

# Foster Care Education Program

## Office of Dropout Prevention & Student Re-engagement



### **IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

State statistics show that on average there are 6,000 Colorado students in foster care each year. The Foster Care Education Program at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) was launched in 2012 to support local education agencies and communities in serving these students.

#### **PURPOSE**

The Foster Care Education Program is dedicated to helping students in foster care excel academically, complete courses, advance to the next grade and continue on a path to postsecondary success.

#### **ACTION**

It takes commitment, leadership and a coordinated effort for students in foster care to establish school stability and succeed in school. The Foster Care Education Program is designed to work with K-12 public schools and districts to focus on these elements:

- Increase learning supports
- Implement effective strategies
- Strengthen partnerships with child welfare and community agencies
- Coordinate educational transition services
- Collaborate with the courts, state agencies and child advocacy groups

### **FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS**

#### **Laws and legislation**

- Implement state laws requiring child welfare education liaisons (CWELs)
- Provide guidance on federal and state legislation that defines the rights of students in foster care

#### **Dedicated resources**

- Train and provide ongoing professional development for child welfare education liaisons, county caseworkers, guardians appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child, court personnel and judges.

#### **Coordinated response**

- Create targeted outreach and public awareness of foster care education issues
- Implement school district pilots to increase supports and coordination of services with county child welfare agencies
- Share and track data on achievement and educational outcomes of students in foster care

#### **Partner with schools and communities to tackle education barriers**

#### **Colorado Facts**

- The 4-year completion rate (attainment of a diploma or high school equivalency) for students in foster care is 37.4 percent
- When students in foster care have six years to complete high school, the completion rate goes up to 53.3 percent.
- Students in foster care have a mobility rate of 55.4 percent.\*

*Statistics are for the 2015-16 school year, and are provided through a data-sharing agreement between the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Human Services.*

- [For information on the definitions of the rates and calculation.](#)

\*: School mobility rate includes duplicate counts.



- Increase transportation to school and academic enrichment activities
- Improve transitions due to foster care placements and school changes
- Ensure transfer of transcripts and student records with each move

## **STUDENT OUTCOME TRENDS**

The following tables provide information about the dropout rates, 4-year graduation and completion rates for students in foster care from 2012-2016. The 4-year rate refers to students who graduate in four or fewer years of entering high school. The extended-year completion rate refers to students who earn a high school credential (diploma or high school equivalency) in five or six years. This information was obtained through a data-sharing agreement between the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Education.

<b>Dropout Rates of Students in Foster Care from 2012 to 2016</b>			
School Year	Total Students In 7th- to 12th-Grade	Number of Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rate
2012-2013	3,560	160	4.5
2013-2014	3,436	185	5.4
2014-2015	3,533	239	6.8
2015-2016	4,018	372	9.3

<b>4-Year and Extended-Year Graduation and Completion Rates of Students in Foster Care for the Class of 2014</b>					
Class of 2014	Total number of students in cohort base	Number of graduates	Graduation rate	Number of completers	Completer rate
4-year	1,242	372	30.0%	519	41.8%
5-year	1,284	451	35.1%	602	46.9%
6-year	1,232	504	40.9%	657	53.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Human Services

## **Where can I learn more?**

- [Visit the Foster Care Program webpage to learn more.](#)
- For questions contact Kristin Myers at [myers\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:myers_k@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6007.

## **Child Welfare Education Liaisons**

- [View a directory of the child welfare education liaisons for each Colorado school district](#)
- [View all CDE fact sheets.](#)