



APPENDIX A

Fostering Open Systems to Transform Education

Leaders across Colorado have created rapid and innovative responses to unique challenges presented throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the systems that support students, families, and communities are still near a breaking point. Staffing shortages are crippling essential services. Mental health is a concern for both children and the adults who support them, and children are presenting with behaviors that current systems are not designed to address. We must establish new and stronger partnerships to meet the rising social-emotional wellness needs of our children, parents, and workforce.

The recommendations presented in the 2021 Recovery Summer report are designed to accelerate change through open systems that focus on the whole child; center those furthest from opportunity; and promote dedicated, reciprocal partnerships between families, schools, and community organizations. Below are potential strategies for accelerating change within each recommendation in the report, as well as relevant examples of these strategies in action.

Prioritize and center family partnership and streamlining responsiveness to family needs

Strategy for change	State and national context
<p>Leverage out-of-school time (OST) and community-based organization (CBO) collaboration to expand and strengthen authentic family engagement.</p> <p>State-level advocacy organizations, such as <u>Colorado Children’s Campaign</u>, family resource centers, and other support organizations, can partner with school districts to identify and address unique local needs.</p>	<p>Colorado is home to several forward-thinking initiatives that engage and empower families and caregivers to be advocates in their children’s learning and development.</p> <p><u>Parents as Teachers</u> engages parents from pregnancy through kindergarten with home visitation and parent education. <u>Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)</u> empowers caregivers from diverse backgrounds to be active participants in preparing children for school success.</p>

Create and maintain comprehensive programs that meet whole child needs

Strategy for change	State and national context
<p>Grow the capacity of existing programs and create new programs that expand academic, enrichment, and social-emotional development experiences.</p> <p>Leverage OST and CBO partnerships to create local solutions to staffing shortages, needed supports for working families, and insufficient resources for students outside of school settings.</p>	<p>A 2021 report from Denver Afterschool Alliance highlights the collective impact of 10 comprehensive OST organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. It offers recommendations for funders, advocates, and partners to address post-pandemic challenges and ensure OST providers have the resources to support Denver’s most vulnerable children and families.</p> <p>American Institutes for Research’s Building Quality in Afterschool project summarized statewide efforts in the development of OST quality improvement systems in its 2020 annual report. The report examines seven areas: afterschool quality standards, assessment tools, core competencies for staff, credential systems, school-age quality rating and improvement systems, aligned professional development, and skill-building initiatives and frameworks.</p> <p>Colorado Education Initiative’s Social Emotional Ecosystem Framework offers a systems approach for designing and implementing integrated social-emotional development supports from within classrooms to family and community partnerships.</p> <p>The LAUNCH Together initiative led by Early Milestones summarized community efforts to build comprehensive early childhood mental health systems and opportunities for statewide impact.</p>

Ensure equitable outreach and opportunity for all families

Strategy for change	State and national context
<p>Create and leverage shared resources and funding to help school districts, OST program leaders, and community partners provide creative solutions, address achievement gaps, recruit and engage families, and increase equity while prioritizing communities with the most need.</p>	<p>State education agencies are using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to incentivize school partnerships with CBOs and increase the reach and capacity of programs. This approach is locally rooted and can improve equitable access to culturally responsive programming.</p>

Use existing and trusted communications channels to streamline resources and services to make access and use easier for families.

Some organizations in Colorado are reaching more families by promoting access to additional funding, providing comprehensive resources, utilizing mobile tools (e.g., [Bright By Text](#)), and involving families in system-level decision-making. The [Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition](#) and [Valley Settlement](#) are supporting schools to develop more intense parent engagement plans, recruiting parents from diverse backgrounds to parent leadership teams, and providing bilingual resources for their primarily Spanish-speaking communities.

[Parent Possible](#) is focusing on parent education and empowerment through outreach programs that meet caregivers where they are and using technology solutions to promote positive adult-child relationships.

Develop funding streams that promote collaboration and sustainability

Strategy for change	State and national context
<p>Use stimulus funding to pilot, learn from, and build sustainable financial models that encourage cross-system collaboration.</p>	<p>The U.S. Department of Education has underscored the importance of supporting community-based afterschool and summer providers in their guidance to state and local education agencies. In its Handbook to Reopening Schools, allowable funding activities include providing students with evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs, including through partnerships with CBOs.</p> <p>The Afterschool Alliance is actively tracking how American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding is being used at the state level to support summer enrichment, comprehensive afterschool, and learning recovery programs.</p> <p>Earlier this year, Colorado lawmakers authorized \$24.8 million for the Community Innovation and Resilience for Care and Learning Equity (CIRCLE) Grant program, which will be open to child care providers, community groups, education entities, Early Childhood Councils, and government agencies.</p>

Invest in statewide systems that promote quality, connection, and alignment

Strategy for change	State and national context
<p>Partner with existing organizations, such as Colorado Afterschool Partnership, Boys & Girls Clubs in Colorado, and Denver Afterschool Alliance, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build an infrastructure of training, support, and resources for program providers, schools, and staff to drive sustained, quality learning experiences in OST settings.• Identify data-collection opportunities, gaps in services, and state and local policy barriers.• Launch a continuous quality improvement system that includes technical assistance, professional development, and peer learning opportunities.• Enhance support for the OST workforce to ensure providers can attract, retain, and develop staff.• Tailor, disseminate, and train staff in using evidence-based practices and tools in ARPA-funded programs. <p>Conduct national research to learn from other state-level efforts and inform planning of sustainable statewide systems.</p>	<p>Current Colorado-based OST infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colorado Afterschool Partnership• Denver Afterschool Alliance• Boys & Girls Clubs in Colorado• 21st Century Community Learning Centers leadership and providers, Scholar's Unlimited, Adams12 Five Star, Douglas County BASE, CSU Extension, Rec4Kids, COAerolab, and many more <p>National examples of successful state-level afterschool networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utah Afterschool Network• Illinois Afterschool Network• Connecticut After School Network• New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network• Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network <p>The Forum for Youth Investment and 50 State Afterschool Network offer comprehensive OST leadership, advocacy, and resources.</p>