



West Contra Costa
Unified School District

BULLETIN

No. R-5

Date: February 12, 2010

Subject: Education of Foster Care Children and Youth

To: Elementary/Secondary Principals

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Wendell Greer, Associate Superintendent

Education of Foster Care Children and Youth

AB 490 (Chapter 862, Statutes of 2003) took effect on January 1, 2004. The bill is an effort to improve educational stability and thereby, educational outcomes for foster youth. The measure seeks to achieve this goal by improving school and social service agency monitoring and support for these students. The following are the key provisions under AB 490:

- Foster youth access to same academic resources, services, and extracurricular activities
- Education and placement decisions dictated by best interest of the child
- School stability in school of origin
- Preference for mainstream school placement
- Immediate enrollment
- Timely transfer of educational information
- Protection of credits, grades, graduation
- Case worker/probation officer access to school records

School of Origin

By federal and state definition, the "School of Origin" is the school the foster child attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled. If different, or if there is another school child attended with which he/she is connected, liaison, child, and person with educational rights shall determine which school is deemed the school of origin. EC 48853.5(e)

Immediate Enrollment

Schools must provide for immediate enrollment and attendance even if the child is missing academic and medical records, immunization records, proof of residency, school uniform, or fees or materials owed to the prior school. EC 48853.5 If there is no space in your school, the student will be displaced as per district policy.

Mainstream School

Foster children must attend a regular mainstream school unless the child has an IEP requiring different educational placement, or the person with the educational rights determines that it is in the child's best interest to attend a different educational program or to remain in the school of origin. EC 48853

TIMELY TRANSFERS

Old School

Within two (2) business days of a child transferring out, the school must transfer educational records to the next school. Records must include determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, classes, grades, immunizations, special education plan. EC 49069.5 (d), (e)

New School

Within two (2) business days of request for enrollment the new school must contact the old school to obtain all records. EC 49069.5 (d)(4)(C) It is suggested that the prior school fax the records to maintain timelines established by law.

PROTECTION OF GRADES, CREDITS, GRADUATION

Grades

A school cannot lower a child's grades due to absences caused by change in placement, attendance at court hearing, or court ordered activity. EC 49069.5 (g),(h)

School Credits

Schools must award credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at another public school, juvenile court school, or non-public, non-sectarian school. EC 48645.5

Graduation

If graduation requirements are completed while a student is detained, the student may be entitled to a diploma from the last school attended or from the County Superintendent of Schools. EC 48465.5

ACCESS TO SCHOOL RECORDS

Case workers and probation officers may access the child's school records without parental consent or court order, so that they may compile the child's health and education summary, fulfill educational case management duties; or assist with school transfer or enrollment. EC 49076

SASlxp provides a check off box for the identification of foster youth. Please check this box when enrolling foster youth.

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