



Education Coordinating Council

August 21, 2024, 9:00 a.m. | Hybrid Meeting

In-Person: 510 South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90020 | Room 9K08

Remote: via Microsoft Teams

Member	Fabricio Segovia, ECC Vice Chair, former foster youth
Representatives Present:	Judge Akemi Arakaki, ECC Vice Chair, Los Angeles Superior Court
	David Carroll, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development
	Michelle Castillo, West Covina Unified School District
	Charity Chandler-Cole, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Los Angeles
	Jesus Corral, Los Angeles County Probation Department
	Yasmin Dorado, Antelope Valley High School District
	Joshua Elizondo, Los Angeles County Youth Commission
	Denise Grande, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
	Dora Jacildo, Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families
	Jodi Kurata, Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA)
	Ed Liao, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
	Marcy Manker, First 5 LA
	Judge Michael Nash, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Luciana Svidler, Children's Law Center of California
	Kanchana Tate, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
	Rachelle Touzard, Los Angeles County Office of Education
	Zarmenee Helwani, Los Angeles Unified School District
	Trish Wilson, Lancaster School District
Additional Presenters:	Jennifer Higuchi, Department of Children and Family Services
	Jessica Petrass, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)
	Jill Rowland, Alliance for Children's Rights
	Taylor Schooley, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development
	Yu-Chi Wang, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Staff:	Barbara Lundqvist, Director, Education Coordinating Council
	Elizabeth Koenig, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Alaina Moonves-Leb, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Rachael Parker-Chavez, Luskin Fellow, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection

Vice Chair Fabricio Segovia brought the meeting to order, welcoming everyone. "I know the beginning of the school year can be a busy time," he said, "so we greatly appreciate all of you—especially our education partners—making the time to be with us." Segovia further thanked Kanchi Tate from the Department of Mental Health for helping the ECC secure and cover costs for today's meeting room. In-person attendees introduced themselves aloud and remote participants were encouraged to introduce themselves in the Chat feature of Microsoft Teams.

The member representing the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), Rachelle Touzard, sought permission to join the meeting remotely under the provisions of California Assembly Bill (AB) 2449, citing ‘emergency circumstances’ resulting from a medical emergency. Touzard confirmed that reason via Teams and attested to the fact that no one over (or under) the age of 18 was in the room with her. **Judge Michael Nash moved that Touzard be permitted to represent LACOE from her remote location and Judge Akemi Arakaki seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Elizabeth Koenig reviewed in-person, online, and telephonic housekeeping issues and reminded attendees that the meeting was being recorded for note-taking purposes. She concluded the meeting prologue with the County of Los Angeles [land acknowledgement](#), referring those wishing to learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County to the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.

Presentation and Discussion: The Alliance for Children’s Rights’ *Comprehensive Education Toolkit for Youth Who Are Systems Involved*

In listening sessions leading up to the finalization of the [2024–2029 ECC Strategic Plan](#), ECC Director Barbara Lundqvist explained, several youth had said that not being aware of their educational rights had affected their ability to academically achieve; caregivers, school personnel, and other system partners had likewise stated the need for more education-rights information so they could offer systems-involved young people better support.

“That feedback was embedded in our strategic plan under both the chronic absenteeism and the youth engagement and supports priority areas,” Lundqvist went on. “We want to increase trainings on education rights for biological parents, caregivers, school-district staff, probation officers, social workers, bench officers, staff at Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs [STRTPs], formal Educational Rights Holders [ERHs], and others. These resources should be youth friendly, developed with feedback from people with lived expertise, and disseminated in a way that is layered and intentional. We’re delighted today to have with us Jill Rowland, Director of the Education Program at the Alliance for Children’s Rights, to present that organization’s just-released *Comprehensive Education Toolkit for Youth Who Are Systems Involved*.” The toolkit is included with these meeting minutes as **Attachment 1**, and is available for download at [Comprehensive Education Toolkit for Youth Who Are Systems Involved | Alliance for Children's Rights](#).

Rowland briefly reviewed the Alliance’s structure—a nonprofit legal services agency providing direct services to individual foster and probation youth and to Los Angeles County agencies while also being active in policy advocacy statewide. “We finalize about a third of the adoptions coming out of Los Angeles County foster care,” she continued, “and we also do probate legal guardianships for kids who are not abused or neglected but are living with a caregiver other than their biological parent. We do extensive education work in early intervention, Regional Center advocacy, and special-education advocacy. We help secure financial benefits for all our families; we work with pregnant and parenting youth and with transition-age youth to make sure they have all the supports they need to be successful in life. Our website is <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/>, my phone number is (213) 268-6010, and my e-mail is jrowland@alliancececr.org. Should you be working with any young people or their caregivers who need support, those are all the ways to contact us.”

The Alliance’s first education toolkit, published about 10 years ago, was designed for school districts serving systems-involved youth, and covered school stability, immediate enrollment, partial credits, AB 216 graduation requirements, and other tools for the school environment. The court companion to that toolkit followed a few years later, addressing those same issues but out-

lining specific rights, responsibilities, duties, and tools for minors' counsel, parents' attorneys, caregivers, social workers, probation officers, judges, and other court staff.

“The third publication in this series was our best-practices guide,” Rowland went on, “which was actually created with a network of school districts, many of which were and are Education Coordinating Council members. The approach this time was not, for example, ‘How do you issue partial credits for a single student?’ but rather, ‘How do you create a system in your school district to issue partial credits to all students who are eligible for them?’

“What this newest toolkit does is replace all three of the previous ones—which were something like 90 pages each—and it accomplishes that in under 30 pages,” Rowland continued. “It outlines all the rights and responsibilities for multiple audiences, with links in the electronic version pointing to all the tools, which include sample court-report language and handy checklists. All the laws cited are a hundred percent current and we’ll continue to update them with each new legislative cycle. It’s everything you need in one place.”

The toolkit’s school-stability section (pages 9 to 13 of Attachment 1) exemplifies the structure of each topic addressed:

- Why is the particular issue important?
- What are the laws and regulations around the issue that school districts must follow?
- What are rules around the issue that Educational Rights Holders (ERHs) must be aware of? What do court partners need to know?
- What tools are available to inform and hold accountable everyone involved with the student?

Rowland then reviewed toolkit highlights, including the two different legal definitions of ‘foster youth’ that school districts should be aware of (page 6 of Attachment 1), the importance of Educational Rights Holders (pages 7 and 8), and the right of foster youth, both when initially removed from their families and when changing out-of-home placements, to immediate enrollment in the least restrictive educational environment possible (pages 14 through 16). An active and knowledgeable ERH is particularly important in those situations and in ‘best-interest’ determinations to decide whether students will attend a different school when their living arrangements change, or remain in their schools of origin.

The toolkit also contains a clear explanation of the pros and cons of graduation arrangements available to qualifying youth in California under AB 167 and AB 216 (pages 21 to 24 of Attachment 1), whereby systems-involved students may have the option to graduate high school after meeting state minimum requirements only, rather than additional school-district or charter-school requirements. As of this year, schools must also recertify students as eligible for these arrangements if they were not originally so designated at the beginning of the school year following their transfer in.

An added section on school discipline (pages 25 and 26 of Attachment 1) further outlines new obligations for a school district to notify social workers, probation officers, ERHs, and minors’ counsel if it is considering a foster youth’s suspension, expulsion, involuntary transfer to a continuation school, or manifestation determination Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

“Our newest section,” Rowland said, “is the final one, on uniform complaint procedures [pages 27 and 28 of Attachment 1] to be used if any of the rights laid out in the rest of the toolkit is violated.”

Rowland reviewed the differences between California's and the federal government's rights of school of origin (discussed in detail on pages 11 and 12) that call for systems-involved youth to stay in their school of origin until and unless the Education Rights Holder decides that it's in a student's best interest to enroll in a new school. Placing agencies also have notification requirements to let school districts know when a youth enters foster care or changes placements.

- For general-education students, placing agencies have a responsibility to notify the student's current school that the student is moving *within one day* of the placement change.
- For special-education students, placing agencies must notify the school that the student is moving *10 days prior* to the placement change.
- These notices must be in writing. As mentioned on page 11 of Attachment 1, a sample [CSW/PO Notice of Placement Change Impacting School Stability](#) is available for download.
- If a dispute arises about whether or not a student will remain in their school of origin, the student must remain in that school until the dispute is resolved.

Discussion

- Jesus Corral thanked Rowland for both today's presentation—as did many individuals participating online, in the Teams meeting chat feature—and for the help of the Alliance over the years. “They’ve trained hundreds of probation officers, using previous toolkits, on how best to advocate for their clients,” Corral said. “I just want to publicly express appreciation to Jill and the Alliance for their hard work.”
- David Carroll asked if any research had been done on students graduating high school under the provisions of AB 167 and AB 216, comparing their outcomes to those of graduates who meeting additional school or district requirements. “We hope that those lower academic levels can be supplemented immediately upon leaving high school,” Carroll said, “before these young people enter either post-secondary education or a career-track training program. Is there research on what they may be lacking? Maybe they’re consistently at lower reading levels than they should be? All these things are very individualized, of course.”

“Unfortunately,” Rowland responded, “I don’t think we’re there yet. We don’t even know how many kids are using the lower graduation requirements, although we have worked to get legislation passed to collect that data starting this fall, looking at students who are considered ‘highly mobile’—foster children, probation youth, those experiencing homelessness, children from military families, and ‘newcomers.’ Data for all those groups will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and by students with and without disabilities.”

A data-matching system exists between school districts and the state child-welfare system, so identifying and tracking data for foster youth is possible. Such a system doesn’t currently exist for youth involved in juvenile justice, however, and it’s unclear how data will be acquired and how accurate it will be, Rowland explained.

Corral noted that the Probation Department’s community college partners “have really stepped up to the plate in terms of assisting our young people. The majority nowadays are graduating under AB 167 or AB 216, and most come to us with different academic gaps. The community colleges have partnered with us for some time, and we’ve had really good success working directly with their disability centers to get these young people assistance and help with their classes. At the end of this last fall semester, six probation youth earned their

associate degrees. We're looking forward to working with the Department of Youth Development to take those numbers even higher.”

- The need for widespread training for multiple disciplines/audiences generated a lively discussion.
 - Rowland reiterated her offer to customize presentations for specific groups so the trainings stay as useful as possible.
 - Training cannot be a ‘one and done,’ but should be an ongoing periodic and consistent effort, incorporating regulatory updates and allowing for agency staff/volunteer turnover.
 - In the past, artists who work in the probation camps, juvenile halls, and many community settings have trained alongside other system professionals, and that has worked well. Can opportunities be created for people in different departments to come together in the same training curriculum?
- ➔ **Action Item:** The departments of **Youth Development** and **Arts and Culture** will identify arts and community providers who need training and connect with **Rowland** to set up sessions.
- ➔ **Action Item:** CASA has its own education training, but finds it helpful to attend others as well; staff would like to attend a training that is already scheduled.
- ➔ **Action Item:** **Jodi Kurata** (ACHSA) and **Michelle Lucarelli-Beltran** (Office of the Ombudsperson for Youth in STRTPs) will help **Rowland** with setting up trainings for staff and youth at STRTPs.
- ➔ **Action Item:** LACOE will work on sharing the new comprehensive toolkit through its District Regional Learning Networks.
- ➔ **Action Item:** All ECC members will identify staff of theirs who need to be trained; ECC can identify opportunities for cross-training across agencies to build a shared understanding of education rights.
 - Youth must also be made aware of their education rights and provided with supports to implement those rights; they need dedicated, well-trained supporters. They also need information about post-secondary education pathways that are sometimes left unexplored. Appropriate materials should also be developed that youth can refer to outside of presentation-style trainings. The OCP is working on videos and a podcast, for example, as is the youth education cohort at the Alliance, and comic-book art is also in process.
 - School-of-origin and education-rights discussions are meant to be taking place at DCFS’s Child and Family Team meetings, but their inclusion should be confirmed.

Updates and Roundtable Discussion with ECC Members and Constituents on the Implementation of the ECC’s Strategic Plan Priority Areas

- *Priority Areas 1 and 3: Stability and Chronic Absenteeism Workgroup*—Co-leads Jennifer Higuchi (Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services) and Yasmin Dorado (Antelope Valley Union High School District)

The workgroup’s Co-Chairs introduced themselves, reporting on their initial planning conference and noting that the workgroup’s first full meeting is scheduled for [Wednesday, September 18, 2024, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams](#). An e-mail will be sent

to ECC members and constituents with connection information and ways to provide input if they cannot attend.

For **stability**, the workgroup will start by addressing three priority outcomes from the ECC strategic plan:

- Information sharing and dissemination: training and ‘beyond training’ will be the first focus
- A caregiver/resource family recruitment system that’s school-based rather than region-based
- An internal review of how placements are identified at DCFS and how schools of origin can be better integrated into placement decisions

Judge Nash suggested that workgroup members review *A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Student Attendance in Los Angeles County*, a report produced by the ECC’s School Attendance Task Force in 2012. Both the executive summary and the full version of that report are included with these minutes as **Attachment 2**.

For **chronic absenteeism**, the workgroup will focus on how children are getting to school, getting into a classroom, and building connections that encourage coming *back* to a classroom. This will include youth feedback and building internal capacity for students via youth ambassadors.

✦ Members expressing interest in joining this workgroup included Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole (CASA of Los Angeles), Jodi Kurata (ACHSA), and Michelle Castillo (West Covina Unified School District).

- *Priority Area 4: Youth Engagement and Supports*—Co-leads Joshua Elizondo (Los Angeles County Youth Commission) and Taylor Schooley (Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development)

The co-leads for this workgroup have identified two areas where the group will begin:

- Enhancing peer support in schools using models that motivate students toward educational success (similar to Guardian Scholars)
- Exploring different youth-engagement models; holding a youth listening session to hear their thoughts on increasing engagement; sharing this feedback with ECC partners

A couple of members raised that it would be good to engage younger aged youth as well. Elizondo explained that ages 18 to 25 were this workgroup’s focus at the moment, but members plan to talk through the process of engaging younger youth, and would appreciate recommendations for doing so.

✦ Members/constituents expressing interest in joining this workgroup included Joanne Rodriguez (National Center for Youth Law’s Compassionate Education team in the Antelope Valley) and Denise Grande (Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture).

- ➔ **Action Item:** Dr. Ed Liao will connect Lundqvist to DCFS’s Youth Advisory group to include in this workgroup.

- *Priority Area 7: Post-Secondary Educational Achievement and Workforce Readiness*—Lead: Jessica Petrass (John Burton Advocates for Youth, or JBAY)
 - JBAY began in 2017 to engage stakeholders in co-designing systems-change work, looking to support youth in whatever educational pathway is best for them. (If anyone is interested in being part of JBAY’s Executive Advisory Committee, please contact [Jessica Petrass](#) directly.)
 - Since this focus began, completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid® (FAFSA) have risen locally, but additional strategies are needed to increase completion rates for Black/African-American students and students in non-public schools.
 - JBAY continues to support the implementation of DCFS and other departmental strategies to increase post-secondary achievement, and likewise looks forward to connecting with the Youth Engagement and Supports team.
 - A new form (vetted by County Counsel) has just been released to connect graduating high-school seniors to resources at college campuses, providing a ‘warm handoff’ for matriculation.

➔ **Action Item:** JBAY will share this form with the **Children’s Law Center** for additional review.

- ★ Members/constituents expressing interest in joining this workgroup included Joanne Rodriguez (National Center for Youth Law’s Compassionate Education team in the Antelope Valley).

Information-Sharing

With regard to information-sharing progress, ECC Director Lundqvist reported that the OCP is working with DCFS and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to address differing legal interpretations of what agencies/individuals may have education records shared with them. Also being discussed are data needs and an assessment of LACOE’s Educational Passport System’s ability to meet those needs. Once that background work is done, ECC leadership will begin engaging other partners, including school districts, to discuss streamlining electronic information-sharing for purposes of care coordination.

Strategic Plan Updates

As implementation of the strategic plan continues, the OCP team has suggested developing a document outlining the role of each ECC member in supporting systems-involved youth in their education. That will be helpful in identifying each member’s responsibilities and making sure the right partners are being engaged in each priority area of the plan.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Lundqvist asked that **each ECC member** check the roles and responsibilities starting on page 19 of [Expecting More: 2006 ECC Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth](#) (excerpted as **Attachment 3** to these minutes) to see if they still apply, need adjustment, or require a makeover. Also, she asked attendees to see if the roles/responsibilities in the Blueprint were missing any members or constituents that should be added to those pages.

Judge Nash envisions the new strategic plan as a living document, one that is updated whenever changes in practice, the law, or available data occur. “I also believe we need to talk about what mechanisms, if any,” he said, “should or could be used to oversee whether or not these responsibilities are being carried out.” If systemic issues present obstacles, it is hoped that members can work together to address those barriers.

Presentation: Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN®) National School Climate Survey | Outreach to LGBTQ+ Systems-Involved Youth

Dr. Yu-Chi Wang, the school climate research manager at GLSEN, reviewed **Attachment 4** to these minutes, the toolkit and links for, plus English/Spanish information about, GLSEN's 2024 National School Climate Survey, which has been released every two years since 1999. This year's survey is open to LGBTQ+ young people age 13 and older who attended middle or high school during the 2023–2024 school year to report their school experiences—from harassment and bullying to teacher support and inclusive curriculum. Wang encouraged ECC members and constituents to share the online survey with systems-involved youth, as GLSEN is trying to have more representation from youth with systems involvement in the survey results; it remains live until mid-October 2024.

Issues from the Field

- School-district partners raised the issue of social workers being unaware that youth in foster care have the right to immediately enroll in their local comprehensive public school if their Educational Rights Holder decides it is in their best interest, even if the youth does not have any of the required documents to enroll. DCFS is working on training social workers about immediate enrollment rights, among other education rights/programs.
- Higuchi reported that DCFS continues using the private vendor HopSkipDrive to transport students to their schools of origin if no caregiver or public option is feasible; its new vendor contract for that service became effective July 1, 2024. The agency launched an additional program, Student Transportation Extracurricular Enrichment Rides (STEER) on that date as well, enabling foster students to get to and from extracurricular activities.
- Recruitment for the Los Angeles County Youth Commission's vacancies begins today, Josh Elizondo announced, with an application deadline of September 13, 2024. A link to an informational flyer will be posted on the [ECC page](#) of the Office of Child Protection's website until the deadline has passed.

A district youth listening session is planned for Saturday, September 14, 2024, that will involve an entertainment showcase and an appearance by Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath. Youth participants will also be asked to complete a survey—already answered by 500+ young people—on what they believe the Commission should be addressing in its work. Elizondo will send a flyer so the ECC can distribute.

Further end-of-year Commission events will also be shared with ECC members and constituents.

- The Department of Youth Development is planning its second annual Youth Development Summit on November 15 and will send a save-the-date notice shortly.
- José Smith posted that LACOE is hosting a [student enrollment best-practices training](#) on September 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
- Kanchi Tate reported that DMH is seeing the impact of [SB 558](#), which is increasing insurance costs for community-based mental health providers and thereby reducing the number of providers able to provide behavioral-health supports on school campuses.

ACHSA added that the current insurer of 90 percent of Foster Family Agencies has stated its intention no longer to renew FFA insurance policies in the coming months unless a legislative fix is passed to address insurers' concerns. For more information about legislation around this issue, please reach out to [Jodi Kurata](#) at ACHSA and [Luciana Svidler](#) at CLC.

Next Meeting

At the time today's ECC meeting was set, members had discussed the fact that the next scheduled convening, November 6, fell on the day after the national presidential election; members postponed any decision about holding a meeting on that date for discussion today.

No objection being raised, members agreed to cancel the November 6 quarterly meeting, although priority-area workgroups will continue to meet through January.

Given this, the Education Coordinating Council's next hybrid meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, February 26, 2025 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

In-person location to be announced

Remote connection via Microsoft Teams to be announced.

Adjournment

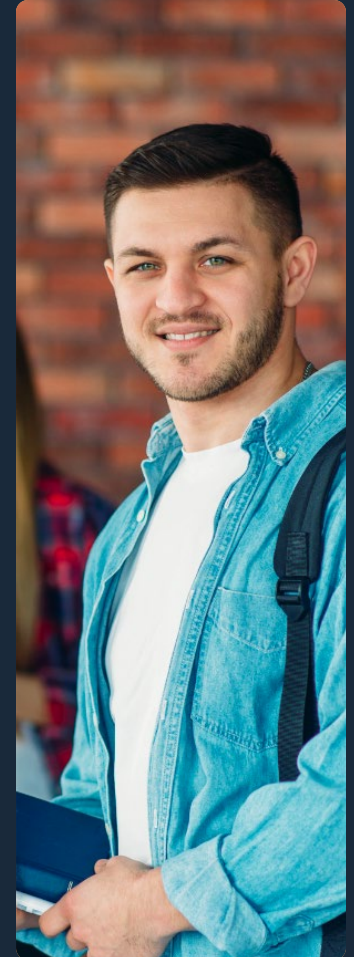
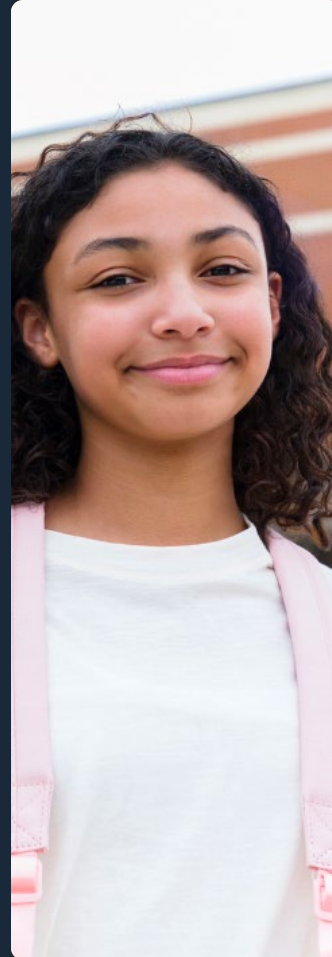
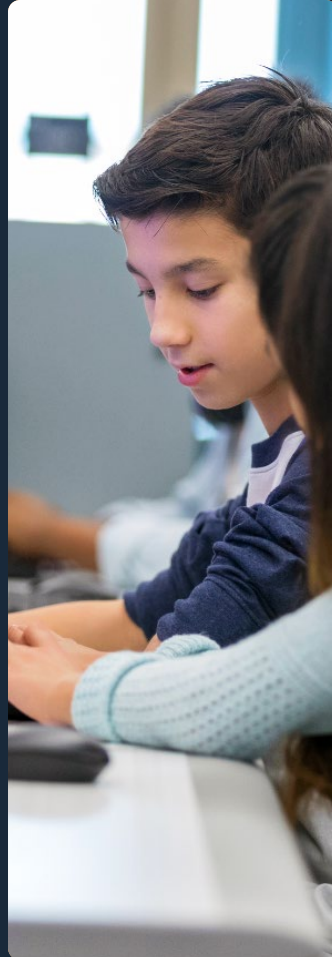
There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

ALLIANCE
for **CHILDREN'S**
RIGHTS



Comprehensive Education Toolkit for Youth Who Are Systems Involved

2024





Introduction

Youth¹ involved in the foster care² and probation³ systems (“youth who are systems involved”) have a right to an education in the least restrictive environment with the appropriate supports and services they need to be successful. School is where youth spend the majority of their waking hours, and uniquely offers opportunities for youth to develop skills that will support their immediate and future well-being and resilience. Unfortunately, youth who are systems involved demonstrate low education outcomes due to many factors including:

- (1) the high mobility they face in these systems;**
- (2) the trauma they have experienced; and**
- (3) a lack of prioritization of education by the systems that control their lives.**

Improving their education outcomes requires prioritizing their education needs and thoughtful coordination between the education, foster care, and probation systems. This comprehensive toolkit is designed for all the adults, and the youth they are working with, to ensure the education needs of youth who are systems involved are met. This toolkit addresses the needs of youth in the foster care and probation systems together because:

- (1) these are often the same youth and families⁴ facing the same barriers to equity including poverty, racism, homophobia, etc.; and**
- (2) the education laws designed to protect these two student populations are the same.**

¹ Throughout the toolkit we refer to youth impacted by systems by the pronouns “they/their”. We have chosen this term because it is gender-neutral and inclusive of all youth.

² We use the terms child welfare system or foster care system due to their more widespread understanding within the community, although we do not believe they accurately describe the function of that system. The terms ‘family regulation system’ and ‘family policing system’ come from Professor Dorothy Roberts who posits that the child welfare system often does not hold a child’s welfare as the primary goal, and instead allows system pressures and needs (e.g., lack of placements) to justify the mistreatment and re-traumatization of the youth the system is supposed to be protecting from harm. Further, it also reflects that families, particularly families of color, experience this system as one of significant over-surveillance and control; basically, these families are being policed.

³ ‘Juvenile justice system’ is a term commonly used to describe youth charged with a crime or on probation. Using the language of ‘justice’ denotes that justice is occurring within this system, something that we significantly contest. We believe the term ‘juvenile criminal legal system’ more accurately captures the function of this system which criminalizes the actions or behaviors of young people. We will use the term ‘youth involved in the probation system’ because of its more widespread understanding within the community.

⁴ Professor Denise Hertz conducted a study in Los Angeles County which found that 80% of youth in the juvenile justice system had prior child welfare involvement.

Youth who are systems involved continue to have the poorest education outcomes of any student population in the state.



As mentioned above, mobility is a major factor in poor education outcomes. In the 2021/2022 school year, 35% of youth in foster care changed schools mid-year (compared to only 10% of the general population).¹ In the area of graduation, **youth in foster care graduated at a rate of only 61.4%** in the 2021/2022 school year (compared to 87% of all students statewide).² Additionally, in the 2021/2022 school year, **only 10% of youth in foster care met the math standards** (compared to 33% of the general student population), and **only 20% of youth in care met the English standards** (compared to 47% for the general population).³

Although there is a wealth of data now available for youth in the foster care system, data for youth involved in the probation system is much harder to find. This data is necessary to understand and meet their unique needs, while also making sure to protect their education privacy rights and to protect them against further discrimination within these systems. These alarming statistics signify that current efforts to improve the education outcomes of youth who are systems involved are not working. Equity demands that school districts and child welfare and probation agencies all improve upon the existing supports and coordination to better meet the education needs of youth who are systems involved.

For over a decade, the Alliance for Children's Rights, in partnership with the California Department of Education, the California School Board Association, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, the Association of California School Administrators, the California Department of Social Services, the County Welfare Directors Association, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, the Child Welfare Council, the Children's Law Center of California, the Education Coordinating Council, the Los Angeles County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Program, and the Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Initiative produced a variety of tools designed to help school district, child welfare, and probation agencies better meet the education needs of youth involved in the foster care system. First, the **Foster Youth Education Toolkit** was designed to give school districts the tools necessary to implement the education rights for individual youth in the child welfare system. Second, the **Court Companion to the Foster Youth Education Toolkit** was designed to improve the education outcomes for youth involved in systems with a specific focus on the players in those court systems including youth, education rights holders, social workers, probation officers, attorneys for youth, parent's attorneys, and judges. Finally, the **Best Practices Guide: For Developing a District System to Improve Education Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care** was designed in partnership with school districts (including Alhambra Unified School District ("USD"), Azusa USD, Bonita USD, Long Beach USD, Pomona USD, and West Covina USD) to support districts in creating entire systems and comprehensive practices to consistently implement education rights for all their youth in the district who are impacted by systems involvement. The Best Practices Guide is **data driven** and provides comprehensive information about how to collect and utilize data in a continuous improvement cycle to ensure improved education outcomes for youth involved in systems.

¹ This and most recent data available at <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

² This and most recent data available at <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

³ This and most recent data available at <https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/>.

This Comprehensive Education Toolkit for Youth Who Are Systems Involved is a compilation of all three prior toolkits and covers:

Youth who are systems involved and their education rights holders

School stability

Immediate enrollment in the least restrictive educational placement

Partial credits

AB 167/216 graduation

School discipline

Uniform complaint procedures

In its print version, it provides a brief recitation of all the most up-to-date and relevant laws necessary for all systems personnel to meet the education needs of youth involved in systems. These laws apply to all public schools including charter schools, continuation schools, adult schools run by school districts, and non-public (special education) schools. In its electronic format, it includes links to all the best practices (e.g., for school districts designing a system to issue partial credits for all eligible students, for court personnel to ensure youth are issued their partial credits) and tools (e.g., partial credit calculation formula and data monitoring tips for school districts, minute order language for judges, sample court report language for social workers and probation officers, checklist for attorneys for youth) for all systems personnel.

CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Alliance for Children's Rights remains committed to improving the education outcomes for youth involved in systems and is exploring opportunities to continue to support districts on their journey toward this goal. We provide free trainings and consultation to districts, individually and in geographic collaborations, who are interested in implementing the recommendations found in the Comprehensive Toolkit, modified as required to meet their local needs, or in modifying and monitoring improvements through their Local Control Accountability Plan ("LCAP").¹ The Alliance also provides trainings to social workers, probation officers, and other court involved personnel. To learn more about opportunities to partner with the Alliance, please contact Education Program Director, Jill Rowland, at jrowland@alliancecr.org.

¹ Find our [Sample LCAP 2024 for Youth in Foster Care, Goals, Outcomes, and Actions, and Additional Activities and Services](#).

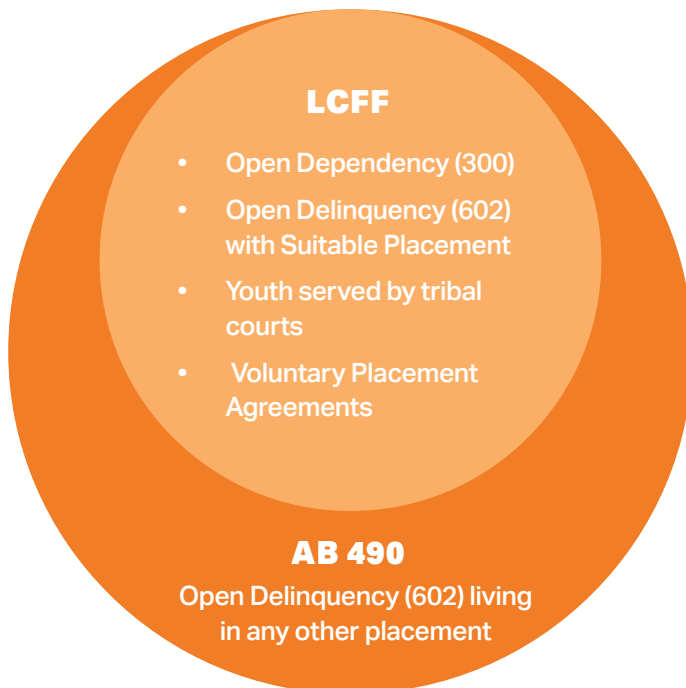
Youth Who Are Systems Involved and their Education Rights Holders



Which Youth are Legally Defined as Youth in the Foster Care System?

Schools should be aware of two important definitions of ‘foster youth.’ The Local Control Funding Formula (“LCFF”) definition identifies which youth will be counted for purposes of LCFF funding and LCAP goal tracking. The broader definition of ‘foster youth’ under Assembly Bill (“AB”) 490 and related laws identifies all youth who are systems involved and who are entitled to all the education rights described in this toolkit including immediate enrollment, school of origin, partial credits, and AB 167/216 graduation.

