

2023 Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Coordinator Update, HB15-1770

This report provides a status update on the progress made by the PWR Coordinator, a position authorized under HB15-1170 and shared between the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Colorado Department of Education’s (CDE) Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). For implementation purposes, the PWR Coordinator is referred to as the Education Consultant throughout this document.

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Update on Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Statewide

In order to support schools to improve postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) outcomes for students, the Education Consultant focuses on increasing both K-12 and industry collaboration to develop new programming across the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Continuum. In addition to work-based programming, the Education Consultant works to improve awareness, value, access, and pathways to demand-driven postsecondary and workforce readiness opportunities for students and families in ways that help strengthen employers' talent pipelines in quality jobs.

Education Consultant Activities 2022-2023

The Education Consultant supports the Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) list of industry-recognized credentials and supports schools in their implementation. The consultant also supports initiatives increasing opportunities for work-based learning, workforce readiness, and career preparation.

Increasing Attainment of Industry Credentials through the Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP)

The Career Development Incentive Program saw significant participation in 2022-2023 with 84 participating school districts throughout the state. Jefferson county reported the most programs eligible for CDIP. Through CDIP, 10,437 industry-recognized certifications were attained by students. Top 10 certifications attained:

- HOME BUILDERS INSTITUTE (HBI): PACT CORE/OSHA 10
- Solidworks
- MOS: Microsoft Office Specialist - Associate

- Adobe Photoshop
- S/P2 Automotive Service
- Social Media Certification
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certification
- CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant)
- Certified Welder
- ServSafe Manager Certification

361 students were reported to have participated in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship activities for CDIP. Nearly one-third of students participating in CDIP qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The Education Consultant took the following steps to support the implementation of CDIP:

- Advised on the creation of the [Quality and In-demand Non-degree Credential Framework](#) to set standards for non-degree credentials across publicly supported credentialing programs in the state. The framework was published on September 29, 2023.
- Increased Workforce Board engagement with the CDIP industry-recognized credential review process by implementing a new letter template for the Boards as part of a secondary school's request for new credentials on the list. This new resource and its future impact on CDIP will be presented at a future Workforce Directors meeting.
- Implemented changes to CDIP strategy. The CDIP list review will now implement a "sunsetting" strategy where certifications will "sunset" for one year before being pulled from the list, allowing schools more time to transition to a more relevant certification.

- Presented CDIP updates in General Session at the CACTA conference.

CDIP Equity Pilot Project

Since 2016, CDIP has equipped over 44,000 Colorado high school students with an industry credential and career preparation experience that supports them to make well-informed decisions about life after graduation, including the possibility of getting a good job right after high school. While the increase in career awareness is promising, there is a persistent gap in CDIP participation among female students and students of color.

In spring of 2023 the Education Consultant convened seven schools and districts who implement CDIP industry-recognized credentials at the highest amount. The participants reviewed their CDIP data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity and participated in facilitated discussions utilizing the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) questions as a guide.

Participation in the pilot prompted participating schools and districts to implement the following actions to encourage more inclusive participation:

- Expand marketing
 - Highlighting “non-traditional” gendered careers in outreach strategies
 - Offer “paperwork” completion events to support students from lower socioeconomic households to participate in opportunities
 - Develop CTE/CDIP media and press releases in order to expand awareness
 - Translate CTE and CDIP marketing materials into Spanish
 - Implement district-wide marketing and recruiting for opportunities
 - Host CTE celebration nights
 - Outreach to younger students to help them know that those careers are an option for them as they move up to high school
- Focus on diverse representation
 - Focus on more diverse industry representation in front of students

- Work with the city and chamber to bring in a series of speakers and mentors that mirror the student body, with a focus on women or female-identifying individuals in STEM
- Conduct intentional parent and teacher training
 - Train teachers and parents about the impact of industry certifications
 - Improve parent outreach around career strategies including pathways, industry certifications, and graduation requirements
- Improve systems
 - Adding additional paraprofessional support to CTE/CDIP courses to support IEP students
 - Plan internal conversations about improving data strategies

The Pilot Project was an initial starting point, yet it comes as no surprise that schools have additional challenges that impact the equity of CDIP opportunities for students. Some of the concerns include:

- Staff and resource shortages
- Student buy-in and commitment to studying for tests
- Inaccurate data and reporting systems at schools
- Lag in data reporting
- Lack of consistency across districts
- Potential for moving too quickly leading to the potential for oversight of important details

Increasing Development and Completion of Work-based Learning

Work-based learning strategies include much more than is often realized. Both schools and businesses can benefit by understanding the full WBL Continuum including strategies for Learning ABOUT Work, Learning THROUGH Work, and Learning AT Work as well as the WBL quality standards and return-on-investment for both employers and learners in each of

these three areas. The Education Consultant completed the following activities to support schools to build and expand their WBL offerings and align them to industry demand:

