



COLORADO
Department of Education

2019 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 law in 2008 (22-91-101 et. seq.) and was updated in 2014 via Senate Bill 14-150, to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools. The purpose of SCCGP is to increase the graduation rate within the state and increase the percentage of students who are appropriately prepared for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education. SCCGP allocates funding for a four-year grant cycle as allocations are available from the Colorado General Assembly. This report describes SCCGP Cohort 4 grantees and their outcomes over one development year from, July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 (during which they received partial funding), and three implementation years from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018 (during which they received full funding).

SCCGP Cohort 4

SCCGP Cohort 4 prioritized schools serving highly diverse and economically challenged students (60 percent of whom were ethnic minorities and 64 percent of whom qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch). The cohort consisted of 16 high schools, 20 middle schools, and five undivided secondary schools. This cohort included four Alternative Education Campuses (AECs). SCCGP Cohort 4 funding reached approximately 30,000 students each year.

SCCGP Cohort 4, Final Program Outcomes¹

SCCGP Cohort 4 made a meaningful impact in cultivating students' postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) through its focus on establishing comprehensive school counseling programs.

Overall trends for the schools within the cohort saw meaningful improvement over the course of SCCGP funding. Four-year graduation and completion rates increased over the course of the grant cycle despite an initial decrease in the first year of full implementation funding for traditional, non-AEC schools. The graduation rate rebounded the following year, and by the final year of implementation realizing, the cohort realized a nearly three percentage point gain. This trend was similarly positive for completion rates, which saw a 2.5 percentage point gain for the cohort by the final year of implementation. The trends are similar to the overall graduation and completion rate trends for the state. The traditional, non-AEC schools' dropout rate spiked during the development year and then returned back to the original rate of 3.4 percent by the end of the grant cycle. Notably, the increase in dropouts impacted students of color more substantially than the cohort's white students in the first year; however, the recovery achieved a 0.1 percentage point net improvement towards closing the achievement gap in year four.²

The AECs also saw gains over the grant cycle. They increased both graduation and completion rates by over 6 percentage points.

Over the course of SCCGP funding, grantees increased student concurrent enrollment by 107 percent, from 901 unduplicated students in 2015 to 1,866 students in 2018. The state's growth during this same time was 29 percent, from 23,127 students to 29,858 students.

¹ Analyses of the AECs are kept separate in this report from the traditional schools because of their unique contexts and student populations.

² For detailed descriptions of how graduation and dropout rates are calculated, please see the following webpages.

Graduation rates: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradratecurrent#ratecalculations>;

Dropout rates: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutcurrent>



During the development year, the traditional SCCGP Cohort 4 schools were supporting nearly 47 percent of their students in completing the FAFSA, almost a full percentage point lower than the state (nearly 48 percent). Notably, during each of the three full implementation years, SCCGP funded schools' completion rate surpassed that of the state and realized almost a 4 percentage point gain over the course of the grant cycle.

During the course of full SCCGP implementation, traditional Cohort 4 schools increased their overall matriculation rate from 50.8 percent to 52.7 percent, nearly 2 percentage points. The matriculation rate includes students who entered into a 2-year, 4-year or career and technical education program in the year after they graduated from high school. During the same time, the state's matriculation rate increased from 57.4 percent to 58.1 percent, less than 1 percentage point.

Grantees and schools reported progress on their SMART goals, including increasing graduation rates, postsecondary plans, GPAs and attendance. SCCGP's goal to reduce student-to-counselor ratios to below the national recommendation of 250:1 was achieved, as Cohort 4's average ratio was 220 students to one counselor. Additionally, the overall quality implementation of American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Model improved greatly during the three years of full funding and implementation (3.1 to 3.5 on a 4-point scale).

SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 9,500 hours of postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) professional development in the last year of funding. This included the American and Colorado School Counselor Association conferences in addition to more hands-on workshops and training, some of which included trainings on tools that support the ICAP and peer mentoring models. All grantees are making progress on enhancing their ICAP systems with curricula, tools and programs for career advising and portfolio development. Notably, schools often reported on the value of district leadership and teacher buy-in for making time in the schedule for stand-alone advisory/seminar classes.

Programmatically, more than twice as many students were enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) courses in the third year of full implementation as compared to the first. This demonstrates that school counselors are establishing relationships with partners and students that encourage effective enrollment. Approximately 2,200 students in SCCGP funded schools visited a college with their school in each of the three years of implementation.

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

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 4 met the statutory goals for the use of state funds and effectively created comprehensive school counseling programs that have had meaningful impact on their students' postsecondary and workforce readiness.



Introduction

House Bill 08-1370 established the School Counselor Corps Grant Program (C.R.S. 22-91-101 et. seq.) This legislation was updated via Senate Bill 14-150. The State Board of Education promulgated rules for program implementation, including: the timeline for submitting applications to the Department of Education, the form of the grant application, criteria for awarding grants, and information to be included in the department's program report.

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 postsecondary and workforce readiness and ensuring timely high school graduation. Among the reasons for this shift is that a high percentage of students either are not graduating within four years of entering ninth grade or not graduating at all.ⁱ Timely monitoring, evaluating, and intervening are necessary measures to decrease the number of students who dropout and increase the number of students who graduate.ⁱⁱ SCCGP supports school counselors in implementing these types of activities.

Role of the School Counselor Corps Advisory Board

The School Counselor Corps Advisory Board, established in C.R.S. 22-91-104.5, assists the department in providing ongoing support to the funded sites in the form of professional development, mentoring, site visits, and technical assistance. See Appendix A for a listing of School Counselor Corps Advisory Board members.



Description of Program for Reporting Period July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2018

Grant Application Process

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was announced in the spring of 2014 prior to the Colorado General Assembly making final appropriations to the program for eligible education providers to have time to prepare their application to the program. The fourth cohort included a development year so that the funds could be maximized by beginning planning at the start of the new school year to increase readiness and capacity for full implementation the subsequent three years of funding. During the launch of Cohort 4 in 2014-15, \$450,000 was distributed to grantees for comprehensive school counseling program development. SCCGP distributed \$3,792,526 for 2015-16, \$3,185,000 for 2016-17 and \$3,241,000 for 2017-18 to Cohort 4 schools for full implementation.

The SCCGP statute defines 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 served:

- Secondary schools at which the dropout rate exceeded the statewide average (i.e., the 2013-14 annual dropout rate for the State of Colorado--2.4 percent);
- Secondary schools with a percentage of students who were eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch exceeding the statewide average (39.7 percent); and/or
- Secondary schools with postsecondary remediation rates that exceeded the statewide average (34.2 percent).

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

Description of Grantees

SCCGP Cohort 4 consisted of 12 grantees, which funded 41 schools (see Table 1). One grantee was a charter school and the rest were school districts serving half urban/suburban communities and half rural communities. SCCGP grantees represented 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.

