



Colorado Department of Education

Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Program End of Year Report Analysis 2005-2006 School Year March 2007

Prepared for the Colorado Department of Education by the National Center for School Engagement in accordance with section 22-33-205(4) C.R.S.

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The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides funding opportunities for school districts to provide services to expelled students and students at-risk of expulsion under the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) categorical program of Colorado’s Amendment 23. These funds are used to support the development, implementation, and continuation of promising programs, in accordance with C.R.S.22-33-205. The CDE Prevention Initiatives’ team manages the \$6.2 million grant program and awards funding to programs that offer best practice strategies in re-claiming out of school youth. Programs are required to show significant local school district support for program sustainability once state grant funding is completed. During the 2005-2006 school year (SY 05-06), grants were awarded to 54 programs.

Each year, the evaluation gathers both demographic information and evidence of outcomes. Specifically, the evaluation assesses student outcomes including improved academic functioning, improved attendance, and decreased disciplinary actions. These three key outcomes are considered essential to programs for at-risk students (Aron & Zweig, 2003).

Overview of the Programs

In SY 05 – 06, CDE funded 54 EARSS programs. Table 1 describes the number of years each of these programs has received funding from CDE.

Table 1: Number of Programs by Year of Funding

| Years of Funding | Number of Programs (%) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 19 (35%) |
| 2 | 12 (22%) |
| 3 | 14 (26%) |
| 4 | 7 (13%) |
| Exemplary Program Funding (Year 5)* | 2 (4%) |

* Programs are identified as exemplary if they demonstrate significant student outcomes in their first four years of funding.

These programs addressed students at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Students are identified as either expelled or at-risk of expulsion. Students at-risk of expulsion typically have difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

- academic failure – failure to gain graduation credits, or failure in one or more subject area
- attendance - chronic truancy or excessive unexcused absences in a short time period
- behavioral issues – both school-based behavioral concerns as well as behaviors in the community which have resulted in expulsion and/or involvement with juvenile justice systems
- social/emotional difficulties stemming from family dysfunction, psychological concerns, and/or other social stressors, which greatly impact school function

Expulsion and at-risk programs also provide academic services and strategies aimed at re-engaging potential dropouts. Program services continue to include individualized learning plans; computer-based learning programs; alternate class schedules with evening course options; after-school programs for extended learning; tutorial programs; one-to-one assistance with difficult subject areas; opportunities to complete high school credits or earn a GED; work study programs to gain vocational skills transferable to the “real world”; transition plans to help reintegrate the

student back into the regular classroom setting; extended time on homework assignments; small group instruction; and small class size to facilitate a higher degree of work completion and engagement with teachers and staff. In general, programs funded through EARSS are often housed in facilities located apart from the traditional school setting, offer smaller teacher to student ratios, and offer more flexible curriculum and class structure, while still meeting district and state standards. This flexible format is supported in the literature (Lange & Sletton, 2002) as an effective program structure for students at-risk of expulsion and academic failure. Often, these students do not do well in the typical school setting and need an alternative setting to blossom.

METHODS

The results reported in this document reflect five years of data that have been collected at the end of each school year from all of the EARSS funded programs. Beginning in SY02-03, data are collected via a web-based data collection system via programs self-report. Each year the survey questions and reporting requirements are modified slightly, however, some core elements have been consistent for more than 4 years. A copy of the online reporting form for SY05-06 can be found in [Appendix A](#). This report is based on the end of year data from SY05-06 as well as selected trends, dating back to SY00-01.

The quality of data can be assured. Throughout the reporting period, program coordinators are in regular contact with the evaluators at the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (CFFC) and CDE staff to ensure that they are counting and coding their data correctly. Additionally, at the annual grantee orientation held in October, new staff are given an intensive session on how to complete their end of year report. Program coordinators also complete a mid year report for accountability and to ensure that staff are tabulating their data correctly. Finally, the online system includes mathematical checks and balances to ensure correct tabulation. By the end of year submission, even program staff in their first year of funding are proficient with reporting program data.

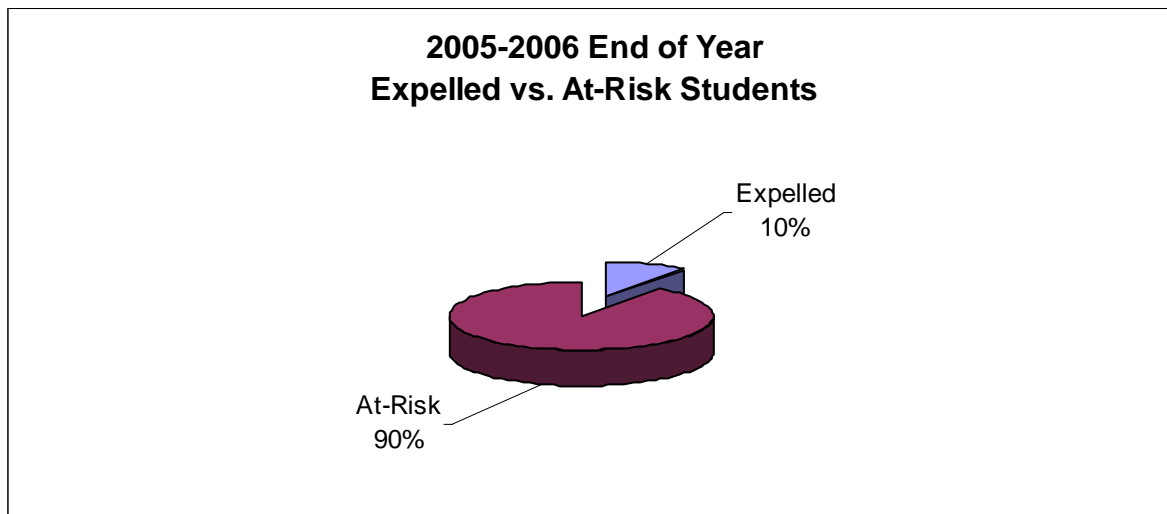
RESULTS

The results section contains four components essential to understanding the impact of the EARSS programs both on aggregate and individually. All program data are aggregated and reported. Additionally, historical trends for the past five school years are described.

