Attendance:

State Members in Attendance: Matthew Butensky (PA), John McGinnis (MD), Kathleen Hoehne (MI), Kristin Myers (CO), Joey Taylor (AZ), Catherine Stelzer (OR), Colin Usher (NV), Daniel Froemel (TN), Peggy Carlson and Katie Weaver Randall (WA), Toni Kersh (MS)

State Members not in Attendance: Jill Mathews (ID), Jeff Wittman (IN)

Federal / State Support Network Members: Bryan Thurmond (OESE), Irene Harwarth (OESE), Kristin Kelly (ABA Center on Children and the Law / Network Subject Matter Expert), Kathleen McNaught (ABA Center on Children and the Law / Network Subject Matter Expert), Sneha Barve (ABA Center on Children and the Law / Network Subject Matter Expert), Fanny Lee (State Support Network), Marshal Conley (State Support Network), Yan Wang (State Support Network)

Topical Brainstorming

Scenario 1: Parents, foster parents, and other caretakers need access to school records

Do you find that schools are often confused about who has education rights and who can make decisions?

What has your state done to improve this type of data sharing?
- In Pennsylvania, there is confusion around this topic. We are considering some short training modules on legal matters. Communication and training is also routinely needed for foster care providers and vendors. In PA we are looking at how to reach those parties as well.

Good examples or tools to share
- In Maryland, foster parents can access student(s) records through the school electronic process for their child.
- Colorado has a law that requires schools to share education records with foster parents.
- Mississippi only permits educational records to be provided to MDCPS staff
- In Washington, individual school districts allow parents, including foster parents, to access their district student information portals

Biggest challenges
- This is a challenge for many foster caregivers in Michigan, we are encouraging LEAs and caregivers to communicate regularly to share educational information. The challenge is that there are 897 LEAs and MANY student information systems.
- In Oregon, foster parents are accessing parent portals pretty well, the problem comes when the foster parent changes or the child returns to his/her parents and DHS has not communicated that in a timely manner.

Catherine Stelzer: https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and districts/reportcards/reportcards/Pages/Accountability- Measures.aspx

Scenario 2: Education records must be exchanged from school to school when a school change occurs

Sometimes the hardest part seems to be knowing that a student has transferred timely.

What has your state done to improve this type of data sharing?
- In Nevada, the entire state is now using the same data collection system.
- Mississippi has policies regarding time limits on providing records once requested.
- Colorado is getting a little better on this through monitoring caseworkers on the best interest determination process. There is an indicator on the child welfare data tracking to remind caseworkers to obtain school records when they hold the best interest meeting to ensure the records follow the child.

Good examples or tools to share
- Washington has a student record exchange that can be used for any students, including foster care students, to immediately access and request records.
- Maryland not experiencing challenges. This is done on a regular basis when a student is placed in school. Student records are transferred when requested by the receiving school.
- In Michigan, we have an expectation and train that schools immediately share records when school placement changes,

Biggest challenges
- In Pennsylvania, I think it's hard to sometimes get to the root of why delays occur. We try to dig deeper (i.e., who is being contacted at the LEA)
- This continues to be difficult in Oregon as school to school records exchanges seems to be slow
- In Nevada we have a state law that discusses this, but LEAs and CWs need technical assistance around those laws.

Scenario 3: Schools needs to know which students are in foster care:

What has your state done to improve this type of data sharing?
- Flagging system is part of Nevada data collection system. *Colin, who marks the "flag"? Is it just when a foster parent enrolls or does school find out from child welfare?*
- Michigan does use the DC which I will talk about shortly, there were some issues with this platform as our only means of identifying students.
- In Oregon, at the state level, we have data sharing between DHS & Child Nutrition for foster care. Districts can view this list. We also have caseworkers send a written notification form, which has been inconsistent due to caseload sizes.
- Mississippi is doing better in this area; however, it is still a work in progress. Joint agency trainings have been very beneficial.
- This has improved tremendously in Pennsylvania with ESSA. The expectation is that the child welfare agency is providing these notifications each and every time. It's not always perfect.
- This is a challenge Maryland is still addressing. All students who enter school with a CWA worker or foster parent are flagged by the registrar or school secretary. This info is sent to the state department so their educational information can be gathered just like MV students. *John, do all MD schools use the same SIS?* Yes- it is a unique identifier however, the State Department of Human Resources does not use the educational identifier and the two systems don't communicate.

