Homegrown
TALENT COALITION





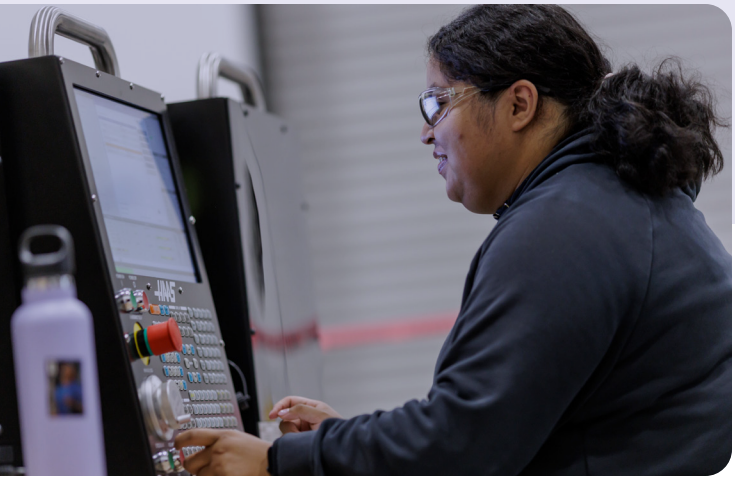


*Photo credit: CareerWise*

# From Promise to Progress

## Sustaining Colorado's Big Three Vision

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In February 2025, Colorado Education Initiative and Colorado Succeeds convened Colorado organizations around a shared commitment: every student in this state deserves guaranteed access to meaningful, high-quality experiences that prepare them for college and career before they leave high school.

**The organizations partnered to support the state's vision: every student will have access to each of, and will attain at least one of, the Big Three, and these experiences will all be aligned to a student's individualized and informed pursuit of passion, purpose, and economic mobility.**

**1** **COLLEGE CREDIT ALIGNED TO A POSTSECONDARY PATHWAY**

**2** **HIGH-QUALITY WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

**3** **IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS**

The convening also resulted in an organizing framework and a formal identity as the Homegrown Talent Coalition (HTC), committed to working together to help each student in Colorado achieve this vision. The Coalition published these commitments in *Pathways to College and Career: Advancing Colorado's Homegrown Talent Coalition to Lead and Sustain Complex Change — From Policy to Promise for Colorado Students and School Districts* in February 2025.

Nearly two years later, this new report takes stock of Colorado's progress toward the Big Three and the Coalition's contributions to that work. It examines what HTC committed to, what we have accomplished, what we have learned, and how our priorities have evolved. As the state continues to build the systems needed to deliver on its vision, HTC remains committed to advancing the work within our influence and helping to ensure that progress translates into expanded opportunities for Colorado students.

***This is not a school district implementation guide**. That work belongs to districts and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and it deserves its own resource written for that audience. Instead, this Coalition shares responsibility for creating the conditions that make student outcomes possible: to help organize and coordinate the nonprofit community surrounding this work, simplify where we can, put ownership where it belongs, and stay focused on impact. Schools and their partners ultimately deliver Big Three experiences and outcomes for students, and the Coalition's role is to strengthen the policy, data, and implementation conditions that make success possible at scale.*

# Members of the Homegrown Talent Coalition

The Homegrown Talent Coalition brings together organizations across Colorado working at the intersection of education, workforce, and policy.




*This report is made possible in part through Colorado's participation in the Launch Pathways Initiative, with technical assistance provided by Launch partner Education Strategy Group (ESG), with generous support from the Launch funders.*




*Photo credit: XQ Institute*

# Why This Moment Matters

A year ago, the Homegrown Talent Coalition committed to reporting back on our progress toward the Big Three vision. As we reach this planned milestone, the conditions shaping Colorado's progress have also shifted significantly.

**FOUR DEVELOPMENTS MAKE THIS PROGRESS CHECK PARTICULARLY TIMELY AND CONSEQUENTIAL.**

## 1 A LEADERSHIP TRANSITION IS ON THE HORIZON

In 2027, Colorado will see a change in the Governor's office and a new legislative composition. The leadership transition makes this progress check particularly important. It provides an opportunity to document what Colorado has already established, identify where continued attention is needed, and give incoming leaders a clear picture of the work underway toward the Big Three vision.

New leadership will want evidence of outcomes and alignment, and this work speaks to both. The next Governor-Elect Phil Weiser and a new General Assembly will take office and will be asked to keep supporting and funding an array of critical priorities for the state. We want this to be one of the easy decisions — the progress districts and communities have demonstrated has taken root and will continue to maintain the state's orientation in the right direction.

