

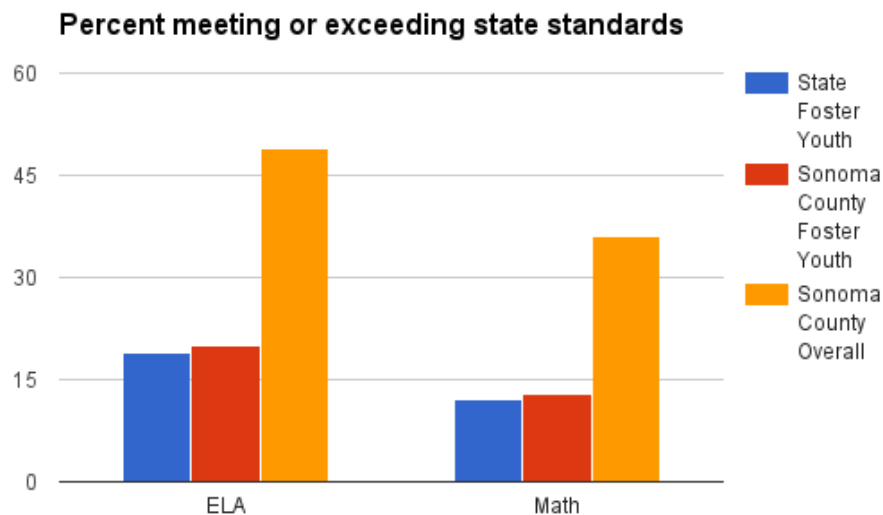
September 18, 2016

Data released on Foster Youth test scores

On Friday, September 16, Sonoma County was able to see, for the first time, how some of its most vulnerable students—foster youth—did on the new state standardized tests. The information was released through the California Department of Education and can be viewed at the state, county, or district level [here](#). Overall, SCOE was pleased that a large percent of grade-eligible Sonoma County foster youths —84— are participating in standardized tests. “This is a good first step and helps provide us the information we need to do better in the future,” said Steve Herrington, Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools.

However, the results of those tests showed the vast majority of foster youths failing to meet the state standard for English Language-Arts (ELA) or mathematics. It also highlighted a large achievement gap between foster youths and the average Sonoma County student. Twenty (**20**) percent of Sonoma County foster youth met or exceeded the standard in ELA, compared to **49** percent countywide. In math, just **13** percent met or exceeded the standard, compared with **36** percent countywide. Sonoma County’s foster youths scored slightly better than the state average for foster youth. Statewide, **19** percent met or exceeded the standard for ELA and **12** percent met or exceeded the standard for math.

“The new data point to the daunting challenge we face in helping our foster youths succeed in school and graduate ready for college or a career,” Dr. Herrington said. “SCOE plans to continue supporting school districts in building supportive culture and policies for foster youths through their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs).”



Specifically, SCOE urges districts to consider policies that could help Foster Youth and other children undergoing change or trauma, such as:

- Taking steps to ease a student's transition between schools or school districts and generally reducing student absence
- Promote a culture of positive discipline that focuses on keeping kids in the classroom, rather than expulsion or suspension
- Provide on-site resources to address trauma
- Work to provide a stable, welcoming and secure environment where students feel safe to learn, regardless of their home life

SCOE is also supporting districts by:

- SCOE FYSCP supports students directly by providing school supplies to districts, available materials include:
 - Digital toolkits (includes a computer, printer, and Wi-Fi hot spot)
 - Education kits that include age-appropriate materials needed for learning, such as calculators, paper, pens, markers, and pencils
- The county office and Sonoma County SELPA hosted a two-day Mental Health First Aid workshop for school districts workshop in the spring of 2016. The packed workshop was meant for those working directly with students and was attended by everyone from Special Education directors to school teams including classroom staff and school psychologists.
- SCOE is also hosting an eight-part series for school districts on Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, and how childhood trauma impacts student learning. The monthly sessions include roughly 35-40 educators and others serving children from around the county. This training is in how to provide an environment that is supportive and address childhood trauma.
- SCOE also provides ongoing support to districts through regular meetings with Foster Youth Liaisons that have been appointed by each district to advocate for knowledge, policies, and tools that help foster youth.
- Collaborates with the County Probation Department on the Keeping Kids in Schools Grant

To learn more or find contact information for your county office or school district, please visit SCOE's [Foster Youth Services page](#).