

Foster Youth & Homeless Education

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October 15, 2024



Educating Students for Success.

Executive Summary

Highlight key programs, services, strengths, and challenges related to Foster Youth and Homeless Education in the Lodi Unified School District (LUSD).

Foster and Homeless Youth Defined

In California schools, Foster Youth and Homeless Youth (McKinney-Vento eligible) are two distinct groups of students, though they both face significant challenges and are provided special protections and services under the law.

Foster Youth: Is generally a child or youth a court has taken jurisdiction over due to...

The presence or risk of abuse or neglect.

The child or youth's violation of certain criminal laws.

OR...

Is a child or youth who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement

Homeless Youth: lack a *fixed, regular,* and *adequate* nighttime residence. They are protected under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Examples include: shelters, motels, campgrounds, cars, or temporarily doubled up with other families due to economic hardship or loss of housing

Foster Youth Program

Foster Youth Program:

- Legal Framework: Ensures immediate school enrollment, transportation, and school stability despite frequent placement changes.
- Challenges: High mobility leading to disruptions, emotional strain, absenteeism, and lack of resources.
- Services: Transportation, school supplies, emotional and academic support
- Success Stories: Partnerships with local organizations and direct student support have resulted in improved outcomes, such as graduation success and recognition by county educational authorities.



LUSD Foster Youth Outreach Team

Foster Team	Responsibilities
Program Coordinator/District Liaison Ben Rechter	Oversees the district-wide Foster youth program and ensuring compliance
Community Liaison Assistant Sandra Salazar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Acts as a point of contact between schools and homeless families.•Provides support with enrollment and attendance issues.•Sets up transportation as needed•Connects families and students with basic needs & community resources.
Community Liaison Assistant Christopher Hernandez Merito	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Acts as a point of contact between schools and homeless families.•Provides support with enrollment and attendance issues.•Sets up transportation as needed•Connects families and students with basic needs & community resources.

McKinney- Vento Program for Students Experiencing Homelessness

McKinney-Vento Program for Students Experiencing Homelessness:

- Legal Framework: Guarantees rights such as immediate enrollment, transportation to the school of origin, and access to educational services.
- Challenges: Students face housing instability, poverty, absenteeism, and emotional strain.
- Services: Provision of school supplies, hygiene kits, transportation, and emotional and academic support.
- Team Collaboration: Program staff provide comprehensive support for students, collaborating with school and community resources, conducting staff training, and working together to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.



McKinney- Vento Program Outreach Team

Homeless Education Team	Responsibilities
Program Coordinator/District Liaison Kelly Collins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Oversees the Lodi USD Homeless Education Program•Ensures compliance with McKinney-Vento Act
Community Liaison Assistant Esther Grijalva	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Connects families and students with basic needs & community resources•Point of contact between schools and homeless families•Provides support with enrollment and attendance•Sets up transportation as needed
Teacher on Special Assignment Andrea Tetz	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Provides individualized support, monitors academic progress and attendance•Provides training to school staff on the needs of students experiencing homelessness•Works closely with school counselors, administrators, teachers and other school staff to address the needs of homeless students
Counselors Victor Mariano & Alexis Suarez	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Offers emotional and mental health support to homeless students.•Provides guidance on college and career readiness.•Assists with social-emotional learning and personal development.

Additional Information

Please note that the additional slides are included for your reference. We welcome any questions or discussions during the question-and-answer portion of the Board Report.

Foster Youth Outreach Team - Lodi Unified School District



Supporting Foster Youth: Legal Framework, Services, and Challenges at Lodi USD

Legal Framework:

- Immediate Enrollment without typical documentation
- School Stability: Stay in the same school despite placement changes.
- Transportation to the school of origin.

Required Services:

- Transportation to maintain school attendance.
- School Supplies: Backpacks, hygiene kits etc.
- Emotional Support: Counseling and mental health services.
- Academic Support: Tutoring, after-school programs, IEP participation.

Main Challenges at Lodi USD:

- Frequent Moves: Leads to school disruptions and academic setbacks.
- Emotional and Psychological Strain: Trauma affects concentration and school performance.
- Resource Gaps: Limited access to basic needs like housing stability and supplies.
- Chronic Absenteeism: Instability makes regular school attendance difficult.
- Social Isolation: Stigma and lack of consistent adult advocacy.



