

Fostering Opportunities: Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care

Addi Cantor

Specialist

Student Engagement Office
Jeffco Public Schools

Natalie Mall

Associate Director

DCYFAP
Jefferson County

Jason Firestone

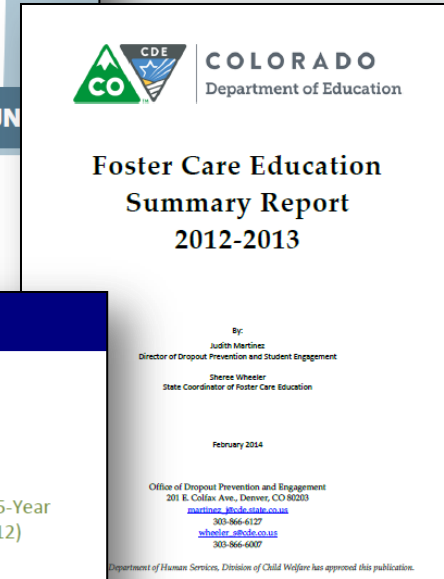
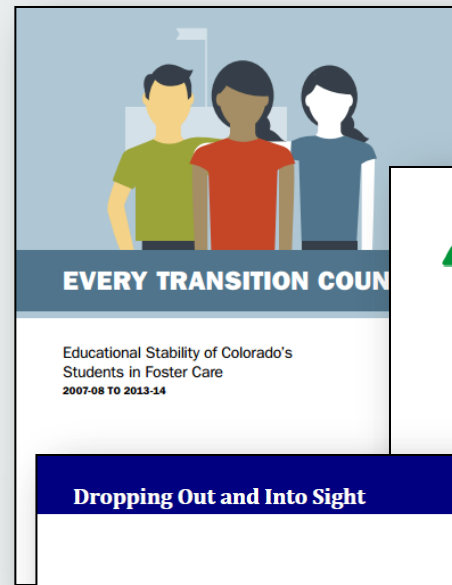
Manager

