



COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

2013 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 became part of the Colorado Revised Statute in 2008 (22-91-101 et. seq.) in order 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 three-year grant cycle. This report describes SCCGP Cohort 2 grantees and their first year of outcomes from the July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012 reporting period.

SCCGP Cohort 2

SCCGP Cohort 2 consists of 23 grantees funding a total of 76 secondary schools. Eighteen grantees were districts and five were charter schools spanning diverse regions of the state. These schools served 53,666 students, sixty-three percent of whom qualified for free or reduced lunch, in 2011-12.

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 1 Outcomes

Since 2009-10, the on-time **graduation** rate for Colorado has increased 1.5 percentage points annually. SCCGP Cohort 2 has established a positive trend with a greater rate of increase, 2 percentage points in the years prior to receiving SCCGP funding and 4.2 percentage points after the first year of funding.

Over the four school years examined for the **dropout** analysis (2008-09 through 2011-12), SCCGP Cohort 2 demonstrated a downward trend of 1.2 percentage points as compared to the state average with the SCCGP Cohort 2 reaching 4.3 percent in 2011-12. (The state dropout rate for 2011-12 was 4.2 percent.)

SCCGP Cohort 2 middle schools made more progress on increasing **attendance** rates from 2009-10 to 2011-12 as compared to the state average. At the time of first year SCCGP funding, these schools were approximately one percent below the state average attendance rate of 94.7 percent.

During the first year of SCCGP Cohort 2, more than 64 counselors were hired lowering the **student-to-counselor ratios** at each school. The average ratio for all SCCGP schools in 2010-11 before receiving funding was 363:1 whereas in 2011-12 the average ratio was 261:1. Most significantly, caseloads at high schools (239:1) and schools serving middle and high school students (183:1) were reduced to below the American School Counselors Association's recommended ratio of 250:1.

Pursuant to SB 09-256, all schools are required to have **Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP)** for each student grades 9th - 12th. Grantees reported on their progress with this postsecondary workforce readiness strategy noting how the school counselors were instrumental in scaling up the implementation. Of SCCGP counselors, 85 percent noted that ICAP implementation was a priority.

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.ⁱ Of the 7,612 seniors in the SCCGP 2011-12 cohort, 3,352 **completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, or 44 percent of SCCGP high school seniors. On average, these schools increased their seniors' FAFSA completion rate by four percentage points from the prior school year's rate of 40 percent.

Although SCCGP Cohort 2 high schools were below the state average in participating in Concurrent Enrollment partnerships, these schools are not far behind. One-thousand of those students were from 24 SCCGP schools. Concurrent Enrollment data was not collected prior to 2012; therefore, 2012 data serves as the baseline to determine if Concurrent Enrollment expands as the school counseling program matures. The recent report on

remediation published by the Colorado Department of Higher Education establishes baseline remediation data for future SCCGP Cohort 2 analysisⁱⁱ. For 2011-12, Colorado's remediation rate for first-time, in-state college enrollment for students ages 17-19 was 40 percent and the SCCGP Cohort 2 remediation rate was 57 percent. These data will be used as baseline for comparison in future years of the grant.

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 1 Grant Implementation

Overall, grantees attributed their success to being able to hire school counselors who possess the skills, time, and resources to develop, deliver, and coordinate high impact programs. Challenging circumstances, such as dramatic increases in number of students and distance learning, made implementation more difficult. However, grantees noted the strategies they were putting in place to address these challenges in the following year. Grantees benefited from direct access to postsecondary workforce readiness (PWR) professional development with more than 950 school professionals accessing an average of 3.5 hours of training on PWR through SCCGP. Additionally, SCCGP school counselors engaged in 16 hours of interactive professional development directly through the program focused on best practices in identifying achievement gaps and data-driven decisions.

Conclusion

After only one year of funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 is already showing signs of significant impact on students' postsecondary workforce readiness and success. SCCGP Cohort 2 graduation rates and middle school attendance rates have improved more than the state average. SCCGP Cohort 2 dropout and FAFSA completion rates have improved similarly to the state average. Overall, student-to-counselor ratios improved to near the national recommendation and school counselors and their school and district partners are benefiting from the professional development opportunities available to them through this grant. Although causation cannot be determined from this quasi-experimental design, as the grant cycle continues it is anticipated that additional data points will provide greater evidence of the positive contribution of SCCGP in this first year of funding for Cohort 2.

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, 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 on-time (within four years of entering ninth grade) or not graduating.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 Attachment A for a listing of School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee members.

Description of Program for Reporting Period July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Grant Application Process

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was announced in the spring of 2011 prior to the State Legislature making final appropriations to the program in order for eligible education providers to have time to prepare application to the program. This allowed the funds to be maximized by beginning implementation at the start of the new school year. The available funding for the launch of the second SCCGP cohort in 2011-2012 school year was \$4,800,000. The SCCGP design reduces funding by 10 percent over the course of three years in order to encourage grantees to systematize and sustain programming beyond the grant program.

SCCGP 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; and/or
- Secondary schools with a high percentage of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch exceeding the statewide average.

Allowable activities included secondary school counselor salaries and benefits; postsecondary preparatory services; and professional development. The RFP included a rubric that detailed criteria that proposal would be

measured against and included sections on 1) a quality plan, 2) partnerships, 3) postsecondary activities, and 4) a budget narrative. In 2011-2012, \$4,800,000 was disbursed to 23 grantees.

Description of Grantees

SCCGP Cohort 2 consists of 23 grantees funding a total of 76 schools. Eighteen grantees are districts and five are charter schools. SCCGP grantees represent a wide range of schools serving a diverse student population with regard to secondary school type, student count, geographic region, ethnicity, and free and/or reduced lunch qualified students.

