COLORADO
Department of Education

2020-2021 State Policy Report: Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

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Overview

Research has shown that earning a high school credential is directly correlated to lifelong positive outcomes that include but are not limited to, lower unemployment rates, livable wage earnings, homeownership, and healthy economic growth.[1] Increases in lifetime earnings are estimated at $230,000 per high school graduate, with corresponding increases annual state and local tax revenue.[2] This report provides an update on a range of student data that indicates our progress as a state towards graduating more students prepared for the future, and describes the activities undertaken by the Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement office to support these efforts.

State statistics show that despite a tumultuous 2020-21 school year marked by a combination of online, hybrid, and in-person learning for many districts and staffing challenges for most, Colorado high school graduation and completion rates declined only slightly, and the dropout rate remained constant. The four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2021 was 81.7 percent, a 0.2 percentage point decrease from the previous year and a 9.3 percentage point increase from 2010. This is the first year that the graduation rate has declined since the introduction of the current calculation method in 2010. The dropout rate in 2020-21 was 1.8 percent. Since the 2009-2010 school year, the dropout rate for Colorado has decreased by 1.1 percentage points. However, these changes in overall rates were not consistent across student groups.

While most Colorado students finished high school within four years of entering ninth grade, other students needed more time in high school to meet graduation requirements. Extended year rates for students taking five, six, and seven years to graduate have continuously improved since 2010, including in the 2020-2021 school year and including a high of an 87% seven-year graduation rate for the class of 2018.

The area that shifted the most during the 2020-21 school year was truancy, with more than double the number of students being identified as chronically absent or truant than in the previous year and a slight decline in the state's overall attendance rate. In addition, behavior incidents (i.e., suspensions and expulsions) decreased by 74 percent from the 2019-2020 school year. More anecdotally, school staff reported that improving attendance was challenging and many reported needing to create new systems to track online and hybrid learning.

Historically, research has found that students from economically challenged communities, students of color, and students with disabilities continue to fall short of their academic potential and are missing the skills to compete with their peers in the workforce.[3] Graduation and completion rates for these students continue to be lower than for their peers across the nation.[4] Colorado statistics show that minority male students, students of color, youth experiencing homelessness, and those in foster care experience disproportionate rates of dropout and school disciplinary actions, which negatively impacts school engagement.[5] Students also express that negative school experiences lead to dis-engaging from the public education system.[6] As a state, Colorado must address persistent educational disparities in order to accelerate progress in high school completion and educational outcomes.

To prevent students from disengaging, a whole-systems approach is needed. The Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement office administers grants and technical assistance to support district efforts to improve these student outcomes. The Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework is an evidence-based framework designed to support design and implementation of full systems of prevention and intervention to ensure

students stay engaged in school and are prepared for graduation and beyond. The framework and grants continue to provide ways for districts to organize efforts

Lastly, the continued impacts of the pandemic, direct and indirect, on grantee districts and their students are discussed in the present report. While it is not possible to predict precisely how the pandemic will impact student high school completion in the years to come, the 2020-2021 graduation rate was the first decline seen in over 12 years in Colorado, and the declines in attendance and truancy may have long-lasting effects on graduation, completion, and dropout rates as the cohorts most affected by the pandemic move through high school. In order to gain better understanding of the unique experiences in the 2020-2021 school year, grantees from any of the three grant programs in the Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement office were asked to discuss challenges they faced in the school year, as well as the strategies and innovations they used to address them.

Reporting Requirements
State law requires the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement to complete an annual report on reducing the student dropout rate, increasing the high school graduation and completion rates, and improving student engagement. This report was prepared in accordance with state statute, section 22-14-111, C.R.S, for the 2020-2021 school year. Data included in this report were pulled from the 2020-2021 Student End-of-Year Snapshot, Student October Snapshot, and the School Discipline and Attendance collection. *See Appendix A for relevant definitions of terms included in this report.*

Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates

81.7%
2021 FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) collects and publicly reports graduation, completion, and still-enrolled rates (available at Graduation Statistics). *See Appendix A for a definition of graduation rates and completion rates.*

How was it calculated?

Class of 2021 Four-Year Graduation Rate = Number of students in the 2020-21 Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) cohort receiving a regular diploma **DIVIDED BY** number of students who entered in ninth grade plus number of transfers in minus number of verified transfers out
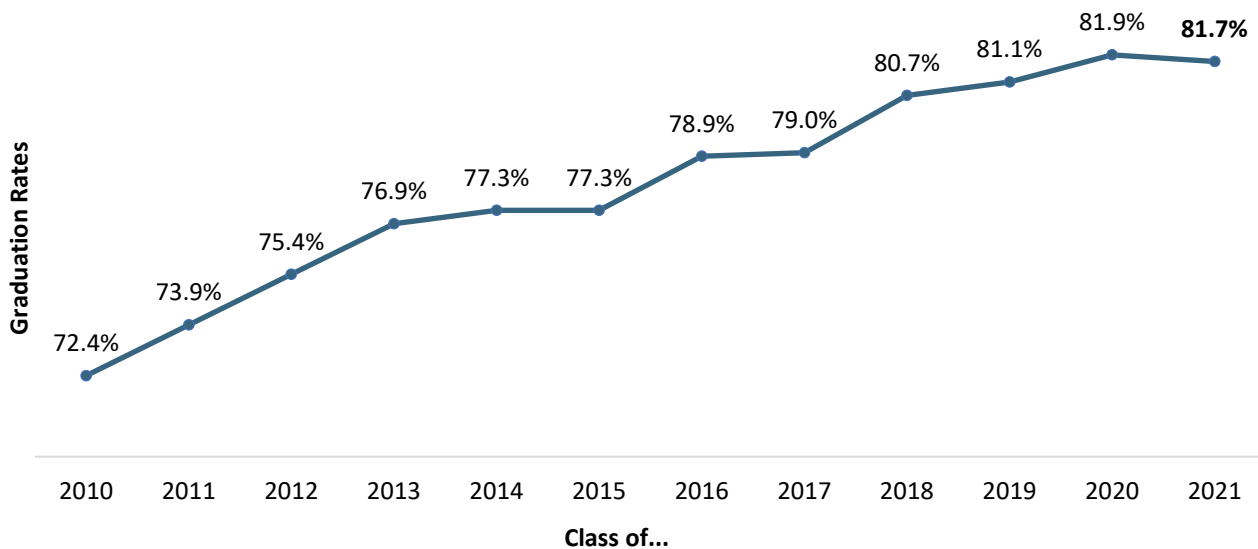
Class of 2021 Four-Year Completion Rate = Number of students in 2020-21 AYG cohort receiving a regular diploma + those completing with a non-diploma certificate or High School Equivalency Diploma **DIVIDED BY** number of students who entered in ninth grade plus number of transfers in minus number of verified transfers out

Class of 2021 Graduation Rate

The Class of 2021 achieved a four-year graduation rate of 81.7 percent. Out of the 68,379 students counted in the 2021 graduating cohort, 55,842 students met their local graduation requirements to receive a high school diploma within four years. Compared to the previous year, Colorado's four-year graduation rate decreased 0.2 percentage points. This is the first decrease since 2010, however, the four-year rate is still a 9.3 percentage point increase in graduation rates since 2010, which is the year CDE began reporting an adjusted cohort rate.

*See **Chart 1** for the four-year graduation rates from 2010 to 2021.*

Chart 1: Colorado 4-year Graduation Rates from 2010 to 2021

Graduation Rates:
- 2010: 72.4%
- 2011: 73.9%
- 2012: 75.4%
- 2013: 76.9%
- 2014: 77.3%
- 2015: 77.3%
- 2016: 78.9%
- 2017: 79.0%
- 2018: 80.7%
- 2019: 81.1%
- 2020: 81.9%
- 2021: 81.7%

(x-axis: Class of...)

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

*Note: Starting in 2018, graduation rates included ASCENT and P-TECH students who were still enrolled but met graduation requirements.

Note: In the 2015-16 school year, CDE automated the process districts use to remove duplicate records, which improved the accuracy of graduation and completion rates. In prior years, it was possible for students to remain in the graduation base of a school or district even though they had later enrolled elsewhere in Colorado. This enhancement prevented such duplications in the 2015-16 calculation and future years.

Class of 2021 Completion Rate

The completion rate represents a cohort-based rate which includes the number of students who graduate plus those who receive a high school equivalency diploma or other designation of high school completion. Like the graduation rate, the completion rate is calculated as a percent of those who were in membership over the previous four-year period (i.e., from grades 9 to 12) and could have graduated or completed in the currently reported school year.

The Class of 2021 achieved a four-year completion rate of 83.2 percent. Out of the 68,379 students counted in the 2021 graduating cohort, 56,862 students completed high school. This includes the 55,842 individuals who met graduation requirements and the 1,020 who received a high school equivalency diploma or other designation of high school completion.

Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates

Still-enrolled students have an opportunity to complete their high school education within five, six, or seven years of entering ninth grade. On average, more than half of students in a class cohort who did not receive a diploma or high school equivalency within four years of entering high school are counted as still-enrolled. CDE's calculation of extended rates for 2020-2021 are higher than those reported in 2019-2020. A closer look at the extended-year graduation rates from the Class of 2010 to the Class of 2018 show that, when afforded more time, more students graduate – an average of 7.3 percentage points difference from the four-year rate to the seven-year rate. Additionally, a total of 9.7 percent (6,614 students) of students in the Class of 2021 remain enrolled and have the opportunity to graduate or complete in five, six, or seven years from entering ninth grade. The data shown in *Table 1: Extended-Year Graduation Rates from 2010 to 2021* provide support for the notion that extended time to meet graduation and completion requirements increases the number of students who graduate annually.

Table 1: Extended-Year Graduation Rates from 2010 to 2021								
Class of	**4-Year Rate**		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2010	72.4	75.8	77.1	81.9	78.5	84.3	79.4	85.8
2011	73.9	76.8	78.7	82.9	80.1	85.4	80.9	86.4
2012	75.4	78.2	80.1	84.2	81.2	85.8	82.2	86.7
2013	76.9	79.6	81.2	84.6	82.5	86.0	84.2	87.8
2014	77.3	79.5	81.7	84.3	84.3	87.1	85.3	88.3
2015	77.3	78.8	83.3	85.4	84.9	87.5	85.6	88.4
2016	78.9	80.3	84.1	86.1	85.6	88.0	86.4	89.1
2017	79.0	80.8	84.2	86.5	85.7	88.3	86.4	89.2
2018	80.7	82.5	84.9	87.2	86.2	88.8	87.0	89.7
2019	81.1	82.9	85.1	87.3	86.6	89.0	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	81.9	83.4	86.0	88.0	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	81.7	83.2	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

Graduation and Completion Rates by Instructional Program Services Type

As in recent years, data continue to show a graduation gap in four-year and extended-year graduation rates and completion rates between the overall state rate and rates for most Instructional Program Services Type (IPST) student groups, which includes economically disadvantaged students, English learners, gifted and talented students, homeless students, migrant students, students in foster care and students with disabilities. *See **Table 2** for the number of students expected to graduate in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 by instructional program service type. See Appendix A for relevant definitions of terms included in this report.*
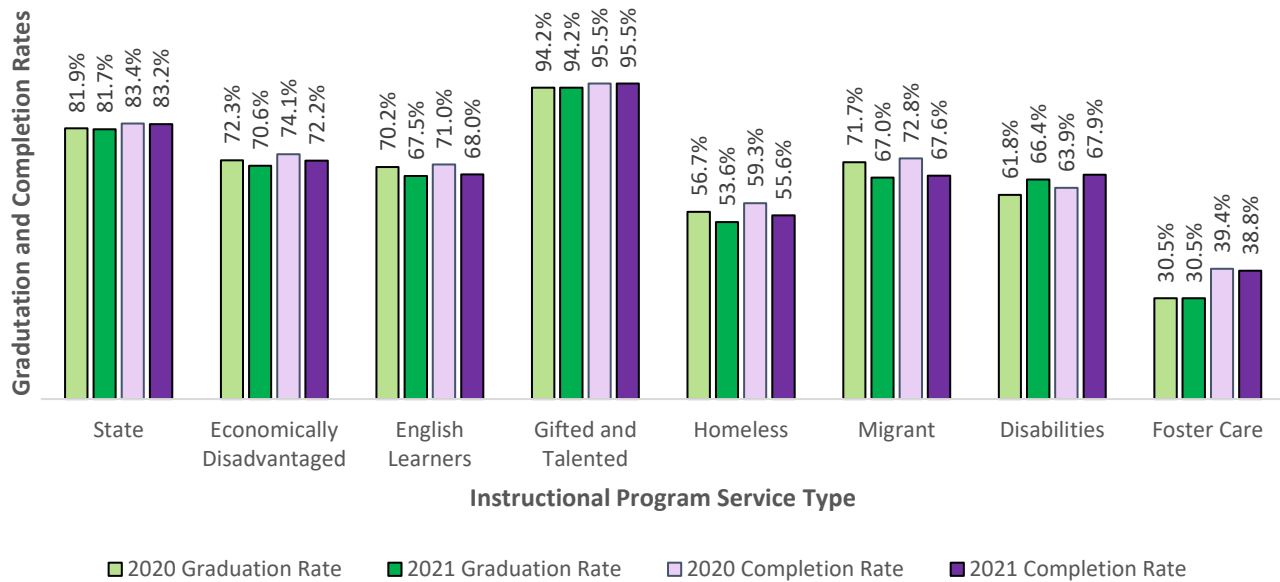
Table 2: Expected Number of Graduates by Instructional Program Service Type		
Instructional Program Service Type	AYG 2019-2020	AYG 2020-2021
All Students	**67,450**	**68,379**
Students with Disabilities	7,151	7,507
English Learners	9,185	8,773
Economically Disadvantaged Students	31,440	31,392
Migrant Students	353	349
Title 1 Students	10,622	11,137
Homeless Students	3,196	2,856
Gifted and Talented	8,048	8,359
Students in Foster Care	894	734

