

# EDCC BREAKOUT

Enhancing Rural Student Postsecondary Success  
via Cross-Sector Collaboration



# DESCRIPTION

Join us for an engaging session where we explore the **critical role of cross-sector collaboration** in boosting postsecondary success for rural students. Participants will learn more about a **rural collaborative model** from the perspective of higher education, industry/workforce, and K12 districts. Designed to be highly interactive and providing **practical insights and actionable strategies**, participants will **leave with a plan** to initiate or enhance cross-sector collaboration in your region.



### WHY AND HOW EACH SECTOR BENEFITS

Hear from the panelists why K12, higher education, and industry engage in the rural collaborative model and the benefits they see, including tactical examples

### ORIGIN STORIES AND CURRENT STATE

Hear from panelists how rural collaboratives started and what phase they are in now. What's going particularly well and where there are challenges.

### GETTING TO ACTION

Hear from panelists tips, tricks, advice, and what to look out for with cross-sector collaborations. Importantly, what can we all learn from rural?

# Our plan for this afternoon

# WELCOME!



**Sara Butler**

Director, Empower Schools



**Dr. Karen Cheser**

Superintendent, Durango 9R  
School District

President Board of Chamber  
of Commerce Durango



**Amanda Cornelius**

Director, Fremont  
Multidistrict Initiative



**Dr. Landon  
Mascareñaz**

Chair, Colorado State Board  
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Co-Founder, Open Systems  
Institute



**Madison Knapp**

Director, Colorado Succeeds



# Before we start

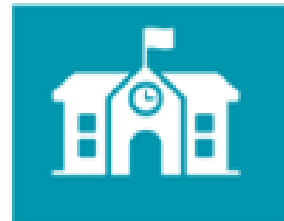
## Share at your tables

- **Name**
- **First job**
- **Current job**

# Rural Collaborative Model

## Pathways Boost Local Economies

The most effective partnerships bring together K-12, higher education, and industry to formally partner to build pipelines of qualified, young candidates to fill the most-needed jobs.



### 2+ Public School Districts

Member school districts formally agree to host and resource pathway courses. These agreements allow students access to expand resources while remaining enrolled in their home district.



