



COLORADO
Department of Education

Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program Annual Evaluation Report 2023-24

Submitted to:

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Colorado House Education Committee
Colorado Senate Education Committee

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Executive Summary

The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) program provides funding to implement educational and support services to expelled students, students at risk of being expelled, chronically absent and/or habitually truant students. Funds are annually appropriated to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for the purpose of making grants available to eligible applicants (local education agencies). Grantees commit to using funds to provide direct services to students, build consistent attendance and discipline practices, and develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion with the goal to keep more students in school, improve students' regular attendance, and support students' progress toward graduation.

More than 6,200 Students and 4,500 Parents, Families, and Guardians Served

In 2023-2024, the General Assembly appropriated \$9,499,542 for the EARSS program and CDE awarded funds to 48 grantees, 5 of whom were in their initial 6-month period of funding dedicated to stakeholder meetings, student identification, and the hiring and training of staff. The remaining 43 grantees provided direct student support for reducing discipline infractions, improving attendance, and working to build stronger systems for prevention and intervention. A total of 6,209 students received direct support including:

- 2,065 students at risk of being expelled.
- 3,921 chronically absent and/or habitually truant students; and
- 223 expelled students.

EARSS grantees primarily serve students in sixth through twelfth grade (80.6 percent of students served), however there is a growing group of grantees serving elementary students, with pre-kindergarten through fifth grade at 7.6 percent of students served. In addition, nearly half of the students served are Hispanic or Latino students (48.6 percent), which is greater than the statewide average (35.5 percent).

More than half of the students were served due to attendance (63.1 percent of students served) with the rest served for expulsions or risk of expulsion. Of the 2,065 students served who were at-risk for expulsion or previously expelled, the primary reasons a student was served were:

- Detrimental behavior (17.2 percent of students); and
- Disobedient/defiant behavior (25.8 percent of students).

In addition to direct student support, more than 4,500 parents and guardians received support services to assist in their children's learning, positive engagement, and academic development.

Overall, students supported by the EARSS grant program experienced positive outcomes at the end of the school year, including 94.8 percent of the students remaining in school, receiving a diploma (graduating), or completing school. In addition, more than half of grantee schools met all of their performance objectives and nearly half made improvements greater than the state's improvement in reducing the dropout rate and improving attendance.

The EARSS Program Met Legislative Intent

Evaluation results suggest that the statutorily defined goals of the EARSS program to prevent expulsions, suspensions, and truancy were met. Grantees reported that, while being served by the EARSS program, 98.1 percent of at-risk students did not receive an out-of-school suspension and 93.6 percent did not receive an in-school suspension. Of the students at-risk for truancy or chronic absenteeism, 98.7 percent did not have a truancy petition filed in court.



Introduction

The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) program is authorized by section 22-33-205, C.R.S. This grant program provides educational and support services to expelled students and students at risk of being expelled, chronically absent, and/or habitually truant. Funds are annually appropriated to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for the purpose of making grants available to eligible applicants (local education agencies). The program is managed by the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement at CDE.

Background: State Statute on Expulsion Prevention and Support Services

Colorado's school attendance laws include several provisions that address the education of students who break school conduct and discipline codes or are deemed at risk of suspension or expulsion. Included in these laws is a legislative framework for expulsion prevention and support services to affected students (see Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 22, Article 33, Part 2: Expulsion Prevention Programs). The law (see text box on the right) states that there are disciplinary violations that justify expulsion; however, it also addresses alternatives to expulsion when discretion is allowed. In such cases, the legislation directs school districts to develop a plan to provide the necessary support services to help students avoid expulsion. The Colorado General Assembly has created the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program to assist grantee school districts in providing such services. Colorado statute further outlines procedures and potential support options for students who have been expelled or at risk of expulsion. This includes guidance to districts and the establishment of the EARSS grant program that districts can access for support.

The EARSS Program

The EARSS program provides funding for grantees (local education agencies) to provide educational and support services to expelled students, students at risk of being expelled, students who are chronically absent, and students declared at-risk of being or who are habitually truant. Funds are annually appropriated to CDE for the purpose of making grants in accordance with authorizing legislation.

The program's approach maintains that more students will stay in school, regularly attend, and make progress toward graduation if school staff provide support services to expelled and at-risk students, offer alternatives to suspension and expulsion, and create effective attendance and discipline systems in schools.

C.R.S. TITLE 22, ART. 33 PART 2: EXPULSION PREVENTION PROGRAMS

22-33-201. Legislative declaration.

The general assembly hereby finds that except when a student's behavior would cause imminent harm to others in the school or when an incident requires expulsion as defined by state law or a school's conduct and discipline code, expulsion should be the last step taken after several attempts to support a student who has discipline problems.

The general assembly further finds that school districts should work with the student's parent or guardian and with state agencies and community-based non-public organizations to develop alternatives to help students who are at risk of expulsion before expulsion becomes a necessary step and to support students who are unable to avoid expulsion.

22-33-202. Identification of at-risk students — Attendance issues — disproportionate discipline practices

(2) In providing necessary support services pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, each school district may provide attendance supports, behavior intervention, and educational services to students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade who are identified as at risk of dropping out of school due to chronic absenteeism or disciplinary actions, including classroom removal, suspensions, and expulsion. Any school district that provides attendance supports, behavior intervention, or educational services to students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade who are at risk of dropping out of school due to chronic absenteeism or disciplinary actions may apply for money through the expelled and at-risk student services grant program established in section 22-33-205 to assist in providing such attendance, behavior intervention, and educational services.



Reporting Requirements

The EARSS authorizing legislation (section 22-33-205, C.R.S.) requires reporting on the evaluation of the grant to the Colorado House and Senate Education Committees by January 1 each year. This report is intended to meet the statutory reporting requirements outlined in section 22-33-205(4), C.R.S., through the analysis of program-level and student-level information annually submitted to CDE by grantees. This report covers evaluation data from 48 grantees, including five grantees engaged in a 6-month planning period who have not started serving students, covering the period between July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. For more details on the evaluation methodology, see **Appendix A – Evaluation Methodology**. For the survey tools from the evaluation, visit the [EARSS Evaluation website](#).

2023-2024 Grant Awards

Grant Application and Selection Process

The EARSS program is managed through CDE’s Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement. CDE staff facilitate an annual competitive grant process. Eligible grant applicants include school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), charter schools, alternative education schools within school districts, non-public schools, and facility schools. Grants are awarded for a six-month planning period and four sequential fiscal years provided that grantees continue to meet grant requirements, make reasonable progress toward performance outcomes, and state funds are annually appropriated. See **Table 1** for a recent history of EARSS funding and **Appendix B – 2023-2024 Funded Grantees** for a list of current grantees.

