Education Coordinating Council

November 8, 2023, 9:00 a.m. | Hybrid Meeting

In-Person: 510 South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90020 | Ninth Floor, Conference Room TK08
Remote: via Microsoft Teams

Member Representatives Present in Person:	Tanya Ortiz Franklin, ECC Chair, Los Angeles Unified School District Judge Akemi Arakaki, ECC Vice Chair Fabricio Segovia, ECC Vice Chair (former foster youth) David Carroll, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development Jesus Corral, Los Angeles County Probation Department Aja Daniels, Long Beach Unified School District Yasmin Dorado, Antelope Valley High School District Jennie Feria, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Ana Gutierrez, West Covina Unified School District Jodi Kurata, Association of Community Human Service Agencies Marcy Manker, First 5 LA Denise Miranda, Los Angeles Unified School District Elisabeth Nails, Department of Arts and Culture Judge Michael Nash, 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 Trish Wilson, Lancaster School District
Member Representatives Present Remotely:	Joshua Elizondo, Los Angeles County Youth Commission
Meeting Presenters:	Jennie Feria, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Jessica Petrass, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) Danielle Wondra, Children Now
Staff and Guests:	Barbara Lundqvist, Director, Education Coordinating Council Elizabeth Koenig, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection Rachael Parker-Chavez, Luskin Fellow, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection

A quorum of members physically present in a single location having been established, Chair Tanya Ortiz Franklin brought the meeting to order, welcoming everyone.

Los Angeles County Youth Commission designee Joshua Elizondo requested permission for his remote participation in today's meeting under Assembly Bill (AB) 2449's post-pandemic adjustments to California's Ralph M. Brown Act, explaining his 'just cause' situation for attending remotely—emergency circumstances—and attesting that no one age 18 or older was in the room with him at his remote location. **A motion to accept Elizondo's remote participation was unanimously approved.**

In-person attendees introduced themselves aloud, and remote participants were encouraged to introduce themselves in the Chat feature of Microsoft Teams.

ECC Director Barbara Lundqvist read Los Angeles County's land acknowledgement, and Elizabeth Koenig then covered virtual-meeting housekeeping topics for those joining remotely, plus the online location of meeting materials that will remain available following today's adjournment.

Lundqvist also updated everyone on her new part-time role as Interim Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families while Director Tamara Hunter serves as the Interim Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Prevention & Promotion Systems Governing Committee.

In an effort to make the group's meetings as welcoming and inclusive as possible to youth, caregivers, and other stakeholders who may be unfamiliar with specific County or school-district acronyms and initialisms, Chair Ortiz Franklin asked ECC members and constituents to use full agency names so that all participants feel included in the discussion.

Draft ECC Strategic Plan Outline

Elizabeth Koenig introduced **Attachment 1**, thanking the myriad of youth and system partners, all of whose contributions over the past several months have led to the high-level outline of a five-year strategic plan that appears on pages 3 and 4 of that attachment. "The backbone of this plan," Lundqvist explained, "is that all of us around the table here share responsibility for the education outcomes of youth in the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems. The ECC's role is to coordinate efforts across our organizations, expand best practices, broker solutions, and implement strategies."

- What are the ECC's key challenges?
- How can it address those challenges? What is it best suited to do?
- What does a strategic plan implementation look like?

Over the past year, the ECC team has connected with more than 130 youth with lived expertise, including youth living in Short-Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs), probation camps, and juvenile hall, plus participants in the Department of Children and Family Services' Independent Living Program, expectant and parenting youth, and more. Those sessions are still ongoing, and additional feedback on *What Youth Are Saying* (page 5 of Attachment 1) will be added to the strategic plan as it becomes available.

"Across the board, system youth expressed a need for stronger support systems and adults," Koenig said. "They want an adult in their corner to encourage them, to be their cheerleader, and with whom they feel safe. At the same time, those adults should be trained on authentic, trauma-informed engagement—coming from a place of compassion in listening to and understanding youths' experiences. Youth also want more input into decisions about their own education and to know their rights in that area, information about avenues other than college, the means—transportation, uniforms, equipment—to participate in extracurricular activities, and more opportunities to develop basic skills, including financial literacy."

