



COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

2014 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.) 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 second year of outcomes from the July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 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 56,794 students, fifty-nine percent of whom qualified for free or reduced lunch, in 2012-13.

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 2 Outcomes

Since 2009-10, the on-time graduation rate for Colorado has increased 1.5 percentage points annually, from seventy-two percent to seventy-seven percent (a five point increase). SCCGP Cohort 2 also established a positive trend with even greater impact during the same time period with a seven percentage point increase. Sixty-five percent of the Class of 2010 from SCCGP Cohort 2 graduated whereas 72 percent of the cohort's Class of 2013 graduated.

In 2012-13, after only the second year of funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 reduced its dropout rate to just 0.1 percentage point above the statewide average of 3.6 percent. SCCGP Cohort 2 possessed a 5.5 percent dropout rate in 2008-09 and 3.7 percent in 2012-13 for a decrease of 1.86 percent. The statewide average decrease for this same time period was 1.3 percent.

During the second year of funding, 24 SCCGP Cohort 2 high schools engaged 1,531 students in Concurrent Enrollment, which was a fifty-three percent increase from the first year. During this same period, the state realized a thirty percent increase.

Nationally, research suggests that ninety percent of high school graduates who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during their senior year of high school enroll in college within twelve months.ⁱ In the first year of funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools' increased its FAFSA completion rate by four percent. Following a similar trend to the state, the SCCGP funded schools' rate declined by approximately one percent, maintaining nearly a three percent increase since funding began.

Postsecondary matriculation data for year one illuminates a significant increase in students enrolling in college after the first year of SCCGP funding. SCCGP Cohort 2 schools increased their rate from thirty-one to forty-four percent in the first year of funding, or 13 percentage points, which equates to 455 more students enrolling in postsecondary education for a total of 2,822 students enrolling in college following high school for SCCGP schools after year one of funding. In contrast, the state's total number of graduates enrolled decreased by 369 students. Data for year two was not yet available at the time of report submission.

SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 2 Grant Implementation

Overall, grantees are making progress toward their grant goals. Some grantees have higher expectations for their performance and are not realizing the impact they seek. In these cases, grantees are identifying strategies for improvement through the use of data and support that the SCCGP provides. Grantees benefited from direct

access to a total of 6,178 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness (PWR) professional development with more than 528 school professionals accessing an average of eleven hours of training on PWR through SCCGP. Additionally, SCCGP school counselors engaged in more than ten hours of interactive professional development directly through the program focused on best practices in identifying achievement gaps and making data-driven decisions.

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 quality, comprehensive implementation.

SCCGP funding successfully reduced student-to-counselor ratios from 261:1 to 232:1 in the second year of funding, below the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) recommended maximum rate. The reduction in ratios at high schools and undivided middle and high schools realized from the first year of funding was maintained in the second year. Notably, the middle school ratio was significantly reduced in the second year from 303:1 to 237:1. Prior to the grant SCCGP schools had an average student-to-counselor ratio of 363:1.

The following are areas to focus program improvement and support, which include implementing regular needs assessments to guide programming (2.6) and analyzing data by demographic variable to identify interventions to close achievement gaps (2.7). Overall, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools have partially implemented school counseling programs with an overall ASCA National Model implementation score of 3.1 (on a four point scale with 4 = fully implemented). Analyzing the individual components, schools are excelling at organizing services so that all students are well served and have access to them; spending at least 80 percent of school counselors' time on activities that directly benefit students; including interventions designed to improve the school's ability to educate all students to high standards; and having the resources for counselors to complete appropriate professional development activities (3.4).

Conclusion

After one year of funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 showed signs of impact on students' postsecondary workforce readiness and success. This impact persisted into the second year of funding with new data points and postsecondary workforce ready indicators demonstrating even broader impact. SCCGP Cohort 2 graduation rates and concurrent enrollment rates have improved more than the state average. SCCGP Cohort 2 dropout, attendance, and FAFSA completion rates have improved similarly to the state average, which is notable due to the challenging social contexts (e.g. low income, mobility, poverty rates) SCCGP schools and students are tasked to overcome. Because of these disparate contexts, school and district partners are extremely appreciative of the added resources and professional development opportunities available to them through this grant. Most notably, the student-to-counselor ratio was reduced to below the national recommended maximum level for all types of schools, which allows these schools the capacity to develop and continuously improve their comprehensive school counseling programs. Although causation cannot be determined from this quasi-experimental design, evidence continues to lead to the conclusion that SCCGP positively contributes to its schools' PWR outcomes.

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.ⁱⁱ Timely monitoring, evaluating, and intervening are necessary measures to decrease the number of students who dropout and increase the number of students who graduate.ⁱⁱⁱ 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, 2012 – June 30, 2013

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 and \$4,320,000 for 2012-13. The SCCGP design reduces funding by 10 percent annually 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 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 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

