

**FACTOR ANALYSIS –Post-Secondary Success** (Notes from 5/30/18 Stakeholder Discussion)

+ Factors supporting education success	-- Factors pushing trend in the wrong direction
<b>Events</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016 DHS/ICA work group on ETV retention completed analysis of trend data and generated some recommendations for improving outcomes</li> <li>• 2018 change in federal law expands ETV age range and adds flexibility to states in ETV parameters – will take affect for 2019-20 academic year</li> <li>• More is known from research and pilot efforts about the challenges to post-secondary enrollment, retention, and completion for youth transitioning from foster care and what works in promoting success</li> <li>• Starting to be able to identify foster youth in education data systems (secondary and post-secondary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High rate of summer melt (students applying for/awarded financial aid, who do not attend)</li> <li>• Lack of academic readiness:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attendance expectations</li> <li>○ Study skills/habits</li> <li>○ Time management/organization skills</li> <li>○ Personal accountability</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Poor placement test scores/remedial or developmental coursework frequently required</li> <li>• Lack of life/social-emotional readiness:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of stability</li> <li>○ Basic needs (housing, transportation, etc.) not met</li> <li>○ Challenges living with roommates (dorms)</li> <li>○ Not able to effectively advocate for self</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students not attending class or engaging in campus activities due to anxiety and depression</li> <li>• Students prioritizing work over class to meet basic needs</li> <li>• Students ending up on academic or financial aid probation</li> <li>• Students taking too many classes/credits</li> </ul>
<b>Patterns of Behavior</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some workers being proactive in getting FAFSA etc. completed early and seeking additional info or documents needed for process to move forward</li> <li>• Connecting students (soft handoffs) to available supports</li> <li>• Individual attention paid by faculty (e.g., contacting students who don't attend first class)</li> <li>• Choosing to live in college dorms (can also present challenges)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospective students not encouraged or supported in completing FAFSA, other steps necessary for enrollment</li> <li>• YTDM and stop. Not providing sufficient support for planning and preparation early enough if ever (e.g., interest/aptitude discussions, college visits, career exploration and planning, etc.)</li> <li>• Youth uncertain about education and career goals – apply/enroll in college becomes the default option without realistic plan or understanding of consequences</li> <li>• Youth (and adult supporters) not aware of or don't consider all options, especially vocational and technical training opportunities</li> <li>• Youth not willing/able to ask for help (fear, uncertainty) or don't have the skills or</li> </ul>

+ Factors supporting education success	-- Factors pushing trend in the wrong direction
	confidence to communicate with adults to seek support
<b>Structure of the System</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early alert systems that trigger referrals to available on-campus supports (ala DMACC)</li> <li>• Availability of on-campus and community supports</li> <li>• Availability of some financial aid dedicated specifically to former foster youth (and eligible for additional financial aid)</li> <li>• Coordination/communication between Aftercare providers and colleges in some areas (among other collaborative efforts)</li> <li>• Utilization of required college experience type course to form small cohorts and provide extra supports to youth transitioning from foster care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality issues (e.g., FERPA) limit information sharing</li> <li>• Early deadlines to apply for financial aid; complexity of FAFSA and other requirements</li> <li>• Requirements of some colleges to complete an online orientation before being allowed to register for classes</li> <li>• Barriers to accessing required placement tests (ACT, etc) including transportation, photo id; and test anxiety; poor performance</li> <li>• Financial aid refunds count as income in determining PAL stipend</li> <li>• Financial aid policies incentivize enrolling right out of H.S. and full-time (while delaying enrollment or attending part-time may be more realistic)</li> <li>• Limited support for students enrolling in summer classes</li> <li>• Unclear who is responsible for student's post secondary preparation and support</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Models</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the need to find the right balance between allowing independence and providing adult support for each individual youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System's responsibility is to get older youth safely to 18 or h.s. graduation – not worry about what comes after they exit the system</li> <li>• Older youth are now adults and need to be accountable for their own actions/inactions (adultifying youth – especially youth of color)</li> </ul>

## **UNDERLYING CAUSES of POOR POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES – 5 Why's**

### *Lack of social-emotional readiness / inability to balance life and continued education*

- 1) Unmet basic needs, mental health issues, and/or need to work result in students being in “crisis mode” –lives are not yet stable enough to successfully pursue post-secondary education, especially immediately after aging out
- 2) Youth do not have enough consistent role models, support and opportunities to “practice adulting” / develop the skills needed to navigate life/education on their own
- 3) Adults not stepping up to help prepare youth or provide appropriate guidance prior to aging out
- 4) Limited resources and lack of shared understanding of who's responsible and accountable for youth being prepared
- 5) Mental model that system's responsibility is to get older youth safely to 18 or h.s. graduation – not worry about what comes after they exit the system

### *Lack of academic readiness – poor study skills, time management, need for developmental courses*

- 1) Youth completing high school and encouraged to enroll in post-secondary education (or enroll as a default plan) without adequate academic preparation for traditional college
- 2) Placement instability leading to multiple school changes, disrupted coursework, lack of consistent education path and poor coordination with education systems
- 3) Attention to education plan and progress is low priority in child welfare case plan; other needs and competing demands require system's attention and resources
- 4) Limited resources and lack of shared understanding of who's responsible and accountable for youth's academic outcomes and preparation for post-secondary education or training
- 5) Mental model that system's responsibility is to get older youth safely to 18 or h.s. graduation – not worry about what comes after they exit the system

## **Actionable Causal Factors**

## **SUGGESTED STRATEGIES and ACTIVITIES BASED on FACTOR ANALYSIS**

- 1) *Adopt policies and implement practices that result in better preparation for and decisions about post-secondary education and training among youth expected to age out.*
  - Clarify and ensure that roles and accountability for education planning and preparation are understood by DHS/JCS workers, contractors, and other partners
  - Develop necessary protocols and practice guidance to ensure consistent implementation of individualized guidance, preparation, and support activities for youth indicating a desire to enroll in post-secondary education or training after exiting care
  - Review and revise state ETV rules to maximize utilization and avoid penalizing youth who delay enrollment, or attend part-time; ensure that ETV is available for vocational and technical training/certificate programs
  - Disseminate information on vocational and technical opportunities, and support youth in exploring a variety of options that match their interests and aptitudes
  
- 2) *Encourage post-secondary institutions to create policies and programs that ensure that students transitioning from foster youth are identified and offered additional help in connecting to on-campus and community resources.*
  - Develop and disseminate materials highlighting needs of and suggesting supports for foster youth
  - Create bridging opportunities (college exp./orientation) specific for foster youth
  - Urge post-secondary institutions to implement processes such as data-sharing agreements, early alerts, dedicated points of contact, proactive referrals and soft handoffs to academic and other support services for youth enrolled in education or training programs
  
- 3) *Convene a multi-sector stakeholder group to share information, review data, examine disparities, set targets, and monitor progress of foster care students, utilizing a results-based framework and shared accountability for desired results.*
  - Involve key stakeholders representing diverse perspectives, including young people