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Youth Testimony on School Stability

“By the time I was in middle school at age 12, I been to several different elementary schools, but I cant remember them all. The ones I can remember, they are: Blackman, Wilber Cross, Madison, and Webster. The difficult part is that they are in the same city of Bridgeport, CT... The effect [of this on] me in school and out of school [is] it affects my work performance and made unexpectedly difficult to get accustomed to my surrounding. I strongly feel that moving to different schools have a great deal on the individuals Spirit along with emotional damage and Physical making the person sick. All I want is for you to listen to me and understand that it is important for foster kids like me to stay in the same school.”

AISHA, current foster youth¹

“It was very hard. It is not easy going through or feeling like I do not belong somewhere permanently, just being another face in the school until I go to another one.”

DOMINIQUE, current foster youth²

“Currently, I am living with my aunt. I was very happy when she asked me to live with her; but it also meant that I would have to change schools again. I really loved Hamden High, where I spent my sophomore year, but I had to choose between a permanent home and the school I wanted.

Most kids don't have to make that kind of choice. I chose to live with my aunt and had to register at another high school, although, I made attempts to stay at Hamden High School by writing letters to the board of education, my attorney, DCF and Child Advocate.

I know it's hard to follow my story and keep track of all the places I've lived and different schools I have attended: seven foster homes, three residential placements, and one shelter. In seven years, I've also attended eight different schools, had five different DCF workers, and three different lawyers.”

CHENICE, current foster youth³

“Educational stability is one of the most challenging problems facing Connecticut's foster youth today...I had switched schools, as I said, conservatively 10 times. It is hard to keep track...The goal for most foster youth is to go to college and go on to higher education and its really difficult when someone like myself has switched schools so many times. You don't have a solid foundation. ”

VANESSA, former foster youth⁴

¹ Testimony for An Act Concerning Foster Placement and Education; Hearing on S.B. 159 Before the Select Committee on Children, February 28,2008

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Video Testimonial provided to Connecticut Voices for Children, can be viewed at <http://www.ctkidslink.org/stability.html>. To date the video has been viewed over 540 times.