



Foster Care & Student Success Texas Data and Trends | 2018

*Educational Experiences,
School Stability, and Academic Achievement*
Collaboration Committed to Improving Student Outcomes



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services



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Disclaimer

The creation and production of this Data Report was created in partnership with the Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services, and Children’s Commission. The materials in this report should not be construed as an advisory or ruling by or from the Supreme Court of Texas on specific cases or legal issues. These materials are solely intended to address the improvement of the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice. The information included in this report was generated for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years and was published in February 2021.

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“My *hope* is that professionals in all systems and communities realize that my story can become the norm when everyone involved does their part to ensure the best interests of children and youth are not only talked about, but more importantly *followed through* on. **Let us stand together** to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care.”

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— Executive Summary —

In the words of an alumna of the Texas foster care system who graduated high school and earned her bachelor's and master's degree from a Texas university, "My hope is that professionals in all systems and communities realize that my story can become the norm when everyone involved does their part to ensure the best interests of children and youth are not only talked about, but more importantly followed through on. Let us stand together to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care."

This data and trends report is the first of its kind in Texas. It represents over two years of intensive collaborative work, cross-systems data sharing, joint learning, and discussion of key findings about the education outcomes and school experiences of Texas students in foster care. This report signifies one of many efforts to engage across the education, child welfare, also referred to as Child Protective Services (CPS), and court systems with a long-term goal of improving education outcomes for students in foster care. The report is designed to communicate how Texas students in foster care perform and engage in school, to summarize Texas' collaborative efforts toward strengthening education outcomes for students in foster care, and to highlight key considerations and opportunities for multi-disciplinary stakeholders moving forward.

The first two sections of the report provide background information on statewide efforts to address the intersection of foster care and education (p. 6), highlight collaborative state efforts to date (p.8), and describe the state data match methodology (p.12).

The following sections focus on: Student Profile (p.15), School Stability (p.20), Local Identification (p.26), Educational Outcomes (p.32), Academic Achievement (p.43), School Attendance (p.48), Special Programs (p.52), and School Discipline (p.59).

The report includes baseline data on selected indicators beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Many tables display three years of trend data and make comparisons between students in foster care and other student populations when data were available. Considerations and opportunities for stakeholders are provided in each section. Throughout the report is information on childhood trauma, the impact of trauma on learning and trauma-informed strategies. The final section contains a summary of data, findings, and promising practices. For further information and reference for readers, links are provided to research and to a suite of resources developed in conjunction with Texas' statewide collaborative focused on foster care education improvements.

Findings in this report are consistent with national research on educational outcomes regarding the school experience, school stability, and academic challenges for students in foster care. Nonetheless, the Texas data suggest some encouraging trends. Analyzing the data and reviewing the research also revealed opportunities for education, CPS, courts and other stakeholders to work together in new ways to support Texas students. Texans will continue to stand together, using data to inform efforts to improve education outcomes for students in foster care.

I. Background

What is the impact of foster care on education?

When a child or youth cannot remain safely at home, a court orders the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), through its child protection division, Child Protective Services (CPS), to assume managing conservatorship or legal custody of the child, a situation commonly referred to as foster care. Children and youth who are of school age and in foster care may find themselves adrift between CPS and education. These are two large child-centric systems with distinctive cultures and practices. They historically lack a shared understanding and working knowledge of one another, such as common practices and a shared vocabulary used by professionals in each system.

Although educational challenges are not unique to students in foster care, this vulnerable population faces additional risks and hurdles to school success. Risk factors include: multiple placement and school changes, court appearances or case-related appointments only available during school hours, missed school days to visit with parents and siblings, an often-unstable early childhood or educational history prior to entering foster care, and a history of child maltreatment before entering foster care. Despite these challenges, with the coordinated support of caregivers, teachers, caseworkers, lawyers, local education agency (LEA) liaisons, judges, coaches, policymakers, and other trusted adults, children and youth in foster care have unlimited potential to succeed and meet their education goals at every level.

A. THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

The American Academy of Pediatrics finds a high prevalence of mental and behavioral health concerns for children and youth in foster care related to histories of trauma and multiple transitions that may adversely impact their emotional well-being.¹ Neuroscience teaches that the early experiences of young children have a tremendous influence on their developing brains and trauma can create toxic stress with lifelong, costly impacts. However, studies also show that providing supportive, responsive relationships as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging and costly impact of trauma that can contribute to negative life outcomes. Research reveals that the adolescent brain continues to develop far longer than originally known by science, providing a window of opportunity to reverse harm by supporting young people to build resiliency, knowledge and skills that will positively serve them in adulthood.²

Interventions collectively known as trauma-informed practices are rapidly becoming a best practice in CPS and public education, although additional research on specific interventions designed for students in foster care are needed.³ Based on research, trauma-informed practices are especially effective for students with high numbers of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Some examples of ACEs include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, mother treated violently, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, or an incarcerated family member. There are also known predictive factors of ACEs for children that that can be single, acute events or sustained over time. Examples include death of a parent and the detrimental effect of community violence and poverty, among others. Adverse childhood experiences occur regularly with children across all races, economic classes and geographic regions; however, there is a much higher prevalence of ACEs reported for children living in poverty.⁴ Healthy brain development can be disrupted or impaired by prolonged toxic stress with significant lifelong implications for learning, behavior, health and adult functioning.⁵

National data indicates that just under half of children (45%) in the United States have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, or ACE. ACEs have been linked to health issues, mental health, emotional and behavioral challenges in school.⁶ Physical and emotional trauma may impact a student's ability to effectively respond, think, learn, and interact in the school setting.⁷ Maltreatment can impact school performance, cause children to experience physical and emotional distress, and result in disruptive behaviors at school.⁸ As young children develop in their home environment and into adolescence, students who experience trauma may also become agitated, disorganized, and disruptive in both home and school.

The trauma of abuse and neglect that students experienced before coming into care is often compounded by grief and loss due to the separation from birth parents, siblings, friends, or communities, and in some cases, the lack of a permanent home or nurturing adult relationship, academic course failure, and exclusionary discipline practices at school. Feelings of grief and loss may manifest in fear, loneliness, withdrawal, anger, an inability to self-regulate behaviors, and a lack of trust in adults.⁹ These responses, while normal for students who have experienced toxic stress and trauma, may be confusing to adults without training in working with students with trauma histories and mental health challenges.

State policies, training and best practices can promote student well-being healthy and brain development for students in foster care, and for all students.¹⁰ Professional development, such as neuroscience training for educators, is one example of how schools integrate trauma-informed teaching strategies and school discipline policies.¹¹ Evidence is building on the value of strengths-based models that promote protective factors, mitigate against risk factors, and

encourage resiliency to help traumatized students thrive in school.¹² The Texas Legislature has directed the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to collaborate with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to identify and promote best practices for early mental health intervention, substance abuse prevention and intervention, trauma-informed practices, building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships and responsible decision making, positive school climates, and positive behavior interventions and supports.¹³

One best practice is school-based mental health, which simply means offering mental health services that range from providing support through a school counselor to providing comprehensive mental health services - in the school setting using trauma-informed strategies.¹⁴ School-based mental health can integrate multi-tiered systems of learning supports that encompass prevention, wellness promotion, and social-emotional interventions that increase with intensity based on student need, and that promote close school-community cross-systems collaboration to facilitate student success.¹⁵

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), DFPS, and HHSC collaborate to coordinate resources, host professional development, and provide information to support LEAs in integrating trauma-informed best practices to support students in foster care and all Texas students.¹⁶ Increasingly, Texas LEAs are partnering with local mental health organizations to create systems of care for students with mental health challenges.

Educational experiences – both academic performance and school engagement – are the best predictors of who will graduate.¹⁷ Schools have an important role to play in creating a climate that addresses the integrated social, emotional and academic needs of students who have experienced trauma.¹⁸ By creating a school environment where children feel safe and connected, public education can cultivate important protective factors that promote resiliency and help realize the potential in students in foster care, and in all students.¹⁹ Education can be a lifeline for students who experience trauma and school offers a safe environment to build confidence, connectedness, skills, and trust.²⁰

B. CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION

In 2010, the Supreme Court of Texas issued an order establishing the Education Committee of the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission). Over an 18-month period, over 100 court, CPS, and education system stakeholders came together to listen and learn from each other, identify barriers and challenges, and ultimately develop recommendations for improvement. In March 2012, the Education Committee issued its final report: The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care.²¹

Improving student outcomes is the core goal of Texas' statewide collaboration. In defining this goal, stakeholders agreed that the consistent and timely exchange of information between agencies, and on a child-specific level among those who work with the child and family, is essential. Sharing data informs state and local efforts and highlights opportunities to serve students in foster care more efficiently and most effectively. To that end, DFPS and the TEA set high-level goals for data sharing to:

- Understand the current exchange of information between TEA and DFPS and identify opportunities for improvement.

- Expand the routine exchange of aggregate data between agencies to determine how children in foster care in Texas are doing educationally and to evaluate improvements to those education outcomes over time; and
- Improve child-specific information sharing to ensure that all agencies and stakeholders have the necessary information to serve the education needs of children and youth in foster care.

Two national programs, the Casey Family Programs Shared Learning Collaborative and the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform Information Sharing Certificate Program, selected the State of Texas to participate in learning programs aimed at enhancing the exchange of aggregate data between TEA and DFPS. The two initiatives accelerated progress towards a more intricate data exchange, including developing a metric to determine school mobility.

Since publication of the *Texas Blueprint* in 2012, an oversight committee, as well as multiple workgroups, have acted to implement the recommendations outlined in the report, with an emphasis on data-driven strategies to improve education outcomes for students in foster care. Texas faithfully follows a model of engaging experts from a variety of disciplines to identify opportunities for improvement and to inform collaborative efforts across systems.

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C. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2012-2013

The 2012-2013 school year data serve as a baseline to measure whether efforts underway in Texas have impacted school outcomes of youth in care as several significant events occurred in Texas shortly before, during, and immediately after the conclusion of this particular school year. This year also sets the benchmark that Texas will measure collaborative collective impact on educational outcomes going forward.

Some significant factors include:

- Texas received a competitive Education System Collaboration to Increase Educational Stability grant by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau; the Texas Trio Project (March 2012 - October 2013);

- TEA built capacity within the state's education system by creating a full-time position to address the needs of students in foster care, support LEAs, and promote CPS collaboration. TEA sustained the Foster Care and Education Policy Coordinator position after the federal grant period ended;
- Texas held its first Foster Care and Education Summit in February 2013;
- Texas issued a Foster Care and Student Success Resource Guide in August 2013;²²
- A Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) code was created at TEA for students in foster care (effective September 2013); and
- DFPS developed its Education Decision Maker form (September 2013).

Because the 2012-2013 data is a baseline, the correlation between the above-mentioned events and student outcomes is unclear. Nonetheless, the baseline data provides context and are valuable in setting the stage for analyzing trends in subsequent school years, strategizing how to effectively implement statewide policies and practices, and informing resource development as stakeholders continue to collaborate.

D. LEGAL OVERVIEW

Federal Law

Both federal child welfare and education law now include requirements related to the educational needs of children and youth in foster care. In June 2016, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) issued joint guidance encouraging child welfare and education agencies at the state and local levels to continuously work together to implement existing laws and to consider other ways to support better outcomes for students in foster care.²³

In 2008, Congress passed the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections), which included significant provisions regarding the educational stability of students in foster care.²⁴ Passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 addressed students in foster care, stressing the joint and coordinated responsibility for both education and child welfare agencies to work together to promote educational stability and measure the academic success of students in foster care.²⁵

ESSA includes historic changes to federal education law that align with and build upon Fostering Connections. ESSA further promotes and requires collaboration between education and child welfare by requiring:

- Designated points of contact in both child welfare and education systems;
- Local, written transportation procedures;
- Coordination between LEAs and local child welfare organizations regarding transportation and cost sharing; and
- Collaboration regarding best-interest decision making.

ESSA also requires TEA to calculate dropout and graduation rates for students in foster care and publish disaggregated student data on standard state report cards annually based on information that is submitted by LEAs through PEIMS starting in 2017-2018.²⁶

TEA and DFPS collaborated to provide LEAs and regional DFPS offices with guidance through a Frequently Asked Questions format to support local implementation of the new ESSA requirements.²⁷

The Uninterrupted Scholar's Act (USA) amended the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in January 2013 and specifically allowed, without requiring parental consent, the disclosure of educational records of students in foster care to an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State law, for the care and protection of the student. USA was a directed effort to remove barriers to information sharing between education and child welfare to promote educational success.

State Law

In the past decade, the Texas legislature memorialized several provisions strengthening educational supports for students in foster care in the Texas Education Code and Texas Family Code.²⁸ For example:

- Under Texas law, students in foster care are entitled to remain in the same school, sometimes referred to as the school of origin, without payment of tuition, until the student completes the highest grade offered at the school, regardless of whether the student recently entered, remained, or exited the conservatorship of the state.²⁹
- If a Texas student in foster care cannot remain in the school of origin, the student must be enrolled in a new school within three days with records transferred within 10 working days.³⁰
- The Texas Education Code includes a suite of laws to promote successful transitions, including establishing systems and procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moving to support the award of partial credit, and promote high-school completion for secondary students in foster care.³¹
- The law requires designated foster care liaisons in each open enrollment charter school, school district, and public institution of higher education and at TEA and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).³²
- The Texas Family Code requires DFPS to designate an Education Decision Maker for each student in foster care; students in care and with disabilities must have a foster parent or surrogate parent appointed by the LEA or the court to make decisions related to special education.³³ Under the Texas Education and Family Codes, if a child resides in a foster home, the foster parent can make decisions related to special education without being appointed as a surrogate parent, if certain requirements are met.³⁴



II. Data Match

How do DFPS and TEA exchange education information about students in foster care?

Through the PEIMS data collection system, TEA receives education data from the LEA, including student demographic and academic performance data, as well as personnel, financial, and organizational information. DFPS collects, stores, and analyzes CPS data in its Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) system, its statewide automated CPS information system.

Pursuant to section 7.029 of the Texas Education Code, TEA and DFPS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2010 agreeing to exchange data to evaluate educational outcomes of students in foster care. TEA and DFPS updated the MOU in 2014 to permit greater flexibility in the exchange of data.

A. THE DFPS AND TEA DATA MATCH PROCESS DESCRIBED

Annually, DFPS provides student-level information from IMPACT for all students in DFPS managing conservatorship, referred to as students in foster care in this report, for 14 or more days during the corresponding school year. Each student in foster care who met this criterion and attended school for at least one day over the course of the school year was counted once. TEA matches the identifying student data provided by DFPS in the PEIMS system to locate each student in the state. TEA then aggregates the information in reports to maintain privacy in accordance with FERPA and state law. In the 2014-2015 school year: 5,371,933 students attended 1,219 Texas LEAs; 27,043 of those students were in foster care at some point during the school year.

B. SCOPE OF THE DATA

To generate some basic reports, TEA uses data as of one day, the last Friday in October, known as the fall snapshot. Data reports for students in foster care are also generated from student attendance data and other data records that LEAs submit periodically to TEA. Although snapshot data provide a valuable perspective, unless otherwise noted, attendance data from the state DFPS-TEA data match reflective of the entire school year will be utilized in this report.

All students in foster care are eligible to be considered economically disadvantaged in Texas public schools.³⁵ Generally, all students considered economically disadvantaged are used as a comparison group for students in foster care for outcome, student achievement, and attendance data in other national and state foster care data reports. Therefore, Texas made comparisons between students in foster care and students who are economically disadvantaged (who are not in foster care) throughout the report. The report also includes frequent comparisons between students in foster care and the total population of Texas students who are not in foster care.

All discussions about data and the exchange of information must include confidentiality and privacy considerations. The data match and information contained in this report comply with FERPA and other federal and state child welfare and education confidentiality laws. Accordingly, data fields with counts of students less than five but greater than zero are masked in the data and the report.

C. TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DATA | DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-TAB DATA REPORTS

TEA and DFPS recently formulated the exchange of additional detailed data and subsets of information in various cross tabulations, known as “cross-tab reports”. These reports were developed for deeper understanding with numerous variables and further comparative analysis based on the existing aggregate data exchange between TEA and DFPS and additional CPS or education data available through IMPACT or PEIMS. For example, Figures 6 and 7 (p. 33) provide information about the promotion of students in foster care in Grades Pre-Kindergarten-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12 and trends over a three-year period in comparison to Texas students not in foster care. With the addition of the cross-tabulation reports, Texas is poised to analyze the data at a deeper level across systems. This additional data analysis will be used to inform policy and practice, determine needed interventions, and observe changes over time.

D. LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA MATCH METHODOLOGY

The current methodology for state-level data analysis may be very useful, but there are significant limitations with it. The data in this report aggregate students at different stages of their journeys through foster care and do not provide a variable for length of time in care. Some students included in the data as reported enter care during the school year, others leave care, while some students are in foster care for multiple school years. As a result, the educational outcomes are influenced, to some degree, by situations occurring while the child was not in foster care.

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In the 2014-2015 school year, the following data on the children and youth in foster care between the ages of 4 and 17 illustrate the great variance in students' length of time in the CPS system:

- 11,416 remained in conservatorship the entire school year (44%);
- 14,515 were in conservatorship part of the school year (56%);
- 7,010 started the school year in conservatorship and exited care at some point during the school year in 2014-2015 (27%);
- 6,781 entered conservatorship at some point throughout the school year and stayed in conservatorship until the end of the school year (26%); and
- 724 entered and left conservatorship within the school year (3%).

Source: IMPACT- DRIT 72880

While the data in this report provide a strong starting point for Texas to observe broad differences between the education outcomes of students in foster care in comparison to students not in foster care, it is unclear at this time to what extent the data and outcomes provided reflect solely a student's education while involved in the foster care system. Educational experiences before, during and after involvement in the CPS system may affect the overall data and student educational outcomes. This caveat should be kept in mind when interpreting each graphic and data point in this report.

In the future, TEA and DFPS will include variables such as length of time in care in the annual data match. This will provide a more nuanced examination of the data for students at different points in their conservatorship experiences. Over time, data may reveal geographic or cohort-specific trends making more targeted interventions and student supports possible for youth most in need.

III. Student Profile

What is the profile of students in foster care?

Students in foster care do not fit one particular archetype. Although there are students in foster care enrolled in every grade, there are more students represented at the beginning of primary grades, and more students represented at the beginning of high school. There are students in foster care from every racial and ethnic group, with an over representation of African-American students and an under representation of Hispanic students in comparison to their child populations enrolled in the Texas public schools. Students in foster care also live in varied settings across the state including urban, suburban, small towns, rural and frontier communities with great cultural and language diversity represented. For these reasons, professionals in the CPS and education systems are guided to address each student's unique experience, needs and strengths to the greatest extent possible, refraining from a one size fits all approach and consistent with current educational and CPS research.



A. GRADE

As noted in Table 1, the highest percentage of students in foster care can be found in pre-kindergarten through grade 3 and in grade 9. While supporting students in care in every grade and developmental stage is key, the data can inform targeted interventions as well as areas for further exploration and analysis.

Table 1: Students in Foster Care by Grade FY 14-15

Grade	Foster Care	% Foster Care	State	% State
EE	321	1%	17,744	<1%
PK	2,392	9%	236,134	4%
KG	2,850	11%	402,983	8%
1	2,812	10%	423,697	8%
2	2,438	9%	418,135	8%
3	2,188	8%	405,591	8%
4	1,858	7%	399,350	7%
5	1,761	7%	396,510	7%
6	1,653	6%	391,755	7%
7	1,570	6%	391,392	7%
8	1,681	6%	397,502	7%
9	2,249	8%	432,022	8%
10	1,619	6%	382,308	7%
11	957	4%	342,055	6%
12	684	3%	334,755	6%
Total	27,043	100%	5,371,933	100%

Source: DFPS IMPACT- TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Of the students in foster care in Texas public schools, 61% are enrolled in Early Education through Grade 5.

Notably, 8% of students in foster care are enrolled in Grade 9. Additional study is needed to determine if youth in foster care are more likely to be retained in school and not progress at this point.

B. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Students in foster care represent multiple racial or ethnic groups and socio-economic demographics. Disproportionality is a term used to describe the overrepresentation or underrepresentation of a particular group in comparison to the percentage of that group in the general population. There is research available to increase understanding of the theories regarding the disproportionate representation of African American children in foster care, including parent and family risk factors, community factors, and organizational and systemic factors.³⁶

Table 2: Students in Foster Care by Race and Ethnicity FY 14-15

Race/ Ethnicity	Foster Care	% Foster Care	State	% State
American Indian or Alaskan	117	<1%	22,162	<1%
Asian	101	<1%	209,492	4%
African American	5,810	21%	684,601	13%
Hispanic/ Latino	11,428	42%	2,789,715	52%
Native Hawaiian/ Other	26	<1%	7,565	<1%
Two or more Races	791	3%	106,607	2%
White	8,770	32%	1,551,791	29%
Total	27,043	100%	5,371,933	100%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

African American children comprise 21% of the students in the foster care population, compared to 13% in the statewide population. Hispanic students represent 42% of students in foster care, compared to 52% statewide. In other words, the data above reflects an over-representation of African American children and an under-representation of Hispanic children in foster care in Texas.

C. LIVING ARRANGEMENT

Children and youth may reside in a variety of settings while in the conservatorship of the state, commonly known as foster care. Below is a list of placement types:

- Kinship Caregiver – A relative or fictive kin who provides care for a child. A relative is a member of the child’s biological family. A fictive kin has a longstanding and significant relationship with the child or the child’s family.
- Foster Home – A state-licensed home (usually temporary) for children in foster care. Caregivers known as “foster parents” receive reimbursement for providing room, board, and transportation for children living in their homes.
- Emergency Shelter – A shelter facility that houses youth for up to 90 days while awaiting a longer-term placement.

- Group Home – A licensed facility where multiple youth live. Staff oversee the facility and students live there 24/7.
- Residential Treatment Centers (RTC) – Facilities regulated by DFPS to provide placements and services to youth who require specialized services.³⁷ DFPS data provide some context to the proportion of children in each living arrangement. For example, on August 31st, 2015, 19,886 children aged 4 through 17 were in DFPS conservatorship. Of these children:
 - 40% lived in a foster home, group home, adoptive home, or emergency shelter setting. This includes kinship care where the caregiver has been verified;
 - 27% lived in kinship care; and
 - 8% lived in a residential treatment setting.

Source: Data Book FY2015

The setting where the child resides will likely affect the student’s home life, time outside of school, and also who the school interacts with to support the needs of the child. The setting a student lives in is important for educators to understand, when providing support in the school day, to meet the unique needs of each student.

D. STUDENT PROFILE – STATEWIDE EFFORTS ADDRESSING DISPROPORTIONALITY

In light of the large percentages of young children in foster care, TEA and DFPS collaborate through various early education statewide task forces and initiatives including groups focused on Head Start, Early Childhood Intervention, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

Educators participate in equity and cultural competence training through professional development that TEA coordinates through the 20 Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs). ESCs are designed specifically to provide professional development and technical assistance for educators and administrators throughout the state.³⁸ Pursuant to ESSA, TEA will produce School Report Cards that include students in foster care following the completion of 2017-2018 school year. Data will be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender for students in foster care, by LEA, and statewide. This annual data reporting will provide additional information for stakeholders and the public to examine disparities and disproportionality in educational outcomes for students in foster care.

Cross-system efforts are also in place to address the racial and ethnic diversity of students in foster care. DFPS partners with multiple agencies throughout Texas to address disproportionality and disparities throughout the CPS system.³⁹ To address disproportionality, DFPS and HHSC, through the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement, created a number of disproportionality specialist positions. The disproportionality specialist provides support to local Disproportionality Advisory Committees in every region of the state, facilitates Knowing Who You Are⁴⁰ and Poverty Simulation training throughout the state, and focuses on family strengths and finding permanent homes for children and youth who might otherwise grow up in foster care without a caring adult in their lives.

