



FosterEd Santa Cruz County: Evaluation Final Report

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

October 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. In January 2013, FosterEd launched a pilot project in Santa Cruz County, in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, Family and Children's Services, the Juvenile Court, and a number of community-based organizations, including Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Cruz County. FosterEd Santa Cruz County is guided by a framework that all foster youth should have an **Education Team** of engaged adults, including 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.

NCYL contracted with RTI International to conduct an independent evaluation of the Santa Cruz County FosterEd pilot. This evaluation report is the third and final in a series that summarizes the accomplishments and lessons learned of the Santa Cruz County pilot and the program's transition to being completely funded by public agencies and housed within one of those agencies: the Santa Cruz County Office of Education.

New Practices in Santa Cruz County

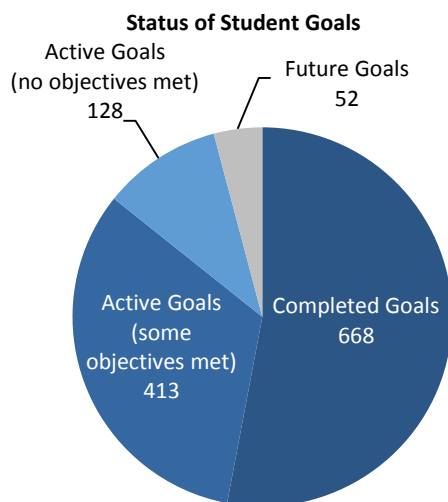


331 foster youth have been supported by an education team and education plan.

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

70% of foster youth education teams have six or more members.

Outcomes



Goal completion

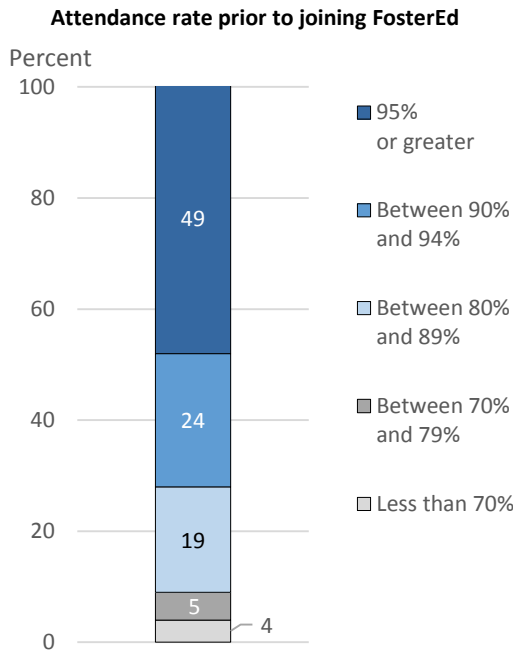
A total of 1,261 educational goals were set for FosterEd students, with 668 of goals completed by June 2016.

The five most common goals were:

- Supporting access to extracurricular activities
- Improving reading proficiency
- Improving math proficiency
- Ensuring students receive appropriate academic supplies
- Ensuring students are enrolled in appropriate schools and classes

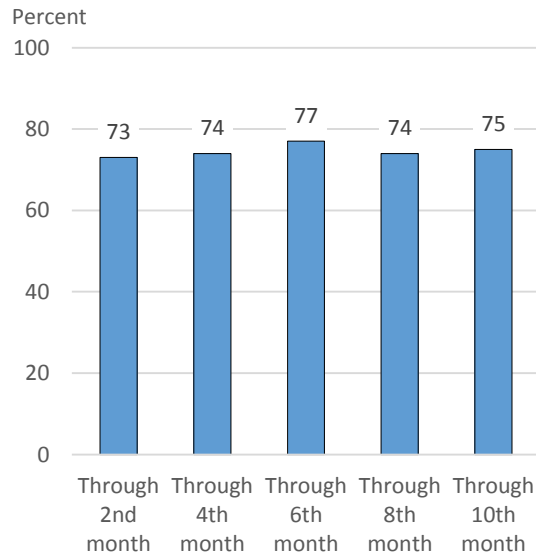
Improved attendance rates

Almost half of the foster youth entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate of 95 percent or greater. Approximately three-quarters of foster youth who entered FosterEd with less than a 95 percent attendance rate increased their attendance.



Note: Included in the figure are 195 youth whose cases were active in FosterEd for at least two months and who had attendance data available for prior to and after joining FosterEd.

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



Note: The denominator for each of the bars, from left to right, is 100, 90, 78, 65, and 59.

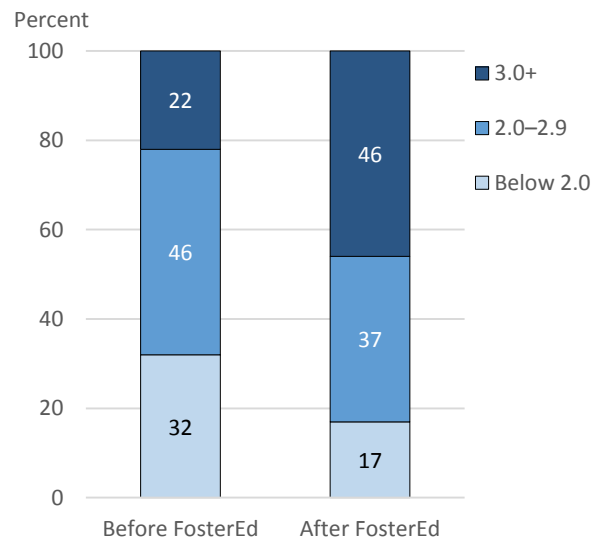
Improved GPA

The proportion of students earning a 3.0 or greater GPA more than doubled after joining FosterEd (from 22 percent to 46 percent) and the proportion earning below a 2.0 was reduced by about half (from 32 percent to 17 percent).

Recommendations

- ➔ Consider whether and how to serve Santa Cruz County foster youth placed out of county and dependents from other counties placed in Santa Cruz County.
- ➔ FosterEd is ready for a more rigorous evaluation design.

High school Foster youth's GPA prior to and after joining



Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction.....	1
<i>About This Report</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Evaluation Overview.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Evaluation indicators matrix</i>	<i>2</i>
Progress on Practice Indicators	5
<i>How Many Youth Have Been Served by FosterEd Santa Cruz County?.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Who Are the Foster Youth Served?.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Who Serves on the Foster Youth’s Team?</i>	<i>7</i>
Progress on Outcomes Indicators	10
<i>Youth Outcomes</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Program Outcomes.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>State Outcomes</i>	<i>25</i>
Conclusions and Recommendations	27
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>27</i>
Appendix A: Evaluation Indicators for FosterEd Santa Cruz County	A-1
Appendix B: Tables	B-1

Introduction

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 beginning in 2009. In January 2013, FosterEd launched a pilot project in Santa Cruz County, in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE), Family and Children's Services (FCS), the Juvenile Court, and a number of community-based organizations, including Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Santa Cruz County.

In July 2012, NCYL contracted with RTI International¹ to conduct an external evaluation of the Santa Cruz County FosterEd pilot. RTI is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to conducting innovative, multidisciplinary research that improves the human condition. The evaluation has been led by Dr. Jennifer Laird.

About This Report

This evaluation report is the third and final in a series that summarizes the accomplishments and lessons learned of the Santa Cruz County pilot and the program's transition to being completely funded by public agencies and housed within one of those agencies: the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. The first report, released in April 2014, detailed progress as of the end of the first year of implementation (January–December 2013).² The second report

covered the first two years of implementation (2013 and 2014).³

This final evaluation report provides an update on the number of youth served, their progress meeting educational goals, and changes in their attendance rates and grade point averages through June 2016. It also highlights factors which supported the transition from a grants-based pilot project to a public program, as well as lessons learned along the way.

To keep this report focused, it does not include some of the information covered in prior reports. For a description of the following topics, please see the Year 1 and Year 2 FosterEd Santa Cruz County evaluation reports:

- How Santa Cruz County was chosen as a pilot location for FosterEd in California and how it was funded.
- The pilot's relationship with similar efforts in California, including the Education Equals Partnership.
- Research literature that has documented the disturbingly poor educational outcomes for many foster youth.
- The logic model underlying FosterEd, and customized programmatic elements for FosterEd Santa Cruz.
- Infrastructure indicators reflecting systems, staff, and products that were developed to support the implementation and sustainability of FosterEd Santa Cruz County.

¹ The initial contract was with MPR Associates. In May 2013, MPR was acquired by RTI International.

² The Year 1 FosterEd Santa Cruz County evaluation report is available at: http://www.foster-ed.org/Modules_SCC/FosterEd_SCC_Year_1_Eval.pdf

³ The Year 2 FosterEd Santa Cruz County evaluation report is available at: http://foster-ed.org/Modules_SCC/FosterEd_SCC_Year_2_Evaluation_Report_FINAL.pdf

Evaluation Overview

RTI aims to conduct evaluations that are methodologically sound, transparent, and meaningful. The goal is to both capture the impacts of programs and systems changes and inform their ongoing development. RTI 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. Furthermore, Developmental Evaluation is distinct from more traditional evaluative approaches in that the evaluators actively participate in the partnership and are expected to support ongoing program improvement by helping program leaders use data as they emerge from the evaluation in order to advance the program.

Evaluation indicators matrix

In collaboration with FosterEd staff, RTI developed an evaluation indicators matrix (see Appendix A). RTI considered it a “roadmap” for the evaluation, acknowledging that it needed to be revisited periodically to ensure that it remained consistent with evolving FosterEd practices. The matrix presents information on what was being measured in the evaluation (i.e., the indicators), the data source for each indicator, how frequently it was going to be measured, and when it was reasonable to expect to see change on the indicator. Some indicators, particularly those related to infrastructure elements, were reported on in the Years 1 and 2 evaluation reports and are not reported on again in this final report. The last

column in Appendix A notes which annual evaluation reports the indicator was reported in.

To the extent possible, RTI leveraged data and instruments that were used as part of the practice, as opposed to being used solely for the evaluation. This was to limit the burden of additional data collection on the program.

Although this evaluation was focused on the Santa Cruz County pilot, the pilot is part of a broader NCYL effort in California, including through its membership in the Educational Equals Partnership, to support the education of foster youth across the state. FosterEd in California 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.

Evaluation methods

RTI employed multiple methods for the evaluation, including a number of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis strategies (**Table 1, page 3**).

