

Directive to Administrators (Specify which administrators)		WAD (Wednesday) Publication Date	WAD Notice Number	No. of Pages
All Administrators		April 12, 2017		1 of 5
WAD Title (Limit to 4-6 Words)			Date Due (if applicable)	Not Applicable After
May is National Foster Care Month			N/A	June 1, 2016
From	Title	Signature		Telephone
Kim Coates (Cabinet member or approved by one below)	Executive Director, School Health Programs, SFCSD			242-2615
Inform: <input type="checkbox"/> (x) Certificated Staff <input type="checkbox"/> (x) Classified Staff <input type="checkbox"/> (x) Parents <input type="checkbox"/> (x) Post on Bulletin Board Other _____				
Administrative Directive				
MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH				
WHAT: Each May, National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity for people nationwide to focus attention on the year-round needs of youth in foster care and encourage more people to get involved in their lives. We invite you to recognize May as National Foster Care Month and to celebrate those who make a difference in the lives of children in the foster care system. For more information on how to get involved in National Foster Care Month activities, visit www.fostercaremonth.org and see attachments.				
WHO: All SFUSD staff, students, families/caregivers, and community.				
WHY: To raise awareness about the needs of the state's 75,000 foster youth and show our appreciation for the dedication of the foster families as well as the mentors, advocates, social workers and volunteers who support foster youth.				
<u>SAVE THE DATES:</u>				
What:	National Foster Care Awareness Day – Go Blue for Foster Youth - Millions of people will “go blue”, to stand in solidarity with those who have been impacted by foster care and show their support for the 402,000 youth in foster care in the United States.			
Who:	All SFUSD staff, students, families/caregivers, and community			
When:	Tuesday, May 2, 2017			
Where:	SFUSD Schools and Sites			
How:	Wear blue, decorate your school or site blue, and use the #goblueday on social media.			
What:	Foster Youth Services End-of-Year Celebration – Celebrating SFUSD students for demonstrating their commitment to their educational success and acknowledging nominated caregivers and service providers that have done exemplary work in supporting the permanency and/or educational needs of SFUSD foster youth students.			
Who:	All are welcome			
When:	Wednesday, May 10, 2017, 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.			
Where:	School Health Programs Office – 1515 Quintara St. San Francisco, CA 94116			
How:	* <u>Nominate a student by April 24, 2017 at https://goo.gl/forms/MkciTfwAYQGqDov2</u>			
	* <u>Nominate a caregiver or service provider by April 24, 2017 at https://goo.gl/forms/wGtskqUfyLeEPa7a2</u>			
	* RSVP for the event by May 4th at https://2017fyscelebration.eventbrite.com or (415) 242-2615 x3208			
ATTACHMENTS:				
a)	<u>May is National Foster Care Month:</u> Ideas on how you can show recognition of foster care month at your school sites.			
b)	<u>How You Can Support Foster Youth in SF</u>			
For more information, check out our website at www.healthiersf.org/fys .				

<i>Approved</i>	Cabinet Member Kevin Truitt	Title Associate Superintendent, Student, Family, and Community Support Department	Signature
<i>SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT – WEEKLY ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE (WAD)</i>			

May is National Foster Care Month!

National Foster Care Month in May provides an opportunity for people nationwide to get involved as foster parents, volunteers, mentors, and employers. It's also an opportunity to show our appreciation for the dedication of the foster families who care for foster children and youth, and the social workers who support them.

We invite you to recognize May as National Foster Care Month. Join us in making this a time to recognize and celebrate those who make a difference in the lives of children in the foster care system. For more information on how to get involved in National Foster Care Month activities, visit www.fostercaremonth.org, or check out the following ideas on how you can show recognition at your school site:

Recognize

The perfect time for honoring the many people who are making a difference in the lives of children and youth in foster care. Take a moment to recognize a foster parent, relative caregiver, mentor, volunteer or social worker for their efforts throughout the year. Remember, a simple “thank you” is a powerful reward.