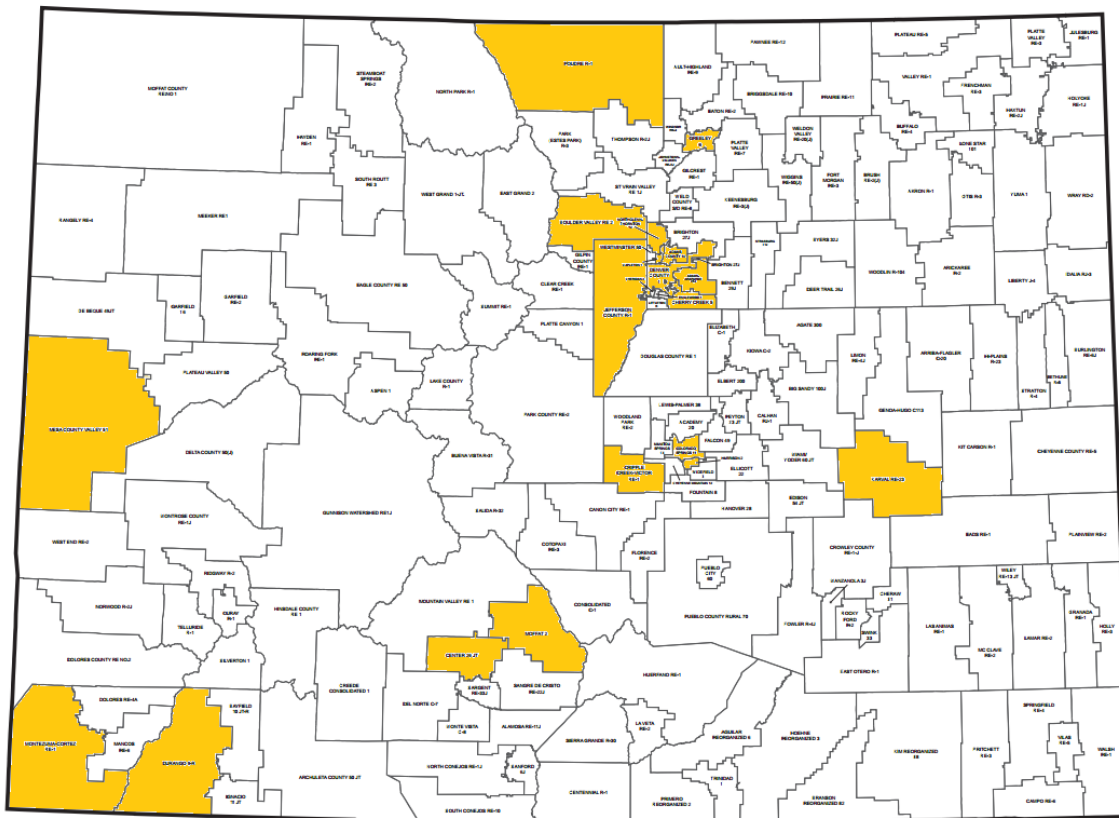
Type of Secondary School: Thirty-four of the seventy-six SCCGP funded schools are high schools. An additional twelve serve both middle and high school grade levels. The remaining thirty are middle schools. Table 1, on the following page, outlines the grantees and the secondary grade levels served by the schools funded. Notably, ten funded schools were also designated as Alternative Education Campuses.

Student Count: The seventy-six SCCGP schools served 53,666 students in 2011-12. Sixteen of these schools enrolled more than 1,000 students with only one school, Overland High School, enrolling more than 2, 000. One of these larger schools served both middle and high and two served only middle school students with SCCGP funds.

Geographic Location: As depicted in the map below, SCCGP Cohort 2 grantees are located across Colorado.

MAP 1: SCCGP Cohort 2 Grantees' Location

Colorado School District Map



- Charter School Institute Schools not shown
- Animas High School in Durango, CO
- Colorado Springs Early Colleges in Colorado Springs, CO
- High Point Academy in Aurora, CO

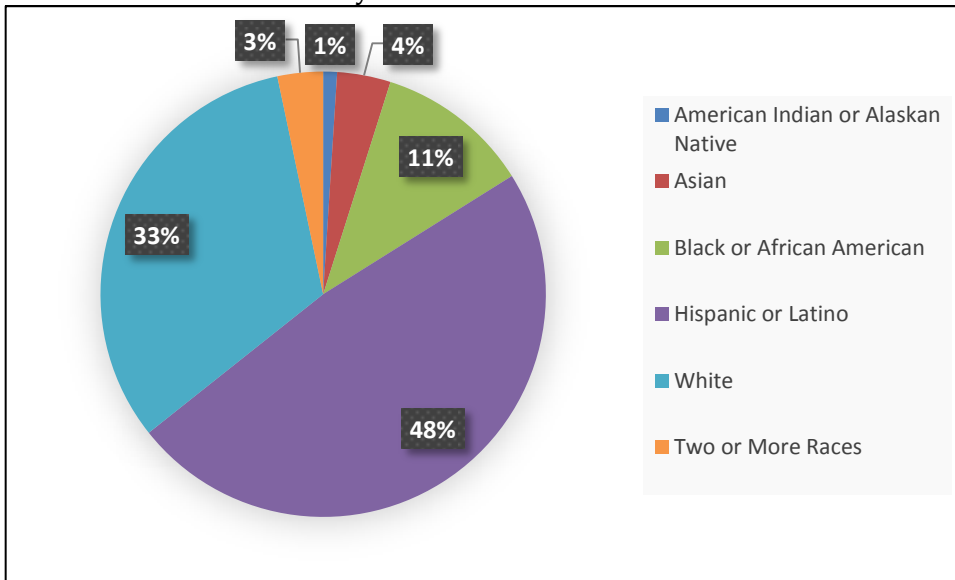
Produced by the Colorado Department of Education Tech Support Services Unit - May, 2007

