

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



January 31, 2022

TESTIMONY OF

Scott Henricks, Director of Permanency
Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

2021 Kansas Foster Care Annual Academic Report Card

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and

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2021 Foster Care Academic Report Card

Thank you for the opportunity to present information on the 2022 Legislative Session education report card for students in foster care. The report encompasses the 2020-2021 school year. We are appreciative of the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) for their continued partnership and efforts in its development.

Ensuring educational stability and positive educational outcomes for children in foster care is a high priority for DCF as reflected in practice, policy, and implementation of applicable law. This annual report requirement has formal origin in the Governor's Executive Order #20-53 on July 7, 2020 and is now codified in Kansas statutes.

DCF and KSDE have worked together over recent years through the Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care Workgroup. Since the inception of the Foster Care Report Card, a partnership has been cultivated and the workgroup has grown significantly in both membership and meeting frequency. The group previously convened on a quarterly basis, but now meets monthly. Membership includes DCF and KSDE staff, KASB (Kansas Association of School Boards) and the Educational Coordinators at all four Child Welfare Case Management Providers (CMPs). Members meet to provide analysis of educational data provided by KSDE, addresses various topics related to education for children in foster care, discuss case scenarios as needed, as well as coordinate sharing of information by and with other school-related agencies and programs such as Families Together, Kansas Mental Health Advisory Council, Kansas Jobs for America's Graduates (K-JAG). For instance, the group did a deep data dive into the first 2019-2020 Foster Care Report Card this past summer to help identify what is needed for inclusion in this year's report. This is the second presentation of this annual report, and it is anticipated this report will continue to improve and strengthen with the insight provided by the Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care Workgroup.

The 2020-2021 school year report reflects differences in outcome achievement for students who are in foster care compared to all students. As learned from last year, there is much work ahead of us as we continue to identify and understand factors influencing the outcomes, successes and gaps in systems or supports which create pathways for parity in outcomes for students who experience a foster care episode. This year's version offers an expanded explanation of calculations for better comprehension of how data is extrapolated, and includes the additional data points:

- Attendance Rate
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Suspensions and Expulsions

Some highlights from the second annual report for 2020-2021 school year include:

- The percentage of students experiencing foster care who graduate with a diploma in 4 years is 26.9 points lower than the percentage of all students in Kansas. (n=61.2% in foster care compared to 88.1% of all students). This is an increase from the last report, in which the rate was nearly 28 points lower.
- Graduation with a diploma in 4 years by race of students reflects foster care students who identify as white continue to experience the greatest difference of graduation rate (n=59.8% in foster care compared 90.3% of all students)
- Attendance rate for students in foster care as compared to all students is a difference of 3.2 points (n=90.6 for youth in care as compared to 93.8 of all students); while chronic absenteeism is 14.6 point difference (n=32.1 for youth in care, 17.5 for all students).

- Dropout rate for youth in foster care also remains 4.2 points higher than all students (n=5.9 for youth in care, 1.7 for all students).
- 2020-2021 Assessment Comparisons for foster care (FC) data to all students (AS) is:

Assessment Level	Math		English Language Arts		Science	
	FC	AS	FC	AS	FC	AS
1	56.11%	34.35%	51.90%	30.3%	53.20%	36.89%
2	33.11%	37.74%	30.91%	34.52%	26.96%	28.55%
3	8.76%	20.07%	15.29%	27.09%	15.84%	23.86%
4	2.01%	7.82%	1.88%	8.07%	3.98%	10.68%

Much has been learned in the second year of developing this report as we continue strive for continuity of education and strong outcomes. Changes in practices, procedures and approaches have occurred utilizing this gained knowledge, and it is anticipated future years of this report will reveal continued improvements. Steps taken include:

- The Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care Workgroup will continue meeting monthly to assess data to inform and drive best practices.
- Foster care case management agencies continue to engage and build relationships with local school districts.
 - CMP agencies ensure the education enrollment form is completed within 3 days of a student in foster care moving so a receiving school knows the 2 prior schools to contact for record transfer. This activity occurs when a child is unable to stay in their same school after a move.
 - Educational Coordinates work with school on an individual level to assist with the timely enrollment, transportation, and other student advocacy related matters.
- As part of the action plans developed last year, each Case Management Provider captures data and develop a report on the number of moves, the number of moves that required a school change and enrollment form.
- The number of children/youth in care has continued to decrease and is now 6,504. In addition to this rate, placement stability remains a focus for DCF and the CMPs, as currently the rate is 6.1, while the national performance rate of moves is 4.4 or fewer per 1,000 days in care.
- DCF tracks success factor measures of same school attendance and grade promotion to complement and provide context to continuity and stability of education.

We appreciate the opportunity this report presents and the continued dialogue it generates to improve outcomes with our partner in this endeavor, KSDE. We look forward to creating meaningful reports so conversations can occur locally. DCF is committed to using this data and insights to improve policy and practices to achieve better outcomes for all children/youth in foster care. We continue to learn about the impact of a child’s stay in foster care on outcomes and level assessments and ways we can improve those outcomes. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on this report. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.