Under LCFF, the term youth in foster care includes: <small>Cal. Educ. Code § 42238.01(b)</small>	Under AB 490 and related laws, the term youth in foster care includes: <small>Cal. Educ. Code § 42238.01(a)</small>
<p>Any child who is the subject of a: (1) juvenile dependency court petition (Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 300), whether or not the child has been removed from their home; (2) dependency petition under the jurisdiction of a court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization; or (3) voluntary placement agreement.</p>	<p>Any child who is the subject of a: (1) juvenile dependency court petition (Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 300), whether or not the child has been removed from their home; (2) dependency petition under the jurisdiction of a court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization; or (3) voluntary placement agreement.</p>
<p>Any child who is the subject of a juvenile delinquency court petition (Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 602) and who has been removed from their home by the court and placed into foster care under a “suitable placement” order. This includes youth who have been placed in a foster home, relative home, or congregate care facility. It does not include youth who have been placed in a juvenile detention facility, such as a juvenile hall or camp.</p>	<p>Any child who is the subject of a juvenile delinquency court petition (Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 602), regardless of where the youth lives.</p>
<p>Any youth age 18 to 21 who is under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court (i.e., is in extended foster care).</p>	<p>Any youth age 18 to 21 who is under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court (i.e., is in extended foster care).</p>



Key Points:

- Any youth who falls within the narrower LCFF definition also falls within the broader definition entitling them to the protections described in this toolkit.
- The difference between the two definitions is that the LCFF definition (youth for which school districts get funding) excludes some youth in the probation system who are protected under AB 490 and related rights.
- Any youth who falls within the broad definition under AB 490 and related laws should be served by a district’s foster youth programs, regardless of whether they “count” for LCFF monetary purposes.
- Any youth who falls within the broad definition under AB 490 and related laws are the same youth we define as youth who are systems involved.

Identification of Youth in Student Identification System

We recommend school districts identify and designate all AB 490 youth (i.e., all youth who are systems involved) as 'foster youth' in their student information system because: (1) knowing who these youth are is an essential first step in trying to meet their needs and serve them; (2) school districts are responsible for ensuring they provide the laws and protections to all of these youth; and (3) this allows for the collection of local data and its use in a continuous improvement cycle to improve the education outcomes of youth who are involved in systems.

Education Decision Makers for Youth Who Are Systems Involved

Ensuring each youth who is systems involved has an Education Rights Holder ("ERH") is essential to protecting their education rights. All parties supporting youth who are systems involved must work together to make sure each youth, whether they have special education needs or not, always has a willing and able ERH.

Education Rights Holder Responsibilities

- ERHs are individuals with the legal authority to make education decisions and access education records.¹
- All youth involved in systems must have an ERH, including infants and toddlers.²
- ERHs have a right to written notice of and to make decisions regarding: (1) school stability; (2) school enrollment, including transfers to alternative schools; (3) high school graduation, including AB 167/216; (4) special education, including decisions regarding assessments and consenting to an Individualized Education Program ("IEP"); (5) early intervention, including decisions regarding assessments and consenting to an Individualized Family Service Plan ("IFSP"); and (6) school discipline.³ If a school district acts without providing proper written notification or affording decision making rights to an ERH, they open themselves to potential legal liability. For example, an expulsion can be overturned if proper notice and ability to participate is not afforded to an ERH.

Who May Hold Education Rights

- Biological parents retain education rights for their children, unless the court limits or terminates their rights.⁴
- When parental rights are limited/terminated, a court must simultaneously appoint a new ERH.⁵ Appropriate ERHs can include: (1) foster parents; (2) relative caregivers; (3) Court Appointed Special Advocates ("CASA"); or (4) community members who have a relationship with the youth.
- Adoptive parents and legal guardians automatically hold education rights.
- Prospective adoptive parents automatically hold education rights once parental rights are terminated.
- Youth automatically hold their own education rights when they turn 18.⁶ Youth 16 years or older have a right to access their own education records.⁷
- Any person who might have a conflict of interest (defined as a person having any interests that might restrict or bias their ability to make education decisions) or receives financial payments for the care of a foster youth (except foster parents/resource families) may not serve as a youth's ERH, including: (1) social workers ("CSW")/probation officers ("PO"); (2) group home staff; (3) therapists; (4) attorneys receiving attorneys fees; or (5) school or regional center staff.⁸

1 Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853.5, 51225.1, 56028, 56321, 56326; Cal. Gov't Code § 95020.

2 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 319(g), 361.

3 Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853.5, 51225.1, 56028, 56321, 56326; Cal. Gov't Code § 95020.

4 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 319(g), 361.

5 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 319(g), 361.

6 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 361(a).

7 Cal. Educ. Code § 49076.

8 Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 361(a)(2).

Appointing an Appropriate ERH

At each court hearing, the judge must assess whether the youth currently has an ERH, and whether that person is an appropriate ERH.¹ The court may consider the following factors in deciding that an ERH is unavailable, unable, or unwilling to exercise education rights:

- Biological parents' whereabouts are unknown or they are unreachable (e.g., they have not provided the social worker with a working phone number or valid address for the past three months);
- Biological parents are deceased or incarcerated; or
- Current ERH is a previous foster parent that no longer wishes to be involved in the youth's life/ education.

If the school is unable to identify the ERH or the ERH is unresponsive after multiple attempts to contact them, immediately contact the youth's CSW, PO, and/or attorney(s) for the youth in order to have an appropriate ERH appointed. Schools may send the **ERH Appointment Request Letter** to the youth's attorney(s), CSW, and/or PO. Depending on the county, an attorney, Guardian ad Litem, and/or a CASA may represent and advocate on behalf of a youth in dependency court. A public defender, panel attorney, or private attorney may represent and advocate on behalf of a youth in delinquency court. If an appropriate ERH is still not identified and appointed, contact the court directly to request assistance.

The court must either:

1. locate and appoint an ERH;
2. make necessary education decisions itself; or
3. submit a JV-535 section 4(a) form to the school district, requesting the appointment of a surrogate parent for youth who are or may be eligible for an IEP/IFSP.²

Proof of Education Rights

If biological parents continue to hold education rights, there will be no documents to prove this. If a court limits or terminates a parent's education rights, then the court will issue one of the following forms, which

can be used as proof of who holds education rights:

1. **JV-535**, "Order Designating Education Rights Holder";
2. Adoption or Guardianship Order;
3. Adoptive Placement Agreement; or
4. Juvenile Court Minute Order.



Resources

Tools for Districts

- **Best Practices on Developing a District System to Identify and Designate Youth Involved in Systems in your Student Information System**
- Review our **Exploration Questions** to see how a District can explore identifying and designating youth involved in systems in your student information system
- **ERH Appointment Request Letter**
- **Screening Questions for Youth Involved in Systems**
- **Student Information System Page for Youth Involved in Systems**
- **District Webpage for Youth Involved in Systems**

Tools for Court Personnel

- **Best Practices for Education Rights (To Be Addressed At Every Court Hearing)**
- **CSW/PO Documentation of Diligent Efforts to Include Youth's ERH in Education**
- **CSW/PO Court Report Language**
- **ERH Checklist**
- **Making Education Decisions for Children Involved with the Dependency Court**
- **CSW/CPO Checklist**
- **Attorney for Youth Checklist**
- **Attorney for Parent Checklist**
- **Judge's Checklist**

¹ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 319(g), 361.

² Cal. Rules Ct. § 5.650.

School Stability

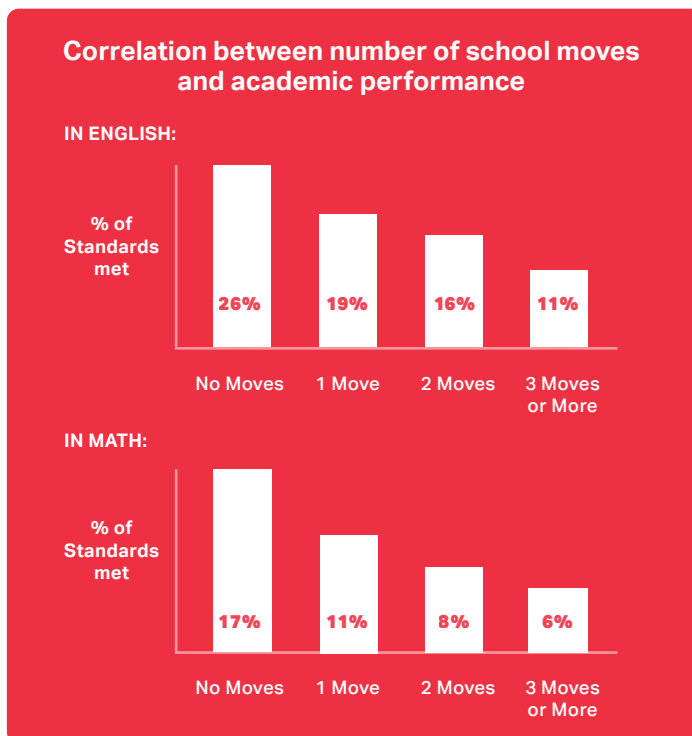


School Stability Matters

Youth in foster care change schools an average of 8 times while in care, losing up to 6 months of learning with each move.

In California, 90% of the general student population is considered stable in school, compared to only 65% of youth in foster care.¹ For all students, there is a correlation between the number of school moves and academic performance: each move lessens the likelihood that a student is proficient in English and math.

In English, for students who do not move during the school year, 26% of them met standards; with one move, that drops to 19%, 2 moves to 16%, and three or more moves drops to 11%. **In math**, for students who do not move during the school year, 17% of them met standards; with one move, that drops to 11%, 2 moves to 8%, and three or more moves drops to 6%.²



¹ <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/StbStudentReport.aspx?cde=00&agglevel=State&year=2021-22&ListReportRows=Sub-&subgroup=-&ro=1>

² Burns, D., Espinoza, D., Adams, J., & Ondrasek, N. (2022). California students in foster care: Challenges and promising practices. Learning Policy Institute. P. 14. Data is from the 2018/2019 school year.

When comparing state testing scores, it is no surprise that youth in foster care are performing lower than other students. In English, while 47% of all students met standards, only 21% of youth in foster care were proficient. In math, while 33% of all students met standards, only 10% of youth in foster care were proficient.³ While there is currently no school stability data available for youth involved in the probation system, they experience significant school disruption when detained and/or moved between different homes and education placements by the court system. Further, youth involved in the probation system often receive inferior education services when forced to attend juvenile court schools and/or illegally required to attend alternative education programs due to their probation status.

In addition to the trauma youth involved in systems suffer being removed from their parents and separated from their siblings, each home change brings the possibility of re-traumatization (e.g., orienting themselves to new foster family members, new rules, new living arrangements, new foods, etc.). If a home change is also accompanied by a school change, youth also lose bonds built with friends, teachers, sports teams, and other extracurricular activities. School instability is also a major cause of the poor social/emotional/behavioral outcomes for youth involved in systems. Data on youth in foster care demonstrating this can be found across the state in school district Dashboards, including poor graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, and school discipline measures. Again, data on youth involved in the probation system is unavailable but is reasonably assumed to be similar or worse.

Improving school stability requires the cooperative efforts of school districts, child welfare and probation agencies, courts, and ERHs. CSW/POs, Attorney(s) for Youth, Attorneys for Parents, Judges, and AB 490 Foster Youth Liaisons all serve important advisory roles in this process and participate in decisions (e.g., home placement, transportation) that deeply impact school stability and the right of a youth to attend their school of origin. Ultimately, ERHs make the final decision about whether it is in the best interests of a youth involved in systems to remain in or return to their school of origin.

³ <https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/caaspp/DashViewReportSB?ps=true&stTestYear=2022&stTestType=B&stGroup=1&stSubGroup=1&stSchoolType=A&stGrade=13&stCounty=00&stDistrict=00000&stSchool=0000000>. Data is from the 2021/2022 school year.

Overview of the Law

School of Origin as Default

Youth involved in systems have a right to remain in their school of origin following a home placement change, unless their ERH determines it is in their best interest to change schools.

In recognition of the major disruptions that occur for a youth when experiencing a school change, both California and Federal law make clear that remaining in the school of origin is the default placement when a youth moves homes.⁴

Child Welfare System and Probation Placement and Notice Requirements

The youth's CSW/PO must consider educational stability when making a home placement decision. This includes consideration of: (1) proximity to the youth's school of origin; (2) school attendance area; (3) the number of school transfers the youth has previously experienced; (4) the youth's school matriculation schedule; and (5) other indicators of educational stability.⁵ Child welfare and probation agencies must provide notification for home placement moves that will impact a youth involved in system's school stability. For youth in general education, they must provide notice to the youth's attorney, the ERH, and the court within one day of making the decision to change the child's placement. For youth who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), notification must be provided to the sending school district as well as the receiving Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) at least 10 days before the change of home placement.⁶ See **CSW/PO Notice of Placement Change Impacting School Stability**.

District Requirements

Before making a recommendation to move a youth involved in systems from their school of origin, a school district of origin's AB 490 Foster Youth Liaison must provide the youth and their ERH a written explanation of why it is in the youth's best interest

4 20 U.S.C. § 1112(c)(5)(B), 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(C)(1)(ii); California Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)-(g); Cal. Rules of Court § 5.650.

5 Cal. Welf. and Inst. Code § 16501.1, Cal. Rules of Court §§ 5.650.

6 Cal. Rules of Court § 5.651.

to transfer to a new school.⁷ See **School of Origin Recommendation Letter**. Also, a youth should not be moved from their school of origin until after a written waiver of this right is obtained by the school district from the ERH.⁸ Best practice dictates that a best interest determination meeting and/or conversation is convened with the youth, their ERH, their CSW/PO, and the district of origin and district of residence; this can also take place in a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting convened by the CSW/PO or an IEP team meeting. See **School of Origin Best Interest Determination Procedures and Worksheet**.

California School of Origin Definition

California law defines school of origin as the school attended when the youth was first removed from their parents/entered the child welfare or probation system, the school attended prior to the most recent home placement change, and any school attended in the last 15 months where the youth feels a connection.⁹ This includes matriculation/feeder pattern rights (e.g., if a youth is first removed from their home in elementary school but wants to return to their school of origin in middle school, they can attend the middle school that the school of origin elementary school feeds into).¹⁰ If a youth's court case closes while they are in elementary or middle school, they have a right to remain in their school of origin until the end of the current school year. If youth are in high school when their case closes, they have a right to remain in their school of origin until they graduate from high school.¹¹

Federal School of Origin Definition

The federal definition of school of origin, as found in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) transportation requirements, provides a limited school of origin definition and only includes the last school attended prior to a placement change.¹²

Transportation Funding

ESSA requires school districts and child welfare agencies to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain youth in foster care in their school of origin, when in their best interest, will be promptly provided,

7 Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(6)-(7).

8 20 U.S.C. § 6311(g)(1)(e)(i); Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5; Cal. Rules of Court § 5.650.

9 Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5.

10 Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(4).

11 Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(2)-(3).

12 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c).

arranged, and funded in a cost-effective manner.¹³ For tips and ideas on developing and funding an ESSA transportation plan, see **School of Origin Transportation for Youth in Foster Care: Strategies and Tips**, **School Stability in LEA Transportation Budgets**, and **School Stability for California's Youth in Foster Care: A Review of Laws and Promising Local Practices**. In addition, many foster parents, including relatives, are eligible for funding from their local child welfare agency if they transport a youth to their school of origin after a placement change.¹⁴ See **All County Letter 11-51**, page 3, and **All County Letter 13-03**, page 2, for funding rates and how CSWs can seek mileage reimbursement for caregivers. The state has further clarified in **All County Information Notice I-86-20** that other trusted adults may provide transportation for a youth in foster care to their school of origin and are eligible for transportation reimbursement. If the youth has an IEP which requires transportation, the District of Origin is responsible for funding transportation.¹⁵

Dispute Resolution

If, at any time, there is a dispute regarding a youth's right to remain in a school of origin, the youth has a right to remain in that school until the dispute is resolved.¹⁶ Disputes should be referred to the school district's dispute resolution process. A complaint can also be filed on the youth's behalf through the Uniform Complaint Procedures Act. See **Enforcement of Education Rights of Youth Involved in Systems: Uniform Complaint Procedure Process**. If needed, the Attorney for Youth or the ERH may request a hearing on the potential school move by filing a **JV-539 Form**. The court, on its own motion, can also set the matter for a hearing.¹⁷

ERH Responsibilities

Any time a youth's home placement is changed, in addition to making the decision about whether a youth should change schools, the ERH must submit a statement to the court indicating whether the proposed change of placement is in the youth's best interest and whether any efforts have been made to keep the youth in the school of origin.¹⁸

¹³ 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c)(5)(B).

¹⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c)(5); 42 U.S.C. § 675(4)(A).

¹⁵ Cal. Educ. Code §§ 41850(b)(5) and 56040.

¹⁶ Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(9).

¹⁷ Cal. Rules of Court § 5.651(e)(2)(A).

¹⁸ Cal. Rules of Court § 651(e)-(f).

Court Hearing on School Stability

The CSW/PO must provide a report to the court that specifies whether the youth has been allowed to remain in their school of origin pending resolution of the dispute, the best interest opinions of the youth, ERH, and AB 490 Foster Youth Liaison, and whether the youth has been segregated into a separate school or program because of their foster status. At this hearing, the court must also make any findings and orders needed to enforce the education rights of the youth, which may include an order to set a hearing to join the necessary agencies regarding the provision of services, including transportation services.¹⁹



¹⁹ Cal. Rules of Court § 5.651.



Resources

Tools for Districts

- [Best Practices on Developing a District System to Consistently Support School Stability](#)
- Review our [Exploration Questions](#) to see how a District can explore developing their own systems and best practices around school stability
- [School of Origin Recommendation Letter](#)
- [School of Origin Best Interest Determination Procedures and Worksheet](#)
- [School of Origin Transportation for Youth in Foster Care: Strategies and Tips](#)
- [School of Origin Transportation Funding Now Available for Local Education Agencies](#)
- [Supporting School Stability for Youth in Foster Care: During Virtual Learning and the Transition Back to In-Person Instruction](#)
- [School Stability for California's Youth in Foster Care](#)
- [Enforcement of Education Rights of Youth Involved in Systems: Uniform Complaint Procedure Process](#)

Tools for Court Personnel

- [Best Practices for School of Origin Court Hearings \(Hearings prior to or following home placement changes\)](#)
- [CSW/PO Notice of Placement Change Impacting School Stability](#)
- [School of Origin Best Interest Determination Procedures and Worksheet](#)
- [All County Letter 11-51](#)
- [All County Letter 13- 03](#)
- [All County Information Notice I-86-20](#)
- [Sample UCP Complaint Form](#)
- [JV-539 Form](#)
- [CSW/PO Court Report Language](#)
- [ERH Checklist](#)
- [CSW/PO Checklist](#)
- [Attorney for Youth Checklist](#)
- [Attorney for Parent Checklist](#)
- [Judge's Checklist](#)



Immediate Enrollment in the Least Restrictive Educational Placement



Immediate Enrollment in the Least Restrictive Educational Placement

If a youth's ERH decides it is not in their best interests to remain in their school of origin, they have a right to immediately enroll in their new local comprehensive school based on their new residence.¹

If you have not considered **school stability** prior to enrolling a youth in a new school, please review that section before returning here. However, please note that respecting a youth's right to school stability may never be used as a barrier to prevent their immediate enrollment when requested.

When youth involved in systems change schools, there is often a large gap each time they disenroll and enroll. Youth miss out on even more instructional days when enrollment is delayed. Due to the unique circumstances of enrolling youth involved in systems (e.g., enrolling in the middle of a school year, youth with credit deficiencies or behavioral needs, youth who were previously enrolled in an alternative school), districts often recommend or even require that youth involved in systems enroll at alternative school sites. While alternative school placements offer opportunities necessary for some youth involved in systems, youth can also miss out on opportunities provided by comprehensive school campuses such as increasing school engagement through participation in extra-curricular academic and social activities.

Overview of the Law

Immediate Enrollment

If a youth's ERH decides it is not in the youth's best interests to remain in their school of origin, a youth involved in systems has a right to immediately enroll in their local comprehensive public school, even if they do not have any of the typically required documents (e.g., transcripts, immunization records, proof of residence, IEP).² Despite not having to have records

to enroll, CSW/POs should still make best efforts to keep an up-to-date Health and Education Passport, including current grades, course schedule, credits, IEPs, etc., to provide to the school when enrolling the youth to ensure appropriate grade, high school courses, and special education placement can be made quickly.

Enrollment in the Same or Equivalent Classes

Youth involved in systems have a right to enroll in the same or equivalent classes as those they took at their old school, even if they are transferring mid-semester. Youth cannot be enrolled in all, or a majority of, elective classes. Youth cannot be forced to re-take a class they have already passed unless their ERH agrees, in writing, that it is in their best interest.³

Equal Participation

Youth involved in systems have a right to equal access to extra-curricular activities regardless of tryouts or sign-up deadlines (e.g., sports, tutoring).⁴

Enrollment in the Least Restrictive Environment

Youth involved in systems cannot be forced to attend a continuation school, adult school, independent study program, or other alternative education site, even if they are credit deficient, have poor grades or behavioral problems, or are returning from a probation or detention placement.⁵ Youth with IEPs must be placed according to what the IEP requires. There are rare exceptions to the requirement to place students in their local comprehensive school, including voluntary and involuntary transfers, each of which have extensive due process requirements prior to completing the transfer.

District Records Requirement

Upon enrollment, receiving Districts must request a youth's education records from their prior school within two business days. The sending District must compile a youth's complete education records as of the last day of actual attendance, including partial credits for high school youth, and forward a copy of all records to the new school within two business days of a request. Districts cannot withhold records due to outstanding fines or fees.⁶

³ Cal. Educ. Code §§ 51225.2, 51228.2.

⁴ Cal. Educ. Code § 48850.

⁵ Cal. Educ. Code § 48432.5. Note that if a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), it may require a different placement.

⁶ Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853.5(f)(8); 49069.5(d).

¹ Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(8)(A).

² Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5(f)(8).

Child Welfare System and Probation Notice and Records Requirements

Once the CSW/PO provides the notice of placement change as discussed above in the school stability section, the CSW/PO must work with the prior school and caregiver to ensure the youth is properly disenrolled, including gathering relevant records including partial credits, and working with the new school and caregiver to properly enroll the youth.¹

District Communication Requirement

Districts have notice requirements to ERHs, CSW/POs, and attorneys for the youth, including around IEPs, school discipline, etc. Districts should collect contact information for these individuals at enrollment.²



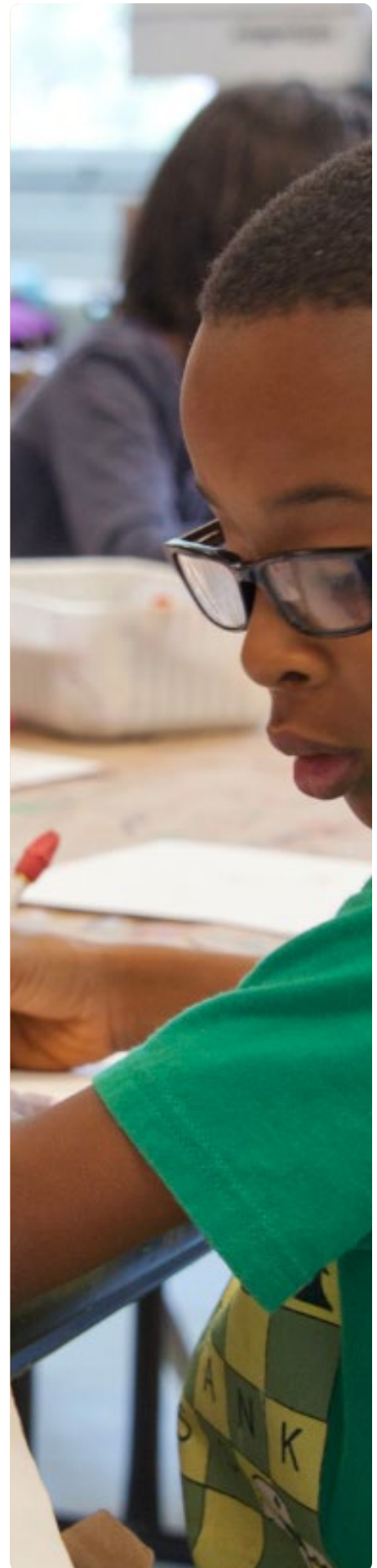
Resources

Tools for Districts

- **Best Practices on Developing a District System to Consistently Immediately Enroll and Appropriately Place Systems Involved Youth in the Least Restrictive Education Setting**
- Review our **Exploration Questions** to see how a District can explore developing their own systems and best practices around immediate enrollment and placement in least restrictive environment
- **Screening Questions for Youth Involved in Systems**
- **Youth Involved in Systems Education Intake Form**
- **Youth Involved in Systems Enrollment Checklist**
- **Sample UCP Complaint Form**

Tools for Court Personnel

- **Best Practices for Enrollment/Disenrollment Court Hearings (Hearings Immediately Before or After A School Transfer)**
- **CSW/PO Notice of School Change and Request for Records**
- **Sample UCP Complaint Form**
- **CSW/PO Court Report Language**
- **ERH Checklist**
- **Making Education Decisions for Children Involved with the Dependency Court**
- **CSW/PO Checklist**
- **Attorney for Youth Checklist**
- **Attorney for Parent Checklist**
- **Judge's Checklist**



¹ Cal. Educ. Code § 49069.5; Cal. Welf. Inst. Code § 16010.

² Cal. Educ. Code § 48911.

Partial Credits



Partial Credits

Youth involved in systems who transfer schools mid-semester have the right to receive full or partial credits for all work satisfactorily completed before transferring schools.

Issuing partial credits to youth involved in systems who have earned them is essential in helping them stay on-track for high school graduation. From an equity perspective, it rewards them, just like any other student, for the work they have accomplished while attending a school. It also helps youth gain a sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence, encouraging them to stay engaged in their education, even if they will only attend a specific school for a short period of time.

All adults supporting youth involved in systems should ensure that they have records from all high schools a youth has attended, and that those records accurately include all credits they were entitled to. As a bonus to the importance of the credits themselves for the youth's graduation status and future, when youth have experienced multiple school moves and revolving adults in their life, an adult taking the time to follow up and do this work for them can go a long way toward building trust.

Districts are now allowed to calculate credits using seat-time or enrollment, or a combination of the two. Many districts have found that using enrollment allows for easier automatic calculation of partial credits in student information systems. Using enrollment to calculate partial credits also creates more equity as it ensures youth involved in systems receive credits without penalty for absences, similar to all other students.

Overview of the Law

District Requirements

Upon receiving notification that a youth involved in systems is transferring schools, a sending school must issue check out grades and full or partial credits on an official transcript, based on either seat time or enrollment. If a new student enrolls who does not have documentation of credits received from their prior school, the receiving school must request credits, including partial credits, from the sending school within two days.¹ If a request for credits is received, a sending school must

send a complete transcript, including partial credits, within two days. Once credits are received, the receiving school must accept all check out grades and credits, apply them to the same or equivalent courses, and immediately enroll youth involved in systems in the same or equivalent classes as they were enrolled in at the sending school.²

Child Welfare System and Probation Records Requirements

Once the CSW/PO provides the notice of placement change (within 1 day of making a placement change decision for a general education student and 10 days prior to a placement changes for a student with an IEP), the CSW/PO must work with the prior school and caregiver to ensure the youth is properly disenrolled, including gathering relevant records including partial credits, and working with the new school and caregiver to properly enroll the youth.³ ERHs, caregivers, CSWs, and POs have a right to receive a copy of a student's education records, including partial credits, within 5 business days of a request.⁴ See **ERH Records Request** and **CSW/PO Records Request**.



² Cal. Educ. Code §§ 49069.5, 51225.2.

³ Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5; Cal. Welf. Inst. Code § 16010.

⁴ 17 CCR § 52164(b); Cal. Educ. Code §§ 49069, 49076(k), (n), 56504.

¹ Cal. Educ. Code § 49069.5.

California's Partial Credit Model Policy

In order to comply with the law, school districts are required to have their own policy and issue and accept partial credits. Districts can choose to adopt California's Partial Credit Model Policy and many across the state have done so.⁵

Partial Credit Calculation Table

Credits Earned	Seat Time Calculation Based on Attendance or Enrollment
0.5	7-13
1.0	14-20
1.5	21-27
2.0	28-34
2.5	35-41
3.0	42-48
3.5	49-55
4.0	56-62
4.5	63-69
5.0	70+

Calculating Partial Credits Based on Seat Time/Attendance:

This is the original Model Policy. Districts count the number of days/periods attended in each course and issues credits based on that attendance rate and the table above.

Calculating Partial Credits Based on Enrollment: This is an addition to the Model Policy, to reflect new legal options for districts issuing partial credits. As discussed above, this creates more equity in the system by treating youth involved in systems the same as other youth, and not lowering their credits earned based on absences. For purposes of counting seat time based on enrollment (not attendance), the number of days enrolled should be calculated by counting school days from the date of first enrollment to the last day of actual attendance (rather than the day when the youth was disenrolled). This count can then be used with the table above to determine the number of partial credits to award.

Under either calculation formula:

- Check out grades should be issued as of the last day of actual attendance.
- Class periods lasting 89 minutes or longer count as 1 class period; class periods lasting 90 minutes or more counts as 2 class periods.



Calculation Table for Districts with Semesters of Unequal Length

The above Calculation Table was designed for districts who have semesters of equal length. If your district coordinates its semester break with the winter vacation, it is very likely that your semesters are different length (e.g., Semester 1 is 75 days and Semester 2 is 105 days). Please use the **Calculation Table for Districts with Semesters of Unequal Length** which will automatically calculate partial credits based on the length of your semesters. Please input the number of days in each semester and the tool will do the rest.



Resources

Tools for Districts

- **Best Practices on Developing a District System to Consistently Issue and Accept Partial Credits**
- Review our **Exploration Questions** to see how a District can explore developing their own systems and best practices around issuing and accepting partial credits
- **Student Withdrawal Report**
- **Credit Request Letter**

Tools for Court Personnel

- **Best Practices for Enrollment/Disenrollment Court Hearings (Hearings Immediately Before or After A School Transfer)**
- **CSW/PO Notice of School Change and Request for Records**
- **CSW/PO Court Report Language**
- **ERH Checklist**
- **ERH Records Request**
- **Making Education Decisions for Children Involved with the Dependency Court**
- **CSW/PO Checklist**
- **Attorney for Youth Checklist**
- **Attorney for Parent Checklist**
- **Judge's Checklist**



High School Graduation for Youth Involved in Systems: AB 167/216



High School Graduation for Youth Involved in Systems: AB 167/216

Youth involved in systems are often highly mobile, which is one factor leading to their very low rates of high school graduation.

This is caused, in part, by trauma suffered during and after the move, graduation requirements that change between schools, the difficulty of adjusting to new academic requirements, teachers, books, etc., and the social and emotional burden of making new friends and adapting to a new home and school environment.

Overview of the Law

California law gives youth involved in systems who meet certain requirements the option to graduate under state minimum requirements, without having to meet additional school district or charter school requirements. If a youth involved in systems changes high schools after completing their second year and cannot reasonably complete additional district or charter graduation requirements within four years of high school, they have the right to graduate under the reduced state minimum requirements.¹ This can limit a youth's post-secondary options (e.g., youth often have not completed A-G requirements and cannot go straight to a 4 year university directly after high school, although they might be able to transfer later after taking community college courses), and may not be appropriate for some youth who are still working to learn basic academic skills necessary to be successful. For these reasons, it is important that youth and their ERHs are well-informed about all their graduation options and their implications before they make the decision about what is in the youth's best interest. AB 167/216 graduation applies to charter schools and any school operated by a school district, including adult and continuation schools.² Further, districts cannot prevent a youth from graduating due to outstanding fines or fees.³

1 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1.

