

ESSA Academy: Knowing Your Place in the Foster Care Space

March 11th, 2024

Kim Humphrey

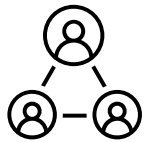
Objectives for Today



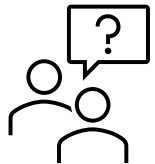
Review the Title I Part A Foster Care Requirements and how the Blueprint for Change can help guide next steps



Explore Data for students in foster care subgroup



Consider ways that Youth can have the opportunity and support to fully participate in all aspects of the school experience



Discuss next steps as we serve our students in foster care



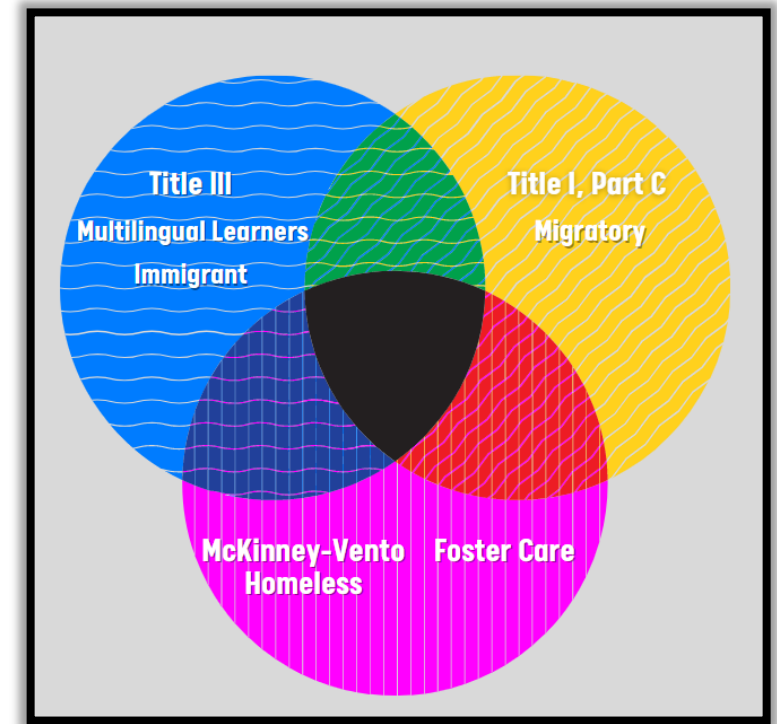
Diversity, Inclusion, and Access Team

Mission

To ensure equitable identification and access to educational opportunities and wrap-around services for students who are multilingual learners, immigrants, migratory, in foster care, and/or experiencing homelessness.

Team Member presenting today:

Kim Humphrey, Foster Care Point of Contact



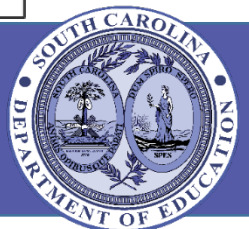
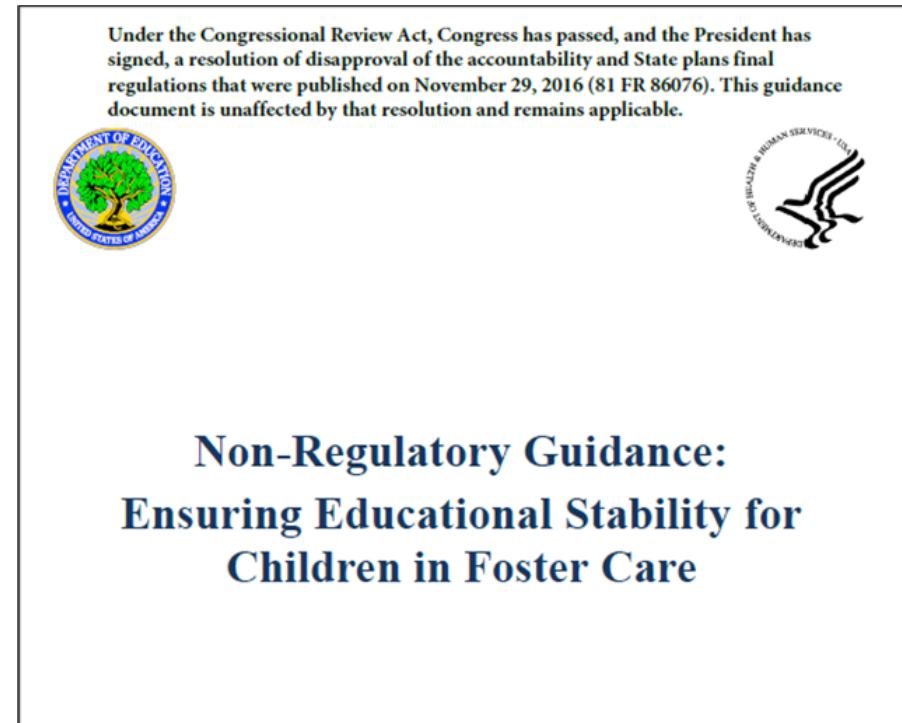
Foster Care: ESSA and Fostering Connections Act

- ED follows the definition of “foster care” established by HHS for the title IV-E foster care program per [45 Code of Federal Regulations 1355.20](#)
- *Foster care* means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency (CWA) has placement and care responsibility.

Foster care includes placements in:

- Foster Parents
- Kinship Care
- Group Homes
- Residential Facilities
- Emergency Shelters
- Pre-adoptive Homes

Check with Local DSS if you have a question regarding a student’s placement classification

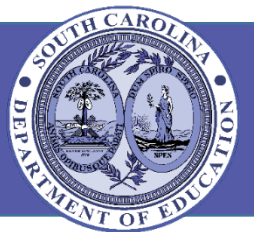


Other Arrangements

Informal Kinship Care

These arrangements are not formalized through the courts or through DSS. They might be recommended by the DSS (might be referred to as a ‘safety plan’ or family preservation), but this is not foster care as defined on the previous slide.

