★ CHARTING THE COURSE

Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success

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CALIFORNIA ★
COLLEGE
PATHWAYS

Supporting Opportunity and Success for
Foster Youth Scholars

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success provides information on the educational experiences of foster youth attending a subset of community colleges and universities in California. This report builds on the work of the California College Pathways (CCP) initiative, a public and private partnership that supports campuses and community organizations to help foster youth succeed in postsecondary education. This strategy is designed to increase the number of foster youth in California who earn a college degree or certificate.

The report, presented in two parts—Part 1: Community Colleges and Part 2: Universities—aggregates data across 31 CCP campuses and demonstrates how foster youth students are faring on a common set of key indicators of access and success in community colleges and universities. The quantitative data for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic years were supplemented with qualitative data from various student and stakeholder focus groups conducted on a subset of individual campuses in 2014. The data presented are intended to promote dialogue that inspires new strategies to ensure that students from foster care succeed.

A key component of CCP is to build a shared measurement system that allows campus and community partners to make informed decisions regarding policies, programs, and practices. CCP developed milestone and momentum metrics to be collected and reported by each campus, which reflect a number of measures of student progress and outcomes. The collection and reporting of metric data aims to support shared learning and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

The data presented include key metrics of progress categorized primarily by the type of institution supplying the information, i.e., community college or four-year university, and then by the milestones which guide the CCP approach: Are foster youth **EQUIPPED** with essential resources to succeed and **ENROLLED** in a college or training program? Have they **EARNED** a college degree and/or certificate? Future reports hope to capture whether youth have **EMBARKED** on a career path.

EQUIP
WITH ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

ENROLL
IN COLLEGE OR TRAINING PROGRAM

EARN
A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE

EMBARK
ON A CAREER

While there are some bright spots, the data show overall that foster youth enrolled in CCP community colleges and universities disproportionately face serious academic and economic challenges compared with non-foster youth, and are not being adequately served by federal and state programs, including financial aid programs. Student support programs specifically for foster youth may be successfully addressing these challenges, but more data are needed to determine their impact.

Please note that this report provides descriptive aggregate analyses from the CCP institutions who submitted data. The data are not intended to be generalizable to the larger population of California community colleges and four-year universities. Furthermore, data were reported at the institution-level, rather than the student-level, limiting the analyses that could be conducted across indicators. Future data collections and reports may incorporate additional data and analyses.

The majority of foster youth in postsecondary school in California attend community colleges. As of spring 2014, there were about 13,400 foster youth enrolled in all California community colleges.[2] Community colleges offer a more affordable and open access education than four-year universities. Community colleges also offer a wide array of certificate and degree programs in career and technical education fields that allow foster youth to move quickly into the workforce. However, the benefits of a community college education may be offset by the fact that most do not offer on-campus housing, and lack of housing can be a critical problem for foster youth during college.

The data in this section are available thanks to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's creation of a mandatory data field flagging foster youth. In examining the metrics below, it is important to note that the foster youth flag is based primarily on foster youth's self-report. As a result, the data for foster youth in this report may both exclude foster youth who should have been counted, and include some who were erroneously identified as foster youth. For more information on the accuracy of the foster youth flag, see the Conclusion and the Appendix.

EQUIP | Basic Skills Course Taking

Figure 1: EQUIP – First college course attempted in either math, English, or ESL was a basic skills course: 2013-14

All Foster Youth | All Non-foster Youth

All Students: 83% (Foster), 77% (Non-foster)
First-time Students: 88% (Foster), 80% (Non-foster)
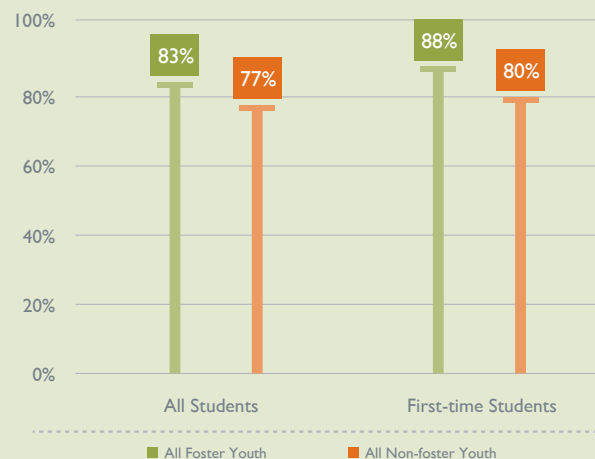
Basic-skills course taking is an important indicator of student preparation for college-level work. Foster youth who do not demonstrate proficiency in English and math are required to undergo remediation by taking basic skills courses before they can take courses that count towards transfer to a four-year university. In a study using sample data collected by the US Department of Education, fewer than 25 percent of foster youth assigned to remediation at community colleges earned a certificate or degree within eight years, compared to almost 40 percent of foster youth who did not enroll in remedial education courses.[3] Through its Basic Skills Initiative, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office is focusing on helping to ameliorate the basic skills needs of foster youth. The state has also allocated considerable funding in part to address this issue through the Student Success and Support Program and Equity funding.

Large majorities of both foster youth and non-foster youth were required to take basic skills courses in math or English.

Approximately three-quarters of both foster youth and non-foster youth who were enrolled in 2012-13 took their first course in math, English, or ESL at the remedial level (data not shown).[4] Among all foster youth enrolled in 2013-14, the percentage was even higher, and there was a gap between foster youth and non-foster youth (Figure 1). Foster youth enrolled in community college for the first time in 2013-14 had particularly high rates of basic skills course taking.

2 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Management Information Systems Data Mart, http://datamart.cccco.edu/Services/Special_Pop_Count.aspx
3 Bailey, T. (2009) Challenge and Opportunity: Rethinking the Role and Function of Developmental Education in Community College. New Directions for Community Colleges, 145, 11–30.
4 Percentages exclude foster youth who had not yet attempted a course in math, English, or ESL.

Foster youth were less likely than their peers to move from basic skills courses to transfer-level courses within two years.

Among foster youth enrolled in 2012-13 whose first course attempted in math was remedial, only 9 percent completed a transfer-level math course within 2 years, compared with 17 percent of non-foster youth (Figure 2). In English, 22 percent of foster youth moved into a transfer-level course within two years, compared with 38 percent of non-foster youth.

Figure 2: EQUIP – Among foster youth whose first course in a subject was a basic skills course, percent who completed a transfer-level course in that subject within two years: 2012-13

★ MOVING FORWARD

EQUIPPING FOSTER YOUTH FOR COLLEGE

The data provided in this report tell us that many foster youth are not equipped to successfully advance through college. Further inquiry in the following areas will lead to an increased understanding of why foster youth place in such high numbers into basic skills courses and then struggle to complete these courses. It may also help illuminate promising strategies to address this issue:

1. California foster youth in K-12 are more likely to experience school disruption, be classified with a disability, and be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools than students without foster care involvement.[5] Is there a correlation between any of these factors and placement into basic skills courses?

2. Some colleges are exploring alternatives to placement assessments that rely solely on assessment tests, which may be more effective at predicting how community college students will perform in college-level courses.[6] Does utilizing an alternative placement mechanism impact the degree to which foster youth place into basic skills courses and/or successfully transition to transfer-level coursework?

3. Which campuses are experiencing some success with supporting foster youth with transitioning from basic skill to transfer level coursework? Are there particular policies or practices that contribute to a successful transition?

5 Barrat, V.X., & Berliner, B. (2013). The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools. San Francisco: WestEd.
6 Rivera, C. (2012, June 25). Long Beach City College Tries an Alternative to Placement Tests. The Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/25/local/la-me-college-remedial-20120625

EQUIP | Financial Aid Receipt

Foster youth are much more likely than the general student population to come from a low-income household and lack financial support from family for college. Research shows that foster youth who receive financial aid are more than 40 percent more likely to accrue 15 or more credits in one year compared to those who do not receive financial aid.[7]

This metric examines receipt of grant-based financial aid, with particular attention to three of the main sources of federal and state aid available to foster youth: Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waivers, Cal Grants, and Pell Grants.

- Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver: a waiver of enrollment fees for California residents who are below a certain income threshold, receive certain forms of public assistance, or have a demonstrated need based on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).[8]

- Cal Grant: a financial award for low-income California residents who are enrolled at least half time and meet certain GPA requirements. To qualify for an entitlement award, students must apply as a high school senior or within one year of graduating high school or earning a GED; they may also apply as a community college transfer student as long as they are under age 28.[9] The vast majority of CalGrants require high school completion or a GED. Some Cal Grants pay tuition and fees, while others may be used for living expenses related to transportation, supplies, and books.[10]

- Pell Grant: a federal financial aid program for low-income undergraduate and vocational students. Applicants must be a United States citizen or an eligible non-citizen and must have a high school diploma or a GED but have not yet earned a bachelor's degree. Recipients must maintain satisfactory academic progress in a degree-oriented program to retain eligibility.

