

A Collaboration between

Lucas County Juvenile Court (LCJC)

Lucas County Children Services (LCCS)

and Toledo Public Schools (TPS)



**Lucas County Pathways to
Success Initiative
*Final Evaluation Report***

Enhancing Educational Services for Youth in Foster Care: Strategic Coordination and Communication for Inter-Agency Policy Reform

An Evaluation of the Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative Final Evaluation Report

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Research tells us that children in foster care are at great risk of failing in school, dropping out of school, and having limited post secondary education success. At the same time, those who have found success in their lives in spite of their time in foster care most often credit a caring teacher or educator who reached out to them. With that said, the least we can do for the children who find themselves in foster care out of no fault of their own, is to provide them with some stability during this time of uncertainty by insuring that they can continue to attend their home schools.

Educating teachers and educators about trauma, the impact trauma that the children may likely experience from the circumstances causing removal from their family and being placed in foster care, and providing them with tools to better deal with behaviors due to the trauma will certainly assist to maintain stability for the child and likely increase the children's opportunity to be successful in school.

And, perhaps, the children will be able to take advantage of a teacher or educator who, with this information, may extend a hand to a child in need of support and stability during a challenging and uncertain time in his or her life.

~Judge Denise Navarre Cubbon



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Executive Summary

Traditionally youth who are involved in the child welfare agencies, public school systems, and juvenile courts are handled by one system or the other. These agencies often have conflicting missions and philosophies (to protect, to educate, or to hold youth accountable); however, they often serve many of the same families. Specifically, foster youth and other trauma-exposed youth may experience difficulties in school including emotional dysregulation, inattention, reactivity, and disciplinary and academic troubles (Castrechini, 2009). Youth in foster care are at high risk of academic failure as a result of frequent school moves (Trout et al., 2008). Children in foster care experience more school transfers, obtain special education classifications at higher rates, are retained at greater rates, and have more disciplinary actions than youth who are not in foster care (Reynolds et. al., 2009, Scherr, 2007; Stone, 2007; Trout et al., 2008). Furthermore, school mobility has been associated with youth dropping out of school and juvenile delinquency (Reynolds et. al., 2009). Likewise, youth in foster care are more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

School mobility rates are highest for those entering care for the first time (Smithgall, 2004) 2011. Based on a sample of LCCS data of 138 youth in LCCS custody whose cases were reviewed in 2011, 60% of the youth had to change schools after entering agency custody. Furthermore, 72% of LCCS foster youth who experienced a change in placement experienced a change of school following the placement change (LCCS data, 2008). Foster placement disruption and high mobility rates are not exclusive to Lucas County, instead research indicates that over a third of the former foster youth involved in a 2004 study reported five or more school changes (Courtney et al., 2004). A study of foster care alumni found that 65% of youth had experienced seven or more school changes from elementary through high school (Pecora et al., 2005). Notably each time a student changes schools, it can take four to six months to recover academically (Casey Family Programs, 2007).

Therefore, in order to effectively address the negative outcomes of youth in foster care in Northwest Ohio, the Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services and Toledo Public Schools agreed to work together to abolish the silos of the previous conflicting philosophies. Historically, in Lucas County one of the overarching problems in developing efficient and effective educational services for youth in foster care has been outdated practices and policies. In 2012, in order to work in a more integrated fashion, the administrators of Lucas Coun-



I remember a time when our Public Schools, Juvenile Court and Children Services would not discuss educational outcomes for children. Now, thanks to Pathways we have very frank, honest discussions and can work together for the best interest of the children.

~Nicole R. Williams,
Lucas County Children Services

PtSI

Chain of Assumptions



School stability leads to improved academic and behavioral outcomes for youth in foster care.

Training teachers and community members on trauma-informed approaches will improve their interactions with students.

Providing adequate transportation will allow students to remain in their home school.

Providing opportunities for enrichment activities helps students feel like they belong and reinforce socially appropriate behavior through pro-social activities.

Building strong relationships between staff members within the three systems has a positive impact on students.

Keeping students as the focal point of all decisions improves service delivery.

ty Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services and Toledo Public Schools, applied for and were awarded the Child Welfare - Education System Collaborations to Increase Educational Stability grant through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grant funds were used to create a multi-system approach to improve the educational outcomes and placement stability of youth in foster care through strategic planning, policy reform and inter-agency service delivery.

The Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative provided added supports to youth in foster care ages 10-17 in hopes of increasing academic and behavioral success for youth in foster care by focusing on: 1) maintaining placement and school enrollment when doing so would be in the child's best interest; 2) providing transportation when necessary for a child to remain in his/her original school; 3) utilizing trauma-informed approaches to delinquent and unruly behavior thereby reducing out-of-school suspensions; 4) equipping teachers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), Guardians ad Litem (GALs), court personnel, and other community stakeholders with the skills necessary to address the unique needs of youth in foster care; and 5) recruiting foster parents in the communities from which students previously resided. This approach has assisted with building infrastructure capacity to ensure that youth in care are afforded the opportunity to succeed academically.

The **Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative (PtSI)** is part of a larger movement to address the issue of educational stability for youth in foster care. The PtSI combines the resources of the Lucas County Juvenile Court (LCJC), Toledo Public Schools (TPS), and Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) to address the compounded negative effects which meet at the intersection of the education and child welfare systems, with implications for the juvenile justice and child mental health systems. PtSI is rooted in a chain of assumptions.

PtSI's theoretical framework exists within trauma-related theories of child and adolescent development. High mobility rates and conflicting data made it virtually impossible to identify a single school with a large enough sample size of foster youth enrollment to serve as a pilot site for the Pathways to Success Initiative. Therefore, PtSI focused on the entire district, which was a challenging task; however, great milestones occurred as a result of the initiative. Specifically, LCCS, LCJC, and TPS have indeed improved their collaboration through this initiative and are committed to sustaining the PtSI by providing staff, in-kind services and funding to improve the educational outcomes and stability of youth in foster care.

Project Implementation

Strategic planning

Lucas County Juvenile Court Lucas, County Children Services and Toledo Public Schools all share the same overarching goal: to do what is in the best interest of children. Their respective missions, values, and activities reflect this shared goal and outline their respective areas of expertise and engagement:

Lucas County Juvenile Court The mission of LCJC is to 1) effectively, efficiently, and equitably administer justice in all matters brought before it and 2) ensure that the children and people who come before it receive the kind of care, protection, guidance, and treatment that will serve the best interest of the community and the best welfare of the child.

Lucas County Children Services The mission of LCCS is to lead the community in the protection of children at risk of abuse and neglect by working with families, service providers, and community members to assess risk and coordinate community-based services resulting in safe, stable, and permanent families for children.

Toledo Public Schools Toledo Public School's mission is to produce competitive college and career ready graduates through a rigorous curriculum across all grade levels by implementing Ohio's New Learning Standards with fidelity.

The model for the PtSI suggests that improved educational outcomes for youth in foster care will only result if agencies serving these youth engage in inter-agency strategic coordination and communication. Therefore, in the first year of implementation, the majority of the initiative activities were geared towards establishing an infrastructure where these collaborative relationships between partners could thrive. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between agencies was critical in defining the framework for the expectations, responsibilities, and agreements for all involved. The MOU was signed by all parties May, 2012.

Adopting methodology for incremental and transformative organizational change delineated by Casey Family Programs in the article "Learning While Doing in the Human Services Sector: Becoming a Learning Organization through Organizational Change", the Lucas County Juvenile Court hired a **Change Leader, Marjory Curry** to oversee the development and imple-



Being a part of the team, that has put processes in place to stabilize our foster children and help set them up for success, has been priceless!

~Heather Baker,
Toledo Public Schools



Working as the Project Director for PtSI has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The opportunity to play a part in making a difference in improving the lives and educational outcomes of youth in foster care was a true gift.

~Deborah Hodges,
Lucas County Juvenile Court

mentation of the Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative. The Change Leader facilitated the development, implementation and fidelity of policies among all staff with a special focus on mid-level management. The Change Leader worked with all of the agencies involved in the review of current policy and development of work plans for evaluating, revising outdated policies and strategically implementing new policies and procedures. Additionally, under the direction of the Change Leader, 6 working committees (Data, Placement Stability, Transportation, Training, Alternatives, Transition Assistance) were established to develop new protocols and procedures. The Change Leader also worked with the **Project Director and Court Administrator, Deborah Hodges** on fulfilling all grant requirements for the Administration for Children and Families.

In the beginning of year 2, the court hired the **PtSI Social Worker, Alicia Komives** to provide support and direct service to youth in foster care at school, and to provide training on trauma exposure and trauma informed care for teachers and school personnel. At the end of year 2, Alicia took responsibility the oversight of the PtSI after the Change Leader left her position.

The major tenet of the PtSI is the importance of collaboration between agencies with which youth in foster care may engage. Therefore, one of the most important implementation activities of the initiative during the first year was the formation of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). Under the leadership of the Change Leader and Court Administrator, the SPC used a three tiered change structure in which 1) the clinical model, focused on serving participants, 2) the program model involved staff at all levels of the agencies and 3) the business model considered personnel, human resources, political factors, media relations, budgeting, sustainability, policy and procedures needed to improve educational outcomes for youth in foster care. The SPC was formed and began monthly meetings in January 2013. It consisted of members from LCJC, LCCS, and TPS. The SPC was charged with the revision, development, and implementation of the policies and protocols related to the academic needs of youth in foster care, aged 10-17 years, at risk for academic failure. Specially, the SPC planned to:

1. Reduce transient care
2. Improve transportation alternatives for youth in care
3. Train and educate staff about the challenges trauma-exposed youth face
4. Link youth to appropriate trauma-informed services
5. Implement protocols that promote alternative disciplinary approaches to in-school behavior problems
6. Develop and implement policies and protocols that increase information and data sharing across agencies

In addition, each collaborative partner was held responsible for delegating mid-level managers and line staff to serve on the policy implementation teams. Those involved in the implementation teams were empowered to ensure the recommended changes were implemented. Specifically, one example of this was achieved through the empowerment of the LCCS Educational Specialists who became an integral part of the team process in planning and service delivery.

The three **Educational Specialists, Nicole R. Williams, Houda Abdoney, and Regina Garmen-Brown**, employed by LCCS were recruited to work with the PtSI team, under the supervision of **Diana Theiss, Manager of Policy and Improvement Initiatives**. This group played a very important role as part of the PtSI team. Prior to this initiative, the Education Specialists worked independently at the schools with youth in foster care with little support. The initiative proved to be a major asset to the Educational Specialists and the team. The PtSI team provided support and assistance to the Educational Specialists, while they in turn proved to be an excellent addition and support to the team. The advocacy and support that is provided by the Education Specialists is invaluable. The work they do on behalf of the youth in foster care is inspiring and much needed.

Toledo Public Schools **Assistant Superintendent, Brian Murphy** and **Heather Baker** played a major role in the development of the Strategic plan. TPS immediately responded to the call to stop youth from having to change schools following a placement or placement change. Their support was invaluable in holding principals accountable for maintaining school stability for youth in foster care.

During the first year of the grant, the Juvenile Court worked vigorously with the proposed contractual agencies to secure contracts for the grant services. The contract with Northwest Professional Consortium (NPC Research) was completed on November 28, 2012 and was approved by the Lucas County Commissioners on December 4, 2012. NPC Research was sought out to provide objective comprehensive evaluation for the Pathways to Success Initiative. Contract negotiations between the Juvenile Court and The Cullen Center as well as between Juvenile Court and American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, Legal Center for Foster Care and Education (Legal Center FCE) took much longer to finalize than expected. The contract between Juvenile Court and The Cullen Center provided trauma-informed training to teachers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), Court

personnel, caseworkers and other community stakeholders, while the contract between, the Juvenile Court and Legal Center FCE, provided technical assistance for the implementation of the Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative.

Placement and School Stability

Increasing educational stability is paramount to improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care. When school placement disruption cannot be prevented the custodial agency should work diligently with school system to ensure that the child's transition is as smooth as possible, i.e. facilitating transitions at natural breaks in the school year.

Objective: Maintain placement and school enrollment when doing so would be in the child's best interest. This was the focal point of the PtSI; with emphasis being placed on preserving the youth's school enrollment when the youth initially entered care. This continues to be a priority and the main objective of the initiative. PtSI offers services to keep the youth in their school of origin even when a placement has disrupted — breaching the historical practice that a new placement means a new school. When school placement disruption cannot be prevented, PtSI works closely with TPS and LCCS to ensure that the child's transition is as smooth as possible.

Intervention Activities: The purpose of Foster Placement Stability Mediation Program is to provide an opportunity to problem solve situations before they become a crisis. A case involving youth ages 10–17 may be referred to mediation if a foster youth, foster parent, CASA, LCCS caseworker, or a court staff member believes that the family would benefit from mediation. Also, cases that are at risk of placement disruption will be screened to determine if mediation is appropriate. The Court created and distributed mediation information to foster parents, foster youth, LCCS caseworkers, probation officers and CASA/GALs. Additionally the Change Leader, Project Director and Mediation Supervisor provided training for 115 individuals (supervisors, case workers, probation officers, & foster parents) on the importance of placement stability and the resources that were developed to prevent disruptions.

This resource has not been utilized as much as we previously envisioned. To date 24 cases were referred to mediation over the course of the grant. The Juvenile Court understood that implementation of this mediation model was a process that involved a system-wide change



This program has made a tremendous difference for our students.

~Brad Aemisegger,
Toledo Public Schools



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which required employing long-term strategies to implement this change. In response to the lack of program referrals, over 230 mediation brochures were mailed out to foster parents to ensure that they were aware of mediation as a resource.

The team also continued to review and update the process for mediation referrals at monthly Foster Parent Association meetings as well as during monthly supervisions meeting with caseworkers. Likewise, information regarding mediation was placed on the Lucas County website. Referrals to mediation can be made on the Lucas County website as well. In addition, the SPC reviewed and proposed changes to the TPS policy which required foster youth to change schools when there is a change in foster homes that places a youth in another school's jurisdiction (all within the same district). As a result of policy revision, it is the expectation that youth in foster care will remain in their school of origin unless it can be proven that doing so is not in the child's best interest.

Transportation

Inadequate transportation results in school disruptions for youth in care. Transportation often becomes a barrier for youth to remain in their school of origin. In 2011, Toledo Public Schools' budget was reduced by 30 million dollars (toledoblade.com). As a result, schools were closed, sports activities were cut, and transportation services for high school students and students in grades K-8 living less than two miles from school were eliminated.

In compliance with the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, LCCS attempts to provide transportation when necessary for a child to remain in their original school. Foster parents are encouraged to consider driving their foster children to the school they have been attending in an attempt to maintain their educational connection. However, this is not always feasible, as foster parents may have multiple children in their home, work jobs outside of the home, or are otherwise unable to provide transportation.

Objective: Provide transportation to allow students to remain in their school of origin when doing so is in the child's best interest.

Intervention activities: The Juvenile Court has worked with Toledo Public Schools to develop a process for addressing transportation barriers that prevent educational stability. Toledo Public Schools has assigned the **Director of Transportation, Brad Aemisegger**, to work with the team to address transportation needs. The director has been a huge asset to the team. He has been very positive about the initiative and is willing to work with the team to address transportation needs. The director routinely goes above and beyond to make transportation arrangements for a youth in foster care. His willingness and speedy response to transportation requests set a very positive tone for the process.

It has been a true collaboration and there have never been arguments or complaining regarding an unwillingness to make arrangements for a youth. When a youth is in need

of transportation services in order to remain in their home school; a referral is made to PTSI and the social worker contacts the TPS transportation department to arrange transportation, when doing so is feasible and in child's best interest. 66 Youth within our target population have been connected with transportation services to ensure school attendance. Because this initiative focuses on systematic changes, a Memorandum of Understanding between Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools was signed indicating that Lucas County Children Services shall be responsible for transporting a child to his/her current school during the first week of the child's placement in foster care, while the best interest determination is being made. Once that determination is made, the responsibility for transportation then shifts to the district that is deemed responsible for that child's education.

For the duration of the grant, grant funds were accessed to cover the cost of transportation to keep children in their school of origin when a bus was not available. When transportation becomes a barrier for youth to remain in their school of origin, PtSI partners with TPS and TARTA—the area's transportation authority—to provide bus services, when appropriate. This collaboration will prove to be a sustainable foundation for continued transportation access for youth in order to maintain their enrollment at their school of origin.

Trauma-Informed Care

Research continues to highlight the impact of trauma on educational outcomes of youth in foster care. Youth who have experienced trauma may experience difficulties in school including emotional dysregulation, inattention, reactivity, and disciplinary and academic troubles.

Trauma can impact school performance in different ways such as: lower GPAs, higher rates of school absences, increased drop-out, more suspensions and expulsions and decreased reading ability (NCTSN, 2008). Teachers, CASAs, GALs, court personnel and other community stakeholders must be equipped with the skills necessary to address the unique needs of youth in foster care. The Lucas County PtSI facilitated the development of materials and strategies within the educational setting that teach and prepare administrators, classroom teachers, aides, CASA/ GALs and others to appropriately address emotional and behavioral challenges resulting from childhood trauma caused by abuse and neglect. 2011 LCCS data indicated that 35% of the foster youth enrolled in the Education Monitoring Program were referred to suspension services and 42% were referred multiple times.

Objective: Address punitive school discipline policies that remove youth from the classroom through strategic planning and policy analysis.

Intervention Activities: A year into the process, The LCJC hired a full-time **Social Worker/Behavior Management Specialist, Alicia Komives**, to work with PtSI youth. The role of the Social Worker/Behavior Management Specialist was to provide evidence-based crisis intervention services for students as needed and provide



I have had a great experience with the Pathways to Success program. I have received the physical support, emotional support, and the counseling support that I needed in my classroom.

~TPS Teacher

consultation services to school staff on individual behavior plans and interventions that meet each youth's specific needs. The Social Worker/Behavior Management Specialist encouraged the use of logical consequences that include immediate responses to negative behavior, time out measures as behavioral triggers appear and rewards and incentives for positive pro-social behavior. Additionally, the Social worker worked diligently to establish and implement trauma informed practices and protocols that promote alternative disciplinary approaches to in-school behavior problems that would otherwise result in suspensions and expulsions and develop and implement policies that minimize disruption caused by school transfers. The Social Worker became licensed as a certified trauma specialist and acted as a resource for the students and teachers on a regular basis providing support, resources and alternatives in the classroom. This greatly assisted in enhancing and providing a stable classroom experience for the youth and teacher alike.

Training

Educational staff is often ill prepared to appropriately address the emotional and behavioral challenges resulting from childhood trauma caused by abuse and neglect (NCTSN, 2008). This often results in suspensions and other punitive actions. Increased awareness about the impact trauma has on youth in foster care and the utilization of multidisciplinary interventions will reduce out-of-school suspensions and expulsions among foster youth, thereby increasing graduation rates.

Objective: Equip teachers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Guardians Ad Litem (GAL), court personnel and other community stakeholders with the skills necessary to address the unique needs of youth in foster care.

Intervention Activities: The Court established a Training Committee to plan and facilitate trainings designed to provide professionals and stakeholders with the skills necessary to address the needs of youth in foster care. The Training Committee has worked diligently in with **Dr. Adrienne Elhai**, a local psychologist regarded as an expert in trauma-informed care, to identify training models, develop a training schedule, secure training locations, and notify community partners of training opportunities. As result of the Training Committee's efforts, the Court sponsored four cross-system trainings within the first year of the grant.