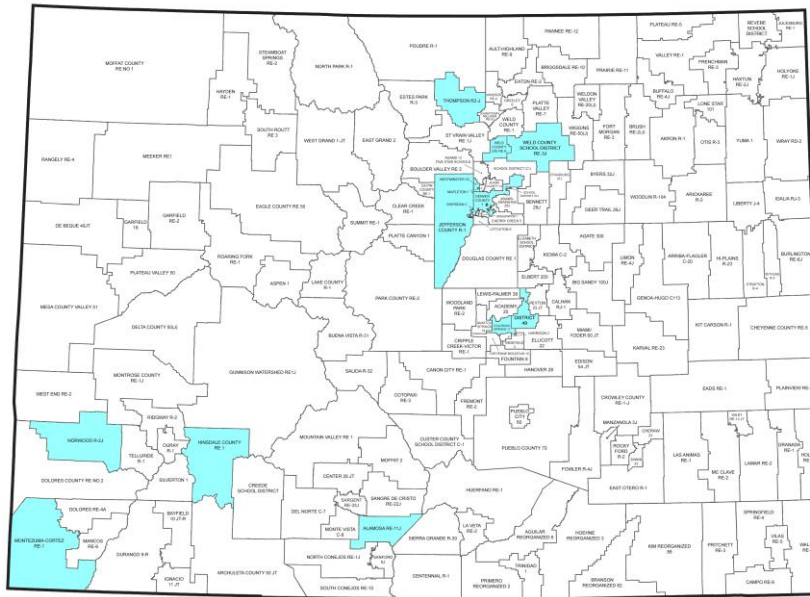
Type of Secondary School: Sixteen of the 41 SCCGP funded schools were high schools; 20 were middle schools; five were undivided secondary schools. Table 1 outlines the grantees and the secondary grade levels served by the funded schools. Four of these schools were designated Alternative Education Campuses (AEC).

Geographic Location: As depicted in Map 1 on the next page, SCCGP Cohort 4 grantees are located across Colorado, as is true for all of SCCGP funded schools. (See Map 2.)



MAP 1

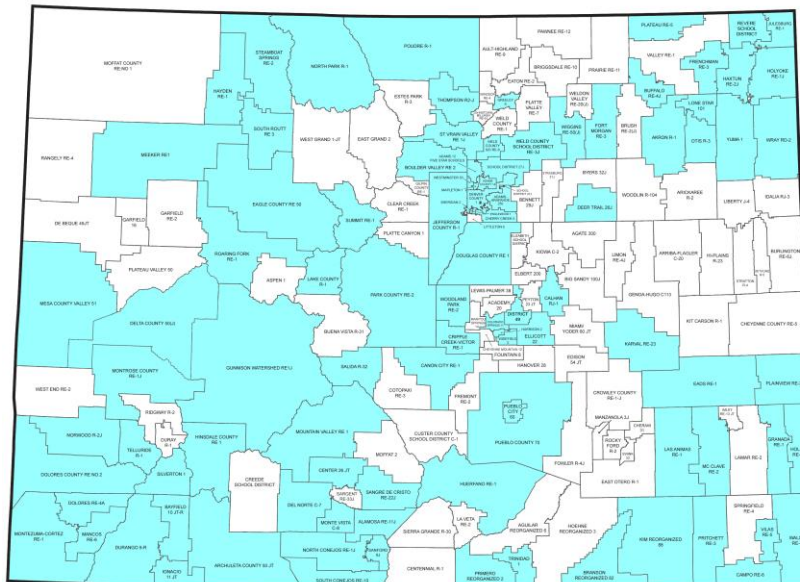
School Counselor Corps Grant Program Cohort 4



Prepared by the Colorado Department of Education - March 2019

MAP 2

School Counselor Corps Grant Program 2009 - 2019



Prepared by the Colorado Department of Education - March 2019



TABLE 1: SCCGP Cohort 4 Grantees and Types of Schools Funded

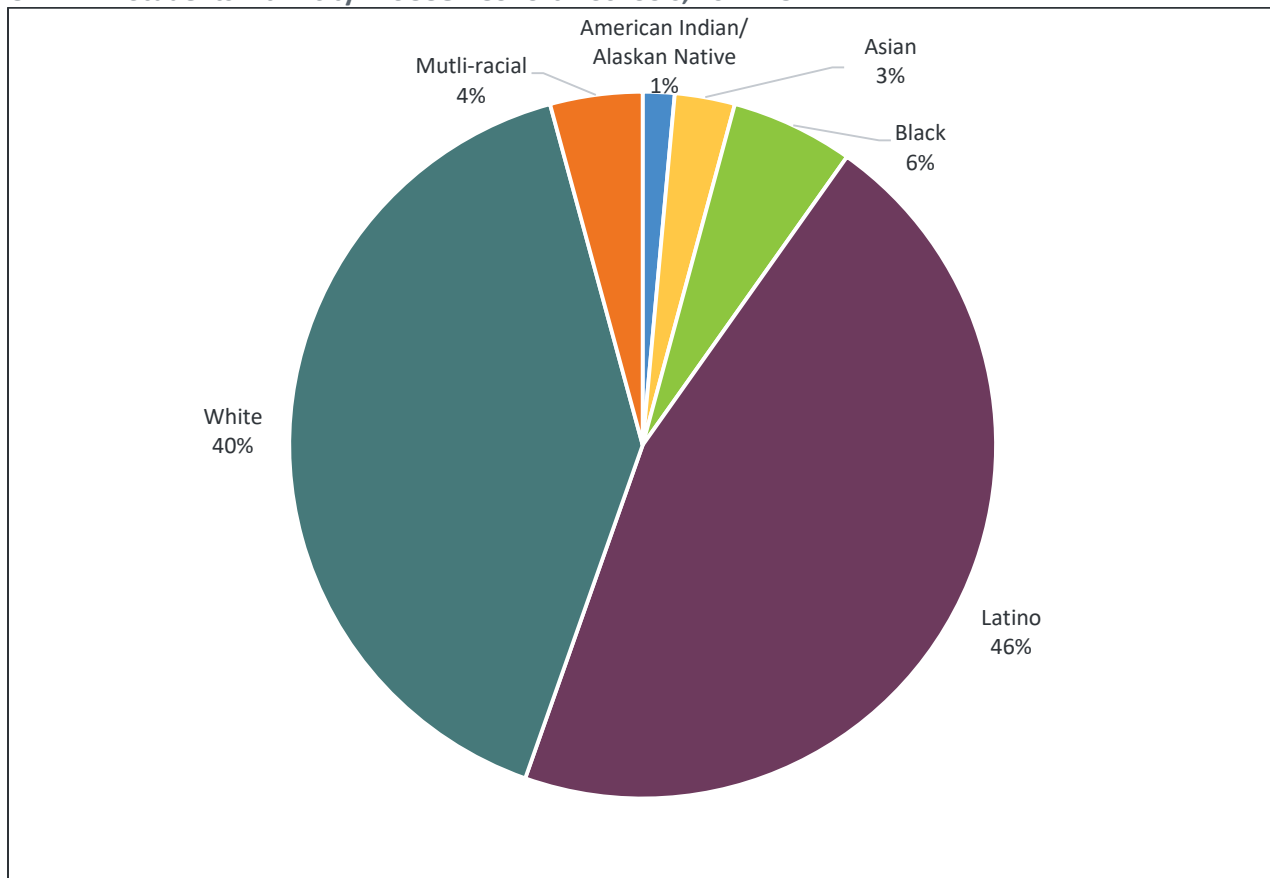
	High	Middle	Undivided Middle & High	Total
Districts				
Alamosa School District	1	1	0	2
Colorado Springs District 11	5	7	1	13
Denver Public Schools	2	6	2	10
District 49 - Charter	1	0	0	1
Hinsdale County School District	0	0	1	1
Jefferson County Public Schools	1	1	0	2
Montezuma-Cortez School District	1	0	0	1
Norwood Public Schools	0	0	1	1
Thompson School District	1	1	0	2
Weld County 8	1	0	0	1
Weld County RE 3J	1	1	0	2
Westminster Public Schools	2	3	0	5
TOTAL	16	20	5	41



