SHARPENING THE VIEW:

Improving Foster Youth Data
to Boost Educational Outcomes

DECEMBER, 2020

ERP EDUCATIONAL **RESULTS** PARTNERSHIP

CALIFORNIA ★ COLLEGE PATHWAYS

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About Educational Results Partnership

Educational Results Partnership (ERP) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is data-informed, employer-led and equity-focused. We are committed to improving outcomes across all levels of education—from Pre-K through career — with a focus on promoting student success in college and in attaining living-wage jobs. Our work focuses on identifying successful educational systems, practices, programs and policies in public education that are getting the best results for students and fostering collaboration across academia and business to replicate success. At ERP, we partner with educators, policymakers, business leaders and nonprofit organizations to improve educational productivity.

Cal-PASS Plus, funded by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, is an accessible, actionable and collaborative Pre-K through career system of student data. The system and initiatives are managed through a partnership between San Joaquin Delta College and ERP. Cal-PASS Plus' mission is to provide actionable data to help improve student success along the education-to-workforce pipeline. Collaboration using data informs instruction, helps close achievement gaps, identifies scalable promising practices, and improves transitions. Cal-PASS Plus offers longitudinal data charts, detailed analysis of transitions and workplace outcomes, information and artifacts on promising practices, and comparisons among like universities, colleges, K-12 school systems and schools.

About California College Pathways

California College Pathways (CCP) is a public-private partnership managed by John Burton Advocates for Youth and dedicated to creating a seamless system of support for foster youth as they transition from high school to colleges and universities and as they work toward their post-secondary goals. The work of California College Pathways focuses on supporting foster youth in four important areas on their path to success:

- **Equip** foster youth with the knowledge, skills and supports to pursue their college and career goals.
- **Enroll** foster youth in a post-secondary degree or certification program that prepares them for gainful employment.
- **Earn** a college degree or certificate.
- **Embark** on a career path.

CCP supports research to better understand foster youth experiences to and through college, including the identification of systemic barriers and effective practices to support this important student population. The network of campuses, and the funders and practitioners who support them, use research findings to support the continuous improvement of post-secondary, secondary and child welfare systems through actionable data, training and technical assistance, as well as to engage in advocacy and policy implementation efforts that strengthen the connections between research, policy and practice that can improve the experience of foster youth.

Acknowledgments

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- Walter S. Johnson Foundation
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This report is dedicated to the practitioners serving foster youth across the state of California. This work would not have been possible without the participation and guidance of the K-12 districts and county offices of education that provided data for this research. Many of these foster youth champions and other practitioners – who work tirelessly to serve students – took time out of their busy days to share their experiences and questions with the research team. Their commitment to improving the lives of foster youth students inspires us to continue our work leveraging data to accelerate success for this historically disadvantaged population.

Background on this Research Series

This *Sharpening the View* report is the fourth in a research series designed to improve outcomes and increase supports for foster youth students.

- **2015** *Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success* – showed that foster youth who enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions face significant academic and economic challenges and that student support programs specifically for foster youth may address some of these issues.

- **2017** *Accelerating Success: Turning Insights into Action for Foster Youth at California Community Colleges* – highlighted the importance of early alert systems and indicated that providing targeted support to a large percentage of foster youth on campus leads to better outcomes for these students.

- **2019** *Pipeline to Success: Supporting California Foster Youth from High School to Community College* – confirmed the academic achievement gap between foster youth and their peers, illuminated the persistent barriers to a successful high school-to-college transition and highlighted the key role that both counseling and financial support play in foster youth college success.

"It is very difficult to get accurate and consistent data on foster youth educational outcomes… lack of access to quality data affects everything in my work, from understanding the true need of students to advocating for funding."

(Survey Response: February 2020)

Executive Summary

This *Sharpening the View* study examines the data challenges faced by foster youth practitioners to support their work in boosting student educational outcomes in California. Critical decisions that have a direct impact on student outcomes are dependent on quality data. This study reveals that the resources allocated to support foster students are not fully realized when K-12 foster youth practitioners are unable to access the timely, consistent and reliable data needed to connect students to services.

Through a mixed-methods research approach, Educational Results Partnership (ERP) studied the foster youth data landscape in California from the perspective of hundreds of K-12 foster youth practitioners in northern, central and southern California. This study focused on understanding the hands-on experiences of frontline practitioners working with foster youth data to answer the following questions:

1. What perceptions do K-12 practitioners have about the quality of foster youth data?

2. What challenges do K-12 practitioners experience when trying to obtain quality foster youth data?

3. How do the challenges experienced by K-12 practitioner's impact their ability to serve foster students?

The journey of foster youth is often wrought with unique challenges and trauma. In the absence of timely interventions and supports that can help foster students overcome these challenges, they are at high risk of experiencing poor educational outcomes. This *Sharpening the View* study reveals the need to bring better alignment and coherence to foster youth data so that K-12 practitioners are properly equipped with the tools needed to improve educational outcomes among this high-risk population. Improving access and quality of the data K-12 foster youth practitioners rely on to identify their foster students by name and by need is the call to action. To make it possible, this study recommends the state align the existing disparate definitions of foster youth in order to ensure consistent access to benefits and facilitate better data sharing between agencies serving foster youth and school districts.

Key Findings

This study found K-12 foster youth practitioners:

*   Experience challenges identifying their foster youth due to the inconsistent definitions of foster youth in state code.

*   Must access and leverage multiple complex data systems from various agencies when trying to identify and serve their foster students.

*   Struggle to get access to quality data needed to effectively serve their foster students.

*   Do not receive timely data and updates on foster students.

*   Seek more training to improve their understanding and use of foster youth data.

Actionable Recommendations

1. **Create a workable definition of foster youth that is inclusive and consistent.**

   Rather than having multiple technical definitions of foster youth across various sections of state code, California policymakers should begin the process of creating one workable definition that serves all foster youth. A workable definition means that frontline K-12 practitioners can seamlessly connect all students who should be categorized as foster youth, to the services and supports that were intended for foster students. This starts by creating a foster youth definition that is inclusive, meaning that all students who fall under the jurisdiction of the child welfare system—such as unaccompanied refugee minors and youth in voluntary placement—be entitled to the same services and supports as students currently defined as foster youth under the Local Control Funding Formula. Second, this definition must be consistent across data systems that touch foster students to facilitate the exchange of data between agencies.

2. **Improve data sharing between school districts and agencies serving foster youth.**

   K-12 foster youth practitioners are leveraging multiple complex data systems and sources when trying to meet the needs of their foster students. Because there is not one data system that provides foster youth practitioners with all the information needed to serve their students, regular data sharing between agencies is critical. Upon adopting a more workable K-12 foster youth definition in state code, the major agencies working with foster youth should agree to share their foster youth data with each other in as close to real-time as possible. The agencies should coordinate and work with each other to:

   (1) Establish norms for the 14 most used data elements identified by practitioners in this report (See Table 2);

   (2) Standardize the data by ensuring there is a common data format so that disparate data sets are formatted into one consistent organization;

   (3) Establish an application program interface (API) between data systems that need to regularly exchange data with each other, so when one system's data is updated, all systems are updated;

   (4) Create centralized access to CALPADS foster youth data at the state level for K-12 practitioners.

3. **Connect more K-12 practitioners to trainings on best practices for accessing and using foster youth data.**

   Use of data enables practitioners and policymakers to improve educational outcomes for foster youth. While the California Department of Education is now offering training to K-12 foster youth practitioners, more of them need to connect with these trainings. The trainings are critical for helping practitioners learn best practices for accessing data and how to use the data to inform their work, including program evaluation for efficacy and continuous improvement. These best practices should include clear, consistent protocols and expectations for collecting foster youth data, accessing the data and reporting it.

Introduction

Students in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable and academically at-risk student groups enrolled in California schools.[1] To address their needs, K-12 practitioners focused on serving the needs of foster youth must have the ability to provide timely supports and interventions, which are critical to closing the achievement gap among this group.[2] California is home to nearly 14 percent[3] of the more than 437,000 children in foster care across the United States,[4] making the state a focal point in the development of solutions for serving this critical population.

However, supporting foster students within the K-12 system is a complex challenge. They are often faced with traumatic experiences of abuse and/or neglect and the inherent instability of being in the foster care system—resulting in unique hurdles outside of the classroom that impact their ability to learn and succeed in an academic setting. Without appropriate and timely interventions and supports to help foster youth cope with and overcome these barriers to academic success, their futures will be riddled with challenges. To overcome these challenges, practitioners and policymakers alike must have timely information at their fingertips and the ability to quickly identify foster youth by name and by need.

When it comes to mitigating the factors that impact a foster student's academic success, there is an urgent need to intervene quickly. Failure to act immediately when a foster student needs support leads to a downward spiral of outcomes that fall squarely on the shoulders of this highly vulnerable population. For example, the impact of trauma on physical, cognitive, social and emotional functioning can have lasting consequences on foster youth.[5,6,7] In addition to the trauma of abuse or neglect that typically leads to their removal from the home, about 32 percent of foster youth in California experience three or more placement changes after a year of being in foster care.[8] Frequent moves create barriers to the development of trusting relationships between foster youth and both adult professionals and peers, which can have lasting emotional and psychological consequences.

Every day that passes without foster youth receiving the supports needed to overcome obstacles can have lifelong damaging consequences. The negative relationship between challenges foster youth face outside the classroom and their academic performance is undeniable. Extensive evidence has shown children in foster care are at high risk for poor educational outcomes (i.e. high rates of grade repetition, lower scores on standardized test,[9,10,11] increased behaviors problems,[12,13] high rates of special education placements[14], a high rate of school mobility[15,16] and low graduation rates[17,18]).During the 2018-19 school year, approximately 56 percent of foster youth graduated from high school within four years compared to 85 percent of non-foster youth students. Additionally, 15 percent of foster youth were suspended, expelled, or placed in disciplinary schools or programs compared to 3 percent of

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non-foster youth. Foster youth also experience chronic absenteeism at a rate of 28 percent compared to 12 percent of the overall student population.[19]

These poor educational outcomes are not a new phenomenon. In fact, for almost half a century the educational needs of foster youth have been overlooked, causing a dramatic academic achievement gap between foster youth and their peers.[20,21,22] Recognizing that foster youth require a unique set of educational supports and services to overcome their challenges and achieve the same level of academic success as their peers, advocates have championed federal laws (e.g. the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections)[23], and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)[24] which have begun to acknowledge the supports needed to address such educational disparities among foster youth.

More notably, California has taken additional measures at the state level to address the academic achievements among youth in foster care. Legislative reforms such as AB 490 (2003)[25], AB 167 (2009)[26], AB 216 (2013)[27], AB 643 (2013)[28], AB 379 (2015)[29], and AB 854 (2015)[30] have aimed to improve education outcomes for foster youth in the K-12 school setting. To further address these disparities, California became the first state in the nation in 2013 to specifically include students in foster care in its funding formula as one of the student groups in need of additional support. Established by AB 97 (2013), the state's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) now requires local education agencies (LEAs) to address the needs of foster youth in their local control and accountability plan (LCAPs). In addition, schools are required to share education outcomes of students in foster care through the state's longitudinal data system. LCFF also requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to share certain foster youth information with the California Department of Education (CDE) in order that CDE may reliably identify students who are foster youth and provide information sufficient to ensure that these students receive the appropriate supports and services that they need.[31,32] Such coordination between agencies serving foster students is critical. For one, frequent changes in school placements as a result of moving homes often results in learning loss and incomplete information about a child making its way

from school to school and from district to district, which results in a negative impact on educational experiences.

The California Department of Education has taken additional steps to support practitioners in the field. In May 2019, CDE created a Foster Youth Data Liaison position dedicated to ensuring schools and districts receive the information they need to identify and provide foster youth with timely and appropriate supports and services for success in their schools and communities. This foster youth data expert position was created to support ongoing collaboration and learning within CDE, across state and local agencies, and among local educational agencies (LEAs) that serve foster youth. The Foster Youth Data Liaison works closely with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on the foster data match process and data sharing MOUs. This position provides technical assistance and training to county Foster Youth Services Coordinators and school district Foster Youth Liaisons around access and use of foster match data. Additionally, the Foster Youth Data Liaison promotes increased understanding and awareness of how educational outcomes are measured and reported for foster youth.

The CDE has also created the Foster Youth in California Schools[33], a web page which has been live since February 2020. The purpose of this page is to highlight the educational outcomes for foster youth and provide information and resources on these outcomes for the different state and local agencies, advocates, and LEAs supporting foster youth in schools. This page serves as a central location in the field to visualize and compare educational outcomes

for foster youth with students who were not in foster care from DataQuest and the California School Dashboard. This page is part of ongoing efforts by the Department to focus attention and support the efforts of those in the field.

Despite these efforts to improve the educational outcomes of foster youth and to promote better coordination among agencies serving youth in foster care, research has shown continued lower academic achievement outcomes, grade retention, and high school graduation rates, compared to their peers.[34] These outcomes merit further exploration into additional factors that may be impacting the timely and effective delivery of resources and supports that are allocated to foster youth and can help change their academic trajectory.

The Role of Data in Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Youth

Ensuring K-12 practitioners have access to accurate and timely data about their foster youth is a critical component for improving foster students' academic outcomes.

The traumatic experiences that negatively impact a foster youth's education cannot be eradicated entirely. However, access to quality data about foster students can provide practitioners with valuable insights on how best to address their needs and provide timely supports that can improve their educational outcomes. Foster youth practitioners across systems can work to promote positive outcomes for their students when appropriate data is made available to them and is shared and used effectively.

However, the data systems K-12 foster youth practitioner's access must be reliable and timely. Otherwise, students will not receive the supports they need when they need them. This is particularly important for vulnerable student populations who need additional supports and services to be successful in school.[35] The ability of practitioners to effectively intervene starts with access to quality data. Quality data must have clear data elements, consistency across systems, and be accessible to those who rely on the information to provide services and make

decisions. The availability of quality data and systems can assist practitioners in developing relevant and timely strategies for achieving student success by elevating the experiences of these marginalized populations, including children in foster care.[36]

To this end, there have been significant investments made, over the past five years, in strategies to improve data sharing among county offices of education, local school districts, and child welfare agencies. For example, there is an inter-agency agreement between CDSS and CDE to match the records of children and youth in the foster care system with statewide student identifiers. This aggregate match of data is populated in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and the CDE shares this information with school districts and county offices of education on a weekly basis in the CALPADS 5.7 report.[37] This report identifies youth in foster care, student enrollment information, student demographics, educational rights holder information, foster youth placement status and social worker contact information. However, these efforts are limited, and challenges continue to persist with the quality of actionable data practitioners can access and use to support youth in foster care.