## 2 THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE IS SHIFTING

Federal priorities around workforce data and postsecondary funding are in motion. Federal financial aid now extends to short-term training programs, making it more important than ever to know which credentials actually drive economic mobility. Colorado does not need to wait for national clarity to keep building what already works here. If anything, a state with an aligned, functioning model is better positioned to adapt to federal change than one still building from scratch.

## 3 THE FIELD IS WATCHING

Colorado has been recognized nationally as a model for career-connected learning. National partners, funders, and peer states are watching to see whether this Coalition sustains what it started or fades, as many well-intentioned coalitions do after launch. We are accountable to the changes we observe in the field. We want to ensure that our work remains aligned with the lessons learned from these experiences and continues to be a reliable resource for school districts navigating shifting conditions.

## 4 THE WORK AHEAD IS HARD

Colorado's early adopters of the Big Three have demonstrated what is possible, with many schools having redesigned the high school experience long before the state established funding and accountability incentives. The next challenge is expanding high-quality Big Three opportunities across more schools and districts, particularly those navigating limited resources, competing priorities, and varying levels of implementation capacity.

As Colorado's funding, data, and accountability systems move from design into implementation, we have an opportunity to better understand where progress is occurring, where gaps persist, and what additional support schools and districts need. HTC's role is to help identify those barriers, connect expertise across the field, and strengthen the conditions that allow more students to access and complete high-quality Big Three opportunities.

**THIS IS A MOMENT TO ASSESS BOTH HOW FAR COLORADO HAS COME AND WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT PROGRESS REACHES EVERY STUDENT.**

# The Vision and Structure Set in Motion

## THE UMBRELLA FRAMEWORK

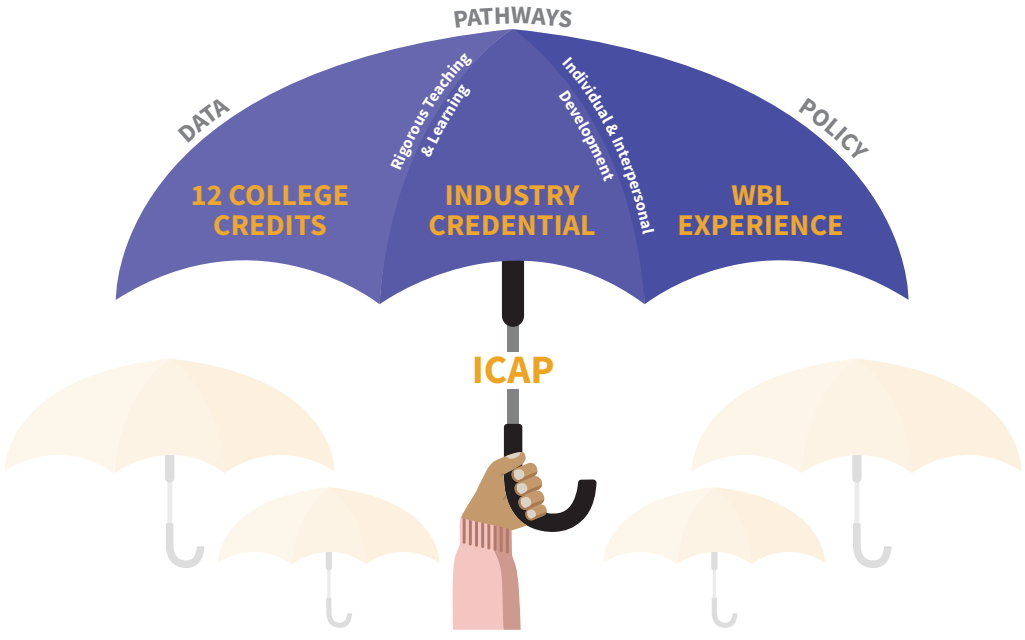
**The promise to Colorado's kids:**
every high school student has no-cost access to — and attains at least one of — "the Big Three" by graduation:

1. **In-demand industry credential**
2. **12 college credits** as part of a defined postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) pathway
3. **High-quality work-based learning** (WBL) experience

**The promise to schools and districts:**
streamlined state infrastructure to enable districts to deliver this coherently and equitably. That requires three things to stay aligned:

1. **Data** (transparent, longitudinal, tied to outcomes)
2. **Pathways** (strong, accessible program structures)
3. **Policy** (aligned accountability and sustainable funding)

These sit atop two foundations — Rigorous Teaching & Learning and Individual & Interpersonal Development — and are activated through an individualized, informed career advising and navigation process (ICAP) to ensure that opportunities align with a learner's pursuit of passion, purpose, and economic mobility.




