

Policies, Procedures and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

Final Report

Submitted to:

California Department of Education

Carol Bingham
Manager, Budget Management and Fiscal Systems Analysis Office
California Department of Education
Fiscal and Administrative Services Division
1430 N Street, Suite 2213
Sacramento, California 95814-5901

Submitted by:

Tom Parrish
Cheryl Graczewski
Abigail Stewart-Teitelbaum
Nina Van Dyke
The American Institutes for Research

With contributions from:

Sally Bolus
Lodestar Management and Research Inc.

Carolyn Delano
SRA Associates

Human Systems Development

March 17, 2003

Executive Summary

Youth in foster care are arguably the most vulnerable population in the nation. Their extraordinary needs, coupled with the fact that governmental entities have so clearly assumed, indeed demanded, assumption of parental oversight, results in public responsibility for their well being that is crystal clear. In response, myriad and complex bureaucracies and a vast network of residential and schooling options, as well as other related service providers, have been established throughout the nation in an attempt to meet the special needs of this population. The annual cost of housing and educating a youth in foster care most commonly ranges from \$65,000 to \$85,000, and sometimes reaches over \$150,000.¹ Despite these considerable efforts and expenditures, far too often this population lacks residential stability and continuous and appropriate educational opportunities resulting in strikingly poor educational outcomes and potential for future success.²

As a result of very poor data, which is partly impeded under the guise of child protection (a topic further discussed in this report), limited information exists in regard to the educational and life outcomes of these children. One important study, however, on outcomes for children growing up as dependents and wards of the state suggests that as a nation, we are doing a very poor job of preparing them for adulthood. For example, from a sample of former foster youth 12 to 18 months after emancipation (leaving the system at age 18), (Courtney & Piliavin, 1998):

- 37 percent had not finished high school,
- 39 percent were unemployed,
- 27 percent of males and 10 percent of females had been incarcerated at least once; and
- 39 percent were receiving public assistance.

With over a half million youth in foster care nationwide (Weinberg et al., 2001) and one out of five youth in foster care residing in California (Morena, 2001), the state has long grappled with issues associated with this special population. As arguably the state's most at-risk population, for whom the state has clearly assumed responsibility for care and prosperity, this charge must be considered among the state's most critical obligations. As one of the results of these concerns, the State Legislature mandated this study. This final report, *Policies, Procedures and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes*, presents findings, recommendations, and a "road map" for change.

The primary goal assigned to this study was to provide a detailed road map for improving educational services to youth who reside in group homes. The following research questions were included in the Request for Proposals (RFP):

1. What are the key state and local policies, procedures and practices that influence the educational placement of youth in group homes?

¹ See Chapter V for further cost of services details.

² See Chapter V for further information on collected outcome data.

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the policies, procedures and practices in determining the educational placement of youth in group homes?
3. What are the causes for, and the magnitude of, any problems identified, and the extent to which each cause contributes to the problem?
4. What are effective options for state action to ameliorate the problems? (Possible state actions could include changes in statutes, regulations, and administrative policies, or changes in state funding formulas and funding levels.)
5. What local actions, including procedural changes, could ameliorate the problems?
6. What are the estimated state and local costs and benefits of implementing the different options?

In addition to these study questions, the 2000 Budget Act Item (6110-001-0890, provision 14) that authorized this study is very explicit that the study must also address issues of finance. This section states that, “the evaluation should include, but not be limited to, funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding.”

Thus, from the onset, it is important to understand the inter-related, but still dual, nature of this study. It was to make specific recommendations regarding the improvement of educational services for youth in group homes and give explicit instructions regarding the need to consider alternative methods for funding these services. This duality is reflected in the two separate stakeholder committees designed to advise the study team in regard to this project, as well as the design of this report, with a large chapter dedicated solely to finance.

Considerable legislative history connected to the education of youth in foster care exists. Senate Bill 933 (Chapter 311, Statutes of 1998) and the Budget Act addressed some of these concerns legislatively. SB 933 created a number of mandates to establish a coordinated effort to improve the education of youth in group homes, including Local Education Agency (LEA) notification procedures for the transfer of records for youth in group homes and increased interagency collaboration. The 1998 Budget Act provided funds for a study on the strengths and weaknesses of the policies and procedures affecting the education of youth in group homes. AIR conducted this study and published its findings in January 2001 (Parrish et al., 2001). The current study, authorized by the 2000 Budget Act, is a follow-up that builds on this prior research.

Group homes are residential facilities licensed by the state to serve six or more youth. They are also referred to as Licensed Children’s Institutions (LCIs). Most of the residents of group homes are youth who have been placed in foster care as dependents as a result of parental abuse or neglect, or placed as wards due to violations of the law. In addition, some youth who are not dependents or wards of the court are placed in group homes. These are youth who have serious emotional disturbances and are eligible for special education services. In these cases, a county mental health department works with the local education agency to facilitate a residential placement.

At the outset of the study, the research team, with the assistance of the study's stakeholders,³ developed a list of areas in which current policies and procedures may not be working to the benefit of youth in group homes. This list included six related issues: fiscal arrangements, capacity to perform needed services within multiple agencies (and a limited number of residential placement options), accountability and responsibility, records and information transfer, interagency relationships, and advocacy.

A three-pronged research design was created to focus on 1) fiscal arrangements, 2) policies and procedures at the state level, and 3) implementation of policies and procedures at the county level. The fiscal analysis was conducted in coordination with a finance committee that the study team assembled for this study.⁴ The state-level analysis involved interviews with state agency staff, document reviews, and input from a stakeholder committee convened to assist the study team. The county-level analysis had two components. One component consisted of qualitative county case studies that involved interviews, document reviews, and focus groups. The second component consisted of the development of youth placement profiles, tracking the educational and residential history for youth in group homes over the course of one year.

The recommendations found in this report are based on a set of fundamental underlying principles derived by the study team in conjunction with its stakeholder committees. We believe that all proposed changes for redesign (as discussed throughout this report) must be based on the following:

- The system must be child-centered and responsive to the voices of youth in foster care,
- The primary responsibility for education must be clearly assigned to education agencies,
- The system must promote interagency collaboration as well as stability and continuity of residential and educational placements.

While these basic principles may seem non-controversial, they represent a change in tide in the basic orientation of current policies as observed through the implementation of this study. Instead of the underlying principles listed above, we found:

- The most fundamental requirements of these children (constancy and consistency of high quality residential and education settings and services appropriate to their needs) often being “force fit” within existing bureaucratic infrastructure and procedures,
- A serious lack of stability in educational and residential placements,
- The voice of participating youth systematically muted,
- Interagency collaboration often sorely lacking (in some counties and especially at the state level), and
- Clear lines of responsibility for ensuring high quality and appropriate education for this population to be ambiguous at best.

The summary of findings and recommendations that follows is designed to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses in the current system found through this study as well as to chart a

³ See the Appendix B for a list of participating stakeholders and their agency/affiliation.

⁴ See the Appendix B for a list of participating stakeholders and their agency/affiliation.

clear roadmap for change to better educate, and therefore improve the potential for future success of this highly vulnerable population.

Findings and Recommendations

Fiscal

Funding educational services for youth living in group homes was the critical issue to be resolved by this study as identified in the 2000 Budget Act. Under the current funding system, there is a clear fiscal incentive to identify foster youth in need of supplemental services as special education, and to serve them in a non-public school (NPS) or by a nonpublic agency (NPA). This includes youth living in group homes, foster family homes, or foster family agency homes. When special education services are provided for this population within public settings, districts are awarded no additional funds. However, under certain circumstances, districts receive 100 percent reimbursement for the cost of these services when provided in a non-public school (NPS) or by a nonpublic agency (NPA).⁵ This creates a clear incentive for youth in foster care, who are in need of supplemental services, to be identified as in need of special education and to have the resulting special education services provided in an NPS or by an NPA.

These provisions raise legal, pedagogical, and practical concerns that have been long recognized in the state. For example, these issues were clearly raised as being in need of resolution at the time of the passage of AB 602. From a legal perspective, they appear to violate the provisions of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which calls for the provision of special education services in the least restrictive environment appropriate to the needs of the youth.⁶ NPS and NPA placements are among the most restrictive (i.e., segregated from non special education students). While they are appropriate for some youth, provisions that clearly favor their use for all youth within a given sub-population must clearly be seen as legally problematic. From a pedagogical perspective, we believe that no one would argue that NPS or NPA placements are desirable for youth not requiring them. The mission of these schooling services is really quite different from the population of schools at large and does not fit the vast majority of children in the state.

From a practical perspective, serious equity concerns must be associated with these provisions. They clearly disadvantage SELPAs with few or no NPSs within their jurisdiction, e.g., Fresno County has no NPS and therefore must serve all youth in foster care within public settings, with no supplemental funding, unless they can make a case to send them out of county. Classic examples of other practical difficulties associated with these provisions are Sweetwater Union School District. When its NPS was forcibly closed, all of the youth previously educated there through fully separate state funds were suddenly made the full fiscal responsibility of the district. When Elk Grove Unified School District decided that public education services were needed for this population to ensure quality, they were unable to establish public alternatives because the funding for these youth was only available when they were served in NPS.

⁵ When the youth is living in a Group Home, Foster Family Home or Foster Family Agency. For further details refer to Chapter II.

⁶ Sec 602 (8) Chapter 33 Title 20 U.S. Code.

As an alternative, this report presents a funding approach that is fiscally neutral in regard to educational placement, i.e., in public or nonpublic settings. This approach is based on the concept that the educational needs of youth should be the primary driver of placement. Rather than simply reimbursing the cost of special education services for youth in foster care when they are served in an NPS or NPA, we recommend deriving a basis for funding special education services for all youth in group homes, FFHs and FFAs, regardless of whether they are served publicly or privately. To provide a basis for funding that is directly related to the need for those funds, but is independent of type or location of the services provided, we propose that instead of making funds available from the state for NPS placements only, funds be made available based on the number of LCI, FFH, and FFA beds within a SELPA. Each type of bed within the SELPA would be assigned a funding weight designed to address variations in the likely need for special education services and the intensity of those services for a youth placed in that type of bed.

Because the proposed alternative funding mechanism utilizes a more decentralized and flexible approach than the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula, which provides funds for services provided, implementation of the recommendations associated with improving accountability in this report are essential for the success of the alternative funding mechanism. Without incorporation of these accountability measures, there is a real danger that the more flexible funding approach recommended in this report could simply result in an overall decline in the number and quality of services available to youth in foster care. In tandem with allowing greater flexibility in the provision of public, as well as private, services for these youth, substantially enhanced accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered and that acceptable academic progress is being made. The AIR study team would not recommend implementation of the alternative funding mechanism presented in Chapter II without the added accountability recommendations to ensure the provision of appropriate education services to the foster care population (see Chapter II for in depth discussion of fiscal analysis, findings and recommendations).

Changing the 100 percent NPS reimbursement incentive alone does not resolve all of the fiscal issues associated with the education of this population. In addition, there are a number of related changes that need to be made to improve education services for youth living in group homes. For example, many youth in foster care are not eligible for special education. However, these youth could often benefit from specialized education services such as counseling, tutoring, or behavior management. The state should seek to maximize the amount of federal funds that are available to serve this population.

Accountability

A related finding is that youth in foster care often do not receive appropriate educational services for a variety of reasons discussed in the report. A strong accountability and monitoring system is needed to ensure that youth in LCIs, FFAs, and FFHs receive appropriate educational services. Under the proposed alternative funding mechanism, SELPAs and school districts would be required to use these funds for the students who generated them.

At the same time, we acknowledge that strict requirements for fiscal reporting at this level could be unduly burdensome. Many of the programs may receive funds from multiple sources and it

would be difficult to decouple the funds. However, it is important that the state, counties, SELPAs, and districts be held accountable for appropriately serving foster youth. The AIR study team recommends that school districts be required to report on outcomes for each of the students in their schools who live in LCIs, FFAs, or FFHs to COE/FYS liaisons who, under the recommendations of this report, are charged with monitoring the education plans for each youth in foster care. This reporting would include the student's educational goals and objectives, the educational program that is in place, the student's progress, and credits accrued towards graduation. Youth in foster care should also be disaggregated as a subgroup at the state level, similar to the special education subgroup, in the Academic Performance Index (API), so that educators and researchers can begin to understand trends for this population and determine better ways to serve youth in foster care.⁷ It is important for schools to be held accountable for the educational outcomes of this population.

Improved monitoring

Current policies and procedures for NPS certification and monitoring must be improved. We recommend that NPS certification and monitoring be fully incorporated into current monitoring systems for special education programs in public schools. The Focused Monitoring/Technical Assistance (FMFTA) units at the CDE should be expanded to include the NPS analysts, and consideration should be given to applying many, if not all, of the standards for public special education programs to NPS programs. Additional staff should be assigned to oversee the certification and monitoring of NPSs at the CDE. The role of the LEA in monitoring the progress of its students in NPSs should also be strengthened. Although some LEAs conduct their own reviews, each LEA should be required to conduct its own monitoring and evaluation of the progress made by its students in NPSs in coordination with the CDE. NPSs should also be included in the statewide school accountability structures such as the API or Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM). NPSs should be more fully integrated into the public education system.⁸

⁷ AB 691 attempted to pass legislation requiring that youth in foster care be disaggregated as a subgroup at the state level in an attempt to learn more about the performance of youth in foster care and to hold the state responsible for improved performance. Concerns were raised, however, that requiring school districts to report on youth in foster care might encourage schools to exclude these youth from testing. Additionally, the API is calculated based on youth who have been at a school for the past 12 months. Many youth in foster care are too mobile to be included in this index. The proposed bill was dropped for these reasons. AB 2403 attempted to accomplish a similar goal by requiring county offices of education and school districts to report the number of foster children enrolled in education programs as part of the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) and the California School Information Services (CSIS) database. It was believed that requiring such reporting would not be part of the high stakes accountability models and would therefore not create perverse incentives as the prior bill but would allow for the state and researchers to document the progress of youth in foster care. While this bill reportedly had considerable support in the Assembly it was vetoed by the Governor for funding reasons. There is currently another bill before the Legislature AB 490 that takes a different approach to similar issues.

⁸ Legislation is currently being developed by advocacy groups that recommends new certification criteria for NPSs (as well as new monitoring procedures). Ideas for improved certification include: requiring all NPS teachers to have appropriate special education credentials, requiring that NPS curriculum meet state educational standards and ensuring the curriculum is appropriate to students' educational needs so that youth can pass the California High School Exit Exam, requiring NPSs include college preparatory classes, extra curricular activities, needed psychological support, and specified discipline procedures. The legislation will also suggest that the goal of NPSs is to provide the support services and academic instruction necessary to ultimately integrate all students into public school.

In addition, the study team observed that many youth in foster care attend Court and Community schools, as opposed to regular public schools. In many cases, there is little monitoring of these educational programs. Moreover, the amount and degree of rigor of instruction in such schools is reportedly often significantly less than that in regular public schools, making transition back to regular public schools difficult. We recommend that either CDE, COEs, or LEAs be responsible for consistently monitoring Court and Community schools, and that this monitoring include, as one of its goals, success in transitioning youth into regular public schools whenever possible.

Independent oversight

A recurring issue voiced by interviewees at the state level throughout the course of the study has been the lack of independent oversight of the education of youth in foster care and the absence of repercussions if the multiple agencies involved in providing youth in foster care with an appropriate education fail to achieve this goal. Independent oversight at both the state and county level would serve to hold the responsible agencies accountable for the educational outcomes of youth in foster care.

These oversight boards, which the study teams suggests would meet twice per year, would not take an active role in facilitating the education of foster youth, but would instead focus on ensuring that the work of those agencies providing education services are meeting the needs of youth in foster care. State and county interagency working groups, discussed below, would be involved in coordinating the delivery of education services.

At the state level, the oversight board would report annually to the Legislature on the education of youth in foster care. The purpose of the board would be to hold the responsible agencies (CDE, CDSS, CDMH, and Probation) accountable and to inform the Legislature whether the statutes governing the education of youth in foster care are being followed. The board would hold hearings in order to learn from the responsible agencies and others how the education of youth in foster care is improving. In order for this board to be truly independent, it would need to be staffed by personnel who do not work for the agencies responsible for ensuring appropriate education. Board members could include foster youth advocates, former foster youth, and other stakeholders. Former foster youth are a particularly important component of this board because our research indicates that youth in foster care do not have adequate voice in a system that controls their day-to-day lives.

A similar oversight board should be established in each county. The county oversight board would report to the County Board of Supervisors in the same way that the state oversight board would report to the Legislature. This recommendation is similar to the recommendation put forth by the Little Hoover Commission in their February 2003 report (Little Hoover Commission, 2003).

The study team also found that the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office is a crucial component of the advocacy for youth in foster care. While study staff found this office to be central to promoting knowledge of foster youth rights and advocacy for youth, the office as it is currently constructed lacks independence. It also lacks the scope to address concerns regarding education, which is one the most important services youth receive from the state to enable successful transition to self-supporting adulthood. The AIR study team recommends creating a truly

independent Ombudsman by separating the office from the Department of Social Services. This new Ombudsman would be appointed by the Legislature and would, in turn, make regular reports directly to the Legislature about the status and progress of youth in foster care.⁹ The office could also make reports to the oversight and monitoring groups described above. The mandate for this office should also be expanded to include educational concerns. The office could then accept reports and follow up on complaints/concerns regarding education, as it now does in regard to residential issues. To properly address the needs brought before this office, additional staff should be funded.

Interagency collaboration

While interagency cooperation in several sample counties appears to be increasing, there is clearly room for substantial improvement at both the state level and in many counties. Interagency collaboration is critical in order for the state to adequately serve youth in foster care. Some social service agency staff at the state level and in some counties expressed difficulty in identifying the office or person responsible for the education of youth in foster care within the CDE, the COE, or the LEA. One of the recommendations of the study team is to clearly identify who is responsible for the education of youth in foster care. This recommendation is discussed in detail in Chapter VII. Once these responsibilities have been clearly delineated and assigned, the AIR study team recommends that state and county interagency working groups on the education of youth in foster care be established to facilitate vital communication.

Clear responsibility

County and state-level findings indicate that confusion exists regarding who is responsible for the education of youth in foster care. We recommend that clear lines of responsibility be drawn among all agencies involved with this population. The ultimate responsibility for the education of youth in foster care must rest with education agencies and be clearly delineated at the state, county, district, and school level. At the state level, a new (or a specified existing) Deputy Superintendent should be identified as the responsible party for the education of youth in foster care. A responsible party should also be specified at each County Office of Education. A strong candidate for this position is the FYS coordinator (the FYS program would have to exist in all counties),¹⁰ who would be located at the COE. This person would have responsibility for collecting records and establishing and maintaining an educational history for each youth in foster care within the county. An educational liaison position should be identified within each district to develop and monitor an education plan for each youth in foster care. Finally, a liaison would also be identified at each school site to ensure immediate school admission of all youth in foster care in the school's attendance area.

In recognition of the important role that non-education agencies play in the education of youth in foster care, the AIR study team recommends that the placing agency and residential care provider share the responsibility for advising the COE when a youth has been moved residentially. The placing agency and care provider should ensure that each youth is brought to the attention of the enrollment office within 24 hours of residential placement and should take on

⁹ These changes are similar to recommendations made by the Little Hoover Commission (2003).

¹⁰ Currently, FYS exists in 39 out of 58 counties. Many of these programs are only funded to serve youth in group homes from their counties. This excludes youth in other forms of foster care as well as youth living outside their county of adjudication

additional educational responsibilities as well. The study team also recommends that a Liaison position be created within each county social services agency and county probation department. These liaison positions are further discussed in Chapter VII.

The study team found that involved Juvenile Court Judges generally have a positive effect on the education of youth in foster care. The AIR study team recommends that the rules of the court be modified to specify that judges must monitor and consider education when making rulings. The rules currently read that they “should” consider educational placements.¹¹ We recommend that this language be changed to “shall.” We also recommend that an Educational Liaison position should be identified within each County Counsel so the courts can participate in improving the education of youth in foster care.

Residential and education stability

Another major county-level roadblock to the attainment of an appropriate and adequate education for many youth in foster care is the frequency with which they change residences and schools.¹² Most often, this change in educational placement is due to a change in residential placement (37% of the time according to data reported to us by schools and 80% according to the data provided by case workers).¹³ This frequency of educational displacement, in and of itself, makes adequate educational progress very difficult. When changing schools, the youth is forced to quickly adapt to new classes, rules, and a new social environment, which inevitably affects educational progress. Moreover, there is often a delay of anywhere from a few days to a number of weeks before the youth can enroll in the new school, during which time he or she is not attending school at all.¹⁴ Finally, school changes often lead to a loss of credits, making it impossible for youth to make educational progress.

The AIR study team recommends that the Legislature develop legislation similar to the McKinney-Vento Act to ensure continuous enrollment in school and to ensure that, whenever possible, youth are kept in their home school when a residential change is necessary. Legislation similar to the McKinney-Vento Act would also mean that youth in foster care would not have to wait for records prior to enrollment. This is discussed in greater detail in the recommendations chapter.

Data needs

At the county level, data and data management remain at the center of the lack of educational progress of youth in foster care. The study team found that databases are often maintained by multiple agencies and many of these databases do not contain sufficient or accurate information in order to make important educational decisions about youth. To ensure that all needed information is immediately accessible to service providers as needed, the state will eventually need to create one single, statewide, web-based system that would provide access to service providers in all involved agencies based on guidelines determined by the proposed state-level interagency working group. In creating this database, the state-level interagency group would

¹¹ Standard 24 Juvenile Court matters: Subdivisions (d)(2), (g) and (h) relating to the role of the juvenile court in the educational process for children under its jurisdiction .

¹² Forty-five percent of the youth in our sample attended two or more schools during the previous 12 months.

¹³ See Chapter V for further details.

¹⁴ See Exhibits V-11 and V-12, Chapter V.

have to design access with an eye toward balancing concerns about confidentiality with providing the best possible care for this at-risk population. It will also be important to include the needs of the court system in decisions about the construction of a statewide database.

Partial credits

Another area for improvement identified by the study team concerns partial school credits. Most regular public schools do not accept or award partial credits. Yet many youth who live in group homes change schools in the middle of a semester, moving either from one regular public school to another, or from a court, community, or nonpublic school to a regular public school.¹⁵ As a result, these students lose credits for work completed; moreover, they are then forced to retake courses they have already partially finished. Our recommendation is that all public and nonpublic schools in California accept and award partial credits for work satisfactorily completed. A related recommendation is that all regular public, court, community, alternative, and nonpublic schools offer essentially the same core courses, titled, coded, and described in a uniform way so that if a youth must switch schools mid-semester, coursework can be continued with minimal disruption.

Need for training

In order for youth in foster care to receive an appropriate school placement in a high-quality program, everyone involved with the education of youth in foster care must understand the special needs and “culture” of such youth, and must also have a clear understanding of each party’s role and responsibilities in these youths’ education. We recommend that each COE/FYS Liaison provide such training to school personnel, caseworkers, educational guardians, CASA, and any other personnel involved in the education of youth in foster care.

Conclusion

The AIR study team’s findings and recommendations are presented throughout the report. For a complete delineation and summary of these recommendations, see Chapter VII.

¹⁵ Thirty-nine percent of the 51 youth we spoke with said they changed schools mid-semester, two or more times since the beginning of school. See Exhibit VI-18, Chapter VI.

Acronym Dictionary

API:	Academic Performance Indicators
ASAM:	Alternative School Accountability Model
BPR:	Business Process Redesign
CACFS:	California Alliance of Child and Family Services
CAPSES:	California Association of Private Special Education Schools
CASA:	Court Appointed Special Advocates
CASEMIS:	California Special Education Management Information System
CCL:	Community Care Licensing
CDE:	California Department of Education
CDMH:	California Department of Mental Health
CDSS:	California Department of Social Services
COE:	County Office of Education
CSIS:	California School Information Services
CWDA:	County Welfare Directors Association
CWS/CMS:	Child Welfare Services/Case Management System
CYC:	California Youth Connection
DIS:	Designated Instructional Services
FFA:	Foster Family Agency
FFH:	Foster Family Home
FMTA:	Focused Monitoring/Technical Assistance
FYS:	Foster Youth Services
IDEA:	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP:	Individualized Education Program
ILP:	Independent Living Program
LEA:	Local Educational Agency
LCI:	Licensed Children’s Institution
NPA:	Nonpublic Agency
NPS:	Nonpublic School
RCL:	Rate Classification Level
RFP:	Request for Proposals
RSP:	Resource Programs
SB:	Senate Bill
SDC:	Special Day Classes
SELPA:	Special Education Local Plan Area
USD:	Unified School District

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Acknowledgements

The research team thanks the following individuals who generously contributed their time and effort in helping to guide this study.

- Contract Monitor Carol Bingham, Budget Management and Fiscal Systems Office, California Department of Education.
- Project Advisory Committee members Dan Troy, Gerald Elmore, Gerry Shelton, Heather Carlson, Jennifer Borenstein, Melody James, and Mary Ader. The committee was comprised of representatives from the California Department of Education, the California Department of Finance, and the Legislative Analyst's Office.
- The Stakeholder Committee whose names and agency affiliations can be viewed in the Appendix B of this report
- The Finance Subcommittee whose names and agency affiliations can be view in the Appendix B of this report.

We also acknowledge the youth in foster care whose educational information was collected in an attempt to better understand the obstacles that these youth face. We would like to thank the juvenile court judges who allowed us access to these youth and their records. We further acknowledge all interview participants; county personnel, school personnel, and group home personnel in the counties of Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Mateo, Shasta, Stanislaus, and Yolo.

We would like to thank the following agencies/organization for their time and support

- California Welfare Directors Association
- The Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families Children and the Courts
- Foster Care Rate Bureau, DSS
- California Department of Social Services
- California Department of Education
- Mental Health Advocacy, Inc.
- Foster Youth Services
- Foster Care Ombudsman

Finally, the study team would like to thank its project consultants for their time and knowledge.

- Jennifer Rodriguez
- Pam Choice
- JoAnna Caywood
- Jeri Flyne Cohen
- Regina Dheil

AIR would also like to acknowledge the important role of the subcontractors on this study. As part of the team, Lodestar and SRA participated in study data collection, interpretation of findings, and the development of potential recommendations, but not in the determination of final study conclusions and recommendations. Human Systems Development was critical in the development of schematics that depict the system as it is currently organized (see Chapter III).

Many thanks to all who contributed to this challenging and important study.

Report Addendum

Examples of achievements from San Diego County have been cited in this report without full acknowledgement. The description of a local FYS Program presented on pages IV-17 through IV-18 cited as a “model worthy of statewide dissemination” was abstracted from an evaluation report prepared on the San Diego County Foster Youth Services Program for the 2001-02 Program Year. Other significant developments within the County are referenced on page IV-14, IV-16, and IV-21. Additionally, the schematic of the “Ideal System” presented on page VII-3 reflects elements of a process collaboratively developed in San Diego, as well as elements from similar schematics produced by Sacramento County Foster Youth Services.

Chapter I. Introduction

Researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in improving the lives of children have devoted much attention to the long-term correlates of foster care residence (e.g., Buehler, Orme, Post & Patterson, 2000). In particular, several studies have examined the relationships between children's out-of-home care and their well-being and ability to attain self-sufficiency in adulthood. A review of this extant literature over the past two decades concluded that former foster youth are less likely than their general population peers or specific comparison groups to complete high school and more likely to live in poor housing, have unskilled or semiskilled jobs with no upward mobility, and use public assistance (McDonald, Allen, Westerfelt, Piliavin, 1996). In particular, although much of the research has been conducted with youth residing in Family Foster Homes (FFH), the finding that foster youth tend to have lower educational aspirations and attainment (e.g., high percentages of youth not completing high school or general education requirements) than other groups is well documented (e.g., Blome, 1997; Cook, 1994; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, in press; Festinger, 1983; Stein & Carey, 1999; Westat Inc, 1991).

Although multiple agencies/systems (e.g., Child Welfare; Education) and programs (e.g., Independent Living Programs-ILP; Foster Youth Services -FYS) exist to assist foster youth in meeting their educational needs and successfully transitioning to adulthood, these programs remain insufficient for preparing many youth for self-sufficiency (US-GAO, 1999; Youth Advocacy Center, 2001). Indeed, a recent AIR investigation on the interface of the Education and Child Welfare systems in California concluded that there is a general state of confusion among service providers regarding who is responsible for meeting the educational needs of foster youth residing in group homes (Parrish, Delano, Dixon, Webster, & Berrick, 2001). Specifically, the study found poor accountability, a lack of interagency coordination and collaboration, no viable state-level information system being implemented, inadequate system capacity and financial incentives that fail to meet the best interests of these vulnerable youth. These findings mesh with a concurrently produced report that found that a substantial number of California's foster youth were not succeeding in school and were experiencing delays in being identified for and receiving special education services (Choice et al., 2001). While the policies, procedures and practices of the various systems and programs reviewed in these studies acknowledge shared responsibility for meeting the educational needs of our state's foster youth, it is clear that these youth remain at risk for failing to receive the "free and appropriate" education to which the law entitles them.¹⁶

For these reasons, the CDE requested the current report. The purpose of this study is to move beyond compiling evidence on the nature of the problem to defining the existing policies, procedures and practices of the key agencies involved in the determination of educational placements. The study also analyzes how the overall process can be redesigned to improve system performance in relation to critical measures such as quality, cost, and timeliness of services. As a result, the primary goal of this study is to provide a detailed "road map" for

¹⁶ Section 602 (8) Chapter 33 Title 20 US Code.

improving educational services to youth who reside in group homes. In order to address these goals, the following research questions were included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) to be used as a guide for the investigation:

1. What are the key state and local policies, procedures and practices that influence the educational placement of youth in group homes?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the policies, procedures and practices in determining the educational placement of youth in group homes?
3. What are the causes for and the magnitude of any problems identified and the extent to which each cause contributes to the problem?
4. What are effective options for state action to ameliorate the problems? (Possible state actions could include changes in statutes, regulations and administrative policies or changes in state funding formulas and funding levels.)
5. What local actions, including procedural changes, could ameliorate the problems?
6. What are the estimated state and local costs and benefits of implementing the different options?

In addition to these study questions, the 2000 Budget Act Item (6110-001-0890, provision 14) that authorized this study is very explicit that the study should address issues of finance. This section states that “the evaluation should include, but not be limited to, funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding.”

The study team conducted research at the state and county levels, as well as with individual youth. Fiscal analysis was also conducted to redefine the funding formula that currently governs the education of youth who live in Licensed Children’s Institutions (LCIs) and who are educated in nonpublic schools (NPS). As a result, this report contains specific recommendations for system change.

Study population

An early issue that had to be resolved was defining the study population. The RFP calls for a study of “children residing in group homes.” This population, however, is too narrow when one considers that many children residing in group homes have, at one time, lived in other forms of foster care, such as foster family homes (FFHs). Other children in foster care also experience many of the same obstacles that children in group homes experience in regard to their education. Additionally, the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula (discussed in Chapter II) includes funding not only for children residing in group homes, but also for children residing in Foster Family Homes and in Foster Family Agency Homes (FFAs). For this reason, it was not feasible to restrict study consideration to children residing in group homes. While this study focuses on issues facing youth in group homes, it also acknowledges that these issues potentially affect all youth in foster care. The term “youth in foster care” is used to define our population for these areas of research. For the fiscal analysis, the population includes all youth who are served under the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula, as described above.

Report outline

The following is presented in this report:

1. In-depth fiscal analysis and recommendations for change to the current funding of NPSs.
2. Overview of the theoretical design of the current system that includes state-level schematics based on existing law that governs the education of youth in foster care. To our knowledge, these schematics are the first of this kind ever to be created.
3. In-depth analysis of state and county level findings concerning implementation of existing policies, procedures and practices, including critical incidents recorded during data collection.
4. Analysis of youth placement profile data collected in eight sample counties.
5. Description of methodologies used for work done at the fiscal, state, county, and youth level.
6. Eleven categories of recommendations for change based on study findings and the overall educational needs of youth in foster care.

Chapter II. Fiscal analysis

As mentioned, the Budget Act authorizing this study explicitly states that “the evaluation should include, but not be limited to, funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year, and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding.” The study team met with the Advisory Group in January 2002 and agreed that the primary emphasis of the study would be on these fiscal issues. To fully understand the many important fiscal issues relevant to this study, a historical perspective on the issues and the prior research in this area is needed.

Background

Funding for special education programs in California has evolved in several stages. Of particular relevance to this study is the way in which funding for the education of special education students in nonpublic schools (NPSs) has evolved. Under the California Master Plan for Special Education, passed in 1974, the State funded districts in two ways. First, districts were funded through a base program determined by the number of students served in particular educational settings, including special day classes (SDCs), resource programs (RSPs) and designated instructional services (DISs). Second, funds were provided for students served in nonpublic schools and nonpublic agencies. The state paid a share of the “excess costs” for nonpublic school and agency services. Excess costs are those that are above the amount of funds that a school district receives for each child attending school, also referred to as the revenue limit amount.

Under these funding provisions, the amount the state paid for nonpublic school and agency services was dependent on the residential situation of the child. If the child was living at home or if a Local Education Agency (LEA) placed the child in a Licensed Children’s Institution (LCI) or Foster Family Home (FFH), the state would pay 70 percent of the excess costs. If a non-education agency placed the child in an LCI or FFH and the parent retained educational rights, the state paid 70 percent. If a non-education agency placed the child in an LCI or FFH and the parent did not maintain educational rights, the state paid 100 percent. The state also paid 100 percent of the NPS tuition if a non-education agency placed the child in an LCI or FFH outside of the parent’s district of residence. A Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) could serve students with disabilities either within the public school setting or contract for services with an NPS. This funding formula created a fiscal incentive for students to be placed in nonpublic schools because sometimes the SELPA’s net cost (costs less revenues) were greater for students they served in the public setting than in an NPS setting.¹⁷

In 1994, the Legislature requested that the California Department of Education (CDE), the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) and the Department of Finance (DOF) collaborate to address some of the concerns with the special education funding model, including the NPS placement incentives. Many of the recommendations contained in the report that resulted from this collaboration¹⁸ were incorporated into the Poochigan and Davis Special Education Reform Act

¹⁷ For an in-depth discussion of this, see Chapter 5 of this report. Also: Parrish, 1987.

¹⁸ The tri-agency report issued in 1995 is entitled “New Funding Model For Special Education.”

(Assembly Bill 602), Chapter 854 in 1997. The bill removed the 70 percent reimbursement provision for NPS placement. However, the bill retained the 100 percent reimbursement for youth served in an NPS if they were placed in an LCI or FFH by non-education agencies and the parent's educational rights were removed, or if the placement was located outside of the parent's district of residence. In other words, the incentive in favor of NPS placement for students living in LCIs was left intact, or arguably increased. Under the old system, if these students were served within a public setting, they might be able to generate additional public special education funding units for the district. Under the new funding system (AB 602), districts faced the choice of receiving no supplemental resources when youth eligible for 100 percent reimbursement were served publicly, or 100 percent reimbursement when those youth were served in an NPS or through an NPA.

Chapter 854 requires LAO, DOF and CDE to complete a study of the issues related to nonpublic schools and agencies. These agencies contracted the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct this study. In September 1998, AIR issued a final report entitled "Special Education: Nonpublic School and Agency Study" (Parrish, Chen, & Shaw, 1998). The findings and recommendations from this study are summarized below:

- 1. The continued incentive to serve LCI students in NPSs is problematic. A funding system that encourages SELPAs to make placement choices that best meet students' needs must be free of fiscal incentives favoring one type of placement over another.*
- 2. When students enter SELPAs with no prior notification or records, it is especially difficult for local officials to know about individual students' needs. Placing agencies should provide SELPAs with information about those students immediately upon arrival.*
- 3. SELPAs need to be provided with the necessary resources to monitor the progress of all students to determine when they are ready to return to less restrictive settings.*
- 4. There is a perception that some LCIs create pressure to place students in NPSs owned by the same organization that runs the LCI. To address this, provisions (e.g., from AB 602 and SB 933) should be reviewed for adequacy and more clearly enforced to separate decisions regarding residential placement from the most appropriate educational setting for LCI students.*
- 5. Funding for LCI students should be based on factors other than special education identification, specific disability categories or types of placement. Additionally, funding should be sufficient to fully offset supplemental local costs such as assessment, monitoring, and transition.*

The report states that given the broad scope of the NPS study and the limited timeline and budget (Parrish, Chen, & Shaw),¹⁹ AIR was not able to provide a detailed description of an education funding plan for LCI students. The study recommended that a subsequent study or panel be formed to develop a detailed alternative approach to funding.

Prior to the Nonpublic School and Agency Study, the Budget Act of 1998 contained funds for two studies on the NPS/LCI issue. AIR was awarded this contract, and the final report entitled "Education of Foster Group Home Children: Whose Responsibility Is It?" was issued in January 2001 (Parrish et al., 2001). Because finance was not specified as a major thrust of this study, the

¹⁹ Finance was just one of four broad-based questions to be explored in this \$100,000 study.

report simply highlighted the importance of removing incentives for youth living in group homes to be identified as eligible for special education and placed in NPSs. The findings and recommendations in this area were similar to the findings presented in the 1998 NPS study.

This current study is in response to language in the Budget Act of 2000. It is the intent of this report to provide specific recommendations on how to improve the education of youth in group homes and, in particular, to provide an alternative to the incentive created by 100 percent reimbursement for LCI/NPS placements. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on this fiscal component of the study.

Methodology

Research methods for this fiscal analysis component include a literature review, meetings with the study's finance subcommittee, state-level data analysis, and interviews with stakeholders and state-level education staff from other states who are familiar with the fiscal issues associated with the education of youth in foster care.

Literature review

The study team reviewed previous studies that addressed issues related to education funding for youth in special education and youth in foster care. A review of statutes and policies associated with funding for NPSs and public education was also conducted.

Finance subcommittee

In February 2002, a separate Finance Committee was formed from the larger Study Stakeholder Group to assist the study team in thinking about the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and potential alternatives, as well as other fiscal issues related to the education of youth living in group homes. Members of the Finance Committee include representatives from the CDE, CDSS, CDMH, the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office, Senate Office of Education, probation, county departments of social services, school districts, SELPAs, California Alliance for Children and Family Services, California Association of Private Special Education Schools, Association of Regional Center Agencies, and group home operators. The committee met eight times to discuss the fiscal issues associated with the education of youth living in group homes and other youth affected by the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula.

State data analysis

In developing an alternative to the 100 percent reimbursement formula, data from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS), a database maintained by CDE, was used to gain an understanding of the number of youth in special education who are living in LCIs, foster family homes, foster family agency homes, and residential facilities. CASEMIS data was also used to determine the types of educational settings and educational services these youth received. CASEMIS data was coupled with data published in the California Special Education Incidence Study in 1998 (Parrish, Kaleba, Gerber & McLaughlin, 1998). State data received from the CDE fiscal services division that show the NPS reimbursements by SELPAs and district revenue limit amounts were also used to develop the alternative funding mechanism. Data from CDSS on the capacity of group homes throughout the state, along with

state census figures for foster family homes and foster family agency homes, was included in the analysis. The analysis of this data is described in more detail in the fiscal recommendations section below.

Interviews with stakeholders and service providers

Interviews were conducted with representatives from the CDE Special Education Division, CDMH, CDSS, SELPAs, Senate Office of Education and Senate Office of Research. The purpose of the interviews was to understand from a state-level perspective some of the fiscal issues and recommendations for change surrounding the education of youth living in LCIs. Although the interviews were guided by questions about the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula, certification, and monitoring of NPSs and fiscal concerns within the public schools, the questions were also designed to allow the pursuit of related issues. To understand how other states are dealing with funding issues associated with the education of youth living in LCIs, interviews with Department of Education staff in six other states were sought. Phone interviews were conducted with staff in two states; email exchanges were used to gather information from the remaining four.

Fiscal issues

Many of the fiscal issues that this report addresses have been long-standing concerns. They are issues that were identified by stakeholders interviewed in the context of the current study, the two prior AIR studies discussed above and in prior policy discussions of special education funding in California (Parrish, 1987). In Phase I of this study, a list of the fiscal issues was refined and presented in the interim report as follows:

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- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Current funding systems affect both the residential and educational placements of youth in foster care, sometimes in conflict with the needs of the youth.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding for school districts to support the supplemental educational and related service needs of youth in group homes is generally only forthcoming when these services are delivered by NPS or NPA providers, creating an incentive for their use and for the placement of youth living in group homes in special education.• Recent studies in Los Angeles County suggest that residential placements are affected more by cost considerations than the needs of the youth.• Group homes may rely upon NPS funding for a viable funding base.• Enrollment in an NPS sometimes may be a prerequisite for placement in an affiliated group home, resulting in some youth attending NPS for whom this may not be the most appropriate instructional placement.• Because NPS placements are only funded by the state for some youth who are in special education, and because of the differing definitions of emotional disturbance used by the Departments of Education and Mental Health, youth with severe mental health needs sometimes may not be able to access needed NPS services. |
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Who is affected by these fiscal issues

The fiscal incentive to place youth in NPSs created by the 100 percent reimbursement formula is not limited to youth in group homes. The 100 percent reimbursement also applies to youth living in FFHs and foster family agency homes (FFAs), if they were placed residentially by a non-education agency and the parent does not maintain educational rights, or if the placement is outside the parent's district of residence.²⁰ Therefore, recommendations for an alternative funding mechanism must include youth in FFHs and FFAs, as well as those who are placed in group homes.

Who is not affected by these fiscal incentives

Because the local educational agency is a party to the residential placement decision, the 100 percent NPS reimbursement does not apply when a youth who is seriously emotionally disturbed is placed in a residential facility by an expanded IEP team pursuant to Section 7572.5 of the Government Code and Section 60100 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations. The 100 percent NPS reimbursement also does not pertain when a district IEP team determines that the most appropriate placement for a special education student is an NPS; for example, a youth with autism residing within a district might receive services through an NPS or an NPA based on a local determination that this is appropriate.

Youth who are placed out of state are also not affected by the 100 percent NPS reimbursement incentive. Senate Bill 2012, Chapter 585, Statutes of 2002 makes it clear that any public agency other than an educational agency that places a disabled child or a child suspected of being disabled in a facility out of state without the involvement of the school district, SELPA, or county office of education in which the parent or guardian resides, shall assume all financial responsibility for the child's residential placement, special education program, and related services in the other state unless the other state or its local agencies assume responsibility.²¹ If a school district places a student out of state then the district must pay the educational costs.

Fiscal findings

The study team found that, according to educators, caseworkers, caregivers, and legislators, many of the issues concerning fiscal incentives that were raised in previous studies continue to serve as barriers to an appropriate education for many youth living in foster care. The study team also looked at how other states handle the financial responsibilities associated with the education of youth living in group homes. These findings are presented later in this chapter.

²⁰ Article 5 (commencing with Section 56155) of Chapter 2 of Part 30 of the Education Code states that "the provisions of this article shall only apply to individuals with exceptional needs placed in a licensed children's institution or foster family home by a court, regional center for the developmentally disabled, or public agency, other than an educational agency." "Foster family home," under subdivision (b) of Section 56155.5, means a family residence that is licensed by the state, or other public agency having delegated authority to license by contract with the state, to provide 24-hour nonmedical care and supervision for not more than six foster children, including, but not limited to, individuals with exceptional needs.

²¹ See Government Code Section 7579(d) in SB 2012.

School districts lack flexibility under current funding arrangements

Under the current funding system, school districts are generally not provided with any additional funds to help meet the educational needs of youth living in group homes, foster family homes, or foster family agency homes, unless that youth is eligible for special education and placed in an NPS or served by a nonpublic agency (NPA). Few additional funds are consistently available for foster care students who are eligible for special or regular education. The 100 percent NPS reimbursement in many cases creates a fiscal incentive for districts to refer youth in foster care to special education programs and then to provide these services through NPSs or NPAs.

Several school districts and counties, including Elk Grove Unified School District, Orange County and Sweetwater Union High School District, have considered, or have established, alternative public programs. While we do not necessarily recommend these particular alternative programs, a clear focus of the fiscal recommendations included in this chapter is to encourage a broader range of public and private programs for this population. We acknowledge that caution must be exercised when considering alternatives that further isolate this population, which is already marginalized. More flexibility in NPS funding provisions would encourage some districts to boost the availability of public programs for this population that may include counselors or other specialized care where there is a higher concentration of youth living in group homes. Such provisions would enhance the capability of public schools to encourage appropriate regular education and special education programs that best meet the educational needs of youth in foster care.

One major concern associated with the current system's lack of flexibility under the 100 percent NPS reimbursement provisions is that they may stand in the way of a youth's right to a less restrictive environment. If a youth can be appropriately served in an integrated public school setting, placing the youth in an NPS is in violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 97), which states that a youth's education program must be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate to the child's needs. Although IDEA requires placement in the least restrictive environment, the study team was informed of multiple cases in which the 100 percent reimbursement incentive proved stronger than the LRE requirement, and youth were subsequently placed in an NPS when a public placement would have been more appropriate. Indeed, the current 100 percent funding provisions blatantly favor nonpublic over public placements. At the same time, public placements may also be overly restrictive. The challenge is to create equal fiscal opportunities for public or private placement coupled with appropriate monitoring and oversight to ensure that each child is served in the least restrictive setting appropriate to the child's needs.

For some youth, an NPS may constitute the least restrictive placement appropriate to the child's needs. IDEA also requires that a "continuum of services" be available to youth with special needs. The underlying purpose of the proposals included in this report is not to undermine NPS placements, but rather to increase the flexibility associated with special education funding for youth in foster care so they can be served in the least restrictive environment, along a continuum of available services, most appropriate to their needs. Special education funds should be made available for youth in foster care, regardless of whether the setting most appropriate to their needs is public or private.

Exhibit II-1. Alternative education options considered by school districts and one COE

Elk Grove Unified School District

Several years ago, Sacramento County's Elk Grove Unified School District became concerned with the education foster care youth in the district were receiving. The district was having a difficult time providing needed services for the large population of youth in foster care in the district. A committee was established to undertake a feasibility study to create a new foster youth community on an old Army base in the area. The idea was to bring families together and provide them with housing near their children to teach the whole family. The project was never completed due to funding obstacles and concerns about removing youth with special needs from the community at large. Although this project raises concerns about isolating a population that is already marginalized, it is an important illustration of the kind of alternatives districts might consider if school districts were provided more flexibility in providing education services for youth in foster care.

Orange County Office of Education

About one year ago, the Orange County Office of Education (COE), in collaboration with Foster Youth Services, developed a focused effort to better serve youth in foster care in their county. As the county experienced an increase in the number of emotionally disturbed (ED) youth, a county-wide effort was undertaken to train staff to work with ED youth. The COE developed a program for this population that is different from an NPS because it is co-located with general education programs. This program would not replace the 24-hour programs that are available through an NPS on an LCI campus. The key to success for the Orange County programs is the training of the staff to be more tolerant of youth with behavior management problems. The difficulty is the funding. Similar to an NPS, the Orange County special programs cost about \$25,000 per year beyond the federal funds (IDEA and MediCal) that are available. Transportation is billed separately and mental health costs are additional. At one point, a SELPA director had identified a youth who was in a foster home and an NPS who the director felt should be served in the district, but was not sure he could afford the district tuition for the special district programs. It was a real concern that the NPS placement did not seem appropriate. The SELPA agreed to pay the special program tuition, but currently this is the only youth in foster care in the program. Orange County has proposed legislation, AB 2520, that would allow youth for whom the IEP team feels a less restrictive environment would be more appropriate to participate in this school-based program rather than attend an NPS. The funding mechanism proposed under AB 2520 would make funds available similar to those available under the 100 percent NPS reimbursement.

Sweetwater Union High School District

In May 2001, the Juvenile Court dependency judges in San Diego requested that Sweetwater Union High School District assume the day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the Advocate School, an NPS located on the grounds of the LCI, New Alternatives. The court had found, over the course of one year, curriculum problems, discipline problems and dangerous incidents that were putting the education of the youth under the court's jurisdiction in jeopardy. The school district, concerned that meeting the educational needs of the 83 students from the Advocate School would have a catastrophic effect on the district's resources, requested additional funds from the Legislature. With a one-time appropriation of \$1 million, the school district has been able to operate a program to serve these youth. The program has been viewed as a success, but it will be difficult for the district to continue the program without additional funds. If funds the state had paid while these youth were in an NPS were redirected to the school district, this program could continue.

Lack of accountability

The fiscal issues associated with the education of youth living in group homes cannot be understood without also considering the larger context of the educational system. For example, if

there were consequences for poor student outcomes at NPSs, districts would have a vested interest in providing and ensuring an adequate and appropriate education for these youth. The NPS certification process is one area in which higher standards could improve the quality of education that is provided. For example, one of the certification criteria requires that only one credentialed teacher be on staff for an NPS.²² The school may continue to operate with only one credentialed teacher, unless otherwise stated in the master contract, regardless of the number of students enrolled. Improved standards for certification, which could include curriculum standards, would increase the likelihood that youth in foster care who are in NPSs receive the education to which they are entitled.

Although one might expect a thorough compliance process to be in place for some of the most expensive educational placements the state provides, in fact the monitoring and compliance process for NPSs is below the standards set for special education programs in public schools. As described in section 56366.1 (d) and (h) of the Education Code, on-site monitoring by the CDE occurs on a four-year cycle unless a complaint has been brought to the attention of the NPS unit or the school had been conditionally certified.²³ Although the LEA may visit and monitor an NPS program at any time, unless otherwise stated in the master contract, this is not a requirement. In fact, it is possible that a student could complete all four years of high school in a school that may have had virtually no oversight from the CDE or LEA.

If the LEA were held accountable for actively monitoring the education provided in NPSs, students who would be better served in a public school setting could be more readily identified, and students who are best served in an NPS would be more likely to receive a quality education. The LEA, SELPA, and COE hold the primary responsibility for ensuring a child's IEP is followed in an NPS.²⁴ Once a youth has been placed in an NPS, there is little incentive for the district to bring the youth back into the mainstream setting. Although districts are responsible for the education of youth both in public and nonpublic schools, they are not required to include youth placed in NPSs in accountability measures, such as the Academic Performance Index. Finally, because of the lack of accountability and enforcement of compliance in NPSs, advocates noted concern that youth may be denied their rights to an appropriate education, especially in the

²² See Education Code 56366.1 (k) (3) "...At least one full-time person with a current valid California credential, license, or certificate of registration in the areas of services to be rendered, or a current valid credential, license, or certificate of registration for appropriate special education and related services rendered that is required in another state, shall be required for purposes of certification under subdivision (d) of Section 56366."

²³ If a formal complaint has been brought to the State Superintendent or the school has been conditionally certified, the State Superintendent may conduct an on-site review annually. The Superintendent may also conduct on-site monitoring of an NPS at any time without prior notice when there is substantial reason to believe that there is an immediate danger to the health, safety or welfare of a child.

