

Instructional Continuity Learning Considerations and Support for Students Experiencing Homelessness and Students with Experience in Foster Care

The purpose of this document is to provide distance learning guidance for students experiencing homelessness and experience in foster cares' instructional access and is aligned to the [SDCOE Instructional Continuity Learning Plan Template Equity Resource Summary](#)

Communication

Consider pre-pandemic factors.

- What steps have been taken to identify students and families are affected by homelessness and have experience with foster care?
- How have the Homeless Liaison and the District Foster Youth Liaison been involved in the process?
- Is there clarity around the strategies and steps the Homeless Liaison is taking to identify McKinney-Vento eligible families? What are those steps?
- Regarding students in or with experience in foster care, as there been regular communication with SDCOE Educational Liaisons, the assigned county Social worker, and potential CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)?
- What was the level of engagement for students and families without homes or experience in foster care in the class/site/district community?
- What efforts have been made prior to the pandemic to solicit the voice of students and families without homes or experience in foster care?
- Are there individuals, groups, or processes in place to facilitate communication with students and families without homes or experience in foster care?
- What supports were in place through McKinney-Vento or other resources prior to the pandemic?

Conduct a quick communication audit.

- Has anyone reached out to students and families without homes or experience in foster care, specifically? If so, who?
- Have the Homeless Liaison and the District Foster Youth Liaison checked in with the students and families they serve during the pandemic?
- For students in foster care specifically, has anyone connected with SDCOE Educational Liaisons, the assigned county Social worker, and potential CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)?
- Is there a record (ex. log, entry into SIS, etc.)
- Were they successful in making contact?
- What percentage of the students and families without homes or experience in foster care of the class/site/district were reached?
- What was stated? What was asked?
- What data (anecdotal, quantitative, or qualitative) was collected during the class?
- Was it recorded? If so, how?

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	• What were the overarching themes and needs shared? • How is the support the McKinney-Vento liaison was providing pre-Covid been translated to the mid-pandemic reality? • What new resources are being provided to students and families without homes or experience in foster care? • Were the themes and needs that emerged from the data addressed through the supports that are currently in place? • What additional supports need to be put in place to meet identified needs? What resources are needed to make it happen? If active communication has not taken place • Include the housing questionnaire and McKinney-Vento information on all communications going out to families in an effort to capture any changes in housing or need. • Assuming the available data is incomplete, how will the site/district provide information to the school community in order to reach the target population? • Create questions to be asked and statements to be shared with students and families without homes or experience in foster care • Design a process for communication to families. Ensure multiple methods of communication are used to increase the likelihood of connection • Allocate staff complete the task • Ensure staff has the necessary tools to complete the tasks (access to phone, phone list, etc) • Provide a template to record data from the call (anecdotal, quantitative, or qualitative) • Create a process to analyze the collected data and use it to inform actions
Social Emotional Supports	Consider pre-pandemic factors: • What social emotional supports were in place for students and families without homes or experience in foster care prior to the pandemic? • Who offered those supports? Consider the current reality: • How have these supports been translated into the current system of services being offered to students? • Are the staff members who provided support to students and families without homes or experience in foster care prepared and available to continue to provide services through other means as we socially distance? • If no supports were in place, what resources and staff are available to provide support now? • How will these supports be made accessible to students and families without homes or experience in foster care? Resources Trauma Informed Educational Practices (Webinar)

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	SEL Resources for Educators , SDCOE Mental Health and Wellness Resources	
Key Components	Sub-Components	Resources to Support Actions
Expanding the Equity Lens	Expanding Educational Equity Consciousness	National Center for Homeless Education Disrupting the patterns of inequity- What does it mean to disrupt inequity in education? (Webinar) Equity Framework 2020-21: Equity by Design National Equity Project (NEP) Featured Resources (link to resources) National Equity Project Webinars (link - free registration required)
	Culturally Responsive/Equitable Instruction	Increasing Equity in Online Learning (webinar - Adult Ed) National Equity Project: Rebel Leadership and COVID-19 (link to resources)
Digital Content Delivery	Resources for educators	Identifying and Supporting Students Experiencing from Pre-School to Post-Secondary Ages Practical Application of the McKinney-Vento Act McKinney-Vento FAQs Supporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness During the COVID-19 Outbreak: Questions to Consider Beyond the Food Pantry: COVID-19 Responses for Students Who are Homeless or with Experience in Foster Care Five Strategies to Help Homeless Students Transitioning to College During COVID-19 COVID-19 Resources for Youth Homelessness Providers COVID-19 and Child and Youth Homelessness: Checklist for LEAs and Early Childhood Providers To Join Homeless Education Resources Listserv