**Informed Career Advising and Navigation Process**

Source: Colorado Education Initiative

## THE TABLE STRUCTURE

*(Homegrown Talent Coalition Model)*

In order to operationalize this vision, the Coalition is structured around a "constellation of tables" not designed to create new work, but to capture a new way of working across existing efforts:

- **Center Table**
  The Coalition's strategic hub, holding and sharing the big-picture view, aligning priorities across the Coalition, and working as a high-level resource for partners across postsecondary, workforce, and industry.

- **Collaboration Tables**
  Three initial topical tables, each with its own workplan, charge, and outcomes, mapped directly to the Data / Pathways / Policy pillars on the previous page.

The Coalition outlined design principles to guide its efforts, and then encapsulated these into a membership and governance charter: inclusive engagement without duplicated effort, strategic alignment of existing work, actionable focus areas, elevation of educator/learner/leader voice, and streamlined state-agency collaboration.

The Coalition's original commitments included both specific work HTC would undertake and broader statewide outcomes we sought to advance. Together, they established an ambitious starting point for the Coalition's work and a shared vision of what progress should look like for Colorado students.

## ORIGINAL TARGETS

### DATA

- Support the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) build-out.
- By **April 2026**: SLDS publicly reports the first statewide Pathways Report.
- By **December 2027**: Better Data for Better Decisions Coalition equips leaders with usable PWR data and communication strategies.

### PATHWAYS

- Strengthen program structures for more equitable, sustainable access to the Big Three.
- By **June 2026**: formal cross-sector technical assistance network meeting regularly.
- By **June 2027**: 25% increase in students participating in at least one Big Three program (vs. 2024 baseline).
- By **2027–28 school year**: 100% of Colorado high schools offer at least one Big Three opportunity.

### POLICY

- Align accountability systems and funding to sustain PWR pathways.
- By **December 2025**: process begins to update the K-12 accountability framework with PWR-specific metrics.
- By **December 2026**: statewide adoption of a unified framework for defining/measuring/communicating Big Three outcomes.
- By **December 2027**: policy and implementation systems in place to support equitable access statewide, prioritizing the lowest-access areas.



# Where Colorado Stands

Our original report established ambitious goals to expand Big Three opportunities and strengthen the state systems needed to support them. Colorado has made progress in building that infrastructure, while consistent statewide data on student access, participation, and attainment are still emerging.

The following snapshot revisits the statewide outcomes and milestones identified in our original report, distinguishing progress in the state's systems from what we can currently demonstrate about opportunities and outcomes for students.

# Statewide Data

*Establish a statewide picture of pathways and outcomes*

### WHAT WE SAID

By April 2026, the Statewide Longitudinal Data System publicly reports the first statewide Pathways Report, covering participation, completion, and postsecondary and career outcomes.

### WHERE COLORADO STANDS

Colorado released its first statewide Pathways Report in September 2026, marking progress toward more comprehensive statewide reporting. Development of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, now called COdata, continues with additional PWR data expected in spring 2027 to provide a clearer picture of Big Three participation and outcomes.

### WHAT WORK REMAINS

- Additional data released by COdata should shift from reporting historical program outcomes (e.g., Career Development Incentive Program, P-TECH, ASCENT) to reporting participation and attainment for each of the Big Three outcomes separately, at the school and district levels, and broken out by student groups.

- The Pathways Report from COdata should expand to examine how concurrent enrollment, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning relate to postsecondary and employment outcomes.

- Explore outcomes for students completing one or more experiences, with course-taking and completion analyses where data support them.

# Student Participation

*Increase statewide Big Three participation by 25%*

### WHAT WE SAID

By June 2027, a 25% increase in students statewide participating in at least one Big Three program, compared to 2024 baseline data.

### WHERE COLORADO STANDS

A verified statewide participation baseline was not available when this goal was established. HTC's initial landscape analysis, using 2024–25 school year data of completion rates (prior to programmatic restructure), provides an early picture of Big Three student participation, but reflects inconsistencies in program offerings and data collection practices. Additional state reporting expected in spring 2027 will provide a more consistent foundation for measuring progress.

### WHAT WORK REMAINS

- CDE must establish a verified participation baseline by spring 2027, based on 2025-26 school year outcomes, using shared and aligned Big Three definitions across the funding and accountability metrics. This baseline data, reflecting aligned programming and data practices, will enable more transparent progress reporting for districts and the Coalition to rely on as we work to advance completion and set ambitious growth goals for the state.