Student Engagement Office
Jeffco Public Schools

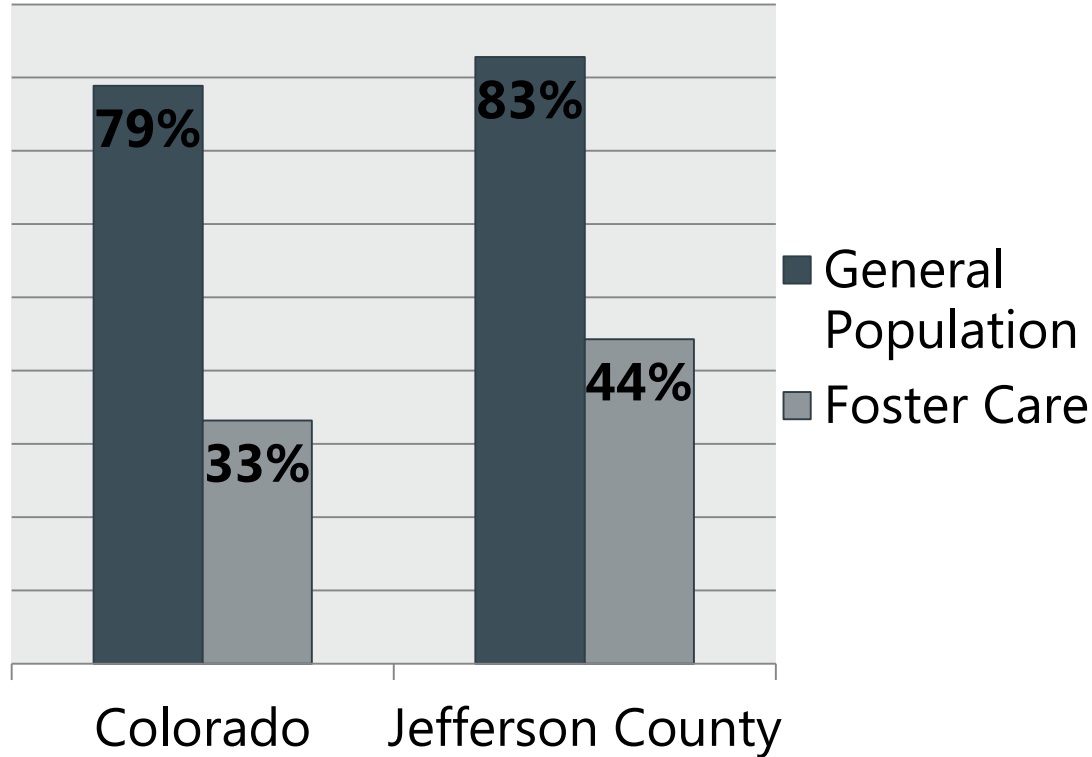


Invisible Achievement Gap

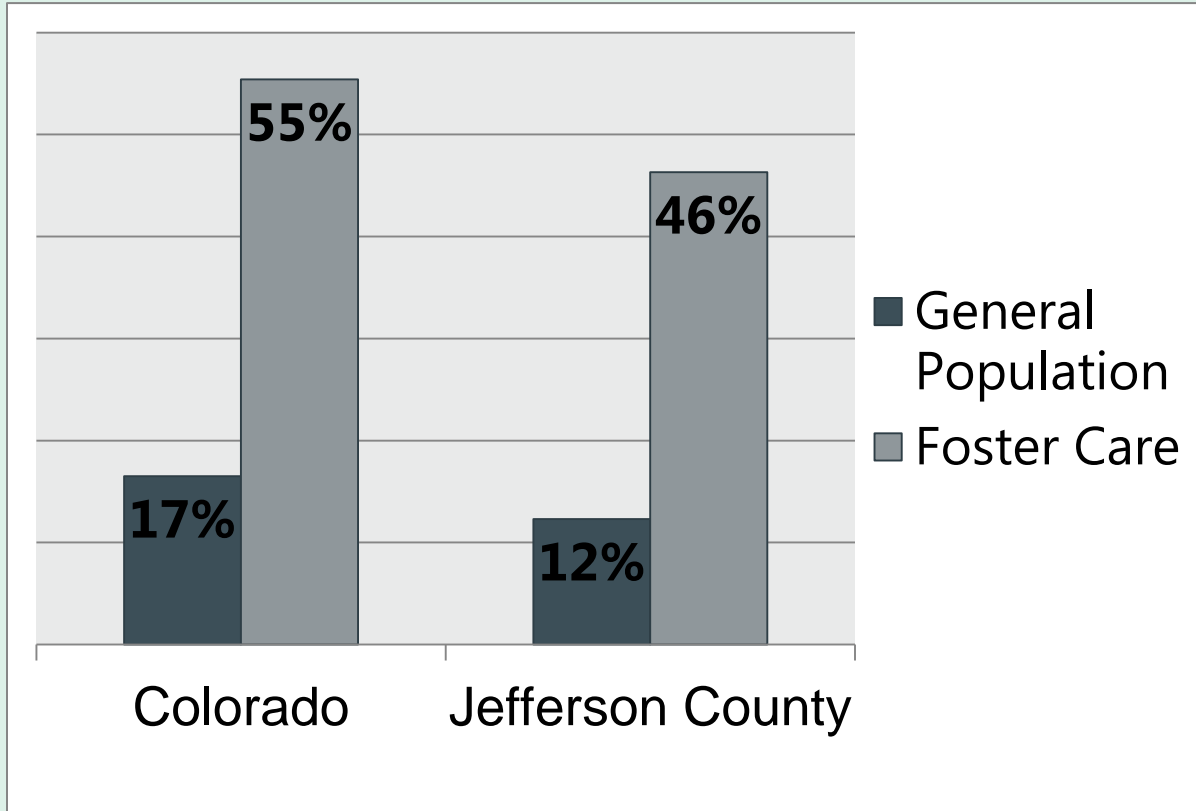
- ❖ Dr. Elysia Clemens
- ❖ Data Use Agreement- CDHS, CDE, UNC
- ❖ CO among first states with this data
- ❖ **Trends in graduation and dropout rates for youth in foster care**
- ❖ Established foundation for coordinated efforts and response
- ❖ Fostering Connections & ESSA



2015-16 Graduation Rates

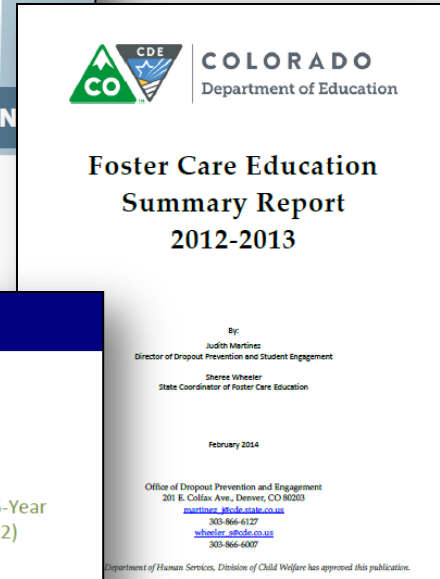
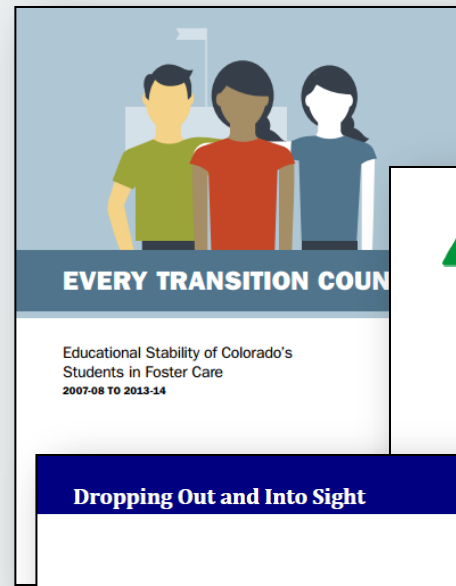


