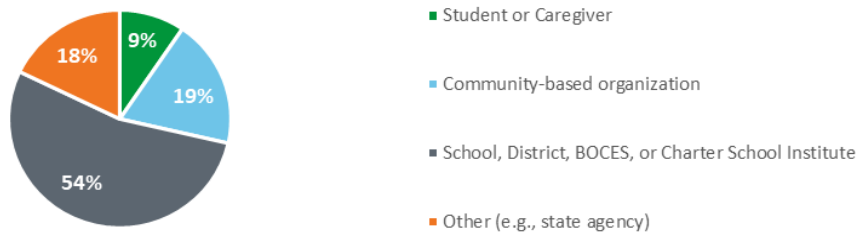# Colorado Academic Accelerator (CO-AAP) Grant Program

Stakeholder Feedback Brief Report: Request for Applications

Pursuant to the Math in Pre-kindergarten Through Twelfth Grade law (C.R.S. 22-2-146.6)

To assure equitable access to funding for the upcoming grant competition, the Colorado Academic Accelerator Grant Program (CO-AAP) team at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) solicited stakeholder feedback in the winter of 2023 to inform the development of the 2023 CO-AAP Request for Applications (RFA), released on December 15, 2023. Feedback was solicited via an online survey and through focus groups.
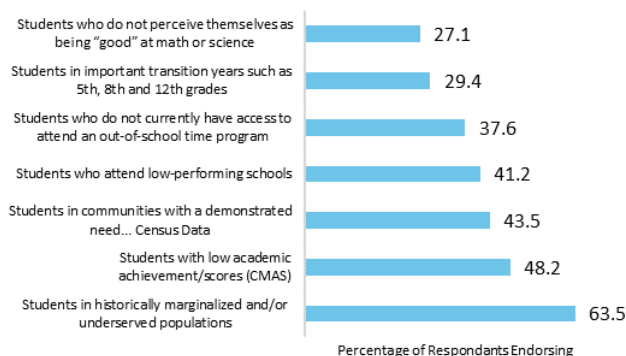
Online Survey

- The survey was conducted from November 8th-17th 2023 and disseminated by CDE staff via emails and listservs.
- 84 people responded to the survey:

Pie chart legend:
- Student or Caregiver — 9%
- Community-based organization — 19%
- School, District, BOCES, or Charter School Institute — 54%
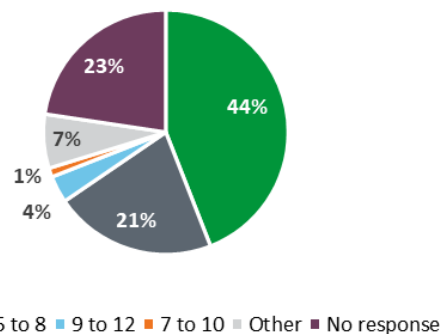- Other (e.g., state agency) — 18%

- Questions about the RFA concerned defining high needs students, grant award amounts, and programming requirements.

Participant Endorsements for Defining "High-Needs Students"

Category	Percentage of Respondants Endorsing
Students who do not perceive themselves as being "good" at math or science	27.1
Students in important transition years such as 5th, 8th and 12th grades	29.4
Students who do not currently have access to attend an out-of-school time program	37.6
Students who attend low-performing schools	41.2
Students in communities with a demonstrated need... Census Data	43.5
Students with low academic achievement/scores (CMAS)	48.2
Students in historically marginalized and/or underserved populations	63.5

Participant Endorsements for Recommended Hours of Programming Per Week

Pie chart legend:
- 1 to 4 — 44%
- 5 to 8 — 21%
- 9 to 12 — 4%
- 7 to 10 — 1%
- Other — 7%
- No response — 23%

- 55% of participants (and 70% of participants who responded) endorsed the notion that $50,000 - $100,000 is a reasonable award amount.
- In open-ended questions, multiple participants recommended: having differing amounts of required hours for school-time and summer programs, focusing dollars on transportation and staffing, and considerations around additional funding for required summer programs.

Focus Groups

- Four focus groups were held via Zoom in November and December of 2023.
- Approximately 34 respondents, who volunteered to take part in the focus groups via the online survey, participated.
- Questions about the RFA concerned grant priorities, program requirements, and funding amounts. In general, feedback within and among groups varied widely and was specific to particular types of programs. However, dominant themes emerged:
  - Grant priorities:
    - Obtaining data can be a challenge particularly for non-school organizations; grantees would like help with this.
    - Participants mentioned prioritizing funding for programs that focus on unrepresented groups in STEM (e.g., women, minority groups).
  - Program requirements:
    - Fewer required hours would be better for smaller schools.
    - Tutoring should be one component of a program, not the focus.
  - Funding amounts:
    - Funds should supplement and not supplant funds that were available during the pandemic. Programs may need additional supports as that money is exhausted.
    - Participants thought it would make sense to have different funding amounts (or a higher maximum amount) available for summer versus school-time programs.

Participants thought money should be earmarked for training and professional development for program staff.

CDE Response

CDE is committed to ensuring equitable access to funding, equitable funding for eligible entities, and equitable access to programs/services for target student populations and their families. In order to extend this commitment to the CO-AAP grant, CDE has:

- Chosen hour requirements (5 – 10 during the school year and 40 minimum hours during the summer) and award amounts (up to $180,000 with no minimum) that align with both legislation and the needs of eligible entities across Colorado.
- Chosen to award priority points for the CO-AAP grant application based on areas of need identified in legislation and through these focus groups.
- Began a CO-AAP "Frequently Asked Questions" document to keep lines of communication open with potential grantees.
- Begun planning a series of webinars to address grantee concerns around meeting hour requirements, obtaining student data, budgeting, and incorporating STEM into existing

Questions?
Please reach out to us at:
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