FY 26

Dropout Recovery Programs

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT: SCHOOL YEAR 2025–2026

RUSSEL POTTER, PH.D. | SCHOOL SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Pursuant to guidelines in ARS §15-901.06, this report provides a view of the performance of schools approved to operate Dropout Recovery Programs during the last fiscal year.

Overview

Schools: Dropout Recovery Programs (DRPs) provide Arizona students who have dropped out of high school the opportunity to return to education and obtain a high school diploma. DRPs may be operated by any public school district, whether charter districts or traditional districts, or county accommodation districts. Districts must apply for approval to operate a DRP, after first applying for alternative status, making DRPs a special subset of the state's alternative schools. Requiring DRPs to hold alternative status ensures their mission is to serve students otherwise unable to profit from traditional educational programs.

Some DRPs operate within a school, with a subset of students served as alternative students, and some students served as DRP students. DRPs are required to provide students with all appropriate and mandated services, including special education and other provisions as required by law, and fulfill all obligations related to testing and accountability. DRPs must provide appropriately certificated and highly qualified teachers for all coursework.

Students: Students attending DRPs must be 16 years of age or older and have an appropriate withdrawal code from a prior school. During the first month of enrollment, students develop a written learning plan with their assigned mentor, specific to their unique academic needs and remaining graduation requirements. Further, during the first month of enrollment, schools may provide wraparound services including social work coaching sessions, trauma coaching sessions, or food and housing security coaching sessions. These wraparound services may be applied to *satisfactory monthly progress* (see below) in the student's initial month, while not applying to graduation requirements.

Expectations: Student attendance and performance is tracked through **satisfactory monthly progress** (SMP). During the first month of enrollment, SMP is based on the development of the student's written learning plan and the provision of any wraparound services. After the student's enrollment month, the state requires SMP to be defined within the context of course or credit completion. In schools where students pursue course completion sequentially, SMP is bound by an expectation of 0.5 credits per month. For schools where students pursue course completion concurrently, progress in those courses must equate to no less than 0.5 credits per month, when aggregated across all months of attendance. Students enrolled for 12 months are expected to earn 5.5 full credits towards graduation.

Accountability: DRP students are not expected to attend classes in person or online on any specific, set schedule. Schools are assumed to operate 7 days a week, with services exceeding the normal work or school day. The unique nature of DRP students means schools operating DRPs do not take attendance like other alternative schools. Students are expected to *make progress* at a rate that meets the requirements for satisfactory monthly progress. Student progress is reported to the Department of Education by the 10th day of the following month and aggregated on

a report called the *DRP_10 Dropout Recovery Program Data Verification Report* (DRP10). Students enrolled in teacher-facilitated courses and meeting the expectations for SMP for the current *or previous* month are counted as in attendance. Students failing to meet the expectations for SMP for two or more consecutive months are not counted as in attendance until they return and meet the program's expectations for reentry.

Districts approved to operate a dropout recovery program are free to contract with educational management organizations (EMOs) for the provision of DRP services. Schools receiving EMO services are required to ensure that:

- The EMO is accredited by a regional accrediting body;
- All teachers provided by the EMO hold a current teaching license from any state;
- All teachers hold a valid Arizona fingerprint clearance card; and,
- All teachers are highly qualified in the subjects to which they are assigned.

All schools operating a DRP and all EMOs providing DRP services are required to submit an annual report to the Department of Education prior to the end of July, following the end of the school year. Each school's submission is referred to as their *Annual Data Report*. This document relies primarily on data aggregated from these school submissions. Submissions were expected to include details for every student with any enrollment during the school year. After submission, it became apparent that due to the itinerant nature of many DRP students, amendments and updates were necessary, with resubmissions accepted as needed. All data from all school reports went into a *DRP Annual Data Report* (ADR) to inform this document. The Department of Education continues to work with schools to ensure that reporting requirements are met, and the method of submission is not overly onerous.

Required Data

Statutory requirements include four required reporting measures. Each datum is a combination of individual outcomes and requirements and may include overlapping results.

