



***INFORMATION SHARING MODELS --
EXAMPLES OF INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES
FOR SHARING OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL RECORDS***

After conducting a national scan of practices and agreements around the country, Children's Law Center of Los Angeles learned of the following examples of interagency agreements and orders that facilitate the sharing of education information and records relating to children under dependency and delinquency jurisdiction.

1. Fresno County, CA

- Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between Fresno DCFS and Fresno Unified School District.
- DCFS to provide FUSD on a monthly basis with an electronic or paper-based list of all children in foster care who are attending FUSD; designates one person as the contact person for FUSD.
- DCFS has a computer that is linked to the FUSD. FUSD, in return, provides DCFS with educational data re: children in foster care, coded for confidentiality, on a monthly basis. FUSD provides the county with software to access educational records of children in foster care.

2. San Diego, CA

- Court Order authorizes the exchange of educational information through a computer based system among the schools and the San Diego Juvenile Court, San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and licensed placements. The Order allows for the exchange of school records, dependency records, and medical records over a secured internet website. The order was made pursuant to Education Code Sections 49076, 49077 and 76244; WIC 827(a); CA Rule of Court 1423.
- San Diego also has a MOU allowing for the exchange of educational information regarding foster children through a confidential Website accessible to the San Diego Superior Court and the County Office of Education. The MOU governs the use and maintenance of the web-site for data exchange.

3. **Broward County, FL**

- Inter-Agency Agreement between the School Board of Broward County and the Florida Department of Children and Families. The agreements concerns appointment of court liaisons, foster care designees, staff development, educational stabilization (i.e. maintaining enrollment in the school of origin), information sharing, and protection of school records. The schools agree to provide information on attendance of foster youth on a biweekly basis and a transcript of each student's annual academic record.
- The parties also have crafted a database of students and school information.

4. **Seattle, WA**

- MOU between DCFS and the Seattle Public School District allows for information sharing between DCFS and Seattle Public Schools (SPS). SPS provides periodic reports regarding the foster children enrolled in their district, including information on the attendance, test scores and academic progress of these youth.
- A meeting is held whenever a foster child enrolls in a school in order to develop education plans and address educational concerns.

5. **Chicago, Ill**

- Partnership between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) seeks to improve educational outcomes for foster youth. Initiatives include: (a) an agreement to maintain and support a child's school of origin during/following placement disruptions; (b) literacy interventions for children in special education, including expediting IEP process and enrollment for DCFS youth transitioning into residential treatment centers and ensuring DCFS youth have access to tutoring supports funded by the No Child Left Behind Act; (c) efforts to enroll all foster youth in Head Start and increase the number of foster youth attending the city's selective high schools; and (d) an educational passport database "which offers comprehensive student profiles to ease school-to-school transition for youth in out-of-home care."

6. **New York, NY**

- MOU between Administration of Children's Services (ACS) and New York City Board of Education (BOE). The MOU (a) establishes the guidelines for instituting a process of regular data sharing between the BOE and ACS; (b) indicates how the data will be used; and (c) addresses confidentiality issues. Establishes that on a semester-basis, ACS shall provide BOE with information re: the children in foster care (including name, placement info, etc).

- BOE provides ACS with information on children identified by ACS as being in foster care – this information includes school admission/discharge, attendance, grade-level, annual test scores, special program status/program participation, grades, disciplinary actions, and graduation.

7. San Luis Obispo, CA

- Interagency and Community Agreement between San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (SLOCOE) and Placing agencies (Department of Social Services and Probation Department), Local Education Agencies (LEA) and San Luis Obispo Juvenile Court System, Community Partners, and Educational Partners, including Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and SLOCOE Foster Youth Services (FYS). The Interagency agreement addresses the responsibilities of the various entities in ensuring County compliance with the 2001 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act and AB 490 and includes a provision regarding information sharing.
- Interagency agreement specifically states that LEAs will provide placing agency staff with access to youth's school records without parental consent or court order. In addition, placing agencies are responsible for immediately determining who has the right to make educational decisions on behalf of the child, the last school of record, the school that the youth wants to attend, the school that the parent or person holding educational rights wishes the youth to attend, and the child's grade level.

8. Sonoma County, CA

- Court order authorizes and directs any public or non-public school that provides educational services to a ward or dependent of the juvenile court to release any and all pupil records (including but not limited to attendance records, IEP records, progress reports, immunization records, or any other educational or health record maintained by a school) upon request of a child's social worker, probation officer, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or attorney without the requirement of parental consent. Furthermore, the placing agencies are authorized and directed to provide the designated school district foster child educational liaison, or their designee, information as to the legal status of the student who is a ward or dependent of the court. The court order also addresses the sharing of psychological and health information.
- Second court order authorizes and directs all public and non-public schools to release any and all pupil records of a minor who is the subject of a Sonoma County probate guardianship, probation, or child protective service investigation related to a student's emotional, psychological, or educational needs without parental consent. In addition The Department of Health Services is also directed to release relevant mental health records of a minor who is the subject of a

Sonoma County probate guardianship, probation, or child protective service investigation related to a child's emotional, psychological or educational needs.