
DOUGLAS COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
LEGACY
CAMPUS
Promises Made
Promises Kept
DCSD LEGACY CAMPUS – 2025–2026 YEAR IN REVIEW





Thank you for taking the time to learn more about, and celebrate, the extraordinary accomplishments of Douglas County students at Legacy Campus. The pages that follow tell the story of a remarkable year. More importantly, they tell the stories of students who are discovering their passions, building professional skills, and taking meaningful steps toward what comes next.

During the 2025–2026 school year, our students carried the promise of Legacy further than ever before. They earned a record number of college credits and a record number of industry-recognized credentials, while more students than at any point in our history participated in internships, apprenticeships, and meaningful work-based learning experiences. Throughout these pages, you will see what those numbers look like in action: students learning alongside industry professionals, competing at the highest levels, serving their communities, earning certifications, and discovering careers they may never have imagined for themselves.

Those accomplishments belong first to our students. But they are made possible by extraordinary instructors, committed postsecondary and industry partners, supportive families, and a school district willing to rethink where and how learning can happen.

As I reflect on this remarkable year, I am proud of how far Legacy Campus has come and I am energized by where we are going. Our work continues to grow, our partnerships continue to deepen, and the opportunities available to our students continue to expand.

The promise of Legacy has always been about what becomes possible when we connect passion to pathway. This year, our students showed us just how powerful that promise can be.

Rex Corr, Ed.D.
Director, DCSD Legacy Campus



Welcome to the Douglas County School District Legacy Campus! Thanks to the generous support and investment of our local community and taxpayers, our state-of-the-art campus provides students with transformative, hands-on Career and Technical Education opportunities. By matching students directly with leading business and industry partners, we bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. Whether preparing to pursue higher education or entering the workforce immediately, our graduates depart equipped with the practical experience, professional certifications, and confidence necessary to excel in an ever-changing world.

We firmly believe that when students discover their true passions, they thrive academically and personally. The Legacy Campus is proud to cultivate these opportunities through diverse pathways, mentorship, and innovative, hands-on coursework. We invite you to explore the inspiring stories, remarkable achievements, and personal testimonials highlighted throughout this year's annual report, showcasing the extraordinary impact of our shared vision.

Erin Kane
Superintendent, Douglas County School District



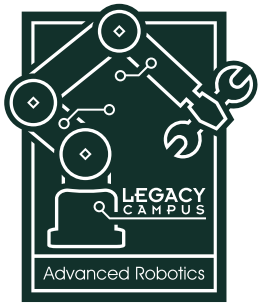
Welcome to your future! In the Douglas County School District, our deepest commitment is to each and every student. We believe that high school is the perfect time to discover what inspires you — to bring your unique passion to light. This guide is your map for that journey of exploration. It is filled with opportunities designed to help you explore your interests with real purpose, giving you the knowledge and experience to confidently plan your next steps.

These programs are more than just classes; they are articulated pathways to your future. Whether your passion leads you to college, a high-skill career, or military service, we have built a clear road for you. These pathways allow you to earn tuition-free college credits and valuable industry certifications, saving you time and money. Our goal is to ensure you leave DCSD with more than a diploma — you will leave with a plan, a purpose, and the competitive advantage you deserve.

Danny Winsor
Assistant Superintendent, Douglas County School District

Pathways


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Adv. Manufacturing -
Aerospace


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Advanced Robotics


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Architecture


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Auto Tech -
EV/Hybrid


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Aviation


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Building Controls
Technology


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Construction Trades


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Culinary & Hospitality


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Electrical
Technology


LEGACY
CAMPUS
EMT/EMS


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Future Educator


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Nursing


LEGACY
CAMPUS
Secure Network
Technologies








AMBULANCE

Enrollment:
574

Total Seat Count:
1,657

Industry Certifications:
212

High School Credits Earned:
1,218

College/Univserty Credits Earned:
4,764

College/University Course Offerings:
46

Internships:
44

Apprenticeships:
13

Tuition Savings:
$1,571,044

Students accepted into
58
colleges/universities in 25 states + Washington, D.C., and 4 other countries

Colleges/Universities Offering Concurrent Enrollment Courses

Arapahoe Community College

CLASSES OFFERED

- Advanced Robotics
- Architecture
- Automotive Technology - EV/Hybrid
- Building Controls Technology
- Certified Nursing Aide
- Construction Trades
- Electrical Technology
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Secure Network Technologies

Metropolitan State University

CLASSES OFFERED

- Aviation
- Advanced Manufacturing - Aerospace
- Culinary

University of Colorado Colorado Springs

CLASSES OFFERED

- Future Educator

University of Colorado at Denver

CLASSES OFFERED

- Future Educator

Community College of Denver

CLASSES OFFERED

- Advanced Manufacturing - Aerospace






Construction

For all of 2025 and much of 2026, Legacy Campus was an active construction site thanks to Douglas County voters' support of the 2024 bond. Much of the bond was directed toward deferred maintenance at buildings across the district, but for Legacy Campus, the plan was expansion. Dubbed "Phase II," the work added a new, 35,000-square-foot wing to the building for four new career pathways. The entirety of the 2025-2026 school year was all about building Phase II, which includes:

- A 9-bay shop for the EV/Hybrid Automotive Technology pathway. The shop was set up for full service with modern diagnostic equipment, lifts, wheel-alignment equipment, tire service and more. Students will be able to earn multiple ASE certifications and earn as many as 14 concurrent enrollment college credits through the various classes offered.
- Workbenches and real-world electrical boxes for the Electrical Technology pathway. From electrical safety to the National Electrical Code, graduates of this pathway will leave with the credentials, knowledge and skills to step into high-demand jobs and apprenticeships in the electrical field.
- A super-sized, indoor workshop for the Construction Trades pathway. Students will learn carpentry, electrical, interior and exterior finishing, masonry and plumbing while working alongside industry partners. They will be able to earn valuable pre-apprenticeship and OSHA certifications aligned with industry standards.
- High-tech, state-of-the-art software and hardware for the Advanced Manufacturing-Aerospace pathway. From 3D printers to CNC mills and lathes, all powered by industry-standard computer programs, students will gain hands-on experience developing prototypes and parts to give them a leg up on technician-level jobs right out of high school or top-flight colleges.