TABLE 1: Grantees by Cohort and Type (N=48)

Cohort	Funding Start	Funding End	Number of Grantees in Cohort	Share of Grantees in each Cohort
Cohort 3	January 2024*	June 2028	5	10%
Cohort 2	January 2023*	June 2027	12	25%
Cohort 1	January 2022*	June 2026	21	44%
2020-2024	July 2020	June 2024	10	21%

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

*Includes 6-month planning period

For the third year, a six-month planning period was included in 2023-2024 for new grantees. This addition was started in 2021-2022 to ensure grantees could hire and train staff in program-specific training. The planning period also provides funding and time to hold additional stakeholder meetings, establish protocols in identifying at-risk students, and prepare to start serving students immediately once school starts that fall.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the General Assembly appropriated \$9,499,542 for the program. CDE retained approximately 2% of funds to support grant administration, training and support for grantees, and funds to support BOCES offices. CDE conducted a competitive grant process in summer and fall 2023 and awarded five

new grants to start the 6-month planning period. Forty-three grantees continued implementing their program in years one through four of the grant cycle.

The 48 grantees funded in 2023-2024 represent 25 counties across Colorado. This represents:

- 27 school districts, 11 individual charter schools, four BOCES, and six facility schools.
 - Four school districts and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) had multiple EARSS grants, each grant serving a different school.
 - Eleven grantees (23 percent of grantees) served students from more than one school district. This occurs when the grantee is a Board of Cooperative Services (8 percent), a facility school (13 percent), or in a rural area and offering services to neighboring districts (2 percent).
 - Eighteen (37.5 percent) grantees are classified as serving rural communities.
- Funding was evenly distributed among new and returning grantees:
 - 50% of grantees had not been previously funded or had not received EARSS funding for over five years.
 - 37.5% of grantees were previously funded, reapplied during the final year of their grant, and were awarded four additional years of funding.

See **Figure 1** for a School District Map highlighting all the districts served by the grant. Grantees serving multiple school districts through collaborative agreements are highlighted in grey.

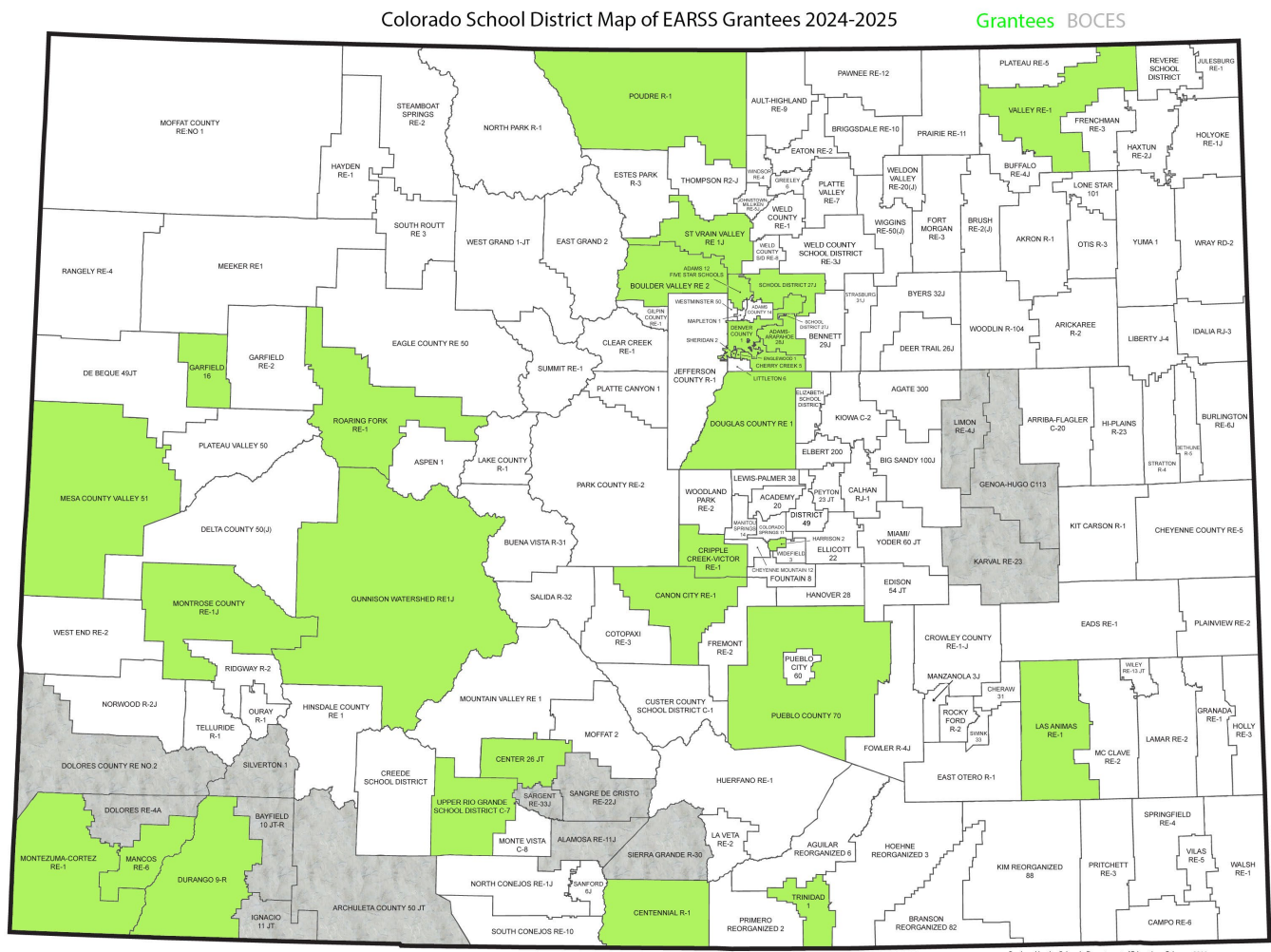


Figure 1. School District Map highlighting districts served by the EARSS grant

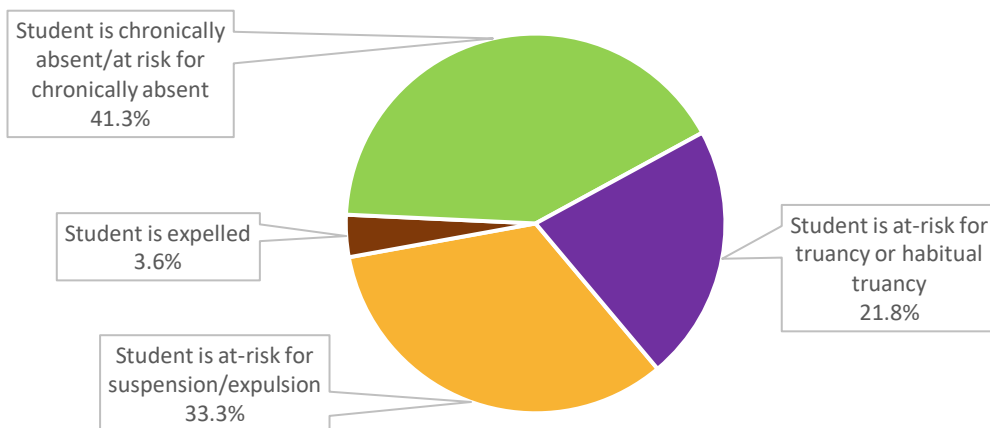
Students Served in 2023-2024

Student Characteristics

In 2023-2024, the 43 EARSS program grantees in their implementation phase reported serving 6,209 students. An additional 5 grantees were in their planning period and not yet reporting on students served. The reasons students were served are presented in **Chart 1**. Overall, EARSS grantees serve a range of grade levels and different populations depending on the district’s students and program.

