



AMERICA
SUCCEEDS

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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Letter from the President

Well, it was quite a year. The COVID-19 pandemic is still impacting seemingly every aspect of our society, and the education sector is no exception. Everywhere – from classrooms and schools to districts and state departments of education to advocacy organizations and philanthropy – continued to devote immense time, effort, and resources to addressing the impact of the pandemic on student learning and emotional well-being.

At America Succeeds, we did our best to remain agile and support our network of partners. 2021 was also the first year of implementation of our new strategic plan, and we're proud of the direction and progress we've made. We grew our network, welcoming partners in Texas and Massachusetts. We're excited to broaden the reach of business-led education advocacy, and it couldn't have come at a better time. And we launched two new initiatives that will shape our work for the foreseeable future.

With our Equity in Education initiative, we developed a policy agenda focused on expanding opportunities for all students, particularly students of color and those underserved by our current system, increasing diversity in the teaching profession, and making funding systems fairer and more responsive to student needs. We were proud to learn from and partner with impressive organizations from around the country leading advocacy in these policy areas, and we're excited to continue working with them to engage business in the fight to advance equity.

We also launched our Durable Skills initiative, developed using field-leading research on the skills employers are seeking in future employees. Whether someone is just entering the job market, moving up the ladder, leading the company, or changing career paths entirely, competency in durable skills will likely be what they rely on most to succeed. We found durable skills in demand in every sector, in every state. With the support of some of the country's top companies, we began to engage business and education leaders in discussions about what it would take to ensure every graduate is equipped with durable skills.

With our growing network and two new initiatives, America Succeeds is well positioned coming out of 2021. I can't wait for the year ahead!



Tim Taylor
Co-Founder and President
America Succeeds

About America Succeeds

Mission

The mission of America Succeeds is to improve educational opportunities, outcomes, and equity by harnessing the influence and acumen of the business community in accelerating systems change.

Vision

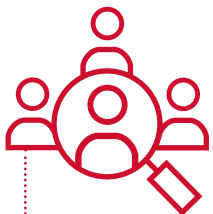
Every student is prepared to succeed in the competitive global economy and contribute to their local community.

Theory of Change

Education is guided by state policy and change is most impactful at the state level. Systems change requires the active engagement of multiple stakeholders. Business leaders have the opportunity, obligation, and capacity to fight for kids and strengthen our education system.

Core Principles

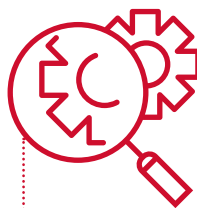
America Succeeds is guided by a set of five core principles. These principles, which are critical to the success of any business, are equally as important in transforming the education system.



Customer-focus:
putting students first in all policies and practices



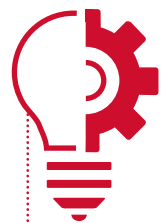
Accountability:
assigning direct responsibility for excellence in outcomes throughout the system



Transparency:
enabling public access to clear, detailed financial and performance data



Return on Investment:
effectively investing limited resources to achieve desired student outcomes



Choice & Innovation:
empowering parents and students to choose - and educators to create - the best learning environments

2021 Board of Directors



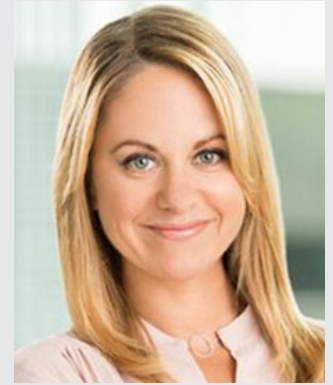
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Foundation Support



America Succeeds Team



CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
Tim Taylor



VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGY
& OPERATIONS
Lauren Cole



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Eric Lerum



POLICY & PROGRAMS
ANALYST
Emilee Ramseur



VICE PRESIDENT OF
PARTNERSHIPS
Stephanie Short



Organizational Values

These core values guide our team as we work toward the mission.



We mean
business.



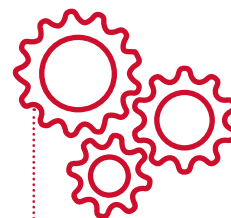
Work hard.
Play hard.
Change the
world.



