The ABCs of Collecting and Sharing Education & Child Welfare Data:

A "How To" Guide for Cross-System Collaborations

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Who We Are

LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION

http://www.abanet.org/child/education/

Data Regarding the Educational Status of Children in Child Welfare System

- Limited Information Available
  - Almost no National Statistics
  - Few Statewide Studies
  - Limited Regional/Local Studies

- However, all regional and local studies to date indicate that these children are not only at greater risk of educational failure, but are truly in crisis.

The Education System is Failing Children in Care

- **Only one third** receive high school diploma in four years;

- **Twice as likely to drop out**
  - Philadelphia study: 75.2% of youth in care dropped out of high school in 2005

- **2-4 times as likely to repeat a grade**
  - California study: 83% of children in care in Los Angeles were held back in school by the third grade

- **Significantly below their peers on standardized tests**
  - lower reading levels and lower grades in core academic subjects

- While 70% of foster youth dream of attending college, 7-13% gain access to any higher education programs and **2% obtain bachelor's degrees.**

Poor Education = Poor Life Outcomes

Poor academic performance contributes to higher than average rates of homelessness, criminality, drug abuse and unemployment.

Maryland Public Policy Institute, Focus Group Study: Foster Care Families, Children, and Education, December 2006, at *www.mdpolicy.org/docLib/20061130_FosterCareFocusGroupStudy.pdf* (April 10, 2007).

A high school drop out is . . .

- Eight times more likely to be incarcerated
- 40% more likely to be on public assistance
- Far more likely to be unemployed
- More likely to become a drug addict
- Estimated cost of a youth who drops out and turns to crime & drugs -- $1.7 to $2.3 million

Why Education Matters

Improved Educational Outcomes . . .

- Improves well being of children
- Increases rates of permanency
  - New York Judges who focus on education in court report dramatic increases in rates of reunification, adoption, permanent legal custodianship, etc.
- Improves life outcomes
  - Increased rates of employment, higher wages, greater job stability, longer lives

Major Barriers To Educational Success for Children in Care

- Lack of school stability
  - Average child in care changes schools at least three times
  - 65% more than seven times according to one study

- Delays in enrollment and transfer of credits

- Disproportionate referrals to disciplinary settings

- Lack of access to educational services

- Confusion over decision making authority

- Absence of education advocates, especially for children in special education

What Can Data Do For You?

Two types of Data:

Statistical – Aggregate & Disaggregate

- Not "personally" identifiable
- Confidentiality rules do not apply
- Disaggregate = Children/youth in child welfare

Student Level - Individual

- Personally identifiable
- Confidentiality rules apply
- Individual records - reports, transcript, IEPs, discipline records, medical records & beyond

What Statistical Data Can Do For You

- Indentify systemic problems
- Develop effective policies & priorities to
  – Improve education outcomes
  – Increase accountability of systems
- Target funding (e.g., school stability)
  – Increase and target $$ for specific goals
- Educate and facilitate collaboration among multiple systems: Education, Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, Employment, Job Training, Vocational, etc.

What Student Data Can Do for You:

- Identify individual educational needs of child
- Track child over time and through systems
- Trigger prompt intervention
- Inform other decisions (e.g., placement and transition goals)
- Enhance and improve delivery of services to individual child

What Child Welfare Can Learn from Education Data

- Which children are failing?
- Why? Is there a correlation between educational failure and type of placement, length of placement, multiple school moves, lack of education advocate, emotional/behavioral problems, failed adoption
- What is the impact of:
  - Prompt enrollment, school stability, trauma-informed curriculum; positive behavioral supports
- Longitudinal data: track children through school AND across systems – employment, medical etc.

Look at Your System: What Data Is Being Collected, By Whom and to What End?

What is Education Collecting?
What is Child Welfare Collecting?

- What is the purpose of the data collection?
- Where/how is the information maintained?
- How is it currently being used?
- What child welfare data relates to the educational outcomes of children in care?
- How could current data be revised/expanded to improve educational outcomes for children in care?
- How could it be shared across systems?

What <u>Information</u> Does Child Welfare Collect About Education?

