



School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant 2024 Annual Report

Submitted to:

**Colorado State Board of Education
House and Senate Education Committees of the Colorado General Assembly**

By:

the Colorado Department of Education

May 2024

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Executive Summary

The Program and Grantees

The School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant (BPEG) program has supported Colorado schools and districts in ending bullying since it was first funded in 2016, after having been created by H.B. 11-1254. Administered by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), as of May 2024, the BPEG program has distributed over \$15 million toward this effort across four cohorts of grantees. The first cohort of grantees (2016-19) supported an average of 34,000 students per year, followed by Cohort 2 (2019-22) with an average of 41,000 students supported per year. For more information on past cohorts, please reference [previous legislative reports](#). In the 2023-24 academic year, the BPEG program included two concurrent cohorts for the first time, with Cohort 3 (2022-2025) grantees being joined by Cohort 4 (2023-2026) grantees.



Bullying Prevention
and Education Grant

Each year, schools and districts collectively receive roughly \$1.9 million, contingent on state appropriations, to engage in the following authorized uses:

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

At the end of the 2023-24 fiscal year, the BPEG program will have completed the second year of implementation for Cohort 3 and the first year of Cohort 4. Funding for Cohort 4 came from one grantee dropping out prior to the first year of Cohort 3 in 2022. The funding allocated to that grantee was made available through an additional Request for Applications for a small Cohort 4, outside of the usual cohort cycle.

Table 1 details type of grantees receiving funding through the BPEG program in Cohort 3 (updated) and Cohort 4 in 2023-24, and the number of schools that they serve with the funding and of students enrolled in those schools. In total, 16 Local Education Providers (LEPs) provide bullying prevention support to 112 schools serving 52,516 students in the 2023-24 fiscal year. The makeup of the 16 LEPs includes 10 school districts, 4 district-authorized charter school organizations, 1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and one school authorized by the Charter School Institute. They were awarded \$1.9 M total, or an average of \$118,114 per grantee.

Table 1: Description of Program Cohorts

Descriptor	Cohort 3 (2022-25)	Cohort 4 (2023-26)	Total
Grantees	11	5	16
School Districts	7	3	10
District Charter Schools	3	1	4
BOCES	1	0	1
Charter School Institute	0	1	1
Schools	105	7	112
Regions	5	3	6 ¹
Students Supported in 2022-23	49,784	1,364	52,516

Implementation and Outcomes

There are many allowable activities under the BPEG program which align with evidence-based best practices to reduce bullying. Program implementation coaches, employed at the school and district level, are responsible for administering the grant at the ground level and picking which activities best match their communities' needs, with the help of technical assistance from CDE, including meetings with CDE staff, monthly optional meetings with other implementation coaches to discuss problems of practice, and asynchronous trainings.

Every spring, grantee schools are required to perform a self-assessment on the fidelity of implementation of the grant activities, and to administer a survey to their students about their experience of bullying, both as a victim and as a witness. [In cohort 1](#) (2016-2019), these tools showed strong evidence of an improved implementation of bullying prevention strategies and a reduction in bullying over the three years of the grant. Subsequent cohorts were deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused school closures, impeded the administration of the student survey in 2019-20 and 2020-21, and disrupted teaching modalities and hence student behavior. While school closures appear to have caused a national reduction in the prevalence of bullying during the pandemic² without a corresponding rise in cyber-bullying³ according to academic research, post-pandemic we observe a rise in bullying incidents nationwide and across Colorado (based on data from Safe2Tell and BPEG program grantees). These state-wide and nation-wide trends are important to keep in mind in interpreting the results for grantees, especially in the absence of student surveys about the prevalence of bullying in schools and districts that do not participate in the BPEG.

The 2022-23 student survey data and school implementation self-assessment data for Cohort 3 grantees are now available and will provide a baseline against which to assess the effect of participation in the program in the next years.

¹ Some regions have grantees in both cohort 3 and cohort 4.

² [Vaillancourt et al., 2021, School bullying before and during COVID-19: Results from a population-based randomized design](#)

³ [Patchin, 2021, Bullying During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

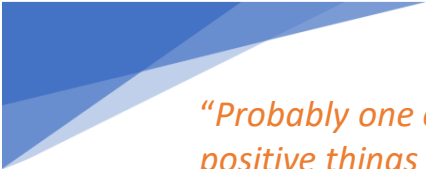
Grant Implementation

Grant Activities

Grantees in the BPEG program use bullying prevention best practices to reduce bullying in their schools. These best practices are organized by the five core components of the BPEG program that are described in the [BPEG Practice Profiles](#):

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

There are many allowable activities under the BPEG program. For example, one grantee has funded “Donuts with Dads” events where school staff and leadership connect with fathers, educate them on the bullying prevention efforts at the school, and recruit them to volunteer. This activity falls within the family, school, and community partnerships component. As another example, reviewing and revising, as necessary, the school handbook on bullying prevention to align with CDE’s [Bullying Prevention and Education Model Policy](#) is an activity conducted within the policy component. For a complete list of the best practices, please see the [BPEG self-assessment](#).