TABLE 1: SCCGP Cohort 2 Grantees and Types of Schools Funded

	High	Middle	Undivided Middle & High	Total
Districts				
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	3	0	0	3
Adams County 14	2	2	0	4
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	0	7	0	7
Boulder Valley RE 2	2	0	0	2
Center 26 JT	2	1	0	3
Cherry Creek 5	1	3	0	4
Colorado Springs 11	4	5	1	10
Cripple Creek-Victor RE 1	0	0	1	1
Denver County 1	4	3	3	10
Greeley 6	3	0	0	3
Harrison 2	2	5	0	7
Jefferson County R-1	4	0	0	4
Karval RE-23	0	0	2	2
Mapleton 1	1	0	1	2
Mesa County Valley 51	3	0	0	3
Moffat 2	0	0	1	1
Montezuma-Cortez Re-1	1	0	0	1
Poudre R-1	0	3	1	4
Charter Schools				
Ace Community Challenge School	0	0	1	1
Animas High School	1	0	0	1
Atlas Preparatory School	0	1	0	1
Colorado Springs Early Colleges	1	0	0	1
High Point Academy	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	34	32	12	76

Ethnicity: The students being served through SCCGP Cohort 2 have diverse ethnic backgrounds with 68 percent identifying with a minority ethnic background. The following chart depicts the breakdown of students’ ethnicities in SCCGP funded schools. (Note: 115 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students were served in this cohort, therefore, their representation was too small to include in the chart.)

CHART 1: Students’ Ethnicity in SCCGP Cohort 2 Schools



Free or Reduced Lunch: The number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch is the standard proxy for students’ socioeconomic status and, as such, one of SCCGP’s eligibility requirements is a high percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Of the 53,666 students served in SCCGP funded schools, 64 percent qualified for free or reduced lunch. In 2011-12, 41 percent of Colorado’s students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Thus, SCCGP is successfully targeting students who are economically disadvantaged.

TABLE 2: SCCGP Cohort 2 Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch

	# of Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch	# of Students	% Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch
SCCGP Schools	34,057	53,666	63.5%
All Schools	33,9723	82,3174	41.3%

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 this data has been verified as accurate by a third party entity. When this type of data was unavailable, state-collected data was utilized. Additionally, grantees submitted a year-end annual report during the spring semester to illuminate program implementation and intermediate indicators for year one. In addition to examining trends and state comparisons where possible, a quasi-experimental design was utilized with a comparison group comprised of schools that are similar to SCCGP Cohort 2 funded schools.

Comparison Group

As indicated by demographic data outlined in the previous section, SCCGP schools are a unique subset within the state. Therefore, a comparison group of schools were pulled from the list of schools that were eligible for funding based on their 2008-09 dropout rate or percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Schools that were funded by SCCGP in Cohort 1 were excluded, which limited the number of large high schools available for comparison. Schools were selected based upon 2008-09 data on their dropout rate, percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, grade levels served, student body size, and school type (e.g. Alternative Education Campus designation, charter). A number of schools had closed or reconfigured since their eligibility was determined in 2008-09 and, therefore, were eliminated from the final comparison group. The follow table describes the composition of SCCGP Cohort 2, its comparison group and the state on key variables.

TABLE 3: SCCGP Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Composition

2008-09 School Year Grades 7-12	SCCGP Cohort 2	Comparison Group	State Totals
Total Number of Schools	76	63	725
Total Pupil Count (EOY Membership)	62,012	43,015	416,953
Grades 9-12 Pupil Count	45,165	32,780	282,657
Grades 7-8 Pupil Count	16,847	10,235	134,296
% of students in grades 9-12	73%	76%	68%
% of students in grades 7-8	27%	24%	32%
Percent of students in AEC schools*	4.1%	3.5%	4.7%
% of Students Econ. Disadvantaged	47.1%	55.3%	29.8%
9th-12th grade dropout rate	5.5%	5.3%	5.0%
7th-8th grade dropout rate	1.2%	1.0%	0.7%

*AEC designation is an estimate as schools designations are non-permanent.

This comparison group will be utilized throughout the report when analyzing third-party validated and state-collected data.