Ideas to Get You Started

- **Send thank-you cards or personalized appreciation letters** to foster parents, kinship families and other volunteers. Reach out to local merchants to donate flowers, candy or gift certificates too.
- **Organize a social gathering** that encourages foster families to come together for a relaxing day of family fun and networking. Invite families to a school sponsored breakfast or lunch. Reach out to local attractions for free passes to the zoo, children’s museum or sporting event. Family outings are great opportunities for siblings living in different foster homes to reconnect and spend quality time together.
- **Feature a foster parent or volunteer of the year** (or select one for each month!) on your school’s website or in a newsletter. Include photos of the honorees and testimonial quotes from the children they serve describing how they have made a positive difference in their lives.
- **Hold a Blue Ribbon event** in celebration of National Foster Care Month. Create a visual display of blue ribbons representing each of the children in foster care in your state or community.
- **Create a visual display** highlighting national foster youth and foster parent achievements. View “success stories” on www.fostercaremonth.org for highlighted stories or visit www.fosterclub.com, click on “famous foster kids” for biographies on famous foster youth.

Promote

Each year thousands of families are affected by child welfare issues. In fact, there are 408,000 American children in foster care because their own families are in crisis and unable to provide for their essential wellbeing. Unfortunately, few citizens understand the magnitude of the issue or what foster care is all about. Promotional support at the local level is a key step in the education process. The more frequently people see positive messages about foster care in their community, the more likely they will be to come forward and do something to *change a lifetime* for a child in need.

Ideas to Get You Started

- **Promote local events and Foster Care Month Events Calendar to school staff, families, youth, and community members.** San Francisco events include:
 - **Celebrate National Foster Care Awareness Day – Go Blue for Foster Youth – On May 2, 2017,** wear blue, decorate your school or site blue, and use the #goblueday on social media. Millions of people will “go blue”, to stand in solidarity with those who have been impacted by foster care and show their support for the 402,000 youth in foster care in the United States.
 - Foster Youth Services End-of-Year Celebration – May 10, 2017, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m., School Health Programs – 1515 Quintara St. San Francisco, CA 94116. RSVP for the event by **May 4th** at <https://2017fyscelebration.eventbrite.com> or (415) 242-2615, ext. 3208
 - **Distribute National Foster Care Month materials in school bulletins, newsletters and in your community.** Help raise awareness about foster care by displaying promotional posters and flyers. Hand out lapel pins and blue ribbons to friends and colleagues.

Support

As you plan for National Foster Care Month activities, we encourage you to support and inspire school site staff's involvement and awareness about foster care.

Ideas to Get You Started

Promote the recruitment of people to be a permanent connection in the life of a foster youth. Encourage school site staff, parents and community members to consider becoming a foster or adoptive parent, mentor, or respite care provider as part of the Foster/Adopt our SF Youth Campaign. For more information, contact Alexis King-Gallman at king-gallmana@sfusd.edu or by phone at 415-242-2615 x3061.

- **Read and Share “What Teachers and Educators Can Do to Help Youth in Foster Care”** for more extensive information on supporting good educational outcomes for students in out-of-home care including: classroom tips, how to explore the student's academic history, preparation for post-secondary education, career planning and more.
- **Educate school site staff on the educational needs of foster youth students.** Issues such as compromised academic outcomes, school placement instability, social/behavioral factors, poor high school completion and low post-secondary entrance rates are adversely affecting the futures of foster youth students. Sample presentations are available on the FYS website, www.healthiersf.org/fys.
- **Help students gain access to appropriate academic supports** such as tutoring, counseling and test preparation. Invite the child's resource parents (foster parents, kinship caregivers, adoptive parents) to work with you in assessing the student's current level of achievement and setting reasonable goals for the academic year.
- **Make your library foster care-friendly!** Broaden the diversity of families depicted in the books and materials in your library to include foster, adoptive and kinship families. Host special readings or film screenings featuring the works of accomplished foster care alumni such as Regina Louise, Josh Shipp, Victoria Rowell, Chris Eyre, Bob Danzig and others.

This information was adapted by www.fostercaremonth.org and brought to you by the SFUSD Foster Youth Services Program for National Foster Care Month. For more information, please contact Foster Youth Services @ 415-242-2615.

