



COLORADO
Department of Education

2017 Legislative Report Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program

Submitted to:

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

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Executive Summary

The School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) became part of the Colorado Revised Statute in 2008 (22-91-101 et. seq.) in order to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools. The purpose of SCCGP is to increase the graduation rate within the state and increase the percentage of students who are appropriately prepared for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education. SCCGP allocates funding for a four-year grant cycle as allocations are available from the Colorado General Assembly. This report describes SCCGP Cohort 3 grantees and their outcomes from their first two implementation years reflecting the July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2016 reporting periods. It is important to know that this is an interim report for this cohort.

SCCGP Cohort 3

SCCGP Cohort 3 successfully connects schools serving highly diverse (55 percent minority) students with economic challenges (52 percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch). This cohort is unique and funded a BOCES serving a number of rural schools, many of which were undivided secondary schools. This cohort also included four Alternative Education Campuses (AECs), which served even more highly impacted students, with an average mobility rate of 60 percent, nearly four times that of the state. SCCGP Cohort 3 funding reached approximately 31,150 students in each of the two years of implementation thus far.

SCCGP Cohort 3, Year 2 Outcomes

Halfway through their funding cycle, SCCGP Cohort 3 is establishing a solid foundation for meaningful impact in cultivating students' postsecondary workforce readiness. AECs are excluded from the outcome analysis as the standard indicators are not as meaningful without deeper exploration of their contexts and student populations.

Overall trends for the schools within the cohort have seen signs of improvement. Most notable are some of the postsecondary outcome indicators. First, five additional Cohort 3 schools began participating in Concurrent Enrollment after the development year. This resulted in 33 percent growth in Cohort 3 student participation from 2014-15 to 2015-16 in Concurrent Enrollment. Second, the growth in FAFSA completions within the cohort was significant. The average rate for the traditional SCCGP Cohort 3 schools was slightly higher than the state's prior to the funding and the rate continued to increase (54 percent) while the state's decreased (48 percent). These are strong indicators that the schools SCCGP funds are supporting are resulting in sustainable partnerships that benefit postsecondary success outcomes for students.

On-time graduation and completion rates increased over the two years of SCCGP implementation despite an initial dip after the development year. The graduation rate rebounded with a pre-implementation rate of 82.4 percent and a Year 2 rate of 83.6 percent or more than one percentage point.

Dropout rates saw an initial, slight uptick in the development year; and then, in the second year, those increases were reversed with a reduction to 1.6 percent, lower than the first year.

SCCGP Cohort 3, Year 2 Grant Implementation

Grantees and schools reported immense progress on their SMART goals with 20 percent and 25 percent, respectively, exceeding their goals. SCCGP's goal of student-to-counselor ratio reduction was achieved as Cohort 3's average ratio was 200:1 in Year 1 and 170:1 in Year 2, both well below the national recommendation of 250:1. Additionally, the quality implementation of ASCA's Model has improved during the first two years of implementation (3 to 3.3 on 4 point scale).



SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 8,600 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development in the first year of implementation and nearly 25,000 hours in the second. This included the American and Colorado School Counselor Association conferences in addition to more hands-on workshops and training, some of which included trainings on tools that support the ICAP. All grantees are making progress on enhancing their ICAP systems with curricula, tools and programs for career advising and portfolio development.

Programmatically, nearly twice as many students were enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) courses in the second year of funding as compared to the first. This demonstrates that school counselors are able to establish relationships with partners and have relationships with students that encourages effective enrollment. Approximately, 15 percent of students in SCCGP funded schools visited a college with their school during both years of implementation.

Grantees expressed immense appreciation for the funds to secure school counselors and attributed their success to the ability to hire qualified professionals for a comprehensive program. From both the outcome and the process data, student attendance emerged as an area for future state support to enhance SCCGP impact. Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 is using state funds to effect meaningful supports and impact on their students' postsecondary workforce readiness.



Introduction

House Bill 08-1370 established the School Counselor Corps Grant Program. The resulting legislation enacted by the General Assembly is 22-91-101 et. seq., of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). The State Board of Education promulgated rules for program implementation, including: the timeline for submitting applications to the Department, the form of the grant application, criteria for awarding grants, and any information to be included in the Department's program report. Effective September 30, 2008, these rules can be found at 22-91-101 et. seq. (C.R.S.).

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) is to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools with a focus on postsecondary preparation. SCCGP was created to increase the graduation rate and increase the percentage of students who appropriately prepare for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education. The role of school counselors has undergone revisions and changes, and today the emphasis is on college and career readiness and ensuring timely high school graduation. Among the reasons for this shift is that a high percentage of students either are not graduating on-time (within four years of entering ninth grade) or not graduating at all.ⁱ Timely monitoring, evaluating, and intervening are necessary measures to decrease the number of students who dropout and increase the number of students who graduate.ⁱⁱ SCCGP supports school counselors in implementing these types of activities.

Role of the School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

The School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee assists the Department in providing ongoing support to the funded sites in the form of professional development, mentoring, site visits, and technical assistance. See Appendix A for a listing of School Counselor Corps Advisory Board members.



Description of Program for Reporting Periods July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2016

Grant Application Process

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was announced in the spring of 2013 prior to the Colorado General Assembly making final appropriations to the program in order for eligible education providers to have time to prepare their application to the program. For the first time, this third cohort included a development year. This allowed the funds to be maximized by beginning planning at the start of the new school year in order to increase readiness and capacity for full implementation the subsequent three years of funding. The available funding for the launch of the third SCCGP cohort in the 2013-14 school year was up to \$50,000 for the development year, \$3,900,941 for 2014-15, and \$3,983,992 for 2015-16.

SCCGP statute defined an eligible education provider as:

- A school district (on behalf of one or more secondary schools);
- A Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES);
- A charter school; or
- An Institute Charter School.

Priority was given to applicants that serve:

- Secondary schools at which the dropout rate exceeds the statewide average (2014-15 annual dropout rate for the State of Colorado is 2.5 percent);
- Secondary schools with a percentage of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch exceeding the statewide average (39.7 percent); and/or
- Postsecondary remediation rates at secondary schools that exceed the statewide average (34.2 percent).

Allowable activities included secondary school counselor salaries and benefits; postsecondary preparatory services; professional development; and program development. The RFP included a rubric that detailed criteria that a proposal would be measured against and included sections on 1) a quality plan, 2) partnerships, 3) postsecondary activities, and 4) a budget narrative.

