



COLORADO
Department of Education

2018 Legislative Report Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program

Submitted to:

**House Education Committee
Senate Education Committee
State Board of Education**

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Executive Summary

The School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) became part of the Colorado Revised Statute in 2008 (22-91-101 et. seq.) to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools. The purpose of SCCGP is to increase the graduation rate within the state and increase the percentage of students who are appropriately prepared for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education. SCCGP allocates funding for a four-year grant cycle as allocations are available from the Colorado General Assembly. This report describes SCCGP Cohort 3 grantees and their outcomes over one development year from, July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 (partial funding), and three implementation years from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017 (full funding).

SCCGP Cohort 3

SCCGP Cohort 3 successfully prioritized schools serving highly diverse (55 percent minority) students with economic challenges (57 percent qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunch). This cohort is unique in that a BOCES was funded, reaching several rural schools, many of which were undivided secondary schools. This cohort also included four Alternative Education Campuses (AECs), which served even more highly impacted students, with an average mobility rate of 60 percent, which is more than three times the rate of the rest of the cohort. SCCGP Cohort 3 funding reached approximately 31,100 students in the development year as well as each of the three years of implementation.

SCCGP Cohort 3, Final Program Outcomes

SCCGP Cohort 3 was successful in achieving meaningful impact in cultivating students' postsecondary workforce readiness through its focus on establishing comprehensive school counseling programs. AECs are excluded from the outcome analysis as the standard indicators are not as meaningful without deeper exploration of their unique contexts and student populations.

Overall trends for the schools within the cohort have seen significant improvement over the course of SCCGP funding. Four-year graduation and completion rates increased over the one year of planning and three years of SCCGP implementation despite an initial decrease in the first year of full implementation funding. The graduation rate rebounded the following year, surpassing the cohort's pre-implementation rate of 82.4 percent with a rate of 83.6 percent. The final year of implementation enhanced this positive trend by reaching 86.4 percent, a 2.8 percentage point gain substantially exceeding the state's growth of 1.7 percentage points to 77 percent over the same three years. This trend was similarly positive for completion rates, which resulted in an 87.4 percent rate for the cohort in this final year of implementation. The 1 percentage point difference between graduation and completion rates demonstrates this cohort is successfully supporting substantially more of their students in graduating with a diploma as opposed to completing with a High School Equivalency or a non-diploma certificate.

Dropout rates also saw a vast improvement from 1.7 percent during the development year to 1.4 percent in this final year of implementation. This 0.3 percentage point decrease is greater than the state's improvement of 2.5 to 2.3 percent. The cohort started at a lower rate, which makes realizing these gains more challenging.

Based on estimates of taxes lost and spending via other systems, the SCCGP provides a return on investment of approximately \$2 for every \$1 spent.ⁱⁱⁱ

The postsecondary outcome indicators illustrate significant growth. First, Cohort 3 schools achieved 22 percent growth in the number of students concurrently enrolled, (enrolled in postsecondary courses while still in high



school), over the course of SCCGP funding. Second, the growth in Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completions within the cohort was substantial. The average rate for the traditional SCCGP Cohort 3 schools was slightly higher than the state's rate prior to the funding; however, the SCCGP funded schools increased their completion rate by over 4 percentage points to 57 percent whereas the state's rate only increased 2 percentage points to 50 percent.

SCCGP Cohort 3, Final Process Outcomes

Grantees and schools reported progress on their SMART goals, including increasing graduation rates, postsecondary plans, GPAs and attendance. SCCGP's goal to reduce student-to-counselor ratios to below the national recommendation of 250:1 was achieved, as Cohort 3's average ratio was 200:1 in 2014-15, 170:1 in 2015-16, and 206:1 in 2016-17. Additionally, the quality implementation of American School Counselor Association Model has improved significantly during the three years of full funding and implementation (3 to 3.4 on a 4-point scale).

SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 21,000 hours of postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) professional development in the last year of funding. This included the American and Colorado School Counselor Association conferences in addition to more hands-on workshops and training, some of which included trainings on tools that support the ICAP and peer mentoring models. All grantees are making progress on enhancing their ICAP systems with curricula, tools and programs for career advising and portfolio development. Notably, schools recognize the value of district leadership and teacher buy-in for making time in the schedule for stand-alone advisory/seminar classes.

Programmatically, nearly twice as many students were enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) courses in the second year of full implementation as compared to the first; and this was maintained in the final year. This demonstrates that school counselors are establishing relationships with partners and students that encourage effective enrollment. Approximately, 15 percent of students in SCCGP funded schools visited a college with their school in each of the three years of implementation.

Grantees expressed great appreciation for the funds to secure school counselors and attributed their success to the ability to hire qualified professionals for a comprehensive program. Grantees saw impact across all outcome areas over the course of the three years of full implementation funding.

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 met and exceeded the statutory goals for the use state funds and effectively created comprehensive school counseling programs that have had meaningful impact on their students' postsecondary and workforce readiness.



Introduction

House Bill 08-1370 established the School Counselor Corps Grant Program. The resulting legislation enacted by the General Assembly is 22-91-101 et. seq., of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). The State Board of Education promulgated rules for program implementation, including: the timeline for submitting applications to the Department of Education, the form of the grant application, criteria for awarding grants, and any information to be included in the department's program report. Effective September 30, 2008, these rules can be found at 22-91-101 et. seq. (C.R.S.).

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) is to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools with a focus on postsecondary preparation. SCCGP was created to increase the graduation rate and increase the percentage of students who appropriately prepare for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education. The role of school counselors has undergone revisions and changes, and today the emphasis is on college and career readiness and ensuring timely high school graduation. Among the reasons for this shift is that a high percentage of students either are not graduating within four years of entering ninth grade or not graduating at all.ⁱⁱⁱ Timely monitoring, evaluating, and intervening are necessary measures to decrease the number of students who dropout and increase the number of students who graduate.^{iv} SCCGP supports school counselors in implementing these types of activities.

Role of the School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

The School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee assists the department in providing ongoing support to the funded sites in the form of professional development, mentoring, site visits, and technical assistance. See Appendix A for a listing of School Counselor Corps Advisory Board members.



Description of Program for Reporting Period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Grant Application Process

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was announced in the spring of 2013 prior to the Colorado General Assembly making final appropriations to the program for eligible education providers to have time to prepare their application to the program. For the first time, this third cohort included a development year. This allowed the funds to be maximized by beginning planning at the start of the new school year to increase readiness and capacity for full implementation the subsequent three years of funding. During the launch of Cohort 3 in 2013-14, \$500,000 was distributed to grantees for comprehensive school counseling program development. SCCGP distributed \$3,900,941 for 2014-15, \$3,983,992 for 2015-16 and \$3,829,280 for 2016-17 to Cohort 3 schools for full implementation.

SCCGP statute defined an eligible education provider as:

- A school district (on behalf of one or more secondary schools);
- A Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES);
- A charter school; or
- An Institute Charter School.

Priority was given to applicants that serve:

- Secondary schools at which the dropout rate exceeds the statewide average (2014-15 annual dropout rate for the State of Colorado is 2.5 percent);
- Secondary schools with a percentage of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch exceeding the statewide average (39.7 percent); and/or
- Secondary schools with postsecondary remediation rates that exceed the statewide average (34.2 percent).

Allowable activities included secondary school counselor salaries and benefits; postsecondary preparatory services; professional development; and program development. The RFP included a rubric that detailed criteria that a proposal would be measured against and included sections on 1) a quality plan, 2) partnerships, 3) postsecondary activities, and 4) a budget narrative.

