PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY:

Postsecondary Access and Success For Colorado's High School Graduates

COLORADO
Department of Higher Education

2023 Report

Data Through the High School Graduating Class of 2021

The Colorado Department of Higher Education
Report to the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Colorado General Assembly and the State Board of Education

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COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

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Last year's report followed students who were high school seniors when the pandemic began. The COVID-19 pandemic was a contributor to lower college-going rates in the last report and continues to have an impact but to a lesser degree. This report follows the high school graduating class of 2021 into their first year of college. While the data reveals areas that require attention, it is important to recognize successes:

- A slight increase in students enrolled in Concurrent Enrollment (programs that follow statute guidelines and offer college courses tuition-free to high school students).
- All students enrolled in Concurrent Enrollment in the 2020/2021 academic year potentially saved $50 million in tuition costs.
- 3.5% earned postsecondary credentials while in high school – a slight decrease from the year previous but much higher than in 2009 (.34%).
- Students assessed as needing developmental education courses have decreased significantly – there is also a decrease in the number of students enrolled in standalone developmental education courses.
- Colorado higher education provides good support once students enroll. Persistence rates increased slightly (just under 80%) – higher than the national average of 75.6%.

These and other successes can be used as momentum to address the areas that need attention. Just under 50% of high school graduates attended an institution of higher education in the fall after graduation. The concern adds to the weight of the upcoming enrollment cliff - projections of a nationwide drop in enrollment of the college-age population beginning in 2025. Further, the cliff has resulted in colleges outside of Colorado increasingly recruiting our state's graduates – 29% of high school graduates enrolled in a college or university in another state – a 4% increase and the highest rate ever. We must work harder to promote the value of higher education and what our colleges and universities in Colorado have to offer.

Our Office of Educational Equity continues the critical work in promoting initiatives focused on removing structural barriers to higher education. The work is more important than ever as equity gaps persist in college-going, persistence, and completion rates.

For the first time, this report includes:

- Credential completions for students that enroll out of state; and
- Retention and completion data that are specific to students that graduate from rural high schools (of interest - completion rates for students from rural high schools are higher or similar to the overall completion rates).

Additionally, work has been done to strengthen ties between education and the workforce in Colorado. Workforce alignment discussion and efforts are included in the Student Success and Workforce Revitalization Task Force report (HB21-1330) and the Secondary, Postsecondary, and Work-Based Learning Integration Task Force interim report (HB11-1215). And finally, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education released an updated strategic plan that focuses on workforce collaboration and providing more learners with programs of value.

While we should celebrate our successes, we certainly have important work in front of us. Here we go!

Dr. Angie Paccione
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Higher Education

KEY FINDINGS FOR 2021 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES:

Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential in High School

- 72% enrolled in CTE courses in high school *(unchanged for last 5 years reported)*.
- 42% enrolled in college courses while in high school *(same as 2020).*
- 3.5% graduated with a college certificate or degree *(3.8% for 2020).*

Pathways to Enrolling in Higher Education

- 49.9% of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education the fall after graduation *(slight decrease from 2020)* - race and ethnicity enrollment gaps persist.
- 47.5% of students from rural areas enrolled in the fall immediately after high school graduation *(2% increase from 2020)*.
- 29% enrolled out-of-state (*4% increase from 2020 - highest ever).*
- Of those enrolled, 75% attended a 4-year institution and 25% at a 2-year institution *(2% increase for 4-years, and 2% decrease for 2-years from 2020).*

58.8% of 2009 high school graduates enrolled in college the fall after graduation.

Pathways to Postsecondary Success

- For every 100 students who enroll in college, eight will complete in two years, 39 will complete in four years and 61 will graduate in six years.
- In-state four year credential completion rates have risen for every high school class since 2009.
- Students assessed as needing developmental education courses has decreased significantly – there is also a smaller decrease in the number of students enrolled in standalone developmental education courses.
- First-year GPA and course credits completed decreased slightly.

Recommendations

- CDHE should work with institutions of higher education, K-12 partners, and the workforce to encourage preparation, enrollment and credential attainment of low income, students of color, students with disabilities and students from rural areas. Encourage similar practices which have already proven to work (Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program, GEAR UP and COSI are good examples).
- Create new incremental credentials that recognize knowledge and skills developed along the degree pathway.
- CDHE should work with college academic advisors to assist in training and designing student pathways, identify student pain points and solutions, and inform policy related to student success.
- CDHE must continue to work with institutions of higher education, CCHE, K-12 partners, and statewide leadership to intentionally remove structural barriers, providing students with the specific supports they need to succeed.

Table of Contents

6 Introduction

9 SECTION I: Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential in High School

18 SECTION II: Pathways to Enrolling in Higher Education

27 SECTION III: Pathways to Success in Higher Education

44 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

50 Overview of Data Included in Report

51 Data and Methodology

53 Appendix I: Data Tables

62 Appendix II: Data File Specifications

Introduction

"Colorado wants more learners to complete postsecondary pathways that are valuable and help all learners unlock their economic potential."

Commission Chair Sarah Hughes

Pathways are essential not only to individual success but also to meeting the state's economic needs. The 2022 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report identified that 91.4% of Colorado's Tier 1 top jobs and 70.4% of Tier 2 top jobs[1] require a credential beyond high school. However, only 61% of Coloradans 25-64 years old hold a postsecondary credential, indicating a supply-and-demand gap for some occupations.[2]

Equity gaps are especially concerning as demonstrated in 2021, 62.9% of Asian or Pacific Islander and 54% of White Coloradoans earned a college degree or certificate, while the attainment rates for American Indian or Alaska Native (35.5%) Black or African American (40.3%), and Hispanic or Latinx (28.1%) were much lower.[2]

This year, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) released, Building Skills for an Evolving Economy. The updated strategic plan focuses on advancing the economic mobility of Colorado's learners and earners by aligning postsecondary talent development with industry and statewide needs.

The plan mobilizes three strategic pillars:

- **Pillar #1**: Identify and improve pathways with negative return on investment;
- **Pillar #2**: Focus on equitable access and participation that enables more learners to succeed; and
- **Pillar #3**: Catalyze increased postsecondary/workforce collaboration, alignment, and co-creation of new pathways that offer a positive return on investment.

Erasing equity gaps is a primary focus. CDHE's chief educational equity officer as well as the Office of Educational Equity leads, serves as a conduit, and amplifies the equity work in higher education in Colorado. CDHE defines equity as striving to intentionally remove structural barriers, providing all students with the specific supports they need to succeed. To that end, CDHE's equity work includes improving outcomes for students with disabilities as well as social determinants of student success (creating healthy minds and hunger free campuses in Colorado).

1 In 2022, Tier 1 top jobs must earn $71,739 a year, and Tier 2 must earn $39,853 per year.
2 Lumina Foundation. https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/CO

A key strategy for meeting Colorado's workforce needs is ensuring that Colorado's high school graduates are enrolling and succeeding in career-connected postsecondary education.

A key strategy for meeting Colorado's workforce needs is ensuring that Colorado's high school graduates are enrolling and succeeding in career-connected postsecondary education. Colorado has been successful at importing highly educated talent to meet workforce demands which has contributed to Colorado's resident attainment rate (60.5%) being almost seven percentage points above the national average (53.7%).[1] Unfortunately, Colorado has not been as successful at educating its recent high school graduates; college-going rates are more than 10 percentage points below the 2021 national average of 61.8%.[2] Growing our talent is imperative, as projections show the number of people moving to Colorado will plateau over the next 10 years. Further, according to the state demographer, Colorado's population growth will also be impacted by slowing birth rates[3]. As fewer people move to Colorado, it is unlikely that Colorado will be able to meet workforce demand if the state does not focus on college-going and completion rates for resident Coloradans—with a specific focus on low-income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students and students from rural areas.

1 Lumina Foundation. https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/CO
2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/hsgec_04262022.htm
3 Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office, Presentations, Aging in Colorado (3/2022): https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/assets/html/publications.html

In 2021, 61,714 students graduated from a public Colorado high school. Graduating from high school is an accomplishment, but to be competitive in the workforce, change careers, and achieve economic stability Coloradans would be better served to have some sort of postsecondary degree or credential. The pandemic continues to have an impact on the college-going rate, but to a lesser extent. Nearly 50% of 2021 high school graduates enrolled in a college or university the fall after graduation, a slight decrease from the previous year which had an almost 6% decrease. Fifty-one percent either went to college or graduated with a postsecondary credential (a slight decrease).[1]

49.9%

of 2021 high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education. 51% either went to college or graduated high school with a postsecondary credential.

A total of 30,092 students (49%) graduated from high school in 2021 without achieving a postsecondary-recognized credential or enrolling directly into postsecondary education. Though some may have taken a gap year, joined the military, or entered a skilled apprenticeship program, many did not pursue a postsecondary pathway. The college-going rate could increase substantially if a focus is given to college-ready students who do not enroll in higher education after high school graduation. Ensuring that prepared high school students are aware of the value of postsecondary opportunities is essential.

2023 Report Format

This report explores both data trends and policy context related to critical pathways that Colorado's recent high school graduates pursue to a meaningful degree or credential.

Specifically, it covers:

SECTION I:

Pathways to a postsecondary credential in high school

SECTION II:

Pathways to enrolling in higher education

SECTION III:

Pathways to success in higher education

Within each section, the report highlights partnerships designed to help more students succeed. Additionally, the report focuses on changing demographics and the importance of closing equity gaps for all populations.

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1 Data Table 1 in Appendix 1.

SECTION I:

Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential in High School

Interventions such as dual enrollment, career and technical education and other programs designed to help high school students achieve an industry- or postsecondary-recognized credential in high school are creating more meaningful pathways. This section outlines critical pathways blending high school and postsecondary education to ensure more Coloradans can complete a credential of value.

Career and Technical Education

Perhaps one of the longest-standing pathways to a postsecondary credential is career and technical education (CTE). CTE was formalized in Colorado through state legislation in 1970, although federal legislation has supported CTE programs since the early 1900s. Colorado's CTE programs deliver proven pathways to career success through rigorous, career-connected courses and programs. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) houses Colorado's state CTE administration, with programs at the middle school, high school, and postsecondary levels. Though not all CTE participants or completers earn a credential, many do (44% of 2021 graduates completed a CTE program).

In 2021 Colorado began collecting CTE completion data under the new Perkins V definitions which impacted completion rates (lower than previous years). Under the new Perkins V law, completion is no longer measured in secondary CTE programs, rather concentration is the focus and completion is measured only at the postsecondary level.

72%

of 2021 high school graduates enrolled in CTE courses at some point during high school.

44%

of 2021 high school graduates completed a CTE program. Students may receive either a postsecondary- or industry-recognized credential upon completion of or on the way to completing a CTE program.[1]

- At the secondary level, a concentrator is a learner who has participated in at least two CTE courses with a course lasting the equivalent of a year or granting a full Carnegie Unit of credit. Previously, there was not a time or credit requirement associated with the number of courses required for completion.
- Secondary CTE programs that report program completions individually define what constitutes a CTE completer, meaning a student has earned credit for the required minimum courses within the CTE program.
- Both concentration and completion are included in the overall completer data listed in Table 2 in the Appendix.

1 Data are currently unavailable for students receiving an industry-recognized credential.

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment

Colorado high school students can access postsecondary coursework in high school through both dual and Concurrent Enrollment programs. In Colorado, the term "dual enrollment" refers to any program that offers college-level courses to high school students. Concurrent Enrollment (capitalized in all usages) refers only to the programs that follow the guidelines detailed in the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (C.R.S. §22-35-101). Colorado's state-structured Concurrent Enrollment program provides courses to students at no tuition cost. It ensures that coursework is part of an approved CTE program or statewide transfer agreement.

For the first time in 13 years, the percentage of high school grads participating in dual enrollment programs (42%) decreased (very slightly). However, graduates enrolled in Concurrent Enrollment (36.2%) programs increased slightly.

42%

of 2021 high school graduates participated in dual enrollment.

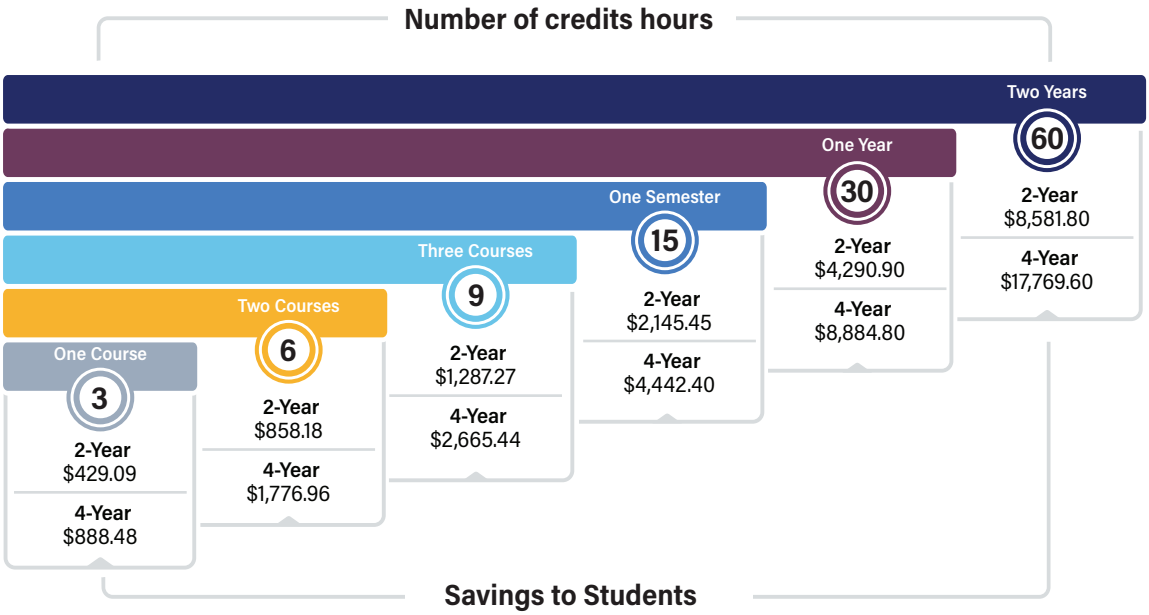
Over the last 13 years, the number of high school graduates who enrolled in dual enrollment has grown more than