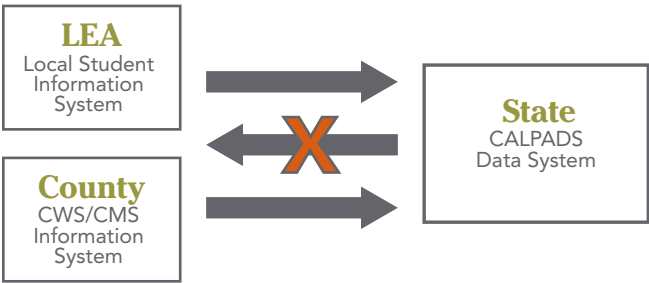## Data Sharing Limitations

To improve foster youth outcomes, timely interventions are essential. Foster youth practitioners working in K-12 institutions need the ability to quickly and immediately identify their foster youth students by name and by need. However, the current reality is that the data infrastructure K-12 practitioners depend on to identify and serve their foster students requires

them to log into multiple, often disconnected, data systems and sources to get the information they need to provide targeted supports. This inefficient and disconnected patchwork of data systems creates significant challenges for practitioners who are unable to quickly access critical information about their foster students. In the meantime, they are unable to identify their foster students and meet their needs in a timely manner, increasing the likelihood that these students will experience traumatic experiences with lifelong impacts.

For example, the lack of data sharing among K-12 data systems is a challenge for foster youth practitioners who are unable to get immediate access to historical information about new foster students that have enrolled in their districts. While Local Education Agencies (LEA's) and Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS) send data to the state's CALPADS system, CALPADS does not feed data back to these two local and county systems, resulting in important information not making its way to practitioners in the field who are responsible for providing services to foster youth based on their needs at the time of enrollment and beyond (See Figure 1).[38] This one-way data flow not only results in limitations to data quality and access to timely information, it results in practitioners not having the information they need to properly serve foster students and mitigate downstream academic impacts.

Figure 1. Student Match Process

Source: California Foster Youth Education Task Force, CDE, January 2020

A major drawback of these disparate data systems is that they do not function cohesively, offering misaligned and inconsistent information. The misalignment among systems is not conducive to effectively serving foster youth students because

K-12 practitioners are unable to get a full view of the history and needs of foster students. K-12 foster youth practitioners need access to actionable data that can inform decision-making on how to better support their students. Thus, understanding and addressing these gaps in the data is critical to enabling them to provide timely services. To ensure quality data on foster youth is accessible to practitioners, it is important to map out where data inconsistencies currently exist, what causes these inconsistencies and potential solutions to resolve them.

Purpose of this Study

Building on the foster youth research series, this *Sharpening the View* report seeks to understand perceptions about the barriers and challenges K-12 practitioners experience when accessing and using foster youth data and systems to serve the needs of students. K-12 practitioners working at the county and school district levels to coordinate or provide direct services to foster students are on the front lines of implementing policies and resources aimed at helping foster students. Therefore, their perspective on the quality of data and systems in place to help them deliver the supports that were intended by policymakers is critical.

Specifically, this study explores the current experiences of practitioners who work within K-12 systems and access and utilize foster youth data and systems to coordinate or provide services for foster students. While significant strides have been made on the policy front in recent years, the experiences of K-12 practitioners working to implement these policies is critical to better understanding the additional barriers that need to be overcome to fully implement legislative intent. K-12 practitioners are on the front lines of coordinating direct services for foster youth. Understanding their experiences with the current data and systems in place and sharing to what extent they feel able to receive timely, accurate and relevant data to serve the needs of their foster students, provides an important perspective on what more can be done to improve the delivery of services. Thus, this report seeks to discover how ongoing data quality and sharing challenges impact K-12 practitioners' ability to serve foster students and provides recommendations for improvement.

Methodology

To understand how K-12 foster youth practitioners perceive the quality of foster youth data across California, Educational Results Partnership conducted an exploratory study focused on learning about the experiences of practitioners that rely on foster youth data and systems to deliver services. This study used a mixed methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The specific methods used (in order) were a focus group, a questionnaire to foster youth practitioners across the state, and individual in-depth interviews with select practitioners. Combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques allows for the evidence to be robust in a way that cannot be achieved using only one type of data collection technique.[39]

The first step was conducting a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to use a qualitative method to identify the key themes expressed by practitioners when describing their experiences in using and accessing foster youth data and systems to establish appropriate placements and coordinate instruction, counseling, tutoring, mentoring, vocational training, emancipation services, training for independent living, and other related services. The qualitative data gathered in the focus group was analyzed to identify the overarching themes expressed by K-12 practitioners. The second step was to use the findings of the focus group to guide the development of a quantitative instrument (questionnaire) that was distributed to a larger group of K-12 practitioners across California. Finally, the third and final step was in-depth interviews with questionnaire respondents who indicated they would be willing to do an interview to elaborate on their responses.

This study sought to answer the following three questions:

1. What perceptions do K-12 practitioners have about the quality of foster youth data?

2. What challenges do K-12 practitioners experience when trying to obtain quality foster youth data?

3. How do the challenges experienced by K-12 practitioner's impact their ability to serve foster students?

Participants

Participants for this study consisted of two groups — the first group consisted of Educational Liaisons at the school district as defined by Education Code 48853.5 (c), often referred to as AB 490 liaisons.[40] The second group of participants were Foster Youth Services Program Coordinators at the county office of education as defined by Education Code 42920.5.[41] Both groups of practitioners were selected because they serve as the primary points of contact within school districts and county offices of education responsible for serving foster youth per state law and are regular users of the data systems reviewed in this study.

State law defines the roles of these two distinct groups of practitioners. Education Code 48853.5 (c) includes a provision that requires all school districts to appoint an Educational Liaison with prescribed duties to ensure appropriate and timely educational placement, assist foster children with school transfers, and ensure foster youth are provided with equal opportunities.[42] AB 490 liaisons work within K-12 school districts and provide direct supports to foster students. County Offices of Education (COE), support K-12 foster youth practitioners at the district level through the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Programs (FYSCP). As a result of AB 854, FYSCP Coordinators at the county level preserve the ability to provide direct services, and other related services when there are identified gaps in service at the district level for foster youth. In addition, FYSCP Coordinators assist school districts with identifying foster youth and offer training and technical assistance for all stakeholders.[43]

The extent to which both AB 490 liaisons and FYSCPs at the school district and county office of education levels utilize foster youth data and systems to support and inform their work with foster students, makes them valuable sources in identifying practical challenges when accessing and using foster youth data and why they were selected as participants for this study. All study participants were identified using California Department of Education (CDE) publicly available contact information for 1,700 AB 490 education liaisons[44] and 113 Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) Coordinators.[45]

Data Collection

This study collected data from K-12 foster youth practitioners located throughout California. To ensure the study captured the geographic diversity of the state, participants were categorized into regions using ERP's Cal-PASS Plus coverage map of seven macro regions (San Francisco Bay Area, Central Valley-Mother Lode, Inland Empire, Los Angeles-Orange County, North-Far North, San Diego-Imperial, and South Central Coast).

Participants were then recategorized into three large regions (Northern, Central, and Southern). The Northern Region consists of North-Far North, the Central Region consists of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Central Valley-Mother Lode, and the Southern Region consists of the Inland Empire, Los Angeles-Orange County, San Diego-Imperial and the South-Central Coast. The participants' geographic breakdown and years of experience serving foster youth are further detailed in Appendix A.

Focus Group

The first step in this study was to conduct a focus group at the 2019 Blueprint for Success Conference that was held in Los Angeles, California from

October 28 through October 29, 2019. The conference attracts hundreds of foster youth practitioners from across the state and provided a unique opportunity to seek K-12 foster youth practitioners for a focus group. Eight K-12 foster youth practitioners participated in the focus group, all of whom served as Program Coordinators at the county office of education level.

Survey

The second step was to develop and send out a questionnaire to a large group of K-12 practitioners based on the major themes identified from the focus group. The questionnaire was delivered via email to 1,813 K-12 foster youth practitioners. From this group, 193 practitioners completed the questionnaire. While survey respondents were located throughout California, most survey respondents were based in the northern region (43.5 percent) (See Appendix A). The questionnaire was posted online and consisted of 15 questions (8 open-ended qualitative questions and 7 close-ended quantitative questions) focused on identifying how these practitioners use foster data and systems, and the challenges they experience. The questionnaire was administered from January 5 through February 23, 2020. See the questionnaire in Appendix B.

Interviews

The final data collection effort in this study was a series of follow-up video conference interviews. All interview participants were K-12 practitioners who filled out the questionnaire and agreed to provide follow-up commentary for the study. Out of the 193 foster youth practitioners who completed the questionnaire and were invited to participate in a follow-up interview, nine agreed to an interview and further described their experiences and challenges in working with foster youth data. Each interview consisted of 15 questions and was conducted virtually by the same researcher, using GoToMeeting software. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was administered between March 3 to March 6, 2020. The interview questions are found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

The interviews and focus group were audio recorded using the GoToMeeting web-based program and then transcribed by the GoToMeeting audio transcription service to capture all words shared by participants. The survey responses, as well as interview and focus group transcriptions were imported into Dedoose, a mixed-methods research support software, used to facilitate tenets of a thematic coding process.[46] A thematic analysis is particularly useful for making sense of large qualitative data sets by using a process to generate themes within the data.[47]

A team coding process was adopted to ensure that the data collected within this qualitative study is correctly interpreted by the research team and to safeguard the trustworthiness and quality of the research. Trustworthiness gauges how well the evidence presented supports the value of the results, while quality measures of how likely systematic error and bias have been prevented through the design of the study.[48]

The researchers began the analysis by reading and re-reading transcripts in order to familiarize themselves with the responses provided by practitioners. Following the initial review of the transcriptions, the subsequent steps were completed:

Code Development: The information provided by each participant and derived from each focus group was coded by two independent researchers. Narrative data was separated from quantitative data, producing 15 initial codes encompassing the K-12 foster youth practitioners' comments regarding working with foster youth data. (See Appendix D).

Generating and Reviewing Themes: A team of researchers examined the codes and excerpts data to identify conceptually similar codes which were then sorted into overarching themes. The themes were refined and expanded to contextualize the context in which practitioners referenced each code. As a result, the team of researchers identified sub-codes within codes which provided a robust data set from the qualitative data.

The definitions of these codes and sub-codes are found in Appendix D.

Following the qualitative analysis, the quantitative responses were analyzed using Dedoose. Descriptive statistics were generated to provide quantitative information on participants and code frequencies for each category and subcategory. Patterns and themes were then developed using the code frequencies and relationships identified in the qualitative data to produce the findings. This iterative and reflective process produced the following six overarching themes:

1. Recent changes are good, but more is needed.

2. Access to quality foster youth data continues to be a challenge.

3. There are too many definitions of foster youth.

4. There are too many data systems.

5. Data lags negatively impact student services.

6. Training is needed to improve the understanding and use of foster youth data.

Findings

- Recent policy changes have helped, but more is needed to ensure practitioners can accurately identify foster youth and use data to improve outcomes.

- There are benefits to using the current foster youth data.

- Current data is helpful, but improvement is needed.

- Access to quality foster youth data is a challenge.

Section II: What challenges do K-12 practitioners experience when trying to obtain quality foster youth data?

- The types of challenges reported by K-12 practitioners range from inferior data quality to conflicting foster youth definitions.

- There are serious concerns about data quality.

- The data elements that raised the greatest concerns were child welfare and attendance data.

- K-12 practitioners reported there are too many definitions of foster youth.

- K-12 practitioners reported there are too many data systems.

- Inefficiencies limit the amount of time spent serving foster youth.

- Keeping track of all relevant data is difficult.

Section III: How do the challenges experienced by K-12 practitioner's impact their ability to serve foster students?

- Lags in data availability impact student services.

- Training is needed to improve understanding and use of foster youth data.

- More robust use of foster youth data is needed to improve educational outcomes.

