

**FIELD HEARING: CENTENNIAL, CO: INNOVATIONS
IN THE SCHOOL TO SMALL BUSINESS PIPELINE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
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Questions for the Record:	
None.	
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None.	
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None.	

INNOVATIONS IN THE SCHOOL TO SMALL BUSINESS PIPELINE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:09 a.m., at Cherry Creek Innovation Campus, 8000 S. Chambers Road, Englewood, CO, Hon. Jason Crow presiding.

Present: Representative Crow.

Chairman CROW. Good morning. The committee will come to order. Thank you all for joining us this morning and a special thanks to the witnesses for being here today. For those in attendance, I would like to share some background on the proceedings.

This is a formal field hearing of the House Committee on Small Business, and due to this format, there is not an opportunity for questions or public comments from the audience at this time, but I do want to thank everyone for your attendance and interest in this issue.

These field hearings are actually a really unique opportunity and as the Chair of the Innovation and Workforce Development Subcommittee, what we like to do is just go out into the community, go back to our districts, and then come to, you know, amazing innovative places like this and it allows us to actually collect best practices and things that are being done out in the district and throughout the country, get those facts and issues into the Congressional record so that we can make better informed decision in D.C. We can work with the staff to identify issues and promote legislation.

So this is a really valuable way to do that and we appreciate your participation in that process. So as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Innovation and Workforce Development on the Small Business Committee, one of my goals this year has been to look at the labor needs for small businesses and entrepreneurs and finding ways to expand educational opportunities for our workers to succeed in the 21st century.

I strongly believe that small businesses are the backbone of America and I am committed to help our small businesses find and train the talent that they need to succeed. Over the past decade, our economy has seen a dramatic shift in terms of work force needs especially here in Colorado. Similar to many economic metrics, Colorado is leading the way with a 2.7 percent unemployment rate,

even lower in our Congressional district, more than a full percentage point below the national average.

But the ability to continue to expand businesses and grow businesses is being substantially hindered by ongoing problems that my colleagues and I in the Small Business Committee hear about from many small businesses all the time who are simply unable to find the qualified workers and the workforce that they need to meet their growing needs. An aging workforce combined with a growing skills gap among our current workforce in a broken immigration system is keeping all firms from reaching their full potential.

In their latest report released earlier this month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that there are currently more open jobs than people seeking to fill them. This poses a problem for many businesses who cannot find the talent that they need to grow and thrive.

According to Pew research, 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day for the next decade, and while demand for jobs and clean and renewable energy and construction remain high, small firms are having a harder time finding workers to meet this demand in many industries. These reasons emphasize the importance of improving our education system and finding innovative ways to address workforce needs. This can happen by creating a massive workforce mobilization effort through public and private partnerships at all levels of education to prepare for the future work in our country.

From the deficiency of construction workers and technicians who could retrofit every building in America for energy efficiency and transform our energy sources to combat the climate crisis, to the lack of healthcare workers that could expand access to veterans and children in even the most rural places in America, all industries are feeling the strain of an adequate pathways to employment.

We are seeing the shortcomings of traditional American career pathways in real time. This country's crushing student debt burden of \$1.5 trillion decreases demand and limits our young people's ability to start families and buy houses, take risks, or become entrepreneurs. While still valuable for many industries, four-year educational institutions can often neglect to train workers for highly skilled and middle income skilled jobs, which make up 47 percent of all jobs here in Colorado.

These middle skills professions are in a variety of industries and support the jobs in construction, healthcare, transportation, and public safety, many of which are dominated by small businesses. Furthermore, 86 percent of our employers see the skills gap as a threat to their businesses. The inability for small firms to attract, hire, and retain qualified workers make the U.S. less competitive and incentivize many businesses to take their operations overseas.

For many labor intensive businesses that cannot be outsourced, they are forced to rely on worker visas, which are in short supply and high demand, unlikely to increase under the current Administration. Luckily, our State is seeking to change the conversation on how we educate our young people for the future. We are innovating new pathways in the school to business pipeline that can empower people and expand their career opportunities throughout life.

And there is really no better example frankly of this work than where we are sitting today, which is really a model in my view in the country for how we can do this at a local level. I am very proud to be here and to share this with the rest of the country.

Apprenticeships in career and technical education, or CTE, are becoming more attractive ways of developing our future workforce. Not only are they less costly than four year college, they combine classroom learning with on-the-job training, maximizing engagement and providing a fuller learning experience.

I hope that today's discussion will shed light on the ways apprenticeships and training programs, especially those in Colorado, are revolutionizing workforce development, helping small businesses obtain the workers they need. I look forward to following up with my colleagues in Washington and work hard to bring down educational barriers to entry and expand the American workforce.

Now, I will just take a moment to explain how this hearing will work. First, I will introduce all our witnesses and then each will be given some time to make an opening statement that summarizes the written testimony. We usually use a five-minute time for this and in D.C. where we are pretty stringent about it, but since we are back here in Colorado, we will be less stringent. But I still do ask that you try to abide by the five-minute rule to the best of your ability.

Now, I would like to introduce our witnesses for today's panel. Our first witness is Ms. Sarah Grobbel, Assistant Superintendent of Career and Innovation Campus of Cherry Creek Schools. Since graduating from Michigan State University—I am a Badger so. We had the big ten thing. It is okay.

Since graduating from MSU with a degree in Mathematics and Chemistry, she has spent the last 20 years serving the Cherry Creek School District, first as an Educator, then as an Assistant Principal and Principal. Your experience and wisdom and education in innovation has led her to our current position as the Assistant Superintendent of the Cherry Creek School District focusing on innovative ways to educate students.

She has also played a critical role in establishing the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus where we sit today, where we are holding this hearing today. This is a new 117,000 square foot campus opening just this August offering many areas of study from construction management to cooking and airplane maintenance and cybersecurity. Thank you for being here.

Our second witness is Mr. Noel Ginsburg, the Founder and CEO of CareerWise Colorado. Mr. Ginsburg has decades of experience as an entrepreneur and serving Coloradans through many initiatives. Since founding Intertech Plastics while in his senior year at the University of Denver, he has received the Martin Luther King Social Responsibility Business Award in 1995, the Daniel Richie Award for Ethics and Business in 1998, the 2001 Leadership Denver Outstanding Alumni Award, the 2012 Goodwill Community Leader Award, and the Anti-Defamation League's 2016 Civil Rights Award.

Well, I find myself asking what I have accomplished in my life compared to you, Noel. Additionally, Mr. Ginsburg is a member of the State Economic Development Commission and the Colorado

Workforce Development Council, a Board member of the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, and the Chair of the Denver Public Schools College and Career Pathways Council. Continuing his civic-minded leadership, he is the Founding Executive Chair of the Board for CareerWise Colorado, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to building the middle class by closing the skills gap through experiential learning.

And I would also add a dear friend. So thank you Noel for joining us. Our third witness is Mr. Matthew Kaplan, Vice President of Business Development and Mentorship at the Outdoor Industry Association. Mr. Kaplan has an MBA in International Business from Thunderbird, and upon graduation quickly combined as passions for the outdoors with his educational background. Working in the outdoor industry for over 20 years, Mr. Kaplan has worked and outdoor electronics world, starting the outdoor division of ACR Electronics.

As President and Managing Director of Suunto North America and top positions at Footbalance North America, Timberland, and Ibex Outdoor Clothing, and as Vice President at the Outdoor Industry Association, Mr. Kaplan is overseen organizational revenue objectives, new business development, and revenue diversification.

He also works with other Industries defined areas of alignment as well as university partners across the country launching the first of its kind continuing education platform for the outdoor industry. Thank you for being here today.

Our fourth witness is Mr. Garry Edmondson, the Apprenticeship Administrator for IUOE Local 9, Colorado's journeyman and apprenticeship training. Mr. Edmondson has nearly 40 years of experience as a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

He has spent his time as a dirt hand, a certified crane operator, apprenticeship program instructor, and administrator, and as a certified crane tester, and served on the National Board for the Crane Operator Certifying Program. Mr. Edmondson has spent his career in the heavy equipment operation side of construction. Thank you for being here today.

As somebody that worked in construction to help pay my way through college, I love the fact that we both started out working as hands on construction sites, and I have a special place in my heart for your work.

