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School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant

2023 Annual Report

Submitted to:

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General Assembly**

By:

The Colorado Department of Education

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Table of Contents

Contents

Introduction and Background	3
Grant Implementation	4
Grant Activities	4
Current Grantees	4
Grant Outcomes	8
Evidence-Based Bullying Prevention Best Practices	8
Reduction in Bullying	10
Additional Data	11
Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment	11
National Comparison Data	13
COVID-19 Pandemic Impact	14
Conclusion	14
Appendix A. Bullying Prevention and Education Grant Logic Model	17



Introduction and Background

Since 2016, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has implemented the School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant (BPEG) program in accordance with C.R.S. 22-93-101, Concerning Measures to Reduce the Frequency of Bullying in Schools. Each year, the BPEG program receives \$2 million, dependent on state appropriations, to support bullying prevention in Colorado schools. As of May 2023, over \$13.1 million has been distributed to schools.

Grantees are authorized to use funding from the program in accordance with Colorado State Board of Education rules for the purpose of reducing bullying. Schools and districts may use funds to:

- Implement evidence-based best practices for preventing bullying;
- Ensure sustainability of the bullying prevention efforts over time;
- Include families and the community in bullying prevention efforts;
- Include student leadership and voice in bullying prevention efforts;
- Review and revise policies concerning bullying education and prevention;
- Survey students on their experiences with bullying; and
- Determine the degree to which evidence-based best practices are implemented with fidelity.

On July 1, 2022, the BPEG program completed its second, three-year grant cycle. Over the six years of grant program implementation, resources have been provided to 130 schools, 24 districts, the Charter School Institute, and the South Central BOCES. On average, the BPEG program impacted over 38,000 students each year. A full accounting of the grantee demographics for each BPEG cohort is reported in Table 1. At the end of the first grant cycle, students in grantee schools reported an overall 33 percent reduction in bullying and 17 percent reduction in witnessing bullying. New grantees to the BPEG program in the second grant cycle saw even greater reductions in bullying with students reporting a 35 percent drop in bullying and 31 percent drop in witnessing bullying, based on schools that reported. Cohort 3 grantees began the BPEG program in fall 2022.

Table 1: Description of Program Cohorts

Descriptor	Cohort 1 (2016-19)	Cohort 2 (2019-22)	Cohort 3 (2022-25)
LEAs	16	20	12
School Districts	14	17	11
BOCES	1	1	1
Charter School Institute	1	1	0
Schools	71	109	107
Regions	5	5	5
Students Supported per Year	34,000	41,000	39,000



Grant Implementation

Grant Activities

In alignment with the stated goal of the BPEG program and State Board of Education rules, grantees engage in many activities throughout the life of the grant that reduce bullying. For example, undertaking the implementation of an evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum and including student voice in bullying prevention efforts. These activities are organized by the five core components of evidence-based bullying prevention best practices. Each year, schools in the BPEG program must complete the BPEG self-assessment to measure their implementation of these core components.

CDE revised the BPEG self-assessment for the 2022-23 school year based on the most up-to-date research on bullying prevention best practices. Results from the revision found five core components that make up the BPEG program:

- (1) Positive School Climate
- (2) Evidence-based Practices
- (3) Data-based Decision Making
- (4) Family, School, and Community Partnerships (FSCP)
- (5) Policy

This newly revised version of the [BPEG self-assessment](#) (PDF) will be first completed by Cohort 3 grantees in Spring 2023. Administration of the original version of the BPEG self-assessment concluded in the spring of 2022.

Many schools in the BPEG program complete activities to improve their scores on the BPEG self-assessment. For example, reviewing and revising (as necessary) the school handbook and district-level bullying prevention policy to ensure alignment with CDE's [Bullying Prevention and Education Model Policy](#) improves scores on the policy core component. Other schools may engage families by including them on “kindness committees” that support the work of the BPEG program at the school level.

The CDE Statewide Bullying Prevention Manager provides live monthly trainings for BPEG program implementation coaches. These implementation coaches are the individuals at the school or district level that lead the work of the grant. Training for implementation coaches includes up-to-date research on bullying from national and international peer-reviewed journals, logistics support for grant activities, and peer collaboration between veteran and new grantees. All trainings are recorded and available through the CDE website.

Current Grantees

The 2022-23 school year is the first year for Cohort 3 BPEG program grantees. CDE selected these grantees through a competitive grant process in the fall of 2021 and the grantees began implementation of the grant in the fall of 2022. Each grantee is eligible to receive a maximum of \$35,000 per school, per year with a cap of \$280,000 per year set for each application. In total, 11 grantees representing 12 different LEAs and 107 schools are receiving funding from the BPEG program for the 2022-23 school year. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the funding provided to each grantee during the 2022-23 school year as well as the average funding per LEA.

Table 2: Funding for Grantees Participating in Cohort 3

Grantee/LEA	2022-23
Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J (APS)	\$153,900
Boulder Valley School District RE-2	\$279,839
Denver Public Schools (DPS)	\$280,000
Douglas County RE-1 - Hope Online Academy	\$70,000
DPS - Highline Academy Schools	\$70,000
DPS - Omar D. Blair Charter School	\$35,000
Hanover School District 28	\$70,000
Johnstown-Milliken School District RE-5J	\$175,000
Mapleton School District 1	\$263,476
Monte Vista School District C-8	\$70,005
South Central BOCES	\$245,000
Total	\$1,712,220
Average Per LEA	\$155,656

As can be seen in Figure 1, school districts represented in Cohort 3 of the BPEG program span five of the eight education regions in the state. Since the inception of the BPEG program, six of the eight educational regions in the state have received services from the BPEG program.

