FosterEd Arizona: Year 2 Evaluation

Prepared for
National Center for Youth Law

RTI International
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 800
Berkeley, CA 94704

Author
Jennifer Laird, Ph.D.
510.665.8238
jlaird@rti.org

February 2016

Executive Summary

FosterEd is an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law aimed at improving the educational experience and outcomes of foster youth. It is guided by a framework that all foster youth should have an **Educational Champion** who can support the student's long-term education success, and an **Education Team** of engaged adults, including the Educational Champion, caregivers, teachers, social workers and the youth, who develop and support an individualized **Education Case Plan** based on an assessment of the student's educational strengths and needs.

FosterEd: Arizona launched a two-year pilot project in Pima County in January 2014. This evaluation report summarizes the progress made through September 2015 in developing the necessary infrastructure and implementing new practices such as education teams and education plans. The evaluation also analyzes metrics that indicate that the program helps youth meet their educational goals and is associated with improved school attendance.

New Infrastructure

- Hired and trained FosterEd staff
- Co-located Education Liaisons at child welfare offices
- Developed standard motions and orders for appointing Educational Champions
- Established data sharing agreements
- Developed process document, with partner approval
- Customized Foster Focus for Arizona
- Linked districts in Foster Focus
- Customized case management and team communication tool for Arizona
- Customized Mentoring Modules for Arizona

New Practices

315 foster youth have been supported by an education team and education plan.

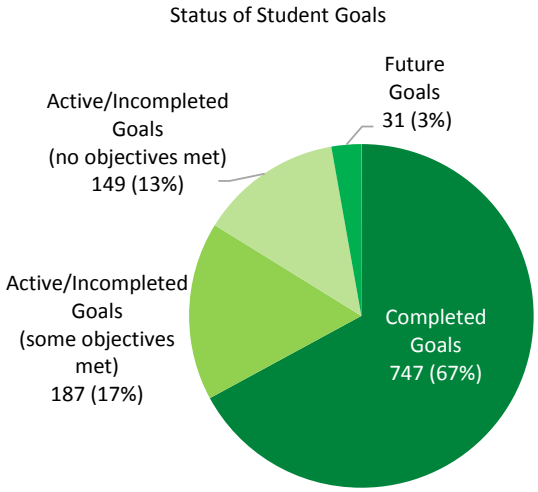
683 adults have served on at least one foster youth's team.

220 Educational Champions have been identified, with the largest share being biological parents (35%) and kinship caregivers (23%).

In addition to the 315 foster youth formally served by the program, FosterEd's Education Liaisons spend approximately 10% of their time providing ad hoc support on educational issues for other foster youth, and an additional 5% of their time presenting to professional communities (i.e., Department of Child Safety and school staff, and district leadership) about the unique educational needs of foster youth.

> *"[It's] great that [the FosterEd Education Liaison] is in the office. They are accessible. Our liaison makes the rounds and talks to people face to face and will answer questions even with cases that she is not on."*
> *- Department of Child Safety Supervisor*

Outcomes



Goal completion

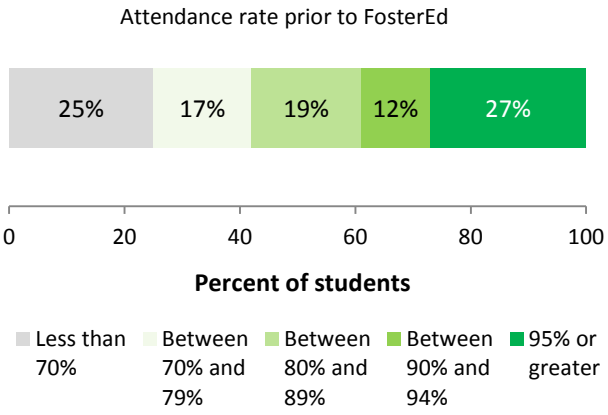
A total of 1,114 educational goals were set for FosterEd students, with 67% of goals completed by September 2015. The five most common goals were:

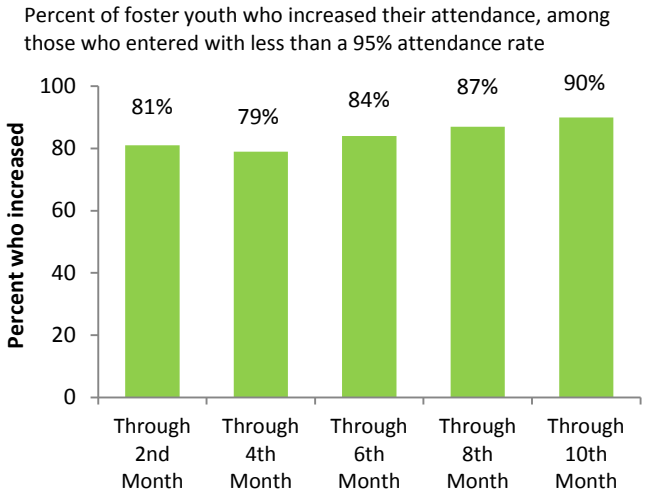
- Enrollment in appropriate schools or classes
- Securing academic records and credits
- Ensuring students receive appropriate special education services and 504 accommodations
- Helping students to access enrichment resources and extra-curricular activities
- Supporting reading proficiency

Improved attendance rates

As youth entered FosterEd, most had an attendance rate below 95%. Of these students, the vast majority improved their attendance rate after joining FosterEd.

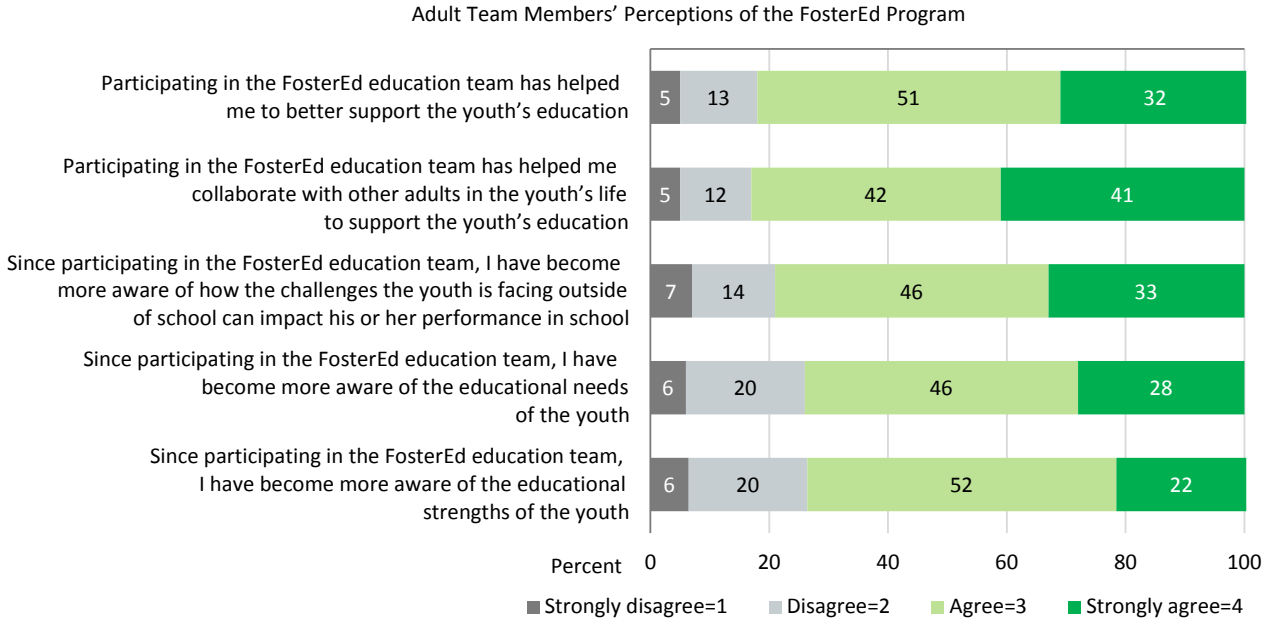
Of the students who entered with at least a 95% attendance rate, the vast majority maintained at least a 90% rate (see Figure 22 in the main report), however maintaining a 95% rate was more difficult. An examination of mean and median attendance rates before and after FosterEd revealed increases across the time periods examined (see Figures 23 and 24 in the main report).





Adult Team Members' Positive Perceptions of FosterEd

At least 74% of adult team members surveyed "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with positive statements about FosterEd.



91% of adult team members surveyed would recommend FosterEd to other adults in the lives of foster youth. When asked for suggestions for improving FosterEd: Arizona, the following three themes emerged:

- Grow to serve more youth
- Improve communication and have more in-person contact
- Clarify roles and timelines

Progress on state-level goals

FosterEd: Arizona has also made progress on a number of state-level goals. Examples include: helping to develop data sharing agreements between the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and the Department of Child Safety (DCS), which has led to regular data sharing between ADE and DCS and school districts; the production and dissemination of a statewide report on *Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap*; and legislative briefings and hearings on FosterEd and the particular educational needs of foster youth.

Recommendations

- Reflect on the newly instituted model of "short-term" and "long-term" cases and consider further adjustments
- Develop sustainability plan for Pima County and consider statewide expansion in phases
- Develop methods for tracking support provided to non-FosterEd cases
- As FosterEd expands, clearly communicate the program capacity to agency partners (e.g., the court, DCS)

Contents

Background

FosterEd is an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) aimed at improving the educational experiences and outcomes of foster youth. It was first developed in Indiana in 2009. With many lessons learned and promising initial findings, in 2011 child welfare and education leaders in Santa Cruz County, California agreed to develop a FosterEd pilot program.[1] In 2012, the Director of FosterEd began discussions with child welfare, education, and philanthropic leaders in Arizona about the possibility of establishing a FosterEd pilot in one county within the state, with a long-term goal of expanding the program statewide.

After much consideration, Pima County was selected as the pilot Arizona county. A Director for FosterEd: Arizona was hired in February 2013, and development of the Pima pilot began in earnest. The first few youth cases joined the program in November and December of 2013, and in January 2014 the program was officially launched. The pilot is supported by generous funding from the Accio Education Fund, the Arizona Community Foundation, the Paul and Amy Blavin Foundation, the Blessings Fund, the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, the Eaglet Fund, the Helios Education Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona, the Kieckhefer Foundation, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, the Troller Fund, and the Ventana Fund.

The Need

In 2012, when FosterEd began discussion with stakeholders in Arizona, there were approximately 400,000 children in foster care in the United States, and approximately 14,000 in Arizona (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013; Needell et al., 2013). A recently released landmark study, *Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap*, documents that Arizona's students in foster care consistently underperform academically compared to their peers not in foster care (Barrat, Berliner, and Felida, 2015). In fact, students in care consistently lag behind other vulnerable populations of students, such as low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The report found Arizona's students in foster care:

- Are consistently among the academically lowest performing subgroups in math and English;
- Have the highest dropout rates;
- Are more likely than the general population to be enrolled in the lowest performing schools; and
- Are more likely to change schools during the school year.

The Pima County Context

Of the 15 counties in Arizona, Pima ranks number 2 in greatest number of foster youth. In December 2015, approximately 3,440 children were in foster care in Pima County, with approximately 2,075 being of school age (i.e., 5 years or older).

[1] Evaluation reports for the Indiana and Santa Cruz County pilots available as of the writing of this report can be found at: http://foster-ed.org/Modules%20SCC/FosterEd%20SCC%20Year%202%20Evaluation%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf; http://www.foster-ed.org/images/FosterEd%20Indiana%20Evaluation.pdf

Within the first few weeks of the Pima County pilot, a major change occurred in the state's child welfare agency. In January 2014, Governor Jan Brewer overhauled the child welfare agency, removing Child Protective Services from the Department of Economic Security and renaming it the Child Safety and Family Services Division, with a new Director reporting directly to the Governor. In October 2014, the agency was renamed the Arizona Department of Child Safety. These major shifts within the state child welfare agency were unforeseen by FosterEd staff and members of the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams. To the credit of FosterEd, their advisors, and their agency partners, the Pima County pilot was not substantially delayed or hindered by the major shifts that occurred as the pilot was launching.

FosterEd Model

Figure 1 depicts FosterEd's program model, including its three key components. The details of the FosterEd model are customized for each county and state, and evolve as each pilot progresses, but the overall objectives are consistent and have persisted.

1 Educational Champion

Parental involvement in education is one of the strongest predictors of a student's educational success. Foster youth often do not have anyone in their lives championing their education by monitoring their academic progress and advocating for their educational needs. Understandably, agency and caretaker attention is often focused on their immediate safety, and consequently the educational needs of youth are typically not given sufficient time in child welfare team meetings or service plans.

FosterEd aims to raise awareness about the educational needs of foster youth by identifying at least one person who can serve as a champion in this area. Ideally, this would be a biological parent or assumed long-term caregiver, someone likely to be a part of a youth's life long-term and therefore able to continue supporting the child educationally even after he or she leaves foster care. However, this may not always be feasible, and in those instances FosterEd: Arizona works to identify and train a volunteer to serve as an Educational Champion.

2 Education team

While Educational Champions are an important component of the model, FosterEd recognizes that to fully support the educational strengths and needs of youth, a team of adults needs to be engaged, including representatives from the children's schools, child welfare agency, and

FIGURE 1: FosterEd Program Model

behavioral health agency. Other adults in the children's life, such as the caregiver, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), coaches, or an engaged relative may also be team members.

3 Education case plan

As youth enter FosterEd, Educational Champions and teams are identified and the student's strengths and needs are assessed. Based on the assessment of strengths and needs, educational goals are set for the youth and the Educational Champions (in some cases), and the team collaborates to support the goals and track progress. Teams tend to focus on 3-4 goals at one time, and often identify additional goals to turn to as the initial, most urgent goals are met. Teams are expected to review the progress being made on goals at least once a month, and set goals that can be accomplished in one or two semesters.

FosterEd Core Practice Components in Pima

The Critical Role of the Education Liaison

Education Liaisons (ELs) essentially staff the FosterEd program. In Pima, three ELs manage the FosterEd cases, and a full-time Director provides oversight and support to the ELs while also nurturing and supporting partnerships with county and state partners. The ELs work with Pima County Department of Child Safety (DCS) specialists to identify school-age youth to involve in FosterEd (see subsequent section for details). The ELs assigned to the youth's FosterEd case stay with that case throughout its duration. ELs coordinate the assessment of the strengths and needs of the youth, identify a team of adults to support the youth educationally, identify an Educational Champion for the youth who is also a part of the team, and then assist the team in developing and tracking educational goals and objectives.

A Focus on Youth Most in Need of Additional Educational Support

During the beginning stages of project planning, FosterEd and its partners had a goal to serve all Pima County K-12 foster youth. However, it quickly became apparent that the needs of the youth were so great that serving all 2,000 school-age foster youth was not possible given the staffing constraints of three ELs. Thus, with input from the Community Planning and State Leadership Teams, FosterEd staff developed a referral checklist for DCS workers to use in considering which cases to refer to FosterEd and started implementing this as a guide in August 2014. Checklist items include whether the child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, is an English-language learner, has attendance issues, and/or is in danger of being retained or is not on-track for high school graduation, along with other indicators that signal a need for increased attention to the educational experiences and performance of the youth.

Shifting to Model that Includes "Short-Term" and "Long-Term" Cases

At the start of Year 2 of the Pima pilot, the FosterEd staff presented to the Community Planning and State Leadership Teams a proposal to further adjust how FosterEd: Arizona takes on and serves new cases. The proposal was motivated by a goal of being able to serve more youth, and to better tailor the level of service to the level of need. The ELs had noticed that some cases needed relatively little support from them, once the caregiver and social worker were connected to each other and communicating about the child's education. Keeping these cases on their caseload until the dependency case was closed or the child moved away, as had been the practice thus far, did not seem like a good use of the ELs' limited time for supervising education teams.

The FosterEd staff therefore proposed developing a practice model that involved identifying cases as either "short-term" or "long-term." The newly identified "short-term" case model is for cases that have less complex needs, and in which the student is placed with a relative who appears to the EL to be a strong Educational Champion. The goals set for these cases are short-term goals that primarily focus on actions of the EL, such as helping the Educational Champion set up tutoring for the child. Short-term cases are expected to be active in the FosterEd program for 1-3 months.

Cases are identified as "long-term" if the needs of the student appear to be more complex and/or there is not a caregiver who can serve as a strong Educational Champion. The ELs assemble larger education teams for the "long-term" cases, identify longer-term goals, and expect to keep the case active in FosterEd until dependency ends or the child is placed out of county and that placement is expected to last a long time. What is now referred to as the "long-term" case model was the standard practice for all cases prior to March 2015, when the "short-term" case model was introduced as a second option. ELs can and do reclassify cases. For example, if an unexpected, complex issue arises on a "short-term" case and the EL thinks the Educational Champion and DCS Specialist need more assistance than expected in supporting the child, the EL can re-classify the case as "long-term," engage more education team members, and develop longer-term goals to support the youth.

ELs' Participation in Child and Family Team Meetings

The ELs typically attend one Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting when they first bring a case into FosterEd. The purpose of attending the meeting is to meet the adults involved in the youth's life, to get a sense of the circumstances of the youth, and to introduce the FosterEd program. In practice, ELs are not always notified when a CFT is occurring, attendance of the adults in the youth's life at the meeting can vary (e.g., parents, caregivers and/or a school representative may be absent), there may be very little time to talk about FosterEd, and/or emotions during the meeting may run high, making it difficult to turn the conversation to education. Nevertheless, the meetings do generally serve the purpose of giving the ELs a window into the youth's educational and life circumstances, and which adults to follow up with about starting the youth in the FosterEd program (including adults who did not attend the CFT).

