



*Promoting Educational Equity
and Ensuring Success*

Program Guide

Fifth Annual California Foster Youth Education Summit

October 2-3, 2012

Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento, CA

Sponsored by



www.fosteredconnect.org

Registration Deadline: September 26, 2012

Overview

Please join us at the 5th California Foster Youth Education Summit. This year's Summit, titled *Cradle to College & Career: Promoting Educational Equity and Ensuring Success*, will include sessions on topics of interest to stakeholders who support the educational needs of foster children and youth from early childhood through college and career.

Day One — Workshops & Plenary

The first day of the event will include plenary sessions and workshops focused on our 6 main special topic areas (AB490, Educational Advocacy, School Discipline, Postsecondary Education, Mental Health, and Early Care and Education).

Day Two — Where do we go from here?

On the second day, participants will have two opportunities to meet with other professionals to discuss how we can move forward together to address the educational needs of children and youth in the foster care system:

First, participants will meet by Special Topic area to develop potential local and state actions and identify next steps for future planning. Then participants will meet with other professionals from their own county to discuss how they can best work together to support foster youth education in their community.

Who should attend?

- Advocates
 - Attorneys
 - Caregivers
 - CASAs
 - Child Welfare
 - Court Staff
 - Early Child Education
 - Educators
 - First 5 Associations
 - Foster Youth/Former Foster Youth
 - Foster Youth Services
 - Foundations
 - Legislative Staff
 - Mental Health & Wraparound Staff
 - Mentors
 - Postsecondary institutions
 - Probation
 - School District and School Site Personnel
 - School Counselors
 - Social Workers
 - State Social Service and Education Staff
 - Youth Currently or Formerly in Foster Care
- And anyone else interested in Foster Youth Education

Registration Fees

\$250 per Person For Summit Only

\$275 for Summit & Networking Reception

\$225 for Students (includes Reception)

(“Students” are foster youth or youth formerly in care currently 24 years of age or younger)

Registration Deadline: September 26, 2012

Fees will increase to \$300 after that date.

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, October 2, 2012

8:30 am	Registration/Check In Opens
9:30 am	Welcome General Session & Keynote Speakers
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Group "A" Workshops
Noon	Lunch and Playwrights Performance
1:15 pm	Group "B" Workshops
2:30 pm	Break
2:45 pm	Group "C" Workshops
4:00 pm	Closing General Session, including brief overviews of the Special Topic Workgroups for Wednesday morning
5:00 PM	Welcome Reception & Networking Event (extra fee to attend)

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

7:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 am	Welcome General Session including 2012 California Legislative Update
9:45 am	Special Topic Work Groups
Noon	Box Lunch and County Team Time
1:30 pm	Break
1:45 pm	Closing General Session with Derek Clark
3:00 pm	Convening ends



Hotel Information

Doubletree Hotel
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento
(916) 929-8855

Sleeping Rooms:

We have a special conference rate of \$84 per night until September 10, 2012. Please use the code: "FOS" or "Foster Youth Ed Summit to receive that rate.

Tuesday Keynote Speakers



Justice Richard Huffman

Justice Richard Huffman was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal for the State of California by Governor George Deukmejian in October of 1988 following his tenure as a Judge of the Superior Court for San Diego County since April of 1985.

Justice Huffman was a member of the California Judicial Council from 1997 to 2011, and served as chair of its Executive and Planning Committee. He is currently chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, and chair of the Financial Accountability and Efficiency Committee for the Judicial Council.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Justice Huffman served 24 years in the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 10 of which as Chief Deputy District Attorney. He was responsible for the overall supervision of a staff of 450, while at the same time personally taking to trial a number of complex and sensitive cases. His contributions to the administration of justice and his trial skills brought him four singular honors: "Outstanding Prosecutor of the Year" by the California District Attorneys Association, "Outstanding Public Lawyer" by the San Diego County Bar Association, "Prosecutor of the Year" by Citizens for Law and Order, and selection for membership in the American College of Trial Lawyers. He was also the recipient in 1988 of the San Diego Trial Lawyers Association's "Trial Judge of the Year Award." Justice Huffman received his J.D. degree from the University of Southern California.

Judge Stacy Boulware Eurie

Judge Stacy Boulware Eurie was appointed to the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in June 2007. In January 2010, Judge Boulware Eurie was appointed to the position of Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. She currently serves on the State Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee, the Financial Accountability & Efficiency Advisory Committee for the Judicial Council, the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, and the California Child Welfare Council.