²⁴ Section 56383 of Chapter 4 of Part 30 of the Education Code states that "pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 300.349 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, after an individual with exceptional needs is placed in a nonpublic nonsectarian school under Section 56366, any meetings to review and revise the pupil's individualized education program may be conducted by the nonpublic, nonsectarian school at the discretion of the district, special education local plan area, or county office of Education. However, even if a nonpublic, nonsectarian school implements a child's individualized education program, responsibility for compliance with this part and with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and implementing regulations, remains with the district, special education local plan area, or county office of Education pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 300.349 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations."

area of Least Restrictive Environment and proper behavioral interventions laid out by state and federal law.²⁵

Issues associated with the lack of accountability also pertain to youth in foster care attending public schools. These youth are often overlooked and left with coursework that does not allow the youth to graduate or if they do graduate, coursework that does not allow them to gain entry to college. In addition, concerns have been raised about the quality of education that youth in foster care receive at court and community schools. Youth in foster care report that they do not always feel welcome in public schools and sometimes prefer the more accepting atmosphere of NPSs. On the other hand, youth attending NPSs may know they are accepted, but may struggle with issues of isolation and lack of access to an array of classes, extra curricular activities, and college guidance (California Youth Connection, 1999). Accountability is further discussed in other sections of the report. The definition of what it means to be responsible and held accountable for the education of youth in foster care needs to be examined. It is important for all youth to have equal educational opportunities, irrespective of where they reside.

How other states handle the financial responsibilities of youth in group homes

In an effort to see if there were lessons to be learned from other states, the study team spoke with staff at the Department of Education (DOE) from six different states who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of funding for the education of youth living in licensed children's institutions. State DOE staff in several of these states described the funding provisions in their state as "confusing." Depending on the state, funding is based primarily on the residential placing agency, the residence of the parent or guardian or the type of educational placement. Most of the states the study team contacted are struggling with some of the same issues as California. The study team did not find a funding mechanism in another state that could be recommended for implementation in California, or even provide much assistance in conceptualizing solutions to the underlying issues. Exhibit II-2 provides a summary of how New York and Maryland handle the educational funding for youth living in LCIs. Data from the other four states are not presented due to lack of response.

²⁵ A behavioral intervention is defined as the systemic use of procedures that result in lasting positive changes in the student's behavior [5.C.C.R.§3001 (f)]. Positive behavioral interventions are the best ways to deal with a serious behavior problem as defined by 5 C.C. R. § 3001 (aa). Advocacy groups often noted concern that positive behavioral interventions were not being used with this population due to a lack of monitoring of nontraditional schools.

Exhibit II-2. Selected states: Fiscal responsibility for the education of youth in LCIs

Educational Setting	Placing Agency	Agency Responsible for Education	Funding Source and Funding Mechanism
NEW YORK			
General education or special education in a public or nonpublic school	Social Services, including juvenile justice and family court	DSS	DSS pays for the residential and education costs, and the state reimburses the county 50 percent of the costs. The district in which the youth resided when he/she entered care would be responsible for reimbursing the state the local tax levy amount (approximately \$5,000/student).
	Mental Health (places in a specific mental health institution)	MH	Mental Health pays both residential and educational component. The school district in which the youth resided when he/she entered care would be responsible for reimbursing the state the local tax levy amount (approximately \$5,000/student).
	Public school district	Public school district and DOE	The district pays for educational services (DSS pays the residential component). The state provides the district with aid through the "private excess cost aid" formula defined in the New York education code. This is a complex formula based on the wealth of the district and other factors. On average, 85 percent of the costs are reimbursed.
MARYLAND			
Special education in a nonpublic school	Court or local school system	Service providing local education agency	<p>The district and the state share the cost for NPS placements.²⁶ The Maryland Code of Regulations 8-415 (3) (i) states that "...the county shall contribute for each placement the sum of: 1. The local share of the basic cost; 2. An additional amount equal to 200 percent of the basic cost; and 3. An additional amount equal to 20 percent of the approved cost or reimbursement in excess of the sum of items 1 and 2 of this subparagraph. (ii) The amount that a county is required to contribute under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph may not exceed the total cost or reimbursement amount approved by the Department. (4) For each of these children, the State shall contribute an amount equal to the amount of the approved cost or reimbursement in excess of the amount the county is required to contribute under paragraph (3) of this subsection." (Note: the federal government has questioned MD because this may create less of an incentive for the district to provide the LRE.)</p> <p>The local school system in the county where the parent of a child in an out-of-county living arrangement resides is financially responsible. If the parents live apart, the county where the parent who has been awarded custody of the child resides is financially responsible.²⁷</p>
General education or special education in a public school	Court or local school system	Service providing local education agency	<p>The county in which the parent or legal guardian resides is financially responsible. The financially responsible local school system (LSS) pays an amount equal to either 1) the local current expense per student in the financially responsible county, or 2) the local current expense per student in the service-providing county, whichever is less. If the service-providing LSS determines the child needs special education, the financially responsible county pays the service-providing LSS the amount equal to the lesser of 1) three times the local current expense per student in the financially responsible county; or 2) three times the local current expense per student in the service providing LSS. If the local current expense per student in the financially responsible county is less than the local current expense per student in the service providing LSS, the State shall pay to the service-providing LSS the difference for each student in an out-of-county living arrangement who attends a public school in the service-providing LSS.</p>

²⁶ See section 8-406 of the Maryland Code of Regulations (COMAR) for qualifying explanation.

²⁷ If custody has not been awarded, the county where the parent with whom the child lives when not in foster care is responsible. If custody has been awarded to both parents and the parents reside in different counties, both counties pay one-half the amount, except if the child receives a public education in a county where a parent resides. If custody has been awarded to both parents and one parent resides out of state, the county where the other parent resides is financially responsible.

Fiscal recommendations

The recommendations associated with the fiscal issues of this study are twofold. The first set of recommendations is directly related to the provision of an alternative funding mechanism to replace the 100 percent NPS reimbursement model. The second set of recommendations provides a response to other fiscal findings described above. Because the proposed alternative funding mechanism utilizes a more decentralized and flexible approach than the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula, which provides funds for services provided, implementation of the recommendations associated with improving accountability in this report are essential for the success of the alternative funding mechanism. Without incorporation of these accountability measures, there is a real danger that the more flexible funding approach recommended in this report could simply result in an overall decline in the number and quality of services available to children in foster care. In tandem with allowing greater flexibility in the provision of public, as well as private, services for these children, substantially enhanced accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered and that acceptable academic progress is being made. The study team would not recommend implementation of the alternative funding mechanism presented below without added accountability to ensure the provision of appropriate education services to the foster care population.

An alternative funding mechanism for LCI/NPS placements

The primary concern with the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement model is that it creates an incentive for youth living in LCIs, FFHs and FFAs to be placed in an NPS or to be served by an NPA. In order to establish the opportunity for this population to receive an education equal to that provided to other youth, a funding mechanism that is indifferent to the type of educational placement is recommended. The educational needs of youth should be the primary driver of placement, not who will pay. The goal of the proposed alternative mechanism is to achieve placement-neutral funding.

Funding based on a bed count

A neutral funding mechanism is created when educational decisions regarding the type or location of the education placement do not affect the amount of funding that is available. To provide a basis for funding that is directly related to the need for those funds, but independent of type or location of the services provided, we propose that instead of making funds available from only the state for NPS placements, special education funds be made available based on the number of LCI, FFH, and FFA beds within a SELPA. Youth living in foster care often require some additional educational services. For students in foster care who are eligible for special education, these additional funds could be used to provide services in the public school setting or in an NPS, if that is most appropriate to the needs of the youth. By making funds available based on the number of LCI, FFH, and FFA beds that are in a SELPA, school districts would have greater flexibility in providing special education students with the most appropriate educational services. The funds made available under this alternative funding mechanism should only be used to serve the foster youth population on which this funding allocation is based.

There is a continuum of care offered within the various residential settings. For example, a foster family home provides a lower level of care than a group home with a rate classification level (RCL) of 10. Generally, youth who are placed in the higher levels of residential care require

more educational accommodations, such as counseling and behavior management. The proposed special education funding mechanism for youth in foster care divides the range of residential care in this model into tiers.

The first tier includes foster family homes. The second tier includes foster family agency homes and group homes with rate classification levels of three through nine. The assumption is that services provided in a foster family agency home and group homes with an RCL of 3 through 9 provide a higher level of care than foster family homes. The third includes group homes with levels 10-11. The fourth tier includes group homes with a rate classification level of 12. The fifth tier includes group homes with classification levels of 13-14+. The five tiers are assigned different weights, which are then used to generate the funding for special education per bed. Tier one receives a weight of one. Tier two receives a weight of two. Tier three receives a weight of four. Tier four receives a weight of six, and Tier five receives a weight of eight. This reflects the belief that a youth in a group home with a rate classification level of 14 is more likely to require special educational services, and that those services will be more expensive than for the average youth who is in a foster family home.

As described above, it is recommended that special education funding for youth in foster care be based on a bed classification scheme, as described above, which has previously only been used as a basis for funding residential services for youth in foster care. If the current CDSS-RCL method of funding for out of home placements is changed, the alternative funding mechanism proposed in this report will need to be re-evaluated. The recommendation to base the proposed funding mechanism on the current RCL method of funding is not meant to be an endorsement of or an inextricable tie to the current bed classification system, which is reported to be currently under review. Rather, the number and type of beds for youth in foster care were viewed as the best available proxy for the varying demand for special education services for youth in foster care by SELPA. In addition, it was determined by the Finance Committee for this study that all beds should not be counted equally to derive the best proxy measure of this need.

For example, a SELPA with 50 FFH beds within its jurisdiction should not be allocated the same funds for providing special education services to the youth in foster care who will reside in those beds as a SELPA with 50 RCL 14 beds. Because it was not possible to tie the special education services that youth in foster care currently receive to the RCL of their bed, these weights were subjectively determined by the study Finance Committee. If the present classification structure used to fund residential services were to change in the future, the special education weights would have to also be altered. New special education funding weights would be needed to reflect whatever new differentiating structure was developed for funding residential services for youth in foster care.

Tier	Type of Residential Placement	Weight
Tier One	FFH	1
Tier Two	FFA RCL 3 Group home RCL 4 Group home RCL 5 Group home RCL 6 Group home RCL 7 Group home RCL 8 Group home RCL 9 Group home	2
Tier Three	RCL 10 Group home RCL 11 Group home	4
Tier Four	RCL 12 Group home	6
Tier Five	RCL 13 Group home RCL 14+ Group home	8

The funding mechanism presented in this report is based on group home capacity by county as of July 2002 and the actual census in FFAs and FFHs over a 12-month period. Data on actual census within group homes are not available. Given that few group home beds are long unoccupied, the stakeholders agreed that capacity is a good proxy for occupancy. The bed count data to be used for implementation of the model will be reported three times a year initially and is discussed below under “Implementation.”

Determining the size of the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs and FFAs

Our recommendation is to broaden the conceptual basis of reimbursing the cost of special education services for youth in foster care when they are served in an NPS or NPA to deriving a basis for funding special education services for all youth in foster care, regardless of whether they are served publicly or privately. Since private costs of providing special education services to this population were entirely recognized and measured, the first challenge under the current system was to estimate the cost of special education for all youth in foster care, whether served publicly or privately. The estimated amount of funds that should be set aside to meet the additional educational needs of youth in LCIs, FFA and FFHs is based on data from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS).²⁸ CASEMIS identifies the youth in this population and specifies the special education services they receive. The full cost of these services was then derived using inflated expenditure data published in the California Special Education Incidence Study in 1998 (Parrish, Kaleba, Gerber, & McLaughlin,

²⁸ Out of home residential options in CASEMIS include LCIs, FFHs and “residential facilities.” FFAs are considered to be included under the FFH definition in the Educational Code. Residential facilities are unclearly defined in CASEMIS. We were informed by CASEMIS staff at CDE that the residential facility definition is essentially the same as for a residential school. However, a residential facility would also include any facilities where the primary reason for the student's attendance is for reasons other than school. It is unclear as to how a residential facility differs from an LCI, so we have included youth residing in residential facilities in our calculations. The study team recommends that a clearer definition for residential facility be adopted and shared with those responsible for entering CASEMIS data.

(1998). Exhibits showing the figures used in this calculation are included in the Appendix A (Exhibits A-1, A-2, and A-3).

CASEMIS service descriptions organize special education services that students receive around four basic placement options for students: Nonpublic School (NPS), Special Day Class (SDC), Resource Specialist Program (RSP) and Designated Instructional Service (DIS).²⁹ In addition to the student’s placement, each student may also receive designated instruction services (DIS) such as language and speech services and physical therapy. Estimated expenditures for these services are added to the spending estimates associated with placement, except for an NPS placement for which designated instruction services are considered to be included. Greater detail regarding the methodology used to assign expenditures is contained in Appendix A.

Based on their primary special education placement and their additional designated instruction services (DIS), expenditures are assigned to the individual students who are in LCIs, FFA and FFHs. Of the 615,166 total students receiving special education services in California who are included in the 2001-2002 CASEMIS database, 15,187 are living in an LCI, FFA or FFH. Of these, 15,145 are served in-state. As described earlier in this section of the report, youth placed residentially out of state are not affected by the 100 percent reimbursement incentive. Therefore, we do not include these 42 students when calculating the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, or FFAs. The breakdown of the expenditures by educational placement type is shown in the exhibit below. The total expenditure amount is \$214,207,321. This is the base amount used to determine the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, or FFAs level.

Residential Placement	Count of Students	NPS Expenditure	SDC Expenditure	RSP Expenditure	DIS Expenditure	TOTAL Expenditure	Average Expenditure per Youth
LCI, FFH/FFA and Residential Facility	15,145	\$101,360,747	\$63,132,290	\$21,969,549	\$27,744,735	\$214,207,321	\$14,144

The base of approximately \$214 million represents the total estimated cost of providing special education services for this population. School districts receive revenue limit funds for each student they serve, and SELPAs receive special education average daily attendance (ADA) funds for each student in the SELPA. The special education ADA funds are needed in part by districts to conduct assessments and other special education program functions. These funds are not currently included in calculating the 100 percent NPS reimbursement and therefore have not been subtracted from the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, and FFAs under the new funding mechanism. However, under the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement mechanism, the state does subtract the district revenue limit amount when reimbursing the SELPA for their NPS costs. The revenue limit amount is based on the student’s district of residence, meaning the district where the LCI, FFA, or FFH is located. We recommend that revenue limit funds be subtracted from the \$214 million base. The amount of revenue limit funds for the population of students in CASEMIS who are living in LCIs, FFAs, and FFHs is equal to \$41,559,409, resulting in a special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, and FFAs

²⁹ DIS is used as a primary expenditure whenever a student receives a DIS service, but does not have a primary placement in an NPS, SDC, or RSP.

amount of \$172,647,912.³⁰ In addition to the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs and FFAs amount, a separate appropriation, as considered by the Finance Committee, should be made for the first seven years of implementation to accommodate SELPAs that receive fewer funds under the proposed funding mechanism as described below. These supplemental funds are necessary in order to ensure that the SELPAs that receive fewer funds under the proposed model are able to transition to more appropriate programs without jeopardizing the education of their students in the short-term. This separate “hold harmless” appropriation should be the amount of \$13,804,969 for the first year of implementation.³¹

Extraordinary cost pool for NPS placement funds

Currently, \$1 million in extraordinary cost pool (ECP) funds are appropriated each year to assist SELPAs with extraordinary costs associated with NPS placements. This provision is described in the Education Code, Section 56836.21. We propose that these funds continue to be available under the alternative funding mechanism to reflect the ongoing possibility of enrolling a very high cost student. Under the current funding mechanism, ECP funds cannot be used for NPS students who are eligible for 100 percent NPS reimbursement. But since there will be no 100 percent NPS reimbursement students under the proposed plan, the demand for these funds may increase. As with the current system, under the proposed alternative funding mechanism, SELPAs would be asked to show that their costs are more than twice that of the statewide average NPS cost in 1997-98, as adjusted since then for inflation. We propose that the SELPA could then be reimbursed for 75% of the excess cost beyond twice the statewide average.

In addition, we recommend that the criteria for accessing the emergency cost pool be modified. These funds should be made available to SELPAs for students residing in group homes, FFAs and FFHs who require high cost educational services, and the funds should not be restricted to cover only NPS placements, but should cover all educational placements. For example, it may be necessary for a SELPA to provide a medically fragile student living in an FFH with unusually high cost educational services. Under the proposed alternative funding model, the SELPA would receive relatively few additional funds for a youth living in an FFH. A medically fragile student in an FFH who requires such services could be considered as an extraordinary circumstance. This SELPA would be eligible to apply for extraordinary cost pool funds to accommodate these unique circumstances that are not accounted for in the proposed alternative funding mechanism. In each case the SELPA would apply to the CDE for these funds and the CDE would review the application and determine the amount of funding based on the merits of the individual case. The SELPA would be eligible for additional funds not to exceed 75% of the excess cost beyond the threshold described above, or some other limit the CDE may elect. The CDE will need to work with the SELPAs to determine an appropriate threshold. We recommend that the ECP fund be

³⁰ The deduction of \$41,559,409 in revenue limit funding is based on the district revenue limit amount as provided by the CDE, Fiscal Services Division (for 2001-2002), for students in CASEMIS who are in out of home placements and receiving NPS or SDC (and SDC/RSP) services. The revenue limit amount is not deducted for students who receive RSP or DIS services since these students would still require general classroom services. The district of residence code is used to identify these students. Again the proposed model treats the revenue limit funds in the same way as they are treated for the 100 percent NPS reimbursement, i.e., the state reimburses the SELPA for costs in excess of the revenue limit amount.

³¹ The “hold harmless” appropriation for SELPAs that receive fewer funds under the proposed alternative funding mechanism is derived by taking the difference between how much these SELPAs are receiving under the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and how much they would receive under the proposed mechanism.

reviewed annually to determine the level of funding necessary to accommodate the purposes described above.

LCI emergency impact funds

In Section 56836.18, the Education Code provides for emergency impact funds to be made available to SELPAs to cover the educational expenditures that may be incurred when a new or expanded LCI or FFH opens during the school year within the SELPA. These funds are also available should a student be placed in a residential placement for which there is no public or nonpublic program available to meet the student's needs specified by his or her IEP. Currently, \$1 million is provided under this provision. During initial implementation, these funds should continue to be available. However, given that the proposed alternative funding mechanism is based on a bed count of LCIs, FFAs, and FFHs at several points in time, SELPAs should be able to accommodate growth between apportionment periods. The Department of Finance should review the need for continuation of the LCI emergency impact funds after initial implementation of the alternative funding mechanism.

SELPAs to distribute funds

Under the proposed alternative funding mechanism, SELPAs would be the recipients of the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, and FFAs based on a bed count for each SELPA. At present, data are not available to link the location of FFH, FFA and group homes to the school district or SELPA that serves them. We recommend that the proposed alternative funding model be phased in the first year, with funds being distributed to the County Office of Education (COE). The same allocation method of funds distributed from the COE to SELPAs based on the location of the beds should be used. In addition, SELPAs should follow this same allocation method in distributing funds to districts unless the member districts can agree to a compelling local reason to do otherwise. The hold harmless provision described below would also apply to SELPAs within each COE for the first year of implementation. The CDE should work with the CDSS over the course of the first year to link each group home, FFH and FFA to a specific school district. If the community care licensing process required the identification of the home school district of each residential facility, this data could be shared with the CDE for the purposes of the proposed funding mechanism. This district-level information could then be combined to provide bed counts, and consequently funding, by SELPA. Funds should be distributed to SELPAs, not the County Office of Education, beginning in the second year. This step would also clarify responsibility for the education of youth in groups homes, FFHs and FFAs. Every bed would be unambiguously assigned to a school district, which would then be clearly responsible for ensuring appropriate and high quality education to the youth residing in these facilities.

Due to the current lack of bed data by SELPA, for the purposes of this report, the proposed alternative funding mechanism links funds generated by the bed count to counties. The funding by county does not equate to the funding by SELPA because often there is not a one-to-one correspondence between counties and SELPAs. However, it is possible to see some of the effects of the proposed funding mechanism across the state by county. The exhibit on the following pages shows how the funds generated under the proposed alternative funding mechanism compare to the funds received under the current 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula.

For each county, we used data provided by the CDSS Rate Bureau to determine the number and types of beds that generate funds under the proposed alternative model. It is important to note that the Rate Bureau data was not designed for this use and therefore is currently not perfectly suited for implementation within this model. For example, across the state, 150 youth are shown as being in group homes that have not been assigned an RCL. Also, there may be some youth in group homes who are not captured within the Rate Bureau data, which only covers all placements eligible for AFDC funds (Title IV-E). For example, not all AB2726 youth are eligible for AFDC funds. Although the data are not perfect, they are the best that are available. Youth placed by social services and probation who are eligible for AFDC funds (Title IV-E) are included in this bed count. We also believe they have the best potential for rectifying the perverse incentives in the current funding system for educating youth in group homes, FFHs and FFAs and can be fairly easily be made more appropriate for this use over time.

In Exhibit 2.3 below, the second column shows the number and type of bed by county for 2001-2002. The third column shows the amount of funds that each county received under the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and the emergency impact funds received. These are actual reimbursement figures received from the CDE School Fiscal Services Division for 2001-2002. The third column shows the funding each county would receive under the proposed alternative funding mechanism. These figures are generated by assigning the weighted allocation per bed based on the total special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, and FFAs amount by county. Exhibit A-4 in Appendix A shows how the weights translate into an allocation per bed. The third column also shows the difference between what was received under the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and what each county would receive under the proposed alternative funding mechanism.

Exhibit 2.3. Proposed model, weighting bases on five tiers

County	2001-02 Counts				Baseline 2001-02				Proposed Model, Weighting Based on Five Tiers				
	Capacity of Group Homes	12 mo Avg. Count of FFH Youth		12 mo Avg. Count of FFA Youth	Actual NPS/LCI Allocations 2001-02*	Emergency Impact Funds	Baseline Total	Model Allocation	Gain (Loss)	Capacity of Group Homes	12 mo Avg. Count of FFH Youth		12 mo Avg. Count of FFA Youth
		Count of FFH Youth	Count of FFA Youth								Count of FFH Youth	Count of FFA Youth	
Alameda	595	691	0	1,231	\$5,508,897	\$0	\$5,508,897	\$7,790,579	\$2,281,682				
Alpine	0	0	0	2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,545	\$4,545				
Amador/Calaveras/Tuolumne	116	81	81	81	\$61,941	\$55,555	\$117,496	\$947,033	\$829,537				
Butte	77	89	89	359	\$289,982	\$111,110	\$401,092	\$1,513,048	\$1,111,956				
Colusa	0	0	0	11	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,909	\$30,909				
Contra Costa	293	518	518	425	\$6,133,085	\$0	\$6,133,085	\$3,486,380	\$(2,646,705)				
Del Norte/Humboldt	20	223	223	49	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$493,630	\$493,630				
El Dorado	104	41	41	63	\$729,358	\$0	\$729,358	\$931,806	\$202,448				
Fresno	374	532	532	870	\$0	\$55,555	\$55,555	\$5,466,178	\$5,410,623				
Glenn	6	23	23	19	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$116,135	\$116,135				
Imperial	47	102	102	8	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$416,358	\$416,358				
Inyo	8	8	8	6	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$48,522	\$48,522				
Kern	155	750	750	577	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,489,727	\$3,489,727				
Kings	0	98	98	25	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$201,702	\$201,702				
Lake	16	17	17	95	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$368,745	\$368,745				
Lassen	21	4	4	55	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$269,201	\$269,201				
Los Angeles	3,647	4,222	4,222	9,107	\$31,794,214	\$166,665	\$31,960,879	\$55,469,379	\$23,508,500				
Madera/Mariposa	68	70	70	57	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$623,174	\$623,174				
Marin	184	80	80	5	\$3,711,066	\$0	\$3,711,066	\$1,690,319	\$(2,020,747)				
Mendocino	118	120	120	71	\$1,547,466	\$0	\$1,547,466	\$1,202,257	\$(345,209)				
Merced	52	107	107	171	\$348,931	\$0	\$348,931	\$845,102	\$496,171				
Modoc	30	1	1	21	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$223,179	\$223,179				
Mono	6	0	0	4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43,749	\$43,749				
Monterey	65	97	97	48	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$664,764	\$664,764				
Napa	112	91	91	19	\$2,613,708	\$0	\$2,613,708	\$629,537	\$(1,984,171)				
Nevada/Placer	92	73	73	158	\$1,478,967	\$0	\$1,478,967	\$1,420,436	\$(58,531)				
Orange	776	612	612	1,023	\$4,524,301	\$111,110	\$4,635,411	\$9,129,374	\$4,493,963				
Plumas	6	0	0	31	\$120,221	\$0	\$120,221	\$118,067	\$(2,154)				

County	2001-02 Counts				Baseline 2001-02				Proposed Model, Weighting Based on Five Tiers			
	Capacity of Group Homes	12 mo Avg. Count of FFFH		12 mo Avg. Count of FFA Youth	Actual NPS/LCI Allocations 2001-02*	Emergency Impact Funds	Baseline Total	Model Allocation	Gain (Loss)			
		Youth	Youth									
Riverside	1,200	805	851	\$8,982,929	\$111,110	\$9,094,039	\$11,812,634	\$2,718,595				
Sacramento	736	637	2,145	\$10,257,189	\$0	\$10,257,189	\$11,799,390	\$1,542,201				
San Benito	24	11	21	\$536,772	\$0	\$536,772	\$203,747	\$(333,025)				
San Bernardino	1,020	714	1,255	\$7,271,611	\$0	\$7,271,611	\$10,561,088	\$3,289,477				
San Diego	800	2,134	426	\$6,834,145	\$111,110	\$6,945,255	\$9,800,112	\$2,854,857				
San Francisco	354	303	393	\$1,435,486	\$0	\$1,435,486	\$4,099,832	\$2,664,346				
San Joaquin	298	294	543	\$2,389,085	\$0	\$2,389,085	\$3,501,321	\$1,112,236				
San Luis Obispo	55	87	115	\$3,020	\$0	\$3,020	\$774,422	\$771,402				
San Mateo	60	82	90	\$521,942	\$0	\$521,942	\$644,537	\$122,595				
Santa Barbara	140	137	40	\$2,491,645	\$55,555	\$2,547,200	\$1,370,209	\$(1,176,991)				
Santa Clara	404	413	591	\$5,734,449	\$111,110	\$5,845,559	\$5,188,744	\$(656,815)				
Santa Cruz	55	134	34	\$502,585	\$0	\$502,585	\$573,742	\$71,157				
Shasta	196	237	128	\$1,736,178	\$0	\$1,736,178	\$1,908,274	\$172,096				
Sierra	0	0	3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,409	\$8,409				
Siskiyou	0	18	96	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$287,042	\$287,042				
Solano	154	145	198	\$1,498,403	\$0	\$1,498,403	\$1,370,550	\$(127,853)				
Sonoma	271	136	142	\$7,020,915	\$0	\$7,020,915	\$2,568,148	\$(4,452,767)				
Stanislaus	206	175	218	\$1,414,484	\$0	\$1,414,484	\$2,089,291	\$674,807				
Sutter	6	35	100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$353,632	\$353,632				
Tehama	64	80	69	\$82,731	\$0	\$82,731	\$767,149	\$684,418				
Trinity	0	26	6	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$52,158	\$52,158				
Tulare	148	303	304	\$0	\$55,555	\$55,555	\$1,927,760	\$1,872,205				
Ventura	113	168	126	\$840,531	\$55,555	\$896,086	\$1,282,938	\$386,852				
Yolo	100	57	172	\$971,807	\$0	\$971,807	\$1,417,936	\$446,129				
Yuba	24	49	166	\$110,317	\$0	\$110,317	\$651,014	\$540,697				
TOTAL:	13,416	15,828	22,825	\$119,498,361	\$999,990	\$120,498,351	\$172,647,912	\$52,149,561				

*County dollars aggregated from 2001-02 SELPA reimbursement figures.
Source: School Fiscal Services Division

The alternative funding mechanism should be rolled into the existing SELPA ADA reporting cycle. Reports showing the number and type of beds by SELPA should be submitted initially to the CDE, along with the ADA reports in December, April and October. The SELPAs should work with the social services to determine the number of beds. It is important for the SELPAs to be aware of the residential placements for which they are responsible. Within three years, the CDE should evaluate the necessity of reporting in October. It may be sufficient for SELPAs to report the number and type of beds in December and April.

As a result of the broader definition of youth in foster care eligible for special education funding, under the alternative funding mechanism (i.e., all youth served in public as well as private settings) most counties (SELPAs) receive an increase in funds under the proposed system. Some counties (SELPAs) will, however, receive fewer funds. An important determining factor will be the extent to which counties, or SELPAs, relied on NPS placements in the past. Counties (SELPAs) that in the past retained relatively high percentages of their foster care population within their public schools (despite the fiscal disincentive for doing so) will be most likely to receive increased funding under the proposed system. Conversely, counties (SELPAs) relying more heavily on higher than average cost NPS placements in the past year may receive fewer funds.

It is also possible that SELPAs that receive fewer funds have special circumstances which need to be accommodated. For example, the closure of the state hospital in Napa County has created a situation in which a number of medically fragile students have been placed in FFHs. The proposed alternative funding model provides relatively few funds for FFH placements because the general assumption is that these students do not require significant additional education services. As a result, Napa will have fewer funds to accommodate students placed in FFHs who may require NPA services. SELPAs with extraordinary circumstances, such as those in NAPA, will be able to apply for Extraordinary Cost Pool funds as described above.

Under the proposed funding mechanism, some SELPAs will receive fewer funds than they currently receive, even though they do not have extraordinary circumstances. This may be the case for a SELPA that traditionally places a higher number of students in NPSs. Therefore, we recommend a provision, as considered by the Finance Committee, that SELPAs would not receive fewer funds than they did in the year prior to implementation for two years. It would be difficult for a SELPA to serve the same number of youth with fewer funds at any given point in time, and a decrease in funds would disrupt services to these youth. Consequently, the process of considering educational alternatives to the current provision of services and making use of the new flexibility afforded by the proposed model would occur gradually.

The SELPAs receiving an increase in funds should be fully funded in the first year of implementation, in full acknowledgement of serving youth in foster care in public, as well as private, settings. All other SELPAs should continue to receive at least the same funding as in the implementation year for the first two years. This hold harmless provision for SELPAs receiving fewer funds would be phased out over five years following the first two years of implementation with a 20 percent reduction of funds each year until the SELPAs reach the point of receiving the funds allocated by the funding mechanism. One possible source of funding for this expansion in

education funding for youth in group homes, FFHs and FFAs is the anticipated expansion in federal special education funds expected to flow to the state over the next few years.

After the first year of implementation, the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs or FFAs should be modified annually to reflect the current statewide bed count. The per-bed allowance based on the five tiers, as described above, should be used in conjunction with the current statewide bed count to determine the appropriation for that year. In addition to the modification based on an annual bed count, a cost of living adjustment (COLA) should be factored in each year to appropriately adjust the bed allowance based on the five tiers. An ongoing assessment of the model base, including the source of bed count information, the bed type weights, potential modifications to the RCL system, unintended consequences from the implementation of this funding system, and the degree to which high quality and appropriate services are being received by youth in group homes, FFHs and FFAs should occur over the initial three to five years of implementation.

Funding for youth placed through AB 3632/2726 (Chapter 26.5)

The funding for a youth who is placed in a residential facility by an expanded IEP team (pursuant to Section 7572.5 of the Government Code and Section 60100 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations) will not be affected by the proposed alternative funding mechanism. Under the new model, the SELPA where the youth resides will receive the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs or FFAs. However, the SELPA that places the youth in residential care will still be responsible for paying the educational costs. In other words, the district with the bed will receive the funds, but will not have to pay for the educational services provided to the youth. While imperfect, these provisions are similar to those under the current funding mechanism. We recommend that these provisions be retained because of the administrative burden of implementing a system where the SELPA with the residential bed reimburses the placing SELPA.

Sources of funds for new funding formula

The source of the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs, FFHs, and FFAs to be used in the new funding formula should include the current funds allocated for the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and additional state and federal special education funds. Given that the source of funds are special education funds, districts will only be able to use these funds to provide special education services to youth living in LCIs, FFAs, and FFHs.

Related fiscal recommendations

As mentioned earlier, changing the 100 percent NPS reimbursement incentive alone does not resolve all of the fiscal issues associated with the education of this population. There are a number of related changes that need to be made to improve education services for youth living in LCIs. Some of these are discussed below, with additional discussion found in the “Recommendations” chapter of this report.

Sources of funds for youth who are not eligible for special education

Many youth in foster care are not eligible for special education. However, these youth could often benefit from specialized education services such as counseling, tutoring or behavior management. The state should seek to maximize the amount of federal funds that are available to serve this population. There are several sources of federal funds that it appears the state is not fully utilizing. For example, Title I, Part D funds are available for neglected and delinquent youth living in “a public or private residential facility, other than a foster home, that is operated for the care of youth who have been committed to the institution or voluntarily placed in the institution under applicable State law, due to abandonment, neglect, or death of their parents or guardians,” or “a public or private residential facility for the care of youth, who have been adjudicated to be delinquent or in need of supervision.”³²

Care providers and educators report that this program is not widely known by districts that are eligible to apply. Title I, Part A funds are another source of funds for this population. The state should consider setting aside a percentage of the Title I, Part A funds to be used exclusively for the education of youth in foster care. Finally, a third funding option is increased use of Medicaid. Some states have very high district participation rates for Medicaid. California, on the other hand, takes relatively little initiative in accessing these funds that may be used for expenditures such as transportation and assessments (Parrish, Anthony, Merickel, & Esra, (2003). CDE and CDSS should work together to maximize the amount of federal dollars that are available to be used to educate this important population.

Accountability and monitoring

A strong accountability and monitoring system is needed to ensure that youth in LCIs, FFAs and FFHs receive appropriate educational services. Under the proposed alternative funding mechanism, SELPAs and school districts would be expected to use these funds for the students who generated the additional resources. At the same time, we acknowledge that strict requirements for fiscal reporting at this level could be unduly burdensome. Many of the programs may receive funds from multiple sources and it would be difficult to decouple the funds. However, it is important that the state, counties, SELPAs and districts be held accountable for appropriately serving these students and that the funds made available under this alternative funding mechanism be used to serve the foster youth population on which the fund allocation is based.

One mechanism for accountability would be for school districts to be required to report on outcomes for the students in their schools who live in LCIs, FFAs, or FFHs. This reporting would include educational goals and objectives for the student, the educational program that is in place, progress the student is making, and credits accrued towards graduation. Youth in foster care could also be disaggregated as a subgroup, similar to the special education subgroup, in the Academic Performance Index (API) so that educators and researchers can begin to understand

³² See section 1432 of Title I, Part D of the United States Code.

trends for this population and determine better ways to serve youth in foster care.³³ Youth in foster care could also be coded on the high school exit exam in the same way that ethnic and racial subgroups are coded. It is also important to include youth in foster care as a subgroup in standardized testing so that schools can begin to be held accountable for their educational outcomes. The state is already making a substantial investment in this population of youth, as described in the data chapter of this report. At the same time, the returns on this investment in regard to the education received and the realization of improved life chances for these children have been poor. Clearly the state must take immediate steps to ensure greater accountability to this gravely at risk population of children, as well as to the taxpayers of the state who currently realize very little return for this substantial expense.

In order to assist the school districts in determining the most appropriate educational program and in facilitating the graduation of youth in foster care, a statewide methodology for counting and tracking partial and full credits towards high school graduation needs to be developed. The mobility of these youth makes it difficult for them to accrue credits within the comprehensive high school setting. A comprehensive high school may not offer partial credit to youth who come in after the year has started, so the district may determine that a continuation school is the best placement, not for educational reasons, but because partial credits are accepted. All schools should accept partial credits for this population. Full credits should also be transferable. Sometimes a youth who has earned full credits at one school is unable to transfer them all because the new school may not accept particular credits. Standardization of course titles could assist in making this possible. Accountability is critical for improving the education of youth in group homes; mechanisms to ensure an appropriate education need to be put in place.

Although the education received at some NPSs has been called into question, the ultimate responsibility for the quality of education offered at NPSs lies with the CDE and LEAs. Through the certification and monitoring process for NPSs conducted by the CDE, the CDE should be able to ensure a quality education. The role of the CDE should be to oversee the education provided in NPSs. Modifications and changes to the Education Code and regulations that govern

³³ AB 691 attempted to pass legislation requiring that youth in foster care be disaggregated as a subgroup at the state level in an attempt to learn more about the performance of youth in foster care and to hold the state responsible for improved performance. Concerns were raised, however, that requiring school districts to report on youth in foster care might encourage schools to exclude these youth from testing. Additionally, the API is calculated based on youth who have been at a school for the past 12 months. Many youth in foster care are too mobile to be included in this index. The proposed bill was dropped for these reasons. AB 2403 attempted to accomplish a similar goal by requiring county offices of education and school districts to report the number of foster children enrolled in education programs as part of the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) and the California School Information Services (CSIS) database. It was believed that requiring such reporting would not be part of the high stakes accountability models and would therefore not create perverse incentives as the prior bill but would allow for the state and researchers to document the progress of youth in foster care. While this bill reportedly had considerable support in the Assembly it was vetoed by the Governor for funding reasons. There is currently another bill before the Legislature AB 490 that takes a different approach to similar issues.

the CDE's ability to conduct certifications and monitoring may be necessary.³⁴ The CDE should continue to explore ways to modify and change the Education code in order to strengthen the certification and monitoring process.

For example, the qualifications needed for NPS staff providing specialized services should be better defined. At present there seem to be two sets of standards—one for special education programs in public schools and one for NPSs. With the limited number of full-time staff employed by the CDE to oversee certification and monitoring of all NPSs both in state and out of state and the current stipulations in the Education Code, it is not possible to conduct what the study team would consider a thorough or timely NPS certification or review process. Although the CDE conducts these reviews in accordance with state law, the study team believes that reviews should be conducted more frequently than once every four years. Additional resources should be devoted to the oversight of these specialized and costly placements. Certification standards for one of the most expensive educational placements in the state should be strengthened and made at least comparable to those that apply to public schools. For example, the current requirement for only one credentialed teacher per NPS, regardless of the number of students served in the NPS, appears very difficult to justify.

As previously stated, the primary responsibility for ensuring that individual students receive an appropriate and adequate education lies with the LEA, SELPA, or COE.³⁵ Oversight of the educational components lies with the LEA. The role of the LEA in monitoring the progress of its students in NPSs should also be strengthened. Although there are LEAs that conduct their own reviews, each LEA should be required to conduct its own monitoring and evaluation of the progress made by its students in NPSs. Contracting districts and SELPAs should monitor each of the NPSs with whom they contract annually, at the time the master contract is renewed and each time the IEP team makes an initial placement and/or conducts a review of a pupil's IEP. A uniform process for LEA monitoring should be developed by the CDE. It is also important for the LEA to participate in the placement of all students within its boundaries. Otherwise, appropriate monitoring cannot occur. There are cases in which a youth has been enrolled in an NPS without the knowledge of the LEA. Interagency cooperation and communication as discussed in the Recommendations chapter are essential for avoiding this type of situation.

³⁴ Legislation is currently being developed by advocacy groups that recommends new certification criteria for NPSs (as well as new monitoring procedures). Ideas for improved certification include: requiring all NPS teachers to have appropriate special education credentials, requiring that NPS curriculum meet state educational standards and ensuring the curriculum is appropriate to students' educational needs so that youth can pass the California High School Exit Exam, requiring NPSs include college preparatory classes, extra curricular activities, needed psychological support, and specified discipline procedures. The legislation will also suggest that the goal of NPSs is to provide the support services and academic instruction necessary to ultimately integrate all students into public school.

³⁵ Section 56383 of Chapter 4 of Part 30 of the Education Code states that "pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 300.349 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, after an individual with exceptional needs is placed in a nonpublic nonsectarian school under Section 56366, any meetings to review and revise the pupil's individualized education program may be conducted by the nonpublic, nonsectarian school at the discretion of the district, special education local plan area, or county office of Education. However, even if a nonpublic, nonsectarian school implements a child's individualized education program, responsibility for compliance with this part and with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and implementing regulations, remains with the district, special education local plan area, or county office of Education pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 300.349 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations."

NPS compliance and monitoring should be incorporated into the monitoring for special education programs in public schools. The Focused Monitoring/Technical Assistance (FMTA) units at the CDE should be expanded to include the current analysts from the NPS Unit and additional NPS staff. Consideration should be given to applying some of the standards for public programs to NPS programs. Although there is currently nothing in law that requires that NPSs follow the same legal requirements as public schools, consideration should be given to bringing these two types of placements more closely in line. As described above, districts should work with the FMTA units to become more involved in monitoring the progress made by youth they place in NPSs. Ultimately, the district should be held accountable if a youth is not receiving a quality education at an NPS. Key performance indicators (KPI) for NPSs that are identical to those for special education programs within the public school setting should be developed. NPSs should also be included in the statewide school accountability structures such as the Academic Performance Index (API) or Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM). NPSs should not be seen as separate from the public education system.

NPS review by the CDE needs to be substantially bolstered, with clear remedies more strictly enforced. Similar to the role of Community Care Licensing (CCL) within the California Department of Social Services in granting and revoking licenses for residential facilities, the ability of the CDE to grant and revoke certification for NPSs should be strengthened. Although the Education Code includes a number of criteria required for certification, more specific criteria for which an NPS certification can be revoked should be detailed in the Education Code. For example, there should be a requirement for an NPS to immediately notify the CDE if the one credentialed teacher leaves the school and a replacement teacher is not available. Consideration should be given to establishing regional FMTA units in the same way that CCL has regional offices. Accountability through the development of more comprehensive standards and monitoring needs to be put in place.

Chapter III. Design of the Existing System

The primary purpose of this study is to develop specific recommendations for the redesign of existing policies, procedures and practices at the state and local levels related to the education of youth living in group homes. Before recommendations on how to improve the policies and procedures can be made, the policies and procedures as they currently exist must be understood. This chapter depicts the current foster care residential and educational system as it is designed to work through existing legislation, rules, and regulations. Another precursor to recommendations for improvement is the exploration of how the current system actually works. Implementation of the system is discussed in Chapter IV.

Key policies, procedures and practices that influence educational placements

Generally, youth who are living in group homes are placed there in one of three ways: by Child Welfare Services, by Probation, or by an IEP team that is expanded to include a county mental health department representative.³⁶ Most of the youth placed in group homes by child welfare services have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. These youth are considered to be dependents of the court and are occasionally referred to as “300s” because of the section of the California Welfare and Institutions Code that governs their status. Most youth placed in group homes by Probation have violated a law and are placed in a group home as an alternative to juvenile hall. These youth are considered wards of the court and are occasionally referred to as “602s,” also referring to a section of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. Youth who are beyond the control of their parents, violate a curfew, or are habitually truant may also become wards of the court. However, these youth, sometimes referred to as “601s,” are generally not placed in residential care by Probation.

Youth placed in a group home by an expanded IEP team have been identified as severely emotionally disturbed and in need of a residential placement in order to benefit from a free and appropriate public education. These youth may be referred to as “AB 3632/2726” or “Chapter 26.5” placements because of the two assembly bills or the chapter of the California Government Code, respectively, that governs their status. In the majority of AB3632 cases, the parents maintain custody of their child. The state laws, rules, and regulations that govern residential and educational placements by these agencies are found in a variety of places including the California Welfare and Institutions Code, the California Government Code, the California

³⁶ The following two citations describe an IEP team and an expanded IEP team. Section 56341 (a) of the California Education Code states that “each meeting to develop, review, or revise the individualized education program of an individual with exceptional needs shall be conducted by an individualized education program (IEP) team.” Section 7572.5 (a) of the California Welfare and Institutions Code states that “when an assessment is conducted pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 56320) of Chapter 4 of Part 30 of Division 4 of the Education Code, which determines that a child is seriously emotionally disturbed, as defined in Section 300.5 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and any member of the individualized education program team recommends residential placement based on relevant assessment information, the individualized education program team shall be expanded to include a representative of the county mental health department.”

Education Code, the Federal Code of Regulations, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures. Each county may also have a set of policies and procedures that overlay the basic structure formed by federal and state laws and policies.

The California Legislature has identified some overarching goals for residential and educational services for youth in state custody. Section 16500.1, Chapter 5 of Division 9 of Title I of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) reads, “It is the intent of the Legislature to use the strengths of families and communities to serve the needs of children who are alleged to be abused or neglected...to reduce the number of placements experienced by these children...to improve the quality and homelike nature of out-of-home care, and to foster the educational progress of children in out-of-home care. In order to achieve the goals specified...the state shall encourage the development of approaches that...allow children to remain in their own schools, in close proximity to their family...” Section 160001.9, Chapter 1 of Title I of WIC states that “it is a policy of the state that all children in foster care shall have [the right]...to attend school and participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment activities, consistent with the child’s age and developmental level...”

Receiving an appropriate education and making educational progress are two primary goals that the Legislature has set forth for youth in foster care. Whether these goals are achieved is partly the result of the specific laws that are in place to facilitate the education of youth in foster care. Other determinants of whether these educational goals are achieved for youth in foster care are the court and residential placement processes that are intertwined with the educational placement process as well as how the laws are implemented at the local level.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures is available as an “operational tool” to assist caseworkers and probation officers in following regulations and statutes concerning the care of dependents and wards. While the handbook contains a significant amount of detail, there is little reference to supporting the education of youth in foster care. For example, in Chapter 31-300 Service Delivery, the social worker is instructed to “have contact with other professionals working with the child, parents/guardians, and out-of-home care provider including, but not limited to, the following: public health nurse, professional group home staff, physician, therapist, infant specialist, social workers from other counties or states providing services” (section 31-335.1).

Although the manual does not limit the professionals that the caseworker can contact, it does not mention educators who could be spending up to eight hours a day with the youth. The manual also does not describe the caseworker’s responsibility to notify the LEA of a youth’s transfer within 5 days or the responsibility to oversee the transfer of educational information to the receiving LEA within 5 days.³⁷ The manual does state that the social worker should “provide the out-of-home care provider the child’s background information as available, including, but not limited to, the following histories: educational, medical, placement, family and behavioral.”³⁸ However, it does not mention that the records are to be provided to the care provider no later than 30 days after the initial placement or within 48 hours after a subsequent placement.³⁹ The

³⁷ Sections 49069-49072 of Chapter 6.5 of Part 27 in Division 1 of the Education Code.

³⁸ Section 31-405.1 (s) of the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures.

³⁹ Section 16000-16012 of Chapter 1 of Part 4 in Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

level of detail required to be included in the health and education summary is also excluded from the manual (see the exhibit below).

The court, residential, and educational processes are somewhat different for each of the three types of youth who are placed in group homes. The relationship between these processes and the laws that govern them are most easily understood by looking at a pictorial representation or schematic. Schematics I, II, and III, described and portrayed below, show the process for dependents, wards, and youth placed through AB 3632/2726. Schematic IV shows the educational process for youth who may be eligible for special education. This schematic should be viewed in conjunction with the first three schematics because any dependent or ward may be eligible for special education and youth who are AB 3632/2726 placements have already been identified as eligible for special education.

The following schematics are color coded to show the court process (pink), the educational process (blue), the residential process (yellow), and the role of County Social Services, Probation, or Mental Health (green) depending on the schematic. The citations for the laws that drive the various processes are referenced with footnotes in parentheses in the boxes on the schematics. Each schematic is shown on a time continuum with hours shown as “h,” days as “d,” months as “m,” and years as “y.”

Placement process for dependents (Schematic I)

Schematic I shows the court, residential, and educational processes and the role of county social services for a youth who is declared a dependent of the court. If social services receives a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, an investigation is conducted and the social worker may deem it necessary to remove the youth from his or her home. Within 48 hours of removing a youth from his or her home, a petition alleging the facts as to why that was deemed necessary must be filed with the court. When removed from his or her home, the youth may be placed in a temporary shelter and may begin attending the shelter school education program. An initial hearing is held before the end of the next court day to determine whether the youth should be removed from home until legal proceedings can occur. No more than 15 days later, a jurisdiction hearing is held to determine if the allegations of abuse or neglect are true.

If the allegations are found to be true, a disposition hearing is held to determine where the child should live. The court order must specifically address any limitation on the educational rights of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the youth. As of January 2003, the court must also appoint an educational guardian if the parent or guardian’s rights are limited. It is at this point that the youth may be moved from the temporary shelter to a group home. Although the Legislature has stated its preference for youth to be placed in a residential setting that will allow them to remain in their own school, it may be necessary for the youth to attend a new school at this time.

Once a youth has been declared a dependent and the judge has determined where the youth should live, county social services is responsible for providing the care provider, in this case the group home operator, with a health and education summary as soon as possible, but no later than

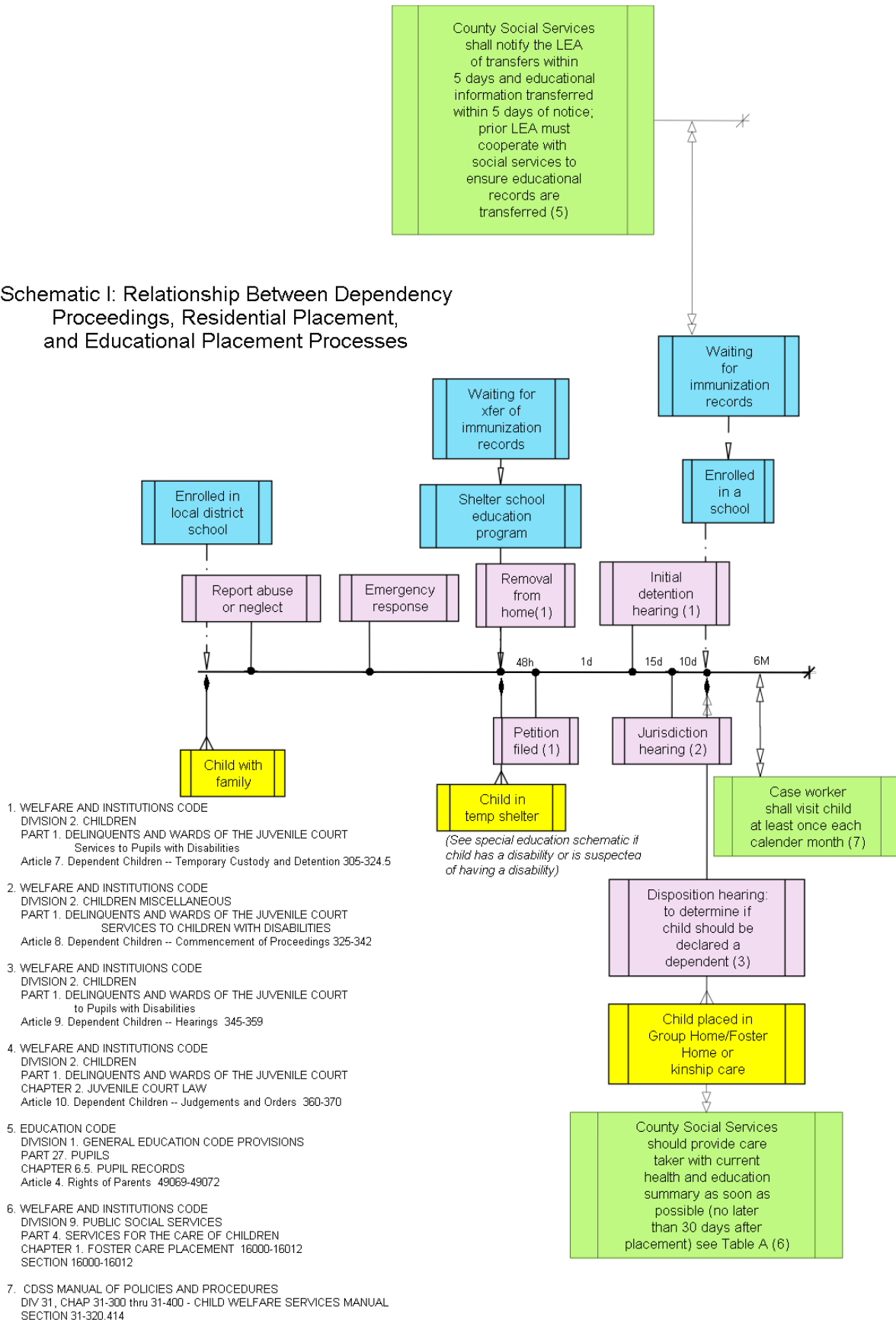
30 days after the initial residential placement. The contents of the health and education summary are described in the exhibit below.

