

DENVER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT **2017**

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CLEAR PATHS. BRIGHT FUTURES.

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DENVER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT NETWORK

789 Sherman Street
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DenverEdNetwork.org



CLEAR PATHS. BRIGHT FUTURES.



Therese A. Ivancovich
Executive Director

Letter from the Executive Director

Since 2014, DEAN has emerged as a community-wide collective impact initiative focused on increasing college attainment and closing the attainment gap for students in Denver.

The creation of DEAN 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. This gap in educational attainment impacts our workforce - which increasingly demands a post-high school credential - our economy and our society, making our work important and urgent.

DEAN seeks to broaden access to opportunity and strengthen community by improving educational outcomes for all Denver students. Recognizing that not one organization, program or government entity can solve the complex problems of educational attainment and social mobility, DEAN is bringing various sectors to work together to cultivate talent and build a talent pipeline in Denver. Fundamentally, we believe that we are stronger when we do this work together.

In just three short years DEAN has built a strong and effective community-wide network to improve educational outcomes for Denver students. We demonstrated positive momentum in our college enrollment, persistence and completion metrics, delivered effective alignment strategies and best practices across our Action Teams, launched a web-based data dashboard and continue to build a data-sharing culture across the partnership.

DEAN's impact will expand with our new credential completion and equity strategy: Denver Direct Pathways. The strategy has earned a "Talent Hub" designation from Lumina Foundation. The Talent Hub designation provides an opportunity to showcase DEAN partners and their attainment-focused work and exemplify Denver as a leader in closing equity gaps and increasing postsecondary attainment.

We have much to do and are humbled and inspired by the great work of our many partners. We share a common goal: increase college enrollment, persistence and completion for Denver Public Schools students. In 2018, we are creating clear paths that lead to bright futures for our Denver students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Therese Ivancovich".

Therese A. Ivancovich
Executive Director

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DenverEdNetwork.org

The Denver Education Attainment Network (**DEAN**) is a **collective impact initiative** focused on **increasing educational attainment** and **closing the attainment gap** for under-represented students in the high school through postsecondary pipeline. DEAN serves as the convener of **over 30 partner organizations and affiliates** committed to actively promoting **college attainment for students in Denver.**

As a network completing its third year, we continue to learn, grow and develop. In the following, please find a summary of our major accomplishments and our plans for future work.

The Why of Our Work

In a few short years, 74 percent of jobs in Colorado are anticipated to require a postsecondary education.¹ Like other fast-growing cities, Denver has no trouble importing college graduates from elsewhere in the country, yet it struggles to develop local talent: among the Denver Public Schools graduating Class of 2012, less than half of Denver students enrolled in college and, after 4 years, only 19% earned any type of credential.² Exacerbating this shortfall is the fact that Denver's minority and low-income students are enrolling and attaining college credentials at rates far below their peers. Currently, three-quarters of Denver's K-12 student body are students of color and two-thirds are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.³ Without any interventions, current socioeconomic and demographic shifts will continue to impact attainment discrepancies.

Denver and Colorado continue to make investments in their students by funding and reforming education. Unfortunately, those investments will not be realized until more students earn a college credential (we use the term "college" to include any type of postsecondary credential, including certificate, 2-year or 4-year degree). Without erasing the equity gaps for low-income and students of color, opportunities to participate in the state's growing economy will be closed to them, and employers will have to look elsewhere for qualified candidates. Without a future homegrown workforce qualified to fill job demands, the state risks stalling its economic growth. Opening pathways to educational and career success, particularly for minority and low-income students, is key to meeting this workforce demand and creating economic opportunity for all.

All Colorado students deserve fair access to educational and career success. The current equity gaps are not just an education issue, but a workforce, economic and societal problem as well. As the Colorado Department of Higher Education works with institutions statewide to achieve its 66 percent by 2025 attainment goal, DEAN is working locally and collaboratively among its many partners. Building on many strengths, DEAN is creating an ecosystem that fosters successful outcomes for a significant number of students – accelerating achievement of the state's goals.

DEAN Structure

DEAN staff facilitate collective work among our partners on two levels: at the strategic level through the Leadership Team, and at the practice level via monthly meetings of Action Teams.

DEAN's Leadership Team engages senior leaders from Denver's four public higher education institutions, the Denver Public Schools district, and other foundation, community and corporate partners. The Leadership Team sets the strategic direction for DEAN, specifically by addressing the barriers and gaps that prevent low-income, first-generation and underserved minority students from attending and completing college. This executive-level work has resulted in Denver Direct Pathways (DDP), a credential completion and equity strategy which DEAN will fully launch in 2018 (details below).

