



EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 2016

EARLY WINS IN 2015

Work-Based Learning

DPS CareerConnect has rapidly expanded work-based learning programs, including job shadows and mentoring. During the 2015-2016 school year, more than 1,200 students will participate in the CareerX Industry Exploration Program. More than 100 students have been matched one-to-one with mentors during our year-long CareerCoach Mentoring Program. In the summer of 2016, DPS CareerConnect will launch an ambitious internship program for 250 students studying STEM industries.

Project-Based Learning

DPS CareerConnect currently serves more than 6,000 students in 74 different programs across almost every high school in DPS. The program has seen 50% program enrollment growth in two years. Major focus STEM industries for growth include: engineering, biomedicine, technology, advanced manufacturing, and finance. More than 2,039 students are enrolled in new STEM pathways this year. Eighty percent of participants in STEM pathways are students of color, and 34% of STEM participants are female.

Through grants and generous donations, DPS CareerConnect was able to provide 11 complete facility upgrades to provide state-of-the-art learning spaces and over \$3M in new specialized equipment and supplies. DPS CareerConnect has 140 certified Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers and 40 school-based work-based learning support staff. Nine assistant principals lead DPS CareerConnect efforts and support students at schools with expanding STEM programs.

Recognition

DPS CareerConnect has received increased recognition over the last year. The program was recently inducted into STEMworks, a highly selective national database that recognizes quality in STEM and is operated by Change the Equation, a non-profit that works at the intersection of business and education to ensure that all students are STEM-literate. The online news outlet Technical.ly recognized DPS CareerConnect as one of Denver's top innovators in late January. DPS CareerConnect has also received recognition for quality implementation from the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as endorsements from Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper and Lt. Governor Joe Garcia.

K-8 Programs

Thanks to several recent investments from Campos EPC and Verizon, along with others, we are opening a new body of work where we will begin to take STEM project-based learning into earlier grades so students can gain STEM exposure before high school and make well-informed decisions regarding their choices of study.

Parent & Community Engagement

DPS CareerConnect is investing heavily in communications directed toward parents. In December 2015, CareerConnect hosted the Superintendent Parent Forum. Approximately 600 parents attended separate morning and evening sessions. The event included a panel discussion featuring CareerConnect students, teachers, business partners, and higher education leaders. CareerConnect staff also appeared on Educa Radio, a Spanish and English language talk show, four times within the last three months to discuss programs. The CareerConnect team is also working heavily with the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team to connect with parents through targeted outreach. Individual schools have also been holding open houses, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, STEM nights, and other events to connect with parents of high school and middle school students. In addition, DPS CareerConnect programs have been featured in the *Denver Business Journal* and the *Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce's Business Altitude Magazine*. DPS CareerConnect will be launching a parent newsletter in the spring of 2016. The team is also working to develop "CareerConnect advocates" at each DPS school who are well-informed about program offerings.

2016 Bond & Mill Levy – Sustainability?

Denver Public Schools is exploring the potential to seek funding in the form of a 2016 Bond Mill Levy Override. The Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) is currently meeting to discuss proposals. In January of 2016, DPS CareerConnect hosted members of the CPAC at the newly renovated West TechConnect building and gave a presentation about the CareerConnect program. The CPAC will present their recommendations to the Board of Education, which will make the final decision.

GOVERNOR HICKENLOOPER'S WORKFORCE MISSION TO SWITZERLAND

Elements of the Swiss System

In late January, Governor Hickenlooper, his Business Experiential Learning Commission and 30+ public, private and nonprofit sector leaders embarked on a mission to Switzerland to study the Swiss Vocational Education & Training (VET) system, widely considered to

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be the gold standard in experiential, career-focused education. VET is a system with permeability that prevents tracking of students and dead-end pathways and promotes a career focused education. This model has contributed to one of the most innovative, competitive economies in the world, has produced the lowest youth unemployment rate (3.4%), and high levels of industry innovation.

In the U.S., roughly 30% of graduating high school students continue on to higher education and almost half of them graduate. For those that do not succeed in the higher education route (more than 70%), there are very little options and no system to support them. In the Swiss VET system, roughly 30% of students immediately continue on to an academic higher education route while the other 70% of students, age 16 and older, participate in apprenticeships across a range of industries, including banking, information technology, and healthcare. Companies have the chance to shape young talent through a positive ROI model, meaning their training costs are actually an investment that provides a return through worker productivity during training, as well as employee loyalty and reduced turnover. Students who participate in Swiss apprenticeships are met with unlimited options for career and higher education. In fact, a majority of bankers and CEO's in Switzerland were apprentices themselves.

This is all achieved through a unique theory and practice model built into the Swiss system. Schools teach the theory and business provides the practice, all guided by competencies identified by trade associations. By age 16, students begin spending three days per week training and being productive in the workplace and two days in the classroom. It is common for a group of businesses or an entire trade association to come together to build an industry training center. This takes some of the burden off of the individual businesses while still providing the apprentices with a specific industry focused education.

One such example is the "Center for Young Professionals in Banking" (CYP). Created by the Swiss Banking Association and five banks including Credit Suisse and UBS, CYP serves as the industry specific training center for apprentices in the banking and finance sector. While a bank's 16-year-old apprentices are underwriting loans and building customer relations, they are also being sent to this training center 1 to 4 days per month for intensive training that is then put to use on the job. The curriculum is based on the competencies identified by the Swiss Banking Association and students that complete the program receive a certification recognized by the association which serves as a stackable credential to attend the Higher Technical College for Banking and Finance, a federally recognized university.

Vision for Denver/Colorado

The immersive and inspiring mission created a new vision for the future of workforce development and education in Colorado where...

- Businesses are engaged in the education system by becoming centers of learning and as drivers of career-focused education content. This is not done in the typical philanthropic fashion American companies are used to; rather, as an operational imperative to the vitality of a business' talent pipeline and a direct positive impact on company profitability.
- Students learn in a system that is built to be competitive in the global economy of the future (not one that has looked the same for 100 years), where they learn theory in school and perfect their skills on the job.
- Students are able to upskill at any point in their professional career with transferrable credit from their previous education and work experiences.
- Businesses move from being consumers of education to producers of education.

CareerResidency

DPS CareerConnect plans to implement many of the aforementioned elements in the new CareerResidency program. Designed by a cross-functional team with representation from Denver Public Schools (DPS), Colorado state government, Colorado advanced industry associations, and a nascent organization called Business and Schools in Collaboration (BASIC), the CareerResidency is a game-changing element in a new program model that builds on recent innovations in K-12 education and higher education to fundamentally transform high school, post-secondary opportunity, and workforce development.

CareerResidency is an "earn as you learn" system for grade 12 and year 13 where students would complete a Swiss-style apprenticeship along with a fully-transferable American associate's degree. Students would work 3 days a week and go to school two days a week for two years, finishing with well-developed skills and half of a 4-year degree complete and fully paid. The CareerResidency will launch beginning with a three-year pilot and then scale throughout DPS and the entire state. Currently, DPS CareerConnect is working with advanced manufacturing, healthcare/biomed, technology, and finance companies and higher education partners to create sets of industry-based competencies.