262%

Concurrent Enrollment

Eighty-six percent of dual enrollment students completed college credits as part of the state's Concurrent Enrollment program. Concurrent Enrollment provides the opportunity for students to earn or make progress toward a degree or certificate tuition free. Figure 1 illustrates the cost savings that students could realize through concurrent enrollment if all credits earned apply toward their program of study. In total, all students in the 2020-2021 academic year (freshmen – seniors) had the potential to save an estimated $50 million on tuition through Concurrent Enrollment.[1]

FIGURE 1: Potential Tuition Savings if All Credits Apply Toward a Student's Degree



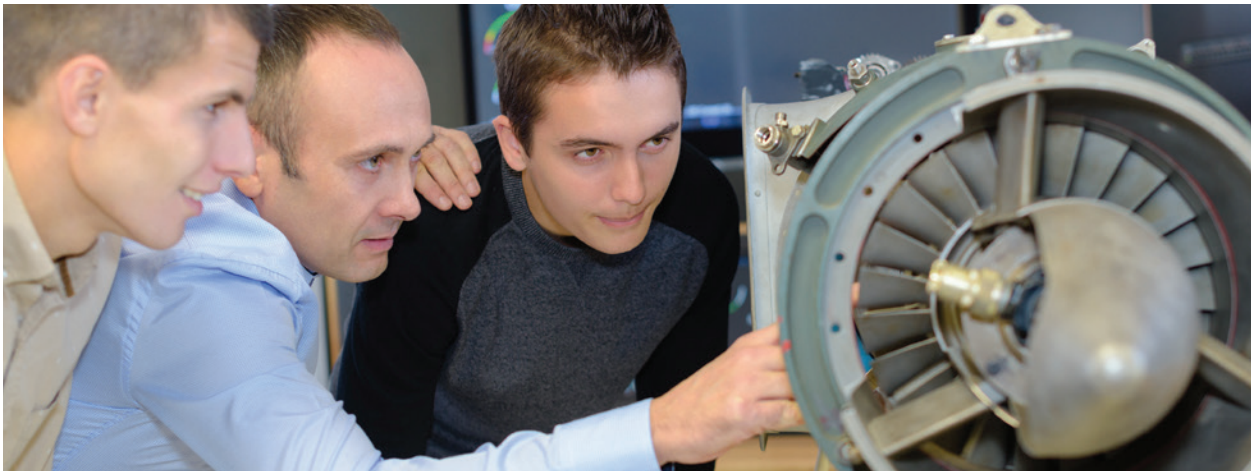
Additional state programs that offer college courses in high school

ASCENT and TREP
Accelerating Students through Concurrent ENrollmenT or "ASCENT" is a 5th year high school program that is included in the same legislation as the state's Concurrent Enrollment program. HB22-1390 removed the cap of students participating each year. Students must have met graduation requirements and completed 9 college level Concurrent Enrollment credit hours before their senior year. College tuition is paid for the student for the academic year. The Teacher Recruitment Education Preparation (TREP) program was created by SB21-185 and models ASCENT but is directed at students wishing to pursue a career in education.

P-TECH
Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools or "P-TECH" is a partnership between a school district, a community college, and one or more local high growth industries/employers. It is a six-year (or shorter) program in which students earn both their high school diploma in addition to an industry recognized associate degree as well as experiences in the workplace through mentoring, job shadowing, internships and more. There are currently 20 P-TECH partnerships throughout the state.

Early College High Schools
An Early College in Colorado is a secondary school that provides a curriculum that requires each student to enroll in and complete secondary and postsecondary courses while enrolled in the four years of high school such that, upon successful completion of the curriculum, the student will have completed the requirements of a high school diploma and an associate's degree or other postsecondary credential or at least 60 credits toward the completion of a postsecondary credential. The curriculum must be designed to be completed within four years. There are currently 18 designated Early Colleges in Colorado.

1 Estimated based on the average in-state tuition at the level of institution that a student attended (average tuition: https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Budget/FY2021/2021_tuitionfeesreport.pdf).



Career Development Incentive Program

The Career Development Success Program (also referred to as the Career Development Incentive Program) was created by the legislature in 2016 to increase the credentials awarded to high school students. This program aligns with the partnership between CDE and CDHE to blend K-12 and higher education and ensure that more students complete high school with a credential. Districts and charter schools can receive up to a $1,000 bonus for each student who completes a qualified industry credential program, a workplace training program, or a Computer Science Advanced Placement course. Though some students were achieving credentials outside of this Career Development Success Program, primarily through CTE, this program has accelerated the growth of high school students graduating with a credential.

A total of

2,172 graduates

completed a credential in high school, representing 3.5% of 2021 high school graduates.

These interventions represent just a few of the innovations at the secondary level to support student pathways into college and careers.

Statewide high school graduation guidelines that went into effect in 2021 (with some implementation flexibility given to school districts due to the pandemic) require all high school students to demonstrate college and career readiness in English and math through a menu of items. This menu not only includes standardized assessments, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) participation, and Concurrent Enrollment but also industry-recognized credentials and a capstone option that can incent students to participate in career opportunities.

The number of high school graduates who are graduating with a postsecondary-recognized credential has increased more than

1,185%

over **13 years.**

Other Postsecondary Pathways

In addition to CTE and dual and Concurrent Enrollment, many Colorado graduates have access to other important postsecondary pathways. Colorado students take rigorous courses in high school through the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs that can lead to college credit. Additionally, Colorado has statewide agreements between all state institutions to accept the same scores for most AP and IB exams and provide course credit. This is of significant benefit to transfer students so that credit earned from exams is not lost when transferring to another state institution.

The **Advanced Placement Program**, administered by the College Board, allows students to enroll in a college-level curriculum in high school and earn college credit by passing an end-of-year exam. In the 2021 school year, 20% of exam takers in Colorado scored 3 or higher on an AP exam (a score of 3 typically is the threshold to receive college course credit). Nationally, over 22% of AP test takers received a score of 3 or higher. Considering demographics, in 2021, 69% of exam takers were White students, and 11% were taken by low-income students. The above Colorado data is taken from reports provided by College Board – the data included all state institutions of higher education except Colorado Mountain College and Aims Community College (20 students total took AP exams from those institutions). Next year College Board will provide comprehensive data on all public institutions in Colorado.

International Baccalaureate is an internationally-recognized program that allows students to take a series of college-level courses that culminate in a standardized assessment where students can earn college credit for a passing score. Thirty-one public high schools in Colorado offer International Baccalaureate programs. Data for Colorado IB participants was not available at time of this report's publication.

Scores Typically Required for College Credit

AP

3

Some courses require 4.

IB

4 out of 7

20%

Of students who took AP exams in 2021 received a passing score of 3 or higher

Representation in High School Pathways That Lead to a Postsecondary Credential

Ensuring CDE and CDHE meet their postsecondary enrollment and attainment goals will mean serving all populations of students equitably. This is particularly important as populations who have traditionally not been served well by education systems represent an increasing share of the student population in Colorado. This section includes trends by gender and race/ ethnicity over time and the percent change between the first and last year in the tables.

CTE Participation by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change from 2015
American Indian or Alaska Native	64.93%	72.40%	72.81%	66.16%	73.56%	71.09%	76.19%	14.79%
Asian	60.39%	67.88%	69.72%	72.31%	72.06%	71.89%	72.62%	16.84%
Black or African American	59.66%	64.17%	63.85%	66.45%	65.55%	67.48%	66.87%	10.78%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	68.99%	62.86%	71.01%	68.75%	68.21%	76.98%	72.43%	4.75%
Hispanic of any race	64.89%	68.28%	68.64%	69.17%	69.05%	69.12%	67.88%	4.41%
Two or More Races	65.87%	71.36%	72.72%	72.92%	71.81%	70.47%	70.94%	7.15%
White	68.21%	73.64%	74.48%	74.28%	74.86%	74.35%	74.58%	8.54%

CTE Overview

Male graduates are more likely than female graduates to participate in CTE, 75% of male graduates enrolled in CTE courses compared to 69% of female graduates. Fewer graduates who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) participate in CTE; 73% compared to 67% FRL eligible.[1] American Indian or Alaska Native (large percent change due to small numbers) and White students are the most likely to engage in CTE, and Black or African American and Hispanic students are the least likely. Asian students experienced the highest growth in the percentage of participation since 2015.

Male graduates were more likely than female graduates to participate in CTE.

75%

compared to

69%

[1] Data Table 5 in Appendix 1.

Dual Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change from 2014
American Indian or Alaska Native	15.88%	22.64%	27.60%	27.66%	31.89%	32.69%	36.46%	31.93%	101.13%
Asian	26.46%	30.41%	36.81%	42.14%	43.65%	45.73%	48.40%	50.73%	91.71%
Black or African American	20.57%	31.08%	28.64%	34.00%	36.16%	37.71%	40.77%	36.91%	79.44%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	26.67%	23.26%	26.43%	23.67%	28.47%	37.09%	32.37%	35.14%	31.74%
Hispanic of any race	24.81%	29.29%	30.66%	32.32%	34.70%	36.19%	37.91%	35.48%	43.00%
Two or More Races	25.22%	28.94%	33.04%	32.66%	37.38%	38.87%	39.68%	39.98%	58.51%
White	26.64%	32.24%	34.83%	37.68%	40.12%	41.31%	45.00%	45.82%	71.98%

Dual Enrollment Overview

Female graduates are more likely to graduate with dual enrollment courses than male graduates, at 46% and 38%, respectively. A much higher percentage of graduates who do not qualify for FRL participate in dual enrollment (44%), compared to just 35% of graduates who do qualify. While the percentage of growth in dual enrollment courses has increased for students whose families qualify for FRL since 2014 (48% increase) there was a 68% increase for students not eligible for FRL.[1] Additionally, the percentage of growth in participation for every race and ethnic category has increased significantly since 2014. Efforts to continue this growth in dual enrollment especially for underrepresented students must continue as it will have a positive impact on college-going and credential completion for these students.

[1] Data Table 5 in Appendix 1.

Credential Attainment in High School by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change from 2014
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.24%	1.00%	1.82%	2.13%	2.39%	3.61%	3.13%	3.92%	**1554.90%**
Asian	0.88%	1.67%	1.58%	2.34%	2.00%	2.59%	3.03%	3.47%	**292.83%**
Black or African American	0.54%	1.09%	1.17%	1.33%	1.09%	1.49%	1.61%	1.68%	**213.86%**
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.48%	0.78%	2.14%	1.18%	4.17%	2.65%	2.88%	3.24%	**118.92%**
Hispanic or Latinx	1.85%	2.65%	2.84%	2.58%	3.26%	3.27%	3.17%	3.17%	**71.61%**
Two or More Races	1.49%	1.58%	2.55%	2.48%	2.77%	2.77%	2.84%	2.84%	**90.11%**
White	1.81%	2.29%	2.66%	3.19%	3.85%	4.23%	4.44%	3.91%	**115.85%**

Certificate and Degrees Earned in High School Overview

The statewide average (3.5%) of students who graduate with a postsecondary credential while in high school in 2021 decreased from the year previous (3.8%). However, students in every demographic category are increasingly earning college certificates and/or degrees while in high school compared to 2014. Nearly 3.8% of female graduates completed high school with a postsecondary credential, compared to 3.2% of male graduates (over a 90% increase since 2014 for both genders). While students who qualify for FRL are less likely to graduate with a postsecondary credential than those who do not qualify for FRL, 2.8% compared to 3.8%, both categories also increased well over 100% since 2014.[1] Additionally, all race and ethnic groups except White students increased or remained the same in credential completion while in high school compared to 2020. An opportunity exists to increase high school credential completion rates for both Black and Hispanic student populations.

Though all of these pathways are promising, to realize their promise of increasing access and reducing costs, the postsecondary education sector and the workforce must recognize them.

Industry and postsecondary institutions should understand and acknowledge the value of CTE programs and experiences. Higher education institutions should continue to recognize the credit that students receive through dual enrollment and work with high schools to ensure that students know how those credits apply toward a degree. Finally, industry and postsecondary credentials awarded in high school should be entry points to higher degrees. This way, if those credentials become obsolete, students know that they can return to postsecondary education and build on their existing knowledge without starting over.

1 Data Table 5 in Appendix 1.

SECTION II:

Pathways to Enrolling in Higher Education

The efforts noted in Part I have the promise of increasing access and making college education more affordable and attainable. This work is more important than ever as the many impacts of the pandemic have contributed to a decrease of more than 6% of our state's high school graduates enrolling in college over the past two graduating classes (2020 and 2021). Further, this decrease comes after a stagnant college-going rate for years before the pandemic.

Increasing college-going rates will require a deliberate and targeted effort. This section provides information that can help policymakers target resources to ensure more students choose to pursue the postsecondary pathways that Colorado's economy and communities demand.

Understanding Trends in College-Going Behavior

There continues to be a strong relationship among 2021 high school graduates between participating in one of the college-pathways programs discussed in Section I and enrolling in a postsecondary institution. The relationship is particularly strong for dual enrollment, where there is a growing body of academic research supporting its effectiveness in improving college-going behavior.[1] Those who achieved a credential in high school were also far more likely to enroll in postsecondary education. The relationship is less profound for those enrolling in a CTE program.

College-Going Rates for Participants of High School Pathways into Postsecondary Education

	Students That Participate	Students That Do Not Participate
CTE Enrollee	50.9%	47.4%
Dual Enrollment	64.6%	39.2%
Credential Attainment in High School	61.3%	49.5%

Again the data demonstrates that college-going behavior is still impacted by the pandemic but to a lesser extent than in the previous class. The college-going rates for every race and ethnic group have decreased after years of gains. Comparing the 2019 graduating class (before the pandemic) to the class of 2021, American Indian or Alaska Native (11.34% decrease) and Hispanic (8.06% decrease) student college-going rates seemed to have been impacted the most. Compared to 2016 graduates, all groups have dropped in their college-going rates. Continued and more focused work toward guiding all students into a college-going pathway, particularly our underrepresented student populations, is critical if we are to meet our goals.