Readers of this report can drive by Legacy Campus and see Phase II in its completed form while looking forward to next year's report containing coverage of the first year of the new classes.








Douglas
County
School District
Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow






Construction Trades Pathway
Championed By
JHL
CONSTRUCTORS
BUILDING COLORADO'S FUTURE


CARLTON ELECTRIC
DENVER, COLORADO





Student Organizations

In addition to highly relevant coursework that provides hands-on experience, Legacy Campus career pathways also offer extracurricular opportunities for students to further develop and demonstrate their skills.

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) offer additional chances to meet and work alongside industry professionals, prove their mettle in competitions, and earn prizes that add to their pathway programs, and gain accolades that bolster their resumes and college applications. In just their third year, the Culinary pathway's CTSO, ProStart, rocketed to the top spot in the state, see below. Likewise, the Building Control Technology students built the best robot in the BattleBots competition and became state champions in SkillsUSA. Architecture, Aviation and CNA students all took career-exposure field trips. Still other students participated in Junior Achievement, FCCLA and more. Hand in hand with every Pathway, CTSOs give Legacy Campus students the opportunity to shine.

ProStart Team Wins Hospitality Cup



ProStart Culinary students won the Hospitality Cup at the annual Colorado ProStart Student Invitational in early March.

Chef Shaemus O'Brien wrote this congratulatory message to them: "This achievement is the direct result of your hard work, dedication, and the countless hours spent practicing, refining, adjusting, and pushing yourselves to improve. Success at this level does not happen by accident. It comes from Saturday morning practices, after-school practices, repeated run-throughs, constructive feedback, teamwork, and the commitment to excellence that each of you demonstrated."

"What makes this victory even more meaningful is not just the trophy, but the journey. You built trust in one another. You learned how to communicate under pressure. You supported each other when things didn't go perfectly. The bonds formed through this process are the kind of friendships and professional relationships that last a lifetime."

"To our families — thank you for the rides, the schedule adjustments, the encouragement, and the support behind the scenes. Your investment in these students makes moments like this possible.

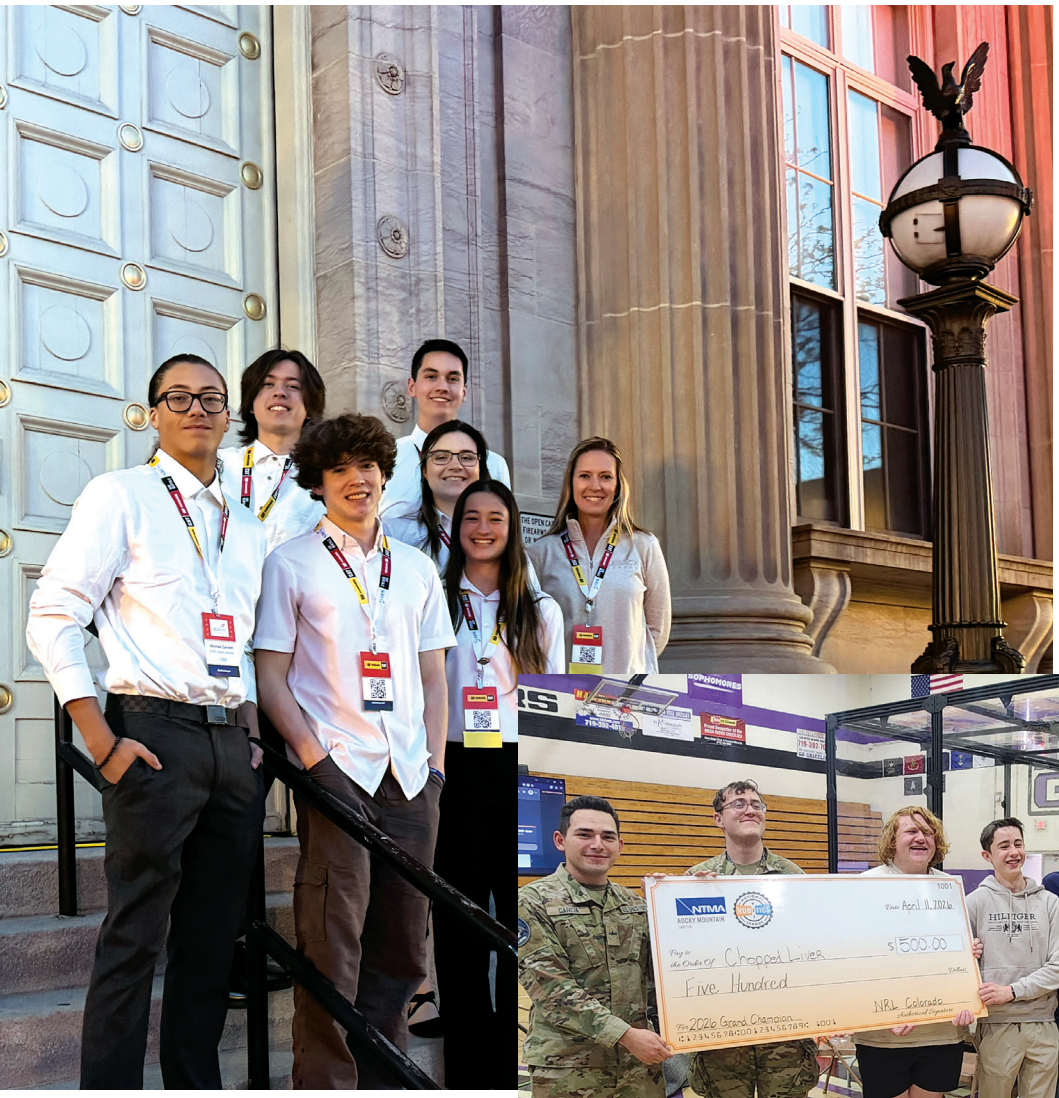
"To our team — you have officially put Legacy Campus on the map. Other programs will now know our name and understand the standard of excellence we represent. You carried yourselves with professionalism, skill, and pride, and you represented our campus at the highest level."

