HOW LCFF CAN HELP FOSTER YOUTH SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is intended to create educational equity by recognizing that foster youth, low-income students and English language learners need additional resources to reach their college and career dreams.

Why are foster youth different?

The educational outcomes for foster youth are heartbreakingly poor, even when compared to other at-risk student subgroups. Based on a study* released in 2013 on the educational outcomes of foster youth:

- Foster youth are four times more likely to change schools than their peers.

- Foster youth have the lowest graduation rate.

- Foster youth are three times more likely to drop out of school than their peers.

- Over one-third of foster youth have below basic levels of English and math skills as measured by state testing.

Desiree received one-on-one support to graduate from high school and start college. Only 3% of foster youth will attend a four-year university. "I realized my life was about struggling through challenges that I had no control over," she said.

How can LCFF help foster youth?

The Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth has developed a sample Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) with action steps and accountability measures that school districts can use to assist foster youth. We are former foster youth, advocates, service providers, and representatives from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and the juvenile court. The LCAP is based on our experience in helping foster youth succeed in school and beyond.

THE COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Advancement Project ✳ Alliance for Children's Rights ✳ Children's Law Center of California ✳ California Youth Connection ✳ California Youth and Family Collaborative ✳ County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services ✳ Hillsides ✳ National Center for Youth Law ✳ Public Counsel

*Barrat, V.X. Berliner, B. (2013). The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools. San Francisco: WestEd.

What goals should schools set for foster youth?

The Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth sample LCAP sets out three main goals:

1. **Close the achievement gap between foster youth and the general student population** as measured by metrics such as improved attendance rates, course passage, standardized testing participation rates and scores, disciplinary rates, and graduation rates.
2. **Promote school stability and prevent push out of foster youth to alternative schools** so they have access to a full range of educational opportunities and don't experience disruptions in their educations.
3. **Ensure foster youth are promptly enrolled in school and in the right classes** so they do not fall further behind when they must change schools.

To accomplish these goals, school districts must:

Establish districtwide infrastructure to support and monitor the educational progress of foster youth. Examples of systemic changes include updating school information data systems to allow the accurate identification of foster youth and to monitor and track foster youth LCAP metrics; developing policies and trainings such as a partial credits policy; collaborating with county child welfare agency to promote school stability and connection to resources.

Ensure district foster youth liaisons have the adequate time, knowledge and resources to do their job. This includes additional staff if needed.

Ensure that upon full implementation of LCFF, every foster youth receives services from a foster youth counselor who can provide individualized assistance in education planning and coordination. Foster youth counselors will help students enroll in school and gather educational records, plan for graduation, access academic support, obtain tutoring, counseling, and other support, and monitor progress to help students stay on track.

Allocate funds to meet LCAP goals and for all services foster youth are entitled to under the law.

The Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth sample LCAP will help schools set high standards and achievable goals for student success. Find the LCAP online at *kids-alliance.org* or *publiccounsel.org*.

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