Preparing Students in Foster Care for Postsecondary Success

January 19, 2022
Welcome!

Adriana Pavicic  
Community Engagement Coordinator  
Florida College Access Network  
apavicic@FloridaCollegeAccess.org
Questions & Conversation

• Submit your questions in the box

• Share on social media
  Twitter: @FLCollegeAccess
  #FCAN
  #TalentStrongFL

This webinar is being recorded; all materials will be available within a week of recording
Our mission:
We lead the collaborative movement to ensure every Floridian achieves an education beyond high school and a rewarding career.

Our vision:
A Florida working together, where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all.
FCAN’s Work

Research and Data FCAN publishes research and data on evidence-based practices and policy opportunities to strengthen Florida's talent pool.

Local college access networks (LCANs) LCANs support 82% of the state’s population. These organizations are made up of community leaders who come together to create solutions and partnerships to support local talent development.

Statewide Initiatives FCAN coordinates 4 College Ready Florida initiatives that provides schools and community organizations resources to help students continue their education after high school.
7 Conditions for Success

**Opportunity for everyone:** To build a talent-strong economy, all Floridians need access to a postsecondary education and the supports to complete it.

**Clear information and guidance:** Students and families need exposure and counseling early and often to make informed decisions about their futures.

**Affordable:** Postsecondary education needs to be within everyone's financial reach, regardless of household income or life circumstances.

**Multiple pathways to success:** Floridians benefit from multiple learning opportunities for academic achievement and career advancement.

**Lifelong learning:** No degree or credential is “one and done;” Floridians need to prepare for career changes through continuous learning.

**Effective use of data:** Transparent access to data on education and economic outcomes, especially for Florida’s diverse populations, helps achieve our goals.

**Community collaboration:** When community partners work together toward a shared vision, they remove barriers, build a robust workforce, and improve the quality of life for their regions.
Today’s Presenters

Brett McNaught  
CEO  
Educate Tomorrow

Dr. Steve J. Rios  
Senior Director  
Positive Pathways Program

Wendy Joseph  
College Coach  
Educate Tomorrow

Dr. Amy Rubinson  
Researcher and Care Coordination Manager  
Educate Tomorrow
Today’s Presenters

Brandy Starks-Gordon
Student/Changemaker Peer Mentor

Janessa Collins
Natural Helper
Educate Tomorrow
Setting the Stage

Brett McNaught, CEO
Perspective of a College Student with Experience in Foster Care

- My story - Specific examples of how high school and college coaches / advisors helped you
- Transition to post-secondary education
- Importance of being an active listener
- Help students to be comfortable coming to you
- Develop an active line of contact / communication
- Help them figure out their interests and strengths
- Help them understand the requirements related to the schools they are interested
- Make sure they understand the importance of “back up schools,” especially local colleges and universities
- Encourage students to participate in groups / clubs
- Other advice

Brandy Starks-Gordon
Graduate Student / Changemaker Peer Mentor

FIU
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Post-18 Programs for Students from Foster Care

1. Extended Foster Care (EFC)
2. Postsecondary Education Support Services (PESS)
3. DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption
4. Homeless exemption
5. Positive Pathways
Students using the Florida Department of Children and Families Tuition and Fee Exemption at State Universities and State Colleges and Technical Colleges 2015-2016 to 2019-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Technical College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>3272</td>
<td>3620</td>
<td>669</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>580</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>6,758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Education
SUS Students Using Homeless Waiver
2017-'18 to 2019-'20

Source: SUS BOG, 2021
Homeless Students in Florida Colleges

U.S. Department of Education

2018-2019 school year
91,068 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year.
6,717 students were unsheltered
7,606 were in shelters
11,004 were in hotels / motels, and
65,741 were doubled up

SOURCE: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), 2013
Extended Foster Care (EFC)

- Young adults can remain in foster until age 21 (age 22, if they have a documented disability) while finishing school or gaining work skills

- Requirements for Participation:
  - Turned 18 years old in licensed foster care, AND
  - Enrolled in high school/ completing G.E.D./post-secondary education, OR
  - Working at least 80 hours/month, OR
  - Participating in a job skills program
Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS)

- Statewide program for students who meet requirements
- one major requirement is that students attend a Florida Bright Futures institution
- Eligible youth may receive monthly stipend of $1,256
- Education Training Voucher (ETV) program funds for students not attended a Florida Bright Futures institution
- 18 while in the legal custody of DCF (Spent at least six months, total, in licensed out-of-home care before turning 18)
- OR
- At least 18 and you were adopted after the age of 16 from foster care
- OR
- placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such your placement or adoption.
- Program available UP TO age 23

Click Here for More Information
Homeless Exemption

The 2021 Florida Statutes (1009.25)
Exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at.

