

2020 HB 15-1170 PWR COORDINATOR UPDATE

This report provides a status update on the progress made by the PWR Coordinator, a staff person established under [HB 15-1170](#) and shared between the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). For implementation purposes, the PWR coordinator is referred to as the Education Consultant throughout this document.

In order to support schools to improve postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) outcomes for students, the PWR Coordinator has been focusing on increasing understanding by K-12 systems of industry and community demand. These efforts include strengthening education and business partnerships and alignment and increasing flexibility in K-12 systems. In increasing flexibility in curriculum and experience delivery methods, schools are responsive to industry need and demand therefore supporting skill development of the talent pipeline. By aligning programs and pathways to industry demand, schools ensure students are able to access meaningful career opportunities and businesses have access to a skilled workforce strengthening community economies and talent pipelines.

Increasing flexibility in Education Systems to strengthen PWR programs

COVID-19 accelerated transformation and innovation of schools and businesses in their work-based learning experiences including internships, apprenticeships, industry sponsored projects, etc. In many cases it has expanded [learning about work opportunities](#) where virtual convenience is supporting participation and has removed location, transportation and scheduling barriers.

The Education Consultant has completed the following activities to support school districts as they transition their work-based learning experiences.:

- Hosted “Work-based Learning during COVID-19 Town Hall” in June spotlighting promising practices, including Westminster High School’s virtual job fair, as well as discussed current industry trends and data as districts worked to navigate the business landscape.
- Kicked off the [Work-based Learning Incubator](#) in September 2020. The Incubator is made up of two strands: a monthly webinar series and a community of practice technical assistance module. The goal of the [webinar series](#) is to discuss topics of interest (equity in programs, engaging with businesses, increasing access for students with disabilities, and others) in the work-based learning space as well as provide resources and best practices.

The webinar series began with a presentation from the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium around workforce center capabilities and the keys to a successful partnership. The second webinar focused on business engagement and featured

presentations around labor market information, national shifts in work based learning and identifying and supporting business need.

Feedback results from the WBL webinar series:

- 98.5% of survey respondents reported being able to utilize information from these sessions in their work.
- 88% of respondents stated that the webinars were effective, with 12% neutral responses. No respondents felt that the presentations were ineffective.
- Common responses for most useful information included:
 - How educators may partner more effectively with workforce centers,
 - How to include a larger variety of partners in work-based learning planning and opportunities,
 - How to utilize the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report to plan in demand career pathways,
 - How to research business and industry trends,
 - How to expand internships to apprenticeships,
 - How to frame conversations around business needs.

The Community of Practice will begin in January with 5-8 schools and/or districts around the state. The goal of the community of practice is to use a design thinking process to build sustainable, demand driven, equitable work based learning programs to launch in the fall of 2021.

- COVID-19 left the high school graduating class of 2020 with many questions around their next steps. As they finished their last three months of their K-12 experience remotely many of them were unsure as to what the fall would hold. In partnership with CDE, the 2020 Graduating Class Transition resource was created which highlighted opportunities and considerations for students transitioning to work and students transitioning to postsecondary education opportunities.
- As schools work to implement the [graduation guidelines policy](#) and continue to develop their [Individual Career and Academic Planning](#) process (ICAP), the Education Consultant provided regular consultation through 10+ convenings and trainings around how career pathway development and work-based learning can support improved PWR outcomes and align to graduation requirements, demonstrations of learning, and the ICAP process.
- The Education Consultant supported the development of the [Talent Equity Agenda](#) which outlines shared strategies, resources, and metrics to accelerate the closure of the racial equity gaps that exist in Colorado. As the Talent Equity Agenda is operationalized over the next year many of the strategies and target areas have direct connections to career connected learning and programming in K-12 schools. Talent Equity Agenda

actions that impact K-12 include efforts to support career navigation into high demand fields as well as the acquisition of postsecondary credentials while increasing exposure to work-based learning programs such as apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships. The Education Consultant will work with state agencies and school districts over the next year to support closing these racial equity gaps and measure outcomes.

