

Education Table Meeting Recap/Action Items

- At the August 26th Education Table Meeting, the main presentation was on the **Soluna App** presented by Dr. Tully from Kooth.
 - The Soluna App is a free online resource that provides access to mental health support to 13–25-year-olds in California via smartphone, tablet, and web access. Soluna requires no insurance, referral or fees. To access Soluna, youth need to provide a California zip code, qualifying age, and an email address.
 - Soluna Services Include:
 - Content library that includes articles and quizzes.
 - Moderated community forum for peer support (direct messaging is not permitted for safety).
 - 1:1 coaching that can be scheduled in advance or with a wait time of 4-5 minutes.
 - Whole-person care navigation connecting youth to supports such as food resources, housing arrangements, transportation, etc.
 - Usage Across California:
 - Since launching in January of 2024, Soluna has over 191,000 California youth users. While in Los Angeles County, there are over 40,000 registered youth users.
 - Data and Outcomes:
 - 43% of coaching sessions occur outside of 9-5pm
 - 43% of users wouldn't have access to mental health without Soluna
 - 54% of users report it helps them stay in school, training, or employment
 - 97% would recommend it to a friend
 - User Engagement:
 - ~80% of users use the Content Library
 - ~50% view community forums
 - ~20% utilize Coaching
 - The strategies below were discussed to integrate Soluna into existing county efforts to support youth who are system impacted:
 - Provide physical flyers and promotional materials to youth at LACOE's in-person FAFSA Workshops.
 - Leverage Soluna to address the "summer melt" helping youth stay connected and supported as they transition to post-secondary education.
 - Coordinating with the DCFS Youth Development Services section to share Soluna resources at their Teen Clubs.
 - Soluna presented at a Youth Commission Meeting in March to broaden awareness among Commissioner and their networks.

- Conducting presentations to other departments, commissions, and youth-focused groups would be a helpful strategy.
 - Exploring collaboration with homeless services and the What I Need (WIN) App to identify potential integration opportunities.
- **Action Items:**
 - **LACOE** will reach out to Soluna (partnerships@solunaapp.com) to request physical flyers to share out at their FAFSA Workshops.
 - **Soluna** will reach out to DCFS to discuss resource-sharing opportunities at the Teen Club that the Youth Development Services section hosts.
 - **Soluna** will connect with Chris (JBAY) to obtain homeless services and WIN App contacts.
 - **Soluna** will share out retention numbers with Education Table
 - Any **Education Table Members or attendees** interested in Soluna trainings, events, presentations, and physical promotional materials please email partnerships@solunaapp.com to submit your request.
 - Additional materials shared: Soluna's [Digital Toolkit](#) is for use to spread awareness of the resource in any newsletters, social media posts, or online web pages.
 - Contact information for follow-up: tully@kooth.com and heather@qs-pa.com
- **Issues from the Field:**

DCFS Education Section Updates:

 - School of Origin:
 - DCFS has finalized the SOO MOU, which is now with their Contracts section for finalization.
 - Currently, 58 school districts and 45 charter networks have signed MOUs.
 - During the last fiscal year, DCFS transported 1,021 students, with 625 students supported through the STEER program (provides transportation to extracurricular activities as well as SOO transportation for youth in STRTPs and youth with transportation in their IEPs).
 - EPS Module:
 - In July, the new EPS Transportation Referral Module launched in partnership with LACOE. This module helps to reduce email use to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and improve tracking.
 - Through the new module, the Education Specialist can generate a request through EPS, helping minimize errors and save time.

- The updated list of LACOE's Education Specialists can be found here: [LACOE FYS Staff Contact List 2026-27 - Google Sheets](#)
- **Action Item:**
 - **DCFS** will share an update regarding the status of the SOO MOU at the next Education Table Meeting.

LAUSD:

- District Funding:
 - LAUSD shared that they are not anticipating fiscal impacts to their foster youth programming, including School of Origin transportation, in the upcoming year. However, LAUSD is anticipating staffing and budget constraints in the next couple of Fiscal Years.
 - LAUSD's Budget Development process will begin in November, with more detailed projections expected by Spring.
- SOO:
 - LAUSD secured SOO funding for the 2026-2027 school year.
 - The district has developed their 2026-2027 Justification Plan, which includes the following objectives:
 - Increase attendance for 75% of students in out-of-home care who receive HopSkipDrive (HSD) transportation services.
 - Ensure 90% of students receiving HSD transportation services will have a Best Interest Determination (BID) on file.
 - LAUSD uplifted the difficulty of achieving a 75% attendance rate for youth who utilize HSD transportation services, and asked school districts what metrics they are tracking to show student outcomes.
 - The group highlighted the complexity of tying attendance directly to accountability metrics given the multitude of factors that impact attendance for youth in foster care (e.g., mental health, anxiety, etc.)
 - Challenges with SOO
 - Difficulty connecting with the Education Rights Holder (ERH) for students who require a BID.
 - Some students being removed from their SOO before engaging the ERH in the BID process
 - Students attending Non-Public Schools (NPS) have had challenges with SOO, particularly when they move outside district boundaries.
- **Action Items:**
 - **LAUSD** will provide an update on potential funding impacts on foster youth services at the next two Education Table meetings
 - **OCFW** will follow up with LACOE and other school districts to identify the metrics they are using to measure SOO outcomes.

- **Jill Rowland (Alliance for Children's Rights)** will share with OCFW the metrics Pasadena uses to measure school stability.
- **OCFW** will reach out to Tanya Ortiz-Franklin (LAUSD) to ask if there are any additional updates regarding funding for LAUSD foster youth programming.

John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY):

- Legislative Updates:
 - AB 2766 Improving Access to Student Housing and Course Enrollment
 - Requires priority housing at CA Community Colleges (CCC) for eligible students who have experienced foster care or homelessness.
 - Requires housing applications to identify current/former foster youth and students experiencing homelessness across CCCs and CSUs
 - Allows housing deposits and upfront housing fees to be deferred or waived until financial aid disbursement.
 - The bill has passed through the Assembly and Senate and now awaits the Governor's signature.
- Direct Admissions:
 - SB 640 guarantees admissions to CSU for ALL eligible High School Seniors who have completed their A-G coursework in California. Students must still apply to the CSU they plan to attend.
 - JBAY has created a one-pager on Direct Admissions for youth and expects to finalized it within the next week.
 - JBAY will also send mailer to youth with information about Direct Admissions.
- CalKIDS:
 - The claim rate for LA County foster youth is 15%.
 - A specialized workgroup will launch in September to increase FAFSA/CADAA completion and CalKIDS claims.
 - The Commission for Children and Families lifted the need for continued and targeted outreach to families with children ages 0-5, as the number of young children with a CalKIDS account remains low.
- **Action Items:**
 - **Chris (JBAY)** will share the finalized Direct Admissions one-pager with OCFW for dissemination to the group.

LACOE Office of General Counsel

- Immigration and Public Charge Updates:
 - Public Charge is a law stating that some individuals can be denied a green card or entry into the United States if the government believes

they are likely to depend primarily on government assistance for their basic needs.

- Public charge applies only to those applying for a visa to enter the country and those applying for a family-based petition.
- The new public charge rule will take effect September 18th
- Before an individual stops using their benefits, it's advised talking to a trusted immigration lawyer or legal services provider.
- Additional information and resources are provided in the attached PowerPoint.