So, thank you for being here today. Ms. Grobbel, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENTS OF SARAH LC GROBBEL, ASSISTANT SUPER-INTENDENT, CAREER AND INNOVATION, CHERRY CREEK SCHOOLS; NOEL GINSBURG, FOUNDER AND CEO, CAREERWISE COLORADO; MATTHEW KAPLAN, VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBERSHIP, OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION; GARRY EDMONDSON, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, COLORADO JOURNEYMAN AND APRENTICE PROGRAM IUOE L9

STATEMENT OF SARAH LC GROBBEL

Ms. GROBBEL. Thank you. Chairman Jason Crow, Ranking Member Balderson, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing at the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus in Cherry Creek School District as part of the Innovations in the School to Small Business Pipeline. I am honored to offer my perspective during this time of educational shift in the United States.

On behalf of the Cherry Creek School District Board of Education, President Karen Fisher, members, Ms. Kelly Bates, Ms. Anne Egan, Ms. Angela Garland, and Ms. Janice McDonald, and Superintendent, Dr. Scott Siegfried, we welcome you to Cherry Creek Schools and to the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus.

In 2015, the Colorado Department of Education made changes to the graduation guidelines for the class of 2021. Cherry Creek Schools seized this opportunity to engage students, parents, educators, community members, business partners, and higher education leaders in a conversation regarding the portrait of a successful graduate in Cherry Creek Schools to create the vision of Cherry Creek 2021.

It was through this work that Cherry Creek Schools changed its goals to inclusive excellence and college and career preparedness and success as we recognized our goal to create learners who focus on innovation, critical thinking, real world experiences, project-based learning, relevancy, communication skills, adaptability, and teamwork.

The Cherry Creek Innovation Campus would be the cornerstone to this work and my passion project over the next three years. In November of 2016, the community and stakeholders of Cherry Creek Schools passed a local bond measure for the capital project which made the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus a reality for Cherry Creek Schools.

The pathways include advanced manufacturing, business services, health and wellness, hospitality and tourism, IT and STEAM, infrastructure and engineering, and transportation, includes both aviation and automotive coursework.

The campus is a standalone college and career preparedness facility accessible for high school students in the Cherry Creek Schools. With curriculum rooted in real-world skills and trade certifications ranging from the computer sciences to aviation to health and wellness as well as college credit options in all pathways, this facility offers students a new bridge to college and viable, successful careers.

More importantly, students are not asked to choose between workforce or college after high school. This programming is for students going on to two and four-year colleges, military, or workforce,

as well as aiding the student who is still trying to connect to his or her career passions and interests.

As is the mission of Cherry Creek Schools, the Innovation Campus was designed to inspire our students to think, to learn, to achieve, to care from the moment that they walk through the main entrance. The intentionality in creating a partnership with industry is what has made this facility stand out across the country.

We engaged industry partners to help us build the concept of each pathway as well as the curriculum and instruction. Principal Mark Morgan and his cadre spent endless hours over the last two years with our architect, contractor, student advisory group, community stakeholder group, and our industry partners to fulfill the vision of 2021 for the Cherry Creek Schools.

We also used documents like the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report to guide our pathway choices. We stand on the shoulders of the pioneer career and technical education teachers in our district who have built a solid foundation for 21st century professional coursework in our schools over the last decade.

Our programming includes career exploration, career and technical education cluster models, internships, and apprenticeships. Over the past three years, we have also participated in Colorado's legislated Career Development Incentive Program, which recognizes the number of students earning industry credentials and participating in internships each year.

We are proud of the work we are doing with CareerWise Colorado, which you will hear about in just a second, in creating apprenticeship opportunities for our students. Through this partnership, we are successfully linking students to career opportunities with a focus on work-based competencies and postsecondary education for each apprentice. Our goal is to create an apprenticeship for each pathway in our career and technical education coursework.

This fall, we opened our newest apprenticeship, Future Educator Pathway Apprenticeship. As the employer of the apprenticeship, we are hiring our current high school students who would like to pursue a degree in education as paraprofessionals working part-time in our K-8 schools.

We are also investing in these apprentices by providing college credit for coursework necessary to earn a teaching certification down the road. Like many industry partners, we are excited about the concept of growing our own to create a pipeline of educators that may help us fill the future job shortage in education.

The Cherry Creek Innovation Campus opened our doors on August 12th, to nearly 1,000 students, with another 1,000 students expected next semester. Although we have much to be proud of at this stage, we recognize our work is not done. We will continue to focus on creating pathways of purpose for our students with a formalized individual career and academic plans for every student from 6th through 12th grade and beyond.

We will also look at future bond measures which will allow our school district to add additional pathways of purpose for students in our district as part of Cherry Creek's future forward strategic planning.

As we continue to strive to be the pipeline for our students from education to healthy and meaningful careers, we ask for your help. According to Education Week, the average per-pupil funding in education across the United States is \$12,756 as of June 2019. This per-pupil spending amount is adjusted for regional cost differences across States, and it captures factors such as teacher and staff salaries, classroom spending, and administration, but not construction or other capital spending.

Colorado ranks in the bottom five of all States at an average per pupil funding of \$10,053. This discrepancy in funding has caused many school districts in States like Colorado to look at local funding sources, especially partnerships with industry, to maintain the level of excellence expected by families and community members.

Our success in the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus has been creating meaningful relationships with industry partners and higher education to provide our students with curriculum and instruction grounded in real-world experiences.

We ask that as a committee that you continue to include K-12 education in workforce development discussions so that we can continue to grow with you in these conversations. Please encourage local business to engage with their community educational partners, and most importantly, focus on better funding sources for all K-12 schools throughout the country including and specially the financial support of local business.

What we have described today has proven to be a significant return on investment for students, community, industry, and local economy. We know what we have created together today will change education tomorrow, because this effort is not just education or industry but the perfect combination of both.

Thank you for this time.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Ms. Grobbel.

Mr. Ginsburg, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF NOEL GINSBURG

Mr. GINSBURG. Good afternoon and thank you for coming here today to learn about apprenticeships, and Sarah, for making sure that I did graduate from this high school years ago. Although you probably weren't responsible.

Chairman CROW. Ask how many years ago.

[Laughter.]

Mr. GINSBURG. Thank you. My name—I don't want that in the Congressional record. My name is Noel Ginsburg. I am the Founder and Chairman of a local manufacturing company Intertech Plastics and Intertech Medical, but I am also the Founder and CEO of CareerWise.

Four years ago, CareerWise set out to build a youth apprenticeship system here in Colorado and in the United States. The reason I founded CareerWise is the same reason you are here today.

And if you take anything away from today's field hearing it should be this, apprenticeship, in particular youth apprenticeship, can be transformational. It can transform our workforce and talent pipelines. It can transform our economy and middle-class. And most importantly, it can transform the lives of our young people through opportunity.

Today as a society we are all in on the four-year degree as an unobstructed path to the middle class, but the reality is that there are lots of challenges along that path. It only successfully serves about 25 percent of our young people in Colorado, and with the rising cost of higher education and skyrocketing student debt, it is clear those numbers aren't going to get better anytime soon.

Meanwhile, industry cannot find enough skilled workers to hire into their early-career roles. This is true of the construction trades, but it is also just as true in fields like IT, financial services, and business operations. Even the workers hired from prestigious schools graduate with the baseline theoretical knowledge in their fields, take tens of thousands of dollars and months and months of training in their practical execution of the job.

Don't misunderstand, higher education is important and valuable for many people and many professions but not all of them. Youth apprenticeship offers practical learning, and with it an illuminated and prestigious path to the middle class that may or may not run through college.

A CareerWise apprenticeship is designed to intersect with higher ed. Apprentices graduate the program with the opportunity to earn up to a semester's worth of debt-free college credit and a focused perspective on how additional education can further their career and life goals.

The system we are building at CareerWise is more than just an education program that turns the workplace into an applied-learning environment—though it is that too. Modern youth apprenticeship in America is smart business. It is not philanthropy. Employers aren't just writing a check and leaving the details to someone else.

Apprenticeship changes the paradigm of early workforce development. Industry takes an active role in shaping their future workforce. Starting as juniors in high school, apprentices spend part of the week in school in their academic pursuits, and part of the week in the workplace, learning by doing and producing valuable work for the employer.

Apprenticeship is different from internship. Whereas interns are often only in their roles for a short amount of time, performing low-value tasks, apprentices are trained over multiple years to step directly into early-career positions. In the CareerWise model, those roles are all high-growth, high-wage positions.

The occupations in a CareerWise apprenticeship and the integration of higher-ed coursework are intended to ensure that there are no dead ends. Apprenticeship can take a young person from the workplace to a PhD, or from the classroom to a corner office. Apprenticeship is an options multiplier. The opportunity it presents to industry and students is made possible only through true partnership and dynamic collaboration.