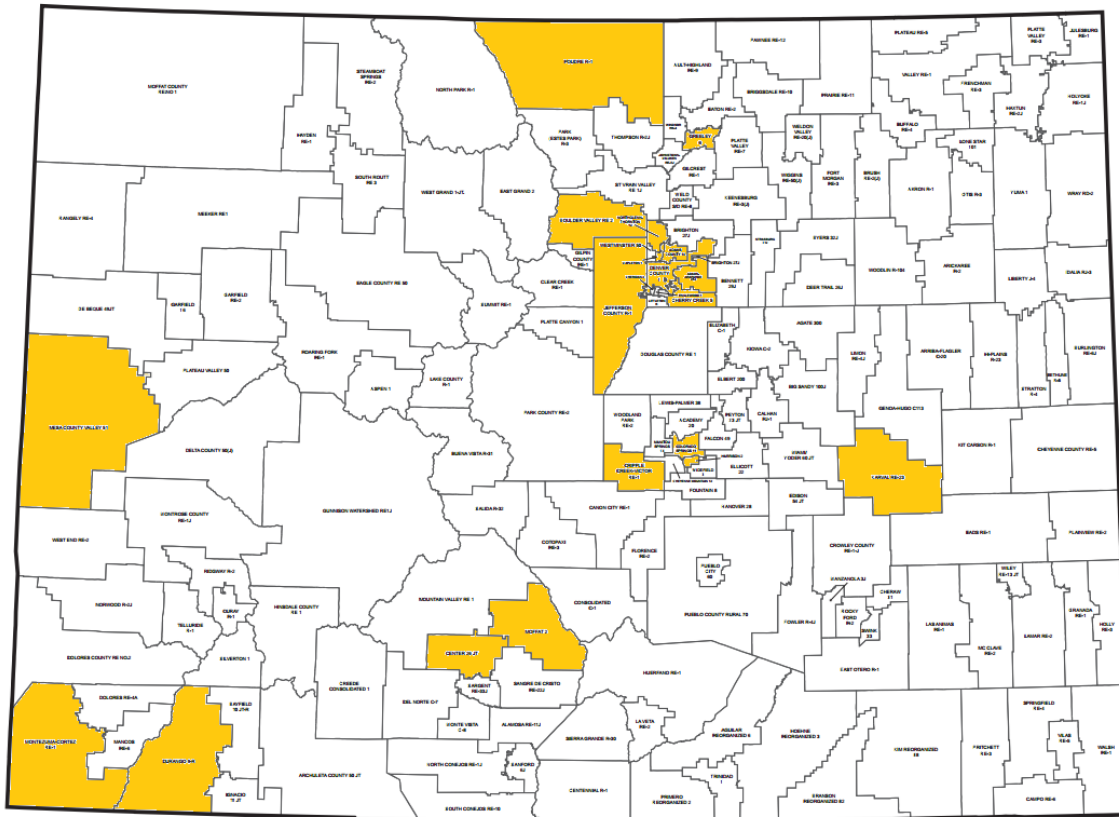
SCCGP Cohort 2 consists of 23 grantees funding a total of 76 schools. Eighteen grantees are districts and five are charter schools. SCCGP grantees represent a wide range of schools serving a diverse student population with regard to secondary school type, student count, mobility rates, geographic region, 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.^{iv} Eleven of these schools have a designation as an Alternative Education Campuses (AEC).

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

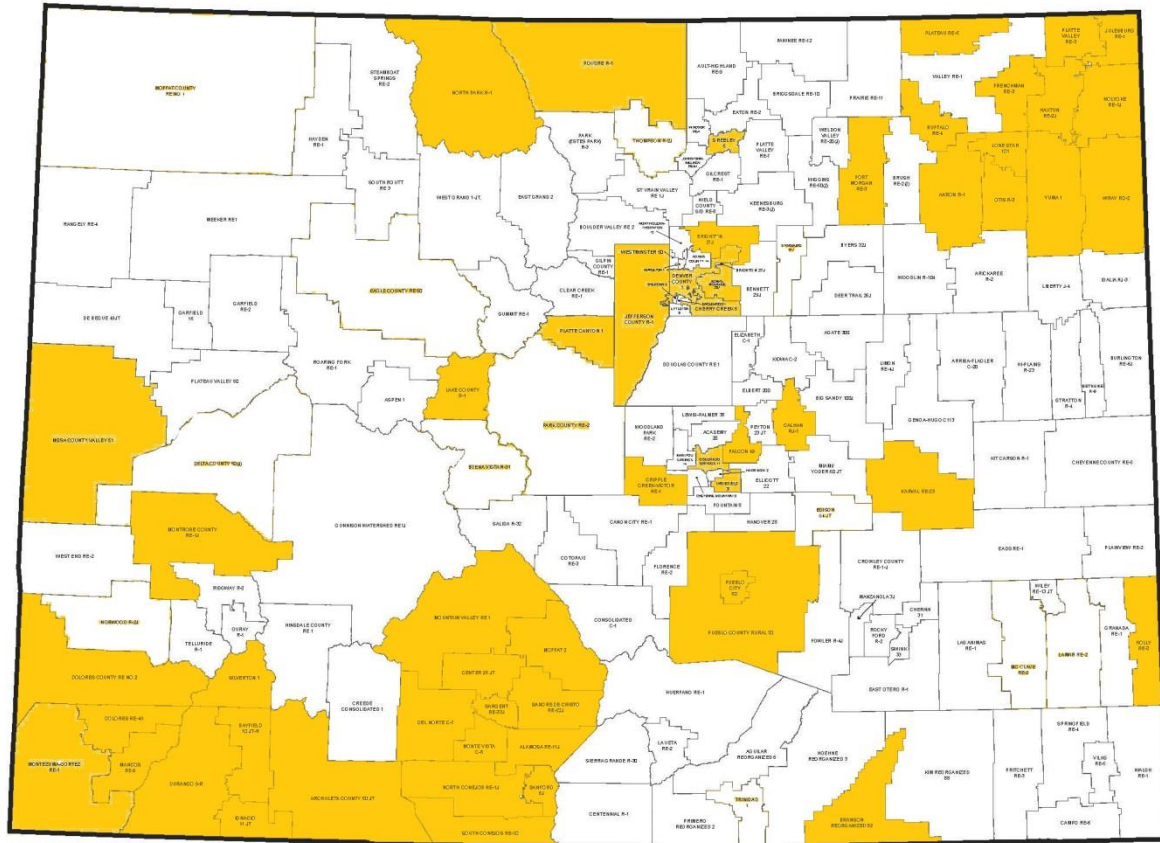


- Charter School Institute Schools not shown
- Animas High School in Durango, CO
- Colorado Springs Early Colleges in Colorado Springs, CO
- High Point Academy in Aurora, CO

