



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# Educational Stability Grant Program Annual Evaluation Report

*Grant Period: September 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020*

*Submission Date: May 2021*

Submitted to:

**Colorado State Board of Education**  
**Colorado House Education Committee**  
**Colorado Senate Education Committee**

This report was prepared in accordance with section The Educational Stability Grant Program legislation, C.R.S 22-14-109 (3), by the following staff from the Colorado Department of Education's Office of Student Support:

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## Executive Summary

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The Educational Stability Grant (ESG) program, authorized by House Bill 18-1306, provides grant money for academic and social-emotional services and supports to highly mobile students. This includes students who experience (or are at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their K-12 education outside of regular grade transitions (e.g., youth in foster care, those experiencing homelessness, and migrant students). Per 22-32-138.5 C.R.S., the program's approach maintains that by removing educational barriers and supporting educational stability, students served will stay in school, maintain regular attendance, decrease behavioral incidents, and make progress toward graduation or completion.

Ten applicants were selected for the grant award, totaling \$805,662. Funds are annually appropriated to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for the purpose of making grants available to eligible applicants and is managed by the Office of Student Support.

### Nearly 4,000 Students Served

Ten grantees served 3,659 highly mobile students. Eight out of 10 grantees reported serving students in foster care or out-of-home placement (177 students; 4.8 percent of students served). Seven out of 10 grantees reported serving migrant students (941 students; 25.4 percent of students served). All grantees reported serving homeless students (2,541 students; 68.5 percent of students served).

Available student level data indicated that 51.7 percent of students served were male and most were Hispanic (62.1 percent of students) or White (24.3 percent of students).

Most students served were in kindergarten through fifth grade (47.9 percent of students) followed by ninth through 12th grade (28.8 percent of students), and sixth through eighth grade (23.3 percent of students).

Services and supports provided to students and families included filling basic needs (e.g., clothing, food, hygiene), increasing connectedness (e.g., academic engagement and interest and career exploration, mentoring, extracurriculars), addressing barriers to learning (e.g., course completion, essential skills building), and providing multiple pathways to graduation for highly mobile students (e.g., career and academic plans).

### The ESG Program Met Legislative Intent

The legislative intent of the ESG program is to improve educational stability as measured by improvement in school attendance, reduction in behavioral and discipline incidents, increase in grade-level promotion, reduction in the dropout rate, and increase in the graduation and completion rates for the grant recipients' schools. Evaluation results verify that the legislative intent of the ESG program was met. Grantees reported that of the students served in 2019-2020 who enrolled in a Colorado school in 2020-2021, 94.5 percent transitioned to the next grade-level. Eighty-six percent of students served experienced positive outcomes, such as school completion and continuation of education within the same school district. Of all students served, 99.1 percent remained in school or graduated/completed school.

Three out of 10 grantees reported that none of the students served in their program dropped out of school in 2019-2020. The remaining grantees reported that 35 students (0.9 percent of all students served and 2.4 percent of students in seventh through 12th grade) dropped out of school. This is lower than the state dropout rate for migrant (3.1 percent), homeless (4.9 percent), and foster (6.4 percent) students.



Many grantees reported making progress, meeting, or exceeding their program’s academic improvement objectives (four out of 10 grantees), school attendance objectives (five out of 10 grantees), and behavioral objectives (six out of 10 grantees).

### **Impact of COVID-19 on ESG Programs**

The most common implementation challenges reported by grantees in 2019-2020 were due to COVID-19. Grantees cited that highly mobile students were most impacted by the pandemic due to lack of basic needs being met and limited access to the internet/WIFI and/or needed devices. Difficulty with implementing traditionally in-person services in a virtual setting and difficulty reaching highly mobile students were also cited as program implementation challenges.

Successes were also reported as many grantees were able to adapt programming to focus more on filling immediate needs and building positive relationships with students and families. Grantees maintained and adapted services to the greatest extent possible during this difficult disruption. Grantees provided direct student services (e.g., check-in calls and virtual visits, using multiple means to track down students, and continued one-on-one support to address individual needs). Additionally, strong collaborative partnerships both in and out of school were developed in response to the pandemic with the purpose of better serving highly mobile students.

The COVID-19 crisis caused a delay in grantees collecting and reporting data for year one of the grant. The flexibility of reporting timelines resulted in a delay in the report submission to the legislature. The data collection process and timeline for the year two report is on track to being submitted by the deadline.



## Introduction

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A highly mobile student is defined as a student who experiences (or is at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their K-12 education outside of regular grade promotion. This includes (and is not limited to) youth in foster care, those experiencing homelessness, and migrant students. School instability is linked to several negative consequences such as stress, lower test scores, four to six months of education loss with each move, loss of credits/coursework, and loss of peer groups and relationships with trusted adults.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> Due to school instability, highly mobile students are more likely to experience lower graduation rates, higher dropout rates, and tend to be disproportionately represented in disciplinary actions.<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10</sup> Colorado data trends show that highly mobile students continue to experience lower graduation rates and completion rates as well as higher dropout rates compared to their peers.<sup>10</sup>

### The ESG Program

In 2018, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 18-1306; Concerning Ensuring Educational Stability for Students in Out-of-Home Placement. The purpose of this law is to remove educational barriers and support educational stability through the creation of the Educational Stability Grant (ESG) Program. The intent of the grant program is to provide academic and social-emotional services and supports to highly mobile students. The desired outcomes of the program include improving school attendance, reducing behavioral and discipline incidents, increasing successful grade-level transitions, reducing dropout rate, and increasing graduation and completion rates for students served.

The ESG program is managed through the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Office of Student Support. Competitive grant reviews occurred for the first time in 2018-2019 and will continue to occur every three years based on the level of funding appropriated by the legislature. Eligible grant applicants include all Colorado local education agencies (LEAs) serving preschool through secondary schools operated by Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), institute charter schools, a state licensed day treatment facilities, or approved facility school, and the state Charter School Institute (CSI).

Priority considerations were given to applicants who proposed serving all three highly mobile student populations, education providers who demonstrated support of the Child Welfare Education Liaison (CWEL), McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison, and/or provided letters of support from the education provider's leadership or surrounding community programs that serve highly mobile students, and education providers with more than 9 percent highly mobile student populations. Applicants submitted an electronic application to CDE's Competitive Grants Office on or before June 19, 2019. A CDE grant review was held on July 8, 2019. The State Board of Education approved the grant awards during the August 2019 State Board of Education meeting. Grants were awarded for three sequential fiscal years provided grantees are meeting grant requirements, are making reasonable progress toward performance outcomes, and state funds are annually appropriated.

