

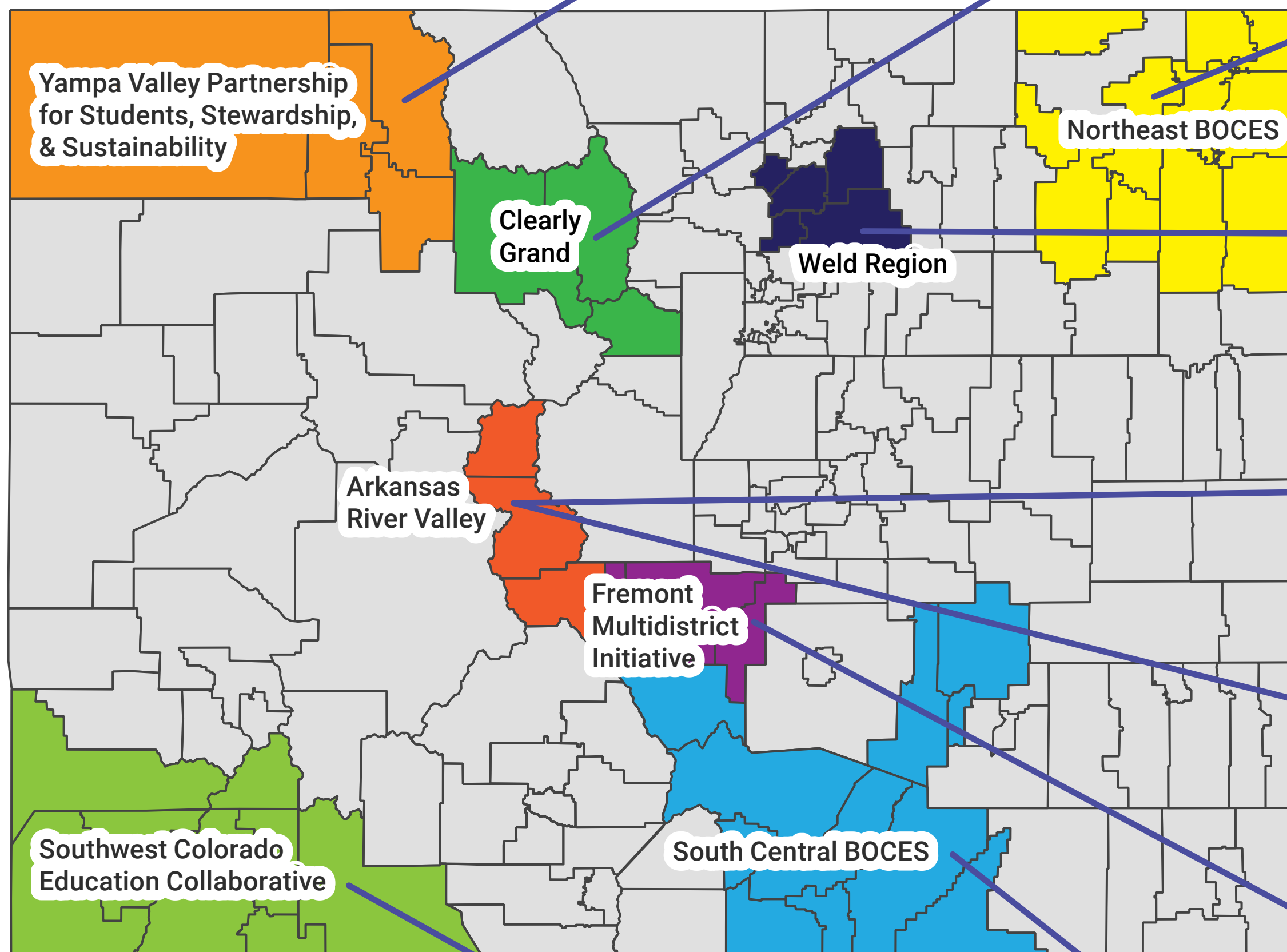
# LISTEN TO STUDENTS TELL THEIR STORIES!

## AN INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT OF CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING IMPACT ACROSS COLORADO.



Welcome to the Elevating Rural Colorado Student Stories Exhibit! We have structured this exhibit as a gallery walk where you will interact with posters that spotlight student stories from eight regions across the state and listen to students' career-connected learning interests, experiences, and impacts as told by them. These stories highlight the educators, staff, and industry partners who have been impacted by career-connected learning work throughout Colorado—and most importantly, students—as they prepare for fulfilling careers and thriving, hopeful futures.

These student stories exemplify the experiences of many others across the state. Based on initial data collection, in 2023-24 more than 600 students earned an industry credential, and more than 600 students participated in internships across the Rural Coaction regions supported by CEI, CO Succeeds, Empower Schools, and Lyra. \*Each student poster shares additional data that demonstrates the scale and context of career-connected learning within their community.



### Engineering & Architecture Pathway

**GABRIELA GARCIA-ARMENDARIZ**  
Steamboat Springs High School  
Steamboat Springs RE-2 District

### Business CTE Pathway

**FLYNN REESE**  
Clear Creek High School  
Clear Creek RE-1 District

### CNA Pathway

**ADRIAN RASCON-JUAREZ**  
Yuma High School  
Yuma 1 District

### Agriculture Pathway

**RAELYNN HANAGAN**  
Roosevelt High School  
Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J District

### CNA Pathway

**MICHELLE RAMIREZ**  
Cloud City High School  
Lake County R-1 District

### Internship in IT

**ANTHONY SCHADEGG**  
Horizons Exploratory Academy  
Salida R-32 District

### Veterinary Assistant Pathway

**JACOB BROOKS**  
Florence Jr/Sr High School  
Fremont RE-2 District

### Internship in IT

**COLTON HARDY**  
Manzanola High School  
Manzanola 3J District

### Environmental Science Pathway & Educator Pathway

**AUTUMN & WILLOW SCHULZ**  
Bayfield & Ignacio High Schools  
Bayfield 10 JT-R & Ignacio 11 JT Districts



Scan the QR codes on the posters to hear audio clips from students.