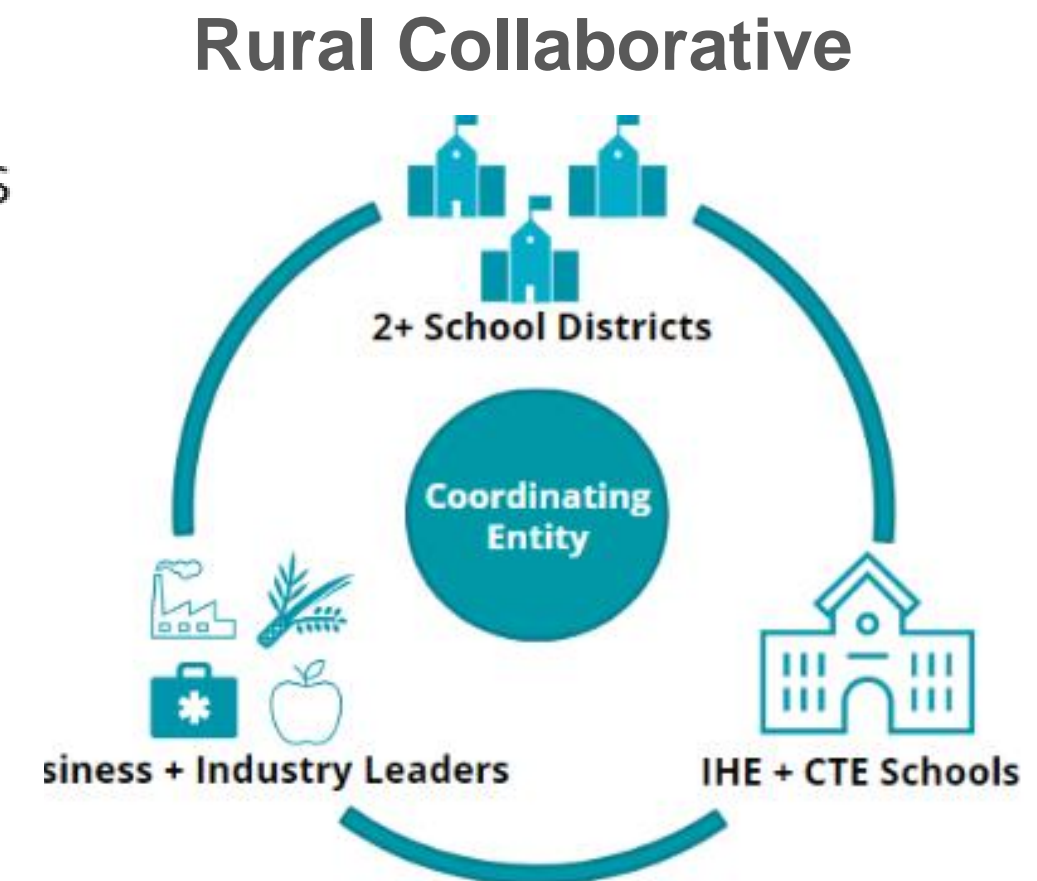
### 1+ Institution of Higher Education

Colleges and universities provide post-secondary qualified instruction allowing students to earn certifications, college credit, and degrees, all before graduation.

