COLORADO
Department of Education

2024-25 State Policy Report: Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Submitted to:

Office of the Governor

Colorado State Board of Education

Colorado House Education Committee

Colorado Senate Education Committee

This report was prepared pursuant to C.R.S. 22-14-111 and covers the 2024-25 school year. State law requires the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement to complete an annual report summarizing progress in statewide metrics and individual grant programs administered by the office. Data included in this report are from the 2024-25 Student End-of-Year Snapshot, Student October Snapshot, the Student Discipline and Attendance collections, and End of Year surveys completed by grantees. It was prepared by the following staff.

Jewel Sale
Data and Evaluation Lead; Sale_J@cde.state.co.us
Johann Liljengren
Director; Liljengren_J@cde.state.co.us

April 2026

Pathways, Policies and Partnerships
Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement
201 E. Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80203

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Outcome Overview 3

Support Efforts 3

Graduation and Completion 5

Graduation Rates 5

Completion Rates 5

Student Engagement 9

School Attendance 10

Discipline and Behavior 12

Stability / Mobility 15

Dropout 17

Student Re-engagement 19

Alternative Campuses (AECs), Charter Schools, and Online Schools 20

Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) 20

Charter Schools 21

Online Schools 22

Ninth Grade Course Reporting 23

Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement 26

Student Engagement Priority – CDE Strategic Plan 26

Dropout Prevention Initiatives 27

Legislative Review 27

Policy and Practice Implications 28

Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement Office Grants 31

DPSR Program Evaluation 31

Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program 32

Student Re-engagement Grant Program 33

Ninth Grade Success Grant Program 36

Conclusion 39

Executive Summary

Outcomes on student engagement and long-term success help us better understand students' connection to school and learning and Colorado's progress in improving student outcomes. This report provides an overview of key metrics including attendance, behavior, dropout and graduation, as well as initiatives facilitated and supported by Colorado Department of Education's (CDE's) Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. The office leads legislatively directed projects and designs initiatives to meet district, school and students aligned with one of the CDE's four strategic priorities: increasing student engagement.

Outcome Overview

Statewide outcomes continued to improve in the 2024-25 school year in most measures after a substantial impact from the pandemic. This includes the highest graduation and completion rates and lowest dropout rates recorded. The 2024-25 school year data shows:

- The four-year graduation rate improved to 85.6 percent, an increase of 2,069 graduates compared to the prior year. The improvement was widespread with the majority of districts (about 69 percent) experiencing four-year graduation rates that were the same or better than the prior year (128 of the 185 local education agencies or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).
- Five-, six- and seven-year graduation rates continue to improve with the highest increase in the five-year rate.
- The most recent seven-year completion rate, which includes graduates and students receiving a high school equivalency diploma, increased to 90.1 percent.
- The dropout rate declined to 1.6 percent, the lowest rate recorded with 1,413 fewer students than the previous year.
- A 0.2 percentage point reduction in the percentage of students who moved schools within the year (student mobility).

While there were some improvements in student attendance, the state rates remained flat or were slightly worse. This includes:

- A statewide chronic absenteeism rate of 28.1 percent, meaning that more than one out of every four Colorado students was chronically absent in 2024-25. This remains above pre-pandemic levels and was higher than the 2023-24 school year.
- An average daily attendance rate of 91.4 percent, a slight decline from the previous year.

There were also differing trends between student groups with some gaps closing slightly and other gaps remaining the same. This included:

- A slight closing of gaps in four-year graduation and dropout rates based on race and ethnicity and student services. However, even with these improvements, gaps still remain.
- Similar gaps were present between groups in student attendance and over-representation of students with disabilities and some racial/ethnic groups in discipline actions.

Support Efforts

The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement manages department initiatives and works across CDE and other agencies to support efforts to improve student engagement and academic outcomes in school. This includes directly managing three competitive state grant programs, supporting the collection and use of data and facilitating projects that help districts identify and use effective strategies. This report focuses on efforts within the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement.

During the 2024-25 school year, Colorado Department of Education's (CDE's) Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement managed $13,473,111 in state grant funding for districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and facility schools, directly serving more than 10,000 students through grant funded programs. The goal of each competitive grant is to support programs that improve student and school outcomes while identifying strategies that can be replicated statewide.

In addition, the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement supported implementation of state legislation and projects, including:

- Continued training and technical support around the new Dropout Prevention Framework, an evidence-based framework of foundational practices and prioritized strategies for intervention.
- Expanded professional learning options, virtually and in-person, for student attendance and behavior. This included options for new and veteran staff to learn effective practices, hear presentations from other districts and plan for implementation.
- Supported the Every School Day Matters! Attendance Campaign, designed to highlight the importance of daily school attendance and encouraged participation in the "50% Reduction Attendance Challenge" aimed at decreasing the chronic absentee rate by half from its pandemic-era high of 34.5 percent. The campaign also provided resources to families, caregivers, school and district communication teams and school and district leaders. More than 50 districts have signed on to participate.
- Developed an Attendance Goal Calculator dashboard where school and district leaders can use current information to see what is needed to achieve their 50 percent reduction goal.
- Led operational work of House Bill 24-1216, Supports for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System, including overseeing the interagency working group, coordinating data discussions, developing required guidance, facilitating the development of rules on credit transfer and aligning efforts across department offices and initiatives.

Graduation and Completion

Graduation and completion rates are calculated every year at the school, district and state level. These rates provide information on the percentage of students who meet all graduation requirements and receive a diploma (graduation) and adds those students who meet the requirements of a high school equivalency diploma (completion). The rates are based on an Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) that is assigned to each student, in most cases when a student enters 9th grade.

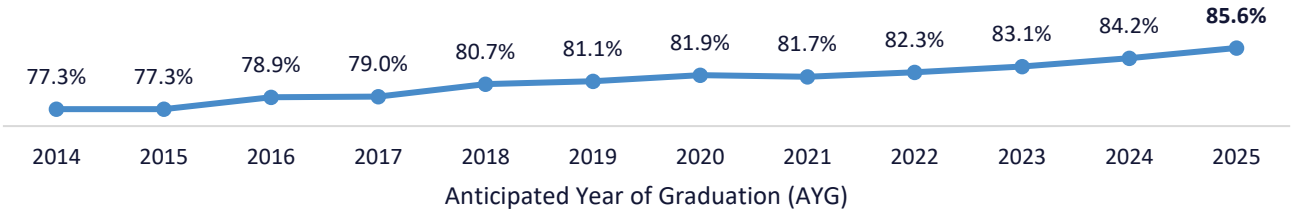
- Detailed information, definitions and a data dashboard are available at Graduation Statistics.

Graduation Rates

Overall, graduation rates in 2024-25 improved in comparison to 2023-24. After a slight decline in 2021, the four-year rate has increased steadily, reaching a record high of 85.6 percent (**Chart 1**). This increase resulted in 2,069 more graduates than the previous year.

- The improvement was widespread, with about 69 percent of districts (128 of 185 local education agencies (LEAs) and BOCES) reporting four-year graduation rates that were the same or better than the prior year.

Chart 1: Four-Year Graduation Rate



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

Extended Graduation Rates

Improvements were evident in extended graduation rates with additional students graduating from each AYG cohort. Colorado calculates graduation rates for students who meet graduation requirements in five, six or seven years (**Table 1**).

- The largest increases continue to be evident in the five-year rate with an additional 3.6 percentage points for the 2024 cohort.
- The six- and seven-year rates have not improved at the same rates as the four- and five-years rates over time with a smaller gap of 5.3 percentage points now evident between the most recent four- and seven-year rate.

Table 1: Extended Graduation Rates

AYG	4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
2025	85.6%	available in 2025-26	available in 2026-27	available in 2027-28
2024	84.2%	87.8%	available in 2025-26	available in 2026-27
2023	83.1%	86.8%	87.8%	available in 2025-26
2022	82.3%	86.1%	87.1%	87.6%

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

Completion Rates

In addition to students graduating with a high school diploma, 912 students in the AYG 2025 cohort completed high school by receiving a certificate of high school completion or a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED).

Over the past 10 years, an additional 1.5 to 1.8 percent of students have completed high school in each AYG cohort (**Table 2**). This has remained consistent even with the increase in graduation rates.

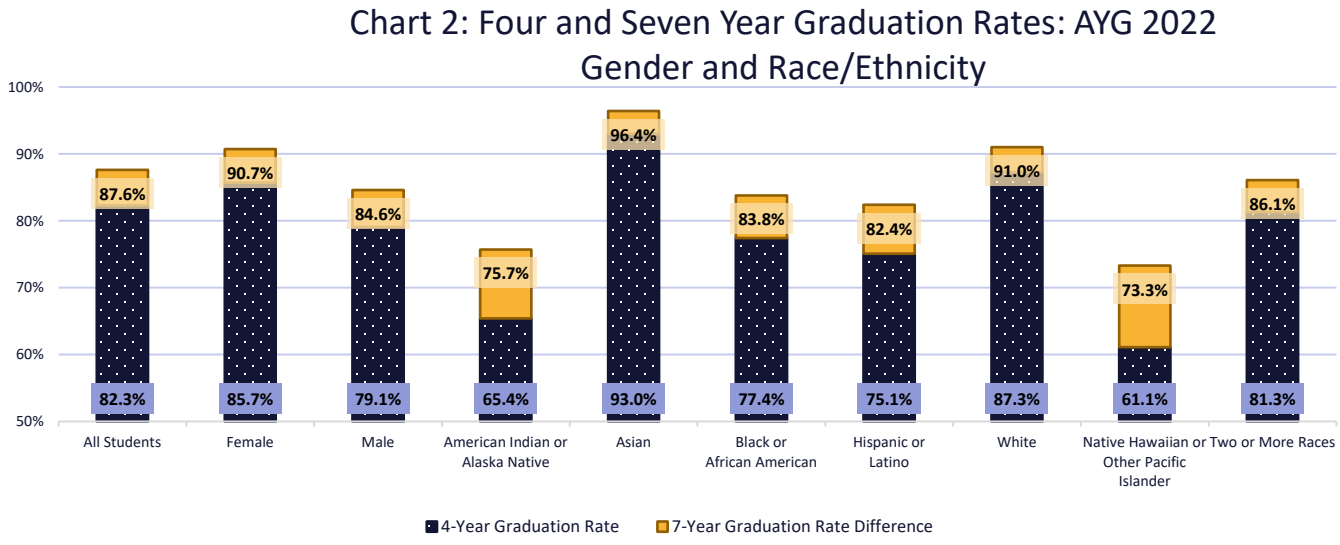
Table 2: Completion Rates

AYG	4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
2025	86.9%	available in 2025-26	available in 2026-27	available in 2027-28
2024	85.6%	89.7%	available in 2025-26	available in 2026-27
2023	84.6%	88.8%	90.0%	available in 2025-26
2022	84.1%	88.3%	89.5%	90.1%

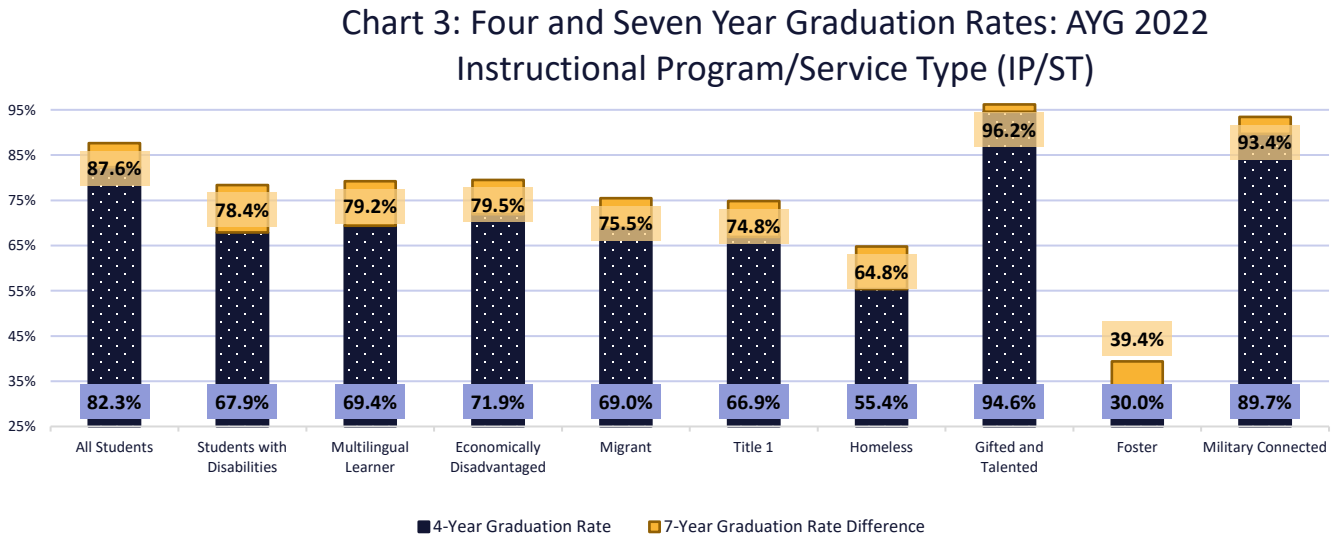
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Extended Year Graduation Rates by Student Groups

In disaggregated extended year graduation rates, additional students in each group graduate by their 7th year. Improvements were seen in most student groups across 4-, 5-, 6- and 7-year. This included larger growth between four and seven for some groups, such as students with disabilities, those in foster care and students who are homeless but not at a high enough rate to close the gaps completely. However, substantial gaps remain between student groups. This is true by gender, race/ethnicity and instructional program/service type (IP/ST) groups (**Chart 2 & 3**).



