Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program
Annual Evaluation Report
2022-23

Submitted to:
Colorado State Board of Education
Colorado House Education Committee
Colorado Senate Education Committee

This report was prepared in accordance with section 22-33-205, C.R.S., by the following staff from the Colorado Department of Education's Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement

Amy Werpy
Program Manager

Bonnie Brett
Research and Evaluation Principal Consultant

Johann Liljengren
Director

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Division of Student Pathways
Office of Student Engagement and Dropout Prevention
201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203

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Executive Summary

The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) program is authorized by section 22-33-205, C.R.S. This grant program provides educational and support services to expelled students, and students at risk of being expelled, chronically absent, and/or habitually truant. Funds are annually appropriated to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for the purpose of making grants available to eligible applicants (local education agencies), and the program is managed by the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement at CDE.

The program provides grants for local education agencies to provide direct services to expelled and at-risk students, build consistent attendance and discipline practices, and develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion with the goal to keep more students in school, improve students' regular attendance, and support students' progress toward graduation. This approach is supported by research showing that exclusionary disciplinary practices put students at an increased risk of low school achievement, increased risk of dropping out, and increased risk of future police involvement[1]. In addition, research has shown that chronic absenteeism is associated with lower achievement levels in school and an increased risk of dropping out of high school. Students who attend school regularly outperform their low-attending peers on standardized assessments and are more likely to stay engaged in school and more likely to graduate[2].

More than 5,200 Students and 3,400 Parents, Families, and Guardians Served

In 2022-2023, the General Assembly appropriated $9,493,560 for the EARSS program and CDE awarded funds to 50 grantees, 12 of whom were in their initial year of funding and engaging stakeholders in the development of the implementation plan. The remaining 38 grantees implemented systems and direct student support for reducing discipline infractions and improved attendance. A total of 5,227 students received direct support including:
- 2,192 students at risk of being expelled;
- 2,773 chronically absent and/or habitually truant students; and
- 262 expelled students.

EARSS grantees primarily serve students in sixth through twelfth grade (84.6 percent of students served), however there is a growing group of grantees serving elementary students, with kindergarten through fifth grade now at 15.0 percent of students served (the remaining 0.4 percent were in pre-kindergarten). In addition, grantees serve higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino students (50.4%) than the statewide average.

About half of the students served were due to attendance (53.1 percent of students served) and about half for expulsions or risk of expulsion. Of the 2,454 students served who were at-risk for expulsion or previously expelled, the primary reasons a student was served were:
- Detrimental behavior (16.5 percent of students)
- Disobedient/defiant behavior (17.7 percent of students).

In addition to the student support, more than 3,400 parents and guardians received support services to assist in their children's learning, positive engagement, and academic development. Grantees indicated that the most common support services available to families included communication between EARSS

staff and the parent/guardian, involving parents/guardians in academic, attendance, and/or behavioral planning, and referrals to community services/social services.

Overall, EARSS grantees reported that the vast majority of students served by EARSS program activities experienced positive outcomes, including 93.2 percent of the students receiving direct services remaining in school, receiving a diploma (graduating), or completing school.

The EARSS Program Met Legislative Intent

Evaluation results suggest that the statutorily defined goals of the EARSS program to prevent expulsions, suspensions, and truancy were met. Grantees reported that, while being served by the EARSS program, 98.6 percent of students served who were at risk for expulsion were not expelled, 79.2 percent did not receive an out-of-school suspension, and 81.3 percent did not receive an in-school suspension. Of the students at-risk for truancy or chronic absenteeism, 98.7 percent did not have a truancy petition filed in court.

Background: State Statute on Expulsion Prevention and Support Services

Colorado's school attendance laws include several provisions that address the education of students who break school conduct and discipline codes or are deemed at risk of suspension or expulsion. Included in these laws is a legislative framework for expulsion prevention and support services to affected students (see Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 22, Article 33, Part 2: Expulsion Prevention Programs). The law (see text box on the right) states that there are disciplinary violations that justify expulsion; however, it also addresses alternatives to expulsion when discretion is allowed. In such cases, the legislation directs school districts to develop a plan to provide the necessary support services to help students avoid expulsion. The Colorado General Assembly has created the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program to assist grantee school districts in providing such services. Colorado statute further outlines procedures and potential support options for students who have been expelled or at risk of expulsion. This includes guidance to districts and the establishment of the EARSS grant program that districts can access for support.

The EARSS Program

The EARSS program provides funding for grantees (local education agencies) to provide educational and support services to expelled students, students at risk of being expelled, students who are chronically absent, and students declared at-risk of being or who are habitually truant. Funds are annually appropriated to the CDE for the purpose of making grants in accordance with authorizing legislation.

The program's approach maintains that more students will stay in school, regularly attend, and make progress toward graduation if school staff provide support services to expelled and at-risk students, offer alternatives to suspension and expulsion, and create effective attendance and discipline systems in schools.

C.R.S. TITLE 22, ART. 33 PART 2: EXPULSION PREVENTION PROGRAMS

22-33-201. Legislative declaration.

The general assembly hereby finds that except when a student's behavior would cause imminent harm to others in the school or when an incident requires expulsion as defined by state law or a school's conduct and discipline code, underline expulsion should be the last step taken after several attempts to support a student who has discipline problems.

The general assembly further finds that school districts should work with the student's parent or guardian and with state agencies and community-based non-public organizations to develop alternatives to help students who are at risk of expulsion before expulsion becomes a necessary step and to support students who are unable to avoid expulsion.

22-33-202. Identification of at-risk students — Attendance issues — disproportionate discipline practices

(2) In providing necessary support services pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, each school district may provide attendance supports, behavior intervention, and educational services to students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade who are identified as at risk of dropping out of school due to chronic absenteeism or disciplinary actions, including classroom removal, suspensions, and expulsion. Any school district that provides attendance supports, behavior intervention, or educational services to students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade who are at risk of dropping out of school due to chronic absenteeism or disciplinary actions may apply for money through the expelled and at-risk student services grant program established in section 22-33-205 to assist in providing such attendance, behavior intervention, and educational services.

Reporting Requirements

The EARSS authorizing legislation (section 22-33-205, C.R.S.) requires reporting on the evaluation of the grant to the Colorado House and Senate Education Committees by January 1 each year. This report is intended to meet the statutory reporting requirements outlined in section 22-33-205(4), C.R.S., through the analysis of program-level and student-level information annually submitted to CDE by grantees. This report covers evaluation data from 50 grantees, including 12 grantees engaged in a 6-month planning period who have not started serving students, covering the period between July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. For more details on the evaluation methodology, see *Appendix A – Evaluation Methodology*. For the survey tools from the evaluation, visit the EARSS Evaluation website.

2022-2023 Grant Awards

Grant Application and Selection Process

The EARSS program is managed through CDE's Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement. CDE staff facilitate an annual competitive grant process based on the level of funding appropriated by the legislature. Eligible grant applicants include school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), charter schools, alternative education schools within school districts, non-public schools, and facility schools. Grants are awarded for a six-month planning period and four sequential fiscal years provided that grantees continue to meet grant requirements, make reasonable progress toward performance outcomes, and that state funds are annually appropriated. See **Table 1** for a recent history of EARSS funding and **Appendix B – 2022-2023 Funded Grantees** for a list of current grantees.

