Evaluation of Support Provided by the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab to Recipients of Colorado's RISE Education Fund

July 2022

Conducted by

LAIB EVALUATION CONSULTING

Evaluation Consultation

Laib Evaluation & Consulting, Inc., established in 2011, is a small, woman-owned business. Owner, Abby Laib, M.S., has over a decade of evaluation experience. Abby has worked with foundations, state and local government agencies, national non-profit and community-based organizations to provide collaborative and utilization-focused evaluations that support strategic learning, outcome demonstration, and program improvement.

Executive Summary

Background To address the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and promote innovation, Colorado awarded $40 million to 32 grantees in late 2020/early 2021 through the [Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund](#). The Governor's Office contracted with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to assist RISE grantees in moving along the Steps to Building Evidence Framework. Ten RISE awardees were selected to receive support. The Colorado Lab worked with each awardee to develop a scope of work, meeting the site where they were, to support evidence building.

Evaluation Purpose The Colorado Lab contracted with Laib Evaluation in April 2022 to gather feedback from sites to better understand RISE grantees experiences and share learnings with funders, partners, and potential partner organizations

Key Findings Evaluation results of the Colorado Lab's support were overwhelmingly positive and helped Colorado Lab staff identify actionable opportunities for improvement.

Site Achievements Supported by the Colorado Lab: 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 ten 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.

Colorado Lab Strengths: Almost all respondents (96%) indicated that they would recommend that other schools/districts work with the Colorado Lab. Sites reported the following types of support to be the most valuable:
- Being a thought partner and building trusting relationships with sites.
- Meeting teams where they were at in terms of planning and implementation while helping to articulate the project goals, design, and approach, and troubleshooting challenges.
- Bringing structure and organization to projects to support implementation and progress.
- Helping teams with meeting facilitation, developing communications plans, engaging stakeholders, obtaining buy-in, and celebrating wins.
- Identifying ways to measure progress, helping to gather and analyze data for sites.

Opportunities for Improvement: When asked about how the Colorado Lab could improve their support, 62% of team members (9 sites) reported, "no improvements needed," reflecting the overall value of the Colorado Lab's approach. Sites noted two primary opportunities for improvement:
- Provide greater clarity about the Colorado Lab's role and support.
- Provide greater clarity on stakeholder's role, responsibilities, and time commitment. This includes providing more information on how the Colorado Lab's support is structured for sites, and each team member's role within that structure.

Project Background

The Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund

The COVID-19 crisis has had an enormous impact operationally, educationally, and economically on Colorado P-12 school districts, charter schools, and institutions of higher education as well as students, parents, and families. To address these challenges and promote innovation, Colorado awarded $40 million to 32 grantees in late 2020/early 2021 through the Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund sponsored through the federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (GEER).
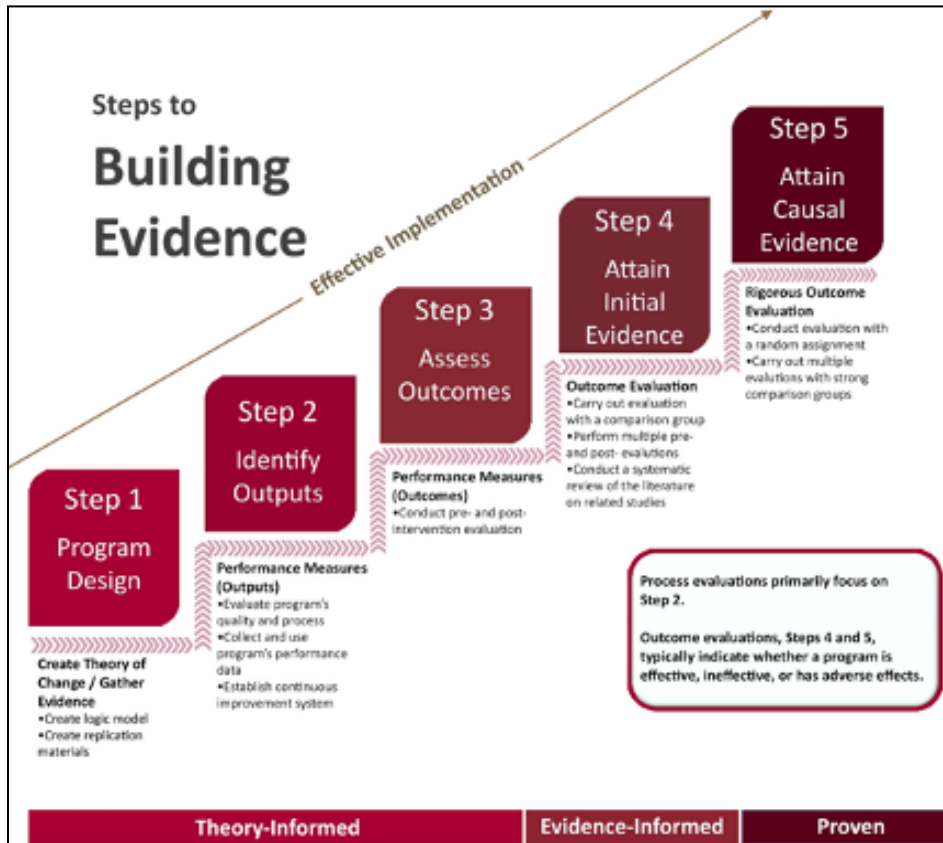
Support Provided by the Colorado Lab

The Governor's Office contracted with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to evaluate ten projects funded through RISE. However, context necessitated that "evaluation" be interpreted broadly. The goal of the Governor's Office in distributing funds competitively rather than by formula, as was done in other states, was to inform reform efforts across the state by stimulating innovative solutions and encouraging rigorous evaluation. However, as demonstrated in the Steps to Building Evidence Framework (Figure 1), these goals are in tension: innovative programs should start at step 1 and "rigorous evaluation" typically refers to steps 4 and 5. When asked to prioritize these criteria in selecting sites for funding, the Governor prioritized innovation. With this in mind, the Colorado Lab's support focuses on three goals:

- Supporting successful implementation of RISE projects.
- Supporting sustainability of RISE projects, defined as ongoing implementation alongside routine data collection, review, and improvement.
- Identifying and supporting dissemination of lessons learned to support the scale of RISE projects.

The Colorado Lab, in partnership with the Governor's Office, identified ten RISE awardees to receive support. Awardees were selected based on the following criteria:

- A need for additional evaluation support and were enthusiastic about building evidence around the programs.
- If successful, the program had the potential to be used by similar schools across the state.
- The program had clear, if informal, theories of change that led to improved outcomes such as:
    - Increased engagement in school by bringing resources to students.
    - Improved social emotional development and school engagement by addressing the underlying causes of behavioral challenges.
    - Increased access to and success in postsecondary education through purposeful connections between rural or disadvantaged urban high schools and Colorado institutions of higher education.

