

Student Support Services

Supporting our CVUSD students who are either homeless or in foster care.

Lisa Miller, Assistant Superintendent Student Support Services
Jocie Wilson, Coordinator Child Welfare and Attendance

Purpose of Presentation

- Inform the Board and our CVUSD community on:
 - The needs of our homeless and foster student population
 - Review our outreach efforts and supports provided
 - Increase awareness of our diverse student population

Legal Definition for Homeless

- McKinney-Vento Act- Federal law passed in 1987, re-authorized in 2015
- Children and youths who:
 - Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
 - May be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, shelters
 - Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
 - Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are children who are living in similar circumstances listed above

Legal Definition for Foster Youth

- Any child who is the subject of a juvenile dependency court (whether or not the child has been removed from his or her home);
- Any child who is the subject of a juvenile delinquency court petition and who has been removed from his or her 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 group home.
- Does not include youth who have been placed in a juvenile detention facility, such as a juvenile hall or camp

CVUSD Homeless and Foster Youth

- 131 McKinney-Vento homeless youth enrolled
- 37 foster youth enrolled
- Although these numbers represent a small percentage of our overall enrollment – CVUSD serves *all* students!
- The number of homeless in Ventura County increased by nearly 13% (1152 to 1299) between 2017-2018*
- This number is believed to be just a quarter, or at best a third of the actual population

*Department of Housing and Urban Development

Supports Provided to Our Homeless Students & Families

- Personal and ongoing outreach to all families experiencing housing-insecurity
- CVUSD's Coordinator of Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) also serves as our District's Foster and Homeless Student Liaison, meeting with families and students to determine level of need—families are matched with supports, such as:
 - Community Resources such as access to medical, dental, and mental health practitioners providing free and sliding scale services
 - Information on agencies that provide temporary and permanent shelter
 - Information on access to local food pantries
 - Information on where to go/how to apply for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and Cal Works
 - Free school supplies
 - Transportation assistance
 - Free clothing
 - Free personal care items

Supports Provided to Our Homeless Students & Families

- CVUSD Foster/Homeless Liaison attends 504, IEP, and SST meetings
- Ongoing case management/meetings with parents
- In addition to a District Foster/Homeless Liaison, Foster/Homeless Liaisons are appointed at each school site to monitor student progress
- School Site Foster/Homeless Liaisons meet quarterly with District Foster/Homeless Liaison and other school site liaisons to collaborate
- District Foster/Homeless Liaison attends meetings at VCOE to stay abreast of legislative updates and to share best practices with other District Foster/Homeless Liaisons
- District Foster/Homeless Liaison trained all high school counselors, school psychologists, and some secondary special education teachers on identifying and qualifying eligible students for District Graduation Requirement Exemption
- District Foster/Homeless Liaison attends District Graduation Requirement Exemption meetings with Academic Counselor, Student, Parent/Guardian to empower stakeholders with information on advantages and disadvantages of accepting graduation requirement exemption

Supports Provided to Our Foster Youth

- CVUSD Foster/Homeless Liaison:
 - Communicates with social workers, as needed, to ensure students are properly enrolled and supported in school
 - Alerts school sites to Educational Rights Holder contact information for students
 - Consults with Foster Parents, matching them with community contacts and resources
 - Attends IEP, 504, SST meetings
 - Attends District Graduation Requirement Exemption meetings with Academic Counselor, Student, Parent/Guardian to empower stakeholders with information on advantages and disadvantages of accepting graduation requirement exemption
 - Trains all high school counselors, school psychologists, and some secondary special education teachers on identifying and qualifying eligible students for District Graduation Requirement Exemption
- In addition to a District Foster/Homeless Liaison, Foster/Homeless Liaisons appointed at each school site to monitor student progress of Foster Youth
- School Site Foster/Homeless Liaisons meet quarterly with District Foster/Homeless Liaison and one another to collaborate

What Supports Look Like at School Sites

- Elementary Schools
 - Academic Interventions (Reading, Mathematics, Writing Skills, ELL)
 - Scholarships for enrichment classes
 - Outreach assistance to connect with community services and free clinics
 - Counseling Services
- Middle Schools
 - Free ASB punch cards to access all activities at no cost
 - Attendance monitoring and support to families in need of transportation (free gas cards or rideshare with other parents)
 - Connect families to community resources (food banks, free dinners each day, etc.)
 - Homework Club
 - Peer Mentoring
- High Schools
 - Assistance with completing College Board applications for fee waivers on AP, IB and PSAT exams
 - Free access to activities and athletic events
 - Opportunities to meet with college representatives

How We Ensure Identification of Students Who Meet McKinney-Vento Criteria:

- Student Residency Questionnaire (SRQ) is a mandatory enrollment document that all new *and* returning students (as circumstances change from year-to-year) complete.
- The SRQ is a Universal Screener and allows our district to discreetly screen for families that are experiencing housing insecurity.
- When a family discloses a living condition that meets the educational definition of homeless (which is different than the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition), school registrars indicate McKinney-Vento in Q (CVUSD Student Information System) and send the SRQs to Student Support Services.
- Additionally, because new McKinney-Vento families enter and exit CVUSD with some level of frequency, the McKinney-Vento list is run by Student Support Services bi-monthly, so that families are not overlooked.
- All families are personally contacted and invited to come in for an intake meeting. During these intake meetings, families are matched with resources.

Change in McKinney-Vento Enrollment Numbers Subsequent to Improved Procedures

- 2015-2016: 32
- 2016-2017: 51
- 2017-2018: 48
- Current Year: 131

How We Ensure Identification of Students Who Are Foster Youth:

- When foster students enroll, or have become foster youth
 - Parents/guardians provide all court documentation, listing information such as Educational Rights Holder and legal guardian, to school registrars
 - Registrars then denote that child as “foster” in Q
 - When Educational Rights change or turn over, the Coordinator of Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) is notified by the Coordinator of Special Populations from the Ventura County Office of Education
 - CWA then notifies school sites of new Educational Rights Holder
 - Student Support Services also runs bi-monthly reports to track students entering and exiting
 - CWA accesses Ventura County’s “Foster Focus” database, which provides info on social worker, Educational Rights Holder, former placements, etc., in the case that services need to be coordinated in conjunction with a child’s social worker

Introducing Conejo Closet

The Conejo Closet is run by CVUSD's Office of Student Support Services to assist CVUSD families in need by providing toiletries, personal care items, school supplies, and clothing—all free of charge.

If you are interested in making a difference in the life of a child or family in the Conejo Valley Unified School District, then please consider making a donation to The Conejo Closet.

Donation Needs:

- New *or gently* used clothing of all sizes (infant – adult)
- New *or gently* used shoes (men's, women's, children's sizes)
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Full-sized shampoo and conditioner
- Deodorant
- Soap (bar soap and body wash)
- Brushes/combs
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toilet paper
- Towels
- School supplies (binders, paper, pens, pencils, crayons, calculators, dividers, flash drives, scissors, spiral notebooks)
- Clothing hangers
- Clothing racks



To make a donation, please contact Jocie Wilson in Student Support Services:

805-497-9511 x234 or

jwilson@conejousd.org

In Closing...

- **Successes:**
 - Increased attention and supports provided to our vulnerable students
 - Updated District procedures to ensure our students needs are being met
 - Increased outreach and engagement with our families
 - Increased training to school site staff on legal requirements and protections
- **Heavy lifting is ahead:**
 - Dashboard results show our students are not yet achieving to the level we believe they can achieve
 - We believe not all families accurately indicate living status and we seek to break down the barriers
 - Review LCAP to increase targeted interventions

Thank you

- Questions?