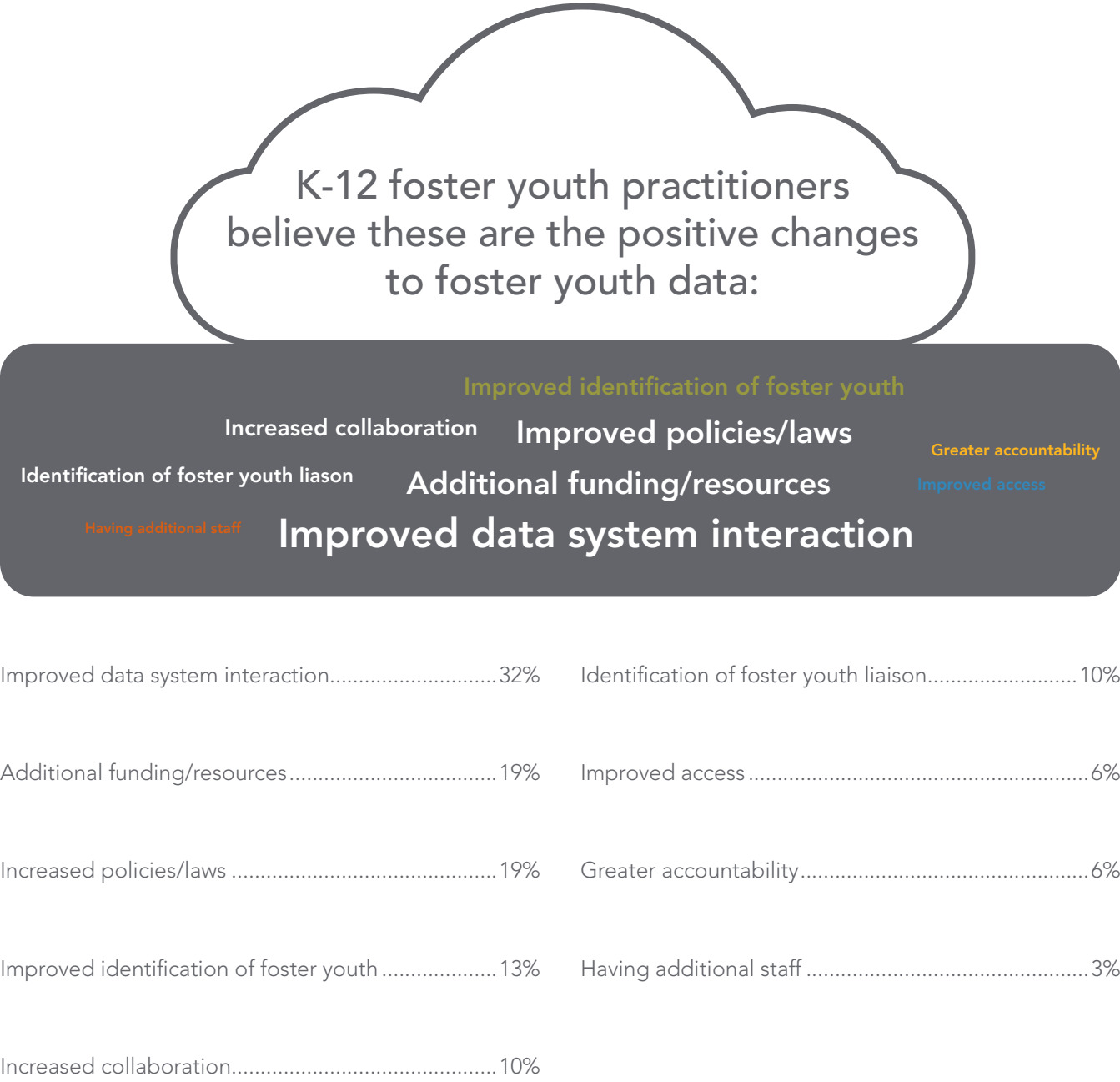## Section I: What perceptions do K-12 practitioners have about the quality of foster youth data?

Recent policy changes have helped, but more is needed to ensure practitioners can accurately identify foster youth and use data to improve outcomes.

Figure 2 shows that K-12 foster youth practitioners agree that the changes made to foster youth data in recent years are a step in the right direction, but more improvement is needed. With the state legislature's adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in 2013, California became the first state in the nation to include foster youth as a subgroup in its education accountability framework. In that same year, the legislature passed AB 97, which mandated data sharing between the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education to enable local education agencies (LEAs) to have access to information about their foster youth. As result, education practitioners now find themselves with access to more data specific to this population than ever before.

Practitioners participating in this study have described these changes as positive. Figure 2 shows that improved data system interaction, helpful policies, and the amount of funding and resources available for supporting foster youth, were among the most frequently identified positive changes expressed by K-12 practitioners in this study. While significant resources have been invested by the state to create data sharing protocols designed to help LEAs more easily identify foster youth, only 13 percent of practitioners indicated there have been positive changes to improve the identification of foster youth.

Figure 2.

K-12 foster youth practitioners believe these are the positive changes to foster youth data:

Improved identification of foster youth
Increased collaboration   Improved policies/laws   Greater accountability
Identification of foster youth liason   Additional funding/resources   Improved access
Having additional staff   Improved data system interaction

Improved data system interaction	32%	Identification of foster youth liaison	10%
Additional funding/resources	19%	Improved access	6%
Increased policies/laws	19%	Greater accountability	6%
Improved identification of foster youth	13%	Having additional staff	3%
Increased collaboration	10%		

"I think now that the state mandated that a liaison be in every district, I think this has been very critical, because now we work with DSS and other partner agencies who are involved in that student's life, we work together to see what we can do to improve as a collective team and so that we are all on the same page. I cannot do my job, efficiently or as effectively, if I did not know what's going on in their case, or what mental health issues they're bringing to school. So the more that I'm able to talk with their mental health providers, or the child advocates, it really gives us the picture of the whole child and how we can best put forward a plan to meet their needs."

(Interview: March 2020)

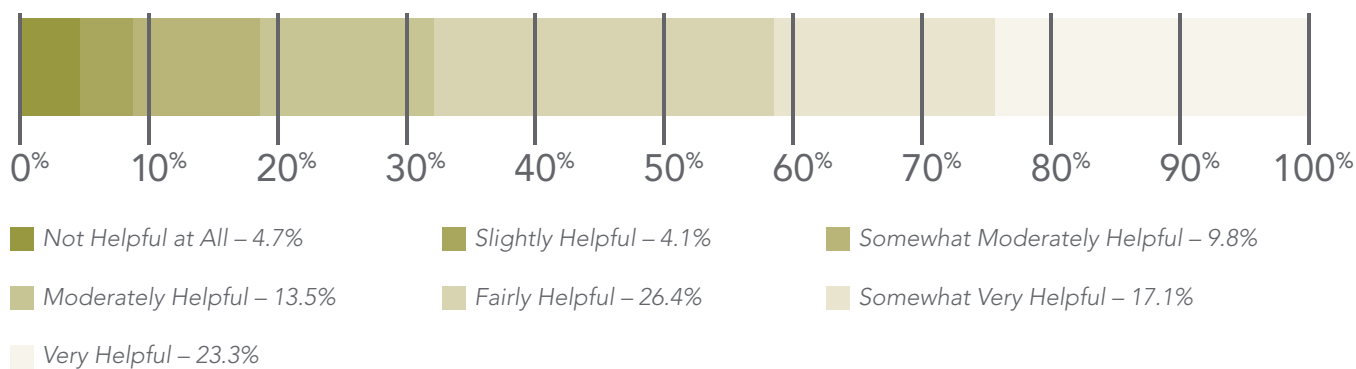## Figure 3. How helpful do K-12 practitioners find the data they receive?

- Not Helpful at All – 4.7%
- Slightly Helpful – 4.1%
- Somewhat Moderately Helpful – 9.8%
- Moderately Helpful – 13.5%
- Fairly Helpful – 26.4%
- Somewhat Very Helpful – 17.1%
- Very Helpful – 23.3%

Figure 4. How much improvement to foster youth data do K-12 practitioners believe is needed?

- Do Not See a Need – 9.8%
- There is Somewhat of a Mild Need – 4.7%
- There is a Mild Need – 10.4%
- There is Somewhat of a Moderate Need – 14%
- There is a Moderate Need – 26.4%
- There is Somewhat of an Urgent Need – 14%
- There is an Urgent Need – 36.3%

Figure 5. How hopeful are K-12 practitioners about the direction of data availability?

- Not at All Hopeful – 8.3%
- Slightly Hopeful – 4.1%
- Somewhat Moderately Hopeful – 8.3%
- Moderately Hopeful – 15%
- Fairly Hopeful – 18.1%
- Somewhat Very Hopeful – 16.6%
- Very Hopeful – 29.6%

Figure 6. How challenging is it for K-12 Practitioners to access, utilize, and disseminate foster youth data?

- Not at All Challenging – 11.4%
- Slightly Challenging – 9.8%
- Somewhat Moderately Challenging – 12.4%
- Moderately Challenging – 15.5%
- Fairly Challenging – 20.2%
- Challenging – 14.5%
- Very Challenging – 13%

Current data is helpful, but improvement is needed

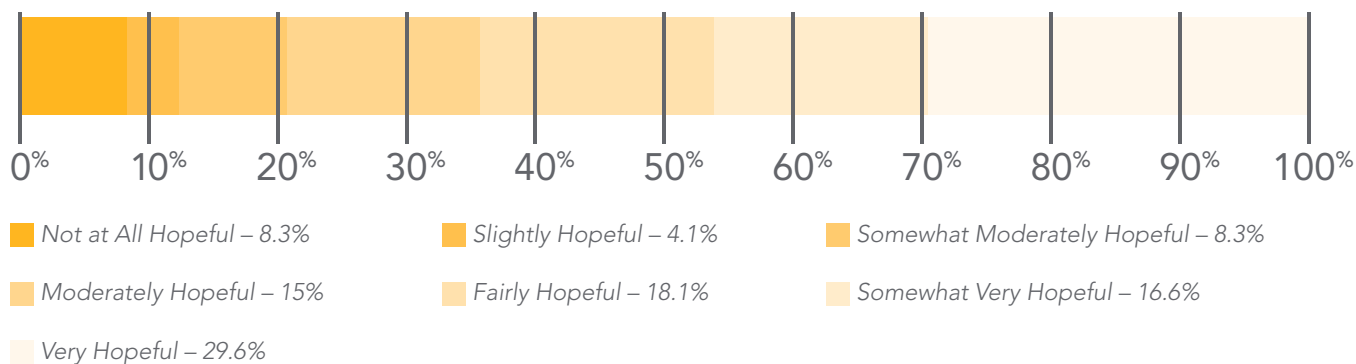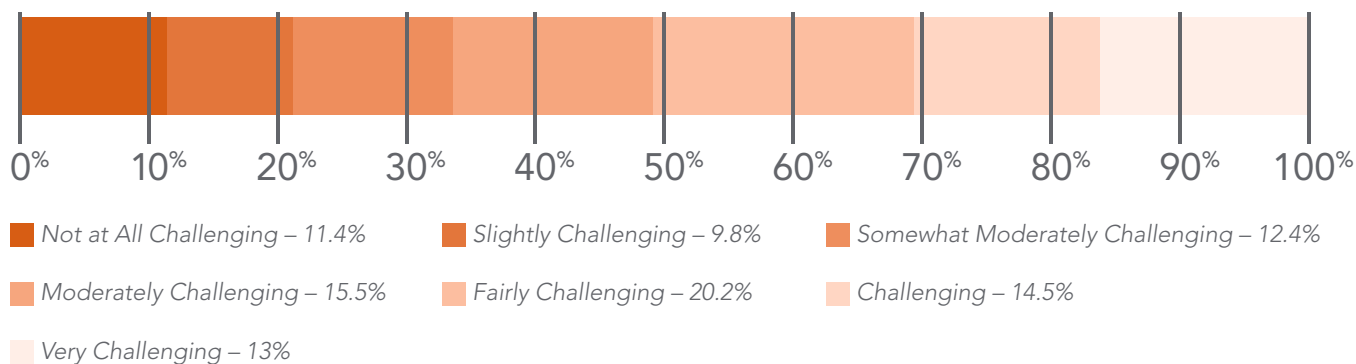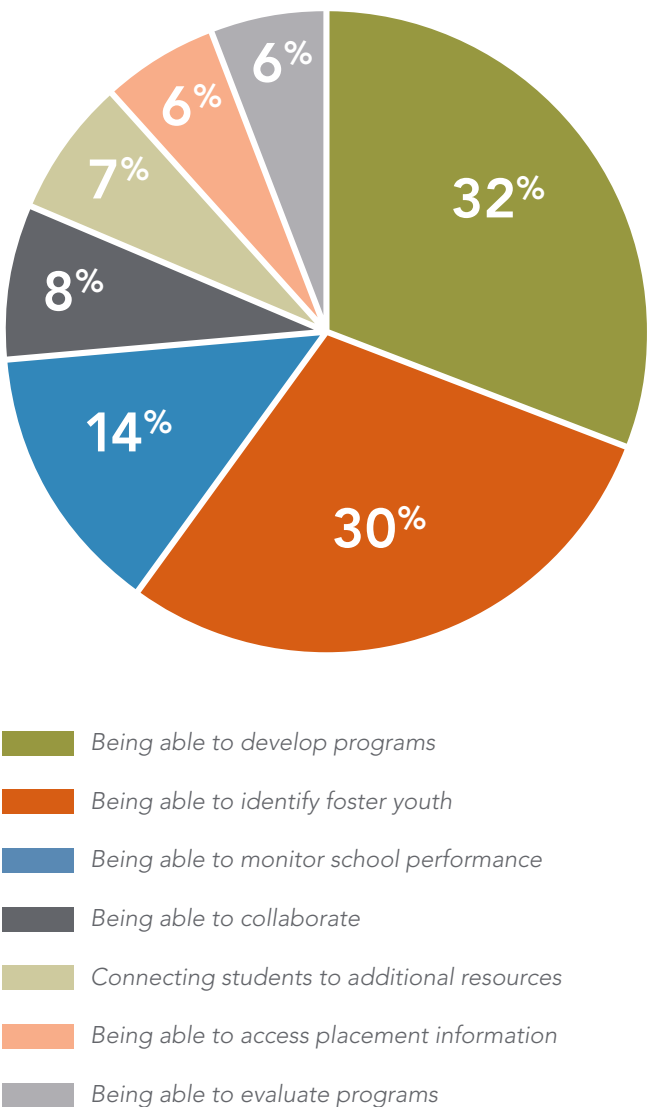Figures 3-5 show how K-12 practitioners perceive the usability of the data they receive to do their jobs. Most practitioners indicated that they find the data that is currently available to them helpful. However, most practitioners also felt there is somewhat of an urgent need or urgent need to improve foster youth data. Most practitioners also expressed that they are hopeful about the direction of data availability in the future.

There are benefits to using the current foster youth data.

Figure 7. K-12 foster youth practitioners describe the following benefits of using current foster youth data:

- Being able to develop programs
- Being able to identify foster youth
- Being able to monitor school performance
- Being able to collaborate
- Connecting students to additional resources
- Being able to access placement information
- Being able to evaluate programs

Access to quality foster youth data is a challenge

While most practitioners indicated that they find the data currently available to them helpful, K-12 practitioners also experience challenges accessing, utilizing and disseminating foster youth data. In fact, most practitioners indicated that accessing, utilizing and disseminating foster youth data is either moderately challenging, fairly challenging, challenging or very challenging. See Figure 6.

