



# 2020 Special Committee on Foster Care Oversight

August 25, 2020

## **Foster Care Report Card**

Presented by:

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**Testimony of:**

Tanya Keys, Deputy Secretary

Kansas Department for Children and Families

**Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Baumgardner, and Members of the Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to present information on the annual education report card for students in foster care. I want to begin by expressing our appreciation for Senator Baumgardner's leadership on this initiative during the legislative session. We acknowledge the frustration this couldn't happen legislatively because of the pandemic but are excited to move forward with this innovation.

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. The annual education report card for students in foster care represents an unprecedented opportunity for DCF and the Kansas State Department of Education to come together to advance these priorities and support foster youth.

On July 7, 2020 the Governor signed Executive Order #20-53 establishing an annual education report card for students in foster care. The report card will track educational outcomes and collect data to give state leaders, educators, and stakeholders a picture of where the state can improve in educating youth in foster care.

Executive Order # 20-53 requires DCF and KSDE to collaborate annually to produce the report card. The report will be presented to the House and Senate Education Committees by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. Data points in the report card include the aggregate graduation rate, grade level advancement, and state test scores for foster youth in a given year. Other data that the report will collect includes disciplinary actions taken against foster youth in schools and data on foster youth participation in early learning and mental health programs. The text of Executive Order #20-53, which includes a listing of all nine data points required in the report, is attached to this testimony.

We are very appreciative of KSDE's willingness to collaborate on this project. KSDE already collects and maintains much of the data required in the report. We engaged KSDE earlier this year to begin the process of matching our foster care data to KSDE's education data. That process is ongoing at this time. We have offered to compensate KSDE for time spent as their staff will perform much of the manual work matching the data.

Importantly, this report will provide transparency and accountability to the public. As their legal guardian, the state bears a heightened responsibility to provide a quality education to youth in foster care and the public deserves to know the state's performance in doing so. The report will also include data by race and ethnicity, allowing us to target and address any disparate impacts.

Kansas will be among the first states in the nation to implement such an annual report. And while we don't yet know exactly what this data will show, we're excited to see where it leads us. This report will provide valuable insights into the services provided to and educational outcomes achieved by our foster youth. This shared accountability also will provide insights into gaps in the system and areas where improvements must be made. DCF is committed to using these insights to improve policy and practices to achieve better outcomes for all foster youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue. I am happy to answer any questions at the appropriate time.



GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 20-53**

Establishing an annual report card for students in foster care

**WHEREAS**, the State of Kansas is committed to supporting the success and well-being of children in the custody of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families;

**WHEREAS**, receiving a quality education is vital to the long-term success and well-being of all Kansans;

**WHEREAS**, as their legal custodian, the State of Kansas bears a heightened responsibility to make every effort to ensure Kansas students in foster care receive a quality education;

**WHEREAS**, there currently exists no report or entity that tracks and publishes educational outcomes for students in foster care;

**WHEREAS**, the Kansas State Department of Education records and maintains data that tracks the educational outcomes of all Kansas students;

**WHEREAS**, the Kansas State Department of Education is willing to share that data to assist with the creation of a report of educational outcomes for Kansas students in foster care;

**WHEREAS**, such a report would provide educators, stakeholders, and elected leaders valuable insights regarding needed improvements in the State's efforts to ensure a quality education for all students in foster care;

**WHEREAS**, such a report would provide additional transparency and accountability to enhance the efforts of the State and school districts to provide a quality education to children in foster care; and

**WHEREAS**, upholding the values of transparency, cooperation, and accountability between educators, stakeholders, and elected leaders regarding the State's efforts to provide quality education to students in foster care will aid in the development of policies and programs that support all children in DCF custody.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby direct the Kansas Department for Children and Families to produce an Annual Academic Report Card for children in the custody of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families in collaboration with the Kansas State Department of Education.

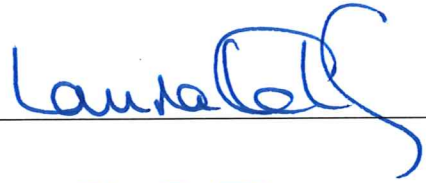
1. The Report Card shall contain the following data elements for the preceding school year:

- a. The graduation rate of students in foster care at the end of each academic year;
  - b. the number and percentage of students in foster care who were promoted to the next grade level;
  - c. the number and percentage of students in foster care who were suspended during the school year, and the average number of days each student spent in suspension;
  - d. the number and percentage of students in foster care who were expelled during the school year;
  - e. state standardized assessment scores for students in foster care, including the number and percentage of students meeting academic standards as determined by the state board of education;
  - f. the number and percentage of students in foster care enrolled in any preschool-aged at-risk program, Kansas preschool pilot program or early childhood special education program under section 619 of part B of the individuals with disabilities act;
  - g. the number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the mental health intervention team pilot program or a similar mental health program;
  - h. the total number of students in foster care enrolled in a school district or accredited nonpublic school and the disaggregated number and percentage of students in foster care enrolled in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools; and
  - i. de-identified disaggregated race and ethnicity data for each data set required in (a) through (h); and
  - j. any additional data elements that both the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Department for Children and Families deem appropriate for inclusion.
2. The Report Card shall be published annually and presented to the House and Senate Education committees by the Kansas Department for Children and Families by January 15 of each year.
  3. For the purpose of this Order, “school” shall include any school of a school district or any nonpublic school accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education.
  4. For the purposes of this Order, “student in foster” care shall include any youth who was in the custody of the Kansas Department for Children and Families and attended a KSBOE-accredited school at any time during the school year for which the report is being completed.

This document shall be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 20-53. It shall become effective immediately and remain in force until rescinded.

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

BY THE GOVERNOR



DATED

7.7.2020



Secretary of State



Assistant Secretary of State

**FILED**  
JUL 07 2020  
SCOTT SCHWAB  
SECRETARY OF STATE