### Reporting Requirements

Each year, the authorizing legislation requires reporting on the evaluation of the grant program to the State Board of Education and the Colorado Legislature by March 31. This report is intended to meet the statutory reporting requirements outlined in 22-32-138.5 C.R.S., through the analysis of program-level and student-level information annually submitted to CDE by ESG grantees. See [Appendix A: Definitions](#) for a list of commonly used terms throughout the report. This report covers evaluation data from 10 grantees available between September 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. For more details on the evaluation methodology, see [Appendix B: Evaluation Methodology](#). For example survey tools used for the evaluation, visit the [ESG Evaluation Website](#).

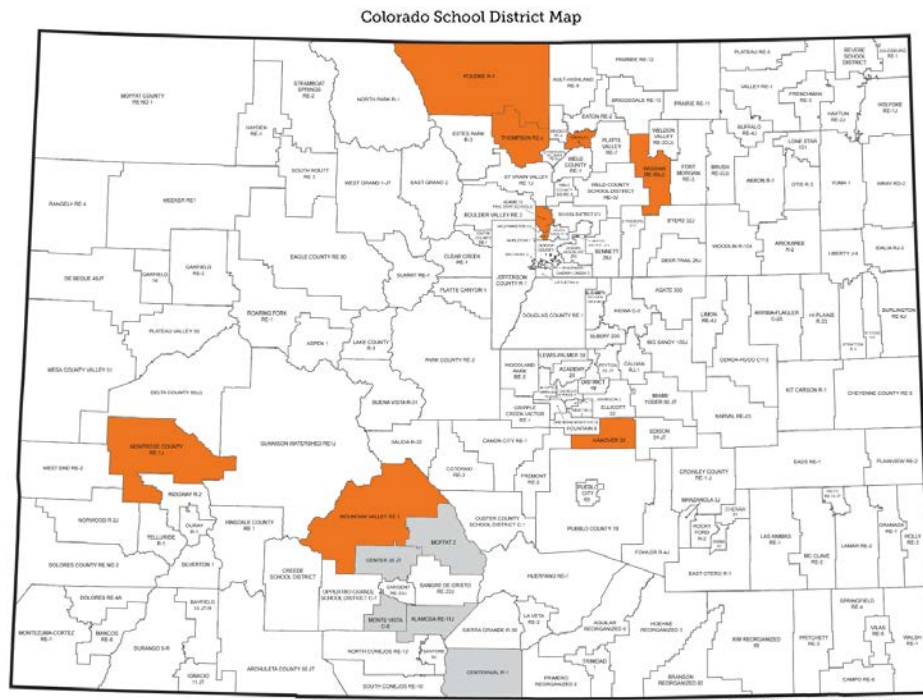


## 2019-2020 Grant Awards

For the 2019-2020 school year, ten applicants were awarded \$805,662, the maximum amount available for grant distribution. The first cohort of ESG grantees included nine school districts and one BOCES in 2019-2020, representing 10 Colorado counties. **TABLE 1** shows the grantees funded in Cohort 1 and amounts awarded.

TABLE 1: AWARDED GRANTEEES	
District	Amount Funded
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	\$85,000
Hanover 28	\$86,000
Mapleton 1	\$64,846
Montrose County RE-1J	\$30,000
Mountain Valley RE 1	\$65,400
Poudre R-1 (Serving 1 school)	\$80,351
San Luis Valley BOCES (Serving 5 districts)	\$147,156
Thompson R2-J	\$81,909
Greeley 6	\$80,000
Wiggins RE-50(J)	\$85,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$805,662</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education, ESG Program Records



Orange: Grants to school districts  
 Grey: Districts served by grants to Boards of Cooperative Education Services



## Students Served

### Students Served in 2019-2020

In 2019-2020, ESG program grantees reported serving 3,709 students:

- Eight out of 10 grantees reported serving **177 students in foster care or out-of-home placement** (4.8 percent of students served). This represents 8.6 percent of students in foster care in Colorado in 2019-2020.
- Seven out of 10 grantees reported serving **941 migrant students** (25.4 percent of students served). This represents 33.3 percent of migrant student pupil membership in Colorado in 2019-2020.
- All grantees reported serving **2,541 homeless students** (68.5 percent of students served). This represents 18.6 percent of homeless student pupil membership in Colorado in 2019-2020.

**3,709**

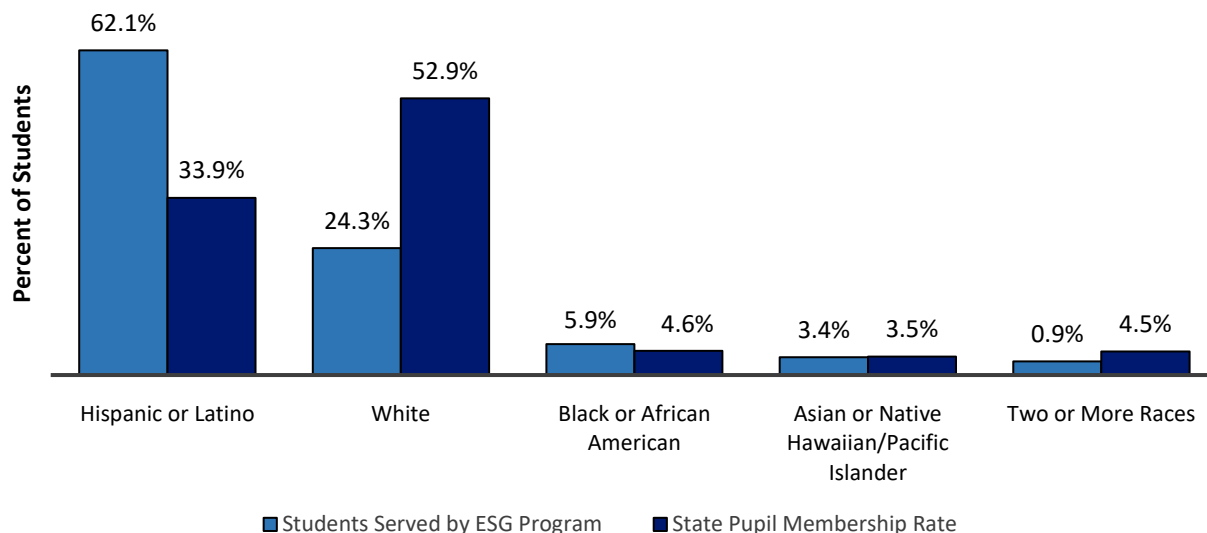
STUDENTS SERVED IN  
2019-2020

Of the 10 ESG program grantees, seven grantees served all three student groups. Two grantees served two student groups, and one grantee only served homeless students.