Data were also collected on receipt of Chafee Grants, which are grants specifically for foster youth. However, the data were deemed unreliable and are therefore excluded from the report.

Figure 3: EQUIP – Foster youth receiving a Pell Grant, Cal Grant, BOG Fee Waiver, or other grant or scholarship-based financial aid: 2013-14
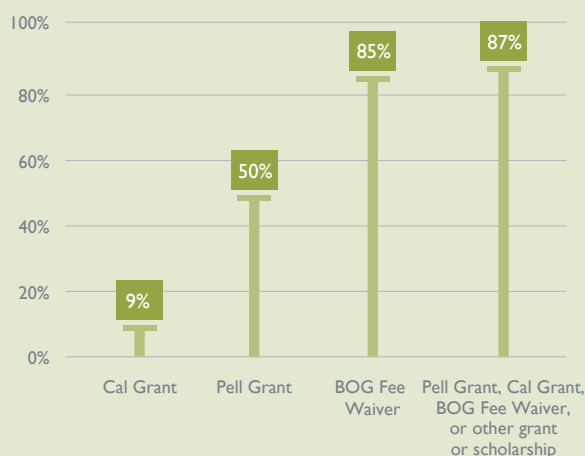
Note: Non-foster youth data were excluded from this indicator. Non-foster youth eligibility rates for financial aid may vary significantly from the rates for the foster youth population; therefore, a straight comparison of rates of receipt between the two groups would be of limited use here.

While most foster youth received some form of financial aid, they received Cal Grants and Pell Grants in relatively low numbers.

In both 2012-13 and 2013-14, the vast majority of foster youth received at least some form of grant-based financial aid, with more than 80 percent of foster youth receiving the BOG fee waiver (see Figure 3 for 2013-14 data; data for 2012-13 not shown). This waiver only covers course enrollment fees and does not provide money for living expenses. By contrast, only about half received a Pell Grant, despite the fact that most foster youth receiving a BOG Fee Waiver would likely have sufficient financial need to qualify for a Pell Grant as well. Fewer than 10 percent of foster youth received a Cal Grant. Unlike the BOG Fee Waiver, Pell Grants and Cal Grants can help foster youth pay for living expenses like housing.[11]

7 Frerer, K., Sosenko, L., Pellegrin, N., Manchik, V., & Horowitz, J. (2013). Foster Youth Transitions: A Study of California Foster Youth High School and College Level Outcomes. Center for Social Services Research and Institute for Evidence-Based Change.
8 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Board of Governors Fee Waiver Program and Special Programs Manual, http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/SSSP/FA/FWAx/BOGFW%20Manual%20(Final%20Revised%20AUG%202009).pdf
9 Cal Grants website, http://www.calgrants.org/index.cfm?navId=12
10 Cal Grants website, http://www.calgrants.org/index.cfm?navId=11
11 About 9 percent reported receiving some other grant or scholarship (excluding Chafee Grants) in 2013-14.

★ MOVING FORWARD

ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY AND ADEQUACY OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial resources are of paramount importance in supporting the efforts of foster youth students.

Campus professionals working with foster youth and financial aid office staff might explore specific reasons why foster youth are not accessing certain sources of aid in greater numbers to improve the overall success rate.

1. Are foster youth applying for financial aid by the March 2 priority deadline? If not, what are the barriers to meeting this deadline?

2. To what extent are foster youth not receiving certain types of financial aid due to lack of eligibility (e.g. lack of a high school diploma, inadequate GPA for Cal Grant, etc.)? To what extent are they not receiving aid due to barriers to access (e.g. lack of awareness about types of aid, confusion about the application process, not meeting deadlines, etc.)?

3. Are there campuses at which greater numbers of foster youth are accessing all available financial aid? If so, what internal or external factors contribute to this?

In addressing these questions, it is important to specifically consider the administrative and eligibility requirements of Cal and Pell Grants.

• In order to receive Cal or Pell Grants, students must fill out the FAFSA. Foster youth reported that they found the FAFSA daunting, confusing, and difficult to complete, and they did not know that they were exempt from filling out the section related to parents' income and education levels if they were in foster care after the age of 13.

• Foster youth who take more than a year off between high school or earning a GED and college are not eligible for an entitlement Cal Grant. Of those who do plan to enroll immediately, many are unaware that they must submit a FAFSA by March 2 during their last year in high school.

• To maintain eligibility for many forms of financial aid, students must make Satisfactory Academic Progress, which at many schools requires a 2.0 GPA; as detailed on page 13-14, about half of all of foster youth are not meeting this criterion.

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

"THE MAIN PROBLEM I HAD WAS FILLING OUT THE FAFSA FORMS WHERE THEY NEED TO KNOW YOUR PARENT'S INCOME AND THE LEVEL OF SCHOOLING THEY HAD, BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW ANY OF THAT. IT WAS A CHALLENGE BECAUSE THE SOCIAL WORKER I HAD AT THE TIME WASN'T VERY HELPFUL. SO I JUST SORT OF HAD TO FIND OUT ON MY OWN."

ENROLL — Participation in Student Support Programs

Foster youth may be eligible to receive support services through a number of different federally- and state-funded programs. Enrollment in five of these programs were examined in this report.

- Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS): A state-funded comprehensive academic counseling program designed to provide additional support to eligible full-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds.[12]

- Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE): a program composed solely of EOPS students who are also single parents receiving public assistance.[13]

- Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS): a program providing support services, specialized instruction, and educational accommodations to students with disabilities.[14]

- TRIO: a federally funded outreach and student services program that serves individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.[15]

- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs): a program that provides work study, job placement, child care, coordination, curriculum development and redesign, and under certain conditions, post-employment skills training and instructional services to community college students receiving state welfare benefits.[16]

These support programs can be critical for student success. For example, prior research has found that students served by EOPS have higher retention rates, higher completion rates of transfer math and English courses, complete more transfer units within three years, and are more likely to have completed a degree or transferred in three years compared to non-EOPS students with similar backgrounds.[17]

Fewer than one-fifth of foster youth participated in EOPS, TRIO, DSPS, CalWORKs, or CARE support programs.

Overall, just 16 percent of foster youth at the CCP two-year campuses participated in these support programs in 2012-13 (data not shown). In 2013-14, 19 percent participated. The percentages participating specifically in EOPS and DSPS were lower (Figure 4).

Figure 4: ENROLL – Foster youth participation in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)
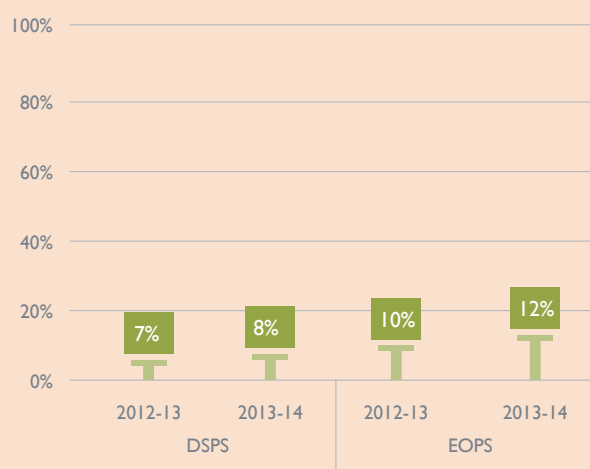
	DSPS		EOPS	
	2012-13	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14
	7%	8%	10%	12%

Note: Non-foster youth data were excluded from this indicator. Non-foster youth eligibility rates for student support programs may vary significantly from the rates for the foster youth population; therefore, a straight comparison of participation rates between the two groups would be of limited use here.

12 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website, EOPS & CARE home page, http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/StudentServices/EOPSCARE.aspx
13 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website, Comparison of CalWORKs, EOPS, & CARE Programs http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/SSSP/EOPS/Training/Comparison%20of%20EOPSCARECalWORKsprograms.pdf
14 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website, Disabled Student Programs and Services http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/StudentServices/DSPS.aspx
15 US Department of Education, TRIO home page, http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html.
16 California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/StudentServices/CalWORKs.aspx
17 RP Group, EOPS Impact Study Technical Report, September 7, 2012.