- Facilitated a Work-Based Learning Community of Practice which engaged 100 attendees in April
- Presented WBL best practices with audiences at both the Colorado Association for Career and Technical Administrators (CACTA) and Colorado Association for Career and Technical Educators (CACTE) conferences promoting the use of the [Work-based Learning Quality Expectations](#) authorized under SB22-140.
- Presented WBL strategies to Harrison D-2 school district staff as part of their professional development day
- Presented WBL Industry Bootcamp concept at Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program (ILOP) Coordinator meeting
- Presented WBL strategies to statewide Apprenticeship Navigator office in order to align office messages and strategy
- Presented WBL strategy to Northeast Principals Meeting
- Presented WBL Bootcamp strategy to Morgan County School District
- Presented WBL to School Counselor Corp Grant participant February meeting
- Presented WBL strategy at CTE training event

Preparing Learners for Careers in Agriculture Guide

Using career pathway development information in My Colorado Journey regarding the Agriculture industry, the Education Consultant has drafted the “Preparing Learners for Careers in Agriculture Guide.” Next, the guide will be supplemented with recent labor market information and relevant resources to extend guidance to educators, counselors, and district staff. The Education Consultant will publish the guide and work on implementation with school districts through the Colorado Department of Education’s Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness team.

HB22-1215 Taskforce

The Education Consultant participated in the 1215 Taskforce and recommendations from the group helped to inform ongoing focus areas for the role.

[House Bill 22-1215](#) established the [Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-based Learning Integration Task Force](#) to develop and recommend policies, laws, and rules to support the equitable and sustainable expansion and alignment of postsecondary and workforce readiness programs in every region of the state. The state currently has nine different programs where learners can earn college credits and quality credentials in high school.

The 25 task force members began meeting in July 2022, and continued to meet through November 2023, spending their time together examining existing programs, including their funding and outcomes, and identified a number of challenges in the current system. When reviewing and considering changes to the system, the task force emphasized the need for a learner-centered approach. Because the current system grew out of multiple programs developed over a number of years, it was not necessarily designed with learner needs at the center. As such, simply tinkering around the edges of what is in place in the current system is not likely to achieve the goals and outcomes desired. The interim report was released December 2022, and the final report of legislative recommendations was released December 2023. The recommendations are organized around the following policy levers: 1) Access, Awareness and Value; 2) Program Modernization; 3) Partnerships; 4) Sustainable Funding.

The Education Consultant is participating in the 2023-24 Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) regional tour to gather feedback from rural areas around the state to increase knowledge and participation in postsecondary and workforce readiness programs. Educators, district staff, and community members will be in attendance in five separate sessions. The areas of Colorado include the San Luis Valley, Western Slope, Northeast Colorado, Southeast Colorado, and the Denver

Metro area. The Education Consultant will be participating in the tours and using feedback to inform strategy, systems alignment, and resource/ technical assistance for school districts.

LAUNCH Equitable and Accelerated Pathways for All

The Education Consultant participated on the Colorado Impact team for the national LAUNCH: Equitable & Accelerated Pathways for All, a national college and career pathways initiative that strives for every learner to have access to and succeed in high-quality and equitable pathways. The Colorado team leveraged this opportunity to refine strategies to implement the 1215 Taskforce report requirements. In the fall 2023 LAUNCH convening, the Colorado Impact team's problem of practice focus was on the Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP). The Education Consultant will continue supporting ICAP work through the CDE PWR team to provide resources and technical assistance to school districts with tools and a network of statewide support.

The New Skills Ready Network

In 2020, JPMorgan Chase & Co announced a major investment in six U.S. cities as part of its \$75 million commitment to better prepare young people for the future of work. Together, the six cities—Boston, Columbus, Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, and Nashville—form the New Skills Ready Network, a five-year endeavor to develop equitable, demand-driven career pathways and related policy solutions that give underserved students access to higher education and real-world work experiences that lead to high-wage, in-demand jobs.

ESG serves as a lead partner in coordinating and supporting the work of the New Skills Ready Network. Collaborating with Advance CTE, ESG is coordinating the collective work of the network as well as providing coaching and technical assistance to the six sites for scaling career pathways and work-based learning and building seamless transitions into postsecondary and the workforce.

This year, the Education Consultant has joined the Denver team to support the local work around this initiative. The Education Consultant attended the 2023 Spring and Fall

convening for NSRI with the Colorado team to support the collaboration between Denver Public Schools and state agencies. Participation in this work helps to inform the resources and technical assistance provided by the Education Consultant to school districts through the PWR office. The NSRI team is in the fourth of the five year project facilitated by The Attainment Network.