2 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1.

3 Cal. Educ. Code § 48853.5.

Transfer Schools After Second Year

To determine whether a youth completed their second year of high school, schools must use whichever method is more likely to make the youth eligible: (1) length of enrollment (i.e., student enrolled in 9th grade and two complete school years have passed); (2) the number of credits earned (i.e., student has earned 120 credits which signifies that they have completed two years of high school; or (3) for students who have been out of school, the average age of youth in their grade level (e.g., student never enrolled in high school but is the age of a typical student in their third year of high school).⁴

Cannot Reasonably Complete District Requirements In 4 Years

When conducting a credit check, the law requires partial credits to be combined into a "yearlong course" for purposes of graduation analysis.⁵ When completing the reasonableness calculation, it is essential to take into account the trauma a student experiences during a placement change, as well as the difficulty of acclimating to a new school environment with new demands. For this reason, we believe it is unreasonable to expect a youth involved in systems to take any more than a typical course load (e.g., expecting them to take before or after school courses or dually enroll is unreasonable). To calculate whether graduating in four years is reasonable for any particular student analyze the: (1) total number of required school district credits remaining; divided by (2) the maximum number of credits earned by a student taking a normal courseload each semester; which will equal (3) the number of semesters the student must complete to satisfy all local school district requirements. If that number is greater than the actual number of semesters left before the student completes 4 years of high school, then the student is not reasonably able to complete local requirements within 4 years and is AB 167/216 eligible.

In addition, even if a youth could reasonably complete the number of credits required to graduate within four years of high school, looking at the types of courses required is also essential to advance equity. For example, expecting a youth to take multiple years of the same subject in one year may be unreasonable. A youth and their ERH can always determine it is in the youth's best interests to complete extra courses, or multiple courses in the same subject within one year, but that should not be part of the 'reasonableness' eligibility analysis.

4 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1(c).

5 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.2(c)(2).

Eligibility and Reconsideration Requirements

The new school district must determine whether a youth involved in systems is eligible to graduate under AB 167/216 within 30 days of the youth's transfer into a new school. In addition, the district must reevaluate eligibility within the first 30 days of a new academic year, if the youth was found ineligible immediately after their transfer.⁶ This accounts for the experience of trauma and school failure that may only occur after a school move. If a youth is found ineligible for AB 167/216 graduation at either of these points in time, they can request that the school reconsider their eligibility at any later time. Once requested, this reconsideration must be completed within 30 days. If a student was not considered for eligibility when they should have been, this does not relieve the district of their responsibility to determine eligibility. For example, if a previous district failed to determine eligibility, and the youth's case has now closed but they would have been eligible with an open case previously, the previous district still has a duty to determine eligibility. The eligibility determination can be completed by either the school a youth attended when they should have been found eligible, or the youth's current school.⁷ Once a youth is found eligible, they remain eligible, even if they transfer schools again, return to their biological parents' care, or their court case closes.

Graduation Options

Only the ERH or a youth who is over 18 years old can determine whether graduating under AB 167/216 is in the youth's best interest. An ERH can change their decision of whether or not to graduate under AB 167/216 at any time prior to the youth's graduation.⁸

Graduation options include:

1. accept the exemption and graduate using minimum state requirements; youth can graduate using this option in 4 or 5 years;
2. reject the exemption and graduate using school district requirements; youth can graduate using this option in 4 or 5 years; or
3. acknowledge eligibility but defer decision until a later date.

Regardless of the graduation option chosen, youth graduate receiving a normal high school diploma.⁹ There should be nothing on the diploma itself that designates it as any different from a typical district diploma.

Notification and Consultation Requirement

The eligibility determination, graduation options, and the impact of AB 167/216 graduation on admissions to a four-year university, must be provided in writing to the youth, their ERH, and CSW/PO within 30 days of enrollment, 30 days of the new school year, and/or 30 days from reconsideration request, whichever is/are the relevant timeline(s). See **AB 167/216 Graduation Eligibility Notification Letter**. The district must also consult with the youth and their ERH about the impact of the graduation options and credit recovery and other academic support options available in the district. When providing this consultation, the district must also ensure the youth is aware of their school of origin rights.¹⁰

Child Welfare and Probation System Requirements

ERH/CSW/PO must keep the youth's Health and Education Summary up to date and provide a copy to the caregiver within 30 days of placement (and within 48 hours of any subsequent placements) and include a copy in the court report prior to each hearing. The Summary must include information about a youth's course enrollment and graduation status. This can be accomplished by including a current transcript and a graduation check with the court report. ERH/CSW/POs are responsible for ensuring that the youth has had a meaningful opportunity to meet the challenging state pupil academic achievement standards to which all pupils are held and has had equal access to educational resources such as tutoring, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses, and vocational/technical education courses.¹¹

6 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1 (h), (o).

7 Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 51225.1(h), (o).

8 Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 51225.1(r).

9 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1 (a), (n).

10 Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.1 (b), (f).

11 Welf. Inst. Code § 16010; Cal. Educ. Code § 48850.



Resources

Tools for Districts

- **Best Practices on Developing a District System to Consistently Determine Eligibility for All Youth Eligible for AB 167/216 Graduation**
- Review our **Exploration Questions** to see how a District can explore developing their own systems and best practices around analyzing AB 167/216 eligibility
- **AB 167/216 Graduation Eligibility Notification Letter**

Tools for Court Personnel

- **Best Practices for Court Hearings Regarding Graduation (Hearings Held for High School Aged Youth)**
- **CSW/PO Court Report Language**
- **ERH Checklist**
- **Making Education Decisions for Children Involved with the Dependency Court**
- **CSW/PO Checklist**
- **Attorney for Youth Checklist**
- **Attorney for Parent Checklist**
- **Judge's Checklist**



School Discipline



School Discipline

Youth in foster care are subject to disproportionate levels of school discipline.¹

For example, **the suspension rate for youth in foster care in California is 12.6%, compared to the statewide average of 3.2%.** When race is added to the equation, the disproportionality is even more stark, **with the suspension rate for African American students in foster care at 19.1%.**²

Youth in foster care face high rates of discipline for a variety of reasons, including racial bias, unmet special education needs, as well as mental health and social-emotional needs caused by the trauma and abuse they have experienced.³ To address this disproportionality, and ensure that youth involved in systems can benefit from their education without being excluded for disciplinary reasons, coordination and support is needed from the multiple systems serving them, inside and outside of school.

Overview of the Law

Notification

If a school district is considering suspension (including in-school and out-of-school suspensions), expulsion, involuntary transfer to a continuation school, or a manifestation determination IEP meeting, they must provide notification to the ERH, CSW, and the attorney(s) for the youth (including attorneys in their foster care and probation cases).⁴



Resources

Tools for Districts

- [Best Practices for School Discipline Notifications](#)
- [School Discipline Notification Letter for Youth Involved in Systems](#)

Tools for Court Personnel

- [Best Practices for School Discipline for Court Personnel](#)
- [CSW/PO Court Report Language](#)
- [ERH Checklist](#)
- [CSW/PO Checklist](#)
- [Attorney for Youth Checklist](#)
- [Attorney for Parent Checklist](#)
- [Judge's Checklist](#)

¹ Please note that there is no specific discipline data available for youth in the probation system.

² <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?year=2021-22&aggllevel=State&cds=00>. Data is from the 2021/22 school year.

³ If you are interested in free trainings on racial justice in education, trauma and education, or special education, please contact the Director of the Education Program at the Alliance for Children's Rights, Jill Rowland, at jrowland@alliancecr.org.

⁴ Cal. Educ. Code § 48911.

Enforcement of Education Rights of Youth Involved in Systems: Uniform Complaint Procedure Process



Enforcement of Education Rights of Youth Involved in Systems: Uniform Complaint Procedure Process

The Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) process allows youth who are systems involved, their education rights holders, or other interested parties (e.g., CSW, youth education advocate/attorney) a way to resolve disputes by filing a complaint with the school district, charter school,¹ and/or the California Department of Education (“CDE”).²

Complaints can be filed for any violation of school of origin, immediate enrollment, partial credits, and/or AB 167/216 graduation rights. When a complaint is filed with the school district or charter school, the district/charter must investigate and provide a written response, including a proposed resolution, within 60 days. If the person who filed the complaint is not satisfied with the district or charter’s response, they may file an appeal with the CDE, who must also investigate and respond in writing within 60 days. If it is determined that a school district or charter has violated a student’s rights, the school district or charter may owe, and the CDE may order, a remedy for the student including, for example, enrollment in a school of origin, transportation services to a school of origin, issuing of partial credits, AB 216 eligibility, and/or compensatory education services to make up for time out of school. A **Sample UCP Complaint Form** is available for use by districts/charters, which have a duty to provide a form to youth/ERH/interested parties interested in filing a complaint; the form can also be used directly by youth/ERHs/interested parties to file a complaint against any district.



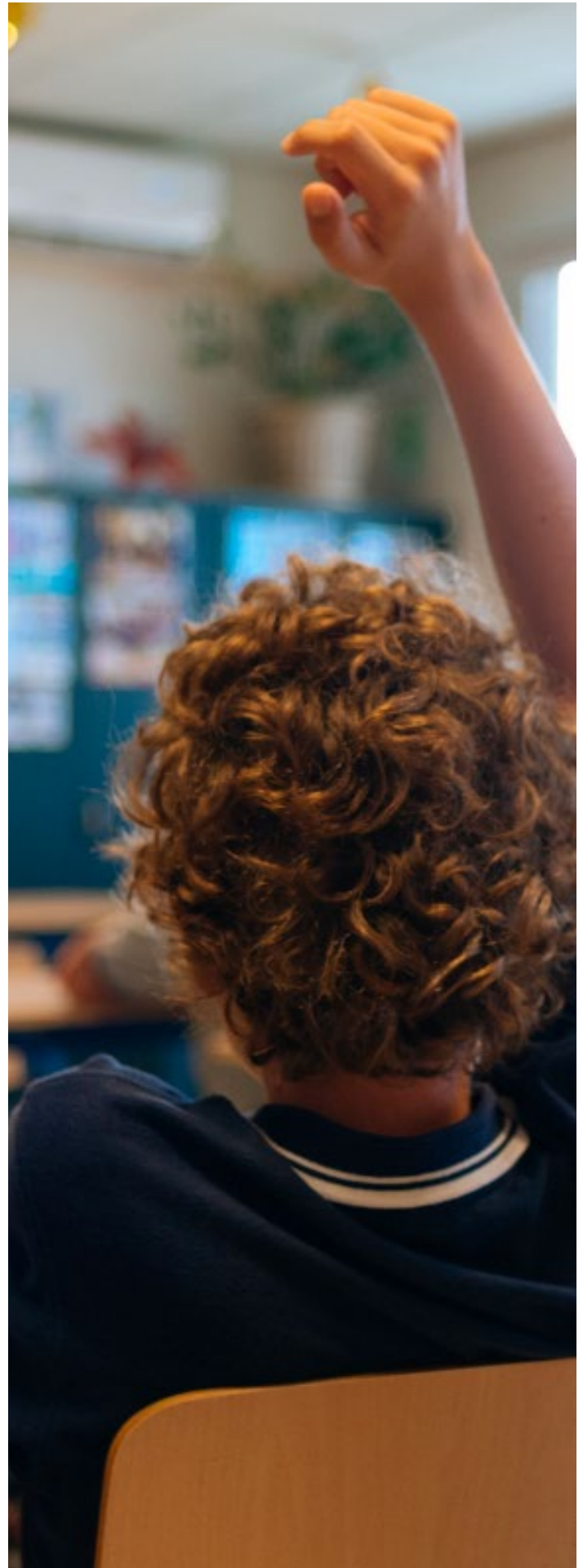
Resources

Tools for Districts

- **Best Practices on Receiving and Investigating Complaints**
- **Sample UCP Complaint Form**

¹ Cal. Educ. Code § 48859(d).

² Cal. Educ. Code §§ 48853(i), 48853.5(h), 51225.1(m), 51225.2(f); 5 C.C.R. §§ 4600-4687.



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Association of California School Administrators



California Child Welfare Council



California Collaborative for Educational Excellence



CA County Superintendents



California Department of Education



California Department of Social Services



California School Board Association



Children's Law Center of California
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ALLIANCE *for* CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A Comprehensive Approach
to Improving Student Attendance
in Los Angeles County

Executive Summary

*A Report from the School Attendance Task Force
(Originally Convened as the Truancy Task Force)*

A Project of the
Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

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Executive Summary

A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Student Attendance in Los Angeles County

**A Report from the School Attendance Task Force
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Overview of the Problem

The issues of school attendance and truancy should be of importance and concern to nearly every governmental and community agency in Los Angeles County. Because attendance rates are directly tied to school success, there is a critical need for interventions that are capable of assessing and effectively addressing the root causes of truancy and poor student attendance and helping young people to get back on track. The findings from national and state research bear this out.

- ❖ The negative impact of absences on literacy is 75 percent larger for low-income children, whose families often lack the resources to make up for lost time on task.¹
- ❖ Poor children are four times more likely to be chronically absent in kindergarten than their highest-income peers. Chronic absence in kindergarten predicts unsatisfactory fifth-grade outcomes for poor children.
- ❖ Chronically absent sixth-graders have lower graduation rates.²
- ❖ Ninth-grade attendance predicts graduation for students of all economic backgrounds.³

Although the courts, law enforcement, schools, and many community organizations are engaged in efforts to address truancy and attendance issues, very little coordination has existed among these entities, and little effort has been made to assess the effectiveness of any given strategy employed. Too often, law enforcement has been called upon to impose criminal punishments on children and families, even though research shows that such methods have little impact and, in fact, actually increase the likelihood of school push-out and drop-out.

In sum, a countywide effort—to systematize and integrate practices with other agencies, promote reforms, eliminate practices that have proven to be ineffective and/or are not supported by research, and align the practices, funding, and resources of agencies with research-based approaches that have proven to be most effective—is long overdue.

History of the School Attendance Task Force

Under the leadership of Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and Vice Chair of the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC), a countywide School Attendance Task Force was convened in the fall of 2010, under the auspices of the ECC, to better understand the issue in Los Angeles County and, ultimately, to develop a set of recommendations for countywide implementation. To this end, the Task Force explored:

- The approaches being used in the county and elsewhere by major stakeholder groups, including the courts, law enforcement, schools, and communities
- Which policies and practices appear to be working and which are not
- Current research-based models for improving attendance and reducing tardiness

¹ Ready, 2010.

² Baltimore Education Research Consortium, SY 2009–2010.

³ Allensworth & Easton, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research at U of C, July 2007.

The Task Force has met each month since its inception, and includes leaders from each major stakeholder group (see the list of School Attendance Task Force members on page iii of the full report). The Task Force spent its first year reviewing information on current programs being developed or implemented by school districts, the juvenile court, law enforcement agencies, community groups, and the business community both in Los Angeles County and around the country. The meetings included presentations on these programs and a review of data and other measurements of outcomes for students who participate in these programs. A summary of the topics covered in the monthly meetings is provided in Appendix E of the full report.

Summary of Task Force Findings

Among other findings, the Task Force members learned that a myriad of reasons cause students to struggle to get to school and to get there on time. Of the thousands of students in Los Angeles interviewed by the Community Rights Campaign (one organization participating on the Task Force), many reported that their only means of transportation (the MTA bus) frequently runs late; they must walk their siblings to another school with a similar start time; they have a medical appointment; they are dealing with mental health issues; they have unaddressed special education needs or a chronic illness; they are being bullied; they are experiencing family problems at home; or student do not see the benefit of an education or feel connected to or safe at school.

- ❖ The Task Force also found that a number of California statutes—found in penal, education, and municipal codes—criminalize student tardiness and attendance issues. Under them, students and their families can face fines, juvenile delinquency enforcement, and/or jail time. Unfortunately, in the absence of a comprehensive, research-based approach to addressing attendance-related issues in Los Angeles, the enforcement of daytime curfew laws, which subject any student absent from school to a citation by police officers, has often been the primary response to truancy. Extensive resources and effort have been focused on using law enforcement to ticket and cite students. For example, between 2005 and 2009, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) issued more than 47,000 tickets under the Los Angeles City curfew ordinance.⁴ The city curfew ordinance’s burdens have fallen most heavily on low-income communities and on families who are least able to afford them.⁵
- ❖ Although the prosecution of students and parents may be appropriate in extreme cases—or as the last step in a broader, graduated system that provides assessments, referrals, and sufficient support to ensure that students and families can access services and resources to address the underlying conditions or reasons that caused the attendance issue—the Task Force was not able to identify any research supporting the efficacy of prosecution as a primary means to improve student attendance on a large scale. Indeed, research on effective approaches over-

⁴ See “Map of LAMC 45.04 Day-Time Curfew Citations,” available at <http://www.thestrategycenter.org/blog/07/30/mapping-lamc-4504-truancy-tickets-geographical-area-race-and-gender>.

⁵ A majority of LAUSD students live in families near or below the poverty line (California Department of Education DataQuest [2010]). Daytime curfew enforcement inherently targets lower-income students because students from poorer families are more likely to walk or take public transit than their higher-income peers. Data collected also shows that schools where curfew enforcement has been most aggressive are concentrated in lower-income communities.

whelmingly supports school-based rather than law enforcement–based interventions as the most effective for both improving attendance rates and reducing rates of chronic absence.

- ❖ Specifically, through the Task Force’s review of published studies measuring the effectiveness of various attendance improvement programs around the country aimed at addressing truancy or improving school attendance, it found that successful programs include:
 - A complete assessment process to determine the primary causes for student attendance issues
 - A strong and comprehensive data-tracking system to effectively identify students with attendance issues early, and quickly target interventions
 - Strong parental involvement and participation
 - Use of incentives for positive behavior and attendance
 - A three-tiered approach to improving student attendance that provides broad interventions for all students, more targeted interventions for students who meet the criteria for being at risk for poor attendance, and substantial interventions for students with intensive needs
 - Cognitive behavior therapy for students with poor attendance, especially when paired with parent and teacher training
- ❖ In Los Angeles, some reforms that align with research and best practices are already underway. During the past two years, the LAPD and LASPD have worked closely with community-based organizations, as well as other government agencies, to revise existing procedures aimed at reducing the number of daytime curfew tickets written to students—particularly African-American and Latino students, who are disproportionately represented. They have issued directives instructing ticket task forces generally not to cite students during the first hour of classes or on campus and, instead, to help students get back to school and access school-based interventions.

This changing emphasis coincides with an increasing recognition by school districts of the need to address student attendance in a comprehensive manner. Several school districts have begun implementing promising programs using research-based strategies that focus on identifying the root causes of chronic absences and quickly providing intensive and tiered resources and interventions to address those problems. Two school district programs in particular stood out to Task Force members because they provide comprehensive, school-based approaches to addressing student attendance issues that incorporate research-based practices and were supported by data reflecting improved outcomes.

First, **Alhambra Unified School District**’s attendance improvement program, the core of which is called Gateway to Success (“Gateway”), has resulted in a 42 percent reduction in truanancies after one year of implementation, and a 61 percent decline in year two. The Gateway program, which is supported by a federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant of \$7 million over four years, links district students with counselors or other health and wellness resources to help them with the challenges that interfere with their academic, personal, or social adjustment. Mental health and wellness programs are brought directly to school sites and services are available to all students, whether they have health insurance or not. This framework was developed to align with a three-tiered public health framework aimed at improving prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services. The continuum of efforts includes:

- **Universal prevention** strategies aimed at reducing risk factors, enhancing protective factors, and ameliorating difficulties before they occur
- **Early intervention** emphasizes the early identification of and intervention for at-risk youth
- **Intensive strategies** involve treatment to reduce the impact of existing problems

This evolving framework has now expanded district-wide and employs a multi-layered approach, incorporating comprehensive prevention and intervention services to reduce campus violence and student behavioral and substance-related problems, and increase the reach of school-based mental health services. Key features of AUSD's program include:

- **A multidisciplinary management team:** Central to the program's framework is a multidisciplinary management team consisting of leadership from the school district, community partners, and higher education.
- **Collaboration and ongoing training:** All school personnel and partnering agencies participate in joint training sessions on topics that include the identification of mental health risk factors, available services, the referral protocol, school culture, collaboration strategies, confidentiality, and family privacy, as well as culturally sensitive intervention.
- **A comprehensive information management and data-tracking system:** To evaluate the impact of this coordinated mental health structure, a computer-based information surveillance system tracks student referrals and linkages. This robust systems allows school officials to intervene early and in real time as attendance issues develop.
- **Parent involvement and education:** An innovative Parent University holds monthly workshops at which hundreds of parents learn techniques to help their students improve.
- **Revised student discipline procedures to minimize exclusions:** Recognizing that disciplinary exclusions greatly affect student attendance, AUSD reviewed the number of suspensions and expulsions in its schools and developed policies to minimize disciplinary exclusions, such as requiring schools to use multiple interventions prior to initiating a suspension, and to document these interventions for such low-level offenses as defiance. As a result, disciplinary exclusions have dropped consistently and significantly over the last two academic years.

Similarly, the **Baltimore City Public School System** has employed a three-tiered approach that focuses on universal strategies to improve attendance, early intervention when students show signs of poor attendance, and intensive interventions for students with severe attendance issues. Key features of Baltimore's program, which was developed after convening a task force with almost a hundred community and business partners to study the problem, include:

- **Universal strategies to improve attendance:** Baltimore developed a number of policies that emphasize and prioritize good attendance, including same-day follow-up with parents for every absence and utilizing attendance incentives and rewards for good attendance. Recognizing that a key element of improving attendance is improving the school climate and making schools places where students want to be, Baltimore has also taken steps to focus on improving the quality of instruction, reviewing the curriculum to evaluate ways to make school more engaging and relevant to students, and improving parent and family engagement and outreach.

- **A robust data system to track attendance:** Baltimore developed a data system that tracks multiple measures of attendance in real time, and ensured that it is available at school sites and is reviewed regularly. Using this system, Baltimore built an early-warning system that uses these multiple measures—including suspension—to identify students that are at risk and intervene early. Additionally, trends are monitored and interventions are developed accordingly.
- **Intervention strategies for students who consistently miss school:** When students are identified based on their attendance history, they receive individual assessments and community supports. Additionally, schools develop a service-rich plan for students who have been chronically absent in prior years, including wraparound services, case management, and special activities to increase their feeling of belonging. When students continue to miss school, they receive increased interventions that may include home visits by social workers or school counselors, assigning a mentor for daily check-in, inviting the family to school attendance hearings, and, as a last resort, conducting a court-based student attendance hearing through family court.
- **A revised discipline code to minimize unnecessary student exclusions:** Baltimore also targeted its high suspension rate, recognizing that sending children home puts them further behind academically and makes them far more likely to drop out. The school district partnered with community stakeholders to review and substantially revise the discipline code, particularly provisions that had allowed high rates of disciplinary exclusion for absences and for defiant behaviors such as talking back. As a result, the number of suspensions dropped from 26,310 to 9,712 over a two-year period.
- **Emphasizing rewards and supports over punitive approaches:** In all instances, Baltimore’s policy also requires that schools offer positive supports to promote school attendance before resorting to punitive responses or legal action. In general, the Baltimore program includes many more incentives than punitive responses in its graduated response to poor attendance.

The Task Force concluded that both model programs closely align with social science research on effective student attendance programs. Both programs also are supported by outcome data demonstrating improved student attendance since their inception. As such, the Task Force found that a three-tiered school attendance program is an essential element to any reform approach and, as explained in greater detail below, recommends that all school districts in Los Angeles County adopt and implement that approach.

Summary of Task Force Recommendations

Based on the School Attendance Task Force’s research and review of effective policies and programs employed by various government and non-governmental agencies to address attendance issues in California and nationwide, and taking into account some of the unique circumstances related to size and transportation in Los Angeles County, the Task Force has developed a set of recommendations for creating a comprehensive and integrated system that should result in significant reductions in attendance-related issues, stronger school outcomes, and less court and criminal justice involvement.

Countywide

- ❖ Maintain a vibrant School Attendance Task Force for stakeholders to coordinate strategies, share best practices, track outcomes, and develop an action plan for implementation of the recommendations in this report.
- ❖ Develop information-sharing protocols among stakeholder agencies/groups.

Schools

All school districts in Los Angeles should establish a sustainable district-wide model for ensuring that students regularly attend and stay in school by incorporating the critical elements of recognized, proven approaches—specifically the three-tiered approach that is strongly supported by research. Other proven strategies include:

- ❖ Creating a strong attendance-data collection and dissemination system that helps target interventions early and often
- ❖ Reducing school-initiated exclusions
- ❖ Partnering with families early and often
- ❖ Creating a communication/media campaign regarding the importance of attendance
- ❖ Creating a uniform system at each school site that focuses on prevention and intervention
- ❖ Maximizing partnerships to ensure a range of services that address the root causes of truancy
- ❖ A focus on high-need populations, schools, grades, and times of year
- ❖ Utilizing rewards and attendance incentives at the individual student, class, grade, and school levels
- ❖ Providing training to all school staff
- ❖ Addressing transportation and safety barriers so that it is easier, safer, and quicker to get to school
- ❖ Increasing the role of the youth voice in schools and learning from youth how to improve attendance
- ❖ Integrating the School Attendance Review Board process with the broader attendance initiative and utilize SARB referrals only after documented interventions have not worked, and only in connection with mental health and other resource-based strategies
- ❖ Referring truancy issues to law-enforcement agencies only as a last resort, and only if school staff can document multiple failed interventions

Juvenile Court

- ❖ Collect and regularly publish data.
- ❖ See that the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department develop policy directives ensuring that judicial officers receive the information they need to properly address attendance issues.
- ❖ Reform the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court process to focus on solutions and supports rather than fines and court appearances.
- ❖ Ensure that judicial officers engage youth and parents to understand the root causes of truancy.
- ❖ Determine and address the causes of unexcused absences, such as any health issues of the youth or family members, real or perceived safety issues at school or in transit, the level of family support for educational values, peer influence, and substance abuse by the youth or family members. Also:
 - Ask social workers and probation officers what steps they have taken to address truancy and ensure that the youth attends school.
 - Refer youth to a 317(e) education panel of attorneys for follow-up action and advocacy to enforce the child's legal rights, where appropriate.
 - Assist in expanding needed services and supports and youth connections to them.
 - Ensure that youth with truancy issues are brought to court at a time that minimally interferes with school classes.
 - Ensure that incarceration is never used as a sanction for poor attendance.
- ❖ Ensure educational stability for youth under the court's jurisdiction.

Law Enforcement

- ❖ Collect and make public data regarding the number of minors cited.
- ❖ Ensure that the primary focus in dealing with truant youth is getting students back to school and engaged in positive activity linked to community resources.
- ❖ Expand programs that connect at-risk youth with mentoring and other services.
- ❖ Develop protocols for dealing with truant youth that are different from traditional delinquency enforcement models.
- ❖ Include local prosecutors in developing a strategies related to truancy prosecution and enforcement.
- ❖ Develop information-sharing protocols among prosecutors' offices so that students are adequately tracked and protected when they do not attend school.
- ❖ Improve interagency data-sharing so that school districts and city and county agencies have as much information as possible before making decisions that will affect specific youth.

Municipalities

- ❖ Reflect current evidence-based research and proven best practices in ordinances on daytime curfew violations.
- ❖ Require the collection and regular publication of data from law enforcement entities enforcing curfew statutes regarding the number of minors cited, the location and time of the citation, and the age, ethnicity, race, and gender of the minors cited.
- ❖ Coordinate with local school districts so that city-funded services such as tutoring, mentoring, and other youth development programming are targeted to students who are most in need of the services.

Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

- ❖ Seek out and advocate for leadership roles in their schools to strategize about how to improve student attendance.
- ❖ Create safe places and parent groups to help other parents struggling with a child or children who have school-avoidance behaviors.
- ❖ Advocate for schools to create strong policies supporting parents in getting their students to school regularly and on time.
- ❖ Demand that schools move away from approaches that criminalize students or result in school-imposed exclusions.
- ❖ Advocate for processes in schools where trained teams and parents work together to understand and address the root causes of truancy.
- ❖ Ensure that school policies and practices require that parents be contacted immediately at the first sign of an attendance issue.
- ❖ Seek out information and training from school and other community agencies if they are having a hard time getting their child to school on time.
- ❖ Demand to be included as equal partners in the dialogue around solving school-attendance issues.

Communities

- ❖ Be informed about and involved in developing and shaping policies around school attendance.
- ❖ Be engaged as partners, allies, and resources by school districts, individual schools, the courts, and law enforcement agencies.
- ❖ Come together around the schools, children, and families in their neighborhoods to offer services, housing, after-school programs, and support to prevent truancy and address its causes.
- ❖ Offer resources—intervention workers, transportation, technology—to create safe passages to and from school and to respond when a young person is faced with a dangerous situation.

- ❖ Be willing to partner and pool resources with other community organizations in the county to create a web of services in the community and on school campuses to address students' academic, social-emotional, and physical health needs.
- ❖ Come forward to provide alternative school models that are flexible and meet student needs, such as Big Picture Learning.
- ❖ Provide positive adult and peer relationships—whether with a family member, teacher, or mentor—as a key to reaching students, addressing their needs, holding them accountable, and motivating them to attend school.
- ❖ Create resource directories, such as the Healthy City database, to ensure that schools and courts can quickly and easily connect families with services.

Next Steps: Priorities for the Task Force in 2012

The School Attendance Task Force has identified some priority areas and specific actions to focus on during 2012 to foster or implement these recommendations.