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

"MY FIRST SEMESTER WAS HORRIBLE BECAUSE I WAS IN CLASSES THAT WERE NOT WHAT I NEEDED, BUT BY SECOND SEMESTER THAT GOT FIGURED OUT WITH THE HELP OF EOPS COUNSELORS."

★ MOVING FORWARD

ENROLLING MORE FOSTER YOUTH IN STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Foster youth enrolled in community colleges disproportionately face serious academic, economic, and emotional challenges and it is imperative that they are adequately served by federal and state programs. It is therefore critical to gain a better understanding of the eligibility challenges and to raise awareness among foster youth of the programs and resources available to them.

1. What percentage of foster youth are eligible for state and federal support programs? Of those that are eligible, how many apply?

2. What are the barriers that prevent eligible foster youth from participating in these programs?

3. How can foster youth awareness of these programs be improved?

4. How do the persistence and completion rates of foster youth participating in state and federal support programs compare to those of foster youth not receiving these supports?

There is evidence that foster youth find these programs helpful. For example, in focus groups, foster youth across multiple campuses stated that EOPS counselors helped them choose classes in line with their goals, and indicated that EOPS counselors fill the void when counseling services on campus are subpar. Other foster youth praised the TRIO program on their campuses.

Beginning in 2016, the Community College System will be implementing a new program at up to ten community college districts within EOPS, known as the Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support Program (CAFYES) which will expand the availability of EOPS services to foster youth and provide an enhanced level of service. Once this program is implemented, additional questions related to lessons learned from this program should be explored.

9

🏛 ENROLL | Full-Time Attendance

Students enrolled in college full time are generally more likely to complete a degree or certificate in six years compared with those enrolled part time or those with mixed enrollment (part time and full time at different periods).[18] Full-time status can also bring many benefits, including greater eligibility for scholarships and other forms of financial aid, as well as eligibility for student support programs and services such as EOPS. Yet, campus professionals also note potential benefits of part-time status for at-risk foster youth, particularly during the first year of college. For example, because many foster youth may be employed or have parenting responsibilities, a full-time course load may be overwhelming, and may make the youth more likely to fail a course and drop out. Course success while enrolled part time, by contrast, can build the student's confidence and increase their likelihood of persisting.

Only about one in three foster youth attended full time, compared with one in two non-foster youth.

In 2012-13 and 2013-14, only about one-third of foster youth enrolled at a CCP community college attended full time, compared with about half of all non-foster youth (Figure 5).

Among foster youth first-time students, the percentages attending full time were even lower: only 22 percent in 2012-13 and 14 percent in 2013-14 were attending full time (data not shown).

Figure 5: ENROLL — Attended full time

	2012-13	2013-14
All Foster Youth	35%	34%
All Non-foster Youth	50%	46%

■ All Foster Youth ■ All Non-foster Youth
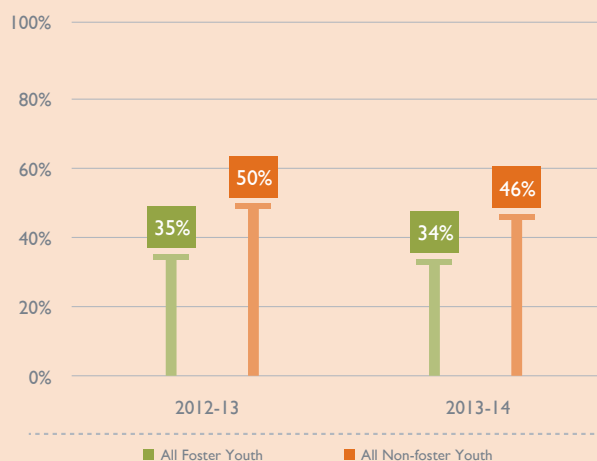
⭐ MOVING FORWARD

INCREASING LEVELS OF FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT AND ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

To help more students make an informed decision as to whether full- or part-time enrollment is in their best interest, it is critical to understand what benefits and difficulties students experience by attending full time and part time.

1. **What are the different reasons foster youth enroll part time rather than full time?**

2. **Do the persistence and completion rates of foster youth enrolled part time differ from those enrolled full time?**

3. **How can campuses help foster youth determine if full-time or part-time enrollment best fits their needs and goals?**

18 Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Chen, J., Ziskin, M., Park, E., Torres, V., & Chiang, Y. (2012, November). Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates (Signature Report No. 4). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.
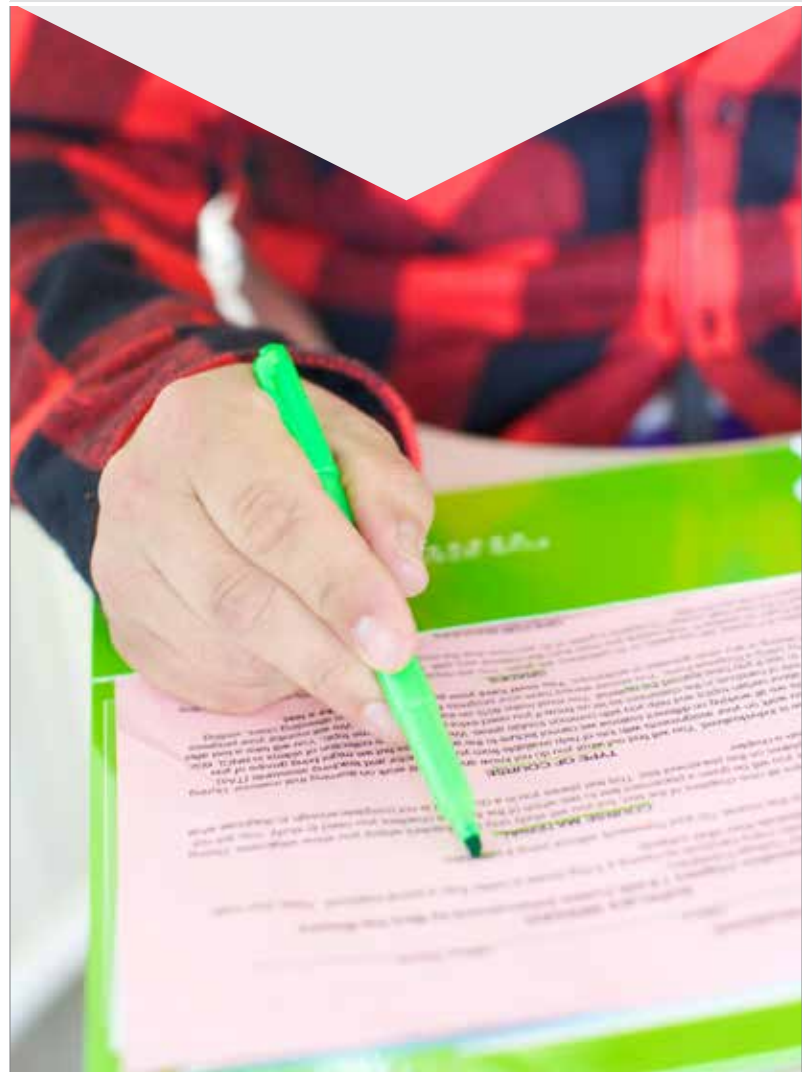
ENROLL   Enrollment Within a Year of High School Graduation[19]

Foster youth who delay enrollment in community college for one year or more are 40 percent less likely to persist (enroll from one year to the next) compared with those who enroll immediately after college.[20]

Foster youth first-time students were less likely to enroll in college within a year of high school graduation compared to their non-foster youth peers.

Across CCP two-year campuses in 2012-13, 62 percent of foster youth who were first-time students enrolled in college within a year of graduating from high school compared with 68 percent of their non-foster youth peers (Figure 6). The percentages were slightly lower in 2013-14 for both groups.

Figure 6: ENROLL – First-time students enrolled within 12 months of high school

Legend:
- Foster Youth First-time Students
- Non-foster Youth First-time Students

Data:
- 2012-13: Foster Youth 62%, Non-foster Youth 68%
- 2013-14: Foster Youth 56%, Non-foster Youth 64%

★ MOVING FORWARD

INCREASING ENROLLMENT SOON AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

While delayed enrollment is associated with poorer educational outcomes, it is not clear that delayed enrollment necessarily causes the poorer outcomes. Nevertheless, because delays in enrollment can increase challenges faced by foster youth, particularly with regard to financial aid receipt, it is important to understand how to advance the enrollment process.