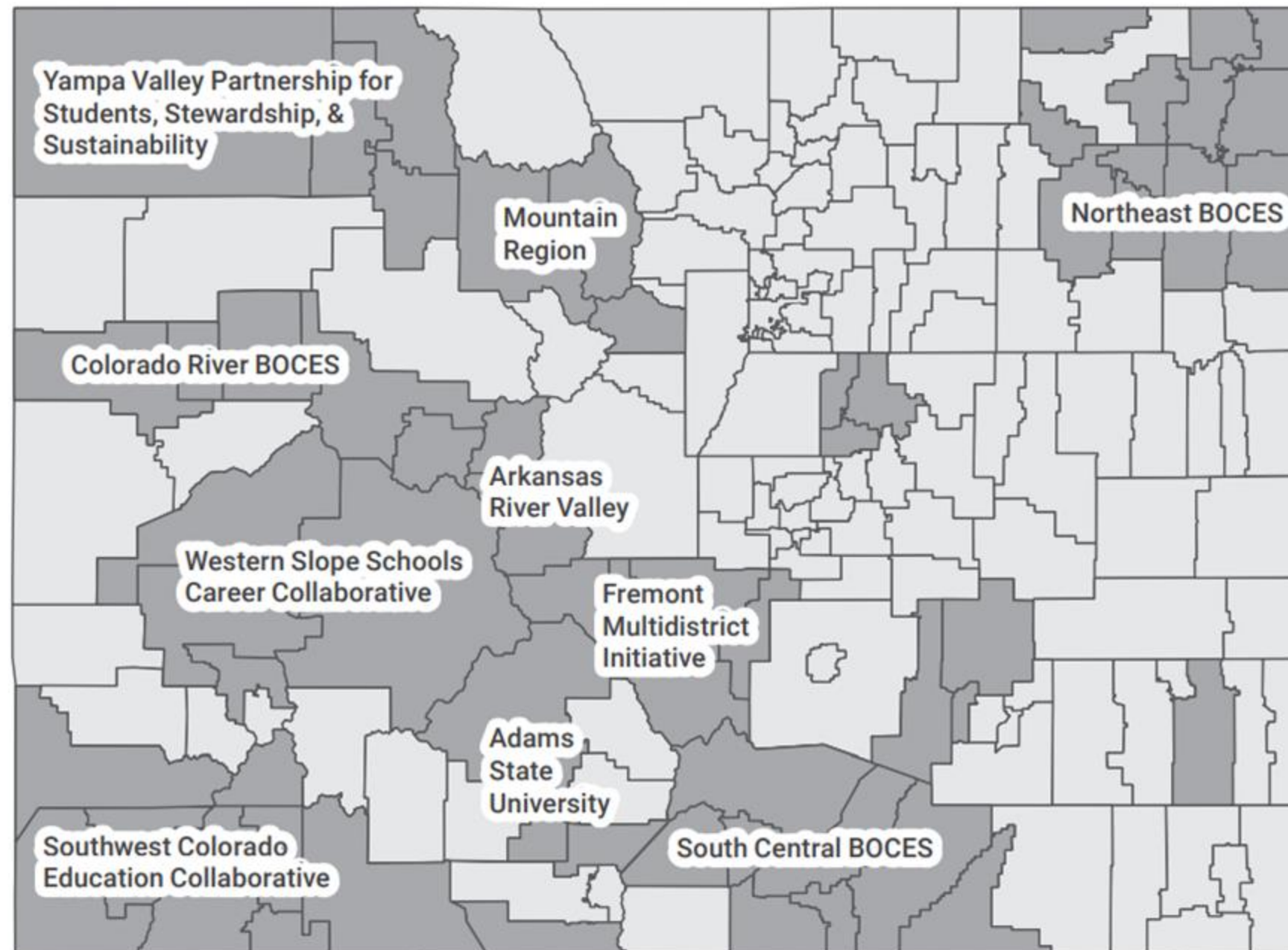


### 1+ Industry Partner per Pathway

Business leaders care about nurturing local talent. Partnering with industry leaders means on-the-job training for students who make connections with employers as they are building their skillset.



# Rural Collaborative Partnerships are Forging All Over Colorado



**ELEVATING RURAL COLORADO**

BUILDING A THRIVING TOMORROW BY INVESTING IN K-12 EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
REFLECTING ON FIVE YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP AND GROWTH

**COLORADO SUCCEEDS** Colorado Education Initiative Homegrown EMPOWER schools lyra





# Table Discussion 1

1. What sector are you from and what pain points do you see that a rural collaborative could solve with you?
2. What career pathways would be most impactful for students in your region? (in demand and family-sustaining wages)
3. What barriers prevent any one organization to implementing these student opportunities on their own?



# Fishbowl: the origin stories and current state

- How did the rural collaboratives around the state start? What were the catalysts? What did the early days look like?
- What phase are the rural collaboratives currently in?
- How was start up funded and what does funding look like now?
- What are the current priorities of the rural collaboratives and where are they headed next?

# Table Discussion 2

1. What did you notice about how each of the collaborations started?
2. Are there current cross-sector collaborations in your region? What do they look like?
3. If you were to start a new rural collaborative in your region, what problem could it solve and who are the key stakeholders that would need to be engaged?
  - a. Are there any individuals or groups who may not be supportive? If so, why?





# Q&A and Share Out with Panelists



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# APPENDIX

# Table Discussion 3

1. If you wanted to start a formal rural collaborative, what are some initial steps you could take?
2. How can you get involved in or strengthen a current cross-sector college and career initiative in your region?



# The Problem

## WORKFORCE IMBALANCE

Colorado currently has two available jobs for every unemployed person in the state.

## TRAINING REQUIRED

More than 90% of top jobs that provide a living wage require a postsecondary education or training

## UNDERGRADUATE DECLINE

Colorado resident undergraduate postsecondary enrollment has declined by 8% since 2010.





# The Opportunity



## COURSEWORK ATTAINMENT

Students can be completing Career & Technical Education (CTE) and concurrent enrollment courses for college credit while in high school for free

## HIGH VALUE INDUSTRY CREDENTIALS

Students can leave high school with in-demand industry credentials leading to high-wage careers

## ON THE JOB WORK EXPERIENCES

Students can engage in real work through internships, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships to assess job fields for skill fit and interest

*A career pathway program offers a clear sequence of stackable credits and credentials, combined with support services, which enables students and job-seekers to secure industry-relevant skills, certifications, and credentials and advance to higher levels of education and employment in high-demand occupations. - CWDC*

**Rural students  
have unlimited  
potential.**

**Rural schools have limited  
resources.**

- **Funding:** High proportion of fixed costs and low property tax base
- **Talent:** Limited pool to recruit, small staff size inherently limits breadth of expertise
- **Course Options:** Low enrollment limits potential for course and program diversity