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 1 Outcomes

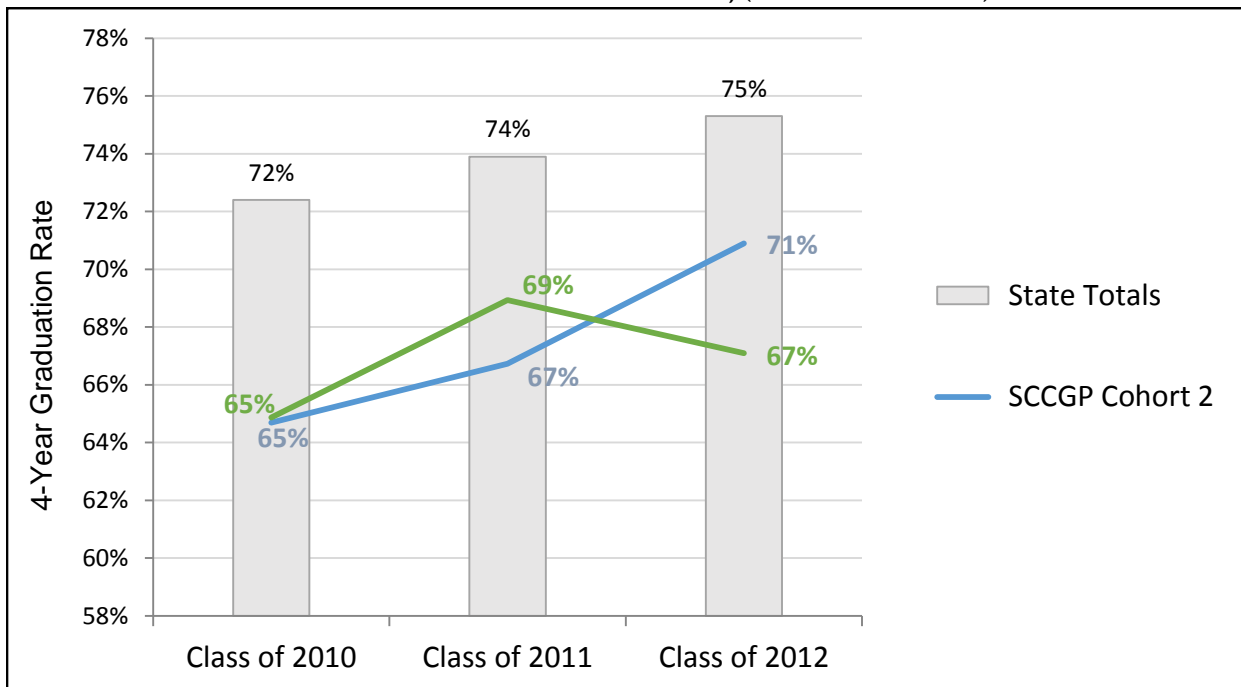
Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) was defined and jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education in June of 2009. PWR describes “the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy including content knowledge, learning and behavior skills.” Districts operationalize PWR in a variety of ways, including students meeting ACT college-ready benchmarks in all four areas, students having the required life skills for success after high school, GPAs, on-track to on-time graduation, having work experience and/or college credit. This report highlights first-year outcomes and baseline data for the following indicators:

- Graduation
- Dropout
- Attendance
- Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP)
- Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion
- Concurrent Enrollment
- Remediation

Graduation Rates

SCCGP aims to increase grantees’ on-time graduation rate. This analysis begins with the Class of 2010 when the four-year formula was adopted so that a trend can be established. The revised formula defines “on time” as only those students who graduate from high school four years after transitioning from eighth grade. Since the revised definition has been in place, the graduation rates for Colorado have increased 1.5 percentage points annually. SCCGP Cohort 2 has also established a positive trend with a greater rate of increase, 2 percentage points in the years prior to receiving SCCGP funding and 4.2 percentage points after the first year of funding. In contrast, the comparison group’s graduation rate increased 4 percentage points prior to 2011-12 and then experienced a 1.8 percentage point decrease. The following chart displays these trends.

CHART 2: Four Year Graduation Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2, (Classes 2010 – 2012)