Evidence that collaboration between these two very different institutions is not only possible but incredibly fruitful, as this building we are in right now proves. The Cherry Creek Innovation Center is the physical manifestation of just such a partnership, as well as the leadership of these pioneers in work-based learning, the Superintendent Scott Siegfried, and Sarah Grobbel, Cherry Creek's Assistant Superintendent of Career and Innovation.

It is in this building that the practical and the theoretical are coming together to offer more educational opportunities and strengthen America's workforce. It is career-focused centers like this one that represent the systems change, a new bridge between industry and education that is beginning to take root across America.

Finally, when students that attend the Cherry Creek Innovation Center are matched with apprenticeships, their success in their future career will be significantly enhanced and the return on investment for the participating businesses will skyrocket.

During the last two years, CareerWise has hosted delegations from across the country to learn about our program design, to hear about the collaborative groundwork that we established through a Governor-appointed business experiential learning commission, to find out about our early challenges and how they were overcome, and to see apprentices at work and hear from their employers like Pinnacol Assurance, Home Advisor, Frontier Airlines, and over 130 employers in the State.

These trips aren't simply fact-finding missions. The learnings the delegations take home are being put to good use. As a result, the CareerWise model has been implemented in vastly different local economies across the country.

Today, CareerWise New York has 85 apprentices working for companies like JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, and Amazon, and CareerWise Elkhart County in Indiana, where 80 percent of the RVs on the road today are manufactured, has apprentices working in those advanced manufacturing facilities.

After the first of the year, CareerWise D.C. will launch as well. A few months ago, I was moderating a panel of apprentices that work at Pinnacol Assurance in Denver. Towards the end of the session, I asked one of the apprentice how she viewed her future prior to her apprenticeship. She is African American and attends one of the poorest performing schools in her district that has a free and reduced lunch percentage of over 90 percent.

After thinking about the question for a moment, she simply said, I didn't think I had one. But she continued, I have learned that I bring value to this company and in turn, they are giving me an opportunity to build a real career and future that I couldn't have dreamed of.

You could have heard a pin drop as many of us were wiping away tears from our eyes. This young lady was just hired as a full-time employee at Pinnacol and will earn her Associate Degree by the third year of her apprenticeship. Her story represents the promise of youth apprenticeship and why I believe this is a strategy that can change education and workforce in this country.

The transformation made possible by youth apprenticeship spans the macro, the economy, growing the middle class, and helping America maintain the most innovative workforce in the world, as well as the micro, setting a young person on a course that may not have otherwise been available to them, and creating the space in someone's workday so that they may impart their wisdom to the next generation of workers.

Thank you for your time and your interest in making these kinds of transformations available for every American. Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Ginsburg. Mr. Kaplan, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW KAPLAN

Mr. KAPLAN. Chairman Crow, I am pleased to submit testimony on behalf of Outdoor Industry Association, OIA, the leading national trade association of 1,300 suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers of outdoor gear and products. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending and supports more than 7.6 million highly skilled American jobs.

On behalf of our member businesses, we thank you for holding today's hearing to discuss new and innovative approaches to educate young people and create a school-to-business pipeline. Small businesses make up the backbone of the outdoor industry, as well as you mentioned earlier. In fact, 78 percent of OIA's 1,300 members generate revenue of less than \$10 million.

These small businesses are especially attentive to legislation and regulations that ensure a framework that encourages economic growth, promotes outdoor recreation, conserves and grows our public lands, protects our environment, and ensures clean air and clean water for generations of outdoor enthusiasts.

The Colorado outdoor recreation industry is thriving. Colorado's outdoor recreation economy generates \$28 billion in consumer spending annually and contributes 229,000 direct jobs. Those who work in the outdoor industry have collectively earned over \$9.7 billion in wages and salaries, while those who support it have generated \$2 billion in State and local tax revenue.

Colorado is the home to many prolific outdoor brands. There are over 170 members of OIA based in the State and these include several large employers, such as VF Corporation, one of whose member brands is The North Face, which recently moved to Colorado in 2018, accounting for over 500 new Colorado jobs, and Vail Resorts, which owns 37 ski areas around the world, five of which are located here in Colorado.

There are also many small businesses, such as Topo Designs and Point 6 socks, as well as the North American headquarters of European brands Fjallraven, La Sportiva, and Scarpa. The outdoor lifestyle and economic strength of the State creates an excellent environment for new brands to test their products and solicit investment.

In 2018, the twice-per-year Outdoor Retailer Show, the largest business-to-business trade event serving the outdoor industry, picked up stakes from its 22-year home in Salt Lake City, Utah, and selected Denver, Colorado, as its new home. It is calculated that the two-time-per-year trade show brings approximately 25,000 attendees to each show, and over \$75 million in direct and indirect impact to the State.

Despite the incredible growth and contribution to the State's economy, the outdoor industry lacks a traditional on-ramp for recruiting and seeking new talent in the workforce. There are no job fairs, there are very few degree programs, and a lack of awareness that the outdoor industry is a viable career path for all aspects of business skills and training. OIA is working to change all of that

and proactively attract and retain a continuous stream of a qualified and diverse workforce.

An important step in this process is working with the State's educational institutions. Given the impact of this sector on the State, it is no surprise that several prominent colleges and universities in Colorado had begun to focus on degree programs and educational opportunities in outdoor recreation including the following to just name a few, the University of Colorado Boulder has a Masters of the Environment Degree focusing on public lands and climate change, Western Colorado University in Gunnison has the first of its kind in the Nation, Outdoor MBA, Colorado State University offers a degree in Adventure Travel and Tourism, and Colorado Mountain College offers a diverse range of outdoor degrees and certificates on all of their 11 campuses throughout the State.

So in 2020, this January, OIA will launch the Outdoor Industry Business Certificate Program, the first of its kind, outdoor industry online continuing education platform with three university partners. Two of these partners are here in Colorado, CU Boulder and Western Colorado University in Gunnison.

The certificates will assist individuals who are looking to enter the outdoor industry from college or from other industries by creating a curriculum that will educate them on subjects important to the success in our industry such as sustainable product design, public lands management, and general outdoor industry business principles, all of which are crucial to the success of an outdoor industry professional as well as the small businesses who employ them.

OIA's business certificates are not only designed for first-time pathways seekers into the industry but also for seasoned professionals from other sectors looking for a new career opportunity or to offer scholarships to students from under-resourced communities and veterans looking for opportunities in the outdoor industry.

Our hope is that these certificates will create the on-ramp needed in our growing sector and allow people to combine their personal passions with their professional pursuits. Although our history is rooted in hiking, camping, canoeing, backpacking, skiing, rock climbing, and many other sports, it takes skilled professionals in sales, marketing, finance, HR, IT, and manufacturing to bring those products to market and make those companies as success. We hope these programs will allow us to recruit and retain a strong workforce.

In closing, I want to thank Representative Crow for having this critically important hearing on ways to better recruit and prepare the workforce of tomorrow. OIA is proud of the various initiatives we are leading and are thankful to be included in this conversation.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to determine if there are ways that Congress can support these important efforts. Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Kaplan.

Mr. Edmondson, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF GARRY EDMONDSON

Mr. EDMONDSON. Thank you, Congressman Crow, for the time to speak to you about the Operating Engineers Apprenticeship Program in Arapahoe County. My Name is Garry Edmondson. I am a 37-year member of the International Union of Operating Engineers and a Training Coordinator for our apprenticeship program. I have spent my career in the construction trade.

My time was spent operating dirt equipment, learning to be a mechanic, and obtaining welding certifications. I went on to attain multiple crane certifications and worked to become a certified crane tester and have had the opportunity to serve on a national board representing a certification program for crane operators for 10 years. Nineteen years ago, I took the opportunity to become an instructor and an administrator with the Operating Engineers Local 101 Apprenticeship Program in Kansas City.

I served there for 14 years before transitioning to my new opportunity in Colorado. My experience in heavy equipment operation, crane training, welding, and diesel mechanics has given me the unique ability to increase the learning experiences for the apprentices who come into our union's apprentice program.

I have been the Administrator for the Colorado Apprenticeship at the Operating Engineers Local 9 for almost 5 years. This apprenticeship program is registered with the United States Department of Labor, and we are an earn-as-you-learn program. We have been teaching apprentices and journeyman for 65 years in Colorado.

We have 160 acres and \$3 million worth of equipment dedicated to the hands-on training and development of union apprentices. Our apprenticeship is governed by a committee with equal representation from management and the union. As a Department of Labor registered apprenticeship, we are held to a dedicated set of standards that apply to all apprentices equally.