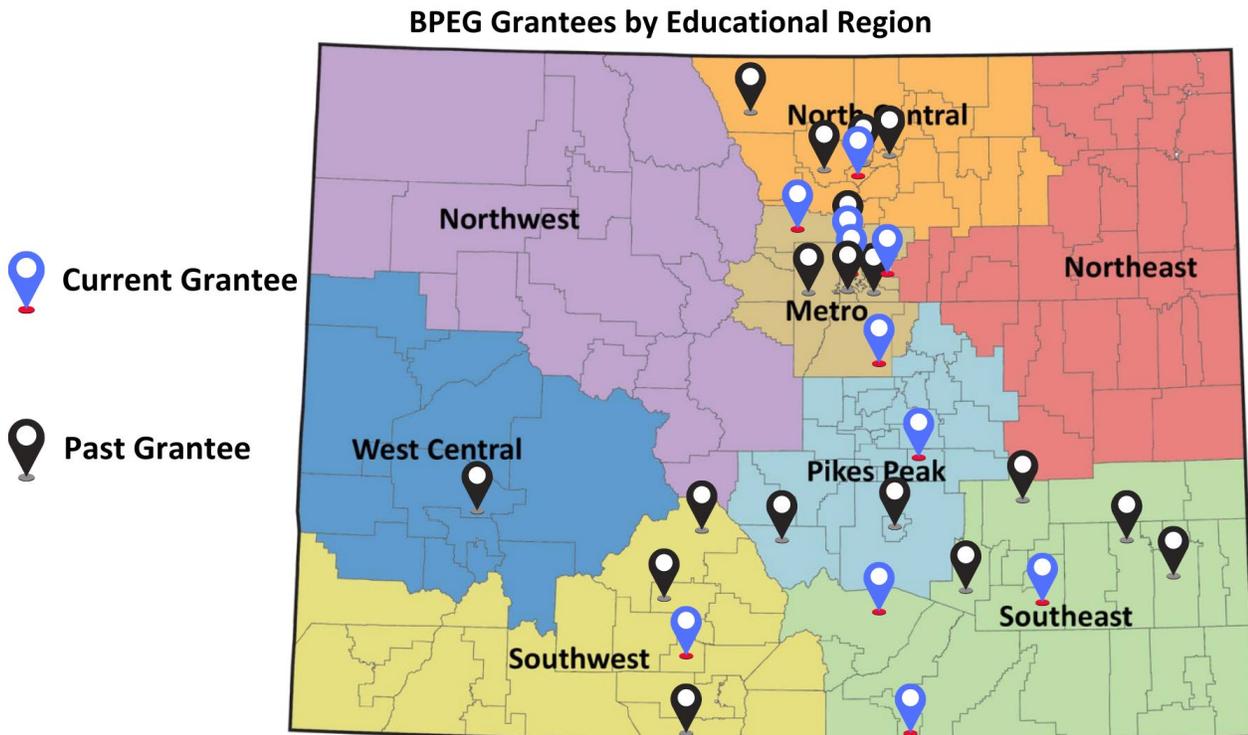


Figure 1: Location of Past and Current BPEG Program Grantees



In Table 3, BPEG program LEAs, schools, and number of students enrolled are presented for the 2022-23 school year. A total of 107 schools are receiving funding from the BPEG program during the 2022-23 school year across 11 districts.

Table 3: Number of Students in BPEG Program Cohort 3 Schools in the 2022-23 School Year.

LEA/School	Students	LEA/School	Students
Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J (APS)		Nederland Elementary School	113
Altura Elementary School	469	Peak to Peak Charter School	1,450
Dalton Elementary School	410	Ryan Elementary School	418
Dartmouth Elementary School	399	Superior Elementary School	420
Fulton Academy of Excellence	396	University Hill Elementary School	413
Harmony Ridge P-8	878	Whittier Elementary School	329
Jewell Elementary School	502	Denver Public Schools (DPS)	
Mrachek Middle School	867	Bryant Webster Dual Language ECE-8 School	30
Side Creek Elementary School	501	Denver Center for International Studies	63
Boulder Valley Re 2		Doull Elementary School	43
Angevine Middle School	661	Fairview Elementary School	26
Arapahoe Ridge High School	206	Grant Ranch ECE-8 School	44
Boulder Community School/Integrated Studies	284	John F Kennedy High School	226
Boulder High School	2,074	Lincoln High School	38
Boulder Prep Charter High School	119	North High School	487
Broomfield Heights Middle School	489	Omar D Blair Charter School	86
Broomfield High School	1,645	Hanover School District 28	
Casey Middle School	452	Prairie Heights Elementary School	20
Centaurus High School	1525	Hanover Junior-Senior High School	20
Centennial Middle School	567	Highline Academy Schools (DPS)	
Fairview High School	1,880	Highline Academy Northeast	72
Justice High Charter School	102	Highline Academy Southeast	48
Louisville Middle School	595	Hope Online Academy (Douglas County)	
Manhattan MS of the Arts and Academics	400	Hope Online Academy Schools	960
Monarch High School	1,523	Johnstown-Milliken School District RE-5J	
Nederland Middle-Senior High School	260	Elwell Elementary School	625
Nevin Platt Middle School	466	Milliken Elementary School	448
New Vista High School	310	Pioneer Ridge Elementary School	468
Southern Hills Middle School	456	Milliken Middle School	682
Summit Middle Charter School	359	Roosevelt High School	1,082
Aspen Creek K-8 School	748	Mapleton School District 1	
Bear Creek Elementary School	342	Academy High School	123
Birch Elementary School	337	Achieve Academy	41
Boulder Universal	206	Adventure Elementary	49
Coal Creek Elementary School	330	Performing Arts School on Broadway	33
Community Montessori School	274	Clayton Partnership School	37
Creekside Elementary School at Martin Park	379	Explore Pk-8	59
Crest View Elementary School	436	Global Intermediate Academy	55