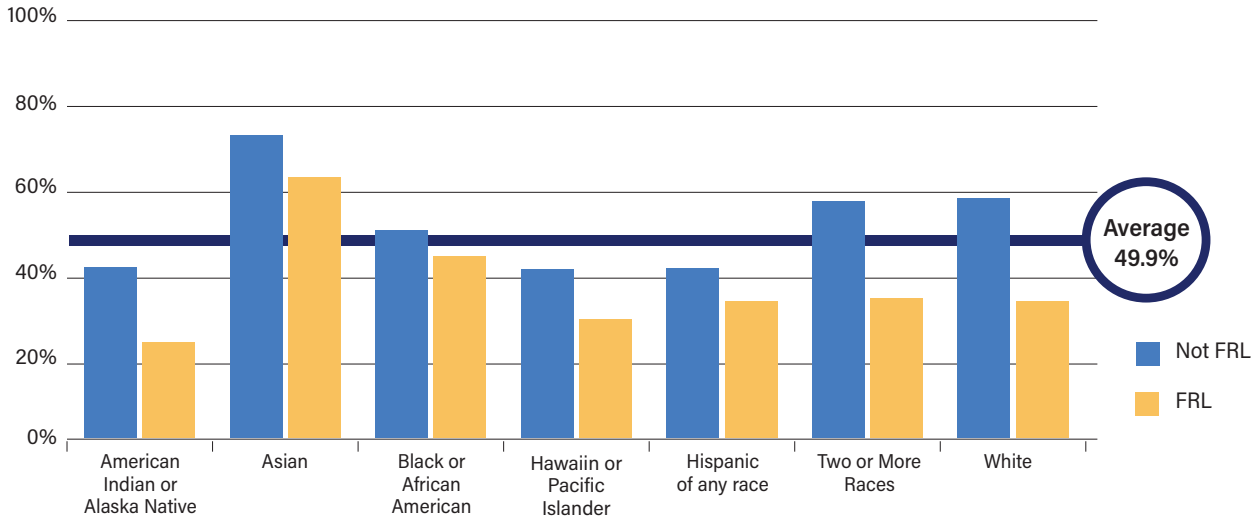
1 Colorado Department of Higher Education (2021) Concurrent Enrollment 2019-2020 Academic Year.
https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2020/2020_Concurrent_Enrollment_July_2021.pdf

College-Going Rate by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change from 2016
American Indian or Alaska Native	41.9%	38.1%	43.8%	45.0%	34.6%	33.6%	**-19.8%**
Asian	75.0%	75.2%	79.0%	78.8%	71.9%	72.0%	**-4.1%**
Black or African American	53.0%	54.8%	55.1%	51.9%	47.8%	47.6%	**-10.3%**
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	49.3%	43.2%	47.9%	44.4%	42.5%	37.3%	**-24.3%**
Hispanic or Latinx	44.2%	45.8%	45.9%	45.9%	39.4%	37.9%	**-14.3%**
Two or More Races	58.5%	58.2%	59.1%	59.0%	52.3%	52.8%	**-9.8%**
White	60.7%	61.2%	61.4%	61.1%	55.8%	55.5%	**-8.7%**

Figure 2 presents college-going rates by FRL eligibility and race/ethnicity. Again, the pandemic continues to impact many categories, especially low-income students but to a lesser extent. Signs of increases in enrollment are seen for FRL-eligible Black or African American and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students. FRL-eligible American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic students all experienced declines in college-going rates. Comparing enrollment rate differences by category between FRL-eligible and not FRL-eligible, Black or African American, and Hispanic students have the smallest difference. FRL-eligible American Indian or Alaska Native and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students enrolled in college at the lowest rates. Low-income Asian students (63.9%) are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education than non FRL-eligible members of any of the other race/ethnicity groups.[1]

FIGURE 2: College-Going Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Income For 2021 High School Graduates



These trends suggest that for Colorado to close some of its most significant equity gaps, it is essential to understand what is happening within populations including by income level and location and size of the student's school district. The state should work to create targeted strategies that address the needs of each group and each individual student to ensure that all students have access to college.

1 Data Table 9 in Appendix 1.

College-Going Rate of Students from Rural Areas Over Time

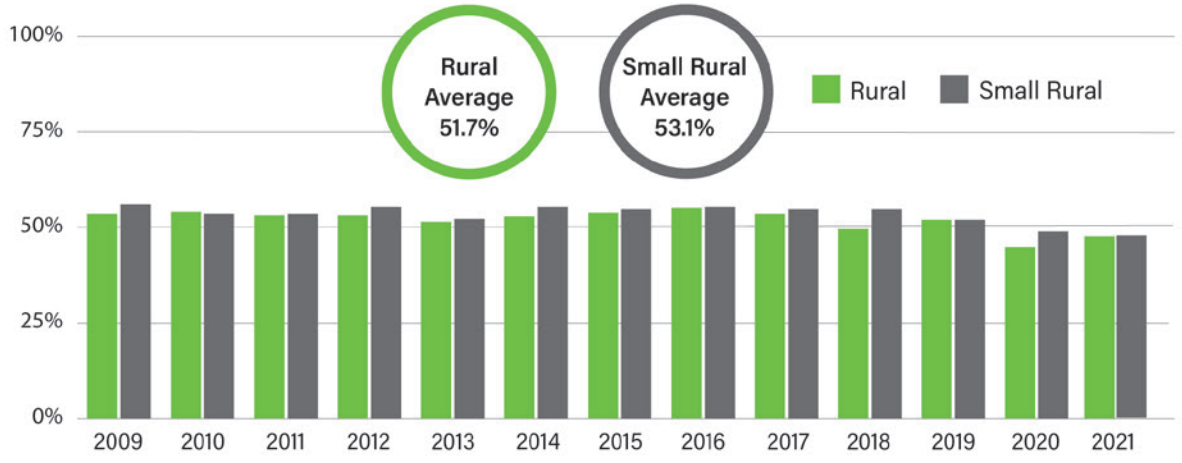
This is the third year that the Postsecondary Report is including information on college-going rates for students from Colorado's rural areas. Students' school district location and enrollment size can also have an impact on college enrollment rates. Rural areas often have fewer resources and opportunities than their urban counterparts. A Colorado school district is determined to be rural by the size of the district, the distance from the nearest large urban/urbanized area and a student enrollment of 6,500 students or less. Small rural districts have a student population of fewer than 1,000 students.

The college enrollment rate for 2021 high school graduates who attended schools in all rural areas (48%) is slightly lower than the state average (49.9%). However, the college-going rate is increasing since the pandemic began. Before the pandemic, the percentage had remained relatively stable.

College-going rates for small rural (less than 1000 students) areas (47.6%) decreased slightly but are a little higher than Rural districts (1000-6500 students) 47.4%.

	College Enrollment for Rural Areas		
	HS Graduates	College Enrollment	Enrollment Percent
2021	9653	4584	47.50%
2020	8785	3986	45.40%
2019	8814	4556	51.70%
2018	8708	4431	50.90%
2017	8238	4424	53.70%
2016	7757	4263	55.00%
2015	7597	4096	53.90%
2014	7755	4152	53.50%
2013	8247	4248	51.50%
2012	8162	4376	53.60%
2011	8753	4661	53.30%
2010	8823	4749	53.80%
2009	8815	4784	54.30%

FIGURE 3: College-Going Rate by Rural and Small Rural Areas



Higher Education Pathways

Students make many choices about their higher education. They decide how soon to enroll in college after high school, whether to pursue a public, private or proprietary institution, as well as choosing to attend an area technical college, two-year college, or four-year institution. They also decide to enroll within Colorado or out of state. The type of degree they want to pursue can guide their decisions. Regardless of the decision, there are many excellent opportunities in Colorado.

When we think about college attendance, we imagine students making a single choice for a school, enrolling and completing at that institution in a linear time frame. However, this is not how today's students interact with the higher education system.

Figure 4 on the next page illustrates the many paths that Colorado's high school class of 2016 has taken through the postsecondary system.

2016 High School Graduates Choices and Credentials Earned by 2021

13% enrolled in a public two-year institution

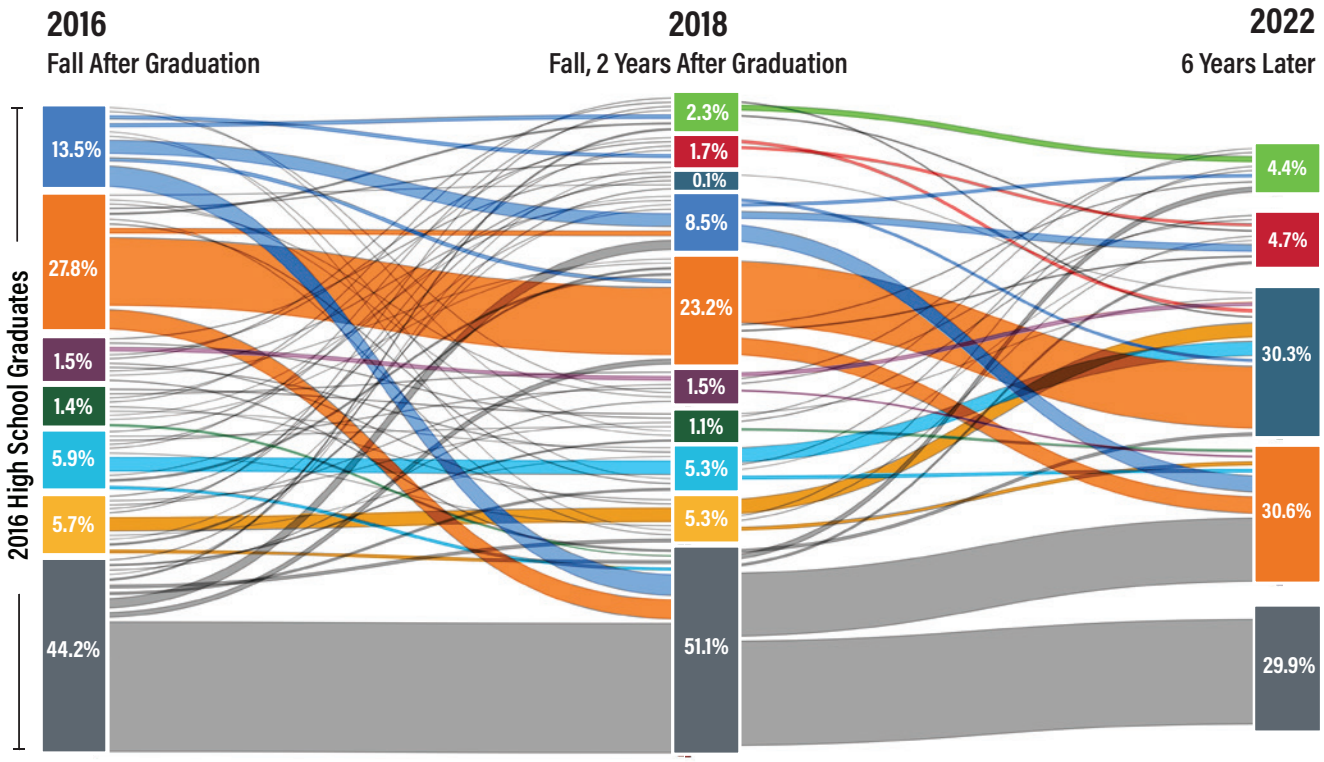
28% enrolled in a public four-year institution

15% enrolled in a private institution or out-of-state

44% did not enroll in college

Students often move between education sectors over the course of their education. Figure 4 on the following page shows the pathways that 2016 graduates took over six years.

FIGURE 4: Pathways of High School Graduates Through Postsecondary Education



	2016 Fall After Graduation	2018 Fall, 2 Years After Graduation
Certificate		2.3%
Associates Degree		1.7%
Bachelors Degree or Above		0.1%
Two-Year Public	13.5%	8.5%
Four-Year Public	27.8%	23.2%
Private	1.5%	1.5%
Public 2-Year Out-Of-State	1.4%	1.1%
Public 4-Year Out-Of-State	5.9%	5.3%
Private Out-Of-State	5.7%	5.3%
Did Not Enroll	44.2%	51.1%

2022 6 Years Later	
Certificate	4.4%
Associates Degree	4.7%
Bachelors Degree or Above	30.3%
Enrolled in 4-Year	30.6%
Did Not Enroll in 4 Years and No Degree	29.9%

- 2016 represents student enrollment information.
- 2018 and 2022 includes credentials earned as well as enrollment information for students who had not yet earned a credential.
- For the first time this report is including credentials earned out-of-state.

Students who enroll in colleges and universities the fall after high school graduation
In-state public colleges or universities are by far the most popular choice for Colorado high school graduates. For the 2021 graduating class, 71% attended an in-state college or university in the fall 2021 term. Four-year institutions (either public or private, in or out-of-state) enroll 75% of students who matriculate to college in the fall following high school graduation (see Tables 6 & 7 in Appendix).

Students who delay enrollment into colleges or universities
When expanding college entry to include the spring and fall one year after high school graduation (a "gap" term or year), the college-going rate increases by an average of more than 7% (for all the high school graduate classes of 2015-2020). The college-going rate increases by 10% on average for students who enroll in two spring or fall terms after high school graduation. Further, students who delay enrollment are far more likely to enroll in a two-year than a four-year institution. With the overall college enrollment rate down for 2020 high school graduates due to the pandemic, there was hope that there would be a noticeable increase in enrollment the year after – this was not the case. As such, it is imperative that higher education focus on re-engagement efforts for adults who did not enroll or complete a credential.

Students who delay enrollment are more likely to attend a two-year institution.

College-Going Rate and College Enrollment By Institution Type Over Time

	TRADITIONAL FALL ENROLLMENT			STUDENTS DELAYING ENROLLMENT			STUDENTS DELAYING ENROLLMENT		
	Enrolled in the Fall after Graduation			Enrolled in the Spring or Fall the Year after Graduation			Enrolled in the Spring or Fall Two Years after Graduation		
	College-Going	2-Year	4-Year	College-Going	2-Year	4-Year	College-Going	2-Year	4-Year
	Cumulative	%	%	Cumulative	%	%	Cumulative	%	%
2021	49.88%	25.44%	74.56%						
2020	50.49%	27.46%	72.54%	57.99%	56.12%	43.88%			
2019	56.34%	26.78%	73.22%	62.54%	62.54%	37.43%	65.08%	60.96%	39.04%
2018	56.63%	27.37%	72.63%	63.76%	65.14%	34.86%	66.14%	59.58%	40.42%
2017	56.36%	26.83%	73.17%	63.77%	64.95%	35.05%	66.58%	62.64%	37.36%
2016	55.81%	26.79%	73.21%	64.29%	61.48%	38.52%	67.08%	62.74%	37.26%
2015	56.55%	25.05%	74.95%	64.28%	62.04%	37.96%	68.03%	56.22%	43.78%
2014	55.95%	25.67%	74.33%	63.38%	63.66%	36.34%	66.22%	65.27%	34.73%

The number of high school students is declining nationally, as a result, more out-of-state institutions are recruiting with greater intensity in Colorado. More than 29% of 2021 high school graduates attended an out-of- state college (see Table 6 in Appendix), both the largest increase and percentage since data was reported in 2009. Only 19.5% of 2009 graduates attended out-of-state institutions. More must be done to keep Colorado graduates in-state especially, as reported by the state demographer, migration to the state is slowing as is the birth rate.