Note. AYG = Anticipated Year of Graduation. Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Foster care youth represent the lowest graduation and completion rates in the IPST category. The graduation rate for foster care youth in the Class of 2021 was 30.5 percent and the completion rate was 38.8 percent. When compared to the state graduation and completion rates (81.7 and 83.2 percent), foster care youth have a 51.2 percentage point difference in graduation rate and a 44.4 percentage point difference in completion rate for the Class of 2021. Compared to 2019-2020, the Class of 2021 had a slight decrease in graduation across all IPST categories except gifted and talented students and students in foster care, whose rate remained constant, and students with disabilities whose rate increased. *See **Chart 2** for the Statewide Four-year Graduation and Completion Rates by Institutional Program Service Type for the Classes of 2020 and 2021.*

Chart 2: Colorado Statewide 4-Year Graduation and Completion Rates by Instructional Program Service Type:
Class of 2020 and 2021 Comparison

	State	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	Gifted and Talented	Homeless	Migrant	Disabilities	Foster Care
2020 Graduation Rate	81.9%	72.3%	70.2%	94.2%	56.7%	71.7%	61.8%	30.5%
2021 Graduation Rate	81.7%	70.6%	67.5%	94.2%	53.6%	67.0%	66.4%	30.5%
2020 Completion Rate	83.4%	74.1%	71.0%	95.5%	59.3%	72.8%	63.9%	39.4%
2021 Completion Rate	83.2%	72.2%	68.0%	95.5%	55.6%	67.6%	67.9%	38.8%

Instructional Program Service Type

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement
Note: Starting in 2018, graduation rates included ASCENT and P-TECH students who were still enrolled but met graduation requirements. Rates for students in foster care are produced in accordance with a data-sharing agreement with the Colorado Department of Human Services. These groups are not mutually exclusive, as a student may be classified in more than one category.

In reviewing the four-year and seven-year graduation and completion rates for the Class of 2018, it is clear that graduation and completion rates increase when youth are provided with an opportunity to continue pursuing their education. For the Class of 2018, the four-year graduation rate was 80.7 percent, and the completion rate was 82.5 percent. The seven-year graduation rate was 87 percent (6.3 percentage points difference), and the completion rate rose to 89.7 percent (7.2 percentage points difference). Moreover, individual student groups follow similar patterns of increased graduation and completion in the 5-, 6-, or 7-year rates. For some student groups, the increase in graduation rates between 4 years and 7 years is even greater.

When looking at extended graduation and completion rates for the Class of 2018 among Instructional Program Services Type, the highest graduation rate remains among gifted and talented students, with a seven-year rate rising to 95.8 percent. The extended rates show that the highest gains from four-year to seven-year rates were for students with disabilities with an 18.1 percent increase for graduation rates and 19.5 percentage point increase for completion rates. This did not eliminate but did narrow the gap between students with disabilities and the overall population. In addition, other student categories also exhibit large percentage point differences between the four-year graduation rates and the seven-year graduation rates: homeless students (10.2 percentage points for graduation; 12.4 percentage points for completion), foster students (9.7 percentage points for graduation; 16.5 percentage points for completion) and English learners (10.7 percentage points for graduation; 11.7 percentage points for completion).

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Table 3: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Economically Disadvantaged Students								
Class of	**4-Year Rate**		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	65.5	67.2	74.0	76.5	76.4	79.5	77.5	80.9
2016	67.8	69.3	75.0	77.4	77.2	80.2	78.4	81.8
2017	68.5	70.5	75.5	78.4	77.6	81.0	78.6	82.2
2018	70.7	72.8	76.4	79.2	78.3	81.6	79.4	82.9
2019	70.9	73.1	76.3	79.1	78.5	81.6	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	72.3	74.1	77.7	80.1	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	70.6	72.2	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2023*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 70.6 percent of economically disadvantaged students in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 72.2 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 1.7 and 1.9 percentage point decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort. This is substantially larger than the decrease of the statewide graduation and completion rates, which only dropped 0.2 percentage points each.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (79.4 percent and 82.9 percent, respectively). This graduation rate is still below the statewide four-year average of 81.7%
For economically disadvantaged students in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 8.7 and 10.1 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

English Learners

Table 4: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of English Learners								
Class of	**4-Year Rate**		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	61.1	61.7	72.2	73.2	75.0	76.4	76.1	77.7
2016	61.4	62.0	71.8	72.8	74.6	76.0	76.0	77.7
2017	64.6	65.3	73.9	75.1	76.6	78.0	77.6	79.2
2018	67.0	67.8	74.0	75.3	76.6	78.3	77.7	79.5
2019	68.6	69.6	75.5	76.7	78.0	79.5	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	70.2	71.0	76.6	77.7	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	67.5	68.0	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 67.5 percent of English Language Learner students in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 68.0 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 2.7 and 3.0 percentage points decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the six-year rates for the Class of 2019 (78.0 percent and 79.5 percent, respectively).
- For English Language Learner students in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 10.7 and 11.7 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

Gifted and Talented Students

Table 5: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Gifted and Talented Students								
	4-Year Rate		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
Class of	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	92.2	93.4	94.8	96.3	95.2	97.0	95.4	97.4
2016	93.2	94.5	95.5	97.2	95.9	97.7	96.0	97.9
2017	93.0	94.3	95.6	97.3	96.1	97.9	96.2	98.1
2018	93.7	95.1	95.4	97.1	95.7	97.5	95.8	97.7
2019	94.0	95.3	95.4	97.1	95.7	97.5	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	94.2	95.5	95.6	97.7	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	94.2	95.5	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 94.2 percent of gifted and talented students in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 95.5 percent of them finished high school (by graduating, or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This is in line with the graduation and completion rates for their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2017 (96.2 percent and 98.1 percent, respectively).
- For gifted and talented students in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 2.1 and 2.6 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Students

Class of	4-Year Rate		5-Year Rate		6-Year Rate		7-Year Rate	
Table 6: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Homeless Students								
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	52.8	54.8	61.2	64.4	63.9	68.1	65.3	70.0
2016	53.2	54.9	60.1	63.1	63.1	66.9	64.5	69.1
2017	55.8	58.4	62.7	66.6	65.3	70.0	66.3	71.3
2018	55.4	58.1	62.0	65.7	64.4	68.9	65.6	70.5
2019	55.5	58.6	61.5	65.0	64.1	68.3	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	56.7	59.3	63.2	66.9	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	53.6	55.6	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 53.6 percent of McKinney-Vento Homeless Education students in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 55.6 percent of them finished high school (by graduating, or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 3.1 and 3.7 percentage point decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2017 (66.3 percent and 71.3 percent, respectively).
- For homeless students in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 10.2 and 12.4 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

Migrant Students

Class of	4-Year Rate		5-Year Rate		6-Year Rate		7-Year Rate	
Table 7: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Migrant Students								
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	67.9	68.9	77.3	78.9	79.4	81.4	80.1	82.1
2016	62.8	63.2	69.7	70.0	73.2	73.9	75.0	75.6
2017	61.8	63.4	71.9	73.5	74.3	75.9	75.7	77.3
2018	66.9	67.2	70.3	70.6	73.0	73.3	74.0	74.9
2019	68.8	70.5	73.9	75.8	76.5	78.4	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	71.7	72.8	74.9	76.5	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	67.0	67.6	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 67.0 percent of migrant students in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 67.6 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 4.7 and 5.2 percentage point decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.

- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2015 (80.1 percent and 82.1 percent, respectively).
- For migrant students in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 7.1 and 7.7 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

Students with Disabilities

Class of	4-Year Rate		5-Year Rate		6-Year Rate		7-Year Rate	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	53.8	55.0	64.8	66.8	70.0	72.6	74.1	77.2
2016	57.2	58.4	66.3	68.0	71.7	74.1	76.5	79.2
2017	56.8	58.3	66.2	68.4	71.9	74.5	76.3	79.2
2018	58.6	60.3	67.1	69.4	71.9	75.1	76.7	79.8
2019	59.2	61.3	67.8	70.8	75.2	78.0	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	61.8	63.9	73.3	75.4	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	66.4	67.9	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	

Table 8: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Students with Disabilities

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 66.4 percent of students with disabilities in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 67.9 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 4.6 and 4.0 percentage point increase compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (76.7 percent and 79.8 percent, respectively).
- For the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 18.1 and 19.5 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

Students in Foster Care

| Table 9: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Students in Foster Care								
	4-Year Rate		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
Class of	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	29.3	35.9	37.6	46.9	40.3	51.0	41.4	53.6
2016	33.2	37.4	40.2	46.4	42.5	51.1	44.9	55.0
2017	23.6	33.6	29.6	43.8	32.0	48.8	33.3	51.4
2018	24.8	37.8	31.3	48.4	33.0	51.5	34.5	54.3
2019	26.6	38.5	33.4	47.3	35.9	51.5	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	30.5	39.4	36.7	46.7	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	30.5	38.8	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. The foster care education data is made available through a data-sharing agreement between the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Human Services. Foster care education data by county of the school district is available at www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/rad_coloradolegislaturereports								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 30.5 percent of students in foster care in the Class of 2021 graduated, and 38.8 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This is the same graduation rate as their Class of 2020 cohort. However, the current four-year completion rate for this student group decreased slightly (0.6 percentage point) compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2016 (44.9 percent and 55.0 percent, respectively).
- For students in foster care in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 9.7 and 16.5 percentage points respectively from the four-year graduation and completion rates.

Graduation and Completion Rates by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

The four-year graduation and completion rates varied by race, ethnicity, and gender. As in recent years, the data continue to show a graduation gap between the overall state rate and rates for most students of color (SOC). The SOC group includes students who indicated as Asian, American Indian / Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black, or Multiple races. When comparing the Class of 2021 to the Class of 2020 four-year graduation rates, graduation rates for white students either maintained or increased, but the rates for SOC decreased. White male students in the 2021 cohort graduated at the same rate as white male students in the 2020 cohort and had just a 0.1 percentage point increase in completion rates. White female students increased in both graduation and completion rates by 1.1 percentage point. However, male SOC lost 1.3 and 1.5 percentage points in graduation and completion rates, respectively, and female SOC decreased by 0.8 and 0.9 percentage points.

*See **Chart 3** for the statewide four-year graduation and completion rates by gender and race/ethnicity for the classes of 2020 and 2021.*

Chart 3: Colorado Statewide 4-Year Graduation and Completion Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity:
Class of 2020 and 2021 Comparison
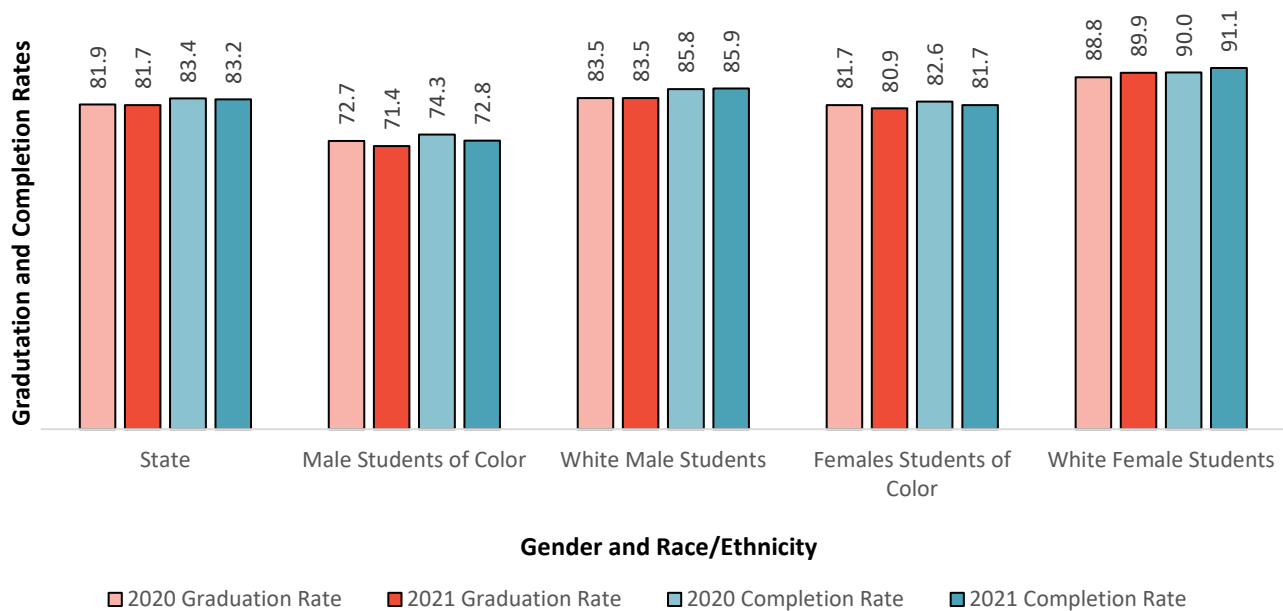
Legend: ■ 2020 Graduation Rate ■ 2021 Graduation Rate ■ 2020 Completion Rate ■ 2021 Completion Rate

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

*Note: Starting in 2018, graduation rates included ASCENT and P-TECH students who were still enrolled but met graduation requirements.

