



Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care: Effective Collaboration

September 7, 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

- **Mary Myslewicz**

Casey Fellow, Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of
Education

- **Lessons from the Field**

- **Kathleen McNaught**, Project Director, Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- **Judge Robert Hofmann**, 452nd District Court Judge, Vice Chair of the Children's Commission, and Chair of Foster Care & Education Committee
- **Jamie Bernstein**, Staff Attorney, Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission)
- **Kelly Kravitz**, State Coordinator, Foster Care Education & Policy and McKinney-Vento Homeless Programs, Texas Education Agency
- **Jenny Hinson**, Division Administrator for Permanency, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

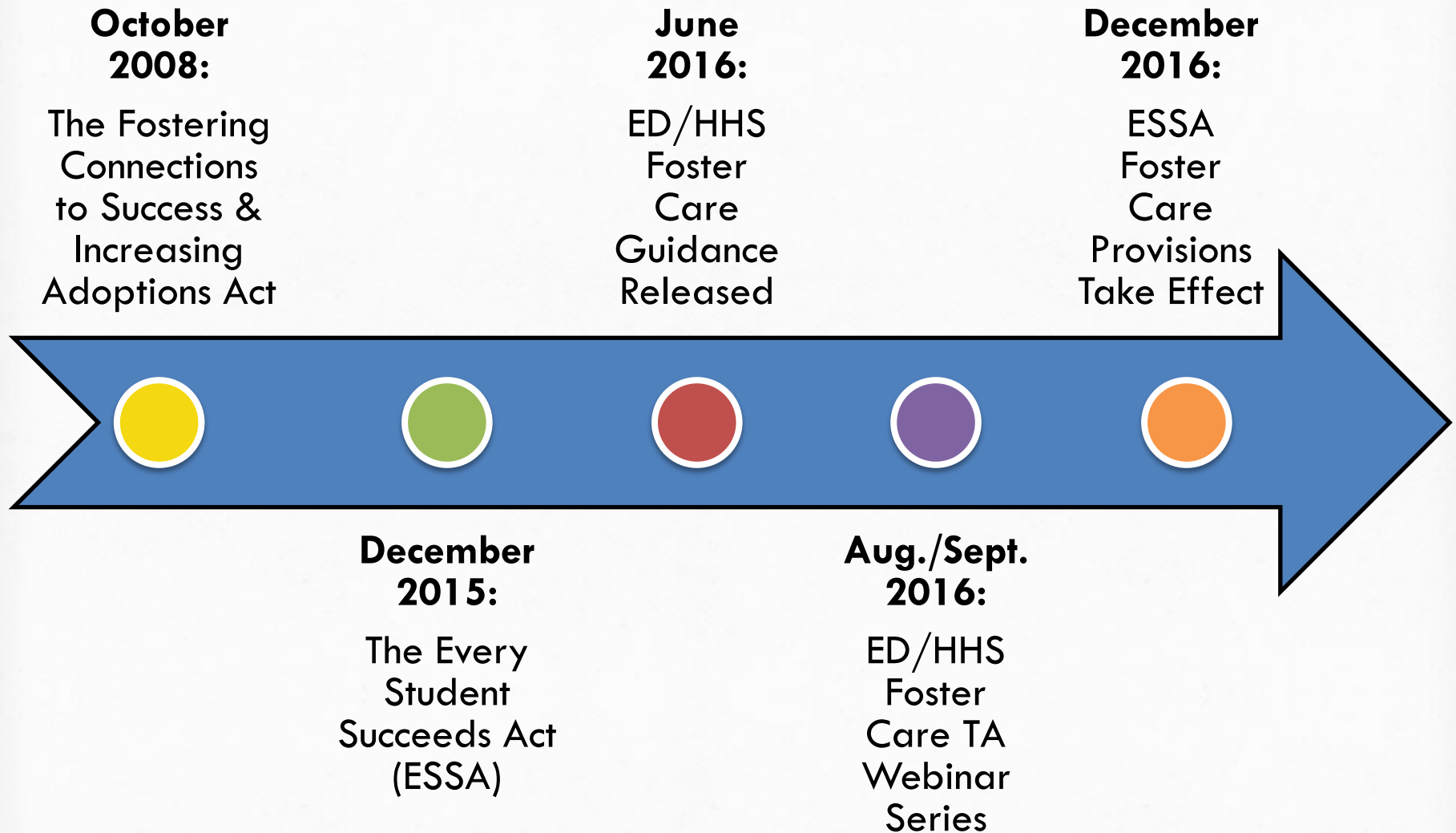
TODAY'S AGENDA

- Provide an overview of the federal framework for ensuring educational stability for children in foster care and the joint guidance related to collaboration
- Highlight essential components for consideration when establishing a collaboration between child welfare agencies and education agencies
- Provide lessons learned from implementation of cross-agency collaboration initiative in Texas
- Q&A

QUESTIONS?

Please submit your questions for our presenters in the “Q&A” box on the right of your screen.