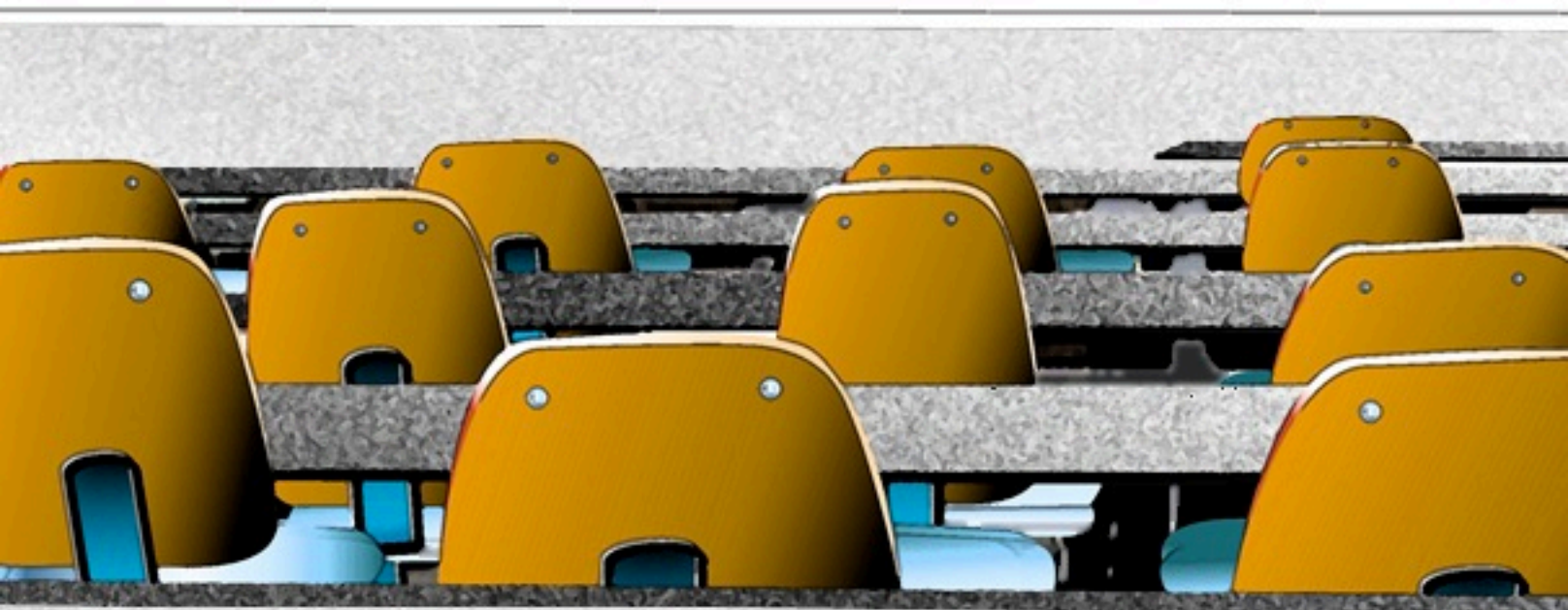
- ❖ Task Force members have already committed to making some key policy changes:
 - Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash is finalizing key reforms to the operation of the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court (IJTC).
 - ✓ His first directive states that, at the youth's option, community service will always be available in lieu of a monetary fine (including assessments and fees) for any offense adjudicated in the IJTC; the directive also lays out the implementation of that change.
 - ✓ A second directive issues guidelines for the IJTC's handling of school attendance cases, and states that the court shall dismiss any citation for which the evidence shows the youth was late to school or en route to school.
 - ✓ A third directive addresses informing youth and parents of their rights in the IJTC.
 - Los Angeles City Councilman Tony Cárdenas has proposed an amendment to the City Municipal Code that directs daytime curfew enforcement to those students who are intentionally avoiding school or loitering in public spaces, and targets resource-based community and school interventions for those students instead of assessing fines.
 - The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department and the Los Angeles Unified School District have agreed to work together to launch between eleven and thirteen Youth WorkSource Centers to serve truant youth and those who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school.
- ❖ As a whole, the Task Force will:
 - Request that the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC) adopt this report at its February 2012 meeting. In addition, the ECC should ask its members to commit to addressing the recommendations that specifically pertain to them and report back on their activities and their progress throughout the year.
 - Distribute this Executive Summary, which highlights the findings and recommendations of the full Report, to a variety of stakeholders at multiple levels through customized

meetings, conference presentations and workshops, seminars, and media exposure. The full Report will be posted on the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council website (www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org) as well as on the websites of other Task Force members, and electronic links to these sites and those of other key stakeholder agencies will be established.

- Identify and create meaningful tools (such as attendance plans) for judicial officers in the dependency and delinquency courts to use to directly address school attendance issues for the youth they supervise.
 - Explore options for securing free transit passes for school-aged youth, especially those residing in low-income communities or attending schools in these areas.
 - Develop a resource book or technical assistance guide to assist school districts in implementing the proposed recommendations for a comprehensive attendance program.
 - Continue to collect information on successful policies, practices, and models to help increase student attendance in Los Angeles County.
- ❖ Task Force work groups will be established to implement the recommendations in this report, including:
- Investigating ways to improve the interagency sharing of student attendance data
 - Developing ideas for a countywide public service announcement campaign that markets the importance of school attendance
 - Creating strategies for increasing connections between school districts and available community resources

A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Student Attendance in Los Angeles County

A Report from the School Attendance Task Force
(Originally Convened as the Truancy Task Force)



A Project of the
Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

February 2012



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
List of Tables	iii
List of Figures.....	iii
School Attendance Task Force Members	iv
Foreword.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Key Definitions.....	2
Legal Definitions	2
Definitions from Social Science Research.....	3
Key Facts	3
Legal Framework	4
Statutes that Criminalize Truancy.....	4
School Attendance Review Boards and Truancy Mediation	4
Daytime Curfew Ordinances.....	5
Efforts to Move from Criminalization to Prevention- and Research-Based Alternatives	7
Historic Opportunity to Implement a Research-Based, Comprehensive Approach: the Countywide School Attendance Task Force.....	10
Task Force Findings Related to Emerging, Effective Research-Based Alternatives.....	12
Research Summary	12
Data Collection/Analysis System and an Assessment Process for Students with Attendance Issues.....	12
Parental Involvement	13
Broad School-Based Interventions	13
Mental Health Treatment Paired With Parent Training and School/Family Communication.....	14
National Best Practice Models: Alhambra and Baltimore	14
Alhambra Unified School District	14
Baltimore City Schools	19
Task Force Recommendations.....	24
Countywide.....	24
Schools.....	24
Juvenile Court.....	29
Law Enforcement.....	31

Municipalities	32
Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers	32
Communities	33
Conclusion.....	35
Appendix A Truancy in the Education and Penal Codes.....	37
Appendix B Daytime Curfew Directives	40
Los Angeles Police Department.....	40
Los Angeles School Police Department	44
Appendix C Councilmember Cárdenas Motion.....	48
Appendix D Los Angeles Unified School District Programs.....	51
Three-Tiered Attendance Intervention Model	51
Discipline Foundation Policy School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program.....	52
Appendix E Task Force Meeting Schedule and Proceedings.....	53
September 20, 2010	53
December 1, 2010	54
February 7, 2011	55
March 2, 2011	55
April 4, 2011	56
May 2, 2011	57
June 6, 2011	58
August 9, 2011	59
August 23, 2011	60
September 13, 2011	60
Appendix F Alhambra Unified School District Programs.....	63
Parent University	63
Incredible Years	64

List of Tables

Table 1. Alhambra Unified School District Disciplinary Exclusions.....	18
Appendix Table A-1. Summary of Truancy Offenses, Elements, and Punishments as Provided for in the Education and Penal Codes.....	37

List of Figures

Figure 1. Alhambra Unified School District Gateway to Success Behavioral Pyramid.....	15
Figure 2. Baltimore City Schools Discipline Code.....	21
Figure 3. Baltimore City Schools Decreases in Absences and Suspensions	21

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Foreword

A sign in one of our dependency courts says, “Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.” Obviously, to obtain that passport, one needs to go to school.

Each year, our juvenile courts in Los Angeles County are involved with between 150,000 and 200,000 children and youth and their families through our three divisions—delinquency court, dependency court, and informal juvenile and traffic court. The overwhelming majority of these young people are of school age, and a large number of them have school issues, including those surrounding attendance. One obligation in the juvenile courts is to ensure the well-being of the children and youth we see, and education is one of our paramount concerns.

In 2005, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors created the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) to bring together the juvenile courts, county agencies (such as Probation, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Mental Health, and the Public Defender), school districts, and others to find ways to achieve better educational outcomes for the children and youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in Los Angeles County. Under the auspices of the ECC, the Truancy Task Force—since renamed the School Attendance Task Force (SATF)—was created in late 2010.

The purpose of the SATF is to convene courts, youth-serving agencies, school districts, law enforcement, community entities, and others to:

- Review the school attendance issues that plague schools in all 81 school districts in our county
- Examine local approaches to improve school attendance
- Review efforts made in other jurisdictions
- Develop better, more, and—if necessary—new ways to enhance school attendance for all Los Angeles County schoolchildren, not just those before the juvenile courts (although that remains a high priority)

This report reflects the ongoing consistent and committed efforts of all those noted, plus others, to increase school attendance and enhance the educational experience of our children, improving the quality of their lives and, in turn, the quality of life for others in our communities.

School attendance is often a complex issue. There is no magic pill to cure its deficiencies. However, this report reflects a positive start to improvement. While great thanks is owed to our committed task force members—and especially to our ECC staff member Sharon Watson—we all recognize that this is only the beginning of our effort to help our children obtain that necessary passport to the future.

Michael Nash
Chair, School Attendance Task Force
Vice Chair, Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council

Introduction

Both common sense and an impressive amount of research conclude that student attendance is absolutely critical to educational success. Students with severe attendance issues are unlikely to graduate from high school, a situation that in turn has serious long-term consequences both for the youth themselves and for our communities. Nonetheless, a crisis exists in Los Angeles County related to student attendance: according to data compiled by the California Department of Education, nearly three out of ten public school students in the county were classified as truants under California law for the 2009–2010 school year, and several districts in the county had truancy rates above 50 percent.¹

Although it is axiomatic that the success of our youth and the long-term health of our communities depend on their being in school and acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive as they transition to adulthood, Los Angeles County has a distressing attendance problem and no systemic approach to solve that problem. The Student Attendance Task Force hopes that this initial report is the first step of many in what must be a sustained and coordinated effort to improve student attendance rates across the county. Part of that effort must be improving access to information and emerging best practices, improving collaboration among agencies (both public and private) who work with youth, and coordinating with those agencies to implement approaches and programs that are proven to work.

The recommendations in this report—developed after months of discussion, research, and information-sharing—create a blueprint for the county that, if implemented, will result in significant attendance improvements and stronger student outcomes.

¹ California Department of Education, Safe & Healthy Kids Program Office, Los Angeles County Expulsion, Suspension, and Truancy Information for 2009–2010

Background

This section provides an overview of the key attendance definitions, research findings on effective practices for improving attendance and reducing truancy, and the existing legal framework that governs attendance and truancy in California. In addition, this section highlights several county-wide initiatives and other efforts that are currently underway to move from the criminalization of school attendance issues toward more research-based alternatives for improving attendance.

Key Definitions

Although recent research has identified certain attendance-rate thresholds that are particularly significant or predictive of student outcomes, the terminology adopted by various statutes or used by researchers and policy-makers varies considerably. In fact, the same term can have different meanings to different people or within different contexts.

In California, the legislature has enacted certain provisions in the Education Code that regulate student attendance and guide how school districts and other governmental agencies address student attendance issues. These definitions, however, do not align with the attendance-rate thresholds that researchers have identified as being of particular importance. Accordingly, for the sake of clarity, key terms are defined below.

Legal Definitions

- ❖ **Average Daily Attendance (ADA):** The total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days in the regular school year. ADA is usually lower than enrollment because of factors such as students moving, dropping out, or staying home as a result of illness. California uses a school district's ADA to determine its general purpose (revenue limit) and some other funding.²
- ❖ **Truancy:** California has legal definitions for different levels of truancy.
 - **Truancy:** Any student who misses three days of school without a valid excuse in one school year, or who is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year is truant.³
 - **Habitual Truancy:** The student has been reported as truant three or more times in a school year (after an initial report of truancy is filed, another report may be filed for each subsequent unexcused absence or tardy) **and** there has been a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the parent or guardian and the student.⁴
 - **Chronic Truancy:** Any student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the schooldays in one school year, provided that the appropriate

² Generally, California Education Code §§46300-46307.1.

³ California Education Code §48260.

⁴ California Education Code §48262.

school district officer or employee has complied with certain requirements of notification and intervention required under the Education Code.⁵

Definitions from Social Science Research

- ❖ **Satisfactory Attendance:** Missing 5 percent or less of school in an academic year, whether excused or unexcused.
- ❖ **Chronic Absence:** Missing 10 percent or more of school in an academic year for any reason, whether excused or unexcused. In numerous studies, this level of absence is strongly associated with declining academic performance.
- ❖ **Severe Chronic Absence:** Missing 20 percent or more of school in an academic year—approximately two months—for any reason, whether excused or unexcused. This level of absence is strongly predictive of the student eventually dropping out.

Key Facts

Although the importance of improving student attendance rates and reducing truancy in Los Angeles is fairly self-evident, research findings underscore both the urgency of addressing this issue and the need for interventions that are capable of assessing and addressing the root causes of truancy and poor student attendance.

- ❖ The negative impact of absences on literacy is 75 percent larger for low-income children, whose families often lack the resources to make up for lost time on task.⁶
- ❖ Poor children are four times more likely to be chronically absent in kindergarten than their highest-income peers. Chronic absence in kindergarten predicts unsatisfactory fifth-grade outcomes for poor children.
- ❖ Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to read proficiently in third grade.⁷
- ❖ Chronically absent sixth-graders have lower graduation rates.⁸
- ❖ Ninth-grade attendance predicts graduation for students of all economic backgrounds.⁹
- ❖ Children in poverty are more likely to lack basic health and safety supports that mean a child is more likely to get to school. Among other issues, they often face:
 - Unstable housing
 - Limited access to health care

⁵ California Education Code §48263.6.

⁶ Ready, 2010.

⁷ Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011).

⁸ Baltimore Education Research Consortium, SY 2009–2010.

⁹ Allensworth & Easton, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research at U of C, July 2007.

- Poor transportation
- Inadequate food and clothing
- Lack of safe paths to school, resulting from to neighborhood violence
- Chaotic schools with poor-quality educational programs

Although the critical importance of attendance as it relates to positive student outcomes is clear, California is one of only five states that do not include attendance in their longitudinal student database. Fortunately, in Los Angeles County, a number of school districts (including the Los Angeles and Alhambra unified school districts) have developed and begun implementing comprehensive data collection systems that allows for the tracking of daily attendance data, sometimes in real time.

Legal Framework

Statutes that Criminalize Truancy

The criminal justice system can be used to enforce compulsory education laws. In California, prosecutors can file charges against both parents and students in the juvenile delinquency and adult courts. The possibility of prosecution depends on whether a student has been classified as a truant, a habitual truant, or a chronic truant under California law. A summary of the various statutes that authorize prosecutions and the range of penalties is provided in Appendix Table A-1 in Appendix A.

Although the prosecution of students and parents may be appropriate in extreme cases—or as the last step in a broader, graduated system that provides assessments, referrals, and sufficient support to ensure that students and families can access services and resources to address the underlying conditions or reasons that caused the truancy—the Task Force was not able to identify any research supporting the efficacy of prosecution as a primary means to improve student attendance on a large scale. Indeed, as described in greater detail in the Research Summary section of Task Force Findings Related to Emerging, Effective Research-Based Alternatives starting on page 12, research on effective approaches overwhelmingly supports school-based rather than law enforcement-based interventions as the most effective approaches for both improving attendance rates and reducing rates of chronic absence.

School Attendance Review Boards and Truancy Mediation

The California Education Code requires that schools follow certain procedures before initiating prosecutions related to truancy. School Attendance Review Boards (SARBs) are local community boards that accept referrals from schools to assist in dealing with truancy and behavior problems. The boards have subpoena powers and the ability to order students and parents to address attendance issues. Any student who is a habitual truant, or is irregular in attendance, may be referred to a SARB or to the county Probation Department. Only after the SARB determines that the pupil or the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to respond to the directives of the board, or that community resources cannot resolve the issue, can a petition can be filed in juvenile court. In Los Angeles County, there are approximately 41 local School Attendance Review Boards.

For families residing within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles, SARBs have the option to refer parents to the City Attorney's Office for prosecution if parents do not comply with SARB recommendations. Upon receipt of a referral for prosecution, the City Attorney's Office

files charges, and parents are required to appear in court. Once in court, if parents are able to show compliance with the Education Code and exhibit a commitment to ensuring their child's attendance, they are offered the option of formal diversion. Formal diversion allows parents the chance to avoid prosecution by following specific steps:

1. Parents come to court on a regular basis to show that their child is attending school every day.
2. Parents show compliance with other terms imposed by the City Attorney's Office, which can include (but are not limited to) signing their child into school, attending parenting classes, attending family counseling, and volunteering at their child's school.

The City Attorney's Office individualizes the terms of diversion for each family to address the specific problems preventing daily school attendance.

Additionally, prior to initiating a prosecution, a school may request that the parent or guardian and the child participate in truancy mediation, which involves a meeting at the District Attorney's office or at the Probation Department to discuss the possible legal consequences of the child's truancy. SARBs can also refer cases to truancy mediation. In Los Angeles County, all local SARBs refer matters to local prosecutors for truancy mediation prior to requesting formal prosecution if the student and/or the parent or guardian does not comply with the SARB process.

Daytime Curfew Ordinances

Students who are absent from school may also be subject to citation by police officers under daytime curfew or anti-loitering laws. In 1995, the Los Angeles City Council enacted Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) §45.04, which makes it unlawful, with limited exceptions, for any youth under the age of 18 to be in a public place during the hours of the day when the youth's school is in session. A similar code section—Los Angeles County Code 13.57.010, et seq.—applies to youth in Los Angeles County jurisdictions policed by the Sheriff's Department. Almost every city in California has enacted similar ordinances over the last two decades.

In Los Angeles County, this type of ticket is referred to the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court (IJTC), and has been punishable with a fine and the possible loss of driving privileges.

Unfortunately, in the absence of a comprehensive, research-based approach to addressing attendance-related issues in Los Angeles, the enforcement of daytime curfews has often been the primary response to truancy, and extensive resources and effort have been focused on using law enforcement to ticket and cite students. For example, between 2005 and 2009, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles Schools Police Department (LASPD) issued more than 47,000 tickets under the Los Angeles City curfew ordinance.¹⁰ Data related to curfew citations in other parts of Los Angeles County have not been collected or analyzed.

The Los Angeles City curfew ordinance's burdens have fallen most heavily on low-income communities and on families who are least able to afford them.¹¹ They include:

¹⁰ See "Map of LAMC 45.04 Day-Time Curfew Citations," available at <http://www.thestrategycenter.org/blog/07/30/mapping-lamc-4504-truancy-tickets-geographical-area-race-and-gender>.

¹¹ A majority of LAUSD students live in families near or below the poverty line (California Department of Education DataQuest [2010]). Daytime curfew enforcement inherently targets lower-income students because students from

- Hefty fines (\$250 per citation plus court fees, which can result in fines in the thousands of dollars)
- For every ticket issued, the loss for students of at least one day of school—and in some cases up to three days—to attend court
- Lost average daily attendance funding, especially to the lowest-performing schools, for each day a student misses to attend court
- Lost earnings by parents who must accompany children to court
- Accumulated fines that low-income families cannot afford to pay, which result in youth being denied employment opportunities and driver’s licenses, further preventing them from moving forward as productive citizens

Moreover, enforcement of the daytime curfew has disproportionately affected African-American and Latino youth. For example, of the approximately 11,000 tickets issued by LASPD between 2005 and 2009, white youth residing within the Los Angeles Unified School District area did not receive any tickets at all, even though they represent 13.18 percent of total relevant youth. In contrast, African-American youth received 16.03 percent of the tickets issued, while representing only 9.88 percent of the underlying population. Latino youth received 71.76 percent of the tickets, while representing only 67.76 percent of total youth.¹²

No evidence exists that the city curfew statute has been effective in meeting its current objective to reduce juvenile crime or juvenile victimization, and substantial research shows that daytime curfews generally have no measurable impact on crime or victimization rates.¹³ Additionally, studies have shown that involving youth in the criminal justice system has the detrimental and unintended consequence of reducing their chances of graduating from high school.¹⁴ Rather than

poorer families are more likely to walk or take public transit than their higher-income peers. Data collected also shows that schools where curfew enforcement has been most aggressive are concentrated in lower-income communities.

¹² The data was obtained through Public Records Act requests from LASPD and LAPD, and includes figures for daytime curfew citations for the period 2004–2009. The baseline population for the City of Los Angeles includes all 5- to 17-year-old individuals within city bounds, regardless of school-enrollment status (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey Three-Year Estimates). The baseline population for LAUSD includes all “total relevant children” regardless of school-enrollment status (NCES School District Demographics System, 2008 American Community Survey). “Total relevant children” represents all K–12 aged children eligible to enroll in LAUSD, even if they attend a non-LAUSD school. This number includes some individuals under 5 and over 17.

¹³ Kenneth Adams, *The Effectiveness of Juvenile Curfews at Crime Prevention*, 587 THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE 136, 155 (2003), available at <http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/587/1/136>; Mike Males and Dan Macallair, 1(2) *An Analysis of Curfew Enforcement and Juvenile Crime in California*, WESTERN CRIMINOLOGY REVIEW (1999), available at <http://wcr.sonoma.edu/v1n2/males.html>; Matthew Lait, *Study Finds Curfew Law Fails to Curb Violent Crime*, LOS ANGELES TIMES, February 10, 1998, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/feb/10/local/me-17512>.

¹⁴ Johanna Wald and Michal Kurlaender, *Connected in Seattle? An Exploratory Study of Student Perceptions of Discipline and Attachments to Teachers* in NEW DIRECTIONS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: DECONSTRUCTING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE at 38 (2003); Gary Sweeten, *Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement*, 23 JUSTICE QUARTERLY 462, 473, 478–79 (2006) [finding that one school-based arrest doubles the likelihood that the student will drop out and that if the student appears in court, the likelihood of drop-out nearly quadruples]; Jon Gunnar Bernburg & Marvin D. Krohn, *Labeling, life chances, and adult crime: The direct and indirect effects of official intervention in adolescence on crime in early adulthood*. 41 CRIMINOLOGY 287–1318 (2003) [juvenile justice involvement increases likelihood of dropping out by 3.6 times].

serving as a “wake-up call,” aggressive criminal justice–centered policies in and around schools are more likely to cause students to feel alienated from the educational system, causing further disengagement.¹⁵

In addition, issuing tickets is a blunt tool that does not actually address the root causes for a student’s difficulties in getting to school. Many of the thousands of students in Los Angeles interviewed by the Community Rights Campaign, one of the organizations participating on the Task Force, reported a host of reasons for their struggle to get to school on time—their only means of transportation (the MTA bus) frequently runs late; they must walk their siblings to another school with a similar start time; they have a medical appointment; they are dealing with mental health issues; they have unaddressed special education needs or a chronic illness; they are being bullied; they are experiencing family problems at home; or student do not see the benefit of an education or feel connected to or safe at school. Younger students may be tardy as a result of their parents’ oversleeping, their parents’ mental health issues, or their parents’ not understanding the importance of children attending school regularly.

In addition, the fear of enforcement for tardiness at the schoolhouse gate can cause young people (and their families) to make the choice to stay away from school if they might be late. As one twelfth-grade female student stated: “I take the bus to school. So if the bus is running late, I sometimes turn around and go home because I do not want to risk getting a truancy ticket.”

Finally, citations result in the unnecessary criminalization and humiliation of youth, with students being detained, handcuffed, fingerprinted, put in the back seat of police cars, and searched.

Efforts to Move from Criminalization to Prevention- and Research-Based Alternatives

During the past two years, the LAPD has collaborated with Public Counsel, the Community Rights Campaign, and the ACLU of Southern California, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the Mayor’s office, and the Los Angeles City Council, as well as the courts and various other regional government agencies to revise existing LAPD procedures aimed at reducing the number of daytime curfew tickets written to students, particularly African-American and Latino students. The resulting directive, issued in March 2011, instructs ticket task forces generally not to cite students during the first hour of classes and, instead, to help students get back to school. Other changes are designed to ensure that students stay in school so that they can acquire an education.

The LASPD has engaged in a similar collaborative effort and has met regularly with community-based organizations—including Dignity in Schools, the Community Rights Campaign, the ACLU-SC, the Youth Justice Coalition, Public Counsel, CADRE, and the Children’s Defense Fund—to revise its existing procedures and reduce the number of daytime curfew tickets for youth on their way to school. The resulting directive, issued on October 19, 2011, focuses cita-

¹⁵ American Psychological Association Zero Policy Task Force, *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations*, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST (December 2008) [finding that “zero tolerance policies may create, enhance, or accelerate negative mental health outcomes for youth by creating increases in student alienation, anxiety, rejection, and breaking of healthy adult bonds”]; Matthew Theriot, *School Resource Officers and the Criminalization of Student Behavior*, 37 J. of Crim. Justi. 280, 285 (2009); *Policing in Schools*, ACLU White Paper (August 2009).

tion efforts on students who are intentionally avoiding school, and utilizes research-based practices such as counseling students, relationship-building, and linking to community-based resources to assist students struggling with ongoing tardiness or poor attendance. The LASPD and LAPD directives are included in Appendix B.

Additionally, City Councilmember Tony Cárdenas introduced a motion in the fall of 2011 to make common-sense changes to the existing Los Angeles curfew ordinance that would redirect curfew enforcement to those students who are intentionally avoiding school or loitering in public spaces, and target resource-based community and school interventions for those students as opposed to issuing fines. (A copy is included as Appendix C.) Specifically, this motion would:

- Limit curfew enforcement on public sidewalks immediately adjacent to school grounds, school entrances, or school grounds so that youth at school or on their way to school are not ticketed
- Limit enforcement for young people going directly to or returning directly home from a public meeting or a school-related sporting event, dance, or activity
- Limit enforcement for a young person who is traveling to school, regardless of tardiness
- Provide that if a police officer does not document that he or she has assessed whether or not one of the statutory exceptions—such as a medical illness—applies before issuing the citation, or does not provide basic information regarding the student’s age and time of citation (for example, during the school day), the court can decide to dismiss the citation
- Provide that citations not be punishable by a fine but, rather, that students be directed to participate in a community or school resource-based program, such as a tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery, after-school program, or a teen or peer court program that helps address the root causes of truancy
- Give students the option of enrolling in a community or resource-based program and providing proof of program enrollment and completion to the court in lieu of their missing additional school time to attend court hearings
- Provide that LAPD share bi-annual statistics related to curfew enforcement with the City Council

The Los Angeles County District Attorney and the Los Angeles City Attorney have both implemented truancy intervention programs and have dedicated staff to work with students and parents at an early stage of truancy identification. The District Attorney’s Abolish Chronic Truancy Program (ACT) has been studied by the Rand Corporation and is an American Bar Association model program for addressing truancy. The ACT program, which served approximately 58,000 students and parents from September of 2006 to June of 2011, deals primarily with elementary-aged children and operates by sending deputy district attorneys and hearing officers into schools to work with students and families. At participating schools, students with attendance issues are identified and referred to the program. Students assigned to the program are longitudinally tracked for both further truancy and for subsequent involvement in the juvenile delinquency system. Annual internal reviews have demonstrated a 50 percent reduction in truancy rates among students referred to

the program, and only 1 percent of students who are in the ACT program are later identified by the Los Angeles Probation Department as being involved in the justice system.¹⁶

The City Attorney’s Truancy Prevention Program has educated over **250,000** families about the importance of attending school. The program’s letters have directed over **70,000** families to general assemblies where families are taught the legal and practical consequences of truancy. Additionally, almost **4,000** families have been referred to City Attorney Hearings for one-on-one intervention. From these families, counselors have taken over **200** to SARBs and have referred **70** families for court intervention that includes diversion in lieu of prosecution.

This changing emphasis from law enforcement agencies coincides with an increasing recognition by school districts of the need to address student attendance in a comprehensive manner. Several school districts have begun implementing promising programs that focus on identifying the root causes of chronic absences and quickly providing resources to address those problems.

- ❖ **Long Beach Unified School District** has a well-regarded Truancy Counseling Center program that has served as a model for other districts. The program’s purpose is to deter truan-
cies and suspensions, serve as an alternative for the suspension of students to their homes,
and provide a service to parents, students, and school staff. Recognizing that truancy is a
symptom of other issues, program staff make efforts to engage parents when they come to
pick up their youth and enroll them in parenting classes, counseling, and other services.
- ❖ **Lynwood Unified School District** has implemented a three-tiered approach to improving
school attendance, which consists of:
 - *Prevention* (a focus on school-site attendance data and increasing student and family
awareness that every minute of school counts)
 - *Intervention* (requiring the district to partner and collaborate with other organizations to
provide such services as wraparound, case management, and mental health)
 - *Recognition* (identifying students, families, and school sites that show improvement in
attendance)
- ❖ In line with its existing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Policy, the **Los Angeles
Unified School District** recently implemented a three-tiered approach to improving school
attendance that provides different sets of interventions matched to the level of student tru-
ancy. This approach recognizes that at the first tier—or “universal level”—providing a posi-
tive school climate/culture is key, as are attendance expectations and school-wide incentives
for achieving those expectations. (Additional information on this policy and initiative is pro-

¹⁶ ACT statistics are taken from three sources. First, detailed internal data are kept on a monthly basis. Second, the Rand Corporation has studied the ACT Program as part of the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act grant administered by the Probation Department. The last period for which it studied the program and reported results was in March of 2009. Rand reported outcomes for 4,125 youth; of that number, only one youth was arrested during the baseline period and three were reported arrested during their participation in the program. There were no incarcerations in the baseline or during the program. School absences decreased 54 percent in the school year of 2006–2007. This third outcome was reported by an independent outcome evaluation survey of the ACT Program commissioned by the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office. The study was conducted by Earl Vincent primarily to inform management of the success of the program.

vided in Appendix D.) The district also has alternative education programs in place, such as its Frida Kahlo High School, that incorporate elements of the national Big Picture Learning approach promoting a “one child at a time” philosophy, a welcoming school culture, project-based learning, mentors, and community internships to promote attendance and academic achievement.

LAUSD has also launched a media campaign to market improved attendance for its students, with a component that makes parents more aware of the detrimental effect of truancy on their children’s well-being. In implementing its approach, LAUSD recognizes that:

- Attendance is a behavior, and we can teach good attendance habits.
- We must intervene early with students having attendance problems.
- Attendance must be closely monitored.
- The effectiveness of interventions must be regularly assessed.

Moreover, because attendance is frequently a symptom of other underlying issues, LAUSD’s policy directs that schools work to ensure that students identified as being at risk are assessed on six different levels—family dynamics, community, social-emotional, medical/physical, behavioral, and academic achievement—to target appropriate intervention.

- ❖ As described in greater detail beginning on page 14, the Alhambra Unified School District has implemented a research-based, comprehensive approach to addressing student attendance issues that is nationally recognized and has generated several years’ worth of improved student attendance data.

That positive progress is being made on all these fronts to incorporate and pursue alternatives to criminalization, as well as to implement strategies that address the root causes of school absences, is extremely promising. However, the number of truancy citations remains high, and the overall rate of school attendance in the county remains lower than that necessary to ensure that young people achieve in school. As such, a countywide effort to systematize and integrate practices with other agencies, promote reforms, eliminate practices that have proven to be ineffective and/or are not supported by research, and align the practices, funding, and resources of agencies with the research-based approaches that have proven to be most effective, is long overdue.

Historic Opportunity to Implement a Research-Based, Comprehensive Approach: the Countywide School Attendance Task Force

Under the leadership of Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and Vice Chair of the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC), a countywide School Attendance Task Force was convened in the fall of 2010, under the auspices of the ECC, to better understand the issue in Los Angeles County and, ultimately, to develop a set of recommendations for countywide implementation. To this end, the Task Force explored:

- The approaches being used in the county and elsewhere by major stakeholder groups, including the courts, law enforcement, schools, and communities
- Which policies and practices appear to be working and which are not
- Current research-based models for improving attendance and reducing tardiness

The Task Force has met each month since its inception, and includes leaders from each major stakeholder group (see School Attendance Task Force Members on page iv of this report). The Task Force spent its first year reviewing information on current programs being developed or implemented by school districts, the juvenile court, law enforcement agencies, community groups, and the business community both in Los Angeles County and around the country. The meetings included presentations on these programs and a review of data and other measurements of outcomes for students who participate in these programs. A summary of the topics covered in the monthly meetings is provided in Appendix E.

Through ongoing dialogue and a review of existing and promising practices in this area, the Task Force has developed a set of recommendations for reforms that should result in significant reductions in attendance-related issues, stronger school outcomes, and less court and criminal justice involvement.

Task Force Findings Related to Emerging, Effective Research-Based Alternatives

Research Summary

The Task Force reviewed published research measuring the effectiveness of various programs around the country aimed at addressing truancy or improving school attendance. The review, which included dozens of published studies, focused on those that evaluated data on outcomes associated with different programs. The findings from this review support several interventions in four categories, briefly summarized below.¹⁷

Despite the importance of student attendance and the number of initiatives that schools and other agencies have launched to address truancy or to improve student attendance over the years, however, surprisingly little research evaluates programs based on outcome data—in other words, comparing attendance rates prior to the initiation of the program or evaluating the attendance data of students enrolled in a program compared to a control group. Thus, certain approaches may be considered best practices despite the absence of any research demonstrating their actual effectiveness.

