



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# 2017-2018 Foster Care Education Data

By:

**Foster Care Education Program**

**The Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement**

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## Introduction

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Children and youth in foster care are a relatively small population of students in Colorado’s K-12 schools. However, they experience the largest academic achievement gap as a group.<sup>1</sup> The dropout rate for children and youth in foster care continues to be significantly higher than Colorado’s state average. A recent research study conducted through the University of Northern Colorado indicated that students in foster care who were not on-grade level in math or reading are expected to have 58 percent and 81 percent increase in the risk of dropping out of school, respectively.<sup>2</sup> When other factors are combined, such as multiple school moves and child welfare placement changes, the likelihood of a student in foster care dropping out increases dramatically. Additional academic supports to ensure students in foster care perform at grade level academically and strategies to reduce school changes can mitigate risk of dropout.<sup>3</sup>

The Foster Care Education (FCE) program at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) was launched in September 2012 and is dedicated to ensuring that students in foster care are successful in school and life. The FCE program provides training, support, and guidance to school districts and county child welfare agencies in the implementation of state and federal laws that address the education of students in foster care. Part of this work includes reporting graduation and completion rates, dropout rates and mobility rates for students in foster care.

In 2012, CDE established a data-sharing agreement with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) which has enabled CDE to calculate graduation, dropout and mobility rates of students in foster care. The 2017-18 school year results at the state and county level are provided in this document. County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.

This document provides foster care education data at the state and county level. It is not intended to provide an analysis of the data such as, root causes and contributing factors for the rates. Information about supporting educational stability of students in foster care and links to foster care research may be found on CDE’s Foster Care Education webpage, [www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare\\_index](http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare_index).

Note: The term “student in foster care” refers to an individual who has experienced an out-of-home placement and has been enrolled in a Colorado public school.

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## State Rates: Students in Foster Care

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### State Graduation and Completion Rates

The four-year completion rate shows that 37.8 percent of students in foster care, in the Class of 2018, finished high school with a diploma, high school equivalency or certificate of completion within four years. The four-year high school completion rate, which combines both the number of graduates and those that received a high school equivalency diploma, of students in foster care is less than half the state rate (82.5 percent).

Table 1 shows that the “best of” rate of high school completion for students in foster care is the seven-year rate for the Class of 2014 (56.0 percent). With three additional years in high school, more than half of students in foster care in a class cohort, finish high school with either a diploma or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED). The persistently low rates signals an urgency to ensure that all students are on track to finish their high school education and are prepared for postsecondary success.



**Table 1: 4-Year and Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Students in Foster Care from 2014 to 2018**

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

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

### Still-enrolled Rates - Students in Foster Care

In the Class of 2018 cohort there were 911 Colorado students in foster care. Of these students in foster care approximately 62 percent did not receive a diploma or HSED within four years of entering high school. Of those students in foster care who did not finish high school, 201 students (22 percent) were counted as “still-enrolled” - not dropouts. Still-enrolled students and have an opportunity to complete their high school education within five, six or seven years of entering ninth grade.

### State Dropout Rates - Students in Foster Care

The current dropout rate for students in foster care slightly increased (0.2 percentage points) to 8.6 percent from the previous year. This rate is 6.4 percentage points higher than the state rate of 2.2 percent.

The pupil count of foster care students in grades 7 to 12, shows an increase in the number students in the 2017-18 school year (4,116 students in foster care) compared to previous school years. See Table 2. Additionally, in the 2017-18 school year, students in foster care represented 0.9 percent of the seventh to twelfth grade pupil count in Colorado, but disproportionately represented 3.5 percent of the students dropping out of school.

**Table 2: Dropout Rates of Students in Foster Care from 2013 to 2018**

School Year	Pupil Count (7th- to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	Number of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Comparison to State Dropout Rate and Percentage Point Difference
2012-2013	3,560	160	4.5	2.0 higher (2.5 state rate)
2013-2014	3,436	185	5.4	3.0 higher (2.4 state rate)
2014-2015	3,533	239	6.8	4.3 higher (2.5 state rate)
2015-2016	4,018	372	9.3	7.0 higher (2.3 state rate)
2016-2017	3,398	284	8.4	6.1 higher (2.3 state rate)
2017-2018	4,116	355	8.6	6.4 higher (2.2 state rate)

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



## Data Privacy and Student Counts

CDE takes seriously its obligation to protect the privacy of student Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Data and statistics covered in this document only include aggregated counts of 16 or more students in foster care. Counts that had under 16 students in foster care have been removed.