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

MAP 2: SCCGP Participating Districts from 2008-2014

Colorado School District Map



Produced by the Colorado Department of Education Web 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

Student Count and End of Year Pupil Membership: At the time of the official student count in October, the seventy-six SCCGP Cohort 2 schools had 44,397 students grades 7-12 enrolled in 2012-13, which is an increase of 1.5 percent, or 758 more students, than in 2011-12. This is slightly higher than the state’s increase of 1.1 percent. Over the course of the year, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools served 56,794 students grades 7-12 in 2012-13, which is a 2.4 percent decrease from the prior year, or 1,391 fewer students as part of their End of Year membership. Despite serving a highly mobile student population (described below), this decrease in End of Year membership may indicate that SCCGP Cohort 2 schools are retaining their students more effectively. (Note: The majority of the data described throughout the report utilizes End of Year pupil membership because it takes into consideration the students who are transient during the course of the year and, therefore, provides a more accurate base count.

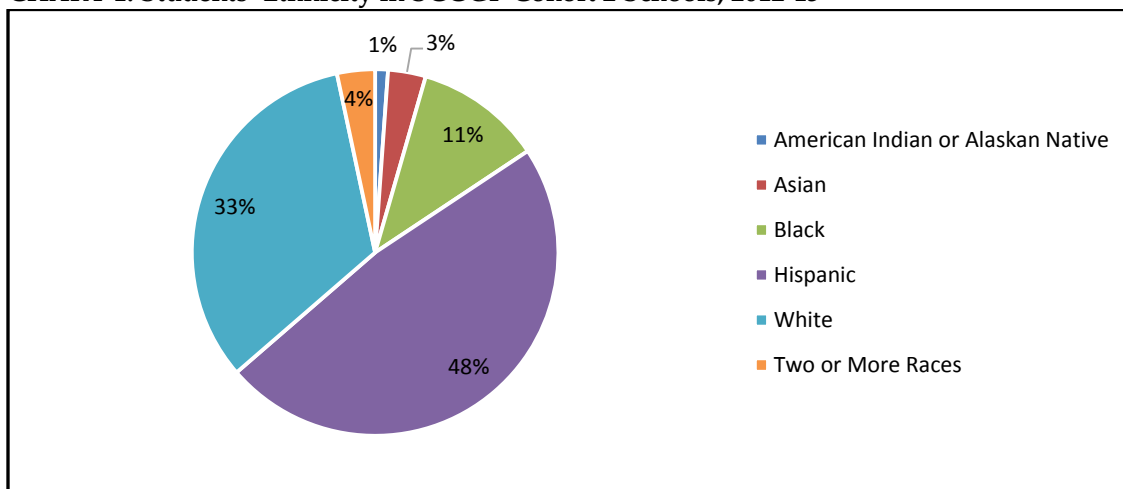
Mobility: CDE defines student mobility rates as the unduplicated count of grade K-12 students who moved into or out of the school or district in a given year divided by the total number of students that were part of the same membership base at any time during the same year. In 2012-13, the calculation was changed to exclude students who changed districts during the summer, whereas in prior years only students who just changed schools within the same district were excluded. The following table contains 2012-13 mobility rates for SCCGP Cohort 2 as compared to the state for grades 7-12, which illuminates that the SCCGP Cohort 2 population is highly mobile (22%) compared to the state (16%).

TABLE 2: SCCGP Cohort 2 Mobility Rates, 2012-13

	# of Students Grade 7-12 who Moved Schools/Districts	# of Students Grade 7-12	Mobility Rate
SCCGP Schools	12,749	56,794	22.4%
All Schools	66,901	424,891	15.7%

Ethnicity: The students being served through SCCGP Cohort 2 have highly diverse ethnic backgrounds. Sixty-seven percent of SCCGP Cohort 2 students identify with an ethnic minority background as compared to forty-four percent of students across the state. The following chart depicts the breakdown of students’ ethnicities in SCCGP funded schools for 2012-13. Little to no change was observed from the prior year. (Note: 160 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students were served in this cohort; therefore, their representation of less than one percent was too small to include in the chart.)

CHART 1: Students’ Ethnicity in SCCGP Cohort 2 Schools, 2012-13



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 56,794 students served in SCCGP funded schools, 59 percent qualified for free or reduced lunch. For comparison, in 2012-13, 37 percent of all Colorado students in grades 7-12 qualified for free or reduced lunch. Thus, SCCGP continues to successfully target students who are economically disadvantaged.

TABLE 3: SCCGP Cohort 2 Percentage of Students Grades 7-12 Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch, 2012-13

	Students Grade 7-12 Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch	Students Grades 7-12	Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch
SCCGP Schools	33,049	56,794	58.2%
All Schools	158,023	425,226	37.2%

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 was utilized. Additionally, grantees and schools submitted a year-end annual report during the spring semester to illuminate program implementation for year two. 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 was 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 following table describes the composition of SCCGP Cohort 2, its comparison group and the state on key variables from 2008-09 when eligibility was determined.