The graduation rates by race and ethnicity indicate that the four-year graduation rate was the highest among Asian students (91.5%) and lowest among American Indian or Alaska Native (64.5%), which represented a gap of 27.0 percentage points. Additionally, the greatest gains from 2020 to 2021 were seen for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students, with an increase of 3.7 percentage points. On the other hand, the four-year

graduation rate for American Indian or Alaska Native students decreased by 2.2 percentage points. Note that both of these groups have small overall numbers so changes by a small numbers of students may change rates more dramatically.

When looking at extended graduation rates for the Class of 2018, the highest graduation rates are among white females and white males, with seven-year graduation rates rising to 92.6 percent and 88.0 percent, respectively. Additionally, extended rates show that male SOC experienced the highest gains from four-year to seven-year with an 8.4 percentage point increase, while their female counterparts experienced a 7.2 percentage point increase. However, the graduation gap between SOC and white students continues, with the largest gap being between white female students and male SOC with a gap of 17.8 percentage points for the four-year graduation rate and a 13.7 percentage gap for the seven-year rate. Male SOC continue to experience the lowest rates of graduation among their peers. *See **Chart 4** for the Colorado Statewide 4-year and extended-year graduation rates by gender and race/ethnicity for the Class of 2018*.

Chart 4: Colorado Statewide 4-Year and Extended-Year Graduation Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity for the Class of 2018
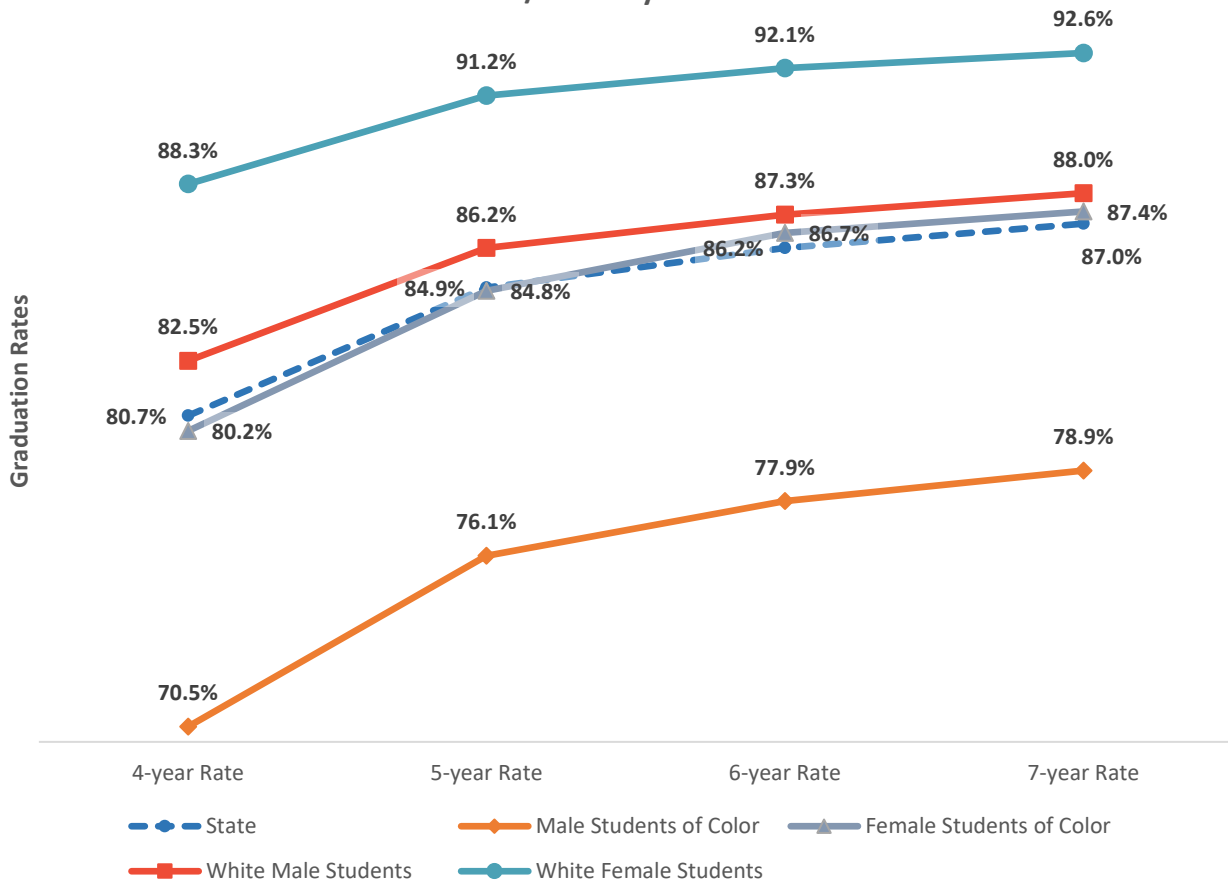
When looking at how graduation and completion rates have improved over time for the last five cohorts of students (2017 to 2021), there is evidence that more time in school resulted in an increased number of students that graduate or complete school and a narrowing of the gap between the groups. The data available for these cohorts indicate that female and male SOC especially benefit from extended-year opportunities and programming.

Male Students of Color

Table 10: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Male Students of Color								
	4-Year Rate		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
Class of	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**
2015	65.4	66.8	73.6	75.9	75.9	78.8	76.8	80.0
2016	67.2	68.6	74.4	76.5	76.4	79.1	77.6	80.6
2017	68.7	70.4	75.7	78.2	77.7	80.8	78.7	81.8
2018	70.5	72.4	76.1	78.7	77.9	80.9	78.9	82.2
2019	71.1	73.0	76.6	79.0	78.6	81.4	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	72.7	74.3	78.3	80.2	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	71.4	72.8	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 71.4 percent of male SOC in the Class of 2021 graduated and 72.8 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 1.3 and 1. 5 percentage point decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (78.9 percent and 82.2 percent, respectively).
- For male SOC in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 8.4 and 9.8 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

White Male Students

Table 11: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of White Male Students								
Class of	**4-Year Rate**		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	79.7	81.9	84.6	87.4	85.8	89.1	86.4	90.0
2016	81.4	83.2	85.9	88.6	87.1	90.3	87.9	91.3
2017	81.0	83.6	85.3	88.5	86.6	90.2	87.3	91.0
2018	82.5	85.0	86.2	89.3	87.3	90.8	88.0	91.7
2019	83.1	85.5	86.5	89.5	87.8	91.1	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	83.5	85.8	87.4	90.3	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	83.5	85.9	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 83.5 percent of white male students in the Class of 2021 graduated and 85.9 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This graduation rate is the same as the graduation rate for the 2020 cohort, but the 2021 completion rate is 0.1 point higher.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (88.0 percent and 91.7 percent, respectively).

For white males in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 5.5 and 6.7 percentage points from the four-year rates.

Female Students of Color

Table 12: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Female Students of Color								
Class of	**4-Year Rate**		**5-Year Rate**		**6-Year Rate**		**7-Year Rate**	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	75.3	76.1	83.0	84.3	85.0	86.7	85.9	87.9
2016	76.7	77.5	83.2	84.6	85.1	86.8	86.0	88.0
2017	77.7	78.8	83.8	85.2	85.8	87.6	86.6	88.6
2018	80.2	81.2	84.8	86.3	86.7	88.3	87.4	89.0
2019	80.1	81.3	84.7	86.2	86.5	88.0	*Available 2021-2022*	
2020	81.7	82.6	86.0	87.0	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	80.9	82.0	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement								

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 80.9 percent of female SOC in the Class of 2021 graduated and 82.0 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 0.8 and 0.6 percentage point decrease compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (87.4 percent and 89.0 percent, respectively).

- For female SOC in the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 7.2 and 7.8 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

White Female Students

Class of	4-Year Rate		5-Year Rate		6-Year Rate		7-Year Rate	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2015	85.6	86.9	89.6	91.5	90.7	92.9	91.3	93.6
2016	87.5	88.8	90.8	92.5	91.8	93.7	92.4	94.5
2017	86.8	88.2	90.4	92.2	91.4	93.4	91.8	93.9
2018	88.3	89.8	91.2	93.0	92.1	94.1	92.6	94.6
2019	88.8	90.3	91.6	93.3	92.6	94.5	*Available 2021-22*	
2020	88.8	90.0	91.8	93.4	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*	
2021	89.9	91.1	*Available 2021-2022*		*Available 2022-2023*		*Available 2023-2024*	

Table 13: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of White Female Students from 2020

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

- The four-year graduation and completion rates showed that 89.9 percent of white female students in the Class of 2021 graduated and 91.1 percent of them finished high school (by graduating or by receiving a diploma, high school equivalency, or certificate of completion). This represents a 1.1 percentage point increase in both the graduation and completion rates compared to their Class of 2020 cohort.
- The highest recent rates of high school graduation and completion for this student group were the seven-year rates for the Class of 2018 (92.6 percent and 94.6 percent, respectively).
- For white females the Class of 2018, the seven-year graduation and completion rates increased by 4.3 and 4.8 percentage points respectively from the four-year rates.

Additional Outcomes

Of the 68,379 students in the Class of 2021 cohort, 16.8 percent (11,517 students) did not complete high school with their graduating cohort or attain a high school credential (either a diploma or high school equivalency credential).

- 9.7 percent of the students in the cohort (6,614 students) were still enrolled at the end of the school year. Still-enrolled students may persist to complete high school in a later year and those who graduate will be counted in the extended-year graduation rates. Those who attain a high school credential (either a diploma or high school equivalency credential) will be counted in the extended-year completion rates.
- 6.1 percent of the students in the cohort (4,160 students) were considered unrecovered dropouts who dropped out of high school at some point.
- Additional student outcomes for the remaining students (about 1 percent of the cohort) include illness/injury, death, exit to detention center, expulsion without return to school, transfer to a facility school or other program, transfer to homeschool, or exit to prepare for high school equivalency.

Dropout Rates

CDE collects and publicly reports on dropout rates (available at Dropout Statistics). *See Appendix A for a definition of dropout rate.*

### 1.8%
2020-2021
DROPOUT RATE

How was it calculated?

2020-2021 Dropout Rate =
Number of dropouts during the 2020-21 School Year **DIVIDED BY** Total number of students that were part of the same membership base at any time during the 2020-21 School Year

Colorado students are staying in school and persisting in their education as evidenced by a stable annual dropout rate. The dropout rate for the 2020-2021 school year was 1.8 percent. Out of the 466,408 students enrolled in grades 7 to 12 in Colorado, 8,292 students dropped out of school during the 2020-2021 school year.

Compared to the previous year, Colorado's dropout rate stayed constant, representing the lowest rate, along with the 2019-2020 school year, since the 2009-10 school year, a 1.3 percentage point decrease over time. (See **Chart 5** for Colorado statewide dropout rate from 2009-2010 to 2020-2021 school year)

Chart 5: Colorado Statewide Dropout Rate from 2009-10 to 2020-21
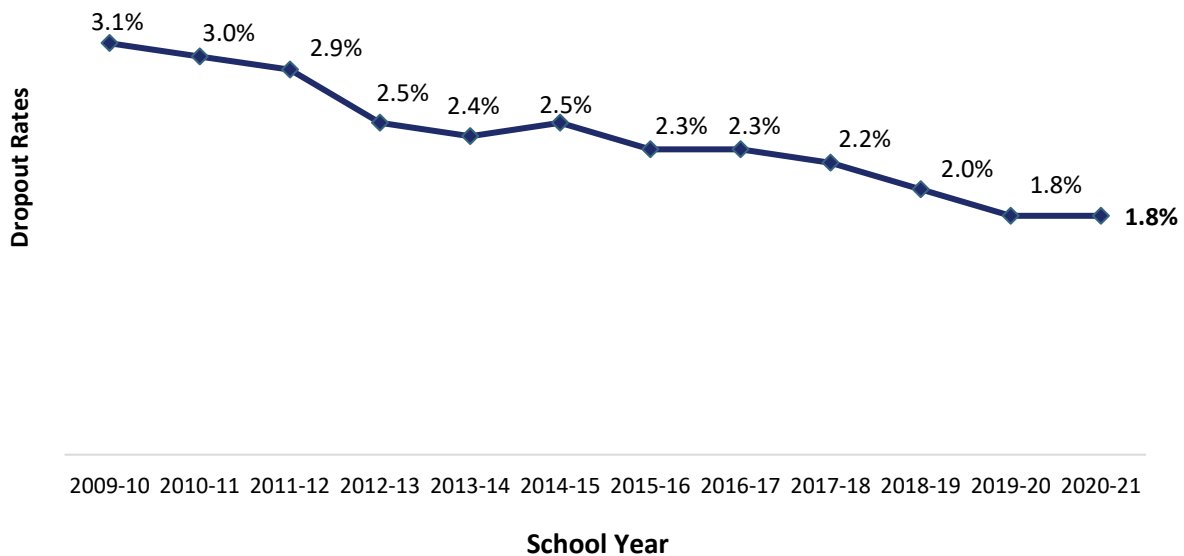
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Dropout Rates by Grade Level

Over the last 11 years, dropout rates have remained low and consistent for 7th and 8th grade students and have been higher for students in 9th grade and greater. In keeping with the pattern, in 2020-2021, dropout rates were low for 7th and 8th grade students (0.2 percent and 0.3 percent) and higher in 9th grade (0.7 percent of 9th grade students). Over the last 11 years in Colorado, dropout rates have been consistently highest in 12th grade.

