

COLORADO
Department of Education

Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS)

2025-2026

Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement
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Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) Grant Program

The EARSS program is authorized by Colorado Revised Statute 22-33-205 to fund grants for which the purposes are to provide education services and support services to expelled students, students at risk of being expelled, enrolled truant students and/or students at risk of being declared, or already are, habitually truant, and chronically absent students.

The EARSS program is considered to be an early intervention program. It's intended to assist school districts in meeting statutory obligations to identify students at-risk of disciplinary action (i.e. violating the Code of Conduct) and habitual truancy and/or chronically absent as early as possible so support plans can be made, in conjunction with the student's family, to assist the student with avoiding future disciplinary action.

Currently there are forty-five grantees.

- Cohort 1 has twenty-one grantees who are currently in year 4 of a four year grant;
- Cohort 2 has twelve grantees who are currently in year 3 of their four year grant;
- Cohort 3 has five grantees who are currently in year 2 of their four year grant; and
- Seven grantees started an 18-month Systems Development Grant focused on system-level work to develop/repair systemic level work regarding attendance or discipline, with the potential of applying for a multi-year EARSS implementation grant in the future.

Additional information can be found at the EARSS homepage: [Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) | CDE]

Board of Cooperative Education (BOCES)

Colorado River BOCES – Yampah Mountain High School

Leigh McGown (lmcgown@ymhs.org) – Cohort 2

Colorado River BOCES and Yampah Mountain High School, working through a student involved leadership team, have developed the idea of hiring a Student Navigator and Re-engagement Coordinator to support at-risk students in gaining work-based learning through internships and apprenticeships that support students core academic work in school, leading to more engagement and progress towards the goal of graduation.

Education reEnvisioned BOCES – Pikes Peak Online School

Nicole Tiley (ntiley@k12.com) – Cohort 1

AT PPOS, we believe in fostering an environment with equal emphasis on meaningful connections, mental health, and academics. Our students often have additional and unique needs, that we seek to teach and nurture within our school setting. The EARSS program that gives all students the space to express themselves and receive support within the school community. As a community, we will incorporate Restorative Justice practices, supporting students' ability to work through challenges in a clear and productive process.

San Juan BOCES – Behavior Emotional Transition and Academic Program

Royce Tranum (rtranum@sjboces.org) – Cohort 1

The Behavior Emotion Transition and Academic (BETA) program has demonstrated success in family engagement and increased emotional skills leading to a decrease in behavioral issues at school. The program seeks to expand this programming through the training and use of Restorative, Trauma Responsive, and Culturally Responsive Practices. The focus of this grant will be on younger students and those experiencing behavioral issues at school along with creating partnerships with local Native American tribes to bring indigenous practices into the processes.

Charter Schools

Adams-Arapahoe 28J – Vanguard Classical East

Pamela Polke (ppolke@vanguardclassical.org – Cohort 2

Vanguard Classical East (VCE) is an Aurora Public Schools K-12 District Charter School. EARSS funding will provide support to 75 6th-12th grade at-risk students. 44.5% are ELL with over 30 languages, primarily Ethiopian and Spanish. In order to better serve our students most at-risk of dropping out, suspension, or expulsion, we are proposing to hire an additional, highly qualified Advocate to build staff capacity and support student outcomes in the areas of academics, attendance, and social-emotional functioning.

Charter School Institute - Kwiyagat Community Academy

Jen Flaherty (jflaherty@utekca.org) – Cohort 3

Kwiyagat Community Academy, a charter school authorized by the Charter School Institute and operated by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, in Towaoc, Colorado, serves 60 K-3 students in 2023-24 and will expand one grade each year to 100-120 students in grades K-5 by 2025-26. The proposed program, Nuchiu Achieves, will increase academic achievement by focusing on academic interventions, increase student socio-emotional regulation by providing student and teacher support services and increase student attendance through increased family engagement and transportation services.