Aggregate Program Data

The following information is the result of data compiled by sites during SY05-06. This component of the results section is intended to give an overview of all funded EARSS programs. During SY05-06, 10,439 students were served by the 54 funded programs. Ninety percent (9,361) of the students served were considered to be at-risk of expulsion while 10% (1,078) were actually expelled from school. Statewide 2,548 students were expelled in 2005 – 2006, which indicates that EARSS programs served a significant number of the expelled students in Colorado. Chart 1 shows the percentage of expelled compared to at-risk students reported for SY05-06.

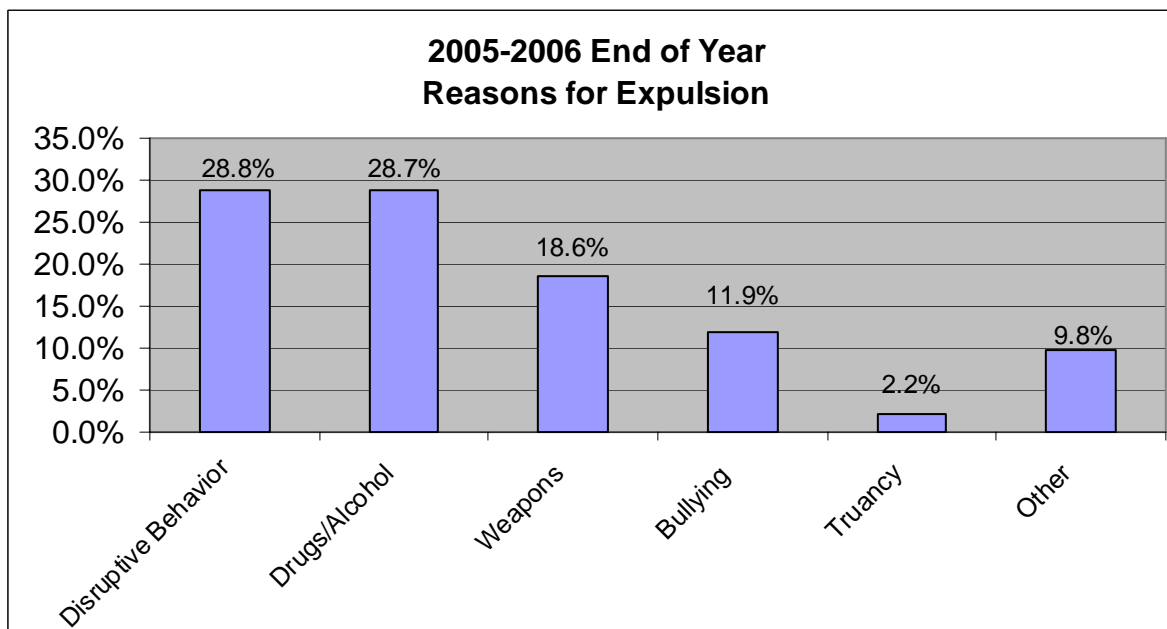
Chart 1: Expelled vs. At-Risk Students for School Year 2005-2006



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Although expulsion typically has multiple behavioral issues, for the purpose of this report, program staff identified only the primary reason for expulsion. Chart 2 highlights the reasons given for expulsion of the 1,078 expelled students who participated in the EARSS programs. The two, most common, primary reasons are disruptive behavior and drug or alcohol use. Almost 10% of students were identified as being expelled for other reasons. These reasons included fighting/assault, gang involvement, vandalism, and theft.