TABLE 4: SCCGP Cohort 2 and Comparison Group Grades 7-12 Composition, 2008-09*

	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
Students in grades 9-12	73%	76%	68%
Students in grades 7-8	27%	24%	32%
Students in AEC schools**	4.1%	3.5%	4.7%
Students Econ. Disadvantaged	47.1%	55.3%	29.8%
9th-12th Grade Dropout Rate	5.5%	5.3%	5%
7th-8th Grade Dropout Rate	1.2%	1%	0.7%

*This is the baseline prior to grant funding

**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 2 Outcomes

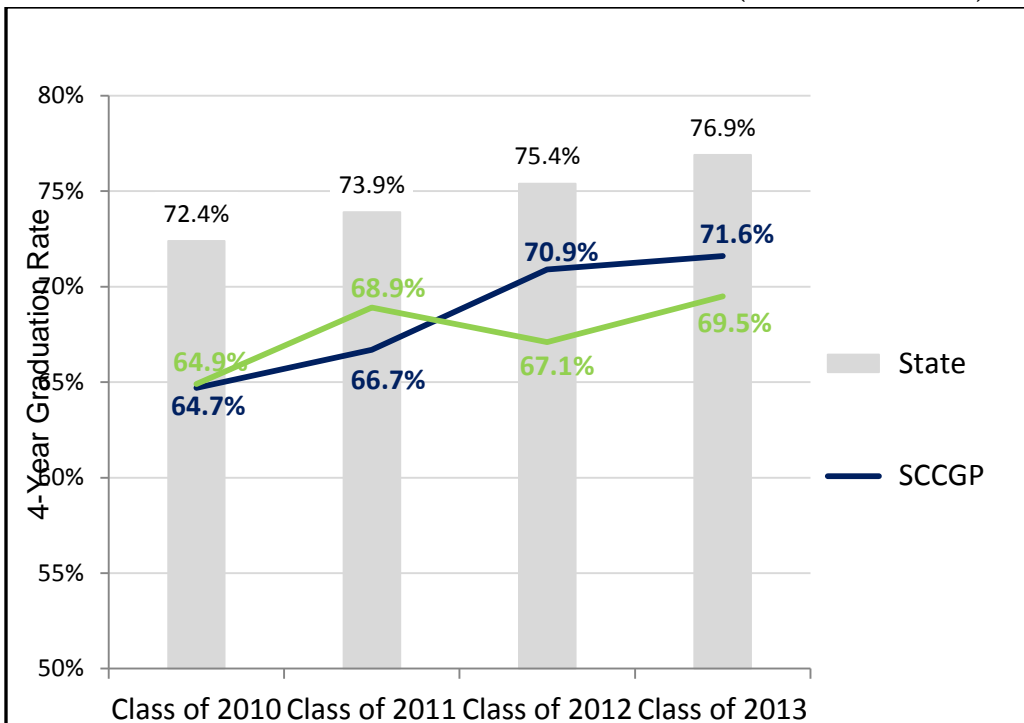
Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) was defined and jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education in June of 2009. PWR describes “the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy including content knowledge, learning and behavior skills.” Districts operationalize PWR in a variety of ways, including students 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 second-year outcomes and baseline data for the following indicators:

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

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 with the Class of 2013 reaching a statewide rate of 76.9 percent. SCCGP Cohort 2 realized a similarly positive trend with a more profound rate of improvement than the state average whereas the comparison group’s graduation rate increased at a similar rate, on average, to the statewide trend. The following chart displays these emerging trends.

CHART 2: Four Year Graduation Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2 (Classes 2010 – 2013)

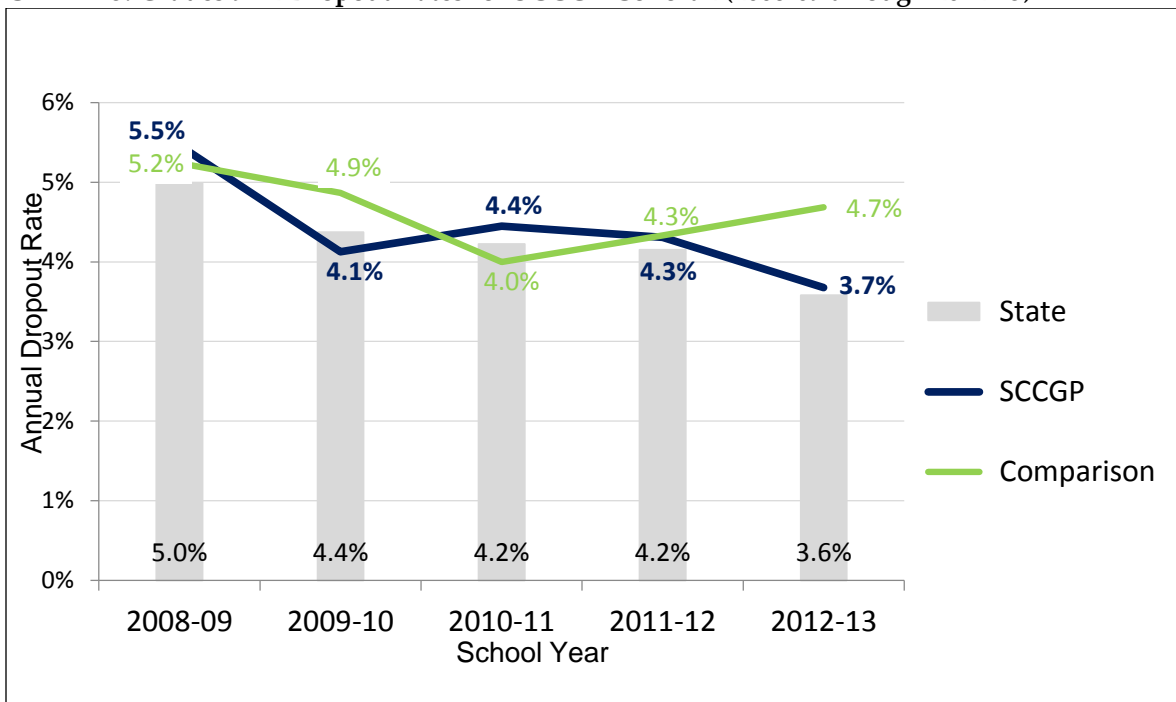


Note: SCCGP funds began the 2011-12 academic year.