Charter School Institute - New America School

Santiago Lopez (slopez@newamericaschool.org – Cohort 1

The New America School will foster improved attendance among the 150 students of all grade levels most at-risk of chronic absenteeism by establishing Opportunity Centers at each of our three schools. The Centers will engender students' intrinsic motivation as it relates to the need to connect students' attendance and academic performance to success after high school. These Centers will integrate interventions designed to promote attendance with postsecondary/workforce preparation activities with to form a unified, comprehensive system of student supports.

Charter School Institute – New Legacy Academy

Steven Bartholomew (sbartholomew@newlegacycharter.net) – Systems Development

The EARSS Attendance Systems Updates grant gives NLCS an opportunity to work with all stakeholders to assess our current attendance practices, policies, and tools and discern how they can be improved to best support our population. The school will

analyze the student-level, school-level, and community-level barriers that students face, explore available tools and resources, and define an attendance improvement plan that addresses students' barriers as effectively as possible. Working with all high school staff and additional stakeholders such as students' families and the Colorado Department of Education will ensure mutual understanding of NLCS's goals and resulting attendance improvement plan. Through surveys, focus groups, our student-led Legacy Leaders team, and mentorship opportunities, students will be key players in developing this robust, relevant, equity-based approach to improving attendance.

Denver Public Schools – Compass Academy

Brandon Jones (bjones@compassacademy.org) – Cohort 1

Partnering with community organizations and experts, Compass Academy will expand supports and services that increase social emotional competency and reduce truancy among 100 at-risk students in grades 6-8. Following a planning period, Compass will leverage best-in-practice tools and supports that provide (1) essential skills building for students at-risk for suspension and expulsion, (2) wraparound attendance supports for students and families, and (2) enhanced attendance, behavioral, and academic programs to address the school's growing Tier 2 and Tier 3 populations.

Denver Public Schools – Rise-Up Community Academy

Karen Ikegami (kikegami@riseupcommunityschool.net – Cohort 1

RCS will establish comprehensive post-secondary systems supporting 100 students from enrollment through graduation. SEL Assessment data will establish a baseline for college and career interests, learning modalities, and student motivators. Data integration will support academic growth while deepening PSR conversations in 9th – 12th grade ICAP courses guiding students in identifying their PSR pathway. The PSR Director and PSR counselor will champion school-wide systems including an interest-based master schedule, on-site concurrent enrollment opportunities, and off-site internship opportunities for hands-on experience.

Douglas County RE-1 – HOPE Online

Susan McAlonan (susan.mcalonan@hopeonline.org) – Cohort 1

HOPE Online Learning Academy will serve 55 of the most at-risk high school students. This program will to support students who are overage and under credit with multiple

risk factors, (low academic achievement, attendance and discipline issues, limited social/emotional competence) to attend school and graduate. Culturally relevant strategies to support these students will include: Redesign of graduation requirements, implementation of workforce ready competency diploma; Flexible academic schedule; Access to concurrent enrollment; social emotional competency with a focus on parent engagement.

Douglas County RE-1 – Renaissance Secondary

Tom Smith (tsmith6@dcsdk12.org) – Cohort 1

Renaissance Secondary School EARSS Student Support Team, composed of a Student Support Specialist, a Student Support Assistant, and a school counselor, to coordinate and provide research-based interventions to 60 at-risk students. Intervention strategies include Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, restorative practices, support plans and contracts, counseling services, and credit recovery. The program will reduce chronic absenteeism, improve academic performance, and provide behavioral supports to students at-risk of expulsion or who are chronically absent.

Harrison 2 - Atlas Prep Middle School

Calley Mannion (cmannion@atlasprep.org) – Cohort 1

Atlas Preparatory Middle School (APMS), a charter school in Harrison School District Two, serves 508 low-income students in grades 5-8. APMS will supplement and expand the existing framework for behavioral supports and interventions that has identified 80 at-risk students. This program will decrease truancy, suspension and expulsion rates of 80 at-risk students before they reach the disciplinary crisis-level. This will be accomplished by hiring two licensed, mental health professionals who will provide targeted interventions and specialized support services at APMS.