Chart 2: Reasons for Expulsion for School Year 2005 – 2006

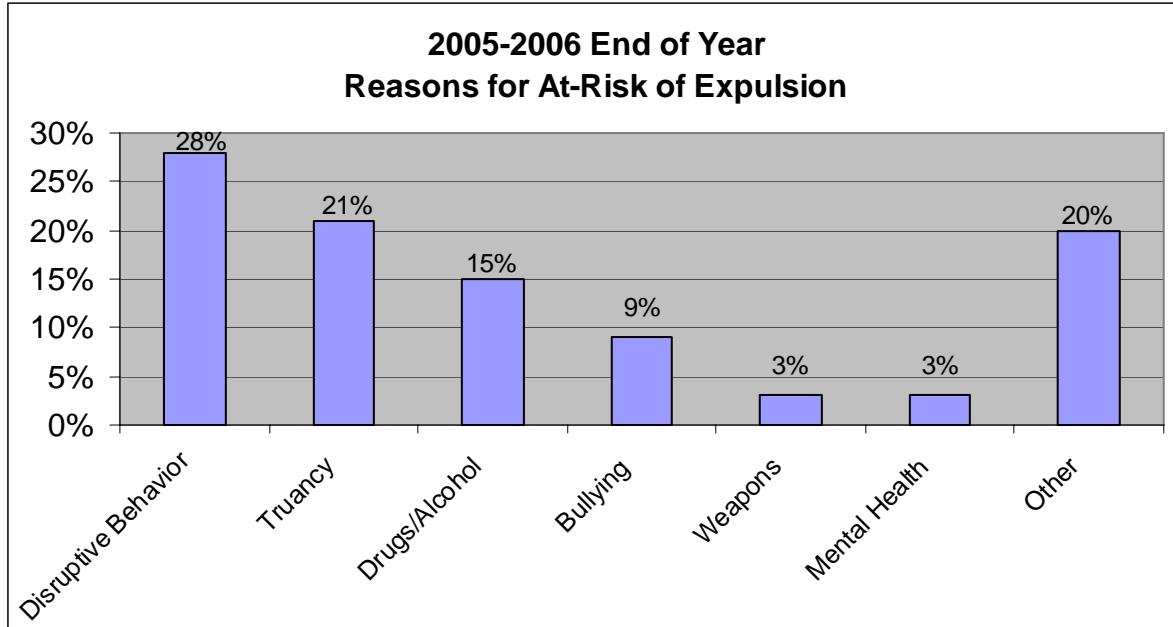


Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

The students considered to be at-risk of expulsion often fit the profile of expelled students in that they have similar disciplinary histories, academic struggles, attendance patterns, and familial concerns. Therefore similar strategies are often implemented for these students. Given that the

majority of students served were categorized as “At-Risk”, it may be that the interventions provided by the EARSS grantees served as protective factors against expulsion. Each year programs are required to report their district policy for identifying students as at-risk as part of their re-application process for grant monies. Chart 3 shows the primary reason given for a student being considered at-risk of expulsion during SY05-06. Similar to expelled students, nearly one-third (28%) of students are identified as being at-risk due to disruptive behavior.

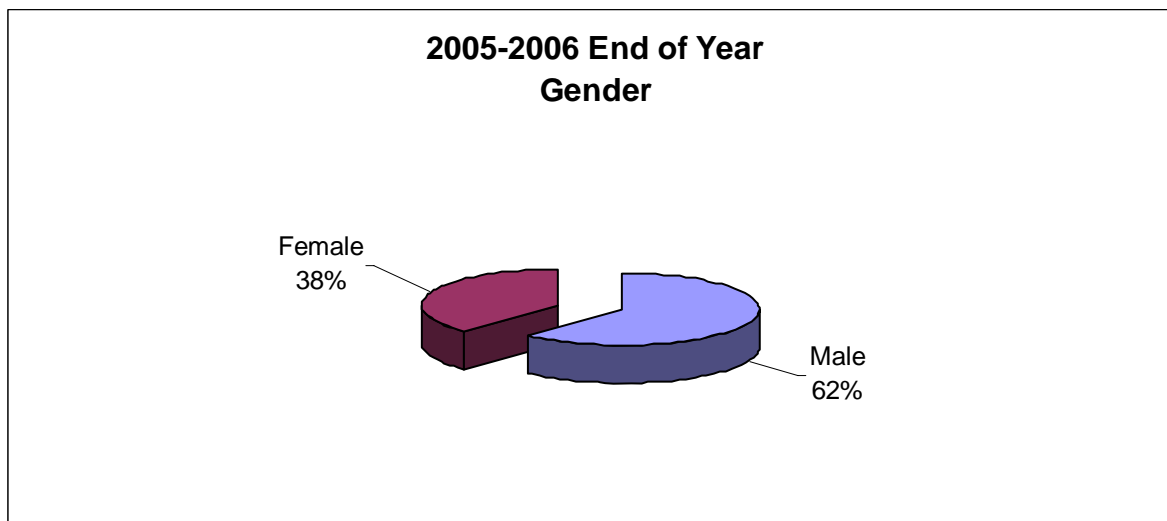
Chart 3: Reasons for At-Risk of Expulsion for School year 2005 - 2006



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Consistent with other years (see Chart 7); Chart 4 indicates that more boys than girls are served by these programs.

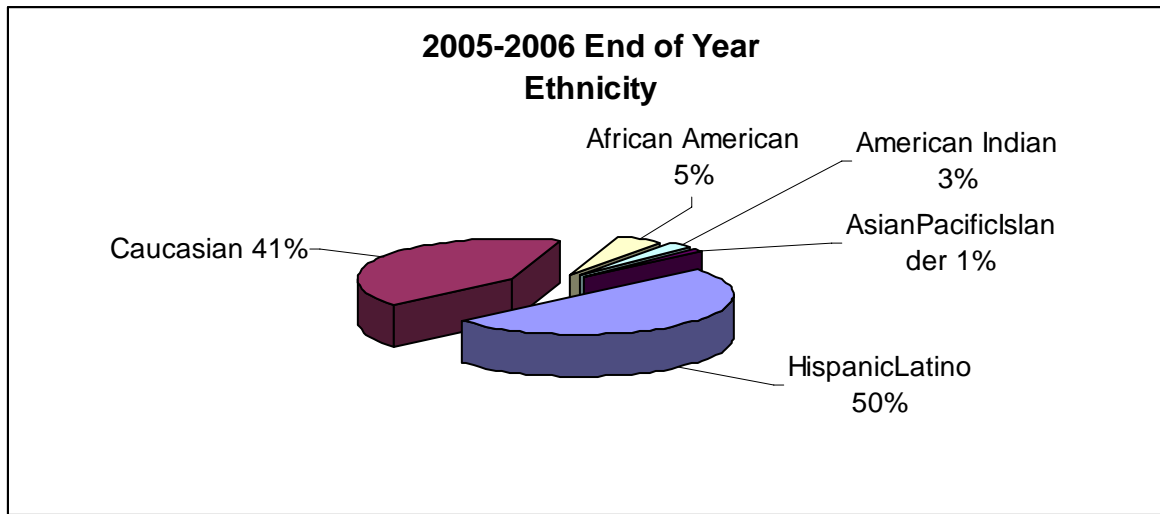
Chart 4: Gender for School Year 2005-2006



