

All-Stars Foster Youth Program: Preparing Our Students for Today and the Future

Jenna Mendez, TK-12 District Foster Youth Counselor, CNUSD

Anita Shirley, Coordinator of Counseling Department, CNUSD

Kimberly Thomas, Student Resource Specialist, Norco College



A QUICK

INTRODUCTION

- Jenna Mendez | TK-12 District Foster Youth Counselor
- Anita Shirley | Coordinator of Counseling Department
- Kimberly Thomas | Student Resource Specialist

**“People Don’t Care
How Much You Know
Until They Know
How Much You Care”**

JOHN C. MAXWELL

WHY?

- *U.S. – 437,465 (up 40,000 from 2012)
- *California - 62,000 Riverside
- *County - 4,700- 6,200

People who had been in foster care as children had *higher* rates of PTSD (25%) than US war veterans (12%)

"The AFCARS Report," 2016; "Number of Children in Foster Care," 2017



WHY?

By age 24

67% of women have children 60% of men have been convicted of a crime

24% are homeless

52% are unemployed

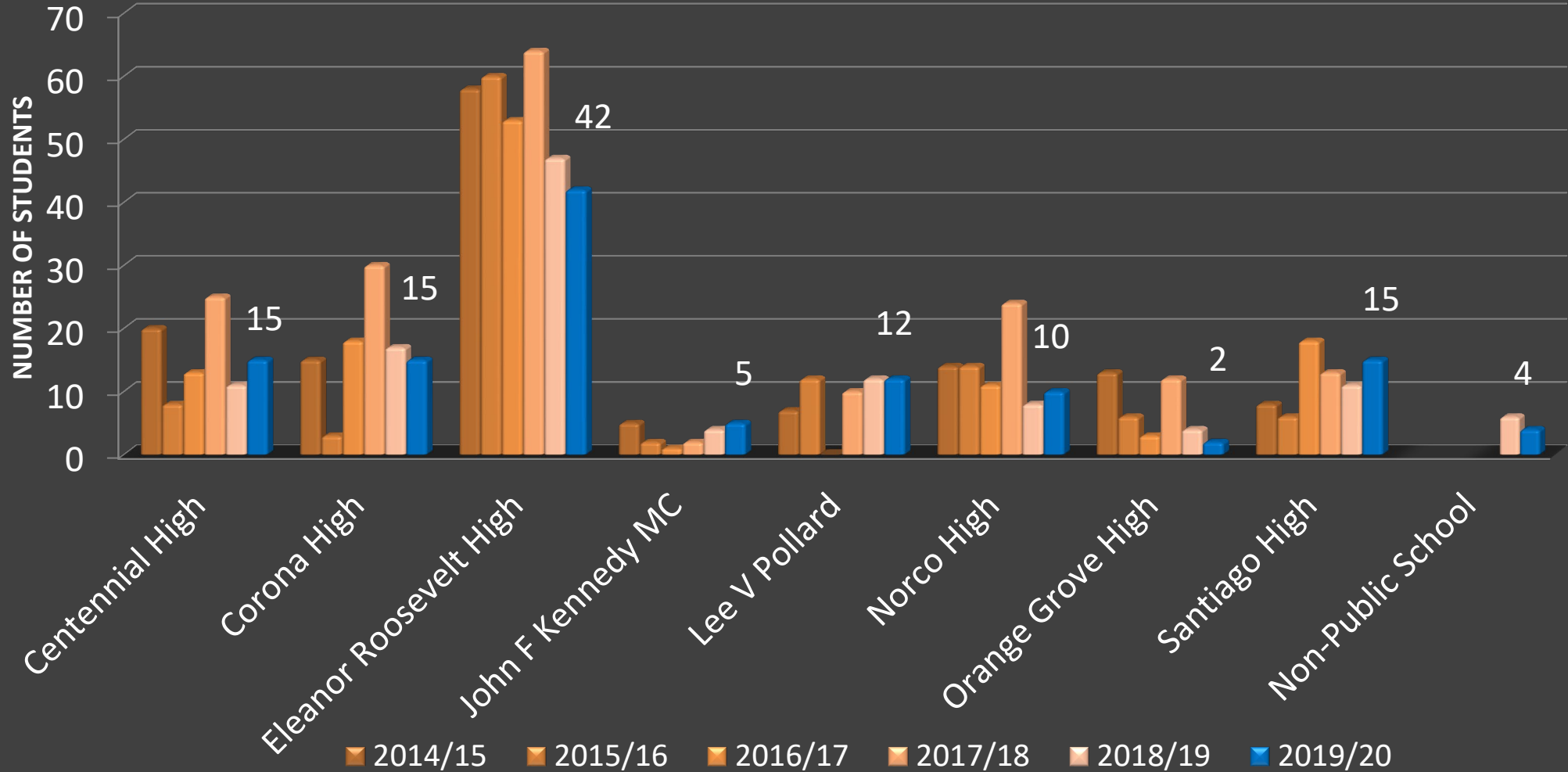
3% have a college degree

8% have an Associate's or Bachelors' degree and only 4% have Bachelor's

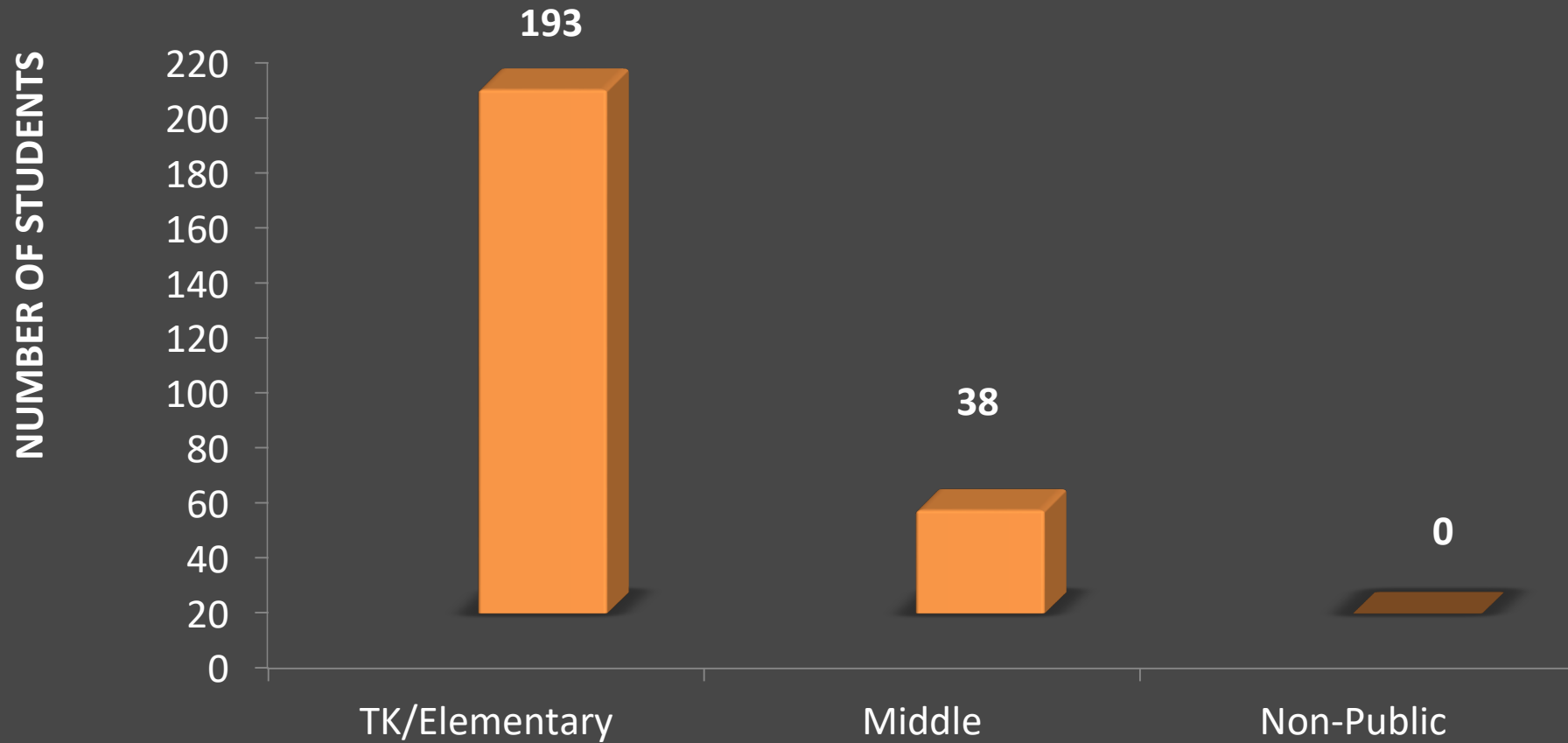


"Foster Kids Face Tough Times," 2010; National Foster Youth Institute, 2015

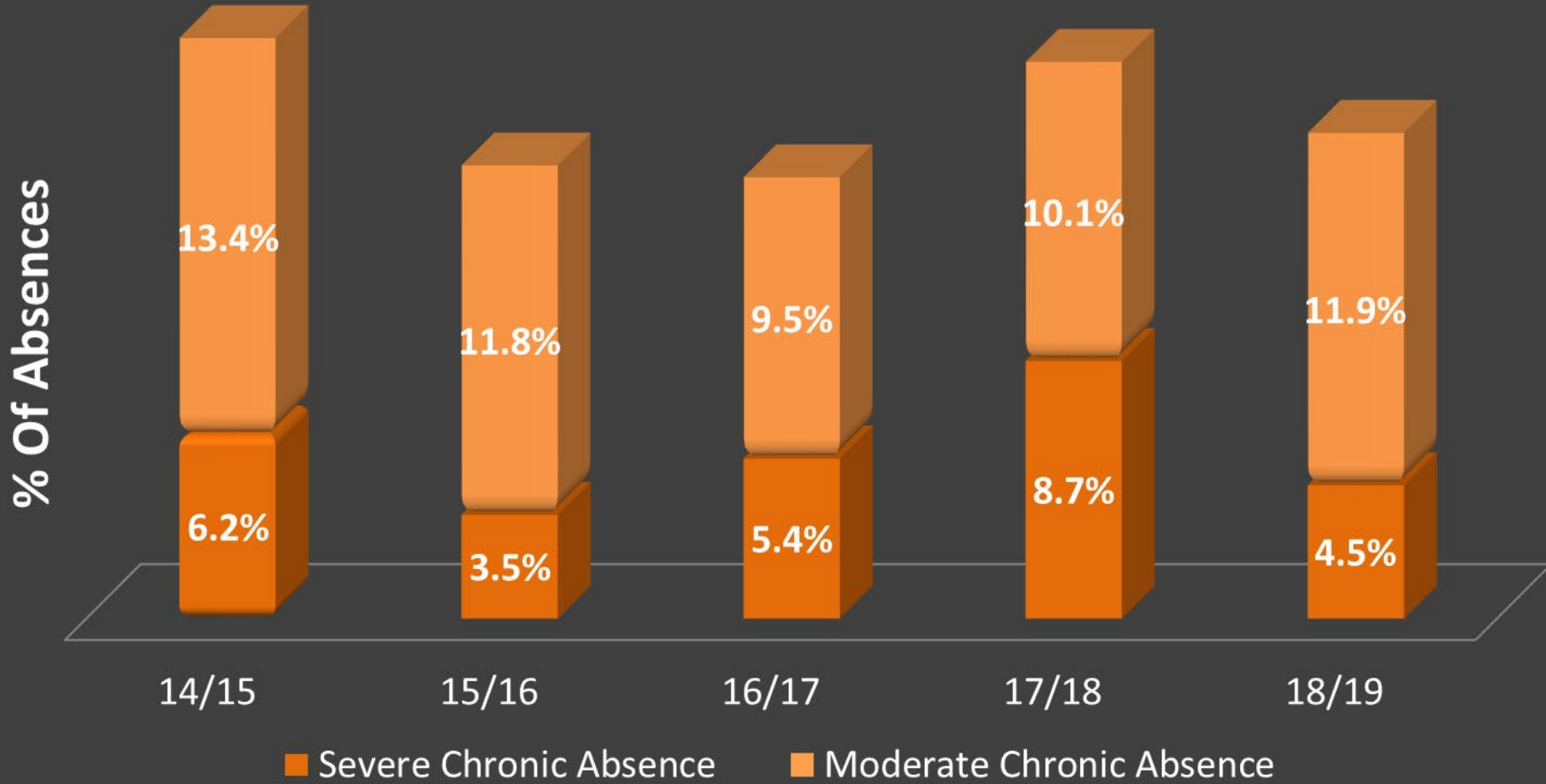
CNUSD NUMBERS



