

San Francisco's Homeless Education Plan

August 2004

This report is the result of a nine-month planning process involving multiple stakeholders to create a three-year plan to strengthen academic outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. The planning process was funded by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation and coordinated by A Home Away From Homelessness. This report was written and prepared by Kate Durham, DPM Consulting.

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A vision without a task is but a dream.

A task without a vision is drudgery.

A task with a vision is the hope of the world.

Inscription on a church in Sussex, England

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executive summary

Improving educational access and outcomes for children and youth in homeless situations is an urgent need. On one hand, research shows children to be the fastest growing sector in the homeless population, with well-documented short- and long-term repercussions at personal, community and public levels. On the other hand, ensuring participation and success in school has proven a viable route out of poverty and homelessness. Expanding access and enhancing outcomes are achievable goals in San Francisco with increased coordination between schools, city departments, community-based organizations (CBOs), the philanthropic community and families.

The **HEP's** new procedures, strategies and materials for enrolling students experiencing homelessness aim to provide all stakeholders with better information on their rights and more immediate access to services and support.

With these objectives in mind, a five-person leadership team created San Francisco's Homeless Education Plan (HEP) between October 2003 and June 2004 through a comprehensive and inclusive process involving multiple stakeholders. The plan's development was funded by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation and coordinated through A Home Away From Homelessness, a San Francisco nonprofit.

The planning process used the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 (see Appendix 3) as a broad framework but went well beyond that outline to explore, reflect on and build from nearly two decades of public and community experience and advocacy in this field.

The planning team comprised representatives from the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), neighboring school districts, A Home Away from Homelessness and consultants. Planning forums included focus groups with homeless and formerly homeless parents whose children are enrolled in city schools; meetings with city departments, schools, CBOs, foundations and advocacy groups; and the creation and input of a parent involvement committee and a citywide homeless education action forum.

In addition to laying the groundwork, the planning process actually led to the achievement of several goals as a result of new or strengthened relationships and coordination. Funding was secured for one parent-school-community relations (PSCR) advisor and a part-time HEP coordinator. Official commitments were made to develop or reinforce material, academic and support services. At community request, the SFUSD's Homeless Education Program was renamed Families in Transition, an indicator of increased sensitivity.

Recommendations to ensure that this plan is implemented center on the appointment of a coordinator to effect system change over a three-year period. Steps will include raising implementation funds, convening quarterly Homeless Education Task Force meetings, and coordinating community-based efforts with the school-based Families in Transition Program.

To improve in-school identification of students whose homeless status qualifies them for support, the HEP recommends the appointment and training of school-based liaisons, ongoing training for school staff, the production and dissemination of outreach materials, and collaboration with student associations on a peer rights and education campaign. Outreach, regular meetings and formal memoranda of understanding with a range of community organizations are planned as the basis for improving out-of-school identification of students experiencing homelessness.

This plan pays particular attention to increasing the coordination, information, training, outreach and materials that will help identify and overcome barriers to access by **children** in homeless situations.

The HEP's new procedures, strategies and materials for enrolling students experiencing homelessness aim to provide all stakeholders – parents, families, school- and agency-based personnel, and children and youth themselves – with better information on their rights and more immediate access to services and support. School liaisons will be identified. The importance of school stability and educational continuity will be emphasized and supported.

Because early care and education make an enormous difference in the future prospects of preschool-aged children, this plan pays particular attention to increasing the coordination, information, training, outreach and materials that will help identify and overcome barriers to access by children in homeless situations. Inter-agency collaboration is advocated in the arena of homeless service provision as well as that of child development.

The HEP recognizes the potential impact of parental involvement in their children's education, the need for parents' input on planning and the complex problems faced by parents experiencing homelessness. A key recommendation is to fund and hire two parent-school-community relations (PSCR) advisors who will offer training, disseminate resource materials and convene meetings in order to build capacity in CBOs, schools and, most importantly, parents themselves.

Merely attending school will not eliminate obstacles to homeless students' academic success. Consequently, the HEP recommends measures to improve and extend material, academic and support services, such as providing a specialist teacher and tutor training, sharing best practices, reallocating Title 1 funds annually to reflect improved identification of eligible students, establishing scholarship funds, improving release protocols to enable schools and CBOs to share information constructively while respecting family privacy; and granting homeless students priority in after-school and summer school programs.

While the planning process was broad in scope and inclusive in participation, there are some key areas not yet explored that merit the same degree of attention. A primary area is service gaps, needs and strategies for unaccompanied youth. Evaluation of school- and community-based supports and services to ensure that they are effective and relevant in meeting the needs of homeless children and youth is another need. Other issues will emerge during HEP's implementation and will be addressed in the addenda to this plan.

This plan is intended to be a tool in action – a catalyst – for systems change. It is designed to guide the community’s work, establish accountability and ensure follow-through on commitments made during the planning process. It is also meant to be dynamic and engaged with other planning processes in San Francisco. The plan’s premise is that education is valued and recognized as a key strategy for ending homelessness. The plan’s outcome will be an interwoven and sustainable system of school, community, public sector and family support that promotes school success for children and youth in homeless situations in San Francisco.

need

According to San Francisco's Plan to Abolish Chronic Homelessness (2004), approximately 15,000 people are homeless in the city and county. Nationally, families and children comprise 40 percent and children 27 percent of the homeless population.¹ Applied locally, these percentages indicate that approximately 6,000 of San Francisco's homeless people are families, 4,050 of them children. By all accounts, children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population.

Extreme poverty and homelessness can have devastating and long-term effects on every facet of a child's life, with a strong statistical potential to inhibit physical, emotional, cognitive, social and behavioral development.²

- ★ Children and youth in homeless situations experience developmental delays that hamper academic achievement at four times the rate of children in the general population and are four times more likely to have behavioral disorders, three times more likely to show signs of a learning disability, and eight times more likely to show signs of developmental problems.³
- ★ They suffer emotional and behavioral problems that affect learning at almost three times the rate of housed children.
- ★ Few homeless children attend preschool or engage in early childhood education.⁴
- ★ Children and youth who are homeless are twice as likely to repeat a grade, often due to frequent absences and moves to new schools, and 45 percent do not attend school on a regular basis.
- ★ Homeless families have moved nearly four times in the past two years compared to their housed counterparts who moved less than twice in the same period,⁵ and 28 percent of homeless children go to three or more schools in a single year.⁶
- ★ The San Francisco Starting Points Initiative found that children living in poverty score lower on standardized tests, are more frequently retained, and more frequently drop out of school.⁷

¹ Laura Waxman and Sharon Hinderliter. 1996. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 1996*. Washington D.C.: US Conference of Mayors.

² Hart-Shegos, Ellen, 1999. "Homelessness and its Effects on Children." Family Housing Fund.

³ Zima, D.T., et al, February 1997. "Sheltered homeless children: their eligibility and unmet need for special education evaluations." *American Journal of Public Health*. 87(2).

⁴ Ellen Bassuk, 1999. *Homeless Children: American's New Outcasts*, The Better Homes Fund.

⁵ The Better Homes Fund Research on Homelessness and Low-Income Families, 1999

⁶ US Department of Education, 1999, Better Homes Fund, 1999

⁷ First Steps Data Report on the Status of San Francisco's Young Children, 2000

“Diverse” populations (African American, Latino, Native American, immigrant and language minority students, and those from poor families) are over-represented in homeless statistics. Improving academic achievement in these demographics is one of the most persistent and challenging issues in education.⁸ Failing this challenge has grim consequences – limiting the college, career and life choices of the poor, and fuelling racial divisions inside and outside school.⁹ Because many homeless children have poor education experiences, their future productivity and career prospects may well suffer. Without the opportunity to receive a quality education, homeless children are much less likely to acquire the skills they need to escape poverty as adults. Research confirms that the effects of homelessness last well beyond the time spent in shelters.¹⁰ Roughly 40 percent of homeless individuals in the U.S. are school dropouts, while 55 percent are either dropouts or have had seven years or less of formal education.¹¹

⁸ Diversity School, Family and Community Connections. Annual Synthesis 2003. Southwest Education Development Lab

⁹ Wing, Jean Yonemura. *Educating Kids Well Saves TaxPayer Dollars and Strengthens the Economy*. UC Accord, UC Berkeley

¹⁰ National Alliance to End Homelessness: *A Plan Not A Dream: How to End Homelessness in 10 Years*.

¹¹ Rossi, P.H. *Down and Out in America*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

rationale

Because education has proven a viable route out of poverty and homelessness, a Homeless Education Plan was initiated to ensure access to quality education and to remove barriers to academic success. The Homeless Education Plan is a key element in a systemic strategy to break cycles of poverty and homelessness in San Francisco. The HEP reflects the urgency with which we need to invest in helping homeless youth and children build the skills and esteem necessary to live healthy, stable lives. Because school can offer a secure, supportive and consistent environment in the day-to-day lives of homeless children and youth, it is an obvious focus for this investment. Moreover, a legally mandated classroom seat exists for every child and youth.