On the other hand, the absence of research confirming an intervention's effectiveness does not mean that the program is not, in fact, effective. In crafting its recommendations, the Task Force incorporated all elements that are strongly supported by research and included others that are considered best practices or have been included in programs that draw heavily from evidence-based practices.

Data Collection/Analysis System and an Assessment Process for Students with Attendance Issues

It is clear that schools must implement and utilize an attendance-data collection system capable of allowing real-time analysis of student attendance. Without such a system, schools cannot understand the full scope of any attendance problems, and also cannot accurately identify individual students with moderate to serious attendance issues. Furthermore, without a comprehensive system in place, schools do not have the ability to evaluate program effects.

A complete assessment process is also essential for determining the primary causes for student attendance issues. As described by Lyon and Cotler (2009), there are four dimensions in which students refuse school:

- To avoid school-related stimuli that provoke negative feelings
- To escape aversive social or evaluative situations
- To obtain parental attention
- To receive positive tangible reinforcement

¹⁷ The Task Force would like to thank Amber Rivas, a student at the USC School of Social Work, for her work on the literature review and for preparing the research summary that formed the basis of this section of the report.

Wilson, Gottfredson, and Najaka (2001) found that interventions that target at-risk youth are necessary to address chronic absenteeism, so it is essential that schools implement and monitor a data system that allows them to identify these students. Without a comprehensive assessment process, school administrators are unable to determine the reason or reasons a student misses school and are therefore unable to develop appropriate interventions.

Parental Involvement

Several studies discuss the effectiveness of parental involvement at both improving student attendance and improving academic achievement. According to DeSocio, VanCura, Nelson, Hewitt, Kitzman, and Cole (2007), Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007), and Epstein and Sheldon (2002), parental involvement is significantly and positively correlated with student attendance. Jeynes (2003), Fan and Chen (2001), and Hill and Tyson (2009) also argue that parental involvement is positively correlated with student academic achievement, such as grade point average and performance on standardized tests. Fan and Chen (2001) report that parental aspirations and expectations for children's educational achievement has the strongest relationship with student academic achievement, while Hill and Tyson (2009) similarly argue that academic socialization—which includes such activities as creating an understanding about the purposes, goals, and meaning of academic performance; communicating expectations about involvement; and providing strategies the student can use effectively—has the strongest and most positive correlation with academic achievement.

Broad School-Based Interventions

Because conditions at schools have been identified as the leading factor contributing to truancy, school-based interventions focused on addressing attendance have become commonplace across the nation. In their research, Balfanz et al. (2007) identified several components found to be successful at improving student attendance, including:

- The consistent recognition of positive behavior and good attendance
- Delivering a consistent response to the first absence or incident of inappropriate behavior
- Creating individually targeted efforts for students who are unresponsive to positive incentives and recognition
- As a last resort, assigning a specific adult, usually one of the student's main teachers, to mentor the student

Again, if effective data systems are not in place to alert school officials when attendance problems arise, these immediate interventions will not be effective. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) also found that the use of incentives for positive behavior and attendance is positively correlated with both increasing daily school attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism. Consistent with these findings, research supports a three-tiered approach to improving student attendance: focusing broad interventions on all students, more targeted interventions on students who meet certain criteria as being at risk for poor attendance, and substantial interventions on students with intensive needs (Balfanz et al., 2007).

Mental Health Treatment Paired With Parent Training and School/Family Communication

A significant amount of research supports an approach to improving school attendance that includes the use of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for students who have documented attendance issues. In a meta-analysis evaluation showing that school-based intervention improves student attendance, Wilson et al. (2001) found that interventions that incorporated CBT were the most effective. Maynard, Pigott, Tyson-McCrea, and Kelly (2009) also conducted a meta-analysis and systematic review of interventions aimed at improving school attendance and found that CBT, especially when paired with parent training, was the most effective approach. Doobay (2008), who argues that CBT is the only intervention for school-refusal behavior with sufficient empirical support, reviewed a case study of a seven-year-old Latina who received CBT, parental training for her mother, and communication with the child's teachers, which resulted in the child's successful reintegration into school, her achievement of a regular school routine, and her eventual ability to maintain improved behaviors without ongoing treatment. In a randomized controlled trial, King, Tonge, Heyne, Pritchard, Rollings, Young, Myerson, and Ollendick (1998) also found CBT paired with parent and teacher training to be effective at improving school attendance, with improvements maintained at a follow-up measurement.

National Best Practice Models: Alhambra and Baltimore

As noted, Task Force members heard from a number of leaders regarding initiatives and programs developed to address attendance-related issues. Two programs in particular stood out because they provide comprehensive, school-based approaches to addressing student attendance issues that incorporate research-based practices and were supported by data reflecting improved outcomes.

Alhambra Unified School District

The Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) has an enrollment of 18,541, with students' families being predominately low-income immigrants. Approximately 53 percent are Asian, 40 percent Latino, 1 percent African-American, and 9 percent Caucasian and others. AUSD students speak 27 different languages and over half are non-citizens, with one-fourth having arrived in the United States less than three years ago. Nearly 70 percent of students reside in low-income homes and between 70 and 81 percent of students receive free and reduced-price lunches. One hundred percent are eligible for Title I funding.

In 2008–2009, the AUSD truancy rate was 37.2 percent higher than that of Los Angeles County as a whole. High school rates were 44.5 percent, elementary rates were 26.09 percent, and the total district rate was 28.73 percent. Between seventh and eleventh grade, truancy rates more than doubled, highlighting the need for early intervention. In that year, AUSD had a total of 5,364 students—4,473 of them in high school—who met the criteria of 'truant' as set by the state of California.

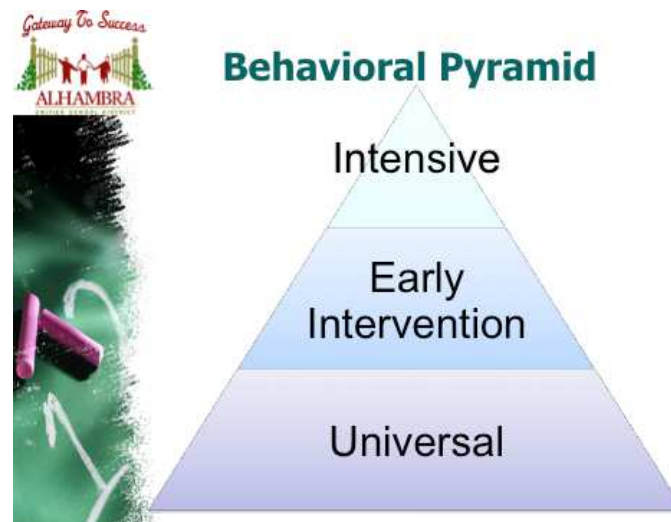
AUSD decided to take concrete and systemic action to address the issue. As a result, in the 2009–2010 school year, the number of students labeled as truant fell to 2,263, a 42 percent reduction from 2008–2009. At the half-way point for the 2010–2011 school year, this decline in truanties has continued at a rate of over 61 percent.

Gateway to Success. A key reason for this substantial drop in truancies is the intensive work with families conducted by AUSD through its Gateway to Success Program (“Gateway”). A 2008 U.S. Department of Education Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant—\$7 million over four years—provides the funding for this program, which links district students with counselors or other health and wellness resources to help them with the challenges that interfere with their academic, personal, or social adjustment. Mental health and wellness programs are brought directly to school sites and services are available to all students, whether they have health insurance or not. Sixteen hundred students now receive school-based mental health and other supportive services through the Gateway program (much of it through community-based providers, without any cost to AUSD), which starts at the pre-school level and extends through the twelfth grade.

The goal of Gateway is to increase access to high-quality school-based mental health care by developing innovative, research-informed approaches that link the school system with the local mental health system. This framework was developed to align with a three-tier public health framework aimed at improving prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services. As shown in Figure 1, the continuum of efforts includes:

- **Universal prevention** strategies aimed at reducing risk factors, enhancing protective factors, and ameliorating difficulties before they occur
- **Early intervention** emphasizes the early identification of and intervention for at-risk youth
- **Intensive strategies** involve treatment to reduce the impact of existing problems

Figure 1. Alhambra Unified School District Gateway to Success Behavioral Pyramid



This evolving framework has now expanded district-wide and employs a multi-layered approach, incorporating comprehensive prevention and intervention services to reduce campus violence and student behavioral and substance-related problems, and increase the reach of school-based mental health services

Centralized and School-Site Management Teams and Referral System. Central to this framework is a multidisciplinary management team—consisting of leadership from the school district, community partners, and higher education—that was formed to drive the project. The Mental Health Integration Team (MHIT) conducts strategic planning, expands partnerships, oversees pro-

gram implementation, and monitors outcomes achieved. Program success is dependent on collaborative relationships between the MHIT, the superintendent, the board of education, community partners, and school-site personnel. To ensure the participation of all stakeholders, a Gateway Advisory Board was created to oversee program progress and expenditures, continuously review outcomes, and make mid-course adjustments as needed. The Advisory Board involves multiple and diverse community sectors and includes the chief of police; the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, Department of Mental Health, and Office of Education; Gateway's external evaluator; and community stakeholders. Both student and parent advisory committees also provide ongoing feedback to ensure program responsiveness to the district's cultural and language needs. The focus of all of these entities is to determine how to effectively integrate school and community resources in policy and practice, with a common goal of promoting healthy child and youth development for all students and breaking down barriers to learning.

To meet district need, the MHIT assessed service availability through resource mapping and a gap analysis (Adelman & Taylor, 2006). This process led to a strategic plan to integrate school-based and school-linked services. Periodic resource mapping evaluates the evolution of the process and allows for midcourse correction, with the goal of maintaining a sustainable infrastructure. The MHIT identified and partnered with community agencies with the capacity to provide services, completing a formal collaborative agreement with each that specifies roles and responsibilities.

Representatives from each partnering agency participate on the School Site Team—school staff, community partners, law enforcement, and site administrators—that provides site-based management for the strategic plan developed by the MHIT, and supervises school-wide student support issues and crises, coordinates universal and early interventions, and collaborates with school site staff. The School Site Team also monitors students identified as at risk, facilitates their referral to and engagement in services, and supports families through the referral process. Representatives from partnering agencies who participate on the School Site Team deliver a range of evidenced-based, developmentally appropriate approaches. This ensures the quality of treatment and increases the range, quantity, and availability of services. Culturally responsive mental health providers who speak predominant languages are also included on the School Site Team.

Completed referral forms are submitted to the School Site Team leadership and the team assigns and tracks each referral to mental health service providers who are either employed by or contract with the school district. Prior to assignment, the team leader initiates contact with the family, introduces the services to be provided, assesses for third-party payment, and prepares the family for the subsequent contact with the service provider.

Ongoing Training. All school personnel (teachers, administrators, special education, support and clerical staff, as well as instructional and yard duty aides, etc.) and partnering agencies participate in cross-training—jointly training multiple disciplines—on topics that include the identification of mental health risk factors, available services, the referral protocol, school culture, collaboration strategies, confidentiality, and family privacy, as well as culturally sensitive intervention. To increase capacity, school and partnering agency staff participate in crisis response training. Staff is also trained on data gathering and input procedures. Outcomes are disseminated through training so that data-driven decisions are made.

Data Tracking. To evaluate the impact of this coordinated mental health structure, a computer-based surveillance system tracks student referrals and linkages. This system monitors individual

student activity from referral to service termination, and allows for the analysis of the Gateway program's impact on service capacity and access. Student-level data (attendance, disciplinary actions, and academic performance) are considered in conjunction with program-specific service utilization data to determine whether a particular service or cluster of services is correlated with utilization. This system provides quantitative data to characterize referrals, including ethnicity, age, gender, grade level, service acceptance and service linkage, units of service, length of service, school performance, and treatment outcome. A surveillance and referral system to address mental health needs is critical to ensure the efficacy and sustainability of this system.

Benefits of Collaboration. This model encourages teamwork and collaboration between school personnel and partnering agencies with the goal of increasing capacity and service access. Collaboration is interwoven at every program level. Leadership is provided through the MHIT and the School Site Team, which incorporates representatives from a continuum of stakeholders with the goal of improved care and coordination. This comprehensive approach continues to develop alongside more sophisticated outcome evaluations. As a result of the ongoing collaboration, a host of other reforms have been achieved, including a safety net of intervention services available to students when they return to school; a central process for all referrals (attendance, behavioral, mental health, and so on); and the addition of university interns, including clinically trained psychologists, on every school campus to leverage resources.

Parent University and Other Parent Engagement Initiatives. An innovative Parent University holds monthly workshops at which hundreds of parents learn techniques to help their students improve. Among other things, the University helps parents understand how to navigate the school system, what their students need to succeed, and how to prevent power struggles with their children; it also includes an LGBTQ curriculum. In addition, a local evaluation team measures the effects of a range of efforts—anti-bullying campaigns; Internet safety promotion; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention; violence prevention; mental health services for different ethnic groups; and so forth. Parents also receive ongoing support from Parent University staff. School staff, district and community partners, police, mental health agencies, and the courts invite parents to join the University and encourage their participation. The Gateway program also offers Incredible Years, a free eight-week program for parents with children between the ages of three and five that is important in building a school-going culture among families whose children will be entering AUSD. (Additional information on the Parent University and the Incredible Years program appears in Appendix F.)

Reward System for Attendance. Each school works with the Gateway to Success program and has its own system for rewarding students for outstanding or improved attendance. At the elementary level, students are recognized at assemblies and given certificates. At the high schools, assistant principals, counselors, and teachers reward and congratulate students individually. Students are also rewarded for perfect attendance at each school site.

Review of Disciplinary Exclusions. AUSD reviewed the number of suspensions and expulsions in its schools, recognizing that disciplinary exclusions also affect student attendance. AUSD has since developed policies to minimize disciplinary exclusions, including requiring schools to use multiple interventions prior to initiating a suspension and to document these interventions for low-level offenses such as defiance. As a result of these efforts, disciplinary exclusions have dropped consistently over the last two academic years, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Alhambra Unified School District Disciplinary Exclusions

		2008–2009 School Year	2010–2011 School Year	Percent Reduction
Elementary students	Suspended	278	84	69%
	Recommended for expulsion	20	15	25%
High school students	Suspended	646	84	69%
	Recommended for expulsion	104	42	59%

SARB Process Linked to Real Services and Interventions and Only After Multiple Interventions. AUSD has also integrated the SARB process into its graduated response to attendance issues and requires documentation that the school has made multiple efforts to connect the student and/or family to resources before proceeding with a SARB referral. In addition, AUSD utilizes the SARB process in a manner that focuses on prevention and intervention, rather than scare tactics and punitive responses. Real resources are provided and the SARB's stated goal is to provide prevention and support services to students and families with various needs. As such, the SARB process in AUSD is used as the tool of last resort when other approaches have failed. Of the 71 students who appeared at a SARB hearing during the 2009–2010 school year, 51 (almost 72 percent) demonstrated improved attendance, defined as a student who improved his or her attendance at least 50 percent since the hearing. Of the 85 students who appeared at a SARB hearing during 2010–2011, 54 (almost 64 percent) demonstrated improved attendance.

Alignment with Evidence-Based Practices. The Alhambra program includes several components that draw on evidence-based research on effective truancy reduction.

- ❖ First, it links students who have attendance issues with mental health and other supportive agencies through its Gateway to Success program; the Task Force learned anecdotally that many, if not most, of the outside providers utilize CBT.¹⁸
- ❖ Second, the Alhambra program utilizes the three-tiered approach—focusing broad interventions on all students, more targeted interventions on students who meet certain criteria as being at-risk for poor attendance, and substantial interventions on students with intensive needs—supported by Balfanz et al. (2007).
- ❖ Third, it focuses on parent involvement at multiple levels by providing parenting support in the form of a Parent University, Incredible Years, and other parenting classes and workshops.¹⁹
- ❖ Finally, Alhambra has instituted a comprehensive real-time data tracking system. Student-level data (attendance, disciplinary actions, and academic performance) are considered in conjunction with program-specific service utilization data to determine whether a particular service or cluster of services is correlated with utilization.

¹⁸ Doobay (2008), King et al. (1998), and Maynard et al. (2009) all concluded that CBT partnered with parent training is effective at improving school attendance.

¹⁹ Epstein and Sheldon (2002) found that parent workshops are effective in both improving daily school attendance and also reducing chronic absenteeism. Hill and Tyson (2009) found a correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement, especially with parental academic socialization.

Baltimore City Schools

Baltimore City Schools serve 85,000 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in 200 schools. Of these students, 87 percent are African-American, 9 percent white, 3 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 1 percent other ethnicities. Eighty-three percent are eligible for free and reduced-priced meals, and there is a 32 percent rate of student mobility. With 60 percent of the district's teachers being considered "highly qualified," Baltimore has 90 percent average daily attendance, and a 31 percent chronic absence rate.²⁰

Overview of the Baltimore Approach. When Baltimore City Schools realized that attendance rates could accurately predict school drop-outs, education leaders in Baltimore partnered with researchers at Harvard Law School and the SOROS Foundation, among others, to study and understand the extent of the problem. As part of this process, they identified 100 public and private partners to serve on an Attendance Taskforce and develop a set of recommendations. Taskforce members quickly focused in on prevention and intervention. With such a range of partners at the table, resources could be targeted to address barriers facing families, such as instability/mobility, homelessness, and lack of transportation and health care. The Baltimore Attendance Taskforce recommendations included:

- Instituting a text-messaging transportation campaign to gather data about student experiences getting to and from school
- Increasing the use of and institutionalizing best practices through a change in direction from a student-focused lens to a school-focused lens
- Leveraging the impact of after-school and community programs on attendance
- Making attendance a "must-respond-to" indicator for youth-serving agencies
- Improving the identification of and responsiveness to homeless youth
- Changing student and parental attitudes about attendance

Based on these recommendations, Baltimore is now conducting a multi-year campaign to improve student attendance rates. For the first year of its campaign (2009–2010), the key components of Baltimore's attendance strategy included examining the data, spreading the word through community forums, and identifying partner agencies and leaders to drive reforms. The second year (2010–2011) focused on maintaining the momentum by strengthening universal approaches, deepening the work with special populations, implementing a coordinated campaign, targeting chronically absent students going into sensitive transition grades (kindergarten and sixth and ninth grades), and revising/improving the use of attendance data. Some key reforms or initiatives that have been adopted are summarized below.

Implementing Universal Strategies to Improve Attendance and Targeting Interventions for Students with Persistent Attendance Issues. As with AUSD's program, Baltimore employs a three-tiered approach, with particular emphasis on the following strategies (based on research-based practices) to improve and underscore the importance of student attendance:

²⁰ Sue Fothergill, Director of Baltimore City School's Attendance Counts Initiative, presented at the August 9, 2011, Task Force meeting. This section of the report is based on the information and data she provided during her presentation, plus follow-up conversations that Task Force members had with Ms. Fothergill.

- Effective and engaging instruction
- Intentionally inviting family participation from the outset
- Building an early-warning system that uses multiple measures of attendance, including suspension
- Establishing a school-going culture, but recognizing that the basis of good attendance is having a good school to attend
- Same-day follow-up with parents for every absence, making person-to-person contact
- Where absenteeism is high in a particular school, listening to students, parents, and teachers to learn what would help
- Utilizing attendance incentives
- Individual assessments and community supports, creating a service-rich plan for students who have been chronically absent in prior years, including wraparound services, case management, and special activities to increase a feeling of belonging
- Increased interventions for students who miss a lot of school—conducting home visits, assigning a mentor for daily check-in, inviting the family to school attendance hearings, and, as a last resort, conducting a court-based student attendance hearing, preferably through family court

Baltimore’s policy also requires, in all instances, that schools offer positive supports to promote school attendance before resorting to punitive responses or legal action. Other key policy changes include:

- Ensuring that schools are places where older students want to be
- Ensuring that students have a voice
- Holding schools and youth-serving agencies—as well as students and their families—accountable for student attendance
- Providing many more incentives than punitive responses
- Offering students meaningful choices and alternatives that address why students are absent, such as work-to-learning opportunities, academic options, and social/emotional supports.

Additionally, in response to data showing that attendance was especially poor the first years after students transitioned from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school, the Baltimore City School District closed or phased out most of its stand-alone middle schools and replaced them with pre-kindergarten through eighth grade and sixth- to twelfth-grade transformation schools.

Reducing Disciplinary Exclusions. Baltimore also committed to end its practice of using punitive out-of-school suspensions to punish lack of attendance and defiance and, instead, focuses on a problem-solving, data-centered approach to keep children in school. Baltimore also targeted its high suspension rate, recognizing that sending children home puts them further behind academically and makes them far more likely to drop out. The school district partnered with community stakeholders to review and substantially revise the discipline code (Figure 2), particularly provisions that had allowed high rates of disciplinary exclusion for defiant behaviors such as talking

back and for absences (students may not be suspended for poor attendance in California). As a result, the number of suspensions dropped from 26,310 to 9,712 over a two-year period (Figure 3).

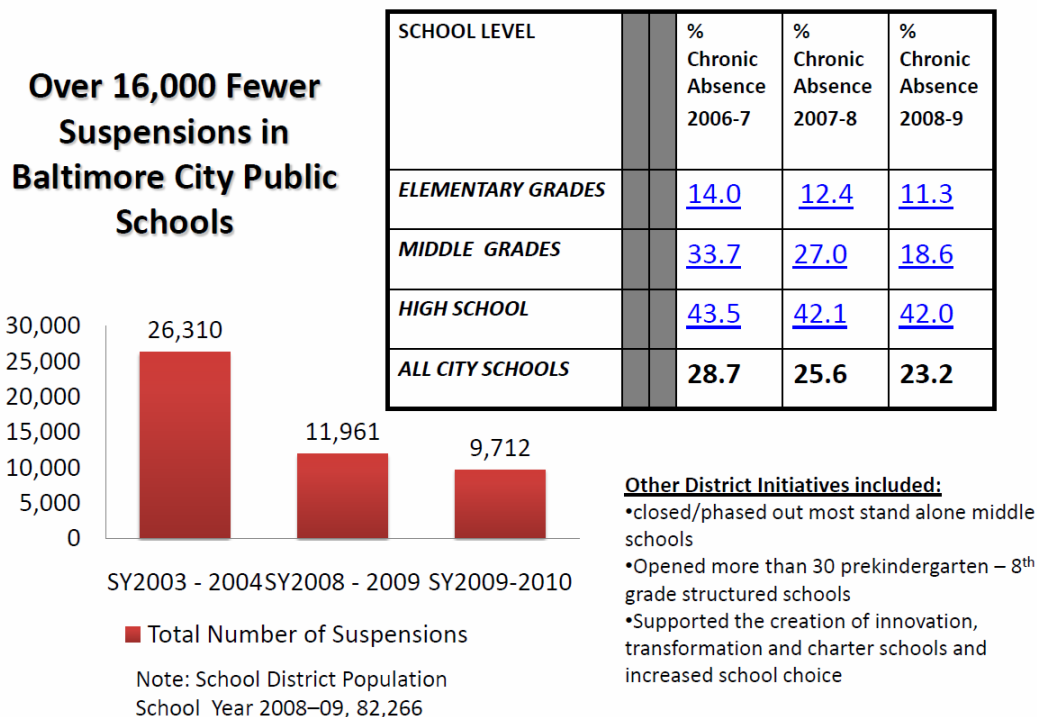
Figure 2. Baltimore City Schools Discipline Code

Discipline Code Changes

INAPPROPRIATE AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS AND LEVELS OF RESPONSE					
KEY: USE LOWEST LEVEL INDICATED FIRST					
LEVEL 1: Classroom Support and Student Support Team-may be appropriate when student has no prior incidents and interventions have not been put in place.	LEVEL 2: Intensive Support Staff and Appropriate Administration-may be appropriate when supports have been put in place in the classroom to address behavior but the behavior has continued to negatively impact the learning of the student and others.				
LEVEL 3: Suspension and Referral-may be appropriate when interventions and supports have been put in place but the behavior is escalating (repeated offenses).	LEVEL 4: Extended Suspension, Expulsion, and Referral- may be appropriate when student's behavior seriously impacts the safety of others in the school.				
Inappropriate or Disruptive Behavior	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Must be Referred to School Police
DRESS CODE VIOLATION (807)					
• Refer to dress code standards listed on pages 28-30	●	●			
• Unexcused Absences	●				
• Persistent or Excessive Absence	●	●			
• Alcohol – Under the Influence		●	●		

Figure 3. Baltimore City Schools Decreases in Absences and Suspensions

Chronic Absence in the middle grades decreased by 15%



Prioritizing Data Analysis and Data-Based Decision-Making. Because chronic absence is often a signal of family or community distress, Baltimore prioritizes the use of data on absences to allocate preschool and early resources, provide free tax-preparation and tax-credit outreach, and target health, housing, and other resources. For example, one elementary school focused on education and access to medical resources to address asthma after identifying high incidences of asthma as a principal cause of high absence rates among many of its students. Additionally, by requiring biweekly reviews by key district personnel of attendance data and making attendance a ‘must-respond-to’ indicator, district leadership can be proactive in addressing issues at the school level that may be contributing to poor attendance, and are able to hold site administrators accountable for addressing individual student attendance issues as they arise.

Evidence of Improved Outcomes. As a result of this coordinated and focused campaign, Baltimore City chronic absence and habitual truancy rates are declining, particularly in elementary and middle school. Chronic absence in the middle grades has decreased by 15 percent, and more than 16,000 fewer suspensions occurred in Baltimore City public schools. This transformation requires persistent monitoring and analysis; a team in Baltimore’s headquarters consistently reviews attendance and suspension data on a school-by-school basis and provides additional support and training to schools with disproportionately high numbers of either absences or suspensions.

Alignment with Evidence-Based Practices. The Baltimore approach incorporates several of the evidence-based practices that the School Attendance Task Force identified as being proven to improve student attendance.

- ❖ First, the Baltimore model involves broad-based school interventions that have been demonstrated to improve student attendance. Balfanz et al. (2007) concluded that effective strategies include:
 - The recognition of positive behavior and good attendance
 - Consistent responses to first absences
 - Individually targeted efforts for students who do not respond to positive incentives
 - Assigning a teacher to mentor the student.

All of these are components of Baltimore’s program.

- ❖ Further, Balfanz et al. (2007) recommend a similar three-tiered approach, focusing broad interventions on all students, more targeted interventions on students who meet certain criteria as being at-risk for poor attendance, and substantial interventions for students with intensive needs.
- ❖ Additionally, specific elements of the more targeted interventions are supported by research.
 - DeSocio et al. (2007) concluded that an intervention program that utilizes mentorship with a teacher is effective at improving school attendance.
 - The involvement of the student’s parent or guardian is supported by Jeynes (2003) and Hill and Tyson (2009), who concluded that parental involvement positively influences academic functioning, and school attendance has been found to be correlated with academic achievement (Reid, 2008).

- Epstein and Sheldon (2002) concluded that providing students with incentives for good attendance, communication with families, and after-school programs were all positively correlated with daily school attendance and negatively correlated with chronic absenteeism, adding that home visits are effective at reducing chronic absenteeism.

Task Force Recommendations

Based on the School Attendance Task Force’s research and review of effective policies and programs employed by various government and non-governmental agencies to address attendance issues in California and nationwide, and taking into account some of the unique circumstances related to size and transportation in Los Angeles County, the Task Force recommends the following reforms, toward the goal of creating a comprehensive and integrated system for addressing attendance and truancy.

Through the School Attendance Task Force, stakeholders will coordinate strategies, share best practices, and track outcomes. The Task Force will also develop an action plan to outline strategies and timelines for implementing the recommendations in this report.

Countywide

1. **Maintain a vibrant School Attendance Task Force** with stakeholders from school districts, the courts, law enforcement, the community, and other relevant entities to implement the recommendations in this initial report, review key data, evaluate the effectiveness of various programs and interventions, promote the replication of effective models, and, where necessary, encourage the modification or enhancement of promising programs.
 - The School Attendance Task Force reports its work to the Education Coordinating Council and other boards/commissions, as appropriate.
 - The Task Force collects bi-annual statistics from public agencies with roles in implementing or enforcing policies that affect student attendance.
2. **Develop information-sharing protocols among stakeholder agencies/groups.** Existing inter-sector and interdepartmental data systems will be reviewed as a starting place, and barriers to sharing will be addressed and overcome through collaborative efforts, a blanket court order, or legislation.

Schools

All school districts in Los Angeles should establish a sensible and sustainable district-wide model for ensuring that students regularly attend and stay in school by incorporating the critical elements of recognized, proven approaches developed by Baltimore, Alhambra, and other school districts, as highlighted below. Many districts already have structures in place that could be strengthened or modified to achieve these recommendations. For example, Los Angeles Unified School District recently developed a three-tiered structure for addressing attendance issues. Focusing on implementation is critical for these districts, and they should draw on the experiences of Alhambra and other proven programs as they move forward.

1. **Focus on proven universal strategies** such as:
 - Effective and engaging instruction (such as Big Picture Learning’s one-student-at-a-time, advisor-led, project-based approach), and proven alternative-school models for students with challenging or special needs

- Transforming schools to create a positive culture with high expectations, a welcoming environment, excellent management, good teachers, a solid curriculum, strong parent involvement and engagement, and learning environments that are culturally relevant and respectful of the skills and knowledge students bring to school; in these schools, for example, if a student is missing from school, staff members may go to their homes and knock on the door to find out what’s wrong
- Teaching good attendance practices to families and students

2. Create a strong attendance data collection and dissemination system that helps target interventions early and often.

- Ensure that teachers submit attendance information on a daily basis.
- Collect and regularly publish school-district attendance data that include a strong focus on chronic absences and severe chronic absences, and that highlight suspensions and other out-of-school exclusions, in addition to excused and unexcused absences.
- Make accurate, real-time attendance data available to individual schools and their community partners to drive agency decision-making.
- Disaggregate attendance data by key demographic and educational categories.
- Address all absences, including those that are excused and unexcused.
- Set yearly concrete, measurable, and well-publicized attendance goals by school and by district.
- Record the reason(s) for student absences, so that appropriate school and support staff can address their underlying causes.
- Build an individualized early-warning system that uses multiple measures of attendance and suspensions.
- Require school sites to review data daily and weekly to identify students with needs and provide them with appropriate interventions.
- If the early-warning system is triggered, school attendance office staff immediately respond by, for example, convening a Student Study Team meeting or a meeting with the student and parent at which the importance of attendance is shared and strategies and services are offered.

3. Reduce school-initiated exclusions.

- Have zero tolerance for zero-tolerance policies.
- Adopt district-wide positive behavior support plans and school-wide discipline plans that create alternatives to exclusions (see Discipline Foundation Policy School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program in Appendix D for a link to the Los Angeles Unified School District’s PBIS plan).
- Ensure that the school’s discipline code requires that initial interventions be made prior to suspensions for minor offenses, that it restricts the use of suspensions for “defi-

ance/disruption,” and that it promotes affirmatively teaching positive behavior and providing pro-social behavior lessons to students who violate school rules.

- Set clear and ambitious goals by school and by district for reducing suspensions and expulsions across the board and for particular subgroups, such as African-Americans, who are disproportionately suspended and expelled.
- Inform the juvenile court, youth-serving county departments, and advocates prior to student expulsions, suspensions, or opportunity transfers.
- Use the juvenile court’s 317e Panel for alternative solutions.
- Cease end-of-the-year “push-outs” or “force-outs.”