### Student Demographics

Demographic data were available for 89.8 percent of the students served by an ESG program (3,331 students) in 2019-2020. A review by grade level showed that most students were in kindergarten through fifth grade (47.9 percent of students) followed by ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (28.8 percent of students) and sixth through eighth grade (23.3 percent of students). The available data show 51.7 percent of students served were male and most students served were Hispanic or Latino (62.1 percent of students) and White (24.3 percent of students). **CHART 1** shows a breakout by race/ethnicity for the students served by the program compared to the 2019-2020 state pupil membership rate.

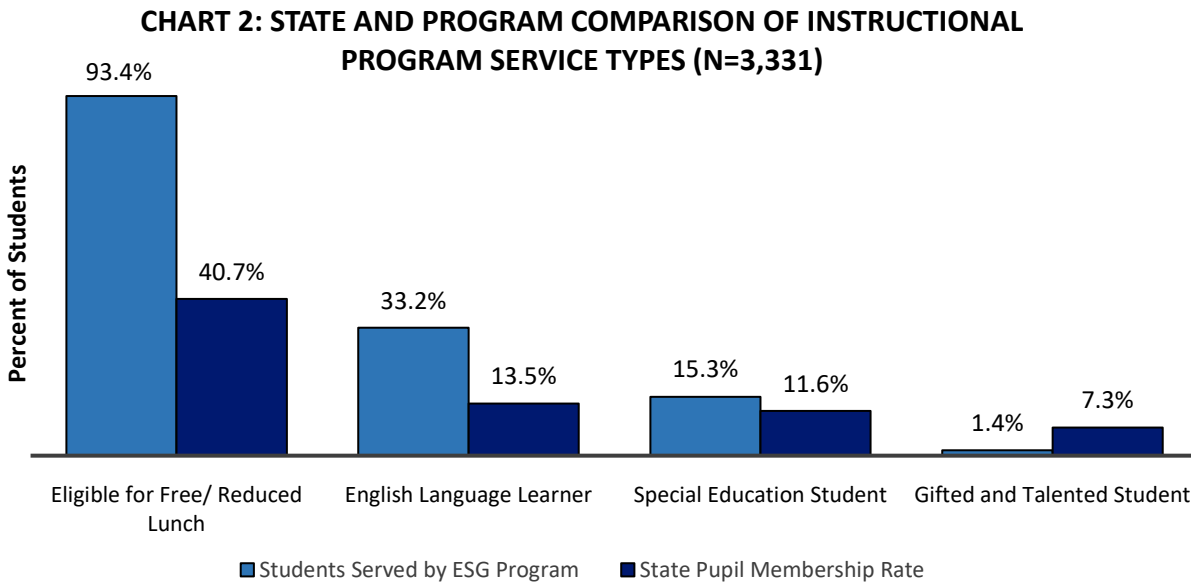
**CHART 1: STATE AND PROGRAM COMPARISON BY RACE/ETHNICITY (N=3,331)**



Source: Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Report and Pupil Membership Data, 2019-2020.



Student-level data for students served in the 2019-2020 academic school year showed that 93.4 percent of students served qualified for free/reduced lunch, 33.2 percent of students served were English learners, 15.3 percent of students served had a special education designation, and 1.4 percent of students served were gifted and talented. **CHART 2** shows a breakout by instructional program service types for the students served by the program compared to the state average pupil membership rate of all students in the state in 2019-2020.



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

**Note:** These student groups are not mutually exclusive.





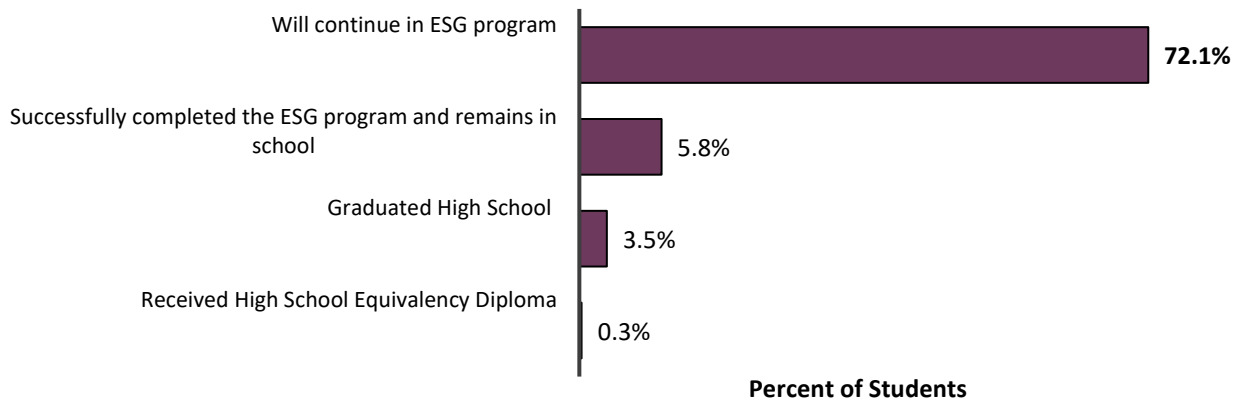
## Program Effectiveness and Student Outcomes

### Outcomes for All Students Served

Of the students served by the ESG program, 81.7 percent experienced positive outcomes by the end of the 2019-2020 academic year (3,204 students). These outcomes reflected school completion, continuation of education, and completion of the program. **CHART 3** breaks down the positive outcomes for students served by these categories.

**8 out of 10**  
STUDENTS EXPERIENCED  
POSITIVE OUTCOMES

**CHART 3: POSITIVE OUTCOMES BY CATEGORY (N=3,709)**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

*“The student began living on their own with different friends, moving from time to time. This qualified them for additional support as an unaccompanied minor. The student excelled at school but needed transportation provided which, was supported through funding. Free lunches were provided and when the student became a participant in the cohort program at Front Range Community College, they needed additional transportation support as well as tuition and material/books purchasing assistance. The liaison communicated regularly with the student advisor/school counselor and clothing was also provided. The grant allowed the purchase of a hotspot to enable the student to access the internet needed for college courses. The student graduated May of 2019 with several credits accrued at college level ... This student is now attending college full time on a scholarship, and it is thanks to the extra grant funding that so much has been gained.”*

- Success Story Submitted by a Denver Metro Grantee



## Dropout Prevention

One intermediate goal of the ESG program is to reduce the number of students dropping out of school by providing students with intensive support focused on addressing these risk factors. In 2019-2020, three out of 10 grantees reported that none of the 128 students served in their three programs dropped out of school. The remaining grantees reported that 35 students (0.9 percent of all students served and 2.4 percent of students in seventh through 12th grade) dropped out of school. This is lower than the state dropout rate for migrant (3.1 percent), homeless (4.9 percent), and foster (6.4 percent) students in 2019-2020.