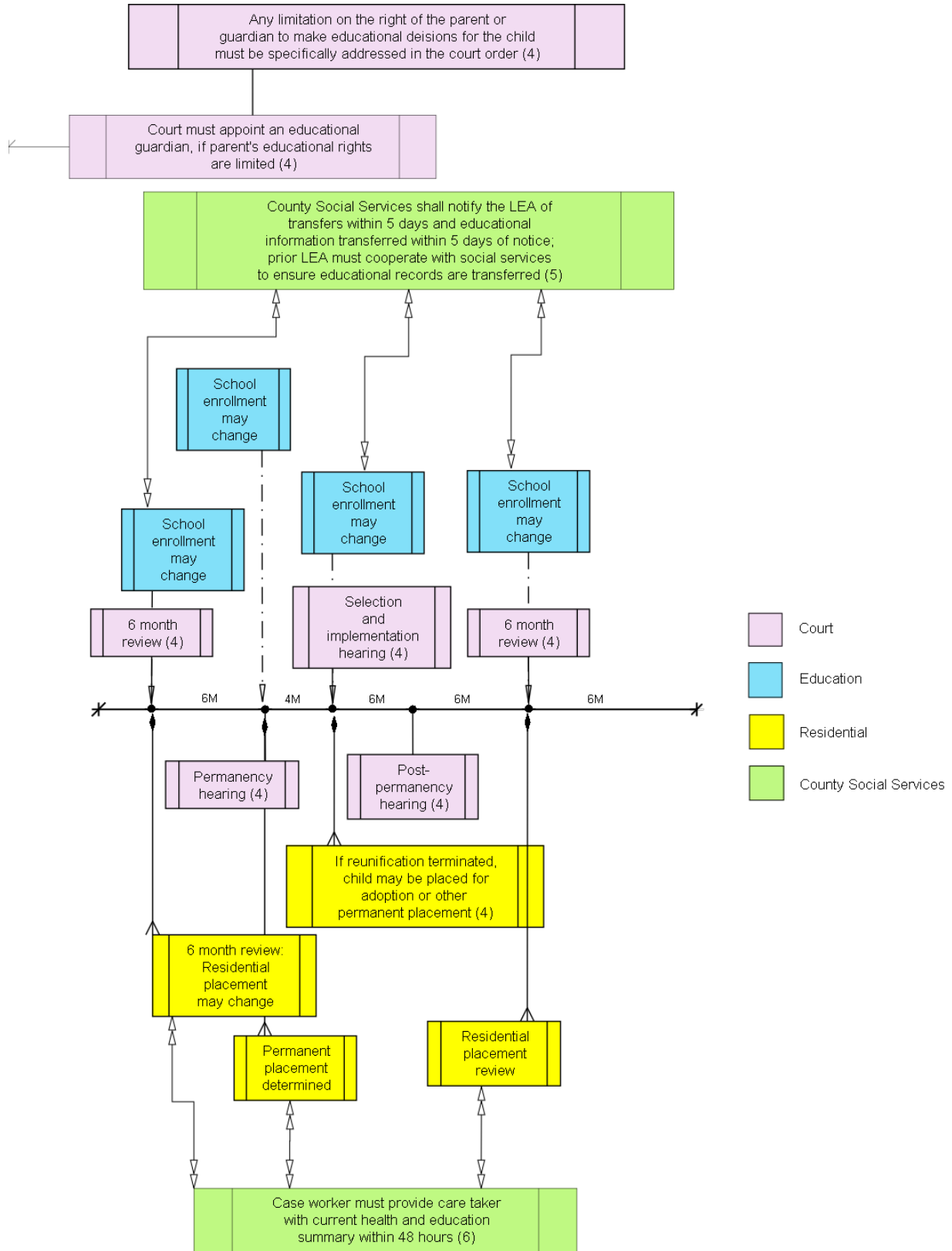
<p>WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE Division 9. Public Social Services Part 4. Services for the Care of Children Chapter 1. Foster Care Placement</p>	<p>Selected Education-related Case Management Responsibilities for the Child Protective Services Agency and Probation</p>
<p>§ 16010</p>	<p>(a) When a child is placed in foster care, the case plan for each child recommended pursuant to Section 358.1 shall include a summary of the health and education information or records, including mental health information or records, of the child. The summary may be maintained in the form of a health and education passport, or a comparable format designed by the child protective agency. The health and education summary shall include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The names and addresses of the child's health, dental, and education providers, • the child's grade level performance, • the child's school record, • assurances that the child's placement in foster care takes into account proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement, • a record of the child's immunizations and allergies, • the child's known medical problems, • the child's current medications, past health problems, and hospitalizations, • a record of the child's relevant mental health history, the child's known mental health condition, and medications, and • any other relevant mental health, dental, health, and education information concerning the child determined to be appropriate by the Director of Social Services. If any other provision of law imposes more stringent information requirements, then that section shall prevail.

If the youth is attending a new school, county social services is also responsible for notifying the prior (sending) LEA of the youth's educational transfer within five days. The LEA, where the youth attended school prior to becoming a dependent, is required to cooperate with county social services to ensure that educational records are transferred to the receiving LEA. There are few other laws that govern the role of the sending and receiving LEAs with regard to youth in foster care.

Once a youth has been declared a dependent, the residential and educational placement may be changed at any time. The care provider, the social worker, and the youth all have the ability to initiate a change in residential placement, which often affects the educational placement. The LEA also has the ability to initiate a change in educational placement. The schematic below shows that when a youth is placed in a subsequent residential placement, the caseworker must provide the new caregiver with the current health and education summary within 48 hours. The 5-day notice of the sending LEA by social services and the 5-day transfer of records to the receiving LEA by social services remains the same for each residential or educational placement change.

Schematic I: Relationship Between Dependency Proceedings, Residential Placement, and Educational Placement Processes





Regardless of placement, child has the right to attend school and participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment courses (6)

Placement process for wards (Schematic II)

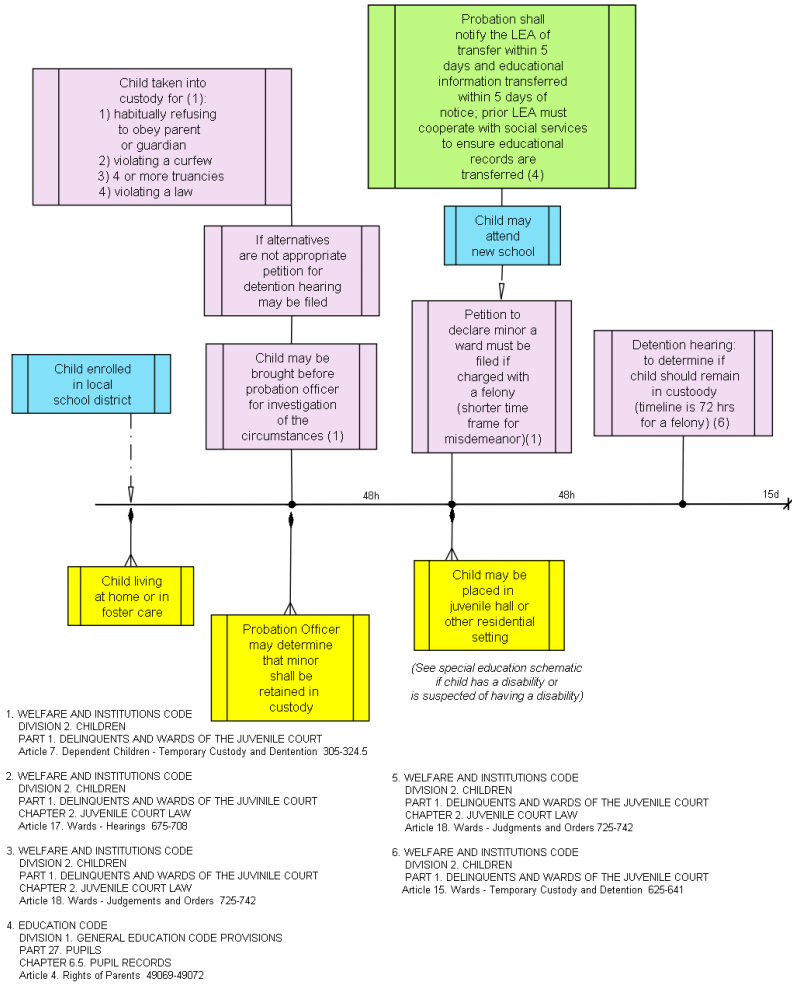
The court, residential, and educational processes for youth who are declared wards of the court are somewhat similar to those for youth who have been declared dependents. The Welfare and Institutions Code states that a youth may be taken into custody for habitually refusing to obey his or her parents, violating a curfew, being truant four or more times, or violating a law. Generally, youth are only taken into custody for the last offence—violating a law. If the youth is brought before a probation officer for investigation of the circumstances, the probation officer may determine that the youth should remain in custody. The probation officer must file a petition to declare the youth a ward within 48 hours. The youth may be placed in juvenile hall, or another residential setting, awaiting his or her detention hearing scheduled within 48 hours to determine if he/she should remain in custody.

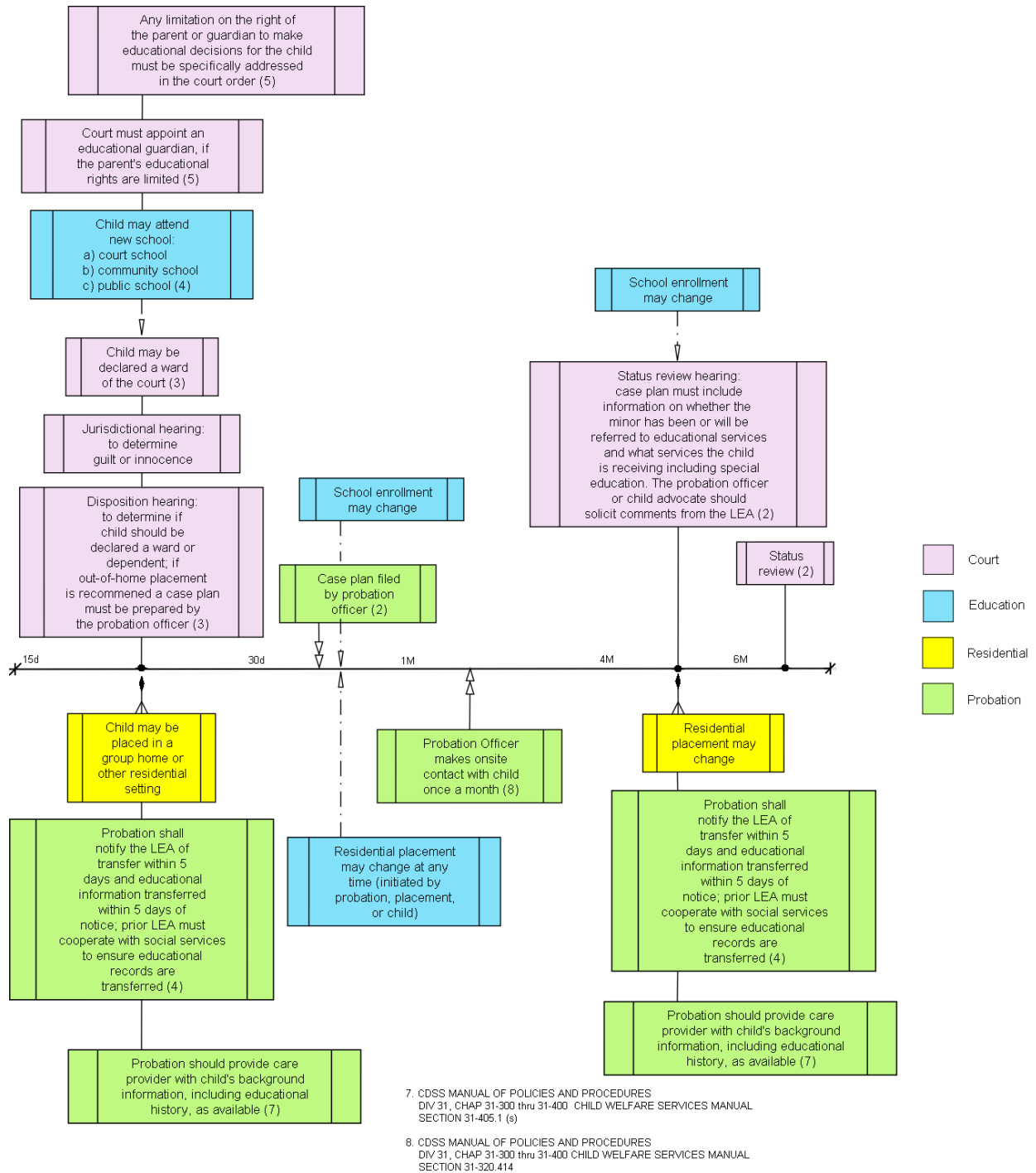
If the judge determines the youth should remain in custody, a jurisdictional hearing and disposition hearing are scheduled within 15 days. During this time, the youth may attend the juvenile hall school. At the jurisdictional hearing, the judge determines if the youth is guilty or innocent of the alleged violation. If he or she is declared guilty, the judge will determine if the youth should be declared a ward at the disposition hearing. An out-of-home placement may be recommended at this time. If the court limits the rights of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the youth, the court order must reflect this decision. At this time, the court must appoint an educational guardian for the youth if the educational rights of the parent or guardian are limited.

Once a youth has been declared a ward and the judge has determined where the youth should live, Probation is responsible for providing the care provider, in this case the group home operator, with a health and education summary as available. If the youth is attending a new school, Probation is also responsible for notifying the prior (sending) LEA of the youth's educational transfer within five days.

The LEA, where the youth attended school prior to becoming a ward, is required to cooperate with Probation to ensure that educational records are transferred to the receiving LEA. Once a youth has been declared a ward, the residential and educational placement may be changed at any time. The care provider, the probation officer, and the youth all have the ability to initiate a change in residential placement, often affecting the educational placement. The LEA has the ability to initiate an educational placement change. The schematic below shows that when a youth is placed in a subsequent residential placement, the probation officer must provide the new care provider with the current health and education summary as available. The requirement that the sending LEA receive notice from Probation within five days of the transfer and that the sending LEA must cooperate with Probation to transfer the educational records to the receiving LEA within five days remains the same for each residential or educational placement change.

Schematic II: Relationship Between Ward Proceedings, Residential Placement, and Educational Process





Placement process for youth placed according to AB 3632/2726 (Schematic III)

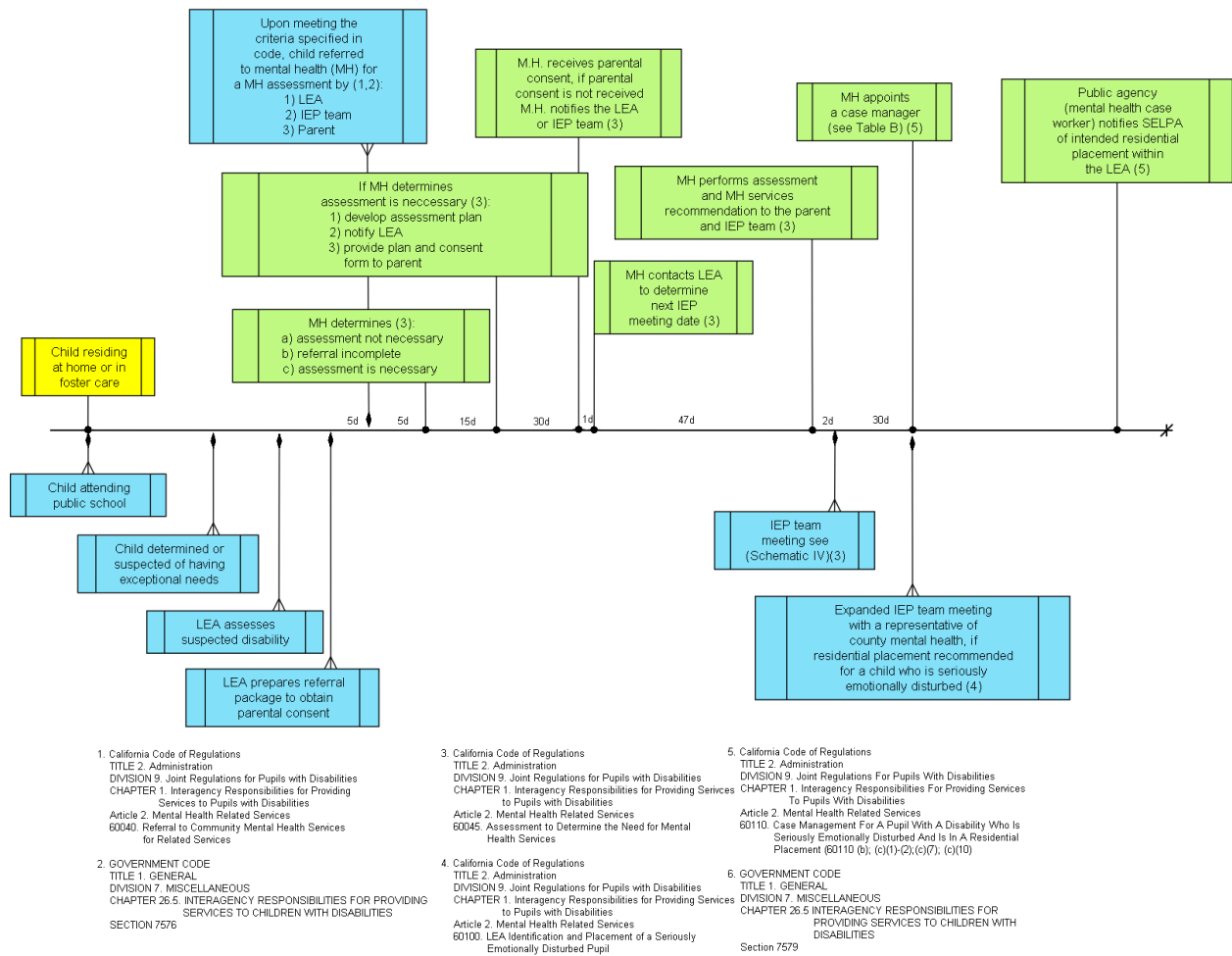
Unlike youth who are placed in group homes as a result of being declared dependents or wards of the court, youth placed in group homes according to Chapter 26.5 of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code are often not in state custody. Chapter 26.5 residential placements are for youth who have a severe emotional disturbance and need a residential placement to benefit from a public education. The residential and educational process for these youth does not involve the court. As shown in Schematic III below, the placement process begins when an LEA has identified a special education student as a youth with an emotional disturbance, and the LEA, a member of the IEP team, or a parent recommends that a residential placement be made. The LEA must prepare a mental health referral package and obtain parental consent for the referral of the youth to county mental health. If county mental health determines that an assessment is necessary, an assessment plan must be developed, the LEA must be notified and the plan must be given to the parent along with a consent form within 15 days. After mental health receives parental consent, the assessment is conducted and an IEP team meeting date is set within 50 days of receiving parental consent. If the IEP team recommends a residential placement, an expanded IEP team, including a representative of the county mental health department, must meet within 30 days. After the expanded IEP team determines that a residential placement is necessary, county mental health immediately appoints a case manager for the youth. The exhibit below shows some of the education-related responsibilities of the mental health caseworker.

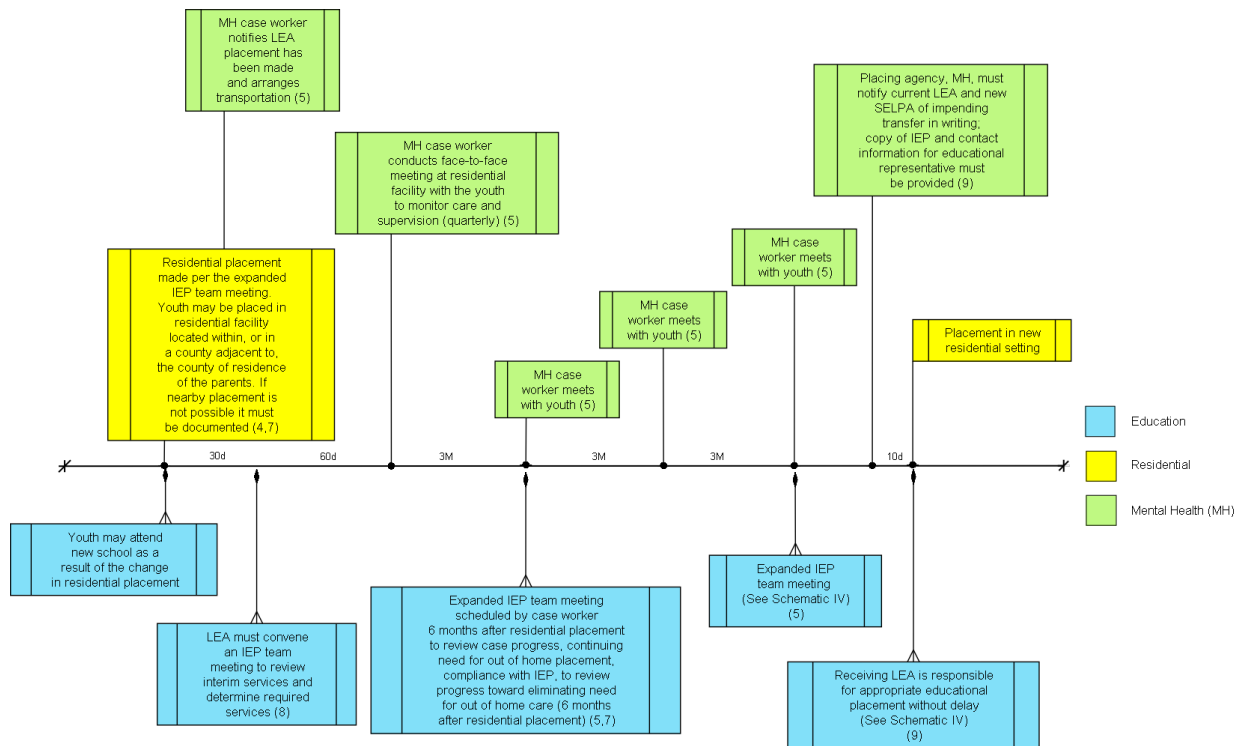
<p>California Code of Regulations Title 2, Division 9, Chapter 1. Interagency Responsibilities for Providing Services to Pupils with Disabilities, Article 2.</p>	<p>Selected Education-related Case Management Responsibilities for Case Manager Designated by the Local Mental Health Director</p>
<p>§ 60110 (60110 (b); (c)(1)-(2); (c)(7); (c)(10))</p>	<p>Coordinate the residential placement plan as soon as possible after the decision has been made to place the pupil in a residential placement. Plan is to include provisions, as determined in the pupil's IEP, for the care, supervision, mental health treatment, psychotropic medication monitoring, if required, and education of a pupil with a disability who is seriously emotionally disturbed.</p>
	<p>Convene a meeting with the parents and representatives of public and private agencies, including educational staff, and identify an appropriate residential placement from those defined in Section 60025 and excluding local inpatient, private psychiatric, and state hospital facilities.</p>
	<p>Identify, in consultation with the IEP team's administrative designee, a mutually satisfactory placement that is acceptable to the parent and addresses the pupil's educational and mental health needs in a manner that is cost-effective for both public agencies, subject to the requirements of state and federal special education law, including the requirement that the placement be appropriate and in the least restrictive environment.</p>
	<p>Notify the LEA that the placement has been arranged and coordinate the transportation of the pupil to the facility if needed.</p>
	<p>Schedule and attend the next expanded IEP team meeting with the expanded IEP team's administrative designee within six months of the residential placement of a pupil with a disability who is seriously emotionally disturbed and every six months thereafter as long as the pupil remains in residential placement.</p>

The mental health caseworker identifies a residential placement that meets the youth's needs within or adjacent to the county of residence of the parents. The caseworker must also notify the SELPA of the intended residential placement within the LEA and work with the LEA to arrange for transportation. After the initial residential placement the caseworker meets with the youth quarterly to monitor the youth's care and supervision.

Within 30 days of placement, the LEA must convene an IEP team meeting to review the interim services that have been provided to the youth and determine the required services. Every six months after residential placement, the caseworker schedules an expanded IEP team meeting to review case progress, determine if there is a continuing need for out of home placement, ensure compliance with the IEP, and assess progress towards eliminating the need for out-of-home placement. If a change in the residential placement is required, the mental health caseworker is required to notify the sending LEA and receiving SELPA in writing of the impending transfer ten days prior to the change. The caseworker must provide the receiving LEA with a copy of the IEP and contact information for the educational representative.

Schematic III: Residential and Educational Placement Process
According to AB3632/2726 (Chapter 26.5)





7. GOVERNMENT CODE
TITLE 1. GENERAL
DIVISION 7. MISCELLANEOUS
CHAPTER 26.5 INTERAGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
SECTION 7572.5

8. California Code of Regulations
TITLE 2. Administration
DIVISION 9. Joint Regulations For Pupils With Disabilities
CHAPTER 1. Interagency Responsibilities for Providing Services to Pupils with Disabilities
Article 2. Mental Health Related Services
60055. Transfers and Interim Placements

9. GOVERNMENT CODE
TITLE 1. GENERAL
DIVISION 7. MISCELLANEOUS
CHAPTER 26.5 INTERAGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
SECTION 7579.1

Placement process for youth who are eligible for special education (Schematic IV)

When a dependent or ward has a disability or is suspected of having a disability, there are steps, in addition to those described in Schematics I and II, that must be taken during the residential and educational placement process. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) affords certain educational rights to all youth with disabilities. Schematic IV shows how a free and appropriate public education is to be achieved under federal and state regulations for youth living in group homes. When a youth is declared a dependent or a ward and the educational rights of the parent are limited, the court must appoint an educational guardian. If the youth has a disability, the educational guardian is referred to as an educational surrogate.

Prior to placing a youth with a disability, or a youth suspected of having a disability, in a group home, the court or placing agency must notify the SELPA administrator. The SELPA administrator must provide the court or placing agency with information about an appropriate public or nonpublic program. At the time of placement the court or placing agency must identify whether the court has limited the educational rights of the parent (and to what extent), and the location of the parents (if they retain any parental rights). The LCI operator must notify the district special education administrator if a youth living in his/her LCI is potentially eligible for special education.

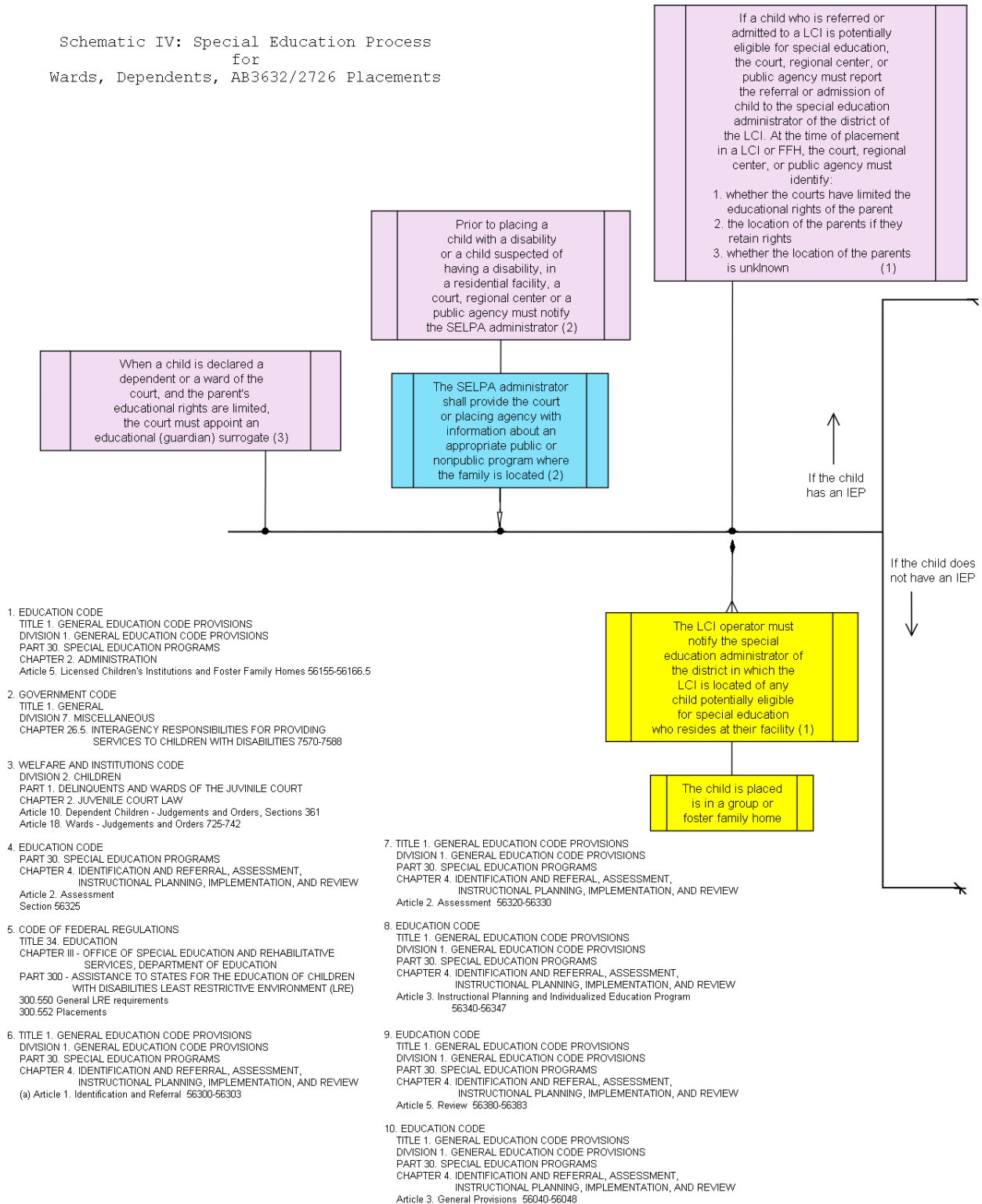
If a youth placed in a group home is already known to be eligible for special education and has an IEP, the LEA must ensure that the youth is immediately provided an interim educational placement for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. The interim placement should be one that is most closely aligned with the IEP and in the least restrictive environment. The LEA must also appoint an educational surrogate if the court did not appoint a surrogate and the educational rights of the parent have been limited. Within 30 days of placement, an IEP team must review the interim educational placement and provide a final recommendation.

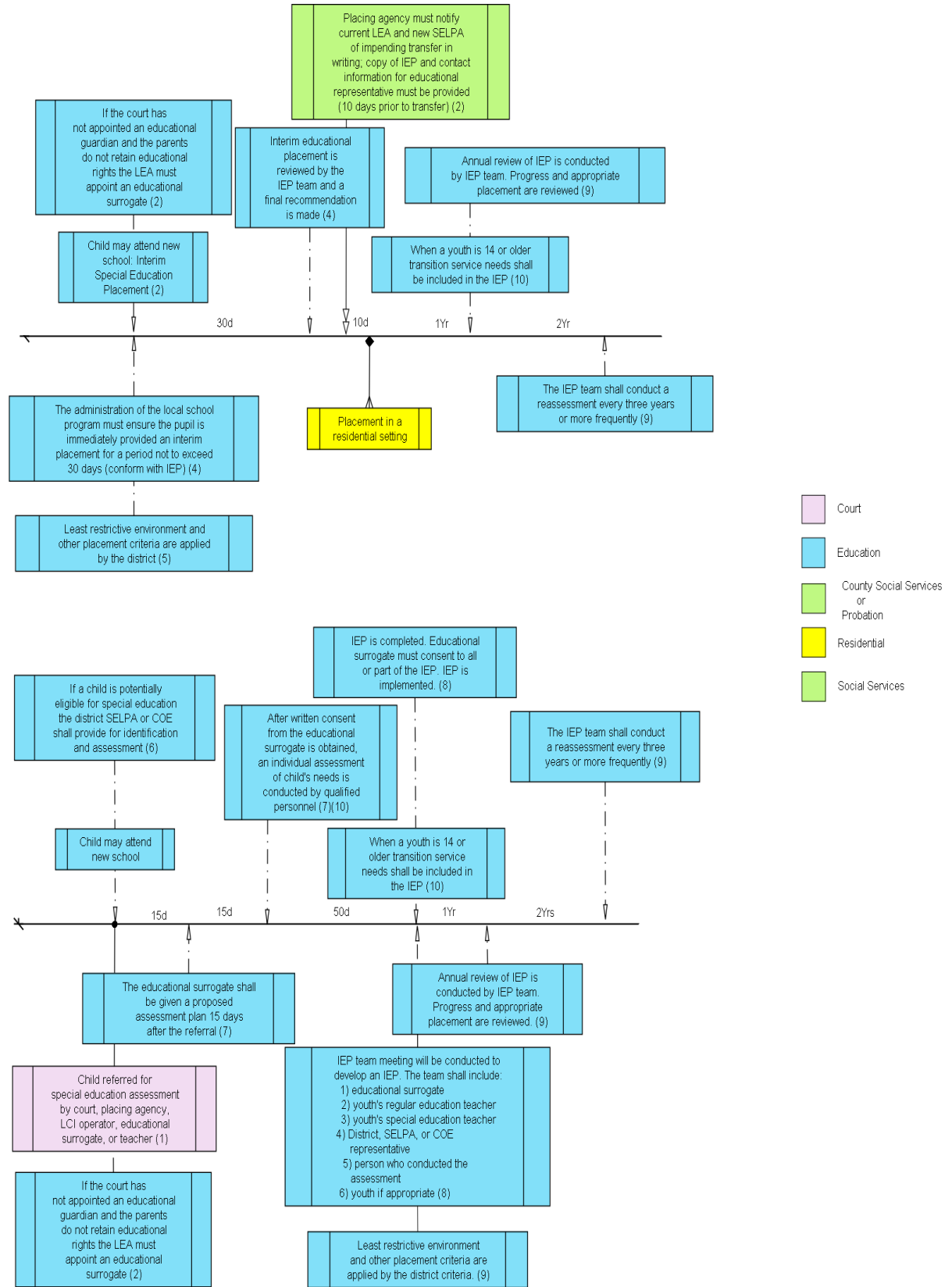
If a youth placed in a group home is suspected of being eligible for special education, but does not have an IEP, the court, the placing agency, the LCI operator, the educational surrogate, or a teacher may refer the youth for a special education assessment. The district, SELPA, or County Office of Education (COE) must provide for the assessment. Within 15 days after the referral has been made, the district, SELPA, or COE must give the educational surrogate a proposed assessment plan. Once the educational surrogate provides a written consent, an individualized assessment of the youth's needs is conducted by qualified personnel. An IEP team meeting will be conducted within 50 days after the assessment to develop an IEP for the youth. The IEP team should include the educational surrogate, the youth's regular education teacher, the youth's special education teacher, a representative from the district, SELPA, or COE, the person who conducted the assessment, and the youth, if appropriate. After the educational surrogate consents to the IEP, it is implemented.

At any time throughout the assessment and IEP implementation process, it is possible for the residential placement of the youth to change. If the youth has an IEP, the placing agency is required to notify the sending LEA and the receiving SELPA of the impending transfer ten days before the transfer occurs. A copy of the IEP and the contact information for the educational representative must be provided to the receiving SELPA. As was mentioned before, the receiving

SELPA must immediately provide the youth with an interim placement. An annual review of the IEP is conducted by the IEP team for all youth in order to ensure educational progress and appropriate placement. When a youth is age 14 or older, the IEP must include the transition service needs of the youth. A reassessment of the youth is conducted by the IEP team every three years.

Schematic IV: Special Education Process
for
Wards, Dependents, AB3632/2726 Placements





Chapter IV. Implementation of the Existing System

The myriad policies and procedures impacting the education of youth in foster care are depicted in Chapter III. In our eight sample counties, we sought to understand where these rules were being met, where they were not being met and why any breakdowns in compliance were occurring. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of this data collection activity and the focus of this chapter is not to monitor or evaluate the counties we studied. Rather, the purpose is to understand how the policies and procedures play out across the eight counties and to try to determine the extent to which they do or do not work in ensuring high-quality education services for youth in foster care throughout the state.

In the discussion below, we review important rules that govern the educational lives of youth in foster care and report findings regarding where and to what extent these laws are being followed at the county level. We will discuss provisions addressing the educational needs of wards, dependents, youth receiving mental health services, and special education youth in foster care in the following three categories: responsibilities of the placing agency, responsibility of the care provider/licensed children's institution (LCI), and responsibilities of the local education agency (LEA).

Compliance with existing laws

Compliance with laws governing placing agencies

Education Code 48852 indicates that the placing agency must notify the LEA when a pupil is placed in an LCI. The placing agency must also provide information to facilitate the transfer of records and appropriate placement. Many counties have attempted to develop systems to ensure compliance with this requirement. One large county in our sample has developed a data system that automatically sends a fax to the relevant LEA at the time a placement is entered into the database. Other counties have modified a state-developed form that is used universally by placing agencies as a notification tool.

Despite these efforts, research staff found that compliance with this requirement was inconsistent across the eight study counties. Choice et al. (2001) also found inconsistencies in how records for youth in foster care were transferred among schools in the nine counties they sampled (Choice et al., 2001). In some counties with particularly successful interagency coordination, this requirement is being met frequently and results in the rapid enrollment of youth in foster care. In other counties, research staff found that compliance with this law was irregular at best. Interviews with caseworkers and care providers in these counties indicate that the form, mentioned above, is often not provided at the time of placement and is thus not faxed to the relevant LEA. According to data collected for this study, in only 44 percent of cases did school personnel know that the youth had been placed in its attendance area prior to the youth's enrollment in school; in only 37 percent of cases did caseworkers report that they had notified

the LEA of the youth's placement in its district after placing the youth.⁴⁰ In general, probation departments across the eight counties exhibited less compliance in providing notification according to county level interviewees.

Education Code 56156 (a) requires each court, regional center or public agency to report to the local district, special education local planning area (SELPA), or county office of education any referral or admission of a child potentially eligible for special education services. The lack of a complete educational history for many youth residing in group homes complicates compliance with this law, particularly for those who have undergone repeated change in residential placements. Due to frequently incomplete records, referrals for special education evaluations and services often come from the school and not from the placing agency. This referral occurs once the youth has been enrolled and a teacher identifies a potential need for special services. In some counties, county offices of education (COE) conduct training for school personnel on how to identify youth with special needs (Bohrnstedt & Stecher, 2002). SELPA directors often take responsibility for coordination of special education records of youth in foster care in order to better serve the youth. That LEAs were taking the responsibility for identification of special education youth is a step in the right direction, but it is important that records be more complete so that caseworkers can consider these special needs when attempting to find new residential and educational placements.

Education Code 56156 (b) says that if a child is potentially eligible for special education services at the time of placement in an LCI or foster home, the placing agency shall identify whether the courts have limited the educational rights of the child's parents/guardians, the whereabouts of the parents/guardians if they maintain educational rights, or whether the location of the parents/guardians is unknown. This rule is particularly important given the recently enacted legislation (SB 1677 and AB 886) that requires that all dependents and wards be assigned an education guardian if the educational rights of parents have been stripped or restricted. Judges report that they often are not informed of the status of the educational rights at the time the case is before their court and are therefore unable to promote educational advocacy for youth in foster care. Even though it is the responsibility of the placing agency to collect and maintain this information, it is often the care providers who conduct their own research to provide judges with more complete records so they can make efficient decisions about who should advocate for a child's educational progress.

Government Code 7579.1 requires that at least 10 days prior to the discharge of a student with a disability, the placing agency must notify in writing the current LEA and receiving SELPA of the impending discharge. Further, the placing agency must give the receiving SELPA a copy of the IEP, identify the person representing the child's educational interests, and provide other relevant information that will be useful when implementing the youth's IEP. Research indicates that this law is impractical in the current system because discharges are rarely planned 10 days in advance.

Because of the seven-day right of refusal (discussed in greater detail later in this chapter), whereby a care provider can give the placing agency seven days to find a new residential placement, youth are often removed rapidly from a home or they run away and appear elsewhere

⁴⁰ See Chapter V for further details.

months later. In such cases, the focus of the caseworker is on finding a new residential placement; findings indicate that the placing agencies very rarely comply with this law. The new provider and SELPA often collect this information, and schools then work together to transfer this information. This process can be cumbersome and imperfect, and a child with special educational needs is either inappropriately placed in the new school or kept out of school until the IEP catches up with him or her. This lack of compliance may leave the state and counties vulnerable to lawsuits under IDEA. More importantly, noncompliance means that youth in foster care suffer.

Compliance with existing laws governing Licensed Children's Institutions (LCIs)

Education Codes 48200, 48201, 48205, and 48260(a) mandate that the group home must enroll the child promptly in the local public school/district using the placement agreement as proof of residence. With regard to this law, our county level fieldwork indicates that, generally speaking, care providers are making diligent efforts to enroll youth in school. Data collected for this study indicate that, according to group home personnel, 74 percent of youth were enrolled in their new school within five days of their residential placement. Eleven percent, however, were out of school more than five days, with three youth (2 percent) having to wait more than 60 days to enroll in their new school. According to the 51 youth who were asked about time spent at a new residence before enrolling in school, 21 percent responded that it had taken more than five days for them to enroll in their new school. We did find rare exceptions in which care providers allowed the youth to sit at home for a week or two before attempting to enroll him or her in school. The majority of delays in placement appeared to be the result of schools creating roadblocks to entry for youth in foster care. This problem will be discussed in more detail in the "LEAs Compliance with Existing Laws" section, below.

Education Code 48854 says that the LCI, nonpublic school, or agency cannot require educational authority to be designated to that institution, school or agency. For the most part, we did not find LCIs or nonpublic schools requiring that educational authority be provided to the LCI or NPS. We did, however, find evidence (in the form of a contract between the LCI and the parent) of a few instances in which the LCI was attempting to obtain educational authority from the parents of residents for whom rights had not been restricted. The most important finding to note when considering this requirement is that there is consistently widespread confusion as to who maintains the educational rights for a youth. This issue is especially confusing when a parent's whereabouts are unknown because records in this category are not properly maintained by the placing agency as is required by law.

Education Code 48854 mandates that an LCI cannot require as a condition of placement that it provide a child's education through a nonpublic school that is owned or operated by the LCI. This is an important piece of law, and we hear a great deal of concern, especially from youth, about violations of this law. Various parties across our counties reported that it was the practice of some LCIs to require NPS enrollment, but no one could quantify the extent of this disruptive practice. Interestingly, caseworkers in one county were not aware of the existence of the law preventing such a practice. Additionally, requiring placement in an NPS further segregates children that are already removed from their home and community because of their placement in

an LCI/group home. Finally, unnecessary placement in an NPS is a violation of Least Restrictive Environment Requirements of Special Education Law.⁴¹

Education Code 56156 (c) requires that LCI staff notify the appropriate school district, SELPA, or county office about youth in their care who may qualify for special education. Across our eight counties we found that care providers consistently send requests for assessment to the appropriate LEA personnel. Care providers reported long delays when requests were made. Some care providers indicated that they refused to accept youth who did not already have an IEP because of the challenge posed by the long delays in assessment. Missing records and shortages in staff at the schools and districts most often caused delays in assessment. Often, there were not enough school psychologists to keep up with assessments, and schools, aware of the transiency of this population, often dragged their feet when it came to conducting assessments for youth in foster care in the hopes that the child would move to the next school. County Offices of Education, school districts, and the State Department of Education may be vulnerable to lawsuits for delays in these assessments under IDEA. More importantly, noncompliance with this law means that youth are not receiving appropriate services.

The Welfare and Institutions Code section 16010 (d) states that the placing agency is responsible for maintaining accurate information for the child's health and education summary. Generally speaking, placing agencies pass this responsibility to care providers through contracts between the two agencies. Across our eight sample counties, we found that larger, more established agencies generally maintained better records. The maintenance of records was far better when a youth had been in a placement for an extended period of time. Smaller homes still struggle when it comes to obtaining health and education information. In these smaller homes, it was often difficult to find progress reports or report cards. Still, findings indicate that these smaller homes have made great progress toward compliance with this law since our last study (Parrish, 2002).

Compliance with existing laws governing local education agencies (LEAs)

Education Codes 48200, 48201, 48205, and 48260 (a) require that an LEA promptly enroll a foster child in school. Results of compliance regarding this law are mixed within our eight sample counties. In approximately half of our counties, speed of enrollment has improved in recent years due to improved records and better understanding of this requirement. In the other half of our counties, however, there were consistent problems with delayed enrollment of youth in foster care by the LEA. Choice et al. (2001) found that approximately 12 percent of their random sample of school-age youth in foster care experienced enrollment delays of two weeks or longer.

The likelihood of enrollment delays was greater for children residing in group homes than for children in other types of foster residences (Choice et al., 2001). One school in a large county was known to require an "orientation class" for youth in foster care before enrollment. At times, a youth would wait two weeks to attend the next scheduled class before being allowed to attend school. In other counties, LEAs required enrollment "interviews," in which they required the attendance of the caseworker before admitting a child to the school. Because of the heavy caseload of caseworkers, these meetings often took weeks to schedule—weeks during which the

⁴¹ Section 300.550 of the Code of Federal Regulations

youth was not attending school. While there were often good reasons for this requirement (e.g., the school wanted to determine if a youth should be placed in a continuation school instead of traditional public school), the result was gaps in schooling for youth in foster care who are often already behind.

These types of roadblocks were found more often when the youth was a delinquent. Care providers and youth themselves are made to feel unwelcome in the public setting. As a result, care providers often push for placement in court, community, or nonpublic schools, which are more accepting of these youth but which are not necessarily the most appropriate placement for a particular youth.

LEAs are vulnerable to lawsuits in this area if cases like these are documented and collected. LEAs are also vulnerable to lawsuits under special education law for those youth in foster care who have been identified as special education. Special education law requires the development of a new IEP within 30 days of the placement change, as well as immediate interim implementation of an existing IEP when a youth changes placements.⁴² Finally, noncompliance with this law means that youth in foster care do not receive necessary services.

Education Code 49069.5 says that upon the request of the placing agency, the LEA must cooperate with the placing agency to ensure the education record is transferred in a timely manner. Notice must be made within five working days and information transferred within five additional working days following the receipt of information. The development of local databases, primarily accomplished by local foster youth services (FYS) programs, has taken LEAs a step closer to compliance with this law (in the counties that receive FYS funding). FYS coordinators often take on the role of compiling records for youth residing in group homes, but they cannot transfer these records until they have a request. These efforts were not found in all counties and generally speaking, education records are often lost or incomplete. New schools often spend a good deal of time trying to piece together educational histories when requests for records from the prior LEA are not met. In some cases, records appear to be irretrievably lost or do not appear at the LEA until months after the youth begins attendance.

It is important to note that while FYS has made some progress in this area, not all youth in foster care are served under this program. Currently, 39 out of 58 counties in California have FYS programs. Many of these programs serve only youth in group homes from their county. This excludes youth in other forms of foster residences, as well as youth living outside their county of adjudication. In sum, care providers and receiving schools report that the transfer of records has not been timely. Much attention is needed in this area given that local efforts are not coordinated at the state level and duplication of effort occurs often (see section on different county and state databases for more information).

It is important to note that compliance with the law is contingent upon the LEA's knowledge that the child has changed schools. School staff members report that frequently they are not notified by either the caregiver or the caseworker when a child changes residential placement,

⁴² Section 56325 of the Education Code.

particularly in cases of seven-day notices.⁴³ The school, therefore, has no way of knowing where the youth has been placed. Additionally, since the youth has not been properly checked out of the prior school, youth are given failing grades and can be reported truant. Care providers and caseworkers report that when they submit requests to the LEA, sometimes the LEA does not respond within the required timeframe. In all eight counties, LEAs were often not in compliance with this law either in transfer or timeframe. Compliance with this law is essential for youth in foster care to make educational advancement.

Education Code 56366 says that the master contract between LEAs and nonpublic schools must include an individual services agreement for each pupil placed in the NPS. It must also include a description of the process being utilized by the district, county office of education, or SELPA to oversee and evaluate placements in nonpublic schools. This description must include a method to evaluate whether the pupil is making appropriate educational progress. Compliance with this law is not the issue—LEAs and NPSs consistently reported compliance with this law. Youth and youth advocates, however, feel that this master contract needs to be reconsidered and that there needs to be increased monitoring of the educational advancement of youth placed in NPSs. As previously noted, monitoring of the education progress of this population is particularly important because youth in group homes and foster care are clearly a highly vulnerable population (Urquiza, Writz, Peterson, & Singer, 1994; Zima, Bussing, Yang, & Belin, 2000). These youth require increased attention and protection. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter II and later in this chapter.

Education Code 48856 requires the LEA to invite at least one non-educational placing agency representative to collaborate with the LEA in the monitoring of a placement in a nonpublic school. Across the board, this requirement was not found to be common practice. Caseworkers do not have time to participate in educational monitoring in general. Increased monitoring of nonpublic school progress is greatly needed, particularly regarding determination of the appropriate time for a youth to move back into the public school setting. Without a non-education representative present at such a meeting, the least restrictive environment requirement may be violated. As there are not enough educational advocates to attend all meetings, the youth's perspective is often underrepresented. Youth and youth advocacy groups such as California Youth Connection (discussed later in this chapter) feel that youth stay in nonpublic schools for significantly longer periods of time than is necessary and are academically behind as a result (California Youth Connection, 2001). Youth advocates also note concern regarding violation of youths' rights to positive behavioral interventions (discussed in Chapter II) due to a lack of monitoring of NPSs.