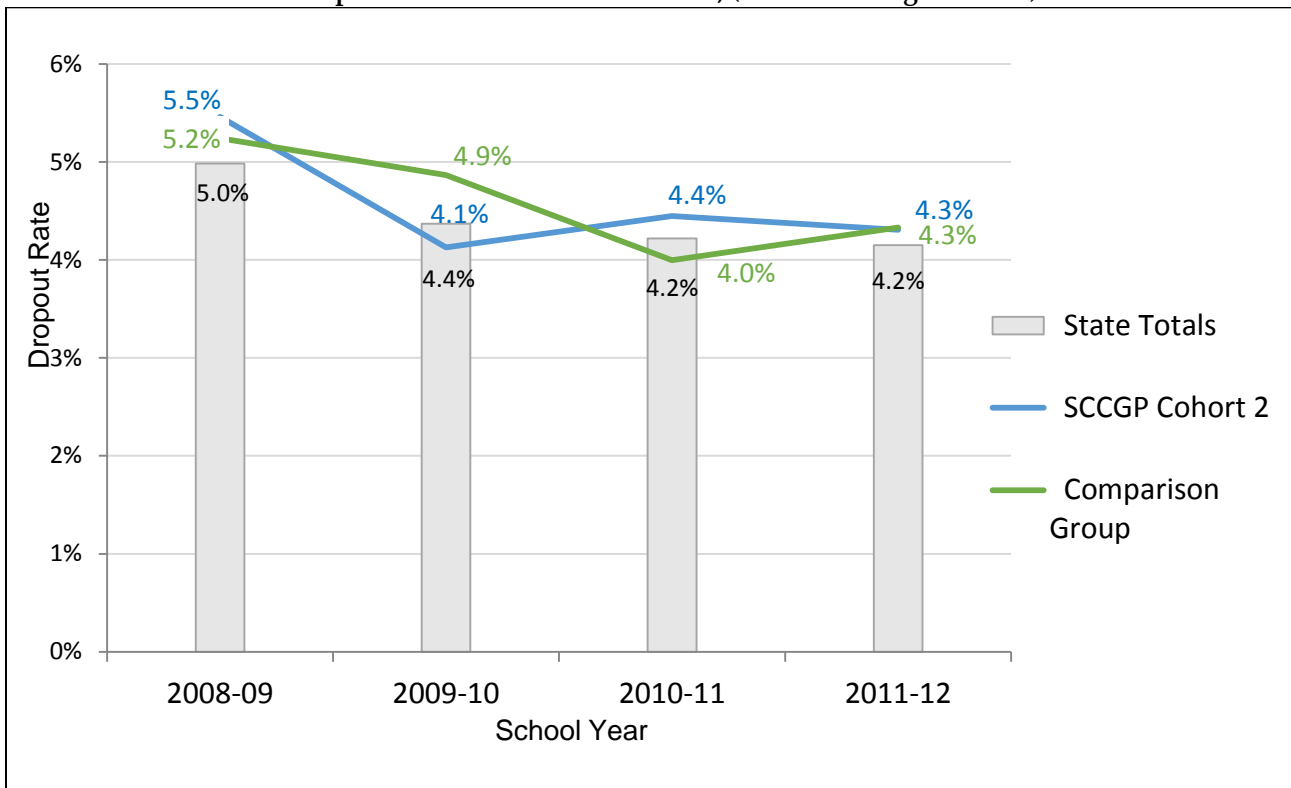


Note: SCCGP funds began the 2011-12 academic year.

Dropout Rates

Dropout rate analysis begins with the 2008-09 school year as this data was part of the eligibility criteria. Both the SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison dropout rates were more than one percentage point above the state average. Over the four school years within this analysis, SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison schools show a similar downward trend to the state average. Substantial differences exist within the SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison group trend lines as illustrated in the following chart. Although the exact cause of the dramatic increases and decreases in these two groups in 2009-10 and 2010-11 is unclear, the fact that SCCGP schools' dropout rate decreased during the first year of funding whereas the comparison schools' rate increased is noteworthy.

CHART 3: Grades 9-12 Dropout Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2, (2008-09 through 2011-12)

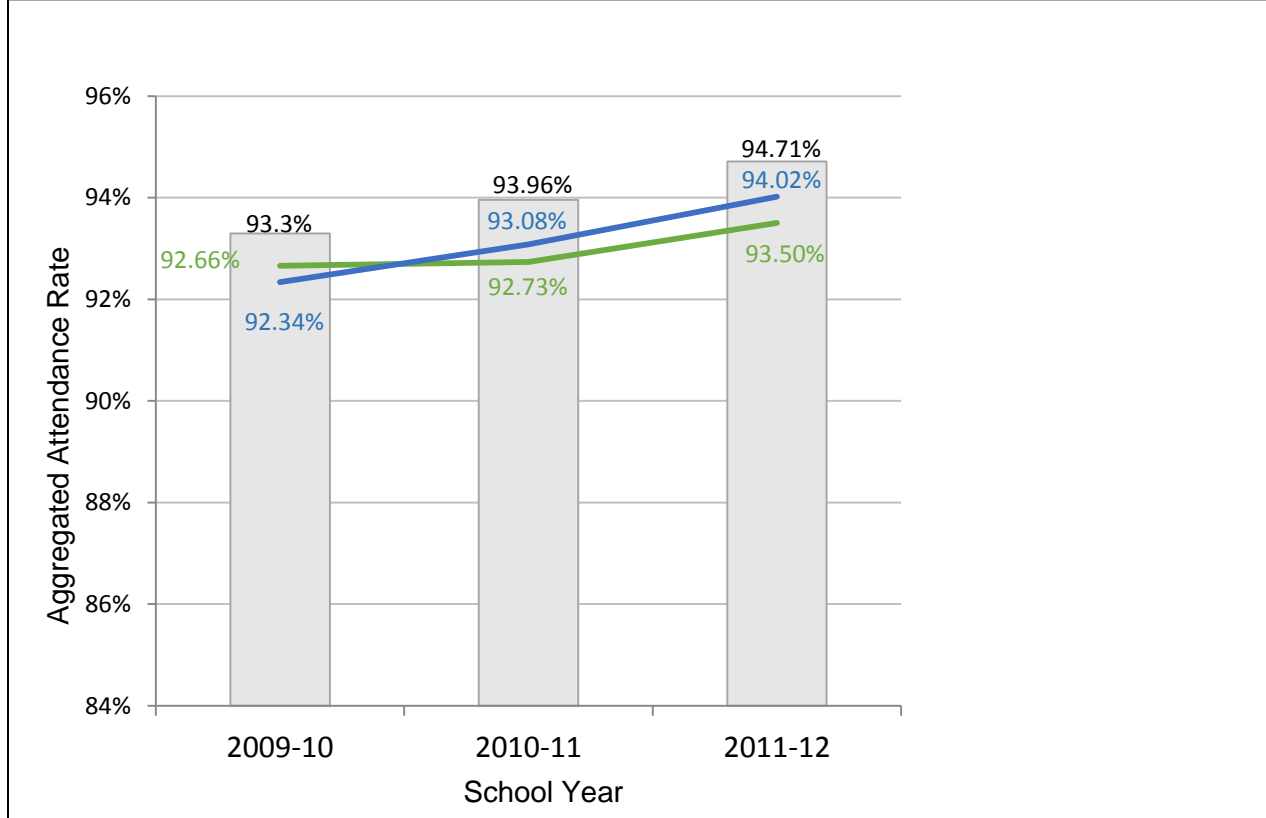


Note: SCCGP funds began the 2011-12 academic year.

Attendance Rates

Graduation rates do not apply to middle schools and dropout rates at the middle school level are below 1% making meaningful change difficult observe. Therefore, attendance rates will be utilized as an additional indicator for school connectedness and future completion at the middle school level. SCCGP Cohort 2 middle schools made more progress on increasing attendance rates in both years as compared to the comparison group and the state average. At the time of first-year SCCGP funding, these schools were less than one percent below the state average attendance rate.

