



## **May 21, 2025, 9:00 a.m. | Hybrid Meeting**

*In-Person: Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court | 201 Centre Plaza Drive |  
Monterey Park, CA 91754 | DCFS Conference Room | Suite 4, Room Number 1627*

*Remote: via Microsoft Teams*

Member	Tanya Ortiz Franklin, ECC Chair, Los Angeles Unified School District
Representatives	Fabricio Segovia, ECC Vice Chair, former foster youth
Present:	Judge Akemi Arakaki, ECC Vice Chair, Los Angeles Superior Court
	Naomi Andrews, Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA)
	Jessica Chandler, former foster/probation youth
	Yasmin Dorado, Antelope Valley High School District
	Jessica Gonzalez, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Los Angeles
	John Hamilton, California State University system
	Dora Jacildo, Commission for Children and Families
	Ayanna McLeod, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
	Denise Miranda, Los Angeles Unified School District
	Judge Michael Nash (Ret.), Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Kristin Sakoda, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
	Luciana Svidler, Children's Law Center of California
	Tiara Summers, Los Angeles County Youth Commission
	Kanchana Tate, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
	Rachelle Touzard, Los Angeles County Office of Education
	Danielle Vappie, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development
	Trish Wilson, Lancaster School District
Additional	Jason Gutierrez, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Presenters:	Jennifer Higuchi, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
	Elisabeth Nails, Department of Arts and Culture
	Jessica Petrass, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)
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
	Evelyn Hughes, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection

### **Agenda Item 1: Call to Order, Introductions, Land Acknowledgement, AB 2449 Notification/Motion**

Chair Tanya Ortiz Franklin brought the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m., welcoming everyone to May's National Foster Care Month, and recognizing the education, child-welfare, and community partners who all support youth involved in the foster-care system. She further thanked the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for helping the ECC secure today's meet-

ing room. Following member self-introductions, Elizabeth Koenig read Los Angeles County's [land acknowledgement](#).

Ortiz Franklin relayed a request from Rachelle Touzard of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to attend today's meeting remotely under AB 2449 due to just cause (illness); Touzard confirmed her request verbally, adding that no persons over the age of 18 were present at her location.

- **Judge Akemi Arakaki moved that Touzard be permitted to represent LACOE from her remote location and Judge Michael Nash seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Koenig reviewed in-person, online, and telephonic housekeeping issues and reminded attendees that the meeting was being recorded for note-taking purposes. She concluded Agenda Item 1 with the County of Los Angeles [land acknowledgement](#).

Because of a presenter's schedule change, Ortiz Franklin explained, the order of Agenda Item 2 and Agenda Item 3 on the printed agenda will be switched.

**Agenda Item 3. Presentation and Discussion: The CalKIDS Program | Update on FAFSA/CADAA Completions | Announcement of School-District Winners with Highest FAFSA Completion Rates**

**CalKIDS** Jessica Petrass, Director of Education for John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), presented on the California Kids Investment and Development Savings ([CalKIDS](#)) program (**Attachment 1** to these minutes), a 529 children's savings account initiative created and funded by the State of California to help more children have an opportunity to save for higher education.

- Starting July 1, 2022, CalKIDS interest-bearing accounts have been/are being opened for every child born in the state regardless of parental income ('newborn' accounts). As of July 1, 2023, the initial deposit to each of those accounts was \$100.
- During the 2021–2022 academic year, California public-school students identified as **low-income**<sup>1</sup> were given CalKIDS 'school-age' interest-bearing accounts with a seed deposit of \$500 if they were enrolled in 1st through 12th grade on the California Department of Education's (CDE's) Census Day—the first Wednesday in October. If a student was in addition identified as a **foster youth** or **homeless**, they received an additional \$500 for each designation, totaling up to \$1,500.

Beginning in academic year 2022–2023 and every year thereafter, each eligible low-income public-school student enrolled in 1st grade, as recorded on the CDE's Census Day, receives the award amounts (as applicable) listed in the second bullet above.

