



RE-ENGAGEMENT OF OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

WHAT IS RE-ENGAGEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH?

The term student reengagement refers to when a student re-enrolls in school after dropping out prior to completion. Student re-engagement is often facilitated through the use of evidence-based strategies by schools, districts or community partners. These practices support youth in accessing and transitioning back to and through high school.

Each year, more than 10,000 Colorado students leave prior to completing high school and less than a third will re-enroll in the following school year. Of those who re-enroll, approximately half will persist in their education.

WHY RE-ENGAGE OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH?

Without a diploma, many out-of-school youth are pushed out of the labor market, impacting the lives of individuals as well as the neighborhoods, communities, and the economy as a whole.

Connecting out-of-school youth to quality educational pathways leads to high school completion, future employment, growth, and success on the individual and community level.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Out-of-school youth, like all youth, need positive relationships with caring adults, the opportunity to engage in learning experiences that connect “to the real world”, and support and resources to help them figure out life outside of school. Reengaged youth also have unique challenges as they re-enter high school including:

- Gaps in knowledge or formal course credits
- Non-academic reasons for leaving school, that are still present after they reengage, including pregnancy or childcare issues, incarceration, health problems, or caring for family members.

In addition, data indicates that certain groups of students may need targeted interventions including male students and English-language learning (ELL) students.

Colorado Dropout Facts and Figures

The state’s current annual dropout rate is at an all-time low at 2.2 percent for the 2016-17 academic year. An analysis of the dropout data shows:

- Over 10,000 students still left school in Colorado last year
- Male students drop out of school at a higher rate (2.6 percent) than female students (2.0 percent.)
- Fifty-two percent of students who drop out are in 12th grade. This is consistent with past years.
- Re-engaged students refer to youth who previously dropped out, but re-enrolled and are persisting in school. An analysis of dropout recidivism for these students shows improvement.
- The dropout recidivism rate decreased from 18.9 percent in 2016 to 10.6 percent in 2017.



Recommended Strategies:

Youth who leave high school need fewer easy exits from the classroom and easier on-ramps back into school. Some youth who stop going to school find it easier to leave school than to stay in or get back in. To re-engage out-of-school youth, systems can offer a range of alternative education options for students with specialized circumstances, like those pregnant and/or parenting. Additional options may include:

- Offering career and technical education with a focus on career planning
- Internships and apprenticeships that provide an immediate real-world application of their schoolwork.
- Principals, teachers, sports coaches, and counselors pulling out-of-school youth back to high school by offering to quickly re-enroll them in school and provide counseling and academic assistance once they have returned.
- Offering self-paced catch-up courses, flexible school schedules, job training, and childcare options.
- Developing school and district [early warning systems](#) for intervening at or before the point of departure.
- Offering flexible schedules and year-round learning, including open-enrollment; Online, early morning and evening classes, or dual enrollment with community colleges.

Re-engagement program

Re-engaging youth often prefer to re-enroll in an alternative education program rather than a traditional high school. In particular, older youth may be uncomfortable re-enrolling in a traditional high school alongside 14- and 15-year old youth. Returning students also might not be comfortable returning to the school they left. Students leave school for a myriad of reasons, some of which may be present in their former schools.

Steps for developing a re-engagement program for out-of-school youth:

- 1) Know the demand for re-engagement services in the community;
- 2) Map the community's resources for youth services and options;
- 3) Study state policies affecting re-engagement and funding of students in high school and post-secondary education options;
- 4) Ensure continual access to a student data system;
- 5) Emphasize the re-engagement center as an integral part of the community and the district's options to keep all students on-track; and
- 6) Keep youth connected through outreach, assessment, and referrals.

Re-engagement of Out-of-School Youth References and Materials:

[Dropout Prevention Best Practice Guide References](#)

[Dropout Prevention Resources](#)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/trackingoutofschoolyouth>