

Colorado Policy Agenda

Teach Plus believes that all students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to opportunity, responsiveness to individual needs, and ability to prepare students for postsecondary success. We support teacher leaders across Colorado in exercising their leadership to shape education policy and advance equity, opportunity, and student success.

For the past decade, Colorado has demonstrated its commitment to PK–12 education through key initiatives, including Universal Preschool (UPK), a new student funding formula, the READ Act, investments in postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR), and expanded educator pathways. These efforts lay a solid foundation for the next phase: ensuring every student can access and succeed in opportunities that lead to long-term economic mobility.

There are critical steps that state leaders must take to continue advancing student opportunities.

1. Expand Access to The Big Three: industry-recognized credentials, college credit, and work-based learning
2. Close Foundational and Readiness Gaps
3. Build and Sustain a High-Quality Educator Workforce

Expand Access to The Big Three

Issue: Colorado has committed to expanding PWR pathways, yet access gaps persist. Without intentional alignment of resources and systems, students furthest from opportunity will continue to face barriers to meaningful career opportunities and economic mobility.

Goal: Colorado will close opportunity gaps to ensure that 100 percent of students have access to, and meaningful engagement in, at least one PWR opportunity through policies that align resources, accountability, and supports to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

Teach Plus Impact:

- + Convened educators to develop recommendations aligned with Colorado's PWR framework and accountability system.
- + Authored and presented [Strengthening Our Workforce While Expanding Student Opportunity](#) and [Recommendations to Expand CE in Colorado](#) to state legislators and the Colorado Department of Education, advancing teacher-informed recommendations to expand equitable access to PWR opportunities.
- + Submitted recommendations on [SB25-315](#) implementation, calling for transparent grant criteria, expanded certification pipelines, and a strengthened PWR accountability indicator.
- + Provided legislative testimony, conducted policy briefings, and published statewide [op-eds](#) advancing equitable PWR access.

Close Foundational and Readiness Gaps

Issue: Without strong foundational literacy and math skills, students face long-term academic and opportunity barriers. When interventions are under-resourced or inconsistently implemented, readiness gaps persist, especially for multilingual learners, students living in poverty, and students of color.

Goal: All Colorado students develop foundational literacy and math skills to leave high school prepared to succeed in PWR opportunities through policies that expand interventions, support implementation, and foster innovation to ensure students have both meaningful choices and the skills to succeed.

Teach Plus Impact:

- + Advocated for foundational literacy and math interventions through [SB19-199](#) and [HB23-1231](#)
- + Published [op-eds](#) advocating for high-quality instructional materials and literacy instruction for secondary students.
- + Participated in Colorado Department of Education listening sessions to provide practitioner insight on READ Act implementation challenges, science of reading alignment, and systemic barriers affecting multilingual learners and students furthest from opportunity.
- + Elevated [math literacy](#) as a critical readiness lever, advocating for mindsets and policies that strengthen foundational numeracy and expand access to grade-level content—particularly for students historically underserved by the system.

Build and Sustain a High Quality Educator Workforce

Issue: Students' access to high-quality instruction depends on recruiting and retaining effective educators. Yet persistent staffing shortages and turnover, especially in rural schools, special education, and multilingual education, undermine equitable student opportunities and outcomes.

Goal: Colorado builds and sustains a high-quality educator workforce through policies that invest in preparation, elevate professional growth, and provide the conditions needed for educators to thrive and remain in the profession, ensuring that all students have equitable access to excellent teaching and the opportunity to succeed.

Teach Plus Impact:

- + Published [Building a Stronger Special Education Workforce](#), advancing policies to expand preparation pathways and improve educator retention.
- + Advocated in support of [SB25-154](#) to expand pathways for special education teachers.
- + Highlighted the role of [Grow Your Own pathways](#) to address teacher shortages and increase educator diversity
- + Investigated [strategic staffing models](#) to expand leadership pathways, enhance collaboration, and improve instructional quality.

Advance Student Opportunity

Issue: Students furthest from opportunity—including those experiencing poverty, students of color, multilingual learners, and students in rural communities—continue to face persistent disparities in literacy, math achievement, and access to high-quality PWR opportunities. These systemic gaps can hinder a student's ability to reach their full potential and access the same opportunities as their peers.

Goal: Colorado advances student opportunity by ensuring all students have access to high quality instruction, supportive learning environments, and pathways that lead to economic mobility by addressing barriers, such as chronic absenteeism that keep students from fully engaging in their education.

Teach Plus Impact:

- + Surveyed 125 parents/guardians in 17 Colorado districts statewide to inform state policy conversations on chronic absenteeism, and student re-engagement: [How to Get Our Students Back in the Classroom](#).
- + Advanced policy solutions to strengthen statewide supports for newcomer and multilingual students, calling for consistent implementation of comprehensive onboarding, native-language assessment, and culturally responsive instruction: [All Students In Colorado should be Fully Supported in the Classroom](#).
- + Supported the creation of the new school finance formula through the passage of [HB24-1448](#).