BCT/Robotics



Teams set high bar in first SkillsUSA competitions

Legacy's first-ever SkillsUSA teams competed in the state competition in Pueblo in April. Michael Carsten and Bennett Dupuis earned first place in the Mobile Robotics event. In the Robotics Urban Search and Rescue event, McKenzie Hamilton and Alexis Nikolich earned second place. Connor LaFrance and Levi Hamilton competed in the electrical event.



Accomplishments:

- BattleBots Grand Champion
- SkillsUSA state champion (and a silver medal) in mobile robotics
- 100% students passed HBI certification
- 100% passed SnapOn Multimeter certification
- Students participated in Signing Day
- Raya Waldron - interning at CU Boulder



Culinary/Hospitality

11 medals earned at FCCLA state competition

Legacy Campus Culinary and Hospitality students posted outstanding performances at the FCCLA State Competition in April. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence truly paid off with six gold medals and five silver medals.



Gold medalists:

Ella Dahnke – Gourmet Food Presentation, Savory

Delaney Kaspar & **Alicia Babas** – Front of House Service

Grace Llamozas – Gourmet Food Presentation, Sweet

Lucy Media – Cake Design

Riley Ortiz – Gourmet Food Presentation, Savory

Silver medalists:

Tina Cortes – Baking and Pastry

Ireland Linville – Culinary Arts

Finn Lonergan – Culinary Arts

Sophia Walthers – Gourmet Food Presentation, Sweet

Evan York – Baking and Pastry

Ireland Linville also qualified to represent Legacy Campus at the national competition.

Architecture

ACE Mentor Competition

DCSD Legacy Campus students took the stage at the ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) Mentor Competition hosted at the CU Denver School of Architecture, and they delivered. From innovative design thinking to confident, professional presentations, these students represented the best of what hands-on, real-world learning can look like. Legacy Campus leaders and instructors were proud of the creativity, collaboration and dedication the students brought to the experience.

"A huge thank you to the ACE Mentor Program for your new partnership and for investing in the next generation of architects, engineers, and construction professionals," said instructor Sarah Zales. "Opportunities like this make a lasting impact, and we're grateful to be part of it!

Learn more about the Architecture program on Page 16.

Aviation

With the launch of Wingspan, students take aviation education to competitive heights

The 2025-2026 school year marked the inaugural launch of Wingspan, a Career and Technical Student Organization established in partnership with Cherry Creek Innovation Campus. Created to support and extend aviation learning beyond the classroom, Wingspan gives aviation students from Colorado high schools the opportunity to compete, collaborate and grow through hands-on aviation challenges.

Students participated in events such as flight planning, simulator flight, and aircraft recognition, applying the knowledge and skills they developed through their aviation pathways. These competitions not only strengthened technical understanding, but also encouraged problem-solving, confidence, and connection among students who share a passion for aviation.

As more Colorado schools develop aviation pathways, Wingspan has the potential to grow into a meaningful statewide opportunity for students. Its first year laid a strong foundation for future collaboration, competition, and continued excitement around aviation education.

Learn more about the Architecture program on Page 19.







Culinary/Hospitality

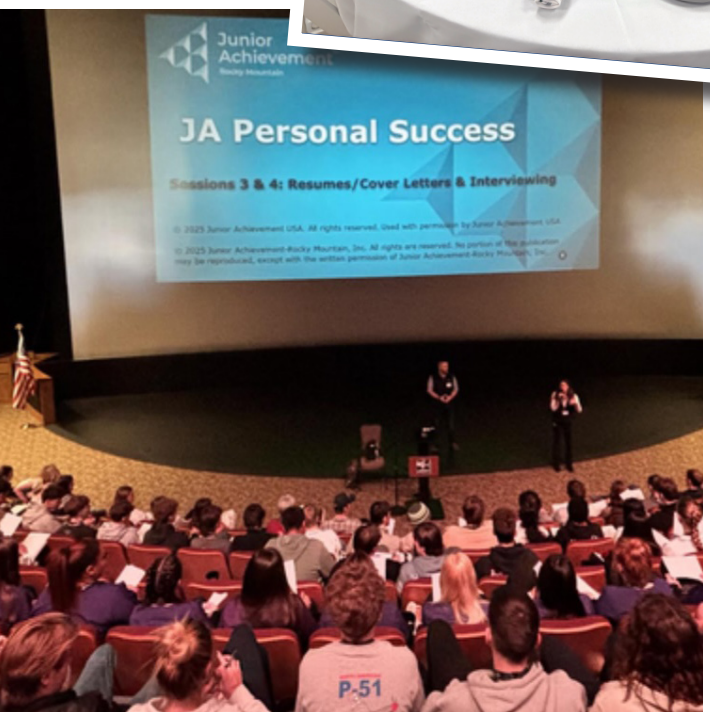
Chef's Table Luncheon

Legacy Campus Culinary and Hospitality students hosted an Advisory Board Chef's Table for industry professionals and Douglas County School District leaders. Students designed and executed a nutrition-forward, seasonal menu while providing professional front-of-house service including house-made sourdough, seared Colorado striped bass and a refined, sugar-free chocolate coconut mousse.