Be in service.



Act like
an owner.



Be a great
problem
solver.

America Succeeds Initiatives

America Succeeds' new initiatives – Durable Skills and Equity in Education – were thoughtfully designed as approachable ways to bring business leaders back into education policy conversations; and to date, we have received an overwhelmingly positive response. There continues to be both an urgent need and incredible opportunity to engage business – an influential, non-partisan voice – alongside other key stakeholders to cut through the noise and take action to improve equity, access, and opportunity for all learners.

Uniting to highlight the demand for fundamental workforce skills and to create a more equitable education system that better serves students of color is not only critical for state leaders navigating ongoing COVID-19 recovery today, but also has the power to transform school-to-work pathways for students' and employers' mutual benefit over the long-term.

2021 Initiative Media & Notable Presentations

Media



Speaking Engagements



The High Demand for Durable Skills

This past year, America Succeeds launched the Durable Skills initiative with endorsements from employer and industry associations such as the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, SHRM, Manufacturing Institute, CompTIA, Associated Builders and Contractors, and American Hotel & Lodging Association, among others.



"We're focused on creating a ladder of opportunity so people can build a career at Walmart, regardless of where they start. We believe our investments to improve career paths for our associates, including robust training and education offerings with technical and Durable Skills, have strengthened our workforce and contributed positively to our stores and communities."

– Sean Thurman, Director of Global Public Policy, Walmart



"Equity, and the lack thereof, is important to the creation and upkeep of our local, state, and federal economies. As business leaders, we must push for specific resources and Durable Skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership to support disadvantaged students and bring them up to the same opportunity level as their educational peers."

– Alex Hammerstein, Senior Vice President, CBRE



"Our students need the skills to compete in this global economy to have thriving careers, and our employers, for us to remain globally competitive, have to have a skilled workforce. Durable Skills are skills that allow students to problem solve, think critically, communicate, collaborate, and have ethical reasoning - all these skills that can last a lifetime."

– Vince Bertram, President & CEO, Project Lead The Way



TRANSWESTERN®

"Commercial real estate is a relationship-based industry. While technical skills are important, Durable Skills like communication, leadership, collaboration and problem-solving are vital for long-term success. Equipping young people with Durable Skills training expands their professional capabilities and opens up more opportunities for them to grow and thrive."

– Phil McCarthy, Executive Managing Director, Transwestern



"Whether you're a product manager, a project manager, or a software engineer, there are a set of Durable Skills that you should have within your competencies to be effective in any one of these jobs. So, as we think about how this carries you through to your career, you establish this wonderful baseline for who you are and how you demonstrate Durable Skills. Then you focus on the technical skills necessary for the various jobs that you'll pursue as you move into your career."