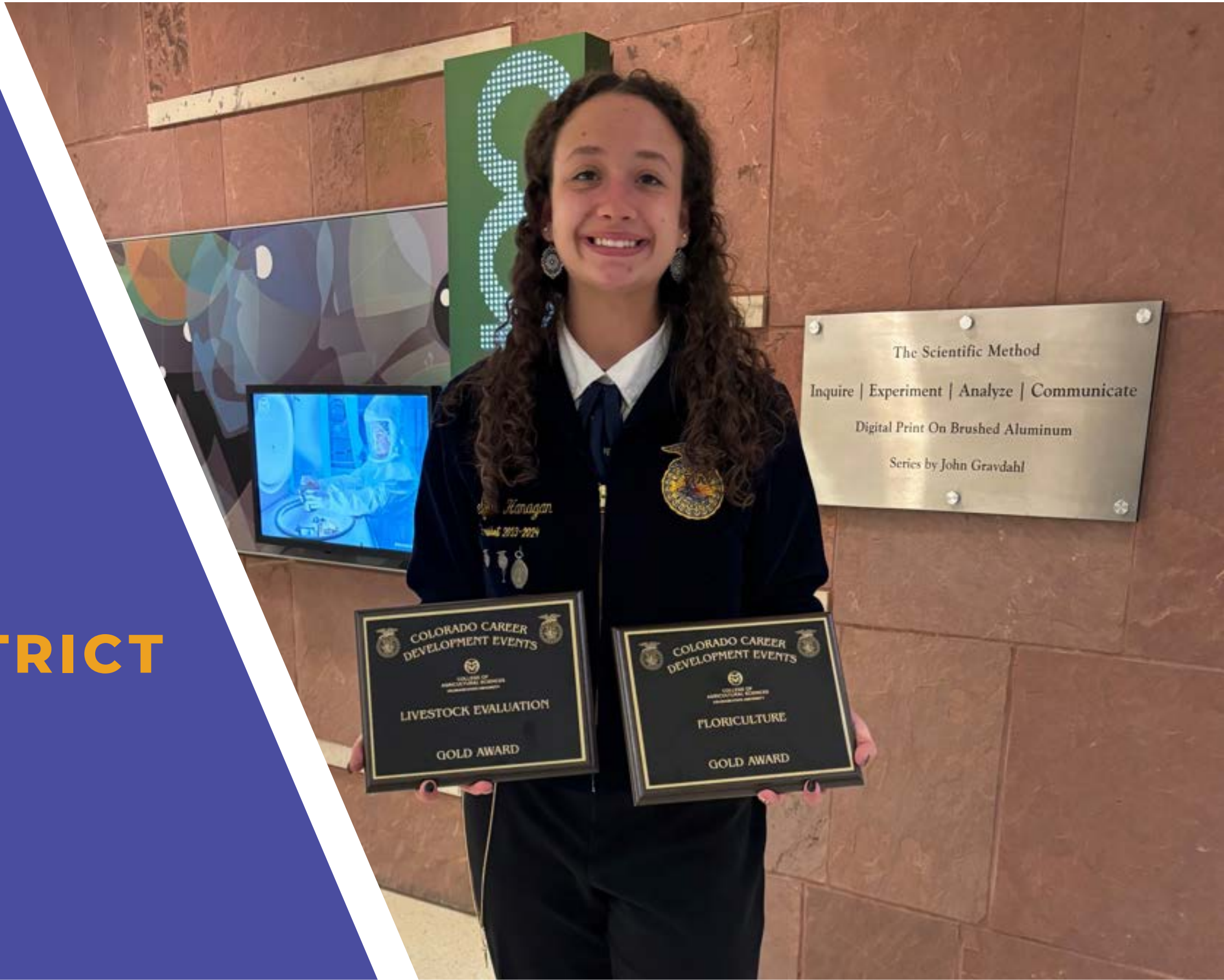


\*Data is missing, incomplete, or only focuses on select pathways in some regions and therefore does not represent complete student participation.



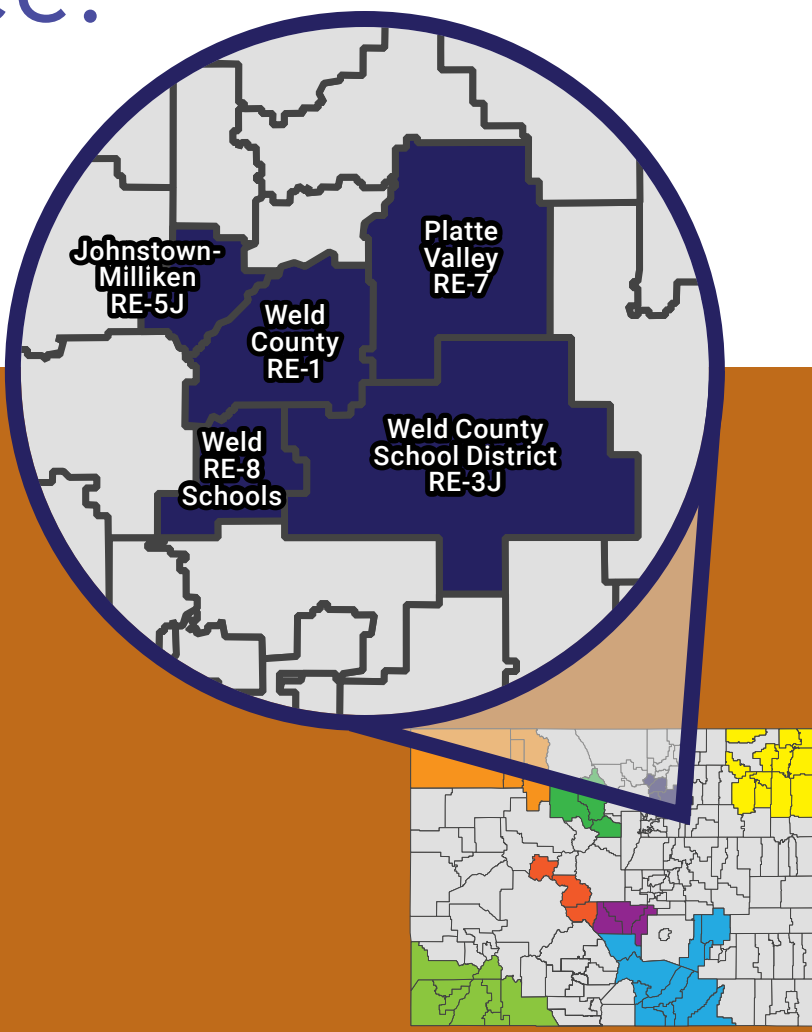
# RAELYNN HANAGAN

ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL  
JOHNSTOWN-MILLIKEN RE-5J DISTRICT  
WELD REGION



Raelynn is part of the class of 2024 and has been involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the Agriculture Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway in high school—and she credits her success in both to her personal growth and career preparation. Special thanks to Mr. Hopkins and Ms. Zuniga, who encouraged her to be the confident leader she is today! Raelynn has goals to continue in the agriculture industry after high school, something she both enjoys and finds she is skilled at since winning the Colorado State FFA Meat Evaluation Contest in 2023. Raelynn is hopeful about a future at Kansas State University where she can continue to participate in meat judging, study animal science, and be close to home.

“I’ve definitely realized how broad the Ag industry is through FFA and the Ag pathway, and that there’s a lot of opportunities out there and that there’s a lot of different ways people can expand on them—especially in the workplace.”



## 2023-24 DISTRICT DATA DETAILS

Students at Roosevelt High School: **1,156**  
Students who earned an industry credential: **240**

Students who completed an internship (60+ hours): **65**  
Students within concurrent enrollment: **350**



 **LISTEN TO MY STORY**





# MICHELLE RAMIREZ

CLOUD CITY HIGH SCHOOL  
LAKE COUNTY R-1 DISTRICT  
ARKANSAS RIVER VALLEY REGION



Inspired by the doctors and nurses who cared for her mother when her brother was born, Michelle put her head down and leveraged an additional year of high school to pursue her dream career. Ms. Kerrigan, her fourth grade teacher and now principal, encouraged her and gave her additional motivation to push for her dreams. During that extra year, Michelle earned her certified nursing assistant (CNA) license. Through her role working with patients and other staff at the hospital in Leadville, she has gained valuable, hands-on experience and learned interpersonal and professional skills. She uses her passion, energy, and perseverance to have positive interactions with those she helps. She values how her opportunities and support at high school gave her access to the resources she needed to pursue her broader goals in the labor and delivery field.

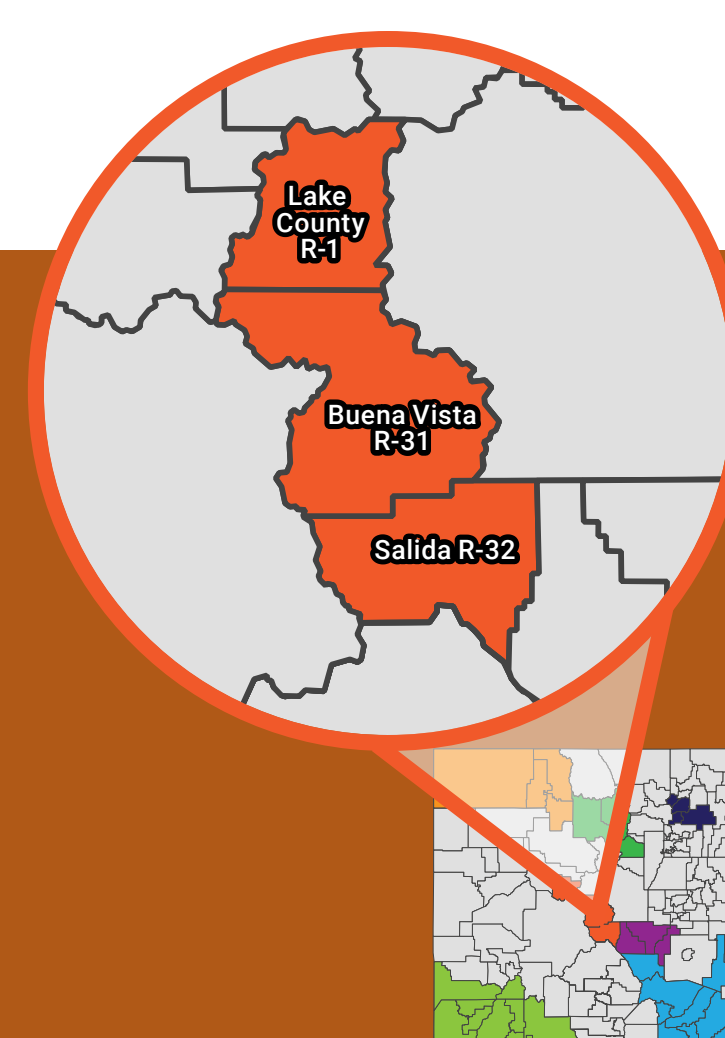
“Telling [myself] to keep going ... and knowing that I already have a position as a CNA once I graduate gives me more of that encouragement to keep going and make sure I’m doing great ... making sure that I’m doing whatever is possible to keep having those doors still open for me.”