1. The number of students who were enrolled for at least 80 days AND either:
    a. Earned 4.5 credits; or,
    b. Earned all the credits required for graduation.
2. The total number of students enrolled prior to the end of January (1/31/2025), who:
    a. Graduated prior to the end of January (early graduates); or,
    b. Met each of the following requirements:
        i. Were enrolled in the DRP *on* the last day in January;
        ii. Needed 3 or fewer total credits to graduate; and,
        iii. Needed 1 or fewer total credits in mathematics to graduate.
3. The percentage of students described in paragraph 2 who graduated during the year.
4. The percentage of students described in paragraph 2 who earned at least one college and career readiness indicator point.

Schools

19 districts (LEAs) were approved to operate DRPs, with 23 total schools providing DRP services to students during FY26. These schools were split between district types, with 10 schools in 6 charter districts, 9 schools individually in traditional districts, and 4 schools in county regional or accommodation districts (county districts). All 4 schools in county districts, 5 schools in traditional districts, and 6 schools in 3 charter districts received services from an EMO.

Two schools, Summit High School and Combs Center for Success High School, ceased operation of a DRP following the FY26 school year, and did not submit data. Both schools received EMO services, and their results were collected from the submission received from their EMO.

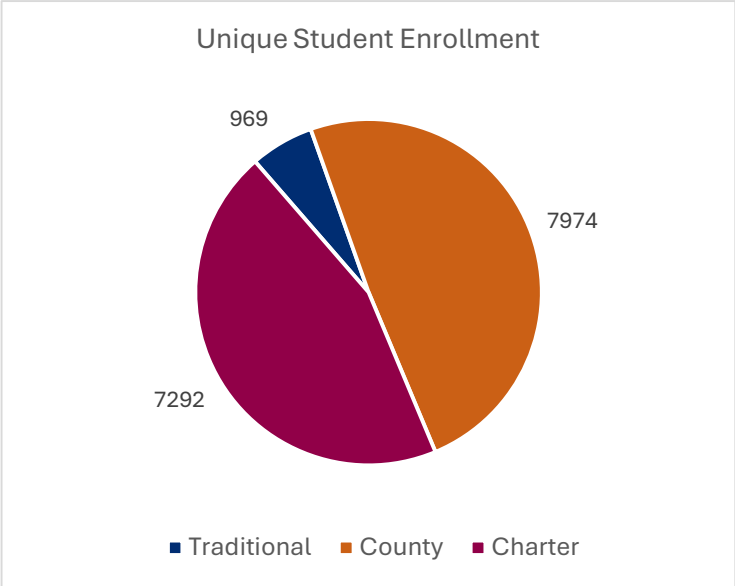
LEA	LEAID	School	School Code	EMO Name if any
Arizona Center for Youth Resources	4346	City View High School	5520	
Career Success Schools	79047	Career Success Schools - STEM Academy 7-12	80025	
Career Success Schools	79047	Career Success Schools - Tech Campus	79129	
Cochise County Accommodation School District	1001687	New Crossroads Academy	1001688	Graduation Solutions
Eastpointe High School, Inc.	78833	Eastpoint High School	78836	Elevated Education
Flagstaff Unified District	4192	Summit High School	4803	Graduation Solutions
Florence Unified School District	4437	Mountain Vista Academy	92280	
GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School	78997	Student Choice High School - Maricopa	1002106	Meelo Management Group
GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School	78997	Student Choice High School - Peoria	90737	Meelo Management Group
GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School	78997	Student Choice High School - Surprise	79022	Meelo Management Group
GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School	78997	Student Choice High School - Yuma	1002107	Meelo Management Group
J O Combs Unified School District	4445	Combs Center for Success High School	1001830	Graduation Solutions
Marana Unified District	4404	MCAT High School	6279	Graduation Alliance
Maricopa County Regional School District	4234	Hope College and Career Readiness Academy	969999	Graduation Solutions
Mesa Unified District	4235	East Valley Academy	78932	Graduation Alliance
Mingus Union High School District	4488	The Academy at Mingus	90449	Graduation Solutions
Navajo County Accommodation District	4386	Navajo County Instruction for Success (NCIS)	7654	Legacy Learning Community
North Star Charter School, Inc.	79701	Arizona Preparatory Academy	79702	
Peoria Unified School District	4237	Peoria Flex Academy	6231	
Pima County Accommodation School District	4401	Pima County Schools Superintendent's Diploma Program	1001696	Graduation Solutions
Prescott Unified District	4466	Genesis Academy	1001973	
Show Low Unified District	4393	White Mountain Institute	79646	
Tucson Youth Development/ACE Charter High School	4422	Alternative Computerized Education (ACE) Charter High School	5861	Graduation Solutions

Datum 1: Enrollment

This report defaults to the Annual Data Reporting (ADR) data submitted by each school or their EMO. Some discrepancies between the various reports are discussed in the *issues and concerns* section, below.

