation reports.

Technical Assistance

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) contracted with Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) to support LEPs selected for this pilot in planning and implementation of their innovative learning plans. Over the course of the last two years, CEI has supported ILOP LEPs with a variety of structures including tailored coaching, network convenings, webinars, and ongoing networking and technical assistance through the coordinator network. Data from a recent survey showed that 100% of surveyed staff within participating LEPs strongly agree or agree receiving technical assistance from CEI has been a positive experience (n=32) and based on their experience so far in this project they would recommend partnering with CEI to a colleague (n=32).

Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Partners

Twenty-seven education partners throughout Colorado have participated in the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot. These partners consist of districts, charter schools, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). There have been three cohorts of partners accepted into the pilot, and each year a new cohort of LEPs is added. Cohorts begin in March of each year and develop innovative learning plans before implementing their programming in the following school year. Education partners serve a wide variety of the state as indicated by the map below. A large portion of participating districts are in rural or small rural settings (78%)

Student Participation

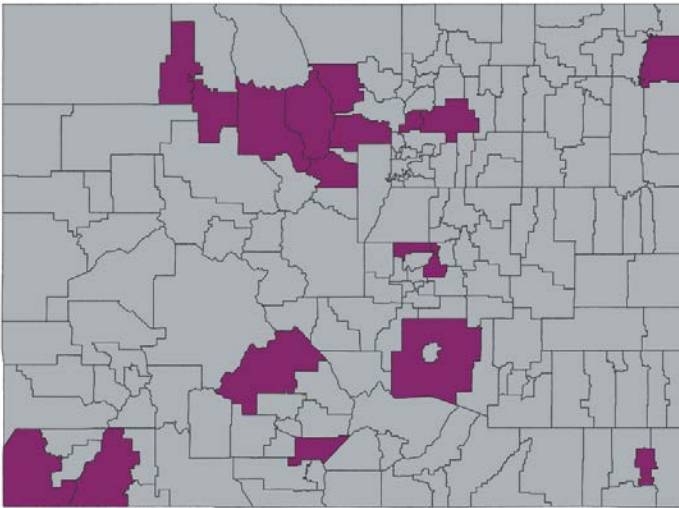
Since implementation of the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot is in its early days, and thus, strong outcome data is not yet available; student participation, especially representative student participation, is a key metric used to chart the status of ILOP programs. Since cohort three of ILOP is still in the planning phase of their

work, the Student Participation section reports on data gathered from cohorts one and two. These data are aggregated at the cohort level to protect student privacy but disaggregated by students' eligibility for free or reduced lunch and students' racial identity to support examination of representative program access.

Report Overview

This report will highlight the supports ILOP partners have received, success stories from ILOP partners over the past two years, student participation in ILOP, and lessons learned from pilot implementation so far across all partners.

Figure 1.1: LEP District Partners Map¹

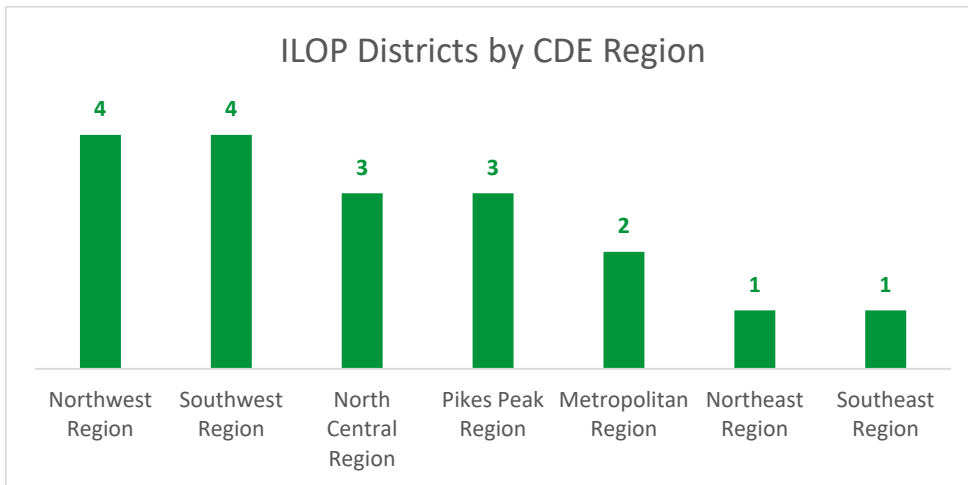


¹ As indicated by the title, this map only represents districts who are participating in ILOP since a regional representation of schools and BOCES would be more difficult, and ultimately less useful.



Introduction

In 2019, [SB19-216](#) created the High School Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program, hereafter known as the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program or ILOP. This program enables participating Local Education Providers (LEPs) to offer their 9th through 12th grade high school students a variety of learning experiences that usually occur outside of the classroom. Per statute, these learning experiences should be designed to enrich students’ education and support them in successfully transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or the workforce.



Innovative learning opportunities may include work-based learning such as apprenticeships or residency programs, enrollment in postsecondary courses taught on college campuses, competency-based learning or capstone projects, and other learning experiences that are designed to help students develop and demonstrate personal, entrepreneurial, civic and

Graph 1.1 ILOP Districts by Region²

interpersonal, and professional skills as described in CDE’s [Essential Skills Required in the Colorado Academic Standards](#).

Participating LEPs are allowed to count their part-time high school students who participate in the LEP’s Innovative Learning Pilot as full-time students regardless of the number of instructional or teacher contact hours each student receives.

Education Partner Participation

Twenty-seven education partners have been accepted into the innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot (ILOP) over the past three years (see figure 1.2 for the full list). Each LEP has developed an innovative learning plan to support their students in accessing career connected learning inside and outside of the school walls.

Partners represent urban, suburban, and rural communities across the state. Fourteen of the ILOP partners districts are rural or small rural settings, three are charter schools, and two of them are online schools. All together ILOP LEPs serve around 200,000 students in the state of Colorado. See Graph 1.1 for a regional distribution of district LEP partners.

Figure 1.2 All LEP Partners

² Note this graph only includes district partners, since districts receive regional designation, whereas BOCES and schools (the other LEPs who participate in ILOP) do not.