Figure 1. Colorado Steps to Building Evidence model

Steps to Building Evidence

Effective Implementation

Step 1
Program Design
Create Theory of Change / Gather Evidence
• Create logic model
• Create replication materials

Step 2
Identify Outputs
Performance Measures (Outputs)
• Evaluate program's quality and process
• Collect and use program's performance data
• Establish continuous improvement system

Step 3
Assess Outcomes
Performance Measures (Outcomes)
• Conduct pre- and post-intervention evaluation

Step 4
Attain Initial Evidence
Outcome Evaluation
• Carry out evaluation with a comparison group
• Perform multiple pre- and post- evaluations
• Conduct a systematic review of the literature on related studies

Step 5
Attain Causal Evidence
Rigorous Outcome Evaluation
• Conduct evaluation with a random assignment
• Carry out multiple evaluations with strong comparison groups

Process evaluations primarily focus on Step 2.

Outcome evaluations, Steps 4 and 5, typically indicate whether a program is effective, ineffective, or has adverse effects.

| Theory-Informed | Evidence-Informed | Proven |

Note: The model has been adopted by the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting for use when considering budget requests.

The Colorado Lab worked with each awardee to develop a scope of work, meeting the site where they were, to support evidence building. For most sites, work started with development of one or more site-based implementation teams, an active group of key project stakeholders that supported the planning, execution, improvement, and sustainability of the initiative.

The Colorado Lab supported teams in a variety of ways, for example:
- Surfacing assumptions about why interventions are expected to make a difference (developing a theory of change).
- Defining what it looks like for an initiative to be "fully implemented."
- Helping to make the implicit explicit and to support team members in developing shared mental models and language.
- Identifying and troubleshooting implementation drivers, such as staff buy-in, community perspectives, or external conditions.
- Generating testable hypotheses, identifying data to measure progress, and building sustainable infrastructure for collecting relevant student and family outcomes.
- Articulating the populations that strategies are designed to impact, under what conditions, and why.

Figure 2 shows the timeline for grant implementation and Colorado Lab support. Toward the end of the funding periods, the Colorado Lab will work collaboratively with awardees to develop accessible dissemination materials to support the identification and sharing of lessons learned.

Figure 2. Timeline for Implementation Funding and Lab Support
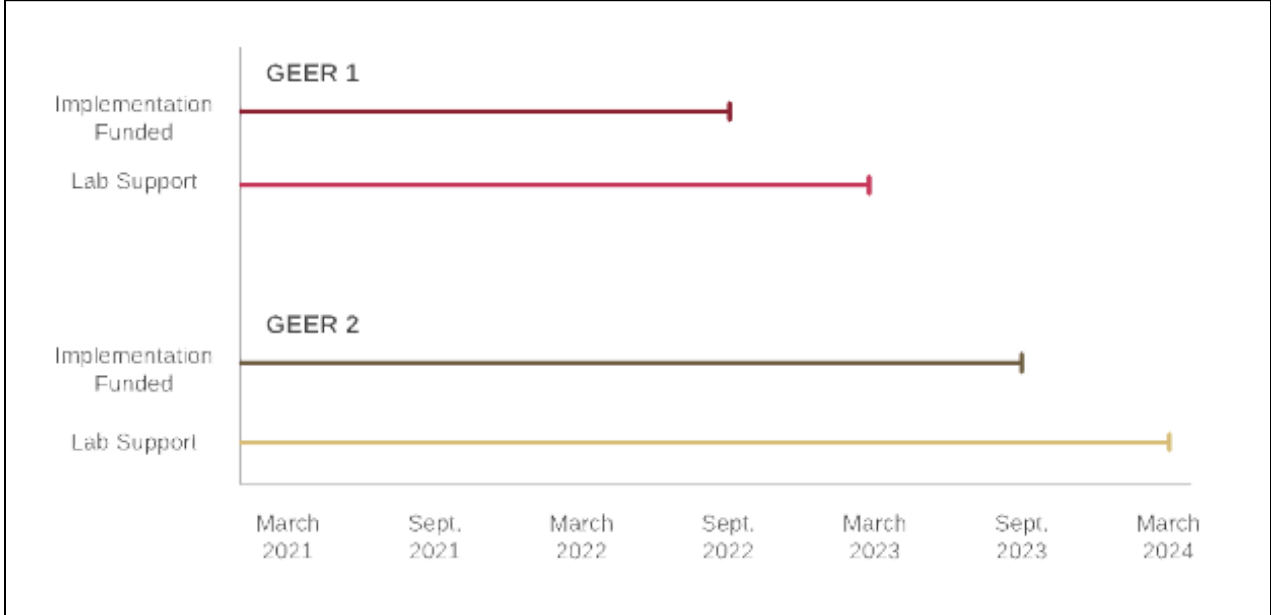
Note: Seven projects are funded with GEER 1, while three are funded through GEER 2.

Evaluation Purpose

The Colorado Lab contracted with Laib Evaluation to conduct an evaluation to better understand RISE grantees experiences and share learnings with funders, partners, and potential partner organizations. The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Gather feedback on the work done with RISE grantees thus far to support continuous improvement within the Colorado Lab.
- Identify short-term impacts of the Colorado Lab's work as well as opportunities to sustain or improve support.
- Demonstrate accountability and responsible use of funds invested in the Colorado Lab.
- Increase stakeholder's understanding of the value of and potential outcomes from funding support for grantees based in implementation science.

Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions guided the evaluation:.

1. What outcomes have sites achieved?
2. To what extent was the Colorado Lab's approach and processes valuable? How could support be improved?
3. How can the Colorado Lab support the successful implementation of innovative school-based projects and lay the foundation for ongoing data-informed decision-making?

Results

Results are organized into three sections: site achievements, Colorado Lab strengths, and opportunities for improvement. Each section includes key takeaways, detailed results, as well as the Colorado Lab's examples and reflections on the results, which were shared with Laib Evaluation.

Site Achievements Supported by the Colorado Lab

Key Takeaways

> The Colorado Lab facilitated collaboration across project teams to help sites successfully design and implement their projects. Overall, the Colorado Lab's support contributed to:
> - All ten 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.

The Colorado Lab's support helped sites to enhance communication and build relationships within the project teams, while supporting teams to develop processes to measure progress and implement their projects. Figure 3 shows respondents' perceived impact of the Colorado Lab's support on six site achievements; five of the six achievements reflect a mean score between "somewhat" and "very much." These findings were consistent across sites.