# Student Access

*Ensure every Colorado high school offers a Big Three opportunity*

### WHAT WE SAID

By the 2027–28 school year, 100% of Colorado high schools offer at least one Big Three opportunity.

### WHERE COLORADO STANDS

Colorado has established new funding and implementation supports intended to expand Big Three opportunities. However, the available evidence does not yet establish how many high schools offer at least one opportunity or how access and attainment vary across the state. Consistent statewide reporting will be essential to understanding progress toward this goal and identifying where additional support is needed.

### WHAT WORK REMAINS

- In order to achieve this vision, state systems will need to support school and Big Three program improvement efforts using existing data districts provide on Big Three experiences by identifying best practices, bright spots, and areas for increased supports. The Coalition will leverage its technical assistance partners to identify districts with promising practices, informed by data, and coordinate around the support provided to districts.

- Coalition leaders will monitor the 2028 rulemaking for the Buckner Innovation Fund and ongoing start-up funding and technical assistance to ensure resources go to high schools offering none or only one of the Big Three, with rural and under-resourced communities at the front of the line, in addition to expanding quality experiences statewide.



*Photo credit: CareerWise*




*Photo credit: XQ Institute*

# State Accountability

### WHAT WE SAID

By December 2025, a process is started to update the state's K-12 accountability framework to include new PWR-specific metrics.

### WHERE COLORADO STANDS

That process is underway. Colorado has begun updating its K-12 accountability framework to incorporate Big Three-related PWR measures, with additional work continuing to refine how participation and attainment are reflected in the system.

### WHAT WORK REMAINS

- The accountability working group should recommend PWR measures that reflect attainment and quality, not participation alone. Those measures should align with the same Big Three definitions as the Start-up and Sustain funding rules, so districts aren't chasing two different targets.

- The State Board should commit to a public timeline for adopting the new measures and first reporting them for informational purposes, by the end of the 2027 legislative session to ensure transparency and effective communications for roll-out with districts and stakeholders. The state should give districts intentional review periods and an appeals process to ensure data quality, and should commit to being responsive to district challenges in implementing new measures.



*Photo credit: Colorado Succeeds*

# From Promise to Progress

## HTC's Role in Advancing Change

Alongside the state's progress over the past eighteen months, HTC has advanced work aligned to the shared Big Three vision. Some of the work directly aligns with the commitments we laid out in our original report, while other work emerged as we identified opportunities to contribute to systems and on-the-ground work that advance student access and attainment.

The following updates document HTC's contributions to Colorado's progress toward the Big Three, including what we committed to, what we have accomplished, and how our work has evolved.

## DATA TABLE | FEBRUARY 2025

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By April 2026:*** *the SLDS publicly reports the first statewide Pathways Report, covering participation, completion, and postsecondary and career outcomes.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

As Colorado advanced the development of COdata and statewide pathways reporting, HTC partners worked to ensure the emerging data infrastructure reflected the Big Three vision and the needs of districts and implementation partners.

Throughout that work, Coalition partners met monthly with COdata advisors and with partners across organizations to track progress, surface questions, and provide ongoing feedback. HTC also advocated for Big Three alignment in COdata from the outset, helping ensure the system is designed to reflect the outcomes that matter to students, educators, employers, and policymakers.

*Additional progress included:*

- Developing shared messaging and communications tools to support awareness and understanding of COdata and the state's emerging data infrastructure.
- Coordinating across Coalition partners to support implementation and reinforce alignment between COdata and the broader Big Three vision.

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**WHAT WE SAID**

***By December 2027:*** the Better Data for Better Decisions Coalition equips policymakers, educators, researchers, and community and industry leaders with communication strategies and PWR data to optimize investment and program quality.

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

HTC completed the state's first Big Three landscape analysis for internal partner use, using 2024-25 school year data. The analysis gives Coalition partners an initial statewide baseline ahead of formal state PWR data reporting expected in 2027, while also surfacing gaps and inconsistencies in current data collection.

The analysis has already informed both policy and field work. HTC used the findings to shape feedback on PWR rulemaking with CDE and the State Board and to sharpen the Coalition's broader strategy. Partners also supported technical assistance sessions at the Career and Technical Education Data Summit, CEI's Big Three convening, and other statewide conferences to help participants map local data infrastructure, identify implementation challenges, and elevate implications for PWR rulemaking as needed.