DISTRICT PARTNERS: RURAL AND SMALL RURAL

Alamosa Re-11J
Durango 9-R
East Grand 2
Estes Park R-3
Montezuma-Cortez Re-1
Weld County School District Re-3J
Weld Re-8 Schools
Clear Creek Re-1
Hayden Re-1
Holyoke Re-1J
Mountain Valley Re 1
South Routt Re 3
Vilas Re-5
West Grand 1-Jt

DISTRICT PARTNERS: URBAN OR SUBURBAN

Boulder Valley Re 2
Falcon 49
Lewis-Palmer 38
Pueblo County 70

SCHOOL PARTNERS

Power Technical Early College (part of District 49)
Stem School Highlands Ranch (part of Douglas County Re 1)
Yampa Valley High School (part of Steamboat Springs Re-2)

SCHOOL PARTNERS: ONLINE

Spark Online Academy (part of Colorado Springs 11)

SCHOOL PARTNERS: CHARTER

Academy of Charter Schools (part of the Charter School Institute)
Colorado Early Colleges (part of the Charter School Institute)
Jefferson Academy (part of Jefferson County R-1)

BOCES PARTNERS

Colorado River BOCES
Education Reenvisioned BOCES (online)

Highlights from ILOP Implementation

Building Systems withing LEPs

Throughout the first two years of implementation, Innovative Learning Opportunity Pilot partners have focused on building district and school systems, piloting practices for high quality student learning, and implementation of innovative learning opportunities. Each LEP has a unique context that provides novel opportunities and challenges to build and grow these programs.

Best practices for building systems and supports for innovative career-connected learning can be found in the Colorado Work-Based Learning Continuum (Figure 1.3). LEPs in ILOP have been building their systems in the “Learning About Work” and “Learning Through Work” sections of the continuum. As ILOP partners have gained flexibility through ILOP they have uncovered new opportunities and challenges to bringing the continuum to life in their schools and district.

Learning About Work

Cohort one and two partners implemented many different systems to support students to learn about the workforce and what career pathways appeal to them. Partners often refer to this phase of the work as “learning about work”. Typically, partners support students to this end by focusing on exploring student strengths and aptitudes, career interests, and the on-the-ground realities of different jobs and careers. This is an essential step in students’ progression toward identifying relevant and engaging career connected learning pathways associated with ILOP programming. As partner LEPs progress through implementation of their ILOP programming they see the value in “learning about work” programming as an accelerant in student engagement and success. One approach to “learning about work” programming that has been designed and implemented by ILOP partners is exploratory and skill building classes that provide students with foundation work skills.

For example, the Academy Charter School has developed a business and entrepreneurship class that students take over two semesters. This course provides skill-building for students that prepares them for work environments, as well as business and entrepreneurship related content and projects. The course is focused on skill building for entry into work environments including learning about appropriate work attire, time management, and professional communication. This course is completed in a traditional classroom environment but includes

instruction from business owners who work at the school part time. This course has been identified as a strength of the program because it brings authenticity to the learning for students in the course. The skills students learn in this class are later assessed by school staff and employers when students start working outside of the school.

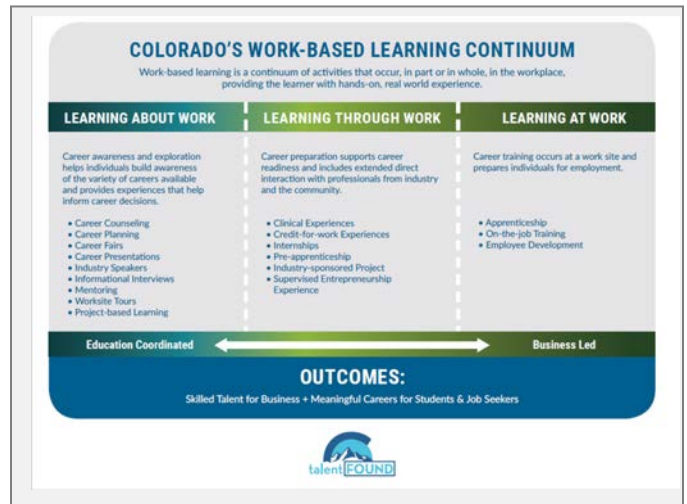


Figure 1.3: Colorado’s Work-Based Learning Continuum

“ I have two children in the program. I do not think either one would be engaged in the educational process if not for this program. It is flexible and meets their needs. They might graduate on time and are both discussing college.”

– Lewis-Palmer Parent



Another noteworthy example of a strong approach taken by an ILOP partner is the Career Start program in Lewis-Palmer School District. After students are identified through criteria designed to target students who are at-risk of dropping out, students engage in a curriculum that supports them to move fluidly through required coursework at their own pace. In addition to this flexible credit acquisition programming, students are supported by social workers to build employability and life skills through a curriculum delivered consistently in a classroom environment. Finally, students complete their individual career and academic plan (ICAP) which includes career exploration, aptitude assessment, and academic planning. This approach has a specific focus on equity as it prioritizes timely and relevant supports for students that are not finding success in traditional learning environments. This approach leverages the ILOP flexibility to engage students based on their specific needs and has found success in reengaging students at risk of dropping out of high school.

Learning Through Work

ILOP partners have developed and launched “Learning Through Work” programming as a primary structure to access “seat time” flexibility through ILOP. “Learning Through Work” is a career-connected experience that provides students the opportunity to apply academic, technical, and essential skills in authentic and relevant environments. Students across ILOP partner organizations have gained access to deeper and more complex “learning through work” programming due to the ability to spend more time outside of school during traditional business hours in a variety of industries and businesses. These programs are primarily focused on creating internship opportunities and work-study initiatives. ILOP partners have developed locally designed opportunities in response to the context of their communities, student needs and interests, and industry demand.

