



# **Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care: Education and Child Welfare Points of Contact**

**August 17, 2016**

*Other than statutory and regulatory requirements included in the document, the contents of this guidance do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.*

# TODAY'S PRESENTERS

- **Stevi Steines**

Chief Deputy, Administration on Children, Youth and Families,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- **Kelly Fitzpatrick**

Policy Advisor, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy  
Development, U.S. Department of Education

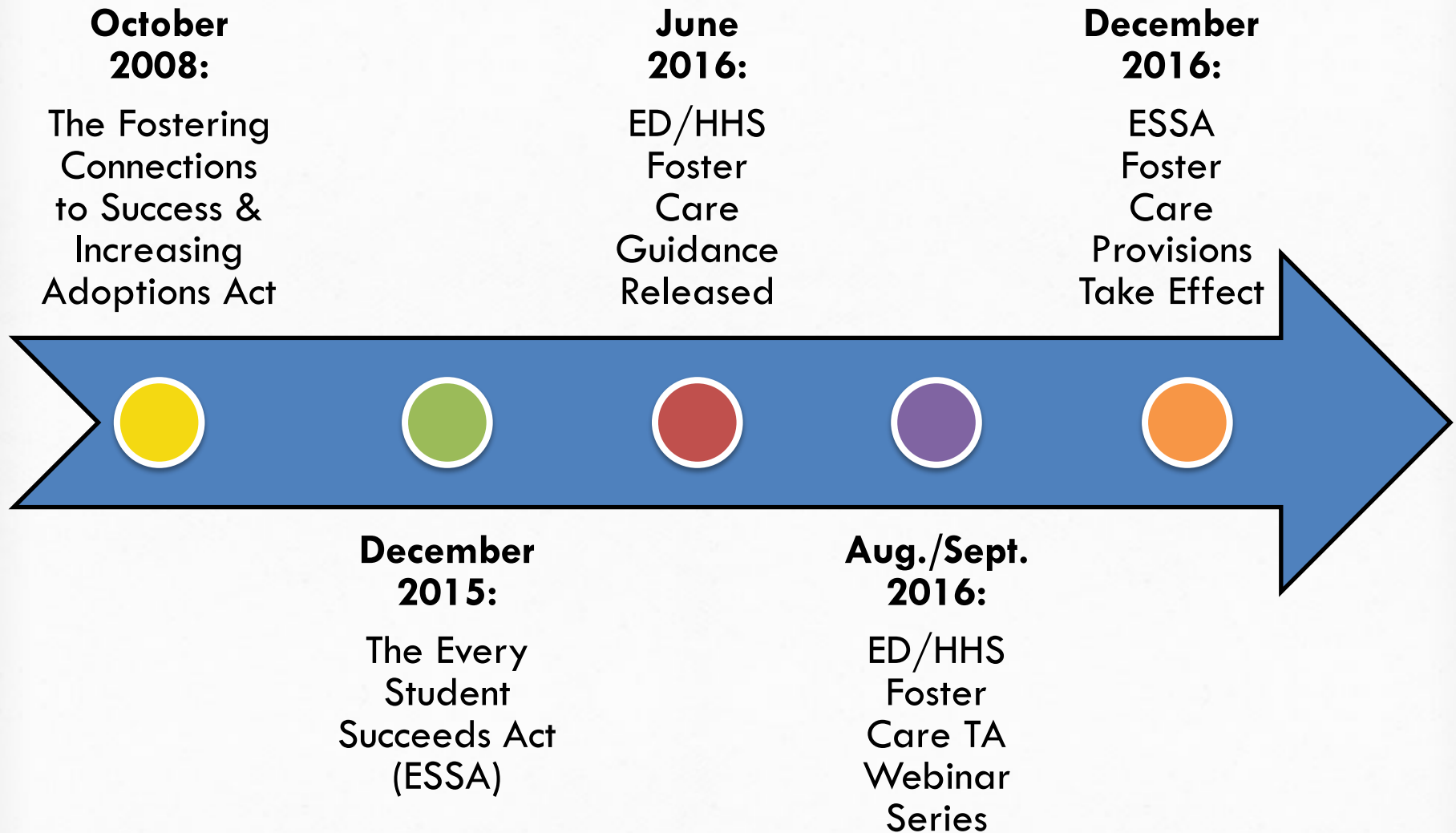
- **Lessons from the Field**

- **Sheree Wheeler**, State Coordinator for Foster Care Education, Colorado Department of Education
- **Cindi Horshaw**, Bureau Director, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
- **Samantha Murphy**, Education Liaison, Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# TODAY'S AGENDA

- Provide an overview of the federal framework for ensuring educational stability for children in foster care
- Unpack the Every Student Succeeds Act provisions related to educational and child welfare points of contact (POCs)
- Learn lessons from early implementation in Colorado and Pennsylvania
- Q&A

# EDUCATIONAL STABILITY: A TIMELINE



# KEY ESSA PROVISIONS

- Children in foster care remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his or her best interest.
- If it is in the best interest of the child to leave the school of origin, the child must be immediately enrolled in the new school even if they don't have the required documentation. The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain the child's records.
- LEAs must collaborate with CWAs to develop and implement clear written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of a child's time in foster care.