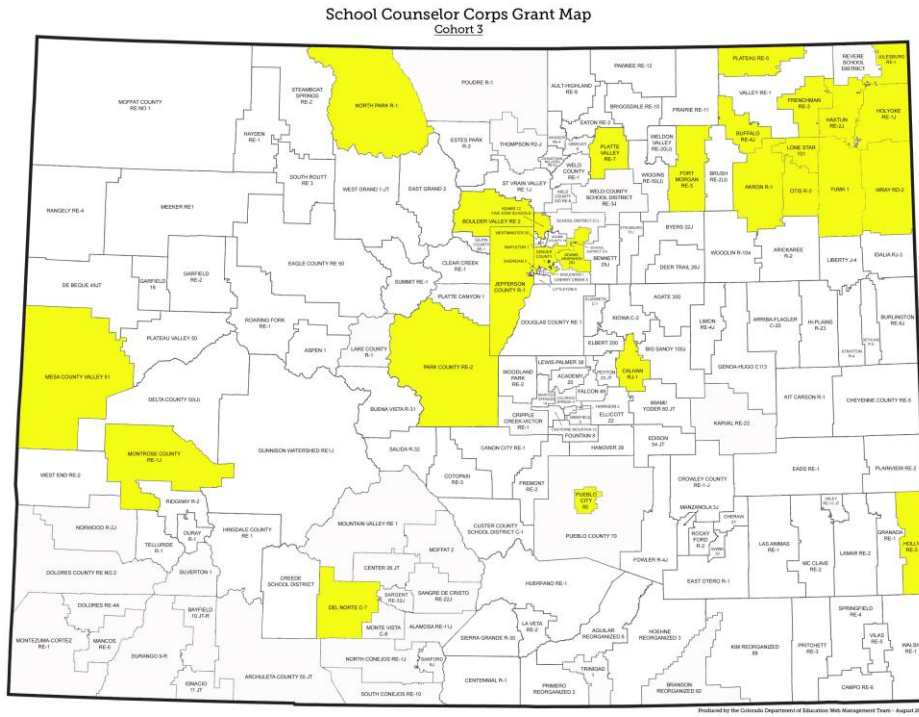
Description of Grantees

SCCGP Cohort 3 consists of 15 grantees, funding 61 schools. Thirteen grantees are districts, one is the Charter School Institute, and another is the NE BOCES representing 9 school districts. SCCGP grantees represent a wide range of schools serving a diverse student population with regard to secondary school type, student count, mobility rates, geographic region, ethnicity, and free and/or reduced lunch qualified students.

Type of Secondary School: Twenty-five of the 61 SCCGP funded schools are high schools and another 27 serve middle schools, two serving K-8. An additional eight grantees serve both middle and high school grades and one online school serving K-12. This outlines the grantees and the secondary grade levels served by the schools funded.ⁱⁱⁱ Four of these schools are designated Alternative Education Campuses (AEC) serving students with significantly challenging circumstances as the demographic data will highlight. Thus, the rest of the analysis will exclude these four schools from the cohort analysis as they are not comparable.

Geographic Location: As depicted in the map below, SCCGP Cohort 3 grantees are located across Colorado.

