



Board of Education

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Crystal Turner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

August 3, 2023

The Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Hernandez,

Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) is dedicated to focusing on equitable, intentional, and engaging practices which provide opportunities for each and every student to be successful. The governing board designates Mikey Park, Student Services Coordinator / McKinney-Vento Liaison to sign the report in order to reflect Saddleback Valley Unified School District's response.

Please see below for the responses to each required Finding as requested in the Orange County Grand Jury report and attached cover letter dated May 19, 2023.

F #	Finding	Agree/ Disagree	Response And Explanation (if Required)
F1	Many children experiencing homelessness are not identified as such, and therefore do not receive the support and benefits authorized by the McKinney-Vento Act.	Disagree. SVUSD disagrees partially with the finding (see right for explanation)	SVUSD sends out the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act Housing Questionnaire in paper form to the families of every student upon enrollment every year, in which families are initially identified. If a family who qualified in the past does not submit the housing questionnaire, school staff is required to make contact with the family to ensure they no longer qualify under the McKinney-Vento Act. Once a form is submitted, the McKinney-Vento status is inputted in our student information system, and the student is referred to their Student Champion who oversees resources and educational rights of the families.
F2	The lack of mandatory McKinney-Vento Act training of school site office staff, counselors, and teachers	SVUSD agrees with the finding	

	contributes to a failure to identify children experiencing homelessness.		
F3	There is disparity in the application of McKinney-Vento regulations across Orange County public school districts which results in unequal access to educational benefits for children experiencing homelessness.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F4	The majority of McKinney-Vento Liaisons are in full-time positions, but because their work includes multiple non-McKinney-Vento responsibilities, most do not have sufficient time to do the work required by the McKinney-Vento Act.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F5	Many McKinney-Vento Liaisons lack needed experience due to a high turnover rate in those positions.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F6	McKinney-Vento Act training is not mandatory for the majority of McKinney-Vento Liaisons.	Disagree. SVUSD disagrees with the finding (see right for explanation)	SVUSD mandates the McKinney-Vento Liaison attend trainings provided by OCDE.
F7	Students experiencing homelessness who are enrolled in an elementary district often do not continue to receive McKinney-Vento benefits when they move to a high school district because the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents the sharing of this information between districts.	Disagree. SVUSD disagrees partially with the finding (see right for explanation)	SVUSD is a K-12 unified school district with a student information system that provides information on students at all grade levels while enrolled in our district. There is a question regarding the sharing of information when students transfer outside of SVUSD and whether or not schools are permitted to share that information. Clarity is necessary.
F8	McKinney-Vento funds depend on school districts submitting grant proposals, but not all districts have employees trained in writing grant applications, resulting in missed funding opportunities.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F9	School districts that do not apply for grants which fund programs benefiting children experiencing homelessness miss potential revenue opportunities.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F10	McKinney-Vento is an unfunded federally mandated program; however,	SVUSD agrees	

	school districts which qualify and apply for Title I, Part A funds may obtain revenues that can be used for children experiencing homelessness. These funds are insufficient to meet the needs of the school districts supporting children experiencing homelessness.	with the finding	
F11	A lack of reliable transportation for children experiencing homelessness often results in chronic tardiness and absenteeism.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F12	Chronic Absenteeism Rates of Homeless Students are disproportionately high in comparison with the Chronic Absenteeism Rates of All Students and Socio-Disadvantaged Students.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F13	Children experiencing homelessness in Orange County perform at a lower level on standardized tests and have a lower graduation rate than All Students and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F14	The percent of Homeless Students graduating who failed to meet state standards on English Language Arts and Math tests is significantly higher than it is for All Students and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	
F15	There is a tendency by school districts to operate in isolation, which prevents productive collaboration on addressing the issue of children experiencing homelessness and the challenges of their education.	Disagree. SVUSD disagrees partially with the finding (see right for explanation)	Collaboration between district McKinney-Vento Liaisons occur when students relocate to another district, and there is continually collaboration through HOPES Collaborative and other OCDE professional development. This does not cover all districts, so improvement is necessary.
F16	A significant lack of affordable permanent housing contributes to many families being caught in the cycle of homelessness.	SVUSD agrees with the finding	

Please see below for the responses to each required Recommendation as requested in the Orange County Grand Jury report and attached cover letter dated May 19, 2023.