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



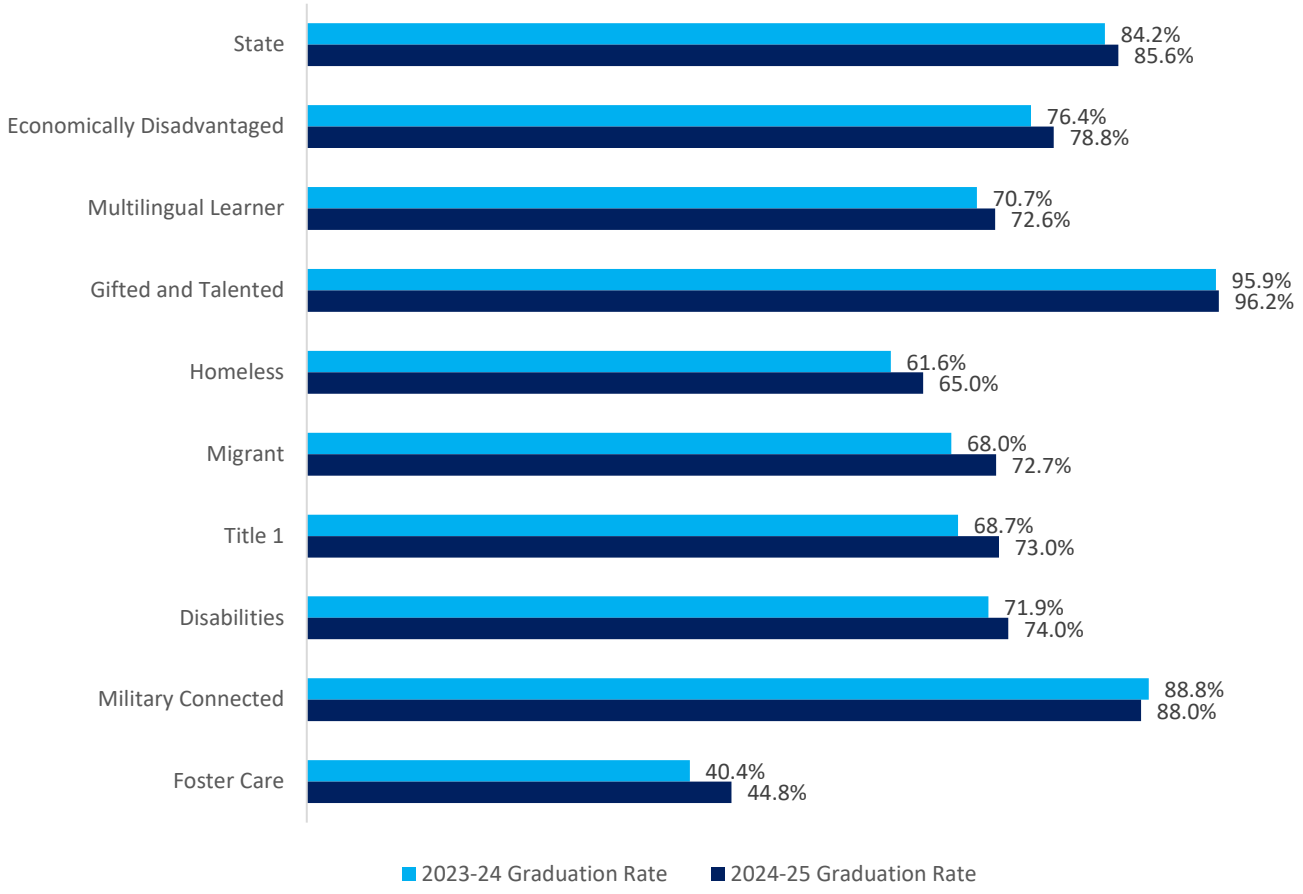
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates by Student Groups

The four-year graduation and completion rates vary by student group. This is true by gender, race/ethnicity and IP/ST. While almost all groups saw improvements in the 2024-25 year, with the exception of military connected and Asian students, there are substantial gaps that remain.

- The four-year graduation rate was the highest among Asian students (92.6 percent) and lowest among American Indian or Alaska Native students (71.3 percent).
- The greatest four-year graduation rate gains from 2024 to 2025 were among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students, who had an increase of 7.3 percentage points. Both the American Indian or Other Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander student groups include small populations. As a result, rates for these groups may fluctuate significantly due to small changes in student counts.
- Seven of the nine groups had a four-year graduation rate that grew more than the change in statewide rate (**Chart 4**).
- Both male and female students saw rises in both four-year graduation and completion rates during the 2024-25 school year. Female students continue to have higher graduation and completion rates than male students. Additionally, non-binary students saw improvements in both four-year graduation and completion rates. Non-binary students comprised fewer than 0.1 percent of possible graduates in 2024-25.

Chart 4: Colorado Statewide Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates in 2023-24 and 2024-25 by 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. Student groups are not mutually exclusive, as a student may belong to more than one category. In the 2020-21 school year, students with disabilities who had met graduation requirements but were returning for transition services were able to be counted as graduates for the first time, potentially leading to a slightly higher graduation rates in the subsequent school years.*

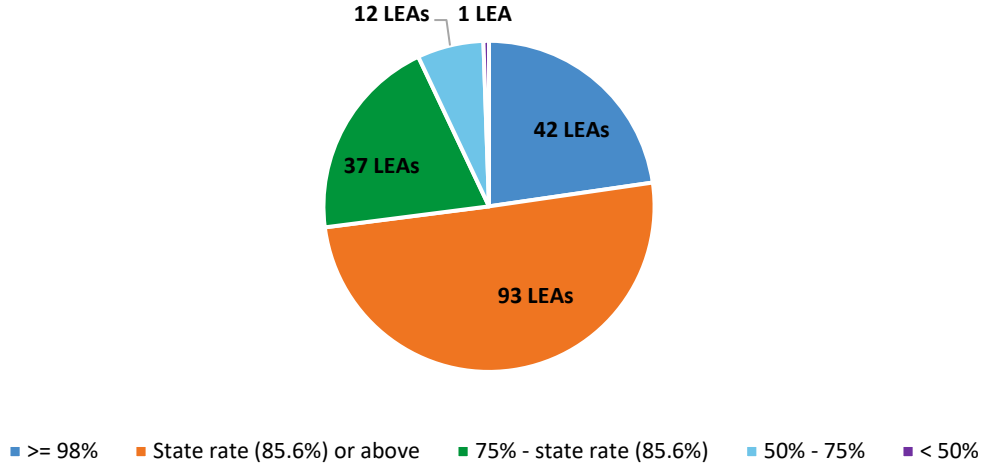
District and School Overview – Graduation and Completion

The majority (72.4 percent) of the 185 Colorado school districts and BOCES had graduation and completion rates above the statewide average, and more than half saw improved four-year graduation rates in 2024-25 (**Chart 5**). This included:

- A growing number of LEAs (137 out of 185; 8 more than the previous year) met or exceeded an 85 percent graduation rate, which is the target set on Colorado's School and District Performance Framework. Only 9 percent of districts have a "best of" graduation rate lower than 85 percent, which is considered approaching or does not meet on the accountability framework cut points.
- Forty-two LEAs achieved a four-year graduation rate of 98 percent or above in 2024 (seven more LEAs than in 2024).
- More than half of LEAs (55.1 percent) reported an increase in their four-year graduation rate from the 2023-24 school year, with most gains ranging from 0 and 5 percentage points.

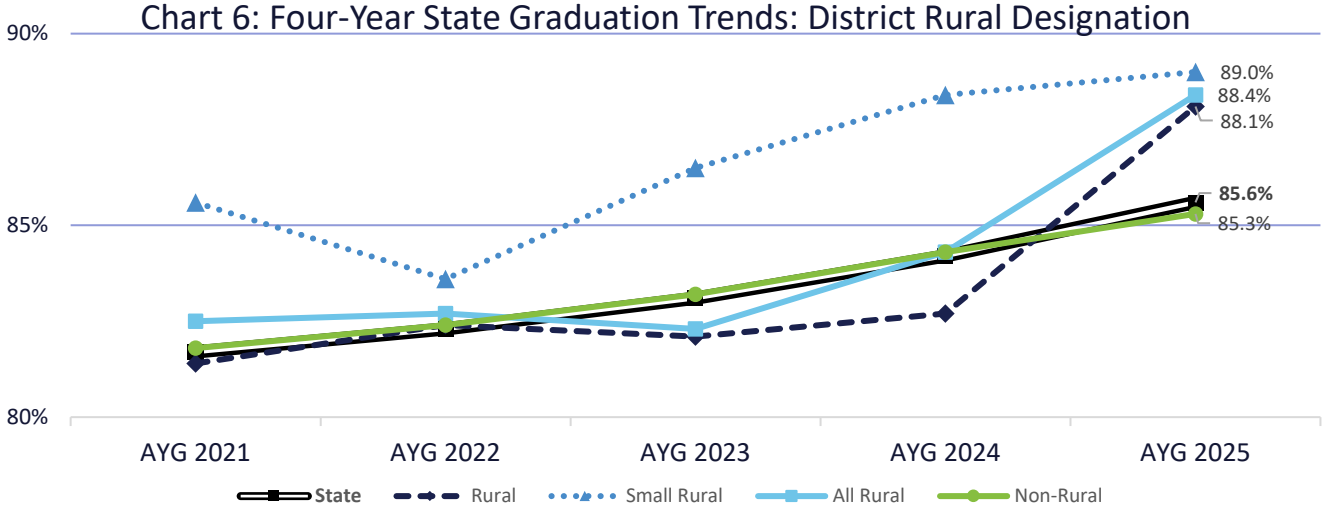
- Only 31.4 percent of LEAs saw a decrease in their graduation rates, with just under half decreasing greater than 5 percentage points.
- Small rural and rural designated districts had higher four-year graduation rates for AYG 2025 than the state and have been trending upwards over the last few years (**Chart 6**).

Chart 5: LEA Four-Year Graduation Rates for the 2024-25 School Year



Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement
Note: LEA = Local Education Agency

Chart 6: Four-Year State Graduation Trends: District Rural Designation



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

Note that rates for LEAs with small numbers of anticipated graduates can fluctuate widely from year to year with a change in only 1 or 2 students. When looking more specifically at district rates by geographic setting, there are varying four-year graduation and completion rates. All but Remote and BOCES saw increases in comparison to the 2024 graduation and completion rates. Three settings remain below the statewide average.

Student Engagement

CDE annually collects measures of student engagement that include mobility, dropout, attendance, behavior and discipline data at the school, district and state level. These measures are often early indicators of disengagement and dropout risk and are used by local and state level staff to identify areas of support or need.

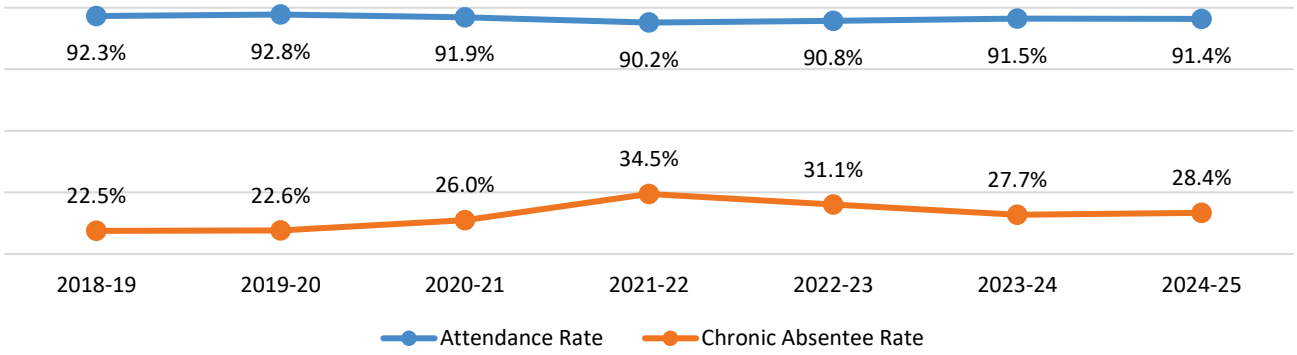
School Attendance

Overall, attendance metrics in 2024-25 remained flat or worsened slightly in comparison to 2023-24. This included:

- An increase in the chronic absenteeism rate from 27.7 percent to 28.4 percent, a rise of 0.7 percentage points. This represents approximately 3,500 more students who were chronically absent compared with the previous year (**Chart 7**). Chronic absenteeism measures students with inconsistent attendance who may experience disrupted learning.
- A slight decline in the attendance rate from 91.5 percent to 91.4 percent (**Chart 7**).
- Mixed district-level results, with more than half of LEAs (107 of 185 LEAs and BOCES) improving chronic absentee rates and 105 improving attendance rates.
- Habitually truant students totaled 127,727 statewide, including 17.4 percent who had four unexcused absences in a single month (22,178 students) and the same proportion had 10 unexcused absences in the school year (22,164 students).

Attendance data is reported to CDE through an end-of-year data collection. Records are submitted at the student level and CDE reports an attendance rate, a truancy rate, the number of habitually truant students and the chronic absenteeism rate. CDE collects school and district level attendance data. **More information** on student attendance can be found at CDE Attendance Information.

Chart 7: State Attendance and Chronic Absentee Rates



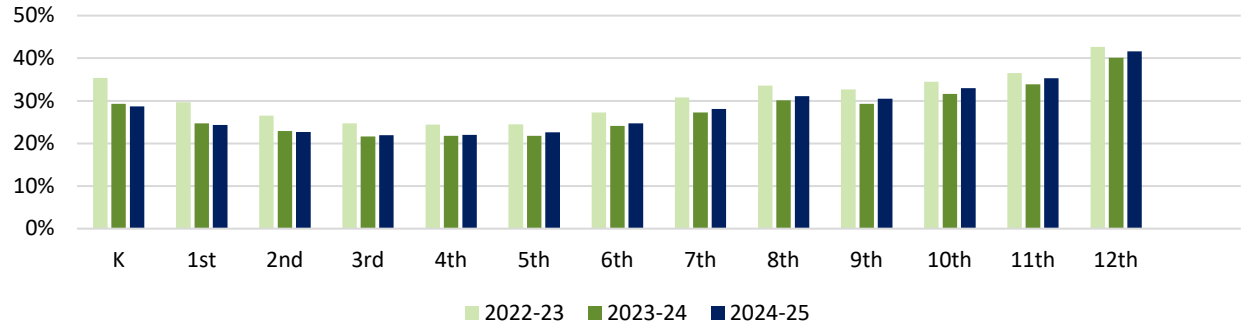
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Changes and Impacts on Student Groups

Chronic absenteeism continues to impact a large number of districts, schools and students with more than one out of every four Colorado students chronically absent (244,622 students). These rates are above pre-pandemic levels.

- While there are higher numbers of students chronically absent in the high school grade levels (about 40 percent of the chronically absent students), attendance remains a challenge across all K-12 grades.
- There were positive trends in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade with all other grade levels having increases in the percentage of students who were chronically absent (**Chart 8**).

Chart 8: Chronic Absentee Rate by Grade

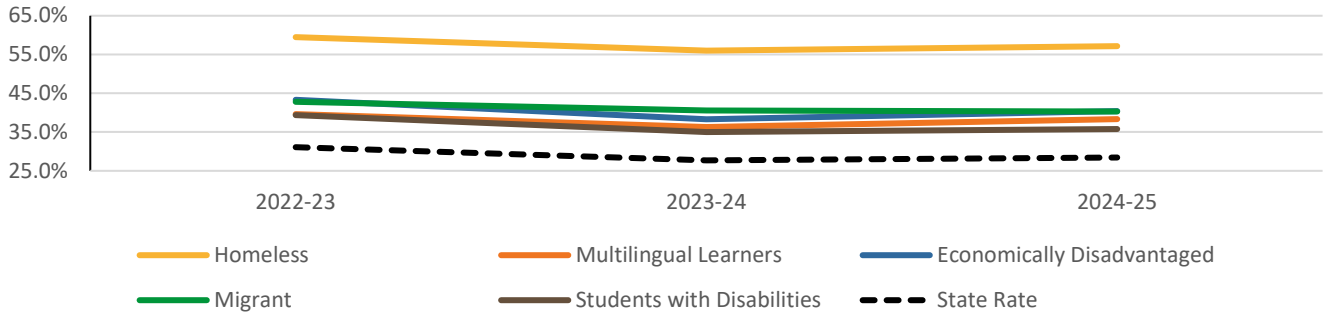


Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Rates by Instructional Program Service Type

There is variation among student groups with some groups having lower rates of attendance and higher rates of chronic absenteeism than the statewide average of 28.4 percent. This included Multilingual Learners (38.4 percent), students with Individualized Education Program (IEPs) (35.8 percent), students who qualify for free/reduced price lunch (40.4 percent), homeless students (57.1 percent) and migrant students (40.3 percent). These student groups followed a similar trend to the statewide rate, only migrant students had a 0.3 percentage point decrease; all other groups had increases (**Chart 9**).