Seventeen years ago, Congress passed a law giving children and youth in homeless situations the right to attend school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. Strengthened in December 2001, the McKinney-Vento Act requires that homeless children and youth be given equal access to the same free, appropriate education, including preschool, that is provided to other children and youth. The legislation gives homeless students the right to stay in their school of origin, even if they move; to enroll in a new school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records or other papers; to get transportation to school; and to receive all the services they need for a meaningful education.

While the ability of the SFUSD to support homeless children and youths' success in school has been enhanced through efforts funded under McKinney-Vento over the last decade, obstacles remain to these students' identification, enrollment and academic success. This plan's recommendations – informed by a large coalition including representatives from the SFUSD, city departments, CBOs, foundations, advocacy groups and homeless families – lay out strategies to ensure that all children and youth in homeless situations in San Francisco have the support, services and resources they need to succeed in school.

For all participants in this planning process, the ultimate goal is to prevent and end family homelessness in San Francisco. Recognizing housing stability as the ultimate step in strengthening homeless students' academic outcomes, we must strive to prevent homelessness, and when that is not possible, shorten the length of time that families are homeless, ensure their access to stable housing and provide services when necessary to support them in sustaining that housing.

We envision a time when homeless education services are required only as a component of crisis response and intervention. In the meantime, as families currently remain homeless for months and even years in San Francisco, the measures and strategies proposed here address the educational needs of children and youth growing up homeless.

The following principles underlie all the recommendations in this plan:

- ★ Education is valued and recognized as a key strategy for ending homelessness.
- ★ The education and health of homeless children and youth is a citywide responsibility and thus requires increased coordination between schools, city departments, CBOs, the philanthropic community and families.
- ★ Schools are safe, welcoming, supportive, respectful and stimulating environments for all students.

process

Through its initiative in education of homeless children, the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation awarded a grant in August 2003 to A Home Away From Homelessness to create a three-year plan to strengthen academic outcomes for homeless students in the SFUSD. The leadership team¹² overseeing the planning process comprised representatives from the SFUSD, neighboring districts, A Home Away From Homelessness and consultants, one of whom will continue with the project as coordinator during the implementation phase.

Parents from focus groups said:

Don't use the word 'homeless' — it stigmatizes families. Perhaps use 'families in transition' or 'displaced families.'

The process design was fueled by the conviction that ensuring sound education for homeless children and youth is the responsibility of all city agencies, public and private, not of the SFUSD alone. Key partners in the planning process therefore included the Homeless Education Council (HEC),¹³ city departments, elected officials, funders, CBOs working with homeless, formerly homeless and low-income families and youth, advocates and parents, together with the SFUSD.

Planning forums over the nine-month period included:

- ★ five focus groups with homeless and formerly homeless parents residing in emergency and domestic violence shelters, transitional housing programs and supportive housing projects;¹⁴
- ★ meetings with the HEC, San Francisco Family Supportive Housing Network and the Shelter Directors' Network;
- ★ individual meetings with the Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Children, Youth and Families, Mayor's Criminal Justice Council, First 5 Commission, United Way Education Fund and Coleman Advocates;
- ★ meetings with SFUSD offices including Pupil Services, Homeless Education Program (now Families in Transition, FIT), Parent Relations, Child Development Programs and School-Based Health Programs;
- ★ the development of a parent involvement committee; and
- ★ a citywide homeless education action forum.

In addition, we convened staff of four elementary schools to talk about enhanced coordination and services. The schools – Bessie Carmichael, McKinley, William de Avila and Treasure Island – were selected because they have a large percentage of homeless students. Principals and support staff met several times with CBO representatives to identify and articulate gaps in

¹² The team comprised Jeanie Kortum, A Home Away From Homelessness; Jeri Cohen, West Contra Costa County School District; Kate Durham, DPM Consulting; Dr. Paula Moten-Tolson, Consultant, and Rosalinda del Moral, SFUSD

¹³ The Homeless Education Council is an information exchange and advocacy body made up of representatives of CBOs working with homeless children and youth.

¹⁴ Focus groups were held with residents of La Casa de Las Madres, 260 Golden Gate, St. Joseph's Village, and Homeless PreNatal Project, as well as with tenants living in family supportive housing on Treasure Island. Groups were held in both English and Spanish. Results of the focus groups can be found in Appendix 4.

services, inform the enrollment process, develop communication protocols, and design services to support homeless children's ability to succeed in school.

As a result of this process, we identified and developed priority strategies to improve academic outcomes. We also built awareness, partnerships and agreements about how to work together to ensure SFUSD compliance with McKinney-Vento legislation as well as access for homeless children and youth to the support, resources and services they need for meaningful education.

Progress

The planning process generated the following concrete actions that have already moved us towards our goals.

Building sensitivity:

- ★ The name of SFUSD's Homeless Education Program was officially changed to Families in Transition (FIT) program.

Identification:

- ★ The SFUSD Pupil Services director made a commitment to identify a school-based homeless liaison in every school by September 2004.

Enrollment:

- ★ The SFUSD raised McKinney funds for, hired and trained a part-time enrollment clerk based at 555 Franklin, as of January 2004.
- ★ The enrollment process for homeless families was streamlined and centralized.

Parental involvement:

- ★ The relationship between the SFUSD FIT Program and the Office of Parent Relations was strengthened.
- ★ The parent involvement committee designed a parent involvement project.
- ★ Money was raised from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families to partially fund the parent involvement project.

Material resources:

We organized to ensure that SFUSD provisions for homeless children, in place for the past decade, continue to be implemented. These include:

- ★ transportation, when necessary, to and from the school of origin; and
- ★ monthly bus passes, school supplies, a backpack and school uniforms.

Academic support:

- ★ Through McKinney funding, the SFUSD ensures the provision of tutors for homeless students living in shelters and in transitional and domestic violence programs, and to formerly homeless students living in supportive housing.
- ★ We secured SFUSD commitment for increased training for tutors and for annual tutor evaluation.

Data collection and evaluation:

- ★ SFUSD committed to add a homeless identifier to their data collection system.

Systems coordination:

- ★ The leadership team provided education recommendations to the Prevention and Education Committee of the Mayor's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, including the proposal that the SFUSD superintendent join city department heads on the Mayor's Homeless Task Force.
- ★ The team identified and developed key partnerships, including those with SFUSD's Office of Parent Relations and the Department of Human Services' Housing and Homeless Programs.

HEP implementation:

- ★ We raised money from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families to partially fund the HEP coordinator position.

action

To ensure that this plan is carried out, we must put structures, staffing, responsibilities and resources in place to take concrete action to implement the changes envisioned. It is critical to build upon planning process momentum by continuing to strengthen partnerships among the SFUSD, CBOs, Department of Human Services' Housing and Homeless Programs, funders and homeless families. The plan itself must be kept current and engaged with events on the ground. San Francisco is a dynamic environment, with renewed commitment evident in 2004's ten-year plan to abolish chronic homelessness. Given this context, our plan must be flexible enough to both inform and adapt to policy shifts.

For all these reasons, we recommend funding¹⁵ and hiring a community-based coordinator to facilitate the realization of this Homeless Education Plan.

A first step for the HEP coordinator will be to form a Homeless Education Task Force. A policy body of the existing HEC (see Appendix 2) and the focal point for coordinated efforts, this task force will comprise representatives with decision-making authority from the SFUSD, city departments, CBOs, funders and parents. The HEP coordinator will provide leadership, direction and logistical support to the task force; serve as advisory to the HEC in concert with the SFUSD Families in Transition (FIT) liaison; interface with other city-wide planning bodies, such as the First 5 Children and Families Commission, to partner and strengthen efforts around homeless children; and ensure ongoing communication and community-based coordination with the SFUSD.

While this infrastructure is needed in the short-term (three years), the true work of the task force, the HEC and the HEP coordinator will be to advocate and advance systems change, rather than merely compensate for system inadequacies. The goal is thus to render the HEP coordinator position obsolete after three years, by which point an interwoven and sustainable system of schools, city departments, CBOs, community services, philanthropists and families will be collaborating to ensure school access and achievement for homeless children.

Recommendations

Who	What	When
Home Away From Homelessness	Hire a coordinator to facilitate implementation of the Homeless Education Plan.	Summer 2004
HEP Coordinator	Develop a Homeless Education Task Force (a policy body of the HEC) of representatives from the SFUSD, city departments, CBOs and parents to assist in making decisions and policies to implement the plan.	Fall 2004
Families in Transition (FIT) liaison, HEP coordinator	Convene the HEC monthly.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEP Coordinator	Convene Homeless Education Task Force quarterly.	Fall 2004, ongoing

¹⁵ Partial funding has already been secured for this position for the 2004–05 year from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families.