4. Partner with families early and often.

- Invite family participation early on by making person-to-person contact on the same day of an absence or tardy, and explain how attendance is tied to successful outcomes such as high school graduation and employment.
- Adopt problem-solving strategies for students who are chronically absent, and work closely with parents to alleviate the reasons behind their child’s poor attendance (for example, absences due to asthma or other chronic medical conditions).
- Find ways to honor and reward parents for their child’s good attendance in pre-school through the eighth grade.
- Create a structured parent education program that is continuously offered to all parents, especially those who have students with attendance issues. This program should:
 - ✓ Offer parents specific suggestions on how to support their children in school and get involved in their education (see Appendix F for background materials on the Alhambra Unified School District’s Parent University and its Incredible Years program).
 - ✓ Ensure that these suggestions are “doable” for all parents, particularly for those who may have struggled in school themselves.
 - ✓ Educate parents about the basic things they can do to establish a school-going culture in their home, such as annual health and dental check-ups, an adequate night’s sleep, morning routines that allow enough time for travel and breakfast, etc.
- Include questions on parent surveys about attendance, such as when and why it is difficult to get their children to school and how schools can help.

5. Create a communication/media campaign regarding the importance of attendance.

- Make the first-day-of-school enrollment and regular attendance during the first two weeks of school a top priority for schools, city government, county and city agencies, and community organizations and partners.
- Communicate frequently with parents and families about the importance of regular and on-time attendance and use a variety of messengers, languages, and formats to ensure that these messages are heard and reinforced.

- Use positive, motivational messages for students, including stories that illustrate the advantages of staying in school.
- Identify corporate, media, cultural, and elected-official supporters to help carry positive and pro-active messages.

6. Create a uniform system at each school site that focuses on prevention and intervention.

- Prevention, intervention, and recovery should be the focus, rather than punishment and legal intervention.
- Immediately identify at-risk and truant youth, refer them for a comprehensive assessment, and provide a continuum of services for assisting them.
- Develop an individualized, comprehensive plan for students with the most intense needs, which includes incentives, prevention, intervention, and credit-recovery strategies and services, relationship-building, case management, and other tools that address the root causes of truancy.
- Ensure that school counselors and staff are trained to provide daily supports and interventions to students with attendance concerns.

7. Maximize partnerships to ensure a range of services that address the root causes of truancy.

- Partner with the county Departments of Health, Public Health, and Mental Health, along with community and faith-based organizations, to publicize available services, stress their importance, create a network of services, and address parental concerns.
- Maximize health partnerships to ensure that students receive annual health, dental, and vision examinations and appropriate mental health services.
- Increase the use of holistic wellness centers on school campuses, such as those established at Washington Prep and Fremont High Schools.
- Create more partnerships between government agencies to deliver integrated services on school campuses, such as the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program model through which social workers are outstationed on campuses to create and implement education plans for foster youth.

8. Focus on high-need populations, schools, grades, and times of year.

- Develop an indicator showing the number of school years during which a student has been chronically absent, include this indicator on key school reports, and focus attendance efforts on children with multiple periods of chronic absence.
- Ensure that school-based health staff use attendance and chronic-absence data to target their outreach and prioritize services and follow-up care for dental, nutrition, asthma, mental health, or other health needs.
- Encourage schools with poor attendance to budget for a full-time, dedicated attendance monitor, and make attendance the first priority of their school improvement plan.

- Focus on attendance in key transition grades—kindergarten, first, fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth (depending on elementary and middle school feeder patterns)—and provide additional attention and interventions in these grades.
 - Partner with and help train early childhood organizations, such as Head Start, Zero to Three, and LAUP, to emphasize the importance of pre-K and kindergarten attendance.
 - Encourage schools to use student mobility as a trigger for additional academic and support services, and to pay special attention to the attendance of highly mobile students, such as homeless youth and youth in foster care.
- 9. Utilize rewards and attendance incentives at the individual student, class, grade and school levels.**
- Adopt a ratio of four incentives (for example, public recognition for improved attendance, gift certificates for perfect attendance, daily praise for student attendance, bonus points) to each single consequence to align with research findings on behavior change and effective attendance and student engagement initiatives.
 - Require every school to have monthly attendance incentives and publicize positive attendance.
 - Provide “high-value” incentives for the highest-attending students and schools.
- 10. Provide training to all school staff.**
- Provide training on school attendance policies, procedures, and responsibilities to all staff who affect attendance, and hold staff accountable for following them.
 - Ensure that attendance-office and other key school staff are trained to recognize and help highly mobile, homeless, or foster-care students stay enrolled in their current schools, to expedite enrollment changes when necessary, and to provide material supports and encouragement to enable regular attendance.
 - Provide professional development for principals and teachers to help them improve attendance.
 - Provide school-wide cross-training that emphasizes the importance of a welcoming and supportive climate, progressive discipline, and regular staff attendance.
- 11. Address transportation and safety barriers so it is easier, safer, and quicker to get to school.**
- Provide easier and more frequent opportunities for parents and students to give feedback about transportation (public transit, for example) services and needs, such as adding a texting or on-line complaint hotline or some questions to an annual school survey.
 - Work with public transit systems to change schedules and stops to promote school attendance and timeliness.
 - Secure corporate and other sponsors to provide transit passes to students attending schools in low-income areas.

- Consider awarding different types of transit passes to students, varying the time, allowable routes, and number of rides depending upon the student’s age, prior attendance, and school performance. This could include awarding unrestricted daily bus passes to very high-attending/performing high school students.
 - Develop more community watch, safe passage, and other programs that involve teachers, school staff, city government, community and faith-based organizations, parents, and family members in efforts to protect students on their way to and from school.
 - Solicit funding for a transportation system review to investigate creating alternative bus systems, such as the network of mini-buses and hub-and-spoke system developed in Denver.
 - Implement a transportation texting campaign to gather more current information regarding public transportation service, and investigate the demand for and the cost of providing yellow-bus service for the (few) sixth-grade students who have to transfer.
- 12. Increase the role of the youth voice in schools and learn from youth how to improve attendance.**
- Establish forums, suggestion boxes, and listening tours to hear from students about what would help them get to school regularly and on time, and what would make them engage in their classes.
 - Involve students in the planning of transition plans, IEPs, school course selections, middle and high school choices, and so on.
 - Ensure that an established student-governance structure exists at secondary schools.
 - Expand student school climate surveys to solicit suggestions about desired services, classes, and activities, and add a “What would make it more likely that you would come to school regularly?” question.
- 13. Integrate the SARB process with the broader attendance initiative and utilize SARB referrals only after documented interventions have not worked and only in connection with mental health and other resource-based strategies.**
- 14. Refer truancy issues to law-enforcement agencies only as a last resort, and only if school staff can document multiple failed interventions.**

Juvenile Court

- 1. Collect and regularly publish data** regarding the number of minors who appear in court for daytime curfew citations, dispositions related to such appearances, and the age, race, ethnicity, and gender of the minors cited.
- 2. Reform the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court process to focus on solutions and supports rather than fines and court appearances.**
 - Students who preemptively engage in community and resource-based programs should be able to submit proof of participation to the court and obtain a dismissal without a court appearance, to avoid court involvement and missing time in school.

- Young people, including those over 18, who cannot afford to pay existing fines should be given an opportunity to provide proof of graduation from high school, a GED, or engagement in a community program or community service to eliminate the fines.
- Dismiss citations for youth who can show that they are on the way to school or on school grounds at the time of the citation.
- Focus on directing students to community-based services and resources and eliminate the use of fines.
- Provide a packet of information to youth and families (in English and Spanish) that includes a revised statement of legal rights, a notice of the charge and defenses, and a survey of interventions and supports they have received in relation to truancy.
- Ensure that court referees explain to every student that they have a right to a hearing before asking whether the student admits guilt.
- Ensure that each hearing is recorded, if not transcribed, and that rights are explained consistently and accurately to the students and families to ensure that students' due-process rights are protected.
- Ensure a written decision explaining the factual bases for the finding that the student violated LAMC 45.04, finding that none of the valid exceptions in LAMC 45.04(b) apply, finding that the citing police officer complied with 45.04(c) before issuing the citation, and acknowledging all arguments the student provided as to why the ticket should be dismissed.
- Ensure that court referees explain the right to appeal, and timelines for doing so, if the student contests guilt and is found guilty.

3. Ensure that judicial officers engage youth and parents in order to understand the root causes of truancy.

- Judicial officers should receive training regarding the variety of underlying causes for truancy, including academic struggles, negative school environments, safety issues, health concerns, and chaotic homes.
- Court policies and actions should:
 - ✓ Focus on the root causes for attendance issues
 - ✓ Encourage targeted interventions that promote engagement in school
 - ✓ Recognize that a sole focus on the behavior itself can unintentionally cause more harm than good by increasing a student's exclusion from school

4. Help ensure education stability.

- The court should be made aware immediately of any proposed change in school for youth under its jurisdiction and the reasons for the proposal.
- Proposed school changes should be carefully evaluated so as to minimize disruption and loss of credits.
- Court actions should, whenever possible, promote the student's engagement in their current school, unless that is not in the youth's best interests.

5. Document absences.

- All reports to the dependency and delinquency courts should document that the social worker or probation officer has monitored the student's school attendance and, if the student exhibits a significant absence problem (for example, 10 percent or more unexcused school days within a period of at least 60 days, or 20 percent or more of a combination of unexcused/excused school days within that same period), that the social worker or probation officer has attempted to schedule a meeting with the student and relevant school staff to discuss the attendance issue and create an attendance plan.
- If students have attendance issues, judicial officers should craft orders to ensure that the social worker or probation officer works with the student and the school to identify the underlying issues leading to the attendance problem and address them through effective interventions and supports. In dealing with youth with attendance issues, courts should:
 - ✓ Determine and address the root causes of unexcused absences, such as any health issues of the youth or family members, real or perceived safety issues at school or in transit, the level of family support for educational values, peer influence, and substance abuse by the youth or family members.
 - ✓ Ask social workers and probation officers what steps they have taken to address truancy and ensure that the youth attends school.
 - ✓ Refer youth to a 317(e) education panel of attorneys for follow-up action and advocacy to enforce the child's legal rights, where appropriate.
 - ✓ Assist in expanding needed services and supports and youth connections to them.
 - ✓ Ensure that youth with truancy issues are brought to court at a time that minimally interferes with school classes.
 - ✓ Ensure that incarceration is never used as a sanction for poor attendance.
- The court should see that the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department develop policy directives to ensure that judicial officers receive the information specified in this recommendation.

Law Enforcement

1. **Collect and make public data regarding the number of minors cited** by city police departments, school police, and the Sheriff's Department for daytime curfew offenses, along with the location and time of the citation and the age, ethnicity, race, and gender of the minors cited.
2. **Ensure that the primary focus in dealing with truant youth is getting students back to school** and engaged in positive activity linked to community resources.
3. **Expand programs that connect at-risk youth with mentoring and other services.**
4. **Develop protocols for dealing with truant youth that are different from traditional delinquency enforcement models.**
5. **Include local prosecutors** in developing a strategies related to truancy prosecution and enforcement.

6. **Develop information-sharing protocols among prosecutors' offices** so that students are adequately tracked and protected when they do not attend school.
7. **Improve interagency data-sharing** so that school districts and city and county agencies have as much information as possible before making decisions that will affect specific youth.

Municipalities

1. **Reflect current evidence-based research and proven best practices in ordinances on daytime curfew violations.** Specifically, these ordinances should:
 - Not be applied to public sidewalks immediately adjacent to school grounds or school entrances
 - Apply only to young people who are intentionally avoiding school, or are loitering in public places at times when they are required to be in school
 - Not apply to young people going directly to or returning directly home from a public meeting or a school sporting event, dance, or activity
 - Not apply to a young person who is traveling on his or her way to school, regardless of tardiness
 - Not result in a court-imposed penalty if the police officer does not document that he or she assessed whether one of the statutory exceptions apply before issuing the citation
 - Not be punishable by a fine, but rather direct students to participate in a community or school resource-based program, such as a tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery, after-school program, or a teen or peer court program
2. **Require the collection and regular publication of data from law enforcement entities** enforcing curfew statutes regarding the number of minors cited for daytime curfew offenses, along with the location and time of the citation and the age, ethnicity, race, and gender of the minors cited.
3. **Coordinate with local school districts so that city-funded services such as tutoring, mentoring, and other youth development programming are targeted to students who are most in need of the services.**

Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

Parents, guardians and caregivers play a critical role in ensuring that their children are consistently and regularly in school. Unfortunately, particularly in lower-income communities and communities of color, schools often perceive parents as part of the problem instead of part of the solution. In addition to the recommendations for schools regarding engaging and partnering with parents as equals, parents, guardians, and caregivers should:

1. **Seek out and advocate for leadership roles in their schools** to strategize about how to improve students.
2. **Create safe places and parent groups** to help other parents struggling with a child or children who have school-avoidance behaviors.

3. **Advocate for schools to create strong policies supporting parents in getting their students to school regularly and on time.**
4. **Demand that schools move away from approaches that criminalize students or result in school-imposed exclusions.**
5. **Advocate for processes in schools where trained teams and parents work together to understand and address the root causes of truancy.**
6. **Ensure that school policies and practices require that parents be contacted immediately at the first sign of an attendance issue.**
7. **Seek out information and training from school and other community agencies if they are having a hard time getting their child to school on time.**
8. **Demand to be included as equal partners in the dialogue around solving school-attendance issues.**

Communities

Community, faith-based, and business groups have much to offer in terms of resources and supports to help address school attendance issues. Too often, the community is not included as an equal partner in solving these issues and its resources are undervalued. In hard economic times like these, it is critical to leverage existing community resources and create a web of support for students struggling in school. Moreover, community organizations work directly with youth and their families before and after school, and they have critical insights into the needs and barriers to school access and engagement.

In developing an integrated system to support school attendance, community organizations and businesses should:

1. **Be informed about and involved in developing and shaping policies around school attendance**
2. **Be engaged as partners, allies, and resources** by school districts, individual schools, the courts, and law enforcement agencies
3. **Come together around the schools, children, and families in their neighborhoods** to offer services, housing, after-school programs, and support to prevent truancy and address its root causes
4. **Offer resources—intervention workers, transportation, technology—to create safe passages** and to respond when a young person is faced with a dangerous situation
5. **Be willing to partner and pool resources with other community organizations** in the county to create a web of services in the community and on school campuses to address students' academic, social-emotional, and physical health needs
6. **Come forward to provide alternative school models** that are flexible and meet youth's needs, such as Big Picture Learning (discussed on page 10)

7. **Provide positive adult and peer relationships**—whether with a family member, teacher, or mentor—as a key to reaching students, addressing their needs, holding them accountable, and motivating them to attend school
8. **Create resource directories** such as the Healthy Cities database to ensure that schools and courts can quickly and easily connect families with services

Conclusion

The School Attendance Task Force has identified some priority areas and specific actions to focus on during 2012 to foster or implement these recommendations.

- ❖ Task Force members have already committed to making some key policy changes:
 - Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash is finalizing key reforms to the operation of the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court (IJTC).
 - ✓ His first directive states that, at the youth's option, community service will always be available in lieu of a monetary fine (including assessments and fees) for any offense adjudicated in the IJTC; the directive also lays out the implementation of that change.
 - ✓ A second directive issues guidelines for the IJTC's handling of school attendance cases, and states that the court shall dismiss any citation for which the evidence shows the youth was late to school or en route to school.
 - ✓ A third directive addresses informing youth and parents of their rights in the IJTC.
 - Los Angeles City Councilman Tony Cárdenas has proposed an amendment to the City Municipal Code that directs daytime curfew enforcement to those students who are intentionally avoiding school or loitering in public spaces, and targets resource-based community and school interventions for those students instead of assessing fines from them.
 - The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department and the Los Angeles Unified School District have agreed to work together to launch between eleven and thirteen new Youth WorkSource Centers to serve truant students and those who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school.
- ❖ As a whole, the Task Force will:
 - Request that the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC) adopt this report at its February 2012 meeting. In addition, the ECC should ask its individual members to commit to addressing the recommendations that specifically pertain to them and report back on their activities and their progress throughout the year.
 - Distribute an Executive Summary of this report, highlighting its findings and recommendations, to a variety of stakeholders at multiple levels through customized meetings, conference presentations and workshops, seminars, and media exposure. The full report will be posted on the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council website (www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org) as well as on the websites of other Task Force members, and electronic links to these sites and those of other key stakeholder agencies will be established.
 - Identify and create meaningful tools (such as attendance plans) for judicial officers in the dependency and delinquency courts to use to directly address school attendance issues for the youth they supervise
 - Explore options for securing free transit passes for school-aged youth, especially those residing in low-income communities or attending schools in these areas

- Develop a resource book or technical assistance guide to assist school districts in implementing the proposed recommendations for a comprehensive attendance program
 - Continue to collect information on successful policies, practices, and models to help increase student attendance in Los Angeles County
- ❖ Task Force work groups will be established to:
- Investigate ways to improve interagency sharing of student attendance data
 - Develop ideas for a countywide public service announcement campaign that markets the importance of school attendance
 - Create strategies for increasing connections between school districts and available community resources

Appendix A Truancy in the Education and Penal Codes

Appendix Table A-1. Summary of Truancy Offenses, Elements, and Punishments as Provided for in the Education and Penal Codes²¹

Statute	Level of Offense	Jurisdiction	Elements of the Offense	Punishment
<p>Education Code §48264.5/Petition is brought against a juvenile pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code §601</p> <p>Criminal Complaint Against Student</p> <p><i>This statute is aimed solely at juveniles. Before it can be used, the minor pupil must have exhausted all the remedies as to the first three truan- cies. See Education Code §48264.5 (a-c).</i></p> <p><i>The SARB can refer the minor pupil for truancy mediation or for filing as can the Truancy Mediator. See Welfare and Institutions Code §601.3 and 601.4.</i></p>	Infraction	Juvenile	<p>Fourth-time truancy within a single school year for the minor pupil. This means that the previous three truan- cies and the notice provisions must be proven. See Education Code §48264.5 (a-c)</p>	<p>One or more of the following:</p> <p>Community service of 20 to 40 hours lasting not more than 90 days.</p> <p>A one-hundred dollar fine that the parent is jointly and severally liable for.</p> <p>Attendance in a court approved truancy prevention program.</p> <p>Suspension or revocation of driving privileges pursuant to Vehicle Code §13202.7 when the student has been to SARB or truancy mediation.</p>

²¹ Daytime truancy tickets are dealt with under local municipal codes.

Statute	Level of Offense	Jurisdiction	Elements of the Offense	Punishment
<p>Education Code §48291/48293</p> <p>Criminal Complaint Against Parent</p> <p><i>The SARB refers the parent for filing. Education Code §48291.</i></p> <p><i>See also, Welfare and Institutions Code §§601.3 and 601.4.</i></p>	Infraction	<p>Adult or Juvenile pursuant to Education Code §49295 and Welfare and Institutions Code §601.4</p> <p>In this county, this offense is prosecuted in Juvenile.</p>	<p>Parent or guardian fails to send their child to school.</p> <p>Parent or guardian continually and willfully fails to respond to directives of the SARB or a service provider that the SARB directs the parent to go to for services.</p>	<p>1st Conviction—\$100 fine</p> <p>2nd Conviction—\$250 fine</p> <p>3rd conviction—\$500 fine or attendance at a parent education and counseling program.</p> <p>The court can also order that the parent enroll the child in school and present proof of enrollment to the court. If the parent fails to comply, the court may hold the parent in contempt and fine them an additional \$1,000. Note that the parent cannot be imprisoned as a punishment for the contempt.</p>
<p>Education Code §48453/48454</p> <p>Criminal Complaint Against Parent Having Control of a Minor Attending Special Continuation Education Class</p> <p><i>The school district refers the parent for filing.</i></p>	Misdemeanor	Adult Criminal Court	Parent or guardian fails to compel attendance of the minor.	<p>1st Conviction—\$50 fine</p> <p>2nd and Subsequent Convictions—\$50 to \$500 fine and/or 5 to 25 days in county jail</p>

Statute	Level of Offense	Jurisdiction	Elements of the Offense	Punishment
<p>Penal Code §272(a)</p> <p>Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor</p> <p><i>Note that this statute does not require that the minor actually be filed upon under a Welfare and Institutions Code §601 petition; it requires only that the action or the omission of action would tend to bring the minor within the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code §601.</i></p>	Misdemeanor	Adult Criminal Court	<p>The parent or legal guardian shall have duty to exercise reasonable care, supervision, protection, and control of a child under the age of 18.</p> <p>They must omit to act or act in a manner that would cause or encourage the minor to come within the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code § 601 or would cause or manifestly tend to cause the minor to remain a person within the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code §601.</p>	<p>\$2,500 fine</p> <p>and/or one year imprisonment in the county jail</p>
<p>Penal Code §270.1—Becomes operative on January 1, 2011</p> <p>Parent or Guardian of a Chronic Truant</p> <p><i>The courts have not yet created a deferred entry of judgment program.</i></p> <p><i>Prosecutors should note that school districts within a single county and within the state have different amounts of instructional days. This could result in an inequitable application of this statute.</i></p>	Misdemeanor	Adult Criminal Court	<p>A parent or guardian of a pupil of six years of age or more who is in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 8.</p> <p>Student is subject to compulsory full-time education or compulsory continuation education.</p> <p>Pupil is a chronic truant as defined in §48263.6 of the Education Code.</p> <p>Has failed to reasonably supervise and encourage the pupil's school attendance.</p> <p>Has been offered language-accessible support services to address the pupil's truancy</p>	<p>\$2,000 fine</p> <p>and/or one year imprisonment in county jail</p> <p>or a court-created deferred entry of judgment program</p> <p>The statute specifies that the defendant cannot be punished under both 270.1 and 272.</p>

Appendix B Daytime Curfew Directives

Los Angeles Police Department

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

NOTICE

14.5

TO: All Department Personnel

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: ENFORCEMENT OF DAYTIME CURFEW AND ACTIVATION OF THE CURFEW ORDINANCE (DAYTIME AND NIGHTTIME) GUIDELINES

EFFECTIVE: IMMEDIATELY

The purpose of this Notice is to clarify the objective, scope and application of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 45.04 – *Daytime Curfew* and to activate The Curfew Ordinance (Daytime and Nighttime) Guidelines. When properly enforced, LAMC Section 45.04 is an effective tool for reducing the likelihood of juveniles being victims of/or involved in crimes. The proper application of the ordinance is directed toward juveniles who are intentionally avoiding school, or are loitering in public places at times when they are required to be in school.

Officers must consider the *spirit* of the intended application of the Daytime Curfew ordinance prior to taking enforcement action. In addition, officers must understand and adhere to the numerous exceptions which allow juveniles to be in public during school hours without violating the ordinance. Students who are making a good faith effort to get to school, regardless of their tardiness, generally should not be subject to enforcement.

Although the majority of Daytime Curfew citations are issued well after the juvenile is required to be in school, officers are reminded that they **must** inquire whether the student has a valid excuse (outlined in the ordinance) for being in a public place during a time when they are required to be in school. Additionally, officers must fully articulate the proper justification in the narrative portion of the Traffic Notice to Appear, Form 04.50.00, to support the officer's determination that the subject is in violation of the ordinance.

Whenever feasible, officers who encounter juveniles during school hours should return the child to their school. Additionally, officers are required by ordinance to conduct an investigation. However, not all such contacts/investigations should result in the issuance of a citation. Section 45.04 (c) states:

*Before taking any action to enforce the provisions of this section, police officers **shall** ask the apparent offender's age and reason for being in the public place during curfew hours.*

All Department Personnel

Page 2

14.5

The officer shall not issue a citation or make an arrest under this section unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred and that, based on any responses and other circumstances, no exceptions to this section apply.

Any student with a valid exception and/or a parental note authorizing their presence in a public place should be allowed to continue on their way.

If the student states that he/she is traveling to school or a destination covered by the exceptions to the ordinance, appears to be heading toward their school, but does not have a parental note authorizing their absence or tardiness, the issuance of a citation for Daytime Curfew may not be warranted. Prior to issuing Daytime Curfew citations to juveniles who are near their school campus (generally within a three-block radius), officers should return the student to the school's administrative office. After consultation with school staff, the officers may determine that the issuance of a citation for the violation of Daytime Curfew is appropriate.

Officers shall not enforce Daytime Curfew violations on school grounds; LAMC 45.04 is enforceable only at any place that is open to the public.

Prior to the implementation of a Daytime Curfew Task Force (DCTF) operation, the involved supervisor should consult with the Area commanding officer (C/O) regarding the purpose for the operation, the targeted boundaries, and the proper instructions to be provided to the involved officers. The Area C/O should verify the location, crime patterns, and crime time periods prior to granting approval for a DCTF. A review of this Notice should be conducted by all personnel involved in any DCTF. Daytime Curfew Task Force operations should generally not begin during the first hour that a school within the targeted boundaries is in session.

It is important to note that nothing in this Notice is intended to preclude an officer from enforcing LAMC Section 45.04; however, enforcement must be reasonable and fair, and the investigation must be clearly articulated in the narrative and should include a record of the **time of the initial encounter** in addition to all of the other pertinent information. When necessary, the use of the Continuation of Notice to Appear, Form 04.50.05, should be utilized to include any pertinent information that would assist the officer in recalling sufficient facts related to their investigation and their ability to testify in court.

SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Supervisors shall assess each Daytime Curfew citation to ensure strict compliance with approved procedures and the provisions of the law. A supervisor who identifies an error or omission on the citation shall:

- * Withhold the original citation and obtain a Notice of Correction and Proof of Service, Form 04.07.00, from the citing employee;
- * Review and approve the completed Notice of Correction and Proof of Service form in accordance with Department Manual Section 4/320.80; and,

All Department Personnel

Page 3

14.5

- * Ensure that the Notice of Correction and Proof of Service is stapled to the lower left corner of the citation, above the original citation, and forwarded in accordance with Department Manual Section 3/202.70.

Juvenile Division has created a procedural guide on curfew enforcement to assist officers in daytime and nighttime curfew investigations. The Curfew Ordinance (Daytime and Nighttime) Guidelines is located on the Local Area Network (LAN) in the Guides link within the Reference Library link.

All concerned bureau commanding officers shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with this Notice in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30. Additionally, Office of Operations will implement a monitoring plan for the first year of implementation to conduct a quarterly review of the data on citations for compliance with this Notice.

Any questions regarding this Notice may be directed to Lieutenant II Alfred Pasos, Officer in Charge, Evaluation and Administration Section, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-6055.



CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION "D"

DAYTIME CURFEW ORDINANCE EXCEPTIONS

- * The minor is accompanied by his/her parent, guardian, other adult person authorized by the parent or guardian having the care or custody of the minor; or,
- * The minor is on an emergency errand directed by his/her parent, guardian or adult person having the care or custody of the minor; or,
- * The minor is going directly to or coming directly from their place of gainful employment; or,
- * The minor is going directly to or coming directly from a medical appointment; or,
- * The minor has permission to leave campus for lunch and has in his/her possession a valid, school-issued off campus permit; or,
- * The presence of the minor in one or more of the places identified in Subsection (a) is connected with or required with respect to a business, trade, profession or occupation in which the minor is lawfully engaged; or,
- * The minor is involved in an emergency such as fire, natural disaster, automobile accident, a situation requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life, or any unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state, which calls for immediate action; or,
- * The minor is in a motor vehicle involved in interstate travel; or,
- * The minor is authorized to be absent from his/her school pursuant to the provisions of California Education Code Section 48205, or any other applicable state or federal law.

Los Angeles School Police Department

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE Los Angeles School Police Department

NOTICE- 11-04

October 19, 2011

TO: All Department Personnel

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: ENFORCEMENT OF DAYTIME CURFEW LAWS – REVISED

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Notice is to clarify the objective, scope and application of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 45.04 – Daytime Curfew restrictions for Minors, and the application of daytime curfew (truancy) enforcement District-wide for Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) sworn personnel. This Notice also reinforces the LASPD's commitment to support the Superintendent's goals of attendance and graduation improvement, and reduce the cycle of student "push out."

LAMC Section 45.04 is intended to be a tool to reduce the likelihood of minors being victims of/or involved in crimes. Officers must consider the *spirit of the intended application* of the Daytime Curfew ordinances prior to taking enforcement action. In addition, officers must be familiar with and adhere to the numerous exceptions which allow minor students to be in public during school hours without violating the ordinance. These exceptions are listed in Appendix A of this Notice.

The proper application of the ordinance is for minor students who are either intentionally avoiding school or loitering in public places at times when they are required to be in school. Unless one of the above-mentioned elements is present at the time the officer has encountered the minor, generally, the minor should not be subject to a citation or an arrest for truancy if truancy is the only offense.

Any minor student who has a school schedule that does not require him or her to be in school at the time of the encounter shall not be cited, as the daytime curfew applies only "during the hours of the day when the school, which the minor would normally attend, is in session, on days when that school is in session." Further, officers shall not issue citations to students who are age 18 or older, even if they are enrolled in school.

Officers are reminded that they must inquire whether the student has a valid excuse for tardiness or absence as delineated in Appendix A. Should a citation be warranted, officers should articulate the justification for the citation in the narrative portion of the citation, (i.e., "Subject did not meet any valid excuse exceptions and was loitering inside a food establishment two hours after scheduled school start").

ENFORCEMENT OF DAYTIME CURFEW LAWS – REVISED**Page 2**

PROCEDURE: Whenever feasible, officers who encounter students off campus during school hours should cause the facilitation of the minor student's return to his/her school.

- Officers **shall**, before taking action to enforce the provisions of the Daytime Curfew laws, ask the student's age and reason for being in the public place during curfew hours. The officer shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm the student's explanation regarding enrollment by contacting the school and/or parent/guardian.
- Officers **shall not** issue a citation or make an arrest under this section unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred and no exceptions listed in Appendix A of this Notice apply.
- Officers **shall not** enforce the Daytime Curfew on school grounds or at school entrances, as the language of the daytime curfew laws indicate that the statute is enforceable only when a student is **absent from school, unsupervised**, at any place which is open to the public. LAUSD campuses, during school hours, are NOT considered "open to the public" as supported by enforceable "No trespassing" laws.
- **Generally**, officers **shall not** enforce the Daytime Curfew directly adjacent to the school grounds and within the "Safe School Zone" perimeter unless the officer has reasonable suspicion, based on specific and articulable facts, that the student is in violation of another law or ordinance.

If the student states that he/she is traveling to school or a destination covered by the exceptions to the ordinance or procedures in this Notice and also appears to be heading toward their school or legitimate destination cited in Appendix A, but does not have a parental consent, the issuance of the citation is **generally** not warranted. Minor students with a valid exception as outlined in Appendix A, and/or possess a valid parental note authorizing their presence in a public place should be allowed to continue on their way.

Officers may utilize reasonable means, including, but not limited to, temporary detentions, to verify the validity of an excused absence.

If there are factors **other than** the actual or suspected violation of Daytime Curfew ordinances that cause the officer to believe officer safety may be threatened or the minor is in possession of contraband, the officer should follow the requisite Department policy and procedures governing protective frisks, the use of handcuffs or physical restraints, and searches.

Daytime Curfew Task Forces

Generally, LASPD should not conduct spontaneous Daytime Curfew Task Forces (DCTF). Should a DCTF be warranted, prior approval SHALL be obtained from a commanding officer.

ENFORCEMENT OF DAYTIME CURFEW LAWS – REVISED**Page 3**

The scope and purpose of the operation and the targeted boundaries shall be documented on an Employee's Report (15.7), addressed to the Commanding Officer of the Division in which the task force will occur. The Division Commanding Officer within the identified target area should verify crime patterns and crime time periods prior to granting approval of a DCTF. Daytime Curfew Task Force operations should generally not begin during the first 90 minutes that the involved school is in session.