DEAN also facilitates three Action Teams, each focused on critical points along the path from high school to college: Transitions to College, College Completion, and DREAMer Support. These teams provide cross-partner coordination to improve outcomes for Denver students, in support of DEAN's overall strategy focused on college enrollment, persistence and completion. The Action Teams engage program directors and other direct service providers to identify barriers and develop and coordinate practices which they can measure, evaluate and scale to improve outcomes for targeted students.

DEAN's partners are deeply committed to equitable outcomes for all students and are building programs to respond to Colorado's changing demographics.

- DEAN is the only Denver-based collective impact initiative solely focused on college enrollment, persistence and completion
- DEAN convenes over 30 partners and affiliates to align around best practice strategies to improve outcomes for low-income and underserved minority students
- DEAN is focused locally: of Denver Public Schools (DPS) graduates, less than half enroll in college the fall immediately following graduation; of those that enroll, over 36 percent attend DEAN partner institutions at either the Auraria Campus or Emily Griffith Technical College⁴
- DEAN's focused work in the state's largest city is critical to Colorado's achievement of its 66 percent attainment goal

By supporting and serving Hispanic, African American and low-income students, DEAN is creating an environment where the success of every student means success for all students. Through our efforts, more students will be positively impacted and attainment rates will increase for a growing and diverse population.

With the leadership of Dr. Kim Hunter Reed at the Colorado Department of Higher Education, support and leadership from Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock's Office, a strong educational ecosystem, and alignment, focus, and cooperation within its network, DEAN is well-positioned to build and implement impactful strategies to increase credential attainment among Denver's under-represented students.




“DEAN’s focus on the experience of male students of color at the Auraria campus has led to greater understanding and greater collaboration amongst and between DEAN’s college and community partners. It’s propelling new ways of thinking and new ways of approaching this very important work.”

**Juan Gallegos, Assistant Director
Center for Multicultural Excellence and Inclusion,
Metropolitan State University of Denver**

