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Department of Education

2025 Legislative Report Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program

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Executive Summary

First enacted in 2008 by House Bill (H.B.) 08-1370 and updated in 2014 by Senate Bill (S.B.) 14-150 and again in 2017 by S.B. 17-068, 2019 by H.B. 19-1187, and 2022 by S.B. 22-140, Colorado's School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) aims to improve high school graduation rates and postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) and support work-based learning awareness, education and opportunities by increasing the availability of effective school-based counseling services within K-12 schools. The program is administered by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and provides funding to eligible local education providers. SCCGP allocates funding for a four-year grant cycle as appropriations are available from the Colorado General Assembly.

Cohort 10 Report

This report describes outcomes of SCCGP Cohort 10 at the close of the four-year grant period. The SCCGP Cohort 10 grant period began with a development year from July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021. The subsequent three years of the grant were implementation years, beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2024.

Information presented in this report is similar to previous legislative reports. One secondary school was excluded from the matriculation reporting. This is done both to avoid misrepresenting the impacts of the program and to protect student privacy due to small school size. Cohort 10 includes fewer secondary schools than previous cohorts due to S.B. 17-068's focus on expanding the program to include elementary schools.

Implications of COVID-19 for Cohort 10 Reporting

The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the outcomes for Cohort 10. Cohort 10 experienced disruption of educational delivery starting in the last few months of the 2019-20 school year. This disruption lasted through the entirety of the 2020-21 academic year (Year 1, the development year), which at a minimum affects the baseline year used in comparisons throughout this report. Though most schools returned to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year, it is likely that the ripple effects of the ongoing pandemic continued to impact students, educators, school counselors, schools and communities.

SCCGP Cohort 10 Description

A total of 39 schools were included in SCCGP Cohort 10. Most (71.8%) were elementary and/or middle schools, which is a substantially larger percentage of schools than in Cohorts 1-7. For example, 16.9% of Cohort 7 grantees were elementary schools. Table 1 displays the full breakdown. Funding was distributed to schools across geographic settings, including schools in both urban and rural communities.

Table 1: SCCGP Cohort 10 School Levels Served

	High School	Middle School	Elementary School	Middle & High School	Elementary & Middle School	K-12
Count	**6**	**8**	**15**	**3**	**5**	**2**
Percent of Cohort	**15.4%**	**20.5%**	**38.5%**	**7.7%**	**12.8%**	**5.1%**

Percentage of Historically Underserved Students in SCCGP Cohort 10 Schools is Higher than the State Average (2023-24)

- 66% (grantees) vs. 46% (state) of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch
- 72% (grantees) vs. 50% (state) of students identify as students of color
- 13% (grantees) vs. 12% (statewide non-grantees) of students changed schools outside of the typical enrollment process
- 2.6% (grantees) vs. 1.6% (state) of students experience homelessness

In the 2023-24 school year, the 39 SCCGP Cohort 10 schools enrolled 21,858 students. SCCGP funding decisions (based on Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) 22-91-104, state board rules and program guidelines) gave priority consideration to schools with dropout rates that exceeded the state average, schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL),[1] postsecondary remediation rates at secondary schools that exceeded the state average, and elementary schools with higher rates of K-3 students identified as having a significant reading deficiency (SRD). Thus, Cohort 10 schools, like previous Cohorts,[2] tended to serve students that exceeded the state average on these metrics. For example, 72% of students in Cohort 10 schools were students of color and over half were FRL eligible. Students in Cohort 10 also experienced homelessness at a higher rate than the state average. In the 2023-24 school year, the final year of funding, Cohort 10 grantees were collectively awarded approximately $3,420,000 in funding.

SCCGP Cohort 10 Outcomes

Cohort 10 included a higher percentage of students of color, students qualifying for FRL, and students experiencing homelessness relative to the statewide student population. Cohort 10 schools also had a higher average mobility rate than schools that were not part of the cohort.

By the end of funding, Cohort 10 grantees:

- **Improved student-to-counselor ratios** from pre-funding levels. The ratio across all funded schools improved from 438:1 to 276:1. This level is much closer to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) best practice recommendation of 250:1, an important part of a comprehensive school counseling program. Ratios for middle and high schools were below 250:1.
- **Made progress on, reached, or exceeded 87% of goals** set during the development year.
- **Improved four-year graduation and six-year completion rates**. While Cohort 10 schools gained 2.5 percentage points in four-year graduation, the margin between Cohort 10 schools and the statewide graduation rates remained equal pre- and post-funding. Cohort 10 schools gained 1.6 percentage points more than the statewide average on six-year completion rates.
- **Improved matriculation rates from 41.7% to 52.7%**, narrowing the gap between Cohort 10 schools and the statewide average from 12.8 percentage points to 4.5 percentage points.
- **Did not improve with respect to dropout rates**, although overall percentages remained low and not very different from the state average by Year 4.

[1] FRL rates fluctuated in recent years. For example, universal meals during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a 3% drop in the FRPL rate statewide. In the 2023-24 school year, the FRPL rate increased by 6%. This increase is due to the inclusion of Medicaid-eligible students but was likely off-set by lower FRPL forms being completed due to the Healthy School Meals for All legislation.

[2] Previous reports to the Colorado legislature on SCCGP can be requested here.

SCCGP enabled Cohort 10 grantees to improve student-to-counselor ratios and continue driving toward goals related to students' social-emotional, behavioral, academic, and postsecondary and workforce readiness. The program supported capacity building and spurred plans to sustain the effects of the program beyond their four years of funding.

Introduction

C.R.S. 22-91-101 was authorized by H.B. 08-1370 and has been updated four times via S.B. 14-150, S.B. 17-068, H.B. 19-1187, and S.B. 22-140. The Colorado State Board of Education promulgated rules (1 Code of Colorado Regulations [CCR] 301-74) for program implementation, which include the timeline for submitting applications to CDE, the form of the grant application, criteria for awarding grants, and information to be included in the Department's program report. Per 22-91-105, C.R.S.:

> *On or before May 15, 2011, and on or before May 15 each year thereafter, the Department shall submit to the State Board of Education and to the education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives, or any successor committees, a report that, at a minimum, summarizes the information received by the Department pursuant to subsection (1) of 22-91-105, C.R.S. The Department shall also post the report to its website.*

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of SCCGP is to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling by increasing the number of counselors within K-12 schools. SCCGP focuses on postsecondary preparation and work-based learning. The program was created to increase the high school graduation rate and the percentage of students who successfully prepare for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education, as well as to support work-based learning awareness, education and opportunities across Colorado middle schools and high schools. To target these outcomes, the program leverages school counseling services, as guided by the ASCA national model.

Grant Application Process

Requests for applications are announced in the spring prior to the Colorado General Assembly making final appropriations for the program to allow eligible education providers time to prepare their application to the program.

The SCCGP statute defines an eligible education provider as:

- A school district (on behalf of one or more K-12 schools);
- A Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES);
- A charter school authorized by a local school board; or
- A charter school authorized by the Charter School Institute (CSI).

As is statutorily required, priority is given to applicants that serve:

- Secondary schools at which the dropout rate exceeded the statewide average;

- K-12 schools with a percentage of students who exceed the statewide average of FRL eligible students; or
- Secondary schools with postsecondary remediation rates that exceeded the statewide average.

Priority was also given to elementary schools in which the percentage of third grade students identified with SRDs exceeded the state average.

Allowable activities included K-12 school counselor salaries and benefits, postsecondary preparatory services, professional development, school counseling program development and grant-related travel. Since the 2014-15 school year, the Colorado General Assembly has appropriated approximately $9,950,000 - $12,000,000 annually for SCCGP to be distributed to grantees across cohorts (in 2023-24: Cohorts 10, 11, 12, and 13) for implementing comprehensive school counseling and postsecondary and workforce readiness supports.

Role of the School Counselor Corps Advisory Board

The School Counselor Corps Advisory Board, established in C.R.S. 22-91-104.5, meets quarterly to assist the department in scoring supplemental grant applications, engages in training to review the Request for Application, and makes funding recommendations. See Appendix A for a listing of School Counselor Corps Advisory Board members from 2023-24.

Program Design

The first three cohorts of SCCGP received three years of funding each for implementation. In the 2014-15 school year (Cohort 4), the program design shifted through a statutory change from S.B. 14-150 to address program planning challenges. The current grant structure provides four years of funding, with a lower funding amount in the first year for development and an increased amount of funding for the three remaining implementation years. The development year (Year 1) allows grantees time and support to complete an environmental scan, a comprehensive needs assessment, goal-setting activities and other best practices recommended by ASCA to ensure subsequent grant funds will be used effectively. During the implementation years (Year 2 through Year 4) grantees work toward implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, including the hiring of licensed school counselors, the purchase or development of curricula or postsecondary planning programs, and facilitating college visits, among other activities. Starting with Cohort 4, CDE staff also began offering structured trainings and a series of webinars each year to support grantees with a consistent model to use in designing their comprehensive school counseling programs.