- To make sure a student is coded correctly reach out to your county DSS office
- These situations can be evaluated by the definition of McKinney-Vento



Foster Care Guidance

[Dear Colleague Letter](#) (ED) and
[Children's Bureau Letter](#) (DHHS)
July 25th, 2023

- Ensure your SEA has appointed a foster care point of contact (POC)
- Ensure the best interest determination (BID) process prioritizes school of origin
- Remind LEAs of immediate enrollment/records transfer requirements
- Ensure collaborative school of origin transportation procedures are in place

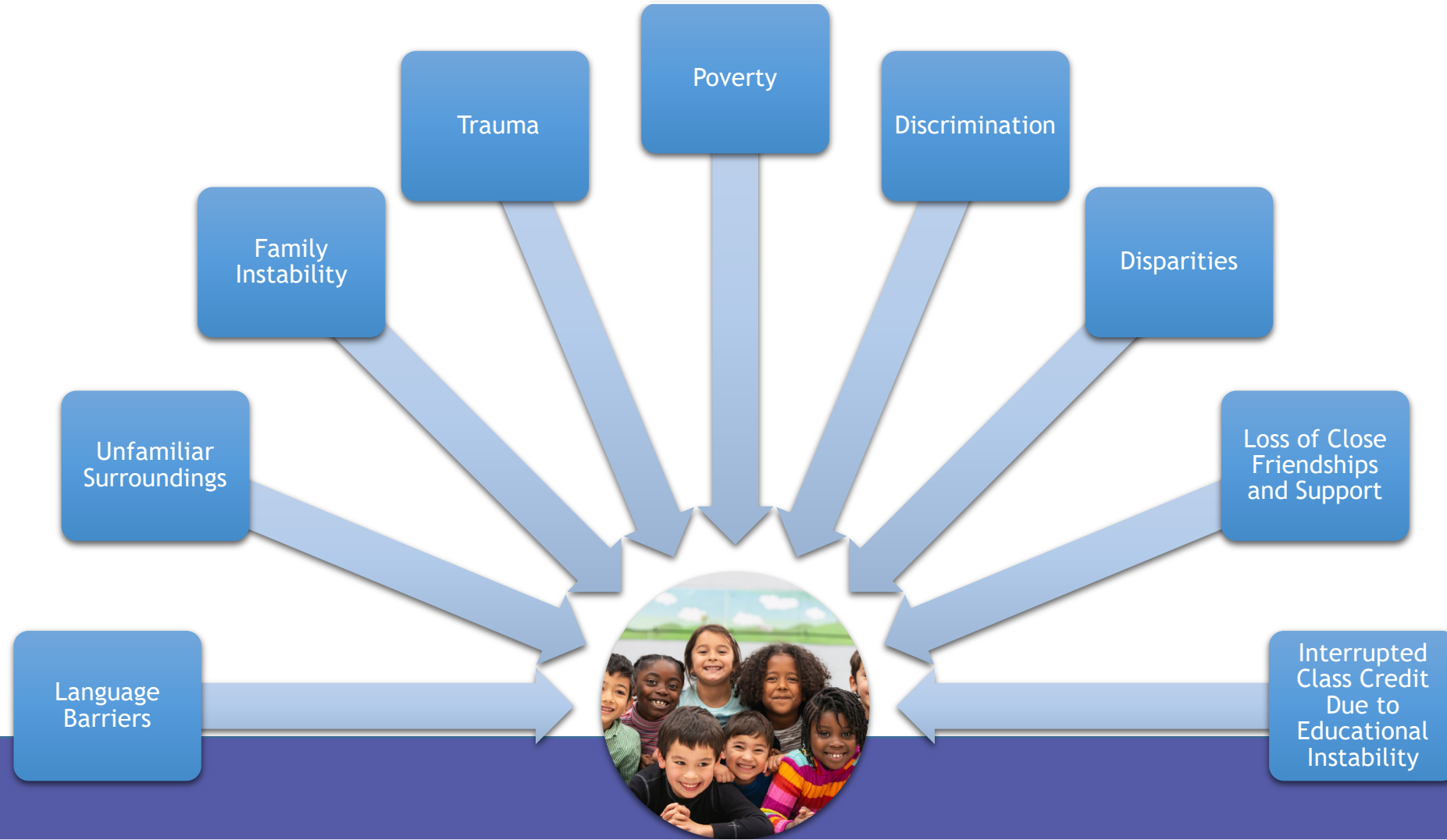
[Blueprint for Change](#) From the ABA: Education Success for Children in Foster Care

EDUCATION GOALS FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

- 1 Youth Are Entitled to Remain in Their Same School When Feasible
- 2 Youth Are Guaranteed Seamless Transitions Between Schools and School Districts When School Moves Occur
- 3 Young Children Enter School Ready to Learn
- 4 Youth Have the Opportunity and Support to Fully Participate in All Aspects of the School Experience
- 5 Youth Have Supports to Prevent School Dropout, Truancy, and Disciplinary Actions
- 6 Youth Are Involved and Engaged in All Aspects of Their Education and Educational Planning and Are Empowered to Be Advocates for Their Education Needs and Pursuits
- 7 Youth Have An Adult Who Is Invested in His or Her Education During and After His or Her Time in Out-Of-Home Care
- 8 Youth Have Supports to Enter into, and Complete, Postsecondary Education



What Students in Foster Care may be Experiencing



Education Makes a Difference

Educators make crucial contributions to the development and well-being of children and youth. Due to their close relationships with children and families, educators can play a key role in providing stability.

Provide continuity in education

Maintain important relationships at school

Provide stability during a traumatic time for the child

Improves the chances of successful completion of high school



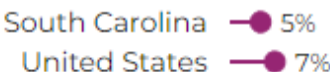
Foster Care Data

Rate of children in foster care per 1,000 children⁶

	South Carolina	U.S.
2018	3.4	5.0
2019	3.5	4.9
2020	3.1	4.7
2021	3.0	4.5

Age distribution

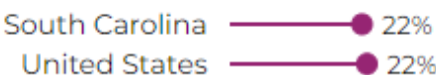
Less than 1 year



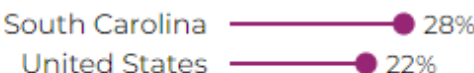
1 to 5 years



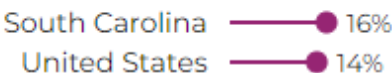
6 to 10 years



11 to 15 years

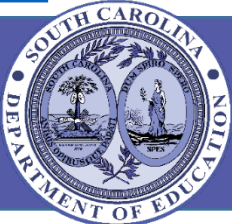


16 to 20 years



We had 3,603 students in foster care from the last Foster Roster List (we are always a month behind)

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-level-data-for-understanding-child-welfare-in-the-united-states>



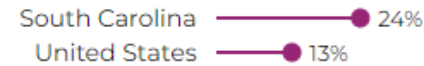
Foster Care Data continued

Reasons for entering foster care⁴

Neglect



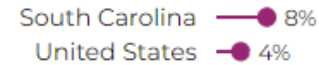
Physical abuse



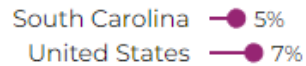
Parental substance abuse



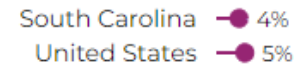
Sexual abuse



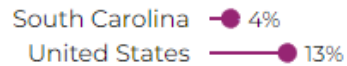
Child behavior problem



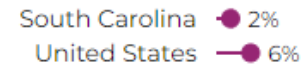
Abandonment



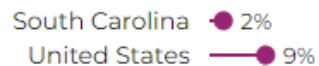
Inability to cope



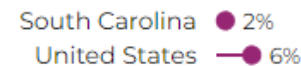
Other



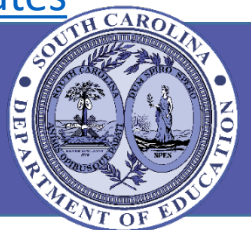
Inadequate housing



Parental incarceration



<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-level-data-for-understanding-child-welfare-in-the-united-states>



