1215 Task Force

Community Feedback Report

2023

COLORADO Department of Education

COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

EDNIUM THE ALUMNI COLLECTIVE

THE Attainment Network

EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE SUCCESS FOR ALL

Introduction

The Attainment Network, alongside the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Community College System, led an effort to design, collect, and report on community input to inform the HB22-1215 Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-Based Learning Integration Task Force (Study of Expanding High School Programs).

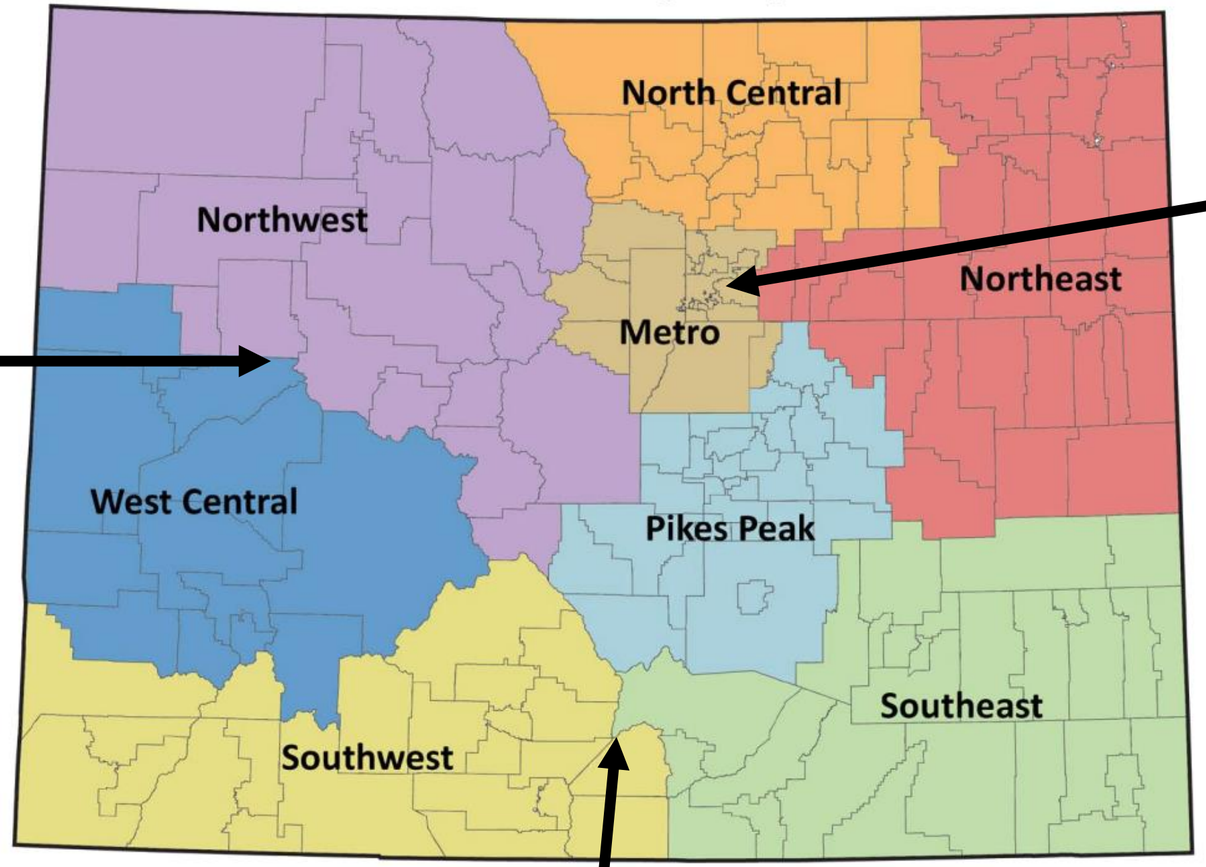
Recommendations delivered to the Task Force focus on the equitable access to and successful expansion of high school programs across all regions of Colorado with a focus on traditionally underserved populations and those who have not accessed relevant programming in their educational experience.

The discovery process of community feedback collection leveraged community organizations, educational organizations, and local partnerships.

