INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

House Enrolled Act 1314-2018:
Annual Report on Foster Care Youth Educational Outcomes

Statutory Authority (IC 20-19-3-18)
This document represents the first annual report on foster care youth educational outcomes as stipulated by House Enrolled Act 1314-2018, which requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to, in collaboration with the Department of Education (IDOE) and the Department of Child Services (DCS), annually prepare and submit the following:

(1) A report on foster care youth educational outcomes, and
(2) A report on homeless youth educational outcomes.

It requires the DOE to develop and submit a copy of the following:

(1) A remediation plan concerning foster care youth, and
(2) A remediation plan concerning homeless youth.

The legislation requires certain information regarding students in foster care to be included in a school corporation's annual performance report. The bill requires the DOE and the DCS to enter into a memorandum of understanding that, at a minimum, requires the department of child services to share with the department, at least one time each month, disaggregated information regarding youth in foster care that is sufficient to allow the department to identify students in foster care. It repeals, for purposes of provisions concerning the transportation of a homeless student to a school of origin, a provision that provides "homeless student" includes a student who is awaiting placement in foster care.

Report Development Timeline

January 15, 2019:	Statutory Deadline for Publication of Graduation Rate
January 31, 2019:	DOE staff to send SBOE staff data for Foster Care Youth Report under IC 20-19-3-18
March 12, 2019:	SBOE staff to review DOE data; DOE and DCS to prepare Foster Care Youth Report and send report to SBOE for review
April 1, 2019:	Per IC 20-19-3-18(d), DOE shall submit the Homeless Youth Care Report to DCS and the Legislative Council in electronic format under IC 5-14-6
June 30, 2019:	After consultation with DCS and other stakeholders, DOE will develop a remediation plan concerning homeless youth and submit to the SBOE, DCS, and the Legislative Council in electronic format under IC 5-14-6

Federal Authority: Every Student Succeeds Act
In 2015, President Obama signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, subsequently renamed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). While this law has a vast impact on the educational systems to allow states the authority to refocus on equal opportunities for all students, a specific section of the law was devoted to ensuring the educational stability of the foster youth population through collaboration between child welfare and education agencies. In addition, disaggregated foster student achievement data must be included on the State and Local Education Agency (LEA) report cards. This section of the ESSA was required to be fully implemented December 10, 2016. More specifically, the ESSA offers the following elements to encourage educational stability for foster youth:

1. Ability for child to remain in their school of origin if collaboratively determined to be in

their educational best interest;
2. Immediate enrollment and transfer of school records;
3. Transportation to be provided to ensure child can participate in school that is uniquely determined to be in their educational best interest;
4. Designated points of contact at the state and local levels
5. Data collection and reporting; and
6. Requires public and charter schools to adhere to these elements.

Defining Foster Care
Per 45 CFR Sec. 1355.20: Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the Title IV-E agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to: placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed, if payments are made by the State, Tribal, or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments that are made.

The Unique Challenges of Foster Care Youth
Foster care is designed to provide temporary housing and care for children and adolescents until they can be either reunited with their family, taken in by relatives, adopted, or emancipated as an adult. Too often, however, youth that pass through the foster care system fail to find permanent homes, transitioning from one living situation to another, and a large percentage experience homelessness at some point in their lives. Without stable homes and loving families to support them, many foster youth struggle to keep up with their peers in academic settings. Across the U.S., youth raised in foster care typically achieve at lower levels academically and are at a higher risk of dropping out of school than their general population peers. Additional academic challenges include:
- Children in foster care are far more likely to change schools during the school year, to be in special education classes, and to fail to receive passing grades than their general population counterparts.
- High school dropout rates are 3 times higher for foster youth than other low-income children.
- Only about 50% graduate from high school.
- Over 40% of school-aged children in foster care have educational difficulties.

Throughout their adult life, former foster youth face increased rates of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, and other adverse situations. Foster youth often lack the skills and support needed to find and hold jobs. Moreover, youth raised in foster care are less likely to have graduated from high school or college, resulting in diminished opportunities for earning living wages and having successful careers in the workforce.

Many of the children and adolescents who enter into foster care have complicated and severe medical, mental, oral, and psychosocial health issues. Psychological and emotional trauma rooted in early childhood experiences is particularly common and can be linked to serious impacts on later development throughout adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, the many medical and mental

health problems faced by youth in foster care are compounded by a lack of adequate access to health services.