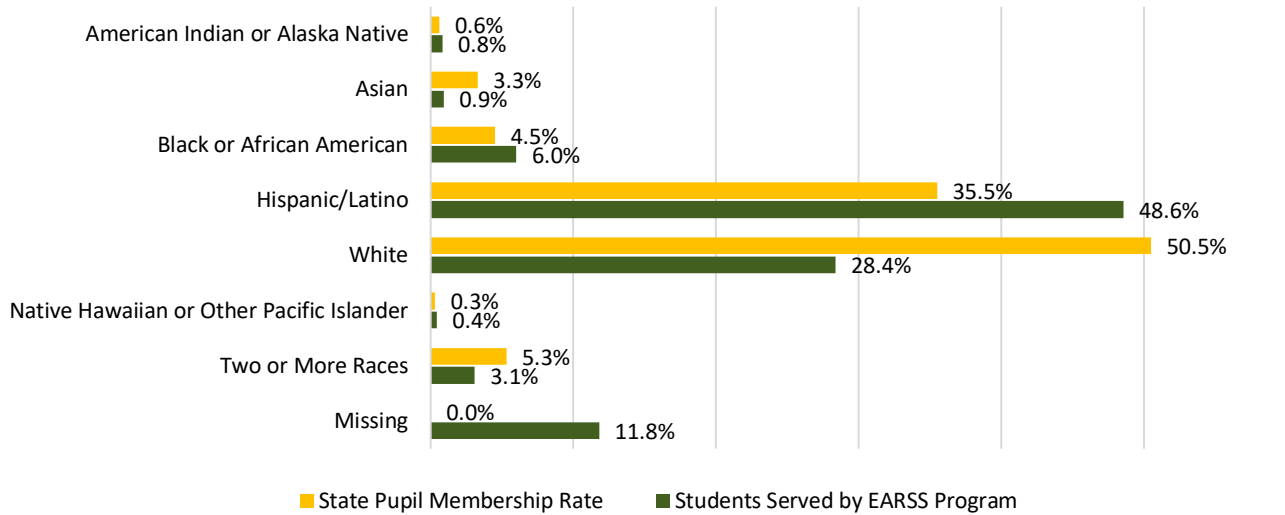
- The primary reasons grantees indicated that students were served were for being chronically absent or at-risk of becoming chronically absent (N = 2,566; 41.3% of students served) or being at-risk of expulsion (N = 2,065; 33.3% of students served).
 - Among students at risk of expulsion, grantees reported specific behaviors students engaged in to be referred for EARSS services. The two most common were disobedient/defiant behavior or repeatedly interfering with school’s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students (N = 532) and detrimental behavior (N = 355). Fights or other violent behavior (N = 299) was the third most listed cause.
- Students served were primarily male (55.2% of students), Hispanic (48.6%), and in grades 6 – 12 (80.5%).
 - The EARSS grant also served students in kindergarten through fifth grade (7.6%) and in preschool (less than 0.1%). Grade data was missing on 11.8% of students.
 - The EARSS grant served a higher percentage of minority populations (i.e., Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students) when compared to the overall student population in the state (**Chart 2**).
 - The EARSS grant served a higher percentage of at-risk students (i.e., those eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch, multilingual learners, special education students, students experiencing homelessness, and migrant students) when compared to the state student population (**Chart 3**).

Chart 1: Grantee-Reported Reasons for Serving EARSS Students



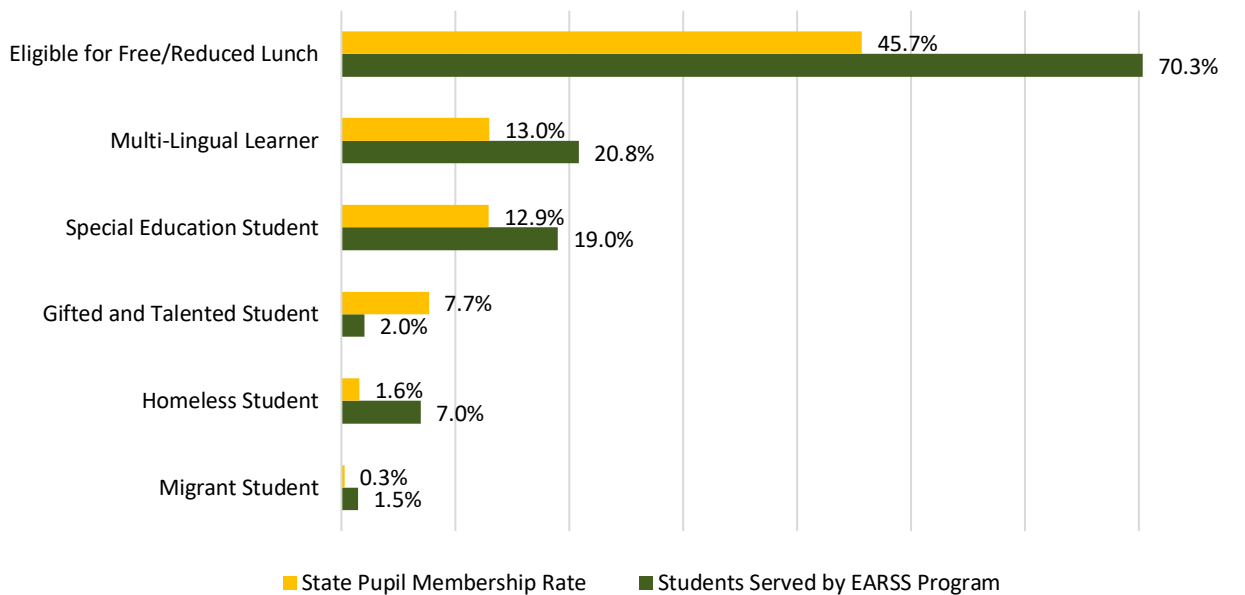
Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

Chart 2: State and Program Comparison by Race / Ethnicity (N = 6,166)



Note: Demographic data were available for 88.2% of students for whom State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) were provided (demographic data were available for 5,437 students or 87.6% of the 6,209 students served; grantees provided SASIDs for 6,166 students). Given that instructional programs and service types are not mutually exclusive, these percentages were calculated from the 5,437 students for whom data were available.

Chart 3: State and Program Comparison by Instructional Program or Service Type (N = 5,437)



Note: Demographic data were available for 88.2% of students for whom State Assigned Student Identifiers were provided (demographic data were available for 5,437 students or 87.6% of the 6,209 students served; grantees provided SASIDs for 6,166 students).

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.



Facility schools with EARSS funding

Facility schools served 5.9 percent of all students served by the grant. The 369 students served by facility school grantees included:

- 90 percent students at risk for expulsion but no expelled students
- 6.8 percent truant students or students at risk for habitual truancy
- 3.2 percent chronically absent students or students at risk for becoming chronically absent

One grantee shared the impact on a student served for truancy who has increased her attendance by 25%. She has reunited with her mother and has increased her engagement in both academic and therapeutic services. The student has increased her motivation to improve her circumstances and plan for the future.