For the second year, a six-month planning period was included in 2022-23 for new grantees. This addition was started in 2021-2022 to ensure grantees could hire staff and have time to receive program-specific training. The planning period allows grantees to hold additional stakeholder meetings, establish protocols in identifying at-risk students, and hire and train staff.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the General Assembly appropriated $9,493,560 for the program. CDE conducted a competitive grant process in summer and fall 2022 and awarded 12 new grants to start the 6-month planning period. Thirty-eight grantees continued implementing their program in years one through four of the grant cycle.

Twelve grantees (24 percent of grantees) served students from more than one school district. This occurs when the grantee is a Board of Cooperative Services (6 percent), a facility school (14 percent), or in a rural area and offering services to neighboring districts (4 percent).

TABLE 1: Grantees by Cohort and Type (*N*=50)			
Funding Start	**Funding End**	**Number of Grantees in Cohort**	**Share of Grantees in each Cohort**
January 2023*	**June 2027**	**12**	**24%**
January 2022*	**June 2026**	**21**	**42%**
July 2020	**June 2024**	**10**	**20%**
July 2019	**June 2023**	**7**	**14%**

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023.
*Includes 6-month planning period

The 50 grantees funded in 2022-2023 represent 26 counties across Colorado. The EARSS program funded 30 school districts, 10 individual charter schools, four BOCES, and six facility schools. Three school districts and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) had multiple EARSS grants, each grant serving a different school. See **Figure 1** for a School District Map highlighting all the districts served by the grant. Grantees serving multiple school districts through collaborative agreements are highlighted in grey.

FIGURE 1   EARSS Grantees 2022-2023 Grantees serving multiple school districts through collaborative agreements are highlighted in gray.

Produced by the Colorado Department of Education - February 2019

Students Served in 2022-2023

In 2022-2023, the 38 EARSS program grantees in implementation phase reported serving 5,227 students. An additional 12 grantees were in their planning period and thus were not yet serving students, and 8 grantees from previous cohorts were operating No Cost Extensions (NCE) to extend their grant beyond the original date. Historically, NCE data has been included in reporting, leading to higher numbers of students served (range for the last five years: 6,433 – 8,183; average for the last five years: 7,269; were NCE data included in this report, the number of students served would be 5,673). This report only includes data from grantees in the initial four-year implementation.

5,227

STUDENTS SERVED
IN 2022-2023

- Nineteen grantees reported serving **262 expelled students**.
  - This represents 5.0 percent of the students served by the EARSS grant in 2022-2023.
  - This represents a majority of the expelled students within those districts (63.7 percent of the expelled students in the districts where grantees are located). Importantly, not all schools in EARSS-served districts have EARSS funding, so not all expelled students are able to be served with the grant. This is true for students at-risk for expulsion and students at-risk for attendance issues as well. Moreover, students and families choose whether or not to accept services when they are offered.

- Thirty-five grantees reported serving **2,192 students at risk for expulsion**.
  - This represents 41.9 percent of the students served by the EARSS grant in 2022-2023.

- Thirty-four grantees reported serving **2,773 truant students or students at risk for habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism**.
  - This represents 53.1 percent of the students served by the EARSS grant in 2022-2023.

Facility School Grantees
Students Served

Facility schools served 2.2 percent of all students served by the grant. The 113 students served by the five facility school grantees included:
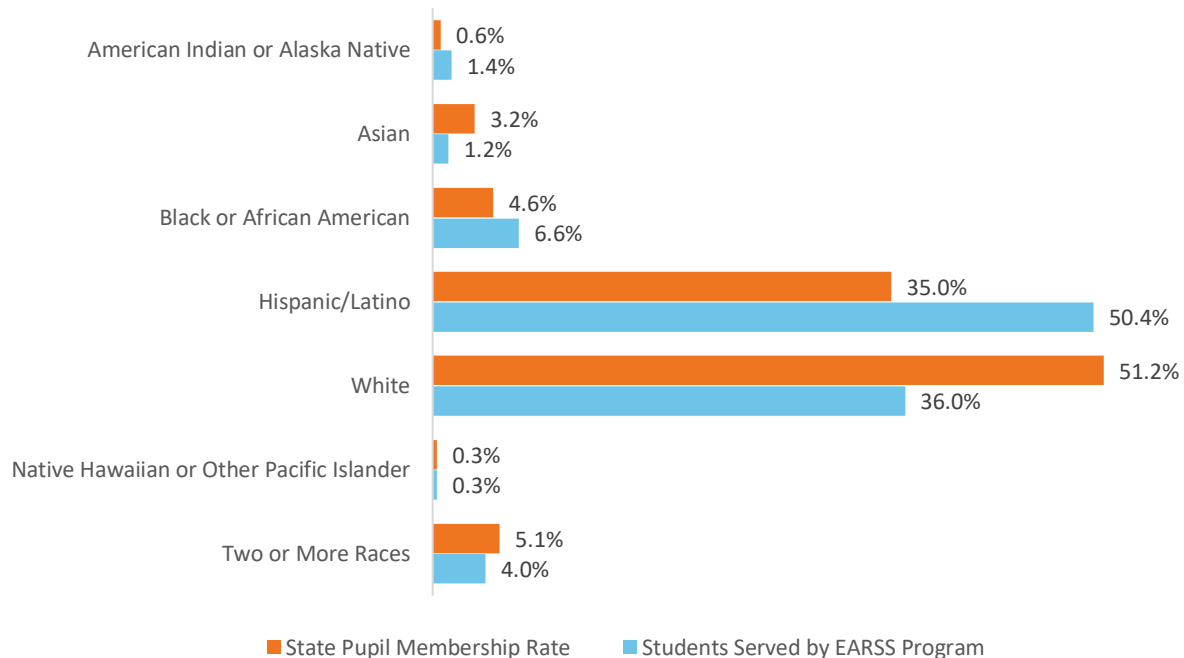- No expelled students
- 88.5 percent students at-risk of expulsion
- 11.5 percent truant students or students at risk for habitual truancy

Student Demographics

Demographic data was available for 95.6 percent of the students served by an EARSS program (4,997 of the 5,227 students served). This includes:

- The majority of students were in grades sixth through twelfth grade with ninth through twelfth grade (46.2 percent of students) the largest group, followed by sixth through eighth grade (38.4 percent of students), and then kindergarten through fifth grade (15.0 percent of students). A small percentage (0.4 percent of students) were in pre-kindergarten. Male students made up a slightly larger percentage of students served (56.7 percent of students).
- The majority of students served were either Hispanic or Latino (50.4 percent of students) or White (36.0 percent of students; **Chart 1**).
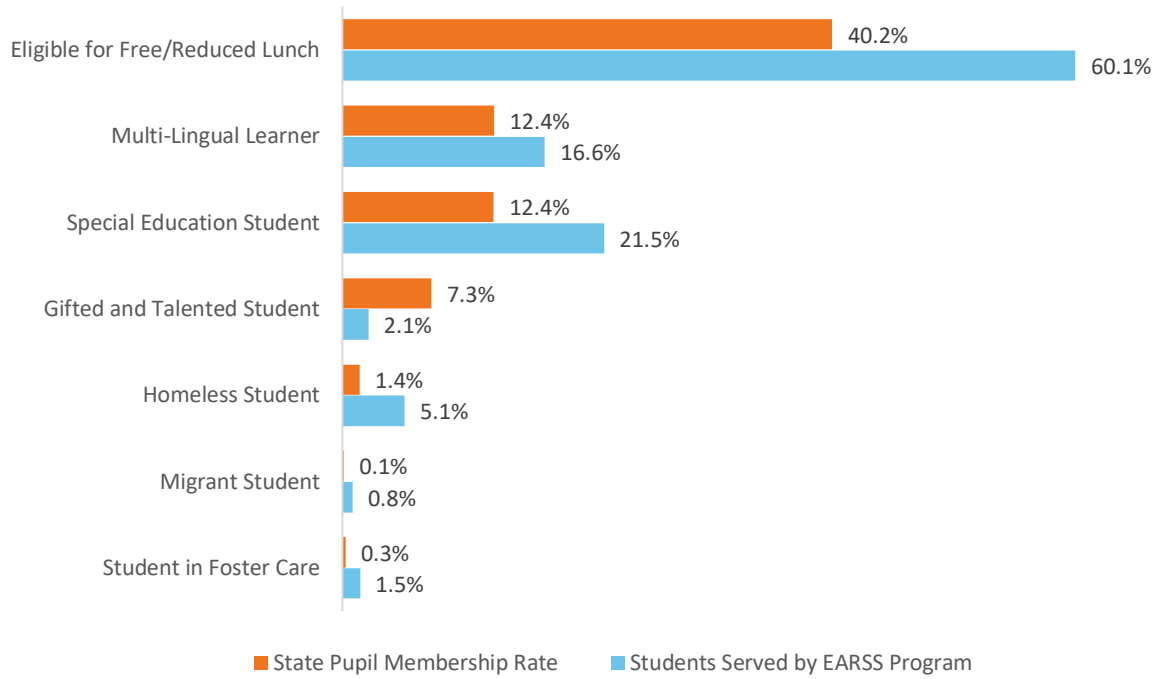
CHART 1: STATE AND PROGRAM COMPARISON BY RACE / ETHNICITY (N = 4,997)

	State Pupil Membership Rate	Students Served by EARSS Program
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%	1.4%
Asian	3.2%	1.2%
Black or African American	4.6%	6.6%
Hispanic/Latino	35.0%	50.4%
White	51.2%	36.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.3%
Two or More Races	5.1%	4.0%

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting and Pupil Membership Data, 2022-2023

EARSS programs served higher percentages of students who were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, multi-lingual learners, special education students, homeless students, migrant student and students in foster care than the percentages of these students in the state's overall population (**Chart 2**). Within the collection process, these have been referred to as Instructional Programs or Service Types. EARSS programs served 60.1 percent of students served who qualified for free/reduced lunch, 16.6 percent of students who were multi-lingual learners, 21.5 percent of students with a special education designation, and 5.1 percent of students who were experiencing homelessness.

CHART 2: STATE AND PROGRAM COMPARISON OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM OR SERVICE TYPE (N = 4,997)

Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch
- 40.2%
- 60.1%

Multi-Lingual Learner
- 12.4%
- 16.6%

Special Education Student
- 12.4%
- 21.5%

Gifted and Talented Student
- 7.3%
- 2.1%

Homeless Student
- 1.4%
- 5.1%

Migrant Student
- 0.1%
- 0.8%

Student in Foster Care
- 0.3%
- 1.5%

■ State Pupil Membership Rate   ■ Students Served by EARSS Program

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting and Pupil Membership Data, 2022-2023
Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive, students can belong to more than one of them.

Behaviors for Which Students Were Served

Students were mainly served due to attendance issues (53.1 percent of students served). When excluding these students from the analysis, the main reasons expelled students and students at risk for expulsion were served included disobedient / defiant behavior or repeated interference (17.7 percent of students) and detrimental behavior (16.5 percent of students; **Chart 3**).

CHART 3: MOST COMMON REASONS FOR BEING SERVED FOR EXPELLED STUDENTS AND STUDENTS AT-RISK FOR EXPULSION (N = 2,454)

Reason	Percentage
Disobedient/defiant or repeated interference	17.7%
Detrimental behavior	16.5%
Fights or other violent behavior	15.6%
Marijuana violation	10.6%
Tobacco violation	9.2%
Other felony	7.0%

Percentage of Students

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023
Note: Excludes students served for truancy concerns.

Example Reason for Being Served
Submitted by Charter School in Denver-Metro Area

"The majority of students that are being served are over age and under credit mainly due to attendance issues. The workforce pathway helps students in this situation receive a diploma and go into the workforce. The majority of these students are also working so the ability to be flexible with their schedule and allow them to work at home is a plus. This pathway and the additional support from this grant was instrumental in keeping students in school. The workforce pathway is a shorter program for these students and still provides a high school diploma, the same as those taking the traditional pathway."

Program Services Implemented

Various types of programming were utilized by grantees to better serve students, including academic and attendance strategies (e.g., credit recovery, online and technology-based learning), behavioral supports (e.g., counseling, mentoring), and emotional supports (e.g., multi-tiered system of support, trauma-informed approaches). These grant-funded support services are primarily delivered by specialized staff (e.g., behavior interventionists, student attendance advocates, family liaisons, etc.).

Grantees were asked to rank 26 primary strategies and supports funded by the EARSS grant in order of effectiveness. Grantees did not include unfunded strategies in their rankings. Of the 26 strategies, grantees ranked essential skills building, counseling, behavioral plans, positive staff-student mentoring and relationship building, and culturally responsive interventions as the most effective strategies. This list was created by averaging the ranked positions of a strategy across all grantees and reporting the top ranked strategies. For example, if three grantees ranked a strategy as 1, 2, and 3 (i.e., as the first, second, and third most effective strategy they used), the average rank for that strategy would be 2.
Program Successes

Grantees were asked to specifically describe best practices that positively affected progress on achieving their objectives. When focusing on grantees who reported positive outcomes for at least 85 percent of students assessed for a particular indicator (see **Appendix C – Example Program Summaries**), program success was attributed to the following factors:

- For academic objectives, grantees reported that individualized support, including daily or weekly communication with both students and families, contributed to student success. Strategies reported by high-achieving grantees included incentivizing academic growth, creating action plans around achievement, and providing collaborative learning circles to teach teachers about the impacts of culture, trauma, mental health, and poverty on student learning.
- For attendance objectives, grantees who were highly successful reported that they used the following strategies to achieve their attendance goals: direct communication with students about barriers to attendance as well as making up work after absences, communication with families about the importance of (and law surrounding) attendance, and the creation of attendance contracts and plans.
- For behavioral and social / emotional objectives, grantees reported that social-emotional learning groups that met weekly or daily, meetings among staff to discuss behaviors and supports, and comprehensive integration of social and emotional instruction and intervention within and across the school day all positively contributed to student growth.

