TO: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP)

FROM: Foster Youth and Homeless Services/Project TEACH

SUBJECT: K–12 Education Listening Session Notes

Present:
Jesse Archer, CoC Analyst, Sacramento Steps Forward; Emily Carlin, Family Services Coordinator, Saint John's Program for Real Change; Lindsay Curtis, Homeless Services Coordinator, Highlands Community Charter School; Gabe Esparza-De Jesus, Project Specialist, SCOE; Ardath Ferris, McKinney-Vento Liaison, San Juan Unified School District; Darrin Greer, Coordinator, Twin Rivers Unified School District; Megan Johnson, Program Specialist, SERVE Center; Elizabeth Marlow, Family Services Senior Director, Saint John's Program for Real Change; Thomas McCready, School Social Worker, Sacramento City Unified School District; Kerstin Morell, Project Specialist I, SCOE; Erica Revis, Program Analyst, SCOE; Jacque Serrano, Project Specialist, SCOE; Tami Silvera, Project Specialist/Homeless Liaison, Elk Grove Unified School District; Tara Turrentine, Coordinator, SCOE; and Takendra White, Coordinator, Twin Rivers Unified School District

Introduction and Background
See the presentation slide deck for Jesse Archer's slides 1–6.

What are system gaps for youth experiencing homelessness in the K–12 education system?
- Ardath Ferris shared that we lose students from school to school and there is no mechanism to find them.
- Tara Turrentine shared that transportation; reality is this is not always a solution that removes the barrier, although the accommodation is within the law, i.e., bus passes.
- Ardath shared that kids are being rejected from CalFresh and healthcare.
- Megan Johnson asked what are challenges when referring to housing supports?
- Ardath shared it is close to impossible; can't get there; can't pass the requirements
- Gabe Esparza-De Jesus shared about students' unwillingness to find housing without their significant other, friends, family, or pets.
- Darrin Greer shared about the difficulty obtaining documentation needed for

school admittance; would like to streamline that process
- Lindsay Curtis shared about the root cause from parent/adult perspective; don't usually see children; something to intervene to prevent homelessness
- Darrin shared that getting the money for deposits.
- Lindsay shared that deposits are a huge barrier even with a voucher.
- Tara shared the competition for housing; folks not wanting to rent to voucher holders
- Ardath shared that there is confusion about whether they have a voucher; only six weeks to find a place with a voucher
- Thomas McCready shared that there are no programs for single dads and Ardath added boys too.
- Tara shared that the system creates homelessness; separating families
- Tami Silvera shared those services regulated to the central part of the city; coordinating transportation within and without the district is challenging
- Lindsay shared that childcare access is a big one.
- Tara mentioned prevention is too late; not enough capacity to pursue prevention; how do we connect with at-risk families

How would you fill those gaps?
- Kerstin Morell talked about Sac County Wellness Centers on school sites and providing transportation to families to access those centers.
- Tara shared the colocation of services.
- Lindsay shared that rental assistance was successful during Covid.
- Ardath mentioned cross-training across the agencies that impact the population; like mental health first aid, but for housing; free Uber for disadvantaged people; no understanding about how to negotiate Medicare and Medi-Cal for transportation assistance
- Darrin expressed that the ideal would be for Lyft or Uber drivers with vouchers between 7-9 a.m. or 2-4 p.m.
- Tami mentioned HopSkipDrive; legality and liability is huge; school bus is not supported as there are not enough drivers for the district; no one solution will work instead a series of options are needed and safety is paramount
- Gabe shared that HopSkipDrive is in Southern California.
- Takendra White shared that HopSkipDrive is not servicing Sacramento County because of a lack of capacity.

How can we prevent youth from becoming homeless?
- Ardath shared that education and employment to self-sustain; there are a million parts to that; mentioned the stigma which creates the need to be subtle
- Tara shared prevention; so much less expensive
- Emily Carlin requested leaning into IEPs; support kids with higher needs by completing that process and allowing it to go with them
- Thomas suggested adding an option to the housing questionnaire about permanent housing that is not stable.
- Tara could add more questions to identify; more capacity is needed to intervene
- Jacque Serrano shared about offering support and assistance (tangible goods) and people not being receptive; increasing understanding that students could have more stable housing; a relationship with somebody at the school allows

students to be interested; school is the only thing they can rely on; students want to be validated and know that they have someone they can call when they need it; ability to believe that they deserve to get help
- Ardath agrees with Jacque.
- Lindsay shared the importance of the counselor-to-student ratio; hiring more counselors; identifying insecure housing placements starts with the relationship developed between a student and a counselor
- Ardath expanding that multidisciplinary to apply more than just the most extreme cases; goal setting for life is missing from school; kids want practical classes
- Jesse shared that life skills is a common theme for all our groups.

