

Annual Report

2023-2024



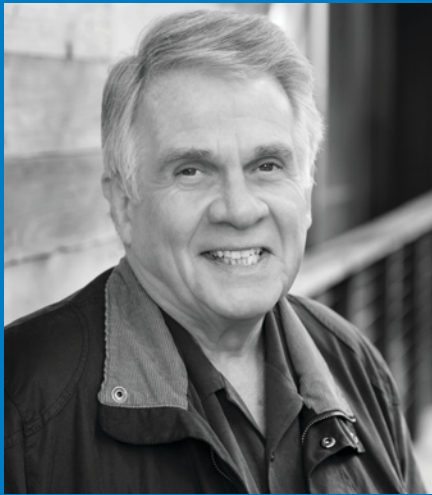


Contents

- 3 Letter from the President**
- 4 At-A-Glance**
- 5 Achievement Impact**
- 7 Impact of the Gates' Effective Implementation Cohort (EIC) Project**
- 10 Adams 14 Turnaround**
- 12 Rural New Mexico Convening of Superintendents**
- 14 ConnectED Team & Financial Overview**

Photos in this report courtesy of Oakland Unified School District, Porterville Unified School District and Gallup-McKinley County Schools.

Letter from the President



Dear Friend,

It has been an honor to serve as ConnectED's founder and president for more than eighteen years. I have learned so much from my colleagues and the community partners who have taken up the challenging work of recreating educational systems that seek to prepare all students, especially those historically underserved, for lasting success in college, career, and life.

The 2023-2024 Annual Report highlights three initiatives that represent ConnectED's work on multiple levels of the system.

We review our learning from participating in the Gates Effective Implementation Cohort. This initiative helps middle school math teachers use the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum to increase students' proficiency, so they are better prepared to succeed in the mathematics courses critical to graduation and successful transition to postsecondary.

The second article speaks to how implementing college and career pathways can play an important role in helping struggling districts "turnaround." Pathways can help re-engage students by making learning more relevant, experiential, and connected to the real-world.

The last article highlights the work of superintendents across the state of New Mexico who came together to share best practices and discuss not only what it would take to change the results of their students but to impact their local regions and the state. This group focused on delivering high-quality career connected learning in small, geographically isolated, rural communities where designing and

implementing college and career pathways can be challenging.

ConnectED continues to support educators at multiple levels of the system to interrogate the impact they can make from the position they are in.

On January 1, 2025, Dr. Ash Vasudeva became ConnectED's new President and CEO. Although I am stepping down as president, I will be staying on with ConnectED as a Senior Fellow. My immediate goals are to be available to help Ash make a fast and successful transition and to fulfill remaining obligations to our community partners and funders.

I could not be more pleased to have Ash take on the leadership of ConnectED and have complete confidence in his ability to advance ConnectED's mission with vision, energy, and consummate competence. I also could not be more pleased with the efforts of our dedicated team who have worked tirelessly to support districts across the country position students for success.

Gratefully,
Gary Hoachlander, Ph.D
President & CEO

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At-A-Glance

Goals & Mission

GOALS: The Annual Report spotlights initiatives tied to goals in ConnectED's 2021–24 strategic plan:

- Support college and career pathways development.
- Grow new community partnerships.
- Develop tools to improve curriculum and instruction.

MISSION: ConnectED is committed to ending cycles of poverty by positioning students, teachers, and school districts to meet the future. We help develop integrated, college and career pathways so that all students, especially those furthest from opportunity, are prepared for success.

UN ALIGNMENT: We help to advance key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

