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Legislative  
Council  
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**MEMORANDUM**

September 12, 2011

**TO:** Legislative Task Force to Study School Discipline

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**SUBJECT:** A Statewide Comparison of Data on Referrals to Law Enforcement, Juvenile Delinquency Filings, and Dropout Rates

This memorandum provides a statewide comparison of data from the past nine years on school district referrals to law enforcement, dropout rates, and county-level juvenile delinquency filings. Attachment A contains a series of maps that illustrate this data geographically. This memorandum analyzes key findings from each set of data.

**School District Referrals to Law Enforcement from 2001 through 2010**

**Definitions.** Colorado law requires each school to report the number of disciplinary actions it took during an academic year.<sup>1</sup> Disciplinary actions include:

- in-school suspension;
- out-of-school suspension;
- classroom removal;
- expulsion;
- referral to a law enforcement agency; and
- any other form of discipline as identified by board policy.<sup>2</sup>

Although Colorado law does not define "referral to a law enforcement agency," the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) assembled a task force of local practitioners to agree on a definition for this term. The task force defined "referral to a law enforcement agency" as a situation in which:

- a student was referred to a school resource officer;
- a police report was filed; or
- police were called, but no report was filed.

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<sup>1</sup>Section 22-32-109.1 (2) (b), C.R.S.

<sup>2</sup>Section 22-32-109.1 (2) (b) (V), C.R.S.

**Overall trends.** CDE provided data on the number of disciplinary actions and referrals to law enforcement reported by each school from the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year. Staff normalized this data to obtain the number of disciplinary actions and referrals to law enforcement per the number of student full-time equivalents (FTE) at each school district. The FTE population is determined by an annual headcount. Table 1 summarizes the highest rates of disciplinary actions and referrals to law enforcement per FTE for each academic year, with an indication of the average and median rate for each year and for the total nine-year period.<sup>3</sup> The school district with the highest rate of disciplinary actions and referrals to law enforcement per FTE is also identified for each year, with an indication of the county in which that school district is located.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that one student may be associated with multiple disciplinary actions. In addition, one offense may lead to several disciplinary actions, each of which would be reported as separate actions by the school. For example, if the response to an incident is the suspension of one student, the expulsion of another, and a referral of the incident to law enforcement, three separate disciplinary actions would be recorded for that incident.

**Disciplinary actions.** From the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year, the average rate of disciplinary actions per FTE for all school districts was 16.7 percent, while the median was 12.2 percent. Several school districts reported no disciplinary actions during this time period. The highest rate reported over the entire nine-year period occurred during the 2005-06 academic year, when De Beque school district reported a rate of disciplinary actions per FTE of 211.0 percent. However, 2005-06 appears to represent an anomaly for the De Beque school district, whose average rate of disciplinary actions per FTE over the entire nine-year period was 47.8 percent. It should also be noted that of the 367 disciplinary actions in the De Beque school district during the 2005-06 academic year, 287, or 78.2 percent were "other actions" rather than expulsions or referrals to law enforcement. Although Center school district did not have the highest rate of disciplinary actions per FTE overall, it did report the highest rate for five of the past nine years.

**Referrals to law enforcement.** From the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year, the average rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE for all school districts was 0.6 percent, while the median was 0.3 percent. The rate has decreased steadily over the past nine years, and several school districts reported no referrals to law enforcement during this time period. The highest rate over the entire nine-year period occurred during the 2006-07 academic year, when South Conejos school district reported a rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE of 7.8 percent. Although Moffat County 1 school district did not have the highest rate of disciplinary actions per FTE overall, it did report the highest rate for three of the past nine years.

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<sup>3</sup>For the purposes of this memorandum, the average rates of disciplinary actions and incidents referred to law enforcement for the entire state were calculated by taking the average of each district's normalized rates. This calculation allowed staff to analyze which districts had a higher or lower rate of disciplinary actions or referrals to law enforcement per FTE than the average district.

<sup>4</sup>Only one county is noted for each school district; however, some school districts cross county lines.

**Table 1**

**Highest, Average, and Median Rates of Disciplinary Actions and Referrals to Law Enforcement by School Districts per FTE from the 2001-02 Academic Year through the 2009-10 Academic Year**

Academic Year	Highest Rate of Disciplinary Actions per FTE		Average Rate of Disciplinary Actions per FTE for all School Districts	Median Rate of Disciplinary Actions per FTE for all School Districts	Highest Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement per FTE		Average Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement per FTE for all School Districts	Median Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement per FTE for all School Districts
	School District (County)	Rate			School District	Rate		
2001-02	Center (Saguache)	101.7%	18.5%	14.8%	Las Animas (Bent)	6.8%	0.8%	0.5%
2002-03	Center (Saguache)	86.7%	17.2%	12.5%	Moffat County 1 (Moffat)	4.8%	0.7%	0.4%
2003-04	Center (Saguache)	92.9%	17.2%	11.9%	Ault-Highland (Weld)	5.8%	0.7%	0.4%
2004-05	Lake (Lake)	115.2%	16.9%	13.6%	Ault-Highland (Weld)	7.4%	0.7%	0.3%
2005-06	De Beque (Garfield)	211.0%	18.1%	12.7%	Moffat County 1 (Moffat)	4.9%	0.7%	0.3%
2006-07	Fowler (Otero)	74.0%	16.5%	12.8%	South Conejos (Conejos)	7.8%	0.7%	0.2%
2007-08	Yuma (Yuma)	77.3%	15.2%	11.1%	Moffat County 1 (Moffat)	5.8%	0.6%	0.2%
2008-09	Center (Saguache)	101.4%	16.0%	10.7%	Moffat 2 (Saguache)	4.2%	0.5%	0.2%
2009-10	Center (Saguache)	129.6%	14.4%	9.6%	Cripple Creek (Teller)	5.3%	0.5%	0.1%
<b>Nine-year Statewide Average or Median</b>			<b>16.7%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>			<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education

*Percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement.* Table 2 illustrates the percentage of school incidents that were referred to law enforcement for all school districts from the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year. The table summarizes the highest percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement for each academic year, with an indication of the average and median rate for each year and for the total nine-year period. The school district with the highest percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement is also identified for each year, with an indication of the county in which that school district is located. As with the data provided above, one offense may lead to several disciplinary actions, each of which would be reported as separate actions by the school.

From the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year, the average percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement for all school districts was 5.2 percent, while the median was 2.0 percent. Several school districts reported that no incidents were referred to law enforcement during this time period. The highest rate reported over the entire nine-year period occurred during the 2009-10 academic year, when Big Sandy school district reported that 76.5 percent of its incidents were referred to law enforcement. Moffat County 1 school district reported the highest rate for two of the past nine years.

Without further research into the specifics of each school district's disciplinary policy and overall response to incidents, it cannot be determined if a high percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement is a worrisome trend or not. For example, if a school asks a school resource officer to mediate a situation between students who would otherwise be expelled, this could be an example of a positive outcome from a referral to law enforcement. On the other hand, if a school district is referring a large percentage of incidents to law enforcement because it lacks the resources to deal with incidents on its own, this could indicate that students involved in such incidents need more support from school personnel.

Further research is also warranted to analyze the overall crime level of a school district and the types of offenses it refers to law enforcement. A school district with a high number of violent or gun-related offenses that refers a high percentage of its incidents to law enforcement is in a different situation than a school district that refers a high number of incidents to law enforcement when those incidents involve student misbehavior that is not violent or threatening.



**Table 2**  
**Highest, Average, and Median Percentage of Incidents that were**  
**Referred to Law Enforcement by School Districts**  
**from the 2001-02 Academic Year through the 2009-10 Academic Year**

Academic Year	Highest Percentage of Disciplinary Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement		Average Percentage of Disciplinary Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement for all School Districts	Median Percentage of Disciplinary Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement for all School Districts
	School District (County)	Rate		
2001-02	Bethune (Kit Carson)	50.0%	5.5%	3.1%
2002-03	Summit (Summit)	47.3%	5.9%	2.5%
2003-04	Moffat County 1 (Moffat)	43.4%	5.5%	2.7%
2004-05	Harrison (El Paso)	60.5%	5.7%	1.8%
2005-06	Arriba-Flagler (Kit Carson)	50.0%	5.5%	2.1%
2006-07	Cotopaxi (Fremont)	42.9%	4.5%	1.5%
2007-08	Moffat County 1 (Moffat)	53.6%	4.8%	1.6%
2008-09	Fort Lupton RE-8 (Weld)	50.0%	4.9%	1.9%
2009-10	Big Sandy (Elbert)	76.5%	4.8%	1.1%
<b>Nine-year Statewide Average or Median</b>			<b>5.2%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education

*Trends for specific districts.* There are 178 school districts in Colorado. In the 2009-10 academic year, there were 775,171 students in the state. The average school district population during this time was 4,355 students, with a median of 566 students. In order to analyze the data provided by CDE more closely, staff chose to concentrate on nine school districts from geographically and economically diverse areas of the state. Information about these nine districts is provided in Table 3. The table lists the counties or portions of counties that are included in each district, the median household income for those counties in 2009, the school district population in the 2009-10 academic year, and how each school district ranked from most- to least-populated during that year. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2009, the median household income for Coloradans was \$55,735.

**Table 3**  
**Geographic and Demographic Information Related to Nine School Districts**

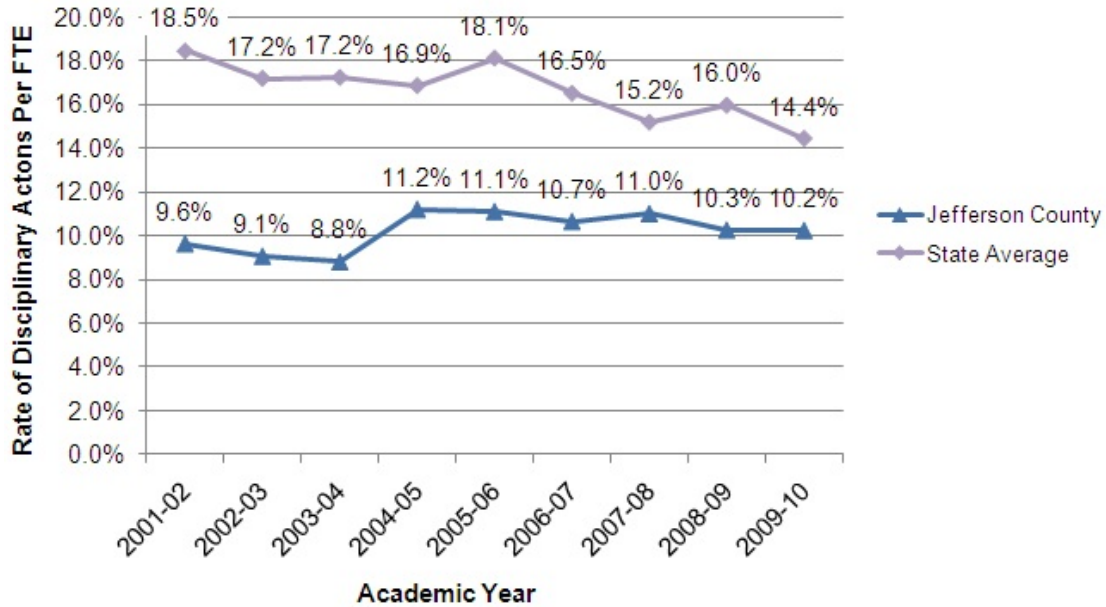
<b>School District</b>	<b>Counties or Portions of Counties Included</b>	<b>Median Household Income for the County in 2009</b>	<b>School District Student Population in the 2009-10 Academic Year</b>	<b>Rank from Most-to Least-Populated School District</b>
Jefferson County	Jefferson	\$66,059	80,877	1
Colorado Springs 11	El Paso	\$55,621	29,611	8
Pueblo 60	Pueblo	\$39,016	16,661	15
Durango	La Plata	\$55,610	4,517	33
Aspen	Pitkin	\$69,352	1,598	53
Yuma	Yuma	\$42,813	747	81
Del Norte	Rio Grande	\$37,993	580	89
De Beque	Garfield, Mesa	\$62,716 (Garfield); \$52,290 (Mesa)	125	160
Pawnee (Grover)	Weld	\$54,578	90	170

*Source: Legislative Council Staff, U.S. Census Bureau*

Staff charted the rate of disciplinary actions per FTE, the rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE, and the percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement from 2001-02 through 2009-10 for each of the selected nine districts. The data used to make this analysis is available in Attachment B. According to this analysis, large and small school districts and rural and urban school districts within the nine school district sample all reported data above and below the statewide district average for all metrics. Therefore, this analysis indicates no clear pattern as to how a certain type of school district is likely to respond to school incidents. Graphs comparing the rate of disciplinary actions per FTE, the rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE, and the percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement to the statewide district average for each school district are available upon request. This memorandum focuses on notable findings from this analysis.

The statewide nine-year average of disciplinary actions per FTE per district was 16.7 percent. As seen in Figure 1, Jefferson County school district reported rates of disciplinary actions per FTE that were below the statewide average for all districts for the entire nine-year period; the average rate of disciplinary actions per FTE in Jefferson County school district was 10.2 percent from 2001-02 through 2009-10.

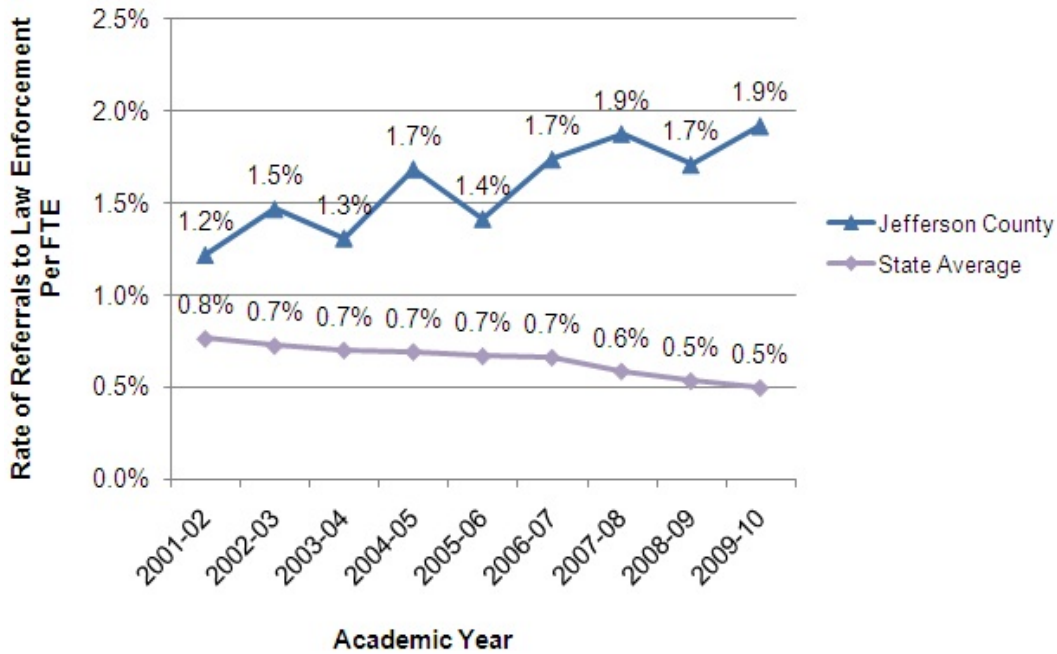
**Figure 1**  
**Rate of disciplinary Actions Per FTE in Jefferson County School District**  
**and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



Source: Colorado Department of Education

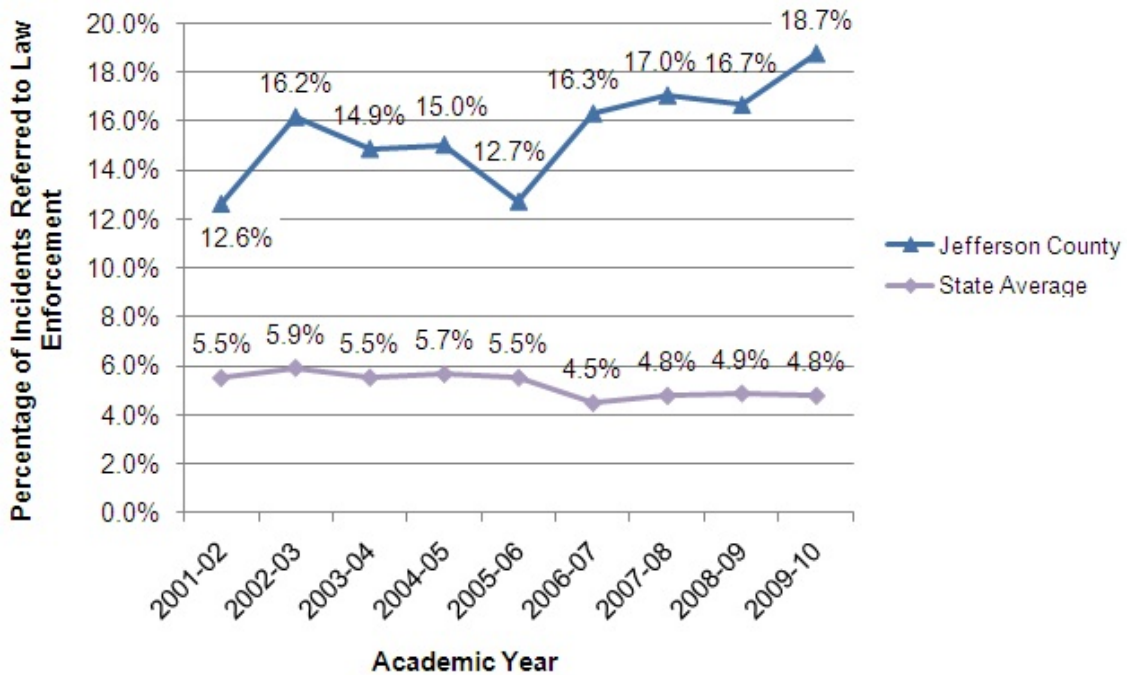
However, Figure 2 illustrates that Jefferson County school district's rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE was consistently higher than the statewide district average from 2001-02 through 2009-10. During this time period, the statewide district average rate was 0.6 percent, whereas Jefferson County school district's average was 1.6 percent. In addition, the statewide rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE per district decreased over time, whereas Jefferson County school district's rate of referrals exhibited an upward trend.

**Figure 2**  
**Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement per FTE in Jefferson County School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



Source: Colorado Department of Education

**Figure 3**  
**Percentage of incidents Referred to Law Enforcement in Jefferson County School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



Source: Colorado Department of Education

Finally, Figure 3 provides the percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement in Jefferson County school district from 2001-02 through 2009-10 compared to the statewide district percentage for this time period. The statewide district percentage remained relatively flat over the nine-year period, with an average of 5.2 percent of incidents referred to law enforcement by each district. During this same time period, Jefferson County school district referred an average of 15.6 percent of disciplinary incidents to law enforcement. In addition, Jefferson County school district's percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement generally increased throughout the nine-year period examined. It should be noted that information concerning the outcome of referrals to law enforcement is not available, and it is therefore not possible to determine whether a higher than average number of Jefferson County students become involved in the juvenile justice system. Further research also would be needed to determine if Jefferson County school district's high rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE and high percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement reflect active involvement by that district's school resource officers, or if another explanation is available. It is also important to note that staff did not consider the rates of other disciplinary actions, such as expulsions and suspensions. Further research into the use of such other actions would provide a more complete picture of each school district's data.

Colorado Springs 11 school district presents additional information of interest. As Figure 4 in Attachment C illustrates, the school district reported a rate of disciplinary actions per FTE that generally matched the statewide district average, although it did report a sharp decline in the 2009-10 academic year. However, Figures 5 and 6 in Attachment C indicate that Colorado Springs 11 school district's rate of referrals to law enforcement and percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement are both well below the statewide district average, even approaching zero in recent years. As with Jefferson County school district, further research into Colorado Springs 11 school district's disciplinary policies may be useful.

Finally, data reported by Pueblo 60 indicates that the school district's rate of disciplinary actions per FTE generally followed statewide trends, as shown in Figure 7 in Attachment C. However, as shown in Figures 8 and 9 in Attachment C, its rate of referrals to law enforcement per FTE and its percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement both declined sharply in the 2007-08 academic year. This decline would warrant further research to determine if anything about the school district or its policies changed during this time.

### **School District Dropout Rates from 2001 through 2010**

**Definitions.** The Colorado State Board of Education defines a dropout as a person "who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completion of a high school diploma or equivalent, and who does not transfer to another public or private school or enroll in an approved home study program." Students who reach the age of 21 before receiving a diploma or designation of completion are also counted as dropouts. A student is not a dropout if he or she transfers to an educational program recognized by the district, completes a General Educational Development (GED) exam or registers in a program leading to a GED, is committed to an institution that maintains educational programs, or is so ill that he or she is unable to participate in a homebound or special therapy program.

The dropout rate is an annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7 to 12 who leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program. Dropout data is reported annually to CDE by Colorado school districts. For this memorandum, staff used dropout data for grades 7 to 12 by school district.

***Dropout and contributing factors.*** According to the 2010 CDE Policy Report to the Joint Education Committee (Attachment D), researchers from the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins have identified contributing factors that influence whether a student drops out of school. The factors have been categorized as:

- life events;
- fade outs;
- push outs; and
- failing to succeed.

Life events include when a student becomes pregnant, gets arrested, or has to work to support his or her family. Fade outs refer to a student who becomes frustrated or bored and stops seeing a reason to attend school, while push outs refer to a student who is perceived to be difficult, dangerous, or detrimental to the success of the school. Push outs also include a student who withdraws, transfers, or is dropped from the rolls if he or she fails too many courses or misses too many days. Finally, failing to succeed refers to a student who fails to succeed in school or who attends schools that fail to provide him or her with the environments and supports that he or she needs to succeed.

According to a student survey conducted by Johns Hopkins, the top reasons for not completing school included:

- too many absences (41 percent);
- did not like school (40 percent);
- lack of interest in school (35 percent);
- weren't happy in school (34 percent);
- poor study habits (31 percent);
- had trouble with math (29 percent); and
- poor grades (29 percent).

***Overall trends.*** According to the 2010 CDE Policy Report to the Joint Education Committee on dropout prevention and student re-engagement, dropout rates have slightly decreased over the past five years. The CDE also reports that:

- students classified as American Indian and Hispanic persistently have the highest dropout rates;
- male students have a higher dropout rate than female students;<sup>5</sup>
- students identified as "homeless" experienced the highest dropout rate over the past five years; and
- gifted and talented students have the lowest dropout rate.

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<sup>5</sup> According to CDE, this prevalence is consistent with CDE safety and discipline data, which shows that males are expelled and suspended at higher rates than females.

Data released by CDE in 2010 indicated that the 2009-10 annual dropout rate improved to 3.1 percent, 0.5 percentage points better than the 3.6 percent rate posted in 2008-09. Table 5 shows average annual dropout rates, the median dropout rate for all school districts, and the highest district dropout rates from the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year. The table also lists which school district had the highest dropout rate per academic year. Plateau Valley school district had the highest dropout rate for three of the past nine years, but Branson Reorganized school district had the highest rate over the nine-year period, at 40.9 percent.

**Table 4**  
**Average and Median Dropout Rates and Highest Dropout Rates from**  
**the 2001-02 Academic Year through the 2009-10 Academic Year**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Average Dropout Rate</b>	<b>Median Dropout Rate for all School Districts</b>	<b>Highest Dropout Rate</b> (school district, county)
2001-02	2.6 percent	1.3 percent	29.8 percent (Plateau Valley, Mesa County)
2002-03	2.4 percent	1.2 percent	23.5 percent (Plateau Valley, Mesa County)
2003-04	3.8 percent	2.2 percent	18.5 percent (Plateau Valley, Mesa County)
2004-05	4.2 percent	2.1 percent	39.2 percent (Branson Reorganized, Las Animas County)
2005-06	4.5 percent	1.9 percent	40.9 percent (Branson Reorganized, Las Animas County)
2006-07	4.4 percent	1.8 percent	19.0 percent (Silverton, San Juan County)
2007-08	3.8 percent	1.6 percent	19.2 percent (Vilas, Baca County)
2008-09	3.6 percent	1.4 percent	19.1 percent (Julesberg, Sedgwick County)
2009-10	3.1 percent	1.3 percent	16.3 percent (Julesberg, Sedgwick County)
<b>Nine-year District Average or Median</b>	<b>2.4 percent</b>	<b>1.6 percent</b>	

Source: Colorado Department of Education

***Trends for specific districts.*** In order to examine dropout rates more closely, staff concentrated on the same nine school districts listed in Table 3 on page 6.

Staff charted the dropout rate from the 2001-02 academic year through the 2009-10 academic year for each of the selected nine districts. Graphs comparing this data to the state average for each metric is available upon request. The data used to make these calculations can be seen in Attachment E. This memorandum focuses on notable findings from this analysis.

The nine-year average of dropout rates for each school district in the state was 2.4 percent. The dropout rate in the Colorado Springs 11 and Pueblo 60 school districts were consistently above the statewide district average for the entire nine years examined. The dropout rate in Yuma school district was above the statewide district average for seven of the nine years examined, while De Beque, Jefferson County, and Durango school districts were above the statewide district average for six of the nine years examined. Pawnee school district was above the statewide district average for only two of the nine years examined. Aspen and Del Norte school districts were consistently below the statewide district average for the entire nine years examined.

De Beque school district had the highest annual dropout rates of the nine school districts examined—15.7 percent in the 2003-04 academic year and 10.8 percent in the 2008-09 academic year.

The dropout rates decreased in all nine school districts during the entire nine-year period. The Durango school district had the biggest decrease in the dropout rate over the nine-year period at 1.9 percent, while De Beque, Pawnee, and Del Norte school districts dropout rates did not change.

## **County-Level Juvenile Delinquency Filings from 2002 through 2010**

**Definitions.** Colorado law requires a yearly reporting of the number and nature of juvenile delinquency filings.<sup>6</sup> Each year this statistical information is provided in the Colorado Judicial Branch Annual Statistical Report. Profiled in the annual reports are caseload statistics for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, District Court, County Court, Water Court, and Probation.

A person who is less than 18 years of age is considered a juvenile under Colorado law. If charged with a crime, he or she is treated differently than an adult. According to Colorado law,<sup>7</sup> the Colorado juvenile justice system and the juvenile court have exclusive original jurisdiction concerning a juvenile ten years of age or older who violates:

- any federal or state law (except non-felony state traffic, game and fish, and parks and recreation laws or regulations);
- certain laws concerning furnishing cigarettes or tobacco products to minors;
- certain laws concerning ethyl alcohol and marijuana;
- county or municipal ordinances, the penalty for which may be a jail sentence of more than ten days (except traffic ordinances); or
- any court order made pursuant to the provisions of the children's code contained in Title 19, C.R.S.

A violation of the law over which juvenile court has jurisdiction is a delinquent act. This includes violations of state and federal statutes and court orders. These acts are listed in the following section. There are certain violations of state law over which juvenile court does not have jurisdiction. These include non-felony state traffic laws, parks and recreation and game and fish laws

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<sup>6</sup>Section 18-1.3-1011 C.R.S.

<sup>7</sup>Section 19-2-104, C.R.S.



or regulations, and offenses concerning tobacco products by an underage person. A juvenile who is charged with committing one of these offenses has his or her case heard in county court.

At the sentencing hearing, the judge has a wide range of sentencing options including one or more of the following:

- commitment of the juvenile to the Department of Human Services for a maximum period of two years for most juveniles, but up to seven years for the most serious offenders. Commitment also includes a mandatory period of parole of at least six months;
- if the juvenile is 18 years of age or older at the time of sentencing, sentencing him or her to county jail or to community corrections;
- detention for up to 45 days;
- placement with a relative or other suitable person or into the custody of the county department of social services;
- probation;
- placement in a hospital;
- imposition of a fine; or
- ordering the juvenile to reimburse any victims for damages caused by the juvenile (i.e., restitution).

When a juvenile delinquent is granted probation, the juvenile court may release the juvenile from probation or modify the terms and conditions of probation at any time. Any juvenile who has complied satisfactorily with the terms and conditions of the probation for a period of two years must be released from probation, and the jurisdiction of the court is terminated.

**Overall trends.** Table 5 in Attachment F shows the number of Colorado juvenile delinquency filings from FY 2001-02 through FY 2009-10, by county. The crimes that are captured in this data are:

- animal cruelty;
- arson;
- assault;
- burglary;
- child abuse;
- criminal mischief;
- curfew violation;
- drugs;
- delinquency case remanded;
- escape;
- fraud;
- forgery;
- homicide;
- harassment;
- incest;
- impersonation;
- kidnapping;
- menacing;
- perjury;
- pornography;
- possession of alcohol;
- prostitution;
- public peace and order violations;
- robbery
- runaway;
- sex offense;
- theft;
- tampering;
- trespass;
- vehicular assault;
- vehicular homicide; and
- weapon possession.

Table 5 demonstrates the raw number of juvenile delinquency filings over the specified time frame, and has not been normalized to reflect population fluctuations. It shows an overall reduction of over 6,000 juvenile delinquency filings, statewide, from the data published in the 2002 Judicial Branch Annual Report. The table also specifies the counties where these reductions were located. Staff used the total change during this time frame to smooth year-by-year fluctuations, which can be dramatic, as shown in the table.

***Trends for specific counties.*** Naturally, large counties saw the largest number of overall filings, which reflects large populations. In most cases, filings fell significantly. For example, Denver County filings dropped from 2,412 filings in FY 2001-02 to 1,339 filings in FY 2009-10, a reduction of 1,073 filings. Similarly, the number of filings in Jefferson County dropped from 2,036 in FY 2001-02 to 1,167 in FY 2009-10, an overall drop of 869 filings. Arapahoe County filings fell from 1,845 in FY 2001-02 to 947 in FY 2009-10, a reduction of 898. Finally, Boulder County's filings fell from 1,197 in FY 2001-02 to 718 in FY 2009-10, a reduction of 479.

Few counties reported overall increases in juvenile filings, and in those cases, the counties are relatively small, and thus the instances are fewer. Gunnison County, for example, reported 44 filings in FY 2001-02 and 69 filings in FY 2009-10, a rise of 25 filings in this time frame. Several counties, however, reported no filings for certain years. These zero filings are concentrated among the least populated counties such as San Juan, Mineral, and Dolores, to name just three.

Given that the raw number of filings may be distorted by a county's population, staff normalized the reported instances by factoring in the population of those under the age of 18 in the county in any given year. The percent change over the time frame, by county, is shown in the final map in Attachment A.

The map demonstrates a similar reduction in total filings across the state. It is intended to show any increase or decrease relative to a given county's size. For instance, using the example above, Denver County reduced its number of filings by roughly half, reporting 1,339 fewer filings. Similarly, Lake County also reduced its number of filings by half, but reported just 20 fewer filings in FY 2009-10 than in FY 2001-02. Therefore, the map is intended to reflect a proportional reduction based on the counties' populations.

### **Correlations Among Referrals to Law Enforcement, Dropout Rates, and Juvenile Delinquency Filings from 2001 through 2010**

Using the data from the nine selected school districts and counties described above, staff plotted the correlations among referrals to law enforcement, dropout rates, and juvenile delinquency filings from the 2001-02 academic or fiscal year through the 2009-10 academic or fiscal year. Staff concentrated on the percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement under the assumption that this data may indicate a propensity to link school disciplinary proceedings with law enforcement proceedings. In addition, it should be noted that the following charts plot school district-level academic year data on dropout rates and percentages of incidents referred to law enforcement against county-level fiscal year data on juvenile delinquency filings. As explained above, the number of juvenile delinquency filings was normalized using the population of individuals who were under the age of 18 for each year examined. Due to its location, for the

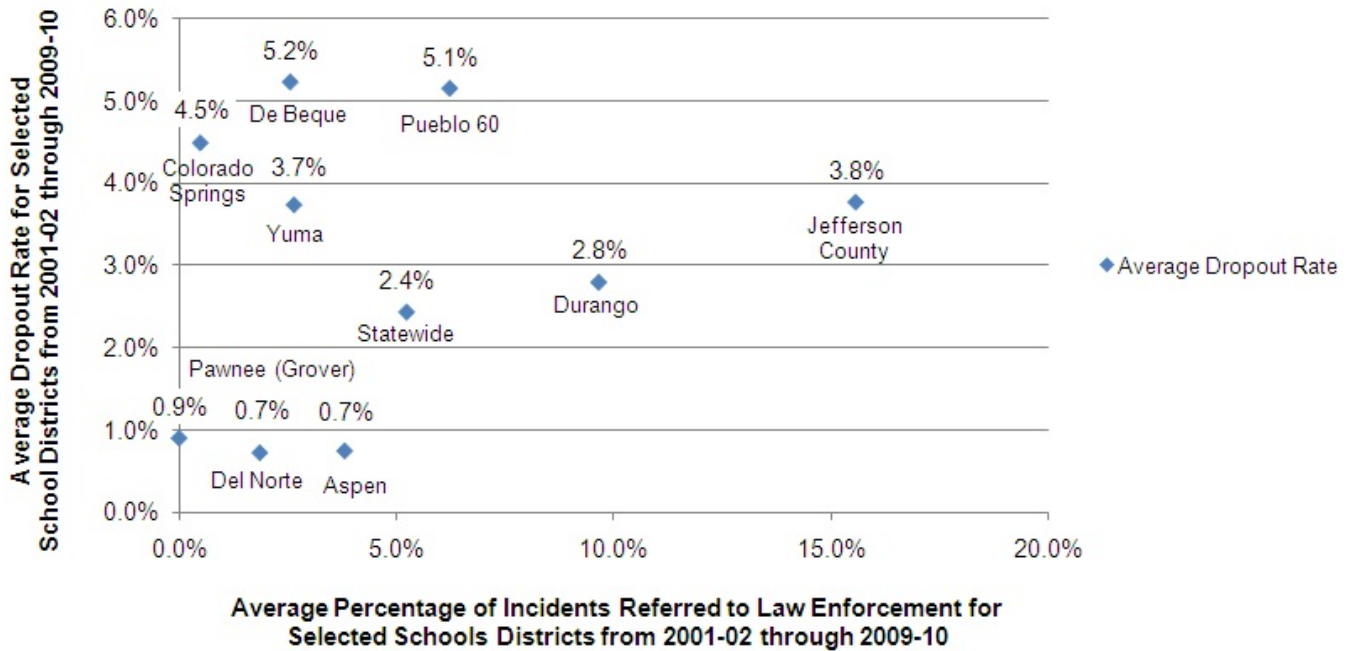
following three charts, De Beque school district data is compared to the average percentage of normalized juvenile delinquency filings in Mesa and Garfield Counties.