Section II: What challenges do K-12 practitioners experience when trying to obtain quality foster youth data?
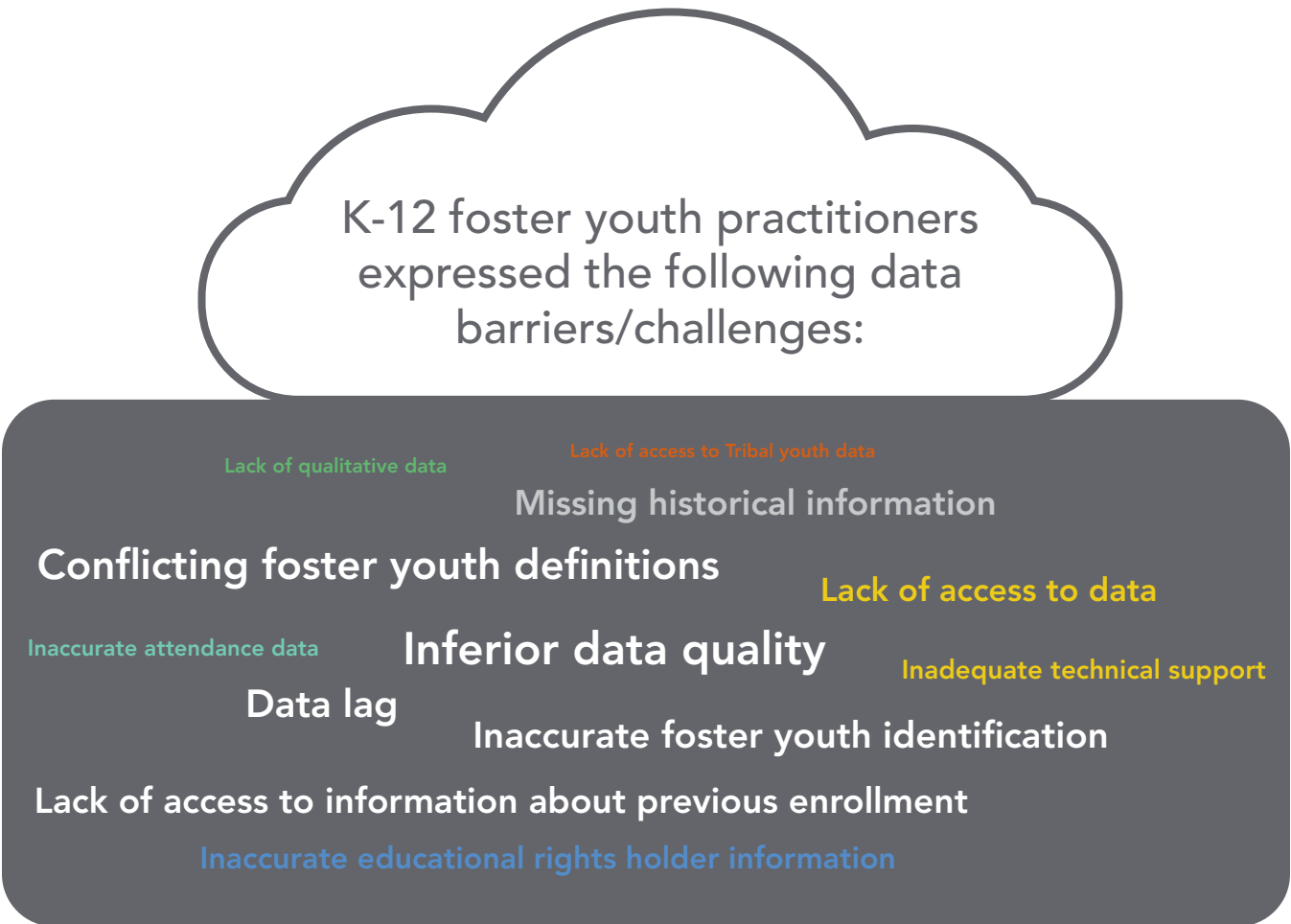
Types of challenges reported by K-12 practitioners

Figure 8 shows the distinct barriers and challenges practitioners identified when trying to obtain the data needed to serve their foster students. The most frequently noted barriers are inferior data quality, conflicting foster youth definitions, data lags, inaccurate foster youth identification, lack of access to information about previous student enrollment, missing historical information, lack of access to data, inaccurate educational rights holder information— defined as the adult who has legal authority to make educational decisions for a minor, and inadequate technical support.

Concerns about data quality

Figure 9 shows the data quality challenges shared by K-12 foster youth practitioners. In this study, of those participants (n=82) who noted the quality of foster youth data as an issue, 38 percent specifically expressed concerns about whether data reported to the state adequately reflects and captures the situations faced by foster students. For example, practitioners referenced the challenges they face when trying to understand a foster students' chronic absentee status. Under ESSA, which sets federal attendance standards for all students, chronic absenteeism is used as a metric of school accountability. However, daily attendance reports only capture the periods when a student is enrolled in a school.

Figure 8.

K-12 foster youth practitioners expressed the following data barriers/challenges:

Lack of qualitative data

Lack of access to Tribal youth data

Missing historical information

Conflicting foster youth definitions

Lack of access to data

Inaccurate attendance data

Inferior data quality

Inadequate technical support

Data lag

Inaccurate foster youth identification

Lack of access to information about previous enrollment

Inaccurate educational rights holder information

Inferior data quality 48%

Conflicting foster youth definitions..........................46%

Data lag 35%

Inaccurate foster youth identification 30%

Lack of access to information
about previous enrollment..23%

Missing historical information...................................22%

Lack of access to data 18%

Inaccurate educational rights holder information 16%

Inadequate technical support 6%

Inaccurate attendance data 5%

Conflicting local vs. state data reports 4%

Lack of access to Tribal youth data 2%

Lack of access to qualitative data 2%

"There are so many challenges I don't even think I can name them all. One challenge working with foster youth data is that there are multiple agencies asking for data, some of which are collected automatically, and some of which are not, and they may be collected differently. For example, if child welfare asks for attendance rates, you have some districts sending it to us by period, some districts sending it to us by day. Another example would be reading level, there are different reading assessments used in different districts."

(Interview: March 2020)

These required daily reports do not capture experiences more prevalent among foster youth such as times of transition when students may not be in school and learning because of a placement and school change.

Foster students may go weeks between leaving one school and enrolling in another while they navigate a new foster placement or go through the reunification process, but this learning loss may not be captured in the data. Additionally, the Attorney General's 2016 Report on Truancy and Absenteeism Crisis found only about half of the school districts statewide have a system in place to alert a new school about a student's attendance history when a student transfers into their district from another district in California.[49] While required reports may be helpful in generating data trends that paint a picture of what is happening to most students enrolled in a school, in the case of foster students, these reports may be failing to capture critical historical information that is needed to paint a full picture of where these students stand academically at the time of enrollment.
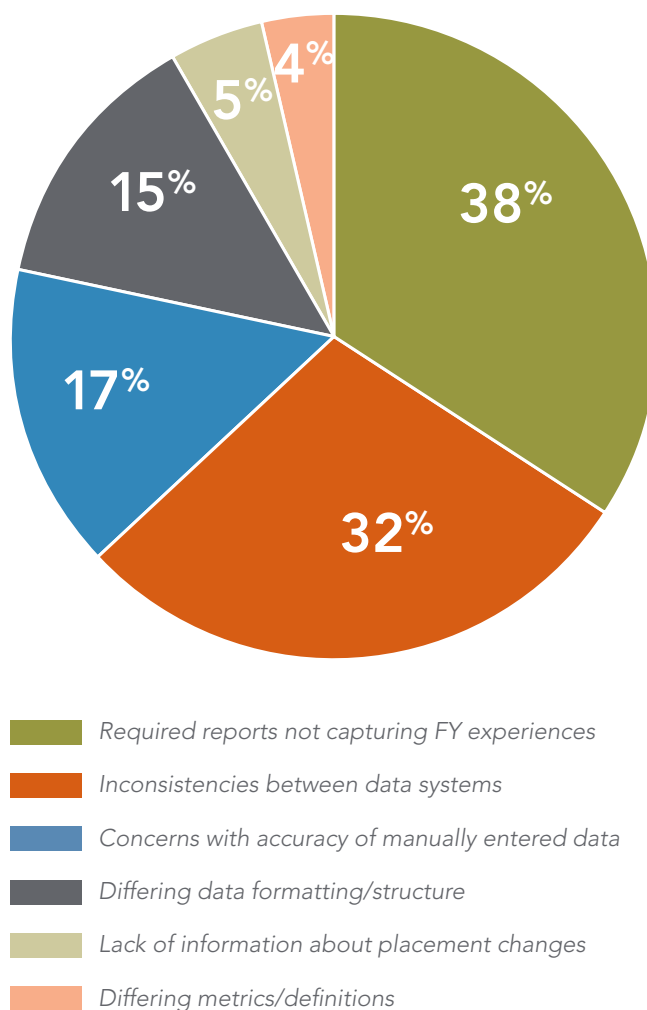
This study also found 32 percent of practitioners expressed concerns about having to use multiple data systems to access the information about their foster students needed to do their jobs. Currently, data about foster youth is being collected by several different agencies. These agencies use different systems and often the systems do not align with each other. They also do not share information about a foster student in real-time. The lack of interconnectivity among systems is particularly challenging in cases where foster youth are changing schools between various districts. Consequently, practitioners feel it would be easier if the data they need to serve their foster students is all housed in a single system.

Data elements that raise the greatest concerns

Another aspect of quality data is ensuring the data elements are clearly defined and consistent across multiple systems. Figure 10 shows the data elements that practitioners are most concerned about. Of the data elements referenced in Figure 10, the quality of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data was identified as being of most concern to practitioners. More specifically, these practitioners expressed challenges with the accuracy and access to
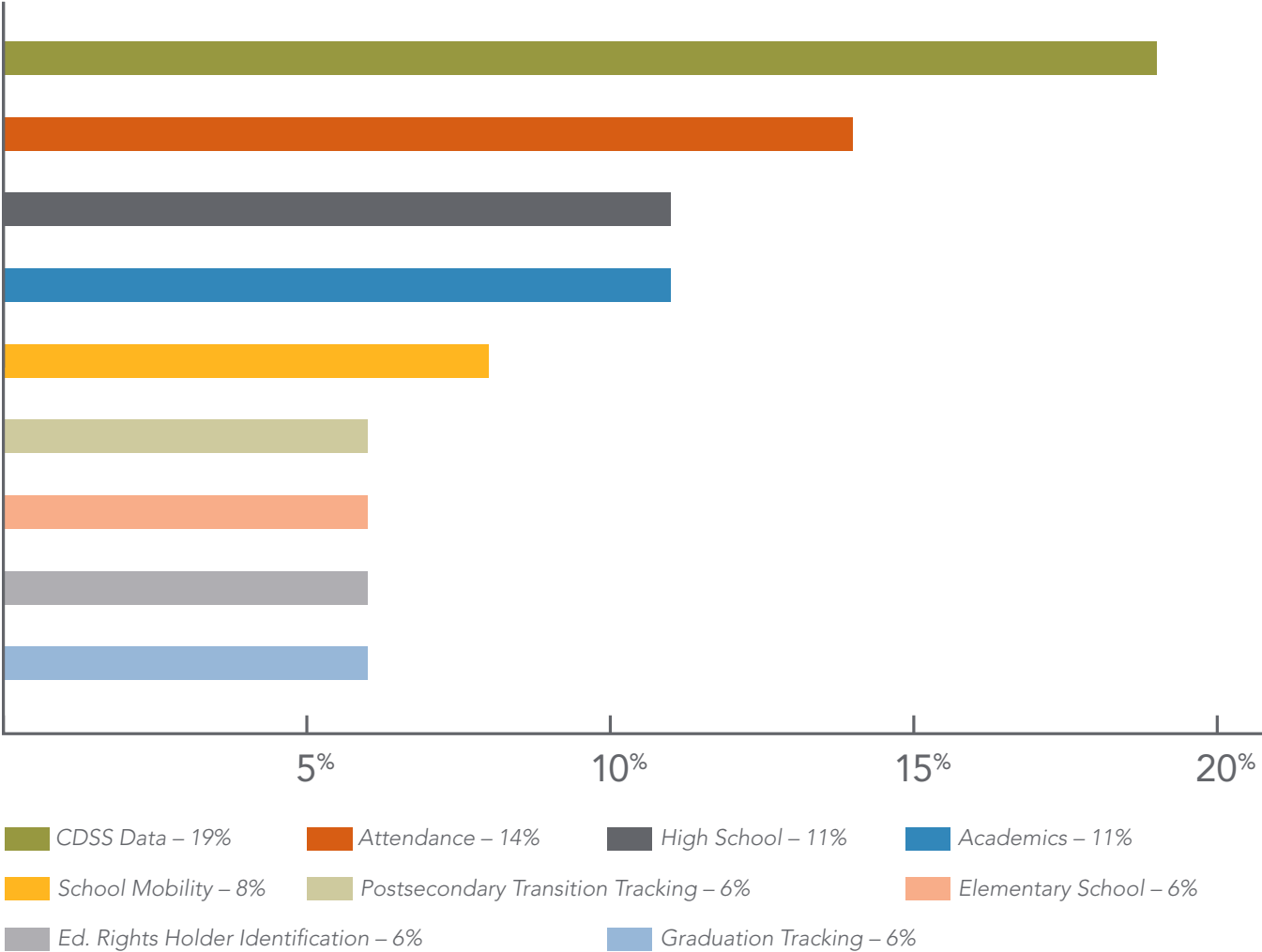
the following CDSS information: child and family team (CFT) meeting & team decision making (TDM) meeting information, court information, foster status, parental rights, placement information, social worker contact information, and visitation information. Additionally, 14 percent of practitioners expressed concerns about the quality of foster youth attendance data as there is often an unrecorded gap in the time a student leaves one district and enrolls in another.

Figure 9. K-12 foster youth practitioners expressed the following major data quality challenges:

- Required reports not capturing FY experiences
- Inconsistencies between data systems
- Concerns with accuracy of manually entered data
- Differing data formatting/structure
- Lack of information about placement changes
- Differing metrics/definitions

> " I wish there was one system. Each district uses their own data system (i.e. Aeries, SEIS etc.) and then there is CALPADS and the systems don't always work well together."

