



**Foster Care and Education Summit:
Texas Takes Next Step to Improve
Education Outcomes of Children and
Youth in Foster Care**

Final Report, August 2013



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Introduction

In February 2013, over 200 court, child welfare, and education leaders met in Austin at Texas' first Foster Care and Education Summit and Texas took another step in its long-term initiative to improve how children and youth in its foster care system fare in schools. This step represented a new chapter in the initiative to improve education outcomes of students in foster care by bringing together a large group of multi-disciplinary stakeholders to raise awareness of the need to improve these outcomes and to begin establishing connections among the courts, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and local school districts.



“School-aged children in foster care are involved in multiple systems (education, child welfare, and the courts). These three systems independently make very important decisions in the life of a child, and a decision in one system can have lifelong implications in another. We are interconnected because of these children, and it is imperative that we work together to achieve the best outcomes for them as none of us can accomplish this by ourselves.” – Audrey Deckinga, Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Why the Summit was Important

The summit was initially conceived as a recommendation of the Education Committee of the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission) in its pivotal publication, *The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care*.¹ The *Texas Blueprint* itself was the result of the Children's Commission's effort to establish a collaborative of child welfare, education, and judicial leaders to address the education needs of children in foster care. Texas children and youth in foster care comprise a small percentage of the total student population, but their difficulties are great. Often, before entering foster care, their lives have been chaotic and sometimes filled with danger or extreme neglect. Foster care, although intended to be a safe haven for children and youth who are victims of abuse and neglect, often causes additional challenges and instability. Some youth formerly in foster care credit school for providing the only consistency in their lives. Many remember a caring teacher who truly made a difference.

According to national studies, youth in foster care frequently have poor educational outcomes compared to the general child population. The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education reviewed studies from around the country on children and youth currently and formerly in foster care. According to these studies, when compared to the general student population, foster youth were more likely to be suspended or expelled, scored lower on statewide standardized tests, were more likely to repeat a grade, were less likely to graduate, and were more likely to drop out.²



Texas schools have yet to implement a tracking mechanism to comprehensively measure the educational outcomes of foster youth, but some available numbers corroborate the national story. According to data collected by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) during the 2010-2011 school year, 40.7 percent of Texas foster youth who left school did so because they graduated,

¹ *The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes For Children & Youth in Foster Care* (March 2012). Available at <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/98/thetexasblueprint.pdf>.

² See National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, *Education is the Lifeline for Youth in Foster Care* (October 2011) at www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/EducationalOutcomesFactSheet.pdf.

compared to the general student population rate of 70.7 percent.³ During the same school year, 28.7 percent of youth in foster care who left school did so because they dropped out, compared to the general student population rate of 8.4 percent. Texas foster youth also had lower high school achievement, were more likely to be in special education, and were less likely to be in the gifted and talented program.⁴

Summit Feedback

The **Texas TRIO Grant** session revealed that:

- “Texas TRIO is a model that can be replicated in other school districts”
- “Our district and many of the surrounding districts do not have foster care liaisons. We will correct this ASAP”
— *Summit Participants*

Although educational challenges are not unique to children and youth in foster care, this vulnerable population faces additional hurdles, including multiple residential and school changes, court appearances or therapeutic or other case-related appointments that must be attended during school hours, missed school days to visit with parents and siblings, as well as a typically chaotic educational history prior to entering foster care in the first place.

Summit Feedback

The Promising Practices in Primary and Secondary Education in Texas

session taught me that “schools and CPS are working together to address needs of foster care students. We can and will follow this protocol. It highlights the need for a foster care liaison in every district.” — *Summit Participant*

Children and youth who are of school-age and in foster care may also find themselves lost in between child welfare and education – two systems with overlap but inadequate ongoing and effective communication. Texas judicial, child welfare, and education stakeholders informally report that school changes result in a damaging loss of records, credits, services, and support systems, which can hinder the academic success of school-age foster children and youth.

³ Pocket Edition, 2011-2012: Texas Public School Statistics. Available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147511872&libID=2147511859>.

⁴Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, 2010-2011. These percentages represent “leaver” rates (correlating to the reasons children leave school) and are *not* graduation or dropout rates.

