

# Dropout Prevention & Student Re-engagement

## Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS)



The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program was established in 1997. It is described in Colorado Revised Statute 22-33-205.

### **PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM**

The purpose of the EARSS grant is to assist in providing educational and support services to expelled students, students at-risk of suspension and expulsion, and students at-risk of habitual truancy as defined by unexcused absences.

Funds are awarded annually through a competitive grant process to fund 4-year grants. Eligible applicants include school districts, alternative schools within districts, charter schools, Boards of Cooperative Education Services, facility schools, and also non-public non-parochial schools working through agreements to serve public school students.

### **IMPORTANCE OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS**

Without necessary supports and intervention, expelled students and students at risk of future disciplinary action and/or habitual truancy frequently lack the skills, capacity and motivation to keep up with their school work. When falling behind their peers, they may isolate themselves and stop coming to school, engage in delinquent behavior, abuse drugs to self-medicate or become disruptive in class.

Expelled students and those that exhibit behaviors linked to disciplinary action and delinquency are at risk of dropping out of school. The EARSS grant program directs resources to address the unique learning needs and challenges of these students.

### **MOST COMMON BEHAVIORS PLACING STUDENTS AT RISK**

2015-16 School Year

EARSS grantees reported serving 403 expelled students. The most common reasons for receiving EARSS-funded services were due to marijuana violations (34.7%), detrimental behavior (13.4%), and disobedient/defiant behavior (10.7%).

Of the 8,691 at-risk students served by an EARSS program, students were identified as “at-risk” mainly due to truancy issues (49.4%), disobedience (17.8%), detrimental behavior (10.9%), and marijuana violations (9.5%).

### **Beneficiaries by the Numbers**

**Annual appropriation since state FY11:**

- \$7,493,560

**Number of Awards:**

2015-16

- 44 grantees located in 20 counties

2014-15

- 44 grantees located in 23 counties

2013-14

- 45 grantees located in 22 counties

2012-13

- 54 grantees located in 25 counties

**Students and Parents Served**

2015-16

- 9,094 students
- 5,484 parents/guardians

2014-15

- 9,897 students
- 7,196 parents/guardians

2013-14

- 8,635 students
- 6,099 parents/guardians

2012-13

- 9,440 students
- 5,802 parents/guardians



## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

### **Programs and Strategies Funded**

State statutes require schools to work with the parents of the expelled and at-risk students regarding the development of plans for serving their child. Therefore, grantees must also engage parents in grant objectives. Examples of common uses of the grant funds include:

- Educational services for core academics such as coursework, tutoring, and credit recovery
- Restorative justice/discipline, wrap-around case management, alternatives to out-of-school suspension and expulsion, and multi-tiered behavioral support interventions
- Life skills, goal setting, fostering career and vocation-related interest, and character education
- Support to habitual truants to increase attendance and avoid truancy court
- Counseling, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, including through contracted services and inter-governmental agreements with other youth-serving community agencies

## **STUDENT AND PARENT OUTCOMES**

### **2015-2016 Evaluation Results**

EARSS grantees reported the following outcomes:

- 76.4 percent of expelled students served experienced positive outcomes. These outcomes reflect school completion, continuation of education, completion of expulsion, and return to school.
- The dropout rate of expelled 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in an EARSS program was 4.0 percent. This is lower than the last reported state dropout rate for alternative schools, which was 17.9 percent.
- 87.5 percent of at-risk students served experienced positive outcomes. These outcomes reflect school completion and continuation of education within the same school district.
- The dropout rate of at-risk 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in an EARSS program was 3.9 percent, which was an increase from last year's rate of 3.0 percent.
- Of the 5,484 parents/guardians served, 47.5 percent improved their ability to support their child's learning.

## **Where can I learn more?**

- [Visit the EARSS grant homepage for more information.](#)
- [View all CDE fact sheets.](#)