Commissioner Joshua Elizondo, who participated in the Youth Commission's listening session, agreed that the *What Youth Are Saying* page is "very much reflective of the needs of the system. Youth need to feel like they belong somewhere," he went on, "and that people care about them and are really engaged in what *they* want to see in their future—and can cultivate pathways so they can reach those milestones for themselves. When I was in foster care, I didn't feel that going to school was a solution for me. I didn't see how it would help my future. I just didn't want to be where I was. If I'd had stronger support from people engaging me in ways that helped me learn more about myself and what I wanted to do in the future, I might have showed up to school."

From the audience, Daniel Bisuano cautioned against relying on the catch-all concept of 'training.' "People think it's a fix," he said, "but we constantly dish out trainings and it doesn't change the fact that a lot of people just don't care. We need to find people who *do* care and have a process to get them involved with these youth."

Rachael Parker-Chavez reviewed *What Systems Partners Are Saying* (page 6 of Attachment 1), gleaned from listening sessions with community-based organizations, advocates, service providers, County agencies, and school districts. Top priority areas for those participants included:

- Stability in school-of-origin transportation and funding, plus placement stability and stability in school enrollment (youth not having to constantly change residences or schools)
- Information-sharing and data integration, including understanding what data can be legally shared

"For the balance of the priority areas our partners identified, mental health tends to be a throughline, along with support for pathways other than college readiness and higher education," Parker-Chavez said. "Meeting basic needs like food and housing is also on the list."

Koenig reviewed an outline of the logic model proposed for the strategic plan (page 7 of Attachment 1), which transforms the key challenges raised by youth and systems partners into ECC focus areas, each with its own activities and action steps that ultimately lead to measurable, timeframe-specific outcomes by which to measure success.

Lundqvist explained the implementation process for priority-area workgroups (page 8 of Attachment 1), starting with one or two—stability and information-sharing, perhaps—and slowly expanding to address all six priorities. "Workgroups will report to the larger quarterly meetings, where they will receive input and feedback," she said, "and the ECC as a whole can vote to focus on another area as emerging issues arise. ECC staff and members will continue to participate in other projects to keep an eye on priorities that do not yet have a dedicated workgroup."

Meeting attendees then broke out into smaller groups to discuss these questions:

- Do the proposed focus areas resonate with you? Are there areas that we are missing?
- Do the two proposed focus areas (stability and information sharing) make sense to start workgroups around, or are there other focus areas we should start with first?
- Outcomes:
  - Any feedback on the outcomes? What are your thoughts?
  - Should other metrics be used for any of the focus areas?
  - Do the outcomes need to be broken down by year or smaller time frames?
  - Should there be additional outcomes for each focus area?

Post–small group discussion observations included:

- Healthy attachments—someone to trust—are at the heart of the matter. Without that, everything else is harder to achieve. How can that issue be integrated into the root causes?
- A 'one size fits all' approach will not work; each youth has his or her individual aspirations that may lead to college or trade school or straight into the workforce. Those goals may change over time—is the focus on the short term or the long term?
- "If kids hate school early on, they won't go later," one participant commented, recommending listening sessions with younger school-aged children to broaden the perspective of the middle- and high-school youth already heard from.
- Data integration is essential to accomplishing the strategic plan's goals, and many key players in that realm are already at the ECC table. How can that be leveraged?
- What data should be tracked for each individual child? Where can that be kept? What systemic data should be tracked? What barriers exist to that? Who analyzes 'how the system is doing'?

- A balance on data-sharing should be found to protect the rights of young people to have their juvenile-court records sealed and those chapters in their lives closed. "Probation can seal records," said Jesus Corral, "but the more departments and other agencies have had access to them, the harder it is to wipe the record." On the other hand, if schools, for example, don't know that a student is a foster youth or on probation, they can't offer specialized services.

- Chronic absenteeism numbers are dismal, and that issue shouldn't be subordinated to anything; the stability and chronic absenteeism focus areas should be combined.

- Absenteeism is a symptom of a larger problem: youth not being engaged by and in school. Youth engagement should be its own priority area, as the other two proposed priorities come from the systems-partner list.

- Can learning lost because of absences be made up in summer school or classes during winter recess or on Saturdays?

- Social skills and media literacy are missing from the supports that youth need for success in life.

- Individual Service Plan (ISP) workers can serve as mentors to foster youth, but many youth don't know that they can have an ISP or even that they qualify for one.

- On-campus peer supports can be very beneficial, especially if provided through 'Guardian Scholars' type organizations that also offer independent living skills, financial literacy, enjoyable activities, etc.

