




# The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

DATE: September 19-20, 2016

SUBJECT: Foster Youth Support Services: Empowering Students with Tools and Resources for Success		Item Number: 4.1	
		Attachment: Yes	
CATEGORY:	Student Services and Special Programs	TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION:	
Recommended By:	 Pam Walker, Vice Chancellor	Consent/Routine	
		First Reading	
Approved for Consideration:	Erik Skinner, Interim Chancellor	Action	
		Information	X

**ISSUE:** This item provides the Board with an overview of the various foster youth support services and programs administered by the Chancellor’s Office, the Foundation for California Community Colleges, and the 113 colleges in the system.

**BACKGROUND:** Almost 14,000 current and former foster youth enroll in California’s community colleges, working against the odds toward building a rewarding career and a stable life. Yet too many never complete a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year college. A key reason why a disproportionate number of foster youth fail to succeed in college is the lack of resources and support on campus to meet their special needs.

Current and former foster youth face many serious challenges that result in disproportionately low rates of educational attainment. Children enter the foster care system because of abuse or neglect inflicted upon them by their family, or when a child’s parents die or are incarcerated, and no one else can or will provide care. Foster youth often suffer academically, emotionally, and developmentally from the trauma they experienced before (and sometimes during) placement in foster care. Also, in custodial care, foster youth deteriorate academically from being moved from school to school as their foster-care placements change. Ten percent of students in foster care attend three or more schools in any given school year, compared to one percent of the general student population, and only two-thirds of students in foster care attend the same school all year, compared to 90 percent of other K-12 students. **(Background cont.)**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** This item is presented to the Board for information and discussion. **(Background cont.)**

Not surprisingly, these disadvantages follow foster youth throughout their education and result in significant barriers to college success. Foster youth graduate from high school, enroll in community college, and persist in community college for a second year at lower rates than not only students in the general population but also other disadvantaged students. According to a 2013 study, youth in foster care were 47 percent less likely to enter college than the general student population and 51 percent less likely to return after the first year. By age 26, only 4.4 percent of foster youth will have received a two-year college degree and 3.8 percent will have earned a four-year degree, rates significantly below the same-age population in California.

Educational outcomes for foster youth historically have been far below those of their non-foster youth peers, leading to lifetime disadvantage. Recognizing that foster youth experience significant disparities in accessing and completing higher education, several years ago the California Community College Chancellor's Office initiated a concerted effort to bring these issues to the forefront and improve the ability of youth to complete their education. Attached are descriptions of some of those efforts.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** This item is presented to the Board for information and discussion.