

# Education Innovation Fund



*Photo courtesy, the Hustle Collective*

In May 2020 a coalition of partners launched the Education Innovation Fund to address COVID-19's dramatic impact on Colorado's schools and students. To support innovative approaches to learning, the Fund's \$325,000 was distributed on a rolling basis to actively promote resilient education systems and stimulate new approaches to meeting learners' needs.

In three months, the Fund awarded \$320,000 to 34 promising efforts across the State. Below is a detailed description of the Fund's grantees, as well as an overview of RESCHOOL's learning dollars.

## Overview of Grantees *\*listed in alphabetical order*

1. **Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists (CABPES)** is a nonprofit that encourages Black youth and youth of color to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Funding from the Education Innovation Fund will allow CABPES to adapt its STEM programming led by a majority of BIPOC professionals to a hybrid model. Virtual classes will include aerospace engineering, biomedical science, and civil engineering. \$5,000 award
2. **Climb Higher Colorado & the Center for Innovation in Education (CIE)** are partnering to convene school and district partners that have expressed a commitment to co-creation and side-by-side learning with students and families. Together, system partners will assemble a design team to test new ways of operating. Teams will have an emphasis on representation and leadership from the voices and perspectives of students and families most at the margins. \$10,000 award
3. **Cortez Charter Collective** is a shared initiative of Kiva Montessori Charter School and Battle Rock Charter School in southwest Colorado. Both schools are small in size, and neither has adequate funding to support an on-site school counselor. The schools will partner together to hire a restorative justice coordinator that will work across both campuses to ensure students' social and emotional needs are met during this time. Funding will be used to train the coordinator and staff at both campuses in restorative practices. \$8,000 award
4. **Denver Independent School** is an umbrella school for K-12 home-based learners. The school provides an innovative educational ecosystem creating solutions to the economic, cultural, and systemic barriers preventing Black families from accessing their right to home-educate their children. Funding will support staffing to build out the organization and stipends to participating families. \$20,000 award
5. **The Dream Keepers Project** is a youth leadership development initiative in Morgan County launching a near-peer mentorship program for incoming immigrant and refugee high schoolers. The program will partner multilingual CSU college students with high school students to support engagement and transitions to college and career during the 2020-21 academic year. Grant award amount: \$20,000
6. **FaithBridge Community Liberation Academy** is a community initiative that will provide supplemental instruction virtually to support students at risk of falling behind during the 2020/2021 school year. The effort will leverage and strengthen FaithBridge's community partnerships to ensure students and families are supported and empowered with resources during this time. \$10,000 award
7. **E Movement** is a collaboration of more than 20 organizations that created the nation's first whole-child environmental literacy guidelines in 2016. Funding will support the development and dissemination of a bilingual database of virtual programming designed to facilitate whole-child learning for grades K-8. \$5,000 award

8. **Edgewater Collective** will provide summertime pop-up lunch and literacy lessons for grade K-3 students as well as create opportunities for student/teacher connections to bridge the remote learning divide. The Collective will evaluate this pilot program and plans to adapt it as a viable model in the fall if remote learning continues. \$4,000 award
9. **Fremont Multi-District Initiative** is a collaboration between three local Fremont County districts and Pueblo Community College (PCC). The partnering organizations recognized that resources are often inequitably distributed across school districts in the area, and are working to reinvent the way a region can cooperatively utilize resources and sustainably provide an outstanding educational experience for rural students. Funding will support this joint effort. \$15,000 award
10. **Fueling Youth Reading is Literacy in Training (FYR is LIT)** is a program that instructs high school students from DSST Montview in literacy training and matches them with an elementary student for one-on-one literacy tutoring. Funding will provide support to the recently launched LIFEHACKS program, which transitioned their learning sessions online. \$6,250 award
11. **Grand Mesa Arts & Events Center (GMAEC)** is a nonprofit located in the rural community of Cedaredge. GMAEC leads 30+ art-based classes to community youth each year to supplement offerings at local elementary and middle schools. Funding will support three art programs to engage students both virtually and in-person during the summer. \$2,700 award
12. **Greater Than One Collective (GTO)** is a collaborative of organizations working to create a community-, home-, and school-connected learning network with students and families at three Park Hill schools. Funding will support GTO to adapt its model so that the organization can continue to provide wraparound support to 40+ families and partner with schools on community-centered redesign. \$15,000 award
13. **Heart and Hand Center** is a nonprofit supporting youth in Northeast Denver through academic support, health and wellness education, social emotional skills, family engagement, and creative expression. Funding will support a program modeled after learning pods available to more affluent families. Heart and Hand will replicate pods to serve low-income families and the children of educators. \$10,000 award
14. **Highline Academy for Virtual Learning** is a collaboration between five charter schools in Denver to develop and implement an entirely online remote learning option for the 2020-21 school year. The virtual academy will serve 200+ students grade K-5 with an innovative program focused on meeting all students' needs. \$5,000 award