MAP 1: SCCGP Cohort 3 Grantees' Location



MAP 2: SCCGP Participating Districts from 2008-2017

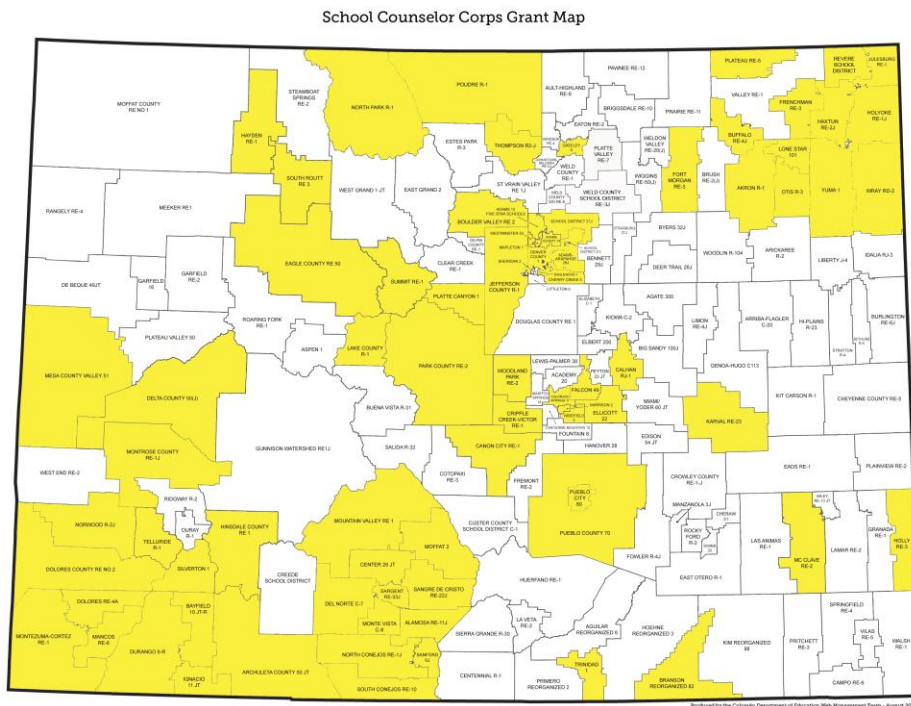




TABLE 1: SCCGP Cohort 3 Grantees and Types of Schools Funded

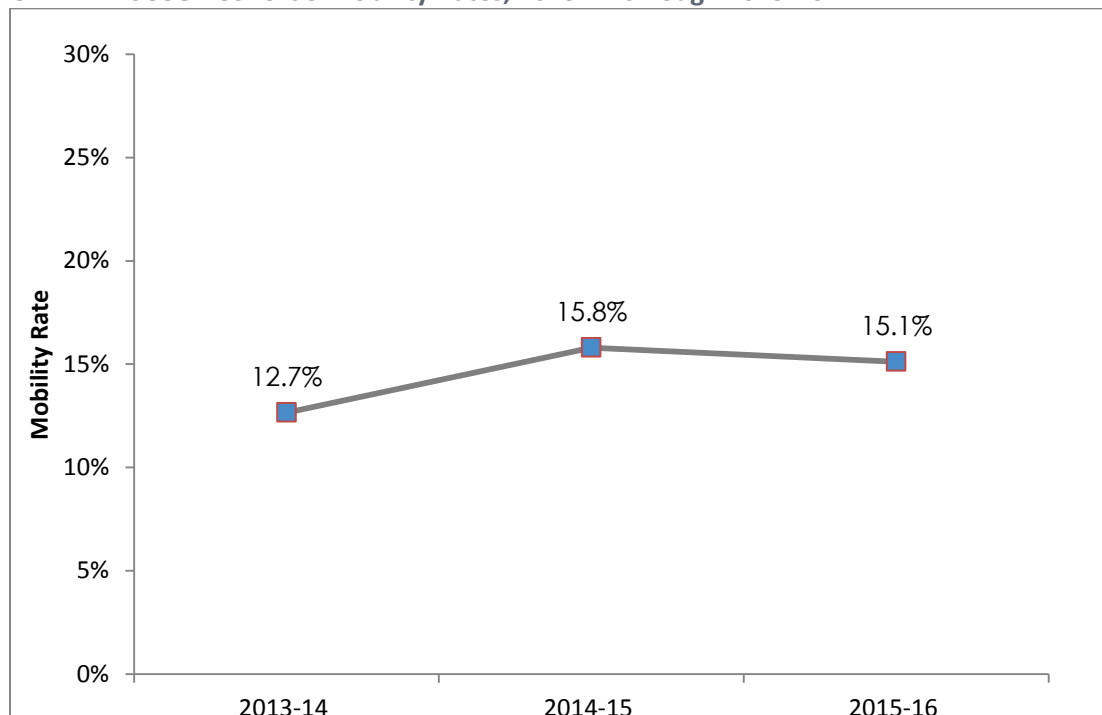
	High	Middle	Undivided Middle & High	Total
<u>Districts</u>				
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	0	5	0	5
Boulder Valley RE 2	2	1	1	4
Calhan RJ-1	1	1	0	2
Del Norte Schools	0	1	0	1
Denver Public Schools	1	0	0	1
Holly School District	1	1	0	2
Fort Morgan County RE-3	1	0	0	1
Jefferson County Public Schools	4	5	0	9
Mesa County Valley 51	1	0	0	1
Montrose County RE-1J	2	3	0	5
Northeast BOCES	4	4	7	15
North Park School, 6358	0	0	1	1
Pueblo City Schools, D60	4	5	0	9
Yuma 1	1	1	0	2
<u>Charter Schools</u>				
New America School - Lakewood	1	0	0	1
New America School - Lowry	1	0	0	1
New America School - Thornton	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	25	27	9	61



Student Count and End of Year Pupil Membership: At the time of the official student count in October of 2013, the development year for SCCGP Cohort 3, the 61 schools served 30,933 students in grades 6-12. In 2014 and 2015, SCCGP Cohort 3 served 31,172 and 31,129 6th-12th grade students respectively. This reflects relative continuity overall in student count numbers over the first three years funded; however, some of the individual schools in the cohort did experience a significant change in membership over the past three years. Thirteen schools saw a membership decline of 10 percent or more; and eight schools saw a membership increase of 10 percent or more. (Note: The majority of data described throughout the report utilizes End of Year pupil membership, because it takes into consideration the students who are highly mobile during the course of the year and, therefore, provides a more accurate base count.)

Mobility: CDE defines student mobility rates as the unduplicated count of grade K-12 students who moved into or out of the school or district in a given year divided by the total number of students that were part of the same membership base at any time during the same year. This demographic analysis began to illuminate the significantly different population of students the four AECs within Cohort 3 serve with a mobility rate of nearly 60 percent. The following chart illustrates the increased mobility the cohort experienced at the onset of SCCGP funding, which is similar to the overall trend for the state (15 percent in 2013-14 and 17 percent in 2015-16).

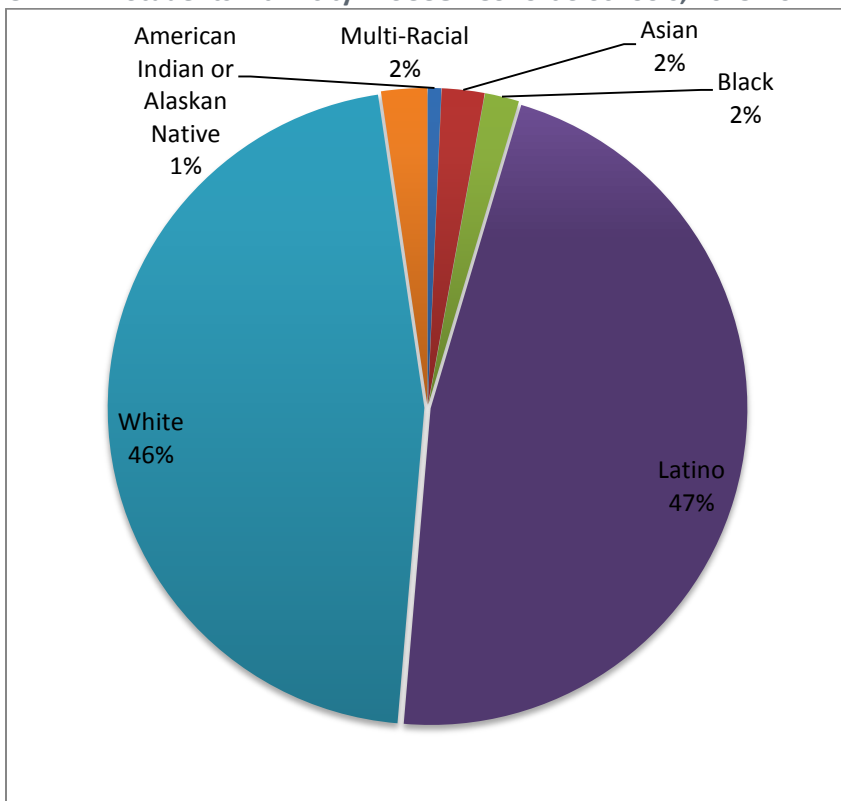
CHART 1: SCCGP Cohort 3 Mobility Rates, 2013-14 through 2015-16





Ethnicity: The students being served through SCCGP Cohort 3 have highly diverse ethnic backgrounds. As of October 2015, 55 percent of all SCCGP Cohort 3 students identified with an ethnic minority background as compared to 46 percent of students across the state. Notably, 88 percent of the SCCGP funded AECs' student body identified as an ethnic minority. The following chart depicts the breakdown of students' ethnicities enrolled in traditional Cohort 3 SCCGP funded schools, which enrolled 54 percent of students identifying with an ethnic minority background in 2015-16. Little to no change was observed from prior years. (Note: only 43 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students were served; therefore, their representation is less than 0 percent and not represented in the chart below.)