Description of Grantees

SCCGP Cohort 3 consists of 15 grantees, funding 60 schools. Thirteen grantees are districts, one is the Charter School Institute, and another is the Northeast BOCES inclusive of nine school districts. SCCGP grantees represent a wide range of schools serving a diverse student population with regard to secondary school type, student count, mobility rates, geographic region, ethnicity, and free and/or reduced lunch qualified students.

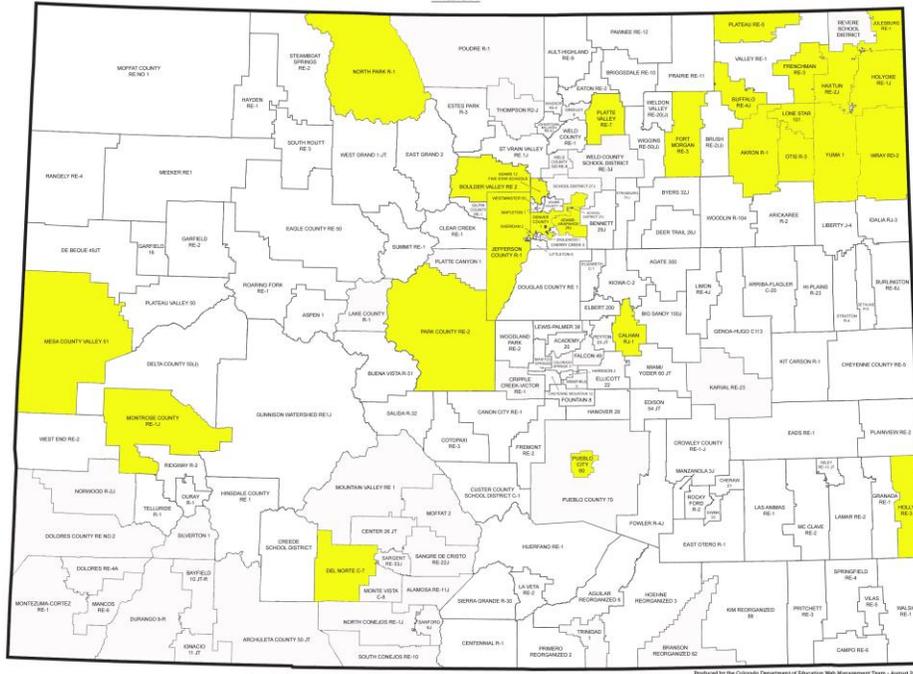
Type of Secondary School: Twenty-four of the 60 SCCGP funded schools are high schools and another 27 serve middle schools, two serving K-8. An additional nine grantees serve both middle and high school grades and one online school serves K-12. Table 1 outlines the grantees and the secondary grade levels served by the schools funded.^v Four of these schools are designated Alternative Education Campuses (AEC) serving students with significantly challenging circumstances as the demographic data will highlight. Thus, the program outcome analysis will exclude these four schools from the cohort analysis as they are a unique subset of schools.

Geographic Location: As depicted in Map 1 on the next page, SCCGP Cohort 3 grantees are located across Colorado.

MAP 1: SCCGP Cohort 3 Grantees' Location



School Counselor Corps Grant Map
Cohort 3



MAP 2: SCCGP Participating Districts from 2008-2017

Colorado School District Map
School Counselor Corps Grant 2008-2018

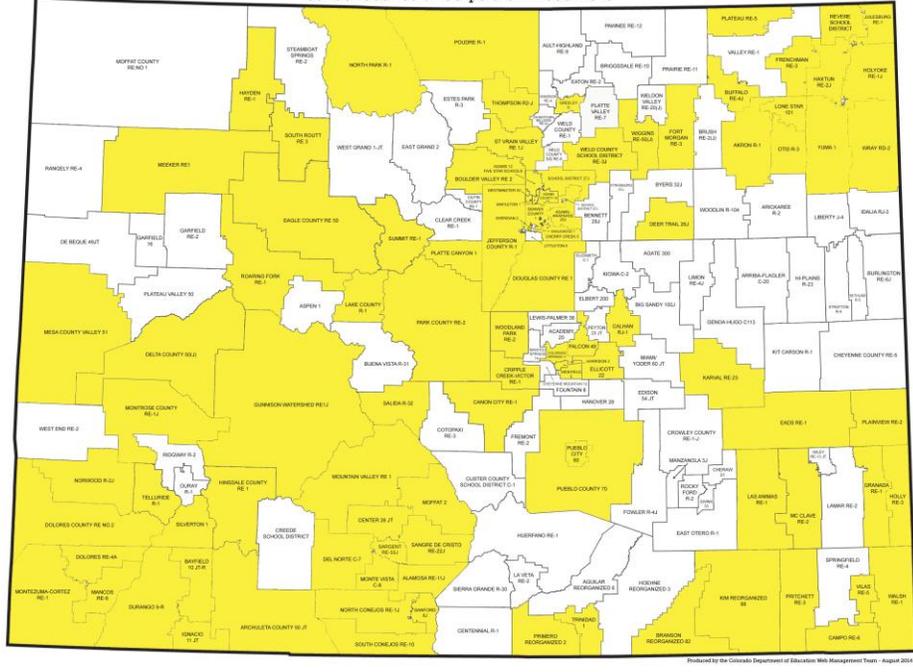




TABLE 1: SCCGP Cohort 3 Grantees and Types of Schools Funded

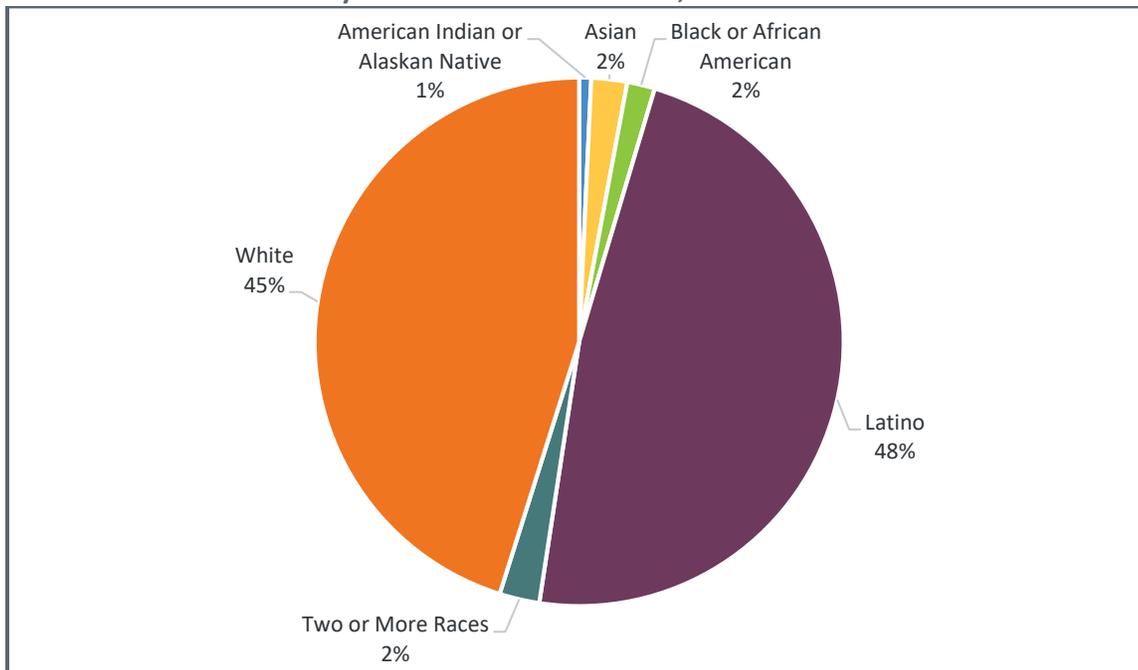
	High	Middle	Undivided Middle & High	Total
<u>Districts</u>				
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	0	5	0	5
Boulder Valley RE 2	2	1	1	4
Calhan RJ-1	0	1	0	1
Del Norte Schools	0	1	0	1
Denver Public Schools	1	0	0	1
Holly School District	1	1	0	2
Fort Morgan County RE-3	1	0	0	1
Jefferson County Public Schools	5	5	0	10
Mesa County Valley 51	1	0	0	1
Montrose County RE-1J	2	3	0	5
Northeast BOCES	4	4	7	15
North Park School, 6358	0	0	1	1
Pueblo City Schools, D60	4	5	0	9
Yuma 1	1	1	0	2
<u>Charter School Institute</u>				
New America School - Lowry	1	0	0	1
New America School - Thornton	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	24	27	9	60



