FosterEd



FosterEd is an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law that improves the education outcomes of students in the State's care. One of just a handful of initiatives recognized by the Center for the Study of Social Policy as helping foster youth thrive, we collaborate with state and local agencies to ensure every student in care or under supervision has an education champion and education team supporting his or her success. We use the lessons learned in our demonstration sites to inform system-level change on behalf of students in the foster care and probation systems.

BACKGROUND

As wards of the state, foster youth and youth supervised by probation are our collective responsibility. However, youth in those populations face tragically poor education outcomes due to obstacles such as increased school mobility and inconsistent adult support. Studies show that:

- Twice as many foster children as their peers repeat a grade¹
- 75% of foster children are behind grade level²
- Only 50% of foster youth graduate from high school by age 18³
- Youth in the juvenile justice system read, on average, 4-5 years behind grade level⁴
- Juvenile justice-involved youth are 4 times as likely to drop out of school than their peers⁵
- 40% of justice-involved youth receive special education services⁶

FosterEd's mission is to improve the education outcomes of these youth by working with communities to implement an evidence-based program model.

PROGRAM MODEL **Education Champion** who can support the student's long-term success Education case plan based on proactive assessment of the student's education strengths and needs Student Enters **Student is Prepared State Care or** for Long-term Supervision Success Education team of engaged adults, including the Education Champion, caregiver, agency staff, and youth

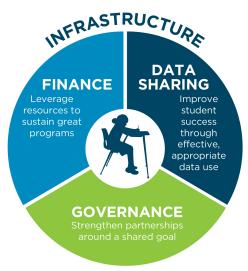


FOSTERED: NEW MEXICO

FosterEd was invited to work in New Mexico by the State's Joint Education Task Force in October 2013. After an investigatory process designed to assess the State's readiness to engage in an effort aimed at improving the education outcomes of students in its care. FosterEd committed to working in New Mexico in July 2014. FosterEd: New Mexico operates under the

guidance of a Leadership Team comprised of senior Children, Youth and Families Department staff.

The goal of FosterEd: New Mexico is to create a publicly operated, publicly supported, statewide program that supports the educational success of students in the State's care. This program is embedded within the public agencies responsible for supporting these students and operates within and as part of their larger practice model. Similar to our efforts in other states, we recommended starting with a demonstration project, carefully evaluating the project, and using the lessons learned both to improve the program and justify its statewide expansion.



The FosterEd: New Mexico leadership agreed with this recommendation and asked us to investigate several New Mexico counties as possible demonstration site locations. In May 2015, our Leadership Team selected Lea County as the demonstration site for FosterEd: New Mexico.



Practice-Policy Cycle

Next steps include:

- Hiring a FosterEd: New Mexico Director
- Developing necessary infrastructure at the state and local
- Implementing and evaluating the demonstration project for a period of two years
- Using the demonstration project as the basis for a statewide program and set of policies

For more information please visit www.Foster-Ed.org or contact Jesse Hahnel at jhahnel@youthlaw.org.

⁶ T. Rowand Robinson & Mary Jane K. Rapport, *Providing Special Education in the Juvenile Justice System*, 20 REMEDIAL & SPECIAL EDUC. 19 (1999)



¹ National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster and Out-of-Home Care (2008).

Honoring Emancipated Youth, Barriers Facing Foster Care Youth: National and Local Statistics about Emancipating Foster Youth (2005).

³ National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care (2014).

⁴ Jessica Feierman, Marsha Levick & Ami Mody, The School to Prison Pipeline ... and Back: Obstacles and Remedies for the Re-enrollment of Adjudicated Youth, 54 N.Y.L. SCH. L. REV. 1115 (2009/10).

Gary Sweeten, Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement, 23 JUST. Q. 462 (2006).