Texas commits to transform education outcomes of students in foster care
Findings from the *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Data Workgroup

Priority — **Cross-system data sharing**

Sharing essential data across child welfare, education, and court systems is critical to the educational success of students in foster care. In 2012, the *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Data Workgroup was established to assess the educational outcomes of students in care in Texas. This brief uses baseline data to highlight the complexities and challenges that impact students in foster care while providing opportunities for agencies to promote cross-system practices and strategies that improve stability and achievement.

Collaboration — **Diverse, multi-disciplinary membership**

The *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Data Workgroup includes:

FORMER FOSTER YOUTH	CHILDREN'S COMMISSION	CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)*	TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY (TEA)	THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	STAKEHOLDERS/ ADVOCATES

*CPS is a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

Accomplishments — **Mobilizing data driven change**

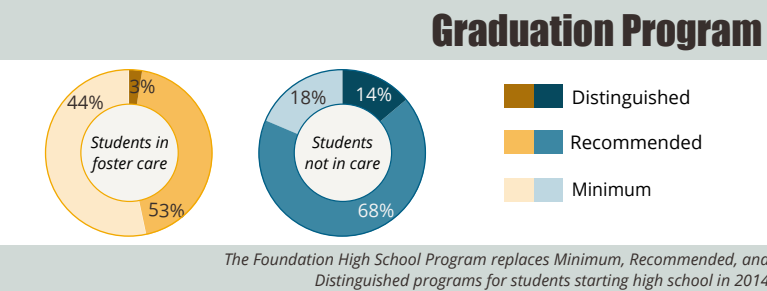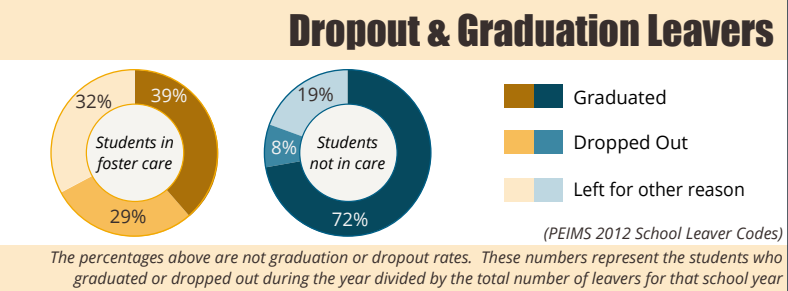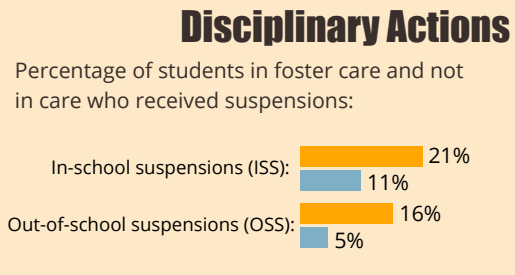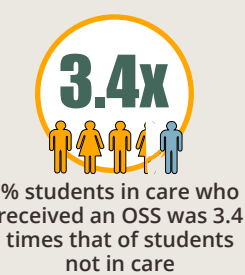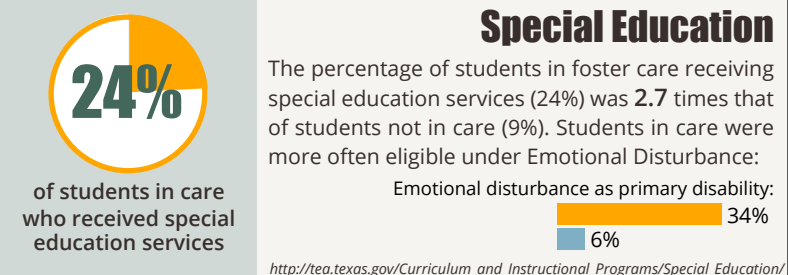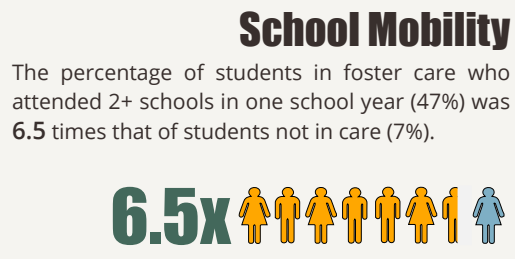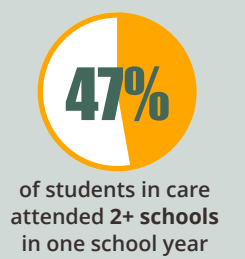Participated in national information sharing programs
Amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DFPS and TEA in 2014
Developed shared definitions across systems
Mapped data collection timeline
Identified priority data indicators
Established 2012-2013 baseline data to measure the educational outcomes of students in foster care

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Outcomes from the 2012-2013 school year

Legend: 🟧 Students in foster care   🟦 Students not in care

23,326 students in foster care attended Texas public schools during the school year

Data sources for this report: Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and the Department of Family and Protective Service's Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT).