Throughout the event, students demonstrated culinary techniques, hospitality standards, and confidence in presenting their work. The event showcased the high level of skill, professionalism, and real-world readiness Legacy Campus students develop through the program.







Junior Achievement™
Rocky Mountain

Justin Whited from **Junior Achievement** coached students on resume writing and interview preparation in March ahead of Legacy Campus' Spring Hiring and Career Fair and mock interviews on March 27.

COLORADO RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
Blue Ribbon
LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION



Impressing Legislators at Blue Ribbon Reception

The Blue Ribbon Reception is an event hosted at the History Colorado Center to kick off the state legislative session. The event is designed to forge relationships between the Culinary and Hospitality industry and state legislators. Legacy Campus Culinary and Hospitality students were paired with local restaurants and served bites to legislators all night on January 14, 2026. Legacy students were paired with chefs who later praised them for their professionalism, hospitality and work ethic. Those students were (from left): Grace Llamozas, Lucy Medina, Delaney Kaspar, Finn Lonergan, Tina Cortes and Lexi Ball.

Culinary Students Cater Governor's Awards

In September, second-year Culinary and Hospitality students had the rare opportunity to cater an upscale lunch at the Governor's Mansion in partnership with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the Colorado Restaurant Association/ProStart. The menu included smash burgers, cantaloupe caprese, whipped feta salad and honey spiced cake that were enjoyed by all in attendance.







CNA/EMT

CNA Students Make the Rounds

Dozens of Legacy Campus Certified Nursing Assistant students gained crucial insights on field trips to AdventHealth Parker, AdventHealth Castle Rock and CU Anschutz hospitals during the 2025-2026 school year. Students toured departments, explored career paths, and heard directly from practicing nurses and CNAs.

EMT students tour ACC

More than a dozen Legacy Campus EMT students toured Arapahoe Community College's Littleton Campus with EMS Chair Dennis Edgerly to explore the partner school's Paramedic and Health Science programs.







Future Ed

B.A.S.E. offers Future Educators experience plus paychecks

Many Future Educator students worked in Douglas County School District's Before and After School Enterprise (B.A.S.E.) programs throughout the school year. These paid positions offered students the chance to earn high school credit by completing at least 120 hours on duty while gaining valuable hands-on experience working with children. Students also began establishing themselves in Colorado's Public Employees' Retirement Association before graduating from high school and building meaningful professional connections with school and district leaders. Most importantly, the Future Educators enjoyed supporting younger learners in a rewarding environment while developing confidence, leadership skills, and a strong foundation for future careers in education.

Future Educators gain field experience

Students in the Future Educator Pathway were placed in 28 elementary and middle school classrooms throughout DCSD to complete at least 42 hours of field-placement experience. That experience connected the concepts learned in their courses at Legacy Campus with the practical realities of teaching and working with students.



Career Fair

Career and Hiring Fair was a big hit once again

Legacy Campus hosted its annual Career and Hiring Fair on March 27. The number of students and exhibitors grew from the previous year, and several students were interviewed for internships and job shadowing opportunities. Some were notified of their acceptance within a few days. Many other students gathered information to apply for summer jobs and future career options as well.



















Sarah Zales,
architecture
pathway developer
at Legacy Campus

DID YOU KNOW?

To acquire licensure, an architect must meet strict qualifications in education, experience and examination – the Architect Registration Examination. There is a variety of ways different states allow for the combination of education and experience – many states require a minimum combination of eight years. Degree programs are usually five years for a bachelor's or four years plus two years for a bachelor's and master's.

Architecture

Building a Strong Foundation

Architecture program thrives with expert instruction and consistent industry support

For Sarah Zales, architecture pathway developer at Legacy Campus, years of knowledge and experience carry less meaning if they are not shared and cultivated.

People can look at her now — as a multiple-award winning principal of a downtown Denver design firm — and appreciate her as a true expert in the field. But most don't know what it took to reach that level of success. From an early age, she was captivated by architecture and made up her mind to pursue it as a career. After battling to reach the pinnacle of that field, though, she realized she had the ability to teach and inspire young architecture aspirants.

- Licensed architect and principal at downtown Denver design firm focused on workplace design and corporate offices
- Nearly 30 years of experience.
- Bachelor's Degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio
- Master of Architecture from CU-Denver
- Former plans examiner with Greenwood Village building department

Providing guest lectures for students was her gateway to education. "It's so fun. When you accumulate so much knowledge over so many years, I think, 'What do I do with it now?' Well, it's really fun to share it. If you still have a passion for what you do … it's exciting to see the light bulb go off when you start to help them make connections. That's the fun part: Seeing it spark something in these students."

Zales' passion for architecture is infectious. Early in her program, she shows slides of random buildings to explain various terms and principles. When she has built a sufficient foundation and vocabulary among the students, she begins The Buildup.

One of her go-to structures for inspiration is the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, designed by the famed architect Louis Kahn in the 1960s for Jonas Salk, the developer of the polio vaccine. She tells her students about the design and concepts behind the concrete-and-wood lab complex with unique light sources and sculpture-like aspects. "One of the concepts is the River of Life … this really narrow, manufactured river that looks like it's dumping out into the Pacific Ocean, and it aligns with the sunset on the spring and fall equinox," she said. "So I was telling the students this, and I had the lights out, and I clicked the last slide, which is the image of the sunset in this river, and I heard some gasps, and to me it was like, 'Oh my gosh, I did my job today because I got real excitement from these kids!'"

Channeling that inspiration toward a career in architecture includes explaining the variety of options. To become a licensed architect requires many years of higher education. Most programs require five years to achieve a bachelor's degree or a four-plus-two path to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree in six years. "It's a pretty education-intensive program, and then you do a lot of years of internship before you can take licensing exams," Zales said. "So it's difficult to come from here and then just finish up architecture. You've still got a long road."