Chart 9: Chronic Absentee Rate by Instructional Program Service Type



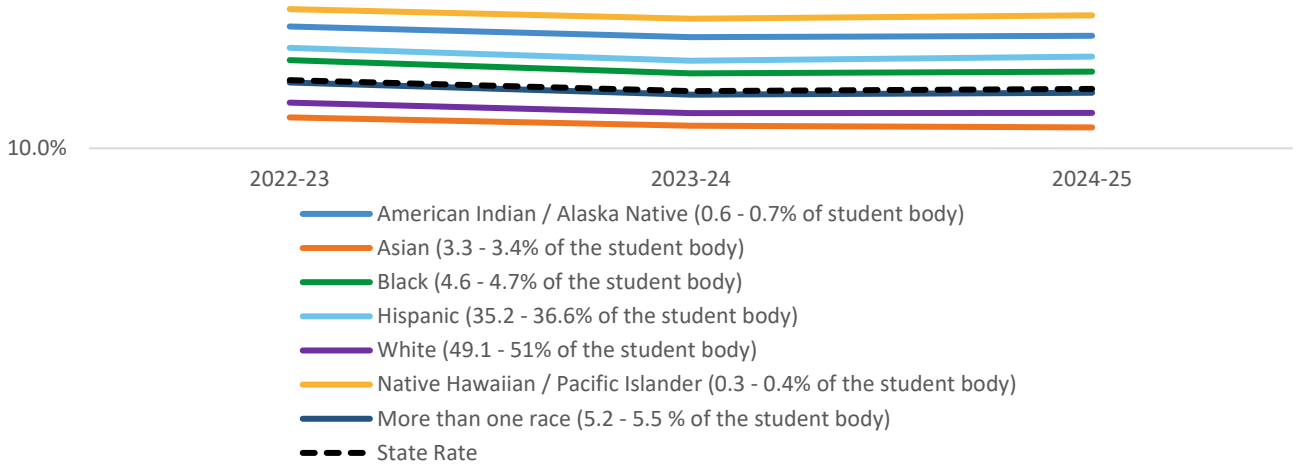
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Rates by Student Race/Ethnicity

Rates of chronic absenteeism increased and attendance rates decreased in all student groups except among Asian students (**Chart 10**). This includes:

- Black (33.7 percent) and Hispanic (38.4 percent) students were above the state average. Hispanic students saw the largest increase with 4,569 additional chronically absent students (1.3 percentage points).
- White students (21.0 percent), Asian students (16.5 percent) and students with two or more races (27.2 percent) were below the average and Asian students saw a 0.5 percentage point decrease.
- The two groups with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism are also the smallest groups of students: American Indian/Alaska Native (5,203 total students – 44.8 percent) and Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (3,208 total students – 51.1 percent).

Chart 10: Chronic Absentee Rate by Race/Ethnicity



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

Discipline and Behavior

Updated data collection: The 2024-25 school year marks the second year for a number of required changes to the discipline and behavior collection. The changes allow additional analysis and level of detail. Specifically, in the 2022 legislative session, House Bill 22 – 1376 included requirements for district and state level reporting alongside other data on school learning environments and a change to student level collection with each incident connected to a behavior, a student and discipline action. Trends for this data are reported at the district and state level and disaggregated by student groups.

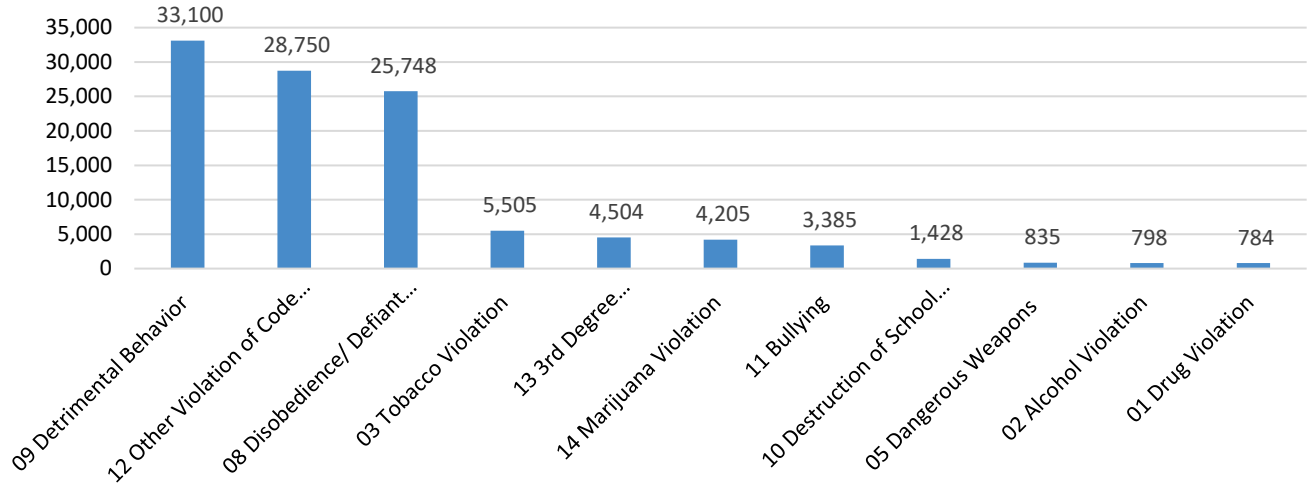
CDE collects information on student behavior incidents that violated their district's code of conduct that resulted in some type of disciplinary action. This includes in- and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and other actions. State- and district-level statistics can be explored using the District Profile Reports dashboard. Further information on the definitions, background and calculation of these statistics can be found on the dashboard.

Incidents and Behaviors

There were a total of 109,438 unique behavior incidents reported during the 2024-25 school year (**Chart 11**).

- Three of the 16 behavior categories accounted for 80 percent of the total behavior incidents: detrimental behavior, disobedience/defiant or repeated interference, and other code of conduct violations.
- Drug and alcohol violations accounted for 10 percent of behaviors.
- High-severity behaviors, including but not limited to dangerous weapons, felony, robbery and sexual violence, accounted for 1 percent of behaviors.
- *Note that in each incident, one or more students could have been involved and there may have been multiple discipline actions. Additionally, only the most serious behavior applies to all students in the incident.*

Chart 11: Most Common Behavior Incidents 2024-25



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

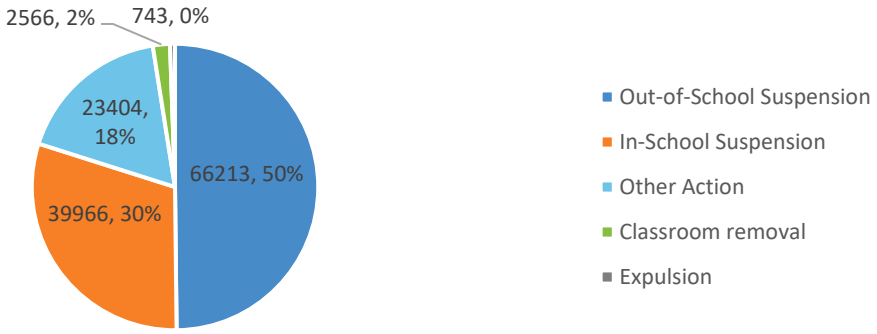
Note: The remaining behavior incidents (1st, 2nd Degree or Vehicular Assault, Robbery, Other Felony, Sexual Violence, and Rape or Attempted Rape) add up to a count of less than 1,000.

Discipline Actions

During the 2024-25 school year, there were 132,892 discipline actions reported (**Chart 12**). This is a 3.7 percent increase (4,687 actions) from the previous school year (**Chart 13**). For each incident and behavior, one or more action was selected that could include classroom removal, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion or other discipline action. There were behaviors that resulted in multiple discipline actions.

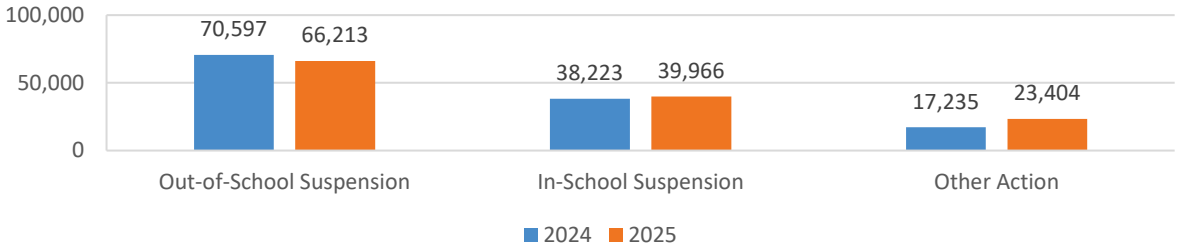
- The majority of discipline actions involved suspensions, with a total of 106,179 in-school and out-of-school suspensions during the 2024-25 school year. This equates to 80 percent of the discipline actions.
- The number of out-of-school suspensions decreased over the last school year from 70,597 to 66,213, which is a 6.2 percent decrease.
- The number of expulsions remained consistent in 2024-25 with 743 total expulsions compared to 744 from the previous year.

Chart 12: Number of Discipline Actions 2024-25



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

Chart 13: Discipline Actions Two Year Trend



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

Note: Classroom removal and expulsion were less than 3,000 total counts so are not shown on the same chart.

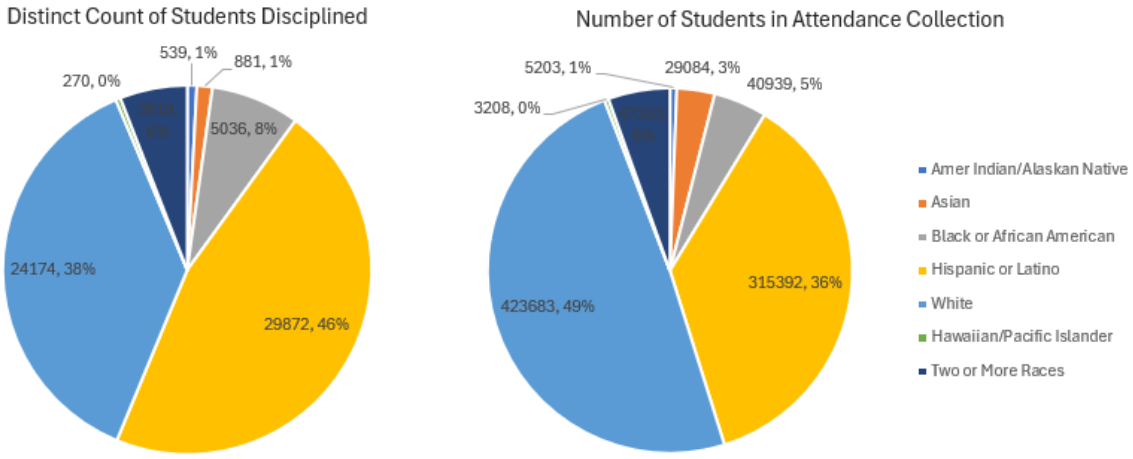
Students Disciplined

There were 64,538 students involved in the 132,892 discipline actions, which is a slight decrease (2 percent) from the 65,791 students in 2023-24. This averages out to roughly two discipline actions per student during the 2024-25 school year, which remains consistent when compared to 2023-24. The 64,538 involved in discipline represents about 7.5 percent of the population in Colorado. However, within the population, involvement is not evenly distributed. The following comparisons to student population use the K-12 collection count.

- Approximately 55 percent of students involved in one or more discipline incidents were in 6th-9th grade.
- Male students represent the majority of students in the discipline collection (68.8 percent of the students disciplined). This is consistent with the past three years.
- Students receiving special education services represented 21.5 percent of students within the discipline collection, while these students represent 14.2 percent of the overall student population.
- Students who are Multilingual Learners represented 16.9 percent of students within the discipline collection. These students represent 15.2 percent of the overall student population.
- Hispanic or Latino students represent the largest racial/ethnic group represented in the discipline collection at almost half (46 percent) of the students. Hispanic or Latino students represent 36 percent of the student population (**Chart 14**).

**Note that students may be included in multiple categories (for instance if they are male and Hispanic)*

Chart 14: Students who Received a Discipline Action by Race/Ethnicity 2024-25 Comparison to Student Population



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

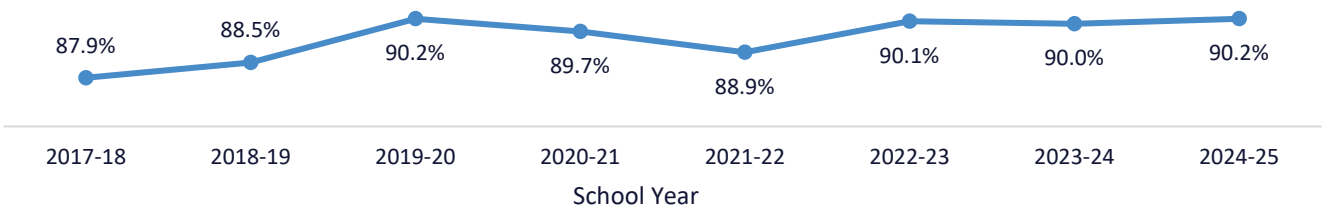
Stability / Mobility

Stability rates have minimal change in 2024-25
Overall, average district stability rates in 2024-25 were consistent with 2023-24 across Colorado (**Chart 15**). This included:

- The average district stability rate slightly increased compared to the prior year.
- Compared to the 2023-24 school year, 112 districts improved in stability (18 more than improved in the previous year).
- Fifteen districts decreased their mobility incidence rate 5 percent or more from the previous year.
- The average school stability rate increased 0.9 percent compared to the prior year.
- The stability rate was maintained or improved in 61 percent of schools compared to the prior year.

Stability and mobility rates show how often students move or remain within a school or district during a school year. The rates are intended to provide a better understanding of which students remained at a school or district without interruption throughout the school year. School level rates focus on movement into/out of a school. District level rates focus on movement into/out of a district. Therefore, a student may be considered mobile for a school but not at the district level if they move between schools in a district. **More information** on mobility can be found at CDE Mobility Information.