Student Count: At the time of the official student count in October 2014, the development year for SCCGP Cohort 4, the 41 participating schools served 29,731 students in grades 6-12. (Note: Most other data described throughout the report utilizes End-of-Year pupil membership because it takes into consideration the students who are highly mobile during the year and, therefore, provides a more accurate base count.)

Ethnicity: The students served in schools funded by SCCGP Cohort 4 were from highly diverse ethnic backgrounds. As of October 2014, 60 percent of all SCCGP Cohort 4 students identified with an ethnic minority background as compared to 45 percent of students across the state. The following chart depicts the breakdown of students' ethnicities enrolled in Cohort 4 SCCGP funded schools. (Note: only 61 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students were served; therefore, their representation is less than 0 percent and not depicted in the chart below.)

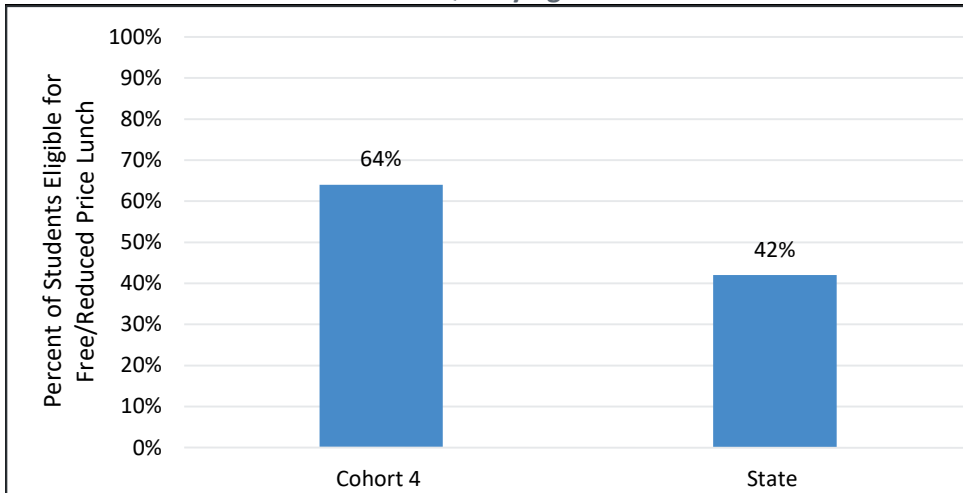
CHART 1: Students' Ethnicity in SCCGP Cohort 4 Schools, 2014-15





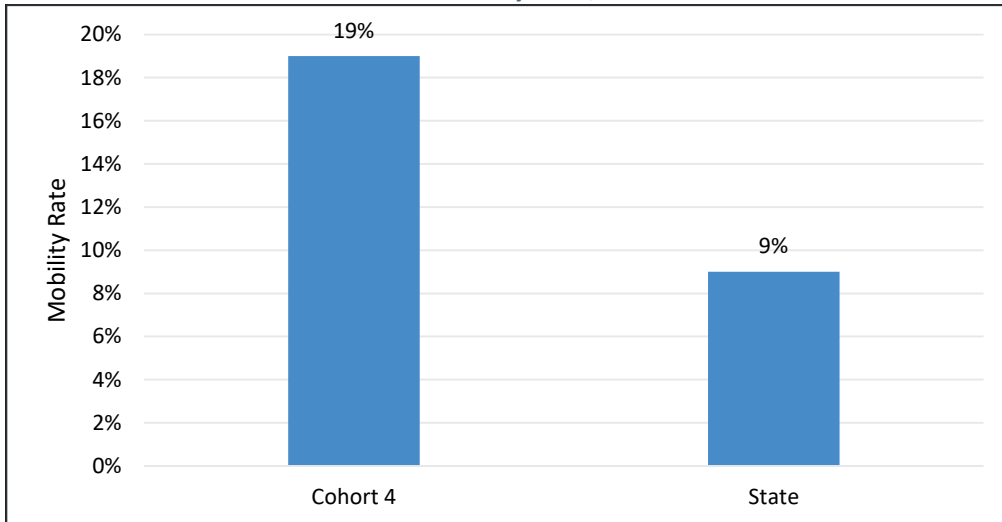
Free or Reduced-priced Lunch: The number of students qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunch is the standard proxy for students’ socioeconomic status. As such, one of SCCGP’s eligibility requirements is that the schools serve a high percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunch. The 2014 October count data show that SCCGP funds reached students from low income backgrounds as 64 percent of students in Cohort 4 schools were eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch whereas only 42 percent of the state was eligible.

CHART 2: SCCGP Cohort 4 Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch, 2014-15



Mobility Rate: The mobility rate calculation timeframe was modified in the 2017-2018 school year so that only entries and exits that occur from the October Count date to the end of the school year are included in the calculation. Students must have a gap in attendance of more than 10 consecutive days for a move to be considered mobile. Cohort 4 schools had a significantly higher student mobility rates than the state, 19 percent compared to 9 percent.

CHART 3: SCCGP Cohort 4 Student Mobility Rate, 2017-18





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 these types of data were unavailable, state-collected data were utilized. Additionally, grantees and schools submitted a year-end annual report during the spring semester to illuminate program implementation. As SCCGP expands, more schools have received these funds, thus limiting the ability to identify comparison schools. Therefore, Cohort 4 analysis examines trends within the cohort. See Appendix B for more details about data sources.