# MCKINNEY-VENTO PROVISIONS

- The phrase “awaiting foster care placement” will be removed from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s definition of homeless children and youth on December 10, 2016 for non-covered states
  - For covered states, or a state that has a statutory law that defines the phrase “awaiting foster care placement,” it will be removed December 10, 2017
- Some children in foster care may still be eligible for McKinney-Vento services (e.g., youth who are living in transitional shelters or motels)

# JOINT GUIDANCE

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**Access the joint guidance here:**

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/edhhsfostercarenonregulatorguide.pdf>

**Access the Joint Guidance Overview webinar here:**

<http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/EducationStability.aspx>



# Education and Child Welfare POCs



# POINT OF CONTACT (POC)

## ESSA REQUIREMENTS

- **SEAs** must provide an assurance that they will designate a POC for CWAs
  - POC cannot be the McKinney-Vento State coordinator for homeless youth
- **LEAs** must provide an assurance that they will designate a POC for the corresponding CWA, if the CWA notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designated a POC

# POINT OF CONTACT (POC)

## GUIDANCE PROVISIONS

### SEA POCs

- Should be designated as soon as possible
- Responsibilities include:
  - Monitoring LEAs and coordinating with the State CWA to issue state guidelines
  - Establishing uniform criteria around best interest determination and guidelines for transportation procedures
  - Facilitating data sharing with State and tribal CWAs
  - Provide professional development opportunities for LEA POCs

# POINT OF CONTACT (POC)

## GUIDANCE PROVISIONS

### LEA POCs

- Should be designated as soon as possible—even if local CWAs haven't notified LEAs in writing
- Responsibilities include:
  - Coordinating with local CWAs to develop a process for implementing ESSA provisions
  - Leading development of best interest determination process
  - Facilitating the transfer of records and immediate enrollment and data sharing with CWAs
  - Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures

# POINT OF CONTACT (POC)

## GUIDANCE PROVISIONS

### **BOTH SEA & LEA POCs**

- Should have the sufficient capacity and resources to guide the implementation of the ESSA provisions

# POINT OF CONTACT (POC)

## GUIDANCE PROVISIONS

### STATE & LOCAL CHILD WELFARE POCs

- CWAs are not required to designate POCs but are highly encouraged to do so
  - Local CWAs should send a letter to relevant LEAs as soon as possible identifying their POC
- Responsibilities include coordinating with SEAs and LEAs to develop a process for implementation
- Should serve as the primary POC between schools, families, and other service providers



# Lessons from the Field

# LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: COLORADO

## GUEST PRESENTER

### **Sheree Wheeler**

Foster Care Education State Coordinator  
Colorado Department of Education  
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# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM



This program, established in 2012, is dedicated to ensuring that students in foster care are achieving academically through course completion, advancing to the next grade, accruing credits toward graduation, and on a path to post secondary success. These efforts are being organized by the State Coordinator for Foster Care Education, who is leading this work.

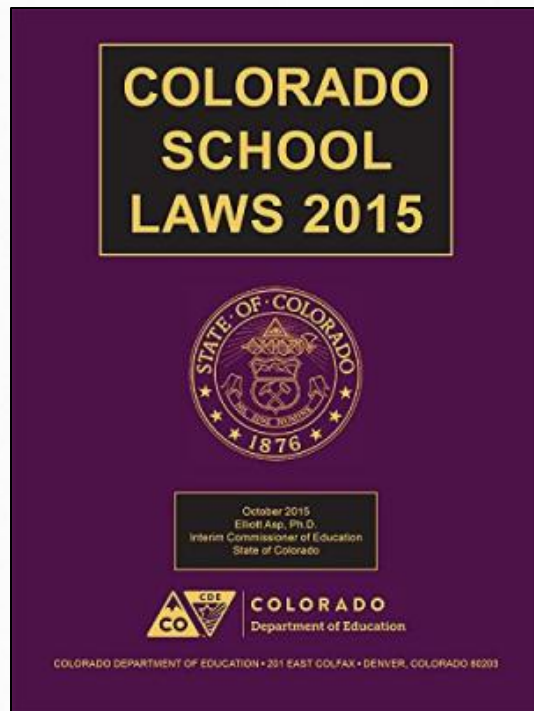


# COLORADO LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Colorado Revised Statute 22-32-138 mandates children who are in out-of-home placements, including but not limited to foster care, deserve access to the same opportunities as other students to:

- Meet the academic achievement standards to which all students are held;
- Maintain stable school enrollments;
- Be placed in the least restrictive educational environments; and
- Have access to the same academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities

# COLORADO LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK



- Each of the 178 school districts and the state Charter School Institute must designate a Child Welfare Education Liaison (CWEL)
- CWELs help to ensure proper school placement, transfer, and enrollment of foster students
- CDE has created an FAQ summarizing this piece of legislation

# CWEL DUTIES

The duties of the liaison include working with child welfare staff and advocates to facilitate prompt and appropriate actions for the educational wellbeing of students in foster care. Duties include but are not limited to:

- School placement,
- Transfers, and
- Enrollment in schools

# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## FOSTER CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM WEBPAGE

Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement Home

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Adult Education Initiatives

Alternative Education

Colorado Graduation Pathways

District to District Student Transfers and Transitions

Expelled and At-Risk Student Service (EARSS)

Foster Care Education

Legislation and Guidance

Resources and Links

Contact Us

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Best Practice Guide for Dropout Prevention

Reports and Data

Resources

Contact Us

More Information

School Counselor Corps

Home

Foster Care Education: Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth

This program, established in 2012, is dedicated to ensuring that students in foster care are achieving academically through course completion, advancing to the next grade, accruing credits toward graduation, and on a path to post-secondary success. These efforts are being organized by the new State Coordinator for Foster Care Education, who will be leading this work. This position was created in partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Morgridge Family Foundation, and Mile High United Way.

Foster Care Program Overview

Foster Care Fact Sheet (PDF)

School District CWEL Designation Information

Under C.R.S. 22-32-138, each school district and the state charter school institute, shall designate a person to act as the Child Welfare Education Liaison (CWEL) for the district. The duties of the liaison include; working with child placement agencies, county departments, and the state department to facilitate the prompt and appropriate placement, transfer, and enrollment in school of students in out-of-home placement.

Child Welfare Education Liaison (CWEL) Directory (XLS)



Legislation and Guidance

View Legislation and Guidance



Resources and Links

View Resources and Links



**Access Colorado's Foster Care Education Webpage:**  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare\\_index](http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare_index)

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# LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: PENNSYLVANIA

## GUEST PRESENTERS

### **Cindi Horshaw**

Bureau Director

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

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### **Samantha Murphy**

Resource Services Manager/Education Liaison  
Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
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# Education Liaisons



- 2008 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)
  - PA did well in assessing children's educational needs.
  - PA needed improvement in assuring appropriate services were provided or arranged.
- Juvenile Court Rules require specific findings regarding education matters
  - Staff will be better prepared to respond to judicial inquiries
- PA DHS Bulletin issued September 2010
  - Critical role of county agencies to monitor the education of all children receiving services
  - Appointment of at least 1 education liaison in each county; or
  - Documentation on how they will meet the following requirements:
    - Central point of contact;
    - Education screen and intervals;
    - Case records;
    - School stability;
    - Collaboration with LEA's;
    - Special education decision makers; and
    - Access to post secondary education opportunities.
- Provide guidance and technical assistance to all staff
- May be one of many job responsibilities

- PA is state-supervised, county-administered
  - 67 counties in PA
  - County staff are funded through state, local and federal monies
- Claim administrative costs for work done by the education liaison
  - Caseworkers are:
    - Employed by the county children and youth agency;
    - Working with youth who fall under the umbrella of child welfare; not all youth; and
    - Not acting in lieu of school officials or functioning under the Department of Education (PDE) purview.

# Collaboration and Next Steps



- State level collaboration models local level collaboration
  - DHS and PDE monthly meetings
- PDE is in the process of **hiring the required Point of Contact** staff member.
  - Once hired, monthly calls between PDE Point of Contact and DHS representative will start taking place.
- In partnership with DHS, PDE will offer an **informational briefing concerning ESSA's foster care provisions** on September 15 from 3-4 PM.
- Review/update **Truancy Toolkit foster care section**.
- PDE will provide **technical assistance to LEAs**:
  - Preparing their transportation plan that have to be ready by December 10, 2016;
  - Revising their Title I application to allocated funds for the LEA foster care point of contact person.
- Since there is similarity between McKinney Vento and Foster Care, **LEAs will be invited to attend upcoming McKinney Vento trainings**.