FIGURE 5: Out-of-State Enrollment

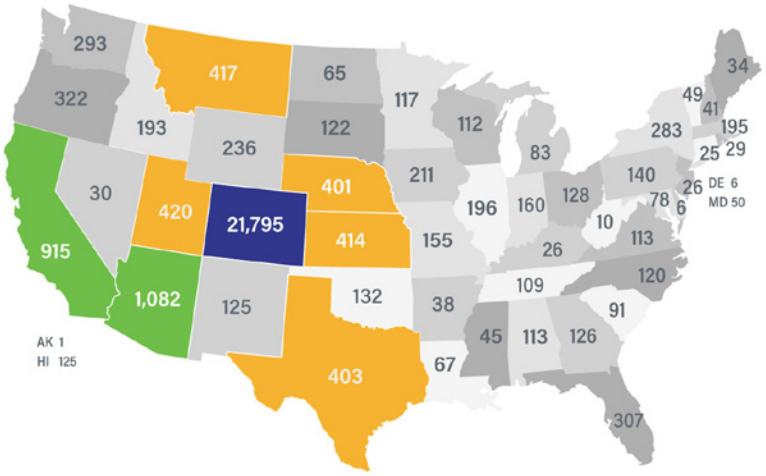


Figure 5 illustrates where high school graduates in Colorado enroll. Arizona and California are by far the top out-of-state choices for Colorado graduates (both with an almost 200-student increase). Utah, Montana, and Kansas are the next most popular choices – Oregon, Florida, Washington and New York also gained significant increases in Colorado student enrollment.

FIGURE 6: In-State Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Income

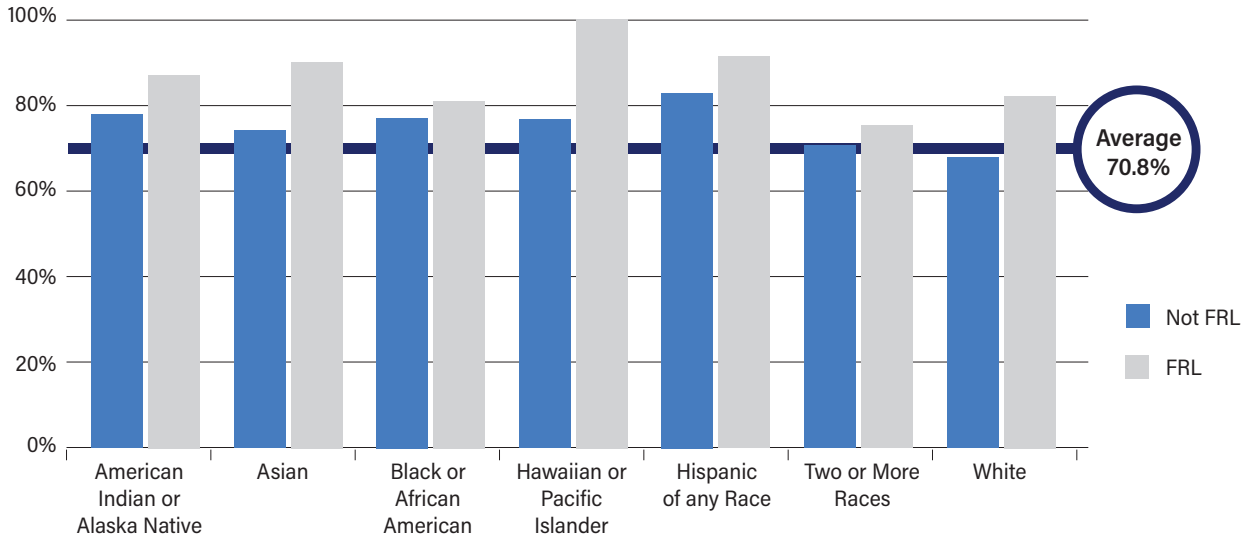


Figure 6 displays enrollment at in-state institutions by Colorado high school grads by race/ethnicity and income. Students who qualify for FRL are more likely to enroll in-state than those who do not qualify for FRL – Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Asian students at the highest rates. Amongst those not eligible for FRL, Hispanic students are most likely to enroll in-state. White students not eligible for FRL are the most likely to enroll out-of-state.

Who Is Not Enrolling in College

Ensuring that more Coloradans access postsecondary education is essential to reaching Colorado's goals. States have focused on increasing access to higher education for decades because higher education provides significant quality-of-life benefits for graduates. Increasing the college- going rate is also an essential strategy for Colorado to meet workforce demands.

Work is also being done in the state to re-engage adults who have not earned a college credential. As noted earlier, 30,092 high school 2021 graduates did not complete a credential in high school or enroll in a postsecondary institution. Although some of these students may have another career path like the military, seminary or private and occupational school in mind, many are strong candidates for institutions to pursue for enrollment.

Providing more Coloradans with access to a postsecondary education and training ensure the state can meet workforce demands.

SECTION III:

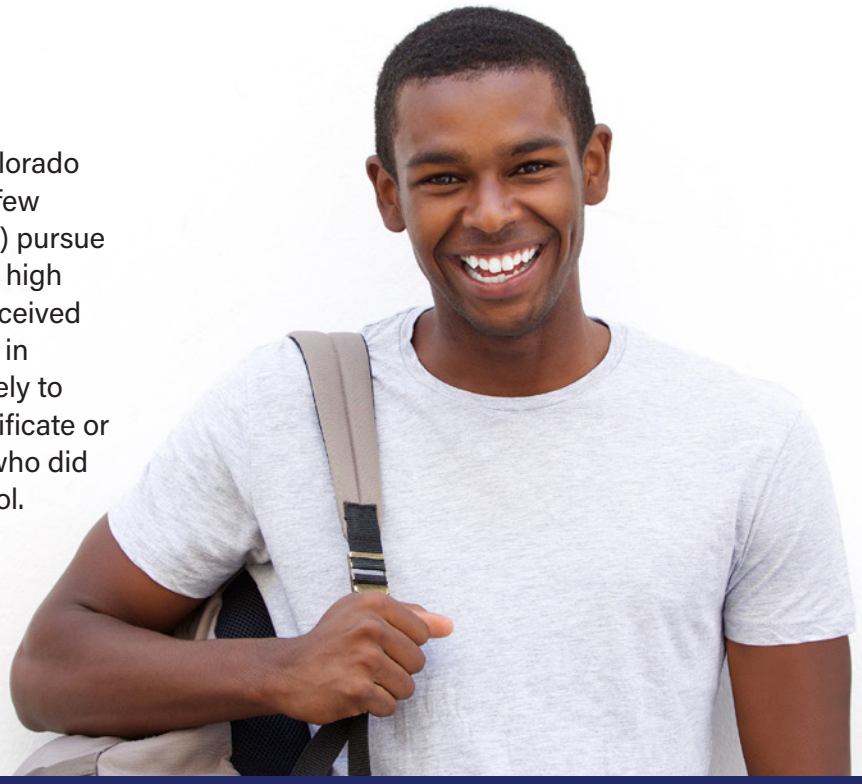
Pathways to Success in Higher Education

As previously illustrated in Figure 4, graduates who enroll in postsecondary education do not always follow linear pathways. Instead, they may move across higher education institutions and between academic programs. But institutions in Colorado continue to do a better job of graduating their students on time. Approximately 39% of 2018 high school graduates who enrolled in an in-state public institution attained a credential within four years (see Table 15 in the Appendix). Comparatively, the 2009 high school graduating class only had a 28% four-year graduation rate. The state and institutional focus on enhancing student pathways to ensure more students have the momentum to graduate, starting early in their postsecondary career, may be driving some of these trends. This next section of the report looks at how high school graduates perform who enroll in the fall term after graduation at an in-state public college or at one of the three private institutions that report data to the state[1]. For the first time, this report also includes the graduation rates for out-of-state college enrollees. This section will also provide information on developmental education enrollment rates and outcomes. Indicators of success that this report will focus on include early degree program enrollment, grade point average (GPA), and credit accumulation.

1 University of Denver, Regis University and Colorado Christian University are the private institutions that submit data to the CDHE.

Initial Pathways

Most high school graduates in Colorado pursue a bachelor's degree. Very few recent high school graduates (3%) pursue a certificate in their first year after high school. However, students who received a postsecondary credential[1] while in high school were slightly more likely to pursue shorter degree paths (certificate or associate degree) than students who did not earn a credential in high school.



Postsecondary Credential Enrollment for High School Graduates of 2021

	All Students	Student with No Credential in High School	Student Receiving a Credential in High School
Certificate	3%	3%[2]	6%
Associate Degree	31%	31%	37%
Bachelor's Degree or Beyond	66%	66%	56%

Growing evidence suggests that choosing a specific degree pathway early in a student's academic career can help ensure they complete their postsecondary education, even if they change their minds and pursue different paths later. Additionally, since outcomes for students who transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution are better when they pursue a defined degree pathway it is important to ensure that more students—and particularly community college students—are identifying and pursuing a specific degree path. Colorado has many transfer agreements between state two- and four-year institutions in well over 30 subject areas to guide students in their pathways.

1 These credentials, often awarded through dual enrollment, may include CTE certificates, academic certificates or associate degrees.
2 Includes one- or two-year certificates offered at institutions that report data to the State Unit Record Data System – state area technical colleges, two-year and four-year institutions, and Colorado Christian University, Regis University and the University of Denver (SURDS).

Developmental Education Needs and Outcomes

This section explores the developmental needs of Colorado's recent high school graduates, examines the postsecondary success of students who require developmental education and looks at equity considerations as they relate to developmental education.

There is a growing body of research showing that assessment scores used to place students into developmental education are a poor predictor of future college success[1], and therefore, college readiness. As a result, colleges have changed both their assessment and placement policies per Colorado's developmental education reform efforts over the years. The changes included expanding the number and types of measurements institutions can use to determine if the student is ready to enroll in a college-level gateway course. The expansion of multiple measures to determine course placement in addition to some community colleges using guided self-placement into courses without an assessment is likely a significant contributor to the substantial decrease in the number of students assessed as needing developmental education.

Additionally, the use of Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) began in Colorado and was propelled by H.B. 19-1206 which, in part, requires institutions to submit a plan to CCHE to replace almost all of their standalone, traditional developmental education courses with SAI. SAI allows students to enroll directly into college-level courses and receive academic support to help them succeed, such as additional labs and tutoring. This saves students money and time and increases their likelihood of passing gateway courses and decreases their chances of leaving college[2]. The community colleges in Colorado are decreasing the number of standalone developmental education courses they offer and increasing SAI options for students.

These innovative changes in developmental education in Colorado in addition to preparation in K-12 appear to be working. 5.33% of 2021 high school graduates enrolled in standalone developmental education course their first year after high school graduation - in comparison, 27.34% of 2010 high school graduates enrolled in a standalone developmental education course their first year after high school graduation. When factoring in both students assessed as needing developmental education in addition to enrolling in standalone developmental education courses, the percentage decreases are especially profound for students of color. For example, in 2012 54% of Hispanic students required developmental education, while only 21% required developmental education in 2021 (see data for additional race and ethnicities in following pages). As SAI expands in use across the state and standalone developmental education courses decrease, we should see a positive trend amongst all institutions which will contribute to an increase in student credential completion.

1 https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/high-stakes-predict-success.pdf https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2016123.pdf https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/predicting-success-placement-tests-transcripts.html
2 Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S.-W. (2010). Referral, enrollment and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. Economics of Education Review, 29(2), 255–270.

Part 1:

Developmental Education Needs

Just under 17% of the class of 2021 who enrolled in a Colorado public institution were either assessed as needing developmental education and/or enrolled in a standalone developmental education course ("requiring developmental education"). This is a significant decrease from 2020 graduates (30%). The decrease is particularly profound when looking at just students assessed as needing developmental education (13% for 2021 graduates compared to 27% for 2020 graduates). These positive changes can in part be attributed to K-12 better preparing students for college in addition to policy changes which includes the uses of multiple measures to assess developmental need.

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Requiring Developmental Education

High School Graduation Year	High School Grads Enrolling In-State	Assessed as Needing Developmental Education	Enrolled in Developmental Education Course in Year 1	Not Assessed But Took a Developmental Education Course in Year 1	Total Requiring Developmental Education	% Requiring Developmental Education
2021	19,464	2,528	1,037	753	3,281	16.86%
2020	20,252	5,544	1,397	575	6,119	30.21%
2019	21,806	4,936	1,874	897	5,833	26.75%
2018	21,941	4,750	2,530	942	5,692	25.94%
2017	21,234	6,770	3,072	613	7,383	34.77%
2016	21,444	6,708	3,655	989	7,697	35.89%
2015	19,952	6,443	3,608	550	6,993	35.05%
2014	19,143	5,714	3,625	762	6,476	33.83%
2013	20,196	5,486	4,374	1,214	6,700	33.17%
2012	20,220	5,718	4,863	1,472	7,190	35.56%
2011	21,790	7,185	5,600	1,138	8,323	38.20%
2010	22,297	7,590	6,095	1,227	8,817	39.54%

The gap in the percentage of high school graduates who require developmental education courses between two-year institutions and four-year institutions is shrinking (20% versus 16%). Both students assessed as needing developmental education in addition to students enrolled in developmental education courses their first year after graduation decreased dramatically for both two and four-year institutions. The need for developmental education for 2021 graduates compared to 2020 graduates decreased by more than 12% for students at four-year institutions and by almost 15% for students enrolled at two-year institutions.

Number of 2021 High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Who Need Developmental Education by Institution Type

Two-Year	Four-Year
1,225	2,056

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Requiring Developmental Education by Institution Type

High School Graduation Year	Two-Year Institutions		Four-Year Institutions	
	High School Grads Enrolling In-State	% Needing Developmental Education	High School Grads Enrolling In-State	% Needing Developmental Education
2021	6,225	19.68%	13,239	15.53%
2020	6,296	34.59%	13,956	28.24%
2019	6,461	41.1%	15,345	20.72%
2018	6,522	44.5%	15,419	18.10%
2017	5,883	58.6%	15,351	25.63%
2016	6,222	55.9%	15,222	27.72%
2015	5,671	61.5%	14,281	24.56%
2014	5,173	56.7%	13,970	25.38%
2013	5,845	58.1%	14,323	23.03%
2012	6,376	62.6%	13,844	23.09%
2011	7,052	65.6%	14,738	25.11%
2010	7,594	66.9%	14,703	25.43%
2009	7,479	64.58%	15,122	23.24%

The below table shows that developmental education rates (assessed as needing and/or enrolled in developmental education courses) for all race and ethnicity groups decreased for 2021 grads. Still, there are significant equity gaps in developmental education needs across race and ethnic groups. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (32%), African American or Black (22%) and Hispanic or Latinx (21%) students are still much more likely to require developmental education. As institutions continue to decrease their offering of standalone developmental education courses and increase SAI, it will be interesting to see how this impacts different race and ethnic groups.