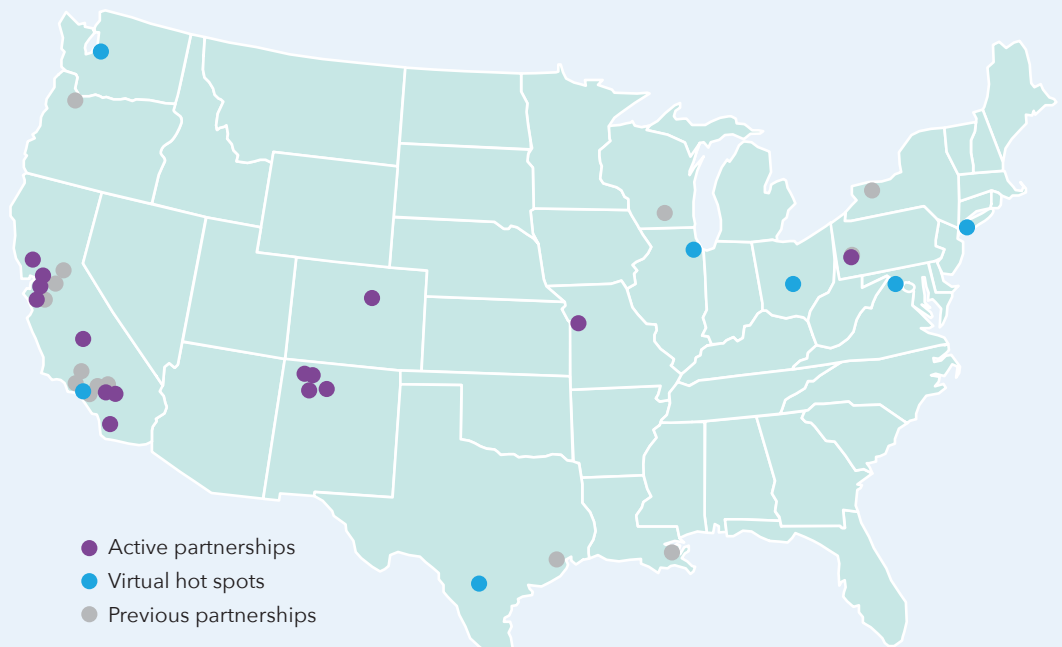
- Quality Education
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Reduced Inequalities

Why We are Different

- ConnectED meets communities where they are. We do not endorse a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, we come alongside districts to understand their needs and support their vision for change.
- To ensure college and career pathways are high quality, we promote a set of principles:
 - Increase student equity and access,
 - Build district-wide support,
 - Design communities of practice that plan, implement, and reflect together, and
 - Develop pathways to opportunity with postsecondary and employer partners.
- These principles result in school districts that prepare students for college, career, and community.

OUR REACH

Along with **previous** and **current partnerships**, there are several “**virtual hotspot**” regions around the country where there is high traffic visitation to ConnectED's website.



Achievement Impact

Pathways Increase Access to High-Quality Careers

- **US News and World** reports students living in rural and inner-city communities often live in STEM deserts without access to vital courses.
- In 42 districts supported by ConnectED, over 500 STEM related pathways are offered. These pathways include industry themes ranging from Agriculture and Health Science to Engineering and Computer Technology.

Pathways Increase College Access and Enrollment

- The **NCES latest college enrollment rates** for high school graduates showed Black (36%), Hispanic (33%) and Pacific Islander (27%) students falling under the national average (39%) with the entire country declining from the rate achieved a decade earlier (41%). In contrast, the postsecondary rate during the same time period (2020) in economically and racially diverse **Los Angeles USD** across all pathways was 62.6%.*
- 20 out of 21 reviewed districts helped students participate in Dual Enrollment allowing them to earn college credits while still in high school which reduced financial cost and provided additional academic support. Over **95% of the long-term districts ConnectED partnered with provide early access to community college for students.**

Pathways Increase College and Career Readiness

According to California **College and Career Readiness Indicators**:

- From 2020 to 2023, 12 California districts partnering with ConnectED increased the percentage of college and career ready high school graduates by 7 percentage points, compared with a 1.7 percentage increase for the state.
- In 2023, 78 California high schools supported by ConnectED, graduated 118,000 students' college and career ready.
- A 2024 **Linked Learning Alliance Student Survey** of 4400 students enrolled in Linked Learning programs showed that 94% of them believed their high school experiences had been valuable.

* LAUSD Linked Learning <https://www.lausd.org/Page/524>

Impact

Over the past 15 years:



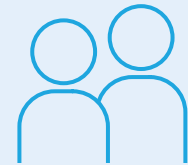
Served **50** communities
in **14** states



Over **350** high schools



More than **1000** college
and career pathways



Over **250,000** students
enrolled annually



Over **85,000** high school
graduates ready for college
and career



907 educators supported
in 2023–24

*After a successful pilot, Oakland, California voted in bond measures to fund college and career pathways. District graduation rates have since increased from 61% before Measure N to 81% in 2024.**



* "7 years ago, Oaklanders approved a tax to improve schools. Did it work?"; The Oaklandside, by Ashley McBride April 26, 2021

2023 Snapshot of Gallup-McKinley County Schools

- From 2017–2023 the graduation rate increased by 10 points
- 3 out of 9 high schools maintained their science achievement scores from 2017–2023, 6 out of 9 high schools increased their science scores by 10 points.