Program Success Story
Submitted by BOCES office in Remote Area

"We were able to work with partnering districts to create a team focused on the needs of the students in their building. The collaborative learning circles that help teachers to understand the impact of trauma, mental health, poverty, and culture on learning has helped school partners to provide better support to students which has resulted in academic gains."

Program Challenges

Grantees were asked to share challenges that were faced when implementing their program and achieving their objectives. The most common challenges related to schools trying to return to normal after the pandemic and subsequent issues with implementation.

- For academic achievement, grantees reported that common challenges included motivating students to engage with school, staff turnover making personal connections with students more difficult, and attendance and behavioral concerns taking precedence over academics.
- Challenges around attendance included adhering to COVID-19 protocols still in place at some schools, impressing upon parents the importance of attendance, particularly at younger grades, lack of parental involvement, lack of consequences around attendance, and lack of transportation options.
- Regarding behavior and social-emotional goals, grantees reported similar challenges to those reported above (i.e., lack of motivation and attendance, lack of parental support), but also mentioned additional challenges, such as addressing the effects of negative peer influences, a lack of mental health providers in schools or community resources to address mental health, and the difficulty of addressing behavior issues on buses.

Example of Program Challenge
Submitted by an Online School

"Engagement and attendance are our biggest challenges as an online school. If students engage in our curriculum the data shows students make academic growth based on our district level assessment in addition to passing classes."

Parent/Family Engagement
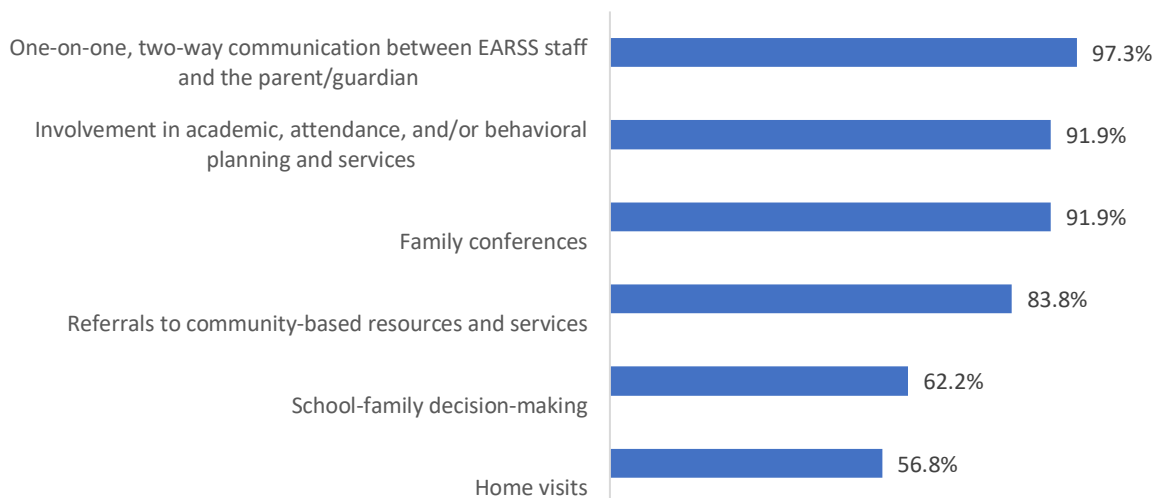
Parents/Guardians Served

In addition to students, grantees reported serving 3,411 parents/guardians of students served. These parents/guardians received support services to assist in their children's learning and positive development.

3,411

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SERVED

Parent/Guardian Services

Thirty-eight grantees provided various support services for parents, guardians, and families. The grantees indicated that the most common support services available to families was involvement in academic, attendance, and/or behavioral planning and services. Grantees also commonly used family conferences and referrals to community services/social services (**Chart 4**).

CHART 4: MOST COMMONLY FUNDED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS (N = 37*)

Strategy	Percentage
One-on-one, two-way communication between EARSS staff and the parent/guardian	97.3%
Involvement in academic, attendance, and/or behavioral planning and services	91.9%
Family conferences	91.9%
Referrals to community-based resources and services	83.8%
School-family decision-making	62.2%
Home visits	56.8%

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023
Note: Grantees could select more than one support service.
One grantee did not report commonly funded family engagement strategies.

Example of Family Engagement
Submitted by a School District from an Outlying Town

"A 3rd-grade student has struggled with attendance since this child entered school. Last year the student missed over 30% of the school year. After many conferences and home visits, our parent engagement coordinator was finally able to explain to the mother that her son's attendance was negatively impacting his education. She made a commitment that both herself and her son would become more involved in the school. The mother attended parent classes, parent nights, was part of our parent leadership group (PICS), and attended the end-of-year family college visit. The student's attendance improved drastically over the year."

Program Effectiveness

CDE evaluates the impact of the program each year through analysis of individual student progress, progress towards performance objectives that are set by each grantee, and overall impact on school and district outcomes.

School Exit Outcomes for EARSS-Served Students

CDE collects data on a final outcome at the end of the school year for each student served in the EARSS program (whether or not they were being served at the end of the year). For 2022-23, this data is available for 97.8 percent of EARSS-served students (5,110 students). Of these students:

9 out of 10

STUDENTS EXPERIENCED POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- 93.2 percent experienced positive outcomes such as the continuation of school or graduation in 2022-2023.
- 0.2 percent withdrew due to external causes (i.e., an illness or injury).
- 6.6 percent of students dropped out, aged out of services, transferred to a detention center, were expelled, or exited to an unknown setting.

Student Success Story
Submitted by a School District in Remote Setting

"A student who essentially dropped out for 2 years returned to school and graduated high school this year! The school had continued to contact and encourage her during the two years, and with the support of EARSS she finally came back! Success!"

Dropout Prevention and student engagement
The long-term aim of the EARSS program is to reduce the number of students disengaging and dropping out of school and to increase overall student engagement. CDE has schoolwide measures for dropouts (students who have completely disengaged from school) and attendance (students who are having inconsistent engagement in school).
- Dropout:

- o In the 2022-23 school year, more than a third of grantees (36.8%) reported no student dropouts among students served.
  - o The EARSS-served schools represented in this report had a dropout rate of 2.0 percent for their total population in the 2022-2023 school year. This is slightly below the dropout rate for the statewide population, which was 2.1 percent. In total, 296 EARSS-served students in grades 7 through 12 were reported as having dropped out while being served (8.0 percent of students served in that grade band).
- Attendance:
  - o Schools served by EARSS showed similar, but slightly less favorable, 2022-2023 attendance outcomes when compared to the statewide rates for all students. Both truancy and chronic absenteeism rates were slightly higher in EARSS-served schools than in the state as a whole and attendance was slightly lower. The fact that these differences are small is notable, given that EARSS funds are directed to schools that struggle in this area particularly. Statewide, levels of truancy and chronic absenteeism rose significantly in 21-22 and declined slightly in 22-23 but remained above levels seen prior to 2020.