The program is designed so that apprentices complete their training and on-the-job hours in 3 years. As a joint apprenticeship, we rely on our signatory contractors to provide the real-life work experience and a competitive wage and benefits in addition to the required training hours that are obtained at our training site. The demand for apprentices has grown over the last 5 years.

For years the interest in trades was overshadowed by the push for high school graduates to transition directly into a university or college environment. This created a shortage of individuals who entered into skilled trades. Trades no longer became an option for the students. The benefits of apprenticeships were left unknown to a new generation, thus creating a shortage of labor and individuals coming into the trades.

We now have an opportunity to change that direction. Pathways from high school are critical to continue to provide growth in apprenticeship programs and trade businesses. One program that we are having success with is the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, MC3, Apprenticeship Readiness Program developed by the North American Building Trades Unions. The apprenticeship program has been working with the MC3 curriculum participants for the last 3 years.

Throughout the year, we have students who are a part of the MC3 program that have a chance to try the equipment, to learn about the construction industry, and to get a feel for trades in gen-

eral. Just this week, we enrolled 2 recent graduates from schools that participated in the MC3 program. They had the opportunity to be at the training site and understand what it means to be in an apprenticeship.

The MC3 program creates a great pathway that introduces students to the skilled trades. Industry recognized apprenticeship programs, or IRAPs, are not the answer to raising awareness about apprenticeship programs. The answer is the expansion of programs like the MC3 along with the job corps, Helmets to Hardhats, and we also are very active with the Department of Corrections here in Colorado—just put a former inmate in two weeks ago. All of which we rely on for incoming pre-apprentices.

These programs ensure that apprenticeships like mine, who for 65 years have worked closely with contractors to meet industry needs can continue to grow and develop apprentices—many, many of our contractors are small businesses, more with less than 25 employees. We need to have access to the next generation that are dedicated to growing a career in the skilled trades.

Our apprenticeship program gives an 18-year-old student a chance at a lucrative career without incurring college debt or student loans. It gives them a choice and opportunity to learn a skilled trade that will never go away. This is done with tried and true standards that are approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Any policies developed or enacted for apprenticeships need to include being a registered apprentice program with defined training standards. It is these standards that will allow an apprenticeship pathway to be successful for future generations. Mr. Crow, thank you for your time.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Edmondson. I appreciate your remarks. Another benefit of these field hearings is I get to ask all the questions myself so I get all the time for me. So I will begin by recognizing myself for questions—

[Laughter.]

And I will just start—you know, I will start in the way that we went with our opening remark, so with you, Ms. Grobbel. Would be interested to hear from you, what are the biggest barriers that you hear from your students in taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity in the training and the apprenticeship programs that you have? What are they struggling with and encountering as they pursue these training programs?

Ms. GROBBEL. Now, I would tell you when we really started to look at this Innovation Campus, the most important thing was access for students. We have an amazing Board of Education and Superintendent that understood that this building can only be successful if all students have the ability to get here.

So things like transportation which were able to provide from every local high school, looking at Carnegie unit credits where kids actually have seat time versus having the ability to be a little bit more flexible in some of the core credits that they need to meet graduation guidelines. Probably the last thing is really the perception of this type of education.

And again, we are very lucky because we look at this for an opportunity for 55,000 students, which is the number of students in Cherry Creek Schools. It is for students that not only want to go

to a two or four-year college but a student that wants to go on to the military and, or directly to the workforce or that really doesn't know.

And so the barrier for us is the perception, getting parents and community members to understand that this is an opportunity for all students no matter what it is that they want to do. So we continue to have that barrier but again, with some great industry partners, great marketing people are really starting to understand how this could fit into a student's education.

Chairman CROW. And Mr. Ginsburg, I would love your thought on that last element that Ms. Grobbel just remarked on and that is the cultural barrier here, right. That we have this bias towards four-year college or university which serves a lot of people really well, but you know, we have this deficit of folks going into the trades, into CTE and that is one of the things that, you know, you remarked on in your beginning—so I would love your thoughts on how do we overcome that cultural barrier and get people to understand that this is a pathway to a very strong middle-class career?

Mr. GINSBURG. Well, I think it starts with the recognition, as I am sure Mr. Edmondson would say, that there is or should be equal dignity to either or any of these paths. But culturally we have done such an amazing job of convincing everyone that there is only one path that that continues to be a challenge. And I think the only way you overcome that is through example. And whether it is through a youth apprenticeship or students that participate in this program graduate out of the airframe and power plant courses, and get immediate jobs that pay \$55,000 or \$60,000, that begins to change the narrative.

The young woman that I spoke about at Pinnacle Assurance, they are hiring her—she will be earning \$50,000 to \$60,000 before she is 25. And so when those stories get out, as well as the fact that an apprenticeship included getting her AS degree, I think we will begin to change the narrative. I think it is critically important that our leadership—the bully pulpit that you have as a Congressman I think is so critical, because you can speak to the power of apprenticeship and opportunity.

You can speak to the fact that there is the equal dignity in multiple paths. I don't have a four-year degree despite all the good efforts of very good schools. I started my company when I was in college, and I think we need to recognize that there is more than one path and then we need to make the investments to make it possible. The infrastructure to do this work, not to subsidize businesses to do this, but to ensure that the tools like what you are sitting in today are available to all kids I think is critically important.

Chairman CROW. And as a follow-up to that, there is kind of a lack of understanding in my view and a lack of awareness not just from the student level and the young person's level but also with small firms and businesses. And we know that—we have heard, and I have heard over the last year, that small firms are sometimes hesitant to take on young staff with little to no experience.

So, how can we incentivize small businesses and smaller firms at the Federal level to partner with existing apprenticeship programs like CareerWise, like the Innovation Campus, and limit risks for

those small businesses while doing that, but also provide them with the workers that they need?

Mr. GINSBURG. Well, I am somewhat sensitive to providing financial incentives to large or small companies because the reality of it is, there is a return on investment for companies that do this. They are more profitable if they do. With that being said, part of this model is having the businesses invest in post-secondary education so that they can earn those college credits.

You can make the case that businesses and particularly small businesses shouldn't be burdened with paying for students' college education. To the extent that we can take barriers from Pell Grants—for example, right now an apprentice could lose Pell eligibility because of the earnings they get while they are in the apprenticeship. Those things need to be changed.

Making an investment in the curriculum development that is necessary for the training that takes place in the workplace as well as the alignment with what is being trained in the schools is an investment that I think makes sense for the Department of Education or the Department of Labor. So there are ways that we can incentivize them not by providing tax credits because this is a profitable strategy for small business.

But taking the burden of having to pay for education out of that, I don't think that necessarily needs to be a part of it. Although I will tell you many of our larger companies, they have that benefit. So a student that goes through Pinnacle Assurance, they will pay for their post-secondary education. It is a part of the typical benefits.

Chairman CROW. And that last point I will mention that I am a co-sponsor of the Jobs Act which we recently introduced that actually opens up eligibility for student loans and Pell Grants and other financial aid for these programs that currently were restricted. So that got lost in some of the other things being covered in Washington recently, but we are actually doing that work and we have heard that message and we are taking action to address that issue.

Ms. Grobbel, do you have any thoughts on that last piece, the issue of incentivizing small businesses and firms to kind of open up opportunities for your students?

Ms. GROBBEL. I have had the opportunity to travel to Switzerland and actually see the apprenticeship in place for what is almost 70 percent of students. That is the path that they choose. I again would concur with what Mr. Ginsburg is saying. There are so many returns on investment that industry gets from participating in this that I would say it is more on the front end. Bring them in.

I would love to introduce you to any one of our 55,000 students because I would tell you the minute that you meet them, you see the types of professional skills that they are capable of in a workplace, they are going to be banging down our doors to be able to be connected with our students. So very excited about maybe that front end piece of how do they connect and what is it that they are really going to get.

Chairman CROW. Mr. Kaplan, I know you mentioned in your earlier—in your opening statement that, I believe the number was

17 percent, of your member companies have a revenue of under \$10 million. So would love your views on what are their concerns?

Mr. KAPLAN. It is actually 78 percent.

Chairman CROW. 78?

Mr. KAPLAN. Yes. So their take on in terms of internships, you are saying?

Chairman CROW. Yes, apprenticeship program or job training program.