The following illustrate site achievements supported by the Colorado Lab:
- The Lab supported Centennial BOCES in summarizing data collected by their Ready for School program, an emergent literacy and oral language enrichment program for preschool-aged children. Results were used to help inform development of a program guide, which included a program logic model, essential elements, tools, templates, and plans to inform the next iteration of the program.
- The Lab supported the Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative in developing graphical depictions of their complex project for use with internal and external stakeholders to create buy-in and alignment. These models have helped the Collaborative effectively communicate about their work, resulting in successful recruitment of additional school district partners and millions of dollars in grant funding to support their efforts beyond RISE.

Enhancing communication with external stakeholders was a focus area for only a few sites. For example, the Colorado Lab supported West Grand School District in developing messages and strategies to communicate to diverse stakeholders-including the school board, community members, and potential employees–about the value of their expansion of the Early Childhood Center. Survey results reflect that fewer respondents reported that Colorado Lab's support helped them in this area.

Figure 3. Extent to which the Colorado Lab supported site achievements (n=44)
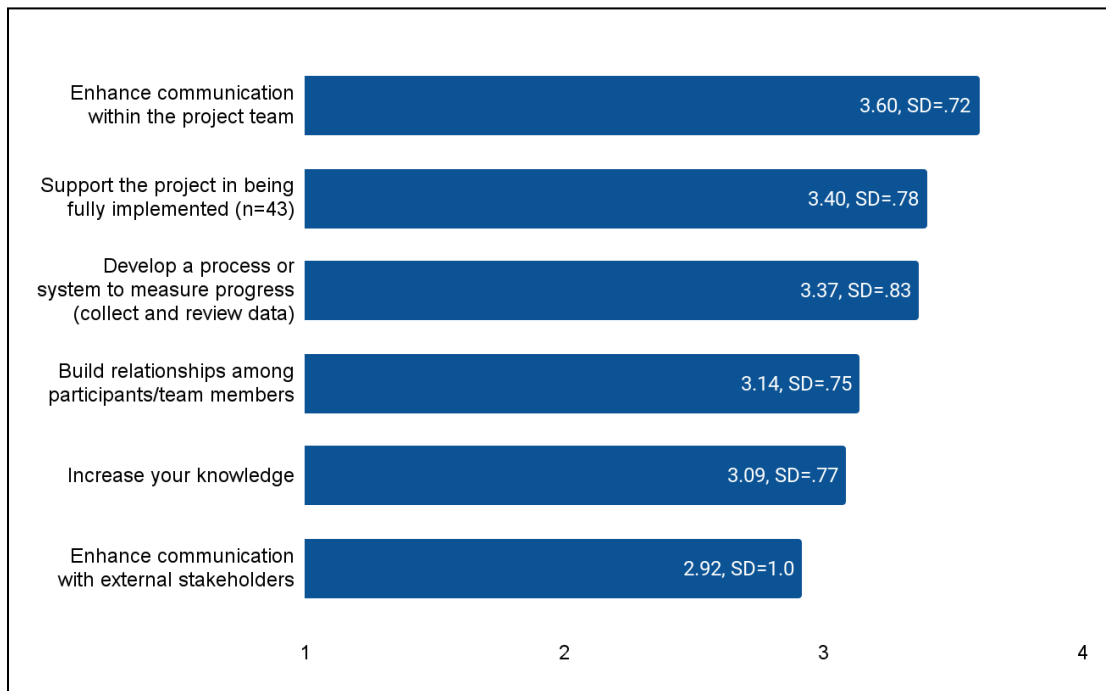
Question: To what extent, if at all, did the Colorado Lab's support help to…
Scale: 1= Not at all, 2=A little, 3=Somewhat, 4=Very much

The Colorado Lab was able to support sites in moving toward sustained implementation of their projects. Sustained implementation was defined as ongoing implementation of all project components, alongside routine collection and review of data to support ongoing improvement. Table 1 shows the extent to which each of the ten sites perceived they would reach sustained implementation.[1] The four sites in the "complete" and "complete - partial" categories made sustained commitments to use the RISE funding to catalyze a new way of working. Examples of new ways of working include: creating new programs/structures to support social and emotional wellbeing, shifting the school's approach to learning to support students in being ready for college/career, and expanding the organization's work to address the needs of a previously unserved population. In addition, the Colorado Lab staff believes that at least two of the three sites that reported "partial" sustained implementation will reach complete sustainability by the end of the Lab's support.

Two sites indicated being "not sure" of sustained implementation status; both experienced significant challenges in implementing their RISE projects including staff turnover and community buy-in. Likewise, the site with mixed responses ("complete - partial - limited"), experienced large-scale staff turnover and capacity issues, likely driving the uncertainty amongst team member responses.

---

[1] Team members from the same sites sometimes reported varying perceptions. For example, one respondent might report "complete" while another person from the same site might report "partial" sustained implementation.

Table 1. Extent to which sites perceived that they would reach sustained implementation (n=10)

To what extent do you feel like you will reach "sustained implementation" of the RISE work, by the end of the grant period?	Number of Sites
Complete	1
Complete - Partial	3
Partial	3
Complete - Partial - Limited	1
None	0
Not sure	2

The evaluation explored the relationship between site achievements supported by the Colorado Lab and perceived ability to reach sustained implementation. Overall, there were no consistent patterns: sites that reported various levels of sustained implementation reported value in working with the Lab on all of the six site achievements.

Colorado Lab Strengths

Key Takeaways

> Almost all respondents (96%) indicated that they would recommend other schools/districts work with the Colorado Lab. Sites reported the following types of support to be the most valuable:
> - Being a thought partner and building trusting relationships with sites.
> - Meeting teams where they were at in terms of planning and implementation while helping to articulate the project goals, design, and approach, and troubleshooting challenges.
> - Bringing structure and organization to projects to support implementation and progress.
> - Helping teams with meeting facilitation, developing communications plans, engaging stakeholders, obtaining buy-in, and celebrating wins.
> - Identifying ways to measure progress, helping to gather and analyze data for sites.

The Colorado Lab demonstrated numerous strengths in their approach to working with sites (Figure 5). Project team members saw the Colorado Lab as a valuable thought partner, who met the teams where they were at, understood their goals, and built a trusting relationship with sites. These findings were consistent across sites.

In open-ended responses team members reported the Colorado Lab brought a structure and organization that helped to support their program plans, designs, and implementation. Responses

indicate that team members valued the Colorado Lab as important thought partners that helped implementation teams think strategically, brainstorm ideas, reflect and better collaborate. One project team member noted the value of the Lab's thought partnership: "the most valuable thing about working with the Colorado Lab was their help as thought partners. They helped us think critically about areas of the program that we hadn't thought about. They also did a great job helping around data analysis and helped us lay our program design on paper. It was so refreshing to see [our] program components laid out in a visually friendly model that helps us explain the program very effectively." See Appendix A for full qualitative results.