“ *Then there is the individual level. We’ve exposed about 290 students and families to the power of student-led learning... and it’s about learning the mindsets, the skills, the values it takes to hustle and how you can apply those in a myriad of contexts.* ”

- **Wisdom Amouzou, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Empower Community High School**

15. **The Hustle Collective** is a group of educators and students that will pilot a new model of virtual, student-led learning with 75+ students (ages 13-18) in the Denver metropolitan area. Students will work with mentors and peers to set a goal and develop and execute self-directed learning plans. The project was initiated at Empower Community High School in Aurora. Funding will support this pilot. \$15,000 award
16. **Isaura Ibarra** is a recent high school graduate and leader with the Youth Empowerment Broadcasting Organization (YEBO) creating a student-led program to engage students nearing graduation through media and the arts. The pilot program will also support the exploration of postsecondary options and pathways for up to 12 high school students in Montbello. \$7,500

17. **Joy as Resistance** was founded by Bre Donnelly, a school social worker in Denver Public Schools, to support the mental health and wellness needs of LGBTQ youth in Denver and Aurora through suicide prevention training, wellness summer sessions and a mobile mental health clinic. \$8,000 award
18. **Logan Learning Lab** addresses the barriers that prevent gifted students from underrepresented backgrounds from accessing educational experiences that maximize their full potential. The Lab works with educators across Denver Public Schools to identify and engage these students and their families, and develop teachers' student-centered instructional practices to transform learning. Funding will support the Lab's work this fall. \$10,000 award
19. **Montezuma School to Farm Project (MSTFP)** supports Southwest Colorado students with educational programs on nutrition, gardening, and environmental stewardship. Funding will support MSTFP to adapt 7 school-based gardens and launch 3 hybrid summertime programs with a strong focus on the environment, math, science, and art. \$3,500 award
20. **Northfield High School** is a school in Denver and member of the Northeast Denver Innovation Zone whose enrollment system was intentionally constructed to provide quality seats across socioeconomically neighborhoods in an effort to help close the achievement gap within DPS. Funding will support Northfield's efforts to pilot and launch the Flyer Connect app that provides families with translated communications, academic tools, and social resources during the 2020-21 school year. Grant award amount: \$3,500

21. **PlatteForum** is an arts-based nonprofit that matches youth with professional artists in intensive and long-term projects where they explore relevant social issues, safely take creative risks, and develop academic, professional, leadership, and personal skills. Funding will support the development of creative arts programming that integrates social and emotional support with opportunities to discover and address social justice and restorative processes important to teens. Grant award amount: \$5,000



*Photo courtesy, Boys & Girls Club*

22. **Rachael Ribota Vaughn Elementary** is an educator launching a food pantry and library for students and families of Vaughn Elementary, a school in Aurora with 94% free and reduced lunch student population. Funds will be used to purchase books, learning materials and food pantry supplies. \$4,000 award.
23. **R.O.G.U.E** is a youth-led multi-media effort that aims to strengthen relationships amongst young people and build bridges with older generations by discussing impactful topics that span multiple communities. Funding will support the team to develop content for Youtube, a newsletter, and a podcast focused on supporting students to navigate the post-COVID-19 education landscape and the transition from high school to college. \$5,000 award
24. **RISE Colorado** is an advocacy organization in Aurora, Colorado that works with low-income families, families of color, and refugee and immigrant communities to put those most impacted by the opportunity gap at the forefront of the movement for educational equity. With support from the Fund, RISE will launch two programs: 1) the Next Generation Virtual Summer Youth Program with curriculum focused on leadership development, academic support, and social connection and, 2) the Family-Led Virtual Community Forum, which provides parents and guardians a space to share their hopes, concerns, and ideas for school re-entry. Grant award amount: \$20,000
25. **San Luis Valley Innovation Hub** is a collaboration between the Boys and Girls Club of the San Luis Valley (BGCSLV), ActionLab360, Alamosa School District, neighboring districts, and community partners. Funding will support the collaborative to launch a new model of online learning that is easily customizable and will be available to more than 1,000 students in the valley. \$15,000 award
26. **Science Fair Fun** is a nonprofit that partners with schools to improve access to high-quality, early learning STEM opportunities. Science Fair Fun targets its programs to public schools with 50% or greater student participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – a population that has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Funding will support the beta test of an innovative STEM 3- Project Kit program with remote learning options. Grant award amount: \$3,500