How to Plan a Successful Summit

Assemble a Multi-Disciplinary Planning Team

Critical to the success of the summit was assembling a multi-disciplinary planning team. With representatives from child welfare, education, the judiciary, and advocacy groups at the table, the planning team set an inclusive tone from the outset and was experientially equipped to account for the myriad needs and perspectives of a diverse group of invitees. These team members were also essential in getting the word out, following up with invitees, and determining the agenda content. The planning team members included:

- Tina Amberboy, Children’s Commission
- Joy Baskin, Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)
- Cathy Cockerham, Texas CASA
- Lori Duke, Attorney at Law and Clinical Director, Children’s Rights Clinic, University of Texas School of Law
- Jenny Hinson, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Judge Rob Hofmann, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of the Hill Country
- Heidi Penix, Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ)
- Tiffany Roper, Children’s Commission
- Julie Wayman, Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Ginny Woods, Texas Center for the Judiciary

The multi-disciplinary team members were indispensable in encouraging attendees to register. For example, Texas CASA followed up with local CASA programs, and TEA reached out to Education Service Centers while TASB contacted superintendents. Team members were able to give the invitees a preview of the summit’s content and explain its relevance to their respective professions. In some instances, when no response from a regional invitee had been received, a judge in that region reached out and made contact, encouraging the invitee to register and attend.

Be Creative with Funding and Logistics

The summit was funded through the federal Court Improvement Program (CIP) grant, which is managed by the Children’s Commission. The Children’s Commission partnered with the



Texas Center for the Judiciary, which provided expertise relating to conference planning. The summit cost approximately \$90,000, with 90% of the costs covering travel and lodging for the summit attendees and faculty. It is believed that the number of attendees was substantially and favorably increased due to the offer to cover travel and lodging costs.



Create a Common Vision about the Purpose of the Summit

The planning team thought very deliberately about how to present the summit's purpose, considering both an "action planning" approach and an awareness-raising campaign. The team ultimately decided to use the summit to "spread the word" about the educational challenges

faced by students in foster care and the necessity to work collaboratively to achieve better school outcomes. Texas has a large school-age child population of 4,978,120⁵ and 1,243 locally-controlled school districts.⁶ The state's child welfare agency is state-run with 8,064 Child Protective Services (CPS) employees.⁷ With so many constituents in such geographically and demographically diverse communities, the team recognized that it was important to begin by simply opening the eyes of professionals to long-overlooked challenges and spur them to action.

Consider Key Events When Determining Dates for Summit

The planning team wanted to consider the school calendar when determining the summit dates because of academic testing and other events that would prohibit school administrator attendance.

Summit Feedback

The Top 10 Things to Know about CPS session was "a great CPS 101 presentation [that] should be used in many settings when the knowledge of CPS is variable or limited."

⁵ See Pocket Edition, 2011-2012: Texas Public School Statistics. Available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147511872&libID=2147511859>.

⁶ See AskTED, Texas Education Agency Reports and Directories. Available at <http://mansfield.tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.Web/Forms/ReportSelection.aspx#Criteria>.

⁷ See Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Data Book 2012, Child Protective Services Overview. Available at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/about/Data Books and Annual Reports/2012/5CPSAll.pdf>.

It was also necessary to avoid key judicial, education, and child welfare conferences convening at the same time.

Be Strategic about Invitees

Rather than sending an open invitation to school districts and others, the planning team opted to be strategic and based its invitations on the state's education regions.⁸ DFPS provided some estimates regarding the "top 200" school districts with more than 20 students in care enrolled in their schools. These districts were sorted by education region, providing the top school districts for each region in terms of significant number of students in care. For each education region, the following persons were invited:

- Superintendents from one to three school districts within the region with the largest number of foster students
- Judges whose jurisdiction corresponded to those school districts
- DFPS staff located in the education region⁹
- CASA programs that either had staff working on education of foster youth issues or who had served on one of the Education Subcommittees



Additionally, to provide a state-level perspective, all members of the Education Committee, some members of the Education Subcommittees, and other stakeholders were invited.

Issue a Joint Invitation from the Courts, Education, and Child Welfare

Invitations to the summit were jointly issued by Justice Eva Guzman, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, and Chair, Children's Commission; Mr. Howard Baldwin, then-Commissioner, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; and Mr. Michael L. Williams, Commissioner, Texas Education Agency. Although it took a fair amount of time to run the



⁸ Texas School Directory 2011-12, Texas Regional Education Services Centers, Map, January 2012 at http://mansfield.tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.TSD/TSDfiles/tsd2012/not_tagged/esc_map_and_directors.pdf.