“Probably one of the most positive things I have seen regarding family engagement in my 17 years of education is the response from dads and father figures...”

Rural BPEG Program Grantee



“One of the best parts of the grant is its flexibility for schools to decide what’s best for their community and how to develop an inclusive culture.”

Metro Region BPEG Program Grantee

The Statewide Bullying Prevention Manager provides technical assistance to BPEG program implementation coaches. These implementation coaches are employees at grantee schools and districts responsible for administering the grant at the ground level. Technical assistance activities include quarterly trainings on bullying prevention topics and monthly check-ins to address barriers. Additionally, optional monthly problems-of-practice convenings give implementation coaches a collaborative space with their colleagues to discuss roadblocks they are currently facing. Asynchronous training opportunities on the basics of bullying prevention and the core components of the BPEG program are available online for grantees. Finally, technical assistance includes the development of tools that guide implementation coaches through the grant process: a month-by-month implementation guide, templates for required annual reporting, and a year-at-a-glance resource that outlines all due dates for the grant program.



Current Grantees

The 2023-2024 school year marks the first time that two cohorts of grantees participate concurrently in the BPEG program. Cohort 3 grantees are in a three-year grant cycle that runs from 2022-2025, and Cohort 4 grantees are in a three-year grant cycle that runs from 2023-2026. The opportunity for a concurrent cohort of grantees came in 2023 after a Cohort 3 grantee decided to withdraw from the grant. This provided a small amount of funding available for a Cohort 4 of grantees.

CDE selected LEAs to join the BPEG program in Cohorts 3 and 4 through a competitive grant application process. Additional priority points were given to applicants based on several factors including rural status and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Each grantee is eligible to receive a maximum of \$35,000 per school, per year with a cap of \$280,000 per year set for each application.

Due to the unique funding source for Cohort 4, and in an effort to provide bullying prevention support to more schools across Colorado, grantees in Cohort 4 were able to participate in the BPEG program in one of two ways. First, applicants could apply to be a traditional grantee wherein they would complete all the required components of the grant program. Alternatively, schools and districts could apply to be a “student survey grantee.” These grantees receive a smaller amount of funding that focuses specifically on building readiness at their site by completing the student survey requirement of the BPEG program. This option provides several benefits to schools including access to ongoing CDE technical assistance, more robust data that can be used for future BPEG program applications, and additional priority points on future BPEG program applications. In return, this allows CDE to collect information about student perceptions of bullying in schools that are not implementing the grant activities, which is an important comparison point to assess the effectiveness of the grant. There is one district, representing two schools, that is a student survey grantee in Cohort 4 (there are none in cohort 3). In the 2023-24 school year, there are 16 grantees in total, representing 112 schools.

Table 2 provides an outline of the funding provided to each grantee during the 2023-24 school year. The total amount of funding distributed is \$1,888,216 with an average funding per LEA of \$118,014.

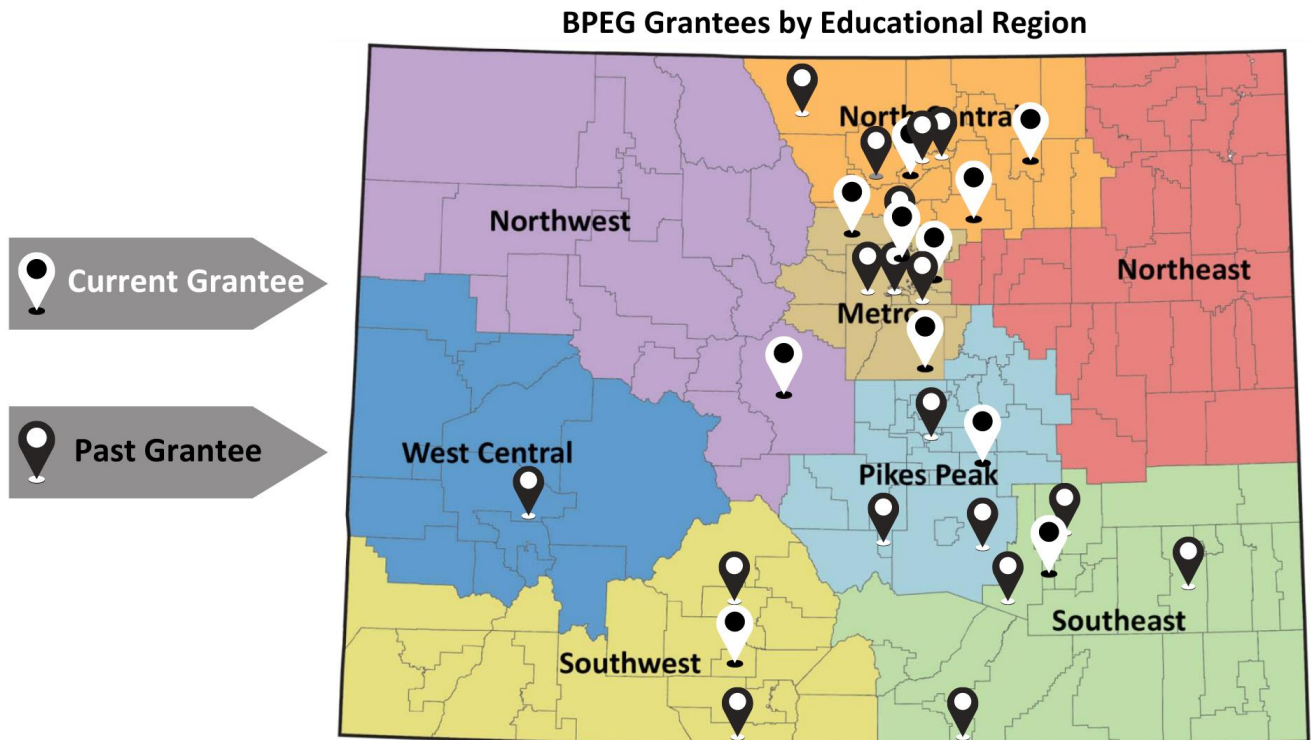
Table 2: Funding for Grantees Participating in Cohort 3 and 4