Figure 10. K-12 foster youth practitioners expressed their greatest data quality concerns about the following data elements:

- CDSS Data – 19%
- Attendance – 14%
- High School – 11%
- Academics – 11%
- School Mobility – 8%
- Postsecondary Transition Tracking – 6%
- Elementary School – 6%
- Ed. Rights Holder Identification – 6%
- Graduation Tracking – 6%

Too many definitions of foster youth

K-12 practitioners expressed that the lack of one common working definition for foster youth makes it difficult to easily identify which services students are eligible for. This is because students who intersect with the child welfare system can do so in a variety of ways. For example, while some students are placed outside the home by court order, other students continue to reside with their parent or parents under court supervision. Some are removed involuntarily by a court while others are subject to a voluntary removal order. Others may exit foster care but remain under limited supervision by the child welfare agency in a form of guardianship. Eligibility for different benefits is not consistently aligned in code and there is misalignment within data systems. The result is a complex maze of information when practitioners try to access

and connect students to the services they need. See Table 1 for a listing and comparison of foster youth definitions under various state laws. Appendix E also provides a table of actual definitions.

> " I know attendance data is at the end of the year reported for foster students. So that's helpful, but I think it would be a lot more helpful if it was throughout the year instead of just once at the end, telling you that your attendance rate for foster wasn't what it should be, not all that helpful." (Interview: March 2020)

Table 1. Varying Definitions of Foster Youth in State Code That Are Relevant to Practitioners Serving K-12 Students*

Foster Youth Definitions	AB 490, AB 167, AB 216	Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP)	LCFF
Students who are the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300	X	X	X
Students who are the subject of a petition filed under WIC Section 602 and have been ordered by a court to be removed from home	X	X	X
Student is between the ages 18 and 21, is enrolled in high school, and is a non-minor dependent participating in a transitional living case plan	X	X	X
Students who are in a voluntary placement	**	Not Included	Not Included
Unaccompanied Refugee Minors	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
Foster students under the placement of an Indian tribe (AB 1962 of 2018)	Not Included	Not Included	X

*Students who are supervised by juvenile probation under the jurisdiction of Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 602, without an order for out of home placement, are not represented in this chart because even though they are eligible for certain educational benefits, they are not connected to the child welfare system, and are therefore beyond the scope of this report.

** The partial credit provision is the only provision of AB 490 that apply to voluntary or informal placements.

> "At times it can be challenging to understand the status of a foster youth's case when they are returned to their family but are in family maintenance and still considered a foster youth."
>
> *(Survey Response: February 2020)*

> "LCFF definition vs. CDSS definition is different. I only get my data from my 5.7 which means there are some students that are not captured because they don't meet the LCFF definition."
>
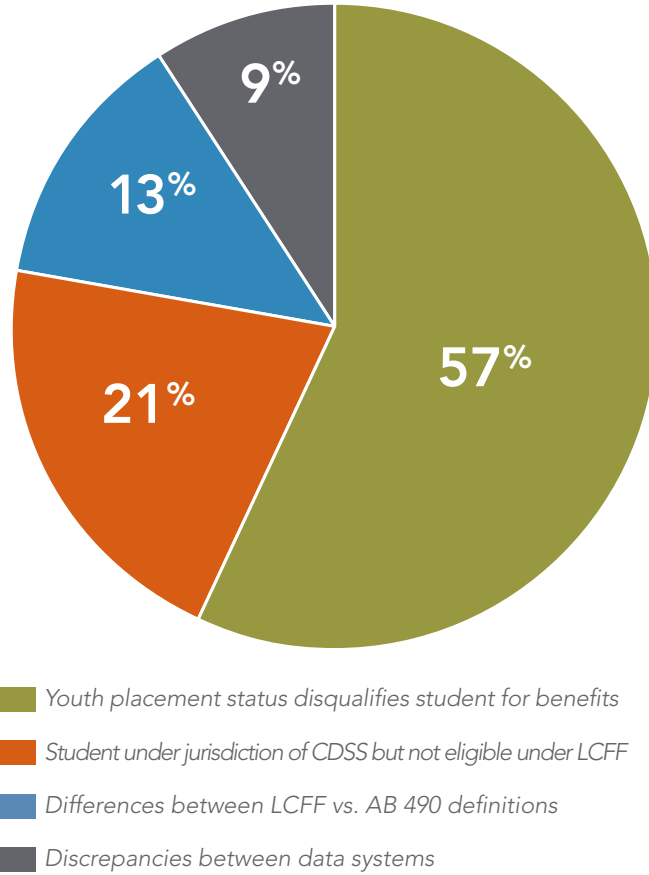> *(Survey Response: February 2020)*

The challenge for practitioners is that within the educational context, the definition of "foster youth" varies across benefits and some foster youth are categorically excluded. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is a funding formula that mandates specific accountability measures related to three identified subpopulations: low-income students, English language learners, and foster youth. With the passage of AB 854 in 2015, the definition of foster youth that is used by a County Office of Education to provide services through the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) was aligned with the LCFF definition, a positive step towards definitional alignment. Both definitions include children and youth in "family maintenance" status, meaning that the child remains with a parent or parents under the supervision of the child welfare system. The inclusion of this population is particularly crucial for continuity of services given that foster youth often move between out-of-home placement and residing with parents.

AB 490, enacted in 2003 and subsequently expanded by other laws, identified youth who are entitled to services that prompt stability and educational equity (e.g. immediate enrollment, school of origin, partial credits, etc.). The definition used to determine who is eligible for these services (Ed Code section 48853.5) is not aligned with the definition used within LCFF. AB 167 and AB 216 created exceptions to district graduation requirements for foster youth in certain circumstances and utilizes a definition of foster youth (Ed Code section 51225.2) that also does not mirror the LCFF definition. In addition, the benefits conferred under AB 490, AB 167, AB 216, AB 854 and LCFF do not extend to youth who are in a voluntary placement and unaccompanied refugee minors even though these students are under child welfare supervision and part of the California Department of Social Services foster care program. As a result of this misalignment between definitions and data systems, foster youth practitioners are left wondering which students qualify for certain types of assistance.

The data lag between data systems used by K-12 practitioners and CDSS also creates confusion as students may move in and out of eligibility for services. Foster youth cannot be served effectively if students who need services cannot get access to those services because they are not consistently defined

and identified across systems. Notably, 57 percent of K-12 practitioners identified the way in which different programs treat foster youth placement status to be the biggest challenge to understanding foster youth definitions (See Figure 11).

Figure 11. When trying to identify services students are eligible for, K-12 foster youth practitioners identified the following challenges:

- Youth placement status disqualifies student for benefits
- Student under jurisdiction of CDSS but not eligible under LCFF
- Differences between LCFF vs. AB 490 definitions
- Discrepancies between data systems

> "There is confusion about youth in Family Maintenance. There is confusion about probation youth who are not in out-of-home placement but who do qualify for AB 167/216."
> (Survey Response: February 2020)

The creation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) resulted in more cohesion among some foster youth services and increased the number of foster youth eligible for services.[50] However, 38 percent of K-12 practitioners in this study stated there

were challenges with the LCFF definition of foster youth. This is likely the result of K-12 practitioners being confused about where students fall under the LCFF and AB 490 definitions and how these definitions impact the services these students can receive. The inconsistency in definitions of "foster youth" create data coherence and alignment problems for practitioners.

Additionally, the reporting is unreliable due to varying definitions within data systems. For instance, the CALPADS 5.7 Report, which aims to produce a point-in-time list of current foster youth enrolled in K-12, only includes foster students who meet the LCFF definition.

Too many data systems

K-12 practitioners shared that they must leverage multiple complex data systems when trying to meet the needs of foster students. Figure 12 shows practitioners in this study identified 13 different data sources to access foster youth data. This is consistent with the previous finding that 32 percent of data quality challenges reported by practitioners are related to using differing data sources to serve foster students (Figure 9). These sources often provide inconsistent information and are not aligned in a way that allows them to function cohesively and in real-time.
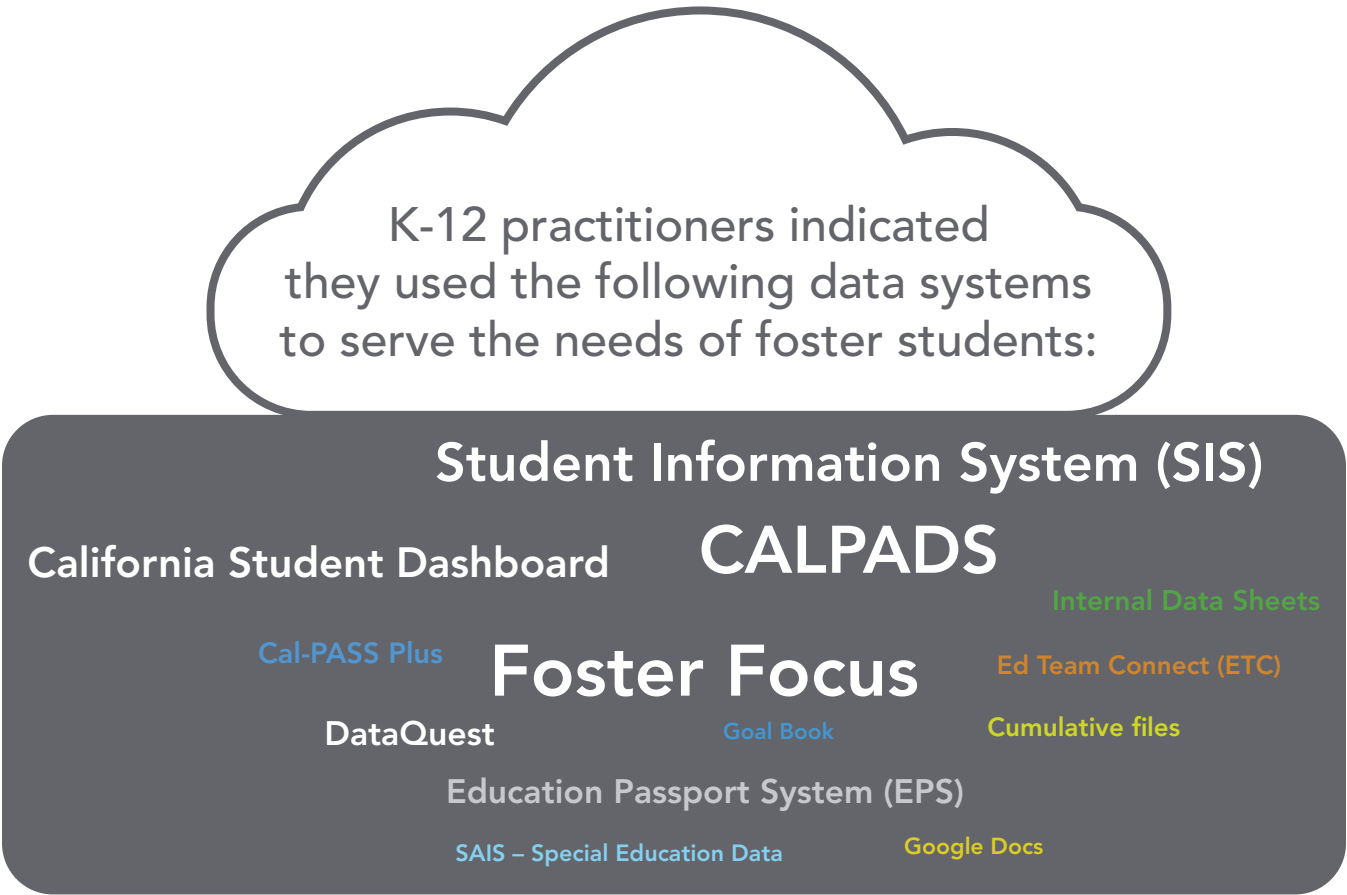
The K-12 level uses the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), which is administered by the California Department of Education (CDE). It contains student-level data, including demographic, academic, discipline, and assessment information. The Child Welfare Services/ Case Management System (CWS/CMS), which is overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), is a centralized statewide system that allows state and county child welfare workers to share information on individual foster youth. CWS/CMS data is sent to CDE and CALPADS generates a weekly report – called the 5.7 Report – for school districts and county offices of education that indicates which students are in foster care. Because the CALPADS 5.7 Report is a weekly report that once generated replaces prior historical reports, service providers cannot use this information to track data over time or maintain a cumulative list of which students were in foster care at any point during the academic year.

To address data sharing challenges, some county offices of education have developed data systems that can match CALPADS 5.7 Reports with Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data. For example, Foster Focus, a system created by the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), links student information systems and CALPADS data, providing county offices of education with a foster youth dashboard and data matching. This system enables program staff to take timely action when students need additional help; however, only those counties who pay SCOE directly have access to Foster Focus (SCOE, 2015). In addition to both the state and county systems, each school district uses a student information system (SIS) (e.g. ESchoolPlus, Aeries, Infinite Campus, and PowerSchool) to house individualized student data that includes course enrollment, grades, transcripts, assessment scores, and attendance.

One barrier that exists is clarity about which data elements should be collected for the different data systems being used. When data systems miss important data elements needed to identify students and needs, K-12 practitioners are forced to use multiple data systems, increasing the possibility that manual searches will result in students with needs not being identified. This study identified the 14 data elements most often utilized by K-12 foster youth practitioners (See Table 2). These are similar to the data elements identified by Data Quality Campaign.[51]

Figure 12.

K-12 practitioners indicated
they used the following data systems
to serve the needs of foster students:

Student Information System (SIS)

California Student Dashboard   CALPADS

Internal Data Sheets

Cal-PASS Plus   Foster Focus   Ed Team Connect (ETC)

DataQuest   Goal Book   Cumulative files

Education Passport System (EPS)

SAIS – Special Education Data   Google Docs

Foster Focus	48%	Cumulative files	2%
CALPADS	43%	Ed Team Connect (ETC)	2%
Student Information system (SIS)	22%	Internal Data Sheets	2%
California Student Dashboard	11%	Goal Book	1%
DataQuest	6%	Google Docs	1%
Education Passport System (EPS)	5%	SAIS - Special Education Data	1%
Cal-PASS Plus	3%		

Table 2. Most common data element group sets identified by K-12 practitioners that work with foster student data

Data element group sets	Percentage of K-12 FY practitioners who identified using each particular data element group set
1. Child Welfare Case Data	47.0%
2. Ed. Rights Holder	20.9%
3. School Mobility	15.7%
4. High School Specific Info	13.0%
5. Historical Student Data	12.2%
6. Attendance	11.3%
7. Academics	11.3%
8. Support & Interventions	10.4%
9. Behaviors	10.4%
10. Discipline Info	8.7%
11. IEPs	7.0%
12. School of Origin	5.2%
13. Mental Health Records	5.2%
14. Graduation Data	5.2%

The total percentage is greater than 100 percent due to practitioners identifying multiple data elements.