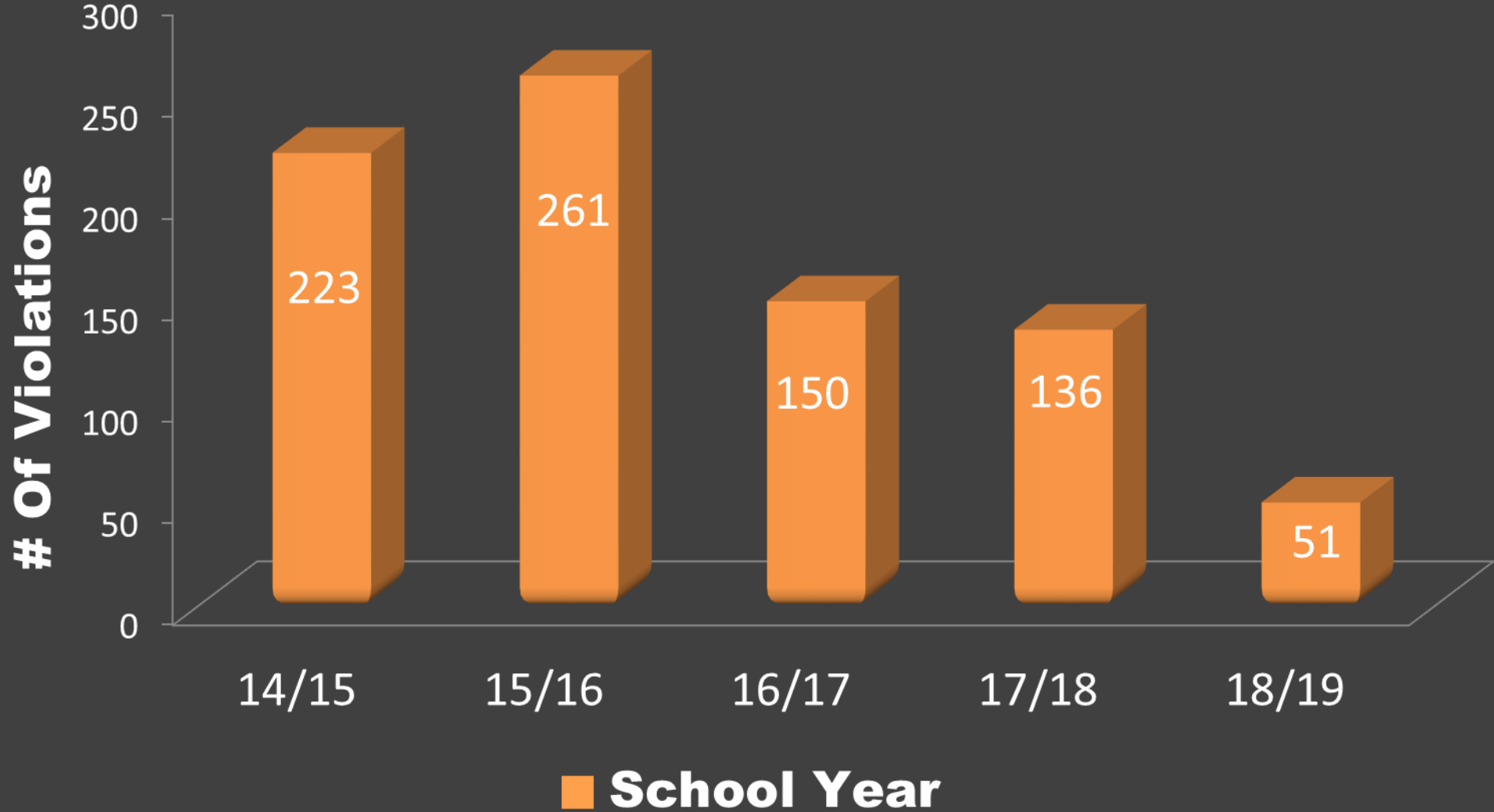
Elementary and Middle

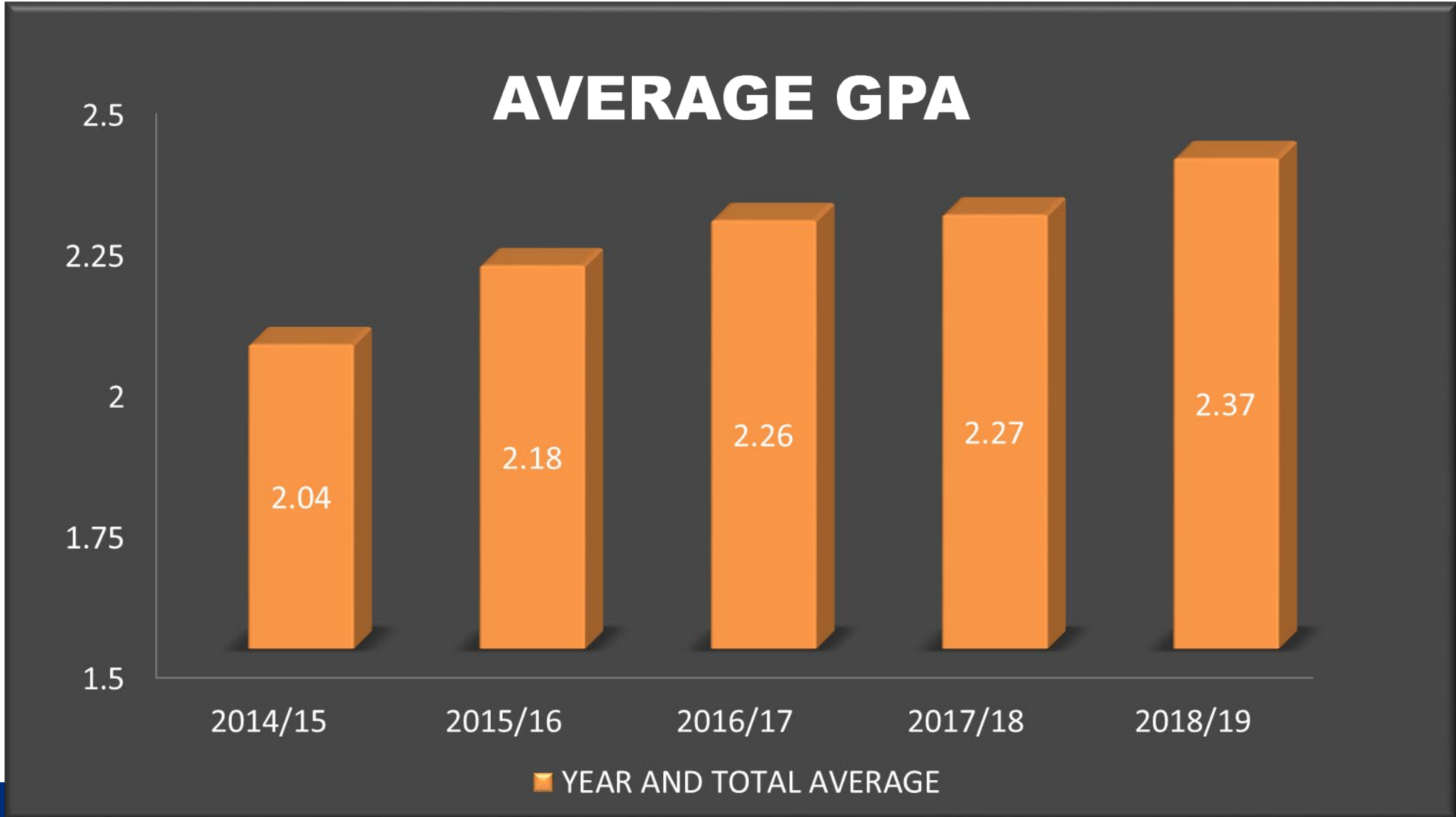


ABSENCES

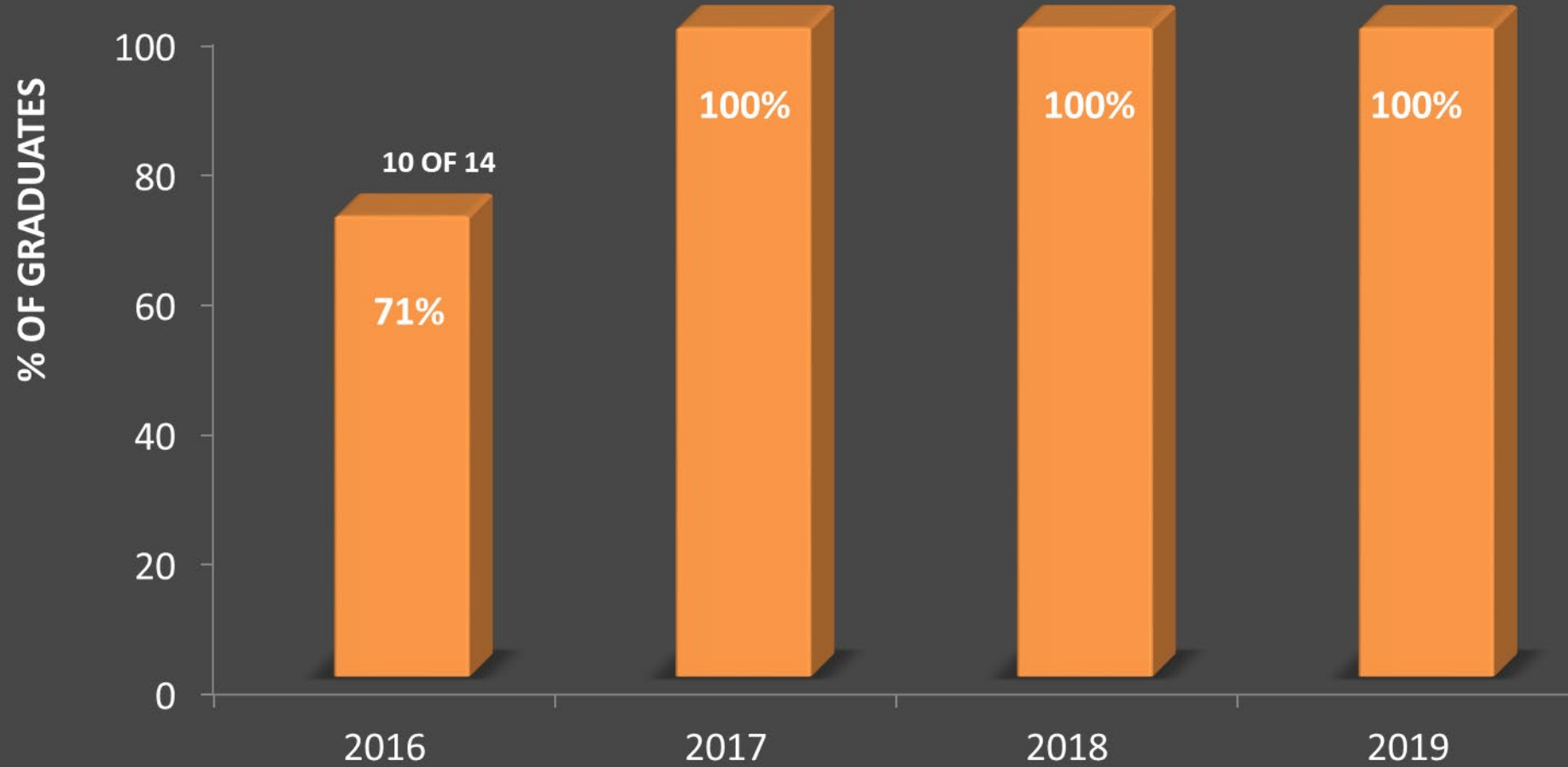


BEHAVIOR VIOLATIONS





GRADUATION RATES



In partnership with caregivers and the community, the All-Star Foster Youth Program empowers youth with resources needed to self-advocate, make healthy choices, and prepare for their future. This is accomplished by building a strong community of support and connection in order to maximize each student's social and emotional health and academic potential.

OUR ALL STAR PROGRAM

PURPOSE

Foster youth are often the *invisible* under-served population.