Foster Care Data continued

Placement settings and stability for children in foster care

Current placement setting⁹

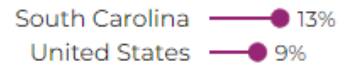
Nonrelative



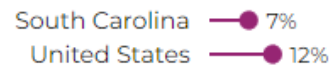
Relative



Group home or institution

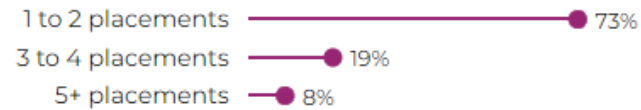


Other



Number of placements by length of time in care

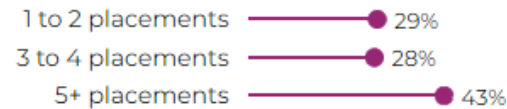
Less than 12 months



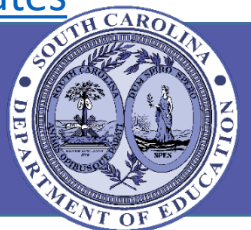
1 to 2 years



2+ years



<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-level-data-for-understanding-child-welfare-in-the-united-states>



Why is School Stability Important?

On a Student's Academics...

Every time a student changes schools, it can take four to six months to recover academically. ¹

Highly mobile students have significantly lower test scores and are far more likely to repeat a grade than stable students. ²

On High School Completion...

High school students who change schools even once are less than half as likely to graduate as those who do not change schools. ³

Foster youth are half as likely as their peers to graduate from high school and are more than twice as likely to drop out of school. ⁴

On the Schools...

High rates of student mobility are disruptive to classrooms and schools, slowing the pace of instruction as new students adapt to school rules and peers. ⁵

Highly mobile students are less likely to be able to rely on schools for important nonacademic supports like role models and social capital, which are extremely important for children in foster care. ⁸

On a Student's Well-Being...

Multiple moves while in foster care, with the associated disruption and uncertainty, can be damaging to brain growth, mental development, and psychological adjustment. ⁶

Children in foster care who change schools often feel stigmatized because of their foster care status and have trouble forming peer networks and support systems. ⁷

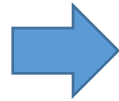


A Shared Responsibility



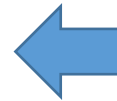
Child Welfare

- Local Case Workers
- Regional Community Liaisons Coordinators
- State Level Contact
- Foster Parents



Enrollment Protocols

- Best Interest Determination (BIDs)
- Immediate Enrollment with Record Transfer/Sharing
- Transportation Plans



Education

- LEA and SEA Foster Care Point of Contacts
- Special Education
- School Staff



Title I, Part A – Educational Stability

- The **school of origin (SOO)** is the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care or at the time of a foster care placement change.
- **Best interest determination (BID)** meetings allow stakeholders to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain at his/her SOO or enroll in the neighborhood school associated with his/her current placement.
- **Immediate Enrollment (IE)** happens if the SOO is not found to be in the best interest of the student after a BID is completed, even without all documentation

Factors to consider during a BID meeting



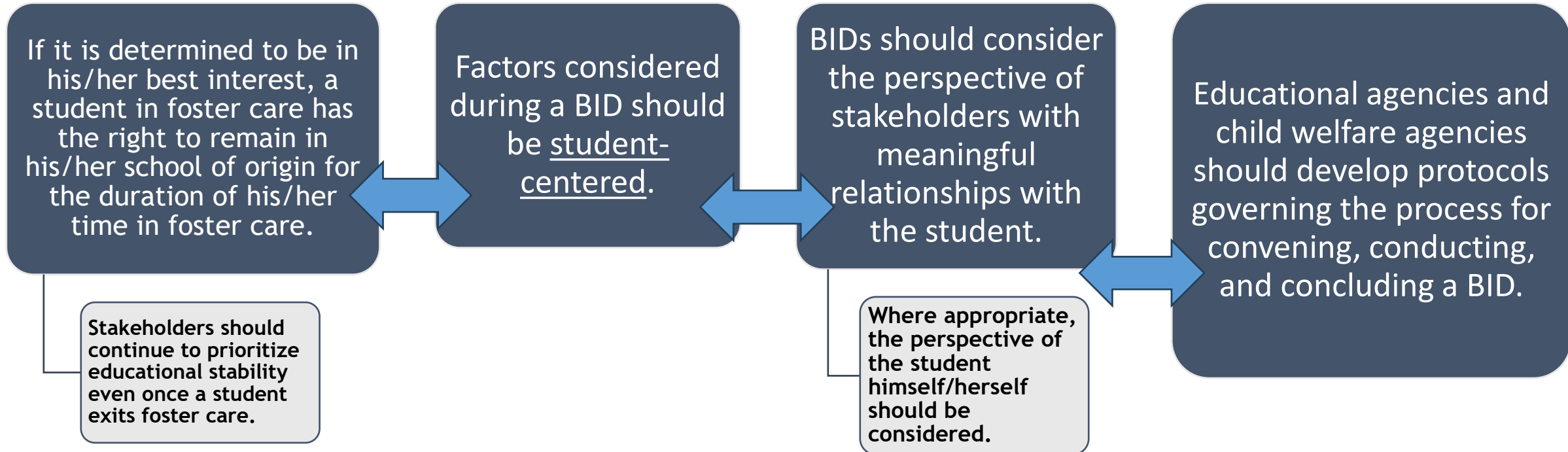
- “all factors relating to the child’s best interest”
- Appropriateness of the SOO
- Student’s proximity to the SOO (after placement change)



- Potential costs of transportation to SOO
- The inconvenience of providing SOO transportation



Implementation Suggestions from the Non-Regulatory Guidance on BIDS



What is NOT a BID

✗ BIDs should not be unilateral decisions

- BIDs are most effective when they are developed collaboratively, with input from education and child welfare stakeholders (when appropriate include the student)

BIDs are not “check-the-box” activities

- ## ✗
- As described, school placement decisions are the lynchpin of the Title I, Part A educational stability requirements, and BIDs are the tool to ensure that each school placement decision reflects a student’s best interest.

✗ BIDs should not be used to change a student in foster care’s school placement outside of the triggers in the law

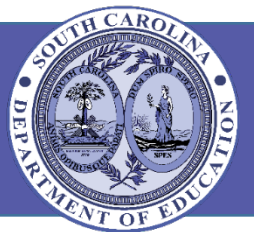
- The Title I, Part A provisions (including those related to BIDs) only take effect when a student enters foster care or experiences a change in foster care placement.