FIT liaison, HEP coordinator	Outreach to ensure broader representation on the HEC to include those representing the 0-5 population as well as unaccompanied youth.	Fall 2004 - Winter 2005
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Homeless Education Task Force, HEC	Present plan to the SFUSD Board of Education for their endorsement.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Homeless Education Task Force members	Meet with mayor's education liaison.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, Homeless Education Task Force members	Raise funds to support implementation of plan.	Fall 2004, ongoing

identification

Context

Prior to this planning process, the SFUSD has identified homeless children and youth primarily through family shelters, transitional housing programs, supportive housing, domestic violence shelters and single-room-occupancy hotels (SROs). Organizations working specifically with homeless families and youth coordinate efforts effectively with the SFUSD Homeless Education Program, now the Families in Transition (FIT) program. While pro-active identification by such agencies does occur consistently, current under-identification means that many homeless students still go unsupported. School-based liaisons and pro-active community outreach are needed in order to increase the identification, enrollment and support of homeless children and youth, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act's stipulations that school districts "identify homeless children and youth by school personnel and through collaboration with other agencies and entities."

Parents from focus groups said:

There should be a contact person identified at every school who welcomes each homeless family.

Identify a liaison at each school who is there to assist homeless families. At the beginning of the school year, send a flyer with every student letting parents know that access to the liaison is available.

Gaps

Reports estimate that approximately 6,000 family members are homeless in San Francisco, of whom more than half are children and youth. A February 2003 point-in-time count revealed 1,148 homeless children and youth between three and 17 years of age on the city-wide shelter waiting list or living in the city's shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence programs and SROs, or in their first year in supportive housing after recent homelessness. By contrast, the SFUSD identified 500 homeless children and youth attending school during the 2003-04 academic year. In other words, there are twice as many children in homeless-support programs as there are school-identified homeless children.

This identification gap widens even further when children and youth living in unsheltered situations are taken into account. Nationally, 35 percent of homeless families are in emergency or transitional shelters, with the remainder staying temporarily with families or friends, or living in motels, cars, campgrounds and other inadequate situations. Children living in these situations are explicitly included in the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness and are therefore protected by its provisions and eligible for its services.

Recommendations

This plan addresses outreach and identification in two main arenas: within and outside of school. The proposed HEP coordinator will work closely with the SFUSD FIT program to increase the number of homeless-identified students enrolled in the district by linking "inside of school" and "outside of school" identification and outreach efforts.

Within Schools

The experience of school districts nationwide over the past two decades shows that identification within schools is highly effective. Yet children and youth experiencing homelessness often go unnoticed by school personnel. Students and parents may try to hide their situation because they are embarrassed by their homelessness. The fear of having children taken away prevents many families from informing school officials of their living circumstances, while unaccompanied youth may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments. Finally, school personnel may not understand the impact nature of homelessness, the poverty that causes it or the breadth of the federal definition of homelessness.

In-school initiatives are critical to ensuring that children and youth in homeless situations are identified and receive both educational services and the protection of the law, particularly as the majority do not live in easily identified locations such as shelters. In sum, in-school identification is a catalyst for systemic change resulting in more efficient and sensitive responses by the entire school body to the needs of homeless children and youth.

Identification Within Schools

Who	What	When
FIT liaison	Ensure that the change of SFUSD's program name (from "Homeless Education Program" to "Families in Transition Program" to avoid stigmatization and increase sensitivity) is reflected in all district communications and documents.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Pupil Services Department, Office of Parent Relations	Designate a school-based liaison in every school in the district to identify and support homeless students and their families. Draft school-site liaison responsibilities and add them to existing job descriptions. Establish regular communication and coordination between-school-site liaisons and the SFUSD FIT liaison, to discuss services, data collection, follow-up activities, etc.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, HEC member agencies	Provide extensive training to school-based liaisons on homelessness (causes, consequences, educational impact), McKinney-Vento Act provisions (especially definitions), successful methods for implementing the Act, available academic services and SFUSD enrollment, transportation, and dispute resolution procedures.	Fall 2004, ongoing
FIT liaison	Work with school-based liaisons to ensure that posters, brochures and other materials on the McKinney-Vento Act are disseminated and displayed throughout schools.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Office of Parent Relations, HEC member agencies, parent-school-community relations or PSCR advisors (see Parent Involvement)	Coordinate with school-based liaisons to offer <i>at least</i> one annual district-wide training for school secretaries, counselors and teachers, to include the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act, how to spot indicators of potential homelessness, appropriate and sensitive methods of identification and referral, the role of school and district liaisons, the basic provisions of the McKinney, Vento Act, and strategies for assisting homeless students.	Winter 2005, ongoing

HEP coordinator, FIT liaison	Convene quarterly or bi-annually a SFUSD homeless education task force that includes at least one representative from each relevant federal, state and local program, including Title I, Special Education, Head Start, Gifted and Talented, Child Nutrition, Early Childhood and Transportation. Conduct at least one educational meeting of the SFUSD task force on the relationship of the McKinney-Vento Act to each of the federal/state programs, and the services available through the FIT program. Work through the task force to create specialized trainings for each of the federal, state or local program's personnel to endure identification within each program area (see Services).	Spring 2005, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison	Include information on the McKinney-Vento Act and the FIT program in at least one regular district-wide mailing to all families and youth enrolled in SFUSD.	Spring 2005
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison	Work with high school students associations to develop a peer rights and education campaign to inform a core group of high school students about the McKinney-Vento Act and services available through the FIT Program, to equip them to provide this information to their peers who may be in need of assistance.	Fall 2005, ongoing

Outside of School

Outreach to community agencies serving low-income families and youth is also essential to reach children and youth in unsheltered locations, both those not currently enrolled in school and those enrolled in school, but not yet identified as homeless and therefore not receiving appropriate services. All community-based organizations and professionals working with low-income families and youth must be informed about the educational rights of homeless children and youth and about the services offered by the SFUSD.

Identification Outside of School

Who	What	When
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison	Produce outreach materials and posters (including the FIT program's phone number) and make them accessible in locations with frequent influx of low-income families and unaccompanied youth in high-risk situations, including public housing, SROs, motels, convenience stores, laundromats, offices of public assistance and other locations.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEP coordinator, HEC member agencies	Identify, conduct outreach to, and develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with agencies, community resources, organizations, neighborhood groups, faith-based organizations and others who can begin to serve as sites for assistance in identifying and supporting homeless students, with a focus on San Francisco's most highly impacted neighborhoods.	Winter 2005

HEP coordinator	Meet with existing San Francisco street outreach workers to educate them about McKinney-Vento and the educational rights of homeless children and youth, and provide them with information on school referrals and resources.	Winter 2005
HEP coordinator, PSCR advisors	Work with agencies in identifying parents and other volunteers who can disseminate information in multiple languages on the educational rights of homeless children and youth in their community through faith-based activities, community centers and social gatherings.	Spring 2005
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force	Work with stakeholders to develop a public awareness campaign including media, placards on Muni and BART, and a wide variety of public service announcements to explain how families and youth can access the FIT program and how the public can support it.	Fall 2005

enrollment

Context

The importance of school stability in the social, academic and psychological life of a child or youth is well documented. Highly mobile students score lower and achieve less academic success than peers who do not change schools. Most importantly, there is conclusive evidence that mobility severely affects prospects of graduating. At the school level, high rates of transience impact learning activities and teacher morale, and create administrative burdens.¹⁶

Parent from focus groups said:

There should be a contact person identified at school who will welcome the family. This person should be identified at time of enrollment and could be the principal, another parent or the parent liaison.

Families in unstable housing situations face considerable difficulties keeping their children in school or enrolling them in new schools. Many parents are unaware of their right to keep a child in her/his original school, if it is their wish and if it is feasible for the child, and of their right to dispute school placement decisions that go against their wishes. Families may have lost all documents and records; may believe that without a permanent residence they are unable to enroll their children; may fear immigration or child protective services, believing that homelessness constitutes a child protective services violation; may not have money for uniforms or books; or may have left the previous school without paying fees, all of which may present formidable barriers to new or sustained enrollment. Children may feel reluctant to attend school without the proper uniform or dress code; unaccompanied youth may not know that they can enroll without a parent or guardian; and domestic violence victims may not feel safe and therefore not enroll at all.

Gaps

The SFUSD has been serving homeless children and youth under the McKinney-Vento Act since 1989. Parent focus groups during this planning process indicated, however, that enrollment has sometimes been delayed in the past, up to three or four weeks. The district's central enrollment staff were not trained in McKinney-Vento, parents were not always apprised of their rights, enrollment forms did not refer to families' housing situation, and enrollment delays and educational disruption occurred. All of these enrollment barriers must be reduced and eliminated to ensure that every homeless child and youth has the same opportunity to attend and succeed in school as any other child.

Progress

Efforts were initiated early in the planning process to redesign and streamline enrollment and improve communication between the Educational Placement Center (EPC) and the staff of shelters and other support organizations. Once the need for an improved enrollment process was

¹⁶ R.W. Rumberger, "The Causes and Consequences of Student Mobility," *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 72, Number 1, Winter 2003, 6–22

identified, the SFUSD in January 2004 hired a part-time enrollment specialist dedicated to needs of homeless students, a position funded through McKinney-Vento. This enrollment clerk reports to both the FIT liaison and the EPC director, trains all EPC staff in procedures and policies related to McKinney-Vento, and acts as the enrollment liaison should questions arise. The enrollment clerk provides the primary link between the EPC and the FIT liaison.