The advantages of the Legacy Campus program are:

- Cost savings by earning college credits while in high school.
- Early exposure to architecture concepts.
- Certifications that allow students to pursue architecture-related careers immediately.

Competitive advantages

Those who want to continue on in architecture find they have a determined advocate in Zales. "One of the things I would say that motivates me is giving them something that I wish I had had," she said, noting that her only opportunity in high school in the early 1990s was a hand drafting class taught by her shop teacher. She took the class, of course, and it was otherwise filled with freshman boys. "I took it because I thought, well, at a minimum, I would like to know how to draft," she said.

"But architecture is a very competitive field. You walk in, maybe at the top of your game, and you get humbled, quickly, by the talent and the collective achievements and everything of these other students from all over the country."

Zales' goal is to empower her students to survive in that competitive world. At minimum, three foundational skills "are hugely beneficial to build their confidence" — knowing how to hand draw, use drafting tools, and build a model with an understanding of scale.

Architecture schools have significant dropout rates because it's too difficult, competitive and overwhelming for students who aren't prepared for it, Zales said. "So you can imagine Student A has had

Continuing Education

Class of 2026 students who moved on to study architecture in college will attend:

American University of Cairo
CalPoly-San Luis Obispo
Miami (Ohio) University
Pratt Institute
Savannah College of Art & Design
University of California-Berkeley (accepted)
University of Oregon
University of Tennessee

Following the Career & Hiring Fair, three Legacy Campus architecture students sought out a job shadowing opportunity with **MOA Architecture.**

Certifications

Of those who attempted it, **76% of students passed the exam** to earn official Revit Certification for 2D drawing.

Of those who attempted it, **89% of students passed the exam** to earn official AutoCAD Certification for 3D drawing.

some architecture history, some building materials knowledge. They've built models, they've hand drafted, they know computer programs," she said, "and Student B is walking in with none of that. B's going to drop out at a much higher rate than Student A. This kid knows he likes it. He's done it, and he has skills."

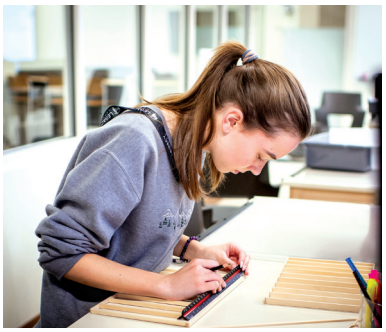
Still, students who may not have a path toward five to six years of college — whether by choice or by the limits of financial aid — can achieve a level of employability experience. In Zales' classes, they can earn an AutoCAD Certified User certification and a REVIT Certified User certification for 2D and 3D computer drawing, respectively.

Zales tries to give students a 360-degree overview of the different aspects of architecture. "In one class, they're learning terminology for the way bricks are laid — a roll lock, a stretcher, a header — they practice building all those out of LEGO. That's in a building materials class," she said. "And then in the next class, they might be doing a watercolor rendering of an ancient Roman building. And then another class, they're 3D modeling their house. There's so many aspects to it."









Partnering with the pros

It's not only Zales who helps teach and mentor students. She had industry volunteers in her classroom weekly for three months: "General contractors … mechanical engineers … we had every related discipline covered, either with a guest speaker or a mentor. It was a really great partnership, and the students represented Legacy so well with their final projects. They were incredible."

Architecture students took three major field trips during the most recent school year, touring Denver architecture firms and the Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel, which is closed to the public for renovation.

A few students participated in an end-of-year career discovery day at HDR Architects in downtown Denver. It was set up for multiple high schools' programs and highlighted several architecture-adjacent fields. Zales' students met an urban planner, a landscape architect, a civil engineer, an interior designer, and even an archaeologist.
Because of such opportunities, one of her students, who was not sure about pursuing an architecture career, had his own lightbulb moment when learning about landscape architecture and was excited to tell her that he's going to the University of Arizona to pursue a degree in that field.

Another key aspect of the Legacy Campus experience is work-based learning opportunities, and Zales matched this student with a 30-hour internship opportunity with Castle Rock's water department. "Being out in the field was interesting to him," she said. Through her mentorship network, Zales connected him with a landscape architect who provided a summer internship opportunity. "Even though this is not a landscape architecture program, we gave him enough exposure that he was able to follow," she said.

That student's parents also told her how much of a stress relief it was for them to see their son learn so much about his own interests and how students can connect to a career path.

"My ideal students are the ones who say, 'I love geometry and I love art. I love to travel and I'm an overall good student,'" Zales said. "I'm like, 'Oh, you sound like an architect.' But the ones who don't have all those characteristics might be good in an adjacent field." She pointed out options for technical-specification writers, project managers, structural engineers and other specialists. "There's so much offered in one field," she said. "In the old days, you had to be good at all of it, and slowly we're moving away from that."

"One of the things a guest speaker said that I loved was, 'Maybe you aren't great at drawing, and you'll just get through that part in college, but there's a place in architecture for you."

Architecture students make a difference for local landmark

Officials at Castlewood Canyon State Park, southeast of Castle Rock, sought assistance from the Legacy Campus architecture program. They are currently in the fundraising stage for a new education-center building and have a preliminary architectural design. They asked instructor Sarah Zales if she had any students who would be willing to build a professional-level model. She had four seniors who jumped at the opportunity. Even well after graduation, they continued with full-day sessions to work on the project.

"They've used all the tools here; we have great resources," Zales said. "They've used the laser cutter and engraver. They 3D printed parts of it. We have all these great model-building materials."

The model will have a home in a display case at the park and will also be taken on the road for special fundraising events.