EDUCATIONAL STABILITY: A TIMELINE



KEY ESSA PROVISIONS

- Children in foster care remain in the school of origin, unless it is determined that it is not in his or her best interest
- If it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child must be immediately enrolled in the new school even if they don't have the required documentation.
- Each state education agency (SEA) must designate a point of contact (POC) for child welfare agencies (CWAs). Local education agencies (LEAs) must also designate a POC for CWAs if the corresponding CWA notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designate a POC.
- 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 UPDATE

- The phrase “awaiting foster care placement” will be removed from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s definition of homeless children and youth.
 - For non-covered states, this change is effective 12/10/16
 - For covered states--that is, States that define “awaiting foster care placement” in statute--this change is effective 12/10/17
- After the effective date, youth “awaiting foster care placement” must be served under ESSA
- Some children in foster care may still be eligible for McKinney-Vento services (e.g., youth who are living in transitional shelters or motels)

Access ED’s Guidance on the ESSA Amendments to McKinney-Vento:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>

JOINT GUIDANCE

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Access the joint guidance:

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

JOINT ED-HHS WEBINAR SERIES

Webinar Topic	Date	Location
An Overview of the ED/HHS Joint Guidance	7/27/16	http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/EducationStability.aspx
Points of Contact	8/17/16	https://1sourceevent.ents.adobeconnect.com/p9u646jav
Best Interest Determination & Immediate Enrollment	8/24/16	https://1sourceevents.adobeconnect.com/p5a1t0r4b8f/
Transportation	8/31/16	Coming soon!
Effective Collaboration	9/7/16	Coming soon!

Access the joint guidance:

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



Effective Collaboration

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

ESSA REQUIREMENTS

Under ESSA, each state plan shall describe--

- The steps an SEA will take to ensure collaboration with the state child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care

Each LEA shall provide assurances that the LEA will:

- Collaborate with the State or local child welfare agency to--
 - Designate a point of contact
 - Develop and implement clear written transportation procedures

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

GUIDANCE PROVISIONS

- Consideration should be given to establishing a structure at the local level
- Provide opportunities to cross-train both child welfare agency and education staff
- Engage variety of stakeholders
- Collaboration should be on-going and continuously works to improve outcomes for children in foster care



Lessons from the Field

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: ABA

GUEST PRESENTER

Kathleen McNaught

Project Director, Legal Center for Foster Care
and Education

American Bar Association Center on Children
and the Law

kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org



PRELIMINARY STEP: DECIDING WHO NEEDS TO BE AT THE TABLE

- Judiciary
- Attorneys & advocates
- Child welfare agency staff
- Educators
- Parents
- Children & youth
- Foster parents



STEP 1: COMMON KNOWLEDGE BASE

- Understand your own policies and practice (including gaps)
- Think about your own goals and priorities
- Learn about other systems

STEP 2: ESTABLISH JOINT GOALS & PROCESS

- Establish process and team
- Collaboratively identify obstacles, challenges, and opportunities
- Take action—develop plans and set priorities
- Track and measure progress; revise as needed

Some Key Tips for Success:

- Start simple
- Start small
- Do not avoid biggest obstacles

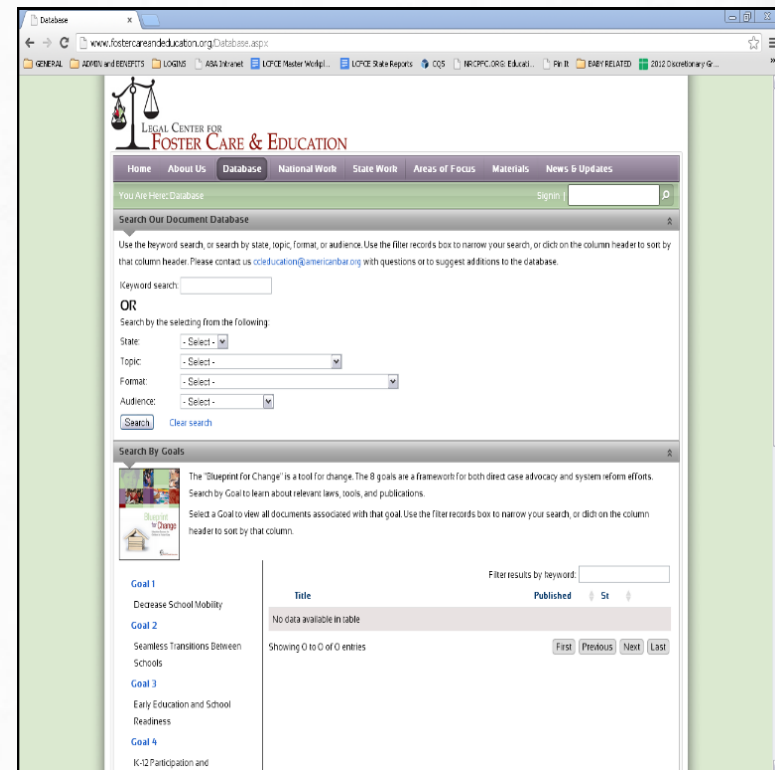
STEP 3: MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

- Staff resources (points of contact)
- Celebrate early victories
- Keep agency leadership (and courts) engaged
- Data drives change and supports progress
- Memorialize changes and collaboration
- Ongoing training and communication