Use of Technology to Support Education Case Plans and Teams

For both the Santa Cruz County and Pima County pilots, FosterEd has contracted with Enome, Inc., a company that developed Goalbook Individual Learning Plans, an online educational case management tool originally designed to support teams of adults working with special education students. Goalbook enables the education teams to set goals for the youth, track progress on those goals, and generally communicate about the education of the student, including celebrating successes. FosterEd worked with Goalbook to adapt the tool for teams working to support the education of foster youth.

At the end of the 2014-15 school year, Enome notified FosterEd that they would be discontinuing their Goalbook Individual Learning Plans product to focus on further developing another suite of their tools that focus on curriculum development and individualized learning. Enome would support Goalbook for the 2015-16 school year to give FosterEd time to identify a new technology solution. FosterEd responded to this news by recognizing it as an opportunity to search for, or work with a vendor to develop, a new tool that

would incorporate aspects of Goalbook that worked well for FosterEd programs and include new or modified components to better meet the needs of the program. The case data presented in this report all come from Goalbook. The new tool is expected to be developed in time for use in summer 2016.

Volunteer Educational Champions

Ideally, the presumed long-term caregiver of the youth (e.g., their biological parent or a relative who will likely have ongoing custody of the child) is able to take on the role of Educational Champion. Unfortunately, identifying a long-term caregiver is not possible for some youth (e.g., they live in a group home), or the assumed long-term caregiver is focused on other issues and cannot currently take on the role of Educational Champion. In those cases, FosterEd assigns a Volunteer Educational Champion to the youth's FosterEd team. As will be discussed on page 26, during the first year of implementation of the pilot, the demand for Volunteer Educational Champions outstripped their supply. The FosterEd staff and Community Leadership Team responded to Year 1 experiences by designing and fundraising for a new FosterEd position dedicated to recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.

Evaluation Overview

In January of 2013, NCYL contracted with RTI International to conduct an external evaluation of the Pima County FosterEd pilot. RTI is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to conducting innovative, multidisciplinary research that improves the human condition. With a worldwide staff of more than 3,700 people, RTI is active in education, child welfare, health and medicine, environmental protection, and decision support systems. RTI maintains company headquarters in North Carolina, eight regional offices in the United States, 10 international offices, and many project-specific offices around the world. This project is conducted out of the Berkeley, California, office with Dr. Jennifer Laird leading the evaluation.

RTI aims to conduct evaluations that are methodologically sound, transparent, and meaningful. Our goal is to both capture the impacts of programs and systems changes, and inform their ongoing development. We have approached this study from a Developmental Evaluation framework, which allows for greater flexibility when analyzing initiatives or innovations, which tend to continuously develop and evolve. When a great deal is in flux, it is impossible to establish a static logic model that reflects precisely what is to happen as implementation advances. Alternatively, linear logical approaches work well when the problem is well understood and the solution is clearly defined.

By using a Developmental Evaluation framework the study is able to adjust as the program evolves. Furthermore, Developmental Evaluation separates itself from more traditional evaluative approaches in that the evaluators actively participate in partnership, and are expected to support on-going program improvement by helping program leaders use data as it emerges from the evaluation in order to improve the program.

Evaluation Indicators Matrix

In collaboration with FosterEd staff, RTI developed an evaluation indicators matrix (see Appendix A). RTI considers it a "roadmap" for the evaluation, acknowledging that it must be revisited periodically to ensure that it remains consistent with the evolving FosterEd practices. The matrix presents information on what will be measured in the evaluation (i.e., the indicators), what the data source will be for each indicator, how frequently it will be measured, and when it is reasonable to expect to see change on the indicator. To the extent possible, RTI is leveraging data and instruments that are used as part of the practice, as opposed to being used solely for the evaluation. This is to limit the burden of additional data collection on the program.

The evaluation matrix groups indicators into three major sections: infrastructure, practice, and outcomes. The infrastructure indicators include products, systems, staff, and resources that need to be in place to support the FosterEd practice (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing). Practice indicators list activities of the program that RTI and FosterEd consider critical and therefore should be counted, tracked, and reported. Outcomes indicators are what FosterEd is trying to affect, and include youth outcomes (e.g., improved attendance) and Educational Champion outcomes (e.g., increased capacity to support the youth's education).

Although this evaluation is focused on the Pima County pilot, the pilot is part of a broader NCYL effort in Arizona to support the education of foster youth. FosterEd in Arizona operates at both the local and state level, with local programmatic challenges and successes

informing state policy efforts, and improvements to state policy facilitating improved local implementation. FosterEd's state policy efforts include legislative advocacy and collaborative projects with state child welfare, education and judicial agencies. The matrix includes some state-level outcomes as well.

After drafting the evaluation matrix with FosterEd staff, RTI presented it to the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams and incorporated their feedback. RTI believes that this level of transparency and collaboration with the partners involved in FosterEd is critical to conducting a comprehensive and useful evaluation.

An RTI report released in January of 2015 detailed the findings from the development of the Pima pilot through September 30, 2014, and is referred to as the Year 1 Evaluation Report.[2] This second and final report covers from the development of the program through September 30, 2015.

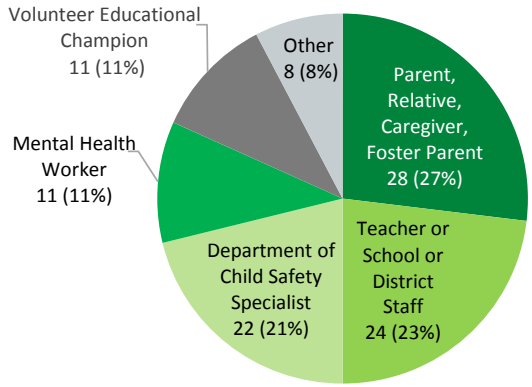
Evaluation Methods

RTI is employing multiple methods for the evaluation, including a number of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis strategies (see **Table 1** on the next page).

As noted in Table 1, adults serving on students' education teams were surveyed in October 2014 and again in October 2015. The results from the October 2014 survey were presented in the Year 1 report. This report presents findings from the October 2015 adult team member survey. In general, the pattern of results from the October 2014 survey were also observed in the October 2015 survey. The purpose of surveying adult team members both years was to examine whether the generally positive experience and feedback of adult team members of FosterEd: Arizona was maintained in the second year. **Figure 2** reports the number of adults who participated in the October 2015 survey (104 total). The largest group was parent, relative, caregiver or foster parent (28), followed by teacher or school/district staff (24), and by DCS Specialist (22).

The evaluation findings are grouped by progress made on infrastructure, practice, and outcomes indicators. Qualitative data are woven throughout the presentation of quantitative data. A final section presents conclusions and recommendations from the evaluators.

FIGURE 2: Role Type of October 2015 Adult Team Member Survey Respondents



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015

[2] RTI started the evaluation in January 2013 as FosterEd started formally working in Arizona to develop the Pima pilot. FosterEd started taking cases in November 2013. The Year 1 FosterEd Arizona Evaluation Report is available at: http://www.foster-ed.org/Modules%20SCC/AZ%20Year%201%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf

TABLE 1: FosterEd: Arizona Evaluation Methods

Qualitative Data	Notes
Bi-Weekly Calls with FosterEd Staff	RTI holds bi-weekly calls with the focus of coordinating the logistics of the evaluation (e.g. plan for data collection), and discussing challenges and unexpected opportunities that are arising within the program with the goal of supporting continuous program improvement.
Observations of State Leadership and Community Planning Team Meetings	RTI participates in most of the meetings of the State Leadership Team (quarterly meetings) and the Community Planning Team (monthly in 2013, then bimonthly in 2014, and quarterly in 2015), providing periodic evaluation updates and observing the dynamics of the group and the issues discussed.
Interviews with Members of the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams	For the Year 1 report, RTI interviewed 4 members of the State Leadership Team and 7 members of the Community Planning Team in October of 2014. At the time those interviews were conducted, 20 members served on the Community Planning Team and 10 members served on the State Leadership Team. For this report, RTI conducted another round of interviews in October of 2015, including with 4 members of the State Leadership Team and 5 members of the Community Planning Team. At the time the Year 2 interviews were conducted, 19 members served on the Community Planning Team and 8 members served on the State Leadership Team. For both the 2014 and 2015 interviews, RTI selected the members who had served the longest and/or who represented key partnerships for FosterEd.
Focus Group with Education Liaisons	RTI conducted a focus group with the Education Liaisons in September of 2014 and again in October of 2015.
Interviews with DCS Supervisors	In October of 2015, RTI interviewed DCS Supervisors. FosterEd sent the names of the 18 DCS Supervisors who work at the three offices in which the FosterEd ELs are located. From that list, RTI randomly sampled three supervisors at each location, making sure to sample at least one Supervisor in the Investigations Unit and one Supervisor in the Ongoing Cases Unit at the site. Of the 9 sampled DCS Supervisors, RTI was able to schedule interviews with 6.
Quantitative Data	**Notes**
Administrative and Case Planning Data	FosterEd tracks case administrative data in Goalbook (e.g., number of cases, number and relation of Educational Champion) and case planning data (goals set for the student and progress made on those goals). These Goalbook data were extracted, de-identified, and transferred to RTI in October of 2014 for the Year 1 Evaluation Report, and in October of 2015 for the Year 2 Evaluation Report. The data were extracted 2-3 additional times each year for presentation at the State Leadership and Community Planning Team meetings.
Communications Data	Data on the number of communications in Goalbook were extracted, de-identified, and transferred to RTI. This includes updated statuses of goals, celebratory messages, and emails from Goalbook to all team members or selected team members. The actual content of the communications were not shared with RTI because the communications often contain identifiable information. The extraction timing was the same as with the Administrative Data listed above.
Surveys of Adult Team Members	In collaboration with FosterEd, RTI developed a survey for adult team members to solicit their feedback on the FosterEd program. The survey was fielded in October of 2014 and again in October of 2015. Minor modifications were made between the two surveys (e.g., questions about Goalbook were dropped in the second survey because FosterEd will soon discontinue using the tool). For each survey administration, team members who had an activated Goalbook account and served on a team for at least two months that year were surveyed (N=273 for the 2014 survey, N=390 for the 2015 survey). The surveys were administered using Survey Gizmo. Respondents were sent four email requests to complete the survey and told they would be entered into a raffle for a $100 gift card if they completed the survey. Of those invited to participate in the 2014 survey, 109 (or 40%) took the survey. Of those invited to participate in the 2015 survey, 104 (or 27%) took the survey. See Study Limitations section below for a discussion of response rates.
Volunteer Data	In Year 1, one of the Education Liaisons led the recruitment and training of Volunteer Educational Champions and kept records of those efforts. In Year 2, the new Volunteer Coordinator took over this responsibility. Summaries of these records were shared with RTI for the Year 1 and Year 2 evaluation reports.
Attendance Data	Attendance rates for foster youth served by FosterEd for at least two months (N=280) were analyzed, comparing their attendance rates before and after joining FosterEd. Attendance data were available for 93 of these students (33%) based on district linkages with Foster Focus or through manual entry into Foster Focus. See Study Limitations section below for a discussion of response rates.

Study Limitations

The evaluation of FosterEd: Arizona includes tracking the progress of numerous qualitative and quantitative measures related to infrastructure, practice, and outcomes. The process has required a strong commitment from FosterEd staff to work closely with the evaluator to ensure that all of the obtainable high quality data has been collected. Considering the breadth of data included in the evaluation, RTI is confident the presentation in this report presents a fair and balanced accounting of the first two years of FosterEd: Arizona. Nevertheless, two data elements should be noted as having relatively low coverage rates. The October 2015 Adult Team Member Survey achieved a 27 percent response rate, lower than the October 2014 survey response rate of 40 percent. The first year included a longer ramp up of team formations, and therefore team members were likely to have been on a case closer to the survey administration time. Appendix Table B-1 presents October 2015 response rates by team member role type. Volunteer Educational Champions were most likely to respond (61%) and teachers or school district staff were least likely to respond (20%). Despite relatively low response rates for some subgroups, RTI believes they provide important perspectives from major stakeholders involved in FosterEd and have therefore included them this report.

FosterEd staff and their partners made great efforts to try to secure education data for the youth served in order to enable examinations of changes in indicators such as attendance. In the end, attendance data for 33 percent of foster youth who had been served for at least two months was available for analysis. While this coverage is lower than anticipated or desired, a comparison of the analysis sample and the population of youth served by FosterEd reveals that the analysis sample is generally representative of the full FosterEd population. The largest difference is a slight over-representation of elementary school students in the attendance analysis, and a slight under-representation of the high school population (8 percentage point difference each, see Appendix Table B-2)

Progress on Infrastructure

In the early stages of the evaluation, RTI and FosterEd identified 11 infrastructure indicators reflecting systems, staff, and products that needed to be in place to launch and support the implementation of FosterEd in Pima County, and to support the sustainability of the program beyond the pilot period. By October 2015, eight of the infrastructure elements were completed and three were ongoing. This section briefly summarizes the progress made on these indicators. While all of the progress should be considered achievements, this report calls out extra-ordinary achievements within some of the indicators (labeled as "particularly notable achievements"), as well as areas still in need of attention. The information presented in this section is based on evaluator observations, information supplied by FosterEd staff, interviews with State Leadership and Community Planning Team Members and the focus group with Education Liaisons.

Completed Infrastructure

The following eight infrastructure indicators were completed by October 2015, with many having been accomplished before the launch of FosterEd in January 2014. In addition to being needed for the launch and implementation of the pilot, the completed infrastructure projects support sustainability of program.

FosterEd staff hired and trained

Leading up to the launch of FosterEd in Pima County, three Education Liaisons (ELs) were hired and trained. These ELs were supervised by the Director for FosterEd: Arizona, who was hired in February 2013. The Arizona Director is a former State Representative, and thus joined the project with deep knowledge of the state policy landscape and relationships with state policy makers and community leaders. In addition to these four full-time positions for the Pima pilot, a Data Manager supported both the Pima and Santa Cruz County pilots. In October 2014 the Data Manager position was replaced by a Technology Project Manager who serves the Pima and Santa Cruz County pilots, and the new pilot being developed in Lea County, New Mexico. A Chief Operating Officer and the National Director of FosterEd also support the Pima pilot part-time. The FosterEd Founder and first National Director became Executive Director of NCYL in summer 2015. A new National Director with extensive experience in programs and policies aimed at supporting foster youth education was hired at that time.

In February 2015, one EL left FosterEd and a new EL was hired to replace her, maintaining the three EL positions. Additionally, a full-time Volunteer Coordinator was hired to lead the recruitment, training, and retention of Volunteer Educational Champions. This work had previously been covered by one of the ELs.

Particularly notable achievements related to hiring and training FosterEd staff

During the Year 1 and Year 2 interviews, a number of State Leadership and Community Planning Team Members noted the assembly of very strong FosterEd leadership and staff as a critical accomplishment for the program leading up to and throughout the first and second year of implementation. Below are illustrative comments about the FosterEd leadership and staff.

"The Liaisons that have been selected are superb."

"(The Volunteer Coordinator) is so personable and knowledgeable. She has enhanced the volunteer program."

"[The] leadership is very effective... the [original FosterEd National Director has the ability] to develop relationships with people by the way he conducts business and who he is as a person. And [the Arizona FosterEd Director] already had a sterling reputation, and relationships were already built. This is a smaller community and so a lot of it is the person who is leading it. [FosterEd's original National Director's] content knowledge is off the charts, his ability to listen to others (he was an outsider and didn't come in here with a set agenda), and his passion for the project is unquestionable. He did his homework on our community: how we're different from other areas in Arizona (like Maricopa and Phoenix). He took advantage of some of the people he knew here and built on that."

Standard motions and orders for appointing Educational Champions in Pima County developed

Standard motions for the appointment of Educational Champions by the Juvenile Court were developed and are in use in Pima County. The order rescinding the appointment was developed and is in use.

Data sharing agreements put in place (with DCS, with Pima districts)

In developing the pilot, FosterEd staff and the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams agreed they should focus on students attending the six largest districts in the county, which collectively educate about 90 percent of all K-12 public school students in the county (the remaining eight districts are relatively small). Data sharing agreements were established with all six of the focal districts as well as the Department of Child Safety.

Process document developed and approved by partners

Given the number of partner agencies involved in FosterEd, the need for a document outlining each agency's role became apparent. Such a document was developed and has been modified multiple times as the program has evolved, including in 2015 to reflect the addition of the "short-term" case model. The partners have each accepted/endorsed the document, including its modifications.

Customized Foster Focus for Arizona

Foster Focus is a database developed and managed by the Sacramento County Office of Education which brings together child-level information from child welfare agencies and schools and has a standard set of components that counties can access through licensing agreements. FosterEd uses many of those standard components and also has developed additional features to support the program. Additionally, the partners worked to modify the coding script for the nightly uploads from Arizona's child welfare database, CHILDS, to Foster Focus.

Customized Mentoring Modules for Arizona

For the Santa Cruz County pilot, FosterEd developed 12 mentoring modules to help adults become effective Educational Champions for their youth. FosterEd staff modified these modules for Pima County (e.g., admissions information for the three Arizona state universities was included in place of admissions information for the California state universities). Each module contains a guide, supporting materials, and tip sheets. The topics of the 12 modules are:

- Beliefs, Expectations, and Aspirations
- Monitoring and Facilitating Learning
- Communication with Child and School
- Education Records and Credits
- Enrollment in Appropriate Schools and Classes
- School Attendance
- Obtaining Academic Support
- Special Education and Accommodations
- Behavioral and School Discipline Issues
- Extracurricular Activities
- Transition to College and Career
- Mentoring Non-Minor Dependents

All versions are available online for free download. For Pima versions, see: http://www.foster-ed. org/resourcespima.html.