Between 2016-2017 and 2020-2021, the biggest decreases in dropout rates were observed for 11th and 12th graders (a 1.0 percentage point decrease each). In comparison to the 2019-2020 academic school year, the biggest decrease in the 2020-2021 academic school year was seen for 9th grade students (0.2 percentage point decrease). An increase of 0.1 percent in dropout rate was observed for 11th grade students after five years of consistent decreases. Tenth grade student dropout rates remained constant and the rate for 12th grade students decreased by 0.1 percentage point. *See **Chart 6** for Colorado statewide dropout rate by grade 5-year trends.*

**Chart 6: Colorado Statewide Dropout Rate by Grade Level
from 2016-17 to 2020-21**
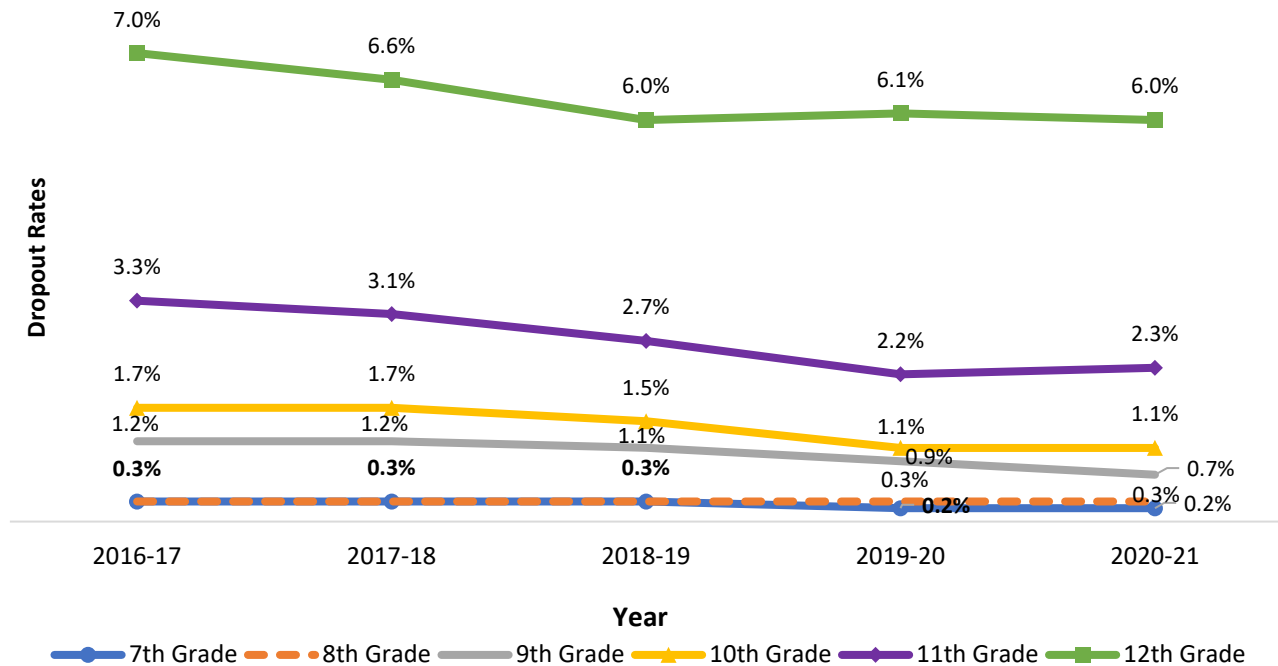
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement.

Rates for Alternative Education Campuses (AECs)

Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) are designated with AEC status by meeting the statutory requirements, which includes serving at least 90 percent of students that meet "high risk" conditions and receiving approval by the Colorado State Board of Education. AECs commonly serve Colorado youth who previously dropped out of school or are at high-risk for dropping out. The majority of AEC students are juniors or older with almost half (47%) of students in AECs categorized as 12th grade students. In the 2020-2021 school year, there were 87 AECs

across Colorado serving more than 25,000 students. More information on AECs is available at: CDE Alternative Education Campuses.

An analysis of AECs shows that the current AEC dropout rate was 15.6 percent (3,949 student dropouts), which represents 47.6 percent of all student dropouts in Colorado. The dropout rate for AECs was 13.8 percentage points higher than the overall state rate (1.8 percent).

Dropout Rates by Instructional Program Services Type

Dropout rates varied by Instructional Program Services Type (IPST) student groups. The highest dropout rates were seen for homeless students (4.7 percent for the 2020-2021 academic school year, representing a 0.2 percentage point decrease from 2019-2020) and students in foster care (5.0 percent for the 2020-2021 academic school year, representing a 1.4 percentage point decrease from 2019-2020). The majority of the IPST groups made improvements from the 2019-2020 academic school year. Only one group, English language learners, experienced a slight increase in the dropout rate (0.1 percentage point). Otherwise, the greatest dropout rate improvement was seen among students in foster care, but homeless students, migrant students (0.4 percentage points), economically disadvantaged students (0.1 percentage point), and students with disabilities (0.1 percentage point) also saw a reduction in dropout rates from the previous year. *See Appendix B for a historical overview of dropout rates across these student groups. See Chart 7 for Colorado statewide dropout rate by instructional program service type for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year.*
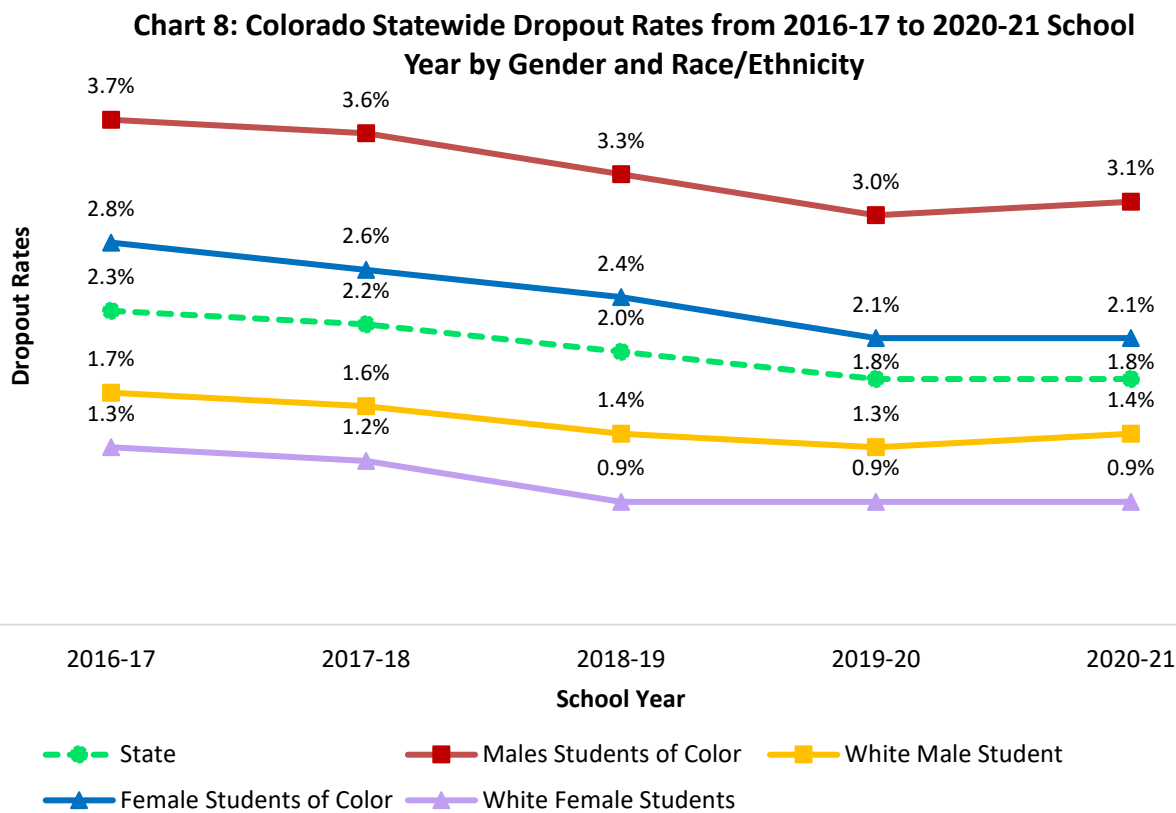
Chart 7: Colorado Statewide Dropout Rates by Instructional Program Service Type for 2019-20 and 2020-21 School Year
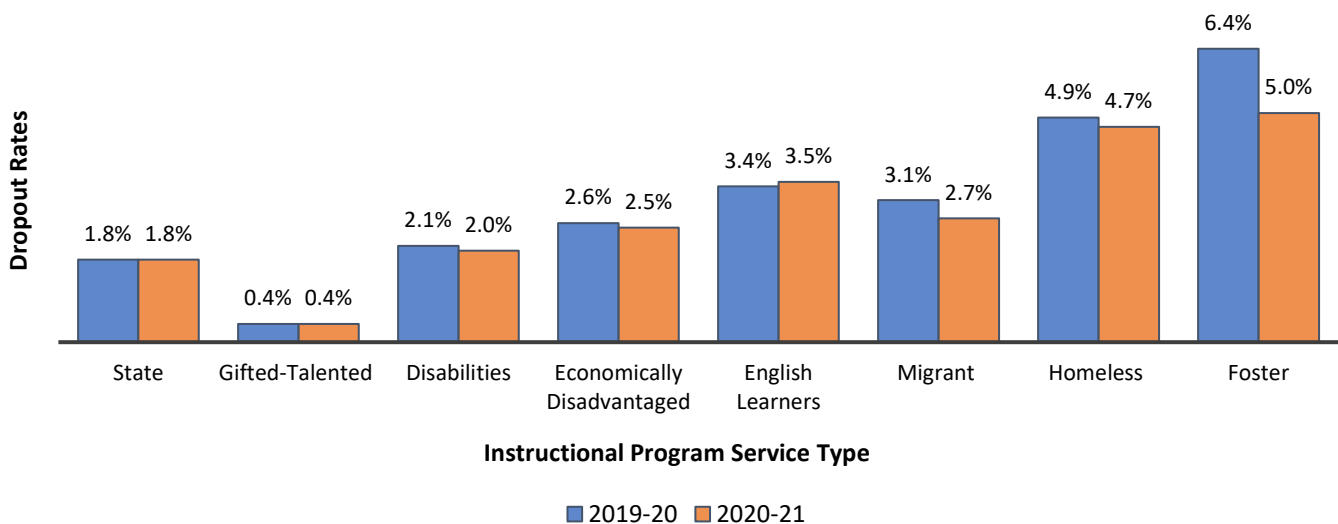
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Dropout Rates by Race, Gender, and Ethnicity

Dropout rates varied by race, gender, and ethnicity of students. White female students and white male students had the lowest dropout rates in 2020-2021, 0.9 percent and 1.4 percent respectively. The highest dropout rates were seen for male SOC (3.1 percent) and female SOC (2.1 percent) for the 2020-2021 academic school year. Both white female and female SOC had consistent dropout rates compared to the class of 2019-2020. However, both white male and male SOC saw a 0.1 percentage point increase in their dropout rates compared to their 2019-2020 rates. The greatest gains in dropout rates in the last five years have been among female SOC, with a 0.7 percentage point decrease from the 2016-2017 to the 2020-2021 school year. Male SOC continue to experience the highest dropout rates compared to their peers. Over time, the average dropout rate for male SOC has remained about 1.3 percentage points higher than the overall state rate and about 2.3 percentage points higher than that of their white female peers. *See Appendix B for a historical overview of dropout rates across these student groups. See Chart 8 for Colorado statewide dropout rates from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 by gender and race/ethnicity.*

Chart 8: Colorado Statewide Dropout Rates from 2016-17 to 2020-21 School Year by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

District Overview

Overview of Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates

In Colorado, locally elected school boards set graduation requirements for their school districts, which means expectations for earning a diploma may differ from district to district. Beginning with the Class of 2021, students now graduate under locally determined requirements that meet or exceed the Colorado Graduation Guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education. *For more information, see: CDE Graduation Guidelines.*

Out of 185 Colorado school districts and BOCES, 72.4 percent reached an overall four-year graduation rate at or above the state rate of 81.7 percent. Thirty-five districts (which is 18.9% of districts) achieved a four-year graduation rate of 100 percent for the Class of 2021, and 44.9 percent of districts reported an increase in four-year graduation rate from the 2019-2020 school year.

When looking more specifically at district rates by settings (e.g., outlying towns, Denver metro, outlying cities, remote, and urban-suburban) in the state of Colorado, there are varying four-year graduation rates. For outlying towns, the graduation rate for the 2020-2021 school year was at 83.2 percent. For the Denver Metro area, the 2020-2021 graduation rate was at 83.9 percent. For outlying city settings, the 2020-2021 graduation rate was at 83.2 percent. For remote settings, the 2020-2021 graduation rate was at 80.2 percent. For urban-suburban settings, the 2020-2021 graduation rate was at 77.5 percent.