Meeting Legislative Intent

The purpose of the EARSS program is to assist in reducing and preventing expulsions, suspensions, and truancy. Grantees reported the following disciplinary outcomes in 2022-2023:

- *Expulsions:* 98.6 percent of at-risk students served who remained in school did not receive an expulsion while being served. More than half of grantees reported that no students were expelled while being served. This is slightly less than the last three years of the grant program with an average of 99.6 percent of students served that did not receive an expulsion while being at school.

- *Out-of-School Suspensions:* 79.2 percent of at-risk students did not receive an out-of-school suspension while being served. More than 25 percent of grantees reported that no students received an out-of-school suspension while being served. This was also slightly lower than the three prior years where an average of 84.2 students served received out-of-school suspensions while being served.

- *In-School Suspensions*: 81.3 percent of at-risk students served did not receive an in-school suspension while being served. More than 30 percent of grantees reported that no students received an in-school suspension while being served. This is slightly lower than the past three years where an average of 87.2 students served received in-school suspensions. However, this year's rate is very similar to last year's and the rate in 2019-2020. This could indicate stability rather than a decline, as in-school suspension rates were artificially lower in 2020-21 because of widespread remote instruction.

- *Truancy Petitions*: 98.7 percent of truant students or students at risk for habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism served by the program did not have a truancy petition filed in court while being served. Nearly 80 percent of grantees reported no petitions filed in court. The number of students who did not receive truancy petitions is better than the results from the last three years of the grant program with an average of 94.0 percent of students served not receiving a truancy petition while being in school. The number of grantees reporting not filing truancy petitions was a significant increase in comparison to the last three years of the grant program
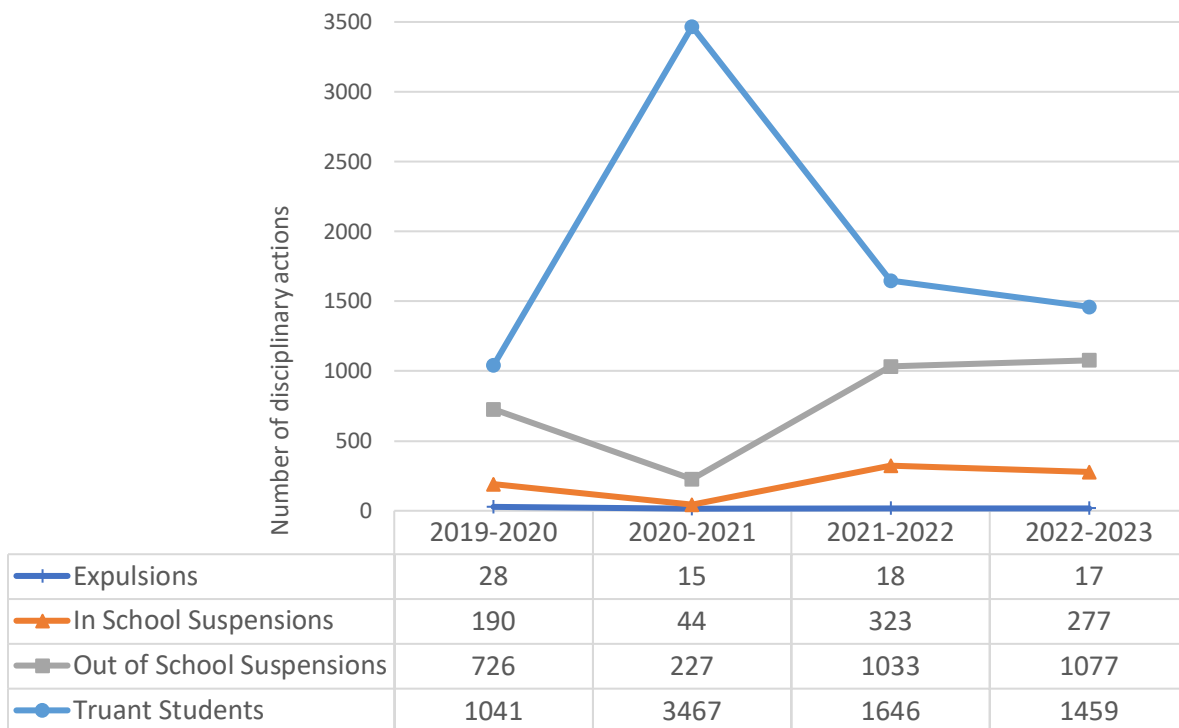
with an average of 50 percent of grantees not filing petitions. Truancy court is considered to be the last-resort approach for schools to utilize. Both local school boards and judicial districts have policies regarding how to handle truancy court as an intervention to compel students to attend school.

2019 – 2023 Cohort

After the end of each cohort's four-year implementation, CDE reports on the overall outcomes for the group of grantees. The 2019-2023 Cohort of grantees' experience was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple impacted school years. While most reporting focuses on specific students that received services, CDE also examines overall outcomes in discipline and attendance at schools served by the EARSS grant.

For this cohort, numbers of suspensions and expulsions in grantee schools remained similar across the years with the exception of the 2020-21 year. Nearly all metrics examined in grantee schools showed some progress this past year, except out of school suspensions. While the 2022-23 numbers are not lower than they were in 2019 (with the exception of expulsions), this is similar to the large increase seen across in the state in nearly all metrics in 2020-2021 (**Chart 5**).

CHART 5:
2019-2023 GRANTEES' OUTCOMES OVER FOUR YEARS

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Expulsions	28	15	18	17
In School Suspensions	190	44	323	277
Out of School Suspensions	726	227	1033	1077
Truant Students	1041	3467	1646	1459

Source: *Colorado Department of Education End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023*
Note: *These numbers are for EARSS-served schools overall, not just the students served within them.*

Student Success Story
Submitted by a Facility School

"A middle school student was referred to our program due to detrimental behaviors in the academic setting. Over the course of this academic year, this student's teachers, counselors and EARSS team utilized various interventions including motivational interviewing (understanding student's motivation, use of open-ended questions, listening with empathy, supporting resistance, and empowering the student). This student appeared receptive to these interventions as evidenced by achieving a 4.0 GPA each quarter this school year. This student is getting ready to transition back to a public school setting early fall. Recently the student was recognized for their hard work by earning a certificate and the student responded, 'I never thought I would ever get one of these things!' If all the work that was put into this program was meant to make a quiet, reserved, and shy kid feel this amount of joy over what seemed to us, just a piece of paper, then it was so worth it!"