## Successful Grade-Level Transitions

The authorizing legislation requires the annual reporting of increases in successful grade-level transitions for the grant-funded schools. CDE does not collect grade-level transition rates at the district or school level. Using the SASIDs of students served by the program submitted by ESG grantees, it is estimated that about 94.5 percent of students served in 2019-2020 enrolled in the next grade-level (2,683 students) and 5.5 percent remained in the same grade level (157 students) in 2020-2021. These data will serve as baseline for the ESG program and for future reporting of grade-level transition rates.

**Note:** Only students with available school records in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 (N=2,840) were included in this analysis. The additional 491 students reported through SASIDs in 2019-2020 were not enrolled in Colorado in 2020-2021. All grantees reported that they attempted to contact every family served during the 2019-20 school year and were unable to locate some families at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. Grantees indicated that this is likely due to the additional financial stress due to the COVID-19 crisis.

## Meeting Legislative Intent and District/School Outcomes

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The authorizing legislation also requires the annual reporting of improvements in school attendance, reduction in behavioral and discipline incidents, reduction in the dropout rate, and increase in the graduation and completion rates for the grant funded schools.

CDE annually collects and publishes disaggregated information at the school, district, and state level on the percent of students who complete high school and the percent of students who dropout of school by student group. Graduation, completion, and dropout rates for 2019-2020 were calculated specifically for the districts and schools served by the ESG program. These data will serve as a baseline for the ESG program and for future reporting of graduation, completion, and dropout rates.

**Note:** Attendance and discipline data by ESG student groups were not available in 2019-2020. However, trends in academic performance, school attendance, and discipline incidents are captured in the Performance Objectives and Program Outcomes section.

## Graduation and Completion Rates

In general, ESG funded districts and schools reported higher or similar graduation and completion rates for secondary students served in 2019-2020 compared to the state rates. Data also show that highly mobile students benefit from having additional years to complete their education. **Table 2** compares the state 4-year and extended graduation rates as well as completion rates reported by funded districts and schools. For more information on these rates, visit the [Graduation Rates](#) CDE webpages.



**TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF STATE AND PROGRAM GRADUATION RATES BY STUDENT GROUP**

Year	Graduation Rates			Completion Rates		
	Foster	Homeless	Migrant	Foster	Homeless	Migrant
4-Year Rates	State: 30.5% ESG: <b>33.3%</b>	State: 56.7% ESG: <b>62.7%</b>	State: <b>71.7%</b> ESG: 71.4%	State: <b>39.4%</b> ESG: 39.3%	State: 59.3% ESG: <b>65.6%</b>	State: <b>72.8%</b> ESG: 71.4%
5-Year Rates	State: 33.4% ESG: <b>43.2%</b>	State: 61.5% ESG: <b>69.6%</b>	State: <b>73.9%</b> ESG: 73.7%	State: 47.3% ESG: <b>48.1%</b>	State: 65.0% ESG: <b>72.7%</b>	State: <b>75.8%</b> ESG: 74.7%
6-Year Rates	State: 33.0% ESG: <b>44.9%</b>	State: 64.4% ESG: <b>70.1%</b>	State: 73.0% ESG: <b>77.9%</b>	State: 51.5% ESG: <b>59.0%</b>	State: 68.9% ESG: <b>74.5%</b>	State: 73.3% ESG: <b>77.9%</b>
7-Year Rates	State: 33.3% ESG: <b>40.3%</b>	State: 66.3% ESG: <b>71.5%</b>	State: <b>75.7%</b> ESG: 73.3%	State: 51.4% ESG: <b>53.2%</b>	State: 71.3% ESG: <b>76.6%</b>	State: <b>77.3%</b> ESG: 73.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Student End-of-Year Snapshot Collection, 2019-2020

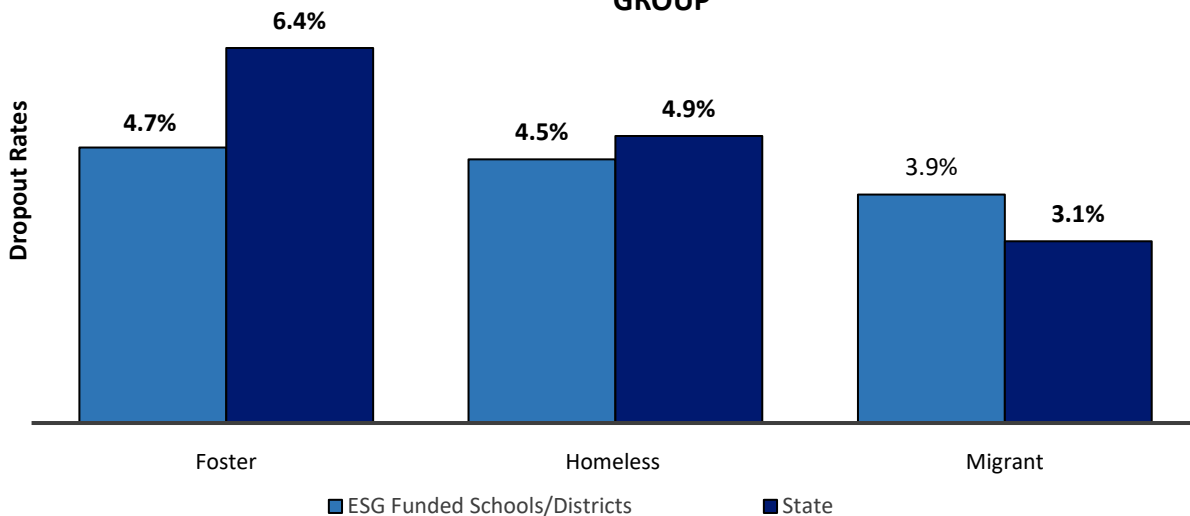
Note: The rates depicted are annual rates and not cohort rates. Program rates include data from 13 districts served and 1 school.

Note: Based on SASIDs data submitted by ESG grantees, 101 students in the Class of 2020 were identified as being served by the ESG program across all the funded districts and schools. Of those identified, 100 students graduated or completed their high school education in 2019-2020.

### Dropout Rates

In general, ESG-funded districts and schools reported lower dropout rates for students served in 2019-2020 compared to the state rates, with the exception of dropout rates for migrant students. **CHART 4** compares the dropout rate for the state to funded districts/schools by student groups. For more information on these rates, visit the [Dropout Statistics](#) CDE webpages.

**CHART 4: STATE AND PROGRAM DROPOUT RATE COMPARISON BY STUDENT GROUP**



Source: Colorado Department of Education, Student End-of-Year Snapshot Collection, 2019-2020

Note: These student groups are not mutually exclusive. Program rates include data from 13 districts served and 1 school.



## Performance Objectives and Program Outcomes

As part of the conditions of the grant, each ESG grantee developed one performance objective in each of three categories required by statute to be achieved by the end of the three-year grant period. Grantees were instructed to rate their performance objectives using the following guidance and provide evidence for the rating selected:

- *If you went above and beyond your objective(s), then you exceeded your goal.*
- *If you have completely (100 percent) met your objective(s), then you have met your goal.*
- *If you have partially met your objective (more than 50 percent), then indicate approaching.*
- *If you have made minimal gains on your objective, select not making progress.*

To better identify how many grantees met or exceeded their objectives, ratings were aggregated by grantees. When focusing on the ratings exceeding and meeting, the results showed that two out of 10 grantees met or exceeded at least half of their objectives, and five out of 10 grantees met or exceeded at least a third of their objectives.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on program implementation and data collection, an additional response of *unable to rate performance objective* was included in the 2019-2020 reporting survey. Grantees unable to rate their objectives were prompted to provide a follow-up explanation. The most common programmatic reasons cited included ***disruption in programming, shifts in program priority, inability to implement programming remotely, and staff turnover.***

Grantees also reported barriers related to the evaluation of their programs and reporting to CDE. The most common barriers cited included ***disrupted or canceled data collections*** and ***comparison to baseline data was no longer valid*** due to changes in available metrics.

### Ratings by Objective Areas

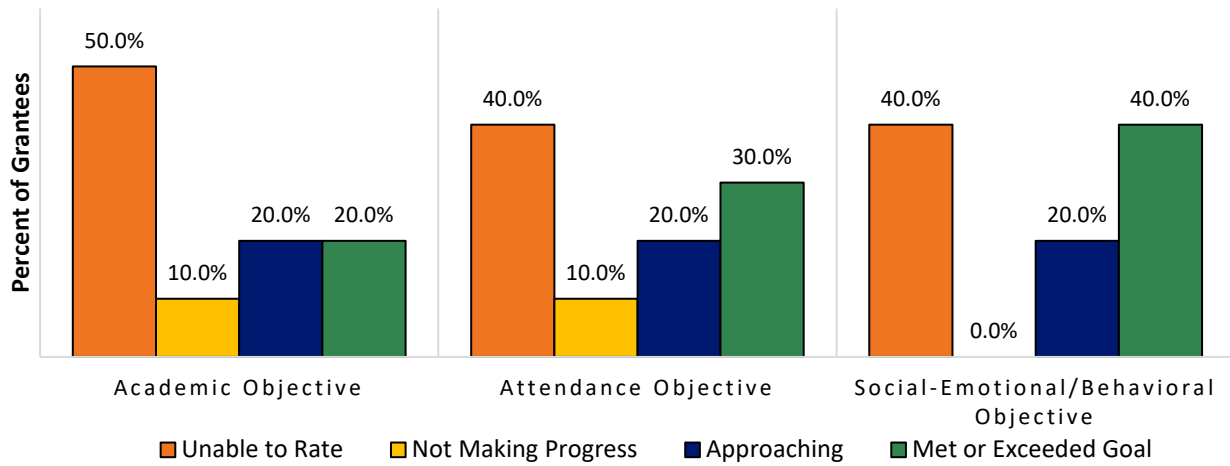
Grantees set one performance objective in each of the following areas:

- **Academic Improvement Objective** focuses on academic outcomes for highly mobile children and youth either through direct academic interventions or to facilitate connections with the education provider's academic supports. Four out of 10 grantees reported making progress, meeting, or exceeding this objective.
- **School Attendance Objective** focuses on demonstrating reduction of school attendance barriers for highly mobile students and increased attendance. Five out of 10 grantees reported making progress, meeting, or exceeding this objective.
- **Behavioral Objective** focuses on reductions in behavioral or discipline incidents and an increase in essential skills through evidenced-based programming. Six out of 10 grantees reported making progress, meeting, or exceeding this objective.

Overall, grantees were significantly more likely to have met or exceeded their social-emotional/behavioral performance objectives. **CHART 5** shows the percent by ratings for each of the three objective areas.



**CHART 5: PERCENT OF RATING FOR EACH OF THE THREE OBJECTIVE AREAS**



*Source: Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020*

Grantees reported that 60.3 percent of students served received academic services, 81.3 percent of students served received attendance related services, and 53.9 percent of students served received social-emotional and/or behavioral related services through the ESG program.



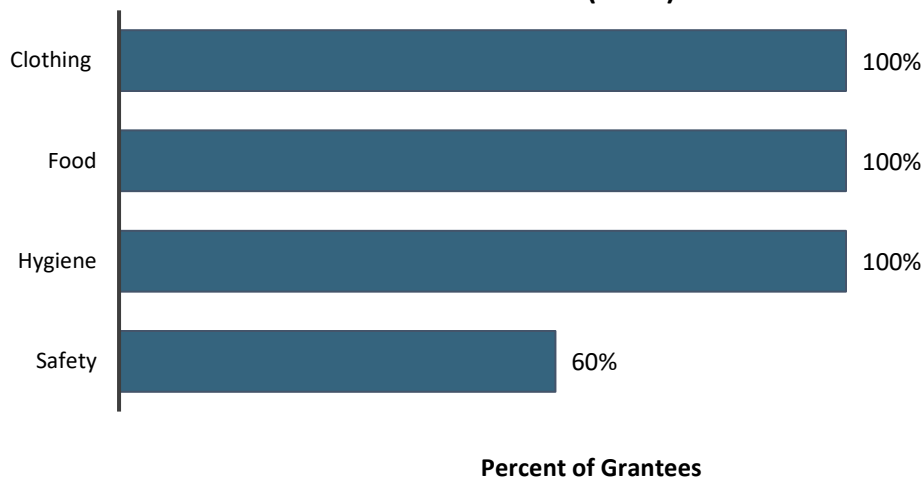
## Highly Mobile Student Framework for Service and Support

The Highly Mobile Student Framework for Service and Support is the foundation of the ESG program. This framework outlines how to improve educational stability and outcomes for highly mobile students. This multi-faceted framework includes services and supports focused on filling essential needs, increasing connectedness in and out of school, addressing barriers to learning, and offering multiple pathways to high school graduation and postsecondary success. See [Appendix C](#) for more in-depth information about the framework.

### Essential Needs

The ESG program funds efforts to ensure that students have access to basic needs such as clothing, food, and housing. **CHART 6** provides a breakout of the most common essential needs met by the ESG program.

