Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Foster Youth Outcomes

1. Purpose:

a. With the recognition of the critical role education plays in improving outcomes for youth in and alumni of foster care, the purpose of SHB 2254 (Foster Care—Education Success, 2012 Session) is to:

   a. Improve the high school graduation and postsecondary outcomes of foster youth through coordinated P–20 and child welfare outreach, intervention, and planning.
   b. Facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW.
   c. Provide Washington students in foster care wraparound educational advocacy services.
   d. Maintain students in foster care in their school of origin and minimize the number of school changes.
   e. Improve access to post-secondary scholarship opportunities and participation in post-secondary education.
   f. Mandate the timely transmission of educational records.
   g. Improve cross-system collaboration between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

2. Description of services provided:

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, the Foster Care Education Program Supervisor at the OSPI has accomplished the following tasks:

a. Collaborated closely with DCYF to:

   i. Secure the triennial formal agreements, [Regional Education Agreements](), between local school districts and DCYF regarding specific strategies for communication, cooperation, and transportation (including the process for cost sharing of school transportation).
   ii. Create consistent communication schedules with DCYF Regional Education Leads and Education Program Administrator.
   iii. Ensure Regional Education Leads attend OSPI trainings on the roles and responsibilities of Foster Care Liaisons and Building Point of Contacts, Best Interest Determination Meetings, and Foster Care Provisions.
   iv. Identify programmatic needs, process changes, and barriers through partnership with the DCYF Education Program Administrator.

b. Re-Design of the OSPI Foster Care website to allow for easier access to newly updated information and resources including the addition of:

   i. [Best Interest Determination Toolkit]()

    ii.   [Foster Care Liaison Toolkit](#)
    iii.   [Building Point of Contact Toolkit](#)

c. Successfully managed the Treehouse Graduation Success Demonstration Sites contracts and Education Advocacy contracts.

d. Completion of the "Stronger Voices Art Academy" specifically designed for students in foster care through ESSER funds.

e. Improved access to educational information regarding students in foster care by establishing clear and consistent communication with the field through GovDelivery, creation of toolkits (see b above), and providing training to school districts, social workers, Educational Service Districts, advocacy organizations, foster parent organizations, and contractors.

f. Supported a statewide system of foster care liaisons to ensure that their individual districts are collaborating with DCYF, service providers, and contractors and that students receive the services they are entitled to by law.

g. Partnering with the U.S. Department of Education (US DOE) on the national platform to exchange information between state foster care points of contact and hosting national office hours.

h. Participation in the American Bar Association National Foster Care Community of Practice.

i. Creation of an identification system for school-based Building Point of Contacts and inclusion of those contacts on the OSPI Foster Care website.

j. Education and training for school districts and system partners to clarify the definition of foster care and ensuring alignment with the federal definition in HB 1955 (2022).

k. Participation in national projects, including:
    i.   US DOE-funded study regarding how state education agencies and state child welfare agencies share data and information about students in foster care.
    ii.   US DOE National State Education Point of Contact alliance focused on effective practices to support the learning of students in foster care.

l. Membership in the following workgroups to ensure the needs of students in foster care and the schools they attend are represented in higher level collaboration efforts:
    i.   Project Education Impact
    ii.   Passport to College Scholarship Leadership Team
    iii.   Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care
    iv.   Family Well-Being Community Collaborative, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) – overseen by the Supreme Court's Commission of Children in Foster Care
    v.   Removal & Placement Decisions Workgroup (AOC – Commission)
    vi.   DCYF – Mandatory Reporter Workgroup
    vii.   Interagency department coordination with Homeless, Institutional Education, Special Education, and Native American teams
    viii.   OSPI, DCYF, DDA quarterly meetings to address educational impact on foster care students also identified as special education students

ix. Education Resource Wednesday's – OSPI, DCYF, Treehouse, and University of Washington Alliance training creation and offerings for caregivers, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and school staff on educational needs and programs for students in foster care

m. Presented at the following conferences on the federal and state educational stability provisions for students in foster care:

i. Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs Conference

ii. Children's Justice Conference

n. Provided the following trainings:

i. Foster Care Liaison Training (3 trainings) for school district Foster Care Liaisons

ii. Building Point of Contact Training (2 trainings) for school-based Building Point of Contacts

iii. Best Interest Determination Meetings for school district Foster Care Liaisons and school district, DCYF, and Treehouse staff

iv. Judicial Community of Practice through the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts for Washington State Judges

v. Education Resource Wednesday's (5 trainings) for Foster Parents, Court Appointed Education Advocates, and Social Workers

3. Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:

SHB 2254 does not include grants or other direct funding to local districts

Beneficiaries in the 2022-23 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	295
Number of Schools:	0
Number of Students:	0
Number of Educators:	0
Other:	N/A

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

☒ No

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2023	$123,000	$123,000
2022	$123,000	$123,000
2021	$123,000	$123,000
2020	$123,000	$123,000
2019	$123,000	$121,429

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

Fiscal Year	Number of School Districts
FY22	295
FY21	295
FY20	295
FY19	295

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

In the 2022-23 fiscal year the following changes have occurred:

a. The Washington State Legislature allocated funding in the 2023 State Budget for the Project Education Impact workgroup for $75,000 per year in 2024 and 2025 (p. 3789). This funding will be managed through a contract between OSPI and Treehouse.

b. HB 1679 (2023) expanded the Project Education Impact workgroup to include improving educational outcomes of students experiencing institutional education.

c. The Washington State Legislature allocated $2.21 million in the 2023 State Budget for funding of the partial expansion of the Graduation Success program to include middle schools statewide (p. 3830).

d. OSPI's foster care work continues in a virtual environment, including trainings, technical assistance through forums and office hours.

8. Program evaluation or evaluation of major findings:

Students in foster care continue to face adversities that include:

a. Higher mobility than their peers. Most students in foster care attend more than one district in a five-year period, and on average at least one more school and district than their peers.

b. Starting off high school without being on track for graduation.

c. Higher absences than their peers.

d. Lower proficiency rates than their peers.

e. Having a middle and high school experience that includes formalized disciplinary actions.

f. Higher discipline rates across all age groups.

g. Most students in foster care have also experienced homelessness at some point.

h. Students in foster care are overrepresented among students receiving special education services as early as elementary school.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

[Describe any barriers or challenges that impacted program design, effectiveness, etc. This could include funding, logistical issues, impacts from events like COVID, etc.]

There are consistent challenges within both the education and child welfare agencies.

School districts face a myriad of challenges including higher turnover rates, reduction in staff, and fewer funding resources. Many school district Foster Care Liaisons carry additional district roles that impact their ability to dedicate the necessary time to the responsibilities of supporting the educational stability of students in foster care. Additionally, Foster Care Liaisons and Building Point of Contacts are not provided with the necessary training around youth in dependency such as impacts of trauma, child welfare process, impacts of declining attendance and engagement, and special education. Without this knowledge, students in foster care cannot be fully supported in their school and in their educational career.

Within DCYF, caseworkers often lack awareness of their legal obligations under state and federal law regarding the education of students in foster care. Districts report that students are frequently moved to new foster care placements with no communication to schools, often resulting in students missing school. The demanding workloads along with high turnover of DCYF caseworkers doesn't allow for sufficient time to dedicate to education.

Transportation has become a challenge for both the education and child welfare system. Lack of bus drivers and independent providers coupled with the high mobility of students to out-of-district placements has led to the inability of students in foster care to access transportation to their school thereby denying them educational stability.

10. Future opportunities:

Legislation authorizing school Building Point of Contacts, RCW 28A.320.145 (2018), has created an improved framework of support for students in foster care. With implementation of the reporting of Building Point of Contacts in each school, OSPI will be able to train, collaborate, and strengthen relationships with the contacts so they can more effectively support youth in foster care.

The OSPI Foster Care program is creating an Advisory Team made up of foster care liaisons, building point of contacts, school and district-based staff, and community-based organizations. The Advisory Team will act as a forum to share areas of focus and achievements from districts and community, review and provide feedback to the OSPI Foster Care Education Team on new (or revised) OSPI documents/resources and provide recommendations regarding supports for foster care students.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

ESSB 5187 Sec. 501(1)(f) - $123,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and $123,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 163, Laws of 2012 (Foster Care Outcomes). OSPI shall annually report each December on the implementation of the state's plan of cross-system collaboration to promote educational stability and improve education outcomes of foster youth.

12. Other relevant information:

N/A

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

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14. Program Contact Information:

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