Dropout Rates

Dropout rate analysis begins with the 2008-09 school year as these data were part of the eligibility criteria. Over the five school years within this analysis, the statewide dropout rate improved, or declined, from 5 percent to 3.6 percent for grades 9-12. For the three years prior to receiving SCCGP funds, the SCCGP Cohort 2 had an average dropout rate of 4.7 percent as did the comparison group. After two years of SCCGP funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools experienced a full percentage point decrease whereas the comparison schools showed no change from their prior three years' average. Two years of funding brought the SCCGP Cohort 2 schools only 0.1 percent above the state dropout rate for 2012-13. In just this last year, the dropout rate for 9th-12th graders in the SCCGP Cohort 2 declined by 0.6 percentage points while the rate for the comparison group increased by 0.4 percentage points.

CHART 3: Grades 9-12 Dropout Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2 (2008-09 through 2012-13)

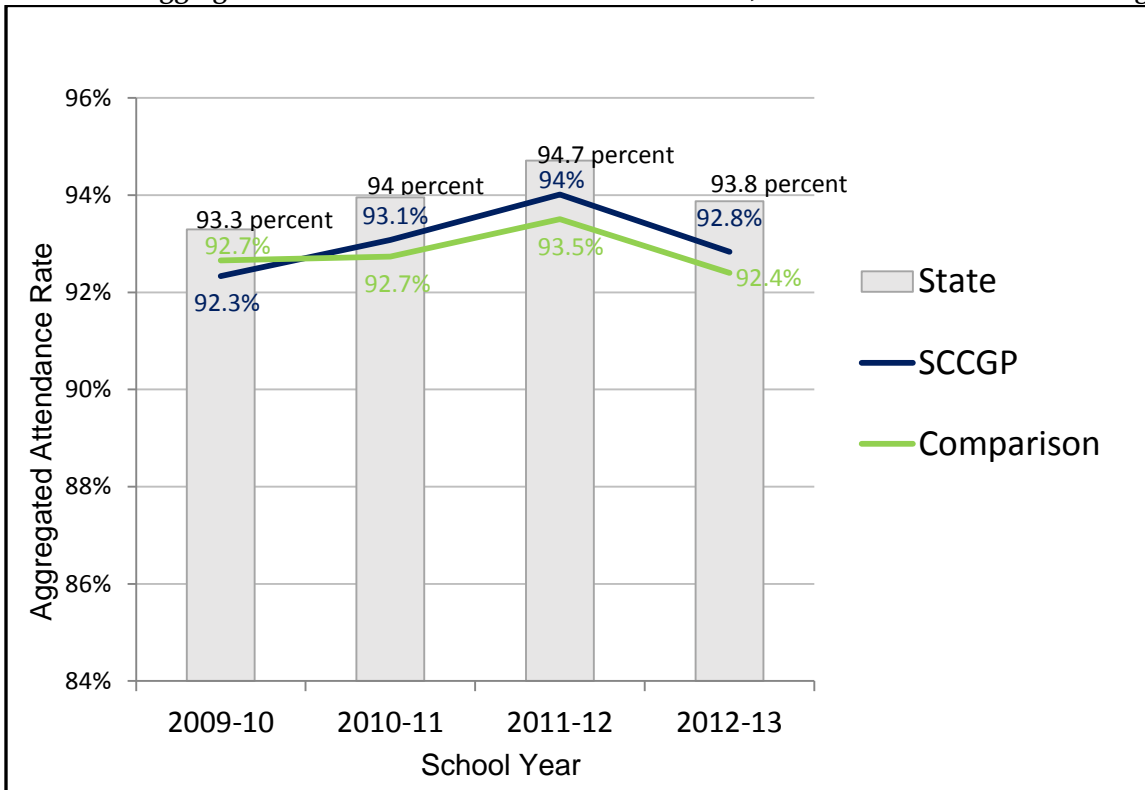


Note: SCCGP funds began the 2011-12 academic year.

Attendance Rates

Graduation rates do not apply to middle schools and dropout rates at the middle school level are below one percent making meaningful change difficult to observe. Therefore, attendance rates will be utilized as an additional indicator for school connectedness and future completion at the middle school level. Grantees maintained some of their attendance gains that were realized during the first year of their grant. In 2012-13, middle school attendance rates across the state dropped approximately one percentage point. SCCGP Cohort 2 and the comparison group middle schools' attendance rates dropped similarly maintaining the differences between groups that were gained after the first year of SCCGP funding.

CHART 5: Aggregated Attendance Rates for SCCGP Cohort 2, Middle Schools (2009-10 through 2012-13)



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

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.^v “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. In 2011-12, Colorado higher education institutions partnered with 304 high schools to serve 14,016 students across Colorado. In 2012-13, the program expanded to include 365 high school partnerships serving 18,231 students. These changes are substantial; however, SCCGP Cohort 2 increased participation at significantly higher rates.