- **Title IV-E of the Social Security Act**

  42 U.S.C.A. 675(1)(C) & (5)(D)

  Case plans MUST include the <u>most recent information available</u> re child's **education records**

  - What do records include?
  - Must be reviewed & updated
  - Supplied to every foster parent/provider
  - Consider in making placement decisions
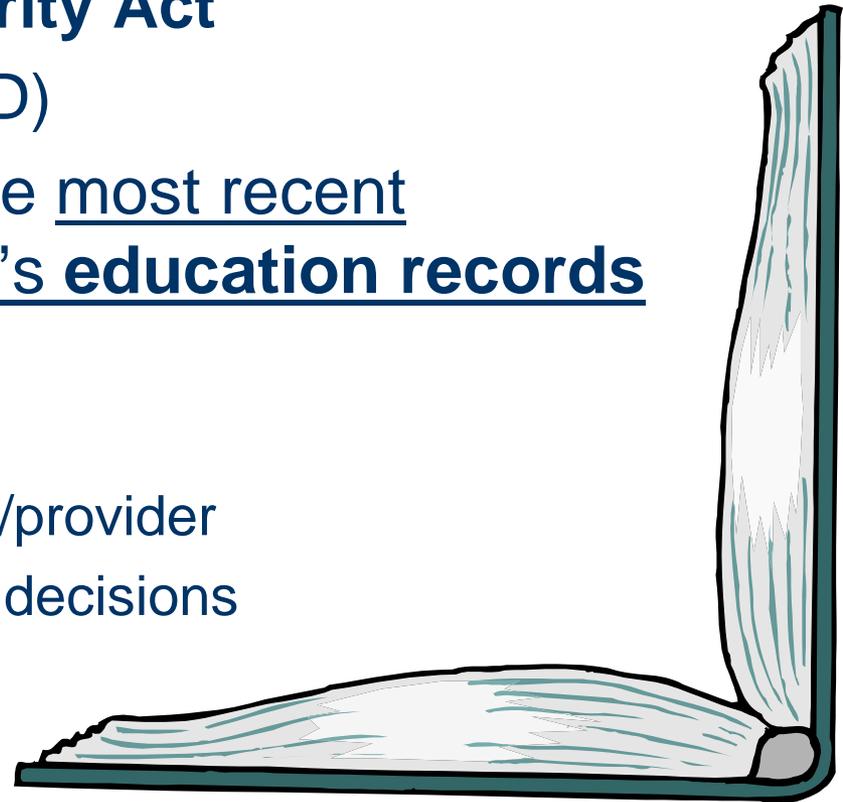
Current Role of Education Data in Federal Child Welfare Reporting

Data Reporting Requirement: CFSRs

- Well being Outcome #2 (educational needs)

Potential Reporting Requirement:

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
  - Must consider proximity and appropriateness of current school in placing child;
  - Ensure that child remains in the same school unless doing so is not in the child's best interests

NEW!

Child & Family Service Reviews 42 U.S.C.A. 1320a-2a

- Well-Being Outcome 2: "Children receive appropriate services to meet their **educational needs**."

  – **Availability of school records** is a factor in determining whether a state child welfare agency is meeting this requirement.

- Currently, **34 states ARE NOT** in substantial conformity with this mandate.

Well Being Outcome No. 2: Establish effectiveness of agency in addressing the educational needs of children in care

- **State's policy requirements** & how requirements are reflected in practice

- Identify **changes made in performance and practice since previous Statewide Assessment** such as initiatives/strategies implemented by the State

- ****Provide quality assurance results or other data about educational assessments and services** (how educational needs are assessed; inclusion of educational needs in the case plan and documentation in the child's record; services the agency provides, role of foster parent, agency's involvement of birth parents in education-related issues.)

- **Key collaborators with the agency in addressing or implementing this item**.

  – Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Monitoring, Feb 10, 2009

AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System)

- 45 C.F.R. 1355.40; Semi-annual review
- Currently, only ONE question of 66 even mentions education (re visual impairment)
- HOWEVER: Proposed amendments (now withdrawn) added:
  - **Learning or developmental disability**
  - **Special education**
  - **Repeated Grade: if so, how many**
- When revisions to AFCARS are revisited, need to consider education issues, particularly in light of Fostering Connections education provisions

What Else Could Child Welfare Collect

- **<u>School Mobility</u>**: Whether living placement resulted in **school change** & re-enrollment
- **<u>Special Ed</u>:** Early intervention; evaluations requested/conducted; special education services delivered as child moves; type of learning/devp'l disability; decisionmaker
- **<u>Early Childhood Education:</u>** Participation in Headstart/other programs: what age/how long
- **<u>Discipline:</u>** Suspensions, expulsions, alternative education for disruptive youth

What Could Child Welfare Collect (Cont'd)

- **Type of educational placement**: public school, residential settings (on-site school, homebound etc.)

