



DENVER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT **2016**



CLEAR PATHS. BRIGHT FUTURES.

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## Letter from the Executive Director

Denver Education Attainment Network (DEAN) has emerged as a community-wide collective impact initiative to increase college attainment for students in Denver. DEAN uses the term “college” to refer to postsecondary attainment of any type of credential beyond high school, including technical and non-technical certificates and 2-year and 4-year degrees. The creation of this network was a direct response to the troubling fact that low-income, minority and first-generation students are not attaining college credentials at the same rate as their peers. Why does this matter? As more Colorado jobs require a college credential, these students are especially at risk of being left out of the job opportunities Colorado employers are seeking to fill in the very near future. A college credential is an important step in creating economic opportunity for Denver students, the Colorado business community and the state’s economy.

Our collaborative efforts are focused on Denver Public Schools (DPS). DPS is the fastest growing urban school district in the country with over 91,000 students, a largely low-income district with 68.5 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch and the largest school district in Colorado. The district’s largest minority demographic groups are the two struggling most to achieve postsecondary credentials – Latinos (56 percent) and African-American students (14 percent).



Therese A. Ivancovich  
Executive Director

By collectively serving DPS – and more specifically, low-income, first-generation and minority students – DEAN is working to improve student outcomes. Our work is focused on college enrollment, persistence and attainment. DEAN and its partners also work to create better support for undocumented students who have received a K-12 education and want to achieve their college goals. DEAN’s community-wide partnership works on a variety of efforts that see our most vulnerable students to and through a college education. Fundamentally, we believe that we are stronger when we do this work together.

This work will require a passion and long-term commitment from our DEAN partners and the Denver community. Through our shared vision, laser-focus and effective implementation, our collective action will build the pathway to increased college attainment and lifelong opportunity.

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## About Denver Education Attainment Network

The Denver Education Attainment Network (DEAN) is a collective impact initiative focused on increasing educational attainment and closing the attainment gap for underrepresented students in the high school through postsecondary pipeline. DEAN serves as the convener of stakeholders and over 40 committed community partner organizations who actively promote college attainment for students in Denver. Through shared data and measurements, a continuous improvement framework and common goals, DEAN helps our community partners shift from acting alone to acting in concert. The impact: our network improves college attainment for Denver students, opening pathways to better opportunities and life-long success.

**COLLEGE** refers to the attainment of postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including technical and non-technical certificates and 2-year and 4-year degrees.

### What's At Stake

In four short years, it is estimated that 74 percent of jobs in Colorado will require a postsecondary education.<sup>1</sup> Yet Colorado has one of the largest postsecondary degree attainment gaps in the country.<sup>2</sup> Low-income, minority and first-generation students who do not succeed in attaining these college credentials won't qualify for employment opportunities and both individuals and our economy will suffer. As demographics shift, it is imperative that we take a collective approach to solving this societal problem. DEAN's mission is to increase college success for these students so that they will have access to career opportunities and the state will have access to a native qualified labor pool. By building their academic success, be it technical training, a 2-year or 4-year degree, Denver students can access the skills, credentials and confidence to participate more fully in Colorado's growing economy.

College enrollment, persistence and attainment are steps along the path to lifelong success. DEAN is creating a community-wide movement to drive impact.



**Increase college attainment for students and graduates of Denver Public Schools through collective impact strategies that enable meaningful college and career opportunities for all.**

#### **+14% College Enrollment**

Increase college enrollment of students from Denver Public Schools (DPS) to 60 percent compared to 46 percent baseline in 2014-2015 (by 2025)

#### **+9% Auraria Campus Completion Rates**

15 percent of DPS graduates on the Auraria Campus will earn a certificate, associates degree or baccalaureate degree within four years compared to 6 percent baseline in 2014-2015 (4-year goal)

#### **+6% Emily Griffith Technical College Completion Rates**

50 percent of DPS students who enroll in an Emily Griffith Technical College certificate program will earn a certificate compared to 44 percent baseline in 2014-2015 (4-year goal)

#### **+5% DPS Persistence at the Auraria Campus**

69 percent of DPS graduates at the Auraria Campus will persist from year-one to year-two compared to 64 percent baseline in 2014-2015 (3-year goal)

## How DEAN Works

DEAN partners with Denver Public Schools (DPS), the Auraria Campus (Metropolitan State University of Denver, Community College of Denver & University of Colorado Denver), Emily Griffith Technical College, the City and County of Denver, and numerous non-profit and corporate partners to develop persistence and completion strategies to serve our most vulnerable students.