Student Count and End-of-Year Pupil Membership: At the time of the official student count in October 2013, the development year for SCCGP Cohort 3, the 60 schools served 30,933 students in grades 6-12. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, SCCGP Cohort 3 served 31,172, 31,129 and 31,088 6th-12th grade students respectively. This reflects relative continuity overall in student count numbers over the four years of funding. (Note: Most data described throughout the report utilizes End-of-Year pupil membership because it takes into consideration the students who are highly mobile during the year and, therefore, provides a more accurate base count.)

Ethnicity: The students served through SCCGP Cohort 3 were from highly diverse ethnic backgrounds. As of October 2017, 56 percent of all SCCGP Cohort 3 students identified with an ethnic minority background as compared to 47 percent of students across the state. Notably, 87 percent of the SCCGP funded AECs' student body identified as an ethnic minority. The following chart depicts the breakdown of students' ethnicities enrolled in traditional Cohort 3 SCCGP funded schools, which enrolled 55 percent of students identifying with an ethnic minority background in 2015-16. Little to no change was observed from prior years. (Note: only 42 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students were served; therefore, their representation is less than 0 percent and not depicted in the chart below.)

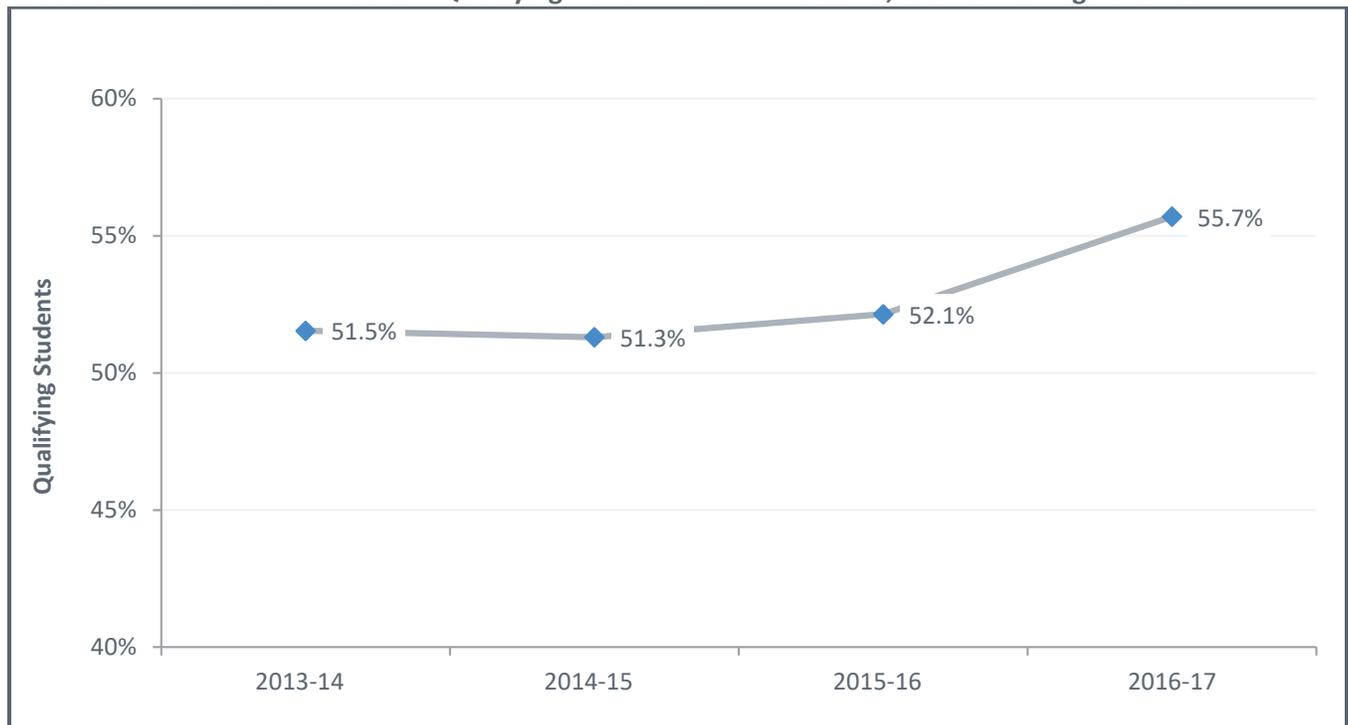
CHART 1: Students' Ethnicity in SCCGP Cohort 3 Schools, 2016-17





Free or Reduced-priced Lunch: The number of students qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunch is the standard proxy for students' socioeconomic status and, as such, one of SCCGP's eligibility requirements is that the schools serve a high percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunch. The 2016 October count data showed an increase in traditional Cohort 3 schools' students' eligibility from 51.5 percent to 56 percent whereas the state identified 42 percent as eligible consistently over the four years of funding. Thus, SCCGP continues to successfully serve students who are economically disadvantaged. Again, the AECs in this cohort serve a significantly higher proportion of students who come from economically challenging circumstances with 74 percent qualifying in 2016, 9 percentage points higher than 2015, more than double the increase the rest of the cohort experienced.

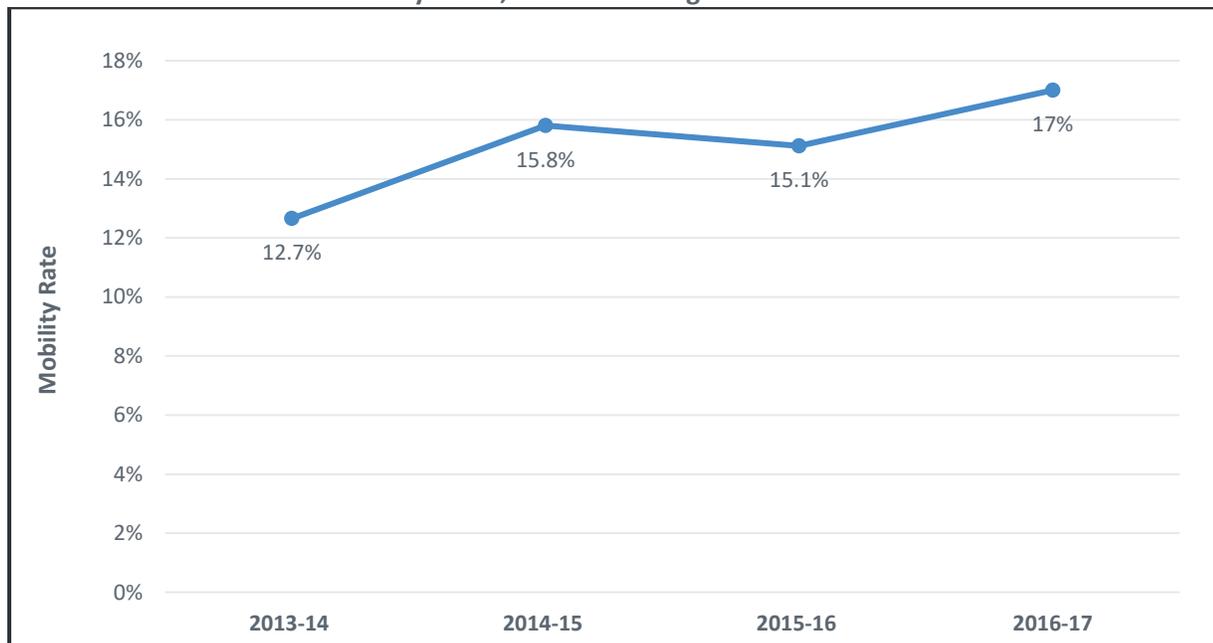
CHART 2: SCCGP Cohort 3 Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch, 2013-14 through 2016-17