The Children’s Commission Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality meets on a regular basis to engage stakeholders across the legal and CPS systems to develop training opportunities and resources related to disproportionality and disparities in the foster care system.

E. STUDENT PROFILE – PROMISING PRACTICES

There are students in foster care in every grade level, from every racial and ethnic background, and living in a variety of placement settings. Regardless of each student’s background, it is important for adults to strengthen collaboration between systems, help children build protective factors to mitigate against the impact of child maltreatment, increase educational stability, provide academic supports, ease transitions, facilitate nurturing relationships, and ensure a positive school experience in order to improve educational outcomes. The following are examples of promising practices for all students in foster care:

- All adults working to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care may benefit children by increasing their awareness of the impact of child maltreatment trauma on children, assessing and developing competencies for implementing trauma-informed practices, and designing intentional strategies to create trauma-informed environments for children in foster care.
- CPS workers, educators, caregivers, and advocates each have unique opportunities to strengthen the development of cognitive, language, resiliency and personal socialization skills with school-aged children in foster care at each developmental stage.
- The education system may ensure employees are equipped with the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary to address the needs of students in care, such as by integrating the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) into staff training and service delivery.⁴¹
- CPS. Enrollment in Pre-kindergarten is a best practice for all young children in foster care. Foster care is one of the eligibility criteria for attending free public pre-kindergarten.
- Future foster care and education reports that are produced jointly across systems can disaggregate the data by race, ethnicity and gender to further examine the disparities in education outcomes for students in foster care.
- Host collaborative forums and meetings to discuss the needs of students in foster care.
- Identify cross-training and information-sharing opportunities.
- Implement early warning data systems⁴², such as measuring course credit accumulation, grades, attendance, and behavior, to assess on-track and off-track indicators for high school graduation. One research-based on-track indicator is course completion in the 9th grade and promotion to 10th grade.⁴³
- Use data to provide timely and frequent child-specific need-based interventions to support students toward graduation.⁴⁴
- Analyze student-level and aggregate data indicators to provide targeted and specific interventions at state, regional, and local levels.

The Foster Care and Student Success Resource Guide is a foundational resource for addressing and identifying the needs of Texas students in foster care. All parties should review the guide to identify strategies for engaging students and providing wrap-around and collaborative supports to meet student needs.⁴⁵

National data indicates that just under *half of children* (45%) in the United States have experienced at least **one adverse childhood experience**, or ACE. ACEs have been linked to health issues, mental health, emotional and behavioral challenges in school.

IV. School Stability

How are students in foster care impacted by school moves?

Prior to placement in foster care, some students have already missed many days or even months of school for a number of reasons such as:

- Moving from one home to another;
- Parental substance abuse;
- Eviction of the biological family and relocation to a new school attendance zone or LEA;
- Becoming homeless; or
- The parent or child's desire to hide the physical marks of child abuse.⁴⁶

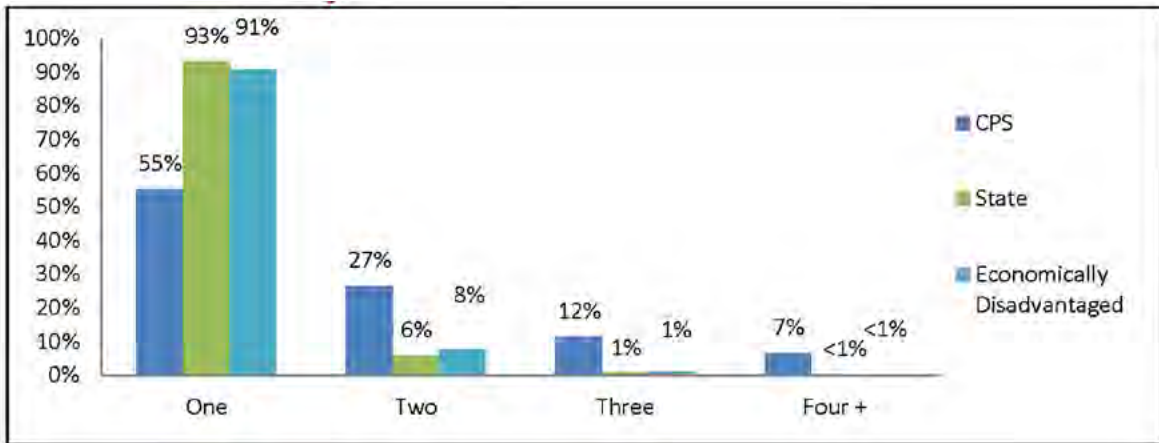
After entering foster care, students may experience additional educational instability due to placement moves, even when those moves serve the best interest of the child, for example, moving to a different foster home or a relative home in a distant geographical area from where the student attends school. Moving to a new school, particularly during the school year, is a difficult experience for most students. However, an emergency placement in foster care due to abuse or neglect, and subsequent school moves while in foster care, can create multiple compounding challenges to school stability that are unique to this population of students (see Figure 3, School Moves Comparison to Other Mobile Student Populations on p.18). Adapting to a new environment, new peer groups, new classes, and in some cases, fragmented and interrupted coursework and course sequences can be challenging. School mobility can be disorienting, stressful and trigger trauma responses for students in foster care.

Research indicates that students in foster care are estimated to lose four to six months of academic progress per school move.⁴⁷ School mobility can result in a negative impact on academic achievement for students in foster care, including increased risk of academic gaps, behavior problems, grade retention, and increased likelihood of dropping out of high school.⁴⁸

A. SCHOOL AND PLACEMENT CHANGES

Figure 1, below, shows that students in foster care attend more schools in a school year than other groups of students, including those who are economically disadvantaged. Students in foster care may be more likely to change schools or districts more frequently than other student groups because CPS works to place the child in the most appropriate placement, such as a relative placement. The placement may be located outside of the student's current LEA and the distance may be too far for the student to remain in the same school.

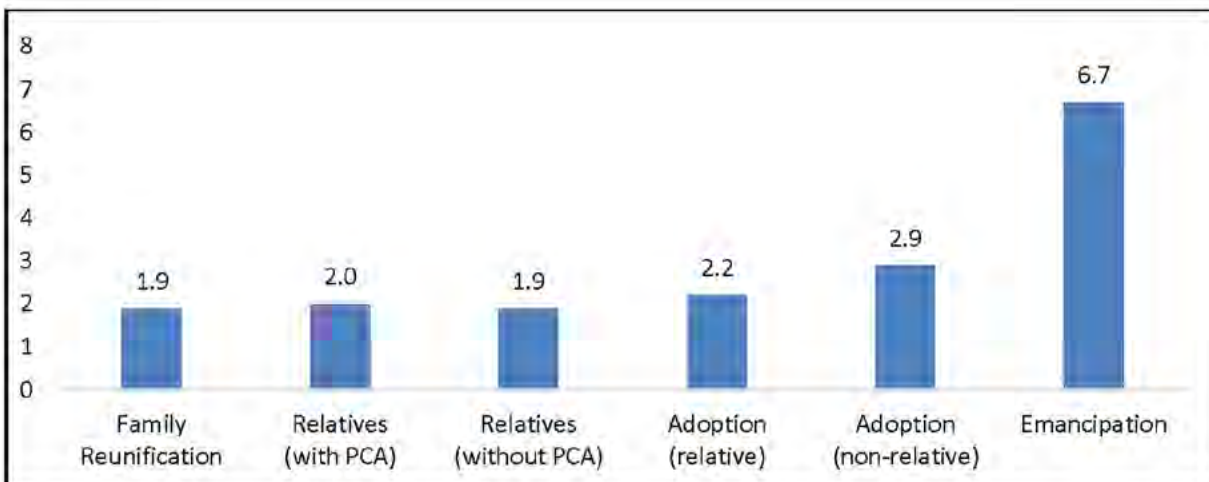
Figure 1: Number of Schools Attended FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 1 shows the disparity in school stability for students in foster care in comparison to all Texas students, and students who are economically disadvantaged. The graph shows the number of schools attended, in one school year, ranging from 1 to 4 or more schools during the 2014-2015 school year by student group. Statewide, 93% of students attended only one school during the school year compared to 55% of students in foster care, a 38 -percentage point difference. Of students who are economically disadvantaged, but not in foster care, 91% of students attended only one school during the same year.

Figure 2: Average Number of Total Residential Placements by Type of Exit for Those Leaving Care in FY 15⁴⁹



Source: Data Book FY 2015

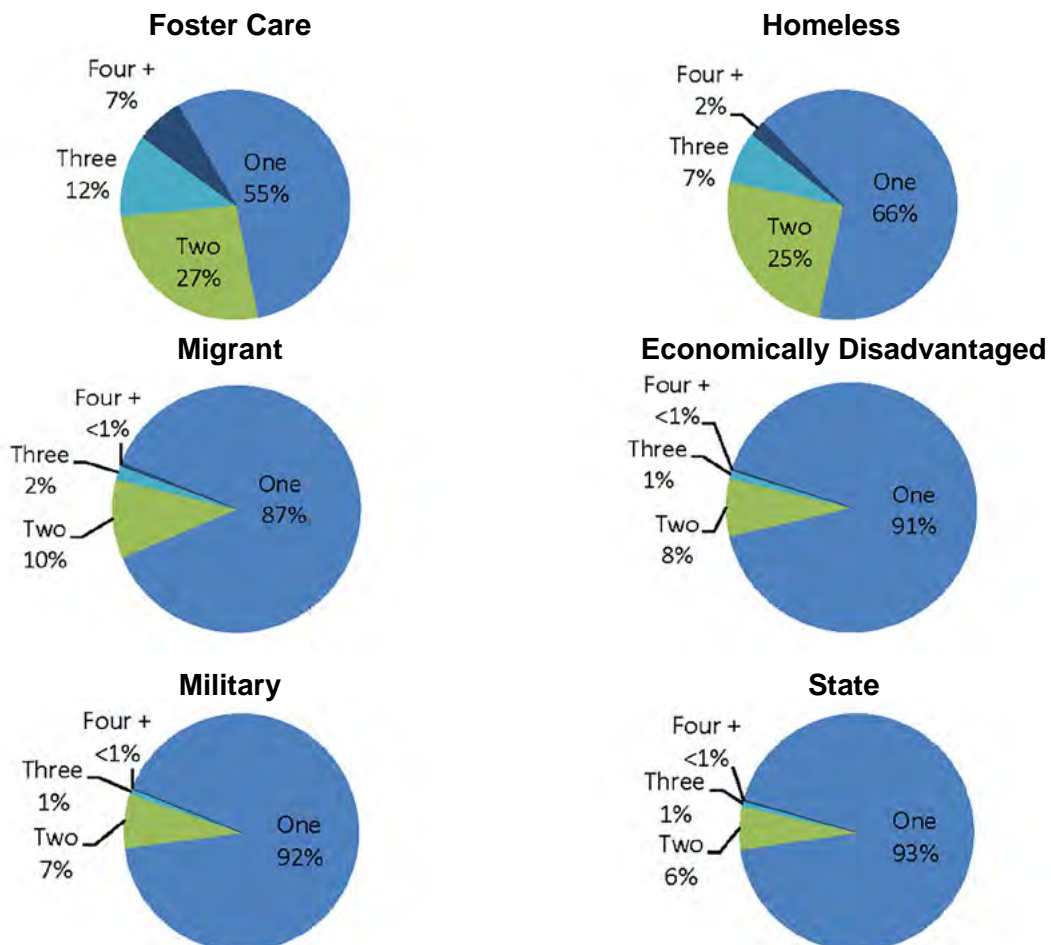
Figure 2 reflects the total number of placements experienced by students who exited DFPS conservatorship in FY 15 by the type of exit from foster care. An exit from foster care may be by family reunification, long-term placement with a relative, adoption, or emancipation (leaving care at age 18). In FY 15, the average number of placements experienced by children who exited DFPS conservatorship was 2.4 placements. Youth who emancipated from the foster care system averaged 6.7 placements in FY 15. This figure does not represent the number of placements a student may have during a particular year, but rather the number of placements a youth had during his or her entire time in DFPS conservatorship. Additional information and data analysis is needed to clearly articulate the relationship between placement moves and school moves. Anecdotally, a placement change is frequently thought to be associated with a school move.

DFPS data on 17,896 children who exited DFPS Conservatorship in FY 15 indicates the following:

- 30% were reunified with the parent;
- 31% were adopted; and
- 31% of students in DFPS conservatorship had their legal custody transferred to a relative or other caring adult.

Additionally, DFPS has steadily decreased the least preferred permanency goal of APPLA (or students who 'age out') from 8% in FY 12 to 7% in FY 15.⁵⁰

Figure 3: School Moves Comparison to Other Mobile Student Populations



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 3 represents education data on the number of schools attended in one school year for each highly mobile student group (foster care, homeless, migrant, military, economically disadvantaged) and the general student population. The charts demonstrate that students in foster care attended more schools during 2014-2015 than other highly mobile student groups, with 45% of students in foster care attending two or more schools during the school year.

B. SCHOOL STABILITY - STATEWIDE EFFORTS

When a child or youth enters DFPS conservatorship, DFPS immediately begins the process of planning for positive permanency. Positive permanency means that DFPS seeks an outcome for the child to exit DFPS care into a permanent setting, which includes a legal relationship to a family (reunification, adoption, or conservatorship to a caring adult). Every child needs a permanent and stable home, preferably with relatives or kin. Family ties provide the child with a sense of belonging and connection to the larger world. This stability increases the likelihood of achieving educational success. If DFPS is unable to achieve positive permanency for a child or youth, then it is the responsibility of DFPS to identify, develop, and support connections to caring adults who agree to provide support to the youth once the youth ages out of the foster care system.

When a placement change is required, locating a placement that allows the student to remain in the same school is a priority. Per federal and state law and CPS policy, students are to remain in their schools of origin, unless it is not in their best interest.⁵¹

If a school move is required, CPS can issue placement waivers for students to remain in the same placement and school until credit can be awarded. The Texas Administrative Code requires a school district to award credit proportionately to a student who is homeless or in substitute care who successfully completes only one semester of a two-semester course.⁵² DFPS requires its residential providers to enroll a child in school within two days. A school district immediately must enroll a student in foster care without the documentation typically required and DFPS has 30 days to supply that documentation.⁵³ LEA foster care liaisons also ensure that school records are promptly transferred with the requisite 10-day period.⁵⁴ Transportation is often identified as a key barrier to school stability. Under ESSA, local education and child welfare agencies must collaborate to develop transportation plans that ensure students in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin will promptly receive it, paid for by either the school, DFPS, or both.

Representatives from TEA, DFPS, and the Children's Commission provide training throughout the state with a central message about the urgent and critical importance of school stability. Training extends to judges, liaisons, caregivers, foster care alumni, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), attorneys, educators, and administrators. Training at every level across systems is critical to supporting school stability for students in foster care. For a comprehensive list of resources developed by TEA, DFPS, the Children's Commission and others, visit the References section of this report.

C. SCHOOL STABILITY – PROMISING PRACTICES

School mobility can add to a student's trauma, disrupt a student's learning and educational success, accentuate trauma-related disruptive behaviors, and negatively affect attachment to caring adults, such as nurturing relationships with teachers and positive social connections and relationships with peers. Supportive relationships and a positive education experience can be powerful contributors to the development of resilience for students in foster care. These factors

are vital components for healthy development and well-being.⁵⁵ The following are examples of promising and best practices related to school stability:

Records for School Withdrawal and Enrollment:

- Notify the LEA foster care liaison of the enrollment of each student in foster care to facilitate coordination during the transition.
- Ensure that school records are transferred immediately when a student withdraws from one school and enrolls in another school by requesting the records immediately from the previous school upon enrollment.
- Confirm that the Texas Records Exchange (TREx) is used for immediate records request and transfer.
- If a child receives special education services, confirm that related records are exchanged in TREx. If not, contact the previous school special education department directly and request special education records.
- Ensure that if there is a special education referral in process that the referral and timelines for evaluation continue and transfer to the new school.
- Use the student's CPS Education Portfolio (green binder) to maintain school records.
- Prior to withdrawal from a school, collect all current school records for the Portfolio. When transitioning a student to a new school, hand deliver school records collected in the Portfolio, such as class schedules, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and test scores. This effort will ease the process of enrollment in the new school until the student's official school records are transferred from the former school.
- Confirm that students' records were reviewed and ensure that all credits and proportionate credits awarded by a Texas public school were transferred and accurately recorded. If records are missing, follow-up with the sending school to request them.

Credits Review and Recovery:

- Review the student's personal graduation plan (PGP) and high school transcript to determine the credits the student has earned and determine credits still needed for graduation.
- Determine whether an intervention such as credit recovery may be needed to help a mobile student complete missing credits required for graduation.
- It is also important to review the student's assessment results to determine if the student has met the assessment requirements for graduation, or identify if another assessment administration is needed.
- Explore supports or options available to students in foster care who need more time to catch up on lost credits to graduate when they pass 18 years of age.
- Identify options for students who have exceeded the maximum age eligibility to enroll in a public school but still lack credits required to graduate.

Best Interest Determination:

- When CPS is making best-interest decisions regarding education for a student, consult with school personnel and seek input to inform decision-making.

- In addition to school personnel recommendations, consider the child's educational needs and strengths, preferences, and extracurricular activities when making best-interest decisions.

School Transportation:

- Implement provisions of ESSA to collaborate on providing school transportation to increase school stability.

Moving to a new school, particularly during the school year, is a difficult experience for most students. However, an emergency placement in foster care due to abuse or neglect, and subsequent school moves while in foster care, can create *multiple compounding challenges* to school stability that are unique to this population of students.

School Engagement at Enrollment:

- Schedule an enrollment conference with educators and caregivers to orient the student to the schedule and procedures in a new school.
- Develop a transition plan with interventions and supports for the student within the first two weeks of enrollment in the new school.
- Schools can prepare a welcome packet for new students and their caregivers who enroll mid-year. For example, a packet of newsletters collected throughout the year to date, and information to help students join clubs and special programs. For younger students, teachers can help to welcome the student by including them in the classroom community (e.g. designating a space for the child's belongings, including the child's name where appropriate (job chart, name chart, etc.) If possible, a teacher may arrange for a photo of the child to be taken so that the child's picture can be added where appropriate in the early childhood classroom.
- Use positive youth development and strength-based practices in school that include students in decision-making and co-planning about their coursework, education pathways, goal setting and post-secondary planning.
- Connect students with extra-curricular activities and other enrichment opportunities.

Foster Care Capacity:

- Foster care capacity is another important consideration. Local collaboratives should develop strategies to increase the number of foster home placements available in areas of the state with the highest numbers of students in foster care and keep students stable in their schools of origin.

V. Local Identification

Where do students in foster care attend school in Texas?

Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, in accordance with Texas law, TEA added an indicator in PEIMS to identify students in foster care in Texas public schools.⁵⁶ The indicator serves to ensure that students in foster care are properly identified at the school and district level and thus provided *all* services and supports required by law and necessary to encourage academic growth and progress.

The ultimate policy goal is for LEAs, local CPS workers, advocates, and caregivers to collaborate in real-time to improve the education experience and outcomes for individual students in foster care. Local identification is a relatively new policy for Texas. School districts, open enrollment charter schools, and CPS are encouraged to work together locally to assess the needs of students and provide appropriate and timely interventions at the individual student level. Also, local collaboration and communication is critical for working together to ensure school stability, best interest decision-making, and transportation planning, when necessary.

Some examples of the direct services and supports requiring accurate local identification of students include:

- Supporting transitions into and out of the school;
- Identifying student academic and social emotional learning needs;
- Planning and providing appropriate educational and transition services;
- Coordinating interventions with caregivers and mental health providers;
- Conducting group conferencing regarding academic progress;
- Providing student information on eligible resources such as dual credit opportunities or scholarships;
- Seeking and providing input to inform educational best interest; and
- Facilitating transportation when needed.

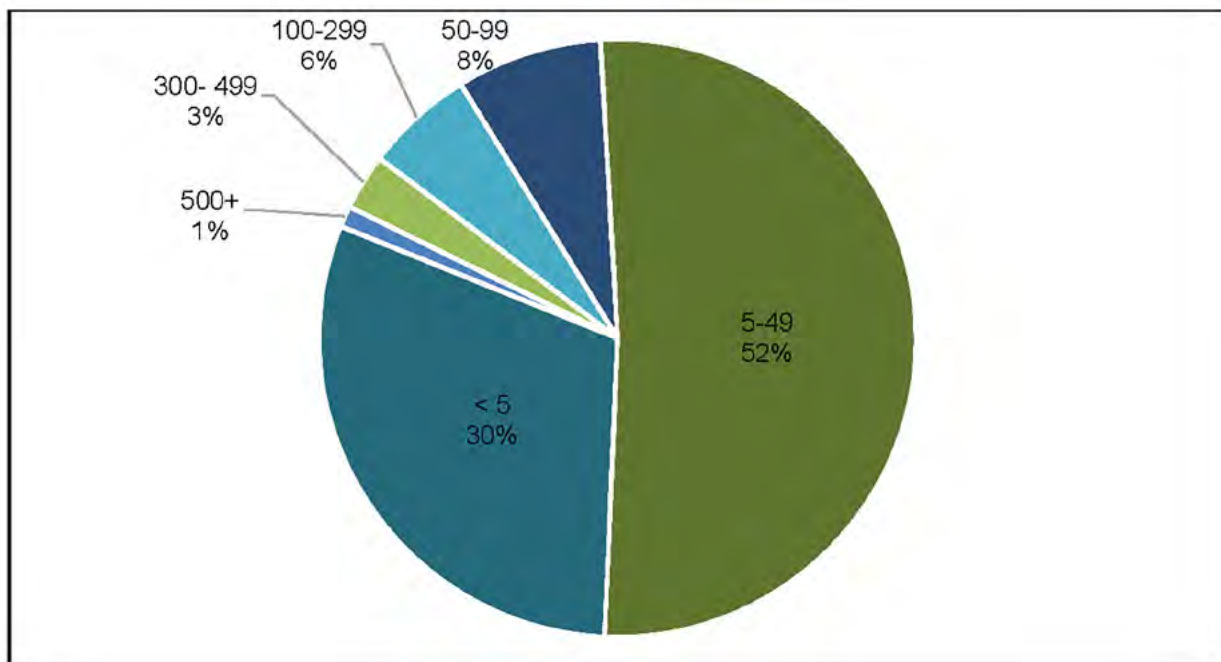
LEAs are required to submit information in PEIMS about students in foster care to TEA during designated reporting periods, so that all eligible students are properly identified by Texas schools, and that accurate standard report cards, and graduation and dropout rates are calculated, per ESSA.

A. DATA AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Figures 4 and 5 below show a distribution of the number of students in foster care enrolled by LEA. Unlike the state level data match that is conducted between DFPS and TEA after each school year that captured 27,043 unique students in foster care in the 2014-2015 school year, Figures 4 and 5 contain information from PEIMS that also account for every Texas school where each student individually attended during the 2014-2015 school year, including students who transferred schools during the school year. For example, these data include the LEA where a student was enrolled prior to entering DFPS conservatorship during the school year.

Thus, in Figures 4 and 5, one student could be counted in more than one LEA. Consequently, the numbers are duplicated and they are higher than the unique student counts. This information gives LEAs and DFPS the most accurate picture of the numbers of students served in each Texas LEA or charter school by taking into account students entering conservatorship during the school year and students moving between LEAs.