Beginning in the 2003-04 school year, enrollment of all homeless children and youth in elementary, middle and high schools takes place at the FIT office or at the EPC, a location that is central and accessible to nearly all homeless programs, SROs and supportive housing sites in San Francisco. The clerk helps to ensure same-day, one-stop enrollment, except when language tests or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are required. During the process, the student's needs are assessed (uniform, transportation, supplies, backpack), and the items themselves or vouchers are provided immediately. The clerk facilitates the collection and forwarding of school records, acquired and transmitted at no cost to the families. Children are to be in school while language testing, IEPs and services are arranged.

Recommendations

Who	What	When
FIT liaison, director of state and federal programs, special education director, school principals, school-site liaisons	Develop procedures and strategies to ensure educational continuity and correct academic placement including routines for incoming students, Special Education Department referral and service request follow-up, school-site liaison/advocate designation, welcoming procedures, supplies and uniform availability, academic levels assessments, a peer "buddy" system, explanations of after-school and enrichment programs to the student and the parent to ensure participation.	Fall 2004, ongoing
FIT liaison, school principals, school-site liaisons, HEC, CBOs	Inform parents of the academic, psychological and social effects of moving schools and of all forms of support available (such as transportation) to keep a child in the same school even when the family changes residence.	Fall 2004, ongoing
FIT liaison	Highlight the importance of school stability in brochures, handouts and other materials dealing with homeless children and youth.	Fall 2004, ongoing
FIT liaison, EPC director, EPC enrollment specialist for homeless students (clerk)	Set a standard for immediate enrollment, requiring that all students who attempt to enroll are able to do so and attend school within one day of completing the process. Develop a set of standards to measure the effectiveness of the new enrollment design and create strategies to meet these indicators (such as school-based or mobile immunization, provision of uniforms and supplies, orientation and welcome materials and procedures, transportation vouchers, attendance monitoring, coordination).	Winter 2005, ongoing

<p>FIT liaison, EPC director, EPC enrollment specialist for homeless students</p>	<p>Educate all enrollment staff about the right to stay in the school of origin. Create a procedure to ask homeless families about their children's previous school when they first request enrollment, to ascertain whether they would like to keep their child in that school, and to assist the family to keep their child in the school if that is their choice and it is feasible.</p>	<p>Winter 2005, ongoing</p>
<p>FIT liaison, HEC, DHS</p>	<p>Work with Homeless Education Council (HEC), DHS and CBOs to create a procedure for homeless family providers – at intake – to inform families about their right to keep their children in their school of origin and assist them to do so. Also, create a procedure when parents leave shelter (voluntarily or involuntarily) to remind them of their right to keep their child attending the same school and assist them to do so.</p>	<p>Winter 2005</p>

early care and education

Context

Research tells us that a child's early experiences affect brain development and lay the foundation for intelligence, emotional health, moral development and future success. "From the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, brain development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life."¹⁷ Poverty may be more damaging during the early years than later, especially in its impact on school performance and future academic achievement. In every way, the early childhood years influence the effectiveness of all subsequent education efforts.

We also know young children's brains are resilient and therefore effective early interventions can shift the odds in favor of more positive outcomes. Since children in homeless situations may not experience relationships and activities that promote school readiness, a quality, stimulating early care and education experience can be key to their success in school and later in life, in tandem with other priority factors such as housing stability and access to health and mental health services.

Given the fact that good early childhood education can minimize, perhaps even reverse, many of the life-altering effects of homelessness and poverty,¹⁸ its guarantee should be considered good public policy. Economists have begun to recognize the value of early care and education: for every \$1 spent in this way, \$7 is saved later in life.¹⁹ Much effort is being made at the national, state and local level to ensure access to quality early education activities during the years before kindergarten for all children under five, especially those living in poverty.

Gaps

McKinney-Vento aims to ensure homeless preschoolers the same opportunity to attend and succeed in preschool as non-homeless children, along with educational services for which they are eligible, such as Head Start and Even Start. Yet, in 2000, only 15 percent of the preschool-aged children identified as homeless nationally were enrolled in school programs,²⁰ suggesting that they are underserved by school-based homeless education programs.

Parent from focus groups said:

Ensure childcare centralized eligibility list (CEL) identifies and prioritizes "McKinney" identified families.

Participant in Homeless Education Action Forum said:

Provide more accessible information about Child Development and Head Start programs for preschoolers.

¹⁷ 1 Shonkoff, Jack, P, and Phillips, Deborah A., Editors: "From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development", National Academy of Sciences, 2000

¹⁸ Bay Area Foundation Advisory Group to End Homelessness. *Ending Bay Area Homelessness: A Pivotal Opportunity for Funders in Children Development and Education*, 2004

¹⁹ Cohen, Mark, *The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth* (1995).

²⁰ U.S. Department of Education, *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Report to Congress* (2000), on Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In San Francisco, school-based child development programs comprise about one-third of the preschool slots in the city. A priority in this plan, therefore, is ensuring that homeless and recently homeless children have access to both school- and community-based early care and education programs and that their parents, and the CBOs that serve them, know how to gain this access. Significant steps in realizing this recommendation include:

- ★ developing greater collaboration and coordination between organizations working with homeless families and those providing and advocating for early care and education programs citywide; and
- ★ promoting greater awareness among homeless families and CBO staff of the importance of early care and education, families' rights to these services and how to access them.

Progress

In meetings held during the planning process, we confirmed that there are entities in San Francisco, such as the SFUSD Child Development Program (CDP) and Head Start, with the capacity and mandate to provide early care and education services for homeless children, and that many CBOs have developed specialized services for serving homeless children. We also learned of initiatives underway in which homeless advocates should participate to ensure that homeless families are well represented in resulting policies and resources. For example:

- ★ The SFUSD's child development centers are not operating at capacity and, although there are openings for children aged 2.9 through 5 years throughout the district, few children currently in homeless situations have accessed these educational services.
- ★ A new SFUSD child development classroom can be established in a particular neighborhood as long as there is a guarantee of an average of 20 children attending daily.
- ★ First 5 San Francisco Children and Families Commission's 2002 strategic plan prioritized children with special needs and children living in families that are homeless. As a result, one million dollars has been committed annually to services for homeless children 0–5 and their families, including shelter-based mental health services, basic child development training for shelter providers and aftercare support.
- ★ First 5 is heading the planning process for the implementation of the Preschool for All (PFA) Charter Amendment passed by San Francisco voters in March 2004. PFA guarantees free access to preschool for all four-year-olds in San Francisco. The phase-in of the program is scheduled for 2005–06 and the target date for full implementation is 2009.
- ★ San Francisco has launched a citywide eligibility system for subsidized public and private childcare slots, resulting in a single waiting list. Both parents and providers will be able to access the centralized eligibility list (CEL). The CEL system tracks a family's housing status, which is one of the indicators for prioritization.

Recommendations

Increased coordination, communication and sharing of information characterize all of the following recommendations. The HEP coordinator, the FIT liaison, the Homeless Education Task Force and the HEC must work together to build links and remove barriers between the major funders and providers of school- and community-based early care and education, CBOs working with homeless families and homeless families themselves.

Who	What	When
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force, HEC, First 5, SFUSD-CDP	Establish a child development/early care and education subcommittee within HEC to facilitate communication, coordination and collaboration among homeless service providers and childcare/early care and education organizations, efforts and initiatives.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, SFUSD CDP, FIT liaison, HEC	Identify clearly and fill vacant preschool spaces in SFUSD child development programs and communicate availability and enrollment process to families.	Fall 2004, ongoing
FIT liaison, CDP director, Pupil Services	Ensure that SFUSD CDP fully implement McKinney requirements including collaboration with the FIT Program to conduct outreach to young siblings of enrolled homeless-identified students.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEP coordinator, Child Development Committee of the HEC, First 5	Advocate on behalf of homeless and recently homeless children by participating in the Preschool for All (PFA) planning process. Develop an addendum with policy recommendations for homeless children. Identify other citywide planning efforts/initiatives on early childhood education or child development in which homeless children should be represented.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, SFUSD CDP, Child Development Committee of the HEC, First 5, homeless families	<p>Review practices and policies that may inadvertently act as barriers to the enrollment and participation of homeless children in childcare and early education programs. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ If transportation is a barrier, explore feasibility of providing transportation for primary caregivers and their children to promote regular attendance and stability. ★ If waiting lists are barriers, explore ways to ensure immediate access. 	Winter 2005, ongoing
FIT liaison, HEP coordinator, Child Development Committee of the HEC	Conduct training on McKinney-Vento for Child Care Planning and Advisory Council (CPAC), First 5, SFUSD-CDP, Head Start, and early care and education CBOs, emphasizing the requirement for homeless families' access to child development programs.	Winter 2005 and annually thereafter
HEP coordinator, CPAC, First 5	Ensure childcare centralized eligibility list (CEL) identifies and prioritizes McKinney-Vento identified families.	Winter 2005, ongoing