## PATHWAYS TABLE | FEBRUARY 2025

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By June 2026:*** *a formal technical assistance network, with representation from districts, postsecondary, workforce, and industry, meets regularly to share resources and align strategy.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

HTC has regularly convened implementation-focused organizations and built the foundation for stronger coordination across technical assistance providers. The Coalition provided coordinated, in-depth feedback on State Board of Education rules for Start-up and Sustain funding, bringing implementation experience into policy development. Members also developed a map of where member organizations are working across Colorado and the types of support they provide. The map creates a foundation for better coordination, identifies gaps and overlaps, and helps districts and other partners navigate available support.

The Pathways Table has also created regular opportunities for organizations working on implementation to share emerging needs, surface barriers, and coordinate responses across policy and field-based work. Through this work, the Coalition has begun clarifying where it can best connect and enable existing technical assistance efforts, rather than creating duplicative supports of its own.

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**WHAT WE SAID**

***By June 2027:*** *a 25% increase in students statewide participating in at least one Big Three program, compared to 2024 baseline data.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

The Pathways Table worked with the Data Table to begin establishing a baseline for statewide Big Three participation. Challenges in consistently capturing and verifying participation data reinforced the need to align HTC's measurement with data collected and reported by CDE, expected in spring 2027.

This work also helped clarify the Coalition's role in strengthening the conditions that support increased participation, while looking to statewide reporting to track progress toward the shared student outcome.




*Photo credit: CareerWise*



*Photo credit: Colorado Education Initative*

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By the 2027–28 school year:*** *100% of Colorado high schools offer at least one Big Three opportunity.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

The Pathways Table contributed ongoing field feedback to PWR Start-up and Sustain fund rulemaking, helping clarify Big Three definitions and elevate questions of quality and consistency across the state.

During the 2025–26 school year, participating organizations also moved beyond sharing information to identifying and prioritizing system-level challenges requiring coordinated action across HTC. This work sharpened the Coalition's role in addressing barriers that no single organization can resolve alone and creating the conditions for more high schools to offer high-quality Big Three opportunities.

These discussions also revealed gaps in how the Big Three are understood and communicated by educators, families, employers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. As a result, HTC elevated communications to a Coalition-wide priority, recognizing the need for clearer and more consistent messaging about the value of the Big Three and how these opportunities connect to students' pathways after high school.

## POLICY TABLE | FEBRUARY 2025

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By December 2025:*** *a process is started to update the state's K-12 accountability framework to include new PWR-specific metrics.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

That process is underway. The new accountability framework, revised in statute in 2025, will hold districts and schools accountable for PWR metrics tied to the Big Three. CDE is now updating accountability frameworks through working group recommendations for State Board approval in spring 2027.

HTC representatives are serving on both the working group shaping the new PWR measures and the technical advisory committee, where they are advocating for the implementation of the 1215 and 1241 Task Force recommendations. Through this work, HTC has helped maintain alignment between the accountability work and the broader Big Three framework, including how college credit, industry credentials, and work-based learning are reflected in state measures.

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By December 2026:*** *the Coalition develops and achieves statewide adoption of a unified framework for defining, measuring, and communicating Big Three outcomes.*

### HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

The State Board of Education has adopted initial Start-Up and Sustain funding rules and has published the list of eligible districts and their anticipated funding, establishing an early statewide foundation for how Big Three opportunities and outcomes are defined, measured, and funded.[1]

The Coalition helped to shape this effort by gathering extensive feedback from members on the proposed rules and translated that input into recommendations for CDE and public comment to the State Board of Education.

[1] The Colorado Department of Education released *start-up funding allocations by district* for the 2025–26 school year.

**WHAT WE SAID**

***By December 2027:*** *the Coalition enables research and development of policy and implementation systems that support equitable student access to PWR pathways, targeting areas with the least access.*

## HTC'S WORK TO SUPPORT PROGRESS

The Policy Table has continued to clarify its role in advancing the systems-level policy and implementation conditions needed to expand equitable access to and attainment of the Big Three. In close connection with the Pathways Table, the Coalition is creating stronger feedback loops between implementation partners and policymakers so barriers emerging in the field can inform state-level decisions.

As part of this work, the Policy Table hosted the annual Day at the Capitol celebration of PWR to bring stories of impact to policymakers during session, and co-hosted a student roundtable with policymakers to elevate what is working, where students are encountering barriers, and where system changes may be needed. The Table also engaged Pathways Table members in feedback on Start-up and Sustain fund rulemaking and supported Coalition representation on the Unified Talent System Transition Advisory Committee to reinforce alignment with the Big Three vision.



