

Collaboration & System Improvements

- Strong need for cross-sector collaboration:
 - Education + industry + government
- Suggested solutions:
 - More public-facing events connecting employers with educators
 - Better communication of workforce needs
 - Expand advisory councils with industry input

Early College & Funding Issues

- Early College / Dual Enrollment programs are highly valuable, especially for:
 - Economically disadvantaged students
- Major barrier:
 - Funding disincentives for school districts
- Recommendation:
 - Advocate for state funding reforms to support participation

Career & Technical Education (CTE) / Skilled Trades

- Persistent stigma around trades vs. 4-year degrees
- High demand in industries like:
 - Construction
 - Water infrastructure
- Key ideas:
 - Start career exposure earlier (elementary/middle school)
 - Create hands-on training environments for non-traditional learners
 - Utilize community colleges for dual enrollment in trades
 - Promote industry credentials, certifications, and micro-credentials

Access & Equity

- Need to better reach:
 - Students not in traditional school pathways
 - Individuals unaware of available opportunities
- Suggested outreach:
 - PTA engagement
 - Community-based programs
 - Summer camps and early exposure initiatives

Community College Role

- Community colleges seen as:
 - Underutilized assets
 - Critical for affordable, credential-based pathways
- Challenges:
 - Misperception of community colleges (“junior college” stigma)
 - Inconsistent collaboration with K–12 systems

Infrastructure & Resource Gaps

- Barriers to opportunity include:
 - Transportation access
 - Awareness of training programs
- Need for tools that connect:
 - Education pathways + job opportunities + required credentials

Housing & Economic Barriers

- Lack of affordable housing impacts:
 - Workforce entry (including teachers)
- Zoning and development policies limit:
 - Starter homes and workforce housing options

Policy & Advocacy Themes

- Need for:
 - Stronger education funding protections
 - Better alignment between state policy and local needs
- Importance of:
 - Face-to-face engagement with legislators
 - Sharing real-time updates (newsletters, alerts)

Additional Key Issues

- Senior isolation identified as a growing concern
- Stormwater and infrastructure costs impacting communities
- Interest in leveraging:
 - Alternative funding sources (e.g., local revenues, grants)

Data & Tools Needs

- Demand for better data on:
 - Education pathways
 - Credential requirements
 - Job opportunities by region
- Interest in tools that:
 - Map training → transportation → employment outcomes

Emerging Priorities

- Career pathways (especially non-college routes) gaining traction at state level
- Focus areas:
 - Workforce development (e.g., water infrastructure jobs)
 - K–12 engagement in planning and safety education
- Recognition that:
 - More ongoing dialogue and collaboration forums are needed

Overall Takeaway

- Strong consensus that systems are fragmented.
- Biggest opportunity lies in:
 - Better coordination across education, industry, and policy
 - Earlier and more inclusive career exposure
 - Removing structural barriers (funding, stigma, access)