1. **What are the reasons that foster youth delay their enrollment in community college after high school?**

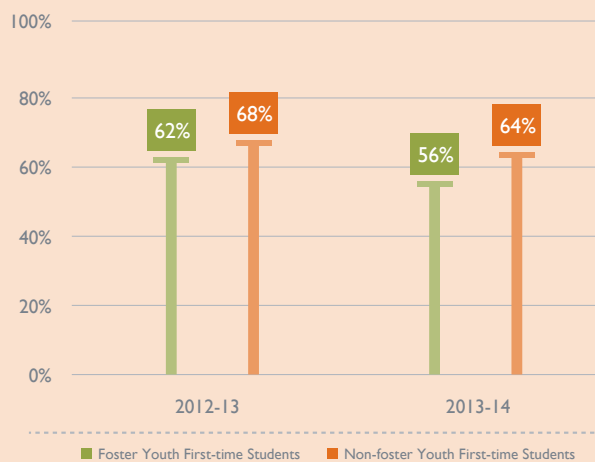2. **How do the completion rates of foster youth who delayed their enrollment compare to those who enrolled within a year of high school?**

3. **Are there strategies that have proven effective in motivating foster youth to enroll within a year of high school?**

4. **Do foster youth who delayed their enrollment require different supports than foster youth who enrolled directly after high school?**

In focus groups, foster youth provided some indications of reasons why they delayed enrollment in college, particularly highlighting that they took time between high school and college in order to work and earn money. Foster youth also reported difficulty tracking down the required documents to enroll in college and obtain financial aid, including birth certificates, social security documents, proof of foster youth status, and transcripts. At least one student had to postpone enrollment because their social worker did not provide the required paperwork on time.

19 Data on enrollment in college within a year of receiving a high school diploma is limited to those students who earn a high school diploma and for whom the date of high school graduation and the first community college term were available. In 2013-14, data were available for about 73% of foster youth first-time students, and 81% of non-foster youth first-time students. Data should be interpreted with caution.
20 Frerer, K., Sosenko, L, Pellegrin, N., Manchik, V., & Horowitz, J. (2013). Foster Youth Transitions: A Study of California Foster Youth High School and College Level Outcomes. Center for Social Services Research and Institute for Evidence-Based Change.

EARN   Course Completion and Success

Earning passing grades in college courses is crucial to college success, as failing to pass courses not only increases time to completion, but also costs students money and puts them at risk of losing their financial aid. Course grades are also a powerful indicator of a student's chances for graduation, with higher GPAs linked to higher rates of college completion.[21]

Foster youth did not complete half of all courses in which they enrolled.

In both years of analysis, foster youth only successfully completed about half of all courses in which they enrolled (Figure 7).[22] By contrast, non-foster youth completed almost 70 percent of their courses. Successful course completion rates were generally slightly lower among first-time students; the 2013-14 course completion rate for foster youth first-time students—45 percent—was particularly low (data not shown).

Foster youth were less likely to have completed 30 or more units than non-foster youth.

In 2012-13 and 2013-14, only about one in five enrolled foster youth had completed 30 or more units anytime during their college career, compared to almost two in five non-foster youth (Figure 8).

Figure 8: EARN – Successfully completed 30 or more units anytime during college

	2012-13	2013-14
All Foster Youth	18%	20%
All Non-foster Youth	38%	37%

Figure 7: EARN – Successful course completion rate (A, B, C, Pass, or Credit)

	2012-13	2013-14
All Foster Youth	51%	50%
All Non-foster Youth	69%	68%

21 Tyson, C. (2014, September 10). The Murky Middle. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/09/10/maximize-graduation-rates-colleges-should-focus-middle-range-students-research-shows (focuses on 4-year colleges)
22 Successful completion means students received either a passing or satisfactory grade

Foster youth were more likely than their peers to have a GPA below 2.0, and were less likely to have a 3.0 GPA or higher.

Overall, in 2012-13 and 2013-14, a little under half of foster youth earned a 2.0 GPA or higher for the academic year, compared with close to three-quarters of non-foster youth (see Figure 9 for 2013-14 data; data for 2012-13 not shown). In both years, just 19 percent of foster youth earned a 3.0 GPA or higher, compared with 36 percent of non-foster youth.

Figure 9: EARN – All students' GPA in 2013-14

	Earned a 2.0 or higher	Earned a 3.0 or higher
All Foster Youth	49%	19%
All Non-foster Youth	71%	36%
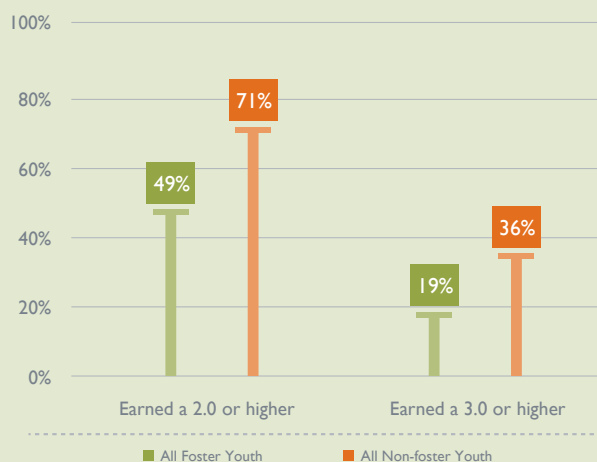
QUOTES FROM CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS

"I HAVE HAD A COUPLE OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE [BEEN] SLEEPING IN THEIR CARS OR COUCH SURFING WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE, AND THEN THEIR GRADES START TO SUFFER BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE CONSTANT ACCESS TO COMPUTERS OR A RIDE EVEN TO [SCHOOL]. . . . THEY LOSE THEIR HOUSING OR THEIR PLACE TO LIVE AND THEN THEY HAVE TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL. THAT'S ONE OF THE LARGEST STRUGGLES I'VE SEEN OUR YOUTH FACE."

EARN — Course Completion and Success

Research indicates that first-year college GPA is the most important predictor of persistence.[23] Foster youth first-time students earned a 2.0 GPA at particularly low rates (Figure 10).

Figure 10: EARN – First-time students' GPA in 2013-14

- **Foster Youth First-time Students** (Earned a 2.0 or higher: 38%; Earned a 3.0 or higher: 18%)
- **Non-foster Youth First-time Students** (Earned a 2.0 or higher: 61%; Earned a 3.0 or higher: 31%)

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

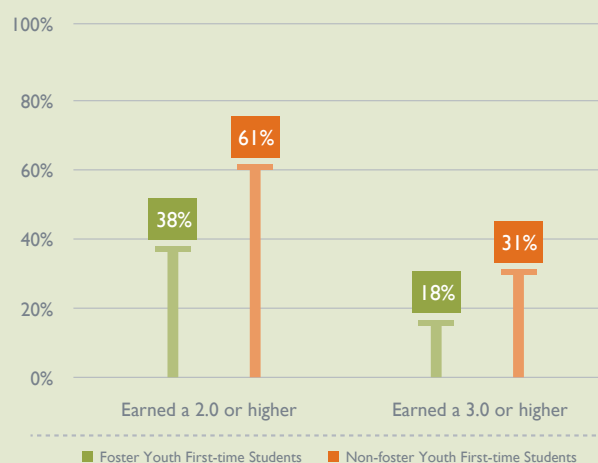"LAST SEMESTER WAS MY FIRST SEMESTER; I TOOK 14 UNITS AND HAD JUST HAD MY BABY . . . IT WAS TOO MUCH OF A STRUGGLE TO BE A NEW MOM AND A SINGLE MOM AND TAKING ALL THOSE CLASSES, SO I HAD TO DROP OUT . . . . THIS SEMESTER, I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE RIGHT CLASSES AND . . . MY SCHEDULE IS MORE MANAGEABLE."

★ MOVING FORWARD

IMPROVING CHANCES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It is critical to examine what is underlying the significant achievement gap between foster youth and non-foster youth and what can be done to address it.

1. Are there specific factors that correlate with course completion and success measures for foster youth, such as part-time or full-time enrollment, remediation needs at entry, or financial aid receipt?

2. What types of interventions are most effective at supporting foster youth academic achievement?

3. For foster youth who achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher, what do they identify as the biggest factors in their success?

Many programs report anecdotally that enhanced counseling services, tutoring resources, ongoing emotional support and linkages to other off campus resources such as housing programs and mental health support can improve student outcomes.

Foster youth also repeatedly noted that they had a lot of difficulty with course selection, particularly in their first semester. Ensuring that foster youth access priority registration and receive targeted academic counseling – including prior to first semester enrollment–would likely help to improve course completion rates and first-year GPAs. Campus support programs have an obvious role to play in this area.

