

March 18, 2026 Education Table Meeting Recap and Action Items

Thank you all for your time, engagement, and thoughtful contributions during our March 18, 2026 meeting, the **first convening of the Education Table**, following the Board approved transition from the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) to a more flexible workgroup structure under the LA County Children and Youth System of Care. We appreciate your continued partnership and commitment to improving educational outcomes for children and youth involved in county systems.

- Below is a summary of **key highlights**, takeaways, and next steps from the meeting.
 - We welcomed **new members**, including:
 - Alliance for Children's Rights; Children Now; John Burton Advocates for Youth; National Center for Youth Law; Ombudsperson for STRTPs
 - **UCLA Pritzker Center presented** findings on the **educational impacts of the Eaton Fire** on DCFS-involved youth. Robust cross-sector discussion highlighted both **strengths in coordinated response** and **gaps in disaster preparedness and infrastructure**.
 - **Key Takeaways:**
 - **Disasters significantly disrupt educational stability**, especially for youth in foster care and system involvement (school of origin, IEP services, mental health supports, postsecondary planning).
 - **Relocation and transportation barriers** (average ~16 miles) create ongoing challenges for maintaining school continuity.
 - **Mental health impacts are substantial and long-term**, affecting both students and the adults supporting them.
 - **System gaps remain**, particularly:
 - Lack of centralized, real-time data on school enrollment and placement
 - Limited cross-agency tracking of youth during emergencies
 - Inconsistent protocols for notifying DCFS/social workers during school-based emergencies
 - **Recovery timelines vary**, and many families need support well beyond the initial disaster response period.
 - Transition-age youth and families in **family maintenance or permanent placements** face unique and often under-resourced challenges.
 - **Discussion Highlights:**
 - Need for **integrated, real-time data systems** across DCFS, schools, and partners
 - Opportunity to strengthen **school safety plans** to better account for youth in care
 - Importance of **coordinated mental health response protocols**

- Emerging need to better understand **ongoing caregiver and family needs post-disaster**
- Strong interest in aligning this work with **County emergency management and System of Care efforts**
- Need for agency-supported and flexible **transportation options** for affected students
- **Eligibility for supports** – shifting from placement-based criteria to approaches that are more responsive to the level of need and impact
- **Additional Issues**
 - The value of school liaisons between school districts and DCFS
 - Limited access to protective gear which can delay immediate response efforts
 - Develop protocols to avoid reinventing the wheel with each emergency
 - Complications arise when evacuation-related changes are not classified as placement changes
 - Importance of supporting families so they can remain together and heal
- **Action Steps:**
 - **Education Table / Office of Child, Youth, and Family Wellbeing**
 - Share meeting materials, UCLA study resources, and follow-up information
 - Elevate discussion to the **System of Care leadership table**
 - Explore formation of an **ad hoc group on disaster planning & education stability**
 - **DCFS**
 - Follow up internally regarding **ongoing caregiver/family needs postfire**
 - Continue improvements to **Form 1399 submission practices**
 - Explore solutions for **real-time school placement data**
 - **School Districts / LACOE**
 - Review safety plans to ensure inclusion of **foster youth considerations**
 - Continue collaboration with DCFS on **1399 implementation and data sharing**
 - **DMH & Partners**
 - Explore formalizing **disaster mental health response protocols**
 - Ensure **sustained supports beyond initial crisis response**
 - **UCLA Pritzker Center**
 - Pursue follow-up data (6- and 12-month impacts)
 - Continue engaging partners on future research priorities

- **Additional Updates**

- Fredy Ruiz, an **Immigrant Relations Coordinator from the LACOE Office of General Counsel** provided an update to help inform how changes may impact the youth and communities we serve. Fredy provided updates on Medi-Cal changes, the proposed expansion of the federal public charge rule, and potential HUD policy changes affecting mixed status families. He emphasized that many of these policies are still pending and encouraged providers to avoid fear-based decision-making, instead guiding families toward legal consultation before making changes to benefits.
- **DCFS shared updates on efforts to improve timely submission of the 1399 form.** Partners noted increased compliance, though challenges remain, including missing caregiver address information and clarity of guidance language. DCFS welcomed continued feedback and collaboration to refine the process.
- The Board has approved renaming OCP to the **Office of Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being**, reflecting a shift toward prevention, healing, and holistic support.
- Attached are a **Sample LCAP for Youth in Foster Care and related resources** developed in partnership among Children Now, Alliance for Children's Rights, National Center for Youth Law, and Children's Law Center of California to help LEAs develop their 2026-27 LCAPs and implement specific actions and services designed to meet the unique needs of students in foster care. These materials can also be found online [HERE](#). If you have questions or would like assistance as you develop your LCAP, please contact Danielle Wondra at Children Now, dwondra@childrennow.org. Please feel free to share these materials widely.
- Attached are flyers for the **April 25th Youth Commission Third District Listening Session**
- Upcoming Education Table meetings:
 - **May 13, 2026 (In-Person – JBAY, Postsecondary Focus)**
 - **August 26, 2026 (Virtual)**
 - **November 18, 2026 (Tentative In-Person)**

Thank you again for your partnership and commitment to this work. We look forward to continuing these important conversations and advancing solutions together. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, feedback, or ideas for next steps.