

Improving Educational Outcomes for Child Welfare-Involved Youth:

Allegheny County's Implementation of the Child Welfare Education Screen



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The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is dedicated to meeting the human services needs of county residents, particularly the county's most vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of prevention, intervention, crisis management and after-care services.

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

CYF	DHS Office of Children, Youth and Families; Allegheny County’s public office mandated by law to protect children from abuse and neglect and to ensure permanency for children
DATA WAREHOUSE	Repository of DHS’s electronically stored data, designed to facilitate reporting and analysis and to aid in decision-making. All DHS programs, as well as entities such as the Allegheny County Jail, Allegheny County Medical Examiner’s Office and selected school districts, feed data into the Data Warehouse; in all, there are approximately 25 data sources both internal and external to DHS. The Data Warehouse houses more than 300 million records. Individuals are uniquely identified across systems by a matching algorithm that uses identifiers such as social security number, first name, last name and date of birth.
DHS	Allegheny County Department of Human Services
EDUCATION SCREEN	Pennsylvania General and Special Education/Disability Accommodation Screen; a tool for gathering information and making recommendations to relevant parties about the education needs of school-aged children and youth who are receiving child welfare services
EL	Education Liaison; an appointee within each county child welfare agency in Pennsylvania responsible for implementation of the Education Screen
ELC	Education Law Center; a nonprofit legal advocacy and educational organization dedicated to ensuring that all of Pennsylvania’s children have access to a quality public education. ELC’s work focuses on making sure that all children have access to school and school programs, providing families (and those who work with them) reliable, understandable information about education laws and policies, and improving schools.
EPOC	Education Point of Contact; a provider agency representative assigned to attend Education Screen training sessions and disseminate information throughout the agency

**Acronyms and
Definitions**

(continued)

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS	The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. This act created a new mandate to ensure school stability and immediate enrollment for children and youth in foster care. It requires child welfare agencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in school • consider education stability when identifying foster care placements • coordinate with local education agencies to ensure that young people stay in their current school when placed in foster care or are immediately enrolled in a new school if it is not in their best interest to stay in their school of origin.
GPA	Grade-Point Average
HHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
JLC	Juvenile Law Center; a national advocate for children’s rights, working across the country to enforce and promote the rights and well-being of children who come into contact with the justice, child welfare and other public systems
KIDS	Key Information and Demographic System; DHS’s electronic child welfare case management application
KIDVOICE	Nonprofit provider of child advocacy and legal representation services to children and youth in Allegheny County
MCKINNEY- VENTO	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §11431-11435); includes a section describing school district obligations for homeless children (including children in temporary shelters awaiting foster care)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding; a data sharing agreement between DHS and participating school districts (MOUs as of April 2013 include Pittsburgh Public Schools, Clairton City School District, Woodland Hills and Elizabeth Forward)
OCYF	Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families
PPS	Pittsburgh Public Schools
PSSA	Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the protective benefits of involvement in the child welfare system are well documented, there is increasing recognition that the unstable family living situations and/or frequent placement changes experienced by children in this system can result in delays in school enrollment, increases in absenteeism, disruptive school changes and lack of continuity in curricula. These factors, in turn, are associated with negative school outcomes such as higher rates of dropout and truancy, lower achievement and increased risk of assignment to alternative school placements, and failure to receive critical special education services.

In an effort to minimize these risks, the federal government requires collaboration among county child welfare agencies and local school districts, focused on the relationship between child welfare involvement and educational outcomes. Improving educational stability is also a priority of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), which identified a strategy for increasing collaborative efforts between counties and school districts with a focus on improved educational outcomes. The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) embraced this strategy and, since September 2010, has worked to implement the Pennsylvania General and Special Education/Disability Accommodation Screen (Education Screen) in partnership with provider agencies and local school districts.

This report primarily focuses on DHS's implementation of the Education Screen, beginning with the appointment of the Education Liaison (EL) responsible for serving as the central point of contact on education and ensuring that staff have access to training and technical assistance related to this implementation. Activities included revisions to the Key Information and Demographics System (KIDS), DHS's electronic child welfare records management application,

which allowed for the Education Screen to be completed electronically, and training and technical assistance related to all aspects of implementation. A survey completed by staff responsible for the Education Screen evaluated the training and technical assistance, the use — and usefulness — of KIDS, and the experience of completing the Education Screen. Select results of this survey are included in this report.

Lessons learned during the implementation process include the need for ongoing training and technical assistance; the importance of technology in making the Education Screen a useful and easily accessible tool; the value of, and challenges with, collaboration; and the multi-system commitment required to implement change.

Report Objective

This report is designed to share implementation strategies and lessons learned from Allegheny County’s implementation of the Education Screen with internal DHS staff, interested stakeholders and other child welfare agencies across Pennsylvania and nationally. It is hoped that Allegheny County’s experience will prove useful to those preparing for similar implementation in their jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

Why it Matters

When school children live in families whose lack of stability results in frequent moves, or experience frequent changes in child welfare placements, they are at increased risk of negative school outcomes resulting from delays in school enrollment and frequent absences. It is estimated that children lose four to six months of academic progress with every school move.¹ These negative outcomes include higher rates of school dropout, lower achievement and increased risk of assignment to special education or alternative school settings. Involvement in the child welfare system is also associated with an increase in disciplinary action. Yet research also shows that it is possible to minimize this impact. Just one fewer placement change can significantly increase a student's academic performance and double the likelihood of high school graduation. Research and practice clearly demonstrate that a successful, uninterrupted educational placement promotes more successful child welfare placements, greater permanency and better life outcomes.²

¹ Kerbow, D. Patterns of Urban Student Mobility and Local School Reform. Technical Report No. 5, October. Washington, DC: Center for Research on the Education of Children Placed at Risk, at p. 20. University of Chicago, (1996).

² All data referred to in the preceding paragraph was reported by the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, in Research Highlights on Education and Foster Care, October 2011. Source material for the data is detailed in that report.

The education of children who receive child welfare services is one of the well-being factors considered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services during the Child and Family Service Review process. In addition, two federal laws, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §11431–11435 [McKinney-Vento]), and Fostering Connections, an amendment to Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act, require collaboration among county child welfare agencies and local school districts to ensure that school changes are minimized and that children in care who do change schools are promptly enrolled (42 U.S.C. §671(a)(30), 675(1)(G)). These efforts at the federal level, as well as coordinated efforts at the state and local levels, have focused attention on the need to more holistically view the relationship between child welfare involvement and educational outcomes.

Action at the State Level: The Education Screen

In Pennsylvania, approximately 168,000 children receive child welfare services in their homes, and approximately 14,000 children receive child welfare services in out-of-home care (Health and Human Services data for SFY 10-11). Recognizing the challenges that these children face, the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) identified a strategy for increasing the focus of child welfare workers on educational success and promoting greater collaboration between the Commonwealth's 67 county child welfare agencies and approximately 500 school districts. The purpose of the strategy is to more effectively identify and meet the educational needs of children and youth who receive child welfare services. On September 17, 2010, OCYF released Bulletin #3130-10-04: "Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen" (see Appendix A). The purpose of the bulletin was to: 1) clarify the responsibilities of county child welfare agencies to monitor educational stability and continuity for all school-aged children actively receiving services from the county's child welfare agency, and 2) emphasize the importance of actively promoting the educational success of children and youth served by

county child welfare agencies. OCYF, in conjunction with the Education Law Center (ELC) and the Juvenile Law Center (JLC), designed the Pennsylvania General and Special Education/Disability Accommodation Screen (Education Screen) (see Appendix B). The Education Screen is a tool for gathering information and making critical recommendations to relevant parties about the educational needs of school-aged children and youth who are receiving child welfare services. The Education Screen contains the following nine sections:

- Education Records
- Education Decision-Maker
- School Stability/Prompt Enrollment
- Special School Settings/Situations
- Progress toward Promotion or Graduation
- Preparation for Postsecondary Education
- Need for Special Education Evaluation
- [Adequacy of] Special Education Services
- Need for Accommodations in School

State Bulletin #3130-10-04 also contained the following guidelines regarding implementation of the Education Screen in county child welfare agencies:

- An Education Liaison (EL) will be appointed within each of the county child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania, and each EL will attend required training on the materials that child welfare staff will be expected to learn
- Training efforts for child welfare staff will be initiated by May of 2011
- Education Screens will be completed at least at the following intervals: once per year for children who live at home, and every six months for children who reside in out-of-home care.

Leadership at the Local Level: Implementation of the Education Screen

Formal planning for implementation of the Education Screen in Allegheny County began in September 2010 with the appointment of the DHS EL. The purpose of the EL role as articulated by the state is to serve as a central point of contact on education and to ensure that staff have access to guidance and technical assistance related to implementation of the Education Screen. DHS has utilized the EL role to the fullest extent possible as a staff resource (for both internal and provider agency staff), trainer, director of implementation activities, and liaison between human services and other child-serving systems such as education, juvenile justice and the courts. The EL has also played a significant role in building the Education Screen in KIDS (Key Information and Demographics System);³ DHS's electronic child welfare records management application, and continues to work with KIDS developers to make improvements to its applicability and ease of use. Development of a training plan for the more than 400

³The Education Screen was originally designed at the state level in paper form, but DHS used funding from a Children's Bureau grant from the federal Administration for Children & Families to build the Education Screen into its existing KIDS application.

caseworkers in the DHS Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) serving approximately 14,000 children and youth also commenced immediately. Because staff at DHS-contracted provider agencies typically have the closest and most direct interaction with a majority of the children and youth who enter the child welfare system, it was determined that they would have primary responsibility for completing the Education Screen; the CYF caseworker is responsible for completing the Education Screen only in cases where there is no contracted provider involved in the delivery of child welfare services. Final approval of the Education Screen by the CYF caseworker and supervisor is required regardless of who completes the Education Screen.

In accordance with state guidelines and as a result of internal collaborations among KIDS specialists, contract monitors, independent living initiative staff and CYF policy specialists, the following intervals for the completion of the Education Screen are included in the DHS policy:

- Annually for children who remain in their homes
- Every six months for children in out-of-home care
- Within 30 days of a change in placement or change in goal/plan for any school-aged child actively receiving child welfare services

More detail about the hierarchy of responsibility for completing the Education Screen for CYF caseworkers and DHS-contracted provider staff in Allegheny County can be found in Appendix C.

