

Youth Education Survey (YES) Summary Report

March, 2014



VT-FUTRES
Fostering Understanding To
Reach Educational Success



Background:

VT-FUTRES is a two-year collaborative project that seeks to improve educational stability and well-being for Vermont youth in foster care. As part of the project, VT-FUTRES partnered with the College of St. Joseph's STEPS program and the Vermont Youth Development Committee to:

PURPOSE

- ❖ Explore the experiences and opinions of transitioning and former youth in custody about their educational experiences
- ❖ Harness the suggestions of youth to improve educational well-being of Vermont youth in care.
- ❖ Provide strategies to child welfare workers, state trainers, local and state administrators, and social work researchers on engaging *with* youths in relationships that facilitate genuine systems change around child welfare practice and educational well-being.

About the Participants:

Over 100 (N=102) youth completed the survey. Of these, the average age of the participants was eighteen with an age range of fifteen to twenty-two. Forty-one percent of the participants were male while fifty-nine percent are female. The majority of participants identified themselves as Caucasian/White (90%), with the remaining identifying as African-American/Black (3%), Asian (3%), Multi-racial (2%) and Other (2%). The participants in the sample entered custody at the age of twelve on average, and had approximately six home placements, with a range from 1-38, and six school changes, with a range from 1-14.

- 46% of participants attended an alternative school at some point in their academic career
- 34% of participants attended a residential school at some point in their academic career
- 35% of participants have lived in a group home
- 33% of participants have been homeless
- 32% of participants have been runaways
- 28% of participants have lived in an intensive residential placement
- 18% of participants have lived in Woodside
- 13% of participants are attending college



Key Finding #1:

1. Keep Local Kids Local: Placement and School Stability Matters!

- ✓ The number of home placements is significantly correlated with the number of school placements a child in care will attend. National studies reveal that with each change in school placement, a child loses 6 months of educational progress
- ✓ Higher numbers of home and school placement are associated with lower ratings of teacher-student relationships
- ✓ Participants who were in college reported attending 3 fewer schools (6 vs 9) and reported 10 fewer placements (6 vs 16) on average than students who dropped out of school.

Key Finding #2:

2. Teacher-Student Relationships are Essential to Educational Well Being

- ✓ Strength of Teacher – Student relationships is strongly correlated with positive educational outcomes
- ✓ Teacher-Student Relationships is strongly associated with future expectations of self
- ✓ Future expectations of self is highly correlated with college attendance
- ✓ Participants who attended college have significantly higher ratings on the following:
 - ❖ Adults expect me to graduate
 - ❖ I am receiving school work that matches what I am capable of doing
 - ❖ Adults at school listen to me
 - ❖ Teachers care about students at my school (current or most recent)
 - ❖ Teachers are/were there for me
 - ❖ Teachers are open and honest with me
 - ❖ Education will create opportunities for me

Key Finding #3:

3. Talk with Kids about College

- ✓ 88% of participants had an adult talk to them about college.
- ✓ 100% of participants who have attended college had an adult ever speak with them about college versus 80% of youth who report dropping out of school.
- ✓ 45% of participants said they expected to go on to a 4 year college or university.

If you have any questions regarding the Youth Education Survey, please contact Jessica Strolin at 656-2173 or jstrolin@uvm.edu. For more information regarding VT-FUTRES and their efforts, visit www.vtfutres.org or e-mail us at vtfutres@gmail.com.