Overview: Foster Care Education Program Improving Educational Outcomes of

Introduction
National research shows that children in foster care experience one to two placement changes per year. Less than 50% of youth in foster care finish high school before leaving care and less than 3% of youth in foster care obtain a bachelor's degree after emancipation. Children and youth in foster care also have a greater risk of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and teen pregnancy compared to the general population. Schools, child welfare agencies, communities, and families must work together to provide the equitable opportunities, specialized services, and useful supports that are essential for students in foster care to be successful in school and in life.

Purpose
The Foster Care Program at OSPI supports students in foster care by encouraging innovative practices that reduce educational disruptions, strengthen school stability, and improve academic performance.

Action
It takes commitment, leadership, and a coordinated effort for students in foster care to have school stability and an opportunity to excel in school. Washington State's Foster Care Education Program is designed to work with K-12 public schools and districts to focus on these elements:

- Increase learning supports
- Implement effective strategies
- Strengthen partnerships with child welfare and community agencies
- Coordinate educational services
- Collaborate with the courts, state agencies, and child advocacy groups

Framework
As part of the Student Support division, the Foster Care Program partners with educators, foster parents, social workers, state agencies, and advocates as they work to support the whole child through evidence-based, best-practices and collaboration.

Coordinated Response
- Create targeted outreach and public awareness of foster care education issues
- Implement school district supports and coordination of services with child welfare agencies
- Share and track data on student achievement and educational outcomes of students in foster care

Partner with Schools and Communities to Tackle Education Barriers
- Increase educational stability
- Improve transitions when they are required
- Effectively use data to inform policy and program decisions

Dedicated Resources
- Train and provide on-going professional development for school district foster care points of contact, child welfare staff, foster parents, court personnel and judges, and community non-profits.

Laws and Legislation
- Implement federal and state laws requiring services and protections for students in foster care
- Provide guidance on federal and state legislation that defines the rights of students in foster care

Where can I learn More?
- Jess Lewis, Foster Care Program Supervisor, fostercare@k12.wa.us or 360.725.6050
- Visit the OSPI Website (http://www.k12.wa.us/FosterCare/)