February 1, 2012, marked the official launch of the Education Screen in KIDS and the date when all casework staff and providers began completing Education Screens for the school-aged children and youth they serve. Since then, implementation activities have focused on supporting the resource needs of staff completing the Education Screen, troubleshooting technical challenges experienced while completing the Education Screen, and collection and analysis of feedback data regarding the experience of all partners involved in the implementation.

EMBEDDING CHANGE: ROLE OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

As of February 2013, DHS had offered over 76 hours of training, through a total of 27 sessions covering 10 topics that were available both as face-to-face training as well as a series of webinars. Technical assistance has been available to workers since the initial launch date of the Education Screen and has continued throughout subsequent stages of implementation.

Training for CYF Caseworkers

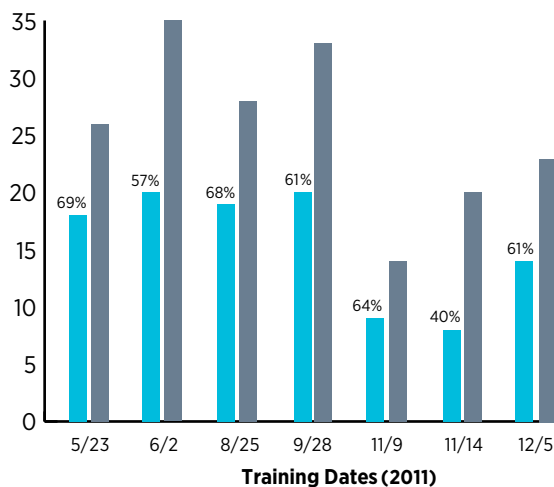
With the cooperation of the CYF Training Department, the first session of the “Achieving Positive Educational Outcomes” training was held within the timeframe outlined by the state. This first full-day training session was conducted seven times from May through December of 2011, during which approximately 200 CYF caseworkers were trained. The EL attended every training session in order to provide answers to questions about implementation and to communicate her availability as a resource to CYF caseworkers. Education Liaisons who work for the DHS Independent Living Initiative also attended these training sessions for the dual purpose of

being trained and sharing their expertise about education with CYF caseworkers as those questions arose.

The state required collection of comprehension data from all CYF caseworkers who attended this training. Ninety percent of individuals who attended one of the training sessions completed the evaluation, and 60 percent of respondents reported increased knowledge, skills and/or awareness as a result of attending the training.

FIGURE 1: Number of CYF Training Attendees Reporting Increased Knowledge, Skills and/or Awareness

■ Number reporting increased knowledge, skills and/or awareness
■ Number who responded to survey



CYF caseworkers were also trained in January 2012 by the EL and a KIDS training professional. The content of this training consisted of important implementation updates regarding the proposed Education Screen policy, proposed CYF provider contract amendments, and a demonstration of how to access and complete the electronic Education Screen in KIDS. This training was offered through seven sessions that were each an hour and a half long; sessions were held in each of the CYF regional offices in order to maximize attendance, which varied by office.

Training for DHS-Contracted Providers

While the proposed DHS Education Screen policy requires that contracted provider agency staff receive the same training as child welfare staff, the CYF Training Department is limited to training DHS staff. To address this gap, the EL worked with internal DHS staff as well as staff at the ELC and KidsVoice, a nonprofit provider of child advocacy and legal representation services to children and youth in Allegheny County, to develop materials for a half-day training for provider agency staff. Integrated Children's Service Plan funds supported this training.

Five separate training session times were offered; each session consisted of an overview of the purpose and content of the Education Screen, a review of proposed amendments to provider agency contracts regarding their role in completing Education Screens, and a demonstration of the electronic Education Screen in KIDS. Acknowledging that one person could not effectively provide training for more than 100 agencies, each provider agency was asked to identify an Education Point of Contact (EPOC) who would attend the required training and be responsible for disseminating information related to the Education Screen throughout the agency. Between January and May of 2012, 140 of the 183 EPOCs (76 percent), representing more than 50 agencies, attended a three-and-a-half-hour training session. Many of the CYF contract monitors who work with these provider agencies also attended these training sessions, helping to reinforce effective communication between the EL and provider agency staff about the requirements and process for completing the Education Screen.

Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance

Most recently, DHS, through a collaborative effort with ELC, offered a seven-part webinar series designed to reinforce key concepts, highlight known barriers and identify effective strategies and interventions to meet the educational needs of children and youth receiving child welfare services. Each of the seven webinars focused on a different topic related to one or more of the nine sections of the Education Screen; more than 150 human services professionals attended. Webinar topics included:

- Overview of Education Screen and Education Records
- Enrollment/School Stability and Attendance
- The Right School Setting (including School Discipline)
- The Role of Education/Special Education Decision-Makers
- Special Education Issues and Accommodations for Children in School
- Progress Toward Graduation
- Education Transition Planning and Post-Secondary

In addition to formal training opportunities, ongoing technical assistance is provided by KIDS specialists, DHS Helpdesk staff, CYF contract monitors and the EL. KIDS specialists are assigned to each of the regional CYF offices and function as liaisons between CYF caseworkers and KIDS developers to troubleshoot technical issues and make needed improvements to KIDS. Requests to the Helpdesk are addressed in consultation with or referred to KIDS developers. Contract monitors, often the first point of contact for providers with questions or technical assistance needs, have been invaluable resources to providers. It is the EL, however, who has the primary responsibility for ongoing training and technical assistance.

In Allegheny County, the EL works in the Office of Community Relations and also holds the title of Resource Services Manager. As such, she responds to information and referral requests about the entire range of services provided by DHS and keeps a log of these requests. Initially following her appointment as EL, she began receiving and tracking information requests related

specifically to the Education Screen. She did not receive any questions about the Education Screen in 2011, but received 25 in the first quarter of 2012. During initial and ongoing training sessions, participants were encouraged to utilize the EL as a resource for answers to follow-up questions or information about implementation. Throughout the remainder of 2012, the EL documented 37 additional questions from human services workers and educators related to the Education Screen. This number offers some insight into staff demand for technical assistance, but it does not offer a complete picture as it does not account for the volume of questions being asked of the DHS Helpdesk, KIDS specialists and contract monitors. The collaborative partners — ELC, JLC and KidsVoice — have also received calls from human services workers related to the Education Screen.

Training and Technical Assistance Feedback

In November 2012, Education Screen implementation partners were invited to complete an electronic survey about their experience with the Education Screen. The survey results, available in Appendix D, will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of the report, “The Role of Technology,” but it is also relevant to this section as the survey addresses satisfaction with the number of training opportunities made available leading up to the launch of the Education Screen. Survey respondents were asked the following questions:

Do you feel you had more than enough, enough or not enough opportunities to learn about the content and the purpose of the CYF Education Screen? (check one)

Do you feel you had more than enough, enough or not enough opportunities to learn how to complete the CYF Education Screen either by hand or in KIDS? (check one)

A majority of respondents (72 percent) responded that they had “enough” or “more than enough” opportunities to learn about each of the training topics above. Twenty-eight percent and 30 percent, respectively, felt as though they did not have enough opportunities to learn about the training topics above.

With regard to workers’ experiences with completing the Education Screen, either by hand or in KIDS, survey respondents were asked the following question:

Which section(s) of the Education Screen do you find most difficult to complete? (check all that apply) [Answer choices reference all nine sections of the Education Screen as well as the option to choose “none of the sections.”]

The most frequent response (29 percent) reflected that survey respondents did not find any of the sections of the Education Screen difficult to complete. The sections on education records and the need for special education evaluation were each identified by 12 percent of respondents as difficult to complete. This may be an indication of the need for additional training in these areas.

With regard to the technical assistance provided to support completing the Education Screen in electronically based KIDS, survey respondents were asked the following questions:

How did you seek assistance when you needed to troubleshoot a problem you experienced with KIDS while completing the Education Screen? (check all that apply)

What form of assistance did you find to be most effective at helping you to resolve the problem you experienced with KIDS while completing the Education Screen? (check one)

Two of the sources of technical assistance that were previously mentioned, KIDS specialists and the DHS Helpdesk, were not only the most commonly selected methods but were also rated as the most effective.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology has been an important component of the implementation process in a number of ways: 1) facilitating completion of the Education Screen, 2) tracking data contained in and related to the Education Screen, and 3) collecting feedback on how the technology involved in completing the Education Screen can be improved.

Completing the Education Screen

The Education Screen was built in KIDS, an implementation decision that was made possible through funding from a federal Children’s Bureau grant. KIDS supports the records management process from the initial reporting of allegations of child abuse or neglect through the delivery and payment of services. Integration of the Education Screen into this system will facilitate more in-depth analysis of data and highlight issues and trends that can improve practice and policy decisions. For example, we can examine how particular placement settings (e.g., foster home vs. congregate care) support or undermine school stability.

CYF staff and all contracted provider agency staff have access to KIDS and can enter case information directly into the system. The approval process for Education Screens varies depending upon whether they are completed by CYF or by a provider agency. The figure below illustrates the full approval process if an Education Screen is initiated by a provider agency.

FIGURE 2: Approval Process Flow Chart for Education Screen Initiated at the Provider Level



The “CYF Review and Approval” step in Figure 2 involves approval by the assigned CYF caseworker and the caseworker’s supervisor. If the Education Screen is initiated by a CYF caseworker, the only other approval required is from the caseworker’s supervisor. The Education

Screen is considered complete only when all levels of approval have been obtained. As each approval is received, the status of the Education Screen changes in KIDS to reflect the current approval status. To ensure greater accountability, a new Education Screen cannot be initiated until all levels of approval have been obtained.