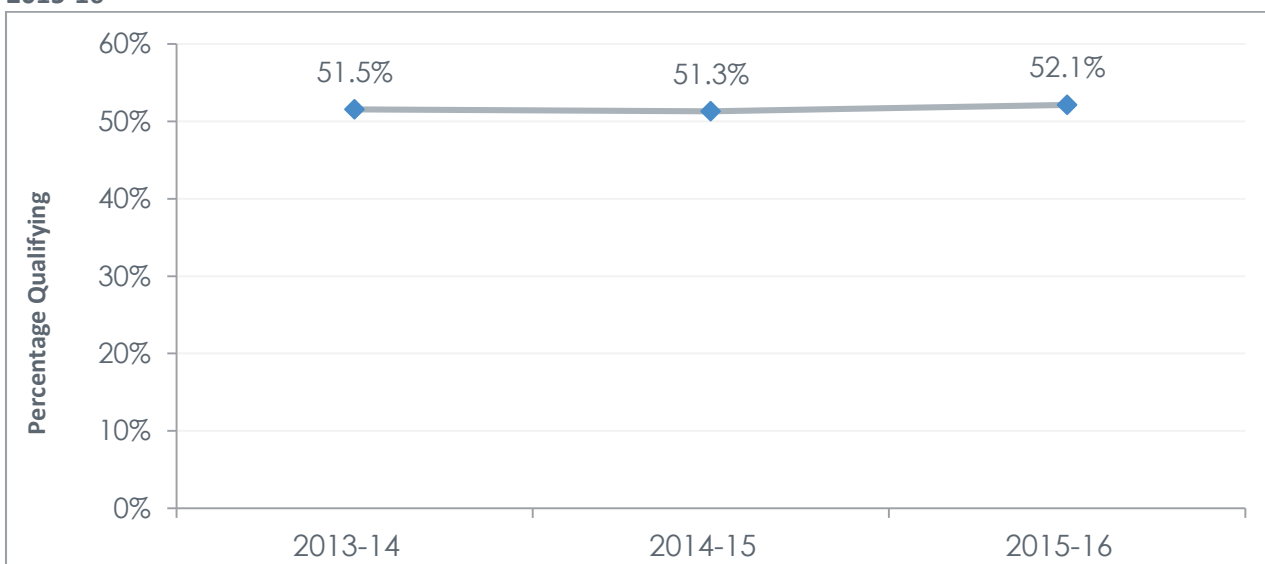
CHART 2: Students' Ethnicity in SCCGP Cohort 3 Schools, 2015-16





Free or Reduced Lunch: The number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch is the standard proxy for students' socioeconomic status and, as such, one of SCCGP's eligibility requirements is that the schools serve a high percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. October count data for the past three years showed that 52 percent of the student body in traditional Cohort 3 SCCGP funded schools qualified for free or reduced lunch whereas the state identified 42 percent as eligible. Thus, SCCGP continues to successfully serve students who are economically disadvantaged. Again, the AECs in this cohort serve a significantly higher proportion of students who come from economically challenging circumstances with 65 percent qualifying in 2015.

CHART 3: SCCGP Cohort 3 Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch, 2013-14 through 2015-16



Data Collection & Analysis

A variety of data sources were utilized for this report. Wherever possible, third-party validated data sources were used as a primary source, such as the National Student Clearinghouse or U.S. Department of Education, as these data have been verified as accurate by a third party entity. When this type of data was unavailable, state-collected data were utilized. Additionally, grantees and schools submitted a year-end annual report during the spring semester to illuminate program implementation. As SCCGP expands, more schools have received these funds, thus limiting the ability to identify comparison schools. Therefore, Cohort 3 analysis examines trends within the cohort for traditional, non-AECs since the above demographics demonstrated how significantly different they are from the rest of the cohort and the state. See Appendix B for more details about data sources.



SCCGP Cohort 3, Year 1 and 2 Outcomes

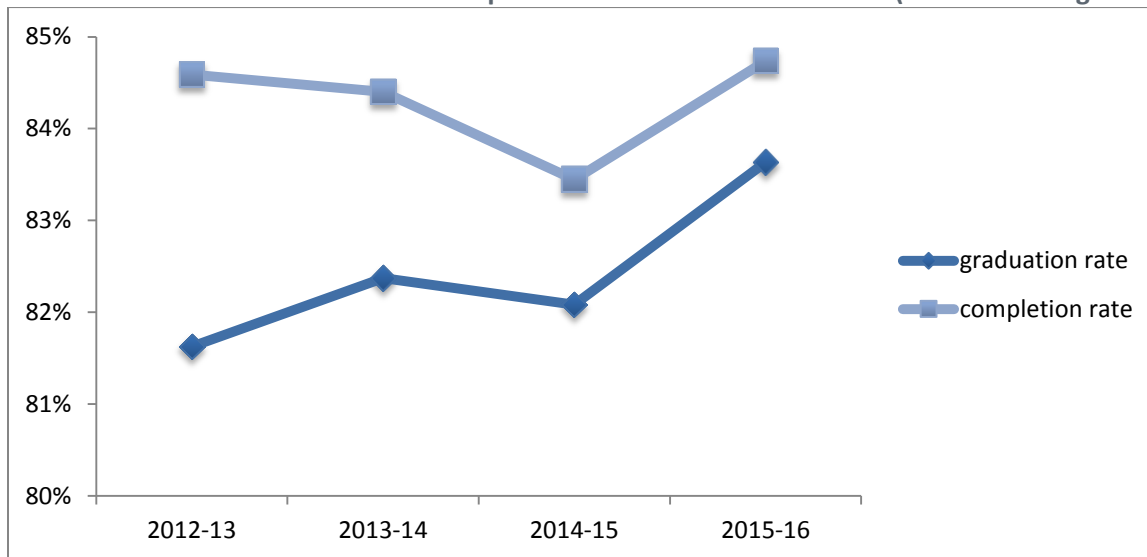
Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) was defined and jointly adopted by the State Board of Education and Colorado Commission of Higher Education in 2015. PWR describes “the knowledge and skills (competencies) needed to succeed in postsecondary settings and to advance in career pathways as lifelong learners and contributing citizens.” Districts operationalize PWR in a variety of ways, including students having the required life skills for success after high school, on-track to on-time graduation, having work experience and/or college credit. This report highlights third-year outcomes and baseline data for the following indicators:

- Graduation rate
- Dropout rate
- Attendance rate
- Concurrent enrollment participation
- Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion
- Postsecondary matriculation

Graduation Rates

SCCGP aims to increase grantees’ on-time graduation rate. Analysis begins with the Class of 2013 so that a trend can be established. “On time” graduation is defined as only those students who graduate from high school four years after transitioning from eighth grade. On time completion rates include not only those who graduated but those who successfully completed a non-diploma certificate or GED within the first four years of entering ninth grade. SCCGP Cohort 3 without the AECs maintained approximately a 5-percentage point higher on-time graduation and completion rates than the state (79 percent and 80 percent, respectively). The following chart displays the Cohort’s emerging graduation and completion rate trends.

