

CODCA Outperforms State and National Averages in Teacher Retention, Graduation Rates



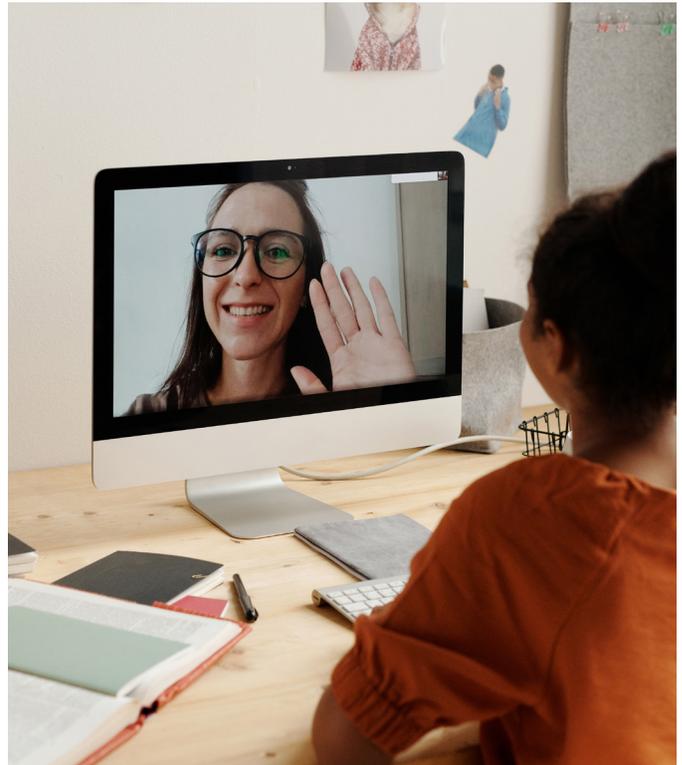
To improve outcomes, school leaders at Destinations Career Academy of Colorado (CODCA) have focused on the following key objectives:

1. Structured school leadership
2. Data-driven decision making
3. Support for credit-deficient students
4. Enhanced parent and family engagement
5. Expanded career learning opportunities

This focus has led to stronger teacher retention rates, higher graduation rates, and lower drop-out rates than state and national averages.

“We work hard to ensure our school is innovative and provides the best place for our students’ journeys in education. We are a cohesive team and we all put our students first to ensure they are growing in academics, are prepared for both college and career, and become confident young people.”

Teri Cady, CODCA Head of School



With strong school leaders, a career-focused curriculum, and a devotion to personalizing the student experience, Destinations Career Academy of Colorado (CODCA), has become synonymous with student success. An online program of the Julesburg School District, CODCA is the state's first full-time, online career technical education¹ program approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE).

At CODCA, every student has access to a rich curriculum taught by state-licensed teachers. In addition to career-focused coursework, students are offered the core subjects of English/language arts, math, science, history, world languages, and Advanced Placement® courses. CODCA has become a prime example of how an effective leadership team and a robust career learning program can contribute to student retention year-over-year and enhance student (and parent) satisfaction.

¹Throughout this document, we use the terms “career learning” and “career learning education” to describe specific course offerings at CODCA. Career learning is more advanced than the vocational training of the past and much broader than what’s traditionally referred to as career technical education or CTE. That’s because through career learning programs, students complete their core academic classes alongside applied learning experiences.



Structured School Leadership

“When I wake up...I have a lot of plans. I’ve got a yearly plan, a five-year plan, a 10-year plan, and then I’ve narrowed [the plans] down [to] what I need to do that week and that day.”

CODCA school leader

Organizational leadership is tantamount to the success of any school. To this end, CODCA Head of School Teri Cady and her team are staying ahead of the shifting nature of online education through strategic planning and goal setting. Driven by the CODCA team’s remarkable leadership, students are well prepared for success—both during their enrollment at CODCA and post-graduation. Cady notes that maintaining a strong organizational approach to leadership is one of CODCA’s top priorities.