Grantee	2023-24 funding	Number of Participating Schools
Cohort 3		
Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J (APS)	\$153,900	8
Boulder Valley School District RE-2	\$279,839	53
Denver Public Schools (DPS)	\$280,000	9
Hanover School District 28	\$70,000	2
Highline Academy Schools (Charter, DPS)	\$70,000	2
Hope Online Academy (Charter, Douglas County RE1)	\$70,000	2
Johnstown-Milliken School District RE-5J	\$175,000	5
Mapleton School District 1	\$263,476	16
Monte Vista School District C-8	\$70,005	2
Omar D. Blair Charter School (Charter, DPS)	\$35,000	1
South Central BOCES	\$245,000	5

Cohort 4		
Charter School Institute	\$35,000	1
Park County RE-2	\$69,996	2
Vega Collegiate Academy (Charter, APS)	\$35,000	1
Weld County School District RE-3J	\$35,000	1
Weldon Valley School District RE-20J	\$1,000	2
Total	\$1,888,216	112
Average Per Grantee	\$118,014	7

With the addition of the northwest educational region, the BPEG program now funds bullying prevention efforts in six of the eight educational regions across the state. As can be seen in Figure 1, since the inception of the BPEG program, seven of the eight educational regions in the state have received services from the grant program.

Figure 1: Location of Current and Past BPEG Program Grantees





Boulder Valley Re 2	Students	Boulder Valley Re 2 (cont'd)	Students
Angevine Middle School	609	Creekside Elementary School at Martin Park	368
Arapahoe Ridge High School	245	Crest View Elementary School	411
Boulder Community School/Integrated Studies	265	Douglass Elementary School	319
Boulder High School	2,022	Eisenhower Elementary School	338
Boulder Prep Charter High School	115	Eldorado K-8 School	559
Broomfield Heights Middle School	498	Emerald Elementary School	404
Broomfield High School	1,693	Fireside Elementary School	436
Casey Middle School	393	Flatirons Elementary School	164
Centaurus High School	1,563	Foothill Elementary School	437
Centennial Middle School	619	Gold Hill Elementary School	12
Fairview High School	1,847	Heatherwood Elementary School	255
Justice High Charter School	103	High Peaks Elementary School	247
Louisville Middle School	610	Horizons K-8 School	361
Manhattan Middle School of the Arts and Academics	418	Jamestown Elementary School	18
Monarch High School	1,447	Kohl Elementary School	281
Nederland Middle-Senior High School	245	Lafayette Elementary School	480
Nevin Platt Middle School	504	Louisville Elementary School	440
New Vista High School	319	Mapleton Early Childhood Center	63
Southern Hills Middle School	493	Meadowlark School	754
Summit Middle Charter School	361	Mesa Elementary School	295
Aspen Creek K-8 School	770	Monarch K-8 School	738
Bear Creek Elementary School	315	Nederland Elementary School	194
Birch Elementary School	314	Peak to Peak Charter School	1,452
Boulder Universal	226	Ryan Elementary School	458
Coal Creek Elementary School	324	Superior Elementary School	429
Community Montessori School	277	University Hill Elementary School	408
		Whittier Elementary School	293

South Central BOCES	Students
Fisher's Peak Elementary School	376
Manzanola Elementary School	70
Manzanola Junior-Senior High School	111
Peakview Elementary School	480
Trinidad High School	210

Weld County School District RE-3J	Students
Lochbuie Elementary School	231

Weldon Valley RE-20(J)	Students
Weldon Valley Elementary School	119
Weldon Valley Jr/Sr High School	90

Vega Collegiate Academy (Charter, APS)	Students
Vega Collegiate Academy	557

Table 4 displays the demographics of students attending BPEG program schools in 2023-24. These are very similar to the demographics of the entire Colorado student population in 2023-24. In BPEG program schools, 49 percent of students identified as white, followed by 36 percent of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino. All other race/ethnicities had less than 10 percent representation. The percentage of students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch increased slightly to 49 percent for the 2023-24 school year, from 47 percent in 2022-23.