At first, only eligible low-income first-graders had accounts created for them with an initial deposit. With the passage of AB 2508 in 2024 (sponsored by JBAY), eligibility for new accounts—plus 'foster youth' and 'homeless' deposits—was theoretically expanded to foster youth in grades 1 through 12 (rather than those in first grade only) starting with the 2024–2025 academic year. "We hope that will ultimately be possible," Petrass stated, "since there was no additional appropriation of funds. I'll keep you posted on that."

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<sup>1</sup> "Low-income" status is defined in each school district's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). See slide 4 of **Attachment 1**.

“Research shows there’s a lot of value in creating college savings accounts for children,” she continued. “With them, kids are three times more likely to enroll in college, and five times more likely to graduate. Even five hundred dollars—not a life-changing amount for someone continuing their schooling—plants the seed with young people, saying *college is possible*. You’ve got an account here waiting for you.”

Petrass recommended that everyone share the two-sided CalKIDS informational flyer (included as **Attachment 2**) to spread the word about the program—especially to graduating seniors if they attended any grade (1 through 12) in California public schools during academic year 2021–2022 and were identified as low-income, foster youth, or experiencing homelessness that year—and encourage students to access their accounts.

The ensuing discussion covered the following issues:

- Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs), needed to access/claim any CalKIDS account, appear on high-school transcripts or can be requested from a school counselor; **OR** students may instead use the unique CalKIDS code on the program’s introductory letter.
- SSIDs should be included in the packets foster youth receive whenever they change placements; Judge Nash suggested that Welfare & Institutions Code §381 should be amended so that SSIDs are also in the materials youth are given before they leave care.
- Luciana Svidler also suggested potentially pursuing legislation to require documentation in the education section of court reports that CalKIDS information has been provided to the youth.
- Several meeting attendees agreed that documenting a student’s SSID should *not* be added to the long list of social-worker responsibilities. It is available through the Educational Passport System (EPS) for districts that share data with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and students themselves may obtain it at their schools.
- Perhaps, however, the Department of Children and Family Services could release an F.Y.I. notice about the CalKIDS college accounts and how older youth in particular need their SSIDs to access and track the funds in their accounts.
- Kate Teague from California Youth Connection suggested including CalKIDS in the required post-secondary training for resource parents.
- Jessica Gonzalez from CASA of LA would like JBAY to present this information to CASAs.
- What CalKIDS provisions exist for students in non-public schools, which many children in care historically attend? The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is not used by all non-public schools, so the formulas for student eligibility as ‘low-income,’ ‘foster youth,’ and ‘homeless’ may not be automatically applied.

In the Education Code, said Jill Rowland from the Alliance for Children’s Rights, a division tends to exist between ‘private’ schools and schools functioning within a typical public school district—considered a ‘local educational agency’ or LEA. “Students attending charter or non-public schools may be doing so as part of their Individualized Education Programs [IEPs] developed by their LEAs,” she continued. “Under typical usage, I would think that non-public school kids should be included in the CalKIDS program.”

Petrass explained that this seems to be a gray area. Original eligibility data was pulled from public school LCFF reporting. If students were attending a non-public school (NPS) through an LEA placement, they might be counted—but no clear statewide guidance confirms this. She recommended following up with CalKIDS or CDE.

- The CalKIDS opportunity should also be talked about with caregivers and in Child and Family Team meetings, especially for/with older youth, as should additional higher-education funding tools such as the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#) and the [California Dream Act Application \(CADAA\)](#).

Petrass will research the issue and perhaps gather a small workgroup to look at strategies to spread the word, making the CalKIDS program a known quantity within all Los Angeles County human-service agencies and schools. She will circle back with the ECC regarding next steps to increase the number of youth in foster care accessing this benefit.

- Petrass would like to see student-level data on how many CalKIDS accounts have been accessed (similar to the information collected on FAFSA submissions), but this level of data is not currently available. At present, the State Treasurer’s Office releases only aggregate registration and claim data at the county level.