Note: A Task Force is defined as the utilization of extraordinary resources above normal deployment, with or without other law enforcement agencies participation, for the purpose of targeting specific statute violations due to complained of or conspicuous criminal activity.

The Commanding Officer, Field Services Bureau, shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with this Notice. Additionally, the Office of the Chief of Police will implement a monitoring plan for the first year of implementation to review the data on citations quarterly for compliance with this Notice.

Any questions regarding this Correspondence should be directed to the Office of the Chief of Police.



STEVEN K. ZIPPERMAN
Chief of Police

Attachment

APPENDIX A - DAYTIME CURFEW ORDINANCE EXCEPTIONS

- LAMC section 45.04 (b)
- The minor is accompanied by his/her parent, guardian, other adult person authorized by the parent or guardian having the care or custody of the minor; or,
- The minor is on an emergency errand directed by his/her parent, guardian or adult person having the care or custody of the minor; or,
- The minor is going directly to or coming directly from their place of gainful employment; or,
- The minor is going directly to or coming directly from a medical appointment; or,
- The minor has permission to leave campus for lunch and has in his/her possession a valid, school-issued off campus permit; or,
- The presence of the minor in one or more of the places identified in Subsection (a) is connected with or required with respect to a business, trade, profession or occupation in which the minor is lawfully engaged; or,
- The minor is involved in an emergency such as fire, natural disaster, automobile accident, a situation requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life, or any unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state, which calls for immediate action; or,
- The minor is in a motor vehicle involved in interstate travel; or,
- The minor is authorized to be absent from his/her school pursuant to the provisions of California Education Code Section 48205, or any other applicable state or federal law.

Appendix C Councilmember Cárdenas Motion

MOTION

PUBLIC SAFETY

During the past two years, the Los Angeles City Council in conjunction with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), as well as the courts and various other regional government agencies and community groups, including Public Counsel, ACLU of Southern California and the Community Rights Campaign have been collaborating with the LAPD to revise existing LAPD procedures aimed at reducing the number of daytime curfew tickets written to students, particularly African American and Latino students.

According to the LAPD and the Los Angeles School Police statistics, police issued more than 47,000 tickets from 2004 to 2009 - 88% of them to African American and Latino students, who make up only 74% of Los Angeles students. With curfew fines often times costing more than \$240 and requiring students and their families to miss additional time from school and work to go to court to resolve them, in addition to schools losing Average Daily Attendance (ADA) state revenue from students missing school to attend court hearing, revising Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 45.04, which imposes a daytime curfew on youth under the age of 18, would substantially increase school attendance and prevent a considerable number of students from entering into the juvenile justice system.

Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 45.04 states that "it is unlawful for any minor ... to be present in or upon the public streets, highways, roads, alleys, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, places of amusement and eating places, vacant lots or any place open to the public during the hours of the day when the school ... is in session ..." As a result of the collaboration between the LAPD, City Council and the community, in April of this year, the LAPD issued an internal directive that directed LAPD ticket task forces to generally not cite students during the first hour of classes, directs police to help students get back to school rather than ticketing them, and makes other changes to ensure that students stay in school and acquire an education.

Given the fact that there are dozens of reasons why students are late or truant, ranging from emotional and mental health problems, school environment, academic challenges, special education needs, economic pressures, substance abuse, physical or emotional abuse in the home, and lack of adequate transportation, revising and/or ending LAMC Section 45.04 would further remove financial hardships on families and help students obtain the education and guidance necessary to become productive residents of Los Angeles. In light of the most recent research confirming that students who appear in juvenile court are almost four times as likely to drop out of school - which is associated with a number of negative outcomes, including unemployment and increased criminal involvement - minimizing court involvement of youth by instead connecting them to resources will substantially benefit the students, the community and the City.


I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles Police Department, with the assistance of the City Attorney, be instructed to report to the City Council on amending, as underlined and striked through on the following pages, Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 45.04 within the next 60 days.

PRESENTED BY:


 TONY CARDENAS
 Councilmember, 6th District

SEP 16 2011

SECONDED BY:



SEC. 45.04. DAYTIME CURFEW RESTRICTIONS FOR MINORS.

(Title and Section Amended by Ord. No. 180,173, Eff. 10/5/08.)

(a) **Curfew.** It is unlawful for any minor under the age of 18, who is subject to compulsory education or to compulsory continuation education, alone or in concert with others, to be present in or upon the public streets, highways, roads, alleys, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, places or amusement and eating places, vacant lots or any place open to the public during the hours of the day when the school, which the minor would normally attend, is in session, on days when that school is in session. This section does not apply to public sidewalks immediately adjacent to school grounds, school entrances to school grounds, or school grounds. This section is intended to apply only to minors who are intentionally avoiding school, or are loitering in public places at times when they are required to be in school.

(b) **Exceptions.** The provisions of this section shall not apply when:

(1) The minor is accompanied by his or her parent, guardian, other adult person authorized by the parent or guardian having the care or custody of the minor; or

(2) The minor is on an emergency errand directed by his or her parent, guardian or other adult person having the care or custody of the minor; or

(3) The minor is attending or going directly to or returning directly home from a public meeting or a school sporting event, dance or activity; or

~~(3)~~(4) The minor is going directly to or coming directly from their place of gainful employment; or

~~(4)~~(5) The minor is going directly to or coming directly from a medical appointment; or

~~(5)~~(6) The minor has permission to leave campus for lunch and has in his or her possession a valid, school-issued off-campus permit; or

~~(6)~~(7) The presence of the minor in one or more of the places identified in Subsection (a) is connected with or required with respect to a business, trade, profession or occupation in which the minor is lawfully engaged; or

~~(7)~~(8) The minor is involved in an emergency such as a fire, natural disaster, automobile accident, a situation requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life, or any unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state, which calls for immediate action; or

~~(8)~~(9) The minor is in a motor vehicle involved in interstate travel; or

~~(9)~~(10) The minor is authorized to be absent from his or her school pursuant to the provisions of California Education Code Section 48205, or any other applicable state or federal law.

(11) The minor is traveling on his or her way to school regardless of whether the minor is tardy for school. If the minor is cited within a 3 block radius of the school within the first 60 minutes of school, this establishes a rebuttable presumption that the minor is traveling on his or her way to school.

(c) **Enforcement.** Before taking any action to enforce the provisions of this section, police officers shall ask the apparent offenders age and reason for being in the public place during curfew hours. The officer shall not issue a citation or make an arrest under this section unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred, that the minor is required to be in school, and that, based on any responses and other circumstances, no exceptions to this section apply. The officer shall articulate the justification, identify the time when the officer first encountered the minor, and provide the minor's stated age in the description portion of the citation. The failure to assess whether one of the exceptions enumerated in subsection (b) applies or to complete the narrative portion is grounds for dismissal of the citation.

~~(d) **Violation.** Each violation of the provisions of this section shall constitute a separate offense and shall be an infraction unless the minor requests that a petition be filed under Section 601 and 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.~~

~~(e) **Penalties for Violation.** Any person convicted of willfully violating this ordinance is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine not exceeding \$250.00 and/or perform community service for a total time not to exceed 20 hours over a period not to exceed 30 days, during times other than his or her hours of school attendance or employment.~~

(d) **Penalties for Violation.** A violation of this section is an infraction. Notwithstanding any other section, a violation of this section shall not be punishable by a fine. For any citation issued under this section, the citation shall be dismissed, if prior to the scheduled court appearance date, the minor submits proof of participation in a community or school resource-based program, including but not limited to a tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery, or after-school program, or a Teen or Peer Court, if one is available. Any citation issued under this section shall specify the steps a minor may take to obtain a dismissal of the citation.

(e) **Data Collection.** The Los Angeles Police Department shall publish bi-annual statistics regarding the number of minors cited under this section, along with the location and time of the citation and the age, ethnicity, race and gender of the minors cited.

(f) **Severability of Provisions.** If any severable provision of this ordinance or any application thereof is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given effect notwithstanding such invalidity.

Appendix D Los Angeles Unified School District Programs

Three-Tiered Attendance Intervention Model

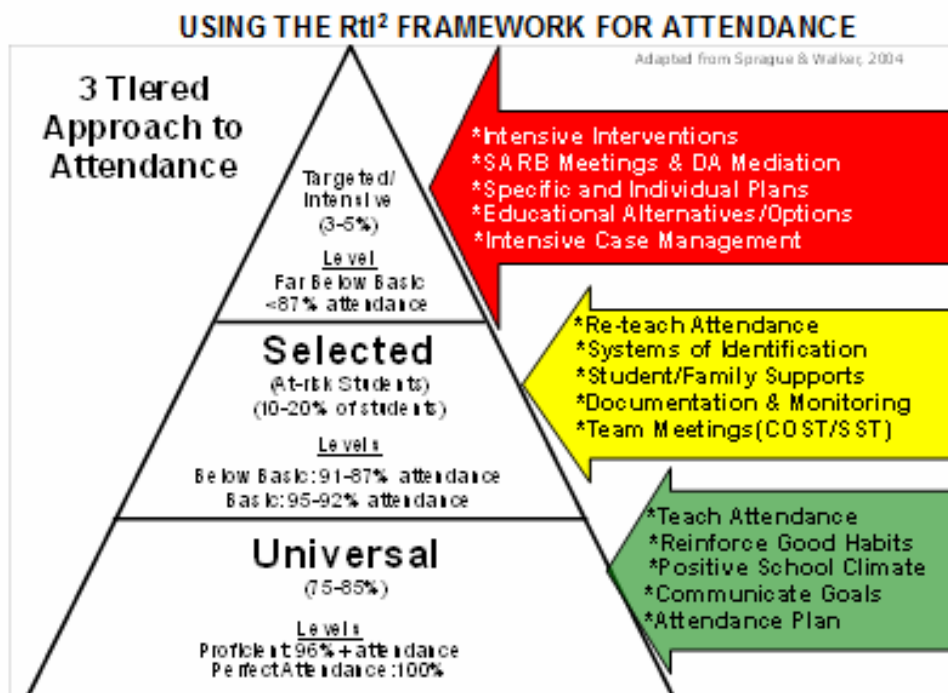
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUPIL SERVICES

Strategies to Reduce Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism

Our Goal is that at least 80% of all students attend school at a rate of 96% or better.

The strategies to increase student attendance (and reduce truancy) are embedded in state laws and the District's Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual. The strategic plan requires that District policies utilize the Attendance RtI² Model in order to ensure prevention, intervention and recovery efforts to increase in-seat attendance of all students at each school site.



TIER I OR UNIVERSAL LEVEL IS THE SUPPORT THAT IS PROVIDED TO ALL STUDENTS

Some examples of Universal Level interventions:

- Development of the Comprehensive Attendance and Dropout Prevention Plan
- Positive School Climate
- Attendance Incentives/Motivational Programs
- Establish Clear Attendance and Tardy Policy and Procedures
- Parent Notifications of Attendance Law

TIER II OR SELECTED LEVEL SUPPORT IS PROVIDED TO “AT-RISK” STUDENTS**Some examples of Selected Level interventions:**

- Referrals to professionals (mental health, medical), and may include team planning and Coordination Of Services Teams (COST)
- District/City Attorney Truancy Prevention Programs, for example, the Abolish Chronic Truancy (ACT) or the Safe Schools Division of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office.
- Partnership with Los Angeles Police Department and LAUSD School Police
- Student Attendance Review Teams (SART)

TIER III OR TARGETED LEVEL IS THE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO STUDENTS NEEDING “INTENSIVE” SERVICES AND INTERVENTION**Some examples of Targeted Level interventions:**

- Intensive “case managed” supports
- Case management can be either a school based system or involve community based models/systems such as Wraparound Services, Department of Mental Health (DMH), Probation, Team Decision Making Meetings (TDM from the Department of Children and Family Services).
- Behavior Support Plans
- Referral to Student Attendance Review Board (SARB)
- Intensive coordination of actions/resources
- Alternative pathways to graduation
- Individualized action and monitoring plan that includes the student and family members.

Discipline Foundation Policy School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program

http://notebook.lausd.net/portal/page?_pageid=33,911578&_dad=ptl&_schema=PTL_EP

Appendix E Task Force Meeting Schedule and Proceedings

September 20, 2010

There was a general discussion of current local efforts to prevent/reduce truancy and what seems to be working and what's not.

- It was agreed that truancy is “the tip of the iceberg” that results from other problems and, therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to properly address it. Also, different approaches are needed for different communities, for different causes of truancy, and for different age groups (elementary, middle and high schools).
- School engagement is key and there are some promising practices in place in some communities: LAUSD’s Washington Prep, the Pomona Project, school personnel mentoring youth, family support units, training parents as volunteer parent advocates that understand how to navigate the school system, teen courts.
- Civilian responses are also important—for example, community task forces, interns working on the streets of Philadelphia, safe passage programs, businesses opening their doors later in the morning (after school starts).
- Schools must tap into and collaborate with community resources, especially in dealing with special populations such as foster and probation youth.
- All of us must communicate with each other more effectively.
- While the task force is coming up with strategies for reducing truancy in the near future, we need to pay attention to what’s not working now, as these approaches are compounding the problem. Resources must be shifted and there must be increased accountability for interventions used.
- What’s not working well now: criminalizing truancy with citations, fines, etc., which results in youth missing even more school, parents missing work, and puts a financial burden on families which leads to more trouble (e.g., driver’s license suspensions) for not paying fines. Further, some neighborhoods (e.g., South LA, Boyle Heights, East SFV) are being targeted disproportionately with high numbers of citations. In some cases, youth are even being cited when walking TO school. Current approaches are generally “blunt instruments” that don’t differentiate well among different groups of truants and, therefore, don’t link truant youth to the right services.

December 1, 2010

This meeting focused on law enforcement approaches to dealing with truancy and presentations were made by:

Earl Paysinger, Assistant Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department
Tim Anderson, Interim Chief of the Los Angeles School Police Department
Lydia Bodin, Deputy in Charge for the Los Angeles County District Attorney
Kristen Byrdsong, Attorney-in-Charge for the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office

Paysinger observed that "truancy is not a crime"; however, teens commit 25% of the 86,000 property crimes committed annually and approximately 36% of these are committed during school hours. He doesn't believe that citations, fines, or jail prevent truancy, as truancy is caused, in large part, by social and economic conditions and such factors as family structure. As "it is not a law enforcement problem," LAPD is partnering with Public Counsel and others to find alternatives that decriminalize truancy.

Some promising ideas for the Task Force to consider include:

- Media marketing campaigns that deliver positive messages about staying in school. Ideally, these should include using social networking sites and their messaging capability to remind youth about attending school.
- Incentivizing school attendance through, for example, students being able to earn prizes such as Apple nanos or have special ringtones/wallpaper on their cell phones
- Providing incentives within schools
- Taking truant students to school-based or community resource centers or other diversionary programs

Anderson noted that, at the present time, there is a "limited tool belt" to deal with truancy and "the easy answer isn't always the right answer." Just taking students back to school isn't working and more diversionary centers and programs are needed.

Bodin described the District Attorney's successful Abolish Chronic Truancy program, which is reducing truancy by more than 50%, and the importance of focusing on young students, particularly those in elementary school. Byrdsong, whose office works primarily with middle school students, pointed out that what seems to be working is requiring parents to accompany their kids to school, because of the positive connections that are formed between parents and school personnel.

Councilman Cardenas emphasized that Chiefs Paysinger and Anderson observations that citations, fines and jail are not effectively reducing truancy are very important and need to be clearly communicated to school board, city and county policymakers.

February 7, 2011

School District approaches to truancy were the focus of this meeting and presentations were made by:

Debra Duardo, Director of Pupil Services, Los Angeles USD

Rick Tebbano, District-Wide Administrator for Child Welfare and Attendance for Long Beach USD

Laurel Bear, Director of Student Services, Alhambra USD

LAUSD is using a 3-Tiered Approach to improving school attendance that provides different sets of interventions matched to the level of school truancy as well as alternative education programs such as the Big Picture approach at its Frida Kahlo High School. The District has also launched a media campaign to market improved attendance for its students, which includes a component that makes parents more aware of the detrimental effect of truancy on their children's well-being.

LBUSD used a host of strategies for addressing truancy and highlighted the District's Truancy Counseling Center (TCC) program, which has been in existence for over 15 years. The TCCs serve students from all over the County and are divided into elementary, middle and high school levels, with teachers assigned to each Center. Recognizing that truancy is a symptom of other issues, efforts are made to engage parents when they come to pick of their youth from a TCC and then enroll them in parenting classes, counseling and other services.

AUSD, through a federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant awarded in 2008, launched its Gateway to Success program, which links District students with counselors or other health and wellness resources to help them with challenges that interfere with their academic, personal or social adjustment. A management team that includes the chief of police, city attorney, DCFS, Probation, DMH, SARB and others, oversees the program, and Parent and Student Advisory Committees play key roles. As a result, a host of reforms has been achieved, including an established consistency for truancy sweeps ; a policy that merchants are not to serve students during school hours; a safety net of intervention services available to students when they return to school; a central process for all referrals; and the addition of university interns, including clinically trained psychologists, on every school campus. An innovative Parent University holds monthly workshops which, among other things, helps parents understand how to navigate the school system, what their students need to succeed, and how to prevent power struggles with their children. In addition, a local evaluation team is in place that is measuring the effects of a range of efforts, including anti-bullying campaigns, internet safety promotion, alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention, violence prevention, etc.

March 2, 2011

As a follow-up to the February meeting, Long Beach USD presented its SB 1317 PACT (Parent Accountability and Chronic Truancy) Program, a collaborative effort between the Long Beach Police Department, City Prosecutor and School District, and Alhambra USD presented recent data showing that school truancy, encouragingly, was cut in half between the 08-09 and 09-10 school years.

Community approaches were then considered and presentations were made by:

Daniel Oaxaca, Executive Director and Founder of the San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps (SGVCC) and staff member Andrew Quinones
Miller Sylvan, Regional Director, Attendance Improvement Management

At the heart of the SGVCC program is a YouthBuild Charter School. Students can earn credits while doing construction or project-based work that focuses on the environment, recycling, or the Earthworks Community Farm. Strong community partnerships have been developed with local cities and businesses to provide these opportunities. All students have an individualized education plan, and those who are 18 or older work towards completing their high school diploma while participating in job training programs, “learning, working, and getting paid at the same time.” The organization puts a heavy emphasis on involving their families in the school and, if a student is missing from school, staff go to their home and “knock on the door” to find out what is wrong. Last year, 42 students (out of the 100 aged 16–18) passed the CAHSEE exams and graduated, and almost all will go on to two or four-year colleges.

The AIM program helps students and their parents avoid court adjudication while recouping millions of dollars in attendance-related revenue. Currently in 14 school districts in 5 states, this program works to transform chronically truant youth by identifying the unique challenges that are the root cause of their truancy, providing intensive positive support, and making sure that every student is in school every day. Youth get wake-up calls every morning to remind them to go to school and are given hand-held monitors to receive and send text messages 5 times a day. Hired coaches contact their youth (1 for every 8 youth) 3–5 times weekly by phone, get involved in their lives and develop lasting relationships with their students. If a youth misses school, the coach knows immediately and talks with the youth that day. AIM began as a court-ordered program but has evolved into a broader program that provides a diversion from court and works closely with truancy sweep efforts and truancy centers. Its results are excellent, improving initial school attendance rates from 70 to 84% to 92–99% during the program, and to 88–95% afterwards.

April 4, 2011

This meeting included presentations by:

Andrew Glazier, Chief of Staff, City Year Los Angeles
Michael Gray, Chief, Kinship Support Division, Department of Children and Family Services; Jennifer Hottenroth, Director, Education & Mentoring; and Teresa Rupel, Program Manager, Skid Row Assessment Team

City Year has been operating in Los Angeles for the past 4 years. Its Corps members are from 17–24 years of age and receive an education award and a stipend for a year of full-time service. 95% act as in-class tutors and mentors for youth at-risk of dropping out of LAUSD schools and use a “whole school, whole child” framework. They also participate in an academically oriented after-school program and a weekend program. Most importantly, Corps members serve as consistent, caring, “near peer” adult role models in all of their interactions with students, a proven contributor to dropout prevention. Using LAUSD’s 3-Tier Model, City Year does some work with Tier 1 students, but primarily concentrates on those in Tier 2. City Year uses three data indicators to select students for program participation—Attendance (less than 90%), Behavior (“unsatisfactory” mark for behavior in at least one class) and Course Performance (final grade

of “F” in Math or English). By the end of the 2009–10 school year, 50% of City Year middle school students moved on track in English and 48% in Math.

There are currently 23,698 school-aged children under the supervision of DCFS—11,410 in elementary school, 3,110 in middle school and 8,551 in high school. 30% of these youth function below grade level; 50% are held back at least once; 46% do not complete high school; and only 15% enroll in college. Early identification of youth with truancy issues is the key to changing these statistics and, as there are numerous and complex reasons for youth truancy, DCFS is employing a variety of strategies for increasing school attendance, including intensive work with school districts. The Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program, for example, is a very successful partnership with 5 school districts that outstations social workers on high school campuses to spearhead the development and implementation of individual education plans through building strong relationships with schools, families and foster students.

No families with children are now living on Skid Row streets, as two nonprofit organizations are effectively meeting their needs. Therefore, truancy is no longer the problem it was on Skid Row in the early 2000’s. On any given night, however, between 30 and 80 homeless families are sleeping in missions. Project staff and their partners understand and continually communicate the message that all children, after a couple of days of homelessness, are expected to be in school. The two best resources for serving homeless children and their families are the 211 information line and DPSS eligibility workers, and McKinney-Vento (Homeless Children and Youth) Coordinators have been assigned in each school district.

May 2, 2011

This meeting included presentations by:

Kari Thierer, National Director of School and Network Support for Big Picture Learning
Stan Ricketts, Director, Camp to Community Transition Program, Probation Department

The Big Picture approach is being used in over 60 schools in 15 states and in a growing number of countries around the world. This program can be adapted to fit specific school districts and communities and can be put into any kind of school. Big Picture Learning starts by asking a student “where are your gaps” and “what are your strengths” and begins from there, even when the gap is social/emotional rather than academic. In this way, Big Picture “helps kids know themselves” and develop their own school curriculum. It is not workbook or chapter-focused, but based on what a youth needs to know and what that youth already knows. Big Picture focuses heavily on probation youth, and believes in educating one youth at a time and getting them out into the real world twice weekly through internships tied into each student’s academic program. Transition planning is key, especially in and out of camps.

Teachers are “advisors” and generalists who guide the same group of students (usually 15 to 18 per group) throughout their high school years. As a result, youth are part of a community and bring their whole selves to their group meetings. Each student also has a mentor outside of school and these mentors, as well as parents, are actively engaged as resources to the Big Picture Learning community. In short, “*Big Picture takes care of truancy because, at their sites, kids want to go to school.*”

Kari suggested that judicial officers take the time to dig deeper into why a student is truant and proposed some key questions that they should ask youth who are truant. She also proposed getting the youth, parent, teacher and judicial officer, as well as key players in the youth's life (including the youth's ally or "someone who cares"), together in a *non-threatening, youth-centered conference*. Together, this group works with the youth to figure out a plan, as is being done, to various degrees, in SSTs, the Gloria Molina FYEP, with school-based DPOs, etc. and youth should be steered to compatible, supportive schools.

Probation currently has three initiatives addressing school truancy: (1) working with bus/MTA/Metro companies to align transportation pick-up times with school start times, and working with safety collaboratives to establish Safe School Zones designed to ensure safe passages to and from school. Pick-up and school start times have been successfully aligned and more safety collaboratives are now in place because, where they exist, crime has been reduced by 17%; (2) establishing increased penalties for crimes committed within 1000 feet of a school or within 500 feet of a bus stop; and (3) working with neighborhood vendors whose businesses are making youth tardy. There is often a 4 to 5 week delay in enrolling youth exiting camps into community-based schools, prompting the Department to focus more intensely on camp to community transitions. A pilot has been created involving 9 school districts, in which receiving districts are brought to the planning table 60 days before a camp youth is to be discharged.

June 6, 2011

This meeting focused on the efforts of the juvenile court and included presentations by:

Jack Furay, Supervising Referee, Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court (IJTC)
 Donna Groman, Supervising Judge, Delinquency Court
 Margaret Henry, Supervising Judge, Dependency Court
 Sherri Sobel, Referee, Dependency Court and Co-Chair, Juvenile Court Education
 Committee

And several other judges and referees from these three courts

Furay reported that: (1) in his years with the court, he has never seen a youth return to court with his/her school attendance record; (2) 70% of youth who return have not complied with the conditions set; and (3) 50% prefer to pay a fine (which must be paid before they can obtain a CDL) than perform community service or go to a program. He would very much like there to be a school representative in each of his courts or at least a designated school contact for the court to confer with about their truant students. One of the best options would be to have arrangements with schools for these youth to attend Saturday schools.

Groman reported that 25 of the approximately 30–40 youth seen every day at the Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center have poor school attendance. She tries to avoid sending truant youth to Juvenile Hall, as that results in their missing even more school. Instead, she looks at each youth's situation to see what can be done to help. Groman frequently sends them to Public Counsel's Education Clinic, which is conveniently located across the street from the court. There, clinic staff look at the youth's entire school history (including pre-school) to try to determine the core problem, and then talk with parents about solutions. In Groman's opinion, parent involvement is the most important factor to changing the youth's situation. She suggests parents have their youth obtain a daily sign-in check for every class their youth takes, and then impose consequences when they are

truant or miss a class. Stability is the key and Groman refers to a variety of community programs to keep the youth at home, such as tutoring, substance abuse prevention, mentoring, wraparound, etc. She also uses community detention programs as a low level sanction.

Henry explained that the Dependency Court works a little differently, as it doesn't really have parents to deal with. It relies on 6-month court reports for school attendance information and expects children's social workers to find out why their caseload youth are not attending school. Drugs are a big issue, and a lot of youth are afraid to go to a new school as the curriculum may be different or they fear being bullied or beat up, etc. Independent study is an option when youth aren't able to cope with school.

Sherri Sobel asks for 30-day reports on education for all of her cases. Her biggest concern is with AWOL youth who are missing school for periods of time. She sees this as a community issue, not a children's issue and, therefore, the support of adults is needed to resolve this problem. Also, there is a "big disconnect" between parents' expectations (almost all want their kids to go to college) and their behavior (not getting their kids up for school every day, for example) that must be addressed.

Other judicial officers then talked about the importance of determining the reason(s) for each youth's truancy and described what variables contribute to their sentencing decisions.

August 9, 2011

This meeting focused on comprehensive, collaborative approaches to improving school attendance and included presentations by:

Hedy Chang, Director, Attendance Works

Sue Fothergill, Director, Baltimore Student Attendance Initiative

Attendance Works is a national and state level initiative that promotes the important role of school attendance in achieving academic success and focuses, in particular, on reducing chronic absence (missing 10% or more of school in an academic year, whether absences are excused or not). Chang pointed out that students who are chronically absent in Kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read proficiently in 3rd grade and this is especially true for low-income children. In the Oakland Unified School District, over 14% of students (nearly 1 out of 7) are chronically absent. Although data is needed to identify programmatic solutions, it is not being used effectively. Recording attendance is done routinely and, in most districts, it is done electronically, but chronic absence is not typically calculated or monitored, even though that data exists. Further, California is one of only 5 states that does not even have attendance in its longitudinal student database. Hedy identified the major characteristics of successful attendance initiatives and gave examples of some of these efforts in Baltimore, Grand Rapids, and New York City. She then listed some of the things that school districts can provide to improve attendance and what, specifically, the TTF could target or promote.

For the first year of the Baltimore Student Attendance Initiative, the key components of Baltimore's attendance strategy included examining the data, spreading the word through forums, getting leaders on board and identifying partners. A broad-based work group of over 100 representatives was established, which developed a set of recommendations to dramatically increase student attendance. These recommendations included: instituting a text messaging transportation campaign

to gather data about student experiences getting to and from school; increasing the use of and institutionalizing best practices through a change in direction from a student-focused lens to a school-focused lens; leveraging the impact of after-school and community schools on attendance; making attendance a “must-respond-to” indicator for youth-serving agencies; improving the identification of and responsiveness to homeless youth; and changing student and parental attitudes about attendance. As a result, chronic absence in middle grades decreased by 15% and there were more than 16,000 fewer suspensions in Baltimore City public schools. Key policy changes included: ensuring that schools are places where older students would want to be; ensuring that students have a voice; holding schools and youth-serving agencies accountable for student attendance, as well as students and their families; providing many more incentives than punitive responses; and offering students meaningful choices and alternatives that address why students are absent, such as work-to-learning opportunities, academic options, and social/emotional supports. To reduce the number of school transitions, the Baltimore City School District decided to close or phase out most of its stand-alone middle schools and, instead, open preK–8th grade and 6–12th grade transformation schools.

The second year focused on: maintaining the momentum by strengthening universal approaches, deepening the work with special populations, implementing a coordinated campaign, targeting chronically absent students going into sensitive transition grades (K, 6 and 9), and revising/improving the use of attendance data. Fothergill presented a list of initiatives the school district is currently engaged in to improve attendance and highlighted the partnership between the City Schools and the City Department of Social Services. She then stressed the importance of attendance data in improving school attendance, gave examples of how Baltimore utilizes this data and noted the lessons learned by the Initiative so far.

August 23, 2011

This meeting was a youth and community forum organized by the Community Rights Campaign, a task force member. There were approximately 80 participants in the forum, including 23 speakers. Youth, teachers/educators, parents/family members and community advocates addressed their experiences related to truancy enforcement and prevention and offered suggestions to the task force for improving and/or building on current practices.

September 13, 2011

This meeting included presentations by:

Don Ferguson, CEO, Mobile TREC SafeKidZone Program

Debra Duardo, Director of Pupil Services, on the Los Angeles USD Grad Van program

David Sapp, Staff Attorney, ACLU of Southern California, on the work of the Los Angeles Community Collaborative

3.2 million people are involved in violent crime each year and 32 million are affected by it. Mobile TREC is a technology program that seeks to mobilize families, schools and neighborhoods to provide a safety net of responders to improve protection and accountability. Families can be equipped with an option on their mobile phone that triggers a massive response when and where necessary; schools can have an affordable, easily deployable, cell phone-based, tool to manage truant students; and neighborhoods can be empowered to respond when someone needs help. With respect to truancy, smart phones with a panic button are given out to students and

their families to create a safe school zone, as students can be prime targets for bullies and afraid to go to school. When the Mobile TREC system was first initiated, 2 of 10 panic button calls required police intervention, so police are now involved with the program from the beginning. Schools may apply for assistance or parents can do so voluntarily; referrals can also come from a SART or SARB. The Alhambra USD is piloting the truancy piece of Mobile TREC's services and about two dozen students are voluntarily participating.

The LAUSD Grad Van circulates among well-populated areas, is staffed by bilingual personnel, and is outfitted with computers that are hooked up to the LAUSD data system. It provides information about school enrollment, student grades, test scores, CAHSEE exam scores, after-school program participation, and attendance, much like that of a student cumulative record. The Grad Van helps fill the tremendous need for educational and attendance information and the Children's Court has arranged for the van to be parked at the court as often as needed so that court officers, CSWs, children's attorneys, and holders of education rights can easily obtain educational information on the youth they are responsible for.