## 2023-24 CLOUD CITY HIGH SCHOOL (CCHS) DETAILS

CCHS is an alternative high school where every student is able to create an individual self-directed path through their course work, work-based learning, and community service.

Concurrent enrollment is offered through Colorado Mountain College (CMC).

In May 2024, 7 CCHS students graduated from CMC: 5 received certificates in welding, 1 obtained a certificate in real estate, and 1 received a nurses aide certificate.



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# Veterinary Assistant Pathway



FREMONT  
MULTI-DISTRICT  
INITIATIVE



# JACOB BROOKS

FLORENCE JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL  
FREMONT RE-2 DISTRICT  
FREMONT REGION



Jacob knew from a young age that he wanted to help animals and people. Growing up on a fifth generation cattle ranch, coupled with his passion for critters, helped him fit in as an “Ag kid” early on. In high school, he picked the Veterinary Science pathway as part of the Fremont Multidistrict Initiative (FMI) shared courses and was the first student to earn his Certified Veterinary Assistant certification. Completing over 300 hours of field time at a local veterinary clinic through the Professional and Internship Community Experience (PaICE) program in Fremont was key to earning his certification, which helped him get a higher paying job in a veterinary clinic during his senior year. Jacob is grateful to Ms. Fall, his Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisor and Agriculture (Ag) teacher of five years, for showing him and his classmates grace while preparing them for the real world. Jacob’s future plans are to serve as the 2024-25 Colorado FFA Sentinel, pushing the urban-rural divide in Ag before starting college at West Texas A&M in 2025 to become a veterinarian.

“[The certificate] helped me get a job, I can only imagine how many other kids it would help get a job in turn. Being able to say, ‘Hey, I have this in my tool belt’, it’s not something that many teenagers have.”

*FMI connects three K-12 school districts and one institution of higher education to provide all students in Fremont County with a quality education and opportunities to develop relevant workplace skills. See more at [fmicolorado.org](https://fmicolorado.org).*

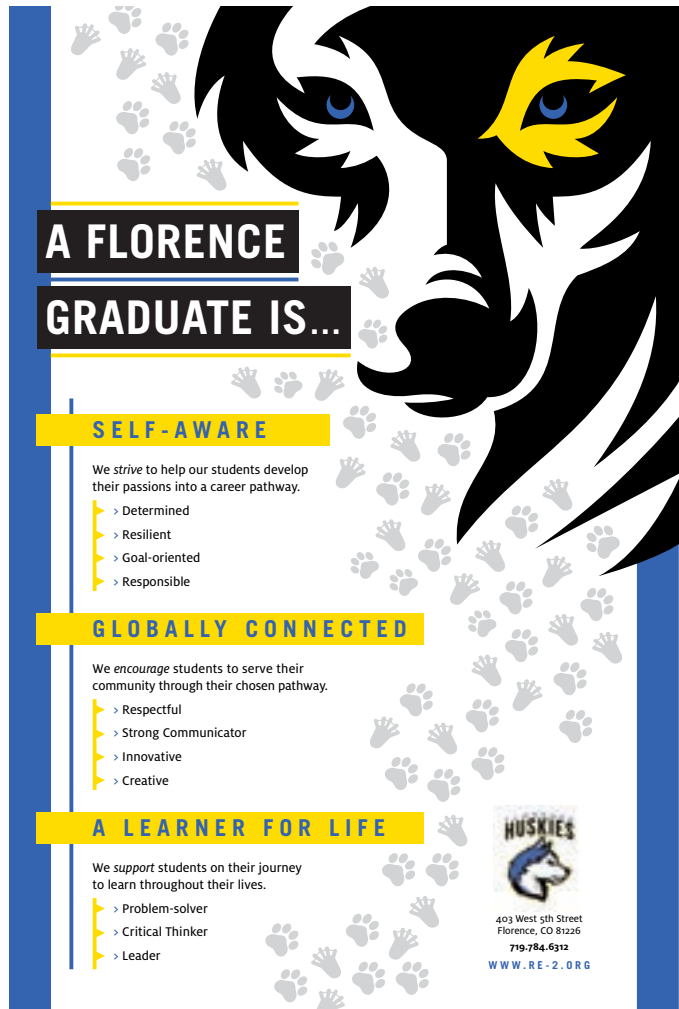
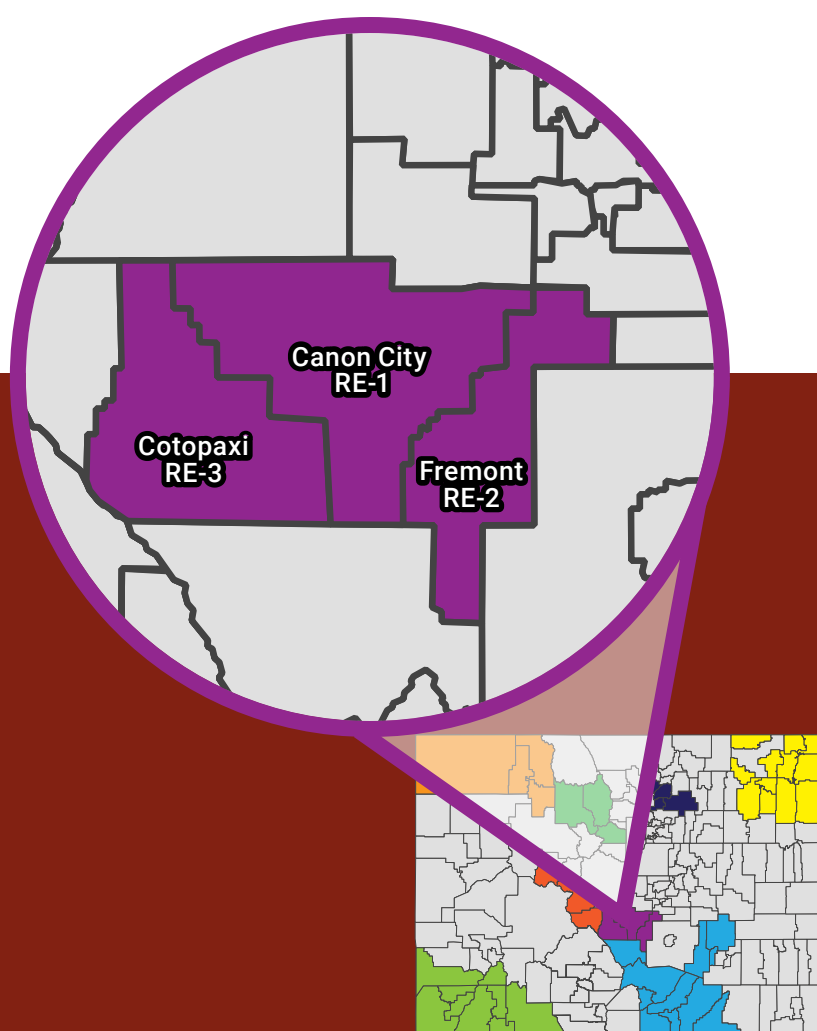
## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

Students: 1,401

Students who earned an  
industry credential: 81

Internships: 210

Other sectors: Agriculture, Health  
Science, Computer Information  
Systems, and Educator



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MY STORY



# GABRIELA GARCIA- ARMENDARIZ

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL  
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS RE-2 DISTRICT  
YAMPA REGION



Gabriela is forging her own path within the Architecture and Engineering Pathway! As a rising senior, she has learned that high school is what you make of it, so she set out to design an experience that both she and her family can be proud of. Gabriela has completed internships, volunteers regularly with youth, and works as a translator in her school and neighboring districts. She credits Mr. Brabec, her physics and applied engineering teacher, for motivating her to create things she never dreamed would be possible. She is very interested in the differences in architecture across places and cultures and, after college, hopes to design memorable buildings that bring more cultures alive right here in Colorado.