Figure 4: Distribution of LEA by the Number of Students in Foster Care Enrolled FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

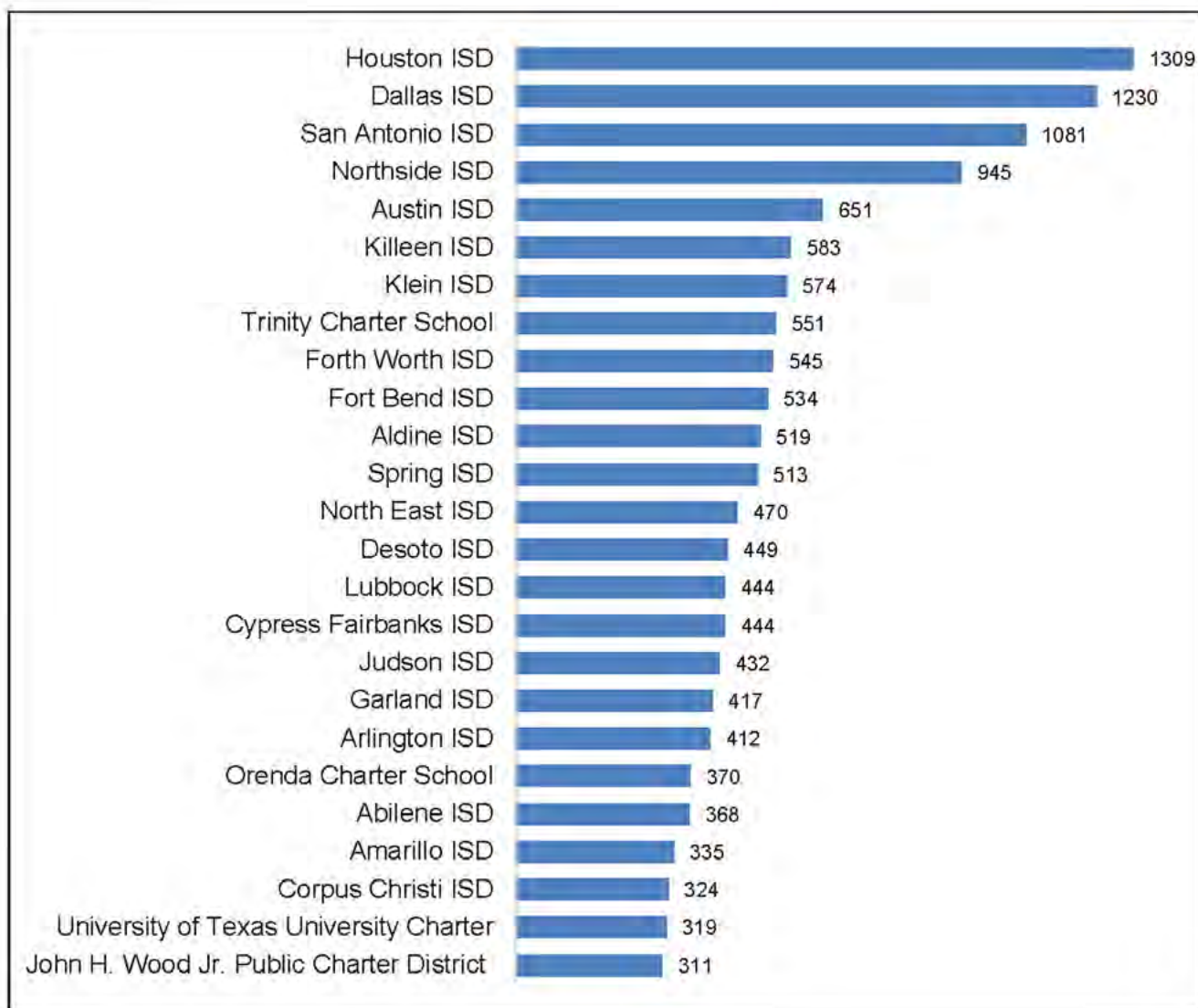
Figure 4 shows that among students in foster care:

- 52% of Texas' 1,219 LEAs had at least 5-49 students enrolled
- 30% of LEAs had less than 5 students enrolled
- 8% of LEAs had 50-99 students enrolled
- 6% of LEAs had 100-299 students enrolled
- 3% of LEAs had 300-499 students enrolled
- 1% of LEAs had over 500 students enrolled

Whether 5 or 1,000 students in foster care attend a particular LEA, the statutory requirements and the need to address the achievement gap for this population exists for all LEAs. Additional

information and data analysis is needed to better understand the LEA size, type of community (rural, urban, suburban, etc.), and distribution of students in foster care placements throughout the state.

Figure 5: Distribution of Students in Foster Care - Top 25 Texas LEAs FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 5 further breaks down the data and specifically lists the top 25 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in terms of where the largest numbers of students in foster care enrolled. Most notably, Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio ISDs each enrolled over 1,000 students in foster care, Northside ISD (Bexar County) and Austin ISD enrolled 945 and 651 students in foster care, respectively. Of the 25 LEAs with highest numbers of students in foster care, four are charter schools.

Student counts identified by LEAs and submitted to TEA through PEIMS show that students in foster care are significantly under-reported by LEAs when compared to numbers that DFPS reports annually. Data under-reporting is of concern because it implies a lack of identification of students in care at the school level, which affects the implementation of important school

stability laws and the provision of educational services to students. This ultimately has a negative impact on educational outcomes for these students. Under-reporting students in foster care at the local level in PEIMS is a data quality issue that the interagency collaboration is working to problem solve based on data. District-level DFPS-reported foster student counts are available to individual LEAs upon request.

Simply stated, schools need to identify students to best meet their educational needs and provide appropriate interventions, as well as to meet statutory mandates. Collaboratively ensuring that local mechanisms are in place to verify that every student is properly identified and accurately coded is a critical state policy. DFPS must also notify schools of each student's educational decision maker, which demonstrates the student's placement in foster care, and of student withdrawals from a school. Collaboration to support students effectively is a key strategy in each local community. For example, LEAs must develop collaborative procedures with DFPS regarding transportation under ESSA. Additionally, LEAs must provide specific supports to students in foster care under Texas law. Those requirements and activities require accurate identification of students by the LEA.

B. LOCAL IDENTIFICATION — STATEWIDE EFFORTS

The following points of contact are established throughout the state to support students in foster care:

- Foster care liaisons at every open enrollment charter school and school district;⁵⁷
- Education specialists in each CPS region and DFPS state office;⁵⁸
- ESC foster care champions in every education region;⁵⁹ and
- A TEA Foster Care Policy Coordinator.⁶⁰

Designated LEA foster care liaisons facilitate the enrollment, records transfer, and withdrawal of students in foster care. Regional Education Specialists assist caseworkers and caregivers with education and school-related matters. They act as liaisons between DFPS and LEAs within their region, advocate for educational services that best meet the needs of a child, and provide training to CPS staff, caregivers, and stakeholders. Liaisons, as well as the other points of contact mentioned above, often go beyond this role, working to provide specialized training and troubleshooting all aspects of the student's education experience. Texas has benefited from these statutory requirements designated positions and the committed individuals serving in them. None of these positions existed prior to 2009 and it is an important step forward in the effort to improve outcomes.

ESSA provides that LEAs will collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to designate a point of contact if the corresponding child welfare agency notifies the LEA that the agency has designated an employee to serve as a point of contact for the LEA. DFPS has designated its 11 regional educational specialists to provide educational advocacy for students in foster care. The LEA foster care liaison can serve as the designated point of contact for the education system, per ESSA.

No additional funding was allocated to the education system to support Texas schools with implementation of the numerous laws and requirements in place to support students in foster care. While the liaison designations are helpful, additional staffing capacity in both the CPS and education systems is necessary to carry out the duties delegated to professionals who serve in this capacity.

DFPS developed Form 2085-E and utilizes this and other 2085 forms to notify schools

that a student is in foster care. Upon request, CPS trains child placing agencies and other residential providers on the process to identify children in foster care to the school. TEA issued guidance for LEAs to document the student's status in PEIMS upon receiving these forms.⁶¹ LEAs must have the 2085-E or other 2085 forms to verify a student's status in foster care for PEIMS reporting and for legal contact information.

State agencies use shared data to create awareness about the educational outcomes of students in foster care across the state. Data are used in presentations to LEAs, CPS, and university personnel to highlight critical information concerning the education of students in foster care. A data and information graphic entitled, "Texas Commits to Transform Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care: Findings from the Texas Blueprint Implementation Data Workgroup" was developed in 2015 to highlight key data elements, provide relevant questions for consideration in the education, courts and CPS systems, and spur local collaboration and data-driven practices statewide.⁶²

When coordinating services with student-level data, data must be accompanied by a firm respect for student privacy. Many students in foster care are reluctant to share details about foster care or the circumstances leading to removal from their parents. Nonetheless, some individuals need to know certain information to effectively serve students in foster care. To help navigate this balance, TEA, DFPS, and the Children's Commission recently developed confidentiality guidance entitled, "Information Sharing between Child Welfare and Schools: Maintaining Privacy and Promoting Educational Success."⁶³

C. LOCAL IDENTIFICATION – PROMISING PRACTICES

School districts, charter schools, and local CPS organizations alike are encouraged to work together to develop solutions for accurate identification of students in foster care. Additionally, to prepare for the new ESSA data reporting requirements, the need to ensure proper student identification must be addressed at both the state and local levels. TEA and DFPS are collaborating to develop technology solutions designed to support LEAs with local student identification.

To support local identification of students in the Texas public schools from the state level, DFPS and TEA are collaborating to develop a technology solution to inform schools in near real-time of students in foster care who are enrolled in each school. Electronic notification through secure state servers is expected to more efficiently equip school personnel who provide statutory educational supports to students in foster care.

There are education consortia in every CPS region in Texas. These consortia represent an opportunity to identify key partners and strengthen collaboration between DFPS education specialists, school district foster care liaisons, child placing agencies, group homes, residential treatment centers, caseworkers, foster parents, and others who support students in foster care. The consortia provide ideal venues to identify communication processes and training opportunities across systems to ensure optimal coordination that benefits students in foster care. Voluntarily designated Education Service Center (ESC) Foster Care Champions have played a supportive role in hosting these consortium events by offering meeting space and encouraging coordination between education and CPS in certain regions.

Stakeholders can consider the following questions to improve student identification:

- How are students in foster care identified by the LEA?

- Where and how is the question regarding foster care asked in the annual school enrollment process?
- What is the process for receiving the DFPS Form 2085-E or other 2085 form at enrollment time each school year?
- What is the process to enter the student's foster care status into PEIMS?
- What is the process to notify the school when a student is no longer in DFPS conservatorship?
- Is there a process in place to confirm the 2085-E or other 2085 form was provided to the school?
- Does the current process promote sensitivity and protect confidentiality?
- Is the LEA Foster Care Liaison notified of each enrollment?
- How are caregivers informed about the student enrollment process?
- Is the child's judge, attorney, CASA, or other advocate promptly informed about any change in school placement?

|

Education can be a lifeline for students who experience trauma and school offers a safe environment to build *confidence, connectedness, skills, and trust*.

|

When stakeholders identify the students who are in foster care and enrolled at a specific school they can use data to help comply with federal and state laws that require LEAs to identify students in foster care and to provide supports to students. Use of data to better serve students is discussed throughout this report. For example, identifying students in foster care helps schools to consider special needs, both academic and social-emotional, related to school stability, school transitions, and benefits that are available to students in foster care, such as the college tuition and fee waiver.⁶⁴ By reviewing student data, LEAs and CPS alike, can also ask questions to support collaborative ESSA transportation planning and identify related costs.⁶⁵ For example:

- What is the average number of students in foster care in your LEA?
- Is this number increasing or decreasing from the previous academic year?
- Are students remaining in their schools of origin within your community?
- How many students reside in a foster home in a different LEA but still attend school in your LEA?
- What type of placement settings exist in your LEA (kinship caregiver, foster homes, emergency shelter, residential treatment center, other)?
- What patterns do you observe regarding school mobility and students entering/exiting schools within your community and LEA?



VI. Educational Outcomes

What education indicators are related to academic success?

Public education provides all students with the opportunity to gain knowledge, develop necessary skills, hone abilities, and develop strengths to graduate from high school ready for college, a career, or the military. Promotion, retention, dropout, and high school graduation are key indicators to measure student progress and success.

Graduation and dropout “rates” (as required by ESSA) are not yet available for students in foster care. Therefore, to analyze the outcomes of students in foster care over the past three years, this report utilizes school leaver data. Leaver data represent the reason why a student leaves school, as recorded in PEIMS. The information is not directly comparable to any other Texas report on children in either the education or CPS systems that look at graduation and dropout rates. Although the figures below are not cohort or rate calculations, the school leaver data in this report are nonetheless valuable in comparing students in foster care with their peers not in foster care.

The policy information provided in this report is based on education policies and definitions that were in effect during the 2014-2015 school year.

A. PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion and retention indicate whether a student is on-track and progressing in school. Promotion means that a student advances from one grade to the next after an academic year. Grade level retention means that a student has not been promoted to the next level and must repeat a grade. A student may only be promoted on the basis of academic achievement in the subject matter of a course or grade level. When a struggling student is retained, research shows that this delay can impact the student's academic career in future years.⁶⁶

In Texas, the Student Success Initiative requires that in addition to demonstrating academic achievement in coursework, a student in grade 5 or 8 must also perform satisfactorily on the State of Texas Assessment for Academic Readiness (STAAR) mathematics and reading tests in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Alternatively, if a student fails to pass a grade 5 or 8 STAAR exam after at least three attempts, a grade placement committee (GPC) may decide in favor of promotion if the committee concludes that if promoted and given accelerated instruction the student is likely to perform at grade level. The student may only be promoted if the GPC's decision is unanimous.⁶⁷

Each LEA may establish local requirements for high school students' grade-level classifications. High school grade-level classifications are typically based on the total number of credits a student has earned. Grade 9 is a critical year for all stakeholders to use best practices and resources to support students in the transition to high school.⁶⁸ To remain on track to graduate, a student must successfully complete courses and accrue the credits necessary to graduate.

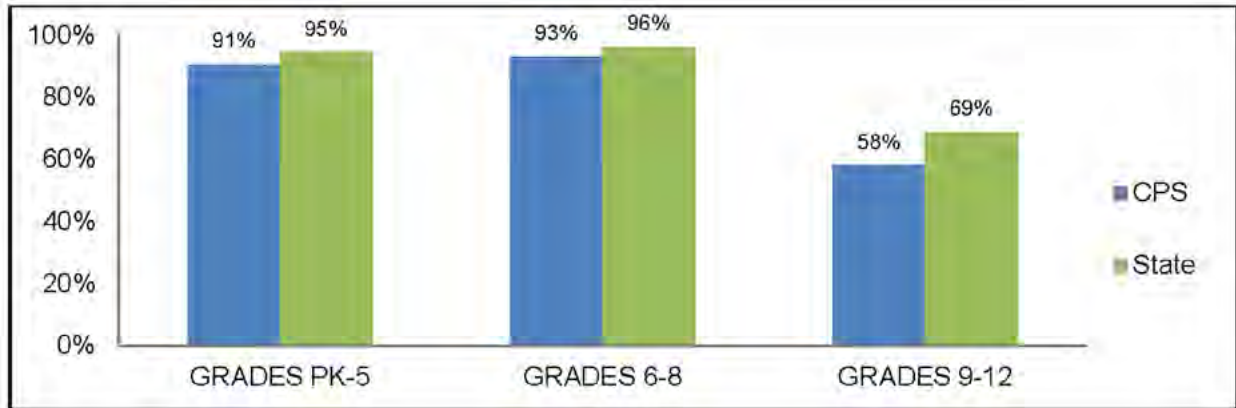
Students who are on track at the end of their freshman year for graduation with their peers are nearly four times more likely to graduate than students who are not on track to complete the state requirements for graduation.⁶⁹

It is important to note that although the term 'promotion' is used in the Figures 6 and 7 below and 'retention' is used in Figures 8 and 9 to describe students in secondary grades (9-12), these terms are only applicable to students in Grades PK through Grade 6 and Grades 7-8 depending on local policy. Furthermore, "promotion" and "retention" in grades 9-12 is described in narrative in the following sections as "to progress or not progress from one grade to the next."

When an elementary school student is retained, the student will probably repeat the entire curriculum for that year. However, a high school student may not progress to the next grade level because he or she needs to retake one course out of six or seven, but the students may "catch-up" with his classmates by making up that one course. Likewise, when a high school student satisfactorily completes his courses for the year, the student progresses from one grade to the next.

But, for consistency in this report, the term "promotion" indicates a student who was classified in a certain grade level one year and a higher grade level the following year. The term "retention" indicates a student who was classified in the same grade level two years in a row.

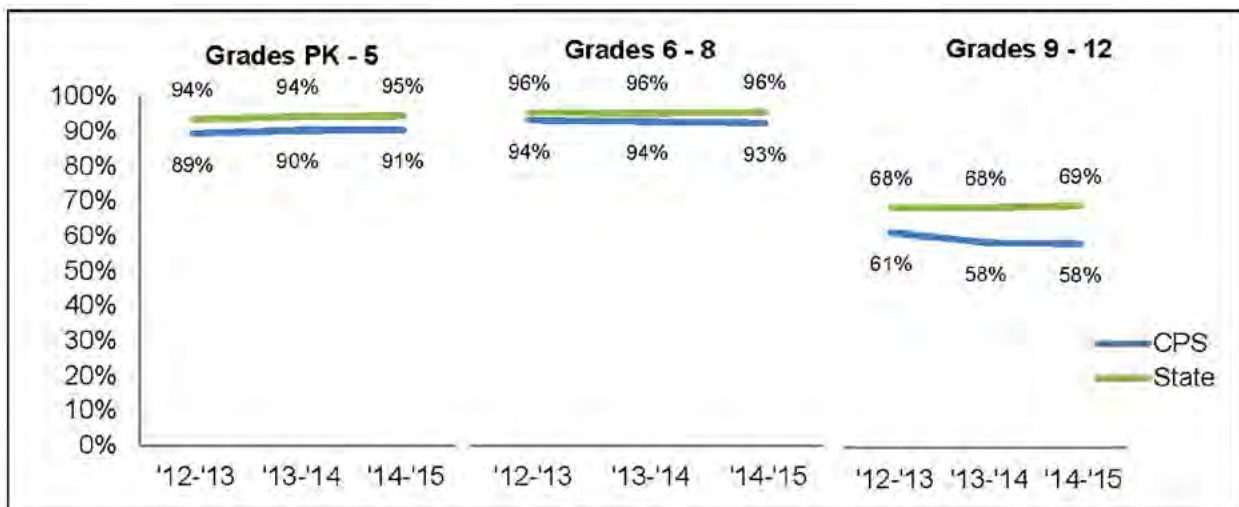
Figure 6: Percentage of Students Promoted FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 6 shows the percentage of students who are promoted to the next grade level for students in elementary, middle, and high school. (Note: The grades 9-12 values do not include grade 12 students who graduated.) The data show that students in foster care are less likely to be promoted to the next grade at all grade levels when compared to other students in Texas. The difference is more pronounced in grades 9-12 where 69% of all Texas students progressed from one grade to the next with their peers and only 58% of students in foster care progressed to the next grade with their peers; an 11 percentage point gap. This compares to a 3 and 4 percentage point difference in the middle and elementary school grade levels respectively.

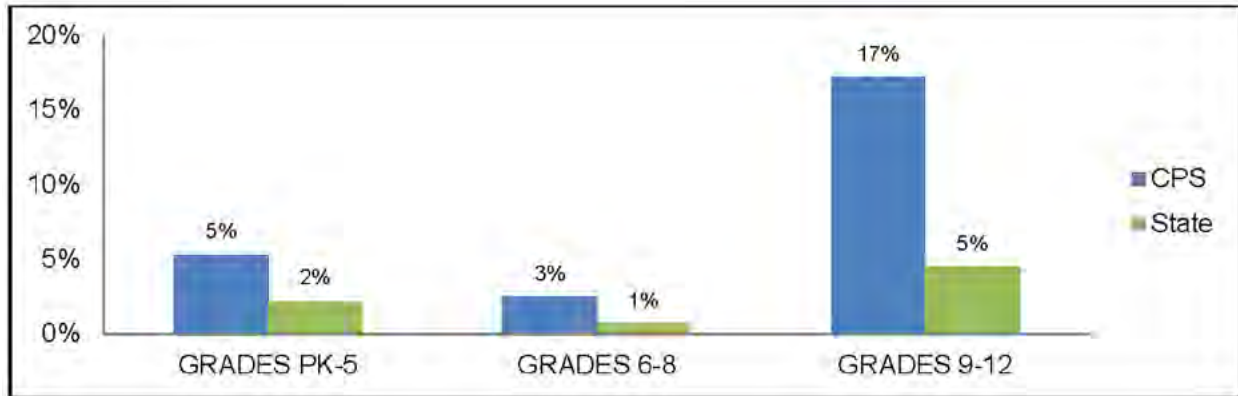
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Promoted Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 7 shows the trend of promotion over three school years for elementary, middle and high school. The trend for promotion in elementary school for students in foster care has increased 3 percentage points over the past three years, consistent with their peers and closing the achievement gap slightly. The trend in middle school is relatively stable. The trend for progress from one grade to the next in high school among students in foster care, however, has decreased 3 percentage points over the past three years, while the trend for all other high school students increased slightly. This gap between students in foster care and all other students in high school was 11 percentage points in FY 15.

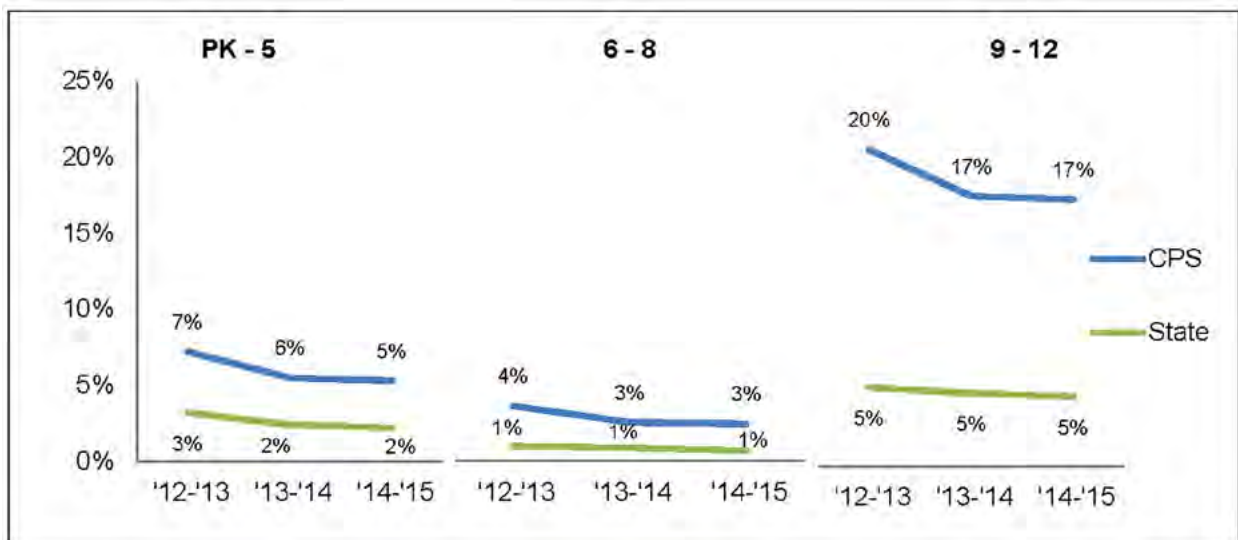
Figure 8: Percentage of Students Retained FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 8 shows that students in foster care are retained at higher levels than their peers at all grade levels. In elementary school, 5% of students in foster care were retained compared to 2% of their peers. This is more than twice the rate of grade level retention compared with peers statewide. In middle school, 3% of students in foster care were retained while only 1% of all students were retained. In high school, the differences between students in foster care and the statewide population are greater, a 12% gap, with 1 in 6 students in foster care in grades 9-12 not progressing from one grade to the next.