Co-located ELs at child welfare offices

To facilitate collaboration with Department of Child Safety staff, each EL was provided office space in regional DCS offices. One EL is located in the Pima north DCS office, another in the Pima south DCS office, and the third in the Pima east DCS office. The ELs and some of the Community Planning and State Leadership Team members cited co-location as critical to establishing FosterEd in the county and generally:

"Having ELs is an incredible addition to the system. Having them in the CPS office is great because the staff just walk by them and can interact directly with them. Brilliant to have them in CPS offices."

DCS Supervisors also noted the value of the co-location and how it strengthens the relationship between ELs and DCS staff and allows ELs to give impromptu support:

"[Working with ELs is] a different experience than other providers we have worked with. The liaison is part of the team. Great that she is in the office. They are accessible. Our liaison makes the rounds and talks to people face to face and will answer questions even with cases that she is not on."

"We work with [names FosterEd Liaison] here in our building very closely… She's always willing to work with us – any education issues in general she is always willing to help."

Ongoing Infrastructure

Progress on three of the 11 infrastructure indicators is ongoing. As with the completed infrastructure projects, these ongoing infrastructure efforts have supported the launch and implementation of the pilot, and will support sustainable practices beyond the pilot.

Establishment and persistence of the State Leadership Team, Community Planning Team, and Steering Committee

The State Leadership Team and the Community Planning Team are responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the pilot. The State Leadership Team provides the broader statewide perspective, including advising about how the pilot can be expanded to other counties in the coming years. The Community Planning Team, on the other hand, provides advice on implementation issues specific to Pima County. A Steering Committee within the Community Planning Team was formed early in the development of the pilot in order to meet even more frequently than the Community Planning Team to work on details of implementation that were best addressed by a smaller group of individuals. The State Leadership Team started in October 2013 and meets quarterly. The Community Planning Team first met monthly beginning in March 2013 through the end of the year, and in 2014 met roughly every other month. In 2015, the

Community Planning Team moved to quarterly meetings. The Steering Committee was formed in March 2013 and meets on an as-needed basis. This was quite frequent in 2013 and became less so in 2014, and no meetings were needed in 2015.

The membership of the teams has varied as members have left their agencies' positions and others have taken their place. At any given time there have been approximately 10 members on the State Leadership Team, including high-level staff from DCS, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), the state Attorney General's Office, the Governor's Office, and the Arizona Community Foundation. The Community Planning Team has always been larger than the State Leadership Team, having about 20 members. These include district-level staff from the two largest of the five focal districts, a representative from the County Schools Superintendent's Office, representatives from the Pima County Juvenile Court (including the Juvenile Court Commissioner), DCS, the county behavioral health unit, and the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona.

Particularly notable achievements related to the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams

Through the Year 1 and Year 2 interviews with members of the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams, and the evaluators' participation in their meetings, there was evidence of a unity of purpose. Compositions of the teams were well-thought out, and meetings have been well-attended and efficient. Considerable effort was invested by the FosterEd National and Arizona directors and their early supporters in identifying potential agencies and organizations to involve in the teams, and the appropriate representatives from those groups. The team members reported feeling adequately prepared about the evolving plans for the pilot and engaged in its refinement and execution. Team members also reported that they felt they were able to effectively guide and support the program.

Customized case management and team communication tool for Arizona

In mid-2013, FosterEd started working with Goalbook to modify their technology tool (originally developed to support special education students) in order to better support the education of foster youth.

Goalbook will be phased out in July 2016 as the company focuses on other products. FosterEd is currently working with a new vendor to develop a technology tool, which will be in place before Goalbook is no longer supported.

Linking districts in Foster Focus

In order to effectively support a child's education, the adults in his or her life need current and accurate information about the child's educational strengths and challenges. For youth in foster care, a number of new adults enter their lives (e.g., foster parents, social workers, dependency court judges, attorneys, CASAs, and new teachers if the child changes schools). These new adults need information about the child's schooling, and even adults already connected to the child, such as biological parents and other relatives, may need support in understanding the educational strengths and needs of the child.

School systems maintain a great deal of educational information on students, including attendance rates, test scores, grade point averages, and behavioral incidents. However, this information is typically not easily accessible to child welfare staff. Foster Focus, a data system developed and managed by the Sacramento County Office of Education, aims to address this challenge by linking education data

supplied by participating districts with CHILDS data, thereby giving the ELs access to educational information for foster youth. With this access ELs can help the educational teams understand the current educational circumstances of the youth. The education data stored in Foster Focus was expected to enable RTI to examine whether foster youth improve on important educational indicators, such as attendance and grades, after joining FosterEd.

Table 2 reports the status of linkages between Foster Focus and the five focal Pima County districts as of October 2015. To be fully linked, districts send nine extracts: demographics, enrollment, attendance exceptions, attendance summary, behavior incidents, test scores, transcripts, special education, and GPA.

TABLE 2: FosterEd Pima County Linkages as of October 2015

District	Percent of County K–12 Enrollment	Linked Status	Notes
Tucson Unified	41%	Partially linked	All extracts are linked with the exception of Attendance Summary. Tucson Unified uses a custom SQL database called Mohave, but is in the process of migrating to Synergy by Edupoint in 2016.
Sunnyside Unified	14%	Partially linked	All extracts linked with the exception of Test Scores. District uses Powerschool.
Amphitheater Unified	11%	Partially linked	All extracts are linked with the exception of GPA. District uses Tyler SIS.
Marana Unified	10%	Partially linked	All extracts are linked with the exception of GPA and Test Scores. District uses Synergy by Edupoint.
Vail Unified	8%	Partially linked	All extracts are linked except for GPA and Test Scores. The SIS system is not able to send a GPA file that meets specifications and Test Score data is not available. District uses Powerschool.

NOTE: There are nine additional districts in Pima County that FosterEd does not expect to link with Foster Focus. Collectively they educate 16% of the K–12 students in the county, with none educating more than 2%.

Areas in need of attention related to Foster Focus linkage

Throughout Years 1 and 2 of the pilot, Foster Focus linkages did not progress as hoped. Recognizing the relatively slow pace of linking at the start of the Pima pilot, FosterEd hired a Data Manager in 2013 to help support this process. That position was then replaced with a FosterEd Technology Project Manager. FosterEd also contracted with an outside programmer to develop the scripts for linkage between PowerSchool and Foster Focus, one of the SISs used in Pima County.

While district data linkages with Foster Focus increased between the Year 1 and Year 2 evaluation, a preliminary examination of the amount of education data in Foster Focus during the summer of 2015 alerted the evaluator and FosterEd: Arizona team that additional work would be needed to secure additional data outside of the existing linkages. The Technology Project Manager worked with staff in one of the large districts to directly transfer data to FosterEd, bypassing Foster Focus linkages that were not working properly with the district. FosterEd in turn transferred these data to the evaluator for analysis. The additional efforts to secure education data paid off. The first exploration of the data in fall 2014 revealed only 10% of cases had the necessary attendance data to be included in analyses (attendance data are needed before and after the youth joined FosterEd). However, by fall 2015 that rate increased to 26% and by January 2016, in time for the writing of this report, it increased to 33%. Furthermore, analysis comparing the full population of students served and those included in the attendance analysis revealed the attendance sample to be generally representative of the full population.

Customization of CHILDS to include a more robust template for education case planning

DCS is interested in further developing statewide capacity for supporting education case planning within the agency's case management data system. That system is currently called CHILDS, but DCS plans to replace CHILDS, which will take several years. The FosterEd: Arizona Director and Technology Project Manager have met with DCS staff, including the project manager of the new system, numerous times. FosterEd has suggested education-related data elements as well as functional requirements to support education case planning for youth in care. These have reportedly been incorporated into the requirements for the new CHILDS system.

Progress on Practice Indicators

In designing the evaluation, RTI and FosterEd identified a set of FosterEd practice indicators to track (see Appendix A). These include the number of youth and Educational Champions involved in the program, the frequency of Goalbook use, and the number of volunteers trained. The data presented in this section come primarily from administrative and case management data stored in Goalbook and extracted and de-identified for RTI.

As discussed in the conclusion, the evaluator has been impressed with FosterEd's commitment to collecting and monitoring data related to its practices and emerging outcomes in order to reflect on the program, identify challenges, and make mid-course corrections. Program staff do this monitoring and reflection formally with the evaluator and Community Leadership Team each quarter, and among themselves at weekly staff meetings. A number of infrastructure projects noted in the prior section (e.g., customizing a case management technology tool for Arizona, developing data sharing agreements, hiring and training appropriate staff) have supported sustainable practices for using data for program improvement.

How many youth have been served by FosterEd?

The next few sections detail information about the foster youth who have been formally involved in the FosterEd program, defined as FosterEd taking on the youth as a "short-" or "long-term" case. In addition to formally serving specific youth through a FosterEd case, FosterEd ELs are available to advise DCS Specialists on educational issues for other specific youth for whom a formal FosterEd case has not been established. Examples include helping to explain to DCS Specialists what Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans are, including the laws and requirements associated with keeping them up to date, and helping DCS Specialists request educational records from schools in cases where the school was not originally responsive to the Specialist. FosterEd ELs also present to groups of professionals in the county (e.g., school and district leaders) about the unique educational needs of foster youth. After presenting information about youth formally served by FosterEd, this report presents some information about these less formal supports provided by FosterEd.[3]

As noted previously, FosterEd began taking a few cases in November of 2013, and formally launched in January 2014. Between November 2013 and the end of September 2015 when the data for this report were extracted, **315** foster

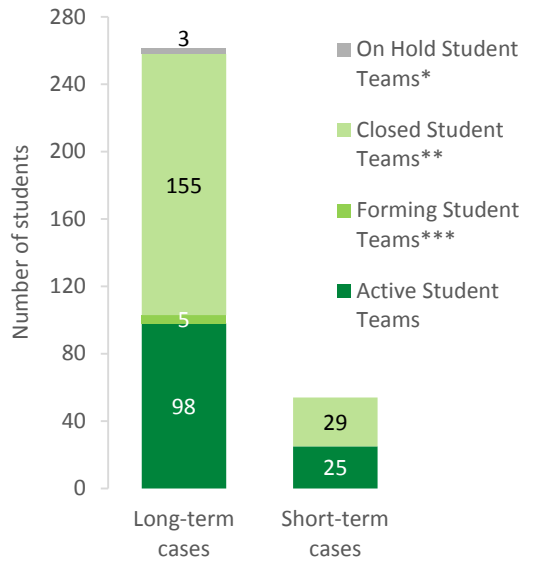
[3] As reported in the Year 1 evaluation report, 193 foster youth had been served by the end of September 2014. Thus, the counts increased by 122 during the second year of the pilot. With the addition of the "short-term" case model in March 2015, the program estimates target case loads of 50 youth for each EL, with half of cases turning over in a year. The expected program capacity is therefore 225 foster youth served annually (75 cases each for 3 ELs). Between the beginning of October 2014 and end of September 2015, FosterEd served 295 cases.

youth had been served, with most (261) supported as a "long-term" case **(Figure 3)**.

Of the long-term cases, 98 were active and 155 had been closed. Long-term cases are closed after all goals are met and there is long term stability with an Educational Champion on the team that will continue on the case. They are also closed if the youth leaves dependency (e.g., is reunified with a parent and the child welfare case was closed) or if the youth is placed outside of the county and that placement is expected to last a long time.

By the end of September 2015, 54 cases were identified as "short-term," of which 25 were active.

FIGURE 3: FosterEd Pima County Student Teams

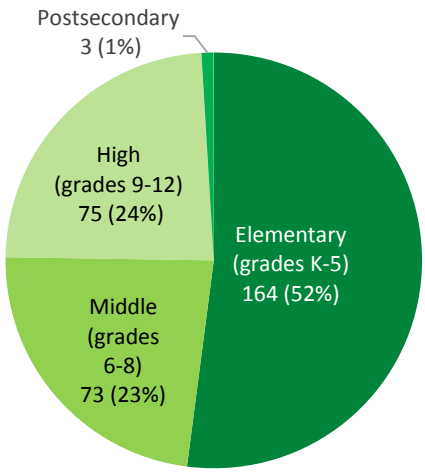


SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.
* Youth placed out of county and that placement is expected to be short term; youth is AWOL.
** For "long-term" cases: dependency case has ended; youth is placed out of county and that placement is expected to last a long time. For "short-term" cases: goals have been met.
*** Student referred, identifying and activating team members.

Who are the foster youth served?

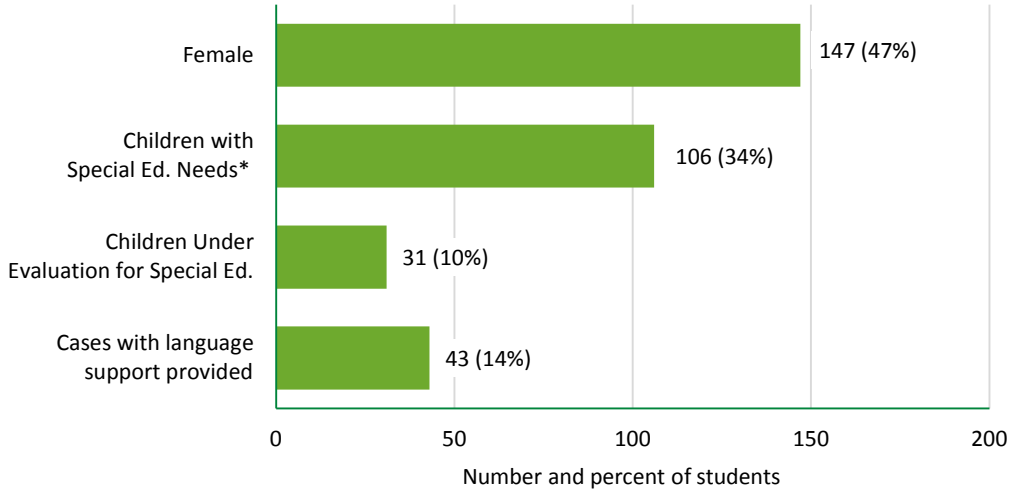
About half of FosterEd youth were in elementary grades, about a quarter in middle grades, and a quarter in high school **(Figure 4).** About half were female **(Figure 5)**. 34 percent were identified as special education students (e.g., they had an IEP or 504 plan), and an additional 10 percent were suspected by someone on the youth's FosterEd team to have undiagnosed learning disabilities and were being evaluated for special education services. 14 percent of students' teams required non-English language support. Typically the need was for Spanish translation for adult relatives, which was provided by the Education Liaison.

FIGURE 4: School Level for Foster Youth Served



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

FIGURE 5: Demographic Characteristics of Foster Youth Served



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

How does FosterEd help youth who are not formally part of the program?

In addition to 315 foster youth who have been served by FosterEd through a formal "short-" or "long-term" case, the three ELs are available to DCS Specialists for consultation and advice. The fact that they are co-located at DCS offices enables Specialists to easily approach them for ad hoc support. FosterEd does not currently have mechanisms to track these services (note that establishing a mechanism is a recommendation of this report, see page 51). However, the ELs estimate that they each spend approximately 10% of their time advising on educational issues for specific non-FosterEd foster youth, and an additional 5% of their time presenting on the unique educational needs of foster youth to professional communities (i.e., DCS staff, schools, district leadership).

ELs' contributions to the education of foster youth, beyond those for whom a formal FosterEd case is established, was referenced in the DCS Supervisor interviews:

"A lot of workers are needing help with the educational system and I always refer them to [name of EL], she has always been reliable for my workers, she has always been resourceful, if she doesn't have the answer she will look for the answer."

"Every time there is a question and [my DCS Specialists] have doubts about an educational program or educational needs I always refer them to talk to [the EL]. I get feedback that she is always able and willing and reliable, on the same day."

"I've reached out to [name of EL] on several occasions, or directed others to, when we had issues surrounding school, even if it wasn't FosterEd."

"[It's] great that she is in the office. They are accessible. Our liaison makes the rounds and talks to people face to face and will answer questions even with cases that she is not on."

Survey responses from DCS Specialists themselves indicate the value of FosterEd beyond the specific cases the serve. At least 80 percent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that beyond the specific FosterEd cases the Specialist has served on, FosterEd has helped the Specialist become more aware of the educational issues foster youth face and helped them know how to better support foster youth educationally (Figure 29 on page 44).

Who serves on the foster youth's team?

Turning back to foster youth with formal FosterEd cases, a cornerstone of the FosterEd model is identification and engagement of adults in the foster youth's life to support the youth educationally. Some team members serve on many teams. For example, there have been four Liaisons (three at any given time), but a Liaison is required for each team.[4] The number of duplicative team members, including those

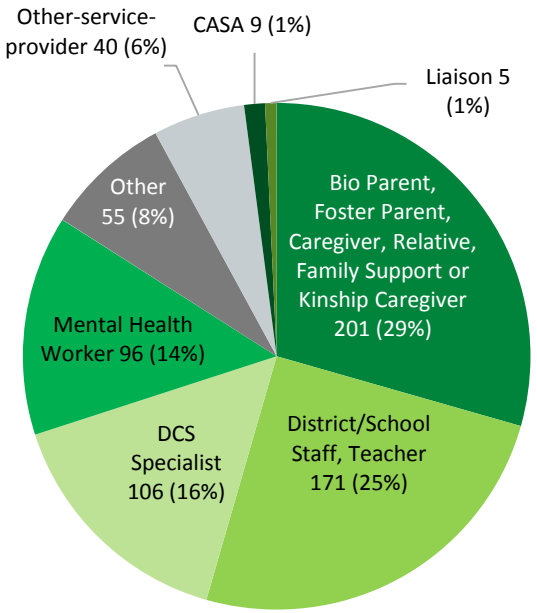
[4] Note that while there are 3 EL positions at any one time, and we note that there have been four total, Figure 6 reports 5 ELs. This is because the Volunteer Coordinator is counted as an EL for the purpose of this graph.

who have served on teams that had closed by the end of September 2015 is **1,623**.[5]

Figure 6 shows **683** unduplicated team members that had served cases by the end of September 2015. The largest share of unduplicated team members were relatives or caregivers (e.g., biological parents, foster parents). The second largest share were district/school staff or teachers.