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		CDE Strategies to Serve Students Experiencing Homelessness. CDE Educating Homeless Students. WestEd Coronavirus. Kids. and Families
Digital Devices and Internet/WiFi Access	District, personal, community	Consider pre-pandemic factors: • What percentage of your students and families without homes or experience in foster care have access to a wifi-enabled device that can easily be used for virtual learning that is NOT a cell phone? How do you know? • How did you provide access to technology in support of their learning prior to the pandemic? • What percentage of your students and families without homes or experience in foster care have wifi access where they reside? How do you know? • How did you provide access to wifi/internet in support of their learning prior to the pandemic? Consider the current reality: • Does the LEA provide access to wifi and devices for students and families without homes or experience in foster care who do not have access where they reside? • How are students and families notified that the LEA will provide students with wifi access and devices? Email? Phone call? Text message? Mailers? Are multiple methods used? • How do students and families without homes or experience in foster care gain access to the devices? Pick-up? Delivery? By appointment? Multiple methods? • What are the implications for the methods used? • Examine the barriers and plan ways to overcome them. • What is the policy regarding lost or stolen devices? • What are the implications of those policies? Consider what's next: • How will students be supported with issues

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		related to devices? WiFi/internet access? • How will they access that support? • How will they be notified that tech support is available? • Email? Phone call? Text message? Mailers? Are multiple methods used? • What are the implications of using the identified methods?
Non-tech Options	Hard copies	If technology is not an option: • How do we give instructional access to students and families without homes or experience in foster care for whom the use of technology is not an option? • Will hard copy lessons be made available? • How do we provide necessary materials (ex. Text books, paper, pencils, etc.) to students and families? • How is work provided? • How do we provide feedback to the student on their work? • How do we provide instructional support? SDCOE Graphics Production can assist with production.
Community Partners and Resources		Foster Youth Specific Resources Resources for Our Community, the Alliance for Children's Rights Just In Time for Foster Youth John Burton Advocates for Youth COVID-19 Resources for Foster Youth, Together We Rise

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Recommended Practices for Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness During COVID 19

It is important to understand that for students experiencing homelessness schools are more than a classroom. For many school represents security and the most stable part of their day. For unaccompanied homeless youth who are far more vulnerable outside of school, it represents a safe place to be for a good portion of their day. For many of these students school is also a source of food, a place where they have positive connections, and it could be their only source of physical or mental health services.

When schools close it may become difficult to serve this less stable population. A few things to consider:

- **Access:** to devices, phones, or the internet. Free wifi offered by communications providers is not always an option, consider those in a hotel, their automobile, shelters and transitional living programs.
- **Space:** students may be living or end up living in crowded environments where not everyone has a room of their own or a quiet place to get online for class.
- **Essential Workers:** Students themselves and/or their parents may have begun performing essential work (in fields, grocery stores or other) in order to keep food on the table during this time.
- **Caring for Siblings:** Students whose parents have taken essential work in order to keep their family going may be relied upon to care for younger siblings and unable to attend class or keep up with assignments.

Recommended Strategies

Outreach to the students we know about; those who have already been identified in your system as McKinney-Vento.

- Outreach and check ins should be done

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		frequently! • Ensure access to the resources they need from the school. ◦ Devices, a prepaid cell phone, hotspot or other solutions. ◦ Hygiene supplies (soap, sanitizer, clean clothing, sanitary supplies, and diapers) ◦ Deliver items (including meals) or continue to provide transportation assistance. ◦ Share resources available in the community for food, housing, health care, and others. ◦ This helps them know that someone cares and wants them to stay in school. Keep contact going and monitor their situation and help insure they return upon re-opening. Make efforts to locate families that you cannot reach or find. Many families are shifting due to loss of their place to stay. A moratorium on evictions does not help a family who was doubled up and not on a lease. Hotels and motels are also not subject to a pause on evictions. • Reach out to the local service providers in your district. If there are shelters or outreach programs make sure they know that new families who show up should be encouraged to get in touch with the school. Give them your liaison contact information. • Post the notice of rights posters at places in the community where families or youth experiencing homeless might go, ie Laundromat, health clinic, benefits office. Make efforts to identify new families who become homeless as a result of the pandemic. Many families who have not been in this situation before do not know they have rights and entitlements at school or who to contact. • Include the housing questionnaire
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		(attached) or the housing questions language on all communications that go to families at this time. Make sure they are aware that there is a contact person if their situation changes. • Ensure any communications updates include information for families and youth who may be experiencing homelessness • Look to your Homeless Liaison about having sensitive conversations with families regarding their housing status. Remember that the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act remain unchanged during this time. Schools and districts have a responsibility to remove barriers for students experiencing homelessness. During this time that could mean: • Additional flexibility for deadlines and participation requirements, • Accommodations for students who cannot participate in online learning opportunities due to homeless living situations, including those with disabilities or who are English Language Learners. • Removing barriers that may prevent unaccompanied youth from participating fully in classes and school activities (such as technology considerations and parental/guardianship requirements). • Continuing enrollment and facilitating the fast collection of or transfer of records for students who may have experienced movement.
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