Think Trauma. The *Think Trauma* training consists of modularized, skills-based, interac-

tive trauma-focused training curriculum designed specifically for direct care professionals who serve youth in residential/correctional facilities. Learning how trauma affects these youth and its impact on their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions, is intended to give training participants the practical tools necessary to make a difference in the lives and future of these youth and their families. Both the PtSI Change Leader and the Social Worker attended and became certified at *Think Trauma* trainers, which was a major asset in providing training to staff. In Year One, two sessions of the *Think Trauma* training were delivered to a total of 85 professionals working with youth in foster care. To measure the impact of the training, a pre- and post-training survey was administered to participants. The survey included 37 statements related to the impact of trauma on youth and corresponding trauma-related approaches such as, "Trauma experienced in childhood can impact later social and emotional development" and "Traumatic events that happened long ago can interfere with thinking, feeling, and acting appropriate today." Participants rated each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' See NPC Final Program Evaluation for the *Think Trauma* Training Evaluation Survey. (*Appendix D. page A.56*)

Fifty-two training participants completed both the pre- and the post-training survey in Year One.

Of the 37 survey items, there was a statistically significant change in the desired direction for 35 of the items. See NPC Final Program Evaluation Report for comprehensive Year One survey results. (*Appendix E. page A.59*) Four main areas of impact were identified:

1. Participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge related to the impact of trauma on youth. After participating in the training, professionals reported greater agreement with statements such as, "Trauma can result in difficulty establishing appropriate boundaries" and "Trauma affects the normal development of the brain, brain chemistry, and nervous system."
2. Participants demonstrated a positive shift in attitudes towards the value of trauma-based knowledge and approaches in their work. After participating in the training, professionals reported greater agreement with statements such as, "Understanding child traumatic stress can improve safety in residential settings" and "Knowing that youth have different reactions to trauma (fight, flight, or freeze) can help us understand their behavior."

3. Participants demonstrated greater understanding regarding both organizational and individual stress. After participating in the training, professionals reported greater agreement with statements such as, “Organizational stress can cause staff to respond with more frequent or severe punitive measures towards the youth in their care” and “Hearing over and over about the trauma that youth have experienced can cause vicarious trauma for workers.”

4. Participants demonstrated a positive shift in attitudes related to the importance of practicing self-care. After participating in the training, professionals reported greater agreement with statements such as “I practice positive self-care strategies when I am stressed out at work” and “Self-care is my responsibility and the responsibility of my co-workers, my supervisors, and my organization.”

These results indicated that the *Think Trauma* training has the potential to affect the work practices and attitudes of professionals working with trauma-affected youth. However, it is important to note that although there was a statistically significant change from pre-training to post-training on almost all the statements, participants were already in agreement with most of the statements before the training. Therefore, the change indicates a shift from agreement to even more agreement, rather than a shift from disagreement to agreement. For example, a change in average rating of 4.7 to 4.9 is statistically significant, but the practical implication of this finding is that participants were already in strong agreement with the statement before they received the training. However, there were specific survey items in which the shift was practically—as well as statistically—significant.

These findings speak to the value of the training. For example, levels of agreement with the statement, “I can identify early signs of a trauma reminder” shifted from an average rating of 3.1 before the training to an average rating of 4.4 after the training (on the 5-point scale ranging from 1 ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 ‘strongly agree.’ This finding indicates an increase in efficacy—the participants felt more capable after participating in the training.

ReThink Trauma. The *ReThink Trauma* training utilized a modified version of the *Think Trauma* curriculum (described above) specifically geared towards foster parents. In Year One, one session of the *ReThink Trauma* training was delivered to a total of 29 foster parents. To measure the impact of the training, a pre- and post-training

survey was administered to participants. The survey included 25 statements related to the impact of trauma on youth and corresponding trauma-related approaches such as, “Trauma can result in distrust and suspicion of others including those who have done nothing to cause it” and “It is important to know the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.” Participants rated each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’ See NPC Final Program Evaluation Report. (*Appendix F. page A.61*)

Year One *ReThink Trauma* Results. Twenty-six training foster parents completed both the pre- and the post-training survey.

Out of the 25 survey items, there was a statistically significant in the desired direction on four of the items. There was no statistically significant change in any of the other 21 survey items. See NPC Final Program Evaluation Report for comprehensive survey results. (*Appendix G. page A.63*) The following are areas in which change was demonstrated:

Foster parents demonstrated an increase in knowledge related to the impact of trauma on youth. After participating in the training, foster parents reported greater agreement with the following statements: “Trauma can result in difficulty establishing appropriate boundaries” and “Youth who appear emotionally cold may have experienced trauma.”

Foster parents demonstrated a greater understanding of the prevalence of trauma among youth in the juvenile justice system. After participating in the training, foster parents reported greater agreement with the statement “Most youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced multiple forms of trauma.”

The results of the *ReThink Trauma* training evaluation indicate that the training did not lead to change in overall knowledge and attitudes related to the impact of trauma. However, as with the results of the *Think Trauma* evaluation described earlier in this report, is it important to note that foster parents reported strong agreement (or disagreement) with the survey items before the training and therefore did not have much room to shift. These findings suggest that it would be valuable to reassess what the training needs are among foster parents. It may be that there are

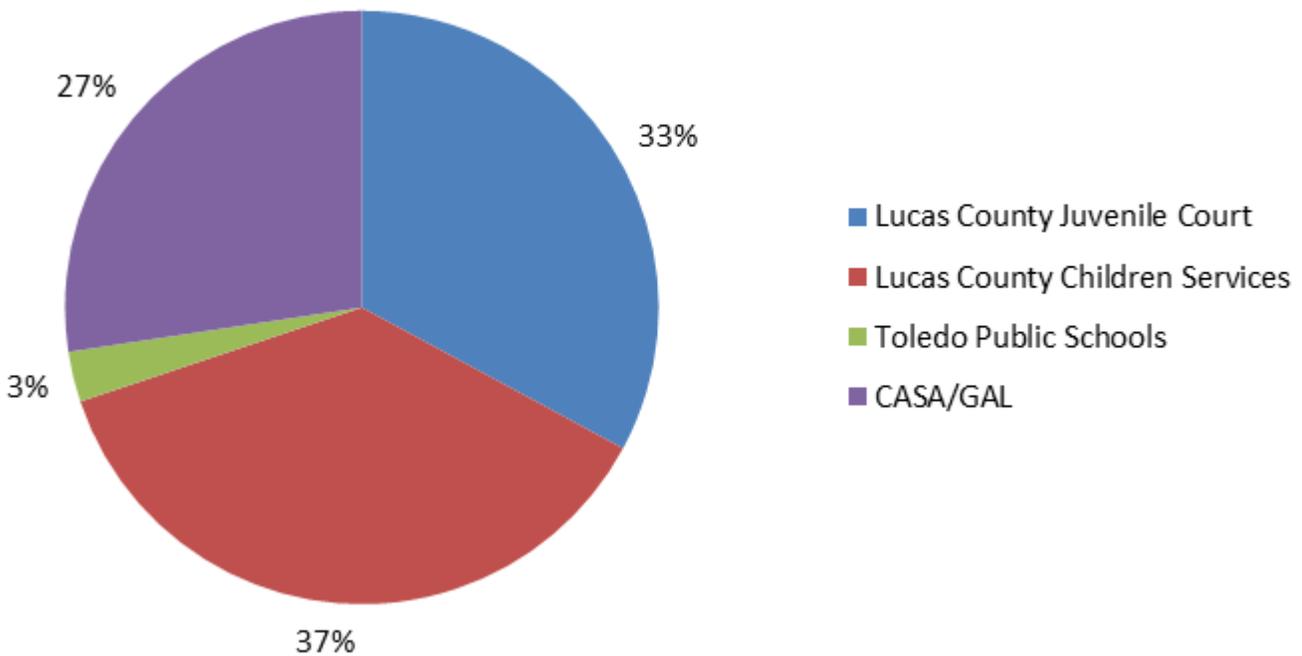
alternative needs in terms of knowledge, information, or efficacy that are not currently covered in the training or that are not measured by the training evaluation survey.

Oscar: Using Problem-Based Learning to Understand Trauma. The Oscar training curriculum is designed for professionals and community members who work with trauma-exposed youth. The goal of the training is to aid participants in identifying trauma-informed approaches and alternative responses to juvenile delinquency in order to decrease involvement in the juvenile justice system, child welfare, or the behavioral health system.

In Year One, one session of the Oscar training was delivered to a total of 100 professionals working with youth in foster care. The evaluation team observed this training during the site visit in addition to analyzing data from an exit survey that participants completed. Training participants were affiliated with LCJC, LCCS, and CASA/GAL. Very few (2%) were from Toledo Public Schools (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report). The majority of participants felt that their knowledge of trauma-informed approaches increased as a result of the training and that they would be able to apply what they learned to their jobs (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report).

Year One Oscar Training Participants: Affiliation *(NPC Evaluation Report)*

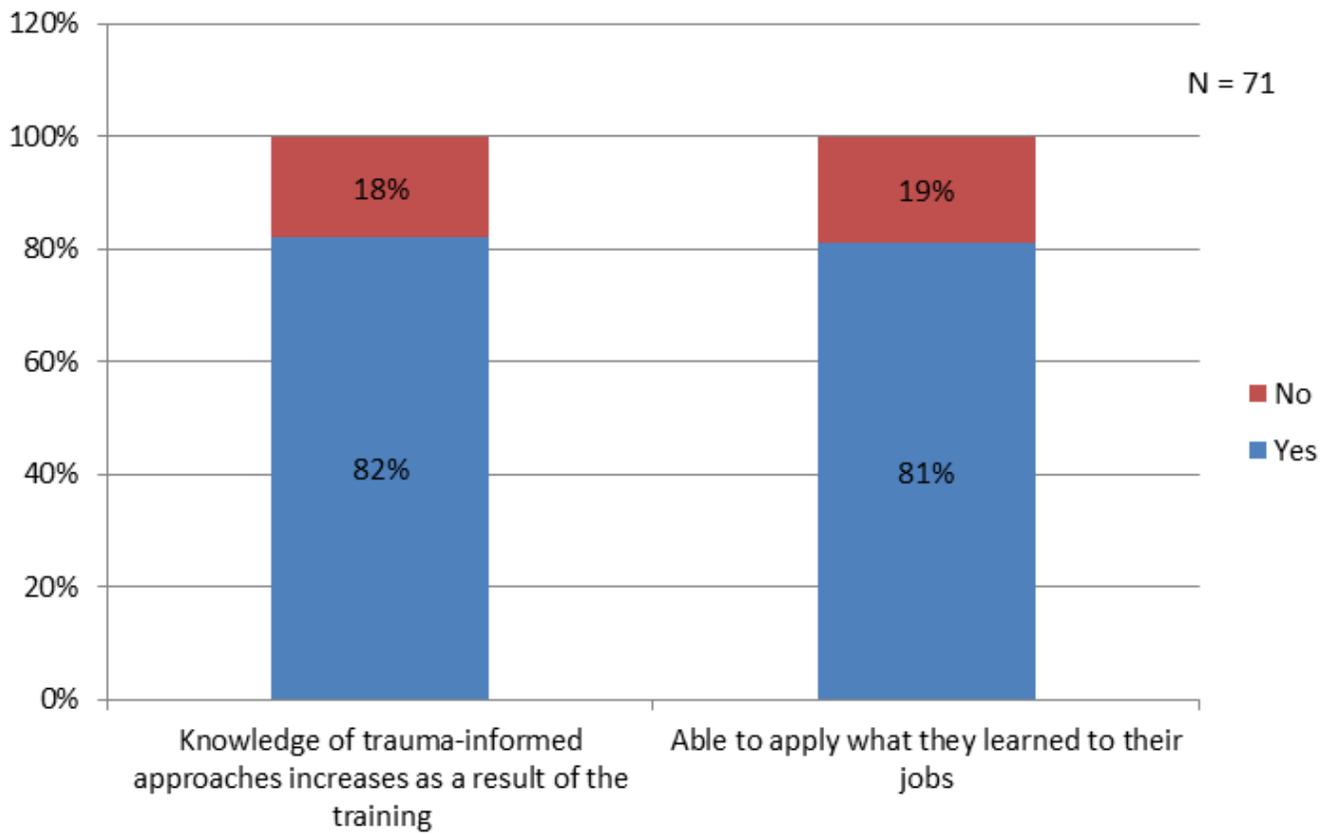
N = 71



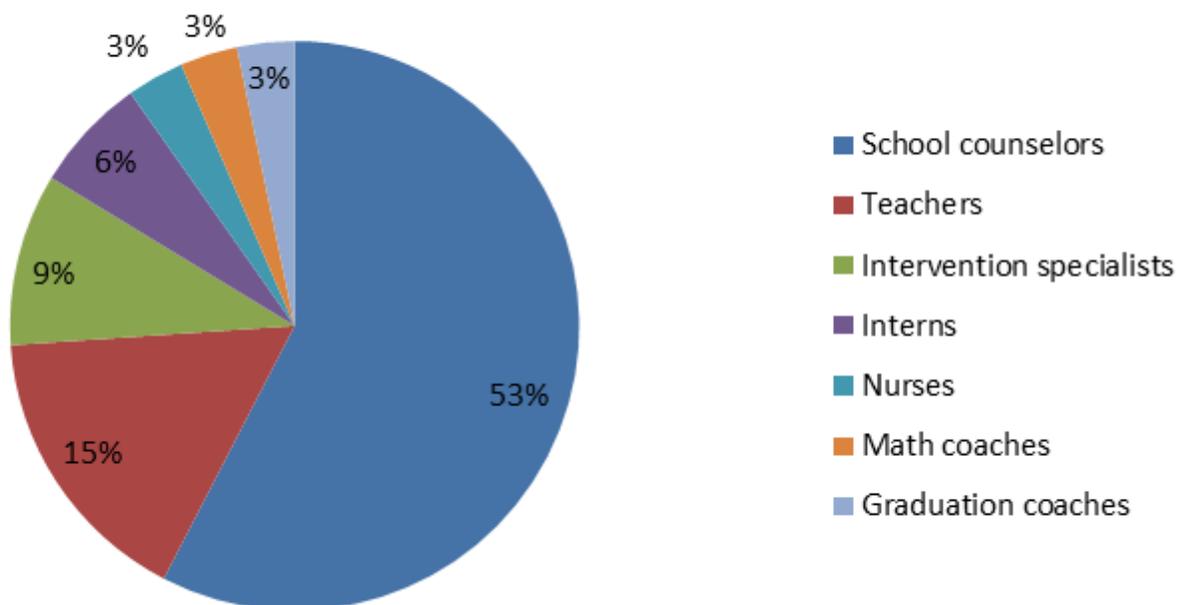
In hopes of fostering a sustainable trauma-informed community, the change leader and social worker completed train-the-trainer training in order to provide continuous trauma training throughout Northwest Ohio. Specifically, in Years Two and Three, seven Educational Advocacy and Trauma trainings were delivered to CASA volunteers/professionals and educational professionals

(teachers, special education teachers, peer literacy coaches, therapists) working with youth. An abbreviated, post-training survey was developed to measure self-reported increase in knowledge and efficacy related to trauma-informed approaches among training participants (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report).

Year One Oscar Training: Participant Feedback (NPC Evaluation Report)



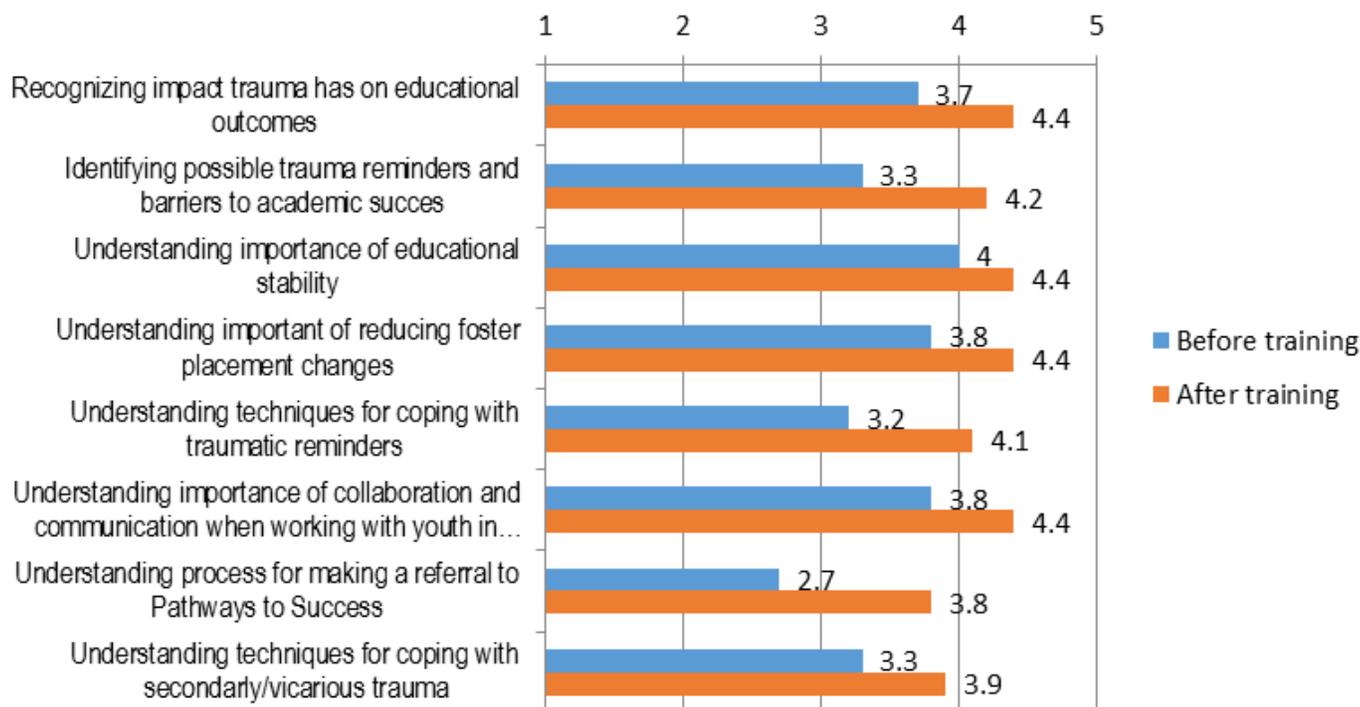
Fall 2014 (Year Two) Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training Participants— (NPC Evaluation Report)



The survey was modified slightly after the initial five trainings were conducted in March and April of 2014 and therefore the findings from the last two trainings conducted in November 2014 are slightly different and are presented separately (See NPC Final Program Evaluation Report for revised version of the survey). Respondents were asked to reflect on their knowledge before the

training and then indicate their level of knowledge after participating in the training. In total, 112 training participants completed the post-training assessment (78 in March/April 2014 and 34 in November 2014). Participants rated their knowledge and skills on a 5-point scale from 1 'very low' to 5 'very high.'