Pueblo 70 School District has a long-standing partnership with Parkview Medical Center in which 33 students intern in the medical field while concurrently completing credential programs through their district’s Career and Technical Education programs. After the district became a part of the initial ILOP cohort, they opened additional opportunities at the hospital for students to intern in areas outside of the medical field. Due to the strong partnership with the hospital, they were able to create opportunities to apply skills in facility maintenance and business administration. Students have also been able to access internships in expanded hours during the day while maintaining full time status at their home schools due to the district’s participation in ILOP. Selected students are taught work-place safety, patient confidentiality, and how to use appropriate interpersonal skills, as part of the required training, upon selection to the program. Students participating in medical internships participated in clinical rotations in which a practicing healthcare professional is the student’s mentor. As a result of their participation in this internship program, 100% of students reported they have a deeper understanding of career paths and what they are interested in pursuing.

Holyoke School District recently changed their graduation requirements to require all seniors in the class of 2025 to complete an internship and capstone prior to graduation. During the 2021-2022 school year, Holyoke School District leveraged ILOP to place students in longer internships during the school day, with students working anywhere from two hours to a half day internship on a regular basis. During the 2021-2022 school year, 18 students participated in internships and 38 students (32% of high school students in the district) participated in combined learning opportunities, where they may have been pursuing an industry certification online and obtaining career exposure. Holyoke prioritized equitable student participation in ILOP, as evidenced in their student participation data which showed strong participation in ILOP programs from low-income students and students of color. One student was able to take a college welding class on-site at Holyoke High School through a partnership with Northeastern Junior College and then work for a local welder half a day as a paid intern. This student is planning on pursuing additional welding training after high school graduation and is looking forward



to the income they can make as a professional welder. Another student, a current senior, was struggling as a junior to know what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. During her internship in 11th grade, she went to several businesses in town and dabbled in different careers. While she enjoyed the experiences, she was not convinced any were her chosen career path. She learned about different certifications in the medical pathway, and, after some research, decided that she wanted to give the Certified Medical Billing and Coding course a try. This senior earned her Certified Medical Billing and Coding certification this past school year, and, due to the flexible scheduling of ILOP, spent the spring semester working in a half day internship at the local hospital in the Billing Department to get more hands-on experience before she pursues more medical training in college. This is just one example of how internships can support both career exploration and preparation for students.

Durango School District created the [Business Education Connection](#) and hired a Work-Based Learning Coordinator to manage employer relationships in the Durango area and support students in accessing internships across Durango High School, Durango Big Picture High School, and Animas High School. With the support of the Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Durango High School launched an internship course in spring 2021 where 17 students were placed in and completed internships. During SY21-22, Durango High School offered two sections of the internship course, so that 25 students were able to participate in internships, including students of color and students with 504 plans (individualized plans to support students with disabilities related to educational needs in the general education classroom). As a part of the internship course, students participated in career exploration activities, professional skills development, informational interviews, and were supported in finding their own internship placement by following a process that simulated the job application process.

Estes Park School District has also created opportunities for students to engage in internships throughout Larimer County in partnership with local businesses and government agencies. In partnership with CareerWise Colorado, Estes Park School District has increased apprenticeship offerings to students as well. Staff at the district worked with students individually to match them with work-based learning experiences that aligned with their interests and aptitudes.

The Academy Charter School has developed a robust individualized internship program that matches students with internships based on their interests and aptitudes. More information with videos and testimonials about this program can be found on [The Academy Work-Based Learning website](#).

Capstones and Credentials

ILOP partners have developed and launched programs that enable students to earn industry credentials through Career Technical Education (CTE) classes, Concurrent Enrollment, and online self-paced curriculum, while also supporting students in developing and presenting [capstones](#) prior to graduation. A capstone project is a multifaceted body of work that is district determined and serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. ILOP partners have developed locally designed opportunities in response to the context of their communities, student needs and interests, and industry demand.

In West and East Grand School Districts, students are not only supported in accessing internships, but are also given the opportunity to earn industry credentials. West Grand and East Grand School District have established a partnership, so that East Grand students can travel to West Grand to complete the required training to earn their Certified Nursing Assistant certification and West Grand students can travel to East Grand to earn their Emergency Medical Technician Certification. One West Grand student shared that she wanted to earn a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification so she could better take care of her mom who has multiple health conditions. This student has used the skills she learned in the CNA class to help both her mom as well as



residents at Cliffview Assisted Living, where she is working.³ The West Grand Class of 2022 was also required to complete capstone projects and presentations for the first time prior to graduating, giving students an opportunity to research a specific passion and present what they learned in their internship or industry credential experience. Finally, when students, such as the student who received their CNA referenced above, could not complete internships in person at Middle Park Health due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Internship Coordinator set up a virtual option for students where they completed a research project and observed surgeries through an online platform.

In Holyoke School District, students are supported in identifying industry credentials that they want to pursue in a self-paced format through online certification platforms, such as those offered through Core Learning Exchange or directly through certification providers, such as the National Healthcare Association. Holyoke leverages ILOP to give students the space and time to pursue these industry credentials aligned to their future career goals. At a site visit in spring 2022, one student shared that they were spending multiple class periods to prepare to earn their Certified Nursing Assistant Certification (CNA), Phlebotomy industry certification, and Certified Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CCMA). This student believed that earning industry certifications in the medical field would empower her to find good paying jobs at healthcare centers across the country and was excited and grateful for how the work-based learning coordinator in Holyoke had supported her in planning for her future.

Lessons Learned from ILOP

As the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot begins its third cohort, LEPs that have been implementing ILOP have uncovered strengths, opportunities, and challenges in bringing their innovative learning plans into implementation. While many of the lessons learned from ILOP implementation are based on local context and constraints, several more universal themes have emerged over the last few years of ILOP implementation. These themes have been tested and distilled through multiple surveys of LEPs, After Action Review conversations conducted with each LEP at the end of each school year, LEP's end of year reports to the Colorado Department of Education and informal feedback gathered in coaching calls and the coordinator network. These themes are helpful in building a deeper understanding of the needs and opportunities created by ILOP flexibility.

Application of ILOP in LEPs

ILOP LEPs have primarily focused on providing seniors that have completed their credit requirements an opportunity to engage in work-based learning experience outside of the school rather than filling their schedule with electives to keep them at full-time status. This application of the ILOP flexibility has been most prominent in ILOP partners as they build the systems to support the development of high-quality strategies for student learning in work-based experiences. This approach also expands learning opportunities for students, while creating the least disruption in traditional high school schedules. As partners have built successful systems for work-based learning they are exploring more innovative scheduling approaches that will open the opportunity to more students in their learning communities.