She adds that having a clear and concise structure for her team and a clear picture of where CODCA will be in the future helps her be a more effective leader. This vision is embraced wholeheartedly by the staff.

Data-driven Decision Making and Supporting Credit-Deficient Students

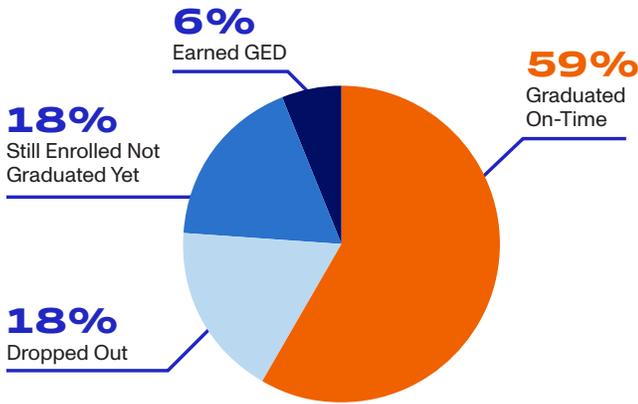
“To put a generalization out there about what all students need is a huge mistake. The key is to work with each one of them individually on what they need to succeed. As educators, sometimes we have basic ideas on improvement but after we study the data, we know where to push students and how to help them start.”

CODCA Head of School Teri Cady

CODCA creates clear pathways for success by using advanced data metrics, which help predict and inform student growth outcomes. By using student data gathered from annual standardized assessments, curricular assessments, and course progress metrics, the CODCA staff closely tracks each student to provide them with the support they need, whenever they need it. This includes social/emotional support services, college and career planning, and engagement support from CODCA student advisors.

Of the students enrolling at CODCA, more than 25 percent are credit deficient. Because of this, many of these students are not on track to graduate on time with their peers. By using an “Every Student, Every Quarter” approach, CODCA counselors meet with each student every quarter to address academic progress. This effort supports credit deficient students in catching up to their peers and graduating on time. In fact, nearly 80% of CODCA students from the class of 2020 graduated on time or are on track to graduate in their 5th year despite enrolling with credit deficient status (see table on next page):

Class of 2020 Cohort Credit Deficient Transfers

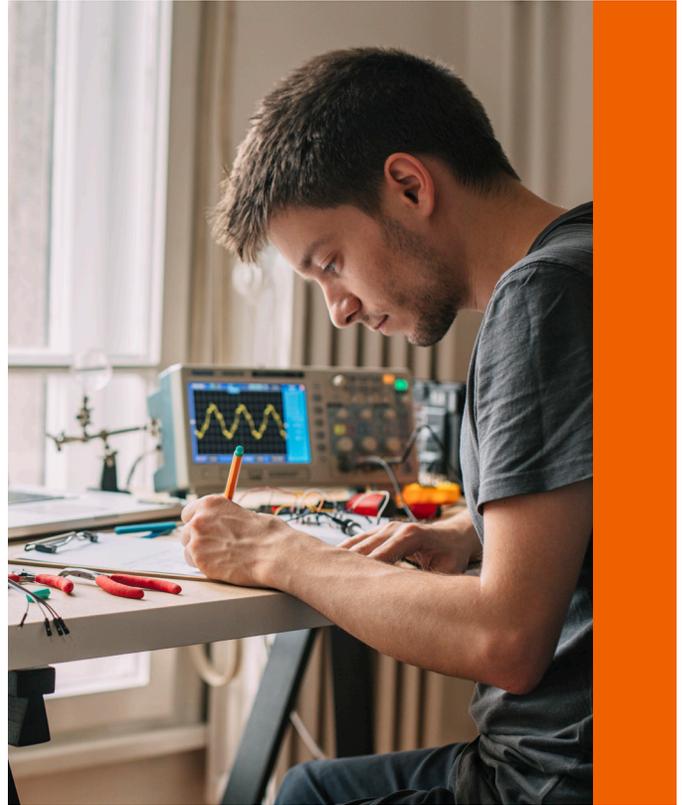


CODCA counselors don't solely review graduation requirements; they help students chart their post-graduation paths. Counselors also recommend various career learning programs that students can participate in, so that upon graduation, they are well-prepared to enter the field of their choosing.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