Figure 10, which plots the nine-year average percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement against the nine-year average dropout rates for each selected school district and for all districts in the state, illustrates no clear correlation between the percentage of incidents that a school district refers to law enforcement and its dropout rate. Jefferson County school district, which had the highest average percentage of incidents that were referred to law enforcement among the nine selected districts, reported an average dropout rate of 3.8 percent. This rate is 1.4 percent higher than the statewide district average, but is lower than the average dropout rates reported by three of the nine school districts examined. Likewise, De Beque school district, whose average dropout rate of 5.2 percent was the highest among the nine districts examined, reported a relatively low average percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement (2.6 percent) compared to the statewide district average (5.2 percent) and to the other eight districts.

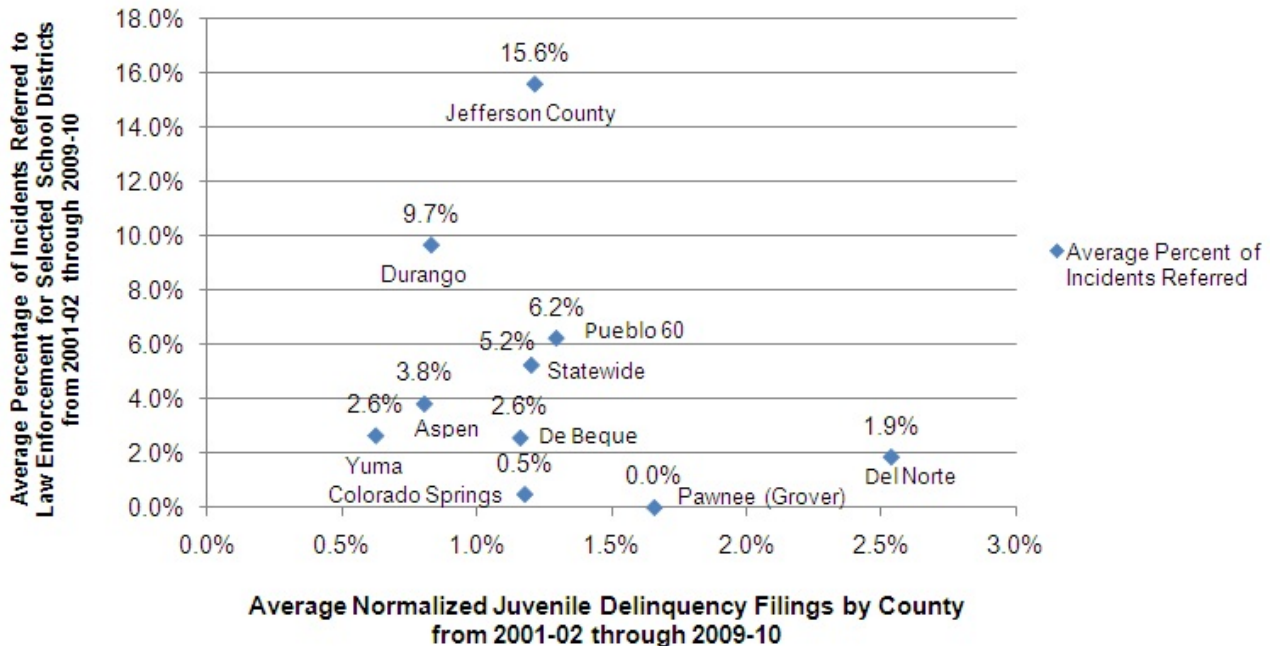
Similarly, Figure 11, which plots the nine-year average normalized juvenile delinquency filings for selected counties against the average percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement for selected school districts and for the state as a whole, illustrates no clear correlation between the two sets of data. Del Norte school district is in Rio Grande County, which reported an average normalized rate of juvenile delinquency filings of 2.5 percent, the highest among the counties examined. However, the Del Norte school district had one of the lowest average percentages of incidents referred to law enforcement, at 1.9 percent. Jefferson County, whose school district's average percentage of incidents referred to law enforcement was 15.6 percent, reported an average normalized rate of juvenile delinquency filings that matched the state average of 1.2 percent.

Finally, Figure 12 plots the nine-year average dropout rate for selected school districts against the average normalized juvenile delinquency filings for selected counties. As with the previous figures, no clear correlation between the two sets of data is evident. Most counties reported a rate of normalized juvenile delinquency filings at or near the state average of 1.2 percent. Rio Grande County, which reported the highest average rate of juvenile delinquency filings among the counties examined, is the location of Del Norte school district, which had the lowest average dropout rate among the school districts examined (0.7 percent).

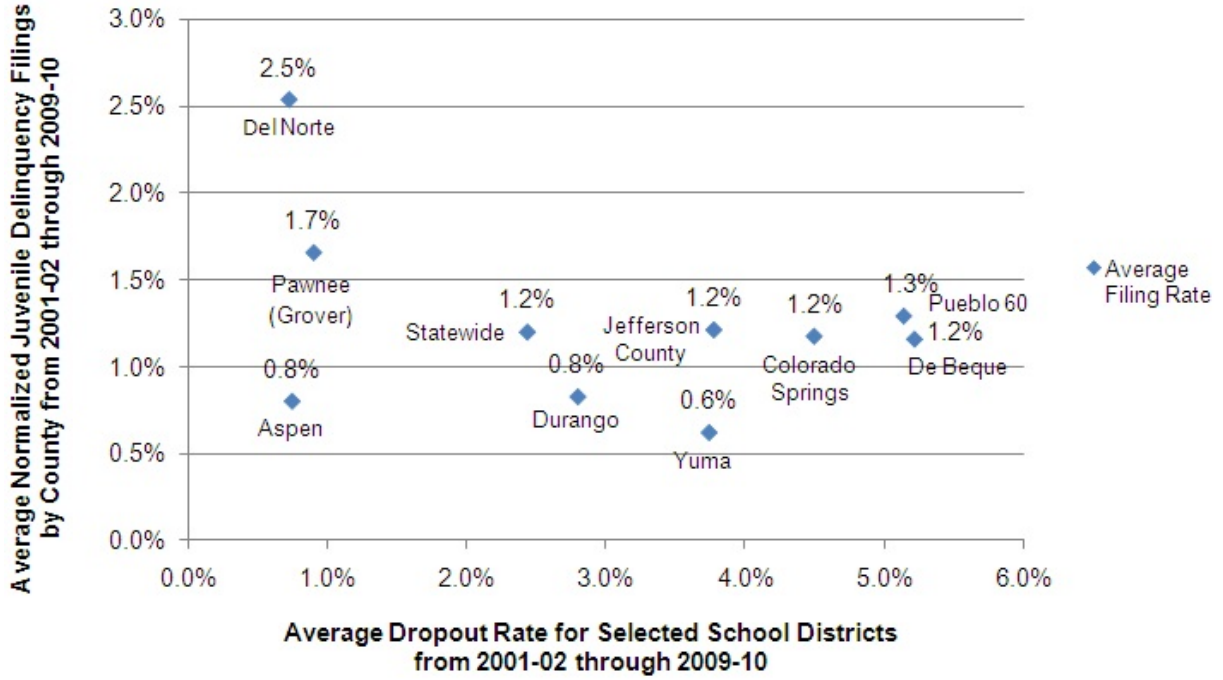
**Figure 10**  
**Average Percentage of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement and**  
**Average Dropout Rate for Selected School Districts from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



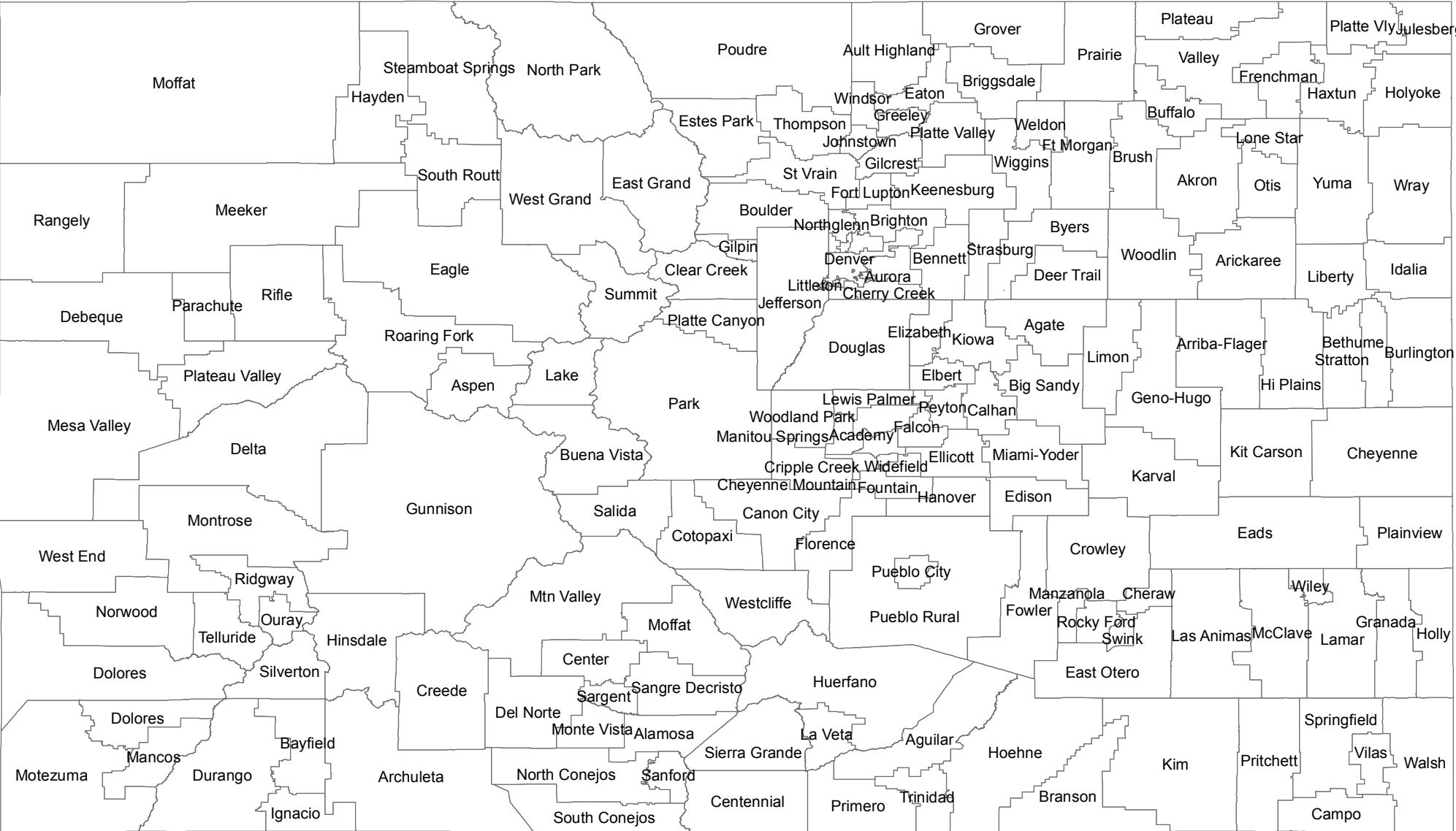
**Figure 11**  
**Average Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings by County and**  
**Average Percentage of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement by School District**  
**from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



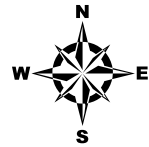
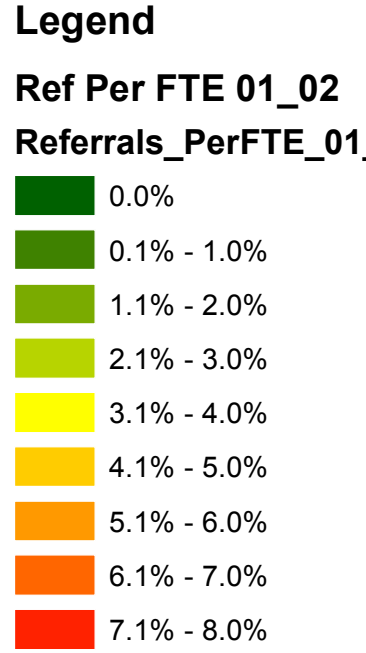
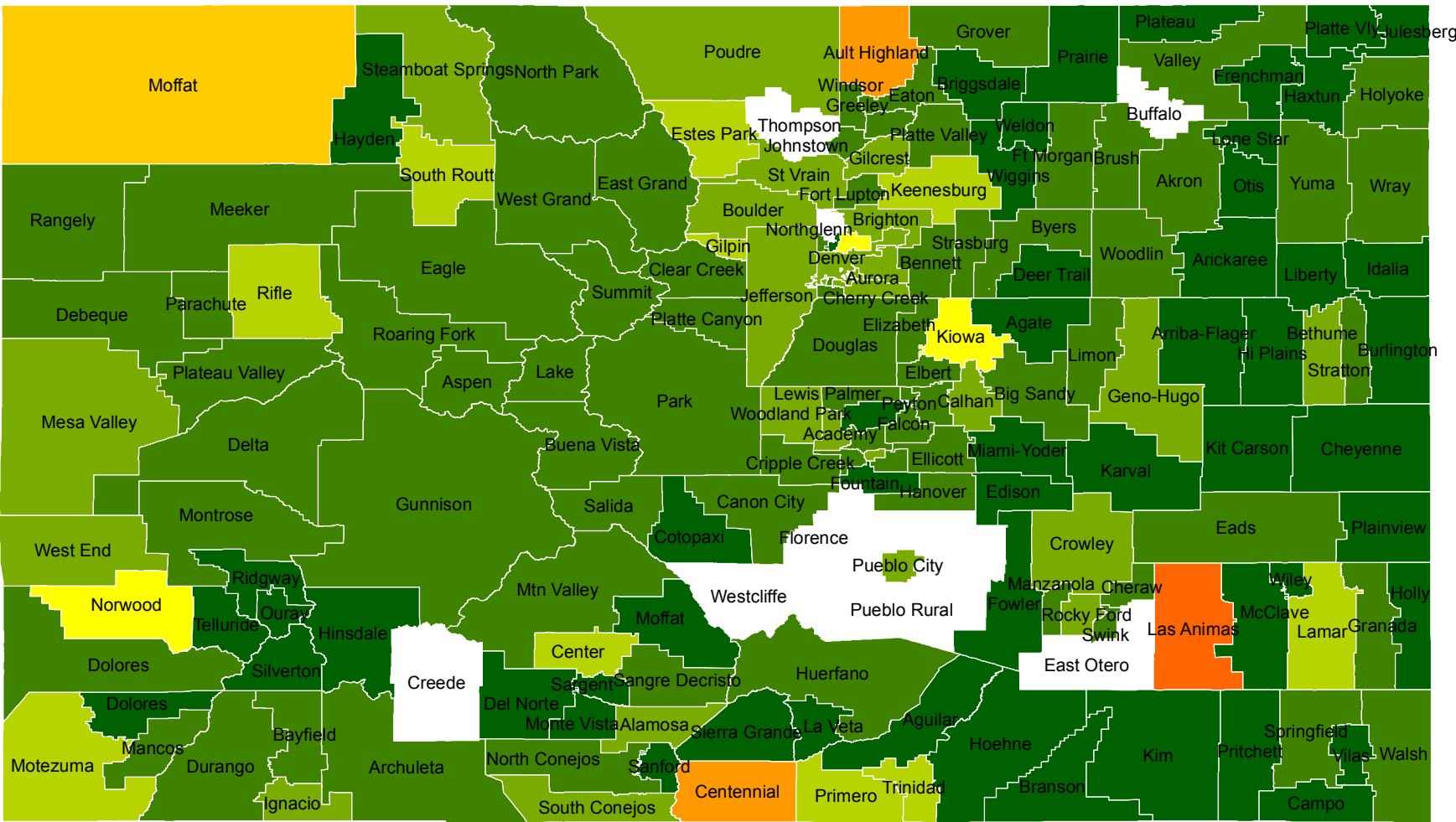
**Figure 12**  
**Average Dropout Rate for Selected School Districts and Average**  
**Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings by County**  
**from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



# Colorado School Districts



# Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE During the 2001-02 Academic Year

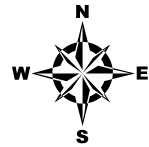
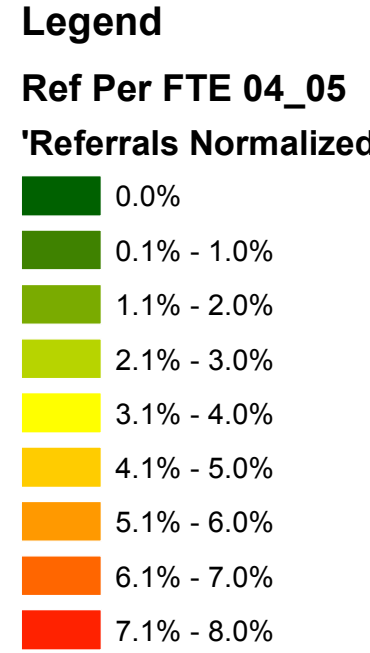
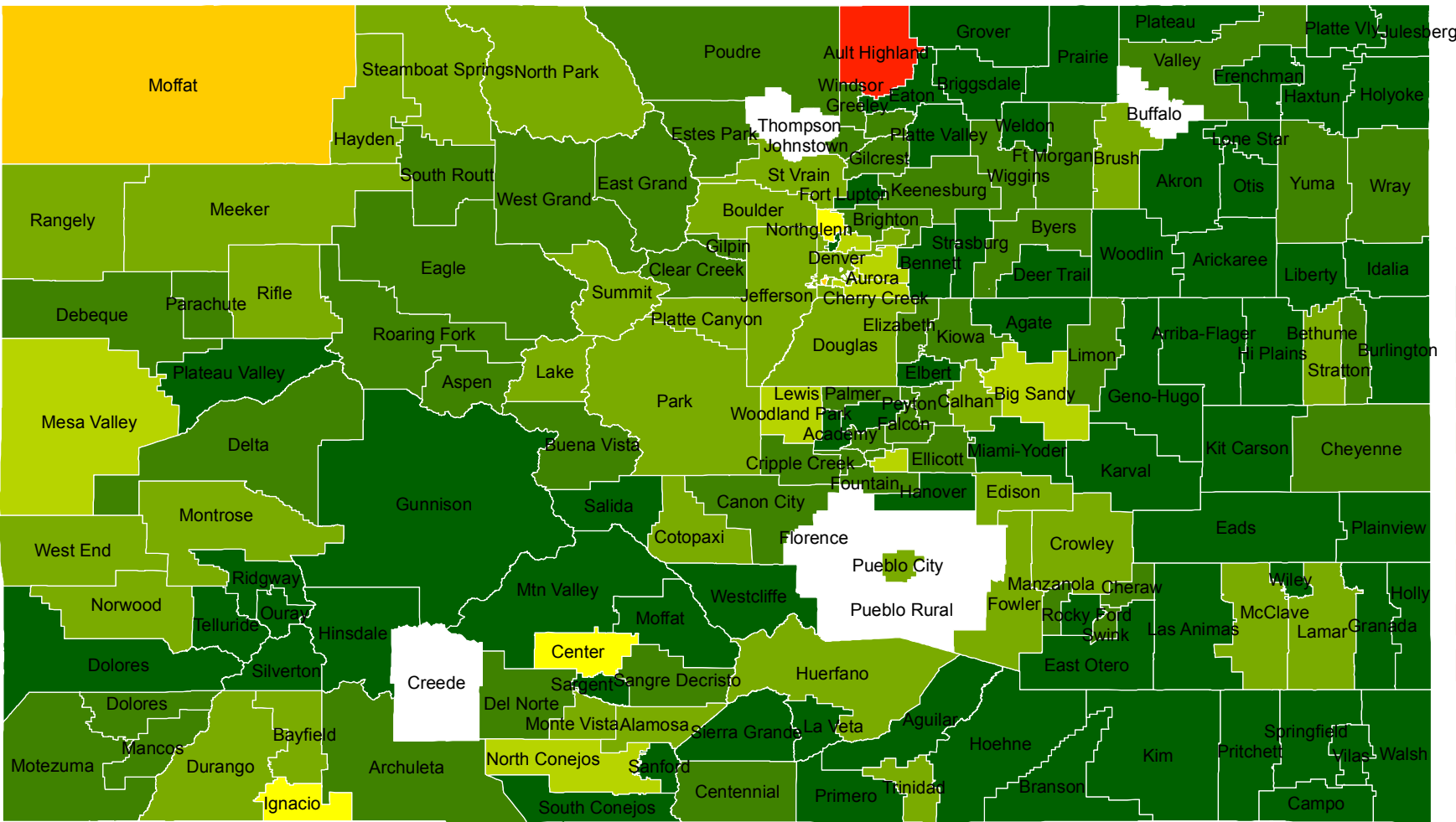








# Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE During the 2004-05 Academic Year

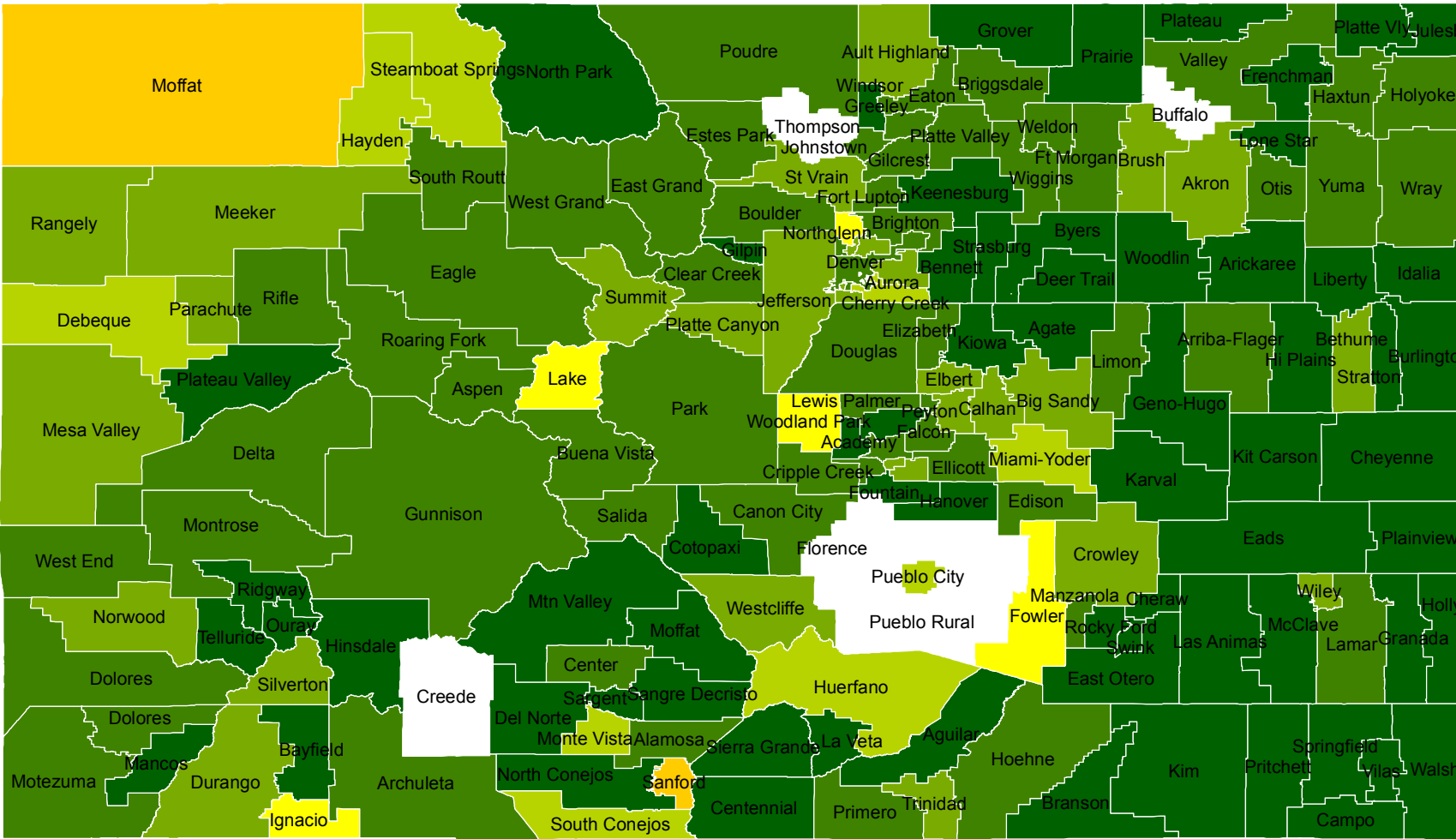
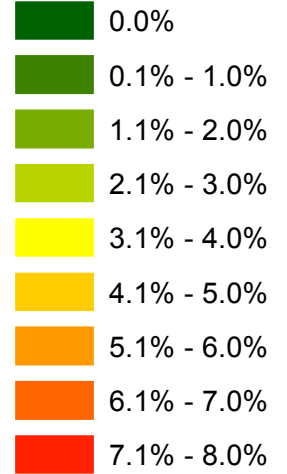


# Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE During the 2005-06 Academic Year

## Legend

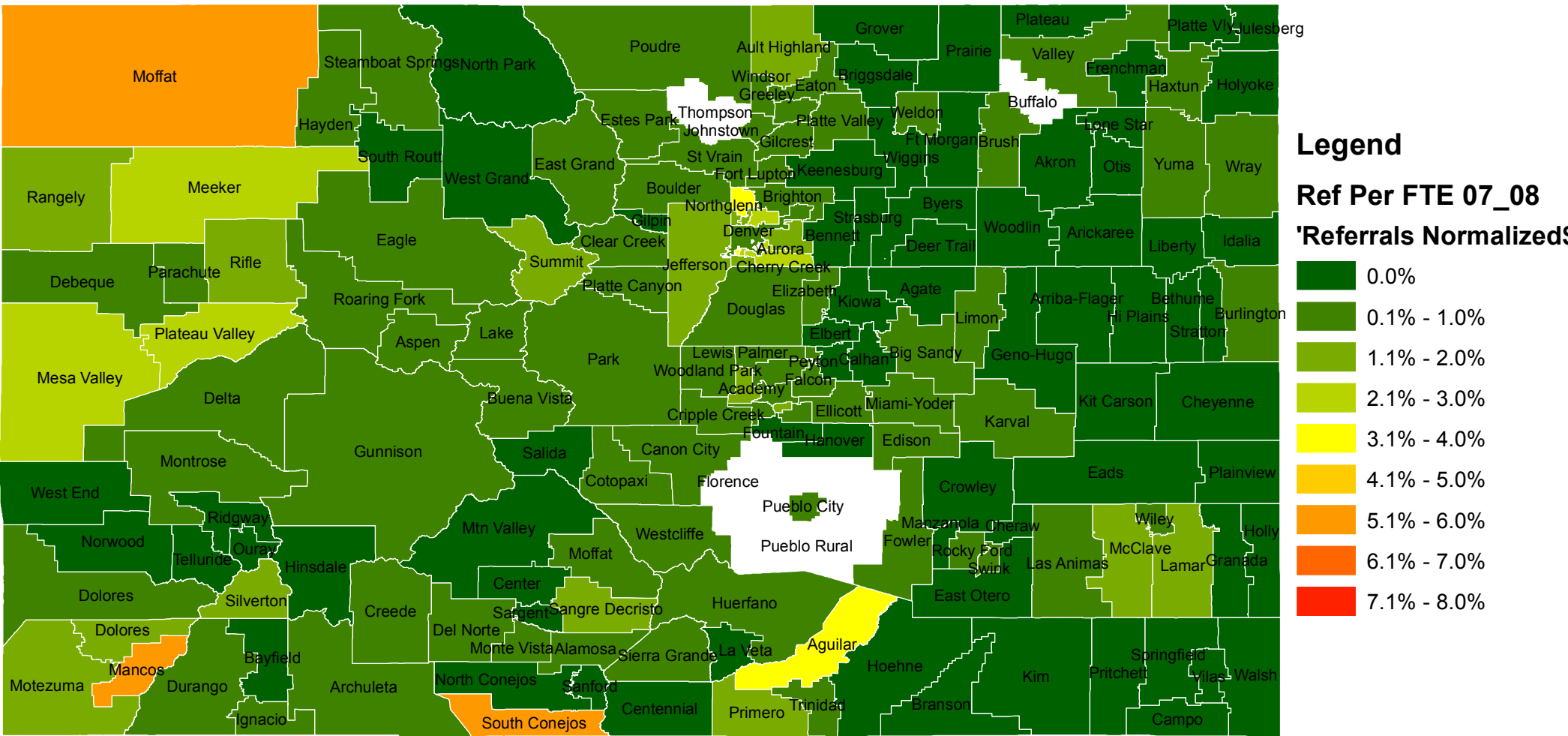
Ref Per FTE 05\_06

'Referrals Normalized



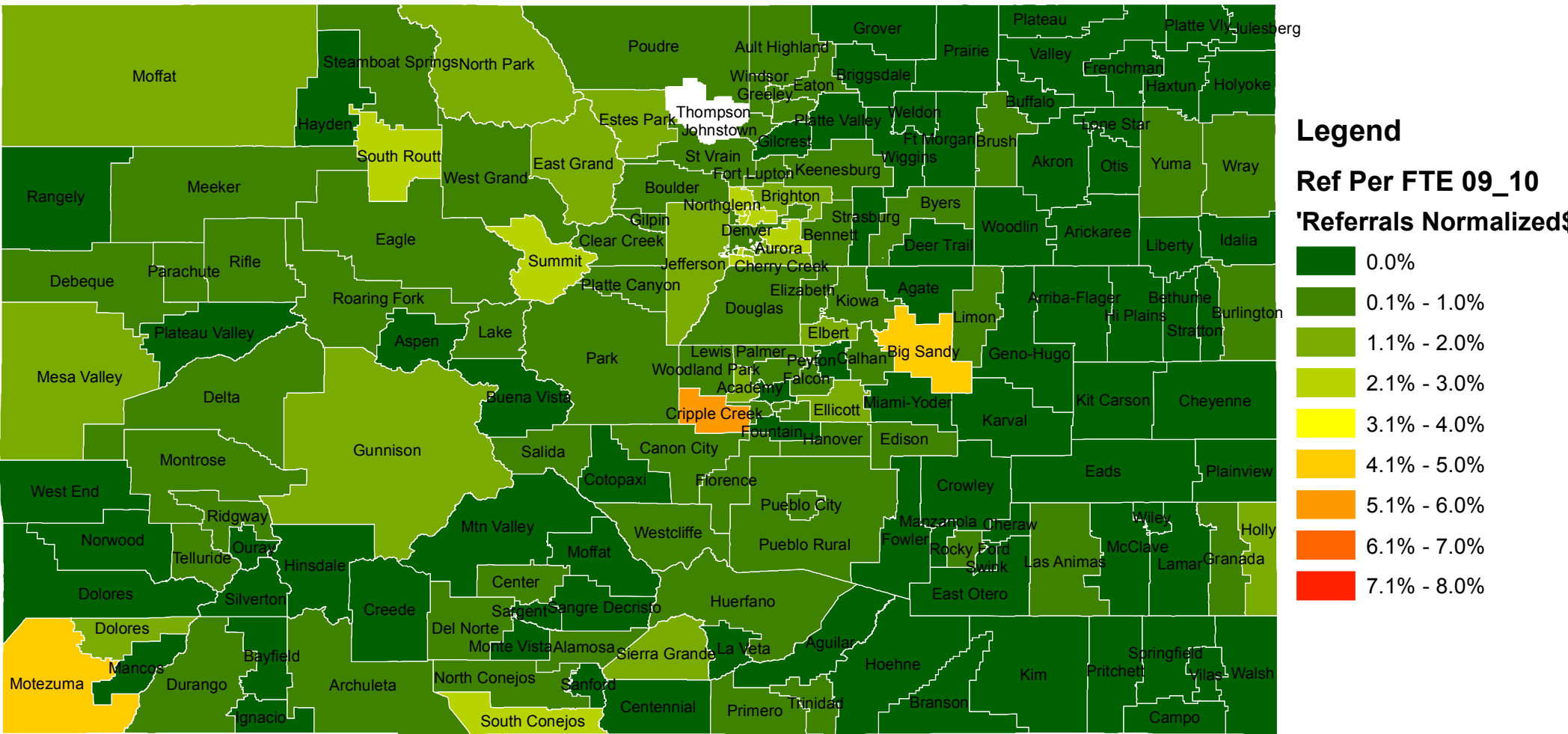


# Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE During the 2007-08 Academic Year





# Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE During the 2009-10 Academic Year

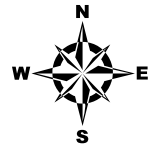
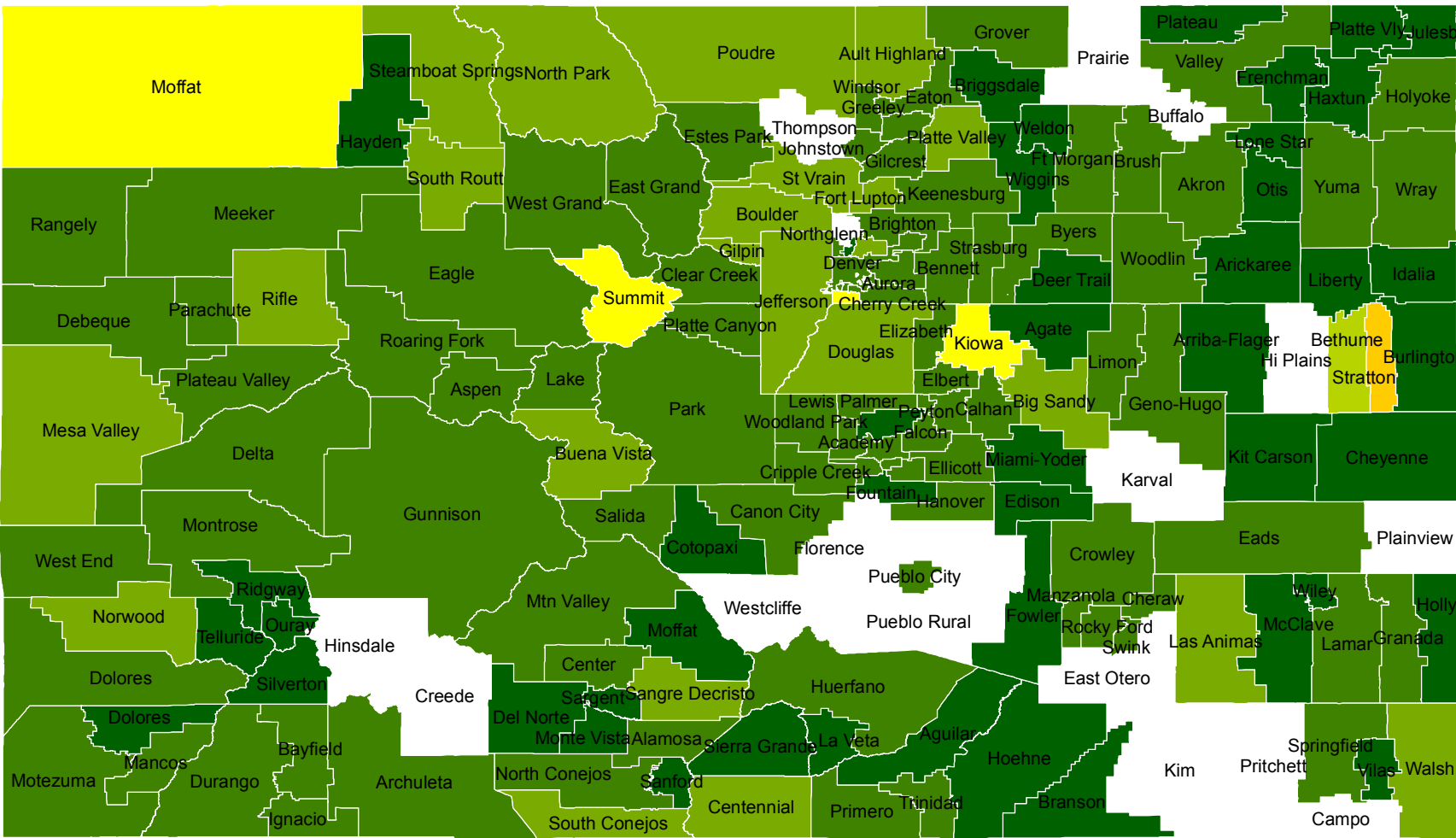
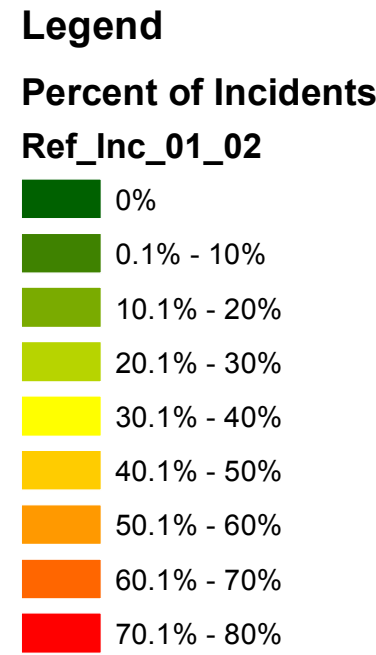




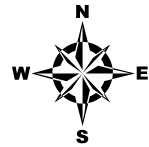
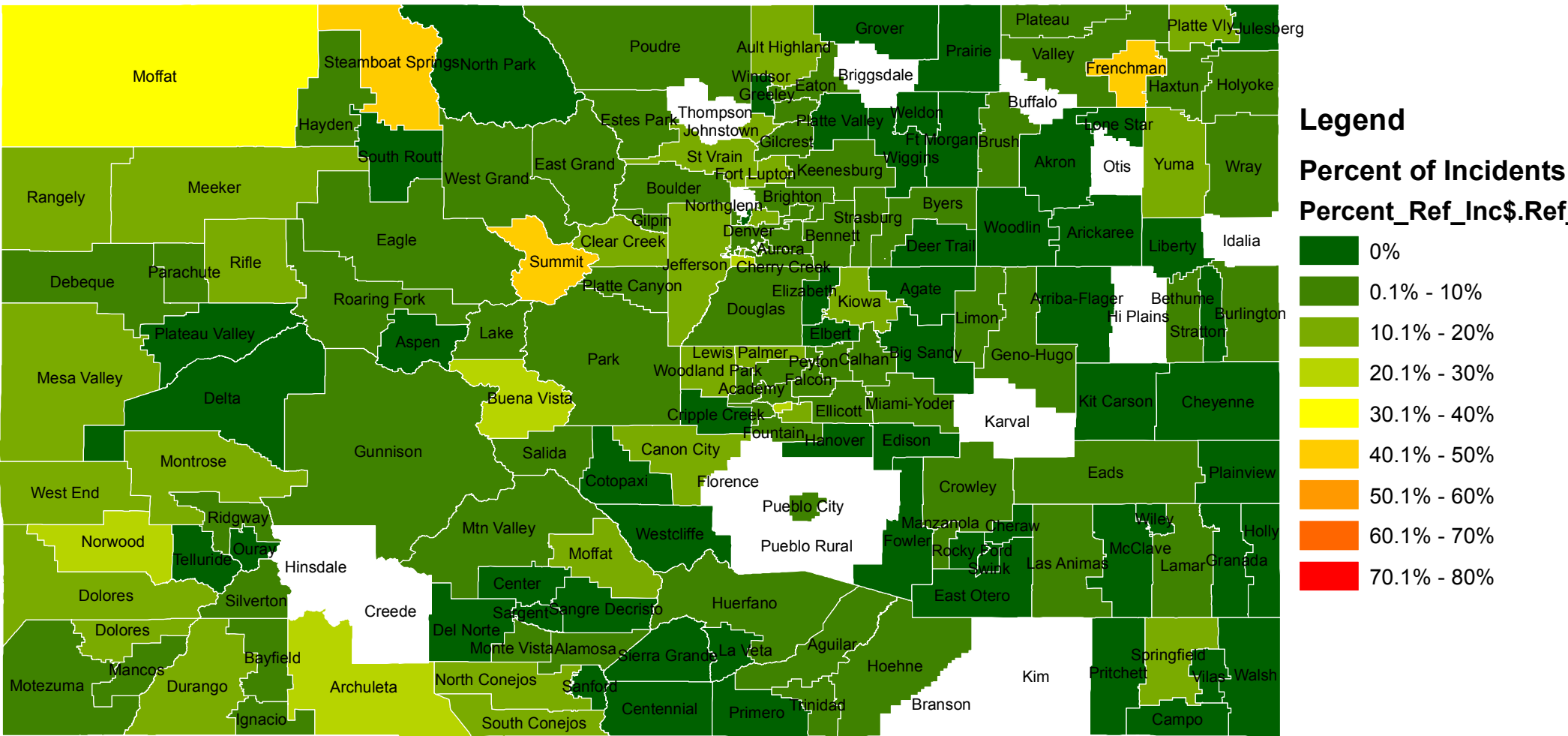




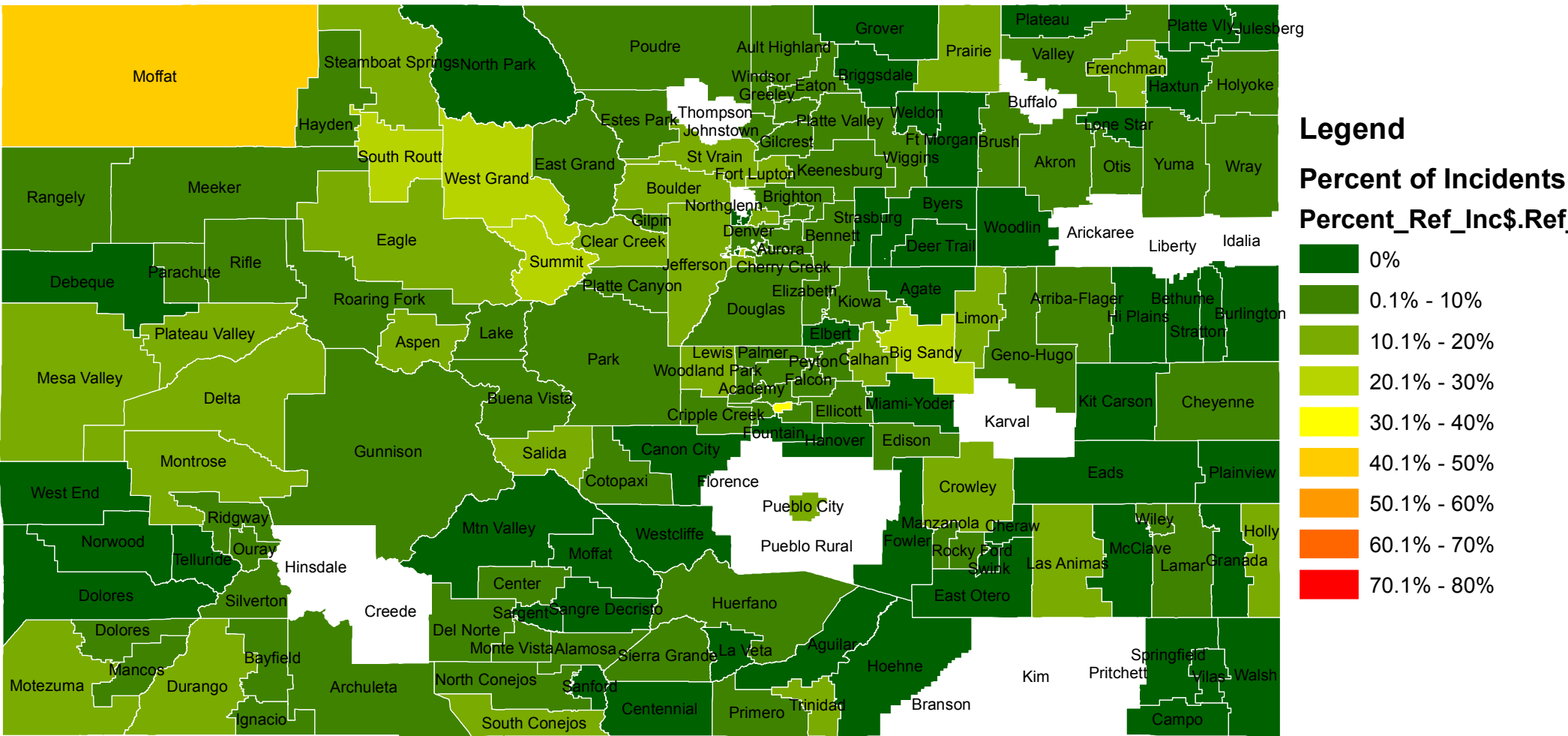
# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2001-02 Academic Year



# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2002-03 Academic Year

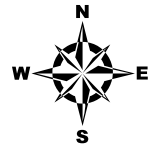
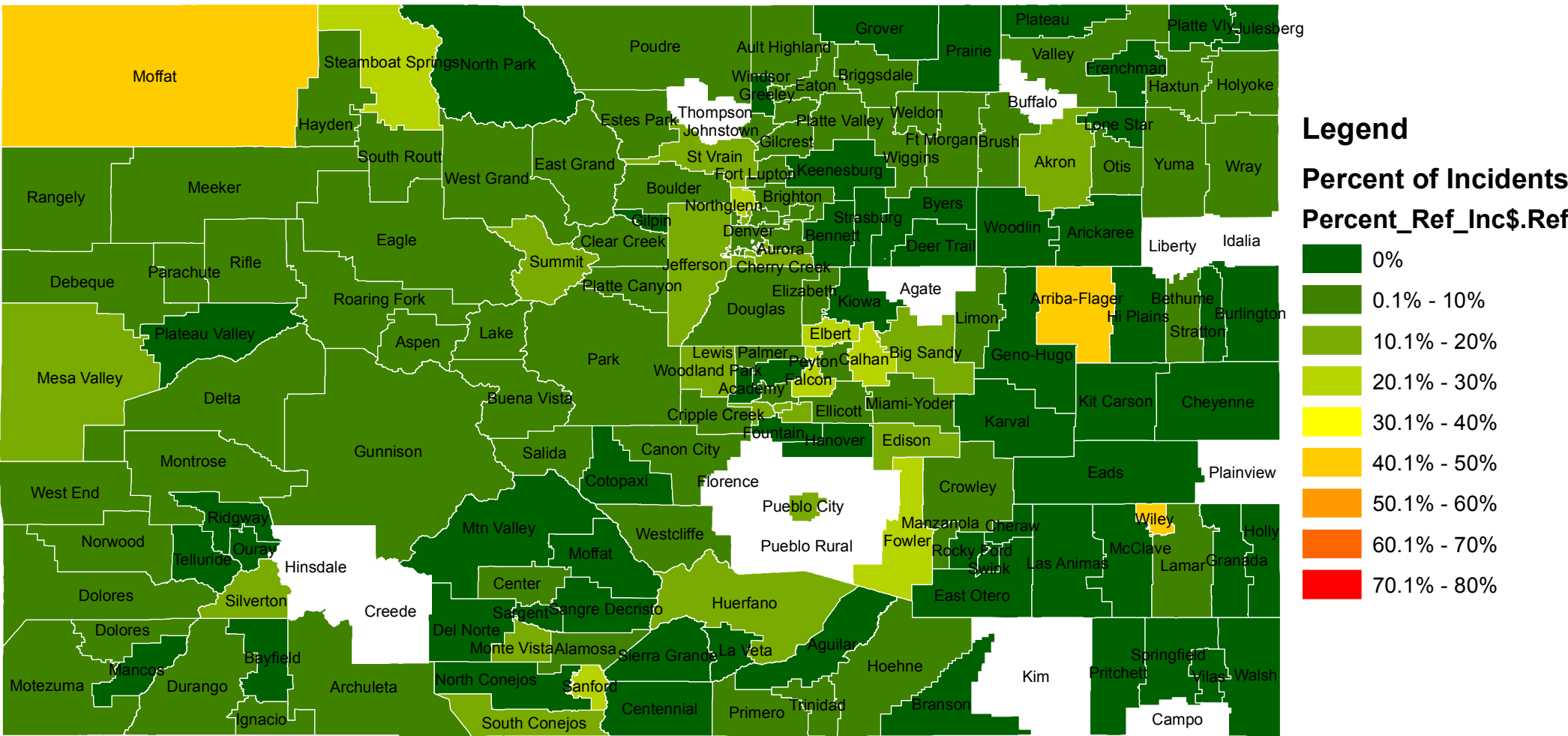


# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2003-04 Academic Year





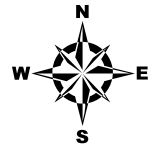
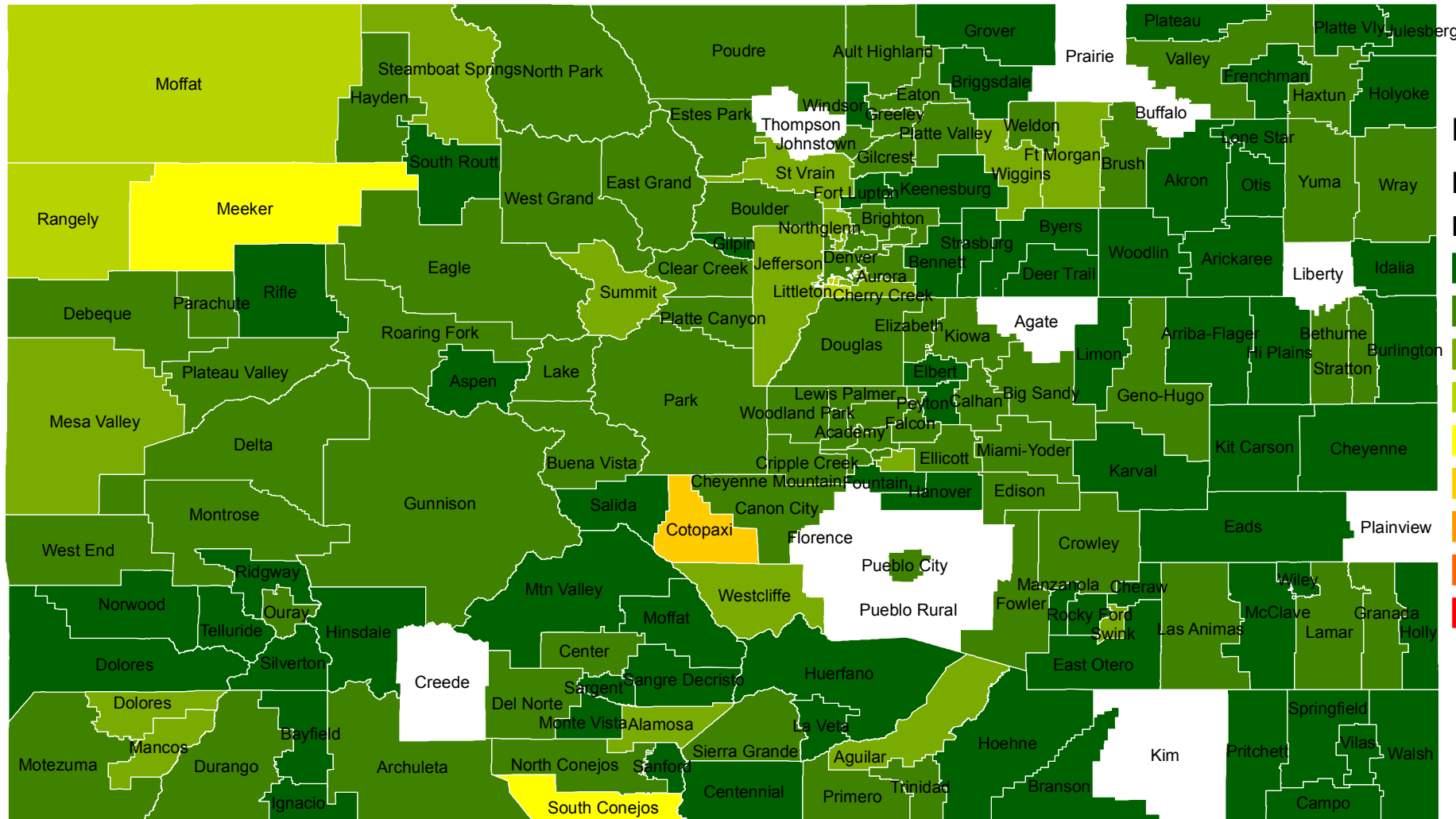
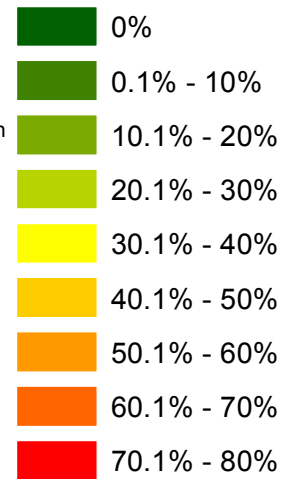
# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2005-06 Academic Year



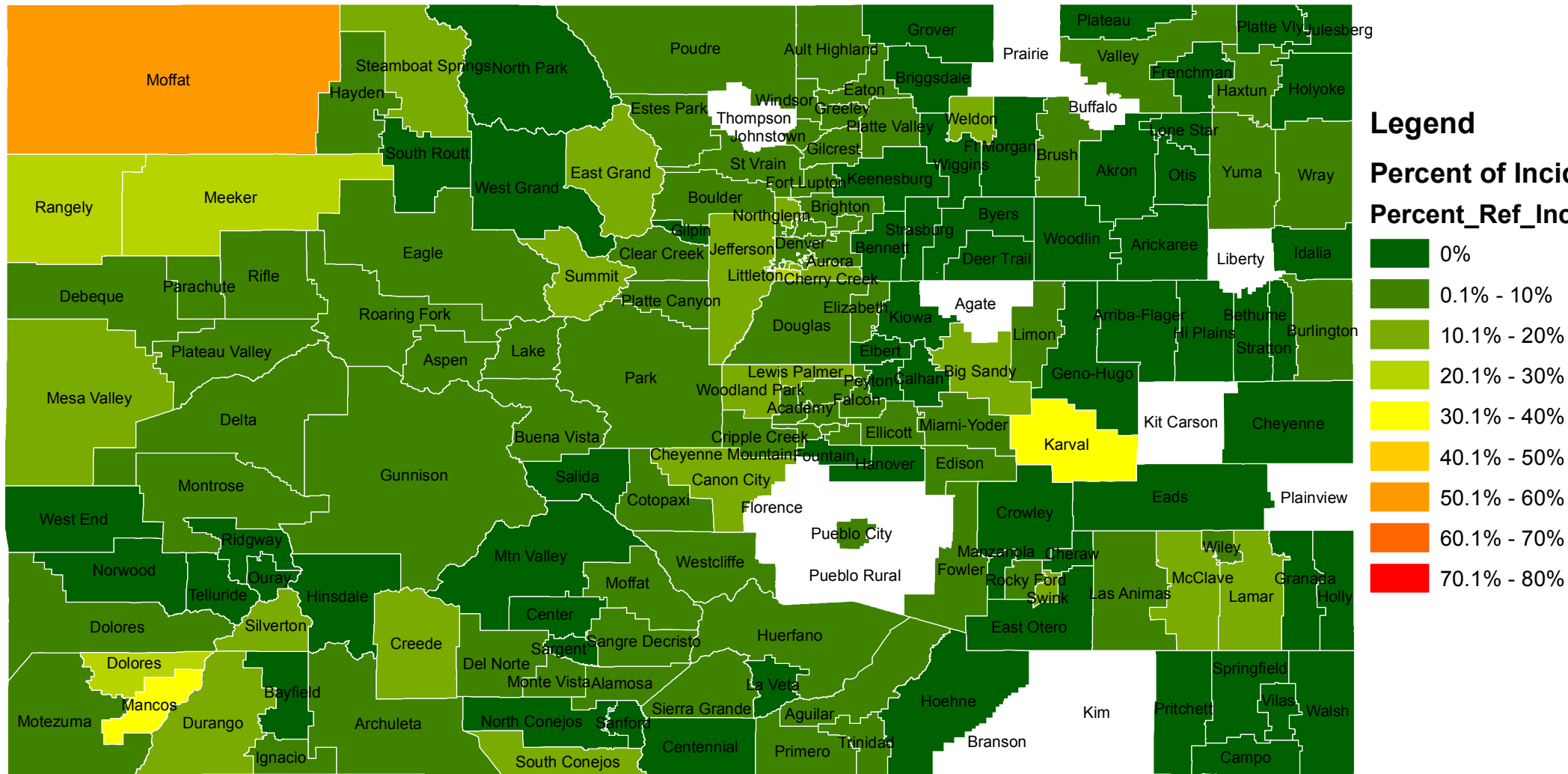
# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2006-07 Academic Year

## Legend

Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement  
Percent\_Ref\_Inc



# Percent of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement During the 2007-08 Academic Year



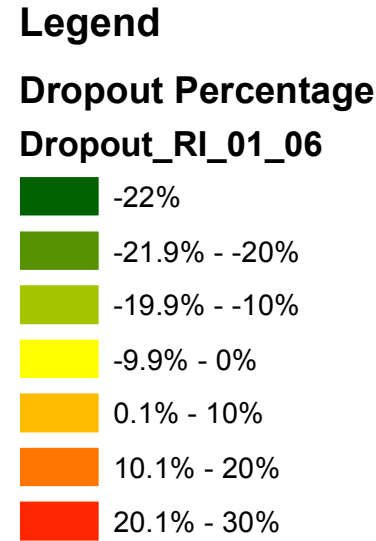
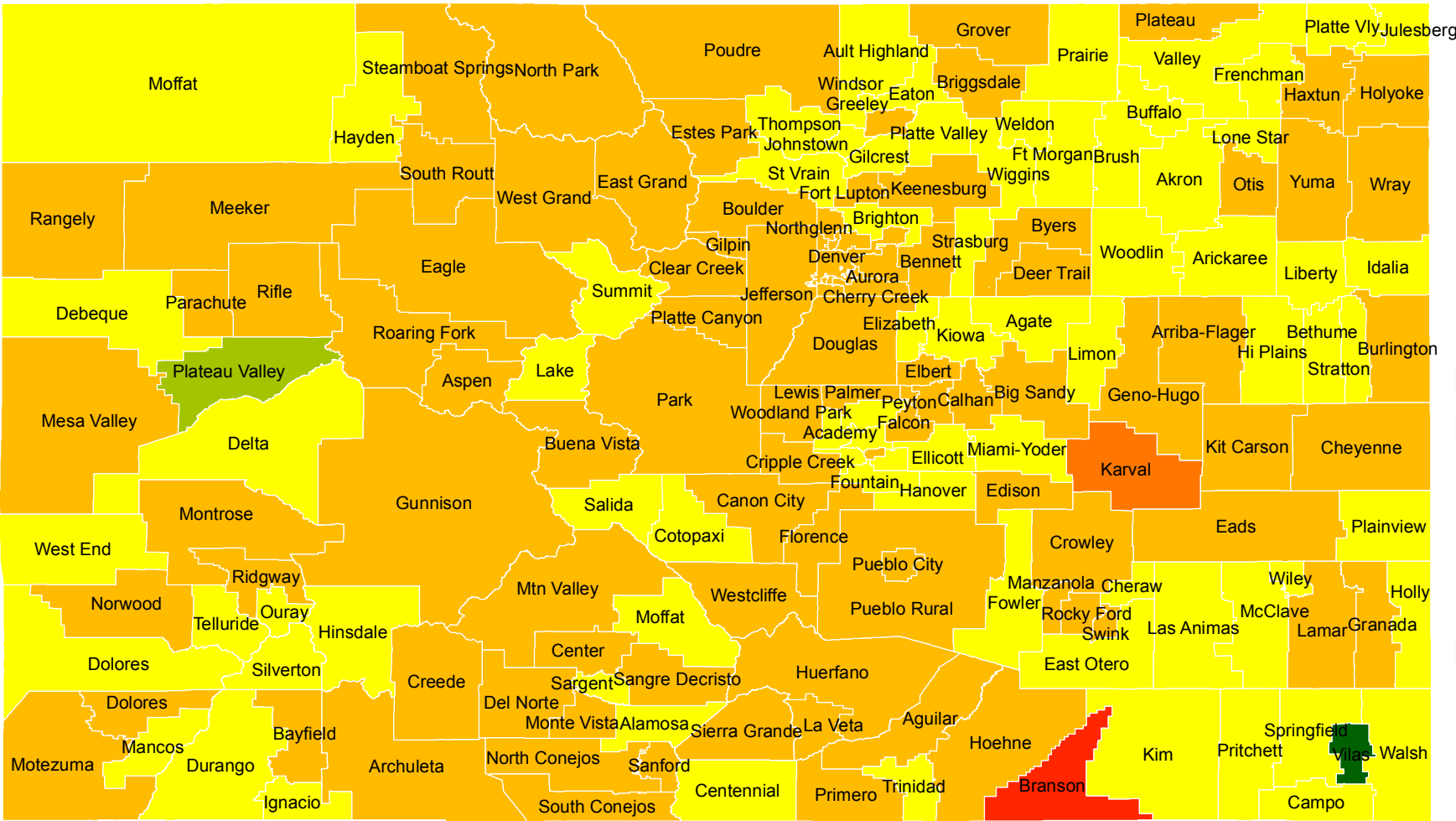




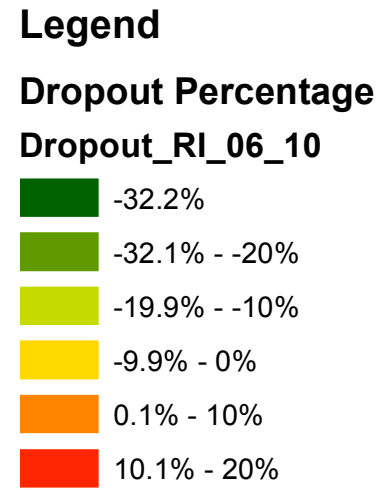
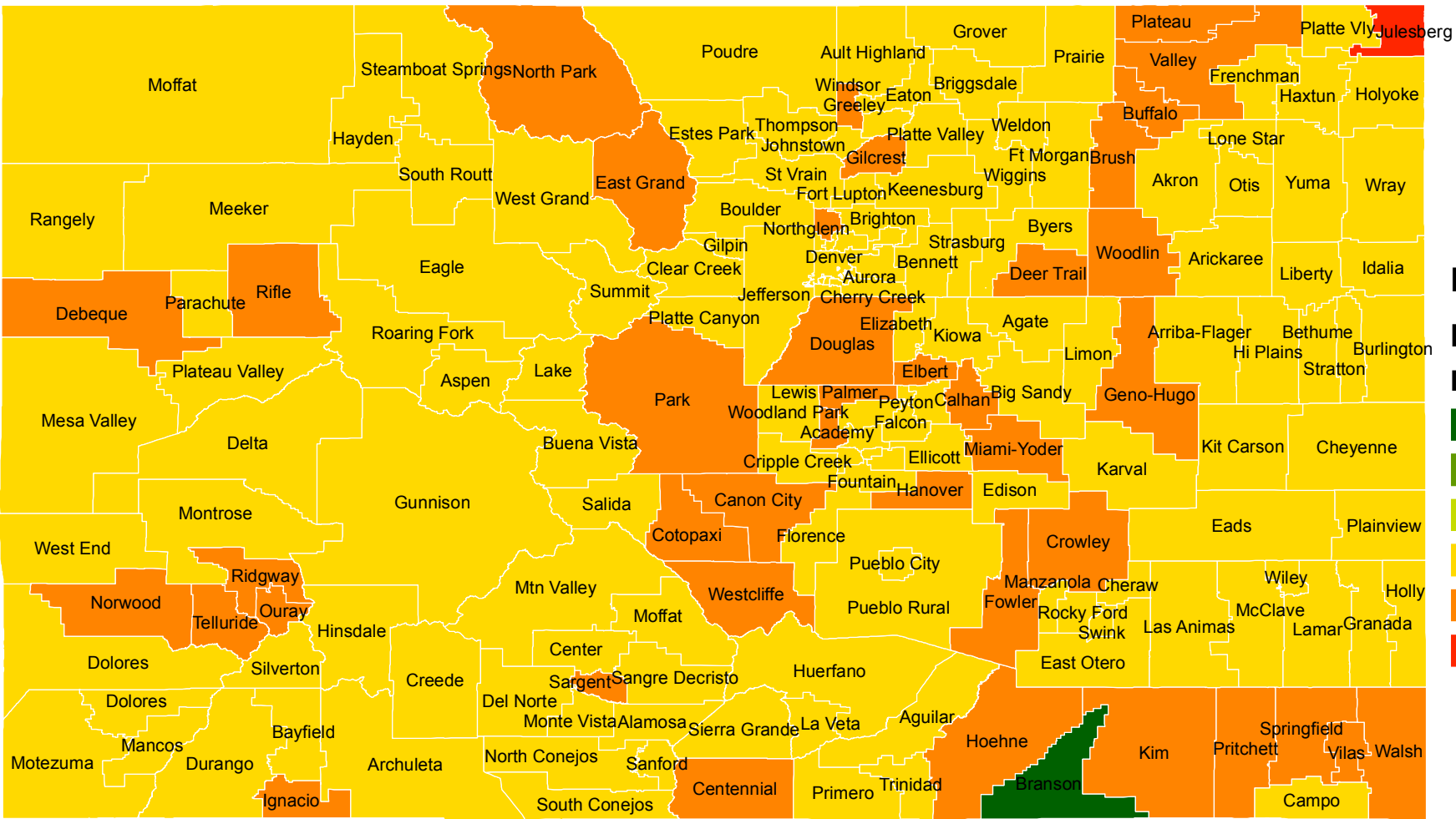