Children without families to make them feel loved and cared for are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by sex traffickers. Foster children in large cities like New York and Los Angeles are at the most risk of being targeted. Traffickers will sometimes send one of their girls into group homes to lure other girls to leave3. Many girls who end up leaving foster care are trafficked into prostitution where they are routinely subject to physical abuse and violence.

Barriers for Foster Care Youth
As evidenced the data below, completing high school can prove to be challenging for students in foster care. They have high levels of school mobility and changing home placements due to factors outside of their control. The lack of foster homes with the level of support to meet the therapeutic needs of the youth within reasonable distance of the school of origin frequently forces students to transfer schools. This can occur multiple times in a single year. Although the ESSA provides foster youth with the right to remain in their school of origin despite home placement changes, too often, these moves can lead to school changes, causing disruptions in their learning.

A major barrier that these students face is the traumatic situation they suffered at home that leads them into the foster care system. This population has or does experience instability and stress at home. This type of ongoing trauma can rewire a child's neurological pathways to be in a constant state of hypervigilance and fear of personal safety; students may constantly be in a flight or fight mode. Trauma can also cause a disruption of the child's ability to effectively engage in the classroom lessons or manifest as negative behaviors.

High mobility due to home placement changes can cause the child to lose faith in the adults responsible for a student's safety. In addition to a potential loss of academic instruction and credits, mobility will also cause students to lack the desire to engage in socialization with peers/community out of fear of another potential home placement change.

National Foster Youth Statistics
The Legal Center for Foster Care & Education studies have shown that:
- 34.2% of 17-18 year olds have experienced five or more school changes.
- Foster youth are approximately three times more likely to be expelled than other youth populations.
- Foster youth are approximately two times more likely to have out of school suspension than other youth populations.
- The average reading level of 17-18 year old foster youth is at the 7th grade level.
- Between 35.6% and 47.3%of foster youth are receiving special education services.
- Only 63% of foster care youth in the Midwest complete high school by age 18 (via HSE or diploma).
- Nationally, 437,465 youth were reported to be in foster care as of September 30, 2016 with 65% of these youth experiencing more than one home placement while in care.

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- Foster children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits per the USDA Food and Nutrition Services Eligibility Manual.

Indiana's Foster Youth Statistics

2019 Indiana KIDS Count Data identified 31,042 students in Indiana's foster care system in 2017. The 2017-2018 school year is the first time foster care youth academic data has been collected at the state level. Indiana's data was collected through LEA reports and the data sharing agreement between the IDOE and DCS. Local DCS offices provide schools with notification of a child's foster status by submission of the School Notification (state form 47412) via email to the LEA's identified Point of Contact. LEAs reported their foster youth data at the end of the academic year to IDOE. Because this is the first time schools have reported and the state has collected these data, there is less consistency than the homeless youth data, which has been collected and reported to the federal government for McKinney-Vento. This first data cull has illuminated inconsistencies and anomalies in the data below. As DCS and IDOE continue the process for collecting these data, the agencies can refine and improve the reporting and collecting of these data to ensure accuracy and transparency.

Of the data reported, the majority of foster care students, approximately 8,335, are enrolled in traditional public schools, with a small percentage attending charters. Nonpublic schools do not report foster care status to the state, so the enrollment of foster care students is currently unknown.

School Type (Enrollment Count)

	Foster Care Student Count	Percentage	All Students	Percentage
Traditional Public	8335	91.8%	1006278	88.3%
Charter	469	5.2%	47089	4.1%
State Run (Blind, Deaf, Corrections)	9	0.1%	821	0.1%
Non-public*	263	2.9%	85634	7.5%

*Non-public schools do not report foster care status

Of the 378 potential foster care youth graduates, 244 (64.6%) graduated in the 2018. This is significantly less than the graduation rate of all students at 88.1%. A major contributing factor to this difference is the high mobility rates of foster students, creating gaps in academic knowledge. High mobility, as well as other challenges unique to this population of students, leads to disproportionately low rates of high school graduation when compared to other economically disadvantaged students. One example of this is that foster care students have a significantly lower graduation rate than homeless youth (82.3%). The data reinforce the importance of fidelity to the ESSA collaboration between the identified DCS and LEA Point of Contacts to determine the educational best interests. The IDOE will strive to find the root cause of this problem and develop evidence-based interventions in its remediation plan.

