



## LCFF and Its Impact on Foster Youth

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## Background

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- Foster youth are children for whom the State has assumed responsibility because they were removed from their home due to neglect or abuse.
- Of students in foster care, 43% are Hispanic, 26% are African-American, 23% are white, and 2% are Asian.
- The LCFF and API recognize foster youth as a distinct student subgroup because their educational outcomes are significantly worse than other at-risk populations of students.



# Invisible Achievement Gap

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According to WestEd's 2013 report, *The Invisible Achievement Gap*, California foster youth:

- Are significantly more likely to change schools; one-third of students in foster care change schools at least once during the school year
- Test below basic and far below basic at twice the rate of students statewide and at significantly higher rates than low SES students
- Are significantly more likely to drop out than any other at-risk student group
- Have a 58 percent graduation rate, the lowest among at-risk student groups and as compared to a graduation rate of 84 percent for students statewide



# Promising Interventions

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- **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Instruction, services and policies that respond to the multiple traumas experienced by most foster youth
- **Education Success Plans:** Goals and objectives based on the student's identified educational strengths and needs
  - **Education Teams:** Interagency teams that monitor educational progress and ensure services are delivered in a coordinated fashion
  - **Instructional Services:** Access to necessary supplemental education services and opportunities
- **Educational Champions:** Adults supporting a foster youth's school success as would an actively involved parent

# Promising Infrastructure

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- **Inter-Agency Information Sharing**
- **District Level Policies**
  - Information sharing policies
  - Partial credit policies
  - Inter-agency agreements, including joint school stability and enrollment policies
- **District Level Trainings**
- **Foster Youth Education Liaisons / Counselors / School Social Workers**
  - Assess educational strengths and needs
  - Develop and monitor education plans
  - Connect foster youth to supplemental education services
  - Facilitate education teams



# Complementary CDE Student Support Strategies

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- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS)
- Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) to support PBIS
- Trauma-Informed Practices



# Methodology

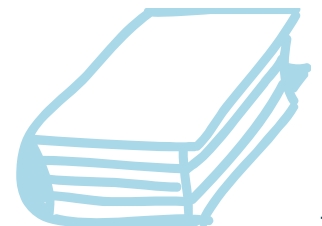
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## Preliminary findings based on:

- Analysis of the LCAPs of the 10 California school districts that enroll the most foster youth. These districts account for a quarter of the state's foster youth.
- Statewide survey of county office of education foster youth services coordinators.
- Interviews with Superintendent; Assistant Superintendents; Director, Student Support Services; Director, Education Services; Director of Special Education Services; Coordinator of Student Services; Coordinator of Community Resources; and Foster Youth Services Coordinators.

*Research brief on this topic upcoming in February 2015.*



## District Plans

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- High variability in how districts plan to improve the educational outcomes of foster youth
- Relatively few districts plan to provide foster youth unique services or supports
- Relatively few district LCAPs include the interventions and infrastructure elements deemed most critical by the field to help foster youth
- Select districts have well-developed, promising plans for closing the foster youth achievement gap



# Examples of Promising LCAPs

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- **Los Angeles Unified School District (approx. 11,000 foster youth)**
  - \$9.9 million to hire 75 foster youth counselors and foster youth specific school social workers responsible for identifying educational strengths and needs and monitoring educational progress
  - All elementary foster youth will receive a comprehensive academic assessment; all secondary foster youth will have an individualized culmination or graduation plan; increase in tutoring services
- **Poway Unified School District (approx. 50 foster youth)**
  - \$44,000 to develop and implement foster youth support protocols
  - Train counselors and administrators in support processes for foster youth
  - Administrator and counselor cultural and PBIS training

# Improving District Plans

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**District stakeholders consistently identified that the following would help them develop and implement improved plans for foster youth:**

- Information on the most common educational challenges facing foster youth and how to better collaborate with county agencies
- Information, resources and tools specific to promising interventions
- Additional guidance and support from those familiar with promising interventions and necessary infrastructure
- Examples of promising district plans for improving foster youth outcomes



# District & County Education Agencies

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- **Districts are best positioned to support foster youth in school and in the classroom**
  - By educating staff on trauma-informed practices and foster youth issues
  - By establishing district policies and infrastructure necessary to ensure foster youth receive the educational opportunities they need to thrive in school
  - By developing and monitoring education plans and facilitating education teams
  - By providing supplemental education services
- **County offices of education are best positioned to support school districts**
  - By increasing collaboration and information sharing across county agencies, including the child welfare, probation, mental health, and judicial agencies, as well as across districts
  - By providing expertise on designing and implementing effective intervention systems for foster youth
  - By ensuring every foster youth has an educational champion and education rights holder supporting their success in school as would an actively involved parent

# LCFF: Accountability and Foster Youth

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Foster youth and the evaluation rubric:

- Did the plan include development of district-level infrastructure supportive of foster youth success?
- Did the plan include training on trauma-informed practice and other foster youth issues?
- Did the plan include promising foster youth interventions?
- Was the plan effectively implemented?



# Recommendations

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- The SBE should receive biannual updates on LCFF's impact on foster youth
- LEAs should have increased access to tools and resources specific to:
  - The most common educational challenges facing foster youth
  - Promising infrastructure and interventions for foster youth
- LEAs should have increased access to expert assistance to help them develop and implement improved plans and programs for foster youth
- The SBE should include at least one member with expertise specific to improving the educational outcomes of foster youth
- Regulations should ensure LEAs explain how an appropriate amount of supplemental and concentration funds will be spent on services that principally address the districts' goals for foster youth and that are likely to be effective

## Contact Information

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