1. school district that provides workforce education programs
2. Florida College System institution
3. Public state university:

Definition:
- Student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
  or
- whose primary nighttime residence is a public
  or
- private shelter designed to provide temporary residence, a public or private
  transitional living program, or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily
  used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
The Tuition Waiver: The Basis of Our Work

• The State of Florida provides tuition and fee exemptions, to eligible students, through age 28.
• Authorized at state public universities, public colleges, and technical colleges.
• Fee exemptions may be available to a student who:
  o is or was in the custody of the Department of Children and Families when he or she reached age 18;
  o was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997;
  o is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.;
  o is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a non-relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.; or,
  o was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least six months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age.
In 2014 the state passed legislation, (F.S. 409.1452):

The State University System of Florida and the Florida College System **shall provide postsecondary educational campus coaching positions** that will be integrated Florida College System institutions’ and university institutions general support services structure to provide current and former foster care children and young adults with dedicated, on campus support.

- This legislation resulted in on campus foster care liaisons or coaches being appointed.
- All 28 colleges and all 12 universities have a designated person
- 7 colleges and universities have a dedicated staff person
Highlights

- Created in 2016 and funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), in response to a Florida law requiring collaboration between DCF and the Florida Department of Education.
- Dramatic increase in number of students from foster care using tuition and fee exemption.
- Unique state-level program aimed at increasing post-secondary educational success among college students who lived in foster care in Florida.
- Administered by Educate Tomorrow, a statewide non-profit organization.
- Maintains and expands a network of members.
- Began as Florida Reach, a volunteer statewide network.
Florida International University’s Fostering Panther Pride (FPP) program offers tailored academic and support services to students identified as formerly in foster care or homeless.

Launched in 2013, the primary goal of FPP is to assist former foster care youth and homeless students in their transition to FIU, their retention and graduation, and their pursuit of securing employment or graduate studies upon receiving their bachelor’s degree.

Anna Ramos
Program Director, Fostering Panther Pride.

The Unconquered Scholars Program

The Unconquered Scholars Program provides an array of support services promoting overall success to youth who experienced foster care, homelessness, relative care, or ward of the State status. Many Scholars have faced profound hardships during childhood that may increase their risk of leaving academia without a degree. In fact, research indicates former foster youth are far less likely to earn a degree than their non-foster care peers. Florida State University is committed to meeting the unique needs of Unconquered students so they experience the long-term professional and personal benefits associated with educational attainment. For more information click here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida Public Universities with Focused and Consistent Support For Students Using Tuition and Fee Exemption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAMU Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Florida Atlantic University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Gulf Coast University</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIU Florida International University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colleges with Consistent and Focused Programs / Initiatives

- Daytona State College
- Miami Dade College
- Broward College
- FSCJ Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Florida SouthWestern State College
- Tallahassee Community College
## Positive Pathways Regional Points of Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region / Circuit</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suncoast Region</td>
<td>Althea K. Blake, EdD. Founder, Higher Agency (813) 580-7874 <a href="mailto:altheakblake@gmail.com">altheakblake@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Jamie Bennett, LMSW, ACC Co-founder, Cetera, Inc. (269) 271-1608 <a href="mailto:jamie@ilbtraining.com">jamie@ilbtraining.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuits 6, 12, 13, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Region</td>
<td>Circuit 15 Sabrina Scott Director of Independent Living Vita Nova (561) 689.0035 <a href="mailto:sscott@vitanovaInc.org">sscott@vitanovaInc.org</a></td>
<td>Circuit 15 Joe Murray Assistant Dean Student Advising Services Florida Atlantic University <a href="mailto:MurrayJ@fau.edu">MurrayJ@fau.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuits 15, 17, 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>Varzi Jean-Baptiste Program Director and Care Coordinator Educate Tomorrow (788) 223-7541 <a href="mailto:Varzi@educatetomorrow.org">Varzi@educatetomorrow.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuits 11, 16</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WELCOME TO POSITIVE PATHWAYS

Informed, empathetic and professional support for students from foster care, adoptive homes, and homeless settings.

