



BUILDING CHAMPIONS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE: FosterEd Progress Update



FosterEd | Arizona

Champions for System-Involved Scholars



INTRODUCTION

Leaders across Arizona have united to invest in the educational success of their students in foster care. In response to a sobering report documenting the extent to which Arizona's foster youth struggle in school, these leaders took action. In January 2016, Governor Doug Ducey, together with leadership in the House and Senate, introduced House Bill (HB) 2665, which laid out a vision and roadmap to address the needs of these students. The legislation, enacted in May of that year, established a groundbreaking public-private partnership to expand a proven model for the education of children in foster care into a statewide program.

While the funding for this vision has only recently been triggered, signs of progress are unmistakable. First and foremost is the mobilization of leaders across the public, philanthropic and non-profit sectors with an enduring commitment to eliminate traditional silos and build a team approach that engages the many agencies and individuals that touch the lives of children in foster care. Secondly, FosterEd has begun the process of statewide expansion, with the first wave of new Education Liaisons serving students in Maricopa County, home to 63% of the state's foster children. To support this program expansion, FosterEd has more than tripled the number of Education Liaisons serving youth, established a Maricopa Leadership Team and developed numerous new partnerships. Key partners include Maricopa-based Department of Child Safety staff and the Phoenix Union High School District.

To date, this initiative has met the project goals and timelines while remaining within budget. By December 2018, FosterEd expects to have ramped up program operations to serve full youth caseloads, expand statewide beyond Pima and Maricopa, produce a year 1 evaluation report, establish a youth engagement and leadership component of the program, and produce resources and supports that will help school districts, regional child welfare offices, courts, and other agencies working to support students in foster care.

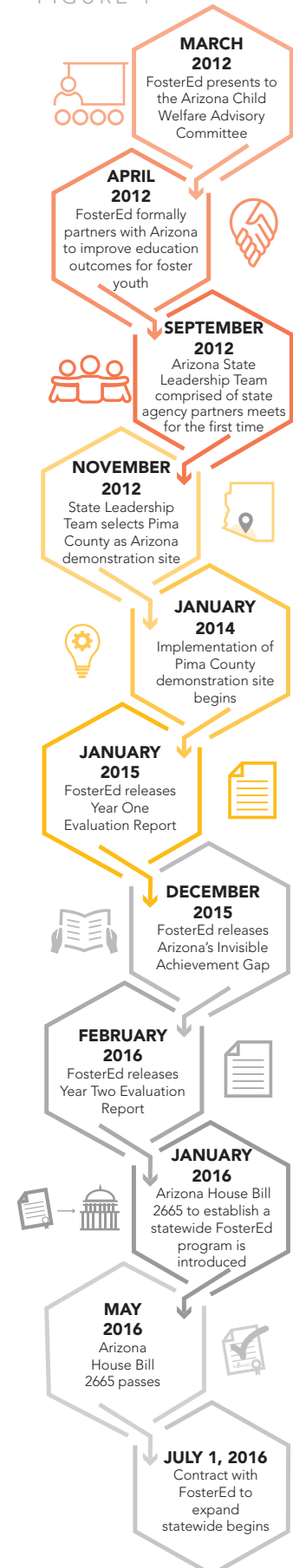
This report summarizes two important phases of work. The first phase includes progress made during the transition year which extended from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, before the funding for the program was available to support expansion. The second is the first four months of the expansion rollout from July to October 2017.

FOSTER ED – AN OVERVIEW

Each and every young person is entitled to a quality education. Each and every young person deserves to have champions by their side helping them to realize their potential. For most children, their primary champion is a parent. But foster youth often do not have anyone in their lives championing their education by monitoring their academic progress and advocating for their educational needs. When children are removed from their homes and placed in foster care, due to abuse or neglect, the state takes responsibility for those children, their safety, health and well-being, and for their success in school.

For students involved with the foster care system, the opportunity to learn has been interrupted by home and school moves. When foster youth change schools they rarely receive credit for the coursework they have completed. They are consistently educated in substandard learning environments. They face – every day – countless adults who hold heart-breakingly limiting expectations for their future. The data substantiating these lived experiences is stark, revealing a staggering achievement gap, chronic poor attendance, and alarming school mobility. Leaders across Arizona have united together to invest in educational success for their students in foster care believing that this is a situation that can and must change.

FIGURE 1



A PROVEN APPROACH

Youth in foster care frequently face an ever-changing stream of new adults in their lives, including foster parents, social workers, attorneys, judges, and new teachers if the child changes schools. These new adults need information about the child's education, as do adults already connected to the child, such as biological parents and other relatives. For parents, access to current, accurate information about their child's academic strengths and challenges is critical to effectively supporting the child's education. Since 2011, FosterEd has been working to fill this gap in the lives of students in foster care, establishing demonstration sites in a variety of contexts and states.

FosterEd is an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law aimed at improving the educational experience and outcomes of foster youth. Our vision is for each and every young person experiencing system involvement to be positively engaged in school and learning, empowered to take charge of their educational futures and have meaningful relationships with caring adults who will consistently and effectively support the young person's educational trajectory once they have exited care.

This work is guided by a framework that all foster youth should have an Education Champion who can support the student's long-term education success, and an Education Team of engaged adults, including the Education 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.

We believe that in order for young people to graduate with a wide array of possibilities for their futures, they need three key things to succeed:

- **Effective and committed education champions.** System-involved youth, like all youth, need strong education advocates who have the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to effectively support the youth's education.
- **Well-coordinated education teams.** System-involved youth are much more likely to succeed in school when the adults involved in their lives – social workers, teachers, therapists, CASAs, etc. – are working together in a coordinated, collaborative manner.
- **Student-centered engagement.** Positive engagement and empowerment at school starts with putting the student at the center of their education decision-making. Giving students "voice and choice" in shaping every element of their education leads to educational success, particularly for system-involved youth who have experienced the trauma and loss of control associated with involvement in the child welfare system.

Figure 2 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 the work in each site progresses, but the overall objectives are consistent and have persisted.

Every young person needs to feel seen and valued to succeed. From this stance, we engage with the student and their champions to co-create an action plan that is centered around the student’s individual strengths and desires for support. We pay particular attention to key transition points – when they come into care, when they transition from a new school, when they are transitioning to college or career preparation and technical education, when they need to change home placements – to make sure the young person comes to expect that the adults around them are in their corner and a resource they can count on to help them realize their dreams for their future.

WHO IS AN EDUCATION CHAMPION?

An education champion is an adult identified by the student who supports and encourages their education. Often, this is a parent or caregiver.

Implementation of this framework has yielded significant improvements in each of the contexts in which it has been tried. Students working with FosterEd have seen improvements in attendance¹ and Grade Point Average (GPA).²

FIGURE 2 Practice Framework



1 See FosterEd Arizona Year Two Evaluation (2016) at foster-ed.org/data-and-technology/program-improvements/
 2 See FosterEd Santa Cruz Year Two (2015) and FosterEd Santa Cruz Year Three (2016) Evaluations at foster-ed.org/data-and-technology/program-improvements/

Youth Success Story



FosterEd became involved in Savannah’s life during her 8th grade year when she was 14 years old. Savannah had been enrolled in online school after a tough year of middle school. Her grades had gone down and behavior at school had become an issue. The team wanted to make sure that Savannah was meeting her potential and was prepared for success in high school.

Savannah’s biological mother Tessa was part of that team. Tessa was 15 when she had Savannah and had allowed family members to adopt her as a baby. Tessa remained in Savannah’s life and planned for that to always be the case. Unfortunately, when Savannah was 14 she was removed from her adoptive family and placed in foster care. Now that Savannah was in the care of the child welfare system, Tessa wanted to make sure Savannah was cared for and that included her education. This made Tessa the perfect Education Champion.

Savannah, together with her Education Champion, decided what the best school placement for her was, and Savannah and her team set education goals together. FosterEd made sure that Tessa had access to all of Savannah’s educational records and had open communication with her school. Tessa monitored attendance, grades, and behavior. She made sure the team celebrated successes – and there was a lot to celebrate. Savannah graduated 8th grade successfully and started 9th grade after participating in a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen. She participated in clubs and engaged positively in after school activities. Savannah eventually was placed back in her mother’s care, and is now a high school senior on track to graduate.

“Setting educational goals gave her control. She wanted more independence. FosterEd gave her the ability to choose what she wanted her goals to be. It gave her control in a time period when she felt she had none.”

Tessa, Ed Champion and Mother

FOSTER ED'S EARLY ENGAGEMENT IN ARIZONA – LOOKING BACK AT THE PIMA COUNTY PILOT

After numerous conversations with state agency leadership, FosterEd committed to working on behalf of Arizona foster children in 2012. Consistent with FosterEd's practice in other states, we assembled a State Leadership Team responsible for supporting and guiding the project.