Government Code 7579.5 says that if the court did not appoint an educational guardian, the LEA must appoint a surrogate parent for a ward or dependent who is eligible for special education. In this law the judge is not required to appoint a guardian. The LEA shall appoint a surrogate from a list of specific candidates (i.e., a foster parent) as surrogate parents prior to selecting the surrogate parent of its choice. The passage of SB 1677 and AB 886, effective January 3, 2003, expands this law to say that the judge should appoint an educational guardian in all delinquency

⁴³ The 7-day notice, or 7-day right of refusal, as it is sometimes called, refers to part of the agreement between the placing agency and the foster parent/provider (SOC 156). It means that foster care parents/providers are required to give the placing agency seven days of notice to remove a child from the home/facility.

and dependency cases in which the parent or guardian's rights have been stripped or restricted. The law provides a list of specific candidates who should be considered for appointment. The judge only appoints a guardian of his/her choosing if the judge does not deem these candidates to be appropriate. If the court fails to appoint an educational guardian, the LEA is required to appoint an educational surrogate for all special education youth.

Because this new legislation became effective only at the start of the new year, field staff gathered data on the prior law, which was in place during the main part of our study. Interviews with attorneys, caseworkers, school staff, and other parties suggest that the LEA surrogates assigned to youth in foster care frequently do not have any knowledge of the child's educational needs or history and often have not met the youth. Interviewees also report that sometimes surrogates would pre-sign IEPs and would not actually participate in the IEP meeting. This latter issue seemed to be more common in larger counties. On the other hand, some surrogates were found to be very diligent in their duties, often becoming very close to their assigned youth and working with care providers and the youth to determine the youth's educational needs. Surrogate outreach and training is a widespread deficiency of the system and needs to be addressed if there is to be hope of compliance with the new legislation. Also, the new legislation renders it even more important for judges to know if the parents' educational rights for a youth have been limited in the past.

Education Code 48645.5 says that each district must accept for credit any coursework satisfactorily completed by a student while in a juvenile court school or in any county or state-operated institution for dependent or delinquent youth. Although we did not specifically look at practices related to acceptance of partial credits from a juvenile courts school or county- or state-operated institutions, our research revealed that acceptance of partial credits was problematic for youth in foster care. Currently, there is no law that requires acceptance of partial credits from NPSs or traditional public schools. Some schools would not accept partial credits. Of the schools in our sample that said youth had arrived at the school with partial credits, three out of 84 of these schools reported that they did not accept that partial credit; one out of 10 of the traditional public schools stated that it did not accept these partial credits. Acceptance of partial credit is made more complicated by the different labeling of courses. Additionally, districts have different course requirements for graduation; given the high transience rates of youth in foster care, it may be impossible for a student to complete all potential requirements or their equivalent in a timely fashion. The receiving school often cannot verify the past school's curriculum and is therefore unwilling to accept partial credits or prior work. Also noteworthy is that many providers in specific counties reported giving up when trying to obtain education information from juvenile hall. The providers' reasons for giving up varied from not knowing whom to speak with at juvenile hall to juvenile hall not returning phone calls regarding education issues.

Finally, Education Code 48653 requires that the district, SELPA, or county officer must first consider services in public education agencies for youth with disabilities who reside in LCIs and foster homes. Only if those programs are not appropriate can non-public services be utilized. Some county-level work showed that a limited number of districts offer programs to meet the more common needs of youth who reside in LCIs (e.g., emotional disturbance). Across our eight counties, care providers and placing agencies felt that public schools discriminate against youth residing in group homes due to negative perceptions of the population as a whole. LEAs are

often unwilling to accommodate these youth in their public school programs and are, therefore, not in compliance with existing law. Interviews with school staff sometimes indicated that due to the lack of resources needed to effectively serve these youth, they are better served in nonpublic settings where their tuition may be reimbursed 100 percent by the state.

There are many laws in effect regarding the requirements of LEAs, LCIs, and placing agencies to ensure the education of youth in foster care. Across the eight case study counties, the study team observed instances in which local collaboratives and authorities have engaged in concerted efforts to address the educational needs of youth in foster care and to increase compliance with existing law and requirements. However, this seemed relatively rare. In addition, while these efforts are having an impact, their progress is restrained by limitations of resources and the limited supply of stable quality foster care placements in many counties. The study team found that some of these laws are unrealistic given the constraints on the system. In the next section, the broader issues that prevent youth residing in group homes from getting a high quality and appropriate education are discussed. This will shed light on why LEAs, LCIs, and placing agencies are often so drastically out of compliance with existing law.

State and county implementation issues

State implementation issues

Lack of independent oversight of the education of youth in foster care

One recurring theme throughout the course of the study is the lack of independent oversight of the education of youth in foster care, and no repercussions if the multiple agencies that are involved in providing youth in foster care with an appropriate education fail to achieve this goal. Staff at CDSS and advocacy agencies commented that there is no recourse for child welfare services if the CDE or LEAs are uncooperative in developing a working relationship for educating youth in foster care. Based on interviews with CDE staff, the study team found that the CDE has limited programs and staff in place to accommodate the unique needs of these youth. Only the Foster Youth Services program, which is not statewide and lacks sufficient coordination and direction from the state, is in place to work with this population. The strengths and limitations of these programs are discussed in more detail later in this chapter of the report. Independent oversight at both the state and county levels would hold the responsible agencies accountable for the educational outcomes of youth in foster care.

Constraints on the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office

Based on interviews and discussions with personnel at the Department of Social Services, experts in youth advocacy, and former foster youth, the study team found that the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office is a crucial part of advocacy for youth in foster care. This office, located in the Department of Social Services, fields phone calls, letters, and emails from youth in foster care with concerns about their housing, health, and other needs. The office is charged with dissemination and education regarding the newly legislated Foster Youth Bill of Rights,⁴⁴ which combines multiple pieces of code to lay out rights of youth in foster care. This document,

⁴⁴ Section 16001.9 of Chapter 1 of Title I of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

designed to be youth-friendly, must now be displayed in every group home. The document also includes the Ombudsman's number to call if a youth feels his or her rights are being violated. While study staff found the Ombudsman's office to be crucial in promoting knowledge of foster youth rights and advocacy for youth, in its current form, the office lacks independence. Reports summarizing the work the office is doing and identifying areas for improvement within the child welfare system must be cleared with the Department of Social Services before being presented to the Legislature. The Ombudsman's office also lacks the scope to address concerns regarding education, perhaps the most vital service for allowing youth to become successful and self-supporting adults. The office has no authority (or staff) to deal with educational concerns. Rather, it must turn these concerns over to the Department of Education, from which Ombudsman staff report that they rarely hear any follow-up about how the issues are resolved.

Limited interagency coordination around education

Education of youth in foster care cannot be successful when it is thought of as a separate topic from the many other factors that affect the lives of this population. The schematics of the court, residential, and educational processes shown in the previous chapter make it clear that the responsibilities of the court, placing agency and LEA are inextricably intertwined. During interviews, staff from state and county social services agencies highlighted the importance of working with the CDE and LEAs to better serve the educational needs of the youth in their care. Interviewees from social services recognized the need for this cooperation and voiced concerns about the continuing lack of communication and coordination. At both the state and county levels, many staff from social services did not feel they had an appropriate counterpart with whom to communicate the needs of youth in foster care at either the CDE or LEA levels. Interviews with CDE staff revealed that youth in foster care are not recognized by CDE as a unique population. Thus, there is not a single office or point of contact responsible for addressing their needs. Also, clear lines of responsibility for this population do not exist consistently across LEAs. While counties with foster youth services (FYS) programs have a resource for coordinating the education of youth in foster care, not all counties participate in this program. Even with FYS in place, staff at social service agencies and care providers report it is difficult to navigate among the SELPAs, County Offices of Education, and districts within the education system.

Critical incidents regarding state-level interactions

In addition to issues relating to implementation of policies and procedures at the state level, study staff noted three important incidents that shed light on implementation issues at the state level.

1. The County Welfare Directors Association reported that youth in foster care are not included in the statewide education five-year master plan. This omission highlights the fact that youth in foster care have not been identified by the Department of Education as a special group requiring unique consideration. For example, the Deputy Superintendent responsible for the Education Access, Equity, and Support branch agreed in an interview that youth in foster care were not an identified group in her mind. She noted that many different departments within CDE address issues relating to these youth, but that no single person is responsible for the education of these youth.

As the relationship between the state and youth in foster care (that of surrogate parent) is so dramatically different from its responsibility for other youth, failure of the state to recognize this population as a special class is extraordinary, with troubling consequences. The high cost associated with housing and schooling youth in foster care (commonly ranging from \$65,000 to \$85,000 per student per year) seems to demand special state oversight, if only from a fiscal accountability perspective alone. Coupled with the poor educational outcomes and resulting life chances for these youth, for whom the state has clearly assumed protective authority, and the lifelong cost to the state of these diminished life chances (in the form of reduced income and ongoing need for social services), the lack of clear oversight of educational services for youth in foster care seems fiscally and morally indefensible. We strongly recommend that the State Legislature acknowledge the special relationship it has assumed in regard to youth in foster care and direct the California Department of Education to respond accordingly. Specific recommendations in this regard are contained in the final chapter of this report.

2. A district superintendent said that LEAs need help from outside agencies to determine if an LEA should move forward with IEP proceedings for a youth in foster care. She said, “It is not the teacher’s responsibility to say that a youth may need an IEP.” However, as noted in the schematics discussed in Chapter 3, according to IDEA, the teacher is one of five identified people who can refer a child for special education assessment. Although this responsibility also lies with the court, placing agency, LCI operator, and education surrogate, teachers are the most likely candidates to spot the potential need for special education services.
3. Finally, a county welfare system stakeholder group was convened two years ago in response to legislation requiring recommendations for change to the welfare system in California. The organizers of this group approached the Department of Education to ask for participants in this stakeholder group and to help the group make recommendations relating to the full scope of services to youth in foster care, of which education is arguably the core component with regard to the child’s future well-being. The Department of Education volunteered a relatively low-ranking staff member within the agency, but that person had to cease participation for unrelated issues. The Department of Education did not identify a replacement. Thus, there is currently no representative from the CDE in this important stakeholder group. Although a district-level education representative attends these meetings, members of the stakeholder group expressed confusion as to who in the Department of Education can speak to the issue of the education of youth in foster care. Of course, this is not surprising given that no one at CDE claims such a responsibility.

The study team believes that these incidents are indicative of a fundamental systemic flaw regarding the education of youth in foster care. This flaw is represented by the title of the last AIR report on this topic: *Educating Children in Group Homes—Whose Responsibility Is It?* (Parrish et al., 2001.) Along with its stakeholder committees, the study team has concluded that the only possible answer to this question is that it must be the responsibility of public education agencies throughout the state. Although other agencies also have responsibilities in this regard, the expertise needed to guarantee high quality and appropriate education services for the foster

care population must reside within education. We consider it imperative that the Legislature clearly directs education agencies to accept and embrace this responsibility

County implementation issues

Our county case studies were designed to assess the quality and appropriateness of education for youth in foster care and to provide insight into the implementation weaknesses and the issues at the root of these problems (see Chapter VI for further methodological details). The following section outlines these implementation issues based on the “issue list” developed in conjunction with our stakeholder groups. We will discuss strengths and weaknesses of “the system” surrounding capacity, accountability and responsibility, data, interagency coordination, and advocacy. It is from these strengths and weaknesses that we seek to create a road map for improving the education of youth in foster care.

Capacity

In discussions about the provision of services for youth in foster care—or, indeed, almost all social services topics—capacity within the system is always an issue. Regarding the education of youth in foster care, there are some specific capacity issues that merit attention. Capacity was identified as a major issue preventing improvement in services in all of our counties and in discussions with almost all stakeholders.

We begin this discussion with findings relevant to school capacity. We often heard from placing agencies and care providers that public schools were discriminating against youth in foster care. Many schools and LEAs were short of staff; as a result, the population with the least voice within the system, youth in foster care, were reportedly often neglected. Overcrowded urban high schools have inadequate numbers of counselors, with ratios of one counselor to 300 to 500 students being common. Youth and youth advocates reported frustration with the public schools’ inability to provide services that are commonly needed for youth in foster care.

Former foster youth reported that youth in foster care believe in the fundamental importance of attending public school. They feel that it is the only way for them to gain much needed social exposure and skills. Additionally, nonpublic schools rarely offer college preparatory classes, vocational training, and other activities that are important to youth if they ever want to attend college or further their education. Those who attend court, community, or nonpublic schools often find that while they are enrolled more quickly than at public schools, activities that are staples in the lives of mainstream youth, such as sports, dances, and other extra curricular activities, are not available.⁴⁵

On the other hand, public school personnel often reported that they do not have the capacity to serve many youth in foster care. School personnel said they would need more counselors and teachers to support the unique needs of youth in foster care. However, there are public school programs that are doing exceptional jobs of meeting the educational needs of youth in foster care. In one county, special education coordinators have taken considerable initiative to create

⁴⁵ The following is a breakdown of types of schools currently attended by the youth in the sample: traditional public school (17%), county-operated special education school (1%), court school (19%), community school (17%), district community day school (2%), NPS affiliated with an LCI (21%), NPS not affiliated with an LCI (15%), independent studies (3%), charter school (3%), other type of school (3%).

the support services found in nonpublic schools in a public school setting. They would like to begin to bring youth in foster care out of nonpublic settings and into this program, but they lack funds to cover their costs (see the fiscal analysis section for further discussion). In one large county, a unique academy has been created to serve youth in foster care. The school offers many of the services of a public school, but is also a safe haven in which youth in foster care can pursue educational progress. The question remains, however, as to whether this academy, while public, is still too isolating, since all students attending the academy are youth in foster care.⁴⁶

The second area of discussion surrounding the capacity issue is caseworker capacity. Increasing caseworker loads significantly impacts the residential and educational placements of youth. Caseworkers do not have time to be involved with the monitoring of their youth's education, as reported above. Because caseworkers are often in the position of needing an almost immediate open bed, they do not have time to consider the education placement that would go along with that bed. Indeed, many caseworkers that were interviewed said that it was the job of the care provider to monitor the youth's academic progress and needs. Those caseworkers who do take a serious interest in education find themselves lacking sufficient time to do the job as they might have hoped.

Group home capacity surfaced as a major cause of the itinerancy of this population. In some counties, particularly in wealthier counties where property values are especially high, there are simply not enough beds for the number of youth in foster care. Choice et al. (2001) also highlighted the existence of a resource problem with regard to bed space for youth in foster care. Bed capacity issues lead to significant portions of these counties' youth being sent out of county, where it is more difficult to monitor their progress and needs. Approximately one-third of the youth in the sample (38% according to data from group homes; 30% according to caseworkers) currently reside in a county outside of either the county where they were adjudicated, or the county where one or both parents currently lives. Education is rarely considered in making these placements. In at least half of the cases in our sample, a change in residential placement was cited as the primary reason for an educational placement change.⁴⁷ In some counties, the lack of capacity to serve certain populations was an issue. Examples include a lack of treatment programs for youth with drug and alcohol abuse problems, a lack of homes that accept delinquents, a lack of appropriate higher level residential placement for dependents, and a lack of homes that have the capacity to care for youth with mental health problems combined with related education needs.

Because a bed staying open for an extended period of time seems to be such a rare occurrence, field staff report that the "seven-day notice" policy is used frequently.⁴⁸ Indeed, in two large counties, this policy was at the root of approximately 90 percent of residential changes. This policy leads to the need for emergency measures taken by the caseworker, and almost never

⁴⁶ It is relevant to note that Congress has laid out policy directives that prevent homeless youth from being segregated in separate schools because of their housing status (42 USCA § 11432 (e)(3)(A)-(D)). Similar principles may apply to youth in foster care.

⁴⁷ School personnel reported this figure as 52 percent; caseworkers, as 81 percent.

⁴⁸ The seven-day notice or seven-day right of refusal, as it is sometimes called, refers to part of the agreement between the placing agency and the foster parent/provider (SOC 156). It means that foster care parents/providers are required to give the placing agency seven days notice to remove a child from the home/facility.

enough time to fully prepare the next residential and educational placement properly. Even in one county where there was an identified wealth of services for youth in foster care, the seven-day notice policy led to social workers feeling they never had time to make an ideal placement or to consider educational placement. Underlying these capacity issues is the lack of quality foster care placements in general. Indeed, the Casey Foundation reports that as many as 50 percent of children placed in urban areas in the United States go to group homes and/or relatives who may not be prepared to care for them due to a lack of quality foster home placements (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002).

An additional side effect of the limited supply of appropriate beds is that youth are moved into temporary “detention” beds in short-term placements, further disrupting the continuity of their education. Youth in these short-term facilities attend court or community schools operated by the county office of education, or participate in independent study programs.⁴⁹ These programs are accredited and youth can earn credits toward graduation. Still, youth face the prospect of relocation if and when a permanent placement opportunity can be found. Often partial credits do not transfer with the youth, so credits earned toward graduation are lost. Alternatively, they can remain in temporary situations, which were never meant to provide a comprehensive educational experience.

An additional finding concerning a lack of appropriate beds is that for approximately half of our sample counties, the majority of wards are sent out of the county for placement. Their progress, both educational and otherwise, becomes more difficult to monitor the further away the placement.

Finally, in four county case studies, respondents felt that group homes did not make educational advancement a priority. Respondents suggested including performance at school (and not just behavior) as part of the homes’ progress plans. Additionally, group home operators, caseworkers and school personnel identified a need for tutors at group homes where they do not already exist. There were reportedly no consequences when group homes did not make education a priority.

Accountability and responsibility

As discussed in the section on compliance with existing state law, group homes, placing agencies and LEAs were often found to be out of compliance with regulations regarding the education of youth residing in group homes. One reason is that typically personnel working with or representing youth in foster care rely on different governing codes from their peers in other agencies. Statutes governing the education of youth in foster care are found in multiple places throughout the California Code; often personnel working with youth in foster care are not familiar with all these varied codes. With 29 codes and multiple people involved in the lives of youth in foster care, there is rampant confusion among caseworkers, school personnel, and care providers as to who is responsible for which aspects of a youth’s education.

Many interviewees report that the state requires little to no accountability (e.g., no enforcement of education data being entered in to the Child Welfare Services-Case Management System

⁴⁹ According to our data, 29 percent of educational placements of the youth in the sample over the past 12 months were in a court or community school, or the youth was placed on independent study.

(CWS-CMS)), and as a result of this lack of accountability, combined with excessive caseloads, many personnel find themselves out of compliance with existing law. Four of our sample counties have identified accountability and responsibility as a problematic issue in caring for youth in foster care.

Two of our case study counties developed interagency task forces to examine educational issues that affect dependents and wards. Findings of these task forces indicate that because monitoring and accountability for educational rights and progress are split among four participants (court, placement agency, attorney and education agency), many youth fall through the cracks. The task forces have also found that the key players in the system do not always know their specific roles or duties with regard to the education of youth in foster care.

In two other counties, most respondents agreed that the education of youth in foster care was the responsibility of care providers. Respondents felt that providers are being paid by the state to assume the day-to-day care of youth in their care, like a parent would. One of these parental responsibilities is ensuring education. While many care providers play a crucial role in the education of their residents, many feel that the contracts they hold with placing agencies do not clearly define where specific responsibilities lie with regard to education. They feel these contracts need to be revisited and made more specific as to which tasks were to be completed by the placing agency and which tasks were their responsibilities. Caseworkers from two counties also mentioned group home contracts with placing agencies as an area that needed increased attention and clarification. One county has changed its contract language with group homes to clarify and reinforce the caregiver's educational responsibilities. This language, effective January 2003, is currently being reviewed by Community Care Licensing to determine its appropriateness for other counties.

A relevant observation in relation to these findings is that the LEA's design appears to be on the premise of oversight by involved and active parents. Youth in foster care often have no parent to speak for their educational needs, which hinders their ability to have those needs met. A child-centered advocate is needed to be the voice of youth in foster care in relation to school agencies. Further advocacy discussion is continued below.

Data

Across all eight sample counties, data problems were cited as a major reason for the lack of compliance with existing policies and procedures. All agencies involved with the care of foster youth are dependent on data when trying to make the best decisions for their youth. At the county level, unfortunately, data and data management problems remain central to the lack of educational progress of youth in foster care. Choice et al. (2001) also noted the problem of a lack of statewide database accessible to all service providers for this population (Choice et al., 2001).

In response to this issue, section 16010 of the Welfare and Institutions code requires that the "case plan for each youth in foster care include a summary of health and education information or records. [This] summary may be maintained in the form of a health and education passport, or a comparable format designed by the child protective agency." The Health and Education Passport was created in many counties in an attempt to better manage data needed for school enrollment. The Health and Education Passport refers to specific fields within CWS-CMS, as

well as paper documents in some counties. All eight counties reported various problems with the implementation of the Health and Education Passport.

Approximately one half of our counties' social services agencies reported that caseworkers do not have time, nor is it a priority, to enter accurate information into the Health and Education Passport or CWS-CMS. There is little to no enforcement of this requirement at the state level. As a result, the Health and Education Passport is simply not used in two of our counties. In additional counties, study staff found the Passports to be incomplete and inaccurate, even when caseworkers reported entering data into the system.

The failure of the Health and Education Passport is not due to a lack of effort in many counties. One large county has even sent out thousands of black binders to group homes that are intended to contain a variety of records and memorabilia for each youth, which can be transported by the caseworker when a youth is moved from placement to placement. These binders were often found to be missing or incomplete. Indeed, only 25 percent of the group homes in our sample reported that they had received the Health and Education Passport for the youth in the sample. Often these passports were blank pieces of paper.

The Health and Education Passport is only one of multiple databases that attempt to collect information on youth in foster care. County probation departments have their own databases, but our research indicates that, in the majority of counties, educational information is not included. Transcripts and credits earned while in juvenile hall are often missing from the databases maintained by Juvenile Hall and therefore do not transfer to the next educational placement.

A third database in some counties is the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) database. This database attempts to collect information on who controls the educational rights of youth in foster care (e.g., parents, foster parents, etc.). This database does not interact with other databases and is limited in the type of information it collects.

A fourth database in many counties is the Foster Youth Services (FYS) database. If the FYS coordinator can gain access, this database is used to input information into CWS-CMS. This access was not common in our eight case study counties. There is, however, a consistent attempt by most FYS programs to share information maintained in FYS databases with social services and probation. Review indicates, however, that even after the dedication of multiple full-time staff in some counties to inputting information into the FYS database, 20 percent of data has been deemed missing

In many counties, LEAs rely on a fifth category of database to make placements. One county has created a database that helps school personnel enroll youth in foster care even when records are missing. SELPAs regularly use the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) as a way to track special education needs and services.

These multiple databases contain different fields reflecting the multiple agencies affecting the lives of youth in foster care. One critical finding is that due to either a lack of correct data fields or a lack of information in these fields, no single database includes sufficient information to fully facilitate educational placements for youth in foster care. Also, no database contains information

on all youth in foster care. Probation and dependency information are often in separate databases, and at least two of our counties do not include data for youth adjudicated in other counties. Additionally, none of these databases interact with each other; confidentiality issues lead to a lack of access for key players in the system.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, two of the case study counties had initiatives underway to attempt to capture needed information in one accessible database. The State Legislature provided one large county \$1.5 million to design a comprehensive data system that would include a wide array of data on all youth receiving social services through the county, including youth in foster care. The county's Foster Youth Services database served as the model for the development of the educational component of this system. The design includes the creation of a web-based system, which will allow for the exchange of information among multiple agencies. The design is currently being reviewed at the federal level to determine the extent to which it satisfies federal requirements. Ultimately, the system is intended to provide a model for all other counties.

An additional initiative began under the leadership of one county's juvenile court. This large county is designing a web-based system that will provide comprehensive data on youth under the protection/control of the court. Multiple agencies, including local educational agencies, will provide information to the system and, in turn, will be provided access to the information they need.

Both of these systems are in the developmental stages. Discussions with those involved in the design processes indicated that the implementation and utility of these systems could be affected by several factors. The first relates to confidentiality and control of access to information. The Welfare and Institution Code and the Education Code restrict who has access to various records. Some aspects of these restrictions block essential access to information for those attempting to serve youth in foster care. The benefits to these youth of maintaining such restrictions needs to be balanced against the potential loss of high quality services appropriate to their individual needs. Additionally, a lack of clarity about the exact nature of these restrictions creates difficulties that need to be addressed for these systems to work.

A second factor that may affect the implementation and utility of these systems is competing system priorities at the federal, state, and local levels. For example, the development of the CWS-CMS was funded to a major extent by the federal government under the assumption that the system would allow California to provide necessary data to federal auditors. In interviews with local county staff involved with the system, staff reported that the federal authorities do not perceive that the system meets their requirements and, as a result, are reluctant to authorize any changes in the system that might enhance its utility at the local county level.

A third factor is system access for "line" workers and staff. The potential value of a web-based passport system will be dependent upon the provision of remote access by caseworkers, school sites, caregivers, and other parties. Such access will depend on the use of up-to-date technology, with its associated costs, among all users.

These initiatives appear to represent important steps towards better data management for the few counties attempting to develop them. County-level databases, however, provide little relief to the

statewide problem of data management because they are county-specific. Much state support and leadership will be needed to develop a statewide data management system that will ensure compliance with existing law and ensure appropriate, timely, and high-quality educational and health services for youth in foster care.

Interagency coordination/collaboration

In the last study by AIR on this topic (Parrish et al., 2001), as well as in a study conducted by Choice et al. (2001), lack of interagency coordination was cited as a major reason why youth in foster care were not being appropriately served. In this research effort, the study team found excellent examples of interagency coordination in many counties, but coordination still remains a significant problem in certain counties. Specific initiatives and local circumstances have been at the root of these coordination improvements. Statewide, however, this issue remains a major concern, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

In one small county, all agencies that provide services for youth in foster care have been relocated into one building. This group serves as a highly effective example of how interagency coordination can best benefit youth in foster care residing in group homes. The program is sponsored by the local Department of Social Services and brings together representatives from all placing agencies and education to work under one roof. This facility has become a resource to the community and promotes increased system and legal knowledge, as well as stability for youth in foster care in both educational and residential placements. The combined agency also works to ensure that care providers are involved in the emancipation plans of youth in foster care. The agency also works directly with youth in foster care, particularly in attempting to support their emotional needs and in preparing them for leaving the system. The major drawback of this program as it is currently staffed is that it does not have the capacity to serve youth from other counties, which, in this case, constitute approximately 80 percent of the group home population.

In the small county discussed above and in five additional sample counties, Foster Youth Services can be credited with increasing interagency collaboration. In one large county, the FYS Program provides a model of effective collaboration worthy of consideration for statewide dissemination. Implementation of the program was greatly facilitated by the desire for educational reform as exhibited by the Juvenile Court, local elected officials, and other parties. This FYS Program has successfully incorporated and focused the interest, resources and commitment of these and other entities, including private industry, to help youth in foster care.

In addition to the development of a computerized database, four other key coordination activities of the FYS program were found through the county site visits:

- Involvement in and coordination of interagency collaborative efforts to enhance the educational placement and success of youth in foster care
- The provision of training on the educational needs and rights of youth in foster care to multiple stakeholders, including placement agencies, care providers, advocates, school districts, and school staff
- The creation and staffing of an educational liaison position to serve youth in group homes by ensuring the transfer of educational and health records, ensuring appropriate educational

placements, monitoring the delivery of special education services, assisting care providers in ensuring the delivery of quality educational services, and performing other functions. This position was piloted in a targeted geographic area encompassing four school districts and several group homes.

- The FYS Coordinator participates in, or regularly attends, all committees and groups which deal with issues related to youth in foster care. The coordinator's presence has helped to bring light to the issue of the education of youth in foster care, as well as to give other county agencies a contact point for educational concerns.

This county's FYS program has achieved a highly successful level of interagency collaboration, as substantiated by the perceptions of the representatives of multiple agencies (including placement agencies, the public defender, the Juvenile Court, care providers, school districts, and school sites) involved in the collaboration, and in the implementation of new policies, procedures, practices, and initiatives. In particular, as a result of their involvement in FYS, both the county social services and probation department have revised their internal procedures to require that caseworkers and probation officers provide necessary educational records at the time they request that a child be placed in his or her first group home. The Director of Residential Services for the County Department of Social Services has ordered that if appropriate records are not provided, the child cannot be accepted into group home placement. Caseworkers are encouraged to work with FYS staff to obtain such records.

During our research in this county, we found that all parties with whom we spoke (e.g., SELPA staff, caseworkers, probation department staff, and care providers) were aware of the FYS Program, and the great majority believed that the program was positively affecting youth in foster care. In contrast, many individuals in other counties were not aware of the FYS program.

Another important finding regarding FYS is the variation in their goals and program design from county to county. FYS is often underfunded for what the county program has agreed to take on, but perhaps more importantly, their goals and objectives vary and thus different issues are being addressed in each county. While some variation to meet the unique needs of each county is appropriate, the full potential of the program might be better realized with clearer program definition. It appears that the program needs more state-level attention and coordination to realize its full potential.

Study staff observed an increased desire for collaboration even in counties where there is no FYS. In one county, county workers have created Memorandums of Agreement and interagency committees for the express purpose of increased collaboration. Informal networking was observed to be one of the most successful ways to increase interagency collaboration. For these informal processes to work, however, staff cannot turn over as frequently as they do in many counties.

While increased collaboration at the county level was a consistent finding among field staff, there were aspects that can still benefit from attention and improvement. Three counties struggled to work with the Department of Probation. Other placing agencies and schools reported that their attendance was not welcome at probation meetings and that no representatives from probation attended interagency meetings. Probation Department personnel in two counties

reported feeling that their youth were discriminated against in public school enrollment processes. In two other counties, social services personnel and care providers felt that probation was very involved with their agencies and with the education of their youth. The problem appears to vary greatly across our eight sample counties.

An additional important finding regarding interagency collaboration is that in five counties, placing agencies felt that LEAs were frequently missing from county-level collaboration initiatives. Many group home operators in these counties reported not knowing whom to contact at a local LEA if one of their residents was struggling in school or not being enrolled promptly. Caseworkers also reported not knowing whom to contact at either the school, county, or state level when struggling with educational services for one of their youth in foster care. There is the perception among placing agencies and care providers that many public schools do not want to serve youth in foster care. One FYS coordinator, who agreed with this as a general rule, also felt that many schools were making improvements in this area. This perception of discrimination is not felt in placing agencies' and care providers' dealings with court schools and NPSs.

The report found that education *was* a focus in three of the case study counties. These three counties' FYS programs have been extremely successful in representing education in collaborative activities with the other agencies involved with youth in foster care. While interagency collaboration appears to be improving, many education agencies still need to become more involved with other agencies for the system to improve the speed and quality of services to youth in foster care.

Some county staff are also struggling to understand the Juvenile Court's role in the educational lives of youth in foster care. Many Juvenile Court judges have become more involved in these issues, and recent legislation obligates judges to appoint an education guardian for all youth in foster care. Still, Juvenile Court judges do not often stay long within the Juvenile Court system, and new relationships must be formed each time a new judge is appointed. In some counties, where judges have been on the bench for many years, study staff noted the extraordinarily positive effect an involved Juvenile Court judge can have in the educational lives of youth in foster care. These judges often require a youth's attendance at court proceedings and consistently ask youth about their educational progress and needs.

Advocacy

The organizational structure of public schools is based on the underlying premise of parents advocating for youths' needs. Youth in foster care often do not have this parental advocacy, and the lack of advocacy was often found to be a primary source of the failure of the public education system to meet their needs. Choice et al. (2001) also noted the problem of a lack of educational advocacy for youth in foster care.

County-level interviewees consistently cited advocacy as one of the most crucial aspects to ensuring the educational success of youth in foster care. And yet, a recognized lack of advocacy for youth residing in group homes was found in all eight counties. This is not to say that there are not good advocacy programs that work their hardest to do what is right for youth in foster care. Many respondents noted that caseworkers and care providers work hard to advocate for their youth. But the need for advocacy in all eight counties greatly exceeds the supply of effective

advocates. In fact, we identified specific programs that could be bolstered further statewide. These programs are briefly described below.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

The concept of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) emerged during the late 1970s as a proactive effort to provide youth with another source of protection and advocacy. CASA programs were established across the country, with somewhat different program models developing in different locations. CASAs must be attorneys in some areas, while community volunteers are utilized in others. California CASAs use community volunteers in addition to regional directors, who are paid for their services.

To become a CASA in California, volunteers must complete a relatively rigorous period of training—44 hours of initial training and 12 hours of continuing education each year. The CASA's role is to provide continuity and support to the children from a single case (usually 2-3 siblings) throughout the time they remain dependents of the court, with the average term of involvement between CASAs and children ranging from 12 to 18 months.

To develop an understanding of each child's case, CASAs are expected to interview various parties involved with the child, including social workers, counselors, teachers, attorneys, parents, and, if appropriate, the child. CASAs also have access to all records maintained regarding a child, including court, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), and educational records. On the basis of the information gathered, CASAs are required to prepare written reports for the Court, which include recommendations regarding family reunification, foster care placement, educational, psychological and health services, and other aspects of the child's care. CASAs are expected to attend all court hearings on each case, and monitor the case to ensure that the child's best interests are being considered and their needs are being met.

In addition to their role and responsibilities in courts, CASAs in many programs endeavor to build supportive relationships with the children they serve. CASAs take children on outings to sporting events, parks, museums and other locales, and maintain ongoing contact with their charges through visits and telephone calls. These interactions are intended to allow the CASA to gain additional insight into the needs and status of the child, and can also serve to build supportive relationships.

Limitations of traditional CASA programs: The main problem with traditional CASA programs is the limited supply of volunteers. Because there are no restrictions on the types of youth (i.e., age or level of care), CASA volunteers work with a broad range of dependents, including those who are placed with their families but are still being monitored by the court. Therefore, the potential demand for CASAs greatly exceeds the supply. Indeed, according to Choice et al. (2001), only 22 percent of the random sample had a CASA.

CASA programs primarily try to serve those children who have the highest level of need and the most limited sources of support in their lives. Given that many children in long-term placements in group homes fit this criteria, group home residents are frequently referred for CASAs by the court. Data from one county-level CASA program indicated, however, that only 21 percent of the youth served were in group homes in 2000-01 in the county.

In addition to the limited supply of CASAs, potential services to group home youth are reduced by the fact that many CASAs do not want to travel significant distances to meet with their charges, and group homes are often located in more remote areas of a county, particularly in counties where real estate is more costly. Additionally, CASAs may have preferences for the age of the children with whom they would like to work, and some CASAs are resistant to working with adolescents, who constitute the primary portion of the population in group homes.

CASA program innovations: Beyond traditional programs, many CASA organizations have developed programs that focus specifically upon meeting the educational needs of youth in foster care. Examples include the Educational Advocates Program, which operates in the large case-study counties. Volunteers of the program are responsible for assessing a child's educational needs through a review of court files and other records and providing written recommendations to the court on issues related to the child's education. This program requires less of a time commitment on the part of the volunteer; thus, volunteers are able to serve larger numbers of kids than the traditional CASA can serve. Volunteers are not required to make court appearances or to establish one-on-one relationships with children. A second example of CASA program innovation is one county-level CASA that has just recently established a new paid staff position of Educational Liaison. This position was established in collaboration with the county FYS Program. The liaison works specifically with group homes in the largest urban school district to identify and meet the educational needs of residents of group homes through the involvement of CASAs.

Foster Youth Services (FYS)

Discussed above as a conduit for increased interagency collaboration, FYS was also found to be serving as an effective advocacy program in many counties. FYS coordinators often show up at schools where a youth is being denied enrollment and also help teachers better understand the unique needs of youth in foster care through training. FYS programs try to determine the educational needs of youth in foster care and attempt to meet these needs by coordinating counseling, tutoring and other support services. However, FYS does not exist in every county, and because it is awarded through a grant structure, the programs differ greatly across counties.⁵⁰ This difference in structure can make it difficult to collaborate on statewide efforts or determine the overall effectiveness of the FYS program given that so many youth move from county to county. Most FYS programs, as currently structured, do not have the capacity to become the advocate that so many youth in foster care are lacking.

County-level ombudsman

Many counties have local ombudsmen who exist to address concerns expressed by youth in foster care. A major problem, however, is that most ombudsmen are not able to deal with education concerns. One large district in one of our counties has employed its own full-time ombudsman. This office serves as a place for youth in foster care to express concerns about their

⁵⁰ Currently, FYS exists in 39 out of 58 counties. Many of these programs are only funded to serve youth in group homes from their counties. This excludes youth in other forms of foster care as well as youth living outside their county of adjudication

educational needs. The office also engages in extensive training of educational surrogates and providers. However, this was not found in any other sample county.

Other advocacy organizations

Other advocacy organizations have also taken an increased interest in the rights of youth in foster care. For example, some national youth advocacy firms have been taking “impact litigation” cases or class action lawsuits on behalf of youth in foster care all the way to state supreme courts. In California, local youth advocacy organizations are becoming more aware of the need for educational advocacy for youth in foster care. For example, one local organization in one of our sample counties was instrumental in developing the Education Initiative program, which was designed to create increased interagency understanding and increased advocacy for the educational needs of youth in foster care. The program placed an educational liaison at the County Department of Social Services as a resource for caseworkers who were struggling with the educational needs of youth in foster care. The liaison understood how the local education system worked and was able to help caseworkers address educational issues. The liaison also increased awareness about educational needs of youth in foster care to caseworkers. Although all interviewed parties reported the Initiative as highly successful, the project was cut short when no contract agreement could be reached between local schools and the County Department of Social Services.

California Youth Connection (CYC)

CYC, a non-profit advocacy and youth leadership organization structured to give voice to current and former foster youth, was identified as a powerful source of advocacy and connection for youth in foster care in counties where chapters exist. CYC allows youth in foster care to come together to discuss shared concerns and avenues to reform. In the current calendar year, CYC has chosen education of youth in foster care as a primary policy topic.⁵¹ They are working with legislators to construct legislation to improve the education of youth in foster care in California. However, not all counties have CYC. Youth residing in group homes are often unable to attend CYC chapter meetings because of restrictions put in place by care providers. Additionally, CYC is a small, non-profit operating on a limited budget. It is the only organization that supports the critical voice of youth in the system.

Youth placed out of state

A relatively small number of youth in foster care are placed out of state. Before the passage of Senate Bill 933, the number of such youth was much greater, particularly for dependents and wards.

Currently, most of the youth placed in out-of-state group homes are Mental Health/AB 2726 placements, largely as a result of the passage of this SB 933. Indeed, some counties now prohibit DSS and Probation from placing youth outside the state. SB 933, which applies to dependents and wards, but not to those governed by AB 2726, holds that all in-state options must be pursued before out-of-state placement is considered, and caseworkers must visit out-of-state youth once a

⁵¹ CYC is one of the sponsors of the recently proposed AB490 that attempts to address some of the recommendations made in this report.

month in person. “Courtesy supervision” is no longer allowed, whereby the California caseworker could turn over her supervision of the youth to a local caseworker, and all out-of-state placements must meet California’s licensing requirements. In addition, AB 2726 youth are, by definition, eligible for special education. IDEA legislation requires that IEP recommendations be implemented “as soon as possible,” which often translates into 15 days in case law, and which means that AB 2726 youth cannot live in shelters or be placed on waiting lists until suitable placements are found. Moreover, because AB 2726 placements are usually parent-driven, such a parent is more likely to advocate for an out-of-state program specific to his or her youth’s needs. The County Office of Mental Health is then required to check the program and pay for the placement. Finally, because SB 933 has resulted in fewer dependents and wards placed outside of California, fewer in-state beds remain for AB 2726 youth.

Agency representatives repeatedly stated that they make every effort to place youth in state. In the case of dependents and wards, the agencies place out of state only if they have exhausted all in-state options and know of appropriate programs in another state. In the case of AB 2726 youth, parents often hear about an out-of-state program they want their child to attend.

The following is one example of an out-of-state placement. This placement concerns a youth overseen by both DSS and Mental Health. This youth has both severe mental health and criminal behavior issues, which necessitated placement in a single facility that contained both his housing and school. The agencies had contacted 35 group homes throughout the state to try to find an appropriate placement, but could not find one with an open space. An out-of-state facility known by the local Mental Health team was identified, and Mental Health received approval both through the Juvenile Court and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process, and coordinated with the local educational agency, to place the youth.

For AB 2726 youth, educational needs are often the driving force behind the out-of-state placements. In most cases, parents, and sometimes attorneys, serve as advocates for these youth, and thus it appears that educational placements for these youth are usually appropriate. In one county, we were told that most of the AB 2726 youth placed out of state were originally from another county and arrived without complete health and education information. Their unmet needs were then discovered by residential or school staff and brought to the attention of either Foster Youth Services or LEA staff.

For other youth, residential placement appears to be the primary focus, and the placing agencies do not always know a lot about the schools connected to the homes, although some agency representatives we spoke with mentioned specific educational opportunities. For example, a Probation representative in one of the counties said that the agency places youth in a program in Nevada both for its highly regarded Wilderness Program and also its strong vocational education program.

Critical incidents regarding youth who were tracked

In constructing youth placement profiles (discussed further in Chapters V and VI), field staff were encouraged to take note of any particularly critical incidents, positive or negative, in regard to the education of youth in foster care. The following section reviews some of these incidents.

Confusion of youth interviewed about their educational status and progress

Youth often reported confusion and frustration regarding their education and their educational rights. In one case, a youth told a team researcher that he had 310 credits in juvenile hall. He was told he needed 210 to graduate and was confused as to why he had not been allowed to graduate. When the study team member talked with him at his residential care setting, he had been told he had 250 credits but was lacking sufficient science credits to graduate. No one could explain to this youth how his sixty credits had disappeared.⁵² He was, however, determined to graduate (he would be the first in his family to have a high school diploma) and so he continued to aggressively pursue his education. He knew he needed only science classes to graduate, but at this court school, science was only offered once per day at most. He therefore had to take classes he had already taken, and his frustration with his educational progress was rapidly rising.

Multiple incidents arose in which youth told researchers they were frustrated by constantly repeating classes every time they had to move.⁵³ When these youth asked their care provider or caseworker why this was happening, they were often told that their records had not yet arrived, that they had gotten lost, or that they did not get any credit for work they had completed in their prior placement because the current school did not accept partial credits. Youth in these circumstances expressed frustration because they felt that if their teachers had simply asked them what classes they had taken and what they needed, they could have avoided repeating classes. Not all youth were this aware, but many attempted to pay close attention to ensure they were making educational progress. One youth commented that “you get a better life with education; you can be somebody...I will be able to help others to read.”

Students allowed to continue in their current educational placement despite changes in residential placement

We encountered two incidents in which youth were allowed to remain in their educational placement, despite the fact that they had undergone a change in residential placement. In both instances, the changes in residential placement reflected a move to a less restrictive residential environment (lower RCL). One youth remained enrolled at the on-site community school. School staff felt that the youth needed more time at the community school to help transition to the public school environment. The youth remained for another full semester and has subsequently transferred to a continuation school on a regular public school campus and is preparing for graduation. This is a positive, yet unfortunately rare, example from our sample of youth in which educational needs were considered in conjunction with a residential change. Stability of educational placement is critical at a time when everything else in a youth’s life (i.e., home, adults, community, schedule) is changing. It is also essential to educational progress and success.

⁵² Of the 51 youth interviewed, the following percentages reported that they spoke with the following people about school: FYS (0%), CASA (0%), group home staff (27%), caseworkers (8%), parents or guardians (8%), educational surrogate (0%), friends (12%), other adults (2%), teacher (37%), relative (2%), school counselor (20%), other (25%), no one (14%).

⁵³ Thirty-five percent of youth interviewed reported that they thought they had had to repeat a class at least once because they changed residential placements.

Delayed educational placement and public school confusion surrounding placements

One particular youth in our sample had been expelled from the regular public high school in the district, but had encountered some delay in enrolling in an alternative education program because the district was not certain where he should be placed. He was eventually placed in adult education classes and seemed to be making progress toward attainment of a GED. Little attention was paid, however, to the appropriateness of the placement. This delay is troubling considering that youth in foster care are often behind other youth in their educational attainment.

Another youth had been enrolled in a local junior high school for a full year, according to the care provider. The care provider noted that the youth was succeeding there. She was well liked by her peers and was getting good grades. She was very happy to be in a public setting after having been in the agency's NPS. When researchers visited the junior high school, however, no record could be found to show that the youth was currently enrolled. Researchers called the school a month later to see if the records had turned up, but they had not. According to the school, this youth was still not enrolled. These are two examples of the confusion that exists around records and enrollment.

Access to services

One group home staff person emphasized how difficult it is to get individualized education programs (IEPs) done in a timely manner. She said that one youth arrived from another county in May, but "no one will do an IEP in May." She first went to the county SELPA to try to get an IEP assessment done; they told her to go to a different SELPA (the county has two SELPAs). She said she never heard back from the second SELPA, and eventually the youth moved to yet another county, still without an IEP. The ability to access to appropriate services at the right time was frequently raised in county interviews and reinforces the educational havoc raised by continuous mobility.

Transiency

When asked how many schools a youth had attended in the past twelve months, the youth said the following: "the last 12 months? Let's see I know I have been to 14 schools, I was expelled once, kicked out of three, then I went to a school with young kids, I think it was one of those temp schools. Are they called temp schools? They said I had learning disabilities but I don't know...I know I used to be a smart kid."

When asked if she had any advice for youth about how to make changing schools easier the youth replied, "yeah, just don't make any friends." Our data indicate that somewhere between 44 percent and 63 percent of the youth in the sample had changed educational placements at least once in a 12-month period. Somewhere between 20 percent and 41 percent had changed schools at least twice.⁵⁴ It is virtually impossible for youth already at risk for school failure to succeed when they change schools so frequently.

⁵⁴ The lower figures are from responses by school personnel; the higher figures are from responses by the youth.

Cost associated with barring access to youth

At the start of the study, project staff asked stakeholders about the importance of conducting youth interviews. Stakeholders, former foster youth, and project staff all agreed that such interviews were an important element of the study in order to understand the educational stories of youth from their perspective as well as the perspective of others. Study staff also asked Stakeholders for advice on how to gain access to youth and their records because confidentiality had been cited as a potentially major obstacle. Stakeholders suggested, and AIR's Internal Review Board (IRB)⁵⁵ concurred, that gaining court orders in our eight sample counties was the best way to gain access to youth and their records.

Difficulty in gaining these court orders varied and, in the end, court orders required different levels of additional work for study staff. In some counties, study staff found Juvenile Court and dependency judges to be very helpful. Judges were often the studies' most steadfast supporters and were able to help in gaining access to homes that were refusing to participate. The complications with access did not stop, however, at the requirement that study staff secure court orders in our eight sample counties. Because a large portion of our sample youth were adjudicated in counties *other* than in the ones where they currently live (i.e., the eight sample counties), the study team pursued court orders from 24 additional counties in order to gain access to records.

Somewhat later in the process, representatives from the California Department of Mental Health required the study team to pursue county-level IRBs in all counties where this research was conducted. This is not a legal requirement, but a policy requirement from the perspective of this agency. The study team went through these IRBs and made changes to protocols as required.

At the school and group home level, team members encountered homes that required signatures from parents, attorneys, and caseworkers before allowing the study team to draw a sample. Other group homes refused the team any access. In a few homes, operators refused to release the names of youth without a judge's approval, and judges refused to sign court orders without a youth's name. In these cases, the study team replaced the group home and began the lengthy process of contacting the replacement group home and asking the home to participate. The study team attempted to meet all of these requirements as time allowed. In the end, obstacles in regard to access to youth took an extensive amount of project staff time, and substantially decreased the overall completeness of data collection.

An important component underlying the research design of this study, which required painstaking record accumulation, data collection, and interaction with youth in foster care and those providing services to them, was to experience firsthand how difficult these activities would be. We found that it was often painfully hard, generally slow, and often impossible to obtain information about youth, either from existing records or through direct access to the youth themselves. Too often, the myriad agencies created to serve these youth created barriers to accessing this information. When all bureaucratic hurdles were seemingly cleared, others arose

⁵⁵ The Internal Review Board is composed of a combination of researchers internal and external to AIR who are independent of the project. It is a form of Human Subjects Committee in that it ensures protection of all study subjects for AIR projects.

in their place. When access to records was finally obtained, too often those records were found to be largely devoid of information, raising even more questions about what was being protected.

The research team has concluded that these many obstacles highlight a critical incident relevant to the findings of this project. We believe that these are not only research obstacles but that they also reveal and highlight some of the substantial barriers youth residing in group homes confront in attempting to receive adequate and appropriate education services. There is little understanding among the many agencies/people involved in the lives of these youth as to who can ultimately grant access to them or their records. Laws and regulations surrounding the governance and services for these youth are unclear and exist in many different statutes. This situation leads to enormous confusion at the service level.

As this is a legislatively mandated study, after considerable deliberation, the research team was granted “agent of the state” status by CDE. It seems that neither this status, nor support for the study from presiding judges, could sweep away the many legal and procedural barriers blocking the sharing of information about youth (e.g., records showing their academic progress, or lack thereof) and blocking access to the youth themselves. It became clear that representatives from any agency with oversight over any of these youth could set up barriers to their access, while no agency had the oversight or authority to cut through this considerable bureaucracy. For example, a high-ranking official in the State Department of Social Services expressed complete dismay at the fact that this legislatively mandated study team was experiencing so many obstacles gaining access to youth and their records. It also became clear that no single person was empowered to make this happen. While it seemed that virtually any state employee could say “no” to granting access, no one seemed empowered to say “yes.”

During one frustrating moment in these deliberations, one of the officials restricting access was asked directly if anyone would be allowed unimpeded access to youth in foster care to enquire about their educational progress. We were told that not even the State Superintendent or the Governor would be allowed such access. While the study team concurs with the importance of confidentiality regarding youth in foster care, we think these restrictions need to be carefully considered in relation to the degree to which they impede the receipt of high-quality and appropriate educational services. If information regarding the educational needs of youth cannot flow to those charged with reviewing, monitoring, designing, or providing these services, it should be no surprise that the resulting educational services are often of unacceptably low quality or inappropriate to the needs of the youth who current administrative structures are so ardently designed to protect. If information regarding these services seldom sees the light of day, successful oversight and monitoring seems virtually impossible, and appropriate and high-quality education services for youth in group homes will continue to be the exception rather than the rule.

Chapter V. Data Analysis: Youth Placement Profiles

To fully understand the effects of the policies, procedures, and practices in place that govern and facilitate the education of youth living in group homes, it was considered essential to gather quantitative, as well as qualitative, data concerning the residential and educational situations of individual youth. Prior studies have demonstrated the difficulties with obtaining complete information on individual youth in group homes and their educational placements (Choice et al., 2001; Parrish et al., 2001). We knew from our prior study the considerable gaps in information and the difficulties of obtaining this information or gaining access to youth, even when granted “Agent of the State” status (Parrish et al., 2001). Indeed, given the lack of well-organized and accessible residential and education data for individual foster youth in California, and the considerable barriers in gaining access to these youth, predictably the data are not as extensive and reliable as we would have liked.

