

## Changing the Story: Improving Education Outcomes for Indiana’s Students in Foster Care

In response to the feedback received through both the original stakeholder group created in 2018 per HEA 1314 and the school Foster Care Points of Contact (POC) from across the state, the previous remediation plan has been updated to reflect the vision and mission of the current leadership at the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and the current needs of the population of youth impacted.

### 1. Based on feedback from the Foster Care POC survey, POCs need more training, resources and clarification on their role.

Goal/Action	Create and share a variety of targeted professional development resources specific to the role of Foster Care POC clarifying the expectations and responsibilities of the POC and the specific needs of foster youth.
Rationale	Communication/Collaboration Identification Service Provision Policy and Procedure
Who	IDOE in partnership with DCS and other stakeholders
How	IDOE in coordination with DCS will create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for all Foster Care POC. Local education liaisons will work with school counselors, school social workers, student services coordinators and school administrators to ensure that training is being put into action with staff (and students where applicable).
When	IDOE will develop and release staff training resources to local Foster Care POC before 1/19/2022 via the foster youth Moodle Community Page and online training opportunities. Additional resources and training will be provided throughout the 2022-2023 school year as needed.
Evaluation	IDOE will track attendance of training/engagement opportunities as well as measure Foster Care POC understanding through a survey conducted annually. At least 90% of Foster Care POC will report having an improved knowledge of their role and the expectations and responsibilities associated with their role.
Re-Evaluation	IDOE will revisit its training materials annually and make revisions as needed or specified by the field.

### 2. In 2020-2021, students in foster care were suspended at a rate more than two times higher than the average rate of all students, and they were expelled at a rate nearly four times higher. There were 1,728 foster students suspended in 2020-2021, a rate of 9%, and 58 foster students were expelled (a rate of 0.3%).<sup>1</sup> Comparatively, just 4% of all students were suspended, and 0.1% were expelled.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a unique count of 18,412 foster students enrolled at any time during the 2020-2021 school year.

Goal/Action	Encourage districts to enact positive discipline practices and deliver resources to districts that will reduce the suspension and expulsion of students in foster care.
Rationale	Equity of Service/Resource Provision Access (suspensions/attendance) Policy and Procedure Achievement
Who	IDOE in coordination with Foster Care POC and other school staff.
How	Promote the use of IDOE Comprehensive Discipline Resource Guide through awareness and direct training.
When	2022-2023 school year; ongoing
Evaluation	Rate of suspension incidents for students in foster care will decrease from 11.9% to 6.9% by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. IDOE will also monitor the participation rate when building-level and districtwide training is provided to help with the evaluation.
Re-Evaluation	Evaluation of training activities will be conducted as they occur. All resources will be reviewed at least once annually with revisions implemented as needed.

**3. While collaborative strategies show promise in terms of impacting foster youth globally, no data exists among Indiana communities regarding outcomes from collaboration between Foster Care POC and community partners, such as between schools, DCS, and health providers.**

Goal/Action	Create a blueprint of communication and related processes to help and support increased collaboration among foster youth, DCS education services, LEAs and community-based service providers. Successful models of collaboration will then have the opportunity to be replicated across the state.
Rationale	Communication/Collaboration Identification Service Provision Policy and Procedure
Who	IDOE, Foster Care POC, DCS education services and community partners will share resources to identify best practices and provide recommendations in the area of collaborative partnerships in student services.
How	IDOE will work with invested parties to create the blueprint of communication and then provide training as appropriate.
When	IDOE and other stakeholders will release guidance during the 2022-2023 school year.
Evaluation	Once a blueprint is shared, a survey will be given to all stakeholders to assess effectiveness of communication and collaboration practices.

Re-Evaluation	At least once a year, IDOE will assess the impact of continued collaboration between Foster Care POC, community partners, and DCS. IDOE will continue communication with all.
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**4. In the 2020-2021 school year, 54.2% of eligible foster youth graduated from high school compared to 86.7% of their peers of the same age. Of those who graduated, two and a half times more students in foster care graduated with a waiver compared to their non-foster care peers.**

Goal/Action	Broaden and intensify services and supports offered to students in foster care in order to increase graduation rates
Rationale	Achievement College & Career Readiness Equity of Service/Resource Provision
Who	IDOE, in partnership with the local POC, will work together to identify specific needs of students in care.
How	Resources provided to LEAs will emphasize the importance of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental health care and trauma recovery</li> <li>• culturally competent common language</li> <li>• student and family centered approaches to support</li> </ul> Resources will also provide clarification and reinforcement of the intent of federal law to limit disruption to education and eliminate barriers to education. Statewide professional development opportunities will occur to improve equity of access to diverse support options and to offer a rich selection of methods and practices. IDOE, in partnership with outside organizations, will offer strategic training to LEAs to better serve high risk populations.
When	IDOE will begin connecting with service providers during the 2022-2023 school year and will provide opportunities for LEAs to share resources in the fall of 2022.
Evaluation	The rate of graduation for foster youth will increase from 54.2% to 59.2% by 2023.
Re-Evaluation	IDOE will revisit its training materials annually and make revisions as needed or specified by the field.