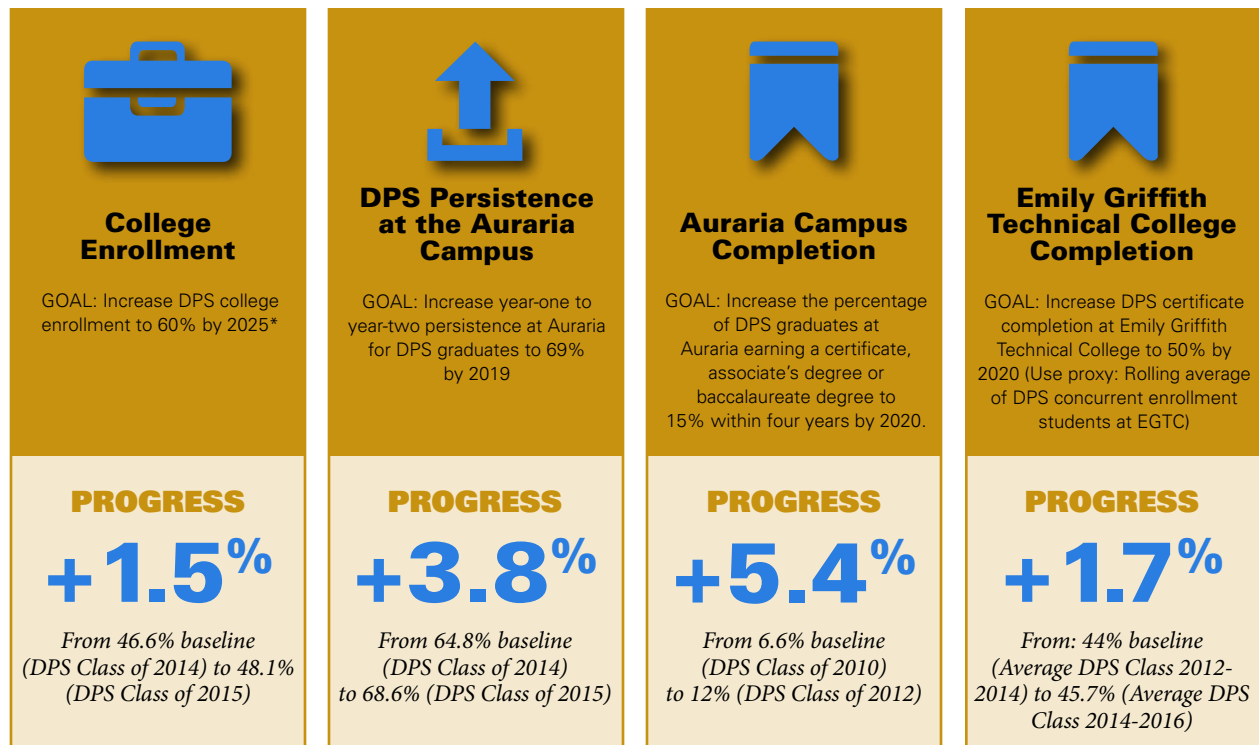
DEAN Goals

DEAN's goals are aligned with the goals of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. To meet 66% attainment by 2025, the state developed four goals to help all Coloradans earn the knowledge, skills and training necessary for success in a rapidly evolving economy:

- Increase credential completion
- Erase equity gaps
- Improve student success
- Invest in affordability and innovation



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



* The DEAN enrollment goal was established in 2014 to align with Lumina Foundation's 60% attainment goal. DEAN is developing an enrollment goal that more closely aligns to our state's 66% attainment goal.

2017 Highlights

DEAN leveraged its network to collaborate, share and expand resources and data to improve college enrollment, persistence and attainment outcomes

Action Teams: Improving College Enrollment, Persistence and Completion

Transitions to College Action Team

- Organized and led the 3rd annual “Train the Trainer” focused on Summer Melt. The training offered best practice strategies and resources in support of students transitioning to college the summer after high school graduation.
- DEAN leveraged existing data-sharing agreements to evaluate the use of an indicator-tracking tool utilized by DEAN partners over Summer 2016 and 2017. The tool was developed around four critical points where students may hit a roadblock and not matriculate in the fall. Roadblocks include missed financial aid deadlines, incomplete financial aid submissions, difficulty navigating the enrollment process and lack of connection on a college campus. The 2017 data showed positive trends which will help inform the team’s work this spring and summer.
- Supported DPS’s Application Week by helping under-supported students complete a college application. College partners will work with these applicants to provide intentional follow-up.
- As a step to addressing barriers, identified the verification process as a heavy burden on low-income students. With support from the Leadership Team, forged relationships with college financial aid directors and staff and are working to develop strategies to smooth out barriers for students and practitioners alike. Recruited financial aid offices to help lead a training for school district counselors on overcoming barriers to college enrollment and student portal access.
- Leveraging best practice strategies, DEAN partners participated in Denver Scholarship Foundation-led FAFSA training workshops. Numerous DEAN partners and their staff attended the trainings, then volunteered at FAFSA nights to help high school seniors begin the financial aid process.
- Organizing a free “Bridging the Gap: Connecting Students to College Success” workshop for February 9, 2018. The training will be aimed at high school counselors and attainment-focused nonprofits in helping identify roadblocks for students along the path from college admission to enrollment. Best practice strategies, resources and effective measurement strategies will be shared in an effort to work more collaboratively and effectively in helping students overcome barriers to college enrollment.



“DEAN’s work leverages Denver’s strong educational ecosystem, prioritizes equity as a key strategy, builds on cross-institutional and community collaborations and contributes directly to Colorado reaching its 2025 attainment and equity goals.”

**Genia Herndon, DEAN Co-Chair
Associate Vice Chancellor
Access & Enrollment Division of Student Affairs
University of Colorado Denver**

DREAMer Support Action Team

- Created a 30-page Tri-Institutional Dreamer Resource Guide, available in English and Spanish. The guide is a one-stop resource to help families and students navigate college at the Auraria Campus. The guide provides admissions, financial aid, and enrollment information for all three Auraria Campus schools, and includes a checklist to help families and students along their college journey.
- Created a 1-page brochure and poster to publicize the Resource Guide (also available in both English and Spanish). These marketing tools highlight key resources and contacts on the Auraria Campus.
- Widely distributed the Resource Guide, brochure and poster at district-wide events such as DPS Application Week, Keeping the Dream Alive conference, DEAN Train the Trainer seminar and DPS counselors.
- Engaged financial aid staff from Auraria Campus institutions in discussions around strategies and process for supporting undocumented students. Provided a forum for staff and direct service providers to discuss the hurdles for undocumented students and their families, and for the financial aid staff to share developments and updates from their institutions.
- Following suit of the other Auraria Campus institutions, the University of Colorado Denver created an Undocumented Student Services page on its website and is working on its own financial aid application form for undocumented students.
- Met with leading DREAMer advocates like Elizabeth Zambrana, Equal Justice Works Emerson Fellow with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network. Provided opportunities for and critical connections in sharing resources and updates after the repeal of DACA.
- Organized and led a DREAMer Resource Day where current and prospective students could learn more about resources available to them.