⁹ Note: DFPS regions differ from the education regions in Texas, thus DFPS identified its staff to correlate with the location of the school district. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, DFPS Offices. Available at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/contact_us/map.asp.

language of the invitation through the approval processes at the court and two agencies, using joint invitations carried more weight than one system alone inviting participants.



Identify Agenda Topics Relevant to Multi-Disciplinary Audiences¹⁰

Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the summit, the planning team tried to ensure the speakers presented information that would be helpful to all participants. Day One of the summit was used to set the stage; welcoming remarks from court, child welfare, and education leaders

demonstrated support and recognition of the universal importance of this issue. The welcoming remarks were followed by a panel of youth formerly in foster care who discussed their experience in school while in care. Data was then jointly presented by representatives of Texas' child welfare and education agencies, giving participants a snapshot of education outcomes of students in care. The remainder of Day One was devoted to background about the national movement to improve education outcomes of children and youth in care and Texas' response, overviews of CPS and education in Texas, and a presentation on the intersection of Texas child welfare and education law.

Day Two focused on encouraging local practice change and collaboration. Speakers, primarily from school districts but also representing CPS and the courts, discussed promising foster care-related practices in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Attendees attended facilitated sessions broken up by discipline – DFPS professionals, judges, representatives of education, CASAs, and advocates – to examine their disciplines' contributions to education challenges and possible solutions to address those challenges. Finally, the summit concluded with a call to return to local communities and begin collaborating!

Summit Feedback

The What Does the Data Tell Us? session:

- “helps us to know where we need to focus our efforts in improving outcomes”
- provided “graphics [that] were clear in representing trends and gaps”
- was a “wonderful summary of information [that] really helps to put things in perspective”
— *Summit Participants*

¹⁰ Available on the Children's Commission's Texas Foster Care and Education website at <http://education.texaschildrenscommission.gov/education-summit.aspx>.

Ask Judges Attending to Exercise Judicial Leadership

Judge Rob Hofmann, Education Committee member and Chair of the *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Task Force (discussed further below), sent a letter to all judges registered for the summit approximately six weeks before the summit commenced letting them know the composition of their regional teams, how team member selection occurred, and the purpose of the summit, accompanied by a request that the judges serve as facilitators at their regional team tables. All attendees at the summit were assigned to a regional or state-level table. About four weeks prior to the summit, judges were sent letters with the identities of their team members and lists of the school districts within or near to their court jurisdiction that had the highest number of foster youth enrolled. At least one judge followed up by personally contacting the team members.



The Summit

Turnout

Extensive follow-up by the planning team yielded a high turnout, including:

- 29 judges
- 42 representatives from 34 school districts
- 14 representatives from state education organizations, including the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Association of School Boards, and the Texas Association of School Administrators
- Representatives from all 20 Education Service Centers
- 44 regional and state-level DFPS staff

Summit Feedback

“Thank you for such a great conference! I learned so opportunity to engage in problem solving dialogue while making connections with people who work in the San Antonio area. This was an eye opener for me, and I am sure many others. I have no doubt that the much, and had the lives of children will be positively impacted for years to come.” – Wade Ivy, Assistant Superintendent, Kerrville ISD

- 13 representatives of Texas CASA and local CASA programs
- 34 advocates, including representatives from child placing agencies, statewide foster care associations, Casey Family Programs, Texas Appleseed, the Office of Court Administration, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, Disability Rights Texas, the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, TexProtects, and Texans Care for Children



Youth Voice

A panel of four youth formerly in the care of DFPS was an indispensable part of the summit agenda. As many attendees noted in their evaluation feedback, hearing the “real” voices of the foster care system “talking about their experience is always the most powerful” because it provides “first-hand information about what students need and where we need to shore up our resources.” Despite countless and

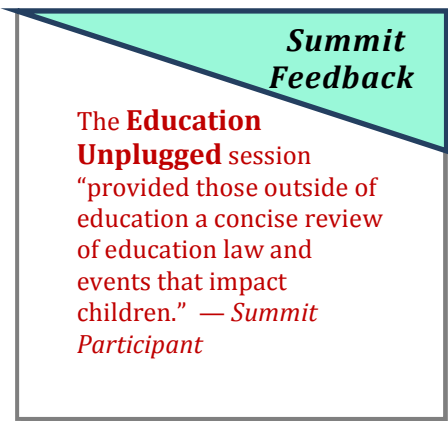
varying hurdles, nearly all the youth on the panel succeeded academically—and each remarked that their educational triumphs significantly contributed to their current success.