CHART 4: On-time Graduation and Completion Rates for SCCGP Cohort 3 (2012-13 through 2015-16)



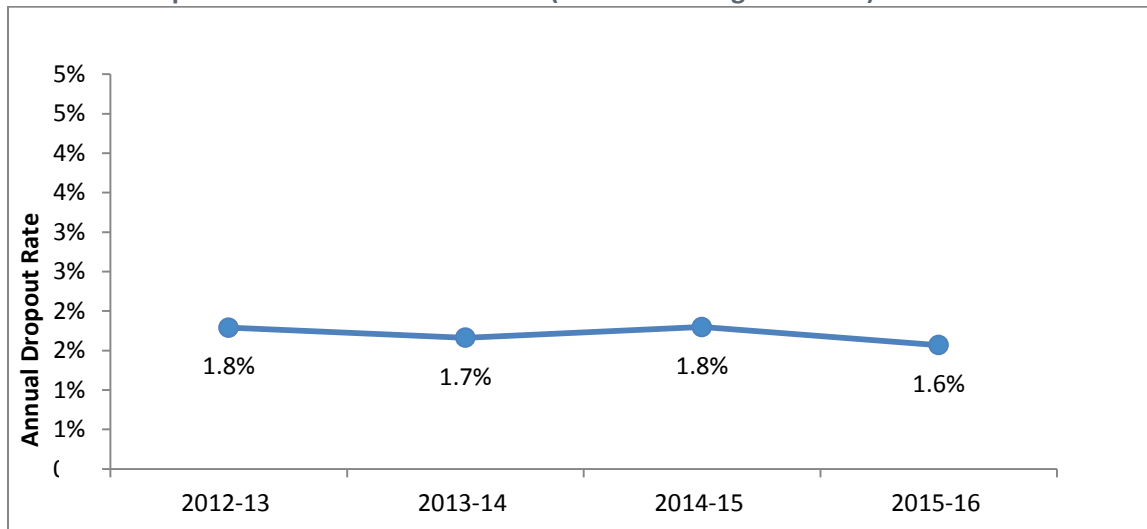
Note: SCCGP funds for implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.



Dropout Rates

Dropout rate analysis begins with the 2012-13 school year as these data were part of the eligibility criteria. Over the four school years within this analysis, the statewide dropout held relatively stable around 2.4 percent. Similarly, SCCGP Cohort 3, mirrored the state’s stability at approximately 1.7 percent. In 2015-16, the schools in the SCCGP Cohort 3 generated 486 dropouts and 22 schools in the cohort reported zero dropouts, the majority serving middle or undivided secondary level students. The following chart illustrates Cohort 3’s dropout rate trend.

CHART 5: Dropout Rates for SCCGP Cohort 3 (2012-13 through 2015-16)

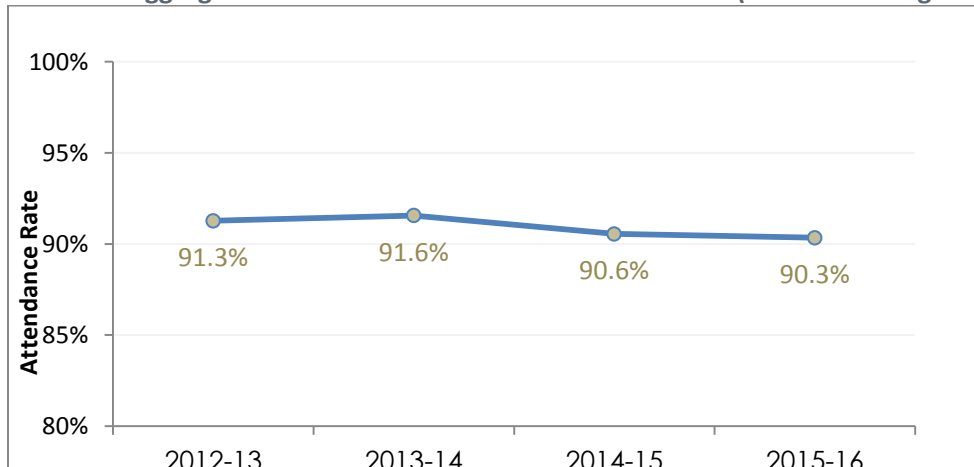


Note: SCCGP funds for implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

Attendance Rates

Attendance is a necessary prerequisite to graduation and completion and as such, school engagement and connectedness is a priority focus for SCCGP grantees. Therefore, attendance rates are utilized as an additional indicator or proxy for future completion. In the first two years of implementation, the traditional SCCGP Cohort 3 schools saw slight decreases in attendance rates. The chart below shows the initial trend with attendance.

CHART 6: Aggregated Attendance Rates for SCCGP Cohort 3 (2012-13 through 2015-16)



Note: SCCGP funds for implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

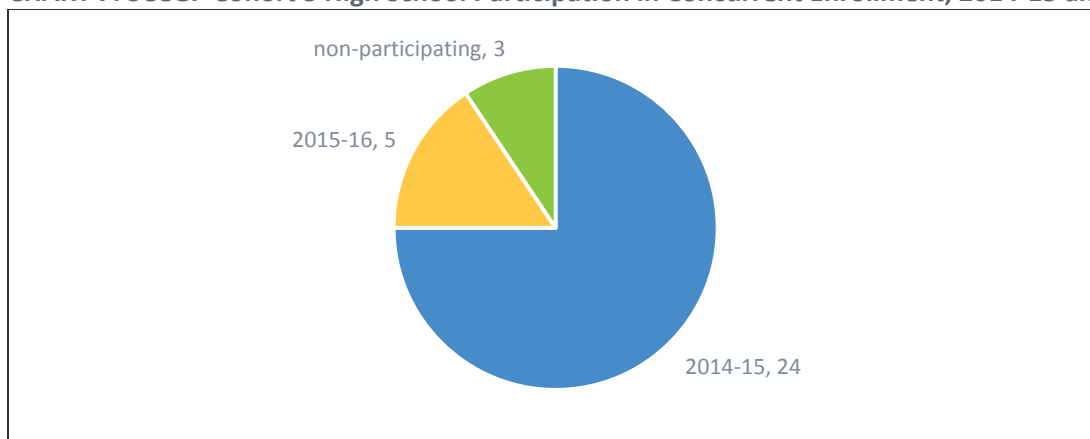


Concurrent Enrollment

The Colorado Department of Higher Education in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education authors an annual report on dual or concurrent enrollment beginning in 2012, which provides high school students the opportunity to enroll in college courses.^{iv} “Concurrent Enrollment” is the “simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, which may include an academic or career and technical education course, at an institution of higher education” as detailed in 22-35-103 C.R.S. The report presents the districts, high schools, and number of unique students engaging in Concurrent Enrollment, ASCENT, and remedial courses as reported by the institutions of higher education.