Inefficiencies limit the amount of time spent serving foster youth

Compounding this issue, many districts endure time-consuming and manual processes to collect the data in one system. This creates co-located data, which is not as comprehensive or streamlined as fully integrated data. This inefficiency puts an undue burden on foster youth practitioners and can limit their time spent on effectively serving foster youth.

Figure 13 demonstrates that a high percentage of practitioners must access data from more than three sources.
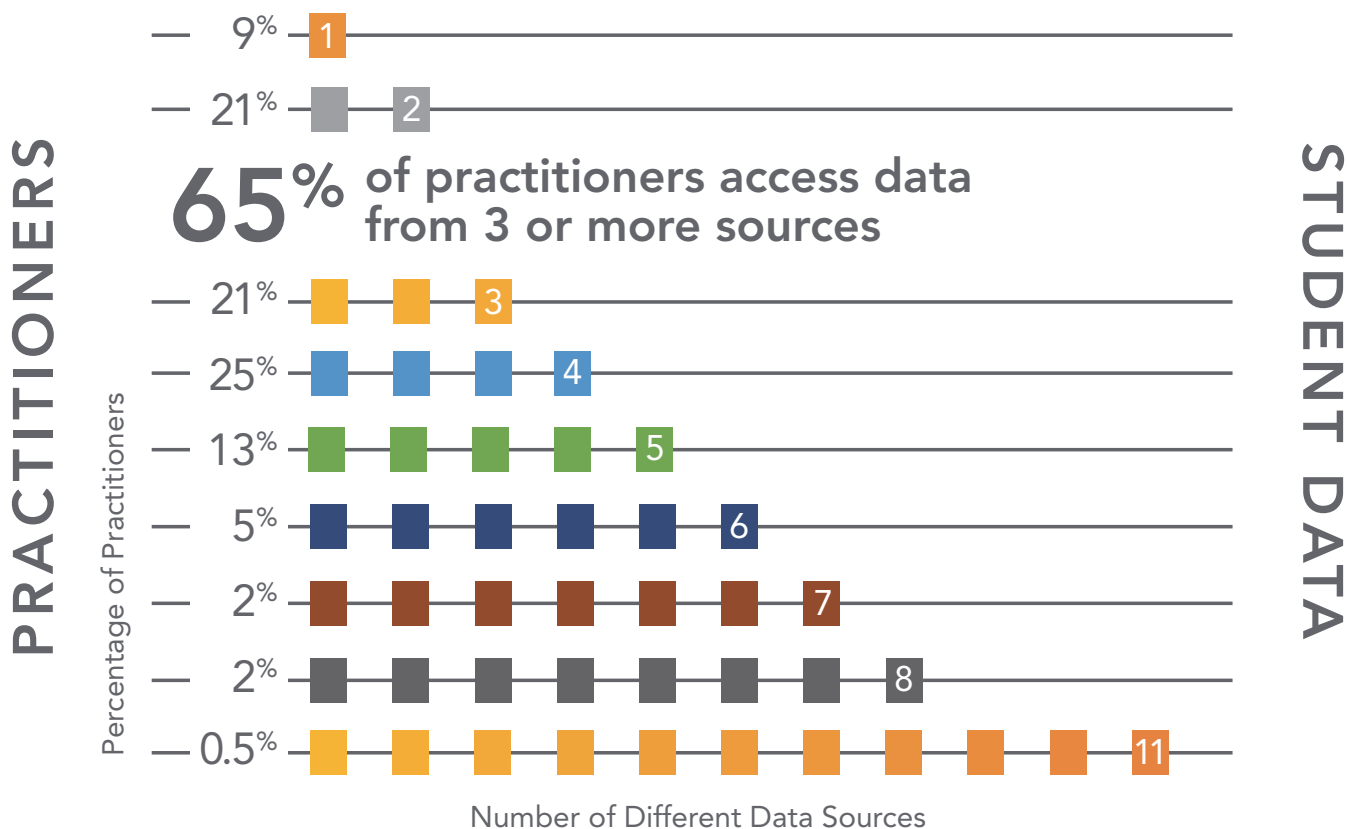
Keeping track of all relevant data is difficult

Table 3 shows the data K-12 practitioners collect when serving their foster students. The challenge for many practitioners is that they may be gathering all their data and storing it in one place but are unable to easily integrate the various pieces from multiple data sources such as a student information system (SIS), assessment programs or learning applications. Foster youth are an extremely mobile population, often dropping on and off a school or district's designated foster youth list multiple times throughout a school year. As the different state agencies that compile data on foster youth do not have an integrated data system, tracking these changes over time can be difficult for practitioners. Additionally, the data gathered may not follow the youth between districts and counties. As a result, many practitioners find themselves having to manually gather historical data about their students.

Most notably, 21.6 percent of practitioners collect information about the support and services foster youth receive, presumably to prevent duplication of services. Additionally, 19.8 percent of practitioners collect cumulative information about which students have been identified at some point as foster youth over the course of the school year. If a practitioner is not manually saving 5.7 Reports each week, which provide only a point in time list, or utilizing a system that can compile the 5.7 Reports into a cumulative report for an entire school year, the historical information is lost. This limits the possibilities for data-informed continuous improvement tracking. The current system requires too much effort from practitioners who are already strapped for time and does not offer a simplified process for foster youth champions to obtain actionable data. Manually uploading or tracking data places a burden on practitioners that takes away time from serving students.

Figure 13.

Only 9% of practitioners can access student data from one data source

PRACTITIONERS

Percentage of Practitioners

| 9% | 1 |
| 21% | 2 |

65% of practitioners access data from 3 or more sources

21%	3
25%	4
13%	5
5%	6
2%	7
2%	8
0.5%	11

Number of Different Data Sources

STUDENT DATA

"*We use CALPADS, Foster Focus, and the CMS/CWS system. We get information from individual district student information systems, like AERIES. We use PROMISE for our county office of education, court, and community schools and we mine data out of Data Quest.*" *(Interview: March 2020)*

"*There isn't one data source, and there's not one data system that communicates across all the systems or agencies. So, the challenge is, you need someone who has the time and the ability to pull data from multiple data sources and multiple data systems. This is a daily activity, and so you have to have somebody who is dedicated to do this and that's their full-time job. Another challenge is to bring all that data and somehow extract what is useful and what's needed. There may be data for reports that are needed for the end of the year FYSC program. There also may be data that we have to pull for our advisory council. There may be data that the courts want on individual students.*" *(Interview: March 2020)*

Table 3. Data K-12 practitioners collect when serving foster students

Types of data K-12 practitioners collect	Percentage of foster youth practitioners who collect this data
1. Support & Services	21.6%
2. Student grades	19.8%
3. Attendance	19.0%
4. Student Academic Records	13.8%
5. High School Academic and Transition Information	13.8%
6. Discipline Information	11.2%
7. Student Needs	9.5%
8. Behaviors	9.5%
9. Testing — State & Local	8.6%
10. Child Welfare Placement Information	8.6%
11. School Mobility	5.2%
12. Demographics	5.2%
13. Health or Mental Health History	4.3%

The total percentage is greater than 100 percent due to practitioners identifying multiple data collected.

Section III: How do the challenges experienced by K-12 practitioner's impact their ability to serve foster students?

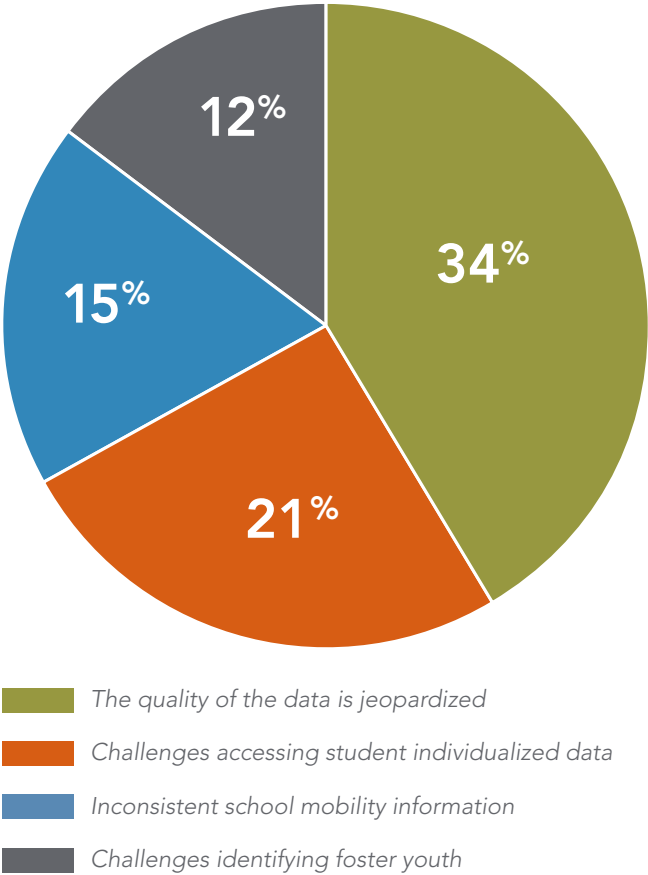*Lags in data availability impact student services*

K-12 foster youth practitioners stated they do not receive timely data about their foster students, resulting in serious barriers to providing effective supports. When data is delayed and/or incorrect and additional information needs to be gathered to confirm the accuracy of the data, it impacts a practitioner's ability to correctly identify student needs.

Youth in foster care frequently experience interruptions in their education as a result of inadequate information sharing. For example, when foster youth change schools, the child welfare agency, the child's caregivers, and the new school often do not have timely access to their educational records. These contain essential information about academic performance, educational history, progress, and special needs. As a result, the student sits idle while the adults are waiting for information. One practitioner echoed how lagged data can impact foster youth: "There isn't consistent use of data between districts. When requesting foster youth data through a data system some districts respond in a timely manner, but others do not. It's hard to move forward with making appropriate decisions when student information is not received in a timely manner." (Survey: February 2020) In this study, 34 percent of the responses mentioned that the data quality used to make decisions about a student is impacted by a lack of timeliness in receiving information (See Figure 14).

> *All of these things (i.e. student needs, discipline information, child welfare placement information, etc.) are beyond the scope of what I believe is provided. For example, state test scores, chronic absenteeism, suspension rate, graduation rate, are the ones we see at the dashboard level. We just get more into detail about all of it, because there is so much more information needed to serve our youths than just those other metrics." (Interview: March 2020)

Figure 14. K-12 foster youth practitioners describe experiencing the following challenges when foster youth data is lagged or inaccurate:

- The quality of the data is jeopardized
- Challenges accessing student individualized data
- Inconsistent school mobility information
- Challenges identifying foster youth

Training is needed to improve understanding and use of foster youth data

Foster youth practitioners expressed that additional training is needed to help improve their understanding and use of foster youth data. Knowing which data system can be used to acquire specific information is integral, as many practitioners identified needing training on data systems. More specifically practitioners referenced needing additional training on accessing and utilizing foster youth data (See Figure 15).

More robust use of foster youth data needed to improve educational outcomes

Having accurate, easily accessible, and timely data on foster youth can help practitioners target programs, services, and supports for their students on an individual basis. Figure 16 shows the percentage of practitioners that rely on data to identify various student needs.
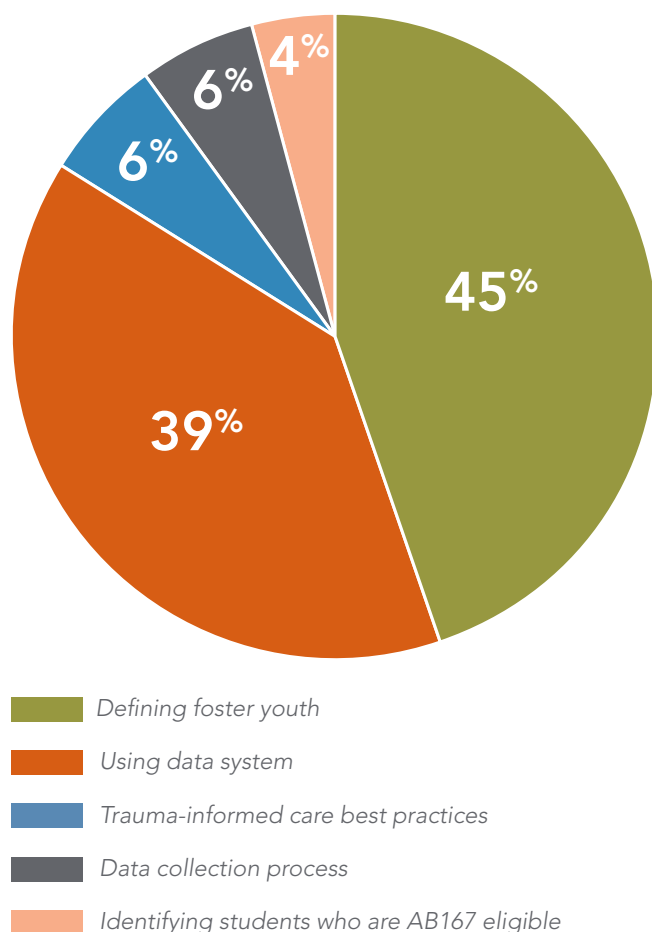

"*The foster youth data file provided by our County Office of Education is not the best tool. It lists students by schools and often that information is incorrect. The inaccurate data requires a lot of additional research to determine if students are ours. [In addition] often students are re-united with their parents and that can take a while to reflect on the CALPADS foster youth list and former foster youth list.*"
(Survey Response: February 2020)

"*To reconcile the lists between SIS and CALPADS we need a 10-digit case number. It is nearly impossible to get that number if the student is placed with us from out of county, which is often the case in our area. More than half of our students can be from another county. Then once we confirm the youth is foster, getting assistance to get the correct information into CALPADS is often like pulling teeth. It is nearly impossible to get one accurate list of foster youth in our district.*"
(Survey Response: February 2020)

Other uses of foster youth data

Figure 17 shows data assists K-12 practitioners in developing and improving foster youth interventions, supports, and services. More specifically, practitioners identified using the FAFSA challenge, independent living program (ILP), transportation services and tutoring to help meet the needs of their foster youth. While participants reported that they use foster youth data to identify interventions and programs for individual students, only 26 percent of participants identified using data for program evaluation to monitor the impact of the foster youth liaison, stakeholder engagement activities and trauma informed practices.