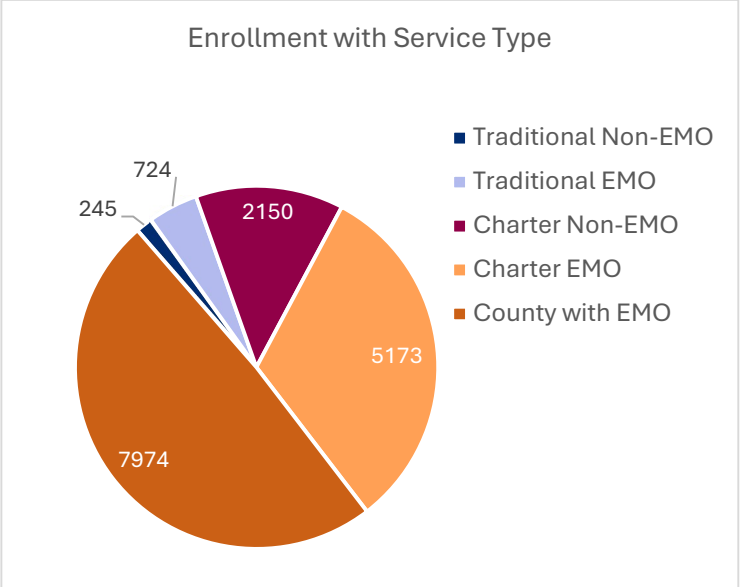
DRP ADR shows 16,009 unique students enrolled in a DRP at some point during the year. These students are nearly split between district types. Most DRP students attended a charter school, with the second largest group attending one of the four county district programs. Traditional district DRPs generally only serve students from within their own district and have the smallest population of students.

As students may move between schools in various districts, and schools with or without EMO services, the following data relies on the unique enrollment counts for each school.



Those students enrolling in more than one school led to a larger count of reported enrollments (16,235). Additionally, some students enroll, leave the DRP, and return to the same (or another) school, resulting in an even larger count of total enrollments across all schools (17,942).

Most students are enrolled in DRPs provided by county districts. All four of these districts enrolled students through their EMO for FY26. Students in DRPs operated by traditional school districts tend to be their own students, resulting in a much smaller subset of the population. Over 85% of all enrolled students received DRP services from an EMO, with 66% receiving services from the same EMO.



Item 1: 80-day enrollment results

1. The number of students who were enrolled for at least 80 days AND either:
   a. Earned 4.5 credits; or,
   b. Earned all the credits required for graduation.

Credits Earned	Non-graduates	Graduates
< 4.5	9,421	661
4.5 +	1,813	1,025

Most students who attended a DRP were enrolled for at least 80 days (12,859 students, 80%). Of those, only 2,838 earned 4.5 or more credits, with an additional 661 students earning fewer credits but meeting the requirements for graduation during the school year. Of students continuously enrolled for at least 80 days, 27% met the expected requirements of Item 1. (Note: Some students may have enrolled for 80 days, withdrew, and enrolled again for 80 days. These students may be counted twice in the table and calculations above.)

Traditional and charter districts had essentially equal success with Type 1 students graduating or earning 4.5 or more credits (27.7% vs 28.6%), while county districts performed less well (15.7%). Charter districts had a marginally better rate than traditional districts, of students earning sufficient credits (17.7% vs 16.8%), but much higher than the county districts (10.2%). Traditional and County districts had the highest rate of graduating students with fewer than 4.5 credits (5.9% and 5.8%, respectively), compared to charter districts (4.2%). Traditional districts had a better rate of graduating students earning 4.5 or more credits (41.3%, vs 36.1% and 35.0% for charter and county districts).