Douglass Elementary School	335	Global Leadership Academy	122
Eisenhower Elementary School	304	Global Primary Academy	63
Eldorado K-8 School	612	Mapleton Early Career Preparation	91
Emerald Elementary School	413	Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts	478
Fireside Elementary School	435	Meadow Community School	23
Flatirons Elementary School	182	Monterey Community School	37
Foothill Elementary School	437	Trailside Academy	60
Gold Hill Elementary School	15	Welby Community School of the Arts	51
Heatherwood Elementary School	261	York International	53
High Peaks Elementary School	266	Monte Vista School District C-8	
Horizons K-8 School	348	Bill Metz Elementary School	269
Jamestown Elementary School	17	Marsh Elementary School	166
Kohl Elementary School	297	South Central BOCES	
Lafayette Elementary School	483	Fisher's Peak Elementary School	69
Louisville Elementary School	451	Manzanola Elementary School	55
Mapleton Early Childhood Center	88	Manzanola Junior-Senior High School	109
Meadowlark School	725	Peakview Elementary School	58
Mesa Elementary School	16	Trinidad High School	57
Monarch K-8 School	715	Total	38,903

Table 4 provides student demographics for those attending BPEG program schools. More males than females were enrolled in the BPEG program during the 2022-23 school year which continues a trend seen during the past cohort. Race/ethnicity percentages of students attending BPEG program schools changed significantly between Cohort 2 and Cohort 3. Specifically, students reporting as Hispanic or Latino dropped from 58% in Cohort 2 to 29% in Cohort 3. This corresponds with an increase in the representation of White students (56% in Cohort 3 versus 34% in Cohort 2), Asian students (5% in Cohort 3 versus 2% in Cohort 2), and students who identify as being two or more races (6% in Cohort 3 versus 3% in Cohort 2). Additionally, the average percent of students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch per school has dropped in Cohort 3 to 47% from a previous high of 62% in Cohort 2.

Table 4: Demographics of Students across BPEG Program Schools for the 2022-23 School Year

Descriptor	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	18,975	49%
Male	20,121	51%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	137	<1%
Asian	1,878	5%
Black or African American	1,174	3%
Hispanic or Latino	11,376	29%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	82	<1%
White	22,058	56%
Two or More Races	2,391	6%
Free-and-Reduced Lunch		
Average Percent per School		47%



One potential reason for these changes is the fact that Pueblo District 60 (Pueblo D60) was in Cohort 2 of the grant but is no longer a grantee in Cohort 3. This district reports that 71% of their students identify as Hispanic or Latino. In addition, Boulder Valley Re 2 School District (BVSD) had nearly all their schools newly accepted into the grant for Cohort 3 with 66% of their students identifying as White and 6% identifying as Asian. There is a significant difference in the percentage of students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch between these two districts as well with 80% of students in Pueblo D60 qualifying while only 29% of students in BVSD qualifying. See Table 5 for a breakdown of the most relevant demographics statistics between these two districts. It should be noted that in an effort to improve equity across potential grantees, schools and districts applying for the BPEG program were provided additional points on their application if they met certain criteria including, (1) their school(s) was classified as rural or small rural, (2) the percentage of students identifying as a minority was higher than the state average, (3) the percentage of students qualifying for free-and-reduced-lunch was higher than the state average, and (4) the percentage of students receiving special education services was higher than the state average.

Table 5: Relevant Demographic Statistics Between Boulder Valley Re2 and Pueblo District 60

Descriptor	Student Population	
	BVSD	Pueblo D60
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	6%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	20%	71%
White	66%	23%
Two or More Races	7%	3%
Free-and-Reduced Lunch		
Average Percent per School	28.5%	80%

Grant Outcomes

Evidence-Based Bullying Prevention Best Practices

BPEG program grantees are required to submit data on program outcomes to CDE by June 30 each year. This means that the first round of outcome data for BPEG program Cohort 3 grantees will be available in the 2024 legislative report; however, complete data for Cohort 2 members of the BPEG program are now available.

