

## **Helendale School District Homeless Youth & Foster Youth Plan**

The following individual has been designated as the Helendale School District Liaison (42 USC 11432):

**Director of Pupil Services  
Helendale School District  
15350 Riverview Road  
Helendale, CA 92342  
(760) 952-1760**

### **Helendale School District Homeless Children and Youth**

The objective of the Helendale School District Homeless Children and Youth is to ensure, in accordance with the law, that every homeless youth residing in Helendale School District, is allowed an equal opportunity to meet the challenging state academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is a federal program to assist children and youth that are experiencing temporary unstable housing.

**Who is homeless?** Children and youth who lack a: fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Under this act, state and local educational agencies must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool programs, as other children and youth. Homeless children and youth have the right to the following:

- Immediate enrollment even if records are not readily available.
- Assistance with school services to maintain educational stability.
- Opportunities for academic success.
- Assistance with obtaining immunizations and medical records.
- Continued attendance in the school in which last enrolled.
- Transportation from current residence to school of origin.

### **Services Available**

- **ADVOCACY** services provide assistance when a student enters a new school or changes schools by ensuring the student has all school records/vaccination records necessary for enrollment and proper school placement.
- **EVALUATION** of individualized academic/support service needs necessary to provide the tools required for academic and life skills success.
- **LINKAGE** to school-based/community resources necessary for after school activities, tutoring, mentorship and other social services.
- **TRACKING** of students' movements within the county or to other school districts and placements in order to assist in smooth transition of services.
- **POST SECONDARY PREPARATION SUPPORT** to ensure that graduating youth develop a post high school plan to become independent, academically and socially successful adults.

### **Education for Homeless Children**

The Helendale School District shall provide homeless students and foster students with access to education and other services necessary for homeless students to meet the same challenging performance standards as other students. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall these students be stigmatized in any way.

Placement decisions for homeless and foster students are based on the student's best interest as defined in law and United States Department of Education's regulations.

### **Definitions**

Homeless means students who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes: (42 USC 11435)

1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in the conditions described (1)-(3) above.
5. "Unaccompanied homeless youth" a youth that is not in the physical custody of the parent or guardian and meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

School of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. (42 USC 11432)

Best Interest means, to the extent feasible, continuing a student's enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of his/her homelessness, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of his/her parent/guardian. (42 USC 11432)

The Helendale School District liaison for homeless students shall ensure that: (42 USC 11432)

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination of activities with other entities and agencies;
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools;
3. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool and other available supplemental programs, referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, social services, and appropriate services;
4. Parents/guardians of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
5. Notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters and soup kitchens;
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law, board policy, and the California Department of Education's Dispute Resolution Policy;
7. Parents/Guardians are fully informed of all transportation services and are assisted in gaining access to transportation to and from the school of origin or the current attendance area;
8. Children and youth who do not have immunizations or medical records are assisted to obtain necessary immunizations or medical records; and,
9. Collaboration and coordination with state coordinators, community, and school personnel occurs in order to provide education and related services to homeless children and youth.

## **Enrollment**

Placement decisions for homeless students shall be based on the student's best interest. In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her school of origin, unless his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise. (42 USC 11435)

The student may continue attending the school of origin for the duration of the homelessness and/or until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing. (42 USC 11435)

The LEA shall ensure immediate enrollment, thereby eliminating any possible enrollment barriers for homeless students.

The administration or designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunizations or other medical records, the administrator or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the appropriate medical service providers to obtain the necessary immunizations.

If a student is placed at a school other than the school of origin, the parent/guardian and/or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the decision and rights to appeal the placement decision. (42 USC 11435)

## **Transportation**

The LEA shall provide or arrange transportation for a homeless student to and from school of origin when the student is residing within the LEA and notify the parent/guardian that such transportation is provided. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another LEA, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and cost for transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEA's cannot agree upon the method, the responsibility must be shared equally.

## **Enrollment Disputes**

The following are five components for resolving disputes regarding school selection and enrollment for homeless children and youths.