Foster care students did have substantially a higher rate of waivers for graduation requirements than all students – 20.9% of foster care students received a wavier compared to 8.3% of all students. This indicates that more foster care students struggle meeting the proficiency benchmark on ISTEP 10 than their peers. Of those that graduate, the majority of foster care students earn a Core 40 designation

(72.5%), which is higher than their peers (50.7%). More foster care students also earn a General designation (18.4%) than their peers (9.5%). Although, foster care students earn fewer Honors designations than their peers. This again reiterates lower academic achievements for foster care students when compared to all Indiana students.

Overall Graduation Rate

	Cohort Size	Total Graduates	Graduation Rate
Foster Care	378	244	64.6%
All Students	82234	72466	88.1%

Waivers for Graduation Requirements

	Waiver Graduates	Graduate Waiver Rate	Non-Waiver Graduates	Non-Waiver Graduation Rate
Foster Care	51	20.9%	193	79.0%
All Students	6029	8.3%	66437	80.8%

Diploma Type

	Foster Care	% Diploma (Foster)	All Students	% Diploma (All)
General	45	18.4%	6862	9.5%
Core 40	177	72.5%	36740	50.7%
Core 40 - Academic Honors	19	7.8%	23770	32.8%
Core 40 - Technical Honors	2	0.8%	1567	2.2%
Core 40 - Academic and Technical Honors	1	0.4%	3278	4.5%
International Baccalaureate	0	0%	248	0.3%

Regarding the retention and promotion of students for 2017-18 and 2018-19, slightly more foster care students (3.9%) were retained in prekindergarten through grade 11 when compared to all Indiana students (1.8%), as well as compared to homeless students (2.7%). Students tend to be retained more often in earlier grades than later – most often in Prekindergarten, though some students may repeat a year in high school due to credit deficiencies.

2017-18 Total Grade Promotion/Retention (PreK-11)

	Student Count	Retained	Retained %	Promoted	Promotion %
Foster Care	8019	315	3.9%	7704	96.1%
All Students	1009855	18464	1.8%	991391	98.2%

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2017-18 and 2918-19 Total Grade Promotion/Retention Disaggregated by Grade

	Student Count	Retained	Retained %	Promoted	Promotion %
Prekindergarten	186	76	40.9%	110	59.1%
Kindergarten	811	83	10.2%	728	89.8%
Grade 1	870	42	4.8%	828	95.2%
Grade 2	758	19	2.5%	739	97.5%
Grade 3	798	14	1.8%	784	98.2%
Grade 4	712	5	0.7%	707	99.3%
Grade 5	677	11	1.6%	666	98.4%
Grade 6	587	8	1.4%	579	98.6%
Grade 7	558	5	0.9%	553	99.1%
Grade 8	561	5	0.9%	556	99.1%
Grade 9	535	16	3.0%	519	97.0%
Grade 10	547	14	2.6%	533	97.4%
Grade 11	419	17	4.1%	402	95.9%

There does not appear to be discrepancies in student retention across different subgroups of foster care students.

2017-18 Grade Promotion/Retention Disaggregated by Subgroup

	Student Count	Retained	Retained %	Promoted	Promotion %
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	27	***	***	***	***
Black	1621	59	3.6%	1562	96.4%
Asian	30	0	0.0%	30	100.0%
Hispanic Ethnicity	643	16	2.5%	627	97.5%
White	5070	218	4.3%	4852	95.7%
Multiracial (two or more races)	620	22	3.5%	598	96.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8	***	***	***	***
Female	3851	127	3.3%	3724	96.7%
Male	4168	188	4.5%	3980	95.5%
Free/Reduced Lunch	2709	169	6.2%	2540	93.8%
Paid Lunch	5310	146	2.7%	5164	97.3%
Special Education	27	***	***	***	***
General Education	1621	59	3.6%	1562	96.4%

Comparatively, a higher percentage of foster care students are suspended (21.0%) and expelled (0.55%) compared to all students (8.9% and 0.28%, respectively). While expulsion is only marginally higher, suspension rates are more than double the percentage. Discipline rates foster care students are also higher than homeless students (17.9% and 0.43%, respectively). This indicates potential behavioral differences due to trauma that each of the subgroups potentially experiences. IDOE will strive to have differentiated interventions for each subgroup based on the potential discrepancies in trauma and stress in its remediation plan.