Figure 7 reports the percent of "long-term" teams with various numbers of members.[6] Over one-third of "long-term" teams had six or more members. **Figure 8** reports the percent of "long-term" teams with various types of members. FosterEd: Arizona has a goal that each long-term case have a representative from the four categories shown in the figure. Almost all "long-term" teams had a DCS Specialist, and 60 percent had a mental health professional. Close to 50 percent had a parent, caregiver or relative on the team, and 36 percent had a representative from the school or district on the team. When each of these four role types were considered in conjunction, 13 percent of students had each of these representatives on their team.

FIGURE 6: Number of Non-Duplicative Team Members

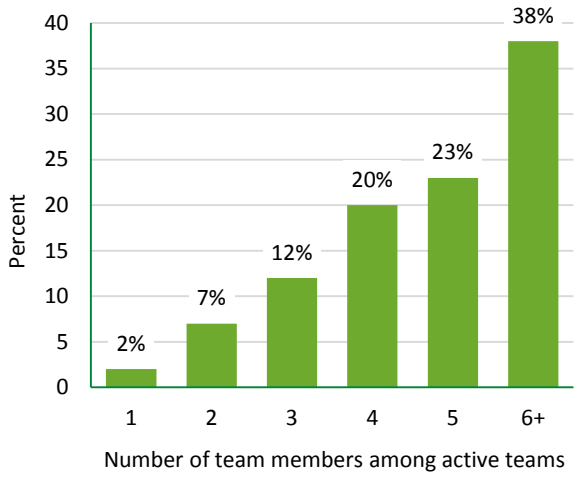


SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015

[5] To be included in this count, and Figure 6, the team member had to have activated their Goalbook account. Starting in mid-2015, FosterEd staff also started counting parents, caregivers, relatives, group home staff, and youth who were active on the team but not through Goalbook (31 total). This was based on the realization that these important team members often faced challenges accessing Goalbook and requiring Goalbook activation to count team members produced an undercount.

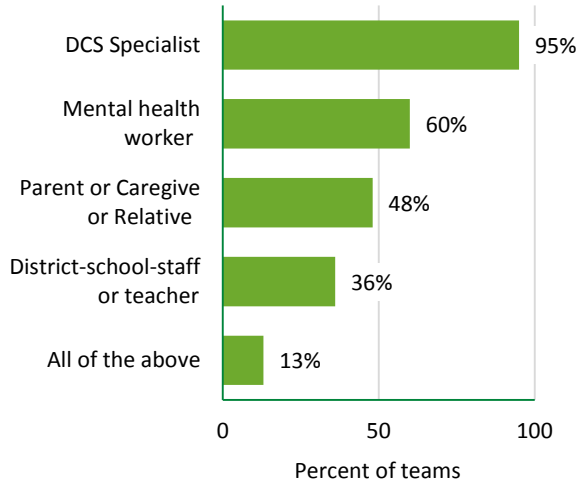
[6] "Short-term" cases typically include the EL, DCS Specialist, and Educational Champion. "Long-term" cases intentionally involve more team members. Figures 7 and 8 are limited to teams that were active at the time the data were extracted.

FIGURE 7: Percent of Active Teams with Various Numbers of Members



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

FIGURE 8: Percent of Active Teams with Various Types of Members

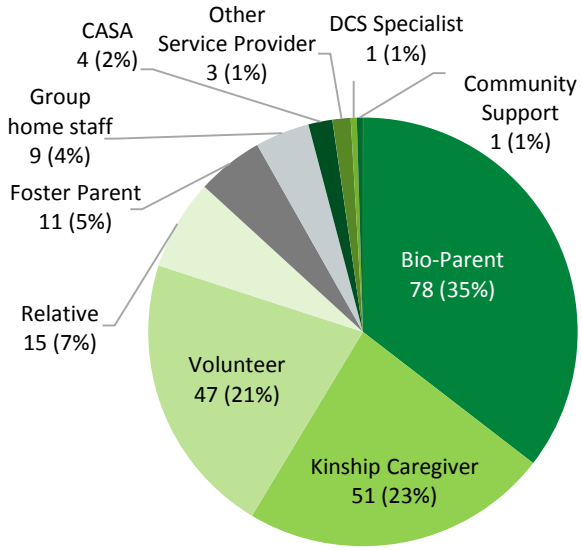


SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

How many Educational Champions have been identified, and who are they?

As of the end of September 2015, **220** Educational Champions had been identified. With 315 foster youth served as of that date, this translated into 70% of youth cases with an Educational Champion. **Figure 9** reports the relationship of the Educational Champion to the youth. The largest share are biological parents, followed by kinship caregivers. 47 of the Educational Champions were volunteers.

FIGURE 9: Relationship of the Educational Champion to the Students



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

How much communication is happening in Goalbook?

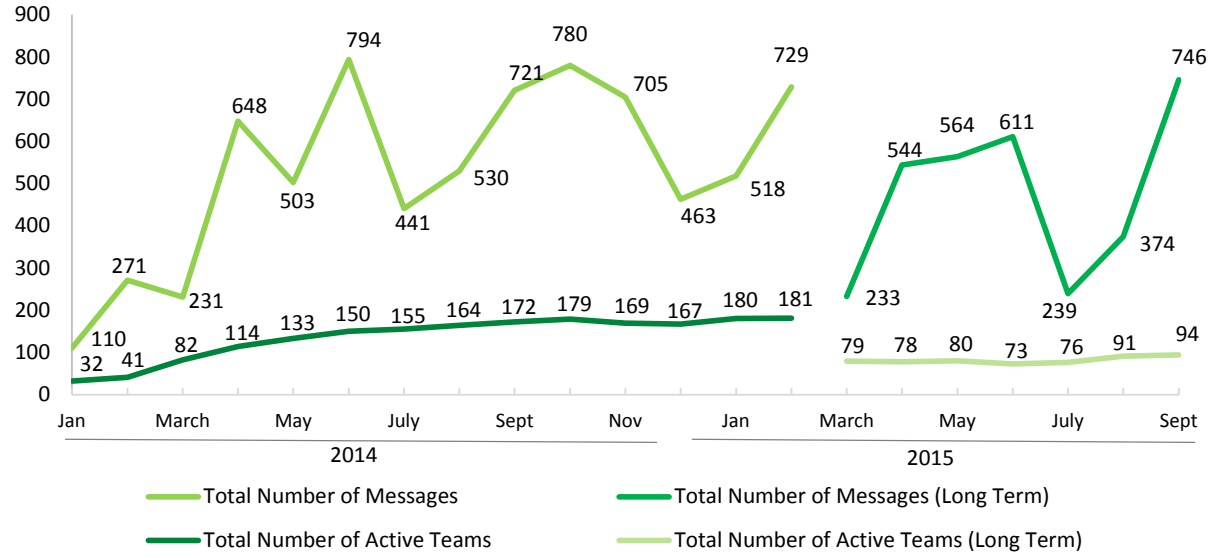
In developing the Pima pilot, the FosterEd staff expected that the majority of team collaboration would occur via Goalbook. **Figure 10** reports the number of messages sent via Goalbook by month. This includes updating goals, sending messages to all or a select group of team members, and posting celebratory messages. Teams must have at least two members during the month to be included in the analyses.

Two sets of trend lines are shown: one from January 2014 through February 2015 which includes all active teams in a given month, and a second set from March 2015 on just for "long-term" active teams. March 2015 was when the revised model of "short-"and "long-term" cases was implemented. Given that "short-term" cases included fewer team members and involved providing short-term focused support, tracking communication for these teams in Goalbook was determined by the FosterEd team, and in agreement with the evaluator, to not be a good use of ELs' time. The partners also agreed, therefore, that the evaluator would only report on Goalbook communication for "long-term" teams from March 2015 on.

The graph shows a general increase in Goalbook communication from the start of the pilot in January 2014 to February 2015, with dips in some months, particularly during July when school was not in session and during the winter holiday months. A similar pattern was observed in the second set of trend lines, when the new model of "long-term" and "short-term" cases was introduced in March 2015. During that first month Goalbook communication was relatively light, as the ELs focused on the transition, and quickly accelerated, with a substantial dip in July, followed by a rebound.

Table 3 shows the amount of communication that occurred within teams. FosterEd and the evaluator pay particular attention to the row reporting 0 messages in the month, as the goal is for teams to have at least one communication each month. That percentage tends to increase during the summer months. In September 2015, the most recent months shown, it was very low (2%). Communication here is defined as messages sent on line or on Goalbook; phone calls, in person meetings, and emails are not included.

FIGURE 10: Number of Goalbook Messages, by Month



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

TABLE 3: Percent of Teams with Varying Amounts of Goalbook Communication, by Month

	2014												2015	
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
0 messages	6%	10%	32%	15%	24%	12%	37%	39%	33%	21%	30%	52%	46%	15%
1 message	47%	12%	18%	10%	23%	15%	13%	21%	13%	15%	15%	13%	15%	20%
2-5 messages	22%	46%	37%	38%	29%	33%	35%	23%	28%	40%	32%	19%	26%	43%
6-10 messages	19%	15%	9%	25%	18%	25%	10%	9%	14%	15%	14%	9%	7%	17%
11+ messages	6%	17%	5%	13%	7%	14%	5%	8%	13%	11%	10%	7%	7%	6%

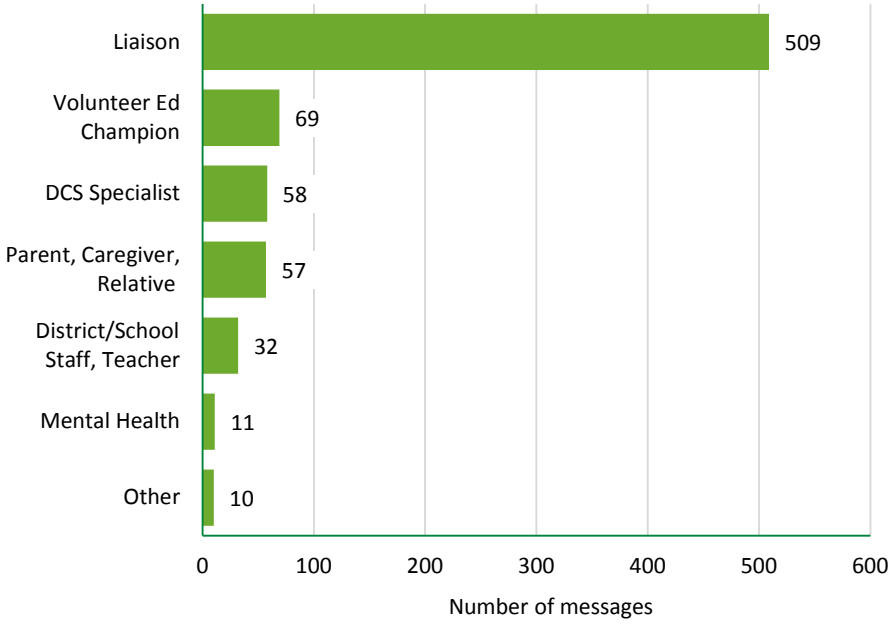
	2015						
	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
0 messages	43%	8%	8%	3%	36%	16%	2%
1 message	20%	17%	16%	5%	16%	25%	10%
2-5 messages	22%	31%	40%	27%	32%	36%	37%
6-10 messages	6%	21%	16%	34%	11%	12%	20%
11+ messages	9%	24%	20%	30%	7%	10%	31%

SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted September 30, 2015.

To further examine collaboration within Goalbook**, Figure 11** reports how many messages were sent by team member role type in a given month, among active long-term teams. September 2015 was chosen for this focal analysis because it was the most recent month and had a relatively large number of messages (746). Most of these messages were

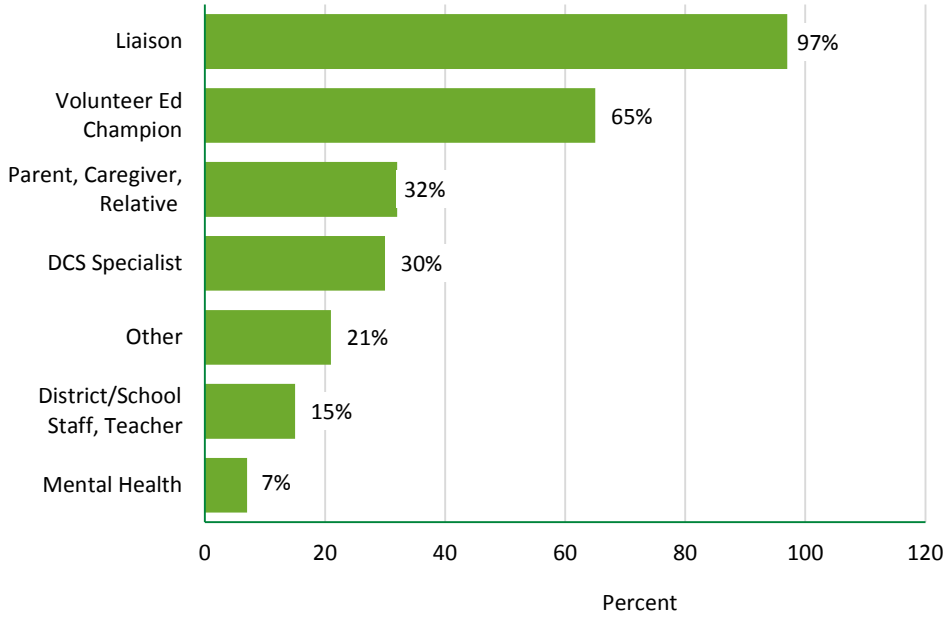
sent by Education Liaisons (509 messages). In distant second were messages sent by Volunteer Educational Champions (69 messages), followed by DCS Specialists (58) and Parents, Caregivers, Relatives (57). **Figure 12** presents the percentage of teams that had a message sent by select role types (among teams that have at least two members and a member of the given role type). Again, Education Liaisons were the most likely to send a message (63 percent of teams had a message sent by an Education Liaison in September), followed by Volunteer Educational Champions (61 percent of teams had a message sent by a Volunteer Educational Champion in September).

FIGURE 11: Number of Messages Sent by Team Member Role Type, September 2015



NOTE: Included in these analyses are active, long-term teams.
SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

FIGURE 12: Percent of teams with a message sent by the role type, September 2015



NOTE: Included in these analyses are active, long-term teams.
SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015

When ELs were asked about Goalbook and its contribution to teaming and communication, they expressed dissatisfaction with the teaming and communication aspect of tool. They noted that aspects of teaming through Goalbook are time consuming and the tool is not usable by all team members.

"The teaming model being put on a social media platform is a) not appropriate, b) too time consuming… to me the option needs to be a case management tool where emails are housed."

"*Schools need to be on a team. Districts are forbidding them to be on it. Mental health providers are not allowed to be on it either. It is not as easy as it is set up to be. Even for us it is easy because we're used to it and sometimes it is not easy."*

"I think we've all made an effort to get kids on Goalbook. I still don't feel like it's appropriate. It's a weird thing for the kids who have been around a long time, there has been distrust. Putting it on an online or social media tool doesn't work. Face to face connection. You cannot do that on a computer."

How many FosterEd volunteers have been recruited and trained?

As described on page 5, volunteers fill a critical role in FosterEd Pima County by serving as Educational Champions when the presumed long-term caregiver (e.g., biological parent or other relative) is not able to serve in that role.

At the end of Year 1 of the pilot, upon reviewing the results of the Year 1 Evaluation Report and in conjunction with ongoing internal team reflection, the FosterEd staff proposed to the Community Leadership Team that a dedicated staff person focus full-time on recruitment, training and support of volunteers. The Year 1 report showed that only 54% of cases had an Educational Champion, and thus the need for more volunteers was great. With generous support from the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, FosterEd was able to hire a coordinator to manage the volunteer program full-time.

Table 4 on the next page reports information about the number of people who expressed interest in volunteering, the number who were trained, and the status of those trained. The change in some of the counts between Year 1 and Year 2, after the addition of the full-time volunteer coordinator, is striking. While only 8 volunteers were assigned to a case in Year 1, 24 were in assigned to a case in Year 2. Also notable are the number of volunteers who agreed to take on more than one case. In Year 1, two volunteers agreed to take on siblings, compared with five volunteers in Year 2. In Year 1, no volunteer took on an additional case after completion of their first case. In Year 2, 9 volunteers agreed to take on another case after their first case ended. These changes resulted in 10 students being supported by a Volunteer Educational Champion in Year 1 compared with 36 students in Year 2.

The Volunteer Coordinator and Education Liaisons noted supporting volunteers to serve on more than one case as a retention strategy and a means of increasing capacity.

"A busy volunteer is a happy volunteer. If they are already through the door and you're valuing them then they will do more."

"Volunteers have taken on a second case. That has made such a huge difference… to my case management."

In addition to retention strategies, the Volunteer Coordinator shared her recruitment and training approach. She intentionally focused on targeted outreach, not with the goal of yielding a large number of contacts, but a group that would be most likely to be interested enough commit to the training program. In Year 1, 52 individuals expressed interest, and 57 percent of them took the next step to be trained. In Year 2, fewer contacted FosterEd to express interest in volunteering (12), but a higher proportion (83%) moved onto training.

Table 4: FosterEd Pima County Volunteers, through September 2015

Status	Pilot Year 1[1]	Pilot Year 2[2]	Cumulative Pilot Years 1 & 2
Expressed interest	54	12	66
Trained	31	10	41
Assisgned to a case (year to date)	8	24	32
Volunteered on at least 1 case but no longer	0	10	10
Waiting to be assigned	11	0	11
Volunteers who took on siblings	2	5	7
Trained but withdrew	8	2	10
Took on an additional case after completion of initial case	0	9	9
Total # of kids served	10	36	46

[1] November 2013-September 2014

[2] October 2014-September 2015

SOURCE: Administrative records kept by FosterEd.