Quasi-Experimental Study

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022, CDE contracted with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) at the University of Denver to assess the impact of SCCGP on student engagement, educational attainment and postsecondary readiness. This study was funded by a grant from the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB). The quasi-experimental design (QED) aimed to estimate the causal impacts of participation in the SCCGP across Cohorts 7-10. Findings from this QED were shared with CDE staff for continuous program improvement. For more information, the QED Technical Report can be found on the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab's website.

Reporting Approach

Cohort 10 Reporting Approach

The approach for the current report is modeled after previous legislative reports, starting with a description of Cohort 10, followed by outcomes achieved through the 2023-24 school year. This descriptive section of the report does not aim to establish causal links between SCCGP and the outcomes described.

Much of the data used in this section of the report are publicly available. CDE's Office of Data Services provided validated data on K-12 outcomes and descriptive statistics for Cohort 10 and the state overall. Additionally, funded schools submit an end-of-year (EOY) report during or shortly after each spring semester to provide information on program implementation, progress towards goals and select performance measures. SCCGP cohort outcomes are compared to the general state student population (i.e., all schools) unless otherwise noted. For specific analytical questions, please contact the Colorado Lab at admin@coloradolab.org.

Limitations of Cohort 10 Reporting

Early SCCGP cohorts focused primarily on funding secondary schools, and related legislative reports focused on secondary and postsecondary outcomes. However, Cohort 10 funding was distributed largely to elementary schools following S.B. 17-068, which focused on the addition of elementary schools as eligible applicants. This means that any secondary and postsecondary outcomes are based on data from a small number of schools. Therefore, those results should be interpreted with caution as they may be less representative compared to previous years.

It is important to keep in mind that many of the cohort-wide outcomes analyzed in this report are based on site self-reported data from grantee schools. To ensure accuracy and standardized measurement across schools, wherever possible, we cross-referenced self-reported grantee data with data from CDE.

As noted above, this report is descriptive, not causal. Outcomes reported here cannot be directly attributed to the SCCGP.

Description of SCCGP Cohort 10

Across all Cohort 10 grant years, 41 schools within 13 school districts received SCCGP funds at some point. However, two schools in Jefferson County R-1, Emory Elementary School and Molholm Elementary School, were included in original funding but closed before the 2023-24 school year. These schools are excluded from all reporting. Additionally, in the 2023-24 school year, Denver Public Schools transferred funding from McAuliffe Manual Middle School to Denver Center for International Studies at Baker. Because these schools both received partial treatment and remained open in the final year of funding, they are both included in reporting.

In the final year of funding, the 2023-24 school year, SCCGP Cohort 10 included 13 school districts representing 39 schools. These schools are used for all reporting below. Cohort 10 grantees served a wide range of students, including variation in grade levels served/school types, school sizes and geographic regions. These students attended schools with student mobility rates and FRL eligibility rates higher than the state average, and a higher proportion of students in these schools were students of color, relative to the state average.

Types of Schools and Program Reach

Of the 39 schools included in SCCGP Cohort 10, there are six high schools, eight middle schools, 15 elementary schools, three schools that serve middle and high school students together, five schools that serve elementary

and middle school students together and two schools that serves K-12 students (Table 2).[3] This is substantially different from Cohorts 1-7, which focused largely on funding middle and high schools. For example, while 38.5% of Cohort 10 schools were elementary schools, only 16.9% of Cohort 7 schools were elementary schools. In the final year of funding, these schools served a total of 21,858 students.

Table 2: SCCGP Cohort 10 Grantees and Types of Schools Funded

Districts	High School	Middle School	Elementary School	Middle & High School	Elementary & Middle School	Elementary, Middle, & High School	Total
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	**0**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**5**
Adams County 14	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**
Bennett 29J	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Denver County 1	**2**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**5**
Fort Morgan Re-3	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Greeley 6	**0**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**
Jefferson County R-1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Poudre R-1	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**
St Vrain Valley RE1J	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Westminster Public Schools	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**4**
Wiggins RE-50(J)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Woodlin R-104	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
TOTAL	**6**	**8**	**15**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**39**

[3] In some cases, schools are co-located and would self-describe as “Elementary & Middle School”, rather than one or the other; for consistency, we use the grade levels served according to school codes.

Geographic Location

Cohort 10 contained a mix of urban and rural school districts from across the state. Figures 1 and 2 show the geographic spread of the Cohort 10 grantee districts and the reach of SCCGP funding Cohorts 1-9 in orange.

Figure 1: SCCGP Cohort 10 Grantee Districts

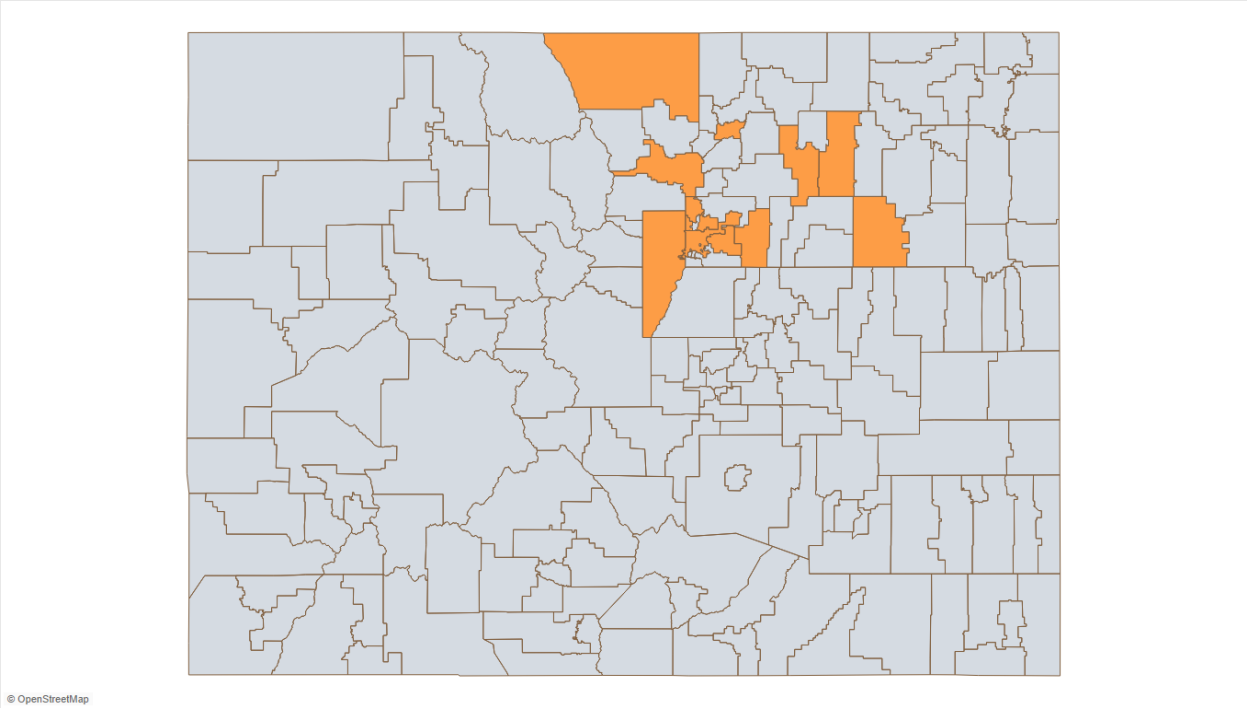
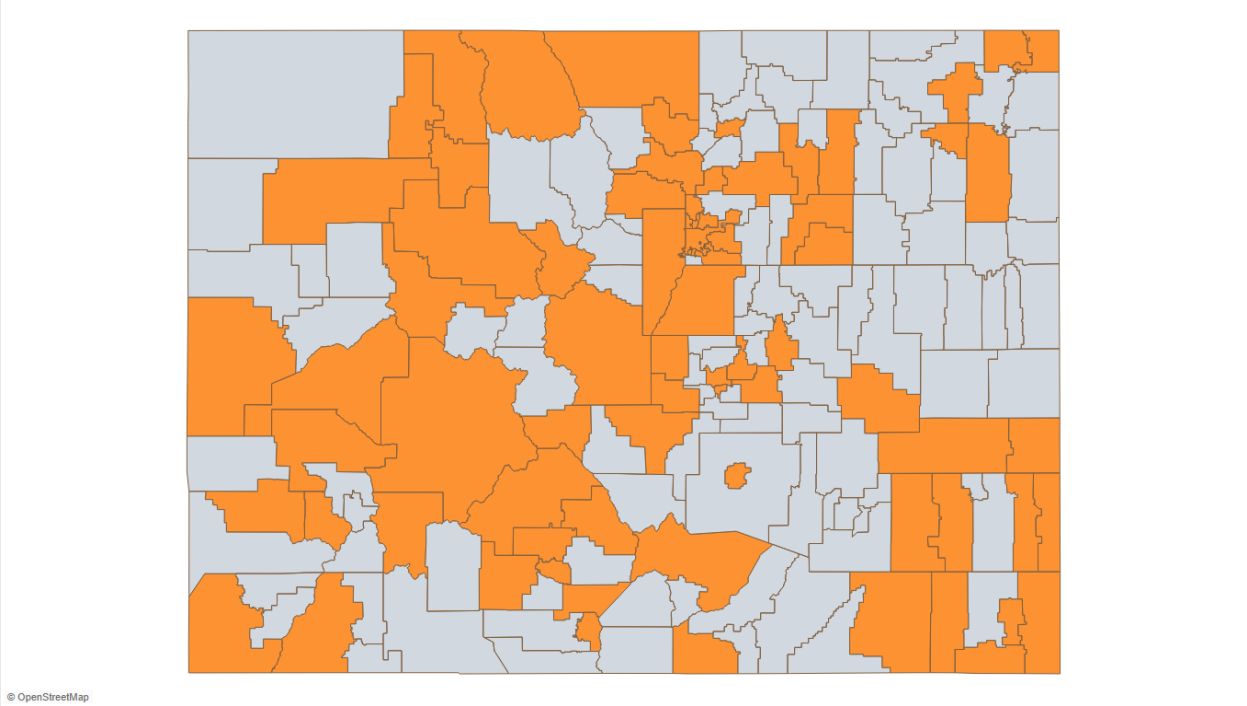