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

TABLE 1: FosterEd Santa Cruz County Evaluation Methods

Qualitative Data Collection Methods	Notes
Bi-Weekly Calls with FosterEd Staff	RTI held bi-weekly calls with a focus on coordinating the logistics of the evaluation (e.g., plan for data collection) and discussing challenges and unexpected opportunities that arose within the program, with the goal of supporting continuous program improvement.
Observations of County Leadership Team	The Leadership Team met monthly or bi-monthly leading up to and during the first year of implementation. During the second and third year of implementation, the team met quarterly. RTI participated in most of the meetings of the County Leadership Team, providing periodic evaluation updates and observing the dynamics of the group and the issues discussed.
Interviews with Members of the County Leadership Team and Other County Leaders and Practitioners	In Year 1, RTI interviewed 9 of the 10 members of the County Leadership Team in December 2013 and January 2014. One team member was not interviewed because she was a recent replacement for a former member. In Year 2, RTI interviewed 7 of the 10 members of the County Leadership Team in February 2015. For those interviews, RTI selected new members and members who represented key partnerships for FosterEd. In Year 3, RTI conducted 10 interviews, 2 with leaders of the County Leadership Team and 8 with other county leaders (e.g., the County Superintendent of Schools) and other practitioners (e.g., school district foster youth liaisons).
Focus Group with Education Liaisons	RTI conducted focus groups with the Education Liaisons in September 2014, February 2015, and May 2016.
Administrative Data (e.g., number of cases, number and relation of Educational Champions)	During the second and third years of implementation, FosterEd tracked case administrative data in Goalbook. The data were extracted, de-identified, and transferred to RTI. This Year 3 report focuses on these data. In Year 1, administrative data were tracked in an Excel Workbook, and the Year 1 Evaluation report summarized those data.
Case Planning Data	In Years 2 and 3, case plan data were tracked and stored in Goalbook. Those data were extracted, de-identified, and transferred to RTI. In Year 1, case plan data were kept in Foster Focus and RTI worked with the Sacramento County Office of Education, which manages the Foster Focus data system, to extract the data for analysis. This Year 3 Evaluation Report focuses on presenting the case plan data extracted from Goalbook for Implementation Years 2 and 3.
Communications Data	Data on the number of communications in Goalbook were extracted, de-identified, and transferred to RTI for the Year 2 report. This included 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. RTI and FosterEd continued to monitor these data during the first half of Year 3 of implementation and then agreed to stop analyzing the data to conserve evaluation resources and because the pattern of results had remained relatively stable.
Survey 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. 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 ($N = 220$ for the 2014 survey, $N = 384$ 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, 118 (or 54 percent) completed the survey. Of those invited to participate in the 2015 survey, 189 (or 49 percent) completed the survey.
Survey of Educational Champions	In Year 1, in collaboration with FosterEd, RTI developed a survey for Educational Champions to gather their experiences with and feedback on FosterEd. The results of that survey were detailed in the Year 1 Evaluation Report.
Volunteer Data	One of the Education Liaisons led the recruitment and training of volunteers, to support Educational Champions during the first two years of implementation, and kept records of those efforts. Summaries of these records were provided to RTI and included in the Year 1 and Year 2 reports. FosterEd and the Community Leadership Team decided to halt the volunteer program during Year 3 after determining the effort required to recruit and support volunteers was not a good investment of the Education Liaisons' time, and also because relatively few Educational Champions wanted to work with volunteers.

Study limitations

The evaluation of FosterEd Santa Cruz County included 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 FosterEd Santa Cruz County through June 2016. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this developmental evaluation included somewhat limited data from education records.

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 71 percent of foster youth who had been served for at least two months were available for analysis, and grade point average (GPA) data for 53 percent of high school foster youth who had been served for at least two months were available. While this coverage is lower than desired, a comparison of these analysis samples and the population of

youth served by FosterEd reveals that the analysis samples are generally representative of the full FosterEd population. For the attendance analysis, the largest difference is a slight over-representation of females in the attendance analysis (4 percentage point difference, see Appendix Table B-1). For the GPA analysis, the largest difference is a slight over-representation of females in the analysis (8 percentage point difference, see Appendix Table B-2).

RTI also analyzed attendance and GPA data for the Year 2 report and, at the time, had fewer students in the analyses and fewer months of attendance data and fewer terms of GPA data. For example, the Year 2 analyses included a total of 164 terms of GPA data for 28 high school students while the final analyses presented in this report included 284 terms of GPA data for 41 high school youth. The larger amount of data, with similar findings, increased RTI's confidence in the findings.

One of the recommendations in the final section of this report relates to establishing an evaluation of FosterEd that will achieve a higher level of evidence. Doing so would involve collecting additional types of education data, additional safeguards to ensure high coverage of data, and a control group.

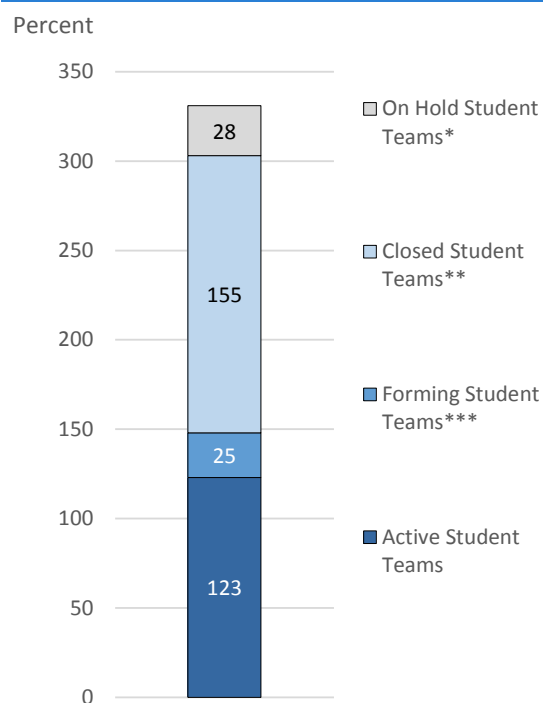
Progress on Practice Indicators

In designing the evaluation, RTI and FosterEd identified a set of FosterEd practice indicators to track (see Appendix A). The data presented in this section come primarily from administrative and case management data stored in Goalbook and extracted and de-identified for RTI.

How Many Youth Have Been Served by FosterEd Santa Cruz County?

Between January 2013, when FosterEd was launched, and June 2016, **331 foster youth have been served**, with 123 of the cases active at the end of June 2016 and 155 closed (**Figure 1**). FosterEd cases close when the youth leaves dependency (e.g., is reunified with a parent and the child welfare case is closed); if the youth is placed outside of the county and that placement is expected to last a long time; and if non-minor dependents decide not to participate in FosterEd. Cases are put on hold when a youth is placed out of county but the placement is expected to be short-term or if a youth went AWOL (e.g., ran away from a placement and cannot be located by the child welfare agency). Cases were considered to be forming during the period after a case had been referred to FosterEd but before the initial team meeting had been held.

FIGURE 1: Santa Cruz County Student Teams



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016, and administrative records for cases that were closed by the end of 2013 before cases were transferred to Goalbook ($N = 45$).

* Youth placed out of county and that placement is expected to be short term; youth is AWOL.

** Dependency case has ended; non-minor dependent has opted out of FosterEd; youth is placed out of county and that placement is expected to last a long time.

*** Student referred, identifying and activating team members.

Unless otherwise noted, subsequent figures in this section are for students who were served in 2014 and/or 2015 and for whom consent to share educational records was obtained ($N = 277$). Nine students were referred but had not yet had a consent form signed at the time the data were extracted for this report, and therefore we cannot report on their demographic or other information.

Forty-five students had their FosterEd case closed in 2013, and their education case plan data and demographic information were not transferred to Goalbook.

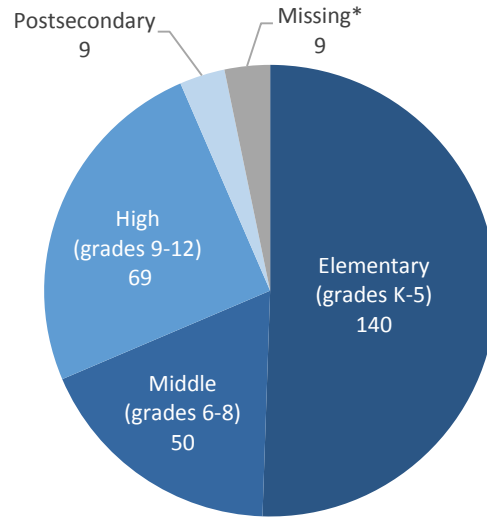
This made reporting on these dimensions difficult given that prior formatting and structure of administrative and education plan data in Foster Focus is not consistent with current data reporting practices. The number of reported student goals that were set and completed in this Year 3 report, for example, is therefore an undercount of the full three years of FosterEd Santa Cruz County implementation. It is more appropriate to view the practice indicators in this section as a reflection of the practices accomplished during 2014, 2015, and the first half of 2016.

disabilities and were being evaluated for Special Education Services. Thirty 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.

Who Are the Foster Youth Served?

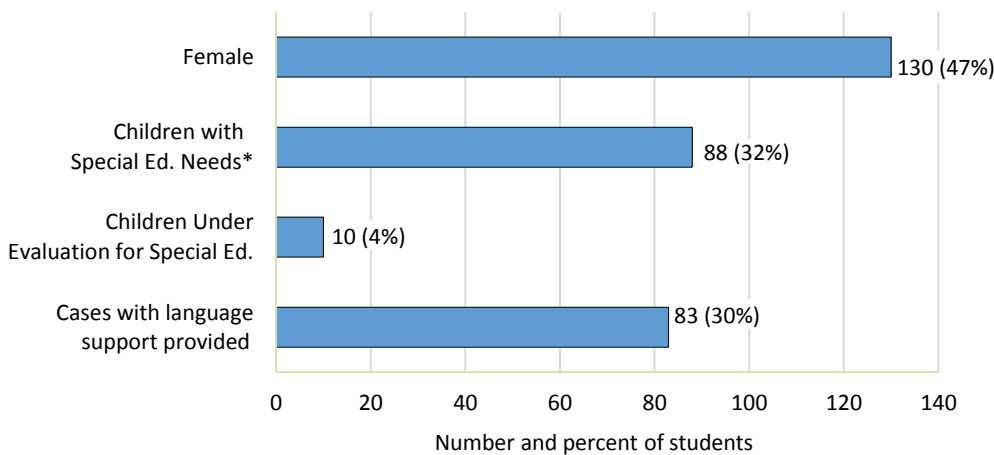
The largest share of the FosterEd youth were in elementary grades (**Figure 2**). Slightly less than half were female (**Figure 3**). About one-third were identified as special education students (e.g., they had an Individualized Education Plan [IEP] or 504 plan), and an additional 4 percent were suspected by someone on the youth’s FosterEd team to have undiagnosed learning

FIGURE 2: School Level for Foster Youth Served



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016.
*Grade information not recorded in Goalbook.