The text of the Education Screen is based on the original format and content proposed by the state, but the language was customized in the electronic version to make it relevant to county child welfare practice and the specific resources available in Allegheny County. Each of the nine sections of the Education Screen contains one or more statements about the child's education. Each of the statements must be classified as true, false or, in some cases, not applicable. For each statement that is false, at least one action step must be identified. As an example, an excerpt from the first section of the Education Screen, "Education Records," appears below:

1. School Stability/Prompt Enrollment

A. The child shall remain in the same school he/she is currently attending.

- TRUE
 FALSE

If FALSE is checked, indicate follow-up steps (select all that apply):

- Discuss whether changing schools is in the child's best interest at Permanency Planning Conference and/or pre-placement conference and document the factors relied on in making this decision
- Contact school social worker/guidance counselor to discuss reasons child is not remaining in the same school
- Contact the district McKinney-Vento homeless liaison because it appears that child qualifies as homeless (e.g., is awaiting foster care placement)
- Contact the McKinney-Vento Regional Coordinator to discuss reason child is not in school of origin
- Other (briefly describe):

Comments:

The Education Screen application in KIDS has many features that are intended to decrease the time it takes to complete the Education Screen. The true, false and action steps require a simple click inside the checkbox, and each section heading (e.g., School Stability/Prompt

Enrollment) can be expanded to show the sub-questions and action steps or collapsed to hide this information. Email alerts are generated from the KIDS application and are sent to provider agency staff to communicate that an Education Screen is due. Once an Education Screen is completed and submitted to the supervisor for approval, an alert is generated and appears in the supervisor's approval inbox in KIDS. The EL is working with KIDS developers to establish an alert system that will notify the CYF caseworker of record as soon as a provider supervisor approves an Education Screen. A preview button allows workers to view how the completed report will look when saved and/or printed. Numerous KIDS and education-related resources are accessible on the DHS website via a conveniently located button on the screen. These combined features and consistent access to the files are particularly helpful in supporting CYF staff and private providers as they prepare for court appearances, family conferences and school meetings.

The education data auto-population feature in KIDS requires a more detailed explanation.

This data, which is shared weekly and integrated in the DHS Data Warehouse, is available as a result of a data sharing agreement between DHS and the child's school district and includes personal identifiers, school directory information, demographics and academic outcomes.⁴

The electronic data feed enables the data to be auto-populated in matching fields within KIDS that include GPA, PSSA score and attendance records. The existence of this data in KIDS enables it to be used in the completion of related sections of the Education Screen and ensures that key academic data elements are both accurate and current. For example, if the education data for a child shows that the child has had three or more unexcused absences, the first statement in section five of the Education Screen ("Child attends school regularly and there are no concerns regarding attendance) would automatically be marked "FALSE."

Tracking Education Screen Data

KIDS is useful for tracking numerous types of data contained in and related to the Education Screen, particularly the completion and approval status of the screen. The EL has been able to utilize this data to follow up as appropriate when completion and/or approval issues occur. In addition, tracking this data can provide information about common reasons for delays or roadblocks for completion. Finally, KIDS enables the tracking of information about how Education Screens are being completed (e.g., what percentage of workers are selecting true, false or not applicable for particular statements throughout the screen; what percentage of workers are selecting each of the action steps associated with each statement; types of write-in action steps; and all responses provided in the open-ended comments fields). As of December 7, 2012, 975 Education Screens had been initiated for school-aged children and youth who are receiving child welfare services in Allegheny County.

⁴Data sharing partnerships are created when representatives from DHS and a local school district sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), enabling the sharing of individual-level education information with DHS for students of that district who have received human services administered by DHS. The first MOU was signed in 2009 with Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS), a district with roughly 27,000 students, more than half of whom have received human services administered by DHS. The broader purpose of the data sharing partnerships is to analyze the data and develop strategies and interventions for improving student performance. Since signing the MOU with PPS, DHS has signed MOUs with three more school districts and continues to pursue additional partnerships with other districts. At least six other districts have expressed interest in signing an MOU with DHS.

A few highlights from data collected through January 14 of this year are provided as an example below:

Section 1: Education Records

Part A – Parent consent/Judge’s order to obtain child’s education records is on file.

- 82 percent of Education Screens were marked true
- 18 percent of Education Screens were marked false
 - o The action step checked most frequently (43 percent of responses) was “obtain parental consent for education records”

Section 3: School Stability/Prompt Enrollment

Part A – The child shall remain in the same school he/she is currently attending.

- 81 percent of Education Screens were marked true
- 19 percent of Education Screens were marked false
 - o The action step checked the most times (64 percent of responses) was “other”

Exactly what the limitations of this data are and how or if it can be used to measure progress toward educational success for the children and youth who are the subject of these Education Screens is yet to be fully understood. DHS analysts have begun to examine this data to better understand its potential uses and its limitations. In addition to potential policy implications, this is valuable data to have for documenting the current educational needs of children and youth receiving child welfare services and workers’ responses to addressing those needs.

Collecting Feedback Related to the Education Screen

A 23-question electronic survey was conducted with all implementation partners to gather information about the implementation process. Some survey results have already been discussed as they relate to earlier sections of the report. Full results are available in Appendix D. The survey received 122 responses from a range of implementation partners, including but not limited to CYF caseworkers; DHS–contracted provider agency staff; CYF supervisors; KIDS developers, specialists and trainers; and staff from ELC and KidsVoice. Forty-three percent of respondents were CYF caseworkers and 18 percent were CYF provider staff, which is important to note given that these individuals carry the majority of the responsibility for completing the Education Screen. Results of the survey reveal the percentage of workers completing the Education Screen by hand versus in KIDS and reflect survey respondents’ opinions regarding the most useful and challenging features of the Education Screen in KIDS. The survey data related to KIDS will be used to develop plans to make improvements to the Education Screen in KIDS.

⁵Survey logic was designed so that only those respondents who reported that they complete the Education Screen in KIDS were asked to answer questions about their experience completing the Education Screen in KIDS.

Eighty-seven percent of those survey respondents whose jobs require that they complete the Education Screen reported that they do so in KIDS.⁵ The remaining 13 percent reported completing the Education Screen either by hand or by a combination of the two methods.

The survey presented the following questions:

When completing the Education Screen in KIDS, what did you find to be most useful about the way the Education Screen was built in KIDS? (check all that apply)

When completing the Education Screen in KIDS, what did you find to be most challenging about the way the Education Screen was built in KIDS? (check all that apply)

The answer choices were the same for both questions. They are:

- Expandable/collapsible option for each question and section of the Education Screen
- Pre-populated school district data where available
- Instructions button linking to education resources on the DHS website
- Text boxes that appear in the process of saving and checking the Education Screen for errors
- Preview button showing print-view of the Education Screen
- Multi-tiered approval process
- Email alerts from KIDS
- KIDS alerts when logged in to KIDS
- Other (respondents who select this option are required to specify what action step they take)

The expandable/collapsible feature received the highest number of responses (24 percent) as the most useful feature about the way the Education Screen was built in KIDS. The Education Screen was the first application in KIDS to offer this feature, so this feedback may impact the use of this feature in other KIDS applications in the future. Pre-populated school district data received the next highest number of responses (approximately 18 percent) as the most useful KIDS feature.

The multi-tiered approval process received the highest response rate (30 percent) as the most challenging feature. Feedback received through open-ended survey questions indicated that this feature caused long delays, which in some cases caused the worker to miss the due date for the Education Screen. As explained in a previous section of the report, an incomplete Education Screen cannot be edited by the worker who created it if information regarding the child's education record changes, and a new Education Screen cannot be initiated until all previous Education Screens for that child have been approved at all levels. The EL is working with KIDS developers to understand more clearly the difficulty workers are having with the multi-tiered approval process and ways in which this feature can be improved.

ROLE OF COLLABORATION

Two types of collaboration have been critical to the successful implementation of the Education Screen: collaboration among DHS staff across multiple DHS offices and with DHS-contracted provider agencies, and multi-system collaboration among DHS and outside partners within education, legal advocacy organizations, the juvenile justice system and the courts. This section describes the barriers to both types of collaboration and the strategies that were employed in Allegheny County to overcome these barriers.

Collaboration within DHS and with DHS-Contracted Provider Agencies

Effective communication is critical to achieving effective collaboration; therefore, barriers to effective communication are also barriers to effective collaboration. Internally, communication among staff in an organization as large as DHS can be difficult given program divisions within DHS offices and office divisions within the department as a whole. The role of contracted provider agencies in delivering many essential human services can create additional distance between staff who must understand each other's roles but who may not interact on a regular basis or who may not work in the same physical space. DHS is unique in that it has committed to integration in all areas of operation from administrative functions and management to service delivery. This commitment is expressed through continuous encouragement of staff to work collaboratively and in an integrated fashion. It is also expressed through structural components such as staff positions designed to strengthen communication across program and office boundaries or between DHS and provider agency staff.

The main strategy utilized to overcome communication barriers was frequent and broad sharing of information with all DHS staff through regular meetings, presentations, emails and cross-trainings, most of which were initiated by the EL. The EL made a concerted effort from the beginning of the implementation process to engage all DHS staff and provider agency staff impacted by the Education Screen, including CYF caseworkers, DHS Independent Living Education Liaisons, provider agency staff, KIDS specialists, CYF policy specialists and CYF contract monitors. More informed implementation decisions resulted from the EL's engagement of these DHS and provider agency staff due to their expertise and unique roles in the implementation process. The EL frequently brought staff together from different offices to demonstrate the connections in their work. An example of this was an informal training on special education conducted by staff from the Children's Team from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) open to individuals who would be completing the Education Screen in child welfare. The EL recognized that these staff had a level of expertise that could be shared with their colleagues in child welfare and that both groups had a shared interest in the educational success of children and youth. Honest communication by the EL regarding the impact of the Education Screen on workers and their workloads also helped to build trust among DHS staff, regardless of their role in implementation.

Additional strategies specific to improving communication between DHS and provider agency staff included the appointment of the EPOC for each DHS-contracted provider agency and continuous involvement of CYF contract monitors in all stages of implementation of the Education Screen. The EPOC is responsible for receiving and disseminating important information regarding implementation, including but not limited to training opportunities and materials, tips for troubleshooting challenges related to the Education Screen in KIDS, information regarding changes to provider contracts and DHS policy regarding the completion of the Education Screen, and information about education-related resources. The EPOCs also communicated back to the EL about additional training needs at their agency and about specific implementation challenges. By engaging the CYF contract monitors throughout implementation, the EL was able to understand and communicate better with DHS-contracted provider staff and increase their buy-in. Buy-in was also increased as a result of welcoming input from the CYF contract monitors into discussions about amendments to provider contracts and DHS Education Screen policy, which demonstrated a commitment by DHS to consider the interests of provider agencies in implementation. CYF contract monitors have continued to be a valuable resource for ongoing troubleshooting for provider agencies on issues related to the Education Screen.