Performance Objectives and Program Attendance Outcomes

Each grantee measured success through individualized performance objectives to be achieved by the end of the grant period. These were set as part of the application process. Grantees set goals in the following categories:

- **Improving Academic Performance**
- **Increasing Attendance**
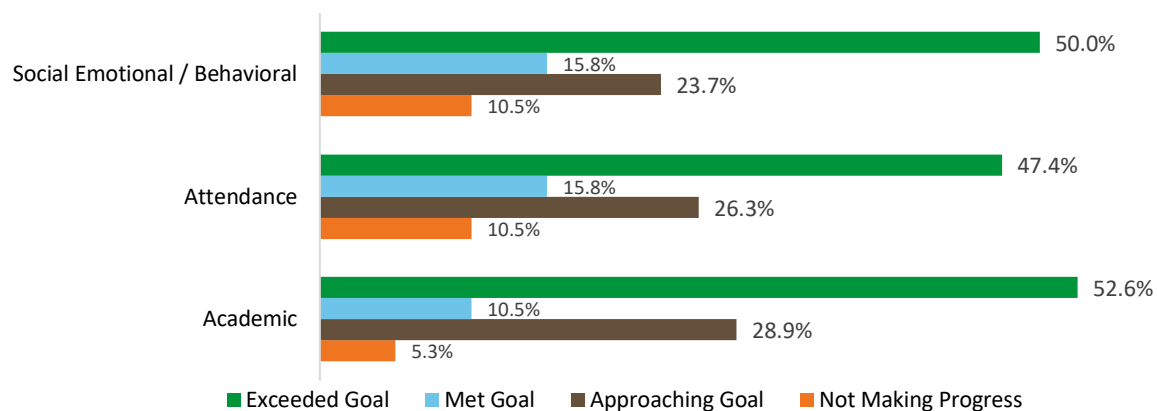- **Improving Social and Emotional Skills/Decreasing Discipline/Behavior**

Grantees annually report progress toward achieving these goals. Grantees reported on the number of students assessed and the number of students who improved in each of the performance objective areas. These values were used to calculate the percentage of students who improved in each area, and values were compared with grantee goals outlined in performance objective. For future PMs, CDE staff have added minimum improvement percentages based on the progress of previous grantees to ensure that grantee PMs are both reasonable and attainable. Grantees were categorized as follows:

- Not Making Progress = Less than halfway to goal
- Approaching = From 50% of goal to 5% below goal
- Met: Within 5% of goal
- Exceeded: 5% or more beyond goal

More than half of all grantees reported meeting or exceeding their performance objectives in 2022-2023 (**Chart 6**, **Chart 7**). Specifically, when aggregating all performance objectives (*N* = 113):

- 65 percent of all goals were met or exceeded.
- 74 percent of grantees met or exceeded at least 2 out of 3 of their goals.
- 26 percent of grantees met or exceeded all their goals.

CHART 6: GRANTEE-REPORTED PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE GOALS

Social Emotional / Behavioral: Exceeded Goal 50.0%, Met Goal 15.8%, Approaching Goal 23.7%, Not Making Progress 10.5%

Attendance: Exceeded Goal 47.4%, Met Goal 15.8%, Approaching Goal 26.3%, Not Making Progress 10.5%

Academic: Exceeded Goal 52.6%, Met Goal 10.5%, Approaching Goal 28.9%, Not Making Progress 5.3%

Legend: ■ Exceeded Goal ■ Met Goal ■ Approaching Goal ■ Not Making Progress

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023.
Note: N = 38 for all Performance Objectives except Academic, where N = 37 because one grantee did not construct an objective that allows for categorization.
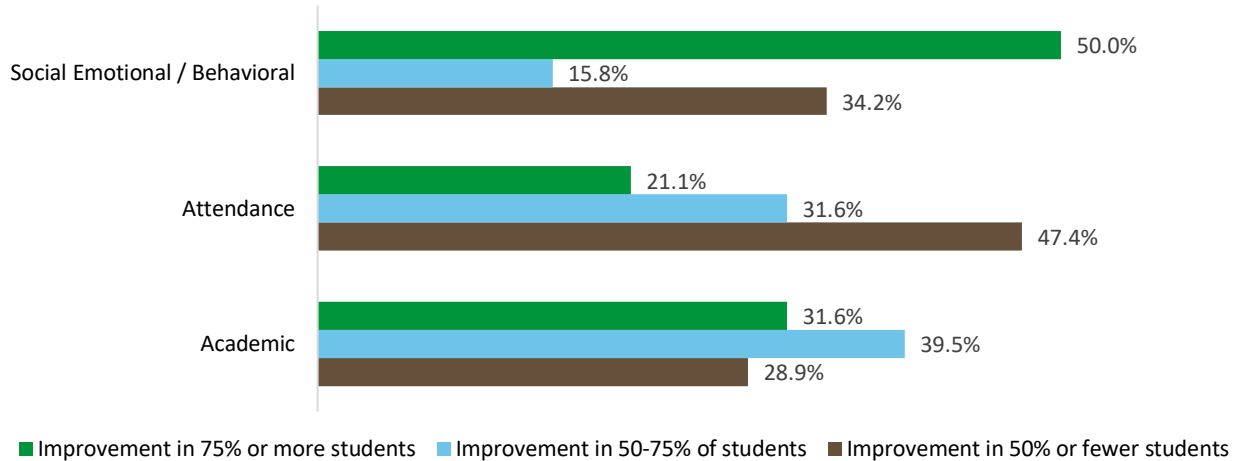
CHART 7: PERCENTAGE OF RATINGS ACROSS ALL OBJECTIVES FOR 2021-2022 AND 2022-2023

Not Making Progress: 2021-2022 13.8%, 2022-2023 8.8%
Approaching Goal: 2021-2022 42.0%, 2022-2023 26.5%
Met Goal: 2021-2022 27.1%, 2022-2023 14.2%
Exceeded Goal: 2021-2022 17.0%, 2022-2023 50.4%

Legend: ■ 2021-2022 ■ 2022-2023
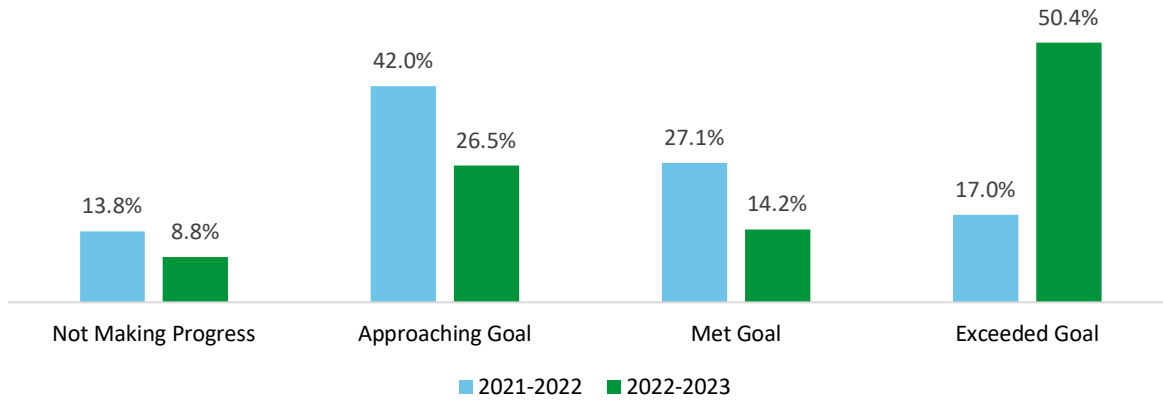
Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023 and 2021-2022.