*Steamboat Springs is part of the Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship, and Sustainability (YVPS3), which partners four K-12 districts, two institutions of higher education, and multiple industry partners to provide shared career-connected learning opportunities for students. See more at [yvps3.org](http://yvps3.org).*

“The experiences I had in architecture and engineering have helped me as a person to understand how my emotions also play a part in my work. Seeing how me, myself, as a person can do what I can do. I’ve learned that I’m not as weak as I thought I was.”

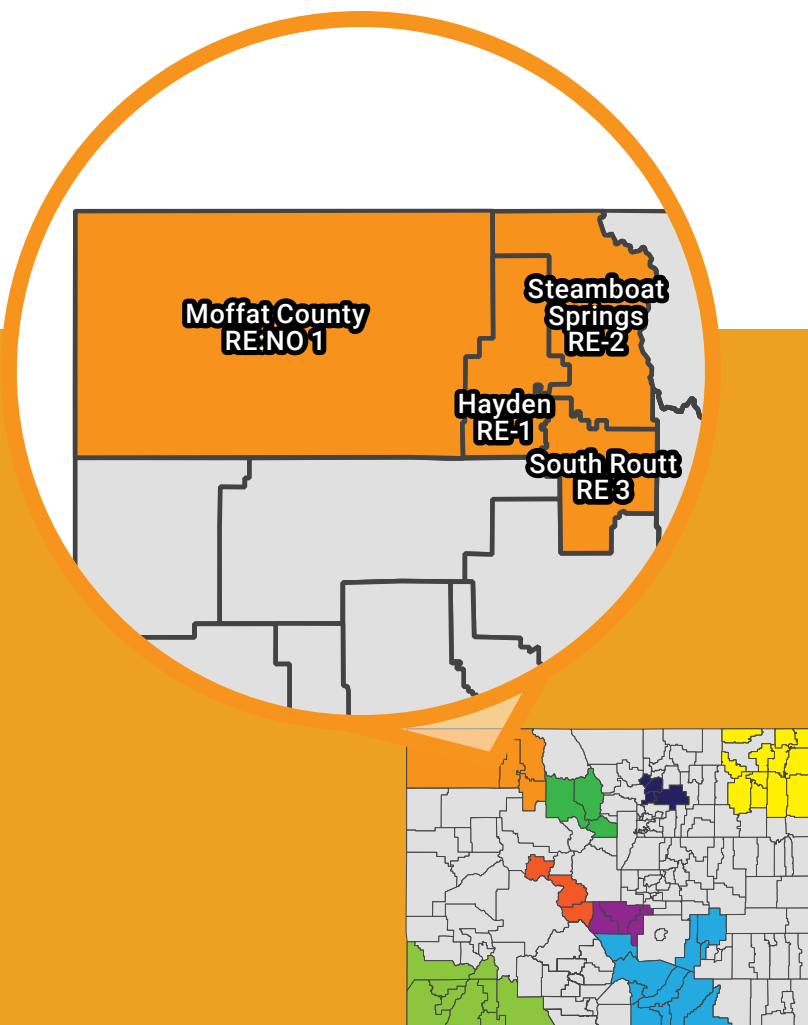
## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

Students: 1,617

Within the agriculture pathway, 26 students across Hayden, Moffat, and South Routt Obtained an industry certificate and 66 students completed an internship with a business partner in the agriculture sector.

148 students participated in concurrent enrollment with Colorado Northwestern Community College within the focus pathways.

Other sectors: Agriculture, Natural Resources, Construction, and Health Science.