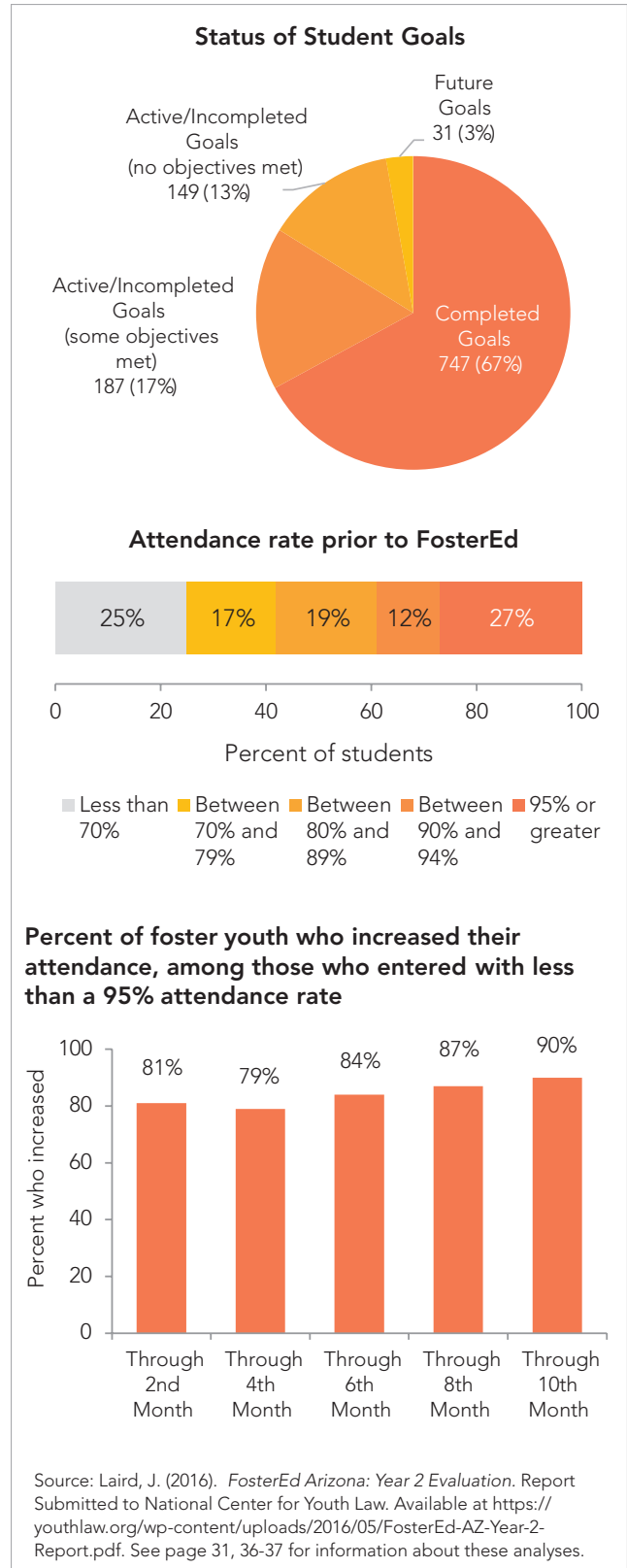
Rather than roll out a statewide program all at once, the State Leadership Team decided to implement the new policies and practices in one locality, using it as the basis for an eventual statewide program. In fall 2012, the State Leadership Team chose Pima County as the location of FosterEd: Arizona's demonstration project.

In 2013, FosterEd developed the infrastructure and conducted the trainings necessary to support the project. Implementation of the Pima County demonstration site began in January 2014. Independent evaluations have found that the program has a measurable positive impact on the educational trajectories of the students served.³

A Call to Action – Arizona's Invisible Achievement Gap

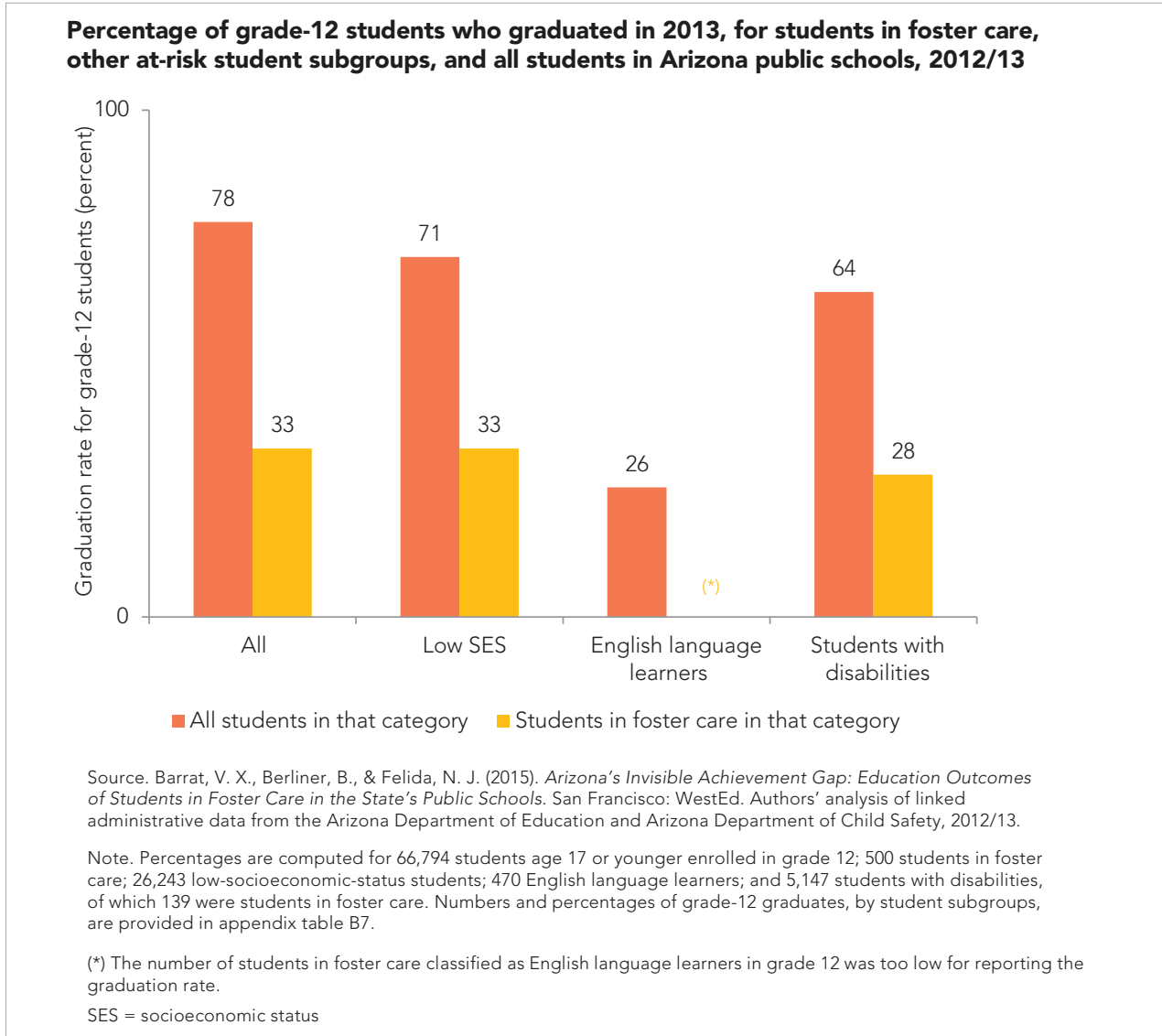
Over the course of 2014 and 2015, with the support of the Arizona Community Foundation, FosterEd and WestEd partnered to produce *Arizona's Invisible*

FIGURE 3



3 Independent evaluations of FosterEd can be found at: <http://www.Foster-Ed.org>.

FIGURE 4



Achievement Gap, a report that for the first time documented the extent to which Arizona's foster youth struggle in school even as compared to other at-risk student subgroups. 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 much more likely to change schools during the school year.

What is most heartbreaking is that these outcomes in no way reflect the potential and capacity of this amazing group of young people.

“The FosterEd Program is a model for public partnerships with philanthropy. Here we have a proven program with best practices and partner with it to bring the benefits to all who need it.”

Arizona Governor
Doug Ducey

In response to this sobering report, leaders in Arizona took action. In January 2016, leadership in the House and Senate introduced House Bill (HB) 2665, which garnered bipartisan support from more than twenty sponsors. The bill, signed by the Governor on May 11, 2016, expands the FosterEd program statewide. HB 2665 provided \$1 million in state funding and an additional \$500,000 in state funding contingent on private matching funds, that if realized, would bring the total program budget to \$2 million. This is an exciting moment for Arizona’s students in care. HB 2665 will ensure that foster children across the state benefit from the same types of support that have proven successful in Pima County.⁴

This report summarizes two important phases of work. The first phase includes progress made during the transition year which extended from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, before the funding for the program was available to support expansion. The second is the first four months of the expansion rollout from July to October 2017.



4 See FosterEd Arizona Year One Evaluation (2015) and FosterEd Arizona Year Two Evaluation (2016) at foster-ed.org/data-and-technology/program-improvements/

A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPY

The early successes of this project reflect the deep commitment of Arizona’s leadership across many levels. Philanthropic leaders provided the critical and early seed funding and a vision. Local and state leadership in both the non-profit and government sectors embraced change and committed staff resources to implement new policies and practices. Governor Doug Ducey and legislative leadership leveraged this broad commitment into a new model for providing services to one of the state’s neediest populations.