In order to effectively address the needs of DPS students, DEAN runs pilot initiatives with students at two Southwest Denver high schools: Abraham Lincoln (ALHS) and John F. Kennedy (JFK). Much like the DPS district, these schools serve large minority demographic groups struggling most to achieve postsecondary credentials – Latinos (82 percent) and African-American students (6 percent). These schools serve a high population of English Language Learners and immigrant students as well as those eligible for free or reduced price lunch. According to informal estimates, the undocumented student population at Lincoln may be as high as 40 percent.

Piloting strategies to improve outcomes for low-income, first-generation, Latino and African American students in Southwest Denver will inform the development of scalable strategies for the entire district. Through the implementation of short-cycle tests and continuous improvement strategies, DEAN can evaluate and adopt the most effective strategies for improving attainment-related outcomes while moving away from well-meaning efforts that do not improve outcomes.

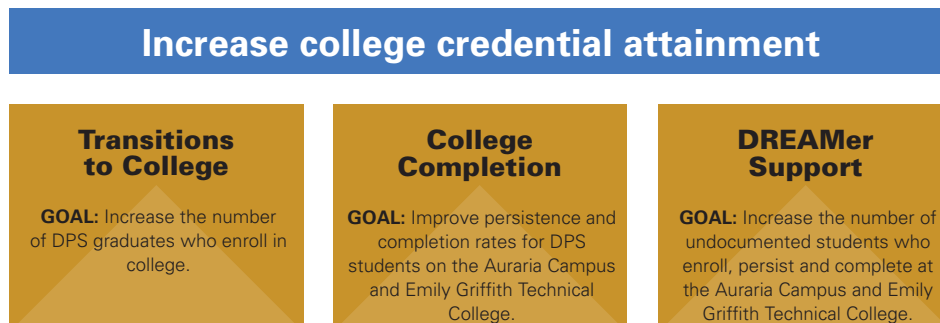
Additionally, DEAN partners with public colleges in Denver to develop enrollment, persistence and completion strategies for DPS students. Of DPS graduates who enroll in college, almost 20 percent attend a school on the Auraria Campus or Emily Griffith Technical College in the fall immediately following graduation.<sup>3</sup>

### DEAN'S Focus

DEAN is the result of a merger of 2 initiatives: Denver College Attainment Network (DCAN), funded by the Lumina Foundation, and Corridors of College Success (CCS) funded by the Ford Foundation. Both initiatives focused on developing postsecondary pathways to success, as well as postsecondary completion. After the merger, DEAN focused its efforts on five critical points spanning the high school to college continuum.

As a continuous learning organization, in 2016, DEAN evaluated the impact and success of each of its focus areas. Close examination of our efforts revealed that DEAN is strongest in the realm of college enrollment, persistence and attainment.

With an over-arching goal of **increasing college attainment for Denver students**, DEAN's Leadership Team identified three critical points along the high school to career pipeline which will impact that goal. DEAN facilitates Action Teams around each of these, and brings members of its partner organizations to work together to provide cross-sector coordination of efforts in these areas.



## 2016 Highlights

With the support of the collective impact framework, DEAN has continued to strengthen its network and build capacity to scale initiatives that will help increase college attainment and close the gap for students in Denver. Our accomplishments to date illustrate DEAN's extensive community support and engagement and its focus on strategic learning and high-leverage activities to drive impact.

### Our Impact

In 2016, DEAN leveraged its network to create “on the ground” collaborative efforts that impact college attainment. Our work with Action Teams focused on 9th grade success, 11th grade on-track to graduate, transitions to college and DREAMer support to help DPS students successfully complete high school and enroll, persist and complete a college credential.

### Supporting Successful High School Completion

DEAN leveraged its network of partners to collaborate, share and expand resources and data to improve high school outcomes. Members of all Action Teams share information about the students they serve and how they serve them, share calendars, combine resources and deliver best-practice interventions to better serve more students.