Student Supports and Services

Program Services Implemented

Various types of programming were utilized by grantees to better serve students, including academic and attendance strategies (e.g., credit recovery, online and technology-based learning), behavioral supports (e.g., counseling, mentoring), and emotional supports (e.g., counseling, behavior plans and coaching). These grant-funded support services are primarily delivered by specialized staff (e.g., behavior interventionists, student attendance advocates, and family liaisons).

Grantees were asked to rank 26 primary strategies and supports funded by the EARSS grant in order of effectiveness. Of the 26 strategies, grantees ranked the following as the most effective:

- essential skills building,
- counseling,
- culturally response interventions,
- positive staff-student mentoring and relationship building,
- attendance contracts,
- behavioral plans, and
- course completion / credit accrual.

Family Engagement

Parents/Guardians Served & Services

In addition to students, grantees reported serving 4,568 parents/guardians of students served.

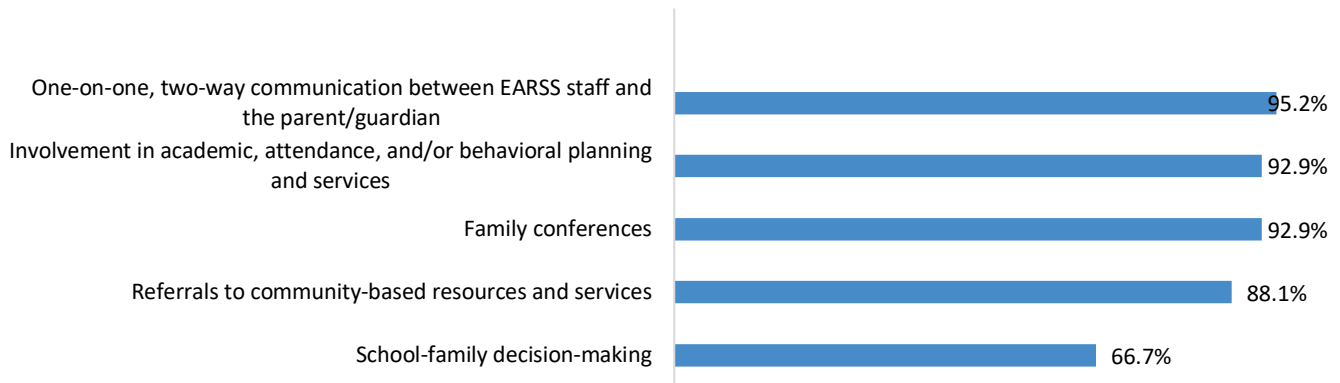
Forty-two grantees provided various support services for parents, guardians, and families. The grantees indicated that the most common support services available to families was one-on-one, two-way communication between EARSS staff and the parent or guardian. Grantees also commonly used family

4,568

PARENTS/GUARDIANS
SERVED

conferences and involvement in academic, attendance, and/or behavioral planning and services (**Chart 4**).

Chart 4: Most Commonly Funded Family Engagement Strategies for Parents/Guardians (N = 42*)



Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024

Note: Grantees could select more than one support service.

**One grantee did not report serving families.*

Program Effectiveness

CDE evaluates the impact of the program each year through analysis of individual student progress, progress towards performance objectives, and overall impact on school and district outcomes.

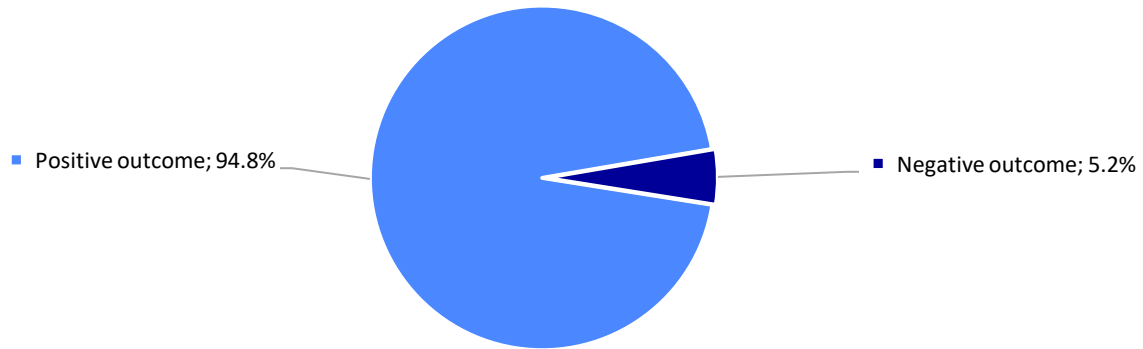
9 out of 10
STUDENTS EXPERIENCED
POSITIVE OUTCOMES

School Exit Outcomes for EARSS-Served Students

CDE collects data on a final status or outcome at the end of the school year for each student served in the EARSS program (whether or not they were being served at the end of the year; **Chart 5**). For 2023-24, this data was available for 96.3 percent of EARSS-served students (5,977 students). Of these students:

- 94.8 percent experienced positive outcomes such as the continuation of school or graduation in 2023-2024. This is 1.5 percentage points higher than was reported in 2022-2023.
- Fewer than 0.1 percent of students withdrew for other reasons (i.e., an illness or injury).
- 5.2 percent of students dropped out, aged out of services, transferred to a detention center, were expelled, or exited to an unknown setting. This is an improvement and is 1.4 percentage points lower than was reported in 2022-2023.
- More than half of the students in the 2023-24 four-year graduation cohort received a diploma (54.3 percent).
- Lastly, 89 additional students (out of 262 possible) graduated who were in the 5th, 6th, or 7th year of high school (i.e., those students in AYGs 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23), and 15 students receiving services graduated early (i.e., those students in AYG 2024-25).

Chart 5: End of Year Outcomes for Students Served by the EARSS Program in 2023-2024



Source: Colorado Department of Education, End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

Quote from a student participating in an EARSS program in an urban setting

During my sophomore year in high school (last year) I was struggling with substance use and it was messing up my grades and life. Then I joined Project LYT (EARSS). In the group, I learned how to handle stress and make better decisions. Everyone was super supportive, and it really helped me cut down on substance use. My grades got better, and I started feeling more in control. Project LYT was a game-changer for me. It gave me the support and tools I needed to turn things around!