Without such data, however, perceptions cannot be confirmed and the parameters of specific recommendations for improving education are difficult to define. We believe that it is critical that this study provides a foundation of data upon which to support conclusions regarding the appropriateness of existing policies, procedures, and practices, and to make specific recommendations for their improvement. Therefore, the study team sought to create “youth placement profiles” detailing the residential and educational histories over the course of 12 months of approximately 300 youth currently residing in group homes.

Based on the data analysis conducted during the prior study, state-level data were known to be insufficient to allow detailed tracking of individual educational information over time. We explored the possibility of using the CWS/CMS database maintained by the Department of Social Services for this purpose. This database is designed to serve as the definitive source of information at the state level regarding youth in foster homes. We found that this database contained little to no relevant information regarding the education of youth in foster homes and that accessing it for purposes of drawing the sample or conducting the analyses needed for a study regarding the residential history of individual youth was virtually impossible. These deficiencies raise questions regarding the utility of this database for purposes other than state and federal reporting. Its potential to assist in improving the state’s ability to track and monitor what is happening to individual youth in the state is clearly unrealized, and appears limited.

At the county level, data quality varies considerably from county to county. To develop a complete picture of the educational history of youth residing in group homes, it was necessary to “handcraft” student placement profiles in each of the eight sample counties. The methodology for sample selection and data collection is contained in Chapter VI. Data collectors used five data collection instruments to gather relevant data on youth in the sample. These instruments consist of forms used to interview school personnel, caseworkers, group home personnel, and youth, and for reviewing school files and CWS-CMS or probation databases. Copies of the instruments are included in Appendix C. These instruments were used to compile detailed placement profiles, documenting the “how and why” of residential and educational placements for youth from the eight counties.

As anticipated, we encountered substantial obstacles in accessing student records and interviewing youth. We were granted “Agent of the State” status by the CDE to review educational records and requested standing court orders from county juvenile courts to review juvenile court records, and records maintained at residential placements, and to interview youth in the sample. As described in Chapter IV, even with the support of courts and state and local agencies, we were not always given access to the information we sought. The time required to obtain access to these data had implications for the data collection effort.

Even when we were granted access to files and allowed to conduct interviews with caseworkers, group home operators, and school staff, often the records were incomplete or missing altogether, or the seemingly appropriate service provider was unable to answer relevant questions. As a result, we were not able to create complete placement profiles for all of the youth in the sample.

The Exhibit below shows that we were permitted to interview 51 youth out of a sample of 191 for whom we were able to obtain data from other sources using the data instruments described below (see Exhibit V-1). As we proceeded in our attempt to document the residential and educational history of these youth, data were increasingly difficult to obtain. Inaccurate and incomplete record keeping made it difficult to track down prior residential and school information even when only a few months time had elapsed.

Exhibit V-1. Data collection indicators

Type of data collection instrument	Number of youth
Youth interview	51
Current group home personnel interview	169
Current school personnel interview	185
Current caseworker interview	142
CWS-CMS/Probation database	137
Current group home personnel, school personnel, and caseworker personnel interviews	120
Total respondent sample	191
Total initial sample	308

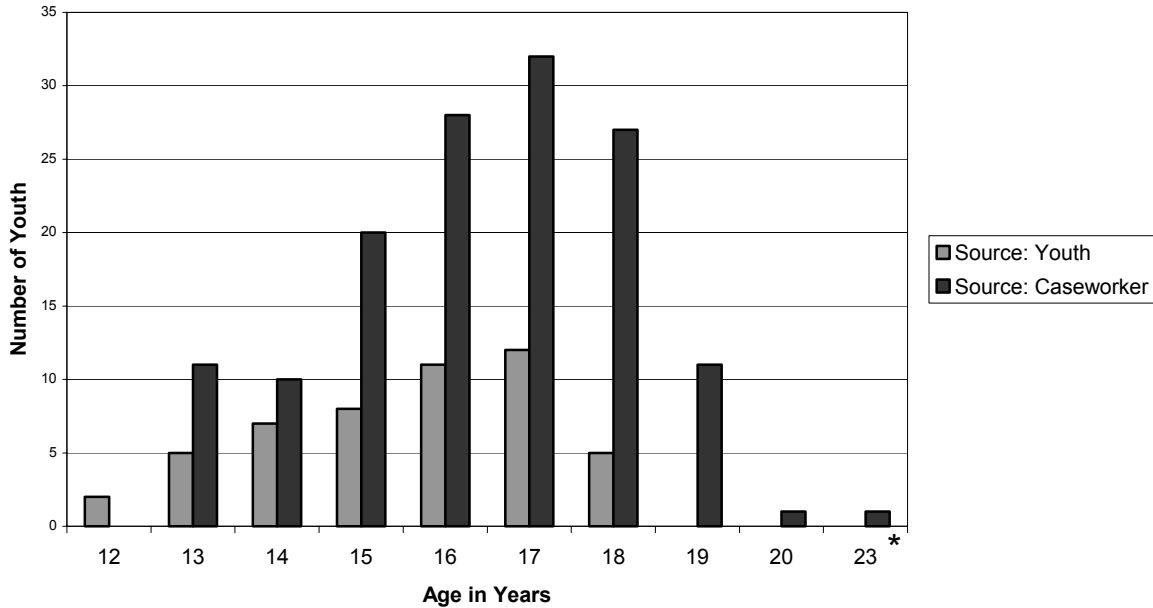
Using the data we were able to collect from the student placement profiles, we conducted multiple analyses. The methods used for these analyses are discussed in Chapter VI. These analyses provide data on important system indicators such as annual expenditure on youth living in group homes, academic performance based on GPA and credits earned, amount of school that youth miss when moved from one educational placement to another, and number and causes of changes in residential and educational placements.

Demographics

The average youth in the sample is in his mid-teens, in 9th or 10th-grade, male, and was placed either by Social Services or Probation. The 51 youth we were able to interview ranged from ages

12 to 18, with an average age of 15.5 years.⁵⁶ Based on data provided by caseworkers for 141 youth, the average age was 16.4 years (see Exhibit V-2).⁵⁷

Exhibit V-2. Age of youth in sample



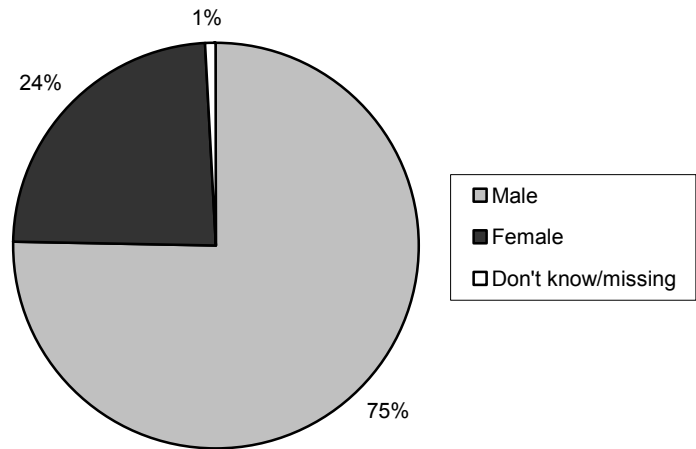
*The youth identified by caseworkers as 20 and 23 years old are, according to the youth themselves, 18 and 13 years old, respectively.

There were considerably more boys than girls in the sample, with slightly more than three times as many boys living in group homes as girls (see Exhibit V-3).

⁵⁶ One youth did not respond to this question, and thus this average is based on 50 responses.

⁵⁷ This total does not equal 142 because one caseworker could not provide the youth’s date of birth. The youth we interviewed may or may not be included in the sample of youth for whom we were able to gather data from caseworkers.

Exhibit V-3: Gender of youth in sample

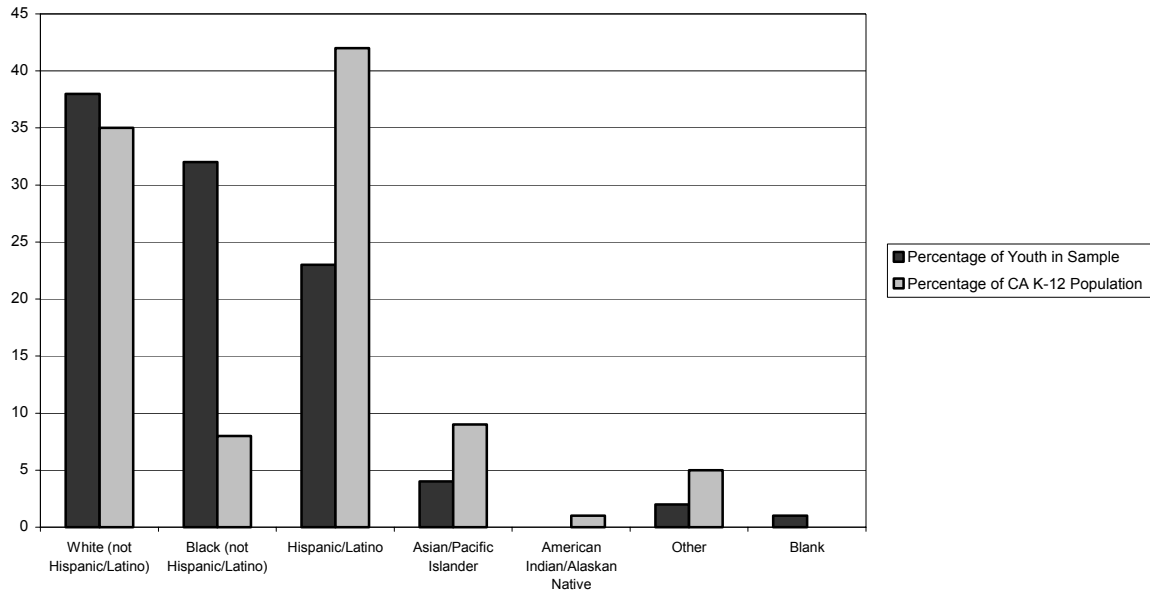


Source: Caseworker interviews

The primary ethnic groups of youth in the sample are White (36%), Black (32%), and Latino (24%) (see Exhibit V-4). There are very few youth of Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity in the sample (4%), and no American Indian/Alaskan Native youth. In addition, caseworkers identified four youth (3%) as “biracial” or “mixed.”⁵⁸ Compared with school-aged children in California as a whole, the youth in the sample are much more likely to be Black, considerably less likely to be Latino, and somewhat less likely to be Asian.

⁵⁸ Two of these youth were described as Black/White, one as Hispanic/White, and one as Asian/Hispanic.

Exhibit V-4. Race/ethnicity of youth in sample



Source: Caseworker interviews

*Source: 2000 Census

†Source: 2000 Census, based on 1999-00 K12 school enrollment

Over 90 percent of the youth in the sample are the responsibility of either Social Services or Probation personnel, with a considerably larger percentage from Social Services. (See Exhibit V-5) Only a few sample youth were AB2726 placements, private placements, or placed by the Department of Developmental Services. Part of the reason for the low representation of these youth in the sample was the difficulty encountered by the study team either with securing parental consent required to view the records of youth whose parents still maintain their educational rights or gaining access to these group homes.

Exhibit V-5. Agency responsible for youth in sample

Agency	Source: Caseworker personnel interviews		Source: Group Home personnel interviews ⁵⁹	
	Number of youth	Percentage of youth	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
Social Services	78	54%	91	55%
Probation	55	39%	65	38%
Mental Health ⁶⁰	3	2%	2	1%
County Office of Ed/ AB2726 ⁶¹	0	0%	0	0%
Private	1	1%	6	4%
Dept. of Developmental Services	4	3%	4	2%
Other	0	0%	1	0%
Missing	1	1%	0	0%
Total	142	100%	169	100%

As shown in Exhibit V-6, a majority (59%) of the parents of youth in the sample maintain their educational rights, whereas more than one-quarter of parents (26%) have lost these rights. For 21 youth (15%), however, the caseworker did not know whether the parents maintained educational rights. This finding mirrors those from the county case studies that there is often confusion as to who holds educational rights of youth in foster care. It is difficult for schools, caseworkers, and the court system to make educational decisions for youth in its care without knowing where the educational rights lie. This confusion demonstrates the need for identified people responsible for the maintenance of all educational records for every youth in foster care.

Exhibit V-6. Do parents maintain educational rights?

	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
Yes	84	59%
No	37	26%
Don't know/ missing	21	15%
Total	142	100%

Source: Caseworker personnel interviews

Spending on Youth

In addition to the basic rate paid to group homes to house and care for these youth, considerable additional money is spent to educate and provide other services to this population (see Exhibit V-7). Of the 169 youth in the sample for whom we have data regarding their current group home placement, more than one-third (36%) attend NPSs, more than one-quarter (27%) receive mental health services, and smaller percentages receive other types of services.

⁵⁹ The youth included in the caseworker interview dataset may or may not also be included in the residential dataset.

⁶⁰ Youth were identified as Mental Health placements, not AB2726 placements.

⁶¹ We were only able to obtain school data for AB2726 placements because we were not granted parental consent to access other data.

The cost of housing one youth in a group home for one year averages over \$61,200; the average cost of tuition at an NPS is almost \$24,000 per student per year; and the cost of various specialized mental health services can each cost over \$60,000 annually, per student (see Exhibit V-7). Moreover, almost one-quarter of the youth in the sample (24%) were receiving more than one mental health service; indeed, 20 (12%) received three or more services (see Exhibit V-8). The most commonly received of these services for the youth in the sample was mental health services (27%), followed by medication support (18%).

Therefore, even for a youth who does not receive special education, attends a regular public school, and does not receive any additional mental health services, the average cost of housing and educating that youth is over \$67,000 per year. If that youth requires additional services, such as special education and mental health services, the expenditure can average upwards of \$150,000 annually. Analysis of the full group home population from our prior study indicated that one half of all youth residing in group homes are in special education and that one half of these special education youth are educated in NPSs (Parrish et al., 2001). As shown in Exhibit V-7, for the one-half of the population of youth in group homes estimated to be in special education, the approximate expenditure for education and residential care is around \$85,000 per year. This figure does not include expenditures on supplemental mental health services and holds regardless of whether their special education services are provided in public or private settings.

Exhibit V-7. Frequencies and annual costs of services for youth in sample (based on current residential and education placements)

Category of service	Are Youth in Sample Receiving Service?				Average annual cost of service ⁶²
	Yes	Percentage yes	No	Don't know/missing data	
Group Home Rate	169	100%	0	0	\$61,216 ⁶³
NPS Tuition	67	36%	118	0	\$23,630 ⁶⁴
Public School – Reg Ed	18	10%	167	0	\$6,473 ⁶⁵
Public School – Spcl Ed ⁶⁶	13	7%	172	0	\$24,390 ⁶⁷
Intensive Day Treatment Services	17	10%	120	32	\$24,000 ⁶⁸
Day Rehab Services	7	4%	131	31	\$35,640 ⁶⁹
Mental Health Services	45	27%	94	30	\$10,639 ⁷⁰
Medication Support	31	18%	102	36	\$1,489 ⁷¹
Crisis Intervention	7	4%	128	34	\$61,927 ⁷²
Therapeutic Behavioral Services	6	4%	129	34	\$2,042 ⁷³
Other	52				N/A ⁷⁴

Source: Interviews with personnel at current group homes and schools

⁶² Based on frequencies and duration of services reported by interviews.

⁶³ Based on 108 responses.

⁶⁴ Based on 49 responses.

⁶⁵ CPI inflation rate applied to 2000-01 data provided by CDE, Fiscal Services. 2001-02 data was unavailable at the time of this report.

⁶⁶ Rate based on average expenditure for Special Day Classes in regular public schools.

⁶⁷ Current weighted average expenditure for Special Day Classes in 2001-02, as shown in Appendix A.

⁶⁸ Based on 1 response. If calculated based on 2001-02 costs for San Mateo County, this figure would be \$28,056; if based on the State Maximum Average (SMA) for this service, this figure would be \$41,182.

⁶⁹ Based on 6 responses. San Mateo County told us that the cost of this service in its county varies by facility. If this cost were recalculated based on the 2001-02 SMA, it would be \$36,045.

⁷⁰ None of our respondents was able to provide cost information for this service. We therefore calculated this figure using 2001-02 costs for San Mateo County. If 2001-02 SMA were used instead, the cost would remain \$10,639.

⁷¹ None of our respondents was able to provide cost information for this service. We therefore calculated this figure using 2001-02 costs for San Mateo County. If the 2001-2002 SMA for this service were used instead, the cost rises to \$1,496.

⁷² None of our respondents was able to provide cost information for this service. We therefore calculated this figure using 2001-2002 costs for San Mateo County. If the 2001-02 SMA were used, this amount would be \$63,471.

⁷³ None of our respondents was able to provide cost information for this service. We therefore calculated this figure using 2001-2002 costs for San Mateo County. If the 2001-02 SMA were used, this amount would be \$2,974.

⁷⁴ We did not ask about cost for “other” services.

Exhibit V-8. Numbers of youth in sample who receive mental health services

Number of services received⁷⁵	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
0	49	29%
1	59	34%
2	21	12%
3	13	8%
4	6	4%
5 or more	1	1%
Don't know	20	12%
Total	169	100%

Source: Group home personnel interviews

As an example of a relative high cost case, youth #1915 in the sample lives in a group home, attends an NPS, and receives day rehabilitation services, mental health services, and medication support. On an annual basis, the average cost for this youth's education and residential care is \$132,614.

Youth #1382 in the sample lives in a group home, attends an NPS, and receives intensive day treatment services, medication support, crisis intervention, and therapeutic behavioral services. The annual cost for this youth's education and residential care is \$152,704.

Even in the case of a more moderate expenditure, youth #1381, who lives in a group home, attends regular education classes in a regular public school, and receives mental health services, the average annual cost is \$78,328.

Educational Outcomes

Grade Point Average

Two statistics often used to measure academic outcomes for foster youth are high school graduation rates and GED rates. In this study's sample, however, the vast majority of youth were still of high school age. Therefore, we gathered data on youths' grade point averages (GPA) and school credits.

Although most of the schools the youth in the sample currently attend reported that the student's progress the prior semester was documented with letter grades (81%), twelve students (7%) did not receive letter grades (see Exhibit V-9). For the 12 students who did not receive letter grades, their academic progress was documented with marks of pass/fail (one case), written evaluations (five cases), or some other method (six cases). In 23 cases (12%) the school did not know how the student's academic progress the previous semester was documented. In most of these cases, it appears that the student attended a different school the previous semester and the current school did not have these records. Of the 35 youth who either did not receive letter grades, or for whom

⁷⁵ Mental health services: Intensive Day Treatment, Day Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Medication Support, Crisis Intervention, Therapeutic Behavioral Services, Other (write-in).

we do not know how their academic progress was recorded, 23 (66%) are in special education, raising further questions about educational outcomes and programs for these children.

Exhibit V-9. How academic progress the previous semester was documented

	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
Letter Grade	150	81%
Pass/Fail	1	1%
Check/Check +	0	0%
Written Evaluation	5	3%
Other	6	3%
Don't know	23	12%
Total	185	100%

Source: School personnel interviews

In 125 of the 185 cases (68% of sample), the school was able to report on either the students' unweighted GPA from the previous semester, or provided the student's individual letter grades for each course from the previous semester, which was then converted into a GPA. The performance of these youth as measured by unweighted GPA was average (see Exhibit V-10). The mean prior semester GPA for these youth was 2.59. These data indicate that the system can work and show that youth in foster care can attain at least average grades under the right circumstances. Our concern is primarily for the 32 percent of the youth in the sample for whom this most basic set of education information either was not known or could not be gathered to sufficiently estimate a GPA.

Exhibit V-10. Grade point average (GPA)

	Number of youth	Mean GPA
GPA listed in records	54	2.40
GPA calculated from individual letter grades	71	2.73
Total	125*	2.59

*Note: Although schools reported that 150 youth received letter grades the previous semester, in 25 cases they were unable to provide us with either a GPA or individual course grades.

Source: School personnel interviews

High School Credits

A second measure of academic achievement is accumulation of school credits towards high school graduation (see Exhibit V-11). Because the youth in the sample were in various grades in school, we did not ask about number of total credits; instead, we asked how many credits the student was enrolled in the previous semester, and how many credits she completed. Our intention was to gather data regarding successful progress towards graduation. If students are not completing close to 100 percent of the classes for which they are enrolled, they are probably falling behind in credits and are thus less likely to accumulate enough credits to graduate. This question was asked both of the schools the youth currently attend, and the youth themselves.

Of the 185 completed current school forms, the school indicated that questions about school credits were inapplicable to 86 cases because it does not award credits, either because it is an

elementary school or junior high school, or for some other reason (e.g., some special education students do not receive credits). One school does not award units by semester class, but instead gives students one credit for every 12 weeks they successfully completes their coursework.

Exhibit V-11. Number of youth attending schools that award credits

	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
School awards credits	99	54%
School does not award credits	86	46%
Total	185	100%

Source: School personnel interviews

Of the 99 students for whom the schools award credits, we have data on the number of credits enrolled in and completed for 83 students, as shown in Exhibit V-12. The records for the remaining 16 students were incomplete, indicating once again the data collection and transfer problems revealed in the county case studies. The fact that these schools did not have this data, even for the previous semester, is a serious source of concern.

From the data in Exhibit V-12, one can see that these foster youth are falling behind. More than one quarter of these students did not receive all of the credits for which they originally enrolled in the prior semester, and 19 percent received less than 60 percent of their enrolled credits. Indeed, four of these students earned none of the credits for which they originally enrolled.

The 15 youth interviewed, who were both awarded credits at their school the previous semester and were able to answer our questions about credits, report results somewhat worse than those reported by the schools. In no case did a youth report that she received as many credits as the number for which she was enrolled, and four of the 15 youth reported that they received 20 percent or less of the credits for which they were originally enrolled. Of the 11 students (out of 15) who knew why they had received fewer credits than the number for which they had enrolled, five said it was because they had not completed the school term and six said it was because they had failed one or more classes.

Exhibit V-12. Percentage of enrolled credits earned (prior semester)

Percentage of credits earned	Source of data: School personnel interviews		Source of data: Youth interviews	
	Number of youth	Percentage of youth	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
0%	4	5%	2	13%
1%-20%	0	0%	2	13%
21%-40%	5	6%	0	0%
41%-60%	7	8%	0	0%
61%-80%	2	2%	3	20%
81%-99%	5	6%	8	54%
100%	60	73%	0	0%
Total	83	100%	15	100%

It is important to note the potential for bias in these results, because youth who know more about their credit progress may also do better in school and thus accumulate relatively more credits than do other foster youth. The fact that only 15 out of 51 youth knew about their credits and progress highlights the fact that youth in foster care, or indeed any youth for that matter, cannot be expected to be solely responsible for tracking their own academic progress. This is the job of the educational agencies in conjunction with the placing agency that takes responsibility for each youth when he or she is removed from the family. School and district staff personnel must be identified as the responsible parties for tracking the educational progress of each youth in foster care and advocating for him when necessary. These results add strength to the fairly obvious conclusion that youth cannot be expected to serve as their own educational advocates.

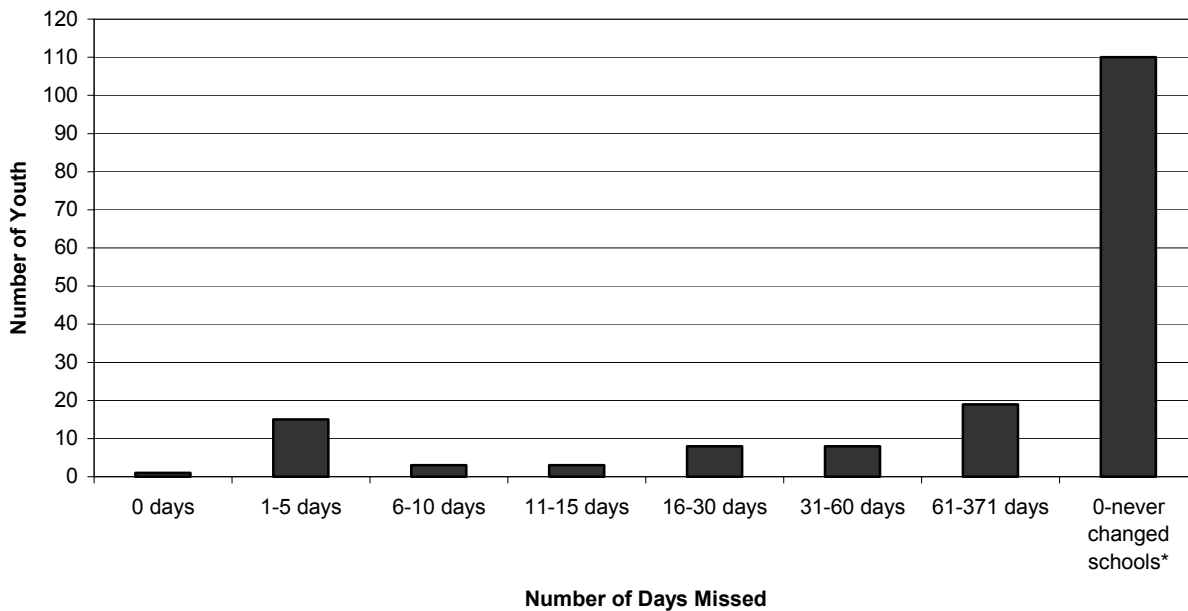
Amount of School Missed

An important reason why foster youth fare poorly academically is that they miss a great deal of school. It is impossible to do well in school if you are not attending consistently. One reason these youth miss so much school is that they change schools frequently, often in the middle of a semester. As a result, there is often a delay between when the youth leaves one school and when he or she begins classes at another. As the start and stop dates for prior educational placements often were not reported or were unknown, Exhibit V-13 below provides a best-case scenario of the number of days of school each youth in the sample missed over the past year due to changes in educational placements. If the data were complete, the number of missed days may have been greater because it is likely that the unavailability of data is due to changes in placement that were not documented. For 68 out of 123 youth who missed school between educational placements, we were able to determine how much school was missed.

Over half (52%) of the youth in the sample that missed school did so for more than 15 days last year because of changing schools. For 18 percent of the cases, incorrect stop and/or start dates in school records were found. For example, the current school may have reported that the youth’s first day of class was September 9, 2002, but the prior school reported that the youth’s last day of

class was November 12, 2002.⁷⁶ Data, therefore, indicate that foster youth often appear to miss a substantial amount of school when they change schools, and also that the schools often keep poor records regarding when and where these youth are in school. It is clear from these data that one person should be made responsible for checking a youth out of school, informing all relevant people, and checking the youth into the next school, to ensure that no time elapses during which the youth is not attending school. Youth in foster care have enough obstacles preventing them from making academic progress without substantial gaps in schooling.

Exhibit V-13. Number of days missed between educational placements (over the prior 12 months)



* Unfortunately, we have no way of discerning from our data how many of these youth attended only one school over the previous 12 months, and how many appear to have missed no days of school between educational placements because we were unable to gather data from more than one school.

Source: Schools

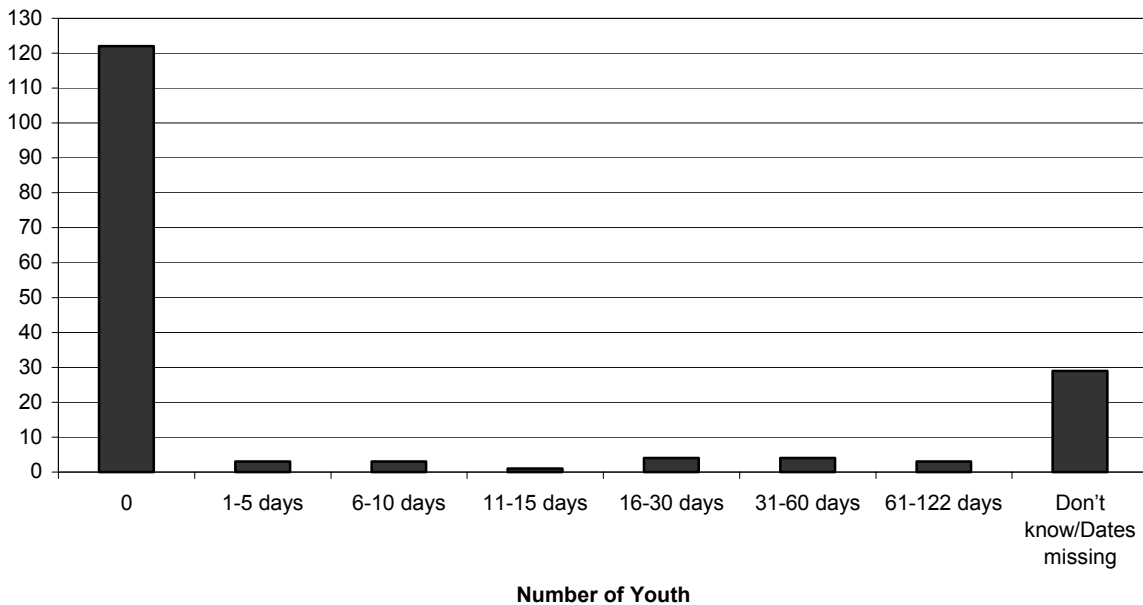
The number of school days foster youth have missed since they began living in their current group home (see Exhibit V-14), combined with the number of residential moves over the past year (discussed later), provides another way to estimate days of school missed. Two variations of this first question were asked of group home staff and of the youth themselves. Group home staff were asked, “While living here, has there been a period of time during which the child has not attended school [but should have]?”⁷⁷ If they answered, “yes,” they provided dates for this missing period (or periods) of time. The youth were asked, “When you came to this group home, how long was it before you went to school?” The important difference between these two questions is that whereas the youth were asked only about school missed between the start of their residential placement and their enrollment in school, the group home staff were asked about all missed school, whether prior to or subsequent to enrollment.

⁷⁶ These 11 cases are not included in the figure.

⁷⁷ The form itself does not include the phrase, “but should have.” Each researcher, however, added this phrase when asking the question, in order to make the question’s meaning more clear.

In most instances, the group homes reported that the youth had not missed any days of school since living there. Given that group homes violate their contract if the youth in their care are not immediately enrolled in and continue to attend school, this result is not surprising. It is, therefore, difficult to fully assess the accuracy of these data. Of a total of 169 youth for whom the question was asked, in 122 cases (72%) the staff said the youth had not missed any school. Only 11 percent reportedly missed more than one day. However, in 29 cases (17%), the staff said they did not know whether the youth had missed school, and in three additional cases, staff could not provide dates for missed school days.

Exhibit V-14: Number of days youth resided at current group home before enrolled in school



Source: Group home personnel interview (current placement)

The fact that personnel could not provide information for 17 percent of youth in the sample provides an additional example of the poor records kept on youth who live in group homes. In the case of 18 of the 169 youth, however, group home staff admitted that the youth had missed school since living in the group home. Twelve of these youth reportedly missed 10 or more days of school, and for eight of these youth, the number of days missed was 30 or more.

As shown in Exhibit V-15, when asked why these youth had missed school, group home staff reported that in more than two-thirds of the cases (68%), the youth was unable to enroll. Explanations for why the youth was unable to enroll included that the school was waiting for the IEP to be transferred before enrolling the youth, the school required some form of interview or orientation class prior to enrollment, or the school was waiting to determine if the youth should be served in a public setting.

Exhibit V-15: Reasons youth missed school

Reason	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
Health	2	11%
Expelled/Suspended	3	16%
Unable to enroll	13	68%
Other	1 ⁷⁸	5%
Total	19⁷⁹	100%

Source: Group home personnel interview (current placement)

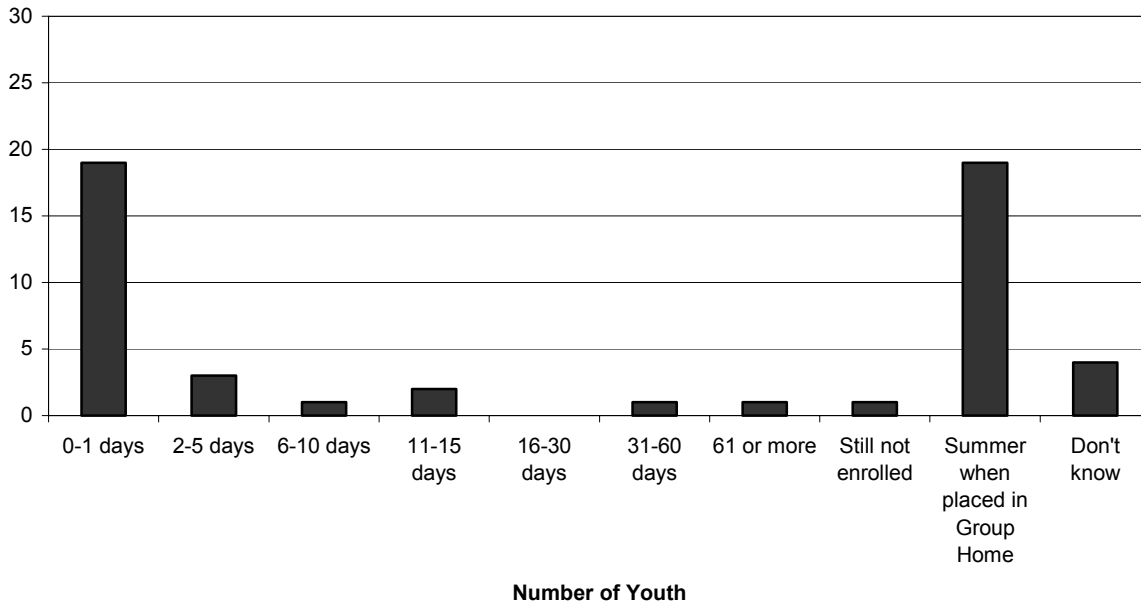
Most of the youth (92%) reported that they knew the number of days that had elapsed between when they arrived at their current group home and when they started school (see Exhibit V-16). Thirty-seven percent said that it was summer when they arrived. Of the 32 youth who should have been enrolled in school immediately, 19 (60%) said they were enrolled either the day they arrived or the next day. The rest (18%) reported a delay of at least two days, with two reporting delays of more than 30 days, and one youth was still not enrolled as of the date we interviewed him.

Findings from youth interviews (Exhibit V-16) paint a somewhat more negative picture of the consistency and quality of education they are receiving. While the truth may lie somewhere between the more positive results reported by group home staff and the more negative results reported by the youth, these results seem to provide one more indicator that youth in foster care should be given an increased voice in the system that runs their lives. Former foster youth and youth advocates consistently remark on the lack of involvement youth have in their own education, and, as noted above, it was often made quite difficult for study staff to gain access to youth for the purposes of this study. Throughout this study, study staff were constantly reminded of the need to protect youth and therefore not interview them and yet, at the same time, staff were reminded that allowing youth a voice in regard to their circumstances was critical.

⁷⁸ This youth reportedly cut school.

⁷⁹ Whereas the number of youth who missed at least one day of school subsequent to their group home placement is 18 according to Exhibit V-11, the number of reasons (Exhibit V-12) adds up to 19. The reason for this discrepancy is that in one case the group home representative was unable to state the number of days of school the youth missed, but was able to provide a reason for why the youth missed school.

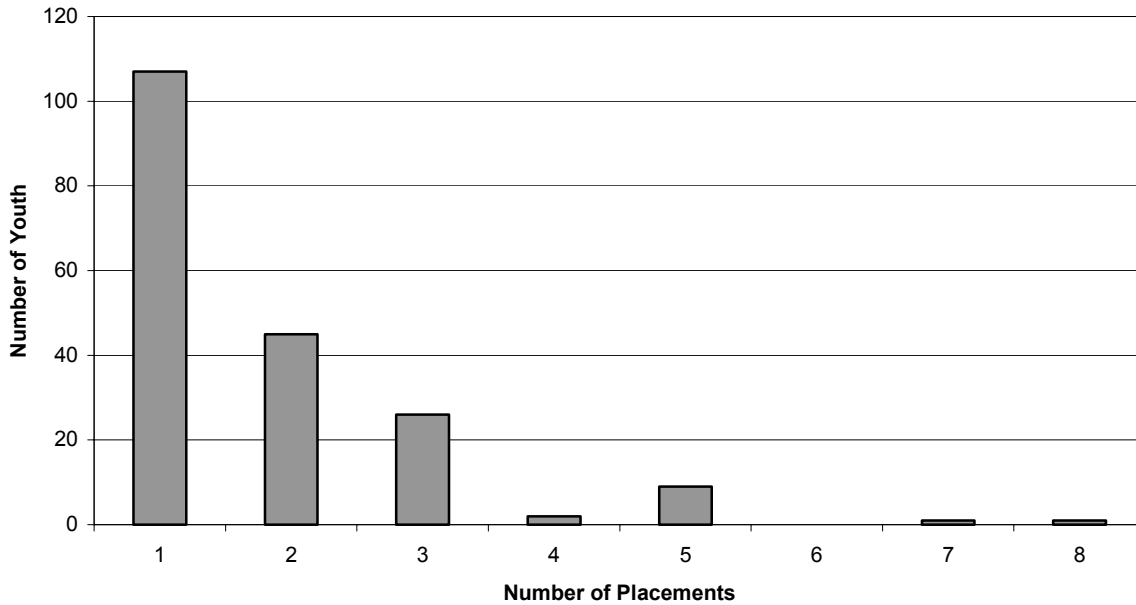
Exhibit V-16. Number of days youth resided at group home before enrollment in school based on youth interviews



Educational Itinerancy

As mentioned earlier, youth who live in group homes frequently change schools, making educational continuity problematic (see Exhibit V-17). Because of the difficulties encountered in collecting data from prior schools, these statistics are likely to present a best-case scenario. If we had complete data, the statistics would likely have looked worse. According to school personnel, only 56 percent of the youth in the sample attended the same school over the past 12 months, with 20 percent attending *three or more schools* over that period.

Exhibit V-17. Number of educational placements over past 12 months

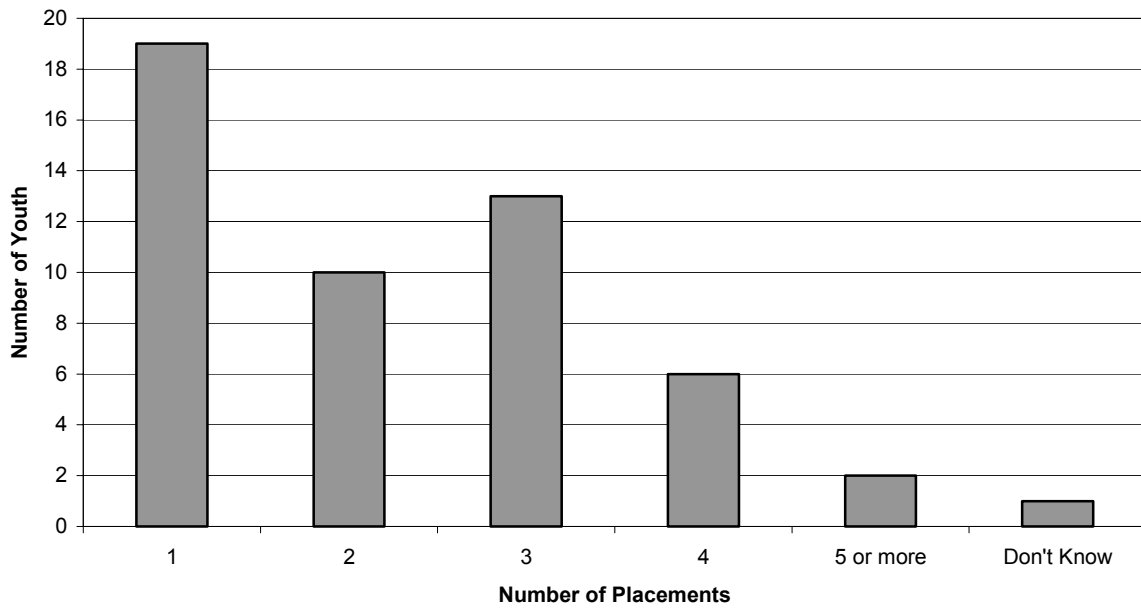


Source: School personnel interviews

Note: This total of 191 is for both current and prior school personnel interviews. The total on Exhibit V-6 is for current school personnel interviews only.

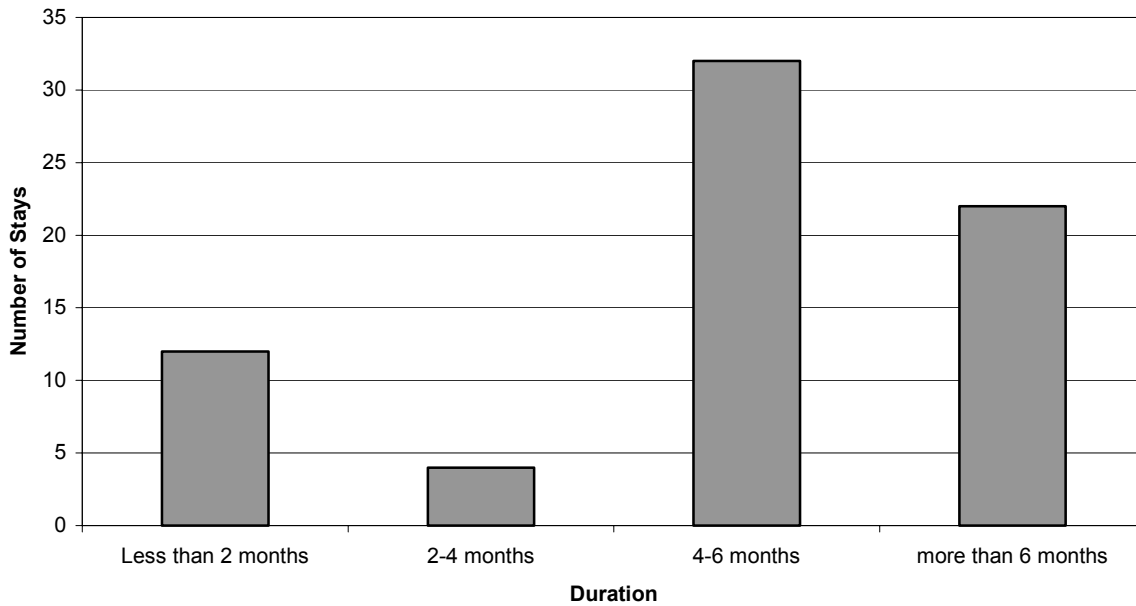
When the youth themselves were asked about the number of schools they had attended over the past year, they reported higher numbers than did the schools (see Exhibit V-18). Only 37 percent reported that they had stayed at the same school the whole time, whereas 41 percent said they had attended three or more schools over the past twelve months.

Exhibit V-18. Number of educational placements over past 12 months as reported by foster youth



Another way to evaluate educational consistency is to look at the length of time youth spend at any given school. As one can see in Exhibit V-19, these youth often change schools, rarely staying at one school for long. Of the 70 school stays for which we have data, fewer than a third (31%) were for more than six months, and 17 percent were for fewer than two months. With this lack of consistency, it is virtually inevitable that foster youth fall behind academically.

Exhibit V-19. Length of time spent at any given school

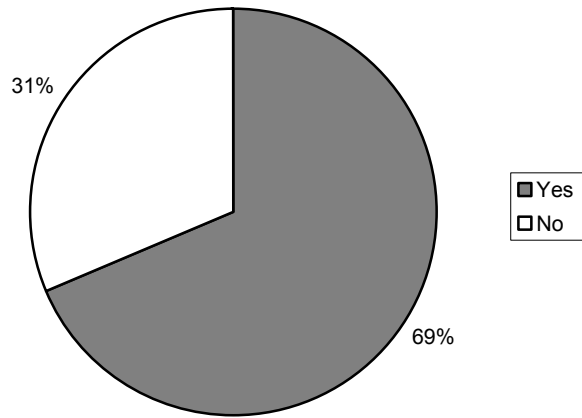


Source: School personnel interviews

Residential Itinerancy

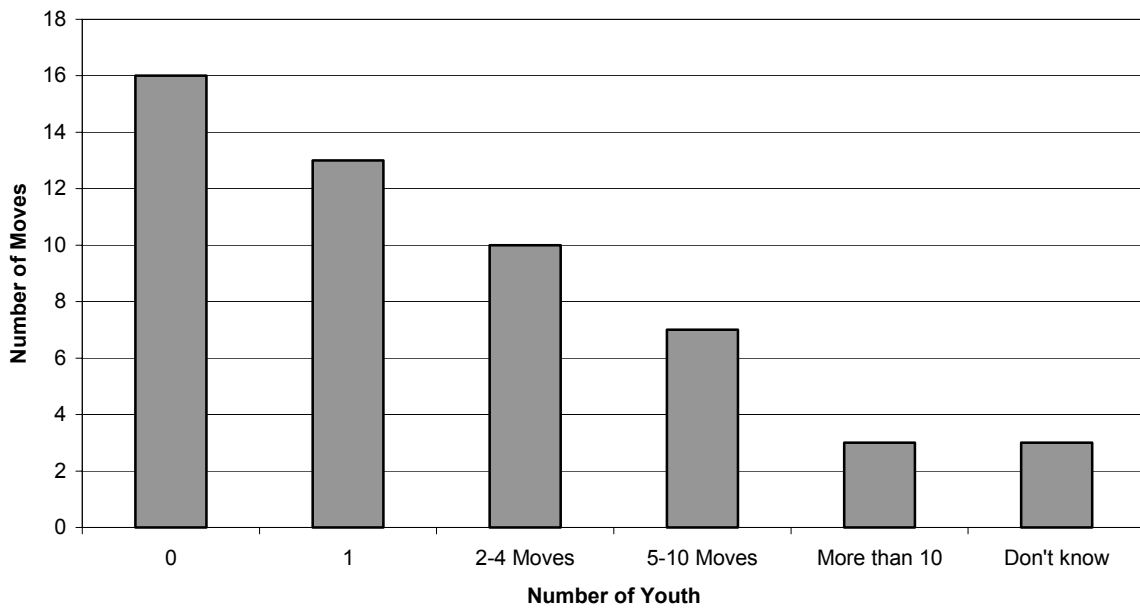
Although foster youth change schools for various reasons (e.g., expulsion, move to a less restrictive environment), most often the reason is change in residential placement (see Exhibits V-20 and V-21). Particularly troublesome are school changes that occur mid-semester, which are especially disruptive to educational progress and achievement. When youth were asked, “Have you ever had to change schools in the middle of the year because you changed residential placements,” more than two-thirds (69%) responded that they had, with an average number of four such mid-semester moves over the course of the youths’ lives. Even if youth are over-reporting this number, and the true percentage is somewhat less, mid-semester school changes would be troubling.

Exhibit V-20. Youth reported changes in school at mid-semester because of residential change (over course of youth's tenure in foster care)



Source: Youth interviews

Exhibit V-21. Number of mid-semester moves reported by youth (over course of their tenure in foster care)



Source: Youth interviews

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, due to gaps in data and other obstacles, we were unable to gather complete data on the sample of youth, particularly from prior schools and residential placements. In a number of cases, we do not know how many prior placements exist because schools and residential placements did not have this information, or because we were unable to talk with staff at a subsequent placement about possible prior placements. Nevertheless, the data we were able to collect regarding residential itinerancy are worrisome (see Exhibit V-22). At the very least, according to staff at the residential placements, 38 percent of youth lived in two or more placements over the past year, and 10 percent lived in four or more residences. Bear in mind that these data represent the number of changes in a single year – not over the life of the child. If this pattern were to continue, imagine the degree of change this implies for youth in the system through multiple years, and the effect of these changes on a child’s sense of security, mental well being, and likelihood of success in school (even if the schooling placement were to remain the same, which most often appears not to be the case).

Exhibit V-22. Number of residential placements over past 12 months

Number of changes	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
1	104	62%
2	35	21%
3	12	7%
4	8	5%
5 or more	9	5%
Total	168	100%

Source: Group home personnel interviews

When we asked youth about changes in residential placements, they reported an even greater number of moves than did group home personnel. Exhibit V-23 shows that of the 50 youth answering this question, 44 percent reported living in three or more residences over the past year, with 10 percent reporting five or more placements.

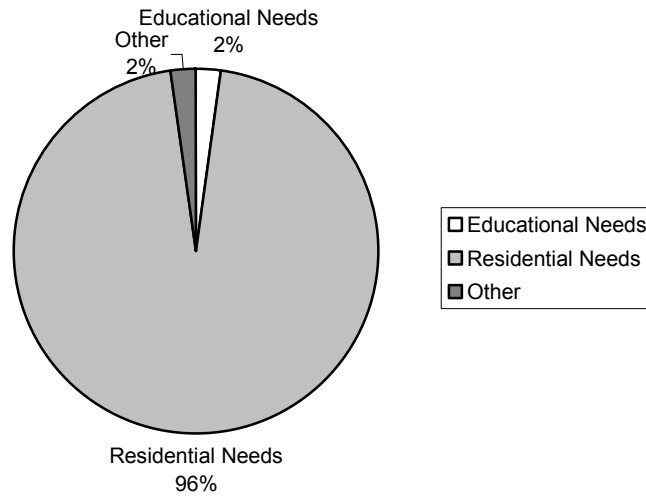
Exhibit V-23. Number of residential placements over past 12 months

Number of changes	Number of youth	Percentage of youth
1	14	27%
2	14	27%
3	11	22%
4	6	12%
5 or more	5	10%
Don't Know	1	2%
Total	51	100%

Source: Youth interviews

Although it is possible that some of these residential changes could have been driven by the educational needs of the youth (e.g., the most appropriate school for a youth was in a different school district, so the youth was moved to a different residence in order to attend this school), the data indicate otherwise (see V-24). When caseworkers were asked whether a given out-of-county residential placement was driven by residential versus educational needs, in only one case were educational needs cited.

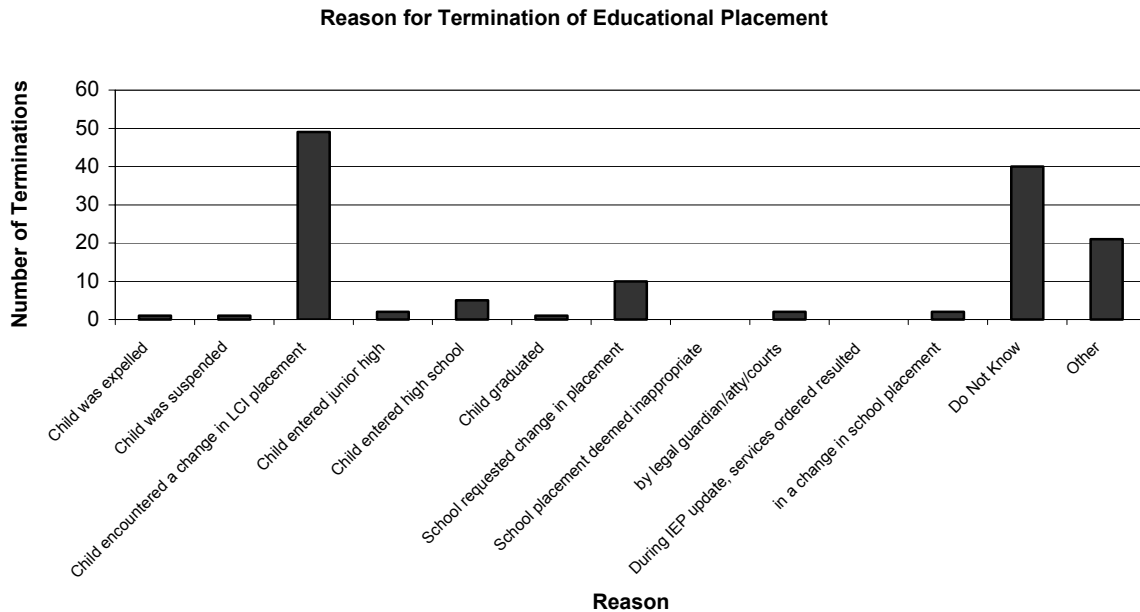
Exhibit V-24. Whether out-of-county placement driven by residential or educational needs



Source: Caseworker personnel interviews

Another way to get a sense of this close causal connection between residential and educational itinerancy is to examine the reasons for termination of educational placement, a question that was asked of both schools and caseworkers (see Exhibits V-25 and V-26). Schools often did not know why a student had left its school (30%). This statistic again indicates the poor record keeping with regards to foster youth. When schools did know why a student had left, over half of the time (52%) the explanation was that the youth had changed residential placement.