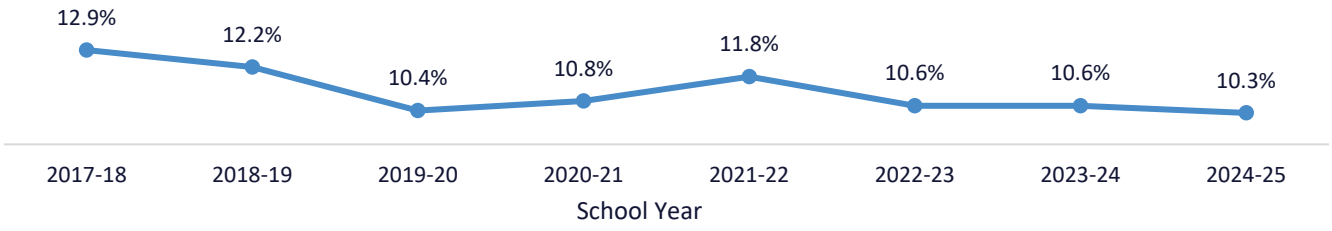
Chart 15: Average District Stability Rate



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

Mobility & Mobility Incidence Rates
Overall, the average school and district rates of mobility and mobility incidence remained consistent in 2024-25, indicating that districts have a stable group of students and student mobility incidents or moves have stabilized (**Chart 16**). Mobility incidence rates are typically higher as they count all moves, including if a student moves multiple times.

Chart 16: Average District Mobility Incidence Rate



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

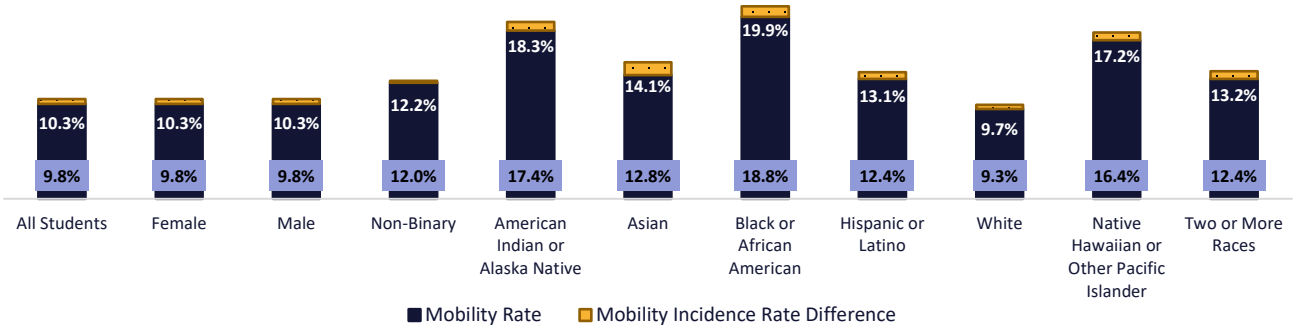
Student Groups

There are multiple student groups that have more mobility instances and higher mobility rates than the general population. This includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Multilingual Learner, migrant and homeless (**Charts 17 and 18**).

- Students experiencing homelessness (28.2 percent, an improvement by 5.6 percentage points from last year), migrant students (25.5 percent, an improvement by 2.1 percentage points from last year), and Multilingual Learners (15.9 percent, an improvement by 1.6 percentage points from last year) have higher mobility rates than the state average.
- Title I students, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students, consistently have mobility statistics similar to the state.

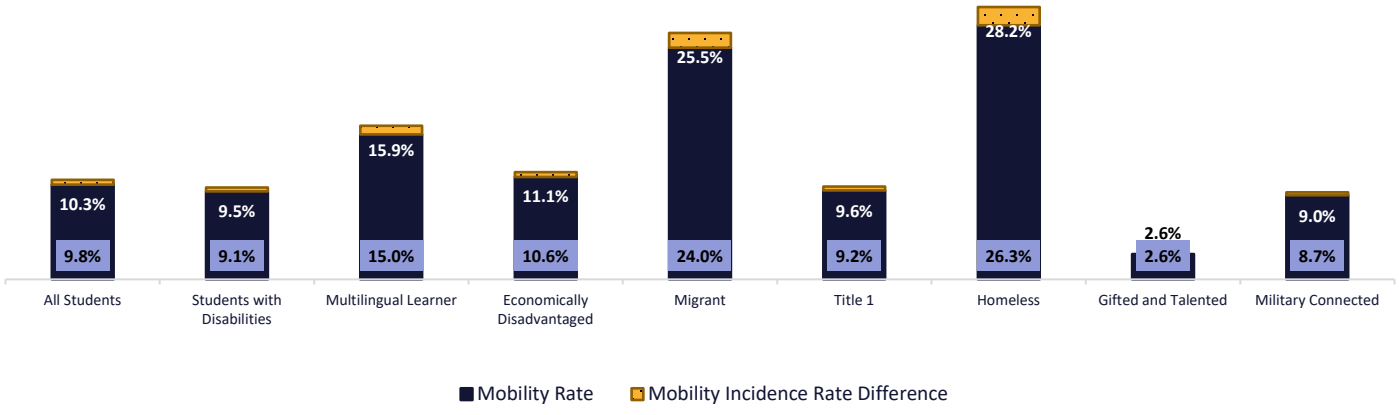
CDE works with school districts who run programs to support highly mobile students. A highly mobile student is defined as a student who experiences (or is at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their K-12 education outside of regular grade promotion. This includes youth in foster care, those experiencing homelessness and migrant students.
Visit the Highly Mobile Youth Frequently Asked Questions page for more information.

Chart 17: 2024-25 Average District Mobility and Mobility Incidence Rates Gender and Race/Ethnicity



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

Chart 17: 2024-25 Average District Mobility and Mobility Incidence Rates Instructional Program/Service Type (IP/ST)



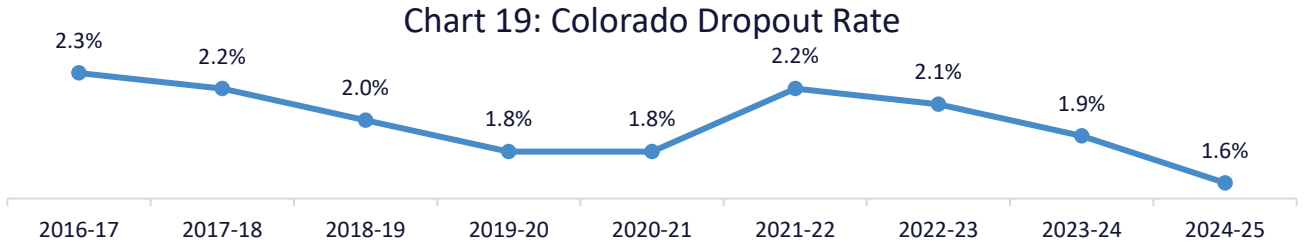
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Dropout

Overall, dropout rates continued the improvement that started in 2021-22 after a large increase directly after the pandemic. This improvement included:

- A reduction in the state dropout rate from 1.9 percent to 1.6 percent in 2024-25. This is a reduction of 0.3 percentage points and represents 1,413 fewer students in grades 7-12 who dropped out. This is the lowest rate that the state has recorded (**Chart 19**).
- The 1.6 percent dropout rate equates to 7,534 students during the 2024-25 school year.
- Dropout rates were the same or better than the prior year in 73 percent of districts (135 of the 185 LEAs or BOCES).

Dropout rates provide a measure of student disengagement within a school year, measuring the percentage of 7th through 12th grade students who left school. School, district and state data is available at Dropout Statistics and on the Dropout Data Dashboard.



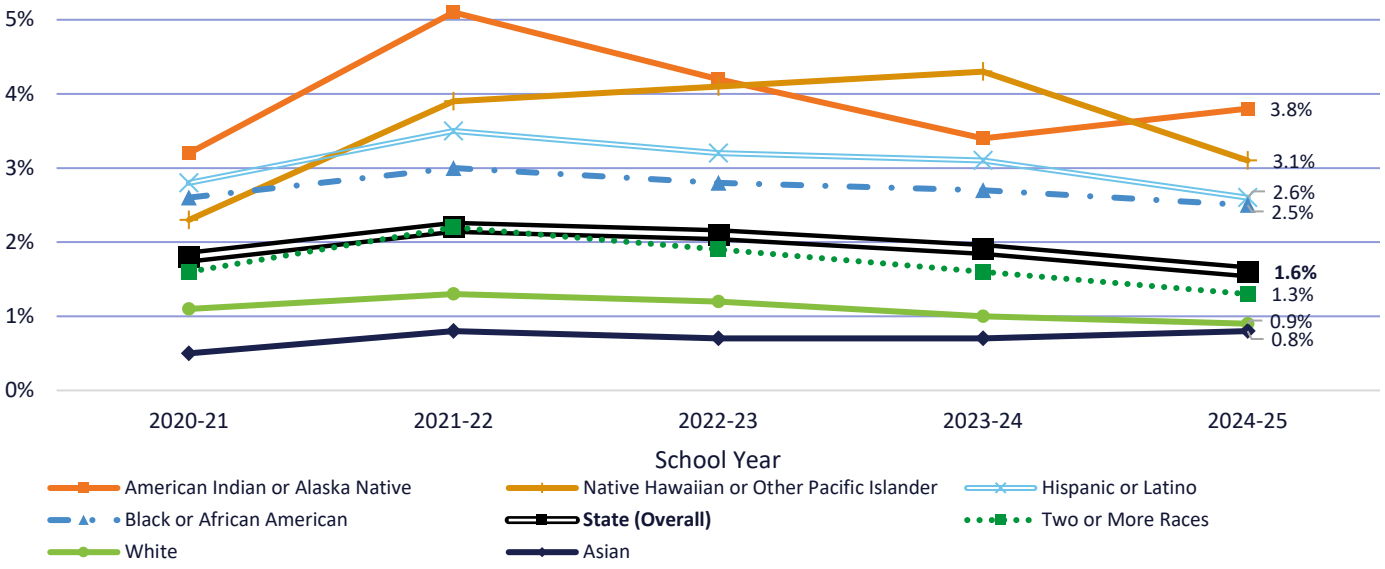
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Student groups

Historically, there have been gaps between groups disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity and IP/ST in the dropout rate.

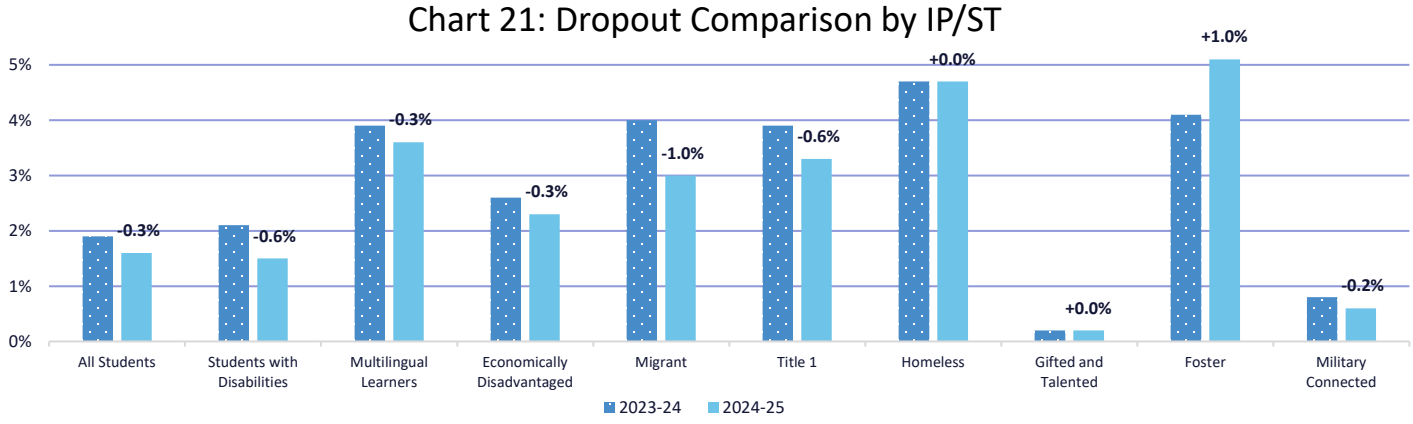
- In the 2024-25 data, there is improvement among all but two racial/ethnic groups, including multiple groups that improved more than the state improvement. Even with these improvements, gaps remain between groups (**Chart 20**).
- Male students continue to have a higher dropout rate than female students (1.8 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively). Non-binary students saw a 0.9 percent increase in the dropout rate in the 2024-25 data. However, it should be noted that non-binary students comprised fewer than 0.1 percent of possible dropouts in 2024-25.
- Students in foster care had the highest dropout rate of the program types and were the only program type whose rate increased from year to year (1 percent increase).
- Several student groups improved at a faster rate than the statewide improvement: students with disabilities (0.6 percentage point change), migrant students (1 percentage point change) and Title I students (0.6 percentage point change) although these groups are still above the state rate (**Chart 21**).

Chart 20: Dropout Trends by Race/Ethnicity



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

Chart 21: Dropout Comparison by IP/ST



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

Concentration of Students who Dropout

While student engagement may be a challenge facing a number of districts across the state, the majority of students who drop out are concentrated in a smaller subset of regions, districts or grade levels.

- Districts below 1,200 students have substantially lower dropout rates and paired with the smaller enrollment numbers, also have a small number of students that drop out.
- About 85 percent of the state's students who drop out last attended one of 21 districts (about 10 percent of the state's districts).
- Twelfth grade students represent about half of the state's students who drop out (52 percent) (**Chart 22**).

Chart 22: Dropout Distribution by Grade Level



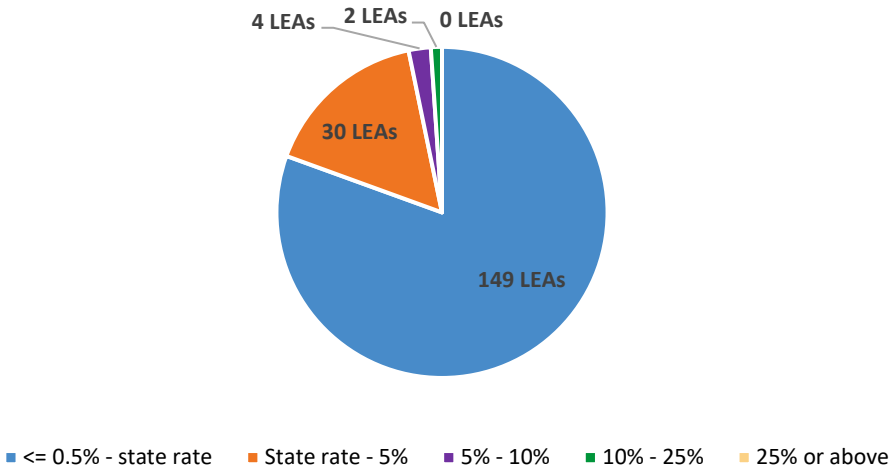
Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement.

Overview of District Dropout Rates

Out of 185 Colorado school districts and BOCES that report dropout rates, more than three quarters were below the statewide average and most districts improved their rates between 2022-23 and 2023-24 or stayed at a dropout rate of less than or equal to 0.5 percent (**Chart 23**).

- One hundred forty-nine districts (80.5 percent) reported a dropout rate below the overall state rate of 1.6 percent. This is consistent with the percentage of districts that were lower than the state rate last year.
- Fifty-nine districts (31.9 percent; 7 less districts than the previous year) reported no dropouts in 2024-25. Forty-eight of those districts (25.9 percent of all districts) also reported no dropouts the previous year.
- Seventy-five districts (40.5 percent) reported a decrease in the dropout rate from the 2023-24 school year, which is 11.1 percent less than did the previous year.