Performance Objectives

Each grantee sets individualized performance objectives to be achieved by the end of the grant period as part of the application process. Grantees set goals in the following categories:

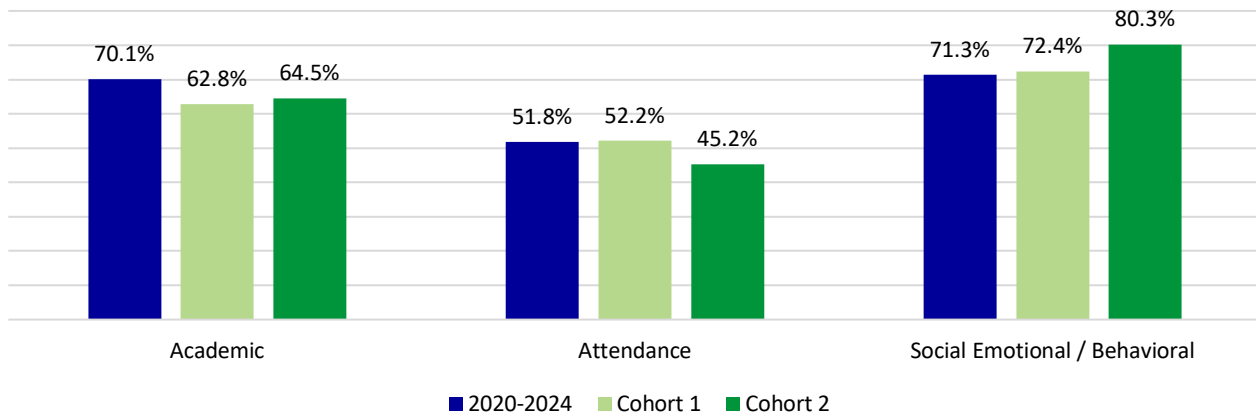
- Improving Academic Performance
- Increasing Attendance
- Improving Social and Emotional Skills/Decreasing Discipline/Behavior

Academic Performance goals included measures such as decreasing course failure rates, increasing grade point averages, and accruing credits at the high school level. *Attendance goals* focused on decreasing chronic absenteeism, reducing truancy court referrals, and increasing daily attendance. *Social emotional/behavioral goals* focused on decreasing conduct and discipline code violations. Measures examined by grantees included discipline measures such as declines in classroom removals, suspensions, and expulsions, decreases in exclusionary discipline actions, and reductions in referrals to law enforcement, arrests, and ticketing.

Grantees annually report progress toward achieving these goals. Grantees reported on the number of students assessed and the number of students who improved in each performance objective area. These values were used to calculate the percentage of students who improved (among those assessed for each Performance Objective) in each area (**Chart 6**). Notably, the highest percentage of students who improved was in social

emotional/behavioral outcomes. The cohort who was in the fourth and final year of funding (2020-2024) saw the highest percentage of improvement of all cohorts in academic goals, whereas the newest cohort, Cohort 2, which was in year one of implementation, saw the highest percentage of improvement of all cohorts in social emotional/behavioral goals.

Chart 6: Percentage Improvement in Students Assessed for Grantee Performance Objectives



Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

Note: Out of 43 reporting grantees: N = 42 for Academic Performance Objectives because one grantee did not construct an objective that allows for categorization; N = 37 for Attendance Performance Objectives because 6 grantees did not choose an Attendance Performance Objective; and N = 42 for Social Emotional / Behavioral Performance Objectives because one grantee did not choose such an objective. Grantees in Cohort 2 chose only two objectives instead of three to allow for more targeted intervention. There were 10 grantees in the 2020-2024 Cohort, 21 in Cohort 1, and 12 in Cohort 2).

In the past two grant competitions, CDE staff required minimum improvement percentages (i.e., goals had to specify an anticipated improvement of at least a certain percent) based on the progress of previous grantees to ensure that grantee Performance Measures are not only rigorous, but also attainable. Grantees were categorized as follows:

- Not Making Progress: Less than halfway to goal
- Approaching: From 50% of goal to 5% below goal
- Met: Within 5% of goal
- Exceeded: 5% or more beyond goal

Story from EARSS program at an Alternative Education Campus

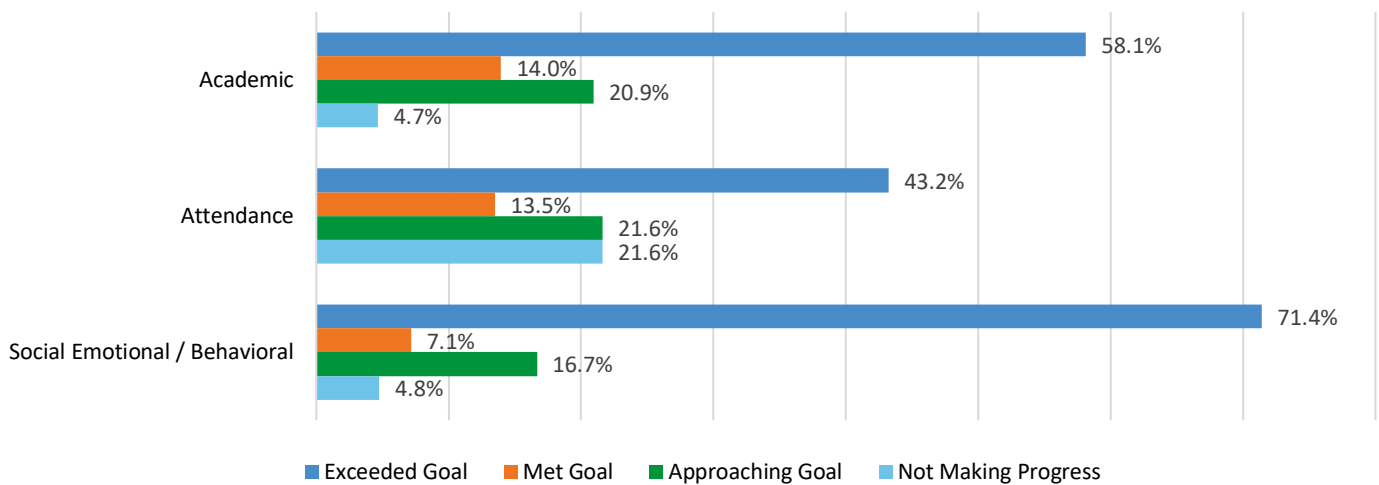
Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) are designed to serve a high population of students with at-risk indicators. There were eight AECs that were grantees in 2023-24.

One AEC shared that by the end of the year over 80% of their seniors were on track to graduate. Their STAR testing [interim assessment] data is also showing consistent growth in both percentile ranking and grade level equivalency.

Nearly two-thirds of all grantees reported meeting or exceeding their performance objectives in 2023-2024 (Chart 7, Chart 8). Specifically, when aggregating all performance objectives (N = 122):

- 69.7 percent of all goals were met or exceeded.
- 63.6 percent of grantees met or exceeded at least 2 out of 3 of their goals.
- 38.6 percent of grantees met or exceeded all their goals.
- A higher percentage of goals were exceeded in 2023-2024 than in the previous year.