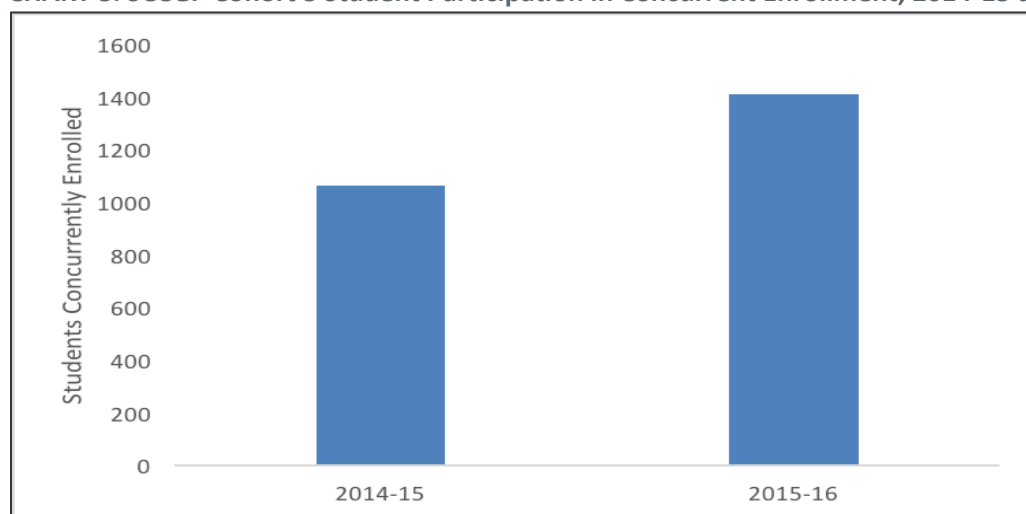
From the development year to the first year of implementation for SCCGP Cohort 3, five additional schools began participating in Concurrent Enrollment. That one year saw nearly a 33 percent growth in student participation. For comparison, the state saw a slight decrease in the percentage of high schools participating and a ten percent growth in student participation. The following graphs depict this growth.

CHART 7: SCCGP Cohort 3 High School Participation in Concurrent Enrollment, 2014-15 and 2015-16, n = 29



Note: SCCGP funds for implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

CHART 8: SCCGP Cohort 3 Student Participation in Concurrent Enrollment, 2014-15 and 2015-16



Note: SCCGP funds for implementation began the 2014-15 academic year.

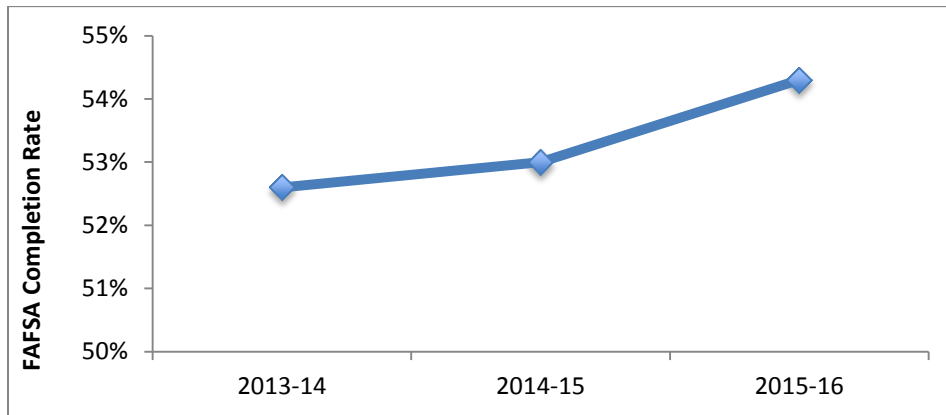


Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Nationally, research suggests that 90 percent of high school graduates who complete the FAFSA during their senior year of high school enroll in college within 12 months.^v Thus, a best practice for school counselors is to support students in completing this PWR benchmark. The Colorado Department of Higher Education recently began collecting, validating, and reporting school-level data on seniors completing FAFSAs (see <https://fafsa.highered.colorado.gov>). Note that FAFSA labels these data in terms of the college freshman class. The following analysis will maintain the referencing used throughout this report with the year reflecting the high school class; therefore, the FAFSA 2014-15 data is applicable to the graduating class of 2014 and referenced here as 2013-14 from the perspective of SCCGP grantees.

Prior to SCCGP implementation funding in 2014-15, the traditional SCCGP Cohort 3 schools were supporting students in completing the FAFSA at a higher rate than the state (48 percent). Notably, the SCCGP funded schools saw nearly a two-percentage point growth in comparison to the state, which saw nearly a percentage point decline.

Chart 9: SCCGP Cohort 3, High School Seniors' FAFSA Completion Rates (2013-14 through 2015-16)



SCCGP Cohort 3, Year 2 Grant Implementation

Cohort 3 was the first cohort to receive funding for a development year, which consisted of a district and school level needs assessment and environmental scan to identify up to four SMART goals based on a root cause analysis. Interventions were then identified to address the prioritized goals and their root causes. Grantees were required to complete end of year reports, which were designed to assess grantee and schools' grant goals, professional development, ICAP implementation, student-to-counselor ratios, ASCA Model implementation, student participation in career and technical education as well as college visits. With the grant reporting system moving to online platforms, grant reporting was the most complete since the grant program launched. The following analysis reflects the themes of progress, outputs, and outcomes for grantees' and schools' first two years of SCCGP implementation for the full Cohort 3.



Grantee Progress toward Reaching Their Goals

Grantees identified three to five goals each for a total of 49 goals. After the first year of implementation, 25 percent of grantees self-reported exceeding the performance measures that they had identified for individual goals with an additional 31 percent meeting their performance measure goal. Forty-three percent of goals were reportedly making progress, while only one goal was reported to not be making any progress. This one goal (increasing FAFSA completion) was one of five for this particular grantee, which supports the SCCGP guidance of up to four SMART goals.

The goals that grantees reported success with most commonly included reducing student-to-counselor ratios to below the national recommendation, ICAP implementation, increasing students' and parents' understanding of graduation requirements and postsecondary options, increasing students' desire to pursue postsecondary education, and increasing overall satisfaction with counseling services. Many grantees explained their implementation success solely by their ability to hire licensed school counselors through this grant program. Two districts exceeded their goals for improving graduation rates. The one who continued to exceed performance goals into year 2 attributed their success in part to an Interagency Team that provides wrap-around prevention supports to students demonstrating need or disengagement issues. The other district attributed their success to systemic culture change of requiring students with low grades to participate in content support in addition to scheduled class time.