Chart 23: LEA Dropout Rates for the 2024-25 School Year



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

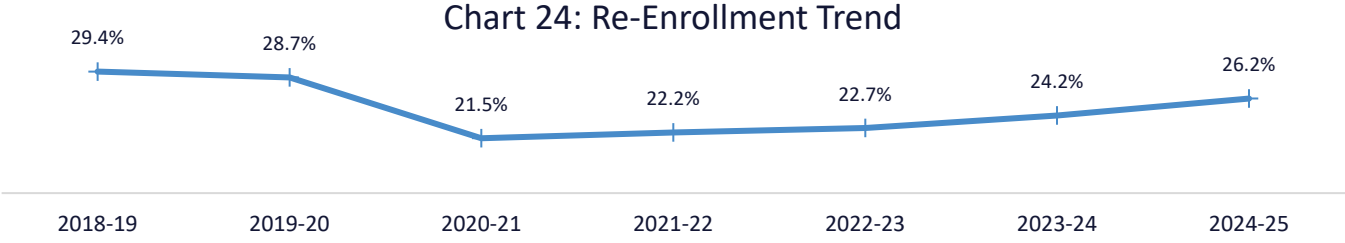
Student Re-engagement

Students who drop out can re-enroll in school and continue their education within the same year or in future years. While there are some students who re-enroll and are successful, the numbers are small.

In the 2023-24 school year, 8,938 students dropped out. In 2024-25, 26.2 percent (2,338 students) of the dropouts from 2023-24 year re-enrolled (**Chart 24**). This is similar to previous years. Of this group of students who re-enrolled:

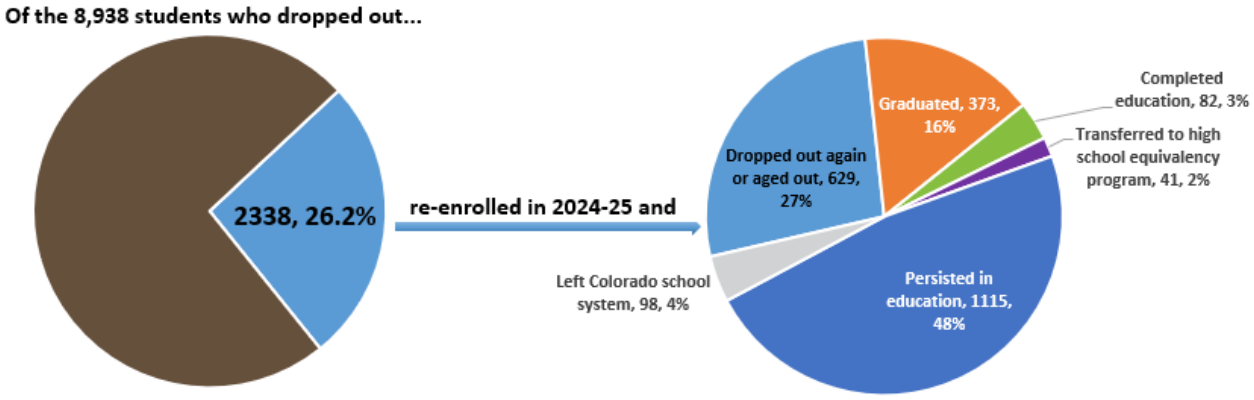
- Nearly half (47.7 percent, or, 1,115 students) were still enrolled at the end of 2024-25.
- About one-fifth (19.5 percent, or, 455 students) graduated or completed in 2024-25.
- Just over one-quarter (26.9 percent, or, 629 students) had dropped out again.
- The remaining students transferred to other settings (**Chart 25**).

Chart 24: Re-Enrollment Trend



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

Chart 25: Students in Grades 7 through 12 Dropped Out in 2023-24



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

Alternative Campuses (AECs), Charter Schools, and Online Schools

There are a range of different types of schools represented within these analyses. This section provides a summary of trends for Alternative Education Campuses, Online Schools and Charter Schools.

Alternative Education Campuses (AECs)

CDE designates schools as Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) when they meet the statutory requirements for designation, including serving at least 90 percent of students that meet "high risk" conditions and receive approval by the Colorado State Board of Education. During the 2024-25 school year, there were 94 AECs across Colorado serving more than 21,000 students, which is just under 2.5 percent of the state's student population. While AECs enroll students in grades K-12, 71 percent of students enrolled in AECs were in 11th or 12th grade. While students may have attended multiple high schools, the last high school they attend will include the student in graduation, completion and dropout data. CDE Alternative Education Campuses provides more information on AECs.

Attendance Rates for AECs
The AEC attendance rate during the 2024-25 school year was 83.8 percent (7.6 percent less than the state rate), and the chronic absenteeism rate was 50.5 percent (22.1 percent higher than the state rate).

Graduation Rates for AECs
Given the focus for AECs, graduation rates should be examined across the four-, five-, six- and seven-year rates. The most recent rates each improved to their highest levels, although the most recent five-year rate is the highest of the extended year rates (**Table 3**).

In the past three years, four-year completion rates in AECs were, on average, 3.7 percentage points higher than four-year graduation rates. Statewide, the average difference between graduation and completion rates over the same period was 1.4 percentage points.

Table 3: Four- and Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates for Alternative Education Campuses from 2020-21 to 2024-25

	4-Year Rate		5-Year Rate		6-Year Rate		7-Year Rate	
AYG	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**	**Graduation**	**Completion**
2021	36.8	41.0	48.5	53.9	52.9	59.0	55.8	62.7
2022	40.7	44.6	52.4	57.5	56.3	62.3	**57.2**	**63.5**
2023	43.1	46.6	55.6	60.5	**58.6**	**64.4**	*Available 2025-26*	
2024	49.7	54.0	**59.3**	**65.0**	*Available 2025-26*		*Available 2026-27*	
2025	**53.8**	**57.1**	*Available 2025-26*		*Available 2026-27*		*Available 2027-28*	

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. The rates in bold are from the 2024-25 school year.

Dropout Rates for AECs
The AEC dropout rate fell to 11.4 percent (3,411 student dropouts), a 2.7 percentage point decrease over the year prior. Almost half (45.3 percent) of all student dropouts in Colorado in 2024-25 were last enrolled in an AEC.

Charter Schools

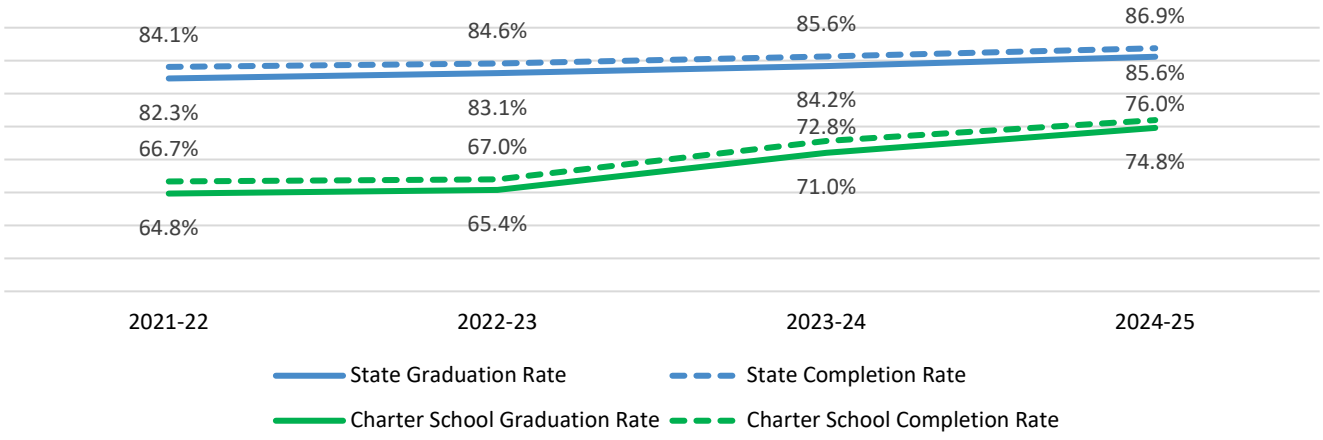
Charter schools are self-governing tuition-free public schools that are held accountable for student and operational performance. Open to all students from Pre-K through 12th grade, each of these independent public schools is different, increasing the variety of school choices available across Colorado. Charter schools (N = 262, 19 of which are also AECs) served over 136,000 K-12 students in the 2024-25 school year, which is similar to the previous year's enrollment. About 8 percent of those students are also AEC students. CDE provides information about charter schools in Colorado.

Attendance Rates for Charter Schools
During the 2024-25 school year, the attendance rate for charter schools was 92.5 percent (1.1 percent higher than the state rate), and the chronic absenteeism rate was 24.4 percent (4 percent lower than the state rate).

Graduation Rates for Charter Schools
Charter schools had improvements in graduation and completion rates in comparison to the 2023-24 school year, though rates remained below the state rates:

- The four-year graduation rate in charter schools improved much more than the state rate improved, with the charter school rate improving from 71.0 percent in 2024 to 74.8 percent in 2025 (a 3.8 percent improvement). The four-year completion rate improved from 72.8 percent to 76.0 percent (a 3.2 percentage point improvement; **Chart 26**).

Chart 26: Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates for the State and Charter Schools



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

Dropout Rates for Charter Schools

The dropout rate for charter schools decreased by 0.7 percentage points (to 2.8 percent; 1,898 dropouts).

Online Schools

Forty-four multi-district online schools, 18 single district online schools, and various other online programs housed in other schools served 32,629 K-12 students in Colorado in 2024-25. This is an increase of 790 students from the prior year's enrollment and represents 3.8 percent of overall K-12 enrollment. Nine online schools serving a third of online students were also AECs. Online schools can be categorized as a single district online school primarily focused on students within the district's boundaries or a multi-district online school, which may serve students from across the state. CDE provides information regarding online schools in Colorado.

Attendance Rates for Online Schools

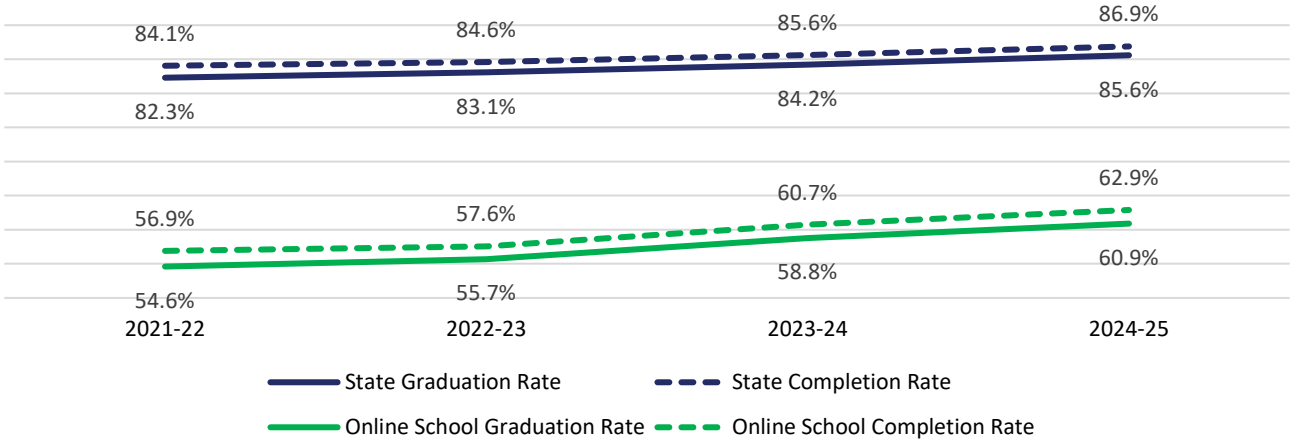
The attendance rate for online schools during the 2024-25 school year was 92.1 percent (0.7 percent higher than the state rate), and the chronic absenteeism rate was 24.4 percent (4 percent less than the state rate).

Graduation Rates for Online Schools

Overall, online schools saw improvements in graduation and completion rates in comparison to the 2023-24 school year; however, rates remain well below statewide rates:

- The four-year graduation rate in online schools improved from 58.5 percent in 2024 to 60.9 percent in 2025 and the four-year completion rate improved from 60.7 percent to 62.9 percent (**Chart 27**).

Chart 27: Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rates for the State and Online Schools

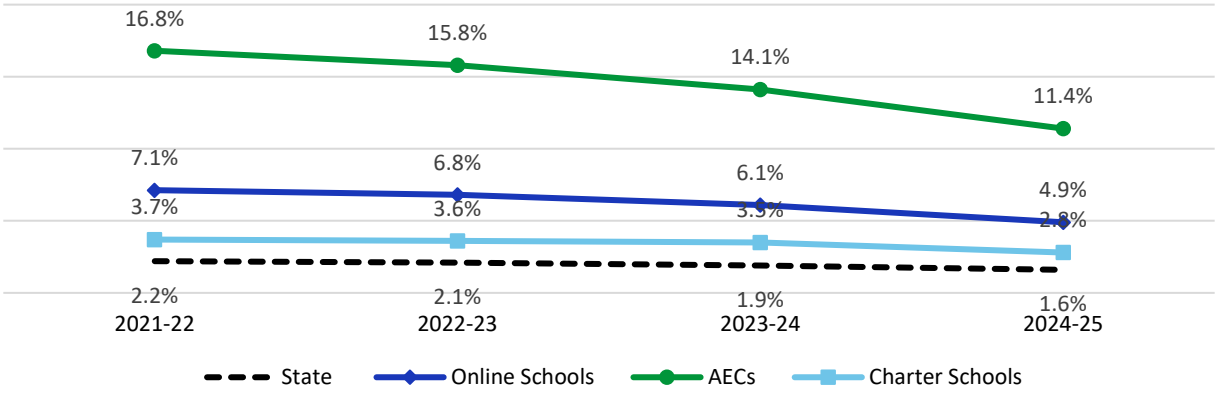


Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Dropout Rates for Online Schools

The dropout rate for online schools improved from 6.1 percent to 4.9 percent (1,937 student dropouts). This improvement narrowed the gap between online schools and the statewide dropout rate of 1.6 percent (**Chart 28**).

Chart 28: Dropout Rates for the State and Online Schools, AECs, and Charter Schools



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

Ninth Grade Course Reporting

The ninth-grade year is important for students' long term academic success. Research has shown that students who have a successful transition to high school, pass their courses and are on-track at the end of their ninth-grade year are more likely to graduate.[1]

[1] https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/track-indicator-predictor-high-school-graduation

The Ninth Grade Success Grant and Ninth Grade course reporting requirements in Colorado are built on this research with the intention to support ninth grade students' high school outcomes and success.

The new reporting is authorized by 2024 legislation (HB 24-1282) that updated the funding amount for the Ninth Grade Success grant and required CDE to report on ninth grade outcomes including:

- The number and percentage of ninth grade students at the school, district and state level who:
  - Have not earned at least four credits
  - Have failed one or more core credits
- Disaggregation of this data for student groups (gender, race/ethnicity, Multilingual Learners and students with an IEP)

CDE is using the Teacher Student Data Link (TSDL) collection for this reporting and has made updates for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 collections to improve accuracy of this data. Detailed information, definitions and a data dashboard are available at Ninth Grade On-Track Statistics.