- ♣ If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the child/youth, or unaccompanied youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute (PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)(iv)). Enrollment is defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities."
- ♣ The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the LEA's homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth. The homeless liaison should assist the student, parents, guardian in preparing the dispute and make available school resources including copying, mailing, or obtaining records.
- ♣ A written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal [PL 107-110, 722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.
- ♣ If a dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the county office of education (COE). The COE's homeless liaison will review these materials and determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials. The COE homeless liaison will notify the LEA and the parent of the decision. Contact information for COE'S homeless liaison can be found at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>
- ♣ If the decision is appealed by either party (LEA, parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth), then the COE homeless liaison shall forward all documentation and related paperwork to the CDE Homeless



Education Program. Upon the review of all parties information, the CDE will notify all parties of the final determination of eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal, The CDE Homeless Education Program can be reached by phone at 1-866-856-8214 or by email at HOMELESSED@cde.ca.gov.

## **FOSTER YOUTH**

Helendale School District Foster Youth Services. The objective of the Helendale School District is to ensure, in accordance with the law, that every foster youth residing in the Helendale School District is allowed an equal opportunity to meet the challenging state academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

### **Assembly Bill 490 (AB 490)**

In accordance with the law, all foster youth residing within the Helendale School District must have access to the same educational rights and resources as other students. These rights and resources include but are not limited to the following:

- Increased stability of school placements
- Immediate enrollment even if records are not readily available
- Timely transfer of student records
- Calculation of full or partial coursework that the student has completed
- Individualized academic plans for foster youth based on their unique set of strengths and needs
- Increased access to support services, extracurricular and enrichment activities to address the areas of growth essential to the success of foster youth

### **SERVICES AVAILABLE**

- **ADVOCACY** services provide assistance when a student enters a new school or changes schools by ensuring the student has all school records/vaccination records necessary for enrollment and proper school placement.
- **EVALUATION** of individualized academic/support service needs necessary to provide the tools required for academic and life skills success.
- **LINKAGE** to school-based/community resources necessary for after school activities, tutoring, mentorship and other social services.
- **TRACKING** of students' movements within the county or to other school districts and placements in order to assist in smooth transition of services.
- **ACADEMIC & CAREER PREPARATION SUPPORT** including bi-weekly meetings, guest speakers and field trips.

## **FIVE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

A student must satisfy each of the following five eligibility requirements to graduate pursuant to AB 167/216:

- 1) The youth must be a pupil in foster care. To be eligible for graduation under AB 167/216, the youth must be removed from his or her home pursuant to WIC Section 309 or subject to a petition filed under WIC Sections 300 or 602. EC § 51225.2.
- 2) The youth must have transferred schools after their second year of high school. To determine whether a youth completed their second year of high school, the school district may use either the number of credits earned or the total length of enrollment in high school, whichever will make the youth eligible for AB 167/216 graduation. Note: Schools, youth, education rights holders, social workers, and probation officers cannot request or require a school transfer for the sole purpose of making a youth eligible for AB 167/216