Figure 5. Project team members' experiences working with the Colorado Lab (n=47)
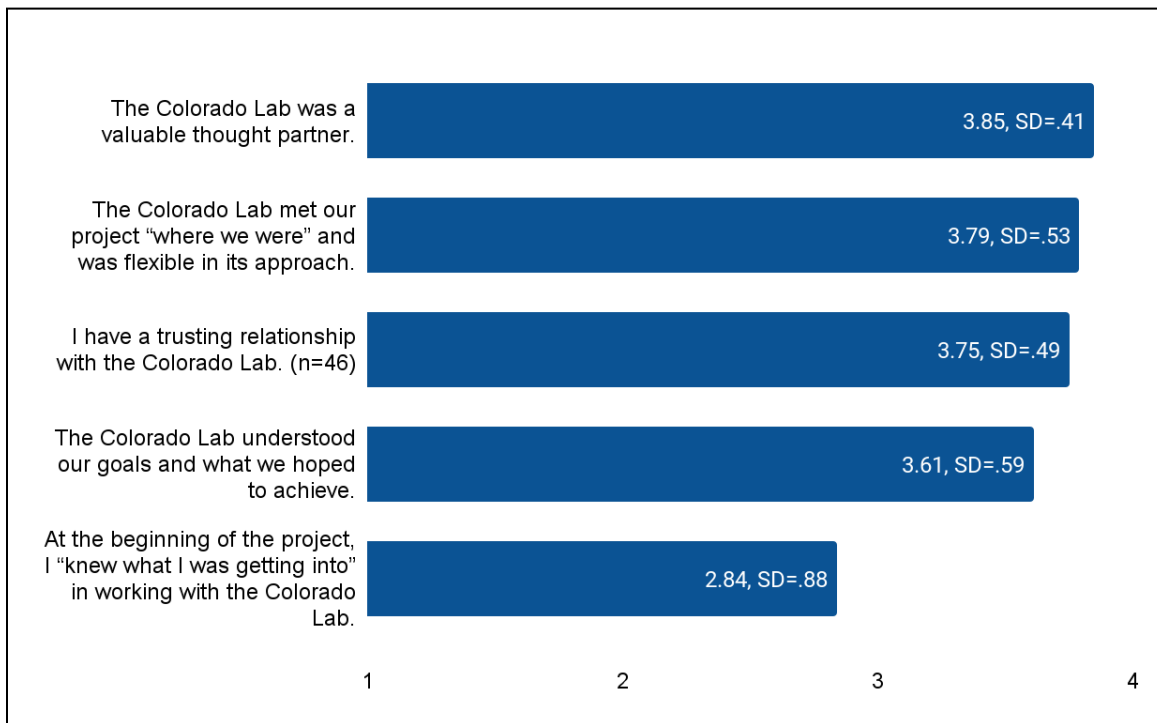
Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience working with the Colorado Lab?
*Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Strongly agree*

Sites found working with the Colorado Lab helpful in a wide variety of ways (Figure 6), including meeting facilitation, developing communications plans, helping to articulate project outcomes, strategy and approach, identifying ways to measure progress, troubleshooting challenges, and celebrating wins. These findings were consistent across sites.

In open-ended responses, respondents mentioned they valued and saw the Colorado Lab's role in supporting the launch and implementation of their programs/curriculum, overall evaluation, analyses and data sharing support, helping engage stakeholders and gaining buy-in for their programs. One project team member noted the value of developing a theory of change, writing, "the Lab has done a great job of guiding this process and creating a visual representation of the work we're doing." Another

noted the value of support on measurement, writing about the value of the Lab in "helping to find meaningful data to use as measurements." See Appendix A for full qualitative results.

Figure 6. Level of helpfulness of types of support provided by the Colorado Lab (n=41-44)
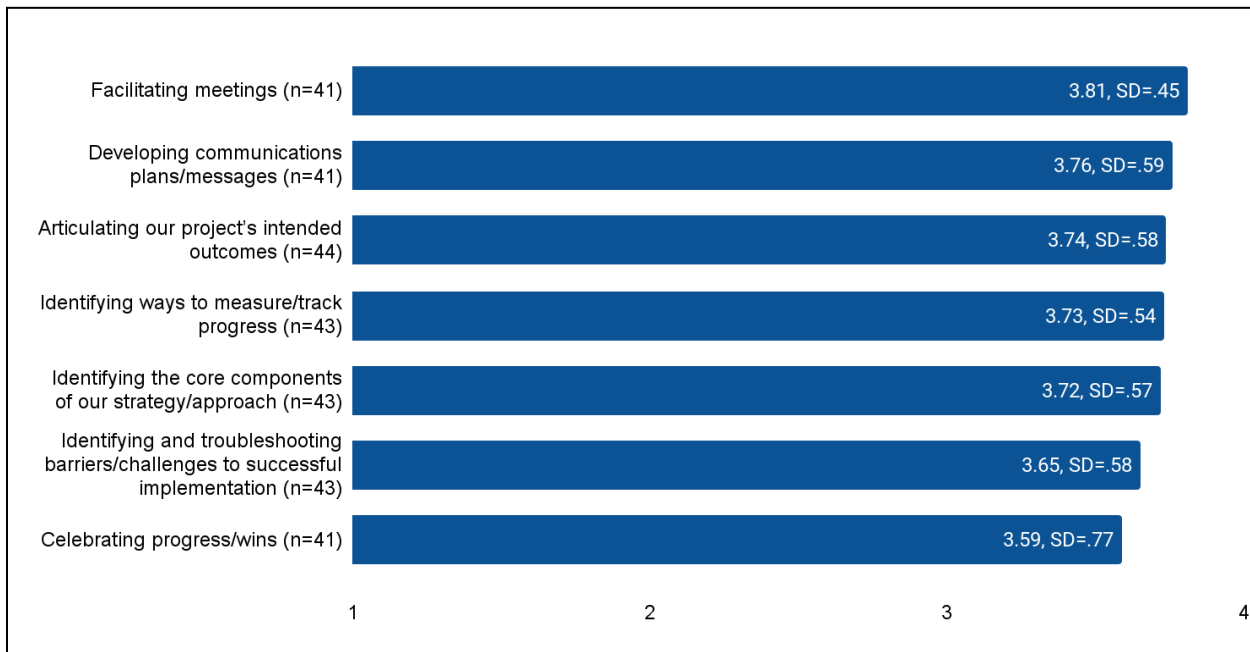
Question: How helpful was it to work on the following with the Colorado Lab…
*Scale: 1=Not at all helpful, 2=A little helpful, 3=Somewhat helpful, 4=Very helpful*

As noted in the introduction, the Colorado Lab supported many sites in developing one or more site-based implementation teams, an active group of key project stakeholders that supported the planning, execution, improvement, and sustainability of the initiative. Implementation team support was tailored to the needs of each site. For example,

- In working with school leaders from six Denver-area charter schools, the Lab supported the development of a learning community, where school leaders could brainstorm successes, challenges, and future directions for their summer programs.
- The Lab supported three rural districts implementing Tier 1 Social-Emotional Learning to define what successful implementation looked like in the classroom and gather monthly data to monitor progress toward this goal. Cross-district implementation teams of teachers and school mental health professionals used the data to develop recommendations for building and district leadership about changes to policy and practice necessary to sustain the effort long-term.