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Over the past several years CDE and CFFC have paid particular attention to the ethnic breakdown of students served in expelled and at-risk programs. This information has raised important concerns about whether or not students of color are overrepresented in expulsion services. The overrepresentation of minority students in these programs appears to serve as a precursor to their representation in the justice system later on. Efforts to minimize or at least understand the reasons behind the overrepresentation of students of color in this data continue at the state level. Currently in the state of Colorado, Latino students make up 25% of the student population and 50% of the students in these funded programs. Additionally, African American students make up 5.8% of the student population and 5% of the students in these programs. Chart 5 shows the ethnic breakdown for students served in the expelled and at-risk student programs this past school year.

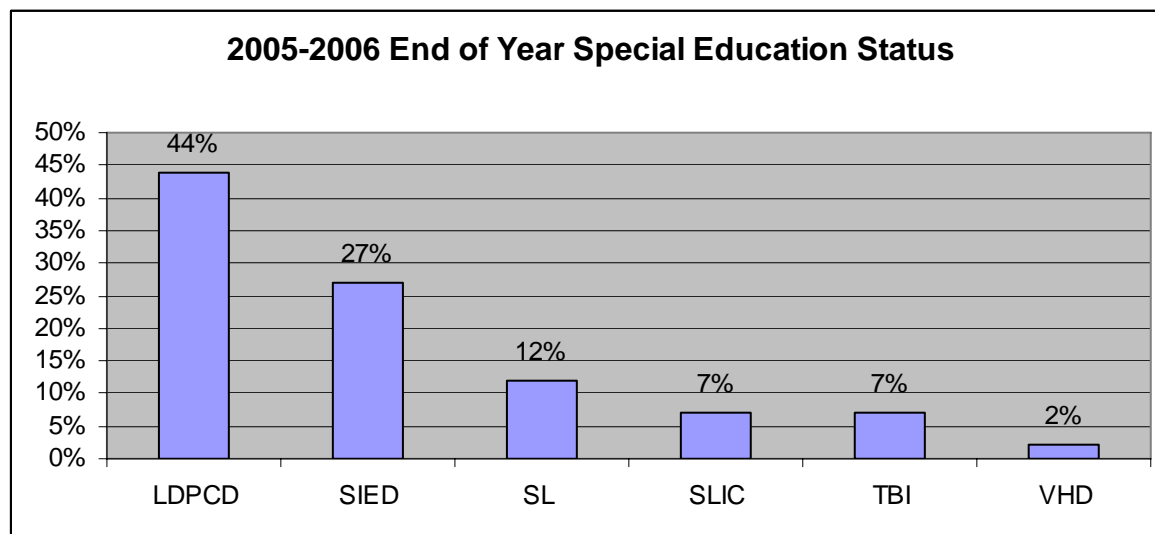
Chart 5: Ethnicity for School Year 2005 - 2006



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

In SY05-06, 22% of students served by the EARSS programs had an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and were receiving special education services. The largest category was students identified with Learning/Perceptual/Communicative Disabilities (LDPCD) at 44%, Significant Identifiable Emotional Disorder (SIED) at 27%, Speech/Language (SL) at 12%, Significant Limited Intellectual Capacity (SLIC) at 7%, Traumatic Brain Injury and Physical Disability (TBI) at 7%, and Vision/Hearing Disability (PD) at 2%. Chart 6 below depicts these percentages.

Chart 6: Special Education Status of Students Served in School Year 2005 – 2006



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Data continues to be reported on the number of students who make changes in three primary areas identified by CDE. The results of that data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Outcomes for School Year 2005 - 2006

| Area of Focus | Total # of Students | Number of Students showing gains | Percent of Change |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Academic | 10,439 | 3,315 | 32% Increase |
| Attendance | 10,439 | 3,566 | 34% Increase |
| Discipline | 10,439 | 4,523 | 43% Decrease |
| Social Emotional Functioning | 10,439 | 8,267 | 79% Improvement |

Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

It should be noted that not all programs reported their outcome data quantitatively, but rather reported “other” outcomes in a qualitative manner. Significant outcomes were noted in multiple arenas of the students and families’ lives. Other student outcomes included reduced recidivism into with the juvenile justice system, improved conflict resolution skills, deferred expulsions, compliance with behavior contracts, and increased credit hours toward high school completion. One program reported that 14 of their students obtained scholarships to further their education. Families also had other outcomes such as improved family cohesion and adaptability, increased parent involvement, and decreased parental stress with child. Program level outcomes included more program coordination with local service providers, improved data collection systems and decreased school-wide expulsion rates. The Expelled and At-Risk programs continue to show improvements in student functioning as they provide opportunities for students to reach school related goals.

More globally, the Expelled and At-Risk programs have had a significant impact on school funding at the local level. Programs recapture per pupil operating revenue (PPOR) that would have been lost due to student dropout or expulsion. EARSS programs report the number of students retrieved as well as their district's PPOR. On average, programs recaptured \$463,263 of PPOR. In total, programs recaptured \$25,016,212.