Another improvement in Year 2 was that training was made more uniform so that all volunteers receive the same training, primarily in small groups of 1-4 people. In addition, support meetings and trainings are offered to volunteers to increase their capabilities and encourage communication.

The Education Liaisons stressed the importance of the Volunteer Coordinator's role. The EL who held the Volunteer Coordinator responsibilities before the position was created shared:

"I did not have the time to devote to the volunteers and do my job… training usually consisted of a lot of resources. With [current Volunteer Coordinator] now here, she has a lot of connections, she is willing to have monthly meetings with volunteers – she touches base with them."

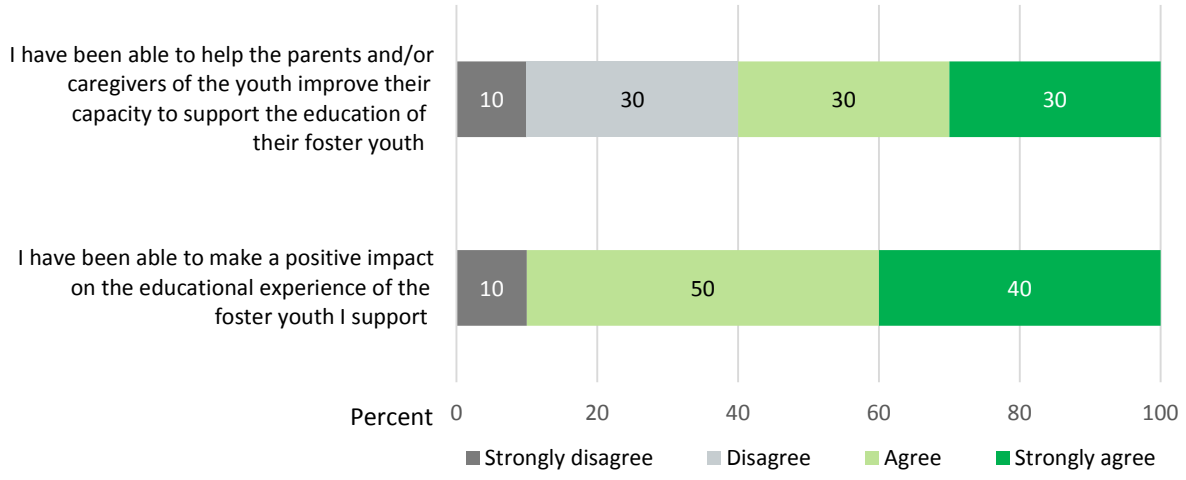
Another EL stated:

"[The Volunteer Coordinator position] can't be a secondary position. It has to be a second salary or there shouldn't be volunteers."

The October 2015 Adult Team Member survey included a few questions specific to Volunteer Educational Champions. **Figure 13** shows that 90 percent of Volunteer Educational Champions felt that they were able to make a positive impact on the educational experiences of the youth, while 60 percent felt that they were able to help the parent or caregiver become a stronger educational support for the child.

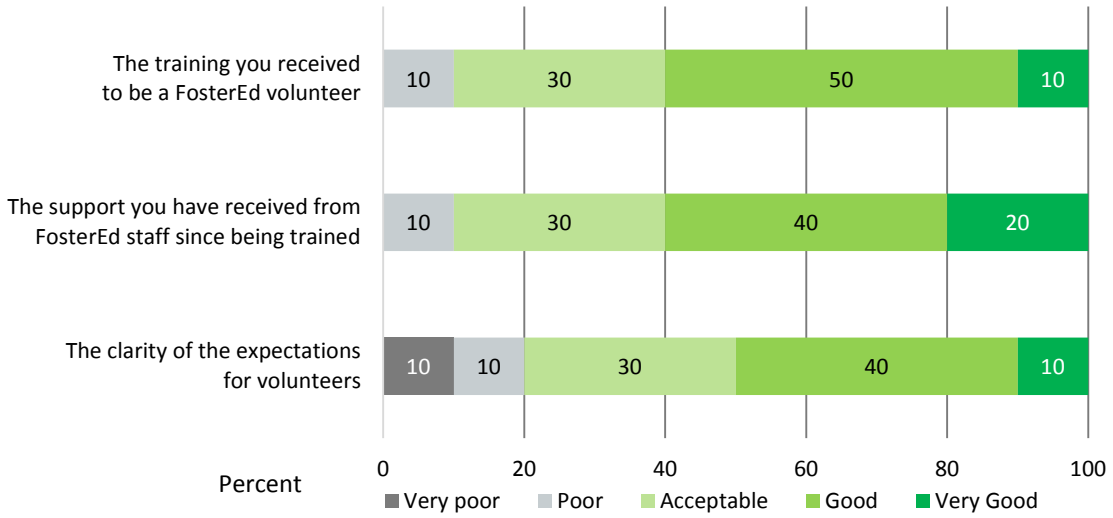
Figure 14 reports that almost all felt the training, support, and clarity of expectations was at least "acceptable," with at least half rating them as "good" or "very good."

Figure 13: Volunteer Educational Champions' Experiences



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015

Figure 14: Volunteer Educational Champions' Perceptions of Their Impact



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015

When Volunteer Educational Champions were asked to comment on whether they have been able to make a positive impact on the youth they support, the one volunteer in the survey who did not feel they were able to make a positive impact explained,

"Student unwilling to participate in the program. Stopped attending school."

The remaining volunteers generally felt that they had made a positive impact on the youth, with these illustrative explanations:

"The child has been in 4 different foster homes or group homes since I started working with her. There has been a change in DCS child specialist once. There have been various counselors. She has been in 3 different schools. I have been the one continuing source of support for my child. She knows that I will unconditionally be there for her. Although she has difficulty expressing her emotions, I have seen signs that she has trust in our relationship and my support for her."

"It is difficult to judge the impact. I feel it is more like planting seeds and the full impact will not be seen immediately; maybe not for years."

"Prior to my involvement there was poor communication between the teachers, parents and student. I arranged a meeting so everyone was on the same page and through Goalbook there was good communication between all parties. Grades improved greatly."

"I believe the positive impact I have made on my youth is with his placement. When the placement has felt overwhelmed and thought the youth was 'educationally challenged' I was able to explain that the youth just needs extra attention that had never been given since his first days of school. Needing to catch up should never be considered 'educationally challenged.'"

Progress on Outcomes Indicators

RTI is tracking a number of outcomes indicators for the evaluation, including some related to youth, others related to Educational Champions, and a program-level outcome of improved collaboration between educators, child welfare professionals, community-based organizations, and the court. Finally, RTI is tracking a number of state-level outcomes identified by FosterEd as goals to achieve beyond the Pima pilot project which reflect their state policy and practice effort (see Appendix A). It is important to point out that it is impossible to isolate the impact that FosterEd has had on these state-level policy and practice changes. Nevertheless, based on interviews with State Leadership Team members, RTI is comfortable reporting on the state outcomes as a reflection of FosterEd's efforts, with the important caveat that the impact of its contributions cannot be disentangled from the contributions of others working at the state level.

Youth Outcomes

How many unmet educational needs were identified and addressed?

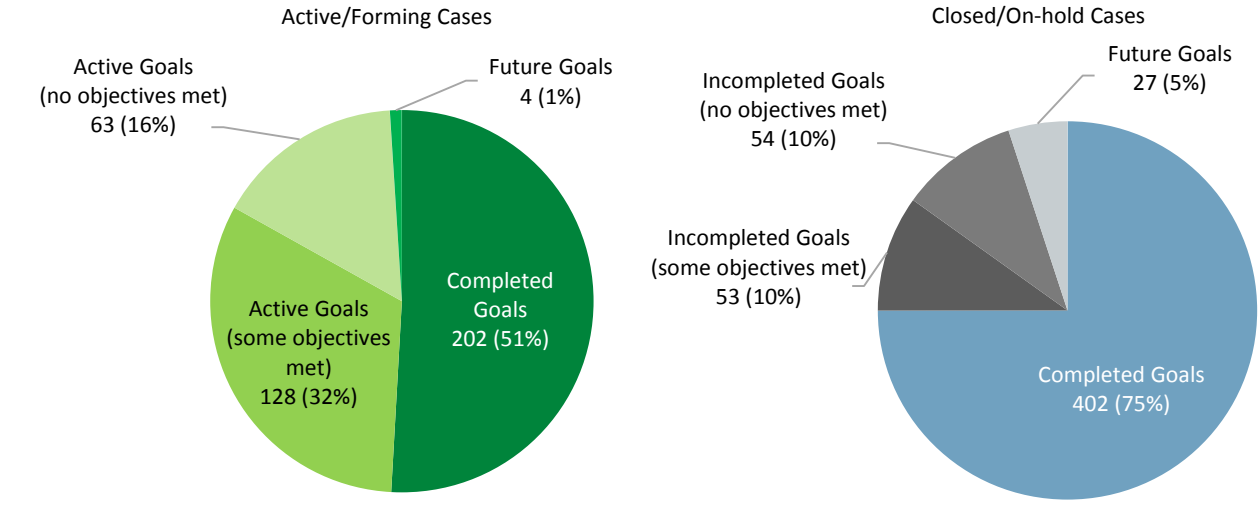
RTI and FosterEd agreed to consider the identification of the educational needs of foster youth as an outcome. This is because educational needs have historically not been given adequate attention by the adults working with these youth, who are often more focused on other critical dimensions of safety and well-being. Since FosterEd aims to raise the profile and attention given to the educational needs and outcomes of foster youth, simply identifying those needs is one outcome of the program.

As of the end of September 2015, **1,114** goals had been set for foster youth. Each of these addressed an identified need of the foster youth. When establishing a goal, the education team also identifies objectives for achieving those goals. An example is setting a goal for improved attendance, and identifying approximate objectives to meet that goal, such as caregiver establishing a 9:00 p.m. bedtime, child setting and rising with an alarm clock, and child having no absences or tardies for 6 weeks.

Figures 15 and 16 present the status of these goals for "long-term" and "short-term" cases, respectively. Each of the figures has a pie chart for active and forming teams, and a pie chart for closed and on-hold teams. There were 397 goals associated with "long-term" cases that were active or forming and about half of those (202) were completed (Figure 15). About one-third were considered active goals (i.e., currently being focused on and supported by the team) and some of the objectives had been met. 16 percent were considered active goals but no objectives had yet been met, and four goals were categorized as "future," meaning the team felt the goal was important but not as urgent as other goals for the student. The team would turn to future goals once other goals been met.

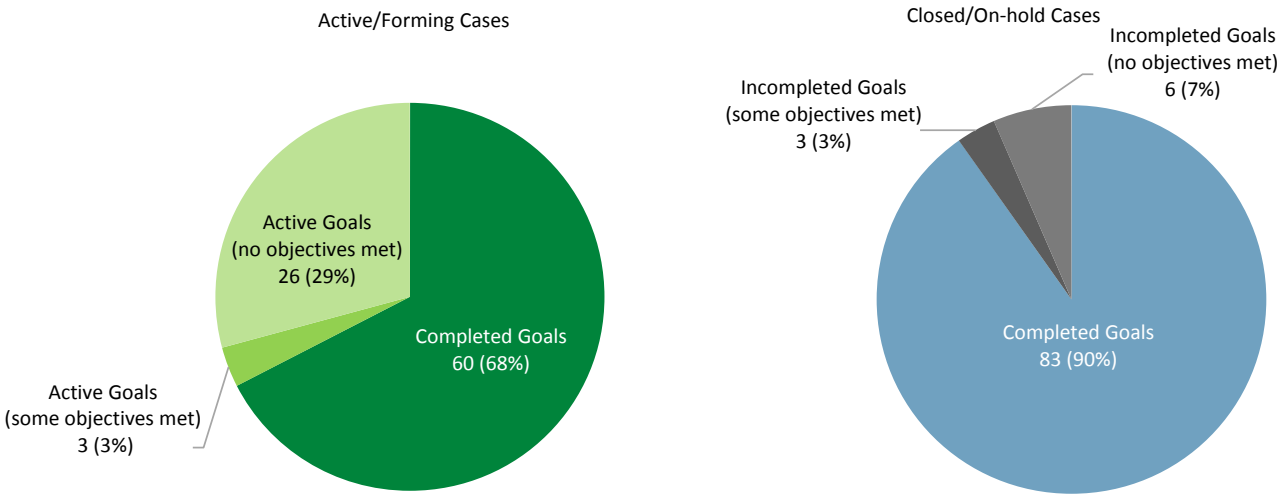
Figure 15 also presents the status of goals for long-term cases that had closed or were on hold. Cases close when the child leaves dependency or moves to another county and that placement is expected to be long-term. Cases are put on hold if the child moves out of county but the move may not be long, or if the child is AWOL. Of the 536 goals set for these cases, 75 percent were completed by the time the case closed and an additional 10 percent had some objectives met but were not completed.

Figure 15: Status of Goals for "Long-Term" Cases



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

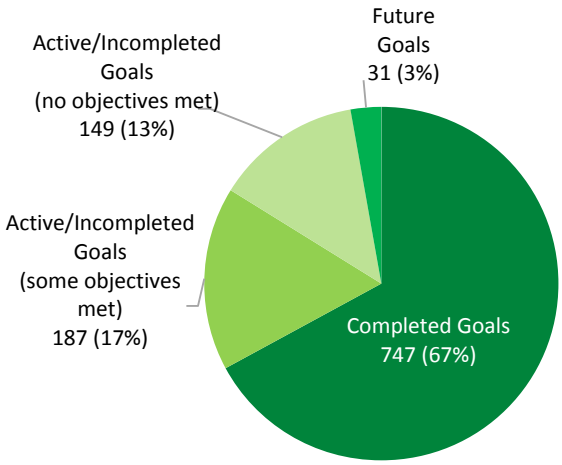
Figure 16: Status of Goals for "Short-Term" Cases



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

Among "short-term" cases, 181 goals had been set, and for both active and closed teams, most had been met (**Figure 16;** 68% and 90%, respectively). **Figure 17** summarizes the status of goals across the "long-term" and "short-term" cases, including cases that were active, forming, closed and on hold. Of the 1,114 total goals, by the end of September 2015, 67 percent had been completed and an additional 17 percent were not yet completed but had some objectives met.

FIGURE 17: For "Long-term" and "Short-Term"Cases, Status of Student Goals



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

What types of goals have been set for youth?

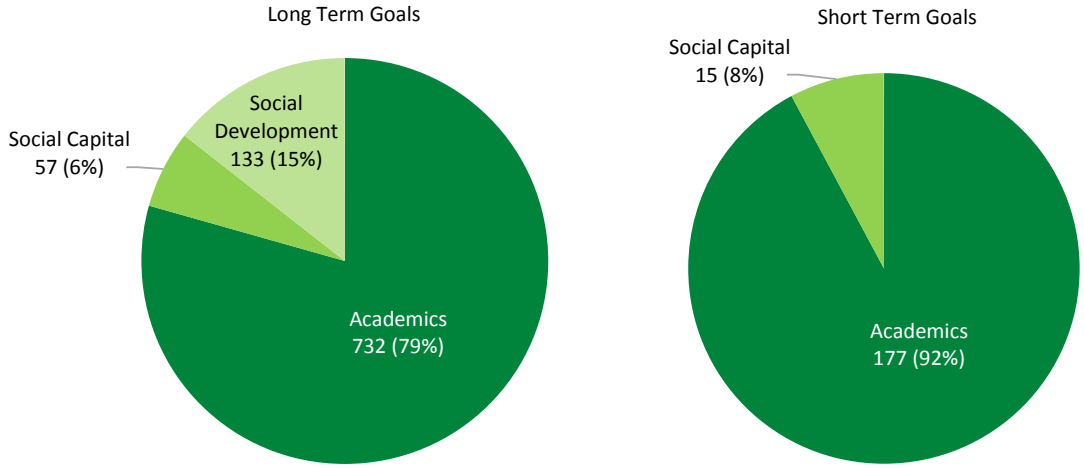
Figure 18 reports the general categories of the goals that have been set for foster youth, for long-term goals and short-term goals.[7] In each case, the largest share were academic (732 or 79% and 177 or 92%, respectively). A substantial proportion (15%) of long-term goals were social development.

Tables 5A describes the long-term academic, social capital, and social development goals identified for students, and **Table 5B** does the same for short-term goals. Academic goals are those clearly associated with the educational behavior and achievement of the youth. Social capital goals focus on the youth's relationships and supporting positive interactions within those relationships. Social development goals focus on needs that have a negative impact on the youth's schooling (e.g., poor behavior at school, lack of opportunities for participating in extracurricular activities).

Among the long-term academic goals, the top five were ensuring the youth were enrolled in appropriate schools and classes, addressing issues related to their academic records and credits, ensuring they were receiving adequate special education or 504 plan support, and improving their reading and math proficiency. Within the social development category, the most common goal set was related to enrichment resources/extracurricular activities. Within the social capital category, the most common goal set concerned positive peer relationships.

[7] As explained on page 9, a case can move from "short-term" to "long-term" classification, or vice versa, if the needs of the youth and their support system changes. Thus, some FosterEd cases have a mixture of short-term and long-term goals.