Nearly half of respondents (43%) from seven sites reported that the Colorado Lab facilitated an implementation team or learning community at their site. In some cases (6 sites), respondents from within the same site reported mixed responses as to whether the Colorado Lab supported work in this area. Colorado Lab staff found this to be an unexpected finding, given that most participants were active members of these structures.

Respondents who provided feedback on the teams generally felt the teams included the right people and that meetings were useful and provided space to reflect and plan (Figure 7). Few respondents reported confusion about why the group was meeting. The value of the implementation team was reflected in the open-ended comments. For example, one respondent noted the value of the Lab in supporting structures that allowed them to "hear from other schools about what they were doing and what their struggles were."

Figure 7. Implementation team/learning community feedback (n=20)
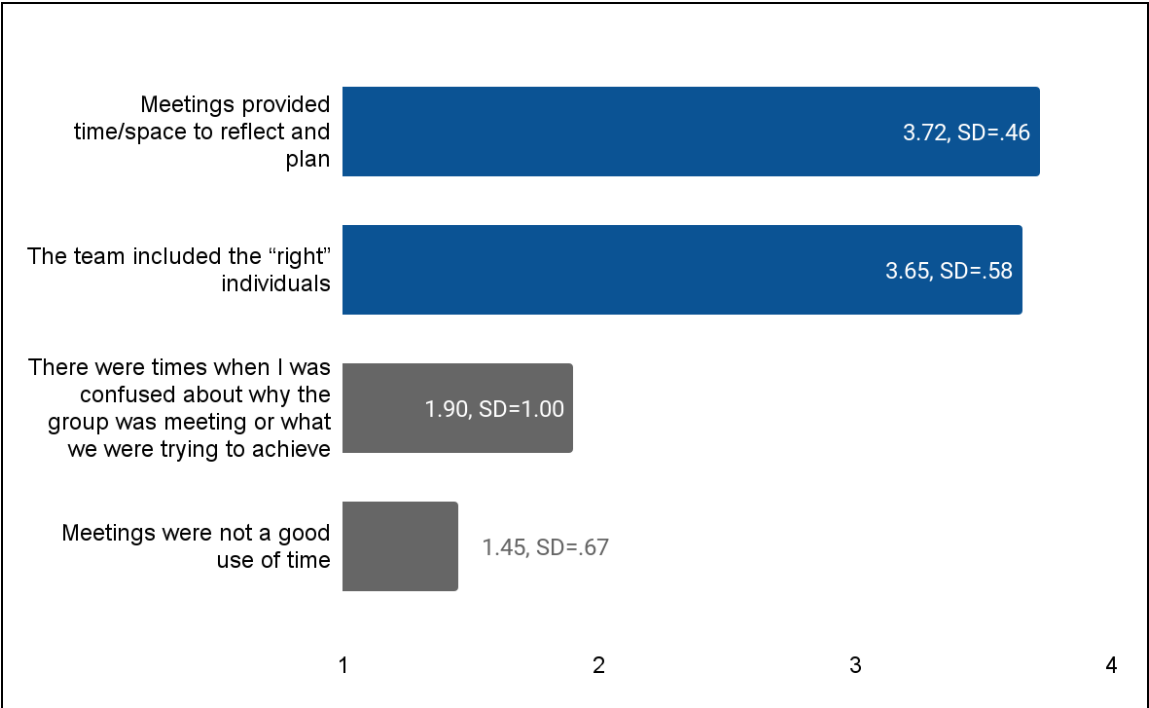
Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the implementation team/learning community?
Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Strongly agree

Over half of respondents (n=24) reported they would "definitely" recommend working with the Colorado Lab to others, with nearly all other respondents reporting that they would "probably" recommend from all sites (Figure 8). Sites reported they would recommend the Colorado Lab because of the level of knowledge, expertise, thought partnership, and outside perspective they bring to a project. The following quote illustrates the multiple dimensions of the Colorado Lab support including thought partnership, facilitation, organization, and measurement, as to why sites would recommend working with the Colorado Lab.

> *"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."*

Figure 8. Would you recommend that other districts/schools work with the Colorado Lab? (n=44)

Definitely would recommend — 55%
Probably would recommend — 41%
Probably would not recommend — 1%
Definitely would not recommend — 3%
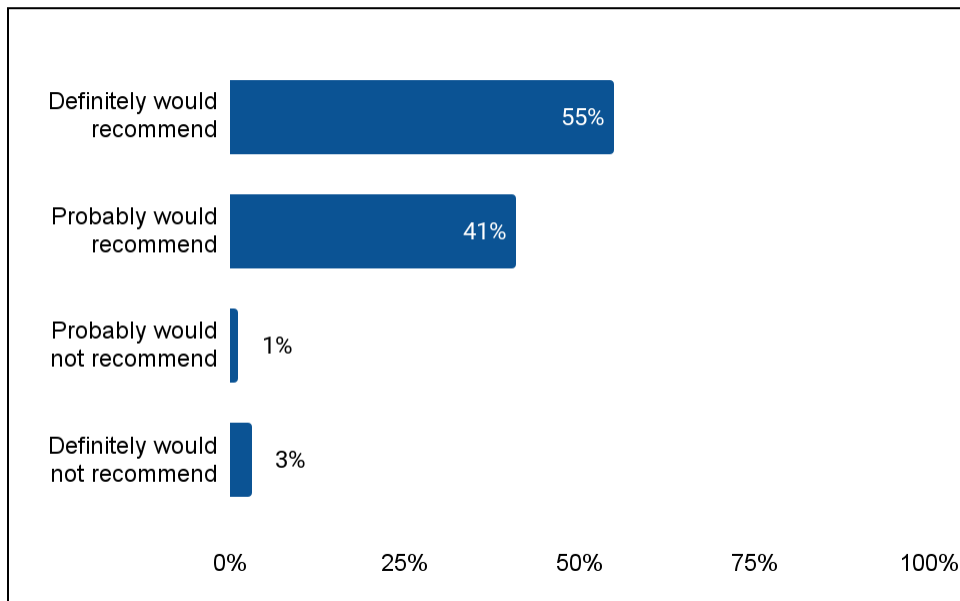
Opportunities for Improvement

Key Takeaways

When asked about how the Colorado Lab could improve their support, 62% of team members (9 sites) reported, "no improvements needed," reflecting the overall value of the Colorado Lab's approach.