Parent Involvement

This evaluation is particularly interested in looking at parent involvement as a strategy. 8,218 parents received support services and assistances from program staff. During the 2005-06 school year, 67% (5,509) of the parents reported that they improved their ability to support their child's learning. There was a lot of variety in how program staff measured parent outcomes. Of the 54 programs, 19 reported using parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences, school events or parent workshops as an indicator of improvement. Nine programs reported attendance in addition to other indicators such as observation, informal parent feedback or staff reporting. Ten programs used self report (of parents) or staff report only. Ten programs used surveys or assessments to determine parent improvement. Three of these assessments were administered using a pre post evaluation design. Six programs reported increased contact via phone or face to face as an indicator of improved ability to support their child's learning. Only one program indicated that they did not serve parents.

Program staff were also asked to describe the two most effective strategies used in addressing the needs of the students they serve. To get a better understanding of effective parent engagement strategies, we analyzed the data from programs reporting parent involvement as an effective strategy. Of these programs, 15% reported parent involvement in the form of parent/teacher/school contact and conferences, parent night, school activities, and family counseling; 7% reported the use of a case management model; 7% reported the use of a wraparound model; 5% reported offering parent education and workshops; and 2% used a Families and Schools Together (FAST) model. Table 3 disaggregates these data by site.

Table 3: Programs that Identified Parent Involvement as their Most Effective Strategy

| COUNTY | PROGRAM NAME | Case management model | Wrap-around model | Parent Ed/ Workshops | One or More Strategies Identified* | FAST |
|--------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|------|
| Adams 12 | Adams 12 Five Star Schools CASASTART | X | | | | |
| Adams 12 | Adams County Truancy Reduction Consortium | | X | | | |
| Adams 14 | Adams 14 CASASTART | X | | | | |
| Adams 31J | Strasburg 31-J PBS | | | X | | |
| Adams 50 | Sundown School PASS Program/Sunrise School PASS Program | | | | X | |
| Arapahoe 1 | Success Through Early Intervention Program | | | X | | |
| Arapahoe 2 | Project ATTEND | X | | | | |
| Archuleta 50 | Archuleta County High School After-Hours Program | | | | X | |
| Boulder 2 | Expelled and At-Risk | | | | | X |

| COUNTY | PROGRAM NAME | Case management model | Wrap-around model | Parent Ed/ Workshops | One or More Strategies Identified* | FAST |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| | Student Services | | | | | |
| Boulder 1J | Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion | | | X | | |
| Conejos and San Luis Valley | Rocky Mountain Youth Academy | | | | X | |
| Denver 1 | CCS Family Advocacy Program | | | | X | |
| Eagle 50 | Expelled & At-Risk Student Services | | | | X | |
| La Plata 11 Jt. | Expelled and At-Risk Student Services | | | | X | |
| La Plata 11 Jt. | Pine River Valley High School | | X | | | |
| Mesa 51 | The Opportunities Center | | X | | | |
| Pueblo 60 | Truancy Reduction Program - Project Respect | | | | X | |
| Rio Grande C-8 | CASASTART | X | | | | |
| Saguache 26 JT | ISS and OSS Programs | | | | X | |
| Cortez | Cortez Middle School | | X | | | |
| | TOTAL | 4 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 1 |

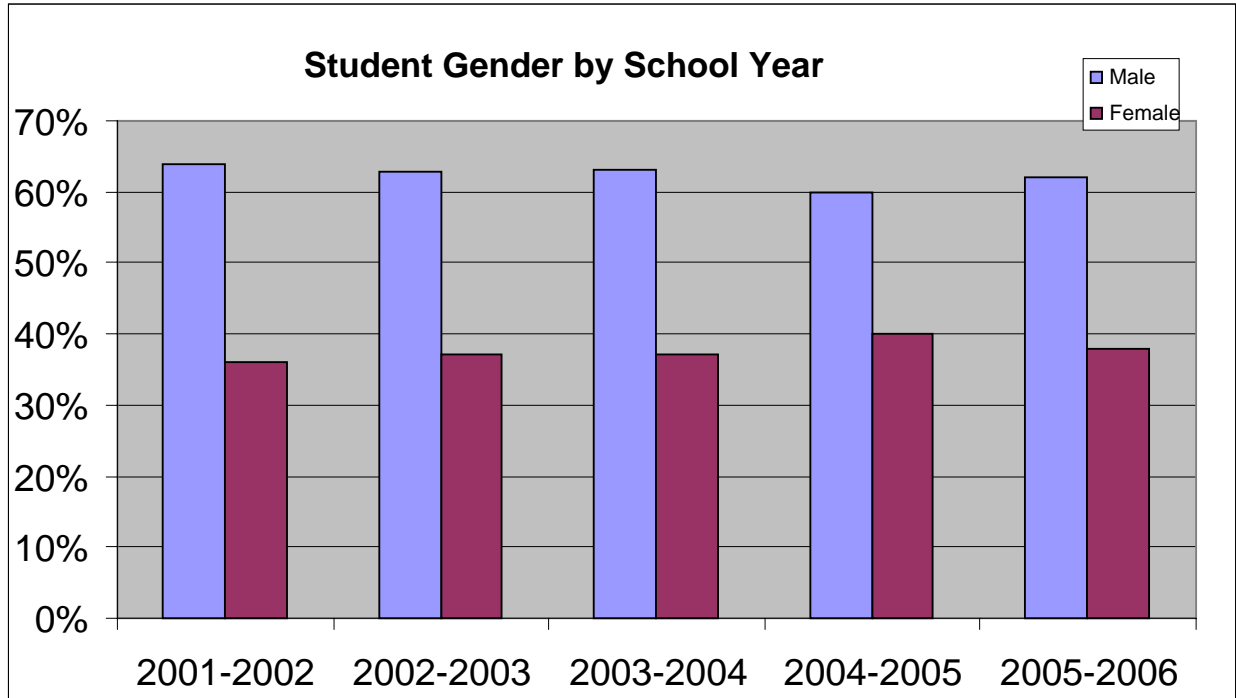
*One or more of the following: parent/school contact and conferences, parent night, parent involved in school activities, family counseling, etc.