Report Outline

1. Project Partners
2. Participant Demographics
3. Data Collection – Population & Methods Details
4. Overview of Reporting Questions
5. Common Themes Heard Across Regions
6. Appendix

Project Partners



Northwest & West Central Regions
Colorado Mountain College
https://coloradomtn.edu/

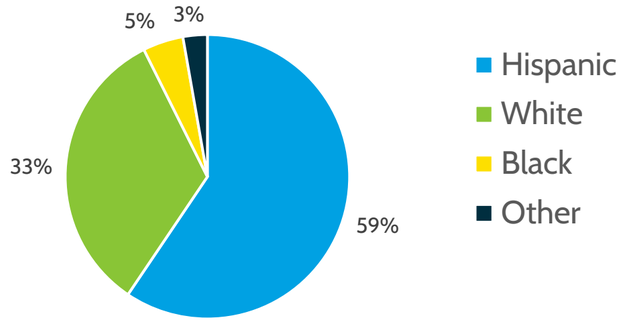
Metro Region
Ednium
The Alumni Collective
https://www.ednium.org/

Southwest & Southeast Regions
Boys & Girls Clubs of the
San Luis Valley
https://www.bgcslv.org/

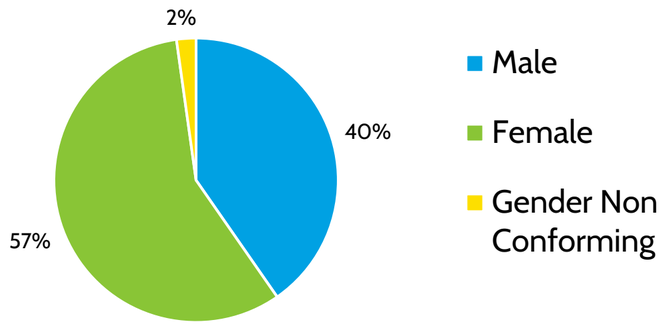
Data Collection – Populations & Methods

Total Participant Count = 217

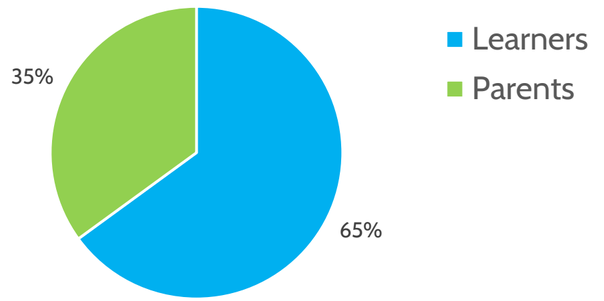
Race/Ethnicity



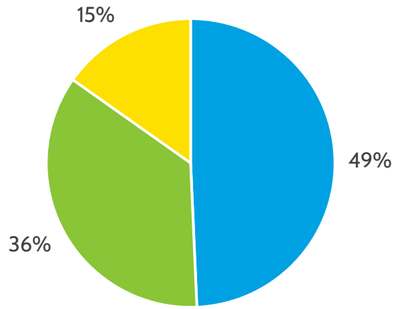
Gender



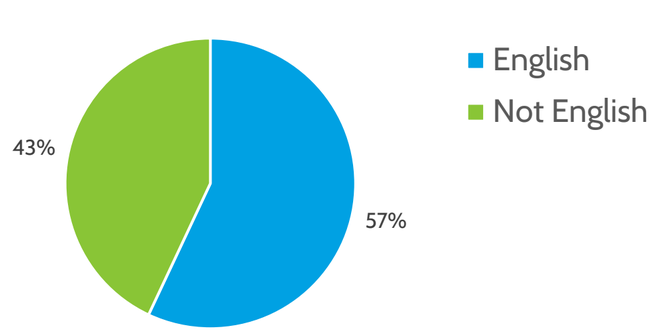
Learner or Parent



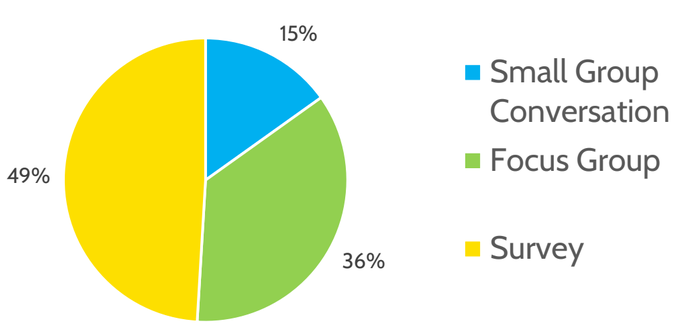
Region



Home Language



Collection Method



Note: Participant demographic data captured varied slightly across sites, so graphs only shown for available cross-site data