Release schedule

CDE released state and district data in Spring 2026 and will begin with an annual release of data that includes school and district data starting in Winter 2027.

Effective Ninth Grade Practices

In Colorado, the ninth-grade success work is defined by four strategies. Schools and districts use on-track and course data to help make decisions about how to support individuals and groups of students.

- **Ninth Grade Success Team:** A multi-disciplinary team of ninth-grade teachers and staff that meet regularly to determine individual and group strategies;
- **Data System:** A system that provides students' behavior, attendance and grades;
- **Instructional Support:** Support for ninth grade students that includes tier 1 common instructional approaches and intervention strategies;
- **Transition Programs:** Programs to support the transition from 8th to 9th grade.

Course Passage

Overall, data shows that just over 75 percent of ninth-grade students are passing four or more courses and not failing any courses with slight variation between the two rates. This includes data for 66,503 first-time ninth-grade students across Colorado for these two metrics:

- Number and percentage of students who passed four or more courses
- Number and percentage of students who did not have any course failures (**Table 4**).

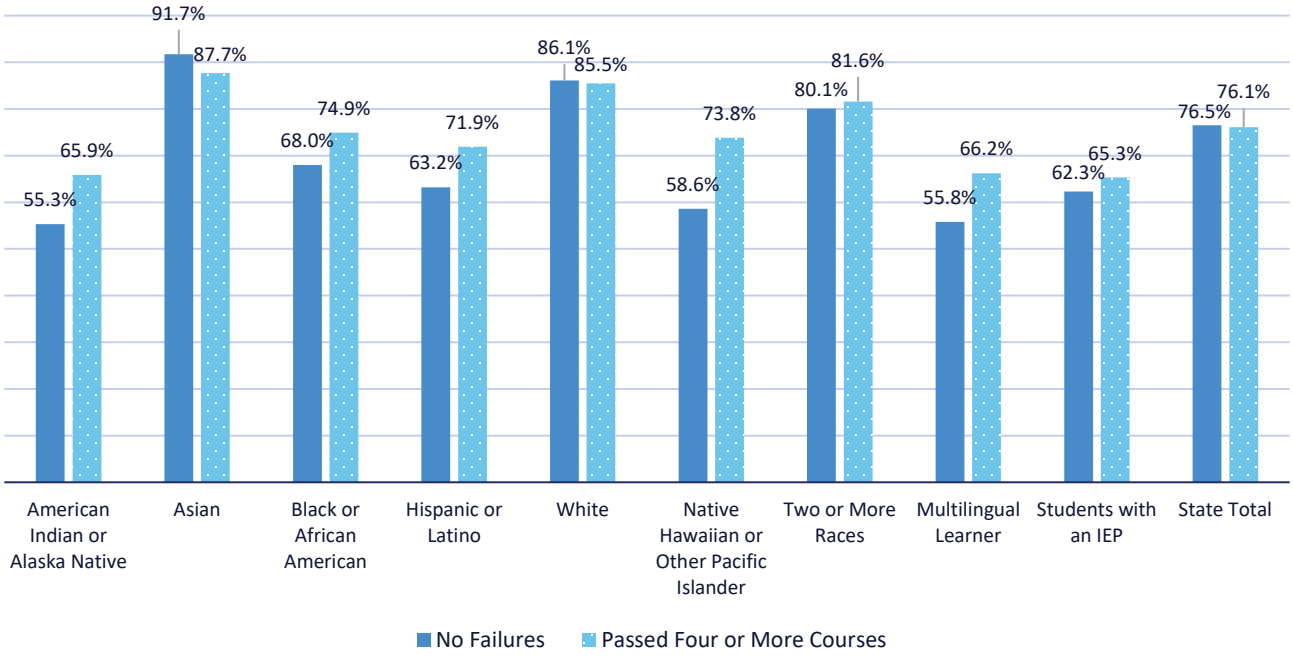
Table 4: Ninth-Grade Course Passage 2024-25

Students Who Passed Four or More Core Courses		Students With No Course Failures	
Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
50,621	76.1%	50,859	76.5%

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

Statewide, there is variation among student groups that is similar to trends seen in four-year graduation rates. Students with IEPs, Multilingual Learners as well as Black/African American, Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaska Native students have lower percentages of students with no failures and of students who passed four or more core courses (**Chart 29**).

Chart 29: Percentage of Students by Student Group



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

Subject Areas

At the state level, Language Arts had the highest percentage of students who passed at least one course (94.1 percent), with Math the lowest at 92.0 percent (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Course Passage by Subject Area

Subject Area	Number of Records	Passed at least one course
Language Arts	64,743	94.1%
Math	63,228	92.0%
Science	62,732	92.9%
Humanities	61,216	93.3%

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

Variations and Trends

There is variation among district data:

- The number of ninth-grade students ranges from just 1 ninth grade student to 7,175 in the largest district with 39 districts with 16 or fewer students.
- The percentage of students with 0 failures ranges from 0 to 100 percent.
- There are 15 districts that did not report data for 2024-25.

Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

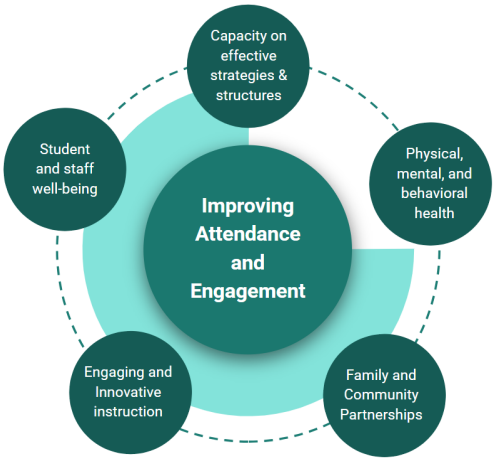
The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement was launched in 2009 to expand and coordinate efforts in reducing the dropout rate, increasing the graduation rate and advancing credential attainment. It is authorized by 22-14-101, C.R.S.

The main responsibilities of the office are to:

- Manage grant resources targeted at improving student, school and district outcomes.
- Provide support and manage projects in content areas of the office by:
    - Analyzing and reporting on data related to student engagement and success including dropout, graduation and completion rates, attendance, discipline and behavior;
    - Developing tools, resources or guidance that support district efforts, such as the Colorado Dropout Prevention Framework, the district profile reports dashboard, attendance best practices and justice-engaged youth guidance;
    - Leading initiatives such as workgroups or task forces that address student engagement, dropout prevention, student re-engagement and student readiness for graduation and postsecondary education and training.

This section of the report outlines key initiatives the office has worked on during the 2024-25 school year.

Student Engagement Priority - CDE Strategic Plan



CDE's Strategic Plan, Start Strong, Stay Engaged, Leave Ready, identified four priorities to guide the work of the department. Student Engagement is one of the four priorities identified and included a wildly important goal focused on improving attendance. The work within this priority is comprehensive and includes strategies from a number of areas that can impact student attendance and engagement as seen in the graphic to the right. New or expanded activities include the following:

- *Every School Day Matters! Attendance Campaign* was launched in 2023-24 to organize resources and highlight the importance of school attendance. This includes communication resources, samples from Colorado districts, and tools to address local challenges.
- Attendance guidebook: CDE launched an updated guidebook that includes rules on attendance collection and implementation, best practices for implementation, and guidance for organizing responses.
- Goal Calculator: The Goal calculator is built around the 50 percent reduction goal and allows districts to see progress over the past 3 years and what reductions would be required to meet their local goal.
- Professional learning opportunities: CDE staff facilitated a chronic absenteeism learning cohort with participation from 19 districts. About two thirds of the districts in the learning cohort improved their chronic absenteeism during the year of participation compared to the previous year. In 2025-26, CDE will offer the learning cohort again and will also offer an attendance 101 training, a peer learning network and regular webinars.

National partnerships

CDE joined with the EdTrust, American Enterprise Institute, Attendance Works, and 14 other states who are committed to reducing chronic absenteeism by 50 percent from its pandemic high. As a part of the campaign, CDE is encouraging schools and districts to sign up for a "50% Reduction Attendance Challenge" aimed at decreasing the chronic absentee rate by half from its all-time high of 34.5 percent during the COVID-19

pandemic. At the time of writing this report (fall 2025), 55 districts and 69 schools had joined the challenge, citing such reasons as, "*We are joining the challenge to help parents and children understand how important it is to be in school and how it helps set students up for success*."

Dropout Prevention Initiatives

Attendance and Behavior Learning Cohorts. In coordination with the CDE's District Improvement and Support Office, the office continues to lead learning cohorts for attendance and behavior. These learning cohorts began in the 2022-23 school year and offer training opportunities for school and district leaders.

Expulsion Hearing Officer Training. In 2023, House Bill 23-1291 was passed. This bill updated requirements for the expulsion hearing process and required a new training for individuals who are acting as Expulsion Hearing Officers, starting in January 2025. Training topics include child and adolescent brain development; restorative justice; alternatives to expulsion; trauma-informed practices; conflict and bias in discipline, suspension, and expulsion; and the requirements and implementation of applicable federal and state laws. The training is accessible through Colorado's learning management platform.

- By November of 2025, 231 individuals had taken the required training from 119 school districts and 31 charter schools.

Disproportionate Discipline Task Force. In 2023, Senate Bill 23-029 created a discipline task force during the 2023-24 school year to make administrative and/or legislative recommendations. The task force studied disproportionate discipline, current statute connected to discipline, and CDE's processes for data collection and sharing of resources. The disproportionate discipline task force concluded in June 2024 and the final report was published in August 2024. Topics covered in the recommendations include clarification of the reasons for expulsion, alignment of codes within the discipline data collection and the creation or gathering of best practices and trainings related to behavior and discipline for school and district staff.

Ninth-Grade On-track Reporting. House Bill 24-1282 was passed in 2024, requiring CDE to include ninth-grade performance measures for each public school, school district, the Charter School Institute and the state starting with data from the 2024-25 school year. This data is included in this report and posted on CDE's webpage.

Justice-Engaged Youth

House Bill 24-1216: Supports for Youth in the Justice System was passed in 2024. The legislation is centered around a Justice Engaged Student's Bill of Rights and includes a number of different projects intended to better support outcomes for this group of students.

- *Interagency workgroup:* CDE participated in the Interagency workgroup in Fall 2024 to identify and make recommendations on improving the collection and use of data on justice engaged youth. An initial report from the interagency working group was published in December 2024.
- *Guidance:* CDE produced its first round of guidance in August 2025 to provide background information on legislation and key roles of school districts. This guidance will be updated to include all required components by August 1, 2026.
- *Rules on Credit Transfer:* CDE worked with the State Board of Education and gathered feedback from a range of stakeholders to create rules for the credit transfer of justice engaged youth. These rules were passed in August 2025.

Legislative Review

Article 14 of Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes requires CDE to report on the amount of state money appropriated for dropout prevention and student engagement. CDE staff identified the bills outlined below during the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions that directly impact dropout prevention, student engagement and

attainment of a high school credential. Funding that is connected to the legislation is indicated, if applicable (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Legislation Impacting Dropout Prevention, Student Engagement, and Attainment of a High School Credential from the 2023 and 2024 Legislative Sessions

Bill name; Total funds appropriated; Date effective	Overview
2024	
H.B. 24-1216 Supports for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System FY 24-25: $82,883 FY 25-26: $92,362	• Establishes a bill of rights for K-12 students involved with juvenile or criminal justice system. • Requires LEAs to designate a point-person for justice engaged students and their families. • Requires CDE to develop guidance that aligns with bill of rights and make guidance available to LEAs and other community organizations involved with justice engaged youth. • Requires CDE to form interagency working group to make recommendations concerning justice engaged youth to CDE and the legislature. • Requires the State Board of Education, in collaboration with interested parties, to make rules concerning the educational rights of justice engaged youth. • Requires CDE to create a statewide hotline for issues pertaining to justice engaged youth and to create a position that will serve as a support person for small and rural school districts.
H.B. 24-1282 Ninth-Grade Success Grant & Performance Reporting FY 24-25: $2,000,000 FY 25-26: $2,000,000	• Requires an annual appropriation to the Ninth-Grade Success Grant Program and extends the repeal of this section to after the 2027-28 school year. • Requires the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement to include ninth-grade on-track and course passage measures for each public school, school district, the charter school institute and the state as a whole starting with 2024-25 data.
2025	
H.B. 25-1167 Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) Year 1 (25-26): $79,406 Year 2 (26-27): $38,965	• Requires that CDE annually prepare and post a report on enrollment trends, student demographics and student mobility in AECs beginning in September 2025. • Required changes to state law that CDE must prioritize AECs in state grants if they satisfy grant requirements and that AECs may serve certain high-risk students through age 21, including students who are pregnant, are parents, or will be eligible for a diploma at the end of the school year. • Allows an AEC with less than 250 students to maintain its AEC designation if there are small changes to student population. • **AEC Report - HB 25-1167 Fact Sheet**

Policy and Practice Implications

As part of the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement's annual report, CDE is required to submit *"a report making state policy findings and recommendations to reduce the student dropout rate and*

increase the student graduation and completion rates." This section of the report is intended to highlight policy and practice implications that have been shared with CDE staff from the field or developed internally through end-of-year surveys, feedback at events, review of grant programs and annual analysis of data. The two areas highlighted here provide an overview of possible improvements in the information CDE collects and the consistency of support and services to students.

- **Data collections:** The Dropout Prevention team supports the collection and use of a variety of data points related to student engagement (attendance, behavior incidents and disciplinary actions, mobility, dropout, course information and graduation from student data and program information in Report Card March). The goal is to ensure that reporting meets legislative requirements and that there is accurate and transparent information available to districts and the public for decision making purposes. There are challenges indicated below that have been raised through this process, along with descriptions of the work CDE is doing to address the gap and potential areas for improvement.
    - **Background:** CDE manages a range of distinct data collections and reporting. For each collection, districts will submit data for specific categories within that collection. These collections occur throughout the school year, have a variety of different requirements including a mix of student level, summary level or program data, and are used to meet a variety of state and federal reporting requirements. Within the purview of dropout prevention, data is used from a number of different collections, including attendance, discipline, end of year (graduation, mobility and dropout), student course information and grant specific collections.
    - **Challenges:** The current setup for collections includes individual collections that are distinct from one another and occur on different timelines. This creates some potential barriers:
        - **Accuracy and timeliness:** Given the range of requirements that are connected to each different collection and the processes and timing for validation, auditing and reporting can vary widely. Moreover, some collections were designed for certain reporting requirements that have changed over time.
        - **Consistency:** Reporting data in different collections, forms and timing (summary, student level, program data) results in slight differences in the numbers that can make comparison between collections challenging and make it harder to get a comprehensive look at different data for school, district or the state overall. For instance, a total student number is collected in multiple different collections (end of year, attendance, October count) and those numbers do not often match as they are taken at different times in the year.
        - **Staff time and capacity:** Both at the state level and at the district level, managing multiple collections is staff and time intensive. CDE staff have heard this specifically from mid-size and small districts that might not have multiple staff members who are responsible for each part of the collection. As new information is requested through legislation, state board rule or through federal reporting requirements, a new or adapted collection is often required, which requires additional staff time at the district and state level and often requires substantial time to implement the new requirements.
    - **Improving collections:** There are a number of different ways to improve the collections process. The three listed below are current projects underway to support the process or have been shared by stakeholders as potential improvements. There are other initiatives and approaches that may help meet similar goals to improve the process.
        - CDE teams in Information Management Systems and program offices are working to establish a data governance process so there are clear and consistent definitions, new dashboards that accurately share data and enable deeper analysis and understanding of the data, and consistent processes for communication, validation and support to districts.