All with the threat of consolidation

# How to Meet the Opportunity in Rural Together

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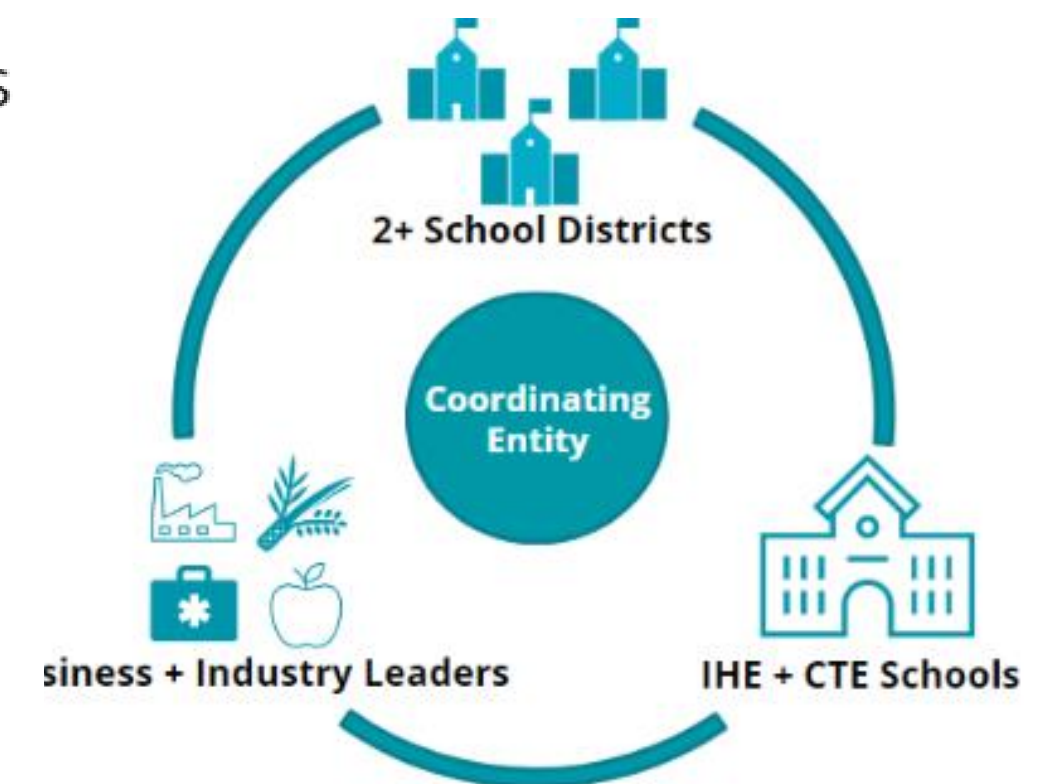
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## Rural Collaborative



# How Rural Collaboratives can support a region



**Convene regional stakeholders to set a vision** and add capacity for implementation while leading policy and advocacy efforts



**Bridge geographic separation** to provide equitable access to courses, credentials, and concurrent enrollment opportunities to all students in a region



**Increase quality and quantity of opportunities** by expanding upon existing programs and pooling resources to create new programs



**Improve talent recruitment and retention region wide** through facilitating professional learning, and developing Grow Your Own initiatives that generate a steady pipeline of talent ready to address regional workforce needs



**Strengthen connections to higher education and local industry** to provide students a clear path to work- based learning, postsecondary degrees, and careers aligned to regional workforce needs