Historical Trend Data

Since we now have comparable evaluation data for the last five years, trend data can be reported. It is critical to note that in both SY01-02 and SY02-03, the grants were classified as either in-school suspension grants or expelled services grants. However, both these grants came from the same categorical program funds. These data are aggregated for comparison. Chart 7 indicates that the percent of males served has been consistently higher than the percent of girls served for the past five years.

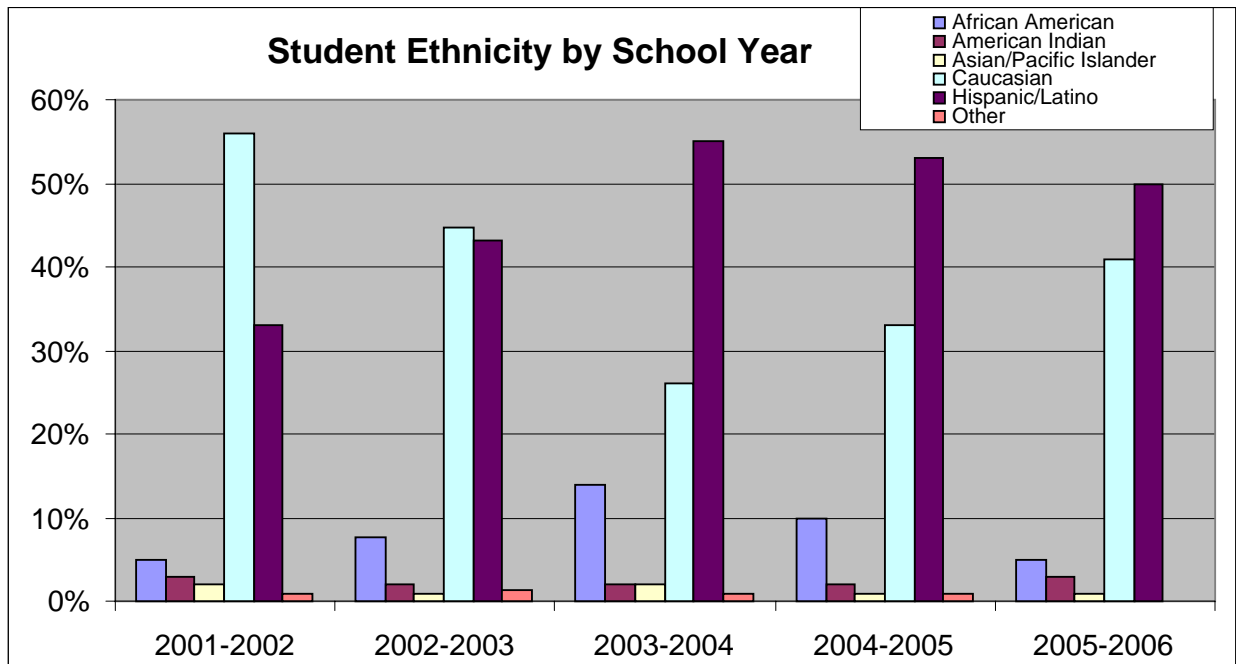
Chart 8 indicates that in SY01-02, many more Caucasian students were served by these grants than students of color. Over the years, these numbers have decreased and the number of Hispanic students has increased markedly. Currently, approximately 50% of the students served are Hispanic. African American students are the next greatest ethnicity group served and this has decreased steadily since SY03-03 to 5% in SY05-06. There are very low numbers of Asians and American Indians served by this grant (approximately 2%).