Multi-System Collaboration

Effective communication is equally critical to achieving external collaboration. Externally, barriers to effective communication are related to the complexity of systems and their varying purposes rather than the complexity and/or size of a single organization such as DHS. Children and youth who receive child welfare services are also served by additional systems, certainly education but also dependency court, as well as juvenile justice and other human services areas such as behavioral health, intellectual disabilities and homeless services. Each of these systems has a plethora of policies and procedures and individuals who carry out the work, which makes coordinating implementation efforts for the Education Screen across these systems incredibly complex. Given the unique priorities and functions of each system, skepticism can occur about an effort that is led primarily by one system but impacts and/or requires cooperation from other systems. This skepticism, while sometimes healthy and even perhaps justified, impacts the level of buy-in from the workers in that system and can impede effective external collaboration. As much as DHS has expressed a commitment to being an integrated department internally, it has also committed to and actively invests in fostering relationships with other child-serving systems such as education, juvenile justice and the courts. The EL has been an active member of the local Education Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup, which is a local subset of the larger state Office of Children and Families in the Courts' Children's Roundtable Initiative. Building and maintaining these relationships are the primary strategies utilized by DHS to overcome barriers to effective external collaboration. Exactly how this strategy is operationalized will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Similar to the strategy for achieving internal collaboration, external collaboration has been achieved through frequent and broad sharing of information by the EL with a variety of external partners and key stakeholders through meetings, presentations, email communication and invitations to cross-trainings regarding the Education Screen implementation. These partners and key stakeholders include ELC and KidsVoice, the Allegheny County Children’s Court staff, and school guidance counselors, teachers and administrators. KidsVoice and ELC helped to develop the text of the Education Screen, led some of the training sessions, and provided invaluable expertise on existing laws about the rights of children and youth to education and education-related services. Collaboration with court staff helped to inform judges and other court staff about the importance of the Education Screen as well as the technical requirements related to completing it. Collaboration with school personnel helped to secure a line of communication between front-line workers in the two key systems involved in implementing this effort to improve educational outcomes: child welfare and education.

The organizational structure of DHS supports effective external collaboration because several of its offices include positions that interface with outside systems. For example, the Office of Behavioral Health includes staff positions such as school-based liaisons, a juvenile court liaison, juvenile justice liaisons, education liaisons (different from the one appointed to manage the Education Screen implementation) and an OBH/CYF Interagency consultant. The EL engaged all of these staff throughout the implementation of the Education Screen, and, in turn, their knowledge and experience helped to coordinate implementation efforts and troubleshoot individual human services/education concerns when they arose within DHS with other systems’ policies, procedures and staff.

Understanding the importance of the child welfare and education systems working effectively together, the EL attempted to achieve buy-in from professionals in both systems by increasing the knowledge of workers from each system about the other system. In some cases, the EL brought child welfare and education professionals together to encourage the building of relationships that would increase the likelihood of effective collaboration. The EL shared school guidance counselor contact information with child welfare workers, and ELC staff helped child welfare workers to better understand a variety of education topics contained in the Education Screen such as school discipline, special education and requirements for enrollment. The EL organized meetings and presentations for school administrators, guidance counselors and teachers to explain mandated reporting procedure in child welfare and to share strategies for working effectively with child welfare workers. At these meetings, in partnership with DHS analysts and ELC, the EL shared local and national data about the differences in education outcomes based on child welfare involvement and the availability of support services, in an effort to unite the two systems in their understanding of the potential benefits for the children they serve.

Feedback on Collaboration

The electronic survey did not include questions that asked specifically about collaboration, but some of the survey questions did elicit feedback about the level and/or quality of collaboration that survey respondents experienced. For example, when asked about initial reactions to the Education Screen, the role of collaboration was readily apparent:

- There will be an increased focus on educational well-being in child welfare (22 percent)
- There will be greater collaboration between schools and child welfare agencies (19 percent)
- It will be difficult to obtain the information necessary to complete the Education Screen (15 percent)

In addition, when asked which sections of the Screen were difficult to complete, the need for improved collaboration was demonstrated:

- Twenty-seven percent of respondents stated that schools failed to provide records
- Eighteen percent noted disagreements among professionals regarding who was responsible for completing the Screen
- An additional 18 percent indicated that they did not know how to obtain the information needed to complete the Education Screen

SUSTAINABILITY

There are three distinct activities that have supported and will sustain this effort to improve educational outcomes through the use of the Education Screen. These activities have been and/or will continue to be critical to achieving system-wide engagement, collaboration and buy-in from the key stakeholders and will be crucial to sustaining these efforts.

Data Sharing Partnerships

Data sharing partnerships between DHS and local school districts have fundamentally changed the level of cooperation and coordination between the education and human services systems. Through the use of technology, these partnerships have also significantly improved the ability of the human services and education systems to identify, understand and improve education outcomes for the children and youth they serve. In just four years, DHS has entered into data sharing partnerships with four school districts in Allegheny County. With each additional partnership, the capacity to meet the educational needs of children and youth who receive child welfare services will increase, and the hope of improving education outcomes for these children and youth will move closer to becoming a reality. As of publication of this report, DHS is in conversation with four additional school districts regarding new data sharing partnerships.

Amendments to the Juvenile Court Rules

In July of 2011, the PA Supreme Court adopted a recommendation of the Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee to increase the focus of courts on the educational needs of children and youth involved in dependency or delinquency matters. The new rules require that the judge in a dependency matter must address the educational needs of each child at every stage of the adjudicatory process and that courts will appoint an Educational Decision-Maker for a child in a dependency or delinquency matter who lacks a parent or guardian. The Comments to the amended Rules specify that courts should consider particular issues — school stability, appropriate school placement, the needs of children with disabilities, progress toward promotion and graduation, and transition planning.

This amendment helps to support the implementation of the Education Screen and to promote educational success for children and youth with system involvement by making key questions about education a priority for judges, attorneys and workers involved in the disposition of a child's court case. This change in practice helps to support the future sustainability of parallel efforts such as the Education Screen and, in turn, gives greater strength to the movement to improve education outcomes for children and youth with system involvement.

Addendum to Dependency Court Record

In April 2012, an addendum was added to the dependency court record in Allegheny County to include information from the education and health evaluations that have been completed for a child or youth. The addendum requires the following information:

- (a) Stability and Appropriateness — To ensure the stability and appropriateness of the child's education, the agency shall provide the following services:
- (b) Educational Decision-Maker — An educational decision-maker shall be appointed pursuant to Rule 1147. Specify the appointee:
- (c) Health Care and Disability — If parental consent cannot be obtained, the following evaluations and treatment are authorized:
- (d) Specify any evaluations, tests, counseling or treatments that are necessary:

The addendum helps to increase the court's emphasis on education and physical health as components of well-being. It also sets a standard for what information is considered by judges when making rulings and ensures accountability for implementing the Juvenile Court Rules.

These questions complement the Education Screen, which deals specifically with educational stability and appropriateness and asks whether an educational decision-maker exists for the child, making it a useful tool for completing the court addendum. Like the amendments to the Juvenile Court Rules, adoption of the addendum to the dependency court record strengthens the movement to improve education outcomes for children and youth who receive child welfare services by making key questions about a child or youth's education a priority for the individuals involved in making or influencing dependency court rulings.

LESSONS LEARNED

Invest Early and Often in Training and Technical Assistance

Planning for training began immediately, and training efforts were continuous leading up to and following the launch of the Education Screen in KIDS. Staff capacity through the CYF Training Department and the EL were critical factors in supporting the training needs of CYF staff and contracted provider agency staff. Ongoing training and technical assistance was also offered continuously by the EL, CYF contract monitors, KIDS specialists and the DHS Helpdesk. While initial participation in training was encouraging, the need for follow-up training, training of new staff and training on emerging topics related to the Education Screen should be carefully monitored and evaluated. In addition, ELC's webinars are being made available to serve as online resources.

If You Build It [Online], They Will Come

Outside of KIDS or another electronic system, the Education Screen is just a checklist that exists in isolation of other data about the child and is at risk of becoming buried in the child's paper file. Technology provides a means for completing the Education Screen, tracking Education Screen data, and collecting feedback from workers related to the Education Screen. Despite the many advantages of the Education Screen being completed electronically, improvements are needed to make KIDS more user-friendly and to have all the features of the Education Screen in KIDS to function more smoothly. One hope for the use of technology moving forward is that it will facilitate analysis of whether improvements have been made toward educational success for the children and youth for whom an Education Screen is completed, and whether some part of the improvements in educational success can be attributed to the Education Screen.

It Takes a Village [to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in the Child Welfare System]

Collaboration, both within and between systems, is critical to successful implementation of the Education Screen in Allegheny County or any other county in Pennsylvania. The primary strategy for achieving effective collaboration is continuous and broad sharing of information with all relevant stakeholders (internal and external). This includes engaging these stakeholders in the development of policy related to the Education Screen, development of training curriculum, development of technology utilized to complete the Education Screen, and the provision of technical assistance; it is also dependent upon the collection of feedback regarding stakeholders' experiences.



While the Education Screen requirement was issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and is the responsibility of child welfare workers to complete, school personnel are the keepers of the education records necessary to complete the Education Screen and the ones who have firsthand knowledge of how a child is doing in school. Without buy-in from both child welfare and education workers (and collaboration between them), the Education Screen will not impact educational success. Achieving buy-in from these workers involves their understanding

of the Education Screen content and why it matters, willingness to do what it takes to help kids to succeed in school (including cooperating with one another), and belief that children and youth who receive child welfare services are capable of succeeding in school like their peers and have equal rights to that opportunity.

System Change Requires Multi-System Commitment

The level of system-wide change required to universally improve education outcomes for children and youth who receive child welfare services cannot be achieved through the implementation of the Education Screen alone. Efforts across multiple child serving systems must occur and evolve simultaneously to support successful change. Data sharing partnerships between human services and education, amendments to the Juvenile Court Rules and Adoption of an addendum to dependency court records are three ways in which sustainability of the effort to improve educational outcomes for children and youth who receive child welfare services is supported. Extended experience with the process, and its results, should provide insight into other opportunities for sustainability.