Previously, Judge Boulware Eurie served as Senior Assistant Attorney General for the Government Law Section of the California Office of the Attorney General where she was responsible for the management of 34 attorneys and the representation of California's constitutional officers, judicial bodies, the Department of Finance and various other state agencies. The section's practice areas included complex political and constitutional law, election law, and litigating state budget and finance issues.

Judge Boulware Eurie has served as the President of the Sacramento County Bar Association and on the board of the Women Lawyers of Sacramento. She is a Judicial Master of the Schwartz/Levi Inn of Court and the Anthony M. Kennedy Inn of Court. She was awarded the Judge of the Year distinction by the Wiley Manuel Bar of Association of Sacramento in 2010 and in 2012 she received the California Association of Black Lawyers' Judicial Award of Excellence. Judge Boulware Eurie obtained her law degree from the University of California, Davis School of Law.

Sade Daniels



Sade is a California native, born and raised in Oakland. Emancipating from foster care at 19, Sade spent many of her adolescent years in group homes and transitional housing placement programs. Sade was active in many youth advocacy organizations and projects such as the California Youth Connection, the California Youth Project, and the Sexually Exploited Minors Network. She has been featured in the San Francisco Chronicle and Essence Magazine, a nationally published magazine. Sade was the recipient of the Youth SCORE award and inducted into the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame. She is first generation graduate from Philander Smith College with a Bachelor of Social Work degree.

Wednesday Keynote Speaker

Be sure not to miss our Wednesday Afternoon Speaker Derek Clark.

A great inspirational presenter (and former foster youth) that will lift your spirits and provide great motivation to take the things you learned at the event and put them to use in your life.

Derek Clark

Derek Clark is an inspiring motivational speaker and the author of *Never Limit Your Life* and the critically acclaimed *I Will Never Give Up* book series.

As a motivational speaker, Derek inspires youth and adults across this nation to never give up and to not let the past limit their incredible future. He shares his message of courage, hope and perseverance to help others find the strength to Never Give Up. When Derek speaks, it is from his passionate soul. He brings along his guitar to sing the journals of his life. He believes that music is one of the purest ways to touch and communicate with the hearts of the audience. His listeners will be ignited with passion and have the courage to take action and fight their fears. He will inspire and teach you to push yourself beyond your perceived limits. He believes it all comes down to a choice and taking responsibility for the direction of your life. He is proof that you don't have to let adversity hold you down in life; you have a fascinating and inspiring destiny awaiting you.



Derek Clark knows first-hand the power of attitude in coping with adversity and overcoming hardship. At five years of age, Derek's mother and stepfather (his biological father was in prison) turned him over to the California foster care system, where he would spend the next thirteen years of his life, contending with rejection, humiliation, emotional distress and overwhelming anxiety. Yet through it all, Derek never gave up, and went from victim to victor by defying the artificial limitations imposed on him. He literally took a disadvantage in life and turned it into an advantage. His remarkable story is one of resilience and redemption, from his personal to professional life.

Derek's life mission has become helping others find the mental strength to recognize and take advantage of opportunities. His purpose is to cultivate drive, focus, and

Tuesday Lunch Program

Playwrights Project

We are pleased to have a lunchtime performance from the Playwrights Project. Playwrights Project's "Telling Stories: Giving Voice to Foster Youth" creates theatre from the life experiences of youth in and out of the foster care system. Their theatre artists work with these storytellers during group sessions and one-on-one interviews to shape their stories into short plays, which are performed by professional actors. The youth and young adults examine the challenges they've faced, celebrate the positive choices and personal strength that have helped them persevere, and communicate their stories to encourage community involvement in improving the child welfare system.

