September 15, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

Subject: Educational Outcomes for 2014–15 Foster Youth

The California Department of Education has long considered the needs of California foster youth to be a high priority, but data about these students has only recently been available at the state level. Students in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable and academically at-risk student groups enrolled in California schools; these students are often negatively impacted in a variety of ways due to significant instability in their home and school placements.

Upon its adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula in fall 2013, California implemented a historic shift in how it funds its public schools. This new funding system significantly increases funding for high needs students and provides greater flexibility to local educational agencies regarding how to meet their needs. In addition, for the first time, foster youth are specifically identified as a high needs student group in California’s accountability system. Local educational agencies are now required to identify in their Local Control and Accountability Plans how resources, including Local Control Funding Formula supplemental and concentration grant funds, will be leveraged to best serve this population. To support these efforts, the Local Control Funding Formula legislation further requires the California Department of Education, in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services, to share data and, through a statewide match, inform districts regarding which of their students are foster youth (either living at home receiving family maintenance services or in out-of-home placements) so that these students can be served. The statewide data match has been in place since fall 2014.

To gauge the effectiveness of these new provisions, the Local Control Funding Formula legislation (California Education Code Section 49085[c]) also requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, on or before July 1 of each even-numbered year, to report to the Legislature and the Governor on the educational outcomes for foster
youth, which includes (to the extent allowable by federal law) the number of foster students at the school site and school district levels, and their “academic achievement,” “incidence of suspension and expulsion,” and “truancy rates, attendance rates, and dropout rates.” Accordingly, the California Department of Education has published the following information about foster students for the 2014–15 academic year. This information is published on DataQuest, the Department’s dynamic Web-based public reporting system that provides reports about California’s schools and school districts:

Census Reports – Distribution of Foster Youth in California

- *Foster Count and Match Rate by County of Jurisdiction (state and county levels)*

- *Count of Matched Foster Students by County of Enrollment and Grade (state, county, district, and school levels)*

- *Count of Matched Foster Students by Race/Ethnicity and Grade (state and county levels)*

Achievement Reports – English Language Arts

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by County (or District)*

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Tests by Grade (county and district levels)*

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by Race/Ethnicity (county and district levels)*

Achievement Reports – Mathematics

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by County (or District)*

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Grade (county and district levels)*
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- **California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Race/Ethnicity (county and district levels)**

To access these reports on DataQuest ([http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/](http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)), select “foster” under the Student Demographics heading and a list of the reports will be available. It should be noted that in the interest of protecting student identity, most of the reports do not provide data at the school level. All the census reports are available at the county level. The **Count of Matched Foster Students by County of Enrollment and Grade** reports are also available at the district and school levels. If feasible, the reports can also be filtered by gender, English learner, migrant, and special education student groups.

The achievement reports are available at the state, county, and district levels and can be filtered by gender; English learner, migrant, and special education student groups; race/ethnicity; and grade.

As processing of additional data is completed, the California Department of Education will make available these additional reports on DataQuest:

- Four-year Cohort Graduation Rate for Foster Students Class of 2014–15
- Count of Foster Student Suspensions and Expulsions in 2014–15
- Count of Schools Attended by Foster Students During 2014–15

To support the reform efforts of the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control and Accountability Plans, and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the California Department of Education plans to post these foster youth reports on DataQuest **annually**. Additionally, beginning in the spring of 2017, the California Department of Education will begin collecting the data required to calculate chronic absenteeism. In late summer, the data will be processed and posted in a DataQuest report that displays the chronic absenteeism rate of foster students.

The achievement reports that are now posted reveal a significantly **higher** percentage of foster students achieving at lower levels than the percentage of non-foster students achieving at the same levels, supporting the identification of foster youth as a high-needs student group. The reports reflect foster youth outcomes in 2014–15, at the very beginning of Local Control Funding Formula implementation, and may be considered baseline data for this student group. Clearly, there is much work to do to increase the achievement levels of foster youth. To support districts to better serve this population, Assembly Bill 854 (Chapter 781, Statutes of 2015), by Assembly Member Shirley Weber, was enacted to enable transitioning of the Foster Youth Services Program to the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program, in which county offices of education play a key role.
coordinating role in helping districts meet the educational needs of foster youth. To support this critical function, the Budget Act of 2015 allocated an additional $10 million to provide increased and more integrated educational services to students in foster care. A more detailed summary of both the outcome reports posted on DataQuest and the new Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program is provided in the attachment.