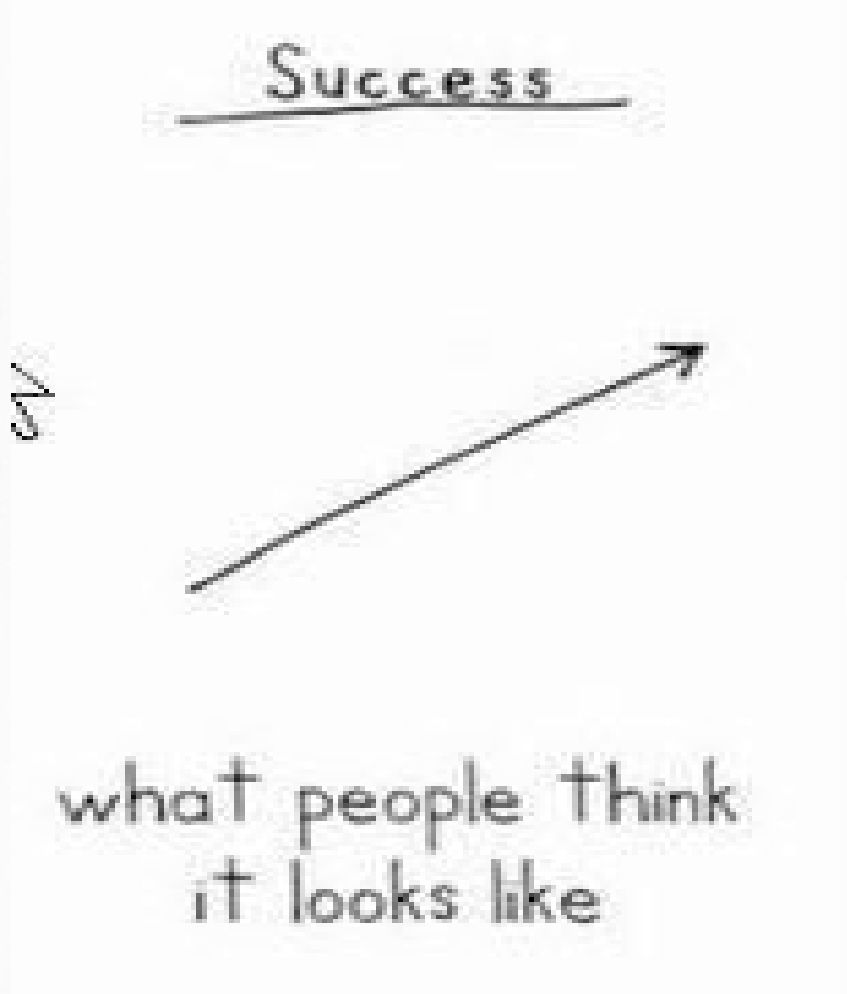
LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE AND EDUCATION

www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/EducationStability.aspx

- Q&A on ESSA
- PowerPoint presentation
- Summary of joint guidance
- Roles and Responsibilities checklist
- **Coming Soon:**
 - Sample LEA transportation procedures
 - Sample state-level guidance



CONCLUSION



LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: TEXAS

GUEST PRESENTERS

Judge Robert Hofmann

452nd District Court Judge, Vice Chair of the Children's Commission, and Chair of Foster Care and Education Committee

rob.hofmann@txcourts.gov



Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission)

jamie.bernstein@txcourts.gov

Jamie Bernstein

Staff Attorney

Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission)

jamie.bernstein@txcourts.gov

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: TEXAS

GUEST PRESENTERS

Kelly Kravtiz

State Coordinator, Foster Care Education & Policy
and McKinney-Vento Homeless Programs

Texas Education Agency

kelly.kravitz@tea.texas.gov



Jenny Hinson

Division Administrator for Permanency
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