- The general belief that 'if foster youth don't go to college right away, they won't go later' needs to be reframed, and grants and scholarships that cut off at certain ages should be extended. Much as individuals may want to continue their education, the red tape and cost of college, especially at the graduate level, is prohibitive for many.

- Not only college 'going,' but supporting students until they *graduate* should be emphasized. But college graduation, especially if it takes more than five years, is tricky to track; before that is built into the outcomes in this plan, the mechanism for obtaining that data should be identified. Real-time data is virtually unavailable. Even the strategic plan's aspirational college-going outcome goal, provided by DataQuest, is several years behind, said Jessica Petrass from John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY). "JBAY is exploring state-level fixes for data issues," Petrass said, "and we'd love to connect with folks on that. Some challenges can't be fixed locally; we need to address state- and federal-level barriers."

- AB 167/216 adjusted high-school graduation requirements for foster/probation youth if they transferred schools after their sophomore year and were not able to complete all school-district graduation requirements by the end of their fourth year. Do success rates in college look the same for AB 167/216 students as for those who graduated with typical requirements? Are AB 167/216 students truly prepared for higher education? Do they need extra support?

- How can 'engagement' be authentically measured? From student attendance? Grades? Involvement in campus activities? And/or via narrative methods such as surveys?

- Having outcomes measured by milestones along a visual timeline would be helpful; setting 'shoot for the moon' goals and 'bare minimum' goals was also suggested.

- At present, the chronic absenteeism outcome addresses only grades 9 through 12, but transitional-kindergarten-through-third grade schools also worry about consistent attendance. Lundqvist will add specific goals for lower grade levels to those for high school.

- As mentioned, mental health came up in in discussions of every priority area, and will be at the forefront of the ECC's efforts. Staff will update the materials presented to better outline that mental health was a throughline and integral for working on all of the proposed priority areas.

- Sharing this plan more broadly could allow other County and community organizations to see areas where they might join in.

Chair Ortiz Franklin asked about two areas missing from the draft plan's priorities: early childhood education (ECE) and statewide legislative advocacy. Lundqvist explained that the ECC team had reached out to a number of ECE partners, who reported that their issues (e.g., workforce, transitional kindergarten, universal preschool) tend to be consistent across system-served and other populations. As there are already groups that focus on ECE, the ECC will continue to engage with partners doing this work to see if the ECC should be looped in at a later date.

With regard to legislation, any County-created body's advocacy recommendations for specific bills must go through the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations unit (CEO LAIR); the ECC needs the Board of Supervisors to take a formal 'for' or 'against' position on any legislation before it can follow suit.

Issues from the Field

FAFSA Challenge and FAFSA/CADAA Webinar Jessica Petrass announced that a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) will be released in December, and JBAY will host *Completing the FAFSA/CADAA: A How-To Webinar for Adult Supporters of Youth with Experience in Foster Care or With Homelessness* on December 6. Registration and further information is available here. To help students prepare, **Appendix 2** presents *5 Things You Can Do Before the FAFSA & CADAA Open in December 2023*.

Senate Bill (SB) 88—Pupil Transportation Update This bill, which passed the California Legislature on October 7, 2023, and takes effect in 2025, places various new requirements on drivers who transport school pupils. It is expected to affect driver retention for HopSkipDrive, the private vendor contracted by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services to transport foster children and youth to and from their schools of origin when other modes of transportation are impractical or unavailable.

The existing HopSkipDrive contract expires in June 2024, Jennie Feria noted; all extensions have been exhausted. The DCFS education section is drafting new language for the next contract cycle, and no disruptions in service are currently expected. "We anticipate increased costs for the service," Feria said, "but vendors other than HopSkipDrive have made inquiries, and we should have more bids than just one. Contract administration is easier with a single vendor, but we'll see what's available and consider our options."

Foster Youth Education Legislative Updates Danielle Wondra from Children Now—and co-chair of the California Foster Youth Education Task Force—updated attendees on several pieces of legislation recently approved by California's governor that take effect on January 1, 2024.

- AB 373 amends the Education Code to give students in foster care and students experiencing homelessness priority access to 'intersession' instruction (summer school and winter sessions, when available) to recover credits they may have lost as a result of missing school or transferring between schools.

- AB 723 amends the Education Code—starting with the 2024–2025 school year—to permit foster children considered 'individuals with exceptional needs' to designate a nonpublic, nonsectarian school as their school of origin.