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MY STORY





# FLYNN REESE

CLEAR CREEK HIGH SCHOOL  
CLEAR CREEK RE-1 DISTRICT  
CLEARLY GRAND REGION

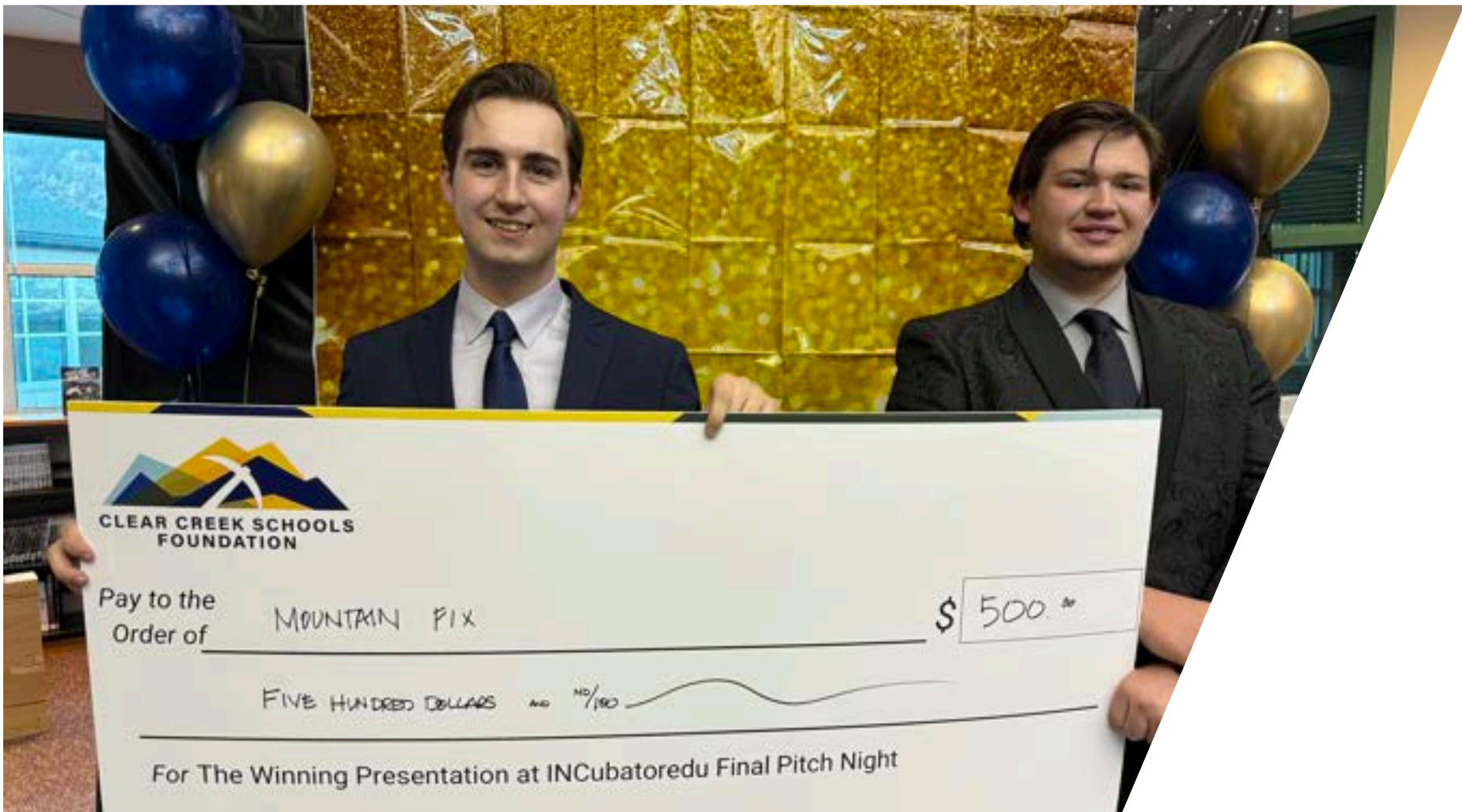
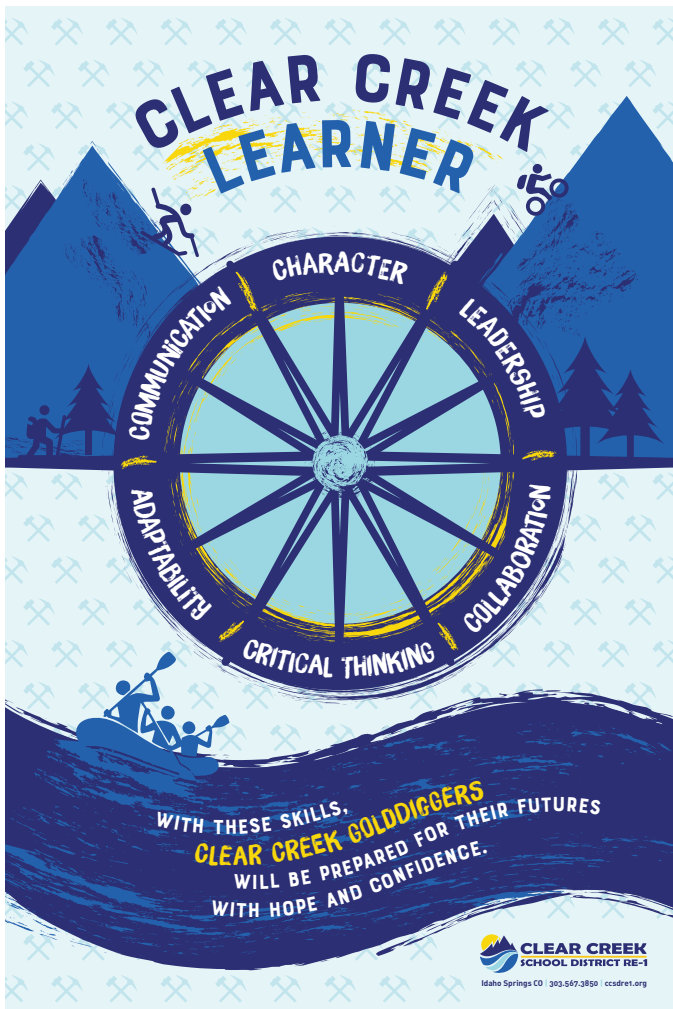
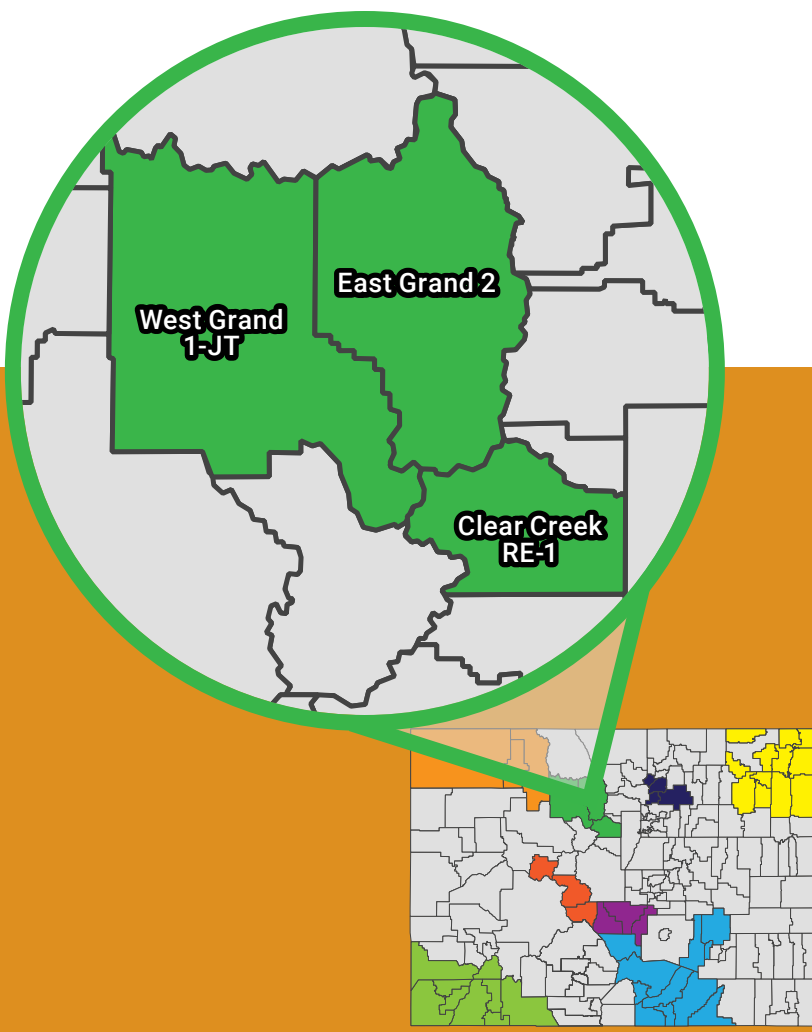


Flynn Reese channeled his love for mechanics and community service into MountainFix Mobile Mechanics, a business he started through his entrepreneurship class. While attending Clear Creek High School, Flynn created a solution for local car repair issues, significantly impacting Clear Creek County. Fueled by his determination to obtain independence and financial security, Flynn’s future plans include growing his business and attending college with the intention of majoring in business and mechanical engineering. He aims to balance his entrepreneurial success with his academic achievements in an effort to serve his community. Throughout this journey, Flynn has built a strong network of connections and received invaluable support and advice from his mentors, including teachers and experienced professionals in the community who have been instrumental in his success.

“I’d recommend this [entrepreneurship] class to be offered within high schools throughout the country. Honestly, this is an amazing class that provides so many amazing opportunities and connections with the right people ... which I feel are quite required for this sort of field.”

## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

Students: 724	Students who earned college credit through concurrent enrollment: 102
Students who earned an industry credential: 122	
Internships: 136	



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# COLTON HARDY

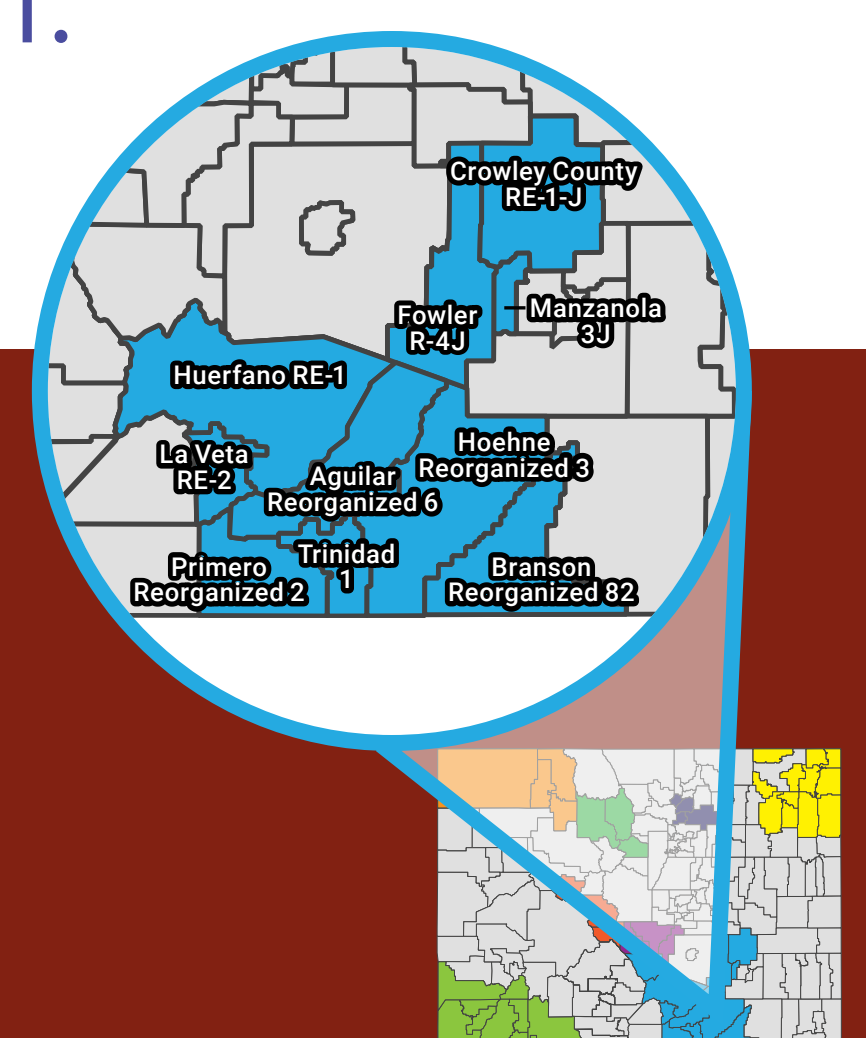
MANZANOLA HIGH SCHOOL  
MANZANOLA 3J DISTRICT  
SOUTH CENTRAL REGION



Colton knew he wanted to help people and make a difference in the world, and it was a forensics course that gave him the inspiration to do so by pursuing a career in information technology (IT). After completing grades 9-11 online, Colton physically attended high school for his senior year. He learned about time management and self-motivation early on and further sharpened those skills during his internship with the school's IT department. After tackling real-life technology problems through the internship, Colton is confident that even complicated challenges can be resolved through dedication, patience, and support from his mentors.