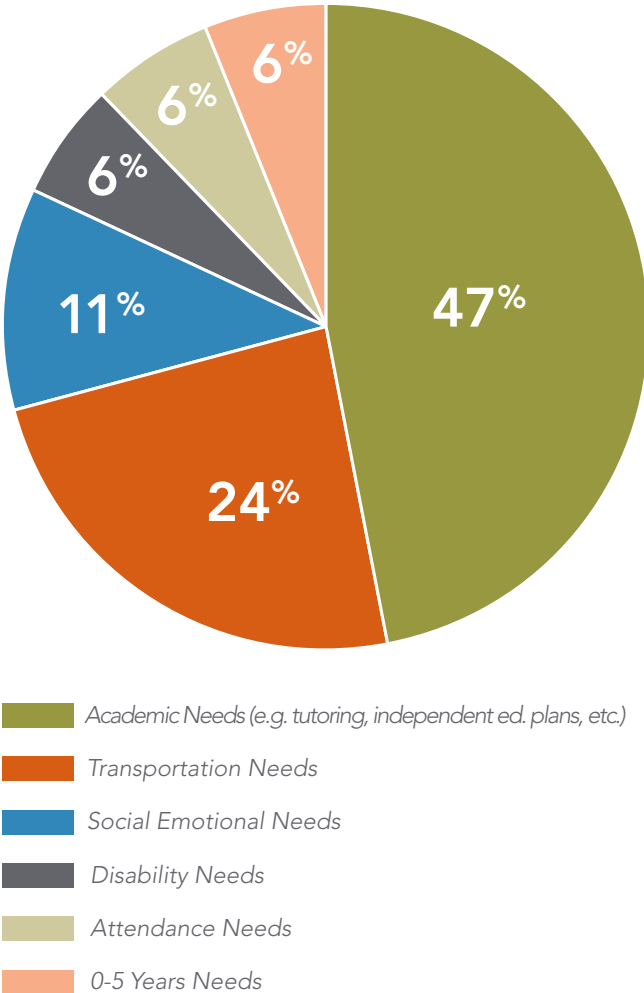Figure 15. K-12 foster youth practitioners described the following as their data training needs:

- Defining foster youth
- Using data system
- Trauma-informed care best practices
- Data collection process
- Identifying students who are AB167 eligible

*The total percentage is greater than 100 percent due to practitioners identifying multiple training.

** Assembly Bill 167 (2009) exempts pupils in foster care from local graduation requirements under certain conditions. 2009 Cal AB 167, Section 1.
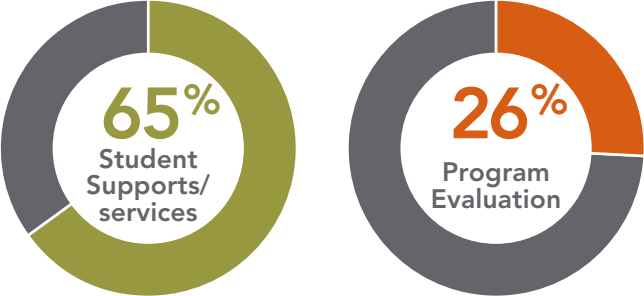

" I think it would be helpful to have some sort of… primer or guidelines that explain the data definitions in a meaningful way… After a phone call with a person at the state level, I finally was like, oh, I didn't know that's what you meant by continuous... If this could be broken down in a way that people can understand because people don't know what to do with this data, if they don't understand the definition of what it's actually telling them. And that really does influence how you interpret the data. So, I know as a practitioner I could really use a quick guide or something to DataQuest." *(Interview: March 2020)*

Figure 16. K-12 foster youth practitioners use data to help them identify the following student needs:

- **Academic Needs** (e.g. tutoring, independent ed. plans, etc.)
- **Transportation Needs**
- **Social Emotional Needs**
- **Disability Needs**
- **Attendance Needs**
- **0-5 Years Needs**

The total percentage is does not equal 100 percent due to some practitioners not identifying specific needs.

Figure 17. K-12 foster youth practitioners identified the following as additional ways they use their data:

65% Student Supports/services

26% Program Evaluation

The total percentage does not equal 100 percent due to some practitioners not identifying specific interventions/programs.

Limitations of this Study

This report has made substantial contributions to what is known about the quality and accessibility of foster youth data. However, there are several key limitations:

- While the study utilized a purposeful sample of practitioners in California, there were some regions that had a higher participation rate. Therefore, this study could not control for isolated challenges that certain regions may experience when working with foster youth data.

- The study originally planned to complete three focus groups and 11 interviews; but due to the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic, researchers were unable to convene in-person with study participants as originally planned and the study only included one focus group and nine interviews. The decrease in data collection resulted in the over-representation of county office of education practitioners in the focus group.

- The study did not make a distinction between the experiences faced by foster youth practitioners at the county office of education and those at the school district level. While practitioners' experience may differ at each of these work settings, the essence of the study focused on the overall experiences of K-12 foster youth practitioners. Future studies should separate these two groups to gain a better understanding of whether there are differing experiences in the use of data faced by foster youth practitioners in different work settings.

- This analysis was limited to foster youth in California, so these findings may not be generalizable to other states.

Conclusion

To improve educational outcomes for foster youth, there must be better alignment and coherence in the data used by K-12 practitioners. This *Sharpening the View* study reveals that practitioners face significant challenges when trying to obtain the quality data needed to do their job. From access and timeliness issues to having to pull information from multiple data systems and sources, foster youth practitioners have expressed that the lack of alignment and coherence in the data they access impacts their ability to provide timely and effective supports to their foster students. These practitioners are seeking consistency in foster youth definitions, better sharing of quality data among agencies and school districts, and more training on best practices.

Foster youth served by K-12 practitioners experience the trauma of abuse or neglect, often compounded by being removed from their homes. They often experience multiple residential and school placements, educational dislocation, and more. To help this vulnerable population, K-12 practitioners need access to a seamless data experience that

identifies each foster youth by name and by need in as close to real-time as possible. Only then will practitioners be fully equipped to deliver vital services that can change the academic and life trajectory of foster youth.

K-12 practitioners' jobs become more challenging when having to navigate multiple complex data systems to serve the needs of their students. This *Sharpening the View* study revealed that from the perspective of practitioners, a lack of access to quality data, too many definitions of foster youth, too many data systems, and data lags all impact student services. Elaborating on these current challenges:

- Multiple data systems use inconsistent definitions of foster youth and therefore information about foster youth in these systems are not aligned in a way that allows them to function cohesively and coherently.

- Data systems used by the various agencies that capture information about foster youth do not regularly communicate and share data among each other in real-time. For example, when a youth moves to a new county, K-12 practitioners are often unable to access that student's data from other systems.

- The data practitioners receive is not timely, which negatively impacts the educational outcomes of foster youth who may not immediately receive supports and interventions when they are most needed.

Finally, this study reveals the need for consistent data sharing processes and training. While the California Department of Education has recently made training available to K-12 foster youth practitioners, more practitioners should get connected to these trainings and learn from best practices used by others. Until all practitioners have been fully trained, the possibility of user error or not operating under best practices, runs high.

Sharpening the View starts with improving K-12 foster youth practitioners' data user experience and then providing them with the training and tools necessary to help connect their students with timely supports and interventions.

Actionable Recommendations

1. **Create a workable definition of foster youth that is inclusive and consistent.**

   Rather than having multiple technical definitions of foster youth across various sections of state code, California policymakers should begin the process of creating one workable definition that serves all foster youth. A workable definition means that frontline K-12 practitioners can seamlessly connect all students who should be categorized as foster youth to the services and supports that were intended for foster students. This starts by creating a foster youth definition that is inclusive, meaning that all students who fall under the jurisdiction of the child welfare system—such as unaccompanied refugee minors and youth in voluntary placement—be entitled to the same services and supports as students currently defined as foster youth under LCFF. Second, this definition must be consistent across data systems that touch foster students to facilitate the exchange of data between agencies.

2. **Improve data sharing between school districts and agencies serving foster youth.**

   K-12 foster youth practitioners are leveraging multiple complex data systems and sources when trying to meet the needs of their foster students. Because there is not one data system that provides foster youth practitioners with all the information needed to serve their students, regular data sharing between agencies is critical. Upon adopting a more workable K-12 foster youth definition in state code, the major agencies working with foster youth should agree to share their foster youth data with each other in as close to real-time as possible. The agencies should coordinate and work with each other to:

   (1) establish norms for the 14 most used data elements identified by practitioners in this report (See Table 2);

   (2) Standardize the data by ensuring there is a common data format so that disparate data sets are formatted into one consistent organization;

   (3) Establish an application program interface (API) between data systems that need to regularly exchange data with each other, so when one system's data is updated, all systems are updated;

   (4) Create centralized access to CALPADS at the state level for K-12 practitioners.

3. **Connect more K-12 practitioners to trainings on best practices for accessing and using foster youth data.**

   Use of data enables practitioners and policymakers to improve educational outcomes for foster youth. While the California Department of Education is now offering training to K-12 foster youth practitioners, more of them need to connect with these trainings. The trainings are critical for helping practitioners learn best practices for accessing data and how to use the data to inform their work, including program evaluation for efficacy and continuous improvement. These best practices should include clear, consistent protocols and expectations for collecting foster youth data, accessing the data and reporting it.

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Appendix A: Data Collection

Data collection occurred in three phases (focus group, survey, and interviews) and participants represented each of the regions for each phase. Prior to participating in research, individuals were informed about the purpose and aims of the study, how the results will be used, and the likely social consequences the study will have on their lives.

Participants were given the option to refuse to participate in a study and to withdraw at any time. Participants were also provided information guaranteeing their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected.[52] By using a variety of methods to collect our data we were able to triangulate our findings which reduced the risk of chance associations and the development of systematic biases.[53]

Study Participant Characteristics

Method	Sample Size	Region	Work Site	Experience
Focus Group	8 participants	Northern – 25.0% Central – 12.5% Southern – 62.5%	COE – 100% District level – 0% School site – 0%	3-5 yrs – 25.0% 6-8 yrs – 12.5% 11+ yrs – 37.5% No response – 25.0%
Survey	193 respondents	Northern – 43.5% Central – 35.8% Southern – 20.7%	COE – 24.1% District level – 68.6% School site – 7.3%	< 3 mos – 3.6% 3-9 mos – 5.2% 1-2 yrs – 10.9% 3-5 yrs – 22.8% 6-8 yrs – 19.7% 9-10 yrs – 5.7% 11+ yrs – 32.1%
Interviews	9 participants	Northern – 44.4% Central – 33.3% Southern – 22.2%	COE – 54.6 % District level – 44.4 % School site – 0.0 %	3-8 yrs – 33.3% 9-15 yrs – 44.4% 16+ yrs – 22.2%

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

California Foster Youth Data: Identifying the Roadblocks and Building a Path Forward

	Question
1	In what region of California do you currently work with foster youth? (Northern, Central, Coast, Southern California)
2	In what capacities do you work with foster youth, both directly and indirectly?
3	How long have you been serving foster youth? If applicable, include the time you worked with foster youth from a previous district. Options: Less than 3 months; 3-6 months; 7-9 months; 1 year; 2-3 years; 4-5 years; 6-7 years; 8-9 years; more than 10 years
4	Do you/have you ever worked with foster youth data?
5	Where do you get your foster youth data from? Please select all sources where foster youth data is received from. Options: CALPADS 5.7 Reports, FosterEd, FosterForum, Student's personal files, IEPs, School registration forms, Other, please list:
6	How has the availability of FY data impacted your work with FY?
7	How has the availability of FY data impacted your work with FY?
8	If you answered yes in Q4, please describe any challenges you had working with foster youth data?
9	What are the challenges you have encountered with variations in definitions of foster youth?
10	What data or information is either not collected, not available, or inconsistently collected/available would be most helpful to your work serving foster youth?
11	On a scale of 1-7 (with 1 being not helpful to 7 being very helpful), how beneficial is the foster youth data you currently receive?
12	On a scale of 1-7 (with 1 being don't see the need to 7 being there is an urgent need), how much of a need do you see for improvements in foster youth data?
13	On a scale of 1-7 (with 1 being no challenges to 7 many challenges), how challenging is it to access, utilize, and disseminate foster youth data?
14	What data do you, as a practitioner, collect about the foster youth you serve that you do not see reflected in the state/district data systems? How does the data you collect independently help you better serve foster youth?
15	Is there any other insights about foster youth data that you have not shared yet in this survey, but is valuable to further our understanding of the challenges of using and or collecting foster youth data in practice?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

California Foster Youth Data: Identifying the Roadblocks and Building a Path Forward

Name of Interviewee:

Title:

Region of California:

Site:

Name of Interviewer:

Date of interview:

Start Time: End Time:

Introduction/Opening Statement:

Thank you again for agreeing to speak with me today. The purpose of this interview is to ask you questions about your experience working with foster youth and the challenges you've experienced with foster youth data. This interview is scheduled for 90 minutes but may be shorter than the allowed time. Additionally, this interview consists of 15 questions, your responses to these questions will help us to better understand the challenges, gaps, and changes needed with foster youth data. As promised when we scheduled this interview, your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study. If at any time you do not want to answer a question or you want to stop the interview, you may let me know. If at the conclusion of this interview, you want to revoke your consent to participate in this study you may let me know, as well.

I would like to accurately capture our conversation today. In order to do this, may I audio record your responses? Please note the recording of this interview will be uploaded to a secure electronic file on our organization's server.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions about practitioner's experience working with foster youth:

1. In what capacity do you work with foster youth, both directly and indirectly? (If the interviewee does not specify, ask if their role is at the County Office of Education, District Level, and/or at a School Site).