23 Crissman Ishler, J. L., & Upcraft, M. L. (2005). The keys to first-year student persistence. In Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot's (Eds.) Challenging and supporting the first-year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
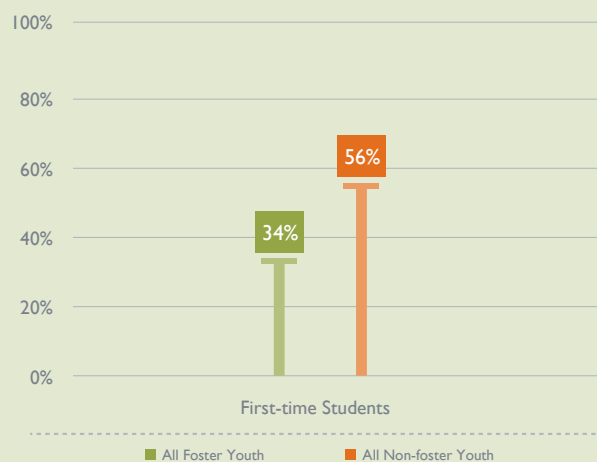
EARN | Persistence

The persistence metric measures the percent of first-time students who, starting in 2012-13, remained enrolled at their community college for three consecutive semesters or four consecutive quarters.

Foster youth were less likely than non-foster youth to persist.

Only about one-third of all foster youth who enrolled for the first time in 2012-13 persisted for three consecutive terms or four consecutive quarters, compared to 56 percent of non-foster youth (Figure 11).

Figure 11: EARN – Enrolled in three consecutive terms or four consecutive quarters starting in 2012-13

First-time Students

■ All Foster Youth   ■ All Non-foster Youth

★ MOVING FORWARD

KEEPING FOSTER YOUTH ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

It is critical to understand what is needed to keep foster youth in school.

1. What factors correlate with persistence rates for foster youth, part- or full-time enrollment, remediation needs at entry, or financial aid receipt?

2. What reasons do foster youth give for dropping out of community college?

3. Do the experiences of foster youth receiving extended foster care benefits differ from foster youth who do not?

4. What types of interventions are most effective at supporting foster youth persistence?

The California Fostering Connections to Success Act, signed into law through Assembly Bill (AB) 12, extends foster care for eligible youth up to age 21, and includes an option to enroll in college to establish eligibility. CCP partners are interested in understanding how to best support those foster youth who have enrolled.

In focus groups, foster youth stressed the need for a specific location on campus, staffed with people knowledgeable about supportive resources available. Some emphasized that this resource should be available in senior year in high school. Those on campuses with programs for foster youth (e.g. Guardian Scholars) highlighted their effectiveness at making resources known.

EARN | Completion   ★ MOVING FORWARD

In California community colleges, students can earn an associate's degree, a Chancellor's Office approved certificate, transfer to a four-year institution, or some combination of these three.

At the 19 community colleges that submitted data,

123 foster youth earned an associate's degree, certificate, and/or transfer in 2012-13.

149 foster youth earned an associate's degree, certificate, and/or transfer in 2013-14[24]

24 For some context, there were 3,500 students identified as foster youth enrolled in the CCP community colleges in 2012-13 and 4,818 students identified as foster youth in 2013-14. The number of transfers in 2013-14 is likely an underestimate due to data lag.

The goal is to increase the number of foster youth in California who earn a college degree or certificate.

• What are currently the biggest barriers that foster youth face in obtaining an associate's degree, certificate, or transfer to a university?

• What are promising strategies for helping more foster youth obtain a degree, certificate, or transfer?

• Are foster youth aware of career and technical education (CTE) certificate programs, which may offer a shorter route to completion than associate's programs? If not, what can be done to raise awareness and ensure that interested foster youth take advantage of this option?

• Are foster youth prepared to transition quickly into employment after graduation?

15

Although most foster youth in California attend community college, there are sizable numbers of foster youth in four-year colleges and universities, either enrolling as freshmen or as transfer students from community colleges. Enrolling in a university may provide many benefits to foster youth as some evidence suggests that students who initially enroll in four-year colleges and universities are more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than similar students who intend to complete a bachelor's degree but initially enroll in a two-year college.[25] Four-year universities also typically offer on-campus housing, and access to housing is a critical issue for foster youth. However, four-year universities are also considerably more expensive and may provide foster youth with less flexibility.

It is also important to remember that four-year universities have selective admissions criteria based on a student's academic preparation in high school and other factors. According to the California Master Plan for Higher Education, University of California campuses offer admission to the top one-eighth (12.5%) of the high school graduating class and California State Universities to the top one-third (33.3%) of the high school graduating class.[26] In contrast, community colleges accept any student who wishes to attend regardless of academic preparation or high school success, including those who did not obtain a high school diploma or GED. Because of these significant differences in student populations, data presented in this section for universities should not be compared with the community college data.

This section would not have been possible without the incredible efforts of the participating universities, who went to great efforts to compile their data on the requested metrics for this report.

EQUIP | Remediation Needs

At CSUs, students who score below a certain level on placement tests are identified as needing remediation.[27] The credits earned by completing remediation courses do not count towards a bachelor's degree, yet cost the same to the student as other college courses and count towards the six-year limit on federal financial aid.

Substantial percentages of foster youth at CSUs were identified as needing remediation.

Among foster youth enrolled in 2012-13 and 2013-14, almost half were identified as needing remediation at entry in English, compared to about one quarter of non-foster youth (see Figure 12 for 2013-14 data; 2012-13 data not shown).[28] Foster youth and non-foster youth were slightly less likely to need remediation in math, but the achievement gap was similar.[29]

Figure 12: EQUIP – Percent of students who needed remediation in English and math: 2013-14

	Needed remediation in English	Needed remediation in Math
All Foster Youth	46%	43%
All Non-foster Youth	25%	21%
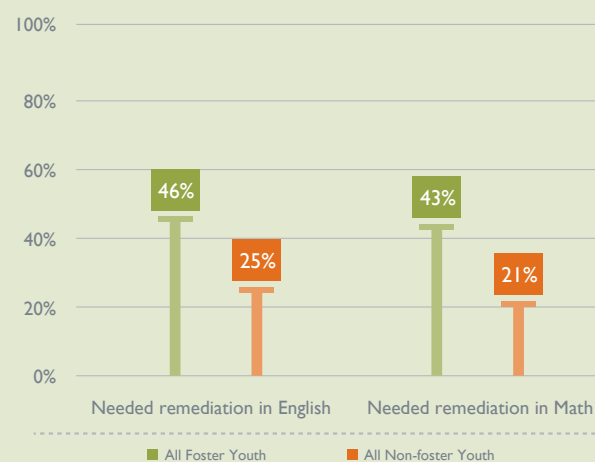
5 CSUs reported usable data.

25 Reynolds, C.L. (2012). Where to attend? Estimating the effects of beginning college at a two-year institution. Economics of Education Review, 31(4), 345-362.
26 UC Office of the President website, Major Features of the California Master Plan for Higher Education, http://www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/mpsummary.htm
27 This metric was requested of CSUs only as the UC system does not have a comparable remediation program.
28 Includes all students who were not exempt from taking the English Placement Test (EPT) and who scored below 147.
29 Includes all students who were not exempt from taking the Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) exam and who scored below 50.

★ MOVING FORWARD

REDUCING THE NEED FOR REMEDIATION COURSES AND ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION FROM REMEDIATION

The higher rates of remedial course taking indicate that foster youth will, overall, have to spend more time and money than non-foster youth completing a bachelor's degree.

1. California foster youth in K-12 are more likely to experience school disruption, be classified with a disability, and be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools than students without foster care involvement.[30] Is there a correlation between any of these factors and placement in remediation?

2. Which CSU campuses excel at supporting foster youth with transitioning out of remediation? What types of interventions are most effective?

30 Barrat, V.X., & Berliner, B. (2013). The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools. San Francisco: WestEd.

🏛 ENROLL — Participation in Student Support Programs

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) aims to improve access and retention of low-income and educationally disadvantaged students by providing admission and academic assistance and, in some cases, financial assistance.[31] The EOP program can serve as a critical resource for foster youth enrolled in universities.

The majority of foster youth were not being served by an Educational Opportunity Program.[32]

Overall, only 34 percent of foster youth at CCP CSU institutions participated in EOP in 2012-13 (Figure 13). In 2013-14, the participation rate for foster youth was 38 percent.