Table 4: Demographics of Students across BPEG Program Schools for the 2023-24 School Year

Descriptor	Number	Percentage	Percentage in CO student population
Gender			
Female	24,879	49%	49%
Male	26,146	51%	51%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	189	<1%	<1%
Asian	2,513	5%	3%
Black or African American	2,111	4%	5%
Hispanic or Latino	18,184	36%	35%
White	24,993	49%	50%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	204	<1%	<1%
Two or More Races	2,905	6%	5%
Free-and-Reduced Lunch	21,639	49%	46%

Grant Outcomes

Evidence-Based Bullying Prevention Best Practices

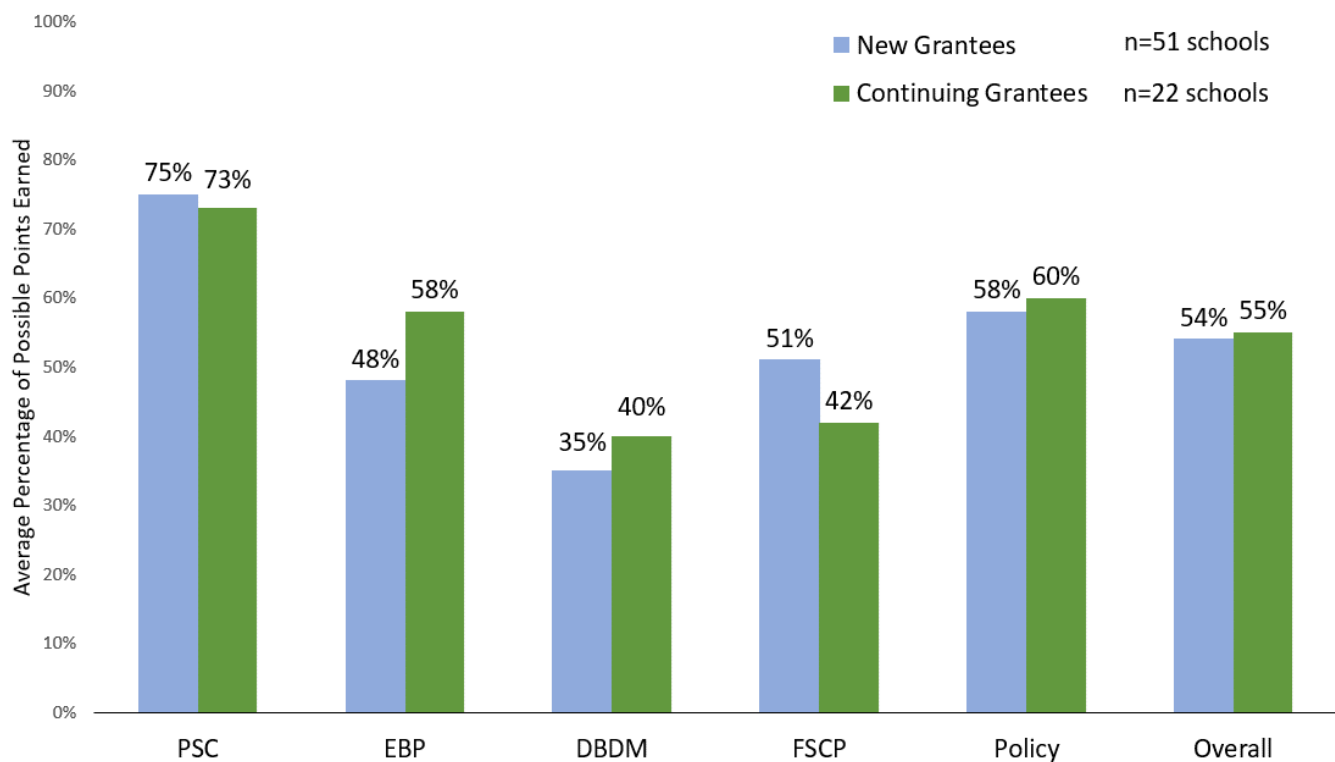
The 2023-24 school year is the first year that outcome data are available for Cohort 3 BPEG program grantees. The BPEG program collects outcome data on both fidelity of implementation and student's experience of bullying for each school in the grant. Fidelity of implementation is measured through the BPEG self-assessment. This is also the first year that data from the updated version of the BPEG self-assessment is available. The updated version of the BPEG self-assessment is research-based and aligns with the five core components of the BPEG program which are described in the program's [practice profiles](#).