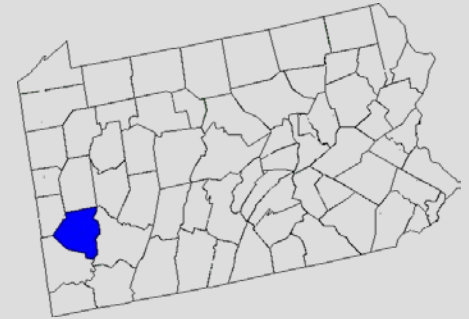


- DHS Bulletin can be found at  
<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/publications/bulletinsearch/bulletinselected/index.htm?bn=3130-10-04&o=N&po=OCYF&id=09/17/2010>
- PDE efforts related to ESSA can be found at  
<http://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act.aspx#tab-1>

# Allegheny County

## Dept. of Human Services

- Employing over 1,000 staff
- Serving every 5th resident, largest county department
- Funding nearly 400 providers for 1,600 distinct services



## Office of Children, Youth and Families

- 1 of 5 Program Offices in the Department
- At one point in time:
  - 3,567 children in 1,689 families were receiving services
  - 1,274 of these children were in out-of-home placement
  - 1,112 of these children were in foster care. About two-thirds of those in out-of-home placement were placed with kin.



# EDUCATION LIAISONS

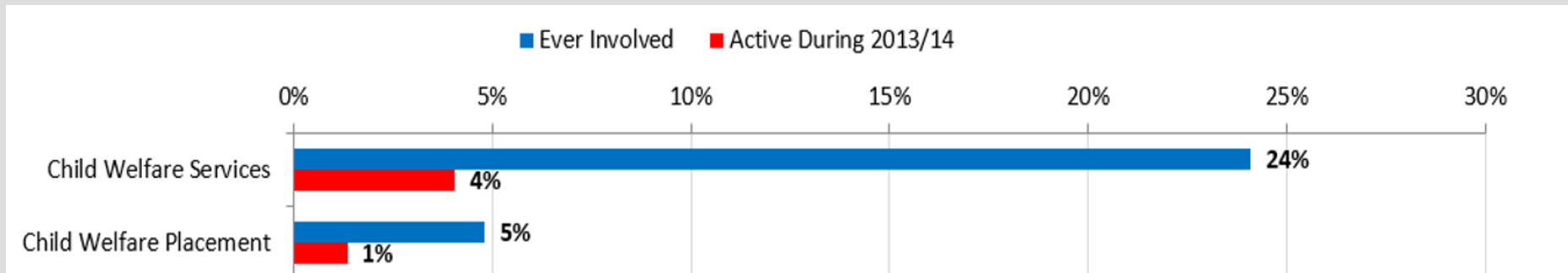
- State requirement
- Local investment – keeping the ear of administration
- Based in good customer services & solid knowledge of resources
- Value on relationships and communication
- Model and teach advocacy skills to child welfare professionals – acknowledge their stress/frustration
- Understand trauma informed language and help educators understand the challenges of students in child welfare – acknowledge their stress/frustration
- Training/Event Planning
- Act as a point of contact **for schools** ABOUT children in child welfare
- Act as a “subject matter expert” **for child welfare staff and provider staff** ABOUT education
- Data – data – data

DHS Office	Education Focused Efforts
Executive	DHS Education Liaison DHS-wide education consent, DHS 200 Focus on Attendance School Counselor dedicated to young people in foster care (enrollment/records) Resource support in Magistrate Hearings (truancy) Independent Living Initiative/Youth Support Partners (TAY in foster care)
Office of Community Services	Early Learning (part of the Head Start/Early Head Start collaborative) Family Support (school readiness) AmeriCorps KEYS Homelessness/Education Funding for afterschool providers
Child Welfare	Areas of focus: education stability and truancy/attendance
Data Analysis Research & Evaluation	Data sharing with school districts Analysis for schools – education outcomes for human service/probation involved young people
Intellectual Disability	Identification of transition aged young people in county ID services into adulthood
Office of Behavioral Health	Children's Team School Based Liaisons – SAP teams, monitors, administrative partners Education Specialists – assistance for those with special ed needs Mental Health partnerships in schools Drug & Alcohol partnerships in schools

# UNDERSTANDING COMMON DATA

## “OPENS UP THE CONVERSATION”

- Data Sharing Agreements
  - <http://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/category/topics/education/>



# Questions for Panelists?



# Technical Assistance

# JOINT ED-HHS WEBINAR SERIES

Webinar Topic	Date
Points of Contact	August 17, 2016
Best Interest Determination & Immediate Enrollment	August 24, 2016
Transportation	August 31, 2016
Dispute Resolution and Collaboration	September 7, 2016

**All webinars will be held from 2 – 3 PM ET**

**Access the Joint Guidance Overview webinar here:**

<http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/EducationStability.aspx>



# QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION?

CONTACT US!

## SEAs & LEAs

- Send questions to ED's ESSA mailbox:  
[essa.questions@ed.gov](mailto:essa.questions@ed.gov)



## CWAs

- The Children's Bureau (CB) provides technical assistance through the Capacity Building Center for States
  - For additional information, reach out to your Center for States Liaison  
(<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/map>)

# Thank you!