Outcome data for the BPEG program include both fidelity of implementation and reduction of bullying data. Each year, grantees submit data on their progress on implementing bullying prevention best practices across the seven components in the first version of the BPEG self-assessment. This assessment was developed at the beginning of the grant program in 2016 to provide grantees with a broad understanding of what practices lead to reductions in bullying. When completing the BPEG self-assessment, schools self-report scores for each item on a three-point scale from 0 to 2 where 0 equals “not in place,” 1 equals “partially in place,” and 2 equals “fully in place.” Grantees in Cohort 2 included both new grantees and continuing grantees from Cohort 1. Given the fact that continuing grantees had an additional three years of implementation, results from data analyses are separated between new and continuing Cohort 2 grantees for more meaningful comparisons.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of overall possible points earned on the BPEG self-assessment by Cohort 2 continuing grantees over time. The general trend of the data shows that implementation of bullying prevention best practices increased from baseline scores during the 2016-17 school year through the last administration during the 2021-22 school year. The highest score obtained by continuing grantees was in the 2018-19 school year prior to a significant drop in implementation of best practices during the first year of the COVID-19



pandemic. Each year following that 2019-20 school year, grantees again increased their overall score on the BPEG self-assessment.

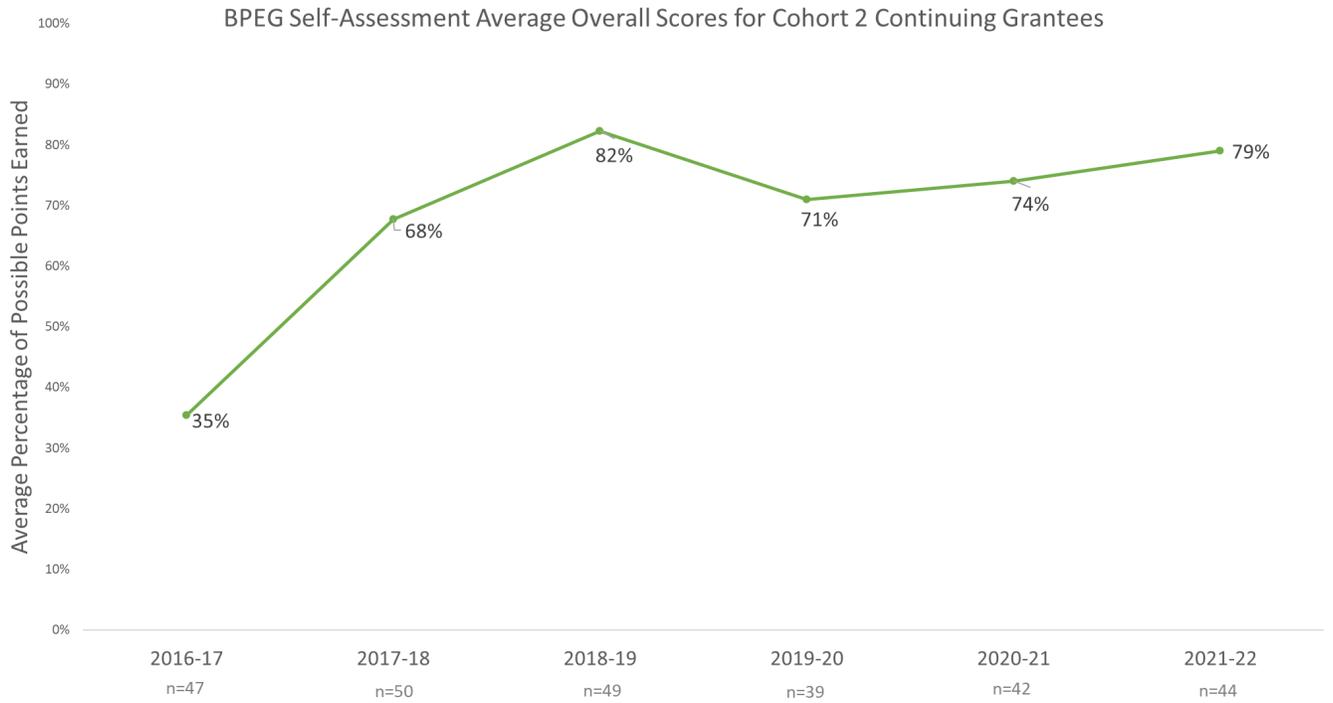


Figure 2: Average Overall BPEG Self-Assessment Scores for Cohort 2 Continuing Grantees