Mobility: CDE defines student mobility rates as the unduplicated count of grade K-12 students who moved into or out of the school or district in each year divided by the total number of students who were part of the same membership base at any time during the same year. This demographic analysis begins to illuminate the significantly different population of students the four AECs within Cohort 3 serve as they experienced a mobility rate of nearly 60 percent each year, 3 to 4 times that of the rest of the cohort. The following chart illustrates the increased mobility the cohort (traditional schools only) experienced while receiving SCCGP funding.

CHART 3: SCCGP Cohort 3 Mobility Rates, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Data Collection & Analysis

A variety of data sources were utilized for this report. Wherever possible, third-party validated data sources were used as a primary source, such as the National Student Clearinghouse or U.S. Department of Education, as these data have been verified as accurate by a third-party entity. When this type of data was unavailable, state-collected data were utilized. Additionally, grantees and schools submitted a year-end annual report during the spring semester to illuminate program implementation. As SCCGP expands, more schools have received these funds, thus limiting the ability to identify comparison schools. Therefore, Cohort 3 analysis examines trends within the cohort for traditional, non-AECs since the above demographics demonstrated how significantly different AECs are from the rest of the cohort and the state. See Appendix B for more details about data sources.



SCCGP Cohort 3, Final Program Outcomes

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) was defined and jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education in 2015. PWR describes “the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens.” Districts operationalize PWR in a variety of ways, including students having the required life skills for success after high school, being on-track to four-year graduation, having work experience and/or college credit. This report highlights baseline data from the initial development year and final outcomes after three years of implementation for the following indicators:

- Graduation rate
- Dropout rate
- Attendance rate
- Concurrent enrollment participation
- Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion

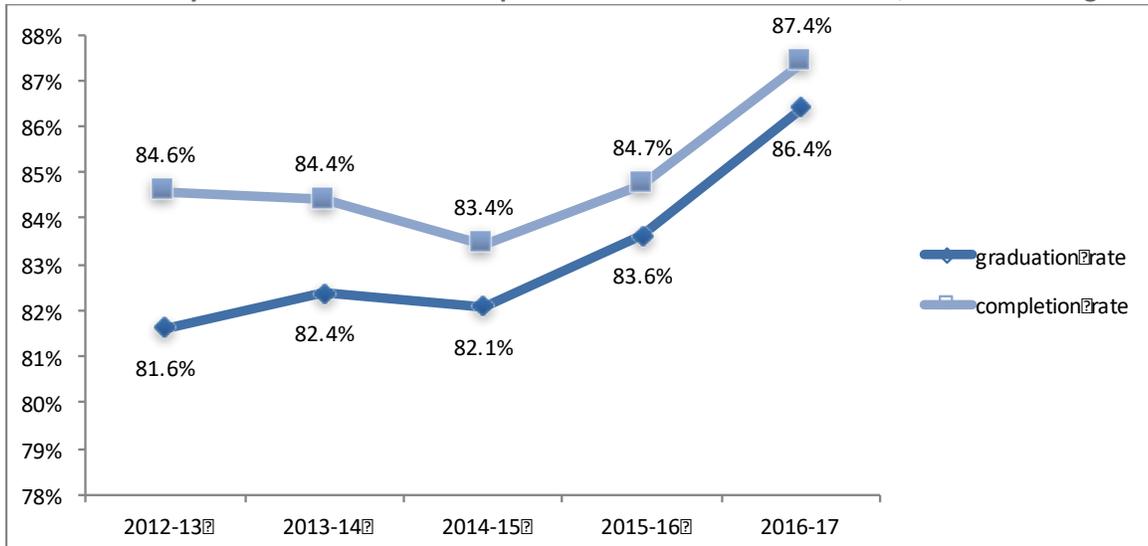
Graduation Rates

SCCGP aims to increase grantees’ four-year graduation rate. Analysis begins with the Class of 2013 so that a trend can be established. “Four-year” graduation is defined as only those students who graduate from high school four years after transitioning from eighth grade. Four-year completion rates include not only those who graduated but those who successfully completed a non-diploma certificate or High School Equivalency within the first four years of entering ninth grade. SCCGP Cohort 3 (exclusive of the AECs) saw significant improvements for four-year graduation and completion rates over the grant period while the state’s rate stayed relatively constant:

- Cohort 3’s graduation rate increased nearly 5 percentage points
- Cohort 3’s completion rate increased nearly 3 percentage points

The following chart displays the gains in graduation and completion rates realized since full SCCGP implementation in 2014-15.

CHART 4: Four-year Graduation and Completion Rates for SCCGP Cohort 3, 2012-13 through 2016-17



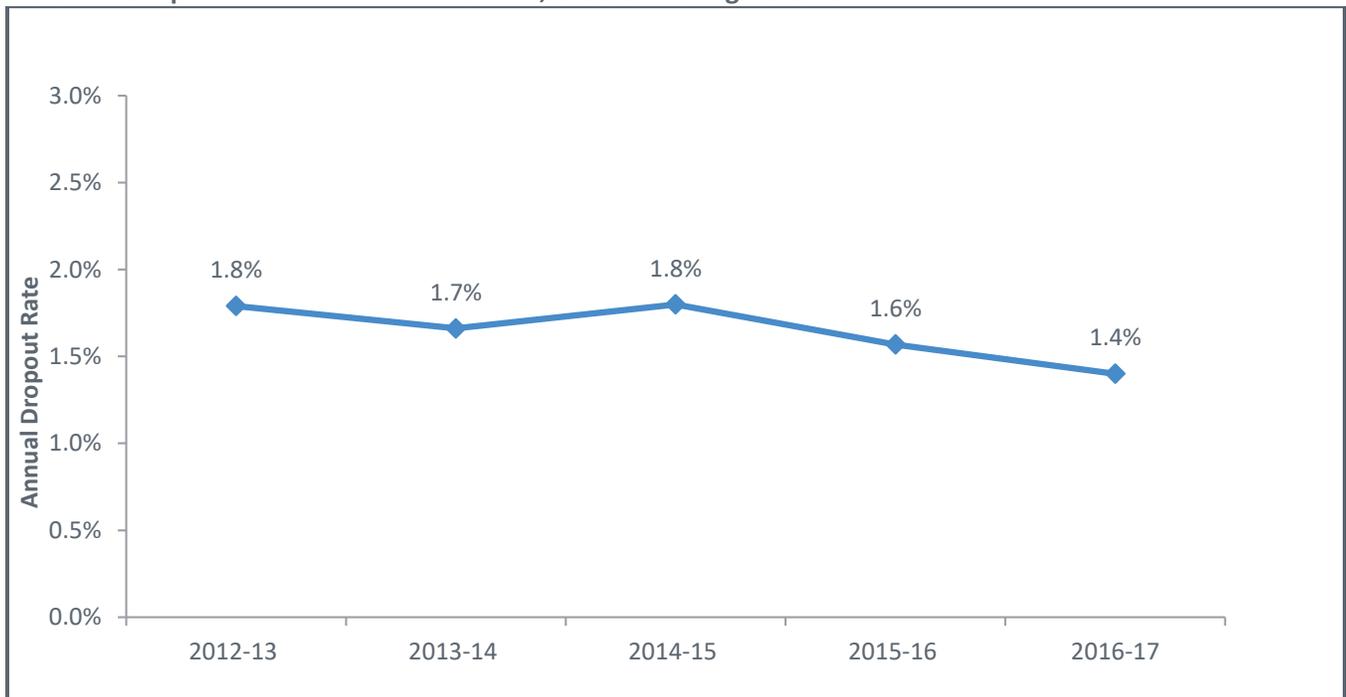
Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.