Figure 9: Percentage of Students Retained Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 9 shows an encouraging trend: the decline of student grade level retention over the past three years for both students in foster care and all Texas students. In elementary and high school, the decline for students in foster care is more pronounced with a 2 and 3 percentage point change respectively. The trend shows that high school students in foster care who do not progress from one grade to the next has decreased over the past three years; 20% vs. 17% comparatively, which is still a 12% percentage point gap with all Texas students.

B. GRADUATION AND DROPOUT

To graduate from high school in Texas, students complete a course of study in accordance with Texas law and State Board of Education rules for the Foundation High School Program. Upon entering ninth grade, each student develops a PGP which is reviewed and revised annually. The PGP is developed jointly by the school, the parent, and the student to help guide the student through the initial graduation program selection process including identifying interests, courses of study, and endorsements, as well as annual course selection.⁷⁰ In Texas, all students enter the ninth grade on the Foundation High School Program with endorsement, a 26-credit graduation program. An endorsement indicates that a student is pursuing or has completed a related series of courses in one of the following areas: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; business and industry; public services; arts and humanities; or multidisciplinary studies. Students may choose to opt out of an endorsement at the end of their sophomore year and pursue the 22-credit Foundation High School Program with no endorsement. To graduate, students must attend school, earn required course credits under the Foundation High School Program, and pass required high school end-of-course (EOC) assessments under the STAAR program.⁷¹

Dropping out of school is a process that begins with the student disengaging from school. Some signs of disengagement from school include truancy, poor classroom behavior, decreased participation in extracurricular activities, and poor relationships with teachers and peers.⁷² Other early warning signs include low grades, low test scores, failure in English or math, poor attendance, falling behind in course credits, and retention at grade level. Disengaged students who exhibit early warning signs are likely to drop out of school.⁷³

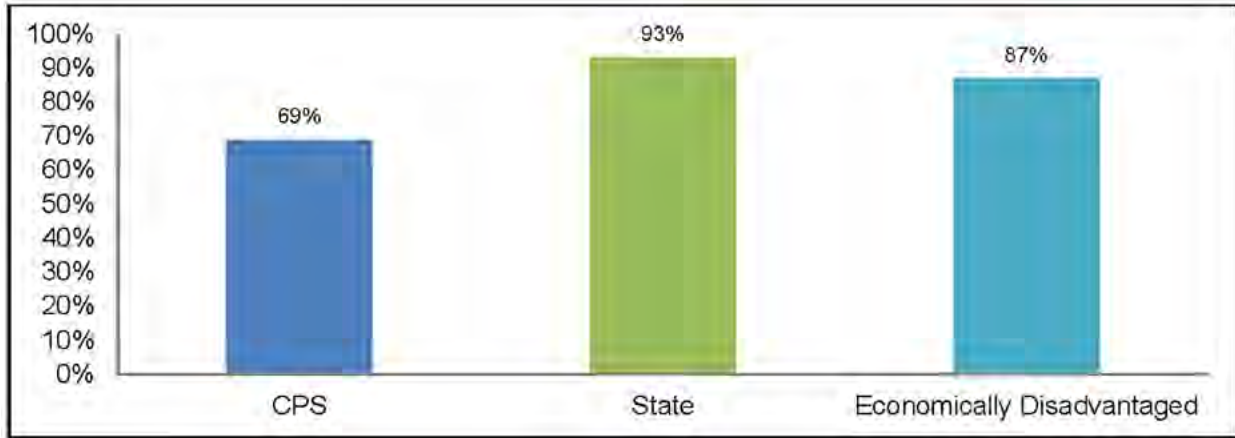
A combination of risk factors for high school graduation often occurs simultaneously with the early warning dropout signs, such as lack of financial resources, member of a racial or ethnic minority group, male gender, older than the average student in their grade, lack of parental involvement, divorce or family conflict, poor school attitude, mental health challenges, negative peer group, negative school climate, low expectations, high exposure to crime, or lack of community support for schools.⁷⁴

Because earning a high school diploma is important for students in foster care, planning for college, career, or the military is key while students are in high school. Benefits are available specifically for eligible students in foster care to support post-secondary education, including the tuition and fees waiver and an education and training voucher.⁷⁵

Obtaining a high school diploma helps bridge the income gap between individuals who drop out and those who graduate with graduates earning \$9,200 more per year on average. Over the course of a lifetime, high school and college graduates respectively earn an average of \$375,000 and \$1 million more than those who drop out. Individuals who drop out of school are also more likely to experience unemployment, poverty, and poor health outcomes.⁷⁶

Figure 10 shows that of all students who reached the 12th grade and left school in FY 15, 93% graduated. Comparatively, 87% of economically disadvantaged students and 69% of students in foster care graduated. These data demonstrate a 24 percentage point graduation gap between students in foster care and their peers, according to school leaver data. Since the data do not represent a graduation cohort rate, they do not reflect whether students who did not graduate from the 12th grade stayed in school for another year to graduate.

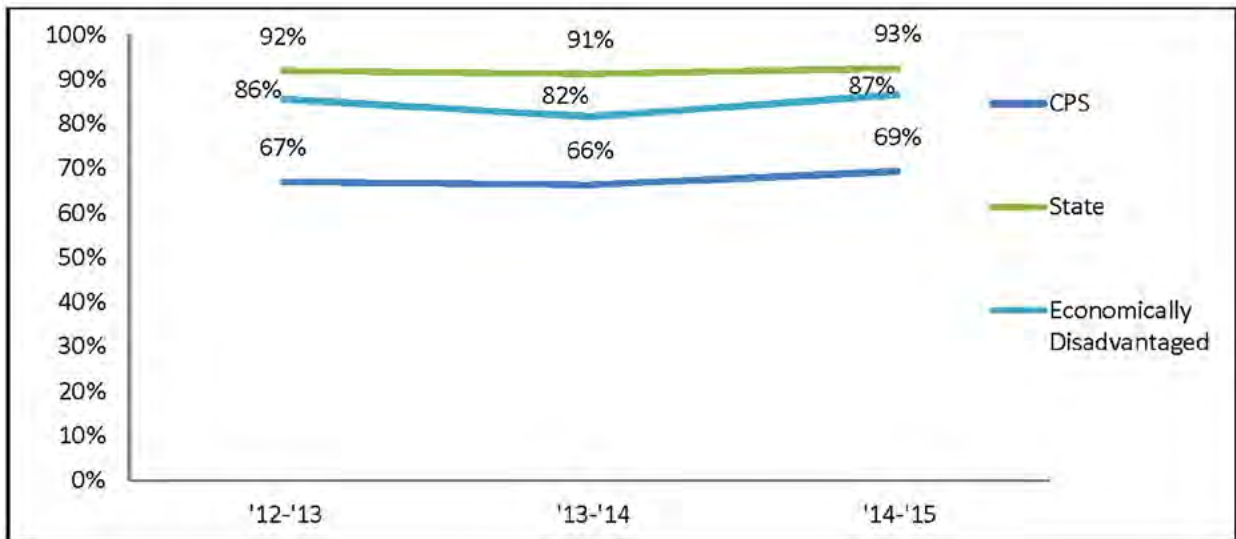
Figure 10: 12th Grade Graduates FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

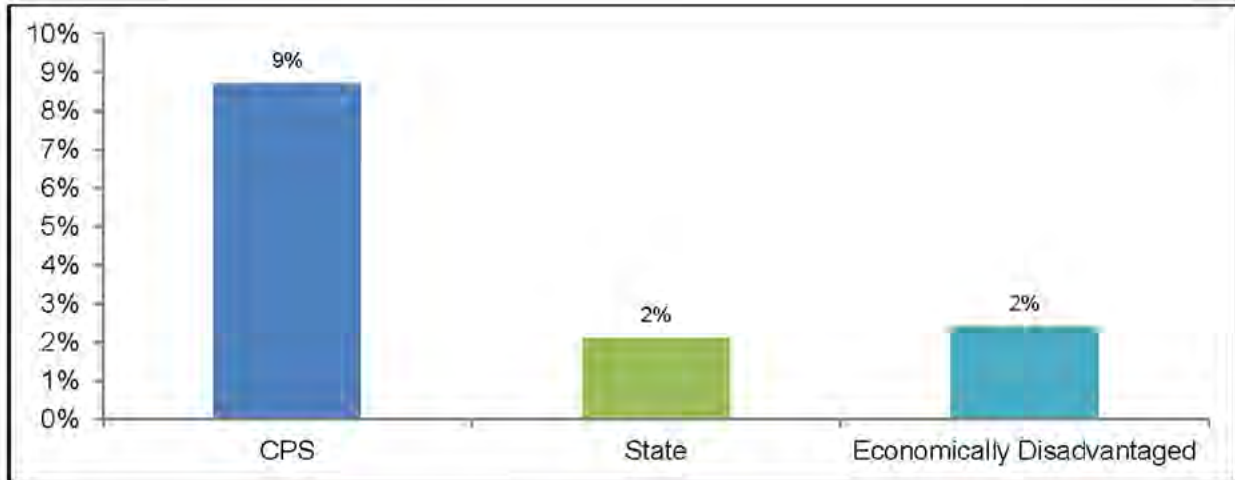
Figure 11 shows that the trend for leaving high school for the reason of graduation among high school seniors has increased for all Texas students since the 2012-2013 school year. Students in foster care still lag significantly behind their peers.

Figure 11: 12th Grade Graduates Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 12: Grades 9-12 Students Drop Out FY 14-15

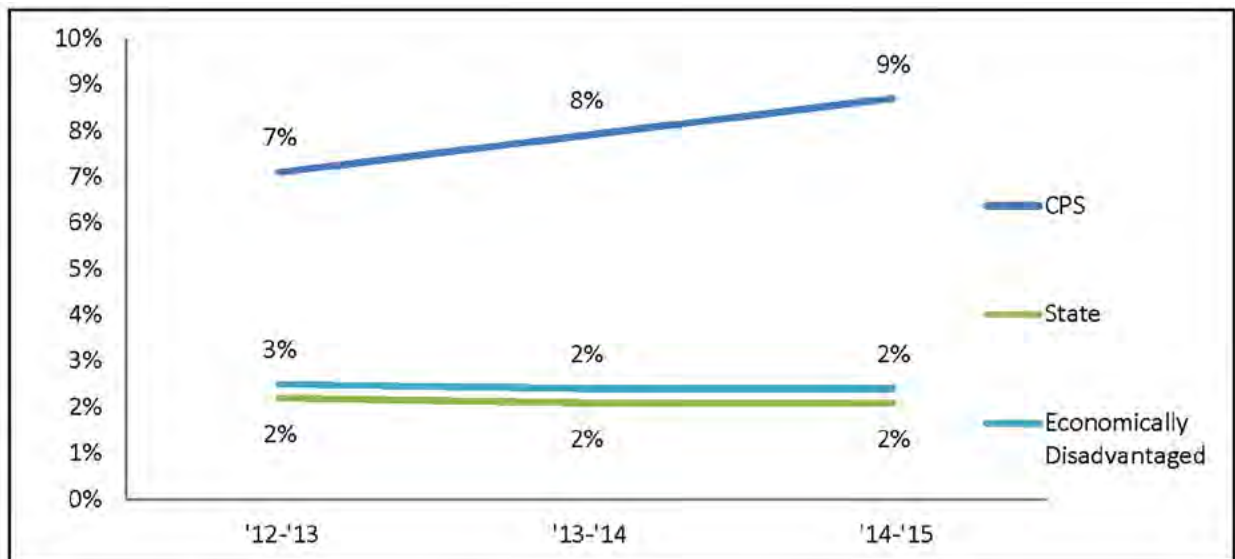


Data Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 12 does not represent a dropout rate but rather shows that 9% of students who were in foster care at some point during the year in grades 9-12 left school and were not enrolled elsewhere, and thus were inferred to have dropped out. In comparison, only 2% of their economically disadvantaged peers left school by dropping out and only 2% of all Texas students in grades 9-12 left school by dropping out of school. In other words, students who had been in foster care during the year are four times as likely to leave school by dropping out from grades 9 - 12 compared to other students in Texas.

It is CPS policy that all students in foster care attend school. Yet it is possible that youth who attended school while in care dropped out of school once they exited foster care.

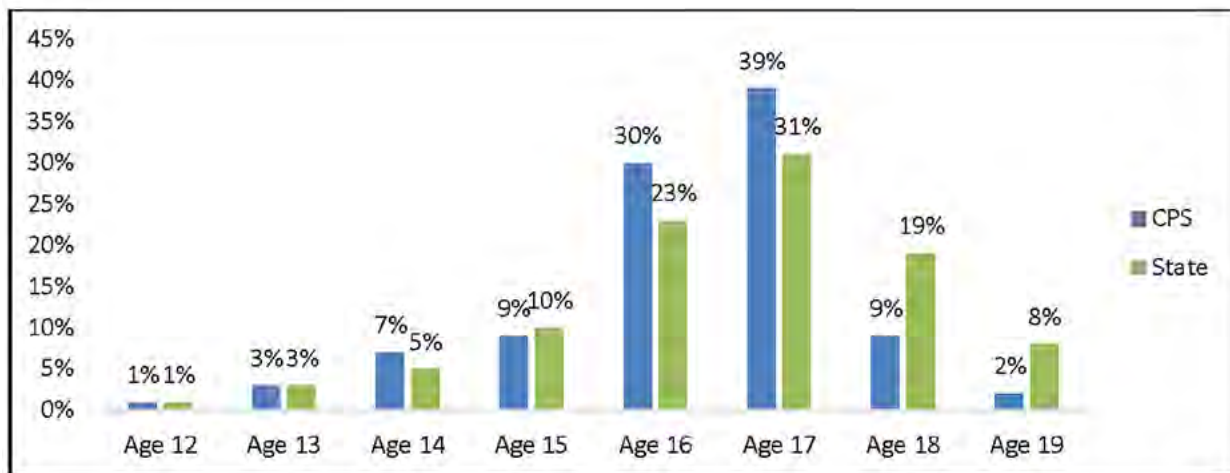
Figure 13: Grades 9-12 Students Drop Out Trend



Data Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 13 reflects a trend of the dropout leaver data over three years. While dropout data remain generally steady for comparison groups, the trend shows that leaving school for the reason of dropout increased for students in foster care from year to year, up 2 percentage points over a three year period. There is also a widening gap between students in foster care and their peers who drop out of school; a 7 percentage point gap in 2015. Students in foster care were more than 4 times as likely to drop out of school than their peers in 2015.

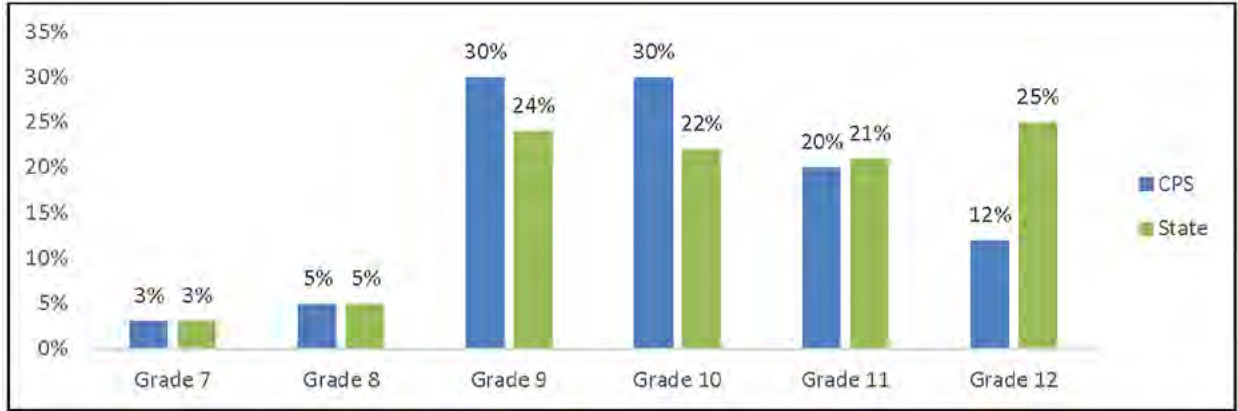
Figure 14: Percentage of Students that Drop Out by Age FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Students in foster care are required by state law and CPS policy to attend school.⁷⁷ However, Figure 14 shows that of students who dropout, 69% of students in foster care and 54% of students statewide were aged 16 and 17 years old. When a student is over-aged and under credited, or not enrolled in coursework on grade-level with their peers, the impact can be detrimental. Further analysis is needed to better understand the dropout data, including comparing the age and grade level when students drop out. Consideration of factors such as a student's entry and exit from foster care, legal status, and disability are variables for future analysis. Another area for additional consideration is whether the withdrawal process is seamless and consistent. If CPS, caregivers, and schools do not adequately communicate, this could lead to leaver data integrity issues.

Figure 15: Percentage of Students that Drop Out by Grade FY 14-15



Data Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 15 shows that of all CPS students in foster care who dropped out of school, 60% dropped out in Grades 9 or 10 in 2015, compared to 46% of students statewide. Of all students in foster care who left school due to dropping out in 2015, 88% dropped out before reaching Grade 12 compared to 75% of all students statewide. Students included in this data may have been in foster care for some portion or all of the school year; moreover, it is critical to address at-risk and early warning indicators regardless of the student's foster care status.

C. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES – STATEWIDE EFFORTS

Under the Texas Education Code, all students who are placed in foster care at any point in time during the school year are considered at-risk of dropping out of school.⁷⁸ Texas has a variety of state policies and programs to encourage reengagement for students who are at-risk or who drop out of school.

TEA provides LEAs with information and guidance to implement these policies. Many LEAs implement local initiatives to prevent and recover dropouts pursuant to flexible state policies designed to meet the diverse needs of students and families. For example, Optional Flexible School Day, Optional Flexible School Year, and the State Compensatory Education program support Texas schools with implementing flexible dropout prevention strategies, including credit recovery, to help students get back on track to high school graduation.⁷⁹

Texas law and the State Board of Education established policy to facilitate the award of credit for students in foster care.⁸⁰ Some examples include allowing students in foster care to receive credit by examination at any point during the school year and providing for award of proportionate credit of high school students who have successfully completed one semester of a two-semester course.⁸¹

Other state policies to promote high school graduation include PGPs, opportunities to earn dual credit at post-secondary institutions, Advanced Placement courses, Early College High Schools, charter schools, the Texas Virtual School Network, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math programs, and endorsements under the Foundation High School Program that facilitate career pathways for students, which can incentivize students to achieve, engage, or reengage in learning.⁸²

A Graduation Toolkit developed by TEA is helpful resources for planning a student's high school years and beyond.⁸³ Additionally, there are federal and state requirements related to post-secondary transitions and successful outcomes for students with disabilities.⁸⁴

TEA provides research and guidance on dropout prevention for at-risk students, collaboration with community organizations, as well as best practice mental health and behavioral health resources to support student success, including best practice resources for schools.⁸⁵ TEA hosted a national dropout prevention conference in Texas in 2015 in collaboration with the National Dropout Prevention Center.⁸⁶

In 2016, DFPS Regional Education Specialists began tracking all 11th and 12th grade students (16, 17, and 18-year olds) to monitor course completion for a high school diploma. CPS monitors an Education Portfolio for each student in foster care although the portfolio itself is maintained by the caregiver. The Regional CPS Education Specialists attend meetings related to special education and work with Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) staff to attend Transition Planning meetings at CPS and the school.

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Research indicates that students in foster care are estimated to lose four to six months of academic progress *per school move*. School mobility can result in a negative impact on academic achievement for students in foster care, including increased risk of academic gaps, behavior problems, grade retention, and increased likelihood of **dropping out of high school**.

|

TEA, DFPS, and the Children's Commission regularly collaborate to develop guidance, training, and supports for educators, CPS staff, caregivers, and students. This includes correspondence and presentations for educators, administrators, liaisons, judges, attorneys, child placing agencies, caseworkers, etc.⁸⁷

Underscoring college and career readiness are central to outreach efforts by TEA and DFPS. High school counselors receive training on post-secondary opportunities available to students in foster care and to encourage students in foster care to participate in dual credit and early college programs. The DFPS Residential Contract requires residential providers to inform, provide, and facilitate access to post-secondary education, vocational, or technical training programs.

There are also statutes in Texas requiring increased supports for students once they enter a Texas college or university. New statutes require supports, including foster care liaisons in public post-secondary institutions, and there are several efforts in place to support students in a number of Texas colleges. There are data sharing agreements in place between DFPS-TEA, DFPS-THECB, and TEA-THECB. The state agencies will continue to link data and track outcomes related to students in foster care.

D. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES – PROMISING PRACTICES

Using and monitoring education data on the local aggregate level and the student level can help courts, educators, CPS workers, caregivers, and advocates determine if students in foster care who are enrolled in Texas schools are on-track for high school graduation.

- Using early warning data is a foundational research-based strategy to help disengaged students get back on track, mitigate against risk factors, and prevent dropout.⁸⁸ Schools and DFPS may add non-academic risk indicators to an early warning indicator system and may implement joint Early Warning Data Systems (EWDS) to examine well-being as well as academic risk indicators.⁸⁹ Although educators can implement EWDS and caregivers can log into LEA parent portals to monitor measures such as grades, attendance, and homework completion, these academic indicators may not get to the root cause of what makes the student at-risk.
- Several LEAs developed local agreements with community organizations to help engage students and to address risk factors including: truancy, mental health, physical health, attendance, and social service needs of their student populations that present barriers to school success.
- Joint data systems may present the challenge of managing confidentiality.⁹⁰ Reviewing the “Information Sharing between Child Welfare and Schools Guide” may be helpful in balancing confidentiality while building collaboration.⁹¹

Collaborative CPS and education strategies are beneficial for child-specific information sharing and planning in small student support teams, in Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee, PGP meetings, or on a one-to-one basis between school personnel and caregivers so that the most appropriate interventions can be coordinated between the adults working with the student.

It is critical to use all available data, both academic and non-academic, as well as a trauma-informed lens, relationship building, and research, to guide meaningful interventions to support school success for students in foster care and to prevent drop out.

Meetings should occur frequently to review the student’s educational progress, identify needs, plan for academic interventions, and wraparound student support services both at school and in the community.

Schools should enroll students in foster care in dual credit opportunities whenever possible, including technical courses. Enrollment in a college course when a student is in high school supports post-secondary planning and can support a student with later activating the tuition and fee waiver that is available for students in foster care.

Schools should implement best practices for dropout prevention and student engagement identified in the education research, assess student interests, outreach to caregivers, and assist with enrolling students in extracurricular activities such as after-school programs that will help to engage students in school.

Caregivers are also important partners in ensuring that students participate in activities and that homework is completed and understood.

VII. Academic Achievement

How do students in foster care perform on state assessment measures?

Assessment results are a tool for educators and caregivers to personalize learning for students and to design interventions targeting gaps in learning and skills. Not performing at a satisfactory level on the assessments can be predictive of future course failure if skills do not improve. This report focuses on reading and mathematics because these are fundamental basic skills for all students to achieve successful education outcomes. A strong academic foundation helps to prepare students in foster care for high school graduation, and develop readiness skills for college, a career, or the military.