**Update on FAFSA®/CADAA Completions | Competition Winners** Jason Gutierrez from the Los Angeles County Office of Education presented **Attachment 3**, the latest data collected on financial-aid application submissions by graduating seniors in the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems during the 2024–2025 academic year. The goal was to have 72 percent complete their applications by the due date. However, that number reached only 56 percent by May 19, many believe because of the increasingly anti-immigrant rhetoric from the current federal administration and students’ natural wish to protect parents who may be undocumented.

- Page 3 of the attachment breaks down completions by LACOE’s five geographic county regions, showing the percentages of graduating foster and probation seniors completing either the FAFSA or the CADAA as of March 20, April 16, and May 19.
- Page 4 congratulates the 2024–2025 school-district winners, including ECC member Los Angeles Unified in the ‘large district’ category.
- Page 5 provides links to the *National Foster Care Awareness Month Toolkit* and the *2024 Summer Resource Guide* for students in foster care.

The initiative’s data reconciliation takes place next week, Gutierrez told attendees, and LACOE hopes that the final completion percentage may rise as a result.

**Agenda Item 2. Presentation and Discussion on Department of Arts and Culture Efforts to Support Youth Involved in the Child-Welfare and Juvenile-Justice Systems and How ECC Members and Constituents Might Partner**

Chair Ortiz Franklin introduced the Department of Arts and Culture’s director, Kristin Sakoda, appointed by the Board of Supervisors as department head in 2019 after having previously served as Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. Since then, she has led the organization through its historic transition to being the County’s first Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), building on the Board’s longstanding belief in access to the arts. Sakoda is an arts executive, attorney, and performing artist with more than 25 years in the field. Prior to her work at DAC, she served in key leadership roles at the New York City Department of Cultural

Affairs. She holds a J.D. from NYU School of Law with honors in Entertainment Law, and a B.A. from Stanford University with a specialization in Race and Ethnicity and a secondary major in Feminist Studies.

Sakoda presented the slides appearing as **Attachment 4** to these minutes, explaining her department's mission, vision, and overall programs and services, including the L.A. County ArtsEd Collective (starting on page 3 of Attachment 4), a public/private collective-impact initiative:

- Prioritizing resources for youth historically excluded from learning in the arts
- Supporting regional efforts to expand school- and community-based arts education (particularly for youth in institutions) and creative career pathways for youth
- Increasing public awareness about the value of arts education

The Creative Wellbeing initiative—formed with DAC, the Office of Child Protection, the [Arts for Healing and Justice Network](#) (AHJN), and the Los Angeles County departments of Mental Health and Children and Family Services—was collaboratively developed as an approach for building communities of wellness especially for at-risk and system-impacted youth, those at risk of becoming system-impacted, and the adults who support them.

- Over the summer, arts partners such as [artworxLA](#) kept Creative Wellbeing services flowing by directly supporting Rose City Continuation High School (Pasadena Unified) students beyond their in-school work. One Rose City student, in fact, completed the Procreate Design course at ArtCenter College of Design, a special program developed in partnership with artworxLA.
- During the fall, teaching artists from member organizations of AHJN provided workshops for the Department of Health Services' Ambulatory Care Network and the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention.
- In December, a sound-bowl activity was arranged during Aviva Family and Children's Services' Caregivers Appreciation Day event.
- Student Danielle Galvan Gomez provided artwork for the Creative Wellbeing Curriculum Guide.

DAC remains affiliated with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, an advisory body appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and also serves as "administrative backbone" for the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, Sakoda explained. It is also involved with grantmaking and professional development in various County-led, philanthropic, and educational entities, in research on and evaluation of those and other initiatives, and with the collection, commissioning, and conservation of civic art. In addition, DAC's cross-sector arts collaborations involve creative strategists in various County departments.

The [Countywide Cultural Policy Strategic Plan](#), requested by the Board of Supervisors in 2017, positions Los Angeles County as a national arts leader in advancing cultural equity and inclusion in every sector of civic life.

- Programs invest in the arts sector and cultural services that reflect and serve the county's diverse communities, with 99 percent of ZIP Codes reached.