2015-16 Mobility Rates



Invisible Achievement Gap

- ❖ Dr. Elysia Clemens
- ❖ Data Use Agreement- CDHS, CDE, UNC
- ❖ CO among first states with this data
- ❖ Trends in graduation and dropout rates for youth in foster care
- ❖ Established foundation for coordinated efforts and response
- ❖ Fostering Connections & ESSA



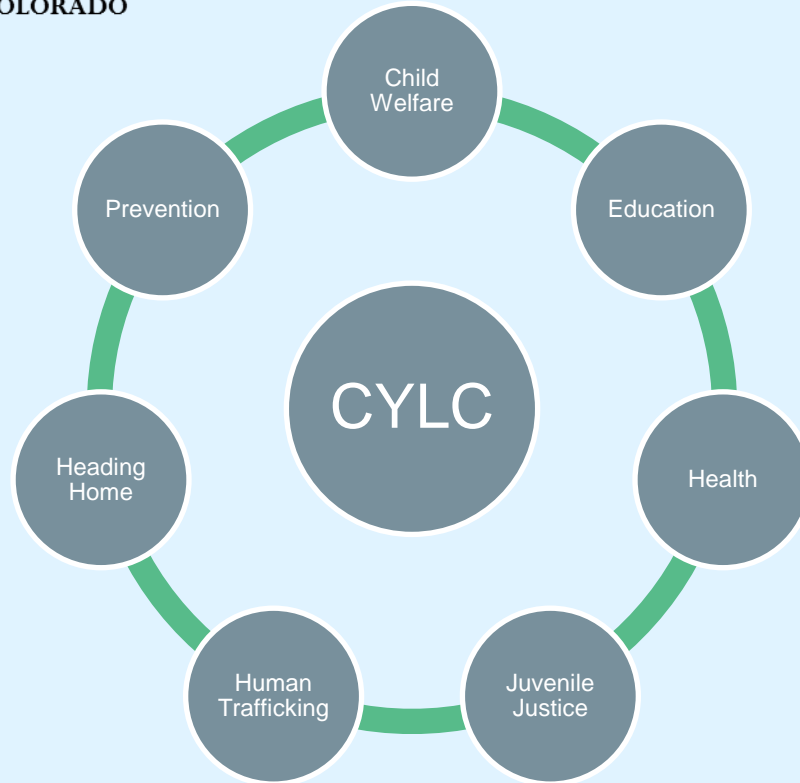
Collaborative Management Program



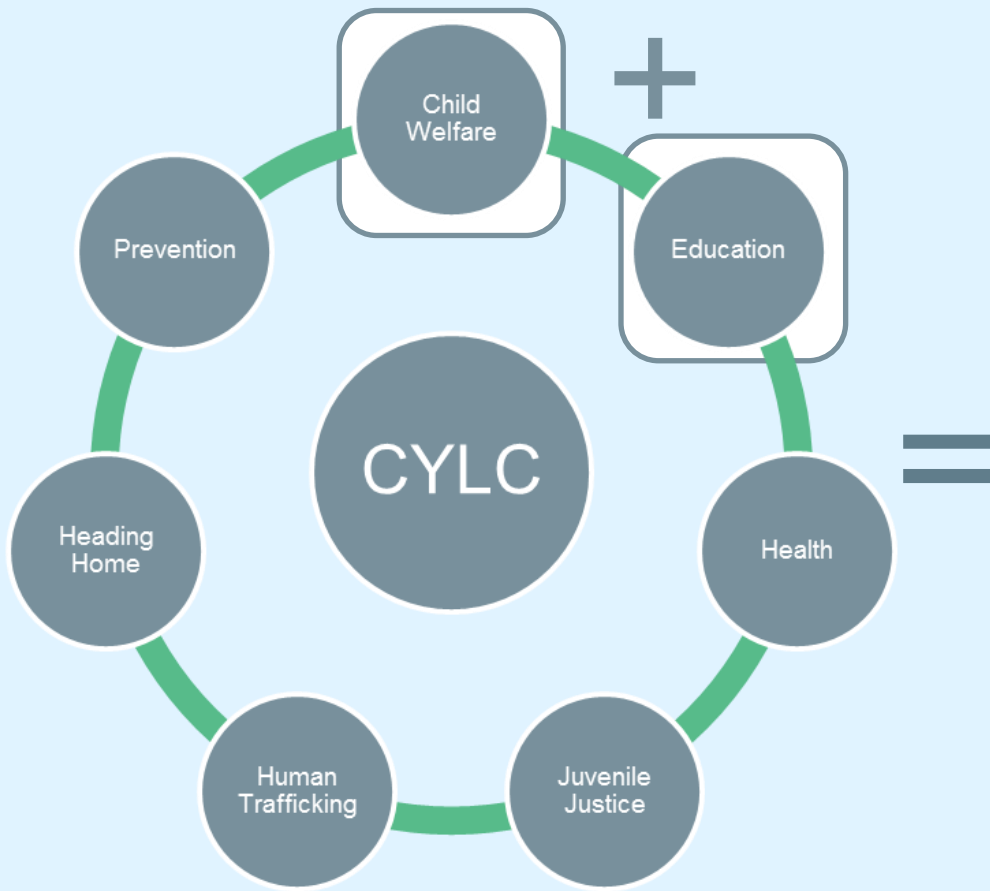


Child & Youth Leadership Commission

JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO



www.JeffersonCountyCYLC.com



Joint Goal:
Improve educational
outcomes for youth in
foster care

JEFFERSON | Human Services
COUNTY COLORADO | *Steps to a better, safer life*

 **JEFFCO**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fostering Opportunities

An educational stability program serving Jefferson County youth through case management, direct support and multi-systemic collaboration



Educational Stability

The opportunity for students to have a consistent, predictable learning environment

ALL students deserve to:

- Know what to expect during the school day
- Have their educational needs met
- Feel connected to the school community



Blueprint for Change

Education Success for Children in Foster Care

GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

GOAL 1 • Youth Are Entitled to Remain in Their Same School When Feasible

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 1-A Youth's foster care placement decisions take school stability into account, and school stability is a priority whenever possible and in the child's best interest.
- 1-B Youth have sufficient foster home and permanent living options available in their home communities to reduce the need for school moves.
- 1-C When in their best interests, youth have a legal right to remain in the same school (school of origin) even when they move outside the school district, and schools that retain children are not financially penalized.
- 1-D Youth are entitled to necessary transportation to their school of origin, with responsibilities clearly designated for transportation costs.
- 1-E Youth have necessary support and information to make school of origin decisions; youth, birth parents, caseworkers, foster parents, courts, attorneys, schools, and educators are trained about legal entitlements and appeal and dispute procedures.
- 1-F Youth with disabilities continue in an appropriate education setting, regardless of changes in foster care placements, and transportation is provided in accordance with the youth's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

GOAL 2 • Youth Are Guaranteed Seamless Transitions Between Schools and School Districts When School Moves Occur

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 2-A Youth have a right to be enrolled immediately in a new school and to begin classes promptly.
- 2-B Youth can be enrolled in school by any person who has care or control of the child (i.e., caseworker or foster parent).