APPENDIX A: OCYF BULLETIN #3130-10-04: EDUCATIONAL STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SERVICES FROM THE COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY INCLUDING THE USE OF AN EDUCATION SCREEN

	OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE		
	NUMBER: 3130-10-04	ISSUE DATE: September 17, 2010	EFFECTIVE DATE: Bulletin - Immediately Screen - January 1, 2012
SUBJECT: Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA) Including the Use of an Education Screen		 BY: Richard J. Gold Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families	

SCOPE:

County Children and Youth Social Service Administrators
 County Children and Youth Advisory Committees
 County Children and Youth Fiscal Officers
 Private Children and Youth Social Service Agencies
 County Chief Juvenile Probation Officers
 Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
 Juvenile Court Judges

PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of this bulletin is to clarify the responsibilities of county children and youth agencies regarding educational stability and continuity for all children receiving services from a child welfare agency, including children in out-of-home care, as well as those receiving services in their own homes. To that end, this bulletin incorporates and supplements the information provided in the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Special Transmittal, dated February 24, 2009, entitled "Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351) herein referred to as "Fostering Connections". Secondly, this bulletin is purposed to enhance the protection of the educational rights for all children receiving services from the county children and youth agency through the introduction and mandated implementation of, an Education Screen. This bulletin rescinds and replaces OCYF Bulletin 3130-08-01 entitled "Education Stability and Continuity for Children in Substitute Care" issued October 1, 2008.

BACKGROUND:

The education of all children receiving children and youth services is one of the well-being factors considered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process. In addition, two federal laws, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C §§11431-11435), (McKinney-Vento), and the Fostering Connections, an amendment to Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act, require both county child welfare agencies and local education agencies to collaborate to ensure that school changes are

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: Appropriate Regional Office
 Origin: Cindi Horshaw, OCYF, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675, 717-783-7287, chorshaw@state.pa.us

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minimized, and that children in care who do change schools are promptly enrolled. See, in particular, 42 U.S.C. §§671(a)(30), 675(1)(G). Research and practice clearly demonstrate that a successful, uninterrupted educational placement promotes more successful child welfare placements, greater permanency and better life outcomes.

Assuring that the educational needs of all children involved with the child welfare system are met is an essential part of the casework process. The 2008 CFSR conducted in Pennsylvania revealed that while Pennsylvania did well in assessing children's educational needs, an area that needed improvement was assuring that appropriate services were provided or arranged. One of the ways that this finding is being addressed is through the issuance of this bulletin and the accompanying education screen. It is the expectation that a greater emphasis will be placed on assessing the educational needs of all children being served within the child welfare system in order to improve outcomes for the children of Pennsylvania.

For many children placed outside of their own homes, moving from one home to another often involves school changes, destabilizing the educational pursuits of these children and significantly undermining academic progress. Not only do children in out-of-home care sometimes face delays in school enrollment and class disruption for various appointments, they also lose credits between transfers, causing difficulties in attaining timely diplomas.

DISCUSSION:

It is incumbent on county children and youth agencies to make every effort to ensure not only that school-aged children receiving services, either in their own home or out-of-home, from the county children and youth agency are attending school, but also that they are receiving the education, special education, or remedial services they need. One way to do that is through accurate and consistent assessment and documentation of those needs.

It is also incumbent on county children and youth agencies to help all children that they serve to avoid unnecessary disruptions in their schooling. It is common practice for children in out-of-home care to be removed from school for visits, meetings, and court proceedings, thereby necessitating the loss of valuable class time. Children receiving services in their own homes are also sometimes removed from school to attend appointments and meetings. While it is true that schools cannot consider a child to be 'truant' as a result of a court-related absence, for children who already face adjustment challenges, these school removals can exacerbate feelings of isolation and discomfort.

School-age children are entitled to attend the public schools in their school district of residence as provided in 22 Pa. Code §11.11 (relating to entitlement of resident children to attend public schools). School-age is defined in 22 Pa. Code §11.12 as the period of a child's life from the earliest admission age to a school district's kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the school term in which a student reaches the age of 21 years, whichever occurs first. (Note: school-age is different than compulsory school age. School-age references the period a child is ENTITLED to attend school while compulsory school age references the period a child MUST attend school or be subject to truancy proceedings for unexcused absences. Compulsory school aged is defined in 22 Pa. Code §11.13 as the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school as a beginner which may be no later than at the age of eight years (six in Philadelphia), until the age of 17 or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first. A beginner is a child who enters a school district's lowest elementary school grade that is above kindergarten. If a child is of

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compulsory school age (age eight), he *must* attend public or private school or participate in an appropriate education program (such as homeschooling) during those years).

However, children in out-of-home care are often moved to different school districts when their living arrangement changes. Although some changes are unavoidable, federal law requires county agencies to work with local education agencies to prevent these educational disruptions whenever possible. Fostering Connections requires the child welfare agency to consider both the proximity to the child's current school and the appropriateness of the child's current educational setting when making placement decisions regarding the child. See 42 U.S.C. § 675(1)(G)(i), (relating to case plans). Additionally, Fostering Connections requires county agencies to work with school districts to ensure (1) that children remain in their original school, unless it is in their best interest to change schools; and (2) that, if they do change schools, they are immediately enrolled with all of the child's educational records provided to the new school (42 U.S.C. §675(1)(G)(ii)(iii)). In Pennsylvania, the only items required for the child to be enrolled in school are proof of age, immunization, residence, and a Parent Registration Statement.

In addition, the McKinney-Vento Act affords children who are considered "homeless," including those "awaiting foster care placement," a number of educational protections including the right to remain in the school they were attending at the time they became homeless or were placed in out of home care or their current school.

This bulletin explains these laws and how best to ensure that children in out-of-home care benefit from these "school stability" protections.

Finally, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that children with a disability, or who might have a disability, have active parents or other authorized persons, usually called "surrogate parents", who can make special education decisions on their behalf (20 U.S.C. 1415(b)(2)) (relating to procedural safeguards and assigning surrogate parents for children who are wards of the State). This bulletin provides guidance regarding the responsibilities of county children and youth agencies in complying with this federal requirement.

This bulletin describes the Education Screen that county children and youth agencies must use when assessing the educational needs of all children they serve. This Screen will assist county children and youth agencies in ensuring that the above rights and opportunities are realized for all children and youth served by the child welfare system.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

As stated earlier, the Federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) monitors the actions taken by states to ensure that the educational needs of children are assessed and appropriate services are provided. The CFSR does not distinguish between children served in their own homes or in out-of-home care. Therefore, it is incumbent on county children and youth agencies to ensure that the educational needs of all children receiving services through the county children and youth agency are met. The Education Screen described below will assist county children and youth agencies in assessing those needs.

With the exception of requirements regarding under Fostering Connections, all provisions in this Bulletin apply both to children receiving services in their own homes, as well as those in out-of-

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home care. Therefore, for a child receiving services in their own home, county children and youth agencies must comply with the requirements set forth in the following sections: central point of contact, education screen and intervals, case records, school stability related to McKinney-Vento, collaboration with local education agencies, special education decision makers and access to post-secondary education opportunities. When the rights of children receiving services in their own homes differ from those in out-of-home care, the text within each section clearly delineates these distinctions.

Central Point of Contact on Education:

To emphasize the critical role that county children and youth agencies have to monitor the education of children receiving services from their agency, either in home or out of home, each children and youth administrator must identify at least one staff member to be trained in educational issues. This staff person(s) will be the Education Liaison(s) for the agency, and will be responsible for providing guidance and technical assistance to all staff. While the Education Liaison(s) may have other agency responsibilities as well, he or she must have sufficient time and opportunity to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

OCYF will offer training opportunities to support the development of this centralization of county children and youth agency educational responsibility. In lieu of appointing an Education Liaison, a county children and youth administrator must provide documentation to OCYF how the county children and youth agency will otherwise meet the statutory and regulatory requirements clarified in this bulletin.

Education Screen (Screen):

As stated above, the Education Screen (Screen) is to be used for all school-aged children served by the child welfare system. The Screen is not a diagnostic instrument or assessment but rather a tool for gathering relevant information and making critical recommendations to school districts, resource parents, placement facilities and courts to ensure that the educational needs of children receiving services from the child welfare agency are met. As education is a key component of a child's well-being, county children and youth agencies must actively ensure that children receiving their services, whether in-home or out-of-home, are receiving the educational services they need.

The Screen is designed to assist the child welfare professional to make determinations in collaboration with school districts regarding whether:

- 1) the child's updated education records are on file;
- 2) the child should remain in the same school or be moved;
- 3) the child is appropriately enrolled in the least restrictive environment and is receiving the appropriate hours of instruction;
- 4) the child is making reasonable progress toward grade promotion or graduation;
- 5) the child requires assistance preparing and planning for post-secondary education;
- 6) the child requires a special education evaluation;
- 7) the child requires different special education services;
- 8) the child requires a special education decision-maker; or
- 9) the child requires accommodations for a disability or health condition.

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Child welfare professionals must also engage in any required follow-up to ensure that the child is in school, receiving appropriate services, and progressing adequately. To facilitate this process, the Screen provides a set of tools to guide child welfare professionals in working with the school districts to obtain needed services. The Screen must be completed with regard to all children receiving services from the county children and youth agency, not only those in out-of-home care. In some cases, issues identified through the Screen (such as the need to appoint a surrogate parent) should also be addressed in court proceedings.

Education Screen (Screen) Intervals:

Children Receiving Services in Their Own Home:

When a family with school age children has been accepted for services by the county children and youth agency, the Screen must be completed on each school aged child in conjunction with initial development of the Family Service Plan (FSP), as well as annually thereafter. The Screen should also be completed on an as needed basis including those situations in which there are concerns that the child's educational needs are not being met, they are experiencing educational challenges, moving into a new school, etc. This provides an opportunity for child welfare professionals to review educational information related to each school-aged child and if needed, to incorporate action items related to education into the FSP.