Sites noted two primary opportunities for improvement:
- Provide greater clarity about the Colorado Lab's role and support.
- Provide greater clarity on stakeholder's role, responsibilities, and time commitment. This includes providing more information on how the Colorado Lab's support is structured for sites, and each team member's role within that structure.

The primary area for improvement identified by sites was the need for the Colorado Lab to provide greater clarity on their role and the scope of their support (38%, 6 sites). Providing greater clarity and ongoing orientation for new team members may help the 25% of respondents who reported needing a better understanding of "what they were getting into" in working with the Colorado Lab (Figure 5). Colorado Lab staff reflected on the importance of grounding sites in project goals, expectations, and roles upfront, as well as throughout the project, especially during periods of turnover or transition in project leadership. They also noted the value in identifying the "right" contact person at each site at the start of the project, who both holds the project vision and is able to engage in day-to-day work to guide the project.

Relatedly, some respondents (n=8, 2 sites) noted the need for greater clarity and information on responsibilities for all team members, the purpose of meetings, and action items to be completed between meetings. As one respondent noted, "only having a year to do this work, it felt like it took a while for all of us to figure out 'who was doing what' and sometimes it felt like there were too many hands in one pot."

As noted previously, the need for greater clarity on roles and structures is underscored by respondents' confusion as to whether an implementation team or learning community was actually implemented at their site. There is likely a need for continued orientation to project roles, responsibilities, and expectations as sites experience turnover and new members join

Other suggested areas for improvement (each noted by n=2, 2 sites) included: (a) finding ways to better connect with rural districts, (b) the need for more data to support implementation, and (c) being mindful of time commitment asked of teams. One quote for each of these areas helps illustrate these perspectives:

- Connecting with rural districts: *"I think the Lab folks were pleasant and wanted to be helpful. To be honest the main problem with consultants from Denver working with rural districts/schools etc. is the disconnect. And as hard as both parties try to understand each other's situation/perspective etc. there is always a disconnect."*
- Need for more data to support implementation: *"I am a data person and the people at my school are data people. Our jobs are based on data and test scores. In order for me to get my other teachers on board with teaching SEL there needs to be data that shows a direct correlation to student academic success and SEL practices."*
- Mindful of time commitments: *"Even though I know the intention was really great, sometimes it felt like another time-consuming meeting to attend, and that's difficult when everyone is so busy actually doing the work, so I think being mindful about time the lab is asking for would be helpful."*

Methods

The evaluation used a short online survey to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The 14-question survey included questions focused on site achievements, the experiences, benefits and value of working with the Colorado Lab, and suggested areas for improvement (Appendix B). The Colorado Lab developed the initial draft of the survey. Laib Evaluation provided feedback to refine the survey, administered the survey, conducted analyses, and reported results in an effort to reduce bias in the evaluation process. The Colorado Lab informed RISE team members of the upcoming survey, the purpose, encouraged participation, and informed that the survey would come from an independent evaluator.

The survey was administered online between mid-April and mid-May 2022, approximately one year after sites began work with the Colorado Lab. Team members who had not yet responded received weekly reminders to encourage survey completion.

In June 2022, Laib Evaluation presented and discussed survey results with the Colorado Lab to inform interpretation of key findings. In addition, the Colorado Lab shared examples of their support and experiences working with sites to help bolster the understanding of results for this report.

Sample

The RISE sample included all active RISE project team members from any organization who engaged with the Colorado Lab. "Engaged" was defined as having participated in three or more meetings/activities. The sample excluded anyone who had transitioned from their position, as there was no way to contact them. The sample included 53 project team members from the 10 sites. The number of project team members varied at each site, between 1 and 20.

Response Rate

The survey achieved an 89% response rate. Each site had at least one respondent and site response rates were between 50-100%, with an average of 86% and most commonly achieved response rate of 100%. Overall, the response rate achieved is considered a high response rate and is representative of the sample.

Analysis

Due to sites having a different number of team members, data was weighted so that sites with more responses would not disproportionately impact the results. Weights were calculated by taking the total number of responses (n=47) and dividing by the number of sites (n=10), then dividing the total number of responses from each site.

Laib Evaluation ran overall weighted descriptives, including frequencies, means and standard deviations, on all likert scale and selection questions. Laib Evaluation also ran descriptives by site, role, and GEER group to understand additional perspectives. Because there were no meaningful differences when looking at disaggregation by roles or the GEER group, those results are not presented. This report includes aggregate and site-level results.

Laib Evaluation conducted a thematic analysis on all open-ended questions to identify patterns or themes to understand overall and site perspectives. Once reviewed, Laib Evaluation identified common words or thoughts to inform themes for all qualitative responses. Once common themes were developed, Laib Evaluation reviewed each response again to identify which themes each response could be counted or included within. Some responses represented multiple themes. Themes were then quantified by how many respondents and by how many sites shared these ideas, to identify most prevalent themes. These data helped in giving meaning to the quantitative descriptive data. Thematic results are only shared if two or more sites reported a similar theme. Thematic data summaries can be found in Appendix A with theme descriptions, respondent and site counts, and sample quotes.

A limitation that impacted the sampling methodology and potentially some of the results was the high rates of staff turnover across several sites. This often led to continued reorientation of the project and team members being at different stages of understanding, which may have impacted results.

Another potential limitation to the results is acquiescence bias, also known as friendliness or confirmation bias; a respondent's tendency to agree with questions. In open-ended questions the Colorado Lab was often referred to as having strong expertise and knowledge, this could lead to respondents not wanting to provide critical feedback. Social desirability bias is also a potential limitation to any sort of feedback data collection. Often respondents want to answer in a desirable way so others will like or accept them. The Colorado Lab worked closely with sites for over a year, which could impact relationships and social interactions. The Colorado Lab made efforts to mitigate these biases by using an external evaluator to administer and analyze the survey, and by constructing survey questions and responses in a more neutral tone.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Table 1. What was the most valuable thing worked on with the Colorado Lab? (Q5)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
Structure and organization to support planning, program design, setting/focusing goals, and progress.	12	7	- The Lab provided the organization, structure, and leadership we were lacking. - The Lab was awesome to keep us on track. She is amazing at staying organized, focused and supportive. Great listener & able to interpret our needs when our conversations oftentimes strayed. - Helping to clarify the larger goals of the project and also creating steps to reach certain goals. - The Lab has done a great job of guiding this process and creating a visual representation of the work we're doing.
Thought partners that facilitated collaboration, implementation, strategic thinking, brainstorming, reflection and evaluation.	9	6	- The most valuable thing about working with the Colorado Lab was their help as thought partners. They helped us think critically about areas of the program that we hadn't thought about. They also did a great job helping around data analysis and helped us lay our program design on paper. It was so refreshing to see out program components laid out in a visually friendly model that helps us explain the program very effectively. - The most valuable thing was having a thought partner and processing time. The Lab is fantastic at allowing me to verbalize the needs and process, then they would prompt me with guiding questions. - The Lab serves as a thought and strategy partner for me and we work collaboratively to implement the plan. This relationship is what I value most. - Thought partnership on evaluation.
Evaluation support related to data collection, developing tools, analyses, and sharing meaningful data.	5	3	- Helping to find meaningful data to use as measurements - Creating the rubrics/surveys and leading the implementation meetings. - Collecting data on our students' mental health. - Thought partnership on evaluation.
Learning from others and resource sharing.	4	2	- Hearing from other schools about what they were doing and what their struggles were. - The cross group meetings they facilitated to hear about what other schools were doing - The shared documents from learnings, lessons learned, community partnership resources, and hopefully data sharing.
Engaging stakeholders and gaining buy-in.	3	1	- Engaging staff in SEL and getting buy in - Ideas to get staff more on board with SEL [...] and the interaction with other individuals outside of our building