- 2-C Youth enrollment and delivery of appropriate services are not delayed due to school or record requirements (i.e., immunization records, birth certificates, school uniforms); designated child welfare, education, and court staff facilitate and coordinate transitions and receive training on special procedures.
- 2-D Youth education records are comprehensive and accurate, and promptly follow youth to any new school or placement; records are kept private and shared only with necessary individuals working with the youth.
- 2-E Youth who arrive in a new school during the school term are allowed to participate in all academic and extracurricular programs even if normal timetables have run or programs are full.
- 2-F Youth receive credit and partial credit for coursework completed at the prior school.
- 2-G Youth have the ability to receive a high school diploma even when they have attended multiple schools with varying graduation requirements.

- 2-H Eligible youth with disabilities receive the protections outlined in federal and state law, including timelines for evaluations, implementation of an IEP or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and placement in the least restrictive environment, even when they change school districts.

GOAL 3 • Young Children Enter School Ready to Learn

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 3-A Young children have all the appropriate health interventions necessary, including enrollment in the Medical Assistance Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program, and receive comprehensive evaluations and treatment.
- 3-B Young children are given special prioritization and treatment in early childhood programs (including Head Start, Early Headstart, and pre-school programs).
- 3-C Young children receive developmentally appropriate counseling and supports in their early childhood programs with sensitivity to their abuse and neglect experiences.
- 3-D Young children have caretakers who have been provided information on the children's medical and developmental needs, and who have received training and support to be effective advocates.
- 3-E Children under age three with developmental delays, or a high probability of developing such delays, are identified as early as possible, promptly referred for evaluation for early intervention services, and promptly evaluated and served.
- 3-F Young children at high risk of developmental delays are screened appropriately and qualify for early intervention services whenever possible.
- 3-G Children under age three who have been involved in a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect, who have been identified as affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or who have experienced a substantiated case of trauma due to exposure to family violence are referred to the early intervention system for screening.
- 3-H Children with disabilities ages three to school age are referred and evaluated, and receive appropriate preschool early intervention programs.