Achieving Altitude

Aviation program leaders help students prepare to become pilots

Legacy Campus' aviation program soared more than ever in the 2025-2026 school year, but for its supremely accomplished instructors, the ceiling is so much higher.

When **Josh Vanterpool,** at right, below, helped launch the two-year program a couple years ago, there was plenty of interest, and 32 students came back for Year Two courses in 2025-2026. During that year, and with the addition of instructor **Nick Powers**, at left, below, every one of the 104 available seats was filled for Year One classes, and nearly 60 moved on to Year Two in 2026-2027.

The core strength of the aviation program is the high caliber of instructors Legacy Campus leaders put into the cockpit.

Vanterpool started as a fighter-jet mechanic in the U.S. Air Force, where he additionally worked towards his private pilot's license. After finishing his military service he continued his education and earned licenses to include Flight Instructor and Aircraft Mechanic licenses. Vanterpool worked as a flight instructor and skydive pilot, and eventually made his way back to Colorado, where he owned and leased multiple aircraft to a local flying club. Vanterpool most recently flew Lear Jets for charter clients before turning his attention to teaching high school students the basics of flying.



Powers is better known as retired Lt. Col. Powers – a former squadron commander of the 33rd Flying Training Squadron at Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Oklahoma. In his 24-year military career, he logged more than 4,500 hours in the air, including more than 1,600 combat hours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more than 1,900 instructor hours training an entire generation of U.S. military pilots. After his military retirement, he became a commercial pilot for United Airlines before seeking something closer to his instructor's heart.

Both men know just how much work it takes to earn one's wings, and are quick to note the end goal of the Legacy Campus aviation program is not a private pilot's license.

That requires extensive time with a flight instructor, access to an aircraft, fuel costs, and airport capacity. The two main outcomes for four semesters of aviation classes is to prepare students for the written-test portion of the licensing process, and to save students thousands of dollars in pursuit of a license and more education. By passing the Legacy classes, which are dual-credit courses administered through Metropolitan State University, students can have 10 college credits in hand — and a significant head start on their pilot training — before entering a full-fledged aviation program.

Starting on the education runway

From the first day of the first class, Powers stresses four traits to be successful in aviation:

- Safety
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Humility



"We spend a lot of time talking about aviation decision-making and human factors," he said. "And that's usually early on where we really analyze mishaps to impart on the students how critical it is to be safe and accountable, because what you do could mean life or death.

The way the two-year program was designed matches the flight-school structure. Legacy Campus students are concurrently enrolled with Metro State for three of the courses. "It's a four-credit course, pretty intense in regards to the content material and the density of stuff they need to become familiar with," Vanterpool said. In the second semester, students get their first hands-on experience in flight simulators "and learn how an airplane moves in three dimensions," Vanterpool said.

When a student and a flight instructor get together at a simulator, they work on a specific set of maneuvers for which the student has to demonstrate the proficiency at before they go on a solo flight.

Those maneuvers are central to the Principles of Flight course. The Aviation Weather course is a complementary course to the ground school portion that is taught in the first semester. At that point the students have an understanding of rules, regulations, aerodynamics, and all the topics covered in ground school, Vanterpool said, and are well-positioned to take the written test segment of the private pilot's license process.

In the second year, students take a third MSU course in which they build upon the fundamentals of flying and learn solo maneuvers — with increasing the parameters. "Instead of flying plus or minus 200 feet, now they have to fly within a hundred feet and execute certain routes and then also be able to understand and how to program the avionics in regards to navigation," Vanterpool said. "We're incorporating more of the maneuvers into actual flight planning and then teaching them how to identify and mitigate emergencies in the cockpit."

Leaving the comfort zone

One aspect of preparing students for the cockpit that has been surprisingly challenging for the instructors has been teamwork.

Vanterpool said there's resistance at first, but the would-be pilots are paired up with peers from different schools so there are no cliques. As they sit together in the two-seat simulators and go through checklists and resource management, they learn the correct ways to check each other. They have to learn how to politely call out mistakes every time, because steps cannot be skipped and calculations must be correct.

"There's a lot of opportunity for them to learn some of those interpersonal skills that I think a lot of this generation hasn't really developed because their relationships are built online via text," Powers said, "as opposed to when we were kids going out and knocking on a friend's door and saying, 'Hey, can so and so come out and play?' and then you're out in the woods playing all day, exploring and problem solving and decision making. I don't think they get that as much."

Early in the first year the instructors use a tried-and-true group activity adapted from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association training. Students are put in groups to build airfoils and experiment with making them more efficient. "We try to frontload that camaraderie so that it kind of plays out in the simulator room, and I think that is a good way to break the ice with the kids who come from nine different high schools," Vanterpool said. "I think it pays off, though, because by the end of the year they've built those bonds and relationships and that carries into that professionalism where now you're adapting those soft skills to work with people you don't know."

Powers chuckled as he remembered plenty of past flight instruction classes. "I think the one thing that I railed against in both the Air Force and here is forming cliques," he said. "I'll break up a clique as quickly as I can."

He said the payoff was clear at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, when all the aviation students had an end-of-year celebration at the Aspen Flying Club, where they had a barbecue along with plenty of fun and games. "They were playing slap ball and if those kids were in a high school together, there was no way that those people would have been hanging out together — and they were all having a blast," Powers said. "That's what brings a smile to my face — to see that they're building those relationships and just interacting with people that otherwise they wouldn't have interacted with."

That camaraderie can pay dividends for their entire aviation careers.

"It's such a small community, you end up making connections and then finding out, years later, that you have a connection to another connection and those mutual connections open up other opportunities," Powers said.

"We tell the students: One - Don't burn bridges; and Two - Maintain good professional relationships with all your contacts because in 10, 15 years you might be applying for a job and there might be somebody that you had a connection with that's on some interview or hiring board or knows somebody you know and they will find out. They will call and they will like, 'Hey man, tell me the skinny on X, Y and Z,' and you want that person to say great things about you."