        - Previous discussions between CDE and school districts have focused on ways to combine or streamline collections, including exploring a statewide student information system that would create a more seamless process for collection and reporting. There are a variety of implementation approaches to this that could improve the accuracy, timeliness and usefulness of statewide data.
- **Engagement of highly mobile students and student dropouts:** Annual statewide data show a higher number of student dropouts each of the past three years compared to 2019-20, and larger numbers of students have left the K-12 system. With the goal to reduce the number of students who completely disengage each year, there is a group of students who are sometimes missing from interventions.
    - **Background:** Districts report the status of each student to CDE at the end of the school year. This includes students who are still enrolled, those who have dropped out, those who have graduated, those who have transferred to another district, and others.
    - **Challenges:** There are challenges with ensuring that a student does not go missing as the student moves across districts and is able to stay connected to school.
        - Most districts have systems built at the school or district level to reconnect with a student who has stopped attending or has dropped out completely. Once a student drops out of a system, the student is often no longer on that district's list to try to re-engage and may not be on the new district's list either. This is especially true when districts and communities are closely connected geographically, and families could be in a different district only one block away.
        - Connecting with a student and re-enrolling allows a student to have access to learning opportunities and continue their path towards graduation. Additional support is frequently needed as students often return with gaps in learning and may be more likely to dropout again.
    - **Improving support:** There are a few different options that may improve the tracking and support for students.
        - CDE staff continue to refine program supports for students who are considered highly mobile and are more likely to be missed between districts. A highly mobile student is defined as a student who experiences (or is at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their K-12 education outside of regular grade promotion. Per Colorado House Bill 18-1306, groups of students included in this definition are youth in foster care, those experiencing homelessness or students in migrant education programs. Highly mobile students among these student groups experience low graduation rates, high dropout rates, tend to be disproportionately represented in disciplinary actions and are above the state average in special education designations.
        - CDE staff are working to support Student Re-engagement and Educational Stability grantees to better target support and are exploring where resources and support could target students who move between districts. More information on these programs can be found on pages 55 and 64 of this report. Additionally, conversations continue about how funding resources could support initiatives that follow students and target support across districts.
        - A longitudinal look at student data at the state level and increased sharing of student data at the district level when students withdraw or enroll at other districts would enable a better understanding of where students reconnect to the system.

Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement Office Grants

CDE manages grant programs designed to improve student engagement, provide support for individual students who have disengaged and build pro-active systems to keep students on-track and connected to school and learning. The grants listed below are detailed within this report:

- Ninth Grade Success Grant (started in 2019)
- Student Re-engagement Grant (started in 2016)
- Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) Grant (started in 1997)

DPSR Program Evaluation

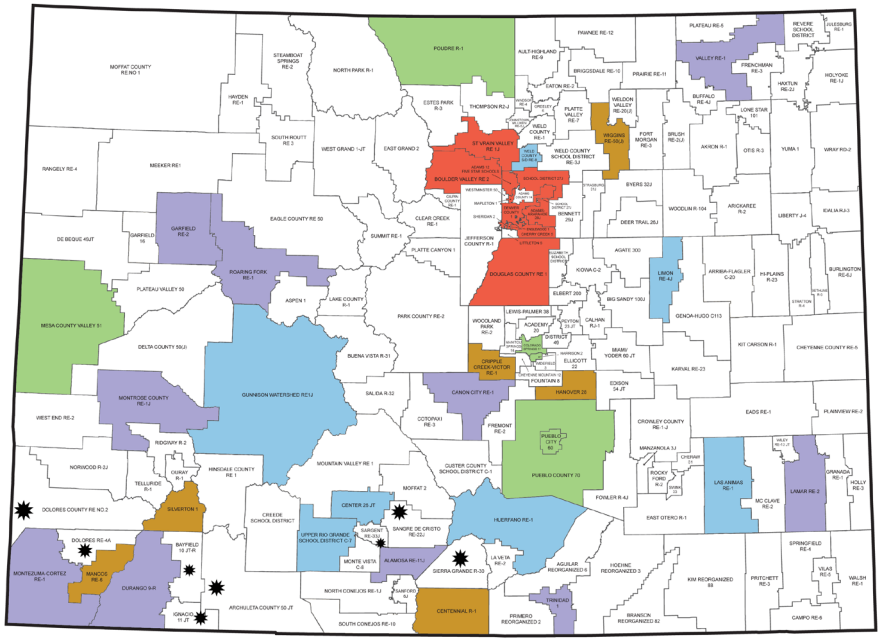
DPSR is responsible for tracking the progress and outcomes for the Ninth Grade Success Grant, the Student Re-engagement Grant, and the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant. These three grant programs collectively served more than 13,000 students across 68 districts in the 2024-25 school year. **Table 7** details grant funding histories for each of the four grants. **Chart 30** demonstrates the locations of DPSR-managed grantees.

Table 7: Four-Year Funding Histories for DPSR Programs

Grant Program	Year			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Student Re-engagement	$2,006,088	$2,009,771	$2,010,299	$2,002,857
Expelled and At-Risk Student Services	$9,493,560	$9,493,560	$9,499,542	$9,470,254
Ninth Grade Success	$800,000	$800,000	$2,400,000	$2,000,000
TOTAL	$13,342,116	$13,701,497	$14,943,471	$13,473,111

Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement
Note: The Educational Stability Grant will be reported separately in 2024-25.

Chart 30: Distribution of DPSR-Managed Grant Funds Across Colorado



Legend: Denver Metro, Urban-Suburban, Outlying City, Outlying Town, Remote, BOCES ✸
***Note**: Grants represented in the map are: The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant, the Ninth Grade Success Grant, and the Student Re-engagement Grant. Districts are color coded by region.*

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.

The program provides funds to grantees to provide services to expelled and at-risk students, ensure consistent attendance and discipline practices, and develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion. The goal is to keep more students in school, reduce disciplinary incidents, improve students' regular attendance and support students' progress toward graduation. Program activities for the grant include the following:

- Each fall, CDE engages internal and district staff members to hold an annual Request for Applications. Applicants submit proposals for a six-month planning period and four years of implementation.
- In January 2025, seven new grantees started an eighteen-month systems development planning period to launch their programs and joined a group of 38 grantees that had started in previous years.

Overall, EARSS grantees reported positive outcomes for the students they supported through their grant programs. This included preventing or eliminating previous behaviors:

- Of students served by the grant, 93.9 percent were not expelled,
- Of at-risk students, 91.8 percent did not receive an out-of-school suspension,
- Of at-risk students, 91.8 percent did not receive an in-school suspension, and
- Of truant students, 98.2 percent did not have a truancy petition filed in court.
- This also included students experiencing positive school outcomes. 93.2 percent of students who were supported in the program remained in school or graduated and completed school.

Funded Districts (2024-25)
There were 45 grantee programs in 24-25 that include 28 school districts, nine individual charter schools, three BOCES (which serve multiple schools), and five facility schools.
Students Served (2024-25)
• 6,323 students received services. • 34.3 percent of students served by the grant were identified as previously expelled or at-risk for expulsion; • 64.1 percent were identified as truant or at-risk for habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism. • 1.6 percent were students attending facility schools.

CDE publishes a full legislative report on the EARSS grant annually.

Student Success story

EARSS programs serve students facing a range of different barriers to learning. The following story is from a student in an urban setting.

For the past three years, I've worked closely with a student that is socially withdrawn and suffers from depression and anxiety. When we first started meeting, he struggled to attend school and his grades were mostly F's. This student and I met weekly for the past three years and forged a relationship. We set goals, checked in on his social/emotional health, physical health and discussed everything from academic success to planning for the future. I am happy to report that in his senior year, this student had a 3.5 GPA and not only graduated but received an award for vast academic improvement. He also made some friends this past year. This student will attend Metropolitan State University in the fall and study aeronautics in order to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot. He gave me a card at his graduation that reads, "Thank you for believing in me. I will never forget you."

Student Re-engagement Grant Program

The Student Re-engagement Grant Program (SRG) is authorized by Colorado Revised Statute 22-14-109 to provide funds to local education providers for programs to maintain student engagement and facilitate student re-engagement for 9th-12th grade students.

Applicants for the SRG propose strategies from the Dropout Prevention Framework they will implement and identify the student needs those strategies will address. The strategies most commonly implemented by grantees, gathered from the end of year survey, include:

- **Early warning systems:** Data and response systems used to identify and respond to student need based on regular updated data
- **Counseling and mentoring:** Used to support individual students who are showing signs of disengagement or have disengaged
- **School climate:** Whole school practices to ensure a conducive environment for student engagement in learning
- **Course completion/credit recovery:** Practices to help recover missed content or credit for students who have fallen behind academically
- **Family partnerships:** Strategies that connect families with schools

Cohort 4

CDE managed a Request for Applications in 2024-25 and awarded funds to 16 schools in 10 districts and the Charter School Institute. These districts began a three-year grant on July 1, 2025.

Funded districts (2024-25)
Twenty-one schools in 12 districts and the Charter School Institute were serving students in 2024-25.
Students Served (2024-25)
• 1,573 individual students served. • Most students were served due to low attendance (60 percent) and course failure (47.6 percent). • *Note: one school closed during the year, impacting how many total students were served.*

Cohort 3

Cohort 3 grantees completed their three-year implementation in spring 2025. Grantees reported serving students for the following reasons (choices were not mutually exclusive so a student could belong to one or more categories):

- Course failure (60.0 percent of students served)
- Low attendance (47.6 percent of students served)
- Insufficient credit accrual (35.8 percent of students served)
- Behavior referrals (27.5 percent of students served)
- Suspensions (19.3 percent of students served)
- High mobility (16.5 percent of students served)
- Being out-of-school (7.9 percent of students served)
- Other reasons, including severe mental health issues and parenting responsibilities (1.8 percent of students served)

In addition to serving students who are at risk of leaving school, grantees re-engaged previously disengaged students. Of the 1,573 students served, grantees reported:

- Of the students served, 27.3 percent had less than 70 percent attendance in the previous year but were still enrolled at the end of the 2024-25 school year.
- Six percent of students were previous dropouts who re-enrolled in 2024-25 and were either still enrolled or had graduated by the end of the year.
- 17.5 percent of students served were transfer students who were still enrolled in the school they were served in at the end of the 2024-25 school year.

While the overall goal of the grant is to increase student engagement, grantees select different performance measures based on the strategy selection and may more closely track attendance, re-engagement or graduation, depending on the approved grant application.

- Seventeen grantees/schools reported progress on Academic Performance Measures which can address academic outcomes such as course failures, passage of core courses or being on-track for graduation.
    - ***Course failure*:** Six grantees reported that approximately three quarters of assessed students (75.1 percent) had fewer core course failures in the second semester in comparison to the first.
    - ***Core Course Passage*:** Five grantees reported that almost all of their students (98.1 percent) identified for support in course passage passed all of their core courses in the second semester of the 2024-25 school year.
    - ***On-Track for Graduation*:** Nine grantees reported that most of students (89.2 percent) identified for graduation support went from not being on track to graduate to being on track to graduate by the end of the second semester.
    - *Note*: *Some grantees combined schools into one report; others submitted multiple reports. One grantee did not report on their progress for this performance measure.*
- Seventeen grantees/schools reported progress on Behavioral and Social Emotional Performance Measures which can address school engagement or attendance.
    - ***School Engagement:*** Five grantees/schools reported that most of assessed students (88.8 percent) increased or improved their school engagement as measured by a specifically set criteria.
    - ***Attendance*:** Seventeen grantees/schools reported that just under three quarters of assessed students (72.3 percent) had higher attendance second semester in comparison to the first semester.

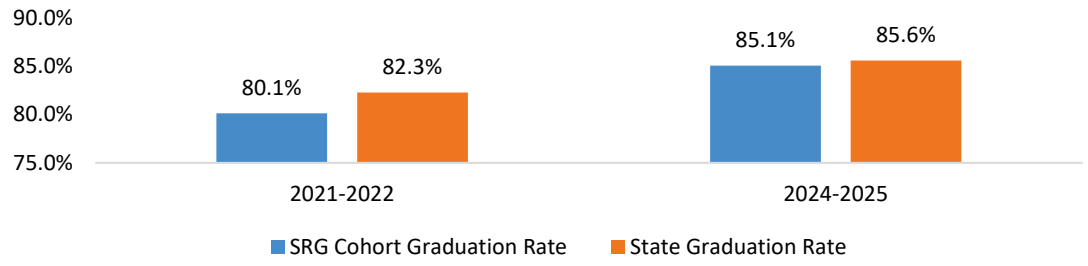
At the end of the 2024-25 school year, there were overall positive outcomes for students, with 93.1 percent of students served having remained in or completed school. This includes:

Key Metrics for Grant Funded Schools

In addition to individual progress, CDE analyzes schoolwide data trends for grantees. Two key outcomes for the SRG are graduation and dropout rates because students who persist in their education are more likely to complete. Examinations of these metrics from 2021-22 (the year before grant programming started) to 2024-25 indicate that, as a cohort, SRG grantees are improving in both graduation and dropout rates.

Chart 31 below shows four-year graduation rates for cohort schools who identified *On-Track for Graduation* as their academic performance measure. Notably, trends in four-year graduation metrics indicate that SRG schools increased their four-year graduation rate by 5.0 percentage points compared to 2021-22 before they started in the program. For comparison, the state four-year graduation rate increased by 3.3 percentage points over this same period, which helped close the gap between cohort schools and the state graduation rate.

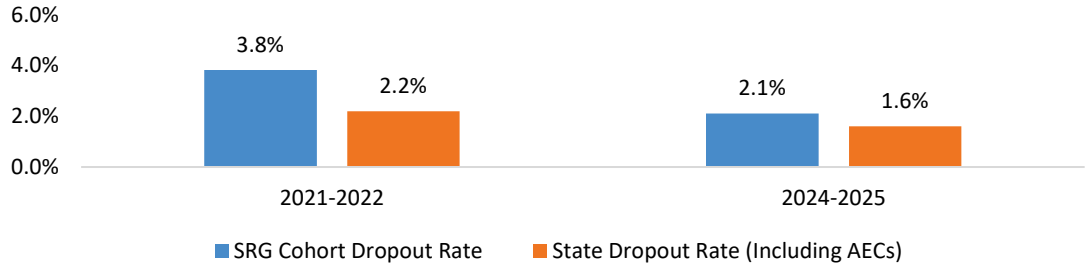
Chart 31: Four-Year Graduation Rates for SRG Cohort Members Targeting On-Track Graduation



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

Dropout rates, too, have improved. This cohort of SRG grantees had a dropout rate that was 1.6 percentage points higher than the state dropout rate in 2021-22, before funding began. In 2024-25, their third year of funding, they closed that gap with a dropout rate just 0.5 percentage point above the state rate (**Chart 32**).