School Districts

Adams-Arapahoe 28J

Paula Niemi (pmniemi@aurorak12.org) – Systems Development

Adams-Arapahoe 28J EARSS Review Leadership Team will review current attendance policy and procedures, identifying current practices and areas of need to develop mentorship program in order to decrease chronically absent rates in the high schools.

Canon City RE-1 – Harrison School

Lacey Ledoux (lacey.ledoux@canoncityschools.org) – Cohort 3

Canon City School District & Harrison School leadership propose to implement a comprehensive trauma-informed support program with an intentional emphasis on the 113 students K-8 identified for EARSS programming due to in-school and out-of- school suspensions. The proposed multi-tiered approach will focus on developing a school culture that emphasizes prevention, intervention, and support rather than punishment for at-risk students. Through trauma-informed interventions students will develop social-emotional skills, emotional regulation, and positive relationships thus empowering students to excel both academically and socially. This will result in improved academic outcomes, decreased suspension rates, and minimized dropout risk.

Centennial R-1

Kimba Rael (kimba.rael@centennial.k12.co.us) – Systems Development

Centennial R-1 School District aims to improve academic achievement, attendance, and overall well-being through a comprehensive set of interventions and support services through the planning and implementation of EARSS Targeted Home-Visit Program, Family/School Student Attendance Review Board, Strengthening Families Program, and Extended-Day Learning and Wellness Program.

Center Consolidated School District 26JT

Katrina Ruggles (kruggles@center.k12.co.us) – Cohort 1

The Center School District will use the EARSS funding to address needs of students who are exhibiting increasingly difficult behaviors and multiple absences, as well as disparities in behavior referrals for students of minority status. The overall goals will be to increase the number for passed courses, increase attendance to above 90%, and

decrease classroom removals through in-school suspension. The grant will serve 252 youth in five schools—Haskin Elementary, Skoglund Middle School, Center High School, Alternative Recovery Center of the SLV, and Center Virtual Academy. Work will focus on providing academic supports and social-emotional learning both during the day and out of school. Finally, the funds will be used to develop a Promotora program focused on providing parent to parent coaching, generating two-way school/home communication, and supporting family and student needs.

Cherry Creek School District 5

Jasper Armstrong (jarmstrong19@cherrycreekschools.org) – Cohort 1

This program is to provide focused support for approximately 500 Cherry Creek School District high school students who are struggling academically due to habitual absenteeism, or from behaviors and social emotional functioning that resulted in out-of-school suspension or expulsion. This grant will provide resources to address the three identified goals, and help the students served by the grant to graduate and be college and career ready.

Cherry Creek School District 5

Teresa Cummins (tcummins2@cherrycreekschools.org) – Systems Development

CCSD will create a consistent and clear model of comprehensive best practices and trainings for key middle school staff; work to build and enrich relationships with parents and families; and refine reentry plans and protocols. Overall, we will approach work through a prevention lens as we aim to create an equitable solution that honors and values resolving conflicts and restoring trust. CCSD utilizes a strategic approach to address the need for comprehensive programming to provide alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices including four key pillars built around: restorative justice practices, equity, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed care that are focused on promoting positive school climate, relationship-building, and healthy conflict resolution.

Denver County 1

Cori Canty (cori_canty@dpsk12.net) – Systems Development

The DPS EARSS grant will work to improve both district and school attendance systems using improvement science methodology. The grant will be implemented in three

phases: Needs Assessment, Improvement Planning and Implementation. Performance Measures and Outcomes incorporate EARSS grant requirements as well as additional measures important to the implementation of the grant. The overarching intent of the DPS proposal of the EARSS Attendance Systems Updates grant is to positively impact chronic absenteeism, attendance and habitual truancy rates for Denver Public Schools students.