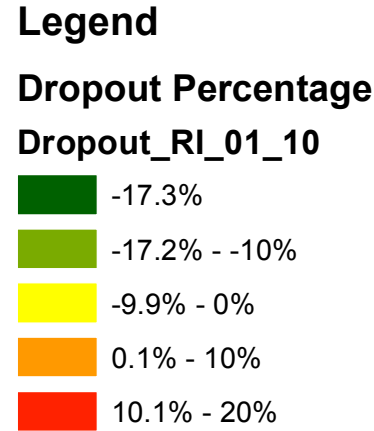
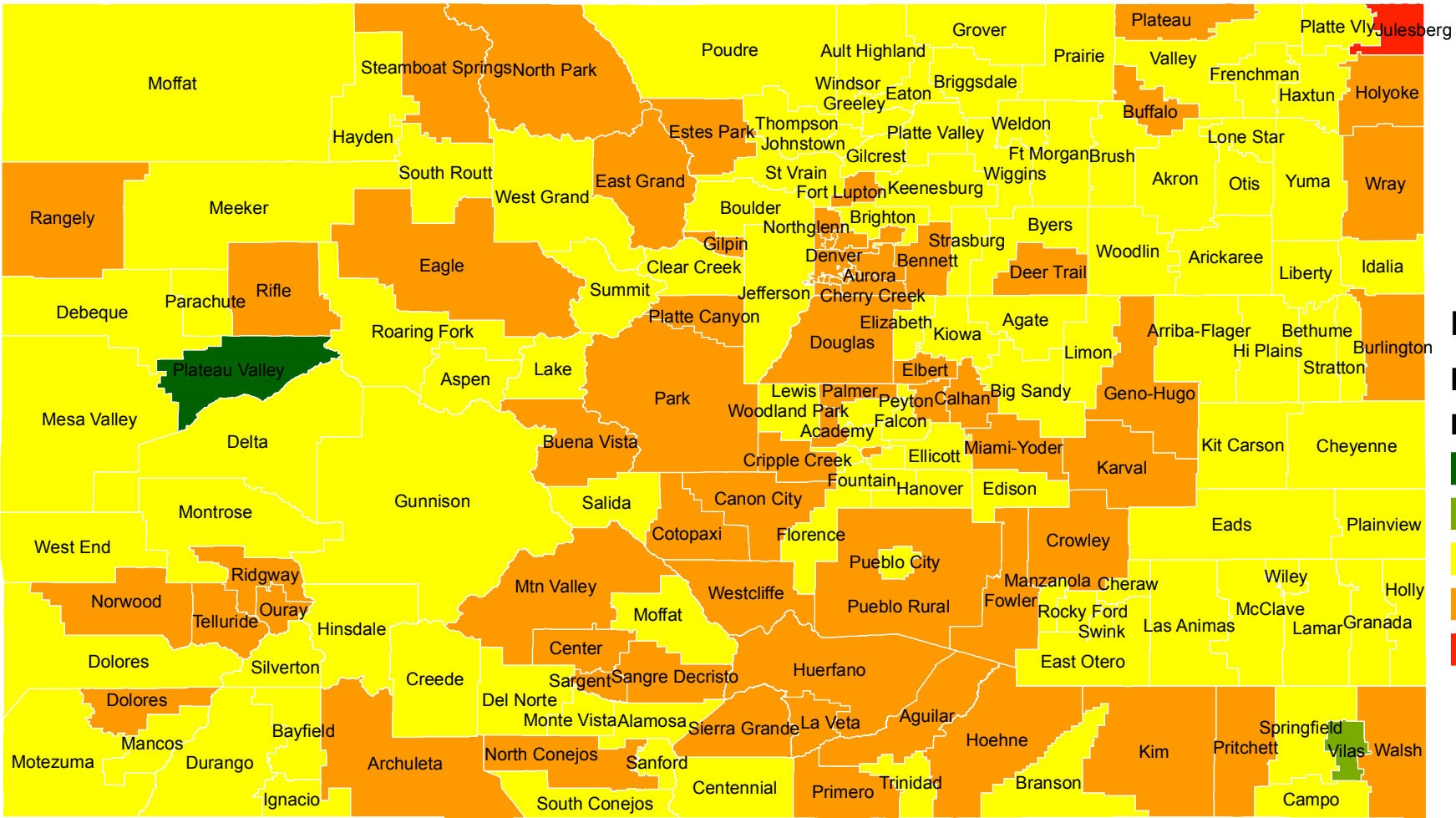
# Percentage Change in the Dropout Rate From 2001-02 through 2005-06



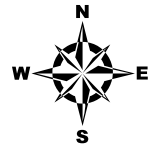
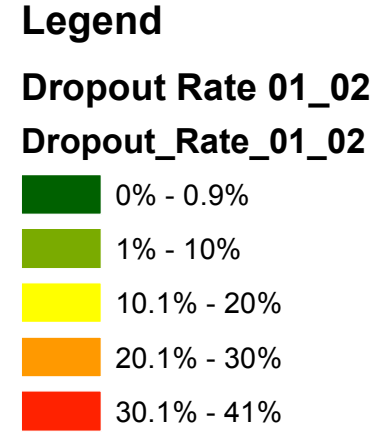
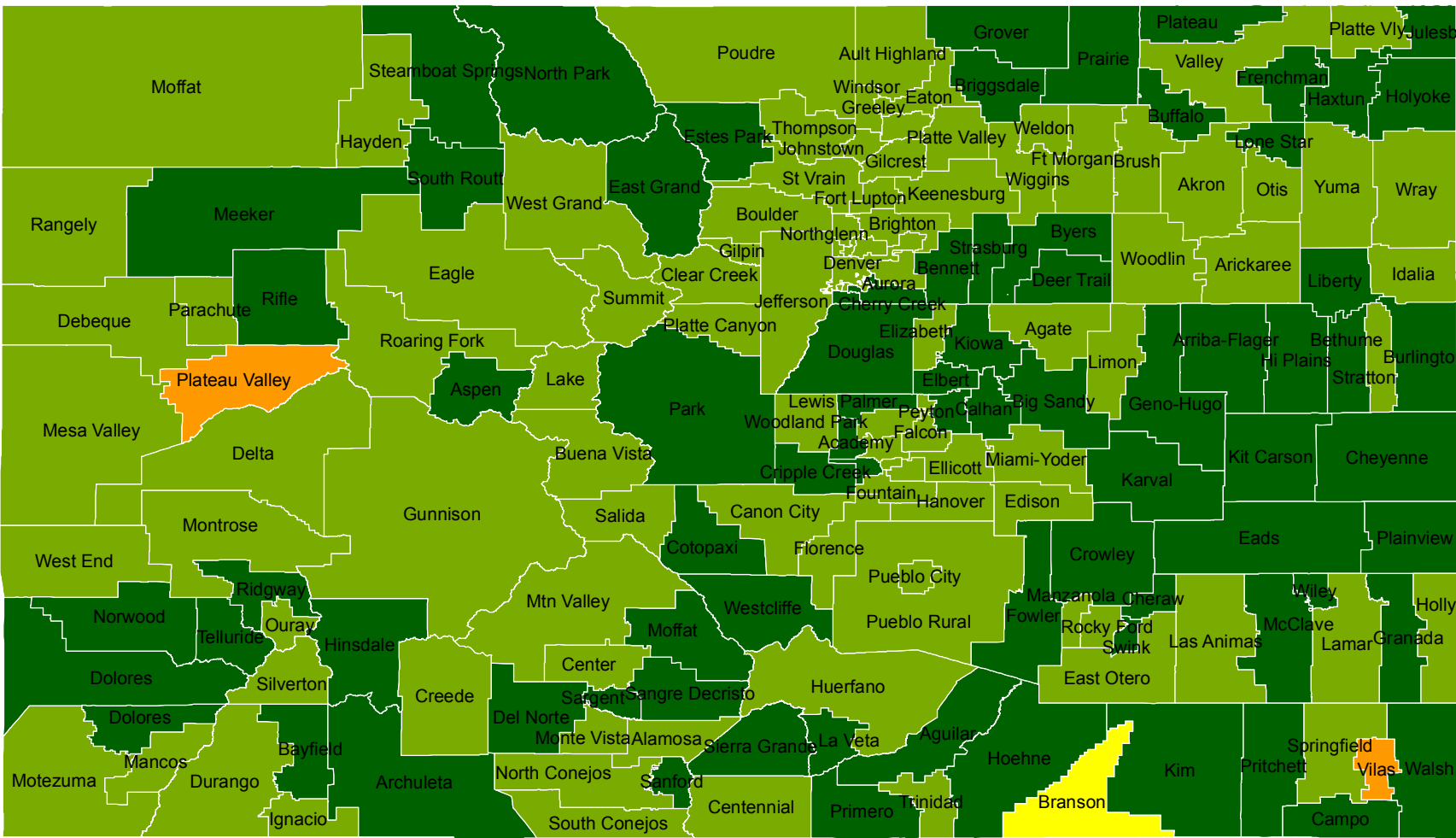
# Percentage Change in the Dropout Rate From 2005-06 through 2009-10



# Percentage Change in the Dropout Rate From 2001-02 through 2009-10



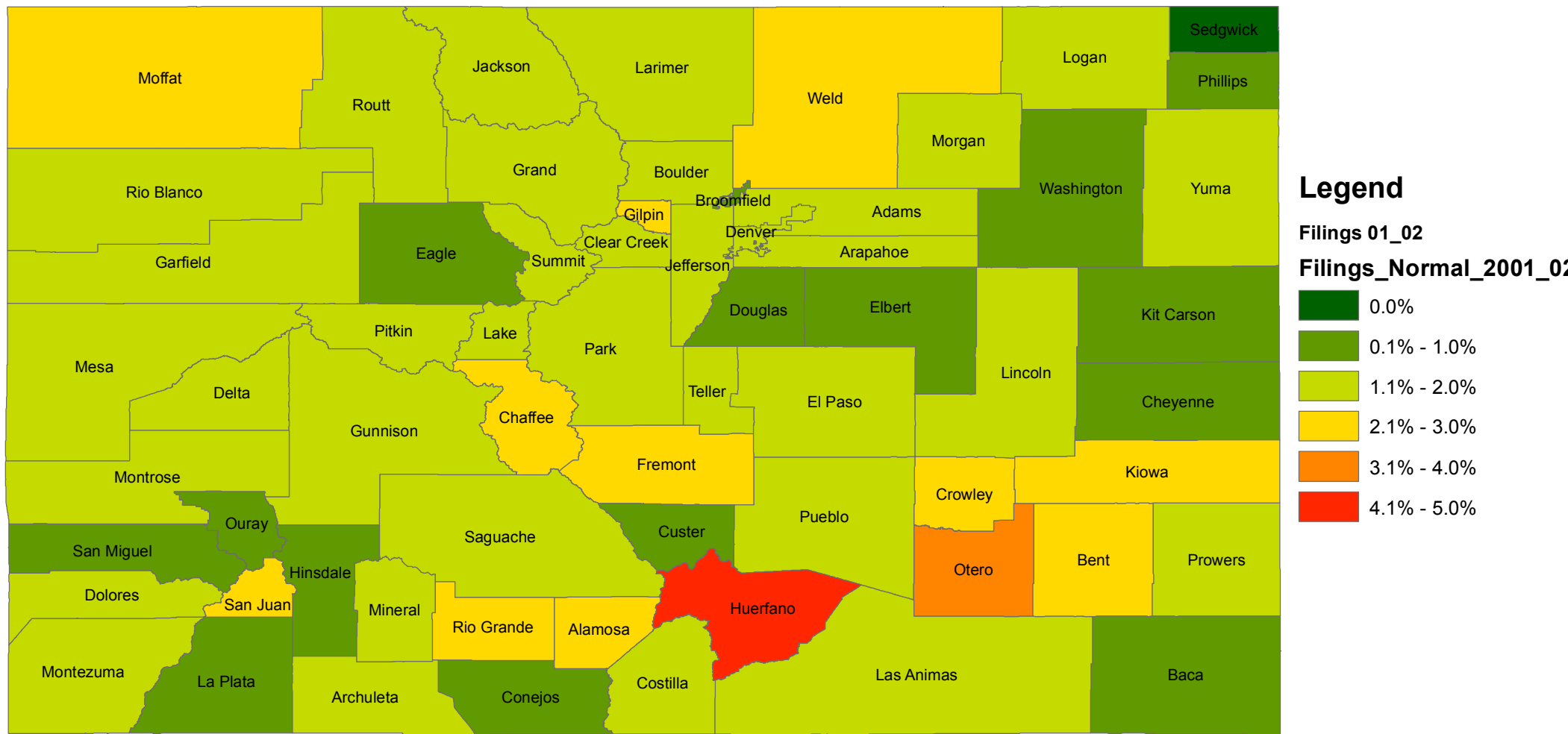
# Dropout Rate During the 2011-12 Academic Year





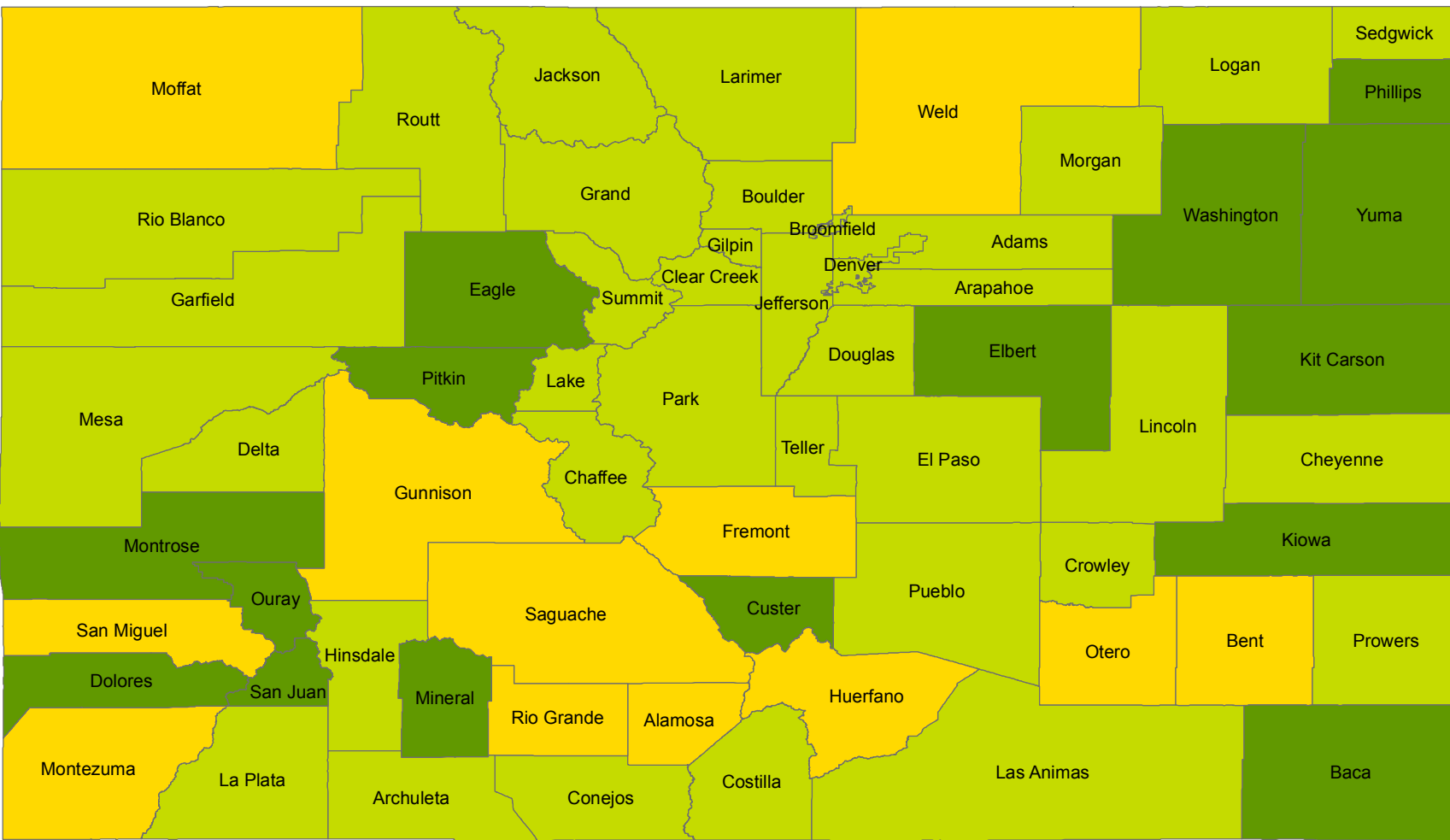


# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2001-02





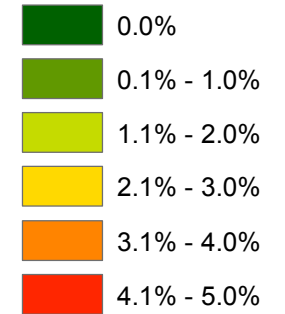
# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2002-03



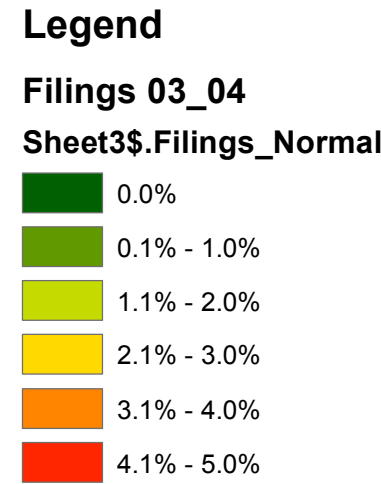
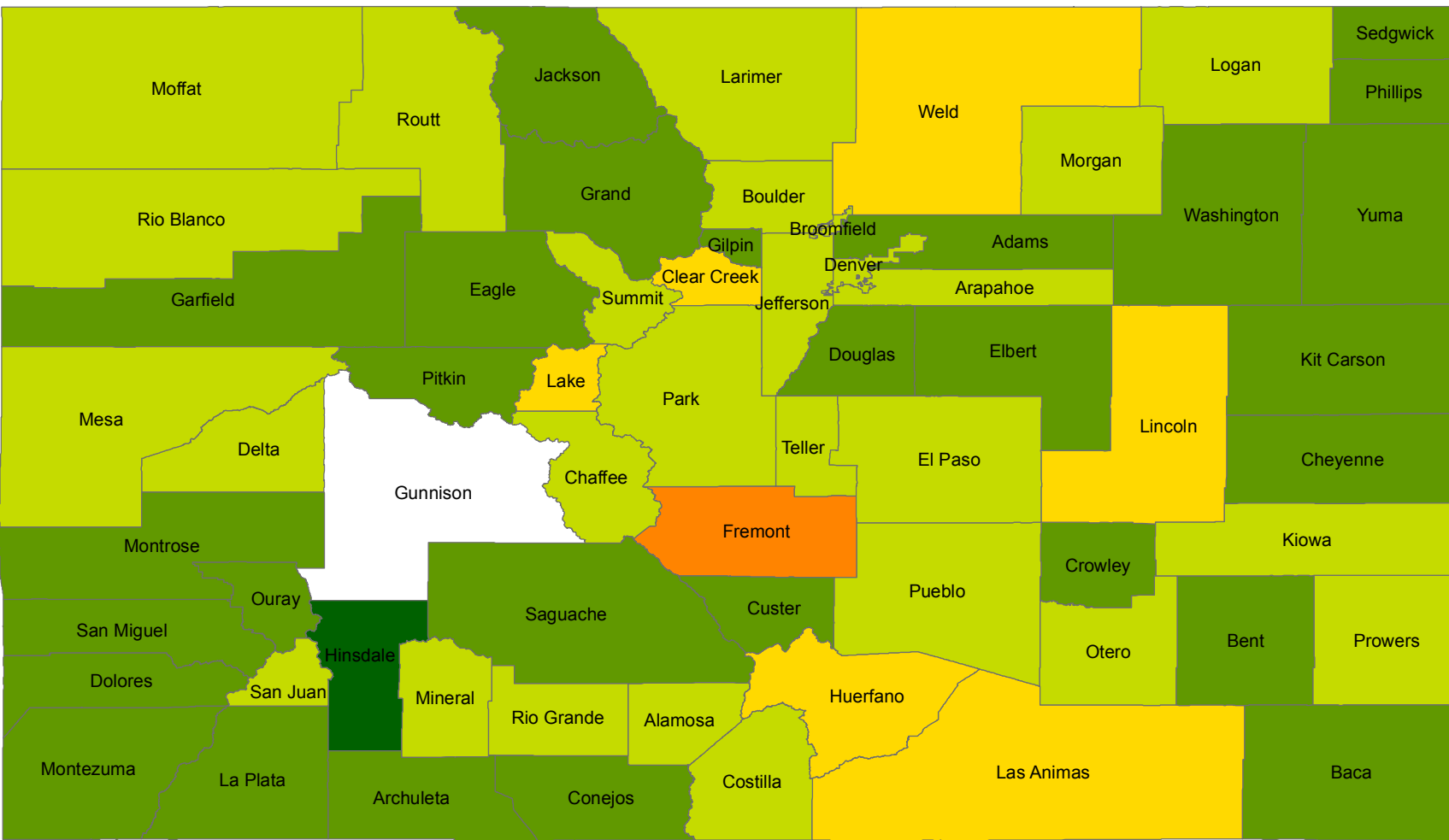
## Legend

Filings 02\_03

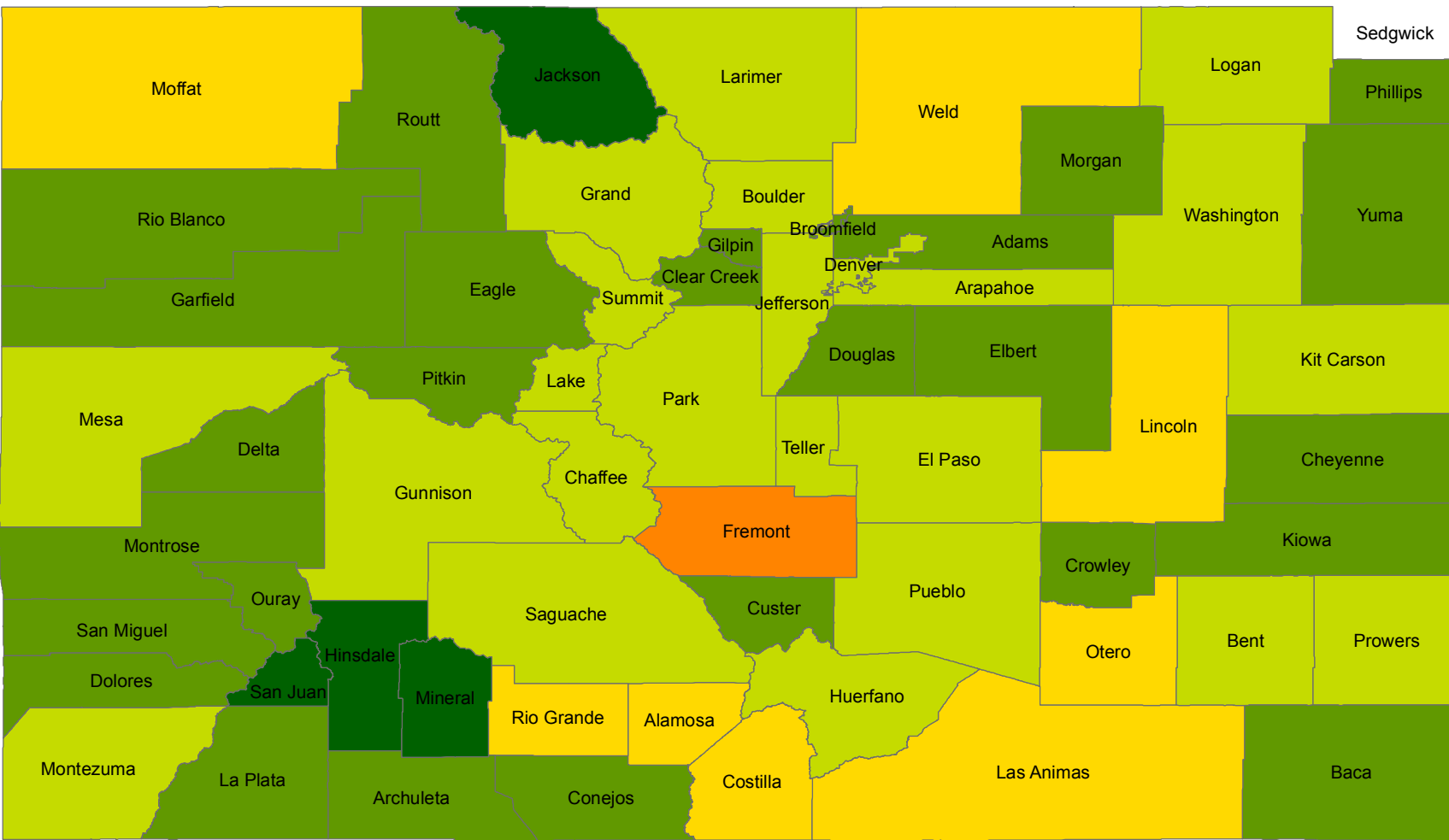
Sheet3\$.Filings\_Normal



# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2003-04



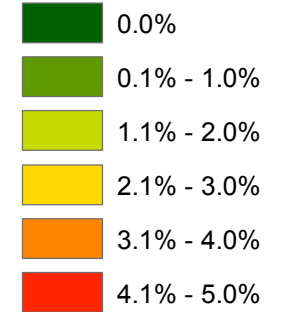
# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2004-05



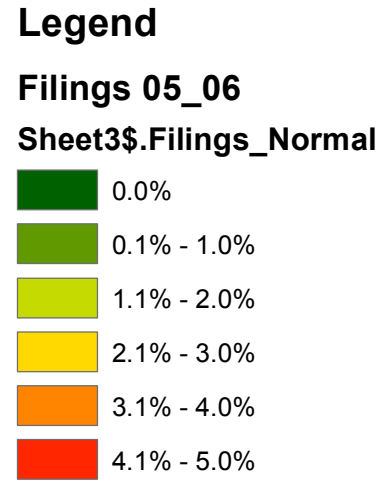
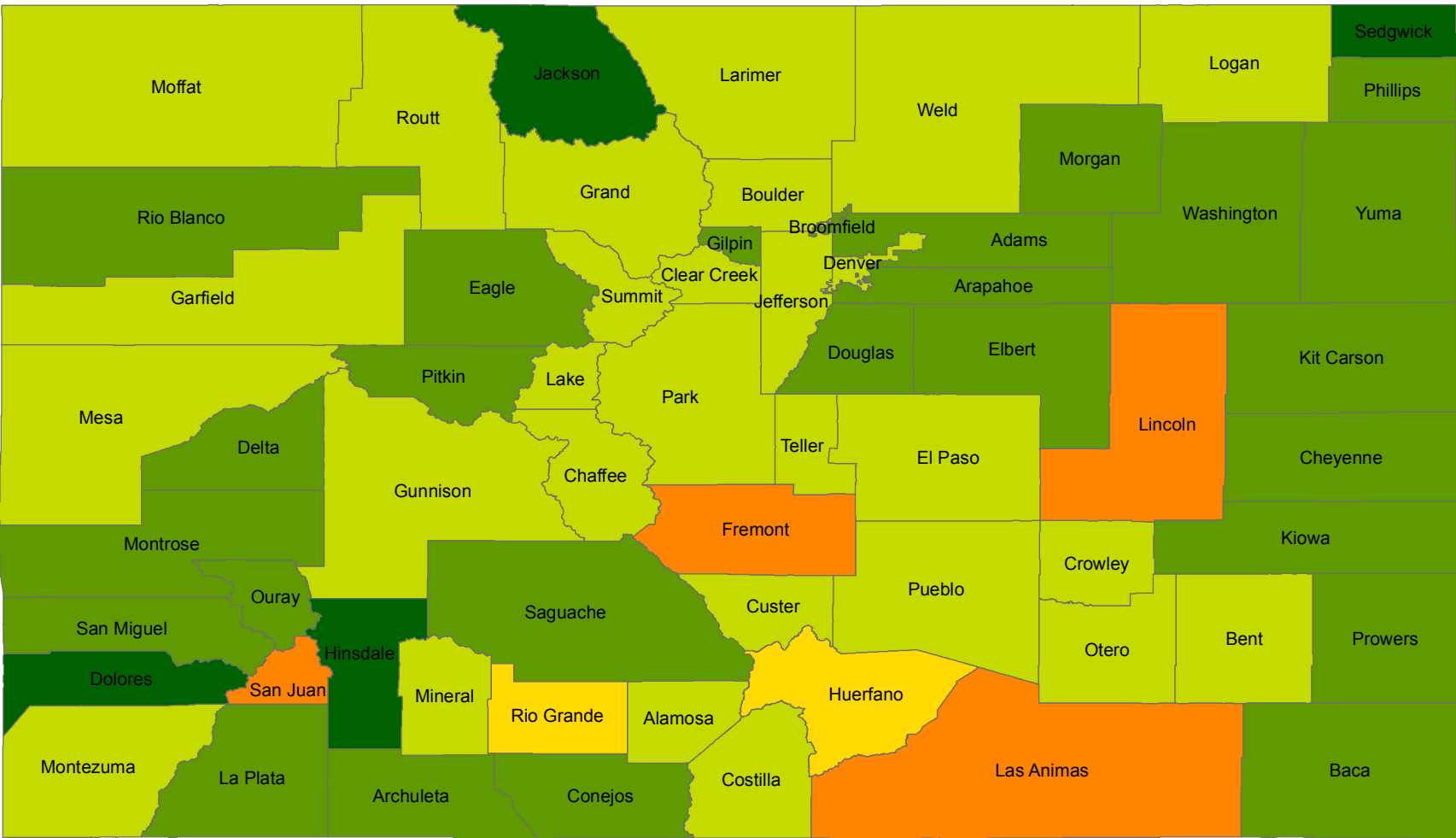
## Legend