When completing the BPEG self-assessment, schools self-report scores for each item on a three-point scale from 0 to 2 where 0 equals "not in place," 1 equals "partially in place," and 2 equals "fully in place." Grantees in Cohort 3 included both new grantees and grantees continuing their work from Cohort 2. Due to the fact that Cohort 3 continuing grantees had already implemented the program for three years, results from data analyses are separated between new and continuing Cohort 3 grantees for more meaningful comparisons. Please note that some Cohort 3 schools were not able to complete the self-assessment in spring 2023 and are thus not included in this analysis. Continuous improvement of the program implementation aims to ensure that all schools will complete it in the future.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of overall possible points earned on the BPEG self-assessment, broken down by the core components of the grant program. The average in participating schools in LEAs that became grantees in Cohort 3 are represented by the blue bar on the left, and the average for participating schools in LEAs that were

already grantees in Cohort 2 are represented by the green bar on the right of each set of bars. The overall results show that the percentage of possible points earned by continuing grantees is similar to that earned by new grantees. This is likely due to the fact that, despite being in the grant for a longer period of time, many of the items on the updated version of the BPEG self-assessment are new for continuing grantees. One of the areas where continuing grantees score higher than new grantees is the evidence-based practices component. This makes logical sense given the fact that implementing an evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum is a requirement of the BPEG program within the first two years. Notably, new grantees have higher scores on the family, school, and community partnerships component compared to continuing grantees. This may be due to the fact that new grantees have significantly more elementary schools compared to continuing grantees.

Figure 2: BPEG Program Self-Assessment 2022-23 Scores for Cohort 3 New and Continuing Grantees



PSC: Positive School Climate; EBP: Evidence-based Practices; DBDM: Data-based Decision Making; FSCP: Family, School, and Community Partnerships