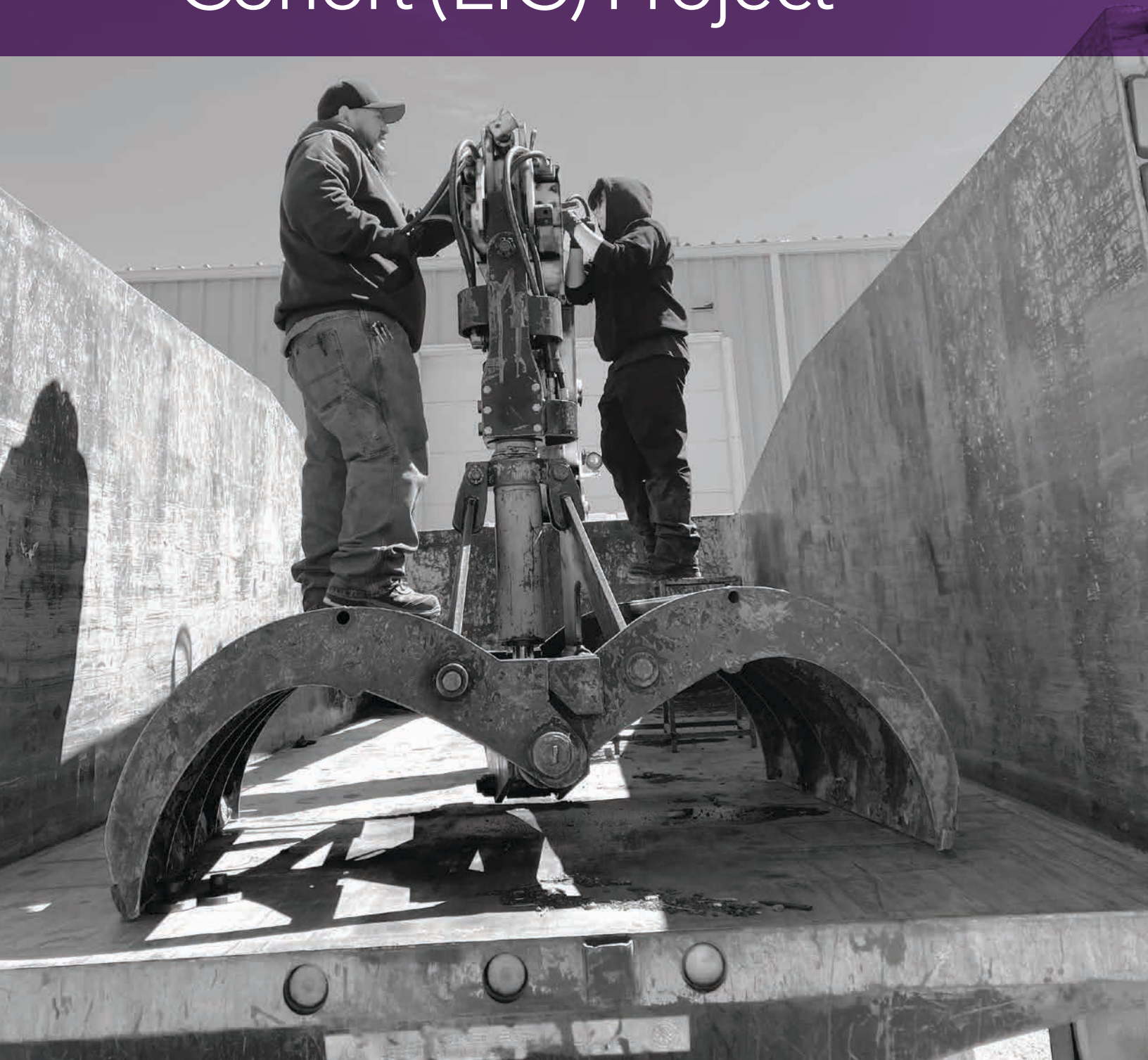
2023 Snapshot of College and Career Readiness in North Kansas City Schools

- 84% of Sophomores completed a resume
- 86% of Sophomores completed a mock interview
- Doubled the number of dual enrollment students from 1725 in 2019–2020 to 3661 by 2023–24
- Doubled the number of Career Technical Education participants from 8.9% for 10th–12th graders in 2019–2020 to 18.9% in 2023–2024
- Responses to a College and Careers Indicator student survey showed that 72.33% of graduates felt "College and Career Ready"

