

Additional Implementation Activities for the Sample Foster Youth LCAP Goals, Outcomes, Actions, and Services

Overview

California's landmark Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) legislation explicitly recognized the unique educational needs and challenges of students who are in foster care, provided supplemental funding to local educational agencies (LEAs), including low-income students and English Learners), required each LEA to develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) including goals, actions and funding for foster youth as well as for other disadvantaged populations and for all students, and created a framework for data collection and reporting of educational outcomes so that LEAs will be held accountable for educational outcomes specific to foster youth and other disadvantaged populations.

This document, created by the foster youth education experts and advocates who make up the Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth (CEEFY)¹, outlines additional implementation activities that can be undertaken by LEAs, in conjunction with the Goals, Outcomes, Actions, and Services of the Sample Foster Youth LCAP, found at: <http://kids-alliance.org/programs/education/lcff/>. In each of the eight goal areas addressed in the Sample LCAP, LEAs will find additional details here on activities that can be undertaken to implement the goals and demonstrate improved education outcomes for foster youth. For additional information on how to implement successful foster youth education programs, see the Foster Youth Education Toolkit, found at: <http://kids-alliance.org/edtoolkit>.

Goal Areas

1. School Stability
2. Immediate Enrollment
3. School Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment
4. Academic Supports and Counseling
5. High School Needs
6. Information Sharing & Data Infrastructure
7. Coordination of Social-Emotional Supports
8. Early Intervention & Prevention for Young Children 0-4

¹ CEEFY is a stakeholder coalition including advocates, child welfare representatives, and foster youth education experts. CEEFY works to engage school districts in Los Angeles around LCFF implementation to close the achievement gap between foster youth and other students by promoting school stability and other best practices to address the unique needs of foster youth. CEEFY members include Advancement Project, All Saints Church Foster Care Project, Alliance for Children's Rights, Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, California Youth Connection, Children's Law Center of CA, First Star Academies, Hillside, LA Area Chamber of Commerce/UNITE-LA, LA County Department of Children & Family Services, LA County Office of Education, National Center for Youth Law, Public Counsel, United Friends of the Children.

Goal 1: School Stability for Foster Youth²

1. Develop policies/procedures and infrastructure necessary to increase school stability including:
 - a. A practice where each youth and their education rights holder (“ERH”) are notified of the youth’s school of origin rights at both enrollment and disenrollment (e.g., develop, provide and review a school of origin flyer);
 - b. Provide the ERH with a written explanation, if recommending against utilizing school of origin;
 - c. A youth’s school of origin rights are immediately implemented when an ERH determines it is in the youth’s best interests;
 - d. When necessary to address transportation needs, the school quickly convenes a team (including the youth, education rights holder, caregiver, social worker/probation officer and school staff) to fulfill the need;
 - e. Transportation funding options are identified or allocated and a method to consistently utilize them is determined, along with a plan for addressing immediate needs while other options are explored; and
 - f. Metrics are developed to measure school stability (e.g., types of schools foster youth are enrolled in, reasons for enrollment, how many youth remain in their school of origin after a home placement change), including establishing baseline data on those metrics.
2. Implement policy: Ensure that all ERHs/youth are informed of a youth’s right to remain in their school of origin at enrollment and disenrollment, are offered counseling by district staff when making their best interest determination, and for all ERHs/youth who determine it is in the youth’s best interests to remain in their school or origin, they are supported to remain there by:
 - a. Ensure staff has sufficient training and availability to provide counseling to all ERHs/youth as they make their best interest determination.
 - b. Supporting child welfare and probation agency efforts to ensure that youth are placed within a reasonable distance of their school of origin, including by recruiting and/or identifying potential temporary or long-term placement options;
 - c. When necessary to address transportation needs, the school quickly convenes a team (including the youth, education rights holder, caregiver, social worker/probation officer and school staff) to fulfill the need;
 - d. Quickly access child welfare agency and district transportation options/funding to ensure no school absences are caused by a home placement change; and
 - e. When requested to do so by a social worker/probation officer, provide relevant information to be relayed to the court to help resolve school of origin disputes pursuant to California Rule of Court 5.651(e)(4).
3. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly) school of origin rates, modifying policies and procedures as necessary to ensure increases in school stability.

Goal 2: Immediate Enrollment of Foster Youth³

1. Develop and implement appropriate policies/practices in place to ensure foster youth (under both the LCFF foster youth definition as well as all AB 490 foster youth)⁴ are identified and tagged through the enrollment process and through state and local data matches by:
 - a. Training school level staff at each school site on new procedures;
 - b. Revising/streamlining enrollment procedures to ensure foster youth and the adult enrolling them can complete procedures quickly;
 - c. Ensuring school site staff can secure current grade placement/course information and Individualized Education Program from the youth’s prior school within 1 school day;
 - d. Ensuring all school records are requested within 2 business days and received 2 business days from a request;
 - e. Ensuring all foster youth who transfer schools are placed in and attending appropriate grade level courses (including a majority of ‘core’ classes) within 24 hours of a change in home placement;
 - f. Ensuring that ERHs are informed of school of origin and immediate enrollment rights upon their first attempt at enrollment; and
 - g. Ensuring that special education status does not delay enrollment for youth by coordinating procedures for placement with any necessary special education support staff.
2. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly) immediate enrollment rates, modifying policies and procedures as necessary to ensure increased outcomes.