R #	Recommendation	Implementation	Response And Explanation (if Required)
R1	All Orange County school districts should develop a "Back to School" plan which includes mandatory McKinney-Vento Act training for all district and school administrators, teachers, office staff, and counselors by December 31, 2023, and annually thereafter.	Recommendation has been implemented	SVUSD created a plan in 2022-23 for robust, annual McKinney-Vento training to be implemented beginning August 2023. This training will be for all district and school staff. In this plan, the McKinney-Vento Liaison will annually conduct in-person trainings for all Principals, Student Champions, Community Liaisons, Counselors, and Psychologists, and she will also ensure all other District staff complete the mandatory asynchronous training provided by OCDE.
R2	Participation in Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) McKinney-Vento Act training programs for all Local Education Agencies (LEA) McKinney-Vento Liaisons should be mandated by October 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.	Recommendation has been implemented	All SVUSD McKinney-Vento Liaisons are mandated to attend an intake training with OCDE. Additionally, the McKinney-Vento liaison is required to attend all HOPES collaborative meetings hosted by OCDE quarterly as well as other trainings and webinars provided pertaining to homeless education/McKinney-Vento rights and information. These meetings provide a way to collaborate with other districts and learn about resources for families in need.
R3	Given that most LEA McKinney-Vento Liaisons are responsible for a number of other duties, and do not have sufficient time to do their McKinney-Vento required work, school districts should identify ways to increase support and/or staff to address the numerous tasks of the Liaisons by October 1, 2023.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future (see right for timeline)	Beginning in 2022-23, SVUSD implemented the role of the Student Champion. The Student Champion is a staff member who receives a stipend from the LCAP for supporting McKinney-Vento and Foster Youth. There is a Student Champion at all 33 school sites, and they are trained directly by the District McKinney-Vento Liaison. To add to this plan, beginning May 1, 2023, a District McKinney-Vento Community Liaison was hired through the use of American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) one-time funds. The focus of this full-time position is to assist Student

			Champions with creating a system for referring families to community and district supports and services. By June 2024, SVUSD will have a plan for ways to keep this McKinney-Vento Community Liaison funded once the ARP-HCY funds have expired.
R4	By January 1, 2024, for children experiencing homelessness to receive uninterrupted McKinney-Vento benefits, Orange County school districts should add a section to their mandatory enrollment school form enabling parents/guardians to give permission for their school to share information regarding their child's McKinney-Vento status with other districts that their child may be attending.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future (see right for timeline)	By January 1, 2024, SVUSD will add a section to their mandatory enrollment school form enabling parents/guardians to give permission for their school to share information regarding their child's McKinney-Vento status with other districts that their child may be attending.
R5	By October 1, 2023, each Orange County school district should develop and maintain a centralized list of district employees with grant application writing capability so that they are prepared to apply for available grants to assist in educating children experiencing homelessness.	Recommendation requires further analysis.	By October 1, 2023, Saddleback Valley Unified School District will create a plan for how to successfully develop and maintain a centralized list of district employees with grant application writing capabilities.
R6	By October 1, 2023, a joint task force should be formed by the OCDE comprised of a district-level administrator from each Orange County school district and leadership from non-profit organizations who serve homeless families, to address absenteeism, low test scores, and low graduation rates of children experiencing homelessness.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future (see right for timeline)	Saddleback Valley Unified School District will participate in OCDE- sponsored joint task force beginning September 2023.
R8	By May 1, 2024, each Orange County school district administration should develop, and present to the District Board of Education, a plan to lower the Absenteeism Rates of homeless students.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be with a time frame for implementation.	By October 1, 2023, the Student Services Coordinator for Attendance Intervention and the Student Services Coordinator/McKinney Vento Liaison will establish a committee to assist with developing strategies for improving attendance. Data and

			information from sites regarding McKinney Vento students will be analyzed to determine a plan for interventions and strategies needed to support improved attendance rates for homeless youth.
R9	By May 1, 2024, each Orange County school district administration should develop, and present to the District Board of Education, a plan to improve the performance of homeless students in English Language Arts and Math.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be with a time frame for implementation.	By September 1, 2023, each school site administrator, Student Champion, library technician, ASB technician, counselor, psychologist and teacher will receive an updated list of the recently identified McKinney-Vento students. Principals will be expected to explain the expectation for how the students will be supported. By October 1, 2023, the McKinney-Vento Liaison will collaborate with tech services in order to code McKinney-Vento students in a way that the program expires but also communicates with Educlimber. This will allow for more effective data collection and transparency. By November 1, 2023, the district Curriculum and Instruction team will meet to discuss a plan for leading site administrators on a plan to improve the performance of homeless students in English Language Arts and mathematics. By December 1, 2023, the Student Services Coordinator/McKinney Vento Liaison, the Coordinator of Education Services, the Director of Students Services, and the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services will present the three Orange County Grand Jury reports to each administrator in SVUSD at the K12 Leadership Training. At this training, administrators will be expected to create a plan with their leadership teams focused on how their school site will improve the performance of homeless students in English

			Language Arts and Mathematics by embedding within systems already in place and successful at the site.
R10	The Orange County Superintendent of Schools should provide information from the School Accountability Report (SARC) to the Board of Supervisors identifying the number and describing the performance of children experiencing homelessness in Orange County public schools. This data should include the aggregate of students in each district who are experiencing homelessness, their chronic absenteeism rates, and the high school graduation rate, and the percent who meet or exceed state standards in English and Math, starting October 31, 2023, and yearly thereafter.	Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be with a time frame for implementation.	Saddleback Valley Unified School District will review and include the information from the School Accountability Report in our regular data analysis and goal setting.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mikey Park, Student Services Coordinator
 Saddleback Valley Unified School District
 parkm@svusd.org
 949-580-3492