

# CSBA Sample Board Policy

**Instruction**

BP 6173.1(a)

## **EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

Note: Education Code 48850-48859 (the AB 490 Educational Rights and Stability Act of 2003) create obligations for districts regarding the education of foster youth, including the right of foster youth to continue attending their school of origin and the requirement to ensure that foster youth have access to the same academic resources, services, and extracurricular activities that are available to all students. See the accompanying administrative regulation. While the requirements of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11431-11435) may apply to foster youth in certain situations, such as when they are living in emergency or transitional shelters or when they are awaiting foster care placement (see BP/AR 6173 - Education for Homeless Children), Education Code 48850-48859 extend services to youth at any time when in foster care. The following policy may be revised to reflect district practice.

The Governing Board recognizes that foster youth may be at greater risk for poor academic performance due to their family circumstances, disruption of their educational program, and emotional, social, and other health needs. The district shall provide such students with full access to the district's educational program and other support services necessary to assist them in achieving state and district academic standards.

*(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)*  
*(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)*  
*(cf. 5149 - At-Risk Students)*  
*(cf. 6011- Academic Standards)*  
*(cf. 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)*  
*(cf. 6145.2 - Athletic Competition)*  
*(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)*  
*(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)*  
*(cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)*

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 48850, placement determinations for foster youth must be made in accordance with the student's "best interest." In addition, Education Code 48853.5 requires each district to designate a staff person as a foster care liaison to help ensure proper school placement and enrollment. See the accompanying administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that placement decisions for foster youth are based on the students' best interests as defined in law and administrative regulation. To that end, he/she shall designate a staff person as a district liaison for foster youth to help facilitate the enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth.

The Superintendent or designee and district liaison shall ensure that all appropriate staff, including, but not limited to, each principal, school registrar, and attendance clerk, receive training regarding the enrollment, placement, and rights of foster youth.

*(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)*  
*(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)*  
*(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)*

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

Note: Pursuant to Health and Safety Code 1522.41 and 1529.2 and Welfare and Institutions Code 16003, foster family agencies, group home administrator certification programs, and community colleges must provide training to foster parents, group home administrators, and other caretakers which includes, among other things, basic instruction on the existing laws and procedures (i.e., Education Code 32228-32228.5) regarding school safety and the ensuring of a harassment- and violence-free school environment.

The Board desires to provide foster youth with a safe, positive learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and promotes students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies to build students' feelings of connectedness with the school, including, but not limited to, strategies that promote positive discipline and conflict resolution, the development of students' resiliency and interpersonal skills, and the involvement of foster parents, group home administrators, and/or other caretakers in school programs and activities.

*(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)*

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

*(cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)*

*(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)*

Note: Education Code 48853.5 encourages districts to collaborate with other agencies to provide services to foster youth. The following **optional** paragraph should be modified to reflect district practice.

To address the needs of foster youth and help ensure the maximum utilization of available funds, the Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with local agencies including, but not limited to, the county placing agency, social services, probation officers, juvenile court officers, nonprofit organizations, and advocates. The Superintendent or designee shall explore the feasibility of entering into agreements with these groups to coordinate services and protect the rights of foster youth.

*(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)*

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly report to the Board on the educational outcomes of foster youth enrolled in the district including, but not limited to, school attendance, student achievement test results, promotion and retention rates by grade level, graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates.

*(cf. 0500 - Accountability)*

*(cf. 5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention)*

*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

*(cf. 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities))*

*(cf. 6162.51 - Standardized Testing and Reporting Program)*

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

(cf. 6162.52 - High School Exit Examination)

*Legal Reference:*

EDUCATION CODE

32228-32228.5 Student safety and violence prevention

42920-42925 Foster children educational services

48645-48646 Juvenile court schools

48850-48859 Educational placement of students residing in licensed children's institutions

49061 Student records

49069.5 Foster care students, transfer of records

49076 Access to student records

51225.3 High school graduation

56055 Rights of foster parents in special education

60851 High school exit examination

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

1522.41 Training and certification of group home administrators

1529.2 Training of licensed foster parents

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

300 Children subject to jurisdiction

309 Investigation and release of child

361 Limitations on parental or guardian control

366.27 Educational decision by relative providing living arrangements

602 Minors violating law; ward of court

726 Limitations on parental or guardian control

727 Order of care, ward of court

16000-16014 Foster care placement

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 29

794 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 42

670-679b Federal assistance for foster care programs

11431-11435 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

*Management Resources:*

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

*Educating Foster Youth: Best Practices and Board Considerations, Policy Brief, March 2008*

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS

*Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care, 2005*

CITIES, COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PUBLICATIONS

*Our Children: Emancipating Foster Youth, A Community Action Guide*

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

California Department of Education, Foster Youth Services: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy>