² For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 19-26.

³ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 14-18.

⁴ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, page 7.

Goal 3: Foster Youth School Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment⁵

1. Develop, modify, and implement policies/practices to reduce disproportionate foster youth enrollment in continuation schools by:
 - a. Creating clear criteria for recommending voluntary placement in continuation schools so that it is consistently applied to all youth regardless of foster status;
 - b. Identifying reason(s) a youth is being considered for placement in continuation school (e.g., credit deficiency, school discipline);
 - c. Prior to transfers, requiring attempts to implement alternative methods at the comprehensive high school (e.g., school based tutoring, partial credits retrieval) to address reason(s) for proposed placement change to alternative school and documenting outcomes of alternative methods;
 - d. Meeting with ERHs prior to enrollment/transfer in alternative school to discuss: reason(s) for proposed placement, alternative methods that have been attempted, whether it is in youth's best educational interest to enroll in alternative school, and procedure for returning to comprehensive school;
 - e. Immediately implementing the ERH's best interest decision regarding school enrollment/placement;
 - f. Ensuring written consent is received from ERH prior to voluntary placement in alternative school; and
 - g. When transferring a youth, set a clear timeline for consideration of a move back to the local comprehensive high school.
2. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly) number of transfers, length of time enrolled, number of credits earned, graduation rates, the number of foster youth who return to their local school after attending an alternative school, participation rates in state standardized testing, and number of voluntary and involuntary transfers to continuation schools, modifying policies and procedures as necessary to ensure increased outcomes.

Goal 4: Academic Supports & Counseling for Foster Youth⁶

1. Establish policy and data infrastructure necessary to support and monitor educational success including but not limited to:
 - a. Policies that ensure that foster youth have equal access to all academic resources available to the general student population, regardless of enrollment dates, sign-up deadlines, or lack of timely access to education records;
 - b. Policies that strive to provide foster youth with access to supplemental academic resources necessary to ensure equity and close the academic achievement gap, including by providing transportation services as necessary to ensure foster youth participation;
 - c. Identifying what academic measures (e.g., state testing scores; state testing participation; participation rates in academic resources/services; GPA; A-G/honors/AP/Honors enrollment and success rates; career/technical/vocational/transition planning, courses, and services including career pathways and linked learning opportunities) will be used to monitor foster youth academic outcomes including both short term and long term measures (e.g., quarterly grades vs. annual state testing scores);
 - d. Identifying district staff to monitor and analyze relevant data at identified intervals (e.g., each quarter, each semester); and
 - e. Ensure district decision makers review data regularly and make policy/practice/programing adjustments as necessary to ensure improvement in foster youth academic measures.
2. Increase foster youth participation in academic resources and support services, utilizing strategies that take into account the unique needs of and legal requirements for foster youth.
3. Hire or assign, train and supervise sufficient liaison staff and district level oversight staff to ensure district and school site staff are informed about and implement all laws and district policies affecting foster youth.
4. Develop a plan and hire necessary personnel to ensure foster youth have access to specialized academic counseling services at a ratio of 1 counselor for every 50 students to support their immediate enrollment and successful participation in academic resources/services and appropriate high school courses including A-G, Honors, AP, and CTE courses.
5. Develop a plan and hire necessary personnel to ensure that for 50% of foster youth: educational history is comprehensively collected and reviewed, a high quality needs assessment is conducted, and educational case management is provided by a designated counselor with the credential, skills, time and training necessary to fully meet the needs of foster youth.
6. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly), analyze, and utilize short and long term academic outcome data (as identified in year 1) to evaluate effectiveness of academic programs/policies for foster youth, making necessary changes in order to improve outcomes.

⁵ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 65-82.

⁶ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, page 31.

Goal 5: High School Needs of Foster Youth⁷

1. Establish written partial credit policy including but not limited to:
 - a. Ensuring appropriate school staff at each school site (e.g., counselor, registrar) are trained in the partial credit policy;
 - b. A calculation formula for issuing partial credits, which takes into account seat time, check out grades, and district scheduling needs (e.g., semesters of different length, block periods);
 - c. Partial credits are immediately issued by sending school and included on an official transcript: 1) at the end of a semester in which a student enrolled after the first day of class, and/or 2) which is sent to the receiving school within 2 business days of withdrawal or 10 continuous days of non-attendance;
 - d. Partial credits from a sending school are immediately accepted by a receiving school and placed onto an official transcript;
 - e. Foster youth are immediately enrolled in the same or equivalent (i.e., meets the same graduation requirement) courses as those enrolled at the prior school;
 - f. Foster youth are given priority enrollment in credit recovery programs, as necessary; and
 - g. A process to request partial credits from a prior district if the student enters mid-semester without such credits.
2. Establish written AB 167/216 graduation policy including but not limited to ensuring:
 - a. Ensuring appropriate school staff at each school site (e.g., counselor, registrar) are trained in the AB 167/216 graduation policy;
 - b. All foster youth are certified as AB 167/216 eligible or not eligible within 30 days of enrollment; and
 - c. All foster youth and their education rights holders receive written and verbal information and counseling necessary to make a best interest determination about the youth's graduation plan.
3. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly), analyze, and utilize partial credit and graduation data (as identified in year 1) to evaluate effectiveness of policies/practices for foster youth, making necessary changes in order to improve outcomes.

