

# The Wellness in Schools Program: Foster and Homeless Youth

September 6, 2023



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
Office of Education

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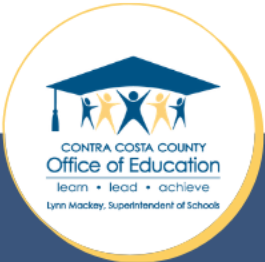
Lynn Mackey, Superintendent of Schools

# Students in Contra Costa County



**750**  
Foster  
Youth

**2,878**  
Homeless  
Youth



# School District Engagement

- How are school districts implementing steps to identify foster or homeless youths?
- How are school districts connecting with foster or homeless youths?
- How can WISP support school districts to address the gaps in services?



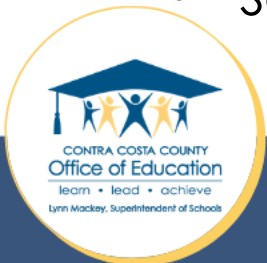
# Collaboration with Districts

- Initiate interagency communication and collaboration
- Encourage school districts to incorporate housing questions on school enrollment application
- Train LEAs on foster/homeless youths rights & provisions
- Meet monthly with identified school districts with high numbers of foster and homeless youths



# Partnerships

- Contra Costa Office of Education Youth Services
- Contra Costa County Children & Family Services
- Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services
- Youth Partner Program (Child Abuse Prevention Council)
  - *Training*
  - *ILSP*
- Community Based Organizations such as:
  - Health, Housing, and Homeless Services (H3 Homeless Programs)
  - Shelter Inc.
  - Seneca mobile response team



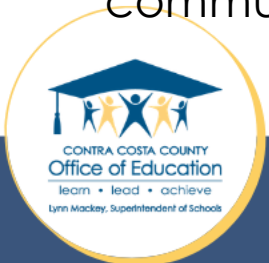
# NAMI Contra Costa

- Ending the Silence Schoolwide Assemblies
- Establishment of NAMICC On Campus in East County High Schools
- Parent Education Nights
- Facilitated enrollment into "I Am A Winner" Program
- Collaboration with Youth Empowerment Programs



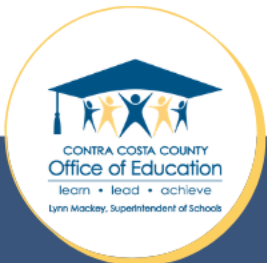
# WISP Foster & Homeless Supports Include:

- **Mental Health Foundations Presentations:** \*WISP Liaisons provide Mental Health Foundations training to foster parents, which can help them address the unique mental health challenges and needs of foster and or homeless youths.\*
- **School Based Collaborative:** Giving partners an opportunity to receive updates regarding countywide events and initiatives directed towards foster and homeless youth populations; working towards promoting early intervention and identify barriers to access mental health treatment.
- **SARB Meeting Attendance:**
- Attends these meetings to advocate for foster/homeless youth best interests and ensure that their rights and needs are respected and met. Also, connecting the foster or homeless youth and their family or caregivers with appropriate mental health supports within the school and community that can help address academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.



# WISP Foster & Homeless Supports Include:

- **School-to-Service Communication:** Working with community-based organizations, schools and families to establish and maintain effective collaboration and coordination between schools and service providers that work with foster and homeless youth.
- **Caregiver & Family Engagement:** Support families in the process of accessing mental health services through school-based coordination and behavioral health provider partnerships.





# Outreach & Coordination activities

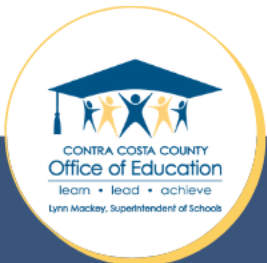
- Social services
- School Districts
- Community College
- Probation Departments



# Challenges

There are gaps in serving foster/homeless youth in Contra Costa County:

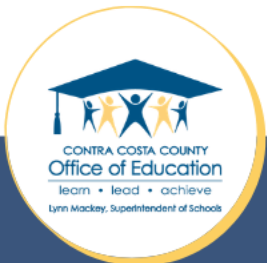
- Lack of stable housing; shortage of affordable housing
- Lack of transportation
- Disruption in services
- Insufficient number of Mental Health providers in Contra Costa
- Trauma informed training specifically to foster & homeless population



# Success Story

## Participant Story:

- **Objective:** Social worker contacted WISP Liaison about an unhoused youth in her school.
- **Why & How:** The liaison contacted the youth's parent and provided linkage to shelters in the area, complete referral to housing and counseling services.
- Liaison continued to check in regularly with the parent on housing progress. WISP FY Liaison connected student to CCCOE Youth Services WIOA program, which provided the student with pre-employment transition services and a paid work experience. WIOA program case manager also provided student with academic monitoring services, which keeps them on track to graduate.
- **Future Objective:** Family successfully got in a stable housing.
- Student is still enrolled in WIOA, which has allowed them to participate in multiple paid work experience to increase transferrable skills.
- Social worker meets regularly with student to give address stress related to homeless issue.



# Questions?

Thank you!