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Requiring Developmental Education by Race/Ethnicity

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
American Indian or Alaska Native	53.28%	42.11%	48.75%	54.81%	46.85%	45.05%	44.70%	29.23%	46.15%	22.78%
Asian	29.19%	26.92%	27.80%	25.19%	27.11%	26.18%	17.99%	17.52%	18.36%	11.80%
Black or African American	61.70%	60.02%	63.77%	58.58%	60.75%	58.70%	46.49%	50.85%	55.12%	21.99%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	47.73%	39.02%	40.00%	48.57%	43.48%	36.59%	35.14%	33.33%	40.48%	31.71%
Hispanic of any race	54.18%	49.76%	51.47%	53.35%	53.43%	52.45%	38.82%	39.32%	43.83%	21.46%
Two or more races	33.94%	32.67%	31.09%	33.70%	33.43%	30.36%	22.25%	23.88%	28.74%	17.24%
White	28.64%	26.48%	26.10%	27.19%	27.46%	26.13%	19.06%	19.94%	23.08%	14.72%

The below table shows that female students are consistently more likely than their male counterparts to require developmental education, but at a decreasing rate. Finally, students qualifying for FRL (low-income) are much more likely to require developmental education than those who do not qualify for FRL. However, FRL 2021 high school graduates experienced a significant drop in needing developmental education compared to 2020 graduates.

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Requiring Developmental Education by Gender and Income

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Female	38.5%	35.5%	37.8%	37.5%	38.7%	37.4%	28.8%	30.5%	34.95%	18.72%
Male	32.2%	30.5%	29.2%	32.2%	32.7%	31.7%	22.7%	22.2%	24.48%	14.61%
Not FRL	29.8%	28.1%	29.6%	29.8%	29.9%	27.9%	21.3%	21.8%	25.21%	15.71%
FRL	56.6%	52.3%	52.5%	53.5%	54.7%	55.2%	41.1%	41.4%	47.20%	21.39%

Part 2:

Developmental Education by Subject

The need for developmental math is much greater than for developmental English (either reading or composition). Of the class of 2021, 15% required developmental math compared to under 6% who required developmental English. However, the decrease in the number of students enrolled in developmental math was more profound than for English.

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Assessed or Enrolled into Developmental Math

High School Graduation Year	High School Grads Enrolling In-State	Assessed as Needing Developmental Math	Not assessed but Enrolled in Developmental Math in Year 1	Total Requiring Developmental Math	% Requiring Developmental Math
2021	19,464	2,250	644	2,894	14.87%
2020	20,252	4,996	557	5,553	27.42%
2019	21,806	4,104	895	4,999	22.92%
2018	21,941	4,058	878	4,936	22.50%
2017	21,234	5,625	647	6,272	29.54%
2016	21,444	5,571	993	6,564	30.61%
2015	19,952	5,510	578	6,088	30.51%
2014	19,143	4,731	845	5,576	29.13%
2013	20,196	4,374	1,207	5,581	27.63%
2012	20,220	4,504	1,484	5,988	29.61%
2011	21,790	5,815	1,294	7,109	32.63%
2010	22,297	6,053	1,430	7,483	33.56%
2009	22,601	5,656	1,357	7,013	31.03%

High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions Assessed or Enrolled into Developmental English

High School Graduation Year	High School Grads Enrolling In-State	Assessed as Needing Developmental English	Not assessed but Enrolled in Developmental English in Year 1	Total Requiring Developmental English	% Requiring Developmental English
2021	19,464	908	248	1,070	5.50%
2020	20,252	2,444	259	2,423	11.96%
2019	21,806	2,658	374	2,531	11.61%
2018	21,941	2,643	824	2,759	12.57%
2017	21,234	4,468	1,112	4,116	19.38%
2016	21,444	4,470	1,274	4,297	20.04%
2015	19,952	4,256	1,424	3,926	19.68%
2014	19,143	3,633	1,438	3,444	17.99%
2013	20,196	3,584	2,540	3,796	18.80%
2012	20,220	3,806	2,966	4,205	20.80%
2011	21,790	4,719	3,522	4,903	22.50%
2010	22,297	5,063	3,818	5,301	23.77%
2009	22,601	4,825	3,577	5,016	22.19%

Percent of 2021 High School Graduates at In-State Public Institutions with Developmental Education Needs by Subject

Both Subjects	Math	English
17%	15%	6%

For students with developmental needs, early enrollment in developmental education is important to accelerate the time to degree and increase the likelihood of success. The below Table illustrates that about 23% of students requiring developmental education enrolled in a developmental education course or SAI in their first year. This percentage has dropped well over 50% since 2010 and experienced a significant drop in the past four years. Students are either increasingly delaying enrolling in their developmental or SAI courses their first year or are instead choosing to enroll in college-level or gateway courses. A future Developmental Education report will provide more details regarding SAI.

High School Graduates Assessed as Needing Developmental Education Who Enrolled in Developmental Education and/or Supplemental Academic Instruction in Their First Year of College

High School Graduation Year	Assessed as Needing Developmental Education	Assessed and Took a Developmental Course in Year 1	Assessed and Took SAI in Year 1	Assessed and Took a Developmental Course OR SAI in Year 1	% Assessed and Took a Developmental Course OR SAI in Year 1
2021	2,528	284	296	580	22.94%
2020	5,544	822	439	1,261	22.75%
2019	4,936	977	619	1,596	32.33%
2018	4,750	1,588	566	2,154	45.35%
2017	6,770	2,459	861	3,320	49.04%
2016	6,708	2,666	630	3,296	49.14%
2015	6,443	3,058	516	3,574	55.47%
2014	5,714	2,863	437	3,300	57.75%
2013	5,486	3,160	70	3,230	58.88%
2012	5,718	3,391	37	3,428	59.95%
2011	7,185	4,462	0	4,462	62.10%
2010	7,590	4,868	0	4,868	64.14%
2009	7,117	4,598	0	4,598	64.61%

Part 3:

Leading Indicators and Postsecondary Outcomes for Developmental Education Students

The below table shows that students who are placed in developmental education pursue fundamentally different pathways than their counterparts. Students enrolled in an associate degree program are much more likely to need developmental education than certificates and bachelor degrees and above. As community and two-year colleges offer the majority of associate degrees, their work in expanding SAI offerings can have a positive impact on associate degree completion rates. (Below table is for 2021 high school graduates.)

Developmental Education Need by Program Enrollment

Developmental Need	Certificate	Associate	Bachelor or Above
No	2.8%	28.9%	66.5%
Yes	2.6%	41.2%	54.6%

As the below chart illustrates, students with developmental needs are much less likely to persist or complete a credential in their first year in college. Compared to the previous year, persistence and completion rates are decreasing for all categories. While almost all races and ethnicities dropped in persistence rates, particularly for those with developmental education needs, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students struggled the most. Asian students continue to persist or earn a credential at the highest rates. Females are more likely to persist or complete their first year than males. Additionally, low-income students struggle as those eligible for FRL have much lower rates of persisting or completing their first year than students who are not eligible for FRL.

First-Year Persistence* or Credential Completion by Developmental Education Need

Developmental Need	First-Year Persistence	First-Year Persistence or Completion
No	80.1%	81.3%
Yes	68.3%	69.1%

* 2020 Cohort

Race and Ethnicity Persistence and Completion in First-Year by Developmental Need*

	First-Year Persistence		First-Year Persistence or Completion	
	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need
American Indian or Alaska Native	59.52%	63.27%	59.52%	65.31%
Asian	80.00%	88.97%	80.48%	89.61%
Black or African American	65.86%	74.44%	66.06%	75.68%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	58.82%	76.00%	58.82%	76.00%
Hispanic of any race	64.45%	69.90%	65.57%	71.22%
Two or More Races	68.37%	81.43%	69.30%	82.36%
White	71.34%	82.97%	72.14%	84.08%

* 2020 Cohort

Gender and Income Persistence and Completion in First-Year by Developmental Need*

	First-Year Persistence		First-Year Persistence or Completion	
	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need
Female	69.74%	81.80%	70.64%	82.88%
Male	65.72%	78.40%	66.52%	79.57%
No FRL	71.79%	82.78%	72.60%	83.84%
FRL	61.87%	67.39%	62.83%	68.83%

* 2020 Cohort

The following tables show credential completion rates. Students requiring developmental education are almost half as likely to earn a credential in four years. However, they are slightly more likely to earn a credential within two years. This could be due to a higher percentage of students enrolled in programs that can be completed in two years having a higher percentage of developmental needs. By race and ethnicity, four-year completion rates are lowest for American Indian/Alaska Native and African American or Black students who have developmental education needs. Once again, females are much more likely than males to graduate in two or four years. Students not eligible for FRL and who need developmental education are only slightly more likely to graduate in two years than students who are eligible for FRL. Over the next few years, the state will be able to assess longer term trends of the demographic impact in developmental education.

Completion by Developmental Need in 2 Years and 4 Years

Developmental Need	Credential Completion Within 2 Years (2018 Cohort)	Credential Completion Within 4 Years (2018 Cohort)
No	**8.0%**	**43.2%**
Yes	**8.0%**	**24.9%**

Race and Ethnicity Credential Completion Within 2 Years and 4 Years

	Credential Completion Within 2 Years*		Credential Completion Within 4 Years**	
	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.76%	8.16%	16.95%	31.51%
Asian	6.19%	5.67%	25.74%	47.45%
Black (not Hispanic)	2.02%	4.96%	13.51%	26.42%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5.88%	4.00%	NULL	29.17%
Hispanic	8.43%	9.07%	24.81%	33.95%
Two or More Races	4.19%	5.82%	23.49%	36.55%
White (not Hispanic)	9.15%	8.13%	27.42%	47.33%

*2020 Cohort, **2018 Cohort

Gender and Income Credential Completion Within 2 Years and 4 Years

	Credential Completion Within 2 Years*		Credential Completion Within 4 Years**	
	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need	Developmental Ed Need	NO Developmental Ed Need
Female	8.54%	9.30%	27.11%	48.19%
Male	7.00%	6.62%	21.66%	37.74%
No FRL	8.24%	7.88%	45.87%	47.93%
FRL	7.50%	8.51%	31.17%	32.94%

*2020 Cohort, **2018 Cohortt

Momentum Measures

Student performance early in college is a crucial predictor of later success. Evidence shows that the first-year GPA is a significant indicator of postsecondary persistence,[1] and there is growing evidence to support first-year credit accumulation as an indicator of long-term academic success in college.[2] Additionally, students who have identified a program of study and have taken coursework in that program of study in their first year are more likely to complete a degree.

First year GPA for Colorado's 2021 high school grads remained about the same from the previous year but has risen each year since 2009 (2.7 GPA).

2.9
Cumulative GPA

Credit accumulation decreased very slightly after years of increasing – 2021 high school grads completed 31.9 cumulative credit hours on average in their first year of college (see Table 11 in the Appendix). In 2009, students averaged only 28.1 credit hours completed in their first year. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of students taking a course load that would put them on target for on-time graduation, possibly due to the pandemic. For the class of 2021, 47.9% of students completed more than 30 credits in their first year (50.1% for 2019 grads but up from 40.1% in 2009). However, 65.8% of 2021 grads completed 24 or more credit hours in their first year, a slight increase from 2020.[3] The changes are small but could negatively impact four-year and two-year graduation rates in the future.

First-Year College Credit Accumulation for 2021 High School Graduates

81%	66%	48%
15 or More Credits	24 or More Credits	30 or More Credits

1 S. Stewart, D. H. Lum, and J. Kim (2015), Factors Influencing College Persistence for First-Time Students, Journal of Developmental Education.
2 D. Jenkins and T. Baily (2017), Early Momentum Metrics: Why They Matter for College Improvement, Community College Research Center.
3 Data Table 10 in Appendix 1. Averages do not include students who accumulated 0 credits; the first-year credit accumulation rates do.

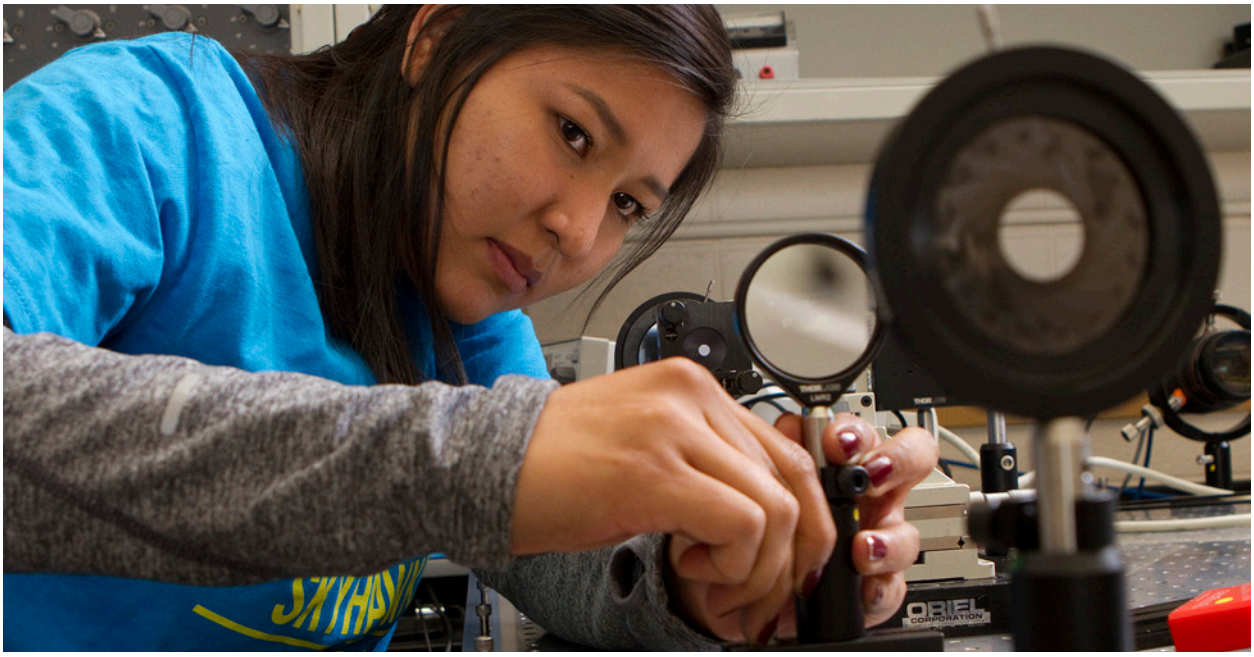


Photo Courtesy of Fort Lewis College

Leading Indicators by Race/Ethnicity and Income

When looking at leading indicators by demographic group, equity gaps emerge early. For example, after the first year of college Black or African American students have over 6 fewer credits than the overall average. Black or African American (2.4) and American Indian or Alaska Native students (2.2) had the lowest average GPA. Hispanic or Latinx students had higher GPAs (2.6) and credit accumulation on average (28.7) than Black or African American students but are still substantially below the overall average. There are also significant gaps between those who qualified for FRL in high school and those who did not. Over 16% more students who did not qualify for FRL completed 24 or more credit hours (full-time course load) than students who qualified for FRL. This difference is significant, as enrolling in more credits can help contain costs for students by reducing the time needed to obtain their degree. It also increases the likelihood of obtaining a degree and a more prosperous future.