Services Provided to Foster Youth

- **Transportation:** Ensuring stability and consistent school attendance
- **School Supplies:** Providing necessary academic materials and hygiene kits
- **Emotional and Mental Health Support:** Counseling services for personal and academic guidance
- **Tutoring and After-School Programs:** Enabling academic success
- **IEP Participation:** Assisting with Individualized Education Plans for students with exceptional needs

Foster Youth Program Key Successes

Partnerships:

- Local Organizations (e.g., Kids Clothes Closet, CASA, SJCOE,)
- Connecting students and families to external resources for tutoring

Improvement Plans:

- Expanding outreach
- Implementing additional training for school staff
- Enhancing student engagement through new programs
- Increased supports aimed to increase graduation rates

Foster Youth Program Key Successes

Recognition

- Recognized at the Executive Advisory Council and Families in Transitions Liaisons meeting by the San Joaquin Office of Education for the second year in a row.

Community Partnership

- Collaborated with local nonprofit His Children's Clothes Closet to assist foster youth in obtaining new and gently used clothing for school.

Graduation Support

- Two graduating seniors attending two different schools were gifted with caps and gowns, ensuring they could walk with their respective classes at graduation.

McKinney-Vento Program for Students Experiencing Homelessness



McKinney Vento Program for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Legal Framework (McKinney-Vento Act)

- Immediate Enrollment: Homeless youth have the right to enroll in school without typical documentation (birth certificates, proof of residency, etc.).
- Transportation: Students must be provided transportation to their “school of origin” to maintain stability.
- Access to Services: Schools must provide services to ensure academic stability and success.

Required Services

- Transportation to school
- School Supplies and meals
- Educational support
- District McKinney-Vento liaison to ensure rights are upheld

Main Challenges Faced by Homeless Youth

- Instability: Frequent moves and lack of permanent housing
- Poverty & Resource Gaps: Limited access to basic needs
- Chronic Absenteeism: Difficulty attending school regularly
- Emotional/Psychological Strain: Impact on mental health and ability to focus on schoolwork

Impacts of Homelessness in LUSD

Lodi USD students experiencing homelessness are eligible for Differentiated Technical Assistance (DTA) due to low performance across the following state priorities:

CA Dashboard 2023



Student Group Report for 2023

Student Group	English Learner Progress	Chronic Absenteeism	Suspension Rate	Graduation Rate	English Language Arts	Mathematics	College/Career (Status Only)
All Students	N/A	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Low
English Learners	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	Very Low
Foster Youth	N/A	Yellow	Red	--	Orange	Orange	--
Homeless	N/A	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Very Low
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	N/A	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Low
Students with Disabilities	N/A	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Very Low
African American	N/A	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Low
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Orange	Red	--	Yellow	Yellow	--
Asian	N/A	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Medium
Filipino	N/A	Yellow	Green	Blue	Green	Green	Medium
Hispanic	N/A	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Low
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	N/A	Yellow	Orange	--	Orange	Orange	--
White	N/A	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Green	Yellow	Medium
Two or More Races	N/A	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Low

Homeless Education Supports

Community Liaison Assistant Support Examples

- ★ Assists site staff and with identification and enrollment
- ★ Assist CWA with home visits and enrollment
- ★ Process Intake forms and Maintains Case Load Lists
- ★ Family support: Referrals, Resources, District Supports
- ★ Provide: Emergency food, clothing, hygiene kits, school supplies,
- ★ Transportation: Bus Passes and District Transportation
- ★ Warm Handoffs and family check-ins

Homeless Education Supports

Teacher on Special Assignment Support Examples

- ★ Provide students with backpacks, school supplies, hygiene kits
- ★ Outreach to “His Clothes” closet clothing donation service
- ★ Assist students in signing up for clubs, after-school tutoring, registration for Bridge
- ★ Provide bus passes
- ★ Connect w/parents regarding attendance to support Child Welfare & Attendance Advisor
- ★ Academic support
- ★ Participate in IEP meetings
- ★ Create plans for general success
- ★ Help obtain hotspots
- ★ Obtain tickets to events
- ★ Share trauma-informed resources with teaching staff
- ★ CAPC referrals
- ★ Attend staff meetings
- ★ Communication & encouragement

Homeless Education Supports

Counseling Support Examples

- ★ **Social Emotional Support:** addressing concerns such as grief, self esteem, confidence, character development, self-regulation, positive & building positive peer relationships/friendships, and social transition for middle school students
- ★ **Academic & Career Guidance:** Discussing college and career plans to help them see a better future, FAFSA application support, providing resources for College Aid, and high school course planning support
- ★ **Personal Needs Assistance:** Ensuring students have the resources to succeed
- ★ **Additional Support:** A trusted adult that they can speak to and ask for help, creating a reliable support network

