Educational Support for Students and Families:
New Opportunities to Address the Needs of Children in Foster Care and Creating a “Military Friendly State” in Florida
AMM
Orlando, FL • November 3-5, 2004

Background
Education of children in foster care
• 2002 Foster Care Independence Act signed
• Independent Living Services Workgroup
• Issues/Recommendations related to education

2004 Overview of legislation related to …
HB 723 - Education of Children in Foster Care
• Children known to the Department
• Establishes goals not rights
• Requires state agreement
• Requires local agreements
HB 723 — Education of Children in Foster Care

DCF and school district agreement shall include, but is not limited to…

• DCF requirements
• District School Board requirements
• DCF/School Board requirements for students with disabilities
• Training requirements

Department of Education
Next Steps

• Inform districts of legislative requirements
• Develop resource packet of information
• Provide technical assistance
• Disseminate district feedback/results
• Communicate with district liaisons

Contact Information

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Education of Foster Care Children

Researchers across the country have assessed the educational performance of children in foster care and have concluded that foster children as a group often demonstrate weaker cognitive abilities, behavioral and emotional problems, and higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness which contribute to poor academic performance and retention.

Performance on FCAT-Math

Performance on FCAT-Reading

The Interagency Agreement

- Agency Collaboration
- Staff Development
- Student Records and Sharing of Info
- Educational Stabilization
- Parental Rights
- Surrogate Parents
- Independent Living
- Evaluation
### Current Collaborative Efforts

- Quarterly Steering Committee
- Coordination of Training and Presentations
- Parent Involvement Training
- Surrogate Parent Planning
- Transition Planning
- Student Services Departments
- Data Systems
- Early Intervention
- Public School Choice
- Preparation for First Day of School

### Sharing of Information

- FERPA/Consent to Release Educational Records
- Letter Signed by the Superintendent
- Provision of active/exited client lists to SBBC bi-weekly
- “Hidden” flag on district Student Support Services screen while in foster care
- SBBC provides weekly attendance report and annual academic record to ChildNet
- SBBC provides notice to ChildNet when mandated parental correspondence is released.
- Child Advocate provides unique foster care demographic information form to school
- Centralized tracking of court orders affecting education

### Educational Stabilization

“ChildNet shall attempt to place students in foster care homes within or closest to their home school boundaries to facilitate stabilization of school placements.”
Transportation

- To the extent possible, transportation is provided to maintain the student in their school of record/history
- 92% (238) of the requests received were routed

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You can make a difference!

_I was in nine different homes as a teenager. The one stable thing in my life was my high school. When I got moved to the children’s shelter, staff took turns picking me up to make sure that I got to school. In retrospect, I realize that it was the most powerful thing somebody could have ever done for me — made sure I got an education._

(Bernstein, p. 81)

Internal Partners in Success

- Student Services (Social Work, Guidance, ESE, FDLRS, Psychological Services)
- Dropout Prevention
- Transportation
- Adult/Community Education
- Information Technology
- Legal Services
External Partners in Success

- Department of Children and Families
- Community-Based Care Provider
- Child Protective Investigation Units
- Attorney General’s Office
- Guardian-ad-Litem Office
- Legal Aid/Attorneys-ad-Litem
- Judges
- Service Providers

Current Collaborative Ventures

- SED Network
- Shared Services Network
- Safe and Drug Free Schools Forum
- Community Alliance
- DCIP (Dependency Court Improvement Project)

For Additional Information/Questions Contact:

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Military Friendly Florida

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Student Support Services Project

Lee Clark,
BEESS, DOE

Administrators’ Management Meeting
Orlando, FL • November 3-5, 2004

Military Friendly Florida

- SB 1604 amended or created laws
- Purpose of law
- Effects on schools and districts
- Technical assistance needs

Florida’s Military Installations

- Bay-Tyndall AFB
- Brevard- Patrick AFB
- Clay- Camp Blanding
- Dade- Southern Command
- Duval- NAS
  - Jacksonville NS
  - Mayport
- Escambia- NAS
  - Pensacola
- Hillsborough- MacDill AFB
- Monroe- NAS Key West
- Okaloosa- Eglin AFB
  - Hurlburt Field
- Pinellas- CG Group St. Petersburg
- Santa Rosa- NAS
  - Whiting Field
Purpose

- Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), 2005 list
- Loss of revenue
- Maintain and grow perception that Florida is military friendly
- Enhance accessibility of Florida’s schools to military connected students

Military Dependent Student Scholarships

Section 295.01
- Amended existing scholarship program to include eligible military dependents whose parent dies as a result of service connected injury, disease or disability sustained while on active duty
- Changed from sustained during time of war

McKay Scholarships

Section 1002.39(2)(a)
- Eliminates the residency requirement for military dependent students
- All other eligibility requirements remain in effect

Section 1002.39(8)
- Districts must expedite development of matrix based on existing/current IEP
Memoranda of Agreement
Section 1003.05
• A cooperative agreement between district & military installation to facilitate transition & collaboration.
• Districts w/military installations must develop MOA
• Contiguous districts encouraged to participate in development of MOA
• All districts must comply w/ legislative mandates

Access to Programs
Section 1003.05(3)
• Preference given to all active military dependent children
• All school districts must comply
• If student meets eligibility criteria—must be enrolled, not placed on waiting list
• Priority regardless of when entered district

Alternative Assessment
Section 1008.221
• Transferring “Seniors” may use concordant SAT or ACT scores in lieu of FCAT
• Not required to take FCAT prior to use of ACT or SAT
Foreign Liaison Officer Tuition

Section 1009.21
- Active duty foreign military officers serving as liaison officers residing or stationed in Florida, & their dependents classified as residents for tuition purposes
- Must attend CC or university w/in 50 miles of military establishment where assigned

Technical assistance needs?

Resources
- Student Support Services Project: http://sss.usf.edu/
- FL DOE: www.fln.edu/doe/military/
- Rich Downs, School Counseling Consultant, SSSP rdowns@tempest.coedu.usf.edu or 850.922-3732
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