# Foster Youth Second Demonstration Site

1. **Purpose:**
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. The legislature recognizes the critical role education plays in improving outcomes, as well as the key role played by wraparound services in providing continuity, seamless educational transitions, and higher levels of educational attainment.

   The purpose/objective of this program, Graduation Success, is to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care by providing individualized education services and monitoring to support completion of their educational milestones, remediation needs, and special education needs. This is one of four sites across the state, with each site serving multiple districts.

2. **Description of services provided:**
Education specialists work with youth to create a student-centered plan for their education and their future, in consultation with DCYF caseworkers. These plans help to create student centered planning goals for each youth with a set of action plans for achieving those goals. Education specialists review the student centered planning goals and action plans with youth on a monthly, sometimes weekly, basis.

   In addition to graduation rates, the program tracks three academic indicators known to impact academic outcomes – attendance, behavior, and course performance. When an issue arises, education specialists advocate for youth at school to eliminate barriers to education access and success. These interventions are divided into four categories: enrollment issues, discipline related issues, barriers to accessing service, and barriers to educational progress.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**
This is the second (2nd) demonstration site and consists of Tacoma and Spokane public schools. School districts were selected due to their high population of high school aged foster youth in those areas.

   **Beneficiaries in 2020-21 School Year:**
       **Number of School Districts:**    2

**Number of Schools:**      30
**Number of Students:**      146
**Number of Educators:**      0
**Other:**      0

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

**FY21 Funding: State Appropriation:**      $1.015 million
                 **Federal Appropriation:**      $0
                 **Other fund sources:**      $0
                 **TOTAL (FY21)**      $1.015 million

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**
   ☒ No
   ☐ Yes, please explain.

5. **State funding history:**

| Fiscal Year | Amount Funded | Actual Expenditures |
|---|---|---|
| FY21 | $1,015,000 | $1,015,000 |
| FY20 | $1,015,000 | $1,015,000 |
| FY19 | $1,015,000 | $1,015,000 |
| FY18 | $1,015,000 | $1,015,000 |

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

| Fiscal Year | Number of Districts |
|---|---|
| FY21 | 2 |
| FY20 | 2 |
| FY19 | 2 |
| FY18 | 2 |

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**
   The initial pilot was a single demonstration site with school districts in King County. Since then, that site has expanded to all school districts in King County. Three (3) additional demonstration sites, including this one, were added in other regions of the state. In addition, this contract was moved from DSHS/CA to OSPI for contract management. The transition has allowed the state education agency to facilitate

better working relationships with school districts, and better communication with the providers intended audience.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**
The goal is to increase graduation rates for students in foster care. In 2013, the statewide graduation rate for students in foster care was 36.5%. As federal and state legislation has been implemented, and the Graduation Success program expanded, that rate has grown to 50.4%

When an issue arises, Education Specialist advocate for students at school to eliminate barriers to education access and success. They work hard to build a team of supportive adults around each youth, including school personnel, caregivers and social workers. Examples of intervention topics include: educational placement determination, course performance, attendance or behavior issues, extracurricular activities, transportation barriers or post-secondary plans. In this second site, 60% of students served received at least one advocacy intervention.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**
Initially there was a difference in how the contractor and OSPI calculated graduation rates, creating a discrepancy in outcomes. We've since been able to agree on a shared calculation baseline and this issue has been resolved.

OSPI and DCYF have established a data exchange which allows us to identify all students who are in out-of-home care under the authority of DCYF. This information is used to identify foster care students for purposes of reporting and service delivery. Graduation rate is based on a cohort of students. The cohort is made up of all students who start 9th grade together. Students who transfer into or out of a school are added or removed from the cohort. If students stop attending school, they are counted as 'drop outs'. If students have met graduation requirements, they are counted as 'graduates'. If students don't graduate but are still attending, they are considered 'continuing'. The four year graduation rate includes students that graduated in 4 years. For reporting, we use the rule that if a student is ever in out-of-home care in grades 9th through 12th, they are designated as foster care.

Because the graduation rate includes students who may no longer be in foster care and those who have never received services from Graduation Success, it may not be the best measurement of program effectiveness. In addition, high mobility for students in foster care continues to be a great challenge. Students are moved from placement to placement, from district to district, which interrupts or ends services depending on where they land. As our contractor expands throughout the state, and Graduation Success is implemented in every district, the goal is to provide support to all eligible students.

The pandemic presented additional challenges and the contractor was committed to maintaining the same level of service to students. They delivered programs remotely and with more flexibility. They provided support with distance learning, including help in navigating school expectations and ensuring access to devices, internet and school work.

10. **Future opportunities:**
    The contractor continues to expand throughout the state, using private funding to supplement costs. Due to the knowledge and expertise gained in the implementation of this first demonstration site, expansion to additional sites has been fluent. The contractor's ongoing partnership with OSPI and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families has allowed the contractor to implement protocols, policies, and procedures for the maintenance and expansion of the program.

    With shared understanding and an improved method of data collection and reporting, we hope to examine the intersection of foster care with other subcategories, such as juvenile justice, in an effort to address the impact of cross-system involvement.

11. **Statutory and/or budget language:**
    ESSB 5092 Sec. 1518 (6)(b) - $1,015,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2020 and $1,015,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 are provided solely for the demonstration site established pursuant to the 2015-17 omnibus appropriations act, section 501(43)(b), chapter 4, Laws of 2015, 3rd special session, as amended.

12. **Other relevant information:**
    Over the last decade, legislative leadership has sparked innovation and development of an array of services to improve educational outcomes. This coordinated, intensive, and intentional program proactively supports youth to complete high school and successfully implement their own plans for their future.

13. **Schools/districts receiving assistance:**
    See OSPI's Grantee List.

14. **Program Contact Information:**
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