GOAL 4 • Youth Have the Opportunity and Support to Fully Participate in All Aspects of the School Experience

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 4-A Youth are entitled and encouraged to participate in all aspects of the school experience, including academic programs, extracurricular activities, and social events, and are not excluded because of being in out-of-home care.
- 4-B Youth receive the additional supports necessary to be included in all aspects of the school experience.
- 4-C Youth's records relating to his or her education and needs are made available to necessary individuals working with the youth, while respecting the youth's privacy.

Goal continued.

- 4-D Youth's appointments and court appearances are scheduled to minimize their impact on the child's education, and children are not penalized for school time or work missed because of court or child welfare case-related activities.
- 4-E Youth are not inappropriately placed in nonpublic schools or other alternative school settings, including schools for students with disabilities.
- 4-F Youth receive supports to improve performance on statewide achievement tests and other measures of academic success (such as attendance and graduation).
- 4-G Youth are surrounded by trained professionals that have the knowledge and skills to work with children who have experienced abuse and neglect; school curricula and programs utilize the research on trauma-informed care.
- 4-H Youth with disabilities are located, evaluated, and identified as eligible for special services.
- 4-I Youth with disabilities receive the special help they need to learn content appropriate to their grade level or, when that is not possible, the content that is appropriate to their learning level.
- 4-J Youth with disabilities receive their education in regular classrooms (with the necessary supports and accommodations) whenever possible.

GOAL 5 • Youth Have Supports to Prevent School Dropout, Truancy, and Disciplinary Actions

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 5-A Youth are not disproportionately subjected to school discipline or school exclusion, and are not placed in alternative schools for disruptive students as a means to address truancy or as a disciplinary measure.
- 5-B Youth have access to school counselors and other school staff familiar with the needs of children who have experienced abuse and neglect, and the staff has mastered effective remediation strategies.
- 5-C Youth have advocates at school disciplinary and other proceedings who are trained on procedures related to dropout, truancy, and discipline.
- 5-D Youth at risk of truancy or dropping out have access to programs and supports designed to engage them in school.
- 5-E Youth who have dropped out of school have access to programs and supports designed to reintegrate them into a school or a General Educational Development (GED) program.
- 5-F Youth with disabilities have behavior intervention plans in place to minimize inappropriate school behaviors and to reduce the need for disciplinary action or referral to the police.
- 5-G Youth with disabilities receive the procedural protections outlined in federal law so that they are not punished for behavior that is a symptom of their disability.

GOAL 6 • Youth Are Involved and Engaged in All Aspects of Their Education and Educational Planning and Are Empowered to Be Advocates for Their Education Needs and Pursuits

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 6-A Youth are routinely asked about their educational preferences and needs, including their view on whether to change schools when their living situation changes.
- 6-B Youth receive training about their educational rights commensurate to their age and developmental abilities.

- 6-C Youth are given the opportunity to participate in court proceedings, and their engagement is supported with transportation and accommodations to decrease the impact on school attendance and schoolwork; attorneys, guardians ad litem, CASAe and judges are trained on involving youth in court, and encourage youth participation.
- 6-D Youth participate in school and child welfare meetings and planning about their education and their future.
- 6-E Youth are surrounded by school and child welfare professionals with appropriate training and strategies to engage youth in education planning.
- 6-F Youth with disabilities actively participate in the special education process, especially in transition planning for post-school education and employment, and are provided with the supports necessary to effectively participate.

GOAL 7 • Each Youth Has An Adult Who Is Invested in His or Her Education During And After His or Her Time in Out-of-Home Care

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 7-A Youth are entitled to have a knowledgeable and trained education advocate who reinforces the value of the youth's investment in education and helps the youth plan for post-school training, employment, or college; efforts must be made to recruit appropriate individuals (i.e., foster parents, birth parents, child welfare caseworkers, teachers, and guidance counselors).
- 7-B Youth exiting care (because of age or because their permanency objective has been reached) have significant connections to at least one adult to help the youth continue education pursuits.
- 7-C Youth have an education decision maker at all times during a child welfare case, who is trained in the legal requirements relating to education decisions for children with and without disabilities.
- 7-D Youth with disabilities who are eligible for the appointment of a surrogate parent have access to a pool of qualified, independent, and well-trained individuals who can serve in that role, and are assigned a surrogate in a timely manner, but no later than 30 days after a determination that a surrogate is needed.