Colorado must tailor supports to diverse students to meet their unique needs earlier in the education pipeline to erase equity gaps and meet the demands of the workforce.

Colorado must tailor supports to meet the unique needs of diverse and low-income students earlier in the education pipeline to erase equity gaps and meet the demands of the workforce.[1] Additionally, national research suggests first-year GPA and credit accumulation impacts a student's likelihood of success.[2] As such, supports for all students their first year of college, especially students of color and students who are from low income families, is particularly critical.

1 Data Table 12 in Appendix 1.

2 First-Year College Credits and Strong GPA Big Predictor of CC Student Success, Campus Technology, https://campustechnology.com/Articles/2017/09/20/First-Year-College-Credits-and-Strong-GPA-Big-Predictor-of-CC-Student-Success.aspx#:~:text=With%20each%20one-point%20increase%20in%20college%20GPA%2C%20the,complete%20a%20credential%20increased%20by%20nearly%201%20percent.

Persistence Rates

First-year retention and persistence are important indicators of whether a student will earn a degree; most students who drop out do so in their first year. Figure 4 on page 23 illustrates this trend and helps us understand how students are moving through the system. First-year persistence rates reflect the number of students who enroll in the second year of their education either at the institution they enrolled in initially or at some other institution in the country. The table includes persistence and completion rates for students who enroll in a postsecondary institution as well as students who complete a certificate or degree by the following fall. The overall persistence rate increased slightly from the year previous. The persistence and completion rates for two-year institutions increased and decreased for four-year institutions.

For the class of 2020,[1] 77.9% of students who enrolled in an in- or out-of-state college the fall after graduation enrolled for a second year in fall 2021 or received a credential.[2] The retention rate without considering credentials earned was 77.1% for all students, and 73.6% for students who graduated from rural high schools (this is the first year retention rates for students from rural areas is included in this report).[3] Colorado's retention rates remain above the national average (75.6%); however, as national rates climb, Colorado's retention rate has stayed constant.[4]

The first-year persistence rate for 2020 Colorado high school graduates who attended four-year institutions was 84.2% (a slight decrease from the previous year). Comparatively, the persistence rate for high school graduates who attended two-year colleges was 58.4% (56.1% previous class). When the number of students who received a degree or credential is included, there is a higher increase for community colleges (60.8%) possibly in part due to offering and awarding one-year certificates. (See Table 13 in the Appendix).

Persistence for High School Graduates of 2020

	Persistence	Persistence and Completion
Overall	**77.1%**	**77.9%**
Two-Year Institutions	**58.4%**	**60.8%**
Four-Year Institutions	**84.2%**	**84.4%**

Persistence Rates by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income

Persistence rates also reflect equity gaps. Females (78%) have a higher persistence than males (75%). The first-year persistence for American Indian or Alaska Natives is 63.2% (lowest – and this student population has low reported numbers so rates fluctuate easily), for Hispanic or Latinx students is 67%, and for Black or African American students is 70%. Only 65% of students who qualified for FRL persist to the second fall semester, compared to 80% of students not eligible for FRL. To erase equity gaps in attainment, the state must become more effective in supporting low-income students and students of color to return to college after their first year.[5]

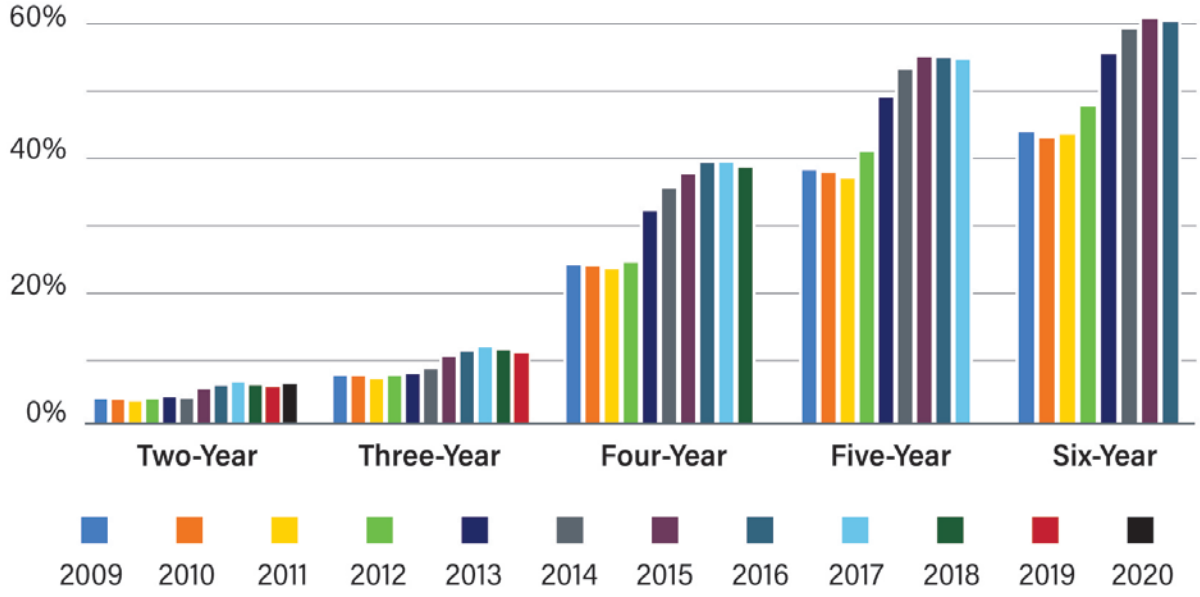
1 Data Table 13 in Appendix 1.
2 Retention rates are not yet available for students who were in their first year of college in the 2020-2021 academic year.
3 Data Table 14 in Appendix 1.
4 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
5 Data Table 14 in Appendix 1.

Credential Completion

For every 100 students who enroll in college, six complete in two years, 39 complete in four years and 61 graduate in six years.

Figure 7 provides a visual of the progress students make toward earning a credential at in- or out-of-state institutions over six years by high school graduating class. Credentials earned from out-of-state institutions are included in this report for the first time. For every 100 students who enroll in college, six complete in two years (2020 grads), 39 complete in four years (2018 grads) and 61 complete in six years (2016 grads). When including students who enrolled at out-of-state institutions as well, the completion rates decrease by 1-2% - this may suggest that students are slightly more successful at completing a credential if they enroll at an in-state institution. The four-year completion rates for high school students who enroll in college the fall after graduation have remained about the same. Two-year completion rates increased slightly and are still much higher than they were in 2009 (4.09%). New to this report are credential completion rates for students that graduate from rural areas (see Table 17 in Appendix). Rural students demonstrated higher or similar completion rates compared to overall state rates. This is promising as rural students have lower enrollment and persistent rates than overall state rates. Efforts to increase completion rates must continue to be a focus to meet workforce demands in Colorado. Figure 7 below represents completion rates for students who enrolled at in-state institutions only. Visit Table 16 in the Appendix to see more data including 3-year and out-of-state enrollee completion rates.

FIGURE 7: Credential Completion Rates by High School Graduation Year



Credential Completion by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income

Females complete at higher rates than males on average. Hispanic or Latinx students have the highest two-year completion rates (although American Indian or Alaska Native 2017 grads were higher) but not as high as four-year completion rates compared to the other race/ethnicity group; this suggests Hispanic or Latinx students are more likely to pursue a certificate or associate degree. Those students who had been eligible for FRL in high school also have a higher two-year completion rate and a much lower four-year completion rate than those who were not FRL eligible. This suggests that more low-income students are pursuing a certificate and associate degrees as well.

Data suggests that more low-income students are pursuing certificate and associate degrees.

Certificate, Associate or Bachelor's Degree Completion by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income for 2017 and 2018 College Enrollees

	2017 High School Graduates		2018 High School Graduates	
	% Earning a Credential in **2 Years**	% Earning a Credential in **4 Years**	% Earning a Credential in **2 Years**	% Earning a Credential in **4 Years**
Gender				
Female	8.6%	43.4%	9.0%	42.9%
Male	7.4%	34.3%	7.5%	34.5%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	11.8%	31.2%	6.1%	25.0%
Asian	4.9%	44.3%	4.2%	44.2%
Black (not Hispanic)	4.5%	21.8%	5.4%	21.4%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4.5%	29.5%	2.6%	18.4%
Hispanic or Latinx	9.3%	31.3%	9.6%	31.3%
Two or More Races	6.1%	34.7%	6.4%	33.9%
White (not Hispanic)	8.1%	44.0%	8.4%	44.1%
Socio-economic Status				
No FRL	7.8%	42.8%	8.2%	42.2%
FRL	8.8%	28.7%	8.7%	28.6%

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report highlights the various pathways taken by Colorado's high school students into higher education both during high school and after graduation. Colorado has built strong postsecondary pathways over many years through partnerships across K-12, postsecondary education and industry. These pathways have helped improve postsecondary completion rates by high school graduates and will continue to drive attainment in Colorado. Equity as defined as race and ethnicity, students with disabilities as well as income status have become an even more pressing concern. COVID-19 could have lasting educational outcome impacts unless more is done to support the entire student and their individual needs.

Colorado manages many efforts aimed at improving the success of our state's students. Of particular note are the following:

- CDHE manages the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, which pairs public and private funding to support students with scholarships and wraparound student support services to promote college enrollment and success. The program operates statewide, supporting counties, public institutions of higher education, and school districts. COSI students persist at significantly high rates (up to 92%).

- To help increase FAFSA/CASFA completion rates, COSI launched the Fund My Future Grant which provides resources to school districts to support students in completing financial aid applications before high school graduation. COSI has awarded over $2.2 million and is serving eleven high schools throughout the state. COSI also operates Finish What You Started and Back to Work initiatives.

- In October 2020, CDHE launched the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA). CASFA allows many students who do not qualify for federal aid to apply and be considered for state aid. This population includes students who do not have lawful immigration status but have state residency and are actively seeking legal status.

- CDHE operates the federally funded GEAR UP program which significantly increases the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP is now in its 4th grant cycle in Colorado. In its previous grant, the high school graduating of 2018 had a 98% graduation rate, a 94% FAFSA completion rate, and a 77% college-going rate.

- To encourage Colorado campuses to promote success beyond the classroom by addressing food and housing insecurities as well as mental health, CDHE along with many agency partners developed Hunger Free and Healthy Minds campus checklists. Institutions that receive these designations have demonstrated that they have services and programs which are actively engaged in these social determinants of student success.
- To remove a barrier to higher education in the state, public and private higher education institutions along with CDHE held the 4th annual Colorado Free Application Days. The program expanded from one day to three days in 2020. In total, students saved more than $2.5 million in application fees and, as a result, increased their likelihood of attending a college/university and doing it in Colorado.

As part of HB21-1330, a Student Success and Workforce Revitalization task force convened higher education stakeholders in the state. The task force created a report which provides an outline of bold and innovative initiatives that can be taken to make higher education more affordable and increase student success and workforce alignment. Possible future legislation focusing on regional economic collaborative grants, as well as and enhanced data system that will include new and more aligned student success measures as well as a data interface, will be inspired by some of the recommendations.

2022 saw efforts from both the legislature and the Commission on higher education toward enhancing student success and credential completion in Colorado:

Outreach & Community Engagement: HB22-1366 and SB22-008 provided funding to improve outreach on financial aid and for foster youth. From these bills, CDHE created a team that includes an outreach navigator, a FAFSA coordinator, four foster care student navigators, and an outreach director. The team works directly with school districts, educators, foster students, students and families in navigating pathway options after high school. Assistance is provided in completing the Federal Student Aid the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA), information on grants, scholarships and other funding sources, career planning, filling out college applications and highlights the importance of pursuing a postsecondary path and much more. The team utilizes My Colorado Journey to connect educators, professionals, students and job seekers with free education and career planning.

Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-based Learning Integration - Colorado's "Big Blur": HB11-1215 established the Secondary, Postsecondary and Work-based Learning Integration Task Force to develop and recommend policies, laws and rules to support the equitable and sustainable expansion and alignment of programs that integrate secondary, postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities in every region of the state. The task force members were selected in July 2022 and formally met four times from July to November 2022, with some additional, optional meetings to discuss discrete topics. The interim report was released in December 2022 – final recommendations will be published in December 2023.

Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: HB22-1255 was signed into law and aims to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in higher education. To that end, the bill includes two main components: 1) For CDHE to collect data from Colorado colleges and universities on students with disability data and report on retention and credential completion outcomes disaggregated by demographics (the first report is due January 2024 to the General Assemble); and 2) Form a Postsecondary Services Advisory Committee that is charged with writing two reports with recommendations to the General Assembly and institutions of higher education on how to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The advisory committee reports are due in June 2023 and June 2024.

Higher Education Support for Foster Youth (SB22-008) created the Foster Ed program which provides free cost of attendance for Colorado resident students who have been in foster care. The bill requires each institution of higher education to have a single point of contact, or navigator, to help these students access and complete their postsecondary education. The bill also invests in a new office in the Department to work directly with foster youth, in partnership with the Department of Human Services, to ensure students are accessing all federal benefits available to them.