2023 Snapshot of College and Career Readiness in Porterville USD

- ConnectED has partnered with Porterville for 15 years implementing pathways in five high schools.
- This district of 13,000+ students of whom 87% are economically disadvantaged and 83% are Hispanic, has extraordinarily positive student outcomes:
 - Since 2012, Porterville's high school graduation rate has been 99%, compared to a state average of 85%
 - Since 2012, 94% of high school graduates report going on to some form of postsecondary education
 - In the class of 2023, 1,085 students completed internships, and 585 earned industry recognized certifications/licensures
 - In 2023, high school students completed 1,724 dual credit courses, up from 1,521 a year earlier

Impact of the Gates' Effective Implementation Cohort (EIC) Project



What are key steps needed to positively change academic achievement for the largest number of students possible?

ConnectED: The National Center for College and Career, in partnership with Envision Learning Partners (ELP) worked with three California public school districts to plan, pilot, and scale the use of High-Quality Instructional Materials for mathematics using the Illustrative Mathematics (IM) curriculum. We did this in two phases.

1. PLANNING PHASE

- identified related strengths, challenges, and current practices
- compiled results and recommendations
- created multi-year strategic plans.

2. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- implemented new curriculum;
- used communities of practice and teacher collaboration to build instructional capacity
- scaled professional development and adult learning.

During the project, two fundamental things began to stand out as having the broadest and deepest impact on student outcomes:

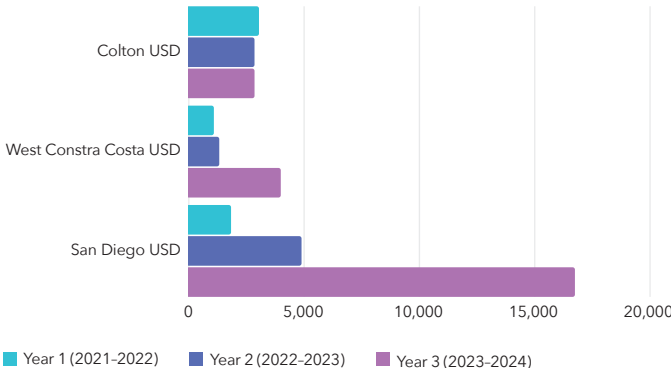
SCALE: increasing the number of teachers and students using the curriculum

INTEGRITY: the extent to which teachers adhere to the pedagogical design of the curriculum.

Scale of Participants

ConnectED and ELP worked with San Diego Unified (SDUSD); Colton Joint Unified (CJUSD); and West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD). In each district, we were able to successfully increase the number of teachers participating in the project through strategic recruitment, which in turn increased the number of students potentially impacted by the results:

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED

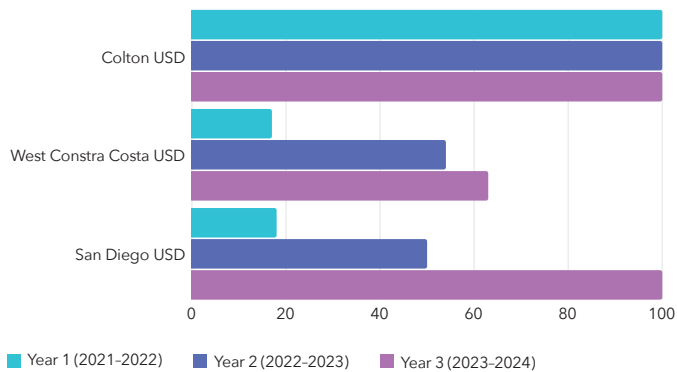


Colton Joint Unified: We worked with 7th and 8th grade teachers in all 4 Junior High schools. We served 100% of classrooms.

West Contra Costa Unified: We worked with 6th, 7th and 8th grade teachers across K-6 and K-8 Elementary Schools, and Middle Schools. We grew from 17% to 63% of classrooms served.

San Diego Unified: We worked with 6th, 7th and 8th grade teachers across K-6 and K-8 Elementary Schools, and Middle Schools. We grew from 18% to 100% of classrooms served.