Biggest challenges
- This area is probably one of the biggest challenges for Tennessee. We are able to identify students in foster care, but it can be difficult to do this in real time. Many times students are moved so quickly that the CWA Ed Specialist isn't even aware that the child has moved for a couple days. *Curious to hear if others have a good system for notifying school in real time when a student changes placement.*
- This is a huge challenge in Arizona. Schools do not know which of their students are in foster care. The child welfare agency has a policy that they will notify the school when a child enters foster care or changes placements. Unfortunately, this does not happen very often.
- Colorado continues to have difficulties in this area. *I would benefit from hearing from other states that have success in this area*. In Colorado, we also have a challenge regarding how schools input this data into the student information system. For example, since parents still have educational rights, they are able to have continued access to the parent portal on the student information system. A school listed a foster parent's contact information on the home page and the parent found out where the foster family was living and attempted to take the children from the foster home. It is difficult to know how to have information in the SIS so schools know where kids are residing and have a valid contact if the child gets sick and needs to go home, but also separating that information from parents who still need to be included in the child's education when they are in out-of-home placement.
- This is still a challenge in Washington. There is a DCYF form that case workers are supposed to complete when a child enters foster care or changes placement, but there is low utilization of the form.
- Oregon has also struggled with notification needing to be secure. Every district has their own secure process, which doesn't necessarily mesh well with DHS. Point of contacts tend to be out in the field and on cell phones. If they miss the timeline for opening the email, it gets missed.
- Kristin Kelly: With how busy caseworkers are, sometimes the "case file" is really in their own head so it is hard to track. Caseloads are always a challenge.

Scenario 4: States should track and report on educational data

What has your state done to improve this type of data sharing?
- Nevada is working toward a combined effort between DCFS and Education related to foster care data.
- Michigan has been able to share and begin to track education data
- In Arizona, the SEA & CWA are both upgrading their computer systems (both agencies are very, very outdated). A part of this upgrade will include a pretty thorough data sharing between both agencies. When this is in place, it will greatly help both the CWA & SEA know which children are in foster care & what school they are attending (and have attended).
- This is currently being done with Maryland in its second year of gathering data
- In Mississippi, Foster care data will be included in the state's report card for the current academic school year.

Good examples or tools to share
- Pennsylvania has a data sharing agreement completed between PDE and DHS. Data matching and verification occurring along with interpretation of findings.
- Washington has a mutual exchange of data with the department of children youth and families that allows us to track and report education outcomes as well as share specific data with school districts and a contracted agency

Biggest challenges
- Oregon has a data exchange which is working well. The area we need assistance with is telling the narrative/story of what the data means. The different foster care definition for ESSA and Child Welfare (includes trial home visit) is a bit confusing.

So, how are you using this data?
- In Michigan, I am BROADCASTING this data, and I will share a couple slides in the breakout room. We are talking about alternate paths to graduate.
- Washington uses our foster care data to populate our report card as well as to generate reports for use by OSPI and DCYF to improve services. We try to ensure that both the child welfare agency (DCYF) and the education agency (OSPI) have the same data to act on.

Scenario 5: Child welfare agency representatives need access to school records:

Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA) made a big difference for many in trying to get caseworkers access to records

What has your state done to improve this type of data sharing?
- In Mississippi, joint trainings for MDCPS and LEAs have made a big difference.
- In Pennsylvania, there were some issues with this until more training was provided around USA.
- In Nevada, data sharing from child welfare to education is possible
- In Maryland, Child Welfare Agency (CWA) workers have access to students under their individual case load. The USA act provides for this exchange.
- In Arizona, the SEA & CWA are both upgrading their computer systems (both agencies are very, very outdated). A part of this upgrade will include a pretty thorough data sharing between both agencies. When this is in place, it will greatly help both the CWA & SEA know which children are in foster care and what school they are attending (and have attended). The SEA IT team has not given me any updates on the timing of the upgrades. The SEA IT team meets biweekly with the CWA IT team, so hopefully it will be completed soon.
- Systems "upgrades" is happening in Michigan

Good examples or tools to share
- Oregon hasn't had much difficulty with this since USA was enacted. We created a joint agreement for records sharing between DHS & Oregon Department of Education, and distributed to school districts.
- Washington's state-level data exchange allows our Department of Children, Youth and Families to populate their state-level child welfare case management system with education records.
- In Tennessee, when a student moves from one school district to another, I think we do a decent job of transferring records and keeping up with the students because the CWA has access to our educational information system and IEP management system.

Biggest challenges
- This is messy for Michigan, we are working on a common shared page between LEAs and CWAs.
- In Tennessee, we usually see a breakdowns when a student is moved in and out of residential treatment as these facilities typically do not have the level of administrative support as a public LEA.
- In Colorado, caseworkers are requesting access and they are granted access by the schools when requested, on an individual level; it would be great, however, to have this happen on a more systemic level.
- Old computer systems

State Example: Washington

Rather than start from a point of compliance, start from a point of what matters – we want to share information to help students in foster care get the support they need. Once you agree on that framework, rather than on separate reporting requirements, it is easier to build trust.

