**DALLAS (SMU)** The W.W. Caruth, Jr. Institute for Children’s Rights at SMU Dedman School of Law hosted a two-day “Education Advocacy for Children in the Child Welfare System: A Symposium and Community Conversation” August 11-12.

**WHAT:** Children in foster care face hurdles beyond the common student’s educational challenges. Foster children may face multiple residential and school changes, court appearances or other appointments during the school days, or may miss school days entirely to visit with parents and siblings.

**WHY:** According to national studies, children in foster care are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school and score lower on statewide standardized tests. These students are also more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to graduate, and are more likely to drop out of school entirely. The Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System reports that children in foster care in Texas are more likely to leave school because they dropped out, rather than graduate. These students also have lower high school achievements, are more likely to be in special education, and are less likely to be in the gifted and talented programs.

**WHEN:** August 11 at 6:30 p.m. the symposium opened with a reception and a keynote address by Regina Calcaterra, *The New York Times* best-selling author of “Etched in Sand”. Ms. Calcaterra’s memoir details her story of resilience and determination, detailing how she and her siblings survived growing up homeless on Long Island.

August 12, 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m. The symposium’s second day continued, with multi-disciplinary presenters, participants, and stakeholders in the child welfare system: educators, health care providers, foster agencies, lawyers, social workers, foster parents, and former foster children.

**WHERE:** SMU Dedman School of Law’s Karcher Auditorium (Storey Hall) on the [SMU Campus](https://www.smu.edu/-/media/Site/AboutSMU/Maps/pdf/SMUCampusMapNamesBLK.ashx?la=en), 3315 Daniel Ave., Dallas

For more information on the symposium, visit [http://law.smu.edu/academics/w-w-caruth,-jr-institute-for-children-s-rights/symposia-and-conferences](http://law.smu.edu/academics/w-w-caruth%2C-jr-institute-for-children-s-rights/symposia-and-conferences)