- **School completion rates**: Drop out, years to complete high school; reasons for dropping out and at what age

- **Credit Issues:** Document problems with credits, obtaining high school diploma

- **Transition Readiness**: level of education, life skills training, transition plans.

What is Education Already Collecting

- **All States** Collect Data
  - NCLB: No Child Left Behind / IDEA
    - Electronically Maintained
    - Student Specific Identification Numbers

- **Each State** May Collect
  - Additional Data (e.g., discipline info, links to other agencies)

No Child Left Behind Act: What is It?

- Seeks to improve educational performance and eliminate achievement gaps between groups of students.

- Requires States to implement accountability systems at the state, school district and school level.

- **Strongly endorses** use of longitudinal data:

  - "Each State may incorporate the data from assessments into longitudinal data systems that link student test scores, length of enrollment and graduation records over time."
  - **U.S. Dept. of Ed provides funding to states to develop systems** to link records over time OR to identify best educational practices. See **http://ies.ed.gov/funding/**
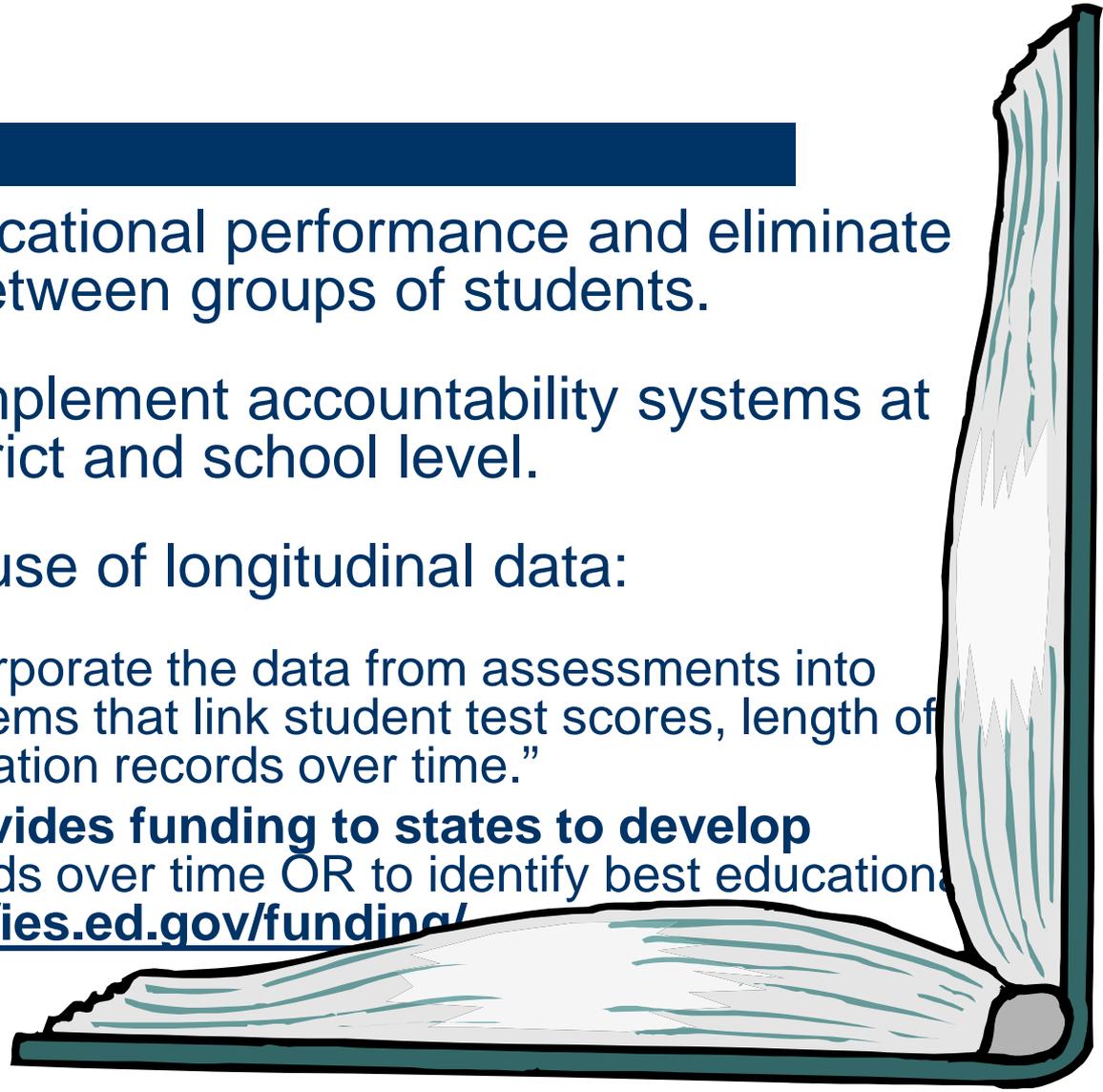
NCLB Education Data: National Profile