Figure 2: SCCGP Grantee Districts, Cohorts 1-9



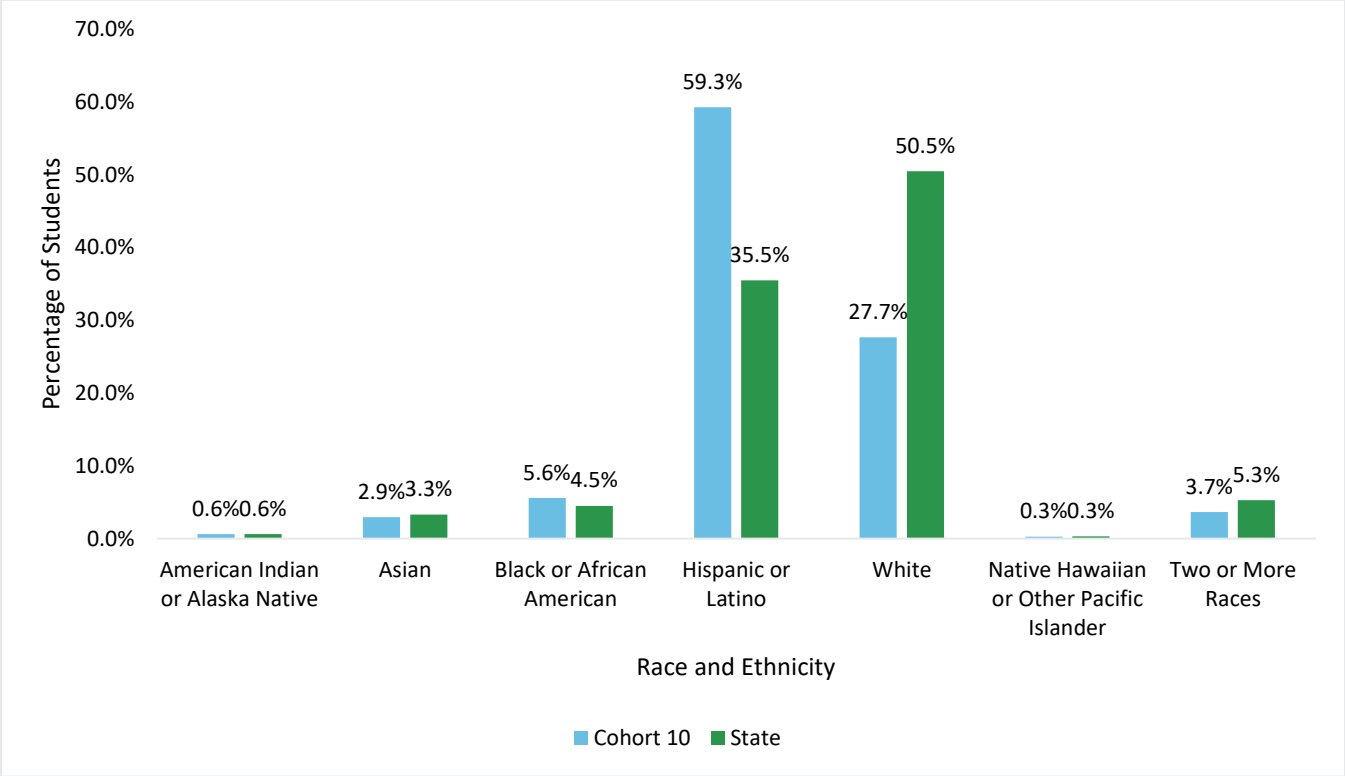
Student Characteristics

Students of color, economically disadvantaged students and highly mobile students tend to have lower high school graduation rates than the state average.[4] Cohort 10's demographic data indicate that SCCGP is being implemented in schools with historically underserved students who may need additional support to accelerate progress on high school graduation rates and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Race and Ethnicity

Cohort 10 grantees served students from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds, with 72.3% students of color, as compared to 49.5% of students statewide. In particular, Cohort 10 schools are composed of over half Hispanic or Latino students, as compared to the state average of 35.5%. Figure 3 depicts the racial and ethnic composition of students enrolled in SCCGP Cohort 10 schools.

Figure 3: SCCGP Cohort 10 Grantee Student Racial and Ethnic Composition, 2023-24

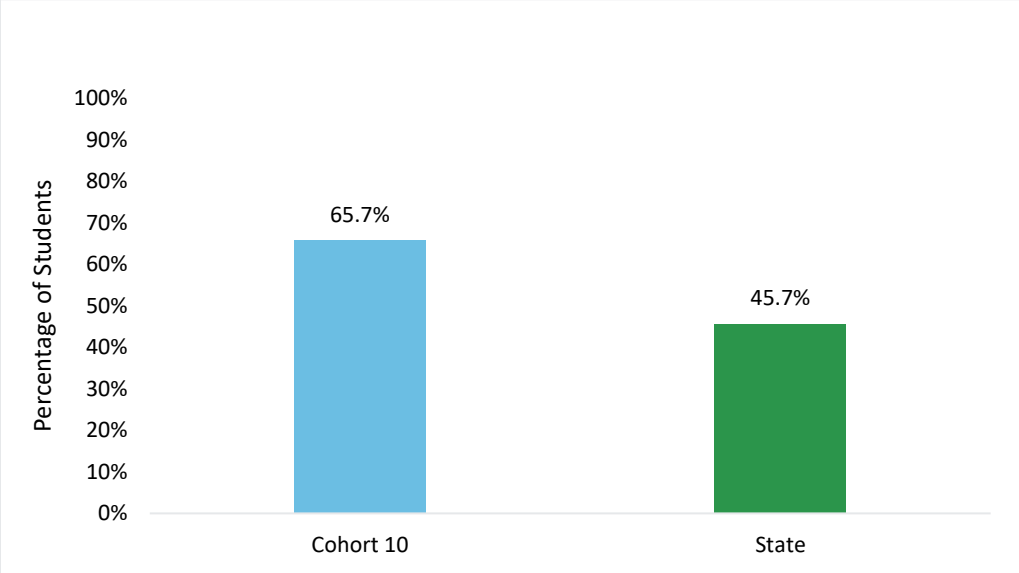


[4] Division of Student Pathways, Office of Student Engagement and Dropout Prevention. (2021). *2019-2020 State Policy Report: Dropout Prevention and Student Engagement.* https://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/2019-20statepolicyreport

Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Student qualification for FRL is a proxy for socioeconomic status of the student's household or economic hardship. As such, one of SCCGP's funding priority considerations is that the schools serve a high percentage of FRL eligible students. SCCGP funds reached this aim, with 65.7% of students enrolled in Cohort 10 schools FRL eligible, compared to 45.7% of students statewide (Figure 4).