- Policies advancing arts and culture in the region adopted by the Board of Supervisors include:
  - Cultural equity and inclusion initiative
  - Countywide Cultural Policy Strategic Plan
  - Regional blueprint for arts education
  - County arts and justice reform plan
- The arts are being integrated into many other County plans, such as aging, sustainability, the Los Angeles River Master Plan, and so on.
- Practices leverage arts and culture as an equity strategy across sectors of civic life.

**Agenda Item 4. Updates and Roundtable Discussion with ECC Members and Constituents on the Implementation of the ECC's Strategic Plan Priority Areas**

The co-leads of the Stability/Chronic Absenteeism Workgroup—Yasmin Dorado from the Antelope Valley Unified High School District and Jennifer Higuchi from the Department of Children and Family Services—submitted their Priority Areas' workplan as **Attachment 5** to these minutes, and also updated attendees on the workgroup's activities:

- Developed and finalized a 2025 workplan outlining action steps for the workgroup to achieve the stability and chronic-absenteeism goals outlined in the ECC Strategic Plan
- Discussed strategies that school districts use to re-engage youth who are not attending school regularly, and how these strategies can potentially be implemented in other districts
  - From that conversation, the workgroup agreed to focus its efforts on strengthening communication between DCFS and school districts regarding attendance issues.
- Gradually coordinating trainings and strengthening communication for caregivers and Children's Social Workers (CSWs)—especially those assigned to special units—on school stability and education rights
- Planning a possible future conversation focused on creating potential parameters, or potential clarifications, to the law to help determine what to do in more complicated cases (i.e., when a placement is far from the school of origin or when there is not an active Educational Rights Holder)
- Quick update on work to address the 'notice' process from DCFS to school districts whenever a youth enters the foster-care system or changes placements
- Update on caregiver/CSW K–12 education trainings

ECC members and constituents were encouraged to let Lundqvist or Koenig know if they are interested in joining this workgroup; current members would greatly appreciate more school districts participating, for example, to support data-collection efforts.

After these updates, ECC members discussed and acted on several items related to the Strategic Plan, referring to **Attachment 6**, where **green text indicates modified or additional text proposed by the workgroup** needing further discussion and approval from the full ECC body.

Page numbers used in the sub-items to Agenda Item 4 (4a, 4b, and 4c, below) refer to the designed version of the *2024–2029 ECC Strategic Plan* that was e-mailed to members prior to this meeting.

**Agenda Item 4a. Discussion and Take Action to Adopt Updated Language for the Desired Outcome under the Stability Priority Area**

**Page 30, bullet #3, under “Desired Outcomes Within 5 Years”**

Original Language

- 100% of youth involved with systems will stay in their school of origin until a best-interest determination (BID) has been completed.

Proposed New Language

- No child being removed from their home or changing placements will change schools until a best-interest determination (BID) has been completed.

Discussion “We talked a lot about this language and its original intent,” Lundqvist explained, “and we know this strategy is aspirational, but there’s a lot of great work going on to make it happen—plus it’s our obligation both to document and to encourage the legal default. Kids are getting moved from their current schools, and our goal is to make sure BIDs are done before that happens, and that whatever school choices follow reflect what is decided in those processes. Kids should not be disenrolled from their current school without a BID being held and the school-of-origin question being thoughtfully decided or waived.”

With regard to timing requirements for the BID, Jill Rowland added, “Federal guidance says that a BID should occur within three days of a move and that transportation should occur within three days of the BID. That’s federal guidance—not legally binding, but obviously a very nice, strong suggestion.”