Impact is most observable when examining the changes in participation over the course of the grant thus far. The state experienced a 20 percent increase in high school partnerships with a 30 percent increase in student participation in Concurrent Enrollment. In comparison, SCCGP Cohort 2 affected a 53 percent increase in student participation and 46 percent increase in high school partnerships. The following chart depicts these changes.

Table 5: SCCGP Cohort 2 Schools and Students Participating in Concurrent Enrollment

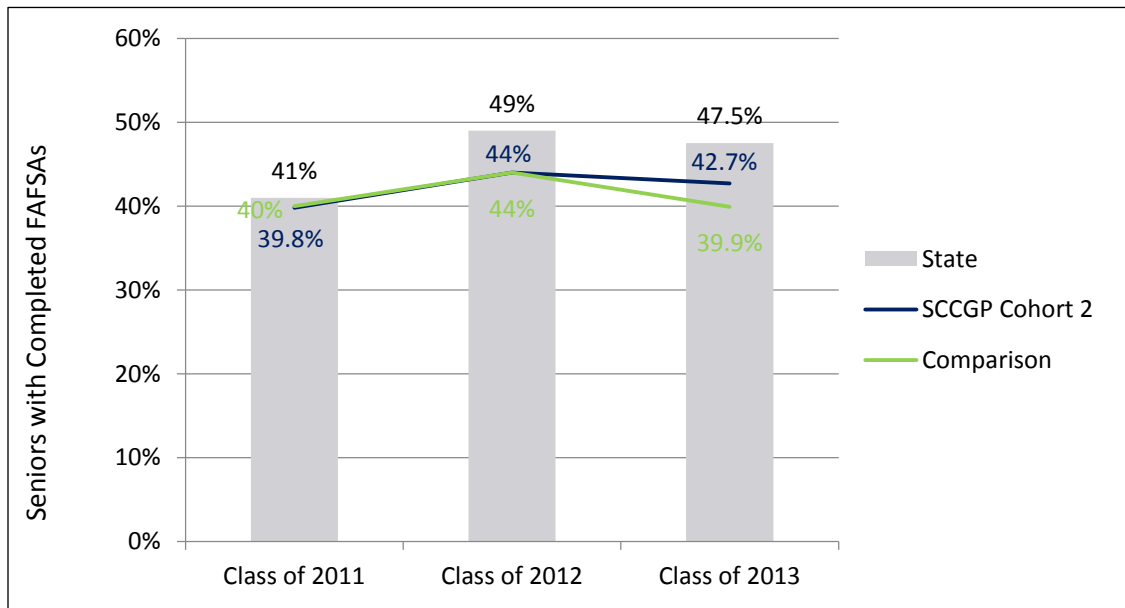
	High Schools Partnering 2011-12	High Schools Partnering 2012-13	Percent Change	Students Participating 2011-12	Students Participating 2012-13	Percent Change
SCCGP Cohort 2	24	35	45.8%	1,000	1,531	53.1%
Comparison	24	34	41.7%	1,694	2,258	33.3%
State	304	365	20.1%	14,016	18,231	30.1%

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.^{vi} 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 <http://higherred.colorado.gov/fafsa/>). 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 2012-13 data is applicable to the graduating class of 2012 and referenced here as 2011-12 from the perspective of SCCGP grantees.

Prior to funding in 2011, SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison schools were one percentage point below the state’s rate for FAFSA completion. After the first year of funding, all groups increased their rate of completions; however, the state’s increase was four percentage points more than SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison schools. In the second year of funding, all groups experienced a decrease in completions; however, SCCGP funded schools’ completions fell slightly less than the state’s whereas the comparison group’s rate returned to its 2011 rate. The following graph depicts these emerging trends.

Chart 6: SCCGP Cohort 2, High School Seniors’ FAFSA Completion Rates (2010-11 through 2012-13)



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

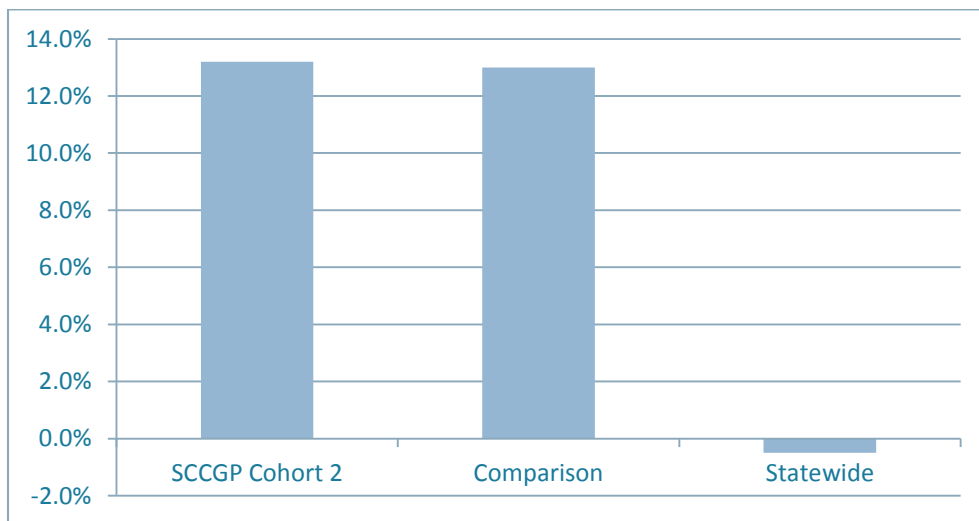
Postsecondary Matriculation

Enrollment data for the Class of 2013 will not be available before this report will be submitted. Therefore, the following analysis contains data for Class of 2011 as baseline and Class of 2012 for the first year of SCCGP Cohort 2 outcomes. SCCGP Cohort 2 and comparison schools increased their matriculation rates by approximately 13 percentage points from 2011 to 2012. In contrast, the state’s rate decreased by half a percentage point. SCCGP Cohort 2 schools increased their number of graduates enrolled in college by 455 whereas the state’s total enrolled decreased by 369 students. Table 6 includes the full analysis and the chart highlights the changes in percent of seniors enrolled in postsecondary for each group. This is the first year these data have been included in the SCCGP report.