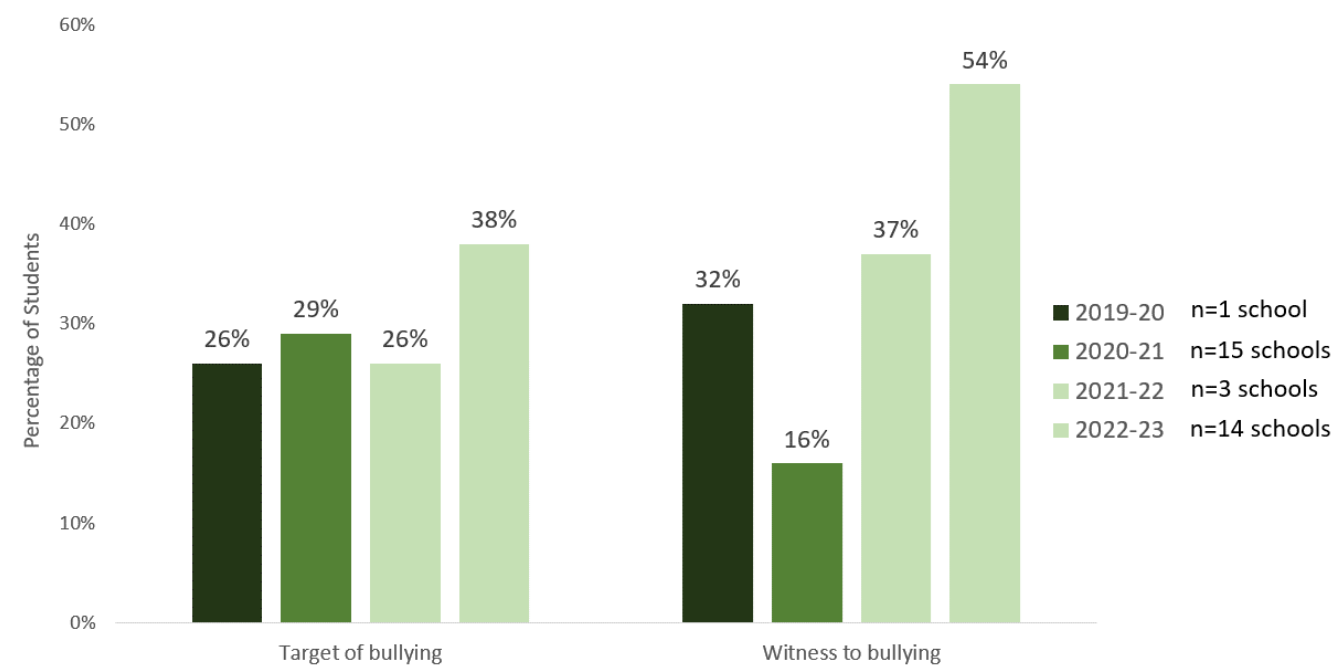
Prevalence of Bullying

Each school in the BPEG program is required to survey their students annually in the spring on their experience being the target of and witness to bullying. These data are submitted to CDE at the school level. CDE then analyzes the data to determine the effectiveness of the BPEG program at reducing bullying. Cohort 3 continuing grantees have collected data on these two questions since their first year in the grant in the 2019-20 school year. There are several factors that have influenced the data of these schools over the years. The most obvious factor is that during the first year of survey administration, the COVID-19 pandemic closed many schools. Due to this, the data include results for only one school out of 51 for the 2019-20 school year, and only 15 out of 51 in the 2020-21 school year, in which schools still experienced periodic closures or fully online instruction. A separate consideration is the fact that the majority of schools for the Cohort 3 continuing grantees come from a

single district. That district experienced staff turnover in 2021-22, combined with a survey administration approach that did not provide time during the school day for completion, led to an overall low response rate with many schools not administering the survey at all. As a result, the number of returning Cohort 3 schools administering the student survey went back down to 3 in 2021-22, even as schools came back to fully in-person schedules (we do not include schools in which the response rate was less than 10%). Moreover, as rates of bullying go up or down within this district, so too do the rates of bullying for Cohort 3 continuing grantees overall.

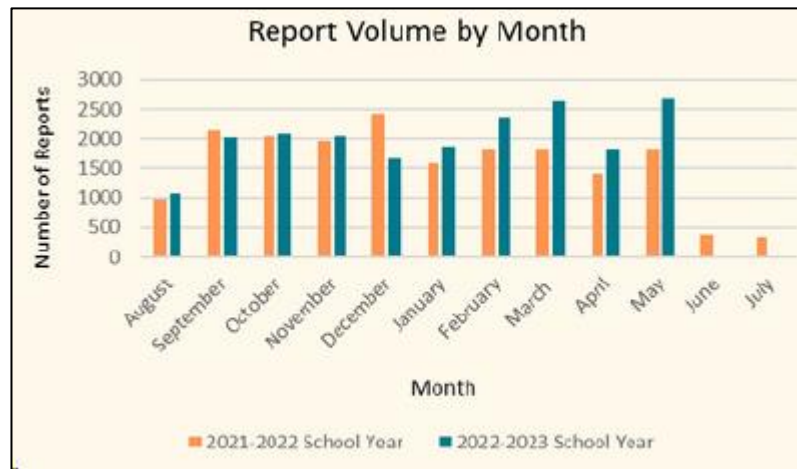
Figure 3 provides the average percentage of students who report being the target of and witness to bullying in schools across Cohort 3 continuing grantee schools. The main finding from these data is that Cohort 3 continuing schools reported a significant increase in bullying reported through the survey during the 2022-23 school year. There are several potential reasons for this finding. First, the district that makes up the majority of schools for Cohort 3 continuing grantees saw a slight increase in bullying reported. Moreover, this school district noted in their annual report submitted to CDE that their data should be interpreted with caution since they only had 27 percent of students participating in the survey in 2022-23 compared to nearly 50 percent in the previous administration due to changes in how the survey was administered.