SCCGP Cohort 4, Final Program Outcomes

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

- Graduation and completion rates
- Dropout rate
- Concurrent enrollment participation
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion
- Matriculation rate

Graduation and Completion Rates

SCCGP aims to increase grantees’ graduation and completion rates. This analysis includes four- and five-year graduation and completion rates. Four-year graduation is defined as those students who graduate from high school four years after entering ninth grade. Four-year completion rates include not only those who graduated but those who successfully completed a non-diploma certificate or High School Equivalency within the first four years after entering ninth grade. Five-year graduation and completion rates include those who those used an additional year beyond what was anticipated to graduate or who complete a non-diploma certificate or High School Equivalency.

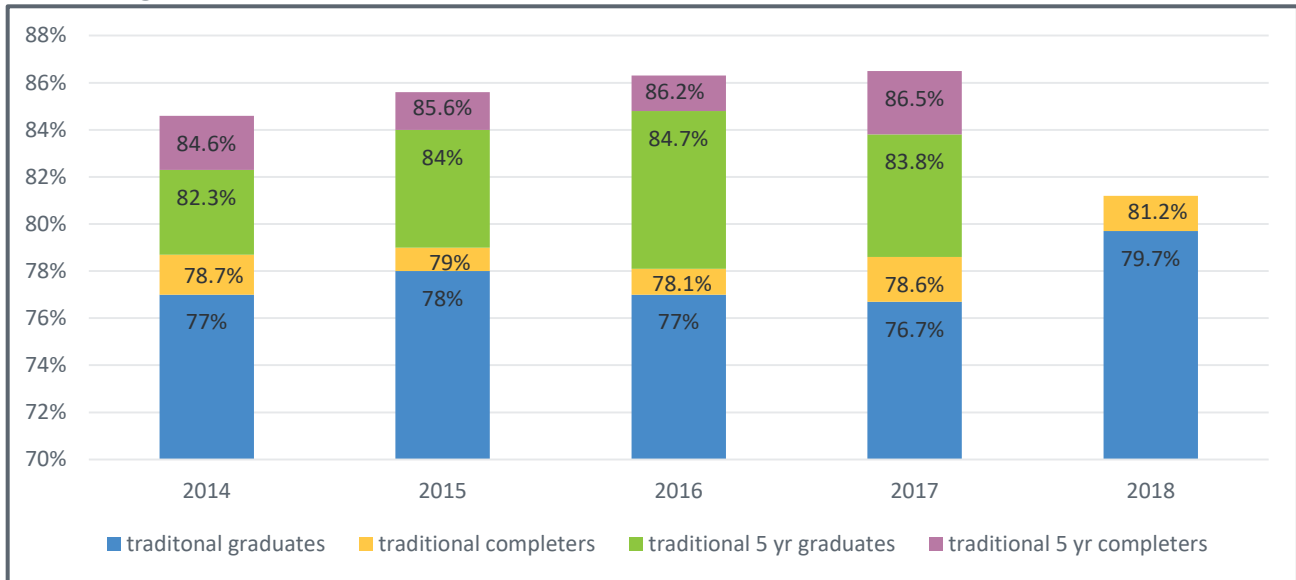
Analysis for SCCGP Cohort 4 begins with the Class of 2014 to establish a baseline trend. Traditional schools within the cohort saw improvements for four-year graduation and completion rates over the grant period similar to the state average.

- Cohort 4’s four-year graduation rate increased nearly 3 percentage points.
- Cohort 4’s four-year completion rate increased 2.5 percentage points.

Although the four-year rates saw a dip with Classes 2016 and 2017, the five-year rates demonstrate that progress was still made, with a 1.6 percentage point increase in five-year graduates and a nearly 2 percentage point increase in five-year completers. The following chart displays the gains in four- and five-year graduation and completion rates realized since full SCCGP implementation in 2015-16 for Cohort 4’s traditional schools.



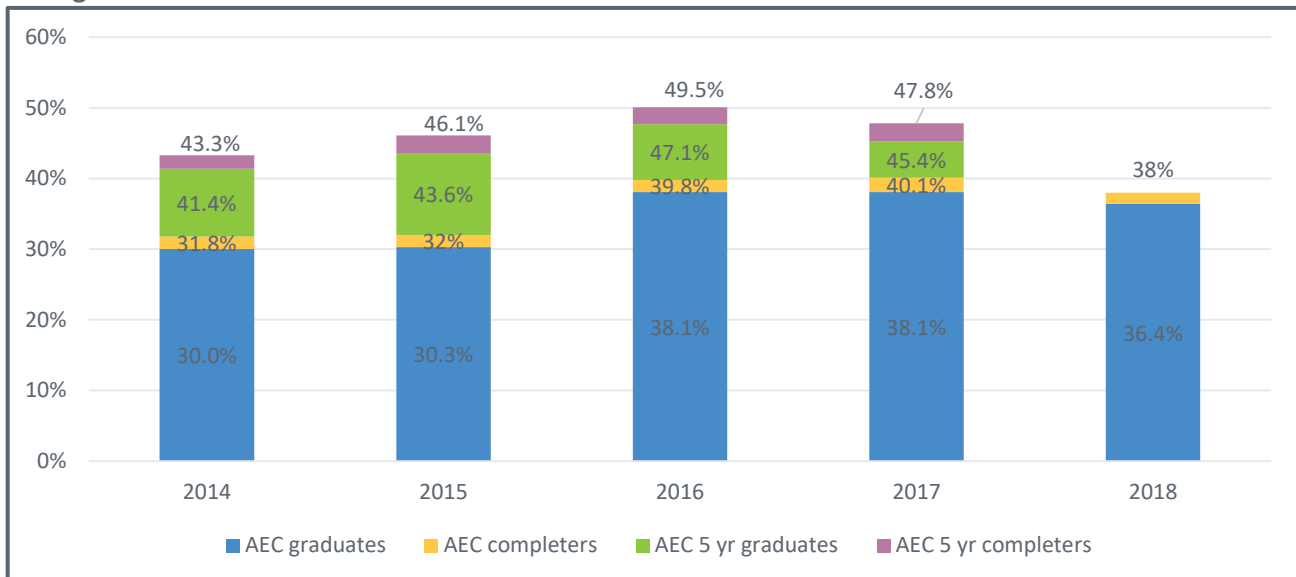
CHART 4: Four- and Five-Year Non-AEC Graduation and Completion Rates for SCCGP Cohort 4 Schools, Class of 2014 through 2018



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2015-16 academic year.