- AB 789 amends the student financial-aid provisions of the Education Code to oblige qualifying institutions under the Cal Grant Program[1] to comply (by the start of the 2024–2025 school year) with various requirements regarding 'satisfactory academic progress' standards used to determine if a student qualifies for a Cal Grant, and to develop and implement policies defining satisfactory academic progress in a manner consistent with federal standards. The bill also deletes the Student Aid Commission's authoriza-

[1] Cal Grant A and B Entitlement Awards, the California Community College Expanded Entitlement Awards, the California Community College Transfer Entitlement Awards, the Competitive Cal Grant A and B Awards, the Cal Grant C Awards, and the Cal Grant T Awards under the administration of the Student Aid Commission

tion to adopt regulations defining 'satisfactory academic progress.' ***This legislation affects all students with Cal Grant Program financial aid.***

- SB 274 amends the pupil-discipline provisions of the Education Code to extend the current "prohibition against the suspension of pupils enrolled in any of grades 6 to 8, inclusive, including those pupils enrolled in a charter school, for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school, officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties" until July 1, 2029.

  Starting July 1, 2024, this legislation further prohibits "the suspension of pupils enrolled in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, including those pupils enrolled in a charter school, for those acts until July 1, 2029," but retains a teacher's existing authorization to suspend any pupil in any grade from class for any of the listed acts, including willful defiance, for the day of the suspension and the day following. In addition, Wondra said, the bill also prohibits schools from suspending or expelling students for being truant or otherwise absent.

Public Comment

- "Authentic engagement starts with every step of the process," said Daniel Bisuano, "and I felt very disrespected while you folks had a twenty-minute discussion of the strategic plan and I was trying to comment and couldn't. I was invited to this meeting to share my lived experience and I feel like my voice has been silenced. I couldn't even share data from an educational workshop I created in partnership with the Education Justice Coalition and Loyola Marymount, geared toward a population of incarcerated individuals. This whole process seems very bureaucratic and very 'sit down and shut up' to me, with you having a full-on discussion after acknowledging that people online were waiting to speak. We're supposed to be having that discussion together, so just start with that step."

- Alexis Obinnà from California Youth Connection agreed that many people make decisions about foster youth without including foster youth. "Engage young people in their education plans," she urged. "We can't be actively working to support young people while at the same time discounting their input."

Next Meeting

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

Wednesday, February 21, 2024 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Physical location and remote connection to be determined

Adjournment

There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Education Coordinating Council (ECC)

Draft Strategic Plan Outline

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Community and Stakeholder Input

- Listening sessions across LA County
- Over **130 young people** with **lived-expertise**
- **10 School Districts**
- **15 organizations** – CBOs, advocates, and philanthropy
- **8 County agencies**
- **2 County Commissions**
- **Juvenile Court**
- **All 5 Board Offices**
- *Note- additional meetings being scheduled through December*

- Alhambra Unified School District
- Antelope Valley Union High School District
- Bonita Unified School District
- Compton Unified School District
- Lancaster Unified School District
- Long Beach Unified School District
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Pomona Unified School District
- West Covina Unified School District
- William S. Hart Unified School District

- Alliance for Children's Rights
  - Education Youth Cohort
- Association of Community Human Services Agencies
- Children's Law Center
- Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
- Child Care Resource Center
- California Youth Connection
- Children Now
- First 5 LA
- Hilton Foundation
- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- National Center for Youth Law
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Opportunity Youth Collaborative
- Pritzker Foundation
- Simply Friends

- Commission for Children and Families
- Department of Arts and Culture
- Department of Children and Family Services
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Youth Development
- Juvenile Court
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Los Angeles County Probation Department
- Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE)
- Ombudsperson for Youth in STRTPs
- Youth Commission

High-Level Outline of Strategic Plan

❖ Timeframe
- 2024 to 2029

❖ Mission
- To raise the educational achievement of system-involved youth.