Immediate Enrollment

What is the goal? Seamless Transitions Between Schools to Minimize the stress of transitioning schools

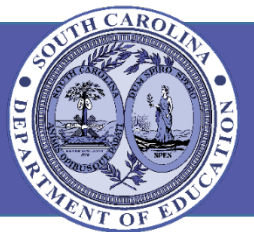
- Students are experiencing a lot of stress in these transitions, and complications in transferring schools can make this worse
- We know that students who move schools are significantly less likely to pass into the next grade that year and significantly less likely to graduate at all. Imagine how impactful this is for our students who move schools 3+ times in a year.
- If a school move is probable, consider inviting the Foster Care Liaison of the receiving school to the BID meeting



Equal Access to the School Experience

What is the goal? Create a sense of belonging for this student with a high number of transitions.

- Make all the parts of school accessible for our students - not just meeting the bare minimum requirements.
- This includes activities like field trips, projects, or school events, as well as things like clubs or organizations.
- This also includes the experiences of being comfortable at school, making friends, and feeling connected.



Transportation Guidance Provisions

Dispute Resolution Procedures

Recommended to help mitigate disagreements related to best interest determinations and transportation funding:

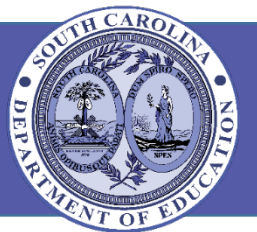
- **Best Interest Determinations**: Where disagreements about placement cannot be overcome, the non-regulatory guidance strongly encourages dispute resolution procedures to designate the CWA the “final decision maker.”
- **Transportation Procedures**: While transportation procedures should clearly articulate how “additional costs” will be allocated, the non-regulatory guidance clarifies that, during the duration of transportation disputes, the LEA remains responsible for providing transportation to the school of origin.



Transportation Funds

How should we pay for it?

- Title I Set-Aside for Foster Care (15 districts have a special set-aside for transportation)
- General Funds
- Collaboration with DSS

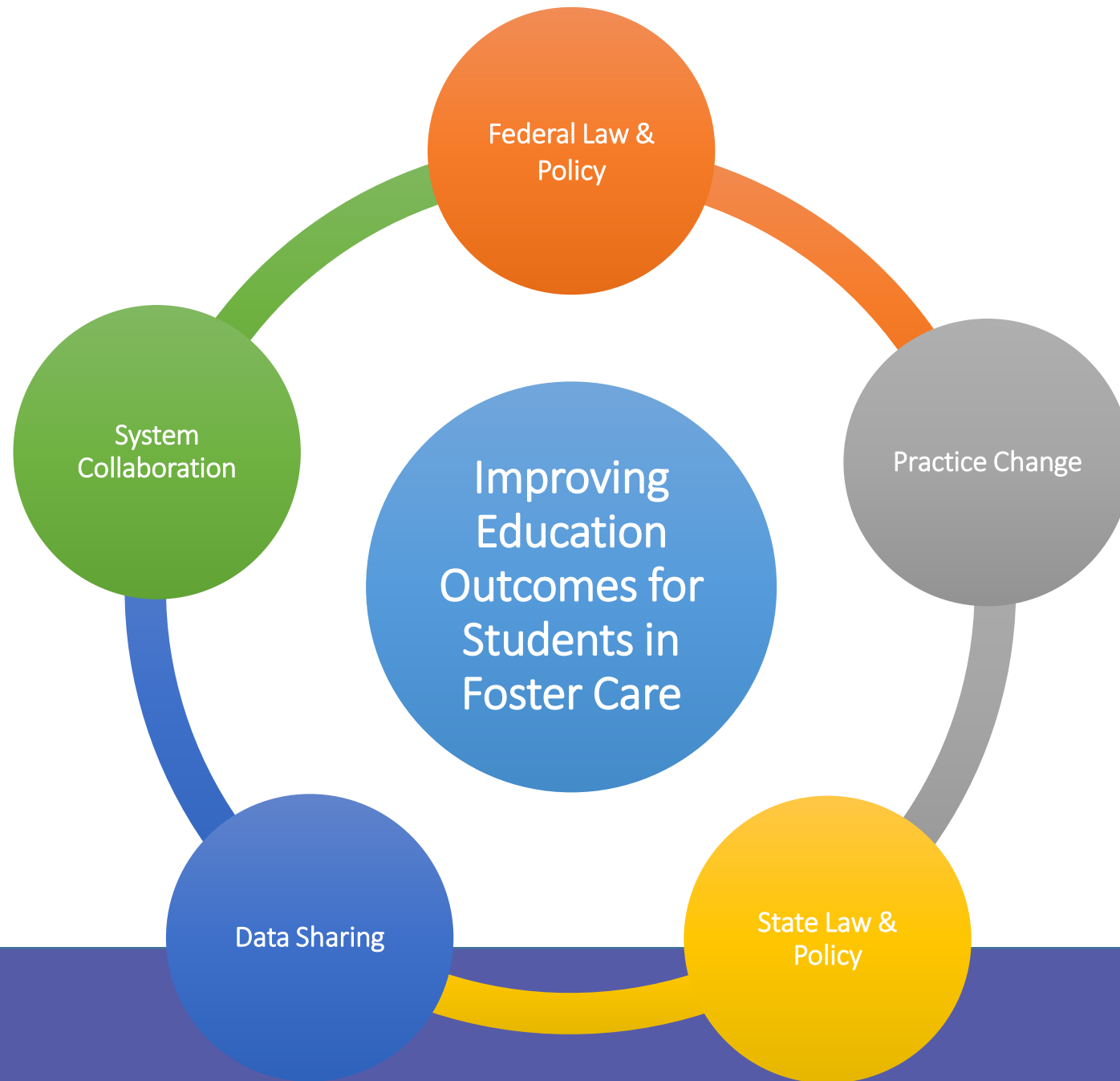


School Dropout, Truancy, and Disciplinary Actions Addressed

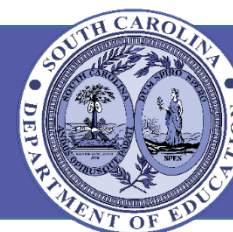
What is the goal?

- Decrease the significantly high truancy, dropout, and disciplinary actions among students in foster care.
- These rates are significantly higher than those among students not in foster care. How can we improve outcomes?