FIGURE 18: Category of Student Goals



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

TABLE 5A: Description of Long-Term Goals

Academics

Goal Title	Count	Goal Title	Count
Enrollment in Appropriate Schools and Classes	177	Career Readiness	9
Academic Records/Credits	133	Homework	8
Special Education/ 504 Accommodations	103	Academic Proficiency Course or Class Specific	8
Reading Proficiency	68	AIMS Related Goals	6
Math Proficiency	59	Appropriate ELL Services	4
Attendance	45	College Readiness	4
Academic Supplies	28	Education Rights/Surrogate	2
Grade improvement	21	Academic Proficiency Benchmark State Test	1
Course completion-High School	18	Academic Proficency K to 2nd Grade	1
Grade progression	18	High School Readiness	1
Writing Proficiency	18		

Social Development

Goal Title	Count
Enrichment Resources/ Extracurricular Activities	79
Behavior and School Discipline	41
Future Expectations	10
Enrichment Resources/ Summer Enrichment	3

Social Capital

Goal Title	Count
Positive Peer Relationship	29
Positive School Staff Relationship	21
Additional Adult Supports (Family & Community)	7

SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

TABLE 5B: Description of Short-Term Goals

Academics	
Goal Title	**Count**
Enrollment in Appropriate School or Classes	44
Liaison to attend Child & Family Team Meeting	38
Missing education records and/or credits	37
Set up tutoring	18
IEP/504 update needed	15
School stability/school transportation	11
Request Education Liaison to attend a school meeting	5
Attendance	4
Post High school/graduation plan from school	3
Grade progression	2
Summer school enrollment	18
Social Capital	
Goal Title	**Count**
Connect DCS to school contact	15

SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

What do adult team members perceive as the impacts of FosterEd on foster youth?

Adult team members' perception of the impact of FosterEd on participating youth was assessed via surveys in October 2014 and again in October 2015. The Year 1 report summarized the findings from the October 2014 survey, while this report presents findings from the October 2015. To be included in the survey pool, the adult had to serve on at least one team for at least two months between January and October of that year.

Figure 19 reports that at least 70% of adult respondents perceived at least "a little" positive impact of FosterEd on each of the dimensions, with the exception of increased involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Table 6 shows the mean responses by team member role type. Mental Health Professionals, Volunteer Educational Champions, and DCS Specialists generally perceived the highest levels of positive impact.

Adult team members were asked if they felt the youth benefited in other ways, beyond the survey items listed in Figure 19, with 52 reporting that they had. The most common additional benefits were:

- **Access to more—or more appropriate—educational services** (20 respondents)

"This particular student had very unusual needs not best met in the traditional school setting, the team was able to work with her to change settings."

"FosterEd ensures that the children are getting all educational needs met. FosterEd has set up IEP meetings to have children re-evaluated as well as assist placements [to] get a child into a contained classroom where the child is now excelling in school."

"The FosterEd representative was able to connect the family and myself with the information to advocate for the child's needs. The FosterEd representative arranged for tutoring that this case manager would not have had the time or knowledge to facilitate."

"[The youth] was enrolled in a summer program that he would not have had the opportunity to attend. Learned to swim, made friends with other autistic children."

- **Youth has improved communication, values education more and trusts his/her support system** (19 respondents)

"The youth appears to communicate his wants and needs more."

"Both my students have become more trusting of the adults who are trying to help them."

"I believe that FosterEd made the student aware that he had a support system in place and that people cared about his success in school."

"The importance of school for his future."

"The child now feels that they have a re-source and support for school. The added attention has made the child understand that school is very important."

- **Benefits outside of school** (8 respondents)

"I think that the FosterEd program is a huge help to the kids in the classroom as well as out of the classroom."

"There has been some additional evaluation and subsequent treatment for suspected ADHD. This has contributed to significant improvement in behavior and performance in school and in the foster homes."

"I believe I see a lot more support from home. This has converted into more self confidence in my student's demeanor when tackling school work."

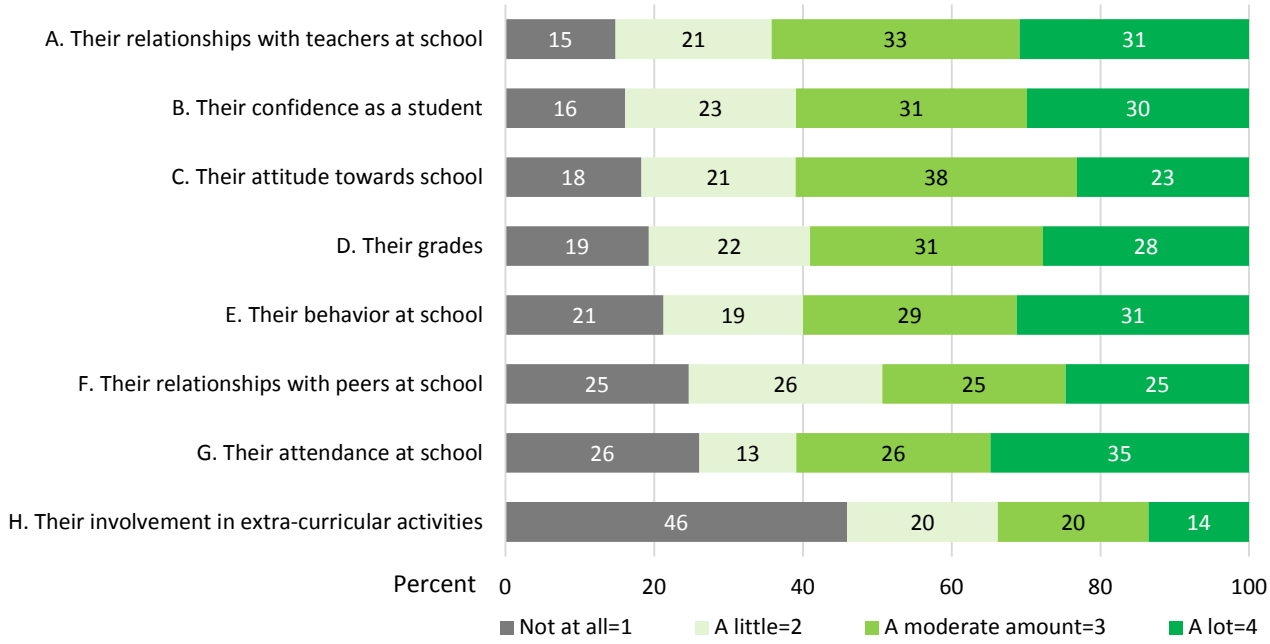
The adult team members were also asked if they felt the youth experienced anything negative due to their participation in FosterEd. Only seven felt this was the case, with a few feeling that the child did not get the support they need and a few others concerned that that the students themselves did not appreciate the involvement of more adults. One adult respondent explained:

"In their opinion, it is probably more people in their business."

Another commented:

"Sometimes resenting one more person 'interfering' in his life. Kids in foster care have so many people involved in their life. I think sometimes he feels like he never has time just to be."

FIGURE 19: Perceived Impacts of FosterEd on Youth, from the Perspective of Adult Team Members



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

TABLE 6: Perceived Impacts of FosterEd on Youth, by Adult Team Member Role Type (Average Response)

Item	Department of Child Safety Specialist	Mental Health Professionals	Parent, Relative, Caregiver, Foster Parent	Teacher or School or District Staff	Volunteer Educational Champion
A. Their relationships with teachers at school	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.6	3.1
B. Their confidence as a student	2.8	3.3	2.7	2.6	3.0
C. Their attitude towards school	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.3	3.1
D. Their grades	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.2	3.1
E. Their behavior at school	3.1	3.2	2.6	2.2	3.0
F. Their relationships with peers at school	2.5	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.6
G. Their attendance at school	2.8	3.3	2.8	2.4	3.3
H. Their involvement in extra-curricular activities	2.3	2.9	2.0	1.8	1.7
Average rating	2.8	3.1	2.6	2.3	2.9

SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

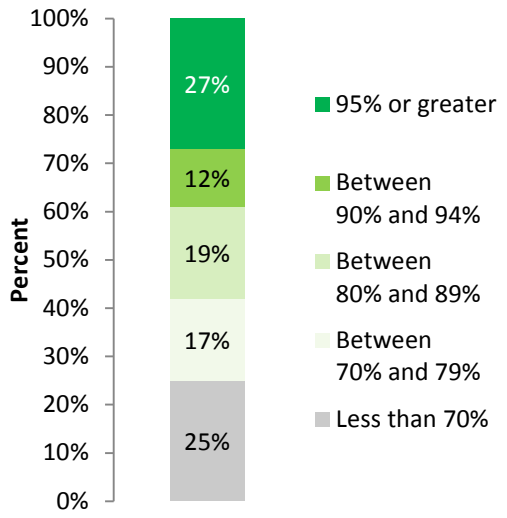
What are youths' attendance rates prior to and after joining FosterEd?

Sufficient education data from students' schools were not available in time for inclusion in the Year 1 report. Since the release of the Year 1 report, however, district linkages with Foster Focus proceeded and Education Liaisons manually entered education records obtained from schools that were not linked with Foster Focus. These two data activities enabled the evaluator to analyze attendance rates for foster youth both before and after they joined the FosterEd program. The analyses were conducted for youth who were involved in FosterEd for at least two months, and for whom "before" and "after" FosterEd attendance data were available.

Although the original goal was to capture "before" and "after" education data for all youth who participated in FosterEd, some FosterEd cases closed abruptly as youth moved out of county or left foster care, and obtaining "after" education data was sometimes impossible. Additionally, the program was hopeful the data linkages with districts would proceed more smoothly than they did and therefore they did not turn to manual entry until the second year of the pilot, when it was difficult to obtain some of the old records. Nevertheless, "before" and "after" attendance data were obtained for 33% of foster youth who had been served for at least two months. As noted on page 9, the analysis sample is comparable to the full population of FosterEd. RTI is therefore comfortable presenting the following attendance analyses.

Figure 20 presents students' attendance rates prior to entering FosterEd for the 93 foster youth who had been active in FosterEd for at least two months, and for whom attendance data were available prior to and after joining FosterEd. [8] About one-quarter of the foster youth entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate of 95 percent or greater, and an additional 12 percent of students had rates between 90 and 94 percent. The majority of foster youth (61%) had "before" attendance rates that fell below 90 percent. One quarter had very low attendance: less than 70 percent.

FIGURE 20: Students' attendance rates prior to entering FosterEd



Note: Included in the figure are 93 youth whose cases were active in FosterEd for at least two months and who had attendance data available prior to and after joining FosterEd.

Source: Education data transferred January 2016.

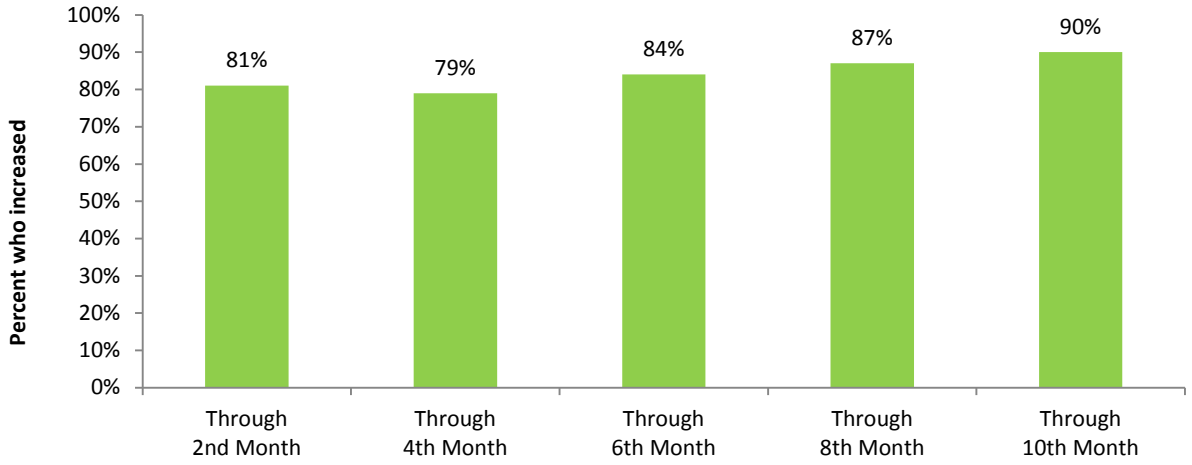
[8] Students needed at least one month of "before" FosterEd attendance data to be included in the analysis. Up to six months of "before" FosterEd attendance data were included for a student in cases where it was available. Students also needed at least two months of "after" FosterEd attendance data to be included in these analyses.

The analysis of attendance rates "after" joining FosterEd was separated for youth who entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate and those who did not. **Figure 21** reports the percent of foster youth who increased their attendance rates among those who entered with an attendance rate lower than 95 percent. Data are shown for multiple time periods. For example, the bar for "Through 6th month" reports the percent of foster youth who increased their attendance rate over the six month period since joining FosterEd. Multiple time periods were calculated to examine the stability of attendance rate increases. We examined attendance over time to assess the possibility that foster youth might experience a boost upon entering FosterEd, but that the increase might wane.

The results in **Figure 21** reveal that the vast majority of foster youth who entered FosterEd with less than a 95 percent attendance rate increased their attendance. This proportion is relatively stable across all time periods examined. Thus, it is not the case that foster youth experience a spike in attendance that then subsides, but rather that the increase is maintained and even grows a bit through the 10th month.

Figure 22 presents information on a relatively small subset of youth (27%) who joined the FosterEd program with a 95 percent or higher attendance rate. For this group, the analysis examined the proportion who maintained a high attendance rate. The dark green bars report the percent who maintained a 95 percent or greater attendance rate, and the light green bars report the percent who maintained a 90 percent or greater rate. 71 percent of these students with high attendance records maintained their rate through the 2nd month, and by the 10th month, 92 percent had maintained a high rate of at least 90 percent attendance. Maintaining the very high rate of 95 percent proved more difficult. Half were able to maintain this very high rate by the 10th month. When the evaluator and FosterEd looked more closely at the data, we found students could drop below 95 percent if they miss two days over the course of two months. FosterEd was able to examine the data further to consider whether events such court dates and medical appoints were causing absences. There is some evidence of this, but many of the absence were illness related and some behavioral/suspensions.

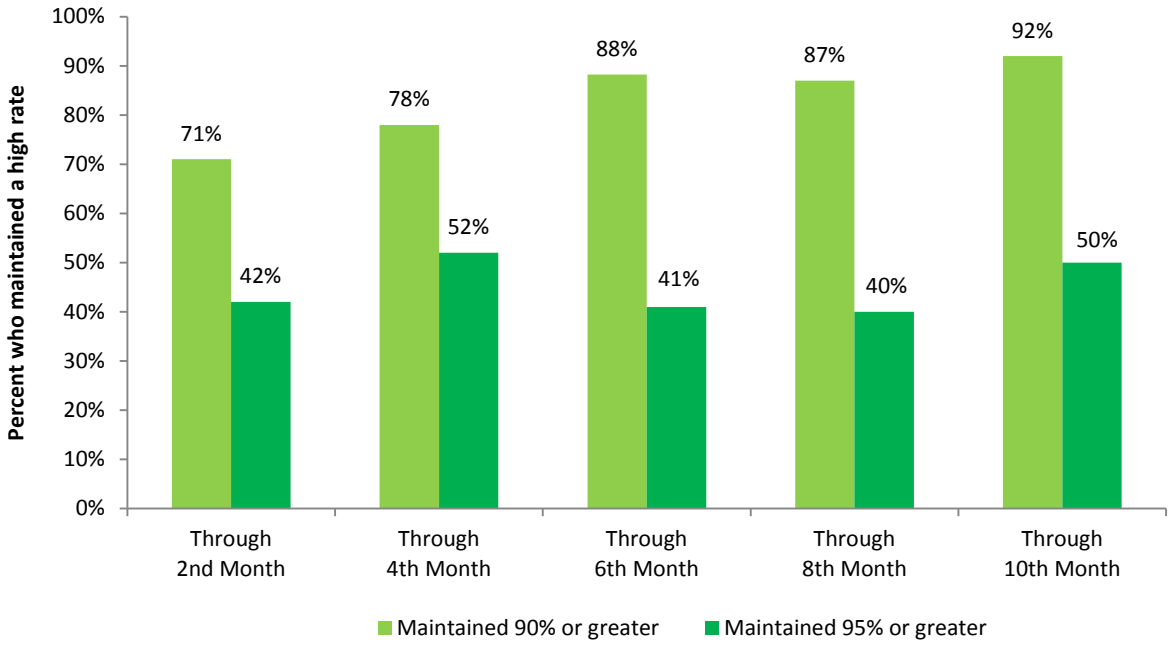
FIGURE 21: Percent of foster youth who increased their attendance, among those who entered with less than a 95% attendance rate



Note: The denominators for each of the bars, from left to right is: 64, 57, 37, 23, 20.

Source: Education data transferred January 2016

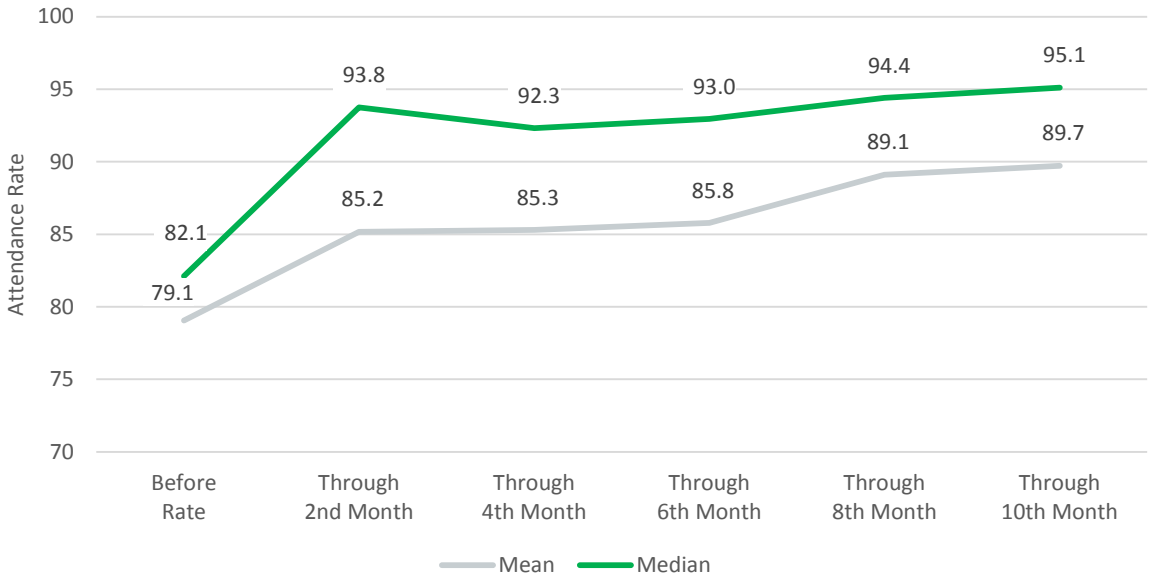
FIGURE 22: Percent of foster youth who maintained a high attendance rate, among those who entered with at least a 95% attendance rate



Source: Education data transferred January 2016.