Discipline (Public Schools)

	Students Suspended	Suspension %	Students Expelled	Expulsion %	Total number of students
Foster Care	1923	21.0%	51	0.55%	9145
All Students	96370	8.9%	3088	0.28%	1075466

Foster care students appear to have more suspensions and expulsions during grades 8 through 10. Black and white students and particularly male student, tend to be on the receiving end of more disciplinary action than their peers. As IDOE develops its remediation report, it will be crucial to examine the types of disciplinary infractions this population of students receive. IDOE should also strive to undertake correlative studies between the infractions and behavioral and mental health challenges unique to the trauma of these students.

Discipline Disaggregated by Grade

	Students Suspended	Students Expelled	Total Students
Pre-Kindergarten	1	0	146
Kindergarten	88	0	887
Grade 1	101	1	926
Grade 2	111	0	809
Grade 3	110	0	849
Grade 4	130	1	768
Grade 5	137	1	729
Grade 6	189	2	635
Grade 7	189	8	598
Grade 8	220	9	611
Grade 9	200	12	626
Grade 10	217	6	666
Grade 11	162	7	610
Grade 12	79	4	428

Discipline Disaggregated by Subgroup

	Students Suspended	Students Expelled	Total Students
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	***	31

	Students Suspended	Students Expelled	Total Students
Black	627	15	1914
Asian	3	0	39
Hispanic Ethnicity	144	2	733
White	976	33	5715
Multiracial (two or more races)	164	1	704
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	***	***	9
Female	650	17	4390
Male	1273	34	4755
Free/Reduced Lunch	828	10	3062
Paid Lunch	1095	41	6083
Special Education	650	17	4390
General Education	1273	34	4755

Similar to graduation rates, waivers, and diploma types, ISTEP scores for foster care students (43.3% and 38.3% in English and math, respectively) are also substantially lower than their peers (64.1% and 58.3%), again reiterating a significant gap in students' academic achievement and success. For both foster care students and their peers, proficiency rates are higher in English/Language Arts than Math. English passage rates slowly decrease from grade 3 to grade 8, which has the lowest passage rate at 38.0%. Math passage rates fluctuate slightly more between grade levels, except for grade 7 at 25.4%. Of the foster care students who pass ISTEP, black, Hispanic, and Special education have the lowest passage rates in both English and math, again mirroring trends for all students.

Total ISTEP Passage Rates (Grade 3-8)

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
Foster Care	3820	1653	43.3%	3842	1471	38.3%
All Students	503181	322541	64.1%	504261	294050	58.3%

ISTEP Passage Rates (Grade 3-8) Disaggregated by Grade

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
Grade 3	796	403	50.6%	800	372	46.5%
Grade 4	735	335	45.6%	745	296	39.7%
Grade 5	671	261	38.9%	672	333	49.6%
Grade 6	564	243	43.1%	567	182	32.1%
Grade 7	525	210	40.0%	524	133	25.4%
Grade 8	529	201	38.0%	534	155	29.0%

ISTEP Passage Rates (Grade 3-8) Disaggregated by Subgroup

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	***	***	***	***	***
Black	726	220	30.3%	729	175	24.0%
Asian	15	12	80.0%	15	8	53.3%
Hispanic Ethnicity	332	143	43.1%	330	122	37.0%
White	2441	1139	46.7%	2459	1036	42.1%
Multiracial (two or more races)	290	137	47.2%	293	125	42.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	***	***	***	***	***	***
Female	1872	933	49.8%	1878	704	37.5%
Male	1948	720	37.0%	1964	767	39.1%
Special Education	1115	199	17.8%	1123	221	19.7%
General Education	2705	1454	53.8%	2719	1250	46.0%

The passing rate for students taking ISTEP for the first time is similarly as low as ISTEP in grades 3-8. Compared to their peers, foster care students have significantly lower achievement on the high school examination, with 28.7% passing English and 9.1% passing math the first time. This is due in large part to gaps in achievement in the elementary and middle school levels. As content becomes more complex and detailed, the importance of vertical articulation of subjects' foundational components increases, thus creating wide gaps when that foundation is lacking.