Overview of Reporting Questions

1. Overall, what did you hear? What **key takeaways** should be elevated to the Task Force? If possible or necessary, please differentiate your learnings by participant location/background.
2. Were your learners able to **access** relevant programming? If not, what were the key **barriers**? If so, what were the key contributing factors? If possible or necessary, please differentiate your learnings by participant location/background.
3. What **key changes** need to be made to programs that would drive **successful access and completion for your population?** If possible or necessary, please differentiate your learnings by participant location/background.
4. Is there **anything else you else you would like to share** about what you heard, the process, etc?

Link to Facilitator Guide

Common Themes Heard Across Regions



Access

Programmatic options need to be communicated to and accessible by *all* learners, not just those thriving in traditional ways

> There's so many people that aren't good students or struggling academically but would benefit from those types of programs and handle hands-on learning. It's just the standard for them to get in is too high. It should be available to everybody.

> Yeah, I'm not sure there's other programs... for students with disabilities to explore work based learning. There are partners that they work with other students, and they have their internship programs, but I feel like when people first hear you're going to work with students with disabilities, they automatically assume that there's going to be less of a workload or that they're gonna have to modify things because the kid can't handle it. And that's not the case. So it's getting the right business partner to open their minds up to working with somebody with disabilities, so that they could see what customizable employment looks like.

> Don't cater to the A+ students as much, these programs don't mean a thing if you aren't actively encouraging all students to do it.



Communication

Programmatic communications must have a focus on cultural competence and trusted people/sources

> I wish students had more mentors from their own community.

> It would be really helpful if programs were able to directly encourage students of color to participate in their programs and if they were to reassure them that they are capable of doing so. Perhaps bringing in speakers of color with similar experiences could be helpful as it could allow students to feel more connected and confident in themselves. The people that work for the program should be knowledgeable about the issues that students of color face, such as maybe not having the full support of their family, not having abundant financial resources, being undocumented or having undocumented family members, living a racialized experience.

> Have people that work in the specific fields come in, someone who has vast knowledge of the industry or field they work in can be super helpful in generating interest and answering questions.



Differentiation & Connection

Quality options need differentiation for learners, while WBL needs to be connected to classroom and postsecondary credit needs to be connected to the campus

> The (classroom) knowledge is still important to understand... science and physics and stuff that goes into like being automotive tech... okay, yeah, I learned how to take a car completely apart, but I can tell you why the engine fires? I think it's important to blend that together.

> I think it's doing a disservice to people to lump so many things together versus trying to make it differentiated to serve people that have different needs. If it doesn't fit my individualized track, then it just sounds like you're just adding a bunch of things together but it's like, no, how is that helping the individual on their individualized track with something that's unique to their experience?

> I don't view like AP or even concurrent enrollment in the same vein as I do the term work-based learning. I think that they could be complementary, though, school-based learning to work based learning.



Barriers

Transportation, internet, scheduling conflicts, and work attire are very real barriers to address

> I know some of my friends go talk on campus and then they have to like walk back over here or find transportation over here. So they don't provide transportation, and then you're late or you miss your other classes here.

> The most concerning barriers included transportation, money/funding, language, access to work attire, scheduling, racism from teachers and coaches toward Hispanic students, and access to high speed internet.

> Offering incentives, childcare, food, and translation services played a huge part in getting families to show up. It was evident that the ability to offer this support was a major contributor to the success of the sessions.

Durable Skills

Emphasis on durable skills earned (particularly in WBL), including confidence, financial literacy, time management, communication, and self expression

> Parents want their children to have the best opportunities, regardless of ethnicity. They want their children to grow up happy, healthy, and financially stable, to be able to follow their dreams of succeeding in a career of their choice and not be restricted to low paying laborious jobs because of lack of opportunity.

> We don't just naturally send emails, dress up to go to things, and build a resume. You still have to learn about customer service and being able to put on a facade to be able to support people. This is kind of how our world operates and sometimes when you're young you don't think that way. It's great to be authentic, but how can you bring that authenticity to this level of professionalism so that you can maneuver more spaces strategically?