*Photo credit: CareerWise*




*Photo credit: XQ Institute*

# What We've Learned Along the Way

Since we launched, we have learned important lessons about collective impact, collaboration, and where the Coalition can have the greatest impact. These lessons have shaped how we organize ourselves and where we focus our efforts.




*Photo credit: Colorado Succeeds*



*Photo credit: CareerWise*

## OUR STRUCTURE MUST EVOLVE TO SUPPORT COLLECTIVE ACTION

As we moved toward adopting a charter in fall 2025, we recognized the need for an organizing body to lead the vision. While two organizations remain the backbone organizations of the Homegrown Talent Coalition, we established shared leadership through a Steering Committee composed of the chairs of each Collaboration Table. This group meets monthly and drives the Coalition's work.

Each Collaboration Table has established its membership, meeting cadence, and priorities, refining its focus as the work has progressed. The Data Table, for example, recognized the need to distinguish between supporting statewide data infrastructure and strengthening district-level data capacity. Better Data for Better Decisions took the lead in supporting and informing the state's work on COdata, while HTC's Data Table sharpened its focus on connecting district-level data practices with state accountability and data systems.

## OUR ROLE IS TO STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS, NOT OWN EVERY STUDENT-LEVEL OUTCOME

One of our most significant lessons emerged from the student-level access and attainment outcomes identified in the original report. Student access, participation, and attainment remain at the heart of our vision, and we will continue tracking these outcomes to understand whether Colorado is progressing toward the Big Three.

However, we committed to numerical targets before consistent statewide data were available to establish baselines and measure progress. Our work to develop an initial Big Three landscape analysis reinforced both the limitations of existing data and the importance of consistent statewide collection and reporting.

We have also come to recognize that statewide student outcomes are not the Coalition's alone to achieve. **When a district adds a credential program or a community college expands concurrent enrollment, those accomplishments belong to the schools, organizations, and communities doing the work.** Keeping that distinction clear is part of how the Coalition earns the trust of the people in the field.

Coalition organizations play distinct roles in advancing system-level and program-level efforts toward Big Three outcomes, and across organizations and the Coalition as a whole, we must therefore be transparent and accountable for advancing the system-level work within our influence, while continuing to track statewide progress toward expanded access to and attainment of the Big Three.

## OUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES LIE AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF OUR WORK

We have also learned that the challenges facing Colorado's education and workforce systems rarely fit neatly within the work of a single Collaboration Table. The Policy Table, for example, cannot fully inform state rulemaking without the field experience of Pathways Table members or the data expertise needed to understand how policies will be measured and implemented.

The Pathways Table has evolved from sharing information to identifying and prioritizing system-level challenges that require coordinated action across organizations. Through this work, members surfaced five challenges that no single organization could see as clearly on its own: industry partnership fatigue, structural barriers between K-12 and higher education, an underprepared Concurrent Enrollment/Career and Technical Education teacher pipeline, low awareness of the Big Three's value, and developing a definition of quality for work-based learning.

These insights have helped the Coalition sharpen its priorities and recognize communications as a Coalition-wide responsibility. Increasingly, we see that our work requires the three tables to operate in coordination rather than as independent tables.

Our collective contribution lies in connecting our members' expertise, addressing shared barriers, and strengthening the systems that shape opportunities for Colorado students.



# Our Path Forward

The lessons of our first eighteen months have helped us sharpen our understanding of where the Homegrown Talent Coalition can make the greatest contribution and how we can work together to advance our shared vision. As we enter the next phase of our work, we are translating those lessons into a more focused set of priorities that build on the diverse expertise of our members and the opportunities for collective action across the Coalition.

Our Collaboration Tables will continue to advance work across policy, data, and pathways, with greater clarity about the system-level changes we can influence and the connections between our efforts. Guiding this work is a shared set of core values that will help us determine where to focus our collective energy, how we make decisions, and how we work together, particularly when our organizations bring different perspectives and priorities to the table.

Together, these priorities and values provide a framework for the Coalition's next chapter: strengthening the systems that support the Big Three and helping ensure that Colorado's progress translates into expanded access to and attainment of high-quality opportunities for students.

# Shared Values for the Next Phase of Our Work

**STUDENTS FIRST**
Every decision starts with advancing our vision for Colorado's students.

**QUALITY DRIVES OUTCOMES**
Ensuring every student has access to the Big Three isn't enough: every experience must be high-quality.

**ONE COHERENT SYSTEM**
Policy, funding, and accountability should pull in the same direction, not work against each other.

**CONNECTED PATHWAYS**
Pathways from K–12 through postsecondary and into industry should connect, not just exist side by side.