A1: Transcending Systems to Achieve Systemic Change

Martha Molina-Aviles, Office of LA County Supervisor
Gloria Molina
Lydia Cincore-Templeton, Children Youth & Family Collaborative
Fernando Meza, Pomona Unified School District
Arlene Barrios & Gloria Molina, LA Dept of Children & Family Services

Think large systems can't peek out of their silos to work together? Think again. The Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Project operating at 13 schools in the Montebello, Pomona and Hacienda La Puente Unified School Districts in Southern California is proving that LA County and a community-based organization can create the multi-sector partnerships needed to improve the academic and post-emancipation outcomes of foster youth. Learn how the visionary Supervisor Gloria Molina, Children Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) collaborates with DCFS and School Districts with large populations of foster youth to prioritize improvement in educational outcomes. Hear how each member of the effort has overcome the limitations of systems-thought to see a bigger picture based on partnership rather than territory and collaboration rather than competition. Receive our best advice, learnings and insights from our experience of creating new expectations for multi-sector collaboration in our publication: *Ten Tips for True Collaboration—Transcending Systems to Achieve Systemic Change*.

A2: Post-Secondary Education: Opportunities for Youth in the Era of AB12

Debbie Raucher, John Burton Foundation
Monique Perry, Former Foster Youth

The extension of foster care to age 21 provides foster youth with the opportunity to pursue higher education while maintaining the support of the foster care system. This presents an exciting new opportunity to dramatically improve educational outcomes for youth in foster care. But in order to make this vision a reality, youth will need guidance, motivation and support from caregivers and professionals to pursue their educational goals. This workshop, geared towards social workers, probation officers, attorneys, CASAs, caregivers and others who work within child welfare systems will provide information on the range of post-secondary educational options available to foster youth, tips on how to motivate youth to expand their educational horizons and practical guidance about admissions, financial aid and other nuts and bolts of California's system of post-secondary education.

A3: Educational and Transitional Services

Sheila Faulkner Loser, Riverside County Office of Ed. Foster Youth Services
Daniel Carrillo, Former Foster Youth, Riverside CC Student
Lacy Lenon, Riverside County Office of Ed. Foster Youth Services

Is your County Office of Education or School District connected to your local Community College? If not, learn how to make the connection and help your at-risk, neglected, and foster youth who successfully completed high school make the transition to college, Career Technical Education programs, directly into the work-force, or into the military. Learn how to collaborate effectively with your local community college to provide direct services to youth, increase graduation completion rates and increase enrollments in post-secondary institutions. Attendees will receive sample documents that will assist with replicating the project in their programs and schools.

A4: Foster Youth Pathways to College: Key Statewide Findings & Implications for Policy & Practice

Kristine Frerer, UC Berkeley, Center for Social Service Research
Jordan Horowitz, Institute for Evidence-Based Change

Every day, stories from the field tell us that a few inspiring foster youth defy early life experiences to become successful in school and life. Many, however, struggle into adulthood. The Center for Social Service Research at UC, Berkeley and the Institute for Evidence-Based Change conducted a statewide link of child welfare and education data to learn more about the nuances of foster youths' academic successes and challenges. Key findings focus on high school to college transitions, with special emphasis on experiences, supports, and characteristics that bolster foster youth educational success. Hear from key stakeholders, a foster youth and policy leader, who will provide their key perspectives on how these findings inform the field to better serve foster youth. These leaders also will facilitate an audience discussion about how this information can lead to changes in practice or policy.



"A" Group Workshops Continued

Tuesday, October 2, 2012 10:45 am

A5: Life After Emancipation

Kamber Sta. Maria, Solano Community College
Foster Youth Student Speakers

Are you interested in hearing directly from current/former foster youth about their challenges and incredible accomplishments as they successfully navigate the post secondary environment and life after emancipation? If so, then join our youth panel presentation where a group of young adults, many of whom are current students of the Solano Community College FYSI & YESS-ILP program, will share their stories of challenges and accomplishments. Recently these young adults worked with the Bay Area Academy to create Digital Stories about their lives. The workshop will include a preview of the Digital Stories, provide an opportunity for the audience to engage in dialogue, and to hear directly from the youth regarding the tangible support systems that are helping them succeed in college and in life!

A6: Continuing to Flourish in Difficult Times or How Do I Deal With the Eeyore(s) in My World

Ellie Sorkin, Sacramento City USD
Miamah Reed, Sacramento City USD

Come learn how to 1) attend to the cup being half full, 2) deal with the Eeyores in their organization or on their case loads, 3) enhance skills to be effective in their work and 4) recognize signs of burnout prior to "a melt down". Participate in small group activities that focus on behavioral management techniques; that help change behavior patterns and accentuate the positive. There will be a philosophical exploration of "why" am I in this field. Participate in experiential activities that enhance personal strength and translate into helping techniques for clients.