FIGURE 3: Demographic Characteristics of Foster Youth Served



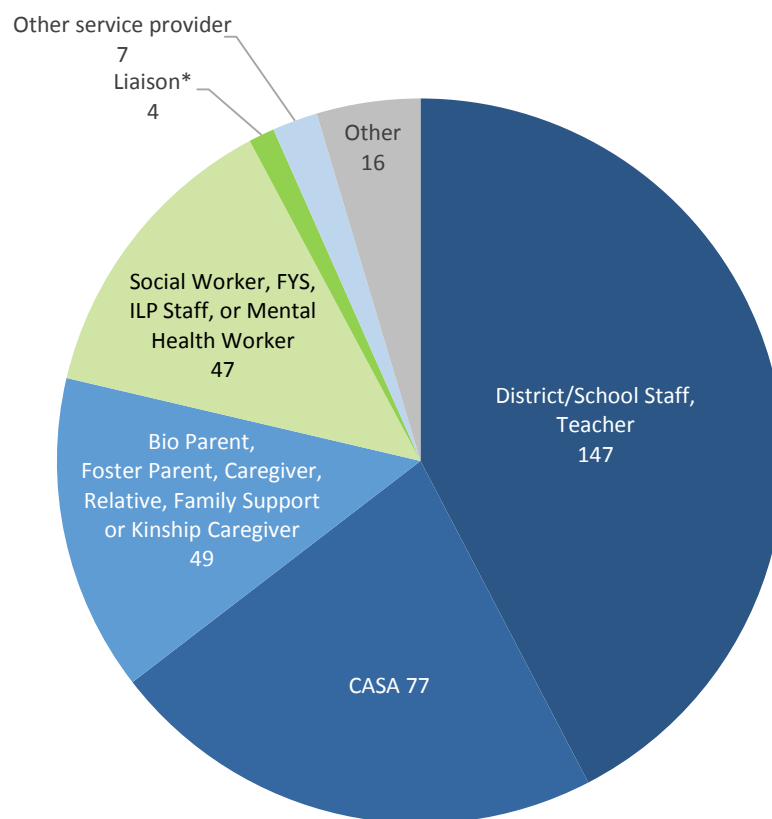
SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016.
*Child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan

Who Serves on the Foster Youth's Team?

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 are only three Liaisons, but a Liaison is required for each team. The number of duplicative⁴ team members, including those who have served on teams that had closed, is 1,945.

Figure 4 shows the number of unduplicated team members for cases that were active in June 2016, and who activated their Goalbook account, or who were parents or caregivers who were not active on Goalbook but were active on the team through other means (e.g., ongoing calls with Education Liaisons). The largest share of unduplicated team members were district/school staff or teachers (147). The second largest share were CASAs (77), followed by family members or caregivers (49). The non-duplicative counts for all team members, including those who only served on teams that closed, is 566.

FIGURE 4: Number of Non-Duplicative Team Members for Open Teams



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016.

* The "Liaison" category includes three Education Liaisons and one Program Manager.

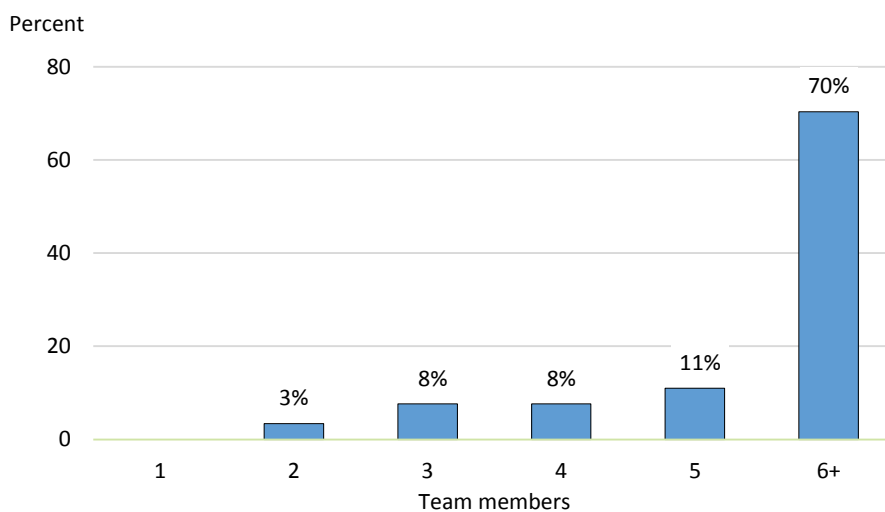
⁴ By "duplicate" team members we mean an adult could have served on more than one team, and thus we are counting roles when we report "duplicative team members" rather than separate people.

Figure 5 reports the percent of active teams with various numbers of members. Seventy percent of active teams had six or more members. **Figure 6** reports the percent of active teams with various types of members. As in **Figure 5**, the team member had to have activated their Goalbook account to be counted in **Figures 6 and 7**. The one exception is that Education Liaisons tried to flag cases in which the parents, relatives, or caregivers had not activated their Goalbook account, but were active on the team by staying in contact with the Education Liaison or through other means. The intention was to count these parents, relatives, and caregivers in the evaluation. Given that this was a manual process, it is likely that some cases were missed.

Figure 6 shows almost all active teams in June 2016 had a social worker. Eighty-eight percent had a representative from the school or district on the team, and 73 percent had a parent, caregiver or relative on the team. Although RTI cannot verify this, the FosterEd program manager thinks that if school and district staff who were active on teams but not through Goalbook were counted, and all parents, relatives and caregivers in this situation were counted, the percentage for both of these group would be closer to 100 percent.

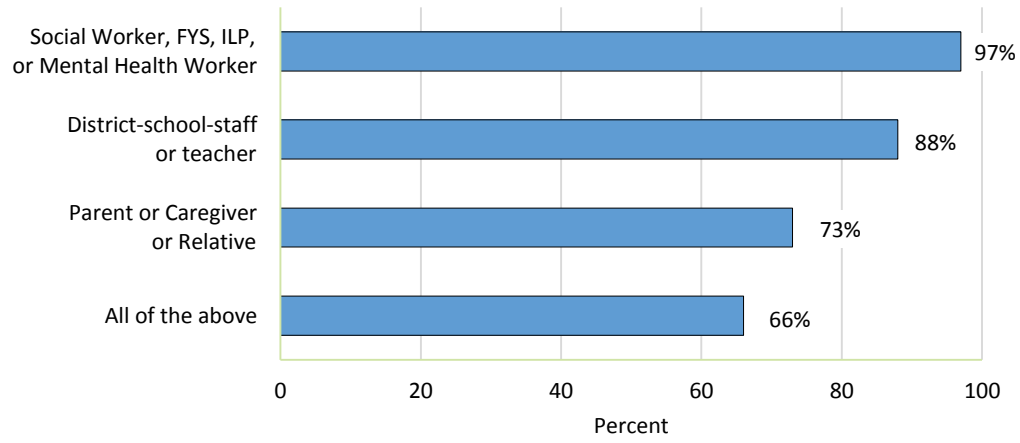
When each of these four role types were considered in conjunction, 66 percent of students had each of these representatives on their team.

FIGURE 5: Percent of Active Teams with Various Numbers of Members



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016.

FIGURE 6: Percent of Active Teams with Various Types of Members



SOURCE: Goalbook data, extracted June 14, 2016.

Progress on Outcomes Indicators

RTI tracked a number of outcomes indicators for the evaluation, including youth-level, program-level, and state-level, which are summarized in this section. As noted in Appendix A, RTI also tracked outcomes for Educational Champions, which were summarized in the Years 1 and 2 reports.

It is important to point out that it is impossible to isolate the impact that FosterEd has had on state-level policy and practice changes. Nevertheless, based on RTI's knowledge of FosterEd state-level efforts, 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. It is also important to note that FosterEd's state-level efforts have been supported by its involvement in the Education Equals Partnership.

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; they are often more focused on the 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.

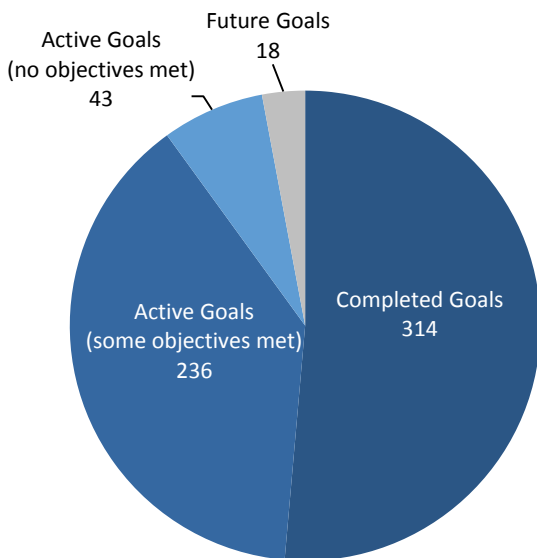
Reported in this section are goals set for youth who were involved in FosterEd in 2014 or beyond and therefore have education plan data in Goalbook. As noted earlier in this report, 45 foster youth were involved in FosterEd in 2013, but their cases closed before January 2014 and their education plan was not transferred to Goalbook. Thus, the goal counts represented in this section are an underestimate of the total number of goals set through the FosterEd program.

For the 277 foster youth whose FosterEd case was active at some point in 2014 or beyond, and for whom consent to share their information in the evaluation was obtained, 1,261 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 approximately three objectives to meet that goal, such as the caregiver establishing a 9:00 p.m. bedtime, the child rising with an alarm clock, and the child having no absences or tardies for 6 weeks.

Figures 7 and 8 present the status of these goals for active and forming student teams, and closed and on hold student teams, respectively. About half of the goals (611) were associated with active or forming teams. Among those, 314 had been completed, 236 were active and some of the objectives had been met, 43 were active but no objectives had yet been met, and 18 were identified as "future" goals (**Figure 7**). To help keep teams focused, teams typically have no more than three goals active at any time. If more than three goals have been identified, some are noted as future goals to be addressed once a more urgent goal has been met.