In addition, because grantees varied widely in their goals (i.e., improvement in 10 versus 90 percent of students), this report also includes the overall percentage improvements reported by each grantee for each performance objective. The most recent cohort of grantees all chose goals targeting at least 50% of their students. In general, grantees saw the most improvement in academic objectives and the least improvement in attendance objectives (**Chart 8**).

CHART 8: GRANTEE-REPORTED PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE AREAS FOR STUDENTS SERVED

Social Emotional / Behavioral: 50.0% (75% or more), 15.8% (50-75%), 34.2% (50% or fewer)
Attendance: 21.1% (75% or more), 31.6% (50-75%), 47.4% (50% or fewer)
Academic: 31.6% (75% or more), 39.5% (50-75%), 28.9% (50% or fewer)

Legend: ■ Improvement in 75% or more students ■ Improvement in 50-75% of students ■ Improvement in 50% or fewer students

Source: Colorado Department of Education, EARSS End-of-Year Reporting, 2022-2023.

Endnotes

[1] Augustine, C., Engberg, a., Grimm, G., Lee, E., Lin Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. (2018). *Can Restorative Practices improve school climate and curb suspension? An evolution of the impact of Restorative Practices in a mid-sized urban school district.* (2018). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. 10.7249/RR2840

[2]Chang, H. N., Bauer, L., & Byrnes, V. (2018). *Data Matters: Using Chronic Absence to Accelerate Action for Student Success.* Attendance Works. Retrieved from ERIC https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED587559

Appendix A – Evaluation Methodology

Data Collection

Evaluation data were collected from 46 grantees funded by the EARSS program. The data reported here are for the 38 grantees currently operating their grants. There were an additional 8 grantees returning for a final year with a no-cost extension and 12 grantees who did not need to report data as they were in the planning period for their first year of funding. 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 using the Student Engagement Evaluation Data Collection (SEEDC) in Data Pipeline.

The results reported in this document reflect data collected at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. Two webinars were conducted to prepare grantees to collect and enter data. Recorded versions of the webinars were also shared with all grantees. 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 was downloaded from the SEEDC 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 (i.e., thematic analysis) analyses. When appropriate, inferential analyses included an investigation of differences by grant year and student type. Due to the unique nature of facility schools, additional analyses were conducted focused on those grantees.

Appendix B –2022-2023 Funded Grantees

County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Adams-Arapahoe	6	Plan	Adams Arapahoe 28-J	Vanguard Classical East	Charter	$50,100
Boulder	2	Plan	St Vrain Valley RE-1J	Frederick HS – Longs Peak MS – Sunset MS	District	$56,412
Colorado BOCES	3	Plan	Colorado River BOCES	Yampah Mountain High School	BOCES	$5,400
Denver	1	Plan	Laradon Hall	Literacy	Facility	$22,070
Denver	1	Plan	Third Way Center	Successful Future	Facility	$45,298
El Paso	5	Plan	Roundup Fellowship	Enhancing Board Certified Behavior Analyst/Registered Behavior Technician Program	Facility	$50,000
Garfield	3	Plan	Garfield 16	EARSS Program	District	$62,703
Garfield	3	Plan	Roaring Fork RE-1	High School MTSS	District	$13,092
Gunnison	3	Plan	Gunnison Watershed RE-1J	EARSS Program	District	$74,000
Larimer	4	Plan	Poudre R-1	Middle School Transition Program	District	$40,248
Montrose	3	Plan	Montrose County RE-1J	Student Wellness and Engagement	District	$73,628
Rio Grande	3	Plan	Upper Rio Grande C-7	URGSD EARSS Program	District	$18,000
Adams, Jefferson, Denver	6, 7, 8	1	Charter School Institute	New America School Opportunities Centers	Charter	$233,276
Arapahoe	4, 6	1	Cherry Creek 5	CCSD #5 EARSS Grant 2022-2026	District	$892,910

County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Denver	1	1	Denver Public Schools	Compass Academy	Charter	$300,000
Denver	1	1	Denver Public Schools	Rise-Up Community Post-secondary Readiness Support	Charter	$294,490
Denver	1	1	Tennyson Center	Motivational Interviewing	Facility	$176,880
Douglas	4	1	Douglas County RE-1	HOPE Online Workforce Pathway	Charter	$162,300
Douglas	4	1	Douglas County RE-1	Renaissance Secondary Student Support Team	Charter	$180,000
El Paso	5	1	Griffith Centers for Children	Griffith Vocational Program	Facility	$168,990
El Paso	5	1	Harrison 2	Atlas Prep Middle School	Charter	$148,000
El Paso	5	1	Harrison 2	HSD2 EARSS Program	District	$249,000
El Paso*	5	1	Education reEnvisioned BOCES	Pikes Peak Online School	BOCES	$184,000
La Plata County	3	1	Durango 9-R	The HUB Therapeutic Program	District	$223,402
Las Animas	3	1	Las Animas RE-1	Academy of Las Animas Student Support	Charter	$228,166
Las Animas	3	1	Trinidad 1	Trinidad Middle School	District	$121,400
Logan	4	1	Valley RE-1	VSD Case Management	District	$413,800
Mesa	3	1	Mesa County Valley 51	Mesa County Valley 51 Bounce Back Program	District	$303,599
Montezuma	3	1	Mancos RE-6	MSD Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Support	District	$180,000
Montezuma	3	1	San Juan BOCES	Behavior Emotional Transition and Academic Program	BOCES	$303,790

County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Pueblo	3	1	Pueblo County 70	Pueblo D70 Student Support	District	$378,575
Saguache	3	1	Center Consolidated 26JT	Center Positive Youth Development	District	$479,990
Teller	7	1	Cripple Creek-Victor RE-1	Restore, Engage, and Provide Support	District	$305,063
Adams	2, 8	3	Adams 12	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	District	$224,105
Adams	8	3	School District 27J	EARSS 2021-2024 Middle School Tier 3 Program	District	$328,337
Alamosa	3	3	San Luis Valley BOCES	SLV EARSS 2021-2024	BOCES	$280,580
Boulder	2, 7	3	Boulder Valley	Advanced Alternative Learning Program and Services	District	$236,062
Centennial	3	3	Centennial School District R-1	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	District	$120,735
Denver	1	3	Denver Public Schools	DPS EARSS Program	District	$166,601
Denver	1	3	DPS - Denver Justice High School	Denver Justice High EARSS Program	Charter	$133,660
Jefferson	7	3	Charter School Initiative	Early College of Arvada	Charter	$83,250
Jefferson	7	3	Jefferson Hills Academy	EARSS 2021 to 2024 Program	Facility	$67,400
Lincoln	4	3	Limon School District RE-4J**	Lincoln County RAD-C	District	$72,727
Boulder	2	4	Boulder Valley	Boulder Prep High School EARSS Program	Charter	$56,989
Conejos	3	4	South Conejos	EARSS 2020-2023	District	$93,212
Douglas	4	4	Douglas County	DCSD Student Assistance Grant	District	$204,279