The California Department of Education expects that this information will not only help schools in their efforts to better address the needs of these students, but that it will also be used by other agencies and organizations that serve these students. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Kazanis, Director of the Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division, by phone at 916-323-5007 or by e-mail at ckazanis@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tom Torlakson

TT:pm
Attachment

cc: Members, California State Senate
    Members, California State Assembly
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR FOSTER YOUTH:
SUMMARY OF 2014–15 OUTCOMES

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to California Education Code Section 49085(a), which was enacted as part of the Local Control Funding Formula educational reform legislation, the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the California Department of Social Services to provide to the California Department of Education, on a weekly basis, a file of all youth meeting the following definition of a “foster youth” as specified in Education Code Section 42238.01(b):

- A child or youth who is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 300 (meaning a court has taken jurisdiction over a child and declared the child to be a dependent of the court due to the presence or risk of abuse or neglect). This includes children who are living at home while a dependent of the court as well as children whom the court has ordered to be removed into the care, custody, and control of a social worker for placement outside the home.

- A child or youth who is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 602 (meaning that a court has taken jurisdiction over a child and has declared the child to be a ward of the court due to the child’s violation of certain criminal laws) and has been ordered by a court to be removed from home pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 727 and placed in foster care as defined by Welfare and Institutions Code Section 727.4(d).

- A youth between ages 18 and 21 who is enrolled in high school, is a non-minor dependent under the placement responsibility of child welfare, probation, or a tribal organization participating in an agreement pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10553.1, and is participating in a transitional living case plan.

Each week, the California Department of Social Services extracts from the Child Welfare System/Case Management System the youth who meet the Local Control Funding Formula definition of a foster youth, along with extracting specified demographic information, and provides the data to the California Department of Education. The California Department of Education matches the youth information received from the California Department of Social Services with student enrollment data maintained in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System. To ensure an
accurate match, the California Department of Education requires a youth to be matched based on name, date of birth, and one school of enrollment over the past three years. The California Department of Education then provides weekly reports through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System to local educational agencies of all students enrolled in their schools that are foster youth. This information enables the schools and districts to provide appropriate supports and services to these youth.

Local educational agencies began receiving these foster reports in the fall of 2014. The reports posted on DataQuest, which are summarized here, are based on all students identified as foster youth during the 2014–15 school year. Each DataQuest report is described and summarized below. The reports can be viewed on DataQuest (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/) by selecting “Foster” under the Student Demographics heading.

CENSUS REPORTS

The following DataQuest reports display the distribution of foster youth in California:

- **Foster Count and Match Rate by County of Jurisdiction (state and county level)**
- **Count of Matched Foster Students by County of Enrollment and Grade (state, county, district, and school levels)**
- **Count of Matched Foster Students by Race/Ethnicity and Grade (state and county level)**

**Foster Count and Match Rate by County of Jurisdiction**

The DataQuest report entitled *Foster Count and Match Rate by County of Jurisdiction* shows that in 2014–15 there were a total of 69,676 foster youth, ages 4 through 18, who met the Local Control Funding Formula definition of a foster youth. These foster youth are displayed on the report based on the county that has jurisdiction over the youth, and not by the county in which the student is enrolled in school.

Viewing just those foster youth potentially enrolled in Kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) public school based on their age (select Grade/Age Filter, “K–12 Only”), 65,771 were within the K–12 age range. Of these youth, 64,902, or 98.7 percent were matched with students enrolled in a California K–12 public school. The report also shows that this match rate was fairly consistent across counties. The 1.3 percent of youth who were not matched were either not enrolled in a California public school, their names or
demographic information were submitted differently in the two systems, or there was insufficient quality school enrollment data in Child Welfare System/Case Management System to enable a match. The California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services continue to work together to increase the quality of the data in the two systems to increase the match rate.

