

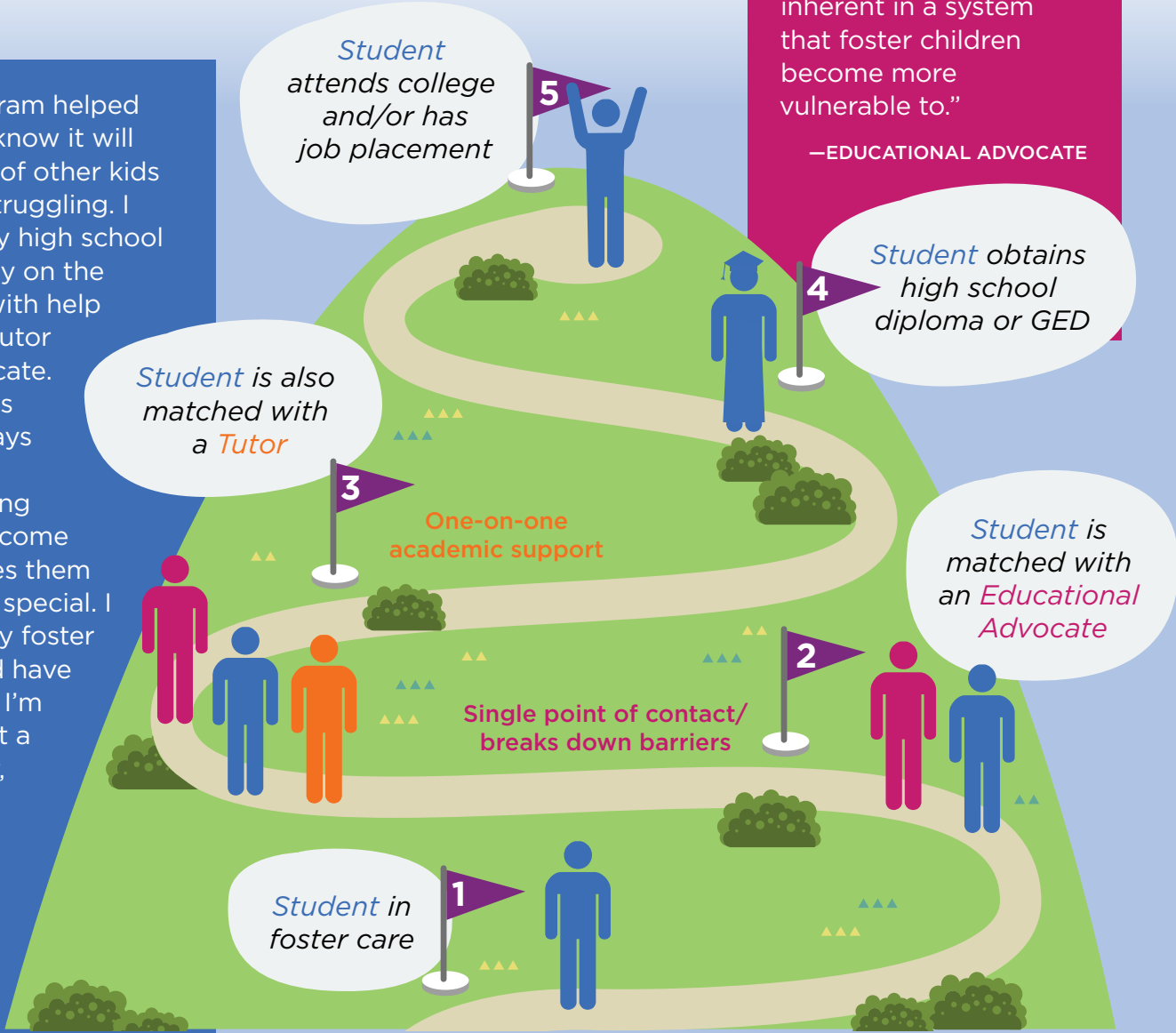
# ACHIEVEMENTS UNLOCKED

Achievements Unlocked, developed by the Washoe County Department of Social Services, is changing the educational trajectory of students in foster care. Matched by the project with tutors and educational advocates, students who were struggling academically took on more courses, earned more credits, improved attendance, and most importantly, got on track to graduate. A multi-disciplinary team model providing advocacy, tutoring, mentoring, and case management to high school aged foster youth, the project succeeded in significantly improving the college and career readiness of the 26 students who completed the pilot in the 2015-16 academic year. With education being the most potent tool for moving out of poverty, Achievements Unlocked has the power to change the lives of young people in foster care.