Colorado 4 Year Graduation Rates by District

Graduation rate	Number of districts
>= 90%	78
80-89%	60
70-79%	21
60-69%	9
< 60%	9
N/A	1
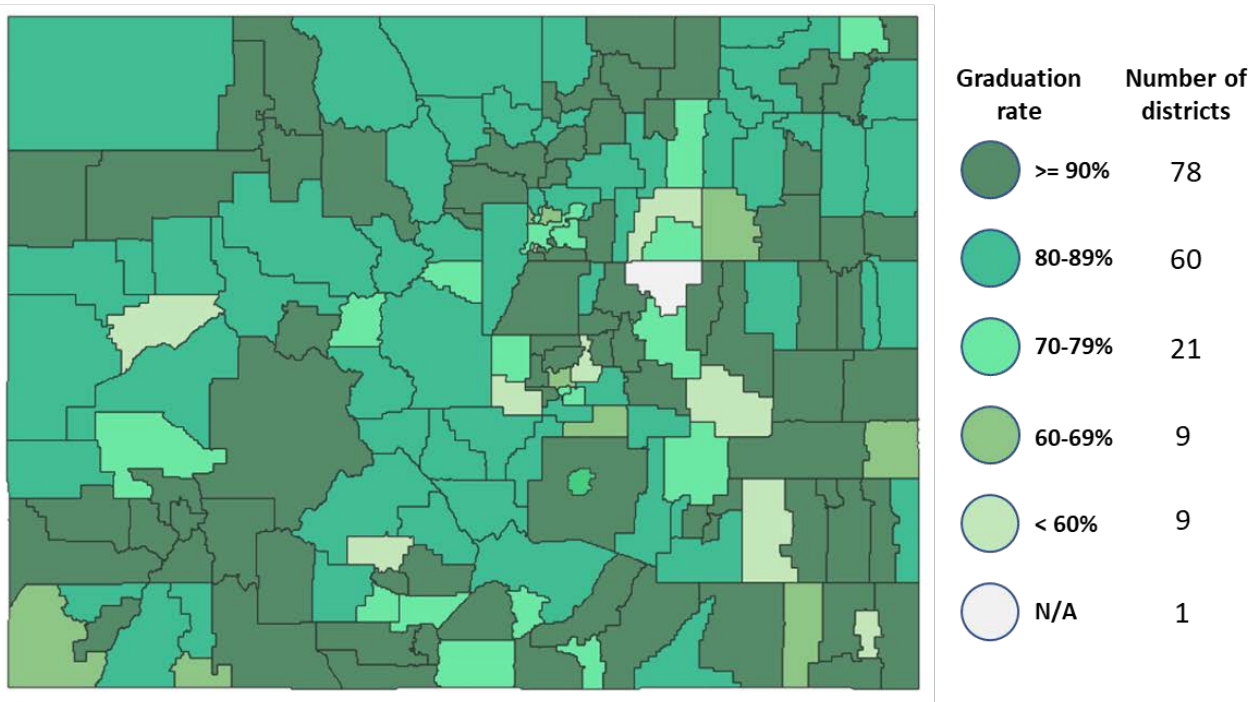
Note: The Education Accountability Act of 2009 (SB 09-163) and HB18-1355 require the Colorado Department of Education to conduct an annual review of the performance of public schools and districts in the state, to make recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning the type of school improvement plan to be implemented in each school, and to determine the accreditation category for each district. The State Board of

Education established a state expectation for all districts to meet or exceed a graduation rate of 85 percent for either the four-year or an extended-year graduation rate. For more information, see: CDE State Accountability. Colorado school districts are making progress towards this goal, with a growing number of districts meeting or exceeding graduation rates at 85 percent. In response to the evolving conditions under COVID-19, an executive order was issued in the Spring of 2020 and later codified by the General Assembly in H.B. 20-1418 to pause the state accountability frameworks to enable schools and districts to focus on providing alternative learning opportunities for students during this time. That pause was in effect for the entirety of the 2020-2021 school year.

Overview of Dropout Rates

Out of 185 Colorado school districts and BOCES, 74.6 percent reported a dropout rate at or below the overall state rate of 1.8 percent. Fifty-four districts reported no dropouts in 2020-2021, and 24.9 percent of districts reported a decrease in drop out from the 2019-2020 academic school year.

When looking more specifically at district rates by settings (e.g., outlying towns, Denver metro, outlying cities, remote, and urban-suburban) in the state of Colorado, there are varying dropout rates. For outlying cities, the dropout rate for the 2020-2021 school year was at 1.8 percent. For the Denver Metro area, the 2020-2021 dropout rate was at 1.6 percent. For outlying town settings, the 2020-2021 dropout rate was at 2.0 percent. For remote settings, the 2020-2021 dropout rate was at 0.9 percent. For urban-suburban settings, the 2020-2021 dropout rate was at 2.2 percent.

Colorado Dropout Rates by District

Dropout rate	Number of districts
0.0%	54
< 1.0%	42
< 2.0%	42
< 3.0%	25
< 4.0%	8
>= 4.0%	7
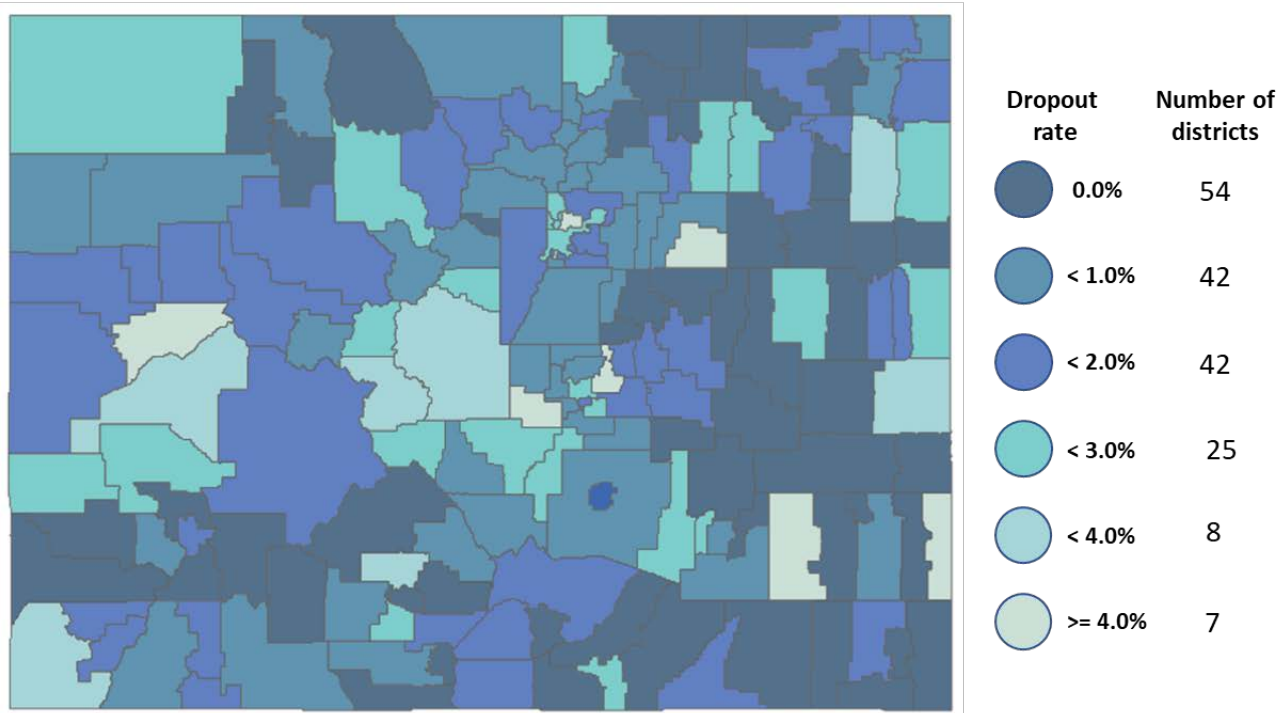
COVID-19 Impact to Graduation, Completion, and Dropout Rates

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact all aspects of education nationwide and in Colorado. Our data on graduation, completion, and dropout rates, shows that the pandemic had disproportionate effects on various disadvantaged student groups in 2020-2021. However, the data indicate that COVID-19 appears to have affected graduation and completion rates more than dropout rates, potentially delaying, but not preventing eventual graduation for the class of 2021.

The effects of the pandemic on graduation and completion rates, particularly among disadvantaged students, is likely the result of less access to technology for online learning, which may have led to learning loss and more time needed to graduate. Indeed, research concerning the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States shows that, in higher education, lower-income students were more than 50% more likely than higher income students to have delayed graduation due to the pandemic,[7] a trend that can be expected in earlier grades as well. Regarding dropout rates, it is perhaps unsurprising that the pandemic had little effect, largely due to loss of employment opportunities. One national study found that worsening employment opportunities due to COVID-19 impacted completion rates in 2020. The largest increases in high school completion rates were observed in areas of higher employment losses -- students had lower prospects for employment; therefore, they were more likely to stay in school.[8]

Additionally, results from the October 2020 Needs Inventory conducted by the non-profit Colorado Education Initiative in partnership with CDE showed that Colorado school districts implemented and continue to implement several best practices for preventing student dropout, such as: utilizing multiple outreach strategies to keep students engaged; prioritizing building and maintaining relationships with students during transitions; offering flexibility in learning environments and instructional models (if possible) with the option to transition between models to fit student needs; adapting to the increased need for technology-based learning and communication; and creating engaging and meaningful learning opportunities for students, including robust work-based learning and other experiential learning opportunities for students.[9,10] *For more information, see: Colorado School District Community Needs Inventory.*

In terms of impact on specific student groups, there is an indication at the national level that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted some groups over others.[11] Our data shows that the four-year, five-year, six-year, and seven-year graduation and completion rates, which had been on a stable rise in recent years, were variable between and among student groups and for students who take part in different instructional programs (e.g., students learning English, students who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch, students on individualized education plans, students who experience homelessness, etc.). For example, homeless students experienced drops in almost all graduation and completion rates, whereas students with disabilities experienced large increases in all graduation and completion rates and migrant students experienced decreases in their four- and seven-year graduation and completion rates but increases in their five- and six-year rates. Recent research indicates that in the state of New York, while all students suffered from missed assignments during online learning, students in high-needs districts were particularly likely to miss work.[12]

When looking forward, it is not possible to predict precisely how the pandemic will continue to affect student high school completion; however, based on initial data, it is reasonable to expect that the pandemic will have long-lasting effects on graduation, completion, and dropout rates, particularly given the impact on attendance and truancy rates. Available national projections predict that between 7 to 9 million children across the country may not return to school.[13, 14] With the challenges of student engagement in the virtual space, challenges

associated with returning to in-person instruction after nearly two years of hybrid and online learning, and staffing challenges, it is possible that rates may regress in the coming school years, and that this trend may continue as currently enrolled students progress through their high school careers. Moreover, a recent national survey indicated that about a quarter of high school students surveyed felt less connected to classmates, staff, and school than they did before the pandemic, putting them at higher risk for dropping out.[15] Given that (lack of) attendance and connectedness are early signs of disengagement, it is possible that these are indicators for future decreases and increases in graduation and dropout statistics, respectively.

Student Re-engagement

Previous CDE analyses in 2016-2017 found that on average, about 30 percent of students who drop out will eventually re-enroll in school. In 2020-2021, 21.6 percent of students (1,835 students) who dropped out in the previous school year (2019-2020) re-enrolled in school. This was less than in previous years and may have been impacted by schools offering remote or hybrid options.

Historically, over half of re-enrolled students have stayed in school or completed high school, which represents a re-engagement rate of 50 to 60 percent. In 2020-2021, 69.4 percent of students who dropped out the previous school year (2019-2020) and re-enrolled graduated, completed school, transferred to a high school equivalency program, or persisted in school, which is higher than the historical trend.

However, per historical trends, the remaining students who do not graduate or complete their high-school education in their first re-enrollment year are at higher risk of dropping out again, which is referred to as dropout recidivism. In 2020-2021, 25.1 percent of students (461 students) of the 1,835 students who had dropped out in 2019-2020 and re-enrolled in school in 2020-2021 dropped out again. The remaining 5.5% of students who re-enrolled left the Colorado educational system in some other way (e.g., leaving the state, beginning homeschooling, etc.). Decreasing dropout recidivism is key to improving disaggregated dropout rates. Effective re-engagement requires identifying and understanding the challenges and circumstances of out-of-school youth, and reconnecting them to high-quality educational opportunities, postsecondary education, and careers.[16]

Colorado's policies regarding dropout prevention support schools and school districts recovering students who dropped out by counting multiple dropout events in an academic year only once toward the school or school district's dropout rate. However, students who have a dropout event over several academic years are counted as dropped out in each year.

APPROXIMATELY 30% WILL RE-ENROLL

EACH YEAR, MORE THAN 10,000 COLORADO STUDENTS LEAVE PRIOR TO COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL.