Figure 4: SCCGP Cohort 10 Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, 2023-24

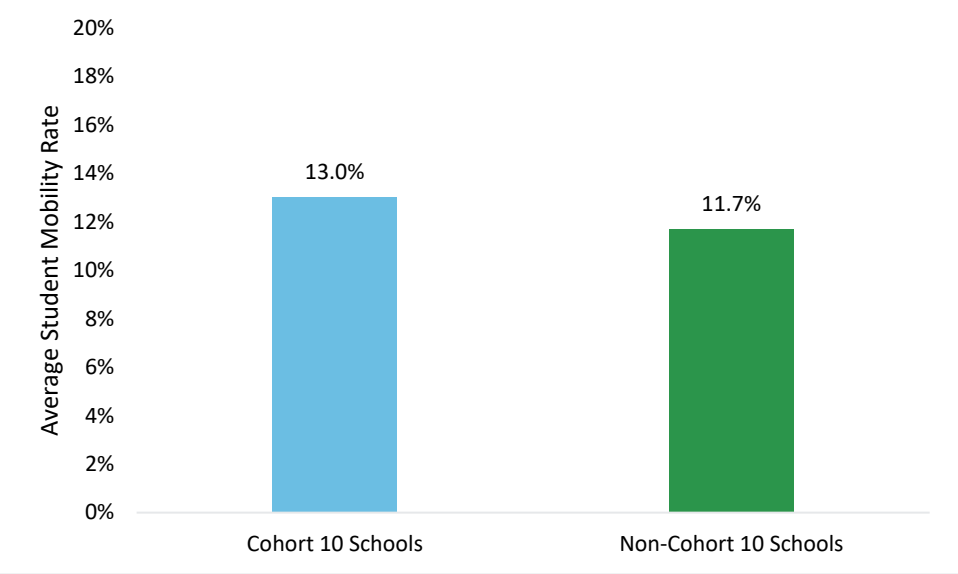


Student Mobility Rate

The mobility rate is the percentage of students who change schools outside of the typical enrollment process and is inclusive of school moves within and across districts. Students must have a gap in attendance of more than 10 days for the student to be considered mobile. In 2023-24, Cohort 10 schools had a higher student mobility rate than schools statewide that were *not* in Cohort 10, 13.0% compared to 11.7% (Figure 5).[5]

[5] School mobility rate calculations are based on the unduplicated count of K-12 students who moved into or out of the *school* during the year, including students transferring from one school to another within the district. This differs from the method used when calculating district mobility rates, which does not include this within-district movement. The comparison made here to non-Cohort 10 schools, as opposed to the state average district mobility rate, provides a more direct comparison.

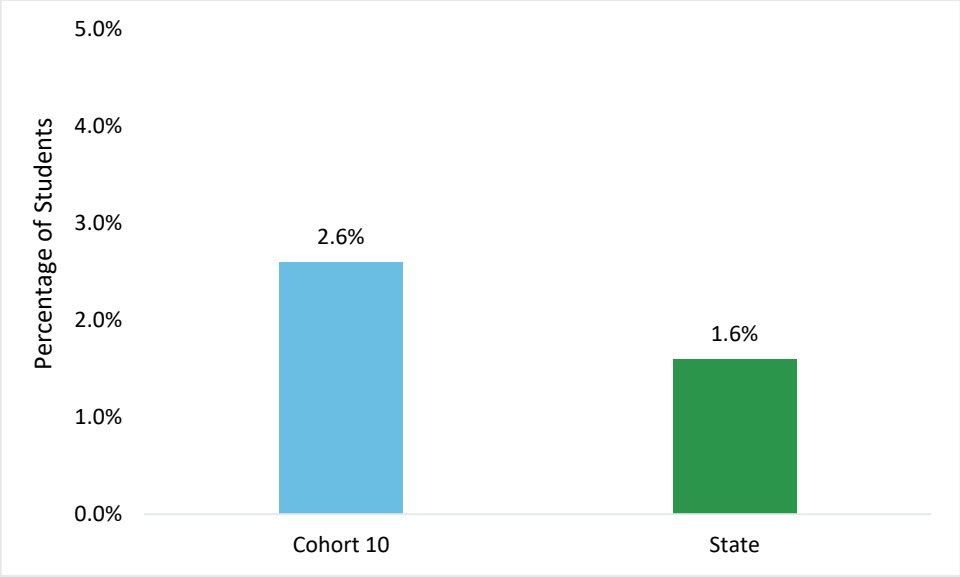
Figure 5: SCCGP Cohort 10 Student Mobility Rate, 2023-24



Student Homelessness Rate

Students experiencing homelessness face additional barriers to accessing education. These barriers are related to higher rates of chronic absenteeism, higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates.[6] In the final year of implementation, Cohort 10 schools, on average, identified a higher rate of students experiencing homelessness than the state as a whole, 2.6% compared to 1.6% statewide (Figure 6).

Figure 6: SCCGP Cohort 10 Student Homelessness Rate, 2023-24



[6] U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Supporting the success of homeless children and youths: A fact sheet & tips for teachers, principals, school leaders, counselors, and other school staff*. https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160315ehcyfactsheet072716.pdf

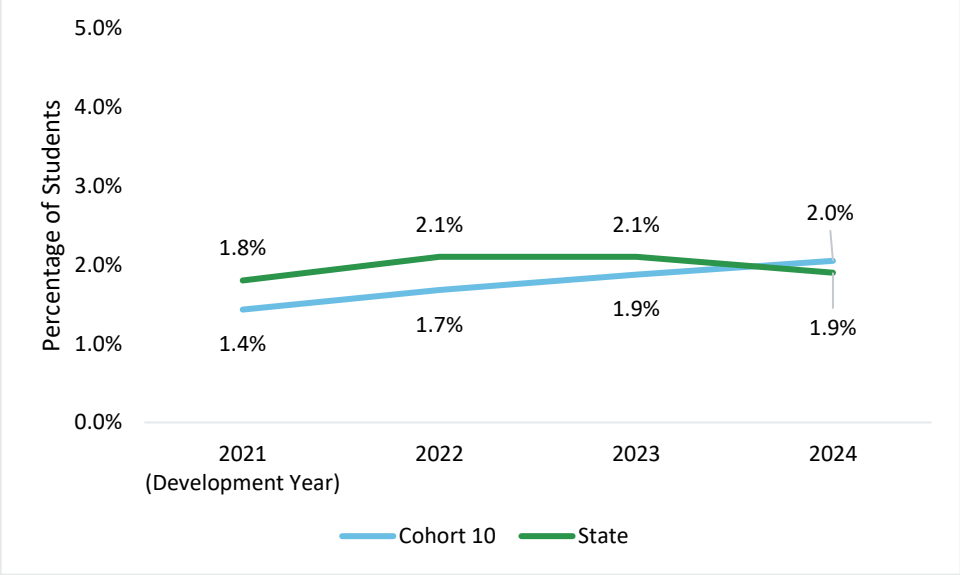
SCCGP Cohort 10 Student Outcomes

This report includes analysis of several secondary and postsecondary student outcomes, including dropout rates, graduation rates, matriculation rates, participation in career and technical education and participation in college visits.

Dropout Rates

The dropout rate is the percentage of students in Grades 7 and above who leave school for any reason, except death, before completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent and do not re-enroll in another school or educational program during the same academic year.[7] A decline in dropout rates indicates an improvement. Out of the 39 schools in SCCGP Cohort 10, 24 schools enrolled students in Grade 7 and above. In the 2023-24 academic year, the membership base for dropout—students relevant to the calculation—was 14,397 students. Figure 7 reports the change in dropout rates for both Cohort 10 schools and the state average over time. During the development year, Cohort 10 schools had an average dropout rate 0.4 percentage points *lower* than the state average. While both state average and Cohort 10 rates increased in 2021-22 and 2022-23, by the end of funding, Cohort 10 had a 0.1 percentage point *higher* dropout rate than the state average, at 2.0%.