District Type	Nongraduates earning < 4.5 credits	Nongraduates earning 4.5 or more credits	Graduates earning < 4.5 credits	Graduates earning 4.5 or more credits	Type 1 Success Rate
Traditional	501	128	45	90	28.6%
Charter	4055	1049	251	592	27.7%
Regional	4932	636	365	343	15.7%

Additionally, Type 1 students in schools receiving DRP services from an EMO experienced a much lower Type 1 success rate than those not receiving EMO services (17.8% vs 46.5%).

Service Type	Nongraduates earning < 4.5 credits	Nongraduates earning 4.5 or more credits	Graduates earning < 4.5 credits	Graduates earning 4.5 or more credits	Type 1 Success Rate
No EMO	972	695	55	185	46.5%
EMO	8464	1118	606	840	17.8%

Datum 2: Early Graduates and On Track Students

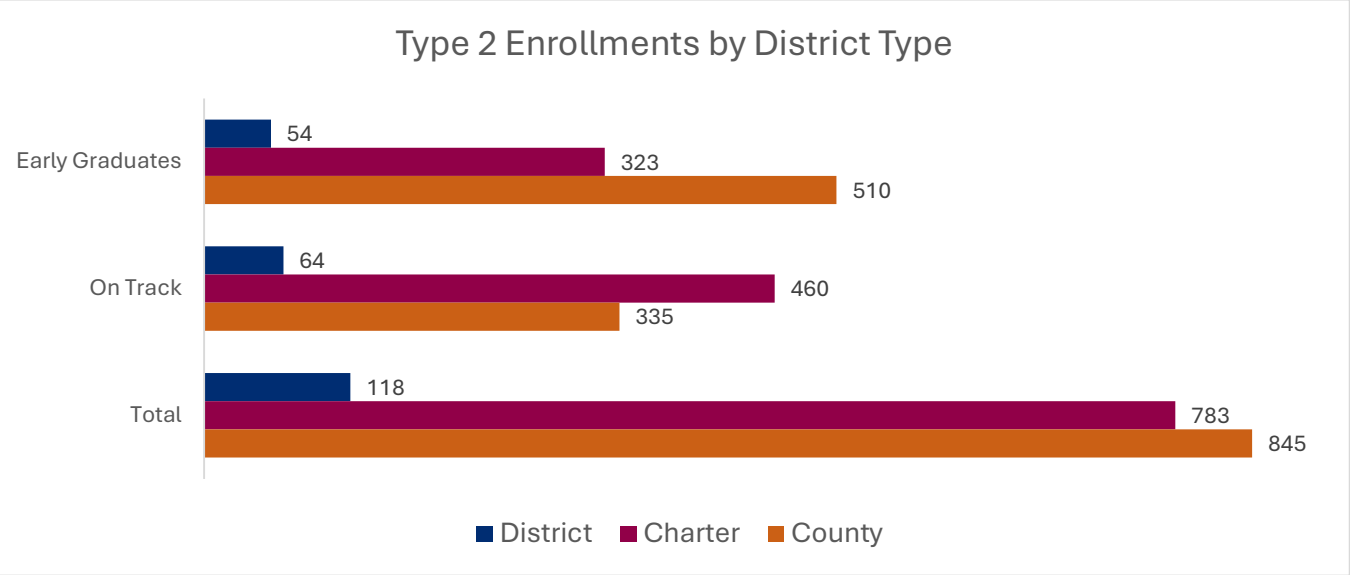
Datum 2 of the report requirements focuses on identifying students who, with sufficient performance at the DRP, could be expected to complete high school requirements during the school year. This requirement sets a foundation based on one of two groups:

- ***Early graduates*** (Type 2a): students who graduate from the DRP with a high school diploma prior to the end of January 2026; and,
- Students enrolled on January 31st, 2026, who meet a sequence of requirements that mirror the ***on track to graduate*** requirements for State Letter Grade accountability (Type 2b). These counts provide the denominators for the remaining required reported values.

These two groups form the basis for all future values required by statute.

2. The total number of students enrolled prior to the end of January (1/31/2026), who:
   a. Graduated prior to the end of January (early graduates); or,
   b. Met each of the following requirements:
      i. Were enrolled in the DRP *on* the last day in January;
      ii. Needed 3 or fewer total credits to graduate; and,
      iii. Needed 1 or fewer total credits in mathematics to graduate.