<p>HEP coordinator, FIT Liaison, Child Development Committee of the HEC, CPAC, First 5</p>	<p>Conduct awareness campaign through workshops, letters, posters, etc. to inform all early care and education programs about the prioritization of homeless children for enrollment in federal and state subsidized programs and the waiving of the immunization and income documentation requirements at the time of enrollment.</p>	<p>Spring 2005, ongoing</p>
<p>HEP Coordinator, Child Development Committee of the HEC, First 5, UCSF</p>	<p>Conduct training with homeless family service providers about importance of early care and education, and how to access San Francisco resources.</p>	<p>Spring 2005, ongoing</p>
<p>HEP Coordinator, FIT liaison, Child Development Committee of the HEC, PSCR Advisors, First 5, UCSF</p>	<p>Conduct outreach to homeless and recently homeless parents to provide workshops on the value of early education and the availability and accessibility of programs.</p>	<p>Spring 2005, ongoing</p>

parental involvement

Context

Academic achievement offers a pathway out of homelessness, and families are central to facilitating positive educational outcomes. It has been found that the degree of parental involvement in education is more significant to student success than the parents' income or education. Improved student achievement and behavior, reduced absenteeism and restored parental confidence in education feature among the proven positive results of parental involvement in their children's education.²¹ Additional benefits of family–school partnerships include empowerment of parents, improvement in teacher morale, higher quality schools and stronger communities.²² School–family–community partnerships are no longer optional but essential for student learning and success in school. Thus, the McKinney-Vento Act requires that school districts inform homeless parents and guardians about educational and related opportunities available to their children, and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

Barriers to family involvement for minority and low-income families include time constraints, childcare and transportation needs and costs, language differences, cultural beliefs, lack of understanding of educational processes and discrimination.²³ These barriers are compounded in families whose lives have been disrupted by homelessness. The priorities of homeless parents are often and understandably focused on securing safe and stable housing as well as employment. Their lives are dominated by seemingly insurmountable poverty and many struggle with domestic violence, substance abuse, chronic health problems, mental health issues and their own inadequate education. Rigorous schedules defined by service and benefits requirements often interfere with their ability to visit their children's schools during the day. Many, not having completed high school themselves, are intimidated by school environments and feel ill equipped to speak with teachers or assist their children with school assignments.

Parent from focus groups said:

CBOs, schools and parents should work as a team.

Participant in Homeless Education Action Forum said:

Community-based organizations and the school district do not understand one another. We need to build better communication, appreciation and rapport between CBOs and schools. This will support greater parent involvement.

²¹Institutes for Responsive Education. *The Home School Connection: Selected Partnership Programs in Large Cities*, Boston.

²²National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

²³Diversity School, Family and Community Connections. *Annual Synthesis 2003*. Southwest Educational Development Lab

Gaps

In focus groups,²⁴ homeless parents said that information and training would increase their capacity for positive and pro-active involvement in their children's education, as would improved coordination between parents, organizations working with homeless families, and schools. In keeping with their recommendations to increase the involvement of homeless parents in their children's education, we must support them in developing the knowledge and skills that they need, and then assist them in finding realistic and accessible venues for participation. Through group activities and advocacy for system change, we can assist parents directly in developing the consciousness, knowledge, self-advocacy and parenting skills needed to support their children's education.

To ensure effectiveness, the following principles must inform the development of homeless and formerly homeless parent involvement programs and services:

- ★ Flexibility: offer activities at flexible times, including evening hours.
- ★ Mobilize: bring programs to parents in shelters, transitional housing programs, SROs, family supportive housing and schools.
- ★ Cultural competency: commit to multilingual services and communications.
- ★ Peer learning: bring parents together for peer learning and engage parents in stipended positions.
- ★ Relevance: provide a meaningful resource.
- ★ Expectations: hold high expectations of all partners – parents, students, teachers and CBO staff.

We must partner with CBOs working with homeless families to ensure that their living and program environments promote and model literacy and education. At the same time, in collaboration with the SFUSD's Families in Transition (FIT) program and Office of Parent Relations, we must offer training to teachers and other school-based personnel to build their understanding of, and sensitivity to, the challenges faced by homeless families.

Progress

As a result of our planning process, we designed a parent involvement program that builds on the effectiveness of the Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative's school/community liaison position, as well as on that of school-based parent liaisons. We raised funds to hire one citywide parent-school-community relations (PSCR) advisor, and envision one or two more joining the team, to build the knowledge and skills of parents and help strengthen crucial links. PSCR advisors will go to the organizations where homeless families are temporarily residing or receiving services to provide regularly scheduled training on navigating the school district and on their rights and responsibilities as parents. For parents with school-age children living in shelters, emphasis will be on the importance of school stability and attendance, parents' and students' rights under McKinney-Vento, the enrollment process, educational and related opportunities available to their children, access to specialized services (including special education and programs

²⁴ Focus groups were held in a family emergency shelter, a domestic violence shelter, a transitional housing program, family supportive housing, and a non-housing based support service program.

for gifted students), the academic and performance standards expected of students at each grade level, and availability of and access to preschool programs. Equipped with this information, parents will be better able to advocate on behalf of themselves and their children within the SFUSD.

For formerly homeless families now in supportive housing, additional emphasis will be placed on building awareness of and skills for ongoing and direct involvement in children's education. Examples include reading aloud to children, introducing early learning experiences to stimulate cognitive development, actively acknowledging the relationship between child achievement and parent expectations, showing interest in progress at school, helping with homework, discussing the value of a good education and possible career options, and keeping in touch with teachers and school staff.

Additionally, PSCR advisors, along with the SFUSD FIT liaison, will help to build CBO service staff's capacity to navigate the district so they can directly assist and support the families they work with.

The need for PSCR advisors stems from resource strains in existing systems, including high student-teacher ratios in public schools and client-staff ratios in CBOs, lack of understanding of the manifestations of homelessness within school environments, and lack of communication and coordination between CBOs and schools. Our intention is that PSCR advisors will improve understanding and communication while building parental skills, so that these positions may no longer be needed in the future.

Recommendations

Who	What	When
A Home Away From Homelessness and Homeless Prenatal Project	Raise funds for and hire two culturally and linguistically competent parent-school-community relations (PSCR) advisors. ²⁵	Fall 2004
PSCR advisors and parents	Build capacity of parents to be more involved in their children's education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Hold regular scheduled trainings, workshops and community meetings with parents to provide resources and information about how schools work, children's rights under McKinney-Vento and the importance of school stability and attendance. ★ Train parents to engage in communication, advocacy and monitoring strategies to support their children's learning. 	Fall 2004, ongoing

²⁵ Funding for one PSCR advisor has been secured from the Department of Children Youth and Families for the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Point parents towards resources for their own education (GED, family literacy, etc.). ★ Provide opportunities for parents to connect with and mentor other parents around educational issues. 	
PSCR advisors, schools, CBOs, HEP coordinator, Task Force and parents	<p>Strengthen relationships between schools, parents and CBOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop confidentiality agreements and releases of information that protect families' privacy rights while allowing schools and CBOs to share relevant information. ★ At schools with large homeless student populations, create CARE teams (teacher, school-based homeless liaison, parent, CBO staff) to generate effective intervention and support strategies. ★ Develop communication and coordination systems. 	<p>Winter 2005, ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2005</p>
PSCR advisors, CBOs, FIT liaison, HEC, DHS	<p>Build capacity of CBOs to promote education and literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Train CBO staff how to navigate the SFUSD. ★ Partner with staff to ensure environments that promote literacy and education (presence of books, reading is encouraged, case management sessions focus on education, etc.). 	Spring 2005, ongoing
PSCR advisors, SFUSD Office of Parent Relations, FIT program	<p>Build capacity of schools to support the academic achievement of homeless students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide sensitivity training to SFUSD teachers and staff. ★ Work with SFUSD to identify a homeless liaison in all schools to offer school-based support to homeless students and their families. ★ Develop relationships with school-based parent liaisons and train them re: community-based system of care. ★ Ongoing coordination/training between the school-based Office of Parent Relations and the community-based PSCR advisors. 	Spring 2005, ongoing
PSCR advisors, SFUSD Office of Parent Relations, FIT program	<p>Make existing materials used by the Office of Parent Relations and others more accessible and relevant to homeless and formerly homeless parents. Adaptation may include language translation, suitability for varied literacy levels, and modification of home-based parent/children activities to fit the constraints of a shelter or transitional housing environment.</p>	Spring 2005
PSCR advisors	<p>Hire parents in stipended positions to assist PSCR advisors to train peers as well as CBO and school staff.</p>	Fall 2005, ongoing

services

Context

As crucial as school is for children and youth experiencing homelessness, attendance is only the first step. Those in school may still face discouraging barriers to academic success. Homeless children have four times the average rate of delayed development, experience more academic problems than other children, and are suspended twice as often.²⁶ Three times as many homeless students experience learning disabilities and have emotional and behavioral problems that often get played out in schools.²⁷

Excellence for All, the comprehensive plan of the SFUSD, emphasizes academic achievement for all students, equity in the allocation of resources and accountability for all. All students are to acquire the core curriculum regardless of whether they are in traditional classrooms, bilingual programs or special education, and irrespective of whether they are homeless or housed.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of January 2002, which greatly expands the federal role in public education, specifically identifies homeless students among the disadvantaged and entitles them to a range of services. The act aims to improve the academic achievement of students in low-performing schools, strives to have every child meet their state-defined proficiency level by 2013–2014, and requires all districts to assess proficiency, keeping specific records for limited-English proficiency (LEP) and disabled students.