Chart 7: Student Gender for the Past Five School Years



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

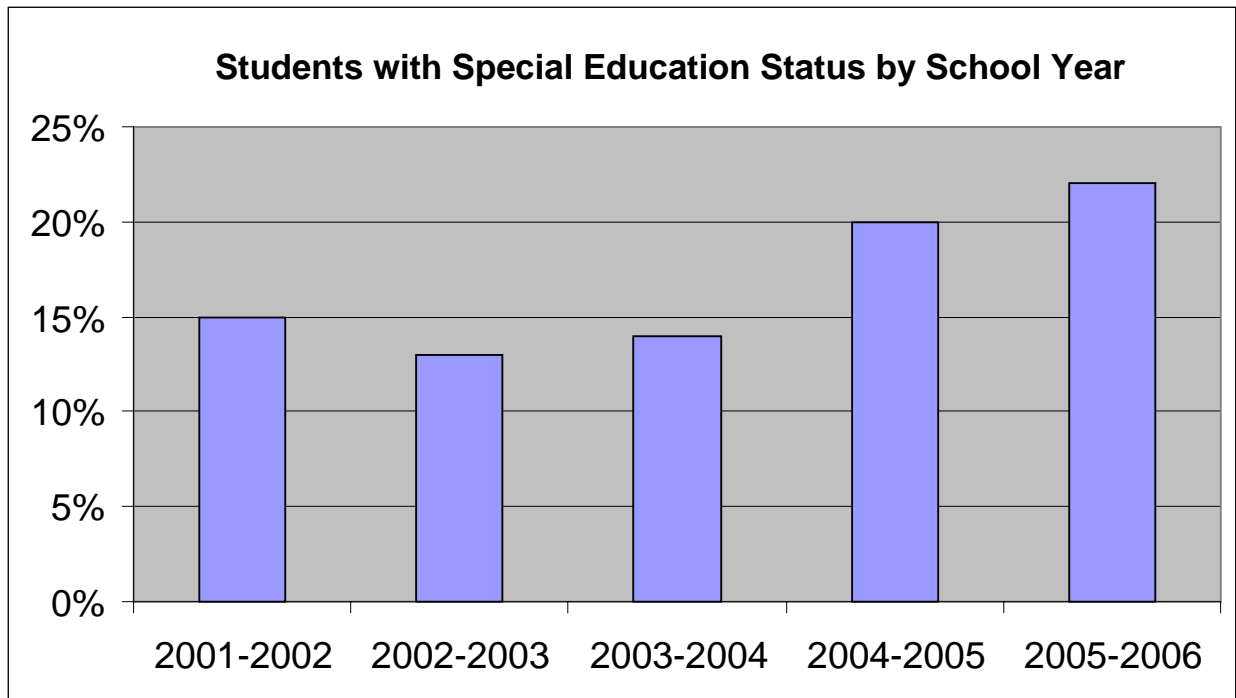
Chart 8: Student Ethnicity for the Past Five School Years



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Chart 9 displays the percentage of special education students served by these programs over the past five years. Approximately 13% to 23% of students served have been identified each year. Since 02-03, the percent of special education students served by EARSS grantees has steadily increased. We keep track of this statistic because we have heard anecdotally that many students are expelled who are in need of an IEP. The approximate number of students with IEP's in the regular student population is 11%. These programs have consistently served more special education students than are in the overall student population.

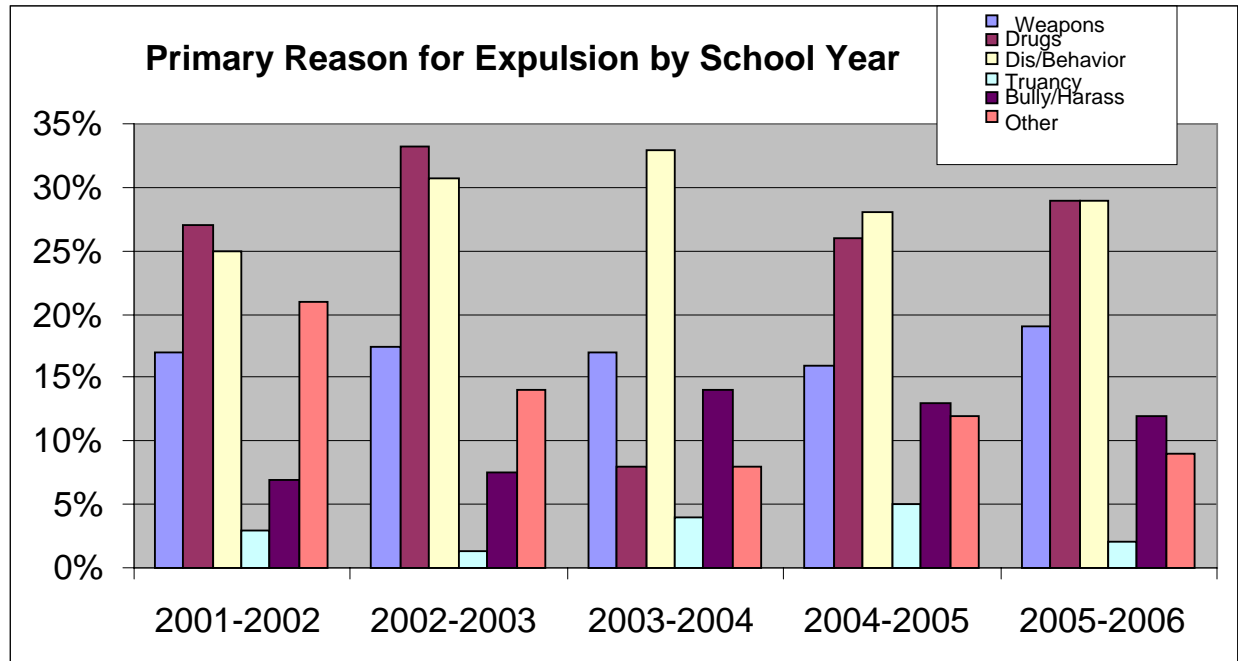
Chart 9: Special Education Served Over the Past Five School Years



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Chart 10 describes the primary reasons for expulsions for each of the past five school years. The two highest reasons are drugs and disruptive behavior, except in SY03-04. In general, disruptive behavior is very often the most cited reason for expulsion. This is continually perplexing as it is not entirely clear what constitutes disruptive behavior. Typically, disruptive behavior is identified at the local school level and therefore allows much discretionary privilege. For the past four years, students were expelled for "other" reasons is decreasing. It is hoped that staff are becoming more precise in their identification of reasons for expulsion. Identified other reasons included defiance, assault/fighting, felony, gang involvement, profanity, and property damage.