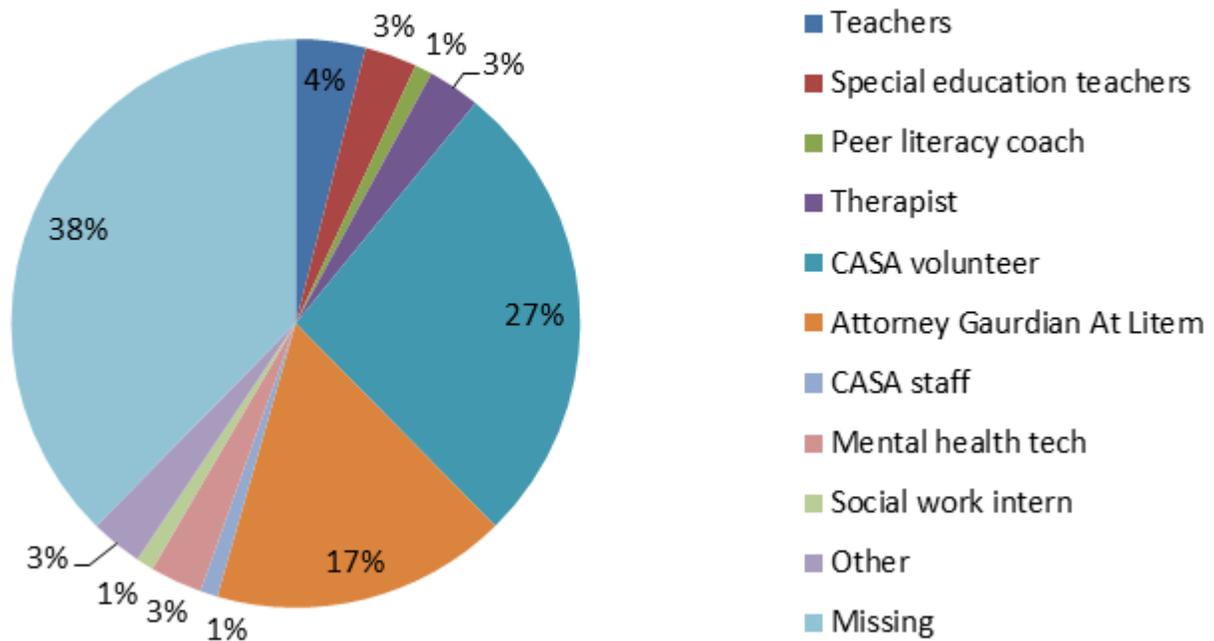
Fall 2014 (Year Two) Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training—Participant Ratings of Change in Knowledge and Understanding (1 'very low;' 5 'very high')
(NPC Evaluation Report)



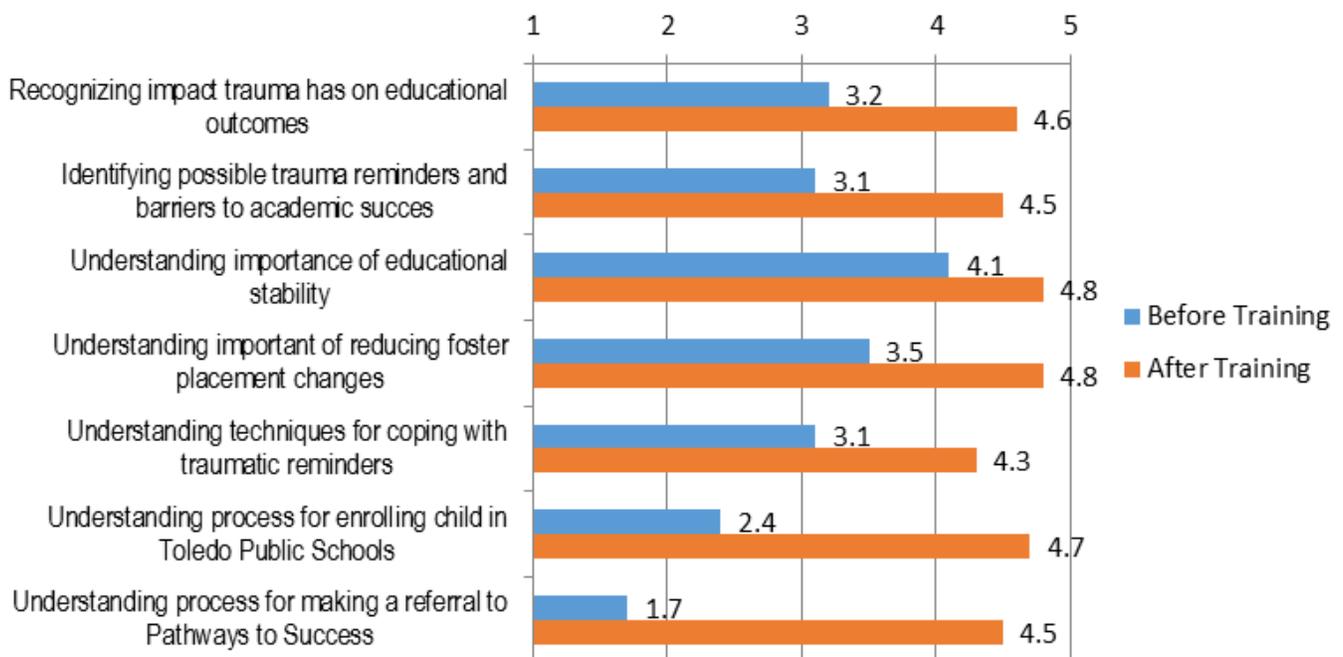
The 78 participants in the spring 2014 training who represented mostly CASA volunteers and attorneys guardian ad litem reported a significant increase in their knowledge and skills in all of the measured topic areas (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report). Although participants reported relatively high levels of knowledge before the training, it is interesting to note that the topics in which they felt they knew the least before the training were the process for enrolling a child in Toledo Public Schools and the process for making a referral to Pathways to Success. The large increase in practical knowledge related to these two

tangible tasks (how to actually do something as opposed to theoretical or conceptual knowledge) is especially relevant to this initiative—in that an important goal is to actually change practice and the way that people do their jobs. Overall, participants felt their knowledge and understanding was greater after the training than before the training. Further, participants felt that the training would make a great deal of difference in the way they did their jobs (average rating = 4.3 on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 'no difference' to 5 'tremendous difference').

Spring 2014 (Year Two) Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training Participants—Roles (NPC Evaluation Report)



Spring 2014 (Year Two) Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training—Participant Ratings of Knowledge and Understanding Before and After the Training (1 'very low;' 5 'very high') (NPC Evaluation Report)



Substantive change does not occur with- in individuals unless it first occurs within the systems that serve them.

~Marjory Curry,
Lucas County Juvenile Court



Marjory Curry and Alicia Komives,
PtSI Staff

The 34 participants who attend the fall 2014 training represented mostly teachers and school counselors and reported a significant increase in their knowledge and skills in all of the measured topic areas (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report). Again, the largest increase in knowledge was related to practical knowledge (how to make a referral to Pathways to Success). Overall, participants felt their knowledge and understanding was greater after the training than before the training. Participants also felt that the training would make some difference in the way they did their jobs (average rating = 3.6 on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 'no difference' to 5 'tremendous difference').

Value of the Educational Advocacy and Think Trauma Trainings

Thirty-four participants completed a post-training evaluation and rated the following statements on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 'poor' to 5 'excellent':

1. The goals of the session were achieved
2. Activities/presentations were effective in reaching the outcomes
3. Session was a valuable professional development exercise
4. Networking with colleagues is valuable to me
5. I am interested in learning additional information about students in foster or out-of-home care

All participants rated the above statements as either '4' or '5' indicating they felt the training did an excellent job at achieving goals/reaching outcomes and providing a valuable professional development opportunity. All participants also strongly felt that networking with colleagues is important and indicated they were interested in learning more about youth in foster and out-of-home care.

In addition to training events the team created packets and desk references for teachers that included information on trauma-informed practices, contact and referral information for the PtSI.

Data Sharing

Objective: Develop systematic, accurate and efficient means for identifying foster youth across agencies.

Intervention Activities: After hiring the **Grant Data Specialist, Ashley Clayton**, to work closely with the PtSI, the Data Committee was established. The primary task of the Data Committee (DC) was to implement protocols that allowed for data sharing across

agencies. The MOU signed by LCJC, LCCS, and TPS included a data sharing agreement in which all three agencies agreed to provide one another with specific data elements such as youth name, youth date of birth, detention history (LCJC), placement history (LCCS), and enrollment status (TPS).

Another goal of the DC was to collect and review data that is available to accurately identify foster youth across agencies. One challenge the DC identified is the transient nature of youth in foster care which affects accuracy and completeness of data. To address this challenge, the DC developed a tracking sheet that lists all youth in foster care. Indicators of problems, such as consecutive missed days of school, disciplinary action at school, or a drop in GPA lead the youth to be flagged for further investigation and attention.

The Data Committee also developed an on-online referral process where teachers, caregivers, court personnel, child welfare workers, and CASA/GALs can request assistance. The referral page is located on the Lucas County website allowing individuals to make referrals 24 hours a day. Once the referral is made an automatic notification is sent to the PtSI Change Leader, the PtSI Social Worker, the CASA Department, and a LCCS designee. This allowed for a rapid response to all referrals thereby ensuring that services are provided as quickly as possible. The online referral system automatically logs the referrals and captures all required data elements for report process outcomes. In addition, the website was utilized to post articles and educational materials to provide easy access for teachers, counselors, caseworkers, and court staff. The Data Committee meet monthly to review program progress and make any necessary changes.

The Data Committee was responsible for drafting an Information Sharing Agreement between Lucas County Children Services, Toledo Public Schools, and the Lucas County Juvenile Court. The Data Committee identified the data elements necessary to track the success of the program and has completed a draft Information Sharing Agreement reflecting those elements. The Court has also purchased an encrypted online data entry system so that users could access the database from any computer with Internet access and database modification that would occur simultaneously for all end-users. This will allow the Court to become more efficient and effective in its service delivery as well as provide more thorough program monitoring to adjust programming procedures in a timelier manner. While progress was made in developing a database and tracking sys-

tem for referrals to PtSI, there is still much work to be accomplished in the data sharing arena. The school, court, and LCCS initially discussed developing a shared database to track long term educational outcomes for youth in foster care. While this has not been realized to-date, the school has expressed that it is committed to working more closely to achieve this goal.

In addition to the Data Committee, the **Court's Information System** staff routinely provided technical support to the PtSI. **Eric Zatko** and **Chuck Vogelbacher** provided support and worked on the development of the website and other needed report functions.

Youth Voice

Objective: Allowing current and former foster youth the opportunity to have an active voice in this initiative.

Intervention Activities: To further this goal, the Change Leader, project director, and social worker attended a KidSpeak presentation in Wayne County, Michigan. After meeting with Dr. Angelique Day the team focused its efforts in the second year of PtSI, to gain a better understanding of the perspectives and educational experiences of youth in foster care. A youth survey and several focus groups were conducted to gather this information. **Cari Carson** and **Kayla Mayer**, Graduate Interns from the University of Michigan, conducted the focus groups with the youth in foster care. Cari and Kayla met with the youth in foster care after school, conducted interviews and collected responses.

Youth Survey

Objective: Allowing current and former foster youth the opportunity to have an active voice in this initiative.

Intervention Activities: To further this goal, the Change Leader, project director, and social worker attended a KidSpeak presentation in Wayne County, Michigan. After meeting with Dr. Angelique Day the team focused its efforts in the second year of PtSI, to gain a better understanding of the perspectives and educational experiences of youth in foster care. A youth survey and several focus groups were conducted to gather this information.

A youth survey was developed and administered to gain an understanding of youth perspective and experiences related to foster care and education (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report for survey instrument. *Appendix J. page A.67*).

Topic areas included:

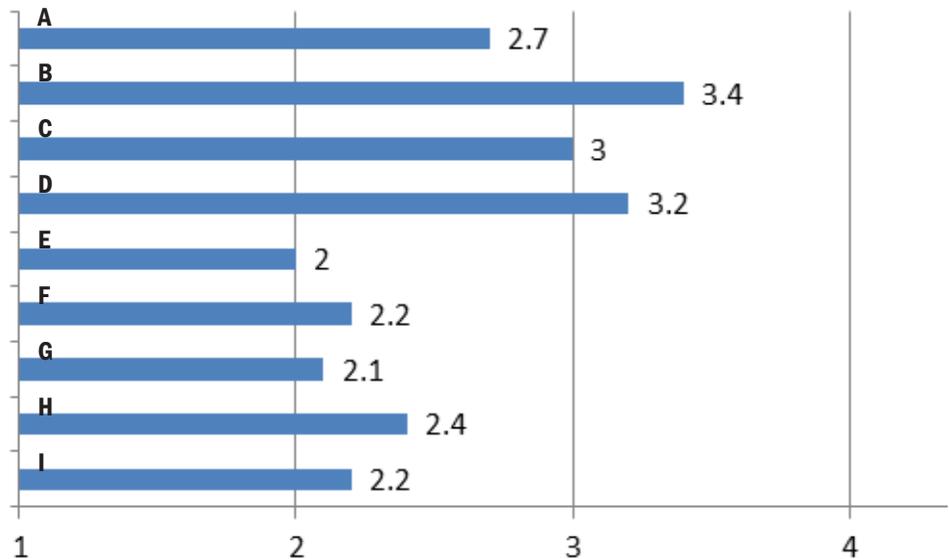
1. The impact of foster care placement on youth educational experience
2. Experiences of staying in one school versus changing schools
3. Satisfaction of transportation plans
4. Youth voice in decision making and planning process
5. Unmet academic needs

Twenty youth completed the survey. Youth ranged in age from 8 to 19 years of age (average age = 15.2 years). On average, youth had attended 1.1 elementary schools (range = 0-4) and 1.5 high schools (0-3) since entering foster care. Youth reported their agreement with statements about their experiences at school on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree' (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report). On average, youth tended to disagree with many of the positively worded statements. Youth did not feel a sense of belonging at their school, did not feel they were treated the same way as other students not in foster care, did not feel their academic needs were being met, and did not feel they had the supplies they needed to participate in school. On average, youth tended to have neutral attitudes (or slight agreement) with the statements indicating that sometimes transportation issues made it difficult to get to school (that statement with the highest level of agreement), that sometimes events outside of class made it difficult to attend school, and that their emotions sometimes made it difficult to pay attention in class.

Youth in Foster Care: Experiences at School (NPC Evaluation Report)

Average agreement (1 'strongly disagree;' 5 'strongly agree')

- A. I feel my teachers understand what it's like for me to be a student in foster care.
- B. Sometimes transportation issues make it difficult for me to get to school.
- C. Sometimes my emotions interfere with my ability to pay attention in class.
- D. Sometimes events outside of class interfere with my ability to attend school.
- E. I feel I have the supplies and equipment I need to participate in school.
- F. I feel my academic needs are being met (help from teachers, tutoring, help with homework).
- G. I am treated the same way as other students who are not in foster care by adults in this school.
- H. It is important to me to stay at my current school.
- I. I feel a sense of belonging at my school.

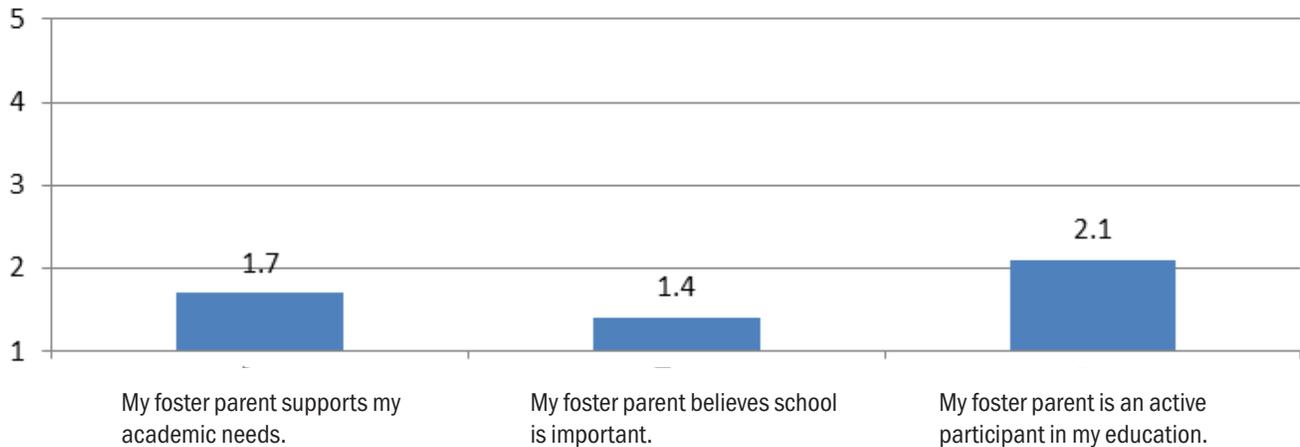


Youth also indicated their agreement with statements related to their foster parent (NPC Final Program Evaluation Report). On average youth did not report feeling support from their foster

parent. They disagreed with the statements that their foster parent supports their academic needs, believes school is important, and is an active participant in their education.

Youth in Foster Care: Experiences with Foster Parents (NPC Evaluation Report)

Average agreement (1 'strongly disagree;' 5 'strongly agree')



The findings from this survey offer insight into feelings, experiences, and unmet educational needs of youth in foster care. They suggest that these youth are not feeling well equipped for school—both in terms of tangible, instrumental support (supplies and equipment, transportation) and emotional support (from both teachers and foster parents). This heightens the need for training and education for teachers, other educational professionals, and foster parents. However, at the end of the survey when youth were asked how being in foster care had affected their experience in school, most responded that it had not affected it or, in some cases, even made it better. This tentatively suggests that perhaps there are other barriers that these youth are facing that are either unrelated to being in foster care or that the youth themselves do not perceive them as being related to foster care. When asked what help, services, or programs would be helpful to have a positive educational experience as a youth in foster care the most common response was tutoring, although most youth said they did not know.

Youth Focus Groups

To gain an even deeper understanding of how youth feel about their experiences in school, four focus groups were conducted in February

2015. Twenty-one youth in grades 5-12 participated. The majority of participants were female (67%). Trained focus group facilitators followed a structured protocol (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report, *Appendix K, page A.69*) and ask participants a series of questions related to their experiences in school. Thematic summaries of responses and illustrative quotes are presented below.

Foster Care and the Impact on School Experiences

How has being in foster care affected your experiences in school? In what positive and negative ways has being in foster care affected your school experience?

Although most of the responses to this question highlighted the negative effects of foster care on school experience (described below), some students cited positive effects, mostly relating to improved school climate in a school they were moved to (“I now don’t get bullied so I was glad to change schools”), available resources (“We have school supplies, free stuff like that”), and academic support/success “Foster care made it better because we get more help,” “I’m getting

better grades, and I get more privileges,” and “I can see my sisters now, and I get good grades.”

Several students could not cite any positive ways, with general responses such as “No good ways at all” and “Mostly in negative ways.” More specific statements centered around four school experiences: homework and academics/ changing schools, dress code compliance, emotional health.

Homework/Academics/Changing Schools One pre-high school student noted that being in foster care has caused her stress, which has made it harder to concentrate and complete homework, saying, “I have a hard time remembering [now].” At the high school level, students noted that being in foster care hurt their academics due to the fact that they had to change schools. One youth reported, “I’ve been in four different schools, and that’s been really hard. I can’t catch up on all my work.” Similarly, another student said, “I hate being in foster care and in Lucas County. I don’t feel like my foster parents care. I’ve been to three schools since I started high school. I know I am smart, but I feel like foster care is holding me back because moving from school to school is difficult.”

Dress Code Compliance Some high school students particularly focused on how being in foster care makes it more difficult to comply with the school dress code. For example, one student shared that, “the vouchers are very cheap. You don’t get choices when it comes to school clothes. Some foster parents care and buy you the things you need.” Students mentioned that the school does not realize that students in foster care may not have the necessary clothing items provided. There was substantial discussion in between students about the discrepant reports given to students by caseworkers about foster parents’ duty to provide necessary clothing. Students also reported receiving discrepant voucher amounts.

