



American Youth
Policy Forum

School Descriptions

Creating a System of High-Quality Education Options to Serve All Students: Denver, CO
February 15-17, 2017

Gateway to College at Front Range Community College

[Gateway to College](#) is a national dropout recovery model that operates in 41 colleges in 21 states across the United States, funded through contributions from foundations, institutions, companies and individuals. In 2008, the Westminster Campus of Front Range Community College (FRCC) received a three year grant to become the first site in Colorado to become part of the Gateway to College Network. Now, the college and each school district partner and use per pupil operating revenue and college funds to pay for the programming (GTC FRCC went off grant in 2011). [Gateway to College FRCC](#) serves youth ages 16-20 years old, who have dropped out, are at-risk of dropping out, or are far behind in credits for their grade level. For admissions, students must be reading English at an 8th grade level or higher, and be from the Mapleton 1, Adams 12, Brighton 27J, Westminster or Jefferson County Public Schools. Students earn their high school diploma and college credits, allowing for progression towards a certificate, Associate degree, or transferable credits. The students who graduated in 2014, 2015, and 2016 earned 26.5 college credits on average. Gateway to College covers the cost of college tuition and books for up to 12 credits, and students are only required to pay for student fees (approximately \$250 per semester), with the exception of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Students typically are in the program for one or two years, and may remain in the program until they earn their high school diploma or turn 21. Approximately 72% of the 2013-14 cohort graduated in three years. As of September 2016, FRCC Gateway to College and its partners have graduated 290 students. Of GTC graduates, approximately 60% have enrolled in a postsecondary institution, 52% of which matriculate to FRCC and 8% of which transfer to another college. To support the success of each student, the program assigns every student a Resource Specialist who acts as a case manager and provides guidance with academic advising and referrals to various resources. During their first term, students take a series of foundational (developmental education) courses of reading, writing, math, and a class focused on college success skills and career development. Students determine the appropriate courses to take with their Resource Specialist based on their educational plan and goals, and transition to college courses following the foundational term.

Colorado High School Charter (CHSC) at Colorado Construction Institute

[CHSC](#) is a small, supportive environment for students who have struggled personally or academically in the conventional high school setting. CHSC serves high school students under the age of 21. CHSC is a Denver Public School Charter, follows the standards of the Colorado Department of Education, and students receive a high school diploma upon graduation. One hundred percent of CHSC seniors graduate with a postsecondary plan and are accepted into at least one postsecondary institution. In the 2015-16 school year, the school had a total of 254 students, in which 64% of students identified as Hispanic, 22% as Black, approximately 9% as white, and 89% of students qualified for free and reduced lunch. To allow the opportunity for frequent feedback, credit recovery, and enrollment of new students, CHSC operates on six-week blocks totaling six semesters from mid-August through the end of May. Each semester,

there are four essential courses: Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies, as well as two elective classes – one focused on everyday math skills and another on social and emotional skill development. Students have access to counseling services at CHSC that support students and their families with personal and social development, academic advisement, and career/postsecondary planning, as well as Student Advocates (AmeriCorps members through [Colorado Youth for Change](#)). Student Advocates support students with both in- and out-of-school issues, including attendance, course passage, student engagement, and referral to community resources. One of CHSC's two campuses, the GES Campus, is on site with the [Colorado Construction Institute \(CCI\)](#). CCI is a partner of CHSC, providing students the opportunity to take part in apprenticeship programs. CCI is a non-profit training organization that provides both pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs for youth and unemployed/underemployed adults, as well as [educational programing](#) to create pathways for students in the construction industry. In the span of three years CHSC moved from “accredited and on priority watch” to “meets expectations” on the school performance framework rubric for AECs, after five years of being on the State’s accountability clock, as a result of several key strategies. These strategies included transitioning out ineffective teachers, implementing a robust teacher feedback and evaluation model, significantly increasing opportunities for concurrent enrollment, increasing time in math and English, offering increased instruction and support in ACT preparation, and contracting with Colorado Youth for a Change. During this time attendance increased from 82% to 87%, the dropout rate decreased from 17% to 4%, and ACT scores increased from 1 point on the SPF to 7.

Futures Academy

Through a partnership with [Colorado Youth for a Change \(CYC\)](#) and Aurora Public Schools, [Futures Academy](#) provides students with the resources, guidance, and academic instruction that allow them to earn college credits (up to an Associate’s degree), technical certifications, a GED, or any combination of the three. Each year, Futures serves approximately 300 students ages 17-21 who are interested in continuing their education and pursuing post-secondary opportunities but have too few credits to earn a traditional high school diploma. Targeted case management provided by student advisors enables wrap-around support for each student. Student advisors help students overcome and remove barriers to academic and personal success by accessing community resources and connecting students with external partners. Teachers provide direct classroom instruction using a competency-based approach to teaching and learning that enables students to prepare for the GED, Accuplacer, college-level coursework, and career expectations. Futures has developed a strong post-secondary culture and works to re-engage students by offering forward movement in their educational goals through concurrent enrollment at Pickens Technical College and/or the Community College of Aurora. In the 2015-2016 school year, 18 students earned credits at CCA, and 35 students successfully completed one or more semesters toward a certificate at Pickens Technical College. Due to the concurrent enrollment model and the age range of Futures students, GED completion varies from year to year in response to students’ postsecondary pathways. In 2015-2016, 47 students completed the GED, and 58 students completed one or more subject tests. At present, 18 students are enrolled in courses at CCA, and 30 students are enrolled in technical certification programs at Pickens. In May 2017, three students will obtain their Associate’s degrees as a result of these partnerships; all three will also transfer to four-year universities in the fall.