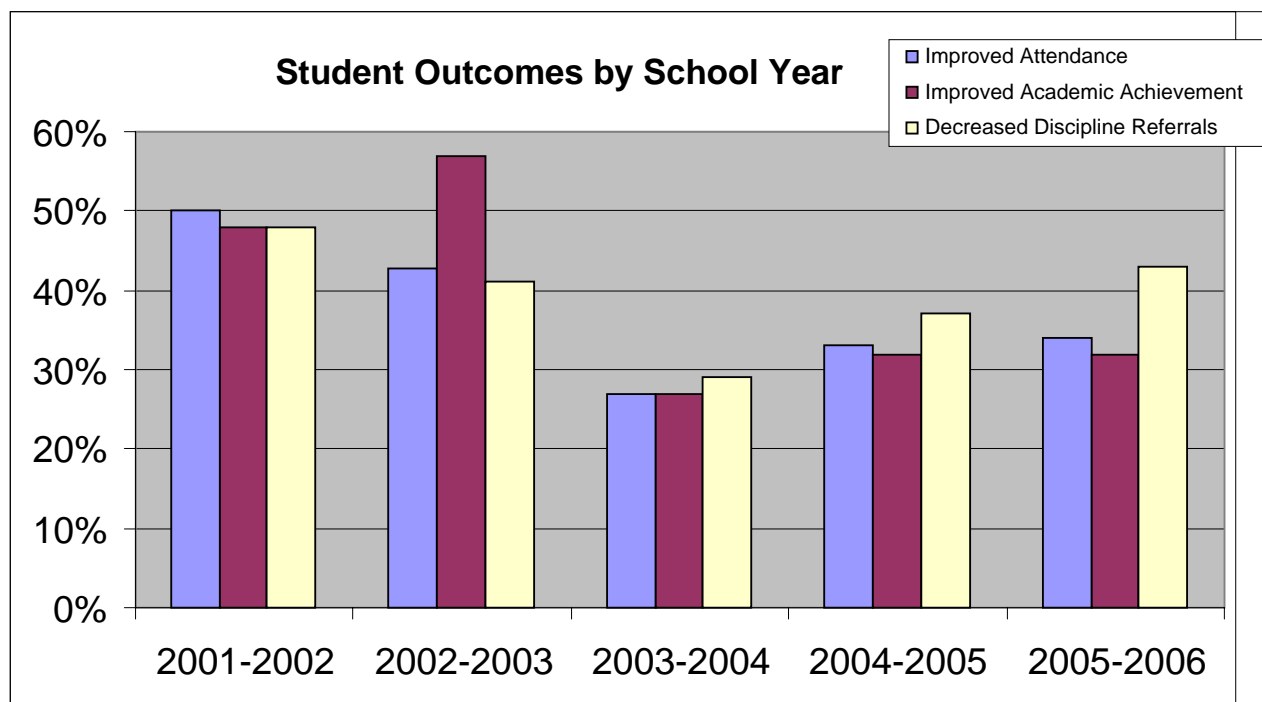
Chart 10: Student's Primary Reason for Expulsion for the Past Five School Years



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

Chart 11 describes the outcomes achieved by students served over the last 5 years. It should be noted that over the years, the reporting system has added other outcomes such as social emotional improvements and parent outcomes. However, the three primary outcomes have been consistently reported; improved attendance, improved academic achievement and decreased disciplinary referrals. Academic achievement is defined as decreasing at least one failing grade; students outcomes have dropped from approximately 50% in SY01-02 and SY02-03 to approximately 30% in the SY03-04 and 04-05. However, in SY05-06, these outcomes are trending upward. It is suspected that this might be attributed to the data collection method used. In SY03-04, the reporting system was transferred to a web-based system. It may be that this has encouraged staff to be more accurate in their reporting.

Chart 11: Student Outcomes for the Past Five School Year



Source: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

As mandated by legislation, the students served by this program are either expelled or at-risk of expulsion. In looking at Table 4, the percentage of expelled students served has decreased from SY01-02 to SY03-04. However, in SY04-05, the number of expelled students increased by 3% over the year before and remained stable at this ration for SY05-06. These data demonstrate the constant balance of prevention services with intervention services provided by these programs.

Table 4: Percent of Students Served who were Expelled or At-Risk of Expulsion

| | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Expelled Students | 19% | 16% | 7% | 10% | 10% |
| At-Risk of Expulsion Students | 81% | 84% | 93% | 90% | 90% |

Overall, these trend data are relatively consistent over the past five years. The ratio of boys to girls has been consistent across all five years; typically 60 % boys and 40% girls served. A recent change has been the increase of Hispanic students served which has coincided with the decrease in Caucasian students served. Finally, in SY05-06, the percent of students served with special education status has again increased to 22%. This appears to be a consistent upward trend over the past three years.

DISCUSSION

During the 2005-2006 school year, the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant recipients provided services to 10,439 students in the state of Colorado. Attempts to reclaim disenfranchised youth and subvert youth identified as at-risk from succumbing to outside pressures and getting expelled remain at the core of these programs. Evidence-based interventions recognized nationally, such as Positive Behavior Support and CASASTART, are gaining more momentum in the efforts targeted at these students. Program interventions and types are in line with what the literature describes as the most effective methods to serve these youth that will garner the best outcomes. Most programs continue to use eclectic approaches in their efforts to address the many needs of the students they serve. These approaches include a high priority focus on academic and attendance gains, but also have components that address family and social/emotional issues.

References

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