GOAL 8 • Youth Have Supports to Enter into, and Complete, Postsecondary Education

Benchmarks that show progress toward this goal:

- 8-A Youth are exposed to postsecondary education opportunities, and receive academic support to achieve their future education goals.
- 8-B Youth in care and youth who have exited care (because of age or because their permanency objectives have been reached) have financial support or tuition fee waivers to help them attend postsecondary education.
- 8-C Youth have clear information and concrete help with obtaining and completing admission and financial aid documents.
- 8-D Youth have access to housing during postsecondary school vacations or other times when school housing is unavailable.
- 8-E Youth over 18 can remain in care and under the courts' jurisdiction to receive support and protection while pursuing postsecondary education.
- 8-F Youth have access to academic, social, and emotional supports during, and through completion of, their postsecondary education.
- 8-G Youth with disabilities pursuing higher education goals receive the supports to which they are entitled to under federal and state laws.



JEFFERSON
COUNTY COLORADO

About Us

2016-17:

- 157 schools
- 30 Title 1 schools
- 86,361 students
- 31.5% qualify for FRL



~730 Jeffco students in foster care

1 School District : 1 County

774 mi² | Urban – Suburban – Mountains – Rural



Caseload Demographics

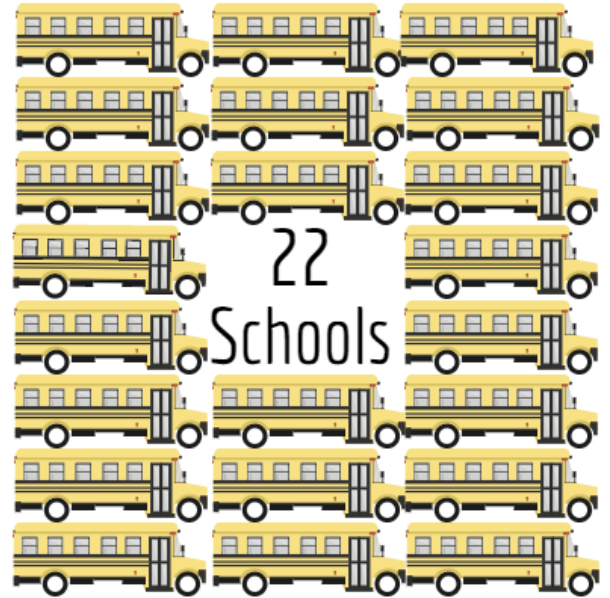


29
students

21
families



White (51.72%) Hispanic/Latino (24.14%)
American Indian (13.79%) Asian (10.34%)



Student Check-In Sheet

















Weekly monitor for:

- ❖ Feelings at school
- ❖ Feelings at current residence
- ❖ Relationship with primary teacher
- ❖ Availability of trusting adult



Student Name: _____ Date: _____

School: _____

How do you feel when you are at school?				
How do you feel when you are at _____?				
How do you feel about your relationship with _____?				
How would others say you are doing?				

Do you have an adult you trust?	Yes	No	Who? _____
---------------------------------	-----	----	------------

Comments:

For specialist to complete: General, overall impression of student

0 1 2 3

Teacher Rubric

- ❖ Completed monthly with primary teacher
- ❖ Monitor academic progress and behavior
- ❖ Monthly reports to support team



Student Name: _____ Date: _____
 Teacher: _____ School: _____

	Indicators	0	1	2	3
Attendance	Student attends class on a regular and consistent basis.	Attends 0%-49% of class	Attends 50%-69% of class	Attends 70%-89% of class	Attends 90-100% of class
Comment:					
Grades/ Schoolwork	Student completes all assignments on time, to the best of their ability.	Rarely or never submits work	Occasionally submits work	Frequently submits work	Consistently submits work
Comment:					
Participation	Student participates in class.	Rarely or never participates in class	Sometimes participates	Usually participates	Consistently participates
Comment:					
Classroom Behavior	Student acts responsibly and honors the student code of conduct.	Consistently displays disruptive behavior	Usually displays disruptive behavior	Frequently displays disruptive behavior	Consistently displays disruptive behavior
Comment:					
Overall Engagement (Zest)	Student appears to enjoy school, engages in age appropriate relationships with peers and adults & participates in pro-social activities.	Rarely or never appears to enjoy school	Sometimes appears to enjoy school	Frequently appears to enjoy school	Consistently appears to enjoy school
Comment:					