SFUSD tutors, paid by NCLB Title 1 funding and based at 13 homeless program sites,²⁸ offer supplemental instruction and homework assistance to homeless children and youth. Some shelters, transitional living programs and family supportive housing projects also offer tutoring by staff and volunteers, while certain children's activity programs provide opportunities for academic enrichment and life skills and leadership development. Additionally, staff from CBOs provide mental health services for homeless children and youth in both school and shelter settings, and these enhance students' ability to learn.

Parents from focus groups said:

Many schools have book programs through which students order from a catalog of books weekly or monthly. There should be a pot of money that allows homeless students the resources so that they too can purchase book(s) regularly just like their peers.

Summer school should be guaranteed for homeless students if they want to attend. They have often missed so much school due to being in transition; summer school provides opportunity to catch up and earn credits, as well as the routine and structure that they so need.

²⁶ National Center on Family Homelessness Publications www.familyhomelessness.org

²⁷ Zima, D.T., et al, February 1997. "Sheltered homeless children: their eligibility and unmet need for special education evaluations." *American Journal of Public Health*. 87(2).

²⁸ Shelters, domestic violence programs, a runaway and homeless youth program, and family supportive housing.

Gaps

This nine-month planning process identified as a priority improved coordination between departments within the SFUSD, as well as with CBOs, city departments and other organizations, if legislation and funding are to have the desired impact on education for homeless children.

Don't send kids home when there are behavior issues. **Homeless kids can't go home.** Instead resolve issues in school — maybe engage them in some kind of community service.

Focus groups with parents of homeless children and youth identified specific service needs, including:

- ★ supplementary academic support, both school- and community-based tutoring;
- ★ summer school for children who have missed school and need to catch up, earn credits and follow a routine and structure;
- ★ after-school programs, particularly for children enrolling late or mid-year; and
- ★ school-based resources for behavior-problem resolution, in recognition of children's high anxiety levels.

Four of NCLB's nine titles apply directly to students experiencing homelessness. Priority access for homeless students to all of these programs is an identified goal of improved coordination:

Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Part A. Homeless Students

School districts are required to reserve funds from their Title I, Part A allocations to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. These funds can be used to meet unique needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness in both participating and non-participating schools. Tutoring and/or outreach services can be paid for with Title I funds, as can basics such as students' clothing, supplies and healthcare.

Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Immigrant Students

The NCLB's Title III English language program could and should be working with the FIT liaison to assess, monitor and place homeless LEP learners in appropriate environments.

Title IV, 21st Century Schools (supplementary after-school learning centers, safe and drug-free schools and communities)

Improved coordination would help homeless students to participate in the after-school, weekend and summer school education and safety programs that the SFUSD runs with Title IV funding in 40 district schools (those in the NCLB Star Program).

Title X, the McKinney-Vento Act

Amendments to this legislation under NCLB require, overall, that every homeless child or youth receives services comparable to those offered to other students in school, and that barriers to their participation in school programs be removed.

Progress

Over the nine months of the planning process, several steps were taken to improve coordination around service provision, both within the SFUSD and between the SFUSD, city departments and community-based organizations.

Overall Coordination

SFUSD Pupil Services Department has committed to adding a homeless identifier to their student data collection system, undertaken with respect to confidentiality issues. This will result in increased funding for homeless students (because the more students identified, the more resources) and will support greater coordination within the district on behalf of homeless students.

FIT Program and Office of Parent Relations Organizations.

The Families in Transition (FIT) Program has secured agreement from the Office of Parent Relations that existing parent liaisons will take formal responsibility as school-site liaisons for homeless children enrolled in the district's 40 star schools as of the 2004–05 school year. Parent Relations has also committed to working with community-based parent–school–community relations (PSCR) advisors, including them in SFUSD training, and giving them access to parent-involvement training and information materials.

FIT and State and Federal Programs

One Title 1 requirement is that all eligible students be assessed to determine if they meet the academic standards required by the state. The FIT liaison and director of state and federal programs agreed to disaggregate homeless students' test scores along with those of LEP students, to determine if supplementary academic assistance should be given. Homeless students below proficiency in math and reading will then be eligible to receive regular extended learning packets, and community-based tutors will be trained to work with them using these materials.

An instructional reform facilitator trains and coaches teachers at each of the 40 Star Program schools to improve Title 1 students' academic level. It has been agreed that the FIT liaison will make presentations to these facilitators (the primary focal point for services in these low-performing schools) on the special needs of homeless students and will work closely with them to inform staff on how best to serve the homeless student population.

Only at-risk students scoring below the 40 percent level are eligible for SFUSD summer schools. The director of state and federal programs committed to ensuring careful monitoring at school sites so that all homeless students meeting this criterion could attend summer school.

The director of state and federal programs agreed to increase funding as better identification methods result in rising official numbers of homeless students.

FIT and Attendance Officers

Seven attendance officers have been recently hired in the district to conduct family outreach and help resolve attendance barriers on behalf of students who are truant. Given the likelihood that some of the truant students are homeless, the FIT liaison has trained the attendance officers on McKinney-Vento and developed protocol for appropriate communication, coordination and response.

Recommendations

Because school can offer consistency, predictability, structure, personal space, a sense of belonging, positive peer relationships and opportunities for healthy relationships with adults, we recommend a creative mix of district, city department and CBO support for homeless students to participate more fully and successfully in both the academic and social culture of their schools. Key to all of the recommendations is timely access to relevant and quality educational and in-school support services.

Academic Support

After-school programs provide critical academic support for students who have no quiet place to study and/or lag behind their peers. Homeless and recently homeless students must have immediate and priority access to quality school- and community-based after-school programs, even mid-year.

Summer school provides a critical catch-up opportunity for homeless students at risk for being held back, along with structure and stability in homeless students' lives.

With the ongoing need for **academic tutoring programs**, tutors need to be better trained on the impact of homelessness, the academic standards expected at every grade level, and the particular curricula followed at their tutees' schools. Because educational deficits are rarely overcome in a short period of time, it is important that tutoring services be extended throughout the year, including summer months.

An **individualized evaluation** is required before students suspected of having a learning or other disability can access special education services. This assessment helps to determine the most appropriate instructional strategies. Delays in securing evaluations mean that children may be out of school for days at a time. To mitigate the delays in securing timely evaluations, it is recommended that evaluations be conducted regularly at accessible locations in the community (such as CBOs that provide services to homeless families). At the same time, it is also important to challenge the assumption that every homeless student lagging in development needs special education services, as problems may be due solely to a lack of consistency in school attendance.

Behavioral/Social Support

Homeless students may have trouble interacting positively with their peers, and their traumas may manifest in inappropriate behavior. Rather than a strictly punitive response, schools with high populations of homeless students should have access to a **behavior interventionist** to consult with staff around understanding and modifying behaviors, thereby improving classroom effectiveness and school safety.

School-based **mental health services** provided by SFUSD staff or through partnerships with community-based organizations can help to meet the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of homeless students. School staff can benefit from direct consultation with mental health providers and from their suggestions to improve students' learning and behavior.

A **scholarship/resource fund** should be established to enable children to participate with their peers in special events and extra-curricular activities, even if their families lack the resources to cover these costs.

Who	What	When
FIT liaison, director of state and federal programs	Ensure ongoing and improved communication, regular meetings and information sharing, in order to ensure better services for homeless students and effective use of resources.	Fall 2004, ongoing
HEC coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force	Propose that the city cover transportation costs. Explore with Mayor and his education liaison the idea that the city pick up the Muni Fast Pass costs for homeless children to get to and from school.	Fall 2004
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force, HEC, Department of Human Services, families	Develop and implement Confidentiality Agreements/ Release of Information Protocols between SFUSD, CBOs and families. Develop releases of information that respect family privacy while allowing schools and CBOs to share relevant information; for example, to help schools deal with children in crisis.	Winter 2005
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, SFUSD Pupil Services, pilot schools	Introduce school-based social skill support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Raise funds for and pilot a behavior interventionist position at each of four pilot elementary schools to support students in learning appropriate school behaviors and to assist school-based staff in understanding the behavior manifestations of homelessness and trauma. ★ Ensure that pilot schools have access to BEST training. ★ Strategize to expand this support to other schools in the district. 	Fundraise: Fall 2004/Winter 2005 Pilot: Spring/Fall 2005 Fall 2004/Winter 2005
FIT liaison, director of state and federal programs	Reallocate Title I Part A reservation funding annually depending on the actual number of homeless students in the district identified through school-based and community efforts.	Spring/Summer 2005, annually thereafter
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force, HEC	Strengthen academic tutor program. Explore the following partnerships and choose, fund and implement the best model(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Collaborate with local universities to staff tutor program with teachers in training. ★ Hire credentialed teachers trained to use reading programs consistent with those used in the classroom. 	Spring 2005, ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Partner with community-based tutor programs. ★ Develop greater access to school-based tutor services. ★ Design a program that offers long-term academic tutors/mentors who stay with students over the course of several years. 	
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, SFUSD Special Education, Task Force, CBOs, private clinicians	<p>Create community-based access to educational assessments/evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Partner with private clinicians to offer assessments scheduled regularly at community-based organizations. ★ Partner with SFUSD to hold individualized education plan (IEP) meetings in community-based settings convenient to parents. 	Spring 2005, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, SFUSD CDP, state and federal programs, Task Force, school- and community-based after-school programs	Ensure that homeless students have priority and immediate access to school- and community-based after-school programs.	Spring 2005, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, state and federal programs, Task Force	Ensure that homeless students have priority access to summer school programs.	Spring 2005, ongoing
HEP coordinator, FIT liaison, Task Force, HEC	<p>Establish a scholarship and material support resource fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Raise funds (from private and faith-based sources and service clubs) for homeless students' participation in extra-curricular activities, events and outings, book purchases, etc. ★ Develop protocol/practice for accessing and maintaining the fund. ★ Conduct outreach to families to access the fund. ★ Raise funds for material support (e.g., backpacks and uniforms) from private sources. 	Spring 2005, ongoing
FIT liaison, HEC, Department of Human Services, PSCR Advisors	Build capacity of CBOs to promote education and literacy. Partner with CBOs serving homeless and recently homeless families to ensure environments that promote literacy and education (presence of books, reading is encouraged, case management sessions focus on education).	Spring 2005 ongoing