> One of the major outcomes parents hope for is to see their child gain confidence, and employers prioritized that over and over. This shows the work we are doing is not just workforce readiness, it is life readiness, and it works. Self efficacy is a key indicator for a student's success in life and in a career.



Funding & Finances

Additional funding for opportunities is needed for programs to succeed, and learners need to be compensated for WBL opportunities

> I think not being paid for your work leads into why our people, like people of color, aren't getting paid the way they should later on in life - they can't negotiate their way out of situations just because we're used to putting in hours for no money.

> My biggest concern when thinking about the prospect of continuing education after high school is the money involved, what I have to pay for each class and materials. I'm also concerned about the time I will be spending because I want to make it worth it.

> I got my CNA license so I was able to have a steady job once I did, you know, get out of high school and be able to support myself. I feel like they should integrate that in more high school because, you know, college is not always an option for everybody.



Support

Need for wraparound supports for learners, particularly around exploration and transitions

> I would urge the people in charge of these programs to think more critically about what populations they are reaching and which populations are truly the ones that need the most help and support.

> Public education completely overlooks students who don’t fit within a mold. I am a high functioning autistic person who’s repeatedly been denied essential accommodations, simply because “that’s not how the world works”. If that’s the case, then students like myself may as well just give up. I tried so hard for so long to change myself for the benefit of education, but I realize it should have been the other way around... I hope whoever is reading this can make an effort to change that. Don’t leave kids like me behind. We’re here, and we’re here to stay.

> I think there's a lack of support a lot of times from the school, that maybe they just don't connect with the students as much because they have such a large caseload. Sometimes it feels like it's a dead end and they're not giving students options and opportunities.

Timeliness & Exploration

Offering opportunities early in High School encourages retention, exploration, and allows learners to fail

> Our students are dropping out like no other and I think opening up options for freshmen and sophomores, even if it's like one day a week... I think that would really open the doors for some people who don't see themselves being in school long term, at least like they have like a job while they're in school and they're learning and they can take that to the workforce if they do decide to drop out or that can also just be another incentive to stay in.

> Whenever you're a senior you have no time to do anything. I feel like if there was more space throughout all the years, like it would be way easier.

> Some kids aren't ready for this step in high school and may fail. That's ok, it's how they learn and they will be ready for it later.

Summary of Common Themes Across Regions



Access

Program options need to be accessible for *all* learners



Communication

Focus on cultural competence and trusted people/sources



Differentiation & Connection

Quality options need differentiation for learners, while WBL needs to be connected to classroom and postsecondary credit needs to be connected to the campus



Barriers

Transportation, internet, scheduling conflicts, and work attire are very real barriers to address



Durable Skills

Emphasis on durable skills earned (particularly in WBL) – confidence, financial literacy, time management, communication, and self expression



Funding & Finances

Additional funding for opportunities, with a need to compensate WBL opportunities