Filings 04\_05

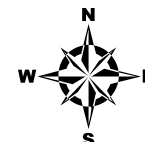
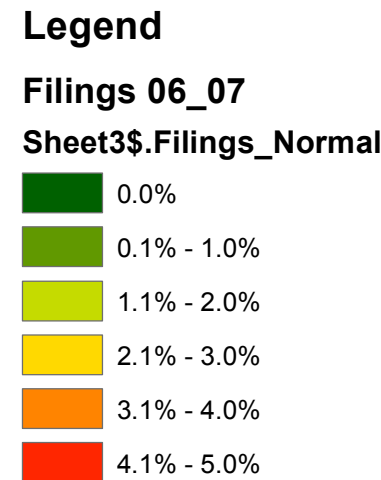
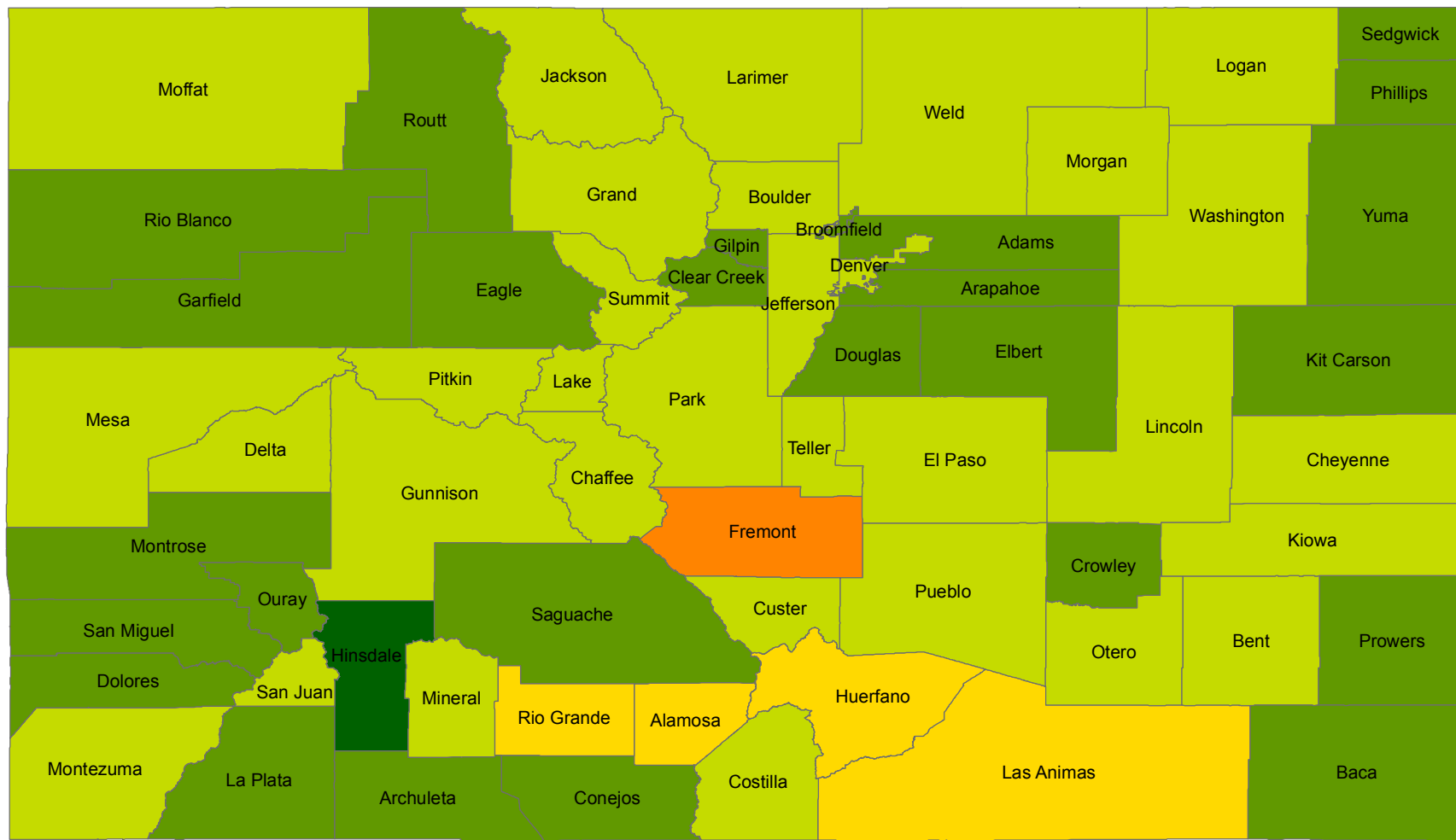
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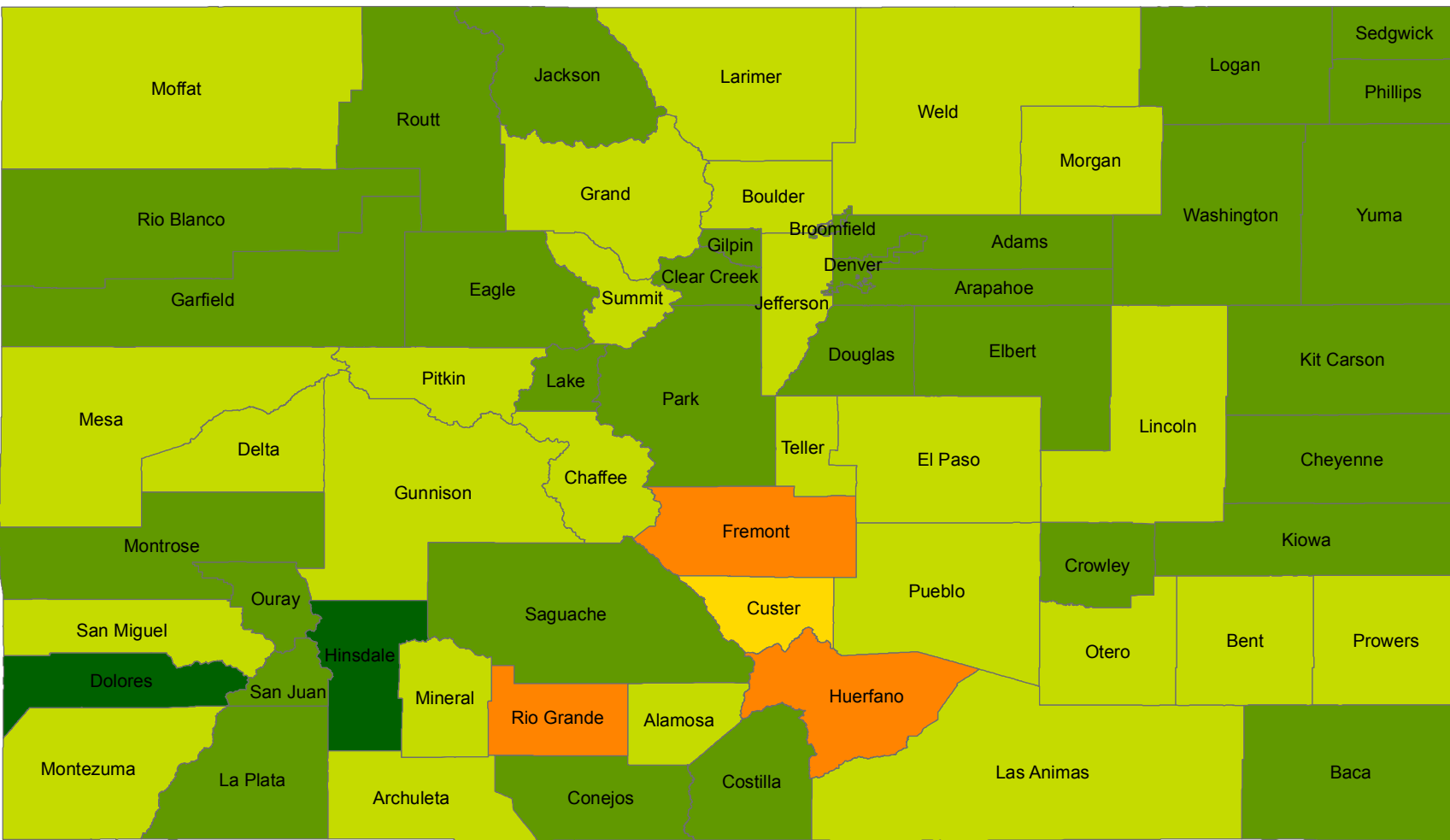
# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2005-06



# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2006-07



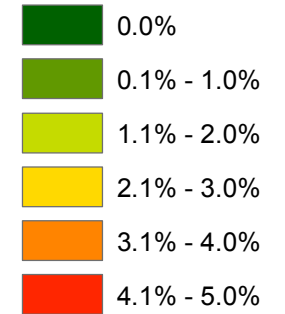
# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2007-08



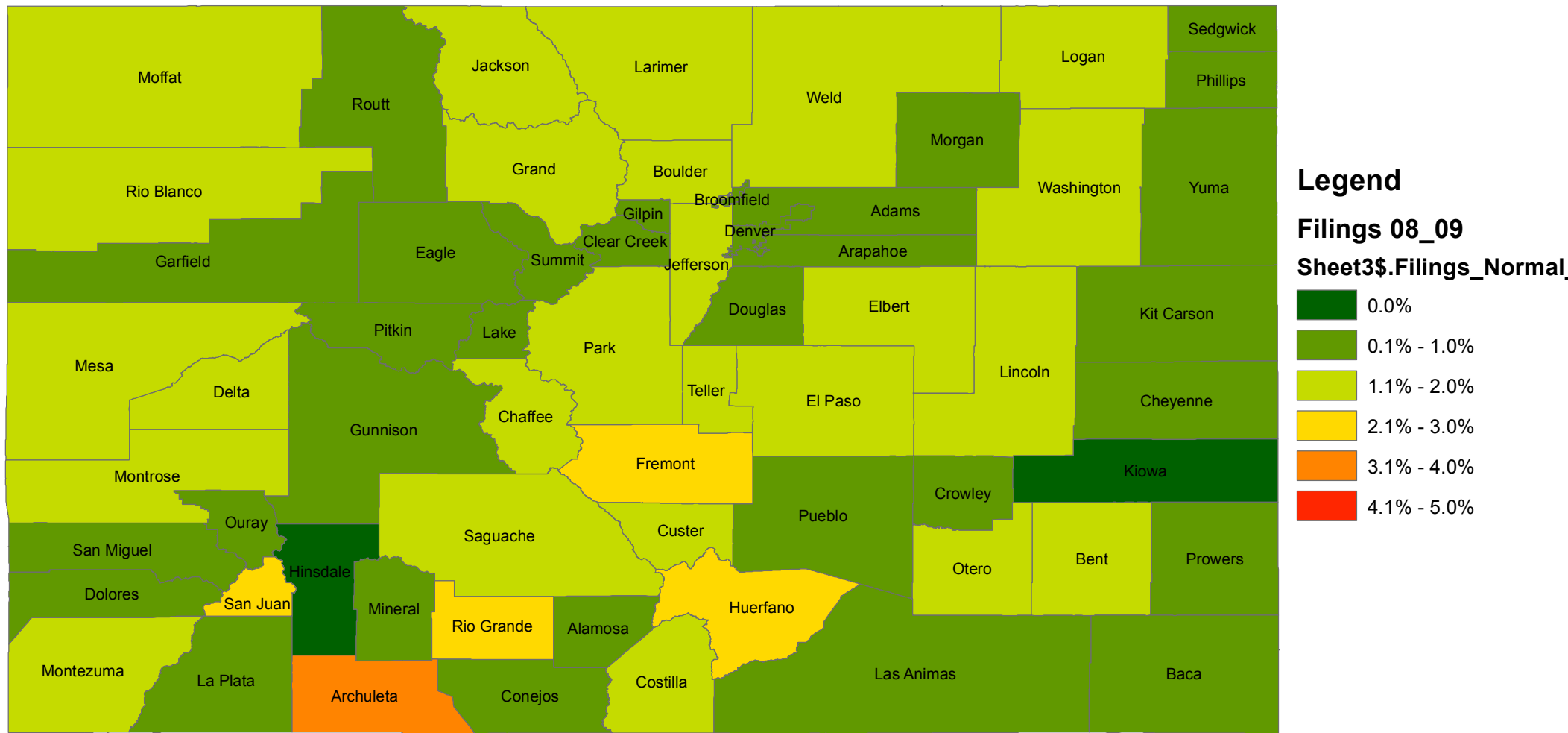
## Legend

Filings 07\_08

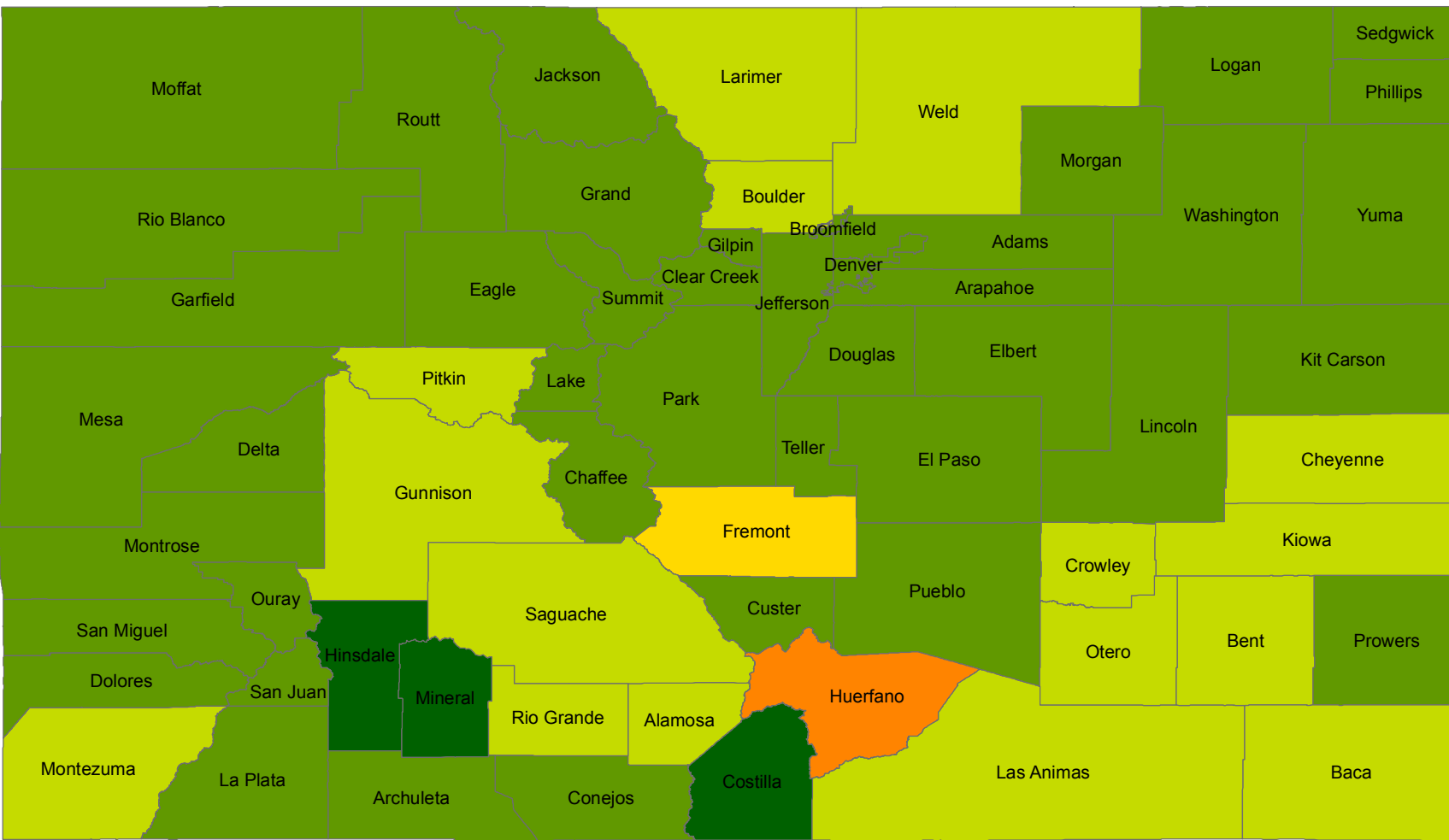
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# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2008-09



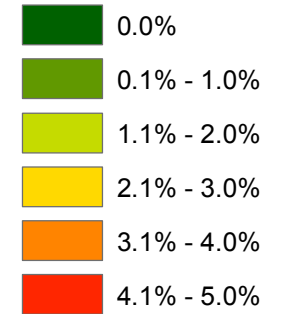
# Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings During FY 2009-10



## Legend

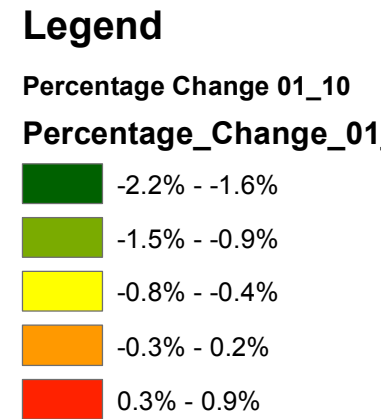
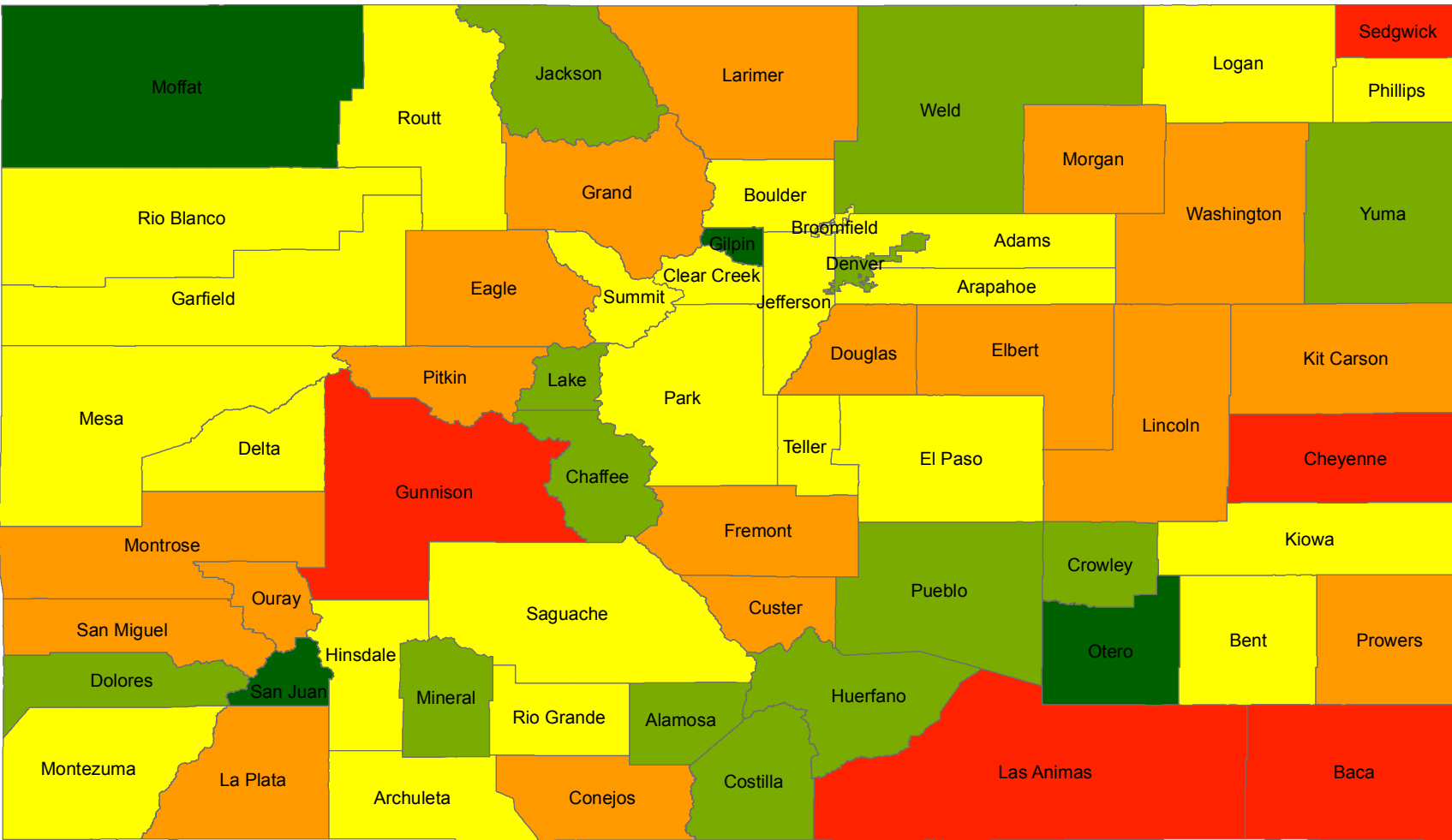
Filings 09\_10

Sheet3\$.Filings\_Normal





# Percentage Change in Normalized Juvenile Delinquency Filings From FY 2001-02 through FY 2009-10



**Table I**  
**Rate of Disciplinary Actions Per FTE in Selected School Districts and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**

School District	Academic Year									Nine-Year Average
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Jefferson County	9.6%	9.1%	8.8%	11.2%	11.1%	10.7%	11.0%	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%
Colorado Springs 11	17.2%	14.8%	15.0%	17.5%	18.3%	15.2%	15.2%	17.2%	5.2%	15.1%
Pueblo 60	21.0%	20.3%	17.7%	17.9%	17.2%	16.7%	13.0%	10.5%	10.1%	16.0%
Durango	49.4%	17.4%	13.3%	14.2%	16.4%	8.5%	2.9%	3.7%	9.4%	15.0%
Aspen	15.5%	14.9%	1.2%	10.5%	11.2%	2.6%	3.7%	2.5%	2.8%	7.2%
Yuma	21.6%	11.6%	32.8%	21.4%	23.7%	28.6%	77.3%	99.3%	52.4%	41.0%
Del Norte	10.5%	12.7%	19.8%	10.8%	14.7%	37.5%	51.0%	30.9%	18.1%	22.9%
Pawnee (Grover)	27.8%	16.1%	11.6%	15.2%	10.7%	16.3%	21.7%	29.7%	3.4%	16.9%
De Beque	15.5%	12.3%	6.6%	18.5%	211.0%	42.6%	35.0%	63.1%	25.5%	47.8%
<b>Statewide</b>										
<b>District Average</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education

**Table II**  
**Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE in Selected School Districts and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**

School District	Academic Year									Nine-Year Average
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Jefferson County	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.7%	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%
Colorado Springs 11	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Pueblo 60	1.4%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	2.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Durango	1.0%	2.0%	1.6%	1.8%	1.3%	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	1.1%
Aspen	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Yuma	0.7%	1.2%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%
Del Norte	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	2.0%	0.9%	0.5%
Pawnee (Grover)	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
De Beque	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.6%	2.3%	1.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%
<b>Statewide</b>										
<b>District Average</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education

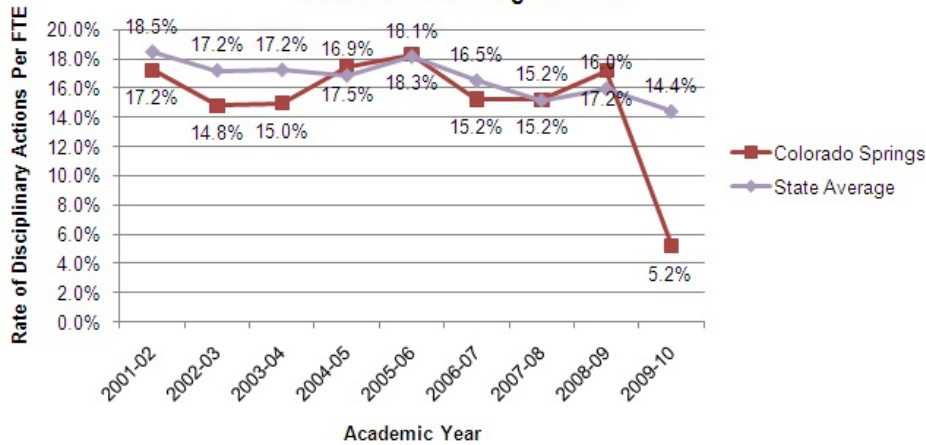
**Table III**  
**Percentage of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement in Selected School Districts and in the State**  
**from 2001-02 through 2009-10**

School District	Academic Year									Nine-Year Average
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Jefferson County	12.6%	16.2%	14.9%	15.0%	12.7%	16.3%	17.0%	16.7%	18.7%	15.6%
Colorado Springs 11	0.6%	1.6%	1.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
Pueblo 60	6.8%	7.6%	10.7%	8.5%	12.6%	9.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	6.2%
Durango	2.0%	11.2%	11.9%	12.4%	8.1%	9.8%	13.5%	11.2%	6.8%	9.7%
Aspen	2.4%	0.0%	16.7%	8.8%	2.9%	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%
Yuma	3.3%	10.3%	2.2%	2.7%	3.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.9%	0.5%	2.6%
Del Norte	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.4%	1.4%	6.5%	4.8%	1.9%
Pawnee (Grover)	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
De Beque	3.6%	4.3%	0.0%	3.0%	1.1%	4.5%	2.2%	1.2%	3.1%	2.6%
<b>Statewide</b>										
<b>District Average</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>

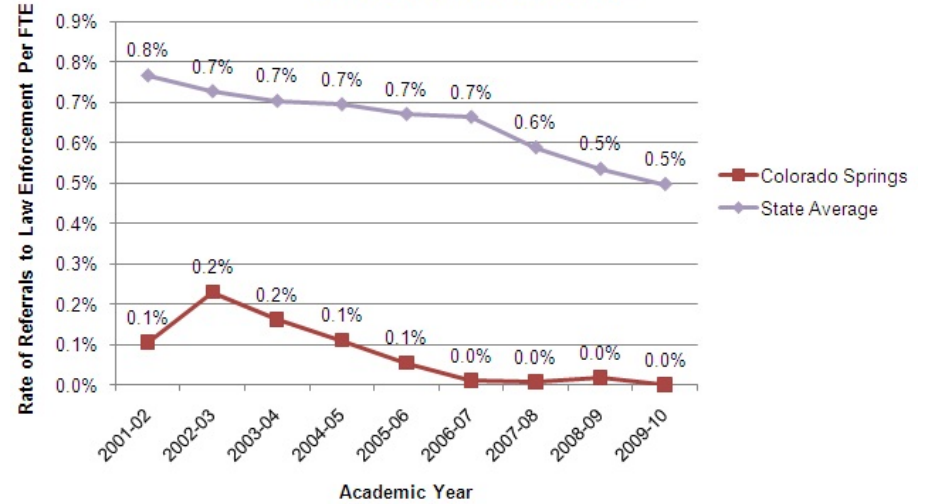
Source: Colorado Department of Education

# Attachment C

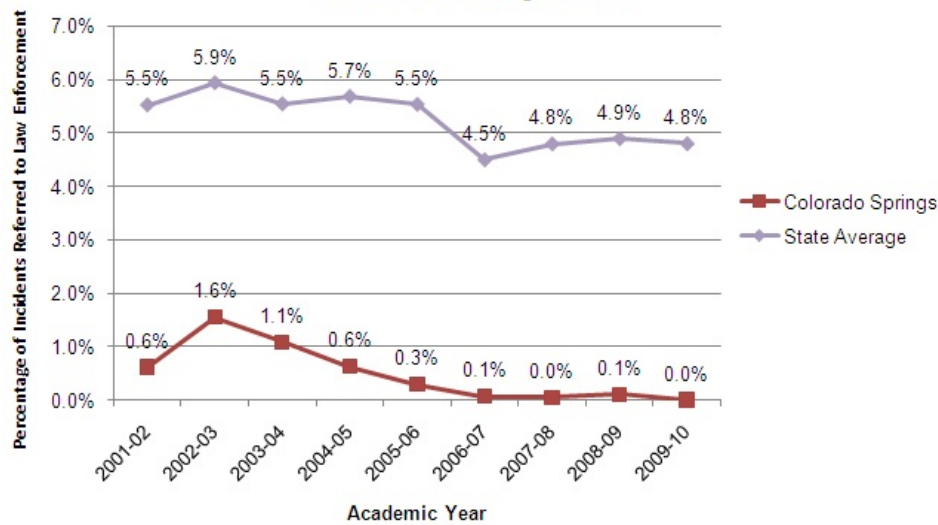
**Figure 4**  
Rate of Disciplinary Actions Per FTE in Colorado Springs 11 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10



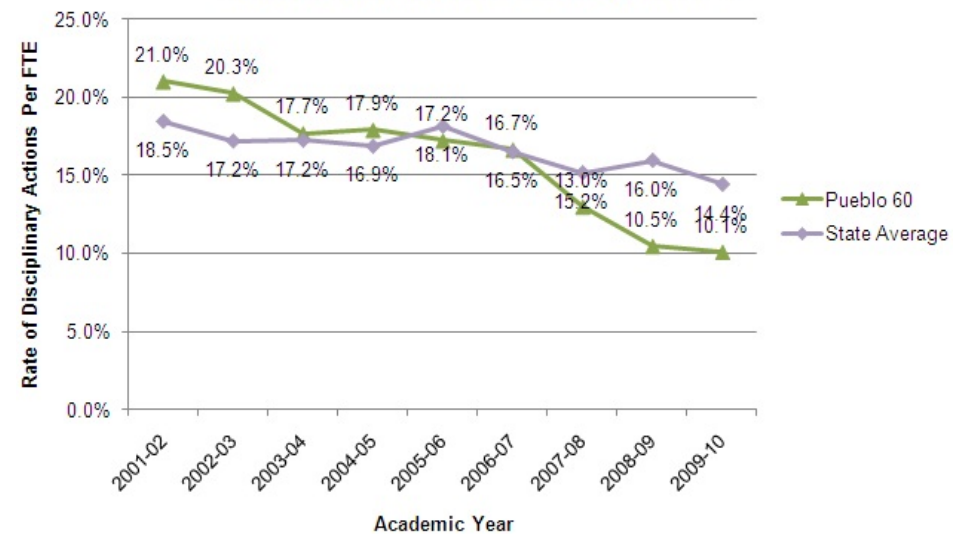
**Figure 5**  
Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement per FTE in Colorado Springs 11 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10



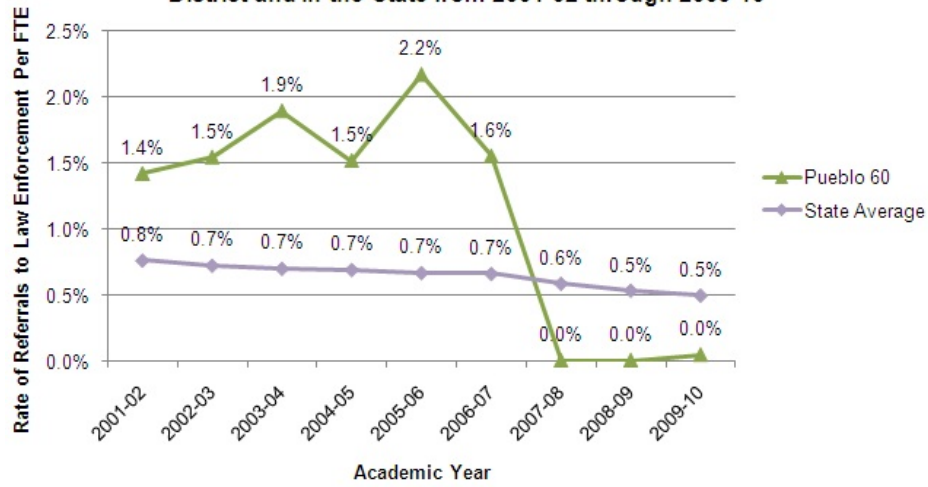
**Figure 6**  
Percentage of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement in Colorado Springs 11 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10



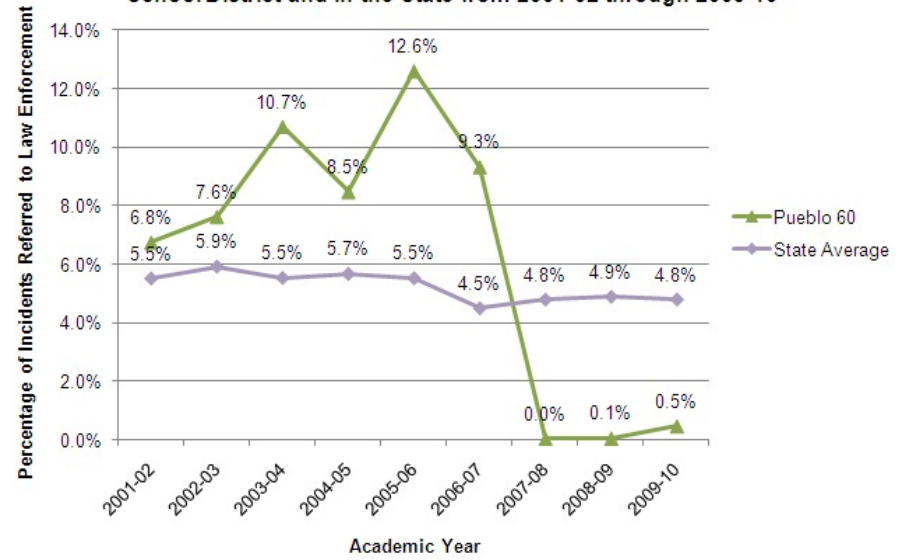
**Figure 7**  
Rate of Disciplinary Actions Per FTE in Pueblo 60 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10



**Figure 8**  
**Rate of Referrals to Law Enforcement Per FTE in Pueblo 60 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



**Figure 9**  
**Percentage of Incidents Referred to Law Enforcement in Pueblo 60 School District and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**



# Dropout Prevention And Student Re-Engagement



## Policy Report to the Joint Education Committee

March 2010

*OFFICE OF DROPOUT PREVENTION AND STUDENT RE-ENGAGEMENT*

*PREVENTION INITIATIVES UNIT*

**cde** Improving  
Academic  
Achievement

**Colorado Department of Education**  
**Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement**  
**Policy Report to Joint Education Committee**

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*This report regarding state policy findings and recommendations to reduce the student dropout rate and increase student graduation and completion rates is submitted pursuant to §§ 22-14-105, 22-14-111, C.R.S.*

*Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement*

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*“The state of Colorado has placed a high priority on reducing the number of student dropouts in Colorado, including establishing the goal of decreasing the high school dropout rate by half by the 2017-18 academic year.”*

**-H.B. 09-1243**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an overview of issues tied to student dropout and graduation in Colorado. It was prepared in accordance with § 22-14-111, C.R.S. and features:

- Analysis of overall incidence, factors and impacts
- Data on school attendance and truancy
- Review of policies, practices and legislation related to school attendance, dropout and graduation
- State expenditures on dropout prevention and re-engagement efforts
- Recommendations and next steps

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***House Bill 09-1243 – Concerning Measures to Raise the Graduation Rate in Public High Schools in Colorado***

In May 2009, Gov. Bill Ritter Jr. signed H.B. 09-1243 into law. The intent of the legislation is to provide focus, coordination, research and leadership in reducing the dropout rate and increasing graduation and completion rates in Colorado (§ 22-14-101, C.R.S.) The law enhances the work of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) by expanding assistance to local education providers and increasing cooperation and collaboration with state agencies and non-profit organizations.