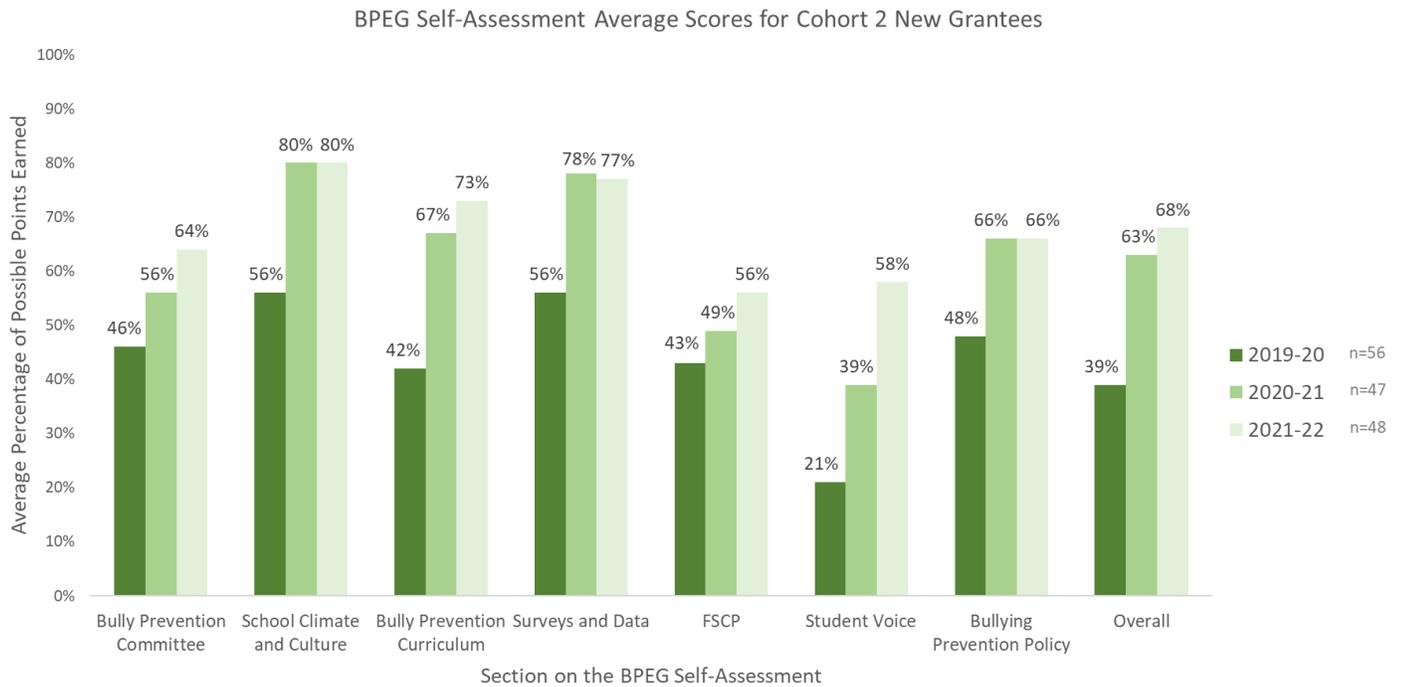


Figure 3: Average BPEG Self-Assessment Scores for Cohort 2 New Grantees



Cohort 2 new grantees began their first year in the BPEG program during the first year of the pandemic, thus it is difficult to determine the impact that the pandemic had on their implementation of best practices. Figure 3 shows the average overall percentage of possible points earned on the BPEG self-assessment for new grantees in addition to the average scores for each component over time. Similar to continuing grantees, new grantees demonstrated consistent improvement in their ability to implement bullying prevention best practices over the life of the grant.

Reduction in Bullying

All schools participating in the BPEG program are required to survey their students each year on their experience being the target of and witness to bullying. Results from these two required questions are submitted to CDE each year and provide an understanding of how effective the grant program is at reducing bullying. Continuing grantees have collected data on these two questions since 2016. Figure 4 shows that students in Cohort 2 continuing schools experienced consistent reductions in being the target and witness to bullying from the 2016-17 school year through the 2020-21 school year. Data from the 2021-22 school year indicate a jump in students reporting both being the target of and witness to bullying over the previous academic year. There are a few potential reasons for this increase at the end of the grant cycle. First, the number of schools providing data to CDE fell from 31 in the 2020-21 school year to just 17 in the 2021-22 school year. This is largely due to turnover at one larger district which resulted in multiple schools not administering their student survey. Additionally, anecdotal reports from many grantees suggest that bullying has become worse than it was pre-pandemic. There are currently no studies examining national rates of bullying for the 2021-22 school year so connections to national averages cannot currently be compared. In the coming years, future research will be examined to determine if this pattern also takes place in other states or at a national level.