Mr. KAPLAN. Yes. The outdoor industry traditionally has not had a very robust internship program and that is something we are working to change pretty dramatically. There is a massive demand for it. So as an example, Patagonia, a large company everybody knows, they had 16 internships last summer, 9,000 applicants for those 16 positions. So the tide is turning a little bit and people are now starting to realize that this is more of a viable career path.

You don't have to necessarily be an avid mountain climber who is going to be climbing Everest or doing extreme sports. Just getting outside for hikes and walks and those types of things are enough to say that you are an outdoor enthusiast. And so people are understanding now that if you are a finance major, there is an opportunity for you with a small backpack company. You don't have to be a rugged backpacker.

So part of the gap has been that I think there has been a misunderstanding or miscommunication that you have got to be extreme to work in the industry, but we need every single business skill set that any other industry would need, even heavy manufacturing and even you know, whether it be finance, accounting, HR as I mentioned.

So there are tremendous opportunities and we are trying to change that message and push that outward more to get these small businesses the skills and the help that they need.

Chairman CROW. And you know earlier, just following on that point, earlier we talked a little bit about one of the barriers to students economically and the value of an earn while you learn program as Mr. Edmondson indicated before. Are your member companies able to provide those opportunities as well something that is paid and does the training so that we make sure we have access to all folks?

Mr. KAPLAN. Yes. And so that is something that is also starting to take a more aggressive effort is these sort of junior apprenticeships or paid apprenticeships or internships. And in fact, we at OIA have done that ourselves and are currently seeking someone in D.C. as a matter of fact for our office out there for a paid internship. And so yes little by little we are starting to turn that tide and get more and more people into the industry.

Chairman CROW. Changing gears slightly, and Mr. Kaplan, it is my understanding that the National Governors Association and State legislators are working to create offices of outdoor recreation in States throughout the country. You know, we have one here. Now that—or how have these offices help to kind of initiate workforce development program?

Once again, when we look at what more can they be doing to be working with, your members, your groups, local businesses, high schools, colleges to expand those opportunity.

Mr. KAPLAN. Absolutely. Yes, Colorado was the second State to implement an Office of Elder Recreation. There are now 17 States across the country and they have created these offices specifically because they have identified this as a growing economic opportunity. And one of the things that is going to be crucial is those offices continuing to work with their institutions of higher learning as well as different trades and different trade associations to make sure that there is that communication and that pathway from academia into industry.

And one of the things that OIA is doing is at the twice annual, or twice a year trade show I mentioned, we are now creating or we are convening a roundtable of HR professionals as well as trade colleges and institutions of higher learning so that we can be that bridge between industry and up-and-coming learners.

Basically to make sure that that these institutions are creating curriculum that will help get these students into the workforce.

Chairman CROW. Mr. Edmondson, you alluded to this also in your opening statement, but the issue of veterans at your program in particular. I have long been a huge fan as a veteran's advocate for Helmets to Hardhats Program that I know has been very successful with many of the labor apprenticeship programs including your own.

So I would love your thoughts on how we can assist that transition even better through programs like that, making sure that as our veterans leave military service that they have a clear pathway into these programs because we know that you know, they are disciplined, they are drug free, they make great employees, but we have to make sure that we are capturing them into these programs early. And I would love your thoughts on that.

Mr. EDMONDSON. That can be a difficult path to break into. It does take a while. Meetings, connections—I am very fortunate. I have met a lot of the right people. They got me into Fort Carson, Buckley Air Force Base. And we have started—we really turned a corner on that. We got these sporadic military veteran here and there.

After we all found out and I got with the right people and Helmets to Hardhats—they have a website. It is almost like a one-stop shopping. You can go on there and actually look for somebody that has an interest in my trade, sheet metal, pipe fitters or whatever. Getting to know they are out there is two biggest obstacle to that. And once you get inside that door, the room is really big behind it. Quite frankly, it has been a lifesaver to me. And obviously we support our veterans 100 percent, as you echo.

They make some of the best employees. They are loyal. They are on time, and quite frankly it feels good support them. So it takes a while to get know the right people. I am relatively new to Colorado. Have been here five years, but now we are full steam ahead with it.

Chairman CROW. Yes, you know, following up on that, I really strongly believe that labor unions are going to play a really important role here particularly in the building trades and heavy construction and other critical areas because you have programs that are time-tested. They have been around for many decades. They

have passed some very stringent certification requirements through DOL and there is a lot of oversight in many of these programs.

So, you know, how can we expand the pathways through your programs because many of the locals that I visited recently say they have these classes and, you know, the plumbers for example told me recently that when somebody gets out of their program, they could be making \$80,000, \$90,000 within a couple of years, but they can't fill their classes, right.

They are trying to and have a hard time recruiting folks and filling their apprenticeship programs. I would love your thoughts on how we can expand pathways and relationships with businesses to provide more of those opportunities.

Mr. EDMONDSON. Good question. The search is always on for all of us for quality employees, apprentices. I have a guy that does the job for once in a while, which has helped a lot. Finding them is the key to it. Retaining them is another key. I think we got behind the eight ball somewhere along the line several years ago. The average age of an operating engineer is somewhere around 53 years old. So with the little unemployment rate in Colorado, the competition is extremely fierce for somebody out there. Making friends like my new friend Ms. Grobbel across the way there. Thank you for having us there. Now we have a friend. We are going to do great things together.

Again, connections is everything. Following up with programs, MC3, Helmets to Hardhats, Department of Corrections is really what is keeping our heads above water at this point. I don't know how they open up much more to be totally honest with you. We do job fairs. We average three a week from October to somewhere in March. That is a lot of job fairs.

Chairman CROW. You do those all around Colorado?

Mr. EDMONDSON. A few weeks ago I was in Grand Junction at an MC3 event. We have been to Delta, virtually all over Colorado Springs, Fort Carson, Pueblo. If there is a job fair and I can fit in my schedule, I am there. We can't not do it.

Chairman CROW. The process here, what we are going to do is I am going to finish by going down the line with a question that as we look at funding, Federal investment, what is the area that you would like to see us focusing our resources to expand these opportunities and kind of grow the economic pie and promote small business development in particular?

So we will just go down the line and then what I will do is I am going to gavel us out of the hearing after that so that we close the Congressional record and I will open it up if there are any questions or thoughts. We can have a discussion that includes the other folks in attendance here as well just to have the other perspectives in the room. So maybe Ms. Grobbel, if you want to start us off?

Ms. GROBBEL. Sure. I have mentioned already a few things today and especially in my initial remarks. Probably the one that I have not mentioned was how the curriculum instruction is built at this building and it is we sit hand-in-hand with our industry partners and build it from day one on. It is tied with industry certificates as well as college curriculum.

One of the things that we recognize when we went to Switzerland is that there is a Federal regulation when it comes to what

is taught within certain pathways of study for students. We have already talked about other funding pieces, but I would say one of the number one things that the Federal Government can help us or at a Federal level would be to start to create curriculum instruction that it doesn't matter what State you are in, this is really the instruction and curriculum that is needed and this is what you should be shooting for.

If there is any way that we could create kind of Federal oversight for that, then again, I recognize that there is also a local control within individual States, but we could use that support.

Mr. GINSBURG. I think there are two places in particular and one is a continuation of what Ms. Grobbel was saying around curriculum. The curriculum that is taught in business as a part of the apprenticeship is expensive to develop. And to have the resources that lead to registered or unregistered apprenticeships that are of high quality, because the curriculum is well-designed is industry advised, actually is a very complex and expensive investment.

The second piece that I think would be very helpful is around educating, you know, our citizens that there are multiple paths of opportunity that should exist in our economy and that apprenticeship is one of them. And that having the skills that enable you to gain access into the middle class and make college more affordable, if that is your choice, is a good option. And right now people till this day will confuse internships with apprenticeships and they are very different.

So there needs to be an education process that is expensive. You can't just do a one and done and expect to change hearts and minds when that has—they have been getting a different narrative for a generation now. So I think those two areas are a place for investment as well as the work that you are already doing around Pell eligibility and other obstacles that exist in the system. I do have to apologize. I have to be in Fort Collins for a meeting with their chamber for CareerWise so I have to excuse myself.

Chairman CROW. Yes. If you could just get the closing statement. Give me a couple of more minutes and then I can gavel out, that would be great. Thank you, Noel. Mr. Kaplan?

Mr. KAPLAN. Yes, I think there is two things also from my perspective. The first is that throughout the country you are seeing more and more States move away from extraction industry economy. Some States are balancing very well outdoor recreation and extraction, but in here in Colorado as an example out in Gunnison, 83 percent of the land surrounding Gunnison and Crested Butte are public lands, much of which had extraction industry on it in the past and has been now abandoned so they are now converting over to outdoor recreation economy.