Figure 13: ENROLL – Foster youth participation in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
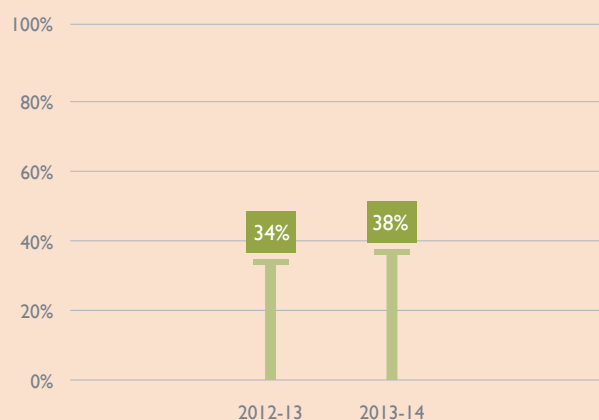
6 CSUs reported usable data. No UCs submitted data on EOP participation. Note: Non-foster youth data were excluded from this indicator. Non-foster youth eligibility rates for EOP may vary significantly from the rates for the foster youth population; therefore, a straight comparison of participation rates between the two groups would be of limited use here.

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

"I KEEP COMING TO EOP AND THEY KNOW OF A LOT OF THE RESOURCES FOR US. . . . [T]HEY ARE THE ONES THAT KEEP ME GOING EMOTIONALLY AND FINANCIALLY."

★ MOVING FORWARD

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF FOSTER YOUTH ENROLLED IN THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is designed to provide additional support to those who need it most. However, fewer than half of all foster youth are participating in the program. In order to expand the number of students participating in EOP it would be worthwhile to explore:

1. What percentage of foster youth are eligible for EOP? Of those that are eligible, how many apply? Of those that apply, how many are accepted? How does this compare to the percent of eligible non-foster youth who are accepted?

2. What are the barriers that prevent eligible foster youth from participating in EOP? Do eligible non-foster youth face similar barriers?

3. How do the persistence and completion rates of foster youth participating in EOP programs compare to those of foster youth not participating?

31 CSU Mentor website, What is the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)?, https://secure.csumentor.edu/planning/eop/
32 Not all UCs have an EOP program, although many have comparable programs. For this report, only CSU campuses reported data on EOP program participation.
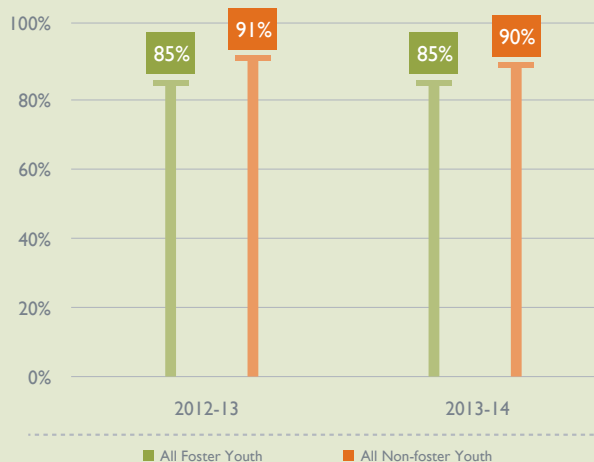
EARN | Course Completion and Success

To advance toward a bachelor's degree, students have to both enroll in a sufficient number of units and complete the courses in which they enroll. Succeeding in courses, beyond just completing them, is important, as GPA is a predictor of both a student's likelihood of degree completion[33] and their post-college earnings.[34]

Foster youth completed courses at slightly lower rates than non-foster youth.

In 2012-13 and 2013-14, foster youth successfully completed 85 percent of courses they attempted (Figure 14). The course completion rates for non-foster youth were a few percentage points higher.
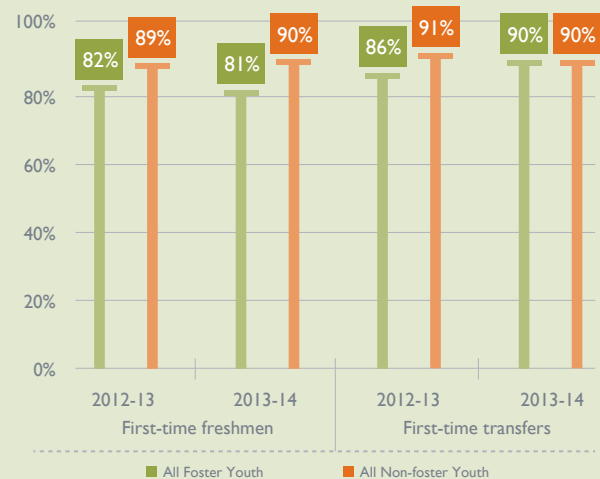
Gaps in course completion rates between foster youth and non-foster youth were slightly wider among first-time freshmen, and somewhat narrower among first-time transfers (Figure 15). In 2013-14, there was no gap between foster youth first-time transfers and non-foster youth first-time transfers.

Figure 15: EARN – Successful course completion rate (A, B, C, Pass, or Credit) for first-time freshmen and first-time transfers

First-time freshmen: 2012-13 — 82% (All Foster Youth), 89% (All Non-foster Youth); 2013-14 — 81% (All Foster Youth), 90% (All Non-foster Youth)

First-time transfers: 2012-13 — 86% (All Foster Youth), 91% (All Non-foster Youth); 2013-14 — 90% (All Foster Youth), 90% (All Non-foster Youth)

■ All Foster Youth   ■ All Non-foster Youth

7 campuses reported usable data on first-time freshmen foster youth; 6 campuses reported usable data on first-time transfer foster youth in 2013-14 and non-foster youth; 5 campuses reported usable data on first-time transfer foster youth in 2012-13.

Figure 14: EARN – Successful course completion rate (A, B, C, Pass, or Credit)

2012-13 — 85% (All Foster Youth), 91% (All Non-foster Youth)
2013-14 — 85% (All Foster Youth), 90% (All Non-foster Youth)

■ All Foster Youth   ■ All Non-foster Youth

7 campuses reported usable data on foster youth; 6 campuses reported usable data on non-foster youth.

33 Tyson, C. (2014, September 10) The Murky Middle. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/09/10/maximize-graduation-rates-colleges-should-focus-middle-range-students-research-shows

34 Backes, B., Holzer, H.J., & Velez, E.D. (2015). Is it worth it? Postsecondary education and labor market outcomes for the disadvantaged. IZA Journal of Labor Policy, 4 :1.
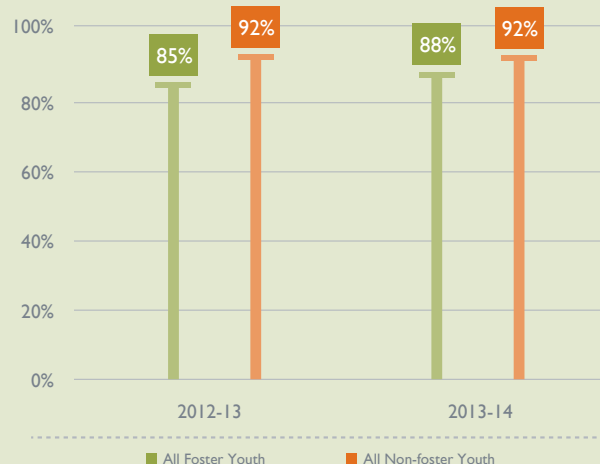
🔭 EARN | Course Completion and Success

Large percentages of both foster youth and non-foster youth achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher, but foster youth were considerably less likely than non-foster youth to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

In both 2012-13 and 2013-14, foster youth and non-foster youth achieved at least a 2.0 GPA at relatively high rates (Figure 16).

Foster youth were considerably less likely than non-foster youth to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher (Figure 17). In both years, a little over one-third of foster youth earned a 3.0 GPA or higher, compared to more than half of non-foster youth.

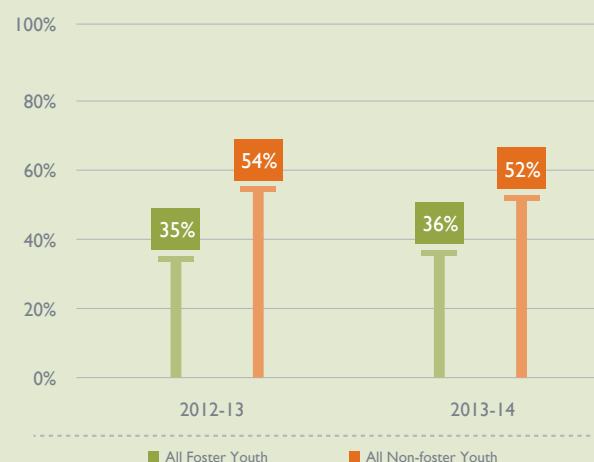Figure 16: EARN – Achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher

11 campuses reported usable data on foster youth in 2013-14; 10 campuses reported usable data on foster youth and non-foster youth in 2012-13 and on non-foster youth in 2013-14.