Figure 3: Average Rates of Bullying Over Time for Cohort 3 Continuing Grantees



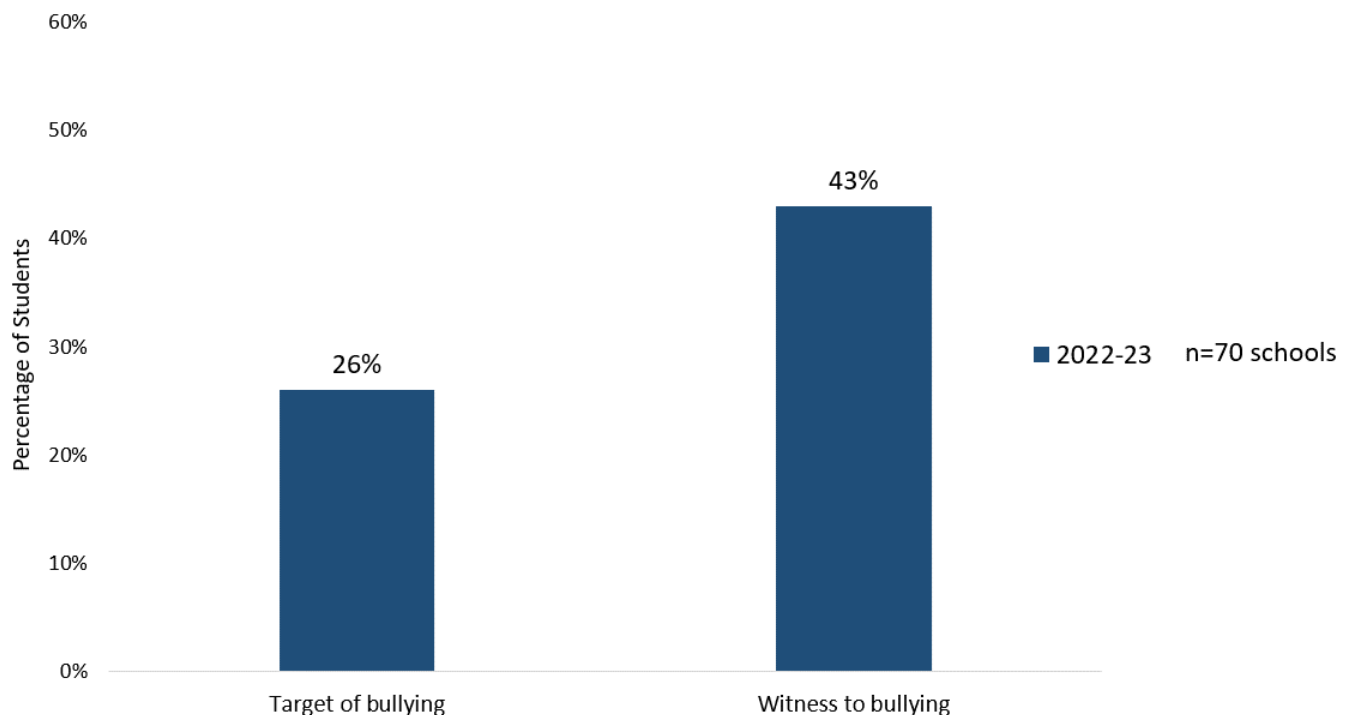
Finally, it should be noted that data suggest that bullying may be on the rise across the nation. News reports from [New Jersey](#), [San Antonio](#), and [Baltimore](#) highlight this national trend. Anecdotal reports from many BPEG program grantees suggest that bullying has become worse than it was pre-pandemic. Data from the spring semester of the 2022-23 school year from Colorado's anonymous reporting tipline, Safe2Tell, show that bullying was either the most common or second-most common tip received from February through May. Moreover, there were significantly more tips submitted to Safe2Tell in the spring semester of the 2022-23 school year compared to the previous year. See Figure 4 for full details. These data suggest that bullying may be on the rise across the state in addition to the BPEG program grantees.

Figure 4: Total Safe2Tell Reports by Month for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 School Years



Cohort 3 new grantees completed their first administration of student surveys in the 2022-23 school year. As shown in Figure 5, on average, 26 percent of students who responded to the survey across the 70 schools described themselves as the target of bullying and 43 percent described themselves as the witness to bullying. Interestingly, this rate of bullying is the lowest for the first administration of any cohort in the history of the BPEG program. Cohort 1 reported 38 percent of students being the target of bullying and 45 percent of Cohort 2 students reported being the target of bullying in their first data collections.

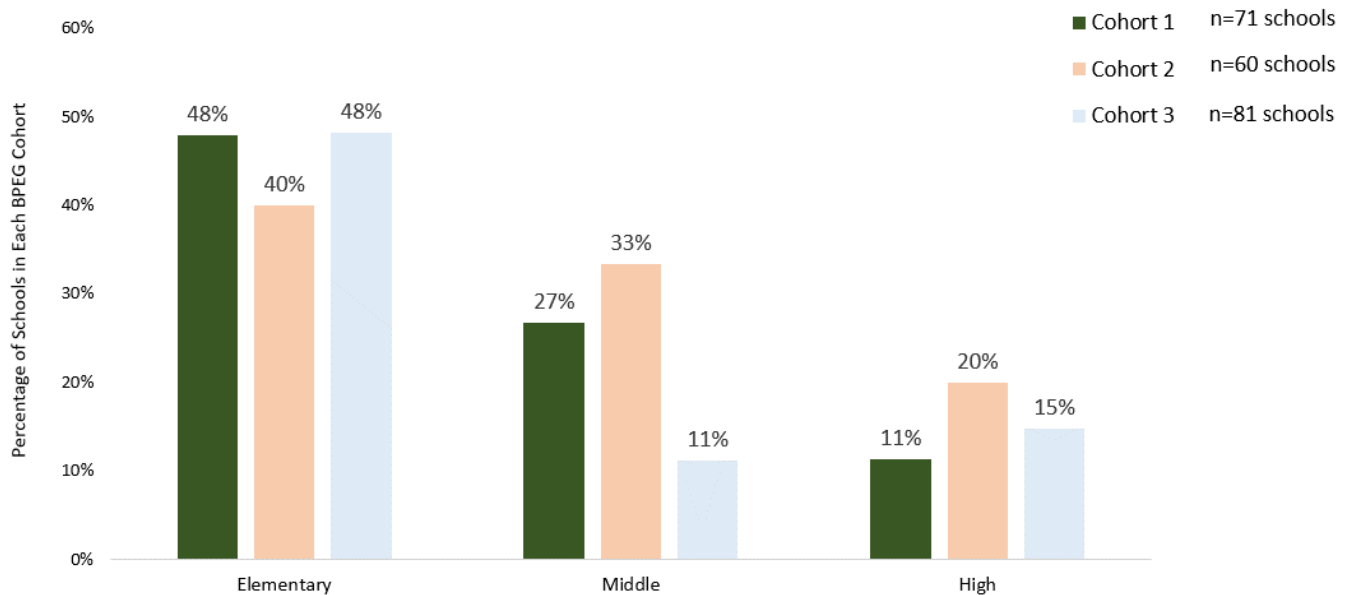
Figure 5: Average Rates of Bullying for Cohort 3 New Grantee Schools