- Working with Southwest Denver high schools, developed and implemented a 9th grade outreach and incentive plan for off-track students that focused on summer school enrollment, attendance and completion (getting students “to and through summer school”). Results: Increased 9th grade summer school completers by 50%. Increased on-track to graduate by 2%.
- Working with Southwest Denver high schools, developed and implemented an 11th grade outreach and incentive plan for off-track students that focused on summer school enrollment, attendance and completion (getting students “to and through summer school”). Results: Increased 11th grade summer school completers by 50%. Increased on-track to graduate by 1.5%.
- Developing a pilot 9th grade math tutoring initiative with Denver Public Library, College Track and MSU Denver's 21st Century College Readiness Center, in collaboration with Abraham Lincoln High School. Results: Created a communication, outreach and incentive plan to engage 9th grade students in after-school tutoring programs and work with these students to pass 9th grade math courses—courses critical to their future success in high school.
- Working with the Office of Economic Development to engage Abraham Lincoln High School in a youth workforce program focused on employment readiness and work-based training to reengage youth who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of the Denver Public Schools systems.

## VISION

Educated Students. College Graduates.  
Meaningful Careers. Thriving Communities.  
A World- Class Denver.

### Improving College Enrollment, Persistence and Attainment

DEAN leveraged its network of partners to collaborate, share and expand resource and data to improve college enrollment, persistence and attainment outcomes.

- Hosted two events with local college partners (University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Arapahoe Community College, Community College of Denver, University of Denver, Emily Griffith Technical College, Red Rocks Community College) and high school alumni who are currently college students to support seniors in getting to college in the fall. Hosted 12th grade students from John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln High Schools who have applied to colleges and been accepted, but are at risk of not matriculating in the fall. Leveraged the power of peers to connect graduating seniors with support on campus to help address 'summer melt'.
- Hosted the second "Train the Trainer" Summer Melt program. Developed and articulated three areas of impact critical for a successful Summer Bridge program. Provided Summer Bridge training and resources to over 50 CBOs.
- Developed and implemented partnership agreements with CBO partners to implement Summer Bridge programming with fidelity around three critical indicators: accessing the student portal; receiving and accepting financial aid awards; registering for fall classes.
- Worked with DEAN partners to leverage existing data-sharing agreements to form robust data to focus summer bridge efforts ensuring smooth transitions from high school to college. The Transitions to College Action Team is leveraging this data, trying to capture some of the 37 percent of DPS students who indicate they intend to enroll in college but do not.
- Supported a communication plan for FAFSA support for 12th graders at Abraham Lincoln High School.
- Members of the DEAN DREAMer Action Team shared information on resources from the 3 institutions on the Auraria campus (CCD, MSU Denver and CU Denver) to create a Resource Guide for undocumented students. The original intention was to provide a one stop shop for current students on campus, but the group soon realized it could share the guide with high school counselors, students and parents and potentially open up opportunities for undocumented students not already planning to attend college.
- Worked with the Auraria Campus and other partners to host a DREAMer Support Forum for DREAMer, Asset, DACA and other undocumented students.



### Building the Action Team Network

DEAN Action Team members are direct service providers, with the authority and experience to identify shared measurements and implement the work required to achieve each Action Team's goals. DEAN partners work on targeted initiatives and pilot programs. Through regular meetings and collaborations, the Action Teams use shared metrics to assess needs, identify overlap, execute projects and report progress. By creating a continuous learning culture, participation on a DEAN Action Team ensures forward momentum and measurable impact.

- In order to develop a more robust data sharing culture within its network, DEAN is implementing Memos of Understanding (MOUs) among its partners.
- Re-positioned DCAN and CCS Action Teams into a more focused and streamlined effort around college enrollment, persistence and attainment.
- Leveraged national and local collective impact partner support (StriveTogether, Michigan College Access Network, Social Impact Solutions, The Civic Canopy) and training to build Action Team member capacity. Areas of focus included Action Team alignment, action-planning, adherence to a common agenda, shared data and metrics and continuous improvement.
- Engaged and recruited cross-sector partners to lend expertise and experience to the "on-the-ground" college enrollment, persistence and attainment work.