California Department of Social Services, Foster Youth Ombudsman Office:

<http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov>

California Youth Connection: <http://www.cal youthconn.org/site/cyc>

Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership: <http://www.ccs partnership.org>

(3/04 3/08) 11/09

**Policy Reference UPDATE Service**

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# CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

**Instruction**

AR 6173.1(a)

## **EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

### **Definitions**

*Foster youth* means a child who has been subject to one of the following: (Education Code 48853.5)

1. Has been removed from his/her home pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 309 (temporary custody)
2. Is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 or 602 (jurisdiction of juvenile court)
3. Has been removed from his/her home and is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 or 602

Note: In instances where the rights of the parent/guardian have been limited, the court may appoint an educational representative on a temporary or long-term basis to make educational decisions for the student.
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*Person holding the right to make educational decisions* means a responsible adult appointed by a court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 361 or 727.

*School of origin* means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the preceding 15 months and with which the youth is connected, the district liaison shall, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, determine, in the best interest of the foster youth, which school is the school of origin. (Education Code 48853.5)

*Best interest* means a placement that ensures that the youth is placed in the least restrictive educational program and has access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to district students. (Education Code 48853)

### **District Liaison**

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 48853.5, districts are required to designate a staff person as an educational liaison for foster youth. This person may be the same individual designated as the district liaison for homeless students as required by 42 USC 11432. See AR 6173 - Education of Homeless Children. In addition, Education Code 48853.5 requires that, for districts operating a foster youth services program, the district liaison be affiliated with that program. The duties of the liaison are as specified below.
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**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

The Superintendent designates the following position as the district liaison for foster youth:  
(Education Code 48853.5)

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(position or title)

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(address)

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(phone number)

*(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)*

The district's liaison for foster youth shall:

1. Ensure and facilitate the proper educational placement, enrollment in school, and checkout from school of students in foster care (Education Code 48853.5)

Note: Education Code 48645.5 requires districts to accept for credit full or partial coursework completed in a public school or nonpublic nonsectarian school or agency in addition to a juvenile court school; see BP 6146.3 - Reciprocity for Academic Credit.

2. Ensure proper transfer of credits, records, and grades when students in foster care transfer from one school to another or from one district to another (Education Code 48853.5, 48645.5)

*(cf. 5125 - Student Records)*

*(cf. 6146.3 - Reciprocity of Academic Credit)*

Note: Items #3-7 below are **optional** and should be modified to reflect district practice.

3. As necessary, make appropriate referrals to ensure that students in foster care receive necessary special education services and services under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973

*(cf. 6164.4 - Identification and Evaluation of Individuals for Special Education)*

*(cf. 6164.6 - Identification and Education Under Section 504)*

4. Ensure that students in foster care receive appropriate school-based services, such as supplemental instruction, counseling, or after-school services

*(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)*

*(cf. 5148.2 - Before/After School Programs)*

*(cf. 5149 - At-Risk Students)*

*(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)*

*(cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)*

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

*(cf. 6174 - Education for English Language Learners)*

*(cf. 6177- Summer School)*

*(cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)*

5. Develop protocols and procedures so that district staff, including principals, school registrars, and attendance clerks, are aware of the requirements for the proper enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth

*(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)*

6. Collaborate with the county placing agency, social services, probation officers, juvenile court officers, nonprofit organizations, and advocates to help coordinate services for the district's foster youth

*(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)*

*(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)*

7. Monitor the educational progress of foster youth and provide reports to the Superintendent or designee and the Governing Board based on indicators identified in Board policy

Note: The following **optional** paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice. Because the district's educational liaison for foster youth often has additional duties pertaining to other programs, CSBA's policy brief Educating Foster Youth: Best Practices and Board Considerations recommends periodic evaluation of the liaison's caseload to determine whether he/she is able to adequately fulfill his/her duties with respect to foster youth.

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly monitor the caseload of the district liaison, as well as his/her additional duties outside of the foster youth program, to determine whether adequate time and resources are available to meet the needs of foster youth in the district.

*(cf. 4115 - Evaluation/Supervision)*

*(cf. 4315 - Evaluation/Supervision)*

**Enrollment**

A foster youth placed in a licensed children's institution or foster family home within the district shall attend programs operated by the district unless one of the following circumstances applies: (Education Code 48853)

1. The student has an individualized education program requiring placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency or in another local educational agency.

*(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)*

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

*(cf. 6159.2 - Nonpublic Nonsectarian School and Agency Services for Special Education)*

Note: Education Code 56055 specifies that a foster parent, to the extent permitted by federal law, shall have the same rights relative to his/her foster child's education as a parent/guardian. See BP/AR 6159 - Individualized Education Program.

