

FosterEd: New Mexico

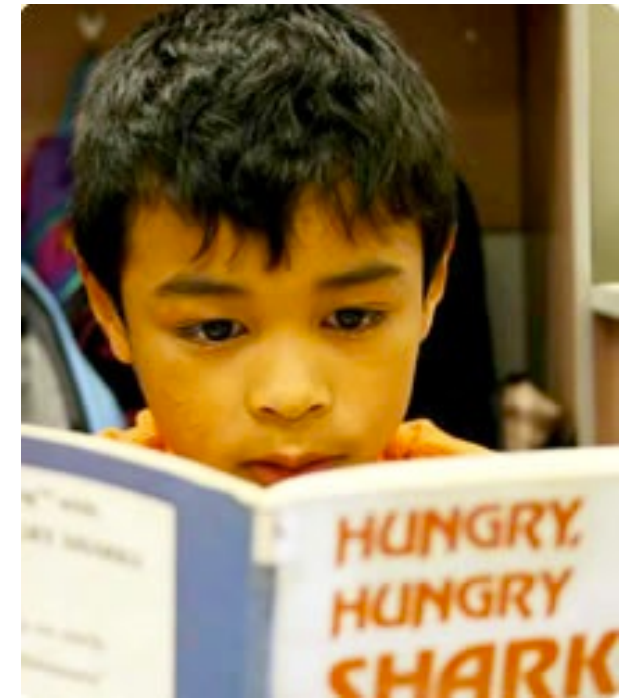


Improving the educational outcomes for students in the foster care and probation systems.

What is FosterEd?



- FosterEd is an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law, a nonprofit organization that works to ensure that low-income children have the resources, support, and opportunities they need for healthy and productive lives.
- FosterEd's goal is to develop and implement strategies to improve the educational outcomes of youth in foster care and those youth that are involved in the juvenile justice system.
- FosterEd currently works in Indiana, California, Arizona, and New Mexico.
- New Mexico is the first state to incorporate youth involved in the juvenile justice system into this project.



Why This Matters



- Foster and probation-supervised youth are some of the most educationally disadvantaged students. Compared to their peers, students in foster care have the highest dropout rates, poorest attendance rates, highest school mobility rates, and poorest academic performance of any other group of students. Probation-supervised youth have higher drop-out rates, high mobility rates, and an overwhelming need for appropriate special education services.
- Closing the achievement gap for this population of young people requires a multi-agency approach, involving deep partnership between state and local education, child welfare, judicial, and community-based agencies.

Educational Outcomes of Foster Youth



The educational outcomes of foster youth are heartbreakingly poor.

- 67% of foster children are suspended from school and 17% are expelled, more than three times the general population.¹
- In a given year, only 29% were proficient for their grade level in English language arts and 37% were proficient in math.²
- Foster youth are twice as likely to be held back in school to repeat a grade.³
- Foster youth attend a four-year college at a significantly lower rate – less than 3% earn a bachelor's degree.⁴

Educational Outcomes of Foster Youth (continued)



Without educational success, many foster youth are ill-equipped to support themselves as adults. The costs are extraordinary:

- 25% of former foster children experience homelessness.⁵
- 33% have spent at least one night in jail.⁶
- 33% of former foster children live in poverty – three times the national rate.⁷
- Nearly half of former foster children are unemployed.⁸

Educational Outcomes of Probation-Supervised Youth



Probation-supervised youth face similarly tragic educational outcomes.

- 40% of justice-involved youth receive **special education** services.⁹ Research suggests that many justice-involved youth require special education, but have not yet been evaluated for services.
- Youth in the juvenile justice system read, on average, 4-5 years **below grade level**.¹⁰
- Involvement with the juvenile justice system quadruples a student's likelihood of **dropping out**.¹¹ According to one national study, 66% of youth drop out of school after they are released from detention.¹²
- One study showed that only 9% of students between 16 and 21 who spent 90 or more days in juvenile justice schools ultimately earned a **GED or high school diploma**.¹³

Youth in Foster Care in Lea County

Point-in-time data as of January 2016



- Total number of Lea County CYFD youth in foster care – 143
- Youth placed out of county (including non-school age) – 33
- Youth placed in Lea County (including non-school age) – 110
- School-age youth (ages 5-17) in Lea County – 78

Youth Under Probation Supervision in Lea County

Point-in-time data as of February 2016



Total number of youth involved with JPO

- Formal supervision, including youth on supervised release and consent decrees – 77
- Informal supervision – 57