27. **Southwest Colorado District Collaborative** is a partnership between five school districts, higher education institutions, and industry leaders to build a collaborative to address areas of common need for students in southwest Colorado. Through this partnership, participating districts will develop student-informed solutions and leverage and share resources, including enhanced distance learning capabilities and career-readiness programming. Funding will support planning efforts this fall. \$10,000 award

28. **Summit County Program Provider Collaborative** is a partnership of more than 65 organizations in Summit County providing a community-centered approach to wrap-around care by leveraging resources through cross-sector partnerships. The collaborative's central outcome is to ensure students have equitable and consistent access to academic and social-emotional support during the 2020-21 school year. \$10,000 award

29. **Silverton Public Schools** is a small rural district in southwest Colorado with a whole-child approach to teaching and learning. Funding will support the district to engage students and families one-on-one to redesign and rethink the school schedule and develop and formalize structures to build relationships and provide student and family coaching through the fall. The effort will work in partnership with the local early childhood education center, and inform the approach of the district into the future. \$20,000 award



30. **Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning** provides intercultural learning programs and services to Coloradans. In response to COVID-19, the Spring Institute plans to launch a new summer learning program at two apartment complexes in Denver and Aurora that are home to a diverse group of multicultural students. The organization plans to project virtual classes in outdoor spaces so that residents can build community while remaining physically distanced. Funding will support the launch and implementation of this program. \$5,000 award

31. **Vilas School District** is a small rural district in southeast Colorado with a focus on project-based learning and developing students' technological skills. Vilas piloted a homeschool options program in the 2019-20 school year, and funding will support planning, communications, and partner building so that the district can accommodate anticipated growth of the program in the 2020-21 school year. \$6,500 award

32. **The Youth Scan Project** is a statewide initiative created by YouthRoots designed to elevate youth voices on COVID-19 related impacts on education and student experiences. Students will design a youth-facing community needs assessment, gather student perspectives, and analyze information during a 10-week program. YouthRoots will then ensure insights from the effort inform decision-makers in philanthropy, education, and government. \$4,350 award

33. **Wyatt Academy** is a K-5 community-centered elementary school serving children and families in the Cole and Whittier neighborhoods of Denver. Funding will support Wyatt to deeply engage families during the summer months to develop a hybrid learning plan with robust online content, and continue to support families with its on-site resource center. \$8,000 award

“ I think it is important that we are building an innovative learning plan - yes. But it is innovative not just because it may be hybrid or remote, but because it will truly be built on community voice.

- Kate Mishara, Executive Director of Wyatt Academy

34. **Young Aspiring Americans for Social & Political Activism's** work has long been rooted in giving Black youth and youth of color the civic tools and knowledge to understand and resist racism while they navigate their school experience and advocate for systemic change. Funding will support a summertime pilot of a five-week Social Sciences and Policy Institute that will lead students in small cohorts through experiential learning projects. \$20,000 award

# RESCHOOL Learning Dollars

A portion of the Education Innovation Fund was used to create a Learning Dollar Fund, managed by RESCHOOL. Families disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and facing economic hardship, were invited to apply for funding to pay for resources and experiences their children needed this summer in order to stay engaged in fun, interesting and important learning.

As of June 30th, RESCHOOL distributed **\$24,000 in learning dollars for 160 youth across 71 families statewide**. [This map](#) shows where applications came from and where learning dollars were distributed.

RESCHOOL had the opportunity to connect with the **71 families** who received Learning Dollars. Through the conversations with families so far, it's clear these dollars will make an impact. Below is a quote RESCHOOL received from a family when they found out they were receiving Learning Dollars. RESCHOOL will circle back with families in August to learn more about the experiences they had with the Learning Dollars and how it impacted their summer. [Reference the June update](#) to learn more about who applied, who was funded and how they prioritized over 400 applications.



*Me siento muy afortunada de que mis hijas puedan recibir estos fondos para gastos recreativos, durante este verano, más en este tiempo donde el estar en casa es difícil.*

English Translation:

*I feel very fortunate that my daughters can receive these funds for recreational expenses, during this summer, more so during this time where being at home is difficult.*



The \$24,000 RESCHOOL had available for the Learning Dollars Fund was distributed to families in gifts between \$250-\$550, depending on the number of kids age 4-17 in the application. 78% of families funded had multiple children and a household income below \$50,000. Close to 350 additional families applied for dollars RESCHOOL could not fund; many more if the application process had not closed after two weeks because of the high demand.

With the 2020-21 school year kicking off for many families with remote learning, the need for Learning Dollars will continue to increase.

If you're interested in supporting or learning more about the program, please reach out to Amy Anderson: [aanderson@reschoolcolorado.org](mailto:aanderson@reschoolcolorado.org) for more information.

## Education Innovation Fund Partners