A7: Engagement Strategies for Youth Programs

Samantha Olson, Sacramento City USD, Foster Youth Services
Cristina Manzo, AmeriCorps Member, Sacramento State
Stephen Dimal, AmeriCorps Member, Sacramento City USD Foster Youth Services

This workshop will focus on the practices used to engage youth and keep them coming back week after week to your classes, groups and 1:1 sessions. Learn the strategies SCUSD Foster Youth Services uses to engage youth in their classes, lunch time groups and 1:1 sessions. Watch a video made by SCUSD Staff with foster youth describing what they want in a teacher and how they would like adults to interact with them. Presentation will include ice breakers, team building activities, strategies, and lesson learned while creating a fun interactive curriculum that is right for the youth you are working with.

A8: Foster Youth and Special Education

Susan McClure and Chio Saephanh
Public Counsel Law Center

Do you know a foster youth who you suspect may need special education? Do you work with foster youth who are in special education but are not getting the appropriate services? This presentation will focus on the intersection between special education and the particular challenges faced by foster youth. The goal is to help participants gain a better understanding of special education generally, explore how special education may be helpful to certain foster youth and to become aware of how the circumstances of foster care can present particular barriers in receiving special education services. Particular issues that will be covered include educational stability, identifying an appropriate education rights holder, education related mental health services, and eligibility under special education as "Emotionally Disturbed." Come and ask questions, share experiences and participate in a discussion to develop creative solutions.

A9: Beyond Collecting Data – Quick & Easy Foster Focus Report to Identify Needs & Solutions

Virginia D'Amico, Sacramento County Office of Ed.

Foster Focus is an innovative data system used by education and placement agencies to improve education outcomes for foster youth. Learn how to use Foster Focus to run pre-programmed reports. Use Foster Focus pre-programmed reports to: Meet your program goals, Focus student services and resources where they can be most effective, and Track your 12th graders. Leave with instructions for producing your own reports and suggestions on using the information effectively.

B1: Increase Retention and Build Community through the Development of a Short Term Residential Program

Lauren Childs, Fresno State Renaissance Scholars Program

Want to increase student retention and sense of belonging? This workshop seeks to encourage higher education professionals to find creative and effective strategies to promote student success and sense of belonging. Learn how Fresno State's Renaissance Scholars Program developed and implemented a 4-day residential program to increase retention and sense of belonging while teaching academic and independent living skills. In this session, participants will understand the step-by-steps process and curriculum design necessary for the planning and execution of 4-day program. A student and panel will also engage with participants to discuss their experience. Creative and effective solutions to address institutional needs and challenges will also be discussed to encourage the implementation of similar intervention programs.

B2: Fostering Successful Transitions from High School to Postsecondary Institutions

Joy Salvetti, Center for College Readiness, CSU Sacramento

Theresa Rowland, Career Ladders Project

Kim Parker, Foster Youth Services, Elk Grove Unified School District

Jordan Horowitz, Institute for Evidence-Based Change

In this moderated session, a panel of representatives from K-12, Community College, and University will present best practices to support foster youth in their transitions from high school to postsecondary education. Attendees will be provided with practical details from panelists experienced in developing, implementing, and sustaining student supports for foster youth. In the second half of the session attendees will be grouped according to the segment in which they work for a question and answer period during which the experts will be available in a consultant role. Attendees not affiliated with a particular segment will have the option of sitting in with any of the three groups.

B3: The Challenge: High-Quality, Youth-Friendly Mental Health Care

Martha Matthews, Children's Rights Project

Fiza Quraishi, National Center for Youth Law

Effective mental health care is an essential support to school success for foster youth who have suffered multiple losses and traumas, and may suffer from depression and other conditions that get in the way of learning and personal growth. But what mental health care do most foster youth receive? One talk therapy session per week with an inexperienced intern, and 15-minute medication management visits every few months? Our challenge: how to get high-quality, youth-friendly mental health care tailored to each youth's individual needs. The EPSDT program gives all foster youth a legal right to all medically necessary mental health care. The Katie A. settlement is intended to reform California's mental health care system for foster youth - but how do we make these rights a reality? This workshop will discuss advocacy strategies and best practices for identifying mental health care needs in the school context, coordinating mental health and education systems and services, and improving the quality of mental health care for foster youth.