Opportunities for Credential Attainment (SB22-192) tasks CDHE, in consultation with the state institutions of higher education, to develop and implement a process that encourages institutions to identify incremental achievements on the path to degree completion, organize stackable credentials, and identify how credentials may become stacked into stackable credential pathways.

Removing Barriers to Educator Preparation (HB 22-1220) creates two educator preparation stipend programs ($42 million) and a temporary educator loan forgiveness program ($10 million) at CDHE; expands options for assessing the professional competency of prospective educators; and allows CDE to offer temporary eligibility authorization to additional types of educators.

Future ways Colorado can support all its students and strengthen postsecondary going.

The findings in this report, combined with proven practices already underway in Colorado and other states, suggest that the following interventions be pursued:

1

CDHE should work with institutions of higher education, K-12 partners, and the workforce to encourage preparation, enrollment and credential attainment of low-income, students of color, students with disabilities and students from rural areas.

As previously discussed in this report, Colorado will not be able to reach its goals, and workforce demands, or be able to erase the equity gap between student groups in earning a certificate or degree unless more effective and tailored work is done to encourage and support first-generation, low-income, students of color, students with disabilities and students from rural areas to enroll in and succeed in higher education. Many successful programs exist across the state. Leveraging partnerships, these proven solutions should be promoted and scaled to reach a greater number of students. Examples of proven and effective programs in Colorado include Colorado School Counselor Corps Grant Program, GEAR UP and COSI.

2

Create new incremental credentials that recognize knowledge and skills developed along the degree pathway.

Stemming from the recommendation of the 1330 Taskforce, Senate Bill 22-192 mandated that CDHE develop 10 stackable credential pathways across five high-value industries aligned with the Talent Pipeline Report by 2025. CDHE convened a steering committee and five industry leadership teams made up of diverse stakeholders from K12, higher education, industry, advocacy organizations and state agencies to focus on the buildout of stackable credential pathways that allow for incremental credentials that lead to higher-wage jobs across a learner/earner's career. The industries of focus for this stackable credential pathways work are behavioral health, cybersecurity, education, healthcare, and programming/developer.

3

CDHE should work with college academic advisors to assist in training and designing student pathways, identify student pain points and solutions, and inform policy related to student success.

Academic advising is critical in ensuring that students stay in college and earn a credential in a timely and informed manner. Additionally, utilizing the expertise of academic advisors can result in solutions to common student issues statewide—not just at one or a few institutions. CDHE has engaged advisors more actively and visibly as partners to advance student success and help achieve the state's goals for equitable postsecondary attainment, including through quarterly online convenings that regularly draw 150-200 participants, and bringing advisors together with faculty to discuss effective transfer. Through a grant from the Education Commission of the States, CDHE created an online course— Advisors LEAD—to help develop culturally-responsive, purpose-focused advisors for an increasingly diverse student population. Advisors understand how policies and programs work "on the ground" with actual students and thus they should be involved more intentionally in their development and evaluation.

4

CDHE must continue to work with institutions of higher education, CCHE, K-12 partners, and statewide leadership to intentionally remove structural barriers, providing students with the specific supports they need to succeed.

The Office of Educational Equity at the Department of Higher Education, led by the chief educational equity officer works with institutions of higher education to establish and inform statewide policy and acts as a conduit and amplifier of promising practices. The office is committed to promoting the public value of higher education and encouraging the general public to direct funding in a way that mirrors the diversity in our state and erases racial/ethnic/income/geographic equity gaps in Colorado. The office will continue to focus on the social determinants of student success, working with policymakers and Colorado's IHEs to remove barriers regarding mental health, food insecurity, housing, racism, belonging, and caretaking. These barriers are especially salient for students of color in Colorado and the OEE will continue to center learners who have been historically racialized, minoritized, and oppressed. Continual implementation of equity-minded practices and auditing policies can have a promising impact on erasing equity gaps in Colorado.

Overview of Data Included in Report

Data Represented in This Report

This report fulfills a statutory requirement (C.R.S. 23-1-113) to provide data and outcomes of Colorado's high school graduates enrolling in institutions of higher education in the state. The data comes from three main sources:

- State Unit Record Data System (SURDS): CDHE's data collection system for in-state public institutions of higher education and three private institutions (Colorado Christian University, Regis University, and the University of Denver).
- The Colorado Department of Education (CDE): CDE, our pre-K-12 state agency partner, provides data on Colorado's high school graduates, which is matched to the SURDS database.
- The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC): NSC provides CDHE out-of-state enrollment, persistence information, and credential completion data as well as information on Colorado private institutions not included in SURDS. Most public and private regionally accredited institutions of higher education in the U.S. report to NSC.

Enrollment data includes Colorado high school graduate students who enrolled at institutions that report to SURDS and NSC. It does NOT include students who graduated from an out-of-state high school.

First-year persistence rates reflect the number of Colorado high school graduates who enroll in an in-state SURDS reporting institution of higher education or an out-of-state institution that reports to NSC the first year after high school graduation and then enroll the next year at either the institution they initially enrolled in or at another institution in the country that reports to NSC.

Credential completion and attainment data includes Colorado high school graduates that earn their credential at an in-state institution that reports to SURDS and, for the first time, an out-of-state U.S. institution that reports to NSC.

Developmental Education data includes Colorado high school graduates that attended an in-state institution that reports to SURDS. It does not include students that enrolled at an out-of-state institution or that do not report to SURDS.

Data NOT Represented in This Report This report does not include data on students that come from out-of-state or country who enrolled or completed in Colorado's institutions of higher education.

Data and Methodology

Data Source

CDHE receives data on high school graduates from CDE. This data is then connected to CDHE's State Unit Record Data System (SURDS) to get postsecondary information from Colorado institutions of higher education. The introduction of the State Assigned Student ID (SASID) in 2009 enabled data to be shared between the two departments; therefore, this kind of data is not available before the 2009 high school graduating class. In 2020, CTE data was added to this report. This data was provided by the Colorado Community College System and linked to the high school graduates based on SASID. Finally, CDHE submits a request to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for out-of-state enrollment information, as well as information on private institutions in Colorado not included in SURDS. NSC data is included and is reflected in college enrollment data in Section I and II and persistence data in Section III. Though NSC provides data on out-of-state completions, those data are not included in any part of this report. As a result, all completions data in this report only include in-state completions at institutions reporting to SURDS.

Report Cohorts

This report uses two separate cohorts:

High School Graduate Cohort:
This cohort consists of all students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and is used primarily in Section I and II. CDE, SURDS and NSC are the source of these data.

College Enrollee Cohort:
This cohort consists of students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and are attending an in-state institution that reports data into the SURDS system. This includes all public Colorado colleges and universities, plus Colorado Christian University, Regis University and the University of Denver. This cohort is used in Section III. CDE and SURDS are the only source of this data with the exception of persistence, where NSC data is used to identify students who enrolled in a private institution or out-of-state institution following their first year.

Academic Years

The academic years referred to in the report coincide with the following fall entry into college of the high school graduates. For example, the 2020 high school graduates tracked in this report enrolled in college in fall of 2020. This report, like all reports after 2012, focuses primarily on students who enroll in college in the fall immediately following high school graduation.[1]

Limitations to Race/Ethnicity Data and Terminology

Additionally, this report uses standard race/ethnicity categories defined by the National Center for Education Statistics. These categories do not always reflect new terminology for race/ethnicity. New racial/ethnicity categories were adopted in 2012 to comply with state and federal reporting standards. As a result, data and comparisons for Asian students, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students and students of two or more races are not available before 2012.

Accessing Data

To make these data more accessible to the public, CDHE created a searchable database and individualized district profiles. The project, known as District at a Glance, is housed on CDHE's website at: https://cdhe.colorado.gov/data-and-research/tools/data-tools/pathways-to-prosperity-postsecondary-access-and-success-for

Contact Information

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1 The report published in 2012 for 2009 high school graduates used a different methodology by calculated college matriculation for all graduates who enrolled in college within 18 months of graduating.

Appendix I: Data Tables

High School Graduates Cohort

This cohort consists of all students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and is used primarily in Sections I and II.

DATA TABLE 1. Percent of High School Graduates Enrolled in College

Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC

High School Graduation Year	Total High School Graduates	Total College Enrollment	% High School Graduates Enrolling in College	Enrolling in College OR Receiving A Credential	% HS Graduates in College OR receiving a Credential
2021	61,714	30,781	49.88%	31,622	51.24%
2020	60,726	30,659	50.49%	31,590	52.02%
2019	60,191	33,911	56.34%	34,664	57.59%
2018	59,995	33,974	56.63%	34,624	57.71%
2017	57,471	32,391	56.3%	32,982	57.39%
2016	56,238	31,384	55.8%	31,873	56.68%
2015	53,128	30,042	56.5%	30,481	57.37%
2014	53,772	30,085	55.9%	30,424	56.58%
2013	54,498	30,115	55.3%	30,348	55.69%
2012	52,012	29,625	57.0%	29,759	57.22%
2011	52,261	29,979	57.4%	30,050	57.51%
2010	51,702	29,937	57.9%	29,966	57.96%
2009	50,184	29,529	58.9%	29,548	58.88%

DATA TABLE 2. Percent of High School Graduates That Enrolled in or Completed CTE

Sources: CCCS, SURDS

High School Graduation Year	Total High School Graduates	Enrolled in CTE	% CTE	Completed a CTE Program	% CTE Completer
2021	61,714	44,382	71.92%	27,138	43.97%
2020	60,726	43,787	72.11%	30,890	50.87%
2019	60,191	43,575	72.39%	32,381	53.80%
2018	59,995	43,274	72.13%	32,044	53.41%
2017	57,471	41,364	71.97%	30,209	52.56%
2016	56,238	40,107	71.32%	28,736	51.10%

DATA TABLE 3. Percent of High School Graduates Enrolled in Dual Enrollment or Completing a Postsecondary (PS) Credential Before Graduation *Sources: CDE, SURDS*

High School Graduation Year	Total High School Graduates	Dual Enrollment	% Dual	Graduate with a PS Credential	% Graduate with a PS Credential
2021	61,714	25,918	42.00%	2172	3.52%
2020	60,726	25,736	42.38%	2294	3.78%
2019	60,191	23,799	39.54%	2220	3.69%
2018	59,995	22,907	38.18%	2,054	3.42%
2017	57,471	20,545	35.75%	1,639	2.85%
2016	56,238	18,701	33.25%	1,458	2.59%
2015	53,128	16,525	31.10%	1,209	2.28%
2014	53,772	13,827	25.71%	917	1.71%
2013	54,498	12,406	22.76%	666	1.22%
2012	52,012	11,023	21.19%	461	0.89%
2011	52,246	9,519	18.22%	311	0.60%
2010	51,702	7,841	15.17%	257	0.50%
2009	50,184	7,164	14.28%	169	0.34%

DATA TABLE 4. Percent of High School Graduates Enrolled in Concurrent Enrollment and Average Credit Hours Attempted and Completed *Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC*

High School Graduation Year	Total High School Graduates	Enrolled in Concurrent Enrollment	% Concurrent	Avg Credits Attempted	Avg Credits Completed
2021	61,714	22,328	36.18%	5.04	4.71
2020	60,726	21,882	36.03%	4.8	4.47
2019	60,191	19,733	32.78%	4.32	4.06
2018	59,995	18,223	30.37%	4.10	3.88
2017	57,471	16,478	28.67%	3.59	3.37
2016	56,238	14,929	26.55%	3.26	3.05
2015	53,128	13,656	25.70%	3.08	2.85
2014	53,772	11,833	22.01%	2.45	2.22
2013	54,498	10,162	18.65%	1.94	1.73
2012	52,012	7,633	14.68%	1.37	1.12
2011	52,246	4,206	8.05%	0.65	0.47

DATA TABLE 5. Percent of High School Graduates that Participated in CTE, Dual Enrollment or Completed a Postsecondary Credential Before Graduation

Sources: CDE, SURDS, CCCS

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change
CTE Enrollee									
Gender									
Female	N/A	N/A	68.94%	69.48%	69.64%	69.65%	69.14%	69.34%	0.57%
Male	N/A	N/A	73.73%	74.47%	74.63%	75.16%	75.05%	74.52%	1.07%
Socio-economic Status									
Non-FRL	N/A	N/A	72.33%	73.74%	73.58%	73.97%	73.72%	73.46%	1.57%
FRL	N/A	N/A	68.90%	67.88%	68.43%	68.75%	68.20%	67.33%	-2.27%
Dual Enrollment									
Gender									
Female	28.13%	33.92%	36.37%	39.13%	41.77%	43.15%	46.46%	46.24%	64.35%
Male	23.27%	28.23%	30.09%	32.36%	34.58%	35.89%	38.32%	37.71%	62.05%
Socio-economic Status									
Non-FRL	26.37%	32.06%	34.87%	37.73%	40.44%	41.53%	44.62%	44.43%	68.46%
FRL	23.55%	28.57%	29.39%	31.17%	32.43%	34.94%	36.97%	34.78%	47.65%
Postsecondary Credential Prior to Graduation									
Gender									
Female	1.99%	2.72%	3.19%	3.47%	3.89%	4.18%	4.21%	3.80%	90.99%
Male	1.42%	1.82%	1.98%	2.23%	2.96%	3.20%	3.35%	3.23%	128.20%
Socio-economic Status									
Non-FRL	1.82%	2.27%	2.74%	3.03%	3.68%	3.94%	4.11%	3.75%	106.67%
FRL	1.34%	2.30%	2.25%	2.45%	2.76%	3.11%	2.97%	2.83%	110.44%

DATA TABLE 6. In-state and Out-of-State Enrollment Over Time for Students Enrolling in College
Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC

High School Graduation Year	% High School Graduates Enrolling in-State	% High School Graduates Enrolling OUT-OF-State
2021	70.81%	29.19%
2020	75.12%	24.88%
2019	74.73%	25.27%
2018	75.26%	24.74%
2017	75.95%	24.05%
2016	76.78%	23.22%
2015	76.25%	23.75%
2014	75.98%	24.02%
2013	77.57%	22.43%
2012	78.07%	21.93%
2011	78.72%	21.28%
2010	79.26%	20.74%
2009	80.54%	19.46%

DATA TABLE 7. Enrollment by Institution Type for Students Enrolling in College
Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC

High School Graduation Year	% High School Graduates Enrolling in Two-Year Institutions	% High School Graduates Enrolling in Four-Year Institutions
2021	25.44%	74.56%
2020	27.46%	72.54%
2019	26.78%	73.22%
2018	27.37%	72.63%
2017	26.83%	73.17%
2016	26.79%	73.21%
2015	25.05%	74.95%
2014	25.67%	74.33%
2013	28.14%	71.86%
2012	28.09%	71.91%
2011	28.70%	71.30%
2010	29.01%	70.99%
2009	28.10%	71.90%

DATA TABLE 8. Class of 2021 College Enrollment Characteristics by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income

Source: CDE, SURDS, NSC

	High School Graduates	% Students Enrolled in College	% College Students Enrolled in-State	% College Students Enrolled Four-Year
Gender				
Female	31,026	55.62%	69.48%	75.54%
Male	30,688	44.07%	72.50%	73.30%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	357	33.61%	77.50%	69.17%
Asian	2,275	71.96%	76.48%	83.69%
Black or African American	2,674	47.57%	74.14%	72.48%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	185	37.30%	69.57%	68.12%
Hispanic or Latinx	19,513	37.88%	84.43%	62.95%
Two or More Races	2,464	52.80%	70.10%	75.86%
White	34,246	55.45%	64.80%	78.39%
Socio-economic Status				
No FRL	46,160	54.81%	67.72%	77.33%
FRL	15,554	35.23%	85.04%	61.75%

DATA TABLE 9. College Enrollment by Gender and Income Over Time

Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC

High School Graduation Year	FEMALE	MALE	No FRL	FRL
2021	55.6%	44.1%	54.8%	35.2%
2020	56.5%	44.5%	56.4%	36.2%
2019	62.3%	50.4%	62.4%	42.3%
2018	61.8%	51.4%	62.1%	42.7%
2017	61.9%	50.8%	62.0%	43.4%
2016	60.3%	51.2%	61.6%	42.0%
2015	61.2%	51.8%	62.2%	41.5%
2014	60.4%	51.4%	60.9%	39.8%
2013	59.9%	50.7%	60.7%	40.5%
2012	61.1%	52.8%	62.7%	41.4%
2011	61.0%	53.7%	62.5%	41.5%
2010	61.9%	53.8%	60.3%	45.9%
2009	62.0%	55.7%	66.0%	42.7%

College Enrollee Cohort

This cohort consists of students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and are attending an in-state institution that reports data into the SURDS system. This includes all public Colorado colleges and universities, plus Colorado Christian University, Regis University and the University of Denver. This cohort is used in Section III.

DATA TABLE 10. College Enrollee Program Enrollment[1] Over Time *Sources: CDE, SURDS*

High School Graduation Year	Certificate	Associate	Bachelor's or Above
2021	2.90%	30.60%	64.50%
2020	3.46%	29.55%	65.17%
2019	3.07%	28.93%	66.52%
2018	2.96%	28.99%	66.51%
2017	3.31%	26.74%	68.52%
2016	2.50%	28.96%	67.17%
2015	1.54%	28.71%	68.29%
2014	1.11%	27.58%	69.69%
2013	1.39%	28.53%	68.17%
2012	1.16%	30.03%	66.92%
2011	2.36%	28.25%	66.45%
2010	2.70%	28.53%	64.91%
2009	2.84%	26.55%	65.68%

DATA TABLE 11. First-Year Leading Indicators of Success Over Time *Sources: CDE, SURDS*

High School Graduation Year	Graduates Enrolled In-State	Average GPA	Average Credits	% with 15 Credits or More	% with 24 Credits or More	% with 30 Credits or More
2021	19,715	2.86	31.90	80.95%	65.81%	47.91%
2020	20,707	2.90	32.13	79.03%	64.68%	48.66%
2019	22,258	2.91	32.50	81.79%	67.12%	50.08%
2018	22,550	2.83	32.18	81.66%	66.72%	49.32%
2017	21,859	2.81	31.63	80.59%	66.26%	48.55%
2016	21,905	2.78	30.58	79.16%	63.45%	45.93%
2015	20,333	2.79	29.53	79.61%	63.71%	44.28%
2014	19,377	2.78	30.03	82.07%	66.03%	45.15%
2013	20,865	2.76	29.12	80.07%	63.38%	42.88%
2012	20,903	2.72	28.80	79.06%	63.57%	42.31%
2011	22,458	2.67	28.28	77.42%	61.34%	39.59%
2010	22,972	2.66	27.86	77.28%	59.62%	37.48%
2009	23,182	2.66	28.11	77.00%	60.62%	40.11%

1 For alignment, a slightly different cohort was used for this data than was used for similar data in the 2018 report; as a result the numbers are not the same, but the trends remain similar.

DATA TABLE 12. First-Year Leading Indicators of Success by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income for 2021 College Enrollees *Sources: CDE, SURDS*

	Average GPA	Average Credits	% with 15 Credits or More	% with 24 Credits or More	% with 30 Credits or More
Gender					
Female	2.78	30.72	79.79%	64.39%	45.04%
Male	2.93	32.85	81.91%	66.98%	50.27%
Race/Ethnicity					
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.17	21.53	60.76%	45.57%	26.58%
Asian	3.0.	37.14	87.38%	73.82%	57.77%
Black or African American	2.44	25.55	67.67%	48.55%	30.69%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2.54	27.53	63.41%	48.78%	34.15%
Hispanic or Latinx	2.64	28.71	74.34%	56.17%	38.85%
Two or More Races	2.86	32.10	81.33%	65.09%	49.58%
White	2.98	33.33	84.54%	71.03%	52.48%
Socio-economic Status					
No FRL	2.93	32.80	83.04%	68.71%	50.42%
FRL	2.60	28.26	72.76%	54.42%	38.06%

DATA TABLE 13. First-Year Persistence[1] and Completion Over Time *Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC*

	Persistence			Persistence and Completion		
High School Graduation Year	**Overall**	**Two-Year Institutions**	**Four-Year Institutions**	**Overall**	**Two-Year Institutions**	**Four-Year Institutions**
2020	77.10%	58.38%	84.19%	77.92%	60.80%	84.41%
2019	76.66%	57.72%	84.62%	78.02%	61.44%	84.99%
2018	79.70%	63.66%	86.51%	81.15%	67.69%	86.87%
2017	80.31%	63.43%	86.85%	81.77%	67.86%	87.16%
2016	79.51%	63.06%	86.21%	80.61%	66.17%	86.49%
2015	80.10%	62.35%	87.09%	81.11%	65.51%	87.26%
2014	81.85%	64.64%	88.12%	82.70%	67.37%	88.28%
2013	79.96%	62.07%	87.01%	80.95%	65.22%	87.15%
2012	80.36%	64.16%	87.46%	81.13%	66.30%	87.64%
2011	78.73%	60.83%	86.93%	79.43%	62.90%	87.00%
2010	79.38%	62.31%	87.81%	80.03%	64.09%	87.90%
2009	80.31%	63.14%	88.49%	80.97%	64.86%	88.64%

1 For alignment, a slightly different cohort was used for this data than was used for similar data in the 2018 report; as a result the numbers are not the same, but the trends remain similar. This change allowed us to incorporate completion.

DATA TABLE 14. Rural Areas First-Year Persistence and Completion Over Time *Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC*

High School Graduation Year	First Year Persistence	First Year Persistence and Completion
2020	72.55%	74.50%
2019	73.31%	75.60%
2018	74.79%	77.10%
2017	75.95%	78.80%
2016	76.07%	78.60%
2015	78.00%	79.50%
2014	76.66%	78.70%
2013	74.06%	75.90%
2012	76.05%	77.60%
2011	75.86%	77.50%
2010	75.59%	77.20%

DATA TABLE 15. First-Year Persistence[1] and Completion by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Income for 2021 College Enrollees *Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC*

	Persistence			Persistence and Completion		
	Overall	Two-Year Institutions	Four-Year Institutions	Overall	Two-Year Institutions	Four-Year Institutions
Gender						
Female	78.43%	58.95%	85.53%	79.27%	61.53%	85.73%
Male	75.42%	57.70%	82.45%	76.26%	59.94%	82.74%
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	63.16%	48.98%	71.43%	63.91%	51.02%	71.43%
Asian	87.65%	69.18%	91.67%	88.20%	70.55%	92.04%
Black or African American	69.57%	55.05%	76.61%	70.09%	56.42%	76.73%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	67.80%	47.83%	80.56%	67.80%	47.83%	80.56%
Hispanic or Latinx	66.57%	52.11%	75.64%	67.79%	54.78%	75.96%
Two or More Races	78.26%	59.18%	85.11%	78.93%	61.39%	85.23%
White	81.11%	62.36%	86.81%	81.85%	64.83%	87.03%
Socio-economic Status						
No FRL	80.20%	64.18%	86.55%	81.24%	67.12%	86.83%
FRL	65.03%	52.90%	72.70%	66.52%	56.27%	73.01%

1 For alignment, a slightly different cohort was used for this data than was used for similar data in the 2018 report; as a result the numbers are not the same, but the trends remain similar. This change allowed us to incorporate completion.

DATA TABLE 16. Credential (Certificate, Associate or Bachelor's) Completion Over Time
Sources: CDE, SURDS

High School Graduation Year	% Earning a credential in 2 Years	% Earning a credential in 3 Years	% Earning a credential in 4 Years	% Earning a credential in 5 Years	% Earning a credential in 6 Years
2020	6.28%	NA	NA	NA	NA
2019	5.85%	10.87%	NA	NA	NA
2018	6.17%	11.50%	38.84%	NA	NA
2017	6.64%	11.92%	39.62%	55.07%	NA
2016	6.12%	11.25%	39.56%	55.33%	60.73%
2015	5.57%	10.45%	37.82%	55.47%	61.16%
2014	4.14%	8.57%	35.69%	53.54%	59.59%
2013	4.42%	7.86%	32.31%	49.34%	55.88%
2012	4.07%	7.64%	24.61%	41.23%	48.05%
2011	3.81%	7.10%	23.66%	37.23%	43.84%
2010	3.99%	7.60%	24.03%	38.07%	43.23%
2009	4.09%	7.64%	24.22%	38.45%	44.18%

DATA TABLE 17. Rural Areas Credential (Certificate, Associate or Bachelor's) Completion Over Time *Sources: CDE, SURDS, NSC*

High School Graduation Year	% Earning a credential in 2 Years	% Earning a credential in 3 Years	% Earning a credential in 4 Years	% Earning a credential in 5 Years	% Earning a credential in 6 Years
2020	12.00%	NA	NA	NA	NA
2019	12.10%	18.10%	NA	NA	NA
2018	12.90%	19.60%	41.70%	NA	NA
2017	15.10%	21.70%	43.40%	56.20%	NA
2016	14.80%	22.20%	44.80%	56.10%	60.70%
2015	12.50%	20.30%	42.60%	56.40%	60.60%
2014	10.10%	17.20%	39.70%	54.40%	59.10%
2013	9.90%	15.30%	35.10%	48.90%	54.00%
2012	8.80%	14.20%	29.40%	43.20%	48.90%
2011	9.10%	13.40%	28.30%	39.20%	44.60%
2010	10.00%	15.10%	28.60%	39.90%	44.10%
2009	9.60%	14.50%	28.70%	40.10%	44.00%

DATA TABLE 18. Rural Wrap-Up, Rural data compared to all Colorado high school graduates

	All Colorado Grads	Rural Grads Only
Enrolled in College Fall After High School Graduation	49.90%	47.50%
First Year Persistence (2020 grads)	77.10%	72.60%
First Year Persistence + Credential Completion	77.90%	74.50%
Credential Earned in 2 Years (2020 grads)	6.28%	12%
Credential Earned in 3 Years (2019 grads)	10.87%	18.10%
Credential Earned in 4 Years (2018 grads)	38.84%	41.70%
Credential Earned in 5 Years (2017 grads)	55.07%	56.20%
Credential Earned in 6 Years (2016 grads)	60.73%	60.70%

Appendix II: Data File Specifications

An Excel file with data for each of the cohorts in this report is available. It includes the following information at the high school, district and state levels and can be accessed on CDHE's website at https://cdhe.colorado.gov/data-and-research/tools/data-tools/pathways-to-prosperity-postsecondary-access-and-success-for

High School Graduate Cohort

This cohort consists of all students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and is used primarily in Section I. CDE, SURDS and NSC are the sources of this data.

High School Graduate Cohort Size Range[1]

% in Dual Enrollment
% in Concurrent Enrollment
% Received a Credential in High School
% in CTE Enrollment
% in CTE Completers
% Enrolled in College
% Enrolled in College or Received a Credential
% Enrolled In-State
% Enrolled Out-of-State
% Enrolled 2-Year 1YearFall
% Enrolled 4-Year 1YearFall
% Enrolled 2-Year 2YearSpringFall
% Enrolled 4-Year 2YearSpringFall
% Enrolled 2-Year 3YearSpringFall
% Enrolled 4-Year 3YearSpringFall
% Prepared for College
% Prepared who Enrolled in College
% Prepared who Do Not Enrolled in College

1 Ranges based on Colorado High School Athletic Association enrollment cutoffs for team sports (except football) https://chsaanow.com/sports/2021/7/30/2022-24-classifications-enrollment-number-cutoffs.aspx

College Enrollee Cohort

This cohort consists of students who graduated from high school in Colorado in a given year and are attending an in-state institution that reports data into the SURDS system. This includes all public Colorado colleges and universities, plus Colorado Christian University, Regis University and the University of Denver. This cohort is used in Sections II and III. CDE and SURDS are the only sources of this data with the exception of persistence, where NSC data is used to identify a student who enrolled in a private institution or out-of-state institution following their first year.

Cohort Size Range of Students Enrolled in a College Reporting to SURDS[1]

% Receiving Pell Grant
% Receiving State Aid
% Receiving Institutional Aid
% Enrolled in a Certificate, Associate Degree or Bachelor's Degree Program, Avg, GPA
% Completed more than 12 Credits
% Completed more than 15 Credits
% Completed more than 24 Credits
% Completed more than 30 Credits
% Enrolled in a Major in Year 1
% Persisted 2nd Year, 3rd Year, 4th Year
% Persisted or Received a credential 2nd Year, 3rd Year, 4th Year
% Completed a Credential (Certificate Associate Degree or Bachelor's Degree) in their 2nd Year, 4th Year, 5th Year, 6th Year

1 Ranges based on Colorado High School Athletic Association enrollment cutoffs for team sports (except football) https://chsaanow.com/sports/2021/7/30/2022-24-classifications-enrollment-number-cutoffs.aspx

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