- **48 states have a unique statewide "student identifier"** that connects student-specific data across key databases and across years.
- **50 states have graduation & drop out rates**
- **49 states track student-level enrollment**, demographic and program participation information
- **48 states maintain student-level state testing** data
- **29 states link to SAT, ACT and AP exams**
- **21 states use a unique "statewide teacher identifier"** to match to student data
- **28 states match PreK-12 with post-secondary**
- **17 states maintain student-level transcript** information, including information on courses completed and grades earned

What Education Data is Collected Under NCLB?

- **Attendance:** Days "absent without excuse" and days enrolled in school
- **School Enrollment:** Tracks student mobility, enrollment delays & grade level designation at time of enrollment
- **Academic Progress*** Standardized scores
- **Special Education*** Disability & Services
- **Program Template:** Participation in remedial & other programs (Title I, HS)

  * = May be _separate_ data system in your state

"Student" Level Data

- **Gender**
- **Race/Ethnicity**
- **Student Status –** Court placed "or" alt ed.
- **Economic status (Free/Reduced Lunch Program)**
- **Educationally Disadvantaged under Career and Technical Education programs**
- **Plan 504 Indicator/Special Ed**
- **LEP Participation/English Proficiency/Language Breakdown/Language/ Home Language Code**
- **Courses – Advanced courses only**
- **Grade retention**
- **Expected Graduation, Graduation Status Code & Type of Diploma**
- **Expected Post Graduate Activity**

What Does Your State's Data Already Tells Us

- Number of times children change schools & days in school
- Grade retention & eligibility for supplemental education services
- State test proficiency in core subjects
- Special Education & LEP participation
- Participation in specific remedial programs
- Graduation status & expected activity (college etc.)
- Drop out & graduation rates
- Teacher Impact: match teacher ID to student data

What Could Education Collect

- "Prompt" Enrollment (FL example)
- Truancy Rates under State Law
- School Performance (e.g., San Diego)
- Special Education – (evaluation requested)
- Academic Progress – expanded definition
- Program Data – vocational & ESY
- Course enrollment (beyond AP courses)
- Credit transfers
- Discipline placements in school
- On-time graduation rates & higher ed data

What's Happening In <u>YOUR</u> State

- Data Quality Campaign
  - <u>http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/index.cfm</u>
- Education Commission of the States
  - <u>http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=913</u>

Disaggregating Education Data About Children in Child Welfare System

- Step I: Identify Subset of Children
- Step II: Child Welfare System's Data
- Step III: Education's Data: Can Education disaggregate non-student specific data using:
  - Social security nos. (matched with student IDs)
  - Residency codes – already in Education system
  - Address/name cross match
  - Other system
- Step IV: Can data be shared across systems?
- Step V: Can longitudinal data track these children over time & after they age out?