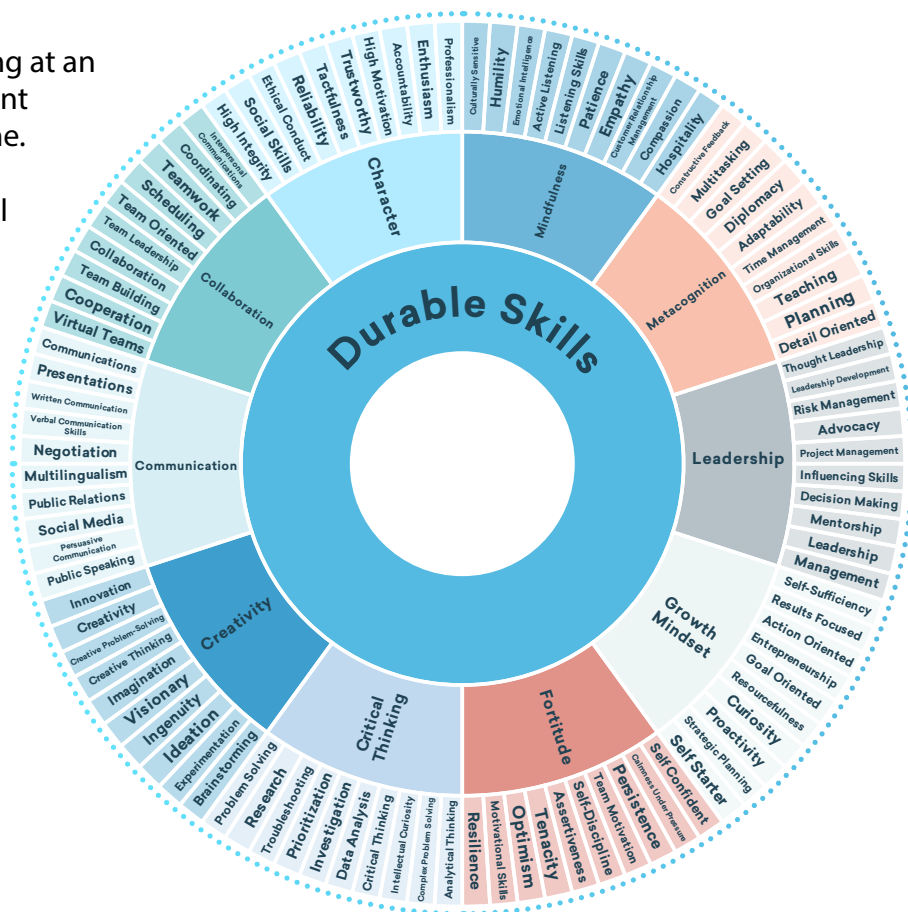
– Jamie Candee, CEO, Edmentum



"At Highlights for Children, we focus on helping children become their best selves. For 75 years, we have been dedicated to building a more optimistic and empathetic world where all children are curious, creative, confident and caring. Success in life comes from more than academic and technical skills. Our schools and communities succeed when they address the needs of the whole child. Children thrive when they develop social-emotional skills, when they build strength in communication, collaboration, and leadership, and when they exercise their curiosity, compassion, and empathy. Imagine a society where ALL children were able to fully develop such broad and durable skills."

– Kent Johnson, CEO, Highlights Magazine

America Succeeds partnered Emsi Burning Glass to analyze 82 million US job postings to quantify the demand for Durable Skills.



7 of the 10 most-requested skills were Durable Skills

The **TOP 5**
Durable Skills
were requested
3.8x more than
the top 5 Hard skills

Demand for jobs in the future

91% management jobs

business operations jobs **86%**

81% engineering jobs

**Jobs at greatest
risk of
automation
in the near term have
lower demand
for
Durable Skills**

Advancing Equity in Education

America Succeeds' Equity in Education initiative targets five specific policy pillars where system change is needed and can be impactful. They include:

- ▶ Recruiting and retaining educators of color
- ▶ Advancing equity in STEM
- ▶ Strengthening equity through social-emotional learning
- ▶ Expanding equity in course access and options
- ▶ Achieving funding equity

In spring 2021, we started building partnerships with organizations like America Forward, Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity, Center for Black Educator Development, Code.org, and Committee for Children, among others. In addition to participating in the various calls, activities, and public forums hosted by these groups, we are working closely to refine state-level policy recommendations around the five pillars. A full report of recommended policies was released in November and a series of actionable playbooks is planned for release in spring 2022.



Equity in Education Supporting Coalition



Every day, we work hard to ensure students receive the excellent education they need and deserve. It's a hard battle and we're glad to fight it.

When we need to recharge our batteries, we also try to have a little fun – like jamming to live music and writing about it.