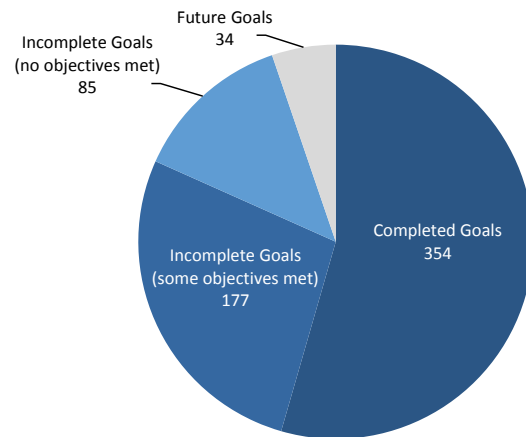
Of the total 1,261 student goals set, 650 were associated with closed or on hold teams. Among those, 354 had been met (**Figure 8**). Some 177 had been active goals that were not completed when the team closed or was put on hold, but progress had been made on the goal. Eighty-five were not completed when the team closed or was put on hold, and progress had not been made on the goal, while 34 had been identified as future goals and had not been activated.

FIGURE 7: Status of Student Goals, for Active and Forming Teams (Counts)



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted June 14, 2016.

FIGURE 8: Status of Student Goals, for Closed and On Hold Teams (Counts)

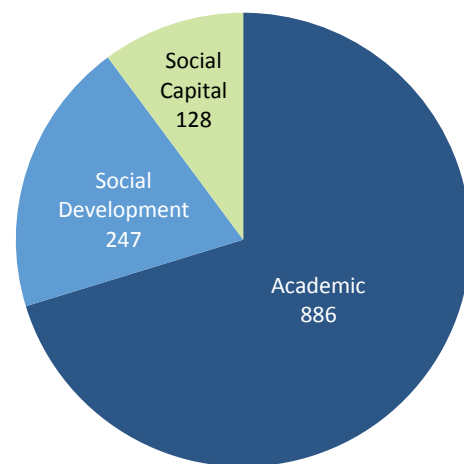


SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted June 14, 2016.

What types of goals have been set for youth?

Figure 9 reports the general categories of the 1,261 goals that have been set for foster youth. The largest group (886) were academic, followed by social development (247) and social capital (128).

FIGURE 9: Category of Student Goals (Counts)



SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted June 14, 2016.

TABLE 2: Description of Student Goals

Academics			
Goal Title	Count	Goal Title	Count
Reading Level	119	College Readiness	38
Math Level	110	Career Readiness	28
Academic Supplies	103	Academic Proficiency	24
Enrollment in Appropriate Schools and Classes	98	CAHSEE Completion	18
Special Education / 504 Accommodations / Student Success Team	94	Academic Records / Credits	18
Writing Level	79	Other Subject Proficiency	8
Attendance	50	Special Education / Speech & Language	7
Course Completion	45	Special Education / Behavior Support Plan	4
Work Habits / Homework	41	Appropriate ESL services	2
Social Development		Social Capital	
Goal Title	Count	Goal Title	Count
Extracurricular Activities	170	Additional Adult Supports	65
Behavior and School Discipline	53	Positive Peer Relationship	40
Future Expectations	24	Positive School Staff Relationship	15
		Education Rights / Ed Champion	8

SOURCE: Goalbook data extracted June 14, 2016.

Table 2 describes the academic, social capital, and social development goals identified for students. One thing to note is the variety of types of goal descriptions: 25 different kinds of goals were identified across all of the student cases. Among the academic goals, the top five were improving their reading and math proficiency, ensuring the youth had appropriate academic supplies, were enrolled in appropriate schools and classes, and were receiving adequate Special Education or 504 plan support. Within the social development category, the most common goal set related to extra-curricular activities. Within the social capital category, the most common goal set concerned additional adult supports.

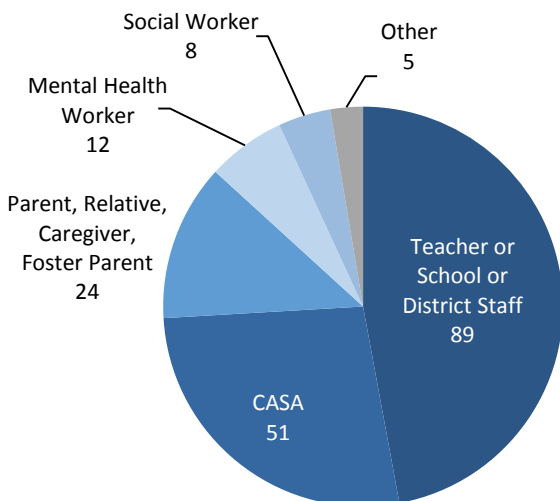
What do adult team members perceive as the impacts of FosterEd on foster youth?

As noted in Table 1 on page 3, 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 2 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.

Figure 10 reports the number of adult survey respondents from the October 2015 survey

(189 total). The largest group was teachers or school/district staff (89), followed by CASAs (51) and parents, relatives, caregivers, or foster parents (24).

FIGURE 10: Role Type of Adult Team Member Survey Respondents



SOURCE: Adult Team Member Survey, October 2015.

Adult team members' perception of the impact of FosterEd on participating youth was assessed in the survey (**Figure 11, page 14**). At least 80 percent 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.

Adult team members were asked if they felt the youth **benefited in other ways from FosterEd**, beyond the survey items listed in Figure 2, with 107 reporting that they had. The most common additional benefits are listed below, with illustrative quotations.

Having a coordinated team of adults to support them educationally (42 respondents)

"They know they have a team rooting for them."

"I don't think we can underestimate the impact that having a team of caring adults has on these

kids' lives. I've seen many positive changes in all areas."

"They feel supported by a number of adults and [are] held accountable by more than just the teacher."

"They gain a greater understanding of what is taking place in their life and how the people around them will guide them and help them through the process."

Access to greater support and enrichment activities (17 respondents)

"They have helped us determine what the alternatives to main stream education [are] that are out there."

"After the foster youth that I am involved with was expelled from Mainstream high school, Foster Ed was very helpful in navigating the different options available to him."

"[The Education Liaison] was instrumental in having my CASA child attend Engineering Camp this summer."

"Has gotten school supplies and books."

"Tutoring has been a big help."

Parents became more involved in their child's education (10 respondents)

"FosterEd has helped keep parents involved and helped make education more of a priority."

"This student has a large bilingual family with extended family relationships. FosterEd has helped support the IEP team in developing relationships which has resulted in a more positive experience for the family, the IEP team, and for the student's education."

The adult team members were also asked if they felt the **youth experienced anything negative due to their participation in FosterEd**. Only 14 felt this was the case, with the most common response as follows:

Some students felt overwhelmed by the number of adults on their team or being part of another program (10 respondents)

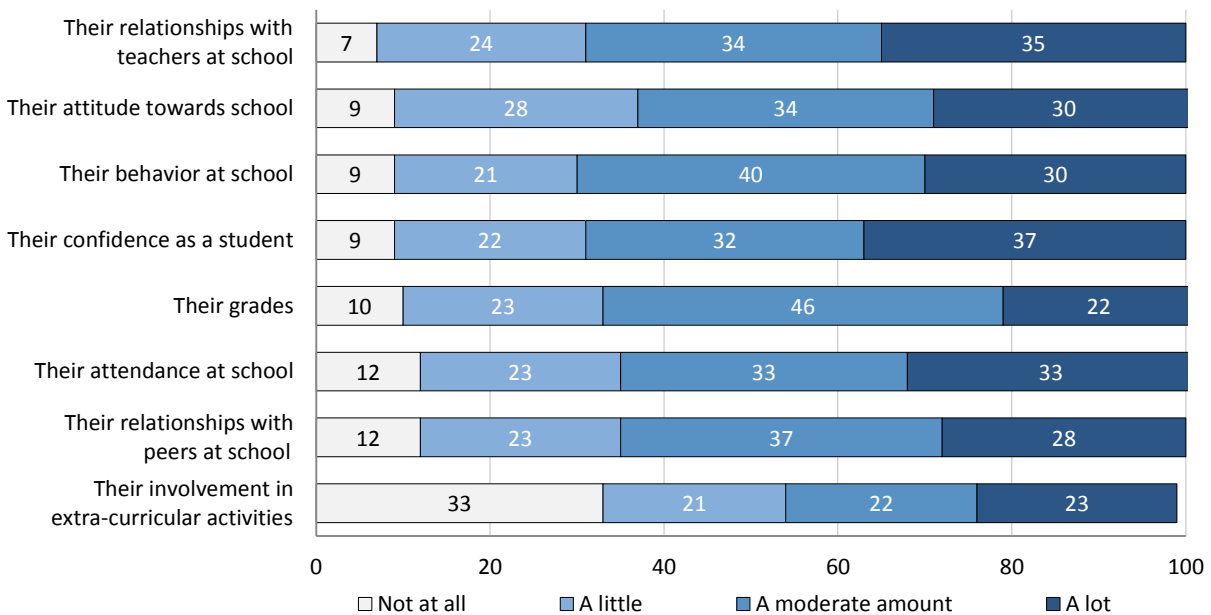
“A couple of students were very overwhelmed with having so many people at the table. One

thought it was just another intrusive process in their lives.”

“Students complain to me that they have too many meetings and too many people in their business. However, I feel like they are all valuable services.”

“He sometimes feels smothered by his adult support team.”

FIGURE 11: Perceived Impacts of FosterEd on Youth, from the Perspective of Adult Team Members (Percent)



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

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

FosterEd Santa Cruz County staff worked with their district partners to access education data electronically and manually entered information from paper records when needed. These two data activities enabled the evaluator to examine attendance rates and GPAs 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 data were available.

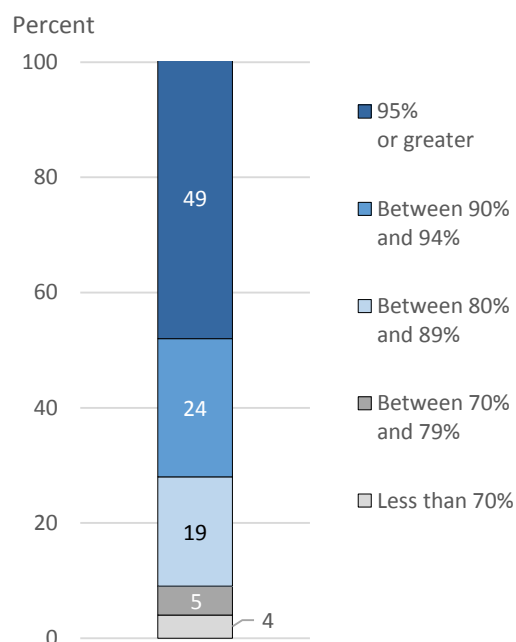
Although the goal was to capture “before” and “after” education data for all youth who participated in FosterEd, some FosterEd cases closed abruptly as youth moved out of county or left foster care, and obtaining “after” education data was sometimes impossible. This data problem was particularly acute for GPAs, an indicator which is calculated at the end of each school term, as opposed to the more frequent time interval for attendance rates, which is calculated monthly.