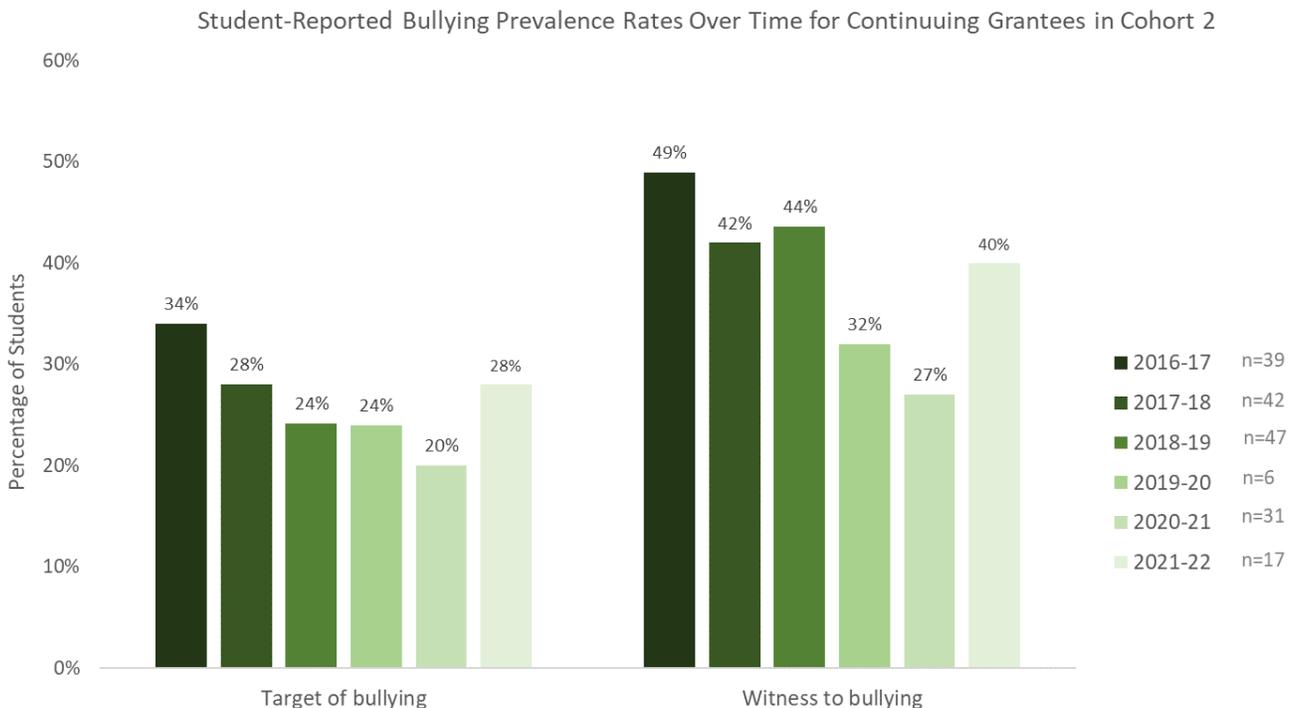


Figure 4: Student-reported Bullying Over Time for Continuing Grantees

Similar to continuing grantees, new grantees to the BPEG program in Cohort 2 saw an initial decrease in student-reported rates of bullying that then increased after the 2019-20 school year. Figure 5 shows that in the first year of the grant prior to implementing new bullying prevention practices, 45% of students in new grantee schools reported being the target of bullying. At the end of the grant, that number dropped to 29% in the schools reporting and represents an overall 36% reduction in bullying. Students also reported a significant reduction in witnessing bullying, going from over half of students reporting witnessing bullying at baseline (in 55 schools) to 36% at the end of the grant, in the 21 schools reporting.

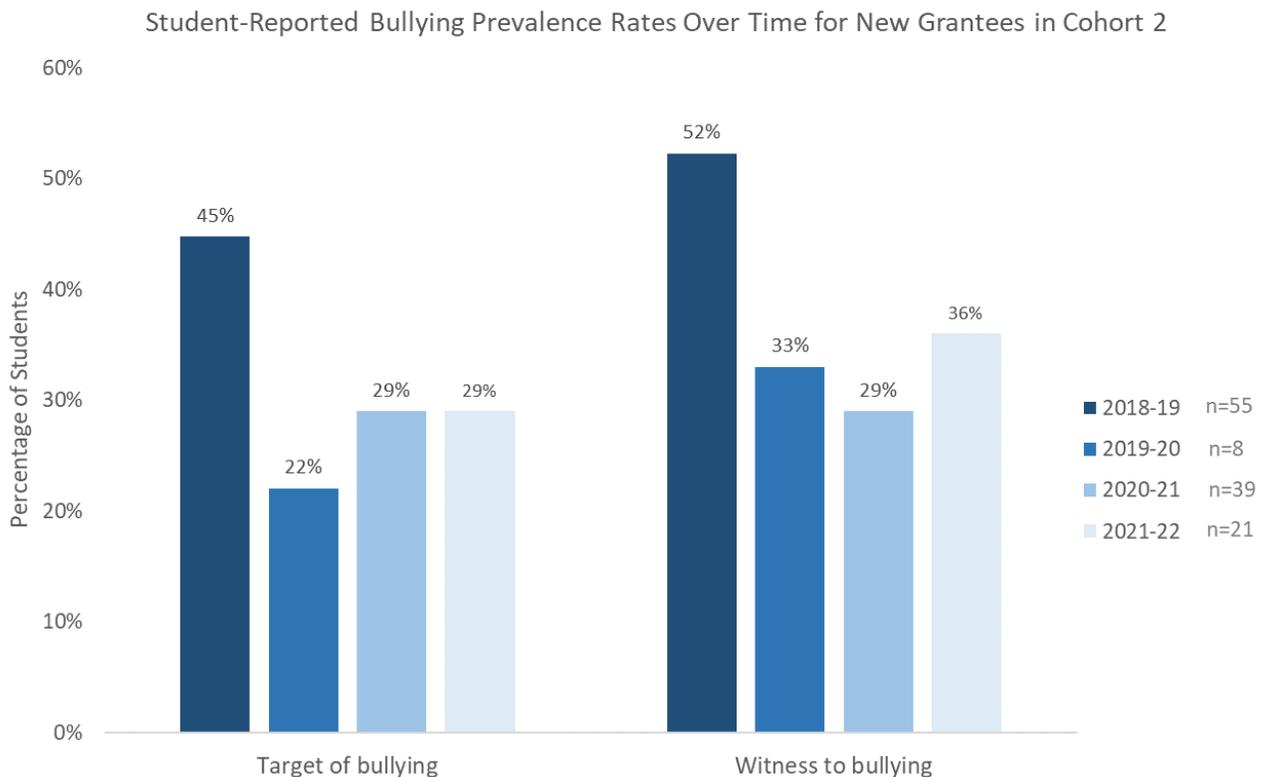


Figure 5: Student-reported Bullying Over Time for New Grantees

One possible explanation for the increase in student-reported bullying from the 2019-20 school year to the 2020-21 school year could be the decreased funding for the BPEG program in the 2020-21 school year. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, funding for the BPEG program was reduced by 50% for the 2020-21 school year. This resulted in many grantees cutting back on FTE or stipends for staff to implement bullying prevention best practices. Interestingly, the jump in student-reported bullying for new grantees in 2020-21 was not seen in continuing grantees. This may be due to the fact that continuing grantees had several years to implement their bullying prevention infrastructure to buffer against the effects of reduced funding. **It should also be noted that the number of grantees reporting data varied significantly across the first three years of data collection, especially for the 2019-20 data, so the results should be interpreted with caution.**