The four AECs within the cohort also realized significant gains over the course of the grant cycle, most notably in the first and second years of full implementation, in which more than 6 percentage point gains were realized for four- and five-year graduation and completion rates. The following chart illustrates Cohort 4 AEC's four- and five-year graduation and completion rate trends.

CHART 5: Four- and Five-Year AEC Graduation and Completion Rates for SCCGP Cohort 4, Class of 2014 through 2018



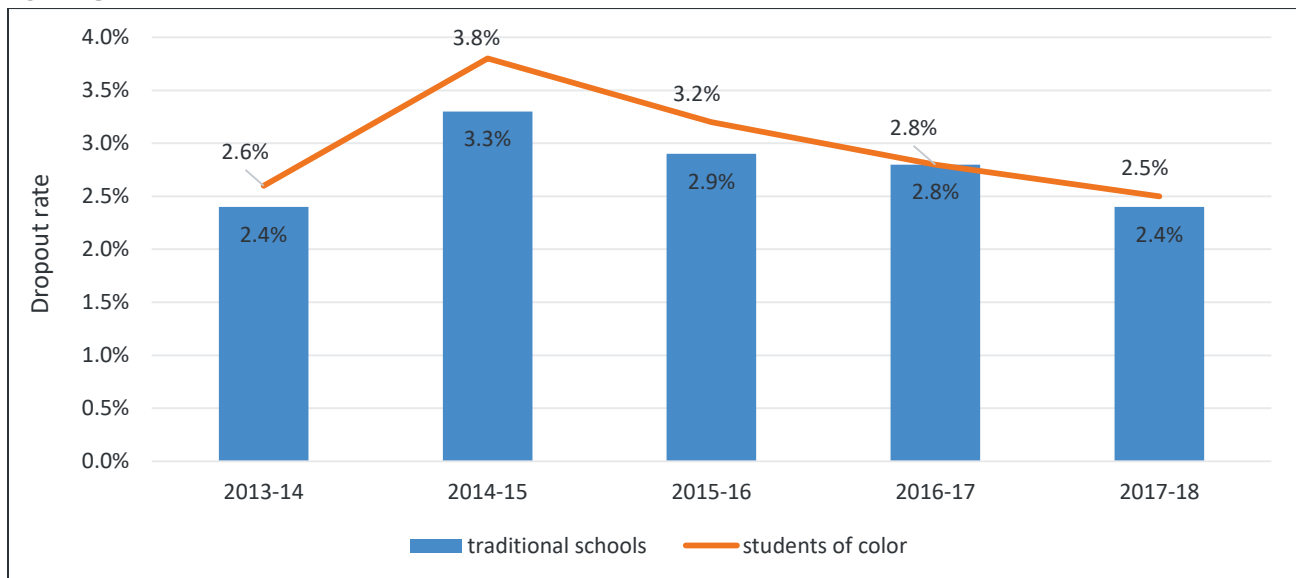
Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2015-16 academic year.



Dropout Rates

Dropout rate analysis begins with the 2013-14 school year as these data were part of the eligibility criteria. Over the five school years within this analysis, the statewide dropout rate improved slightly from 2.4 percent to 2.2 percent. For students of color statewide, the state dropout rate improved by 0.4 percentage points, from 3.5 percent to 3.1 percent. Over the same time, SCCGP Cohort 4 traditional schools experienced a spike during the development year and a recovery back to the original rate of 3.4 percent by the end of the third year of full funding. Notably, the increased dropout rate impacted students of color more substantially; however, the recovery achieved a 0.1 percentage point net improvement. The following chart illustrates Cohort 4 traditional schools' dropout rate trends overall and with their students of color separated.

CHART 6: Dropout Rates for SCCGP Cohort 4 Traditional Schools and Their Students of Color, 2013-14 through 2017-18



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2015-16 academic year.

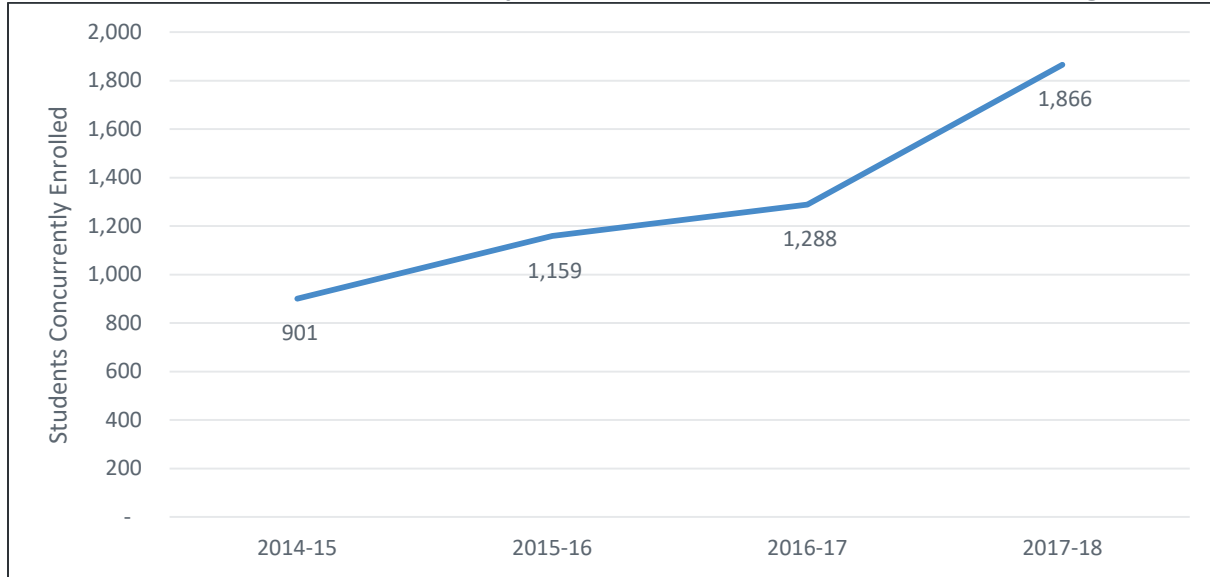
Concurrent Enrollment

Beginning in 2012, the Colorado Department of Higher Education in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education has authored an annual report on dual or concurrent enrollment.ⁱⁱⁱ “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 C.R.S. 22-35-103. The report presents the districts, high schools, and number of unique students engaging in Concurrent Enrollment, ASCENT, and remedial courses as reported by the institutions of higher education.

Over the course of SCCGP funding, grantees increased students concurrently enrolled by 107 percent, from 901 unduplicated students to 1,866 students. The state’s growth during this same time was 29 percent, from 23,127 students to 29,858 students. The following graph depicts Cohort 4’s substantial growth.



CHART 7: SCCGP Cohort 4 Student Participation in Concurrent Enrollment, 2014-15 through 2017-18



Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2015-16 academic year.