Note: The Local Control Funding Formula definition of a foster youth does not include the youth of families who are “voluntarily” receiving child welfare services; these youth are also maintained in Child Welfare System/Case Management System. Local educational agencies sometimes believe that the statewide match process is not identifying some number of foster youth, but often these youth are “voluntary” and do not meet the Local Control Funding Formula definition of foster youth.

Count of Matched Foster Students by County of Enrollment and Grade

The DataQuest report entitled Count of Matched Foster Students by County of Enrollment and Grade displays the matched students by county of enrollment, by grade. Refer to DataQuest for the full report, which displays reports at the district and school levels.

As Table 1 depicts, statewide, the highest numbers of foster children were in Kindergarten and the high school grades. Also available are county reports that display the districts within the county, and district reports that display the schools within the district. These reports show that in 2014–15, Los Angeles County enrolled the most foster youth, enrolling 26,132 foster students or 40.3 percent of the foster students statewide. Within Los Angeles County, 12,714 or 48.7 percent were enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Within the Los Angeles Unified School District, every school had enrolled at least one foster child/youth during 2014–15, with one school enrolling 247 foster youth.
Table 1
Statewide Count of Matched Foster Students by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KN *</td>
<td>6,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UE *</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US *</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64,902</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*KN = Kindergarten; UE = Ungraded Elementary; US = Ungraded Secondary

Count of Matched Foster Students by Race/Ethnicity and Grade

The statewide DataQuest report entitled Count of Matched Foster Students by Race/Ethnicity and Grade displays the matched foster students by race/ethnicity and grade. Table 2 below compares the percentage of foster youth by race/ethnicity to the percentage of each race/ethnicity of the total student population. For most of the race/ethnicity groups, the percentage of foster students was similar to the percentage in the total student population. For example, 54.79 percent of the foster students in 2014–15 were Hispanic or Latino, and 53.64 percent of all students in California were Hispanic or Latino. The largest disparity was for the African American group: 5.99 percent of the total student population was African American, yet 18.41 percent of the foster population was African American.

Table 2
Percentage of Foster by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Total Student Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Foster Count</th>
<th>Percentage of Foster</th>
<th>Total Student Count*</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrollment*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>35,561</td>
<td>54.79%</td>
<td>3,344,431</td>
<td>53.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1.44%</td>
<td>36,755</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
<td>545,720</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
<td>31,513</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>158,224</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>11,949</td>
<td>18.41%</td>
<td>373,280</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White, Not Hispanic</td>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>12,183</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>64,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>18.77%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>1,531,088</td>
<td>175,700</td>
<td>38,809</td>
<td>6,235,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>24.55%</td>
<td>2.82%</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DataQuest, Statewide Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–15

**ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS**

The following DataQuest reports display the achievement levels of foster students, as measured by their performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics. For comparison purposes, each report also displays the same data for non-foster students.

**Achievement Reports – English Language Arts**

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by County (or District)]

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Tests by Grade (state, county, and district levels)]

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by Race/Ethnicity (state, county, and district levels)]

**Achievement Reports – Mathematics**

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by County (or District)]

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Grade (state, county, and district levels)]

- [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Race/Ethnicity (state, county, and district levels)]
The DataQuest reports entitled *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by County* and *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by County* show that there is a fair amount of consistency from county to county in the academic achievement of foster students. The reports also display, for comparison purposes, the achievement levels for non-foster students.

Table 3 summarizes some of the data displayed in the DataQuest reports, *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Tests by Grade*, *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Grade*. The data show that:

- The percentage of foster students achieving at the higher levels was significantly lower than the percentage of non-foster students achieving at the same levels. For English Language Arts, 3.9 percent of foster students exceeded standards compared to 16.3 percent for non-foster students. For mathematics, 2.5 percent of foster students exceeded standards compared to 14.3 percent for non-foster students.