The new legislation focuses on five key areas:

1. Creating the Office of Dropout Prevention and School Re-Engagement within CDE, § 22-14-103, C.R.S.
2. Requiring completion of reports on student attendance, policies and practices and the overall incidence, causes and effects of student dropout, engagement and re-engagement in Colorado. These reports are to be posted on the Internet and submitted to the Colorado State Board of Education, Governor and State Legislature, §§ 22-14-104, 22-14-105, 22-14-111, C.R.S.
3. Requiring identification of “high priority” and “priority” local education providers in need of assistance to increase graduation rates and reduce dropout rates. Identification is based on the state’s accreditation rubric for graduation rates and a criteria adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education. Local education providers that are designated “high priority” and “priority” are required to complete practices assessments and graduation and completion plans, §§ 22-14-106, 22-14-107, 22-14-110, C.R.S.



4. Creating the Student Re-Engagement Grant Program within CDE to be funded with gifts, grants and donations, §§ 22-14-109, 22-14-110, C.R.S.
5. Amending previous legislation such as parental notification when a student drops out of school. Notification is now required even if the student is not subject to the compulsory attendance age requirement. Repeals the mandate to expel habitually disruptive students and repeals the requirement that a suspension or expulsion count as an unexcused absence under a school district's attendance policy, §§ 22-14-108, 22-33-104, 22-33-106, C.R.S.

### The Office of Dropout and Student Re-Engagement

In October 2009, Gov. Ritter designated State Fiscal Stabilization Funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to create the office. Upon receipt of funding, the office was launched within the Prevention Initiatives Unit of CDE to build on the state's commitment to ensure graduation and school success for all students and re-engaging out of school youth. The activities and responsibilities of the office are authorized in legislation (§ 22-14-103, C.R.S.) and include:

- Analyzing student data pertaining to dropout, graduation and completion rates, truancy, suspension and expulsion rates, safety and discipline incidences, student re-engagement and student academic growth.
- Coordinating activities and initiatives across CDE, state agencies and community organizations in an effort to address dropout prevention and student re-engagement.
- Identifying and assisting high priority and priority local education providers in an effort to increase graduation rates.
- Identifying and recommending best practices, effective strategies and policies to reduce student dropout rates and increase student engagement and re-engagement.
- Securing resources to develop and manage a dropout prevention and student re-engagement grant program to fund research-based strategies and services that address social, emotional and academic needs.
- Coordinating efforts to sustain the office and secure funding past the ARRA funding period (2009-2011).

### Definitions

The following definitions are taken from Colorado revised statutes and the Colorado Code of Regulations and provide a context for issues and topics discussed in this report.

**Dropout:** In Colorado law, a dropout is defined as a "person who leaves school for any reason, except death, before completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent, and who does not transfer to another public or private school or enroll in an approved home study program." A student is not a dropout if he/she transfers to an educational program recognized by the district, completes a GED (General Educational Development) or registers in a program leading to a GED, is committed to an institution that maintains educational programs, or is so ill that he/she is unable to participate in a homebound or special therapy program. Students who reach the age of 21 before receiving a diploma or designation of completion ("age-outs") are also counted as dropouts.

The Colorado dropout rate is an annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades seventh-12th that leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base which includes all seventh to 12th-grade students that were in membership any time during the year. In accordance with a 1993 legislative mandate, beginning with the 1993-94 school year, the dropout rate calculation excludes expelled students. An at-a-glance overview on how rates are calculated is provided in the next section of this report.

***Student engagement:*** This means a student's sense of belonging, safety and involvement in school that leads to academic achievement, regular school attendance and graduation. Elements of promoting student engagement include providing rigorous and relevant instruction, creating positive relationships with teachers and counselors, providing social and emotional support services for students and their families, creating partnerships with community organizations and families that foster learning outside of the classroom and cultivating regular school attendance.

***Student re-engagement:*** This means that a student re-enrolls in school after dropping out prior to completion. It typically results from a local education provider's use of evidence- or research-based strategies to reach out to students who have dropped out of school and to assist them in transitioning back into school and obtaining a high school diploma or certificate of completion.

## **ANALYSIS OF OVERALL INCIDENCE, FACTORS AND IMPACTS**

CDE collects the following student data from local school districts on an annual basis:

- Pupil membership
- Graduation statistics
- Suspension/expulsion statistics
- Attendance information including truancy rates
- Dropout statistics

For the purpose of this report, graduation and completion rates and dropout rates are examined to assess the overall incidence and discuss factors that influence a student's decision to leave school.

### **Colorado Graduation and Completion Rates**

The statewide graduation rate for the class of 2009 was 74.6 percent. This represents an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared to the class of 2008. The graduation rate stood at 73.9 percent in 2008, 75 percent in 2007 and at 74.1 percent in 2006.

There were 63,585 students in the membership base of the 2008-2009 graduating class. These are the students who entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year or transferred into this class during 10th, 11th or 12th-grade and could have graduated as part of the class of 2009. From that group, 47,459 graduated. While the raw total of students graduating increased by more than nearly 1,200 additional students over 2008, the membership base also was larger by 974 students. For complete graduation and dropout statistics visit the CDE Web site - [http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_stats.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stats.htm).

The completion rate for the class of 2009 increased to 79.2 percent from 78.8 percent, up 0.4 percentage points from the class of 2008. The completion rate includes all graduates plus those students who are not considered graduates but who receive a certificate, a designation of high school completion or a GED certificate.

Details on how rates are calculated and the background on moving to a four-year graduation rate can be found in *Appendix B – Calculating Rates in Colorado*. See Table 1 for an at-a-glance look at rate calculations.

Table 1: Overview of the rate calculations for graduation, completion and dropout			
	Graduation Rate	Completion Rate	Dropout Rate
<b>Time period</b>	Adjusted longitudinal high school cohort (Class of...)	Adjusted longitudinal high school cohort (Class of...)	Annual (July 1 to June 30)
<b>Numerator</b>	# of students receiving a regular diploma during the past year	# of students receiving a regular diploma, GED certificate or designation of high school completion during the past year	Number of reported dropouts and “age outs” during the past year
<b>Denominator</b>	# of students finishing eighth grade four years earlier + transfers in – verified transfers out	# of students finishing eighth grade four years earlier + transfers in – verified transfers out	# of seventh -12th students that were in membership at any time during the past year
<b>Statewide 2008-2009 rate (and count)</b>	74.6% - State Avg. (47,459 graduates)	78.0% - State Avg. (50,377 completers)	3.6% - State Avg. (14,975 dropouts)
<b>Notes</b>	The graduation rate will be calculated as a four-year (on-time) rate beginning in 2009-2010.	The completion rate will be calculated as a four-year (on-time) rate beginning in 2009-2010.	Students transferring to a GED program are not counted as dropouts in the dropout rate.

### Colorado Dropout Rates and Impacts

The annual dropout rate in 2008-2009 improved to 3.6 percent, compared to the 3.8 percent rate recorded in 2007-2008. The 2008-09 rate represents 14,975 students who dropped out of Colorado public schools.

An analysis of the state data shows, on average, students dropped out at 17.48 years of age and the majority were in the 12th-grade. This grade level average, however, does not validate that these students had accrued the appropriate number of credits to be a senior in high school. Research suggests that many of these students may have been promoted to 12th-grade based on age as opposed to credit accrual. For more details, see *Appendix A: 5-Year Summary of Student Dropout Data*.

Numerous studies report the high cost of dropping out not only in terms of the negative impact on the students, but on the community as well. For example, if the 14,975 Colorado students who dropped out last year do not return and complete school, the cost to taxpayers could reach over \$4 billion in lower tax revenue, higher cash and in-kind transfer costs and imposed incarceration costs.<sup>1</sup>

### Dropout and Contributing Factors

Researchers from the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University have identified contributing factors that influence whether or not a student drops out of school. These factors have been grouped into four categories.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Why Students Dropout:**

##### ***Life Events***

This refers to students who drop out because of something that happens outside of school. For example, they become pregnant, get arrested or have to work to support their family.

##### ***Fade Outs***

This category includes students who have generally been promoted on-time from grade to grade and may even have above grade level skills but at some point become frustrated or bored and stop seeing a reason for coming to school. Once they reach the legal dropout age they leave, convinced that they can find their way without a high school diploma or that a GED will serve them just as well.

##### ***Push Outs***

Students who are or who are perceived to be difficult, dangerous or detrimental to the success of the school and are subtly or not so subtly encouraged to withdrawal from the school, transfer to another school, or are simply dropped from the rolls if they fail too many courses or miss too many days of school and, in some cases, past the legal dropout age.

##### ***Failing to Succeed***

Students who fail to succeed in school and attend schools that fail to provide them with the environments and supports they need to succeed. For some, initial failure is the result of poor academic preparation, for others, it is rooted in unmet social-emotional needs. Few students leave school upon their initial experience with failure. In fact, most persist for years, only dropping out after they fall so far behind that success seems impossible or they are worn down by repeated failure. In the meantime, they indicate a need for “help” through poor attendance, acting out and/or course failure.<sup>3</sup>

CDE does not collect statewide data on *why* students dropout, however, there is state data available through the national GED testing service. In Colorado, GED test-takers are routinely surveyed on their reasons for not completing school.

***The average high school dropout will cost taxpayers over \$292,000 in lower tax revenues, higher cash and in-kind transfer costs, and imposed incarceration costs relative to an average high school graduate.***

***- Sum, A. (2009). The Consequences of Dropping Out of School.***

CDE has access to the survey data through the state GED administrator and a report was created based on responses from 15,333 students, ages 16 to 21 years old, who took the GED test in Colorado during 2008 and 2009. Students were asked in the survey to check all the “reasons for not completing school.”

**Top Responses:**

- 41 percent - *Absent too many times*
- 40 percent - *Did not like school*
- 35 percent - *Were bored in school*
- 34 percent - *Weren't happy in school*
- 31 percent - *Poor study habits*
- 29 percent - *Had trouble with math*
- 29 percent - *Poor grades*

In the GED survey the questions are organized in four areas: 1) family, 2) social, 3) academic environment and 4) student performance, which clearly align with the four categories, previously cited, on why students dropout.

In the “family” section, students reported “reasons for not completing high school” as got a job (19 percent), needed money to help out at home (12 percent), got pregnant or made someone pregnant (10 percent). These circumstances could also be described as “life events” that influence a student’s decision to leave school.

In the area of “social” a high percentage (34 percent) stated that they didn’t complete high school because they “weren’t happy in school.” The literature suggests it is likely these students lacked connection with someone (teacher or caring adult) or something (class or afterschool activity) to engage them in school. Similarly, under “academic environment” GED students stated that they left because they “did not like school” or “were bored.” These reasons are examples of why some students “fade out” of school.

The reasons for not completing school under “student performance” included were absent too many times and had trouble with math. These responses could be interpreted as either “fade outs” or “failing to succeed.” For additional survey results see *Appendix C*.

**Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research**

*Dropping out is more of a process than an event—a process that, for some students, begins in early elementary school.*

*Grades are more consistent than test scores in predicting which students will leave school without graduating.*

*Several behaviors both in and out of school—including absenteeism, delinquency and substance abuse—are strong indicators*

*of dropping out.*

Study by Russell Rumberger and Sun Ah Lim, (University of California, Santa Barbara, 2008.

## **ANALYSIS OF RATES OVER TIME**

Colorado dropout rates by race and ethnicity, gender and instructional program service type between 1998 and 2009 are examined to gain a better understanding of the scope of the problem, context and circumstances. See *Table 2: Percent of Colorado Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Instructional Program* for statistical information or visit the CDE Web site, [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us).

***Instructional Program Service Type (IPST):*** This classification refers to students identified as belonging to one or more of the following categories and therefore receiving supplemental services provided by the school and/or district attended: Students with disabilities, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, migrant, title 1, homeless and gifted and talented . See next section for detailed description of each IPST category.

### ***Colorado Dropout Rate Summary***

- *A close-up look at dropout data by race and ethnicity between 1998 and 2009 reveals trends that closely mirror the academic achievement gap.*
- *Over the past five years the dropout rate has slightly decreased.*
- *Students classified as American Indian and Hispanic persistently have the highest dropout rates.*
- *Male students have a higher dropout rate than female students. This prevalence is consistent with CDE safety and discipline data, which shows that males are expelled and suspended at higher rates than females.*
- *In 2008-09, Native American males had the highest dropout rate (6.8 percent) and Asian female students had the lowest dropout rate (1.9 percent).*
- *A look at dropout rates by Instructional Program Service Type shows:*
  - *Students identified as “homeless” experienced the highest dropout rate over the past five years.*
  - *Title I, limited English proficient and migrant students also experienced dropout rates significantly above the state average.*
  - *Gifted and talented students had the lowest dropout rate.*



<b>Table 2: Percent of Colorado Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Instructional Program</b>												Percentage Point Change 2007-08 to 2008-09 (negative indicates improvement)
<u>1998-1999</u>	<u>1999-2000</u>	<u>2000-2001</u>	<u>2001-2002</u>	<u>2002-2003</u>	<u>2003-2004</u>	<u>2004-2005</u>	<u>2005-2006</u>	<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>		
<b>State Total</b>	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	3.8	4.2	4.5	4.4	3.8	<b>3.6</b>	-0.2
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>												
American Indian	5.3	5.2	4.9	5.0	3.8	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.1	6.4	<b>6.8</b>	0.4
Asian	2.3	2.3	2.1	1.5	1.5	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.3	<b>2.2</b>	-0.1
Black	4.4	3.7	3.6	3.0	3.0	4.3	5.4	6.6	5.8	5.5	<b>5.0</b>	-0.5
Hispanic	6.5	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.2	6.3	7.5	8.2	8.0	6.6	<b>6.2</b>	-0.4
White	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.7	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.4	<b>2.3</b>	-0.1
<i>Gender</i>												
Male	3.7	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.6	4.2	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.0	<b>3.8</b>	-0.2
Female	2.9	2.	2.6	2.3	2.1	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.5	<b>3.4</b>	-0.1
<i>Instructional Program Service Type</i>												
Students with Disabilities	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	4.8	4.4	5.6	3.5	2.8	<b>2.4</b>	-0.4
Limited English Proficient	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	5.3	7.1	7.7	9.3	6.8	<b>6.7</b>	-0.1
Econ. Disadvantaged	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.2	4.0	<b>4.1</b>	0.1
Migrant	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	4.1	4.8	6.1	8.5	4.7	<b>5.2</b>	0.5
Title 1	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	4.5	5.8	8.9	7.9	4.9	<b>5.3</b>	0.4
Homeless	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	9.0	7.5	8.7	9.5	7.9	<b>7.5</b>	-0.4
Gifted & Talented	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	<i>n/r</i>	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	<b>0.9</b>	0.1
<p>Note that the IPST categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a student reported as limited English proficient may also be reported as economically disadvantaged.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: Colorado Department of Education  <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2009DropoutLinks.htm">http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2009DropoutLinks.htm</a></p>												

## Analysis of Rates by Instructional Program Service Type

The following overview by IPST features analysis by CDE Data Services and CDE content experts on circumstances and challenges that may impact the dropout rates. Separate graduation and dropout rates are calculated for each of these sub-groups. The IPST graduation rate designation is based on the student receiving services for that IPST category at any point during ninth – 12th-grade. The dropout rate designation is based only on whether a student was reported in that IPST category during the most recently completed school year. The “percent of growth” refers to pupil membership, which is detailed at the end of this section. See *Graph 1: Annual Dropout Rates by IPST* for snapshot.

**Students with Disabilities:** This classification refers to students who have been formally identified as having educational disabilities and are unable to receive reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports in the public schools because of specific disabling conditions. Approximately 10-12 percent of Colorado’s public school population receives special education services.

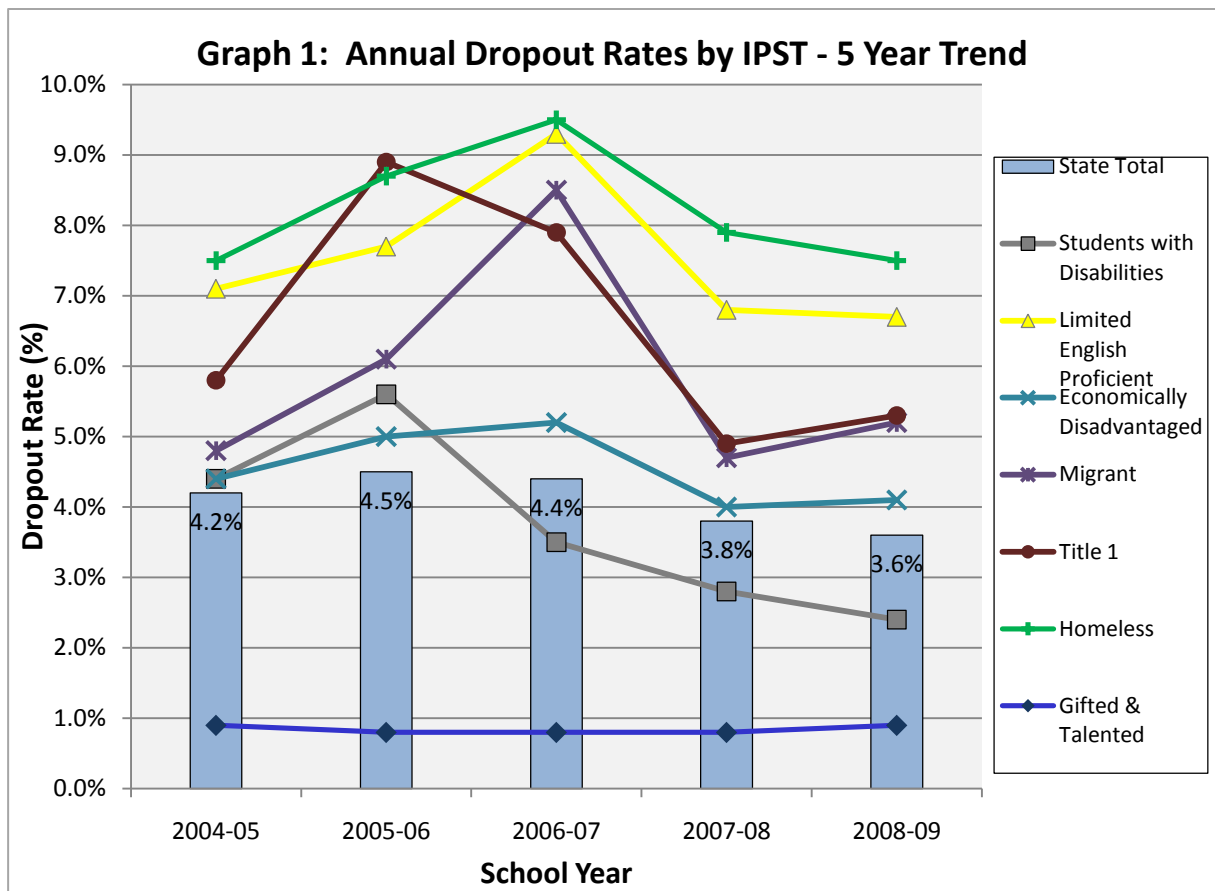
Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	2.4	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	8.8
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	64.3	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	- 2

The annual dropout rate of 2.4 percent does not accurately represent the number of Colorado students with disabilities who are dropping out of school. As reflected in the graduation rate of 64.3 percent there are many students with disabilities who do not graduate with a regular high school diploma. Underreporting of the number of dropouts is partly influenced by the high rate of students with disabilities who transfer to programs outside of the educational mainstream, which includes eligible facilities and state operated programs (i.e. Department of Youth Corrections). The definition of a dropout used in Elementary and Secondary Education Act differs from past federal reporting requirements by the Office of Special Education Programs for students with disabilities. The difference in definitions may cause some reporting errors when dropout numbers are submitted to CDE during the end-of-year student collection.

To help reduce the dropout rate for students with disabilities, there has been a focus on transition requirements for students with special education designations. For example:

- IDEA 2004 (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) put greater emphasis on transition planning for students with disabilities (age 16 and older); therefore schools are doing a better job of preparing students with disabilities for life after high school.
- Response to Intervention (RtI) measures have increased the responsibility of general education instruction and interventions prior to identifying a student as a student with an educational disability; therefore schools may not be identifying as many students and/or intervening earlier.





**Limited English Proficient:** This designation encompasses all students identified as either “non-English proficient” or “limited English proficient.” Non-English proficient is defined as a student who speaks a language other than English and does not comprehend, speak, read, or write English. Limited English proficient is defined as a student who comprehends, speaks, reads or writes some English, but whose predominant comprehension or speech is in a language other than English.

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	6.7	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	7.8
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	53.3	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	15

The report titled “The English Learners in Colorado: A State of the State 2009,” prepared by CDE’s Office of Language, Culture and Equity, highlights the dramatic increase in enrollment of English learners (ELs) in Colorado’s K-12 education systems.<sup>4</sup> The state’s student enrollment growth rate over the past 10 years is posted at 15.6 percent while the EL enrollment growth rate over the same period is 260 percent. The report also documents that the state’s EL population slightly decreased in seventh through 12th-grades in 2008-09 from previous years and the elementary level enrollment significantly increased.

The dropout rate for EL students has been on the decline since 2006-07. This is significant given the challenges EL students experience. In the 2008-09 school year, 70 percent of Colorado’s EL students were eligible for free and reduced lunch, which is an indicator linked to poverty. In addition, issues around immigration status and mobility tend to negatively impact EL students.

**Economically Disadvantaged:** This designation applies when a student qualifies for either the free or reduced lunch program. The Federal National School Lunch Act establishes eligibility for the reduced price lunch program for families with income up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level (in 2009, this amount was \$39,220 for a family of four). Families with income up to 130 percent of the federal poverty level qualify for the free lunch program (in 2009 this amount was \$27,560 for a family of four).

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	4.1	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	29.8
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	61.2	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	25

There has been discussion that, at the high school level, there is an underreporting of students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program, in part because high school students apply for this program at a lower rate than other grade levels. There is speculation that this may be influenced by the social stigma associated with low income and/or there may be more meal options off campus for high school students.

**Migrant:** In this context, migrant refers to students and youth who are eligible for supplemental services through regional service providers. A migrant is a child who is or whose parent(s)/spouse is a migratory agricultural worker, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent/spouse to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural work has moved from one school district to another.

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	5.2	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	0.5
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	58.3	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	- 46

Over the past three years, eligible migrant children have made progress in lowering their dropout rate from to 8.5 percent in 2006-07 to 5.2 percent in 2008-09. The 2008-09 rate represents a slight increase over the 2007-08 rate and should be monitored. In terms of dropout prevention, migrant children have multiple barriers to overcome. In 2008-09, 73 percent of migrants were also classified as English Learners (EL) and 20 percent were also homeless.

Initiatives that have been put into place for the past three years to support migrant students include:

- The Migrant Youth Leadership Institute provides an intense program that builds capacity of migrant youth in various areas such as leadership, transition to higher education and academic success through the arts and experiential learning.
- Several consortia groups such as Out of School Youth build the capacity of the Migrant Education Program staff to work with diverse needs of OSY youth.

For more information visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde\\_english/elau\\_migrant.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/elau_migrant.htm).

**Title 1:** This designation refers to students who are identified by the school as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state’s challenging student academic achievement standards on the basis of multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the school.

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	5.3	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	7.7
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	45.8	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	1

**Homeless:** According to the McKinney Act, a “homeless individual” lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	7.5	Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	1.3
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	56.2	Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	84

Rates over time document that students who are homeless have the highest dropout rates among the instructional program service types. A high percentage of students drop out, although there have been improvements in the last couple of years. The spike in the 2006-07 rate could be related to the departure of the displaced students from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who came into Colorado during the 2005-06 school year, with many of these students leaving during the 2006-07 school year. If these students did not adequately complete the school transfer process and their transfers could not be verified, they would have been recorded as drop outs.

This leads to two primary points regarding the data. One concern stems from the data collection method and the determination if a student has dropped out. Homeless students enroll and transfer/withdraw from districts much more frequently than the general student population. Legislative policy dictates that a district must verify a transfer of student based on a records request of the receiving districts or educational institution.

Therefore, if a homeless student leaves school and does not adequately complete the transfer process to another school, he/she would be reported as a dropout when in fact, the student may be attending a school in another state. The lack of documentation required for a transfer may occur because these students and their families are living in highly mobile, high crisis situations.

The second point addresses the impact of high school mobility on the dropout rate. It is reported that high mobility and issues related to poverty diminish the likelihood of staying in school and graduating. Therefore, increasing identification and school stability through enhanced support for the educational rights found in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act becomes imperative. Steps needed to decrease the dropout rate among students impacted by homelessness:

- The more effective schools and communities are in identifying students who are homeless, working with them to stay in schools of origin, and helping to meet basic and academic needs, the higher likelihood that the dropout rate will decrease.
- Providing credit accrual and recovery programs are also important components in enhancing school success and completion for students experiencing homelessness.

*Colorado Youth for a Change started a program in 2007 that collaborates with districts to provide homeless liaisons that specifically work with homeless students who have dropped out of school and reconnects these students to appropriate educational programs that can help them graduate in the traditional school setting or through a GED program.*

*This program is now in **Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools and Boulder Valley Schools.***

-Dana Scott, State Director of Homeless Education

**Gifted and Talented:** Defined as students who have been formally identified, using district-wide procedures aligned with CDE guidelines, as being endowed with a high degree of exceptionality or potential in mental ability, academics, creativity, or talents (visual, performing, musical arts, or leadership).

Dropout Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	0.9
Graduation Rate in 2008-09 (percent)	91.6

Percent of seventh to 12th-grade students designated in 2008-09	9.1
Growth in total number of students over past five years (percent)	23

The overall trend of dropouts in the reported gifted student population slightly increased over the past three years. The trend shows that a range of 450 to 500 reported gifted students dropped out of school per year statewide. When comparing the rate of gifted student dropouts to the state average for all Colorado students, it is much lower than other reported categories. However, the rate for gifted learners may be compromised by factors of identification and record keeping systems.

*It was only recently that Colorado statute required K-12 identification, programming and record keeping for gifted students. Current dropout rates may not reflect a true body of gifted students, especially since identification and record keeping are generally phased-in beginning at K-8, then into high school years.*

As Colorado broadens identification and observes a more varied gifted population, it will be important to monitor factors that may potentially contribute to increased dropout rates. There is research that reports that five percent of gifted populations dropout. The intention in Colorado is to offset high gifted dropout rates through statewide initiatives supporting learning and growth. Promising initiatives include quality gifted programming, the new content standards, rigor, continuous learning and concurrent enrollment options.

### **Pupil Membership**

The statewide pupil membership count for the 2008-2009 school year totaled 818,443 students, which represented a 2 percent increase over the previous year. A five-year review of annual student data shows that the number of students in Colorado grew by 10.8 percent from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. The percent of Hispanic students has increased from 26.2 percent in 2004 to 28.4 percent in 2008 and the percent of white students decreased from 63.5 percent in 2004 to 60.9 percent in 2008. *See Table 3.*

**Table 3: Percent of Pupils by Racial/Ethnic Group**

Racial/Ethnic Group	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
American Indian	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Asian	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.6
Black	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Hispanic	26.2	27.1	27.9	27.9	28.4
White	63.5	62.5	61.5	61.5	60.9

*Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Services – [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)*

## REVIEW OF SCHOOL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

This section addresses recent statutory changes and amendments to existing state laws regarding student attendance and discipline and highlights corresponding school policies to be revised by local school boards. Issues and considerations related to truancy and student level data collection are also featured.

### Updates and Revisions

In 2008 and 2009, CDE, the Colorado Children's Campaign, the Partnership for Families and Children and the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) revised sample school policies to better reflect the intent of best practices regarding re-engaging truant, suspended and expelled students, as well as students who drop out of school. After the passage of H.B. 09-1243, the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) revised its sample policies to reflect these changes, in August 2009. Those revised policies serve to assist local school boards in updating their own policies. See *Appendix D: From Statute to Policy* for a summary table of statutes and policies that affect student attendance and discipline.

The changes to Colorado statutes in the last legislative session also impact the following policies:

- § 22-33-104 (4)(a), C.R.S.- Legislation concerning compulsory school attendance no longer mandates that suspensions and expulsions be considered unexcused absences for purposes of a local board's student attendance policy. Further, the statute no longer states that penalties for nonattendance due to unexcused absence may include the imposition of academic penalty for classes missed while unexcused. This corrects the practice of discouraging students who are not engaged in school or are on the verge of dropping out. Reductions in credit or grades as a punishment for unexcused absences or work turned in after disciplinary actions may result in course failure, which over time may contribute to students dropping out of school as they fall further behind academically.
- § 22-33-107(3)(a), C.R.S. - The existing law on "Habitually Truant Students," defines a habitually truant student as a child age six (on or before August 1) and under 17 years old who has four unexcused absences from public school in any one month or 10 unexcused absences during the school year.
- § 22-33-107(3)(b), C.R.S. - Directs that local school boards adopt and implement policies and procedures for children who are habitually truant. The policies and procedures shall include provisions for the development of a plan, based on the reasons for the truancy and when possible developed in partnership with parents or guardians. The plan must be developed with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school.
- § 22-14-101, C.R.S. - Addresses the previous path to mandatory expulsion, charted by declaring students habitually disruptive when they have been suspended three times. Now, § 22-33-106(1)(c.5)(I), C.R.S. no longer mandates school districts to expel a habitually disruptive student. It provides the option that districts may suspend or expel habitually disruptive students, which is reflected in CASB sample policy JK and JK-R, Student Discipline; JKD/JKE-E, Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion. *Note:* This may still conflict with existing state law § 22-33-202, C.R.S., concerning identification of at-risk students, which directs school districts to adopt policies to identify students who are habitually disruptive in order to provide the necessary support services to help them *avoid* expulsion, in partnership with the student's parent or guardian. This is stated in CASB sample policy JKD, Expulsion Prevention.

- Along the same theme of re-engaging students, revisions made by H.B. 09-1243 direct districts to develop policies and procedures with the goal of encouraging a student who dropped out of school to re-enroll in school, and convey to the student's parent the long-term ramifications of dropping out of school (§ 22-14-108(1), C.R.S. and CASB sample policy JFC and JFC-R, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts. In addition, this statute directs school districts to notify a student's parent, guardian or legal custodian if the student drops out of school, even if the student is not beyond the compulsory attendance age. This revision is reflected in CASB sample policy JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts.

### Truancy Issues

State law [C.R.S. 22-33-107(4)] directs that on or before September 15, 2010, and on or before September 15 each year, school districts will report to CDE the aggregate number of students identified as habitually truant for the preceding academic year, to be posted on the CDE Web site.

The Colorado State Board of Education rule related to Habitual Truants, 1 CCR 301-78, Rule 2.00 (7), provides standardized definition for school district reporting of habitually truant students to CDE. This definition for counting a "habitual truant" is a student who has four days of unexcused absences in a month or 10 total days of unexcused absences during the school year.

The current statutory framework could be strengthened by better aligning incentives toward student engagement. For example, policies developed to address truancy may result in suspension or expulsion of students, leading to further reduced instructional time, which prevents academic progress and reduces student engagement. Staff members in school districts tend to seek direction on how to dis-enroll or withdraw students who are "habitually truant" rather than creating plans to re-engage these students. In addition, some school districts include the number of minutes each student is tardy, to calculate unexcused absences. This practice will be impacted by state board rules which provide standardized calculation of habitually truant students (CCR 301-78, Rule 2.00 (7)).

### Truancy Court

Existing state law C.R.S. 22-33-104(4)(b) directs school boards to specify the maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before the school district may initiate judicial proceeding. Some school districts interpret this law to mean that they must initiate judicial proceedings for unexcused absences, resulting in referrals of students to court before school district staff can develop a plan with parent/guardians.

According to the Colorado Judicial Division of Planning and Analysis, in 2008 and 2009, 57 school districts and one board of cooperative educational services (BOCES), representing 29 counties, referred students to court for truancy. See *Appendix E: Colorado Truancy Court Referrals for 2008 and 2009* for a complete list. Most of the referred students attend districts in the Denver metropolitan or urban areas along the Front Range. In 2008, 3209 referrals occurred and in 2009, there were 2880 referrals of truant students to court.

Implementing a plan to address the reasons for the truancy and with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school is the best practice for re-engagement of truant students. Judges and magistrates in several judicial districts have initiated partnerships with these school districts to provide services to truant students and their families after the student has been referred to court.



If a child does not comply with a court order of attending school, a contempt finding may result in an appropriate treatment plan that may include community service, supervised activities and other activities with the goal of ensuring the child has an opportunity to obtain a quality education. However, sanctions for contempt of court may also include incarceration of the student or parent. Section 22-33-108(7)(a-b), C.R.S. Children’s advocacy groups advocate eliminating this statute, because the outcomes for students include increased criminal activity, and the positive effects are modest.