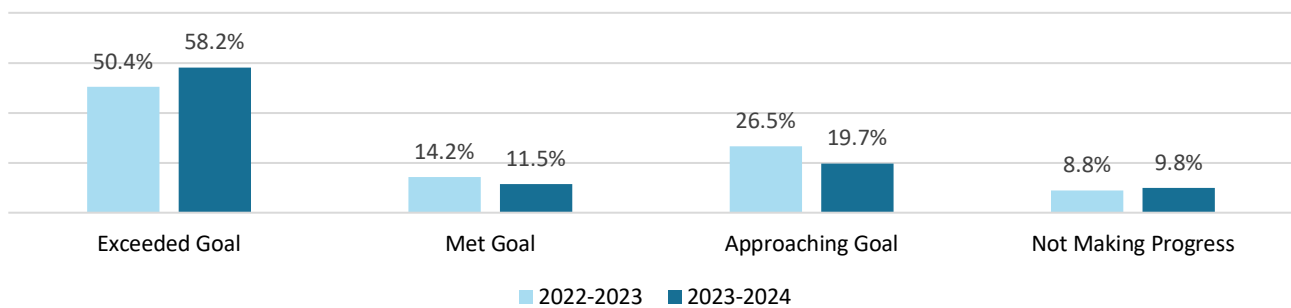
Chart 7: Grantee-Reported Progress Toward Meeting Performance Objective Goals



Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

Note: Out of 43 reporting grantees: N = 42 for Academic Performance Objectives because one grantee did not construct an objective that allows for categorization; N = 37 for Attendance Performance Objectives because 6 grantees did not choose an Attendance Performance Objective; and N = 42 for Social Emotional / Behavioral Performance Objectives because one grantee did not choose such an objective. Grantees in Cohort 2 chose only two objectives instead of three to allow for a more targeted intervention.

Chart 8: Percentage of Ratings Across All Objectives for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024



Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024.

Note: Out of 43 reporting grantees: N = 42 for Academic Performance Objectives because one grantee did not construct an objective that allows for categorization; N = 37 for Attendance Performance Objectives because 6 grantees did not choose an Attendance Performance Objective; and N = 42 for Social Emotional / Behavioral Performance Objectives because one grantee did not choose such an objective. Grantees in Cohort 2 chose only two objectives instead of three to allow for more targeted intervention.

Story from a rural EARSS program

Improved attendance has been a focus for the school, with significant efforts directed towards addressing this critical issue. Regular meetings with parents are scheduled as soon as a student is identified as being at risk of becoming chronically absent or habitually truant. While high numbers of absences remain a challenge for multiple students, ongoing monitoring has shown a positive trend: the rate at which students were missing school slowed throughout the school year. These efforts, including consistent communication and collaboration with parents, have contributed to gradually improving attendance patterns, highlighting the schools' commitment to fostering a supportive and accountable educational environment.

Meeting Legislative Intent - Impacting EARSS Students

The purpose of the EARSS program is to assist in reducing and preventing expulsions, suspensions, and truancy for students served by the program.

- **Expulsions:** During the 2023-2024 school year, 1.8 percent of students served by EARSS were expelled according to discipline data reported to the state. Grantees did not directly report the number of expulsions incurred by EARSS-served students.
- **Out-of-School Suspensions:** Grantees reported that 91.8 percent of students did not receive an out-of-school suspension while being served. Just over one-fifth of grantees reported that no students received an out-of-school suspension while being served. This percentage was higher than the three prior years where an average of 83 percent of students served did not receive out-of-school suspensions while being served.
- **In-School Suspensions:** 93.6 percent of students served did not receive an in-school suspension while being served. More than 40 percent of grantees reported that no students received an in-school suspension while being served. This is also higher than the past three years where an average of 87.2 students served did not receive in-school suspensions.
- **Truancy Petitions¹:** 98.7 percent of truant students or students at risk for habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism served by the program did not have a truancy petition filed in court while being served. More than 70 percent of grantees reported no petitions filed in court. For comparison, during the last three years of the grant program an average of 95.8 percent of students served did not receive a truancy petition while being in school. The number of grantees reporting not filing truancy petitions increased in comparison to the last three years of the grant program with an average of 61.7 percent of grantees not filing petitions.

Impacting Schoolwide Outcomes - Dropouts and Student Engagement

In addition to the impact on students served directly, the long-term aim of the EARSS program is to reduce the number of students disengaging and dropping out of school and to increase overall student engagement. CDE collects schoolwide measures for dropouts (students who have completely disengaged from school) and attendance (students who are having inconsistent engagement in school). While EARSS programs target individual students for support, the schools that house EARSS programs serve more than 100,000 students.

- **Dropout:** The EARSS-served schools represented in this report had a dropout rate of 1.7 percent for their total population in the 2023-2024 school year. This is lower than the dropout rate for the

¹ Truancy court is a last resort approach for schools to utilize in addressing attendance. Both local school boards and judicial districts have policies regarding how to handle truancy court as an intervention to compel students to attend school.

statewide population (1.9 percent) and a larger decrease from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 than the state decrease, which was a 0.1 percentage point drop.

- A dropout rate of 1.7 percent is 0.3 percentage points lower than the previous year when EARSS served schools had a dropout rate of 2.0 percent.
 - At the school level, while just over half of the schools represented in this report saw an improvement in their dropout rate (50.4 percent), nearly half (47.2 percent) saw an improvement greater than the state's improvement of 0.1 percentage point.
 - In total, 268 EARSS-served students in grades 7 through 12 were coded as having dropped out at the end of the year in 2023-2024 (5.3 percent of the students served in that grade band).
- **Attendance:** EARSS served schools saw improvements in attendance but remain lower in attendance and higher in chronic absenteeism than statewide averages. This includes the following:
 - The schools served by EARSS have similar, but less favorable, 2023-2024 attendance outcomes when compared to the statewide rates for all students. Both truancy and chronic absenteeism rates (4.7% and 34.0%, respectively) were higher in EARSS-served schools than in the state (3.4% and 27.7%) and attendance was lower (89.9% in EARSS-served schools versus 91.5% in state). Statewide, levels of truancy and chronic absenteeism rose significantly in 2021-2022 and declined slightly in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 but remained above levels seen prior to 2020.
 - In looking at the rate of improvement relative to the state, more than a third of EARSS-served schools (40.8 percent) saw attendance rate increases greater than the state increase of 0.7 percent and a similar percentage (40.1 percent) saw decreases in chronic absenteeism greater than the state decrease of 3.6 percentage points.
 - In comparison to 2022-23, EARSS-served schools improved in both attendance, with a 0.5 percentage point increase, and chronic absenteeism with a 2.4 percentage point decrease. The truancy rate remained the same. More than half of all EARSS-served schools saw an improvement in their attendance and chronic absentee rates from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 (64.1 percent and 64.8 percent, respectively).

2020-2024 Cohort

After the end of each cohort's four-year implementation, CDE reports on the overall school level outcomes. The 2020-2024 Cohort of grantees' experience was marked by multiple school years impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including an increase in chronic absenteeism and decrease in attendance to levels not seen previously. Given the attendance levels and that the first year of implementation for this cohort (2020-2021) was in a largely online environment for many schools, making attendance data inconsistent, examinations of growth will begin in the second year of implementation (2021-2022). This section will focus on attendance only this year. CDE implemented a new statutorily required discipline data collection in 2023-2024 that impedes the ability to examine trends across time, so discipline data is not included.