conclusion

Profound change on behalf of homeless children and youth is not only possible, it is well within the reach of any community, regardless of scale, complexity or experience – and it doesn't have to take forever to happen.

Barbara Duffield, Policy Director
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

This document is the result of a comprehensive planning process designed to move us toward educational equity for children and youth in homeless situations in San Francisco.

Our inclusive process built awareness, deepened knowledge, created partnerships and inspired commitments on behalf of homeless children and youth. Following this roadmap will ensure that students in homeless situations have the access, support, resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school.

This plan is intended to be a tool in action – a catalyst – for systems change. It is designed to guide our work, establish accountability and ensure follow-through on commitments made during the planning process. It is also meant to be dynamic and engaged with other planning processes in San Francisco.

While the planning process was broad in scope and inclusive in participation, there are some key areas not yet explored that merit the same degree of attention these other topics received over the nine-month planning process. A primary area is service gaps, needs and strategies for unaccompanied youth. Evaluation of school- and community-based supports and services to ensure that they are effective and relevant in meeting the needs of homeless children and youth is another need. Other issues will emerge during HEP's implementation and will be addressed in the addenda to this plan.

Putting plans into practice requires people – and this plan must be supported from all sectors if it is to succeed. Key stewards of its implementation are A Home Away From Homelessness, the Homeless Education Task Force, the Homeless Education Council and the San Francisco Unified School District. We must also engage the ongoing stewardship of city departments, community-based organizations, funders, elected officials, advocates and homeless families.

The plan's premise is that education is valued and recognized as a key strategy for ending homelessness. The plan's outcome will be an interwoven and sustainable system of school, community, public sector and family support that promotes school success for children and youth in homeless situations in San Francisco.

appendix 1: abbreviations & acronyms

CBO	community-based organization
CDP	Child Development Program, within SFUSD
CEL	centralized eligibility list, single waiting list for subsidized childcare in San Francisco
CPAC	Child Care Planning and Advisory Council
DHS	Department of Human Services
EPC	Educational Placement Center
FIT	Families in Transition Program, formerly Homeless Education Program, within SFUSD
HEC	Homeless Education Council
HEP	Homeless Education Plan
IEP	individualized education plan
LEP	limited English proficiency
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
PFA	Preschool for All
PSCR	parent-school-community relations (advisors)
SFUSD	San Francisco Unified School District
SRO	single-room-occupancy hotels
UCSF	University of California San Francisco

appendix 2: who's who

The key agencies and representatives shown below were consulted during this planning process and/or will participate in implementing recommendations. Many nonprofit and community-based organizations, city departments and funders are not shown here. Many but not all of those involved are listed in Appendix 5. Positions or functions created through this planning process are *italicized*.

Homeless Education Plan (HEP) — Organized through A Home Away From Homelessness

HEP coordinator

Parent-School-Community Relations (PSCR) advisors

Homeless Education Council (HEC) — *Facilitated by FIT liaison*

- ★ Representatives of CBOs working with homeless children and youth

Homeless Education Task Force — *HEC policy body*

- ★ CBO directors
- ★ City departments
- ★ Representatives from planning initiatives
- ★ SFUSD representatives

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)

Families in Transition (FIT) Program (formerly Homeless Education Program)

- ★ FIT liaison

Office of State and Federal Programs (No Child Left Behind or NCLB Titles)

- ★ Director
- ★ Principals and staff of Star Program Schools

Office of Parent Relations

- ★ Director, *school-based liaisons*

Educational Placement Center (EPC)

- ★ *Homeless enrollment clerk*

Child Development Program (CDP)

- ★ Director

District Schools

- ★ Principals, staff, *school-based liaisons*

Department of Human Services (DHS)

- ★ Housing and Homeless Programs

appendix 3: The McKinney-Vento Act²⁹

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law passed in 1987 to help people experiencing homelessness. Part of the law protects the rights of children and youth who are homeless to go to school. In December 2001, Congress changed the law to give more rights to children, youth and families who are homeless, and these amendments went into effect in July 2002.

McKinney-Vento gives children and youth in homeless situations the right to:

- ★ stay in their school even if they move;
- ★ enroll in a new school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records or other papers;
- ★ get transportation to school;
- ★ go to preschool programs;
- ★ get all the school services they need;
- ★ have disagreements with schools settled quickly; and
- ★ go to the school they choose while disagreements are settled.

The Act defines a range of homeless situations. No matter how long a child or youth has been without a home, and no matter whether s/he lives with a parent or is separated from parents, a child or youth without a fixed, regular and adequate residence is considered homeless.

Under McKinney-Vento, every school district must have a liaison or coordinator responsible for ensuring that students who are homeless can enroll and succeed in school. In San Francisco, this person is the Families in Transition (FIT) liaison. The liaison must:

- ★ make sure students are enrolled immediately, even if they do not have all the usual documents;
- ★ help families and youth get immunizations and medical records if necessary;
- ★ explain transportation services and help set up transportation;
- ★ make sure students get all the school services they need;
- ★ tell parents and guardians about all the programs and services that the school has for their children;
- ★ reach out to children and youth in all different kinds of homeless situations;
- ★ settle disagreements between schools and families or youth quickly;
- ★ make sure preschoolers who are homeless can enroll in Head Start, Even Start or other preschool programs;
- ★ post notices about the educational rights of students who are homeless;

²⁹ From National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty: *Education of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations: The 2003 Guide to Their Rights*, <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/McKinney%percent20booklet2003.pdf>

- ★ make sure parents and guardians can take part in their children's education;
- ★ refer students to any medical, dental, mental health or other services they need;
- ★ coordinate with social services and housing agencies to ensure access to education; and
- ★ make sure students have a full and equal chance to do well in school.

The legislation protects students' right to stay in their school of origin or choice, wherever possible, to avoid disruption of their schooling. Among the services that McKinney-Vento protects for students in homeless situations are:

- ★ preschool,
- ★ school meals,
- ★ programs for language minority students,
- ★ special education and other programs for students with disabilities,
- ★ Title I services (federally stipulated funds for disadvantaged students),
- ★ programs for gifted and talented students,
- ★ vocational and technical education, and
- ★ before- and after-school programs.

appendix 4: results of parent focus groups

Methodology

In February and March 2004, we conducted five focus groups with homeless and formerly homeless parents with students enrolled in the SFUSD to solicit their input into the Homeless Education Planning Process. These groups generated valuable input from 22 parents.

Groups were held with residents of La Casa de Las Madras (a domestic violence shelter), 260 Golden Gate (a family shelter), St. Joseph's Village (a family shelter) and Homeless PreNatal Project (a non-housing-based, support service organization for homeless families), as well as with tenants living in family supportive housing on Treasure Island. Groups were held in both English and Spanish. A sixth group is being planned for tenants of the Chinatown SRO Collaborative.

Community-based organization staff helped with identifying and recruiting group participants as well as with scheduling focus group sessions. Kate Durham (Community Liaison Consultant to the Homeless Education Planning Process) and Rosalinda del Moral (SFUSD Homeless Liaison) were responsible for meeting facilitation, note taking and preparation of this report.

At the beginning of each two-hour focus group, participants were provided with a summary of the homeless education planning process. In addition to providing general recommendations, each participant was asked to frame their input around two key questions:

1. Are there academic and support services (school- or community-based), and/or material goods that you do not currently receive that you think would help your child(ren) do better in school?
2. What would help you to be more connected/involved with your child(ren)'s education?