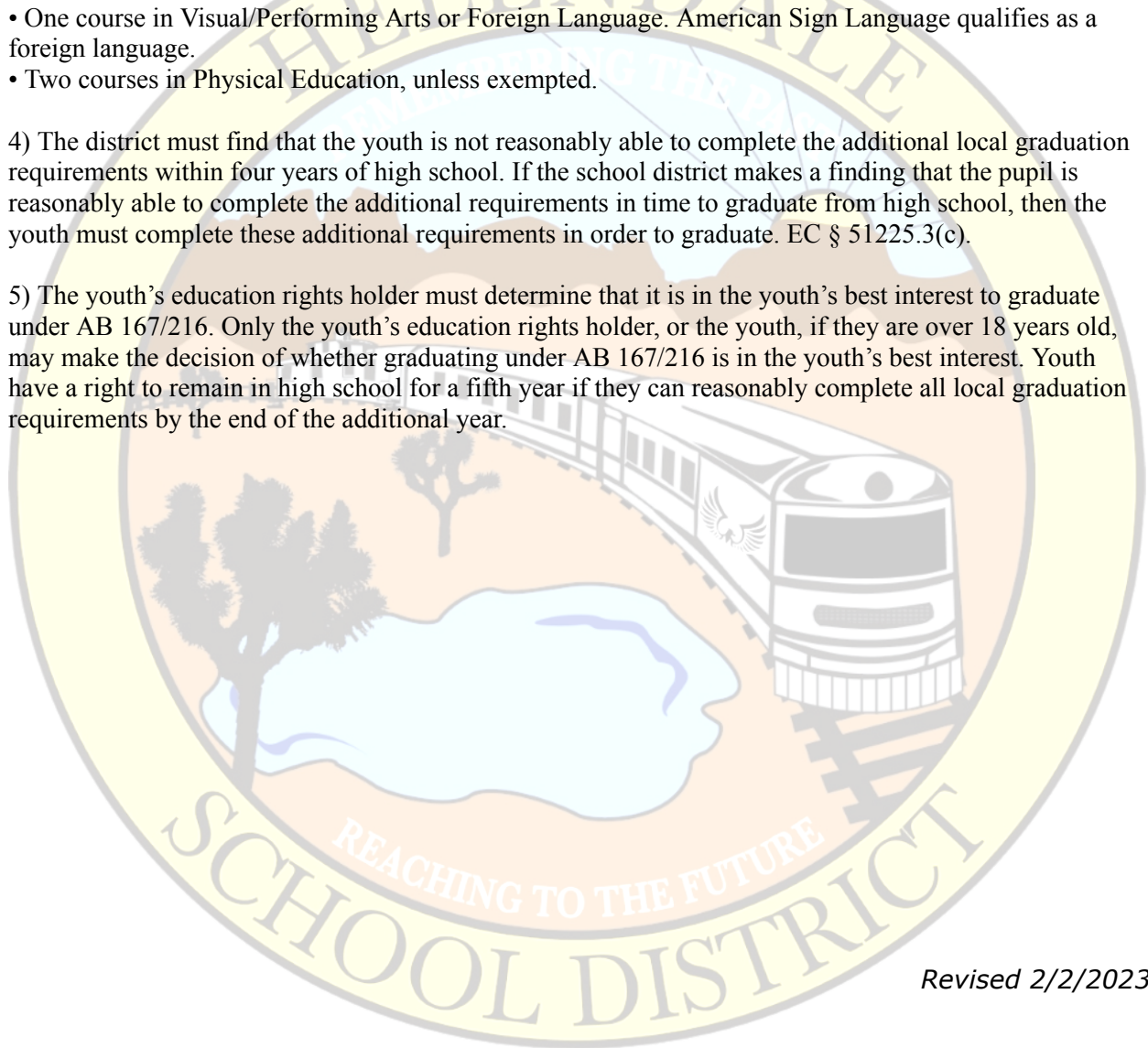
graduation.

3) The youth must complete all California graduation requirements. California requires pupils to complete all of the following one-year courses, unless otherwise specified, in order to receive a diploma of graduation from high school, EC § 51225.3(a):

- Three courses in English.
- Two courses in Mathematics, including one year of Algebra I unless previously completed.
- Two courses in Science, including Biological and Physical Sciences.
- Three courses in Social Studies, including United States History; World History; a one-semester course in American Government and Civics; and a one-semester course in economics.
- One course in Visual/Performing Arts or Foreign Language. American Sign Language qualifies as a foreign language.
- Two courses in Physical Education, unless exempted.

4) The district must find that the youth is not reasonably able to complete the additional local graduation requirements within four years of high school. If the school district makes a finding that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate from high school, then the youth must complete these additional requirements in order to graduate. EC § 51225.3(c).

5) The youth's education rights holder must determine that it is in the youth's best interest to graduate under AB 167/216. Only the youth's education rights holder, or the youth, if they are over 18 years old, may make the decision of whether graduating under AB 167/216 is in the youth's best interest. Youth have a right to remain in high school for a fifth year if they can reasonably complete all local graduation requirements by the end of the additional year.



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