887 students graduated by the end of January (Type 2a students). An additional 859 students were enrolled by the end of January and had only 3 or fewer total credits remaining to graduate, including no more than 1 credit in mathematics (Type 2b students). These 1,746 students are concentrated at county districts (approximately 48.4% of all DRP students), followed by Charters (44.8%) and Traditional districts (6.8%).

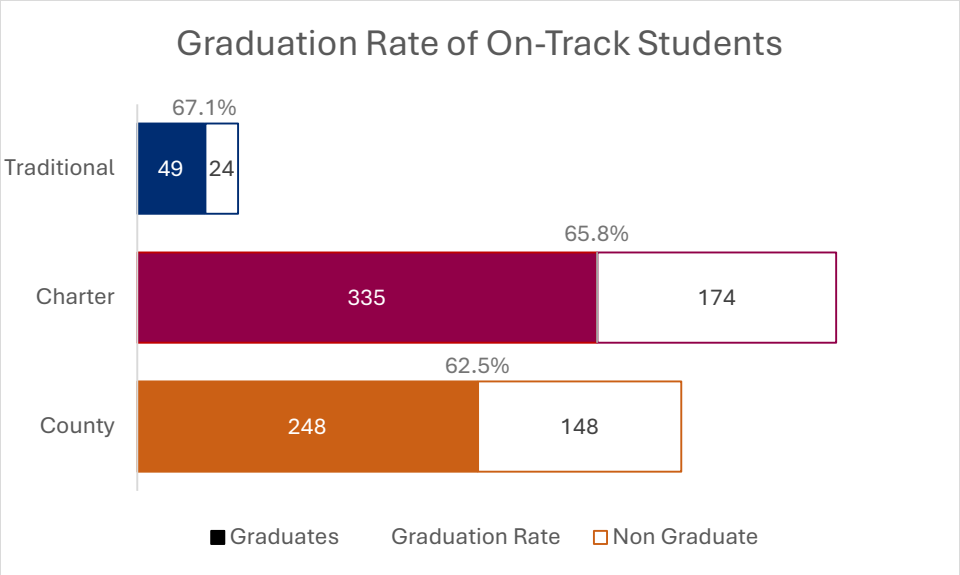


Datum 3: Graduation Rate of Type 2 Students

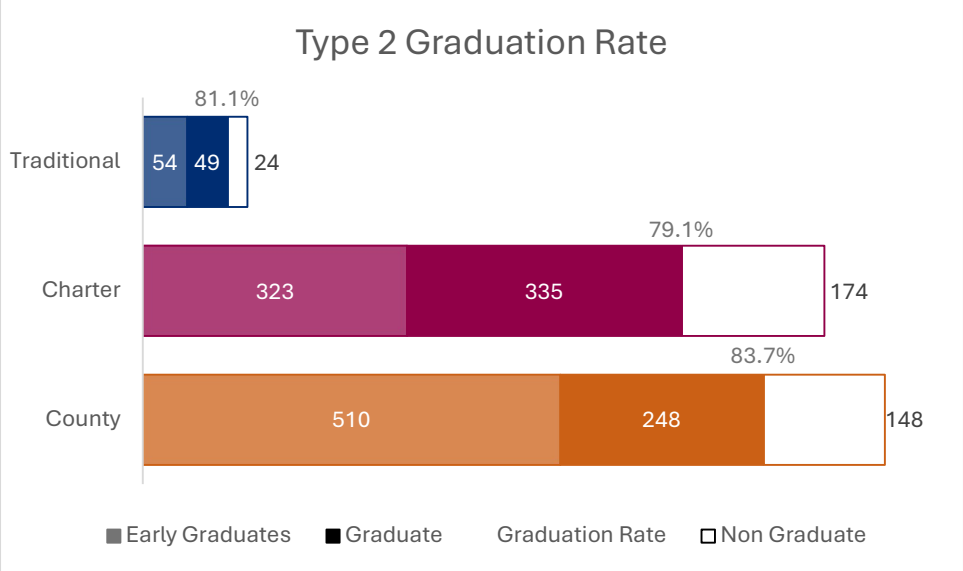
The third component of this report is the graduation rate of all students identified by the second part, as either *early graduates* or *on track to graduate,* as explained in the previous section.