LEGAL CENTER FOR
FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION



EDFacts Initiative

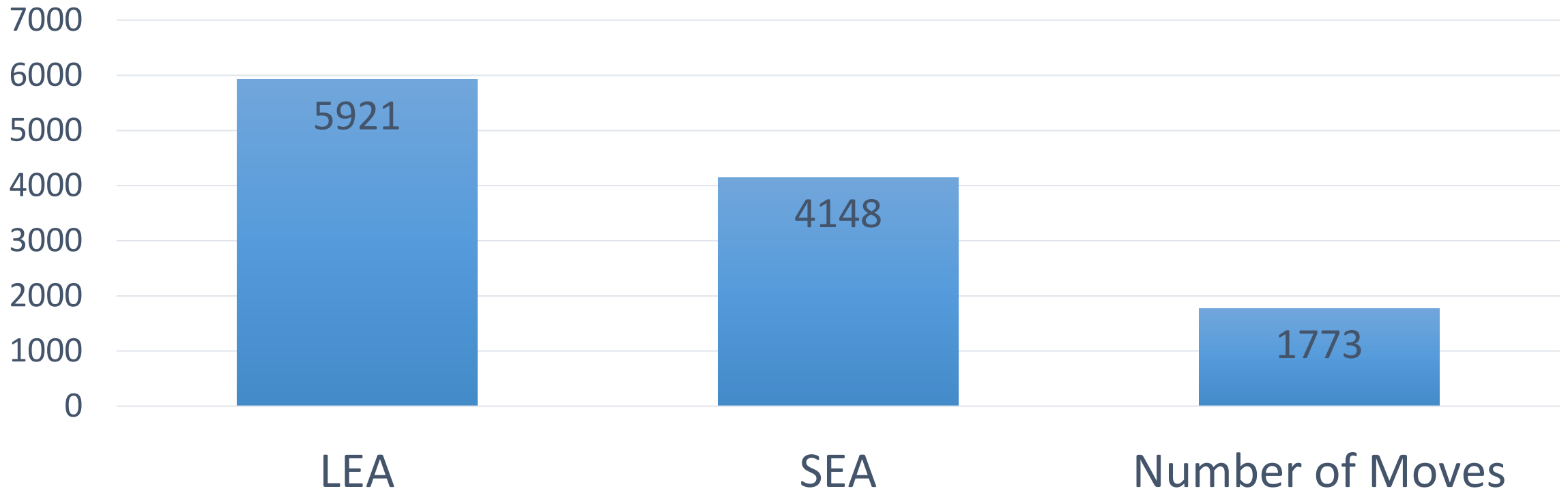
SEA and LEA Data reported to USED

Through EDFacts, SEAs provide USED with the following state- and district-level information about students in foster care:

- Academic achievement on standardized tests
(required since School Year 2016-17)
- Graduation rates
(required since School Year 2016-17)
- **Enrollment in LEAs that receive Title I-A subgrants**
(NEW beginning School Year 2022-23)