Another limitation of the GPA analysis is that GPAs were only available for high school students, as elementary schools and even middle schools do not have standard grading systems. Despite these data challenges, RTI is comfortable presenting the following educational outcomes analyses.

Attendance

Figure 12 presents students' attendance rates prior to entering FosterEd for the 195 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. Almost half of the foster youth entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate of 95 percent or greater, and an additional 24 percent of students had rates between 90 and 94 percent.⁵ While the FosterEd staff and evaluator were initially surprised by these high attendance rates, they are in line with attendance rates for foster youth observed in one of the other Education Equals counties.

FIGURE 12: Students' Attendance Rates Prior to Joining FosterEd



Note: Included in the figure are 195 youth whose cases were active in FosterEd for at least two months and who had attendance data available for prior to and after joining FosterEd.

SOURCE: Foster Focus data extracted June 24, 2016.

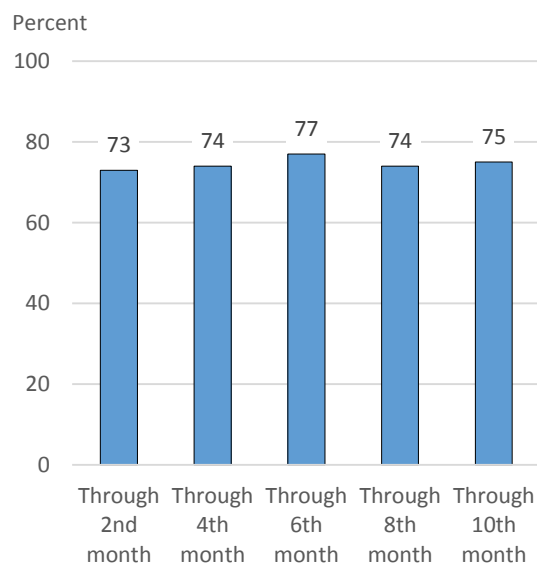
⁵ Students needed at least one month of “before” FosterEd attendance data to be included in the analysis. Up to six months of “before” FosterEd attendance data were included for a student in cases where it was available. Unlike some of the practice indicators which required data from Goalbook where students' goals and team

members were tracked starting in 2014, the attendance and GPA analyses did not require Goalbook data. Therefore, students who started being served in 2013 and who had “before” and “after” education data were included in these educational outcomes analyses.

About two-thirds of students who entered FosterEd without very high attendance rates increased their attendance rates

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 13** 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 4th month” reports the percent of foster youth who increased their attendance rate over the four-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.

FIGURE 13: The Percent of Foster Youth Who Increased Their Attendance, Among Those Who Entered with Less Than a 95% Attendance Rate



Note: The denominator for each of the bars, from left to right, is 100, 90, 78, 65, and 59.

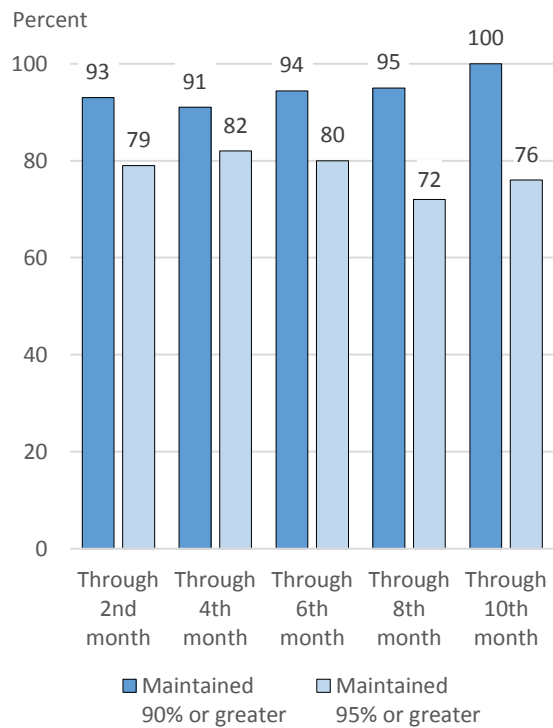
SOURCE: Foster Focus data extracted June 24, 2016.

The results in Figure 13 reveal that approximately three-quarters 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 relatively stable through the 10th month.

The vast majority of students who entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate maintained it

Figure 14 presents information on youth who joined the FosterEd program with at least a 95 percent attendance rate. For this group, the analysis examined the proportion who maintained a high attendance rate. The light blue bars report the percent who maintained a 95 percent or greater attendance rate, and the dark blue bars report the percent who maintained a 90 percent or greater rate. Over 90 percent of the foster youth who entered FosterEd with at least a 95 percent attendance rate maintained an attendance rate of 90 percent or greater, and over 70 percent maintained the very high attendance rate of 95 percent. These results held across the 10 months examined.

FIGURE 14: The Percent of Foster Youth Who Maintained High Attendance Rates, Among Those Who Entered with at Least a 95% Attendance Rate



Note: The denominator for each of the bars, from left to right, is 95, 81, 66, 57, and 49.
 SOURCE: Foster Focus data extracted June 24, 2016.

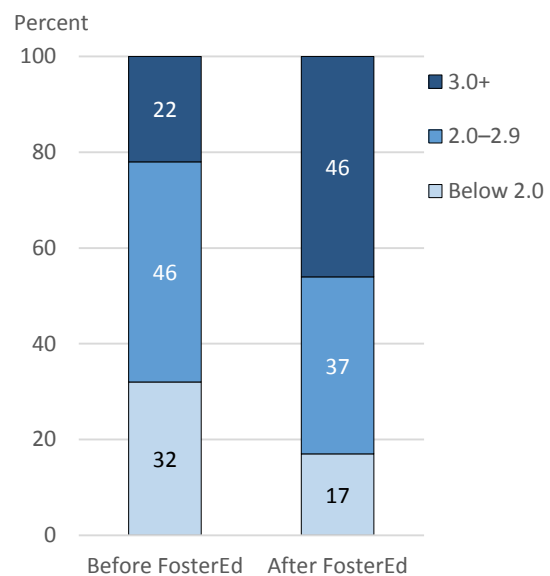
Grade point average

High school students' GPAs prior to and after joining FosterEd were also examined. The analysis is based on the 41 high school students who were active in FosterEd for at least two months and for whom "prior to" and "after joining" GPA data were available.

GPAs increased after students joined FosterEd

Figure 15 reports that 22 percent of these youth joined FosterEd with a 3.0 GPA or greater, while 32 percent had a 2.0 or below. The proportion of students earning a 3.0 or greater GPA more than doubled after joining FosterEd (from 22 percent to 46 percent) and the proportion earning below a 2.0 was reduced by about half (from 32 percent to 17 percent). Median GPA increased from 2.5 "prior to" FosterEd to 3.0 "after joining" FosterEd. Mean GPA increased from 2.3 to 2.7.

FIGURE 15: High School Foster Youth's GPA Prior to and After Joining



SOURCE: Foster Focus data extracted June 24, 2016.

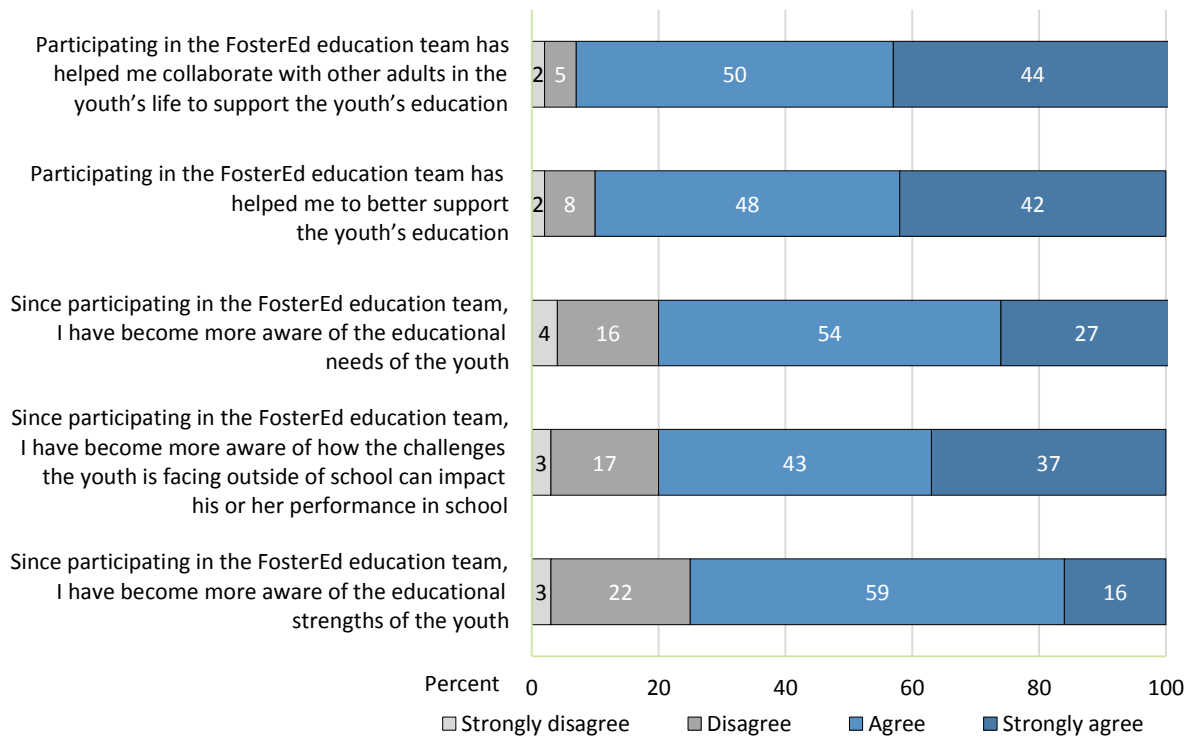
Program Outcomes

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 FosterEd has helped them collaborate with others to support the youth.

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

Figure 16 reports the survey responses to a number of positive statements about FosterEd. At least 75 percent of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to each of the statements.