Emotional Health A small number of students spoke directly to the emotional toll of being in foster care on the school experience. One high school student stated that, “for me, it’s distracted me because I try and put a wall up. I don’t want people to know that I am in foster care because I don’t want them to pity me.” Another high school student acknowledged that “at first, I couldn’t handle it [being in foster care] because I loved my family, and I couldn’t deal with it emotionally, and

I was taking that to school.” That same student continued on to state, “I realize now that there are a lot of benefits to being in foster care. I’m glad I’m in foster care now. It has motivated me to be what I want to be.”

Are there any other things about being in foster care that make it difficult for you to participate in school?

In response to this follow-up question, students described issues related to bullying, foster parent support, and not having anyone with whom to talk.

Bullying One student referenced a history of being picked on by peers for being in foster care, although another student stated that their peers were supportive. One student reflected that “students make jokes” about foster care. Another student said, “I’ve been bullied for being in foster care,” to which another student agreed.

Foster Parent Support High school students identified that the impact of being in foster care depended on foster parent attitudes and behaviors: “If your foster parent gives a crap about you and school or if they’re just in it for the money.” Another student felt that their “foster parent isn’t supportive of some extracurricular activities. I have to rely on myself and the bus to get home after school.”

Emotional support One student expressed that students do not feel they have people to talk to about their situation. For example, students expressed discontent regarding school counselors’ availability (i.e., only at the school once a week).

Do you feel that your teachers and other school staff understand these challenges?

The responses to that question were divergent, with both positive and negative appraisals of staff’s understanding of challenges related to being in foster care. Some students were unsure if all their teachers knew they were in foster care while other students knew that their teachers knew and had mixed feelings about that fact.

Students who felt their teachers and other school staff understood the challenges they faced said, “They’re ok with it. They help us if we need anything;” “My teacher got me some volunteer work that I could do here at school;” “My teacher knows I’m in foster care and makes it really easy

Students mentioned that the school does not realize that students in foster care may not have the necessary clothing items provided.

for me;” and “I had a teacher who was so supportive she gave me a bike when my foster parents didn’t.”

Some teachers make sure jokes about foster care are not allowed. Another student found it helpful when a teacher told her that being poor was not an excuse for not doing well in school and when the teacher gave a personal example of this. Two students had particularly high praise for guidance counselors. One stated, “My guidance counselor at [a high school] was really understanding. He was always there for me.” Another student said, “My counselor was the only person who understands my challenges of being in foster care.”

Several students did not believe their teachers or schools staff understood the challenges of being in foster care, stating simply: “No;” “They’ll probably never really understand;” “They don’t care;” and “They’re not so helpful.”

More specifically, several students felt uncomfortable when their teachers referenced the fact that they were in foster care of otherwise talked about foster care in front of the class. One student stated: “One of the teachers tells everyone about us being in foster care,” to which four students agreed.

Another pre-high school student said, “Sometimes my reading teacher makes me uncomfortable when she talks about kids in foster care.” Another student echoed that sentiment, saying, “My teacher talks about foster care in the room when everyone is there, and it’s uncomfortable because I don’t want everyone to know. I have talked to her about it, but she still brings it up.” Another student shared that “when they check on our names in the computer it says that we are in foster care, and I don’t like that.” This student also explained that teachers will sometimes do this where the entire class can see and it makes him/her uncomfortable.

Finally, one student described feeling judged by staff: “Some authority figures treat us with pity, and they don’t really like us. They think we are always doing bad things like drugs or getting pregnant.” One student felt that staff used them “as an easy target for a punching bag,” while another student felt that, “when they find out you’re in foster care, they act sad, and then they’re back to the way they are.”

Have you ever had to switch schools because of a change in your foster care placement? If yes, how did that affect you?

Many students had switched schools due to a placement change. At the high school level, all students indicated that they had switched schools due to a placement change. Responses included:

“Yes.” “After we switched [placements], my sister and I went to another school.”

“I had to switch schools because of a busing issue.”

“I switched schools once, but this is my first foster placement.”

“This is my seventh high school since I started 12th grade.”

“I’ve been in four different high schools this one school year and three different high schools in 9th grade [last year].”

“I’ve been in 20 different schools and 20 different foster placements.”

“I had a teacher who was so supportive she gave me a bike when my foster parents didn’t.”

“I’ve been in 20 different schools and 20 different foster placements.”

While some students reported a positive response to switching schools (“I was excited about the move because no dress code and high school type setup. It was a new start.”), many students expressed frustration and

anger. Students stated: “I didn’t know anybody;” “I was kind of mad. I had my schedule set out, I knew the teachers I was about to go to, and then they were like ... [you’re moving];” and “I was so mad about having to switch schools.”

Involvement of Foster Parents

Is your foster parent involved in your education? If yes, in what ways are they involved?

Responses varied significantly to this question, with some students reporting that their

foster parents were involved and other students wishing their foster parents were more involved. In general, the high school students had more negative feelings related to their foster parent's lack of involvement than the younger students.

Foster Parent Involvement One student stated that their foster parent “tries to find ways for me to make my work easier.” Another student found that their foster parent “encourages me more than my mom did, and it gets stuck in my head.” Earning privileges and receiving rewards were other positive ways in which foster parents supported students: “My foster parent motivates me to get good grades by giving me privileges;” “We get more privileges if we do well in school. If we don't do well we may get our phones taken away and this is helpful;” and “I used to get \$20 for every A I got but then my foster parents found out that I was changing the grades myself.”

Lack of Foster Parent Involvement High school students in particular did not feel that their foster parents were involved. Statements include: “Nope;” “Not involved in my education at all. I don't feel like she really cares;” “As long as I get good grades, they don't care;” “As long as I have good grades, they don't ask me about homework;” “She doesn't really care. I get in trouble if I stay after school for tutoring.” Another student added that their foster parent doesn't ask about homework or come to school meetings.

What don't your foster parents do that you would like them to do?

Several students suggested ways their foster parents could be more involved in their education:

“Ask about my homework more. Come to school more.”

“Say, ‘Hey, good job, you're doing good.’”

“Even once a year...acknowledge the good things. Even a little bit. If you see they [the foster students] are putting in effort, acknowledge the fact they're actually trying.”

“I would like my foster parent to actually do what she says she would do like get me a bus card, so I can do sports.”

“I wish my foster parent came to school meetings/ fun programs so that she could encourage me more. My mom use to come and she didn't have a car but my foster mom does and she doesn't come.”

Another student shared that “when they check on our names in the computer it says that we are in foster care, and I don't like that.”

Other students had more specific comments. One noted that students should be able to give feedback to their foster parents. Another student remarked:

“I want to be the one who opens school mail, to see my midterm grades....”

Transportation Barriers

Has transportation ever been an issue or challenge for you? Why or why not?

While some students could walk to and from school and did not express many challenges related to transportation, several students expressed challenges—particularly with relying on the bus. Some challenges surrounding the busses revolved around bus access: “We don't get bus service to this school,” referring to a K-8 school. Another remarked that the “busses are not reliable.” However, most feedback revolved around bus passes, with youth noting that a student's transportation issues are a matter of whether or not “they” give students bus passes. Students stated that relying on the bus makes it difficult to do after school activities: “We should get bus cards for sports season so that we can be a part of sports.” Another student similarly stated, “The bus passes we do get don't allow us to stay for sports because they start and stop at a certain time,” a statement to which two other students agreed. Differential access to bus passes was a noted issue. While “Children's Services helps you get bus passes,” “a case worker doesn't tell everybody the same thing,” a high school student stated. For example, one student had a bus pass

for the whole year, and the other students did not know how to get such a pass.

Suggestions for Improvement

Do you have any suggestions for ways schools could improve the experience of youth in foster care?

A predominant theme in youth responses to this question involved the suggestion to increase the understanding, empathy, and caring of teachers and school professionals. Suggestions included:

“Make the teachers care.”

“Give the teachers sympathy training.”

“Incorporate more sympathy training for the teachers and the students.”

“Have a little class or video about foster care – like in health class.”

“The school should care about me.”

“School officials don’t seem to care about us. They should take us out of class to check in with us to ask about the pressure we are going through.”

Other suggestions related to academics and acknowledging/addressing learning styles:

“Make learning more interesting.”

“Do more projects to make school more interesting.”

Youth expressed concern about clothing requirements:

“Take away the dress code. It costs more to buy uniforms.”

“Make sure students have supplies for school, like clothing.”

A concern about confidentiality was expressed by one youth and echoed by many:

“I would not like my teacher telling my business [that the student is in foster care].”

Following up on their more in depth conversation about transportation barriers, youth suggested increased access to transportation:

“Provide more bus passes. And provide shuttles.”

Finally, youth suggested creating community-building opportunities for students in foster care, agreeing that being able to connect with other youth in foster care was helpful:

“Have more after school activities that foster care kids could do together.”

Overall, the results from the focus groups offer a deep and detailed understanding of the educational experiences of some youth in foster care. In conjunction with the youth survey, they add support to the notion that youth in foster care experience unique experiences in school—many of which are negative. Many of the challenges the youth spoke of are ones in which the PtSI strategic planning committee are aware (teacher knowledge and understanding of the educational experiences of youth in foster care, transportation needs, support of foster parents). Many of the PtSI activities have been designed to address these challenges (trainings for both educational professionals and foster parents, transportation services). Therefore, when examining these results in combination with the training results we can conclude that there has been an impact in the right direction among the training participants involved. They suggest that efforts to educate and inform educational professionals about the needs of youth in foster care should be continued.

After compiling and reviewing these results, the PtSI team developed a handout for



To see those ‘ah-ha’ moments when they understand where the student is coming from and how they, as the teacher, can make a difference.

~Alicia Komives,
Lucas County Juvenile Court

school personnel, caseworkers, and probation officers, entitled “*The 6 Things Students in Foster Care Want Their Teachers & School Staff To Know*”. In addition, a handout was developed for Foster Parents entitled, “*The 4 Things Students in Foster Care Want their Foster Parents to Know About School*” (See Appendix Q. & R.) Both of these handouts were included in school and agency newsletters and sent to school personnel, foster parents, caseworkers and probation officers. At the Back to School meeting for principals and school personnel, the handouts were again shared in their packets. This information is invaluable in the training of agency personnel and foster parents. The PtSI staff are committed to ensuring that the voices of youth in foster care are heard through providing increased venues for them to share their concerns, hopes, dreams and feedback. The Court continues to work with the VOICES committee which consists of youth in foster care and former foster youth to gain valuable insight and make improvements in the court process and their educational needs.

Specialized Recruitment

One often overlooked piece to the educational puzzle is foster parents. Increasing localized foster parent recruitment efforts, particularly in neighborhoods where foster youth have previously resided, will increase educational stability for youth in care. Ideally, child welfare agencies would place youth in foster homes near their school of origin thereby preventing a change in school. However, a lack of foster homes makes this difficult. The Lucas County Juvenile Court attempted to assist Lucas County Children Services with recruitment of foster parents, however nothing materialized out of those efforts. There is still a great need to recruit foster homes in the suburbs surrounding the city of Toledo. The team will continue to reach out to LCCS to assist in recruitment efforts. Recently, there have been many changes in staffing at LCCS, which bring new opportunities to again reach out and re-address this issue.

Sustainability:

Objective: Inter-agency collaboration and sustainability. In addition to the accomplishments listed in this report, the Court has laid a solid foundation to sustain the PtSI process for youth in foster care. This process has been institutionalized within the systems. Evidence of this is the recent signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies. The executives of LCCS, LCJC and TPS signed the updated MOU effective June of 2015. This truly represents the strong commitment by the agencies to continue the PtSI process for youth in foster care following the end of the grant.

Keeping youth in their home schools within the TPS system is now the norm. The Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative has created a model for even greater collaboration as Lucas County Children Services, Lucas County Juvenile Court and Toledo Public Schools have agreed to continue to work together to ensure that youth in foster care have the opportunity and support to fully participate in all aspects of the school

and community experience. All agree that there is still much work to be done and are committed to addressing barriers and system issues that potentially cause harm to youth in foster care.

Activities: Through the utilization of combined local, state and federal resources, LCJC, LCCS and TPS will continue to allocate funds necessary to sustain the process.

The above agencies are also committed to seeking and securing any additional funds necessary to improve outcomes for targeted youth. The agencies are committed to assigning staff to oversee the fulfillment of the mission and goals of improving the stability and educational outcomes for youth in foster care. The team will continue to meet as needed to plan, review progress regarding implementation, and problem solve situations. Multiple committee meetings took place on monthly bases to review progress regarding transportation, data, training, stability, and intervention strategies. These teams will continue to meet as needed. Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools continue to be committed to improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care. LCCS, LCJC and TPS meet once a quarter and shall continue meeting regularly to consider the progress of the Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative and to modify the terms of the MOU as needed to best serve the children and families served by each agency. At this time the Court is committed to funding the social worker position beyond the life of the grant. It is our belief that the relationships that have been established between the agencies will continue beyond the life of the grant to improve the educational outcomes for youth in foster care.

Also, to ensure continuous effective and efficient service delivery, the Change Leader, Project Director, and Social Worker established regular communication with the Crossover Coordinator in order to prevent duplication of services. A youth who is dually involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare system is overseen by the Crossover teams who ensure that caseworkers and probation officers are conducting joint home visits and Crossover conferences. A youth may be eligible to receive additional educational support from the Pathways Initiative if the youth is struggling academically. The Crossover Coordinator, the PtSI Coordinator, and social worker will coordinate meetings and interventions. This allows the youth the opportunity to benefit from academic support while simultaneously preventing

duplication of services as the Crossover process.

Dissemination

In honor of National Foster Care Awareness Month, both of the Lucas County Juvenile Court Judges, PtSI Project Director, PtSI Change Leader, the Director of LCCS, the Superintendent of Toledo Public Schools and the Assistant Superintendent of Toledo Public Schools participated in a Press Conference on May 22, 2013 where local television stations covered the event. The purpose of the press conference was to inform the community about the initiative and its expected outcomes. Likewise, the Administrative Juvenile Court Judge, PtSI Project Director, PtSI Change Leader, PtSI Social Worker, and LCCS Quality Improvement Supervisor presented to 79 members of Toledo Public School Administrative Personnel regarding this initiative. At which point, 40 principals identified a point of contact within their school building.

Additionally, the Change Leader and social worker presented program information to TPS staff during staff meetings at all 50 Toledo Public Schools prior to January 1, 2014. The team also met with the Lake Erie West School Superintendents on October 31, 2013 to discuss partnering with schools outside of the TPS district. The presentations within each school included providing participants information regarding the initiative as well as instructions for making an online referral. Information regarding the initiative's progress was also disseminated on the Lucas County website for teachers and other community members.

Routinely, throughout each year, information on the PtSI process was disseminated through agency newsletters and cross training events. The social worker conducted training in 2015 with the Single Points of Contact in each school. The PtSI team has continued to meet each year with principals and other school personnel at their annual back to school meeting. The PtSI team has been a part of this agenda for the past 3 years. This is a huge accomplishment, in that this is a very difficult meeting to get into, as the principals have much to cover regarding the upcoming school year. Each year we have presented updates regarding the PtSI process, prepared folders with pertinent information for each principal, and initiated the updating of the Single Point of Contact for each school. Attending this meeting is critical, as it provided the opportunities for the team and executives of the agencies to demonstrate the continued commitment to the PtSI process. Each

year the **Juvenile Court Judge, Denise Navarre Cubbon** has attended, as well as the **Superintendent of TPS, Dr. Romules Durant** and **Assistant Superintendent, Brian Murphy**. This in itself demonstrates the administrative support for this process to the TPS principals. Actions speak louder than words, and the united front presented to the TPS staff sets the expectation that we are going to work TOGETHER to support the youth in foster care in their school setting.

Enrichment Activities for Youth in Foster Care

Enrichment activities sponsored by the Court were opened up and offered to youth in foster care. These activities received rave reviews from the youth. Many youth were offered the opportunity to take part in the Build a Bike program through Toledo Bikes! Toledo Bikes! is a non-profit organization dedicated to the recovery of used bikes, recycling those bikes through volunteer and educational efforts into the hands of others. Toledo Bikes! also helps to promote bicycling awareness through community outreach, education, and cycling events. This is a week long class that allows youth to choose a donated bike to rehab. At the end of the week, the youth not only get to keep the bike, but they receive a bike helmet, lock and instruction on how to operate the bike safely. Participants learn to use tools, and as a result of their interaction with wonderful instructors, benefit from this positive experience. After the first class in which youth in foster care participated, there was a request to expand this opportunity for more youth. The kids loved this program! Youth that participated stated, “I

love to do hands-on things”, “It was a fun education program”, “Getting a bike and building it was fun”....were just some of the comments. This was a big hit with the kids and needs to be expanded so more youth in foster care can participate.

Youth in foster care were also able to take part in the Art Enrichment Program that the Court offers to youth that are Court involved. This program offers youth the opportunity to take part in classes at the Toledo Museum of Art. Youth can take classes in art instruction for glass blowing, bead making and painting. Once again, the youth loved taking part in these activities. Feedback was great and youth were very proud of the art they created. The success of these enrichment activities was heightened by the involvement of the social worker, change leader and the educational specialists, who attended the activities along side of the youth. This provided another layer of support and an opportunity to build strong relationships with the youth in foster care.



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Contextual Events, Challenges, and Community Changes

Changes in Personnel

One of the challenges to the PtSI process has been the changes in personnel. Shortly after the award was granted the Superintendent of TPS, Jerome Pecko retired. Dr. Pecko was very supportive and instrumental in the leadership required to apply for the grant. Dr. Romules Durant became the new Superintendent, following Dr. Pecko's departure and continued to offer support for PtSI from TPS. After year two of the initiative the Change Leader left her employment with the Juvenile Court to pursue new opportunities to improve the lives of youth in foster care. At that time, the Social Worker stepped up to take the reigns of overseeing the process with the Project Director.

In May of 2015, the Social Worker accepted a new position with TPS. In addition, one of the Educational Specialists accepted a new position at LCCS. This has presented a real challenge to the PtSI process, however, the focus has been on reassigning these duties to existing personnel. Under the of the LCCS Supervisor, the Educational Specialists have stepped up and taken a leadership role in managing referrals from the schools for assistance. TPS has offered to allow the PtSI Social Worker, that is now employed as a social worker at the school, to continue to support and be involved with the initiative from the school side. This will be a tremendous asset. Two new positions are being created at the Court and each position will have duties regarding PtSI assigned to them. A social worker is also going to be hired at the court to be assigned to the schools. Also, during this time, the Director of LCCS retired. The Interim Director and the Court Administrator are meeting to assign staff to oversee this process

and ensure sustainability for the initiative. It is the hope the LCCS will step up and assign additional staff to oversee PtSI, including fully staffing the educational specialists positions which provide tremendous support to the youth at school.

Transportation

During this process, one area of need that has been identified is providing transportation for youth who are either too young to ride the bus or live too far away to ride the bus to school. This continues to be a challenge. With the ending of the grant, funds to pay for transportation will have to be explored. One good note is that TPS recently added busing back in the budget for students. This will certainly be an asset for youth getting to school.

Providing transportation is critical for maintaining stability for youth in foster care. While the Director of Transportation at TPS has been such an asset to youth, there still needs to be funds dedicated for this purpose for youth that are not able to ride the bus. LCCS lost a tax levy in the last election in Toledo. They will be going back to the voters to approve the tax levy in the future. These funds are necessary to assist in transportation costs. Transportation outside of busing is expensive and continues to be a problem for youth in foster care in our community. The transportation committee will continue to seek solutions and alternatives for youth to support their school placements.

