

Office of Dropout Prevent and Student Re-engagement  
**Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS)**  
**State Grant Program**



**PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM**

The Expelled and At-risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program was established in 1997. It is described in Colorado Revised Statute 22-33-205.

The purpose of the EARSS grant is to assist in providing educational and support services to expelled students, students at-risk of suspension and expulsion, and students at risk of habitual truancy as defined by unexcused absences.

Funds are awarded annually through a competitive grant process to fund 4-year grants. Eligible applicants include school districts, alternative schools within districts, charter schools, Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), facility schools and also non-public, non-parochial schools working through agreements to serve public school students.

**IMPORTANCE OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS**

Without necessary support and intervention, expelled students, and students at-risk of disciplinary action and/or habitual truancy frequently lack the skills, capacity and motivation to engage in school. When falling behind their peers, they may isolate themselves and stop coming to school, engage in delinquent behaviors, abuse drugs to self-medicate or become disruptive in class.

Research shows that expelled students and those that exhibit behaviors linked to disciplinary action and delinquency are at-risk of dropping out of school. The EARSS grant program directs resources to address the unique learning needs and challenges of these students.

**Beneficiaries by the Numbers**

Year Served	Grantee Information	Individuals Served
2022-2023	39 EARSS grantees located in 23 counties (not including NCE schools serving students)	Unavailable at this time
2021-2022	67 EARSS grantees located in 31 counties (including Cohort 1) 44 EARSS grantees located in 24 counties (not including Cohort 1)	Unavailable at this time
2020-2021	57 EARSS Grantees located in 27 counties	6,573 Students 4,287 Parents/Guardians
2019-2020	58 EARSS grantees located in 28 counties	7,397 Students 4,186 Parents/Guardians
2018-2019	60 EARSS grantees located in 29 counties	8,183 Students 5,638 Parents/Guardians

**Student Success Stories**

**Metro-area example** – We had a student that came to us due to a lack of engagement and a poor outlook about school. The student was truant and at-risk to the point of dropping out of school. We were able to help the student retrieve the credit necessary to fulfill graduation requirements as well as provide social and emotional skill-building opportunities. The student did not only change their outlook about the school but their outlook about life overall was rejuvenated as well.

**Outlying Town example** - One student comes from a complex home environment, including a parent with criminal history, substance abuse history, domestic violence history, and mental health history. Upon meeting this student it was expressed that this student wanted help breaking the familial cycle. Collaboratively with school staff, parents, the student, and a counselor this student has established a plan for an independent future began initiating new and healthy relationships with peers and teachers. This student has also been able to address academic concerns, self-advocate, and has addressed personal mental health concerns in efforts to heal from the events they have experienced.

**BOCES example** - The positive relationships that grew and developed during staff student mentoring encouraged increased attendance, improved behavior and supported academic growth. The existence of *these* improved relationships motivated students in that school staff knew them and would work with them and their individual challenges to help them grow and succeed.

## STUDENTS SERVED IN 2020-2021

In 2020-2021, EARSS program grantees reported serving 6,573 students, less than one percent of students enrolled in Colorado in 2020-2021.

- Twenty-one grantees reported serving **71 expelled students** (1 percent of students served).
- Fifty-two grantees reported serving **2,197 students at risk for expulsion** (33.4 percent of students served).
- Fifty-one grantees reported serving **4,305 truant students of students at risk for habitual truancy** (65.5 percent of students served).

## SERVICES PROVIDED

The most effective strategy reported by grantees in 2020-2021 was mentoring/positive relationship building.

Examples of common uses of the grant funds include:

- Educational services for core academics such as coursework, tutoring and credit recovery.
- Restorative practice and discipline, case management, alternatives to out-of-school suspension and expulsion, and multi-tiered behavioral support interventions.
- Essential and life skills, goal setting, fostering career and vocation-related interest, and character education.
- Support to habitually truant students to increase attendance and avoid truancy court.
- Counseling, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment services, including through contracted services and agreements with other youth-serving community agencies.
- Individualized and relevant educational opportunities focused on student interests.

## PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

State statutes require schools to work with parents/guardians of expelled and at-risk students regarding the development of plans for serving their child. Therefore, grantees must also engage parents in grant objectives.

Common support services available to families included

- communication between staff and families,
- involving parents/guardians in academic, attendance, and/or behavioral planning, and
- referrals to community services/social services.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

EARSS grantees reported the following outcomes:

- 80% of students served experienced positive outcomes such as school completion and continuation of education. These outcomes reflected school completion, continuation of education, completion of the expulsion term and return to school.
- Of all students served, 97.2% remained in school. Without program support through EARSS, it is more likely that these students may have been expelled, had unexcused absences, or dropped out of school.
- 3.7% of at-risk students dropped out of school in 2020-2021.
- Of the at-risk students served through an EARSS program, 97% were not expelled, 95.9% did not receive an in-school suspension, 95.4% did not receive an out-of-school suspension and 95.1% did not have a truancy petition filed in court.