*Manzanola is a member of the South Central BOCES, which serves 12 school districts in South Central Colorado, helping the districts to offer meaningful career and technical education programs, internship/apprenticeship, and industry certification opportunities to all students. See more at [sc-boces.org](https://sc-boces.org).*

“[The internship] has benefited me in allowing me to create an idea in my head of ... the hours I’m gonna work in the career. It has also helped me get into a mindset of, ‘Well how am I going to fix this problem?’ The internship is helping me think for myself.”



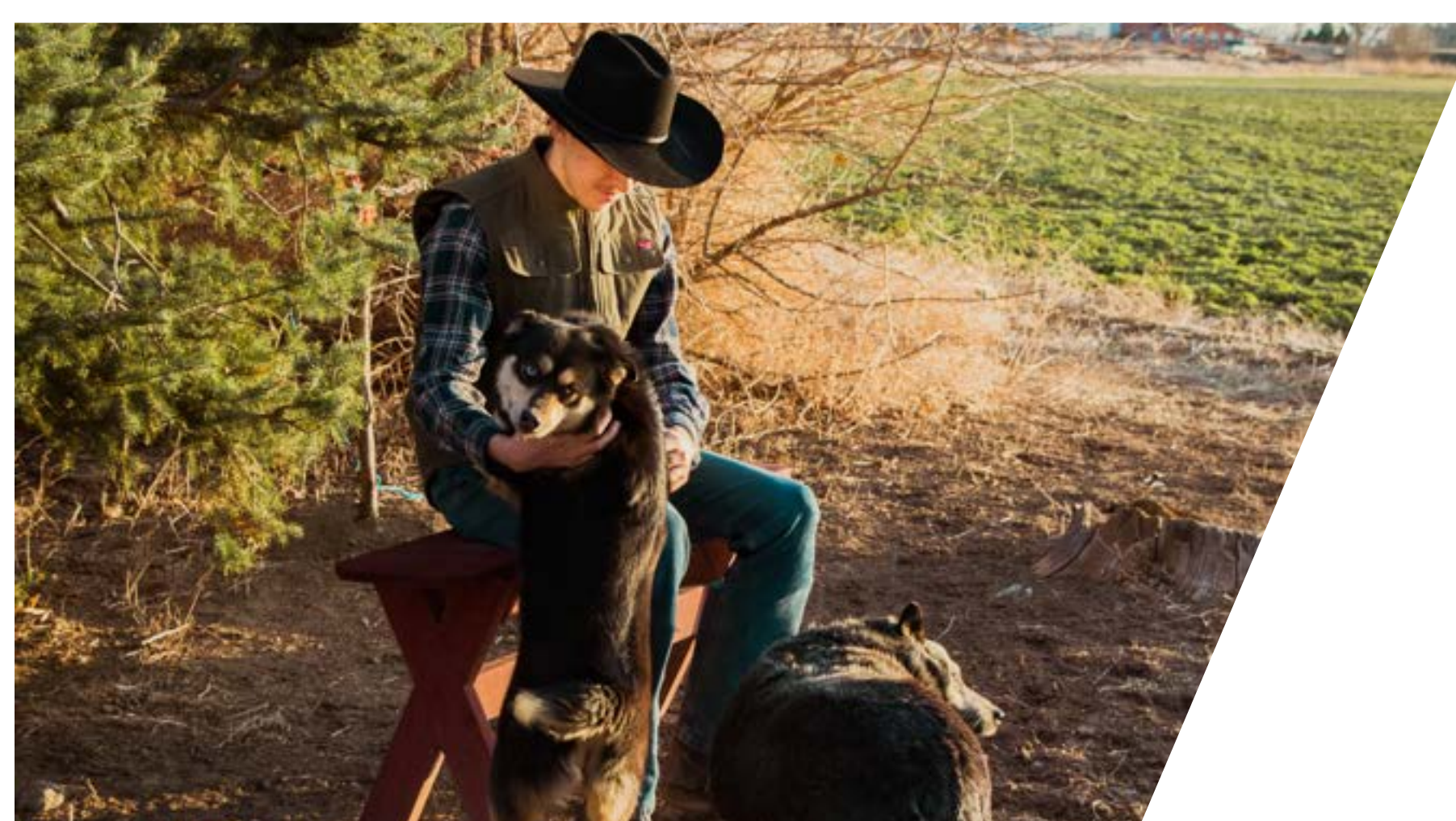
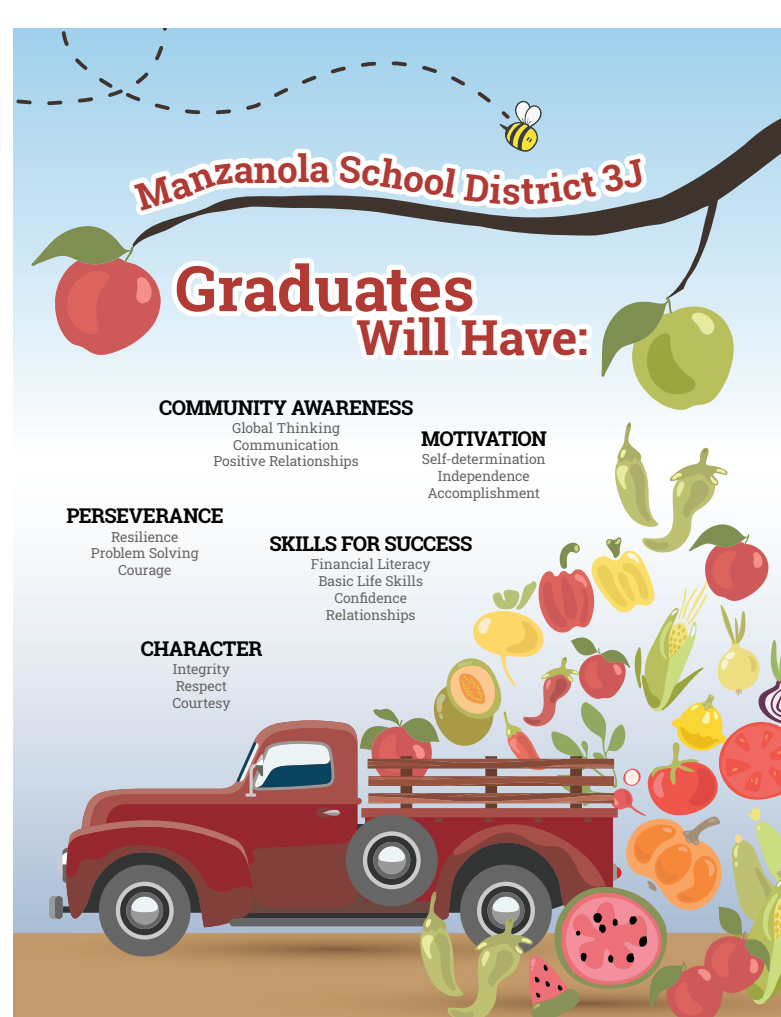
## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

Students: 1,448

Internships: 41

57% of high school students participated in a career exploration activity.