College Completion Action Team

- DEAN's newest Action Team was kicked-off in January 2017.
- DEAN staff and data consultant met with individual partners to guide their data retrieval methods and review and interpret disaggregated student data.
- Using student surveys and organizational disaggregated data, identified gaps and narrowed the scope of the work to focus on male students of color in their first year of college (FYMOC).
- DEAN recruited Auraria Campus directors within student identity programs to engage deeply in the work.
- Mapped events across campuses that support students in their first year and organized a messaging and outreach strategy to encourage FYMOC to attend the most critical events.
- Used continuous improvement strategies to evaluate event attendance data and adjusted and improved the approach for subsequent events.
- Developing a student feedback and outreach strategy to inform and strengthen messaging and impact on FYMOC.
- Building out data capacity to utilize persistence data in shaping future persistence strategies.



Building and Strengthening the DEAN Network

- Developed and implemented network-wide partner survey across multiple sectors (higher education, non-profit and K-12). Survey results showed strong goal alignment and partner value.
- Build and maintain an active network which includes over 30 partner organizations and affiliates, and over 85 active individual members.
- Launched DEAN website: www.DenverEdNetwork.org
- Launched web-based data dashboard: <http://DenverEdNetwork.org/data-dashboard/>
- Produced DEAN Annual Report (2016).
- Continue to develop local funding channels and increase Leadership Team funding levels to create a sustainable funding model.
- Developed monthly newsletter, Facebook and LinkedIn pages to better connect DEAN partners to each other and to community stakeholders.
- Held network-wide convenings to prioritize work and build network buy-in for DEAN's college completion agenda.
- Narrowed scope to focus on three critical points along the high school to career pipeline:
 - ▶ Transitions to College
 - ▶ College Completion
 - ▶ DREAMer Support
- Engaged Mile High United Way to train DEAN staff and key partners on facilitation, and continuous learning and improvement processes. The trainings centered on capacity building, strengthening and improving facilitation, implementation and evaluation practices in support of collective learning, collective action and systems improvement among the Action Teams.
- In the spring of 2017, DEAN worked with its Leadership Team to identify opportunities for systems change to improve college outcomes for low-income, first generation and minority students. Through a facilitated process, DEAN developed a strategy called Denver Direct Pathways to better align academic pathways and advising and community engagement efforts in support of increased attainment.
- Designated a "Talent Hub" by Lumina Foundation with the launch of Denver Direct Pathways.
- DEAN uses student surveys, participation and focus groups to gain information and insights into community needs and concerns.
- DEAN is fully aligned with the State of Colorado's over-arching attainment goal that 66 percent of Colorado citizens aged 25-34 will attain a postsecondary credential by 2025. DEAN is also aligned with the department's goal of erasing equity gaps in credential attainment.
- DEAN is partnering with the Denver Mayor's Office and the Denver Education Compact to align efforts around education priorities and to work more closely with key city departments.

DEAN Data Goals and Accomplishments

- Demonstrated positive momentum in college enrollment, persistence and completion metrics.
- Established Memos of Understanding (MOUs) among DEAN partners to further develop a more robust data sharing culture through shared data collection and analysis.
- Enhanced data expertise to collect, analyze and disseminate data.
- Continue to align DEAN goals and metrics with CDHE and institutional partner attainment goals.
- Annually monitor factors that demonstrate momentum towards earning a college credential: 11th Grade on Track to Graduate, FAFSA Completion, Credit Accumulation, College Retention.
- Annually report on progress towards DEAN goals. Report through web-based data dashboard, Baseline and Annual Reports.
- Launched web-based data dashboard with annually updated metrics (enrollment, persistence and completion goals, along with contributing factors listed above).
- Annually renew data sharing agreements with higher education and CBO partners.
- Monthly/bi-monthly program evaluation for all Action Teams.