3. The percentage of students described in paragraph 2 who graduated during the year.

In addition to the 887 students graduating *prior* to the end of January, 632 students meeting the requirements for Type 2b status graduated during the school year. Only traditional districts met the Federal Accountability graduation rate requirement, exceeding 66.67%.



For all districts, the graduation rate for type 2b students is about 80%, with a total of 1,519 Type 2 students graduating during the school year.

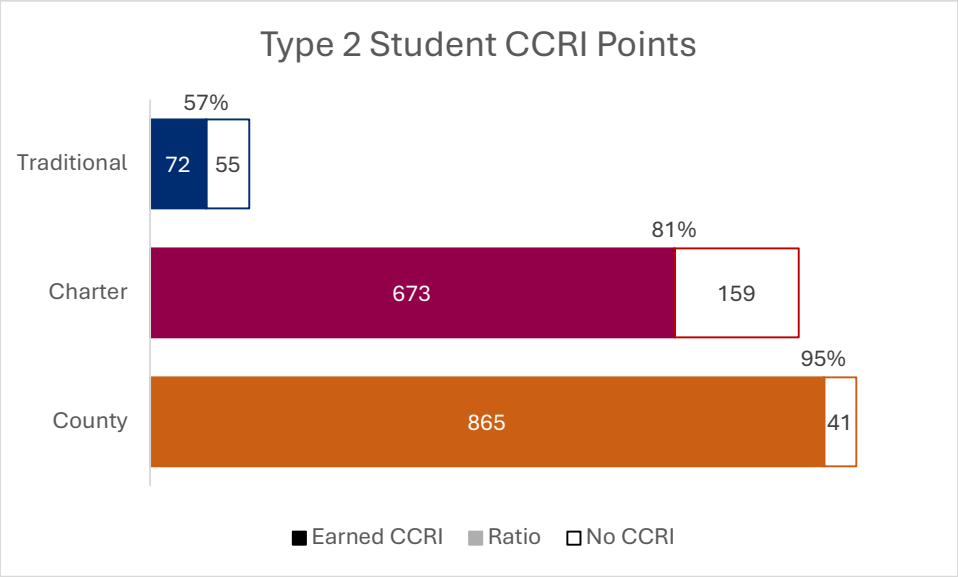


Datum 4: CCRI Ratio of Type 2 Students

The final datum required for the annual report is also couched in terms of the Type 2 students, defined above. This measure is a determination of how many of those Type 2 students *earned* at least one college and career readiness indicator (CCRI) point on the annual submission for A-F letter grades.

4. The percentage of students described in paragraph 2 who earned at least one college and career readiness indicator point.

There are 887 early graduates and 978 on-track students, combined to create a pool of 1,865 total type-2 students. Of those students, 1,610 (86%) earned at least one full CCRI point for the academic year report for A-F letter grades. County districts ensured 95% of their eligible students earned at least one CCRI point, outperforming their local charter (81%) and traditional districts (57%) peers.



Note, the statutory requirements for reporting CCRI results for these students to ADE in the individual school Annual Data Report marginally differ from the Accountability requirements for what students *qualify* for CCRI points. It is plausible that some of these students completed the steps necessary to qualify for CCRI points, but due to their graduation plan were not eligible for inclusion in the CCRI Self Report for A-F letter grades. Those students would be included in a future year, provided they continued to qualify for DRP reporting as well. See further information on this in the *about the data* section, below.

About the Data

Note that neither Type 1 nor Type 2 students encompass all enrolled students throughout the year. Further, the 80-day requirement for Type-1 students is not aligned with how DRPs provide services to students—a student may be enrolled for 80 days but only be active in coursework for the second month of that span, and then fail to participate in the 3rd month, after the 60th day. Alternately, a student may be enrolled for a total of 80 nonconsecutive days, with continued revisions to their written learning plan, and never be in a position to complete any credits. The 80-day requirement is below the expected days necessary to manifest 4.5 credits; if the base rate is 0.5 credits per month. Further, a student enrolled and making satisfactory progress for the full 80 days, but taking multiple courses concurrently, may not finish *any* credits within that timeframe.