Tone

From the welcoming remarks through the final presentation, the planning committee worked to develop an agenda with a tone of collaboration throughout the summit, similar to the one used by the Education Committee when working on the *Texas Blueprint*. A proactive spirit permeated the summit’s panels, presentations, and break-out groups, sending participants home ready to work together on the issues.



Largely contributing to the collaborative tone were the judges. Many Texas professionals working with foster youth expressed that they long wanted to contact their regional judges and colleagues from other disciplines, but did not know how to reach out. Finally speaking face-to-face at the summit, educators, child welfare practitioners, and judicial leaders put their heads together to begin crafting proposals, projects, and policy changes for their communities.



Planning and Coordination

The planning team took great care to coordinate discussion between panelists and speakers in advance of the summit, ensuring smooth transitions between panelists, minimal repetition of information, and thorough coverage of each presentation topic. Advance planning and discussion allowed moderators to preview questions and possible responses with the panelists, which became especially important in planning the youth panel. Though some of the

youth were seasoned speakers, others previously had never told their stories in front of a large group and appreciated knowing what to expect.

Because advance coordination required the speakers to be prepared well before the summit, it was also possible to post the PowerPoint presentations and other materials online before the summit convened—another asset for those attendees who wanted a preview of the conference materials.

Materials and Resources

Attendees wishing to explore the materials before and during the summit appreciated having the summit materials readily available via several different means. Prior to the summit, attendees were provided access to the presentations on a webpage created by the Texas Center for the Judiciary, as well as a smartphone application that connected them to the content of presentations, related websites, speaker biographies, and logistical information.

Upon check-in, each attendee was given a zip drive, including the PowerPoint presentations and appendices; throughout the summit, presenters continued to share website links and other resources. Each participant was also given a conference booklet containing copies of frequently-requested reimbursement forms and MCLE forms and a participant directory with comprehensive contact information. Finally, during the summit, the Children’s Commission unveiled its Texas Foster Care and Education website.¹¹



¹¹ Available at <http://education.texaschildrenscommission.gov/>.

Q&A and Group Debrief

Due to the depth of speaker presentations, the summit agenda unfortunately did not provide sufficient time for post-session questions or group debriefing. As noted in the speaker evaluations, time for questions and answers would have allowed the audience to fully participate in the conference experience and maximize their learning.

Furthermore, this was the first time that many professionals had met practitioners from other fields in their geographic region. The social event at the conclusion of Day One was not well-attended, so it would have been helpful to build in other opportunities for local teams to confer and share resources, concerns, and ideas.¹²

Follow Up

Because a number of questions were raised or left unanswered during the summit, attendees wanted an immediate plan for follow up. If possible, any states or other jurisdictions planning to hold a similar summit should be prepared to give conference participants a forum for continued discussion and a timeframe and venue for follow up to outstanding questions. While the Texas summit was largely intended to raise awareness of the issue and spark local collaboration, it also bore the responsibility of giving participants tools and resources to meet their needs. Some of these tools and resources are currently in development in Texas, such as a resource guide for the school district foster care liaisons and information for the Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book regarding education of children and youth in foster care.



Evaluations

Planning partners approached the Child and Family Research Institute at the University of Texas at Austin to develop pre- and post-summit evaluations. Four evaluations were prepared and distributed several weeks prior to and a few days after the summit to the following groups of attendees:

¹² Day Two did include a session for professional breakout groups to discuss their respective challenges and goals. Available on the Children’s Commission’s Texas Foster Care and Education website at <http://education.texaschildrenscommission.gov/education-summit.aspx>.

Summit Feedback

Hearing **The Voices of Youth in Care** was “powerful,” “a great reality check,” “so much more effective than listening to data,” and “a tremendous guide for [case] managers to improve practice and service delivery.”
— *Summit Participant*

- Judges
- Education Professionals
- Child Welfare
- Advocates (including CASA)

The evaluations were administered through the use of an online survey tool and measured such indicators as: 1) practitioner experience; 2) knowledge of foster care-related laws, policies, and practices; and 3) interaction with other foster youth education-related fields. The pre-summit evaluations showed the planning team what types of professionals would be attending the summit and their existing experiences with and knowledge of foster care and education. The post-summit evaluations asked open-ended questions about the respondent’s post-summit conclusions, goals, and intentions.