Dropout Rates

Dropout rate analysis begins with the 2012-13 school year as these data were part of the eligibility criteria. Over the five school years within this analysis, the statewide dropout rate improved slightly from 2.5 percent to 2.3 percent. Over the same time, SCCGP Cohort 3 realized twice the decrease as the state, a reduction of .4 percentage points. In 2016-17, 32 schools in the SCCGP Cohort 3 reported zero dropouts, which was 10 more schools than the previous year. The following chart illustrates Cohort 3's dropout rate trend.

CHART 5: Dropout Rates for SCCGP Cohort 3, 2012-13 through 2016-17



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

Over the three years of full implementation and funding, SCCGP Cohort 3 employed interventions that retained a total of 78 students (assuming that the Cohort's dropout rate would have remained the same as in 2013-14 prior to funding). Based on estimates of taxes lost and spending via other systems, the SCCGP provides a return on investment of approximately \$2 for every \$1 spent.^{viii}

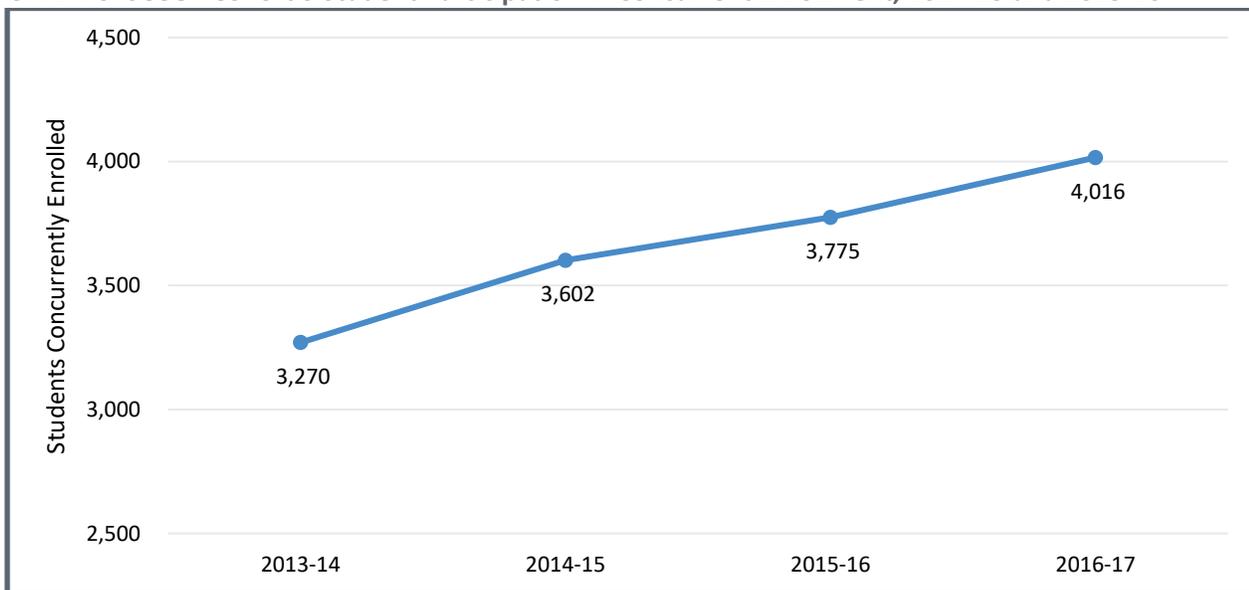


Concurrent Enrollment

The Colorado Department of Higher Education in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education authors an annual report on dual or concurrent enrollment beginning in 2012, which provides high school students the opportunity to enroll in college courses.^{viii} “Concurrent Enrollment” is the “simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, which may include an academic or career and technical education course, at an institution of higher education” as detailed in 22-35-103 C.R.S. The report presents the districts, high schools, and number of unique students engaging in Concurrent Enrollment, ASCENT, and remedial courses as reported by the institutions of higher education.

Over the course of SCCGP funding, grantees increased students enrolled by nearly 22 percent, from 3,270 unduplicated students to 4,016 students. The following graph depicts this growth.

CHART 6: SCCGP Cohort 3 Student Participation in Concurrent Enrollment, 2014-15 and 2015-16



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

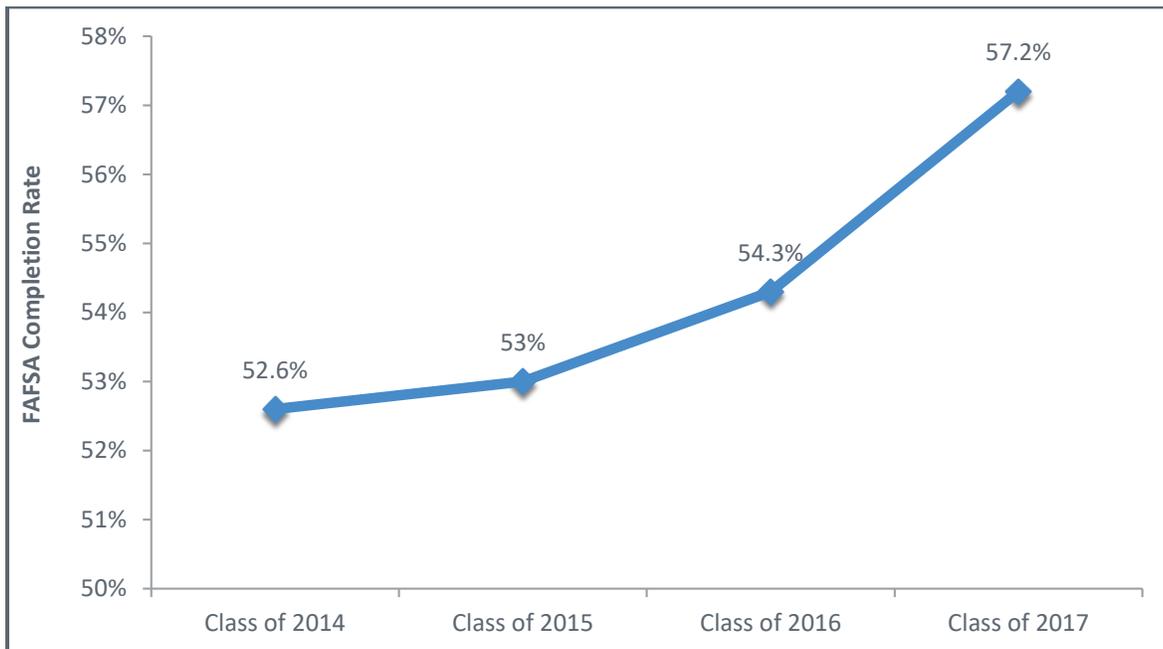


Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Nationally, research suggests that 90 percent of high school graduates who complete the FAFSA during their senior year of high school enroll in college within 12 months.^{ix} Thus, a best practice for school counselors is to support students in completing this PWR benchmark. The Colorado Department of Higher Education recently began collecting, validating, and reporting school-level data on seniors completing FAFSAs (see <https://fafsa.highered.colorado.gov>). Note that FAFSA labels these data in terms of the college freshman class. The following analysis will maintain the referencing used throughout this report with the year reflecting the high school class; therefore, the FAFSA 2014-15 data is applicable to the graduating class of 2014 and referenced here as 2013-14 from the perspective of SCCGP grantees.