Come join us at GratefulEd.org

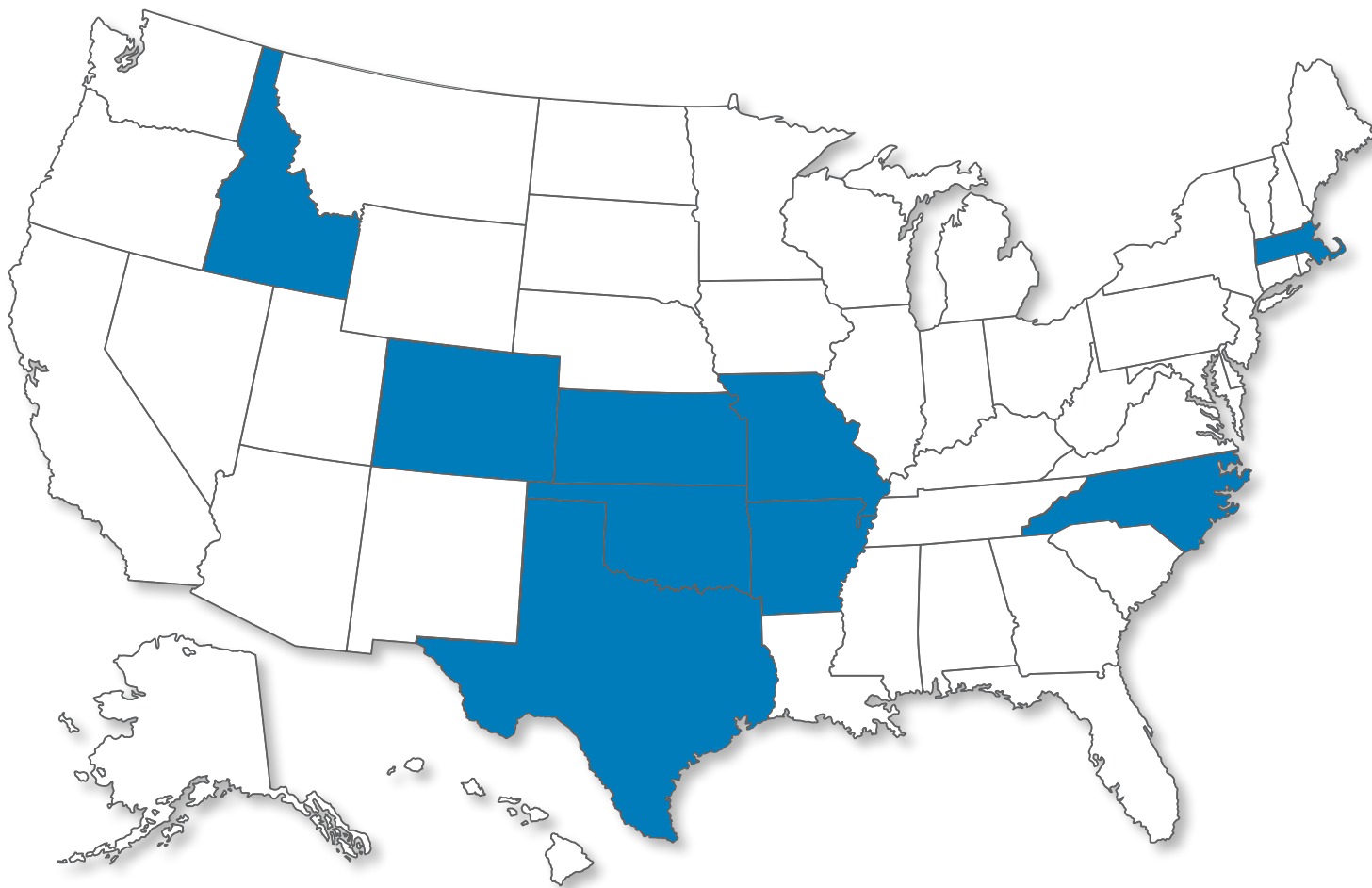


GRATEFUL ED
BY AMERICA
SUCCEEDS

Congrats! You've made it this far - you deserve a prize.
Email us at info@americasucceeds.org and we'll send you our brand new Grateful Ed t-shirt.

America Succeeds Network

America Succeeds was founded on the premise that networked nonprofits are some of the most effective nonprofits in the world. By developing and supporting a network of like-minded, mission-driven organizations, America Succeeds' state partners are able to develop holistic solutions at the scale of the problems we seek to address.



America Succeeds' state partners all share our commitment to preparing students to succeed in a competitive global economy and contribute to their local community.