2. How long have you been serving foster youth? If applicable, include the time you worked with foster youth from a previous district.

3. How do you utilize foster youth data? If the interviewee is unsure about how to answer this question, provide him/her with an example (e.g. supports, services, academics, etc.).

Questions about challenges with foster youth data:

4. In your opinion, and from your experience, are there any challenges you have working with foster youth data? Please describe these challenges and what do you perceive to be the cause of these problems?

Questions about collecting and reporting foster youth data:

5. What experience do you have with attending child welfare, Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings and/or Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings? How do you access the information shared in these meetings?

6. Where do you get your foster youth data from? Please include all the sources where you access foster youth data.

7. In your opinion, and from your experience working with foster youth, what are the barriers practitioners face in collecting and reporting foster youth data?

Questions about how practitioners use foster youth data:

8. What data or information is either not collected, not available, or inconsistently collected/ available would be most helpful to your work serving foster youth?

9. Are there specific data metrics or categories you would like to receive for foster youth data? If so, what are these specific data metrics or categories?

10. What data do you, as a practitioner, collect about the foster youth you serve that you do not see reflected in the state and/or the district data systems? How does the data you collect independently help you better serve foster youth?

11. How frequently would you like to receive foster youth data? If you disseminate foster youth data, how often would you like it to be disseminated?

Additional feedback:

12. What are some positive changes made by the state and/or your district you've experienced throughout your time working with foster youth data?

13. If you could make a wish list, what information about each foster youth would be important to share across practitioners to best help each foster youth?

14. Are there any other insights about foster youth data that you have not shared yet in this interview, but is valuable to further our understanding of the challenges of using and or collecting foster youth data in practice?

15. Are there any questions you thought we would ask you but didn't?

Appendix D: Categories Hierarchy Table

Categories	Subcategory 1	Subcategory 2	Subcategory 3	Subcategory 4
1. Benefits of data	1.1 Availability 1.2 Collaboration 1.3 Conduct program evaluation 1.4 Ed rights holder 1.5 Educating the public 1.6 FY trends/draft reports 1.7 Identification of FY 1.8 Job efficiency 1.9 Make informed decisions 1.10 Monitor school performance 1.11 Placement information 1.12 Program planning 1.14 Provide additional resources 1.15 Student enrollment 1.16 Student support members	1.10.1 Attendance 1.10.2 Behaviors 1.10.3 Discipline 1.10.4 Student outcomes 1.12.1 Provide supports and services		
2. Best Interest Determination				
3. Collaboration (Related to Data Sharing)	3.1 COE to School Districts 3.2 FY Practitioner and Teacher or Other Adult 3.3 Interagency 3.4 MOUs 3.5 School districts and school sites	3.3.1 CDSS to partner agencies 3.3.2 COE to partner agencies 3.3.3 LEA's and CDSS		
4. Data Barriers/ Challenges	4.1 Access to student individual data 4.2 Attendance 4.3 Challenges- Interventions/ program data 4.4 Data Quality 4.5 Ed rights holder 4.6 Enrollment 4.7 FY definitions 4.8 FY identification 4.9 Graduation rate 4.10 Interventions/Program data 4.11 Local vs. state data reports 4.12 Medical history 4.13 Mental health information 4.14 Qualitative data 4.15 School mobility/stability 4.16 Special education 4.17 Technical support 4.18 Timeliness of data/lag of data 4.19 Transitions 4.20 Tribal youth	4.1.1 Academic data 4.1.2 Ed. Rights holder 4.1.3 Historical data 4.1.4 IEPs 4.1.5 Reason for care 4.1.6 Social emotional 4.1.7 Support team contact info. 4.1.8 Youth needs 4.4.1 Data formatting/structure 4.4.2 Data reporting for grade level 4.4.3 Data reporting requirements 4.4.4 Differing data systems 4.4.5 Differing metrics/definitions 4.4.6 Manual data entry 4.4.7 Students no longer in care 4.7.1 Data dissemination 4.7.2 Data system definitions 4.7.3 LCFF definition 4.7.4 LCFF vs. AB 490 4.7.5 LCFF vs. AB 854 4.7.6 LCFF vs. CDSS 4.7.7 Non-Foster youth 4.7.8 State vs. school districts 4.7.9 Tribal youth 4.7.10 Youth placement status 4.8.1 Placement of FY/inconsistence being in care	4.4.3.1 Data reporting for grade level 4.4.3.2 Frequency reporting data 4.4.3.3 Graduation rates 4.4.3.4 Higher ed 4.4.3.5 Number of foster youth 4.4.3.6 Reporting attendance 4.7.4.1 Probation youth	

Appendix D: Categories Hierarchy Table

Categories	Subcategory 1	Subcategory 2	Subcategory 3	Subcategory 4
5. Data Collection	5.1 Data collection methods 5.2 Data practitioners collect 5.3 Structure consistency/formatting 5.4 Timeliness	5.1.1 Spreadsheet 5.1.2 Surveys 5.2.1 Academic assessments 5.2.2 Attendance 5.2.3 Behaviors 5.2.4 Best interest determination 5.2.5 Communications- School & Child Welfare 5.2.6 Cradle to Kindergarten 5.2.7 Historical information 5.2.8 Demographics 5.2.9 Discipline information 5.2.10 Elementary school information 5.2.11 English learners 5.2.12 Goals/struggles 5.2.13 Student grades 5.2.14 High school academic and transition info. 5.2.15 Medical needs 5.2.16 Child welfare placement info. 5.2.17 Probation youth 5.2.18 Qualitative data 5.2.19 School climate 5.2.20 School connectedness 5.2.21 School enrollment data 5.2.22 School mobility 5.2.23 School of origin 5.2.24 School transitions 5.2.25 Social emotional/mental health info. 5.2.26 Student needs 5.2.27 Student records 5.2.28 Student support members 5.2.29 Supports & services 5.2.30 Testing- state & local	5.2.9.1 Each incident 5.2.14.1 Academic progress 5.2.14.2 Beyond high school 5.2.14.3 Chafee grant 5.2.14.4 Dropout/expulsions 5.2.14.5 FAFSA 5.2.14.5 High school completion 5.2.16.1 Placement changes 5.2.16.2 Placement type 5.2.18.1 Narrative notes 5.2.27.1 Birth certificate 5.2.27.2 CFTs & TDMs 5.2.27.3 Court information 5.2.27.4 Ed Rights holder 5.2.27.5 IEP and 504 plans 5.2.27.6 Immunization record 5.2.27.7 Social services information 5.2.27.8 Transcripts 5.2.27.9 Treatment plans	5.2.14.5.1 AB 167/216
6. Data use by practitioners	6.1 Identify student needs 6.2 Interventions/programs	6.1.1 0-5 years needs 6.1.2 Academic needs 6.1.3 Attendance needs 6.1.4 Disabilities 6.1.5 Social emotional needs 6.1.6 Transportation needs 6.2.1 Program evaluation 6.2.2 Supports and services	6.2.1.1 Best practices 6.2.2.1 FAFSA challenge 6.2.2.2 ILP 6.2.2.3 Transportation 6.2.3.4 Tutoring	6.2.1.1.1 Foster youth liaison 6.2.1.1.2 Stakeholder engagement 6.2.1.1.3 Trauma informed practices
7. FY barriers				
8. FY impact	8.1 Access to supports & services 8.2 Data accuracy–outcomes changing 8.3 Placement stability 8.4 Probation youth 8.5 School mobility 8.6 School of origin 8.7 Student needs	8.7.1 Transportation		

Appendix D: Categories Hierarchy Table

Categories	Subcategory 1	Subcategory 2	Subcategory 3	Subcategory 4
9. FY student data	9.1 Accessing data 9.2 Data elements 9.3 Frequency of data usage 9.4 Frequency receiving data	9.1.1 Advocate groups 9.1.2 CFT & TDM information 9.1.3 Differences in data collection 9.1.4 Different data systems 9.1.5 Foster youth & their support team members 9.2.1 Academics 9.2.2 Attendance 9.2.3 Barriers 9.2.4 Behaviors 9.2.5 Best interest determination 9.2.6 Birth certificate 9.2.7 CDSS data 9.2.8 Cohort data 9.2.9 Cradle to kindergarten 9.2.10 Discipline information 9.2.11 Ed. Rights holder 9.2.12 Education engagement data 9.2.13 Elementary school 9.2.14 Grades 9.2.15 High school specific information 9.2.16 Higher education 9.2.17 Historical data 9.2.18 IEPs 9.2.19 Immunizations records 9.2.20 Medical information 9.2.21 Mental health records 9.2.22 Probation data 9.2.23 School connectedness 9.2.25 School mobility 9.2.26 School of origin 9.2.27 Socio-emotional needs 9.2.28 Special education 9.2.29 State and local testing 9.2.30 Student needs 9.2.31 Student strengths 9.2.32 Support team members contact info. 9.2.33 Support and interventions 9.2.34 Tribal youth	9.1.4.1 Cal-Pass Plus 9.1.4.2 California Student Dashboard 9.1.4.3 CALPADS 9.1.4.4 Cumulative files 9.1.4.5 DataQuest 9.1.4.6 Ed Team Connect (ETC 9.1.4.7 Education Passport System (EPS) 9.1.4.8 Foster Focus 9.1.4.9 Goal Book 9.1.4.10 Google Docs 9.1.4.11 Internal data sheets 9.1.4.12 SAIS- Special Education Data 9.1.4.13 Student information system (SIS) 9.2.7.1 CFT & TDM information 9.2.7.2 Court information 9.2.7.3 Foster status 9.2.7.4 Parental rights 9.2.7.5 Placement information 9.2.7.6 Social worker contact 9.2.7.7 Visitation information 9.2.15.1 AB 167/216 9.2.15.2 Graduation rate 9.2.15.3 Higher ed. transitions	9.1.4.3.1 CMS/CWS 9.1.4.13.1 AERIES 9.1.4.13.2 Data Zone 9.1.4.13.3 Power School 9.1.4.13.4 PROMISE 9.1.4.13.5 Q 9.1.4.13.6 Saleforce 9.1.4.13.6 School City 9.2.7.5.1 Reason for change in placement
10. LCFF/LCAP	10.1 Accountability 10.2 Funding 10.3 FY reporting requirements 10.4 Pre- LCFF			
11. Policy/law				
12. Positive changes to FY data	12.1 Accountability 12.2 Additional staff 12.3 Collaboration 12.4 Data system 12.5 Designated FY staff 12.6 Foster youth data metrics 12.7 Funding/resources 12.8 Identifying foster youth 12.9 Policy/law			

Appendix D: Categories Hierarchy Table

Categories	Subcategory 1	Subcategory 2	Subcategory 3	Subcategory 4
13. Practices sharing information	13.1 COE 13.2 Collaborations 13.3 Data system 13.4 Identify FY staff 13.5 Interagency communication 13.6 Internal communications 13.7 Share resources 13.8 Sharing procedures 13.9 Student reports 13.10 Timing of data sharing 13.11 What should be shared	13.5.1 Attend meetings 13.5.2 MOU's 13.5.3 Receiving information 13.11.1 Academics 13.11.2 Attendance 13.11.3 Best interest determination 13.11.4 CDSS information 13.11.5 Discipline 13.11.6 Ed. Rights holder 13.11.7 Education engagement 13.11.8 Education goals 13.11.9 Higher ed. 13.11.10 IEPs 13.11.11 Mental health info. 13.11.11 School mobility 13.11.12 School of origin 13.11.13 Student needs 13.11.14 Student progress 13.11.15 Student strengths 13.11.16 Students' connections 13.11.17 Support team members 13.11.18 Support and services	13.5.3.1 CFT/TDM outcomes 13.5.3.2 JV535 forms 13.11.4.1 Adult pick-up authorization 13.11.4.2 Court information 13.11.4.3 Placement information	
14. Resources	14.1 Money 14.2 Multiple roles 14.3 Needs improvement 14.4 Staff turnover 14.5 Time	14.2.1 Staff duties		
15. Suggestions for study findings				
16. Training	16.2 Data collection process 16.3 Data system 16.4 Defining foster youth 16.5 High school graduation requirements 16.6 Trauma-informed care	16.2.1 Provided training 16.2.2 Training needed		

Appendix E:
Foster Youth Definitions

Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program

42921(c) - a pupil in foster care means a foster youth, as defined in paragraph (b) of Section 42238.01, or a foster child who is detained in a county-operated juvenile detention facility.

Local Control Funding Formula

42238.01(b) "Foster youth" means any of the following:

(1) A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, whether or not the child has been removed from his or her home by the juvenile court pursuant to Section 319 or 361 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, has been removed from his or her home by the juvenile court pursuant to Section 727 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and is in foster care as defined by subdivision (d) of Section 727.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(3) A nonminor under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court, as described in Section 450 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, who satisfies all of the following criteria:

    (A) He or she has attained 18 years of age while under an order of foster care placement by the juvenile court, and is not more than 19 years of age on or after January 1, 2012, not more than 20 years of age on or after January 1, 2013, and not more than 21 years of age, on or after January 1, 2014, and as described in Section 10103.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

    (B) He or she is in foster care under the placement and care responsibility of the county welfare department, county probation department, Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization that entered into an agreement pursuant to Section 10553.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

    (C) He or she is participating in a transitional independent living case plan pursuant to Section 475(8) of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 675), as contained in the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), as described in Section 11403 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(4) (A) A dependent child of the court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization who is the subject of a petition filed in the tribal court pursuant to the tribal court's jurisdiction in accordance with the tribe's law, provided that the child would also meet one of the descriptions in Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code describing when a child may be adjudged a dependent child of the juvenile court.

    (B) This paragraph is effective no later than the 2020–21 fiscal year.

Educational Stability Benefits (AB 490)

48853.5(a) This section applies to a foster child. "Foster child" means a child who has been removed from his or her home pursuant to Section 309 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, is the subject of a petition filed under Section 300 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or has been removed from his or her home and is the subject of a petition filed under Section 300 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Local Graduation Exemptions (AB 167/216)

51225.2(a) "Pupil in foster care" means a child who has been removed from their home pursuant to Section 309 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, is the subject of a petition filed under Section 300 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or has been removed from their home and is the subject of a petition filed under Section 300 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.