During the development year, the traditional SCCGP Cohort 3 schools were supporting nearly 53 percent of their students in completing the FAFSA, 5 percentage points higher than the state (48 percent). Notably, over the three full implementation years, SCCGP funded schools increased their completion rate by over 4 percentage points to 57 percent whereas the state’s rate only increased 2 percentage points to 50 percent.

Chart 7: SCCGP Cohort 3, High School Seniors’ FAFSA Completion Rates, 2013-14 through 2016-17

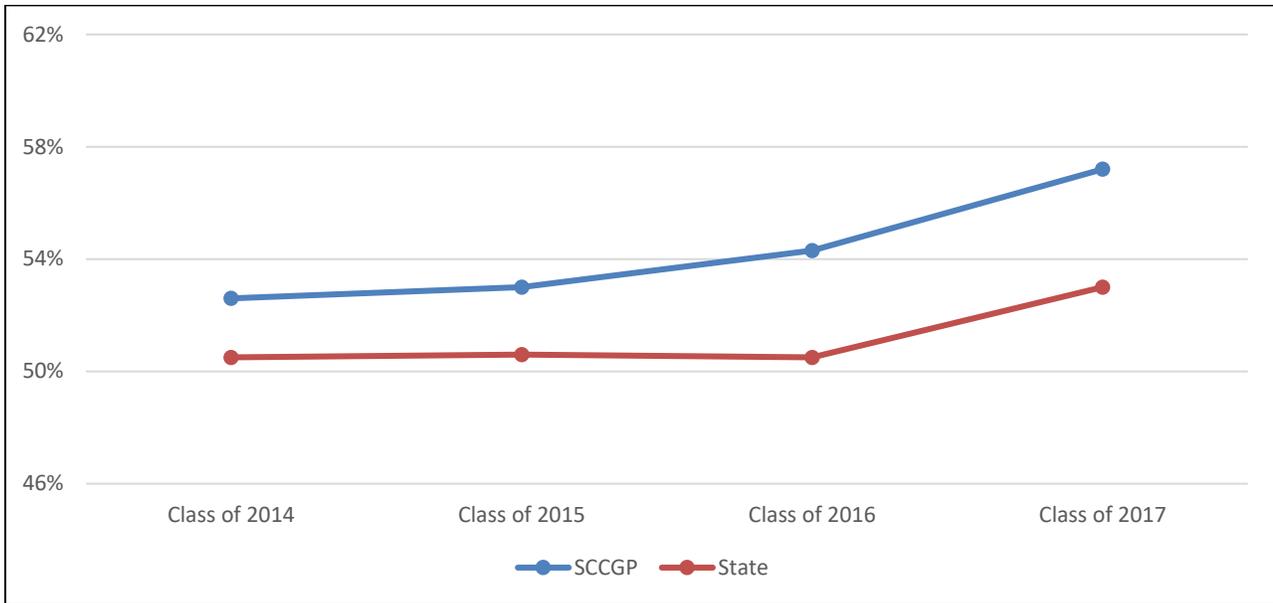


Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Continued

Chart 7: SCCGP Cohort 3 and State, High School Seniors' FAFSA Completion Rates, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.



SCCGP Cohort 3, Final Process Outcomes

Cohort 3 was the first cohort to receive funding for a development year, which consisted of a district- and school-level needs assessment and environmental scan to identify up to four SMART goals based on a root cause analysis. Interventions were then identified to address the prioritized goals and their root causes. Grantees were required to complete end-of-year reports, which were designed to assess grantee and schools' grant goals, professional development, ICAP implementation, student-to-counselor ratios, ASCA Model implementation, student participation in career and technical education as well as college visits. With the grant reporting system moving to online platforms, grant reporting was the most complete since the grant program launched. The following analysis reflects the themes of progress, outputs, and outcomes for grantees' and schools' three years of SCCGP implementation for Cohort 3.

Grantee Progress toward Reaching Their Goals

Eleven grantees identified two to six goals each for a total of 41 goals. In this final year of implementation, 41 percent of grantees self-reported meeting or exceeding the performance measures that they had identified for their goals.

The goals that grantees reported success with most commonly addressed aspects of ICAP implementation, including student participation in a seminar/advisory class to explore career interests and planning, completing their College in Colorado portfolios, and regular use of Naviance. Three grantees reported exceeding their goals for engaging 30 percent more parents at parent nights, 90 percent of graduating seniors having postsecondary college acceptance or job placements, and maintaining a graduation rate of 85 percent and dropout rate of less than 2 percent. The two grantees with great success with student outcomes attributed their accomplishments to counselors dedicating time weekly or bi-weekly to check in with seniors.

Schools reported their progress on 142 goals. Schools self-reported 25 percent of their goals as exceeding their benchmarks for progress, which included increasing graduation rates, study/academic skills, GPAs, attendance, ICAP course implementation and portfolio completion, and student awareness of STEM careers. Many attributed their success to strategic partnerships with teachers, community members/agencies, administrators and with other districts across a BOCES. Of note are those exceeding expectations for attendance goals since previous years identified attendance as particularly challenging. Schools making substantial progress commented:

“Our school-wide attendance intervention impacted staff awareness of attendance needs. Attendance needs were intentionally shared with the community through the Counseling Advisory Committee to improve awareness and efforts to improve student attendance. Students in this group were especially receptive to personal goal setting. Teachers also joined the effort by calling the parents of students with excessive absences to reinforce the school district attendance policy.”

“Several factors positively affect attendance in our setting. We offer free breakfast and lunch every day at no charge. Our staff chef continues to provide excellent options. Free bus passes for public transportation are provided to students who complete a daily progress report. We provide gas money to car poolers and utilize Z-Trip if necessary. We also offer after school activities (e.g. field trips to plays, movies, art events) to students that are meeting academic and attendance expectations.”

Schools reported not making progress on only eight goals and many attributed the deficiency to changes in scheduling, budgets and program offerings.



Professional Development

In the final year of implementation, School Counselor Corps Grant recipients indicated that secondary school counselors and team members attended over 20,972 hours of postsecondary and workforce readiness professional development, reaching more than 1,760 school professionals with nearly 12 hours of professional development per person on average. Four hundred and seventy-four school professionals attended the Colorado School Counselor Association Annual Conference with an additional 37 attending the American School Counselor Association Annual Conference. Other trainings grantees' staff attended included:

- College in Colorado;
- LINK Crew/WEB;
- The Boomerang Project;
- Colorado Council on High School and College Relations Annual Conference; and
- School counselor workshops, institutes and trainings.

Grantees shared the value of these professional development opportunities on their work. The following quotations illustrate the impact that these trainings had on district and school practices:

“Counselors learned valuable skills, principles and techniques for working with students in an effective and quick manner. Counselors were given training on Individual Solution Strategies. Many Corps and non-Corps Counselors have been using Individual Solution Strategies with students and small groups all year and have seen significant increases in student performance.”