The Governor’s commitment to this critical issue has been instrumental in supporting this public partnership with Arizona’s philanthropic sector. The effort is supported by generous funding from many foundations across the state, including the Accio Education Fund, the Arizona Community Foundation, the Paul and Amy Blavin Foundation, the Blessings Fund, the Burton Family Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, the Eaglet Fund, the Ellis Center for Educational Excellence, the First Advised 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. This early and deep investment paid off, in the form of educational progress for foster youth.

Public agencies and non-profits that share a commitment to improving the lives of foster youth have joined forces to leverage our efforts and amplify results. The critical agency partners that have come together include: Office of the Governor, Department of Child Safety, Department of Education, Pima County Juvenile Court, Pima County Schools Superintendent’s Office, Phoenix Union High School District, and Tucson Unified School District. These represent just a few of the committed partners to this effort. For a list of other critical partners, please see “Appendix A, Leadership Team Rosters. ”

It is this type of partnership between government and philanthropy that has a powerful opportunity to scale and sustain practices that are making a difference in the lives of children and families.

“The FosterEd program has been a huge asset not only to DCS but to the families they serve. Their tireless efforts have tremendously impacted the way we think about education and their advocacy for the students has superseded the expectations of many throughout our region. They are a go-to resource for DCS and for the families we mutually serve!”

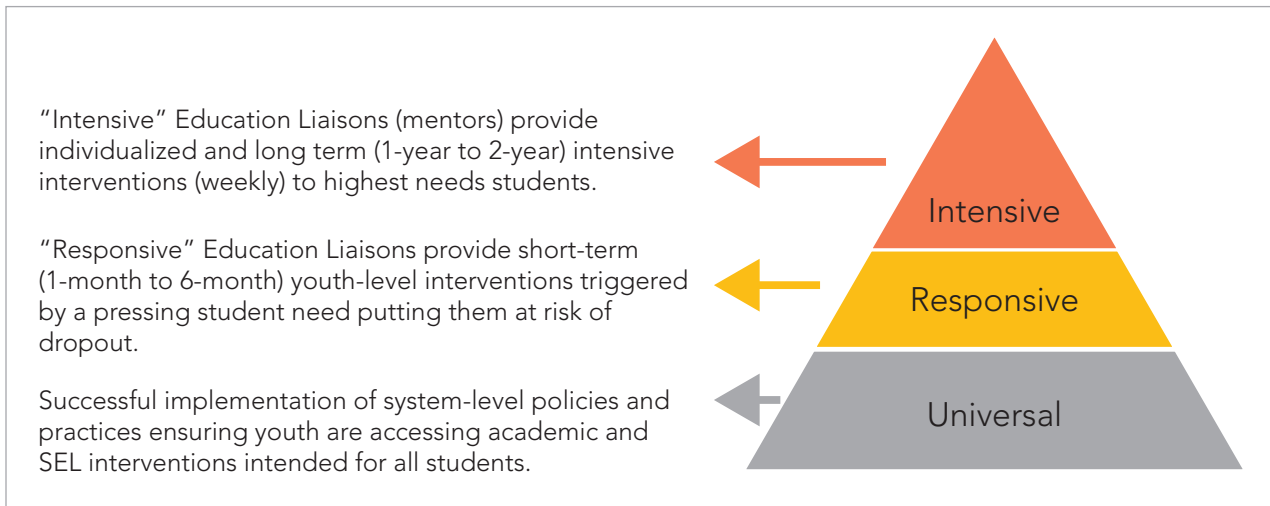
Meghean Francisco,
Program Specialist,
Department of Child Safety

CAPTURING LESSONS LEARNED TO DRIVE CONTINUOUS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The transition period (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017) was an opportune time for reflection, planning, new relationship building in other regions of the state and a review of program data to inform a successful statewide rollout. Each region and each county has its own constellation of resources, partnership dynamics and community assets to be leveraged. The conditions for success statewide are going to be different than for a demonstration site. During this period, FosterEd's process to collect lessons learned and plan for a successful expansion revealed some critical key themes.

- **Continued focus on local adoption and engagement.** Building upon the lessons of implementation science, replication of a successful model requires a local approach to adoption. Given that a majority of the state's foster youth population (63%) resides in Maricopa county, we have concentrated our efforts to date in building the local infrastructure to support the work. It comes as no surprise that local adoption requires time to build trusting relationships amongst and across multiple youth-serving agencies. Early in, our relationship building efforts with Maricopa partners revealed that 1) there is a strong network of agencies and nonprofits in the community doing meaningful and impactful work for this population of students; and 2) the importance of being wise stewards of Arizona's resources necessitates a thoughtful approach to intake and collaboration practices that do not duplicate, but leverage those important resources.
- **Realizing graduation outcomes requires direct and intensive relationships with youth, their champions and teams.** FosterEd's vision is to implement a statewide program that will lead to positive outcomes, such as improved attendance, grades, behavior, and course completion, for students across grades K-12, to ensure students are positively engaged in school and learning, and to ensure they are on a pathway towards high school graduation. During the transition year, FosterEd investigated other evidence-based programs across the country that are successful in both improving real time education outcomes such as attendance, course completion, proficiency in math and English, and grades, and in improving graduation and Career Technical Education program entrance rates.
- **Not all youth need the same level of support and intervention to succeed.** We recognize that youth needs are individualized and may not require the same level of time investment to address one or more pressing issues. By tailoring our services we can maximize the number of youth effectively served. In the Pima pilot, the program evolved to support both "short-term" and "long-term" tiers of engagement. Our analysis of the work

with youth and families in both levels of engagement has led us to formalize and improve upon these two tiers of involvement. For the state expansion, Education Liaisons will provide two levels of support. For those youth with complex, longer-term needs, we will provide intensive services over a period of 1-2 years to ensure those young people are on a pathway toward graduation. For youth with more emergent needs that can be addressed in a shorter time period, we will serve “responsively” for a period of 1-6 months.



- **Effective use of data remains one of our most vexing challenges, yet one we must still tackle.** Gaining access to reliable data at the state, regional and individual youth level has and continues to be a challenge that requires focused persistence on the part of FosterEd staff. These challenges are numerous, but we continue to see examples where these barriers are cleared. When we have access to this information, we are able to address early warning signs of educational disengagement and thus avoid long term educational setbacks for youth. It is essential to have real-time information and academic progress data for this population of young people in order to understand the program’s impact. State level data is also essential so that we know where foster youth are placed in schools and ultimately so that we can measure the full impact of the FosterEd program across the state.
- **Social/emotional learning outcomes are an important part of the picture.** We want to measure what matters. For students in foster care especially, this means understanding the nature and growth in students’ trust in the adults around them and the degree to which they are seeing their champions working on their behalf and supporting them. We also have observed that students’ sense of agency – their capacity to have positive outlooks for their lives, articulate a vision for their future and take steps to make those goals real – is an important element of success. Given the importance of these mea-

asures, we are implementing a survey instrument to understand the degree to which our Education Liaisons are helping youth to make positive steps in both of these arenas.

- **Young people need champions they can trust to be in their corner for the long run.** A champion is not a short-term adult in a young person's life. Historically, FosterEd recruited, trained and supported volunteers to serve as champions. Our efforts to identify champions moving forward will be to identify and support adults in each student's life – parents, family members, long-term mentors – that the student can lean on to be in their corner for the long run.
- **Volunteers' greatest impact is to provide targeted support.** Volunteers will continue to be a core element of FosterEd's program, but engaged in a targeted manner, joining a student's team along with their Education Champions and assisting with specific areas of interest and need such as tutoring, support with college applications, and facilitating the young person's involvement in school activities. We will continue to recruit and support volunteers to serve youth.



PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

In this section, we have identified six key areas of work that FosterEd has engaged in to support a successful expansion. These areas include:

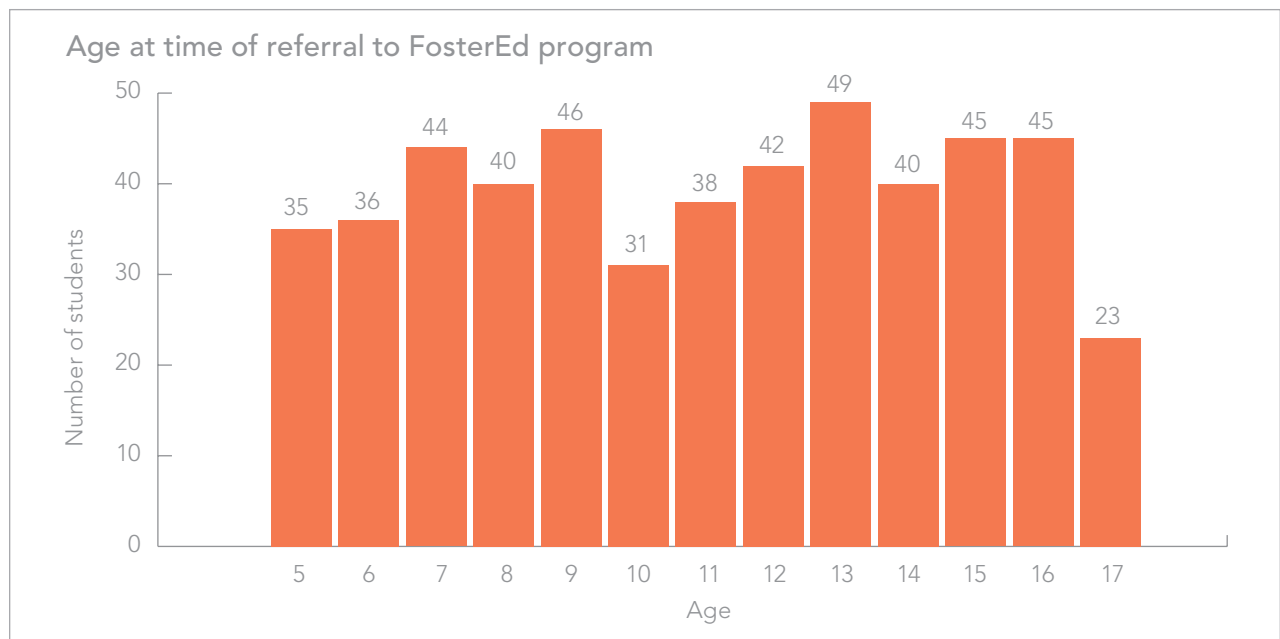
1. Maintaining Pima County Services & Early Maricopa Youth Outreach
2. Building a Strong Network of Advisors
3. Compiling and Analyzing Foster Youth Distribution Data
4. Establishing an Instrument to Measure Key Social/Emotional Progress Indicators
5. Building a Strong Team - Staffing, Training and Onboarding
6. Establishing Co-Location Agreements
7. Building a Robust Technology to Support Effective Practice

Maintaining Pima County Services & Early Maricopa Youth Outreach

As of October 11, 2017, FosterEd Arizona Education Liaisons had served **541** students in foster care.⁵ Approximately fifty-six percent of students served were male and approximately 43% were female. Less than 10 students either identified as “other” gender or did not have gender data recorded. Approximately 39% of students served were receiving special education services, and approximately 9% were in need of evaluation for possible special education services. Students referred to FosterEd ranged in age, at the time of their referral for FosterEd services, from 4 to 18.

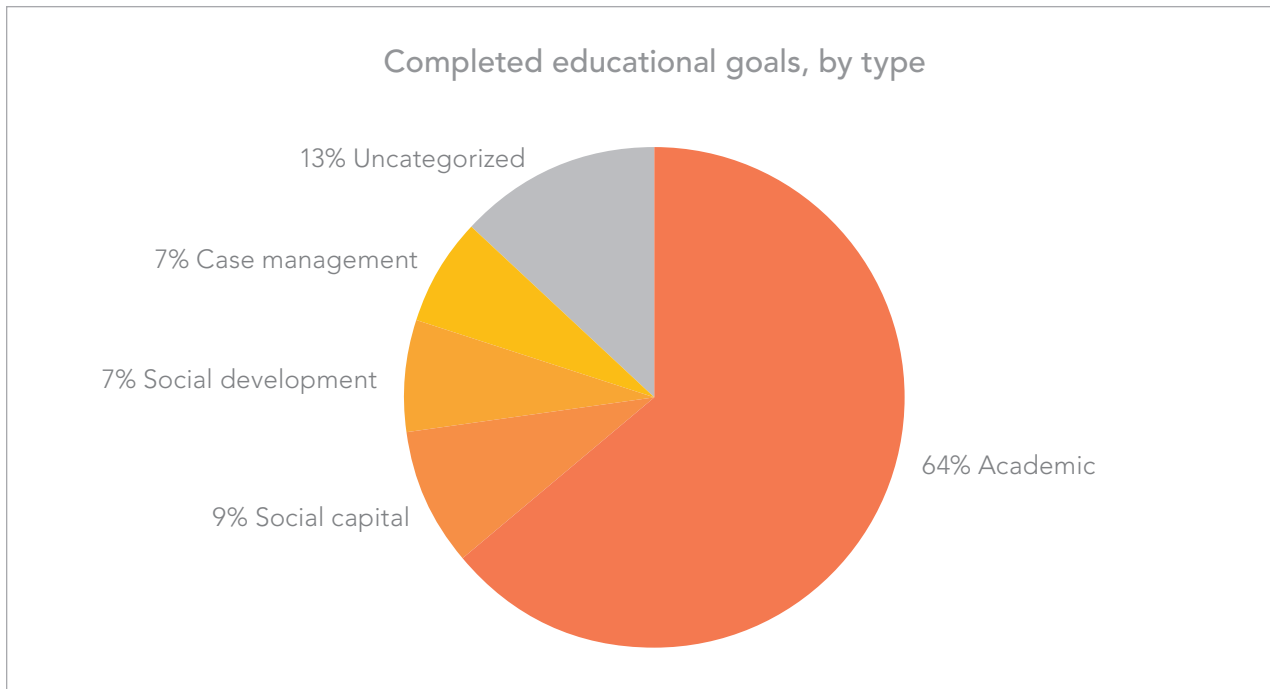
Education Liaisons brought together 1,453 adult team members to support the students they served. Team members reflect adults who have the potential to have a positive impact on the students’ education. They included the following role types: attorney, biological parent, CASA, child welfare worker; district/school staff; education liaison; foster parent; independent living/young adult staff; mental health staff; other service provider; relative; residential staff; teacher; and trained education supports.⁶

In the course of Education Liaisons’ work with students and education teams, a series of goals were developed based on the student’s individual strengths and needs. Seventy-seven percent of students served by Education Liaisons completed at least one education goal. In total,



5 The source for the information included in this section is data extracted from EdTeamConnect, FosterEd’s educational case management system, on October 11, 2017. Education Liaisons manually enter data into EdTeamConnect. The total number of students served reflects the cumulative number of students served from the second half of 2013, when FosterEd Arizona began accepting a small number of pilot cases in Pima County, until October 11, 2017.

6 The total number of team members includes six team members whose role types were not specified in the data, in addition to team members described in the role type breakdown.



2,063 goals were set for youth, 1,405 of which were successfully completed. Of these goals, 911 were academic goals, 122 were social capital goals, 94 were social development goals, 95 were case management goals, and 183 were uncategorized goals. An example of an academic goal is improving the student's school attendance; a social development goal may be focused on ensuring the student participates in an extracurricular activity; social capital development goals often relate to helping the student form supportive adult relationships and/or building the capacity of those supportive adults.

Building a Strong Network of Advisors

To ensure we are meeting the needs of the state and local communities in which we work, FosterEd initiates and facilitates invested teams of state and local leaders to build will and measured progress toward a shared vision for improving the educational conditions and opportunities for youth in foster care.

Maricopa County Leadership Team. Over the past six months, FosterEd has established a Maricopa Leadership Team and developed numerous new partnerships. Key partners include Maricopa-based Department of Child Safety staff and the Phoenix Union High School District. Casey Family Programs and Children's Action Alliance act as valued advisors to FosterEd. Youth from Fostering Advocates Arizona have provided invaluable guidance on how to enlist youth clients and partners in our work. In addition, Arizona Children's Association, Arizona Charter Schools Association, the Arizona Department of Education, Mercy Maricopa, the

Maricopa County Juvenile Court, Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council, ASU Preparatory Academy, Maricopa County Education Service Agency, and representatives from the Bridging Success Programs at Arizona State University and Maricopa Community Colleges are all members of the Maricopa Leadership Team. Please see “Appendix A, Leadership Team Rosters.”

Compiling and Analyzing Foster Youth Distribution Data

Understanding where school-age foster youth are located throughout Arizona is essential to FosterEd’s ability to deploy resources strategically and to maximize the impact of our services.

Arizona currently has 10,623 school-aged children (ages 5 to 19) in out-of-home foster placements.⁷ Because FosterEd provides Responsive Tier services to foster youth in grades K-12 and Intensive Tier services to high school age foster youth, it is relevant that 63% (6,735) of children are of an age that would place them in elementary or middle school and 37% (3,888) are of an age that would place them in high school. Additionally, the Department of Child Safety is organized into 5 regions with the vast majority (89%) of school age foster youth placed in the Central, Southwestern, and Pima Regions, where FosterEd currently has a presence.