Children in Out-Of-Home Care:

For children placed in out-of-home care, the Screen should be completed prior to the child entering care, if possible. If it is not possible, the child welfare professional should attempt to gather information including asking all education-related questions and obtaining documentation related to the areas included on the screen within the first week following placement. Completion of the actual screen should then occur within 60 days for an emergency placement or within 30 days for a non-emergency placement, which is consistent with the regulations and development of the FSP and Child's Permanency Plan (CPP). If the Screen cannot be completed prior to the child entering placement, consideration must still be given to the proximity and appropriateness of the child's home school when making placement decisions, and to the child's best interest when determining which school the child will attend. This information must be documented in the case record. The Screen must also be completed before any subsequent placement and move to a new school district. It is also recommended as quality practice to use the Screen whenever "considering" a placement change and prior to any court proceeding, in order to ensure that the agency can address any relevant inquiries from the court regarding whether or not a child's educational needs are being met. The Screen must be completed at minimum every 6 months thereafter for a child in out-of-home care.

Case Records:

55 Pa. Code, §3130.43 (c)(6) and (10) (relating to family case records) requires county agencies to establish and maintain a family case record for each family accepted for service. The contents of the case record are to include educational reports and records. This requirement includes children who are receiving services in their own home, as well as those who have been removed from their homes and placed in out-of-home care. Section 3130.43 (c)(6) specifically requires that family case records for children receiving services in their own homes are to contain correspondence between agencies and individuals involved in the case, which should include local education

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agencies (LEAs), commonly referred to as schools. Likewise, §3130.43 (10) specifically requires that family case records for children in out-of-home care contain current and updated information required for school enrollment, which includes proof of the child's age, residence, school immunizations and a sworn statement of the child's disciplinary record. To promote continuity of a child's educational placement, the agency must be prepared to produce the child's education records whenever a new school placement must be made. Case records must include copies of the child's current Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Service Agreement, also known as a 504 Plan, if applicable, for children with disabilities and/or medical needs that require modifications at school but who do not qualify for special education. Also, case records must include any evaluations of identified disabilities, as well as the name and address of the surrogate parent, if one has been appointed as a special education decision maker, and/or the name and address of the child's education decision maker, if not the parent or surrogate parent. These records must be obtained in a manner consistent with the family's confidentiality rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232(g)). For example, a school district can provide the records to the caseworker with written consent of the parent, or a student who is over age 18. The court can also order the release of school records.

Section 3130.67 (relating to placement planning) also requires the county children and youth agency to prepare an amendment to the service plan prior to placing a child, except for emergency placements and this amendment must include:

- The names and addresses of the child's educational providers;
- Their grade level performance;
- Their school records;
- Assurance that proximity to the child's current school was taken into account; and
- A record of the child's immunizations.

The family case record must also include the Child's Permanency Plan (CPP), if applicable, current and anticipated school placement, grade level and recent report cards or alternate measures of progress. Having this information readily collated and available will facilitate timely enrollments should a child move to another school district, either when initially placed in out-of-home care or when a placement changes. The information should be reviewed and updated each time a child's living arrangement changes, or for those children in out-of-home care, at the six month review if no placement change has occurred.

School Stability:

As described below, maintaining school stability requires close collaboration with schools and school districts. The issue of ensuring school stability, including the collaborative efforts to arrange transportation, should also be addressed in court proceedings when placement decisions are approved or reviewed.

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All Children Being Served:

To minimize disruption of the school day, and to help all children succeed in their school setting, child welfare professionals should attempt to avoid making appointments or scheduling meetings or court proceedings during school hours. Unless there is a compelling reason, such as the court schedule will not accommodate this consideration, child welfare professionals should arrange for the child's attendance before or after school hours, on weekends, during vacations or on in-service days. For information about allowable absences, please see:
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/cwp/view.asp?A=11&QUESTION_ID=121159.

Children in Out-of-Home Care Only:

Federal law requires county children and youth agencies to help prevent unnecessary school changes.

Consideration of School Stability Benefits Under the McKinney-Vento Act:

The McKinney-Vento Act provides special protections for children who are considered homeless. These children have the right to remain in their original school unless a change is in their best interest, to have transportation to that school provided and funded by the school district, if needed, and to be enrolled in school even if they cannot provide the items usually required for school admission. In addition to free school lunches, the waiving of some fees and residency requirements for activity participation, these students are also entitled to have the services of an educational liaison from the school to assist with enrollment and obtaining records, as well as to inform them, their schools, and families about rights and procedures available under McKinney-Vento. Notably, in cases where a school district disagrees as to whether a child qualifies as homeless, that child is nonetheless entitled to immediate enrollment or to remain in his/her school of origin pending full resolution of any dispute. See PDE BEC entitled "Education for Homeless Youth" issued February 3, 2010 which can be found at http://www.pennvest.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/us_codes/7505/education_for_homeless_youth/507380. See also PDE BEC entitled "Enrollment of Students" issued January 22, 2009 which can be found at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon's_statutes/7503/enrollment_of_students/507350.

While we generally think of school stability issues in the case of children in out-of-home care, some children receiving services in their own home are also entitled to school stability protections because of their living situations and child welfare professionals should understand these protections in order to assist families. Children receiving in-home services may be "homeless" as defined in McKinney-Vento and entitled to the legal protections of school stability and immediate enrollment described in the McKinney-Vento section above because they are residing in public or private shelters, staying with a parent in a domestic violence shelter, living in a transitional housing program or living with relatives or friends due to lack of housing.

McKinney-Vento also provides school stability and enrollment protections to dependent youth who are "awaiting foster care placement." The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has defined children and youth "awaiting foster care placement" and hence entitled to all McKinney-Vento protections to include "those who live in shelters or are placed in emergency, interim or respite foster

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care; evaluation or diagnostic centers or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation.” School officials and county children and youth agencies should use the following definitions to identify the living situations that would qualify children for “awaiting foster care placement”:

- shelter care – physically unrestricted facilities for temporary care (see 42 Pa. C.S. §6302 (relating to definitions));
- emergency care – residential care and supervision in a non-secure setting, not to exceed 30 days (see 55 Pa. Code §3130.37 [relating to emergency and planned temporary placement services]);
- interim care – planned temporary placement services including residential care and supervision of a child in a foster family home or twenty-four-hour out-of-home care in a non-secure facility for children not related to the provider (see 55 Pa. Code §3130.37);
- respite foster care – short-term foster placement designed to provide relief to the primary foster family responsible for the child; and
- evaluative or diagnostic centers, or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation - hospitals and other residential facilities used for evaluation and diagnosis.

This list is illustrative, but not exhaustive. If a child is otherwise “awaiting foster care placement” because the placement is not likely to become permanent, he or she may be eligible for McKinney-Vento protections. For children who qualify as “homeless” under the McKinney-Vento Act, school districts have the ultimate decision-making responsibility concerning enrollment and school stability. However, the district will need supportive information from the county children and youth agency.

Accordingly, PDE has advised that “local school officials should consult with their local county children and youth agencies whenever necessary to determine if a child meets the definition of ‘awaiting foster care placement’, including, on a case-by-case basis, whether a child who does not clearly fall into one of these categories is nevertheless a child ‘awaiting foster care placement.’” Again, refer to BEC, “Education for Homeless Youth.” Therefore, consistent with legal confidentiality considerations, it is important that county children and youth agencies work collaboratively with school districts to assist them in identifying children in this category, and to support their efforts to maintain the education stability of a child in out-of-home care. County children and youth agencies should also advise eligible children and families about their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, and assist children and their families in contacting school personnel, including McKinney-Vento liaisons, to ensure that the child receives appropriate school placement, benefits and services. Also, while it is the school district’s responsibility to provide/fund transportation under McKinney-Vento, county children and youth agencies may assist by using Title IV-E funding, wherever possible, for this purpose.

Consideration of School Stability Benefits Under Fostering Connections:

Even if a child is not eligible under McKinney-Vento, Fostering Connections requires county children and youth agencies to work with local school districts to maintain school stability for all children placed in out-of-home care including those in residential placements, by coordinating with appropriate school districts to ensure that placed children remain in their current school unless a change would be in their best interests. (42 U.S.C. 675(G)(ii)). Also refer to PDE BEC entitled “*Educational Programs for Students in “Non-Educational” Placements*” (revised May, 2010) at

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http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa_codes/7501/educational_portions_of_no_n-educational_placements/507372. Agencies should work with local education agencies (LEA) to arrange transportation needed to help children remain in their current school and should use Title IV-E funding, whenever possible, for this purpose.

As discussed above, to determine which school is in a child's best interest, child welfare professionals should consult with the child, parents, resource parents, teachers and other school staff, and should give preference to the current school unless significant factors weigh in favor of a move. Some factors that suggest that a school move may be appropriate are: the child's new living arrangement is likely to become permanent, the move coincides with a natural transition time (vacation/holiday closure), and the child would be better served by the new school; the child's social or academic needs would be better met at the new school; a significant commute to the original school would have a negative impact on the child; or the child's safety would be compromised by remaining in the current school.

It is important for county children and youth agencies and child welfare professionals to be prepared to inform the court about the educational status and needs of the child, whether the proximity to the school was considered in recommending a planned placement, whether and/or how school stability can be maintained and if so, whether and/or how necessary transportation will be provided, and if a school change is in the child's interest, whether the child has been immediately enrolled with all school records. In Pennsylvania, the only items required for the child to be enrolled in school are proof of age, immunization, residence, and a Parent Registration Statement.

Proposed Juvenile Court Rules have been published which, if they become final, will require courts to consider these questions at every court proceeding.

Consideration of School Proximity in Making Placement Decisions:

Fostering Connections requires that the county children and youth agency consider *proximity* to the child's school and the *appropriateness* of the child's educational placement when making placement decisions regarding a child (42 U.S.C. § 675(1)(G)(i)) (relating to case plans). In assessing the appropriateness of a school, child welfare professionals should consult with the child, parents, resource parents, teachers and other school staff.

The McKinney-Vento liaison for the school district will need to play a critical role in making this determination if the agency believes the child will be eligible for McKinney-Vento protections (as described below).

A school is generally appropriate if:

- the child is well-served by the curriculum, including any special education resources, vocational education, or Advanced Placement courses;
- the child is progressing at a reasonable pace (is passing courses and being promoted);
- no safety concerns weigh against the child remaining in that school; and
- the child is not experiencing any particular problems related to the school.

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If the school is appropriate, county children and youth agencies should make every effort to find the child a placement in that school district or school attendance area. Consideration should be given to any appropriate kin in the child's home district attendance area, or to families suggested by the school as potential placement resources. These suggested families must either be already approved as resource parents or willing and able to complete the approval process including the requirements of the OCYF Bulletin 3140-04-05/3490-04-01 entitled "Child Placements with Emergency Caregivers".