Figure 17: EARN – Achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher

11 campuses reported usable data for 2012-13 and on foster youth in 2013-14; 10 campuses reported usable data on non-foster youth in 2013-14.

First-time freshmen foster youth were somewhat less likely to earn a 2.0 GPA. In 2013-14, 74 percent of first-time freshmen foster youth earned a 2.0 GPA or higher, compared with 85 percent of first-time freshmen non-foster youth (data not shown). Among first-time transfer students, by contrast, 94 percent of foster youth and 91 percent of non-foster youth earned a 2.0 GPA.

The gap between foster youth and non-foster youth in achieving a 3.0 GPA was similarly large among first-time freshmen (28 percent for foster youth in 2013-14 vs. 47 percent for non-foster youth) (data not shown). By contrast, among first-time transfers, the gap was narrower, with 49 percent of foster youth and 55 percent of non-foster youth earning a 3.0 GPA or higher in 2013-14.

MOVING FORWARD

## ELIMINATING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

It is encouraging that foster youth at universities are completing courses and achieving 2.0 GPAs at a relatively high rate. However, the greater achievement gap at the 2.0 GPA level among first-time freshmen may indicate that, relative to their peers, foster youth struggle more academically early on in their college careers. It may also indicate that foster youth who perform poorly are more likely to drop out after their first year. Furthermore, a gap remains at the 3.0 level, which is troubling, as researchers have found that students with first-year GPAs above a 2.0 but below a 3.0 make up nearly half of all dropouts.[35]

1. Are there specific factors that correlate with course completion and success measures for foster youth, such as EOP participation or remediation needs at entry?

2. What types of interventions appear to be most effective at supporting foster youth academic achievement?

3. For foster youth who achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher, what do they identify as the biggest factors in their success?

4. What is the connection between campus-based support program participation and GPA? What specific supports may have an impact on student achievement? How do foster youth in these programs differ from other foster youth in terms of academic preparation?

Foster youth in campus-based support programs fared better academically than other foster youth.

On both GPA metrics in both years, foster youth students participating in campus-based support programs specifically for foster youth had higher GPAs than the general population of foster youth (see Figure 18 for 2013-14 data; 2012-13 data not shown). Differences in outcomes may be influenced by whether campus-based support programs are serving foster youth with either greater or fewer needs that the general foster youth population.

Figure 18: EARN – GPA achievement for all foster youth and foster youth in campus-based support programs: 2013-14

Achieved a 2.0 GPA or higher: All Foster Youth 88%, Foster Youth in Campus-Based Support Programs 94%
Achieved a 3.0 GPA or higher: All Foster Youth 36%, Foster Youth in Campus-Based Support Programs 44%

■ All Foster Youth   ■ Foster Youth in Campus-Based Support Programs
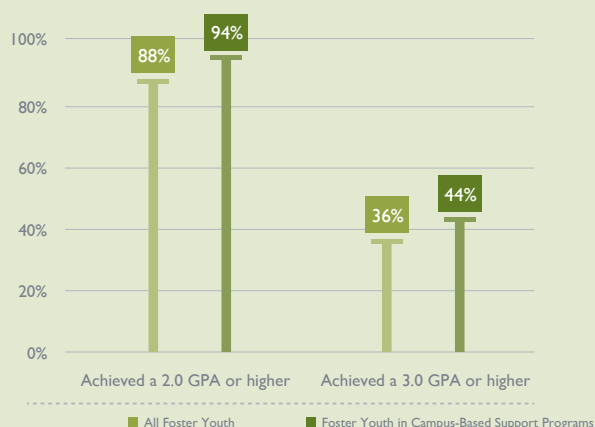
8 campuses reported data on foster youth in campus-based support programs.

35 Tyson, C. (2014, September 10) The Murky Middle. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/09/10/maximize-graduation-rates-colleges-should-focus-middle-range-students-research-shows
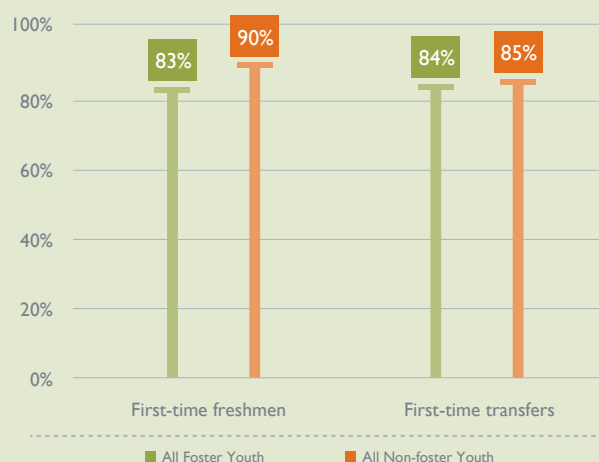
EARN | Persistence

The persistence metric measures the percent of first-time students who remained enrolled for three consecutive semesters or four consecutive quarters.

Foster youth at universities persisted at relatively high rates.

Among first-time freshmen who enrolled in 2012-13, 83 percent of foster youth remained enrolled for three consecutive semesters or four consecutive quarters (Figure 19).[36] The persistence rate was similar for first-time transfer students.

Figure 19: EARN – Enrolled in 3 consecutive terms or 4 consecutive quarters starting in 2012-13

First-time freshmen: All Foster Youth 83%, All Non-foster Youth 90%
First-time transfers: All Foster Youth 84%, All Non-foster Youth 85%

■ All Foster Youth   ■ All Non-foster Youth

7 campuses reported usable data on first-time freshmen foster youth; 6 campuses reported usable data on first-time transfer non-foster youth; 5 campuses reported usable data on first-time freshmen non-foster youth and first-time transfer foster youth.

★ MOVING FORWARD

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING PERSISTENCE RATES

It is encouraging that persistence rates are relatively high for both first-time freshmen and transfers. However, some foster youth fail to persist after their first year. Furthermore, it is important to remember that it usually takes at least eight semesters or 12 quarters to complete a bachelor's degree, and the rates for first-time freshmen only show persistence through the first third of the program. More data is needed to understand how persistence rates look in later years.

1. Are there specific factors that correlate with persistence measures for foster youth, such as EOP participation or remediation needs at entry?

2. What are the reasons that foster youth give for dropping out before earning a bachelor's degree?

3. What types of interventions appear to be most effective at supporting foster youth persistence?

EARN | Completion   ★ MOVING FORWARD

Eight CCP universities reported data on bachelor's degree completions in 2012-13. Nine reported data for 2013-14.

At the universities that submitted data,

101 foster youth earned a bachelor's degree in 2012-13.

125 foster youth earned a bachelor's degree in 2013-14[37]

The goal of California College Pathways is to increase the number of foster youth in California who earn a college degree or certificate.

• What are currently the biggest barriers that foster youth face in obtaining a bachelor's degree?

• What are the most promising strategies for helping more foster youth complete a bachelor's degree?

• Are foster youth prepared to transition quickly into employment after graduation?

36 Data were not yet available for students who enrolled in 2013-14.
37 For some context, there were 739 students identified as foster youth enrolled in the eight universities submitting data on bachelor's degree completion in 2012-13, and 797 students identified as foster youth enrolled in the nine universities submitting data on bachelor's degree completion in 2013-14.

One of the most important ways to support foster youth students in postsecondary education is to better understand their experiences and needs.

The following recommendations are intended to advance systemic data collection and improve the use of shared measurements.

1. Include more robust identification of foster youth on community college and university campuses, employing multiple sources. For example, consider the population of students who have been identified as a foster youth from any of the following: (a) admissions application/CCC Apply; (b) FAFSA; (c) Chafee Grant applications; (d) priority registration; (e) EOP/EOPS; and (f) self-identification through campus support programs specifically for foster youth.

2. Institutionalize data sharing practices with new policies. For example, data matching between the California Department of Social Services child welfare data system and the California Community Colleges data system would allow for the automatic verification of foster youth status, thereby greatly improving the accuracy and inclusivity of foster youth data.

3. Conduct additional, more in-depth data collection as outlined in the report to create more actionable findings. For example, conduct focus groups or interviews with youth and stakeholders.

California College Pathways will collect data for the 2014-15 year from campuses in the spring of 2016, and will create a follow up to this report analyzing the new year of data. Further years of data collection will allow for a richer understanding of the data, as well as information about trends, to better inform both policy and practice for foster youth students in postsecondary education.