30%

Of these re-enrolled students about half will graduate/complete or persist in their education

50%
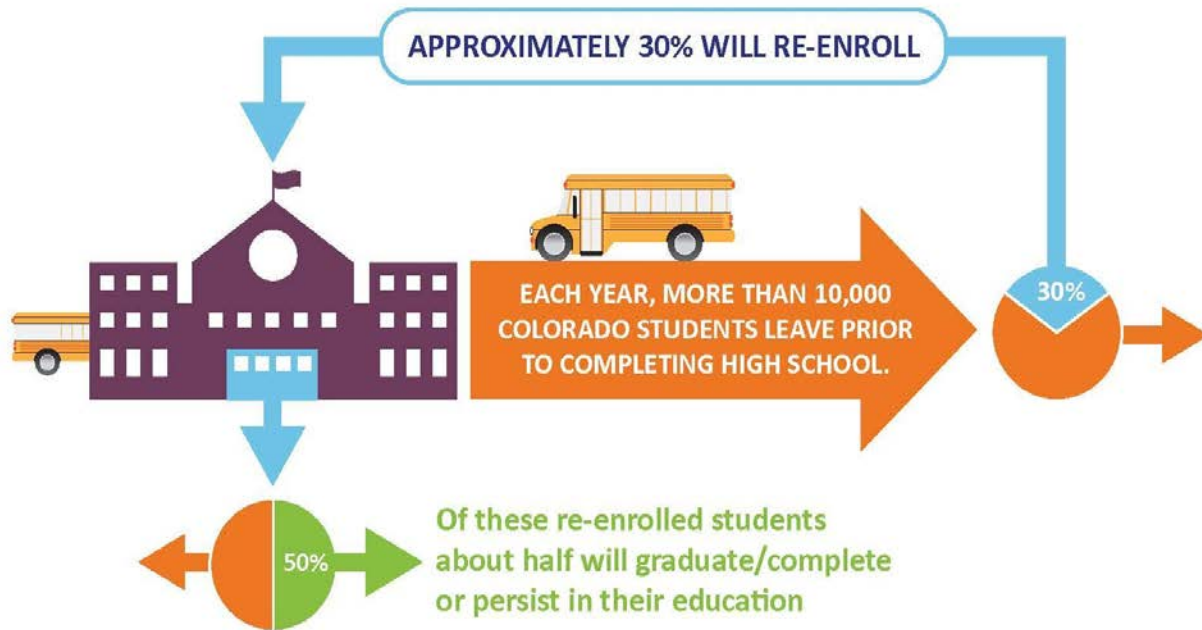
Student Engagement

Research shows that there are three main indicators associated with dropout known as the ABCs of disengagement. These include attendance, behavior, and course performance.[17] These indicators provide school and district staff with information to intervene early to ensure students stay on-track and often provide a projection of future graduation and completion rates.

School Attendance

The 2020-2021 attendance data reported to CDE represents attendance from the start of school to the end of the spring semester. The overall average daily attendance rate in the 2020-2021 school year was 91.9 percent (0.9 percentage point decrease from the 2019-2020 school year) and the truancy rate was 5.2 percent (a 2.5 percentage point increase from the 2019-2020 school year). Districts and schools reported to CDE that complications with online and hybrid learning environments made attendance more inconsistent. In addition, many districts who did use hybrid or online learning did not have attendance policies and systems that accurately measured student attendance and engagement. For instance, one DPSR grantee indicated, *"It was hard to keep that exactness if the student did not have internet access at the start of their class or joined late as they would be marked absent. Families had to call and excuse students who had logged in late or did not have internet during that time and that often did not occur until I called home after checking the weekly attendance report. If*

How was it calculated?

Attendance Rate - Total days of school attended by all students **DIVIDED BY** aggregate number of whole and partial days students could have attended school.

Truancy Rate - aggregate number of whole and partial days students were absent (out of school), without being excused by a parent/guardian **DIVIDED BY** aggregate number of whole and partial days students could have attended school.

Chronically Absent rate - A student absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled during the school year is chronically absent. All absences are included – unexcused, excused and suspensions. The rate is the percentage of students enrolled who are chronically absent.

students were in school, a late pass would have rectified the attendance by the end of the school day. Accuracy in attendance became tricky especially when the option to be remote or in-person started in the second semester."

A student absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled during the school year is considered chronically absent. Chronically absent students include K-12 students who are absent for any reason (e.g., illness, suspension, or the need to care for a family member), regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused; 26.0 percent of all students enrolled in 2020-2021 (229,963 students) were reported chronically absent from school in comparison to 22.6% in 2019-20 (August – March) and 22.4% in 2018-19.

To be considered habitually truant, a student who is at least six years old on or before August 1 of the year in question and is under 17 years old, has to be reported as having four unexcused absences from public school in any one month, or 10 unexcused absences from public school during any school year. In 2020-2021, 196,761 students (22.3 percent of all students) were reported as habitually truant, more than double than were reported in the previous year. The statistics provided below represent proportions of habitually truant students.

- 13.9 percent of habitually truant students (27,312 students) had four unexcused absences in one month.
- 15.8 percent of habitually truants (31,026 students) had 10 unexcused absences in the school year.
- 70.4 percent of habitually truants (138,423 students) met both conditions.

Note: *The Colorado Department of Education collects school and district level attendance data. Student level attendance data was collected for the first time in 2019-2020; however, trends by student groups could not be determined since it was the first year of the collection. Updates will be shared in the 2021-22 legislative report and where data is comparable, trends will be identified. More information on student attendance can be found at [CDE Attendance Information](#).*

Behavior Incidents

Most behavior incidents are determined and documented locally by districts. CDE collects information on student suspensions and expulsions but does not collect data on minor infractions that are often handled at the school or district level.
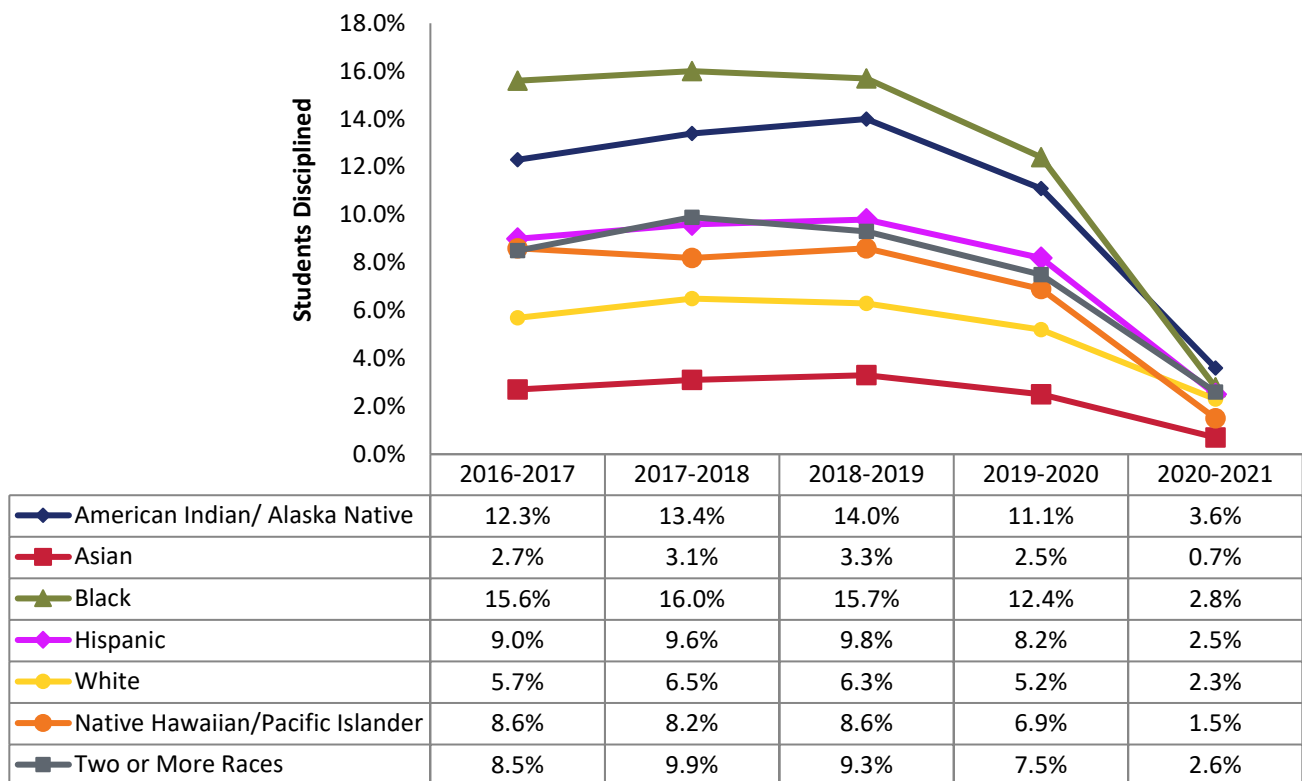
The Colorado legislature has passed numerous bills since 2010 that have changed policies on discipline and encouraged a shift in school discipline policy from strict, mandatory punishment to supportive school discipline. In 2011, the passage of House Bill 11-1032 encouraged the use of restorative practices as a school's first consideration to remediate several types of offenses. In 2012, House Bill 12-1345 eliminated the statutory mandate to expel students for drugs, weapons (except firearms), serious assaults, and robbery, as well as encouraged alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

Over the past 11 years, there has been a drastic reduction in expulsions in Colorado schools, from 2,163 incidents in the 2009-10 school year to just 653 in the 2019-2020 school year, a 69.8 percent reduction over ten years. In the 2020-2021 school year, reductions were larger still. It appears that a combination of factors, including the loss of in-person instruction, the move to hybrid learning environments, and the increase in absenteeism noted above contributed to this decline. In the 2020-2021 school year, there were 170 expulsion incidents, a 74.0 percent reduction from the previous year.

In 2020-2021, 21,847 students were disciplined (e.g., experienced in- or out-of-school suspension or expulsion), 45,841 fewer students disciplined than in the previous school year. This represents 2.0 percent of the students enrolled in 2020-2021.

Aside from the uniform drop in behavior incidents (likely due to COVID-19 and the suspension of in-person learning), patterns in discipline varied across race/ethnicity and gender. Male students were disciplined at a higher rate in 2020-2021 (73.1 percent of students disciplined) than female students (26.9 percent of students disciplined), as has consistently been the case over time. CDE conducted an analysis to better understand how many students within each race/ethnicity were disciplined out of the total number of enrolled students. A closer look at the discipline rate by student enrollment and race/ethnicity shows a disproportionately higher rate of discipline among minority students when compared to discipline rates for their peers, a trend that continued despite the dramatic drop in discipline incidents overall in the 2020-2021 school year. *See **Chart 9** for the five-year trend of students disciplined by race/ethnicity.*

Chart 9: Five Year Trend of Students Disciplined by Race/Ethnicity

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
American Indian/ Alaska Native	12.3%	13.4%	14.0%	11.1%	3.6%
Asian	2.7%	3.1%	3.3%	2.5%	0.7%
Black	15.6%	16.0%	15.7%	12.4%	2.8%
Hispanic	9.0%	9.6%	9.8%	8.2%	2.5%
White	5.7%	6.5%	6.3%	5.2%	2.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8.6%	8.2%	8.6%	6.9%	1.5%
Two or More Races	8.5%	9.9%	9.3%	7.5%	2.6%

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

More information about evidence-based supportive disciplinary methods that serve as alternatives to suspensions and expulsions can be found in the CDE Dropout Prevention Best Practices Guide.

Note: The Colorado Department of Education collects school and district level discipline data. More information on student discipline can be found at CDE Suspension/Expulsion Statistics.

Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement Priorities

The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement (DPSR) was launched in 2009 and was created to expand efforts in reducing the dropout rate, increasing the graduation rate, and advancing credential attainment. This effort is authorized by statute, in section 22-14-101, C.R.S., and builds on the state's commitment to ensure graduation and school success for all students and re-engaging out of school youth.

The main responsibilities of the office are to: (1) analyze student data pertaining to dropout, completion rates, truancy, suspension and expulsion rates, discipline incidence and student growth; (2) coordinate efforts across CDE and lead initiatives to address dropout prevention, student engagement, student graduation and achievement and student re-engagement; and (3) secure and manage resources to fund services and supports.

The Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework

As part of this work, DPSR identifies and recommends best practices and effective strategies to reduce student dropout rates, increase student engagement, increase graduation and achievement, and increase student re-engagement, which are highlighted in Colorado's Dropout Prevention Framework. The framework outlines how to accelerate progress at the school and district level. The evidence-based framework is designed to create an ecosystem for institutional change. It provides a foundation for rigorous and relevant coursework, teacher preparedness and instruction, and development of systems for students needing more attention to reach their full potential. This multi-faceted framework is structured by three main themes:

- **Identification:** Identifying students who are starting to disengage and at risk of dropping out of school through data analysis, early warning systems.

- **Intervention and Support:** Successful efforts include transition planning and support, whole school strategies and tiered interventions to keep students engaged, and strategies to support students identified as being off-track to graduate or at risk for dropping out. Intervention and supports are data-informed and contextualized to meet student needs. Example methods and strategies include increasing community engagement, counseling and mentoring, course completion and credit recovery, family partnering, student re-engagement, multiple pathways to graduation, and transition programs.

- **Institutional Change:** System-wide changes that can be utilized to create an ecosystem for student success, including high level engaging learning opportunities, improving school climate, evaluating policies and practices to prevent student disengagement before it starts, and understanding the multiple pathways to graduation that can be used to re-engage students and increase graduation rates.