County*	Congressional District	Year of 4-year grant	Grantee	School or Program funded, or District-wide Strategies	Grantee Type	Amount Awarded
Kit Carson	4	4	Arriba-Flagler CSD #20**	Kit Carson Co EARSS 2020-23	District	$40,341
Larimer	2	4	Poudre	Poudre District Smart Start	District	$102,429
Rio Grande	3	4	Upper Rio Grande School District	URGSD EARSS	District	$59,601
Saguache	3	4	Mountain Valley	EARSS 2020-2023	District	$56,987

*Note: * County refers to where the city of administration was located. It might not reflect all counties receiving services per grantee. ** District programs serving more than one district.*

Appendix C – Summaries of Successful Programs

Below is a list of the grantees who reported positive enrollment outcomes for 85 percent or more of students served and reported having met or exceeded all their performance objectives in 2022-2023. For these grantees, we provide a description of their programs as submitted as part of the initial grant applications. All program descriptions for the 50 grantees can be found here.

Grantee	Program Summary
DPS – Denver Justice High School	Denver Justice High School will serve EARSS eligible students and reduce truancy and discipline issues while raising graduation rates and academic achievements. This 1 for 9-12 graders who are currently behind on their credit accumulation will receive additional tutoring and opportunities for summer coursework to keep them involved in school all year long. We will also increase mentoring relationships and family involvement in individualized attendance and academic 1s as well as 1s for graduation.
Harrison 2 – Atlas Prep Middle School	Atlas Preparatory Middle School (APMS), a charter school in Harrison School District Two, serves 508 low-income students in grades 5-8. APMS will supplement and expand the existing framework for behavioral supports and interventions that has identified 80 at-risk students. This program will decrease truancy, suspension and expulsion rates of 80 at-risk students before they reach the disciplinary crisis-level. This will be accomplished by hiring two licensed, mental health professionals who will provide targeted interventions and specialized support services at APMS.
Las Animas RE-1	Las Animas School District will serve 100 most at-risk middle and high school students from the Academy of Las Animas, an online school that serves students statewide. Funding will allow the Academy to provide case management, social and emotional learning support, services to increase parent engagement, and crucial resources to re-engage and support at-risk students academically who are demonstrating warning signs for dropping-out of school.
Limon RE-4J	The Rural At-Risk/District Attendance Review Board is a collaboration between three small rural school districts, Limon, Genoa-Hugo and Karval, with our Lincoln County Interagency Oversite Group, established by HB1451, that provides wrap around services for at-risk youth. The program will serve 35-40 rural students by utilizing a Youth Advocate to support at-risk students in regards to behavior, academic progress and attendance at school. The program also requests district stipends for academic mentoring and individualized emotional and cognitive support. Grades 6-12.
Mancos School District RE-6	MSD's EARSS Program will provide social, emotional, and behavioral support to EARSS eligible students.
Mountain Valley RE-1	Mountain Valley School District RE-l will support the students that will reduce the likelihood of eventual expulsion and/or declaration as a habitual truant. The program would include support services for eligible students to help them avoid expulsion; AmeriCorps volunteers as mentors, after school tutoring, leadership activities, and an opportunity for students to meet with the restorative justice coach. The program plans to serve PreK-12, 70 students the first year, 75 the second year and 80 and 85 the third and fourth year of the program.

Poudre	Boltz Middle School (BMS) and Fort Collins High School (FCHS) propose an EARRS-funded transition program, impacting up to 160 7th-10th grade students every year. A strong partnership between middle and high school provides a greater impact on student success with a proactive approach to improving graduation rates. Grant monies will support one (1) FTE Transition Counselor position: .5 FTE housed at Boltz Middle School and .5 FTE housed at FCHS in addition to programming that facilitates effective student transition and engagement.
San Juan BOCES	The Behavior Emotion Transition and Academic (BETA) program has demonstrated success in family engagement and increased emotional skills leading to a decrease in behavioral issues at school. The program seeks to expand this programming through the training and use of Restorative, Trauma Responsive, and Culturally Responsive Practices. The focus of this grant will be on younger students and those experiencing behavioral issues at school along with creating partnerships with local Native American tribes to bring indigenous practices into the processes.
San Luis Valley BOCES	The San Luis Valley BOCES will provide services to 237 middle and high school students at-risk of academic, behavioral, and/or attendance issues (truancy or suspension/expulsion). SLV BOCES will provide educational services including tutoring and college/career exploration, and support services including Behavior Interventionist and Restorative Practices training.
Trinidad SD 1	Trinidad Middle School (TMS) will provide case management services including educational services, social and emotional learning support, parent/family engagement support, and referral services to ensure that students at risk of academic failure and/or are demonstrating warning signs for dropping out of school receive the services needed to overcome barriers

Attachment D – Common Strategies

EARSS program evaluations have identified the following as activities and strategies that are commonly used to serve EARSS students and to make progress in grantees' performance goals.

Attendance Contracts
Refers to written agreements to address attendance issues. Often includes strategies to address barriers to attendance and action plans to improve attendance.

Behavioral Plans
Refers to action plans to address behavioral and truancy issues. Plans should be developed in coordination with students, parents, school personnel and community-based providers.

Course Completion/Credit Recovery or Accrual
Refers to programs/activities that allow a student to continue earning course credits and to advance toward graduation and/or facilitate accrual of credits, especially in core courses (math, science, reading and social studies). May include self-paced digital content or online programs.

Counseling
Refers to social-emotional counseling that may be school-based or community-based and is provided by qualified school staff or other counseling professionals.

Culturally Responsive Interventions
Refers to strategies and activities that are relevant and sensitive to a student's background, culture and language and may include, but are not limited to, reducing inappropriate referrals to special education, addressing over representation of specific cultural groups in disciplinary actions and closing the achievement gap.

Essential Skills Building
Refers to programming that addresses the development of creativity and innovation skills, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, social and cultural awareness, civic engagement, initiative and self-direction, flexibility, productivity and accountability, character, and leadership.

Individual Career and Academic Planning
Refers to planning aimed at intentionally guiding students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills to create their own meaningful and powerful pathways to be career and college ready.

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)
MTSS is a whole-school prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for every student through a layered continuum of evidence-based practices and systems. In Colorado, the components of the MTSS framework represent educational reform initiatives, Response to Intervention, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Positive Staff-Student Mentoring and Relationships

Refers to one-on-one or small group mentoring by staff and student connections to a caring adult. Strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to, advising, coaching, problem solving, and self-esteem building. This is often done by grant-funded FTE such as behavior interventionists, attendance advocates, family liaisons, tutors, mentors, counselors, and social workers, etc. Often involves a case management structure.

Restorative Practices (in response to or as an alternative to exclusionary discipline)

A formal process, facilitated by trained mediators in restorative justice, which allows students to understand the harm caused, who it affected and how to repair it. It provides support and an opportunity to resolve student conflicts and misconduct.