The STAAR assessments are taken by Texas students to assess academic knowledge and skills and are a good indicator of a student's readiness to learn more and successfully achieve when presented with more complicated material, eventually leading to high school graduation. For example, performance on Grade 3 assessments in reading and math may predict future school success.⁹² The STAAR assesses each student's performance and progress relative to Texas educational standards called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).⁹³

Grades 5 and 8 are referred to as Student Success Initiative grades in Texas. Students must pass the STAAR assessments, including math and reading, in grades 5 and 8 prior to grade level promotion. Grades 5 and 8 are also key years for student transitions to middle or high school and the STAAR helps to gauge student readiness.⁹⁴ If students do not perform at a satisfactory level in state assessments, schools must provide compensatory, accelerated instruction to help students perform at grade level on the assessments.⁹⁵

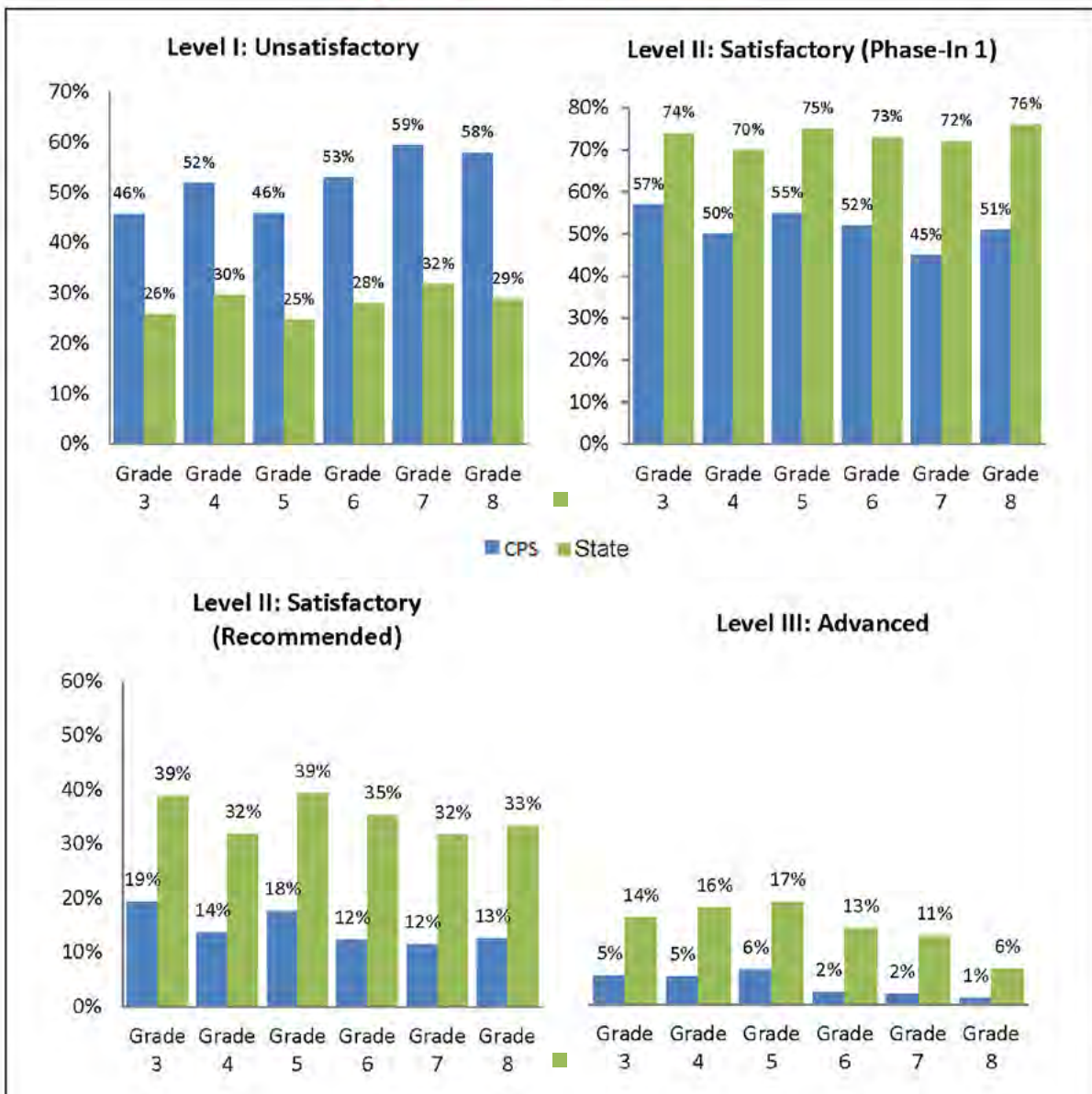
Data and student performance levels described in this report are based on the FY 15 STAAR program policy, definitions and reports. Note, this report does not disaggregate data based on special programs or by the version of the STAAR taken by students in foster care. In FY 15, there were three STAAR performance levels: Level I: Unsatisfactory, Level II: Satisfactory (met standards at Phase-In 1 level), Level II: Recommended, and Level III: Advanced. STAAR scores in 2014-2015 indicate an increasing degree of achievement toward meeting state standards.

A. MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENTS

Mathematics is a foundational academic subject that all students need to advance in their education through the education system and to earn a high school diploma. Math skills are foundational for college and career readiness. Strong math skills are also required in many high demand employment fields, such as business and industry, healthcare and sciences, technology, and engineering. In the chart below, the top left graph represents students who did not meet standards at a satisfactory level for the STAAR math assessment in Grades 3-8, the other three graphs signify students who met satisfactory standards for the assessment to varying degrees of achievement.

Figure 16: Math STAAR Results 2015

Figure 16: Math STAAR Results 2015



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 16 shows that of the students in foster care tested in Grade 3 on the STAAR Math Assessment:

- 46% did not meet standards at a satisfactory level. This represents a 20 percentage point performance gap between students in foster care and all students in Grade 3 statewide.
- In Grade 8, 58% of students in foster care performed unsatisfactorily compared to 29% of their peers statewide, indicating a widening performance gap.
- The performance gap continues to widen at the high end of the performance scale as well, with only 14% of students in foster care achieving recommended or advanced levels on the STAAR Math Assessment in Grade 8, while 39% of the statewide population achieved at the recommended and advanced levels, which represents a 25 percentage point achievement gap.

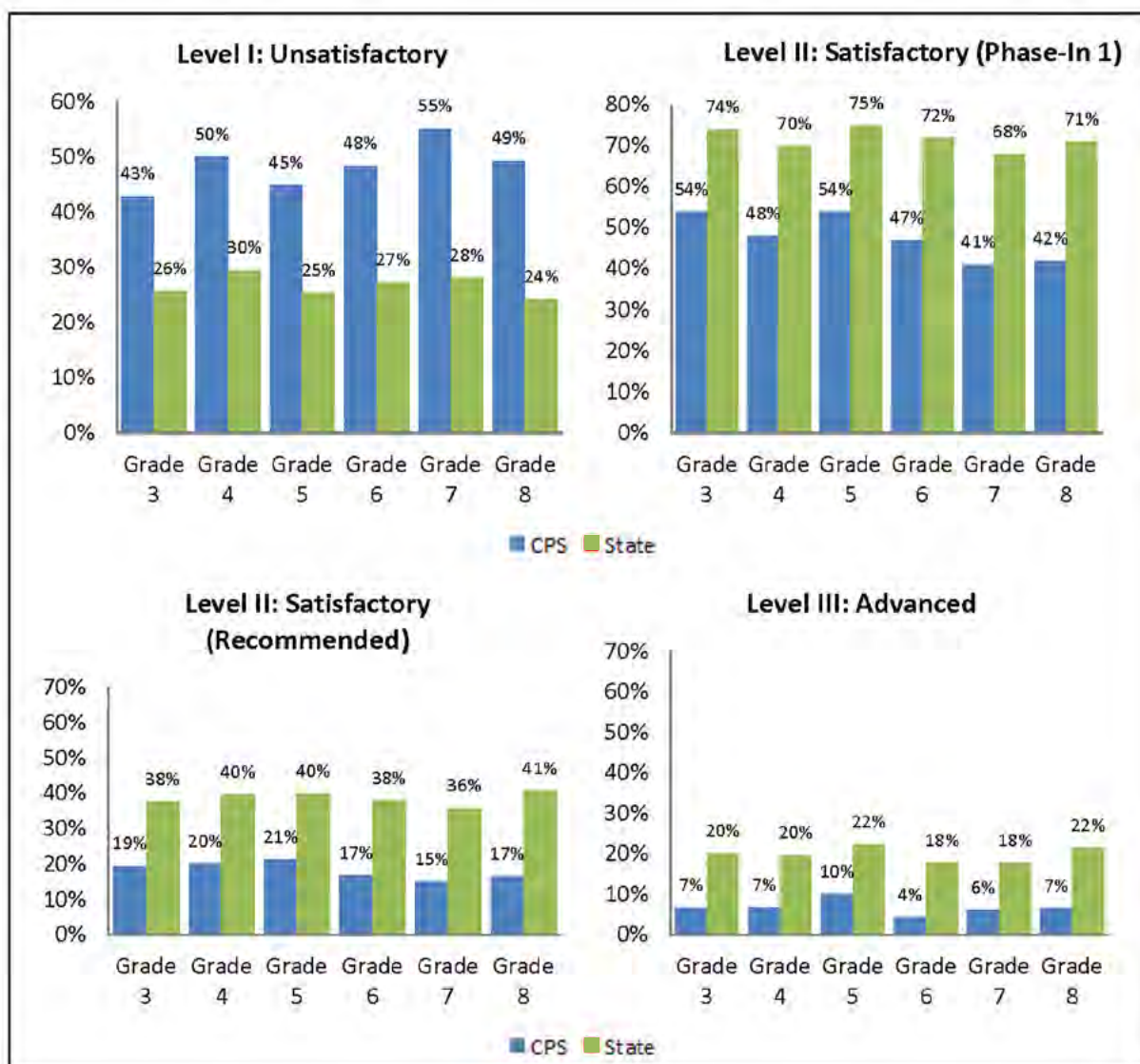
B. READING ASSESSMENTS

Reading is a critical skill for future learning. Sound literacy skills are necessary for achievement in all academic classes and for earning course credit in high school leading to a diploma. In the chart below, the top left graph represents students who did not meet satisfactory standards on the STAAR reading assessment in grades 3-8; the other three graphs signify students who met the standards on the assessment to varying degrees of achievement.

Figure 17 on the following page shows that of all students in foster care tested, 43% and 50% of students in Grades 3 and 4, respectively, did not meet standards at a satisfactory level on the STAAR Reading Assessment. This compares to 26% and 30% of students in Grades 3 and 4 statewide who did not perform at the satisfactory level. Notably, 49% of students in foster care performed unsatisfactorily on the Grade 8 Reading Assessment, compared to 24% of their peers. The achievement gap continues to widen in Grade 8 with 24% of students in foster care performing at the recommended or advanced reading level compared to 63% of their peers.

The achievement gap that can be seen in Figures 16 and 17 represents an urgent concern for students in foster care. When students do not perform satisfactorily in the core subjects of reading and math, these gaps in skill can affect students' performance in grade level promotion, passing the STAAR EOC Assessments required for high school graduation, and earning course credit. In high school, students need strong reading and math skills to complete all academic course work, including career and technical education, and to earn credits toward graduation, as well as to prepare for college, a career, or the military.

Figure 17: Reading STAAR Results 2015



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

C. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – STATEWIDE EFFORTS

TEA recently developed a new STAAR report card designed to improve communication and transparency concerning statewide assessments, particularly to support students and parents.⁹⁶ The Texas Assessment Management System is a comprehensive resource for families, administrators, and educators.⁹⁷ Specifically, the parent (student) portal is an online tool on the TEA website to support student learning at home and to engage caregivers and families in learning about the state assessment process and supporting students. Caregivers can log into this user-friendly state system to access free academic resources, including tutorials and games, to extend academic skill building at home. This is a new resource available to all Texas families to support students with making individual progress on the state assessment.

TEA and ESCs support academic achievement by providing tools, educator professional development, including literacy and math academies as well as other training opportunities,

family engagement, and best practice strategies for special student populations. Each ESC hosts a website with academic achievement training opportunities available in each region of the state. Other academic resources are available through TEA collaboration with universities, including resources developed to support education for students in foster care.⁹⁸

Most LEAs offer login portals for parents and caregivers to monitor student grades and homework assignments. Caregivers can communicate directly with teachers online, request teacher conferences, and discuss strategies to support academic achievement. Online tools are also available through most LEAs for caregivers to support college and career planning. Additionally, contact information for each LEA Foster Care Liaison is available on the TEA Website in AskTED.⁹⁹

In addition to the academic interventions and well-being considerations for education and CPS stakeholders discussed above, judges now regularly inquire about whether the student's education needs and goals have been identified and addressed.¹⁰⁰ Attorneys and guardians ad litem representing children are charged with determining whether the student's educational needs and goals are being satisfied before each review hearing, which typically occur every six months.¹⁰¹ A judicial checklist and bench book chapter are available to assist judges and lawyers in identifying key education considerations.¹⁰² Additionally, an Education Advocacy Toolkit was developed by DFPS, TEA, Texas CASA, and the Children's Commission to assist volunteer advocates with navigating the education system.¹⁰³

D. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – PROMISING PRACTICES

Adults involved in a child's education should monitor student academic performance with course grades and STAAR performance, especially in elementary and middle school. Access to books and additional reading time outside school benefits all students, including those in foster care. Young students can benefit from being read to in the evenings and on weekends by caregivers.

Students who are behind and struggling academically can benefit from additional structured time on school-related tasks outside of school hours. Access to free tutorials and academic games to support skill building in reading and math are available to caregivers on the TEA website for use at home or in libraries.

- Schools can outreach to caregivers encouraging participation and engagement in parent involvement activities on the school campus.
- Caregivers should attend academic events at school (e.g. parent-teacher conferences) to discuss STAAR results and academic performance.
- Caregivers may contact teachers to learn about interventions at school designed to improve academic performance and discuss opportunities to reinforce skill building at home, including logging into free tutorials and educational games provided by TEA through the Texas Assessment Management System.
- Schools should offer students in foster care opportunities to participate in tutoring, other academic support options, and after-school activities that support reading and math skills.
- Volunteers, advocates, and caregivers can also support student growth in reading and math through providing enrichment activities such as trips to the library, scheduling a reading hour, playing hands-on math activities, and educational or family games.
- Caregivers can log in to online portals hosted by LEAs to monitor student grades, homework assignments, and homework completion, and to communicate directly with teachers to ensure early intervention for struggling students in foster care.
- Caregivers can encourage student participation in extracurricular enrichment activities.

VIII. School Attendance

What does the attendance data tell us about students in foster care?

School attendance is a significant predictor of academic success or failure. There is a negative effect on academic achievement associated with poor school attendance, whether absences are excused or unexcused.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, absenteeism in the early grades can influence a child's reading abilities and whether a student will be retained at the current grade level. The effects of poor attendance are particularly pronounced among low-income children, who need more classroom time to master reading and are less likely to have access to resources outside of school to help them catch up.¹⁰⁵

Students in foster care may struggle with maintaining consistent school attendance for several reasons. As part of judicial oversight when a child enters foster care, the student's presence is required at court hearings unless excused by the judge. Often, students are required to participate in other case-related appointments and visits with parents and siblings. Occasionally, necessary appointments must be attended during school hours and can result in absences or missed classroom time. There may be placement changes requiring a few missed school days to move to a new, safe home.

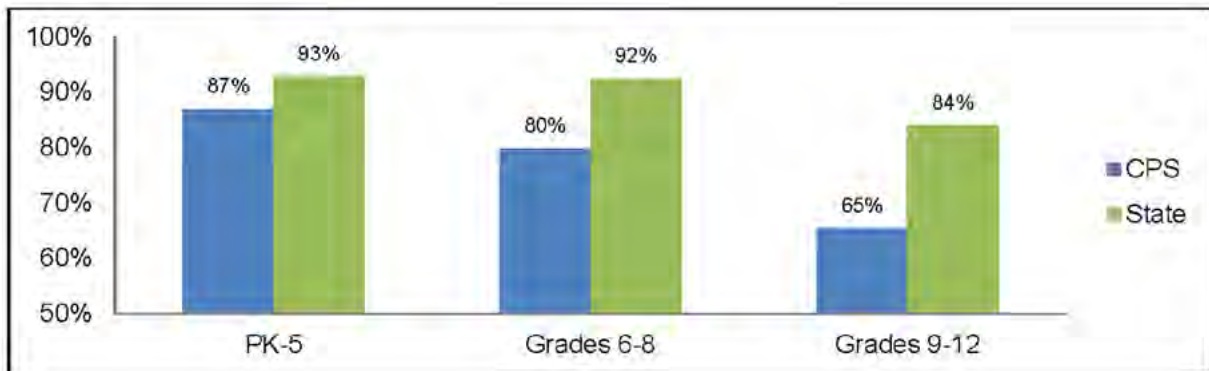
Texas law requires LEAs to excuse absences of students in foster care if the student is participating in an activity, as determined and documented by DFPS, that is ordered by a court or required under a service plan, if it is not practicable to schedule that participation outside of school hours.¹⁰⁶ Facilitating consistent attendance is essential for students in foster care to make the most of available instructional time in order to strengthen academic performance.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORD OF 90-100%

Texas law requires students to attend at least 90% of all available school days in order to receive credit for a class, subject to limited exceptions. Students in foster care are not excused from maintaining the 90% attendance requirement in class to earn course credit.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is critical for all students, including those in foster care, to limit school absences, whether they are excused or unexcused.

The limitation to these data is that the attendance reports calculate the percentage of days that each student attended school based on the number of days that each student was enrolled in school. These data do not reflect all possible school days if a student had gaps in school enrollment. Although it is the policy of DFPS for all students to be enrolled in school within two days of a transition, there may be gaps in school enrollment days for students in foster care due to emergency removals from home due to abuse or neglect, placement changes, and school moves that are not accounted for in the data calculation.

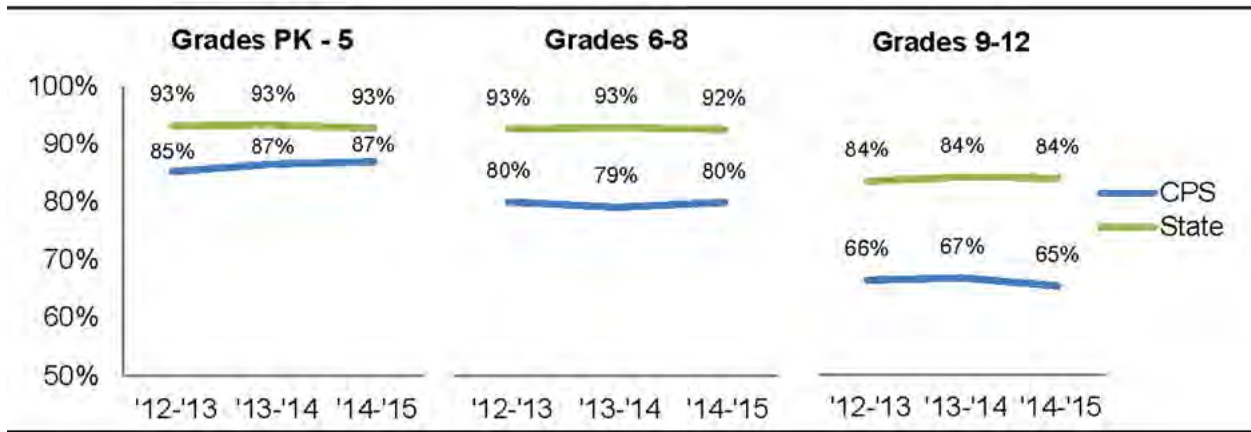
Figure 18: Percentage of Students with Attendance Record of 90-100% by Grade FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 18 disaggregates the 2014-2015 attendance data by grade levels to show the percentage of students in elementary, middle, and high school with attendance records above 90% in the last school attended during that school year. Students in foster care consistently have lower attendance records than their peers statewide. The difference is especially pronounced in the high school grades where 65% of the students in foster care achieved at least 90% attendance record compared to 84% of their peers, which represents a 19 percentage point gap between peers. In middle school, there is a 12% gap in attendance between students in foster care and their peers, with a 7% attendance gap in elementary school. These increased gaps in attendance in the secondary grades mirror the increased retention and dropout data for youth in foster care.

Figure 19: Percentage of Students with Attendance of 90% or Greater Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 19 shows that attendance trends have remained largely stable for students in foster care over the past three school years, with a slight decrease in attendance for students in high school. The data show a growing gap in attendance of nearly 20 percentage points between all students and students in foster care in high school. While there is still room to improve the 6 percentage point gap that exists in elementary school, the gap has narrowed 2 percentage points over the three years included in this data set.

B. ATTENDANCE – STATEWIDE EFFORTS

School attendance policies and laws exist to support students in foster care with excused absences when necessary for court or related service appointments documented in the student’s case plan.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, students must attend classes 90% of the time to earn a final grade or course credit.

The Texas Legislature and the education system have invested significant infrastructure in truancy prevention and school engagement.¹⁰⁹ For example, LEAs provide students in foster care who are truant with additional counseling supports.¹¹⁰ TEA provided guidance to LEAs on strategies to promote student attendance and to offer academic supports for struggling students.

DFPS updated its policies to include required actions to support the academic progress of children in foster care.¹¹¹ This includes reminding caseworkers to schedule medical and therapy appointments or parent/sibling visitations after-school and on weekends, when possible. If a student must have an appointment during school hours, DFPS encourages the student to remain in core subjects and alternate missing electives. As DFPS moves forward with residential contracts with providers, it will explore how to include educational goals.

Regional PAL staff and Regional Educational Specialists visit students with reported absences, working to identify and resolve the issues of school attendance (e.g. transportation, teen pregnancy/parenting, disinterest in school, or frustration at inability to be successful in school due to learning disabilities). Regional Education Specialists also assist caseworkers in identifying appropriate learning opportunities for students who lack course credit through credit recovery programs, online courses, summer school programs, and before/after-school tutoring at the school or offered through community resources.

C. ATTENDANCE – PROMISING PRACTICES

Poor attendance can be turned around when schools and communities partner with students and caregivers to use data to monitor student progress and implement promising and proven practices, particularly during transitions.¹¹² Truancy policies in Texas require the analysis of the root cause of chronic attendance problems.¹¹³ Some potential strategies to prevent truancy include:

- Building good attendance habits for children in elementary school will enhance the student's instructional time for reading and mathematics to facilitate a pattern for strong school attendance in secondary school.
- Engaging classroom instruction, extracurricular activities including sports, the arts, youth development activities, and enrichment programs are strongly associated with enhanced school engagement evidenced by better attendance, higher levels of achievement, and aspirations to higher levels of education.¹¹⁴
- Participating in an engaging school environment with classroom enrichment activities that appeal to student interests can strengthen student motivation, encourage peer interaction, build student-adult relationships, provide structure and challenge, connect students to school, and stimulate academic inquiry.¹¹⁵
- Supportive adults ensuring that students in foster care attend school every day and monitor student attendance, make reasonable efforts to schedule appointments outside of school hours and test days, facilitate participation in extracurricular activities, help students access tutoring and other needed supports, monitor homework completion, monitor academic progress, identify student's interest's and strengths, communicate necessary social-emotional information, and collaborate with teachers to strengthen school engagement and strategies for academic success.

Data are valuable to monitor attendance. Stakeholders can calculate the percentage of all days attended by students in foster care based on the available instructional time. Given the mobility of students in foster care, this analysis may be a more accurate accounting of the percentage of school days attended by students in foster care.



IX. Special Programs

How can students in foster care benefit from special programs in school?

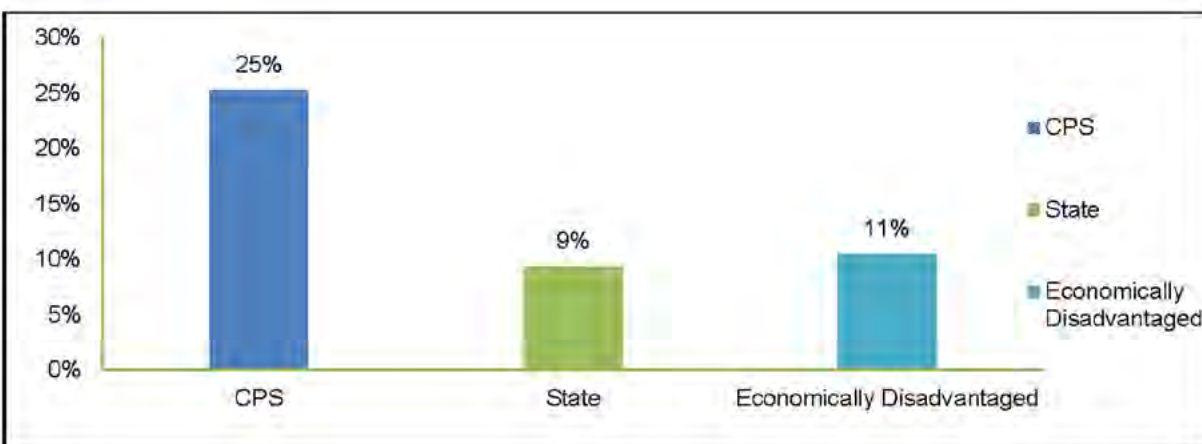
One research-based recommendation by the U.S. Department of Education for dropout prevention is to provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and serve them after they leave school.¹¹⁶ Special programs may add both rigor and relevance to a student's educational program as well as provide needed support services to help a student succeed.