Legislative Review

Article 14 of Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes requires CDE to report on the amount of state moneys appropriated for dropout prevention and student engagement. In FY 2020-2021, funds were appropriated to dropout prevention and student re-engagement efforts through the Student Re-engagement Grant Program (SRG; $1,939,995) and the Expelled and At-Risk Students Services Grant Program (EARSS; $9,493,560). The previously funded Ninth Grade Success Grant Program (NGSG), begun in 2019-2020, did not receive additional funds in 2020-2021. *See **Table 13** for grant funding histories for each of the three grants.*

Table 14: Three-Year Funding Histories for DPSR Programs			
Program	**Year**		
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
SRG	$1,939,995	$1,939,995	$1,939,995
EARSS	$9,098,788	$9,493,560	$9,493,560
NGSG	---	$725,000	---
Annual Total	$11,038,783	$12,158,555	$11,433,555

DPSR oversees these three state-funded programs that support communities, local education agencies, and schools in reducing student dropout and increasing school engagement. *See the figure below for funded districts.*

2020.2021 Student Engagement Grantees
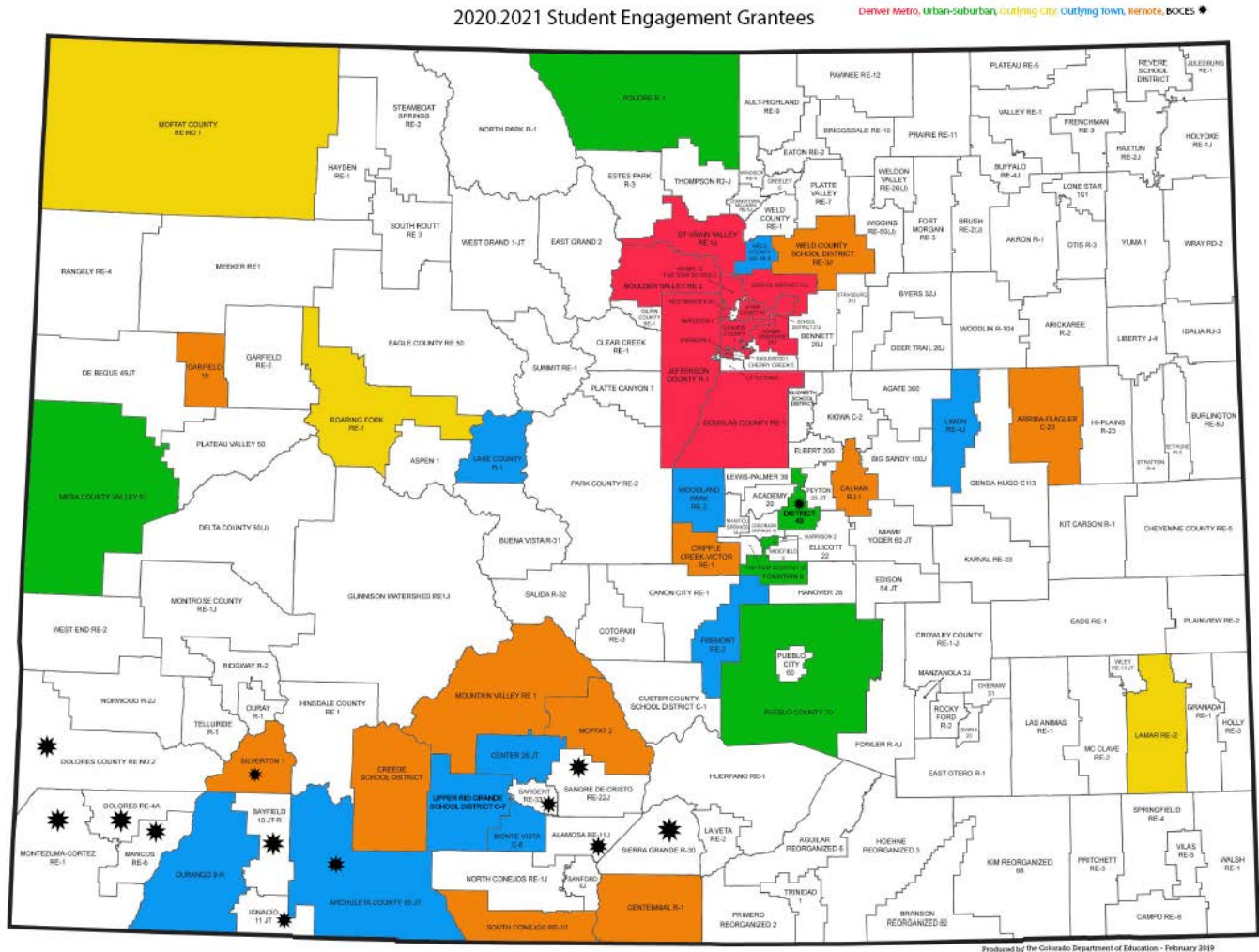
DPSR Program Evaluation

DPSR is responsible for tracking progress and results for these programs, which are highlighted below. Overall, these programs served more than 8,000 students in 2020-2021. *See **Table 14** for more information about DPSR programs.*

Table 15: DPSR Program Evaluation Results

Program Purpose	Framework Strategy Example	2020-2021 Evaluation Summary
Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) Grant Program		
The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program (EARSS) is authorized by Colorado Revised Statute 22-33-205 to assist in providing educational and support services to expelled students, students at risk of suspension and expulsion, and students at risk of habitual truancy as defined by unexcused absences.	Strategies funded include: • Course completion/credit recovery • School climate • Counseling and mentoring • Family partnering	**Funded LEAs** • 57 EARSS grantees located in 27 counties. **Students Served** • 6,573 students received services through grantee programs. • 33% of 7th to 12th grade students served by the grant were identified as at-risk for dropping out of school; 66% were identified as truant or at-risk of habitual truancy. **Student Outcomes** • 80% of students served experienced positive outcomes such as school completion and continuation of education. • 97% of students served remained in or completed school. This includes positive outcomes such as school completion but also includes things such as transfers out of the public school system, which were considered neutral.
Student Re-engagement Grant (SRG) Program		
The Student Re-engagement Grant Program (SRG) is authorized by Colorado Revised Statute 22-14-109 to provide educational services and supports to local education providers to maintain student engagement and facilitate student re-engagement for 6th – 12th grade students.	SRG funds all methods and strategies highlighted in the framework. Strategies most funded include: • Data analysis • Counseling and mentoring • School Climate • Course completion/credit • Family partnering	**Funded LEAs** • 11 SRG grantees in final (3rd) year of grant. • 21 schools funded. **Students Served** • 2,085 students served. • 12% of students served were recovered out-of-school youth. **Student Outcomes** • 86% of students served experienced positive outcomes such as school completion and continuation of education. • 93% of students served remained in or completed school.
Ninth Grade Success Grant (NGSG) Program		

| The Ninth Grade Success Grant Program (NGSG) is authorized by Senate Bill 19-246 to assist students enrolled in ninth grade to develop the skills they need to successfully persist in graduating from high school. | Strategies most funded included: Eighth to ninth grade transition Early warning systems Data analysis Multiple pathways | **Funded LEAs** 10 schools funded (in FY 2019-2020). **Students Served** 998 students served (in FY 2019-2020). |

Source: CDE Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement, Program End-of-Year Collections

Impact of COVID-19 on DPSR Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact all aspects of education and access to programs for many students in the state of Colorado and nationwide. EARSS and SRG grantees were asked to discuss the challenges that they experienced in 2020-2021 as a result of COVID-19, as well as the strategies and innovations they used to help alleviate some of the experienced struggles.

A thematic analysis of responses (N=80) revealed that nearly all grantees stated that the move to online learning for the first half of the year was a challenge for student engagement, retention, and mental health. However, despite the unprecedented challenges of the 2020-2021 school year, grantees also discussed innovations in programming that allowed them to continue making deep and meaningful connections with their students and families. The next few sections reflect the common themes discussed by DPSR grantees.

Theme: Dual Impacts of COVID-19 and Virtual Learning

Nearly all grantees spoke about the detrimental impacts of COVID-19 and virtual learning on student and family engagement and attendance. Grantees indicated that virtual platforms commonly led to disengagement from classes and the school community. Oftentimes it was difficult to determine if students were engaged and paying attention when they were logged on virtually.

> "The number of students disengaged increased drastically due to all of the changes in our school and society over the past year.
> Students had to learn online, meaning that they had to be at home where most of them did not have internet access, a quiet space to work, or even a comfortable space with a table and chair."
> (SRG Grantee)

> "With the quick jump to remote learning, some of the systems that were in place when school was in the building were still being rolled out and established. One of the student groups that seemed most disengaged with remote learning was our MLLs (multi language learners) that were in the beginning stages of learning English, because in addition to the tech barriers, they had to overcome the language barrier."
> (SRG Grantee)

Moreover, grantees reported that there were significant issues with taking and maintaining attendance as a result of both virtual and hybrid learning. Grantees also shared additional responsibilities their students took on during the 2020-21 school year that interfered with schoolwork, such as working to help the family or caring for siblings or sick relatives during school hours. Grantees stated that this was a bigger problem for marginalized families.

"There were many complications with remote learning, such as access to the internet, computers not working, students having to care for younger siblings/family, students having to work, students and families impacted by COVID, basic needs not being met, and other various reasons."
(SRG Grantee)

Theme: Student Mental Health Impacts

Grantees noted that COVID-19 impacted student's mental health in many ways: isolation, personal experiences and difficult family situations during the pandemic, and the switch to a completely virtual environment compounded on each other. Grantees reported that students were overwhelmed, demotivated, anxious, and disengaged, and that extra efforts were made to address these concerns via connection with staff, counselors, and other students.

"There were many students that struggled with emotional trauma due to the COVID virus. Their school attendance and participation was inconsistent and varied between in class participation and Zoom classroom attendance. This was extremely challenging as many students were taken out of the norm in terms of school regimen. Temporary school closures due to COVID outbreaks added to the complexity of the school year resulting in a lot of non-engagement. Much of the non-engagement centered on survival."
(SRG Grantee)

Theme: Connection as a Strategy for Re-engagement

"Teacher/Staff consistently reaching out to students was critical this year especially. With online learning being the primary educational format this year it was necessary for staff to consistently meet with students one on one. Program coordinator set Friday as a day to meet each student virtually to discuss any blockers students had as well as to provide consistency in career conversations and relationship to the school."
(SRG Grantee)

In the face of the many challenges present during the 2020-21 school year, some grantees discussed how they had to meet student needs, ensure well-being, and build relationships before students could engage fully in academics. For a lot of grantees, not being able to see students face-to-face meant that they had to regroup and re-organize to meet students where they were and meet needs they hadn't had previously. The grantees who reported this shift in focus to well-being, relationship building, and connecting families with resources spoke about the positive aspects that they experienced as a result of the shift. Additionally, some sites reported having to take on different roles, such as helping students process home life events due to quarantining with family members. It appears that the shift in focus to relationship building helped a lot of students and families served through DPSR Programs to overcome what at times seemed like insurmountable challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theme: *Flexibility and Innovation in the Face of Uncertainty*

Grantees reported flexibility and innovation in response to the increased challenges associated with the 2020-2021 school year. This included increases in home visiting to reach disengaged students, flexible learning options for students with non-academic responsibilities, and increased access to counseling for students struggling with mental health issues. In addition, multiple grantees reported reaching out to more students than anticipated due to increased need.

> "A student and her family were hit hard by COVID. Her parents furloughed from their jobs and she had to increase her work hours to help support her family. She did not think she was going to be able to graduate and considered dropping out. Her re-engagement facilitator worked with her and the school staff to alter her hours so she could do her schoolwork at night and on weekends. She was initially discouraged, however, her weekly contact with her facilitator and mental health support was the key to her success. Community resources were provided and this student ended up graduating this Spring. She and her family were very proud and grateful for the unwavering support."
> (SRG Grantee)

Themes: *Student Successes and Readiness for the Future*

Despite the challenges of an unprecedented school year, grantees reported resounding student successes during the 2021-2022 school year. Success stories included re-engagement of out-of-school youth, students who graduated under difficult circumstances, and tales of increased attendance, class participation, and academic competency. It is clear that throughout the year, programs remained committed to reaching out to and re-engaging students who might otherwise have been alienated due to online learning or other changes. In addition, grantees reported an eagerness to hit the ground running in the 2021-2022 school year with increased supports for students who struggled during the pandemic.

> "A big focus in the building next year will be to not only keep students on track in their classes but also to try and help with credit recovery to make up for this past school year. Using the data obtained this school year, the counseling team is already planning intentional schedules, groups and lessons to best help students have more success academically in the upcoming school year."
> (SRG Grantee)

> We had a student who had been with us for several years and who was very credit deficient and struggling to get caught up. That student had a significant issue with anxiety, which led to issues with attendance and truancy. The grant has allowed us to get creative and create a hybrid online/in person learning model, staffed with support for students such as this. We moved the student from our every-day in-person learning model to our hybrid online/in-person model. This was a significant move. The student attended more regularly with their modified schedule and the ability to also work independently. They thrived with the more intensive attention they got from the staffed support position. We were able to close the gap on credit deficiency this year and this student graduated with a regular diploma in May!
> (EARSS Grantee)

Response to COVID-19

It is clear from the thematic analyses of grantees' responses that COVID-19 had a significant impact on student engagement, attendance, and mental health. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic posed a new challenge to retaining students and preventing dropout. To assist programs and local education agencies across Colorado during the pandemic, DPSR participated in town hall meetings and hosted office hours to discuss strategies for student engagement and academic success. Additionally, each school district in Colorado has a CDE-assigned support coordinator or other support person. These coordinators work with districts to determine needs and ways that the department can help support these needs. Schools and districts certainly rose to the challenges they faced because of the pandemic and have been working to redesign and rethink their efforts to ensure students are successful.