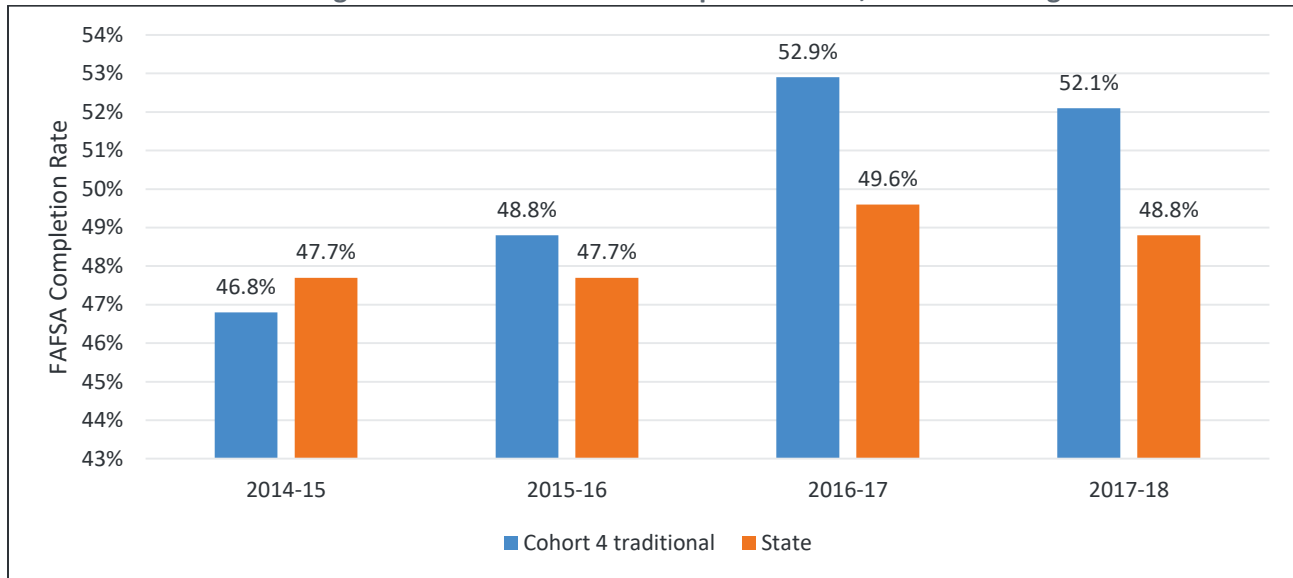
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Nationally, research suggests that 90 percent of high school graduates who complete the FAFSA during their senior year of high school enroll in college within 12 months.^{iv} Thus, a best practice for school counselors is to support students in completing this PWR benchmark. The Colorado Department of Higher Education recently began collecting, validating, and reporting school-level data on seniors completing FAFSAs. (See <https://fafsa.highered.colorado.gov>.) Note that FAFSA labels these data in terms of the college freshman class. The following analysis will maintain the referencing used throughout this report with the year reflecting the high school class; therefore, the FAFSA 2015-16 data is applicable to the graduating class of 2015 and referenced here as 2014-15 from the perspective of SCCGP grantees.

During the development year, the traditional SCCGP Cohort 4 schools were supporting nearly 47 percent of their students in completing the FAFSA, almost a full percentage point lower than the state (nearly 48 percent). Notably, during each of the three full implementation years, SCCGP funded schools' averaged FAFSA completion rate surpassed that of the state and realized almost a 4 percentage point gain.



Chart 8: SCCGP Cohort 4 High School Seniors' FAFSA Completion Rates, 2014-15 through 2017-18



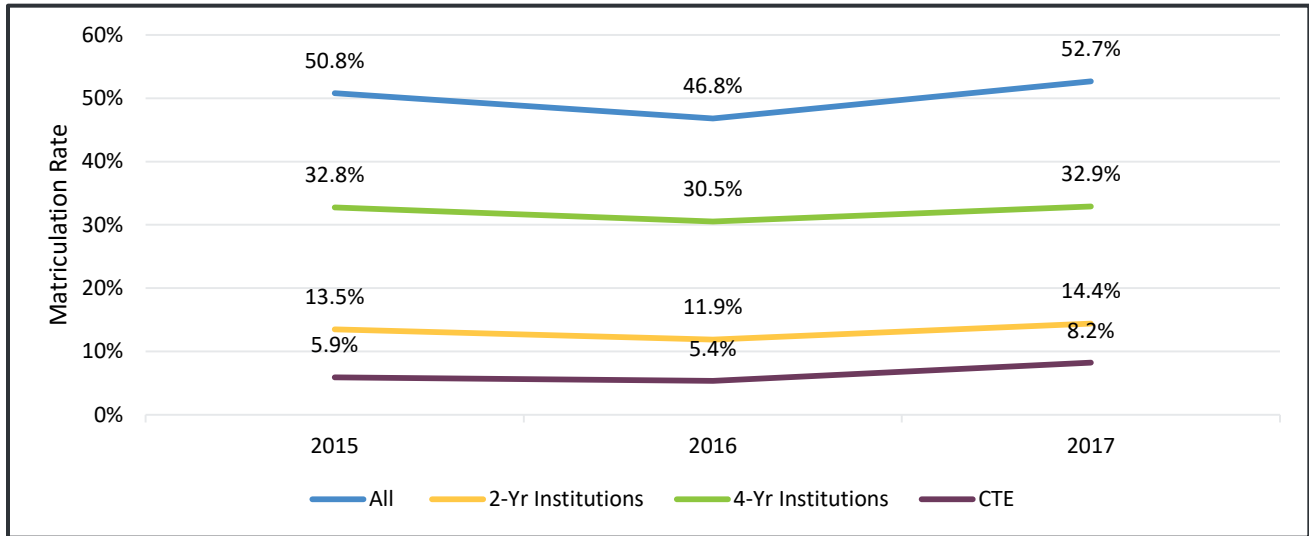
Note: SCCGP funds for full implementation began the 2015-16 academic year.

Matriculation Rates

During the course of full SCCGP implementation, traditional Cohort 4 schools increased their overall matriculation rate from 50.8 percent to 52.7 percent, nearly 2 percentage points. The matriculation rate reflects the percent of students who enroll in a 2-year, 4-year or career and technical education program in the year after graduation. During the same time, the state's matriculation rate increased from 57.4 percent to 58.1 percent, less than 1 percentage point. Across the state, matriculation rates at all institution types declined in 2016; however, the 4-year institution rate for the state did not recover in 2017 whereas the traditional Cohort 4 schools did. The following table shows the gains SCCGP funded schools made in supporting their students' matriculation overall and by institution type.