Figure 7: SCCGP Cohort 10 Dropout Rates, 2020-21 through 2023-24 School Years



High School Graduation and Completion Rates

A student is considered to have *graduated* if they receive a regular diploma. A student's Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) cohort is determined by assigning an unchanging anticipated year of graduation to students when they enter ninth grade. Sometimes the AYG cohort is referred to as the "Class of…"[8] The four-year

[7] Colorado Department of Education. (n.d.). *Dropout statistics – definitions*. https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrentdefinitions

[8] Definition from the Colorado Department of Education: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradratecurrent

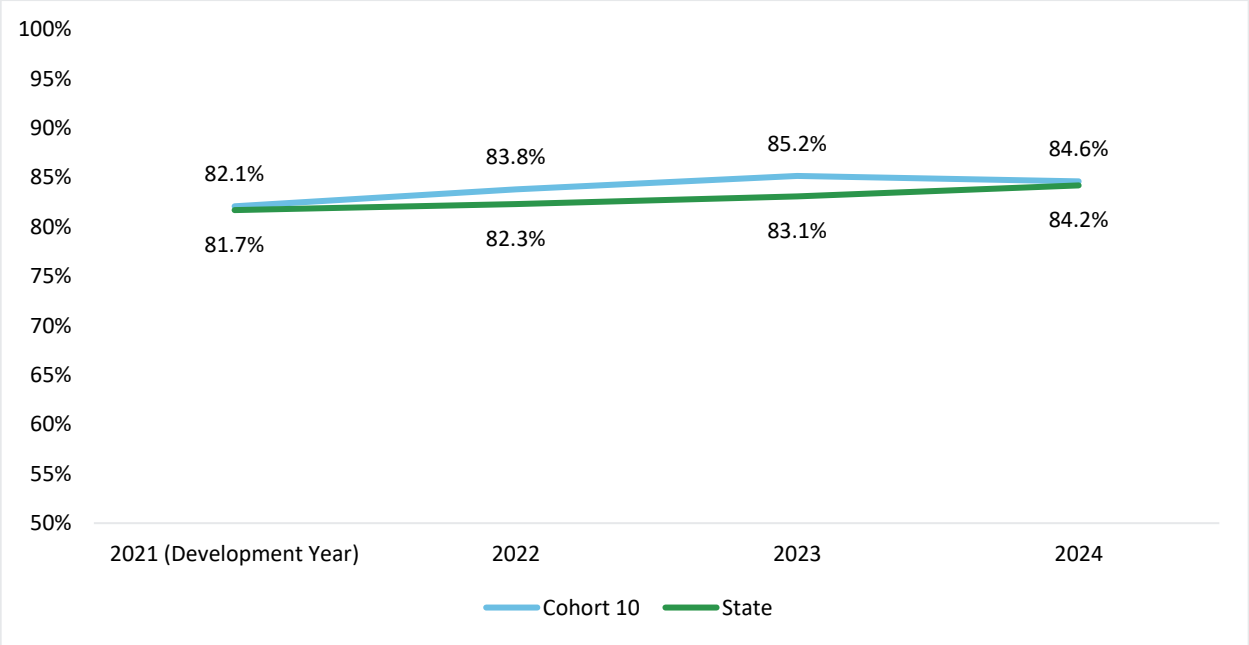
graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates within four years of entering ninth grade by the number of students in that AYG cohort.

A student is considered to have *completed* high school if they receive a regular diploma, a non-degree certificate or a High School Equivalency Diploma. The six-year completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of completers within six years of entering ninth grade by the number of students in that AYG cohort.[9] This means that students completing in 2021 to 2024, as documented in this report, are part of AYG cohorts 2019 to 2022.

Four-Year Graduation Rate

Cohort 10 consisted of 11 high schools, including three hybrid middle-high and two K-12 schools. Prior to receiving full SCCGP funding, the Cohort's four-year graduation rate was 0.4 percentage points *above* the state average (AYG 2021). Across all subsequent funded years, Cohort 10 schools maintained a graduation average slightly higher than the statewide average. Both Cohort 10 and the state increased graduation rates by the final year of funding, with an increase for Cohort 10 schools of 2.5 percentage points between 2021 and 2024 (approximately 3% growth). At the end of funding, Cohort 10's graduation rate remained 0.4 percentage points higher than the state average (Figure 8). This trend can be interpreted as no relative gain for Cohort 10 schools.

Figure 8: SCCGP Cohort 10 Four-Year Graduation Rates, AYG 2021 to 2024

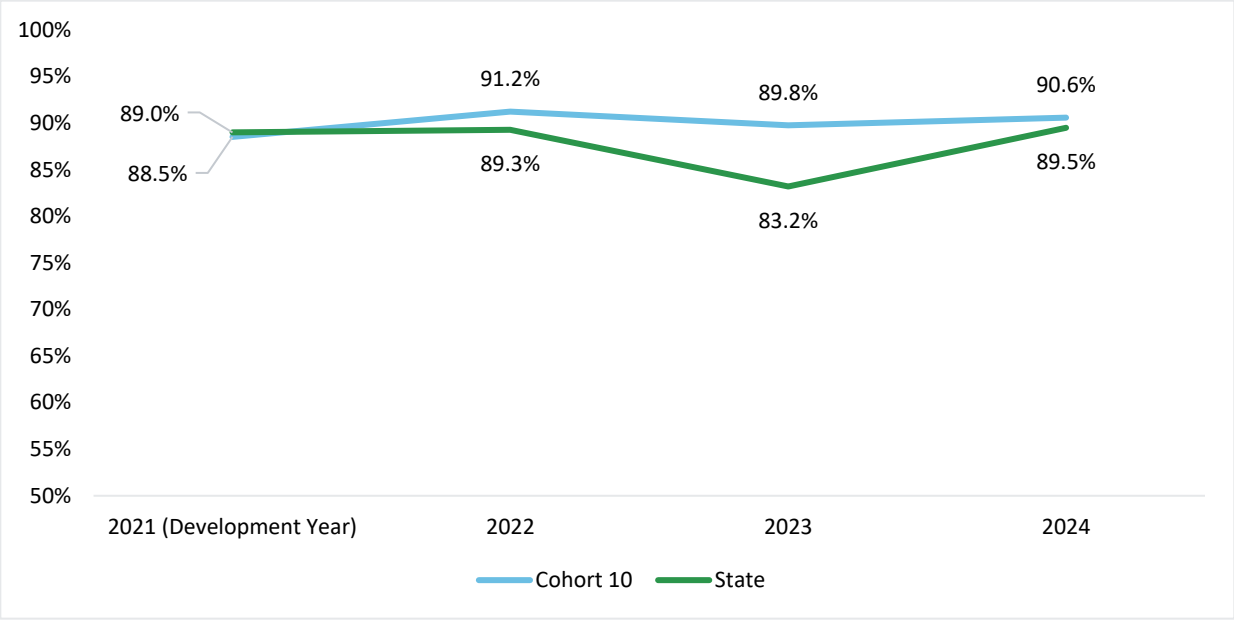


Six-Year Completion Rate

Prior to receiving full SCCGP funding, Cohort 10's six-year completion rate was 0.5 percentage points below the state average. Across all subsequent funded years, Cohort 10 schools maintained a completion rate higher than the state average. In the last year of funding, Cohort 10 had a completion rate 1.1 percentage points higher than the state average (Figure 9). This translates to a relative gain of 1.6 percentage points for Cohort 10 schools.

[9] Read more about calculating graduation and completion rates here.

Figure 9: SCCGP Cohort 10 Six-Year Completion Rates, 2020-21 through 2023-24 School Years for AYG 2019 to 2022



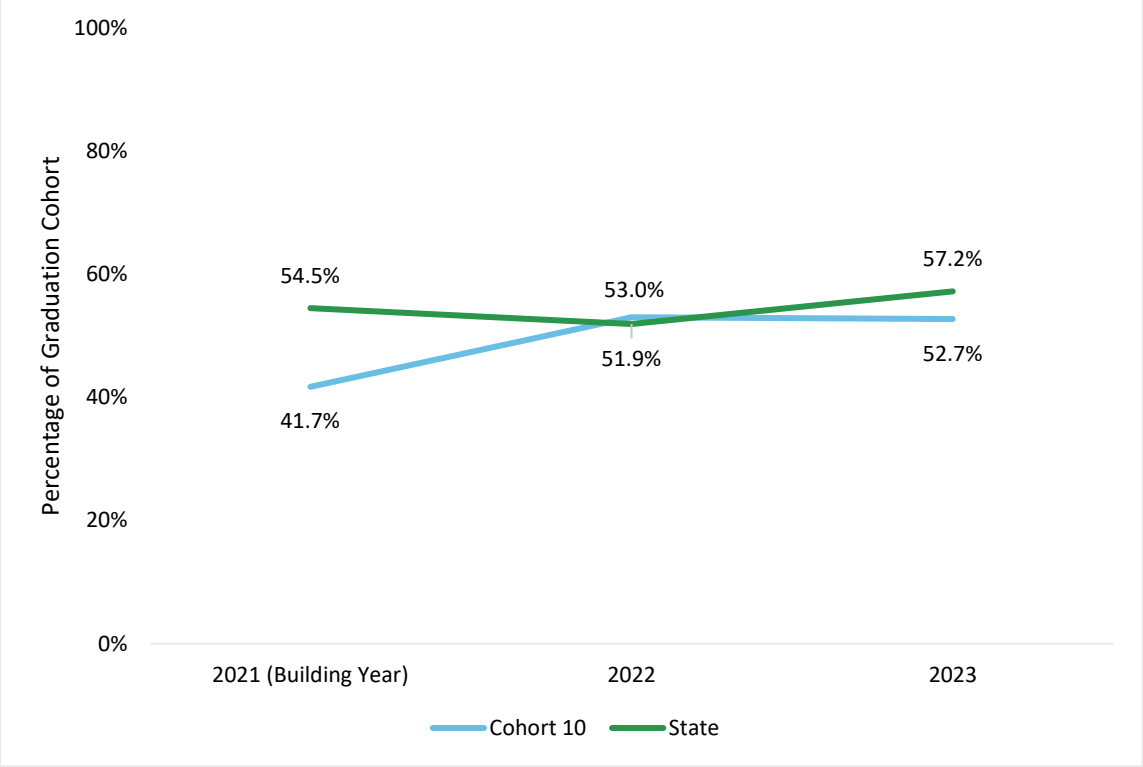
Note on CDHE Data

Data from CDHE, including FAFSA completion rates and concurrent enrollment participation, were not available in time for inclusion in this report.