❖ Role & Approach
- Share responsibility for the education for youth involved in the child welfare and probation systems,
- Coordinate efforts across organizations and jurisdictions,
- Encourage networks to work together to expand best practices and help fill gaps to prevent system-involved children from being left behind educationally,
- Broker solutions and collaborations among child-serving entities, and
- Implement strategies that bolster the increased educational achievement of the County's foster and probation youth

❖ Introduction
- History/Context of the ECC
- Discuss different foster youth education players in LA County (e.g., DCFS Ed Team, LACOE FYSCP, District FYL, Court, Providers, CBOs, advocates, etc.)
- How the ECC fills gaps, expands capacity, and creates systems change by being a convener, connector, and translator between systems

❖ Explain the need for a new strategic plan
- Review bright spots and ongoing barriers/challenges

❖ Outline of new strategic plan process

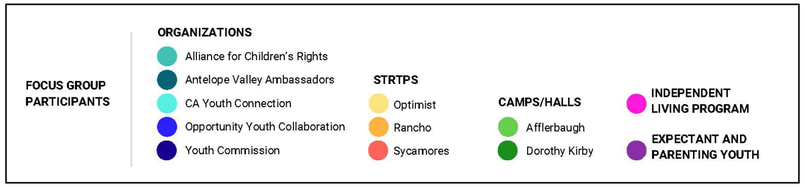
High-Level Outline of Strategic Plan (cont.)

- What We Know
  - Data on current education outcomes for youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- What We Want
  - What does it look like for youth involved in systems to succeed at school?
  - Discuss the need for shared responsibility
- Seven Basic Agreements
- What Youth are Saying
- What System Partners are Saying
- Logic Model
- Focus Areas, Shared Outcomes, & Action Items
- Priority Areas Implementation
  - Memorialize the roles of ECC members, the ECC Chair, and ECC staff in a Charter
  - Workgroups
- Thank You & Member Logos

What Youth Are Saying

ECC YOUNG PEOPLE LISTENING SESSIONS

OCP conducted listening sessions with over 130 system-impacted young people representing 12 groups and/or organizations. After a thematic analysis, ten needs were identified as being most important to them.



TOP TEN NEEDS EXPRESSED BY YOUTH	# RAISING THE ISSUE	WHICH GROUPS RAISED THE ISSUE (ORGANIZATIONS / STRTPS / CAMPS & HALLS / ILP / EPY)
Stronger Support Systems and Adults	12 of 12 (100%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Training on Authentic Youth Engagement	11 of 12 (91.7%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Youth-Led Decision Making	10 of 12 (83.3%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Trauma-informed schools, and training for staff and caregivers	9 of 12 (75%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Access to Electives & Extracurriculars	9 of 12 (75%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Post-High School Resources and Support	9 of 12 (75%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Stronger Academic Supports	8 of 12 (66.7%)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Transportation and School Stability	6 of 12 (50%)	● ● ● ● ● ●
Basic Needs, Financial Support and Life Skills	6 of 12 (50%)	● ● ● ● ● ●
Increased Mental Health Spaces and Resources	5 of 12 (41.7%)	● ● ● ● ●

TOP TEN NEEDS EXPRESSED BY YOUTH	ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIONS & YOUTH QUOTES
Stronger Support Systems and Adults	Young people in every focus group named a lack of supportive and encouraging adults (teachers, social workers, caregivers, etc.) as a primary barrier to their educational success. A common theme expressed by young people was that the adults around them don't often believe in them or discourage their goals as being "unrealistic." ***"Just having someone to be there for you [saying] 'you can do it...' That's all I want to hear because sometimes, as a foster youth, I feel very sad or lonely, and it really messes with your work ethic."***
Training on Authentic Youth Engagement	Young people desire for leaders (school districts, educators, probation, caregivers, etc.) gain additional training on how to authentically engage youth in conversations about their educational goals, challenges, and solutions.
Youth-Led Education Decision Making	Students want to be included and take a leadership role in decision-making that impacts their education.
Trauma-informed schools, and training for staff and caregivers.	Participants expressed the need for more understanding of what they've been through and a connection with more adults who are trauma-informed and/or who have lived experience within the child welfare system. In particular, the need for staff, including social workers, probation officers, and educators.
Access to Electives and Extracurriculars	Access to electives, such as art and languages, along with extracurriculars, such as sports and dance, were top responses to what keeps youth engaged in school and what motivates them to come to school. Transportation was identified as a primary challenge for youth participation in extracurriculars.
Post-High School Resources and Support	Youth identified the need for support around college, trade and vocational schools, and workforce development through linkages to programs, resources, and funding, as well as encouragement and navigation support from staff and caregivers.
Stronger Academic Supports	Tutoring, mentorship, hands-on learning, access to tech, and support with subjects youth need to graduate were most commonly identified as supports youth desire.
Transportation and School of Origin Support	Youth expressed stability and being able to remain in their school, mainly through access to reliable transportation, as vital to their success. ***"Normalize keeping kids in one school."***
Basic Needs, Financial Support and Life Skills	Not having access to food and homelessness was deemed crucial to educational success by youth. Closely aligned was the need for financial literacy and life skills. ***"How am I supposed to work or go to school if I am homeless"***
Increased Mental Health Spaces and Resources	Youth expressed that experiencing mental health-related issues posed a being in school every day, as well as finishing school altogether. Requesting more attention be given to assessing needs as well as resources to meet those needs. ***"Then you also have the emotional aspect [of court]; school isn't the first thing on your mind."***