Looking Ahead: Denver Direct Pathways

Recognizing the need to further scale our work and its impact, in the spring of 2017 DEAN worked with its Leadership Team to identify opportunities for systems change strategies to improve college outcomes for low-income and minority students. Working with Denver Public Schools, Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, University of Colorado Denver, Emily Griffith Technical College and other community partners, DEAN developed Denver Direct Pathways to better align academic-to-career pathways, and advising and community engagement efforts in support of increased attainment for Denver Public Schools students.

The Denver Direct Pathways credential completion and equity strategy earned a “Talent Hub” designation from Lumina Foundation in September 2017. The first designation of its kind, Denver joins 16 other communities across the nation in pursuing bold strategies that erase postsecondary equity gaps and drive achievement of Lumina’s Goal 2025 where at least 60 percent of Americans will hold high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials. The Talent Hub designation provides an opportunity to showcase DEAN partners and their attainment-focused work and exemplify Denver as a leader in closing equity gaps and increasing postsecondary attainment.

Talent Hub cities are committed to eliminating deep disparities in educational outcomes and leading institutional change that better supports students in achieving their postsecondary educational goals. Building these practices and policies to close the equity gap particularly for African-American, Hispanic and low-income populations will strengthen the educational ecosystem in Denver, improving outcomes for all students.

The Denver Direct Pathways strategy is closely aligned with the State of Colorado’s attainment goal of 66 percent by 2025. With rapidly changing demographics, Colorado cannot reach this goal without closing equity gaps and increasing enrollment, persistence and completion of traditionally underserved minority, low-income and first-generation students. DEAN’s work, focused on priority populations across the state’s largest city, is essential to reaching these goals.

What is a Talent Hub? In America Needs Talent,⁵ Jamie Merisotis, President & CEO of the Lumina Foundation, describes “Talent Hubs” as communities that organize and align themselves around collective talent goals to offer and create multiple pathways to success. Various sectors in Talent Hubs work together not just to attract talent, but to cultivate and retain talent. Talent Hubs accelerate community and regional attainment efforts and improve the ecosystem in which students pursue and complete a high-quality degree or credential. Equity is a foundational component of Talent Hub success.



Denver Direct Pathways – the Talent Hub Strategy

Denver Direct Pathways (DDP) is a completion and equity strategy designed to increase attainment rates for all students and improve outcomes for underserved minority and low-income populations. Each of our college partners and Denver Public Schools have been engaged in pathway development for several years. The DDP will seek to knit together these individual efforts into a cohesive, broad- scaled strategy to see more students through to credential completion.