Support

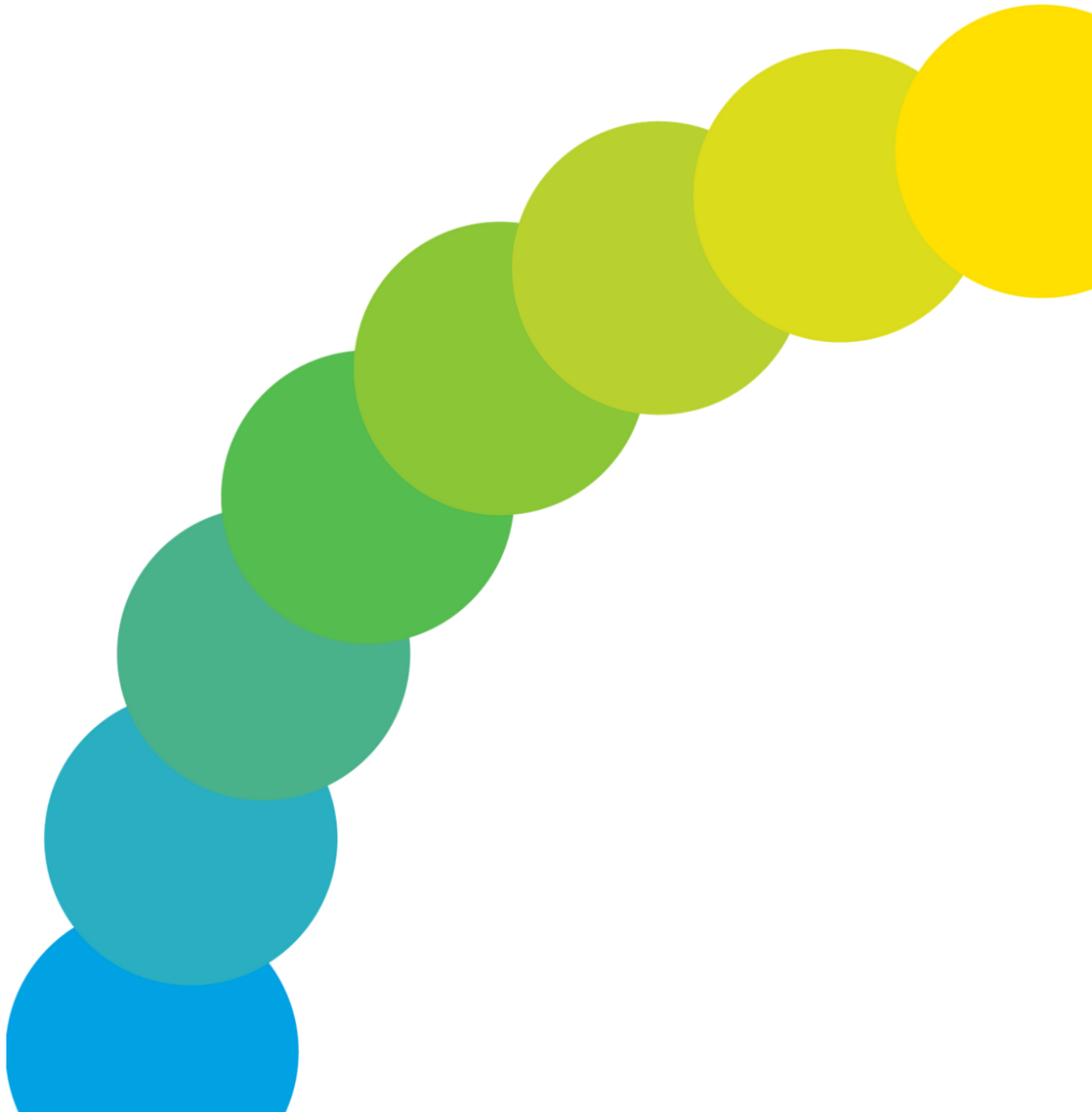
Need for wraparound supports for learners, particularly around exploration and transitions

Timeliness & Exploration

Offering opportunities early in High School encourages retention, exploration, and allows learners to fail



Questions and Conversation



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Thank you to...