**CHART 6: MOST COMMON SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOCUSED ON ESSENTIAL NEEDS (N=10)**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

**Note:** Grantees could select more than one support service.

*“The program connected families to local community resources for holiday food baskets, emergency food resources, housing vouchers, and homelessness prevention...partnered with DHS for students/families with open cases, to help support students at school...connected students/families to clothing resources through Community Connections Closet...provided for urgent needs and hygiene products, as needed.”*

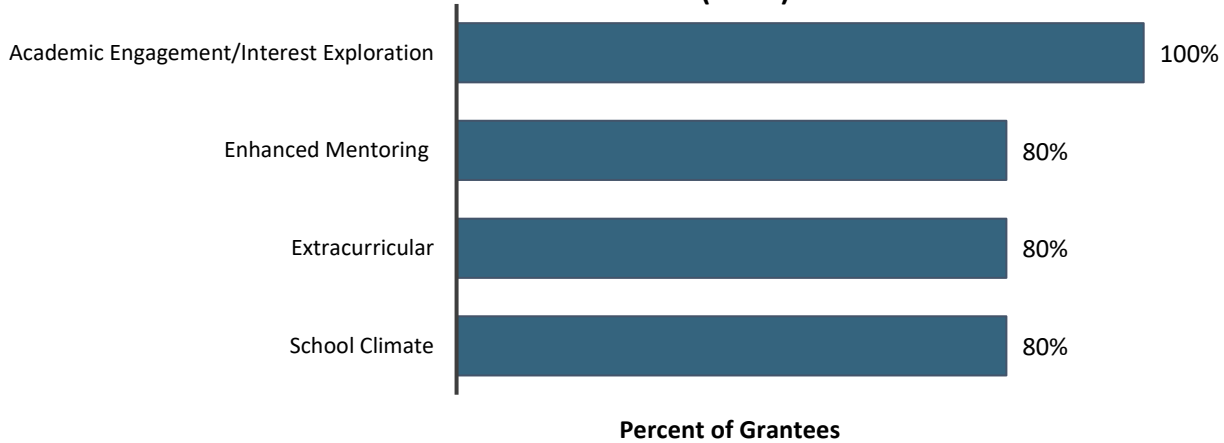
*- Submitted by an Urban-Suburban Grantee*



## Connectedness (in and out of school)

The ESG program funds services and supports to ensure that students have an opportunity to form meaningful connections with peers and adults in all aspects of their lives. **CHART 7** provides a breakout of the services and supports provided to increase student connectedness.

**CHART 7: MOST COMMON SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOCUSED ON CONNECTEDNESS (N=10)**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

**Note:** Grantees could select more than one support service.

*“Both the Graduation Advocate and Engagement Specialist worked to develop authentic relationships with the students and families served through this grant. The GA scheduled meetings with all students on a quarterly basis and met individually with students who needed academic support on a frequent basis. The ES connected with families via phone and in person to discuss students grades and attendance and to provide housing and resource assistance.”*

*- Submitted by an Urban-Suburban Grantee*

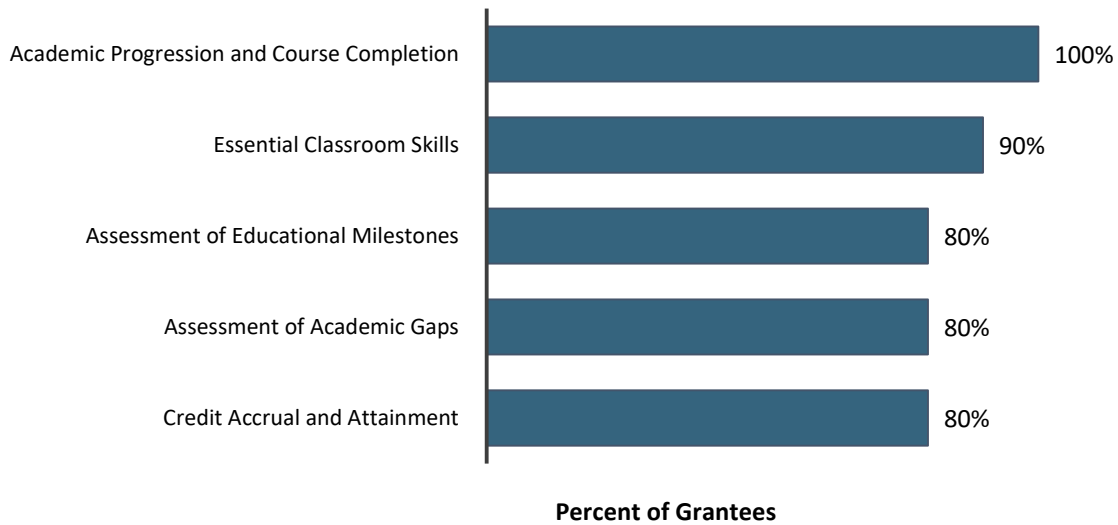


## Addressing Barriers to Learning

The ESG program funded innovative solutions to addressing barriers to learning for highly mobile students.

**CHART 8** provides a breakout of the most common innovative services and supports implemented to address barriers to learning.

**CHART 8: MOST COMMON SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING (N=10)**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

**Note:** Grantees could select more than one support service.

*"All 7 categories under "innovative solutions to address barriers in learning" are accomplished routinely with every student, according to their need, within our schools. Our small by design models assure that not only teachers know their students, but that each staff member playing a critical role steps in when called for. Staff also knows to contact the district rep supporting the homeless, foster and migrant students when needed for additional support."*

*- Submitted by a Denver Metro Grantee*



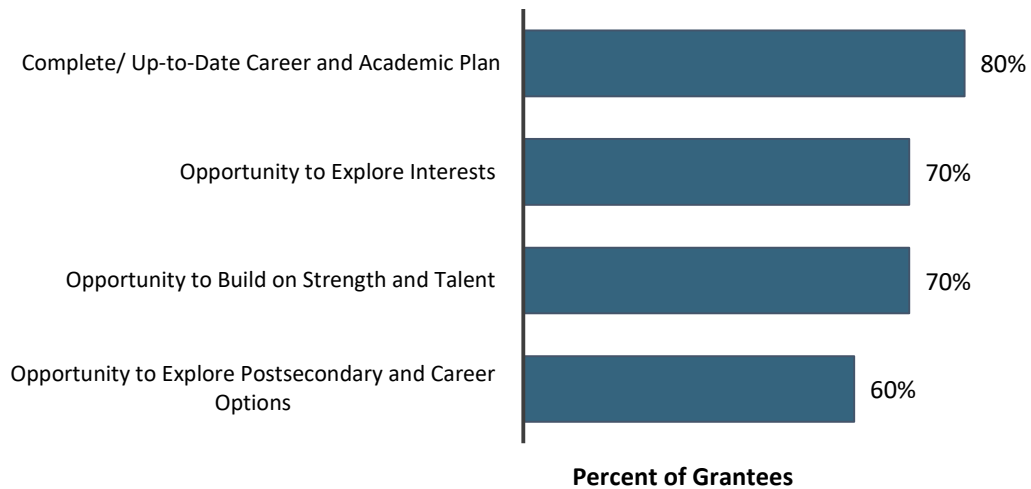


## Multiple Pathways

The ESG funds a variety of structured academic opportunities for students to achieve their goal for high school graduation and postsecondary success based on the individual student's academic interest and unique needs.