# One Example: Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative

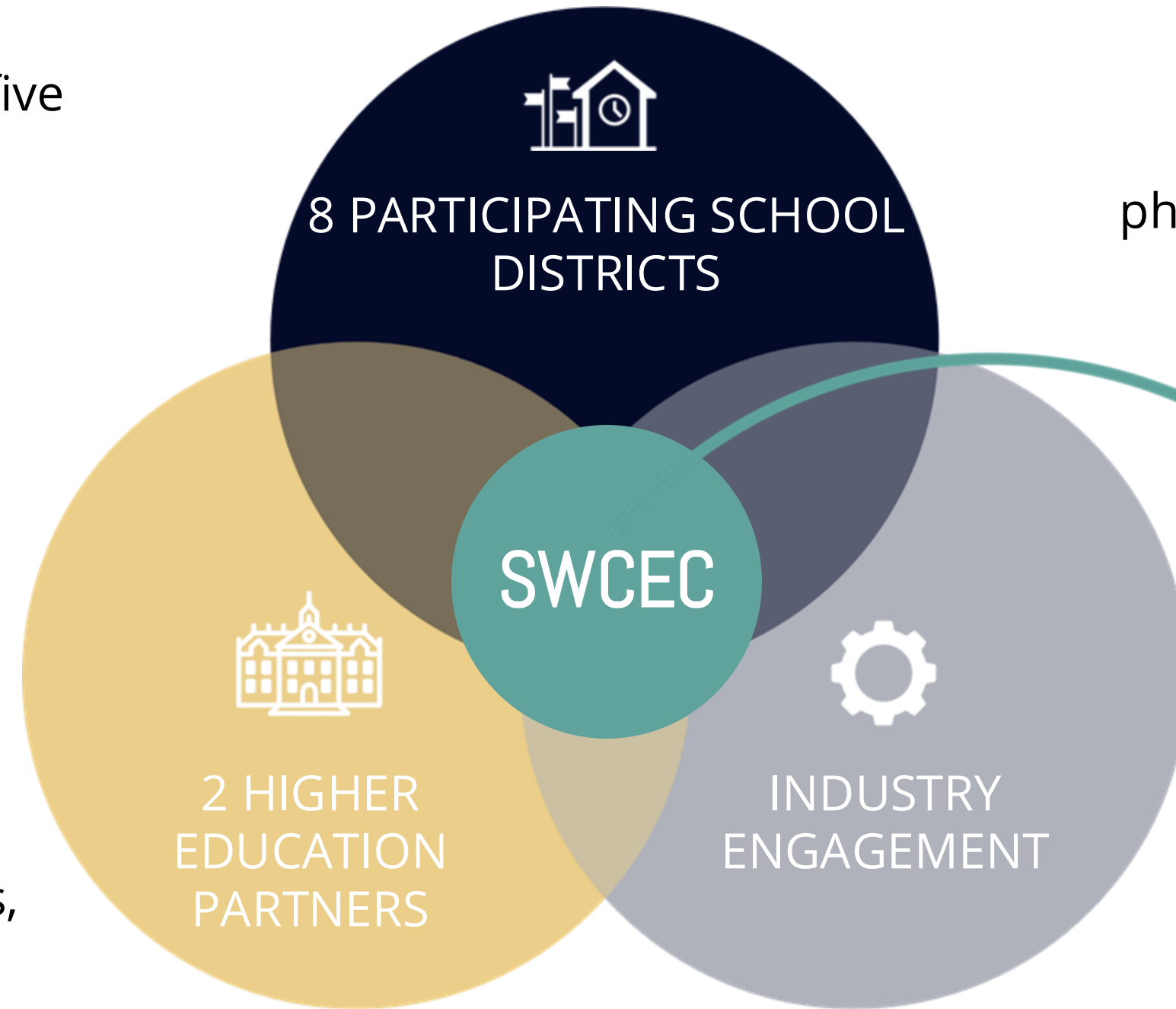
## CAREER PATHWAYS

The Collaborative organizes five shared pathways:

- BUILDING TRADES
- ENVIRONMENTAL
- HEALTH SCIENCES
- EDUCATOR
- HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

## PATHWAY FEATURES

Pathways feature CTE and concurrent enrollment courses, mobile learning labs, and a variety of work-based learning opportunities.



## FUNDING

SWCEC was awarded multiple competitive grants, receives philanthropic funds, and districts and higher education partners financially contribute.

## FORMAL MOU & GOVERNANCE

Partners have all signed a formal MOU. The centralizing non profit has full time employees and Board of Directors of K12, higher ed, industry, community, and tribe representatives.