This report includes only students enrolled in special education, gifted and talented (G/T), English Learners (ELs), and career and technical education (CTE) programs. Other special programs benefiting students in foster care include after-school programs or enriching extracurricular activities; however, TEA does not track data on participation in those programs at the state level.

A. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education programs serve students with disabilities when a disability impacts the student's academic performance in accordance with federal and state laws.¹¹⁷ Special education programs and related services support a student with a disability with a program, referred to as an IEP, to help the student benefit from the general curriculum. Students are provided with an individualized array of supports and services developed by the student's ARD committee that must include the student's parent/guardian/surrogate parent, a district administrator, a special education teacher/provider of the student, a general education teacher of the student if the student is or may be placed in a general education setting, and someone who can interpret evaluation data if such are being discussed in the meeting. The committee may also include the student, as well as advocates, health specialists, mental health specialists, behavior specialists and others who have knowledge about the student. TEA maintains online resources and technical assistance to support families, students, and schools for students with disabilities.¹¹⁸

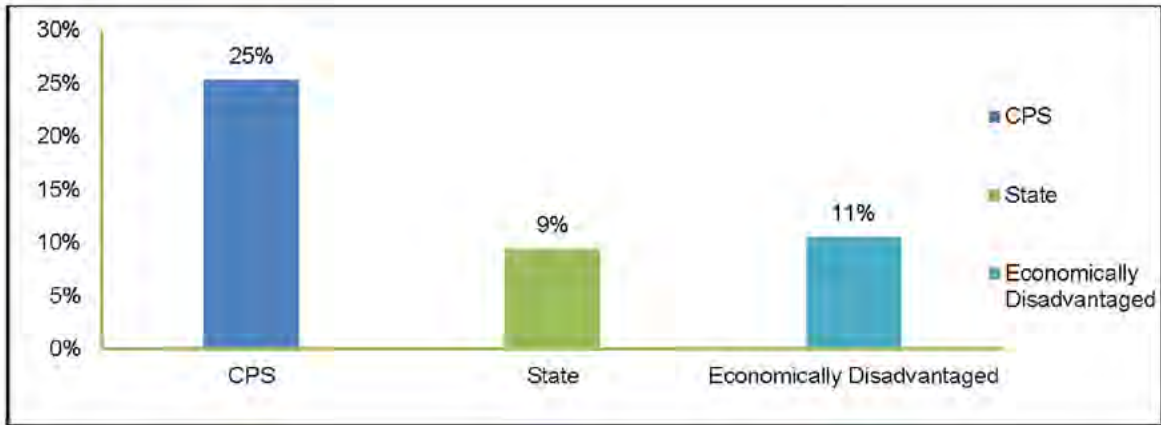
Figure 20: Percentage of Students Receiving Special Education Services FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 20 shows that there is a greater percentage of students in foster care receiving special education services than the general statewide population of students, or other economically disadvantaged students. Statewide 9% of all students were served by special education services compared to 25% of students in foster care in the 2014-2015 school year, a difference of 16 percentage points. Texas students in foster care are nearly three times as likely as their peers to have disabilities that impact their ability to benefit from the general curriculum without supportive special education services.

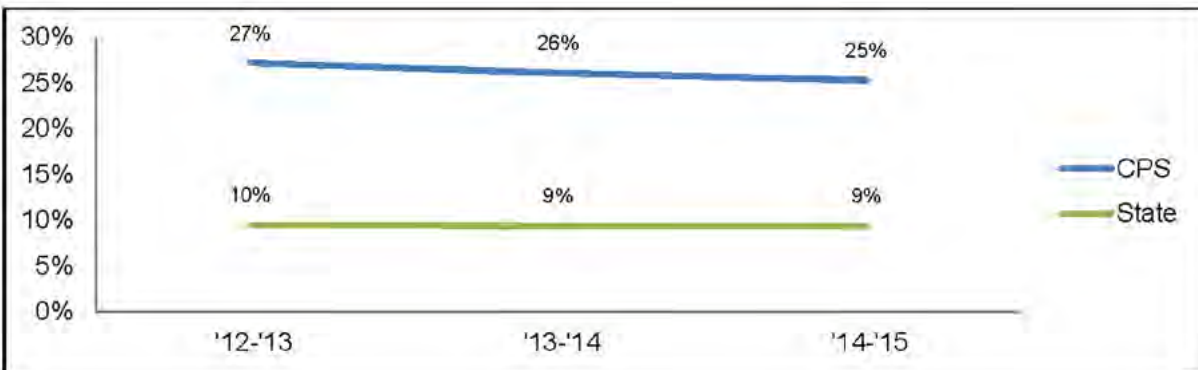
Figure 21: Primary Student Disability Identified for Special Education Services FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 21 shows the percentage of students eligible for special education services categorized by each primary disability classification. Of students in foster care receiving special education services, 31% receive special education services with the primary disability of emotional disturbance, compared to 6% of their peers. This is an indicator that students in foster care present with more mental health and behavioral health challenges than their peers receiving special education services.

Figure 22: Percentage of Students Receiving Special Education Services Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 22 indicates there was a slight decrease in the percentage of students in Texas schools receiving special education services over a three-year period, with this decline being greater for students in foster care.

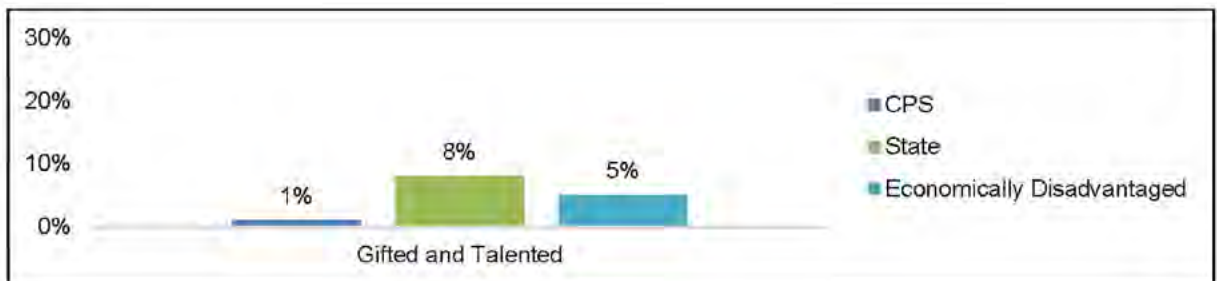
B. GIFTED AND TALENTED (G/T)

The G/T program services are designed for an identified student who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment, and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership, or excels in a specific academic field. Figure 23 shows that there are fewer students in foster care enrolled in G/T programs. A total of 8% of Texas students enrolled in G/T programs while only 1% of students in foster care enrolled in these programs.

C. ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs)

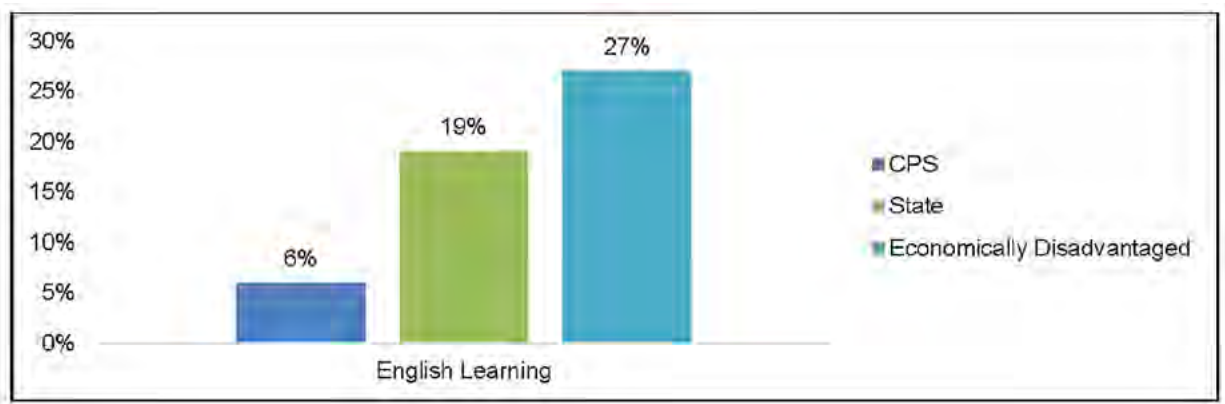
English learners are students with limited English proficiency who are identified based on need determined by responses to a Home Language Survey and results of an English language proficiency assessment. An array of classes and supports are offered for students who are identified as ELs.

Figure 23a: Percentage of Students in G/T Programs FY 14-15



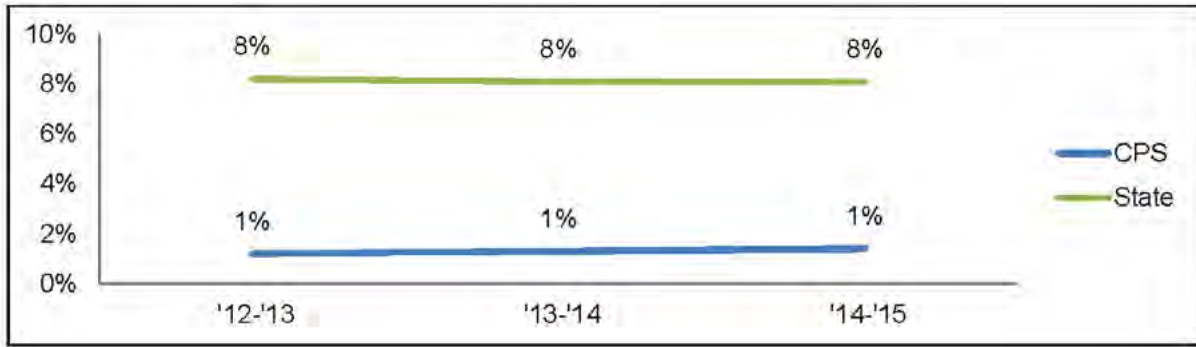
Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 23b: Percentage of Students Identified as EL FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

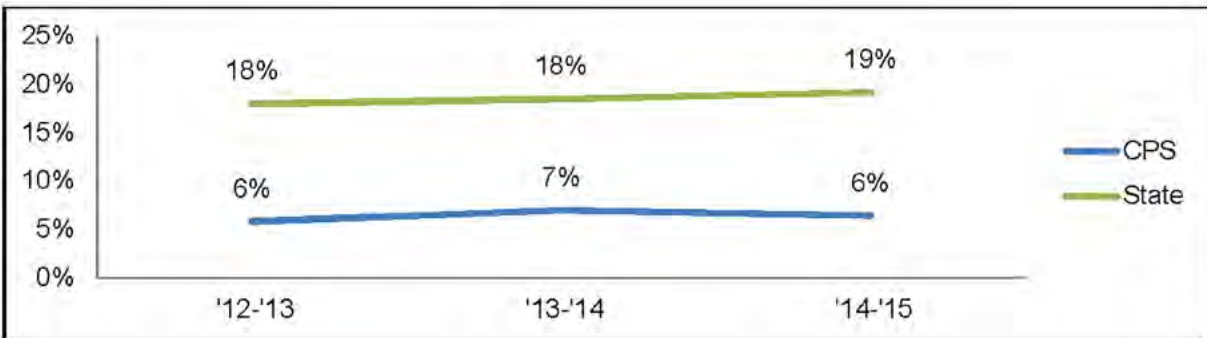
Figure 24: Percentage of Students Enrolled in G/T Programs Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 24 shows that the proportion of students in G/T has remained steady for both students in foster care and other students in Texas over the past three years. This data also is consistent with STAAR data that gaps exist with respect to high achievement in school. Students in foster care have the same academic potential as any other student, but data reveals they need additional help and support to overcome the challenges impeding their academic success. Research shows that early intervention, particularly with reading and math foundational skills, is critical to boosting academic achievement.

Figure 25: Percentage of Students Identified as EL Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 25 shows that 19% of students statewide are identified as EL, while only 6% of students in foster care are identified as EL. The number of students in foster care who are also identified has remained consistent over a three-year period, while this number for all students statewide has increased slightly in the same period. The discrepancy may indicate a failure to adequately identify ELs in foster care.

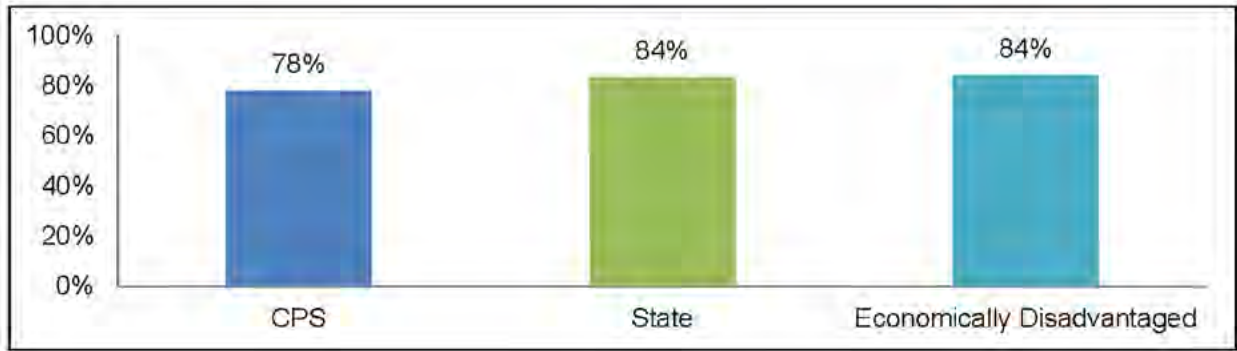
D. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

CTE programs offer content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare students for further education and careers in current or emerging professions. CTE classes offer opportunities for students to explore careers,

participate in courses of study leading to career pathways, and may provide opportunities to earn endorsements at high school graduation or industry-based certifications for employment in high school.¹¹⁹

Figure 26 includes both students who participate in a CTE course individually and students enrolled in a progressive CTE course sequence.

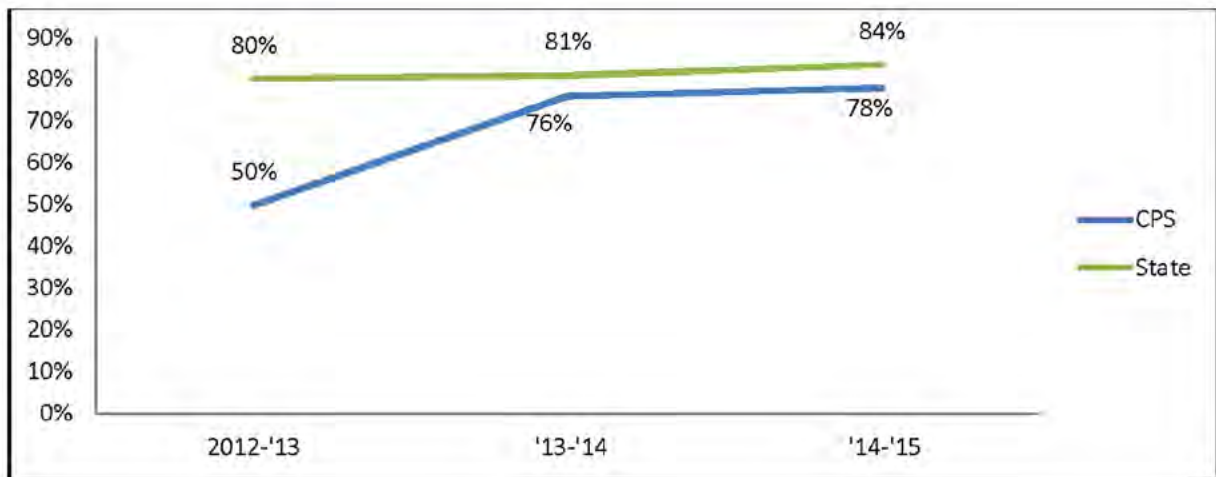
Figure 26: Percentage of Students in CTE (Grades 9-12) FY 12-13



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Additionally, Figure 26 shows that across Texas, 84% of all students between grades 9-12 were enrolled in CTE, while 78% of students in foster care in grades 9-12 were enrolled. Comparatively, 84% of students identified as economically disadvantaged matched the state rate of 84%.

Figure 27: Percentage of Students Enrolled in CTE (Grades 9-12) Trend



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 27 shows that the gap in participation in CTE programs narrowed since the 2012-2013 school year and the CTE program participation rate has increased by 28 percentage points over a three year period for students in foster care while the participation rate has risen only slightly for other students in Texas. To further increase participation and course of study success, an accelerated focus on strengthening literacy and mathematics skills in the elementary grades is a central strategy for collaborative efforts.

E. SPECIAL PROGRAMS – STATEWIDE EFFORTS

Students receiving special education services are entitled to protection from discrimination and access to a free, appropriate public education. There is overlap and alignment between special education and the CPS system, especially in the area of transition planning. Transition planning begins in both systems no later than age 14 but earlier planning is encouraged. These processes are meant to prepare the student for independent living and adulthood. Policies regarding transition planning are included in the CPS Policy Handbook. TEA also provides transition planning guidance for LEAs based in IDEA. To encourage greater coordination and efficient use of resources, a Transition Planning Guide with side by side comparisons between systems was also developed by DFPS, TEA, and the Children’s Commission.¹²⁰

TEA also made a concerted outreach to encourage schools to increase the participation rate of students in foster care in CTE programs that are aligned with their career interests. Increased participation in CTE is likely a result of a new statutory provision in the Texas Foundation High School Program implemented in 2014-2015 requiring students to select one of five endorsements. Endorsements may include a career pathway such as: business and industry; public services; science; technology; arts and humanities; engineering and mathematics; or multidisciplinary studies. Pursuing an endorsement may make CTE course selection more intentional for students in foster care.

a. Special Programs – Promising Practices

Students in foster care are a vulnerable population of students who need connection to caring adults, programs, and services that can support academic growth and school engagement. Engaging these students and offering opportunities to participate in special programs aimed at meeting their educational needs and interests is critical for this student population.

- Educators can ensure all students in foster care have access to special programs, including G/T, aimed at meeting their intellectual needs and providing valuable skills after the students leave the care of the state and beyond. Assessments for G/T can be requested by the caregiver.
- Educators should work with students to identify and schedule CTE courses in a coherent sequence that reflects student interest and that can lead to a credential.
- If students were involved in any special program at a prior school, before a school move to a new school, all parties should make efforts to review records, collaborate, and evaluate the need for continuity in participation in special programs at the new school.
- Caregivers and child advocates can help students to identify career interests and help students to select CTE courses that will engage their interest and promote career pathways.
- Caregivers and advocates who suspect a need for enrollment in EL or special education services can discuss student needs with the school counselor or other educator, request to review records of any assessment, or request to have an assessment implemented to determine student needs for services.

All adults across Texas systems can use the transition planning guide that was developed to strengthen transition planning for students receiving special education services.¹²¹

X. School Discipline

How do the behavioral needs of students in foster care manifest in the school setting?

A safe, supportive school climate and discipline practices are associated with high academic achievement, improved grades, and strong student attendance thereby improving academic performance and graduation rates.¹²² A positive school climate also facilitates high levels of student engagement and self-discipline, due in part to the emphasis on cooperative learning and respectful interaction that helps promote good behavior in school, strong attachment to school, positive student relationships with adults and peers, and high levels of staff satisfaction, involvement, and investment.¹²³ This positive school climate is especially important for students in foster care who have experienced traumatic histories of abuse or neglect, instability, and who may lack trust in adults due to early attachment or maltreatment experiences.

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education (ED) issued guidance urging LEAs to create safe and supportive school climates using exclusionary discipline only as a last resort. Schools are encouraged to:

- Provide “meaningful instruction” if a student is removed from class;
- Reduce the number of suspensions, expulsions, and arrests by providing targeted supports and interventions with a proven track record of success; and,
- Provide students with enhanced/increased access to mental health professionals.¹²⁴

These practices align with current educational research on student-centered approaches and personalized learning strategies that are national best practices for structuring the school experience for all students to become ready for college, a career, or the military.¹²⁵ In contrast, exclusionary practices, where students are removed from their classroom, without meaningful instruction and interventions to address their needs, deny students instructional time and may lead to poor outcomes such as truancy, decreased social development, dropping out of school, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and delayed employment.¹²⁶



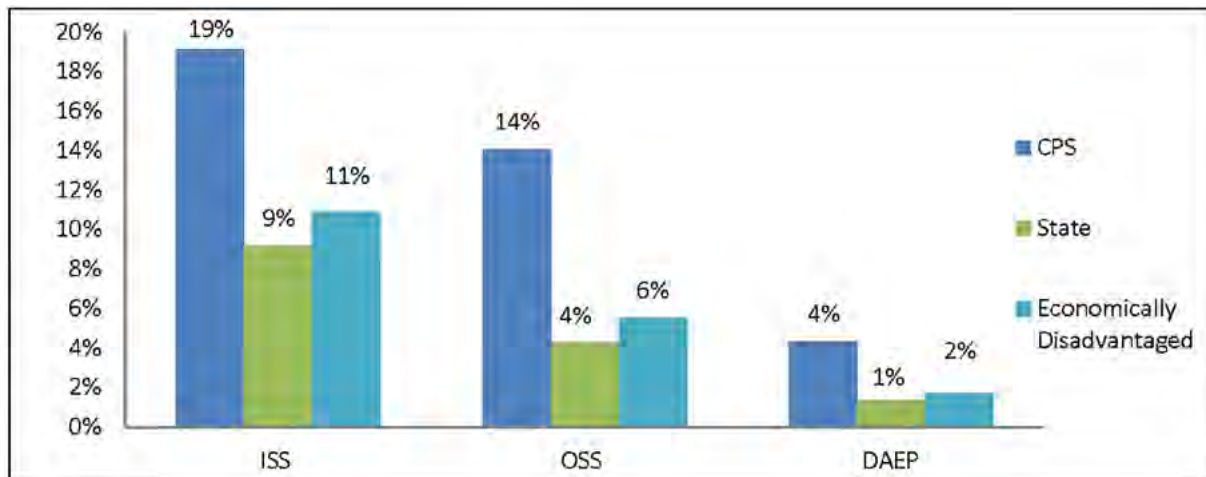
A. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The national data show that students in the CPS system are disproportionately suspended, expelled, and placed in separate disciplinary schools or programs in relation to their peers.¹²⁷ Data in this report also demonstrate Texas students in foster care experience higher rates of exclusionary disciplinary actions than all other students in Texas schools, including other economically disadvantaged students.

Local disciplinary policies, practices, and student codes of conduct are adopted by local school boards governing each LEA, in alignment with Texas state statutes on school discipline.¹²⁸ In the 2014-2015 school year, students in foster care received 20,778 disciplinary actions for violating the local code of conduct. However, other disciplinary actions reflected in the data are mandated by Texas law for certain serious behaviors impacting school safety. Although Texas law distinguishes between mandatory and discretionary disciplinary actions, this report does not disaggregate the data regarding whether the disciplinary actions taken were mandatory or discretionary.¹²⁹ A more extensive analysis is an anticipated element of future disaggregated data reporting.

