

[Sign Up](#)[Donate](#)[Communities](#)[En español](#)[Colorado Votes 2023](#)[Jobs Board](#)[Events](#)

## HIGHER EDUCATION

# Colorado celebrates the first 300 students to get their associate degrees after they dropped out of a four-year university

By Jason Gonzales | January 22, 2024, 4:55pm MST

[f](#) [X](#) [in](#) [REPUBLIC](#)



Colorado's CORE Initiative seeks to get associate degrees to students who completed at least 70 hours of their four-year education b

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

out. | (Eli Imadali for Chalkbeat)

---

*Sign up for our [free monthly newsletter Beyond High School](#) to get the latest news about college and career paths for Colorado's high school grads.*

Colorado state leaders on Monday celebrated the first 300 students to receive an associate degree through a program meant to award students who earned at least 70 college credits but never finished their four-year degree.

Colorado is believed to be one of the first states in the country to offer this type of program, which was launched in 2021 through \$1 million in pandemic relief funds.

The state estimates that more than 25,000 former college students statewide may be eligible for an associate degree under the Colorado Re-Engaged Initiative, or CORE. Several thousand students are also expected to become eligible to take part in the program each year, according to a news release from Gov. Jared Polis' office.

"CORE is a great opportunity for Coloradans to get a degree and advance their careers," Polis said in the release. "So many Coloradans who are forced by their circumstances to step away from education have invested so much time and money, yet don't have the degree to reflect their hard work. I am proud that Colorado is providing students and institutions with the tools they need to help Coloradans get degrees and fill in-demand, good-paying jobs."

So far, seven colleges and universities have participated in the program, including:

- Colorado State University Fort Collins
- Colorado State University Pueblo
- Fort Lewis College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs



- University of Colorado Denver

Western Colorado University plans to take part in the program starting this year.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that students who have completed some college, but did not earn a degree make about \$935 a week on average. Meanwhile, an associate degree increases weekly pay by about \$70 more a week.

The governor's office said the program also increases the number of Coloradans with a degree or certificate and helps them secure employment in higher paying careers. The program also may entice former students to return to college, the release says.

Lawmakers and school officials across the state have applauded the impact of the program.

Become a Chalkbeat sponsor

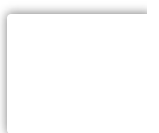
Beth Myers, an associate vice chancellor at CU Denver, said it's life-changing for students.

"I heard one graduate tell her mother that her coursework wasn't for nothing," Meyers said in the news release. "It was worth the investment."

*Jason Gonzales is a reporter covering higher education and the Colorado legislature. Chalkbeat Colorado partners with Open Campus on higher education coverage. Contact Jason at [jgonzales@chalkbeat.org](mailto:jgonzales@chalkbeat.org).*



The Latest





## Tennessee lawmaker to file legislation to add appointed members to Memphis school board

Rep. Mark White cites prolonged frustration with the board's locally elected leadership

By Marta W. Aldrich and Laura Testino | February 6



## The 'science of reading' debate has begun in the Michigan Legislature

On Tuesday, the Senate Education Committee began hearing testimony from students, parents, and teachers who want more structured phonic literacy instruction for all public school students.

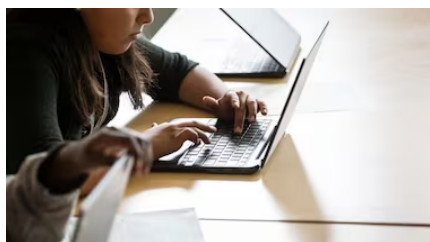
By Hannah Dellinger | February 6



## Indiana AG's new tip line for controversial classroom teaching raises concerns about accuracy and privacy

The website includes examples of "inappropriate" lessons or policies in 13 Indiana districts and one university, but districts say those are inaccurate.

By Aleksandra Appleton, Amelia Pak-Harvey and MJ Slaby | February 6



## How many NJ students are still being taught virtually? No one seems to know.

Some districts are holding classes online to fill gaps caused by teacher shortages.

By Hannah Gross, NJ Spotlight News | February 6



## In a first, Chicago will elect school board members this year. Tell us your questions.

Your questions will help guide Chalkbeat's coverage leading into school board elections.

By Reema Amin | February 6



## Shapiro pitches \$1.1 billion hike for basic school funding in budget plan, excludes vouchers

The Pennsylvania governor's proposal for public school aid would set a record for a single-year increase.

By Dale Mezzacappa | February 6



[About Us](#) • [Strategic Plan](#) • [Our Staff](#) • [Awards](#) • [Careers at Chalkbeat](#) • [Our Supporters](#) •  
[Contact Us](#) • [Become a Sponsor](#) • [How to Be a Source](#) • [Code of Ethics](#) • [Republishing](#)  
[Terms of Use](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Cookie Policy](#) • [Do not sell my info](#) • [Diversity](#) •

A Civic News Company Newsroom