And as a part of that, many of these areas similar to that are also trying to foster investment there around small businesses and startups and you are seeing across the country many new startup accelerators starting to come forward to promote the outdoor industry small business sector and create an opportunity for these small businesses to get off the ground.

So I think funding around small businesses and entrepreneurship in terms of some of these accelerators and grant dollars that are available is going to be very important. And the other thing I

think also, it has come up a few times, our veterans. And what a lot of people don't realize is that the outdoor industry manufactures a tremendous amount of gear used by our armed forces. And it is the most hardcore people using the most hardcore products in the most hardcore environments, and many, many outdoor brands use that.

So there is already a familiarity with the product, with the technologies being used, whether it be fabric technologies or electronic technologies, and so being able to create an on-ramp for those veterans to come into our industry using at or working for brands and products that they actually are already familiar with would be a great and a tremendous opportunity. Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Mr. Edmondson?

Mr. EDMONDSON. I have actually got two parts to this answer. Number one, I think it belongs—it starts in high school, funding of programs like for Ms. Grobbel. I am a product of the 70s. We had a thing called Vo-Tech. They got tired of us. They threw us out of the high school and said get on the bus, you ride 35 miles to the bigger town down the road, and we could take welding, auto body, machine shop. There is like five different classes that provided such a good foundation.

For some of us, we were not college-bound. I am from a poor, poor County Southeast Kansas. College was virtually not an option for probably 80 or 90 percent of us, and I can safely say that instructor—I think his name to the Jim Mayfield—two years of welding and he would run that class with an iron fist. I look you in the eyes and say he saved my life. I would be dead or in prison now if it wasn't for that skill I learned.

So if we could help Ms. Grobbel, these other schools have an alternative path for somebody that is not going to go to college, that don't mean they are bad people. I don't mean they are not smart. That doesn't mean they are not willing to work. We need a path for these type of people. Second off, our industry is funded by employer contributions, investments in infrastructure is what puts us on the map.

I-70, not fun to drive now, but it is going to be. We got lots of people working there. Kiewit has over 245 people working there, operating engineers alone as we speak. Without these jobs going our funding goes down. So any investment in our infrastructure is what would keep us on the map.

Chairman CROW. Thank you. Based on the testimony today, some really good follow-ups for us on the committee. I really appreciate your variety of perspectives. We are able to get a lot of different perspectives here, which I appreciate and I appreciate your time very much. So I look forward to working with all of you going forward to identify more opportunities. We will follow up as well with some additional questions.

I really think this is an opportunity for really a win-win-win here. You know, this is where our communities can win, our kids can win, and our businesses can win, and we can kind of grow the pie for everybody. And frankly, those are great opportunities and I think you can find a situation in my role where a lot of people can come out of this better off.

And I look forward to working with all of you on that. So thank you for sharing your testimonies and answering questions and providing that perspective. I am going to go through an incantation here now before I wrap it up. So I would ask the unanimous consent of me, that members have five legislative days to submit statements and supporting materials for the record.

Without objection, that is so ordered.

And if there is no further business to come before the committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

Written Testimony of

Sarah Grobbel, Assistant Superintendent of Career & Innovation
Cherry Creek School District

Before the U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Small Business

Subcommittee on Innovation and Workforce Development

Hearing on Innovations in the School to Small Business Pipeline

November 22, 2019

Chairman Jason Crow, Ranking Member Balderson, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing at the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus in Cherry Creek School District as part of the Innovations in the School to Small Business Pipeline. I am honored to offer my perspective during this time of educational shift in the United States.

On behalf of the Cherry Creek School District Board of Education, President Karen Fisher and members Kelly Bates, Anne Egan, Angela Garland, and Janice McDonald, and Superintendent Dr. Scott Siegfried, we welcome you to Cherry Creek Schools and the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus.

In 2015, the Colorado Department of Education made changes to the graduation guidelines for the class of 2021. Cherry Creek Schools seized this opportunity to engage students, parents, educators, community members, business partners, and higher education leaders in a conversation regarding the portrait of a successful graduate in Cherry Creek Schools to create the vision of Cherry Creek 2021. It was through this work that Cherry Creek Schools changed its goals to *Inclusive Excellence* and *College and Career Preparedness and Success* as we recognized our goal to create learners who focus on innovation, critical thinking, real world experiences, project-based learning, relevancy, communication skills, adaptability and teamwork. The Cherry Creek Innovation Campus would be the cornerstone to this work, and my passion project over the next three years.

In November of 2016, the community and stakeholders of Cherry Creek Schools passed a local bond measure for the capital project which made the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus a reality for Cherry Creek Schools. The pathways include Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, Health and Wellness, Hospitality and Tourism, IT/STEAM, Infrastructure and Engineering, and Transportation, including both aviation and automotive coursework. The campus is a stand-alone college and career preparedness facility accessible for high school students in the Cherry Creek Schools. With curriculum rooted in real-world skills and trade certifications ranging from the computer sciences to aviation to health and wellness as well as college credit options in all

pathways, this facility offers students a new bridge to college and viable, successful careers. More importantly, students are not asked to choose between workforce or college after high school. This programming is for students going on to two- and four-year colleges, military, or workforce, as well as aiding the student who is still trying to connect to his/her career passions and interests.

As is the mission of Cherry Creek Schools, the Innovation Campus was designed to inspire our students “*to think, to learn, to achieve, to care*” from the moment they walk through the main entrance. The intentionality in creating a partnership with industry is what has made this facility stand out across the country. We engaged industry partners to help us build the concept of each pathway as well as the curriculum and instruction. Principal Mark Morgan and his cadre spent endless hours over the last two years with our architect, contractor, student advisory group, community stakeholder group, and our industry partners to fulfill the vision of 2021 for the Cherry Creek Schools. We also used documents like the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report to guide our pathway choices.

We stand on the shoulders of the pioneer Career and Technical Education teachers in our district who have built a solid foundation for 21st century professional coursework in our schools over the last decade. Our programming includes career exploration, Career & Technical Education courses tied to the Career & Technical Education career cluster model, internships, and apprenticeships. Over the past three years, we have also participated in Colorado’s legislated Career Development Incentive Program which recognizes the number of students earning industry credentials and participating in internships each year.

We are proud of the work we are doing with CareerWise Colorado in creating apprenticeship opportunities for our students. Through this partnership, we are successfully linking students to career opportunities with a focus on work-based competencies and postsecondary education for each apprentice. Our goal is to create an apprenticeship for each pathway in our Career & Technical Education coursework. This fall, we opened our newest apprenticeship, Future Educator Pathway apprenticeship. As the employer of the apprenticeship, we are hiring our current high school students who would like to pursue a degree in education as paraprofessionals working part-time in our K-8 schools. We are also investing in these apprentices by providing college credit for coursework necessary to earn a teaching certification. Like many industry partners, we are excited about the concept of “growing our own” to create a pipeline of educators that may help us fill the future job shortage in education.

The Cherry Creek Innovation Campus opened our doors on August 12, 2019 to nearly 1,000 students, with another 1,000 students expected next semester. Although we have much to be proud of at this stage, we recognize our work is not done. We will continue to focus on creating Pathways of Purpose for our students with a formalized Individualized Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) for every student from sixth through twelfth grade and beyond. We will also look at future bond measures which will allow our school district to add additional Pathways of Purpose for students in our district as part of Cherry Creek’s Future Forward strategic planning.

As we continue to strive to be the pipeline for our students from education to healthy and meaningful careers, we ask for your help. According to Education Week, the average per-pupil

funding in education across the United States is \$12,756 as of June 2019. This per-pupil spending amount is adjusted for regional cost differences across states, and it captures factors such as teacher and staff salaries, classroom spending, and administration, but not construction or other capital spending. Colorado ranks in the bottom five of all states at an average per pupil funding of \$10,053. This discrepancy in funding has caused many school districts in states like Colorado to look at local funding sources, especially partnerships with industry, to maintain the level of excellence expected by families and community members. Our success in the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus has been creating meaningful relationships with industry partners and higher education to provide our students with curriculum and instruction grounded in real-world experiences.

We ask that as a committee, you continue to include K-12 education in workforce development discussions, so we can continue to grow with you in these conversations. Encourage local business to engage with their community educational partners. Most importantly, focus on better funding sources for all K-12 schools throughout the country including the financial support of local business. What we have described today has proven to be a significant return on investment for students, community, industry, and local economy. We know what we have created together today will change education tomorrow, because this effort is not just education or industry but the perfect combination of both.