2. The parent/guardian or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be placed in another educational program.

*(cf. 6159.3 - Appointment of Surrogate Parent for Special Education Students)*

Note: Education Code 48853.5 requires the district, upon initial placement or change in placement, to allow a foster youth to continue his/her education in the school of origin for the remainder of the school year, unless the person with the right to make educational decisions waives that right.

State law does not address the provision of transportation to the student's school of origin. Districts with questions about their obligation with respect to transportation should consult legal counsel.

3. At the initial placement or any subsequent change in placement, the student is entitled to remain in his/her school of origin, as defined above, for the remainder of the academic school year pursuant to Education Code 48853.5.

The district liaison may, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, recommend that the youth's right to attend the school of origin be waived and he/she be enrolled in any school that students living in the attendance area in which the foster youth resides are eligible to attend. All decisions shall be made in accordance with the foster youth's best interest. (Education Code 48853.5)

Prior to making any recommendation to move a foster youth from his/her school of origin, the liaison shall provide the youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth with a written explanation of the basis for the recommendation and how this recommendation serves the youth's best interests. (Education Code 48853.5)

The role of the liaison shall be advisory with respect to placement decisions and determination of the school of origin. (Education Code 48853.5)

If the liaison, in consultation with the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, agrees that the best interests of the youth would be served by his/her transfer to a school other than the school of origin, the principal or designee of the new school shall immediately enroll the foster youth. The youth shall be immediately enrolled even if he/she has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

to the school last attended or is unable to produce records, such as academic or medical records, proof of residency, or clothing normally required for enrollment. (Education Code 48853.5)

*(cf. 5125.2 - Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts)*

*(cf. 5132 - Dress and Grooming)*

*(cf. 5141.31 - Immunizations)*

Within two business days of enrollment, the liaison shall contact the school last attended by the student to obtain all academic and other records. Upon receiving a request from a new school, the liaison shall provide all records within two business days of receiving the request. (Education Code 48853.5)

Note: Education Code 48853 and 48853.5 specify that, if a dispute arises regarding school placement, the district shall use an existing dispute resolution process available to any district student. The following paragraph should be modified to reflect any specific district dispute resolution process and may also be modified to reflect district practice.

If a person with the right to make educational decisions for a foster youth or the foster youth disagrees with the liaison's enrollment recommendation, he/she may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall make a determination within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. Within 30 days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision, the parent/guardian or foster youth may appeal that decision to the Board. The Board shall consider the issue at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board's decision shall be final.

If any dispute arises regarding the request of a foster youth to remain in the school of origin, the youth has the right to remain in the school of origin pending resolution of the dispute. (Education Code 48853.5)

**Applicability of Graduation Requirements**

Note: The following section is for use by districts maintaining high schools which have established graduation requirements that exceed the state's minimum requirements; see BP 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements. Education Code 51225.3, as amended by AB 167 (Ch. 224, Statutes of 2009), provides that foster youth who transfer into the district or between district schools in grades 11-12 shall be exempted from locally established high school graduation requirements, as provided below. This exemption does not apply to state graduation requirements for course completion or the high school exit examination.

When a foster youth in grade 11 or 12 transfers into the district from another school district or transfers between high schools within the district, he/she shall be exempted from all coursework and other graduation requirements adopted by the Board that are in addition to the statewide coursework requirements specified in Education Code 51225.3 and the high school exit examination, unless the district makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate from high school while he/she remains in foster care. (Education Code 51225.3, 60851)

## **EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH** (continued)

The Superintendent or designee shall notify any student who is granted an exemption and, as appropriate, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student if any of the requirements that are waived will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and shall provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges. (Education Code 51225.3)

*(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)*  
*(cf. 6162.52 - High School Exit Examination)*

### **Grades/Credits**

Grades for a student in foster care shall not be lowered if the student is absent from school due to either of the following circumstances: (Education Code 49069.5)

1. A decision by a court or placement agency to change the student's placement, in which case the student's grades and credits shall be calculated as of the date the student left school
2. A verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity

*(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)*

### **Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities**

Note: AB 81 (Ch. 76, Statutes of 2009) amended Education Code 48850 to provide that, when the residence of a student in foster care changes pursuant to a court order or decision of a child welfare worker, the student shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in extracurricular activities and interscholastic sports. For additional information about eligibility requirements, see BP 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities.
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A foster youth who changes residences pursuant to a court order or decision of a child welfare worker shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities. (Education Code 48850)

*(cf. 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)*  
*(cf. 6145.2 - Athletic Competition)*

(11/05 3/08) 11/09