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Table 2. How would you describe the Colorado Lab's role in supporting RISE at your site? (Q6)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
Facilitation and structure for planning, program design, setting and focusing goals and progress	14	6	● It has made a huge difference. I don't think our project would be nearly as organized without them. ● Colorado Lab played a large role in supporting our work. They were able to guide us, keep us on target and help put organization to the work. ● I don't know if we would be as far along or have such great progress. I think we would have been doing the work, but the organization, tracking, and creating data and systems might not have been as far as it is. ● They facilitate progress.
Thought partners that facilitated collaboration, implementation, strategic thinking.	8	6	● They were helpful thought partners, resourceful and responsive. ● Fantastic. Helped keep us on track and brought in great ways of thinking differently for coming up with effective solutions ● It was very helpful because it gave us a space to brainstorm and figure out how to best create our innovative strategy ideas. ● They were helpful thought partners, resourceful and responsive.
Resource sharing and responsive support provided.	5	3	● The Colorado Lab not only gave us some SEL tools that we were in need of, but it also gave us ideas of how to begin to use those resources, ways to help tailor them to fit our needs and gave us some valuable data about how SEL looked across our school district. ● Good- it seemed like they were quietly in the background, but were ready to answer any questions and provide guidance when needed.
Engaging stakeholders in open/honest discussions and gaining support.	3	1	● They also made it feel like a safe place to discuss concerns we had about SEL instruction (or lack of) at our sites and were going to take our questions to administration to see how they could better assist us. ● I appreciated someone who facilitated those meetings who was not from any of the [...] districts that were working on this program. It allowed for open and honest communication about what we were struggling with
Lacked understanding of the rural community dynamics.	2	2	● Though the Colorado Lab understood our goals, I'm not sure they understood the dynamic of our small, rural community. ● I think the Lab folks were pleasant and wanted to be helpful. To be honest the main problem with consultants from Denver working with rural districts/schools etc. is the disconnect. And as hard as both parties try to understand each other's situation/perspective etc. there is always a disconnect.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Table 3. Please provide more details on how the Colorado Lab Support could be improved. (Q8)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
Greater clarity and information on roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (including Colorado Lab), purpose of meetings and work to be done in between.	8	2	• Only having a year to do this work, it felt like it took a while for all of us to figure out "who was doing what" and sometimes it felt like there were too many hands in one pot. • In the beginning I did not entirely understand the goals and objectives of the CO Lab. • There are multiple stakeholders involved in this project and I feel like Colorado lab could've helped to ensure and guide how everyone was involved • It was sometimes confusing what the goals of the meeting were. For example, was meeting a time to brainstorm or a time to check off a list of work getting done. Needed to have more clarity about what the school should be doing between the check in meetings.
Find ways to connect with sites and stakeholders to provide support and avoid the "disconnect".	3	2	• I think having someone on campus occasionally would be helpful • It would be addressing what I said earlier about the disconnect. My suggestion is to get people in the field who can work with schools directly. Online/Zoom mtg consultation has its purpose but that has to be coupled with "boots on the ground" so to speak. • I have felt ignored and lost. Once I felt this disconnect, it was hard for me to plug back in
More info on data collection/ use and evidence base to support implementation and buy-in.	2	2	• Making it clear what they will be collecting information on and how it will be used. • I am a data person and the people at my school are data people. Our jobs are based on data and test scores. In order for me to get my other teachers on board with teaching SEL there needs to be data that shows a direct correlation to student academic success and SEL practices.
Being more mindful about time commitment of meetings.	2	2	• Even though the end time is scheduled as 5:45p for [...] meetings, it would be ok to end earlier. • Even though I know the intention was really great, sometimes it felt like another time-consuming meeting to attend, and that's difficult when everyone is so busy actually doing the work, so I think being mindful about time the lab is asking for would be helpful.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Table 4. What do you wish you had been able to work on with the Colorado Lab, but did not? (Q9)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
Nothing or not applicable, indicating sites didn't have any additional wishes they wanted to work on with the Colorado Lab	17	6	• I cannot think of anything specific at the moment. • Nothing comes to mind. • All went well, nothing
More time to continue work, figure out next steps and timelines.	5	2	• I can't think of anything. Maybe more time to do the work. • I just wish we could work longer together throughout this grant. It would be nice to have monthly or even quarterly check-ins to keep us on task with the new measures we are creating, etc. as we implement new work next year. • I wish we had worked on the program rollout timeline with them the first year.
More funding opportunities or types to support programs.	2	2	• I wish we can have more grants available to keep up the good collaboration • Restorative justice programs
Assistance with stakeholder engagement	2	1	• More help with the small groups. • More work including other buildings in our district and including admin in meetings.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Table 5. What have been the biggest benefits/outcomes of the Colorado Lab's support? (Q10)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
Thought partnership that provided guidance, expertise, outside perspective, and support.	12	6	● Colorado Lab has provided many benefits but if I had to name two, they would be keeping the project a structured/targeted road to our desired outcome and provided a different lens to see the work through. ● Having a thought partner to reflect on meetings and plan the next meetings has been really beneficial. Lauren is so in tune with my goals for our work and we have been able to collaborate on making our time and team better over time. ● Having an outside perspective. Easy to get lost in certain things when you are living them all the time. Having a different/outside view helped. ● Our [...] team has felt that we have a partnership with CoLab and not just a group that we connect with. We are also wanting to continue our relationship with the team after the RISE grant where applicable. They have a strong team and we collaborate very well and they have helped with creating new components to our program which have been very helpful for our school districts. ● They are able to listen to all your thoughts and ideas and put them into a more concise and focused form. ● Guidance and support for difficulties with the curriculum.
Coordination and a process to facilitate planning and implementation	9	6	● The Lab has really helped our cadre of very different and unique [...] schools to come together and effectively support each other with the process of planning, implementing, and reflecting on lessons learned from two years of summer programming. ● At times a source of motivation to get a piece of project honed in so that it could be reviewed at team mtg. ● The dedicated space to work on the design has been monumental.
Evaluation component and identifying ways to measure/track progress.	7	4	● Also, knowing that there is an external evaluation component has provided leverage when needed to stay true to the proposal's intended outcomes. ● The biggest benefit was being able to have access to fast and reliable data analysis. It was great to learn about different ways of evaluation and also they were super helpful in explaining any thematic data they helped us analyze.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