jenny.hinson@dfps.state.tx.us

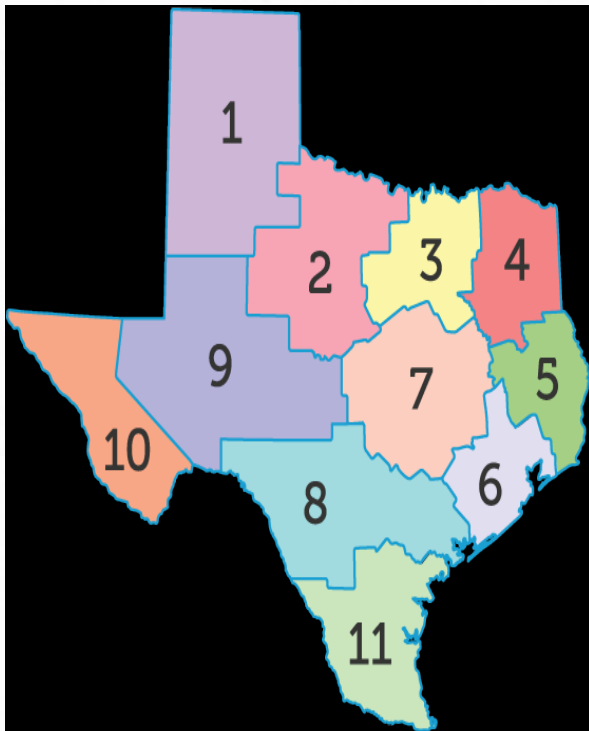


Different Systems, Finding Common Ground

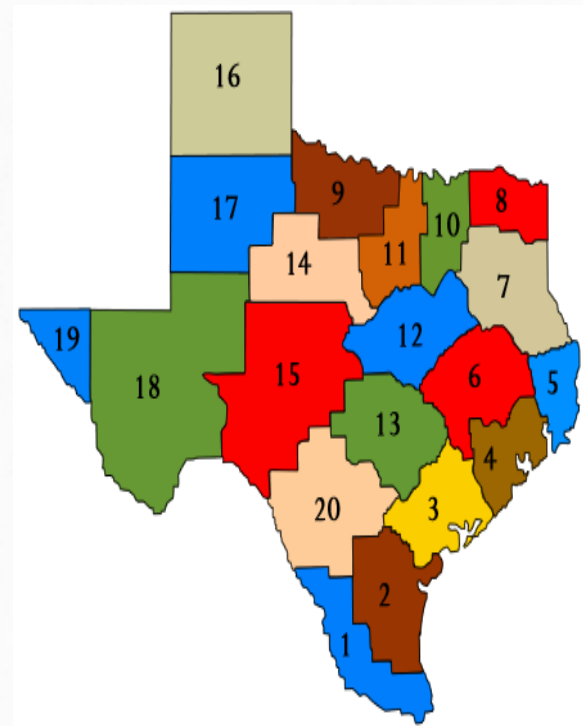
Judge Robert Hofmann

DEVELOPING A COMMON LANGUAGE

Child Welfare Regions

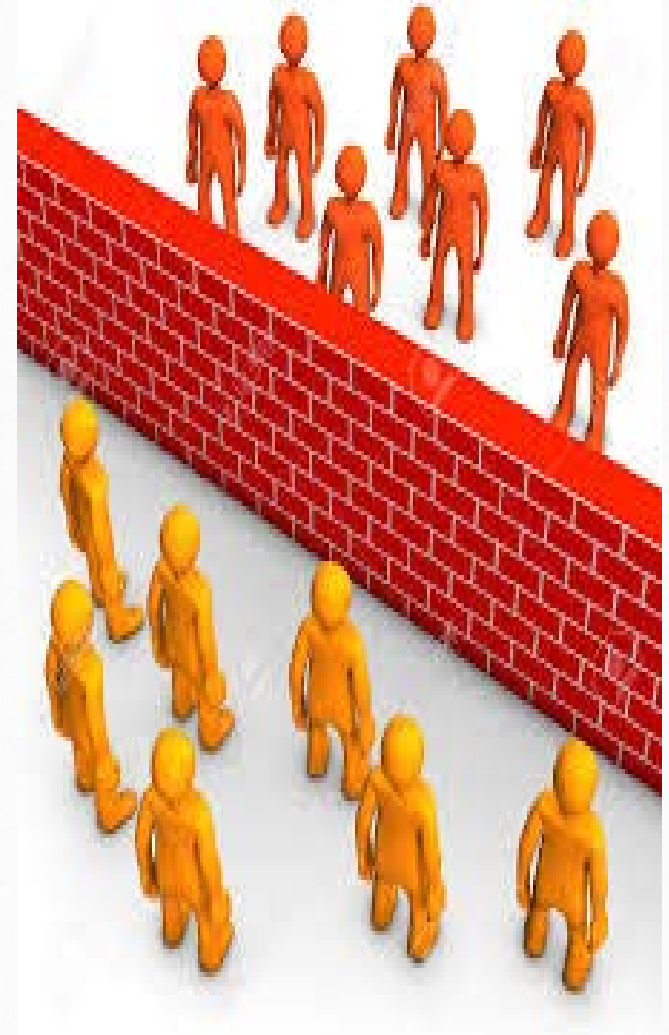


Education Regions



BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

- Data sharing
- Mutual understanding of policies and procedures
- Staff turnover
- Enrollment issues
- Placement disruptions
- Trust



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Misc. Docket No. 10-9079

ORDER ESTABLISHING EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF
PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Children's Commission

- Established by Supreme Court of Texas order in November 2007
- Chaired by Justice Eva Guzman
- Administer the federal Court Improvement Program grant
- Serve as a facilitator of collaboration for state leaders in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches

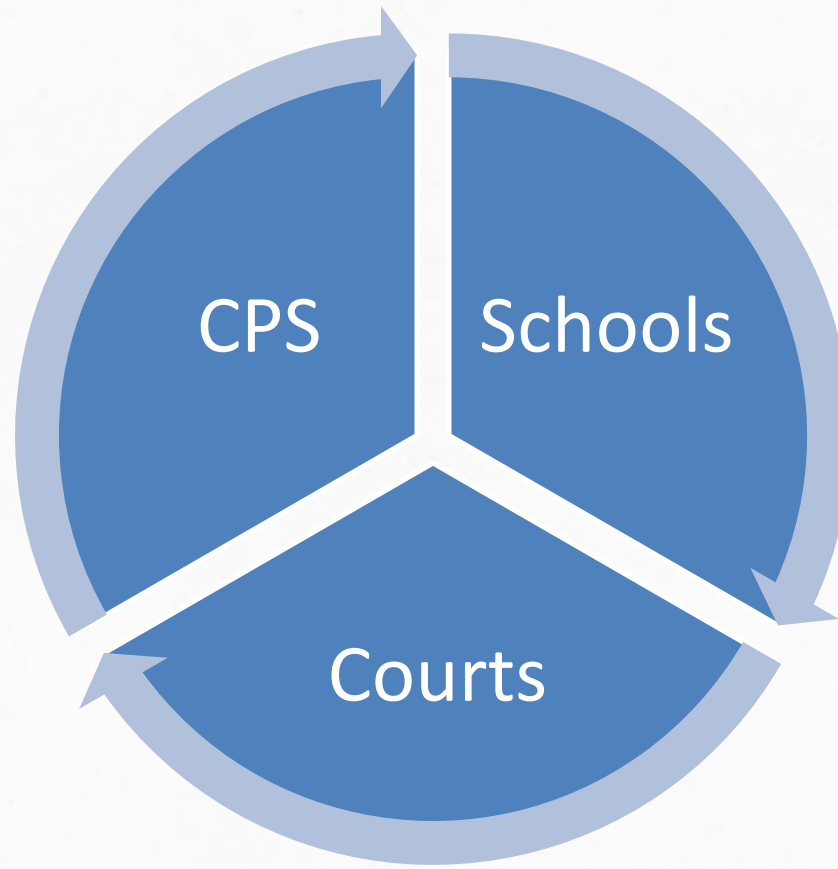
Education Committee

- Idea developed by Texas team during National Leadership Summit on Child Protection, October 2009
- Focus: Education outcomes for children and youth in foster care
- Commitment of statewide resources to examine educational outcomes and make recommendations for improvement

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

✓ Three Judges	✓ State Education Agency (TEA)	✓ Association of School Boards (TASB)	✓ Association of School Administrators (TASA)
✓ State Bar of Texas School Law Section	✓ State Child Welfare Agency (DFPS)		✓ Texas CASA
✓ Parent and Children's Attorneys		✓ Former Foster Youth	✓ Casey Family Programs

THE STATE AS PARENT = THESE CHILDREN ARE “OUR” RESPONSIBILITY



THE TEXAS BLUEPRINT:

Transforming Education
Outcomes For Children &
Youth In Foster Care



**THE FINAL REPORT OF THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF
THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS
CHILDREN'S COMMISSION**
— MARCH 31, 2012 —



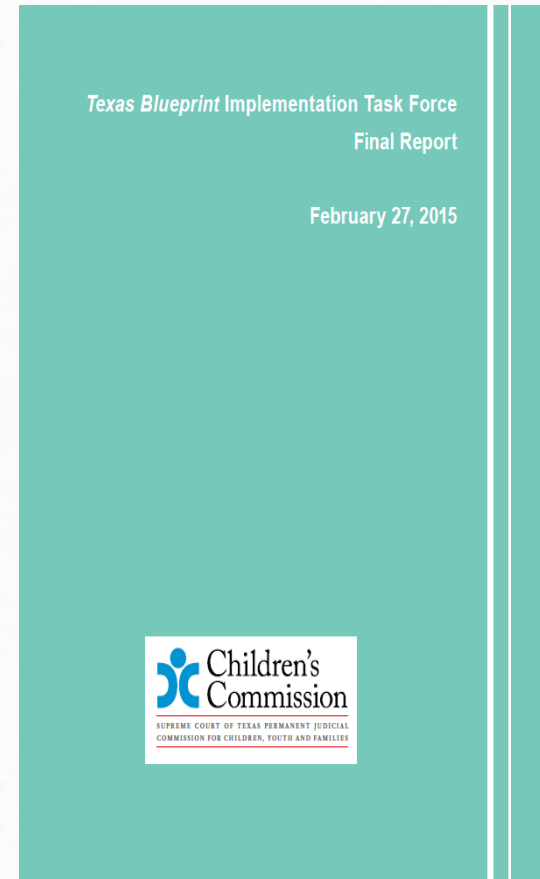


Developing Priorities

Jamie Bernstein

TEXAS BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

- Established in December 2012 by Children's Commission
- Monitored progress of collaborative workgroups addressing a variety of education related topics:
 - Data Collection and Information Sharing
 - School Stability
 - Training and Resources



Final Report available at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/foster-care-education.aspx>

STATE LAW IMPROVEMENTS

- Consideration of educational needs and goals during Permanency Hearings
- Attorneys and guardians ad litem must be knowledgeable about children's educational needs and goals
- Education decision-maker provisions
- Foster care indicator added to Texas' state education data collection
- K-12 and postsecondary liaisons for students in foster care
- Excused school absences due to court-ordered appointments and activities related to CPS service plan

TRAINING

- Texas' first Foster Care and Education Summit, February 2013
 - Kicked off with a joint invitation from Supreme Court Justice Eva Guzman and the Commissioners of the state child welfare and education agencies
 - Attended by approximately 200 judges, school district and education service center representatives, CPS, CASA, and advocates
- Cross-disciplinary training throughout the state
- Education consortiums
- National Dropout Prevention Conference – professional development track for Texas foster care liaisons