Total Students in Foster Care by Region and Grade Level

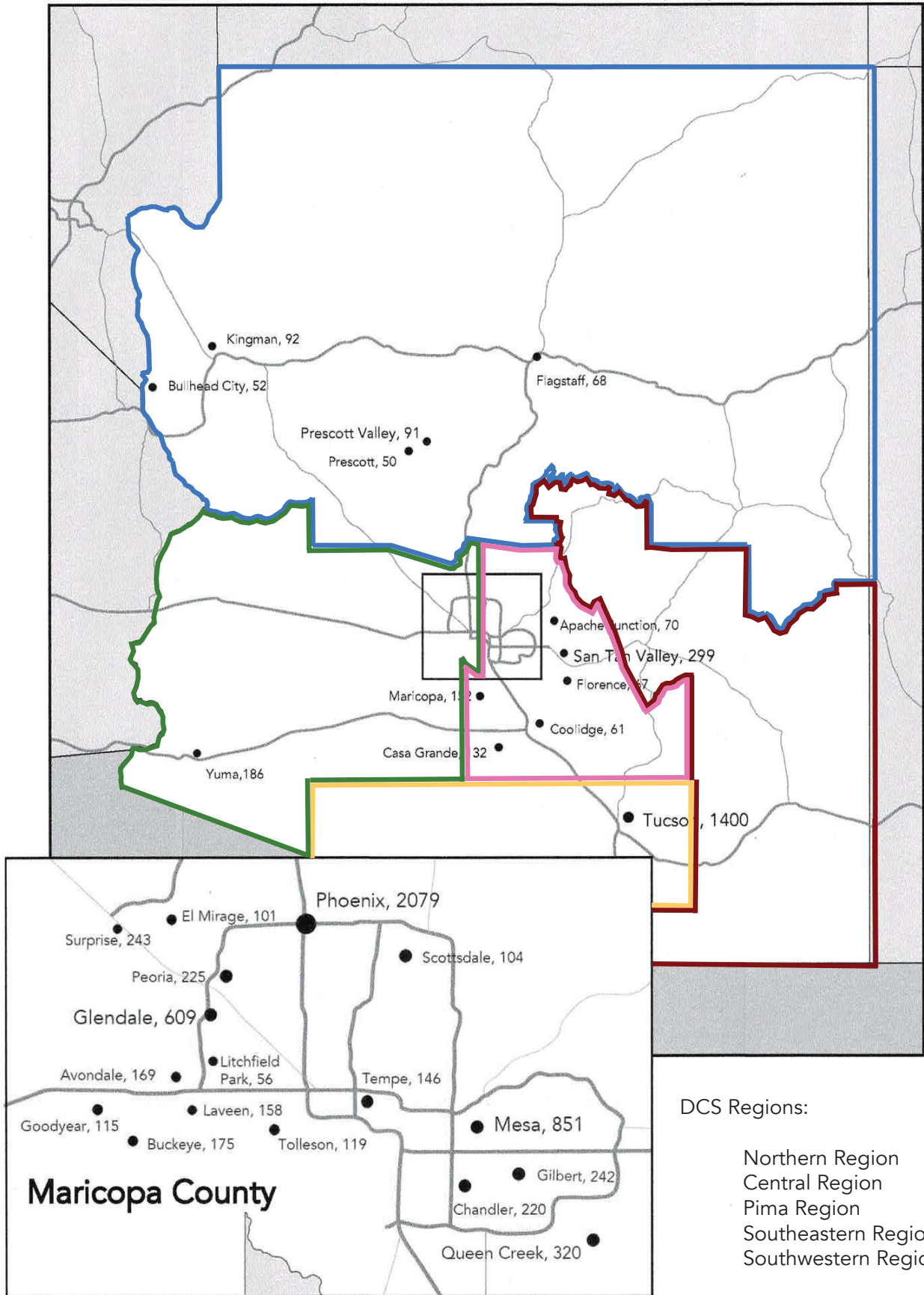
Region	Elem/Middle	High School	Total Youth
Northern	533	337	890
Southeastern	200	87	287
Central	2,527	1,532	4,059
Pima	1,186	585	1,771
Southwestern	2,270	1,346	3,616
Total	6,735	3,888	10,623

Outside of Maricopa County, concentrations (more than 50) of school-age foster youth are found in the following cities:

Region	County	City	Youth
Northern	Coconino	Flagstaff	68
Northern	Mohave	Kingman	92
Northern	Yavapai	Prescott	50

⁷ Data in this section was provided to NCYL by the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) on September 14, 2017.

Cities with more than 50 Students Total by Region



Northern	Yavapai	Prescott Valley	91
Southeastern	--	--	--
Central	Pinal	Apache Junction	70
Central	Pinal	Casa Grande	132
Central	Pinal	Coolidge	61
Central	Pinal	Florence	67
Central	Pinal	Maricopa	152
Central	Pinal	San Tan Valley	299
Pima	Pima	Tucson	1400
Southwestern	Yuma	Yuma	186

As FosterEd plans its next phase of statewide expansion in the coming months, we will be reviewing this information with the State Leadership Team, considering additional factors such as the location of DCS offices, the presence of other nonprofits, and the resources of potential school district partners, along with a variety of other factors.

Foster youth in group home settings

As of August 2017, nearly 2,000 (12%) of Arizona's foster youth were placed in congregate care settings. Research shows that foster youth placed in group home settings experience greater educational disadvantage than foster youth placed with licensed foster families or with kin.⁸ Youth in group homes often struggle in school because they have multiple and revolving caregivers, experience higher rates of placement instability, and frequently have a harder time accessing computers, internet, and homework help. Because youth in group homes have a high level of educational need, FosterEd has prioritized this population. Currently, 50% of youth served through our Intensive Tier are placed in group homes. In addition, we have partnered with a set of group homes in Pima County, and with the schools their youth attend, to improve policies and practices around school enrollment, transportation, and attendance. This project will benefit over 100 youth this year and many more in the years to come.

Establishing an Instrument to Measure Key Social/Emotional Progress Indicators

One significant area of evaluation work between July and October 2017 has been the development of the youth survey tool that will be used to evaluate high school students' sense

⁸ Wiegmann, W., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Barrat, V. X., Magruder, J. & Needell, B. (2014). *The Invisible Achievement Gap Part 2: How the Foster Care Experiences of California Public School Students Are Associated with Their Education Outcomes.*

of self-efficacy, positive adult relationships, and future success orientation, and beginning to pilot this survey tool in the field. The survey tool draws scales from existing, validated research instruments, with some language adaptations and a customized question. Education Liaisons will administer the survey near the beginning of their initial engagement with students, every six months thereafter, and, whenever possible, at the time of case closure. Please see “Appendix B, Youth Survey.”

Building a Strong Team – Staffing, Training and Onboarding

To support statewide expansion, FosterEd Arizona’s team has grown from a team of 5 based in Pima County to a team of 15 including 10 Education Liaisons located in Pima and Maricopa Counties. FosterEd welcomed 8 new members of the team in August 2017. Selected from more than 125 applicants, our new team members have combined expertise in education, child welfare, and behavioral mental health. During the week of August 21, 2017, the entire FosterEd Arizona team, and some members of the national team, came together for onboarding and training in Phoenix. FosterEd staff and key partners, including DCS, Mercy Maricopa, and the Phoenix Union High School District, provided training on the child welfare, education, mental health and juvenile court systems, mandated reporting, special education, school discipline, graduation requirements, college access, and the *Every Student Succeeds Act*. Liaisons were also trained on FosterEd’s case processes and data management tool, and had opportunities to apply what they were learning to case scenarios. The week of onboarding culminated in a panel presentation that included numerous members of the Maricopa Leadership Team.

On August 28, 2017 our Education Liaisons began their work in the field. In Maricopa County, three Education Liaisons are co-located in high schools within the Phoenix Union High School District, working with students with a high level of need, and three Education Liaisons are co-located in DCS offices working with students in kindergarten through 12th grade who have an emergent need for educational support. Similarly, in Pima County, two Education Liaisons are co-located in three high schools within the Tucson Unified High School District and two Education Liaisons are co-located in DCS offices. Please see “Appendix C, Meet the Team.”

Phoenix Union High School District

FosterEd has partnered with the Phoenix Union High School District (PUHSD) to provide Intensive Tier services to students in foster care with a high level of need. PUHSD is one of the largest high school districts in the country, with 20 schools and over 27,000 students, more than 500 of whom are students in foster care. Over 95% of PUHSD's students are youth of color; over 50% speak Spanish at home; and with nearly 80% of its students qualifying for free or reduced school lunch, the District made the decision to provide free meals to all students.

FosterEd Liaisons are currently co-located in Cesar Chavez, Betty Fairfax, Maryvale, and Central high schools. Embedded with the student services team at each school, our Education Liaisons partner closely with the PUHSD's Community Liaisons to identify, serve, and support students in foster care. At two schools FosterEd Liaisons and PUHSD Community Liaisons co-lead peer support groups for youth in foster care. By embedding Education Liaisons in PUHSD's student services program, we are able to leverage existing resources provided by the schools and their broader communities. The partnership is strengthening communication and collaboration between the schools and DCS and resulting in education teams that are more inclusive of school site staff. This deep partnership is also raising district-wide awareness of the distinct educational needs of students in foster care and already advancing improvements in policy and practice that benefit all of PUHSD's students in foster care.

"Having the FosterEd Liaisons on campus and engaging with our school community has also increased awareness; not only about the needs of students in foster care, but also the barriers and challenges that students in foster care experience."

Cyndi Tercero, Student Support Services Manager

Establishing Co-Location Agreements

To ensure successful collaboration and communication with case workers and school district staff, FosterEd Education Liaisons are co-located within Department of Child Safety offices and school sites. Currently, Education Liaisons are partnering with Phoenix Union High School District through co-location at Maryvale High School, Betty Fairfax High School, Central High School and Cesar Chavez High School, and with Tucson Unified School District through co-location at Tucson High School, Catalina Magnet High School, and Rincon High School. FosterEd is also partnering with the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) through co-location at DCS offices in both Pima and Maricopa counties.