Example site outcomes/progress achieved	3	2	- As stated before, I think an additional SEL resource has been the biggest benefit of the Colorado Lab's support. In finding other SEL resources, we have been able to give students some SEL that they were in dire need of. - My students and I are all on an equal level of sharing how we feel and it makes the climate in my classroom more comfortable for us all.
Developing communication plans and dissemination product support.	2	2	- Having the team available with communications support has been highly valued - Dissemination products to guide additional schools in summer programming work and hopefully compiling in a way that is usable and tells a story about the schools work.

Table 6. Why would you recommend the Colorado Lab? (Q15)

Theme	Response Count	Site Count	Sample Quotes
The knowledge, expertise, thought partnership and outside perspective they bring to a project.	14	8	- 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. - They are great thought partners and they are very neutral. They know evaluation and what makes the most sense. - The Colorado Lab is a great stepping stone at recognizing where and how your school can improve on the basis of SEL implementation. - When taking on a large project, it is vital to have thinking/processing partners. Colorado Lab supported our work in a practical way. - The knowledge and expertise of the team is critical to the successful implementation of projects like these.
The facilitation skills and reflective listening they use to foster open and honest communication to support implementation progress.	8	5	- Their organization and facilitation skills have been top-notch. They have really helped with relationship development among the school leaders, with providing opportunities for thought-partnership, and with helping us to figure out to measure/collect/report data from this project. I've been very impressed with how they really hear what people are saying, and then summarize it well for the benefit of all. They are thoughtful and open; they communicate wonderfully and are very organized. Our project success will be greatly enhanced because of their support. - BHaving a facilitator that isn't involved in our district allows us to be open and honest with our feedback with each other and the other schools.

Appendix A: Thematic Summary Tables

			● High levels of communication, honoring all voices in a room, written products ● How well they articulated our goals and helped with communication with our staff and other districts.
The accountability and organization they establish with sites to support implementation progress.	7	5	● The accountability piece is needed ● They keep us well organized ● They helped us focus and stay on task and on time. ● 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 Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

You are receiving this survey because you have been working with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) as a part of the Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund project. We are interested in learning about your experience. The information you share will support the Colorado Lab in identifying ways to better support school districts and partners.

The survey is being administered by Laib Evaluation Consulting. Aggregate results (based on all responses) will be summarized and shared with the Colorado Lab.

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Please use your own experiences and respond openly and honestly.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If after you start the survey, you decide you no longer want to participate, you can stop at any time. If you decide not to participate or not to answer any question, we will not disclose this fact to anyone.

Thank you in advance for your contribution and cooperation with this important project. Please feel free to contact Abby Laib (abby@lhevaluation.com) for any additional information.

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience working with the Colorado Lab?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
At the beginning of the project, I "knew what I was getting into" in working with the Colorado Lab.	○	○	○	○
The Colorado Lab met our project "where we were" and was flexible in its approach.	○	○	○	○
The Colorado Lab understood our goals and what we hoped to achieve.	○	○	○	○
The Colorado Lab was a valuable thought partner.	○	○	○	○
I have a trusting relationship with the Colorado Lab.	○	○	○	○

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

2. How helpful was it to work on the following with the Colorado Lab...

	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Did not work on this area with the Lab
Articulating our project's intended outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
Identifying the core components of our strategy/approach	○	○	○	○	○
Identifying ways to measure/track progress	○	○	○	○	○
Identifying and troubleshooting barriers/challenges to successful implementation	○	○	○	○	○
Celebrating progress/wins	○	○	○	○	○
Developing communications plans/messages	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitating meetings	○	○	○	○	○

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

* 3. Did the Colorado Lab facilitate an implementation team or learning community at your site?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not Sure

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the implementation team/learning community?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The team included the "right" individuals	○	○	○	○
Meetings provided time/space to reflect and plan	○	○	○	○
There were times when I was confused about why the group was meeting or what we were trying to achieve	○	○	○	○
Meetings were not a good use of time	○	○	○	○

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

5. What was the most valuable thing you worked on with the Colorado Lab?

6. How would you describe the Colorado Lab's role in supporting RISE at your site?

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

* 7. How could the Colorado Lab improve its support? (check all that apply)

☐ Provide more clarity on their role or scope of the Colorado Lab's support

☐ Provide more or different communication

☐ Provide another/different type of support

☐ No improvements to Colorado Lab support needed

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

8. Please provide more details on your answer choice(s) to how the Colorado Lab support could be improved.

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

9. What do you wish you had been able to work on with the Colorado Lab, but did not?

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

The next section asks you to reflect on the work that you have been able to achieve with the Colorado Lab.

10. What have been the biggest benefits/outcomes of the Colorado Lab's support?

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

11. To what extent, if at all, did the Colorado Lab's support help to...

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very much
Increase your knowledge	○	○	○	○
Build relationships among participants/team members	○	○	○	○
Enhance communication within the project team	○	○	○	○
Enhance communication with external stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, families, external partners)	○	○	○	○
Support the project in being fully implemented	○	○	○	○
Develop a process or system to measure progress (collect and review data)	○	○	○	○

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

12. Overall, to what extent do you feel like you will reach "sustained implementation" of the RISE work, <u>by the end of the grant period</u>?

Sustained implementation is defined as: ongoing implementation of all of the project components, alongside routine collection and review of data to support ongoing improvement.

- ○ No sustained implementation
- ○ Limited sustained implementation
- ○ Partial sustained implementation
- ○ Complete sustained implementation
- ○ Not sure

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

A few last questions...

* 13. Would you recommend that other districts/schools partners work with the Colorado Lab?

○ Definitely would not recommend

○ Probably would not recommend

○ Probably would recommend

○ Definitely would recommend

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

14. Why would you not recommend the Colorado Lab?

LAIB *EVALUATION CONSULTING*

RISE Cross-Site Evaluation Survey

15. Why would you recommend the Colorado Lab?