3 summer institutes

8 students in new

15 job shadows

Shared internship handbook

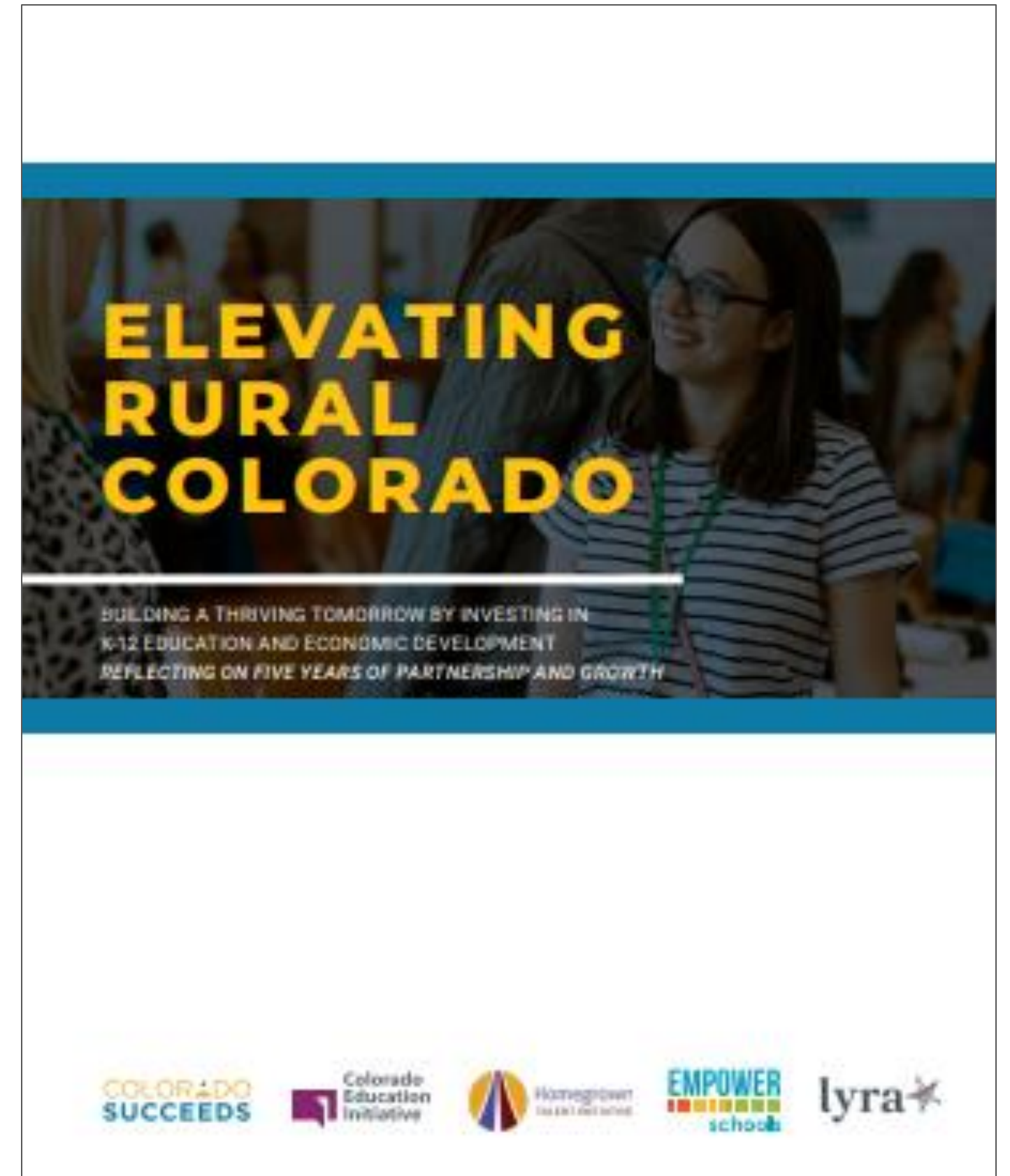
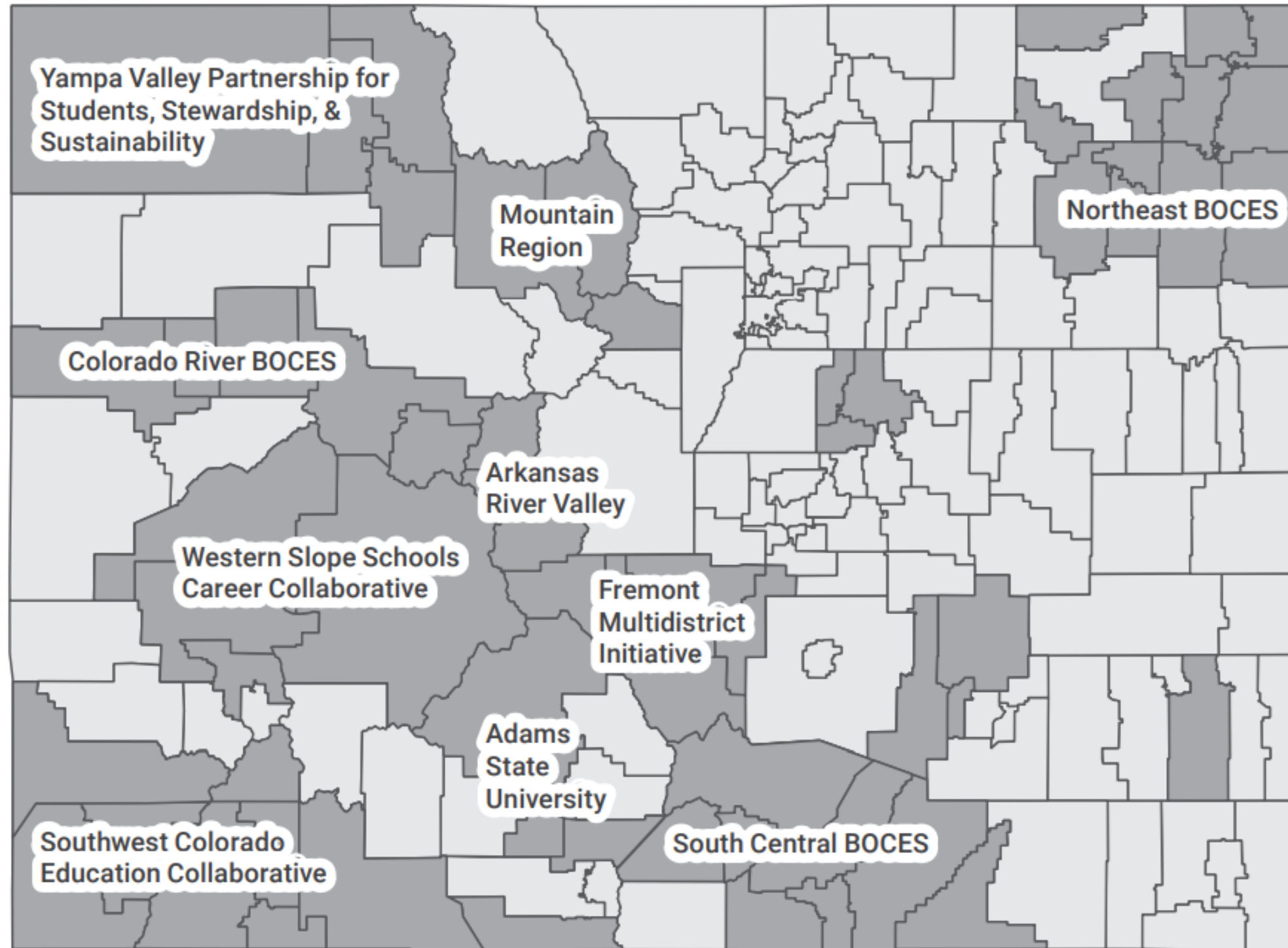
Career Launch SW

2 Career Fairs

# Rural Collaboratives are not

- An informal agreement**
- Working together on a short term initiative or one that only serves a small number of students**
- District Consolidation**
- Only for rural districts (despite the name!)**
- Copy/paste models from region to region**
- Led by an outside organization or non-local leaders**

# These Partnerships are Forging All Over Colorado



# Join us in a breakout to learn more

- How these collaborations got started
- How you can get involved in a current region or start your own
- Tips for success and challenges to watch out for



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