Goal 6: Information Sharing & Data Infrastructure

1. Establish baseline metrics in:
 - a. Number of foster youth served by the district;
 - b. Time between home placement changes and school enrollment;
 - c. School stability data including how many education rights holders ("ERH") participate in school of origin decisions, number of youth who remain in their school of origin after an ERH makes a best interests determination, and what district funds are utilized to provide school of origin transportation;
 - d. Percentage of eligible youth who receive their partial credits;
 - e. Number of youth/ERHs who are notified of their AB 167/216 eligibility within 30 days of enrollment;
 - f. Number of foster youth who graduate under AB 167/216, local graduation requirements, and/or stay in high school for a 5th year;
 - g. Number/percentage of foster youth who attend alternative schools including continuation schools including whether ERHs gave written permission for such attendance;
 - h. Number of youth who participate in academic and social-emotional intervention programs/services; and
 - i. Number of preschool aged foster youth who are served by the district.⁸
2. Ensure the necessary student information system infrastructure modifications are made. Some examples of this include: 1) ensuring foster youth are tagged in the student information system for later data collection and disaggregation; 2) ensuring ERH information is gathered and stored in the student information system (in addition to caregiver/home placement information; 3) ensuring the student information system can accurately issue partial credits when appropriate; and 4) tracking timelines for AB 167/216 graduation notifications.
3. Ensuring the district has appropriate policies/practices in place to ensure foster youth (under both the LCFF foster youth definition as well as all AB 490 foster youth) are identified and tagged through the enrollment process and through state and local data matches.
4. Ensure that schools work with county child welfare and probation agencies to identify and engage education rights holders ("ERH") and ensure they have the information necessary to make well informed best interest determinations for their students.

⁷ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 56-59 on Partial Credits and 60-64 for AB 167/216 Graduation.

⁸ For a more comprehensive (although not exhaustive) list of foster youth data points, see the Foster Youth Education Toolkit at www.kids-alliance.org/edtoolkit pages 32-35.

COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR FOSTER YOUTH

5. Hire or assign, train, and supervise staff with the technical skills necessary to develop systems for tracking appropriate metrics against baseline data.
6. Regularly (at least quarterly) measure, track, and evaluate education outcome data to evaluate effectiveness of programs/policies for foster youth, making necessary changes in order to improve education outcomes.

Goal 7: Coordination of Social-Emotional Supports⁹

1. Develop and implement policies to increase access to and improve success rate of foster youth participating in campus-wide attendance improvement initiatives including but not limited to consistent attendance monitoring, home (including group home)/school coordination/communication, are connected to community partners to assist the family with challenges that may be preventing consistent attendance (e.g., public transportation vouchers, medical/mental health services), utilize tools from the Ad Council Campaign, available at www.oah.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit such as a tiered system for intervention that offers intensive, positive support, engagement with group homes.
1. Develop and implement policies to increase access to and improve success rate of foster youth participation in individualized truancy and dropout prevention programs.
2. Ensure that interested foster youth receive equal access (regardless of enrollment date/missed deadlines) to sports, extra-curricular programs, and afterschool/summer enrichment programs.
3. Ensure, through data collection, that foster youth are participating on an equal footing with other student populations in school-based social-emotional resources, trauma-informed mental health services, positive behavior intervention systems and/or restorative justice programs, pupil services and attendance counseling, campus-wide and individually designed attendance improvement initiatives, truancy and drop out prevention programs, sports, extra-curricular programs, and afterschool/summer enrichment programs.

Goal 8: Early Intervention & Prevention for Young Children 0-4¹⁰

1. Increase identification and enrollment of foster children in early education programs by filling all available early education slots.
2. Increase identification and enrollment of foster children in early education programs by ensuring they have at least equal access to necessary pre-academic/academic support services including tutoring, academic enrichment programs, and summer/intersession programs and social-emotional and behavioral support services including trauma-informed mental health services; and
3. Develop or modify existing district data systems to track the type of early care and education programs foster children enroll in and at what frequency including the overall percentage of foster children residing within the district who are enrolled in an early care and education program; and
4. Utilize data infrastructure to regularly measure (at least quarterly) foster child enrollment in early education programs, modifying policies and procedures as necessary to ensure increased outcomes.

⁹ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 37-41 on Trauma, 42 on Special Education, and 43-46 on Discipline.

¹⁰ For more information, see Foster Youth Education Toolkit, pages 47-54.