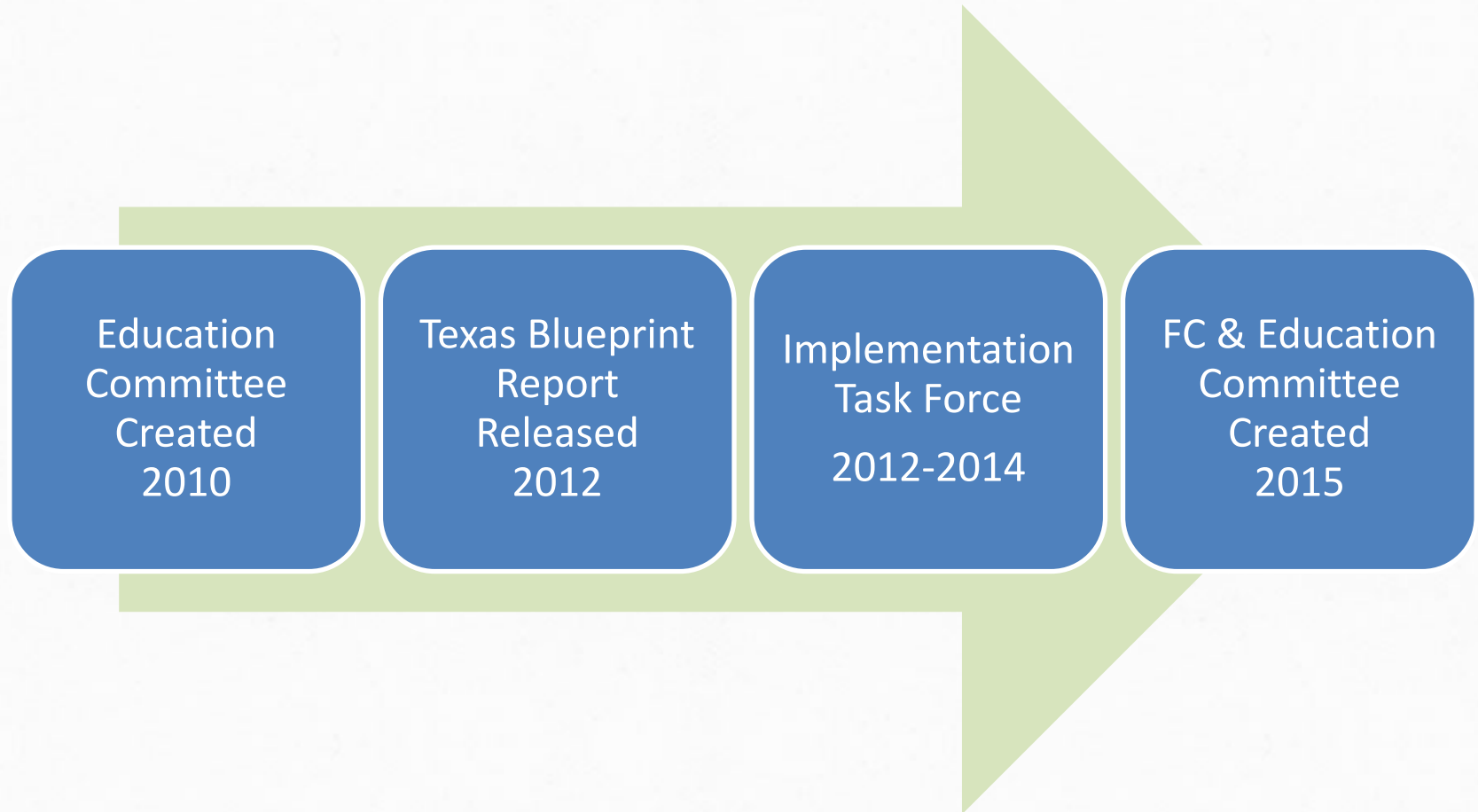
MOBILIZING DATA-DRIVEN CHANGE

- Statewide data exchange since 2008-09, updated MOU between TEA and DFPS in 2014
- Aggregate foster care education data is shared in presentations with education, court, and child welfare audiences
- Participation in national information sharing programs
- Developed shared definitions across systems
- Mapped data collection timelines
- Identified priority data indicators

COURT INVOLVEMENT

- Play a key leadership role
- Provide judicial education and correspondence about educational needs of students in foster care
- Judges are statutorily required to ask about education at hearings
- Created an Education Checklist