It's one thing to have knowledgeable instructors, but it's another to have such a breadth of experience to offer guidance and wisdom for students who find themselves at a crossroads of many aviation-career paths to choose from.

"They have two great mentors here that can help lead them on those paths because we've got pretty much all of it covered,"

Aviation students take Discovery Flight field trip

The Legacy Campus Aviation Pathway hosted its first-ever Discovery Flight Day at the Colorado Air and Space Port in Adams County, giving students a hands-on introduction to real-world aviation operations. Throughout the day, students experienced flight in Cessna 172 G1000 aircraft provided by Aspen Flying Club, applying classroom concepts in aerodynamics, navigation, and flight operations to actual flight conditions.

In addition to flying, students toured the control tower and airport grounds, learning about air traffic control, airport management, and the many career pathways within aviation. Partners including Wings Over the Rockies provided engaging, aviation-themed activities for students awaiting their flights. A member from the Experimental Aircraft Association provided a static aircraft display for hands-on discovery for students. The event showcased the collaborative effort between Legacy Campus, Aspen Flying Club, Colorado Air and Space Port staff, EAA and Wings Over the Rockies — all working together to inspire the next generation of aviation professionals.





Aviation field trip offers unique flight-simulation experience

Second-year aviation students visited Hotel Polaris at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs in December. The exposure trip offered students the chance to apply their learning to more complex aircraft systems, including F-16 and 737 MAX simulators.

Working toward pilot licenses

Thirty-five students passed the FAA private pilot written exam. Each student in the Aviation Pathway is provided with access to an online test-preparation program. The FAA Private Pilot Knowledge Test is one of the key benchmarks in the process of earning a Private Pilot Certificate. Practice tests are built into the curriculum, and each student is given the opportunity to take the FAA exam after demonstrating readiness by earning three scores of 90% or higher on the practice exams.

Seven students went on to complete the Private Pilot License process. To earn their license, students must successfully pass the FAA Private Pilot checkride, which is the final practical evaluation required to earn a Private Pilot Certificate. The checkride assesses both aeronautical knowledge and in-flight performance, requiring students to demonstrate safe decision-making, procedural understanding, and flight proficiency. Because this portion of training must be completed in an actual aircraft with documented flight hours and instructor endorsements, each student must pursue outside flight instruction through a local flight school. While the Aviation Pathway provides the academic foundation, test preparation, and simulator experience, local flight training is essential for students to complete the practical requirements needed for certification.



In addition to numerous career pathways for high school students, Legacy Campus provides school-to-work opportunities for adults ages 18-21 with developmental disabilities in DCSD's Bridge Program. As the staff at Legacy Marketplace, Bridge students gain on-the-job experience serving Legacy Campus students, staff and the community during the school year. Legacy Marketplace is highly regarded as THE place to grab hot and cold coffee beverages, breakfast and lunch items, weekly specials, as well as on-the-go snacks and drinks.

Partner Opportunities

The DCSD Legacy Campus acts as a bridge connecting students, public education, and industry leaders. It goes beyond traditional classroom learning and offers students experiential opportunities that help shape them into future leaders, innovators, and change-makers.

To give our students a competitive edge, the Legacy Campus actively seeks partnerships. These partnerships are essential in building strong community connections that enable Legacy students to actively participate in the world around them. Local businesses and organizations collaborate with students to address important issues, provide hands-on practical experiences, and engage with the leaders of tomorrow.

By becoming a partner with Legacy Campus, you not only support cutting-edge education but also benefit from the innovative projects and creative solutions generated by the students. It's a mutually beneficial relationship where you contribute to the advancement of education while gaining access to the unique ideas and solutions developed by Legacy Campus students.









PARTNERSHIPS

A/D Works!
ACC
Advanced Auto Parts
AdventHealth
Aspen Flying Club
Axis Communications
Barker Rinker Seacat Architects
Carlton Electric
Castle Rock Auto Plex
Castle Rock Water
CDOT Division of Aeronautics
Centennial Airport
Christian Brothers Automotive
City of Lone Tree
Clear the Air Foundation
Colorado Air and Space Port
Colorado Beef Council
Colorado Restaurant Association
Convergint
CU College of Nursing
Cuningham Group Architects
DCSD Curriculum, Assessment, & Instruction
DCSD Elementary and Middle Schools (Future Ed Field Placements)
DCSD Human Resources
DCSD Language, Culture, & Equity
DCSD Learning Services
DHE
Discount Tire - RM Region
EAA - Experimental Aircraft Association
Eidos Architects
ELIGHT
Escoffier
Foundation for Douglas County Schools
Four Seasons Denver
Four Seasons Hotel
Fresh Point Produce Denver
General Building Materials
HDR Architects
Hollis + Miller Architects
Hunter Engineering
Ideal Tools
Junior Achievement
Junior Achievement
Klein Tools
Mikron
Metropolitan State University
Napa Auto Parts. DEN107 - Parker Branch
Noah Cares
Palmer DCS
Panther Industries
Rocky Mountain Catering
Rotary Club of Parker
Rotary Club or Castle Rock
Schomp Auto Group
Snap On Industrial
South Metro Fire Rescue
Toyota Motor Sales USA
University of Colorado Denver School of Education and Human Development
VIBE Foods
Wings Over the Rockies

Alumni Success

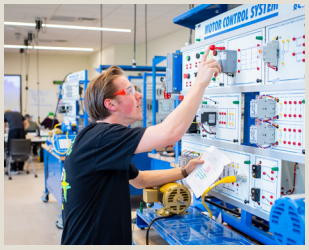
















Aviation careers taking off

As the Legacy Campus aviation pathway grows, so does the number of students earning scholarships and other opportunities.