In addition to scheduling redesign, ILOP LEPs are also exploring ways to leverage their [Graduation Guidelines](#) to create additional flexibility for innovative learning opportunities and innovative assessment of student learning

³ See a video about this student's experience here: https://storyvine-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/package/rendered_video/33663/2022_05_10_e3861f00-1441-4dea-af98-b8bd74f18912.mp4?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAILWAUL4J24VJZWSA&Expires=1967737406&Signature=clCduHAbdW3JLjBPP1oRRiXtC%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22SV-Video-33663-2022_05_10.mp4%22



in work-based learning environments. Colorado Graduation Guidelines are a road map to help students and their families plan for success after high school. In order to graduate from high school, students choose from a Menu of Options - adopted at the local school board level - to demonstrate Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) in Reading, Writing and Communicating, and Mathematics.

Successes

The primary strength that has come out of ILOP is that districts, schools, BOCES, and charter organizations have expanded relevant, authentic, career-connected learning for students across the state. Each partner in ILOP has identified specific opportunities that align with the interests and needs of their students and have developed programming to meet those needs.

In addition to expanded student opportunities, ILOP partners have increased partnerships in their communities and as a result, these partnerships have grown students' professional networks and increased mutual collaboration and support between LEPs and local businesses. While recruiting new and sustained partnerships has been a challenge for LEPs, especially due to the impact of COVID-19, this is a strength that will continue to grow year over year as schools and districts continue to expand their ILOP offerings and career-connected learning pathways. Long term, it is expected that impact on businesses who support ILOP work, and the larger local business community will become more pronounced as students matriculate from high school to local jobs, or to post-secondary education and then local jobs. Impacts of ILOP on local businesses is already evident in Pueblo 70, where a number of students have gained employment at the local hospital following their internship.

A notable trend is that LEPs who have hired a career-connected learning coordinator have seen accelerated success. The role of a coordinator not only provides human capital for the complex work of recruiting and retaining partners, supporting student placement, and conducting high-quality assessments of student learning in work-based learning environments, but it also frequently results in more focused and sustained implementation of this new programming. Highlights of coordinators' work includes strategic planning with a focus on career-connected learning, the development of sustainable career-connected pathways, and communications efforts to inform the community and families about the rich opportunities being offered by the schools.

ILOP partners are developing more rigorous work-based learning opportunities for students and businesses. As a part of ILOP implementation, LEPs are introducing and expanding assessments aligned with work-based learning skills and competencies to ensure that students are not only engaging in internships but are demonstrating skills in the workplace through performance-based assessments, employer feedback, and credential acquisition. The Academy, a Cohort 1 LEP, has developed a robust [internship handbook](#) that outlines expectations and supports for students and businesses participating in their internship program.

Opportunities

During the first few years of ILOP implementation, several opportunities have emerged for LEP leaders to expand, deepen, and improve career-connected learning opportunities through the flexibility ILOP offers.

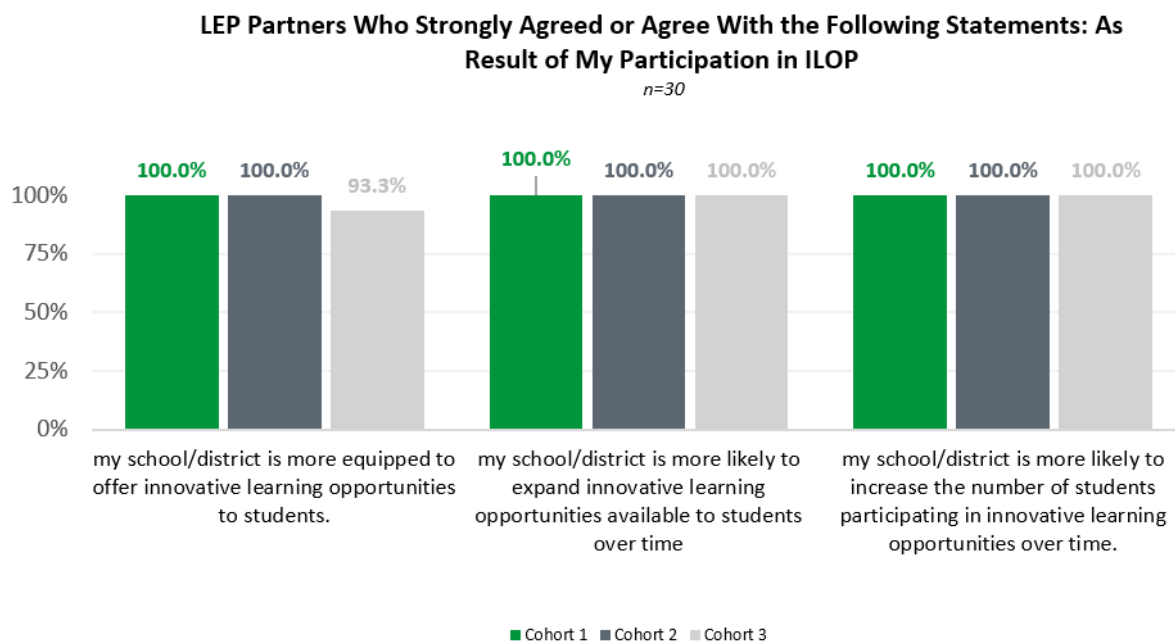
One key opportunity is for leaders to examine student access to their programming, especially how they equitably recruit, support, and credential work-based learning in their context. As systems and structures in ILOP partner organizations become clearer and more concrete, the question is emerging as to whether the students participating in ILOP programming are representative of their larger student population and why the students are selecting the opportunities in which they are participating. This assessment and reflection process is necessary to ensure that the opportunities provide equitable access to rigorous learning for all students in the communities they serve. At this point in ILOP implementation, students of color are being served at a rate that

closely mirrors the population of students in the LEPs and serves a greater percentage of students of color than the general population of students (See [Graph 1.3](#) in the Student Participation section).