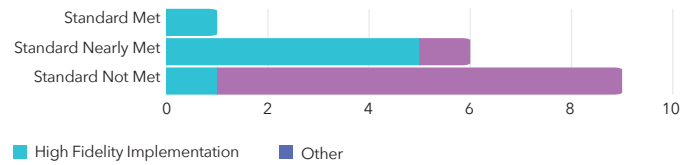
PERCENTAGE OF POSSIBLE SCHOOLS SERVED



Fidelity of Practice

Although there was an increasing number of teachers participating, not all classrooms were achieving the same results. To determine how the project was impacting student proficiency, we examined student performance on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). We did this by comparing the test results from high-fidelity implementation classrooms with the test results of classrooms with average and low fidelity implementation. Overall high-fidelity implementation resulted in classrooms with higher average CAASPP scores compared to the rest of the classrooms.

WEST CONTRA COSTA: AVERAGE CAASPP SCORES COMPARING CLASSROOMS WITH FIDELITY IMPLEMENTATION TO THE REST OF THE CLASSROOMS, YEAR 1



We also compared change in the percentages of students who did not meet, nearly met, met or exceeded standard on the CAASPP. In these we saw positive change in high-fidelity schools from Year 1 to Year 2.

Implementation in Colton Joint Unified School District:

There was an increase in the number of students who Met or Exceeded Standard on the CAASPP from Year 1 (2.4%) to Year 2 (23.1%).

Implementation in San Diego Unified School District:

There was an increase in the number of students who Met or Exceeded Standard on the CAASPP from Year 1 (25.9%) to Year 2 (38.2%).

Implementation in West Contra Costa: There was a decrease in students who scored below proficiency (15%) and an increase in the percentage of students who nearly met standard (10%) and an increase in students who met or exceeded standard (5%).

The final analysis of the EIC project is still being completed. Many more insights are sure to be determined. What is clear so far is that when attention is paid to scaling the number of participants and supporting consistent implementation of best practices it is possible to increase achievement for many students in a district.



Adams 14 Turnaround



*“Adams City High School has seen a significant improvement in graduation rates, which by some measures exceed Colorado’s average graduation rates, district leaders said. That is a big factor driving the school’s rating.”**

*“Adams City High School, the district’s one comprehensive high school, which has also been under state-ordered improvement plans for its own low ratings, now will have a clear separate order to continue its work with outside group ConnectED on rolling out the school’s career options, called academies, which started for ninth grade students this year.”**

Can a systems approach to College and Career Readiness help move a struggling district out of turnaround status?

For the past two years, ConnectED has partnered with Adams 14 in Commerce City, CO. The district is located in an industrial island in the Denver metropolitan area with a more than 90 percent Hispanic student population. For the past ten years, the district has been in “turnaround status” due to poor academic performance. As a result, the State Board imposed external management, and threatened to close the district and reorganize it as charter schools. The State Board’s actions were challenged by the Colorado Supreme Court in a suit brought by the district. ConnectED was invited to help the district by the newly hired Superintendent, Karla Loria. As part of its turnaround strategy, the district worked with ConnectED to start five academies in its high schools.

By May 2024, ConnectED President Gary Hoachlander was invited to join the district for its “accountability” hearing to the State Board. He updated the Board on the pathway development progress the district made over the past two years. As a result of this work and the support of other partners, Adams 14 saw significant improvement in graduation rates which by some measures exceeded Colorado’s average graduation rates. Adams 14 student achievement data also showed steady progress. These achievements were viewed as a community win and reported in the local [newspaper](#).

Superintendent Loria made a point of calling out the support of ConnectED and other partner organizations. The State Board found the progress extraordinary. The Board voted 8–1 to support the district’s plan for moving forward and relieved it of further accountability reporting for the next two years.

All of this is owed to extremely hard work. ConnectED played a crucial role by helping the district to:

- Engage in a readiness assessment
- Create a Graduate Profile
- Help leaders better support academies
- Support and improve pathways
- Develop and weave work-based learning into the career academy experience
- Create a vision and goals for industry-themed curriculum, instruction, and learning
- Support teachers to collaboratively design pathways

Not only can college and career readiness help a district come out of turnaround status, it can also help an entire community have hope for the future.

* State leaders show new trust in Adams 14’s plan for improving its schools By Yesenia Robles | May 8, 2024, 5:27pm PDT Updated: May 9, 2024, 3:32pm PDT

Rural New Mexico Convening of Superintendents



With support from American Student Assistance, the LANL Foundation, and the Thornburg Foundation, ConnectED convened superintendents from rural districts in New Mexico to discuss policy priorities for the upcoming year's Legislative Session.