**BUILT FOR COLORADO'S REGIONS**
Big Three opportunities, funding, and program design should reflect regional capacity, scale, labor market needs, and local input, with enough flexibility for regions to build what fits.



*Photo credit: Colorado Succeeds*



*Photo credit: CareerWise*

**TO LEARN ABOUT THE VALUES THAT DRIVE OUR COLLABORATIVE WORK, CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE.**

## DATA TABLE | OUR PATH FORWARD

The Data Table will focus on connecting district-level data practices with the state systems that rely on that data, ensuring that field experience informs statewide reporting and that the resulting information can support local decision-making.

*Looking ahead, the Data Table will:*

- Support districts in strengthening Big Three data collection, management, and reporting practices.
- Advocate for reporting and analysis that make Big Three access, participation, and outcomes more visible and useful.
- Bring field and data insights into CDE and State Board accountability rulemaking to ensure PWR measures remain strong and aligned with the Big Three.
- Partner with the Pathways Table to pair data insights with implementation support for districts working to expand access and improve student outcomes.
- Connect district-level data needs and lessons to the broader state data infrastructure, in coordination with Better Data for Better Decisions.
- Translate Big Three data into clear, accessible stories that demonstrate the impact of these experiences to policymakers, families, and the public.

## PATHWAYS TABLE | OUR PATH FORWARD

The Pathways Table will focus on addressing the system-level challenges that require coordinated action, and strengthening the conditions that allow more schools and districts to offer high-quality Big Three opportunities.

*Looking ahead, the Pathways Table will:*

- Advance communications as a Coalition-wide priority, building a clearer shared narrative about the value of the Big Three, strengthening consistency across organizations, and helping students, families, educators, employers, and policymakers understand how these opportunities connect to students' pathways after high school.
- Elevate system-level challenges and opportunities to strengthen connections across K-12, postsecondary, workforce, and industry to address barriers that span institutions and sectors.
- Drive efforts to ensure quality and consistency across Big Three opportunities, including the need for clearer expectations for high-quality work-based learning.
- Surface implementation barriers and field insights that should inform the work of the Policy and Data Tables.
- Identify where Coalition partners can better align or coordinate their existing work to strengthen support for districts and schools.

## POLICY TABLE | OUR PATH FORWARD

As Colorado moves from policy design into implementation, the Policy Table will focus on sustaining alignment across funding, accountability, and implementation. Its role will be to connect what HTC is hearing from the field with the policy decisions that shape how the Big Three are supported statewide.

*Looking ahead, the Policy Table will:*

- Help shape the accountability working group's recommendations so new PWR measures remain aligned with the Big Three vision.
- Build understanding of and support for the Big Three among a new governor and incoming legislators.
- Surface and respond to system barriers identified by districts, implementation partners, and the Pathways Table.
- Monitor the Unified Talent System Transition Advisory Committee and identify opportunities to reinforce alignment with the Big Three.
- Build a clearer picture of how local boards of education are interpreting and implementing the Big Three, including where additional guidance, policy alignment, or support may be needed.
- Continue connecting field experience, student perspective, and implementation realities to state policy discussions.



# Staying the Course

Colorado has made progress toward building the systems needed to deliver on the promise of the Big Three, but the work is far from complete. Sustaining that progress requires a shared commitment to the vision, continued alignment across state systems, and the flexibility to adapt as new evidence and implementation challenges emerge. Each of us has a distinct role in ensuring that the work underway translates into greater access, participation, and attainment for Colorado students.

### TO COALITION MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

*Stay engaged. Stay focused.*

- The tables are working. Year one of our work asked organizations to show up; year two asks every participant to focus on the vision and stay aligned to outcomes.
- The Pathways Table has moved from sharing information to addressing system-level problems that no single organization could address alone.
- The Data Table is creating supports that help districts use data to maximize their impact, and the Policy Table is inside the rulemaking that decides what counts.
- This year's momentum proves the model. Ongoing and expanded participation from member organizations is what will sustain it.

### TO NATIONAL PARTNERS AND PHILANTHROPY

*Build on what Colorado has established.*

- Colorado already has the vision, the infrastructure, and years of results. Funding here accelerates tables that are already moving rather than seeding a new initiative.
- The Coalition exists in part to support educators' ability to build high-quality, equitable access to opportunities for students, and we do that by aligning our efforts on their behalf. Fueled by shared buy-in rather than a single charismatic leader or government edict, the Coalition is a proof point other states can learn from.
- Programs scale when state systems change. With enabling policy conditions and 30+ partners aligned, investment here accelerates impact and produces results the field can use.

## TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND STATE AGENCY PARTNERS

*Stay the course toward coherence.*

- Colorado has the opportunity to align its education and workforce systems around the Big Three so definitions, funding, accountability, and data work together for student success.
- Districts have navigated complex, disconnected requirements for decades. Streamlining them lets educators direct limited people, time, and funding toward expanding high-quality opportunities for students.
- Continued cross-agency coordination should connect K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, with accessible dashboards showing where opportunities exist, where gaps remain, and how students are progressing.
- As needs evolve, state partners must keep Big Three opportunities relevant to students' interests and aspirations and aligned with the skills and credentials employers value, so policy, data, and implementation reinforce one another and districts can more easily deliver on the promise of the Big Three.
- State agencies have the opportunity to target support and communications for the communities who need it most. Whether because of size, geography, accountability, or the need for additional focus and funding, the state's role can help bring Big Three opportunities to all students.

## TO THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION AND LEGISLATURE

*Build on the foundation already in place.*

- The next Governor and General Assembly will inherit a working model for one of the state's most complex problems: activating adults to help young people connect to passion, purpose, and economic mobility. The Big Three address it inside our education systems.
- Through work-based learning, a student gains an adult outside the family who knows their name and strengths. Through credentials and college credit before graduation, they demonstrate readiness for next steps.
- Students with these experiences report stronger connections to school and caring adults and greater relevance and agency in school and their postsecondary pursuits, while the state gains a Colorado-trained workforce, homegrown talent that stays in rural communities, and education dollars tied to outcomes.
- The definitions, accountability sub-indicator, funding structure, and data system are already in motion, and the Coalition offers ready on-ramps for any broader youth service, mentoring, or employment agenda.

# From Promise to Progress

For too long, Colorado has imported a skilled and educated workforce while allowing students right here in our state to languish academically and economically, creating a paradox: imported education versus homegrown student outcomes.

When we launched the Homegrown Talent Coalition, we committed to using our efforts to help eliminate the Colorado paradox, and in service of this, the Coalition has set a course of intentional collaboration and impact.

A credential must mean the same thing in Durango as it does in Denver. The accountability framework, the emerging data system, and the budget each shape what will count and what will be funded.

No single organization can be in all of these rooms. We have to continue to align our efforts long enough for the work to take root and then compound. Our collective backbone capacity attends to the conditions under which student outcomes can move and the means to see whether they are moving. When the definitions are shared, data make progress visible, the accountability system is meaningful, and public funding sustains it, regional results ripple out and up to the state level. The Coalition helps those lessons travel across regions and inform statewide systems. Absent that, good local work stays local.

Over the past decade, programs have scaled when the state systems around them changed and stalled when they didn't. Pilots that never reach statute or data that remain inaccessible do not spur sustainable change at scale. Colorado is one of a small number of states where these pieces are coming together through policy and supported by the Coalition. That alignment is not a byproduct of the work: it is the work.

Our experience reinforces the Coalition's theory of action: when organizations move together, build trust in a shared vision and strategy and in each other, and stay focused on outcomes, they can shape policy, elevate practice, surface barriers, and strengthen the conditions that help districts and schools deliver on the Big Three vision.

Our coherence, consistency, and commitment to this work ensure that schools' efforts and resources are streamlined in the most straightforward way. We imagine a future with clear definitions, aligned funding, accessible data, and accountability systems that reinforce rather than complicate one another. In that future, every Colorado student has access to the Big Three, and graduates have completed at least one opportunity aligned with their pursuit of passion, purpose, and economic mobility.



**WE ARE CLEAR-EYED ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AHEAD AND CONFIDENT THAT WHEN WE MOVE TOGETHER, WE MOVE FURTHER, FASTER FOR COLORADO'S KIDS.**

Homegrown
TALENT COALITION

## ABOUT THE HOMEGROWN TALENT COALITION

The Homegrown Talent Coalition brings together organizations across Colorado working at the intersection of education, workforce, and policy.

Coalition members operate outside of government and school districts, partnering closely with both to support implementation, inform policy, and connect efforts across the system. Together, members play a unique role: coordinating across sectors to align policy, practice, and data, and building the conditions that make it easier for schools and districts to expand access to meaningful opportunities for students.

The Coalition is working to ensure every Colorado student has access to college credit, in-demand industry credentials, and work-based learning experiences aligned with their individual and informed pursuit of passion, purpose, and economic mobility.

Learn more at **homegrowntalentcoalition.org.**