Durango School District 9-R

Samantha Tower (stower@durangoschools.org) – Cohort 1

'The Hub' is an innovative educational model founded on a therapeutic approach to learning and development for students in grades 6-12, with significant emotional or behavioral challenges. Those served include youth who are impacted by adverse childhood experiences, academic barriers connected to mental health, and those at-risk for suspension, expulsion, and chronic absenteeism. These students struggle to access comprehensive treatment or individualized support through existing community resources, or their home school. Identified students require a targeted, alternative learning environment uniquely designed to provide treatment, wraparound services and skill building.

Eagle County RE-50

Lisa Pisciotta (lisa.pisciotta@eagleschools.net) – Systems Development

ECSD will establish a District Restorative Practices Leadership Team (RPLT) comprising the Restorative Practices Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, school administrators, counselors, and teacher leaders. This diverse team will utilize their varied expertise in restorative practices and discipline policies to ensure a comprehensive approach that incorporates multiple perspectives. Funding from the EARSS grant will compensate 17 staff for their participation on the RPLT, recognizing the extra hours they will dedicate to this critical work. The team will consist of diverse stakeholders, including teachers, counselors, and administrators from each school, ensuring a comprehensive approach.

Englewood 1

Diana Zakhem (diana_zakhem@engschools.net) – Cohort 3

Englewood Schools will implement an intensive Credit Recovery and GED Lab for students attending Englewood High School (EHS) and Colorado's Finest High School of Choice (CFHSC). This lab will address the critical need for credit recovery options and GED preparation resources coupled with extensive wrap-around supports to ultimately increase high school completion rates and enable better academic and professional opportunities for our target population, including the support of students who are at risk of dropping out based on habitual truancy and chronic absenteeism.

Garfield County School District 16

Claudia Flores Cruz (cflorescruz@garfield16.org) – Cohort 2

Garfield County School District 16 hopes to implement services that meet the needs of students (K-12) with high acuity mental and physical health needs with the goal of improving their overall school experience. Garfield County School District 16 (Garfield 16) hopes to support these students and their families through the following roles: Family Meeting Facilitator, Student Advocate, and Student Support Services Coordinator.

Gunnison Watershed School District RE-1J

Megan Wells (mwells@gunnisonschools.net) – Cohort 2

Gunnison Watershed School District will provide intensive, individualized support to students to overcome barriers to attendance and academic growth, as well as provide restorative services for students who are assigned in-school suspension. Over 15% percent of the K-12 students in our district are identified as having some risk for academic failure and/or discipline referral. This targeted support intends to improve overall outcomes in youth behavior and functioning, family support/resources, and maintenance in our school setting.

Harrison School District 2

Brett Nelson (brenelson@hsd2.org) – Cohort 1

Harrison School District 2 EARSS Intervention program is designed to improve academics and behavior of 9th - 12th grade students in two high schools in southeast Colorado Springs. Two EARSS instructors (interventionists) will serve 83 EARSS-eligible students by

working with families to examine root causes, providing online and technology based learning, and promoting positive student-staff mentoring and relationships, restorative practices, and wraparound case management. This program will increase the social-emotional health of our students and improve our graduation rate.

Las Animas School District RE-1

Adams Combs (adam.combs@academy-la.com) – Cohort 1

Las Animas School District will serve 100 most at-risk middle and high school students from the Academy of Las Animas, an online school that serves students statewide. Funding will allow the Academy to provide case management, social and emotional learning support, services to increase parent engagement, and crucial resources to re-engage and support at-risk students academically who are demonstrating warning signs for dropping-out of school.

Mesa County Valley School District 51

Amy Frazier (amy.frazier@d51schools.org)

District 51 is experiencing extreme behavior post COVID and the students involved are getting younger. We propose Bounce Back, an expulsion/pre-expulsion program designed to develop specific skills in the area of anger management, cognitive moral reasoning, restorative problem solving, empathy, mindfulness/self-regulation and self-care. Pre-Expulsion will serve high school students with multiple out of school suspensions. Expulsion will serve middle schools and high school students separately. High school will focus on credit accrual and recovery.

Montezuma County Mancos School District RE-6

Janet Fogel (jfogel@mancosre6.edu) – Cohort 1

MSD's EARSS Program will provide social, emotional, and behavioral support toEARSS eligible students.