Only 50 percent of the 400,000 children in foster care in the U.S. complete high school by age 18.

“Having an advocate assigned to a foster student immediately sheds light on barriers inherent in a system that foster children become more vulnerable to.”  
—EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATE

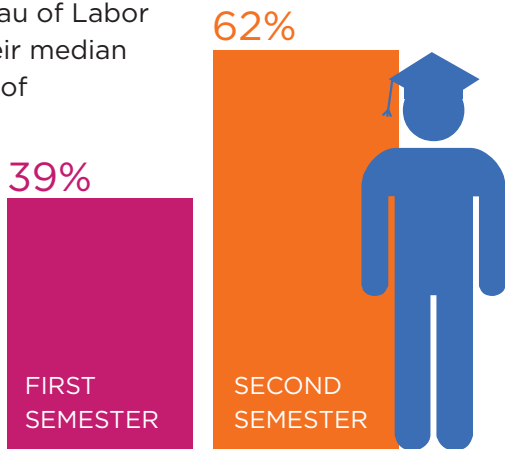
“This program helped me and I know it will help a lot of other kids that are struggling. I passed my high school proficiency on the third try with help from my tutor and advocate. Foster kids don’t always get extra help. Having someone come help makes them feel really special. I think every foster kid should have that. Now I’m working at a pharmacy, and I plan to go to college in the fall.”  
—STUDENT



PILOT FUNDED BY  
WALTER S. JOHNSON Foundation  
administered by the Whittier Trust

## YOUTH ON TRACK TO GRADUATE

High school dropouts are far less likely to find work than their peers who complete high school, and earn significantly lower wages. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, their median annual wage of \$25,636 is about \$10,000 less than that of their peers.



“It’s really nice having someone who will listen to you and not judge you. My advocate talks with me about how to overcome difficulties that stop me from doing my schoolwork and being successful. This program is important so foster youth don’t feel alone in their situation, whatever that is, and that they have someone to talk to and express how they feel and how to overcome what they’ve been through.”



—STUDENT

Marcus\* didn’t start school until he was 8 years old. He entered Achievements Unlocked as a 16-year-old freshman, initially telling his educational advocate that he thought he would drop out because he hated the thought of graduating when he was twenty. Working closely with his school counselor, his advocate helped him embark on a three-year graduation plan while his tutor helped him build his math skills. Marcus is now highly motivated, and has no doubt he will graduate next year as a junior and move on to college.

\*Student’s name has been changed to protect his privacy.



## A GREATER NUMBER OF CREDITS

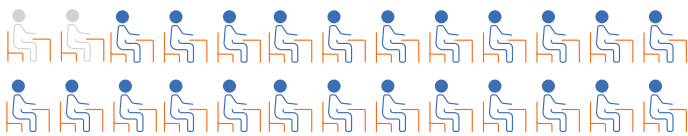
Every participant in the program reported feeling supported by their educational advocates. Through the wraparound support provided by Achievements Unlocked, students took on more courses and earned more credits.



## INCREASED SCHOOL STABILITY

1/3 of all students in foster care in the district changed schools during the year yet all but

**2 of the 26 students**



in the program remained in their schools of origin. Achievements Unlocked invests the student in the school and the school in the student. A student who feels their school is engaged in their success is less likely to engage in behaviors that lead to changes in their school placement.

“Educational mentoring for foster children pays dividends which can’t easily be measured. Statistics consistently demonstrate that foster children, absent interventions like Achievements Unlocked, will fail educationally at alarming rates. Children who have access to Achievements Unlocked, however, succeed at very high rates; I continue to be amazed by their progress and success. I aspire to offer the program to ALL foster children in this district.”



—HONORABLE JUDGE EGAN WALKER, SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, FAMILY DIVISION, WASHOE COUNTY