Aaron Bell: Four-year, full-ride U.S. Air Force ROTC Type 1 Scholarship to Purdue University, where he will study Aerospace Engineering, an exciting next step that reflects both his academic ability and his commitment to a future in aviation and aerospace.

Cole Hitchingham and Carter King: Rob Hill Scholarships from Centennial Airport, in memory of a pilot who lost his life.

Jaylyn Luber and Faith Miller: Scholarships to the U.S. Air Force High School Aim High Flight Academy, an elite summer residency designed to cultivate the next generation of aviators from across the United States. Earning two of only 250 spots from a competitive pool of 3,000 applicants, Jaylyn and Faith will immerse themselves in hands-on flight operations and rigorous technical training, exploring the diverse professional pathways offered by the Air Force and the global aerospace sector. Last year, Legacy student Kelty Clay participated in the program as well.


Jaylyn Luber and Faith Miller

Asmi Patil: Type 4 scholarship with the United States Air Force ROTC 105th Detachment at CU Boulder, where she will study Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences, an exciting next step that reflects both her academic ability and her passion for flight and space.

Jakob Zosel: With the support of a $12,000 AOPA National Scholarship, Jakob earned his Private Pilot License on March 24th, an accomplishment that marks a major milestone in his aviation journey.

Pathways and Purpose: Celebrating Workforce Entry

In May, Legacy Campus hosted its inaugural **Signing Day**, recognizing students who secured industry positions before graduation. Similar to an athletic signing day when students announce where they will compete at the college level, the event honored students as they committed to future employers and career opportunities that were connected to their pathway programs.

Eight students were highlighted for taking their next steps into promising futures in high-demand industries. Five in the Building Controls Technology pathway signed apprenticeships with Carlton Electric, where they began working toward earning their journeyman licenses. Another student in the pathway accepted a position with Lockheed Martin as a Mechanical/Electrical Fabrication Technician, helping build and test systems. Students in other pathways were also recognized for their career commitments. One Culinary/Hospitality student moved from intern to full-time employee at Great Divide Brewery in Castle Rock, while a Robotics pathway student committed to Convergint Technologies and will gain experience in fire life safety and security systems.

Each year, the DCSD Legacy Campus Signing Day will continue to highlight the power of real-world learning experiences and the many opportunities available to students through career and technical education. This first class of students embodies what it means to connect passion to purpose and pathway.















"The campus is beautiful, the classes are personal and great teachers/people"

Addison Noble,
Architecture

I've really appreciated the opportunity of getting to know my desired career before college, to affirm or deny if that's what I really want to do. I feel like I learned so much, and all my teachers taught everything in a super-easy-to-understand, engaging way.

Aubrey Friedman,
Future Educator









"Legacy has turned a dream job for me into a reality I'm on track for."

Bjorneby Beckman,
Future Educator



"It's amazing! I would absolutely go here every day if I could!"

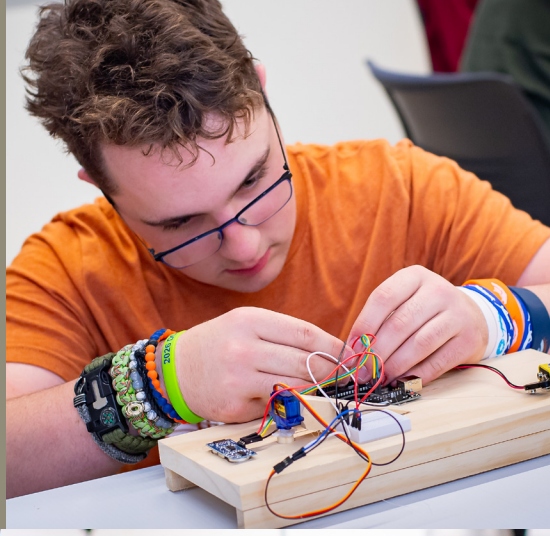
Ella Dahnke,
Culinary





"Legacy Campus is awesome sauce"

John Larson,
Architecture



"I like how you don't feel trapped and you feel like your interests are seen. When I'm here and I am doing my work, it doesn't feel like a math class I've had to take all my school years, but like a class that was made so that I could enjoy what I love. "I see you" is the perfect way to describe how it makes me feel"

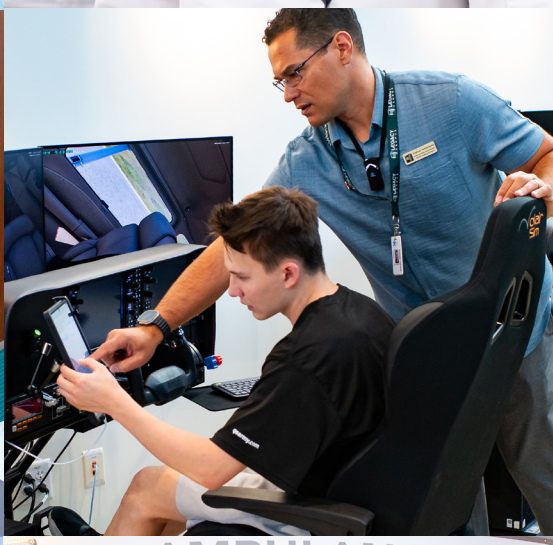
Liliahna LaGuardia,
Secure Network Technologies













"Legacy Campus opens up many windows and preps you perfectly for your future career and is such an engaging and encouraging environment"

Lexi Ball,
Culinary





Dr. Rex Corr, *Director*
rmcorr@dcsdk12.org | 303-387-7805

Katie Winsor, *Assistant Director*
kawinsor@dcsdk12.org | 303-387-7806

@legacy_campus /company/legacy-campus @LegacyCampus @dcsdlegacycampus

© 2026 Douglas County School District Legacy Campus