Number of youth committed or in detention

- Commitment – 10
- Detention – 6 (some are included in formal supervision count)

Youth Under Probation Supervision in Lea County

Point-in-time data as of February 2016



- Hobbs – 42
- Lovington – 16
- Tatum – 3
- Eunice – 2
- Jal – 1

FosterEd Program Model



FosterEd Program Model (continued)



1. Identification and support of an Education Champion.

- Education Champions are identified and informed of their rights and responsibilities.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, a child's biological parent is his or her Education Champion

2. Development and monitoring of the education team.

- The FosterEd Education Liaison creates and monitors education teams using teaming technology tool.
- Teams include the student's Education Champion, case worker or probation officer, school staff, caregiver, CASA, the student (if age appropriate), and any coach, mentor, or community member able to help the student succeed in school.

3. Development of an individualized education plan based on the child's strengths and needs.

- The education team identifies the student's educational strengths and needs, and develops goals and objectives to help the student succeed in school.
- The FosterEd Education Liaison provides ongoing support to the education team.

Parent and Caregiver Involvement is Key



- Researchers have consistently found that parental involvement is strongly correlated with educational success.
- Controlling for factors such as socioeconomic status, parent education level, and race, studies have repeatedly found that students with “actively engaged” parents have:
 - Higher GPAs and test scores
 - More class credits earned
 - Better attendance
 - Improved behavior at home and school
 - Better social skills and adaptation to school

Parent and Caregiver Involvement is Key (continued)



- Key parental beliefs, behaviors, and capacities linked to educational success include:
 - Expectations and aspirations about education
 - Monitoring educational progress and attendance
 - Discussion of school at home
 - Facilitation of learning at home
 - Communication with teachers and school staff
 - Capacity and confidence to advocate on behalf of the child



What is an Education Champion?



- An Education Champion is an adult who is committed to helping the student succeed in school. Education Champions gather educational information, advocate for the student, help advance the student's school-related goals, and participate on the student's education team.
- Whenever possible, the student's Education Champion should be someone likely to be involved in the student's life long-term, such as a biological parent or relative caregiver.

Building Education Plans



- FosterEd education plans include academic and social development goals across a broad spectrum of needs, from attendance to behavior to college and career objectives to participation in extracurricular activities.
- FosterEd education plans should complement any existing plans, such as IEPs and transition to independent living plans.
- FosterEd education plans are based on both a student's strengths and needs.
- When age-appropriate, youth voice is critical to developing education plans.

Building The Youth's Team: Technology Tools



Goalbook is a secure, online educational case management system and communication tool to track progress on the student's educational goals and objectives.

The screenshot displays the Goalbook web interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the 'GOALBOOK' logo, a search bar with the text 'find students', and a user profile for 'Tyler Smith, Teacher/School Site Staff'. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'My Students', and 'Schools'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column shows the user's profile for Tyler Smith, including a photo, name, title, and email address. Below this are sections for 'Students' and 'Teammates', each displaying a grid of profile icons. The right column features a 'Share' modal window with tabs for 'Student Message' and 'Celebration'. The 'Student Message' tab is active, showing a form with fields for 'Student name', 'Message', and 'Share With'. There is also an 'Upload a file' button and a checked checkbox for 'Share immediately by email'. A green 'Share' button and a 'Cancel' link are at the bottom of the modal. Below the modal is a 'Messages' section showing a message from 'Education Equals' about 'Anna Sample', shared with 2 people about 11 hours ago. At the bottom right, there is a red 'Contact us!' button with an upward arrow.

FosterEd: New Mexico State and County Partners



State-Level Partners

- Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD)
- Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
- New Mexico Supreme Court
- Public Education Department (PED)
- Pegasus Legal Services for Children

County-Level Partners

- CYFD – Lea County
- Fifth Judicial District Court
- Hobbs Municipal Schools
- Lovington Municipal Schools

Key Milestones: April 2014 – Present



April 2014:
Joint Education
Task Force
recommended
partnership
with FosterEd

**October
2014:** First
convening of
state-level
partners

**October
2015:** Chief
Education
Liaison hired

**February
2016:**
Director
hired

**September
2014:**
Pilot site
investigation
process
began

May 2015: Lea
County selected
as the pilot site

**November 2015 –
February 2016:**
Processes and
infrastructure
developed

March 2016:
Case referrals
and case
management
begin

FosterEd: New Mexico Contacts



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Research Cited



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