Many ILOP partners are working with the community college system to provide students with opportunities to take concurrent enrollment courses as part of their work to earn credentials in alignment with the work-based learning experiences in which they are engaging. This has led several ILOP LEPs to begin developing clearly articulated career pathways. In order for these pathways to support students to leave high school with college credit, a credential, and work experience, an opportunity has emerged for ILOP partners to further align their work with community college partners. The collaboration between local LEPs and community college partners is essential to further develop efficient and coherent student learning experiences that are happening inside and outside of classroom walls.

Introducing “seat time” flexibility has created an opportunity for local schools and districts to engage students in new ways through career-connected learning, but a limited scope of students have been able to take advantage of the opportunity due to two limiting factors- how schools award credit and traditional scheduling. Colorado has flexibility in state graduation requirements, with a focus on competencies over course credits, which provides opportunities for LEPs to define rigorous pathways to graduation at the local level. ILOP LEPs have identified an opportunity to explore how students are demonstrating mastery of academic standards and essential skills through work-based learning experiences. Through performance-based assessment aligned with the Colorado Graduation Guidelines, there may be an opportunity to expand access to work-based learning for more students and specifically students that are traditionally excluded from these experiences. ILOP partners have demonstrated a commitment to expanding these programs and providing more access to students in their communities (Figure 4).

Graph 1.2: Feedback from LEP Partners on the Impact of their Participation in ILOP Overall





Challenges

ILOP LEPs have experienced many successes over the past two years and have also identified challenges in maximizing the ILOP opportunity.

Scheduling and Transportation

One challenge that LEPs have highlighted is organizing their schedules to ensure that students can access high quality work-based learning while ensuring that they are able to access the core courses they need to meet local graduation requirements. This scheduling challenge has limited their ability to expand the opportunity as widely as possible in the first year or two of implementation. LEPs are working on this challenge and are reviewing ways to adjust schedules to expand the opportunity for all student groups. An additional challenge related to student access to innovative learning opportunities, particularly in more rural communities, has been transportation. Some LEPs have explored virtual or remote opportunities for students, but providing access to high quality, in-person work-based learning has been challenged by ensuring students have reliable transportation to experiences outside of the school walls.

COVID-19 Impact

ILOP launched in March of 2020 just as schools and businesses began to reduce or shut down in-person activities. Closures due to COVID-19 had a strong impact on the launch of learning opportunities associated with ILOP. Many programs were forced to scale back or postpone their launch. While this has been a large challenge for ILOP LEPs, they have also found innovative ways to provide alternative opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning experiences. As the limitations caused by COVID-19 subside, CDE expects continued, and perhaps accelerated, growth in ILOP programming.

Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

An essential part of creating high-quality work-based learning experiences is developing and maintaining business partnerships. Many LEPs have been able to develop partnerships, but the process of recruiting partners and maintaining those relationships has required many partners to develop new positions for this role. The development of this role in many LEPs has provided greater success in the recruitment process, but in order to sustain this position, LEPs require sustainable funding sources. Some LEPs may be able to expand the ILOP programming to the point that they can shift full time employees' time from traditional classrooms to ILOP coordination however there have not been examples of this approach in the pilot yet.

Leadership and Staff Turnover

Over the course of the last two years several ILOP partners have experienced turnover at the leadership level or within their staff that are leading the ILOP work. This has disrupted plans for implementation in some LEPs as the leaders holding the vision or the staff holding the logistical understanding of the programs have left the organizations. This challenge along with challenges related to hiring in schools and LEPs has been and will continue to be an obstacle for successful implementation.

Student Participation Data

Because implementation of ILOP is in its early days and thus strong outcome data is not yet available, student participation, especially representative student participation is a key metric used to chart the status of ILOP programs. Since cohort three of ILOP is still in the planning phase of their work, the following section will report on student participation data gathered from cohorts one and two.



Data Approach and Notes for Interpretation

As reported on in previous sections of this report, especially the “Learning About Work” section, ILOP is often the catalyst for LEPs to expand their career-connected learning work to a variety of students through a variety of activities including courses, guest speakers, and other activities designed to support students to explore career options and develop skills that will support them in their career long term. Due to the large scale of these activities, it is difficult to capture true participation in ILOP-related activities or LEP-based initiatives sparked or reinforced by ILOP.

With that in mind the Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness at the Colorado Department of Education, in consultation with Colorado Education Initiative, the technical assistance provider, determined the most accurate and useful measure of student ILOP participation is data gathered in the October count process. In the October count process, LEPs designate students who are participating in an ILOP opportunity by coding them as either a part-time student who is participating in ILOP, or a full-time student who is participating in ILOP. As a result of this data collection process the number of students who participated in ILOP the 2020-2021 school year (representing students just from cohort one) and the 2021-2022 school year (representing students from cohort one and two) were aggregated. Note that data from cohort three, who just began their ILOP work in early 2022 will not be available until spring 2023.

Note that this report examines data aggregated across cohort one (for the 2020-2021 school year) and across cohorts one and two (for the 2021-2022 school year). The data has been aggregated at the cohort level, and not disaggregated at the LEP level, due to concerns related to student privacy. Data are disaggregated by student group where possible given n sizes.

Aggregated Participation Data

In the 2020-2021 school year, LEPs in cohort one had a total of 100 students participating in ILOP. Seventy-three students were only enrolled in their school part-time but were counted as full-time students due to the flexibilities afforded by ILOP. Twenty-seven students would have been full time students regardless of their participation in ILOP-related activities.

In the 2021-2022 school year, LEPs in cohorts one and two had a total of 600 students participating in ILOP. 310 of those students were considered part-time students, and 290 were considered full-time students. The same note flagged above about part-time students applies here as well (LEPs received full time funding for these 310 part-time students).

Based on the data submitted by education partners, more students are accessing the ILOP program in 2021-2022 than in 2020-2021. These data indicate there is momentum and more and more students are expected to continue to access this program over time.