Additional Data

Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment

Given the natural transition point at the end of the 2021-22 school year with the completion of two full BPEG program grant cycles, additional data were collected and analyzed to provide context for the results of the BPEG program. The first collection of additional data comes from the [Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment](#) (PDF) from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). As described in the assessment, the tool



supports state agencies to “determine where their efforts are in relation to best practices in bullying prevention, to help guide the implementation of effective bullying prevention activities and programs.” In short, it is an assessment for state leaders to measure their capacity to prevent bullying.

The Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment measures six areas of capacity:

- Partnering with schools, community agencies, or coalitions
- Partnering with other state agencies
- Information dissemination and providing training to others
- Facilitating the identification and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying incidents
- Identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions
- Identifying and disseminating information, programs, services for groups at increased risk of bullying

Each focus area contains multiple items and can have scores ranging from 0-18. Scores in the 0-6 range are considered “lower capacity,” scores in the 7-12 range are considered “moderate capacity,” and scores in the 13-18 range are considered “higher capacity.”

Table 6: Colorado Department of Education Total Area Capacity Scores on the Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment

Total Area Capacity Scores	
Area	Score
Partnering with schools, community agencies, or coalitions	11
Partnering with other state agencies	12
Information dissemination and providing training to others	13
Facilitating the identification and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying incidents	10
Identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions	15
Identifying and disseminating information, programs, services for groups at increased risk of bullying	9
Total Area Capacity Score:	70

The Statewide Bullying Prevention Manager at CDE completed the Bullying Prevention Capacity Assessment in the spring of 2023. Table 6 shows the scores for each area of capacity. Results indicate that no areas fall into the “lower capacity” range which represents a strength for CDE. The highest score is in the “identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions” area which is in the “higher capacity” range. This suggests that CDE has the capacity to provide schools and districts with the information and resources needed to select and implement evidence-based bullying prevention best practices. The lowest score is in the area of “identifying and disseminating information, programs, services for groups at increased risk of bullying.” Research suggests that some of these student groups include students with disabilities, students identifying as LGBTQ+, and students identifying as Asian¹.

The HRSA provides several suggestions to address concerns with lower capacity scores in the area of identifying and disseminating information, programs, and services for groups at increased risk of bullying. These include providing enhanced support for families with youth who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, educating and engaging community stakeholders in bullying prevention efforts, and training health care personnel in identifying and providing appropriate referrals for youth impacted by bullying. Through the BPEG program, schools and districts may benefit from using these strategies to broaden their approach to preventing bullying for their students.

¹ [Patchin & Hinduja \(2022\)](#); see [Rivara & Le Menestrel \(2016\)](#)

National Comparison Data

One way to better understand the impact of the BPEG program, and bullying prevention efforts across the state in general, is to compare rates of bullying in Colorado to rates of bullying across the nation. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Systems (YRBSS) is a national survey conducted every other year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey monitors several categories of health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults. One area consistently measured is the rate of bullying for high school students. Colorado schools participated in the YRBSS biennially from 1991 to 2011. In 2013 the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) was launched, and the YRBSS was not administered. This change was made in an effort to reduce the burden of requiring schools to administer multiple surveys each year. Items about bullying on the HKCS are similar to those on the YRBSS. Beginning in 2017, Colorado schools began participating in the YRBSS in addition to the HKCS.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of high school students reporting being bullied on school property in the past 12 months as indicated by the YRBSS national average, YRBSS Colorado average, and the HKCS average. The YRBSS reports that their data at the national and Colorado level are representative of the student population as a whole with respondents coming from public and private schools. A line marking when the BPEG program began is shown to provide context for the data. The 2016-17 school year served as the baseline data collection year for the first cohort of the BPEG program, meaning that no interventions were put into place at that time.