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley

Olivia Martinez, Joy Mejia, Matias Francisco, Aaron Miltenberger

Colorado Mountain College

Yesenia Silva Estrada, Jessica Hedden, Zachary Haberler

Ednium

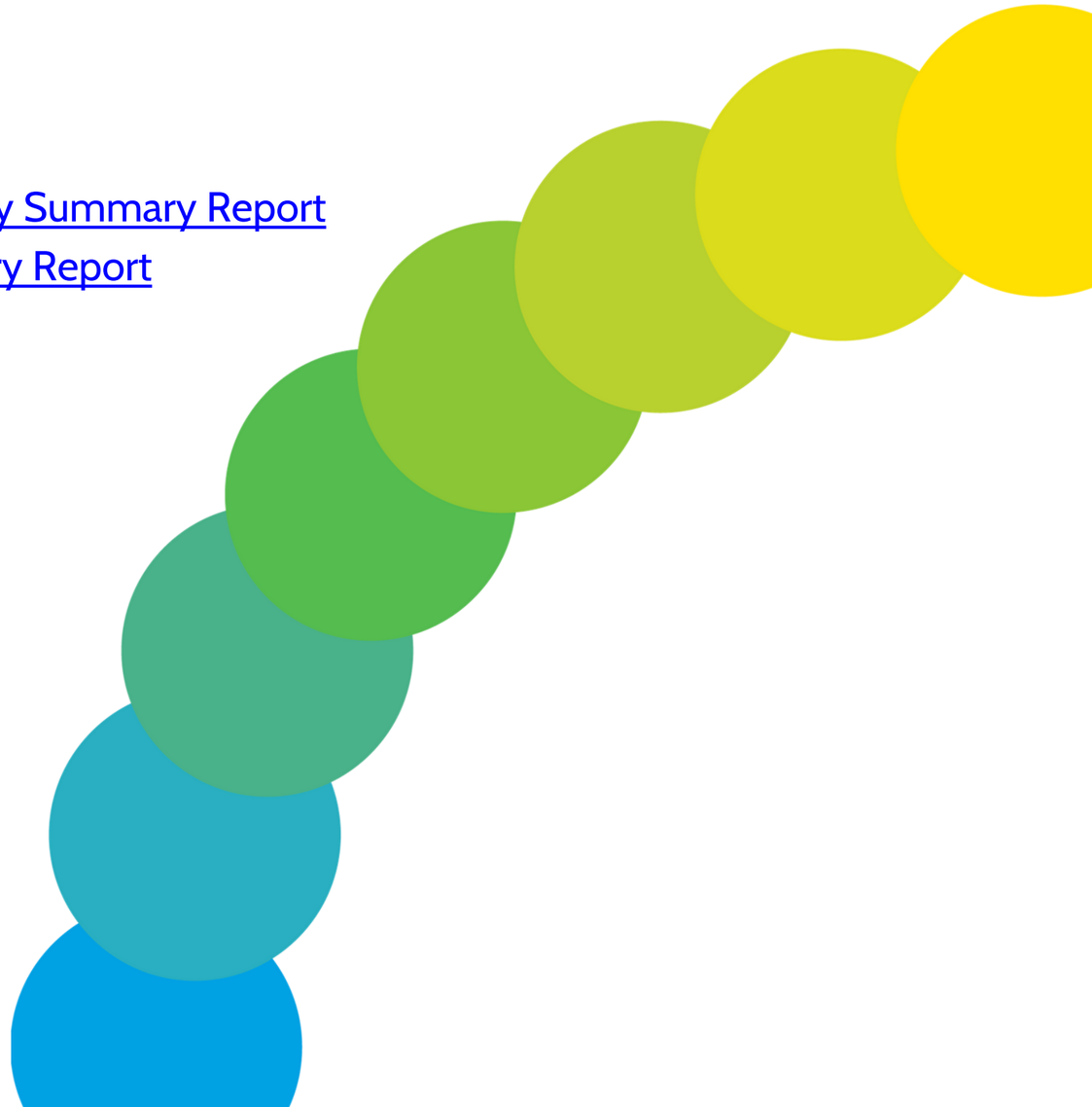
TeRay Esquibel



Appendix

Metro Region: Ednium Summary Report
Southwest & Southeast Region: Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley Summary Report
Northwest & West Central Region: Colorado Mountain College Summary Report

Facilitator Guide



Data Collection – Populations & Methods Details

Region(s)	Partner	Population	Data Collection Method
Metro	**Ednium – The Alumni Collective**	DPS High School learners, Alumni, and Parents • 33 total participants, 56% Hispanic and 30% Black, 59% female, 41% male, representing 6 high schools and a wide variety of postsecondary credit and work-based learning experiences	7 Small Group Conversations and post-event survey administration
Southwest & Southeast	**Boys & Girls Club of the San Luis Valley**	SLV learners and parents/guardians • 77 total participants (41 learners and 36 parent/guardians), 96% Hispanic, 52% living below family poverty line, 33% Spanish-speaking and 33% speaking Q'anjob'al (a Mayan/Guatemalan dialect), 50% male, 50% female	2 Focus Groups, held in Antonito and Alamosa on February 21st and 22nd
Northwest & West Central	**Colorado Mountain College**	Former CMC Dual Enrollment (CEPA) students • 71 participants, 40% first gen, 60% white, 33% Hispanic, 23% Spanish-speaking, 65% female, 29% male, 5% gender non-conforming, representing 5 school districts in western and central mountain regions Parents of CMC-sponsored Upward Bound and CEPA students • 36 participants, 51% white, 38% Hispanic, 33% Spanish-speaking, representation from 8 school districts in western and central mountain regions	Survey with direct outreach using institutional contact records and random sampling