Exhibit V-25. Reason for termination of educational placement



Source: School personnel interviews

Caseworkers, in contrast to school personnel, stated that change in residential placement was almost always the reason for change in educational placement (81%). In three cases, they did not know the reason for the move. This difference between the school personnel and caseworkers regarding knowing why a youth had left a school (70% versus 97%, respectively) highlights the lack of communication among agencies involved in the care of youth in foster care. If the caseworker knows why a change has occurred, the school should also be made aware of these reasons.

This finding indicates the need for increased interagency collaboration, particularly with schools, a finding also supported by the county case studies. Additionally, study staff often heard that youth in foster care misbehave in school and are therefore suspended or expelled, contributing to their educational mobility. Although it may be true that schools that cannot properly meet their needs suspend youth in foster care, data reveal that suspension/expulsion is rarely the *cause* for an educational change (cited only 5% of the time by caseworkers, and 2% of the time by school personnel). Instead, the cause is almost always a residential change (80%).

As long as educational placement remains an afterthought to residential placement, caseworkers will not be compelled to consider residential changes that would allow youth to remain in their home schools. Consistency of schooling is critical to youth in foster care and the maintenance of the same educational placement could provide much needed stability in a tumultuous time. There is a great need for an advocate to push for residential maintenance as well as constancy in school placement, or at the very least continuance in the same school even in the face of a residential change.

Exhibit V-26. Reason for termination of educational placement

Reason for termination	Number of terminations	Percentage of terminations
Child was expelled	2	2%
Child was suspended	3	3%
Child encountered a change in LCI placement	87	80%
Child entered junior high	1	1%
Child entered high school	1	1%
Child graduated	1	1%
School requested change in placement	0	0%
School placement deemed inappropriate by legal guardian/atty/courts	1	1%
During IEP update, services ordered resulted in a change in school placement	0	0%
IEP status change	1	1%
Do not know	3	3%
Other	8	7%
Total	108	100%

Source: Caseworker personnel interviews

Summary

The student profile data presented in this chapter were collected to provide as solid a foundation as possible upon which to support conclusions regarding the appropriateness of existing policies, procedures and practices, and to make specific recommendations for their improvement. The data we were able to collect support many of the perceptions that service providers and advocates shared with the study team. Many foster youth are constantly changing schools, and are often staying at any given school for only a few months before moving to another school. Almost always, these changes are driven by residential, not educational, considerations. Moreover, when a youth changes schools, sometimes mid-semester, there is sometimes a delay in enrollment in the new school, which further exacerbates the difficulties inherent in starting at a new school. In short, given these statistics, it is not surprising that the educational progress and educational outcomes for many foster youth are poor. Recommendations presented in Chapter VII address many of these issues.

The intensive data collection design developed to create youth placement profiles across the eight sample counties also allowed the study team to experience first hand the barriers to access, and the inaccurate and incomplete record keeping for the data that are available. As described in Chapter IV and shown by the gaps in the data we were able to collect, record keeping, communication among service providers, and data availability are poor. Given the educational and residential movement of this population, accurate record keeping and the transfer of data are critical to increasing the likelihood of success for these youth. Recommendations for improvements in this area are included in Chapter VII.

Chapter VI. Methodology

State-level methodology

The ultimate goal of the state-level component of this study was to better understand the policies and procedures of each agency in meeting the educational needs of youth in group homes. The research methods for the state-level component of this study include meetings with the study stakeholder groups; the study advisory group which helped guide the study; interviews with state agency representatives from the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the California Department of Mental Health (CDMH), the Department of Finance (DOF), and the Legislative Analysts Office (LAO), legislative representatives, the Administrative Offices of the Court, child advocacy representatives, and others; and document reviews of existing policies and procedures.

Stakeholder groups

A Stakeholder Group was formed to assist the study team in exploring the issues and concerns associated with the education of youth in group homes and to brainstorm about possible solutions to identified problems. The Stakeholder Group includes a broad representation of organizations relevant to this study. The members include representatives from foster youth organizations, state agencies, LEAs, advocacy groups, local placement agencies, group homes, legislative representatives, SELPAs, FYS, and NPSs. The committee met four times over the course of the study to provide input and feedback to the study team.

A separate Finance Committee was formed from the larger study stakeholder group in February 2002 to assist the study team in thinking about the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula and potential alternatives, among other fiscal issues related to the education of youth living in group homes. Members of the Finance Committee include representatives from CDE, CDSS, CDMH, the Foster Youth Ombudsman's office, Senate Office of Education, probation, county departments of social services, school districts, SELPAs, California Alliance for Children and Family Services, California Association of Private Special Education Schools, Association of Regional Center Agencies, and group home operators. The committee met eight times. The study's fiscal analysis is presented in Chapter II.

Interviews with state agency representatives and others

Interviews with representatives from the CDE, CDSS, CDMH, and LAO were conducted to gain an understanding from the various agencies' perspective as to issues associated with the education of youth in foster care and potential recommendations for improvement. Interviews were guided by questions about interagency coordination at the state-level, communication between state and county agencies, and rules and regulations. Interviews with legislative representatives, representatives from the Administrative Offices of Courts, child advocates, Juvenile Court Judges, and others focused on gaining an understanding of the issues and potential recommendations from the perspective of stakeholders who are not responsible for the immediate provision of services to youth in foster care.

Document review

The study team began the document review process by gathering the state and federal statutes that govern the provision of educational services to youth in foster care. The relevant sections of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, Education Code, Government Code, and Code of Regulations were reviewed in addition to sections of the Federal Code of Regulations and Title 20 of the United States Code. The study team also reviewed materials from the agencies responsible for providing services to youth in foster care such as the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures, the Resource Directory of the Foster Care Services Bureau, documentation from the CDMH on the interagency responsibility for providing services to special education students, and other materials. The purpose of the document review was to examine the written policies and procedures governing the education of youth in foster care.

County-level methodology

The eight case study counties for this study were Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Mateo, Shasta, Stanislaus, and Yolo. The Advisory Group approved of the selection of these counties at the January 15, 2002 meeting.

The county sample was designed to reflect diversity in county size, geography, urbanicity, data capacity, FYS representation, and percentage import/export of group home youth. It was also important that the sample represent a significant percentage of group home youth. The 8 counties in the sample represent 48 percent of all youth in group homes, 49 percent of all youth in group homes attending NPSs, 59 percent of all NPS students, 44 percent of all NPSs, and 42 percent of all group homes. The sample includes larger (Los Angeles, San Diego) and smaller (Shasta, Yolo) counties, and also reflects a range of geographic locations and urbanicity. Discussions with local agencies and other contacts confirmed that at least some of these counties have significant data capacity (i.e., local databases and data initiatives). While most counties were recipients of Foster Youth Services funds, the sample also included counties that did not receive these funds (Stanislaus, Yolo). The sample also reflects varying percentages of youth in foster care placed within the county (import/export factor). Los Angeles County, for example, placed 85 percent of its youth into foster care within the county. At the opposite end of the spectrum are counties such as Yolo, where only 38 percent of youth in foster care were placed in the county.

Data on each county in California are presented in the Exhibit VI-1 below. The counties selected in the sample are shaded in gray.

Exhibit VI-1. Summary of county information for site visit counties

COUNTY	Total Youth in Group Homes ⁸⁰	Total Home Youth in Special Education ¹	Total Group Home Youth in NPS ¹	% of all Students in County in Group Homes ⁸¹	% of all Special Ed Students in County in NPS ²	2000-2001 FYS Grant Recipient ⁸²	Number of Group Homes ⁸³	Number of NPS ⁸⁴	Number of Students Served in NPS ⁸⁵	Percent of Foster Youth Placed In County ⁸⁶	Rate Classification Levels ⁵
Alameda	1,203	392	211	0.30%	3.46%	Y	79	15	779	58.90%	4 to 14
Alpine	1	0	0	0.41%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	0.00%	n/a
Amador	6	2	0	0.09%	0.25%	Y	0	0	2	35.10%	
Butte	126	67	6	0.24%	0.45%	Y	14	1	20	71.50%	7 to 12
Calaveras	27	12	2	0.28%	0.60%	Y	6	0	5	59.70%	
Colusa	6	0	0	0.10%	0.00%		0	0	0	48.50%	
Contra Costa	610	292	138	0.25%	2.21%	Y	55	12	425	69.30%	6 to 14
Del Norte	18	6	5	0.23%	0.00%		0	0	0	75.90%	
El Dorado	52	20	13	0.13%	3.14%	Y	19	3	103	59.50%	n/a
Fresno	459	182	9	0.17%	0.02%	Y	66	0	5	82.00%	6 to 14
Glenn	16	5	3	0.18%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	38.60%	
Humboldt	46	15	4	0.14%	0.00%	Y	6	0	0	86.20%	
Imperial	96	21	3	0.19%	0.03%	Y	9	0	1	82.30%	n/a
Inyo	11	2	1	0.24%	0.47%	Y	1	0	2	51.20%	n/a
Kern	281	81	11	0.13%	0.08%	Y	31	1	12	89.50%	
Kings	20	4	1	0.05%	0.04%		0	0	1	75.10%	
Lake	38	20	7	0.26%	0.39%	Y	2	0	5	59.90%	8
Lassen	22	2	1	0.28%	0.00%		4	0	0	60.60%	
Los Angeles	5,435	2,763	1,436	0.18%	3.18%	Y	357	93	5590	85.90%	all
Madera	56	28	0	0.15%	0.00%	Y	9	0	0	66.70%	3 to 12
Marin	125	86	58	0.23%	4.07%		19	8	168	56.70%	
Mariposa	11	4	2	0.30%	0.00%	Y	1	0	0	79.40%	9
Mendocino	115	77	71	0.48%	4.04%	Y	9	3	97	66.40%	n/a
Merced	102	31	8	0.14%	0.38%	Y	8	0	22	55.60%	n/a
Modoc	13	7	0	0.51%	0.00%	Y	1	0	0	63.00%	10
Mono	1	0	0	0.04%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	28.60%	
Monterey	133	29	7	0.11%	0.07%	Y	11	1	5	68.40%	
Napa	202	180	69	0.65%	3.76%		11	6	89	73.20%	
Nevada	19	5	4	0.09%	2.78%	Y	3	1	38	61.80%	n/a
Orange	1,351	507	138	0.16%	1.35%	Y	96	16	636	72.90%	4 to 14
Placer	108	55	28	0.17%	0.53%	Y	8	2	29	52.20%	n/a
Plumas	9	2	1	0.20%	0.00%		1	1	0	57.40%	
Riverside	1,205	650	375	0.25%	2.15%	Y	124	18	757	75.90%	n/a
Sacramento	771	282	152	0.22%	3.86%	Y	94	37	941	73.00%	6 to 14
San Benito	13	1	0	0.08%	0.00%		5	1	0	63.10%	
San Bernardino	1,084	486	212	0.19%	1.16%	Y	107	22	463	72.30%	n/a
San Diego	1,219	595	225	0.15%	1.91%	Y	96	29	1008	85.60%	n/a
San Francisco	415	198	139	0.26%	4.62%	Y	27	20	317	53.10%	3 to 14
San Joaquin	340	251	75	0.19%	1.24%	Y	53	5	160	75.90%	
San Luis Obispo	133	60	8	0.22%	0.07%	Y	7	0	3	76.80%	6 to 14
San Mateo	201	70	28	0.11%	1.23%	Y	18	4	123	50.80%	
Santa Barbara	208	116	58	0.19%	1.45%	Y	20	1	92	72.40%	n/a
Santa Clara	632	271	113	0.13%	1.26%	Y	53	13	335	66.80%	n/a
Santa Cruz	105	42	9	0.15%	0.29%	Y	12	1	15	71.70%	n/a
Shasta	96	74	40	0.20%	1.99%	Y	35	5	72	82.60%	6 to 14
Sierra	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%		0	0	0	16.70%	
Siskiyou	35	8	5	0.32%	0.10%		0	0	1	61.30%	
Solano	108	45	27	0.09%	1.15%	Y	28	6	99	75.10%	n/a
Sonoma	279	177	121	0.24%	3.43%	Y	42	17	312	71.90%	
Stanislaus	161	88	43	0.11%	2.23%		28	8	262	72.10%	
Sutter	28	10	4	0.12%	0.21%		1	0	4	44.40%	
Tehama	21	7	6	0.14%	0.66%		5	0	7	71.80%	
Trinity	15	1	1	0.47%	0.00%		0	0	0	59.60%	
Tulare	249	75	6	0.19%	0.75%	Y	25	0	62	80.20%	
Tuolumne	8	2	0	0.07%	0.59%		0	0	6	66.70%	
Ventura	206	96	42	0.09%	1.17%	Y	17	5	164	77.90%	n/a
Yolo	105	51	35	0.23%	2.15%		7	1	64	38.20%	
Yuba	57	22	13	0.26%	0.38%	Y	4	0	7	37.90%	n/a
ALL Counties	18,416	8,578	3974	0.18%	2.06%	42	1,634	356	13,308	77.30%	
Sample Total	8,879	4,215	2,027	0.18%	2.06%	8	686	155	7,903	82.05%	
% of All in Sample	48%	49%	51.01%			19%	42%	44%	59%		

⁸⁰ Source: Data matched between CWS/CMS and CASEMIS for the “Studies of the Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes” (Parrish et al., 2001)

⁸¹ Source: Public School Enrollment and Staffing Data Files (CBEDS) for 1999-00 School Year

⁸² Source: FYS Current Award List, January 2002, Educational Options Office, California Department of Education

⁸³ Source: Community Care Licensing Division, Department of Social Services, January 2002

⁸⁴ Source: Nonpublic Schools Database, June 1, 2000, Special Education Division, California Department of Education

⁸⁵ Source: California Special Education Management Information System, December 1999 release

⁸⁶ Source: California Department of Social Services, CMS/CWS Reports, January 11, 2002

Fieldwork in these counties was divided among AIR and its subcontractors, with all field staff implementing similar methodologies. Some county research differed based on specific structural and organizational strengths and weaknesses of policies and procedures at the county level.

In all eight counties interviews were conducted with a broad range of parties, including county social service personnel, caseworkers, probation officers (and their bosses), school administrators, teachers, school counselors, CASA workers, juvenile and dependency court judges, county administrators, SELPA directors, mental health administrators and workers, residential care facility staff, child advocates, FYS coordinators, and others. Initial interviews with these personnel were fairly broad to allow respondents to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system in their county as they saw it.

Research staff reviewed the “Issues List” with interviewees and asked respondents to discuss whether or not they felt the list was complete and accurate. Research staff also asked respondents to identify reasons for success within their county in relation to the education of youth in foster care. Each interviewee was asked to identify other people for potential interviews. Where relevant, interviewees were asked to discuss any local databases that contain data on youth in foster care. Many respondents were interviewed more than once as research staff learned more about county-level processes. Generally, project staff found these parties eager to discuss the education of youth in foster care and to share their opinions about how the situation might be improved.

County-specific databases were reviewed by project staff and evaluated for efficiency, accessibility across county and agency, completeness, and accuracy of fields. CWS/CMS and probation databases were reviewed along similar lines during our youth placement profiles discussed below.

In the majority of our counties, research staff conducted focus groups with personnel they had identified as central and/or able to think creatively about ways to improve education for youth in foster care. Presentations at local and statewide meetings and conferences by team members helped gain interest for and participation in the study. Focus groups centered on the following three questions: 1) What are the policies, procedures and practices affecting the education of youth residing in group homes in the county and how do these differ from issues in other counties or at the state level? 2) What are the most significant roadblocks preventing group home youth in the county from attaining positive educational outcomes? 3) What are potential solutions to these problems?

Youth placement profiles

In order to better understand the educational histories of youth residing in group homes in California, the study team sought to create “youth placement profiles” detailing the educational histories of approximately 300 youth currently residing in group homes over the course of the prior 12 months. Details about the creation of the youth placement profile instruments are discussed in the next section. Below is a discussion of the selection process for sample youth.

Selection of homes

We acquired a list (from the Community Care Licensing Department of the California Department of Social Services) of group homes in our eight sample counties. From this list, we selected only homes that are fully licensed (homes with temporary or pending licenses were not included). This selection produced a list of 611 group homes in our eight counties. Next, we defined sampling strata in order to ensure adequate representation of particular types of group homes, as well as targeted populations served by these homes. Specifically, we desired adequate representation of:

- Large group homes (capacity of 15 or more youth)
- High RCL level homes (RCL 13 or 14)
- Youth with special medical or disability-related needs
- Wards of the state
- Each of the eight selected counties

Thus, we created four crossed sampling strata: county, home size (large and small), RCL level (1 to 12 and 13 to 14), and population (dependents, medical/disability needs, and wards). We then determined an initial minimum number of homes to sample in each targeted stratum level.

Exhibit VI-2. Initial sampling frame of Group Homes number selected / total in frame (percent selected)

Population, Size, RCL Level	Alameda	Fresno	Los Angeles	San Diego	San Mateo	Shasta	Stanislaus	Yolo	Grand Total
Youth, Large, High RCL	1/1 (100%)		2/3 (67%)						3/4 (75%)
Youth, Large, Low RCL	1/1 (100%)		1/30 (3%)	2/3 (67%)		1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)		6/36 (17%)
Youth, Small, High RCL	4/4 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	5/6 (83%)				3/3 (100%)		13/14 (93%)
Youth, Small, Low RCL	4/50 (8%)	2/36 (6%)	3/231 (1%)	4/8 (50%)	6/8 (75%)	11/29 (38%)	8/23 (35%)	4/5 (80%)	42/390 (11%)
Med/Dis, Large, High RCL	2/2 (100%)			1/2 (50%)					3/4 (75%)
Med/Dis, Large, Low RCL			1/3 (33%)	4/14 (29%)	1/1 (100%)				6/18 (33%)
Med/Dis, Small, High RCL		1/1 (100%)							1/1 (100%)
Med/Dis, Small, Low RCL			1/52 (2%)	1/50 (2%)	1/1 (100%)				3/103 (3%)
Wards		8/12 (67%)	7/8 (88%)		1/1 (100%)				16/21 (76%)
Grand Total	12/58 (21%)	12/50 (24%)	20/333 (6%)	12/77 (16%)	9/11 (82%)	12/30 (40%)	12/27 (44%)	4/5 (80%)	93/591 (16%)

Homes in these strata, however, were not uniformly distributed across the sampling frame. For example, 12 out of 22 homes were identified as primarily serving wards located in Fresno County. Thus, we adjusted the home sample sizes in each cell of the sampling frame to attempt to achieve a degree of geographical balance. The initial home sampling frame appears in Exhibit VI-2.

The marginal totals in the bottom row show the overall sample by county, with as few as four homes in Yolo county, and as many as 20 in Los Angeles county. In the far-right column are the marginal totals by category of home.

Within each cell of the sampling frame, homes were randomly drawn to be contacted for this study. Throughout the course of the study, it became evident that some of the selected homes were either unwilling to participate or were otherwise unsuitable (for example, they had no youth age 12 or older). These homes were then randomly replaced by another home within the same sampling frame cell if possible. If the sampling frame cell became exhausted, a suitably close substitute was chosen randomly from a proximate sampling frame cell. The final sample is shown in Exhibit VI-3.

Exhibit VI-3. Final sample of Group Homes number selected / total in frame (percent selected)

Population, Size, RCL Level	Alameda	Fresno	Los Angeles	San Diego	San Mateo	Shasta	Stanislaus	Yolo	Grand Total
Youth, Large, High RCL	1/1 (100%)								1/1 (100%)
Youth, Large, Low RCL	1/1 (100%)		3/30 (10%)	1/3 (33%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)		8/37 (22%)
Youth, Small, High RCL	4/4 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	5/6 (83%)				2/3 (67%)		12/14 (86%)
Youth, Small, Low RCL	4/50 (8%)	2/36 (6%)	3/231 (1%)	4/8 (50%)	6/8 (75%)	11/29 (38%)	9/23 (39%)	2/5 (40%)	41/390 (11%)
Med/Dis, Large, High RCL				1/2 (50%)					1/2 (50%)
Med/Dis, Large, Low RCL	1/1 (100%)		1/3 (33%)	4/14 (29%)					6/18 (33%)
Med/Dis, Small, High RCL		1/1 (100%)							1/1 (100%)
Med/Dis, Small, Low RCL	1/4 (25%)		2/52 (4%)	2/50 (4%)	1/1 (100%)				6/107 (6%)
Wards		8/12 (67%)	6/8 (75%)		1/1 (100%)				15/21 (71%)
Grand Total	12/61 (20%)	12/50 (24%)	20/330 (6%)	12/77 (16%)	9/11 (82%)	12/30 (40%)	12/27 (44%)	2/5 (40%)	91/591 (15%)

Selection of youth

Within each home, anywhere from 2 to 5 youth were randomly sampled, depending on the size of the home and its location. Not knowing the actual enrollment of the group home beforehand, sample selection was based on the total registered capacity of the home according to data provided by Community Care Licensing. A random list of bed numbers was drawn for a given home. The data collectors were asked to draw these identified youth from the case files of the home, where bed #1 corresponded to the first youth file (in alphabetical order), etc. Data collectors completed this task in different ways. In homes where the operator was comfortable

showing the list of residents to our data collector, the data collector drew the random list herself from an alphabetized list. Some homes expressed concerns with revealing all residents names and so data collectors asked the operator to alphabetize their list of current residents and to draw the sample youth based on a random list of numbers provided by the data collector. This sample was sometimes drawn before the visit to the home took place and occasionally when the data collector arrived on site. When a youth who was drawn was unavailable for participation because of age or other factors (e.g., had not lived at a shelter long enough to meet our criteria),⁸⁷ a substitute was drawn from a randomized list. The final number of youth sampled⁸⁸ appears in Exhibit VI-4. If no youth at a home were available for participation, the home was replaced based on the procedure discussed previously.

Exhibit VI-4. Final youth sample counts

Population, Size, RCL Level	Alameda	Fresno	Los Angeles	San Diego	San Mateo	Shasta	Stanislaus	Yolo	Grand Total
Youth, Large, High RCL	5								5
Youth, Large, Low RCL	5		12	4	5	5	5		36
Youth, Small, High RCL	12	3	10				6		31
Youth, Small, Low RCL	13	6	8	10	25	33	31	9	135
Med/Dis, Large, High RCL				4					4
Med/Dis, Large, Low RCL	5		4	16					25
Med/Dis, Small, High RCL		4							4
Med/Dis, Small, Low RCL	5		4	4	4				17
Wards		24	12		4				40
Grand Total	45	37	50	38	38	38	42	9	297

Finally, sampling weights were computed, based on the probability that a particular home was chosen from the sampling frame, and the probability that a given youth was chosen from that particular home.

Creation of youth placement profile instruments

Youth placement profile protocols were designed and implemented by the study team in each county for each youth selected through the methodology discussed above. The profiles include record review and quantitative interviews with school personnel, care providers, caseworkers, youth, and review of databases. Our goal was to provide a quantitative assessment of the issues associated with the policies, procedures and practices at the county level. Through the development of placement profiles, we sought to document how and why particular residential and educational placements were made for our sample of youth over a period of one year.

Protocols for the creation of the youth placement profiles were closely constructed by the study team to capture the following information about each youth in our sample: 1) number and causes

⁸⁷ For a youth residing in a temporary shelter, he or she had to have been living there for at least 30 days or have lived in a foster care placement prior to residing at the shelter.

⁸⁸ These numbers are subject to final auditing, as the data from the field have not been fully reconciled against revisions to the sampling frame.

of changes in residential placements, 2) number and causes of changes in educational placements, 3) amount of time each youth was enrolled in school, 4) length of stay in various educational settings, 5) educational history including current and prior special education status, 6) an estimate of current annual spending (revenue) per youth in our sample (i.e., on group home and on NPS services/other, such as patch funds combined), and finally, 7) educational outcomes for each youth (i.e., number of credits, grades, school advancement). Protocols were reviewed by study stakeholders and former foster youth and were pilot tested in each county. For each caseworker, school, and residential form, particular questions were repeated for every placement the youth had been in during the 12 months prior to when he or she was included in our study sample. Study staff scheduled site visits, and teams ranging from 1 to 5 researchers visited group homes and schools where youth in our sample were, or had been, enrolled. On average, site visits lasted 45 minutes to one hour per youth.

Tracking out-of-state youth

The study team had planned initially to gather data on a small sample of youth placed by our eight case study counties in group homes outside of California in order to provide a complete picture of the education of the state's group home youth. We were unable to do so, however, because the process required getting such data was almost impossible. In two of our eight case study counties, the agency required us to obtain parental consent forms, but parents did not return them. In one of the counties, the agency responsible for the out-of-state placements did not return repeated e-mails and phone calls regarding selecting a sample of out-of-state youth. In one other county, the single out-of-state placement involved a Native American youth; we thus needed to obtain additional consent from both the Tribal Council and the youth's tribal lawyer, which would have taken at least two additional months and was, therefore, not possible within the study timeframe. In one county, we did not receive the court order approving our study until near the end of our data collection timeline, which did not allow us enough time to pursue out-of-state data. And in three counties, there were no youth currently living in group homes out of state. We thus focused out data collection on the vast majority of California group home youth—those who reside in group homes within California.

Chapter VII. Recommendations

Eleven major recommendations are highlighted in this chapter. They flow from the following overarching principles:

- The system should be child-centered, with young peoples' needs dictating the structure, rather than the needs of youth in foster care being force-fit into existing systems. These systems should be modified and joined as needed to assure high-quality services for youth in foster care.
- State and local education agencies must bear the primary responsibility for ensuring appropriate and high-quality educational services for youth in foster care.
- Youth in foster care should be recognized by the state as a special group with unique needs requiring special protections and accommodations. At the same time, youth in foster care must be afforded the same rights as other youth to be served in high quality public schools, when appropriate to their needs.
- Youth in foster care should be protected from any failings of the system (e.g., should not lose partial education credits due to forced relocation).
- Education of youth in foster care should be fully acknowledged as one of the primary services offered by the state in regard to future opportunities and success.
- Youth in foster care should be given a voice in their educational needs and progress, and a right to be heard by those in a position to respond.
- The vital needs of youth in foster care must be considered together (health, education, food, shelter and safety), and all involved agencies must work closely together to ensure their successful integration.
- Educational success is dependent on stability in residential and educational placements.
- All professionals involved with youth in foster care must serve as advocates for the youth in their care

From these overarching principles, a vision of an ideal educational system for youth in foster care was derived. From this vision the study team has attempted to identify where needs are not being met in order to develop the recommendations presented in this chapter. This depiction of an ideal system, followed by eleven recommendations, is discussed in the following section.

The ideal system based on the educational needs of youth in foster care

The study team identified the following basic educational needs of youth in foster care, needs not so different from those of any child:

- Stable, continuous and uninterrupted education
- Immediate enrollment in school if a move is necessary
- Appropriate school placement in a high-quality program according to the unique needs of each youth

- Full records (i.e., credits, special education, prior course schedule, test results, health records, other special needs and foster youth status) for each child fully available to all service providers needing access to them
- Clear lines of responsibility and accountability to ensure educational advancement
- Voice in regard to their educational placement and needs.

In considering an ideal education system for youth in foster care, we attempted not to be bound by existing practices. This ideal system is child-centered, assigns primary responsibility for the education of youth in foster care to education agencies, relies on interagency collaboration and promotes stability and continuity of educational placements.

A flowchart depicting the ideal system is presented below. The flowchart begins with a youth being declared a ward or dependent of the court. The first educational step is to assemble all relevant records about the youth. This task is assigned to the County Office of Education. This office takes responsibility for records throughout the ideal system. The second step is for advocates (in the form of a County Office of Education and/or a District Liaison) to help the youth maintain the educational placement he or she was in before entering the system. This will help bring continuity to the youth's education as well as keep at least one aspect of the child's life stable in a very confusing time.

If the current educational placement cannot be maintained, then the County Office of Education works to ensure immediate enrollment in the next educational placement. Immediate enrollment is crucial because time out of school is very destructive to the educational progress of youth in foster care.

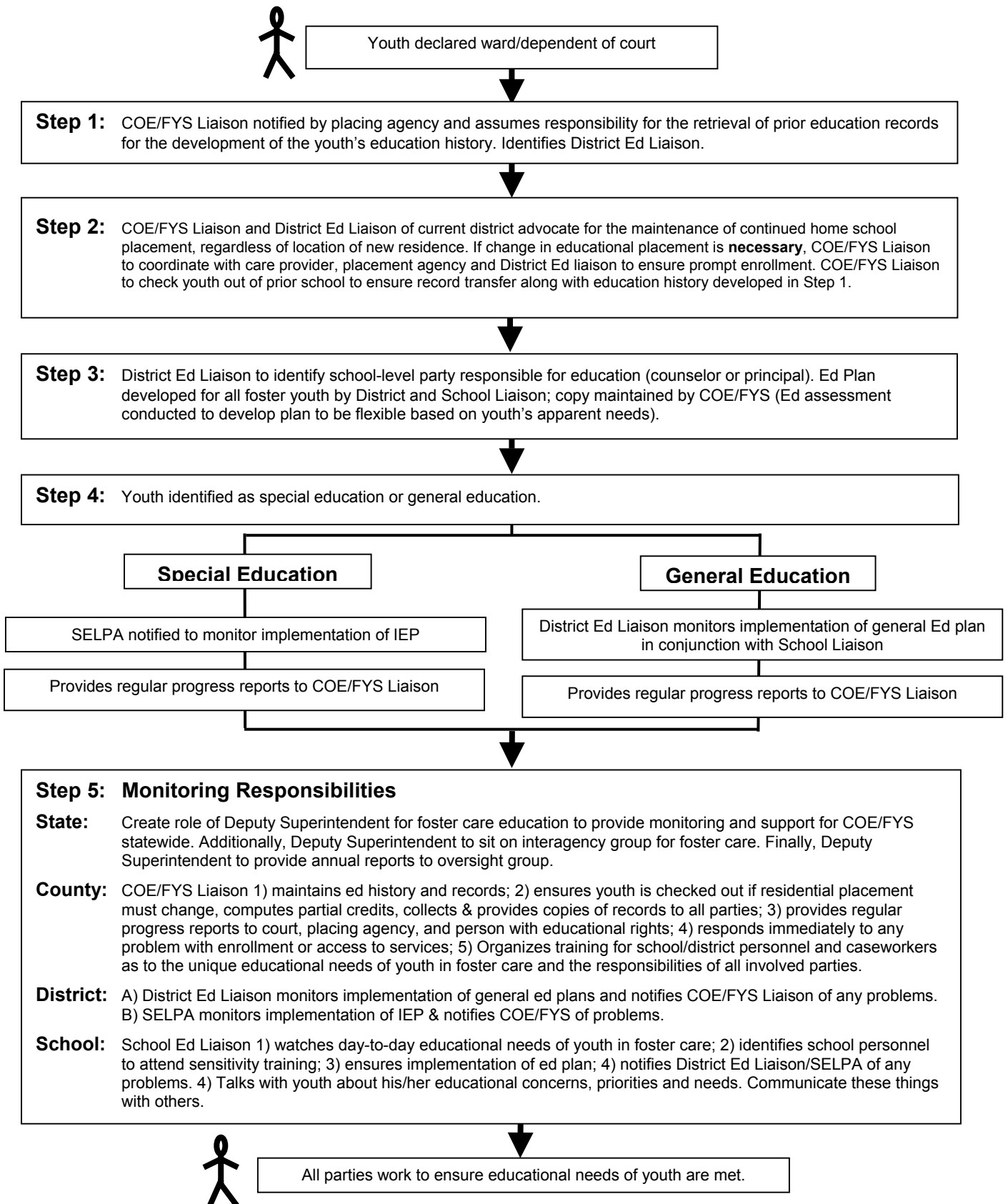
The third step involves the identification of someone at the school where the youth is enrolled who takes responsibility for the youth's day-to-day educational progress. This school liaison is a contact for the youth to voice educational concerns and needs and is trained in the unique educational needs of youth in foster care.

The fourth step in the ideal system involves the identification of the youth as needing special education services or the maintenance of the youth in the general education system. This step identifies the SELPA as the responsible party for overseeing the education of all youth eligible for special education. The District Liaison would share this responsibility as well as oversee the education of all non-special education youth.

The final step depicts monitoring responsibilities for all educational agencies from the Department of Education to the school site. These responsibilities are to be maintained throughout the time the youth is in foster care.

In this system, clear primary responsibility is placed on educational agencies to ensure an appropriate and quality education for youth in foster care. However, these education agencies do not work in isolation. They work cooperatively with other agencies involved in the lives of youth in foster care to ensure educational progress. Identification of the responsibilities of other agencies regarding the education of youth in foster care is discussed in the recommendations, which are presented below.

Exhibit VII-1. Ideal System



Recommendations for change

A number of changes need to occur in order to bridge the gaps between the current system and the ideal system. The following recommendations represent important steps toward the development of an ideal system, and include suggestions for rectifying major deficiencies in the existing system that are necessary to meet the educational needs of youth in foster care.

Recommendation 1:

An alternative to the 100 percent NPS reimbursement formula should be implemented.

As described in the fiscal analysis section of this report, the current funding formula, which reimburses LEAs for 100 percent of the NPS/NPA tuition for certain types of placements and provides no supplemental funding for those youth placed in a public setting, creates a fiscal incentive for educational placements that may not be the most appropriate for the needs of the youth. The proposed alternative funding mechanism creates a “fiscally neutral” environment regarding youth living in LCIs, as described in detail in Chapter II.

Recommendation 2:

Accountability and monitoring of public and nonpublic education received by youth living in LCIs need to be strengthened.

At the county level and state level, there is a concern that no one is held accountable for the educational outcomes of youth in foster care. The future success of these youth depends on receiving a quality education. As described in Chapters II and IV of this report, youth in foster care often fail to receive appropriate and high-quality education services in public and non-public settings. There appear to be a number of causes for this, but ultimately greater accountability and clearer lines of responsibility are needed to ensure that youth in foster care receive a high quality and appropriate education. Recommendations about how to strengthen the accountability and monitoring of the delivery of public and nonpublic education to youth in foster care are described in detail in Chapter II. Beyond accountability for educational outcomes, there is need for increased monitoring of the education of youth in foster care to ensure compliance with existing state and federal law, as described in Chapter IV. Additional recommendations below are designed to improve oversight and monitoring of educational services for youth in foster care.⁸⁹

Recommendation 3:

An independent state and local oversight board should be developed.

The lack of independent oversight of the education of youth in foster care and the lack of repercussions when these youth do not receive an appropriate education are significant weaknesses in the current accountability structure. This lack of accountability exists at the state, county and local levels.

⁸⁹ The need for increased accountability and monitoring of public and nonpublic education received by youth living in foster care was also highlighted as critical by the California Youth Connection (1999).

The AIR study team recommends that an independent oversight board be created at the state level. This board would report to the Legislature on the education of youth in foster care on an annual basis. The board would not take an active role in facilitating the education of foster youth, but would instead focus on ensuring that agencies providing education services are successfully working together to provide high quality and appropriate education for youth in foster care. This group would meet two times per year. State and county interagency working groups, proposed in a separate recommendation below, would be involved in coordinating the delivery of education services. The purpose of the oversight board would be to hold the responsible agencies (CDE, CDSS, CDMH, Probation) accountable for high quality education services for this population and to inform the Legislature accordingly. The board would hold hearings in order to learn from the responsible agencies and others how the education of youth in foster care is improving. For this board to be truly independent, it would be staffed by personnel who do not work for the agencies responsible for ensuring an appropriate education. Board members could include foster youth advocates, former foster youth and other stakeholders.

A similar oversight board should be established in each county. The county oversight board would report to the County Board of Supervisors in the same way that the state oversight board would report to the Legislature.⁹⁰

Recommendation 4:

Change/expand the Ombudsman Office to create independence and to include educational concerns under its purview.

Study staff identified the Foster Care Ombudsman Office as an excellent vehicle for youth advocacy. The office has good mechanisms in place for dealing with situations in which a youth's rights are being violated. However, independence is needed from all of the governmental agencies it is attempting to oversee in order to truly represent the needs and concerns of youth in foster care. Accordingly, the AIR study team recommends separating this office from its current position within the Department of Social Services. This new Ombudsman would be appointed by the Legislature and would, in turn, make regular reports directly to the Legislature about the status and progress of youth in foster care. The office could also make reports to the oversight and monitoring groups described in Recommendation 3.⁹¹ There is precedence for independent Ombudsman offices. In Rhode Island, the Ombudsman is appointed by the Legislature. In Michigan, the Foster Care Ombudsman office has the right of subpoena. Indeed, in Santa Clara County (which is not one of our sample counties) the County Board of Supervisors appoints the county foster care ombudsman, who reports directly to that board.

In addition education should be included as part of this offices overall mandate. This expansion of responsibility would identify a person whom every youth in foster care could turn to with education related concerns. The Ombudsman would work with the identified responsible education party at the state, county, district and school levels (see Recommendation 6) to ensure that the educational concerns of youth in foster care are being properly and promptly addressed.

⁹⁰ These recommendations are similar to those put forth by the Little Hoover Commission in their February 2003 report (Little Hoover Commission, 2003).

⁹¹ These recommendations are similar to those put forth by the Little Hoover Commission in their February 2003 report. (Little Hoover Commission, 2003).

Finally, the Ombudsman's Office would need increased capacity in order to manage the changes discussed above. The office currently employs only ten part-time and full-time staff to field concerns from the entire state.

Recommendation 5:

Interagency working groups regarding education of youth in foster care need to be established at the state and county levels.

Providing an appropriate education to youth in foster care will only succeed if all of the agencies responsible for the youth communicate and cooperate. The provision of the basic needs of youth in foster care, including education, health, shelter and safety, cannot be undertaken in isolation because of their interconnected nature. Although interagency cooperation in several of our sample counties is increasing, there is clear room for improvement at the state level, and in many counties. As described in the state and county findings section of this report, staff at social service agencies at both the state and county levels have expressed difficulty in identifying the office or person responsible for the education of youth in foster care within the CDE, the COE or the LEA. A recommendation of the study team is to clearly delineate this responsibility. In addition, the AIR study team recommends that state and county interagency working groups on the education of youth in foster care be established to facilitate communication.

The state interagency working group should have high-level representation from all responsible agencies, including the CDE, CDSS and CDMH, county probation departments through the County Probation Officers Association (CPOA), as well as from foster care and nonpublic school providers. The Deputy Superintendent responsible for the education of youth in foster care (as described in Recommendation 6) should be the CDE representative and should provide leadership for this group. Memorandums of understanding (MOUs) should be created among the participating agencies to solidify these relationships. This group should meet monthly to discuss cross-agency issues affecting the education of youth in foster care. The group should develop a manual of policies and procedures for ensuring an appropriate education for youth in foster care to be used by counties and respond to any concerns expressed by the county interagency working groups described below.

One of the first issues that should be addressed by this group is how to ensure that policies designed to protect the confidentiality of this population do not hinder the sharing of information that is necessary for the appropriate provision of services. This group should also create a resource website listing all facilities and programs available for the education of foster youth across the state. Many county-level personnel suggested that this would help them to better understand the options available when considering a youth's education. The primary responsibility for the website should lie with the Deputy Superintendent, but other responsible agencies should be involved in its creation and dissemination.

In addition, each county should create an interagency working group that focuses on the education of youth in foster care. Santa Clara County has devised such a group, which could be used as a model for others. For counties that already have an interagency working group focusing on education, it should be considered whether all necessary parties are included. The liaisons (as

described in Recommendation 6) from county social services, county probation, county counsel and the county office of education should meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss systemic difficulties within the county and concerns about particular cases. Current and former foster youth should also serve on this working group in an attempt to increase the voice of youth in the system. This working group should serve as a central point for resolving educational issues with interagency communication and coordination within the county. The local groups should also serve as conduits for communication to and from the state interagency working group.

Recommendation 6:

Unambiguously assign ultimate responsibility for the education of youth in foster care to the State Department of Education, and to county and local education agencies. Clearly define roles regarding the education of youth in foster care for all other involved agencies.

Based on county and state-level findings that indicate confusion regarding who is responsible for which pieces of the education of youth in foster care, we recommend that clear lines of responsibility be drawn among all agencies involved with this population. The ultimate responsibility for the education of youth in foster care should lie with the Department of Education. We therefore recommend delineation of these responsibilities at the state, county, district and school levels as follows:

State: A Deputy Superintendent should be given clear responsibility for the education of youth in foster care. This Deputy Superintendent should sit on the State Interagency Working Group. This group would be responsible for coordinating the overall education of youth in foster care at the state level (see Recommendation 5 for details on this group). The Deputy Superintendent would also report to the Legislature and the Oversight Board (see Recommendation 3) about progress and obstacles in the education of youth in foster care. Finally, the Deputy Superintendent would be responsible for designing training on any new guidelines given by the State Interagency Working Group or the Legislature.

County: Working in coordination with the Deputy Superintendent specified as responsible for the education of youth in foster care, a responsible party should be specified at each county office of education. A strong candidate for this position would be the FYS coordinator, who would be located at the COE. This person would have responsibility for collecting records and establishing and maintaining an educational history for each youth in foster care within the county, including identification of any limitations in parental educational authority and copies of documents such as IEPs, transcripts, assessment records, health records, notes about other special needs and information about foster care status. This county coordinator would also be responsible for advocating for McKinney principles (discussed below) that allow youth to stay in their home school whenever possible (see Recommendation 7). The coordinator would further be responsible for checking a youth out of school and calculating his or her partial credits through coordination with the local district liaisons (see Recommendation 9 for discussion of partial credits). The county coordinator would then ensure immediate enrollment (if a school change was deemed necessary), record transfer, identify the district level liaison and ensure the

development of an educational plan by the district liaison.⁹² The coordinator would then receive reports from district and school liaisons in order to monitor the youth's progress and use these reports to provide information to the court, placing agency and residential placement. Additionally, the coordinator would be responsible for training school personnel about the unique educational needs of youth in foster care. Many FYS Coordinators are already engaging in training activities, as evidenced in the county-level discussion. Finally, the FYS coordinator would be responsible for establishing a county-level interagency group, to meet once per month to discuss the care of youth in foster care (see Recommendation 4).

District/SELPA: Responsibility for the development and monitoring of an education plan for each youth in foster care will fall mostly to the District Liaison (and to the SELPA for special education students). This person would coordinate with the County FYS Coordinator and the school-level liaison. The District/SELPA Liaison would report to the COE/FYS person, who would then report to the courts and other agencies.

School: Each school site should identify a liaison who would work to ensure immediate admission of all youth in foster care in the school's attendance area. This liaison would attend the COE/FYS training on the educational needs of youth in foster care, ensure the implementation of the education plan on a day-to-day basis, and report to District/SELPA and COE/FYS Liaisons with progress and concerns.

Clearly, there are other agencies that play an important role in the education of youth in foster care. Below is a discussion of where the responsibilities of placing agencies, residential care providers and courts lie within the recommended system.

Placing Agency/Residential Care Provider: These two groups would both be responsible for advising COE/FYS when a youth has been moved or is absent (fax to be sent within 12 hours of determination). The placing agency and care provider would ensure that each youth is brought to the attention of the enrollment office within 24 hours of residential placement. In order for these important steps to work smoothly, contracts between placing agencies and residential care providers need to be revisited and made significantly clearer. Financial penalties against the residential care providers for not completing educational responsibilities should be considered as part of these revisions. The placing agency would be responsible for informing the district liaison about any problems with immediate admission to school. Both the placing agency and the care provider should work with school and district liaisons to ensure youths' educational progress.

The AIR study team recommends that a liaison position be created within each county social services agency and county probation department. The liaison from the placing agency would be the point person at their placing agency for education-specific concerns, and would work with the County Office of Education Educational Liaison and the County Counsel Liaison (described below) to address countywide problems and case-specific concerns surrounding the education of youth in foster care. The County Office of Education, placing agency and County Counsel

⁹² Under current education code every student in California is supposed to have an educational plan by the age of 14. While county level findings indicate that this requirement is largely ignored or satisfied only nominally, youth in foster care are a special population and, with out parents to advocate for them, they are in particular need of an education plan upon entry into the social services system.

Liaisons would form the county interagency work group as described in Recommendation 5, above. This liaison model is based on the current Santa Clara model and is similar in principle to the Education Initiative, piloted in Los Angeles County.

Courts: As discussed in the implementation section, involved Juvenile Court Judges are having very positive effects on the education of youth in foster care. Judges and court officials report that to bolster this role in every county, a modification of the rules of the court should occur. This modification would specify that judges “*shall*” monitor and consider education when making rulings. The rules currently read that they “*should*” consider educational placements.⁹³

A liaison should be identified within each County Counsel so that the courts can participate in improving the education of youth in foster care. The County Counsel Liaison should be the point of contact within the placing agencies and County Office of Education. The Liaison would also be a member of the county interagency working group on the education of youth in foster care described in Recommendation 5. The liaison should have full understanding of the structure of the educational system, as well as all educational decisions and options available to youth in foster care. County Counsel can rely on this liaison when making recommendations to the court regarding educational placement. Additionally, through contacts on the interagency working group this liaison would be able to work with LEAs and, likewise, LEAs would have a contact in the County Counsel’s office. The liaison would help make education a priority in the courtroom.

Diagram of Structural Recommendations 3 through 6

Below is a diagram that depicts the structural recommendations described above (Recommendations 3-6) to improve the provision of educational services to youth in foster care. The state-level structural recommendations are shown on the top half of the diagram and the county-level structural recommendations are shown on the bottom half of the diagram.

In order to develop these structural recommendations, the study team applied the concept of Business Process Redesign (BPR) to the governmental structures that control the education of youth in foster care. Business Process Redesign is “the analysis and design of workflows and processes within and between organizations” (Davenport & Short 1990). Grover, Jeong, Kettinger, & Teng (1994) define BPR as “the critical analysis and radical redesign of existing business processes to achieve breakthrough improvements in performance measures.” In the diagram below, the reader will note the “radical redesign” of the system. It was the conclusion of the study team that in order to adequately serve youth in foster care, dramatic changes were needed in the current structure. The study team first evaluated the existing structure, analyzed its shortcomings, developed an ideal model for serving these youth and then sought to transform the current system to reach the ideal model.

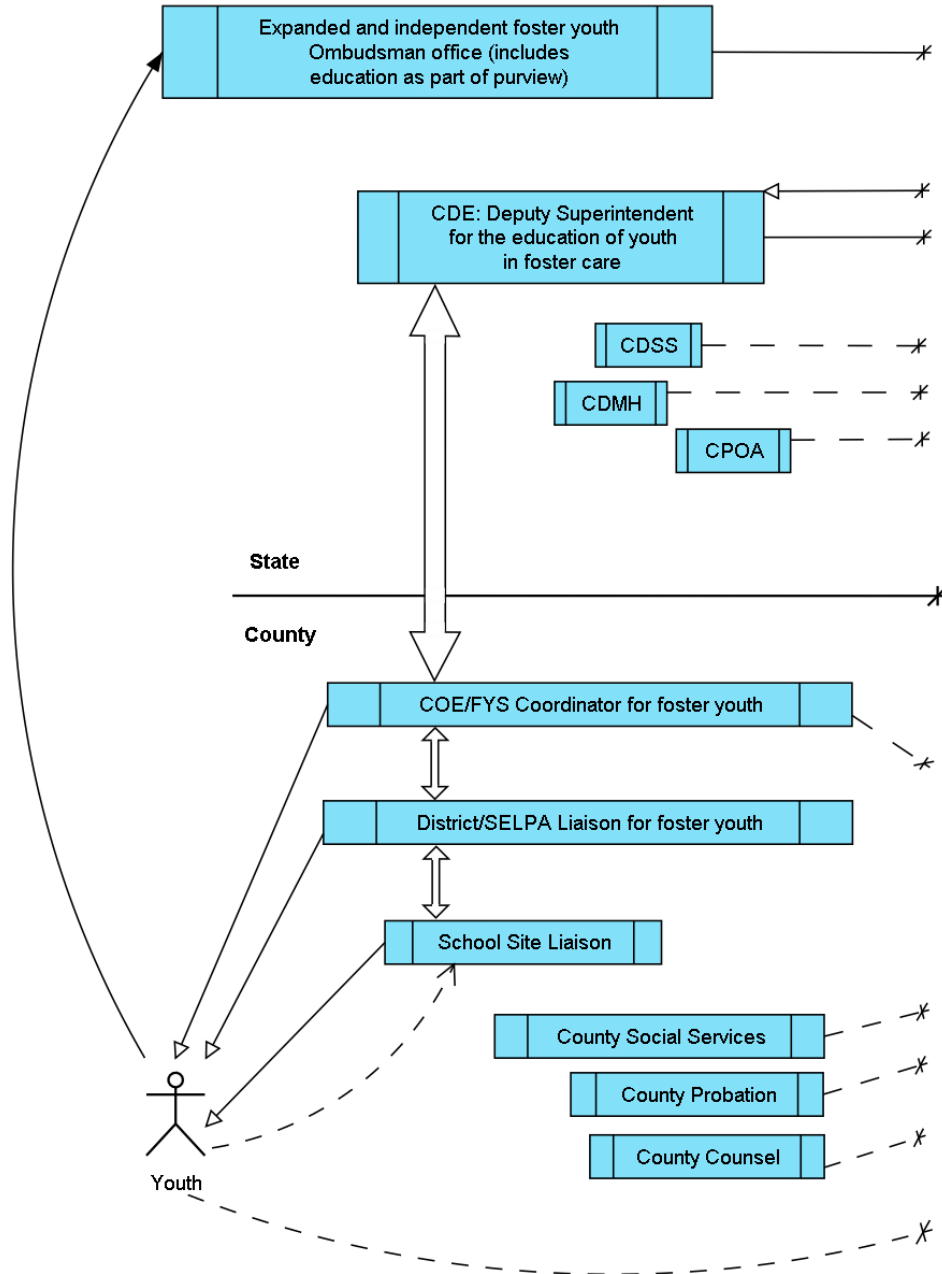
To extend the concepts of BPR further, the Legislature and government agencies must take responsibility for ensuring thorough review of implemented recommendations to ensure that “breakthroughs in performance measures” are, in fact, occurring.