“It is imperative that our school counselors be up to date on new college programming, admissions requirements, and financial aid information. This conference allows PCS counselors to obtain the most up to date information on the schools are students are applying to, thereby increasing acceptance rates for students.”

“The Counselor Corps trainings have allowed our teams to collaborate on best practices and reflect upon what is working well and what isn't. They have also given us the opportunity to hear from other school districts on how they are implementing the SCCG. It is always great to hear about other's success and barriers.”

“Counselors ...reported strongly that the information learned is relevant and immediately applicable. We are pushing and coaching our district counselors toward meaningfully using data to drive and evaluate programming. This conference further encouraged and supported this effort. Counselors have been exposed to many best practice models and are taking them back to their buildings.”



Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) Implementation

ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills to create their own meaningful and “PoWeRful” pathways to be career and college ready. The ICAP is used to help establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align coursework and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid, and ultimately enter the workforce following college graduation. The State Board of Education promulgated rules for ICAPs pursuant to SB 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, 2.02 (1)(d)).

Grantees’ comments illustrate how the grant supported them in meeting this requirement with high quality:

“ICAP milestones have been intertwined throughout the advising curriculum. Each grade level is divided into their own advising/seminar class. This allows advising teachers to implement the milestones seamlessly. Counselors are also involved in ICAP implementation by providing essential support to advisors. Through our computer labs as well as our laptop carts, students access Naviance easily and explore their interests and postsecondary options. The Thornton and Lakewood campuses also have a FaStart program that is an extended orientation where students all have time to get up to speed with their ICAP requirements. All new students to the school take this FaStart program in the morning and regular classes in the afternoons. Every student first creates an account, does an interest inventory, searches for careers, and begins working on their resumes, etc. All three schools believe that full ICAP implementation is crucial for our students who mostly are first generation students. Students count on the school staff to guide them in exploring their interests, apply their knowledge, and have as much access to postsecondary resources as possible. Not only do our students go on to the workforce, they also apply to college, university, and the military. We strive for all of our students to be independent and successful post high school years”.

“Jeffco leadership is actively committed to transforming ICAPs in all of our Jeffco middle and high schools. We have worked very hard, at the district level, to help schools embrace and lead ICAPs as a process rather than an event that happens a couple of times during a student's school year. We have a workgroup of counselor leaders who have spent the year aligning ICAP with core content essential questions and units of study by grade level. We have also started holding monthly ICAP professional development open to all counselors in the district. We continually weave our ICAP vision as well as support and tools into multiple counselor opportunities throughout the year. While we place greater value on students creating meaningful ICAPs than we do on the number completed, we do still expect that 100% of students will have an ICAP. This year our completion rates improved significantly from last year: HS - 90.99% (+15% from last year) MS - 92.8% (+.8% from last year) Option - 71% (+28% from last year).”



Student-to-Counselor Ratio

The grant played a significant role in reducing the student-to-counselor ratio in funded schools to meet the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) recommendation of 250:1. ASCA recommends this ratio so that professional school counselors can focus their skills, time, and energy on direct and indirect services to students at least 80 percent of their time. This comprehensive school counseling program model:

- 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;
- is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion;
- is based on data-driven decision making; and
- is provided by a state-credentialed, licensed professional school counselor.

Benefits of lower student-to-counselor ratios and implementing the comprehensive counseling program include higher standardized test scores, higher graduation rates, and higher retention rates.^x

Nearly 38 full-time, certified school counselors were hired using SCCGP funds in 2016-17. SCCGP funding is decreasing student-to-counselor ratios to well below the best practice recommendation of a maximum ratio of 250 students to one school counselor. In the first year of full SCCGP implementation, the overall ratio was 200 students to one counselor and that average was maintained throughout the full implementation of the grant, schools maintained a ratio of approximately 200 students to one counselor. Low ratios were observable across all school types for all years, ranging from 104 students to 235 students per counselor.

Throughout the grant reports, grantees noted that decreased student-to-counselor ratios afforded schools additional opportunities to develop systems and supports that enable them to provide more comprehensive, quality, and/or individualized postsecondary readiness support services. The following quotes provide some examples of how counselors contribute to student success in unique and meaningful ways:

Counselors were able to offer the following groups to our students: 8th Grade Academic Success/High School Readiness group (8 students); 7th Grade Academic Success Group (8 students); 7th Grade Girls Group (12 students); 7th Grade Boys Group (7 students); 6th Grade Girls Circle (8 students); and 6th Grade Boys Council (8 students). In addition, the 8th grade counselor was able to organize and arrange for Judi's House to host a Grief and Loss Group for 8 students (6th, 7th, and 8th combined).

Our goal was reached due to records of the numbers of Heaton students seen and counseled by counselors during school year 2016-17. Students would seek to see their counselor during different times in the day... before school, during school periods, during lunch and after school.

Counselors used grade level ESL teacher recommendations and MAP data to identify 8 students per grade level for academic intervention. Counselors held individual student meetings and grade level small groups focusing on reflection and goal setting; organization, prioritization, and use of a day planner; checking Infinite Campus and planning to make up work; effective note taking and study skills; reducing test anxiety and public speaking anxiety; self-advocacy and accessing help; and carrying good habits into high school.



American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Model Implementation

The school-level grant report included a reliable measure for assessing the level of ASCA Model implementation, the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.^{xi} This is the second year this tool has been utilized to measure implementation of the ASCA model by grantees. The survey includes a total of 14 items, which provide an overall implementation score and two factor scores – programmatic orientation and school counseling services. The following table includes the three years of grant report data for SCCGP Cohort 3. (Note: the four-point rating scale for the survey was 1 = Not Present, 2 = Development in Progress, 3 = Partly Implemented, and 4 = Fully Implemented.)

Table 2: ASCA Model Implementation Scores for SCCGP Cohort 3, Full Implementation Years

	Overall Implementation	Programmatic Orientation	School Counseling Services
2014-15	3	3	3
2015-16	3.3	3.2	3.3
2016-17	3.4	3.4	3.5

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 schools’ ASCA Implementation Scores are partly to fully implemented and showed great growth from during the three years of full implementation and funding. The components with the greatest implementation scores reported in this final grant year were:

- “A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors.”
- “School counselors spend at least 80 percent of their time in activities that directly benefit students;”
- “Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them” (3.6).

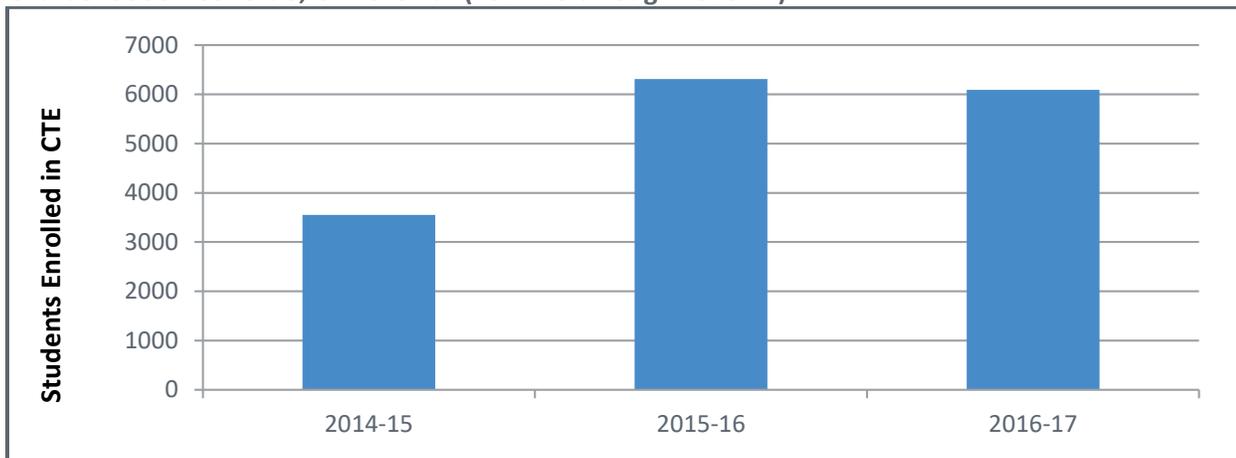
In this final grant year, “Needs Assessments are completed regularly and guide program planning” was rated the lowest overall (3.1). “School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps” received some of lowest scores most consistently during implementation; however, this indicator also saw the most growth, from 2.5 to 3.2. School Counselor Corps trainings have likely contributed to this growth as they consistently focus on data collection and disaggregation to target interventions for at-risk students.