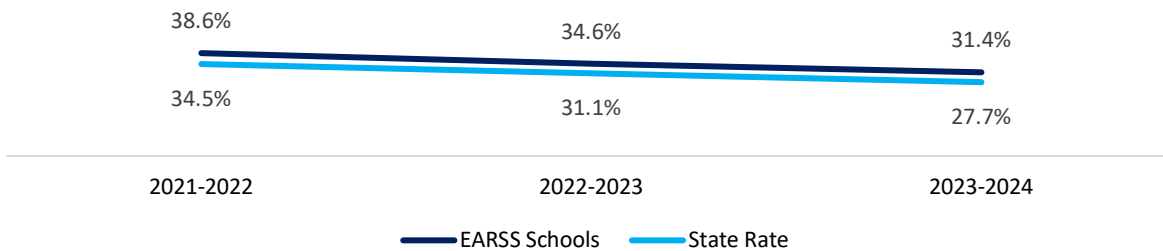
Attendance

For the 2020-2024 Cohort, trends in attendance generally followed state trends with a portion of EARSS grantees showing improvement in attendance at a faster rate than the state.

Chronic Absentee Rate. EARSS funded schools followed trends in their rates that were similar to trends in statewide rates in that the state chronic absentee rate saw a large jump in 2021-2022 followed by a gradual decrease until the 2023-2024 school year (**Chart 9**). Examination at the school (rather than the cohort) level reveals that a large proportion of EARSS schools are seeing greater improvements overall than the state. Most notably, nearly all 2020-2024 EARSS schools (85.2 percent) saw a decrease in chronic absentee rates from 2021-

2022 to 2023-2024, and more than half (59.3 percent) saw a decrease that was larger than the decrease of 6.8 percentage points seen at the state level.

Chart 9: Chronic Absentee Rates for EARSS Cohort 2020-2024 and the State

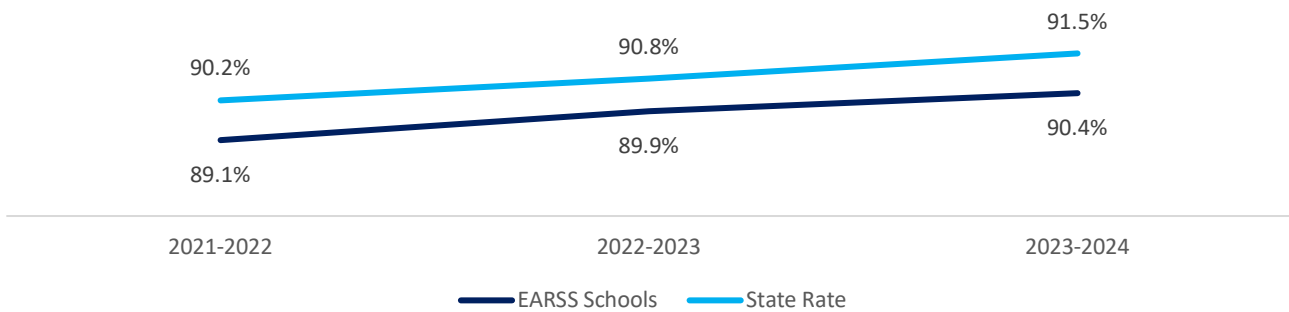


Note: 55 schools are included in the 2020-2021 count and 54 schools are included in all other years.

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Attendance Data Collection 2020-2021 through 2023-2024.

Attendance. The attendance rate saw a large decrease in 2021-2022 followed by a gradual increase across the years. EARSS served schools followed this trend, staying slightly below the state rate (**Chart 10**).

Chart 10: Attendance Rates for EARSS Cohort 2020-2024 and the State



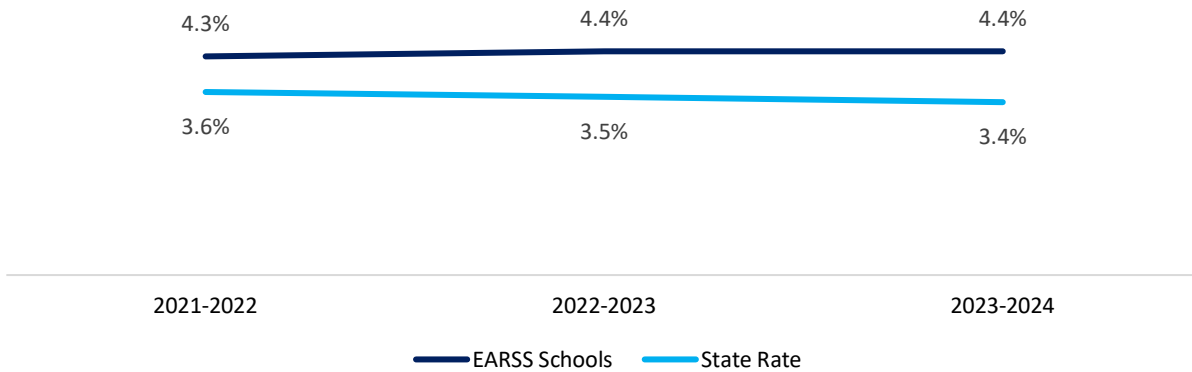
Note: 55 schools are included in the 2020-2021 count and 54 schools are included in all other years.

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Attendance Data Collection 2020-2021 through 2023-2024.

Again, examination at the school level reveals positive trends in a large proportion of EARSS funded schools. Specifically, four out of five of EARSS schools (79.6 percent) saw an increase in attendance rates from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024, and more than half (51.9 percent) saw an increase that was larger than the increase of 1.3 percentage points seen at the state level.

Truancy. The truancy rate saw a sharp decline in 2021-2022 (after a spike in 2020-2021) and has remained fairly constant since, with EARSS schools having a higher rate than the state (**Chart 11**).

Chart 11: Truancy Rates for EARSS Cohort 2020-2024 and the State



Source: Colorado Department of Education, Attendance Data Collection 2020-2021 through 2023-2024

At the school level, trends similar to those seen in chronic absentee and attendance rates hold for truancy rates. In particular, even though truancy rates rose for grantees as a whole, nearly half (42.6 percent) of EARSS funded schools saw a decrease in truancy rates from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 and more than a third (38.0 percent) saw a decrease that was larger than the state decrease of 0.2 percentage points.

Effectiveness of Technical Assistance Provided by Grant Funds

Grantees rated how beneficial the training and technical assistance provided and/or purchased by the EARSS grant was in helping them to impact student outcomes or achieve performance objectives. Grantees rated seven forms of training/technical assistance on a three-point scale from Not Beneficial to Extremely Beneficial. Grantees could also select N/A if they did not take part in the training/technical assistance.

- Nearly all grantees (90.7%) utilized “Technical assistance via phone or email with the CDE EARSS team” and all who did (100%) found it beneficial or extremely beneficial.

Chart 12 shows the percentage of grantees who utilized and benefited from each type of technical assistance. Only one grantee reported not having used any of these types of training or technical assistance.

Chart 12: Percentage of Grantees Utilizing Trainings and Technical Assistance Provided Through EARSS Grant



Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2023-2024



In an open-ended question about which trainings/technical assistance opportunities were the most effective in achieving performance objectives and student outcomes the most cited response was the ability to meet with and learn from other programs and schools implementing the EARSS grant (e.g., through conferences, the community of practice, or regional meetings).

Grantee comment about technical assistance

CDE held regional trainings during the 2023-24 school year to provide opportunities for learning, highlighting practices, and planning among grantees.

One grantee shared that the opportunity to meet other programs that are dealing with similar populations and challenges was helpful in seeing the various techniques and strategies that they have utilized with success and those that have not been successful, as well as being able to share the experiences from their program.