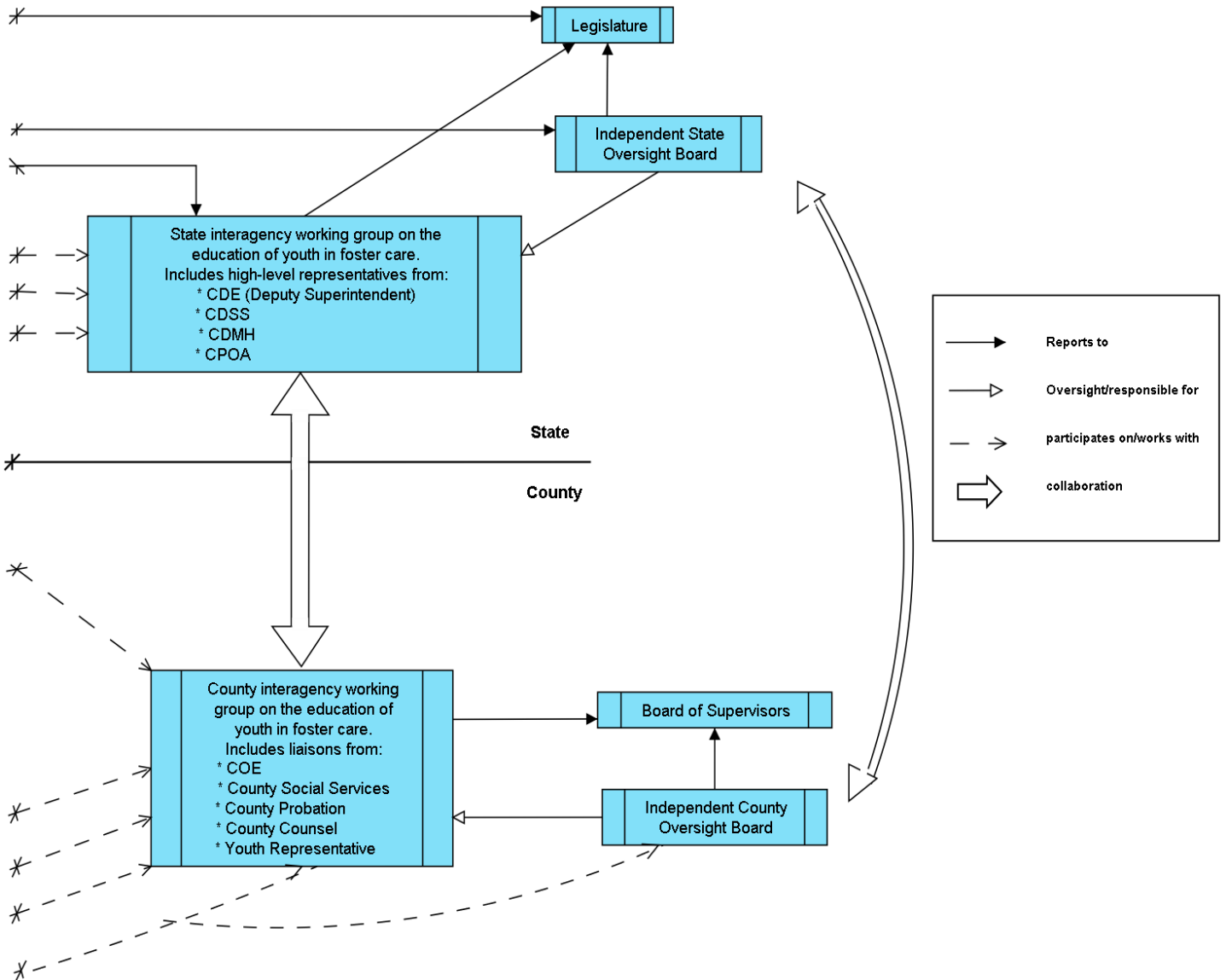
⁹³ Standard 24 Juvenile Court matters: Subdivisions (d)(2), (g) and (h) relating to the role of the juvenile court in the educational process for children under its jurisdiction.

Recommendations relating to increased monitoring of the performance of youth in foster care will help begin the process of ensuring needed improvements.

Structural Recommendations Regarding Education for Youth in Foster Care

State, county, and local education agencies have ultimate responsibility for education with collaboration from Social Services, Probation, Mental Health, and independent oversight





In addition to the structural changes listed above, non-structural recommendations are also made to rectify deficiencies in the current system as described below

Recommendation 7:

Develop legislation similar to the McKinney-Vento Act to ensure continuous enrollment in school and to ensure that whenever possible, youth are kept in their home school when a residential change is necessary. Legislation similar to the McKinney-Vento Act would also mean that youth in foster care need not wait for records prior to enrollment.

A major roadblock to the attainment of an appropriate and adequate education for many youth in foster care is the frequency with which they change schools. Most often, this change in educational placement is due to a change in residential placement. This frequency of educational displacement, in and of itself, makes adequate educational progress very difficult. When a youth changes schools, he or she is forced to quickly adapt to new classes, rules and social environment, which inevitably affects educational progress. Moreover, there is often a delay of anywhere from a few days to a number of weeks before the youth can enroll in the new school, during which time he or she is not attending school at all.

We recommend that the federal legislation passed to protect the educational rights of homeless youth be used as a model for the creation of legislation that would offer similar benefits to youth in foster care. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in December 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Among its provisions are two that are of particular relevance to this issue of frequent school changes and the itinerancy of youth in foster care. The first is that local educational agencies (LEAs) must, to the extent feasible, keep youth in their school of origin regardless of their current residence (unless doing so is against the wishes of the youth's parent or guardian). Moreover, the state and its LEAs are required to ensure that the youth receives transportation to this school. The second significant provision is that if it is deemed in the best interest of the youth to enroll in a new school, that school must immediately enroll the youth, even if the youth lacks records normally required for enrollment (such as medical records, previous academic records, proof of residency, or other documentation). If all youth who live in foster care were included within this Act, the problems inherent in frequent school changes would be greatly minimized, better meeting their educational needs.

Recommendation 8:

Develop a single, statewide web-based system providing access to all involved agencies.

All agencies involved with the care of youth in foster care depend on data to inform their decisions. At the county level, however, data and data management issues are critical factors impeding educational progress for youth in foster care. As discussed in the implementation section, databases are often maintained by multiple agencies, and many of these databases do not contain sufficient or accurate information in order to make important educational decisions about youth. To ensure that all needed information be immediately accessible to service providers as needed, the state will eventually need to create one single statewide, web-based system that would provide access to service providers in all involved agencies based on guidelines determined by the state-level interagency working group.

The state would not have to start from scratch on this task. There are many places to look for models at the county level. As discussed in the implementation section, Los Angeles County has developed the web-based “Passport System,” which is currently under federal review. Expanding such a system statewide, while initially costly, would ensure increased educational progress for youth, help interagency collaboration by avoiding the duplication of data efforts currently found throughout the state and could be critical to improved educational outcomes for youth in foster care. Given the societal costs of the failings of the current system the start-up costs could be soon off set by gains in efficiency.

In creating this database, the state-level interagency group would have to design access with an eye toward balancing concerns about confidentiality and the need to protect youth against the need for information so their progress can be regularly tracked and assessed. It will also be important to include the needs of the court system in decisions about the construction of a statewide database.

Recommendation 9:

Create a system to require the acceptance and awarding of partial credits when a youth has to change schools mid-year.

One of the five fundamental educational needs of youth in foster care that we have identified is educational advancement. Moreover, as stated previously, a crucial overarching principle for a system that effectively serves youth is that youth should not be penalized by current inefficiencies in the system. One area in which youth are currently harmed in their educational advancement is in the transfer of credits from one school to another.

Most regular public schools do not accept or award partial credits. Yet many youth who live in group homes change schools in the middle of a semester, moving either from one regular public school to another, or from a court, community or nonpublic school to a regular public school or vice versa. As a result, these students lose credits for work completed; moreover, they are then forced to retake courses they have already partially finished.

Our recommendation, therefore, is that all public and nonpublic schools in California accept and award partial credits for work satisfactorily completed. A second recommendation is that all regular public, court, community, alternative and nonpublic schools offer sufficiently similar core courses, titled, coded and described in a uniform way so that if a youth must switch schools mid-semester, he or she can continue his or her coursework with minimal disruption.⁹⁴

Recommendation 10:

Interagency training for all personnel involved in the education of youth in foster care (e.g., caseworkers, school personnel, Juvenile Court Judges, educational guardians, CASA, liaisons, as defined above).

In order for youth in foster care to receive an appropriate school placement in a high-quality program, everyone involved in the education of youth in foster care must understand the special

⁹⁴ This recommendation was also highlighted as a priority by the California Youth Connection (1999).

needs of such youth and also have a clear understanding of each party's role and responsibilities in these youths' education.

We therefore recommend that each COE/FYS Liaison provide such training to school personnel, caseworkers, educational guardians, CASA, foster care and nonpublic school providers as well as others involved in the education of youth in foster care. The COE/FYS Liaison should also consider drawing on the experience of outstanding foster care and nonpublic school providers when developing these trainings. Some current FYS programs have already implemented such training, and the results seem to be positive both for the youth they serve and for the trainees, who have mentioned that such training can also serve as a forum for meeting each other and sharing thoughts and ideas on issues surrounding the education of youth in foster care. Training should include a variety of topics. The most important of these is the rules and regulations that govern the education of youth in foster care (discussed in chapter IV), in order to bring the counties and state into compliance with existing law and avoid potential lawsuits. Specifically, training should include a review of IDEA requirements for special education services, public schools' legal responsibility for youth in foster care and the educational responsibilities of care providers and placing agencies.

In conjunction with interagency trainings, the COE/FYS Liaison should develop and execute a systematized strategy for the recruitment and training of educational advocates. As this research demonstrates, and as advocacy groups such as CYC consistently highlight, knowledgeable and neutral advocates are central to ensuring appropriate services, educational progress and, most importantly, youth voice in their own education. COE/FYS should draw on the knowledge of highlighted advocacy groups (such as CASA and CYC) when developing and implementing recruitment and training processes. The state should make recruitment and training of educational advocates a funding priority.

Recommendation 11:

Improvement and increased monitoring of court and community schools by CDE, COEs and LEAs.

Many youth in foster care attend court and community schools, as opposed to regular public schools. In many cases, however, there is little monitoring of these educational programs. Moreover, the number and difficulty of instructional offerings in such schools is reportedly often significantly less than that in regular public schools, making transition back to regular public schools difficult.

We therefore recommend that either CDE, COEs or LEAs be responsible for consistently monitoring court and community schools, and that this monitoring include as one of its goals success in transitioning youth into regular public schools whenever possible. CDE, COEs and LEAs might, therefore, require that court and community schools provide the option of full school days, with the goal of shifting youth from half-days to full days (and then on to regular public school). They should also pay close attention to the content of instruction in court and community schools, ensuring that their level of instruction matches that provided in regular public schools, so that a student transitioning into a regular school is prepared for the level of work expected.

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Appendix A: Fiscal Analysis

In this appendix, details regarding the proposed alternative funding mechanism are presented. As described in Chapter 2 of the report, the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFHs/FFAs is based on a estimate of the special education expenditures for youth living in LCIs, FFA and FFHs.⁹⁵ Using data from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS), the special education services that are provided to this population can be determined. An estimated expenditure for these services can then be assigned using inflated expenditure data published in the California Special Education Incidence Study (Parrish, Kaleba, Gerber & McLaughlin, 1998).⁹⁶ The first section below describes how special education services are categorized in CASEMIS and the algorithm used to assign expenditures. The second section below provides an explanation of the methods used in the Incidence study to derive expenditures for special education services. The third section describes how the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFHs/FFAs is allocated based on a county bed count. The last section of the appendix includes definitions from CASEMIS for residential status, special education service categories, and school types.

Use of placement options in the calculation of the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHS

Special education services that students receive are organized around four possible placement options for students—Nonpublic School (NPS), Special Day Class (SDC), Resource Specialist Program (RSP) and Designated Instructional Service (DIS).⁹⁷ In addition to the student's placement, each student may also receive designated instruction services (DIS) such as language and speech services and physical therapy. These expenditures are in addition to the expenditures of placement, except for a NPS placement for which designated instruction services are considered to be included in the placement expenditure. The categorization of youth into the categories NPS, SDC and RSP follows the algorithm outlined in Chapter 6 of the Incidence report (Parrish, Kaleba, Gerber & McLaughlin, 1998). Specifically, youth were categorized as follows:

If the listed school type was code 70 or 71 (see Exhibit A-2 for school codes), the student was flagged as NPS. If the school type was code 72, the student was not included in the calculation (see fiscal analysis section on who is affected by the 100 percent NPS reimbursement for explanation of out of state youth). Students with service code 43 (Special Day class in an NPS)

⁹⁵ Out of home residential options in CASEMIS include LCIs, FFHs and “residential facilities.” FFAs are considered to be included under the FFH definition in the Educational Code. Residential facilities are unclearly defined in CASEMIS. See CASEMIS definitions section of this appendix. We were informed by CASEMIS staff at CDE that the residential facility definition is essentially the same as for a residential school. However, a residential facility would also include any facilities where the primary reason for the student's attendance is for reasons other than school. It is unclear as to how a residential facility differs from an LCI so we have included youth residing in residential facilities in our calculations. The study team recommends that a clearer definition for residential facility be adopted and shared with those responsible for entering CASEMIS data.

⁹⁶ The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was used to inflate the 1997-1998 figures found in the Study of Incidence of Disabilities to the 2001-2002 figures shown above. This resulted in an overall inflation adjustment of 12.7 percent. In regard to a final adjustment to the proposed allocation, the state may wish to use the standard cost of living adjustment (COLA) generally used by the state for adjustments to education spending. We estimate that this alternative would result in a somewhat higher overall inflationary adjustment of 14.84 percent.

⁹⁷ DIS is used as a primary expenditure whenever a student receives a DIS service, but does not have a primary placement in a NPS, SDC or RSP

but not listed as officially NPS (i.e., do not attend a school with code 70, 71, or 72) are flagged as NPS.

For those not in an NPS:

If the student has service codes 25, 26, or 65 (see Exhibit A-3 for service codes), that student is flagged as having a resource specialist (RSP).

If the student has service codes of 41, 42, or 43, that student is flagged with a special day class (SDC).

Note that some students may be labeled both RSP and SDC if they receive services from both categories. For these students, the base expenditures for RSP and SDC are both applied.

Derivation of expenditures and assignment of services documented in CASEMIS

As described in the fiscal analysis section of this report, estimated expenditures for special education services were assigned using inflated data published in the California Special Education Incidence Study (Incidence study) in 1998. Below is an explanation of the methods used in the Incidence Study to derive expenditures for special education services.

The purpose of the analysis in the Incidence study was to develop a uniform set of procedures for measuring variations in services received by students across the state. The research team for the Incidence study constructed a model that compared the placement and related services of students to the special education personnel providing these services. This analysis was conducted primarily on the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) and the Special Education Personnel Data Report. In addition, the Special Education Personnel Data Report provides information on the numbers of teachers, administrators and other certificated staff providing special education services. The state's J-50 files supplemented this with selected financial information and the distribution of aides. Using CASEMIS and the state's personnel data report for standardized counts of special education personnel by job category, quantities of teacher and aide time were assigned to individual students based on their primary special education placement and the related services received. For example, Language and Speech is one of the related services listed on CASEMIS. Concurrently, the Personnel Data Report provides a count of Language and Speech Specialists statewide. We generated a count of the total number of students receiving speech therapy statewide and compared it to the total number of language and speech specialists across the state for the purpose of determining a ratio of services to personnel. This ratio was then multiplied by a single statewide standardized teacher salary and benefit amount. This value was the projected cost of salary and benefits for one student receiving speech therapy. This approach was applied for all instructional services and placements in CASEMIS. The results of this program and service cost analysis have been inflated for the current study to reflect 2001-2002 costs and are summarized in Exhibits A-1, A-2, and A-3 below.

The expenditures for services for each category of service is computed as follows:

- For students designated NPS, the expenditure is a flat rate of \$25,139.

- For those not in an NPS,
 - If the student is flagged as SDC, a rate based on their primary disability code (see Exhibit A-1) is accumulated.
 - If the student is flagged as RSP only, the rate of \$4,749 (expenditure of service code 65) is accumulated.

Expenditures associated with all services received are accumulated. Some services are excluded for SDC or RSP expenditure calculations, as they are already figured into the base rate (see Exhibit A-3 for complete list of inclusions and exclusions).

Exhibit A-1. Disability codes and associated expenditures for SDC

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
10	Mental Retardation (MR)	\$10,491
20	Hard of Hearing (HH)	\$16,486
30	Deafness (DEAF)	\$19,233
40	Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	\$10,491
50	Visual Impairment (VI)	\$16,486
60	Emotional Disturbance (ED)	\$18,777
70	Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	\$17,632
80	Other Health Impairment (OHI)	\$10,491
81	Established Medical Disability (EMD)	\$10,491 ⁹⁸
90	Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	\$8,280
100	Deaf-Blindness (DB)	\$28,850
110	Multiple Disability (MD)	\$21,907
120	Autism (AUT)	\$18,777
130	Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	\$21,907
Weighted Average Expenditure:		\$23,966

Source: Disability codes and labels from CAESMIS and inflated expenditure figures from Parrish et al. (1998).

⁹⁸ Set to equal expenditure of code 80—direct expenditure data not available.

Exhibit A-2. School code labels and expenditures. Note that this model pegs all NPS expenditures at average of codes 70 and 71. The average NPS figure of \$25,139 is used.

<i>School Code</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
0	No school	
10	Public day school	
11	Public residential school	
19	Other public school or facility	
20	Continuation school	
21	Education clinic	
22	Alternative work education center	
23	Work-study program	
24	Independent study	
25	Alternative education	
30	Juvenile Court school	
31	Community school	
32	Correctional institution or facility	
40	Home school at parent's home	
45	Hospital facility	
50	Community college	
51	Adult education program	
55	Charter school (operated by an LEA/district)	
56	Charter school (operated as an LEA/district)	
61	Head Start program	
62	Child development or child care facility	
63	State preschool	
64	Private preschool	
65	Extended day care	
70	Nonpublic day school	\$24,340
71	Nonpublic residential school – in California	\$25,938
72	Nonpublic residential school – outside California	\$25,938
75	Private day school (not certified by Special Education Division)	
76	Private residential school (not Certified by Special Education Division)	
80	Parochial school	

Source: School codes and labels from CAESMIS. Figures from Parrish et al. (1998)

In Exhibit A-3, the RSP and SDC columns indicate whether a particular service is counted in the DIS expenditure column for RSP and SDC designated youth. For youth designated as SDC, we omit codes 40 through 43 from the DIS expenditure calculations (this expenditure is already included in the SDC base expenditure). For students designated RSP, we discard any service entries for codes 20, 25, 26, and 65 (the expenditure of code 65 is the base expenditure for an RSP student). We retain the code of 40 to reflect the expense of special day inclusion for an RSP student. For students not designated NPS, RSP, or SDC, all service expenditures apply.

Exhibit A-3. Service codes and associated unit expenditures

<i>Code</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Unit Expenditure</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>RSP</i>	<i>SDC</i>
20	Regular class with accommodation	\$4,749	= RSP Expenditure		√
25	Resource services (school-based program)	\$4,749	= RSP Expenditure		√
26	Resource specialist program	\$4,749	= RSP Expenditure		√
40	Special day inclusion services	\$23,966	Average SDC expenditure	√	
41	Special day class in public integrated facility	\$23,966	Average SDC expenditure		
42	Special day class in public separate facility	\$23,966	Average SDC expenditure		
43	Special day class in nonpublic school	\$25,139	Average NPS expenditure		
50	Language and speech	\$1,496		√	√
51	Home and hospital	\$12,917		√	√
52	Adapted physical education	\$1,533		√	√
53	Audiological services	\$824		√	√
54	Individual counseling	\$1,496		√	√
55	Group counseling	\$1,496		√	√
56	Guidance services	\$1,496		√	√
57	Occupational therapy	\$2,060		√	√
58	Physical therapy	\$1,229		√	√
59	Orientation and mobility	\$5,718		√	√
60	Parent counseling	\$1,496		√	√
62	Social work services	\$1,496		√	√
63	Vocational education training	\$1,812		√	√
64	Recreation services, includes therapeutic recreation	\$1,533		√	√
65	(**RSP) Individual and small group instruction	\$4,749	Base RSP Expenditure		√
66	Vision services	\$9,545		√	√
67	Specialized driver training	\$9,545		√	√
68	Psychological services	\$1,496		√	√
71	Specialized services for low incidence disabilities	\$9,545		√	√
72	Health and nursing - specialized physical health care services	\$9,545		√	√
73	Health and nursing - other services	\$7,821		√	√
74	Interpreter services	\$7,821		√	√
75	Education technology services	\$7,821		√	√
76	Behavior management services	\$7,821		√	√
77	Assistive services	\$7,821		√	√
78	Braille transcription	\$7,821		√	√
79	Reader services	\$7,821		√	√
80	Note taking services	\$7,821		√	√
84	Transition services	\$2,279		√	√
85	Vocational counseling	\$2,279		√	√
86	Deaf and hard of hearing services	\$9,545		√	√
87	Respite care services	\$5,087	Average DIS expenditure	√	√
90	Transportation	\$4,954	Average expenditure taken from national SEEP	√	√
99	Other special education services	\$5,087	Average DIS expenditure	√	√

Source: Services codes and labels from CAESMIS. Unit Expenditure inflated from figures in Parrish et al. (1998)

Allocation of the special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFHs/FFAs among counties Table A-4 shows the initial special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHs amount of \$214, 207,321 which is based on an estimate of the special education expenditures for youth living in LCIs, FFA and FFHs as described above. The revenue limit that is subtracted (see Chapter II for explanation) is the based on the student's district of residence, meaning the district where the LCI, FFA or FFH is located. We recommend that revenue limit funds be subtracted from the \$214 million base. The amount of revenue limit funds for the population of students in CASEMIS who are living in LCIs, FFAs, and FFHs is equal to \$41,559,409, resulting in a special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFHs/FFAs amount of \$172,647,912.⁹⁹ The total special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHs amount of \$172,647,912 is the initial funding amount less the revenue limit funds generated by each student based on their district. The total number of youth living in group homes, FFAs and FFHs in the state is 56,536. This count is based on group home capacity data received from the CDSS Rate Bureau and actual census figures for FFAs and FFHs. (see note 1). Column two in the table below shows weights assigned by bed type, as determined through consultation of the Finance Committee, based on the level of additional educational services that may be needed by a youth placed in a bed of that type. This is further discussed in the Chapter 2 of the report. The assigned weight is then used to generate a per youth funding amount which is shown in the last column. For each county, the number and type of beds are multiplied by the appropriate per youth funding amount shown below to determine the level of funding the county receives under the proposed alternative funding mechanism.

⁹⁹ The deduction of \$41,559,409 in revenue limit funding is based on the district revenue limit amount as provided by the CDE, Fiscal Services Division, for students in CASEMIS who are in out of home placements and receiving NPS or SDC (and SDC/RSP) services. The revenue limit amount is not deducted for students who receive RSP or DIS services since these students would still require general classroom services. The district of residence code is used to identify these students. Again the proposed model treats the revenue limit funds in the same way as they are treated for the 100% NPS reimbursement, i.e., the state reimburses the SELPA for costs in excess of the revenue limit amount.

Exhibit A-4. Special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHs allocation based on bed weights

Initial special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHs	\$ 214,207,321
Less revenue limit	\$ (41,559,409)
<hr/>	
Total special education appropriation for youth in LCIs/FFAs/FFHs	\$ 172,647,912
FFH+FFA+GH youth (Note 1)	52,069
Allocation per youth	\$3,316

Weighted Model

Category	Weight	N Youth	Total \$	\$ Per Youth
FFH Weight	1.0	15,828	\$ 21,583,238	\$ 1,364
FFA Weight	2.0	22,825	\$ 62,249,179	\$ 2,727
(Note 2) Group Home RCL 3 Weight	2.0	28	\$ 76,363	\$ 2,727
RCL 4 Weight	2.0	83	\$ 226,361	\$ 2,727
RCL 5 Weight	2.0	200	\$ 545,447	\$ 2,727
RCL 6 Weight	2.0	183	\$ 499,084	\$ 2,727
RCL 7 Weight	2.0	425	\$ 1,159,076	\$ 2,727
RCL 8 Weight	2.0	711	\$ 1,939,065	\$ 2,727
RCL 9 Weight	2.0	954	\$ 2,601,784	\$ 2,727
RCL 10 Weight	4.0	2,214	\$ 12,076,204	\$ 5,454
RCL 11 Weight	4.0	1,566	\$ 8,541,705	\$ 5,454
RCL 12 Weight	6.0	5,550	\$ 45,408,492	\$ 8,182
RCL 13 Weight	8.0	42	\$ 458,176	\$ 10,909
RCL 14+ Weight	8.0	1,310	\$ 14,290,721	\$ 10,909
(Unknown RCL)	4.9	150	\$ 993,018	\$ 6,620
Total		52,069	\$ 172,647,912	\$ 3,316

Note 1: Figures for Group Home (GH) enrollment are not available - we use total capacity here.
 Figures for FFH and FFA's are 12 month averages (September 01 through August 02) of actual enrollment
 GH Source: CDSS Rate Bureau
 FFH/FFA Source: CWS/CMS tables in http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/CWS-CMS2-C_412.htm

Definitions from CASEMIS

Definitions from CASEMIS for residential status, special education service categories, and school types are included below.

Residential Status CASEMIS Definitions (CASEMIS Manual, 2001-2002)

Parent Or Legal Guardian: This includes natural or adoptive parents and surrogate parents or other persons or relatives who have legal custody of children.

Licensed Children's Institution (LCI): Licensed Children's Institution is a residential facility which is licensed by the state, or other public agency which has delegated authority by contract with the state to license, to provide nonmedical care to children, including, but not limited to, individuals with exceptional needs. "Licensed Children's Institution", in addition, includes a group home as defined by *subdivision (a) of Section 80001 of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations*. See *Education Code Section 56155.5(a)* for exclusions.

Foster Family Home (FFH): Foster Family Home is a family residence which is licensed by the state, or other public agency which has delegated authority by contract with the state to license, to provide 24-hour nonmedical care and supervision for not more than six foster children, including, but not limited to, individuals with exceptional needs. "Foster family home", in addition, includes a small family home as defined in *paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) of Section 1502 of the Health and Safety Code (E.C. 56155.5(b))*.

Hospital: A public hospital, state-licensed children's hospital, psychiatric hospital, proprietary hospital, or a health facility for medical purposes. (*E.C. 56167(a)*). It does not include state hospital (see below).

Residential School: A Residential School is a nonsectarian school where a student with exceptional needs resides on a 24-hour basis and receives special education and related services at the school. This includes both public and private facilities.

Incarcerated Institution: Individuals with exceptional needs who have been adjudicated by the Juvenile Court, for placement in a juvenile hall or juvenile home, day center, ranch, or camp, or for individuals with exceptional needs placed in a county community school (*E.C. 56150*); includes placement in California Youth Authority and other public correctional institutions.

State Hospital: A state hospital is a residential facility operated by the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Developmental Center: A Developmental Center is a residential facility operated by the California Department of Developmental Services

Special Education Service Categories (CASEMIS MANUAL, 2001-2002)

Regular Class with Accommodations: Student is educated in the general education classroom. Accommodations to the general education curriculum are determined and implemented through collaboration between general and special education personnel.

Resource Services (school-based program): Services to address student's IEP goals are provided in an integrated resource program including general education and special education program options.

Resource Specialist Program: Resource Program Specialist Program is a special education service that provides instruction and services to those students whose needs have been identified in an IEP, and are assigned to regular classroom teachers for the majority of a school day.

Special Day Inclusion Services: Student is educated in the general education classroom. Modifications to the general curriculum are usually required more than 50 percent of the school day.

Special Day Class in public integrated facility: is a placement setting that provides intensive instruction and services to pupils when the nature or severity of the disability precludes their participation in the regular school program for a majority of a school day. This includes children placed in self-contained special classrooms with part-time instruction in a regular class or self-contained special classrooms full-time on a regular school campus. (*E.C. 56364*).

Special Day Class in public separate facilities: a placement setting in which disabled children and youth receive special education and related services for a majority of the school day in a public separate facility.

Special Day Class in nonpublic school: a placement setting in which disabled children and youth receive special education and related services for a majority of the school day in a nonpublic facility.

Language And Speech: Language and speech services provide remedial intervention for eligible individuals with difficulty understanding or using spoken language. The difficulty may result from problems with articulation (excluding abnormal swallowing patterns, if that is the sole assessed disability); abnormal voice quality, pitch, or loudness; fluency; hearing loss; or the acquisition, comprehension, expression of spoken language. Language deficits or speech patterns resulting from unfamiliarity with the English language and from environmental, economic or cultural factors are not included. Services include; specialized instruction and services; monitoring, reviewing, and consultation. They may be direct or indirect including the use of a speech consultant.

Home And Hospital: Services delivered in the home or hospital to a student when, for medical reasons (including psychiatric reasons) or any other reasons, the student is unable to attend school.

Adapted Physical Education: Direct physical education services provided by an adapted physical education specialist to pupils who have needs that cannot be adequately satisfied in other physical education programs as indicated by assessment and evaluation of motor skills performance and other areas of need. It may include individually designed developmental activities, games, sports and rhythms, for strength development and fitness, suited to the capabilities, limitations, and interests of individual students with disabilities who may not safely, successfully or meaningfully engage in unrestricted participation in the vigorous activities of the general or modified physical education program. (*CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.5*).

Audiological Services: These services include measurements of acuity, monitoring amplification, and Frequency Modulation system use. Consultation services with teachers, parents or speech pathologists must be identified in the IEP as to reason, frequency and duration of contact; infrequent contact is considered assistance and would not be included. (*CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.2*)

Counseling: One-to-one counseling, provided by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP. Counseling may focus on aspects, such as educational, career, personal; or be with parents or staff members on learning problems or guidance programs for students. Individual counseling is expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR Sec. 300.24(b)(2), (CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.9).

Group Counseling: Counseling in a group setting, provided by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP. Group counseling is typically social skills development, but may focus on aspects, such as educational, career, personal; or be with parents or staff members on learning problems or guidance programs for students. IEP-required group counseling is expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR Sec. 300.24(b)(2)); CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.9)

Guidance Services: Guidance services include interpersonal, intrapersonal or family interventions, performed in an individual or group setting by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP. Specific programs include social skills development, self-esteem building, parent training, and assistance to special education students supervised by staff credentialed to serve special education students. These services are expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR 300.306; CCR Title 5 Sec 3051.9).

Occupational Therapy: Occupational Therapy (OT) includes services to improve student's educational performance, postural stability, self-help abilities, sensory processing and organization, environmental adaptation and use of assistive devices, motor planning and coordination, visual perception and integration, social and play abilities, and fine motor abilities. Both direct and indirect services may be provided within the classroom, other educational settings or the home; in a group or on an individual basis; and may include therapeutic techniques to develop abilities; adaptations to the student's environment or curriculum; and consultation and collaboration with other staff and parents. Services are provided, pursuant to an IEP, by a qualified occupational therapist registered with the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board. (CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.6, E.C. Part 30 Sec. 56363).

Physical Therapy: These services are provided, pursuant to an IEP, by a registered physical therapist, or physical therapist assistant, when assessment shows a discrepancy between gross motor performance and other educational skills. Physical therapy includes, but is not limited to, motor control and coordination, posture and balance, self-help, functional mobility, accessibility and use of assistive devices. Services may be provided within the classroom, other educational settings or in the home; and may occur in groups or individually. These services may include adaptations to the student's environment and curriculum, selected therapeutic techniques and activities, and consultation and collaborative interventions with staff and parents. (B&PC Ch. 5.7, CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.6, EC Part 30 Sec. 56363, GC-Interagency Agreements Ch. 26.5 Sec. 7575(a)(2)).

Orientation And Mobility: Students with identified visual impairments are trained in body awareness and to understand how to move. Students are trained to develop skills to enable them to travel safely and independently around the school and in the community. It may include consultation services to parents regarding their children requiring such services according to an IEP.

Parent Counseling: Individual or group counseling provided by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP to assist the parent(s) of special education students in better understanding and meeting their child's needs; may include parenting skills or other pertinent issues. IEP-required parent counseling is expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR Sec. 300.24(b)(7); CCR Title 5 Sec 3051.11).

Social Work Services: Social Work services, provided pursuant to an IEP by a qualified individual, includes, but are not limited to, preparing a social or developmental history of a child with a disability; group and individual counseling with the child and family; working with those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; and mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to learn as effectively as possible in his or her educational program. Social work services are expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR Sec. 300.24(b)(13) ; CCR Title 5 Sec 3051.13).

Vocational Education Training: Organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment and may include provision for work experience, job coaching, development and/or placement, and situational assessment.

Recreational Services: Therapeutic recreation programs assist the student in becoming as independent as possible in leisure activities and recreation programs in schools and community agencies. (Title V Section 3051.15).

Individual And Small Group Instruction: Instruction delivered one-to-one or in a small group as specified in an IEP enabling the individual(s) to participate effectively in the total school program.

Vision Services: This is a broad category of services provided to students with visual impairments. It includes assessment of functional vision; curriculum modifications necessary to meet the student's educational needs—including Braille, large type, aural media; instruction in areas of need; concept development and academic skills; communication skills (including alternative modes of reading and writing); social, emotional, career, vocational, and independent living skills. It may include coordination of other personnel providing services to the students (such as transcribers, readers, counselors, orientation & mobility specialists, career/vocational staff, and others) and collaboration with the student's classroom teacher. (CAC Title 5 Sec. 3030(d), EC 56364.1).

Specialized Driver Training: Any specialized or modified instructions needed to supplement the regular driver training program. (Title V Section 3051.8(a)).

Psychological Services: These services, provided by a credentialed or licensed psychologist pursuant to an IEP, include interpreting assessment results to parents and staff in implementing the IEP; obtaining and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions related to learning; planning programs of individual and group counseling and guidance services for children and parents. These services may include consulting with other staff in planning school programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated in the IEP. (CFR Part 300 Sec.

300.24). IEP-required psychological services are expected to supplement the regular guidance and counseling program. (34 CFR Sec. 300.24); CCR Title 5 Sec 3051.10).

Specialized Services For Low Incidence Disabilities: Low incidence services are defined as those provided to the student population of orthopedically impaired (OI), visually impaired (VI), deaf, hard of hearing (HH), or deaf-blind (DB). Typically, services are provided in education settings by an itinerant teacher or the itinerant teacher/specialist. Consultation is provided to the teacher, staff and parents as needed. These services must be clearly written in the student's IEP, including frequency and duration of the services to the student. (CCR Title 5 Sec. 3051.16 & 3051.18).

Health And Nursing—Specialized Physical Health Care Services: This includes specialized services provided pursuant to an IEP, such as catheterization, gavage feeding, suctioning, nebulizer treatments, blood glucose monitoring, administration of oxygen, plus any other specialized services in an education setting that may be provided by a trained staff member and does not require the direction or supervision of a physician. (EC 49423.5(b))

Health And Nursing—Other Services: This includes services that are provided to individuals with exceptional needs by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP when a student has health problems which require nursing intervention beyond basic school health services. Services include managing the health problem, consulting with staff, group and individual counseling, making appropriate referrals and maintaining communication with agencies and health care providers. These services do not include any physician-supervised or specialized health care service. IEP-required health and nursing services are expected to supplement the regular health services program. 34 CFR 300.306; CCR Title 5 Sec 3051.12).

Interpreter Services: Sign language interpretation of spoken language to individuals, whose communication is normally sign language, by a qualified sign language interpreter. This includes conveying information through the sign system of the student or consumer and tutoring students regarding class content through the sign system of the student. (CCR Title 5, Sec. 3051.16)

Education Technological Services: Any specialized training or technical support for the incorporation of assistive devices, adapted computer technology or specialized media with the educational programs to improve access for students.

Behavior Management Services: A systematic implementation of procedures designed to promote lasting, positive changes in the student's behavior resulting in greater access to a variety of community settings, social contacts, public events, and placement in the least restrictive environment. (Title V Section 3001(d)).

Assistive Services: The term includes a functional analysis of the student's needs for assistive technology; selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, or repairing appropriate devices; coordinating services with assistive technology devices; training or technical assistance for students with a disability, the student's family, individuals providing education or rehabilitation services, and employers. (34 CFR Part 300.6).

Braille Transcription: Any transcription services to convert materials from print to Braille. It may include text books, tests, worksheets, or anything necessary for instruction. The transcriber should be qualified in English Braille as well as Nemeth Code (mathematics) and be certified by appropriate agency.

Reader Services: Any specialized assistance given to the visually impaired student for the purpose of orally reading material the student cannot read independently. This may include, but is not limited to, assistive technology such as a closed circuit TV reader, or peer assigned to read to the student. This does not include instruction in the process of learning how to read.

Note Taking Services: Any specialized assistance given to the student for the purpose of taking notes when the student is unable to do so independently. This may include, but is not limited to, copies of notes taken by another student, transcription of tape recorded information from a class, or aide designated to take notes. This does not include instruction in the process of learning how to take notes.

Transition Services: These services may include program coordination, case management and meetings, and crafting linkages between schools and between schools and post-secondary agencies.

Vocational Counseling: This includes career counseling to assist student in assessing his/her aptitudes, abilities, and interests in order to make realistic career decisions. (*Title V Section 3051.14*).

Deaf And Hard of Hearing Services: These services include speech therapy, speech reading, auditory training and/or instruction in the student's mode of communication. Rehabilitative and educational services; adapting curricula, methods, and the learning environment; and special consultation to students, parents, teachers, and other school personnel may also be included. (*Title V Sections 3051.16 and 3051.18*).

Respite Care Services: Through the IFSP process, short-term care given in-home or out-of-home, which temporarily relieves families of the ongoing responsibility for specialized care for child with a disability (**Note: only for infants and toddlers from birth through 2, but under 3.**)

Transportation: (Definition is not in CASEMIS manual; this information is from an email received from CASEMIS staff) Transportation services are related to the child's disability in accordance to the IEP and are different from what the student's non-disabled peers would receive.

School Types (CASEMIS MANUAL, 2001-2002)

Public Separate School: Public separate school means public separate day school facilities where students with disabilities receive special education services for a majority of the school day. This may include children placed in:

- Public day schools for students with disabilities; or
- Public day schools for students with disabilities for a portion of the school day (greater than 50%) and in regular school buildings for the remainder of the school

Private Separate School: Private separate school (under the federal placement categories) is a nonpublic day school, program or agency where students with disabilities receive special education services for a majority of the school day at public expense. It does **not** include private residential schools. Note that this definition is not the same as Nonpublic placement setting in California

Public Residential School: Public residential school is a public residential facility where students with disabilities receive special education services for a majority of the school day.

Private Residential School: Private residential school (under the federal placement categories) is a nonpublic residential facility where students with disabilities receive special education services for a majority of the school day at public expense. It does **not** include private day schools. Note that this definition is not the same as Nonpublic placement setting in California.

Homebound/Hospital Program: This category includes students with disabilities who are placed in and receive special education services in hospital programs or homebound programs. It includes state hospitals, developmental centers, and community projects operated by the state agency of developmental services. It also includes teaching hospitals.

Correctional Facility: This category is used when students with disabilities receive special education services in a correctional institution. This includes (a) short-term detention facilities (community-based or residential) or (b) correctional facilities operated by the Department of Corrections and the California Youth Authority. Note that students reported under this category are **duplicated counts**. An agency reporting students in correctional facilities **shall** also report the same students under other appropriate federal placement categories.

Other Private School: Other private school (under the federal placement categories) is an option when students with disabilities **are placed by their parents or guardians** in regular parochial or other private schools and whose basic education is paid through private resources. Special education services are provided at public expense by an LEA or SELPA through an Individualized Services Plan (ISP) in accordance with the district's policy for serving a proportionate share of students with disabilities in private schools. Note that the students reported under this category are **duplicated counts**. These students are also reported in other federal placement categories.

Selected School Types Public Day School: Day schools operated or administered by a public agency to provide instruction in general education. This includes schools listed in the *California Public Schools Directory* published by the California Department of Education. This category does not include residential school, or other types of schools listed under this field.

Public Residential School: Schools operated or administered by a public agency to provide instruction in general education, where students reside at the same location. This category does not include any other types of schools listed under this field.

Continuation School: Continuation schools primarily serve students 16 through 18 years old by providing individualized instruction and flexible scheduling to meet their individual graduation needs, while allowing them to comply with the compulsory part-time attendance laws. It, also, is mandated to provide guidance, placement, and follow-up services to students. (*EC 48400-48454, CAC Title 5 Sec 11000-11010*).

Education Clinic: Education clinic provides appropriate educational services to school dropouts through recruitment or referral. These services may include: instruction in basic academic skills, motivation, employment or re-entry orientation. The goal is transition to either public school, diploma equivalency program, vocational program, military or other service program, or post-secondary education.

Alternative Work Education Center: An alternative program to teach basic academic skills, with emphasis on the improvement of student motivation for achievement in order to obtain employment or to return to regular high school. Center will operate on a clinical, client-centered basis; and provide classroom instruction, on-the-job training, career counseling and placement services. (*EC 52900*).

Work-Study Program: A program administered by the Student Aid Commission to provide an opportunity for college students to earn money while gaining experience in educationally beneficial or career-related employment. (*EC 69951*).

Independent Study: An alternative to classroom instruction consistent with a school district's course of study. This is an instructional strategy (not a categorical program) that responds to an individual's needs and styles of learning. (*EC 46300(3), 51745-51749.5, CCR Title 5 Sec 11700-11703*).

Alternative Education: An alternative program to teach basic academic skills, with emphasis on the improvement of student motivation for achievement in order to obtain employment or to return to regular high school. Center will operate on a clinical, client-centered basis. (*EC 52900*).

Court Schools: An alternative program that serves the educational needs of students who are under the protection or authority of the Juvenile Court or local school district. The County Office of Education provides for the education programs in juvenile ranches, camps and schools, as well as juvenile halls. Students are placed in Juvenile Court schools when referred by the Juvenile Court or a deputy probation officer. These programs seek to transition the students back to an

appropriate educational, training, and/or employment setting upon release or after the court terminates jurisdiction. (*W&IC Sec 202 et seq., EC Sec 1980 et seq.*).

Community School: An alternative program that serves the educational needs of students. The County Office of Education provides for the education programs in community schools. Students are placed in community schools when expelled from school, or referred by a School Attendance Review Board (SARB). These programs seek to transition the students back to an appropriate educational, training, and/or employment setting. This also includes district operated community schools.

Correctional Institution Or Incarcerated Facility: It is an institution run by the California Department of Corrections, California Youth Authority or any other public agency where an individual is detained for infraction with the law and where educational classes provide instruction in civic, vocational, literacy, health, homemaking, technical, and general education.

Home School At Parent's Home: An alternative to classroom instruction when a medical report states and certifies that the student's diagnosed condition prevents him/her from attending a school setting. Instruction may be delivered individually, in small groups or by teleclass. (*Title V, Section 3051.4*).

Hospital Facility: The educational needs of students who are placed or who reside in a public hospital, state licensed children's hospital, psychiatric hospital, proprietary hospital, or a health facility for medical purposes are the responsibility of and provided by the district or county office in which the hospital or facility is located. (*EC 56167-56168*).

Community College: This includes specialized services and educational programs offered by the post-secondary community colleges for students over high school age in academics, reading and mathematics labs, and vocational, career, and community development skills.

Adult Education Program: This includes programs, such as, parenting, basic education, high school diploma, English as a second language, citizenship, short-term vocational programs, older adults, adults with disabilities, home economics education, and health and safety in order to provide or improve the skills of adults.

Charter School (operated BY a LEA/district): Charter schools that are deemed to be a public school within the District/SELPA participate in either the same manner as other schools within the District or as described in a memorandum of understanding.

Charter School (operated AS an LEA/district): Charter schools that are deemed a local education agency for the purpose of special education must participate in an approved special education local plan (SELPA) as an LEA. (*EC 56195.1 sections (a), (b), or (c) (20 USC 1400 et seq., EC 47641 (a), AB 1115, Chapter 78, Statutes of 1999)*).

Head Start Program: A part-day comprehensive child development program for children 3-5 years of age from low-income families. Services are provided in this program through four components: education, social services, parent involvement and health. Head Start is mandated

to make a minimum of 10 percent of its enrollment opportunities available for preschool age children with disabilities.

Child Development Or Child Care Facility: Any residence or building, or part thereof, in which child care and development services are provided. The facility must be licensed by the State Department of Social Services.

State Preschool Program: Part-day comprehensive developmental programs for children 3-5 years of age from low-income families. The programs include educational development, health services, parent education and participation, program evaluation, and staff development.

Private Preschool: A preschool program operated by a private agency, that provides basic supervision, age appropriate activities, nutrition, and parent education for preschool children ages 3-5.

Extended Day Care: An extended school day program that provides educational activities that are appropriate to the ages of the students and that capture the students' interests and needs. (*EC 58752*).

Nonpublic Day School: A nonpublic, nonsectarian day school (under the field *SCH_TYPE*) that enrolls individuals with exceptional needs pursuant to an individualized education program, employs at least one special educator, and is certified by the department (*EC 56034*).

Nonpublic Residential School: A nonpublic, nonsectarian school that enrolls individuals with exceptional needs pursuant to an individualized education program, employs at least one special educator, and is certified by the department. This school provides an educational program at the same location where the student resides (often a licensed children's institution). (*EC 56034*).

Private Day School (Not Certified By Special Education): A school, sectarian or nonsectarian, which is not administered by a public agency and does not provide special education services. Students attending this school do not reside at the school premises. Services are provided through an ISP, in accordance with district policy for serving students in private schools.

Private Residential School (Not Certified By Special Education): A school, sectarian or nonsectarian, which is not administered by a public agency, and does not provide special education and services. The student resides at this school, although private residential school may provide a combination of residential and day programs. The status of a student (whether day or residential) will depend on where the student resides. Services are provided through an ISP, in accordance with district policy for serving students in private schools.

Parochial School: A school that is affiliated with or run by a religious organization.

