

Lewis Center for Educational Research

BP 6173: INSTRUCTION
EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Adopted: June 17, 2013

Revised: June 12, 2023

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (“LCER”) Board of Directors (“Board”) (which operates Academy for Academic Excellence (“AAE”) and Norton Science and Language Academy (“NSLA”) (collectively, “LCER”) desires to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational program, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards, are provided a free and appropriate public education, are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “*homeless children and youth*” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. 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 the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of “homeless.”

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the LCER Liaison.

LCER Liaison

The President/CEO designates the following staff person as the LCER Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

AAE SCHOOL COUNSELOR
17500 MANA RD. APPLE VALLEY
760-946-5414 (Ext. 112)

NSLA SCHOOL COUNSELOR
230 S. WATERMAN AVE. SAN BERNARDINO
909-386-2300 (Ext. 709)

The LCER Liaison shall ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled by LCER schools (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by LCER personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies, and through the annual housing questionnaire administered by the school.
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at LCER schools.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including: services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act; early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”); any other preschool programs administered by LCER, if any; and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
4. Parents/guardians 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. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, LCER charters, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. LCER personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. The LCER Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students and that the youths may obtain assistance from the LCER Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>.

Enrollment

LCER shall immediately admit/enroll the student for which an LCER school is a School of Origin. “School of Origin” means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

LCER shall also immediately enroll a homeless youth who seeks to enroll in an LCER school, if the youth would otherwise be eligible to attend and subject to the school’s capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the school’s charter and Board policy. A homeless youth who is enrolled will have the right to attend classes and participate fully in school activities, including extracurricular activities.

The youth shall be immediately enrolled even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunizations, other required health records, proof of residency) or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C); Education Code Section 48850(a)(3)(A).)

If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the President/CEO or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the LCER Liaison. The LCER Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

A homeless youth may remain in the student’s school of origin for the entire period for which the youth is homeless. If a youth obtains permanent housing during an academic year, the youth will be permitted to remain in the school of origin through the end of the academic year.

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the student shall be immediately admitted (subject to the school’s capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in school’s charter and Board policy), pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the admission/enrollment decision, including an explanation of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision. The parent/guardian shall also be referred to the LCER Liaison.

The LCER Liaison shall carry out the Board-adopted dispute resolution and complaint process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

Housing Questionnaire

LCER shall administer a housing questionnaire for purposes of identifying homeless children and youth. LCER shall ensure that the housing questionnaire is based on the best practices developed by the CDE. LCER shall annually provide the housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians of students and to all unaccompanied youths at LCER schools. The housing questionnaire shall include an explanation of the rights and protections a student has as a homeless child or youth or as an unaccompanied youth. The housing questionnaire shall be available in paper form. The

housing questionnaire shall be available in the primary language other than English spoken by fifteen (15) percent or more of the students enrolled at LCER and shall be translated into other languages upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. LCER shall collect the completed housing questionnaires and annually report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled. (Education Code Section 48851.)

Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall promptly be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in LCER schools such as (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4)):

- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for students with disabilities and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
- Counseling and Social Emotional Learning services
- Programs in vocational and technical education
- LCER nutrition programs
- Transportation services
- Programs for gifted and talented children

Transportation

In the event that LCER provides transportation services to all LCER students, LCER shall provide comparable transportation services to each homeless child or youth attending LCER schools, as noted above. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4).)

If the LCER does not otherwise provide transportation services to all LCER students, LCER shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from LCER schools, at the request of the parent or guardian (or LCER Liaison), if an LCER school is the student's school of origin. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J).) Transportation provided by LCER will be adequate and appropriate for the student's situation, but LCER does not commit to any one method of transportation for all youth.

Professional Development

All administrators, teachers, and employees of LCER, including the LCER Liaison, will be provided professional development on the identification, services, and sensitivity necessary when dealing with homeless children and youth. (The LCER Liaison will verify that LCER is providing the required training to school personnel providing services to youth experiencing homelessness at least annually through the CDE's verification system. (Education Code Section 48852.5(c)(2).)

The LCER Liaison shall offer training to school site certificated and classified employees providing services to students experiencing homelessness, including, but not limited to, teachers, support staff, and other school staff who work with pupils, at least annually relating to:

- (1) LCER's homeless education program policies; and
- (2) Recognition of signs that pupils are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

The LCER Liaison shall inform such employees of the availability of training and the services the LCER Liaison provides to aid in the identification and provision of services to students who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

High School Graduation Requirements

Homeless students who transfer to an LCER school any time after the completion of their second year of high school shall be exempt from any of the school's graduation requirements that are in excess of the California minimum graduation requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3 ("additional graduation requirements") unless the school makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the school's graduation requirements by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

To determine whether a homeless student is in their third or fourth year of high school, either the number of credits the student has earned to the date of transfer or the length of the student's school enrollment may be used, whichever will qualify the student for the exemption.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of the date that a student who may qualify for exemption under the above requirements transfers into the LCER, the LCER shall notify the student, the student's educational rights holder, and the LCER Liaison of the availability of the exemption and whether the student qualifies for an exemption.

The LCER shall notify students who are exempted from the school's additional graduation requirements and the student's educational rights holder of how any of the requirements that are waived will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.

LCER shall not require any student who would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school to accept the exemption from the school's additional graduation requirements or deny the student enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which the student is otherwise eligible. LCER shall not revoke an exemption and shall grant an eligible student's request for the exemption at any time if the student qualifies, regardless of whether the student previously declined the exemption. An eligible student's exemption from the school's additional graduation requirements will continue to apply while the student is enrolled in the school or if the student transfers to another school even after the student no longer meets the definition of a homeless child.

LCER shall not require or request that a student transfer schools in order to qualify the student for the exemption. Nor shall a student, a student's parent/guardian or educational rights holder, or a student's social worker or probation officer request a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption from the school's additional graduation requirements.

If a student who is exempted from the school's additional graduation requirements completes the California minimum coursework requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3 before the end of the student's fourth year of high school and would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school, LCER shall not require or request that the student graduate before the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

If LCER determines the student is reasonably able to complete the school's graduation

requirements by the end of the student's fifth year of high school, LCER shall do the following:

1. Inform the student of the student's option to remain at the school for a fifth year to complete the graduation requirements.
2. Inform the student, and the educational rights holder for the student, about how remaining in school for a fifth year to the school's graduation requirements will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution.
3. Provide information to the student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.
4. Permit the student to stay at LCER for a fifth year to complete the school's graduation requirements upon agreement with the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older, or, if the student is under 18 years of age, upon agreement with the educational rights holder for the student.

Acceptance of Course Work

LCER will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a homeless student.

LCER will provide homeless students credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, LCER shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless LCER, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the homeless student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

Notice

For any homeless student who seeks enrollment at an LCER school, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrollment and at least annually while the student is enrolled at an LCER school.

Annual Policy Review

LCER shall annually review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the identification of homeless children and youths or the enrollment of homeless children and youths at LCER schools. In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the identification, enrollment, and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school. LCER's review of its homeless education program policies shall use resources developed

by the CDE and posted on the CDE's internet website and resources developed by homeless education technical assistance centers established using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

School Website Posting

LCER shall ensure that the following information is posted, and updated as necessary, on its internet website:

- The name and contact information of the LCER Liaison(s) for homeless children and youths.
- The contact information of any employee or contractor that assists the LCER Liaison in completing the Liaison's duties.
- Specific information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.