Monthly Network Call
First Wednesday of Each Month | 1:30 – 2:30 PM
Monthly New Member Orientation | 2:30 – 3:00 PM
# How to Find Foster Care Liaisons Anywhere in the State

www.PositivePathwaysFlorida.org

## State College Liaisons and Coaches

Type something in the input field to search the table for first names, last names or emails:

Search...

The following is the list of State College Liaisons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firstname</th>
<th>Lastname</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anelle</td>
<td>Moss</td>
<td>Broward College (Central)</td>
<td>Davie</td>
<td>Coordinator, Student Success</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amoss3@broward.edu">amoss3@broward.edu</a></td>
<td>954-201-4859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslyn</td>
<td>Bailey-Oddman</td>
<td>Broward College</td>
<td>Davie</td>
<td>Coordinator, Student Success</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rbailey2@broward.edu">rbailey2@broward.edu</a></td>
<td>954-201-8407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>Gnaizda-Gilson</td>
<td>Broward College (North)</td>
<td>Coconut Creek</td>
<td>Coordinator, Student Success</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mgnaiizda@broward.edu">mgnaiizda@broward.edu</a></td>
<td>954-201-2310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Cauley</td>
<td>Chipola College</td>
<td>Marianna</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cauleym@chipola.edu">cauleym@chipola.edu</a></td>
<td>850-526-2761 Ext. 2451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Register at www.PositivePathwaysFlorida.org
Perspectives from a College Coach

- **DCF tuition exemption** is the gateway to post-secondary opportunities for youth in foster care
  - Understand who is eligible
  - Become familiar with what programs are covered and where (public colleges and universities, technical schools)

- **Key Collaborations**
  - Connecting with your local Community Based Care agency is essential to understand the benefits and resources available for students in foster care
  - McKinney-Vento district liaisons can help you understand benefits and resources
  - Create a community of support around each student

- **Early Identification** of eligible students
  - Educate Tomorrow’s TCE (The College Experience) summer gateway program
  - Pre-college Advisement with foster youth and McKinney-Vento students

- **Single Point of Contact**
  - College coaches establish relationships with institutional departments (financial aid, admissions, advisement) and community partners
  - Assess needs and refer to key departments like Access Services, Single Stop
  - FAFSA and scholarship support
  - Mentoring, coaching, leadership development (Changemakers, YVAC)
  - Non-academic support from community partners (housing, emergency shelter placement)
Knowing Your Students and Accessing College Readiness Support

Student-Specific Considerations
- What happens if someone is 18 and still in high school?
- 50% of 18-24 year olds who are experiencing homelessness have been in foster care in Miami-Dade County
- Student strengths

Government Resources
- Guardian ad Litem: https://guardianadlitem.org
- PESS: https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/postsecondary-education-services.shtml
- McKinney Vento: https://nche.ed.gov/resources/
- Annual IEP review
- Local Children’s Trust
- TRiO Programs

Private Resources
- Emergency funds (AOK https://aokscholars.org, nsoro https://nsoro.foundation, local foundations)
- Community Resources (local libraries and Museums)
- Housing options for college students in Florida: Southern Scholarship Foundation, FUP/HUD Vouchers, local community residences (Casa Valentina)

Community-Specific Resources
- Community gatherings during holidays (Thanksgiving celebration, monthly birthday parties)
- Pre-college programs (FSU-CARE, Summerbridge programs, The College Experience)
Perspective of Former Foster Youth / Current Youth Advocate

- My story - Specific examples of how high school and college coaches / advisors helped
- Challenges of students in care and in regular classes
- Youth insights
- Importance of IEPs / Lack of use
- College tours / The College Experience
- Help youth understand who to contact about vital information about college
- Encourage students to participate in groups / clubs
- Other advice

Janessa Collins
Natural Helper
Educate Tomorrow
Questions?
Upcoming webinar:

Where Do Students Go? How Do You Know? Options for Data-Starved Districts

Date and Time: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 2 - 3 p.m. EST
Learn More:

For upcoming webinars, policy briefs, and promising practices, subscribe at:

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