The data in this report represent only exclusionary discipline practices. The PEIMS data collection system does not collect data on other discipline practices, such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Discipline Practices, or other trauma-informed practices.

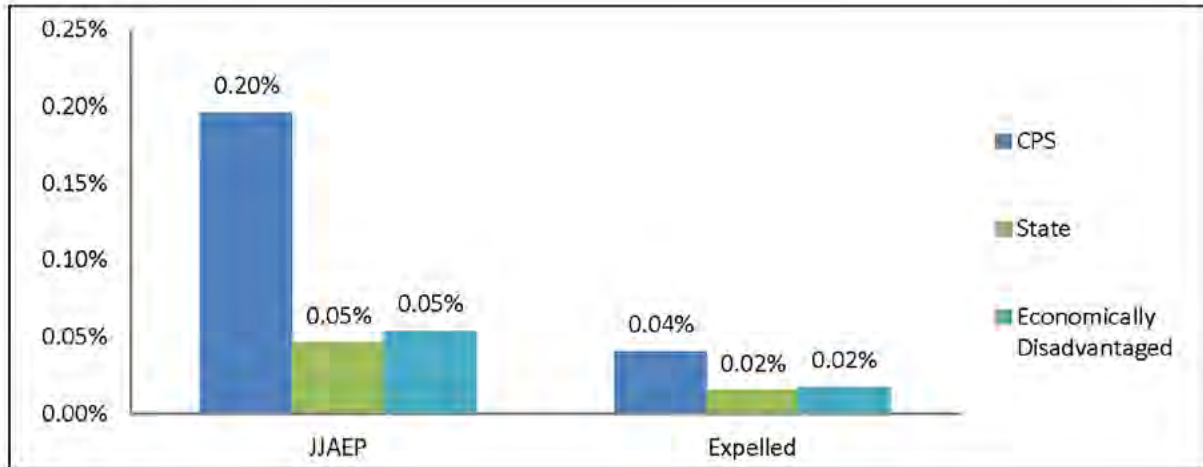
Figure 28: Percentage of Students Subject to ISS, OSS, and DAEP FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 28 shows the percentage of students who received the different forms of school disciplinary action. Students in foster care are more than twice as likely to receive in school suspension (ISS), and more than three times more likely to receive an out of school suspension (OSS) or be moved to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) than other students in Texas. Note, students may receive multiple types of disciplinary action during the course of a year. Accordingly, each student disciplined may appear in more than one column above.

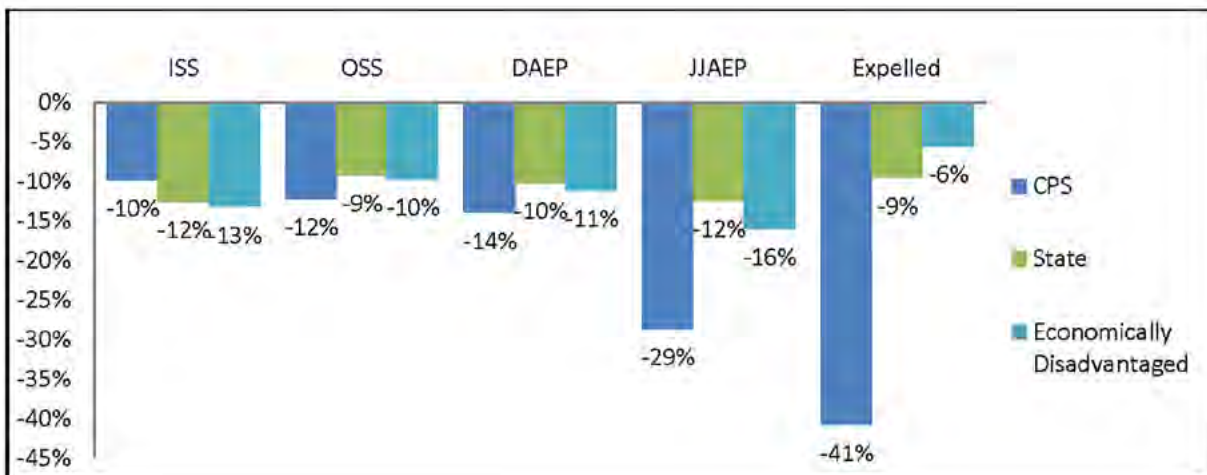
Figure 29: Percentage of Students Subject to JJAEP and Expulsion FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 29 shows that students in foster care are four times more likely to be placed in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). JJAEP placements involve serious offenses. Students in foster care are also twice as likely to be expelled as other students in Texas. These disciplinary actions are mandatory for certain offenses and discretionary for other offenses, in accordance with Texas law.¹³⁰

Figure 30: Percentage Change in Discipline Actions per Student FY 12-13 through FY 14-15



Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Figure 30 shows the percentage decline in the use of each form of disciplinary action reported to TEA from FY 12-13 through FY 14-15. The Texas data reflect a positive trend in reducing exclusionary discipline practices for all Texas students, especially students in foster care, across all exclusionary discipline categories.

School expulsions for students in foster care decreased by 41 percentage points over three years compared to 6 percentage points for other economically disadvantaged students and

9 percentage points for all Texas students. Placement of a student in foster care in a JJAEP decreased more than two times as rapidly for students in care. The rates of out of school suspensions and placement in DAEPs have also declined at a faster rate among students in foster care compared to other students in the state.

In 2017, the Texas Legislature amended section 37.005 of the Education Code to prohibit out-of-school suspensions for students in pre-k through 2nd grade, except in cases of conduct involving weapons, violent offenses, and drugs or alcohol. In addition, LEAs may implement positive behavior management strategies, train educators, and support students with age-appropriate, research-based interventions.

|

Students in foster care are a **vulnerable** population of students who need *connection* to caring adults, programs, and services that can support *academic growth and school engagement*.

|

B. SCHOOL DISCIPLINE – STATEWIDE EFFORTS

As there is no definitive model, TEA provides LEAs with guidance and training for best-practice strategies in research and the education literature such as: PBIS, Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS Integrating Family Engagement and Restorative Discipline Practices. TEA provides professional development for LEAs in coordination with ESCs and other partners. TEA and ESCs host websites with training resources, offer training and technical assistance to LEAs. Training is provided both on site and through online courses for educators and administrators.¹³¹

In accordance with state statutes, TEA, HHSC, and ESCs have also collaborated to identify additional best practice resources for schools including: early mental health intervention, mental health promotion, trauma-informed practices, skill building in self-regulation and responsible decision making, substance abuse prevention, substance abuse intervention, suicide prevention, positive youth development, positive school climate, and positive behavior supports.¹³²

The state's Health and Human Services Commission, Juvenile Justice Department, DFPS, universities, ESCs and other statewide policy organizations collaborate with TEA to provide resources for LEAs, such as Youth Mental Health First Aid training, Systems of Care, wrap around services, Community Resource Coordination Groups, prevention and early intervention services, evidence-based research, planning, and mental health collaboration training for communities and schools.

Select Regional Education Specialists offer specialized training on trauma-informed care and classroom strategies. Regional Education Specialists attend all notified Manifestation Determination Hearings and school disciplinary hearings. Regional Education Specialists also attend school and education-related meetings, including ARDs, Transition Planning, and Circles of Support at juvenile justice facilities, residential treatment centers, and emergency shelters.

Trauma-informed Training is required for all CPS staff, foster and adoptive parents, and residential contractors annually.

C. SCHOOL DISCIPLINE – PROMISING PRACTICES

Stakeholders can increase awareness of research and case studies about the impact of child maltreatment and trauma on learning, behavior, and academic performance. Some strategies include:

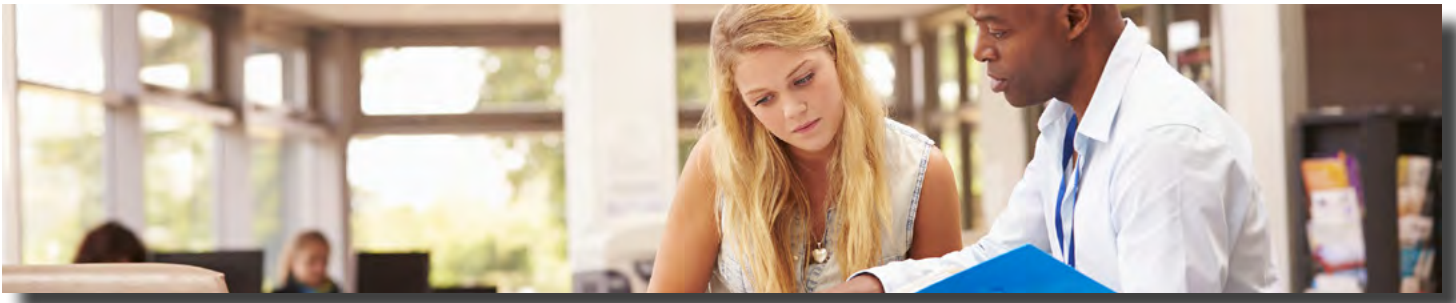
- Assess and identify needs, strengths, and gaps in existing learning supports, such as the availability of school and community resources and unmet student mental health needs that impact the well-being of the school community.
- Assess school climate measures, identify needs, and integrate strategies that help to facilitate a safe, nurturing, and supportive school climate in alignment with education research.
- Implement an integrated approach that connects behavioral and trauma-informed mental health services with academic instruction and learning, such as in discipline or classroom management plans.
- Ensure access to mental health referrals, screenings, and services for students in foster care.
- Collaborate between caregivers, advocates, educators and mental health professionals as a student support team to share information that is needed to develop personalized, multi-tiered behavior support plans and practices to address root causes of disruptive behavior for students in foster care.
- Explore collaborative agreements with local mental health and child-serving agencies to provide prevention, intervention, and behavioral health support services that help address student discipline and well-being at school.
- Participate in professional development to consider research, strengthen skills, and to develop strategies for trauma-informed disciplinary interventions that advance positive educational outcomes for students in foster care.

XI. Summary of Findings, Data, and Promising Practices

This section highlights key findings indicated by data matched between TEA and DFPS for the 2014-2015 academic year and further points to key data elements, short-term trends and statistics supporting the findings, summarizes research-based impacts, and highlights promising practices that are described throughout the report.

This “at-a-glance” summary is intended to equip stakeholders with key information indicated by data in the report to create awareness of educational needs and to strengthen cross-systems collaboration on shared goals to improve educational outcomes for Texas students in foster care.

This data points to findings which may lead to more targeted interventions on behalf of students in foster care. Please also note that the data has limitations, including how children and youth in foster care were faring academically prior to coming into care. This data shows that children who have been through traumatic experiences that have led to them being removed from their parents are struggling in many indicators of wellbeing in the school environment. Future data may provide additional information, such as educational experiences in comparison to length of time in care and based on academic progress prior to entering care.



A. STUDENT PROFILE

The majority of students in foster care during the 2014-2015 academic year were enrolled in Early Childhood Education through Grade 5. Additionally, there was a disproportionate representation of students of color in foster care.

1. Impact

- The trauma related to abuse or neglect experienced by many young children impacts their learning and poses a challenge. The education and CPS systems must work together in new ways to facilitate student success, including addressing the disproportionality of children of color in foster care. Early childhood through the primary years are critical periods of time for brain growth when children develop cognition, learning processes, personality traits, adaptive behaviors, and when coping with stress and emotions are established, strengthened, and made permanent.

2. Data

- 27,043 students in foster care attended Texas public schools at some point during the 2014-2015 school year.
- Generally, 61% of students in foster care are enrolled in the early childhood education and elementary grades, compared to 39% in the secondary grades.
- Of students in foster care, 8% are enrolled in Grade 9 and 3% are enrolled in Grade 12.
- African American children comprise 21% of the students in the foster care population, compared to 13% in the statewide population. Hispanic students represent 42% of students in foster care, compared to 52% statewide.

3. Promising Practices

- Implement coordinated prevention and early intervention strategies for students in elementary school to support young students with developing good attendance habits and reading and math skills that are critical for building a strong academic foundation.
- Increase awareness, knowledge, and skills for all adults who work with students in foster care regarding the impact of trauma on learning and on implementing trauma-informed practices across systems to support improved educational outcomes.
- Leverage opportunities to provide interagency cross-training for staff in the education and CPS systems on strategies to identify and eliminate disproportionality and disparities, to promote equity, to provide early interventions for struggling students, and other promising practices to improve outcomes for students in foster care.
- Disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, placement type, and time in care to more deeply examine the data, identify disproportionality and disparities and develop next steps to work across systems to improve the educational outcomes for all students.
- Include youth voice in decision making and ensure the cultural and linguistic competencies of adults working with students in foster care.



B. SCHOOL STABILITY

During the 2014-2015 academic year, students in foster care moved more frequently between schools during the school year compared to all other mobile student populations, including economically disadvantaged, homeless, military connected, and migrant students.

1. Impact

- School mobility is linked to increased risk of poor academic achievement, behavior problems, grade level retention, and high school drop-out. School changes disrupt learning experiences and can negatively impact social relationships with peers, teachers, and other supportive adults.

2. Data

- The percentage of students in foster care who attended two or more schools in one school year (45%) was over 6 times that of students statewide (7%) in the 2014-2015 school year.
- A greater percentage of students in foster care attended two or more schools in one school year (45%) compared to other mobile populations including students who are homeless (34%), migrant (13%) or economically disadvantaged (9%).

3. Promising Practices

- Monitor systemic practices to ensure effective implementation of state and federal policies, such as: immediate school enrollment, immediate records transfer, credit and proportionate credit transfer, transition plans, personal graduation plans (PGPs), transportation plans to ensure school stability, and access to related educational support services for struggling students.
- Use the student's Education Portfolio (green binder) to maintain school records and hand deliver records collected at the time of withdrawal, such as school schedules, the IEP, and test scores, when transferring from one school to another.
- Ensure that the LEA foster care liaison is informed of the enrollment of each student in foster care so that plans can be coordinated to facilitate the transition.
- Ensure that if there is a special education referral in process that the referral and timelines for evaluation transfer to the new school.



C. LOCAL IDENTIFICATION

There was a significant disparity between the number of students in foster care identified in the DFPS-TEA data match and the number of students identified by LEAs and coded in PEIMS for the 2014-2015 academic year.

1. Impact

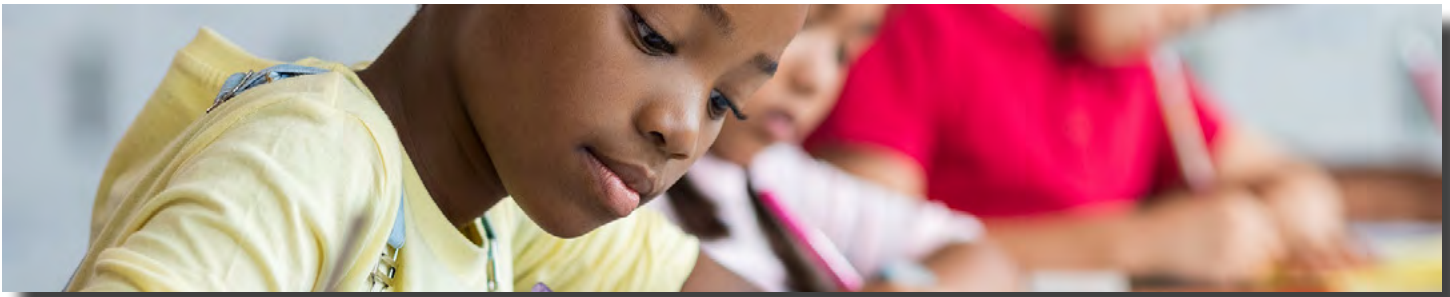
- Students who are not identified in real time by the LEA do not have opportunities to benefit from the assistance of the LEA's foster care liaison, educators, counselors, or the academic and mental health supports specifically designed to assist students in foster care with maintaining school stability and achieving academic success. Due to this disparity, data for this report were produced by implementing a state level data match between TEA and DFPS.

2. Data

- Of students in foster care, 52% of Texas' 1,219 LEAs had at least 5-49 students enrolled; 30% of LEAs had less than 5 enrolled; 8% of Texas LEAs had 50-99 enrolled; 6% had 100-299 enrolled; 3% of LEAs had 300-499 enrolled; and 1% of LEAs had over 500 students enrolled.
- Four of the Top 25 LEAs with largest numbers of students in foster care are charter schools.
- Many LEAs under-identified students in foster care.

3. Promising Practices

- Identify local processes for communication and training opportunities across systems.
- Encourage collaboration through education consortia with child placing agencies, group homes, residential treatment centers, DFPS Education Specialists, caseworkers, foster parents, LEA foster care liaisons, school administrators, counselors, etc.
- Confirm that the LEA's foster care liaison is identified and updated in the AskTED system.
- The CPS regional education specialist and LEA foster care liaison should develop a relationship to build on collaborative efforts to identify and support students in care.
- Caseworkers and caregivers can ensure the DFPS Form 2085-E is provided to the school upon enrollment or upon a child entering conservatorship for all students in foster care.
- Review district PEIMS procedures. Refer to TEA PEIMS Supplemental Guidance on the TEA website to view acceptable and non-acceptable documentation.
- Ensure that local systems are in place to identify students in foster care and enter foster care status in PEIMS.
- Use the jointly developed a state Information Sharing Guide regarding the sharing of confidential information to best support students in foster care.¹³³
- To support local identification of students in the Texas public schools from the state level, DPFS and TEA are collaborating to develop a technology solution to inform schools in near real-time of students in foster care who are enrolled in each school. Electronic notification through secure state servers is expected to more efficiently equip school personnel who provide statutory educational supports to students in foster care.



D. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

During the 2014-2015 academic year, students in foster care were more likely than their peers to be retained (held back) at grade level, and for the smaller population of youth in care and in high school, were more likely to leave high school as a dropout, and more likely to leave high school as a senior without a diploma.

1. Impact

- Students who do not complete high school are more likely to earn less over a lifetime than their peers, to live at the poverty level, and to not pursue post-secondary college or career opportunities.

2. Data

- High school students in foster care did not progress through the grade levels at the same rate as other students in their graduation cohort. Students in foster care are four times more likely to not progress at the same rate as their peers. (17% vs. 5%)
- Seniors in foster care were 24% less likely than their peers to leave high school as a graduate. (69% vs. 93%)
- Students between Grades 9 through 12 in foster care were more than four times more likely to leave school as a dropout than their peers. (9% vs. 2%)

3. Promising Practices

- Use early warning data systems, a database to track indicators, to identify when a student is struggling and off-track for high school graduation. Include course grades, attendance records, standardized test scores, state assessment results, discipline records, teacher reports, and related social-emotional or CPS information to inform decision making when planning student interventions.
- Implement early interventions for struggling students at school and reach out to caregivers to develop collaborative home-school interventions to promote academic growth, especially in reading and math.
- Collaborate and meet frequently in ARD teams, student support teams, or to review student PGPs to examine student progress and make data-driven decisions for interventions at school and connections in the community that support struggling students to get back on-track toward graduation.
- Provide students with access to educational opportunities such as: credit recovery programs, tutoring, counseling, credit by examination, dual credit courses, career and technical education courses, special programs, and post-secondary planning resources.
- Assess student interests, outreach to caregivers, and assist with enrolling students in extracurricular activities such as after-school programs that will help to engage students in school.
- Caregivers are also important partners in ensuring student participation in school activities, monitoring grades, attending teacher conferences or requesting meetings when needed, implementing collaborative home-school interventions for struggling students, and ensuring homework is complete and understood.



E. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

During the 2014-2015 academic year, students in foster care performed at lower levels of skill in reading and mathematics on state standardized tests and performed at unsatisfactory levels for reading and mathematics assessments more frequently than peers statewide.

1. Impact

- Unsatisfactory academic growth in reading and mathematics in the primary grades can correlate with poor academic achievement in the secondary grades when academic coursework becomes increasingly more rigorous. Without this academic foundation, students may earn lower course grades, fail to be promoted to the next grade level, fail to earn course credits required for graduation, become disengaged from school, demonstrate poor attendance habits, display disruptive behavior or discipline problems, may drop out of school, or may fail to graduate from high school ready for college, a career, or the military.

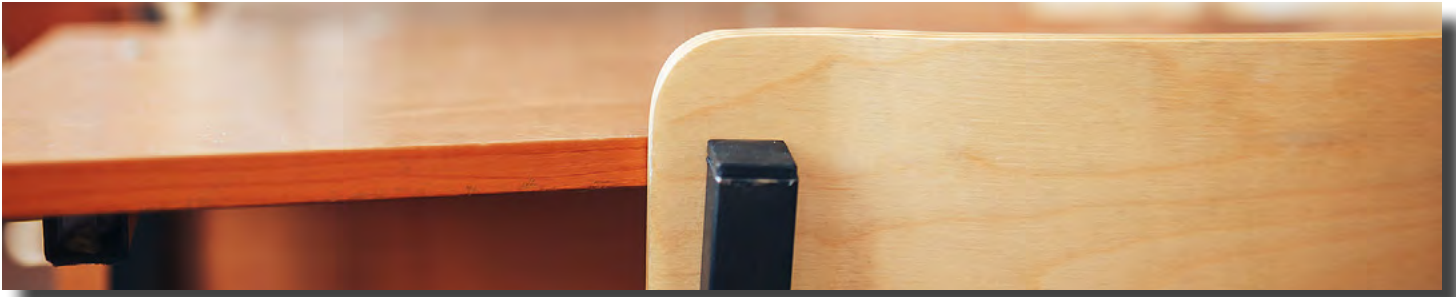
2. Data

- Almost half of the third-grade students in foster care performed at an unsatisfactory level on the state assessment for mathematics, while just over one-quarter of all Texas students failed to achieve at a satisfactory level. (46% vs. 26%)
- Eighth grade students in foster care performed at an unsatisfactory level on the state assessment for mathematics at nearly twice the rate of their non-foster care peers. (58% vs. 29%)
- Eighth grade students statewide achieved the levels of recommended or advanced on the state mathematics assessment at over two and a half times the rate of eighth grade students in foster care. (39% vs. 14%)
- Third grade students in foster care performed at an unsatisfactory level on the state reading assessment at nearly two times the rate of their peers. (43% vs. 26%)
- Eighth grade students in foster care performed at an unsatisfactory level on the state assessment for reading at over twice the rate of students statewide. (49% vs. 24%)
- Eighth grade students statewide achieved the levels of recommended or advanced on the state reading assessment at over twice the rate of eighth grade students in foster care. (63% vs. 24%)

3. Promising Practices

- Student academic performance including course grades, and STAAR performance, should be monitored closely in elementary, middle, and high school by all adults who are working with students in foster care.
- Schools should offer students in foster care opportunities to participate in tutoring, other academic support options, mentoring programs, summer programs, and after-school opportunities that support strengthening reading and math skills.
- Volunteers, advocates, and caregivers can support student growth in reading and math by providing enrichment activities such as trips to the library, scheduling a reading hour, structuring time for online STAAR skill building, playing hands-on math activities and educational or family games.

- Caregiver-teacher conferences should be held to identify student needs and plan for early home-school academic interventions, including using TEA's Texas Assessment Management System resource for families.
- LEA online portals and tools should be used for school-home communication including: real time monitoring of grades, class attendance, homework assignments, and homework completion and to facilitate timely teacher-caregiver communication.
- If a disability that impedes learning is suspected, a special education evaluation should be requested.
- Cross-systems training between education and CPS should be provided on best-practices for home-school communication and collaborative interventions to support struggling students in foster care.



F. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

During the 2014-2015 academic year, students in foster care missed more instructional time at school than their peers statewide at all grade levels, with increasingly more school days missed in middle school and a widening attendance gap between students in foster care and their peers in high school.

1. Impact

- Missing instructional time may negatively impact educational achievement indicators at all grade levels, including reading and math skills for young children, academic content knowledge, course grades, state test scores, grade level promotion, grade point average, earning course credits, and high school completion. When there is a significant academic achievement gap between peers in school, there may also be associated impacts on self-efficacy and on the social-emotional well-being of the struggling student.