The following technical appendix provides general information about the campus data that are analyzed in this report, including known data limitations.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA

There are 20 CCP network two-year campuses, all of which are part of the California Community Colleges System. This report includes data for 19 of these campuses. Student data within the California Community Colleges System are tracked through a centralized database known as the Management Information System (MIS). Each community college district is required to upload student level data into this system so that aggregate data can be tracked. In 2012, a flag was added to the submission requirements for MIS in order to identify and track data specifically for foster youth students (the "foster youth flag").

The milestone and momentum point data for the CCP two-year colleges were provided to RTI in the form of reports from the Cal-PASS Plus system of data. Cal-PASS Plus is a voluntary, actionable, and collaborative pre-K through 16 system of student data governed by Memoranda of Understanding (data sharing agreements) among all participating institutions. The system is managed through a partnership between San Joaquin Delta College and the non-profit Educational Results Partnership. Each college is individually responsible for uploading data to the Chancellor's Office multiple times a year in different subsets including course and section information, student information, program and special services participation, student enrollment, financial aid, and student degrees and certificates, among others. The Chancellor's Office stages that data, creates system-wide variables, analyzes that data, and provides the system-wide dataset to Cal-PASS Plus.

Cal-PASS Plus additionally recruits the participation of K-12 school districts and four-year institutions. K-12 districts representing approximately 70 percent of the public education students in California annually upload their data files from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), providing student information, program participation, and course and test-taking performance. A limited number of four-year public universities also provide data, though in a custom format as there are no system-wide student-level reporting standards. Using a variety of techniques, CalPASS Plus matches the MIS data to CALPADS and four-year institutional data, creating an intersegmental system of data that provides opportunities to track students across the divides that span the transitions within K-12, from K-12 to community colleges, and from both K-12 and community colleges to four-year institutions. All data in the Cal-PASS Plus system is de-identified to protect confidentiality of records.

In partnership with California College Pathways, Cal-PASS Plus created foster youth data dashboards, which display the milestone and momentum point data (both raw numbers and percentages) for CCP community colleges as well as all community colleges for which any students are flagged as foster youth. The data contained in the dashboards for the CCP community colleges as downloaded on April 21, 2015, were used in this report.

The foster youth dashboards provide data for students who are flagged in the MIS system as foster youth, and also for those who were not flagged (the "non-foster youth category"). The dashboards also present data specifically for the first-time student cohort of foster youth and non-foster youth, those students who were enrolled for the first time at a specific institution during the academic year and who had not been observably enrolled in any other community college or four-year institution within the last decade.[38] For reasons pursuant to the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), any portions of the dashboards in which there were fewer than 10 students represented in the data were suppressed.

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38 To the extent possible, the CCCCO tracks enrollment across all of the public higher education systems in California and separately works to track first enrollment across all other higher education institutions as well using National Student Clearinghouse data. Note, however, that units taken while concurrently enrolled in high school are not counted against student first-time status, consistent with national policy from the Department of Education.

In addition to the campus-level data, Cal-PASS Plus also provided aggregated data for all CCP campuses. The CCP totals provided by Cal-PASS Plus include data that were suppressed at the campus level due to small student counts.

Complete financial aid data were missing for three campuses for the 2013-14 school year. Limited financial aid data for a small subset of students were reported for two of these campuses and are included in the totals.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA LIMITATIONS

This report would not have been possible without the participation of the CCP campuses. Prior to the final data pull for this report in April 2015, community colleges reviewed their data in Cal-PASS Plus and were instrumental in helping CCP to refine the metrics to ensure that the metric data were as high quality as possible.

There are some data limitations to keep in mind when analyzing the community college metric data. First, the foster youth flag, which identifies students who are current or former foster youth, is not used consistently across schools because campuses may use varying methods to identify foster youth. Although the vast majority of campuses are reporting this data to the MIS (90 percent report rate as of the fall of 2013), it is believed that the flag does not at this time accurately capture all of the foster youth on campus and may in some cases include students who are not in fact foster youth. Furthermore, in some cases, campuses may be tracking their foster youth but not using the flag that populates the MIS foster youth data field; in these cases, these youth are not being identified as foster youth in the upload of local campus data to MIS. In addition, as a brand new data element, colleges demonstrated some variance in the fidelity of their foster youth designations with some wide swings in the number of foster youth identified as attending the campus in the first few years, as is often the case when new data elements are introduced. As a result of these inconsistencies, it is likely that campuses are overall undercounting their foster youth and that students who should be included in the foster youth category are included in the non-foster youth category[39] though it is likely also the case that in some specific instances campuses may also be overcounting the number of foster youth by conflating the category with other student services variable flags.

In addition, data in Cal-PASS Plus were not available for foster youth participating in campus support programs specifically for foster youth, such as Guardian Scholars. Therefore, it is impossible to make inferences about how foster youth in these programs are faring at the CCP community colleges as separate from foster youth at those campuses in general. In future data collections, this data will be tracked and provided by institutions directly to Cal-PASS Plus, allowing for closer evaluation of the performance of students

in those programs compared to non-participating foster youth and students in general.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that the Cal-PASS Plus data include any student enrolled in at least one community college course. The data may therefore include a number of older students who are enrolled in a community college course for personal enrichment and are not seeking a degree or certificate; it may be that these types of students would be disproportionately represented among non-foster youth. As a result, the educational goals of students in the non-foster youth category may not be completely aligned with the foster youth category. Also, students may move between campuses both within and between academic years, though this is not exceptionally common. As a result, both foster youth and non-foster youth may potentially be represented in the dashboard for multiple schools.

For many metrics, data are presented for two years. However, variations in data between the two years may be due to random fluctuations or particularities of data reporting in a given year, particularly where the number of students in a category is small. Without further years of data, it is not advisable to make inferences regarding trends at this time.

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39 As evidence, data for the two-year campuses show a number of non-foster youth receiving Chafee Grants (72 in 2012-13 and 48 in 2013-14), which are limited to foster youth. These students are likely foster youth who have not been flagged in the MIS system.

UNIVERSITY DATA

The process of submitting data was different for the universities. Data were submitted by the campuses themselves, in most cases using a template provided by California College Pathways. Campuses provided an initial round of data in spring 2014 for the 2012-13 academic year only. The CCP data team reviewed the submissions, had discussions regarding the data and metrics with campus professionals, and subsequently refined the metrics. Campuses resubmitted data for 2012-13 and 2013-14 for the revised metrics between November 2014 and April 2015. The campuses' efforts to provide two rounds of data reports were invaluable in refining the metrics and helped to ensure that the data used in this report would be as high quality as possible.

Data were collected for all foster youth and all-non foster youth. In addition, for both the foster and non-foster populations, data were collected for two student cohorts: incoming freshmen students (first-time freshmen) and incoming transfer students (first-time transfers). Finally, data were collected for foster youth participating in a campus-based support program for foster youth, as well as for first-time students in one of these programs.

UNIVERSITY DATA LIMITATIONS

This report includes data for 12 of the 13 CCP four-year campuses. However, some campuses submitted data for some metrics and not others and are therefore only represented in select metrics.

The data in this report are generally the data that were submitted in late 2014 and early 2015. However, two of the campuses submitted data in the preliminary round in the spring of 2014 but not again for the later data collection. The data from these two initial submissions are included in the report where possible. However, not all metrics that were included in the final data pull were included in their submissions, and the metrics that were reported were reported somewhat differently. Specifically, one of these campuses did not include transfer students in their data and reported the number of students "in good standing", which is used herein as a proxy for those students with a 2.0 GPA or above. The other campus also did not report data for transfer students and reported data for fall of 2012-13 only.

Unlike the community college system, the CSU and UC systems do not have a centralized mechanism for tracking foster youth and there is no requirement that individual campuses do so. However, like community colleges, four-year campuses must utilize common definitions and tracking methods in order to get to good data. As 100 percent of UC campuses and most CSU campuses have specialized support programs for foster youth in place, most campuses do appear to have a mechanism in place for tracking foster youth. Those that do not should consider updating their data systems to incorporate a foster youth flag.

"WE ALL HEAR HOW HIGHER EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE, BUT FOR FOSTER YOUTH COLLEGE CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE MAKER. THIS REPORT SHINES A LIGHT ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES WE FACE IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE IN REACHING THEIR GOALS. IT'S A BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER FUTURE, FOR THEM AND FOR THE SOCIETY THEY WILL HELP BUILD."

— John Burton, Chair and Founder of the John Burton Foundation