Matriculation Rates

The matriculation rate is the percentage of high school graduates who in the summer/fall semesters immediately following graduation: enroll in a CTE program, two- or four-year institute of higher education, enlist in the military, or have completed a qualifying credential. Postsecondary matriculation data are not yet available for the graduating class of 2024. Of the 11 high schools in Cohort 10, 10 had unsuppressed matriculation rates available; to protect student privacy, we calculated matriculation rates only for those schools. During the development year, Cohort 10's matriculation rate was 41.7%, which was 12.8 percentage points below the state average. In the final year for which data are available, the gap between Cohort 10 schools and the statewide rate narrowed to just 4.5 percentage points (Figure 10).

Figure 10: SCCGP Cohort 10 Matriculation Rates, 2022-2024 for 2021-2023 Graduates



Career and Technical Education

SCCGP encourages schools to increase students' exposure to diverse career pathways and opportunities through enrollment in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In the final year of the grant, funded schools reported enrollment of 1,215 students in CTE courses, out of 7,400 high school students.[10] Comparisons are not made to previous cohorts because the composition of the cohorts (i.e., total number of schools and students, proportion of elementary and middle schools, which specific schools) changes.

College Visits

In the final year of grant funding, 1,290 high school students in Cohort 10 schools participated in visits to colleges and other postsecondary opportunities. Institutions visited included:

- Colorado State University
- Community College of Aurora
- Front Range Community College
- Lincoln Tech
- Metropolitan State University
- Morgan Community College

[10] As reported by grantees in EOY reports. The high school enrollee number reported in EOY reports differs from October count data but is used here for internal consistency.

- Northeastern Junior College
- University of Colorado Boulder
- University of Colorado Denver
- University of Northern Colorado

SCCGP Cohort 10 Program Outcomes

In this section, we report program outcomes, drawn from grantee schools' self-reported EOY reports which examine progress in six program areas:

- Identified SCCGP goals;
- Professional development;
- Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) lessons and activities;
- Student-to-counselor ratios; and
- ASCA Model implementation.

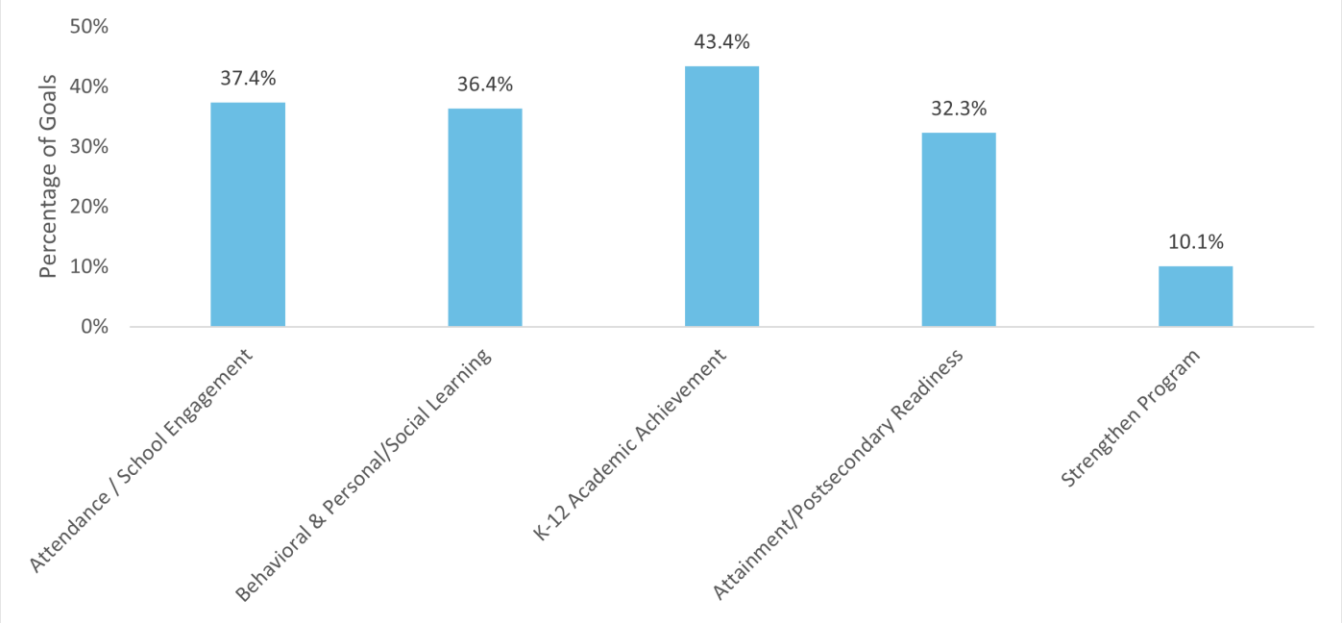
Progress Toward Reaching Goals

During the development year (Year 1), schools and districts create goals they would like to achieve with SCCGP funding, based on their needs assessment, environmental scan and ASCA best practice guidance.

Cumulatively, Cohort 10 schools provided data on progress for a total of 99 goals. Grantees identified the primary focus areas of their goals, selecting from six options aligned with the overall goals of the program. Cohort 10's goals most often focused on K-12 academic achievement (43.4% of 99 goals; Figure 11).[11] Sample goals are shown in Table 3.

[11] Because grantees can select multiple related focus areas, percentages sum to over 100%.

Figure 11: SCCGP Cohort 10 Goal Focus Areas



Of the 99 goals, grantees rated 59.6% of goals (n=59) as "met" or "exceeded" at the end of grant funding (Figure 12). The remaining were rated as "making progress" (n=27, 27.3%), "not making progress" (n=8, 8.1%), or "unable to rate" (n=5, 5.1%).

Table 3: SCCGP Cohort 10 Examples of Goals by Category

Goal Category	Sample Goals
Attendance/School Engagement	**By May 2024 [site] students who identify as American Indian will increase their attendance by 2% from 78% to 80% or higher.** **By May 2024, the number of students who have been identified as chronically absent will decrease by 6%, from 29.82% to 23.82%.**
Behavioral & Personal/Social Learning	By May 2024, students in the RTI [Response to Intervention] process will increase perceptions of whether they have the potential to change factors that are central to their performance in school (growth mindset) by 10% from 47% to 57%. The percentage of staff reporting difficulties with impulse control and problem solving in students will decrease by 5% each year.
K-12 Academic Achievement	**By May 15, 2024, the number of one-on-one meetings with students on 504 plans directly related to their 504 plan will increase from 25% to 100% of students.**
K-12 Attainment / Postsecondary Readiness and Success	By the end of the school year 2024, [site] will increase ICAP completion rates by 39 percent from 56% to 95%.