Montrose County School District RE-1J

Jack Christensen (john.christensen@mcsd.org) – Cohort 2

The Student Wellness and Engagement (SWE) model operates as a tiered intervention for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The purpose of SWE is to provide

prevention and intervention for attendance, behavior and social-emotional wellbeing through a district-wide mechanism that is operated out of the Engagement Center (EC). SWE was developed as a result of increased chronic absenteeism, behavior needs, and lack of engagement in all levels. As needs increase, SWE will expand to increase prevention and intervention strategies.

Poudre School District R-1

Kate Sherrill (ksherrill@psdschools.org) – Cohort 2

Boltz Middle School (BMS) and Fort Collins High School (FCHS) propose an EARRS-funded transition program, impacting up to 160 7th-10th grade students every year. A strong partnership between middle and high school provides a greater impact on student success with a proactive approach to improving graduation rates. Grant monies will support one (1) FTE Transition Counselor position: .5 FTE housed at Boltz Middle School and .5 FTE housed at FCHS in addition to programming that facilitates effective student transition and engagement.

Pueblo County School District 70

Chris Slobodnik (cslobodnik@district70.org) – Cohort 1

Pueblo County District 70's proposed program will help expelled/students at-risk of expulsion by addressing the barriers that disrupt their school experience. A Student Support Advocate and a Wraparound Case Manager (Student Support Team) will provide support and services to a minimum of 200 students in grades six through twelve. The main focus of the team is to form "supportive" relationships with the student s so they can experience academic progress, increase attendance and/or demonstrate improvements in behavior or social emotional functioning.

Roaring Fork School District RE-1

Sarah Frederick (sfrederick@rfschools.com) – Cohort 2

Since 2018, Roaring Fork School District (RFSD) has been working with an EARSS grant to improve outcomes for at- risk students in regard to their behavior, attendance, and discipline. Despite significant efforts, we continue to struggle to serve our EARSS-eligible students - especially students of color. This application seeks to expand and refine our current promising strategies and prioritize and implement culturally responsive,

student- and family-centered, equitable strategies to serve at-risk students. Approximately 400 students in grades K-12 would be served.

Sheridan 2

Shelagh Burke (sburke@ssd2.org) – Cohort 3

The purpose of this application is to provide targeted support and interventions for approximately 260 secondary students (approximately 20% of students) in Sheridan School District who are struggling academically due to habitual absenteeism, or from behaviors and social emotional functioning that resulted in out-of-school suspension or expulsion. This grant will provide resources to address the three identified goals, and help the students served by the grant to graduate and be college and career ready.

South Conejos RE-10

Josephine Montoya (jomontoya@southconejos.com – Systems Development

Establishing protocol and training staff in in order to provide real-time behavioral support, de-escalating students allowing the students in crisis and returning to the classroom as quickly as possible, minimiing lost learning time.

St Vrain Valley School District RE-1J

Hilary Sontag (Sontag_hilary@svvsd.org) – Cohort 2

Longs Peak Middle School, Sunset Middle School, and Frederick High School will serve approximately 300 5th - 12th graders annually, utilizing a family-centered and culturally responsive approach to strengthen attendance and academic achievement among chronically absent students. Strategies will include case management, family engagement, home visits, attendance plans, counseling/mentoring, and restorative practices. The schools will also emphasize career/future-connected planning and research-based family engagement strategies such as the Academic Parent Teacher Teams program.

St Vrain Valley School District RE-1J

Kristin Hefflon (hefflon_kristin@svvsd.org) – Cohort 3

St. Vrain Valley Schools will utilize EARSS funds to serve chronically absent students at three schools: New Meridian High School, Niwot High school, and Skyline High School.

The schools will serve chronically absent 9th and 10th graders, working with students and families to address root causes of chronic absenteeism while also increasing future focused, career-connected conversations and planning in alignment with students' individual career and academic plan (ICAP). The overall goals of the grant are to increase attendance, academic achievement, and effective planning for postsecondary/workforce goals.