** Refer to ECC Young People Listening Sessions Handout*

What Systems Partners Are Saying

ECC SYSTEM PARTNER LISTENING SESSIONS

OCP conducted listening sessions with 33 system partners. Following a thematic analysis, nine areas were identified as key priorities across system partners, as well as sub-areas presented within these priorities.

CBOS, ADVOCATES, PROVIDERS

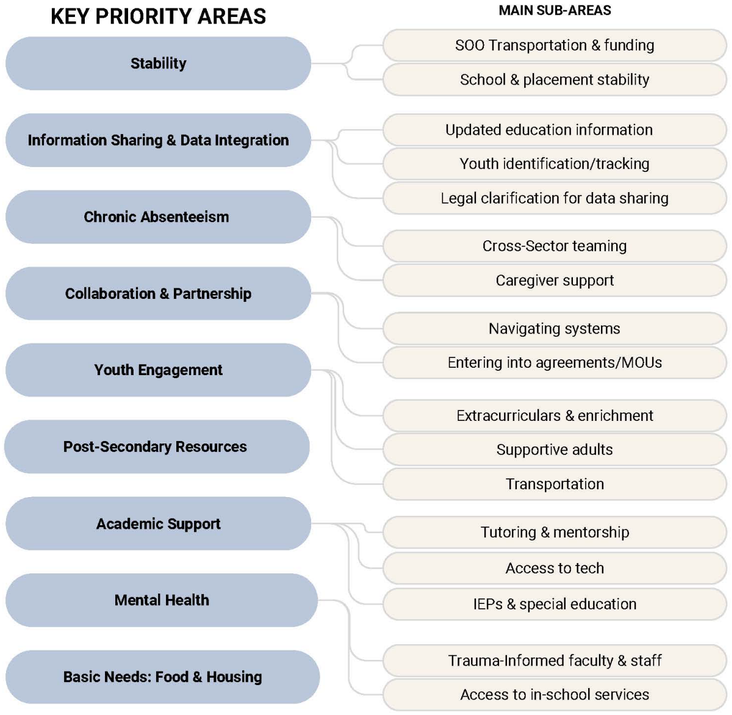
- Alliance for Children's Rights
- Child Care Resource Center
- Children Now
- Neighborhood Legal
- Hilton Foundation
- Pritzker Foundation
- Resource Parents
- Simply Friends
- ACHSA
- CLC
- CCALA
- CYC
- First 5 LA
- JBAY
- NCYL

COUNTY AGENCIES

- Arts & Culture
- Children's Deputies
- Commission for Children & Families
- Ombudsperson for STRTPs
- Probation
- Youth Commission
- Juvenile Courts
- DCFS
- DMH
- DYD
- LACOE
- OAECE

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Alhambra
- Antelope Valley
- Bonita
- Compton
- Lancaster
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Pomona
- West Covina
- William S. Hart