DPSR created the COVID Related Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework with information shared by schools and districts across Colorado on strategies and promising practices related to student engagement and dropout prevention during COVID-19. The framework was split into three sections to better guide schools and districts as they navigate through the challenges posed by the pandemic. For more information about DPSR, visit Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. *See **Table 14** for COVID related dropout prevention framework elements.*

Table 14. COVID Related Dropout Prevention Framework Elements		
Area of Support	**Target Goals**	**Areas with Recommendations to Consider**
Identification	Identifying students who are at risk of dropping out of school through the use of data analysis, early warning systems, and the review of policies and practices as a means of preventing student disengagement before it starts.	• Data Analysis • Early Warning Signs • Policies and Practices Review
Intervention and Support	Successful efforts include transition planning and support, school-wide strategies and tiered interventions for students identified as being off-track to graduate or at risk of dropping out.	• Community Engagement • Counseling and Mentoring • Course Completion and Credit Recovery • Family Partnering • Multiple Pathways to Graduation • Student Engagement and Re-engagement • Transition Programs
Institutional Change	System-wide changes that can be utilized to create an ecosystem for student success, including improving school climate, evaluating policies and practices, and understanding that multiple pathways to graduation can be used to re-engage students and increase graduation rates.	• School Climate

Find more information on approaches and best and promising practices at CDE's Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement webpage.

Best Practices around Dropout Prevention during COVID-19 and beyond

It is important to continue the effort to reduce student dropout and increase student retention in order to help students graduate high school successfully and reach their highest potential after high school. In previous reports there has been a focus on the improvement of school climate and culture to help reduce dropout rates. Some of the effective school practices that could contribute to reduced dropout rates, and that have been mentioned in previous reports, include the development and implementation of the following:

- Strategies designed to catch students up, such as: self-paced catch-up courses, project-based learning, differentiated flexible school schedules, job training embedded as part of the academic program.
- Policies and practices that promote personalized learning environments and opportunities for individualized instruction, such as tutoring, case management, and small classes focused on building close staff-student relationships.
- A tiered and prevention-based framework like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that approaches students from a strength-based perspective, teaches students how to be successful, and celebrates their accomplishments with clear benchmarks for attaining student success.
- Mechanisms by which students can form strong relationships with adults and peers through mentoring programs and partnering with social service agencies.
- Incentives and recognition programs for students and schools when there is improvement in attendance to positively impact school climate.
- A whole-child approach which focuses on students' well-being and connectedness, academic progress, and overall development and success.

State Priorities

In the past year, state agencies have set goals to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. Collective state priorities include:

- Cross-systems coordination and collaboration, with special attention in serving students involved in public service systems (e.g., child welfare and juvenile corrections), students experiencing homelessness, and students from rural areas with limited access to services.[18]
- Talent development to address teacher shortages, especially in early childhood education and care, special education, and secondary-level mathematics and science.[10]
- Erasing equity gaps among traditionally underserved populations, with special attention to minority males and students living in poverty.[20, 21]

Steps to accelerate progress are occurring across the state. There is collective momentum to stem and reverse negative trends. CDE's strategic plan focuses attention on systemic inequities on student outcomes, seeks to expand successful high school models and commits to developing a strong pipeline of high-quality teachers and principals.

Conclusion

Over the past 10 years, Colorado has continued to make strides in increasing the number of students meeting graduation requirements and reducing the number of students who disengage from and drop out of school. For the first time within this period, the graduation rate declined year over year, indicating a high level of student need and disruption to students' lives. Given the complexities associated with the global pandemic, many school districts rose to the occasion, redesigned systems and structures, and provided significant additional or new support to aid in the success of their students—in the hopes of maintaining engagement and achievement while decreasing their dropout rates. As the final section of this legislative report makes clear, success was not consistently maintained across the state during the past year and where success was observed, it came from a commitment to well-designed plans that emphasize student engagement and dropout prevention strategies and methods. There is more targeted work to be done as there are still persistent gaps between many individual student groups and overall rates including among our students of color, students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, students who live in foster care and are homeless. Overall graduation and completion rates need to keep improving to ensure that Colorado students are prepared for life after high school.

The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement is charged with continuously aligning resources and coordinating supports to enhance student engagement and re-engagement and ultimately reduce the dropout rates and improve graduation rates across the state of Colorado. In utilizing the dropout prevention framework, which provides guidance for systemic change, schools and districts incorporate strategies and methods influenced by state standards and learning supports, with the goal of helping students attain a high school diploma or equivalency. The Colorado Department of Education is committed to being an active partner to districts in supporting this endeavor.

APPENDIX A: Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are taken from Colorado Revised Statutes, the Colorado Code of Regulations and the CDE data dictionary.

Adjusted Cohort Rate: Under the "Anticipated Year of Graduation" cohort formula that was implemented beginning in 2010, students are assigned an unchanging anticipated year of graduation when they enter into ninth grade. The anticipated year of graduation is assigned by adding three years to the school year that a student begins ninth grade. For example, the formula anticipates that a student starting ninth grade in the fall of the 2015-2016 school year will graduate with the Class of 2019.

Dropout: A person who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent, and who does not transfer to another public or private school or enroll in an approved home study program. Students who reach the age of 21 before receiving a diploma or designation of completion ("age-outs") are also counted as dropouts.

Not a dropout: A student who transfers to an educational program recognized by the district, completes a high school equivalency or registers in a program leading to a high school equivalency, is committed to an institution that maintains educational programs, or is ill and unable to participate in a homebound or special therapy program. See Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at CDE dropout statistics, www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent.htm.

Dropout Rate: An annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7 to 12 who leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program. The Colorado dropout rate is not the inverse of the graduation rate. FAQ and calculation details are available at CDE dropout statistics, www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent.htm.

Discipline Incidents: The total number of incidents (not students) that are reported by local education agencies to CDE. Examples include, but are not limited to, classroom suspension/teacher removal, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. More details can be found at CDE suspension/expulsion, www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/suspend-expel.

- **Classroom Removal Incidents**: Reporting includes total number of incidents (not students) in which the most severe action taken was the student(s) being suspended from the classroom or removed by the teacher. Includes only incidents where a teacher removal process was followed (e.g., contacting parent/guardian, student-parent-teacher conference and if the second removal, developing a behavior plan).
- **In-School Suspension Incidents**: The total number of incidents (not students) involving the reported behavior in which the most severe action taken was the student(s) being suspended in school. Student suspended from classroom to another location in the school in accordance with local school board policy.
- **Out of School Suspension Incidents**: Student suspended from school grounds in accordance with local school board policy.
- **Expulsion Incidents**: The total number of incidents (not students) involving the reported behavior in which the most severe action was the student(s) being expelled. Student expelled in accordance with local school board policy.
- **Expulsion Rate:** Indicates number of students expelled during the year divided by the student enrollment as of October 1.

Graduation Rates and Completion Rates:

- **Four-year and Extended-year Graduation Rates:** The graduation rate is a cohort rate. Included in the cohort are students with the same Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG). Under the AYG cohort formula, students are assigned an unchanging anticipated year of graduation when they enter into ninth grade. AYG is assigned by adding three years to the school year that a student begins ninth grade. Regardless if it takes four years or up to seven years to graduate, students are always included in the graduate membership base (the denominator) of their AYG cohort. Upon receiving a diploma, a student is counted in the graduates total (the numerator). FAQ and calculation details can be found at CDE Graduation Statistics, www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradratecurrent. *Note: In school year 2015-16, CDE automated the reporting process districts use to remove duplicate records, which improved the accuracy of graduation and completion rates. In prior years it was possible for students to remain in the graduation base of a school or district even though they had later enrolled elsewhere in Colorado.*
- **Completion Rate (four-year and extended-year):** A cohort-based rate which includes the number of students who graduate plus those who receive a high school equivalency diploma or other designation of high school completion. Like the graduation rate, the completion rate is calculated as a percent of those who were in membership over the previous four-year period (i.e., from grades 9 to 12) and could have graduated or completed in the currently reported school year. Extended-year completion rates are calculated following the same logic as the extended-year graduation rates, but the numerator includes regular diploma graduates, high school equivalency completers and students receiving other completion certificates. *Note: Colorado has approved the use of three High School Equivalency (HSE) tests: General Educational Development (GED®) Test, High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®); and Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™). Students, 17 years of age and older, are eligible to take an HSE test, however, younger students may receive an age waiver if they meet specific conditions. More information at CDE High School Equivalency Testing Program, www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/hse.*

Economically Disadvantaged: Student qualifies for either the free or reduced lunch program. The Federal National School Lunch Act establishes eligibility for the reduced price lunch program for families with income up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level (in 2009, this amount was $39,220 for a family of four). Families with income up to 130 percent of the federal poverty level qualify for the free lunch program (in 2009 this amount was $27,560 for a family of four).

Gifted and Talented: Students who have been formally identified, using district-wide procedures aligned with CDE guidelines, as being endowed with a high degree of exceptionality or potential in mental ability, academics, creativity, or talents (visual, performing, musical arts, or leadership.

Habitually Truant: A child who is "habitually truant" means a child who has attained the age of six years on or before August 1 of the year in question and is under the age of 17 years having four unexcused absences from public school in any one month, or 10 unexcused absences from public school during any school year. Authorizing legislation: C.R.S. 22-33-107

Homeless: According to the McKinney Act, a "homeless individual": lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Instructional Program Service Type (IPST): This includes students who are economically disadvantaged, Title I, limited English Proficient, migrant, homeless, gifted and talented, and students with disabilities.

Limited English Proficient: This designation encompasses all students identified as either non-English proficient or limited English proficient. Non-English proficient is defined as a student who speaks a language other than English and does not comprehend, speak, read, or write English. Limited English proficient is defined as a student who comprehends, speaks, reads, or writes some English, but whose predominant comprehension or speech is in a language other than English. Districts must provide language services to all limited English proficient students.

Local Education Agencies (Local Education Provider): These terms mean a school district, a board of cooperative services created pursuant to article 5 of title 22, or the state Charter School Institute created pursuant to C.R.S 22-30.5-503.

Migrant: Students enrolled in a specially designed program for children who are, or whose parent or spouse is a migratory agricultural worker, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent or spouse in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural work has moved from one school district to another.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR): Performance indicator in the state accountability performance frameworks that reflects student preparedness for college or careers upon completing high school. The indicator includes student graduation rates, disaggregated graduation rates for historically disadvantaged students (free/reduced price lunch eligible, minority students, students with disabilities, English learners), dropout rates (overall and disaggregated) Colorado SAT mean scale scores (overall and disaggregated), and matriculation rates that represent the percent of high school graduates that go on to CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs, community colleges, or four-year institutions in the year after they graduate high school.

Pupil Count: The total (cumulative) number of students in membership at any time during the academic year.

Student Engagement: Refers to a student's sense of belonging, safety and involvement in school that leads to academic achievement, regular school attendance, and graduation. Elements of promoting student engagement include providing rigorous and relevant instruction, creating positive relationships with teachers and counselors, providing social and emotional support services for students and their families, creating partnerships with community organizations and families that foster learning outside of the classroom, and cultivating regular school attendance.

Student Re-engagement: Means a student re-enrolls in school after dropping out prior to completion. Student re-engagement can be facilitated through a local education provider's use of evidence- or research-based strategies to reach out to students who have dropped out of school and to assist them in transitioning back into school and obtaining a high school diploma or certificate of completion.

Student Re-engagement Rate: Percent of students who dropped out in the prior year and re-enrolled in their home school/district in the following year and the percent who dropped out and were retrieved anywhere in the state in the following year. Calculation information cited in CCR 301-84, *Rules for Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement*, www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=3542.

Students with Disabilities: Students who have been formally identified as having physical or health conditions that may have a significant impact on the student's ability to learn and therefore warrant placing the student on an Individual Educational Program (IEP).

Truancy: In general, truancy refers to a student who is absent without excuse by the parent/guardian. If the student leaves school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, the incident will be considered to be an unexcused absence and the student shall be considered truant. Local school district policy provides details on what types of absences are considered excused or unexcused.

Truancy Rate: Total Student Days Unexcused divided by Total Student Days Possible. Annual district and school-by-school truancy rates at CDE Attendance Information, www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/truancystatistics.

APPENDIX B: Historical Overview of Annual Dropout Rates

School Year	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
State Total (all students)	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.8	**1.8**
American Indian / Alaska Native	5.3	6.5	5.4	4.4	5.0	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.0	4.0	**3.2**
Asian	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	**0.5**
Black or African American	4.6	4.4	4.4	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.8	**2.6**
Hispanic or Latino	5.4	4.9	4.7	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.2	2.8	**2.8**
White	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	**1.1**
Hawaiian / Pac. Islander	*N/R*	2.9	3.8	3.6	2.4	3.3	2.7	2.5	3.0	3.4	3.9	**2.3**
Two or More Races	*N/R*	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	**1.6**
Male	3.4	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.1	**2.2**
Female	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.2	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.5	**1.3**
Students with Disabilities	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.7	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.1	**2.0**
Limited English Proficient	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.4	**3.5**
Economically Disadvantaged	3.4	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.7	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.6	**2.5**
Migrant	4.1	4.2	3.5	3.6	4.2	4.1	3.6	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.1	**2.7**
Title I	4.9	5.2	5.7	4.4	4.2	4.5	5.2	5.4	5.1	4.0	3.4	**3.2**
Homeless	7.2	6.7	8.5	6.0	5.5	6.1	6.1	5.9	6.1	5.4	4.9	**4.7**
Gifted & Talented	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	**0.4**
Students in Foster Care**	*N/R*	*N/R*	*N/R*	4.5	5.4	6.8	9.3	8.4	8.6	6.9	6.4	**5.0**

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. More information can be found at www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval.

**Foster Care rates were made available through a data-sharing agreement between CDE and the Colorado Department of Human Services.
N/R = not reported

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