**CHART 9** provides a breakout of the most common pathways available through the program.

**CHART 9: MOST COMMON SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOCUSED ON MULTIPLE PATHWAYS (N=10)**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, ESG End-of-Year Reporting, 2019-2020

**Note:** Grantees could select more than one support service.

*“The Educational Stability Grant Funds provided our Highly Mobile Students with resources and supports for a successful learning environment. We focused on 3 pathways: leadership, parent partnerships, and post-secondary readiness. The Culture & Equity Coordinator together with the regional Migrant Education Director, Child Welfare Education Liaison, and other district administrators, faculty and staff worked to implement a program that would increase graduation rates, engage students, and foster a culture of connectedness. Students were offered an opportunity to develop leadership skills by participating in leadership activities. A district peer mentoring program provides an opportunity for high school students to serve as mentors for younger students encouraging a sense of volunteerism, connectedness and leadership.”*

*- Submitted by a Grantee in an Outlying City*



## Most Effective Strategies

Grantees were asked to report on the most effective strategies that have positively impacted their programs. The most effective strategies identified by grantees included focusing on strategies that increase **connectedness with students and families**, providing **academic supports** to students, **meeting essential needs**, increasing **community engagement**, reducing **transportation** barriers, and implementing **MTSS**.

## Lessons Learned

Grantees were asked to specifically describe special circumstances that positively affected progress on achieving program objectives. Program success was attributed to the following factors:

- Dedicated program staff or team focused on providing supports to students (e.g., interventionist, specialist, mentors, liaisons, and youth advocates).
- Focus on identifying students in need of services.
- Consistent communication and relationship building efforts with students.
- Cross team collaboration and partnerships within and outside of the district.
- Regularly tracking progress of students serviced (e.g., Early Warning Systems).

Grantees were also asked to specifically describe circumstances that negatively affected progress on achieving program objectives. **Program disruption due to COVID-19** was the most cited challenge with program implementation and achieving program goals in 2019-2020.

Other challenges mentioned included:

- Staff turnover and the amount of time required to fill positions.
- Difficulty in identifying students for services due to access to student records.
- Family/guardian engagement with a highly mobile population.

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*“The one-on-one meetings with youth in foster care in schools built trust between the students and the schools by providing a one-person point of contact for the child within the District system to access academic and administrative support. The meetings between students and the liaison also encouraged stability in the education of the students by connecting them to relevant academic players including social workers, counselors, teachers, and other staff.”*

*- Submitted by a Grantee in an Outlying City*

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## Impact of COVID-19 on Students and Programs

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In general, grantees were successfully implementing programming and making progress on their program goals prior to March 2019. The most common implementation challenges reported by grantees in 2019-2020 were directly due to COVID-19. Grantees were asked an optional follow-up question in the end of year reporting survey to explain how COVID-19 impacted their ESG program's services to students.

Results of a thematic analysis of the responses ( $N=8$ ) revealed that highly mobile students were most impacted by the pandemic. Challenges cited included **lack of basic needs** and **limited access to the internet/WIFI and/or needed devices**.

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*"COVID impacted students by not being able to go to school and get support. They were at home or wherever they could go that were not necessarily safe, warm, and good places to be. Also lack of internet access, food insecurities, and not having individual computers to do schoolwork left our most vulnerable population to take care of themselves."*

*Submitted by a Rural Grantee*

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Grantees also voiced concerns on the **impact the stress will continue to have on students**, including on future academic performance and attendance. Several grantees take a whole child approach in individual work with students and families when addressing academic, attendance, and behavioral goals. This approach allows grantees and students to address concerns individually.

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*"Almost all of the students we serve are low income. Many of our families faced the possibility of falling behind on rent and bills once parents and family members were required to remain at home. For those who were able to remain in their jobs, they faced (and continue to face) the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, many of our families lack adequate access to internet. Many of our students have younger siblings at home who they are now responsible for watching during the day. Although we have not seen the full impact that stress will have on our students, it was apparent that student performance and academic interest waned. We believe that this will continue to impact the resilience and determination of our students in the coming academic year."*

*Submitted by an Urban-Suburban Grantee*

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At a programmatic level, grantees reported that a **decline in services** occurred due to **difficulty with adapting traditionally in-person services**. Grantees also reported **difficulty in reaching students and families** during the transition.

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*“The programming was impacted somewhat in that the face-to-face learning and interventions did not happen. However, the virtual interventions did, and we are fortunate to be a small school and work with each of the 40 students. Some students it was difficult, but many were able to be assisted. The number of services declined for some students as it was difficult to connect with some.”*

*Submitted by a Rural Grantee*

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However, grantees also reported successes during this time. For example, grantees commonly reported that programs were able to **adapt programming to focus on filling immediate needs of students and families and on building positive relationships with students**. Grantees maintained services to the greatest extent possible during this difficult disruption to direct, in-person student services.

Grantees also cited that **varied and repetitive outreach efforts** with students and families contributed to continuing services and keeping students engaged (e.g., check-in calls and virtual visits, using multiple means to track down and engage students, and continued supports to address individual needs).

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*“When we transitioned to remote learning, all of those services and interactions disappeared. We adapted. We phoned students to check in on how they were doing academically and to see if they had any resource needs (rent assistance, food, transportation to medical appointments...). We advocated for the resources they needed to succeed in their classes and provided them with tips for how to manage their time.”*

*Submitted by an Urban-Suburban Grantee*

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Grantees also reported that **strong collaborative partnerships** occurred for the purpose of better serving students and meeting immediate needs.

