



# Colorado Rural Education Collaborative

*Advancing Opportunity, Quality, and Prosperity*

## Colorado Rural Education Collaborative (CREC) Compact

*The CREC Compact was outlined at a two-day design meeting held in Pueblo, Colorado June 11-12, 2015. The event included nearly 100 participants from 30 rural districts, six BOCES, five professional associations, the Rural Education Council, higher education, philanthropy, and business and civic leadership. The basic design question was: Together, how can we identify, scale and sustain high impact innovations that advance rural education and prosperity?*

*All parties that sign this Compact commit to one common purpose: **expanding student opportunity, enhancing educational quality, and enriching economic prosperity for rural Colorado**. All parties recognize that the value of sharing resources and relationships requires a certain kind of leadership—trust, ingenuity, openness, innovation, creativity, transparency, respect, responsiveness and a mission-first mindset. We recognize that we have a better chance of realizing our common purpose if we connect around high impact innovations, share everything we can, secure additional resources through aligned action, and actively participate in a community of learning. We also know that we need to connect and not duplicate any of the numerous vital and relevant initiatives, organizations, people and networks that are committed to a more positive future for rural Colorado students, schools and communities.*

*Since inception, the CREC has focused on efforts identified as priorities by members including:*

- *College/Career Readiness through Pathways to Prosperity*
- *Teacher/Leader Efficacy*
- *Teacher Recruitment & Retention*
- *Social/Emotional Learning & Students At-risk*
- *STEM Integration and*
- *Student-Centered Accountability.*

*These collaborative efforts have attracted significant investment and are informing the field through local and national contributions to education. More here: <https://www.coruraledcollab.org/our-work>*

*This Collaborative is designed to strengthen the value and impact of all these collective efforts through the power of networking. We all want to make tangible progress on tough problems facing rural Colorado. We also recognize that **we live in a time of great opportunity where a strategy of collaboration can make a real difference for our children, families, and hometowns.***

*We agree to the following **guiding principles** to engage the right people at the right times in the right ways around the right innovations to advance rural student opportunity, educational quality and economic prosperity.*

- 1) *Act as a network of networks that includes the voices of rural students, parents, communities, schools, educational service providers, higher education, philanthropy, and workforce and economic development.*
- 2) *Promote widespread engagement between places and people that hold a shared mission—rural districts, communities and champions committed to expanding student opportunity, enhancing educational quality, and enriching prosperity.*



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- 3) *Focus on relevant high impact and cost-effective innovations that make a difference.*
- 4) *Be open and share everything we can.*
- 5) *Celebrate our common victories.*
- 6) *Remove barriers.*
- 7) *Connect through a simple collaborative infrastructure (Genesis work groups/network improvement communities) and the CREC website ([www.coruraledcollab.org](http://www.coruraledcollab.org)) that makes it easy to engage around common interests, strengths, needs, resources, impact measures and mutually reinforcing action.*
- 8) *Leverage investments for greatest impact.*
- 9) *Scale and sustain change through trust, transparency, and reciprocity.*

*To realize our shared aspirations we need to locate, link, lift, and leverage our shared assets. From the early days of community barn raising and grain/electrical co-ops to today, we know that rural Colorado is better off when we work and learn together for mutual benefit and growth.*

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**Focus:** Raise educational attainment and increase the value of educational credentials for rural students, families and communities.

- Rural students secure credentials that advance aspirations and economic self-sufficiency.
- Rural families experience reduced postsecondary education cost burdens.
- Rural communities grow and keep talent to support local economic vitality.

**High Impact Innovation Priorities (\*denotes Awesome Idea identified by Pueblo participants):**

- 1) Opportunity: Expand rural student access to educational resources that fit their personal aspirations, skills and learning dynamics.
  - Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) Implementation\*
  - Blended Learning\*
  - Concurrent Enrollment
  - Student engagement, wellness, and social emotional learning
- 2) Quality: Enhance rural teacher and principal access to systems of support that advance their capability, leadership and impact.
  - Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Retention\*
  - Teacher Practice Networks\*
  - Professional Learning Systems
- 3) Prosperity: Enrich rural community access to assets that advance education and economic development for local benefit.
  - Mutual school and community enhancement projects\*
  - Advanced CTE and technical certifications\*
  - Education to industry pipelines



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## Commitments and Created Value

Every organization identified below commits to the compact by signature. It is fully recognized that the core value proposition for this Collaborative rests on every participant getting greater value than they give.