Seeing no public comment on this item, Denise Miranda moved that the ‘proposed new language’ in green (Item 4a, above) be adopted. Jessica Chandler seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Agenda Item 4b. Discussion and Take Action to Adopt Updated Language for the Activities and Action Steps under the Chronic Absenteeism and Information-Sharing Priority Areas in the ECC Strategic Plan**

**Page 35, bullet #1, under Information Sharing**

Original Language With One Proposed Change

- In a workgroup that includes DCFS, Probation, LACOE, school districts, Children’s Law Center, and child-welfare advocates:
  - Determine the critical data points/documents/files that need to be shared between DCFS, Probation, and education partners
  - Additionally, determine what outcome data metrics need to be tracked across the County
  - Analyze whether confidentiality/privacy legal barriers exist to sharing identified data points and/or possible limitations in existing data systems for storing and tracking critical data points/documents/files and outcomes
  - Determine next steps to address barriers and ensure that existing and/or new additional data systems can track the data points and outcomes needed, consistent with applicable confidentiality and privacy laws

Discussion Various ECC members suggested broader agency/individual inclusion in the subject workgroup, further clarifying that agencies/individuals should be invited to be part of that group. Language in **blue** (below) conveys their amendments to 4b's introductory bullet-point wording.

Proposed Edits to Language in the Introductory Bullet

- In a workgroup **whose invitees** include DCFS, Probation, LACOE, school districts, **Children's Law Center, minors' counsel for youth involved in the juvenile-justice system,** and child-welfare **and juvenile-justice** advocates:

Seeing no public comment on this item, Luciana Svidler moved that the proposed edits above in **blue** and **green** be adopted. Jessica Chandler seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Page 40, bullet #1, under Chronic Absenteeism**

Original Language

- Ensure that DCFS and Probation provide the Court with regular school-attendance updates/information in court reports, including information on what may be contributing to attendance challenges, and what supports are needed to re-engage and/or support youth.

Proposed New Sub-Bullet Language

- Ensure that DCFS and Probation provide the Court with regular school-attendance updates/information in court reports, including information on what may be contributing to attendance challenges, and what supports are needed to re-engage and/or support youth.
  - **The Juvenile Court, Children's Law Center, DCFS, and Probation will collaborate to ensure that school-attendance updates and other information is not used punitively, but will be leveraged to identify supports to address the root cause of attendance issues.**

Discussion The group acknowledged that current procedural rules already direct DCFS and Probation to provide the court with regular school-attendance updates in court reports, including information on what may be contributing to attendance challenges and what supports are needed to re-engage/support the student. Attending school regularly is often a condition of probation, and the court needs to understand if that goal is being met.

Probation officers and social workers have a duty to tell the truth in their court reports, Tia Summers added. "It's not personal—you're just reporting the facts. This added language implies that attendance issues may be used punitively, but if you're simply reporting that the youth is not meeting the conditions of their probation, that's just reality. *Why* they're not at school? There could be something else going on with that, for sure, and system partners should find out what."

Continued discussion indicated that most members would overall be more comfortable with the existing language by itself, and **the motion for adoption of the green edits was withdrawn.**

**Agenda Item 4c. Discussion and Take Action to Adopt the ECC Strategic Plan Design**

The designed version of the 2024–2029 *ECC Strategic Plan* was sent to members and constituents prior to today's meeting. "This is basically the 'pretty version' put together by the Executive Office's graphics team," Lundqvist explained. "And before we finally place it on the ECC website, we will make all the text changes that we voted for this morning."

Seeing no public comment on this item, Jessica Chandler moved to accept the designed version, Jessica Gonzalez seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The finalized strategic plan is made part of these minutes as **Attachment 7**.

**Agenda Item 6. Discussion and Take Action to Adopt Future ECC Quarterly Meeting Dates**

The following dates were proposed as future ECC quarterly meeting dates:

- Wednesday, August 27, 2025 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, November 5, 2025 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, February 25, 2026 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Seeing no public comment on this item, Jessica Chandler moved to accept these dates, Jessica Gonzalez seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**Agenda Item 7. Next Meeting**

The Education Coordinating Council's next hybrid meeting is scheduled for:

**Wednesday, August 27, 2025 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.**  
**510 South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles 90020**  
**Ninth Floor Terrace Level Conference Room VCHQ TK02**  
***In-Person Attendees: Parking garage at 523 Shatto Place, Los Angeles 90020***

*Virtual Attendees:*

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**Adjournment**

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