FosterEd's partnership with Tucson Unified School District is documented in a Memorandum of Understanding that describes FosterEd's scope of work and the responsibilities of both FosterEd and the district in serving students in foster care through summer 2018. Memoranda of Understanding documenting FosterEd's partnerships with Phoenix Union High School District and DCS are in progress.

Building a Robust Technology to Support Effective Practice

All of FosterEd's Education Liaisons in Arizona now use EdTeamConnect (ETC), a case management and communication tool designed to track student progress, encourage teaming, and allow for the evaluation of FosterEd's work. ETC is an open source technology developed by FosterEd to support the state expansion of FosterEd's efforts in Arizona. This tool is a central location for a wide range of information for each student served by FosterEd, including current educational information for each student, key education-related documents, education team membership and contact information for those team members and an education plan, including action steps for each team member to take to advance the plan.

In July of this year, FosterEd released additional enhancements to ETC to better support the Education Liaisons' work with students. The first major enhancement is a data dashboard, which allows Education Liaisons to quickly confirm that all of their students are supported in three key ways:

1. a complete education team, as measured by having representatives from key partner agencies, including education and child welfare;
2. an identified Education Champion and identified Education Rights Holder; and

- for students with special education needs, an up-to-date Individual Education Program (IEP).

The second major enhancement was the addition of a feature to track the frequency and regularity of each Liaison's one-on-one meetings with individual students and their Education Champions, and what is discussed in each meeting. This feature helps ensure consistency and quality of direct engagement between Education Liaisons and the students we serve.

The final major enhancement to ETC was modifying a number of data fields to match information needs related to the statewide expansion. One prime example of this is that ETC now allows tracking and analysis of each student's county of origin.

Rigorous Evaluation Design and Data Tracking

Effective use of data offers an enormous lever to inform policy, create connections across traditionally siloed divides, and support collective action across. We have a disciplined practice of measuring what matters and using this information to support real-time learning. We believe that relationships with parents, family, peers and community are central to a young person's educational success and we are measuring the degree to which we are helping to forge and strengthen these connections.

In July 2017, FosterEd began working with RTI International, an external research organization that conducted the two-year Pima County pilot evaluation, to develop a plan for a multi-year evaluation of the statewide work, and to begin laying the groundwork for this evaluation process. Our objective is to obtain a rigorous evaluation that will help us assess how well we are implementing the program and what impact the program is having on the students we serve, and help us continuously improve our work. RTI has proposed a two-part evaluation: (1) an implementation evaluation, and (2) an impact evaluation, using multiple studies, of the effectiveness of FosterEd on students' social-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes. The implementation evaluation will examine the extent to which FosterEd is implemented

The screenshot displays the FosterEd interface for a student named Yulissa Robles. At the top, there are navigation icons for 'Students', 'Actions', 'Interactions', and 'Reports'. The student's name 'Yulissa Robles' is prominently displayed, along with her school 'NORTHGATE HIGH SCHOOL', 'GRADE 11', and '17 YEARS OLD'. A blue 'OPEN' button is visible next to her information. Below this is a horizontal navigation bar with tabs for 'Overview', 'Goals', 'Team', 'Documents', 'Interactions', 'Education', and 'Student Info'. The 'Overview' tab is currently selected.

Under the 'Overview' tab, there are three main sections:

- Your upcoming actions:** A message states 'You do not have any upcoming actions.' Below this is a link 'View Everyone's Actions →'.
- Latest Interaction:** A section titled 'MEETING' with a date of 'August 15, 2017'. The interaction is with 'Andrew Liaison Demo'. The text describes a meeting where Yulissa discussed her academic progress and plans to return to school. It also mentions that her academic records were saved from an OST Summer Program.
- Team Members:** A list of staff members with their names, roles, and contact information:
 - Jasmine Amons-CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocate (jamons+demoTM@youthlaw.org)
 - Ben Gadde: Algebra Teacher (bengadde@school.org)
 - Charla Benvenito: Social Worker (charla@childwelfareemail.com)
 - Tanya Harrison: Guidance Counselor (tharrison@vinehill.org)
 - Gilbert Robles: Proud Father (grobles@yahoo.com)
 - Michelle Tralman: Education Liaison Supervisor (mtralman@youthlaw.org)

At the bottom of the interaction section, there are three data categories: 'ENGAGEMENT' (Student Meeting), 'LOCATION' (In Person (On-Site)), and 'TOPIC' (Checked Ed Data, ,).

with fidelity in Pima and Maricopa counties, and what challenges exist to implementing and sustaining the program with high levels of fidelity. For this assessment, RTI will develop implementation indicators and criteria in close consultation with program partners and will analyze data from EdTeamConnect. Results of the implementation evaluation will be important for guiding discussion of program improvement.

The design for the impact evaluation will depend on what education and child welfare data FosterEd and RTI International are able to access for review and analysis. RTI's current vision for the impact evaluation, assuming the desired level of data access, includes (1) a pre-post design to evaluate students' sense of self-efficacy, positive adult relationships, and engagement (using the youth survey tool described above); (2) a rigorous difference-in-differences design with matched comparison group and pre-treatment years to assess the effect of FosterEd's intensive tier of support on student behavioral and academic outcomes; and (3) a county-level analysis to examine whether academic gaps among foster youth and non-foster youth decrease when served by FosterEd across all three tiers of support. In addition to analysis of quantitative data, RTI staff will conduct interviews and/or focus groups with youth participants during an in-person data collection site visit in Arizona.



LOOKING AHEAD

In the months ahead, FosterEd will continue early implementation and begin the expansion work beyond Maricopa and Pima counties. By December 2018, FosterEd expects to have ramped up program operations to serve full youth caseloads, expand statewide beyond Pima and Maricopa, produce a year 1 evaluation report, establish a youth engagement and leadership component of the program, and produce resources and supports that will enable school districts, child welfare, courts, and other agencies working to support students in foster care. Below is an abbreviated description of those key activities.

Ramping Up to Serve Maximum Numbers of Youth Effectively

Early expansion efforts have focused significantly on doing outreach within our co-located schools and DCS offices as well as finalizing our intake processes. In schools, we quickly found that the lists generated at the state level to assist schools in identifying students in foster care are slow to populate at the start of the school year, fail to identify a significant number of foster youth, and have many inaccuracies. We are working with school site staff

and DCS to more accurately identify all students in foster care and with ADE and DCS to address issues with the state-level data that is pushed down to schools. In DCS offices, we have collaborated with our DCS partners to develop an online intake form for FosterEd referrals that is quick and easy for busy DCS Specialists to complete. Importantly, this tool will facilitate the receipt of referrals from DCS offices across Maricopa and Pima Counties, beyond just those in which we have Education Liaisons co-located. With these efforts underway, we are poised to be serving full caseloads of youth, 250 youth at any given time, by the end of the calendar year.

Next Wave of Statewide Expansion

Plans to bring FosterEd's services to additional regions of Arizona are currently underway. FosterEd is analyzing data showing where school-age foster youth are located, considering a variety of factors such as the location of DCS offices, the presence of other nonprofits, and the resources of potential school district partners, to determine locations for expansion. We plan to have co-location agreements and key partnerships in those locales in place during the first quarter of 2018 with service provision beginning later in 2018.

Year 1 Evaluation Report

As noted above, we have been working with RTI International on a long-term plan to evaluate FosterEd's work in Arizona. We expect that RTI International will produce an initial evaluation report, regarding the first year of statewide work in Arizona, in the fall of 2018. This report will include an evaluation of implementation efforts to date and analysis of administrative data from FosterEd's educational case management system. If FosterEd and RTI International are able to obtain access to sufficient student-level education data from Arizona Department of Education, this evaluation will also include initial analysis of educational outcomes of students served.

Youth Engagement

FosterEd is excited to take the opportunity that statewide expansion provides to continue the work of youth development and engage youth more fully in every aspect of our work. By 2020, the aim of our youth development program is to do just that, involving youth voice in planning, practice, and evaluation. As we extend our work past major metropolitan areas, we look forward to gathering input from these students on their unique challenges and strengths. With the use of youth surveys and student focus groups, our Year 2 Evaluation will

reflect the experiences of the students with whom we work. In the future, we hope to enlist peer leaders and youth ambassadors to help support our Universal Tier and our investment in the communities where we work.

State Wide Systems Support to Agencies Serving Students in Foster Care

FosterEd also provides state-wide systems supports. We work closely with the Department of Child Safety to develop trainings for both DCS staff and licensed foster parents to make sure they have the knowledge required to be effective educational advocates for children and youth in foster care. FosterEd is also working with the Arizona Department of Education and DCS to improve data systems to better identify for schools who their students in foster care are as well as to enhance the sharing of educational data between the schools, child welfare, behavioral health, and the courts. In addition, FosterEd is working at both the state and local levels to ensure effective implementation of provisions of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* that are specific to foster youth – including that processes are in place to keep foster youth in their schools of origin when in the student’s best interest, receive transportation to their schools of origin, and to ensure a timely and smooth transfer of schools when a school change occurs.