Participation Data Disaggregated by Student Group

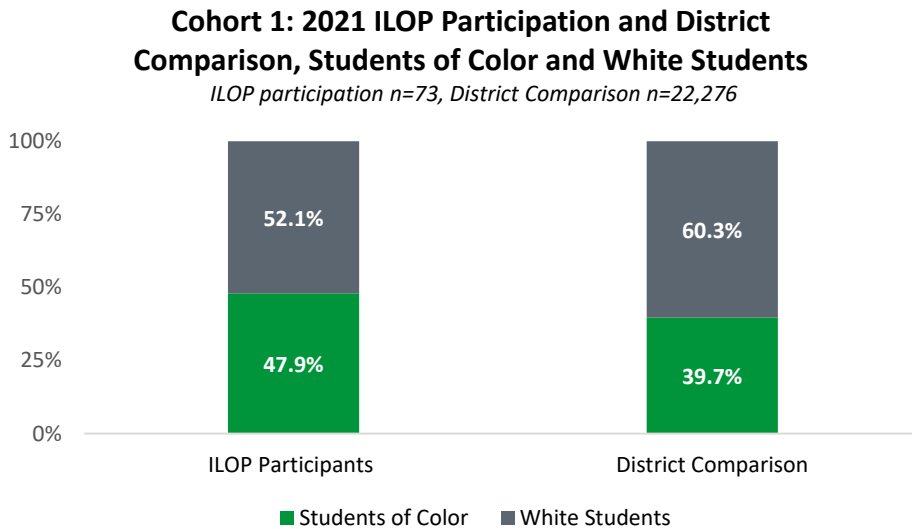
As noted above, disaggregating data by student group is a critical aspect in ensuring equitable access to the ILOP program. Since the target population of the ILOP program is part-time students participating in innovative learning opportunities, the following analysis has been restricted to that group of students. For the 2020-2021 school year that group is comprised of 73 students, and for the 2021-2022 school year, that group is comprised of 310 students.



Data for participation of English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented Students, and Students with Disabilities in ILOP are suppressed due to insufficient data. However, n sizes support the examination of data for the following groups of students: students of color, and students who receive free or reduced-price lunch. Note that free and reduced lunch data collection and reporting was less precise for spring 2021 assessments than historically. These data should be used with caution.

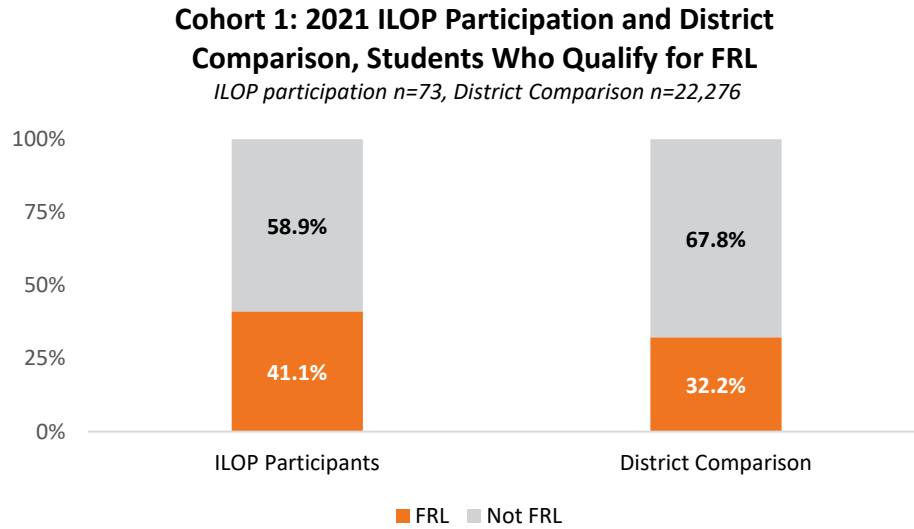
While participation numbers are useful on their own, the context of how they compare to the larger population within each LEP is critical in analyzing these data and understanding opportunities for more representative participation. Graphs 1.3 and 1.4 below compare part-time ILOP participants and the whole population of students in cohort 1’s participating LEPs, and graphs 1.5 and 1.6 compare part-time ILOP participants and the whole population of students in cohort 1 and 2’s participating LEPs.

Graph 1.3: 2021 ILOP Participation Data for Students of Color and White Students

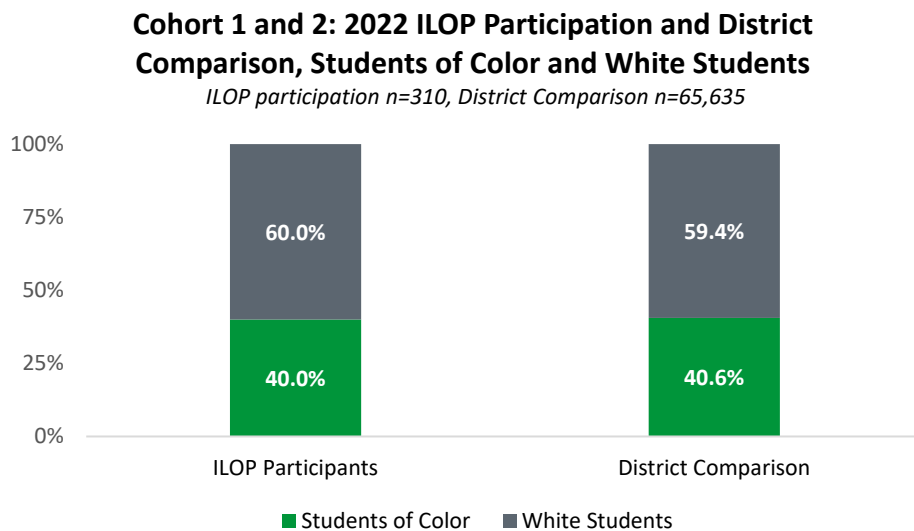




Graph 1.4: 2021 ILOP Participation Data for Students Who Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and All Other Students