Key takeaways by Region

Metro Region

All learners need multiple, quality options

Clarity of expectations and the ability to fail are critical – learners don't feel safe failing in the classroom but need to be free to learn and develop in real world learning

Concurrent Enrollment is most effective when taken on the college campus

Work Based Learning
- Needs to be differentiated from college credit options for learners
- Needs to earn HS credit and/or needs to be paid (for financial literacy and life prioritization)
- Connections to classroom learning must be woven in
- Is more relevant and better at teaching durable skills - college credit programs often miss the mark for many learners

Communication
- Culturally relevant communication from trusted people (peers and program leaders)
- Clear understanding of individual barriers and individualized supports to overcome
- Need support in makings sense of the experience

Southwest & Southeast Regions

Overall low familiarity and even lower participation in programs

Need more communication and outreach around opportunities, particularly for Hispanic and those less involved in extracurriculars

Parents expressed hope for experience and earning durable skills through opportunities (including money and time management, confidence, work ethic and experience, responsibility, self expression, English language skills, volunteering experience)

Northwest & West Central Regions

Not all learners are seen as potential participants – preference is given to traditionally high achieving students

CE, IB, and AP are given preference over WBL and other types of career training programs

30% of learners did not feel supported or encouraged in career exploration in HS

High value placed on career exposure opportunities early on in High School

Cost and finances were primary concern for post HS plans



Access and barriers by Region

Metro Region

Overall lack of awareness and untimely communication around programmatic options

Preference is given for learners thriving in traditional ways, but WBL provides an environment that allows many with alternative brilliance, learning styles, and potential to demonstrate it

Early access is critical for learners to try multiple areas of interest

Many learners need convincing from trusted people – trust is necessary for learners to take a potential social/academic risk

Learners expressed difficulty navigating WBL process and paperwork, overcapacity school staff, and a need for self advocacy to access and succeed programs

Awareness in and of itself is not enough – supports are needed

Southwest & Southeast Regions

Only 3 learners (7%) had participated in these programs through the Rise and Rural Coaction grant internship opportunities, and one by concurrent enrollment through their school

Most concerning barriers included
- culturally relevant communication
- Transportation
- access to technology
- money/funding
- work attire
- scheduling
- adult support,
- experience with racism in school staff

Every school is different with varying and confusing options across the region

Northwest & West Central Regions

Alumni voiced need for more communication directly from teachers and program providers (postsecondary partners)

High school counselors were the primary source of learning for programs, with teachers as second.

Key changes for success by Region

Metro Region

Programs need to be consistently messaged as accessible to all, not just those doing well in traditional settings and conceptions

Start offering opportunities early and encourage exploration

Clear communication to learners of benefits of the opportunities so learners can prioritize

Family outreach – their opinion plays major role in perception of opportunities

WBL needs to be seen as connected to and not in conflict with traditional definitions of success (like college)

Southwest & Southeast Regions

Broader outreach and communication to families with multilingual programming

Valley-wide broadband internet

Interdistrict communication and collaboration to support strategic resource sharing across smaller districts

Funding to support internship and apprenticeship opportunities

Northwest & West Central Regions

Outreach and communication to *all* students (opportunities are for everyone)

Need for broader range of learner supports (mental health support and tutoring)

Parents called for higher teacher quality across programs and more consistent and ongoing communication

Other learnings by Region

Metro Region

Questions to explore further:
- How do we measure quality, and how do we balance tension between scale and individualization?
- Where does entrepreneurship fit into WBL?

Repeated concepts and thoughts:
- Quality over quantity – money is numbers, but this is about people and individuals
- Lens beyond HS – the transition out of HS is critical and learners need to be supported
- Cultural competency – learners and communities need to succeed on their terms, not terms given to them
- Access for all – programs need to be available to all learners across CO
- Better marketing – especially a need to be on social media
- Compensation – students need to get paid for their work
- Focus on durable skills and human connection
- Transportation
- Mentoring (peer to peer)

Southwest & Southeast Regions

Offering incentives, childcare, food, and translation services are critical to participation in feedback sessions

Appreciation for the opportunity to be heard!

All parents want the best for their kids, and character development and durable skills are high value – *this is not just workforce readiness, this is life readiness*

Northwest & West Central Regions

Access to under 18 learners requires longer timeline to navigate research ethics and consent