Unless it is in the child's best interest to change schools, the county children and youth agency should make every effort, in collaboration with the school, to maintain the child in the current school even if the child has been moved to another attendance area or school district. As explained below, attention to "proximity" can ensure that the child lives close enough to the original school to make remaining in the same school possible. If the county children and youth agency, in collaboration with the school, determines that the child should remain in the same school, despite the change in the child's placement, the county children and youth agency should coordinate with the school district to ensure that necessary transportation is provided in as efficient and as cost-effective a manner as possible.

Collaborating with Local Education Agencies (LEA) (for Children in Out-of-Home Care):

County children and youth agencies and child welfare professionals are responsible for ensuring that children in out-of-home care have school stability and that, when it is in a child's best interest to change schools, a child is promptly enrolled with necessary school records. However, county agencies must work together with schools in both formal and informal ways to be successful in achieving these goals. County children and youth agencies and school districts should consider developing interagency agreements (e.g. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)) to establish mechanisms for ensuring education stability for youth in care. MOUs or other written agreements with school districts would provide a structure for collaborative efforts, and could encompass considerations such as:

- what information, including placement parameters and time-frames, will be needed to determine eligibility for McKinney-Vento;
- how school stability will be ensured;
- how transportation will be provided and funded;
- how "best interest" school placement determinations will be made;
- which school staff will work with county staff;
- how the prompt transfer of school records will be accomplished;
- a schedule of regular meetings and/or cross-trainings;
- an agreement to share policy changes/updates; and
- any other education-related matters.

The "Enrollment of Students" BEC issued by PDE states that "school districts are strongly encouraged to develop policies or agreements to enable a student who is in foster care to remain in the educational program in the same school or school district even if that student is moved to a residence in another school attendance area within the district or in another school district." Even absent an interagency agreement, individual child welfare professionals must coordinate with school district staff to keep children in their current schools unless a school change is in the child's best

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interest. When a change is needed, county children and youth agencies must work with the receiving school or school district to “provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school.” (42 U.S.C. §675(1)(G)(ii)(II)).

Special Education Decision-Makers:

Children in Out-of-Home Care:

County children and youth agencies must be vigilant to ensure that youth in care who need or who may need special education services receive the services they need. A key issue for the child welfare professional is whether the child needs an education decision-maker, other than the parent, appointed by a school district or the court. Key actions the decision-maker may need to undertake include:

- 1) requesting in writing an evaluation to determine a child’s eligibility for special education services;
- 2) requesting a re-evaluation;
- 3) requesting and participating in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting; and
- 4) requesting mediation or a hearing when necessary. (Special Education is a complicated process, and for more information see the Education Law Center’s website at www.elc-pa.org.)

The IDEA provides that the birth or adoptive parent is the special education decision-maker for a child, but, when the parent of a child in out-of-home care is deceased, inactive, cannot be located, or when the parents’ rights have been terminated, the resource parent automatically steps into this role and is authorized to make special education decisions for the child. However, the court has the authority to appoint an alternate decision-maker when in the best interest of the child such as instances when the foster parent is unwilling, unable or not best-suited to make these decisions.

Because a child in congregate care does not have a resource parent, a “surrogate parent” must be identified whenever the birth or adoptive parent is unavailable or unwilling, and the child is eligible for or needs to be evaluated for special education. When a child needs a surrogate parent, the county children and youth agency should make a request, either to the school district or the juvenile court, that a surrogate be appointed. When the whereabouts of a parent is known, **only** the court can make the appointment. When a child is in a residential placement, and there is no parent that can be located, it is the responsibility of the school district in which that placement is located to appoint a surrogate parent or the court may do so.

While the court may exercise its discretion in whom it appoints (subject to the limitation described below), the local school district may only appoint a surrogate who has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child as required under 34 CFR 300.519(d)(2)(iii). The LEA is responsible for maintaining records regarding available surrogates who have been properly trained to meet this federal requirement and for selecting a surrogate as appropriate who can fulfill this requirement.

Whenever possible, the county children and youth agency should assist the local education agency or the court in identifying potential people who can serve as a surrogate to the child, such as a relative, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or a prior resource parent. Under the IDEA, whether appointed by an LEA or a court, a surrogate cannot be someone who is employed by an

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agency that is involved in the education or care of the child. Therefore, the surrogate decision-maker **may not** be the child's caseworker, residential staff or a representative from a county or private children and youth agency. However, the juvenile court can authorize any individual, including the child welfare professional, to consent to an **initial evaluation** of a child who is living in a congregate care facility such as a residential treatment facility or group home.

(For more details on the IDEA's requirements on surrogate parents, and the authority of courts and school districts to assign special education decision makers, see the Education Law Center website at www.elc-pa.org)

Children Receiving Services in Their Own Home:

For a child receiving services in their own home, the parent remains the special education decision-maker unless a court divests the parent of those rights. If a child lives with another person who is acting as the parent and fulfilling that role, that person also remains the decision-maker unless a court divests them of this authority and appoints another person.

Access to Postsecondary Education Opportunities:

County children and youth agencies must ensure that youth served by the child welfare system, both in their own home and out-of-home, have the skills and opportunity to pursue post-secondary education and training. For youth age 14 or older receiving special education, services that will help the youth make the transition from school to postsecondary education and training must also be included in the transition planning component of the student's IEP (22 PA Code §14.131(a)(5)). See ELC's fact sheet on transition planning for more information at www.elc-pa.org. Child welfare professionals should participate in independent living planning and transition planning to ensure that all appropriate transition services are provided as outlined in the Fostering Connections Special Transmittal issued by OCYF on February 24, 2009.

The county aids in the youth's educational achievement by ensuring that all Chafee-eligible youth are identified and made aware of available support services through the county and state's Independent Living Program--such as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and college application waivers, funds or programs involving college visits, mentoring programs, and information about scholarships targeted at youth in foster care. The county must also ensure that all Chafee-eligible youth are informed about the Educational and Training Grant (42 U.S.C.A. § 677 (i), (ETG)). Fostering Connections has expanded the eligibility for ETG to youth who, at age 16 or older, were adopted or entered into a permanent legal guardianship. The agency should assist the youth in filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form by providing the required documents to ensure that any youth who was in foster care at age 13 or older, including those who are now adopted or in guardianship arrangements, has independent status for the purpose of receiving financial aid. See Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S. §1087v. Pursuant to the Department's responsibility to ensure the well-being of children in its care, this same post-secondary preparation assistance should be made available to all older youth.

Fostering Connections now requires that within the 90 days before a youth discharges from care at age 18 or older, the agency must work with the youth to create a detailed individualized transition plan that includes "specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, and work force supports and employment

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services, and is as detailed as the child may elect.” (42 U.S.C. A. § 675(5)(H)). The plan must be youth-driven and must be presented to and approved by the court. Child welfare professionals should seek the involvement of representatives from the youth’s school, including, if applicable, the IEP team, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and any post-secondary programs the youth is in, or interested in, in developing the plan. Because a youth’s educational success and credentials are such an important part of achieving a successful transition to adulthood, the education component of the transition plan should be significant and detailed.

Youth who have been adjudicated dependent before turning age 18 can stay in care until age 21 if they are in a program of treatment or instruction, and have requested the court to retain jurisdiction. (42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302). This extension in care can provide youth a crucial opportunity to enter and complete post-secondary training and education. Studies show that youth who stay in care are far more likely to enter post-secondary education than those who leave care at 18. As part of the required transition plan, agencies must inform eligible youth of their right to request to remain in care.

Children in Out-of-Home Care:

By the time a child in out-of-home care turns 16, the county must document in the case plan, and the court must determine, the independent living services, including the educational services the youth needs to help support a transition from high school to post-secondary education or training. (42 U.S.C.A. 675 (5)(c)(i); (42 Pa.C.S.A. 6351(f)(8)). That may include services such as remedial instruction, tutoring for the SAT’s, or enrollment in local Upward Bound Programs. Additional information regarding Upward Bound Programs can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>.

For more information regarding the educational rights of children in foster care, please visit Education Law Center’s website at <http://www.elc-pa.org> and Juvenile Law center’s website at www.jlc.org. The websites feature helpful tips and resources for both professionals and resource parents who are working on educational service delivery to children.

APPENDIX B: PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION/DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION SCREEN (EDUCATION SCREEN)

GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION/DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION SCREEN	
Family/Case Name :	Case Number :
Education Decision-Maker:	Student ID Number:
Current School:	Special Education Decision-Maker:
Agency Name :	Address :
Initiated by :	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>
	Phone No :
	Update <input type="checkbox"/>
Child Name:GUS GRAHAM	
1. EDUCATION RECORDS	
A. Parent consent/Judge's order to obtain education records is on file.	
B. Up-to-date education records are on file.	
2. EDUCATION DECISION-MAKER (A special education decision maker cannot be a child welfare professional, except when appointed by a court to request and consent to an initial evaluation.)	
A. The child has an education decision maker who is acting or attempting to act	
B. The child has a special education decision maker who is acting or attempting to act.	
3. SCHOOL STABILITY/PROMPT ENROLLMENT	
A. The child shall remain in the same school he/she is currently attending.	
B. If child is not remaining in the same school, child was enrolled in new school promptly	
4. SPECIAL SCHOOL SETTINGS/SITUATIONS	
A. Child is attending a regular public school (including charter school) or private or parochial school.	
B. Child receives full day of instruction in accordance with the law.	
C. Child is in Advanced Placement (AP), vocational-technical (vo-tech) or involved in extra-curricular activities.	
5. PROGRESS TOWARD PROMOTION/GRADUATION	
A. Child attends school regularly.	
B. Child is placed at appropriate grade level for age/development.	
C. Child is receiving remedial services as needed.	
D. Child is making adequate academic progress (i.e., child has a C-average or better).	
E. Child received all credits earned for classes successfully completed (applies only to students grades 9-12).	
F. Child completed high school requirements and diploma or GED was or will be issued.	
6. PREPARATION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION (Applies, at a minimum, to students age 16 or older)	
A. Postsecondary planning is occurring.	
B. Child has a plan for accessing money for post-secondary education/training (Chafee ETG, etc.).	
7. NEED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION (Complete this section only for student without existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP))	
A. Child does not appear to have a disability that affects school functioning.	
B. Child's academic performance and/or progress does not indicate a need for evaluation for eligibility for special education (including gifted).	
C. Child exhibits no truancy/disciplinary concerns that suggest a need for special education services.	
D. Child's family or caregiver does not believe that the child needs to be evaluated for special education services, including gifted.	
8. SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (Complete this section only for student with an IEP).	
A. Current special education services are meeting the child's educational needs and child is making academic progress as indicated in quarterly reports.	
B. Child is 14 or older and has special education transition plan in Individualized Education Plan.	
C. Child's special education plan is current (reviewed each year) and evaluations have been conducted at the appropriate intervals (every 3 years for all children or every 2 years for children with a diagnosis of Mental Retardation).	
D. Child's family or caregiver believes child's educational needs are being met - included gifted and talented or special education needs.	
E. Child is in the least restrictive education environment.	
9. NEED FOR ACCOMMODATIONS IN SCHOOL	
A. Child does not need accommodations for a Section 504 disability or condition.	
B. Child does not need support (e.g. Student Assistance Program (SAP) for behavioral health or substance abuse.	
<small>)CYF #353E Education Screen Complete for all school-age children in conjunction with initial FSP-AND every 6 months thereafter for C's in FC; and annually for)s at home (regardless of dependency, as long as the CYF case is open). Refer to Education and Developmental Screening & Referrals Policy and Procedure for arification. </small>	