Figures 23 and 24 show rising mean and median attendance rates across the periods examined. Figure 23 presents information for all 93 students in the analysis. Note that the denominators decreases as the time periods advance. **Figure 24** is limited to the 32 students for whom data are available through the 10th month after joining FosterEd.

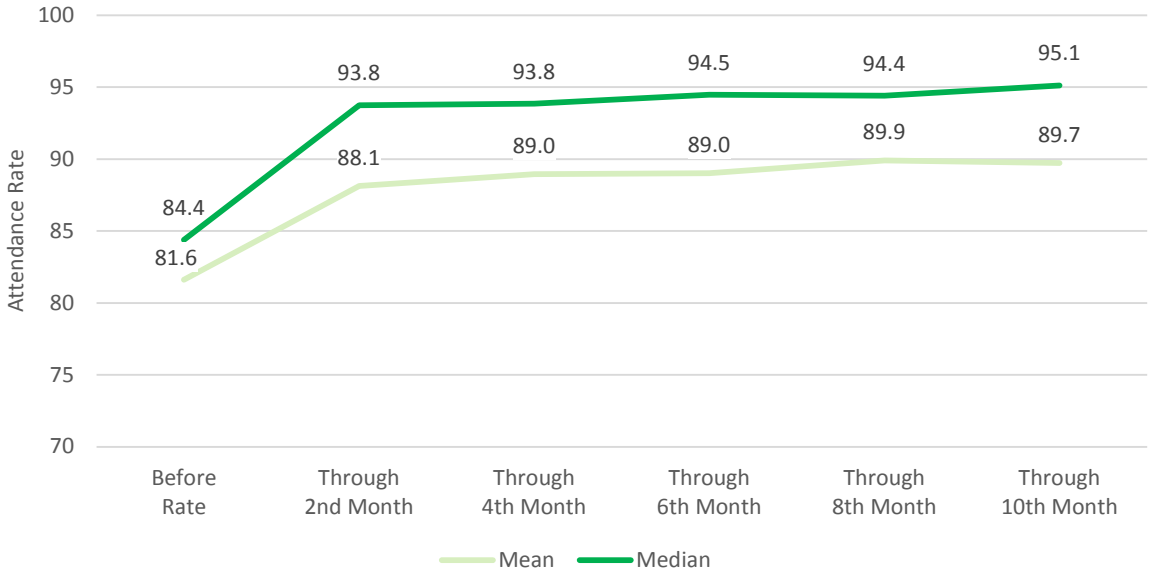
FIGURE 23: Attendance rates for all 93 students in analysis



Note: The denominators for each of the bars, from left to right is: 93, 88, 80, 54, 38, 32.

Source: Education data transferred January 2016.

FIGURE 24: Attendance rates for 32 students with data for all periods



Source: Education data transferred January 2016.

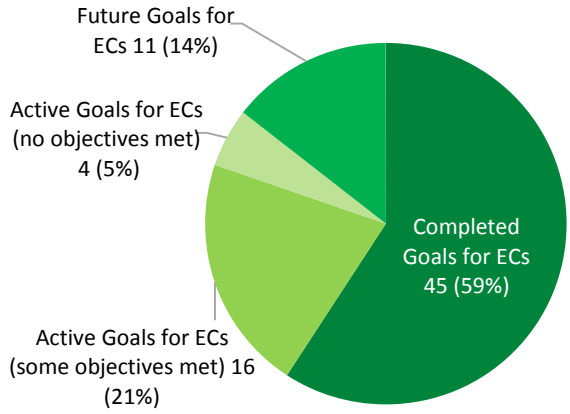
Educational Champion Outcomes

How many Educational Champions had a goal to increase their capacity to support the youth educationally?

FosterEd expects that many Educational Champions will need mentoring or coaching to effectively support and advocate for the youth. When the presumed long-term caregiver cannot serve as an Educational Champion, community volunteers fill this role to the extent that there are enough volunteers to cover the need. Those volunteers receive 8 hours or more of training and ongoing support from the Education Liaisons. When a presumed long-term caregiver can fill the role of Educational Champion, those individuals may need different supports for their role. Many have not been traditionally successful students themselves, and may not have the confidence or know how to navigate school systems. Thus the FosterEd program includes a component that provides the necessary mentorship to the Educational Champions. 76 student teams included a goal to increase the capacity of the Educational Champions (24% of all student teams; 36% of teams with an Educational Champion identified).

Figure 25 shows for 45 (or 59%) of the teams, the goal to increase the capacity of the Educational Champion has been met. 16 of the 76 teams in which mentoring to the Educational Champions is occurring have met some of those mentoring objectives. 4 of the teams with Educational Champions needing mentoring had no objectives associated with those goals. 11 teams have labeled the Educational Champion goal a "future goal." This means that the need to support the Educational Champion has been identified and the Educational Champion has agreed to the support, but there is not another adult serving on the team who is available to provide that mentoring.

FIGURE 25: Status of Goals to Increase the Capacity of Educational Champions (ECs)



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted September 30, 2015.

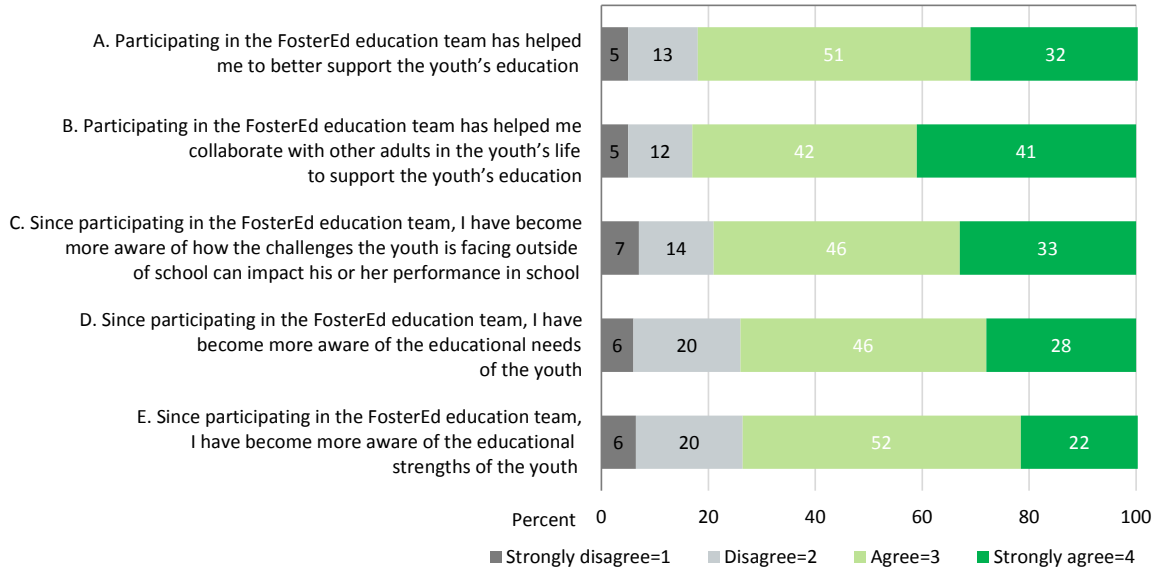
Program Outcomes

In addition to asking adult team members about their perceptions of the educational impacts of FosterEd on the participating foster youth, the team member survey assessed a number of other dimensions, including team members' general feedback on the program, their experience with Goalbook, and the extent to which it has helped them collaborate with others to support the youth.

What are adult team members' perceptions of the FosterEd program?

Figure 26 reports the survey responses to a number of positive statements about FosterEd. At least 74 percent of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to each of the statements. On each statement, each of the five main respondent groups had an average response above a calculated neutral position (i.e., 2.5) (**Table 7**).

FIGURE 26: Adult Team Members' Perceptions of the FosterEd Program



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

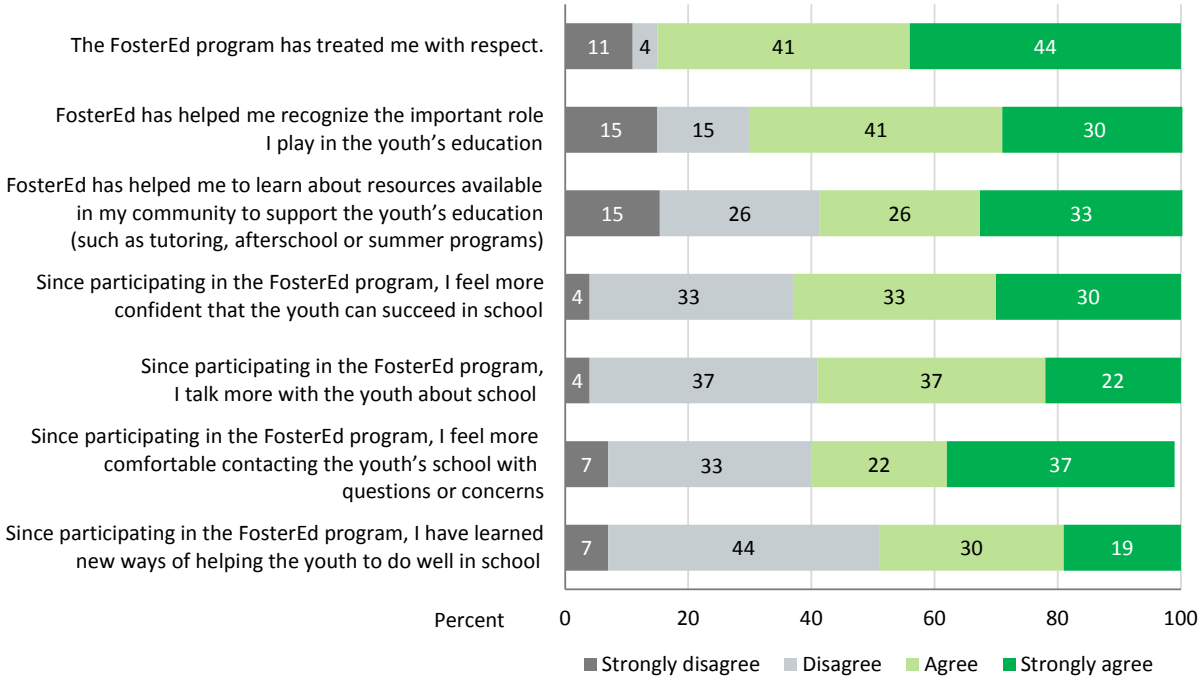
TABLE 7: Perceptions of the FosterEd Program, by Adult Team Member Role Type

Item	Department of Child Safety Specialist	Mental Health Worker	Parent, Relative, Caregiver, Foster Parent	Teacher or School or District Staff	Volunteer Educational Champion
A. Participating in the FosterEd education team has helped me to better support the youth's education	3.4	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.3
B. Participating in the FosterEd education team has helped me collaborate with other adults in the youth's life to support the youth's education	3.5	3.3	2.9	3.2	3.3
C. Since participating in the FosterEd education team, I have become more aware of how the challenges the youth is facing outside of school can impact his or her performance in school	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.5
D. Since participating in the FosterEd education team, I have become more aware of the educational needs of the youth	3.1	3.4	2.9	3.0	3.5
E. Since participating in the FosterEd educationteam, I have become more aware of the educational strengths of the youth.	3.1	3.3	2.9	2.9	3.1
Average rating	**3.2**	**3.2**	**2.9**	**3.0**	**3.3**

SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

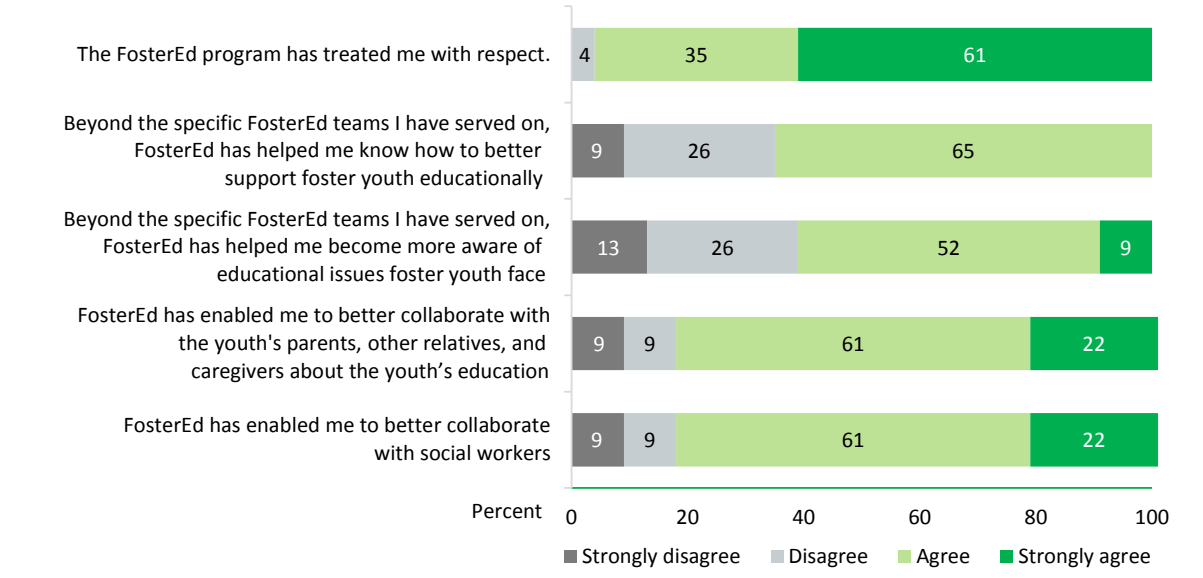
Figures 27-29 present results of specific questions asked of different survey respondent groups. Over half of the parent/caregiver subgroup reported that FosterEd helped them be a stronger educational supporter for their child on each dimension below, with the exception that just under half felt that they had learned new ways of helping the youth do well in school (**Figure 27**).

FIGURE 27: Specific Survey Questions Asked of Parents, Relatives, Caregivers, Foster Parents



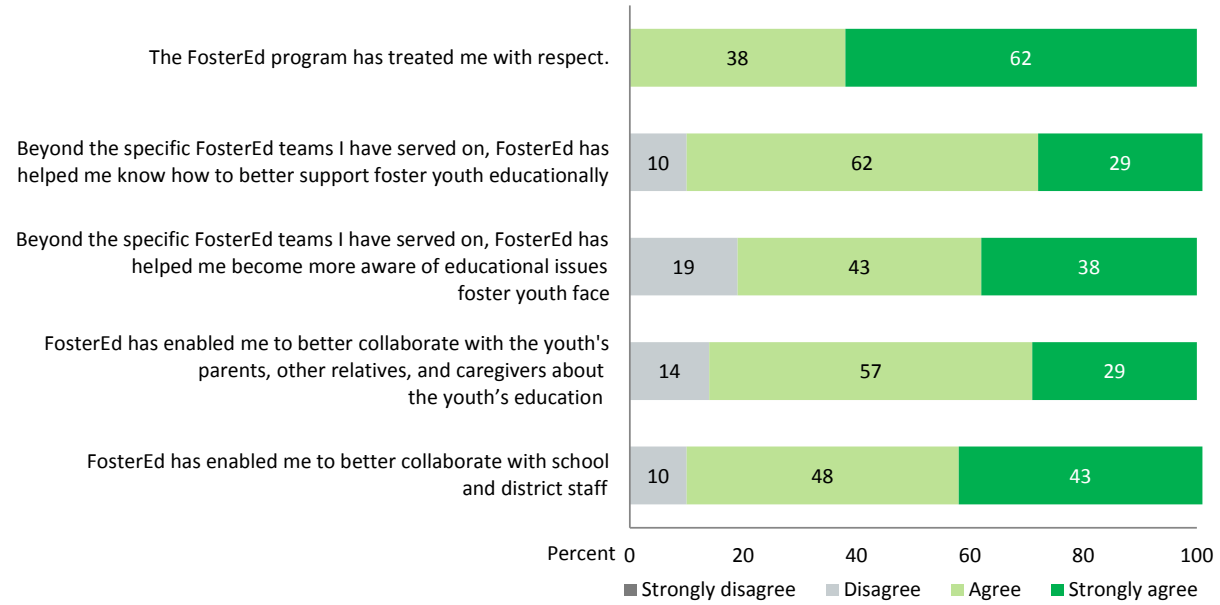
SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

FIGURE 28: Specific Survey Questions Asked of Teachers, School and District Staff



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

FIGURE 29. Specific Survey Questions asked of Department of Child Safety Specialists



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

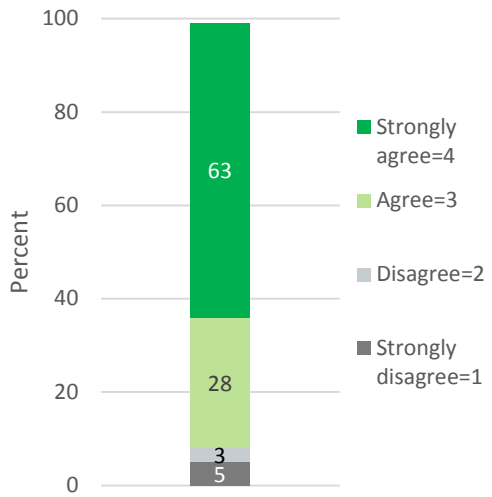
Over 60 percent of the teachers/district/school staff subgroup reported that FosterEd helped them to better support foster youth educationally, and increased their awareness of the educational issues facing foster youth **(Figure 28)**. 83 percent reported that it helped them better collaborate with social workers, and 83 percent reported it helped them better collaborate with the youth's parents, other relatives, and caregivers.