Strengthening business & education partnerships and alignment

[The Career Development Success Program](#) (HB16-1289/HB18-1266) also known as the Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) provides financial incentives to school districts for students who complete approved industry aligned and in demand programs. This year CDIP underwent major revisions to support increased school district adoption of the program and process improvement on the yearly revision of the approved programs list to better support continued industry alignment and relevance. During this revision a new process was outlined for the annual list review, the list was converted to a searchable and more user-friendly format, and additional resources were developed and posted to the [CDIP website](#). As part of the process revision, the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium was added as a review partner to ensure rural area industry credential needs are represented on the approved programs list.

To support increased adoption by districts, the Education Consultant engaged stakeholders at many 20+ convenings, virtual events, and 1 on 1 consultation meetings to increase awareness of and participation in CDIP. The result is for the 2019-2020 school year 53 school districts participated with 18 new school districts, and over 8,500 credentials awarded which is a 26 % increase from the previous year. Additional schools were planning on participating but with COVID-19 many schools were not able to participate due to not being able to take certification exams in person. The CDIP list was updated to include designations on the programs that included opportunities that could be completed virtually. This helped districts offer exams remotely to students who had already gained the skills.

In October of 2020, the Education Consultant supported the planning and facilitation of the TalentFound conversation that brought together the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium and rural K-12 educators to support partnership development. In this meeting with 90 attendees, participants heard panels on promising partnerships, students who had benefited from the partnership of their school and workforce center, and engaged in local area breakout time to increase connections across schools and workforce. Local areas reported next steps as continuing the partnership and developing systems to work together to benefit their communities moving forward. The Education Consultant will provide ongoing technical assistance to these partnerships.

Feedback Results from the TalentFound conversation:

- 97% of respondents found the event valuable
- 91% of respondents plan to continue the conversation with their local areas

- Common responses for the most useful part of the conversation included gathering resources and information from other areas and the time and space to be able to make local area connections and next step planning
- 67% of respondents reported this being their first TalentFOUND conversation

Additionally, in order to support businesses in strengthening their connections with education, the Education Consultant contributed content for the October release of [Talent Development Playbook](#) that spotlighted key information for businesses interested in strengthening their partnerships with K-12.

In an effort to expand business opportunities for work-based learning, the Education Consultant convened partners across labor and education to facilitate the development of a Colorado-specific framework for Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs. The [IRAP framework](#) will help better engage businesses in a variety of industries in the development of apprenticeships while ensuring students and job seekers benefit from the same quality standards upheld in Registered Apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities in Colorado. .

The Education Consultant has also worked with the program manager for the [P-TECH](#) (Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools) and [ILOP](#) (Innovative Learning Pilot Program) programs to provide support in understanding the business perspective for this programming. The P-TECH and ILOP programs support direct connections to industry with partners who provide mentors, apprenticeships, internships and curriculum advising. In P-TECH programs students leave high school with in-demand certifications and an associates degree. Moving forward, we will focus on opportunities to help expand the scope and reach of these programs through more direct work with P-TECH schools and ILOP participants.

Goals for Next Year

- Expand career pathways programming, integrating CDIP as stackable credentials
 - The demand for trained behavioral health professionals is high and increasing while the interest of secondary schools and students for programming is also increasing. Utilizing the career pathway development from this year and information in [MyColorado Journey](#) around behavioral health, a resource will be developed for secondary schools around a high school to postsecondary behavioral health pathway in order to develop programming that aligns to industry demand. This resource will provide examples of work-based learning experiences, concurrent enrollment and certifications along with CTE (Career and Technical Education) courses.
- Increase equity in career pathway programs
 - Utilizing Talent Equity Agenda resources and equity professional development opportunities, the Education Consultant will help districts analyze data and develop plans to support increased access for underrepresented and

underserved populations through 1 on 1 consultations and WBL Incubator sessions.

- Additional goals will be developed in response to the changing economy and recovery from COVID-19. One such resource will be released that discusses how sustainable work-based learning programs can be developed and implemented in a changing economy for both industry and education partners to utilize.