While Peggy has been with ED for 3 years, the data sharing and reporting between child welfare and education has been going on since 2002. First, the school districts reported to the state. Then, student information system reported to state. Then, there was a state match. So, it has been an evolution.

How does 1) SEA best identify students and 2) share education information. The bottom line is that school need to know who is in care. The reporting requirements are not the main focus.

Process: Spent 9-10 intense months negotiating a "mutual exchange of data" - each agency has a report and then they are matched nightly. This info then goes out to districts. It is compiled for reports.

Challenges and Concerns: Legal framework. Prioritize work. There were a lot of needs and uses. They started with the uses that were closest to students education success (e.g. not just reporting). So, they had a framework for exchange: tech/elements. Then, review process for both agencies so they had an opportunity to review and raise concerns. Then, policies and procedures for both SEA, LEAs, CW and RO...protections on confidentiality for data and a way to monitor. Relationships and trust were a big challenge, but once those were overcome, the process and tech pieces were easier. They had to link program and data staff always. Before posting graduation rates, it went to CW for review. Made sure they were prepared to respond publicly. Want to work together.

Structure: Umbrella data share agreement is constant and they attach statements of work with specific use
1) Meet federal requirements. 2) Support contractors in school districts. As new needs arise, they add additional SOW.

State Example: Michigan

HHS was the originator of the data sharing. They have a third-party vendor.

Where Michigan Started-

Data for FC youth originates with DHHS

The Center for Education and Performance Information (CEPI), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) have a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) to allow for the exchange of student level information.

The CEPI and MDE determined that using the existing **Direct Certification**, **Student Roster Report** is currently, the most efficient method for LEAs to identify foster youth within their schools.

1. Foster Medicaid Flag and eligibility for participation in federally subsidized food programs is attached to the student case file by DHHS when a foster case is opened.
2. Beginning at age 3 (or when a child is enrolled in a school program) a Unique Identifier Code (UIC) is applied by a LEA to students which is then used as a match to the Medicaid/SNAP/TNF flag to identify students/youth who are in care. The UIC becomes part of the DHHS case file on the CWA side (shared).
3. The Direct Certification (DC), Student Roster Report had an unknown "glitch" where students' foster status would be overridden by the priorities of the SNAP and TNF leaving LEAs with an incomplete list of students in foster care, thus denying them additional supports and services.
   a. An update to the DC report's code language in December 2018 has stabilized the foster status of students.
   b. Additionally, the DC report prior to October of 2019 was not pulled from CEPI on a regular basis, again, causing LEAs to not have complete lists of students. At this time, the cross match is pulled every 2 weeks.

Where Michigan is now-

1. Michigan has a stable, regularly scheduled UIC data pull from DHHS to match against LEA records every two weeks.

*If your state's LEAs are saying they do not have accurate lists, talk with the programmers to ensure that the code language used for reporting to the Federal government isn't interfering with identifying students.

Where Michigan is headed-

1. Michigan currently has a Grant initiative supporting the design and build of a MIDataHub which is a **voluntary**, separate database from the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) that is a "real time" data source for LEAs to access their student demographic and performance information. The HUB is being designed with MTSS in mind and will identify what academic interventions the student has participated in. The development of the DataHub stemmed from LEA frustration with having to wait for the data releases through CEPI/MDE.
   a. The MIDataHub is currently offering a pilot "Snack-Pack" (Lunch-Box and Back-Pack are under development) or snapshot of student data that compiles pertinent information onto one page for those LEAs that are participating within the HUB.
   b. Within the MIDataHub, there is capability to engage with MDHHS to share a common page regarding student status. This is being initiated from the MDE side and discussion is underway

with MDHHS to incorporate this within their next database build. Meetings are scheduled with all parties in November.

Challenges-

1. Michigan does not require LEAs to enter "foster status" within MSDS the only way to know is to receive the MDHHS Notification and Records Release Form or to run the DC Report.
   a. Bottom line is kids get missed…
2. It is important to understand how and where data originates and what the exact mechanisms are for capturing the data. (who enters the data initially, where does it go from there, who has access to the data, who should have access to the data, etc.)
   a. Michigan didn't know that our code language was allowing for overrides within the report, thus omitting students.
3. It is hard to help LEAs understand who within their LEAs have the authority to run secure reports like the DC.
4. If states are "repurposing" existing reports, it is critical to understand all the components and purposes for the report to ensure all parties are present for the discussion to avoid unintended consequences.

I plan to be available to answer questions regarding Michigan's data use and reporting. I will be sharing slides of 2017-2018 graduation data for youth experiencing care as well as a comparable slide showing foster youth graduation alongside other subgroup achievement.

For those attending the NAEHCY conference in DC next week, please plan to attend my session on Sunday November 3rd at 3:00 pm where I will be sharing the presentation: **Using DATA to Improve Foster Student Graduation Outcomes.**