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 2014-15, SCCGP Cohort 3 schools enrolled 3,553 unduplicated students in CTE courses. In 2015-16, 6,312 unduplicated students were enrolled in CTE courses, which demonstrate impressive growth in implementation. In 2016-17, Cohort 3 schools held relatively steady with 6,090 unduplicated students enrolled in CTE.

Chart 8: SCCGP Cohort 3, CTE Growth (2014-15 through 2016-17)



College Visits

In 2016-17, SCCGP Cohort 3 schools provided approximately 3,450 unduplicated students with opportunities to visit colleges.



Conclusion

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 achieved great impact in cultivating students' postsecondary and workforce readiness by providing comprehensive school counseling programming to schools with highly diverse students from economically challenging backgrounds. The following are some of the contributions SCCGP funding has made to these schools' postsecondary and workforce readiness outcomes and indicators:

- Four-year graduation and completion rates took an initial dip during the SCCGP development year; however, schools gained back those losses to surpass original rates after the second year of full implementation funding. The trends continued with nearly a 3 percentage point gain over the course of the grant.
- Dropout rates saw an initial, slight uptick in the first year of implementation; and then, in the second year those losses were reversed with a reduction to 1.6 percent, which less than the initial rate. The positive trend continued into the final year with a reduction to 1.4 percent.
- Based on estimates of taxes lost and spending via other systems, the SCCGP provides a return on investment of approximately \$2 for every \$1 spent.^{xii}
- FAFSA completion rates were higher for SCCGP Cohort 3 than the state prior to funding; the cohort's rate of improvement was twice that of the state's after SCCGP funding.
- The number of unduplicated concurrently enrolled students increased nearly 22 percent over the course of SCCGP funding.
- Nearly twice as many students were enrolled in CTE courses in the second and third years of full SCCGP implementation as compared to the first.
- SCCGP funded schools had student-to-counselor ratios well below the best practice recommendations for all three years of full implementation and implementation of ASCA's Model improved during each year.
- Approximately 15 percent of students in SCCGP funded schools attended a college visit each year of full SCCGP implementation.
- SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 21,000 hours of postsecondary and workforce readiness professional development in the final year SCCGP funding, which ensures counselors are up to date on new practices, programs and requirements.

Grantees expressed immense appreciation for the funds to secure school counselors and attributed their success to the ability to hire qualified professionals for a comprehensive program.



Appendix A: 2016-17 School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

Lisa Moore, Jefferson County Public Schools, Master Practitioner (Chair)

Andrew Burns, Durango School District, School District Administration (Vice Chair)

Carl Einhaus, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Student Affairs

Lucia Delgado, Colorado State University, Student Support

Elysia Clemens, University of Northern Colorado, Counselor Educator

Derek Lopez, Colorado State University Pueblo, Student Retention

Brenda Meltenberger, Burlington School District, High School Counselor

Khara O'Connell, Community College of Denver, Student Support

Catie Riessen, Brighton 27J School District, Middle School Counselor

Julie Rife, Colorado Community College System, CTE, Assistant Program Director



Appendix B: Data Collection and Analysis Process

- 1) CDE provided grantee reports at the district and school level. (Grantees with missing reports were contacted for these data.) These data were utilized for:
 - Student-to-counselor ratios
 - Grantee implementation indicators
 - Goals
 - Professional development
 - ASCA standards
 - ICAP
 - Career and Technical Education
 - College Visits

- 2) Once the final list of SCCGP schools was determined, CDE's publicly accessible data were utilized for:
 - Demographic data and student counts
 - Graduation, completion, drop-out, and attendance rates

- 3) The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) i3 data system and reports were utilized for:
 - FAFSA Completion (U.S. Department of Education verified data)
 - Concurrent Enrollment (SURDS)
 - Postsecondary Matriculation (National Student Clearinghouse & SURDS)

CDHE provided additional data for schools that had too small of numbers to report publicly.



Endnotes and Definitions

Endnotes

- ⁱ Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (October, 2009). The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School. Retrieved on February 15, 2016 from www.northeastern.edu/clms/wp-content/uploads/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf
- ⁱⁱ Alliance for Excellent Education. (October, 2009). Potential Economic Impacts of Improved Education on Colorado
- ⁱⁱⁱ White, S.W., and Kelly, D.F. (2010). The School Counselors Role in School Dropout Prevention. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 88, 227-235.
- ^{iv} Ibid.
- ^v New Horizon High School in Harrison School District 2 and Irving Alternative Education Campus in Colorado Springs School District 11 have closed and, therefore, are not included in this report.
- ^{vi} Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (October, 2009). The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School. Retrieved on February 15, 2016 from www.northeastern.edu/clms/wp-content/uploads/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf
- ^{vii} Alliance for Excellent Education. (October, 2009). Potential Economic Impacts of Improved Education on Colorado
- ^{viii} Colorado Department of Higher Education & Colorado Department of Education. (2013). Annual Report on Concurrent Enrollment 2011-12 School Year. Retrieved on May 7, 2013 from http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2012/2012_Concurrent_Enrollment_Feb_2013.pdf
- ^{ix} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002/06).
- ^x Burkard, A., Gillen, M., Martinez, M., & Skytte, S. (2011). Wisconsin School Counselors Benefit All Students: The Effect of Fully Implemented Comprehensive School Counseling Programs in Wisconsin High Schools. Retrieved on April 22, 2013 from www.oakcreek.k12.wi.us/ochs/guidance1/guidance_docs/WSCA_Research_Report_2011_11.pdf
- ^{xi} Clemens, E., Carey, J. & Harrington, K. (2010). The School Counseling Program Implementation Survey: Initial Instrument Development and Exploratory Factor Analysis. *ACA: Professional School Counseling*, 14:2, 125-134.
- ^{xii} Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (October, 2009). The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School. Retrieved on February 15, 2016 from www.northeastern.edu/clms/wp-content/uploads/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf

Definitions

Graduation Rate: This rate indicates the percent of students who graduate with a high school diploma by meeting the graduation requirements of their local school district. Those who graduate within four years of entering ninth grade are counted in the 4-year graduation rate. Students who need more time to successfully graduate are counted in extended-year graduation rates. The state's 5-year, 6-year and 7-year graduation rates, respectively represent the number of students who graduate from high school within five, six or seven years of entering ninth grade. Colorado is one of 29 states that provides a free public education for students up to 21 years of age.

Completion Rate: This rate is determined by combining all graduates with those who receive a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED). There are three approved high school equivalency tests in Colorado: GED, Hi-SET and TASC. The completion rate is always higher than the graduation rate because it includes both high school graduates and high school equivalency completers.

Concurrent Enrollment: Concurrent Enrollment program, defined as the simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, including academic or career and technical education courses, which may include course work related to apprenticeship programs or internship programs (that can be applied toward a technical certificate or degree), at an institution of higher education.