Training

A major portion of the proposal for this initiative included training for teachers and school personnel. However, due to union rules and lack of training time for teachers the Court had to rethink the approach for training teachers. The Court developed an online trauma training model that teachers can access via the county website. Additionally, the team continued to work with principals to attend staff meetings in order to provide training for teachers. Eventually, the



This grant opened doors for us and provided the vehicle for the type of communication and collaboration that is needed to truly make a sustainable difference in the lives of our children in foster care. It furthered our mission in a way that cannot be measured.

~Diana Theiss,
Lucas County Children Services

Court was able to move to a Lunch & Learn training system where school personnel would be able to attend training during their lunch breaks if interested.

Trauma-Informed Care

To ensure that providing trauma-informed care remained the focal point of Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative, the Court identified a trauma screening tool to be used at the Shelter Care hearings. The CASA Department agreed to use the NCTSN Screening Checklist: Identifying Children at Risk to gather pertinent information during the initial stages of the case. The use of this tool would provide information that would then be used to identify the appropriate case plan services. By utilizing this trauma screening tool, the Court would be able to promptly refer those in need of being further assessed for trauma. However, LCCS wanted to develop an interagency committee to conduct further review of available evidence-based tools. This would allow the process of selecting a tool to be done conjointly to ensure success and buy-in prior to implementation. Unfortunately, this selection process caused a delay identifying a tool for nearly an additional year. However, during the 2014-2015 school year a trauma screening tool was implemented by the Court. Data will be kept to track this information and inform practices.

In the 2015 workplan for the Juvenile Court, the Court identified the goal of becoming a Trauma-Informed Court to ensure that the practices and procedures at the Court are trauma-informed at all levels. The Court plans to work with the National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges to provide technical assistance in the development of these practices.

There is a real commitment in Lucas County to ensuring that staff across systems are trained in the effects of exposure to trauma and trauma-informed practices. Numerous trainings have been conducted over the past 2 years and several will be conducted in 2015. The Court and other agencies are currently sponsoring several training events this year on trauma informed practices. PtSI staff will continue to offer training on the effects of trauma and trauma-informed practices to teachers and school personnel. On June 11, 2015 PtSI staff conducted a training entitled "Trauma Training/Classroom Strategies-Interventions Specific for School Personnel" (Appendix P). This training, attended by over 100 school personnel, received rave reviews. Many of the evaluations stated that training such as this should be conducted each year and that it was extremely useful for teachers, bus drivers, and school personnel.

Smooth Transitions from Secure Detention

Initially it was thought that there would be a need to ensure that youth in foster care that were in detention had services to ensure a smooth transition back to school. This did not prove to be the case, as there were no youth in foster care in detention that were referred to PtSI. In addition, the Crossover initiative requires the Crossover team to immediately meet to develop alternatives for any youth in foster care that is booked in detention. These requirements ensure that youth

in foster care are not being forgotten in detention. Additionally, the Court contracts with a provider to assist in the transition back to school for these youth.

Suspension Rates

Children and youth in foster care experience school suspensions and expulsions at higher rates than non-foster care peers. In order to reduce out-of-school suspension service providers should utilize, advocate for, and equip others with trauma-informed approaches and strategies to address behavioral issues among youth in foster care. Ideally, this approach will allow service providers to establish and implement practices and protocols that promote alternative disciplinary approaches to in-school behavior problems that

would otherwise result in suspensions and expulsions. Since the inception of the PtSI process, the social worker and the educational specialists provided support and vigorously advocated for the youth in foster care that were at risk of suspensions or expulsions. It is the desire of the PtSI to create a committee to begin discussing the development of a protocol for youth in foster care at risk of suspension. At a meeting in June of 2015, the Assistant Superintendent expressed support and commitment to begin meeting to address this issue. A committee is being formed and will work to create alternatives to suspension for youth in foster care. TPS overall has been working to improve options to address discipline issues and reduce youth being charged for school related behavior.



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I don't feel like my foster parents care. I've been to three schools since I started high school. I know I am smart, but I feel like foster care is holding me back because moving from school to school is difficult.

~a youth in foster care

Data Sharing

Lucas County understands the value of having data to drive policy decisions. As leadership expert, Peter Drucker stated, *"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."* The Data Analyst, along with the Information Systems team did a great job of developing a user friendly website and referral system for the PtSI process. TPS also granted partners access to the Sunguard system, which tracks grades, attendance, and discipline records for TPS students. This was a big accomplishment, in that, agency staff can now look up information immediately for junior high and high school students. The system does not include elementary school children, but access to this information has improved. There is still a lot of room for improvement, but this has established a foundation. The team had the vision that a shared database would be developed between TPS, LCCS and the Court. However, this did not materialize. Getting the data committee together on a regular basis proved to be a problem. Meetings were not very well attended and as a result, development of a shared database was stalled. The school has expressed that they are still committed to working on this. The data committee is to reconvene and will begin working on this again in October, 2015. Each system is collecting a significant amount of data individually on youth in foster care. A shared database that is dedicated to tracking the progress of youth in school is critical. It is a huge disappointment that this was not accomplished during the past 3 years of this project. As we move forward, each system will have to dedicate the right people to make this dream a reality.

Process Evaluation Methodology and Goals

The Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative intended to foster strategic coordination and communication between Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools—all organizations that serve foster youth at risk for academic failure. Because the focus is on coordination and communication between agencies, the expected short-term outcomes of the initiative implementation are at the agency level, such as changes in policy, staff capacity, and collaboration between agencies. However, it is hypothesized that improvements in individual youth level outcomes, such as foster placement stability, graduation rates and other educational success indicators will occur in the longer term as a result of initiative implementation.

To investigate such agency level changes, a process evaluation was conducted. Process evaluation is fundamentally concerned with how a program (or initiative) is being implemented. This examination involves documenting the practices, policies, and procedures of the initiative as well as determining how closely the actual implementation aligns with the original plan and whether the intended goals and objectives are met. The current process evaluation explored the representation of the different agencies in the PtSI, the collaboration between agencies, and to what extent PtSI processes differed from business as usual for collaborating agencies.

Process Evaluation Goals

The goals of the process evaluation were to better understand the PtSI implementation strategy and to document the various successes and challenges associated with the implementation.

The process evaluation sought to provide information regarding:

1. The practices, policies, and procedures of the PtSI
2. How the new enhancements, specifically, the development of a strategic planning committee, the revisions of policies and protocols, and the training on trauma-informed approaches have been incorporated into the existing systems and practices
3. The factors and strategies associated with successful collaborative efforts
4. The data collection and management systems in place to measure initiative outputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes

Process Evaluation Activities

The process evaluation utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collected directly from staff representing the participating agencies, the recipients of the trainings on trauma-informed approaches, and youth in foster care. The evaluation team documented the various components of implementation through:

1. Review of program materials, such as MOUs with initiative partners, meeting minutes, and policy and procedure documents
2. A site visit by NPC staff to Lucas County, Ohio
3. Observation of the Strategic Planning Committee

4. Participation and consultation with the Data Committee
5. Pre-and post-survey administration to recipients of the trainings on trauma-informed approaches
6. Measurement of the change in perceptions of collaboration among key stakeholders (Time 1 and Time 2)
7. Interviews with key stakeholders to document the perspectives on implementation successes and challenge (Time 1 and Time 2)
8. Survey administration to youth in foster care
9. Foster groups with youth in foster care

Perceptions of Collaboration

The overarching objective of the PtSI was to develop and facilitate coordinated and collaborative efforts between the key agencies involved. Several measures of collaboration, such as representative committee membership and the development of MOUs between agencies, have been discussed above. To further assess the collaborative effort, surveys measuring baseline and follow-up perceptions of collaboration were administered to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). SPC members representing LCJC, LCCS, and TPS completed the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (NPC Final Program Evaluation Report) in the summer of 2013 and again in the summer of 2014. Analysis was conducted to examine any change in perceptions and experiences related to collaboration. The baseline, follow-up, and change analysis is presented below.

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory included 40 statements related to collaboration and reflecting the following domains and constructs:

History of collaboration or cooperation in the community

Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community

Favorable political and social climate

Mutual respect, understanding and trust

Appropriate cross section of members

Members see collaboration as in their self-interest

Ability to compromise

Members share a stake in both process and outcome

Multiple layers of participation

Flexibility

Development of clear roles and policy guidelines

Adaptability

Appropriate pace of development

Open and frequent communication

Established informal relationships and communication links

Concrete, attainable goals and objectives

Shared vision

Unique purpose

Sufficient funds, staff, materials and time

Skilled leadership

Baseline Measurement of Perceptions of Collaboration—Summer 2013. At the baseline survey administration ten key stakeholders rated statements such as, “All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group” and “People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another” on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’ Seven respondents represented LCJC, two represented LCCS, and one did not indicate his/her affiliation. Domains that received the highest ratings (i.e., all participants either indicated ‘agreement’ or ‘strong agreement’) were:

1. Favorable political and social climate
2. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
3. Established informal relationships and communication links
4. Unique purpose
5. Skilled leadership

Other domains were more distributed among agreement, no opinion, and disagreement (see NPC Final Program Evaluation for comprehensive baseline survey results). These findings established a baseline measurement of collaboration and allowed for an assessment of change in perceptions after 1 year.

Follow-Up Measurement of Perceptions of Collaboration—Summer 2014. At the follow-up survey administration 14 key stakeholders rated the same 40 statements on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’ Six respondents represented LCJC, five represented LCCS, one represented TPS, one reported their affiliation as ‘other’ and one did not indicate affilia-

tion. Domains that received the highest ratings at follow-up were:

1. Favorable political and social climate
2. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
3. Established informal relationships and communication links
4. Unique purpose
5. Concrete and attainable goals and objectives

Domains 1-4 received the highest ratings at baseline as well. However, although “Skilled leadership” was one of the highest rated domains at baseline, it was not one of the highest rated domains at follow-up. Instead, “Concrete and attainable goals and objectives” was one of the highest rated domains at follow-up. Other domains were more distributed among agreement, no opinion, and disagreement (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report for comprehensive follow-up survey results).

Change in Perceptions of Collaboration
Only five of the respondents at follow-up had also completed the baseline survey, which limited the analysis of change in perceptions of collaboration. For this matched sample, there were no statistically significant changes in agreement on any of the domains. Although conclusions cannot be drawn from such a small sample, it can be noted that the levels of agreement at baseline were already high. This can lead to a “ceiling effect” in which there is little room for positive change. Further, the small matched sample may indicate staff turnover (the same respondents were not there to complete the follow-up survey) or a decreased level of involvement in the initiative (either due to a change in role or to decreased investment).

One important limitation of these results is the absence of respondents from TPS (none at baseline and only one at follow-up). Given that the purpose is to measure the collaboration between the three lead agencies, the lack of response from key stakeholders representing one of the three agencies compromises the value of these findings.

The lack of participation among TPS stakeholders is potentially an interesting finding on its own—perhaps suggesting that they were not as involved or invested in the collaborative effort.

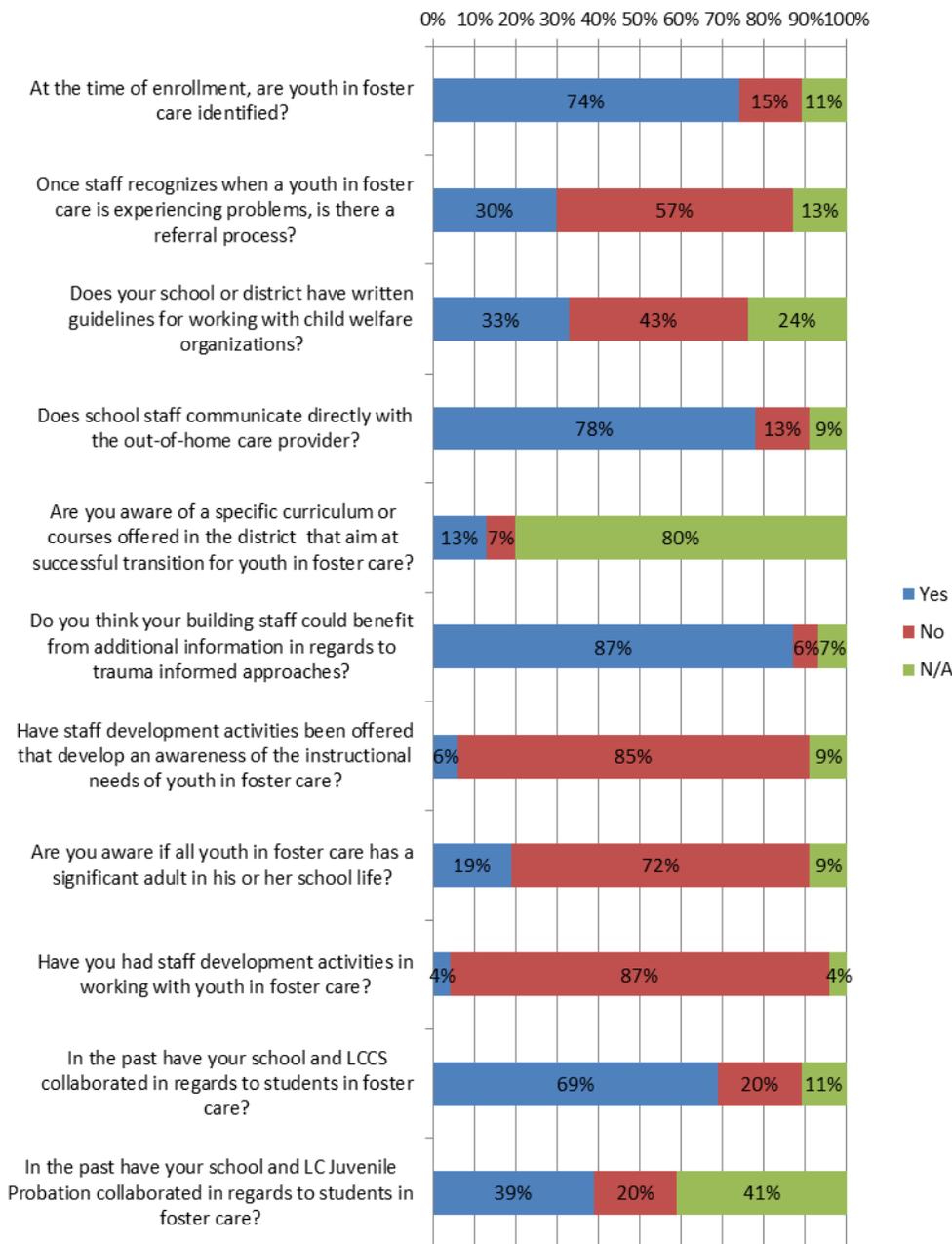
Climate for Collaboration

In an effort to assess the existing collaborative climate within Toledo Public Schools, principals from TPS were invited to complete a brief self-assessment survey (see NPC Final Program Evaluation Report) in the summer of 2013. The survey included questions regarding their existing practices (“Does your school or district have

written guidelines for working with child welfare organizations?”), past collaboration (“In the past have your school and Lucas County Juvenile Court collaborated in regards to students in foster care”), and their training needs (“Do you think your building staff could benefit from additional information in regards to trauma-informed approaches?”). Fifty-four principals completed the survey. The findings were as follows.

The overall results of the survey indicate that although the majority of principals reported that their schools have practices in place to identify youth in foster care (74%) and to commu-

TPS Climate Survey: Baseline Results (54 principals responded) (NPC Evaluation Report)



nicate directly with out-of-home-providers (78%), there is considerable room for improvement in both awareness and collaborative efforts.

A need for training The results of the survey demonstrate a significant need for training and education. Only 13% of principals were aware of specific curriculum or courses that focus on transition of youth in foster care and 80% felt such a training was not applicable. Very few principals (4%) reported that professional development opportunities related to working with youth in foster care had been offered to their staff, and almost all (87%) felt that their staff could benefit from such information.

Past collaboration and attitudes towards collaboration Over two thirds of principals (69%) reported that their schools had collaborated with LCCS in the past. However, only 39% reported that their schools had collaborated with LCJC. Further, 41% responded that collaboration with LCJC was not applicable. This finding indicates that almost half of the principals did not feel there was a need for collaboration. This suggested that perhaps a training effort geared towards helping principals understand the benefits of collaboration would be a worthwhile activity during the second year of the grant.

Year One Key Stakeholder Interviews

In Year One, twelve key stakeholders agreed to be interviewed. Seven represented LCJC, two represented LCCS, two represented public schools, and one identified as 'other.' Overall, it was evident that this group of key stakeholders was highly committed to collaborating on the PtSI. They spoke with enthusiasm about working together toward a common goal, and there was excitement among stakeholders for the relationship-building that had already begun to occur. Stakeholders expressed a high level of respect for one another, and many expressed satisfaction with what the PtSI had already accomplished. Interviewees responded to five questions. A summary of response and illustrative quotes are presented below.

What do you see as the key goals and expected outcomes for this initiative?

The overwhelming response to this question highlighted a strong desire to improve academic outcomes for youth in foster care. There was unanimous agreement regarding the key factor that would lead to achieving this outcome—having policies and practices in place to keep

youth in the same school regardless of placement changes:

“To integrate LCCS and Court staff into educational planning w/schools, provide educational stability (not moving around), and integrate foster parents in delivery of academic services.”

“[To] develop collaborative relationships between the 3 systems and a routinized process of communication, information sharing, and data sharing.”

“[To] support kids in foster care and provide stability for them to help improve educational outcomes, which in turn should improve quality of life.”

How does your role or your activities contribute to these goals and outcomes?

Activities mentioned by respondents included participating on committees, dedicating agency staff specifically to PtSI, and providing education and expertise on trauma. Respondents felt confident in the importance of their respective roles and activities. Key stakeholders agreed that their most significant strength was having representatives from each of the three agencies, each bringing a different and necessary perspective. Whether it is providing direct services, offering perspective and expertise, facilitating communication among members, or helping to build relationships, each member's role is clearly crucial to the objective of improving academic success, increasing placement stability, and creating strong systemic collaboration. In addition to speaking of their own, subject-matter specific contributions (e.g., implementing data systems, bringing expertise and knowledge related to trauma, and staff management), stakeholders stressed the common role they share:

“Facilitating communication; navigating the people and the process.”

“Advocating for the kids and putting teams together/building relationships.”

What do you see as the most successful part of the initiative so far?

A consistent theme present in all the interviews was that one of the greatest successes of PtSI thus far was the buy-in from top administrators from the three lead agencies. Many marveled at the collaborative efforts thus far, saying that the quality of their working relationships were greater than anything they had experienced before and greater than they had expected. Many felt this was due to the common goals and having the right people at the table. In particular, several stakeholders commented that having the schools integrated in to the collaboration was significant.

“Because leadership at TPS is so bought in, we led at their back-to-school night and presented to all the principals and assistant principals to educate, ask them to work with us, and get them to identify a person in their building that would be a champion.”

“It’s very exciting to have all players at the same table.”

“The focus on trauma that this initiative has is critical so I’m really glad to see that as a focus. It is important to educate school staff and administrators about trauma and how it impacts a child’s behavior and educational progress, triggers, and things like that. Again, getting agency heads together and getting the right people is a success.”

“We have a unique situation occurring right now—the heads of all the agencies are finally coming together and talking—all of them starting to work together now and I’d never seen that before.”

What do you see as the main challenge with the initiative right now?

Few overarching themes emerged from the responses to this question, but stakeholders did mention challenges related to communication and stressed the importance of making sure the appropriate people and agencies are aware of the initiative, its services, and how to utilize those services (e.g., mediation). Stakeholders reported that efforts were being made to get the word out, but felt it was important to keep communication as a focus and a priority. Another challenge mentioned was related to getting the appropriate information to teachers—some felt that teachers’ lack of participation was not due to lack of inter-

est but rather lack of time allocated for teachers to participate in trainings.

Do you have any suggestions for how to improve what has been done so far?