ISTEP Grade 10 (First Time)

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
Foster Care	498	143	28.7%	497	45	9.1%
All Students	80265	47240	58.9%	80192	29003	36.2%

ISTEP Grade 10 Disaggregated by Subgroups (First Time)

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	***	***	***	***	***	***
Black	126	20	15.9%	125	4	3.2%
Asian	***	***	***	***	***	***
Hispanic Ethnicity	34	7	20.6%	33	4	12.1%
White	292	102	34.9%	292	32	11.0%

	English/Language Arts			Math		
	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
Multiracial (two or more races)	41	10	24.4%	42	3	7.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0			0		
Female	270	86	31.9%	265	24	9.1%
Male	228	57	25.0%	232	21	9.1%
Special Education	151	10	6.6%	151	2	1.3%
General Education	347	133	38.3%	346	43	12.4%

Though foster care students score higher in English than Math on ISTEP, they have an overall lower pass rate on IREAD-3 when compared to all students, with foster care students at 79% versus all students at 87.1%. This is a higher rate of passing than homeless students.

IREAD-3

	Tested Students	Students Passing	Pass Rate
Foster Care	803	634	79.0%
All Students	84405	73547	87.1%

Examining the number and percentage of foster care students enrolled in schools disaggregated by their state accountability grade, the majority of foster care students attend a 'B' designated school, with the next highest amount attending a 'C' school. The distribution of foster care students at D and F schools is higher than their peers; overall, all Indiana students attend 'A' school at a greater percentage than foster care students.

School Accountability Grades

	A	B	C	D	F	No Grade/Appeal Pending
Foster Care Student Count and %	1640 (18.5%)	3145 (37.6%)	1996 (22.5%)	936 (10.5%)	638 (7.2%)	522 (5.9%)
All Students Count and %	348952 (30.8%)	413636 (37.6%)	205648 (18.2%)	91659 (8.1%)	40137 (3.5%)	32394 (2.9%)

Prekindergarten Pilot Program

IDOE and DCS did not receive any data from the LEA's regarding the number and percentage of eligible foster care youth who are enrolled in the prekindergarten program under IC 12-17.2-7.2. The On My Way Pre-K program is also required to gather this information due to the federal Child Care Development Block Grant reauthorization. Questions regarding foster care status have been added to the OMW Pre-K application for the 2019-2020 year. They have been gathering this information for CCDF families for a year now, and the February 2019 report showed 1,991 of 19,696 families and 3,315 of 37,103 children either had homeless priority or identified as such. The OMW Pre-K program, however, does not track retention. Further collaboration with OMW Pre-K staff is planned to provide a more

comprehensive and informed picture.

Steps to Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Care Youth
Foster care students score nearly consistent with or higher than homeless students on standardized tests in grades 3 through 8 and 10. The greatest difference in achievement between homeless and foster care youth is graduation rate, with nearly a 20 point higher graduation rate for homeless students than those in foster care. IDOE must strive to address this discrepancy in its remediation plan by examining the root cause of this gap – in terms of academic barriers, systematic issues, and mobility and trauma complications that can impact foster care youth.

To meet all the physical, developmental, emotional, and social needs of youth in the foster care system, we must design and implement a unified, collaborative response in every community. By June 30, 2019, the IDOE, in collaboration with the DCS, will develop a comprehensive report detailing the necessary steps to improving educational outcomes for this vulnerable student population.

Creating a remediation report addressing the achievement gaps of foster care youth must be based on guiding principles evidenced in the adult and family systems. Successful interventions include:
- Immediate accessibility;
- Individualized, flexible, and choice-based;
- Developmentally appropriate for youth;
- Culturally competent;
- Trauma-informed;
- Housing First approach;
- Positive Youth Development; and
- Family reunification and resiliency strategies.

As noted above, though there is some overlap with the challenges for homeless and foster care youth, it is necessary to develop strategies and interventions unique to the traumatic experiences of these children. Additionally, IDOE and DCS must address how to better report and collect foster care data in an accurate, streamlined process. IDOE provide the State Board of Education, Governor's Office, Indiana General Assembly, and the public with its final remediation report no later than June 30, 2019.