Teller County – Cripple Creek-Victor School District RE-1

Miriam Mondragon (mmondragon@ccvschools.com – Cohort 1

REPS (Restore, Engage, & Provide Support) through four essential positions – one elementary and one secondary Dean of Students: one secondary Family and Student success Advocate and one secondary College & Career Advisor. Each will play a significant role in the lives of our 173 at-risk, expelled, and suspended youth through social-emotional health, whole-child behavior management/coordination of resources, Restorative Practices, and post-secondary success. REPS will transform the culture of our district from exclusion to early intervention and support.

Trinidad School District 1

Deana Pachelli (deana.pachelli@trinidad.k12.co.us) – Cohort 1

Trinidad Middle School's (TMS) will provide case management services including educational services, social and emotional learning support, parent/family engagement support, and referral services to ensure that students at risk of academic failure and/or are demonstrating warning signs for dropping out of school receive the services needed to overcome barriers.

Upper Rio Grande School District C-7

Aaron Horrocks (ahorrocks@urtigers.co) – Cohort 2

Upper Rio Grande School District works with local programs to increase student achievement and address behavior concerns in our students. We will serve at least 60 students per year though clubs, mentorship, and essential skills building.

Valley School District

Elizabeth Mauler (maulere@re1valleyschools.org) – Cohort 1

Valley R-1 School District will provide case management, social and emotional learning support, services to increase parent engagement, and crucial resources to re-engage and support at-risk students academically who are demonstrating warning signs for dropping-out of school.

Facility Schools

Griffith Centers for Children

Lena Cazeaux (lena_terrapin@me.com) – Cohort 1

EARSS funding will be utlizied to launch a Vocational Program at Griffith Centers beginning in year one with Culinary Arts and year two Facilities and Maintenance pathways. Vocational educational opportunities will provide options to meet a broader range of learning preferences and student individual educational needs to increase student engagement in school; improve attendance; and facilitate greater social-emotional functioning among 110 students per year in grades K-12 from 12 school districts along the front range.

Laradon Hall

Keenan White (keenan.white@laradon.org) – Cohort 2

The Laradon School supports K-12 students with intellectual/developmental disabilities with significant behavioral needs. We are developing an intensive literacy engagement and growth project to improve and strengthen the academic, behavioral and transition outcomes of our students. By diversifying and increasing literacy instruction and supports, we believe we will see an increase in literacy growth, higher levels of engagement in all learning, and grow the number of students returning to a less restrictive environment.

Roundup School

Kathy Stults (kstults@rup.org) – Cohort 2

In order to continue our progress in meeting our student's needs and the goal to rejoin their home school while reducing suspension, explsion, and truancy potential, Roundup Fellowship will utilize EARSS funding to enhance our BCBA (Board Certified Behavioral Analysts) and RBT (Registered Behavior Technician) program. Through expanding and enhancing our program we will see imporved educational course performance, reduced out-of-school time, and improved social-emotional competence.

Tennyson Center for Children

Djuana Osbyz (djuana.osby@tennysoncenter.org) – Cohort 1

Tennyson Center for Children EARSS Motivational Interviewing (MI) framework is an evidence-based approach that empowers students to influence their own change. MI taps into a student's executive functioning, teaches problem-solving skills, self-awareness, goal setting, and decision-making that overlays social-emotional learning and improves academic, life, and social skills. Deployment of the MI framework will increase student engagement and attendance in school while facilitating social-emotional functioning among a minimum of 60 K-12 students served per year.

Third Way Center

Amy Thomas (athomas@thirdwaycenter.org) – Cohort 2

The Successful Futures Project will enhance the school performance, engagement, graduation rates, family/community involvement and vocational opportunities for 160 high school students at Third Way Center. These youth are considered the most at-risk in the state with numerous suspensions, expulsions and up to 30 previous human service placements. This project will include a variety of academic (arts and voc-ed) opportunities that will lead to an increase in GPA, an increase in course completion and thus in graduation rates, and an increase in prosocial skills leading to a decrease in suspension rates.