One explanation for the unusually low percentage of students reporting being the target of bullying in the inaugural year for Cohort 3 new grantees is the grade level of schools in this cohort. Figure 6 shows the percentage of schools that identified as an elementary, middle, and high school for each cohort of the BPEG

program. Please note that due to some schools in the grant program serving grades K-8 or K-12, not all schools are represented in Figure 6. Cohort 3 schools have a significantly lower percentage of middle schools compared to other cohorts. This is important because research consistently demonstrates that bullying is most frequent in middle school⁴.

Figure 6: Type of Schools by Percentage for Each BPEG Cohort⁵



This trend is also found for Cohort 3 continuing grantees and Cohort 3 new grantees. Figure 7 shows the percentage of schools by type for Cohort 3 continuing and new grantees. Cohort 3 continuer schools have over three times as many middle schools that make up their cohort compared to Cohort 3 new schools. The likely increase in overall bullying rates across the state in conjunction with the higher number of middle schools for

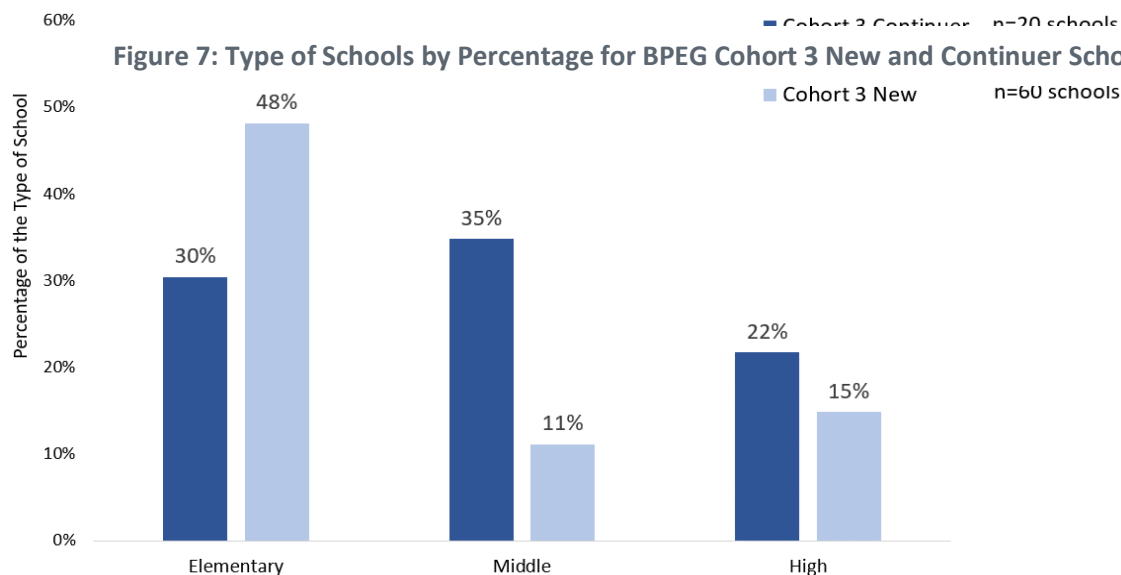


Figure 7: Type of Schools by Percentage for BPEG Cohort 3 New and Continuer Schools.

⁴ See Rivara & Le Menestrel, 2016

⁵ Schools that span more than one category, e.g. K-8 schools or 6-12 schools, are not included in this analysis.



Cohort 3 continuer grantees may explain the higher rates of bullying found for those schools compared to Cohort 3 new schools.

Conclusion

The BPEG program, administered by the Colorado Department of Education, has been vital in supporting schools and districts across the state in their efforts to combat bullying since 2016. The program has reached over 150 schools, reaching nearly 50,000 students annually. Using evidence-based practices, grantees have fostered positive school climates conducive to preventing bullying. Notably, the BPEG program has adapted, introducing a concurrent Cohort 4 alongside Cohort 3, aiming to effectively use allocated funding to address emerging challenges. This includes the apparent rise in bullying incidents across Colorado based on data from Safe2Tell and BPEG program grantees. In the 2023-24 school year, the BPEG program remains committed to creating safer learning environments for all students.