FIGURE 16: Adult Team Members' Perceptions of the FosterEd Program (Percent)

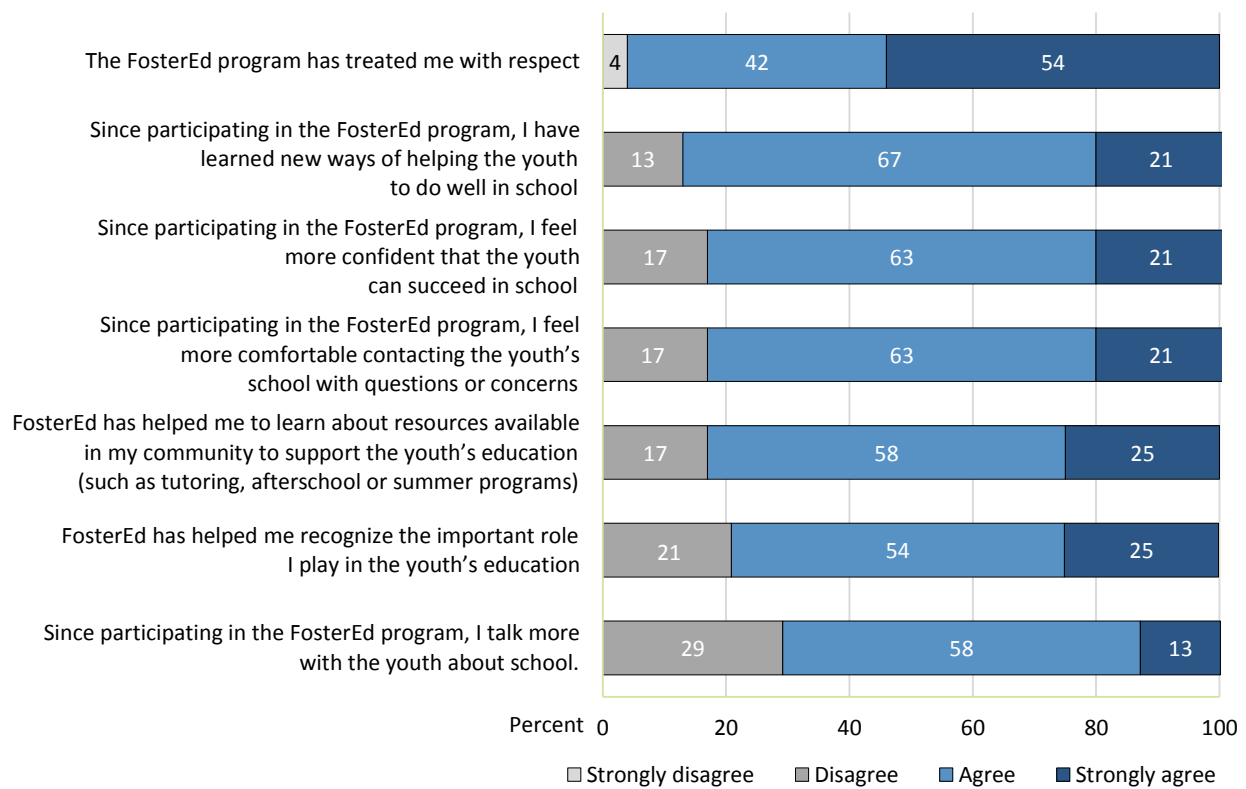


SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

Figures 17 and 18 present results of specific questions asked of different survey respondent groups.⁶ Over 70 percent of the parent/caregiver subgroup reported that FosterEd helped them become a stronger educational supporter for their child on each dimension below (**Figure 17**). Over 75 percent

of the teachers or district or school staff subgroup reported that FosterEd helped them better support foster youth educationally and increased their awareness of the educational issues facing foster youth (**Figure 18**). Ninety-two percent reported that it helped them better collaborate with social workers.

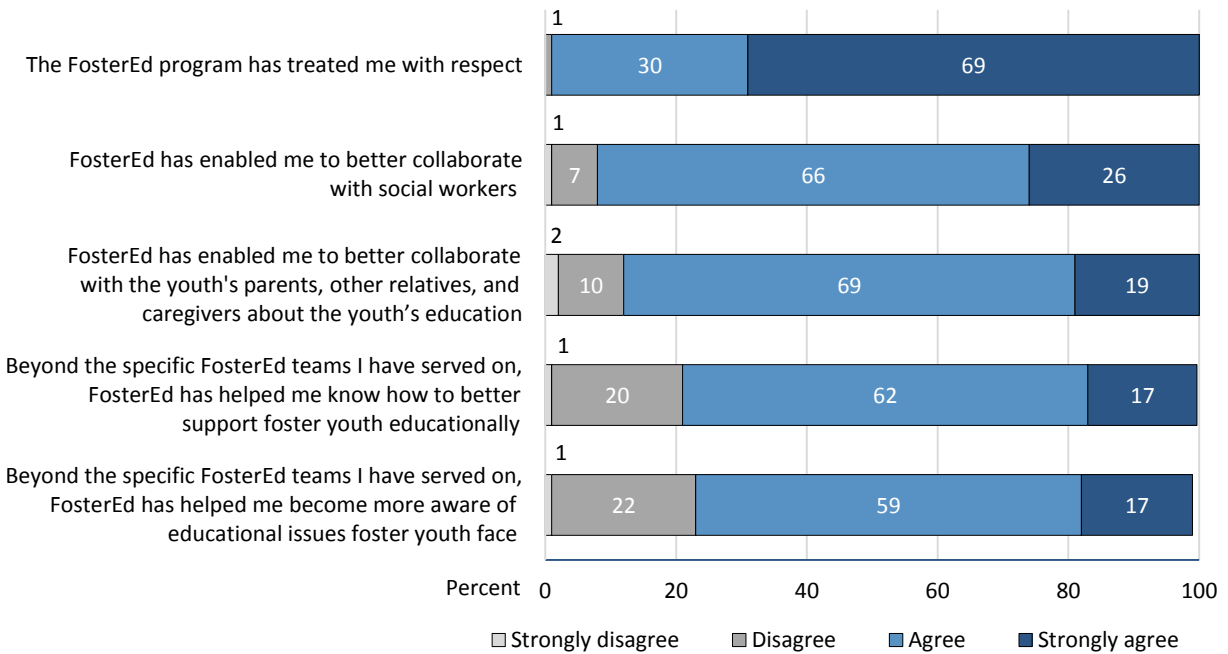
FIGURE 17: Specific Survey Questions Asked of Parents, Relatives, Foster Parents, and Other Caregivers



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

⁶ Three subgroups were presented with individualized questions: 1) parents, relatives, foster parents, and other caregivers (*N* = 24), 2) teachers and school and district staff, and 3) social workers (*N* = 89). Only 8 social workers replied to the 2015 survey, a size too small to show their results separately.

FIGURE 18: Specific Survey Questions Asked of Teachers, School and District Staff (Percent)



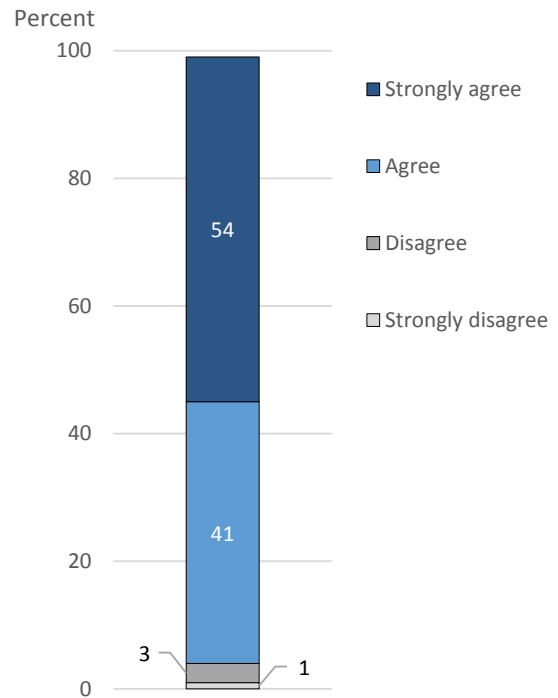
SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

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

Ninety-five percent of adult team members who responded to the survey indicated that they would recommend FosterEd to other adults in the lives of foster youth (54 percent strongly agreed, and 41 percent agreed) (Figure 19).

When asked to explain their answer to whether they would recommend the FosterEd program to other adults in the lives of foster youth, 136 participants responded. Of the 136 participants, 131 participants responded positively (2 of these also included negative feedback). Following is the most common **positive** feedback, with illustrative quotes:

FIGURE 19: Percent of Adult Team Members who Would Recommend FosterEd



SOURCE: Adult Team Members Survey, October 2015.

Coordinates adults in the lives of youth to support their education (52 respondents)

"I think the system is helpful in connecting all of the adults in the youth's life, especially those who may not be as up to speed on their educational goals/progress."

"FosterEd provided the glue that held the complicated team of people working for the child together."

"A collaborative team working with the best interests of the student involved can truly achieve wonderful things."

Provides resources for the youth and the adults in their lives, such as access to FosterEd's knowledgeable staff (37 respondents)

"FosterEd is a great resource to go to with questions, concerns. I have found it to be extremely helpful. It was great to have a FosterEd person at a meeting with the teachers, and parent meeting!"

"FosterEd has helped the family navigate the often confusing IEP process and has helped the family get their concerns expressed and needs met."

"I believe that the youth with FosterEd Liaisons have received more thorough support with their educational needs. There have been many occasions where pieces have been missing and the FosterEd Liaison has really helped to bridge those gaps and meet those needs."

Seven respondents shared **negative feedback** (2 of the 7 also shared positive feedback). The only common negative comment was about the volunteer program (2 respondents), which has since been canceled.

What suggestions do adult team members have for improving FosterEd?

When asked if they had any recommendations for improving FosterEd, 48 responded. There were two major themes for the recommendations, as follows:

Hire more Liaisons, lower their caseloads, serve more youth (11 respondents)

"I wish there were more of the staff. I also wish they could serve students who are living and going to school in this district that are originally from other counties."

"More case workers are needed to really have time to meet the students' needs."

"To increase the number of FosterEd liaisons, since the number of children who need extra assistance to help them succeed in school is very large."

"Lower case loads."

More communication and/or meetings (9 respondents)

"More face to face meetings are needed to better understand and meet the needs of the youth and family."

"It would be helpful to get some updates every month or so, both positive and negative, on how the child is doing in each subject and how s/he is doing with peers."

"I think there needs to be more communication between those involved in the child's life so that they are all working towards the same goal and in a unison manner."

“I would like to be able to meet more often with the FosterEd team. I don’t feel as much as part of the team as I would like to.”