The overall response to this question highlighted the hard work and strong efforts on the PtSI thus far. Responses were overwhelmingly positive and expressed confidence in the capability of the team and the future of the PtSI:

“Communication, collaboration, the right people at the table—those things were done, and are being done, so I have nothing to suggest, really!”

“I love this initiative! It makes me excited about coming to work!”

“I don’t think there is anything we aren’t going to be able to problem solve.”

In Year Two, 17 key stakeholders agreed to be interviewed. Eight represented LCJC, four represented LCCS, three represented public schools, one represented CASA, and one identified as ‘other.’ Overall, it was clear that the levels of commitment and enthusiasm among this group of stakeholders remained very high. Interviewees responded to the same five questions asked in Year One as well as three new questions related to the future of the initiative. A summary of responses and illustrative quotes are presented below.

What do you see as the key goals and expected outcomes for this initiative?

The responses to this question echoed the responses in Year One, indicating commonalities and consistency among key stakeholders in what they considered to be the key goals and expected outcomes of the initiative. Respondents focused on the ultimate goal of improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care and stressed that collaboration and coordination among systems was a necessary condition to achieve that goal:

“To create a system of partnerships and collaborate as it relates to education of kids in foster care, and then through that stabilize them educationally and

ensure they get the services and supports that they need to be educationally successful.”

“Improve academic performance of youth, reduce disruptive behaviors, improve overall functioning, and to improve collaboration among the three major organizations.”

“That we would collaborate and youth would get the necessary services—that youth in foster care have the best outcomes in regards to education and their overall well being.”

How does your role or your activities contribute to these goals and outcomes?

Responses to this question shifted from the more conceptual contributions in year one to more tangible, task-related contributions in year two:

“I was out in schools—connecting with a single point of contact and maintaining communication... held collaborative meetings, providing training to teachers, provided in-classroom support, made referrals to outside sources, collected a lot of data on trends we were seeing and what we were looking at in terms of promotion to next grade, school transfers, placement.”

“My role is pretty important because I get to speak for children at the table. We have case workers and others too, but I am speaking at the school where kids are at for most of their day, asking: are they happy there, are they doing well.”

“Attending meetings and dialoguing about what supports are necessary and why the child is acting out.”

“Main thing is transparency of data and the willingness to be at the table for conversations and planning. Making sure people are at the table, as well as data being accessible for LCCS and the Courts in order to make decisions in regards to the status of the child.”

“I share information about our system and how it works. I bring information about what the initiative is doing to promote feelings of partnership and collaboration with the other two systems.”

What do you see as the most successful part of the initiative so far?

In year one, key stakeholders expressed their excitement for the possibility and the very beginnings stages of the collaboration and in year two they were just as excited to share their experiences with the impact of the collaboration that did indeed take place:

“One of the biggest has been the collaboration with LCCS and TPS. I’d like it to be stronger still, but I think the collaboration we have alone makes things happen very quickly...without those connections there would be a lot of challenges.”

“Collaboration piece. What that means for me is that if I have a problem at a meeting or an issue with school, I could contact Pathways and make a referral. Pathways can become involved, bring all the people to the table and remind us that we have this agreement...let’s talk about the problem.”

“Relationship piece. It’s so cool that now I know people at LCCS and can pick up the phone and say, ‘kid’s not doing well, what can I do to help?’ We all run to the table like a bunch of concerned mothers! We’ve been able to keep students stable whereas before we haven’t had that setting—it’s improved awareness and showed us where we can help.”

“Overall, the relationships (all 3) to make things happen and the ability for our staff to be involved as contact people and know the contacts in each school has also made it so these youth don’t fall through the cracks.”

Respondents also felt that the newly developed relationship with the school system was particularly notable:

“They have really broken through with the school system and really gotten school system on board...”

really set up some good relationships that can break down a lot of barriers. We've also gotten access to TPS's database with grades and attendance and discipline information and we've never been able to get that before, that's huge. I use that all the time. It's not perfect—it's not everything we need—but we had nothing before so it's really big. Something we've wanted forever."

Many stakeholders spoke of the value of the trainings on trauma-informed approaches:

"From the trainings I went to where educators were present, they were working really hard for educators to understand that behaviors in the classroom are trauma showing its ugly head rather than behavior issues so to speak."

"The training with the teachers and providing training to committees—making sure we are all on the same page as to purpose, as well as understanding the impact trauma has on youth in the classroom."

Finally, stakeholders shared examples of ways in which actual practice had changed as a result of the implementation of the initiative:

"Just figuring out how to transport these kids around so they aren't changing schools. That's a huge feat we've never accomplished before."

"Change in procedure and practice, they way people are thinking. Can only speak to CASA department, but feeling like these changes are happening in other parts of the system too. LCCS now has three educational specialists! That's a huge change in process."

What do you see as the main challenge with the initiative right now?

Many respondents felt that still a year later there was a major challenge in getting the school system on board and invested in the collaboration:

"School system has been the real Achilles heel in this whole thing. We can't get them to follow through—they come to meetings, they commit verbally but just don't do it."

"Getting through to some of the schools, continuing to get through obstacles. Even though there has been a lot of success, there continue to be barriers we are attempting to overcome. ...They had trauma materials, opportunities to go through training. Just very resistant to incorporating a lot of our suggestions and they were old school in responding (punitive). No matter what we tried."

Some key stakeholders also felt that the mediation component of the initiative had not fully been implemented:

"Promoting people to take advantage of the mediation program. We need to advertise it more, make them more aware that this program exists and to take advantage of it: If there is a problem with a foster parent and youth, there's a place to turn besides just their caseworker. Make the case workers aware of using this tool (mediation). All it is like carrying a tool belt—just another tool in the belt. You use the hammer a lot and forget you also have a screw driver."

"Our mediation model has not been utilized as expected with the goal of making sure placements don't disrupt, so the challenge has been getting key players to utilize that tool and make referrals. Maybe we need to get caseworkers to see it as a tool versus an extra task."

Transportation challenges related to keeping youth in their current schools were also mentioned:

"Transportation. Not because we don't have a phenomenal department and director—been bending over backwards. But right now we have to be creative to make it happen. Can't use school transportation because don't have routes in certain areas of youth are too little for private transport (taxi). We have to figure out other ways...come together to solve the problem."

“Transportation. A lot of kids stay with relatives to main [their school]. I don’t know what it would take. Maybe they need to pay their foster parents more—it’s a lot to ask some of them to take kids 25 minutes to school.”

Do you have any suggestions for how to improve what has been done so far?

Most respondents felt strongly that the initiative was on a solid track and that care needed to be taken to ensure that all the efforts remained supported and in place:

“We have been rocking! Nothing comes to mind but that we stick to it—determined to see this through. I know with grants that funding can never be promised for years, so as long as we put things in place that will stand the test of time regardless, keep pushing, keeping doing what we’re doing.”

“Individuals that have been involved with the initiative that I’ve worked with, I tell you, they are giving 110% and this is their passion. Unless we lose key people I don’t see this initiative going away, only moving forward.”

“We got everyone to the table so just continue to do that and have open dialogue and honest conversations about where improvements are needed. Just getting over the hump of collaboration, which we did, so now we should look at strengths and weaknesses.”

There were specific suggestions for improvement related to overcoming the challenges with TPS involvement:

“I think we need to continue to build relationships with TPS and at the end of the year hopefully have decent data to share at back-to-school meeting—that’s really important because TPS in general needs to see the value in the work we’re doing. We are headed in a great direction, it just needs time and the data and research speaking for itself.”

“I think it would help if we could work with teachers’

unions and get them on board and that might give us an inroad into having more of their time and get some trainings.”

“Training has to be ongoing. People forget what they’ve learned if they don’t implement it and do it on a daily basis. Making sure people are doing what they are trained to do.”

What do you feel are the most important next steps for this initiative?

Suggestions for next steps reflected what key stakeholders shared about the challenges and fell in to four areas:

1. Continued and expanded effort to collect, analyze, and disseminate data—with an emphasis on being able to share the success stories of the initiative.
2. Continuing to encourage TPS involvement and investment in the initiative.
3. Implement more fully the mediation model and
4. Continue to work on creative ideas for transportation.

Do you see the activities and efforts of this initiative continuing past the end of the funding period?

Enthusiasm for and confidence in the initiative continuing past the end of the funding period are strong. Stakeholders mentioned repeatedly that the heart of the initiative is the relationships that have been formed. Further they spoke of the procedures that have been put in place and felt that they would endure even with a change in grant funding or other resources. There was concern expressed, however, that without the proper leadership the initiative would suffer.

“I do, I really do. Of course there will be challenges—money always makes things easier—but open relations, coming together, the team—more import-

ant than money. Once the team is established they can come together to find out how to get money and continue...I definitely see these practices we've put in place continuing on."

"Yes I do. Parts of it will be harder without the money (i.e., incentives and transportation) so I doubt anyone can devote money to this initiative outside of the grant, but relationships will be able to be sustained."

"I feel it's sustainable but will it be sustained? I don't want to sound cynical but it kind of depends on who takes the lead because if it's someone mediocre then no, in three years we will be right back to square one."

What do you think it will take to keep this initiative going?

The key aspects that respondents felt were necessary to keep the initiative related to relationships, leadership, funding, and improved data systems/automation:

"Probably biggest thing will be for key people to stay in place. Right now if we get change—if people leave—I can see it falling apart. Relationships have been developed, if they move I can see it falling apart. Not worried about that right now, but looking in the next few years there will be retirements and things like that."

"Strong leadership and a commitment to understanding that this is working and it does work so we need to keep moving forward—we need a strong leader to keep people engaged."



Recommendations and Next Steps

As evidenced in this report, the Pathways to Success Initiative has had a significant impact in improving the lives and educational outcomes for youth in foster care. PtSI developed a strong foundation which enabled a thriving and productive collaboration. In addition to continuing the policies and practices that have already been put in place, the following are recommendations outlining areas to focus on as the initiative continues to move forward.

Ensure key staff are present and available to lead the initiative forward.

One of the themes that very clearly emerged from the evaluation is that the key stakeholders were intensely passionate and committed to their work with PtSI. Perceptions of leadership were strong and several interview respondents expressed concern that without the right people at the helm, the initiative may be less sustainable. Although staff turnover in the future is likely inevitable, it will be important to ensure that there is a conscious effort to a) continue to support the key leaders of the initiative and b) continue to foster an “initiative knowledge base” so that experience, historical knowledge, and passion is not lost if and when key staff are no longer present. PtSI has done an excellent job of institutionalizing the process, however, the agencies will need to devote time and energy to ensure that key staff are assigned for oversight. It is also recommended that all key policies and procedures that have resulted from the initiative be clearly documented and accessible so that new staff can continue the effort.

Continue outreach to Toledo Public Schools.

While the relationship with TPS is strong at the executive level, evaluation findings suggest that a continued and perhaps heightened effort to

build a solid relationship with TPS as well as to reduce resistance and increase investment of school professionals is a critical step in moving the initiative forward. TPS participation in evaluation activities was limited (TPS staff perspectives were not well represented in the key stakeholder interviews or in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory) and in order to truly measure the nature and impact of the collaboration, it is necessary to include the perspectives of all three agencies. Further, many of the challenges and barriers to the success of the initiative that key stakeholders felt existed related to a still somewhat tenuous connection with the schools. It is evident that the relationship strengthened over the years of the initiative, giving promise for the impact of a continued effort in this arena.

Conduct ongoing training on the impact of trauma and trauma-informed approaches.

The effectiveness of the Think Trauma Trainings indicate that teachers and school professionals benefited from having such an opportunity. However, as was mentioned by several key stakeholders, training must be ongoing so that both new staff have the opportunity to participate and returning staff have the opportunity to keep their skills and knowledge current and refreshed. Therefore, it is recommended that trauma-informed training remain a key component of the PtSI. In addition, because the trainings had less of an impact on foster parents and youth expressed that they did not feel their education was supported by their foster parent, it is recommended that the training committee revisit the training needs of foster parents and refine or develop a new training curriculum for them.

Continue to prioritize and finalize data sharing processes.

As the initiative moves forward, it is recommended that the data committee continue to work to gather all relevant data and to automate

the data sharing process between agencies. The stage has been set for this effort, however, much work has yet to be done to be able to evaluate the progress that is being made and to address areas of concern. As the initiative continues it will be increasingly important to be able to document the outcomes of the initiative and to tell the stories of the successes. Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating this information is a valuable activity for the sustainability of the initiative—both in terms of retaining buy-in from stakeholders and in making a convincing argument for future funding.

Secure funding for transportation resources.

While there is significant confidence that the initiative will continue in the future (beyond the current funding grant) because of the practices that have been put into place, there are key components of the initiative that will still need extra financial support. Transportation is key element of helping youth stay in their current schools and therefore additional funding or resource allocation should be pursued so that youth are still offered these resources.

Revisit the mediation component of the initiative and strategize for more consistent and comprehensive implementation

One component of the initiative that was more challenging to implement and solidify into practice was the mediation model. Key stakeholders still see the absolute value of offering this resource to youth and foster parents but feel that caseworkers are not always aware or interested in utilizing the tool. Therefore, an increased effort to train and inform staff working with youth in foster care and to encourage them to utilize mediation in their work is recommended.

LCCS should consider taking the direct responsibility for the oversight of the PtSI process.

While the Court applied for and was awarded the grant, at this time it makes sense that the child welfare agency would take a leadership role in oversight of the PtSI process. The Court is committed to playing a major role in PtSI, but LCCS, as the leader in child welfare, should have the direct responsibility for ensuring all measures are taken to ensure the successful educational outcomes for youth in foster care.

Continue to increase the opportunity for youth in foster care to have a VOICE.

LCCS, TPS, and the Court should continue to ask youth in foster care what they need to suc-

ceed in school. This should be done informally and formally to track the suggestions and needs of youth, while following up to ensure youth have been heard and improvements have been made.

Expand the opportunities for youth in foster care to be involved in enrichment activities and pro-social activities.

The survey results of youth spoke loud and clear that youth want to be more involved in enrichment activities and after school activities. Steps need to be taken to make sure transportation and funding for activities is provided to make this happen.

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LUCAS COUNTY PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS INITIATIVE

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT – LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES – TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COLLABORATION SURVEY³

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We are interested in your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions related to collaboration and the Lucas County Pathways to Success Initiative—involving Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools. Please read each statement carefully and rate your level of agreement using the scale provided. Your responses will only be analyzed in the aggregate. The information we gather from this survey will allow us to learn more about the Pathways to Success Initiative.

IMPORTANT!

So that we can measure any changes in perceptions of collaboration over time, please enter the first three letters of your mother's maiden name, your two digit birth day of the month (e.g., 05, 12, 26), and the last two numbers of your zip code.

For example: Mother's maiden name = Lopez, Birthday = 01/15/1950, Zip Code = 43607 **↑** Code = LOP1507

YOUR CODE: _____

I REPRESENT (circle one): **JUVENILE COURT** **CHILDREN SERVICES** **TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

³ Mattessich, P., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. (2001). Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement. When responding to each statement, think specifically about the Pathways to Success Initiative that involves Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools .	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Agencies in our community have a history of working together.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It's been done a lot before.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Others (in this community) who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The political and social climate seems to be "right" for starting a project like this one.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The time is right for this collaborative project.	1	2	3	4	5
7. People involved in our collaboration always trust one another.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
10. All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement. When responding to each statement, think specifically about the <u>Pathways to Success Initiative</u> that involves <u>Lucas County Juvenile Court</u> , <u>Lucas County Children Services</u> , and <u>Toledo Public Schools</u> .	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.	1	2	3	4	5
16. When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.	1	2	3	4	5
18. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.	1	2	3	4	5
19. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.	1	2	3	4	5
20. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
21. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement. When responding to each statement, think specifically about the <u>Pathways to Success Initiative</u> that involves <u>Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools</u> .	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
23. This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.	1	2	3	4	5
24. This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.	1	2	3	4	5
25. We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	1	2	3	4	5
26. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
32. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals.	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement. When responding to each statement, think specifically about the <u>Pathways to Success Initiative</u> that involves <u>Lucas County Juvenile Court</u> , <u>Lucas County Children Services</u> , and <u>Toledo Public Schools</u> .	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
33. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals.	1	2	3	4	5
34. The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	1	2	3	4	5
36. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
37. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Our collaborative group had adequate funds to do what wants to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Our collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
40. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B.

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Results

Factor	Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	Agencies in our community have a history of working together.	Time 1		5 (50%)		3 (30%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
	Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It has been done a lot before.	Time 1		5 (50%)	1 (1%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community	Leaders in this community who are part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish.	Time 1			6 (60%)	4 (40%)	
		Time 2					
	Others (in this community) who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the “right” organizations to make this work.	Time 1			3 (30%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Favorable political and social climate	The political and social climate seems to be “right” for starting a collaborative project like this one.	Time 1				8 (80%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
	The time is right for this collaborative project.	Time 1				5 (50%)	5 (50%)
		Time 2					
Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	People involved in our collaboration always trust one another.	Time 1		5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	
		Time 2					
	I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration.	Time 1				7 (70%)	3 (30%)
		Time 2					
Appropriate cross section of members	The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	Time 1			2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
	All the organizations that we need to be members	Time 1		4 (40%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	

Factor	Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	of this collaborative group have become members of the group.	Time 2					
Members see collaboration as in their self-interest	My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.	Time 1				5 (50%)	5 (50%)
		Time 2					
Ability to compromise	People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project.	Time 1		1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	
		Time 2					
Members share a stake in both process and outcome	The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.	Time 1			5 (50%)	5 (50%)	
		Time 2					
		Time 1			2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
		Time 1			1 (10%)	8 (80%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Multiple layers of participation	When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.	Time 1		2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
		Time 1			4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
Flexibility	There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.	Time 1			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
		Time 2					

Factor	Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.	Time 1			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
		Time 2					
Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	Time 1		2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	
		Time 2					
	There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.	Time 1			9 (90%)	1 (10%)	
		Time 2					
Adaptability	This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	Time 1			7 (70%)	3 (30%)	
		Time 2					
	This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.	Time 1			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
		Time 2					
Appropriate pace of development	This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.	Time 1			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
		Time 2					
	We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	Time 1		1 (10%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Open and frequent communication	People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.	Time 1			2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
	I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration.	Time 1		1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	
		Time 2					

Factor	Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.	Time 1			2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Established informal relationships and communication links	Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	Time 1			1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
	I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.	Time 1				8 (80%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish.	Time 1		1 (10%)		6 (60%)	3 (30%)
		Time 2					
	People in our collaborative group know and understand the goals.	Time 1			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
		Time 2					
	People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals.	Time 1			2 (20%)	8 (80%)	
		Time 2					
Shared vision	The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work.	Time 1			4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					
	My ideas about what we are trying to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	Time 1			1 (10%)	9 (90%)	
		Time 2					
Unique purpose	What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	Time 1				2 (20%)	8 (80%)
		Time 2					
	No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	Time 1				3 (30%)	7 (70%)
		Time 2					

Factor	Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	Our collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.	Time 1			9 (90%)	1 (10%)	
		Time 2					
	Our collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.	Time 1		1 (10%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
		Time 2					
Skilled leadership	The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	Time 1				8 (80%)	2 (20%)
		Time 2					

TPS Climate Survey

Name _____ Date _____

School building _____

Please check YES, NO or N/A for each item below

	YES	NO	N/A
1. At the time of enrollment in your school, are youth in foster care identified?			
2. Once staff recognize when a youth in foster care is experiencing problems, is there a referral process? If so what is that process?			
3. Does your school or district have written guidelines for working with child welfare organizations and others that might lead to providing new/better services for youth in foster care?			
4. Does school staff communicate directly with the out of home care provider?			
5. Are you aware of a specific curriculum or courses offered in the district for goal setting, self advocacy and independent life skills that aim at successful transition for youth in foster care?			
6. Do you think your building staff could benefit from additional information in regards to trauma informed approaches?			
7. Have staff development activities been offered that develop an awareness of the instructional needs of youth in foster care?			
8. Are you aware if all youth in foster care has a significant adult in his or her school life?			
9. Have you had staff development activities in working with youth in foster care?			
10. In the past have your school and Lucas County Children's Services collaborated in regards to students in foster care?			
11. In the past have your school and Lucas County Juvenile Probation collaborated in regards to students in foster care?			