Conclusion

The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) program is authorized by section 22-33-205, C.R.S. This grant program provides educational and support services to expelled students, and students at risk of being expelled, chronically absent, and/or habitually truant. While the funds provide additional support to specific students identified by the grantee, grantees also work on building stronger systems to impact schoolwide data.

In 2023-2024 the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program, managed by the Colorado Department of Education Dropout Prevention Student Reengagement Office, met legislative intent by having a positive impact on the educational experience of over 6200 students and 4500 parents and families in the state of Colorado through the progress of individual students, supporting grantees in meeting performance goals, and improving schoolwide outcomes in attendance and discipline.



Appendix A – Evaluation Methodology

Data Collection

Evaluation data were collected from 43 grantees funded by the EARSS program. Grantees were responsible for submitting their End-of-Year Survey to CDE using a Qualtrics survey platform. In addition, they were required to securely submit State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) for all students served using the Student Engagement Evaluation Data Collection (SEEDC) in Data Pipeline.

The results reported in this document reflect data collected at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. Two webinars were conducted to prepare grantees to collect and enter data. Recorded versions of the webinars were also shared with all grantees. Throughout the reporting period, CDE staff were available to assist with problems and answer questions.

CDE staff analyzed the data for any irregularities and conducted mathematical checks to correctly calculate and tabulate data. If data were not accurate, CDE staff contacted grantees for clarifications and revisions. These strategies ensure that year-end reporting is as accurate as possible.

Analysis

Aggregated data from the materials collected was downloaded from the SEEDC and Qualtrics systems as Excel spreadsheets by CDE staff, which facilitated the statistical analysis of process and outcome data. All Personally Identified Information (PII) data was managed and stored securely in accordance with CDE guidelines. Using disaggregated and aggregated data, CDE staff conducted quantitative (i.e., descriptive statistics and inferential statistics) and qualitative (i.e., thematic analysis) analyses. When appropriate, inferential analyses included an investigation of differences by grant year and student type. Due to the unique nature of facility schools, additional analyses were conducted focused on those grantees.



Appendix B –2023-2024 Funded Grantees

County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Arapahoe	6	Plan	Englewood 1	Colorado’s Finest HS of Choice Englewood HS	District	\$16,000
Arapahoe	6	Plan	Sheridan 2	Fort Logan Northgate Sheridan HS SOAR Academy	District	\$62,910
Boulder	2	Plan	St Vrain Valley RE-1J	Niwot HS New Meridian HS Skyline HS	District	\$54,098
Fremont	7	Plan	Canon City RE-1	Harrison School	District	\$73,951
Montezuma	3	Plan	Charter School Institute	Kwiyagat Community Academy	Charter	\$78,820
Adams-Arapahoe	6	1	Adams Arapahoe 28-J	Vanguard Classical East	Charter	\$124,650
Boulder	2	1	St Vrain Valley RE-1J	Frederick HS – Longs Peak MS – Sunset MS	District	\$324,570
Colorado BOCES	3	1	Colorado River BOCES	Yampah Mountain High School	BOCES	\$86,600
Denver	1	1	Laradon Hall	Literacy	Facility	\$210,000
Denver	1	1	Third Way Center	Successful Future	Facility	\$205,994
El Paso	5	1	Roundup Fellowship	Enhancing Board Certified Behavior Analyst/Registered Behavior Technician Program	Facility	\$75,000
Garfield	3	1	Garfield 16	EARSS Program	District	\$319,850
Garfield	3	1	Roaring Fork RE-1	High School MTSS	District	\$580,415
Gunnison	3	1	Gunnison Watershed RE-1J	EARSS Program	District	\$55,000



County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Larimer	4	1	Poudre R-1	Middle School Transition Program	District	\$149,221
Montrose	3	1	Montrose County RE-1J	Student Wellness and Engagement	District	\$349,060
Rio Grande	3	1	Upper Rio Grande C-7	URGSD EARSS Program	District	\$132,000
Adams, Jefferson, Denver	6, 7, 8	2	Charter School Institute	New America School Opportunities Centers	Charter	\$237,621
Arapahoe	4, 6	2	Cherry Creek 5	CCSD #5 EARSS Grant 2022-2026	District	\$879,785
Denver	1	2	Denver Public Schools	Compass Academy	Charter	\$275,000
Denver	1	2	Denver Public Schools	Rise-Up Community Post-secondary Readiness Support	Charter	\$300,000
Denver	1	2	Tennyson Center	Motivational Interviewing	Facility	\$167,040
Douglas	4	2	Douglas County RE-1	HOPE Online Workforce Pathway	Charter	\$162,300
Douglas	4	2	Douglas County RE-1	Renaissance Secondary Student Support Team	Charter	\$180,000
El Paso	5	2	Griffith Centers for Children	Griffith Vocational Program	Facility	\$145,870
El Paso	5	2	Harrison 2	Atlas Prep Middle School	Charter	\$157,000
El Paso	5	2	Harrison 2	HSD2 EARSS Program	District	\$249,000
El Paso*	5	2	Education reEnvisioned BOCES	Pikes Peak Online School	BOCES	\$184,000
La Plata County	3	2	Durango 9-R	The HUB Therapeutic Program	District	\$223,402



County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Las Animas	3	2	Las Animas RE-1	Academy of Las Animas Student Support	Charter	\$154,800
Las Animas	3	2	Trinidad 1	Trinidad Middle School	District	\$90,200
Logan	4	2	Valley RE-1	VSD Case Management	District	\$253,900
Mesa	3	2	Mesa County Valley 51	Mesa County Valley 51 Bounce Back Program	District	\$300,000
Montezuma	3	2	Mancos RE-6	MSD Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Support	District	\$146,000
Montezuma	3	2	San Juan BOCES	Behavior Emotional Transition and Academic Program	BOCES	\$300,000
Pueblo	3	2	Pueblo County 70	Pueblo D70 Student Support	District	\$384,320
Saguache	3	2	Center Consolidated 26JT	Center Positive Youth Development	District	\$468,157
Teller	7	2	Cripple Creek-Victor RE-1	Restore, Engage, and Provide Support	District	\$307,780
Adams	7, 8	4	Adams 12	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	District	\$158,215
Adams	8	4	School District 27J	EARSS 2021-2024 Middle School Tier 3 Program	District	\$211,355
Alamosa	3	4	San Luis Valley BOCES	SLV EARSS 2021-2024	BOCES	\$103,120
Boulder	2, 7	4	Boulder Valley	Advanced Alternative Learning Program and Services	District	\$117,067
Centennial	3	4	Centennial School District R-1	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	District	\$80,490
Denver	1	4	Denver Public Schools	DPS EARSS Program	District	\$76,753



County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Denver	1	4	DPS - Denver Justice High School	Denver Justice High EARSS Program	Charter	\$79,800
Jefferson	7	4	Charter School Initiative	Early College of Arvada	Charter	\$55,500
Jefferson	7	4	Jefferson Hills Academy	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	Facility	\$45,000
Lincoln	4	4	Limon School District RE-4J**	Lincoln County RAD-C	District	\$42,388