Goal Category	Sample Goals
	By May 30, 2022, [site] seniors will increase their College and Career Measure completion by 25% from 63% to 88% and hold steady or improve in future years.
Strengthen the SCCG Program	**[Site] will decrease student counselor ratio's below 1:250 by May of 2024 to meet the individual needs of students ([social and emotional learning], Academic, PWR).** **By May 2024, the counseling department will provide at least two diversity, inclusion and equity opportunities each year for stakeholders through workshops, book clubs or other means to better spotlight underrepresented populations in our community.**

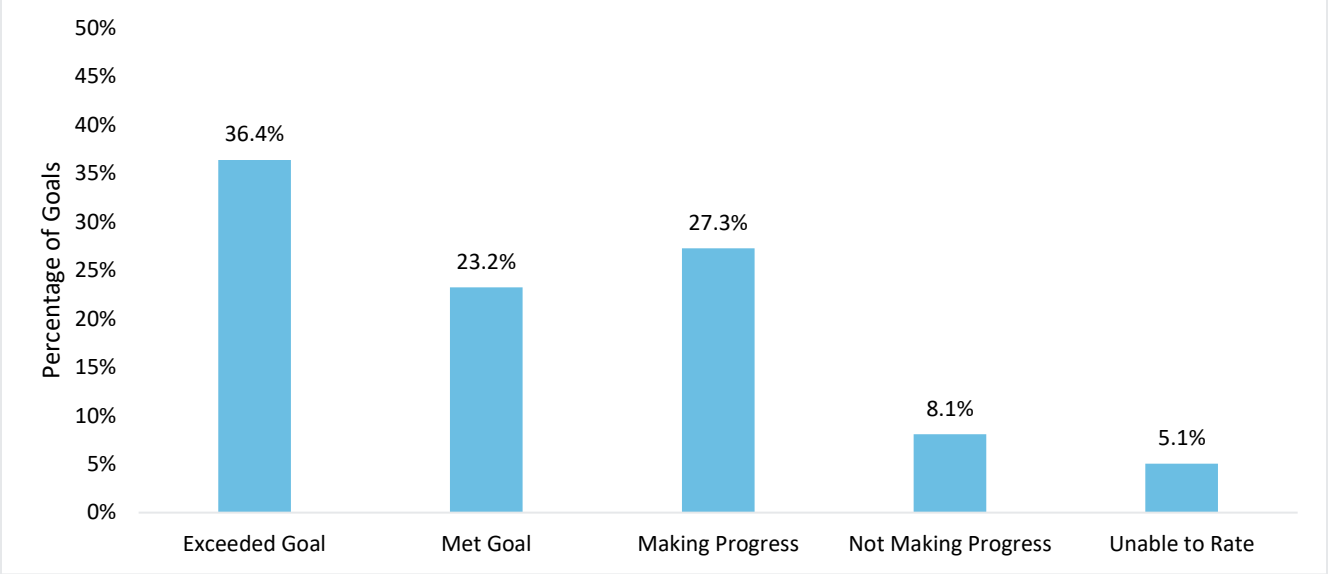
Sites that met or exceeded goals were supported by:

- The addition of counseling staff/additional staff time, particularly those supported with SCCGP funds.
- Relationship-building and collaboration with other members of the school staff: classroom teachers, mental health teams, family engagement staff, attendance liaisons, administrators, school nurses.
- Creating resources to support asynchronous engagement (e.g., recordings of ICAP lessons).
- Identification and purchase of relevant curriculum and resources (e.g., Xello, Ellii, Second Step).
- Shared learning across school counseling staff, including within district and with other SCCGP grantees.
- Use of technology (e.g., Infinite Campus) to support data tracking and monitoring.
- Use of translation resources, including English Language Development teachers, telelanguage and translation features on existing tools for family collaboration and student engagement.

Sites that did not meet or exceed goals attributed the lack of progress to:

- Staff turnover (e.g., unable to hire a school counselor).
- Chronic absence, exacerbated by challenges with student and family transportation.
- Changes in school leadership and culture.
- Variable enrollment (e.g., additions of grade levels, opening new buildings).
- Socioeconomic, geographic and cultural factors within families served (e.g., caregiving responsibilities that interfered with teenage students' attendance).
- Being relatively early in implementation of longer-term initiatives or programming.

Figure 12: SCCGP Cohort 10 Progress on Goals



Professional Development

In the final year of implementation, Cohort 10 SCCGP recipients indicated that school counselors and other team members attended over 3,000 hours of professional development related to PWR. This included three school professionals attending the ASCA National Conference, and 19 school professionals attending the Colorado School Counselor Association Conference, in addition to SCCGP-specific training opportunities provided by the state team. Other training and professional development opportunities engaged in by grantee school staff included:

- 504 Frontline training
- Advancing School Mental Health conference
- Anxiety is Your Superpower
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented conference
- Colorado Safe Schools Summit
- Corridor Counselor professional learning community
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Essentials training
- Dialectic Behavior Therapy training
- Elementary Behavior
- Emergenetics Associate/Facilitator training
- The Emotional Lives of Teenagers
- Evidence Based School Counseling Program
- Formative Practices Integration

- Graduate coursework
- Hatching Results
- Innovative Schools conference
- Meaningful Career Conversations training
- Panorama survey data training
- Restorative Circle training
- Rethink Data Analysis
- Stop the Bleed
- Suicide risk assessment training
- Teachers of Color Association
- Trauma-Informed Training
- Where Everybody Belongs training
- Xello training
- Zones of Regulation

Following engagement in these professional development opportunities, counselors reported improved crisis management skills such as suicide prevention, an increased awareness and implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive practices, greater knowledge around dropout prevention, greater knowledge of trauma-informed practices, improved school and classroom environments and connection with other school counselors.

Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) Implementation

ICAP implementation is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. ICAP helps students establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align coursework and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid and enter the workforce with a living wage job. School counselors support school personnel and all ninth-12th grade students in creating and acting upon an ICAP, as described in the State Board of Education's rules for ICAPs pursuant to S.B. 09-256:

> *Effective September 30, 2011, each school counselor or school administrator shall ensure that every student in grades nine through twelve and their parents or legal guardians has access to and assistance in the development of an ICAP (1 CCR 301-81, rule 2.02 (1)(d)).*

Over the course of funding, SCCGP sites work to strengthen the ICAP process across grade levels, ranging from college visits for high school students to career-focused crafts and dramatic play opportunities for kindergarteners. In the final year of funding, Cohort 10 schools offered approximately 475 unique ICAP activities for a total of approximately 706 activities across all schools, reaching over 18,000 students. Examples of the activities implemented by Cohort 10 schools are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: SCCGP Cohort 10 Examples of ICAP Activities Offered, by School Type/Grade Levels Served

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
• "Career clues" game • STEAM Day • Field trips (businesses, colleges, Museum of Discovery) • Costumes/dress up • Career BINGO • Career-focused crafts • Bulletin boards • Read alouds (e.g., *Oh, the Places You'll Go*) • Strengths and interest inventories • Problem-based learning • Career exploration scavenger hunt • Virtual career activities (e.g., Paws in Jobland, MyNextMove.org, Xello) • Vision boards • Career exploration fair • Financial management lessons • Business start-up project • Lesson on grade point average	• Postsecondary exploration activities • Targeted college- and career-relevant conversations or assistance • Organization and time management lesson • Career day/expo • Future Forward (CTE) field trip • High school graduation requirements lesson • True Colors inventory • High School transition activities • Career expo • Field trips (colleges) • Lessons on learning styles • Workshop with a college funding coach • "Lunch with professionals" sessions • Virtual career activities (e.g., Major Clarity)	• College campus visits • FAFSA workshops • College and career fairs, college recruitment and informational visits • Hiring fair • Field trips • Application completion workshops • Lessons on college entrance exams, high school transcripts, internships, paying for college, FAFSA/ Colorado Application for State Financial Aid /scholarships, and earning college credit in high school • Lessons on apprenticeship programs, work values, and military careers • Career speakers and trades workshops • Mock interviews • Targeted college- and career-relevant conversations or assistance • Microcredentialing • Hosting Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

In addition, SCCGP funding supported schools in developing longer-term infrastructure and capacity for implementing ICAPs. For example, most Cohort 10 schools that completed EOY reports (89%) involved an individual other than the school counselor in ICAP implementation. The inclusion of other professionals, community members and caring adults strengthens the school counseling program, prioritizes ICAP implementation alongside other school wide initiatives and leads to greater capacity for implementation across the school. This was also evident in the descriptions of ICAP activities that involved community partnership.

Student-to-Counselor Ratio

The ASCA national model for comprehensive school counseling programs recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of no more than 250 students to one school counselor (250:1). ASCA recommends this ratio so professional school counselors can focus their skills, time and energy on direct and indirect services to students at least 80% of their time. This student-to-counselor ratio enables a comprehensive school counseling program that:

- Ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students;
- Identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive school counseling program;
- Delivers programming to all students in a systematic fashion;
- Bases programming on data-driven decision making; and
- Ensures that programming is provided by a state-credentialed, licensed professional school counselor.