Schools reported their progress on 176 goals. Schools reported not making progress on only three, which all focused on reducing absenteeism. One school recognized that they were delayed in understanding their data to intervene on targeted students and another hypothesized that students' absenteeism was due to a community tragedy. Nearly 20 percent of goals reported on were exceeding their benchmarks for progress, which included graduation, FAFSA completion, program delivery, increased use of services, attendance, course completion rates, academic and social skills, ICAP completion, truancy supports, concurrent enrollment, and increased student awareness of STEM careers. Of particular note for those exceeding their attendance goals, successful strategies included using data to identify students in need of additional supports through a tiered systems of interventions.

Professional Development

In Year 1 of implementation, School Counselor Corps Grant recipients indicated that secondary school counselors and team members attended over 8,600 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development, reaching more than 500 school professionals with more than 17 hours professional development on average. Ninety-one professionals were able to attend the Colorado School Counselor Association Conference in 2014 with an additional 270 attending the American School Counselor Association Conference. In Year 2 of implementation, grantees reported accessing nearly 25,000 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development reaching over 2,100 professionals for an average of 12 hours of professional development. Other trainings grantees were able to attend or bring into their whole staff included:

- FAFSA Completion;
- LINK Crew;
- Concurrent Enrollment
- Financial Aid workshops;
- ICAP Summit;
- ACT workshop/conference;
- Colorado Council on High School and College Relations Annual Conference;
- Colorado Statewide Pre-Collegiate Conference; and
- Alpine/Naviance Training.



Grantees shared the value of these professional development opportunities on their work. The following quotations illustrate the impact that these trainings had on district and school practices:

“Participants collaborated with other counselors from across the state to plan goals and strategies action steps for their counseling programs. We learned where to access data and how to use that data to garner support for our work as well as pinpoint areas for improvement. This knowledge also applies to our movement towards RAMP certification since a model program uses school data in this way.”

“By focusing on ICAP implementation and best practices the team was able to develop a district wide ICAP scope and sequence. The team also visited a highly effective counseling program, which enabled them to plan with and learn from other counselors from around the state.”

“Through information and networking, the RTI program was able to adapt to our small school setting while providing more personal resources to families, including family visits. Our counseling department was also able to make one on one contacts with college recruiters for individual students.”

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) Implementation

ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop the awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills to create their own meaningful and PoWeRful pathways to be career and college ready. The ICAP is used to help establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align coursework and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid, and ultimately enter the workforce following college graduation. The State Board of Education promulgated rules for ICAPs pursuant to SB 09-256:

Effective September 30, 2011, each school counselor or school administrator shall ensure that every student in grades nine through twelve and their parents or legal guardians has access to and assistance in the development of an ICAP (1 CCR 301-81, 2.02 (1)(d)).

Grantees’ comments illustrate how the grant supported them in meeting this requirement with high quality:

Jeffco values the potential and impact that a meaningful ICAP can have on the life of a student. We have come a long way since the inception of ICAP. We have learned in our district that ICAP has become very task oriented and has been delivered in a one and done format, focusing heavily on completion rates and not as heavily on outcomes for students. As a district, we have strategically worked this year to move away from ICAP being a series of tasks to being a series of meaningful experiences, documented and measured via a thoughtful ICAP survey. We piloted this model with 7th and 9th grade. The Jeffco ICAP task force spent this year mirroring this process for all grades, 7th-11th. We built the framework and will implement in these grades next school year. Additionally, our task force successfully aligned all ICAP competencies, quality indicators, and actionable items for each grade to our district's C-CAP documents. The purpose of this project was to build the framework for gaining better access into classroom instruction and embedding ICAP competencies into classroom curriculum. Our district has spent two years creating a new competency based vision for 2020 graduates and beyond. As a district, we have deemed ICAP as a key piece and have written it into the strategic vision and plan for our graduates.

At our April District PLC for Counselors (funded through SCCGP), counseling consultants presented on the new ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors and trained on how to better implement these new standards into the



ICAP implementation plan for our district. Through the Counseling Corps' support as well as through the introduction and implementation of Naviance as our student counseling software, students begin their ICAP development in sixth grade. Training on the Naviance software has integrated well with and reinforced ICAP development in our district. We will be using our increased number of counselors, our Bridge Counselor, PoWeR 9 and 11 and integrated social skills classes to provide time for counselors to work with students to more systematically complete ICAP. Additionally, we will maximize Parent Conferences for their increased participation in the development of ICAPs.

Student-to-Counselor Ratio

The grant played a significant role in reducing the student-to-counselor ratio in funded schools to meet the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) recommendation of 250:1. ASCA recommends this ratio so that professional school counselors can focus their skills, time, and energy on direct and indirect services to students at least 80 percent of their time. This comprehensive school counseling program model:

- ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students;
- identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive school counseling program;
- is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion;
- is based on data-driven decision making; and
- is provided by a state-credentialed, licensed professional school counselor.

Benefits of lower student-to-counselor ratios and implementing the comprehensive counseling program include higher standardized test scores, higher graduation rates, and higher retention rates.^{vi}

Nearly 46 full-time, certified school counselors were hired using SCCGP funds in 2014-15 and 2015-16. SCCGP funding is significantly decreasing student-to-counselor ratios to well below the best practice recommendation. In the first year of SCCGP implementation, the overall ratio was 200 students to one counselor and average caseloads fell to 170 students per counselor in the second year of implementation. Low ratios were observable across all school types for both years. The following table illustrates the student to school counselor ratios that SCCGP afforded funded schools.

Table 2: Student-to-Counselor Ratios Prior to and During the Three Years of SCCGP Cohort 3 Funding

	2014-15	2015-16
High Schools	230:1	191:1
Middle Schools	177:1	163:1
Undivided Middle & High Schools	197:1	125:1
TOTAL	200:1	170:1

Throughout the grant reports, grantees noted that improved student-to-counselor ratios afforded schools additional opportunities to develop systems and supports that enable them to provide more comprehensive, quality, and/or individualized postsecondary readiness support services.

American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Model Implementation

The school-level grant report included a reliable measure for assessing the level of ASCA Model implementation, the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey.^{vii} This is the second year this tool has been utilized to measure implementation of the ASCA model by grantees. The survey includes a total of 14 items, which provide



an overall implementation score and two factor scores – programmatic orientation and school counseling services. The following table includes the two years of survey data for SCCGP Cohort 3. (Note: the four point rating scale for the survey was 1 = Not Present, 2 = Development in Progress, 3 = Partly Implemented, and 4 = Fully Implemented.)