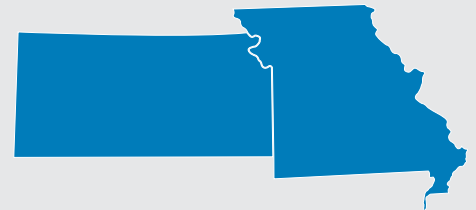
State Partners

Each America Succeeds state partner is an independent nonprofit organization representing the business voice for education within their respective state or region. This structure reflects our belief in the importance of change happening organically at the state level. Our team collaborates with each state partner alongside our network of national business leaders, education advocates, communities, and other stakeholders to continually improve equity, access, and opportunity in education.

State Partner Highlights 2021

Aligned

- ▶ Aligned advanced several of its policy priorities, including the creation of the Office of Childhood in Missouri and the completion of an early learning survey across Missouri LEAs and the passage of the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act and an expanded public/private early-learning match appropriation in Kansas.
- ▶ Aligned also doubled its team size through contractors, increased revenue and membership.



Arkansas Learns

- ▶ Arkansas Learns filed an amicus brief on behalf of seven parents seeking to overturn an exemption for four school districts that wanted to opt out of the state's interdistrict school choice policy. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals granted the reversal.
- ▶ Arkansas Learns launched AkransasReads.org, a user-friendly, interactive site where users may learn their public school district's or charter's reading readiness.
- ▶ Arkansas passed legislation prohibiting state, college/university and school district employees from collective bargaining.
- ▶ Arkansas Learns also successfully supported a millage extension for the Little Rock School District, which prioritized a traditional West High School.



State Partner Highlights 2021 (continued)

BEST NC

- ▶ Two BEST NC initiatives went through the final steps of becoming official state programs: TeachNC was adopted by the Department of Public Instruction as an official state initiative with state funding, and the state finalized the TP3/ Principal Fellows merger with an increase of \$1.5M in funding



Colorado Succeeds

- ▶ Colorado Succeeds advanced its policy agenda, including the passage of Senate Bill 106, which expands student access to high-quality post-secondary pathways and flexibility for districts to offer them.
- ▶ Colorado Succeeds also supported eight communities with ongoing technical assistance to better align their pathways with their local economy through the Homegrown Talent Initiative and the Governor's RISE Grant.
- ▶ The Succeeds Prize celebrated and rewarded six education providers that used innovation to improve student outcomes. 9NEWS is broadcasting segments on each winner.
- ▶ Colorado Succeeds also convened members interested in starting or scaling work-based learning experiences through a Community of Practice to help navigate challenges and minimize barriers.



Every Kid Counts Oklahoma

- ▶ Through its Educator Advisory Group, Every Kid Counts Oklahoma engaged educators in monthly conversations regarding their concerns with Oklahoma's education system, as well as potential policy solutions to address issues identified.
- ▶ EKCO's Educator Advisory Group spurred the creation of www.teachersforteachers.org, a platform that allows teachers to market themselves to schools for professional development, mentoring, and coaching opportunities.
- ▶ EKCO advocated successfully for open transfer legislation that empowers families to choose the right school for their child, regardless of their zip code or proximity to the school. Additionally, EKCO advocated for a corresponding change in the funding formula that better incentivizes schools by allowing funds to follow students where they enroll. These two bills were lauded by Governor Stitt as the "most transformative education reforms in state history."





Idaho Business for Education

- ▶ Idaho created the first federally registered Youth Apprenticeship Program with IBE's support.
- ▶ IBE also defended against legislation that would have undermined the public education system in the 2021 legislature.



Massachusetts Business Alliance

- ▶ MBAE successfully advocated for a number of policy priorities, including expanding opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized, in-demand credentials, growth of early college programs, and student-centered uses of federal relief funding, as well as better planning for student recovery at the district level for how schools will address racial and socio-economic achievement gaps.
- ▶ MBAE also launched an online portal that enables users to view and compare school district teaching and learning plans responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic. MBAE also released an analysis of district collective bargaining contracts and the MOUs negotiated during the pandemic that highlighted a general lack of flexibility for schools and districts in addressing challenges presented by remote teaching and learning and the implications for student learning recovery.



For information about America Succeeds' network and partnerships, please contact Eric Lerum at elerum@americasucceeds.org.



Share the America Succeeds Annual Report



America Succeeds

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