Toolkit for Foster Youth Education Success

Enrolling Foster Youth

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Why are you here?

You’ll Learn:

1. Enrollment rights of foster youth.
2. Best practices for identifying and enrolling foster youth.

NOTE: When we refer to foster youth, that includes both foster youth with open dependency court cases and probation youth with open delinquency court cases.
Youth Experience
Bonita Unified School District

- Students in District: approximately 10,000
- Foster Youth included in LCFF norm 2014: approximately 150
- Foster Youth enrolling in 2014: about 500
- Three large group homes account for nearly 50% of foster youth.
- District investment in Foster Youth Program
Enrollment Challenges

• Do not know who all foster youth are
• Lack of advanced notice of enrollment
• Do not know who holds education rights
• Lack of records/paperwork
• Students are credit deficient
• Students are academically behind
• Students have significant mental health needs
• Students have come from across the county
Enrollment Strategies

- Change enrollment paperwork
- Focus on finding Education Rights Holders
- Train local school staff
- Rely on Education Rights Holders to make decisions about alternative school options
- Hire interns to facilitate record gathering and placement discussions
- Improve lines of communications with local group homes, child welfare agency, and probation department
- Work with county office of education and local child welfare agency to improve data matching
Enrolling Foster Youth
Enrolling Foster Youth

Sean, a 16 year old foster youth, walks into the front office of your local comprehensive high school with his grandma Jeannie to enroll in school. He is more than 2 years off track for graduation.
Andrea, an employee at a local group home, calls the local high school to enroll Calvin, who was placed in the group home over the weekend. Calvin has some significant mental health and behavioral needs and Andrea asks about putting him in a smaller school.
Enrolling Foster Youth

Mr. Rivas, the dean of discipline at the middle school where you serve as the AB 490 foster youth liaison, is fed up with Jimmy. Jimmy is a foster youth who can’t seem to control his anger and has been suspended a few times this year. Mr. Rivas wants you to send him to the community day school.
Enrolling Foster Youth

Jessica and her aunt Sue walk into the front office of your elementary school. Sue fills out the enrollment paperwork, including the foster youth screening questions. She answers “yes” that Jessica lives with someone other than her parents. You ask if the youth is in foster care, and Sue replies “No, I don’t think so.”