Other sectors: Culinary, Construction, and Advanced Manufacturing



 LISTEN TO MY STORY





# AUTUMN AND WILLOW SCHULZ

BAYFIELD AND IGNACIO HIGH SCHOOLS  
BAYFIELD 10 JT-R AND IGNACIO 11 JT  
DISTRICTS  
SOUTHWEST REGION



Sisters Willow and Autumn have both excelled in concurrent enrollment classes through Pueblo Community College and the SWCEC\* shared courses program. Willow graduated from Ignacio High School in 2024, where early on she completed her Associate of Arts and was one of the first students in the Educator Pathway to earn an Early Childhood Assistant Teacher certification. She is passionate about psychology and strategic communications and eager to help others.

Her sister Autumn, starting 11th grade at Bayfield High School this fall, earned a River Watch certification as part of the Environmental Science Pathway and participated in an internship at Durango's Waste Water Plant. By advocating for herself and with the support of family and her school community, Autumn has been in the environmental science program since middle school and values the exposure to various related career opportunities.

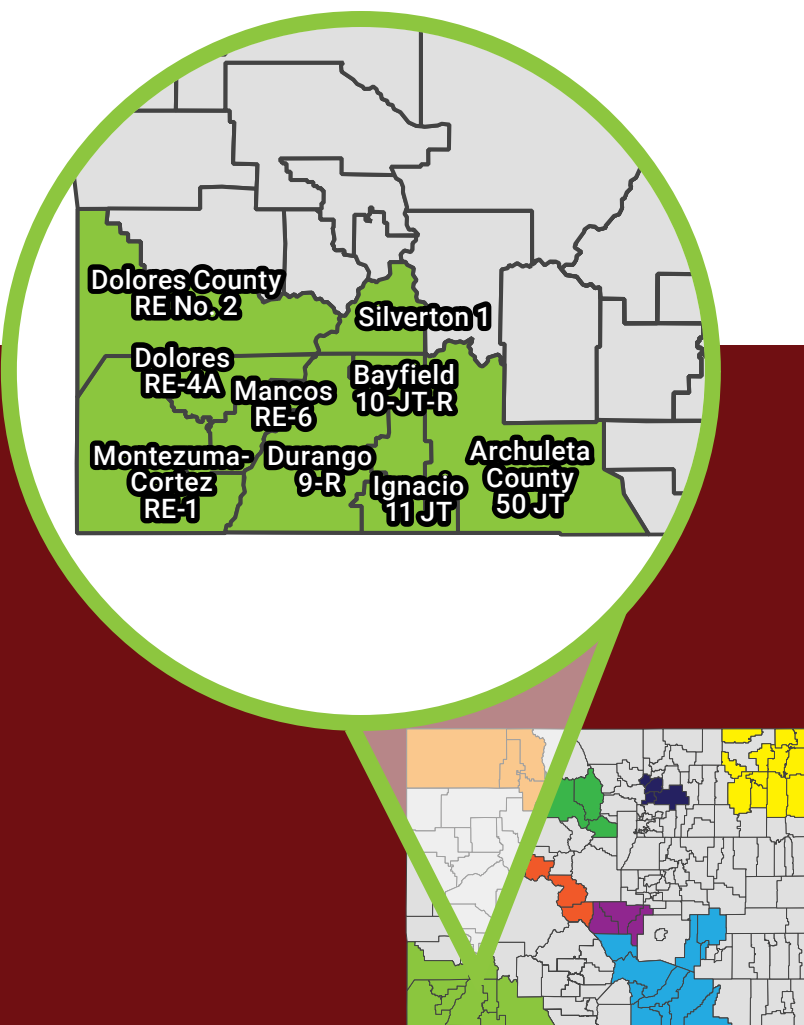
“All of the work that I did allowed me to see where in my community people needed help and how I could use the skills that I've learned to continue to help in those areas.” –Willow

*\*The Southwest Colorado Education Collaborative (SWCEC) strengthens diverse communities by providing pathways in career readiness and higher education for students to build 21st-century skills and economically viable futures. See more at [swcoedcollaborative.org](https://swcoedcollaborative.org).*

## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

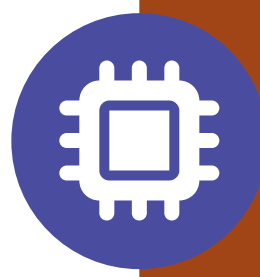
Students: **4,143**  
Students who earned an industry credential: **228**  
Students who enrolled in focus pathways: **1,696**

Students who participated in a job shadow, summer institute or other WBL exploration activity organized by SWCEC: **253**  
Other sectors: Environmental, Building Trades, Health Sciences, Education, and Hospitality