Specific Behaviors	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Excessive aggression or violence towards self	0	1	2	3
Excessive aggression or violence towards others	0	1	2	3
Hyperactivity, distractibility, inattention	0	1	2	3
Very withdrawn or excessively shy	0	1	2	3
Oppositional and/or defiant behavior	0	1	2	3
Sexual behaviors not typical for child's age	0	1	2	3
Peculiar patterns of forgetfulness	0	1	2	3
Inconsistency in skills	0	1	2	3
Excessive mood swings	0	1	2	3
Chronic sadness, doesn't seem to enjoy any activities	0	1	2	3
Quick, explosive anger	0	1	2	3
Difficulty with authority	0	1	2	3
Comment:				
Strengths:				
Areas of Growth:				

Specialist Initials: _____ Teacher Initials: _____

Academic Performance

2015-16 Goal	2015-16 Data	2016-17 Goal	2016-17 Data
No less than 60% of youth involved in this project will show improved academic performance in at least one performance area.	67% of participating students show improved academic performance in at least one area from September 2015 to May 2016.	No less than 60% of youth involved in this project will show improved academic performance in at least one performance area.	89% of participating students show improved academic performance in at least one area from September 2016 to May 2017.

School Behaviors

2015-16 Goal	2015-16 Data	2016-17 Goal	2016-17 Data
No less than 25% of participating students will show a decrease in concerns according to the teacher rubric.	56% of participating students demonstrated fewer trauma specific behaviors on the monthly teacher rubric from September 2015 to May 2016.	40% of participating students will show a decrease in concerns according to the teacher rubric.	83% of participating students demonstrated fewer trauma specific behaviors on the monthly teacher rubric from September 2016 to May 2017.

Impactful Strategies



Best Practices for Teachers & Administrators

Foster Care Education

A guide to meeting the educational needs of youth in the child welfare system

School personnel know how important an education and high school diploma are for all children. The majority of Colorado's youth in foster care are not graduating from high school on time and school personnel are in a distinct position to make this a greater possibility. The following best practices and helpful tips are a resource to help guide the important work of improving the educational outcomes for youth in care.

Best Practices for Teachers & Administrators

1. Welcome the student to the school- give them a tour and ensure they have all necessary school supplies.
2. Respect the student's privacy- be discreet about their involvement in the child welfare system. Consult with the student before disclosing his or her status.
3. Ensure the school has complete academic records- including current IEP, 504, transcripts, and/or other support plans (if applicable).
4. Identify and communicate with the student's educational decision maker & caseworker- provide regular academic and behavioral updates. The point of contact could be a parent, foster parent, caseworker, or Guardian ad Litem (GAL).
5. Engage the student in the school community- inform them of and help them join extracurricular activities, regardless of their enrollment date.
6. Advocate for the student- ensure the student has the support and guidance needed to progress academically and socially.
7. Ensure special education, behavioral, emotional, cultural, and linguistic needs are met.
8. Ensure the student is in the appropriate academic setting- including Gifted & Talented, Honors, Advanced Placement, ESL, Special Education, etc.
9. Maintain up-to-date contact information in Infinite Campus- including current caregiver and caseworker information.
10. Waive all fees for any child in out-of-home care- including lunch, books, lab week, in-school activities, and before/after school programs (Colorado Statute 22-32-138).
11. For students in 7th grade or higher, consider the student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).
12. Stay up-to-date on and participate in local, state and national legislation efforts and professional learning opportunities to stay informed of how you can be a champion for all students in out-of-home care.
13. Support the student through the Court process by being aware of upcoming court hearings, encouraging the student to attend, and acknowledging the stress these hearings may cause.

Tips to Help Youth Succeed in School

- Greet the student everyday • Develop a positive relationship • Find out what they like
- Help them feel connected to school • Ask them about themselves • Celebrate any advances
- Check in with student regularly • Be a listening ear • Be aware of necessary accommodations
 - Help them develop social skills • Be consistent • Encourage school involvement
- Identify support programs • Be an advocate • Ensure the most appropriate learning environment
 - Be non-judgmental • Be a positive role model • Help them set realistic goals & aim high
 - Talk about high school graduation & postsecondary education

Educational Support Checklist

To ensure a smooth transition to a new school for the youth, there are several vital objectives that should be completed on the student's first day. Below is a checklist for teachers and administrators to complete with the student to make certain they have everything they need to be successful.

Does the student ...

- Have all necessary school supplies?
- Need a tour of the school?
- Know how they are getting to/from school?
- Know how to find their school contact?
- Have all fees waived (lunch, books, etc.)?
- Have online access to grades and homework?
- Know the attendance policy of the school?
- Have an adult to help with homework?
- Know about the extracurricular activities available?

The following is a checklist of ongoing objectives for teachers and administrators to refer to when working with a youth in out-of-home care. There is likely a team of professionals who also work with the youth which typically includes the student's caseworker, Guardian ad Litem (GAL), foster parents, biological parents, and often times, a mental health professional. It is important for teachers and administrators to ensure they are communicating with the entire team so everyone is working in the best interest of the student.