FosterEd is also identifying, creating, and piloting best practices to improve the education outcomes of students in foster care. These efforts will culminate in an Arizona Foster Youth Education Toolkit that will provide practical tools for use by school staff and DCS Specialists in the areas of:

- Enrollment, including best practices for providing transportation to schools of origin
- Special needs of foster youth, including trauma-informed education and special education related needs
- Needs of high school-age foster youth, including credit transfers, credit recovery and graduation planning
- School discipline, including understanding the impact of trauma on behavior and alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices
- Post-secondary planning, including tools for preparing youth for work, college, or career and technical education opportunities

“Education is a major aspect of a foster child’s life. Educational success will serve these children well their entire life.”

Arizona State
Representative, John Allen

Through the Toolkit, we hope to start an exchange of ideas and best practices among foster care stakeholders throughout Arizona that will result in improved education outcomes for all of the state's foster youth.

Volunteers

Volunteers are now active in Maricopa and Pima Counties, providing a spectrum of support services specific to our students' needs. They serve roles such as Resource Coordinators that help connect our staff with existing programs and resources in the community and Academic Guides and Career & College Success Coaches who individually work with students in pursuit of their educational goals. As we work with more students, our volunteer recruitment will grow as well. In the next year, we hope to assign 70 or more volunteers in these roles, nearly tripling our former volunteer base and building a statewide community that is committed to serving our students.

Volunteer Recognition



Lori Riegel began working with FosterEd in early 2015. Drawing on her experience as a behavioral health professional and parent, she has served as Volunteer Educational Champion for two students. One of those students, Kathleen*, came into FosterEd while living in shelter care. Lori met bi-weekly with Kathleen, working on reading as well as organization and turning assignments in on time. As Kathleen transitioned from shelter care to adoption, Lori ensured that she had an IEP and could be successful at her new high school. Lori attended the adoption

ceremony and continued to work with Kathleen until her parents felt prepared to support her educationally.

Lori currently works as an Academic Guide with Veronica*, a middle schooler with PTSD, for which she is provided accommodations at school. Lori has been working with Veronica to use apps and tools to help her remember when to turn in her assignments. She has also been supporting Veronica's grandparents' communication with the school and participating in IEP meetings to support them. Lori said: "Veronica is learning that I am in her corner, especially when it comes to interfacing with her teachers. Her grandparents are making our visits a priority." Continuously going above and beyond for youth in care, Lori is also beginning work as our Volunteer Resource Coordinator for Pima County.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

APPENDIX A

Leadership Team Rosters

State Leadership Team

- Administrative Office of the Courts
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arizona Department of Education
- Arizona State Board of Education
- Governor's Office of Education

Maricopa County Leadership Team

- Arizona Charter Schools Association
- Arizona Children's Association
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arizona Department of Education
- Arizona State University
- Casey Family Programs
- Children's Action Alliance
- Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council
- Maricopa Community Colleges
- Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA)
- Maricopa County Juvenile Court
- Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care
- Phoenix Union School District

Pima County Leadership Team

- Arizona Attorney General's Office
- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Casey Family Programs
- Children's Action Alliance
- Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
- Indigenous Strategies
- Joint Technical Education District (JTED)
- Office of Pima County Faith Coordinator
- Office of Pima County School Superintendent
- Pima County Juvenile Court
- Sunnyside School District
- United Way Tucson and Southern Arizona

APPENDIX B



Youth Survey: You are the expert about you!

Why am I being asked to complete this survey?

The FosterEd program is committed to helping you and other foster youth succeed in school and prepare for your future. We understand that there are many factors, other than academics, that play a role in succeeding in school, such as how well-supported students feel by the adults in their lives and their mindsets associated with their future possibilities. Your answers to this survey help us understand how we can best support you in those non-academic areas that are also important aspects of succeeding in school. We will be asking you to complete this survey about every six months to see if your perspectives and experiences change.

What do you want me to do?

This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. It is important that you read each question carefully. Please mark the response that best represents your answer.

Must I complete the survey?

No. Your participation is voluntary. However, we encourage you to take the survey so we can learn about you and learn what supports are most helpful to you.

Will my survey information be given to anyone else?

Your Education Liaison will see your answers. FosterEd will also share survey answers for all youth with researchers at RTI International who will be studying whether FosterEd is effective at supporting foster youth. When we share the survey answers with RTI, we will not give them your name or any other identifying information about you. They will combine your answers with the answers from all of the youth participating in FosterEd.

What if I have questions?

If you have a question, such as not understanding a word or knowing how to mark an answer, at any point while completing the survey, please ask your Education Liaison for help. If you want to know more about the study of FosterEd, you can contact Jen Laird at 510-665-8238, jlaird@rti.org.

THANK YOU!

About You

Question 1. Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I believe I can succeed at almost anything to which I set my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Adults in My Life

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about the adults in your life.

Please do not consider your Education Liaison when answering the next four questions. Instead, think about other adults in your life, such as your caregivers, foster parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, other relatives, teachers, counselors, CASA, coaches, or adult friends.

Question 2. I have at least one adult in my life who supports and encourages my education.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 3. In general, the adults in my life:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Care about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Listen to what I have to say.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Care whether or not I come to school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Give me a lot of encouragement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Show me respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Know my strengths as a student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Praise my efforts when I work hard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Care about the grades I make.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 4. During the past 30 days, how often did you discuss the following with any adult in your life?

	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
a. Selecting courses or programs at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. School activities that interest you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Things you've studied in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Current events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Your plans for the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Your interest in future jobs or careers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Your plans for college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 5. During the past 30 days, how often did any adult in your life do the following?

	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
a. Encourage you to do well in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Encourage you to take part in activities that are not part of class work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Help you get books or supplies you needed to do your school work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Praise or reward you for working hard on school work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Offer to help you with homework or a special assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Attend a school event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your Future

Question 6. Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about your future.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. When I think about my future, I feel very positive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I have a clear image of myself being successful in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I know how I don't want my life to turn out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I have a good sense of what it takes to be successful as an adult.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I am on the "right track" for future success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I try to make good choices to increase my chances for a good future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. I see a strong connection between success in school and success in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. I am prepared to work hard to have a good life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. I feel confident that I have what it takes to be successful in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. I feel certain that I will graduate from high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. I plan to attend college after I graduate from high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. I see myself accomplishing great things in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the Education Liaison to complete:

Youth's ETCID:

Date youth filled out the survey (MM/DD/YY) / /

MONTH DAY YEAR

Source of Scale for Q1: Chen, G., Gully, S.M., & Edan, D. (2001). Validation of New General Self-Efficacy Scale. *Organizational Research Methods, Vol 4* (1), 62 – 83. Scales for Q3-6 adapted from: Bowen, G. L., & Richman, J. M. (1997). *The School Success Profile*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

APPENDIX C

Meet the Team



Michelle Francois Traiman, Senior Director

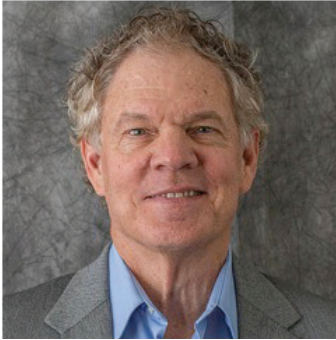
Michelle is Senior Director of FosterEd. She brings more than 20 years of experience in the non-profit and philanthropy sectors, as well as substantial expertise in child welfare and education. Most recently, she served as the Associate Director of Child Welfare with the Stuart Foundation, where she led a major initiative to improve education outcomes for foster youth across California. Her life's work has been focused on helping young people realize the vastness of their potential and supporting systems change efforts that put the needs of youth at the center of policies and practices. Michelle's professional experiences span a broad spectrum: as an artist, stage director, fundraiser, community activist, strategic planner, and program director – all the while as a passionate advocate for young people and families. Her superpower is finding out what is uniquely awesome about people. She lives in San Francisco with her amazing husband Cliff and step-son Theo, and holds a B.A. from Macalester College in Minnesota.

FosterEd Arizona



Molly Dunn, Director, FosterEd Arizona

Molly Dunn is the Director of FosterEd Arizona. Deeply influenced by her own early experience as a foster child, Molly has dedicated her career to improving the education outcomes of system-involved youth. As a direct services provider, with Legal Services for Children and the San Francisco Public Defenders' Office, Molly advocated on behalf of hundreds of youth in special education and school discipline matters. As a clinical instructor at Stanford and Loyola law schools and as a supervisor with Legal Advocates for Children and Youth, she has mentored and guided other advocates to serve system-involved youth. As a policy advocate with the Alliance for Children's Rights, Molly sought to remove systemic barriers and secure much-needed resources to help youth in foster care achieve success in school and in life. Molly holds a B.A. from Macalester College and a J.D. from Stanford Law School.