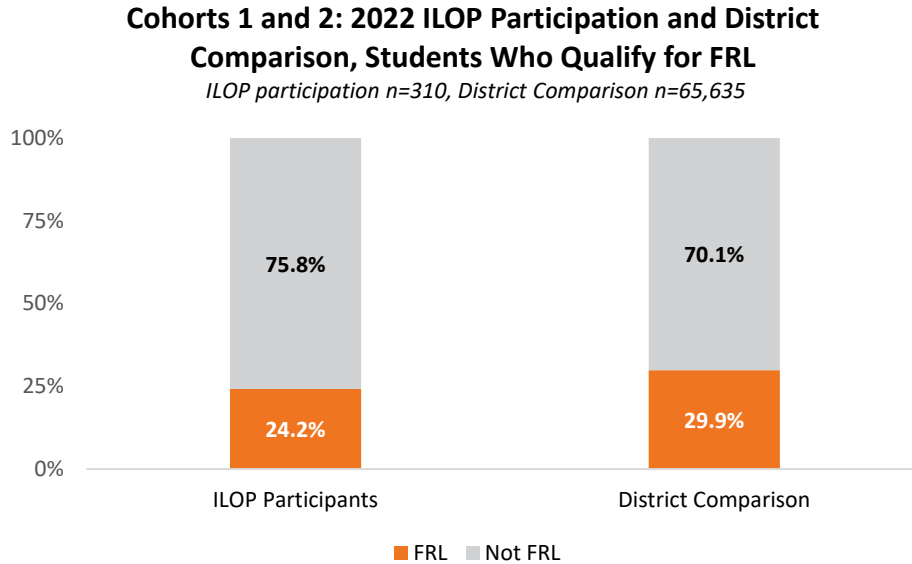


Graph 1.5: 2022 ILOP Participation Data for Students of Color and White Students





Graph 1.6: 2022 ILOP Participation Data for Students Who Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and All Other Students



In general, these graphs demonstrate that overall groups of part-time students participating in ILOP closely mirror LEPs' populations. As noted in the introduction, the count of students represented in the 2022 data tripled compared to the 2021 data. This increase in participation is attributable to cohort two's presence in the 2022 dataset, and the number of students participating in ILOP increasing in Cohort 1. As participation continues to increase, CDE is noting a need for ongoing technical assistance that supports equitable implementation of ILOP among new partners as they begin to implement their programming, and technical assistance that supports districts to reflect on their implementation of ILOP long term to ensure they are continually removing barriers to access and supporting students from diverse backgrounds to reap the benefits of an ILOP experience while ensuring ILOP remains a rigorous academic program that supports students to meaningfully expand their career-connected skillsets.

Technical Assistance Support

The Colorado Education Initiative or CEI

After the Innovative Learning Pilot Program was created in [SB19-216](#), the Colorado Department of Education released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a technical assistance provider for the program. Upon completion of the RFP process, CDE selected the Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) as the provider for the program, based on the strength of their proposed technical assistance programming. The contract with CEI may be renewed for 7 years (through state fiscal year 26) pending satisfactory performance and available appropriations.

For over 14 years, CEI has been at the forefront of improvement, innovation, and change in Colorado's public education system. CEI's mission is to accelerate systems change to ensure that every student in Colorado is prepared and unafraid to

"This last year, we were able to move forward with our continuous improvement strategies despite the pandemic thanks to our collaboration with CEI. We will be implementing innovative practices next fall through redesigning learning in two of our elementaries, our middle school and high school and create school cultures that embrace all our learners!"
- Clear Creek School District

succeed in school, work, and life and ready to take on the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond. CEI has built their reputation on high-quality implementation, thought leadership, and the ability to convene key stakeholders. Over the years, CEI has worked in partnership with educators and community members on the ground in more than 150 urban, suburban, and rural school districts across Colorado. In the 2020-2021 school year, CEI partnered with 61 districts across the state of which 81% serve students of a 50% or greater population of “furthest from opportunity” as defined by minority, FRL, or rural designation, reflecting experience working with diverse districts in various regions of the state.

Figure 1.4: CEI Design Commitments



Through CEI’s work, they have identified there are six fundamental components of all breakthrough systems initiatives. CEI approaches their work with districts through the lens of our six [Design Commitments](#) (Figure 1.4) and draw upon [human-centered design](#) strategies to ensure all work is informed by all key stakeholders.

Technical Assistance Support

CEI’s technical assistance for ILOP focuses on supporting partners to build systems to design, implement, continuously improve, and sustain innovative practices. CEI has led kick-off calls, webinars, tailored coaching, a coordinator network, and networking opportunities across cohorts.

As part of CEI’s own continuous improvement efforts, several surveys have been administered by CEI throughout the last two years of ILOP technical assistance provision. This section highlights data collected in the most recent survey effort, conducted during spring of 2022. This survey was administered to all ILOP partners and includes multiple responses from several LEP partners as LEPs often have teams comprised of many members, each of whom received the survey.

Kick-Off Calls and Current State Analysis

When LEPs are approved to be a part of an ILOP cohort, CEI facilitates a kick-off call with leaders in the LEP along with key staff that will lead the implementation of innovative learning opportunities in their context. Through an interview protocol designed to discern the current state of each LEP including the level of implementation of ILOP programming, the team’s systems for communication, industry partnership, implementation planning and management, student recruitment into ILOP programming, continuous improvement practices, and current measurement practices, CEI develops a tailored coaching plan to support partners. This plan outlines CEI’s support for the planning phase of the ILOP cohort experience.

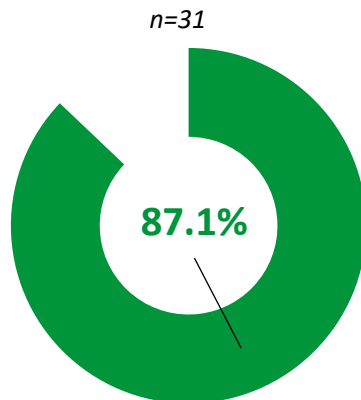


Tailored Coaching

CEI has offered each participating LEP tailored coaching supports. Between the time the LEP is approved as an ILOP participant and the beginning of the following school year, CEI works with each LEP in the cohort to prepare for implementing their innovative learning plan in the next semester. Across the three cohorts this has meant that LEPs have received support in building their ILOP implementation plan, developing internships, recruiting students, communicating with families, and building plans for continuous improvement as they implement innovative strategies in their community. Tailored coaching usually consists of three to six meetings between CEI and the ILOP team in a LEP. This is the most intensive support offered to ILOP partners by CEI.