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice reports that between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, 382 students appearing in court for truancy were sentenced to detention for violating a valid court order. In response to this action, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance (OAJJA) has expressed concern about the potential loss of federal funds because of the state’s high numbers of youth with statutory offenses, such as truancy, who are incarcerated. Colorado has been a participant in the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) since 1980. As a participant, Colorado receives an annual federal award for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs based on demonstrated compliance with the core requirements of the JJDP Act. The core requirements are commonly accepted “best practices.” The Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) compliance monitor collects data on youth held securely across the state. If Colorado is out of compliance with any of the core requirements, 20 percent of the federal award is lost and 50 percent of the remaining funds must be used to “come back into compliance.”

The act has three core requirements related to the appropriate holding of juveniles in secure settings:

- Deinstitutionalization of status offenders (D.S.O.)
- Jail Removal
- Sight and sound separation of juveniles from incarcerated adults (For example, if juveniles should be put in adult jail, they must be separated from adult inmates so they cannot see or hear each other.)

Specific to the truancy issue, since 1999, truancy petitions have increased overall and so has the use of detention as a sanction for truants violating court orders. This has resulted in an increase in the number of violations for failure to follow the “Valid Court Order” process as outlined in the Colorado Rules of Juvenile Procedure (Rule 3.8). The potential ramification for increased violations can include loss of federal Title II (Formula) Grant funds which totaled \$924,000 in 2009. As stated above, if Colorado is found to be out of compliance with the core requirement regarding D.S.O., 20 percent of the federal funds would be withheld (\$184,000) and 50 percent of the remaining funds must be targeted to the area of non-compliance. Sentencing truants to detention without benefit of the Valid Court Order counts as violations under Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders.

Research on the effectiveness of truancy court and alternatives to court indicates that alternative strategies improve attendance and enrollment at the end of the school year and reduce future referrals to court, at a fraction of the cost of traditional court intervention. See *Appendix F: Research on the Effectiveness of Truancy Court Compared to Alternatives to Court* for more information.

***Research on the effectiveness of truancy court and alternatives to court indicates that alternative strategies improve attendance and enrollment at the end of the school year, and reduce future referrals to court, at a fraction of the cost of traditional court intervention.***



## **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

The Colorado Legislature passed legislation to provide leadership in creating and implementing policies that play a key role in reducing the dropout rate and creating multiple pathways to graduation.<sup>5,6</sup> Examples of recent legislation include but are not limited to:

- Parent Involvement In Education (S.B. 09-090)
- Healthy Choices Dropout Prevention Pilot Program (S.B. 09-123)
- Education Accountability Act of 2009 (S.B. 09-163)
- Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment (S.B. 08-212)
- School Counselor Corps Grant Program ( H.B. 08-1370)
- Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement (H.B. 09-1243)
- Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (H.B. 09-1319)

### **Statutes Relevant to Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement**

A review of Colorado statutes identified 28 statutes that pertain to student dropout prevention and intervention. In FY 2009-2010, a total of \$16,305,890 in state funds was allocated in conjunction with eight of these statutes. Two additional statutes are to be funded based on per pupil operating revenue and the total amount expended is not yet available. The remaining 18 statutes do not have state funds allocated. See *Appendix G: Table of Statutes Relevant to Student Dropout and State Investments* for a summary of statutes including, description, reporting requirements, outcomes and state funds allocated.

These 28 statutes can be characterized in five categories: 1) Grants and programs that address dropout prevention and student re-engagement; 2) Parent involvement; 3) Post secondary and workforce readiness; 4) Truancy and school attendance; and 5) Measures and requirements.

### **Grant and Programs that Address Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement**

This category refers to state grants and programs that are designated to support students at-risk of dropping out, re-engage those who have dropped out or provide extra assistance to ensure graduation and school completion.

There are 11 state statutes that match this category. Of these, seven were allocated \$15,732,183 in state funds in FY 2009-2010. Three are unfunded and one statute is supported through federal dollars. Overall the funded grants and programs are showing positive results and achieving the intended results.

### **Parental Involvement**

In this context, parent involvement includes fostering the inclusion and participation of parents/guardians/primary caregivers in the education of children. Over 30 years of research shows that when parents are involved in the education of their children, students have better attendance, high rates of homework completion, high levels of academic achievement and are less likely to drop out of school.

Three statutes specifically address parents by supporting participation in school events (§8-13.3-103, C.R.S), increasing parent leadership and voice in decision-making at the state and local

level (§ 22-7-303, C.R.S.) and ensuring that parents are notified if their child drops out of school (§8-13.3-103, C.R.S.). Two of these statutes do not require oversight or reporting on effectiveness and state money is not allocated to support implementation. One statute is unfunded, but requires oversight by CDE and community leadership.

### **Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness**

The definition adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education states, “Postsecondary and workforce readiness describes the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy.”

The Colorado’s Preschool to Postsecondary Alignment Act (S.B. 08-212, also known as “Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids” or CAP4K), mandated a definition for post secondary and workforce readiness as a means to support alignment of P-20 education and support graduation and school success. In FY 2009-2010, the total allocation for this effort was \$573,707.

In addition to CAP4K, there are three statutes that address postsecondary and workforce readiness in conjunction with increasing dropout rates and increasing graduation rates. Two represent concurrent enrollment in high school and an institution of higher education. The legislation titled, “Fast College, Fast Jobs” was repealed in 2009 by Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT), § 22-35-101, C.R.S. and both are funded based on fixed amount of per-pupil operating revenue (PPOR) for qualifying students. The last statute in this category is titled “Individual Career and Academic Plans,” §22-32-109, C.R.S. and there were no state funds allocated to address the mandates in this legislation.

### **Truancy and School Attendance:**

This refers to unexcused absences and issues related to school attendance, such as setting the ages of compulsory school attendance, consequences for truancy and addressing barriers to attendance. There are seven statutes in this category and they primarily establish rules, guidance and structure to issues related to truancy. The statutes are not state-funded and do not require evaluation. The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice and CDE both track aspects of the laws such as, rates of truancy, number of referrals to truancy court and number of truant students sent to detention for violation of a court order to attend school.

### **Requirements and Regulations**

Statutes categorized in this area refer to specific guidance in processes or application of rules. There are three statutes listed and one focuses on sharing information between state agencies when there are child welfare or juvenile justice issues being considered. Another outlines steps in securing appropriate educational services for children in out-of-home placement. The final statute provides guidance on the application to be classified as an alternative education campus.

*This statutory review involved analysis of legislative reports and a content search of Colorado legislation from 1995 to 2009. A “Digest of Bills” is prepared each year by the Colorado Office of Legislative Legal Services and was a primary source. Information on the allocation of funds was provided by the state agencies responsible for monitoring or implementing a specific statute.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Over the past three years, more than 300 stakeholders from across the state participated in three summits and a forum sponsored by America's Promise Alliance. Stakeholders and participants represented schools, communities, non-profit organizations, businesses and state agencies. The following "Framework of Strategies for Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement" incorporates the recommendations by these stakeholders and is linked to the four categories on why students drop out.<sup>7</sup>

### **A Framework of Strategies for Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement**

**Supports to Address Life Event Issues** (Forces outside of school lead students to dropout, i.e. pregnancy, illness, family stressors)

- Comprehensive social and emotional support for families (mental health services and family therapy)
- Health and wellness programming for students, families and educators
- Flexible scheduling (on-line programming, Saturday school, extended school hours)

**Supports for Fade Outs** (Students do adequate in school but stop seeing a reason for staying, lack purpose or connection)

- Peer to peer mentoring
- Adult advocates and mentors
- Transitional academies (fifth to sixth grade, eighth to ninth grade)
- Service learning
- Before and/or after school programs dedicated to credit recovery and real-life career applications

**Supports for Push Outs** (Students who are perceived to be detrimental to others in the school)

- Policy reviews that incorporate best practices (tools for reviews have been developed by the Colorado Graduates Initiative)
- School culture surveys/Action plans
- Parenting classes based on parental involvement and family leadership models
- Character education and life skills trainings

**Supports for Academic Failure** (Often persisting in school for many years and then dropout because the work is too difficult/too far behind and there is a lack of resources and options)

- Early warning systems to identify students in need of dropout prevention supports (software, training, implementation, support)
- Tutoring
- Parent involvement to support learning at home
- Summer school programs
- Teacher professional development (How do I help struggling students? Differentiated instructional methods, managing student behavior, etc.)
- Strategic supports for Immigrant, Refugee and EL students

*Note: Most of the strategies identified address more than one of the factors linked to dropout.*

## **At the state level, stakeholders call for action and movement in three primary areas:**

### **Coordinate a state response to student re-engagement**

Outreach and recovery of students who have dropped out is the first step. There must be effective options when they return to ensure school completion. Schools need incentives to address barriers and invest in educational alternatives and innovations. This leads to the next recommendation.

### **Strengthen alternative education in Colorado**

There is general consensus among policy makers and education advocates that multiple pathways to graduation need to be increased and improved, including expanding resources available for vocational education.<sup>8</sup> In 2008-2009, more than 20,000 Colorado students enrolled in an alternative education school and at the end of the year, over 4,000 had dropped out, resulting in an annual dropout rate of 20.5 percent these students. Offering support and intensive study of the policies and operations of alternative schools and determining the needs of students who attend them could lead to a considerable decline in the state's dropout rate. In this area, current efforts are being led by the Colorado League of Charter Schools and the Donnell-Kay Foundation.

### **Sustain state efforts to reduce the dropout rate**

Successful initiatives require public will, supportive policies and adequate resource allocations.<sup>9</sup> Through the leadership and support of state leaders and national attention by the National Governor's Association and America's Promise Alliance there is growing public awareness and interest in addressing the dropout crisis.

The remaining ingredient for success is the allocation of resources to implement policies, fund and manage grant programs (especially those recently created) and sustain current efforts. For example, the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement needs support to sustain its work past the ARRA funding period, which ends in August 2011.

## **Future Considerations**

### **Changes in Calculating the Graduation Rate in 2009-10**

- The mandated calculation and use of the "on-time" graduation rate for Adequate Yearly Progress purposes beginning with the 2009-10 school year creates a potential disincentive for districts and BOCES to offer special programs aimed at re-engaging dropouts including credit recovery programs, non-traditional aged student programs and career/technical education programs. Under the new graduation rate calculation, any student requiring more than the standard four years to complete high school will count against the "official" (i.e. on-time) graduation rate for the school and district attended – regardless of the student's ultimate educational outcome. See *Appendix B* for more details.
- Two options that would allow CDE to collect information regarding dropout recovery and to provide districts and schools with recognition and incentives for re-engaging students who have dropped out are:

1. Establish new codes to allow reporting of "interim dropouts" (students who drop out for a period of time, but return to an educational environment before the end of the school year).
  2. Develop and utilize the dropout re-enrollment and dropout retrieval reports required under 1 CCR 301-84. Use these reports to identify "net gains" and "net losses" in terms of students who have dropped out and those who were retrieved across districts and across schools.
- The current October 1 headcount of students approach for assigning per-pupil funding does not provide financial incentives to districts and schools to retain students or to encourage students who leave before graduating to return to school.

### **Data Reporting Requirements and Tools for Student Tracking**

- Districts lack a system for "real time" confirmation of enrollment and attendance for students who transfer out of their schools. At present, district respondents must wait until the close of the annual Student End of Year data collection – which occurs months after the school year has closed – before receiving official confirmation that a student who indicated he or she was transferring to another Colorado public school district truly entered and attended a school in the receiving district or other educational environment. This confirmation is particularly important for students who transfer to a GED preparation program or to a public online school. GED preparation programs fall outside of the Colorado public education system and therefore they do not report information about participating students to CDE. Online schools lack a consistent definition of what constitutes official "attendance" in an online environment.
- Current policies and statutes require districts to track and verify students who transfer outside of the Colorado public education system. CCR 301-67 states that students for which this official documentation of transfer cannot be obtained must be reported as dropouts. Representatives from numerous districts have indicated that they lack the resources to locate students who exit the state – particularly those students who move to another country after exiting.
- CDE does not currently apply a permanent "flag" to students who 1) have dropped out in the past and then returned to the Colorado public education system or 2) have been served by a dropout prevention or dropout recovery program. This prohibits the calculation of ultimate graduation, completion and dropout rates for these groups of students.
- At present, there is no means for districts to report student participation in educational programs (such as credit recovery programs, expelled and at-risk programs, teen parent...)

### **Next Steps**

Colorado was one of six states selected to participate in the National Governors Association's "State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All" initiative. Colorado will join with Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Tennessee and West Virginia in developing a comprehensive state dropout prevention and recovery approach. The initiative provides assistance in analyzing state and school level data, assessing gaps in student supports and creating a dropout prevention and recovery action plan for implementation. The results of Colorado's participation will be highlighted in the 2011 Policy Report to the Colorado Legislature, to be submitted by the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement by February 15, 2011. For more information about this initiative, visit [www.nga.org/center/edu](http://www.nga.org/center/edu).

## Appendix A – 5-Year Summary of Student Dropout Data Collected By CDE from Local Education Providers

School Year	Total Dropouts Reported	Average Age at Dropout (days)	Average Age at Dropout (years)	% of Dropouts under 17 years old	Dropouts from Grade 7	Dropouts from Grade 8	Dropouts from Grade 9	Dropouts from Grade 10	Dropouts from Grade 11	Dropouts from Grade 12	State Dropout Rate	State Dropout Rate for Non-alt Schools	State Dropout Rate for Alt. Schools	% of 7-12th Grade Students Attending Alt. Schools
2004-05	16,092	6,252	17.13	46%	554	851	3,506	3,545	3,555	4,081	4.2%	3.2%	22.8%	5.0%
Percent of Student Dropout by grade in 2004-05					3%	5%	22%	22%	22%	25%				
2005-06	18,031	6,239	17.09	46%	689	899	3,591	4,116	4,100	4,636	4.5%	3.3%	26.2%	4.9%
Percent of Student Dropout by grade in 2005-06					4%	5%	20%	23%	23%	26%				
2006-07	18,027	6,229	17.06	46%	740	1,022	3,466	3,846	3,982	4,971	4.4%	3.4%	24.1%	4.8%
Percent of Student Dropout by grade in 2006-07					4%	6%	19%	21%	22%	28%				
2007-08	15,524	6,347	17.39	34%	506	551	2,334	2,724	3,859	5,550	3.8%	2.9%	22.3%	4.6%
Percent of Student Dropout by grade in 2007-08					3%	4%	15%	18%	25%	36%				
2008-09	14,975	6,381	17.48	32%	417	468	2,470	2,608	3,475	5,537	3.6%	2.7%	20.5%	4.9%
Percent of Student Dropout by grade in 2008-09					3%	3%	16%	17%	23%	37%				

- In July 2007, the compulsory school attendance age in Colorado increased to 17 and the percent of dropouts under 17 years of age began to decrease that school year. Also in that year, the percent of students dropping out from grade 12 began to increase.
- The percent of seventh – 12th-grade students attending alternative education schools has remained fairly consistent over the past five years.
- The National Governor’s Association reports that most states include seventh through 12th-grade students in their calculation of annual dropout rates.

## APPENDIX B: CALCULATING RATES IN COLORADO - 2008-09

Dropout and graduation rates are frequently used to track and measure the success and effectiveness of our educational system, however, there tends to be confusion about what the rates represent. This document focuses on describing how CDE defines and calculates state rates, provides information on federal reporting of graduation rates and background on moving to a four-year graduation rate for the class of 2010.

**Graduation Rate:** This rate is a cumulative or longitudinal rate which calculates the number of students who actually graduate as a percent of those who were in membership over a four-year period (i.e., from Grades nine-12) and could have graduated with the current graduating class.

A graduation rate is reported for each graduating class (i.e., the class of 2009). The rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates by the membership base. The membership base is derived from the number students entering ninth grade four years earlier (i.e., during the 2005-2006 year for the class of 2009) and adjusted for students who have transferred into or out of the district during the years covering grades nine through 12.

### ***The Graduation Rate Calculation:***

Number of students receiving a regular diploma during the 2008-09 school year

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(Number of students beginning ninth grade in 2005-06) + (Number of transfers in) – (Number of verified transfers out)

**Completion Rate:** This rate is also a cumulative or longitudinal rate which reflects the number of students who graduate *as well as* those who receive a GED certificate or a certificate or other designation of high school completion. Like the graduation rate, the completion rate is calculated as a percent of those who were in membership over the previous four-year period (i.e., from grades nine-12) and could have graduated in the currently reported school year.

### ***The Completion Rate Calculation:***

Number of students receiving a regular diploma, GED certificate or designation of high school completion during the 2008-2009 school year

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(Number of students beginning ninth grade in 2005-2006) + (Number of transfers in) – (Number of verified transfers out)

**Dropout Rate:** The Colorado dropout rate is an annual rate, reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades seven-12 who leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. In accordance with a 1993 legislative mandate, beginning with the 1993-94 school year, the dropout rate calculation excludes expelled students.



***The Dropout Rate Calculation:***

Number of dropouts during the 2008-09 school year

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Total number of students that were part of the same membership base at any time during the 2008 – 09 school year

The dropout rate is an annual rate (i.e. an indicator of the number of 7th –12th grade students who dropped out of school in that academic year only) while the graduation rate is a four-year cohort based rate. It is not statistically valid to multiply the annual dropout rate by four to find out how many students dropped out during the four years of high school. Similarly, it is not statistically valid to multiply the dropout rate by four and subtract this number from 100 to determine the graduation rate.

**Background on Calculating a Four-Year Graduation Rate**

The movement to adopt a uniform and accurate definition of high school graduation rate was led by the **National Governors Association** and the **U.S. Department of Education**.

In 2005, under the leadership of the **National Governors Association**, all 50 governors signed the *Graduation Counts Compact*, which pledges states to:

- Implement a common method for states to calculate official high school graduation rates
- Improve state systems for collecting, analyzing and reporting data on all aspects of student achievement
- Keep the public informed about the progress of this work

The compact calls for states to calculate a Four-Year graduation rate by counting all first-time entering ninth graders, then looking to see how many of them graduate four years later, with allowances made for the numbers of students who transfer into and out of the system.

In 2008, the **U.S. Department of Education** announced new regulations for **Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act** to establish a uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rate that is comparable across states; strengthen public school choice and supplemental educational services requirements; and increase accountability and transparency. (As detailed in this document.)

The need for a uniform graduation rate was created by a lack of accurate and comparable reporting across the states. Many states have calculated their graduation rate in ways that make their numbers look better than they really are. For example, in some states, students are counted as graduates if they earn a GED, even if they stopped attending school in the ninth grade. In other states, students are not defined as dropouts until they formally notify their schools that they have withdrawn from school, an extra step that disaffected students are unlikely to take. In at least one state, the graduation rate has been defined as the percentage of 12th-graders who earn a diploma at the end of the year— a formula that fails to account for all of those students who left school *before* the 12th-grade.

*Note: These are not practices that apply to Colorado. CDE is leading efforts to improve state data collection, strengthen reporting and analysis and link data systems from preschool education through postsecondary education.*



## **NCLB Information Sheet: A Uniform, Comparable Graduation Rate**

How the final regulations for Title I hold schools, districts, and states accountable for improving graduation rates

October 2008

The reforms introduced into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) fundamentally changed the way that states and districts approach the challenge of educating all students to achieve high standards. The U.S. Department of Education announced new regulations for Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act that respond to the lessons learned from six years of implementing these reforms and build on the advancements of state assessment and accountability systems. The department carefully considered the more than 400 comments received after issuing the proposed regulations in April 2008 and made several substantive changes based on those comments.

The final regulations establish a uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rate that is comparable across states; strengthen public school choice and supplemental educational services requirements; and increase accountability and transparency.

### **Graduation Rates Within NCLB**

#### ➤ **A Uniform and Accurate Definition of Graduation Rate: The Four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate**

An accurate method of calculating graduation rates that is uniform across states is necessary to improve high school accountability. Requiring school officials to have written confirmation before removing a student from a cohort will improve the accuracy of graduation rate calculations. Written confirmation will also ensure that students who have dropped out of school are not counted as transfers and will consequently hold schools accountable for dropouts and others who do not graduate from high school with a regular diploma.

- ✓ The **final regulations** define the “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier (adjusting for transfers in and out, émigrés and deceased students—see below).
  - Students who graduate in four years include students who earn a regular high school diploma at the end of their fourth year; before the end of their fourth year; and, if a state chooses, during a summer session immediately following their fourth year.
  - To remove a student from a cohort, a school or district must confirm in writing that a student has transferred out, immigrated to another country or is deceased.
  - For students who transfer out of a school, the written confirmation must be official and document that the student has enrolled in another school or in an educational program that culminates in a regular high school diploma.

#### ➤ **Timeline to Implement the Four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate**

According to the 2008 report from the National Governors Association, the great majority of states will have the capability to implement an adjusted cohort graduation rate by the 2010–11 school year. This timeline will maximize the number of states using the rate as soon as possible, and as a result, the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) that was included in the proposed regulations is not required as the interim measure for all states.

- ✓ The **four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate must be reported at the high school, district and State levels in the aggregate as well as disaggregated by subgroups** beginning with report cards providing results of assessments administered in the 2010-11 school year. For adequate yearly progress (AYP) decisions, states must use the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate at the state, district, and school levels, including disaggregated graduation rates for all required subgroups, based on assessments administered in the 2011-12 school year.

➤ **Option to Use an Extended-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate or Rates**

An extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate will give states, districts and schools credit for students who take longer than four years to graduate with a regular high school diploma.

- ✓ The **final regulations** permit states to propose, for approval by the secretary, one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates that take into account students who graduate in more than four years.
  - Any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate must be reported separately from the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.
  - A state desiring to use one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate or rates must describe to the Secretary how it plans to use the extended-year rate along with the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in determining whether its schools and districts make AYP, while still holding them accountable for graduating the vast majority of their students within four years.

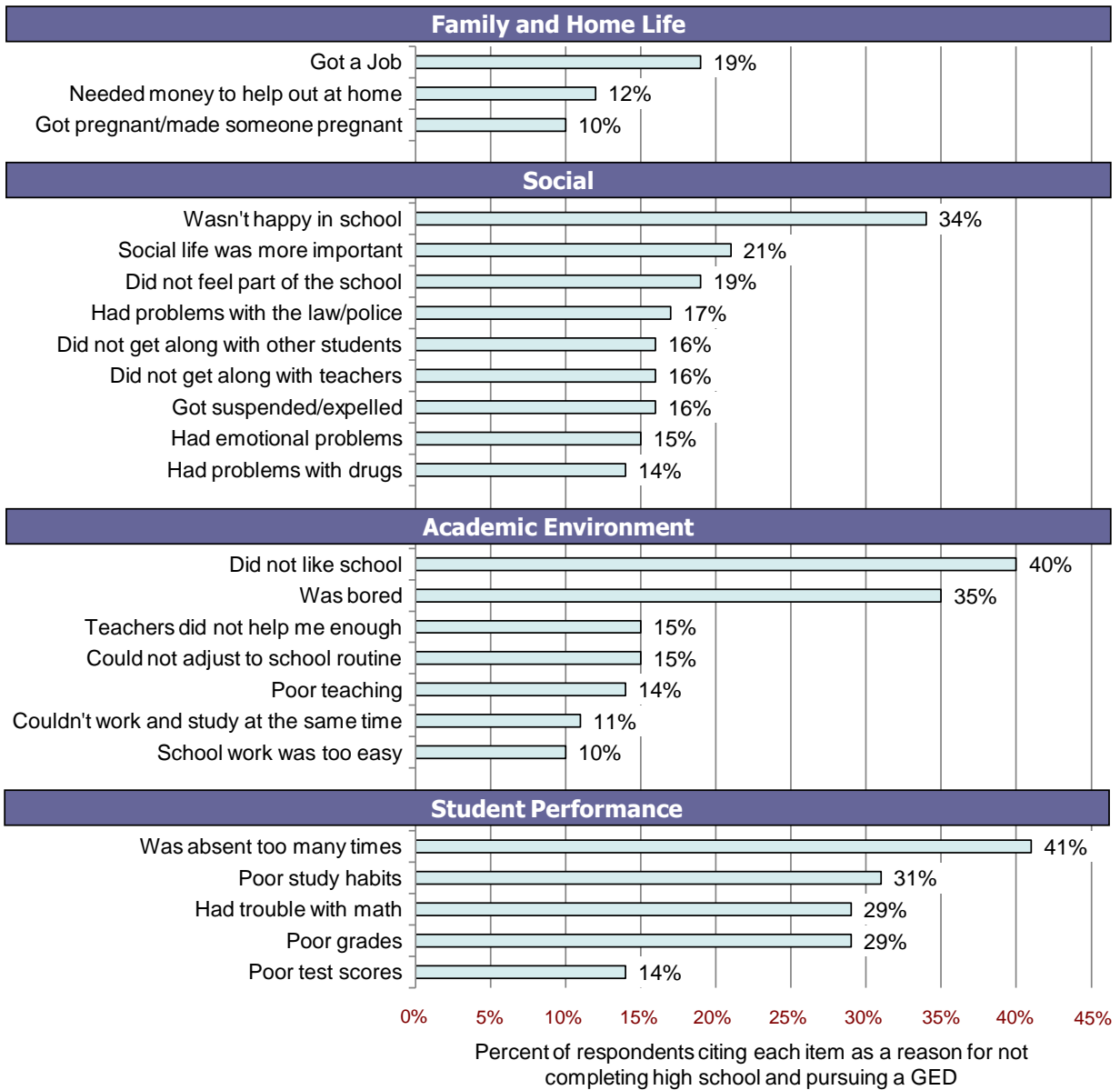
➤ **Graduation Rate Goal, Targets, and AYP**

At a time when a high school diploma is the minimum credential needed for success in the labor force, high schools and districts with low rates of graduation should be held accountable for improving their graduation rates. States must set aggressive goals and annual targets in order to hold districts and schools accountable for graduating more of their students each year.

- ✓ The **final regulations** provide that for a school or district to make AYP, it must meet or exceed the state's graduation rate goal or demonstrate continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting that goal. Each state must submit the following for peer review and approval by the secretary:
  - A single graduation rate goal that represents the rate the state expects all high schools in the state to meet; and
  - Annual graduation rate targets that reflect continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding that goal.

Source: The NGA Center for Best Practices, [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)  
U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

## Appendix C: Reasons Cited for Not Completing High School Among GED Exam Takers Aged 16 to 21 Years - 2008 and 2009



**Notes:**

- Categories and reasons cited are not mutually exclusive (respondents could select as many reasons as they wished)
- Total records in this sample = 15,333
- Source: CDE - Office of Adult Education and Family Literacy/GED

**APPENDIX D: Colorado Department of Education  
From Statute to Policy  
2009**

**Dropout prevention bill affects student discipline and attendance policies**

The Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement Act, § 22-14-101, C.R.S. (the Act) addresses Colorado’s student dropout rate [H.B. 09-1243]. The Act created the office of dropout prevention and student re-engagement (the Office) within the Colorado Department of Education. The Act also amended existing state law regarding student attendance and discipline and, therefore, requires school boards to revise their student discipline and attendance policies. In August 2009, the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) revised its sample policies to reflect the changes made by H.B. 09-1243. These revised CASB samples will assist local school boards in updating their own policies to reflect these changes in law.

This chart summarizes the changes to state law made by H.B. 09-1243 and the CASB sample policies affected. It also provides clarification of existing state law and recent revisions to Colorado State Board of Education rules.

**1. Attendance**

Colorado Statute	Revisions made by H.B. 09-1243	CASB Sample Policies Affected
§ 22-33-104(4)(a), C.R.S.	No longer mandates that suspensions and expulsions be considered unexcused absences for purposes of a local board’s student attendance policy.	JH, Student Absences and Excuses
§ 22-33-104(4)(a), C.R.S.	No longer states that penalties for nonattendance due to unexcused absence may include the imposition of academic penalty for classes missed while unexcused.	JH, Student Absences and Excuses JHB Truancy

**2. Habitually Disruptive Students**

Colorado Statute	Revisions made by H.B. 09-1243	CASB Sample Policies Affected
§ 22-33-106(1)(c.5)(I), C.R.S.	School districts are no longer mandated by state law to expel a habitually disruptive student. Districts <i>may</i> suspend or expel habitually disruptive students.	JK and JK-R, Student Discipline JKD/JKE-E, Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion

**3. Dropout Prevention and Intervention**

Colorado Statute or Rule	Revisions made by H.B. 09-1243 or Colorado State Board of Education Rules	CASB Sample Policies Affected
§ 22-14-108(1), C.R.S.	School districts must notify a student’s parent, guardian or legal custodian if the student drops out of school, even if the student is not of compulsory attendance age.	JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts

§ 22-14-108(1), C.R.S.	Districts must develop policies and procedures with the goal of encouraging the student to re-enroll in school and conveying to the student’s parent the long-term ramifications to the student of dropping out of school.	JFC and JFC-R, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts
Colorado State Board of Education Rules, 1 CCR 301-67, Rule 2.01(7)	Defines “dropout.”	JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts JH, Student Absences and Excuses JHB, Truancy
<b>4. Habitually Truant Students</b>		
<b>Colorado Statute or Rule</b>	<b>Revisions made by H.B. 09-1243 or Colorado State Board of Education Rules</b>	<b>CASB Sample Policies Affected</b>
Colorado State Board of Education Rules, Habitual Truant- 1 CCR 301-78, Rule 2.00 (7)	Provides standardized calculation for counting a “habitual truant” as a student who has four <b>total</b> days of unexcused absences in a month or 10 <b>total</b> days of unexcused absences during the school year.	JH, Student Absences and Excuses JHB, Truancy
<b>Colorado Statute or Rule</b>	<b>Existing State Law on Habitually Truant Students</b>	<b>CASB Sample Policies Affected</b>
§ 22-33-107(3)(a), C.R.S.	Child of age six (on or before August 1) and under 17 years old who has four unexcused absences from public school in any one month or 10 unexcused absences during the school year is habitually truant.	JH, Student Absences and Excuses JHB, Truancy
§ 22-33-107(3)(b), C.R.S.	School districts must adopt and implement policies and procedures concerning children who are habitually truant. The policies and procedures shall include provisions for development of a plan based on the reasons for the truancy and, when practicable, must be developed with parents/guardians. <b>The plan shall be developed with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school.</b>	JHB, Truancy
§ 22-33-104(4)(b), C.R.S.	School boards must specify the maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before the school district <b>may</b> initiate judicial proceedings.	JHB, Truancy
§ 22-33-107(4), C.R.S.	On or before Sept. 15, 2010, and on or before Sept. 15 each year thereafter, school districts shall report to CDE the number of students identified as habitually truant for the preceding academic year. CDE shall post this information on the Web site for the public to access.	JHB, Truancy

## Appendix E: Colorado Truancy Court Referrals for 2008 and 2009

<b>County</b>	<b>District Code</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Total Referred 2008</b>	<b>Total Referred 2009</b>
<b>Adams</b>	0010	Adams 1, Mapleton	9	11
	0020	Adams 12, Northglenn-Thornton	146	72
	0030	Adams 14, Commerce City	42	57
	0040	Adams 27J, Brighton	19	32
	0070	Adams 50, Westminster	48	8
<b>Adams Arapahoe</b>	0180	Adams-Arapahoe 28J, Aurora	108	146
<b>Arapahoe</b>	0123	Arapahoe 2, Sheridan	14	30
	0130	Arapahoe 5, Cherry Creek	80	49
	0140	Arapahoe 6, Littleton	36	38
<b>Alamosa</b>	0100	Alamosa RE-11J-Alamosa	7	22
<b>Boulder</b>	0470	Boulder RE1J, St. Vrain Valley	119	116
	0480	Boulder RE2, Boulder Valley	112	143
<b>Conejos</b>	0580	Conejos RE 10, Antonito	3	5
<b>Denver</b>	0880	Denver 1, Denver	541	342
<b>Douglas</b>	0900	Douglas RE 1, Castle Rock	6	12
<b>Elbert</b>	0920	Elbert C-1, Elizabeth	1	1
<b>El Paso</b>	1040	El Paso 20, Academy	3	9
	1020	El Paso 12, Cheyenne Mountain	4	4
	1010	El Paso 11, Colorado Springs	271	338
	1110	El Paso 49, Falcon	21	12
	1000	El Paso 8, Fountain	10	7
	0980	El Paso 2, Harrison	104	61
	1030	El Paso, Manitou Springs		1
	0990	El Paso 3, Widefield		2
<b>Fremont</b>	1140	Fremont RE-1, Canon City	38	20
<b>Garfield</b>	1180	Garfield RE-1, Roaring Fork	8	11
	1195	Garfield RE-2, Rifle	8	4
<b>Huerfano</b>	1390	Huerfano RE-1, Walsenburg		9
<b>Jefferson</b>	1420	Jefferson R-1, Lakewood	468	497
<b>Kit Carson</b>	1500	Kit Carson RE-6J, Burlington		3
<b>Lake</b>	1510	Lake R-1, Leadville	4	1
<b>La Plata</b>	1520	La Plata 9-R, Durango		11
<b>Larimer</b>	1550	Larimer R-1, Poudre	16	1
	1560	Larimer R-2J, Thompson	29	26
	1570	Larimer R-3, Park	1	

<b>County</b>	<b>District Code</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Total Referred 2008</b>	<b>Total Referred 2009</b>
<b>Las Animas</b>	1580	Las Animas 1, Trinidad	2	10
	1590	Las Animas 2, Weston	1	2
<b>Logan</b>	1828	Logan RE-1, Valley Mesa(Sterling)	18	4
<b>Mesa</b>	2000	Mesa51, Grand Junction	92	83
<b>Moffat</b>	2020	Moffat RE1, Craig		1
<b>Montezuma</b>	2035	Montezuma RE1, Cortez	11	9
	2070	Montezuma RE-6, Mancos		4
<b>Montrose</b>	2180	Montrose RE-1J, Montrose	73	24
<b>Morgan</b>	2395	Morgan RE-2 (J), Brush	7	8
	2405	Morgan RE-3, Fort Morgan	20	28
<b>Mountain BOCES</b>	9030	Mountain BOCES	8	3
<b>Otero</b>	2520	Otero R 1, La Junta	3	9
	2530	Otero R 2, Rocky Ford	4	9
	2535	Otero 3J, Manzanola	1	
<b>Prowers</b>	2660	Prowers RE-2, Lamar	6	16
<b>Pueblo</b>	2690	Pueblo 60, Urban	306	187
	2700	Pueblo 70, Rural	23	29
<b>Teller</b>	3010	Teller RE-1, Cripple Creek	3	
	3020	Teller RE-2, Woodland Park	3	
<b>Weld</b>	3085	Weld RE-2, Eaton	1	
	3140	Weld RE-8, Fort Lupton		15
	3120	Weld 6, Greeley	346	325
	3100	Weld RE-4, Windsor	5	13
<b>Total number of referrals by year</b>			3209	2880

Source: Colorado Judicial Branch | Division of Planning and Analysis

## **Appendix F: Research on the Effectiveness of Truancy Court Compared to Alternatives to Court**

### **TRADITIONAL COURT PRACTICES**

- ✚ In a large sample of truancy court students in South Carolina, first time truancy court referrals tended to have a higher rate of later lifetime referrals to court. Additionally, students referred who are “male, minority group members, younger at the time of first offense, have been placed in special education, have a history of drug use, or have a criminal history in the family” are more likely to have future referrals to court. (Zhang, Siyannis, Barrett, & Wilson, 2007).
- ✚ In a longitudinal study of a random sample of 134 students who attended truancy court in School Year 05-06, MacGillivray (2008) found that 33% attended the first possible school day after their court appearance, 28% did not matriculate at the end of the year, and 38% were still in school two years later (30.5% transferred to other districts). Of the 134 students, 37 were still attending in the school district and their attendance data indicated a reduction in unexcused absences from 37.3 in the year prior to court to 17.7 in the year of court. The majority of these 37 students were elementary students.
- ✚ Garrison (2001) found that a traditional court model with enhanced referrals to a community based social worker reduced “irregular attendance” for 18% of the students. 195 students/families were served by the program at a cost of \$260,000.
- ✚ In a study of 44 students, Mueller, Giacomazzi & Stoddard (2006) found a statistically significant reduction from 18.3 to 9.1 absences and 15.7 to 11.2 tardies on average in the four months before and after court. All students in the sample were elementary students (first through sixth grade).