FIELD HEARING: INNOVATIONS IN THE SCHOOL TO SMALL BUSINESS PIPELINE
Small Business Subcommittee on Innovation and Workforce Development

November 22, 2019
Cherry Creek Innovation Center | Centennial, Colorado

Testimony: Noel Ginsburg, CareerWise, founder & CEO

Good afternoon. Thank you for all coming here today to learn about apprenticeship. My name is Noel Ginsburg. I'm the Founder and Chairman of a local manufacturing company, Intertech Plastics and Intertech Medical. But I'm also the founder and CEO of CareerWise. Four years ago, CareerWise set out to build a youth apprenticeship system here in the United States.

The reason I founded CareerWise is the same reason you're here today—and if you take anything away from today's field hearing it should be this: apprenticeship—in particular youth apprenticeship—can be transformational. It can transform our workforce and talent pipelines. It can transform our economy and middle class. And, most importantly, it can transform the lives of our young people through opportunity.

Today, as a society we are all-in on the four-year degree as an unobstructed path to the middle class. But the reality is that there are lots of challenges along path—it only successfully serves about 25 percent of our young people, and with the rising cost of higher education and skyrocketing student debt, it's clear those numbers aren't going to get better anytime soon.

Meanwhile, industry cannot find enough skilled workers to hire into their early-career roles. This is true of the construction trades, but it's also just as true in fields like IT, financial services and business operations. Even the workers hired from prestigious schools—graduates with the baseline theoretical knowledge in their fields—take tens of thousands of dollars and months and months to train in the practical execution of the job.

Don't misunderstand: higher education is important and valuable for many people and many professions. But not all of them.

Youth apprenticeship offers practical learning, and with it an illuminated and prestigious path to the middle class may or may not run through college. A CareerWise apprenticeship is designed to intersect with higher ed. Apprentices graduate the program with the opportunity to earn up to a semester's worth of debt-free college credit and a focused perspective on how additional education can further their career and life goals.



The system we're building at CareerWise is more than just an education program that turns the workplace into an applied-learning environment (though it is that, too). Modern youth apprenticeship in America is smart business. It's not philanthropy—employers aren't just writing a check and leaving the details to someone else. Apprenticeship changes the paradigm of early workforce development; industry takes an active role in shaping their future workforce.

Starting as juniors in high school, apprentices spend part of the week in school in their academic pursuits, and part of the week in the workplace, learning by doing, and producing meaningful, valuable work for the employer.

Apprenticeship is different from internship. Whereas interns are often only in their roles for a short amount of time, performing low-value tasks, apprentices are trained over multiple years to step directly into early-career positions—in the CareerWise model, those roles are all high-growth, high-wage positions.

The occupations in a CareerWise apprenticeship and the integration of higher-ed coursework are intended to ensure that there are no dead ends. Apprenticeship can take a young person from the workplace to a PhD, or from the classroom to a corner office.

Apprenticeship is an options multiplier. The opportunity it presents to industry and students is made possible only through true partnership and dynamic collaboration.

Evidence that collaboration between these two very different institutions is not only possible but incredibly fruitful, is this building we're in right now. The Cherry Creek Innovation Center is the physical manifestation of just such a partnership—as well as the leadership of these pioneers in work-based learning, Scott Siegfried, Cherry Creek's superintendent, and Sarah Grobel, Cherry Creek's assistant superintendent of career & innovation.

It's in this building that the practical and the theoretical are coming together to offer more educational opportunities and strengthen America's workforce. It's career-focused centers like this one that represent the systems change—a new bridge between industry and education—that is beginning to take root across America. Finally, when students that attend the Cherry Creek Innovation Center are matched with apprenticeships, their success in their future career will be significantly enhanced and the return on investment for the participating business will skyrocket.

During the last two years CareerWise has hosted delegations from across the country to learn about our program design, to hear about the collaborative groundwork that we established through a Governor-appointed Business Experiential Learning commission, to find out about our early challenges and how they were overcome, and to see apprentices at



work and hear from their employers like Pinnacol Assurance, Home Advisor and Frontier Airlines.

These trips aren't simply fact-finding missions. The learnings the delegations take home are being put to good use. As a result, the CareerWise model has been implemented in vastly different local economies across the country. Today CareerWise New York has 85 apprentices working for companies like JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America and Amazon, and CareerWise Elkhart County in Indiana—where 80 percent of the RVs on the road today are manufactured—has apprentices working in those advanced manufacturing facilities. After the first of the year, CareerWise DC will launch as well.

A few months ago, I was moderating a panel of apprentices that work at Pinnacol Assurance in Denver. Towards the end of the session, I asked one of the apprentices how she viewed her future prior to her apprenticeship. She is African American, and attends one of the poorest performing schools in her district that has a free and reduced lunch percentage of over 90 percent.

After thinking about the question for a moment, she simply said, "I didn't think I had one." She continued: "But, I've learned that I bring value to this company and in turn, they are giving me an opportunity to build a real career and future that I couldn't have dreamed of."

You could have heard a pin drop as many of us were wiping away tears from our eyes. This young lady was just hired as a full-time employee at Pinnacol, and will earn her associate degree by the third year of her apprenticeship. Her story represents the promise of youth apprenticeship and why I believe this is a strategy that can change education and workforce in this country.

The transformation made possible by youth apprenticeship spans the macro: the economy, growing the middle class and helping America maintain the most innovative workforce in the world, as well as the micro: setting a young person on a course that may not have otherwise been available to them, and creating the space in someone's workday so that they may impart their wisdom to the next generation of workers.

Thank you for your time, and your interest in making these kinds of transformations available to every American.

**OUTDOOR
INDUSTRY[®]
ASSOCIATION**

TESTIMONY

OF

MATT KAPLAN
VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

ON

“INNOVATIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-SMALL BUSINESS PIPELINE.”

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER 22, 2019

Chairman Crow, I am pleased to submit testimony on behalf of Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), the leading national trade association of 1,300 suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers of outdoor gear and products. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending, supports more than 7.6 million highly skilled American jobs, and makes other significant contributions toward the goal of healthy communities and healthy economies across the United States. On behalf of our member businesses, we thank you for holding today's hearing to discuss new and innovative approaches to educate young people and create a school-to-business pipeline.

Small businesses make up the backbone of the outdoor industry. In fact, 78 percent of OIA's 1,300 members generate revenue of less than \$10 million dollars. These small businesses are especially attentive to legislation and regulations that ensure a framework that encourages economic growth, promotes outdoor recreation, conserves and grows our public lands, protects our environment, and ensures clean air and clean water for generations of outdoor enthusiasts.

We welcome the efforts being undertaken by the Committee to promote American small businesses and to create a legislative and regulatory environment where they can prosper and continue to grow. In the outdoor industry, the success of those small businesses relies heavily on a strong workforce, growth in outdoor recreation participation, access to outdoor spaces, fair and balanced trade, conservation of public lands, and protection of our climate. At OIA, we see the economic, health, and social benefits from the outdoors every day and hope to continue working with your Committee on this important topic.

Outdoor Recreation in Colorado

Colorado provides a diverse landscape for all types of outdoor recreation activities. From camping and hunting to mountain biking and skiing, there is a little something for everyone. In fact, recent statistics show that 71 percent of Colorado residents participate in outdoor recreation each year, and this number doesn't even count visitors to Colorado. It's no surprise that outdoor recreation is immensely important to this state and those who live and play here – it contributes to a higher quality of life, making people and communities happier and healthier.

The Colorado outdoor recreation industry is thriving. Colorado's outdoor recreation economy generates \$28 billion in consumer spending annually and contributes 229,000 direct jobs. Those who work in the outdoor industry have collectively earned over \$9.7 billion in wages and salaries, while those who support it have generated \$2 billion in state and local tax revenue.

Outdoor Industry Manufacturers and Employers in Colorado

Colorado is the home to many prolific outdoor brands. There are over 170 members of OIA based in the state. These include several large employers, such as VF Corporation, which recently moved to Colorado in 2018, accounting for over 500 new Colorado jobs, and Vail Resorts, which owns 37 ski areas around the world, 5 of which are located here in Colorado; small businesses, such as Topo Designs and Point 6 socks; and the North American headquarters of Fjällräven, La Sportiva and Scarpa. The outdoor lifestyle and economic strength of the state creates an excellent environment for new brands to test their products and solicit investment.