B4: New Avenues for Education Advocacy for Transition Age Foster Youth

Sandra Jimenez, Public Counsel

Gretchen Peterson-Fisher, Public Counsel

Come hear about the innovative work taking place to serve foster youth attending high school in South Los Angeles. The Success in Education and Transition Clinic is a school-based approach that makes success in education and transition for foster youth a core practice area with the end goal of ensuring that foster youth can be successful independent adults. The Children's Rights Project at Public Counsel has an Attorney and Social Work team dedicated to serving the unique needs of transition aged foster youth. We will describe the key features of this program and explain how pairing an attorney with a social worker better enables advocacy and legal representation for foster youth. We will then facilitate an open discussion with the attendees on how elements of this model can be adapted to help foster youth throughout the state.

"B" Group Workshops Continued

Tuesday, October 2, 2012 1:15 pm

B6: Tutor Connection : Increasing Academic Outcomes and Preparing Future Educators

Michelle Lustig and **Michelle Bailow**, San Diego County Office of Ed, Foster Youth & Homeless Ed Services
John Halcon, CSU, San Marcos, School of Education
Student/Youth Ambassador from San Diego

Come learn about Tutor Connection, a program that provides high-quality, free in home tutoring services to current foster youth between ages 5-21. Students receive tutoring that varies among subject specific, subject remediation, and study skills/organizational methods. The tutors are future teachers, enrolled in CSU San Marco's School of Education. This workshop will cover the two key pieces of the program including discussion of the course instruction the tutors receive and will explain the process of how caregivers, group home staff and any other adults in these youths' lives can benefit from these services. We will show how youth that are in the tutor connection program build self-esteem and academic progress. This program is a joint effort between San Diego County Office of Education, Foster Youth and Homeless Education Services, CSU, San Marcos, School of Education, & San Diego County Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Services.

B7: Digital Stories

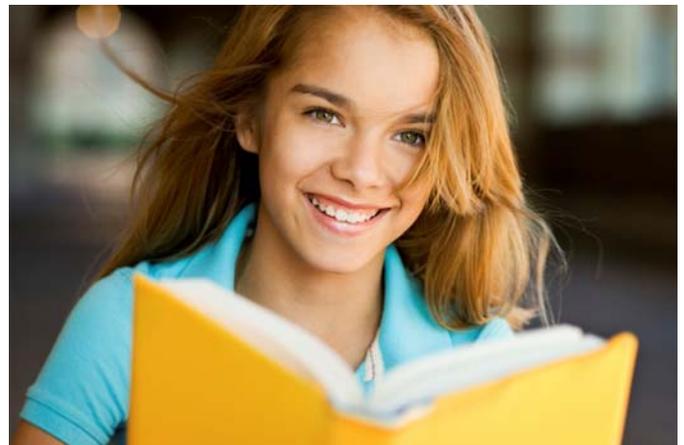
Julie Ngo, Orange County Dept. of Education
Gayle Nicholls-Ali, Digital Rain Factory
Greg Manning, Orange County Health Care Agency

A Foster Youth making their own digital story involves producing a creative masterpiece that includes learning new technology and identifying and writing about one very significant incident in their life. The process includes using their voice and creative brain to put it together, and allowing fellow learners to hear it, view it and congratulate them for the production. Digital Storytelling is both an empowering and therapeutic process that allows the creator to share a very important part of his/her life. The result is truly a sense of empowerment and achievement. You will learn how you can incorporate this process into your work as a tool to help youth realize their goals. Sample youth digital stories, information about the process, and how to get it to your county will be shared.

B8: Collaborating for Academic Success of Foster Children from Cradle to College

Lori-anne Elinsky, **Carol Sittig**, **Maria Gomez**, and **Crystal Alvarez**, San Bernardino County Children and Family Services

This workshop will provide an overview of the role of the Educational Liaison in relation to children in foster care. Come learn about the roles and services of the San Bernardino County CFS Educational Programs. Hear how we measure outcomes to meet our goals of providing services to foster youth academic success. Explore and utilize the CFS "Youth and Family Guide to College and Beyond" through an interactive activity and discussion. And have the opportunity to participate in the questions and answers period.