Chart 9: SCCGP Cohort 4 Traditional School Matriculation Rates by Institution Type, 2014-15 through 2016-2017





SCCGP Cohort 4, Final Process Outcomes

Cohort 4 received an initial year of partial funding for development, which consisted of a district- and school-level needs assessment and environmental scan to identify up to four SMART goals based on a root cause analysis. Interventions were then identified to address the prioritized goals and their root causes. Grantees were required to complete end-of-year reports, which were designed to assess grantee and schools' grant goals, professional development, ICAP implementation, student-to-counselor ratios, American School Counselor Association Model implementation, and student participation in career and technical education and college visits. The following analysis reflects the themes of progress, outputs, and outcomes for grantees' and schools' three years of SCCGP implementation for Cohort 4.

Grantee Progress toward Reaching Their Goals

For the final grant report, ten of the 12 grantees reflected on the one to four goals each had identified during the development year for a total of 31 goals. In this final year of implementation, 71 percent of grantees self-reported meeting or exceeding the performance measures that they had identified for their goals.

The goals that grantees reported success with most commonly addressed aspects of an effective school counseling program with a culture and structures that support postsecondary planning:

- ICAP completion (5);
- Improved postsecondary planning culture and capacity (3); and
- Improved Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (2).

These grantees attributed their success to a shift in leadership focus, partnerships with core academic teachers and community members, data-driven follow-up processes, and explicit instruction time through advisory and seminar classes.

Three grantees reported exceeding or meeting their goals for getting or keeping students on track for graduation and two of them attributed their success to a focus on 8th to 9th grade transitions and the other to individualized counseling.

The two grantees that focused on decreasing college academic remediation did not experience full success in this goal because of the budgetary limitations of hiring more academic intervention staff.

Thirty-two schools reported their progress on 77 goals. Schools self-reported meeting or exceeding 73 percent of their goals, which largely included ICAP completion and improved Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. Additionally, the 3 schools that focused on middle to high school transitions met or exceeded their goals. Many attributed their success to strategic partnerships with teachers, community members/agencies, and administrators. Schools making substantial progress commented:

"I believe we made exceptional growth in this area [ICAP completion] as a school. We set up a system utilizing community/advisory classes where teachers were trained on ICAP, taught the pre-written ICAP lessons by the counselors, data collection and analysis by the counselors and much more. This system established an easy avenue to deliver ICAP lessons to all students regardless of age, gender or race. The counseling team worked hard to integrate ICAP into the classrooms and the school system."

"Prior to the Counselor Corps grant, a formal system of support was not in place for students who struggling to pass their classes. At risk students were identified and were provided specific interventions



and support. The SCCGP goal was met of more than 80% of at-risk students participating in a tiered system of support during the 8th grade year. The data collected showed evidence of length and type of participation for each student, including parent communication.”

“With the addition of another full-time counselor, we have been able to run more groups to support students that struggled with credit completion. In addition, each student has been given more individualized support in regards to failing grades.”

Professional Development

In the final year of implementation, SCCG recipients indicated that secondary school counselors and team members attended nearly 9,500 hours of PWR professional development, reaching more than 560 school professionals with nearly 17 hours of professional development per person on average. Over 100 school professionals attended the Colorado School Counselor Association (CSCA) Annual Conference and 47 attended the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Annual Conference. Other trainings grantees’ staff attended included:

- Advanced Placement;
- LINK Crew/WEB; Transition Programs
- National Postsecondary Strategy Institute; and
- School counselor workshops, institutes and trainings.

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

“The impact of participating at CSCA is huge. From networking with other counselors to the immediately implementable information that is shared at the workshops, this conference is an invaluable opportunity for counseling teams.”

“A significant number of schools counseling departments in our district now have meaningful mission and vision statements as well as measurable goals. Schools are now using data to drive their programming and progress monitor their effectiveness. Many of our counseling teams are now using this information to hold management agreements and meaningful advisory councils.”

“District leadership attended this convening conference to increase their knowledge, skills, and practices as it relates to college and career readiness practices that are having an impact from around the country.”

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

“We were able to offer two additional AP classes for our students. The AP computer science class sparked an interest in two of our seniors to pursue post-secondary education in the computer coding world. 90% of AP students took the AP exams associated with their course.”



“We were successful in encouraging the District to pick up the cost of retaining all of the Counselor Corps funded staff.”

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) Implementation

ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills to create their own meaningful and “PoWeRful” pathways to be postsecondary and workforce ready. The ICAP is used to help establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align coursework and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid, and ultimately enter the workforce following college graduation. The State Board of Education promulgated rules for ICAPs pursuant to SB 09-256:

Effective September 30, 2011, each school counselor or school administrator shall ensure that every student in grades nine through twelve and their parents or legal guardians has access to and assistance in the development of an ICAP (1 CCR 301-81, 2.02 (1)(d)).

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

Graduation and ICAP connection:

“Recently, ICAP completion was adopted into DPS’s new graduation guidelines.”

How SCCGP is supporting positive culture change through ICAP:

“Both Grant counselors were hired to create a secondary ICAP that leads to a future orientation culture for our students and a seamless, systemic approach to preparation of students for the day after graduation. The ICAP curriculum incorporates State recommendations, ASCA mindsets, WPS district personal and social competencies within a future planning/tracking document that is used by all counselors when guiding these students for course selection, college selection and on-time graduation status. The ICAP addresses the transitions from 8th to 9th and 12th to graduated (late work this spring on elementary resources will also provide baseline student planning data in their annual notebooks and simple instruction that will tie their earliest planning into the Future Plan once these students enter 6th grade.) Each year the ICAP is reviewed for changes and input is sought from all counselors and teachers who were a part of instruction, students who are surveyed and administration of each building. Greater attention to on-track status for graduation, direct linking of elective to future plans, expansion of concurrent enrollment for more students and parent outreach will shape the plan for 2018-2019. PASS instruction of parents and the roll out of the Dream Plan Do PWR campaign in 2018-2019 will more actively engage parents and families in the work of postsecondary planning of our students. Student future plan data is already helping shape the new course process at the high school and we are working to include more middle school career options and larger future planning projects prior to high school in order to maximize the last years of instruction for students. Outside agencies, mentors, resources and special transition sessions on interviewing/resumes/career matching will be a goal for next year as well.”



SCCGP provides more support for postsecondary readiness through individual school counselor interaction:

“Each student is exposed to college and career discussions starting in the middle school. Students are also exposed to SAT/ACT test preparation starting in the 8th grade. As students matriculate in to high school, an academic plan is discussed with each of them that is aligned to their postsecondary interests and goals. During each student's junior year, a greater level of interest is placed on post-secondary test preparation, exposure to a variety of career opportunities and discussions centered on FAFSA completion and the college admissions process. During this year, students also participate in a written introspective assignment that helps them focus their efforts in selecting a career path that they are interested in. The assignment is a capstone event that sets the foundation for their senior year. During their senior year, emphasis is placed on resumes, interview techniques, personal finances, FAFSA completion, and the college application/scholarship process. Students interact with the counselor on a very individual and personal level to finalize their plans and achieve their stated goals regarding each student's individual postsecondary pathway.”