** Refer to ECC System Partner Listening Sessions Handout*

KEY PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED IN LISTENING SESSIONS	ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIONS
Stability	Placement stability and school of origin stability were expressed as critical to reducing learning disruption and increasing youth engagement in school. System partners expressed that SOO policy implementation remains a challenge, along with the process of notifying schools when a youth changes placements and the lack of active/engaged education rights holders.
Information Sharing & Data Integration	Lack of information sharing and linking/integration between data sources was raised as a primary challenge across system partners. In particular, not having a shared understanding of what information is legally able to be shared, as well as issues integrating different systems to ensure access to updated education and placement information for youth.
Chronic Absenteeism	Chronic absenteeism was identified by system partners as a primary barrier to educational achievement, often correlated with several other factors, including lack of consistent transportation, poor youth engagement, mental health, lack of incentives, material needs, and lack of support for caregivers/STRTP providers when youth are refusing to attend school.
Collaboration & Partnership	System partners desire better collaboration, communication, and partnership to improve educational outcomes. In particular, they need support navigating the IEP process, CBO services, entering into MOUs to provide on-site services, and upholding education rights. There is also a need for clarity as to which systems partners, in addition to CSWs, can support when there are education challenges.
Post-Secondary Resources	System partners named post-secondary resources as a primary need for system-impacted youth. The need to address low college enrollment and completion rates, better connections for warm handoffs between high school and college, and the need to fully fund all aspects of college (including basic needs), were all raised. In addition, system partners also expressed the need for support efforts to connect youth with workforce opportunities, including CTE programs.
Youth Engagement	System partners expressed the need to strengthen authentic youth engagement, both in school and in education decisions. This included amplifying communication around existing enrichment activities for youth in foster care, providing access to mentors and supportive adults, and adding additional support and resources to address unmet mental health needs.
Academic Support	The need for stronger academic support to improve educational achievement was raised by systems parnters. In particular, the need for increased access to tutoring opportunities for youth, access to the technology needed to succeed in school, and consistent funding for education services.
Mental Health	Student challenges with mental health along with the need for mental health resources, particularly in-school resources, were both named by system partners as critical to youth engagement and school (academic, and social-emotional) success.
Basic Material Needs	System partners shared that a lack of material support for system-impacted youth (mainly food and housing) was a barrier to academic achievement.

ECC LOGIC MODEL OUTLINE

ECC Strategic Plan 2024-2029

KEY CHALLENGES raised by youth and system partners in listening sessions	ECC FOCUS AREAS derived from key challenges	ACTIVITIES needed to address ECC focus area	OUTCOMES by which to measure success
ROOT CAUSES of the key challenges	STABILITY	**ACTION STEPS** to achieve activities.To be finalized by focus area specific ad-hoc meetings.	Increase the countywide school stability rate from 64.4% (21-22 rate for system-involved youth) to 90% (on par with the stability rate for all students in 21-22) // *within 5 years*
	INFORMATION SHARING & DATA INTEGRATION		Secure legal agreements across the County for what individual and aggregate student data can be shared. Track by district and key demographics across all priority areas for all system-involved youth // *within 5 years*
	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM		Decrease the countywide chronic absenteeism rate from 44.7% (21-22 rate) to 28% (18-19 rate). Decrease the countywide chronic absenteeism rate for 9-12 grade from 54.7% to 31% (21-22 rate for 9th-12th grades) // *within 5 years*
	COLLABORATION COMMUNICATION& PARTNERSHIPS		Ensure DCFS notifies school districts of a pending detention and/or placement change within 1 day, or 10 days for youth with IEPs, for 75% of youth // *within 1-2 years*
	YOUTH ENGAGEMENT/ SUPPORTS		After collecting initial baseline data on youth access to extracurriculars, increase the rate of youth participating in these activities by 5% each year until it's on par with all students // *within 5 years*
	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT		Increase the graduation rates for youth in foster care from 61.1% to 86% (21-22 Countywide rate for all youth) // *within 5 yrs*
	POST-SECONDARY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS		Improve the college-going rate for youth in foster care within 12 months from graduation from 54.1% to 62% (on par with the Countywide rate for all youth) // *within 3-5 years*

ECC MISSION: RAISE THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF SYSTEM INVOLVED YOUTH

** Refer to ECC Logic Model Document*

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Priority Areas Implementation

Action Steps

- Implement workgroups lead/co-lead by ECC members and constituents
  - Begin with 1-2 workgroup and slowly expand
  - ECC members can vote to focus on another area as emerging issues arise
  - ECC staff provide backbone support
- Workgroup leads implement action items and report back on progress at quarterly ECC mtgs
- ECC members at quarterly meetings provide input and feedback on direction/action items of the workgroups
- ECC staff/members participate in other projects to keep an eye on other priority areas

Workgroups:

- **Stability**
- **Information Sharing**
- Communication/Teaming
- Youth Engagement
- Post-Secondary
- Chronic Absenteeism

Next Steps

Over the next 3-5 months:

- Finalize **outputs/shared outcomes**

- Convene smaller meetings to gather feedback and **finalize action items for each ECC Focus Area**

