EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS FOR
FOR
STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

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Overview

- Educational Needs of Youth in Care
- DC Foster Youth Population
- Key Contacts
- Resources for Support
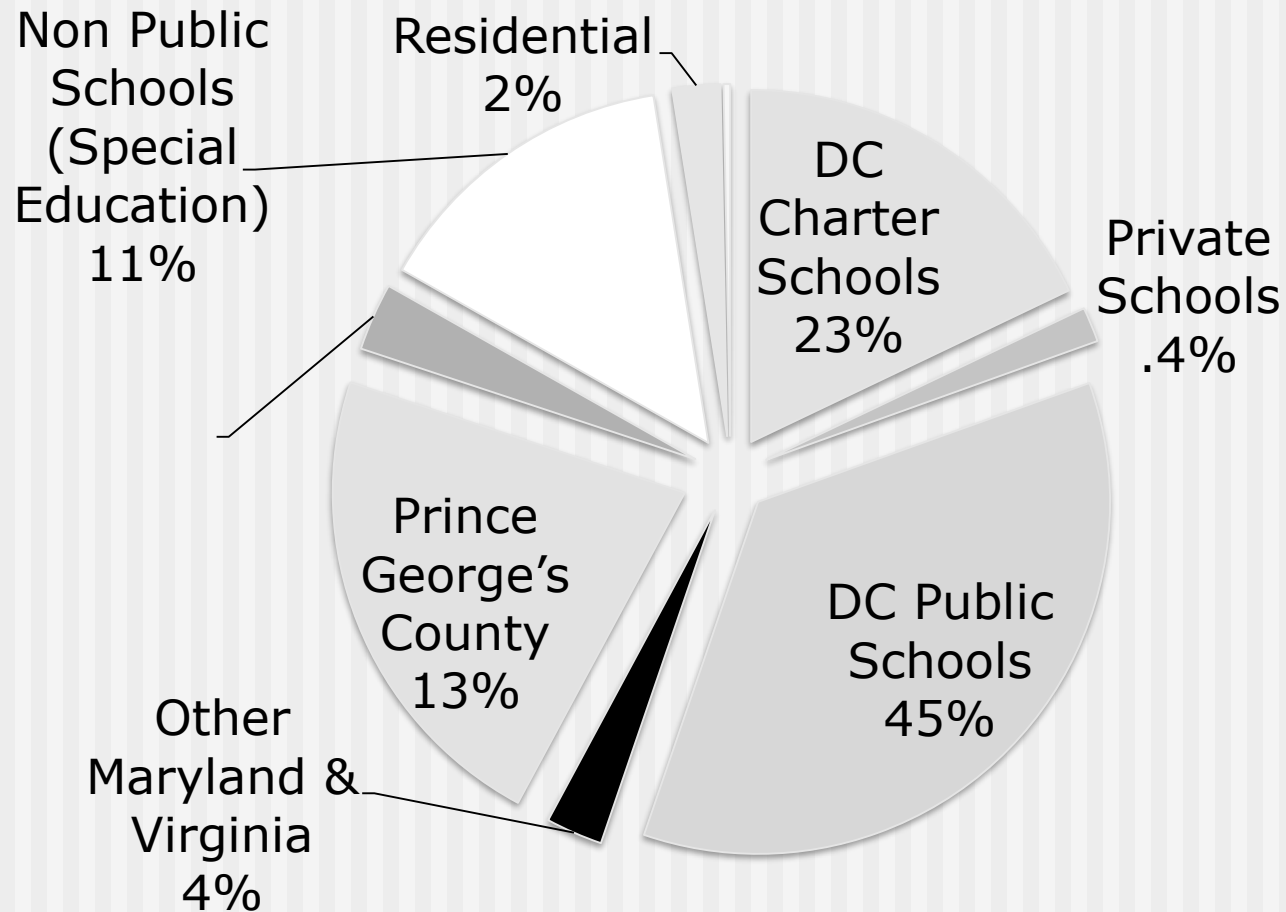 - Federal law mandates
  - CFSA Educational Services

Educational Profile of Foster Youth: National Statistics

➢ **Compared to other students, they experience:**

- Higher rates of school suspensions and expulsions;
- Lower standardized test scores in reading and math;
- High levels of grade retention and drop-out;
- Far lower high school and college graduation rates.

➢ **Highly mobile and prone to instability**

- Youth who had even one fewer placement change per year were almost twice as likely to graduate from high school before leaving care.

DC Kids in Care (as of 2/28/19)

Total Number of Kids in Foster Care		865
Characteristics	Number	Percentage
AGE		
0-5 y.o.	259	30%
6-12 y.o.	245	28%
13-17 y.o.	205	24%
18 - 21 y.o.	156	18%
GENDER		
Male	452	52%
Female	413	48%
RACE		
African American		78%
Hispanic		14%
Other		7%

Where DC Foster Youth Attend School

Pie chart showing where DC foster youth attend school:
- Non Public Schools (Special Education) 11%
- Residential 2%
- DC Charter Schools 23%
- Private Schools .4%
- DC Public Schools 45%
- Prince George's County 13%
- Other Maryland & Virginia 4%

DC Foster Youth Performance Data

Academic Performance

➢ 83% of foster youth in Grades 9-12 scored a Level 2 or below on the English/Lit section of the PARCC in SY 17-18

➢ 93% of foster youth in Grades 9-12 scored a Level 2 or below on the Math portion of the PARCC in SY 17-18

Special Education

➢ 46% of DC foster youth had IEPs during the SY17-18 school year

Factors that Impact Performance

➤ Trauma

➤ Higher propensity of disabilities

➤ Educational Neglect

➤ Parental disengagement; lack of support

➤ Placement stability

➤ Stigma

Key Contacts – Who is in their life in terms of education

Agency-connected

    1) CFSA social worker

        - through CFSA or one of our private agencies

    2) Caregiver

        - Foster parent, kinship parent, group home facility

Non-agency-connected

    1) Education Decision maker

        - Special ed

            - Biological or adoptive parent unless rights limited by the court

            - Surrogate parent or another individual appointed to be the ed decisionmaker by the court (foster parent, GAL, relative)

    2) GAL (Guardian ad litem) – court-appointed advocate

Key Contacts – Who to contact for what

- Illness, injury, homework issues, field trip or other authorizations (day to day issues/concerns)
  - Caregiver
  - If cannot reach caregiver, social worker
- Discipline issues
  - Education Decision maker (parent)
  - Helpful to also notify caregiver and social worker
- Special education decision-making
  - Education Decision maker
  - Helpful to also notify caregiver and social worker

Resources for Support: Federal Law

- Uninterrupted Scholars Act
- ESSA

Uninterrupted Scholars Act

- Exception to FERPA
- Allows schools to provide a child welfare agency copies of student's records without first obtaining parental consent

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Dual-agency (child welfare and education agency) responsibility for foster students' educational success

- Increased inter-agency communication & collaboration

- Elimination of barriers to enrollment

- Increased performance accountability and monitoring

Overview of Foster Care Provisions

- **School Stability Provisions** (remain in the same school if in the child's best interest; transportation when needed; immediate enrollment without barriers if change school)

- **Staff resources** at state and local education agencies (and child welfare agencies)

- **Charter School Grant** enrollment practices

- Required **disaggregate data collection** and reporting by SEAs

State Title I Plan Requirements: School Stability

- State Title I Plans must describe the steps the State Education Agency (SEA) will take to **ensure collaboration** with the State child welfare agency to **ensure the educational stability** of children in foster care.

- Federal child welfare law already requires child welfare agencies to collaborate with education agencies to ensure school stability; this law **creates reciprocal obligations on education agencies**.

School of Origin & Best Interest Determinations

- The plan must include assurances that:
  - Youth in foster care are **enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that its not in their best interest**
  - The **best interest determination** will be based on factors, including the consideration of:
    - The appropriateness of the current education setting; and
    - The proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement

Immediate Enrollment

- When a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be **immediately enrolled in a new school, even without the normally required records.**

- The **enrolling school must contact the previous school to obtain** academic and other **records**

State Title I Plan Requirements: Point of Contact at SEA

- The State Education Agency (SEA) must designate a **point of contact (POC) within their agency to work with the child welfare agencies**, who will oversee implementation of the SEA responsibilities.

  - The SEA point of contact may not be the same person as the State Coordinator for homeless children and youth under McKinney-Vento.

  - For DC, that person is Katie Reda, Special Programs Manager, OSSE (katie.reda@dc.gov)

State Title I Plan Requirements: Point of Contact at LEAs

- **Local Education Agencies** (LEAs – i.e., school districts, charter schools) **must designate a point of contact for children in foster care**, if the child welfare agency notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designated a point of contact within the child welfare agency for the LEA.

  - CFSA ESSA Foster Care POC is me, Megan Dho, Supervisor of Education and Child Care, (megan.dho@dc.gov; 202-727-1303)

School Stability Transportation

- LEAs must collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to:
    - Develop and implement clear **procedures for how transportation to maintain children in foster care when in their best interest will be provided, arranged, and funded** <u>for the duration of the time the child is in foster care</u>.
    - Ensure the children in foster care needing transportation promptly receive it.

School Stability Transportation (con't)

- These procedures must:
  - Ensure that youth in foster care who need transportation to the school of origin **promptly receive it in a cost-effective manner**
  - Ensure that **if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation** to the school of origin, **LEAs will provide it if**:
    - They are reimbursed by the child welfare agency;
    - The LEA agrees to pay the costs; or
    - The LEA and the child welfare agency agree to share the costs.

Charter Schools

- States receiving charter school grants under Title IV Part C of the ESSA must work with charter schools on **recruitment and enrollment practices to promote inclusion of all students,** including **eliminating any barriers to enrollment** for youth in foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth.

Data and Reporting

- SEAs must annually include the following **disaggregate information on children and youth in foster care** in their State report cards:
    - **Student achievement on academic assessments**
    - **Performance on other academic indicators**
    - **High school graduation rates**

Where is DC with implementation of these provisions?

- ✓ Child welfare POC identified

- ✓ CFSA and OSSE published guidance document for LEAs with model transportation procedures

  - ✓ See document on OSSE's website: https://osse.dc.gov/publication/osse-and-cfsa-issue-joint-essa-foster-care-guidance-leas

- ✓ LEAs have identified their POCs:

  - ✓ See list of foster care POCs on OSSE's website here: https://osse.dc.gov/publication/education-services-children-and-youth-committed-child-and-family-services-agency

- ✓ LEAs and CFSA have started to develop their school stability transportation procedures

Resources for Support: CFSA Educational Services

- **Direct Services**
  - to at-risk population
- **Consultative Services**
  - For all social work staff
  - Via assignments to supervisory units
- **Incentives/Events/Trainings**
- **Contracted Services**
  - Transportation
  - Tutoring
  - Mentoring

Opportunities for collaboration/teaming

- Data-sharing
- Problem-solving
  - Sharing strategies for support/resources
  - Resolving issues around enrollment
  - Breaking through barriers in communication
  - Bringing teams together

QUESTIONS???