

Foster Care Outcomes

1. Purpose:

With the recognition of the critical role education plays in improving outcomes for youth in foster care, the purpose of SHB 2254 (Foster Care—Education Success, 2012 Session) is to:

- a. Improve the high school graduation outcomes of foster youth through coordinated P–20 and child welfare outreach, intervention, and planning; and provide improved postsecondary outcomes.
- b. Facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of students who are dependent.
- c. Provide for our students in foster care: wraparound educational advocacy services; mandate the timely transmission of educational records; recognize the importance of maintaining a foster child in the school program he or she was in before entering the foster care system and minimizing the number of times a child has to change schools.
- d. Increase/improve dependent student access to and participation regarding post-secondary scholarship opportunities.
- e. Increase/improve cross-system collaboration between education, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

2. Description of services provided:

The Foster Care Education Program Supervisor at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has accomplished the following tasks during the 2017–18 fiscal year:

- a. Collaborated closely with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to secure agreements between local school districts and their respective child welfare field offices committing to specific strategies for communication and collaboration, including implementing a new process for cost sharing of school transportation when needed.
- b. Successfully managed the Graduation Success Demonstration Site contract and the Educational Advocacy contract
- c. Improved access to educational information regarding children and youth in foster care in Washington State public schools by establishing clear and consistent communication with the field through GovDelivery, and providing in-person training to school districts, social workers, Educational Service Districts, advocacy organizations, foster parent organizations, and contractors.
- d. Supported a statewide system of foster care liaisons whose duty it is to ensure that their individual districts are collaborating with Children’s Administration, service providers, and contractors. These staff also ensure that students received the services they are entitled to by law.
- e. Participated in the following workgroups to ensure the needs of school-aged children and youth in foster care and the schools they attend are represented in higher level collaboration efforts:
 - 1) Court Improvement Program Grant Steering Committee
 - 2) Children, Youth, and Family Advisory Committee

- 3) Collective Impact Initiative
- 4) Passport to College Leadership Team
- 5) Commission on Children in Foster Care

3. Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:

SHB 2254 does not include grants of other direct funding to local districts.

Beneficiaries in 2018–19 School Year:

of School Districts: 295
 # of Schools: 00
 # of Students: 00
 Other: 00

of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 1.0
 # of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 0.0

FY 19 Funding: State Appropriation: \$0.123 million
 Federal Appropriation: \$0.0 million
 Other fund sources: \$0.0 million
 TOTAL (FY19) \$0.123 million

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding? If yes, explain.
 No.

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY19	\$123,000	\$121,429
FY18	\$123,000	\$123,000
FY17	\$123,000	\$120,988
FY16	\$123,000	\$123,000
FY15	\$123,000	\$116,454
FY14	\$123,000	\$123,000
FY13	\$128,000	\$108,004

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) history:

Fiscal Year	# of Districts
FY19	295

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized federal education law in 2015, with provisions ensuring school stability for students in foster care. This legislation required school districts to designate a point of contact to ensure students in foster care receive services specified in the new provisions. Districts are also required to collaborate with child

welfare agencies to implement clear written procedures related to transportation. OSPI and DCYF updated the Regional Education Agreement, which each school district signs, to reflect these requirements. The agreement addresses enrollment, record transfers, transportation and joint education planning.

In addition, state legislation enacted in 2016 (HB 1999) mandated that administration of the Graduation Success Demonstration Sites and Education Advocacy programs serving foster youth be transferred from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The transition has allowed the state education agency to facilitate better working relationships with school districts, and better communication with the providers.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

Youth impacted by the foster care system experience among the lowest high school graduation and postsecondary completion outcomes compared to any other population of youth. Efforts to address this disproportionality include strategies to support educational stability and immediate access. Programs such as Graduation Success, which provide intensive, individual support, show promising results with increased graduation rates.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

There have been challenges negotiating the useful exchange of information with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Challenges include differing interpretations of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and Washington state information-sharing laws as well as the differing needs and uses of education information.

Also, as school districts strive to comply with the relatively new requirements under ESSA, the need for technical assistance has grown. Providing in-person training and professional development opportunities to school districts has been a challenge due to a lack of funding.

10. **Future opportunities:**

With both state and federal legislation focused on improving the educational outcomes of youth in foster care, an array of strategies to support these students has been implemented. Improved educational stability, coordinated interagency collaboration and individual student services pave the way for Washington to be a leader in the nation with respect to dependent youth graduating from high school, enrolling in postsecondary education, and completing postsecondary education.

11. **Statutory and/or Budget language:**

Budget Proviso: ESSB 6032 Sec. 501 (12) \$123,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2018 and \$123,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2019 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 163, Laws of 2012 (Foster Care Outcomes). OSPI shall annually report each December on the implementation of the state's plan of cross-system collaboration to promote educational stability and improve education outcomes of foster youth.

12. Other relevant information:

With the demand on school districts to provide educational stability and services for students in foster care, the need for training and technical assistance grows. Ongoing efforts to comply with program requirements of state and federal legislation exceeds the capacity of existing program staff at OSPI.

13. List of schools/districts receiving assistance: See OSPI [website](#).

14. Program Contact Information:

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