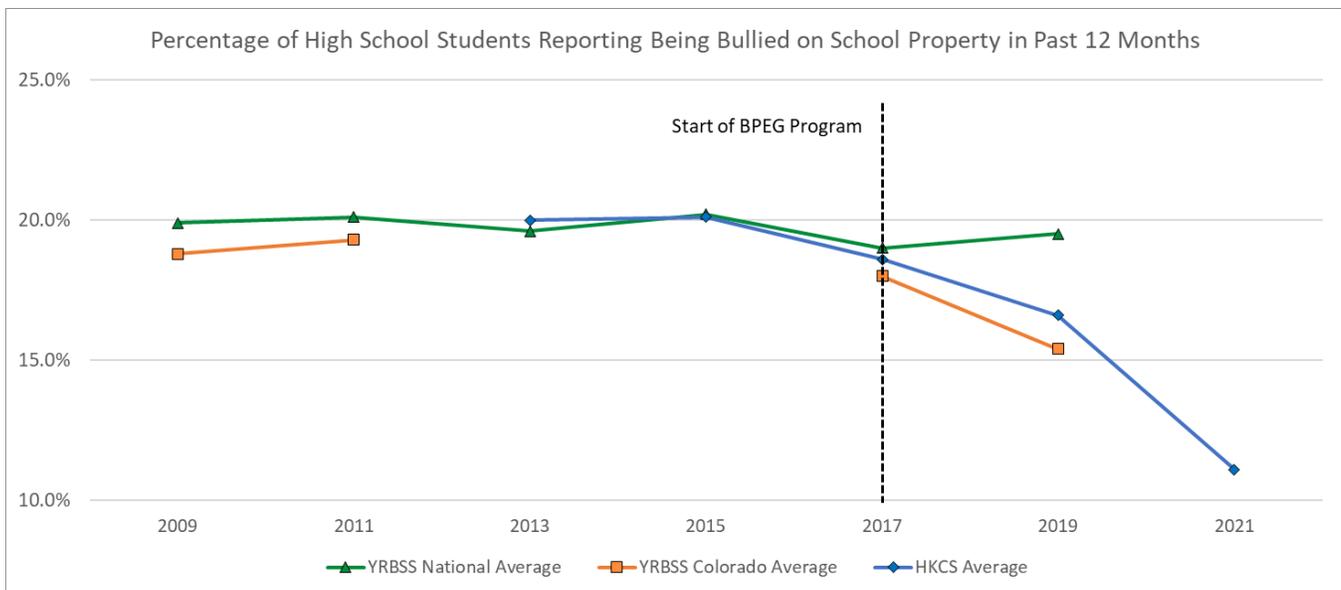


Figure 6: National and Colorado Averages of High School Students Reporting Being Bullied on School Property in the Past 12 Months Over Time.

Results from the YRBSS national average show a consistent level of student-reported bullying over time, ranging from 19.0% to 20.2%. Between 2009 and 2017, YRBSS Colorado and HKCS average reports of bullying are mostly in-line with the national YRBSS average. The data in Colorado prior to the implementation of the BPEG program show that between 18.6% and 20.1% of high school students reported being the target of bullying during each administration period.

The first YRBSS and HKCS data collection period after CDE began implementing the BPEG program show a stark shift in trends. The national YRBSS data show high school students reporting a slight increase in bullying between 2017 (19.0%) and 2019 (19.5%). Colorado data, in contrast, show decreases in student reported bullying for both the YRBSS Colorado average in 2017 (18.0%) to 2019 (15.4%) and the HCKS average in 2017 (18.6%) to 2019 (16.6%) and 2021 (11.1%). Data for the 2021 survey administration of the YRBSS is expected to be released in spring 2023. At that time, additional information will be provided to determine if the trends seen



in 2019 continue through 2021. It should be noted that there are many factors that impact bullying at the state and national level, so it would be incorrect to suggest that the BPEG program is the sole reason for Colorado's drop in reported bullying since the beginning of the program's implementation; however, it is possible that the BPEG program, in combination with other contextual factors, have had some impact on reducing bullying across the state. For example, recent legislation in Colorado (HB 21-1221) requires district school boards to incorporate the approaches, policies, and practices outlined in the CDE Model Bullying Prevention and Education Policy.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the BPEG program in several ways. First, due to the discontinuation of in-person learning across the state of Colorado from March 2020 through the end of the school year, and the general disruption of a typical learning environment, many schools did not submit student survey data in the spring of 2020. Academic research on national rates of bullying suggest that the prevalence of school-level bullying declined significantly during this time, likely because of a lack of in-person learning ([Vaillancourt et al., 2021](#)). Moreover, rates of cyberbullying did not significantly increase despite students spending more time online through remote learning (see [Patchin, 2021](#)). The number of schools submitting data to CDE as part of the BPEG program continued to be below pre-pandemic levels during the 2020-21 school year. This was due, in part, to ongoing uncertainty about the spread of COVID-19 and increased challenges related to periodic school closures. Given these unique circumstances, data for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years should be interpreted with care.

During the 2020-21 school year, funding for the BPEG program was reduced by 50 percent, from \$2 million to \$1 million. This resulted in an across-the-board reduction of about 50 percent of funding for all grantees. As described previously, this funding reduction may have impacted new grantees in the BPEG program to a greater degree since they had not had the opportunity to build their bullying prevention infrastructure to the same extent as continuing grantees. Moreover, the pandemic's effect on youth's social skills development and experiences with trauma, coupled with the increased stress on school staff, may be leading to a current increase in bullying behaviors.

Conclusion

The end of the 2021-22 school year marks the completion of two full grant cycles for the BPEG program- Cohort 1 (2016-17 through 2018-19) and Cohort 2 (2019-20 through 2021-22). Grantees in the program and reporting results consistently increase the number of bullying prevention best practices they implement in their schools over the course of the grant. On average, students in grantee schools report 32% less bullying and 21% less witnessing of bullying at the end of the first grant cycle. Looking forward, a new cohort of grantees began the BPEG program at the start of the 2022-23 school year and represent a shift in demographics from previous cohorts.



Appendix A. Bullying Prevention and Education Grant Logic Model