Commitment	Created Value
<b>Generation Schools Network:</b> Provides a collaborative facilitator and staff back-office functions that support coalescing of districts around solving pressing problems of practice.	<b>Generation Schools Network:</b> Infrastructure established to facilitate implementation of collaborative efforts, raise local funding and coalesce rural voices.
<b>Affiliated Organizations:</b> Made up of state associations, professional associations, economic development, higher education, philanthropic entities, and other rural school improvement groups that work together to advance Collaborative work and remove barriers to success.	<b>Affiliated Organizations:</b> Each organization can engage the power of the collaborative to grow their own impact as well as that of their members.
<b>Districts:</b> Ensure top leadership support, share capacity, coordinate data, information and communication requests, and align resource pursuit strategies tied to Collaborative priorities. Commit to high impact innovations that fit their agenda.	<b>Districts:</b> Access to more resources and relationships to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase student achievement and employability;</li> <li>● Strengthen teacher and principal quality; and</li> <li>● Grow community vitality.</li> </ul>
<b>BOCES:</b> Align and support regional and local leadership and activities around high impact innovations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>BOCES:</b> Strengthen their own ability to provide support and spread what they do well.</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education:</b> Ensure a stronger voice and equal participation of rural districts in high impact innovations such as concurrent enrollment, blended learning and connections to business and industry.	<b>Higher Education:</b> Reduce educational attainment gaps particularly for first generation and/or minority rural students. Promote economic and workforce development with participating rural communities and their schools.
<b>Economic/Workforce Development:</b> Share information with and about local employers, connect schools with internships, apprenticeship, and certificate programs. Build strong and relevant partnerships with employers and school programs, pathways, and projects.	<b>Economic/Workforce Development:</b> Develop pipelines of local talent trained and ready for jobs in the community to reverse brain drain and grow local entrepreneurial capacity.
<b>Community Leaders:</b> Align and support community leadership around high impact innovations.	<b>Community Leaders:</b> Grow and keep more local talent. Attract new talent and investment.



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<p><b>Philanthropy:</b> More coordinated, accountable, and impactful investment approach to rural student opportunity, educational quality, and economic prosperity.</p>	<p><b>Philanthropy:</b> Grow their own impact as well as that of their grantees.</p>
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## Simple Rules for Collaboration

The Collaborative and all of its members will operate using these simple rules as a guideline:

- Make it easier to make connections that matter
- Do not duplicate existing efforts and relationships, strengthen them
- Keep it simple for districts to participate
- Let student, educator, and community needs guide action
- Make relationships mutually respectful and beneficial
- Leverage Collaborative power into more capacity and resources

## Participating District Expectations

To be part of the Collaborative, districts must:

1. Commit to guiding principles, mission, strategy, high impact priorities and impact measures as outlined in this Compact.
2. Ensure strong board, superintendent, and community leadership engagement.
3. Be willing and able to share district resources to support high impact innovations.
4. Work in close cooperation with other districts in the Collaborative especially those in their own BOCES and nearby geography.
5. Coordinate shared pursuit of external resources to support high impact innovations that fit their agenda.
6. Facilitate information sharing and data gathering as needed.
7. Choose a participation level that suits their district which may change over time.

## Generation Schools Network Partner Expectations

1. Provide leadership, facilitation and expertise to set-up and operate the Collaborative and support the implementation of high impact innovations with member districts.
2. Connect expertise and assistance from: people, projects, networks, and organizations that have demonstrated success in implementing designated high impact innovations in rural settings—BOCES, philanthropy, higher education institutions, researchers, policy makers, business leaders and others who can be valuable assets to the work of the districts.
3. Pursue funding for high impact innovations from a variety of sources.
4. Monitor, track and communicate Collaborative progress and goal achievement, making necessary adjustments, and broadening engagement across rural Colorado as progress warrants and funding permits.
5. Develop and implement strategic communications to gain recognition and support for the Collaborative at the state and federal level.



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6. Support the policy effort of the Colorado Rural Alliance and funnel legislative issues that are identified by the work of the collaborative for support through their rural Advocacy efforts.
7. Connect and inform Colorado efforts through the work of the Rural National Collaborative made up of rural collaboratives nation-wide and facilitated by National Rural Education Association.

## **Tracking and Defining Impact**

As various projects are rolled out in response to locally identified needs and funding commitments, both qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered and shared with the membership through the Work tab on the CREC website, the monthly e-newsletter, the rural pre-conference at CASE and other venues where Superintendents and stakeholders gather. Projects will have varying impact measures, while the following success indicators will be monitored the work of the CREC:

- Educational attainment
- Economic growth and business/industry engagement
- Teacher and principal quality
- Student engagement
- High school diploma and industry-recognized credentials quality and acquisition
- New investments in rural students, families, schools, and communities

## **Collaborative Governance**

- Collaborative Stewardship: Steering Committee members (District and BOCES representatives) meet twice annually (winter and summer) to provide direction and leadership to the CREC.
- Genesis Work Groups: Areas of focus are chosen for the development of work groups/ network improvement communities based on the direction provided by the Steering Committee. Interested districts are then invited to work together on the same high impact innovation priority (i.e., opportunity, educational quality and/or economic prosperity) with GSN providing the structure and back off functions to keep the group connected and moving forward.



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## **Signatures: District**

Superintendent of Participating District (*required*)

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

School Board President (*suggested*)

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures: Affiliated Organizations** (BOCES, higher education, economic/workforce development entities, philanthropy, non-profits, government agencies, etc.)

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures: Supporting Partners** (Generation Schools Network)

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

For any further questions about the Colorado Rural Education Collaborative, please contact:

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