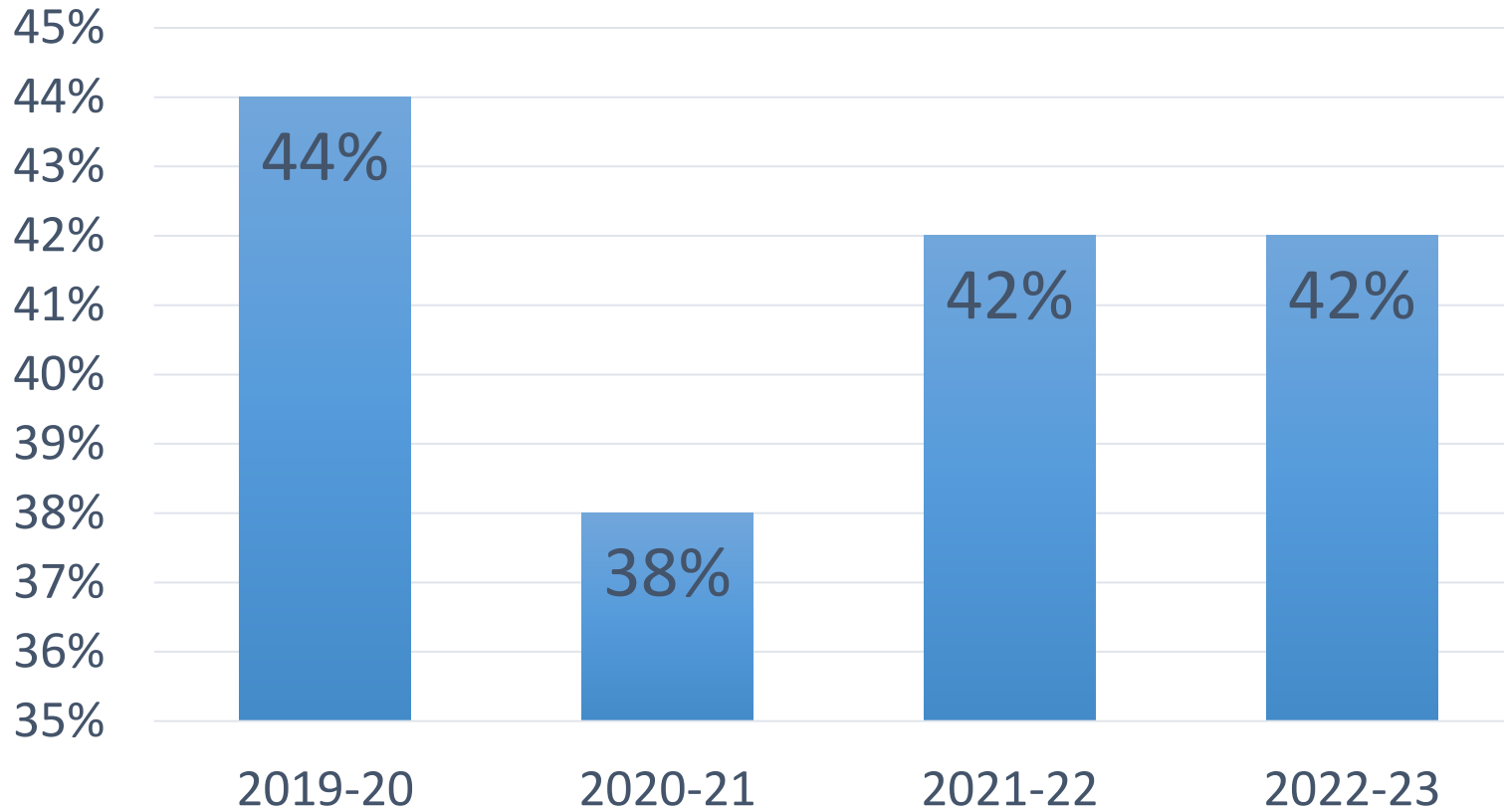


2022-23 Numbers Regarding Enrollment



Foster Care Data Trends in South Carolina

Graduation Rate for Students in Foster Care

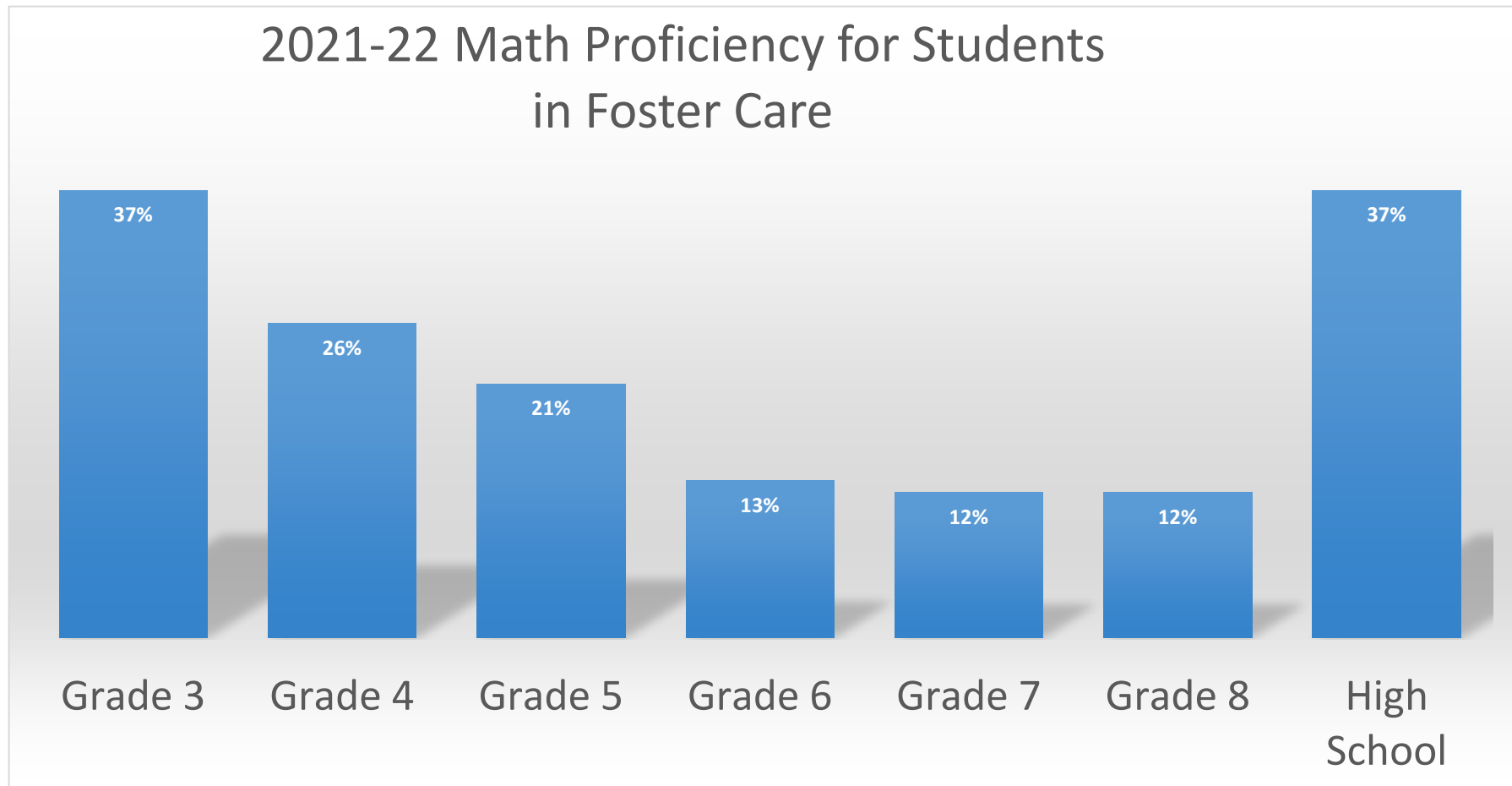


Data Source: ED Data Express, [SC School Report Cards](#)

■ Percent of those that graduated as part of the 4yr cohort



2021-22 Foster Care Data Trends in South Carolina

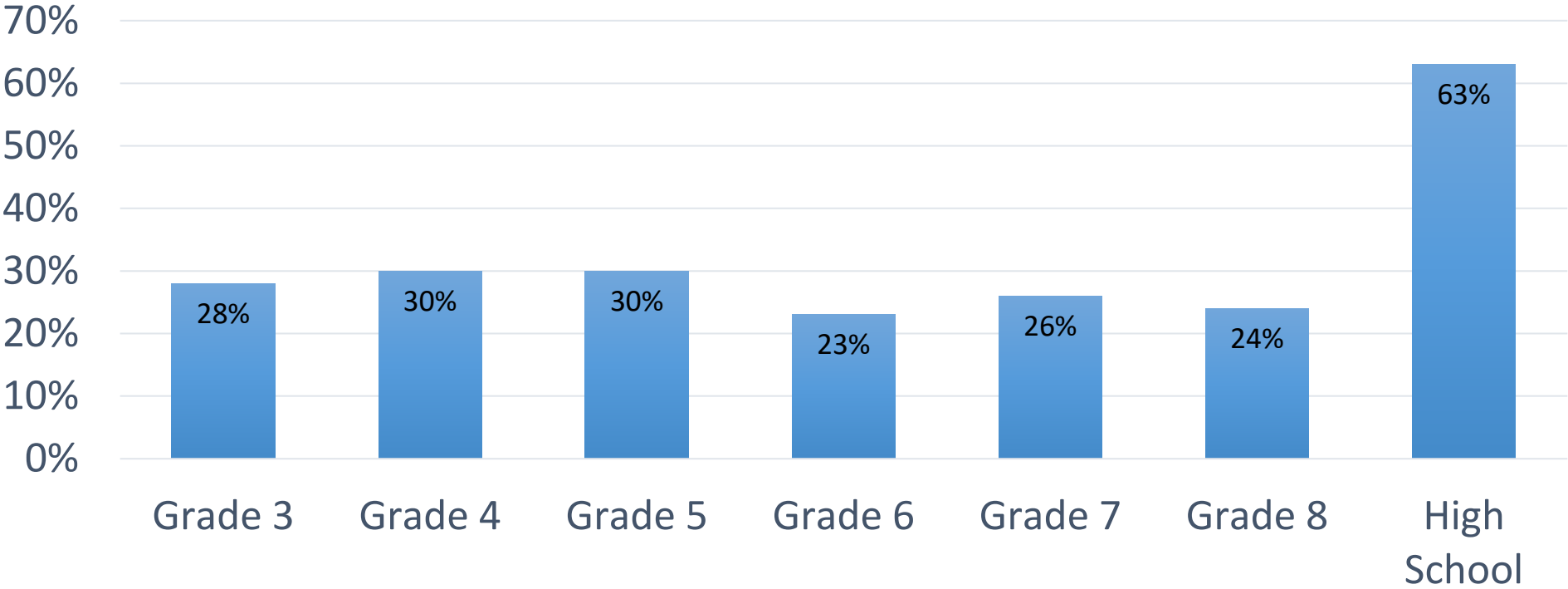


Data Source: ED Data Express, [SC School Report Cards](#)