Over 80 percent of DCS staff reported that FosterEd helped them better support foster youth educationally, become more aware of the educational issues facing foster youth, and better collaborate with school and district staff and with parents and caregivers (**Figure 29**).

Would adult team members recommend FosterEd to other adults in the lives of foster youth?

Approximately 9 out of 10 (92%) adult team members who responded to the survey indicated that they would recommend FosterEd to other adults in the lives of foster youth (63% "strongly agreed," and 28% agreed) **(Figure 30)**.

FIGURE 30: Percent of Adult Team Members who Would Recommend FosterEd



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

When asked to explain their answer to whether they would recommend the FosterEd program to other adults in the lives of foster youth, 79 participants responded.

Below is the most common ***positive*** feedback, with illustrative quotes (61 participants responded positively):

1 Supports collaboration of adults in the youth's life (16 respondents)

"I believe collaboration between all the people involved with a youth is the best way to serve them."

"The added collaboration enforced the students' self-worth and attention to reaching academic goals."

"I started [at] DCS when FosterEd was being launched; I cannot imagine doing my job without having FosterEd as a teammate."

"I think that the FosterEd program helps with ensuring the educational needs are met and focused on."

"I believe strongly in the mission of FosterEd. The kids need the support for their time in school and foster parents need the support and help as well. The whole foster system can be overwhelming to the child, the foster parent, and to the biological parent. Having someone who can focus on the educational needs can help each of them."

"In a system where the odds are stack[ed] so heavily against the children in care, FosterEd is really a beacon of hope. The Liaisons provide the advocacy and passion that not only help motivate these youths to do better in school, but also pursue higher education opportunities that might otherwise be dismissed."

2 Helps the adults in the youth's life navigate the education system (15 respondents)

"They provide essential assistance in navigating and educating others about a system that is often confusing. They have been an indispensable part of the team and have helped me to better advocate for and represent the youths that I serve."

"[The EL] was a blessing to grandchildren in her involvement in setting up tutoring. Helping us understand the IEP process. FosterEd was there for the children and it made a big difference. Thank you."

3 Helps to ensure education is a focus (13 respondents)

"Gives insight on how the child is doing at school and can have more participation from other adults toward the educational goal for the child."

"Any resources that support youth and families with growth through education is my recommendation."

"There is benefit for a child to have a FosterEd Champion if there is no CASA, Court Ordered Surrogate Parent or other party to advocate for the child's education."

The most common ***negative*** feedback, with illustrative quotes, were (11 participants responded negatively; 7 of these were parents, relatives, or caregivers):

1 Not enough support (6 respondents)

"I need more interaction with the Liaison from FosterEd. In my case, I only had small contact."

"Services have not been substantive."

2 Poor communication in some cases, particularly with parents and caregivers (5 respondents)

"It forces others between the child and parent and puts undue stress on the home."

"As grandmother I was largely kept out of all processes/meetings."

What suggestions do adult team members have for improving FosterEd?

When asked whether they had any suggestions for improving the FosterEd program, 39 adult team members surveyed offered suggestions. Below are the most common themes, with illustrative quotes:

1 Grow to serve more youth (9 respondents)

"Only improvement would be to have this program available to all of my families and youth."

"The only improvement I could see is to expand this program so that all children in care are covered. There are many kids who are getting by, but could use the extra support. There are also many kids who do not qualify based on current program parameters that desperately need that extra support person. I hope that you get the funding needed to be able to sustain and expand upon this program."

"We need more FosterEd people."

2 Improve communication and more in-person contact (8 respondents)[9]

"The email/message board system was not convenient to open new messages, read and contribute. With so many email exchanges occurring between all the various team members, I think it would be simpler to use standard emails to communicate between the assigned FosterEd representative, caseworker, placement, teacher, etc."

"On one of my cases the FosterEd Liaison was sporadic in attending CFTs or on her communication."

"Have face to face meeting of the team at least once so we get to know each other better."

"Get in contact with the on-going case manager just for an update on the kid's educational goals/progress. Go to CFTs and just be there to see if there are any lapses with education and if there are, go from there."

3 Clarify roles and timelines (5 respondents)

"It would be nice if the FosterEd program made schools aware of what they do. Up until I worked with FosterEd, I had never heard of the organization. It would also be good if the organization had some sort of court order ready

[9] Four respondents specifically suggested ELs attend more CFTs.

to allow schools to be in contact with them and not violate FERPA."[10]

"I have found the length of time between being assigned to a family and actually starting to work with them fairly frustrating. I don't know if my experience is typical for all volunteers, but I had a several month wait between being assigned a family and actually meeting the child/children in both cases I have been involved in."

"Getting school staff on board has been an obstacle for me. My first meeting with the teacher was difficult this year. She sees me as another report or person that she has to answer to. There is difficulty getting them to understand I need to be part of the communication. They are still only dialoguing with the placement despite the fact I have given them my contact info and kept in contact."

State Outcomes

As noted in the beginning of this section, RTI is tracking 10 state-level outcomes identified by FosterEd as goals to achieve, beyond the Pima pilot project, which reflect FosterEd's state policy and practice efforts. Although it is impossible to quantify or isolate FosterEd's contributions to the state outcomes, RTI is comfortable reporting on them as a reflection of FosterEd's efforts given perspectives shared during the State Leadership and Community Planning Team interviews, and RTI observation of State Leadership Team meetings.

MOUs developed for data sharing between the Arizona Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety

To help schools quickly and efficiently identify their foster youth, DCS and ADE agreed to start flagging foster youth in data they share with schools and districts about which students are eligible to receive free- or reduced-price lunches (foster youth are automatically eligible for this). This "flagging" of foster youth was done by adding a column in the Child Nutrition Program data transfer indicating which students were in foster care. The MOU between DCS and ADE allows food service to share the list identifying foster children with the school and district administration for the purpose of promoting the educational and social success of foster children.

The MOUs were established during the first year of the FosterEd project. During this second year, FosterEd has helped to develop new protocols to be used by school districts and school personnel to safely protect the identification of students in foster care.

Regular data sharing between the Arizona Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety

The Child Nutrition Program data transfer happens nightly. On a larger scale, future ability to share data between DCS and ADE will depend on the improved data systems expected to be developed for both DCS and ADE.

[10] The ELs do obtain FERPA-compliant release forms for all their cases allowing schools to share educational records. This respondent's comments suggest this is not clear to all team members. Particularly with schools, the role of the ELs in lawfully receiving education information should continue be emphasized by the program.

Data sharing between state agencies and local agencies

ADE shares Child Nutrition Program data with local school districts on a regular basis. FosterEd helped ADE develop policy templates to protect this information which ADE made available to districts as a reference for developing district policies. ADE expects to provide training to districts on the protocols.

Standard motions and order for appointing Educational Champions developed for Pima pilot used in other Arizona counties

FosterEd: Arizona is collaborating with Maricopa County partners to consider adopting FosterEd processes for their Crossover Youth Project (serving youth dually-involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems) in Maricopa County.

Use of education case management and team communication tool in other Arizona counties

FosterEd is developing new software to support education case management that will replace Goalbook in summer 2016

Use of CHILDS' more robust template for education case planning in other Arizona counties

A replacement for CHILDS is not expected for several more years. FosterEd has been offering advice on the education template, and is a major subject matter expert with regard to education elements in the new system.

Production of Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap report

WestEd, a nonprofit research and development agency, recently analyzed statewide child welfare and education data to report on the educational experience and outcomes of foster youth in Arizona. *Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap* was released in December 2015 with advocates, government officials, and former foster youth noting the critical importance of having documented for the first time the substantial achievement gaps between the state's foster youth and their classmates.[11]

Legislative briefings and hearings about FosterEd and Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap report

FosterEd had the opportunity to present the FosterEd program to a group of legislators at the Arizona State Senate on September 17, 2014. Senate President Andy Biggs and Senator David Bradley sponsored the bipartisan legislative briefing for members of the Senate and House Education and Human Services Committees, as well as community stakeholders and legislative staff. FosterEd participated in a stakeholder meeting in the House of Representatives hosted by Representative John Allen on November 3, 2015.

Legislation passed stemming from Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap report

FosterEd has been recommending to both the Governor's Office and key legislators the importance of creating a statewide foster youth education program. The upcoming February 2016 legislative session offers the opportunity to continue to advocate for this through the legislative and budget processes. At the end of

[11] Report available at http://youthlaw.org/publication/arizonas-invisible-achievement-gap/

2015, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act was passed by Congress with bipartisan support and was signed by the President. This legislation has significant provisions for states regarding students in foster care, several of which would be addressed by a statewide FosterEd program.

Funding to continue FosterEd statewide beyond the pilot county

In 2012 when the Director of FosterEd began discussions with child welfare, education, and philanthropic leaders in Arizona about the possibility of establishing a FosterEd pilot in one county within the state, the partners also had a long-term goal of expanding the program statewide after the pilot. During the last year, the FosterEd: Arizona Director has been working with members of the State Leadership Team on expansion and sustainability goals. The 2016 state legislative session will be an important opportunity for state leaders to support expansion.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the full range of quantitative and qualitative data collected across the first and second years of the evaluation, it is clear the FosterEd Pima County pilot has achieved many successes, and evolved to address challenges. Of the 11 infrastructure components identified as essential for the pilot, eight have been completed, and the remaining three were in process. 315 foster youth had been served, and 1,114 goals had been set for these youth. Significant progress was made on students' goals: 747 (67%) of the goals were completed, 187 (17%) were active goals in which some of the objectives had been met, 149 (13%) were active goals in which no objectives had yet been met, and 31 (3%) were identified as "future" goals.[12]

Feedback about the FosterEd project from adults serving on the students' teams was overwhelmingly positive: 91 percent reported that they would recommend FosterEd to other adults in the lives of foster youth. Feedback from members of the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams was also positive, with illustrative comments of, *"I wish we could clone it*," and "*I hope it can expand*."

Perhaps most notably in this report, for the first time the evaluator has been able to compare students' attendance rates prior to joining FosterEd with their rates after joining. The results are positive, with increases in mean and median rates, and with the vast majority of students who enter FosterEd with low rates increasing those rates.

Prior sections of this report presented data that spoke to the many evaluation indicators identified at the beginning of this study. Two additional themes emerged from the evaluation and are important to note:

Greater awareness of educational needs of foster youth

During the Years 1 and 2 State Leadership and Community Planning Team interviews and in the interviews with DCS Supervisors conducted in Year 2, the increased visibility of the educational needs of foster youth, and a better understanding of the education system among adults in the youth's life, was cited as an important achievement of the FosterEd program.

"Having ELs is something that's desperately needed for children involved with the Department of Child Safety because the DCS Specialists aren't given much information about education, education achievement, and how to monitor a child's education. Frankly, DCS Specialists are more focused on safety and what they need to get done. Having people who focus on [the foster youth's] education is phenomenal."

"The other positive is that our foster parent, guardian, or placement has become more educated in understanding the education system."

[12] The status of the goals is summed across active, forming, closed, and on-hold teams, and across "short-term" and "long-term" cases. For closed and on-hold teams, the goals noted as "active" were active at the time the case was closed or put on hold.

Reflective program; committed to continuous improvement

The evaluator continues to be impressed with the critical self-reflection of the FosterEd: Arizona project. Throughout the pilot, the project leaders, staff, and members of the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams have been hungry for the data emerging from the evaluation. The evaluator prepared data summaries approximately each quarter, and the project Director and staff developed even more frequent data inquiry processes to examine elements of their practice during staff meetings. This commitment to using data, both quantitative and qualitative, to reflect on their practice has enabled them to respond to challenges and develop solutions.

Two major adjustments were introduced in the second year of the pilot to address challenges identified in Year 1. First, the FosterEd team developed and introduced a "short-term" case model to accompany the original "long-term" case model with the goal of being able to serve more students. Second, they formalized the volunteer program by adding a new, full-time FosterEd staff position to train and retain more volunteers to be able to better meet the demand for more Educational Champions. The evaluator is also observing the FosterEd team's commitment to reflection and innovation as they work with their colleagues in other states, and with a new technology vendor, to develop a replacement for Goalbook.

Recommendations

RTI offers the following recommendations as FosterEd: Arizona completes the second year of the Pima County pilot and works towards sustainability and expansion.

1 Recommendation: Reflect on the newly instituted model of "short-term" and "long-term" cases and consider further adjustments.

In developing the "short-term" case model to accompany the "long-term" case model, FosterEd ELs estimated that as many as 50% of their current long-term cases could be adequately supported as a "short-term" case. However, in implementing the dual case models the ELs found that while their initial assessment was that relatively little support was needed on a case, circumstances can change quickly and the EL often needed to re-classify a "short-term" case as a "long-term" case. The ELs anticipated the need for this type of flexibility, but perhaps not the extent to which it has occurred. The share of cases that are short-term is also substantially smaller than originally expected (at the writing of this report, 20% of active cases were "short-term"). Having worked with this new model for almost a year, the evaluator encourages the team to consider if further adjustments are needed. FosterEd is at a particular inflection point right now, choosing the replacement for the Goalbook system. Reviewing the short-term and long-term framework definitions could be woven into the development of the new case management system.

2 Recommendation: Develop sustainability plan for Pima County and consider statewide expansion in phases.

When FosterEd and leaders of Arizona state and local agencies and philanthropic organizations began discussions in 2012, the long-term goal of this project was to pilot the program in one county using philanthropic dollars before a statewide expansion that would be sustained with public dollars. When this goal was mentioned to the State Leadership and Community Planning Teams during the October

2015 interviews, there was a consensus that the Pima program should continue and the program should expand to other counties. However, most do not think the program will receive full, public funding in the near future, given the political climate regarding the state budget.

Alternatives to the original growth model should be considered. Some options suggested by State Leadership and Community Planning Team members include sustaining the Pima County project with a combination of public-private dollars; growing the program county by county with public-private dollars; and finding a "home" for the program in a local non-profit that will allow it to fundraise.

3 Recommendation: Develop methods for tracking support provided to non-FosterEd cases.

As described on page 9, Education Liasons are called upon to offer ad hoc support and advice about educational issues for youth who do not have a formal FosterEd case. The ELs estimate they each spend approximatley 10% of their time on non-FosterEd cases, and an additional 5% on presenting to professional groups (e.g., school and child welfare staff) about the particular eduational needs of foster youth. The benefits of having ELs located at DCS offices to serve as resident experts on educational issues was clearly noted throughout the DCS Supervisors interviews. Since FosterEd's current method for counting the number of youth served is soley focused on those with a formal FosterEd case, these counts underestimate the total support provided by ELs. RTI recommends FosterEd consider efficient ways for recording and therefore enabling reporting on their full range of services.

4 Recommendation: As FosterEd expands, clearly communicate the program capacity to agency partners (e.g., the court, DCS).

There is real tension between serving as many foster youth in Pima County (and ultimately the state) through FosterEd as possible, and serving them well. Having implemented FosterEd in Indiana and in one county in California before starting the Pima County pilot, FosterEd leaders knew appropriate Education Liaison caseload target numbers would vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Setting caseload targets should be influenced by the specifics of the program and the profiles of the foster youth served in the program. Although FosterEd has standard elements across jurisdictions, each program is customized to the jurisdiction based on existing infrastructure, policies, and partnerships in the jurisdiction. Further, given the number of foster youth in Pima County, FosterEd has recognized that serving those with the highest needs should be the priority. In preparation for expanding throughout Arizona, FosterEd should develop with their partners a more targeted referral process so that FosterEd is assigned as soon as possible to children with the highest needs.

Early in the pilot, FosterEd leadership considered setting targets of about 100 cases per EL, then lowered the target to 75 after the first few months of the pilot. As the first year of implementation closed, the FosterEd leadership and staff identified 50 cases at any one time as a reasonable target for ensuring that cases are provided adequate support from the EL. They recognized, however, that each EL serving only 50 cases per year would not reach enough foster youth. Thus, FosterEd introduced the "short-term" case model so that the EL could provide short-term, focused support for cases that did not have complex needs, and then close those cases and move on to more cases.

Even with this adjustment, many Pima County foster youth are not able to be served by FosterEd and interest in the program from DCS, the court, and educators is very high. One Community Planning Team member who leads one of the local public agencies noted that she has to remind her colleagues who ask about FosterEd that not all of their youth have this support. She explained, *"[FosterEd has] created a desire for more services. That's good and bad. Clearly FosterEd is being effective and people want them."*

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Acknowledgments
RTI appreciates the strong dedication of the FosterEd staff and each collaborating organization to the evaluation. Their commitment to an external, transparent, and comprehensive evaluation has been remarkable.

About the Evaluator

Dr. Jennifer Laird is Program Director of Evaluation and Equity at RTI International. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology at Stanford University. Dr. Laird has 15 years of experience in education research and evaluation, with expertise in the intersection between education and child welfare, as well as in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) secondary education, and outside-of-school-time programs. In addition to the directing the evaluation of FosterEd: Arizona, she directs the evaluation of FosterEd: Santa Cruz County, and the evaluation of the Education Equals Partnership, a California statewide effort to improve educational outcomes for students from foster care, starting with preschool and extending across the entire education continuum. Four California counties – Fresno, Orange, Sacramento and Santa Cruz – are implementing a common agenda for change and tracking shared progress data metrics.

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