



Colorado Higher Education Strategic Plan

Summary: Objectives and Drivers

DRAFT: March 31, 2022

Considerations/Principles

1. The primary motivation for most learners is career preparation and economic mobility.
2. A traditional four-year (or other) pathway and a focus on successful career outcomes are not contradictory.
3. Skills-based pathways called for in this plan must be of high quality and attractive and accessible to learners from all backgrounds.
4. While focused primarily on public colleges and universities, this plan recognizes the broader ecosystem of postsecondary education that includes private providers. It also recognizes the interdependence of K-12 education, higher education and the workforce. It may be read as a call to action to all stakeholders, reflecting the necessity for alignment and partnership.

Overarching objectives

(Crucial on their own and underpin success of others)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY: An ecosystem designed to meet the needs of all learners with an intentional focus on erasing educational equity gaps among Hispanic, African American and Native American populations and other people of color.

- Resources to help navigate the postsecondary environment are available to all students as early as middle school and throughout their learning pathway.
- Disaggregated data is utilized to identify and support the implementation of equity-minded solutions.
- Wrap-around supports are readily available for all learners.
- Learning environments reflect and are relevant to all students.
- Faculty and staff are fully equipped to implement equity-minded practices.

DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING: A robust data system and a culture of data use throughout the ecosystem lead to data-informed policy making at all levels to best meet the needs of learners.

- Institutions and policy makers have access to—and utilize—robust, longitudinal data to inform learner approaches and outcomes from K-12 education through postsecondary education and the workplace.

- Students and families have clear and transparent information as early as middle school about programs, costs, and career opportunities associated with learning pathways.

Core objectives

LIFELONG LEARNING: An ecosystem that supports all learners throughout their lifetimes, enabling seamless progression through a diversity of learning pathways and credentials that help them advance their career and personal growth.

- Skills and competencies represented by a credential are informed by employers.
- The blurring of lines among K-12, postsecondary, and work enables individuals to engage in different experiences simultaneously as learners, earners, or both.
- Institutions offer flexible and alternative pathways to better serve employed learners.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI): An ecosystem that provides all learners with improved access to professional opportunities and career mobility, thereby delivering an attractive return on investment.

- Credentials are viewed by employers as evidence of relevant, valuable skills learned.
- Time to credential is optimized for efficient delivery of learning objectives; demonstration of knowledge and skills is valued and incented over seat time.
- Students benefit from access to professional networks that support their career entry and progress.
- Stop outs with debt and with no credential are minimized.
- Students and families have clear information about the costs and benefits (ROI) of specific learning pathways.

THE PUBLIC GOOD: An ecosystem that drives the economic vitality of the state and a healthy democracy by preparing an educated and engaged citizenry

- Learners and institutions serve as resources locally, statewide, and beyond to help advance social and economic opportunities
- Learners develop relevant skills that help our communities, states, and nations develop and thrive economically, politically, scientifically and socially.