Table 3: ASCA Model Implementation Scores for SCCGP Cohort 3, Implementation Years 1 & 2

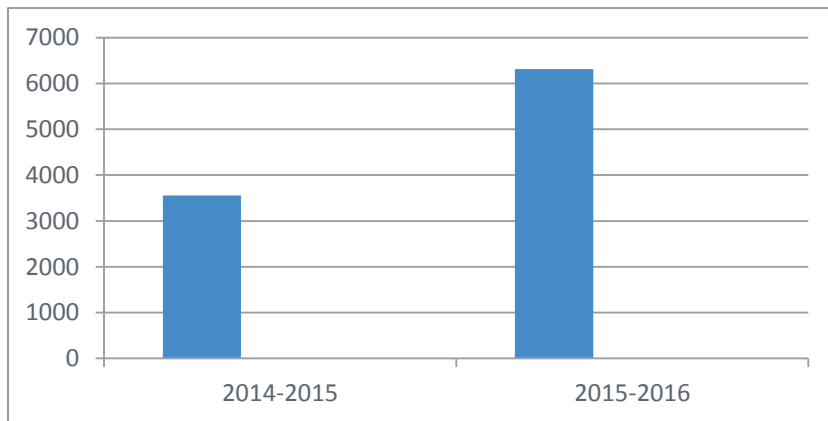
	Overall Implementation	Programmatic Orientation	School Counseling Services
2014-15	3	3	3
2015-16	3.3	3.2	3.3

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 schools’ ASCA Implementation Scores are partly implemented and showed growth from implementation Year 1 to 2. The components with the greatest implementation scores reported in Year 1 were “Services are organized so that all students are well served and have access to them” and “School counselors spend at least 80 percent of their time in activities that directly benefit students (3.3). These components increased slightly and “School counselors use student performance data to decide how to meet student needs” improved to similarly high levels (3.4) in Year 2. For both years, “School counselors analyze student data by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic level to identify interventions to close achievement gaps” had the lowest levels of reported progress (2.5 to 2.6).

Career and Technical Education

In 2014-15, SCCGP Cohort 3 schools enrolled 3,553 unduplicated students in CTE courses. In 2015-16, 6,312 unduplicated students were enrolled in CTE courses, which demonstrate impressive growth in implementation.

Chart 10: SCCGP Cohort 3, CTE Growth



College Visits

SCCGP Cohort 3 schools provided opportunities to visit colleges to approximately 4,540 unduplicated students in 2014-15 and again in 2015-16.



Conclusion

Overall, SCCGP Cohort 3 is establishing a solid foundation for significant impact in cultivating students' postsecondary workforce readiness. SCCGP Cohort 3 funds schools serving highly diverse students from economically challenging backgrounds.

Overall, trends for the traditional schools within the cohort have stabilized or improved. The following are some of the contributions SCCGP funding has made to these schools' postsecondary workforce readiness outcomes and indicators:

- FAFSA completion rates were higher for SCCGP Cohort 3 than the state prior to funding; the cohort's rate continues to grow while the state's rate has fallen.
- Five additional Cohort 3 schools began participation in Concurrent Enrollment after the first planning year. This resulted in 33 percent growth in student participation from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- On-time graduation and completion rates took an initial dip with the development year of SCCGP implementation; however, schools gained back those losses to surpass original rates in the second year, particularly for graduation at 83.6 percent, which was a full percentage point higher than prior to implementation.
- Dropout rates saw an initial, slight uptick in the development year; and then, in the second year those losses were reversed with a reduction to 1.6 percent, which less than the initial rate.
- Nearly twice as many students were enrolled in CTE courses in the second year of funding as compared to the first.
- SCCGP funded schools had student-to-counselor ratios well below the best practice recommendations for both years of implementation and implementation of ASCA's Model has improved during the grant period thus far.
- Approximately, 15 percent of students in SCCGP funded schools attended a college visit during both years of implementation.
- SCCGP grantees were afforded nearly 8,600 hours of postsecondary workforce readiness professional development in the first year of implementation and nearly 25,000 hours in the second.

Grantees expressed immense appreciation for the funds to secure school counselors and attributed their success to the ability to hire qualified professionals for a comprehensive program. Attendance emerged as an area of potential focus for future state support to enhance SCCGP impact.



Appendix A: 2015-16 School Counselor Corps Advisory Committee

Rana Tarkenton, Denver Scholarship Foundation, Pre-Collegiate (Chair)

Lisa Moore, Jefferson County Public Schools, Master Practitioner (Vice Chair)

Andrew Burns, Fort Lewis College, College Admissions

Carl Einhaus, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Student Affairs

Lucia Delgado, Colorado State University, Student Support

Elysia Clemens, University of Northern Colorado, Counselor Educator

Derek Lopez, Colorado State University Pueblo, Student Retention

Brenda Meltenberger, Burlington School District, High School Counselor

Khara O'Connell, Community College of Denver, Student Support

Catie Riessen, Brighton 27J School District, Middle School Counselor



Appendix B: Data Collection and Analysis Process

- 1) CDE provided grantee reports at the district and school level. (Grantees with missing reports were contacted for these data.) These data were utilized for:
 - Student-to-counselor ratios
 - Grantee implementation indicators
 - Goals
 - Professional development
 - ASCA standards
 - ICAP
 - Career and Technical Education
 - College Visits
- 2) Once the final list of SCCGP schools was determined, CDE's publicly accessible data were utilized for:
 - Demographic data and student counts
 - Graduation, completion, drop-out, and attendance rates
- 3) The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) i3 data system and reports were utilized for:
 - FAFSA Completion (U.S. Department of Education verified data)
 - Concurrent Enrollment (SURDS)
 - Postsecondary Matriculation (National Student Clearinghouse & SURDS)

CDHE provided additional data for schools that had too small of numbers to report publicly. In the future, it would be helpful to receive raw data sets (as opposed to reports) for Concurrent Enrollment.

Endnotes

ⁱ White, S.W., and Kelly, D.F. (2010). The School Counselors Role in School Dropout Prevention. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 88, 227-235.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ New Horizon High School in Harrison School District 2 and Irving Alternative Education Campus in Colorado Springs School District 11 have closed and, therefore, are not included in this report.

^{iv} Colorado Department of Higher Education & Colorado Department of Education. (2013). Annual Report on Concurrent Enrollment 2011-12 School Year. Retrieved on May 7, 2013 from http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2012/2012_Concurrent_Enrollment_Feb_2013.pdf

^v U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002/06).

^{vi} Burkard, A., Gillen, M., Martinez, M., & Skytte, S. (2011). Wisconsin School Counselors Benefit All Students: The Effect of Fully Implemented Comprehensive School Counseling Programs in Wisconsin High Schools. Retrieved on April 22, 2013 from www.oakcreek.k12.wi.us/ochs/guidance1/guidance_docs/WSCA_Research_Report_2011_11.pdf

^{vii} Clemens, E., Carey, J. & Harrington, K. (2010). The School Counseling Program Implementation Survey: Initial Instrument Development and Exploratory Factor Analysis. *ACA: Professional School Counseling*, 14:2, 125-134.