## Foster Care Student Count

In school year 2017-18, 5,846 Colorado public school students were identified as students in foster care. Table 3 shows the count of students in foster care for the 27 counties that had a count of 16 or more students in grades K-12.

**Table 3: 2017-18 Count of Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County Code	County Name	Count of Foster Students
01	ADAMS	427
02	ALAMOSA	36
03	ARAPAHOE	599
06	BENT	20
07	BOULDER	197
08	CHAFFEE	18
15	DELTA	98
16	DENVER	1105
18	DOUGLAS	147
21	EL PASO	943
20	ELBERT	31
22	FREMONT	67
23	GARFIELD	31
28	HUERFANO	16
30	JEFFERSON	427
34	LA PLATA	42
35	LARIMER	178
38	LOGAN	26
39	MESA	294
42	MONTEZUMA	27
43	MONTROSE	46
44	MORGAN	25
45	OTERO	42
51	PUEBLO	318
60	TELLER	25
62	WELD	386
	State Total	5846

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*



## Foster Care Dropout Rates

### 2017-18 Dropout Rates for Students in Foster Care

In accordance with student data privacy guidance, Table 4 includes the four counties that had a count of 16 or more students in foster care in seventh to twelfth grades and had 16 or more dropouts.

**Table 4: 2017-18 Foster Care Dropout Rate and Student Counts by County of School District**

County Name	Total Category <i>(Note: Alternative schools is not the same as Alternative Education Campuses)</i>	Pupil Count (7th- to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	Total number of dropouts	Dropout rate
	STATE TOTALS (ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS ONLY)	1,052	200	19.0%
	STATE TOTALS (EXCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS)	3,064	155	5.1%
	STATE TOTALS (INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS)	4,116	355	8.6%
ADAMS	DISTRICT TOTALS	278	19	6.8%
ARAPAHOE	DISTRICT TOTALS	440	24	5.5%
DENVER	DISTRICT TOTALS	1009	192	19.0%
EL PASO	DISTRICT TOTALS	673	30	4.5%

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*



## Foster Care Graduation and Completion Rates

### Four-Year Graduation and Completion Rate for Students in Foster Care

Graduation and completion rates of students in foster care are listed by the county of the school district. Table 5 represents the cohort of students in foster care that graduated and/or completed high school within four years of entering ninth grade in fall 2014. The Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) for this cohort was 2018 (Class of 2018). Table 5 includes the four counties that had a count of 16 or more students in each column.

**Table 5: 4-Year Graduation Rate for Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County Name	Total number of high school students in cohort base (Foster Care)	Number of graduates (Foster Care)	Graduation rate	Number of completers	Completer rate
DENVER	268	23	8.6%	82	30.6%
EL PASO	161	44	27.3%	63	39.1%
JEFFERSON	62	21	33.9%	25	40.3%
MESA	55	20	36.4%	23	41.8%
<b>STATE TOTALS</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>37.8%</b>

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*

### Five-Year Graduation and Completion Rate for Students in Foster Care

Graduation and completion rates are listed by the county of the school district. Table 6 represents the foster care cohort that graduated and/or completed high school within five years after entering ninth grade in fall of 2013. The AYG for this cohort was 2017 (Class of 2017). Table 6 includes the five counties that had a count of 16 or more students in each column.

**Table 6: 5-Year Graduation Rate for Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County Name	Total number of high school students in cohort base (Foster Care)	Number of graduates (Foster Care)	Graduation rate	Number of completers	Completer rate
ADAMS	52	19	36.5%	24	46.2%
ARAPAHOE	80	28	35.0%	36	45.0%
DENVER	257	42	16.3%	108	42.0%
EL PASO	161	47	29.2%	60	37.3%
JEFFERSON	59	20	33.9%	21	35.6%
<b>STATE TOTALS</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>43.8%</b>

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*



### Six-Year Graduation and Completion Rate for Students in Foster Care

Graduation and completion rates are listed by the county of the school district. Table 7 represents the foster care cohort that graduated and/or completed in six years after entering ninth grade in fall of 2011. The AYG for this cohort was 2016 (Class of 2016). In accordance with student data privacy guidance, Table 7 includes the 10 counties that had a count of 16 or more students in each column.