Appendix B:
Pennsylvania General
and Special Education/
Disability
Accommodation
Screen (Education
Screen)

(continued)

General and Special Education/Disability Accommodation Screen

Child Name:	Assessment Summary Form
<p>For each item on page one of the screen where the answer was "False", provide rationale for this determination as well as steps taken to address the matter. If objectives and/or tasks have been included on the Family Service Plan/Child's Permanency Plan, you may indicate "see FSP/CPP" to avoid duplication of information. Refer to the Education Screen Resource Manual for additional information and guidance as it relates to each item on the General and Special Education/Disability Accommodation Screen. You may attach extra pages if needed. Refer to the following website for clarification on each section and suggested referrals: www.allegchenycounty.us/dhs/education/</p>	
Follow-up step(s) and comments	

CYF Comments :

Caseworker: _____ Date: _____
 Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

DRAFT

©CYF #353E Education Screen Complete for all school-age children in conjunction with initial FSP-AND every 6 months thereafter for C's in FC; and annually for C's at home (regardless of dependency, as long as the CYF case is open). Refer to Education and Developmental Screening & Referrals Policy and Procedure for clarification.

APPENDIX C: EDUCATION SCREEN SCHEMATIC

CYF Education Screening Tool *Please check all that apply*



Education Screen to be completed on every school aged child actively receiving services from CYF

- One time a year for children living at “home”
- Every six months for children in “care”
- Within 30 days of any change in placement and/or chance in goal or plan



Hierarchy of Responsibility for Contracted Providers
Please complete paperwork in conjunction with the Placement Service Plan (PSP), the In Home Service Plan (IHSP) or the ILSP. If you don't complete at PSP, IHSP or ILSP, please complete paperwork at the time of CYF Family Service Plan (FSP).

- If child is in placement – placement provider does initial screen, subsequent screens & 30-day screen if new placement**

note – If a DHS Independent Living Education Liaison is assigned to a child, he/she will take over screening responsibilities after the initial screen is done.

- Independent Living**

note – When an Independent Living Provider is assigned to a child Independent Living Provider is always responsible for every screen after the 30-day initial screen completed at the time of placement.

- If family receives services in the home, Hierarchy of Responsibility**

1. Crisis or regular in-home worker
2. Truancy/Special Casework assignment
3. Family Group Decision Making
4. Inua Ubuntu



Hierarchy of Responsibility for CYF staff if no ‘purchased’ service.
Please complete paperwork in conjunction with the Family Service Plan (FSP).

- OCYF Foster Care Caseworker**
- OCYF Family Services Caseworker**
- OCYF Intake Caseworker (GPS)**
- OCYF Intake Caseworker (CPS)**

APPENDIX D: SURVEY RESPONSES

TABLE 1: Initial Reactions of Survey Respondents to the Education Screen Requirement

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
There will be additional training opportunities	11%	20
There will be an increased focus on educational well-being in child welfare	22%	40
There will be greater collaboration between schools and child welfare agencies	19%	34
It will be difficult to obtain the information necessary to complete the Education Screen	15%	27
I am concerned about what the Education Screen could reveal about the educational stability of school-aged children and youth who are served by child welfare	2%	4
It will be difficult to complete the Education Screen due to my existing workload	14%	25
I am not the right person to be completing the Education Screen	12%	22
*Other (please specify)	6%	11
Total Responses		183
Total Respondents		113

*Within the “Other” category, one response was classified as positive, six were classified as negative, one was classified as neutral, and three indicated that the question did not apply to them.

TABLE 2: Survey Respondents’ Ratings of the Number of Opportunities to Learn about the Education Screen

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
More than enough	17%	18
Enough	55%	58
Not enough	28%	29
Total Respondents		105

**Appendix D:
Survey Responses**

(continued)

TABLE 3: Survey Respondents' Ratings of the Number of Opportunities to Learn How to Complete the Education Screen

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
More than enough	15%	16
Enough	56%	59
Not enough	29%	30
Total Respondents		105

TABLE 4: The Most Useful Features of the Education Screen in KIDS (could check more than one)

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Expandable/collapsible option for each question and section of the Education Screen	24%	18
Pre-populated school district data where available	18%	13
Instructions button linking to education resources on the DHS website	8%	6
Text boxes that appear in the process of saving and checking the Education Screen for errors	16%	12
Preview button showing print-view of the Education Screen	8%	6
Multitiered approval process	3%	2
Email alerts from KIDS	12%	9
KIDS alerts when logged in to KIDS	1%	1
*Other (please specify)	10%	7
Total Responses		74
Total Respondents		41

**Within the "Other" category, four responses indicated that nothing was useful, one indicated that the question did not apply to them, one indicated that it was not as useful as it could be, and one indicated that they do not receive alerts but would like to begin receiving them.*

**Appendix D:
Survey Responses**

(continued)

**TABLE 5: The Most Challenging Features of the Education Screen in KIDS
(could check more than one)**

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Expandable/collapsible option for each question and section of the Education Screen	11%	7
Pre-populated school district data where available	10%	6
Instructions button linking to education resources on the DHS website	8%	5
Text boxes that appear in the process of saving and checking the Education Screen for errors	11%	7
Preview button showing print-view of the Education Screen	2%	1
Multitiered approval process	30%	19
Email alerts from KIDS	8%	3
KIDS alerts when logged in to KIDS	6%	4
*Other (please specify)	18%	11
Total Responses		63
Total Respondents		41

**Within the “Other” category, two responses indicated that all features were most challenging, two indicated that the question did not apply to them, five indicated a problem with missing or incomplete information, one indicated that email alerts did not work, and one indicated that they had no issues.*

Appendix D:
Survey Responses

(continued)

TABLE 6: Which section(s) of the Education Screen do you find most difficult to complete? (check all that apply)

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Education Records	12%	9
Education Decision-Maker	5%	4
School Stability/Prompt Enrollment	4%	3
Special School Settings/Situations	7%	5
Progress Toward Promotion or Graduation	7%	5
Preparation for Post-Secondary Education	7%	5
Need for Special Education Evaluation	12%	9
Adequacy of Special Education Services	11%	8
Need for Accommodations in School	7%	5
I do not find any of the sections of the Education Screen difficult to complete	29%	22
Total Responses		75
Total respondents		42

TABLE 7: Reasons it is Difficult to Complete Specific Sections of the Education Screen (that are checked in previous question)

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
I don't understand what the section of the Education Screen is asking	3%	1
I don't know how to obtain the information I need to complete the Education Screen	18%	6
I don't understand how to interpret the education records	6%	2
I don't know who to contact to get the information I need	12%	4
The school(s) have not provided me with the information I need to complete the Education Screen in a timely manner	27%	9
Disagreement between workers/professionals about how to complete the Education Screen	9%	3
Disagreement between workers/professionals about who is responsible for completing the Education Screen	18%	6
*Other (please specify)	9%	3
Total Responses		34
Total Respondents		20

*Within the "Other" category, one response indicated that they had not yet completed an Education Screen, one indicated that they don't feel as though this should be their responsibility, and one indicated that they could not correct the Education Screen when there was an error in it.

Appendix D:
Survey Responses

(continued)

TABLE 8: *How did you seek assistance when you experienced difficulty completing the Education Screen due to the reasons you checked in the previous question? (check all that apply)*

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Contacted direct supervisor	33%	9
Contacted CYF Contract Monitor	7%	2
Contacted DHS Education Liaison	7%	2
Contacted Education Law Center	4%	1
Contacted KidsVoice	11%	3
Contacted Nicole Anderson at the AIU	4%	1
I needed assistance but did not seek assistance	19%	5
Other (please specify)	15%	4
Total responses		27
Total Respondents		20

TABLE 9: *How did you seek assistance when you needed to troubleshoot a problem you experienced with KIDS while completing the Education Screen? (check all that apply)*

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Contacted DHS Helpdesk	21%	10
Contacted KIDS Specialist from my CYF office	30%	14
Contacted KIDS Developer	0%	0
Contacted CYF Contract Monitor	0%	0
Contacted DHS Education Liaison	6%	3
Contacted the designated Education Point of Contact for my agency (for CYF provider agencies only)	2%	1
Consulted KIDS Job Aids or other training materials	2%	1
I never needed assistance	15%	7
I needed assistance but did not seek assistance	13%	6
Other (please specify)	11%	5
Total Responses		47
Total Respondents		40

Appendix D:
Survey Responses

(continued)

TABLE 10: *What form of assistance did you find to be most effective at helping you to resolve the problem you experienced with KIDS while completing the Education Screen? (check one)*

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Contacting DHS Helpdesk	19%	5
Contacting KIDS Specialist from my CYF office	44%	12
Contacting KIDS Developer	4%	1
Contacting CYF Contract Monitor	4%	1
Contacting DHS Education Liaison	4%	1
Other (please specify)	26%	7
Total Responses		27
Total Respondents		27