



UNIVERSITY *of* DENVER

COLORADO EVALUATION AND ACTION LAB

Colorado Lab Newsletter

September 2022

Featured in this newsletter:

- **Colorado Lab Hiring for Five New Positions**
- **Several RISE Grantees Move Toward Project Completion**
 - Evaluation of Colorado Lab Support Provided to RISE Grantees
 - Centennial BOCES: Helping Migrant Families Thrive
 - Montrose County School District: Supporting Student Wellness and Engagement
 - Denver-Area Charter Schools: Infusing Social-Emotional Learning into Summer Programs

Colorado Lab Hiring for Five New Positions

We're hiring! The Colorado Lab is seeking FIVE exceptional candidates for 2-year appointments with the possibility of an extension based on funding. Applicants must be local to the Denver area and apply by **4:00 PM MST Tuesday, September 27, 2022** for best consideration. Please share the postings to potential candidates in your network!

- **Senior Researcher** - Two positions are open to support the Lab's portfolio of research and evaluation projects. [Apply here.](#)
- **Senior Manager, Policy and Program** - Support the Director of the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Hub to manage the portfolio of evaluation work, including managerial direction to operations staff and bringing together evaluation communications for decision makers. [Apply here.](#)
- **LINC Project Specialist** - Help to ensure the [Linked Information Network of Colorado](#) (LINC) reaches its full potential as a critical resource to the State of Colorado and academic research community. This position includes supporting new LINC data partners through the onboarding process, managing the LINC project process, institutionalizing management processes, and maintaining the LINC website. [Apply here.](#)
- **Business Coordinator III** - Support critical functions of the Colorado Lab, including contract management, budgeting/financial management, internal and external communications, report and product editing, meeting and event planning, and information technology management. [Apply here.](#)

RISE Grantees Build Evidence

To address the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and promote innovation, Colorado awarded \$60 million to 38 grantees in late 2020/early 2021 through the [Response, Innovation, and Student Equity \(RISE\) Education Fund](#) funded by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund. The Governor's Office contracted with the Colorado Lab to assist 10 RISE grantees in moving along the [steps to building evidence](#) to ensure that these new and innovative approaches grow to be effective in improving student and family outcomes. In this month's newsletter, we share the progress of several RISE grantees as they move toward sustainability, along with an evaluation report on the support the Colorado Lab provided to the grantees. To learn more about these efforts, please reach out to [Dr. Lauren Gase](#).



Evaluation of Colorado Lab Support Provided to RISE Grantees

Laib Evaluation gathered feedback from RISE-funded and Colorado Lab-supported sites to better understand their experiences and to share learnings with funders, partners, and potential partner organizations. Evaluation results were overwhelmingly positive and are being used by the Colorado Lab to identify opportunities for improvement.

Results show that the Colorado Lab facilitated collaboration across project teams to help teams successfully design and implement their projects. Overall, the Colorado Lab's support contributed to:

- All 10 sites reporting enhanced communication and relationships within teams, project implementation, and processes and systems to measure progress, as well as increased knowledge.
- Eight sites reporting that they will reach partial-to-complete sustained implementation by the end of the project period.

Nearly all grantee respondents (96%) indicated they would recommend working with the Colorado Lab to other schools/districts.

"To have someone with an outside lens look at the work we are doing, ask good questions, redirect us when we get too far off task, and help drive the work forward has been invaluable. While we may have done the work, I don't think we would have been as organized to be able to account for the how/why, and track and sustain it without the organizational pieces and process we have gone through with support from the Lab."

- RISE grantee

[See the full report.](#)

Centennial BOCES: Helping Migrant Families Thrive

The [Centennial Board of Cooperative Educational Services](#) (Centennial BOCES) administers the largest Migrant Education Program (MEP) in Colorado, serving over 2,500 students in North Central and Northeast school districts and communities. Centennial BOCES secured RISE funding to address the unique needs of families in rural communities exacerbated by the pandemic ([see earlier story](#)).

The Colorado Lab supported Centennial BOCES in this work, helping them to identify key program elements and intended outcomes, develop tools for data collection, examine data to make meaning of progress, celebrate successes, troubleshoot barriers to implementation, and integrate lessons learned into next steps.



As a part of our partnership with Centennial BOCES, [we describe their work over the past decade](#) to cultivate partnerships with a diverse array of groups including school districts, higher education institutions, early learning centers, churches, community health clinics, local nonprofit organizations, and state departments like the Division of Housing to improve outcomes for migrant families that have been historically underserved.

The RISE funding was catalytic in supporting Centennial BOCES to expand their work with preschool-aged children and families. Centennial BOCES built the READY for School program, which delivers emergent literacy and oral language enrichment to preschool-aged children to help them be “preschool ready” and coaching parents to build self-efficacy. The Colorado Lab worked with Centennial BOCES to help them learn from their work and identify strategic next steps to sustain their work with this important population.

Montrose County School District: Supporting Student Wellness and Engagement

Montrose County School District directed RISE funds toward strengthening their Student Wellness and Engagement (SWE) program, building a tiered system of support to ensure students have their social-emotional needs met.

The RISE funding supported the district in its work to develop a referral process and support systems to increase access to mental health resources in six elementary schools. As the school year wrapped up, Colorado Lab staff met with the team in Montrose to synthesize work into an SWE Program Guide. The guide provides a central place to describe SWE’s approach and major activities and is geared toward three primary audiences:

- **SWE staff and members of the SWE implementation team:** to provide a central place to describe the work and support them in onboarding new staff/members
- **Elementary school leadership:** to orient them to what is available through SWE and how they can access SWE supports
- **School district leadership:** to support them in understanding the goals and scope of SWE

The guide is organized into five sections: a program overview, descriptions of the three tiers of SWE support available to elementary schools, a description of how elementary schools can access SWE services, the roles and responsibilities of SWE staff and partners, and how the program engages in ongoing learning and improvement. Each section is designed to stand alone so that it can be shared with different stakeholders.

Denver-area Charter Schools: Infusing Social-Emotional Learning in Summer Programs

With the support of a RISE grant, six Denver-area charter schools delivered summer programs that included academic, social-emotional, and experiential components ([see earlier story](#)). The Colorado Lab created a learning community to support these schools in sharing best practices and identifying and testing solutions to emerging challenges. In August, school leaders came together for the final learning community meeting to reflect on implementation and outcomes from their second round of summer programming.

RISE Learning Community Charter Schools

- Academy 360
- AUL Denver
- Colorado High School Charter
- Girls Athletic Leadership Schools
- Highline Academy
- RiseUp Community School

The Colorado Lab worked with school leaders to synthesize lessons learned, creating a [Summer Programs Toolkit](#) that shares the lessons, along with tools that other school leaders can use to develop summer programs. The Colorado Lab also created a video (below) to highlight the value of centering summer programs in social emotional learning. We are partnering with the Colorado League of Charter Schools to share these news resources.



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