The convening was held near Bernalillo and attended by 20 leaders from the region. For the past five years, ConnectED has partnered with Gallup McKinley County Schools, helping them plan and implement a system of college and career pathways in eight of their high schools. Six of those schools are small and geographically remote. As we worked with these schools, and others in rural districts, we developed a deep appreciation for the challenges of offering high-quality career-connected learning in rural communities.

There are two reports that have stemmed from this work beginning with **Building a System of College and Career Pathways in New Mexico** which provided state leaders and other stakeholders recommendations for developing a system of college and career pathways.

The second report *College and Career Pathways in Rural New Mexico: Strategies and Policy Implications* summarized what ConnectED is learning about how to adapt academies and pathways in these challenging conditions. Some of the topics include:

- Industry "Super Themes" or "Mega Clusters;"
- Flexible high school graduation requirements,
- Making work-based learning more accessible,
- Making dual credit more accessible,
- Strategies for recruiting teachers, counselors, and administrators,
- Teacher credentialing,
- Alignment with middle and elementary school, and
- Creating a small school community of practice.

Both reports were used to springboard conversations with the superintendents about past work and galvanize input on new ideas. As a result of the convening, critical issues affecting the delivery of pathways in rural communities were reviewed. The final sessions focused on priorities for 2025, turning policy into specific initiatives, and next steps.

Students in rural communities shouldn't be excluded from the benefits of college and career pathways. All students have dreams for the future. Thanks to a small group of persistent superintendents, students in rural New Mexico are one step closer to an expanded opportunity to make their dreams come true.



Champions of ConnectED

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Carnegie Corporation
LANL Foundation
Thornberg Foundation
American Student Assistance
Kellogg Foundation
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
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Your new and continued support is appreciated.
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Daphannie Stephens
Chief Program Officer
JD Hoyer
Special Advisor to
ConnectED

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Senior Event Planner/IT
Administrator
Joseph Hendry
Administrator, IT/Operations
Deanna Penales
Accountant
Mary Adams
Executive Assistant

Program Team

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Regional Support
Kiera Brodsky-Chase
Director, Instructional Design
and Research
Vinci Daro
Director Instructional Impact
in Mathematics

Ben Crosby
Director, Technology and
Media
Julie Koenke
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Regional Support
**Jennifer Lutzenberger-
Phillips**
Director, Learning, Teaching
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Shierra Merto
Director, Finance and
Contracts
Pier Sun Ho
Associate Director, Learning
Teaching and Pathway
Development
Tamyra Walker
Associate Director,
Instructional Design and
Mathematics
Maggie Williams
Financial Consultant
Gene Schmidt
Educational Consultant
Liza Eaton
Educational Consultant
Rocio Weiss
Educational Consultant

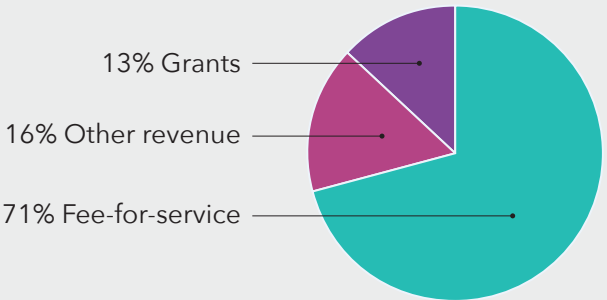
Financial Overview 2023

Annual Income & Expenses

Revenue	\$3,280,086
Expenditures	\$4,375,740
Net Change in Assets	(\$1,095,654)

Deficit reflects expenses earned revenue received from multi-year commitment (Gate Foundation) booked in prior year.

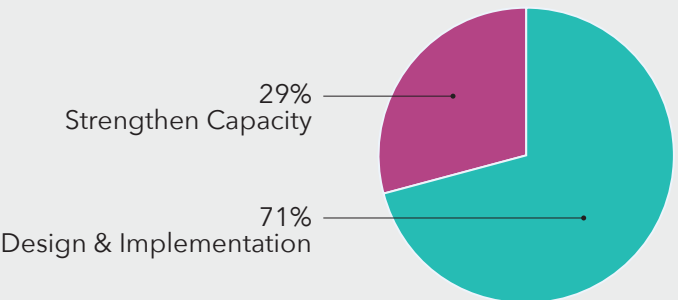
Annual Revenue 2023



Service Categories Program Expenses

Design & Implement Pathways	\$2,273,715
Strengthen Instructional Capacity	\$934,832

Services Categories – Program Expenses



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