Appendix D.

Think Trauma; Moving Toward a Trauma-Informed System

Training Survey

We would like to assess how staff received this training and what was learned as a result. We will use this information to improve the training for the future. Your responses are anonymous so please feel free to be candid with your feedback.

So that we can track your responses before and after the training, please enter the first three letters of your mother's maiden name, your birth day of the month (e.g. 05, 12,26), and the last two numbers of your zip code. For example: SKO2501 _____

1. Which one of the following systems are you affiliated with?
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Child welfare
 - CASA/GAL
 - Education
 - Other _____

2. How long have you been working in your current job?

<input type="radio"/> Less than one year	<input type="radio"/> 7-10 years
<input type="radio"/> 1-3 years	<input type="radio"/> 10-15 years
<input type="radio"/> 4-6 years	<input type="radio"/> More than fifteen years

3. Have you had any training in child trauma prior to the Think Trauma Training Session?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Select “undecided or I don’t know” if you are not familiar with a statement yet.

	Strongly Agree	Inclined to agree	Undecided or I don't know	Inclined to disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Only mental health professionals can help children who have experienced trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Understanding child traumatic stress can improve youth safety in residential settings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Knowing that youth have different reactions to trauma (fight, flight or freeze) can help us understand their behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Trauma can result in feeling “on guard” or overly watchful all of the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Understanding child traumatic stress reactions can reduce the use of restraints in residential settings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Trauma affects the normal development of the brain, brain chemistry and the nervous system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. It is important to know the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Trauma can result in distrust and suspicion of others including those who have done nothing to cause it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Trauma can result in difficulty with establishing appropriate boundaries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Trauma can result in defensive and aggressive attitudes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Organizational stress can cause staff to respond with more frequent or severe punitive measures towards the youth in their care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Trauma can result in difficulties managing anger.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Trauma can result in seeing angry facial expressions in others when it is not how they are feeling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Sounds, places, people, smells, images, feelings and memories can all be trauma reminders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Understanding child traumatic stress can increase my safety at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. My stress level impacts the youth in my care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Traumatic events that happened long ago can interfere with thinking, feeling, and acting appropriate today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Inclined to agree	Undecided or I don't know	Inclined to disagree	Strongly disagree
18. Youth who appear “emotionally cold” may have experienced trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Substance abuse, self-injury, and overeating are coping strategies in response to emotions associated with feeling victimized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Trauma experienced in childhood can impact later social and emotional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Youth who have experienced trauma just need to get on and move on with their lives (i.e., the need to “deal with it”)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. youth in the juvenile justice system are past the point that they can learn to get along well with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Youth may not be able to identify their trauma triggers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Understanding child traumatic stress is important to my job and work environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Organizations, like individuals, are vulnerable to stress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I practice positive self-care strategies when I am stressed out at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Understand child traumatic stress can improve my job satisfaction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. I want to make a difference in the lives of these youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Self-care is my responsibility and the responsibility of my co-workers, my supervisors, and my organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I can identify early signs of a trauma reminder.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. The exact same calming behaviors or strategies can be applied to every youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Most youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced multiple forms of trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Using discipline, seclusion, and restraint can be traumatic for staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. I can tell the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Hearing over and over again about the trauma that youth have experience can cause vicarious trauma for workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Working with trauma-exposed youth has had a negative influence on how I see the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Youth use their trauma as a way to avoid consequences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results from the Think Trauma Training Evaluation

Statement	N	Average rating before training	Average rating after training	Significant change? p < .05
Only mental health professionals can help children who have experienced trauma.	58	1.8	1.4	YES
Understanding child traumatic stress can improve youth safety in residential settings.	58	4.4	4.8	YES
Knowing that youth have different reactions to trauma (fight, flight, or freeze) can help us understand their behavior.	58	4.6	4.9	YES
Trauma can result in feeling “on guard” or overly watchful all of the time.	55	4.5	4.8	YES
Understanding child traumatic stress reactions can reduce the use of restraints in residential settings.	58	4.2	4.7	YES
Trauma affects the normal development of the brain, brain chemistry and the nervous system.	58	4.5	4.8	YES
It is important to know the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	58	4.5	4.8	YES
Trauma can result in distrust and suspicion of others including those who have done nothing to cause it.	58	4.7	4.9	YES
Trauma can result in difficulty establishing appropriate boundaries.	58	4.6	4.8	YES
Trauma can result in defensive and aggressive attitudes.	57	4.6	4.9	YES
Organizational stress can cause staff to respond with more frequent or severe punitive measures towards the youth in their care.	57	4.1	4.6	YES
Trauma can result in difficulties managing anger.	58	4.6	4.8	YES
Trauma can result in seeing angry facial expressions in others when it is not how they are feeling.	57	4.2	4.8	YES
Sounds, places, people, smells, images, feelings and memories can all be trauma reminders.	58	4.7	4.9	YES
Understanding child traumatic stress can increase my safety at work.	58	4.4	4.8	YES
My stress level impacts the youth in my care.	56	4.3	4.7	YES
Traumatic events that happened long ago can interfere with thinking, feeling, and acting appropriately today.	58	4.6	4.9	YES
Youth who appear “emotionally cold” may have experienced trauma.	58	4.4	4.8	YES

Substance abuse, self-injury, and overeating are coping strategies in response to emotions associated with feeling victimized.	58	4.6	4.9	YES
Trauma experienced in childhood can impact later social and emotional development.	58	4.7	4.9	YES
Youth who have experienced trauma just need to get on and move on with their lives (i.e., they need to “deal with it”).	56	1.8	1.4	YES
Youth in the juvenile justice system are past the point that they can learn to get along well with others.	58	1.7	1.3	YES
Youth may not be able to identify their trauma triggers.	58	4.3	4.5	NO
Understanding child traumatic stress is important to my job and work environment.	58	4.7	4.9	YES
Organizations, like individuals, are vulnerable to stress.	57	4.6	4.8	YES
I practice positive self-care strategies when I am stressed out at work.	57	3.9	3.8	NO
Understanding child traumatic stress can improve my job satisfaction.	58	4.3	4.7	YES
I want to make a difference in the lives of these youth.	58	4.8	4.9	NO
Self-care is my responsibility and the responsibility of my co-workers, my supervisors, and my organization.	57	4.3	4.6	YES
I can identify early signs of a trauma reminder.	55	3.1	4.4	YES
The exact same calming behaviors or strategies can be applied to every youth.	57	1.9	1.6	Marginal .07
Most youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced multiple forms of trauma.	58	4.0	4.5	YES
Using discipline, seclusion, and restraint can be traumatic for staff.	57	4.2	4.6	YES
I can tell the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	52	2.8	3.5	YES
Hearing over and over about the trauma that youth have experienced can cause vicarious trauma for workers.	56	3.8	4.4	YES
Working with trauma-exposed youth has had a negative influence on how I see the world.	58	2.5	2.8	Marginal .06
Youth use their trauma as a way to avoid consequences.	55	2.7	2.2	YES

Appendix E.

Rethinking Trauma

Training Survey

We would like to assess how foster parents received this training and what was learned as a result. We will use this information to improve the training for the future. Your responses are anonymous so please feel free to be candid with your feedback.

So that we can track your responses before and after the training, please enter the first three letters of your mother's maiden name, your birth day of the month (e.g. 05, 12,26), and the last two numbers of your zip code. For example: SKO2501 _____

1. How long have you been a foster parent/ relative care giver?
 - Less than one year
 - 7-10 years
 - 1-3 years
 - 10-15 years
 - 4-6 years
 - More than fifteen years

2. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Select "undecided or I don't know" if you are not familiar with a statement yet.

	Strongly Agree	Inclined to agree	Undecided or I don't know	Inclined to disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Only mental health professionals can help children who have experienced trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Understanding child traumatic stress can improve youth safety in foster placements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Knowing that youth have different reactions to trauma (fight, flight or freeze) can help us understand their behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Trauma can result in feeling "on guard" or overly watchful all of the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Trauma affects the normal development of the brain, brain chemistry and the nervous system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. It is important to know the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Trauma can result in distrust and suspicion of others including those who have done nothing to cause it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Trauma can result in difficulty with establishing appropriate boundaries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Inclined to agree	Undecided or I don't know	Inclined to disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Trauma can result in defensive and aggressive attitudes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Trauma can result in difficulties managing anger.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Sounds, places, people, smells, images, feelings and memories call all be trauma reminders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My stress level impacts the youth in my care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Traumatic events that happened long ago can interfere with thinking, feeling, and acting appropriate today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Youth who appear "emotionally cold" may have experienced trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Substance abuse, self-injury, and overeating are coping strategies in response to emotions associated with feeling victimized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Trauma experienced in childhood can impact later social and emotional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Youth who have experienced trauma just need to get on and move on with their lives (i.e., the need to "deal with it")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Youth in the juvenile justice system are past the point that they can learn to get along well with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Youth may not be able to identify their trauma triggers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I want to make a difference in the lives of these youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. The exact same calming behaviors or strategies can be applied to every youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Most youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced multiple forms of trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I can tell the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Working with trauma-exposed youth has had a negative influence on how I see the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Youth use their trauma as a way to avoid consequences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ReThink Trauma Training Evaluation Results

Statement	N	Average rating before training	Average rating after training	Significant change? p < .05
Only mental health professionals can help children who have experienced trauma.	24	2.3	2.7	NO
Understanding child traumatic stress can improve youth safety in residential settings.	24	4.5	4.5	NO
Knowing that youth have different reactions to trauma (fight, flight, or freeze) can help us understand their behavior.	26	4.6	4.5	NO
Trauma can result in feeling “on guard” or overly watchful all of the time.	25	4.2	4.3	NO
Trauma affects the normal development of the brain, brain chemistry and the nervous system.	24	4.4	4.5	NO
It is important to know the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	26	4.7	4.7	NO
Trauma can result in distrust and suspicion of others including those who have done nothing to cause it.	26	4.4	4.7	NO
Trauma can result in difficulty establishing appropriate boundaries.	26	4.4	4.6	Marginal .06
Trauma can result in defensive and aggressive attitudes.	26	4.4	4.6	YES
Trauma can result in difficulties managing anger.	26	4.5	4.5	NO
Sounds, places, people, smells, images, feelings and memories can all be trauma reminders.	26	4.4	4.5	NO
My stress level impacts the youth in my care.	24	4.4	4.4	NO
Traumatic events that happened long ago can interfere with thinking, feeling, and acting appropriately today.	26	4.5	4.6	NO
Youth who appear “emotionally cold” may have experienced trauma.	25	4.2	4.6	YES
Substance abuse, self-injury, and overeating are coping strategies in response to emotions associated with feeling victimized.	26	4.4	4.6	NO
Trauma experienced in childhood can impact later social and emotional development.	26	4.6	4.7	NO
Youth who have experienced trauma just need to get on and move on with their lives (i.e., they need to “deal with it”).	26	2.2	2.7	NO
Youth in the juvenile justice system are past the point that they can learn to get along well with others.	25	2.3	2.3	NO
Youth may not be able to identify their trauma triggers.	25	3.9	4.2	NO

Statement	N	Average rating before training	Average rating after training	Significant change? p < .05
I want to make a difference in the lives of these youth.	26	4.5	4.5	NO
The exact same calming behaviors or strategies can be applied to every youth.	26	2.7	2.7	NO
Most youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced multiple forms of trauma.	25	3.6	4.2	YES
I can tell the difference between when a youth is acting up versus when he/she has been triggered by a past event.	26	3.4	3.4	NO
Working with trauma-exposed youth has had a negative influence on how I see the world.	26	2.6	2.6	NO
Youth use their trauma as a way to avoid consequences.	25	2.9	3.4	NO

Appendix H.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Evaluation of the Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training

1. Please indicate your role:

- CASA Volunteer
- Attorney Guardian Ad Litem
- Other: _____

2. Please review the following list of knowledge and skills statements. Give some thought to what you knew before this training and what you learned here today. Using the rating scale below, circle the number that best represents your knowledge and skills **before** and **after** this training.

Rating Scale: 1 = Very Low 2 = Low 3 = Medium 4 = High 5 = Very High

Before Training					Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills related to:	After Training				
1	2	3	4	5	Recognizing the impact trauma has on educational outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying possible trauma reminders and barriers to academic success.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the importance of educational stability.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the importance of reducing foster placement changes.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding how children may respond to traumatic events.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding of techniques for coping with trauma reminders.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the process for enrolling a child in Toledo Public Schools.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the process for making a referral to Pathways to Success.	1	2	3	4	5

3. To what extent do you expect this training will make a difference in the way you do your job? Using the rating scale below, please circle the number that best represents your response.

No difference		Some difference		Tremendous difference
1	2	3	4	5

4. Please feel free to include any additional comments you have about the training.

Thank you!

Appendix I.



Evaluation of the Educational Advocacy and Trauma Training

5. Please indicate your role: _____

Date: November 3rd 2014

6. Please review the following list of knowledge and skills statements. Give some thought to what you knew before this training and what you learned here today. Using the rating scale below, circle the number that best represents your knowledge and skills **before** and **after** this training.

Rating Scale: **1 = Very Low** **2 = Low** **3 = Medium** **4 = High** **5 = Very High**

Before Training					Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills related to:	After Training				
1	2	3	4	5	Recognizing the impact trauma has on educational outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying possible trauma reminders and barriers to academic success.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the importance of educational stability.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the importance of reducing foster placement changes.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding how children may respond to traumatic events.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding of techniques for coping with trauma reminders.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the importance of collaboration and communication when working with youth in foster care.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding the process for making a referral to Pathways to Success.	1	2	3	4	5

7. To what extent do you expect this training will make a difference in the way you do your job? Using the rating scale below, please circle the number that best represents your response.

No difference		Some difference		Tremendous difference
1	2	3	4	5

8. Please feel free to include any additional comments you have about the training.

Thank you!

Appendix J.

Survey for Youth in Foster Care

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information we gather from this survey will allow us to learn more about young people’s perspective related to their experiences in foster care and school.

1. How old are you? _____
2. How many elementary schools have you attended **since entering foster care**? _____
3. How many high schools have you attended **since entering foster care**? _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best matches your level of agreement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ no opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
4. I feel a sense of belonging at my current school.					
5. It is important to me to stay at my current school.					
6. I am treated the same way as other students who are not in foster care by adults at this school.					
7. I feel my academic needs are being met (for example, help from teachers, tutoring, help with homework).					
8. I feel I have the supplies and equipment I need to participate in school.					
9. Sometimes events outside of class interfere with my ability to attend school.					
10. Sometimes my emotions interfere with my ability to pay attention in class.					
11. Sometimes transportation issues make it difficult for me to get to school					
12. I feel my teachers understand what it’s like for me to be a student in foster care.					

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate each of the statements below by circling the number that best matches your level of agreement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ no opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
13. My foster parent supports my academic needs.					
14. My foster parent believes school is important.					
15. My foster parent is an active participant in my education.					

16. How has your foster care placement affected your experience at school?

17. What type of help, services, or programs would be helpful for you to have a positive educational experience as a youth in foster care?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Lucas County Pathways to Success Youth in Foster Care: Focus Group Protocol

TO BRING:

- 2 digital recorders, a flat mic, and extra batteries
- Laptop computer for notes
- Blank paper for comments
- Food, drinks & paper products (napkins, plates, cups)

Greet everyone as they enter the room. Invite them to make themselves comfortable and help themselves to pizza and pop. Once everyone is settled and seated:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in today's group discussion. My name is and this is [Facilitator] works at [org name] and [Facilitator] works at [org name]. We are interested in better understanding the school experiences of youth in foster care. We are holding group discussions to help us understand your experiences. We appreciate you taking the time to participate in this discussion. We have a few important reminders before we get started.

- Your participation in today's discussion is voluntary and you can stop at anytime. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to.
- We will keep everything you say in this room confidential, and we ask that you do the same. Please do not share with anyone outside of this room what any of the other participants say.
- Only members of the evaluation team will be able to see the notes and/or hear the recording of the discussion. Your name will not be linked to what you say here and information you share here will not be presented to anyone (such as case workers, teachers, or foster parents) in a way that could identify you.
- The discussion will last about an hour.
- We will ask you a series of questions about your experiences with school and foster care.
- Although you can choose not to answer any question, it is important that everyone share their thoughts and feelings today, so that we can understand your experiences.
- We will take notes and audio record the discussion as a backup to our written notes. The recording will be kept locked, will only be used by the evaluation team, and will be destroyed at the end of the study. If you do not wish to be recorded or become uncomfortable with it at any time, you may leave the discussion.

- Finally, there are some ground rules for the discussion group:
 - Be open and honest about your experiences, as the information you provide will help make the program better for everyone.
 - The focus group discussion will be taped but the information will only be used for purposes of transcription and, as always, participants will not be individually identified in any write-up of the discussion.
 - It is important that everyone gets a chance to participate, so please respect the other participants by letting them talk about their experiences without judging them or making negative comments. That having been said, you may respond to others' comments after they have spoken (this is definitely encouraged!)
 - No interrupting when someone is talking. We'll take turns and make sure everyone gets a chance to talk.
 - If you think of something that you don't want to share in the group, but think I should know, you can write it down on the sheet of paper (provided), you can stay after and tell me before you leave.
 - We ask that everything said here “stay in the room.” For our part, we will keep everything that is said completely confidential. We encourage you to do the same to help us in having an open and honest conversation about your true experiences.
 - Does everybody here agree that what is said here stays here? (either get a show of hands or go around the circle asking each person if they agree)

Are there any questions before we get started?

1. First, before we turn on the recorder, I'm going to go around the room—please tell me your name, what grade you are in and something interesting about yourself.

Thanks so much...it is great to have everyone here. Okay, now I am going to turn on the recorder. [TURN ON RECORDER]

2. Let's talk about your experiences in school.
 - Tell me about how your foster care placement(s) has affected your experiences at school?
 - Has it affected it in good ways? In bad ways?
 - What is an example of how your foster care placement has positively affected your experiences at school?
 - What is an example of how your foster care placement has negatively affected your experiences at school?
 - Are there any other things about being in foster care that make it difficult for you to participate in school?
 - Do you feel that your teachers and other school staff understand these challenges?
 - What could be done to help you overcome these challenges?

