

Notes for Michigan Young Leader Advocacy Summit:

8/5/16

Concerns youth had:

- They did not know or who their educational planner was, or did not know how to access them.
- They were not receiving credits for the school work done while they were in residential treatment. This meant that students were returning to a community school after some period of time in residential and the credits were not honored from the residential to the community school.
- Students believed that there were many barriers to completing online school, due to lack of resources for online education services (laptop, internet services).
- Students were largely unaware of the transportation resources available to them as students in foster care.
- Many school staff do not understand the experiences of foster youth and how important education is to them (one comment was that teachers don't understand and don't try to understand; they give up on the student because they assume the student is moving anyway or will drop out soon).
- Youth's experiences in foster care are not taken into consideration when they are facing expulsion. Youth in care should get a second chance at reinstatement, especially when their home district is the one they were expelled from.

Solutions youth had:

- Suggestions for Coalition and collaboration: youth should be involved in the training of case management staff and school staff about how to accommodate for and best assist the youth in completing their education goals. Adults who directly affect students lives should be made aware of how to engage with and understand the youth, not to give up on them, and to reach out to offer resources, not assuming that the youth will know about them.
- Students suggested an education Bill of Rights, which would be WIDELY disseminated to the youth, and discussed as needed. Students have the right to attend schools of choice, and participate in extracurricular activities without barriers (youth in the group by and large were not aware of these facts).
- The electronic backpack: this might be an online database which students could have their completed and needed credits for any current or future school to look at to help establish credits. This would cut down on students taking time to obtain records from the previous schools, or repeating classes they have already passed.
- Youth would like to have post-expulsion services (in addition to online school, because online school alone is not effective for all students).
- Youth experiencing technology limitations suggested that youth be provided with phones so they can directly access online services which might remove barriers (i.e. electronic backpack, contacting their education planner, getting in touch with tutors or teachers, etc.)