The purpose of the All-Star program is to empower youth with the resources needed to self-advocate, make healthy choices, and prepare for their future.

Our program is designed to build a village for these "at-promise" students.

ACHIEVEMENT

Helping close the achievement gap in terms of academics, attendance, and behavior

COMMUNITY

Increasing student engagement by establishing a social support network and providing emotional, informational, and academic support

FUTURE PLANNING

Providing opportunities and assistance in planning for the future

ALL STAR FOCUSES

OUR ALL STAR CLUB

All foster youth are informed of this club and encouraged to be active participants.

We hold monthly meetings and check in with each student quarterly.

Incentives Program

FOSTERSUPPORT

The club is designed to provide a safe space of students from similar backgrounds to socialize

RESOURCES+ GUEST SPEAKERS

We discuss resources for the students to access now and after they age out. We bring in guest speakers who were former foster youth or currently help foster youth

FUN + FOOD

We inform them of upcoming events and always provide food at all meetings

OUR ALL STAR
CLASS

We created a class for foster youth only with between 10-20 students

Teacher should be trauma-informed and have a counseling partner

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL

Class starts with "family time" where the focus is on social training, emotional regulation, coping/life skills, + future planning. They also mentor the local elementary and middle school All-Star students.

ACADEMIC

The second hour of class focuses on academic support through tutoring, grade checks, credit recovery, and meeting with case carriers

CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate events and all victories! Birthdays, mentor events, achievements, etc.

OUR ALL STAR

MEN TORS

We created our Mustang Mentor program for foster youth to be paired with an adult staff member on campus

The program is voluntary for our students and staff

MENTOR SUPPORT

Our program is designed for our students to have an adult on campus they trust to go to. We encourage bi-monthly check-ins.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

Staff are trained on how to best interact with the needs of these students and learn the basics of trauma-informed care

FUN EVENTS

We have quarterly mentor events. Mentors are encouraged to attend events with their mentee

OUR ALL STAR EVENTS

We have events 2-3 times a month for our foster students

For the last 2 years, ERHS hosted the kick-off event in the form of a UNITY Forum

New this year is the parent/guardian open house

DISTRICT EVENTS

Events with all foster youth in the district. Guest speakers, DJs, photo booth, and lunch

FIELD TRIPS+ CAMP

Field trips include- to the fire station, colleges, Zoo, Disneyland, and UCR high ropes course. UNITY camp in Big Bear allows students a fun experience to be around other All-Stars and to learn about themselves/others.

OTHER EVENTS

Lunch for the middle schools, mentoring, senior mentor/mentee dinner, gifts at the holidays, conferences, etc.

PROVIDING

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

In addition to social-emotional support, we supplement our academic counselors in providing academic support for our foster students

COLLEGE/CAREER CLASS COLLEGE VISITS

Field trips to CSUSB, CSUSM, Cal Poly Pomona, CSUF, and Norco College

COLLEGE APPS

Providing assistance for all college applications, and Norco College in particular

FAFSA ASSISTANCE

ACADEMIC CHECK-IN

AB216

ALL STARS AT OTHER LEVELS

Elementary and Middle

Corona-Norco currently has 228 middle and elementary All Stars

The high school students mentor the middle and elementary students

Have specific events for those grades levels

MONTHLY MEETINGS

GOODY BAGS/DUFFEL BAGS

Norco College packed duffel bags for each elementary student with school supplies, teddy bear, blanket, and coloring materials.

BIRTHDAY BOX

MIDDLE SCHOOL

TRANSITION LUNCHEON-

Current All-Stars present the program to the 8th graders with lunch and raffle.

MENTORS

ACADEMIC CHECK-IN

DISTRICT HOLIDAY EVENTS

FIELD TRIPS

ALL STAR FOSTER PROGRAM



INTERMEDIATE



ALL STAR FOSTER PROGRAM



ELEMENTARY



**SOURCES OF
FUNDING**

DISTRICT

LCAP and LEA

**SCHOOL SITE
COUNCIL**

DONATIONS

From staff, the community, Miguel's Jr., Foundation Foundation, SilverLakes, community food bank, PTA, Circle City Rotary, Norco College leverages grant funding to support positions and the CNUSD collaboration, etc.