- Integrate feedback from today's discussion and action item meetings into a **written draft of the strategic plan**
  - Discuss/gather feedback on the draft strategic plan at an ECC quarterly meeting

- **Identify leads** for workgroups/priority areas and begin convening workgroups for the 1-2 initial focus areas

- Begin drafting **ECC Charter**

ECC LOGIC MODEL OUTLINE

ECC Strategic Plan 2024-2029

KEY CHALLENGES
raised by youth and system partners in listening sessions

ROOT CAUSES
of the key challenges

ECC FOCUS AREAS
derived from key challenges

- STABILITY
- INFORMATION SHARING & DATA INTEGRATION
- CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
- COLLABORATION COMMUNICATION& PARTNERSHIPS
- YOUTH ENGAGEMENT/ SUPPORTS
- ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
- POST-SECONDARY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

ACTIVITIES
needed to address ECC focus area

ACTION STEPS
to achieve activities.To be finalized by focus area specific ad-hoc meetings.

OUTCOMES
by which to measure success

- Increase the countywide school stability rate from 64.4% (21-22 rate for system-involved youth) to 90% (on par with the stability rate for all students in 21-22) // *within 5 years*
- Secure legal agreements across the County for what individual and aggregate student data can be shared. Track by district and key demographics across all priority areas for all system-involed youth // *within 5 years*
- Decrease the countywide chronic absenteeism rate from 44.7% (21-22 rate) to 28% (18-19 rate). Decrease the countywide chronic absenteeism rate for 9-12 grade from 54.7% to 31% (21-22 rate for 9th-12th grades) // *within 5 years*
- Ensure DCFS notifies school districts of a pending detention and/or placement change within 1 day, or 10 days for youth with IEPs, for 75% of youth // *within 1-2 years*
- After collecting initial baseline data on youth access to extracurriculars, increase the rate of youth participating in these activities by 5% each year until it's on par with all students // *within 5 years*
- Increase the graduation rates for youth in foster care from 61.1% to 86% (21-22 Countywide rate for all youth) // *within 5 yrs*
- Improve the college-going rate for youth in foster care within 12 months from graduation from 54.1% to 62% (on par with the Countywide rate for all youth) // *within 3-5 years*

ECC MISSION: RAISE THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF SYSTEM INVOLVED YOUTH

** Refer to ECC Logic Model Document*

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Thank you.

Any Questions?

JBAY JOHN BURTON Advocates for Youth

www.jbay.org
www.cacollegepathways.org

5 Things You Can Do Before the FAFSA & CADAA Open in Dec 2023

If you are a student currently or previously in the foster care system, here are five things you can do to get ready for college while you wait for the FAFSA or CADAA to open:

Typically, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and California Dream Act Application (CADAA) are released on October 1 for the following academic year, but in 2023, these applications won't be available until December 2023.

1 Create your FSA ID

Create your FSA ID at studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/. You will need an FSA ID to fill out your FAFSA online. To create an FSA ID, you'll need a Social Security Number, and a mobile phone number and/or email address. Make sure the name and social security number you enter in the FSA ID application exactly matches the name and number on your Social Security Card. It's recommended to create an FSA ID before you fill out the FAFSA, since it takes a few days to process.

2 Apply for the Chafee Grant

The Chafee Grant is up to $5,000 per year. You can apply for the Chafee Grant as soon as October 1st for the following academic year. Students must also submit a FAFSA or CADAA to be eligible for this funding. The Chafee Grant is for current or former foster youth who were in foster care at least one day between the ages of 16-18. Learn more about eligibility by visiting chafee.csac.ca.gov.

3 Get Connected to Support

Ask for help with applying to college; you don't have to do this alone. Talk to your school counselor, social worker/probation officer or Independent Living Program (ILP) Coordinator. You can also visit cacollegepathways.org and click "Find Support" to get the contact information for the campus-based foster youth support programs at the colleges you are interested in applying to. They can even help you apply!

4 Research and Apply to Colleges

Work with your school counselor to help you explore colleges that are a good match for you and your goals. Learn more about how to apply and key deadlines by visiting this step-by-step guide for 12th grade students in foster care HERE.

5 Apply for Private Scholarships

Scholarships are money to help students pay for college that don't need to be paid back. Scholarship searches and applications take time, so get a head start now. To visit a list of scholarship search websites and application tips, visit this link HERE.