C1: The Importance of Sense of Belonging Among Former Foster Youth in College

Kizzy Lopez, Renaissance Scholars, Fresno State
Kenyon Whitman, Renaissance Scholars Alumni & Doctoral Student

This presentation will bring together qualitative and quantitative studies which focus on the predictors of success among former foster youth in California colleges. In both studies, persistence toward graduation is identified as a primary predictor of academic success. Join small group discussions regarding intervention strategies derived from the research. Participants will learn how to: apply current research to improve college persistence, understand the connection between sense of belonging and persistence among FFY, describe the role foster youth supporters have in developing sense of belonging, develop strategies in which educators and foster youth advocates can collaborate, and create strategies to obtain money to fund activities that develop sense of belonging and increase college retention.

C2: Trauma Informed Education and Mental Health Practice

Dr. Holly Magana, Orange County Health Care Agency
Betsy DeGarmoe, and **Rebeca Llaury-Juarez**
Orange County Department of Education

Recognition of the impact of trauma on learning and behavior has highlighted the need for cross-system collaboration in addressing the impact of trauma on foster youth. This interactive presentation will present information on the impact of trauma and on evidence-based and trauma informed practices. Participants will be asked to share ideas and strategies for increasing cross-system collaboration toward the goal of developing a trauma-informed system of care highlighting education, mental health, child welfare and other service systems.

C3: User Friendly Career Exploration Resources

John Merris-Coots, CA Dept of Education/Cal Career Resource Network

Come hear an overview of career exploration and planning resources from the California Career Resource Network (CalCRN). The focus will be on CalCRN's FREE resources: The California Career Center, The California Career Zone, and California Reality Check. These easy to use resources provide a variety of tools for exploring future options. Students can use them on their own or with the support of an adult. Begin planning for the future today. All attendees will receive copy of the California Career Planning Guide.

C4: Improving Educational Outcomes for Pregnant & Parenting Foster Youth

Mara Ziegler, Children's Rights Project
Barbara Facher, Alliance for Children's Rights

Come see a collaborative model of working with pregnant and parenting teens to assure they are enrolled in school and working to complete their education. Through the use of case vignettes and group discussion you will learn about a practice model that can be used to effectively intervene with pregnant and parenting teens to improve their educational outcomes. Only about 50% of teen mothers get a high school diploma by the age of 22. Since teens in foster care are 2 ½ times more likely to become pregnant than their peers in the general population, they are a greater risk of parenting responsibilities impeding their education. This does not have to be the outcome. See how with proper support and advocacy, this population can remain in school and realize their potential.

C5: Reducing School Mobility Using School Connect

Trish Kennedy, Foster Youth Services, Sacramento County Office of Education
Cathy White, Sacramento County Office of Education
Veronica Carrillo, County of Sacramento

School mobility has a significant negative impact on children's academic outcomes and educational success. When placement changes are necessary, the biggest barrier to maintaining school of origin can be finding appropriate placement options that would allow a child to remain in their school. To combat this problem, the Sacramento County Office of Ed partnered with Sacramento County CPS to develop School Connect. The School Connect software holds over 100 fields detailing the skills and experience of local foster homes, including the school district information. School Connect is used to match the needs of the child to the family, maintaining school of origin whenever possible. This presentation previews version 2.0 of School Connect, which includes map-based searching and improved tools to make finding placements easy. Find out how your county can use School Connect to increase placement stability and reduce school mobility.

C6: "A to G Relay" - A Fun, Activities Based A to G Workshop

Berj Amir, California State University, Monterey Bay
Matthew Daines, CSU, Monterey Bay

Successfully completing the A to G requirements in high school is the key to university eligibility, and it is important to prepare youth with this information even before high school. The "A to G Relay" is a fun, extremely low cost, method to engage youth in activities that represent each of the A to G requirements, and can be done in two to three hours. Come join this hands on workshop that has the same central principal as the A to G Relay itself; there is no better way to learn than having fun and doing! Participants will take home a modified version of the A to G Relay, and will leave the training with instructions on how to put on a Relay themselves.

C7: First Year & Senior Year - College Transitions

Sara Gamez, Makeda Bostic & Angelica Cano
Renaissance Scholars - Cal Poly Pomona
Monique Allard, Student Support & Equity
Programs – Cal Poly Pomona

Cal Poly Pomona's Renaissance Scholars program assists former foster youth in their transitions to the university and later through graduation into the professional field. This workshop is designed to assist participants in developing a comprehensive seminar that builds upon the seven domains identified in the Casey Family Programs' *It's My Life Framework for Transitioning Youth*. The programs seminar model and best practices will be shared.