Sustainability

Since planning for the FosterEd Santa Cruz County project, the National Center for Youth Law and County Leadership Team have had a goal to secure public funding for the project after the pilot, which was initially financed by a federal grant and philanthropic sources (see Years 1 and 2 evaluation reports for details of funding sources). By spring 2015, public funding had been secured for the three Education Liaison positions. Sources included Family and Children’s Services, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) via California Department of Education’s (CDE) Foster Youth Service Coordinating Program (FYSCP),⁷ and school districts via federal Title IV-E funds. By fall 2015, funds were secured for the Project Manager position via additional monies provided to SCCOE for FYSCP.

During each year of the evaluation, RTI conducted interviews with county partners and a focus group with the Education Liaisons. For the first two years, the interview respondents were members of the Community Leadership Team. During the third year, RTI wanted to cast a wider net and interview other county leaders and practitioners. This decision was in part to understand their perspectives on how well the transition from a privately funded pilot, managed and staffed by a non-profit (NCYL), to a publically funded program housed in a county agency had gone. These respondents were also asked about their perspectives on prospects of continued sustainability. The topics of

transition and sustainability were also the focus of the Year 3 focus group with Education Liaisons.

A number of factors supported a smooth and successful transition

All interview and focus group respondents described the transition of FosterEd from a grants-based pilot project to a public program housed in the SCCOE as generally smooth and successful. The following were cited as contributing factors:

- **Early agreed upon vision and focused effort beginning during Year 1 of the pilot.** NCYL and the community partners agreed during the early planning stages of the pilot that—assuming the pilot went well—FosterEd would need to be sustained with public rather than philanthropic funds. By the end of the first year of the pilot, the FosterEd Program Manager and some members of the Community Planning Team were meeting with other county leaders to discuss specific potential funding mechanisms. These conversations continued through the second year of the pilot and were supported by state policy changes in the form of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)⁸ and AB 854. Having an early, shared vision for sustainability, strategizing about options during the first year of the pilot, and then actively pursuing options during the second year of the pilot were all important components of ultimately securing public funds.

⁷ FYSCP was established by AB 854 which was signed by the Governor in October 2015. It replaced a prior program, Foster Youth Services, and resulted in more funds to most COEs, including SCCOE.

⁸ Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), was signed into law by California’s governor in July 2013 with many of its provisions taking effect by January 1, 2014. It was discussed in the Year 2 evaluation report.

- Evidence of effectiveness.** Multiple respondents noted the important role that evaluation data played in county leaders agreeing that FosterEd should continue beyond the pilot period. “The data were hugely helpful. If we hadn’t seen those good outcomes I wouldn’t have been able to make the case I was able to make,” explained one leader. Another agreed, “[County leaders] were very swayed by those numbers.” Information shared in less formal ways was also compelling to those who helped make the decision about whether and how to sustain FosterEd. “I hear nothing but positive things about FosterEd from [social] workers,” noted one interviewee. Another explained, “There’s been continual feedback about how useful and utilized this is, and for me it felt like such a no-brainer—it has a solid infrastructure, we need to have this continue.”
- Flexibility during the transition period.** Both agency leaders and Education Liaisons noted with appreciation that NCYL was flexible during the transition period. For example, hiring SCCOE employees requires many specific, bureaucratic steps. NCYL agreed to continue financing an Education Liaison position when the hiring process at SCCOE took longer than expected. There was also a six-month delay in getting the Education Liaisons and Program Manager computers once they became SCCOE employees. NCYL allowed the FosterEd staff to continue using NCYL laptops until the SCCOE computers arrived.
- Tightening of public budgets.** A few interviewees noted the fortuitous timing of establishing FosterEd as a public program, given the current strong state and local economy. One explained, “The economy has recovered and tax receipts are up. We had some additional money that we are able to put on the table. I guarantee we wouldn’t have been able to do that if the economy were weak, no matter what the outcomes measures from the pilot were.” If the state and/or local economy were to contract substantially, continued public funding for FosterEd could be in jeopardy.
- Districts’ financial contributions and changes in leadership.** Districts’ financial contributions for SCCOE to support FosterEd were noted by a few of the interviewees as important both in terms of helping to cover the costs of the program and as evidence that they have “skin in the game,” along with the other public agencies providing funding (e.g., SCCOE, Human Services Department). While California’s Local Control Funding Formula allocates additional funds to districts based on the number of foster youth they serve, asking districts to transfer some of those funds to SCCOE to support FosterEd has been challenging. Some districts have instead asked to contribute in-kind services or wondered why SCCOE needs district contributions when it also receives funds from the state via AB 854 to coordinate services for foster youth. There is also a risk that districts that have agreed to help financially support FosterEd may decide at some point to work independently rather than collaborate with FosterEd. An interviewee thinks the chances of this happening increase when district leadership changes. Therefore, there is a need to continually build relationships with

Potential Threats to Sustainability

RTI asked interviewees whether they anticipated any challenges in continuing to sustain FosterEd in the county, and how those challenges could be monitored and addressed.


new leaders and to demonstrate that collaboration across the county is beneficial as opposed to districts working in isolation.

- **Keeping innovative spirit alive.** In interviews conducted during each of the three years of the evaluation, FosterEd's commitment to reflection, continuous improvement, and creative responses to challenges were often cited as clear strengths of the program. These qualities are certainly important as a program is being piloted, and they continue to be important as programs mature. One interviewee suggested, "I think that keeping the innovative spirit alive is critical. Lessons learned and making adjustments as needed. That has been there all along but that spirit has to continue. We have one model but we shouldn't become married to it."
 - **Continue to track and communicate outcomes.** With the external evaluation of FosterEd Santa Cruz County ending, a number of interviewees noted that a threat to sustainability would be not continuing to track and communicate outcomes in some capacity. It is understandable and appropriate that the level of resources to do so are scaled back at this time, and that this work be undertaken by SCCOE or another agency partner rather than an external evaluator. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to assume the positive outcomes documented thus far will necessarily continue in the future, and that leaders who will be making decisions about whether to continue supporting FosterEd will be satisfied with outcome data that are several years old.
-

State Outcomes

RTI has tracked 13 state-level outcomes identified by FosterEd as goals to achieve beyond the Santa Cruz County pilot project, which reflect FosterEd's state policy efforts. Although it is impossible to quantify or isolate NCYL's contributions to the state outcomes, RTI is comfortable reporting on them as a reflection of FosterEd's efforts given knowledge of the extent of its involvement in state working groups and other state-level activities, including as members of the Education Equals Partnership.


The Year 2 evaluation report presented an extensive recording of the state-level outcomes achieved up to that point, including many that were attained through Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), a sweeping education reform. To keep this report focused, we limit this section to four state-level indicators for which additional substantial progress was made during the final year of this evaluation.

 Recent public reporting of the educational achievement of foster youth enabled by data sharing between (1) California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and California Department of Education (CDE) and (2) CDE and Local Education Agencies (LEA)⁹

In 2014, CDSS and CDE began a formal data match process and shared these data with local school districts. CDSS and CDE refined match procedures to increase the match rate. FosterEd worked closely with CDE to help troubleshoot the data based on the experience in Santa Cruz County.

Data sharing between CDSS, CDE, and LEAs enabled a September 2016 release of information about the nearly 70,000 foster

youth in California's public schools.¹⁰ The release helps to increase public awareness of the educational performance and needs of foster youth. For example, for English language arts, 56.2 percent of foster students did not meet standards, compared with 30.5 percent for non-foster students. For mathematics, 64 percent of foster students did not meet standards, compared with 37.3 percent for non-foster students. Additional data on suspensions and expulsions, graduation rates, and student mobility are expected to be released later in the 2016-17 school year.

 Improved statutes governing the Foster Youth Services (FYS) program, now called the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP)

The Year 2 evaluation report noted that legislation had been introduced to update the FYS program to align with the new Local Control Funding Formula and to ensure that the LCFF is effectively implemented for students in foster care. That legislation, AB 854, passed and was signed by the Governor in October 2015. The major components of AB 854 are:

- Establishment of the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program. Prior program was called Foster Youth Services.
- Expansion of the definition of "foster youth" to be consistent with the definition in LCFF, which includes all foster youth with an open case, regardless of the living arrangements in which they have been placed by the state. Under the FYS program, foster youth in relative-care settings were not included. The state budget for FYSCP increased by about 67%.

⁹ Note these are two state-level indicators. See Appendix A.

¹⁰ See the CDE press release at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr16/yr16rel63.asp>.



Use of Goalbook or other case management tool outside of Education Equals counties

Starting in 2014, FosterEd Santa Cruz County used Goalbook, an online education case management tool. At the end of the 2014-2015 school year, the company that offered Goalbook notified FosterEd they were going to discontinue the product in June of 2016 to focus on other technology products. FosterEd used the opportunity to consider what aspects of Goalbook were most helpful for FosterEd Santa Cruz County and the other FosterEd sites, and what other functions would be desirable. The

technology manager of FosterEd, who supported all the FosterEd sites, led a process of engaging many stakeholders to consider whether to adopt another existing tool, or to work with a technology company to develop a new tool. FosterEd decided to develop a new tool and contracted with a company to develop what has come to be named EdTeamConnect. The tool was launched this summer in Santa Cruz County as well as in FosterEd's Arizona and New Mexico pilot sites. The FosterEd Santa Cruz County team provided critical input into the development, testing, and now implementation of EdTeamConnect.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Years 1 and 2 evaluation reports commended FosterEd and its community partners for a remarkable learning cycle that resulted in major, well-thought-out adjustments to the model introduced and refined as the pilot project progressed. Also noted in conclusions of those reports were effective collaborations among FosterEd staff, agency leaders and practitioners, school districts, and community-based organizations such as CASA. These two strengths of the partnership—strategic evolution and highly functional partnerships—were also demonstrated throughout this third and final year of the evaluation as FosterEd transitioned from a philanthropically funded pilot to a publicly funded program housed in a county agency.

The positive findings, first presented in the Year 2 report, of increased attendance and GPAs after students joined FosterEd were further bolstered in this final year of the evaluation based on updated analyses involving more students and more data points. Finally, the adults serving on students' education teams continued to observe positive impacts on the foster youth in Year 3. They reported that participating in FosterEd helped them better support their youths' education and that they would recommend FosterEd to other adults connected to foster youth.

Recommendations

Over the course of this three-year evaluation, RTI has offered recommendations through a number of avenues: in the two prior annual evaluation reports, during quarterly County Leadership meetings, in bi-weekly calls with the Program Manager, and through participation in a few FosterEd retreats that included staff from the Santa Cruz County project and other FosterEd sites. RTI has appreciated FosterEd's

deep commitment to evaluation and sincere interest in receiving feedback, whether offered by the evaluator or any other stakeholder. At the conclusion of this three-year evaluation, RTI has just two final recommendations.