Sharing Data & Information Across Systems

Real and Perceived Barriers:

- **Child Welfare Laws: CAPTA** 42 U.S.C. 5106 (A)(B)(2) & (A)(B)(A)
  - State laws must protect confidentiality of child welfare records & specify when and with whom records may be shared
  - State statues may authorize info. sharing
  - Permits sharing of info. with gov't agency to protect child from abuse/neglect

Sharing Information:
Real & Perceived Barriers

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

20 U.S.C. § 1233g; 34 CFR Part 99

- **Purpose: to protect privacy interests of parents and students regarding the students' education records**

- **Parent's have the right to share or refuse to share records**

- **Exceptions to parental consent**
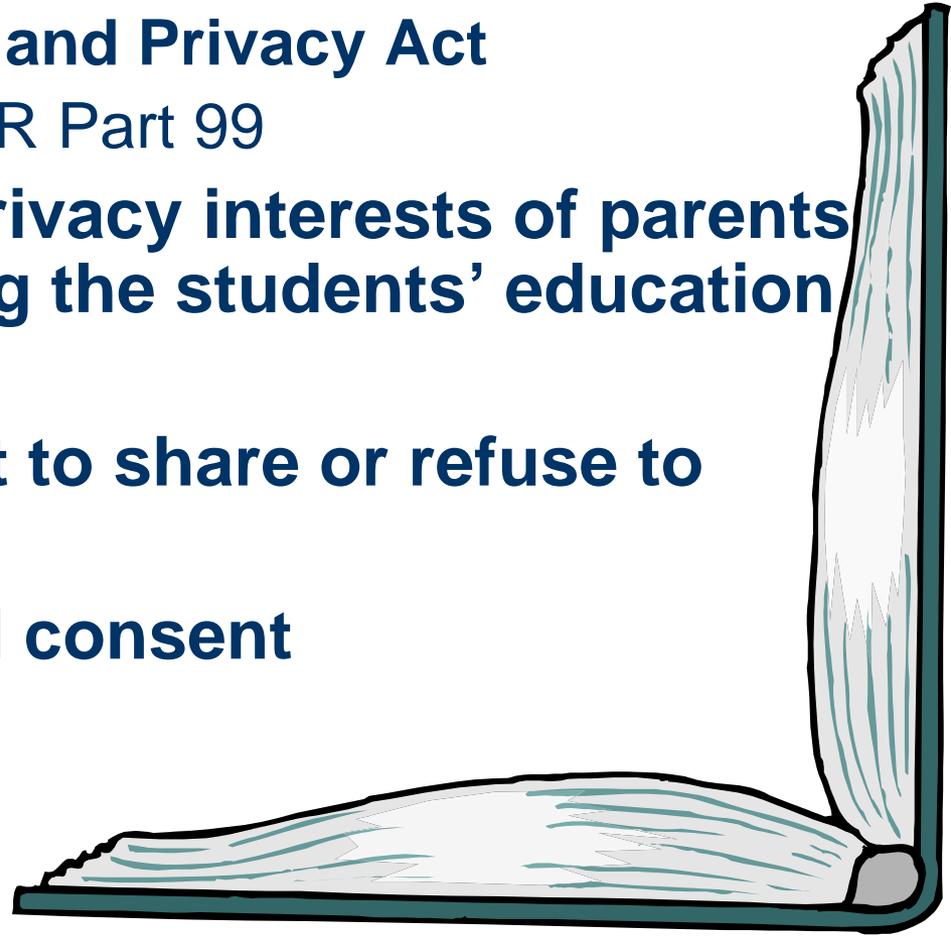
What Education Records Can Be Shared with Child Welfare:

- **Non-student specific data**
- **Directory Information**
- **If It qualifies as an education record,**
  - Need parent consent
    - Parental Consent Form (common practice: time of placement)
  - School may view a representative from the Child Welfare Agency as the parent under the FERPA definition of parent (acting in place of parent)
  - OR falls under FERPA exceptions to consent (court order is one of the exceptions)

Sharing Information To Improve Educational Outcomes

- Education to Child Welfare
- Child Welfare to Ed
- Joint Research
- Common Data System Accessed by Multiple Agencies (with varying levels of accessibility)

Examples of
Data Collection & Information Sharing

- Washington State
- Florida Department of Education
- Utah
- West Virginia
- Pima County, AZ
- California
  - Los Angeles Education Coordinating Council
  - San Diego
  - Fresno

How Can We Do This?

- Tools
  - **Solving the Data Puzzle**: http://www.abanet.org/child/education/publications/solvingthedatapuzzle.pdf

- Funding Opportunities under ARRA:
  - http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/421
  - http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/428

Contact Information

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