47% of students in care attended **2+ schools** in one school year

School Mobility

The percentage of students in foster care who attended 2+ schools in one school year (47%) was **6.5** times that of students not in care (7%).

6.5x 🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍

24% of students in care who received special education services

Special Education

The percentage of students in foster care receiving special education services (24%) was **2.7** times that of students not in care (9%). Students in care were more often eligible under Emotional Disturbance:

Emotional disturbance as primary disability:
🟧 34%
🟦 6%

http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Education/

3.4x 🧍🧍🧍🧍

% students in care who received an OSS was 3.4 times that of students not in care

Disciplinary Actions

Percentage of students in foster care and not in care who received suspensions:

In-school suspensions (ISS):
🟧 21%
🟦 11%

Out-of-school suspensions (OSS):
🟧 16%
🟦 5%

Dropout & Graduation Leavers

Students in foster care: 39% / 32% / 29%
Students not in care: 19% / 8% / 72%

- **Graduated**
- **Dropped Out**
- **Left for other reason**

(PEIMS 2012 School Leaver Codes)

The percentages above are not graduation or dropout rates. These numbers represent the students who graduated or dropped out during the year divided by the total number of leavers for that school year

Graduation Program

Students in foster care: 3% / 44% / 53%
Students not in care: 14% / 18% / 68%

- **Distinguished**
- **Recommended**
- **Minimum**

The Foundation High School Program replaces Minimum, Recommended, and Distinguished programs for students starting high school in 2014

Children's Commission   •   TEXAS DFPS   •   TEA Texas Education Agency

Prepared by: The University of Texas at Austin — Child & Family Research Institute — School of Social Work

Building local cross-system collaborations
Using data to transform education outcomes for students in foster care in Texas

Recommendations

Collect, share, and analyze local data across systems to inform decision-making and improve practices

Organize a group of child welfare, education, and judicial stakeholders in your community

Consider local strengths and challenges, create shared definitions, and brainstorm solutions to meet the needs of your community

Questions to consider

	Schools	Courts	CPS
School Mobility	Do you know your district's foster care liaison and the student's designated education decision-maker? How can foster care liaisons work with school staff to improve transition services within required time frames?	Where is the student enrolled in school? If the student changes placements, what can be done to ensure school stability? Can the student remain in the current school? If not, is there a transition plan in place to ensure prompt record transfers?	Do you coordinate with schools and caregivers to develop either creative transportation solutions that allow a student to remain in the same school or a transition plan if the student changes schools?
Special Education	Who is responsible for making a student's special education decisions? If required, is a surrogate parent appointed and trained?	Do the caregivers, attorneys, surrogate parent, CASA, or other advocates have current information about the student's Individualized Education Program?	What issues are addressed in the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings?
Disciplinary Actions	Do you include trauma-informed training for staff? What prevention and alternative strategies to suspension and expulsion are available to students? Does your school use Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Support strategies effectively?	What behaviors does the student present in school that lead to a disciplinary action? What services are needed to prevent and address these behaviors?	Do you remind caregivers annually and during the enrollment process to provide a written signed statement of "opting-out" from corporal punishment for each student in foster care?
Dropout Prevention	What evidence-based dropout prevention strategies are in your school plan? When do you review students' course credit accruals? How do you address student needs for tutoring, content mastery, credit recovery, and extra-curricular activities?	What laws are in place to support high school completion? If a student is not on track to graduate, what is needed to support high school completion?	Does a student have a personal graduation plan, and if so, when was it last reviewed? How can you collaborate with schools to facilitate student participation in extra-curricular activities, online courses, credit recovery services, and tutoring?
Graduation Program	Have you talked with the student about their post-secondary goals, aspirations, and options? Is this information reflected in the student's personal graduation plan, current course selection, and graduation program?	Is the student on track to graduate, and what are the student's postsecondary education goals and plans?	What are the student's educational goals and aspirations? Are additional services available to help the student realize these goals?

This brief highlights data collected at the state level as the result of collaboration between child welfare, education, and court systems in Texas. For more information, please see:

Child Protective Services Education Policy: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x15000.asp

Texas Education Agency Foster Care & Student Success: http://tea.texas.gov/FosterCareStudentSuccess/

Children's Commission education site: http://education.texaschildrenscommission.gov/