### **TRUANCY COURT DIVERSION PROGRAMS**

- ✚ Munoz et al. (2001) found a 24% decrease in nonattendance one month after participation in a school-based, court diversion program targeting elementary school students (n=45).
- ✚ Shoenfelt & Huddleson (2006) evaluated a truancy court diversion program that significantly reduced unexcused absences in the semester after the intervention for elementary students and less so for junior high school students (n=37). A comparison group was included in the design but prior absences did not match the treatment group. Excused absences and tardies were not affected.
- ✚ Fantuzzo, Grim & Hazan (2005) used a quasi experimental design with 567 matched truants and found that community court significantly reduced absences compared to no intervention or traditional truancy court in the 30 days post court and at one year follow up. The community court occurred at the school not the court house and involved community based service providers to promote family use of available support services.
- ✚ MacGillivray (2008) found that 69% of eighth and ninth grade students who participated in Attendance Mediation Workshops improved their attendance in the weeks that followed the workshop (65% to 73%) compared to the weeks before the workshop. 93% of students were still enrolled in school at the end of the school year. The cost of the workshops averaged \$175 per student. This was a small pilot of 5 workshops for 35 students.



**APPENDIX G: Table of Statutes Relevant to Student Dropout and State Investments**

Table lists Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) by Category and Effective Date

<b>Category: Grants and Programs that Address Dropout Prevention and Student-Re-Engagement</b>			
<b>Titles/Statutes</b>	<b>Description (Purpose, Reporting and Outcomes)</b>	<b>State Agencies Responsible</b>	<b>State Funds Allocated 2009-2010</b>
<p><b>1. Teen Pregnancy and Dropout Prevention</b></p> <p>(§ 25.5-60, C.R.S., Effective May 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorizes implementing a statewide program for teen pregnancy and dropout prevention to serve teenagers who are Medicaid recipients.</li> <li>• Funded through federal funds and Medicaid. Program funding consists of 90 percent federal funds and 10 percent local matching funds.</li> <li>• A report documenting the program's effectiveness is due to the General Assembly by Sept. 1, 2010. Upon review of the report, the General Assembly will decide whether to continue the program.</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing</p>	<p>\$0</p> <p>federally funded</p>
<p><b>2. Expulsion Prevention Programs, Part 2 of the School Attendance Law - of 1963</b></p> <p>(§§ 22-33-201 to 205, C.R.S., Effective April 1996)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation shows that the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant program is meeting its intended results.</li> <li>• Reports annually to the house and senate education committees and the 2008-09 evaluation showed:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8,624 students participated in 57 funded programs.</li> <li>• The dropout rate of at-risk students in an EARSS program was 2%, which is below the most current state rate of 3.6%</li> <li>• The dropout rate of expelled students served by an EARRSS program was 5%, which is significantly lower than the most recent state dropout rates of 20.5% for students in alternative education programs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Funding note: This year 50 school districts, BOCES, schools and eligible facilities submitted grant requests totaling \$9.8 million, however, the amount available for new grants was \$2.4 million. As a result, 19 of the 50 applicants received awards, though many more were qualified. In addition, most of those funded received less than they requested.</li> <li>• Legislative update: S.B. 09-256 requires the state board to award at least half of any increase in the appropriation for the expelled and at-risk student services grant program for the 2009-2010 fiscal year to grant applicants that provide services and supports that are designed to reduce the number of truancy cases requiring court involvement and that also reflect the best interests of the students and families. Authorizes and encourages the department to retain up to an additional 2% of any moneys appropriated to the expelled and at-risk student program to partner with organizations or agencies that provide services and supports that are designed to reduce the number of truancy</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$7,343,567</p>

	<p>cases requiring court involvement and that also reflect the best interests of students and families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For more information: Visit: <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi_expelled_grant.htm">http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi_expelled_grant.htm</a></li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Colorado Student Dropout Prevention and Intervention Program - Tony Grampsas Youth Service Program</b></p> <p>(§ 25-20.5-204, C.R.S., Effective May 2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation shows that the grant program is meeting its intended results.</li> <li>Reports to program board.</li> <li>Tony Grampsas Youth Service Program provides services to at-risk students and their families to reduce the dropout rate. Twenty percent of the appropriated funds must support student dropout prevention programs and in FY 2008-2009, 21% of funds supported services to 10,288 students.</li> <li>Funding note: For FY 2010 - 2011 the TGYS Program received a \$1,000,000 reduction in General Funds. This equates to a \$200,000 funding reduction for student dropout prevention.</li> <li>For more information on evaluation and services, visit: <a href="http://www.tgys.org">www.tgys.org</a></li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Child, Adolescent and School Health Unit	\$1,020,617
<p><b>4. Dropout Prevention Activity Grant</b></p> <p>(§§ 22-27.5-101 - 16 C.R.S., Effective 2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program provides additional funding for schools to sponsor before-and after-school programs and summer programs that encourage positive school attachment and provides greater incentives for some students to stay in school.</li> <li>This grant program is funded through a state income tax check off. Statute designates that "for income tax years commencing on or after January 1, 2005 but prior to January 1, 2008.</li> <li>Requires report to legislature, and results for 2008-2009 showed that four school/community partnerships received grants and demonstrated the following results:  <u>Alamosa High School/ Boys and Girls Clubs</u> - 63 percent of Alamosa High School students graduated in 2009, compared to 50 percent in 2008, exceeding their performance measure.  <u>Cole Arts and Science Academy/Catholic Charities</u> - 93percent of participating students showed an increase in school connection, as measured by the Youth Bonding Scale, exceeding their target.  <u>Lamar Middle School /Project Acquire High School</u> - Twenty four students consistently attended the after school Teen Center for more than 30 days. Plus many dropped in as needed. The majority of positive student comments regarded homework help and credit recovery.  <u>Sierra High School/YMCA</u> - 59 percent of participating students increased their grades in math and 50 percent of participating students increased their grades in reading. 14 percent of participating students graduated and none of the participating students dropped out.</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Education	\$83,460

<p><b>5. Division of On-Line Learning</b></p> <p>(§§22-30.7-103, C.R.S., Approved May 23, 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorizes online educational programs and sets forth the criteria for such programs; and specifies which students a district can count in the online program pupil enrollment.</li> <li>• Requires annual report to the Colorado State Board of Education and the house and senate education committees to be completed by Feb. 1.</li> <li>• Results for the 2008-2009 school year showed an increase in number of students served by 1,452 over the previous year, bringing the total to 13,093 students.</li> <li>• Many programs saw improvements in student success. Although most lag behind the state average in indicators of achievement, a few notable programs are showing high growth/high achievement based on the Colorado Growth Model and the graduation and completion rates for online programs, on the average, increased from the previous reported year.</li> <li>• For more information visit: <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/">http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/</a></li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$376,817</p>
<p><b>6. Colorado Homegrown STEM Work Force Act</b></p> <p>(§§ 24-48.5-109, C.R.S., Effective May 2007)</p>	<p>Establishes the STEM after-school education pilot grant program fund and designates it to receive funding from the state education fund.</p> <p>Added funding through H.B. 08-1388, Effective May 2008)</p> <p>Repeals the grant program, effective July 1, 2010.</p> <p>In 2008-2009, state funding for program was eliminated as part of budget balancing act.</p>	<p>Colorado Office of Economic Development</p> <p>transfers funds to Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$0</p>
<p><b>7. School Counselor Corps Grant Program</b></p> <p>(§22-91-01, C.R.S., Effective May 2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation shows that the grant program is meeting its intended results.</li> <li>• Grant goals: Increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools; Raise the graduation rate; Increase the percentage of students who appropriately prepare for and apply to postsecondary education; Elevate the number of students who continue into postsecondary education</li> <li>• Reports annually to the state legislature and the first report completed by January 15, 2009. The 2008-2009 results showed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decreased the student-to-counselor ratios to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommendations.</li> <li>○ Attended or facilitated over 1600 hours of professional development workshops that directly impacted the secondary counselors, faculty members and administrators.</li> <li>○ The implementation of the grant program played a major role in increasing the college related data collection process at the majority of grantee schools and districts.</li> <li>○ College Related Data</li> <li>○ 1,240 Completed Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)</li> <li>○ 8,911 Sent College Applications</li> <li>○ 3,543 Submitted Scholarship Applications</li> <li>○ \$18,172,719 Total Received Scholarship Dollar</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$5,000,000</p>

	<p>amount</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For more information visit:  <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/SchoolCounselor/SchoolCounselor.htm">http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/SchoolCounselor/SchoolCounselor.htm</a></li> </ul>		
<p><b>8. Closing the Achievement Gap Program</b></p> <p>(§, 22-7-611, C.R.S., Effective June 1, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDE requested funding to pilot a program for districts that showed persistent achievement gaps for minority students and/or students of poverty. Six districts were selected to receive assistance, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An on-site achievement gap manager</li> <li>Assistance in developing formative assessments</li> <li>Intervention services and professional development</li> <li>Selection of an independent vendors to assist in the implementation of the project.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The pilot districts and their providers are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summit School District - McREL</li> <li>Roaring Fork School District - McREL</li> <li>Greeley-Evans School District 6 - Edison Learning</li> <li>Eagle Schools - Edison Learning</li> <li>Yuma Schools - Edison Learning</li> <li>St. Vrain Valley School District - America's Choice</li> </ul> </li> <li>Evaluation report pending</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Education	\$1,750,000
<p><b>9. Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement</b></p> <p>(§22-14-101, C.R.S., Effective 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement.</li> <li>Requires reports on best practices, policies, evaluation of graduation and completion plans and grant program, as appropriate, to Colorado State Board of Education, Governor and house and senate education committee to be completed by Feb. 15.</li> <li>Requires identification and assistance to local education providers designated as "high priority" and "priority."</li> <li>In § 22-14-109, C.R.S., creates "Student e-engagement grant program."</li> <li>Authorizes CDE to seek gifts, grants and donations to fund activities and grant program.</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Education	<p>\$157,722</p> <p>State Fiscal Stabilization Funds</p> <p>Grant Program Unfunded</p>
<p><b>10. Parent involvement in education grant program</b></p> <p>(§ 22-7-305, C.R.S., Effective August 5, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates the parent involvement in education grant program (program) to provide moneys to public schools to increase parent involvement in public education and authorizes CDE to seek and accept gifts, grants and donations from private or public sources for the program.</li> <li>To be eligible to receive a grant, a public school shall meet one or more conditions, including but not limited to, "The dropout rate for the public school for each of the three academic years immediately preceding application exceeded the state average dropout rate for each respective year."</li> <li>After implementation, requires annual report to the Colorado State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education.</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Education	Unfunded

<p><b>11. Healthy Choices Dropout Prevention Pilot Program</b></p> <p>(§ 22-82.3-102, C.R.S., Approved May 21, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates program to reduce the dropout rate of adolescent students in certain public schools.</li> <li>• The objective is to enhance the academic achievement and physical and mental health of adolescent students and thereby improve student attendance and reduce the number of students who fail to graduate from high school.</li> <li>• Authorizes CDE to seek and accept gifts, grants and donations from private or public sources for the program.</li> <li>• After implementation requires report to the education and the health and human services committees of the general assembly concerning the activities carried out under the program and the effectiveness of the program.</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>Unfunded</p>
<p><b>Category: Parental Involvement</b></p>			
<p><b>12. Notice to parent of dropout status</b></p> <p>(§ 22-14-108, Effective May 21, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires local education providers to adopt and implement policies and procedures to notify a student's parent if the student drops out of school, even if the student is not subject to the compulsory attendance requirement.</li> <li>• The intent is to convey the long-term ramifications of dropping out of school to encourage student re-engagement.</li> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness and no reporting required.</li> <li>• Repealed parental notice of dropout status (§ 22-33-107.1, C.R.S.) which only required notification if the student was subject to the compulsory attendance requirement specified in § 22-33-104, C.R.S.</li> </ul>	<p>No specific oversight charged to Colorado Department of Education.</p>	<p>\$0</p>
<p><b>13. Parental Involvement in K-12 Education Act</b></p> <p>(§ 8-13.3-103, C.R.S., Effective 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statute is in Chapter 340, Labor and Industry, and does not include reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Allows leave for involvement in academic activities if certain requirements are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An employee is entitled to take leave, not to exceed six hours in any one-month period and not to exceed 18 hours in any academic year, for the purpose of attending an academic activity for or with the employee's child.</li> <li>○ In the alternative, an employer and employee may agree to an arrangement allowing the employee to take paid leave to attend an academic activity and to work the amount of hours of paid leave taken within the same work week.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>No specific oversight charged</p>	<p>\$0</p>
<p><b>14. Colorado State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education</b></p> <p>(§ 22-7-303, C.R.S., Effective August 5, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates the state advisory council for parent involvement in education (council) at CDE.</li> <li>• The council shall assist CDE in implementing the parent involvement grant program and provide advice to recipient schools. § 22-7-305, C.R.S.</li> <li>• Makes changes to school district accountability committees. Seeks to increase parent representation on decision-making boards and school district accountability committees.</li> <li>• Reporting requirement tied to grant program.</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$0</p>

<b>Category: Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness</b>			
<p><b>15. Fast College Fast Jobs Act</b></p> <p>(§ 22-35.5-101 to 108, C.R.S., Effective April 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created pilot program to enable students to simultaneously complete high school and obtain an associate's degree.</li> <li>Incorporated in the funding provided through the Public School Finance Act of 1994.</li> <li>The December 2008 report showed that even though the Fast College Fast Jobs Program was available to 23 school districts and two BOCES serving 62 target schools, only 1 school district, Denver Public Schools, chose to participate in the program.</li> <li>During FY2007-08, three schools participated from Denver Public Schools, with 393 ninth grade students participating in the program. There were 255 students remaining in the program as 10th-grade students in FY 2008-2009, a 65 percent retention rate in the program.</li> <li>Reason for exit included: 107 student's GPA dropped below 2.0, 14 transferred to another school and 10 transferred out of district.</li> <li>Other districts that were eligible to participate chose to take advantage of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act rather than to participate in the Fast College Fast Jobs program.</li> <li>H.B. 09-1319 (Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment programs) - Repealed the high school fast track program, the "Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act," and the "Fast College Fast Jobs Act."</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>Fast College Fast Jobs is no longer being used by any school districts</p>
<p><b>16. Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT)</b></p> <p>(§ 22-35-101, C.R.S. et seq., Added 2009)</p>	<p>New legislation: Effectiveness not yet evaluation for effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ASCENT program permits eligible students to participate in a "fifth year" of high school while enrolled concurrently.</li> <li>In fall 2009, and each fall thereafter, submit to CDE a list of current 12th-graders who will be eligible for the ASCENT program during the upcoming school year, i.e. current seniors (2009-2010 school year) who plan to remain enrolled at the high school in order to participate in a dual degree or fifth year program (in the 2010-2011 school year).</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>Districts with ASCENT students will receive a fixed amount of "per-pupil operating revenue."</p>
<p><b>17. Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act</b></p> <p>S.B. 08-212</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that a student who enters school ready to succeed and achieves the required level of proficiency on standards as he or she progresses through elementary and secondary education will have achieved postsecondary and workforce readiness upon graduation from high school</li> <li>It requires various state education agencies to collaborate to create a seamless system of public education standards, expectations and assessments.</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$573,707</p>
<p><b>18. Individual Career and Academic Plans</b></p> <p>(§ 22-32-109 C.R.S., Effective May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures that each public school shall assist each student and his or her parent or guardian to develop and maintain the student's individual career and education plans no later than the ninth grade, but may assist prior to the ninth grade.</li> <li>On or before Feb. 1, 2010, the state shall promulgate rules to establish standards for individual career and academic</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$0</p>



2009)	plans for students in public schools. A plan shall be designed to assist a student in exploring the postsecondary career and educational opportunities available, aligning course work and curriculum, applying to postsecondary education institutions, securing financial aid, and ultimately entering the workforce.		
<b>Category: Truancy and School Attendance</b>			
<b>19. School Attendance Law of 1963 - Truancy – court</b>  (§19-1-104 , Effective June 1, 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Allows a criminal justice agency investigating a matter under the "School Attendance Law of 1963" to seek, prior to adjudication, disciplinary and truancy information from the juvenile's school.</li> <li>• Clarifies the juvenile court has enforcement power for violations of any orders it makes under the "School Attendance Law of 1963."</li> </ul>	Colorado Judicial Branch   Division of Planning and Analysis tracks referrals to Truancy Court	\$0
<b>20. Truancy Court Sanctions</b>  §§ 22-33-108(7)(a-b), C.R.S. Effective April 12, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Allows the court to impose juvenile incarceration in a juvenile detention facility for violating a valid court order under the "School Attendance Law of 1963" pursuant to any rules promulgated by the Colorado Supreme Court.</li> </ul>	No specific oversight designated but monitored by Colorado Divisions of Juvenile Justice	\$0 However, impacts annual court costs and expense of detention
<b>21. Truancy Court</b>  (§§ 22-33-108(7)(a-b), C.R.S. , Effective March 31, 200)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Requires conforming changes to federal law.</li> <li>• Removes the phrase " physically secure" from the definition of "temporary holding facility."</li> <li>• Defines "status offense" as it is defined in federal law.</li> <li>• Clarifies that juveniles held in adult facilities shall be segregated by sight and sound.</li> <li>• Creates a civil penalty for a jailer who violates the sight and sound provisions.</li> <li>• Prohibits a juvenile court from ordering a juvenile to enter an adult facility as a disposition for an offense or as a means of modifying the juvenile offender’s behavior.</li> <li>• Prohibits a juvenile alleged to have committed a status offense or convicted of status offense from being held in a secure setting.</li> <li>• Requires a juvenile court to follow C.R.J.P. rule 3.8 in truancy cases. Rule 3.8. Status Offenders - Juveniles alleged to have committed offenses which would not be a crime if committed by an adult (i.e., status offenses), shall not be detained for more than 24 hours excluding non-judicial days unless there has been a detention hearing and judicial determination that there is probable cause to believe the juvenile has violated a valid court order. A juvenile in detention alleged to be a status offender and in violation of a valid court order shall be adjudicated within 72 hours exclusive of non-judicial days of the time detained. A juvenile adjudicated of being a status offender in violation of a valid court order may not be disposed to a secure detention or correctional placement unless the court has first reviewed a written report prepared by a public agency which is not a court or law enforcement agency. Nothing</li> </ul>	No specific oversight designated  Compliance with C.R.J.P. rule 3.8 monitored by Colorado Divisions of Juvenile Justice	\$0  However, helps secure funding from Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

	herein shall prohibit the court from ordering the placement of juveniles in shelter care where appropriate, and such placement shall not be considered detention within the meaning of this rule.		
<b>22. Truancy proceedings</b>  (§ 13-1-127, C.R.S., Effective March 22, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Allows authorization of employees of the school district to represent the district in truancy proceedings, even though the employee is not an attorney.</li> <li>• No reporting required.</li> </ul>	No specific state oversight designated,	\$0
<b>23. Truancy enforcement</b>  (§ 22-33-107, C.R.S., Updated in 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Requires school district to have policy for a truancy plan with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school.</li> <li>• No reporting required.</li> </ul>	No specific state oversight designated	\$0
<b>24. School Attendance Act - Compulsory School Attendance</b>  (§ 22-33-104, C.R.S., Effective July 1, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amends compulsory school attendance law and requires that each child between the ages of six and 17 shall attend public school unless otherwise excused.</li> <li>• It is the obligation of every parent to ensure that every child under the parent's care and supervision between the ages of six and 17 be in compliance with this statute.</li> </ul>		
<b>25. Standardizing Truancy Reporting and Expanding the Resources</b>  (§ 22-33-104, C.R.S., Effective August 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds requirement for reporting of unexcused absences - services for truant students.</li> <li>• Requires the Colorado State Board of Education to adopt guidelines for the standardized calculation of unexcused absences of students from school.</li> <li>• Requires a school district to report annually to the department of education ("department") concerning the number of students who are habitually truant.</li> <li>• Requires the department to post this information on the internet.</li> <li>• Effectiveness not yet assessed.</li> </ul>	Colorado Department of Education	\$0
<b>Category: Requirements and Regulations</b>			
<b>26. Exchange of information concerning children - criminal justice agencies - schools and school districts - assessment centers for children.</b>  (§ 19-1-302,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorizes an exchange of information among schools and school districts and law enforcement agencies. Allows any criminal justice agency or assessment center for children to share any information or records, that rise to the level of a public safety concern except mental health or medical records, that the agency or center may have concerning a specific child with the principal of the school at which the child is or will be enrolled as a student and the superintendent of such school district, or with such person's designee.</li> <li>• Allows a criminal justice agency or assessment center for children to share with a principal or superintendent any records, except mental health or medical records, of</li> </ul>	No specific state oversight designated,	\$0



<p>C.R.S., Effective April 7, 2000)</p>	<p>incidents that do not rise to the level of a public safety concern but that relate to the adjudication or conviction of a child for a municipal ordinance violation or that relate to the charging, adjudication, deferred prosecution, deferred judgment, or diversion of a child for an act that, if committed by an adult, would have constituted misdemeanor or a felony.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the information so provided to be kept confidential. Directs the principal of a school, or such person's designee, to provide disciplinary and truancy information concerning a child who is or will be enrolled as a student at the school to a criminal justice agency investigating a criminal matter that involves the child. Requires the criminal justice agency to maintain the confidentiality of the information received.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>27. Educational services for children in out-of-home placement</b></p> <p>(§§ 22-32-138; 19-3-213; 25-4-902 C.R.S., Effective April 2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks to promote education stability by taking into account the child's existing educational situation and, to the extent possible and in accordance with the child's best interests,</li> <li>Addresses the transfer process for children in out-of-home placements when they move between schools.</li> <li>Requires coordination between county departments and schools to "assure there is a plan for educational stability" for children in foster care.</li> <li>Requires a Family Services Plan that documents efforts to maintain educational setting, or other factors that were considered and reasons why remaining in the same school is not in the best interests of the child and efforts to assure enrollment, including timely provision/ transfer of the educational records to the school as defined in § 22-32-138, C.R.S. (five days for sending of records + five days for enrollment of student upon receipt of records).</li> <li>No reporting required.</li> </ul>	<p>No specific state oversight designated,</p>	<p>\$0</p>
<p><b>28. Definition High Risk - Alternative Campus</b></p> <p>(§ 22-7-604.5, C.R.S., Effective 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The legislation defines the criteria for identifying "high risk student" when applying to be designated an alternative campus. Includes, but not limited to, a student enrolled in a secondary school that has dropped out of school or has not been continuously enrolled and regularly attending school for at least one semester prior to enrolling in his or her current school. Also may include a student who has been expelled from school or engaged in behavior that would justify expulsion.</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>\$0</p>

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup>Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., McLaughlin, J., and Palma, P. (2009). *The Consequences of Dropping Out of School*. Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeast University. Boston Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup>Balfanz, R. (2007). *What Your Community Can Do to End its Dropout Crisis: Learning from Research and Practice*. National Symposium on America's Silent Epidemic. Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup>Rumberger, R., and Sum, A. (2008). *Why Students Dropout of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research*. California Dropout Research Project Report #15. Santa Barbara, CA.

<sup>4</sup>Language, Culture and Equity Unit. (2009). *English Learners in Colorado: a State of the State*. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education.

<sup>5</sup>D. Princiotta, R. R. (2009). *Achieving Graduation for All : A Governor's Guide to Dropout Prevention and Recovery*. Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

<sup>6</sup>S. Deyé, (2009). *Making a Difference: Eight policy recommendations that could improve America's high schools in a new report*. National Conference of State Legislatures. Denver, CO.

<sup>7</sup>Dropout Policy Forum (2009). Colorado Statewide Dropout Initiative: Partnering for early intervention and student retention. Recorded February 13, 2009. Sponsored by America's Promise Alliance. Denver, CO.

<sup>8</sup>Martin, N. &. (2006). *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum, Web site: [www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org).

<sup>9</sup>Balfanz, R. B. (2009). *Advancing the Colorado graduates agenda: Understanding the dropout problem and mobilizing to meet the graduation challenge*. Donnell-Kay Foundation and Piton Foundation. Denver, CO.

**Table IV**  
**Dropout Rates in Selected School Districts and in the State from 2001-02 through 2009-10**

School District	Academic Year									Nine-Year District Average
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Jefferson County	2.6%	2.2%	4.5%	4.3%	3.1%	3.7%	3.2%	2.3%	1.8%	3.1%
Colorado Springs 11	5.2%	4.1%	5.0%	4.6%	4.9%	4.6%	4.0%	3.7%	4.4%	4.5%
Pueblo 60	5.1%	4.8%	6.2%	5.1%	5.4%	5.1%	4.7%	5.1%	4.8%	5.1%
Durango	3.4%	2.9%	2.9%	1.6%	2.9%	2.4%	3.3%	4.3%	1.5%	2.8%
Aspen	0.8%	0.0%	1.7%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%
Yuma	3.3%	5.3%	4.9%	3.9%	4.8%	3.7%	3.6%	1.9%	2.3%	3.7%
Del Norte	0.6%	0.0%	1.7%	0.2%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%	0.7%
Pawnee (Grover)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	2.7%	3.1%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
De Beque	4.1%	0.9%	15.7%	3.1%	1.0%	5.0%	2.3%	10.8%	4.1%	5.2%
<b>State Average</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Education

**Table 5**  
**Juvenile Delinquency Filings by County from FY 2001-02 through FY 2009-10**

County	Fiscal Year									Total Change 2001-10
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Adams	1,280	1,146	1,032	1,013	1,003	926	958	782	717	-563
Alamosa	97	94	83	91	69	98	58	42	46	-51
Arapahoe	1,845	1,795	1,532	1,557	1,424	1,357	1,210	1,181	947	-898
Archuleta	32	51	21	27	21	27	46	87	15	-17
Baca	6	8	2	6	5	7	5	6	12	6
Bent	31	36	10	16	22	17	23	16	21	-10
Boulder	1,197	926	942	913	906	822	783	721	718	-479
Broomfield	130	181	145	132	129	88	119	97	81	-49
Chaffee	68	45	61	59	47	64	46	40	29	-39
Cheyenne	3	8	4	4	2	5	1	3	6	3
Clear Creek	32	42	52	19	29	16	15	11	19	-13
Conejos	17	28	6	14	22	10	8	19	17	0
Costilla	10	12	10	19	10	12	5	10	0	-10
Crowley	24	15	5	9	11	6	7	3	13	-11
Custer	8	6	5	1	10	10	18	10	5	-3
Delta	95	106	78	69	72	86	82	92	55	-40
Denver	2,412	2,306	1,959	1,734	1,799	1,804	1,621	1,552	1,339	-1,073
Dolores	5	2	4	1	0	4	0	1	1	-4
Douglas	582	736	617	733	757	761	581	713	575	-7
Eagle	82	96	102	82	90	94	111	132	86	4
El Paso	2,094	2,040	2,123	1,873	1,806	1,834	1,890	1,671	1,426	-668
Elbert	52	28	32	51	36	36	40	60	44	-8
Fremont	211	284	305	366	342	344	313	258	194	-17
Garfield	163	171	104	124	190	136	136	153	135	-28
Gilpin	24	18	10	4	10	7	5	3	5	-19
Grand	31	31	30	43	34	35	37	32	23	-8
Gunnison	44	66	48	35	39	42	47	27	69	25
Hinsdale	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1
Huerfano	72	47	43	27	43	37	48	38	39	-33
Jackson	7	5	1	0	0	4	1	4	1	-6
Jefferson	2,036	1,896	1,733	1,646	1,664	1,412	1,397	1,349	1,167	-869

**Table 5 (Cont.)**  
**Juvenile Delinquency Filings by County from FY 2001-02 through FY 2009-10**

County	Fiscal Year									Total Change 2001-10
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	
Kiowa	9	1	4	1	2	4	3	0	5	-4
Kit Carson	14	15	2	29	14	9	18	10	9	-5
La Plata	95	125	97	66	100	92	91	92	77	-18
Lake	38	43	49	37	39	45	20	21	18	-20
Larimer	1,061	1,071	1,022	906	1,075	1,038	1,260	1,328	1,243	182
Las Animas	61	78	95	91	141	80	55	29	76	15
Lincoln	14	18	33	24	34	13	17	16	10	-4
Logan	69	57	64	65	64	61	39	62	36	-33
Mesa	471	475	528	592	430	463	429	425	337	-134
Mineral	2	1	4	0	3	2	2	1	0	-2
Moffat	88	89	72	77	66	65	64	55	27	-61
Montezuma	97	153	62	118	101	102	70	106	68	-29
Montrose	101	90	89	90	92	83	87	173	104	3
Morgan	103	95	89	81	57	98	93	84	84	-19
Otero	176	108	86	126	100	84	57	79	53	-123
Ouray	2	4	5	5	3	7	5	6	4	2
Park	45	71	60	66	46	56	30	40	21	-24
Phillips	8	10	8	2	5	4	2	8	1	-7
Pitkin	36	15	15	17	21	32	32	16	34	-2
Prowers	50	78	48	44	38	40	42	19	37	-13
Pueblo	692	721	623	550	441	482	464	364	300	-392
Rio Blanco	21	16	26	10	8	10	10	18	13	-8
Rio Grande	86	88	64	99	96	97	113	83	66	-20
Routt	53	54	51	26	51	36	42	45	28	-25
Saguache	28	38	18	32	18	10	5	20	19	-9
San Juan	3	1	2	0	4	2	1	3	1	-2
San Miguel	11	27	11	4	6	5	16	7	8	-3
Sedgwick	0	7	5	NA	0	4	4	1	3	3
Summit	63	58	71	61	58	66	66	60	33	-30
Teller	91	87	67	63	77	69	62	63	45	-46
Washington	13	2	5	13	9	15	2	17	8	-5

**Table 5 (Cont.)  
 Juvenile Delinquency Filings by County from FY 2001-02 through FY 2009-10**

County	Fiscal Year									Total Change
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2001-10
Weld	1,349	1,243	1,466	1,818	1,078	1,090	1,277	1,285	1,059	-290
Yuma	34	12	21	12	7	24	17	19	8	-26
<b>Total Change</b>										<b>-6,035</b>

Source: Colorado Judicial Branch