2021-22 Foster Care Data Trends in South Carolina

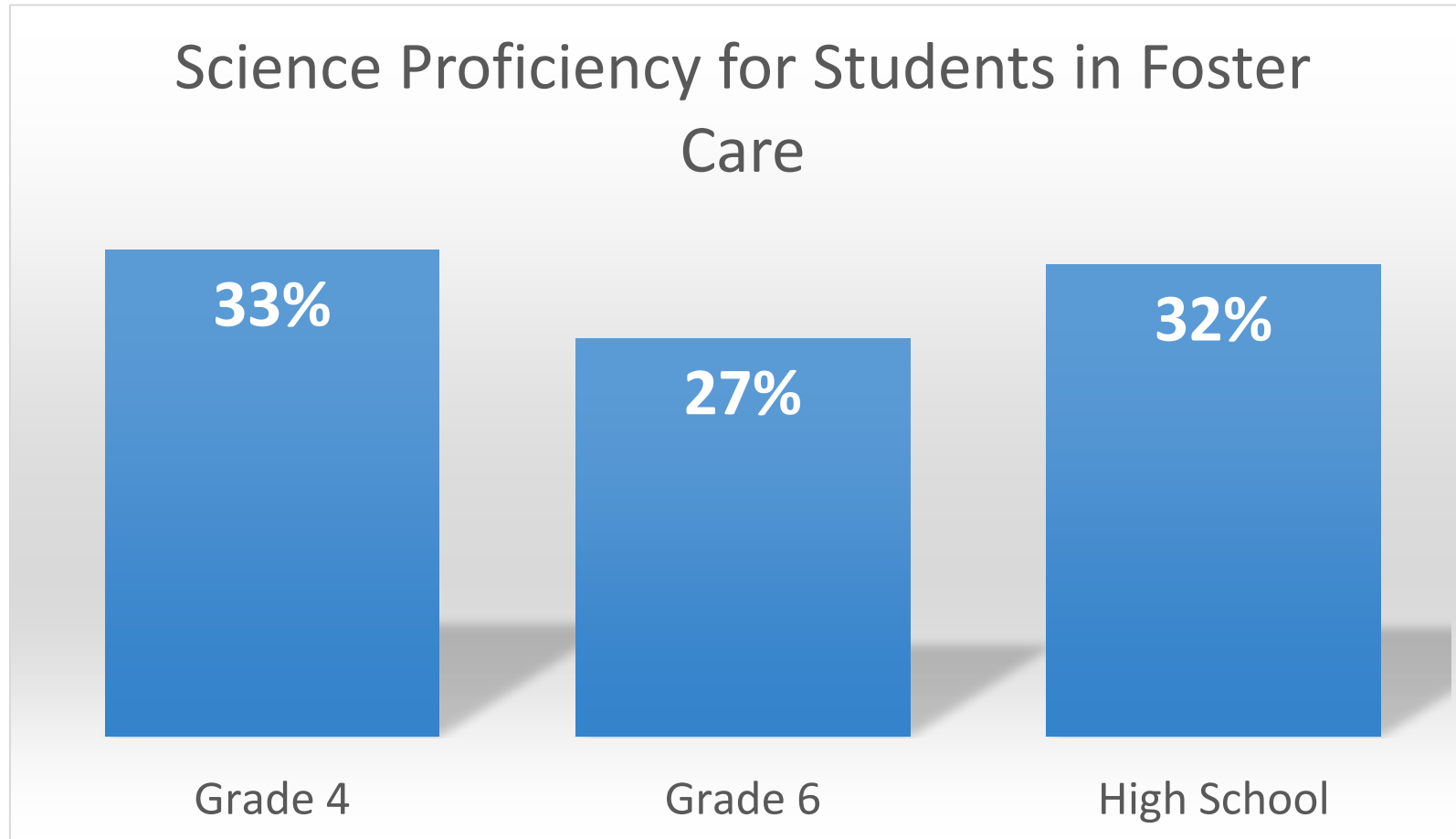
Reading Language Arts Proficiency for Students in Foster Care



Data Source: ED Data Express, [SC School Report Cards](#)



2021-22 Foster Care Data Trends in South Carolina



Data Source: ED Data Express, [SC School Report Cards](#)



Concerning Trends for students in Foster Care

Missing 20 days or
being absent 10
percent of school
days

Two or more mild
or more serious
behavior
infractions

**Low Credit
Accumulation**

Failure in
reading/language
arts or math in 6th
through 9th grade

A GPA of less than
2.0

Two or more
failures in 9th grade
courses

Failure to pass a
course

Ensure that these students are on the radar of your school's MTSS team can help move the needle for student success and well-being



Children's Bureau (HHS) Data Requirements

Beginning in FY 2023, states must report to AFCARS (the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System) several education-related elements for students in foster care including:

- A child's involvement in the special education system
- Current school enrollment
- Last grade completed
- States submit AFCARs data twice per year



Data Helps to Measure Impact

We can “move the needle!”



Data

Knowing local poverty data and tracking historical identification patterns

Leads
→
to

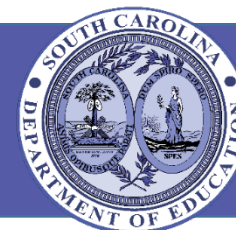
Actions

Designing culturally sensitive outreach and identification strategies

Results
→
in

Outcomes

More students are identified and receive needed supports and services



How can we support our students?

Welcome Packet/Plan for New Students:

Include tour and warm handoff to School Staff

Packet could include:

- Map of the school
- Bell schedule
- Contact info for guidance counselor, admin, and/or school social worker
- School calendar
- Information about clubs, organizations, or sports
- Information about tutoring and/or summer programs



How can we support our students?

Proactive Attendance Monitoring

- Check-in on students before they are considered truant
- Plan for when a student is transitioning schools (Written procedures)
- Intervention plan for students with an increase in absences

DSS Collaboration

- Communication with their worker and placement can lead to faster resolutions, and help keep our students in school



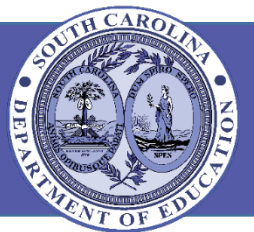
How can we support our students?

Tutoring

- After-school, summer, or during school (such as lunch-bunch) tutoring programs can make a BIG difference in student grades
- Don't forget our younger students. Data shows our younger students are severely behind their grade level in testing

Other After-School Programs

- Ensuring our students in foster care can participate in after school programs can help them feel connected to their school and their own interests



How can we support our students?