**Table 7: 6-Year Graduation Rate for Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County Name	Total number of high school students in cohort base (Foster Care)	Number of graduates (Foster Care)	Graduation rate	Number of completers	Completer rate
ADAMS	87	33	37.9%	38	43.7%
ARAPAHOE	127	52	40.9%	61	48.0%
BOULDER	45	25	55.6%	26	57.8%
DENVER	286	74	25.9%	115	40.2%
EL PASO	268	116	43.3%	134	50.0%
JEFFERSON	113	53	46.9%	61	54.0%
LARIMER	44	22	50.0%	24	54.5%
MESA	65	35	53.8%	41	63.1%
PUEBLO	40	21	52.5%	23	57.5%
WELD	59	42	71.2%	45	76.3%
<b>STATE TOTALS</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>51.1%</b>

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*

### Seven-Year Graduation and Completion Rate for Students in Foster Care

Graduation and completion rates are listed by the county of the school district. Table 8 represents the foster care cohort that graduated and/or completed in seven years after entering ninth grade in fall of 2010. The AYG for this cohort was 2015 (Class of 2015). In accordance with student data privacy guidance, Table 8 includes the nine counties that had a count of 16 or more students in foster care in each column.





**Table 8: 7-Year Graduation Rate for Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County Name	Total number of high school students in cohort base (Foster Care)	Number of graduates (Foster Care)	Graduation rate	Number of completers	Completer rate
ADAMS	71	38	53.5%	44	62.0%
ARAPAHOE	110	48	43.6%	56	50.9%
BOULDER	40	25	62.5%	29	72.5%
DENVER	259	72	27.8%	125	48.3%
EL PASO	245	120	49.0%	141	57.6%
JEFFERSON	98	38	38.8%	50	51.0%
MESA	63	29	46.0%	37	58.7%
PUEBLO	55	27	49.1%	33	60.0%
WELD	49	26	53.1%	33	67.3%
<b>STATE TOTALS</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>53.6%</b>

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*



## Foster Care Student Mobility Rates

The Student Mobility Rate is an unduplicated count. This means that once a student has been counted in a given school or district this student will not be counted as “mobile” again in the same year.

In general, a student is considered mobile any time the student exits a school or district outside the normal educational progression. Examples of normal progression include advancing grades between academic years, matriculating between elementary school and middle school or between middle school and high school, and exiting as a high school graduate or high school completer at the end of the twelfth grade. Unanticipated or “non-normal” movements, such as a mid-year grade advancement, entry into a school or district after October 1, or exit from a school or district before the end of the school year, are considered instances of student mobility. Often students who experience disruptions in their education need more time in high school to complete courses, build skills and accumulate the credits needed to graduate prepared.

Table 9 lists the student mobility rate by county of school district. Featured are those counties that had counts of 16 or more students.

**Table 9: 2017-18 Mobility Rate for Students in Foster Care by County of School District**

County name	Total number of students in foster care	Mobile Foster Students	Student Mobility rate
ADAMS	526	295	56.1%
ALAMOSA	43	18	41.9%
ARAPAHOE	768	431	56.1%
BOULDER	223	92	41.3%
DELTA	110	54	49.1%
DENVER	1210	628	51.9%
DOUGLAS	188	88	46.8%
EL PASO	1121	602	53.7%
FREMONT	72	22	30.6%
JEFFERSON	496	223	45.0%
LARIMER	217	120	55.3%
LINCLON	21	16	76.2%
MESA	298	108	36.2%
MONTROSE	55	27	49.1%
PUEBLO	378	178	47.1%
WELD	420	284	67.6%
NONE	63	33	52.4%

*Note: County level data represent the count of students in foster care based on the school district they last attended.*



## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Legal Center for Foster Care and Education (2018). *National factsheet on the educational outcomes for children in foster care*. Retrieved from <http://www.fostercareand education.org/>
- <sup>2</sup> Clemens, E., Lalonde, T., Klopfenstein, K., & Sheesley, A. (revise and resubmit). Early Warning Indicators of Dropping Out of School for Students Who Experienced Foster Care. Educational Researcher.
- <sup>3</sup> Clemens, E. V., Lalonde, T. L., & Sheesley, A. P. (2016). *The relationship between school mobility and students in foster care earning a high school credential*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 68, 193-201.