Many of the focus group participants have already worked with Rosalinda del Moral, and many currently receive transportation support as well as supplies, uniforms and tutoring from the District's Homeless Education Program. Therefore, their feedback reflects suggestions for support/services that they don't currently receive.

The following tables include the detailed comments made by participants in all focus groups in response to each of the two questions posed to them and indicates the specific group(s) in which each point was made.

The comments have been grouped broadly by the following themes: Enrollment, Material Resources, Academic Support, Parent Involvement, After-School Programs, Support Services, Child Development, Special Education, Building Sensitivity, and Internal Coordination and

Coordination with Other Systems. The text reflects the phrases and language actually used in the focus group. Where the same or a similar point was raised in more than one group, these have been grouped together.

Homeless Education Program Planning Process

Feedback from Parent Focus Groups³⁰

Conducted February-March 2004

	LA CASA	HOMELESS PRENATAL	260 GOLDEN GATE	TREASURE ISLAND	ST. JOES
ENROLLMENT					
Enrollment should happen more swiftly; has taken up to 3-4 weeks which means that child is out of school for that long.	X	X			
Better practices to protect victims of domestic violence; in enrollment process, alert District to situation so that information is not released to batterer.	X				
When multiple enrollments from one shelter, fax names of schools w/ openings to make choice process more real.	X				
There should be a contact person identified at school who will welcome the family; this person should be identified at time of enrollment. Could be principal, other parent, parent liaison.		X			
MATERIAL RESOURCES					
Provide at no charge uniforms, gym clothes and locks for lockers.	X		X		
Access to free lunch program needs to happen more swiftly – has taken up to 30-45 days; application for free lunch program should be part of enrollment.	X				X
Many schools have book programs through which students order from a catalog of books weekly, monthly. Homeless students/families should be allocated resources so that they too can purchase one book per week or month, just like their peers.			X		
Have a pot of money available for homeless parents to request scholarships for their children to participate in music, sports and other extra-curricular activities.			X		
Transportation home to school for Special Ed students needs to be mindful of frequent address changes with homeless families; shouldn't have to re-apply (which means a two-week wait) each time address changes.					X

³⁰Feedback reflects recommendations for how to improve academic outcomes for homeless students and how to better engage homeless parents in their children's education.

Adult fast passes provided for parents with children in special ed or with young children so that they can accompany their children to school.					X
More variety in lunch program.				X	
Snacks should be provided; some kids don't have enough to eat and if snacks were provided to all we could discreetly address this.			X		
School bus would work better than public transportation. Picking up kids from shelter and directly transporting them to schools, particularly those schools that are across town.			X		
Uniforms should be darker colors; difficult to keep white shirts clean.			X		
ACADEMIC SUPPORT					
Tutoring – both school-based (oftentimes quieter than shelters) and community-based; particularly for those students transferring from other districts where different curriculum is used.	X	X		X	
Summer school should be guaranteed for all homeless students. They have often missed so much school due to being in transition; summer school provides opportunity to catch up and earn needed credits as well as the routine and structure that they so need.	X	X	X		X
More arts and music opportunities available in schools.		X			
Need tutors who specialize working with special education students.					X
Decrease the number of days off in school; students are not getting enough schooling.			X		
Computer access for students in the early grades.				X	
Combining kindergarten and first grade does not work.				X	
Upgrade homework for gifted students.				X	
PARENT INVOLVEMENT					
Notes or calls when student has slipped or needs extra support; teachers shouldn't wait until parent-teacher conferences.	X			X	
Progress reports on all subject areas sent home with students daily or weekly.			X	X	
Sensitivity training around issues of homelessness for other parents of students at school.		X	X		
Offer workshops to parents with an incentive at end; e.g., come to 10 family literacy workshops and get a camping trip; incentives for parent involvement.		X		X	
Stronger teacher/parent relations. Ensure that teachers make contact with parents at least once a year; parents should by law have to come to their children's school at least once a year; have a mandatory meeting for parents and teachers together.		X		X	
Provide classes for parents that parallel what their children are learning so that parents can assist their children with homework; provide examples for parents so that they can help children complete homework.			X	X	

Engage parents as volunteers: ★ Make it a requirement that parents volunteer a certain number of hours per week or per month in school. ★ Structure program so that volunteer hours meet welfare-to-work requirements. ★ Engage parents as volunteer liaisons, conflict mediators. ★ Engage parents as tutors/mentors.		X		X	
Identify a liaison at each school who is eligible to assist homeless families. At beginning of school year, send home a flyer/memo with each student letting their parents know that access to the liaison is available.			X		
Education liaisons who go to the shelters on a regular basis to help parents navigate the SFUSD.	X				
Include a list of events/important dates for upcoming semester with report cards.		X			
Put homework up on web site, or on a recorded voice mail so that parents can be more aware of homework expectations.	X				
When a child misbehaves or gets hurt, go to parent first, not principal or CPS.		X			X
Provide opportunities for parents to meet other parents; e.g., parent nights.			X		
Provide support groups for parents where they can vent about frustrations with school; doing so may clear the way for more positive involvement.				X	
Ensure that all homeless parents have a cell phone so that they can stay in contact with school and vice versa.			X		
Family literacy programs for homeless parents.		X			
Implement a phone tree through which parents remind parents of important dates, etc.		X			
AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS					
Emergency/priority slots in after-school programs.	X				X
After-school program extended to evening hours for students 11-12 and older.		X			
SUPPORT SERVICES					
Nurses and school counselors in every school; counselors available for both one-on-one and group support for homeless students; counselors at all grade levels.	X	X			X
More information about support services (e.g., shelters, parenting support, DV services, CalWorks, etc.); provide info through flyers and ensure that teachers know what is available.		X	X		
Don't send kids home when there are behavior/disciplinary issues; instead engage them in some kind of community service; resolve issues in school.		X		X	
Timing of support services shouldn't just be when family/child/parent is in crisis; services should prevent crisis.		X			
School-based programs for students with behavior issues.				X	

Naps should be instituted in schools across all grade levels; even 20 minutes a day is helpful and introduces healthy habits.			X		
Address safety issues in schools by having more staff present at recess and lunch time.				X	
CHILD DEVELOPMENT					
More accessible information about child development and Head Start programs for pre-schoolers.	X				
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
Special services/academic support for students who are not eligible for special ed but who need more support than their peers in general classroom.	X				X
IEP assessments need to happen more quickly.					X
Special education teachers need more training in dealing with special needs of students.					X
Need more bilingual special education teachers.				X	
BUILDING SENSITIVITY					
Better sensitivity training for teachers and other school staff.		X	X		
Don't use the word homeless; it stigmatizes families. Perhaps use 'families in transition' or 'displaced families.'		X	X		
School atmosphere must change; reconstruction of language; e.g., re-establish no tolerance for racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of bigotry.		X			
Training for teachers in stress and anger management.				X	
Treat homeless students with dignity and respect, like all students.					X
Teaching and school staff who reflect the demographics of the students.				X	
COORDINATION: INTERNAL AND WITH OTHER SYSTEMS					
Courts should have more information about how school districts work.	X				
Improved coordination between shelters and schools.		X			
Improved coordination with the juvenile justice system; the SFUSD should offer more drop-out prevention services.		X			
SFUSD should anticipate multiple addresses changes for homeless families and their systems should be able to accommodate this without disrupting services.					X

appendix 5: acknowledgement and planning participants

The homeless education planning process and this plan are the result of the hard work and commitment of many people. Dozens of community members contributed to this plan through their participation in committee and individual meetings, the homeless education action forum and focus groups.

The five-member leadership team convened by A Home Away From Homelessness to design and facilitate the planning process comprised:

Jeri Cohen, West Contra Costa County Unified School District
 Rosalinda del Moral, San Francisco Unified School District
 Kate Durham, DPM Consulting
 Jeanie Kortum, A Home Away From Homelessness
 Paula Moten-Tolson, Early Education Consultant

Key advisors to this team included:

Barbara Duffield, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
 Jim Winship, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater School of Social Work
 Susan Wong, San Francisco Unified School District

The following groups were key participants in the planning process:

Parents accessing services at Homeless Prenatal Program
 Parents living in supportive housing on Treasure Island
 Parents residing at 260 Golden Gate
 Parents residing at La Casa de Las Madras
 Parents residing at St. Joseph's Village
 The San Francisco Family Supportive Housing Network
 The San Francisco Homeless Education Council
 The San Francisco Shelter/Connecting Point Program Directors' Network

The following people participated in the planning process. We extend our apologies to anyone who has been inadvertently left off this list.

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 Trish Bascom, SFUSD School Health Programs
 Jennifer Brazill, A Home Away From Homelessness

Lawanda Brown, William De Avila Elementary School
 Jim Buick, Department of Human Services
 Jeffrey T. Burgos, Bessie Carmichael Elementary School
 Gwen Chan, Assistant Superintendent SFUSD
 Sai-Ling Chan-Sew, Department of Public Health
 Keith Choy, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
 Kala Ciletti, Raphael House
 Bonnie Coffey-Smith, McKinley Elementary School
 Josanna Cortez, La Casa de Las Madres
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Deena Zacharin, SFUSD Office of Parent Relations

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