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*“School is where many of our students get two meals per day, and despite great effort to continue emergency food service, many students and families were unable to make it to our emergency food sites after schools closed. When we saw that only about 10% of Free/Reduced Lunch eligible students were being served at the 5 emergency food sites, the ESG and Family Engagement teams collaborated with Transportation and Nutritional Services to plan and deploy 5 bus routes to get school meals, weekend non-perishable food, school supplies, and new books out to families. The bus routes increased the # of students served with emergency food/supplies from approximately 450 per week to about 600 per week.”*

*Submitted by an Urban-Suburban Grantee*

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## Conclusion

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The ESG program represents the state’s primary investment in removing educational barriers and supporting educational stability for highly mobile students. Results from the current evaluation revealed that nearly 4,000 students were served by the ESG program in the 2019-2020 academic school year. Services and supports provided to students and families (e.g., filling basic needs, increasing connectedness, addressing barriers to learning, and providing multiple pathways for highly mobile students) contributed to positive results on performance objectives and student outcomes. For example, 86 percent of students experienced positive outcomes, such as school completion and continuation of education within the same school district. Of the students served in 2019-2020 who enrolled in a Colorado school in 2020-2021, 94.5 percent successfully transitioned to the next grade-level.

Grantees reported that the most effective strategies that have positively impacted program and student outcomes included focusing on strategies that increase connectedness with students and families, providing academic supports to students, meeting essential needs, increasing community engagement, reducing transportation barriers, and implementing MTSS.

ESG grantees faced unique barriers in this first year of the grant program. Due to the timing of the authorizing legislation and State Board of Education approval, funds for this grant were available to grantees at the end of September 2019, making the first year of the grant program shorter than subsequent years. This first year of the grant program served as a baseline for the next two years of the program. Grantees indicated they were making significant progress prior to the COVID-19 crisis, but this progress was disrupted when schools transitioned to remote learning.

COVID-19 impacted programs in several ways (e.g., decline in services, fewer students identified for supports, discontinued program aspects) and barriers such as limited access to basic needs, devices, and internet were identified during the transition to remote programming. Although disruptions due to COVID-19 occurred, most



grantees were able to adapt and leverage their programs to focus more on filling immediate needs and building positive relationships with students and families.

The ESG program provides opportunities to students who may otherwise not have these supports. Evaluation results for the ESG program indicate that the program met its legislative intent in this first year to remove educational barriers, as well as supporting educational stability for highly mobile students. Results of the evaluation also revealed that highly mobile students were most impacted by the pandemic in funded districts. Continued funding to support this work will support COVID-19 response and recovery.



## Endnotes

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- <sup>9</sup> Kull, M. A., Morton, M. H., Patel, S., Curry, S., & Carreon, E. (2019). Missed Opportunities: Education among Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America. *Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago*.
- <sup>10</sup> Colorado Department of Education (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/2019statepolicyreportondropoutpreventionandstudentengagement>



## Appendices

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### Appendix A: Definitions

**Highly mobile students-** means children or youth who at any time during the academic year were homeless, as defined in section 22-1-102.5, C.R.S; were in non-certified kinship care, as defined in section 19-1-103, C.R.S; were students in out-of-home placement, as defined in section 22-32-138(1)(h), C.R.S.; or were migrant children, as defined in section 22-23-103, C.R.S.

**Homeless children and youth-** means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate primary nighttime residence and includes children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (that are deemed as inadequate housing) or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Residing in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances; and/or
- Unaccompanied youth living in the above circumstances.

**Kinship:** According to Colorado Revised Statute 19-1-103, there are two types of kinship placement. The definitions are as follows:

- (71.3) "Kin", for purposes of a "kinship foster care home" or for purposes of "noncertified kinship care", may be a relative of the child, a person ascribed by the family as having a family-like relationship with the child, or a person that has a prior significant relationship with the child. These relationships take into account cultural values and continuity of significant relationships with the child.
- (78.7) "Noncertified kinship care" means a child is being cared for by a relative or kin who has a significant relationship with the child in circumstances when there is a safety concern by a county department and where the relative or kin has not met the foster care certification requirements for a kinship foster care home or has chosen not to pursue that certification process.

**"Student in out-of-home placement"**- Means a student who at any time during an academic term is in foster care and receiving educational services through a state-licensed day treatment facility, who is otherwise in placement out of the home as that term is defined in section 19-1-103 (85), C.R.S. or who is in placement outside of the home as a result of an adjudication pursuant to article 2 of title 19, C.R.S. It includes a child or youth who transfers enrollment as a result of being returned to his or her home at the conclusion of out-of-home placement.





## **Appendix B: Evaluation Methodology**

### **Data Collection**

Evaluation data were collected from all 10 grantees funded by the ESG program. Grantees were responsible for submitting their End-of-Year Survey to CDE using a Qualtrics survey platform. In addition, they were required to securely submit State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) for all students served.

The results reported in this document reflect data collected at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Webinars were conducted in preparing grantees to collect and enter data. Throughout the reporting period, CDE staff were available to assist with problems and answer questions.

The CDE staff analyzed the data for any irregularities and conducted mathematical checks to correctly calculate and tabulate data. If data were not accurate, CDE staff would contact the grantee for clarification and revisions. These strategies ensure that year-end reporting is as accurate as possible.

### **Analysis**

Aggregated data from the materials collected were downloaded from the SEES and Qualtrics systems as Excel spreadsheets by CDE staff, which facilitated the statistical analysis of process and outcome data. All Personally Identified Information (PII) data was handled and stored securely in accordance with CDE guidelines. Using disaggregated and aggregated data, CDE staff conducted quantitative (i.e., descriptive statistics and inferential statistics) and qualitative analyses (i.e., thematic analysis). For quantitative analyses, statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ . When appropriate, inferential analyses included an investigation of differences by grant year and student group.



## Appendix C: Highly Mobile Student Framework

Below are the elements of the service and support framework. Listed are examples of services and supports that are needed to improve student outcomes.

**Essential needs** — means ensuring students have access to basic human needs, which includes the following:

- Food
- Housing
- Safety
- Clothing
- Hygiene
- Language Interpreter (if needed)

**Connectedness (in and out of school)** — Refers to ensuring students have an opportunity to form meaningful connections with peers and adults in all aspects of their lives. Programs that support connectedness include, but are not limited to:

- Enhanced mentoring (programs that connect to adults and peer networks)
- Extracurricular
- Academic engagement/interest exploration
- Community engagement
- School climate

**Innovative solutions to address barriers to learning** — Refers to the education provider's efforts to reduce barriers to learning for highly mobile students. Examples of programs include, but are not limited to:

- Academic progression and course completion
- Seamless transfer of coursework
- Assessment of academic gaps due to school mobility
- Essential classroom skills
- Assessment of educational milestones
- Complete and up-to-date student assessment
- Credit accrual and attainment

**Multiple pathways** — Defined as a variety of structured academic opportunities for students to achieve their goal for high school graduation and postsecondary success. Each pathway is defined by its programming and is accessed by each student based on the individual student's academic interest and unique needs. Examples include:

- Complete and up-to-date career and academic plan
- Opportunity to explore interests
- Opportunity to build on areas of strength and talent
- Opportunity to explore a multitude of postsecondary and career options