

Downey Unified School District

STUDENTS

FOSTER YOUTH STUDENTS

AR 2515

Definitions

Foster youth means a child who has been subject to one of the following:

Has been removed from his/her home pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 309 (investigation and release of child)

1. Is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 (jurisdiction of juvenile court) or 602 (minors ward of court, violating law)
2. Has been removed from his/her home and is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 or 602

Persons 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 the student was last enrolled, or any school the child attended in the last 15 months where the youth had a connection. 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 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, the school of origin.

Best interest means a placement that ensures that the youth is placed in the least restrictive educational programs and has access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to District students.

“Best interests means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, educational stability, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress, and the foster youth's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all district students.”

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District Liaison

The Superintendent designates the following position as the District liaison for foster youth:

Director of Student Services
11627 Brookshire Avenue, Downey, CA 90241
(562) 469-6550

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.
2. Assist foster youth when transferring from one school to another or from one district to another in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records, and grades.

Enrollment

A foster youth placed in a licensed children's institution or foster home shall attend local comprehensive school programs operated by the District unless one of the following circumstances applies:

1. The student has an individualized education program requiring placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency or in another local educational agency.
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 or that the student continue in his/her school of origin, as specified below.

At the initial placement or detention, or any subsequent change in placement of a foster youth, the District shall allow the student to continue his/her education in the school of origin for the duration of the court's jurisdiction. If the court's jurisdiction is terminated prior to the end of the school year, a foster youth may remain in the school of origin until the end of the academic year. If the court's jurisdiction is terminated while a youth is in high school, then the youth may remain in their school of origin until high school graduation. The youth also has the right to matriculate from elementary to middle and from

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Enrollment - continued

middle to high school utilizing the same feeder patterns as other students. However, 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 immediately 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.

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.

The role of the liaison shall be advisory with respect to placement decisions and determination of the school of origin.

If the liaison, in consultation with the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, agree 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, even if the youth is unable to produce records, such as academic, medical, or proof of residency, or clothing normally required for enrollment.

The liaison shall within two business days of enrollment 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 for the school last attended shall provide all records within two business days of receiving the request.

If there is a dispute as to school enrollment, then the youth has the right to remain in the school of origin pending resolution of the dispute. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment into a school, the foster care youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

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Enrollment Disputes

The District Liaison (Director of Student Services) shall carry out the dispute process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. A meeting will be held as soon as possible with the education rights holder. The caregiver, social worker, and foster care youth may be invited, but are not necessary participants. A decision will be made in the best interest of the student based on, but not limited to the following: distance between new home and school of origin, feasibility, time of arrival due to transportation, types of connections to the school that will be given high value, and other related issues. A written explanation of the decision will be provided to parties involved.

If the dispute continues, then an appeal meeting with the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services will be scheduled as soon as possible with the education rights holder. The caregiver, social worker, and foster care youth may be invited, but are not necessary participants. The education rights holder shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment.

If the person with the right to make educational decisions for a foster youth or the foster youth disagrees with the appealed enrollment recommendation, he/she may then appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall make a determination within 30 days of receipt of this appeal. Within 30 days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision, the education rights holder 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 the Board decides that a foster care youth may not remain enrolled in the school of origin or school in which enrollment is sought, then it must ensure that another school will immediately enroll the foster care youth. This other school must either be the local school of residence, another school that qualifies as a school of origin, or another school to which the education rights holder consents.

Grades and Credits

The District is required to issue grades and credits to foster youth in the case of a change of placement. A student's grades may not be lowered due to absences caused by a change of placement, attendance at a court hearing or participation in a court ordered activity, and the student's grades must be calculated as of the date the student left school.

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Issuing of Course Credits

(Credit designation is for 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades only)

The District must award credit to foster youth for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed. Students earn credit for attending, participating, and completing assignments as indicated below (Every 7 class periods = 0.5 credits):

0 – 6 Class Periods	Insufficient Attendance to Warrant Grade
7 – 13 Class Periods	0.5 credits per subject
14 – 20 Class Periods	1.0 credits per subject
21 – 27 Class Periods	1.5 credits per subject
28 – 34 Class Periods	2.0 credits per subject
35 – 41 Class Periods	2.5 credits per subject
42 – 48 Class Periods	3.0 credits per subject
49 – 55 Class Periods	3.5 credits per subject
56 – 62 Class Periods	4.0 credits per subject
63 – 69 Class Periods	4.5 credits per subject
70+ Class Periods	5.0 credits per subject

In calculating partial credits, the District shall count each class period lasting 89 minutes or less as 1 class period and each class period lasting 90 minutes or more as 2 class periods.

If a foster youth is enrolled in an alternative school setting (e.g., continuation school, independent study program, or adult school), the District must calculate credits according to the above formula or an approved credit plan adopted pursuant to Education Code § 51225.3(b), if such plan provides for the awarding of partial credits.

Upon receiving notification that a foster youth will be transferring schools, the District must issue check out grades. For each subject that the youth is passing as of the last day of actual attendance, the District's sending school must then calculate partial credits. The District's sending school should include all courses, grades, and partial credits earned on an official transcript within 2 business days of notification of the youth's transfer.

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Issuing of Course Credits - continued

When a foster youth transfers into the District during the school year or between schools within the District, the District's receiving school must request and accept all check out grades and partial credits awarded by the previous school within 2 business days of the youth's enrollment. The District's receiving school must then apply these credits and grades to the same or equivalent courses on the District's official transcript. The foster youth must be immediately enrolled in the same or equivalent courses so they can complete a full grading period of credits.

At the end of the grading period during which the foster youth transferred into the District's receiving school, the District must calculate the remaining partial credits owed based on the number of periods attended per class after the youth's enrollment in the District's receiving school. The grades and credits earned should then be added to the youth's official transcript.

Transportation

The District shall not be responsible for providing transportation for a foster youth to and from a District school of origin when the student is residing within the District. Transportation will be the responsibility of the caregiver or person with educational rights.

Graduation Requirements

AB 167/216 requires a school district to exempt a pupil in foster care from all coursework and other requirements adopted by the Governing Board of the District that are in addition to the statewide coursework requirements if the pupil, after completing their second year of high school, transfers to the District from another district or between high schools within the District, unless the District makes a finding that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements within four years of high school. Whether a youth has completed their second year of high school can be determined based on length of enrollment or number of credits earned, whichever method is more likely to make the youth eligible for AB 167/216 graduation.

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Graduation Requirements - continued

Within 30 days of the student’s enrollment in the district, the district will certify the youth as eligible for AB 167/216 graduation and provide written notice of such eligibility to the youth, education rights holder, and social worker. Such notice will advise the education rights holder of the impact of graduating under AB 167/216 on admissions to a 4 year university. Once certified, a youth will remain eligible, regardless of whether their foster care case stays open or they transfer schools again. A youth can request that they be reassessed for eligibility at any time. The decision to utilize AB 167/216 graduation will be solely that of the education rights holder. A youth will be allowed to continue attending school for a 5th year of high school if they can complete local graduation requirements during that time.

<u>State Required Courses</u>	<u>Credit Requirement</u>
English	30
Math	20
Science (Biological and Physical)	20
World History	10
U.S. History	10
Government	5
Economics	5
Visual/Performing Arts <u>or</u> Foreign Language	10
<u>Physical Education</u>	<u>20</u>
TOTAL:	130

Note: 10 credits earned is equivalent to a one-year course

In addition to completing the coursework above, a pupil must receive passing scores on both California High School Exit Exams (CAHSEE) - English and Math. Special Education students are eligible for the CAHSEE Waiver.

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

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.