Data for this report was primarily collected from annual submissions from each school and/or educational management organization (EMO), referred to in this document as the DRP Annual Data Report (DRPADR). School reports were checked for all inclusions where possible. Some data was compared to each school's submitted College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI) report submitted to Accountability during the letter-grade submission window.

Note that not all reported CCRI points on the annual submission matched the submissions on the CCRI submission due to variations in reporting requirements—CCRI self-reports expects schools to *not include* students not expected to graduate from their DRP during the fiscal year, even if they otherwise meet the *on track to graduate* requirements of reporting requirement 2b. Initial receipts from schools and their EMOs included students and their CCRI *accomplishments* even if those students were not included in the CCRI report. Additionally, some students were included on the CCRI reports that were *not* included in the annual data reports from schools. Further, differences in reported values for those students appearing on both reports were common. Some of this was due to miscommunication: the Annual DRP data report only needs to know if a student earned *at least one* CCRI point, which would be met by a student reported on the CCRI report with 3 points. ADE worked to clear as many issues as possible and continues to revise and improve the DRP annual reporting process.

Data was also compared to the enrollment submissions for Dropout Recovery Satisfactory Monthly Progress report (DRP10), for each student at each school.

Issues and Concerns

Required Datum Limitations: Due to the nature of SMP and the current-or-prior monthly progress reporting, it is possible that a student can be enrolled for all 12 months of the year and meet the credit requirements for satisfactory monthly progress (SMP) only in alternating months. Schools are required to track SMP based solely on student performance at achievement no less than ½ credit per month. A student making SMP all year *should* earn 5.5 graduation credits. However, if the student made SMP in the prior month, they may retain SMP for the next month.

For a student to be disenrolled, they must either withdraw or fail to meet SMP for two consecutive months. This nuance makes it difficult to determine if a student is expected to earn 5.5 graduation credits. For example, a 12-month student with an itinerant monthly progress may 'earn' the school 12 full months of Average Daily Membership (ADM) but only be expected to earn 2.5 credits toward graduation. Further, students taking courses concurrently may be on track to earn the full 5.5 graduation credits, but if that student is absent or fails to make progress in the last month, they may in fact earn zero credits for the entire year while counting as making 'satisfactory progress' the entire time.

Further, the content in this report focuses on only a tiny subset of the overall DRP student population. Datum 1 focuses on 80% of the student population, due to the 80-day requirement. Parts 2 through 4 focus only on early graduates (887 of the over 16,000 students) and those on track to graduate in the current year (978 students). With only 1,865 students included in 3/4ths of the reporting, it is hard to claim that less than 12% of the total student-school enrollment population provides a clear picture of how these programs are performing.

Enrollment: The school/EMO-submitted ADR reports show 16,009 unique students enrolled in a DRP at some point during the year. Some of these students (1,785—11%) had multiple enrollments, both at the same school or at different schools. This was heavily concentrated at the county district level (72.3%), further concentrated among schools receiving services of an EMO (93.9%), with 79.6% of all multiple enrollments at schools serviced by the same single EMO. To measure 80 days of *consecutive enrollment,* potential future reports would need to capture the full enrollment history of each student, and for those data to be matched and validated by other enrollment data submitted to the Department of Education.

The DRP10 report shows 15,989 unique students enrolled. Only 8 schools had student reports similar to the DRP10 provisions. All four county districts had errors in either self-generated or EMO-provided submissions, with 5 traditional districts (4 of which used EMOs), and 6 charter districts (of which 3 used EMOs). While the nature of these data is complicated, ongoing analysis shows that the difference between Annual Report counts and submitted SMP counts are concentrated at schools serviced by EMOs, with almost the entire difference at schools serviced by the same EMO.

School Years: Some schools program their academic year and student progress in such a way that students might graduate after June 30th. Students graduating on July 1st or 2nd have an enrollment record that stretches into the following academic year, removing them from both the On-Track to Graduate CCRI allowance, and from the graduation count for the current academic year. Additionally, those students are tracked as making satisfactory progress for the month of July. Whether a student has 'earned ½ credit' in those few days is questionable at best. Additionally, students receiving satisfactory progress for a the month in which they have enrolled for fewer than 5 days is not restricted to July.