The post-summit evaluations voiced a near unanimous concern for school stability, summarizing the “greatest barrier” to foster youth educational success as, “not being placed in a foster setting within the same school district or school. I really feel in most cases that the relationships the children have with the teachers and staff, if they are involved in a CPS case, can be the most consistent and trusting ones that they have.” Many respondents were also excited to learn about the roles of and eager to collaborate with school district foster care liaisons and DFPS Education Specialists, heartened by the prospect of multi-agency support and the idea that “a cooperative system between CPS and education is possible.”

Comparing the pre- and post-summit evaluations, the planning team may better understand how to satisfy the needs of the disparate participants. For example, some individuals had little prior contact with foster youth, while others worked with them every day; some attendees had extensive working knowledge of foster care education-related laws, while other did not know such guidelines, rights, and responsibilities existed. By knowing these audience traits in advance, the planning team could advise the speakers to tailor their presentations accordingly.

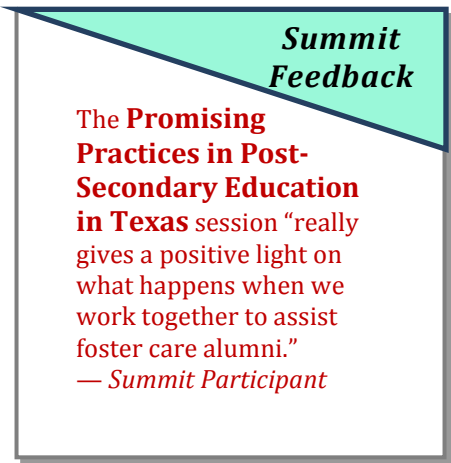
**Summit
Feedback**

The Promising Practices in Primary and Secondary Education in Texas session was “an excellent beginning to understanding the role of a liaison” that will “help schools get started.” — *Summit Participant*

Speaker evaluations were conducted during the summit itself via hard-copy handouts, measuring such indicators as session relevance, teaching methods, speaker knowledge of topic, presentation knowledge, and usefulness of course materials and session. Each evaluation additionally sought feedback on how the session could have been improved and what the respondent liked most about the session.

Reviewing the speaker evaluations, the planning team knows what to include or change and what to preserve should it choose to convene another summit in the future. Furthermore, the planning team may share this feedback with individual speakers, many of whom have already been asked to repeat their presentations with additional audiences.

Furthermore, the planning team now has valuable information on training needs and whether new initiatives may result on the local level. Many audience members listed the practices for which they intend to advocate following the summit: “a committee with the foster care liaison,” increased “placement within the same districts,” and “ensuring the Education Portfolio¹³ is up-to-date.” Participants also listed the resources they still need to effectively support improved education outcomes for foster youth, including “the TEA resource guide,”¹⁴ “a common communication system for CPS and the ISDs,” and “more Education Specialists.”¹⁵ The planning team can share this information with the *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Task Force as it designs its implementation plan, as discussed below.

A box with a green triangular top-left corner containing the text 'Summit Feedback'. Below this, the text reads: 'The Promising Practices in Post-Secondary Education in Texas session “really gives a positive light on what happens when we work together to assist foster care alumni.” — Summit Participant'.

Summit Feedback

The Promising Practices in Post-Secondary Education in Texas session “really gives a positive light on what happens when we work together to assist foster care alumni.”
— *Summit Participant*

Include and Thank All

In cultivating a collaborative tone, it is essential to ensure the speakers represent child welfare, education, and the courts and to acknowledge all systems for their respective contributions, including the substantial work that preceded the summit, so that those who engaged in the projects feel that their work was valued.

Relatedly, the inclusion of the advocacy community proved instrumental in challenging assumptions and building new resolve. During the breakout sessions, several advocates, especially those representing foster home and child placing agency communities, stated that they traditionally held low academic expectations of their youth and were eager to shift the thinking in their communities.

¹³ The Education Portfolio is a collection of education-related documents in a green binder that travels with the child from placement to placement. It includes such documents as report cards, special education records, and school discipline records.