Table 6: SCCGP Cohort 2 Year One Matriculation Outcomes, 2010-11 to 2011-12

	Students Enrolled from Class of 2011		Students Enrolled from Class of 2012		Change in Students Enrolled from 2010-11 to 2011-12	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
SCCGP	2,345	31.3	2,822	44.1	455	13.2
Comparison	1,977	34.1	2,243	47.1	266	13
State	29,974	57.4	29,605	56.9	-369	-0.5

Chart 7: SCCGP Cohort 2 Year One Outcomes, Percentage Increase in Matriculation Rates for 2011-12



SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 2 Grant Implementation

A new reporting system was initiated in 2012-13 to assess grantee and schools' grant goals, professional development, ICAP implementation, student-to-counselor ratios, ASCA National Model implementation, student participation in career and technical education as well as college visits. All twenty-three grantees submitted grant reports. Of the seventy-six schools that were identified by grantees as part of their application, sixty-one schools submitted a school-level grant report. This is the first year school-level reports were collected from participating schools. The following analysis provides an assessment of program implementation and areas for program improvement.

Grantee Progress toward Reaching Their Goals

Grantees identify their own goals, including the number of goals, which ranged from one to seven. On average, grantees reported meeting exactly half of their individual goals. The goals that grantees reported success with most commonly included getting and staying on track for graduation, improving postsecondary planning culture and capacity, and improving retention and decreasing dropout rates. The primary areas where goals were not yet reached included increasing attendance (in school and for postsecondary events) and improving retention and decreasing dropout rates. Some of the explanations for not meeting identified goals included data not being available at the time of reporting; some schools within the same district meeting the goal while others not; and efforts and progress not realizing changes in outcomes yet. Grantees that did not realize the impact they planned for often suggested program improvements. For example, one grantee aimed to increase their attendance rate with increased communication to students and families, but instead the rate fell. Although disappointed, they identified areas for improvement for next year, such as having advisors making personal calls to students who are absent more than three days in a row and increasing home visits.

Professional Development

School Counselor Corps Grant recipients indicated that secondary school counselors and team members attended 6,178 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development, reaching more than 528 school professionals with more than eleven hours professional development on average. More than 500 of these professional development hours were provided exclusively by the School Counselor Corps program, averaging each counselor receiving over ten hours of grant-specific 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);
- National Association of College Admissions Counseling National Conference;
- ACT workshop/conference;
- Colorado Statewide Pre-Collegiate Conference; and
- Colorado School Counselor Association Annual Conference.

Grantees shared the value of these professional development opportunities on their work. The following quotes illustrate the impact:

Counselor Corps counselors understood the goals of the grant, beginning to determine caseloads, noticing and naming students on their caseloads.

These workshops encouraged the SCC counselors to focus their work more, to set SMART goals for their work this year, and to understand how to use data appropriately and effectively.

The knowledge obtained at these conferences was brought back to school with a passion to enhance the school-counseling program by providing responsive services to address the needs of the students, the parents, and faculty.

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) Implementation

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)).

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

Grades 6th through 12th Counselors developed milestones at each grade level connected to ASCA standards. Through their ASCA implementation strategies, they created a long-range planning guide to ensure all students have equitable access to the ASCA standards and learning attached to each ICAP milestone.

Counselors are primarily responsible in all schools for ICAP implementation. At the middle level, counselors regularly access students through full class activities using College in Colorado and provide goal setting, high school and postsecondary academic planning, and postsecondary college and career planning activities to their students. On average, middle level counselors access classrooms for ICAP and other counseling-related activities once per month. High school counselors have a much harder time gaining access to classrooms, and thus generally provide ICAP lessons two to three times per year per grade level using Naviance for academic and postsecondary planning and for goal setting activities. Finally, the Coordinator for Counseling, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary Readiness has met with all curriculum directors in an effort to have ICAP requirements embedded with the curriculum in different curricular areas.

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, 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.^{vii}

SCCGP funding successfully reduced student-to-counselor ratios with each year for a total reduction of 131 students per counselor. Prior to SCCGP funding, the schools' average ratio was 363:1; then the first year of

funding reduced the average ratio to 261:1 and then 232:1 in the second year, which is below ASCA’s recommended maximum rate. The reduction in ratios at high schools and undivided middle and high schools realized from the first year of funding was maintained in the second year at 239:1. Notably, the middle school ratio was significantly reduced in the second year from 303:1 to 237:1. The following table illustrates the significant reduction in caseloads that SCCGP afforded funded schools.

Table 7: Student-to-Counselor Ratios Prior to and During the First and Second Years of SCCGP Cohort 2 Funding

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
High Schools	311:1	239:1	239:1
Middle Schools	438:1	303:1	237:1
Undivided Middle & High Schools	344:1	183:1	182:1
TOTAL	363:1	261:1	232:1

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.