Chart 32: State and SRG Cohort Dropout Rates



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

Student Success Story

Student Re-engagement grantees work to build strong systems that help students stay on-track and intervene and support students as soon as they show signs of disengagement. The following story was shared by a grantee, in a rural school district, as an example of the impact they have on individual students.

The majority of the group of students that graduated this year arrived at [our school] the first year of our grant cycle. They arrived as sophomores with little interest in school and a general distrust of adults, thinking everyone was "out to get them." They lovingly called themselves "the dropouts." Those first two years of the grant the social worker was running targeted intervention groups that many of those students were placed in, whether due to attendance, drug use, failing grades, or all of the above. Through these groups the students learned that the social worker and student support team were there to help and they made a lot of improvements over the years. This year, their senior year, attendance was still a struggle for a few of them and we were afraid they were not going to make it to graduation. Through those strong relationships that were built over the past three years, the social worker and student support team were able to push these students in a firm but caring manner. Phone calls would be made to either the students or the parents and in class support was offered to make sure they stayed on task. In the end we had 24 graduates, including all of the original crew known as the "dropouts."

Ninth Grade Success Grant Program

The Ninth Grade Success Grant Program (NGSG) is authorized by C.R.S. 22-14-109.5 to assist students enrolled in ninth grade to develop the skills they need to successfully persist in graduating from high school. Program descriptions for current Ninth Grade Success Grantees are available on CDE's website.

History, Legislative Intent and Goals

The grant was created in 2019 (House Bill 19-1276) and provides funding for schools to assist ninth-grade students in developing the skills they need to stay on-track in 9th grade, graduate from high school and be successful in education and professional careers. Grantees commit to implementing four main components of the Ninth Grade Success model:

- **Ninth Grade Success Team:** Create a cross-disciplinary team of staff to include ninth grade teachers and support staff that meet regularly to identify and implement strategies.
- **Data System:** Implement a system that provides real-time access to data (e.g., behavior, attendance and grades) that can be disaggregated.
- **Instructional Support:** Provide instructional support for ninth-grade students to increase engagement and rigor in learning.
- **Transition Programs:** Implement transition programs prior to and during the 9th grade year.

House Bill 23-1231: Concerning Mathematics in Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, passed in 2023, added prioritization based on mathematics performance, extended the grant program until 2028 and increased the funding available.

Key Metrics from 2024-25

- Total appropriation: $2,000,000
- Evaluation funding: N/A
- CDE staff funded by the grant: 1.0 FTE
- Staff funded by the grant in the field: 13.5 FTE total
- Number of grantees: Cohort 2 (2024-2027): 26 grantees
- Number of students served: 5,267
- Average cost per student served: $349
- The program is at Step 3 Assess Outcomes on the Colorado Evidence Continuum

Cohort 1 (2019 – 2024)

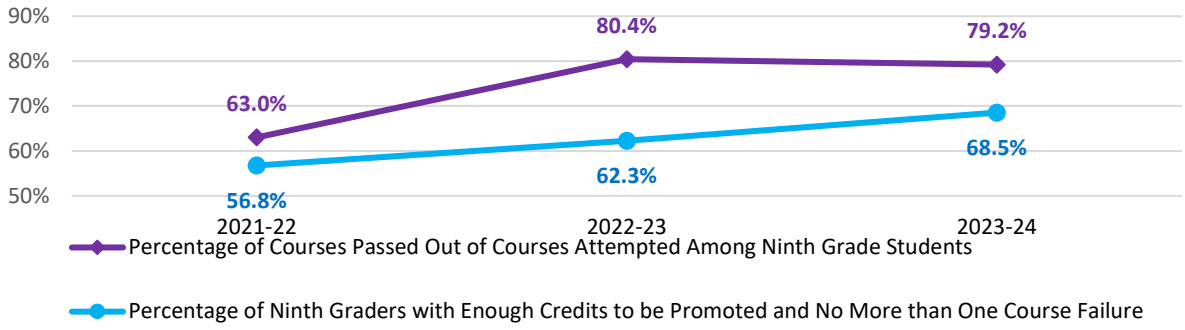
Nine grantees received awards in January 2020 with eight grantees continuing to 2024. No funding was allocated to the program for the 2020-21 year.

- Grantees served more than 8,000 students over the life of the grant.
- All grantees reported that they were fully or partially implementing all components of the grant by the final year.

Student Outcomes

Each year starting in 2021-22 grantees reported ninth grade on-track metrics. As a cohort, these metrics increased over time with about 80 percent of courses passed and just under 70 percent of ninth grade students on-track (**Chart 33**).

Chart 33: Ninth Grade Success Grant Cohort 1 Grantee-Reported On Track Rates from 2021-22 to 2023-24

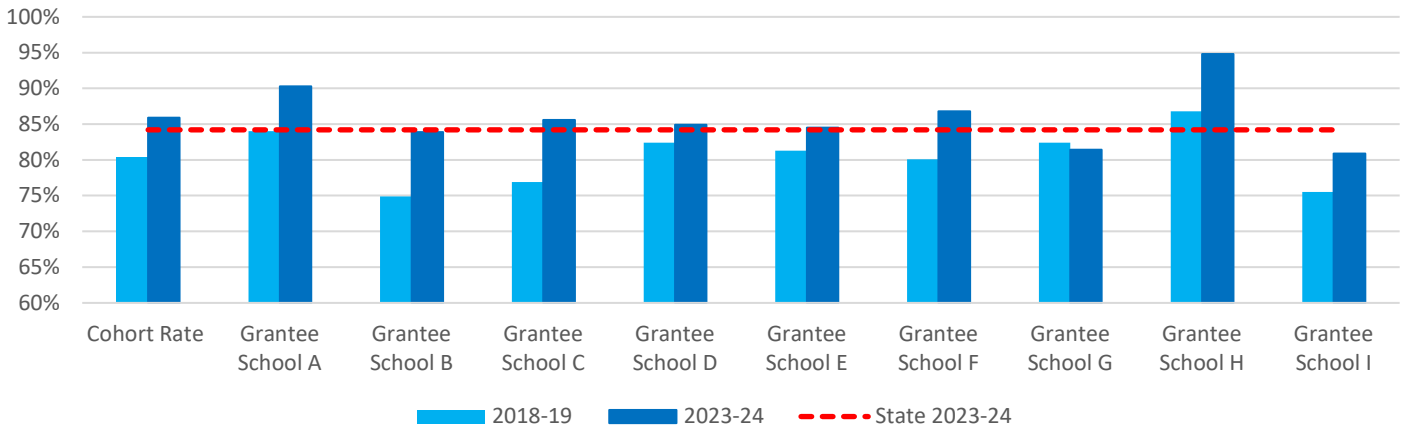


Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Ultimately, the goal of the grant is to improve the four-year graduation rate and dropout rates. An examination of Cohort 1 grantee and state rates from the year before the grant began to the final year of implementation reveals:

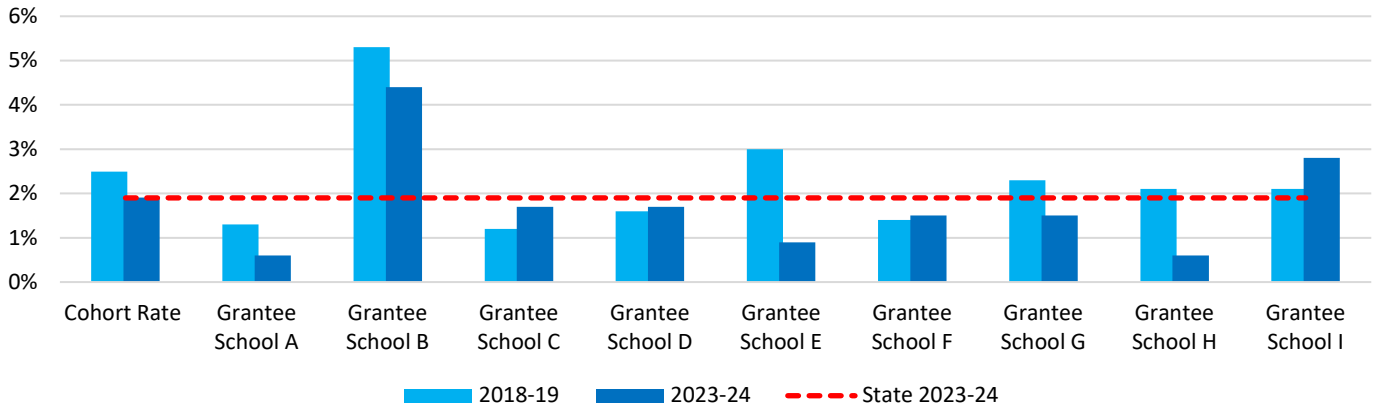
- All but one grantee increased graduation rates over time
- Two thirds of grantees ended the program with a graduation rate at or above the state rate (**Chart 34**).
- More than half of Cohort 1 grantees decreased their dropout rates over time
- All but two grantees ended the program with a dropout rate below the state rate (**Chart 35**).

Chart 34: Cohort, School and State Four-Year Graduation Rates of Cohort 1 Grantees in 2018-19 and 2023-24



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

Chart 35: Cohort, State and School-Level Dropout Rates of Cohort 1 Grantees in 2018-19 and 2023-24



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

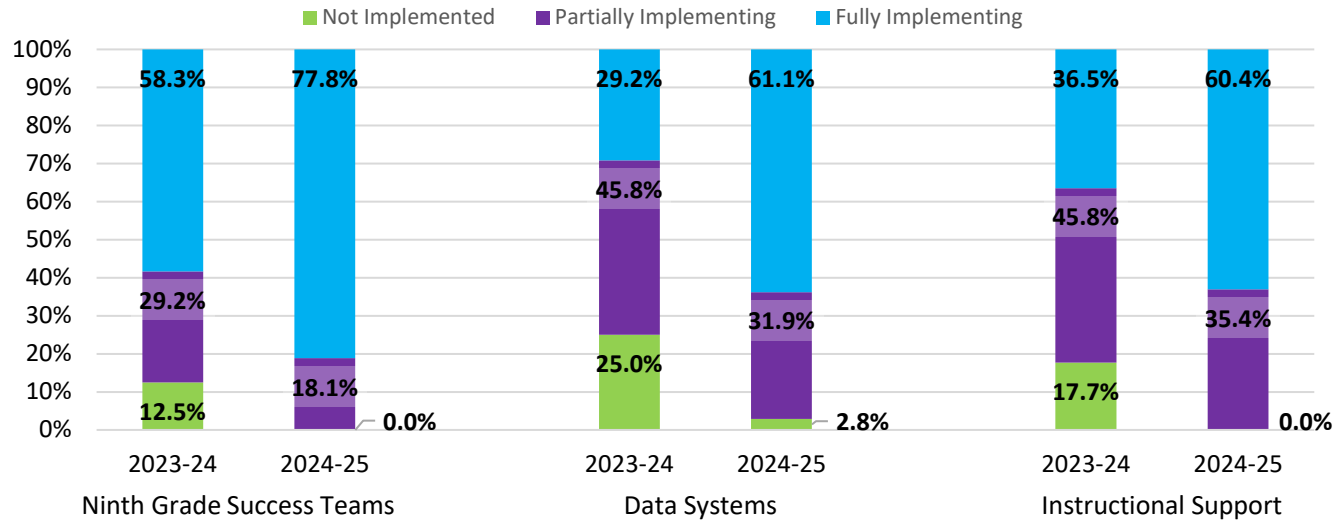
Cohort 2 (2024-2027)

With additional allocated funding, CDE awarded 26 schools starting in January 2024 for 2.5 years of funding. In the first full year of funding (school year 2024-25), grantees served **5,267 students**.

Implementation Outcomes

After just one year of funding, Cohort 2 grantees are fully or partially implementing nearly all grant components, a marked improvement over the year prior in which all grantees implemented a six-month planning period (**Chart 36**).

Chart 36: Cohort 2 Grantee Reported Implementation Levels of Grant Components

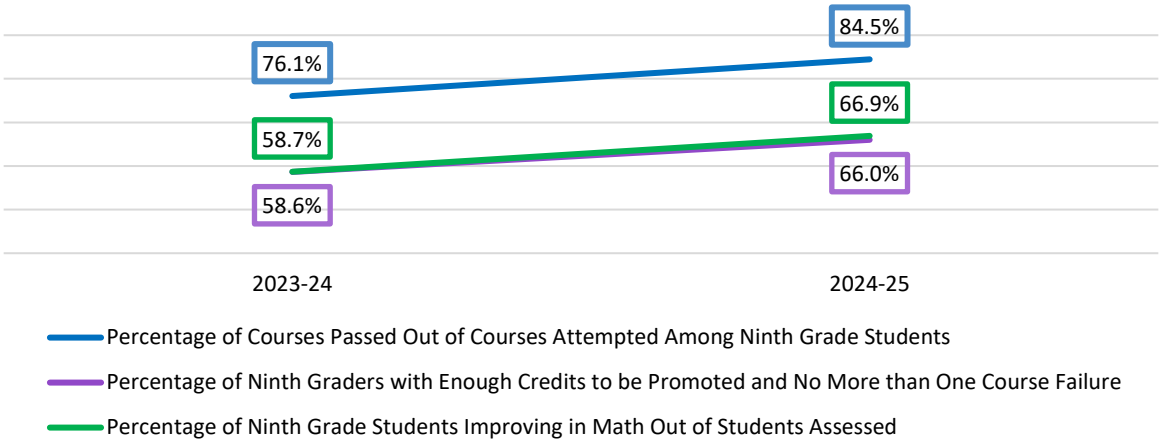


Source: CDE Office of Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Student Outcomes

Cohort 2 grantees also reported progress in affecting ninth-grade on-track indicators from their planning year to their first year of implementation. A third on track indicator, achievement in mathematics, was added to reflect changes in legislation adding a focus on mathematics performance and support (**Chart 37**).

Chart 37: Cohort 2 Ninth-Grade On-Track Indicators from 2023-24 to 2024-25



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

Conclusion

As outlined throughout this report, key statewide metrics in 2024-25 showed progress towards the goals of increasing student engagement and accelerating student outcomes; however, this was not consistent across all measures. This report includes outcome data from the 2024-25 school year for attendance, dropout, mobility, behavior, discipline, graduation and completion, including the highest graduation and completion rates in Colorado history. Attendance remained an outlier in the data with progress seen in previous years not continuing in 2024-25.

During the 2024-25 school year, CDE's Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement managed $13,473,111 in grant funding to districts, BOCES and facility schools that served more than 10,000 students with direct support. The goal of each of the grants is to fund programs that lead to improved student and school outcomes and to learn more about effective strategies that can be replicated.

District and school strategies, which can be supported by CDE grants, and supported through efforts in CDE's Strategic Plan for students to Start Strong, Stay Engaged, and Leave Ready, will continue to have an impact on student outcomes, especially those most impacted by the pandemic.