- The percentage of foster students achieving at the lower levels was significantly higher than the percentage of non-foster students achieving at the same levels. For English Language Arts, 56.2 percent of foster students did not meet standards, compared to 30.5 percent for non-foster students. For mathematics, 64.0 percent of foster students did not meet standards, compared to 37.3 percent for non-foster students.

### Table 3

**Number/Percentage of Students Tested and Achievement Levels**

**Foster and Non-Foster Students (All Grades)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>English Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>Non-Foster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Enrolled</td>
<td>30,782</td>
<td>3,305,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Tested</td>
<td>27,651</td>
<td>3,176,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Enrolled Students tested</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students with Scores</td>
<td>26,671</td>
<td>3,146,408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Achievement Level | Standard Exceeded | Standard Met | Standard Nearly Met | Standard Not Met |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DataQuest reports entitled *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Test Results by Race/Ethnicity* and *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test Results by Race/Ethnicity* show that for each race/ethnicity category, foster students did not perform as well as their non-foster counterparts. Within the foster student group, Asians and Filipinos performed better than average, and African Americans performed worse as compared to all race/ethnicity student groups.

**FOSTER YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATING PROGRAM**

California is committed to closing the foster youth achievement gap to provide students in foster care the opportunity to realize their full potentials, reach their college and career goals, and become independent, productive members of society. Recognizing the need to align the existing county structure of support for foster youth to one focused at the district level, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 854 (Chapter 781, Statutes of 2015) which amended *Education Code* sections 42921–42927, establishing the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program and further defines the approach for counties and districts to collaboratively meet the educational needs of foster youth. To support this realignment, the Budget Act of 2015 allocated an additional $10 million to provide increased and more integrated educational services to foster students.

Assembly Bill 854 prioritizes the educational stability of foster children and youth as a joint responsibility of educational and child welfare agencies and other partners. This new law creates the much needed opportunity to increase access to more meaningful educational supports for foster children and youth by shifting the focus of the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program from a direct service model to a systems integration model that incorporates assistance to local educational agencies in building policies, developing protocols, and implementing case management strategies to ultimately produce improved educational outcomes for foster youth.

Assembly Bill 854 also requires counties to develop and implement a plan that establishes guiding principles and protocols for providing meaningful supports to foster youth that are aligned with the priorities established in the Local Control and...
Accountability Plan and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The work associated with Assembly Bill 854 emphasizes the importance of collaboration and joint decision-making between child welfare agencies and state and local educational agencies to improve educational outcomes for foster youth.

The California Department of Education administers the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program and is engaged in the work of supporting county offices of education in the transition to the new work called for under Assembly Bill 854. In 2015, the California Department of Education developed new standards for the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program, embedded these new standards into a program review process, and awarded funding to 57 county offices of education. As required under Assembly Bill 854, the California Department of Education has also contracted with two county offices of education to establish the Foster Youth Services Technical Assistance Program to provide needed professional development to county offices of education to implement the elements of Assembly Bill 854 as it aligns with the priorities under the Local Control Funding Formula.

OTHER EFFORTS

The California Department of Education is committed to working collaboratively with the California Department of Social Services and other partners to improve the education outcomes of foster youth. The California Department of Education is also working on the following efforts:

- Collaborating with the California Department of Social Services and the Bureau of Children’s Justice at the California Department of Justice to address issues facing foster youth. Data sharing between local educational, child welfare, and law enforcement agencies is key to effectively serving foster youth. To facilitate appropriate data sharing, the three agencies jointly developed and recently released guidance to local agencies on the sharing of foster data.


- Coordinating with child welfare agencies to align practice and policy development with a meaningful community collaborative process that encompasses capacity building and the priorities of the Local Control and Accountability Plan as defined in the Local Control Funding Formula.
Coordinating professional development opportunities and technical assistance for local educational agencies and other partners regarding school stability and educational supports for foster youth with a focus on increasing access to postsecondary institutions, career technical education programs, or adult education programs.