Donations include monetary, food, school supplies, camp supplies, etc.

FUNDRAISERS

ALL STAR FOSTER PROGRAM



Senior Dinner- Class of '17



Senior Dinner- Class of '18



Senior Dinner- Class of '19

ALL STAR FOSTER PROGRAM



Monthly Activities



Speakers

ALL STAR FOSTER PROGRAM



Team building and bonding



on the challenge course

STARTING SMALL

- Identify your at promise population- homeless, low SES, foster, behavior
- Collect data (check grades, attendance, behavior)
- Support from administration and buy-in from staff
- Meet monthly- lunch, snacks
- Birthday notecards
- Mentor program/pen pals with local schools
- Welcome package
- Reach out to on campus programs (ASB, PTA)
- Explore community resources



OUR DATA SPEAKS

Our past 5 years of support has shown:

- **Decreased chronic absenteeism**
- **Increased academic performance**
- **Decrease of behavior incidents**
- **Successful graduation rates**





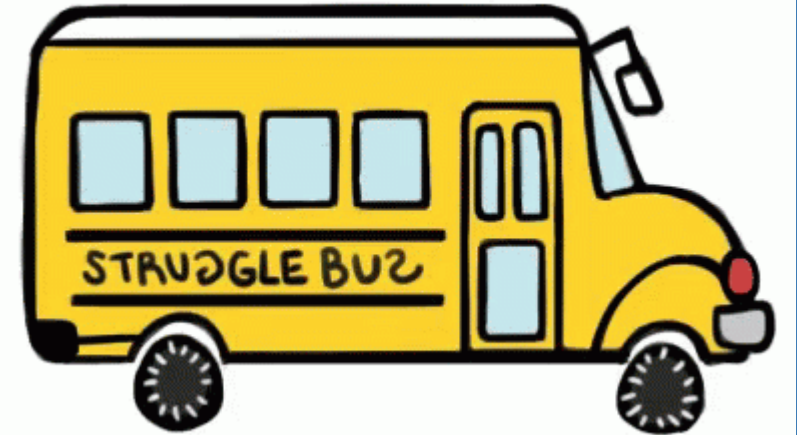
Resource Specialist focus:

High school

- Monthly visits
- Guided Pathways Connection
- College Bound Days
- California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)/Career Exploration
- FAFSA
- CHAFEE
- Scholarships
- Dependency documentation
- Options for Transitional Housing

College & Technical Schools

- Application assistance
- Registration assistance
- Handoff to Student Success Coach
- Connection to additional services
- Continued support



Peer to Peer Outreach

- ▶ Current college students (former foster youth) participate in activities on High School Campus
- ▶ Mentors (former foster youth or similar life circumstances) provide support once they are Norco students
- ▶ Many are former Corona Norco students who enjoy the opportunity to return to their former campuses and share their success & challenges
- ▶ Student Success Coach & Resource Specialist participate in activities with the All Star students to include: Unity Camp, Career Days, District Celebrations, Parent Orientations and other events as appropriate.
- ▶ Provide transition services to other campuses in our District (Riverside Community College & Moreno Valley College)



Continued support...

- ▶ Resources allocation planning
- ▶ Academic Planning (reasonable units)
- ▶ Encourage persistence
- ▶ Connections through engaging activities
- ▶ On-going Celebrations
- ▶ 2018/19 CNUSD- Out of 28 seniors
 - ▶ 17 students attended a community college (13 are at Norco College)
 - ▶ 3 attended CSU/UC
 - ▶ 2 attended Private Universities
 - ▶ 6 are Lifeskills students



Success Stories

Roshon Williams-

- Became the president of our All-Star club
- Was asked to speak at the Riverside County School Board Association's conference and introduce Steve Pemberton- Author, speaker and executive
- In RSP courses in high school
- Was accepted to Cal State Fullerton through the EOPS program and is doing very well.



CONTACTS

JENNA MENDEZ | JMMENDEZ@CNUSD.K12.CA.US

ANITA SHIRLEY | AMSHIRLEY@CNUSD.K12.CA.US

KIMBERLY THOMAS | KIMBERLY.THOMAS@NORCOCOLLEGE.EDU