2. Data

- In elementary school, 87% of students in foster care attend above 90% of all enrolled school days in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5, compared to 93% of all elementary students; a 7-percentage point attendance gap between peers.
- In middle school, 80% of students in foster care attend above 90% of all enrolled school days in Grades 6 through 8, compared to 92% of all middle school students; a 12-percentage point attendance gap between peers.
- In high school, 65% of students in foster care attend above 90% of all enrolled school days in Grades 9 through 12, compared to 84% of all high school students; a 19-percentage point attendance gap between peers.

3. Promising Practices

- All systems and adults working with students in foster care should analyze the root cause and related factors resulting in absences from school and develop strategies to increase school attendance; particularly for students with attendance rates below 90% of all available school days.
- Adults working with young students in foster care should help them build a pattern of good attendance habits in elementary school. This practice will enhance the student's instructional time for reading and mathematics and serve the student well in secondary school.
- Students in foster care who are truant must receive additional counseling services if the school determines that the student's truancy is the result of being in foster care.
- Educators and caregivers should implement personalized learning supports to engage students in attending and learning.
- Schools should use online portals and other engaging communication tools to inform caregivers of class attendance.
- Caregivers are important partners in monitoring student attendance and in ensuring that students attend school each day.
- Whenever practicable, appointments and family visits for students in foster care should be scheduled during non-school hours.



G. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

During the 2014-2015 academic year, students in foster care were more likely to receive special education services than their peers, and less likely to participate in G/T or EL programs. The rate of participation in CTE for students in foster care increased at a significantly faster rate than CTE participation increased amongst their peers.

1. Impact

- Students in foster care are a vulnerable student population with unique academic challenges and needs. Barriers to participating in special programs at school may deny students critical opportunities to engage with their peers, explore their interests, or attain their goals.

2. Data

- Students in foster care are nearly three times more likely to receive special education services (25%) than all students statewide (9%).
- Students in foster care are nearly six times less likely to participate in G/T programs (1%) than their peers (8%).
- The percentage of high school students in foster care participating in CTE programs increased by 28 percentage points over three school years (from 50% to 78%) to significantly narrow the CTE participation gap with their peers statewide (78% vs. 84%).

3. Promising Practices

- Caregivers, advocates, and educators should refer students to apply for special programs that they may be eligible for or interested in that can provide needed learning supports and enriched learning opportunities in school or during out-of-school time.
- As a part of the development of a student's PGP, plan a high school course of study with supports, including: assessing career interests, selecting an endorsement, choosing courses, including a coherent sequence of CTE or other courses that may lead to an industry-based credential in high school, evaluating options for enrolling in dual credit courses, planning for credit recovery programs or credit by examination when needed, connecting to needed support services, and facilitating the college application process including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and informing students of their eligibility for the Texas tuition fee waiver.
- Caregivers and advocates should collaborate with educators in ARD committee meetings to develop IEPs for students, including: monitoring academic progress, planning related services to support students with disabilities to access the general curriculum, engaging in transition planning that is coordinated with the CPS transition plan, preparing and annually reviewing progress on the PGP.



H. SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

While students in foster care were more likely than their peers to receive exclusionary discipline actions (e.g. Out-of-School Suspension) during the 2014-2015 academic year, all forms of exclusionary disciplinary actions are decreasing at a faster rate for students in foster care than the decrease for their peers, with the greatest decrease for the most severe action, expulsion.

1. Impact

- Exclusionary discipline practices like suspensions and expulsions deny students meaningful and positive behavior interventions and instructional time, and may lead to outcomes like truancy, decreased social development, lower grades, loss of credits, dropping out of school, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and delayed employment.

2. Data

- Students in foster care are two times more likely to receive in-school- suspensions, and over three times more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions or be placed in a DAEP than their peers.
- Over a three-year period, the rate of decreased expulsions received by students in foster care was 4.5 times greater than the rate of decrease in expulsions received by all students statewide (-41% vs. -9%).
- Over a three-year period, the rates of decrease in exclusionary discipline actions occurred at a faster rate for students in foster care than for all students statewide:
 - OSS: There was a 12-percentage point decrease in out-of-school suspensions among children in care compared to a 9-percentage point decrease among all children in Texas;
 - DAEP placement: There was a 14-percentage point decrease in DAEP placements among children in care compared to a 10- percentage point decrease among all children in Texas (-14% vs. -10%); and,
 - JJAEP placement: There was a 29-percentage point decrease in JJAEP placements among children in foster care compared to a 12-percentage point decrease among all children in Texas.

3. Promising Practices

- Increase awareness of research and strategies for implementing trauma-informed disciplinary practices to improve school stability, academic performance, and educational outcomes (e.g. PBIS, restorative practices, integrated school mental health, prevention and early interventions).
- Assess and identify needs, strengths, and gaps in existing learning supports such as the availability of school and community resources and unmet student mental health needs that impact the well-being of the school community.
- Implement an integrated approach that connects behavioral and mental health services with academic instruction and learning including discipline or classroom management plans.
- Explore collaborative agreements with local mental health agencies to provide prevention, intervention, and behavioral health support services that help to address student discipline and well-being at school.
- Communicate and coordinate mental health service plans and behavior intervention strategies across systems for students in foster care.

XI. Conclusion

Texas recognizes the significant impact and important role that education plays in the long-term success and well-being of students in foster care. Education is especially critical to combating the obstacles and challenges that students in foster care face. However, the data revealed that too many students in foster care are not achieving successful educational outcomes. Using data to drive decision making, leaders in the CPS system, education system, court system and many committed stakeholders are addressing the educational needs and unique challenges of students in foster care.

All adults working with students in foster care share an important responsibility, as well as a tremendous opportunity, to collaborate on strategies that remove barriers and build on strengths to equip each student to succeed in school and life. The educational success that our students achieve will last long past their involvement in the education and court systems.

This seminal joint report between state agencies provides a baseline of data, short-term trends, links to resources and a sampling of promising practices for all Texans to work together toward improving the educational outcomes of students in foster care.

— Appendices —

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD)	A committee composed of a student’s parent(s) or the adult student and certain required school personnel and service providers who are involved with the student. Sometimes the student is also a member of the ARD committee. The ARD committee determines a student’s eligibility to receive special education services and develops the student’s individualized education program (IEP) and transition plan. The ARD committee is also referred to as the IEP team.
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring before age 18. ACEs include all types of abuse and neglect as well as parental mental illness, substance use, divorce, incarceration, and domestic violence. A landmark study in the 1990s found a significant relationship between the number of ACEs a person experienced and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor physical and mental health, substance abuse, and risky behaviors. ¹ The more ACEs experienced, the greater the risk for these outcomes. By definition, children in the child welfare system have suffered at least one ACE.
Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	A permanent legal arrangement for a child designed to promote stability and permanency in a child’s life; refers to permanent placements other than reunification with a parent, adoption, or permanent managing conservatorship to a relative.
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)	Court Appointed Special Advocates are appointed as volunteer advocates or guardians ad litem to represent the best interest of a child when DFPS asks to be made the child’s legal conservator or seeks to have the parental rights to the child terminated.
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	Programs offer a sequence of courses that provide students with coherent and rigorous content that is aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions.
Child Protective Services (CPS)	CPS is a division of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) responsible for providing services to children and families and monitoring the Texas foster care system. CPS also manages community-based programs that prevent delinquency, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children.
Conservatorship	Another term used to describe the status of a child or youth who is placed in DFPS legal care, custody, and control by a court order.
Credit by Examination	Credit by examination allows students in primary grades to accelerate a grade level and students in secondary academic courses to earn credit for a course on the basis of an examination. A school district shall provide opportunities for a student who is homeless or in substitute care who transfers to the district after the start of the school year to be administered credit by examination at any point during the school year. (19 TAC § 74.26(a)2)
Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)	Established in accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) §37.008 and defined as an educational and self-discipline alternative instructional program, adopted by local policy, for students in elementary through high school grades who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory or discretionary disciplinary reasons.
Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	State agency working with communities to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. DFPS also works to protect the health and safety of children in daycare, as well as foster care and other types of 24-hour care.

Term	Definition
Dropout	TEA uses the National Center for Education Statistics dropout definition. Under this definition, a dropout is a student who is enrolled in public school in Grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not: graduate, receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die. ¹³⁴
Early Warning Data System (EWDS)	Early Warning Systems are based on a body of research indicating that dropout is a gradual process and that students exhibit tell-tale signs along the way. When a student begins to show a discernible number of negative indicators, such as academic failure or multiple office referrals, the data indicators can alert the school and caregivers that swift action is needed to help the student get back on track. ¹³⁵
Economically Disadvantaged	The percentage of economically disadvantaged means the count of students that are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or other public assistance divided by the total number of students. Sixty-one percent of all students in Texas are coded by schools in PEIMS as economically disadvantaged. All students in foster care are categorically considered economically disadvantaged and all foster care students are eligible for free meals under the school nutrition program.
Education Specialist	Points of contact at DFPS state office and each of the 11 DFPS regions. They serve as liaisons with the school district foster care liaisons, participate in ARD committee meetings, and have subject matter expertise to assist caseworkers and other CPS staff.
English Learners (ELs)	Students with limited English proficiency who are identified based on need determined by responses to a Home Language Survey and results of an English language proficiency assessment.
Foster Care Liaison	Each LEA in Texas is required to appoint at least one employee to act as a foster care liaison. The liaison facilitates the enrollment in or transfer to a public or open-enrollment charter school of any child in the district or area served by the charter school who is in the conservatorship (foster care) of the state.
Gifted and Talented Education (G/T)	A program for a student who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment and who exhibits high performance capability.
Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT)	DFPS uses IMPACT to document all stages of service of a case, including when someone reports abuse, neglect, or exploitation and when those cases are investigated.
Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)	An alternative educational setting in which the student is supervised by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. Currently, only large counties with a population over 125,000 must have a JJAEP program; in other counties, a JJAEP program is optional.
Local Education Agency (LEA)	A public school district or open-enrollment charter school.
Prekindergarten	The State of Texas offers free public prekindergarten for children at least three years of age and who meet one of the eligibility criteria. One of the eligibility criteria is if the child is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services, following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201 Family Code.
Proportionate Credit	<p>The award of partial credit to a student who is able to successfully complete only one semester of a two-semester course. The student would be awarded one-half credit for successfully completing only one semester of the course.</p> <p>A school district shall award credit proportionately to a student who is homeless or in substitute care who successfully completes only one semester of a two-semester course (19 TAC § 74.26(e))</p>

Term	Definition
Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)	PEIMS is a system for collecting data from Texas public schools, including student demographic, attendance and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organization information.
Special Education	A program with a wide array of services and supports that are available for eligible students with disabilities pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state law.
State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)	The state program which includes annual assessments for reading and mathematics, grades 3-8; writing at grades 4 and 7; science at grades 5 and 8; social studies at grade 8; end of course (EOC) assessments for English 1, English II, Algebra I, biology and U.S. history. For certain tests and grade levels, students may not be promoted if they do not pass the state assessment at a satisfactory level.
Substitute Care	The status of all children who are in the conservatorship of DFPS, including children who are placed with a relative, kin, or in a licensed placement. "Foster care" has a similar meaning although some associate the term with a child living in a "foster home."
Texas Education Agency (TEA)	The state educational agency (SEA) in Texas with primarily responsibility for the supervision of state public primary and secondary schools
Texas Education Code (TEC)	The laws and statutes that govern Texas education law including early education through post-secondary education.
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	TEKS are Texas' state curriculum standards for what students should know and be able to do. ¹³⁶
Texas Family Code (TFC)	The laws and statutes that govern Texas family law, including child protection.
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)	The mission of the THECB is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader. ¹³⁷
Texas Records Exchange (TREx)	A web-based software application designed for the exchange of electronic student records. By using the TREx application, school registrars can electronically request and receive confidential student records for students who have attended or will be attending Texas public schools.
Trauma-informed Practices	A strengths-based framework that is grounded in the understanding of the impact of trauma on a child and family and recognizes the effects that trauma has on the development and behavior of individuals.
Uninterrupted Scholar's Act (USA)	A law that specifies that education records can be disclosed without consent to child welfare caseworkers or other representatives of a state or local child welfare agency. ¹³⁸
U.S. Department of Education (ED)	Federal education agency with a mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. ¹³⁹
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Federal Health and Human Services agency with the mission to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans by providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services. ¹⁴⁰

Appendix B: Additional Data Tables

Table B1: Students Enrolled in Texas Public Schools Grades EE – 12

Grade	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
	CPS	State	CPS	State	CPS	State
EE	288	18,039	305	17,506	321	17,744
PK	2,051	244,029	2,437	242,915	2,392	236,134
KG	2,405	402,596	2,854	403,946	2,850	402,983
1	2,422	407,445	2,805	420,519	2,812	423,697
2	1,932	398,395	2,410	404,262	2,438	418,135
3	1,693	391,481	2,038	398,866	2,188	405,591
4	1,606	386,761	1,844	392,076	1,858	399,350
5	1,453	383,852	1,726	390,890	1,761	396,510
6	1,430	387,872	1,570	384,393	1,653	391,755
7	1,452	384,720	1,642	394,052	1,570	391,392
8	1,530	376,005	1,644	389,672	1,691	397,502
9	2,112	413,349	2,346	420,941	2,249	432,022
10	1,312	353,692	1,513	370,345	1,619	382,308
11	946	332,358	970	331,106	957	342,055
12	694	325,065	743	328,263	684	334,755
Total	23,326	5,205,659	26,847	5,289,752	27,043	5,371,933

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

*Note that for tables B1 and B2, students in DFPS (CPS) conservatorship are also counted in the totals for the State.

Table B2: Students in Texas Public Schools by Race

Race/Ethnicity	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
	CPS	State	CPS	State	CPS	State
American Indian	102	20,803	111	21,087	117	22,162
Asian	91	185,818	101	198,890	101	209,492
Black or African American	5,389	667,346	5,865	674,374	5,810	684,601
Hispanic/Latino	9,814	2,672,106	11,416	2,736,333	11,428	2,789,715
Native Hawaiian/Other	10	6,915	20	7,238	26	7,565
Two or more Races	595	94,927	674	100,328	791	106,607
White	7,325	1,557,744	8,660	1,551,502	8,770	1,551,791
Total	23,326	5,205,659	26,847	5,289,752	27,043	5,371,933

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B3: Number of Schools Attended

	School Moves	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
CPS	One	55%	55%	55%
	Two	27%	27%	27%
	Three	12%	12%	12%
	Four or More	7%	7%	7%
State	One	93%	93%	93%
	Two	6%	6%	6%
	Three	1%	1%	1%
	Four or More	0%	0%	0%
Economically Disadvantaged	One	91%	91%	91%
	Two	8%	8%	8%
	Three	1%	1%	1%
	Four or More	0%	0%	0%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B4: Student Promotion

	Grade	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
CPS	PK - 5	12,149	89%	12,367	90%	12,583	91%
	Grades 6-8	4,149	94%	4,555	94%	4,589	93%
	Grades 9-12	3,115	61%	3,274	58%	3,217	58%
State	PK - 5	2,432,652	94%	2,260,385	94%	2,298,211	95%
	Grades 6-8	1,098,071	96%	1,115,880	96%	1,131,541	96%
	Grades 9-12	966,785	68%	988,025	68%	1,022,133	69%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B5: Student Retention

	Grade	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
CPS	PK - 5	973	7%	750	6%	732	5%
	Grades 6-8	165	4%	126	3%	121	3%
	Grades 9-12	1,040	20%	975	17%	954	17%
State	PK - 5	82,428	3%	57,246	2%	53,542	2%
	Grades 6-8	11,070	1%	10,419	1%	8,745	1%
	Grades 9-12	71,769	5%	67,222	5%	67,419	5%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B6: Students Enrolled in Grade 12 with Graduation Leaver Code

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%
CPS	519	774	67%	537	809	66%	522	752	69%
State	298,701	326,278	92%	300,665	329,365	91%	311,066	336,084	93%
Economically Disadvantaged	139,087	162,546	86%	135,447	165,801	82%	144,800	167,173	87%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B7: Students Enrolled in Grades 9-12 with Dropout Leaver Code

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%
CPS	362	5,092	7%	445	5,605	8%	484	5,539	9%
State	31,284	1,419,854	2%	31,075	1,445,607	2%	30,545	1,486,060	2%
Economically Disadvantaged	19,217	768,738	2%	18,785	787,748	2%	18,997	798,562	2%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B8: Percentage of Students with Dropout Leaver Code by Age FY 14-15

Age	CPS	% CPS That Dropped Out	State	% State that Dropped Out
12	6	1%	506	2%
13	16	3%	1,003	3%
14	35	7%	1,517	5%
15	46	9%	3,071	10%
16	155	30%	7,175	22%
17	207	40%	9,854	30%
18	50	10%	6,030	19%
19	9	2%	2,424	8%
20	***	***	902	3%
Total	524	100%	32,482	100%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B9: Percentage of Students with Dropout Leaver Code by Grade FY 14-15

Grade	CPS	% CPS That Dropped Out	State	% State that Dropped Out
7	17	3%	895	3%
8	26	5%	1,540	5%
9	158	30%	8,210	25%
10	159	30%	7,287	22%
11	102	19%	7,175	21%
12	65	12%	8,353	25%
Total	527	100%	33,460	100%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B10: STAAR Reading Results for Students in Foster Care and Other Students

	Grade	2013		2014		2015	
		CPS	State	CPS	State	CPS	State
Level I: Unsatisfactory (Phase-In 1)	Grade 3	37%	22%	42%	25%	43%	26%
	Grade 4	50%	29%	43%	27%	50%	30%
	Grade 5	45%	23%	41%	24%	45%	25%
	Grade 6	46%	29%	45%	23%	48%	27%
	Grade 7	44%	23%	46%	25%	55%	28%
	Grade 8	36%	16%	35%	17%	49%	24%
Level II: Satisfactory (Phase-In 1)	Grade 3	63%	78%	58%	75%	57%	74%
	Grade 4	50%	71%	57%	73%	50%	70%
	Grade 5	55%	77%	59%	76%	55%	75%
	Grade 6	54%	71%	55%	77%	52%	73%
	Grade 7	56%	77%	54%	75%	45%	72%
	Grade 8	64%	84%	65%	83%	51%	76%
Level II: Satisfactory (Recommended)	Grade 3	21%	39%	23%	41%	19%	38%
	Grade 4	18%	37%	19%	35%	20%	40%
	Grade 5	17%	39%	21%	42%	21%	40%
	Grade 6	21%	40%	19%	40%	17%	38%
	Grade 7	18%	38%	18%	39%	15%	36%
	Grade 8	24%	47%	24%	47%	17%	41%
Level III: Advanced	Grade 3	8%	20%	6%	17%	7%	20%
	Grade 4	7%	20%	6%	18%	7%	20%
	Grade 5	7%	20%	7%	20%	10%	22%
	Grade 6	7%	20%	4%	15%	4%	18%
	Grade 7	6%	16%	6%	19%	6%	18%
	Grade 8	8%	24%	8%	23%	7%	22%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B11: STAAR Mathematics Results for Students in Foster Care and Other Students

	Grade	2013		2014		2015	
		CPS	State	CPS	State	CPS	State
Level I: Unsatisfactory (Phase-In 1)	Grade 3	50%	31%	51%	31%	46%	26%
	Grade 4	55%	32%	50%	30%	52%	30%
	Grade 5	49%	25%	41%	22%	46%	25%
	Grade 6	48%	26%	43%	22%	53%	28%
	Grade 7	52%	29%	59%	33%	59%	32%
	Grade 8	45%	23%	43%	21%	58%	29%
Level II: Satisfactory (Phase-In 1)	Grade 3	50%	69%	49%	69%	54%	74%
	Grade 4	45%	68%	50%	70%	48%	70%
	Grade 5	51%	75%	59%	78%	54%	75%
	Grade 6	52%	74%	57%	78%	47%	72%
	Grade 7	48%	71%	41%	67%	41%	68%
	Grade 8	55%	77%	57%	79%	42%	71%
Level II: Satisfactory (Recommended)	Grade 3	15%	31%	15%	32%	19%	39%
	Grade 4	14%	32%	19%	37%	14%	32%
	Grade 5	17%	39%	20%	42%	18%	39%
	Grade 6	16%	36%	18%	39%	12%	35%
	Grade 7	14%	31%	11%	31%	12%	32%
	Grade 8	16%	35%	16%	38%	13%	33%
Level III: Advanced	Grade 3	6%	15%	5%	15%	5%	14%
	Grade 4	5%	16%	8%	20%	5%	16%
	Grade 5	6%	21%	7%	22%	6%	17%
	Grade 6	5%	16%	5%	17%	2%	13%
	Grade 7	3%	9%	3%	11%	2%	11%
	Grade 8	1%	5%	3%	8%	1%	6%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B12: Percentage of Students with Attendance Rates 90% and over

		2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
		Attended 90% and over	%	Attended 90% and over	%	Attended 90% and over	%
CPS	PK - 5	11,576	85%	13,956	87%	14,181	87%
	Grades 6 - 8	3,522	80%	3,830	79%	3,912	80%
	Grades 9 - 12	3,368	66%	3,725	67%	3,607	65%
State	PK - 5	2,426,659	93%	2,464,287	93%	2,477,595	93%
	Grades 6 - 8	1,058,378	93%	1,078,561	93%	1,086,378	92%
	Grades 9 - 12	1,184,987	84%	1,216,747	84%	1,248,672	84%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B13: Students that Received Special Education Services

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%
CPS	6,353	23,326	27%	6,998	26,852	26%	6,850	27,043	25%
State	492,936	5,205,659	9%	493,557	5,289,752	9%	502,943	5,371,933	9%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B14: Primary Student Disability Identified for Special Education Services FY 14-15

	CPS		State	
	Count	%	Count	%
Emotional Disturbance	1,729	31%	24,386	5%
Learning Disability	1,100	20%	160,285	36%
Intellectual Disability	775	14%	42,453	10%
Other Health Impairment	730	13%	58,778	13%
Speech Impairment	666	12%	88,973	20%
Autism	335	6%	49,464	11%
Other	276	5%	21,350	5%
Total	5,611	100%	445,689	100%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B15: Students that Attended EL Classes

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%
CPS	1,358	23,326	6%	1,868	26,852	7%	1,733	27,043	6%
State	906,284	5,182,333	18%	945,666	5,262,900	18%	994,289	5,344,890	19%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B16: Students That Attended G/T Classes

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%	Count	Total Attendance	%
CPS	284	23,326	1%	357	26,852	1%	375	27,043	1%
State	422,401	5,182,333	8%	427,625	5,262,900	8%	433,713	5,344,890	8%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

Table B17: Students Enrolled in CTE Courses (grades 9-12)

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%	Count	Total Enrolled	%
CPS	2,286	4,587	50%	3,881	5,105	76%	3,871	4,965	78%
State	1,109,324	1,380,874	80%	1,137,460	1,404,899	81%	1,206,716	1,444,101	84%

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

*Note: Denominator is derived from enrollment in grades 9-12, not cumulative attendance.

Table B18: School Discipline by Action FY 12-13 and FY 14-15

Discipline Action	CPS		State		Economically Disadvantaged	
	2012 - 2013	2014 - 2015	2012 - 2013	2014 - 2015	2012 - 2013	2014 - 2015
ISS	4,949	5,179	544,231	491,318	399,568	356,680
OSS	3,741	3,812	244,513	228,957	195,128	181,211
DAEP	1,179	1,177	79,905	74,031	61,510	56,220
JJAEP	64	53	2,755	2,490	2,041	1,764
Expelled	16	11	875	817	591	574
Total	23,322	27,043	5,179,577	5,344,890	3,172,681	3,261,374

Source: DFPS IMPACT-TEA PEIMS Matched Data

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