CHART 4: Aggregated Attendance Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2, Middle Schools (2009-10 through 2011-12)



Note: SCCGP funds began the 2011-12 academic 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 (see www.ascanationalmodel.org). 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 and execute the ASCA National Model. 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 professional school counselor.

Benefits of low ratios and implementing the comprehensive counseling program include lower higher standardized test scores, higher graduation rates, and lower retention rates.^{vi}

During the first year of SCCGP Cohort 2, more than 64 counselors were hired lowering the student-to-counselor ratios at every level. Most notably, caseloads at high schools (239:1) and schools serving middle and high school students (183:1) were reduced to below the ASCA’s recommended ratio (250:1). The following table illustrates the significant reduction in caseloads that SCCGP afforded funded schools.

Table 4: Student-to-Counselor Ratios Prior to and During the First Year of SCCGP Cohort 2 Funding

	2010-11	2011-12
High Schools	311:1	239:1
Middle Schools	438:1	303:1
Undivided Middle & High Schools	344:1	183:1
TOTAL	363:1	261:1

Throughout the grant reports, grantees noted that improved 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.

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP)

An ICAP is an individualized plan developed by the student and the student’s parent or legal guardian, in collaboration with the school counselors, school administrators, school personnel and/or Approved Postsecondary Service Providers. 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)).

Districts’ comments illustrate how the grant supported them in meeting this goal:

The counselor created ICAP accounts for all students grades 6-12...[by] September 30th. By January 2012, all 9-12 graders had complete portfolios in addition to active accounts. By April, all 8th graders completed portfolios as well...through half-hour to forty-five minute one on one meetings. During this meeting students were also invited to complete Interest Inventories, Career Clusters, and identified academic and career goals for not only the current academic year, but also post-secondary goals and talked about obstacles to and feasibility of goals.

Career clusters were introduced as part of the enrollment process; ICAPs were completed individually with each student, including career goals and how they could achieve them. The process was iterative in that after classroom guidance lessons were completed, ICAPs could be modified based on new knowledge.

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.^{vii} Thus, a best practice for school counselors is to support students in completing this PWR benchmark. The Colorado Department of High Education recently began collecting, validating and reporting school-level data on seniors completing FAFSAs (see <http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/fafsa/>). Note that FAFSA labels the 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 2012-13 data will be comparable to and referenced here as 2011-12 from the perspective of SCCGP grantees.

Of the 7,612 seniors in the SCCGP 2011-12 cohort, 3,352 completed FAFSAs, or 44 percent of SCCGP high school seniors. Notably, on average, these schools increased their seniors' FAFSA completion rate by 4% from the prior school year's rate of 40%. The comparison group saw a similar increase. The following table depicts these gains.

Table 5: SCCGP Cohort 2, High School Seniors' FAFSA Completion Rates for 2010-11 and 2011-12

	Percent of Seniors with Completed FAFSAs (2010-11)	Percent of Seniors with Completed FAFSAs (2011-12)
SCCGP Cohort 2	40%	44%
Comparison	40%	44%
State	44%	49%

Concurrent Enrollment

The Colorado Department of Higher Education in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education released a report on dual or concurrent enrollment for 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 high schools and number of unique students engaging in Concurrent Enrollment, ASCENT, and remedial courses as reported by the institutions of higher education. This Concurrent Enrollment data was not collected prior to 2012; therefore, 2012 data serves as the baseline to determine future impact. In 2011-12, Colorado higher education institutions partnered with 304 out of 473 high schools to serve 14,016 out of the 120,320 11th and 12th grade students across Colorado. One thousand of those students were from 24 SCCGP schools and another 1,694 were from the comparison group. As baseline, SCCGP Cohort 2 high schools were below the comparison group and state averages for partnering and students participating in Concurrent Enrollment. The following table depicts the SCCGP schools and number of students engaging in these postsecondary workforce readiness strategies as compared to the comparison group and all high schools.

Table 6: SCCGP Cohort 2, Comparison and All Schools and Students in Concurrent Enrollment

	# of High Schools Partnering	# of High Schools	% of High Schools Partnering	# of Students Participating	# of 11 th and 12 th Graders	% of Students Participating
SCCGP High Schools	24	41	59%	1,000	14,240	7%
Comparison Schools	24	35	69%	1,694	15,308	11%
All High Schools	304	473	64%	14,016	120,320	12%

Remediation

SCCGP aims to contribute to the reduction in students' need for remediation upon entering college. Data systems between K-12 and higher education have been aligned to begin to capture these data more accurately. At this time, these data only reflect students attending college in-state. Remediation is defined as being 1) assessed as needing remediation or 2) enrolled in a basic skills course. The recent report put forth by the Colorado Department of Higher Education establishes baseline data for future SCCGP Cohort 2 analysis (see http://higherred.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Remedial/FY2012/2012_Remedial_relapr13.pdf). The following table depicts the 2011-12 remediation rates for first-time college enrolled students ages 17 to 19 for SCCGP Cohort 2, the comparison group, and the state. (Note: data does not include high schools with student enrollment under 16.)

Table 7: Baseline Remediation Rate Data for SCCGP, College Enrollment for 2011

	# of Students Enrolled	# of Students in Remediation	% of Students in Remediation
SCCGP	2,345	1,347	57%
Comparison	1,977	1,036	52%
State	24,659	9,862	40%

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 1 Grant Implementation

The grant reports elicited much information on grantees' successes and challenges with implementing the SCCGP and achieving their year one goals. Overall, success is attributed to the school counselor having the time and resources to develop, deliver, and coordinate high impact programs. The following quotes illustrate these strategies.