- Examples
 - Having someone at school that feel comfortable talking with and confiding in
 - Tutoring
 - Have you ever had to switch schools because of a change in your foster placement?
 - If yes, how did that affect you?
- 3. Let's talk about your experiences in foster care.
 - Is your foster parent involved in your education?
 - IF YES, in what ways are they involved?
 - IF NO, what don't they do that you would like them to do?
 - Examples
 - Ask about homework
 - Attend school meetings
 - Do you feel your foster parent(s) are supportive of your education and experience in school?
- 4. Let's talk about getting to school and issues around transportation.
 - How do you currently get to school?
 - Has transportation ever been an issue or challenge for you?
 - i. IF YES, tell me about what/why it's been challenging for you
 - ii. IF NO, tell me about why it hasn't been an issue
 - Have you received any supports related to transportation?
 - i. Examples
 1. Bus pass
 2. Switched schools
- 5. Do you have any suggestions for ways schools could improve the experience of youth in foster care?
- 6. Do you have any suggestions for ways that foster parents could improve your experiences in school?
- 7. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your experience? Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you again for your time and sharing your experiences with us. Remember that if you'd like to share something else you can write it down on one of the sheets of paper right now.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FOCUS GROUPS:

- Compile the note papers, digital recorder, and any other materials.
- Power down the laptop that was used to take electronic notes.
- Clean up food/drinks.
- Restore the furniture to its original location, if necessary.

Appendix L.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT, LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES, and TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lucas County Juvenile Court, Lucas County Children Services, and Toledo Public Schools have come together to collaborate and apply for the Child Welfare- Education System Collaborations to Increase Educational Stability Grant. The aforementioned partners will enter into a collaborative agreement in which **Lucas County Juvenile Court** will be the lead agency and named applicant and the other agencies will be partners in the application.

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize the collaboration between the aforementioned agencies in order to build infrastructure capacity to increase educational stability, graduation rates, foster placement stability and reduce the risk of foster youth becoming involved in the juvenile delinquency system.

Implementation of this Agreement is conditioned upon **JUVENILE COURT'S** receiving grant funding from Administration for Children and Families HHS-2012-ACF-ACYF-C0-0270.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES:

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT, LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES and TOLEDC PUBLIC SCHOOLS will establish and participate in an Executive Steering Committee to oversee the ACI grant.

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT, LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES and TOLEDC PUBLIC SCHOOLS and the Executive Steering Committee will:

1. Develop and implement a model for information and data sharing between schools, children services and the court for case management purposes;
2. Develop and implement written policies and protocols for school staff for allowing children in foster care to remain in their school of origin when possible;
3. Develop and implement written policies and protocols for school staff about what to do when a foster child is moved into a new school;
4. Develop and implement policies that ensure that course credits are easily transferred between schools
5. Create opportunities for children and youth to raise awareness and advocate for the importance of school stability and educational continuity;
6. Explore sustainability options;

7. Develop and implement written policies that require immediate enrollment in a new school when remaining in the original school is not in the child's best interest;
8. Develop and implement behavioral interventions for children/youth in the schools that utilizes trauma-informed approaches.

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT will:

1. Designate one (1) person to administer the ACF grant;
2. Designate at least one (1) person to attending bi-monthly collaboration team meetings;
3. Comply with any policies or protocols set forth by the Executive Steering Committee;
4. Comply with the requirements set forth by the ACF grant;
5. Agrees to comply with accepted accounting, billing and fiscal management principles necessary for proper stewardship of federal funds;
6. Comply with the project evaluation requirements set forth by the ACF grant.

LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES will:

1. Designate at least one (1) person to attending bi-monthly collaboration team meetings;
2. Inform the old and new school as soon as possible once a decision is made that a child must change schools.
3. Comply with the requirements set forth by the ACF grant;
4. Comply with any policies or protocols set forth by the Executive Steering Committee;
5. Comply with the project evaluation requirements set forth by the ACF grant.

TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS will:

1. Designate at least one (1) person to attending bi-monthly collaboration team meetings;
2. Comply with the requirements set forth by the ACF grant;
3. Comply with any policies or protocols agreed upon by the Executive Steering Committee;
4. Comply with the project evaluation requirements set forth by the ACF grant.

ASSURANCES:

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT, LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES and TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. Have the organizational capability to fulfill the provision of services described herein. This includes, but is not limited to, facilities, equipment and staffing levels;
2. Have staff that includes appropriate bilingual and bicultural individuals consistent with the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the population this Agreement is designed to serve;
3. Fully understand the proposed project goals and the roles of their agency;
4. Will follow through on the commitments of the proposed project, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors;
5. Agree to comply with accepted accounting, billing and fiscal management principles necessary for proper stewardship of federal funds;
6. Affirm that its service locations are accessible by public transportation, have adequate parking, are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA), and are amenable to the target population.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

The Pathways to Success Initiative will serve foster youth ages 10-17 that are at risk of academic failure as a result of educational mobility, delinquent and unruly behavior, placement instability, and other challenges associated with foster care experiences.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

If the JUVENILE COURT has a complaint to register concerning services provided by LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS as outlined in this Agreement, the following process is to occur:

1. The concern must be reported to LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS' Administrator/Superintendent or designee in writing by the JUVENILE COURT's Administrator or designee. Serious infractions should be addressed within 10 days of the incident.
2. LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC Schools Administrator/Superintendent or designee will investigate the concern within 5 days of receiving the written documentation from the JUVENILE COURT Administrator or designee.
3. LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS Administrator/Superintendent or designee will provide a written report to the JUVENILE COURT's Administrator or designee regarding the results of the investigation and corrective measures instituted (if necessary) within 10 days of receiving the written documentation from the JUVENILE COURT.

4. At the request of the JUVENILE COURT's Administrator or designee, if dissatisfied with the result of the investigation or corrective measures instituted, the JUVENILE COURT's Administrator or designee and LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS Administrator/Superintendent or designee will meet within 10 days to discuss a resolution.

The same procedure will be utilized by LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS if issues arise with LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT relative to this Agreement

ALLEGATION OF BREACH OF AGREEMENT:

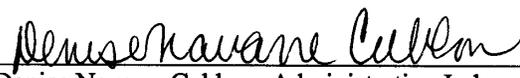
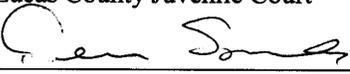
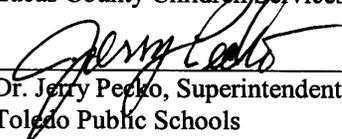
1. Either party may terminate this agreement with thirty (30) days written notice.
2. Breach of this Agreement by LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS may result in the refusal of the JUVENILE COURT to refer LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS eligible clients and the termination of the JUVENILE COURT's responsibility to provide the services listed herein.
3. Breach of this Agreement by the JUVENILE COURT may result in LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS's refusal to comply with the terms of this Agreement.
4. LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES AND/OR TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS and the JUVENILE COURT agree to fully discuss any allegations of a breach in this Agreement prior to the taking of any of the actions outlined above.

TIMELINE:

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on JUVENILE COURT'S receiving funds requested for the project described in the ACF grant application. Responsibilities under this Memorandum of Understanding would coincide with the grant period.

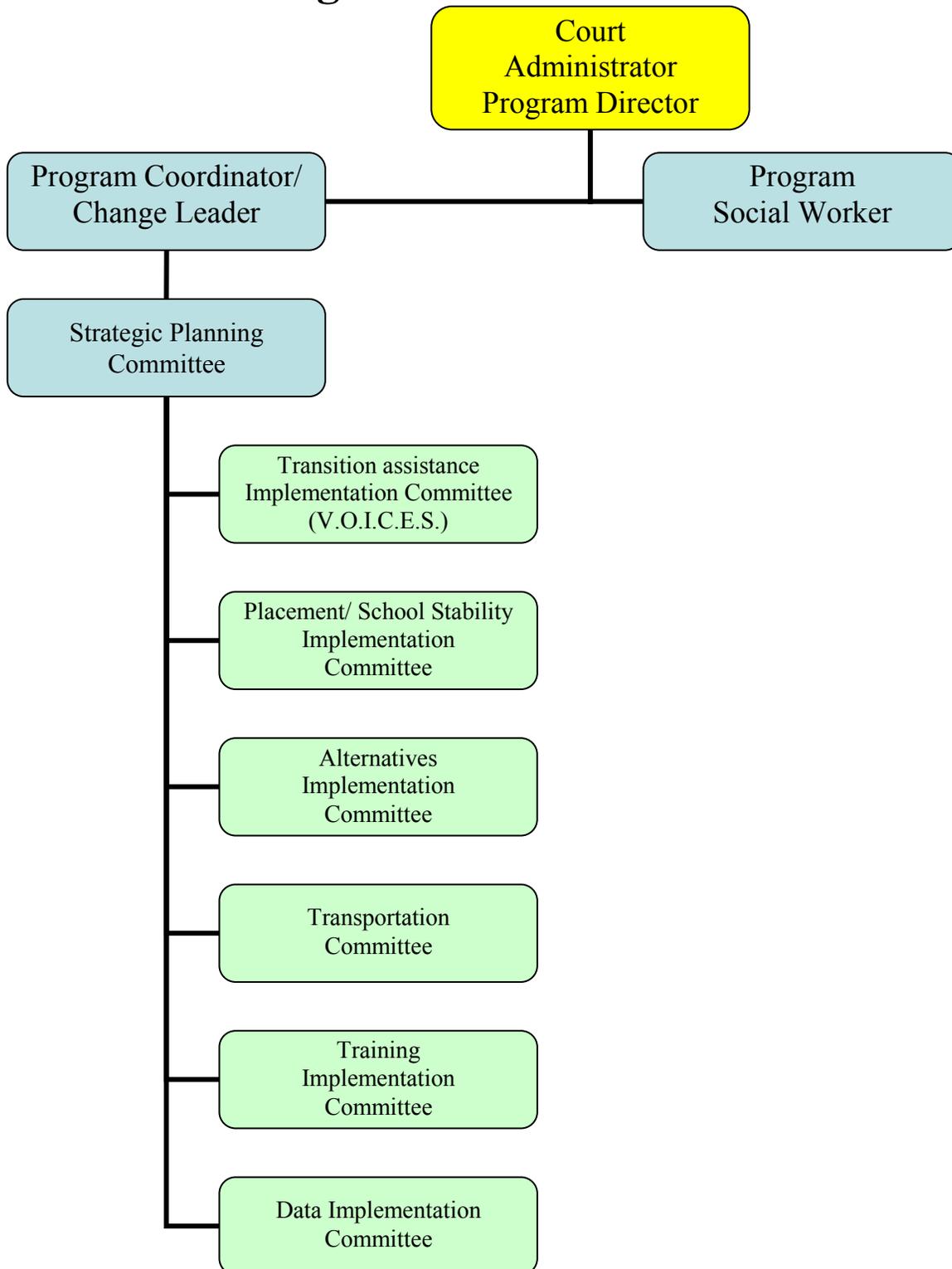
COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP:

Our signature hereafter, indicates our support for the process described within the application. We are committed to creating systematic changes and policy changes that promote educational success for youth in foster care.

	5/24/12
Denise Navarre Cubbon, Administrative Judge Lucas County Juvenile Court	Date
	5/24/12
Dean Sparks, Executive Director Lucas County Children Services	Date
	5/29/12
Dr. Jerry Pecko, Superintendent Toledo Public Schools	Date

Appendix M.

Lucas County Pathways to Success Organizational Chart



Lucas County Pathways to Success Committee Membership

PtSI Executive Steering/ Strategic Planning Committee (This committee is specific to the implementation of PtSI)

Name/ Agency	Agency
Dean Sparks	LCCS
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Deborah Hodges	LCJC
Janice Lodge	LCJC
Grant Data Specialist	LCJC
Judge Cubbon	LCJC
Judge Zimmelman	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Kendra Kec	LCJC
Brian Murphy	TPS
Eric Zatkan	LCJC
Sandy Frisch	Educational Service Center Lake Erie West
Dr. Pecko	TPS
Kevin Tackett	LCJC
Dr. Elhai	Cullen Center
Patricia Hall	LCCS
Diana Theiss	LCCS

PtSI Data Implementation Committee

(This committee will develop systematic, accurate and efficient means for identifying foster youth across agencies.)

Name	Agency
Eric Zatkan	LCJC
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Tricia Hall	LCCS
Sarah Sagaser	LCJC
Chuck Vogelbacher	LCJC
Laurie Kuhnke	LCCS
Colin Pregibon	TPS

Training Implementation Committee

(This committee will plan and facilitate trainings designed to equip teachers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), court personnel and other community stakeholders with the skills necessary to address the unique needs of youth in foster care)

Name	Agency
Judy Leb	CASA
Dr. Elhai	The Cullen Center
Foster Parent Association Rep	
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Rene King	LCCS
Virgie Hamrick	TPS

Transportation Implementation Committee

(This committee will identify ways to efficiently provide transportation when necessary for a child to remain in their original school)

Name	Agency
Diana Theiss	LCCS
Brad Aemisegger	TPS
Tricia Hall	LCCS
CSB – IV-E representative	LCCS
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC

Placement/ School Stability Implementation Committee

(This committee will oversee the implementation of the Foster Placement Stability Program in order to maintain placement and school enrollment when doing so would be in the child's best interest)

Name	Agency
Kevin Tackett	LCJC
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Jackie Windless-Williams	LCCS
Heather Baker	TPS
Judy Leb	CASA
Sheila Ferguson	LCCS

Alternatives Implementation Committee

(This committee will identify trauma-informed approaches to delinquent and unruly behavior --in the home as well as in the classroom.)

Name	Agency
Donna Seed	LCCS
Kris Kapela-McGuckin	LCCS
Nicole Williams	LCCS
Foster Parent Association Rep	
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Sandy Frisch or Delegate	ESC Lake Erie West
Community Engagement Rep	
Kendra Kec	LCJC
Virgie Hamrick	TPS
John Edwards	
Dr. Elhai	Cullen Center

Transition Assistance Implementation Committee (V.O.I.C.E.S.)

(This committee will identify ways to facilitate a smooth transition from secure detention to mainstream academic settings. Likewise, this committee will identify ways to assist youth aging out of foster care or returning home from placement.)

Name	Agency
Foster Youth Rep.	
Marjory Curry	LCJC
Alicia Komives	LCJC
Kevin Tackett	LCJC
Foster parent representative	
Greg Braylock	United Way
VOICES Committee rep	

LCCS= Lucas County Children Services

LCJC= Lucas County Juvenile Court

TPS= Toledo Public Schools

Appendix O.

May 11, 2015

Dear Student,

This year, a team of people has been working to learn about how school is for Toledo students in foster care. We want to learn so that we can make positive changes.

In order to learn more about school challenges for youth in foster care and to hear your suggestions for improving school, we talked with 21 TPS students in foster care. **If you participated in one of these conversations, we want to say THANK YOU!**

We listened to what students said, and we made a flyer (attached) to share what we learned. This flyer will be given out to TPS teachers and staff and will be shared with foster parents and Children Services workers across Toledo. **Your ideas are already making a difference across the area.**

If you were not able to participate in our conversations with youth in foster care earlier, and if you have ideas about ways to improve school for kids in foster care in Lucas County, **we want to hear from you! Your voice is important!** Please contact Alicia Komives, LISW, for more information at: akomiv@co.lucas.oh.us. Even if you did participate in the conversations earlier but have more ideas or comments about the flyer, please feel free to contact Alicia Komives at the email address above.

Many thanks!

Sincerely,

Cari Carson
Social Work Intern
Lucas County Collaboration

Alicia Komives
Social Worker
Lucas County Collaboration

For more information about us check out this website! <http://www.co.lucas.oh.us/index.aspx?nid=2618>

Trauma Classroom Strategies

Interventions Specific for School Personnel

Cause & Effect

Defining Traumatic Stress
 Trauma, **What** is it?
How does it Impact Child Development, Learning, and Classroom Behaviors?



Kristine Buffington, MSW, LISW-S

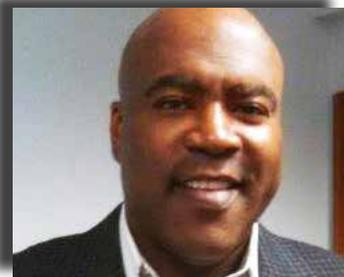
Current Facilitator of the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies Crisis Management (Formerly Seclusion & Restraint Reduction) Learning Community.

Completed Trainer program for Psychological First Aid (Disaster Mental Health with National Child Traumatic Stress Network).

National trainer and consultant in trauma-informed care for child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice systems.

Now What?

Identify whether or not a behavior is a traumatic response. How to “self check” before trying to **de-escalate**. Intervention strategies for the classroom, small groups of students and the individual.



Tony Williams

University of Toledo, Marketing major

Certified with the State of Ohio as a Trainer/Facilitator

NCI-Nonviolent Crisis Intervention instructor

Executive Director of “The Firm” where he provides respite, mentoring, and recreational services aimed at stabilizing youth behaviors.

Provides in-school and out-of school support services for TPS students with severe behaviors.

Scott HS Library
 Scott High School
 2400 Collingwood Blvd.

6 Contact Hours

*pre-approval for contact hours is always recommended. Check your IPDP goals. For alignment, you may write an addendum if necessary. Addendum forms can be found on TPS intranet. If questions call LPDC office at 419-671-8398

Thursday, June 11

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Registration Opens at 8:00 a.m.

Continental breakfast will be provided, lunch is on your own.

Register online:

<http://www.co.lucas.oh.us/index.aspx?NID=2628>



For more information:
 Contact Alicia Komives
 AKomiv@co.lucas.oh.us
 419-213-6676



This training is brought to you collaboratively from
 TPS-Toledo Public Schools, LCCS-Lucas County Children Services, and Lucas County Juvenile Court



Appendix Q.

In February and March 2015, the Lucas County Juvenile Court (LCJC), Toledo Public Schools (TPS), and Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) collaborated to hold focus groups about the educational experiences of youth in foster care. The focus groups gave the agencies the opportunity to hear from the youth who are the target population of a federal grant to improve educational outcomes for youth in foster care. LCJC, TPS, and LCCS all work together to implement the grant.

Twenty-one middle and high school students participated in four focus groups. The youth discussed how being in foster care has affected their schooling, and they gave suggestions for how the systems in their lives could be improved to be more supportive to youth in foster care. Results from the focus groups were synthesized and will be used to make program and policy improvements across the agencies. Youth will be invited to continue giving feedback on how agencies can help improve educational outcomes for students in foster care.

6 Things Students in Foster Care Want Their Teachers & School Staff to Know

1. We appreciate when you encourage us and support us to meet high expectations.
2. We like when school staff check in with us periodically to see how we are doing. It is good to know they care.
3. We want school staff to know what foster care is, and why kids may be placed in foster care. It is not our fault.
4. Please keep the fact that we are in foster care confidential. Please do not share this information with our classmates by saying it directly or by suggesting out loud that we have a caseworker, asking who we live with, etc.
5. Sometimes we may be late or out of dress code, and this may be because of lack of supplies or appropriate transportation. Please ask us what we need.
6. Many of us want to participate in academic support or other extracurricular activities, but we may need assistance getting there.

4 Things Students in Foster Care Want Their Foster Parents to Know About School

1. We appreciate when you encourage us in our education, “acknowledge the good things ... even a little bit,” say “Good Job,” and support us to meet high expectations.
2. We like when you come to school for meetings and fun programs and to be involved in our education.
3. It is hard for us to participate in school fully when we are missing school supplies. Having the right supplies and clothes lets us learn.
4. Please know that we depend on you to help us with transportation so that we can do after-school tutoring, sports, and other activities. We want to participate in these. Please help us be able to.

As a society and community, we struggle to have an understanding of their challenges, emotionally and behaviorally in the school setting. We have a responsibility to these children and to society as a whole, to ensure that their educational needs are being met.

It is a reality that the resources and tools to make this happen are lacking. The Pathways grant provided these tools and resources, as well as education as to what these children need to have educational stability and, hopefully, academic success. It provided us an opportunity **to learn the language that these children are trying to teach us—in order to help them. We are just beginning to understand the magnitude of this endeavor. It was an honor to participate in this grant and to serve our children in this capacity.**

~Houda Abdoney,
Lucas County Children Services