Credit Recovery Programs

- Many students in foster care are missing credits due to absences or other circumstances - credit recovery helps them get back on track
- This can happen in the summer, weekends or during school
- Guidance staff can complete a transcript audit to find students in foster care that would benefit from this support



Diploma Planning Institutes

The South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Student Intervention Services will be offering a new cohort of Diploma Planning Institutes in partnership with the National Dropout Prevention Center for school level graduation teams.

- The Diploma Planning Institute process guides school level teams to build school-specific, research-based, and foundational dropout prevention plans that have a high probability of improving performance and graduation rates of at-risk students.
- For more information contact Aveene Coleman at acoleman@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-3057



Questions



Optimistic Closure

Where have you seen a win with students in foster care this year?

What next step can you take to ease the transition of our students in foster care?



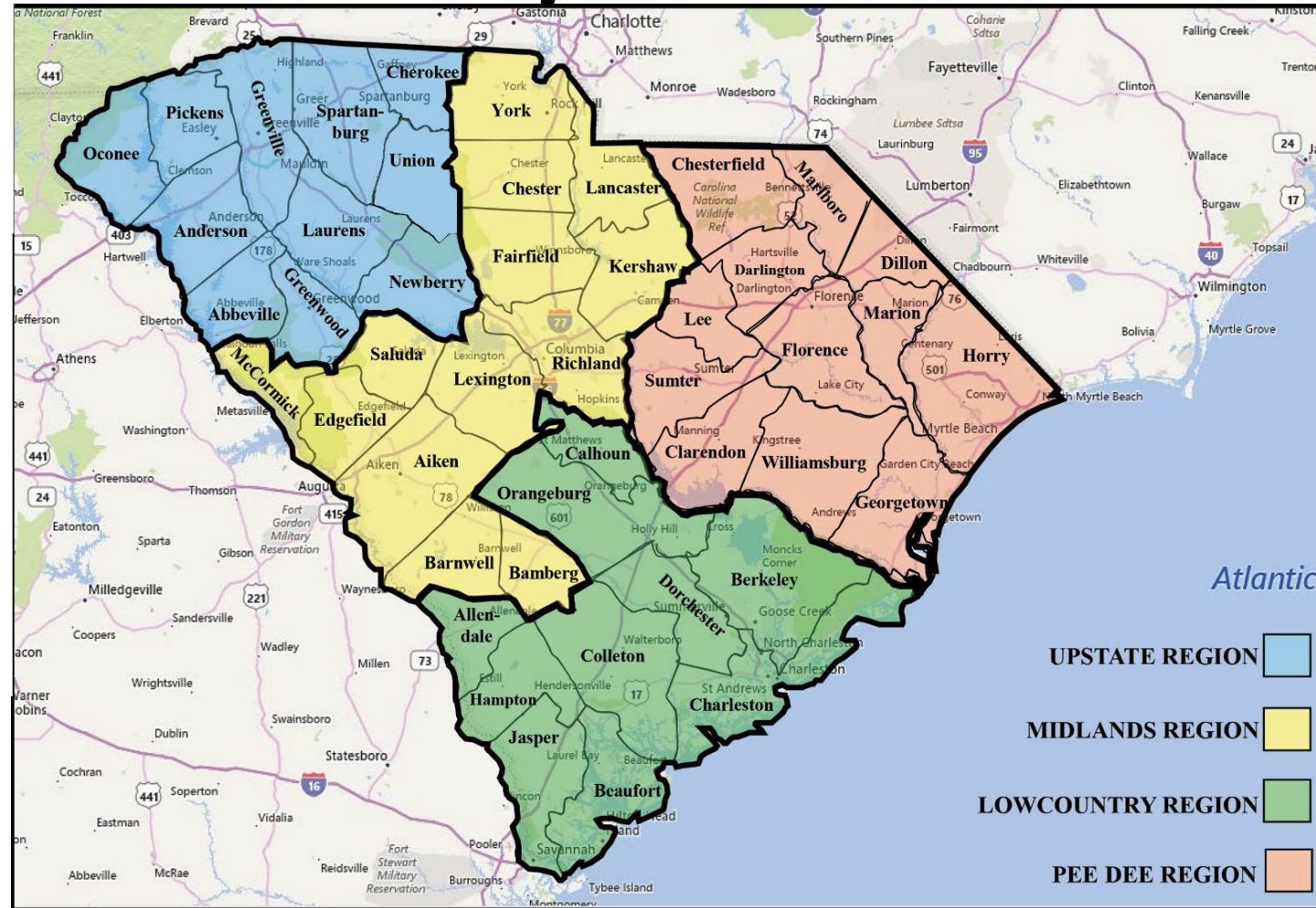
Contact Information



Kimberly Humphrey
Education Associate
State Foster Care Point of Contact, McKinney Vento Program Manager
803-734-3759
khumphrey@ed.sc.gov



Additional Points of Contact: Regional Community Liaison Coordinators



Contact Information

- Statewide Education/Non-Citizen Advocate: Shana Charles, shana.charles@dss.sc.gov
- Low Country: LaVerne Latham, Laverne.p.latham@dss.sc.gov
- Upstate: Tahmeka Pigott-Murphy, Tahmeka.PigottMurphy@dss.sc.gov
- Pee Dee: Brittany Gibson, Brittany.Gibson@dss.sc.gov
- Midlands: Megan Temple, Megan.Temple@dss.sc.gov



Educational Stability Citations

- 1: Casey Family Programs, Educating Children in Foster Care: The McKinney-Vento and No Child Left Behind Acts, p.11 (2007)
- 2: Schafft, The Incidence and Impacts of Student Transiency in Upstate New York's Rural School Districts, p.2 (2005)
- 3: Rumberger et al., The educational consequences of mobility for California students and schools, p. 37 (1999)
- 4: Smithgall et al., Educational experiences of children in out-of-home care, p. 28 (2004); Blome, What happens to foster kids: Educational experiences of a random sample of foster care youth and a matched group of foster care youth. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, Vol. 14 (1), pp. 41-53 (1997)
- 5: Conniff, Bouncing from school to school. The Progressive, Vol. 62 No. 11, p. 21-25 (1998); Sanderson, Veteran teachers' perspectives on student mobility. Essays in Education, p. 4 (2003)
- 6: American Academy of Pediatrics, Developmental Issues for Young Children in Foster Care, PEDIATRICS Vol. 106 No. 5, p. 1148 (2000)
- 7: Yu et al., Improving educational outcomes for youth in care: A national collaboration (2002)
- 8: See Casey Family Programs, Educating Children in Foster Care: The McKinney-Vento and No Child Left Behind Acts, p.7 (2007)



Foster Care Resources

[Legal Center for Foster Care & Education](#)

[US Department of Education Students in Foster Care](#)

[Annie E Casey Foundation](#)

[Child Trends](#)

[South Carolina Department of Education](#)

[SC Report Cards](#)

[ED Data Express](#)