The [school] has not previously had a counselor, and the Senior Seminar class was very limited. We have now developed a curriculum, aligned it to ASCA standards, and utilized College in Colorado in the implementation... All of the seniors completed the FAFSA and have been accepted to a college. This is the first time this has happened.

In the 2010-11 school year, only two students participated in internships/job shadows. This year, with the implementation of the internship/job shadow program developed by our Internship Coordinator the number of students participating in internships/job shadows exceeded the 5% goal...Further, we had 11 applicants to Southwest Conservation Corps and 4 of the 11 have been offered positions.

...Students also took the EXPLORE test and counselors reviewed the results with students and parents...At [one middle school], the Counselor focused on truancy and attendance, helping to keep students from dropping out before high school. Individual students and their parents met with the counselor to create truancy plans. Also, the counselor gave presentations to Spanish speaking parents on postsecondary possibilities. At [two other middle schools], the Counselor set up visits at the feeder high school and coordinated scheduling with the high school counselors. She...created a parent information night about high school for 8th grade parents.

Some of the challenges grantees faced were often due to broader changes in their district, such as significant increases in their student body. Others reflected additional challenges posed by the nature of their school, namely distance learning. The following quotes illustrate some of these challenges and the determination of grantees to problem-solve and address these challenges.

We did not meet this goal due to the dramatic increase in new students and the lack of structure and process to support them in completing five components of the ICAP in College in Colorado...the Career Center team is hosting a training to strategize how to better ensure the completion of ICAP components in the community advising class.

School Corps Grant Counselors have been collecting data on a caseload of students that they determined at the beginning of the year. The counselors determine four categories of issues: 1) Lacking school success 2) Falling behind in class 3) Disengaged from school 4) Personal issues and barriers. The grant counselors have been working with students and have been providing interventions in 1) Success skills 2) Academic catch-up and 3) Student engagement.

Professional Development

School Counselor Corps Grant recipients indicated that secondary school counselors and team members attended 28,739 hours of professional development, reaching more than 950 school professionals with on average 3.5 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development. The following list provides examples of types of professional development opportunities the grantees were able to access:

- American/Colorado School Counselor Association Conference(s);
- NWEA Testing Score Interpretation & Retrieval In-service;
- ACT workshop/conference;
- Colorado Council on High School & College Relations workshop; and
- Dropout Prevention and Student Engagement Forum.

Nearly 2,000 of these professional development hours were provided exclusively by School Counselor Corps program, averaging to each counselor receiving 16 hours of grant-specific professional development. Grantees shared the value of these professional development opportunities on their work. The following quotes illustrate the common sentiments of its impact:

This training provided the participants with CTE/PWR connections and information about how they can assist with career and college readiness while minimizing the need for remediation...There was also ample discussion on how to create a school culture that emphasizes career/college readiness, while maintaining fidelity to the school's mission.

By attending this conference, we were able to create a stronger connection with our local youth employment agency (the Southwest Conservation Corps) and as a result of this relationship, 2 recruiters visited campus and spoke with at least 50 students. Furthermore, more than 12 students have applied for summer positions with the Conservation Corps.

It provided me valuable networking with colleagues and resources available to my students in the San Luis Valley that I had not had prior knowledge of.

The Use of The American School Counselors Association's Standards

School Counselor Corps grant recipients were required to report whether they adopted or have demonstrated a commitment to adopting standards for school counselor responsibilities, as recommended by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The ASCA recommends that schools should develop comprehensive guidance counseling services focused on three domains:

- (1) academic development,
- (2) career development, and
- (3) social development.

Grantees shared examples of how their school counselors are focusing on the three ASCA standards. Some of the academic development implementation methods included the following:

Weekly FLEX or team meetings with all parties involved with student's academic progress, including administrators, deans, counselors, mental health, teachers and special education, to help support at-risk and struggling students; extended school day for students to make up work; counselor check-ins with failing students; mentoring groups run by adult mentors and student mentors; small group interventions around academics; encouraging homework club and advocating for self.

All students meet with their counselor individually for grade consultation and credit checks on a regular basis. We are assisting students to become graduation ready by providing them their transcripts on a regular basis with grade consultation. Transcripts are given to 9th & 10th graders yearly at registration in mid- February. 11th graders meet with their counselor to review transcripts and credits twice a year at minimum. Seniors meet regularly with their counselor to review credits and opportunities for credit recovery.

The methods used to implement the career development domain varied among grantees and include the following examples:

Several classrooms identified a need to have male role models come and discuss why it is important to stay in school and complete postsecondary education. This was accomplished and the attitude of these students is completely transformed.

Postsecondary planning presented by grade level counselors via College in Colorado and Naviance each year; EXPLORE and ACT preparation and review; high school grade level checks with counselors; enhancing lessons about college and career in conjunction with teacher lessons; all eighth grade students at two middle schools toured a college campus; monthly guidance curriculum in AVID classes; quarterly guidance curriculum in all classes; college/career fair; ICAP implementation and completion at all grade levels.

School counselors individualize college and career counseling for students as students express interest and respond to counselors' invitations to onsite or interest visits.

The following examples illustrate the types of activities provided by grantees when implementing standards in the social development domain:

The Success Coaches work to meet all of the students' affective and social needs throughout the school year...The Success Coaches also include parents in these efforts so that the students can have a support system in place both in and out of school. Student/peer mentoring programs...and transitional opportunities for all students in District high schools has been extremely successful initiatives in assisting students...

The middle school Choices class addresses most of personal/social development ASCA standards...Weekly lesson plans are aligned to these standards as are assessments. After school programming further supports the development of these skills. The merit program rewards students for positive behavior as well.