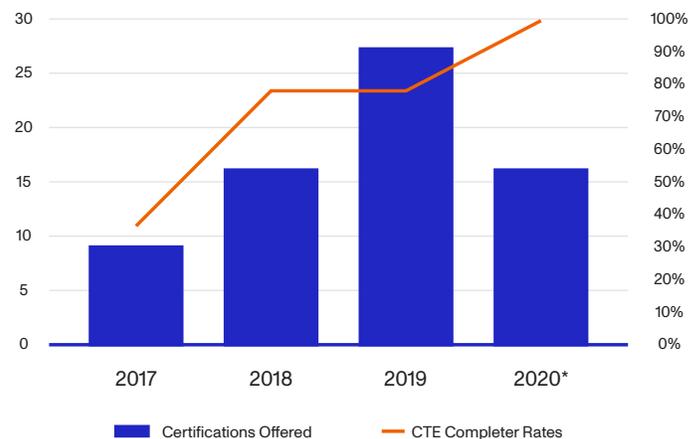
In 2020, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many career learning programs were limited or stopped altogether. However, CODCA was not part of this trend and career learning has continued unabated. In addition to career learning programs, students planning to attend a two or four-year college after graduation can enroll in college-level courses at any of the eleven community colleges that CODCA has partnered with. As part of this partnership, students can earn both college and high school credit.

Staff predict the school will offer upwards of 40 certification programs for students to choose from during the 2021-2022 school year. More specifically, they can study and pick from five growing, in-demand career fields: agriculture, business, health and human services, information technology (IT), and manufacturing. It's important to note that CODCA has seen increases year-over-year in the number of students working toward earning certifications in many of these programs, including Microsoft Excel, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Dreamweaver, and Solid Works.



As the number of certifications continues to increase, the percentage of students classified as "CTE Completers" has increased, too. A CTE Completer is defined as a student who has met all requirements for a career learning concentration and high school graduation or any other approved alternative education program (see table below).

CODCA Certifications Offered vs. Percentage of Students Completing CTE Program



On the other hand, if a CODCA student is unsure of their future college or career goals, the school’s counseling team provides exceptional support for students to gauge their interests and then provide both career learning opportunities and certification programs that support these interests. For example, students can join one of the many nationally-recognized Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) available to them at CODCA. CTSOs include:

CTSO	Career Learning Program at CODCA
Skills USA	IT Design
Technology Student Association	Programming/Engineering
Health Occupations Students of America-Future Health Professionals	Health Science, Legal & Law Enforcement, and Education & Training
Future Farmers of America	Agriculture
Future Business Leaders of America	Business and Marketing
eSports	Game Design

Staying up to date with the certifications and skills relevant in today’s job market is no easy task; that’s why CODCA relies on parents and dozens of industry leaders across the state to help them find new opportunities for students to succeed. Some of the partnership opportunities students at CODCA can take advantage of include those at the U.S. Olympic/Paralympic Games, the Trader Joe’s Virtual Art Department, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Enhanced Parent and Family Engagement

Parents and legal guardians have multiple opportunities to play an active role in their student’s academic journey. Coupled with robust support services—including Stride K12’s Strong Start program—CODCA parents and students can join dedicated learning communities aimed at providing families with the skills and resources they need to succeed in an online learning environment.

Caregivers also have the opportunity to attend CODCA’s monthly Student Accountability Committee (STAC) meetings to voice their opinions on the growing CODCA community. The STAC committee upholds its commitment to providing a transparent educational experience by providing student data metrics that illustrate how CODCA is performing.

Like other Stride K12-powered schools, CODCA staff regularly communicate with caregivers and learning coaches through email and by phone to keep them up to date on their students’ progress. These regular communication touch points help establish long-lasting relationships between families, teachers, and staff.