Benefits of lower student-to-counselor ratios from research in other school counseling programs include improved attendance and discipline rates and higher graduation and completion rates.[12]

For Cohort 10 schools, SCCGP funding was effective in lowering the student-to-counselor ratio. Prior to SCCGP funding, Cohort 10 schools had the equivalent of 49.85 full-time, licensed school counselors, for an approximate student-to-counselor ratio of 438:1. In the final year of funding, that increased to 79.1 full-time school counselors, for a 276:1 ratio.[13] This change allowed SCCGP Cohort 10 schools to get much closer to the best practice 250:1 recommendation set forth by ASCA. Ratios at the end of funding varied by school level served, with schools that served middle and high school students exclusively reporting a lower ratio than elementary-only schools (Table 5).[14]

Table 5: SCCGP Cohort 10 Student-to-Counselor Ratio, by School Type

School Type in Report	Student-to-Counselor Ratio
Elementary Only (n=15 reports; 5,706 students)	**380:1**
Middle Only (n=7 reports; 4,731 students)	231:1
High School Only (n=5 reports; 6,352 students)	**235:1**

American School Counselors Association Model Implementation

The EOY reports included a reliable measure for assessing the level of ASCA National Model implementation, the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.[15] The survey includes a total of 14 items, which provide an overall implementation score and two factor scores—programmatic orientation and school counseling services.

[12] Carey, J., & Dimmitt, C. (2012). School counseling and student outcomes: Summary of six statewide studies. *Professional School Counseling,* 16(2). https://doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/2156759X0001600204

[13] This ratio is calculated based on the student counts provided by grantees in EOY reports: 21,847.

[14] Most, but not all, grantees submitted EOY reports. We examined only the reports that exclusively focused on elementary, middle, or high school students and excluded those that spanned multiple levels (e.g., K-8 schools). These report counts are lower than the number of schools in the cohort at each level because some grantees combined multiple schools onto a single report. Given the small number of reports, these rates should be interpreted with caution.

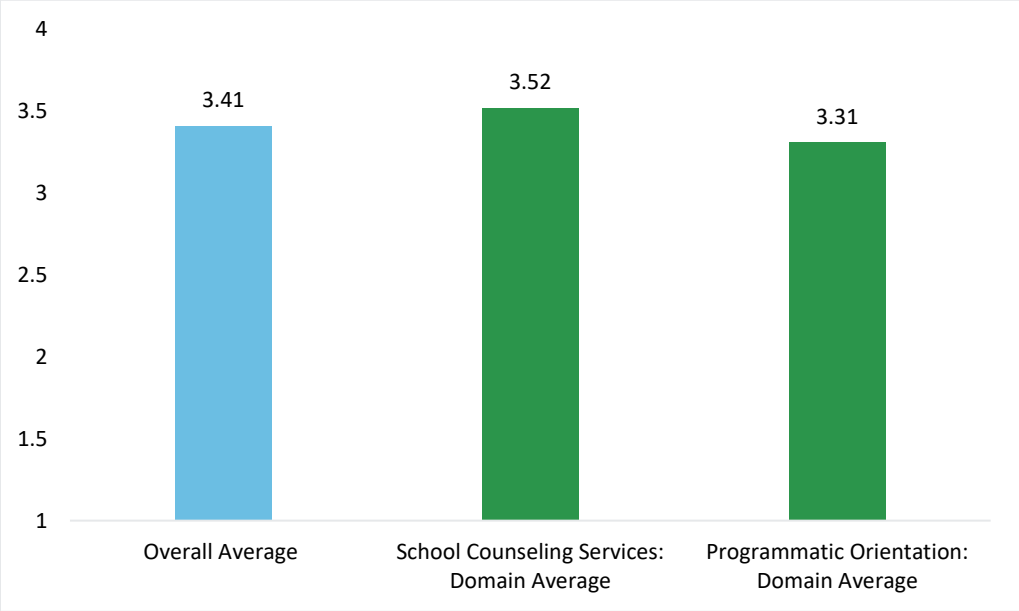
[15] Clemens, E., Carey, J., & Harrington, K. (2010). The School Counseling Program Implementation Survey: Initial instrument development and exploratory factor analysis. *Professional School Counseling, 14(2),* 125-134.

The 4-point rating scale used in the survey was 1 = not present, 2 = development in progress, 3 = partly implemented, and 4 = fully implemented.

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 10 schools' self-ratings on this tool demonstrate that one of the key areas of implementation for SCCGP, implementation of the ASCA National Model, is in progress in funded schools (Figure 13). At the end of the final year of funding, Cohort 10 schools reported partial overall implementation of the ASCA National Model, averaging a score of 3.41 across all items (n=36 reports).

Both domains of the ASCA self-rating also had average scores falling between partly and fully implemented. Average ratings of items on the school counseling services domain ranged from 3.36 to 3.69 (out of 4), with a domain average of 3.52. Average ratings of items on the programmatic orientation domain ranged from 2.97 to 3.44 (out of 4), with a domain average of 3.31. Only one item fell below the "partly implemented" threshold: "School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps." This item has consistently been one of the areas of greatest challenge across previous cohorts.[16]

Figure 13: ASCA Model Implementation in SCCGP Cohort 10 Schools



Sustainability

In the final EOY report, grantees were asked to share their plans for sustaining the impact of the program in their schools once the grant cycle is completed. Of the 36 school-level reports, 23 (64%) indicated that full funding had been secured to continue the counselor position beyond the end of SCCGP funding; an additional five schools (14%) were partially funded. Funding sources included school/district general funds, state rural funding and other grants, and one site obtained partial funding through a Ninth Grade Success Grant (different

[16] See https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/sccgparchivedannualreports.

state-level grant administered by CDE). Barriers to securing sustained funding included challenges in hiring school counseling staff and decreased student enrollment, leading to lower school funding overall.

Cohort 10 Conclusions

Cohort 10 included a total of 39 schools from across the state. In the 2023-24 school year, the final year of funding, Cohort 10 grantees enrolled 21,858 students. This group included a higher percentage of students of color, FRL eligible students, mobile students and students experiencing homelessness relative to the statewide student population.

By the end of funding, Cohort 10 grantees:

- **Improved student-to-counselor ratios** from pre-funding levels. The ratio improved from 438:1 to 276:1. This level is much closer to ASCA's best practice recommendation of 250:1, an important part of a comprehensive school counseling program. Ratios for middle and high schools were below 250:1.
- **Made progress on, reached, or exceeded 87% of goals** set during the development year.
- **Improved four-year graduation and six-year completion rates**. While Cohort 10 schools' four-year graduation rates increased by 2.5 percentage, the margin between Cohort 10 schools and the statewide graduation rate remained equal pre- and post-funding. Cohort 10 schools' six-year completion rates increased 1.6 percentage points more than the statewide average.
- **Improved matriculation rates from 41.7% to 52.7%**, narrowing the gap between Cohort 10 schools and the statewide average.
- **Did not improve dropout rates**, although overall percentages remained fairly low.

SCCGP enabled Cohort 10 grantees to improve student-to-counselor ratios and pursue goals related to students' social-emotional, behavioral, academic, and postsecondary and workforce readiness outcomes, and to continue driving toward goals that support students' postsecondary and workforce readiness. The program supported capacity building and spurred plans to sustain the effects of the program beyond their four years of funding.

Appendix A: School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

2023-2024 Advisory Committee:

Andrew Burns, Pueblo City Schools 60, Executive Director of Student Support Services
Lauren Jones, NCCCSCDA LPCc, Colorado Community College System, CTE Program Director for Special Populations, Counseling and Career Development
Kim Medina, Colorado Mesa University, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management
Amy Miglinas, Bayfield School District, High School Principal
Stephanie Mijo, Academy District 20, College and Career Counselor and D2 Harrison Schools, Career and College Counselor
Kylie Rogalla, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, Assistant Professor
Shae Smith, Akron School District R-1, Akron Elementary School Principal and Licensed School Counselor
Katie Wolver, Adams 12 School District, School Counselor

Appendix B: Data Sources

The following **data sources** were used to report outcomes for Cohort 10:

1) The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) collected self-reported data from grantees at the district and school level. These data were utilized for:
   - Student-to-counselor ratios
   - Grantee implementation indicators
     - Goals
     - Professional development
     - ASCA standards
     - ICAP
     - Postsecondary and workforce readiness programming (i.e., CTE)

2) CDE's publicly accessible data, supplemented and verified by Data Services at CDE, were utilized for demographic data and student counts.

3) CDE's publicly available district and performance framework datasets were used to calculate matriculation rates.

4) Some data were provided directly by Data Services at CDE, including:
   - Student mobility rates
   - Dropout rates
   - Graduation and completion rates

Descriptive statistics guided the **analysis process**, with SCCGP cohort outcomes compared to the general state student population (i.e., all schools) unless otherwise noted. For specific analytical questions, please contact the Colorado Lab at admin@coloradolab.org.