**Appendix B: Stakeholder Group Members, Finance
Subcommittee Members and Advisory Group Members**

Stakeholder Group Members

STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
<i>Foster Youth Organizations:</i>	
Maria Ramiu Staff Attorney	Youth Law Center
<i>State Agencies:</i>	
Lou DelGaudio Manager, Foster Care Branch Placement Policy Unit West Irvin Foster care branch, social services Greg Lim Manager, Foster Care Branch Rates Policy Unit	Department of Social Services
David Neilsen, Chief Children and Family Services Zoey Todd Children and Family Services	California Department of Mental Health
<i>County:</i>	
Danna Fabella	Director of Social Services for Contra Costa County
<i>LEA:</i>	
Loretta Morris Administrative Specialist	Youth Development Services, Contra Costa COE

STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
Benita Washington Fresno Unified School District	Fresno Unified School District
<i>Legal:</i>	
Kathleen Harms, Member Rep sent: Hank Mattimore, Member	Juvenile Justice Commission and Court Appointed Special Advocates worker
Alan Watahara, ESQ, Executive Director Rep sent: Jonathan Pearson	California Partnership
<i>Local Placement Agencies:</i>	
Ellen Bucci	San Mateo Mental Health Child Welfare
<i>Group Home:</i>	
Jim Galsterer Executive Director	True to Life Children's Services
Nicette Short Senior Policy Advocate	California Alliance of Child and Family Services
<i>Legislative:</i>	
Amy Dean Principal Consultant	Senator Alpert's Office
Kathryn Dresslar	Darrell Steinberg's office
<u>Andy Shaw</u>	Assembly member Dion Aroner's Office <i>left office in early September; Aroner's office unable to provide a replacement</i>
Kim Connor Senior Consultant	Senate Office of Research
Tanya Lieberman Principal Consultant	Senate Education Committee
Susan Ronnback Consultant	Senate Budget Office

STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
<i>ADVOCACY:</i>	
Lupe Alonzo-Diaz Senior Policy Advocate	Children’s Advocacy Institute
Sherri L. Rita Staff Attorney	Protection and Advocacy, Inc.
<i>SELPA:</i>	
Michael Brogan South County Special Education Region	San Diego County Office of Education
Kim Hopko LACOE	LACOE
Mildred Browne, EdD Assistant Superintendent Special Education/Student Services Mt. Diablo Unified School District Sherry Mudd Foothill SELPA Glendale Unified School District	School Districts
<i>FYS:</i>	
Amy Alhadeff, School Psychologist	Fresno FYS Coordinator
<i>NPS:</i>	
Dick Schnetzer Chair, Governmental Affairs Wayne K. Miyamoto, Director CAPSES Public & Governmental Affairs	California Association of Private Special Education Schools (CAPSES)

Advisory Group Members

ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER	AGENCY
Carol Bingham California Department of Education Fiscal and Administrative Services Division	CDE
Gerald Elmore	
Gerry Shelton	
Melody James	CDE, SpEd
Heather Carlson	DOF
Dan Troy	
Jennifer Borenstein	LAO
Mary Ader	

Finance Subcommittee Members

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER	AGENCY/AFFILIATION
<i>STATE AGENCIES:</i>	
Karen Grace-Kaho Foster Care Ombudsman	Department of Social Services
Robert Pate Community Care Licensing Childrens Residential Licensing Program Manager	Department of Social Services
Zoey Todd	Department of Mental Health
<i>COUNTY AGENCIES:</i>	
Stuart Oppenheim Director, Children and Family Services Policy Office County Welfare Department	County of San Mateo County of Contra Costa
Paul Buddenhagen Contra Costa Children & Family Services	
<i>PROBATION:</i>	
Carol Ritchie Director of Quality Placement Assurance Lynwood Justice Center	Probation Department
<i>LEA:</i>	
Kay McElrath San Diego Unified School District, Budget Office	San Diego Unified School District
Mark Shrager Director of Budget Services	Los Angeles Unified School District

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER	AGENCY/AFFILIATION
Eileen Skone-Rees Coordinator, Division of Special Education Non-Public Schools Department	Los Angeles Unified School District
<i>GROUP HOMES:</i>	
Nicette Short Senior Policy Advocate	California Alliance of Child and Family Services (CACFS)
Steven Young Chief Executive Officer	McKinley Children’s Center
Jim Galsterer Executive Director	True to Life Children’s Services
<i>LEGISLATIVE:</i>	
Kim Connor, Senior Consultant Senate Office of Research	Senate Office of Outreach
<i>ADVOCACY:</i>	
Lupe Alonzo-Diaz	Children’s Advocacy Institute
Robin Allen Executive Director	California Court Appointed Special Advocates
<i>SELPA :</i>	
Jack Lucas SELPA Director East San Gabriel Valley SELPA	SELPAs
J. Sarge Kennedy Asst. Supt., Student Programs and SELPA Operations Tehama County Dept. of Education	SELPAs

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER	AGENCY/AFFILIATION
<i>NPS:</i>	
Dick Schnetzer Chair, Governmental Affairs CAPSES Wayne K. Miyamoto, Director CAPSES Public & Governmental Affairs	California Association of Private Special Education Schools (CAPSES)
<i>REGIONAL CENTERS:</i>	
Elaine Bamberg	Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)

Appendix C: Youth Placement Profile Instruments

COVER PAGE

Youth ID: _____

Case #: _____

Study Team Member: _____

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
* Youth Name	_____ Last Name _____ First Name		
1. Assigned Youth ID	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

*- indicates will not be keytaped

CASEWORKER (Social Services, Mental Health, Probation)

Youth ID: _____

Case #: _____

Study Team Member: _____

Residential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
 Educational 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
1. Agency currently responsible for youth	(A) DSS (B) Probation (C) DMH (D) COE (2627) (E) Private (F) Department of Developmental Services (G) Other (specify: _____)		
2. Youth Date of Birth	(A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
3. Youth Gender	(A) Male (B) Female (C) Transgender		
4. Youth Ethnicity	(A) American Indian or Alaskan Native (B) Asian or Pacific Islander (C) Black (not of Hispanic origin) (D) Hispanic or Latino (E) White (not of Hispanic origin)		

*- indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
5. Current grade in school	(A) Kindergarten (B) Grade 1 (C) Grade 2 (D) Grade 3 (E) Grade 4 (F) Grade 5 (G) Grade 6 (H) Grade 7 (I) Grade 8 (J) Grade 9 (K) Grade 10 (L) Grade 11 (M) Grade 12 (N) Mixed Grade (specify: _____) (O) Other (specify: _____) (P) N/A (not enrolled in school)		
6. County where youth was declared ward/dependent (<i>enter county codes from last page</i>)	(A) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
7. Do parents maintain educational rights?	(A) Yes (B) No (C) Unable to determine		
8. If the parents' educational rights were terminated, was an education surrogate appointed?	(A) Yes; identify _____ (i.e., CASA, district appointed, foster parent, etc.) (B) No (C) I don't know (D) N/A (parents maintain educational rights)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
* Contact information for placement			Placement Name: _____ Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
9. Date of entry into residential placement	A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
10. Date of termination of residential placement	A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR B N/A (information from current placement)		
11. Geographic location of Residential Placement (<i>mark all that apply</i>) Note: out of county = out of county of adjudication and where parents reside	A In county of adjudication B In county where both parents reside C In county where one parent resides D Out of county: County Name _____ E Out of state: State Name _____		
12. Type of residential placement	A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) B County shelter C Other emergency shelter D Relative/kinship placement E Foster family F Foster family agency G Group home H Residential treatment program I Hospital J CYA K Juvenile Hall L Other		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
13. What are the specific reasons for termination of residential placement? <i>(mark all that apply)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A Foster parent withdrew from system <input type="checkbox"/> B Relative declined to continue to care for child <input type="checkbox"/> C Child required hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> D Child required higher level of care <input type="checkbox"/> E Child became eligible for lower level of care <input type="checkbox"/> F Placement deemed inappropriate by care giver <input type="checkbox"/> G Placement deemed inappropriate by caseworker/probation officer <input type="checkbox"/> H Placement deemed inappropriate by child <input type="checkbox"/> I Moved from emergency placement <input type="checkbox"/> J Child AWOL <input type="checkbox"/> K Child required hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> L Child arrested/incarcerated <input type="checkbox"/> M Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> N N/A (information from current placement) 		
14. Reason for entry into "the System"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A Abuse/ Neglect/ Abandonment <input type="checkbox"/> B Private (family initiated) <input type="checkbox"/> C Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> D School district initiated/ AB2627 <input type="checkbox"/> E Criminal violation <input type="checkbox"/> F Other (specify: _____) 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
15. Reason for placement into group home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Capacity <input type="radio"/> B Child repeatedly AWOL at prior placement <input type="radio"/> C LCI exercised 7 day right of refusal <input type="radio"/> D Child required different level of care <input type="radio"/> E Child completed program <input type="radio"/> F Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> G N/A (not in a group home) 		
16. If out of county residential placement, was this placement driven by ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Educational placement needs <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement needs <input type="radio"/> C N/A (placed within county) 		
17. Reason(s) why child was placed out of county and/ or state (Residential) (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A All in-county LCIs were at capacity <input type="radio"/> B Child committed a penal offense during the time of enrollment and was placed in out-of-county juvenile hall <input type="radio"/> C Child went AWOL <input type="radio"/> D LCI exercised 7-day right of refusal after school enrollment; child was exported to surrounding county <input type="radio"/> E Child was on "emergency placement" status at the time of enrollment <input type="radio"/> F Child was denied enrollment (list reason) <input type="radio"/> G Child needed hospital setting <input type="radio"/> H Judge ordered child be kept away from parents/offender <input type="radio"/> I LEA has placement arrangement with out-of-county school <input type="radio"/> J Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> K N/A (placed within county) 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
18. After placing this child, did you notify the LEA of the child's presence in their district?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Not sure		
19. Who enrolled the child in school?	<input type="radio"/> A LCI staff <input type="radio"/> B Surrogate <input type="radio"/> C Case worker <input type="radio"/> D Parent <input type="radio"/> E N/A (not currently enrolled in school) <input type="radio"/> F Other (specify: _____)		
20. Reason(s) why child was placed out of county and/or state (Educational Placement) (mark all that apply)	<input type="radio"/> A Receiving LCI has no affiliated NPS; active IEP ordered NPS placement <input type="radio"/> B Receiving county has no NPS; active IEP ordered NPS placement <input type="radio"/> C Receiving county NPSs at capacity; IEP ordered NPS placement <input type="radio"/> D At the time of enrollment child had a request for a 504 assessment which later ordered _____ placement. <input type="radio"/> E At the time of enrollment child had a request for IEP hearing which later ordered _____ placement. <input type="radio"/> F Placing agency has arrangement with out-of-county school <input type="radio"/> G LEA has placement arrangement with out-of-state school <input type="radio"/> H Placing agency has arrangement with out-of-state school <input type="radio"/> I Child required specialized program not available in California (program full or not in existence?) <input type="radio"/> J N/A (placed within county)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
21. Termination of educational placement was primarily driven by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Educational placement needs <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement needs <input type="radio"/> C N/A (information from current educational placement) 		
22. What are the specific reason(s) for termination of educational placement (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Child was expelled <input type="radio"/> B Child was suspended <input type="radio"/> C Child encountered a change in LCI placement <input type="radio"/> D Child entered junior high <input type="radio"/> E Child entered high school <input type="radio"/> F Child graduated <input type="radio"/> G Child passed GED <input type="radio"/> H School requested change in placement (Reason) <input type="radio"/> I School placement deemed inappropriate by legal guardian/atty/courts <input type="radio"/> J School placement deemed inappropriate by caseworker <input type="radio"/> K IEP status changed <input type="radio"/> L During IEP update, services ordered resulted in a change in school placement <input type="radio"/> M A new school/program opened <input type="radio"/> N LCI implemented school program on-site (such as a charter school or independent study) <input type="radio"/> O Don't know <input type="radio"/> P N/A (information from current placement) 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
Mental Health Services Questions			
23. Does the youth receive “intensive day treatment” services?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
24. What is the cost per day for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ __, ___ ___/day <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
25. How many days of intensive day treatment service has this youth received in the past month?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ days <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
26. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
27. Does the youth receive “day rehabilitation” services	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
28. What is the cost per day for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ __, ___ ___/day <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
29. How many days of day rehabilitation service has this youth received in the past month?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ days <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
30. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
31. Does the youth receive "mental health services" such as individual therapy?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
32. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
33. How many minutes of mental health service has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ , ___ , ___ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
34. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
35. Approximately how many additional clients (youth) are served with this youth at the same time?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ <input type="radio"/> B Don't know <input type="radio"/> C None (youth receives this service alone) <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
36. Does the youth receive "medication support"?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
37. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
38. How many minutes of medication support has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ ___ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
39. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<p>(A) 1 month (B) 3 months (C) 6 months (D) 9 months (E) Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) (F) Service is no longer needed (G) Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
40. Does the youth receive "crisis intervention"?	<p>(A) Yes (B) No (C) Unable to determine (D) Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
41. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<p>(A) \$ ___/minute (B) Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
42. How many minutes of crisis intervention has this youth received in the past week?	<p>(A) _____ minutes (B) Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
43. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<p>(A) 1 month (B) 3 months (C) 6 months (D) 9 months (E) Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) (F) Service is no longer needed (G) Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services</p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
44. Does the youth receive "therapeutic behavioral services (TBS)"?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
45. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
46. How many minutes of TBS has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A ___-___-___ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
47. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		
48. Other Services	<input type="radio"/> A Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> B Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> C Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker does not know about specific mental health services		

COUNTY CODES

<u>Code</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>County</u>
01	Alameda	32	Plumas
02	Alpine	33	Riverside
03	Amador	34	Sacramento
04	Butte	35	San Benito
05	Calaveras	36	San Bernardino
06	Colusa	37	San Diego
07	Contra Costa	38	San Francisco
08	Del Norte	39	San Joaquin
09	El Dorado	40	San Luis Obispo
10	Fresno	41	San Mateo
11	Glenn	42	Santa Barbara
12	Humboldt	43	Santa Clara
13	Imperial	44	Santa Cruz
14	Inyo	45	Shasta
15	Kern	46	Sierra
16	Kings	47	Siskiyou
17	Lake	48	Solano
18	Lassen	49	Sonoma
19	Los Angeles	50	Stanislaus
20	Madera	51	Sutter
21	Marin	52	Tehama
22	Mariposa	53	Trinity
23	Mendocino	54	Tulare
24	Merced	55	Tuolumne
25	Modoc	56	Ventura
26	Mono	57	Yolo
27	Monterey	58	Yuba
28	Napa	59	Out of State
29	Nevada	60	Don't know
30	Orange	61	Deceased
31	Placer	62	Other

Description of Mental Health Categories of Services

The group home may contract with the county department of mental health to provide these services to youth in their group home.

- 1. Day Treatment Intensive** – a “milieu” treatment by a mental health professional that occurs every day with a staff to client ratio of 1:8. Either a half day (less than 4 hours) or a full day may be provided. The service can be provided in the context of a classroom, after school tutoring or a recreational activity in which there is an effort to redirect behavioral problems.
- 2. Day Rehabilitation** – similar to “day treatment intensive” except that the service occurs only once a week and the staff to client ratio is 1:10.
- 3. Mental Health Services** – This includes individual therapy, group therapy (different from day treatment because it is not for four hours at a time; it is also not a “milieu” therapy, but more topic oriented), family therapy, collateral (this is not a direct service to the child, but working with the child’s teacher, for example, in coaching on how to work with the youth), and rehabilitation services (can be a traditional 50 minute hour in an office or less traditional services such as in-home, in the community, in the classroom and almost anything else that assists a child, family, significant person (teacher, baby sitter, extended family, etc) to achieve the child’s mental health goals. Services may include assisting a family to get organized to have groceries in the house, a place for a child to study, so they can return home, etc.) The services can be for a traditional hour per week or many hours a day.
- 4. Medication Support** – This is time with a psychiatrist or assistance with medication education.
- 5. Crisis Intervention** – unplanned effort to diffuse a crisis situation
- 6. Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)** – This is a short-term, one-on-one intensive service designed to extinguish certain maladaptive behaviors. To receive this service, the youth must be medical eligible and have been in a psychiatric hospital with in the past two years, be in imminent risk of entering a psychiatric hospital, be in a RCL 12-14 facility or at risk of being placed in an RCL 12-14 facility. TBS works to identify what triggers a particular maladaptive behavior and then to replace that behavior with a more appropriate response. This service can be three to four hours at a time.

CWS-CMS/Probation Database

Youth ID: _____

Case #: _____

Study Team Member: _____

Research note: The information below is what you are required to look for in the database. Please feel free to use the database to collect other information that you need to complete your youth placement profile.

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
1. Database used to answer the following questions:	<input type="radio"/> A CWS/CMS <input type="radio"/> B Probation <input type="radio"/> C Other (specify: _____)		
2. Date youth became a ward/dependent	<input type="radio"/> A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR <input type="radio"/> B N/A (no information in database)		
3. Number of residential placements youth has been in since becoming a ward/dependent	<input type="radio"/> A — — —		
4. Number of educational placements youth has been in since becoming a ward/dependent	<input type="radio"/> A — — —		

Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 *- Indicates will not be key taped

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
5. Current education placement type	<input type="radio"/> A Traditional public school <input type="radio"/> B Public Special Ed School (County Operated) <input type="radio"/> C Court school <input type="radio"/> D Community school <input type="radio"/> E District community day school <input type="radio"/> F NPS affiliated with LCI <input type="radio"/> G NPS not affiliated with LCI <input type="radio"/> H CYA <input type="radio"/> I Juvenile hall <input type="radio"/> J Shelter/Receiving home <input type="radio"/> K Independent study <input type="radio"/> L Charter school <input type="radio"/> M Hospital <input type="radio"/> N Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> O No information entered		
6. Is this education placement affiliated with the residential placement?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C No information entered <input type="radio"/> D No such field		

Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 *- Indicates will not be key taped

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
7. Current residential placement type (should always be a group home, in theory)	<input type="radio"/> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) <input type="radio"/> B County shelter <input type="radio"/> C Other emergency shelter <input type="radio"/> D Relative/kinship placement <input type="radio"/> E Foster family <input type="radio"/> F Foster family agency <input type="radio"/> G Group home <input type="radio"/> H Residential treatment program <input type="radio"/> I Hospital <input type="radio"/> J CYA <input type="radio"/> K Juvenile Hall <input type="radio"/> L Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> M Unable to determine		
8. Date entered current (or most recent if not currently enrolled in school) education placement	<input type="radio"/> A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR <input type="radio"/> B N/A (no information in database)		
9. Date exited current (most recent) education placement	<input type="radio"/> A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR <input type="radio"/> B N/A (no information in database) <input type="radio"/> C N/A (still in school)		
10. Is there information in an education records field?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C N/A (no such field)		

★- Indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
11. If there is information in an education records field, why type of information is there (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Grades <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Progress reports <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Caseworker notes <input type="checkbox"/> (D) Behavior reports <input type="checkbox"/> (E) School movement information <input type="checkbox"/> (F) Teacher comments <input type="checkbox"/> (G) IEP information <input type="checkbox"/> (H) Needs/Services plan information <input type="checkbox"/> (I) Other (specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> (J) N/A (no information in field) <input type="checkbox"/> (K) N/A (no such field)		
12. Do the parents maintain educational rights for the youth?	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (B) No <input type="checkbox"/> (C) No information entered <input type="checkbox"/> (D) No such field		
13. Has the court appointed an education representative/surrogate for the child?	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (B) No <input type="checkbox"/> (C) No information in field <input type="checkbox"/> (D) No such field		
14. Approximately how many of the education fields in the database are complete?	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) 0% <input type="checkbox"/> (B) 25% <input type="checkbox"/> (C) 50% <input type="checkbox"/> (D) 100% <input type="checkbox"/> (E) N/A (there are no education fields in the database)		

Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 *- Indicates will not be key taped

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
* Contact information for Residential Placement			Placement Name: _____ Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
* Contact information for Educational Placement			Placement Name: _____ Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____

*- Indicates will not be key taped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

Youth ID: _____
 Case #: _____
 Study Team Member: _____

Residential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
 Educational 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
1. Date of entry into Residential Placement	<input type="radio"/> A MO DY YR		
* Contact information for Residential Placement			Placement Name: _____ Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
2. Type of Residential Placement	<input type="radio"/> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) <input type="radio"/> B County shelter <input type="radio"/> C Other emergency shelter <input type="radio"/> D Relative/kinship placement <input type="radio"/> E Foster family <input type="radio"/> F Foster family agency <input type="radio"/> G Group home <input type="radio"/> H Residential treatment program <input type="radio"/> I Hospital <input type="radio"/> J CYA <input type="radio"/> K Juvenile Hall		
3. For a Group Home placement, is there an affiliated NPS?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C N/A (not a group home placement)		

*- indicates will not be keytaped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
4. For Group Home placement: RCL (mark one)	(A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4 (E) 5 (F) 6 (G) 7 (H) 8 (I) 9 (J) 10 (K) 11 (L) 12 (M) 13 (N) 14		
5. For Group Home placement: Size of group home	(A) _____ Beds		
6. Geographic location of Residential Placement	(A) In county of adjudication (B) In county where both parents reside (C) In county where one parent reside (D) Out of county: County Name _____ (E) Out of county: State Name _____		
7. What are the expenditures on current group home services (Rate – room and board costs)?	(A) \$ _____/month		
8. Does the Group Home pay for any additional education or related services? If so, how much?	(A) No (B) Yes: \$ _____		

Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

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Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
9. What is the source of funds?	<input type="radio"/> A DSS (Title IV-E) <input type="radio"/> B Mental health (AB2627) <input type="radio"/> C Mental health (EPSDT) <input type="radio"/> D Private (Family) <input type="radio"/> E Other (specify: _____)		
10. Which agency placed the child in your care?	<input type="radio"/> A DSS <input type="radio"/> B MH <input type="radio"/> C Probation <input type="radio"/> D County Office of Education (2627) <input type="radio"/> E Private <input type="radio"/> F Department of Developmental Services <input type="radio"/> G Other <input type="radio"/> H Unable to determine		
★ Contact information for this agency			Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____
11. What Health and/ or Education records were provided at the time of placement? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="radio"/> A Immunization <input type="radio"/> B Cumulative file <input type="radio"/> C Transcript <input type="radio"/> D Report cards <input type="radio"/> E Name of previous school <input type="radio"/> F IEP <input type="radio"/> G None		

★- indicates will not be keytaped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
12. Did you receive the "Health and Education Passport" document?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Don't know what the Health and Education passport document is. <input type="radio"/> E Other (specify: _____)		
13. Do you have the "Needs and Services" plan document?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Don't know what the Needs and Services plan document is. <input type="radio"/> E Other (specify: _____)		
14. Were you advised that the child had an IEP?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No, informed that child had no IEP <input type="radio"/> C Don't know <input type="radio"/> D Child did not have IEP at time of placement		
15. While living here, has there been a period of time during which the child has not attended school?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes Approx. beginning date <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR Approx. end date <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Don't know		

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Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
16. If yes, what was the reason for time out of school?	(A) Health (B) Expelled/suspended (C) Not enrolled (D) Unable to enroll (lack of needed records) (E) Other (specify: _____)		
17. How many schools has the child been enrolled in while living here?	(A) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
18. <i>Who</i> enrolled the child in school?	(A) LCI staff (B) Surrogate (C) Case worker (D) Parent (E) Foster Parent (F) N/A (not currently enrolled in school) (G) Other (specify: _____)		
19. When was the <i>first</i> attempt made to enroll the child in school?	(A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
20. When was the child's first full day of school?	(A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
* School name and contact information where they are enrolled			Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ Contact Person: _____ <input type="radio"/> N/A (not currently enrolled in school)

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 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
21. What is the frequency of communication <i>between</i> the school and the residential placement?	<input type="radio"/> A Daily <input type="radio"/> B Weekly <input type="radio"/> C Monthly <input type="radio"/> D Once per marking period <input type="radio"/> E Once per semester <input type="radio"/> F Once per academic year <input type="radio"/> G N/A child not in school <input type="radio"/> H No evidence <input type="radio"/> I Never		
22. <i>What</i> information is being transferred during these communications? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="radio"/> A IEP document <input type="radio"/> B IEP progress toward annual goals <input type="radio"/> C Report cards <input type="radio"/> D Progress Reports <input type="radio"/> E Credits <input type="radio"/> F Attendance <input type="radio"/> G Behavior at school <input type="radio"/> H Suspension <input type="radio"/> I Information communicated through parent/teacher type meetings <input type="radio"/> J N/A (no information communicated) <input type="radio"/> K Other (specify: _____)		
23. Does the youth receive “intensive day treatment” services?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		

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 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
24. What is the cost per day for these services?	<p>(A) \$ __, __ __ __ /day</p> <p>(B) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
25. How many days of intensive day treatment service has this youth received in the past month?	<p>(A) __ __ __ Days</p> <p>(B) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
26. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<p>(A) 1 month</p> <p>(B) 3 months</p> <p>(C) 6 months</p> <p>(D) 9 months</p> <p>(E) Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight)</p> <p>(F) Service is no longer needed</p> <p>(G) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
27. Does the youth receive “day rehabilitation” services	<p>(A) Yes</p> <p>(B) No</p> <p>(C) Unable to determine</p> <p>(D) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
28. What is the cost per day for these services?	<p>(A) \$ __, __ __ __ __ /day</p> <p>(B) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		
29. How many days of day rehabilitation service has this youth received in the past month?	<p>(A) __ __ __ __ days</p> <p>(B) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services</p>		

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Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
30. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
31. Does the youth receive "mental health services" such as individual therapy?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
32. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
33. How many minutes of mental health service has this youth received in the past <i>week</i> ?	<input type="radio"/> A _____ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		

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 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
34. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
35. Approximately how many additional clients (youth) are served with this youth at the same time?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ <input type="radio"/> B Don't know <input type="radio"/> C None (youth receives this service alone) <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
36. Does the youth receive "medication support"?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
37. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
38. How many minutes of medication support has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A ___ ___ ___ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		

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Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
39. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
40. Does the youth receive "crisis intervention"?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
41. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
42. How many minutes of crisis intervention has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A _____ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		

*- indicates will not be keytaped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
43. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 month <input type="radio"/> B 3 months <input type="radio"/> C 6 months <input type="radio"/> D 9 months <input type="radio"/> E Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) <input type="radio"/> F Service is no longer needed <input type="radio"/> G Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
44. Does the youth receive “therapeutic behavioral services (TBS)”?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Unable to determine <input type="radio"/> D Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
45. What is the cost per minute for these services?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ___/minute <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
46. How many minutes of TBS has this youth received in the past week?	<input type="radio"/> A ____, ____ minutes <input type="radio"/> B Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		

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 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
47. What do you estimate the future duration of this service to be?	(A) 1 month (B) 3 months (C) 6 months (D) 9 months (E) Ongoing (no end of need for service in sight) (F) Service is no longer needed (G) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
48. Other Services	(A) Other (specify: _____) (B) Other (specify: _____) (C) Other (specify: _____) (D) Residential placement does not know about specific mental health services		
49. Date of termination of Residential Placement	(A) ____/____/____ MO DY YR (B) N/A (information from current placement)		

Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement
 *- indicates will not be keytaped

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
50. What are the specific reasons for termination of residential placement? <i>(mark all that apply)</i>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A Foster parent withdrew from system <input type="checkbox"/> B Relative declined to continue to care for child <input type="checkbox"/> C Child required hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> D Child required higher level of care <input type="checkbox"/> E Child became eligible for lower level of care <input type="checkbox"/> F Placement deemed inappropriate by care giver <input type="checkbox"/> G Placement deemed inappropriate by caseworker/probation officer <input type="checkbox"/> H Placement deemed inappropriate by child <input type="checkbox"/> I Moved from emergency placement <input type="checkbox"/> J Child AWOL <input type="checkbox"/> K Child arrested/incarcerated <input type="checkbox"/> L Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> M N/A (information from current placement) <input type="checkbox"/> N Child reunited with family <input type="checkbox"/> O Child moved to be closer to relatives <input type="checkbox"/> P Child endangers safety of other residents <input type="checkbox"/> Q Environment deemed no longer safe for child <input type="checkbox"/> R Other (specify: _____) </p>		

*- indicates will not be keytaped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Description of Mental Health Categories of Services

The group home may contract with the county department of mental health to provide these services to youth in their group home.

- Day Treatment Intensive** – a “milieu” treatment by a mental health professional that occurs every day with a staff to client ratio of 1:8. Either a half day (less than 4 hours) or a full day may be provided. The service can be provided in the context of a classroom, after school tutoring or a recreational activity in which there is an effort to redirect behavioral problems.
- Day Rehabilitation** – similar to “day treatment intensive” except that the service occurs only once a week and the staff to client ratio is 1:10.
- Mental Health Services** – This includes individual therapy, group therapy (different from day treatment because it is not for four hours at a time; it is also not a “milieu” therapy, but more topic oriented), family therapy, collateral (this is not a direct service to the child, but working with the child’s teacher, for example, in coaching on how to work with the youth), and rehabilitation services (can be a traditional 50 minute hour in an office or less traditional services such as in-home, in the community, in the classroom and almost anything else that assists a child, family, significant person (teacher, baby sitter, extended family, etc) to achieve the child’s mental health goals. Services may include assisting a family to get organized to have groceries in the house, a place for a child to study, so they can return home, etc.) The services can be for a traditional hour per week or many hours a day.
- Medication Support** – This is time with a psychiatrist or assistance with medication education.
- Crisis Intervention** – unplanned effort to diffuse a crisis situation
- Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)** – This is a short-term, one-on-one intensive service designed to extinguish certain maladaptive behaviors. To receive this service, the youth must be medical eligible and have been in a psychiatric hospital with in the past two years, be in imminent risk of entering a psychiatric hospital, be in a RCL 12-14 facility or at risk of being placed in an RCL 12-14 facility. TBS works to identify what triggers a particular maladaptive behavior and then to replace that behavior with a more appropriate response. This service can be three to four hours at a time.

*- indicates will not be keytaped
Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

SCHOOL

Youth ID: _____

Case #: _____

Study Team Member: _____

Residential 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
 Educational 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
<p>* Contact information for Educational Placement</p>			Placement Name: _____ Contact Person: _____ Telephone number: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
<p>1. Type of Educational Placement</p>	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Traditional public school <input type="radio"/> B Public Special Ed School (County Operated) <input type="radio"/> C Court school <input type="radio"/> D Community school <input type="radio"/> E District community day school <input type="radio"/> F NPS affiliated with LCI <input type="radio"/> G NPS not affiliated with LCI <input type="radio"/> H CYA <input type="radio"/> I Juvenile hall <input type="radio"/> J Shelter/Receiving home <input type="radio"/> K Independent study <input type="radio"/> L Charter school <input type="radio"/> M Hospital <input type="radio"/> N Other (specify: _____) </p>		

*- indicates will not be keytaped
 Shading indicates question to be repeated about previous placement

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
2. Geographic location of Educational Placement (<i>mark all that apply</i>) Note: out of county = out of county of adjudication and where parents reside	(A) In county of adjudication (B) In county where both parents reside (C) In county where one parent resides (D) Out of county: County Name _____ (E) Out of state: State Name _____		
3. Date of enrollment into Educational Placement	(A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
4. Date of termination of Educational Placement	(A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR (B) N/A (information from current placement)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
5. Reason for termination of Educational placement (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Child was expelled <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Child was suspended <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Child encountered a change in LCI placement <input type="checkbox"/> (D) Child entered junior high <input type="checkbox"/> (E) Child entered high school <input type="checkbox"/> (F) Child graduated <input type="checkbox"/> (G) Child passed GED <input type="checkbox"/> (H) School requested change in placement (Reason) <input type="checkbox"/> (I) School placement deemed inappropriate by legal guardian/atty/courts <input type="checkbox"/> (J) School placement deemed inappropriate by caseworker <input type="checkbox"/> (K) IEP status changed <input type="checkbox"/> (L) During IEP update, services ordered resulted in a change in school placement <input type="checkbox"/> (M) A new school/program opened <input type="checkbox"/> (N) LCI implemented school program on-site (such as a charter school or independent study) <input type="checkbox"/> (O) Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> (P) N/A (information from current placement)		
6. First day of school completed	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR		
7. Prior to the child's enrollment, did you receive notification from DSS or DPO that this child had been placed in your attendance area?	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (B) No <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Don't know		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
8. Who enrolled the child?	(A) LCI staff (B) Surrogate (C) Case worker (D) Parent (E) N/A (not currently enrolled in school) (F) Other (specify: _____)		
9. At the time of enrollment, were you provided immunizations records?	(A) Yes (B) No (C) Unable to determine		
10. At time of enrollment, with what education records were you provided? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	(A) IEP past (B) Current IEP (C) Cum file (D) Transcript (E) Name of prior school (F) None (G) Unable to determine		
11. How many credits are earned for each semester class (e.g., 1 class = 4 credits)	(A) ___ .__ credits		
12. Number of credits child enrolled for at school last semester	(A) ___ .__		
13. Number of credits earned in school last semester	(A) ___ .__		
14. If credits earned are less than credits attempted, why were fewer credits earned?	(A) Child did not complete term at school site (B) Child failed one or more courses (C) Child dropped one or more courses (D) Unable to determine (E) N/A (credits completed)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
15. If credits earned are less than credits attempted, did school report partial credits in cum file?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C N/A (credits completed)		
16. At time of enrollment did school accept partial credits? (i.e., if child arrived part way through the semester, with partial credits from a previous school, did school accept these credits?)	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No, district policy <input type="radio"/> C No, did not fit with new school curriculum <input type="radio"/> D N/A (no partial credits reported to school)		
17. How was child's progress in coursework documented?	<input type="radio"/> A Letter grade (e.g., A, B, C) <input type="radio"/> B Pass/fail grade <input type="radio"/> C Check/ check + <input type="radio"/> D Written teacher evaluations <input type="radio"/> E Other (specify: _____)		
18. What is child's GPA for the most recent grading period? Note: please provide the un-weighted GPA. If school only computes weighted GPA, please report class grades below	<input type="radio"/> A _____ <input type="radio"/> B N/A (no un-weighted GPA computed)		
19. If school does not compute an unweighted GPA, please list grades for classes from last grading period	<input type="radio"/> A Class A: _____ <input type="radio"/> B Class B: _____ <input type="radio"/> C Class C: _____ <input type="radio"/> D Class D: _____ <input type="radio"/> E Class E: _____ <input type="radio"/> F Class F: _____ <input type="radio"/> G Class G: _____ <input type="radio"/> H Class H: _____ <input type="radio"/> I N/A (has GPA)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
20. What is the frequency of communication between the school and the child's residential placement?	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Daily <input type="radio"/> B Weekly <input type="radio"/> C Monthly <input type="radio"/> D Once per marking period <input type="radio"/> E Once per semester <input type="radio"/> F Once per academic year <input type="radio"/> G Never <input type="radio"/> H N/A (child is not in school) <input type="radio"/> I No evidence </p>		
21. What information is being transferred during these communications? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A IEP document <input type="checkbox"/> B IEP progress toward annual goals <input type="checkbox"/> C Report cards <input type="checkbox"/> D Progress reports <input type="checkbox"/> E Credits <input type="checkbox"/> F Attendance <input type="checkbox"/> G Behavior at school <input type="checkbox"/> H Suspension <input type="checkbox"/> I Information communicated through parent/teacher type meetings <input type="checkbox"/> J Other (specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> K No information communicated </p>		
22. At time of enrollment, did the child have an active IEP?	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Yes, the child had an active IEP <input type="radio"/> B No, the child did not have an active IEP <input type="radio"/> C N/A, the child never had an IEP <input type="radio"/> D Unable to determine </p>		
23. When was the IEP created?	<p> <input type="radio"/> A <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> MO DY YR <input type="radio"/> B N/A (no IEP) </p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
24. Who signed the IEP (mark all that apply)	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A Parents <input type="checkbox"/> B Residential Placement Representative <input type="checkbox"/> C Child advocate <input type="checkbox"/> D Educational Surrogate <input type="checkbox"/> E Case Worker <input type="checkbox"/> F NPS representative <input type="checkbox"/> G When appropriate, the child (after age 14 child must be invited) <i>School District Personnel:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> H Special Ed provider (teacher/related service provider) <input type="checkbox"/> I Special Education Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> J Regular classroom teacher <input type="checkbox"/> K LEA representative <input type="checkbox"/> L Individuals who performed the assessment </p>		
25. If the child doesn't have a current IEP, is there evidence of a past IEP?	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A Yes <input type="checkbox"/> B No, no evidence <input type="checkbox"/> C Has never had an IEP <input type="checkbox"/> D N/A (has a current IEP) </p>		
26. If yes, what is the date of that past IEP?	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A $\frac{_}{_} \frac{_}{_} \frac{_}{_}$ MO DY YR <input type="checkbox"/> B N/A (has a current IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> C N/A (has never had an IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> D Data not available </p>		
27. What is the "closed" date of that IEP?	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A $\frac{_}{_} \frac{_}{_} \frac{_}{_}$ (closed) MO DY YR <input type="checkbox"/> B N/A (IEP is not closed; IEP is active) <input type="checkbox"/> C N/A (has never had an IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> D Date not available </p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
28. If the child used to have an IEP that is now inactive, why did it become inactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Wrongly assigned <input type="radio"/> B Lost <input type="radio"/> C Unknown <input type="radio"/> D Child completed recommendations of IEP <input type="radio"/> E N/A (has a current IEP) <input type="radio"/> F N/A (has never had an IEP) 		
29. If checked "wrongly assigned" in the cell above, how was the decision made to change the status? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Re evaluation by a professional <input type="radio"/> B Parent requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> C Caseworker requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> D Teacher requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> E Group home operator requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> F Advocate requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> G Educational surrogate requested re evaluation <input type="radio"/> H Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> I N/A 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
30. If child has a <i>current</i> IEP, what is the child's primary category of disability? (<i>mark only one</i>)	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Autism <input type="radio"/> B Deaf-blindness <input type="radio"/> C Deafness <input type="radio"/> D Emotional Disturbance <input type="radio"/> E Hard of hearing <input type="radio"/> F Mental disability <input type="radio"/> G Multiple disabilities <input type="radio"/> H Orthopedic impairment <input type="radio"/> I Other health impairment <input type="radio"/> J Specific learning disability <input type="radio"/> K Speech/language impairment <input type="radio"/> L Traumatic brain injury <input type="radio"/> M Visual impairment/blindness <input type="radio"/> N ADD (may not be designated as primary) <input type="radio"/> O ADHD (may not be designated as primary) <input type="radio"/> P Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> Q N/A (no IEP) </p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
31. If child has an IEP, what are the child's other categories of disability, if any? <i>(mark all that apply)</i>	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Autism <input type="radio"/> B Deaf-blindness <input type="radio"/> C Deafness <input type="radio"/> D Emotional Disturbance <input type="radio"/> E Hard of hearing <input type="radio"/> F Mental disability <input type="radio"/> G Multiple disabilities <input type="radio"/> H Orthopedic impairment <input type="radio"/> I Other health impairment <input type="radio"/> J Specific learning disability <input type="radio"/> K Speech/language impairment <input type="radio"/> L Traumatic brain injury <input type="radio"/> M Visual impairment/blindness <input type="radio"/> N ADD (may not be designated as primary) <input type="radio"/> O ADHD (may not be designated as primary) <input type="radio"/> P Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> Q N/A (no other categories) <input type="radio"/> R N/A (no IEP) </p>		
32. Was a review of this child's IEP conducted during this placement?	<p> <input type="radio"/> A Yes, because annual review <input type="radio"/> B Yes, because change in needs/services required <input type="radio"/> C No <input type="radio"/> D Review required, but unable to be determined if it occurred </p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
33. What are the placement specifications of the IEP team <i>(mark all that apply; continued on next page)</i>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> A No school <input type="checkbox"/> B Public day school <input type="checkbox"/> C Public residential school <input type="checkbox"/> D Other public school or facility <input type="checkbox"/> E Continuation school <input type="checkbox"/> F Education Clinic <input type="checkbox"/> G Alternative work education center <input type="checkbox"/> H Work-study program <input type="checkbox"/> I Independent study <input type="checkbox"/> J Alternative education <input type="checkbox"/> K Juvenile court school <input type="checkbox"/> L Community school <input type="checkbox"/> M Correctional Institution or facility <input type="checkbox"/> N Community school <input type="checkbox"/> O Correctional institution or facility <input type="checkbox"/> P Home school at parent's home <input type="checkbox"/> Q Hospital facility <input type="checkbox"/> R Community college <input type="checkbox"/> S Adult education program <input type="checkbox"/> T Charter school <input type="checkbox"/> U Head Start program <input type="checkbox"/> V Child development or child care facility <input type="checkbox"/> W State preschool <input type="checkbox"/> X Private preschool <input type="checkbox"/> Y Extended day care <input type="checkbox"/> Z Nonpublic day school </p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued on next page)</i></p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
33. What are the placement specifications of the IEP team <i>(continued from previous page; mark all that apply)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A Non public residential school in CA <input type="checkbox"/> B Non public residential school outside CA <input type="checkbox"/> C Private day school <input type="checkbox"/> D Private residential school <input type="checkbox"/> E Parochial School <input type="checkbox"/> F Other (specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> G N/A (no IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> H No recommendation 		
34. What related services does the IEP team specify? <i>(mark all that apply; continued on next page)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A Regular class with accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> B Resource services <input type="checkbox"/> C Resource specialist program <input type="checkbox"/> D Special day inclusion services <input type="checkbox"/> E Special day class in public integrated facility <input type="checkbox"/> F Special day class in nonpublic school <input type="checkbox"/> G Language and speech <input type="checkbox"/> H Home and hospital <input type="checkbox"/> I Adapted physical education <input type="checkbox"/> J Audiological Services <input type="checkbox"/> K Individual Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> L Group Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> M Guidance Services <input type="checkbox"/> N Occupational Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> O Physical therapy <input type="checkbox"/> P Orientation and mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Q Parent counseling <input type="checkbox"/> R Social work services <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued on next page)</i></p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
34. What related services does the IEP team specify? (continued from previous page; mark all that apply)	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational education training <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation services <input type="checkbox"/> Individual and small group instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Vision services <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized driver training <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological services for low incidence disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Health and nursing <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter services <input type="checkbox"/> Education technology services <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior management services <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive services <input type="checkbox"/> Braille transcription <input type="checkbox"/> Reader services <input type="checkbox"/> Note taking services <input type="checkbox"/> Transition services <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf and hard of hear services <input type="checkbox"/> Respite care services <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify _____) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (no IEP) </p>		
35. Did child receive the services recommended in the IEP?	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine <input type="checkbox"/> Received partial services <input type="checkbox"/> NA (no IEP) </p>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
36. What is the monthly tuition for the NPS?	<input type="radio"/> A \$ ____/____/month <input type="radio"/> B N/A (public school)		
37. What is the source of funds for NPS tuition? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="radio"/> A State reimbursement to district <input type="radio"/> B AB2627/ district <input type="radio"/> C Private (parents) <input type="radio"/> D Private (others) <input type="radio"/> E Other <input type="radio"/> F N/A (public school)		

YOUTH INTERVIEW

Youth ID: _____

Case #: _____

Study Team Member: _____

Introduction

Thank you for coming today. My name is _____ and I am doing a study for the California Department of Education. The reason I am here today is to ask you some general questions about your feelings about your education and where you have lived, including how many schools you have attended, what types of classes you have had, what you like best about school and what would make changing schools easier for you and other foster youth in the future. You do not have to answer any question I ask and you may end this interview or leave the room at any time—no questions asked. Anything you do say about your educational and residential experiences will be kept confidential; I will not tell staff here at the group home, your caseworker or your parents/guardians. You will see me writing stuff down during the interview and this is just so I can share your opinions—but I will not mention your name when I share these opinions. If you want, at the end of the interview I will show you what I have written down. If you see any mistakes in what I have written, you can correct them. If you tell me that there are illegal things happening, I will share that information with the appropriate person.

Do you have any questions about the reason I am here and why I am asking you your opinions about school and where you live?

I, _____, have read the above statement or have had it read to me, and agree to participate in this interview. Any questions I had about the study were answered, and I understand that I can stop the interview at any time.

Date: _____

Signature of youth: _____ (only if required by placement)

I, _____, certify that I read the information statement to the youth regarding the youth's right to leave the interview at any time.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Signature of interviewer: _____

*- indicates will not be keytaped

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
1. How old are you?	(A) 12 (B) 13 (C) 14 (D) 15 (E) 16 (F) 17 (G) 18 (H) 19 (I) Other (specify: _____)		
2. What grade are you in school?	(A) Kindergarten (B) Grade 1 (C) Grade 2 (D) Grade 3 (E) Grade 4 (F) Grade 5 (G) Grade 6 (H) Grade 7 (I) Grade 8 (J) Grade 9 (K) Grade 10 (L) Grade 11 (M) Grade 12 (N) Mixed grade (specify: _____) (O) Other (specify: _____) (P) N/A (not enrolled in school)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
3. How old were you when were first placed in an out of home placement?	(A) 0 (B) 1 (C) 2 (D) 3 (E) 4 (F) 5 (G) 6 (H) 7 (I) 8 (J) 9 (K) 10 (L) 11 (M) 12 (N) 13 (O) 14 (P) 15 (Q) 16 (R) 17 (S) 18 (T) Other (specify: _____)		
★ What do you like best about school? (<i>write down quote, not quantified data</i>)			
4. How many schools have you attended in the past 12 months?	(A) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
5. Who enrolled you in your current school?	<input type="radio"/> B LCI staff <input type="radio"/> C Surrogate <input type="radio"/> D Case worker <input type="radio"/> E Parent/guardian <input type="radio"/> F Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> G Don't know		
6. When you came to this group home, how long was it before you went to school? (<i>mark all that apply</i>)	<input type="radio"/> A _____ Days <input type="radio"/> B Still not enrolled in school <input type="radio"/> C It was summer when I arrived		
7. Do you attend school regularly (i.e., Monday–Friday)	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C N/A (not currently enrolled in school)		
8. If you do not attend school regularly, why not?	<input type="radio"/> A Transport problems <input type="radio"/> B Skipped school <input type="radio"/> C Came home <input type="radio"/> D Sent home <input type="radio"/> E Sick <input type="radio"/> F Waiting to be enrolled <input type="radio"/> G Other (specify: _____)		
9. Do you feel that your current school has assigned you to the right kinds of classes?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C I don't know <input type="radio"/> D N/A (not currently enrolled in school)		
10. If not, what kinds of classes do you need?	<input type="radio"/> A IEP related classes <input type="radio"/> B Prep classes (i.e., more advanced) <input type="radio"/> C Non-core classes (i.e., art, music etc) <input type="radio"/> D Different levels of core classes <input type="radio"/> E N/A (youth has needed classes)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
11. Are there services you are not getting you feel would help you do better in school, what are they?	(A) Counseling related (B) Tutoring/time with aide (C) Other (specify: _____) (D) N/A (getting needed services)		
12. Number of credits child enrolled for at school last semester	(A) ___ - ___ - ___		
13. Number of credits earned in school last semester	(A) ___ - ___ - ___		
14. If you did not receive all the credits you enrolled for, why not?	(A) Child did not complete term at school site (B) Child failed one or more courses (C) Child dropped one or more courses (D) School would not accept credits (E) Child doesn't know (A) N/A (credits completed)		
15. Do you have an Individualized Education Plan, an IEP?	(A) Yes (B) No (C) Don't know		
16. Which of these services do you receive? (continued on the next page)	(A) Regular class with accommodations (B) Resource services (C) Resource specialist program (D) Special day inclusion services (E) Special day class in public integrated facility (F) Special day class in nonpublic school (G) Language and speech (H) Home and hospital (I) Adapted physical education (continued on the next page)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
16. Which of these services do you receive? (continued from previous page)	<input type="checkbox"/> Audiological services <input type="checkbox"/> Individual counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Group counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance services <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Physical therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation and mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/guardian counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Social work services <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational education training <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation services <input type="checkbox"/> Individual and small group instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Vision services <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized driver training <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior management services <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive services <input type="checkbox"/> Braille transcription <input type="checkbox"/> Reader services <input type="checkbox"/> Note taking services <input type="checkbox"/> Transition services <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf and hard of hear services <input type="checkbox"/> Respite care services <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (no IEP)		
17. If you don't have an IEP, did you ever have one?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
18. If you used to have an IEP, why don't you have one anymore?	<input type="radio"/> A Wrongly assigned <input type="radio"/> B Lost <input type="radio"/> C Don't know <input type="radio"/> D Child completed recommendations of the IEP <input type="radio"/> E N/A (never had an IEP)		
19. If you have an IEP, did someone review your IEP during the time you have been living here?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes, because annual review <input type="radio"/> B Yes, because change in needs/services required <input type="radio"/> C No <input type="radio"/> D Review required, but unable to be determined if it occurred <input type="radio"/> E Don't know <input type="radio"/> F N/A (never had an IEP)		
20. Have you ever had to change schools in the middle of the year because you changed residential placements?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Don't know		
21. If yes, how many times?	<input type="radio"/> A 1 <input type="radio"/> B 2 <input type="radio"/> C 3 <input type="radio"/> D 4 <input type="radio"/> E 5 <input type="radio"/> F 6 <input type="radio"/> G 7 <input type="radio"/> H 8 <input type="radio"/> I 9 <input type="radio"/> J 10 <input type="radio"/> K Other (specify: _____) <input type="radio"/> L N/A (never changed schools in the middle of the year)		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
22. Do you think you had to repeat classes because you changed residential placements?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B No <input type="radio"/> C Don't know <input type="radio"/> D N/A (has not changed group homes)		
23. Do you know if your credits have been transferred to your current school from your previous school?	<input type="radio"/> A Yes <input type="radio"/> B Know <input type="radio"/> C Don't know <input type="radio"/> D N/A (has not changed schools)		
24. If all of your credits were not transferred, do you know why not?	<input type="radio"/> E Child did not complete term at school site <input type="radio"/> F Child failed one or more courses <input type="radio"/> G Child dropped one or more courses <input type="radio"/> H School would not accept credits <input type="radio"/> I Child doesn't know <input type="radio"/> J N/A (credits completed)		
* Do you think there are ways that the school system could be changed so that it would be easier for you and other kids to change schools? If so, how? (<i>write down response</i>)			
25. Where do your parents/guardians live now? (<i>insert county code from last page</i>)	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
26. How many places have you lived in the past 12 months (for example, a group home, a hospital, with your family?) (<i>enter number</i>)	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
27. In the last 12 months, what types of places have you lived? <i>(continued on the next page)</i>	Place 1 (Current placement) A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) B County shelter C Other emergency shelter D Relative/kinship placement E Foster family F Foster family agency G Group home H Residential treatment program I Hospital J CYA K Juvenile Hall L Homeless M Don't know		
	Place 2 A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) B County shelter C Other emergency shelter D Relative/kinship placement E Foster family F Foster family agency G Group home H Residential treatment program I Hospital J CYA K Juvenile Hall L Homeless M Don't know		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
<p>24. In the last 12 months, what types of places have you lived? (continued on the next page)</p>	<p>Place 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) B County shelter C Other emergency shelter D Relative/kinship placement E Foster family F Foster family agency G Group home H Residential treatment program I Hospital J CYA K Juvenile Hall L Homeless M Don't know 		
	<p>Place 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) B County shelter C Other emergency shelter D Relative/kinship placement E Foster family F Foster family agency G Group home H Residential treatment program I Hospital J CYA K Juvenile Hall L Homeless M Don't know 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
<p>24. In the last 12 months, what types of places have you lived? (continued on the next page)</p>	<p>Place 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) <input type="radio"/> B County shelter <input type="radio"/> C Other emergency shelter <input type="radio"/> D Relative/kinship placement <input type="radio"/> E Foster family <input type="radio"/> F Foster family agency <input type="radio"/> G Group home <input type="radio"/> H Residential treatment program <input type="radio"/> I Hospital <input type="radio"/> J CYA <input type="radio"/> K Juvenile Hall <input type="radio"/> L Homeless <input type="radio"/> M Don't know 		
	<p>Place 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) <input type="radio"/> B County shelter <input type="radio"/> C Other emergency shelter <input type="radio"/> D Relative/kinship placement <input type="radio"/> E Foster family <input type="radio"/> F Foster family agency <input type="radio"/> G Group home <input type="radio"/> H Residential treatment program <input type="radio"/> I Hospital <input type="radio"/> J CYA <input type="radio"/> K Juvenile Hall <input type="radio"/> L Homeless <input type="radio"/> M Don't know 		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
24. In the last 12 months, what types of places have you lived?	Place 7 (A) Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) (B) County shelter (C) Other emergency shelter (D) Relative/kinship placement (E) Foster family (F) Foster family agency (G) Group home (H) Residential treatment program (I) Hospital (J) CYA (K) Juvenile Hall (L) Homeless (M) Don't know		
28. How many Group Homes have you lived in the past 12 months? <i>(enter number)</i>	Place 8 (A) Not in Out of Home Placement (OHP) (B) County shelter (C) Other emergency shelter (D) Relative/kinship placement (E) Foster family (F) Foster family agency (G) Group home (H) Residential treatment program (I) Hospital (J) CYA (K) Juvenile Hall (L) Homeless (M) Don't know <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		

Question	Response	Critical Incident	Researcher Note (if needed)
29. Who do you talk to if you have a question about school?	<input type="radio"/> A FYS <input type="radio"/> B CASA <input type="radio"/> C Staff <input type="radio"/> D Caseworker <input type="radio"/> E Parent/guardian <input type="radio"/> F Surrogate <input type="radio"/> G Friends <input type="radio"/> H Other community adult (i.e. religious leader) <input type="radio"/> I Teacher <input type="radio"/> J Relative <input type="radio"/> K Counselor at school <input type="radio"/> L No one <input type="radio"/> M Other (specify: _____)		
30. How often do you see your caseworker? (Note: <i>not</i> the group home caseworker)	<input type="radio"/> A Never <input type="radio"/> B Once/month <input type="radio"/> C Less than once/month <input type="radio"/> D More than once/month		
31. How often do you talk to this caseworker?	<input type="radio"/> A Never <input type="radio"/> B Once/month <input type="radio"/> C Less than once/month <input type="radio"/> D More than once/month		
★ Is there anything else you would like to share about your school or education? (<i>write down response</i>)			

I would like to thank you very much for your participation in this interview. I hope that this study will help to make going to school better for other kids like you in the future. Before I leave, I would like to give you this card with the toll-free number for the foster care help-line. Although it is not related to this study, I think it is important for you to know that these people are there to help you if you ever have concerns about the care or services you are receiving in foster care. Thank you again for participating!

COUNTY CODES

<u>Code</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>County</u>
01	Alameda	32	Plumas
02	Alpine	33	Riverside
03	Amador	34	Sacramento
04	Butte	35	San Benito
05	Calaveras	36	San Bernardino
06	Colusa	37	San Diego
07	Contra Costa	38	San Francisco
08	DeI Norte	39	San Joaquin
09	El Dorado	40	San Luis Obispo
10	Fresno	41	San Mateo
11	Glenn	42	Santa Barbara
12	Humboldt	43	Santa Clara
13	Imperial	44	Santa Cruz
14	Inyo	45	Shasta
15	Kern	46	Sierra
16	Kings	47	Siskiyou
17	Lake	48	Solano
18	Lassen	49	Sonoma
19	Los Angeles	50	Stanislaus
20	Madera	51	Sutter
21	Marin	52	Tehama
22	Mariposa	53	Trinity
23	Mendocino	54	Tulare
24	Merced	55	Tuolumne
25	Modoc	56	Ventura
26	Mono	57	Yolo
27	Monterey	58	Yuba
28	Napa	59	Out of State
29	Nevada	60	Don't know
30	Orange	61	Deceased
31	Placer	62	Other