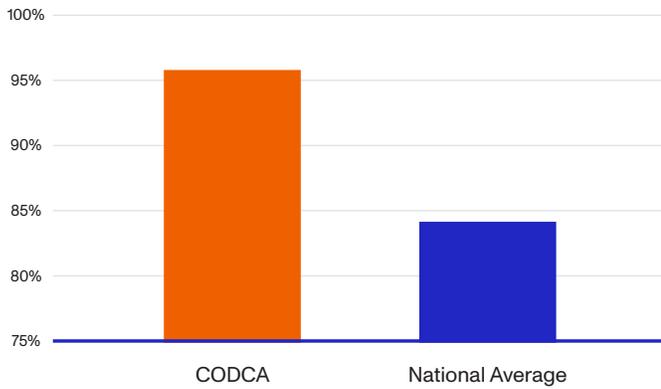
CODCA Maintains Stronger Teacher Retention Rates Than National Average

“The staff and admin are supportive and kind. I appreciate all the encouragement and opportunities to be creative and plan engaging, meaningful lessons for students. The admin is mindful of teacher autonomy and recognizing teachers as professionals. It’s a data-driven school, which I appreciate as well. CODCA gives teachers the chance to gather, review, and assess meaningful data that makes a difference in our planning and student success.”

CODCA English teacher

Of course, passion for student success is not exclusive to the leadership team. Because of the vision of the school and the collaboration between school leaders and teaching staff, CODCA has been a shining example of how school culture positively impacts teacher retention. For the past five years, teacher retention rates at CODCA have remained steady at more than 90% each year, a higher percentage than the national teacher retention rate of about 84%.

2020 Teacher Retention Percentages



Additionally, CODCA teachers report consistently high rates of satisfaction, according to the *2020 Teacher Culture & Satisfaction Survey*. This survey is distributed to teachers on an annual basis by Stride, Inc. When asked why they were satisfied teaching at CODCA, nearly every teacher reported “being supported by the staff” as a top reason.

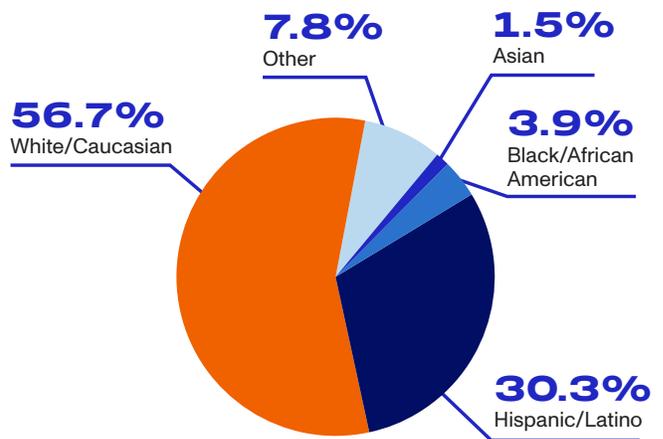
Teacher retention at CODCA has been integral to the ongoing success of the school. Not only do strong rates of teacher retention give a clear indication of the culture at the school, but retained teachers have a better understanding of the typical nuances that make every school unique.



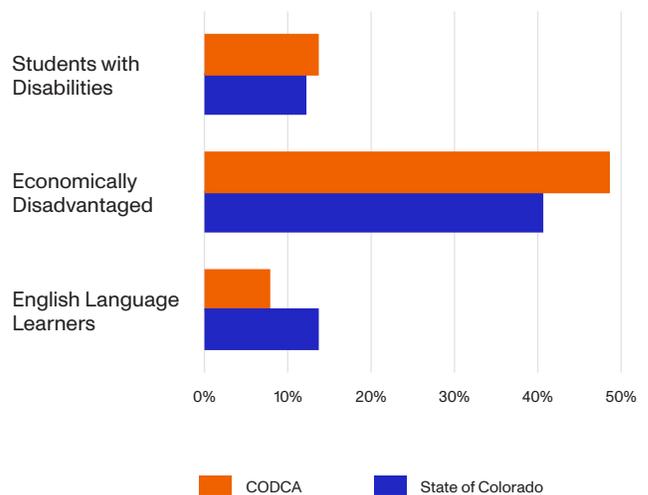
CODCA Boasts Increasing Graduation Rates

As of January 6, 2021, CODCA has a state-reported enrollment count of 869 students in grades 6-12. The demographic breakdown of students enrolled at CODCA is largely similar to that of the state of Colorado. However, among underserved student populations, CODCA has higher percentages of students with disabilities and economically-disadvantaged students than the state average (see charts below).

CODCA Demographics

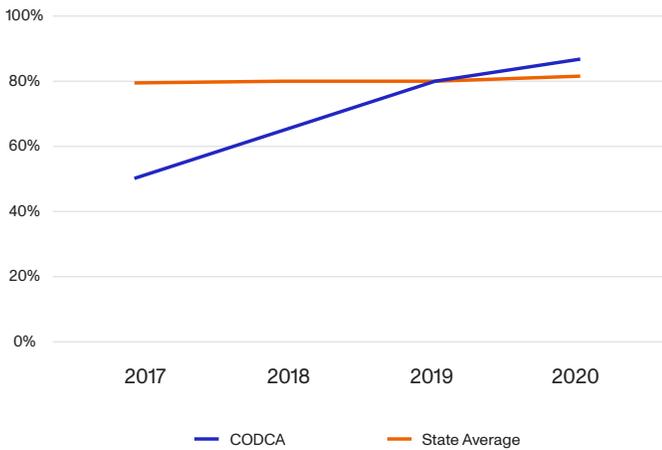


Underserved Student Populations



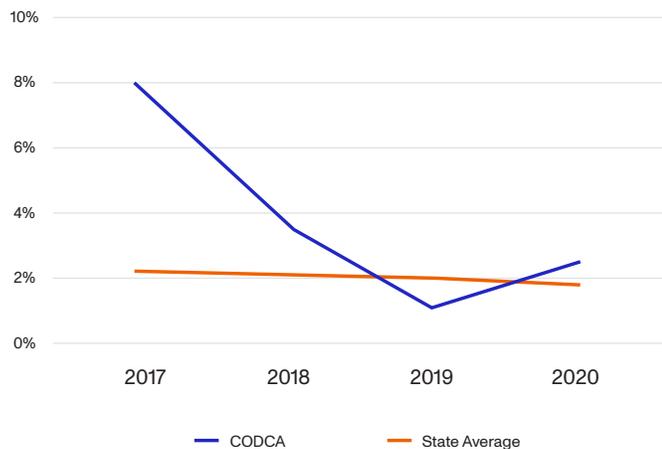
Supporting these students and those of all backgrounds and abilities is one of CODCA's top priorities. And the results of this effort can be seen in the school's graduation rates. As illustrated in the table below, CODCA has seen four-year graduation rates increase nearly 10 percentage points each year over the last five years. In addition, **CODCA achieved an 85.9% graduation rate during the 2019-2020 academic year, which surpassed the state of Colorado's average graduation rate that year of 81.9%.**

High School Graduation Rates in Colorado



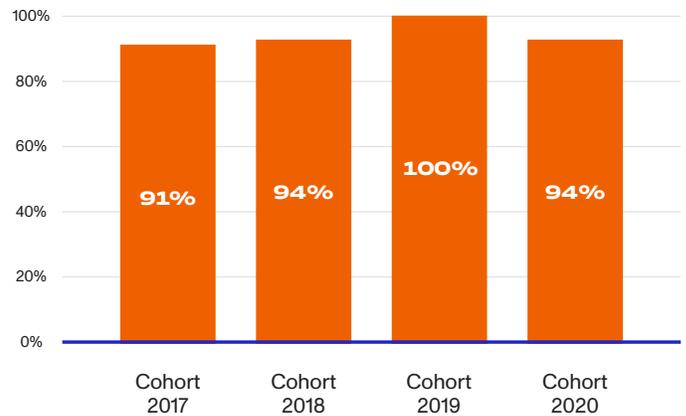
Conversely, because of the exponential *increase* in graduations rates at CODCA, drop-out rates at the schools have decreased significantly—from 8.0% in 2017, to 2.4% in 2020. Dropout rates at CODCA have improved so well at the school that in 2019, CODCA had a lower dropout rate (1.3%) than the entire state of Colorado (2.0%) (see table below).

Dropout Rates in Colorado



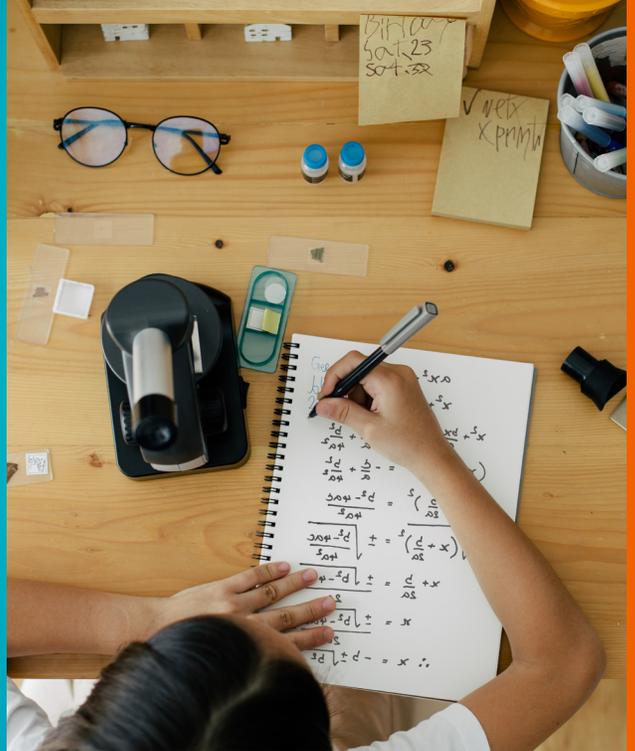
The relationship between mobility and graduation rates is often overlooked. Data clearly shows that schools that serve high mobile populations, like CODCA, have lower graduation rates. However, research indicates, that when students spend their entire high school career at CODCA (from ninth grade through graduation), they have an even greater likelihood of graduating in four years or less. In fact, between 2017-2020, at least 90% of students who enrolled in 9th grade and stayed enrolled throughout their senior year, went on to graduate within four years of enrollment (see table below).

Percentage of Non-Mobile Students Who Graduated Within Four Years of Enrollment of CODCA



The increase in student success outcomes at CODCA is the result of an engaging course curriculum, dedicated wraparound support services, and the school's growing career learning program. This program is designed to maximize student achievement and expose learners to college and career options. These are the reasons why CODCA has become a popular destination for students seeking a competitive advantage in the job market upon graduation.

CODCA has transformed the face of career learning in Colorado, in part because of its focus on data-driven decisions and its ability to provide real-world connections with industry leaders across the state of Colorado. The CODCA staff's passion for providing students with the greatest outcomes possible is a passion that has increased graduation rates to nearly 86% and keeps families returning to CODCA year after year.



About Stride

At Stride, Inc. (NYSE: LRN) we are reimagining learning – where learning is lifelong, deeply personal, and prepares learners for tomorrow. The company has transformed the teaching and learning experience for millions of people by providing innovative, high-quality, tech-enabled education solutions, curriculum, and programs directly to students, schools, the military, and enterprises in primary, secondary, and post-secondary settings. Stride is a premier provider of K-12 education for students, schools, and districts, including career learning services through middle and high school curriculum. For adult learners, Stride delivers professional skills training in healthcare and technology, as well as staffing and talent development for Fortune 500 companies. Stride has delivered millions of courses over the past decade and serves learners in all 50 states and more than 100 countries. The company is a proud sponsor of the Future of School, a nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the gap between the pace of technology and the pace of change in education. More information can be found at stridelearning.com, K12.com, destinationsacademy.com, galvanize.com, techelevator.com, and medcerts.com.