Graph 1.7: Feedback from LEP Partners on Coaching Supports, Collected Spring 2022

LEP Partners Who Rate Their Coaching Support from CEI as Extremely Valuable or Valuable

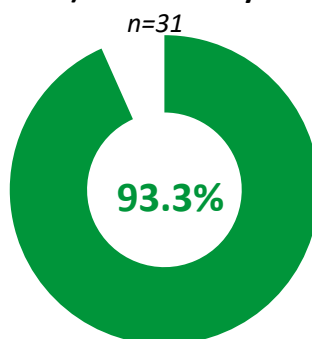


Webinars

CEI offered three to five webinars each year to ILOP partners to support their work aligned to ILOP, especially strengthening and growing that work. Webinars are designed to bring expertise from CEI, state partners, and ILOP cohort members to all ILOP participants. Webinars have supported LEPs to learn about course coding

Graph 1.8: Feedback from LEP Partners on Webinars, Collected Spring 2022

LEP Partners Who Rate The Webinars (e.i., ICAP, internship, and business partnerships webinars) as Extremely Valuable or Valuable





requirements, individual career and academic plans (ICAP), virtual and in-person internship design and implementation, the career connected learning continuum, policy opportunities to enhance ILOP, and lessons learned from the cohorts.

Before- and After-Action Reviews

Before LEPs begin their implementation, CEI facilitates a Before-Action Review. This process is designed to help LEPs to clarify their goals for implementation and identify challenges they foresee in their upcoming implementation work. CEI captures this information to use when revisiting their goals after they have started their implementation work. After three to four months of implementation, CEI facilitates an After-Action Review. This process is used as a continuous improvement approach to help the LEPs to identify “wins” in their implementation, why they were successful, and how they know. LEP teams also discuss what did not go as planned, why, and how they know. The LEP then identifies the practices they will continue, what they will stop doing, and what they will change to improve their outcomes. This is also a process that helps to uncover leading indicators of the impact of their work, including impact on the students they are serving.

Resources

In addition to training and coaching, CEI has developed resources specific to ILOP and career-connected learning that support LEPs to implement and improve their ILOP programming. Career connected learning is a continuum of activities that occur, in part or in whole, in the workplace, providing the learner with hands-on, real-world experience. It combines skill development with training opportunities and is a key strategy in Colorado for developing talent and preparing Coloradans for the workforce and evolving labor market. These include a [course coding frequently asked questions document](#) and a [CEI Career-Connected Learning Toolkit](#) with resources from partners around the state and country along with tools for self-assessment, measurement, and developing a career-connected learning program. Each of these resources are continually updated to reflect new information uncovered by ILOP partners and new tools needed by cohort partners. These resources include tools developed by the cohort members and exemplars from around the state and country.

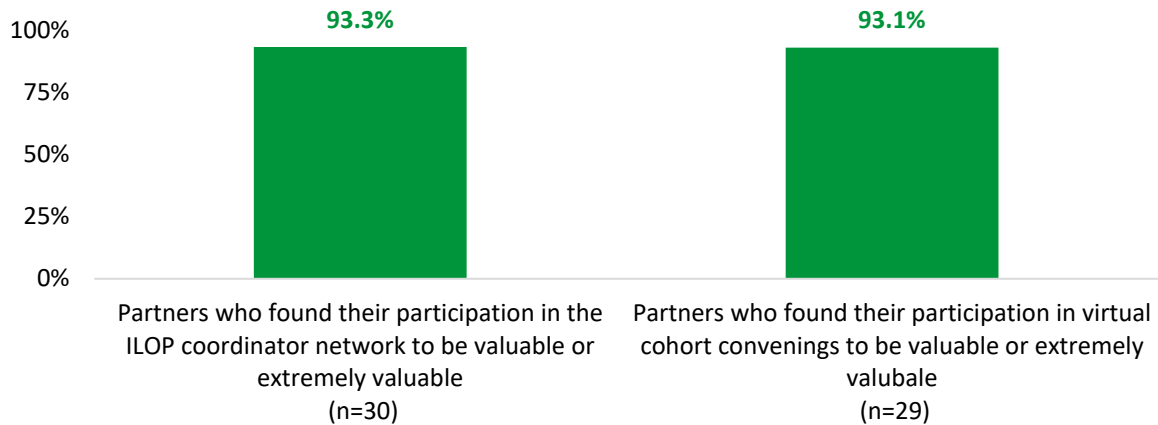
Coordinator Network and Cross-Cohort Convenings

In the first two years of technical assistance for ILOP partners, CEI brought all ILOP partners together in a cross-cohort convening where they learned about each other’s work and shared resources and best practices. This networking opportunity proved to be a valuable experience for the members of ILOP. In order to expand this opportunity to provide valuable networking and shared learning, CEI launched an ILOP coordinator network in fall of 2021. The network meets monthly to provide valuable content about policy opportunities, career connected learning, and ILOP reporting requirements. The network also provides a space for ILOP partners to share best practices, highlight innovative practices, and share problems of practice. This year the coordinator network has covered course coding, equity audit tools and processes, measuring impact, and internship development and implementation.



Graph 1.9: Feedback from LEP Partners the Coordinator Network, Collected Spring 2022

LEP Partner Feedback on Supports Provided by CEI



Conclusion

In Colorado, the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot has provided unique flexibility for LEPs to explore new models for providing career-connected learning to students in their communities. LEPs are still working to take full advantage of the opportunity by developing schedules to accommodate work-based learning, exploring innovative approaches to assessing and crediting students for their work-based learning experiences, and building partnerships with community organizations and industry partners.

- **Shared Learning and Growth:** After two years, LEPs are collaborating to identify systems and structures that will enable greater access to quality learning experiences through ILOP. Each LEP is continuously reflecting on successes and challenges in their ILOP implementation and sharing their learning across and within their systems.
- **Systems Building:** The ILOP opportunity has prompted LEPs to review their current systems and begin to build new systems that accommodate innovative approaches to student learning. Many LEPs are seeking partnerships and funding sources to expand their programming and solidify systems that support innovative career-connected learning that engages and inspires students in their learning journey.
- **Expanded Access to ILOP Programming:** LEPs in ILOP are expanding access to students in ways that increase access to students that are traditionally excluded from innovative learning opportunities. All LEPs in ILOP have the intention to continue to grow and expand their ILOP offerings as they develop more sustainable structures to support students in career-connected learning.