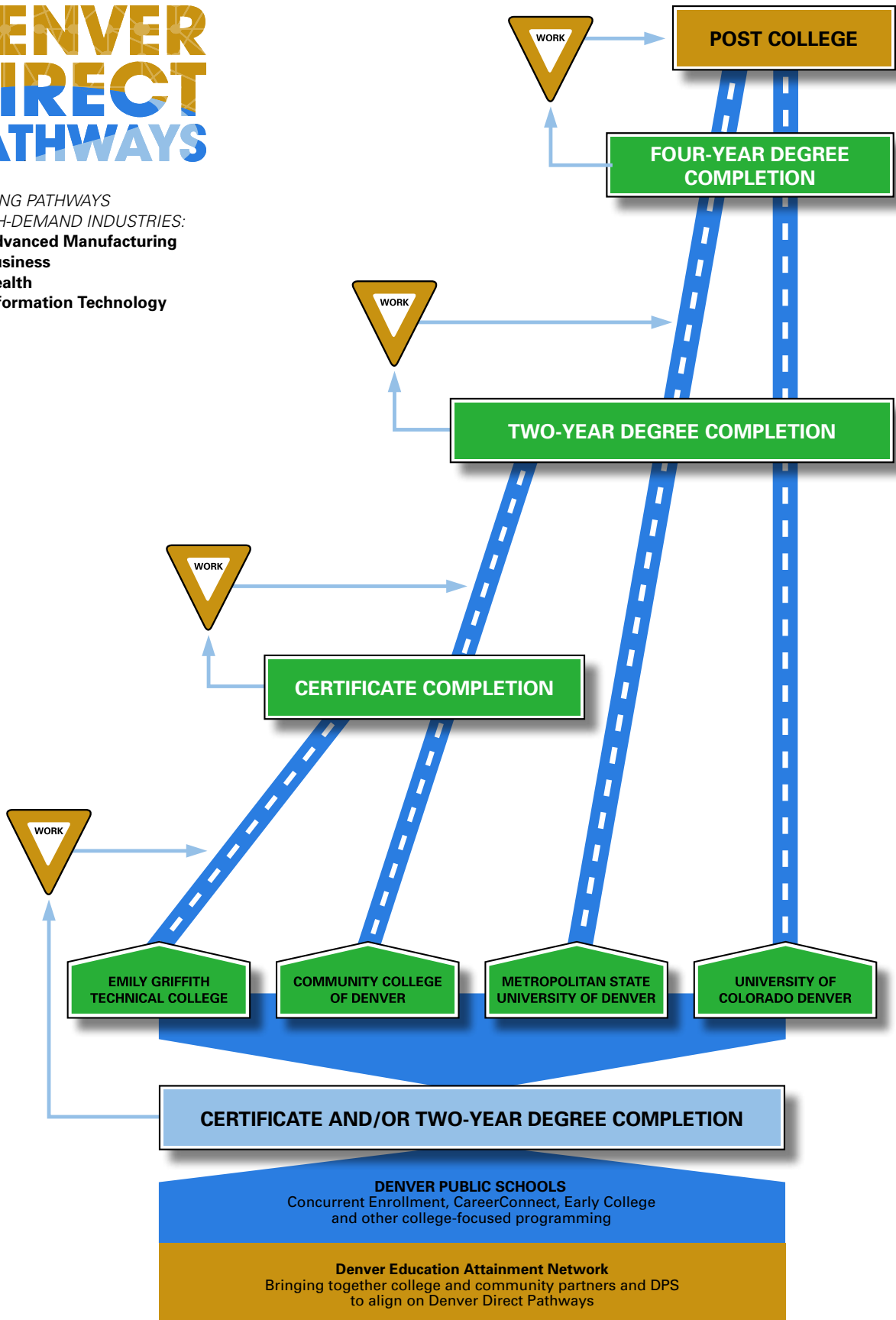
- The DDP strategy incorporates five key components:
 - ▶ Alignment of pathways in Advanced Manufacturing, Business, Health, and Information Technology, with input from employers
 - ▶ Development of a cross-institutional and cross-partner Advising Council
 - ▶ Smoothing of transition points: high school to college, two-year to four-year transfers and certificate transfers
 - ▶ Alignment of Denver Public Schools programs of study to Denver Direct Pathways
 - ▶ Implementation of community, family and student awareness and engagement strategies

Denver Direct Pathways will provide students clearly articulated paths to high-quality degrees, certificates or credentials, providing access to many more workforce opportunities and economic security.

DENVER DIRECT PATHWAYS

BUILDING PATHWAYS
IN HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRIES:

- **Advanced Manufacturing**
- **Business**
- **Health**
- **Information Technology**



Leadership Team

John Albright

Student Engagement Director
Denver Public Schools

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

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

Dr. Sandra Haynes

Deputy Provost, Academic and Student Affairs
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Genia Herndon

Associate Vice Chancellor
Access & Enrollment Division of Student Affairs
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Rosemary Rodriguez

Former 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
Pinnacle Assurance

Dr. Kristin Waters

Chief Operating Officer
Denver Scholarship Foundation

Funders

DEAN funders are investing in college enrollment, persistence and completion strategies for Denver students. An investment in DEAN is an investment in Denver's most vulnerable students. DEAN is creating, innovating and aligning practices that support college access, college success and workforce opportunity.



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

DEAN is now three years old and has grown considerably. Our network continues to expand with over 30 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

¹ Carnevale, Anthony P. et al. *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020, STATE REPORT* (Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2013).

² Colorado Department of Higher Education. *District at a Glance – Detail*. Report for Class of 2012. Filter Data: 2012, Denver County 1.

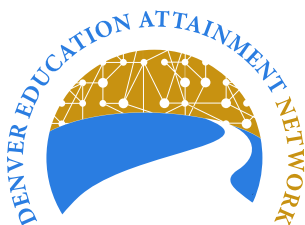
³ Denver Public Schools. *Facts and Figures*. <http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/Page/202>.

⁴ Denver Public Schools. *College Enrollment, Persistence and Attainment Analysis* (Spring 2017).

⁵ Merisotis, Jamie. *America Needs Talent: Attracting, Educating and Deploying the 21st Century Workforce* (New York: RosettaBooks, 2015).

Join us. Support us.

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



CLEAR PATHS. BRIGHT FUTURES.

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