

**EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

The County Board of Education 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 Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) shall provide such students with full access to the COE's educational program and other support services necessary to assist them in achieving state and COE academic standards.

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

The County 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 County 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.

To address the needs of foster youth and help ensure the maximum utilization of available funds, the County 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 County Superintendent or designee shall explore the feasibility of entering into agreements with these groups to coordinate services and protect the rights of foster youth.

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

*Legal Reference:*

EDUCATION CODE

*3228-3228.5 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 CODES

*1522.41 Training and certification of group home administrators*

*1529.2 Training of licensed foster parents*

WELFARE AND INSTITUTION 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*

*Adopted: 11/20/2014*