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 recommendation of 250:1. ASCA recommends this ratio so that professional school counselors can focus their skills, time, and energy on direct and indirect services to students at least 80 percent of their time. This comprehensive school counseling program model:

- ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students;
- identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive school counseling program;
- delivers programming to all students in a systematic fashion;
- bases programming on data-driven decision making; and
- ensures that programming 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.^v

Thirty-four full-time, certified school counselors were hired using SCCGP funds in 2017-18. SCCGP funding effectively decreased student-to-counselor ratios to below the best practice recommendation of a maximum ratio of 250 students to one school counselor. In this final year of full SCCGP implementation, the overall ratio was 220 students to one counselor. These lower ratios were observable across all school types, averaging 220 for high school, 217 for middle school, and 240 for undivided secondary school students per counselor.

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

“Counselor to student ratio is at ASCA recommended standards thus allowing counselors to be more active in the classrooms by providing regular classroom guidance lessons and providing proactive services to all students instead of reactive services.”

“Now that it is the end of the 3-year program counseling systems are fully implemented to 100%. This goal was reached by steady and consistent work towards implementing more counseling systems each



year. The consistency of having the same grant counselor in the school continually building the program allowed this goal to be reached.”

“All systems are strong in the counseling department as reflected by ASCA department review, evaluations, ICAP, whole child services, advisory, and parent outreach, etc. The counseling department has become an integral part of the school system as a whole.”

American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Model Implementation

The school-level grant report included a reliable measure for assessing the level of ASCA Model implementation, the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.^{vi} The survey includes a total of 14 self-reported items, which provide an overall implementation score and two factor scores – programmatic orientation and school counseling services. The following table includes the first and last years of grant report data for SCCGP Cohort 4 demonstrating the significant progress made by grantees. (Note: the four-point rating scale for the survey was 1 = Not Present, 2 = Development in Progress, 3 = Partly Implemented, and 4 = Fully Implemented.)

Table 2: ASCA Model Implementation Scores for SCCGP Cohort 4, Initial and Final Implementation Years

	Overall Implementation	Programmatic Orientation	School Counseling Services
2015-16	3.05	2.9	3.21
2017-18	3.48	3.44	3.51

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 4 schools’ ASCA Implementation Scores demonstrates that the funded schools have achieved partly- to fully-implemented comprehensive school counseling programs as the funding concluded. The components with the greatest implementation scores reported in this final grant year were:

- “The school counseling program has the resources to allow counselors to complete appropriate professional development activities (3.8);”
- “A written mission statement exists and is used as a foundation by all counselors (3.7);” and
- “School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs (3.7).”

Notably, written mission statements and using data were significantly lower in the first year of implementation, 3.1 and 3.2 respectively. This shows great growth in the program’s structural implementation.

“School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps” was rated the lowest overall in both the first and last years of implementation, 2.6 and 3 respectively. Despite being the lowest rated, grantees demonstrated great strides in this element of program implementation. Based on past evaluations of other SCCGP cohorts, this is an area of consistent need for focused training and support.



Career and Technical Education

SCCGP encourages schools to increase students' exposure to diverse career pathways and opportunities through enrollment in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In 2015-16, just over 3,200 students participated in CTE courses. By 2017-18, this number more than doubled with 7,640 students participating from Cohort 4, as reported by grantees.

College Visits

Grantees state that in each of the three implementation years, SCCGP Cohort 4 schools provided approximately 2,200 unduplicated students with opportunities to visit colleges.



Conclusion

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 4 provided comprehensive school counseling programming to schools with highly diverse students from economically challenging backgrounds. The following are some of the contributions SCCGP funding has made to these schools' postsecondary and workforce readiness outcomes and indicators:

- On average, SCCGP funded schools had student-to-counselor ratios well below the best practice recommendations and implementation of The American School Counselor Association's Model improved during each year.
- Over the course of SCCGP funding, grantees increased student concurrent enrollment by 107 percent, from 901 unduplicated students to 1,866 students. The state's growth during this same time was 29 percent, from 23,127 students to 29,858 students.
- FAFSA completion rates started out lower for SCCGP Cohort 4 than the state prior to funding. During each of the three full implementation years, SCCGP funded schools' completion rate surpassed that of the state and realized almost a 4 percentage point gain.
- During the course of full SCCGP implementation, traditional Cohort 4 schools increased their overall matriculation rate from 50.8 percent to 52.7 percent, nearly 2 percentage points. During the same time, the state's matriculation rate increased from 57.4 percent to 58.1 percent, less than 1 percentage point.
- Four-year graduation and completion rates dipped during the first and second years of SCCGP implementation for traditional schools; however, they gained back those losses to surpass original rates in the final year of full funding. Additionally, the cohort's AECs realized over a 6 percentage point gain in their four-year graduation and completion rates.
- Cohort 4's traditional schools dropout rates saw a substantial spike during the development year; and it took the three years of full grant implementation to return to the initial rate. Notably, however, the cohort managed to make improvements in that its students of color saw a dropout rate only 0.1 percentage point higher than its white students in the final year of full funding.
- Over twice as many students were enrolled in CTE courses in the final year of full SCCGP implementation as compared to the first.
- Approximately 2,200 students in Cohort 4 schools attended a college visit each year of full SCCGP implementation.
- SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 9,500 hours of postsecondary and workforce readiness professional development in the final year SCCGP funding, which ensures counselors are informed of new practices, programs and requirements.

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



Appendix A: 2017-18 School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

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

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

Carl Einhaus, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Student Affairs

Lucia Delgado, Colorado State University, Student Support

Elysia Clemens, University of Northern Colorado, Counselor Educator

Lauren Jones, Colorado Community College System, CTE, Program Director

Brenda Meltenberger, Burlington School District, High School Counselor

Kim Medina, Colorado School of Mines, College Admissions Director

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



Appendix B: Data Collection and Analysis Process

- 1) CDE collected self-report data from grantees at the district and school level. These data were utilized for:
 - Student-to-counselor ratios
 - Grantee implementation indicators
 - Goals
 - Professional development
 - ASCA standards
 - ICAP
 - Career and Technical Education
 - College Visits

- 2) CDE's publicly accessible data were utilized for:
 - Demographic data and student counts
 - Graduation, completion, drop-out, and truancy rates

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

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



Endnotes

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

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ 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

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

^v 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

^{vi} 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.