C8: School Success Program: Education & Child Welfare Improving Education Outcomes Together!

Mindy Dittman & Violeta Mora, San Diego COE,
Foster Youth & Homeless Education Services
Roseann Myers, San Diego County HHSA, Child
Welfare Services

Come hear how School Success program in San Diego integrates services provided by Foster Youth & Homeless Ed Services Ed Liaisons in nine of the County's CWS regional/program offices and at Polinsky Children's Center, the County's receiving home. Learn how the Education Liaisons serve as a bridge between the child welfare system and school districts so that students in foster care have access to the full array of support services and resources they need to meet their educational potential.

C8 Continued

Come hear about the program's success, best practices, and learn how our program model created a unique opportunity to fund SDCOE staff by using grant and in-kind funding to access federal Title IV-E funding, increasing San Diego County's ability to provide services to foster youth that will assist them to reach independence with a high school diploma. The School Success Program is a joint effort of County of San Diego HHSA Child Welfare Services (CWS) and San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) and Foster Youth and Homeless Education Services (FYHES).

C9: Guardian Scholars Go From Good to Great: Effective Models in Higher Education

Dr. Reginald Blaylock, San Diego State University
Josephine Mojica, San Diego State University

The Guardian Scholars program for former foster youth at San Diego State University is in its sixth year, but serves as a model for post-secondary institutions throughout California. Learn how local and regional partnerships as well as coalition building throughout the campus community have bolstered support services for 64 enrolled SDSU students. See how because of these promising practices, Guardian Scholar students are on a pathway to degree completion.

C10: California College Pathways: Empowering Youth for College and Career

Carol Davies, Fresno City College
Kevin Clark, California Youth Connection
Kevin Bristow, Renaissance Scholars/CSU East Bay

Be part of a lively discussion amongst practitioners in post-secondary education who will discuss the connections and relationships that have been created and maintained in order to provide seamless transitions for youth from one college experience to the next. We will provide a state-wide overview of the community colleges, CSUs and UCs who have innovative and strong support systems for youth at their respective campuses. Representatives from CSU East Bay and Community College Pathways will share their best practices. Come away with a list of resources and detailed information about the programs and services that the highlighted campuses have to offer. You will have time during the workshop to reflect, in small groups, on the information that was shared and discuss new strategies that could be adopted to assist your youth in accessing post-secondary educational opportunities.

Special Topics Work Groups

Wednesday morning attendees will break out into six Special Topic area groups. The groups will spend time developing potential local and state actions and identify next steps for future planning in that specific issue area. Upon registering, you will be asked to pick from one of the following:

School Discipline

Research shows that compared to their peers, foster youth receive disproportionate levels of school discipline, including suspensions and expulsions. Foster youth are much more likely to exhibit emotional and behavioral problems at school than their non-foster peers due in part to the high levels of traumatic experiences many foster youth have endured. For example, a child who was physically abused or has witnessed abuse of family members may react much differently to stressful situations than other children—the child may overreact to a confrontation with a teacher or peer by initiating a physical fight. Alternately, the child may have trouble recognizing risky situations and feel comfortable only when surrounded by potentially dangerous activities, such as drug dealing or gang violence.

Compounding the problem, foster youth frequently change homes and schools, often causing confusion about which responsible adult should be notified of discipline problems at school; consequently, that adult is not notified with sufficient time to advocate on the child's behalf. Fortunately, best practices aimed at addressing disproportionate school discipline are emerging from research and efforts of local education agencies (LEAs) across the state. The findings show that when LEAs create a communication loop between the foster child's school and the agencies that are responsible for the child's welfare under state law (such as the court, the child welfare agency, and the minor's counsel), those agencies can put services in place to address the root causes of the student's emotional or behavioral problems at school, support the youth at disciplinary hearings, and ultimately help the youth avoid suspension or expulsion.

School Stability

Research has clearly demonstrated what common sense has long known—the high rates of school mobility among foster youth has negative impacts upon their educational outcomes. There is mounting evidence from our classrooms, our caseloads, and our communities that school mobility negatively impacts these youth academically, socially, behaviorally and psychologically. School mobility exacerbates the lack of continuity and stability in their lives. School is one of the few places where children whose lives are in crisis can maintain a sense of normality and predictability. It has been known for many years that children in foster care struggle academically compared to the general student population. Maintaining school stability is one to the simplest ways to reduce this disparity. Keeping foster children in their school of origin enables them to remain connected to a consistent team of supportive adults who know them, their learning styles, and their academic and social needs. Foster youth who remain in their school of origin are able to remain connected to their peers, friends, and community, and are provided a better opportunity to succeed academically.