It may be prudent to provide additional guidelines on graduation dates and timelines, and/or a restriction on how many days a student must be 'active' before being able to count as making Satisfactory Monthly Progress.

DRP10: The DRP10 Satisfactory Monthly Progress report (DRP10) is a district-specific report for students earning or being tracked for satisfactory monthly progress. For the purposes of this analysis, all DRP10 reports from FY26 for all schools approved to operate a DRP were aggregated into one complete report. For each individual student enrollment, a row of results is produced, such that a student who enrolls, withdraws, and reenrolls may produce more than one row of data. A student may enroll, withdraw, and enroll at a *different* DRP, withdraw, return to the first DRP, and so on. Analysis shows that a given student may appear in the report up to four times in one school year. However, some students were included with inaccurate data, including having an improper Student ID assigned for various reasons, or not having a valid school membership. Students included with inaccurate data are *not* included in ADM funding.

DRP10-ADR Discrepancies

District ADR reports show self-reported counts of total units earned for each student enrollment. These were aggregated, ensuring all credits earned by a student at any given school were included, regardless of number of enrollments at that school. Then, these counts were combined with the total number of months claimed for SMP by each district for each student-school combination. Again, any student changing schools would have their individual-school results included at only that school. Finally, the total days enrolled at any given school for each student were collected. This allowed us to focus the following analysis on only student-school enrollments of no less than 10 days.

The DRP10 report had 16,430 unique school-student enrollment records. Of these, 217 were 10 days or less, and an additional 1,457 enrollments with no months of SMP claimed. Of note, 82 of those zero-SMP enrollments were listed as enrolled for the full calendar year. The remaining 14,695 student-school enrollments were used to determine a ratio of credits earned per month of SMP claimed, approximately 0.50, precisely what would be expected if all students earn one half-credit per month. However, the variation among students *and* schools was great.

Schools ranged from 0.15 to 1.25 credits per month of satisfactory progress. The lowest ratio school claimed 300 months of satisfactory progress but reported only 45 total units. The highest ratio school 6,862 months of satisfactory progress and reported 8,557 credits.

Analysis shows that 4,422 student-school enrollments with at least one month of satisfactory monthly progress included had zero reported graduation credits. Indeed, 71 of those students were reported as receiving a full 12 months of SMP, and additional 449 students with 6-11 months and no reported credits. Another 4,912 student-school enrollments had a credit-SMP count ratio of less than 0.458 (which is expected of a 12-month student earning 5.5 credits).

These 4,422 students with no credits, 449 student enrollments of 6-11 months with no credits, and the 4,912 students with a ratio below expected amounts to roughly 2/3rds of the entire enrolled population (66.57%).

At the other end of the spectrum, there were several students enrolled for less than a month earning as many as 23 credits. These students with a credit-SMP ratio above 2 are a minority. There were 632 such students, averaging just under 4 months of SMP, earning an average of 12.5 credits, with one student earning 16.5 credits in only 7 days.

DRP Annual Data Report and EMO Oversight: The DRP Annual Data Report (ADR) submitted to the Department of Education by each school also expected a single row per student, per enrollment. Any student enrolling, leaving, and returning should have two separate records. For each record, schools are expected to provide the number of graduation credits and the number of math credits remaining at enrollment, and the number completed at the end of enrollment.

The intent was to capture the data for each student in the context of the legislative reporting requirements for this Annual Report. Many schools contracting with EMOs surrender control of their own data to the EMO, resulting in reliance on the EMO for 100% of their data submissions. Due to this, submissions from the schools affiliated with that EMO submitted *only* what the EMO shared with them. In some cases, submissions were ONLY received directly from the EMO, and some schools did not error-check or validate their EMO submitted reports.

It is unclear if this surrender of data authority to the EMO is the cause of other EMO-adjacent concerns raised in this report. Due to the complexity of the data involved, this report focused on the aggregation of self-reported data as described by statute. However, further analysis to determine the specific performance of each School-EMO relationship may be necessary to reveal the causes of these data issues, and indeed if the State of Arizona is getting sufficient return for the investment in DRP services.