David Sapp pointed out that the Los Angeles Community Collaborative has been focusing on the issuance of daytime curfew violation tickets, especially those issued for tardiness, and the negative impact of these tickets on parents who aren't even permitted to speak at hearings on their children's behalf. LAPD's new directive, which the Collaborative helped shape, is a positive step for addressing this issue, and more work is being done to find other solutions. The Collaborative reviewed the research on preventing/reducing truancy and looked at the Denver, Ohio and Baltimore models. Most current efforts are pilot programs and, therefore, there is not a lot of information/data on results.

He then presented the Collaborative's handout: *Addressing the Root Causes of Chronic Absence and Truancy: Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Improving Student Attendance, Academic Engagement & Community Health in Los Angeles County*. This document includes the top 30 core components of a research-based strategy to improve school attendance in the County. Its four main recommendations are:

- Repeal or significantly curtail the current LAPD daytime curfew ordinance and the method of its enforcement in court
- Use the Baltimore approach as a sensible and sustainable school district-wide way of ensuring that students stay in school
- Reform the IJTC court process to focus on solutions and support
- Ensure accurate and regular public dissemination of data on a bi-annual basis from public agencies with roles in implementing or enforcing policies that affect school attendance

On behalf of the Collaborative, David stressed that a vision is needed for bringing together all that we're learning from the pilots and ongoing research.

Sharon Watson distributed a list of the agreements and learnings of the task force over the past year which includes some components of an overall approach and highlights what is not working well currently, what is working well, and policies and practices that have proven to be effective or show promise.

A task force workgroup was then created to develop an overall approach to increasing school attendance in the County, based on the documents presented today and task force meeting discussions during the past year, to begin identifying recommended actions for implementing some of the best ideas generated so far. The remaining meetings of the task force during 2011 will focus on this work, and a summary report will be drafted by the January 2012 meeting.

*Full meeting summaries can be found on the Education Coordinating Council's website: www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org under Current Activities, School Attendance Task Force, Task Force Meetings, Agendas and Minutes.

Appendix F Alhambra Unified School District Programs

Parent University

Gateway To Success School Safety Event Bring Many Hands Together “Parent University”

One of the primary goals of the Alhambra School District is to ensure that all students are safe. The standards to educate a child are many, and these do not revolve only around school subjects. Factors such as a child's physical and emotional well-being are also crucial to his or her success.

“We work to educate the whole child, and it takes many people to do this,” said Dr. Laurel Bear, District Director of Student Services and Gateway To Success.

The Alhambra School District's Gateway To Success Program has been instrumental in helping bring in a 5-year Federal Grant through the Safe School and Healthy Students Initiative. The district is currently in its fourth year of the initiative, which revolves around school safety and focuses on violence prevention, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention, student behavioral, social, and emotional supports, mental health services, and early childhood social and emotional learning programs. The funding provides for extensive programs and support, such as Special Resource Officers to mentor students and serve as liaisons for the Police Department, detection dogs to look for contraband materials such as drugs or weapons, and a network of counselors to help at-risk students.

The programs the grant helps to fund illustrate the community and collaboration needed to reach every child. When the district hosted their event “Parent University,” the primary focus was to educate families about the importance of school safety. The phrase, “We all have a hand in every child's success” is a fitting theme to punctuate the day's activities.

“Many people have a hand in the success of the child, and we are celebrating that at the Parent University and the title reflects how important cooperation is,” Dr. Bear said.

The district's Gateway to Success program is presenting Parent University with the Alhambra Police Department monthly. The event features many workshops, guest speakers, an honor to local heroes, community resource vendors, and free childcare. Information will be available through translators in multiple languages. It is free to attend and will take place at various schools throughout the district.

Everyone in attendance has been encouraged to decorate a cardboard hand, which will be in both adult and child sizes. The completed hands will then be linked together and placed around the community.

Workshops are varied and designed to meet the diversity of the students within the district. Those offered include topics like teens and the Internet as hosted by an FBI agent, effective communication with students, graduation requirements, food and fitness, positive discipline, and the road to college. Parent and student advisory boards have been consulted to rank the events at Parent University and help determine its final shape and content.

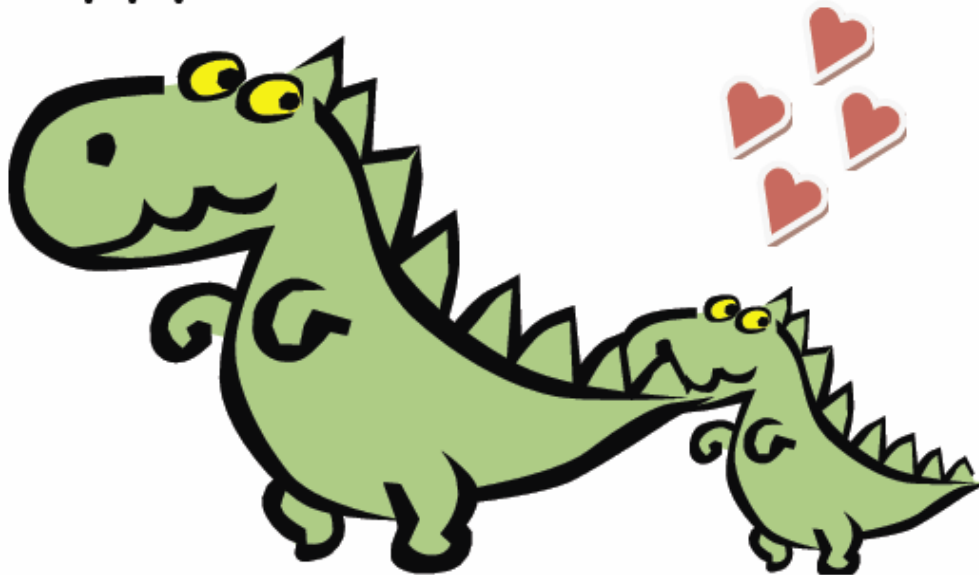
Dr. Bear underscored the event's theme in recognizing the boards' involvement as part of a “truly collaborative community.” The Police Department has also distributed posters advertising the free event around the community.

For more information, please contact Laurel Bear Ph.D. at (626) 943-3410, or at bear_laurel@alhambra.k12.ca.us.

Incredible Years



Want to be a Parent of a
Happy and Successful Child?



Attend
FREE Parenting Classes!

AUSD's Gateway to Success program will provide
FREE Parenting Classes to parents of children ages 3 to 5 years.

Learn EFFECTIVE and USEFUL parenting skills.

Classes will be offered in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Day and Time to be Announced.

To register or for more information, please call

(626) 943-3410

What It Will Take To Do Better

Doing better will require continuing efforts to develop strong relationships, improve communication, and share information among all of the various groups that are important to dependent and delinquent youth—judges, lawyers, teachers, social workers, probation officers, police, child care providers, caregivers, and many others. Even more important, doing better will require regular communication among families, caregivers, youth, and the professionals who make many of the critical decisions that affect their lives. Enhanced and continuous training and cross-training will be essential, and it may also be necessary to pilot-test more effective ways to help families navigate the complicated educational, legal, and social service systems of Los Angeles County.

Two important topics to address in this effort are the roles and responsibilities of key players and their respective accountabilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

In September 2005, a representative group of stakeholders who play a role in the educational lives of youth[†] in the child welfare and probation systems—including youth, biological and foster parents, holders of educational rights, caseworkers, CASAs, legal experts, and school personnel—participated in a work session to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities. They agreed that individuals entrusted with raising the educational attainment of foster and probation youth have both collective and individual responsibilities. **The collective responsibility of all groups is to adhere to and live by the Seven Basic Agreements spelled out on page 8.**

Individual responsibilities are:

Youth

- ✓ Actively participate in planning for their education and their future.
- ✓ Regularly attend school and educational and enrichment programs.
- ✓ Complete homework and other school assignments.
- ✓ Ask for help when needed.
- ✓ Seek out interests/hobbies and ways to participate in them.
- ✓ Advocate for what they think they need to further their education.

Major challenges cited by youth:

- They are usually not included in their educational planning.
- Transcripts and records are often delayed, and youth are not listened to about what classes they have completed and what credits they have earned.

[†] The children and youth who are the subject of this Blueprint are those under the supervision of Los Angeles County's DCFS and Probation Department. They are referred to in several ways throughout this report—as dependent and delinquent youth, as foster and probation youth, and as system youth. These terms are used interchangeably, even though some differences exist. These children and youth range in age from newborn to 21 years.

- Frequently, no one ensures their attendance at school or that adequate transportation is available.
- They do not have the information they need about what resources exist, what post-high school options are available, what courses they need for higher education, how to apply for financial aid, etc.
- Fellow students often work in school offices where they may be privy to confidential information or overhear conversations about foster and probation youth.

“Everyone is worried about politics and personal issues between partners, but no one is worrying about the kids.”

—Machelle Wolf, former foster and probation youth

Parents

- ✓ Provide a home structure that supports the education of the youth (when the youth is at home).
- ✓ Maintain a strong attachment with the youth.
- ✓ Encourage stability in their child’s enrollment in early care and development programs, and in school.
- ✓ Advocate for the youth (regarding school enrollment, classes needed, etc.) and seek out other advocates when necessary (for translation services, for example).
- ✓ Request their child’s enrollment in after-school, off-track, and summer programs and services.
- ✓ Link with teachers, review teacher reports, and attend school conferences.
- ✓ Participate in school functions, activities, and events whenever possible.
- ✓ See that the youth has school supplies, access to technology, adequate transportation, etc.
- ✓ Partner with caregivers around the youth’s needs.
- ✓ Link with the youth’s social worker/probation officer on all issues.

Major challenges cited by parents:

- The system cuts parents out of the process and does not support their role.
- They often don’t have access to the information they need to fulfill their responsibilities.
- Parents may not be the holders of education rights.
- Family members don’t always get permission to contact a youth in foster care.

Caregivers

Caregivers have most of the same responsibilities as parents do. In addition, they must:

- ✓ Enroll the child in early care/child development programs and in school.
- ✓ Be knowledgeable about the youth's social/emotional, developmental, and educational needs.
- ✓ Maintain the day-to-day responsibility of supporting the youth's education and related needs (nutrition, for example, and social, physical, and emotional well-being).
- ✓ Make certain that the youth completes assigned schoolwork.
- ✓ Communicate with the youth and his or her parents.
- ✓ Keep caseworkers and others informed about the youth, and raise issues when necessary.
- ✓ Provide transportation and items needed for school (pencils, paper, etc.).
- ✓ Encourage and support the youth's participation in after-school, off-track, and summer academic and enrichment programs and activities.
- ✓ Be familiar with higher education requirements (classes, financial aid opportunities and requirements, etc.).
- ✓ Gather information about the youth's educational status, ongoing progress, and any developing problems, to make recommendations to and help inform the social worker/probation officer and the court.
- ✓ Collect the information needed for the youth's health and education passport and ensure that the passport accompanies the youth if his or her placement changes.
- ✓ Attend the youth's IFSP (Individualized Family Support Plan) and IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings.
- ✓ Be informed of the youth's problems and advocate for the youth to receive the services needed to meet his or her educational needs.
- ✓ Minimize the number of appointments scheduled for youth during school hours.

Major challenges cited by caregivers:

- They often do not have up-to-date contact information for parents.
- Despite AB 490, schools are not cooperating with caregivers to ensure the timely enrollment of youth.
- When caregivers are located some distance from a youth's school, they often do not have the time or financial resources to provide transportation to and from school. Given the size of Los Angeles County, this is a particularly difficult challenge to solve.
- Because of community safety issues, current policies prevent caregivers from allowing probation youth to participate in unsupervised after-school activities.
- Educational information about the youth is rarely provided at the time of placement.

- Academic progress is disrupted when the youth is released home shortly before the end of the semester.
- Caseworkers are not always available to participate in placement provider treatment planning meetings.

Holders of education rights (court-assigned ‘responsible adults’)

- ✓ Assert the youth’s educational rights with the school.
- ✓ Know the educational needs of the youth and how to find available services.
- ✓ Ensure that the youth is properly enrolled in educational programs and school, and that he or she is attending regularly.
- ✓ Request psycho-educational assessments for youth who may need special education services, and attend IFSP and IEP meetings to advocate for the youth’s needs.
- ✓ Monitor the implementation of prescribed services and make sure they are delivered.
- ✓ Ensure the stability of the youth in school or early care/child development programs.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with the youth’s teacher and other school staff.
- ✓ Collect the required documentation and track the youth’s educational progress.

Major challenges cited by holders of education rights:

- Who decides if a given program is the best fit?
- Getting information is difficult; schools do not know who these youth are nor where educational information should be sent.
- Districts may not conform with federal IEP guidelines.
- System barriers make it unnecessarily difficult for youth to access non-public school services.

Children’s Social Workers and Deputy Probation Officers (county department case managers)

- ✓ Ensure that educational plans—including Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILPs)—are developed for youth as part of the case planning process.
- ✓ Give strong consideration to school stability and whether a youth is succeeding in his or her current school when making placement decisions.
- ✓ Be knowledgeable about locating education resources, and help families and youth access them.
- ✓ Encourage youth and their families to be accountable for their educational achievement, and keep parents involved when possible.
- ✓ Provide caregivers with current educational information when the youth is placed.
- ✓ Ensure and assist youth in transitions between schools.
- ✓ When a youth transfers to another school, notify that school and request that the student be checked out.

- ✓ Make certain that transportation plans are developed when the distance to school is a barrier.
- ✓ Help build bridges among parents, caregivers, and schools.
- ✓ Discuss the youth's educational progress with parents and youth regularly.
- ✓ Understand child/youth development and help refer youth, caregivers, and families to appropriate services.
- ✓ Be informed of the youth's problems and advocate for the youth to get services that meet his or her educational needs.
- ✓ Inform the school and the caregiver about who holds the youth's education rights.
- ✓ Intervene when there is a problem at the school.
- ✓ Attend the youth's IFSP and IEP meetings.
- ✓ Refer young children for mandated CAPTA (Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act) and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) screenings.
- ✓ Gather information about the youth's educational status, ongoing progress, and any developing problems, to make recommendations to and help inform the court.
- ✓ Regularly update the educational information in information systems and case files.
- ✓ Make every effort to meet with youth during non-classroom time.

Major challenges cited by case managers:

- No point person exists at the school to communicate with and get information about how the youth is doing.
- Delays often occur in identifying holders of education rights.
- Some schools are reluctant to enroll youth who are returning from probation halls and camps.
- Youth are often directed to non-mainstream schools and are thus denied access to the full range of program options and resources available to others.
- Courts place restrictions on the types of placements to be used, making it difficult to keep youth in the same school district.

**School teachers/administrators/personnel
(public, non-public and charter)**

- ✓ Understand and meet the unique educational needs of foster and probation youth.
- ✓ Communicate the youth's educational progress and concerns with all responsible adults involved with the youth.
- ✓ Educate the youth in the most appropriate setting for his or her needs.
- ✓ Be sensitive to the unique circumstances of foster and probation youth when developing curricular assignments that address family ties.
- ✓ Assist with the immediate enrollment of the youth.
- ✓ Designate one person in the school as a 'point of contact' for the youth, to help with enrollment and checkout, troubleshoot, mediate disputes, and connect the youth to resources.

- ✓ Transfer records in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Identify available school resources.
- ✓ Provide a private space on the school grounds for youth to meet with caseworkers, to help maintain confidentiality.
- ✓ Assist in the youth's educational planning with the parent or caregiver, including academic assessments, how to resolve deficiencies, and the courses needed for graduation and entrance into post-secondary institutions.
- ✓ Develop policies and procedures and provide services for special-needs children.
- ✓ Understand the rights of the youth and family.

Major challenges cited by school personnel:

- Schools do not know who the case manager is and are often told that they cannot get the name of this person because of confidentiality issues.
- Key personnel within the school to assist are not identified.
- Calls into the school are usually handled by clerks whose employment turns over frequently.
- Private space for meetings is at a premium in many public schools.

Legal advocates/attorneys

- ✓ Be educated about and advocate for the youth's rights.
- ✓ Help educate parents and caregivers about the youth's rights.
- ✓ Be aware of the educational process and the youth's progress in it.
- ✓ Understand child development and the system of available services, especially with regard to young children.
- ✓ Advocate to meet the youth's individual needs in all areas.
- ✓ Know how to access specialists.
- ✓ Build relationships on all levels that affect the youth.
- ✓ Assist in empowering youth and caregivers to advocate for their needs in the future.
- ✓ Use the court process when necessary to ensure the youth's rights.
- ✓ Make every effort to minimize the amount of school time the youth has to miss for appointments and court hearings.

Major challenges cited by attorneys:

- Access is limited to school personnel, educational records, and information about the youth's progress.
- A lack of parity of representation exists for youth in the delinquency system because of differences in standards among the Los Angeles County Public Defender, the Alternate Public Defender, and panel attorneys.
- The panel structure for delinquency attorneys doesn't lend itself to continuity and a focus on long-term issues such as education.

County departments

- ✓ Ensure that educational planning is part of all case planning (in team decision-making, case conferences, etc.).
- ✓ Address educational considerations when developing permanency and placement plans.
- ✓ Routinely include educational planning and progress in court reports.
- ✓ Encourage departmental staff to be knowledgeable about and connect youth to the range of program supports and services available.
- ✓ Help families and communities provide environments that support learning.
- ✓ Outstation liaisons in schools to help link youth to services and to troubleshoot.
- ✓ Partner with community agencies to expand resources for youth.
- ✓ Promote the stability of casework staff assigned to youth.

“Train foster parents to help them manage common problems and reduce failed placements.”

—Richard Kadison, M.D., Chief of the Mental Health Service at Harvard University, author of “College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It”

School districts

- ✓ Set a positive tone for students and create a welcoming environment.
- ✓ Provide safe school campuses, including passages to and from.
- ✓ Train school personnel about the unique educational needs of foster and probation youth.
- ✓ Make sure that AB 490 education liaisons work with and support school-site-designated point persons for foster and probation youth.
- ✓ Ensure the timeliness of educational planning and implementation.
- ✓ Provide programs and resources that help youth achieve.
- ✓ Establish policies that help youth succeed, and hold staff accountable for following them.
- ✓ Ensure that surrogate parents appointed for children eligible for special education services are trained in and fulfill their mandated duties.
- ✓ Establish agreements across school districts to assist students in completing partially satisfied course requirements in a timely manner.
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality regarding students’ status as wards of the court.

Judiciary

- ✓ Hold all parts of the system—including child welfare workers, probation officers, attorneys, caregivers, and school personnel (to the extent possible)—responsible for the youth’s educational achievement, issuing orders as needed and monitoring progress.
- ✓ At least every six months, make inquiries of the youth, the family, advocates, and agency personnel about the youth’s developmental and educational progress; intervene when there is a need, and recognize achievement.
- ✓ Ensure that every youth has an effective holder of education rights and that this person’s identity is quickly communicated to CSWs, DPOs, caregivers, and school personnel.
- ✓ Understand the roles of those involved with the youth’s educational achievement.
- ✓ Educate hearing officers about the educational needs of foster and probation youth, who is responsible for meeting those needs, and the types of resources available to meet them.



[2024 National School Climate Survey](#)

Join us in amplifying the NSCS message — together, we can build safe and affirming schools for all!

Links to survey: • [English](#) • [Spanish](#)

About the Survey

The GLSEN National School Climate Survey is our flagship report on the school experiences of LGBTQIA2S+ youth in schools. Delving into the challenges LGBTQIA2S+ students face and the resources supporting their well-being, this survey sheds light on the current school climate for our youth and informs policy makers nationwide. Join GLSEN in spreading the word! Together, we can make a difference for youth in schools.

Who can take the survey?



LGBTQIA2S+ youth who are 13 years or older and attended middle or high school in the US during the 2023-2024 school year.

In this kit (in English & Spanish)

1. [Social media copy](#)
 - a. [Social graphics](#)
2. [Flyers](#)
3. [E-mail copy](#) (for youth & adult audiences)
4. [Talking points](#)
5. [Resource for Educators to share about the survey](#) (English)
 - a. Talking points for educators
 - b. Letter template to administrators

Social Copy

English

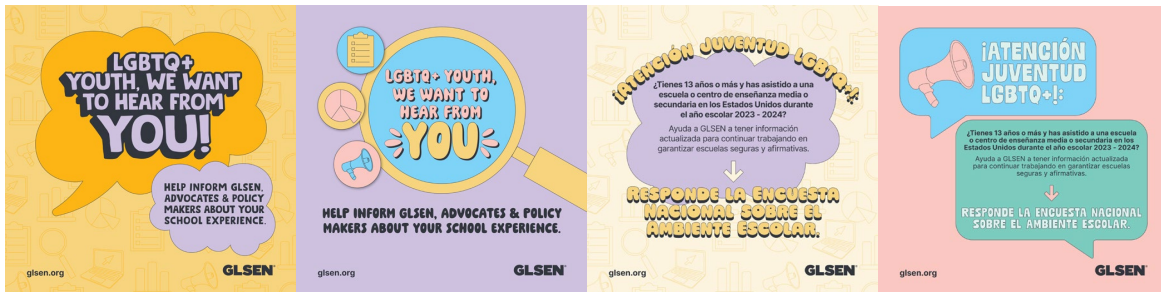
-  LGBTQ+ Youth: Make Your Voice Heard! Are you 13+ and attended a US middle or high school during the 23-24 school year? Join us in shaping safer, more affirming schools. Take @GLSEN's National School Climate Survey!
-  Calling LGBTQ+ Youth: Your Voice Matters! Help shape national policy by completing @GLSEN's 2024 National School Climate Survey. Share your experiences and advocate for change!

2024 National School Climate Survey Outreach Toolkit

• 📣 LGBTQ+ Youth, Speak Up! Your school experience matters. Take @GLSEN's National School Climate Survey today and help inform advocates and policy makers. Don't forget to spread the word to three friends!
Español

- 🌈 Juventud LGBTQ+: ¡Haz que tu voz se oiga fuerte y claro! ¿Tienes más de 13 años cumplidos y has asistido a una escuela o centro de enseñanza media o secundaria en los EE. UU. durante el año escolar 23 - 24? Únete a nosotros para crear escuelas más seguras y afirmativas. ¡Participa en la Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar de @GLSEN!
- 🇺🇸 ¡Atención Juventud LGBTQ+!: ¡Tu voz importa! Ayuda a formar la política nacional completando la Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar 2024 de @GLSEN. ¡Comparte tus experiencias y aboga por el cambio!
- 📣 Juventud LGBTQ+, ¡Levanten la voz! Tu experiencia escolar es importante. Responde hoy a la Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar de @GLSEN y ayuda a mantener informados a defensores de derechos y responsables de crear políticas. No olvides correr la voz a tres amistades.

[Social Graphics in English](#) | [Social Graphics in Spanish](#) (samples below)



Reshare

After the initial NSCS launch on our social platforms, we are continuing to build momentum. Stay connected with @GLSEN on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn to be part of the ongoing NSCS journey.

To reshare a post to your Instagram story and tag @GLSEN, follow these steps:

- 1) Open Instagram and navigate to the @GLSEN page. Find a social post about the NSCS on our feed.
- 2) Share to Story: Below the post, tap the paper airplane icon (similar to the direct message icon). In the menu that appears, select "Add post to your story."
- 3) Customize Your Story: Once the post is added to your story, you can customize it with text. Tap on the screen to bring up the text box.
- 4) Tag @GLSEN: Type "@GLSEN" to tag us. Instagram will suggest the official GLSEN account as you type; select it from the suggestions. Adjust the tag's position and size by dragging and pinching the text box.
- 5) Share Your Story: Once you are satisfied with your story, tap "Your Story" at the bottom to share it with all your followers.

2024 National School Climate Survey Outreach Toolkit

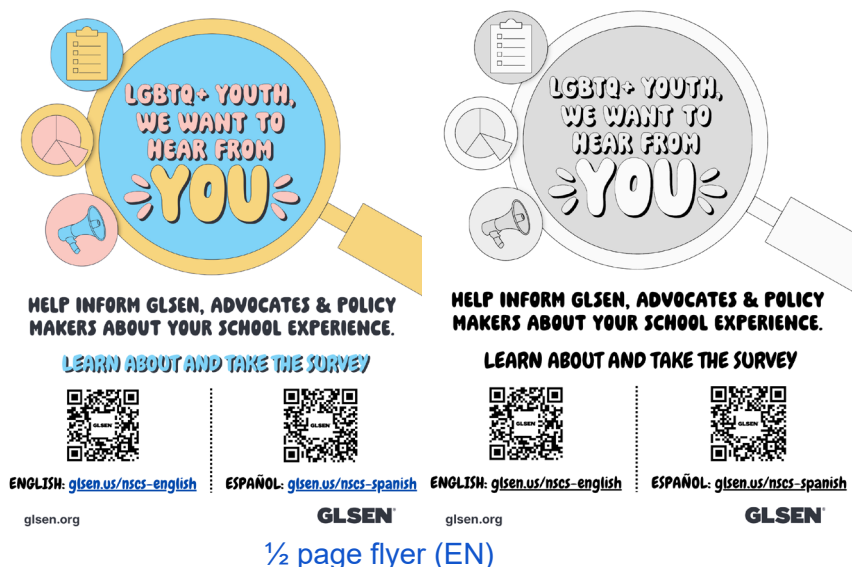
Here's a glimpse at our tentative posting schedule:

- 🔍 Follow-up Posts:
 - 🌈 Bi-weekly reminders

Flyers

English

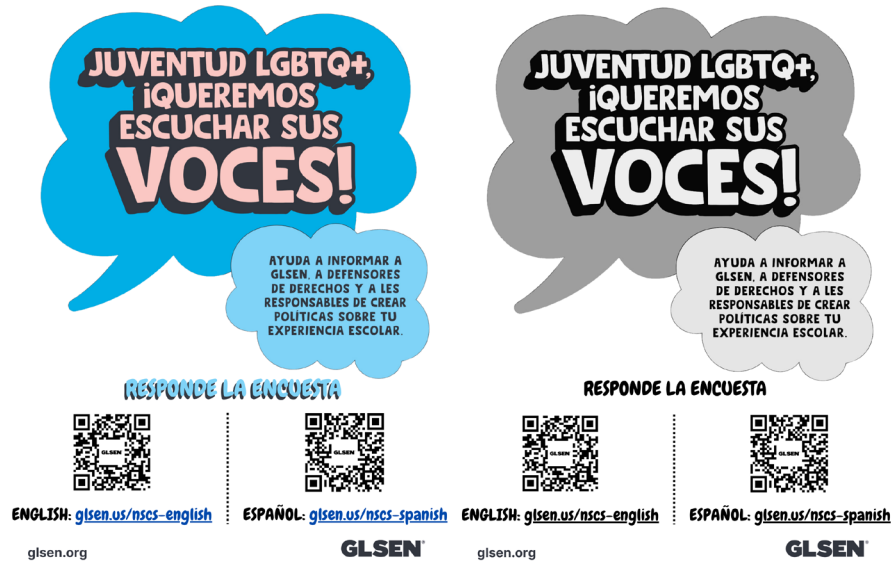
[NSCS flyer Color \(1\).pdf](#) [NSCS Flyer BW.pdf](#) (samples below)



Español

[ES NSCS flyer Color.pdf](#) [ES NSCS Flyer BW.pdf](#)

2024 National School Climate Survey Outreach Toolkit



[½ page flyer \(ES\)](#)

E-mail/Listserv Copy

Youth Audience

English

Calling LGBTQIA2S+ Youth!**Share your voice by taking GLSEN's 2024 National School Climate Survey!**

This survey aims to understand the school experiences of LGBTQIA2S+ youth. What we learn from this survey will support our continued efforts to create safe and affirming environments for LGBTQIA2S+ youth in schools.

[Take the survey in English!](#) | [¡Participa la encuesta en español!](#)

The survey is available to students aged 13 or older who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ and have attended middle or high school in the United States, a U.S. territory, or a U.S. military base overseas during the 2023-2024 school year.

If this does not describe you, you can still help us by [sharing this survey with others!](#)

Thank you!

2024 National School Climate Survey Outreach Toolkit

Español

¡Un llamado a jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+!**Comparta su voz participando en la Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar 2024 de GLSEN.**

El objetivo de esta encuesta es conocer la experiencia de jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+ en la escuela. Lo que aprendamos de esta encuesta apoyará nuestros esfuerzos continuos para crear entornos seguros y de afirmación para jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+ en las escuelas.

[¡Haz la encuesta en español!](#)

La encuesta está disponible para estudiantes de 13 años o más que se identifiquen como LGBTQIA2S+ y hayan asistido a una escuela secundaria o preparatoria en los Estados Unidos, un territorio de los Estados Unidos o una base militar de los Estados Unidos en el extranjero durante el año escolar 2023-2024.

Si no es así, puede ayudarnos [compartiendo esta encuesta con más personas](#).

Gracias.

Adult Audience

English

GLSEN's 2024 National School Climate Survey is LIVE!

GLSEN has recently launched the [2024 National School Climate Survey](#). This survey aims to understand the school experiences of LGBTQIA2S+ youth. The insights gathered will inform our continuous efforts to create safe and affirming environments for LGBTQIA2S+ youth in schools.

We need your support in distributing the survey to LGBTQIA2S+ youth in your communities and networks who are 13 years and older and attended middle/high school in the 2023-2024 academic year. We especially want to **amplify the experiences of LGBTQIA2S+ students of color, trans students, LGBTQIA2S+ students in rural areas and so on**, and we are working with organizations on the ground to disseminate the survey.

Help us spread the word virtually by using our [outreach toolkit](#) (which includes sample post language and graphics), or print and share our [flyer in color](#) or [flyer in black/white](#) (these have QR codes and links to English and Spanish versions of the survey).

Thank you so much for your help! Together, we can build safe and affirming schools for all!

2024 National School Climate Survey Outreach Toolkit

Español

¡La Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar 2024 de GLSEN está EN VIVO!

GLSEN ha lanzado recientemente la [Encuesta Nacional sobre el Ambiente Escolar 2024](#). Esta encuesta tiene como objetivo comprender las experiencias escolares de jóvenes de la comunidad LGBTQIA2S+. La información recopilada servirá de base para nuestros continuos esfuerzos por crear entornos seguros y de afirmación para jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+ en escuelas.

Necesitamos su apoyo para distribuir la encuesta entre jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+ de sus comunidades y redes que tengan 13 años o más y hayan asistido a la escuela media/secundaria en el año académico 2023-2024. Queremos **profundizar** especialmente en **experiencias de estudiantes LGBTQIA2S+ de color, trans, LGBTQIA2S+, con residencia en áreas rurales, etc.** Estamos trabajando con organizaciones del lugar para difundir la encuesta.

Ayúdenos a correr la voz virtualmente utilizando nuestro [kit de herramientas para redes](#) sociales (que incluye ejemplos de texto y gráficos para publicaciones), o imprima y comparta nuestro [folleto en color](#) o [en blanco y negro](#) (contienen códigos QR y enlaces a las versiones en inglés y español de la encuesta).

¡Muchas gracias por tu ayuda! Juntos podemos construir escuelas seguras y afirmativas para todos.

Talking Points

English

- This survey is about school experiences of youth who are LGBTQIA2S+.
- The information we gather is used to work toward building safe and affirming schools for all students.
- LGBTQIA2S+ youth who are 13 years and older and have attended middle or high school in the US during the 2023-2024 school year are eligible.

Español

- Esta encuesta trata sobre las experiencias escolares de jóvenes parte de la comunidad LGBTQIA2S+.
- La información que recopilamos se utiliza para trabajar en la construcción de escuelas seguras y de afirmación para estudiantes.
- Podrán participar jóvenes LGBTQIA2S+ mayores de 13 años que hayan cursado estudios de secundaria o bachillerato en los Estados Unidos durante el curso escolar 2023-2024.