Working with other professionals...

- Introduce yourself to the team
- Invite to all education meetings and conferences
- Provide regular academic & behavior updates
- Report any difficulties, challenges, or changes
- Involve team in planning any educational supports
- Develop a professional relationship with the team
- Relay the good news
- Identify the educational decision maker
- Keep updated contact information of current caregiver
- Ensure appropriate releases of information

Colorado Facts

From the Colorado Department of Education for the 2012-2013 school year

- Only 27.5% of youth in foster care are graduating high school in 4 years.
- Approximately 1 in 11 students in foster care dropped out one or more times.
- Children and youth in foster care have higher rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and teen pregnancy compared to the general population.

For additional assistance, contact

Jeffco Public Schools Student Engagement Office: (303) 982-6559
District Child Welfare Education Liaisons (CWEL):
Non-IEP (720) 497-7788 IEP (303) 982-2355

Jefferson County Department of Human Services: (303) 271-4015

CDE Foster Care Education website

www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare_index



Educational Support Checklist

❖ Best Practices

❖ Transitions

❖ Accountability

❖ *ROI's*

❖ *Contact Information*

	Name	Phone Number	Email
Student			
Biological Parents			
Caregiver			
School Contact			
DHS Caseworker			
Mental Health			
Other			
Other			

General: <input type="checkbox"/> School has received full academic record <input type="checkbox"/> School has received full health record <input type="checkbox"/> Student's IEP is current <small>(if applicable)</small> Next Review: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Student's 504 is current <small>(if applicable)</small> Next Review: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other support plan(s) are current <small>(if applicable)</small>		Current ROI allows: JPS/ DHS Expires: _____ JPS/ _____ Expires: _____ JPS/ _____ Expires: _____
Student: <input type="checkbox"/> Has toured the building <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of resources within school building <input type="checkbox"/> Has information on available school services <input type="checkbox"/> Has all necessary school supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Has appropriate clothing for school <input type="checkbox"/> Knows how they are getting to and from school <input type="checkbox"/> Has a peer buddy/mentor <input type="checkbox"/> Has been introduced to their school counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Has online access for grades/ homework <input type="checkbox"/> Is enrolled in the free/ reduced lunch program <input type="checkbox"/> Knows the attendance policy of the school <input type="checkbox"/> Knows about extra-curricular activities available <input type="checkbox"/> Has identified a place to study at home <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent(s)/ Caregiver(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Has access to Parent Portal & Jeffco Connect <input type="checkbox"/> Has a copy of the school year calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Has the number to the school attendance line <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the school attendance policies <input type="checkbox"/> Has contact info for Educational Support Team <input type="checkbox"/> Has contact info for mental health clinician <small>(if applicable)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Has information on school & district services	School Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Knows who to contact for educational decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Has up-to-date emergency contact information <input type="checkbox"/> Has received Best Practices for youth in foster care <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of any necessary accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of any medical concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Knows about the monthly evaluation rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Has contact info for mental health clinician <small>(if applicable)</small>
Notes: 		

Additional Strategy Considerations

- ❖ **Cross Agency Training**
- ❖ Social Emotional Support
- ❖ Ensuring Fees are Waived
- ❖ Partial Credit at Transfer Points
- ❖ **Notification of Placement process**
- ❖ Responsive, supportive enrollment
- ❖ Allowing extended time as needed
- ❖ Ensuring access to full participation
- ❖ **Best Interest Determination process**
- ❖ Mentoring & relational-centered strategies
- ❖ Remove barriers to tutoring and credit recovery
- ❖ Alternative ways to demonstrate mastery for credit



THANK YOU!

Addi Cantor

Specialist

Student Engagement Office

Jeffco Public Schools

Addi.Cantor@jeffco.k12.co.us

Natalie Mall

Associate Director

DCYFAP

Jefferson County

Nmall@co.jefferson.co.us

Jason Firestone

Manager

Student Engagement Office

Jeffco Public Schools

Jason.Firestone@jeffco.k12.co.us



Websites:

[University of Northern Colorado- Foster Care website](#)

[CDE Foster Care Education website](#)

[Casey Family Programs](#)

Reports:

[CDE State Policy Report 2015-16: Dropout Prevention and Student Engagement](#)

[Every Transition Counts: Educational Stability of Colorado's Students in Foster Care, 2007-08 to 2013-14](#)

[Dropping Out and Into Sight: Graduation and Dropout Rates for Colorado Students in Foster Care, 5-Year Trend Analysis](#)

[Foster Care Education Summary Report 2012-2013](#)

Fact Sheets:

[CDE Foster Care Education Program](#)

[Every Transition Counts: K-12](#)

[Every Transition Counts: High School](#)

More:

[ABA Blueprint for Change](#)