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# ANTHONY SCHADEGG

HORIZONS EXPLORATORY ACADEMY  
SALIDA R-32 DISTRICT  
ARKANSAS RIVER VALLEY REGION



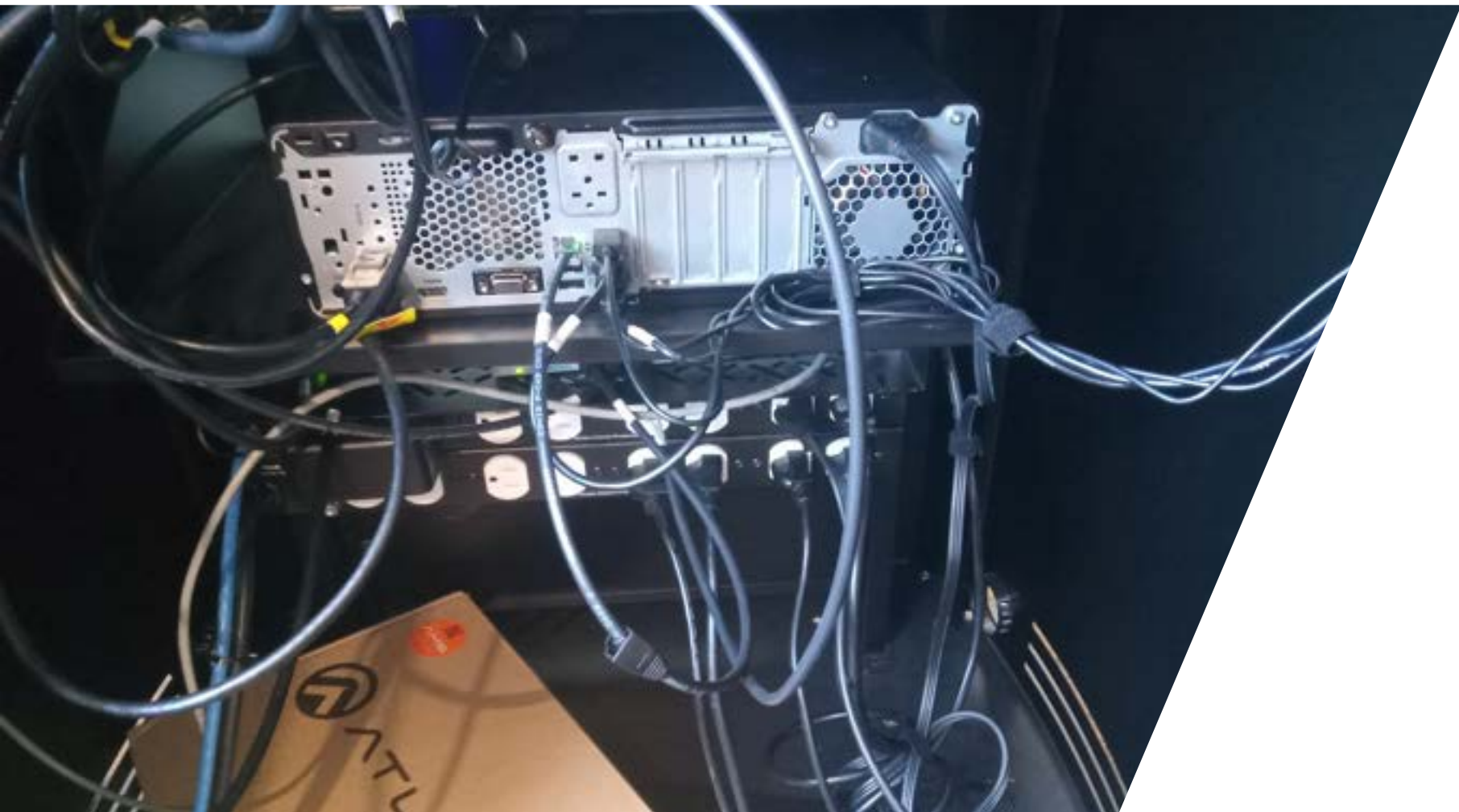
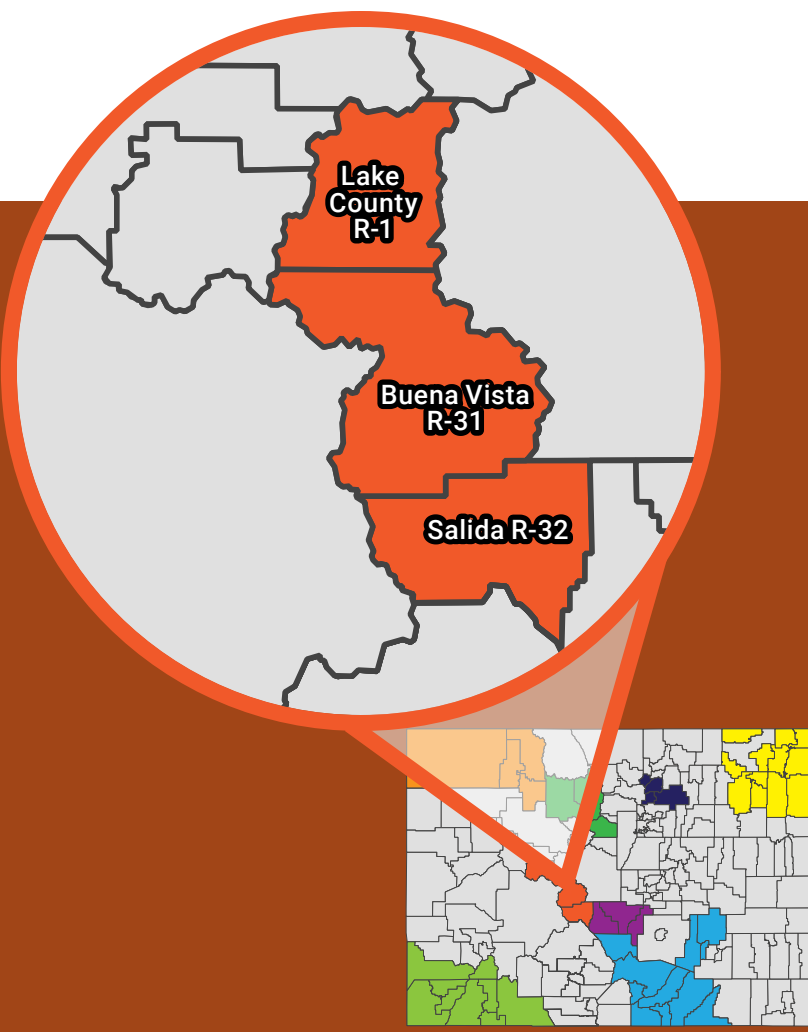
Anthony has faced challenges and anxieties in the past, but by pushing out of his comfort zone and having a growth mindset, he has become more confident in himself and his future. He was connected to the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) which helped him find an internship in the Information Technology (IT) Department at Colorado Mountain College (CMC), where he is also taking concurrent enrollment courses. He is grateful for many things, including his internship mentor, Jess Russell at CMC, and his 10th grade Independent Studies class, where he wrote his own published autobiography. A creative and mindful young man, Anthony is excited to join the ASCENT program in the fall for a free year of college towards a bachelor's degree to become a freelance writer.

“Horizons is very focused on making education student centric. I found classes that I was interested in and was able to really enjoy them ... hands-on experiences and sharing with others was the biggest benefit from these classes.”

## 2023-24 HORIZONS EXPLORATORY ACADEMY (HEA) DETAILS

HEA is an alternative high school that honors individualized paths to success through a personalized, rigorous curriculum designed around the needs, aspirations, and creativity of every student. HEA offers concurrent enrollment with Colorado Mountain College.

Students participate in real-life experiences, including, but not limited to, job shadowing, internships, personal finance study, arts exploration, and outdoor activities. 34 total high school students.



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# ADRIAN RASCON- JUAREZ

YUMA HIGH SCHOOL  
YUMA 1 DISTRICT  
NORTHEAST REGION



Adrian was the first student in his cohort to enroll in the certified nursing assistant (CNA) program at his high school, offered through Northeastern Junior College (NJC). The program has given him valuable experience in patient care, first through classroom learning, followed by clinicals at a nursing home. With encouragement from Mrs. Trute and Mrs. Lubbers, who emphasized the importance of perseverance and growth, Adrian has developed strong skills in communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. Clarity around what to expect at the college, fueled by his passion to help others, has motivated Adrian to pursue his Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) by starting at NJC. He values how his experiences in high school have prepared him for college and a rewarding nursing career.

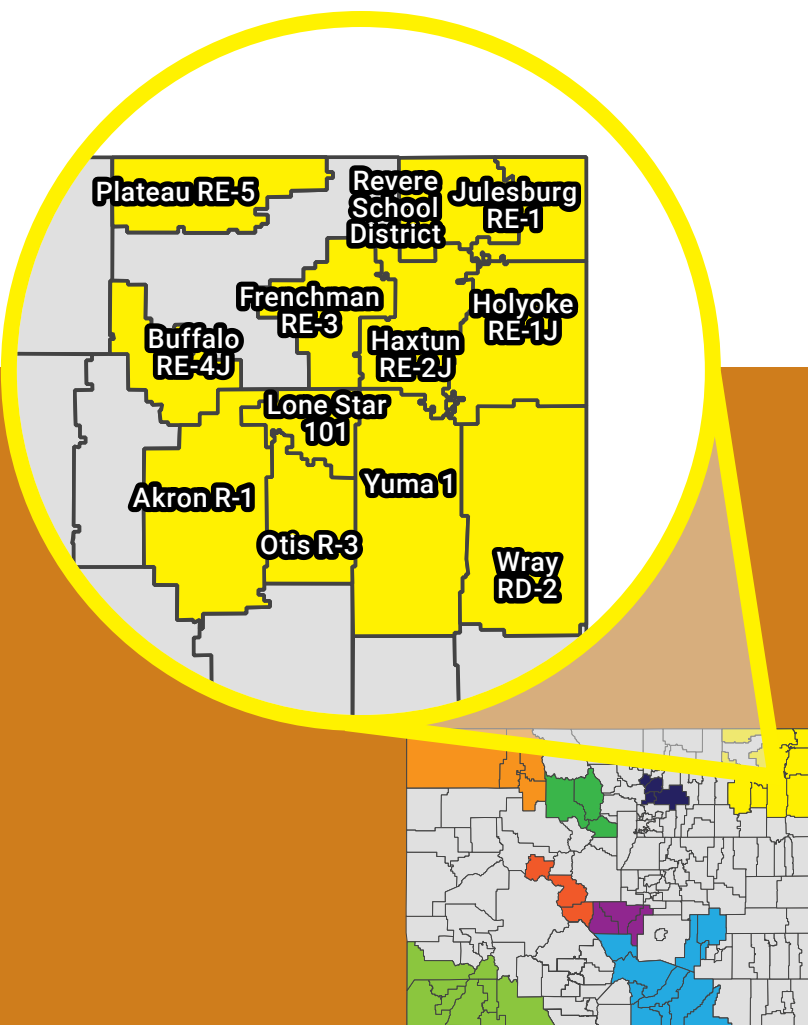
*Yuma is a member of the Northeast BOCES, which supports collaboration between 12 school districts to participate in career and technical education, data, technology, school-to-work programs, and more. See more at [nebores.org](https://nebores.org).*

“Throughout this class, I’ve benefited by learning more about taking care of someone and having more empathy for them. Taking care of others how you would like to be taken care of.”

## 2023-24 REGION DATA DETAILS

Students: 1,259  
Students who earned an industry credential: 158  
Internships: 143

Other sectors: Building Trades, Education, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Transportation



 LISTEN TO MY STORY