¹⁴ The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Resource Guide is a manual of information related to the education of youth in foster care, offering explanations of collaboration between TEA and Child Protective Services (CPS) as well as summaries of foster care and education-related laws and policies.

¹⁵ DFPS Education Specialists are staff members trained in the area of foster care education and are charged with assisting caseworkers with their clients’ education-related concerns.

Breakouts

Near the conclusion of Day Two, each discipline – child welfare, education, the judiciary, and advocacy – broke out into separate groups to discuss common challenges and generate solutions with their professional counterparts from other areas of the state. Each group addressed and took notes on the following questions:

- How does our profession contribute to the educational challenges of students in care?
- What can we, as a profession, do to improve educational outcomes of students in care?
- What can I personally do to improve these outcomes?
- How do we pass the word along to our colleagues?
- What resources and/or information are still needed to effectively support improved education outcomes?

Summit Feedback

The Connection between Education Law and the Child Welfare System session

“did an excellent job
clearly laying out roles,
responsibilities, and
decision making processes
concerning students in
foster care. Thank you!”
— *Summit Participant*

Summit Feedback

As a result of my presentation at the Education Summit, I have received a request from Dallas ISD to train all of their Principals and Assistant Principals. We were also able to set up training for 2 more ESC regions for our [Children’s Justice Act] funded project. We have confirmed training for all Forth Worth ISD Principals, the Superintendent, and his administrative team. We are planning with Bastrop ISD to train all 1,300 staff in the district. – *Joyce James, Executive Director, Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities*

The chart in this report’s Appendix documents each discipline’s ideas and feedback. Some common concerns included: 1) lack of communication between all involved parties; 2) lack of focus on education needs of foster youth in professional training; and 3) incomplete educational history for a specific child. Different groups also proposed similar solutions such as aiming for fewer school placement disruptions, talking to youth about school and college, and collaborating with other agencies and stakeholders. Finally, in moving forward, several disciplines echoed the desire to consistently raise the issue of education of foster students with all colleagues; create and distribute informational websites, fact sheets, and other resources; and improve the quality of information in the Education Portfolio and court reports.

Looking Ahead

As envisioned by the Supreme Court of Texas, the Education Committee was to be a short-term effort of less than two years. But, as part of its charge, the Court directed the Education Committee to develop a collaborative model to continue systemic improvement of educational outcomes after the submission of the *Texas Blueprint*. That collaborative model, the *Texas Blueprint* Implementation Task



Force (Task Force), was created by order of the Supreme Court of Texas in December 2012 to ensure implementation of the *Texas Blueprint's* recommendations and suggested strategies¹⁶ and now moves the Education Committee's efforts forward by prioritizing the recommendations and monitoring the progress of implementation. In prioritizing the recommendations, three primary issue areas emerged: Data, Training and Resources, and School Stability. The Task Force decided to form three workgroups based on these issues, which have since identified chairs and will be meeting from July 2013 through the fall of 2014. Many of the workgroup members attended the summit and, hailing from diverse and multi-disciplinary backgrounds, bring a wealth of professional expertise to their respective workgroup's efforts at reform and collaboration.

Following the summit, the Task Force also continues to meet and has developed an implementation plan to guide how it monitors implementation of the *Texas Blueprint*, feedback from the summit, and the collaborative call to arms of the summit attendees. The summit, in conjunction with a To the Administrator Addressed letter issued by TEA to promote awareness of foster care awareness month in May, helped to solicit 273 new foster care liaisons. These have since been added to the TEA school district foster care liaison listserv and represent a true testament to the growth of awareness of foster care education issues. Furthermore, the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference that convened in May 2013 included a vigorous discussion of education issues. Several judges who attended the Foster Care and Education Summit commented on changes they made after returning home, including supporting the training of CASA volunteers as education advocates or mentors and asking more education-related questions during hearings. Regional

ESCs are also hosting trainings in response to the summit discussion, including one in May and two upcoming trainings in July and October of this year.

Conclusion

The Foster Care and Education Summit brought together stakeholders from education, child welfare, and the courts, many for the first time, and gave a platform for these stakeholders to begin collaborating. It served to raise awareness of the unique educational needs of Texas students in foster care. The summit represented a necessary next step for Texas in its work to improve education outcomes of children and youth in foster care.