Colorado as the Hub of the Outdoor Industry

In 2018, the twice-per-year Outdoor Retailer show, the largest B2B trade event serving the outdoor industry, picked up stakes from its 22-year home in Salt Lake City, Utah, and selected Denver, Colorado, as its new home. Colorado has welcomed the show with open arms, where attendees view the latest and greatest products and trends in winter and summer outdoor recreation, while also having the opportunity to test them out in Colorado's backyard during each show's "Demo Days." It is calculated that the two-time-per-year trade show brings approximately 25,000 attendees to each show, and over \$75 million in direct and indirect impact to the state each year.

Much of the state is converting from an extraction industry economy, in many cases on public lands, to an outdoor recreation economy. Rural areas that are embracing this movement are using incentives to bring companies to their area and also creating outdoor industry start-up accelerators to foster these fledgling companies. A perfect example of such an area is Gunnison, Colorado, which is surrounded by thousands of acres of open space, 83 percent of which are public lands. Gunnison Travel and Tourism is overseeing an outdoor industry start-up accelerator at their ICELab innovation center on the campus of Western Colorado University. Start-ups of this sort that assist in the creation and launch of new outdoor-focused products are popping up all around the state. Ongoing funding from the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), which offers grants for start-ups as well as funding for accelerators, is an important way the state can continue to offer support for the outdoor industry and workforce development in the sector.

Educational Resources in Colorado Relating to the Outdoor Industry

Despite the incredible growth and contribution to the state's economy, the outdoor industry lacks a traditional on-ramp for recruiting and seeking new talent in the workforce. There are no job fairs, very few degree programs, and a lack of awareness that the outdoor industry is a viable career path for all aspects of business skills and training. OIA is working to change all of that and proactively attract and retain a continuous stream of a qualified and diverse workforce. An important step in this process is working with the state's educational institutions.

Given the impact of this sector on the state, it is no surprise that several prominent colleges and universities in Colorado have begun to focus on degree programs and educational opportunities in outdoor recreation, including the following, to name just a few:

- University of Colorado, Boulder, has a Masters of the Environment Program (MENV) focusing on public lands and climate change
- Western Colorado University in Gunnison has the first of its kind in the nation Outdoor MBA
- Colorado State University offers a degree in Adventure Travel and Tourism
- Colorado Mountain College offers a diverse range of outdoor degrees and certificates on all of their 11 campuses throughout the state

Workforce Development and Recruitment in the Outdoor Industry

To help link the state educational institutions to companies in the outdoor industry, OIA developed an Educators Working Group at each of the Outdoor Retailer trade shows. This group convenes industry HR professionals with approximately 10 to 15 colleges and universities from around the state and around the country. The goal is to determine how colleges and universities can refine or update their curriculum to give companies in the outdoor industry the skilled workforce that they require in this ever-expanding sector. OIA has convened these groups at the past three trade shows, and each time, the number of HR professionals and the number of higher learning institutions increases.

In addition, OIA has expanded the workforce resources on its website offering visibility to internships, job postings, and in the near future, direct links to college career centers so students can view outdoor industry opportunities along with other jobs posted via their university.

In January 2020, OIA will launch the Outdoor Industry Business Certificate program, the first of its kind outdoor industry, online, continuing education platform with three university partners. Two of these partners are here in Colorado: CU Boulder and Western Colorado University in Gunnison. The certificates will assist individuals who are looking to enter the outdoor industry from college or from other industries by creating a curriculum that will educate them on subjects important to success in our industry such as sustainable product design, public lands management, and general outdoor industry business principles, all of which are crucial to the success of an outdoor industry professional, as well as the small businesses who employ them.

OIA will promote the certificates via a new online career center and via college and university career centers, HR professionals, LinkedIn, trade shows, and through nationwide outdoor industry media.

Given the power of the sector and the draw to the industry, OIA's business certificates are not only designed for first time pathway seekers into the industry but also for seasoned professionals from other sectors looking for a new career opportunity, and they offer scholarships to students from under-resourced communities and veterans looking for opportunities in the outdoor industry. Our hope is that these certificates will create the on-ramp needed into our growing sector and allow people to combine their personal passions with their professional pursuits.

In addition to working to get people into the industry via workforce development and a continuing education platform, OIA also helps outdoor companies to develop the future leaders of the outdoor industry through the Skip Yowell Future Leadership Academy. This academy selects 36 individuals each year to participate in a six-month long mentor-mentee educational program for middle-level professionals, already in the outdoor industry. Participants learn about management styles, mentorship, leadership, and issues important to the future growth and success of their careers, as well as issues important to the outdoor industry: diversity, equity and inclusion, climate, a balanced trade agenda and sustainability.

Although our history is rooted in hiking, camping, canoeing, backpacking, skiing, rock climbing, and many other sports, it takes skilled professionals in sales, marketing, finance, HR, IT, and manufacturing to bring those products to market and make those companies a success. We hope these programs will allow us to recruit and retain a strong workforce.

Closing

I want to thank Representative Crow for having this critically important hearing on ways to better recruit and prepare the workforce of tomorrow. OIA is proud of the various initiatives we are leading and are thankful to be included in this conversation. We look forward to continuing to work with you to determine if there are ways that Congress can support these important efforts.

Thank you, Congressman Crow, for the time to speak to you about the Operating Engineers Union in Arapahoe County. My Name is Garry Edmondson.

I am a 37-year member of the international union of operating engineers and am a Training Coordinator for our apprenticeship program. I have spent my career in the construction trade. My time was spent operating dirt equipment, learning to be a mechanic and obtaining welding certifications. I went on to attain multiple crane certifications. I worked to become a certified crane tester and have had the opportunity to serve on a national board representing a certification program for crane operators for 10 years. Nineteen years ago, I took the opportunity to become an instructor and an administrator with the Operating Engineers Local 101 apprenticeship program in Kansas City. I served for 14 years before transitioning to my new opportunity in Colorado. My experience in heavy equipment operation, crane training, welding, and diesel mechanics has given me the unique ability to increase the learning experiences for the apprentices who come into our union's apprentice program.

I have been the administrator for the Colorado apprenticeship at the Operating Engineers Local 9 for almost 5 years. The Apprenticeship program is registered with the United States Department of Labor, and we are a earn-as-you-learn program. We have been teaching apprentices and journeyman for 65 years in Colorado. We have 160 acres and \$3 million worth of equipment dedicated to the hands-on training and development of union apprentices. Our apprenticeship is governed by a committee with equal representation from management and the union. As a Department of Labor registered apprenticeship, we are held to a dedicated set of standards that apply to all apprentices equally. The program is designed so that apprentices complete their training and on-the-job hours in 3 years. As a joint apprenticeship, we rely on our signatory contractors to provide the real-life working experience and a competitive wage in addition to the required training hours that are obtained at our training site.

The demand for apprentices has grown over the last 5 years. For years the interest in trades was overshadowed by the push for high school graduates to transition directly into a University or College environment. This created a shortage of individuals who enter into skilled trades. Trades no longer became an option for students. The benefits of apprenticeships were left unknown to a new generation, thus creating a shortage of individuals coming into the trades. We now have an opportunity to change that direction. Pathways from high school are critical to continuing to provide growth in apprenticeship programs and trade businesses.

One program that we're having success with is the **Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Apprenticeship Readiness Program developed by the North American Building Trades Unions (NABTU)**. The apprenticeship program has been working with the MC3 curriculum participants for the last 3 years. Throughout the year, we have students who are a part of the MC3 program that have a chance to try the equipment, to learn about the construction industry and to get a feel for trades in general. Just this week, we enrolled 2 recent graduates from schools that participated in the MC3 program. They had the opportunity to be at the training site and understand what it means to be in an apprenticeship. The MC3 program creates a great pathway that introduces students to the skilled trades.

Industry recognized apprenticeship programs or IRAP's are not the answer to raising awareness about apprenticeship programs. The answer is the expansion of programs like the MC3 along with the Job Corps, both of which we rely on for incoming pre-apprentices. These programs ensure that apprenticeships like mine, who for 65 years have worked closely with contractors to meet industry needs can continue to grow and develop apprentices. Many of our contractors are small businesses, with less than 25 employees. We need to have access to the next generation that are dedicated to growing a career in the Skilled Trades. My Apprenticeship program gives an 18-year-old student a chance at a lucrative career without incurring college debt or student loans. It gives them a choice and opportunity to learn a skilled trade that will never go away, this is done with tried and true standards that are approved by the US Department of labor. Any policies developed or enacted for apprenticeships need to include being a registered apprentice program with defined training standards. It is these standards that will allow an apprenticeship pathway to be successful for future generations.

Thank you for your time.