1 Consider whether and how to serve Santa Cruz County foster youth placed out of county and dependents from other counties placed in Santa Cruz County.

Throughout the pilot, partners from child welfare and education agencies have expressed disappointment that FosterEd is not able to serve foster youth who are dependents of SCC but placed out of county, or foster youth who are dependents of other counties but placed in SCC. The partners are not frustrated with FosterEd staff; they understand this decision is due to capacity constraints. Nevertheless, after seeing the benefits of FosterEd first-hand, they want all foster youth to have access to these critical supports, especially considering many of those placed out of county are in group homes and at heightened risk for educational struggles.

2 FosterEd is ready for a more rigorous evaluation design.

This three-year developmental evaluation was intentionally structured to support the evolution a new program aimed at addressing a complex social problem: the unacceptably low educational outcomes for a particularly vulnerable student population. Now that FosterEd has refined its framework and practices through pilots in Santa Cruz County and Pima County, Arizona, any future formal evaluations should consider a more rigorous design that could yield stronger levels of evidence as to the effectiveness of FosterEd. Santa Cruz County is likely not the best setting for the next generation of evaluation for FosterEd as a larger county offers more opportunities for constructing an appropriate control group, but Santa Cruz County would nevertheless benefit from information obtained from a more rigorous evaluation of FosterEd.

Appendix A:

Evaluation Indicators for FosterEd Santa Cruz County

Improvement in...		Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?	
Infrastructure						
1	Program	Establishment and persistence of County Leadership Team	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations, Leadership Team interviews	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
2	Program	Engagement with California’s Improving Educational Outcomes of Children in Care (IEOCC) workgroup	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
3	Program	Number of FosterEd staff hired and trained	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations, Leadership Team interviews	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
4	Program	Development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Interagency Agreements within the County	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations, Leadership Team interviews	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
5	Program	Customization of Foster Focus (FF) for FosterEd Santa Cruz	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, Sacramento County Office of Education, RTI observations	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
6	Program	Number and percentage of Santa Cruz County districts partially linked with FF, number and percentage of Santa Cruz County districts fully linked with FF	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, Sacramento County Office of Education	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
7	Program	Customization of Goalbook for FosterEd Santa Cruz County	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, Goalbook, RTI observations	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
8	Program	Development of Mentoring Modules	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
9	Program	Development of MOU to use Foster Youth Services funds to leverage Title IV-E funds	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations, Leadership Team interviews	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
10	Program	Co-location of Education Liaisons at County Office of Education and Child Welfare offices	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, Leadership Team Interviews, Education Liaisons focus group	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
11	Program	Establishment of joint employment status for FosterEd Liaisons with the National Center for Youth Law and the County Office of Education	BL; 6 mos., annual	National Center for Youth Law, Leadership Team Interviews, Education Liaisons focus group	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
12	Program	Continue integrating FosterEd and the Education Equals Partnership	annual	National Center for Youth Law and the Stuart Foundation	Second year of project	Year 2
Practice						
1	Youth	Number of youth participating in FosterEd (total and disaggregated by special needs, cases needing English language support)	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 (final)
2	Ed Champion	Number of youth for whom an Ed Champion is identified (number who are bio parents, number who are CASA, caregivers, etc.).	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
3	Youth	Number of teams created	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook	First six months after teaming structure implemented	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 (final)
4	Program	Number of Goalbook users, by user type (Ed Liaison, SW, bio parent, foster parent, ed champion) and intensity of use.	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook webmetrix data/report.	First six months after Goalbook implemented	Year 2-framed as adult team members. Year 3 (final)-framed as adult team members, parents/caregivers active on teams but outside of Goalbook also counted. Intensity of Goalbook use not included in Year 3 (final)
5	Program	Number of volunteer education support people recruited, trained, and assigned to cases	BL; 6 mos., annual	NCYL records	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2
6	Ed Champion	Number of presumed long-term caregivers (bio parents/relatives/foster parents) who want mentoring and are receiving mentoring, and the type of mentoring goals set	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook	First six months after teaming structure implemented	Year 1 Year 2
Outcomes						
1	Youth	Number of foster youth with unmet educational needs identified, number of needs identified (i.e., active and inactive goals set for youth in Goalbook), and type of needs identified (e.g., attendance, special ed resources)	BL; 6 mos., annual	Goalbook	First six months of project	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 (final)

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
2	Youth	Number and percentage of youth who improved on at least one active goal, number and percentage who improved on 2-3 active goals, number and percentage who improved on 4+ active goals	BL; annual	Goalbook	After 1st year of project	Yes, but reported at the goal level, not the youth level. Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 (final)
3	Youth	Number and percentage of youth who completed at least one active goal, number and percentage who completed 2-3 active goals, number and percentage who completed 4+ active goals	BL; annual	Goalbook	After 1 st year of project	Yes, but reported at the goal level, not the youth level. Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 (final)
4	Ed Champion	Of bio parents/caregivers who had a goal set to improve their capacity, with the goal being active, percent who increased that capacity	BL; annual	Goalbook	After 1 st year of project	Year 1 Year 2
5	Youth/Ed Champion/Others	Number and percentage of team members who report that participating in FosterEd has been beneficial to them (disaggregated by bio parent/caregiver, parent, social worker, school/district rep)	Annual	Survey of adult team members	9 months after teaming structure implemented	Year 1 included results from a phone survey of Education Champions. Years 2 and 3 included surveys of adult team members.

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
6	Program	Improved collaboration between educators (local education agencies, state education agencies), child welfare (local and state), community-based organizations, and courts	Annual	County Leadership Team and other stakeholder interviews and adult team member survey.	After 1 st year of project	Year 1 included results from County Leadership interviews. Year 2 included results from County Leadership interviews and survey of adult team members. Year 3 include results from County Stakeholder and adult team member survey.
7	Youth	Increase in school attendance rates	Annual	Foster Focus	After 1 st year of project	Year 2 Year 3 (final)
8	Youth	Increase in grades	Annual	Foster Focus	After 1 st year of project	Year 2 Year 3 (final)
9	Youth	Decrease in suspensions and other behavioral incidents	Annual	Foster Focus	After 1 st year of project	No, due to slower than expected Foster Focus linking process, data not available. See Year 1 and year 2 report for discussion.
10	Youth	Decrease in school mobility (e.g., decrease in percent of foster youth who move schools during the school year)	Annual	Foster Focus	After 1 st year of project	No, due to slower than expected Foster Focus linking process, data not available. See Year 1 and year 2 report for discussion.

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
11	Program	Sustainability: funding to continue FosterEd in Santa Cruz County after the pilot	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, County Leadership Team interviews	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2 Year 3 (final)
12	State	Improved judicial process and forms to identify a foster child's education rights holder developed, and used outside of Santa Cruz County	Annual	National Center for Youth Law	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 1 Year 2
13	State	Standardized MOU for use in using Foster Youth Services (FYS) funds to leverage Title IV-E funds developed and used outside of Santa Cruz County	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 1 Year 2
14	State	Use of Goalbook or other case management tool outside of Education Equals Counties	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2 Year 3 (final)- move to EdTeamConnect
15	State	Use of Education Champion resource modules outside of Santa Cruz County	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2
16	State	Legislation requiring data sharing between California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and California Department of Education (CDE) and between CDE and Local Education Agencies (LEAs)	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 1 Year 2
Outcomes—Continued						
17	State	Data sharing between CDSS and CDE	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	Year 2 Year 3 (final)
18	State	Data sharing between CDE and LEAs related to students in foster care	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2 Year 3 (final)
19	State	Legislation holding schools and school districts accountable for the educational outcomes of foster youth	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 1 Year 2

Improvement in...			Report timing: Baseline*; semi-annual; annual	Data source/ comments	When change is first expected	Included in Y1, Y2, and Y3 (Final report)?
20	State	Legislation requiring school districts to develop plans detailing how they will improve the educational outcomes of foster youth	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 1 Year 2
21	State	Meaningful guidance and model plans/ templates developed and adopted by the CDE and SBE	Annual	National Center for Youth Law	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2
22	State	Improved statutes governing the FYS program	Annual	National Center for Youth Law	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2 Year 3 (final) – Now called Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program
23	State	An improved FYS Request For Proposal	Annual	National Center for Youth Law	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2
24	State	Development of state-wide tools for implementing project to support foster youth	Annual	National Center for Youth Law, RTI observations	After Santa Cruz County pilot	Year 2

*BL – "Baseline" is defined as the launch of the project, but may want to adjust to launch of revised project (i.e., teaming structure, for some indicators). BL will be zero for some indicators (e.g., number of youth in FosterEd)

Appendix B: Tables

Appendix Table B-1. Demographic Characteristics of Youth Served by FosterEd, and Those for Whom Sufficient Attendance Data Were Available to Include in the Analysis

	Served by FosterEd	Included in Attendance Analysis	Percentage Point Difference (Included minus Served)
Percent Female	47	51	4
Percent Special Ed. (IEP/504 Plan or under evaluation)	36	38	2
Percent of Cases Needing Language Support	30	31	1
Percent Elementary	51	49	-2
Percent Middle School	18	18	0
Percent High School	25	27	2

Note: To be included in the attendance analysis, foster youth needed to be served by FosterEd for at least two months, have some attendance data available before joining FosterEd, and have at least two months of attendance data available after joining FosterEd.

Appendix Table B-2. Demographic Characteristics of High School Youth Served by FosterEd, and Those for Whom Sufficient GPA Data Were Available to Include in the Analysis

	Served by FosterEd	Included in GPA Analysis	Percentage Point Difference (Included minus Served)
Percent Female	49	57	8
Percent Special Ed. (IEP/504 Plan or under evaluation)	37	35	-2
Percent of Cases Needing Language Support	23	19	-4

Note: To be included in the GPA analysis, high school foster youth needed to be served by FosterEd for at least two months and have at least one term of GPA data available before and after joining FosterEd.

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. RTI also thanks the funders of the FosterEd Santa Cruz County evaluation: The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation.

About the Evaluator

Dr. Jennifer Laird is Program Director in the Center for Evaluation and Equity Studies at RTI International. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology at Stanford University. Dr. Laird has 17 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 Santa Cruz County, she directed the evaluation of FosterEd Arizona, 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.

RTI International 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, justice systems, health and medicine, environmental protection, and international development. 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.



RTI International is a registered trademark and a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.