Our counselors strive to improve the social and emotional growth of our students through regular meetings, one-on-one counseling using the DBT method, providing additional resources in the community, and on-going case management. We have an interdisciplinary health team that works collaboratively to develop strategies for our students, including individual counseling, life coaching, behavior management, and providing access to resources outside of school.

Conclusion

Overall, year one of SCCGP Cohort 2 was successful and showed progress toward improving student achievement.

- SCCGP Cohort 2 serves a significantly greater percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (63%) as compared to the state average (41%).
- SCCGP Cohort 2 on-time graduation rates are increasing and the rate of increase has more than doubled since receiving the grant funding. From 2010 to 2011, SCCGP Cohort increased 2 percentage points and 4.2 percentage points from 2011 to 2012 whereas the state average rate of change was 1.5 percentage points.
- SCCGP Cohort 2 dropout rates are reversing during the first year of funding after a significant increase the year prior. The percentage point change from 2009-10 was 0.3 and from 2010-11 to 2011-12 was -0.1 (negative indicates improvement).
- SCCGP Cohort 2 middle schools' attendance rates are improving faster than and are approaching the state average of 94.7 percent.
- Student-to-Counselor Ratios were significantly reduced: At all levels, schools ratios were significantly decreased. Most notably, on average, SCCGP funded high schools have reached ASCA's recommended ratio of 250 students to one counselor.
- SCCGP seniors increased their rate of completing FAFSAs: SCCGP schools increased their seniors' FAFSA completion rate by 4 percent, on average, in this first year of funding.
- SCCGP provided access to 28,739 hours of professional development, reaching more than 950 school professionals with on average 3.5 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development.
- SCCGP grantees are meeting their goals through practices supported by the ASCA standards.

After establishing baseline with this first year of outcomes, SCCGP Cohort 2 grantees have great opportunity to impact additional postsecondary workforce readiness indicators in the additional two years of the grant cycle.

- With only 59 percent of funded high schools participating in concurrent enrollment partnerships and 7 percent of students in SCCGP funded high schools participating in concurrent enrollment, all SCCGP funded high schools could focus on this strategy and likely see significant gains in their students' postsecondary preparation and success.
- Moreover, with 57 percent of SCCGP Cohort 2's first-time, college enrolled students aged 17 to 19 in 2011 needing remedial education, SCCGP has great potential to have a significant impact on reducing these rates by intervening earlier with remedial PWR supports.

Attachment A: 2013-14 School Counselor Corps Advisory Board

Dr. Paul Thayer, Colorado State University (Chair), Student Retention

Tracy Thompson, Colorado Community College System, ICAP Liaison & Retired School Counselor (Vice-Chair)

Andrew Burns, Fort Lewis College, College Admissions

Darrell Green, Colorado Association of Career & Technical Education

David West, Aurora Public Schools, Master Counselor Practitioner

Deb Suniga, Arapahoe Community College, TRiO Talent Search

Gully Stanford, Colorado Department of Higher Education, College In Colorado

Jennifer Quintana, Scott Carpenter Middle School, Middle School Counselor

John Simmons, Denver Public Schools, Executive Director of Student Services & CASE Representative

Lisa Moore, Jefferson County Public Schools, High School Counselor

Rana Tarkenton, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Dr. Rhonda Williams, University of Colorado – Colorado Springs, Counselor Education

Attachment B: Data Collection and Analysis Process

- 1) CDE provided grantee reports on a number of files. This data was utilized for:
 - Finalizing the schools and districts/charters that received SCCGP Cohort 2 funding as a few schools had moved from charter to district and vice versa and a few had closed since receiving funding
 - Student-to-counselor ratios (Grantees with missing reports were contacted for this data.)
 - Grantee implementation indicators
 - Goals
 - Professional development
 - ASCA standards
- 2) Once the final list of SCCGP schools was determined, CDE's Data Services provided aggregate demographic data on free or reduced lunch, ethnicity, and student count by grade level.
- 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)
 - Remediation (SURDS)
 - Concurrent Enrollment (SURDS)

CDHE provided additional data for schools that had too small of numbers to report publicly. In the future, it would be helpful to receive raw data sets (as opposed to reports) for concurrent enrollment and remediation.

- 4) CDE's Dropout Prevention Unit provided dropout and graduation data and analysis as well as the dropout and free or reduced lunch data from 2008-09 that determined schools' eligibility. (Note: the RFP had 2009-10 data on it despite eligibility being determined from 2008-09 data.) The list of Alternative Education Campuses as well as the School Directory was also provided for additional context, including grade level, name and school type changes.

Comparison group data was determined initially by the consultant by examining:

- School type
- Dropout rate
- Free or reduced lunch rate
- Student count
- Alternative Education Campus designation

CDE staff then pulled dropout and free or reduced lunch data for the initial list from 2008-09 through 2011-12 and examined the school directory to eliminate some schools based on changing contexts that made these schools anomalies. The comparison group was finalized after comparing its 2008-09 demographic, school and dropout data to SCCGP Cohort 2 and the state average. CDE staff then analyzed graduation and attendance data for the comparison group, SCCGP Cohort 2, and the state.

Endnotes

ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002/06).

ⁱⁱ Colorado Department of Higher Education. (2013). 2012 Legislative Report on Remedial Education. Retrieved on May 7, 2013 from http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Remedial/FY2012/2012_Remedial_relapr13.pdf

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} 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

^{vii} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002/06).

^{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://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2012/2012_Concurrent_Enrollment_Feb_2013.pdf