Educational Advocacy

Like all children, youth in foster care need engaged adults to support their education. Studies have consistently shown that children whose parents are engaged in their schooling have better academic outcomes. Parental involvement is linked to higher GPAs and test scores, enrollment in more challenging academic programs, more class credits earned, more classes passed, better attendance, improved behavior at home and school, and better social skills and adaptation to school. The positive benefits of parental involvement are consistent for children of all racial groups and social classes, and in schools of all qualities.

Tragically, children in foster care are much less likely to have an engaged adult supporting their education. This lack of educational support is a significant factor contributing to the lower academic achievement of foster children compared to other youth. Without an adult supporting their educational success, many foster youth suffer delayed enrollment, are funneled into low quality schools and remedial classes, lack meaningful representation at special education planning meetings, and fail to access resources such as tutors or summer school programs.

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Mental Health

Improving access to and coordination of mental health services is critical to support the mental health of youth in foster care. Recently there has been increasing recognition of the need to improve knowledge about the impact of trauma and to increase utilization of evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions within the many service systems that work with foster youth. Trauma has significant impacts upon a student's readiness to learn, and increased anxiety levels interfere with concentration and attention as well as contributing to behavior problems in the classroom.

This issue brief will review two aspects of improving access to and coordination of mental health services for youth in foster care. The first focuses on understanding and addressing trauma and its impact on learning and behavior, as well as developing guidelines for creating trauma-informed mental health, school, and child welfare services. The second aspect will address the impact of Assembly Bill 114 and methods to ensure students continue to receive the mental health services to which they are entitled as responsibility for AB 3632 mental health services transfers from county departments of mental health to departments of education. This section of the brief will contain updates on these recent changes as well as highlight policy areas to watch and address as the impacts of the legislation begin to unfold.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood experiences substantially impact the developmental trajectory of a person's life. Positive early childhood experiences lay the groundwork for strong cognitive development, psychosocial well-being, and good health. Unfortunately, the converse is true for negative experiences. Adverse early childhood experiences place children at higher risk of developmental delays, mental health issues, and long-term health problems requiring early intervention, special education and other health services. Nowhere is this issue more prevalent than for the abused and neglected children in the child welfare system. Infants and toddlers are not only overrepresented in the child welfare system, but also have a higher percentage of developmental delays compared to infants and toddlers in the general population.

Unfortunately, those who care for infants and toddlers in the child welfare system (such as social workers and foster/relative caregivers) frequently do not have sufficient access to information about a variety of critical topics, including healthy early childhood development, the impact of maltreatment on development and behavior, best practices for caring for maltreated young children, indicators of delays in all developmental domains (including mental health), and how to access services to address these needs. Robust training programs on these issues for social workers and caregivers can improve outcomes and give maltreated young children a path towards better health, psychosocial, and educational outcomes. This issue brief seeks to address what training is currently required for social workers and foster/relative caregivers on early childhood issues, what training is currently available to these groups, and what policy options may be used to improve the access to and quality of training in this crucial area.

Post-Secondary Education

Each year in California, over 37,000 foster youth in the State's care continue their education despite their family struggles. Although these youth deal with the emotional toll of their individual experiences with issues such as neglect, physical abuse, or substance abuse, and live in perpetual uncertainty in foster care placements that may change at any moment, these students continue to go to school. In addition to their trauma and the instability of foster care placements, the majority of foster youth also share characteristics that define "disadvantaged" students, such as belonging to a racial/ethnic minority, lower socio-economic status, low levels of English fluency, or having a disability. Disadvantaged students do not excel in high school and achieve college readiness, complete high school, or continue on to college as often as other students.

However, there are a number of programs and practices currently in place in California's education systems, from high schools to universities, designed to support foster students. This broad array of programs provides academic instructional support, orients foster youth towards post-secondary education, ensures foster youth are aware of and take advantage of financial aid and other opportunities and services available to them, and generally works to ease the transition from high school to college and beyond. In addition, there are model programs that work as intersegmental education partnerships designed to collectively and collaboratively motivate and empower students toward their ultimate life goals.