### Building and Strengthening Infrastructure to Improve Access to College Opportunities

- Merged and rebranded Denver College Attainment Network and Corridors of College Success to represent a cohesive high school through college completion collective impact initiative.
- Hired DEAN's first Executive Director to focus on building the organizational infrastructure, developing wider community awareness and participation, engaging the Leadership Team in identifying and acting on systemic change and creating a vision to drive change and deliver results.
- Hired DEAN's first Partnership Director to build Action Team capacity using shared data and measurement, implement a continuous improvement framework and scale innovative strategies that increase college success.
- Enhanced data expertise. Hired data consultants to collect, analyze and disseminate data to better focus DEAN efforts.
- Focused DEAN's goals to better target college enrollment, persistence and attainment.
- Expanded the Leadership Team with additional members who round out areas of expertise and provide extensive experience from the corporate sector, philanthropy and the community.
- Leveraged technical assistance and coaching to build DEAN's data infrastructure of shared data and measurement systems.
- Developing and implementing a continuous improvement framework to support network partners in developing and testing strategies in support of college attainment.
- Established DEAN Baseline Report to inform, measure and evaluate the work of DEAN and its partners.
- Collaborated as part of the Collective Impact Leaders Group (CILG). Convened by the City and County of Denver, CILG members DEAN, Denver Public Schools Career Connect and Opportunity Youth represent over \$9M of collective impact funding. CILG is working to leverage collective work on education attainment and career pathways and continues to explore ways to collaborate and consolidate efforts.
- Developed DEAN mission, vision, marketing collateral and website to showcase the work of our partnership.





# Leadership Team

## **Gordon Banks**

Senior Vice President  
FirstBank

## **Erin Brown**

Executive Director, Office of Children's Affairs  
City and County of Denver

## **Denise Bryant**

Director of Workforce Development,  
Office of Economic Development  
City and County of Denver

## **Minna Castillo Cohen**

Senior Director, Community Impact and Investments  
Mile High United Way

## **Tisha Corbett**

Director of Student Services  
Emily Griffith Technical College

## **Dr. Rhonda Epper**

Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Community College of Denver

## **Laura Giocomo**

Vice President, Communications and Marketing  
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

## **Genia Herndon**

Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Partnerships and  
Student Engagement  
University of Colorado Denver

## **Melinda Higgs** (Ex-Officio)

President/CEO  
Colorado Nonprofit Development Center

## **Monique Lovato**

CEO/Executive Director  
MiCasa Resource Center

## **Antonio Parés**

Education Policy Director, Office of Children's Affairs  
City and County of Denver

## **Dr. Kim Poast**

Executive Director, Office of College and  
Career Readiness  
Denver Public Schools

## **Dr. Mark Potter**

Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Studies  
Metropolitan State University of Denver

## **Rosemary Rodriguez**

District 2 Representative, Board of Education  
Denver Public Schools

## **Joyce Schlose**

Chief People Officer  
Goodwill Industries of Denver

## **Edie Sonn**

Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs  
Pinnacol Assurance

## **Rana Tarkenton**

Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer  
Denver Scholarship Foundation

## Funders

Thank you to our funders whose investment in DEAN is creating impact for our most vulnerable students. By supporting DEAN, our funders are elevating the work of DEAN partners and creating space for innovative and revolutionary practices to emerge.

- **City & County of Denver**
- **Community College of Denver**
- **Denver Public Schools**
- **Denver Scholarship Foundation**
- **Emily Griffith Technical College**
- **Ford Foundation**
- **LatinasGive!**
- **Lumina Foundation**
- **Metropolitan State University of Denver**
- **Mile High United Way**
- **University of Colorado Denver**
- **USCM/USAFunds National Education Pathways  
with a Purpose Award**
- **Connie Burwell White and  
William W. White Foundation**

## Looking Ahead

DEAN is now two years old and has grown considerably. Our network continues to expand with over 40 partner organizations dedicated to this important work.

DEAN is filling a gap in the cradle to career pipeline and is the only collective impact initiative in Denver working on college enrollment, persistence and attainment. DEAN has built the framework to meet its short- and long-term goals.

**With continued support from our community partners, we are creating clear paths and bright futures for DPS students.**

### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P.; Smith, N., Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Center for Education and Workforce.

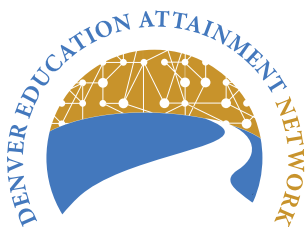
<sup>2</sup> Colorado Department of Higher Education. *Colorado Commission on Higher Education (2012). Colorado Competes: A Completion Agenda for Higher Education. Colorado Commission on Higher Education Master Plan.*

<sup>3</sup> Colorado Department of Higher Education (2016).



# Join us. Support us.

Contact us for more information about how you can join our efforts to build the pathway to increased college attainment and lifelong opportunity for DPS students.



CLEAR PATHS. BRIGHT FUTURES.

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