What are some of the biggest barriers you face in supporting youth at this time?
- Tara requested one word for the biggest barriers. She shared housing; beds in programs
- Ardath dittoed Tara's suggestions.
- Takendra shared transportation
- Gabe shared that students not being in a place where they are ready to accept help.
- Jacque shared their fear of receiving help.
- Tami shared transportation and lack of affordable housing.
- Thomas shared housing and time.
- Tara shared the capacity to respond; liaisons with a caseload of 200-800 kids.
- Elizabeth Marlow shared absenteeism(transportation); prioritizing school

If you had unlimited funding, what would you prioritize for implementation?
- Gabe suggested funding into programs for skills that are currently relevant.
- Ardath suggested a safe place to stay that meets basic needs (shelter, food, safety); personal coach for parents and kids
- Tara suggested case management; TAY cases that are time intensive; there is no prevention because intervention did not occur in the 0-5 age range
- Megan shared that no funding is set aside yet for ages 0-5.
- Tami suggested affordable housing; one-stop concept to receive supports-showers, laundry, food, and community supports; having multiple locations for one stops
- Kerstin suggested respite care for mothers of multiple children.

What are some promising practices you are trying in your schools/on your campus to identify and serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness?
- Tami shared one new program in her district is having one academic intervention teacher; this program is being piloted at a high school campus; the role of the academic intervention teacher includes the following academic mentor/coach, student advocate, and surrogate parent; moving kids from straight Fs to Bs.

What are some challenges to identifying youth and young adults experiencing housing instability that might be addressed through partnerships?
- Tara shared partnerships with shelters.
- Takendra suggested a partnership with DHA.
- Megan shared vocational programs, community colleges
- Elizabeth shared external special education support for transitional youth; tailor and expedite support

- Ardath shared DHA; Steps Forward-general prevention; sports coaches, pediatricians, park districts

Additional Thoughts
- Thomas shared this idea (it's a bit out of the box) but I wanted to suggest paying high school students that are homeless to attend school. Often times they lack supervision at home and/or miss school to work under the table somewhere. I think paying them for attendance would increase attendance, graduation rates, and future employment.
- Ardath shared is the fragility of mental health and seeking for ways to support and strengthen families and students since it is so easy to do long-lasting harm. Especially people/youth without diagnoses, non-compliant with medication or seeking treatment, difficult, destructive behavior, traumatized, or harming selves. I am sure NAMI would welcome a discussion and consider partnership. There are already support groups to family members/friends over 18 whose loved one has mental illness and peer support groups for those experiencing mental illness. Maybe there could be a hybrid. My co-facilitator has been a statewide facilitator and I can run ideas by her.
  - In looking at wraparound types of things, peer facilitation is effective from the prevention aspect, maybe this would work for homeless as well. Maybe something similar to some of the things Foster Youth does to facilitate Indep. Living Skills and transition-we just have more gray areas and an ever-changing landscape regarding where our youth stay.
  - From the recent HETAC webinar, I really liked this slide on expansive inclusion intersectionality (is that a word?) and this list of marginalized folks. It is helpful when considering some of your questions because there is so much variety in people's individual circumstances.
  - "Rainbow (the provider) transcends its vision from inclusive to expansive*, as we will be able to represent by centering and reaching a wider scope of Marginalized LGBTQI+ and Intersectional Identities more effectively.
  - Historically Marginalized & Intersectional LGBTQI+ Identities encompass:
    - Transgender and Gender Non-conforming
    - Black, Indigenous and People of Color
    - Women
    - Neurodiversity & Mental Health Abilities
    - Physical Abilities
    - Body Diversity
    - HIV Status
    - Elders
    - Youth
    - Immigrants
    - Interfaith
    - Familial Composition
    - Class/Socioeconomic Status
      *'inclusive' with its implied power differential, whereas 'expansive' refers to centering power with marginalized people