Peter Hershberger, Senior Advisor, FosterEd Arizona

Pete is the Senior Advisor of FosterEd Arizona. He has worked in juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral health in Tucson, Arizona for over 30 years. Pete is a Licensed Professional Counselor who has worked in direct services in institutional, residential and community settings as well as administration. He has supervised both foster care and therapeutic foster care programs. Pete served for eight years in the Arizona House of Representatives, including five years as Chairman of the Human Services Committee. In 2003 he founded the Arizona Children's Caucus, a bipartisan caucus in the legislature promoting children's issues and received numerous state and national awards. Pete served for one year as Chairman of the Human Services Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures and served two years on the Legislative Working Group of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Pete received his B.A. from Colorado College and his M.Ed. from the University of Arizona.



Andrea Molina, Director of Student Supports & System Partnerships, FosterEd Arizona

Andrea is the Director of Student Supports & System Partnerships: FosterEd Arizona. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Arizona in 2007. She went on to receive her graduate degree in education from American University in Washington, D.C. where she was a teacher for six years. Andrea has worked with and mentored children of all ages and has deep roots in the Tucson community. The fact that she is bilingual and bicultural has assisted her in bridging gaps within the communities where she has worked. Her understanding of the achievement gap in education and her desire to see an end to it, led her to become a FosterEd Education Liaison in 2013.



Christy Wagner, Director of Student Centered Engagement, FosterEd Arizona

Dr. Christy Wagner is the Director of Student Centered Engagement for FosterEd: Arizona. She has worked in education field for over 20 years. Christy is a Licensed Administrator and Educator who has served the early childhood, K-12 and post-secondary communities. She has an expertise in the areas of special education, gifted education, and with English language

learners. Christy is a member of the National Governors Association Early Care and Education Committee. As a licensed foster care provider and adoptive parent Christy is passionate about advocating for youth and their educational rights. Christy received her B.A., M. Ed., and Ed. D from Northern Arizona University.



Arayah Larson, Manager of Youth Development & Volunteer Engagement, FosterEd Arizona

Arayah is the Manager of Youth Development & Volunteer Engagement for FosterEd Arizona. She comes from a family of educators and is passionate about youth advocacy and community service. As a young person, Arayah served on the boards of the Pima County Public Library and the Every Voice in Action Foundation and volunteered with the Pima County Women’s Commission. She attended Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC and graduated in 2013 with a B.A. in Political Science and Global Studies. She returned to Arizona after 5 years in North Carolina working for the National Climatic Data Center, North Carolina Democratic Party, and the Campaign for Southern Equality. Arayah is a firm believer in the power of young people and the ability every individual has to serve their community.



Julia Aros-Thornton, Education Liaison, Pima County

Julia (Julee) is an Education Liaison with FosterEd Arizona. She holds an undergraduate degree in family studies from the University of Arizona. She began her career over two decades ago working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system and their families through the juvenile court, providing case management services to improve educational outcomes and reduce recidivism. She then moved on to provide in-home services to families who had been referred to Child Protective Services. Working with families in their homes gave her a real life understanding of the challenges disadvantaged families face day to day. Prior to joining NCYL, she worked in foster care, educating, licensing and supporting foster families to meet the needs of the foster children in their homes. Julee speaks Spanish, providing her the ability to work with Spanish-speaking families, and she also has knowledge of American Sign Language.



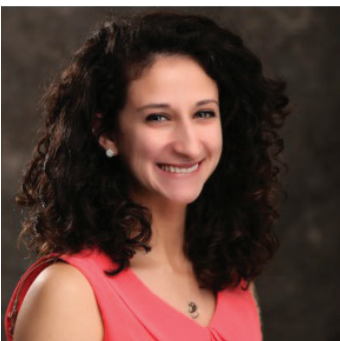
Jennifer Harris, Education Liaison, Pima County

Jennifer is an Education Liaison with FosterEd Arizona. She graduated from The University of Arizona with a B.S. in Family Studies and Human Development. Her interest in child welfare began when she interned with Child Protective Services and continued to develop through her work at Casa de los Ninos children's shelter. In 2003, Jennifer began her service in the United States Peace Corps in the Pacific country of Vanuatu as a Youth Development Volunteer, working with youth in rural communities to develop programs around gender advocacy, sexual and reproductive health, and education. She remained in Vanuatu after her service, working at a local NGO as Research Manager and Youth Center Manager for 8 years before returning to Tucson. Jennifer's 18 years of experience in multi-cultural settings working with at-risk children and youth has given her insight in working with children in the foster care system and the unique challenges they face.



Shane Carr, Education Liaison, Pima County

Shane is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. After serving in the U.S. Army, Shane attended the University of Wisconsin-Parkside on an Athletic Scholarship for Cross Country and Track and graduated in 1999 with a B.A. in Criminal Justice. Shane spent 5 years working in law enforcement before moving to Arizona where he worked for 6 years with the Arizona Department of Child Safety as an Investigator and then as a Case Manager for the Young Adult Program. For the past 5 years, Shane has worked with students and families in the Tucson and Marana Unified School Districts as a Drop-Out Prevention Specialist and as a District Social Worker. Shane was a board member on a local non-profit where he worked on a charitable race. Proceeds went to the Title I school where he coached and to Youth On Their Own, a local non-profit helping homeless youth graduate high school. Working with foster youth and helping them to graduate and be successful members of the community has always been his passion.



Jennie Hedges, Education Liaison, Pima County

Jennie is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. Originally from New Jersey, she moved to Tucson to study Psychology at the University of Arizona and graduated in 2013 with a B.A. in that field. Jennie has experience working with underprivileged youth within many rural communities of Arizona. She also has an extensive background working with local non-profits and

behavioral health networks. As a foster parent herself, Jennie wants nothing more than to aid system-involved youth in their journey to success as each and every child is capable and deserving of such.



Sandra Ortega, Education Liaison, Maricopa County

Sandra is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. Her educational background in social work and experience in working with vulnerable populations allows her to identify and address a multitude of systemic barriers facing students in foster care. Sandra strives to make the public education system a more equitable one, a place in which all children have an opportunity to achieve their full potential. She received both her BSW and MSW with a concentration in Planning, Administration, and Community Practice from Arizona State University. Outside of her role as an Education Liaison, Sandra promotes social justice by increasing civic engagement within the social worker community. She volunteers her time with a local non-profit organization in an effort to make the political landscape more diverse and inclusive. Sandra is fluent in Spanish.



Jaron Neal, Education Liaison, Maricopa County

Jaron is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. Previously, he was an Independent Living Specialist II with Arizona's Children Association (AZCA) where he helped foster youth aging out of care build life skills ranging from opening bank accounts and renting apartments to preparing for college. Prior to AZCA, Jaron was a Mentor Program Coordinator for Aid to the Adoption of Special Kids. In that position, he assisted foster youth in finding and matching with mentors from the community. Jaron's previous experience also includes serving as a Residential Advisor for HomeBase Youth Services, which offers transitional living services to homeless youth ages 18-24. He obtained his B.A. in English from the University of Phoenix in 2013, and his M.A.Ed. from Northern Arizona University in 2017.



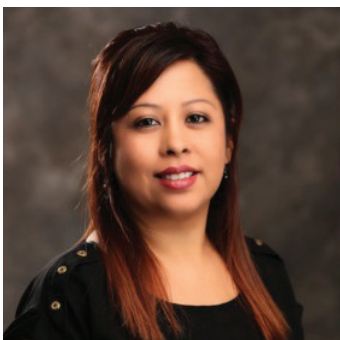
Jessica Montoya, Education Liaison, Maricopa County

Jessica is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. Jessica attended Northern Arizona University and graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. Prior to working as an Education Liaison, Jessica interned for the Department of Child Safety in Flagstaff and soon after began working permanently with the Department. Jessica understands from her own experience the difficulties of obtaining higher education and having the support to do so. Jessica's goal is to see all children, especially those in foster care, succeed and she knows that it takes all of the systems involved in our foster youth's lives, working together, to make that a reality.



Ashely Dickerson, Education Liaison, Maricopa County

Ashely Dickerson is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. She is a proud Arizona native and attended the University of Arizona where she studied the Social and Cultural Foundations in Public Education while focusing on Adolescent Development, Ed Policy and Africana Studies. Ashely has extensive experience both in and out of the traditional education field and has worked with various nonprofits including serving as an elementary school teacher, completing four terms as an AmeriCorps member in her community, and launching her own leadership and empowerment program for girls of color. Education campaigns and civic engagement are at the core of her efforts. She is passionate about creating an equitable and just education system in Arizona, which has led her to FosterEd: Arizona.



Victoria Gonzales, Education Liaison, Maricopa County

Victoria is an Education Liaison with FosterEd: Arizona. Victoria has worked in the education and behavior health fields for over 10 years. Previously, she worked for Valley of the Sun United Way as a Destination Graduation Coordinator where she case managed high school students and ensured that they were on track to graduate. She is an active advocate for youth, and as a licensed foster care provider she is experienced and passionate in delivering and supporting positive change to all children, families, and community members.

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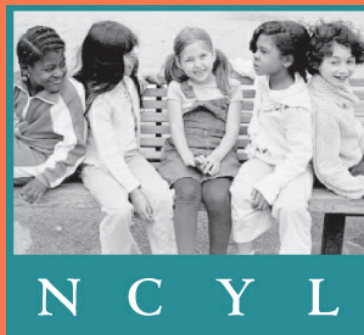
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