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

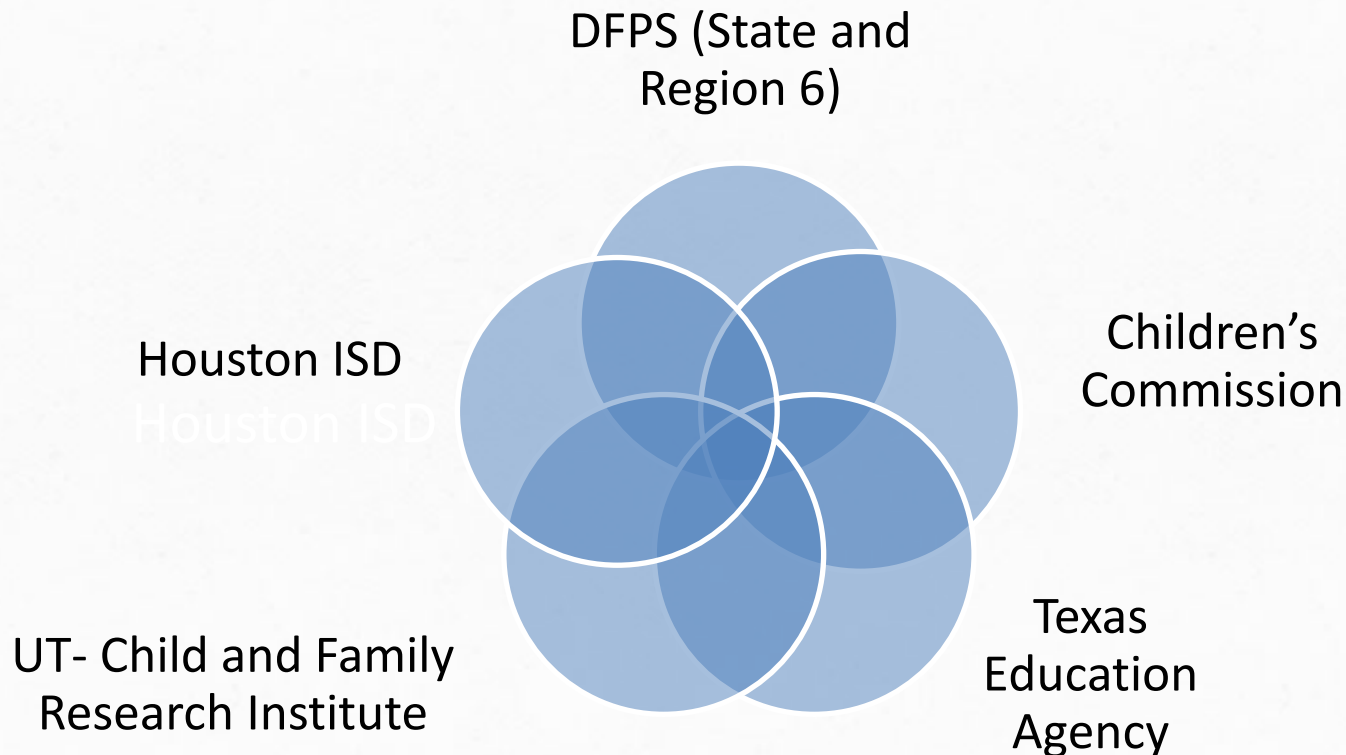




Building Infrastructure

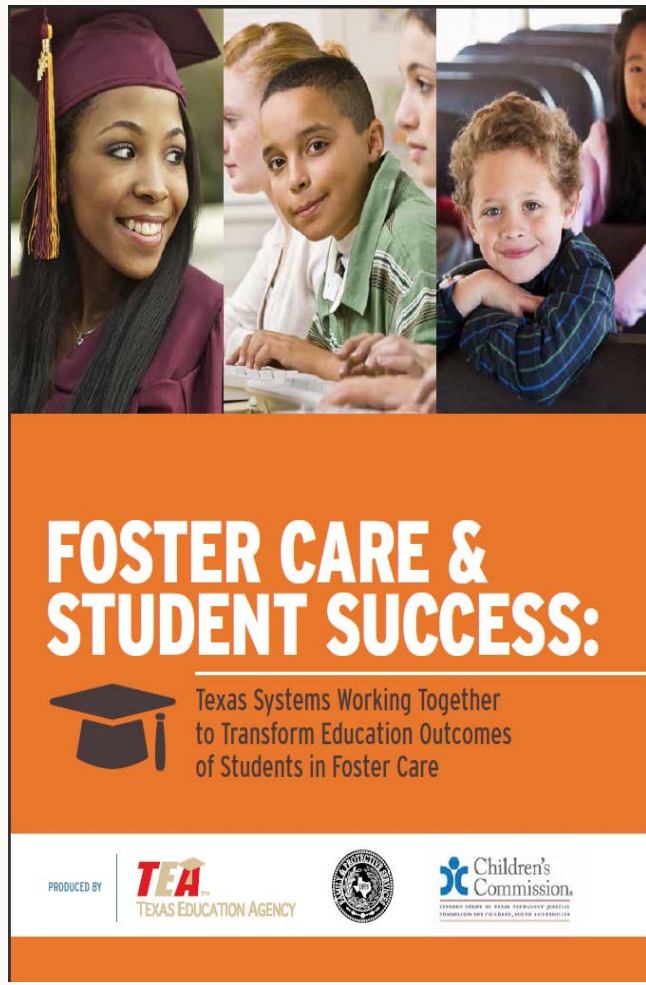
Kelly Kravitz

TEXAS TRIO PROJECT: STRENGTHENING COURT, CHILD WELFARE, AND EDUCATION CONNECTIONS FOR YOUTH



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families awarded Child Welfare Education Demonstration Grant to Texas

TEA FOSTER CARE & STUDENT SUCCESS



- Comprehensive resource and training guide, released in October 2013; written by TEA, DFPS, and Children's Commission
- Foundational guide for education community, foster care liaisons, and all who support the education of students in foster care
- Includes policy, practice, laws, and resources for school district training and development on foster care and education

<http://tea.texas.gov/FosterCareStudentSuccess/>

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

- Foster Care Education and Policy Coordinator added to SEA in 2012
 - Implementation of numerous state education laws
 - Development of tools and resources
 - Mobilize coordination and collaboration across numerous divisions and programs
 - Building capacity and creating linkages across a variety of state and federal education programs
 - Participation in Texas Blueprint Implementation Taskforce workgroups and activities

