

Foster Care Education Program

Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement



COLORADO
Department of Education

Improving educational outcomes for children and youth

State statistics show that on average there are 5,000 Colorado students in foster care each year. The Foster Care Education Program at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) was launched in 2012 to support local education agencies and communities in serving these students.

Purpose

The Foster Care Education Program is dedicated to helping students in foster care excel academically, complete courses, advance to the next grade and continue on a path to postsecondary success.

It takes commitment, leadership and a coordinated effort for students in foster care to establish school stability and succeed in school. The Foster Care Education Program is designed to work with K-12 public schools and districts to focus on these elements:

- Increase learning supports
- Implement effective strategies
- Strengthen partnerships with child welfare and community agencies
- Coordinate educational transition services
- Collaborate with the courts, state agencies and child advocacy groups

Framework for success

- **Laws and legislation**
 - Implement state laws requiring child welfare liaisons (CWELs)
 - Provide guidance on federal and state legislation that defines the rights of students in foster care
- **Dedicated resources**
 - Train and provide ongoing professional development for child welfare education liaisons, county caseworkers, guardians appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child, court personnel and judges.
- **Coordinated response**
 - Create targeted outreach and public awareness of foster care education issues
 - Implement school district pilots to increase supports and coordination of services with county child welfare agencies
 - Share and track data on student achievement and educational outcomes of students in foster care

2018 Colorado Facts

- The 4-year completion rate (attainment of a diploma or high school equivalency) for students in foster care is **37.8 percent**.
- When students in foster care have six years to complete high school, the completion rate goes up to **51.1 percent**.
- Students in foster care have a mobility rate of **55.4 percent**.

Statistics are provided through a data-sharing agreement between the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Human Services. For information on the definitions of the rates and calculation, visit CDE's Graduation Statistics webpage, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/gradratecurrent>.

- **Partner with schools and communities to tackle education barriers**

- Increase transportation to school and academic enrichment activities
- Improve transitions due to foster care placements and school changes
- Ensure transfer of transcripts and student records with each move

Student outcome trends

The following tables provide information about the dropout rates, 4-year graduation and completion rates for students in foster care from 2012-2018. The 4-year rate refers to students who graduate in four or fewer years of entering high school. The extended-year completion rate refers to students who earn a high school credential (diploma or high school equivalency) in five or six years. This information was obtained through a data-sharing agreement between the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Education.

Table 1: Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Students in Foster Care from 2014 to 2018								
Class of	4-Year Rate		5-year Rate		6-year Rate		7 year Rate	
	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion	Graduation	Completion
2014	30.0%	41.8%	35.1%	46.9%	40.9%	53.3%	42.7%	56.0%
2015	29.3%	35.9%	37.6%	46.9%	40.3%	51.0%	41.4%	53.6%
2016	33.2%	37.4%	40.2%	46.4%	42.5%	51.1%	Available 2018-19	
2017	23.6%	33.6%	29.6%	43.8%	Available 2018-19		Available 2019-20	
2018	24.8%	37.8%	Available 2018-19		Available 2019-20		Available 2020-21	

Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Table 2: Dropout Rates for Foster Student from 2012 to 2018				
School Year	Pupil Count (7-12 Grade)	Number of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Comparison to State Dropout Rate and Percentage Point Difference
2012-2013	3,560	160	4.5	2.0 higher (2.5 state rate)
2013-2014	3,436	185	5.4	3.0 higher (2.4 state rate)
2014-2015	3,553	239	6.8	4.3 higher (2.5 state rate)
2015-2016	4,018	372	9.3	7.0 higher (2.5 state rate)
2016-2017	3,398	284	8.4	6.1 higher (2.5 state rate)
2017-2018	4,116	355	8.6	6.4 higher (2.5 state rate)

Source: CDE Data Services and Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement

Where can I learn more?

- Contact Kristin Myers at the Foster Care Education Program Office at myers_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6007.

Child Welfare Education Liaisons

- For the list of child welfare education liaisons in each Colorado school district, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/cweldirectory>.
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs