EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Presented by:
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CFSA Office of Well Being, Education Unit
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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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Kids in Foster Care</strong></td>
<td>865</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0-5 y.o.</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-12 y.o.</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<td>13-17 y.o.</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 - 21 y.o.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Where DC Foster Youth Attend School

- DC Charter Schools: 23%
- DC Public Schools: 45%
- Prince George’s County: 13%
- Other Maryland & Virginia: 4%
- Non Public Schools (Special Education): 11%
- Residential: 2%
- Private Schools: .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 for the duration of the time the child is in foster care.
  - Ensure the children in foster care needing transportation promptly receive it.
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.
SEAs must annually include the following \textit{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

✓ LEAs have identified their POCs:

✓ 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???