SEA LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

- Every district and charter school designates a Foster Care Liaison
- Engage in meetings across departments to increase awareness in SEA about the education of students in foster care (Curriculum, School Improvement, Title I, College and Career Readiness, Fiscal)
- Leverage existing processes, systems and regional education communication networks to increase capacity within state's education system
- Regional Education Service Centers – Foster Care Champions
- Host Foster Care & Student Success webpage on SEA site
- Develop data indicator and process for identifying and reporting students in foster care in Texas schools
- Disseminate information and materials
- Include foster care and education in major statewide education conferences and educator meetings

ESSA IMPLEMENTATION | SEA COORDINATOR ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Convene stakeholders
- Coordinate at SEA with Title I, Legal, Data, Transportation, etc.
- Document collaborative activities and provide information for State Plan
- Champion across program areas
- Problem solve and educate
- Train and equip



Strengthening Collaboration

Jenny Hinson

CHILD WELFARE ENGAGEMENT

- Updated numerous policies and contracts
- Designated Education Specialists in each region
- Developed form to identify education decision-maker
- Created internal website and portal of education information for DFPS staff
- Developed publications for caregivers
- Formalized collaboration through regional education consortiums

DFPS/CPS EDUCATION SPECIALISTS

- Work with stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in conservatorship
- Ensure every child/student has the necessary resources to meet and exceed each child's educational goals and needs through representation and advocacy
- Primary resource and subject matter expert for caseworkers, schools, community stakeholders on foster care and education
- Participate in state and regional committees, workgroups, and local courts

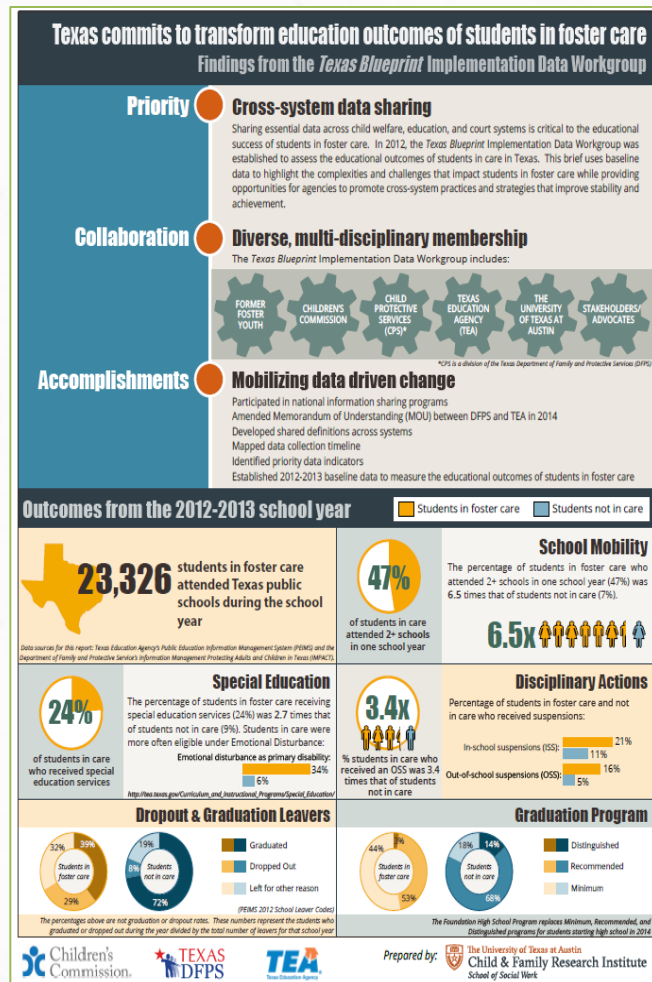
TEXAS CASA EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



- Collaborative document developed by Texas CASA, DFPS, TEA, Children's Commission, and other stakeholders
- Contains tools and resources to help advocates navigate the educational challenges facing students in foster care
- Breaks down the different education decision-making roles and the involvement of the Court Appointed Special Advocate

<http://texascasa.org/learning-center/resources/educational-advocacy-toolkit/>

FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION DATA INFOGRAPHIC



BUILDING COLLABORATION | LESSONS LEARNED

- Establish contacts and build relationships across systems
- Establish shared vision and goals
- Create opportunities to learn about one another's systems, agency jargon, decision-making processes, services provided, legal mandates, constraints, etc.
- Include other stakeholders and relevant partners
- Use data to track progress
- Celebrate successes and victories
- Each system provides unique insights and perspectives that are necessary for effective collaboration and improved student outcomes
- Remain open and positive
- Listen and seek understanding of what is new or unknown
- Develop strategies for collaborative work
- Identify high-level champions
- Involve youth and alumni



Questions for Panelists?

Please submit questions in the “Q&A” box on the right of your screen.

QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION?

CONTACT US!



SEAs & LEAs

- Send questions to ED's ESSA mailbox: essa.questions@ed.gov
- Contact your Office of State Support Program Officer:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oss/contacts.html>

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>

For additional information, please visit our websites:

- ED's Every Student Succeeds Act page - <http://www.ed.gov/essa>
- HHS' Educational Stability for Children and Youth in Foster Care page -
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/service-array/education-services/meeting-needs/educational-stability/>



Thank you!