American School Counselors Association (ASCA) National Model Implementation

The school-level grant report included a reliable measure for assessing the level of ASCA National Model implementation, the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.^{viii} This is the first year this tool has been utilized to measure implementation of the ASCA model by grantees. The measure includes a total of fourteen items, which provide an overall implementation score and two factor scores – programmatic orientation and school counseling services. The following analysis serves as baseline for SCCGP Cohort 2 ASCA National Model implementation. 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 8: ASCA National Model Implementation Baseline Scores for SCCGP Cohort 2, Year 2

	Overall Implementation	Programmatic Orientation	School Counseling Services
High Schools	3.2	3.1	3.3
Middle Schools	3	2.8	3.1
Undivided Middle & High Schools	3	3	3.1
TOTAL	3.1	3	3.2

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools have “partly implemented” school counseling programs with an overall implementation score of 3.1. Examination of individual items indicates that schools are excelling at organizing services so that all students are well served and have access to them; spending at least 80 percent of school counselors’ time on activities that directly benefit students; including interventions designed to improve the school’s ability to educate all students to high standards; and having the resources for counselors to complete

appropriate professional development activities (3.4). Areas to focus program improvement and support include implementing regular needs assessments to guide programming (2.6) and analyzing data by demographic variable to identify interventions to close achievement gaps (2.7).

Notably, SCCGP Cohort 2 middle schools' programmatic orientation was the only composite score below 3, partly implemented, which indicates that middle schools may need additional programmatic support in implementing model school counseling programs. Individual scores indicate that middle schools are struggling most with implementing an annual review to get information for improving program for next year (2.2) in addition to the components identified overall.

Career and Technical Education

Thirty-four SCCGP Cohort 2 high schools reported offering career and technical education (CTE). These schools enrolled 15,420 students in CTE courses (includes duplicates if student is enrolled in multiple CTE courses). This data will serve as baseline for comparison next year.

College Visits

Forty-eight SCCGP Cohort 2 schools reported hosting college visits. These visits engaged 8,581 students (unduplicated) in at least one college tour. This data will serve as baseline for comparison next year.

Conclusion

Overall, year two of SCCGP Cohort 2 was successful in reaching its target audience and has demonstrated impact toward improving student achievement.

- SCCGP Cohort 2 serves a significantly greater percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (58 percent) as compared to the state average (37 percent).
- The state realized an annual increase of 1.5 percent in its four-year graduation rate. The SCCGP Cohort 2 on-time graduation rate has increased nearly five percentage points during the two years of grant funding, two points more than the state's increase in those two years.
- For the three years prior to receiving SCCGP funds, SCCGP Cohort 2 had an average dropout rate of 4.67 percent. After two years of SCCGP funding, SCCGP Cohort 2 schools experienced a full percentage point decrease bringing them only 0.1 percent above the state drop-out rate for 2012-13.
- SCCGP Cohort 2 schools' have reduced student-to-counselor ratios to below ASCA's recommended maximum ratio of 250:1 with an overall ratio of 232:1.
- Data for year one demonstrated SCCGP funding has impacted postsecondary matriculation rates by increased students' enrollment from 31 percent in 2011 to 44 percent in 2012 reducing the gap between SCCGP Cohort 2 schools and the state rate of 57 percent.
- SCCGP Cohort 2 engaged over 500 more students in concurrent enrollment during the second year of funding as compared to the first. This 53 percent change, far surpassed the 30 percent change the state realized.
- During the second year of funding, 24 SCCGP Cohort 2 high schools partnered with higher education institutions to provide Concurrent Enrollment opportunities for their students, which was a 46 percent increase in partnerships from the first year. In comparison, the state overall increased partnerships by 20 percent. These increases suggest an intentionality to increase capacity for additional students to participate in concurrent enrollment in future years.
- SCCGP funds supported more than 528 school professionals in receiving more than eleven hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development on average for a total of 6,178 hours.
- SCCGP Cohort 2 seniors have increased their rate of completing FAFSAs over the two years of funding; however, like the rest of the state, this last year saw a 1.5 percent decrease.
- SCCGP Cohort 2 schools consider their school counseling programs to be "partly implemented" with the school counseling services factor slightly further along in implementation than the programmatic orientation factor.

SCCGP is making a meaningful impact on students' postsecondary success and closing the gaps between students living with disadvantaged circumstances and the state average. Notable improvements have been observed and maintained over the two years of funding in the areas of reducing student-to-counselor ratios, increasing graduation rates, reducing dropout rates, increasing concurrent enrollment participation, and increasing enrollment in postsecondary institutions following high school graduation.

SCCGP would benefit from focusing improvement strategies on attendance as well as supporting middle schools in developing robust programs that foster students' school connectedness. Additional support can be provided by creating opportunities for grantees to share best practices, particularly for grantees that are struggling with increasing retention and decreasing dropout rates since many grantees are experiencing success while many others are not.

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, Adams 50, Middle School Counselor

Lisa Moore, Jefferson County Public Schools, High School Counselor

Rana Tarkenton, Denver Scholarship Foundation

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

Attachment 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

The reporting system changed for 2012-13 and included the following additional indicators:

- Career and Technical Education
 - College Visits
- 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. CDE updated demographic data in addition to mobility data.
 - 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. In the future, it would be helpful to receive raw data sets (as opposed to reports) for concurrent enrollment and remediation.

- 4) CDE's Office of Dropout Prevention & Student Engagement provided dropout, graduation, attendance 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. ACT scores were included in 2014.

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. In 2014, the analysis included ACT scores.

Endnotes

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

ⁱⁱ White, S.W., and Kelly, D.F. (2010). The School Counselors Role in School Dropout Prevention. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 88, 227-235.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} 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.

^v 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

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

^{vii} 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

^{viii} 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.