Check out the FYS website at www.healthiersf.org/fys for additional resources



San Francisco Unified School District
Student, Family, and Community Support Department
School Health Programs
Foster Youth Services Program



What Teachers and Educators Can Do to Help Youth in Foster Care

Children and youth living in foster care and group homes face daunting obstacles on their path towards completing a successful education. School can be an important source of stability for foster youth by providing a welcoming, caring and safe environment. Here are some facts, tips and resources to help support school success for foster youth.

Facts

- Children are removed from the care of their parents primarily because of abuse or neglect due to complex family, social, and environmental conditions out of their control.
- Some children in foster care move frequently among emergency shelters, foster parent, guardian homes (kinship/relative or non-relative) and group homes.
- Multiple adults are involved in different aspects of foster youths' lives: social workers, relative caregivers, foster parents, group home staff, probation officers, therapists, court appointed lawyers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), education surrogates, and birth parents.

All these changes often result in multiple school placements. Because of these complexities in their lives, many, but not all, foster youth perform below grade level, are held back in school, and have lower graduation rates than their peers.

General Tips and Confidentiality

- Respect the youth's privacy! His/her foster care status is confidential and cannot be shared without permission.
- Create an environment that makes the student feel included and safe. Match youth up with a "buddy" or a mentor at the school to introduce the youth to others and the school.
- Ask the foster parent/group home worker to include the social worker's name and phone number on the emergency card and to let the school office know of any changes.
- All foster youth are eligible for free/reduced school lunch programs. Assist youth and caregivers in the application process and make sure youth are enrolled.

Build Relationships with the Child and Family

- Get to know the youth by sharing interests and hobbies. Regularly check in with the youth.
- Youth in foster care often do not want to be treated differently. At the same time, school staff and caregivers can acknowledge or accommodate extenuating circumstances.
- Remain patient and consistent. Many children and youth in foster care have lived through difficult experiences and may find it difficult to trust adults.
- Children and youth in foster care need strong advocates in schools. Educators, foster parents, child welfare staff and birth families can all support school success.

Connect with Child Welfare Staff

A social worker is required to file a court report every 6 months regarding each of the youth on his/her caseload. The court requires information about the child's school attendance and performance and is legally entitled to all information about the child.

- Confirm the identity of individuals presenting themselves as social workers by asking to see their county identification badges.
- Maintain regular contact with the youth's foster parent or group home worker(s).
- Contact the youth's social worker and other service providers (therapist, mentor etc.) to share positive experiences and concerns about the youth's school performance and attendance. Invite them to participate in upcoming school events and meetings.
- In order to support the student, ask to be informed of court dates & medical appointments that may impact attendance or state of mind.

Explore the Student's Academic History

- If possible, contact the student's former teacher and school to find out about academic status, strengths, and challenges. Request that school records and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) be delivered to the appropriate staff at your school in a timely fashion.
- Be aware that many children and youth in foster care may have a harder time learning because of frequent moving and continual transition.
- Invite the caregivers (foster parents, kinship caregivers, adoptive parents, etc.) to work with you in assessing the student and setting goals for the academic year.

Create Inclusive Learning Opportunities

- Structure classroom activities and materials to support student success. Provide predictability, clear expectations and opportunities for meaningful participation.
- Help youth connect with tutoring, after school programs and community programs.
- Broaden the diversity of families depicted in the books and materials in your classroom to include foster, adoptive and extended relative families.
- Certain assignments may be difficult for youth in foster care or adoptive families, such as bringing in baby pictures or science experiments requiring extra resources or space.
- Obtain permission for special activities, such as field trips, from those who have legal authority to give permission (e.g. social workers, court, birth parents).
- Consider doing a unit on foster care during May. A list of books about foster care and adoption is available on the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency.

Prepare Youth for Postsecondary Education, Training and Careers

- Teach students about postsecondary education options while in middle and high school.
- Create opportunities for students to build personal and social skills so they can advocate for themselves, solve problems, and actively participate in their communities.
- Help students access academic supports, plan appropriate high school courses, SAT/ACT or assessment preparation, and apply to postsecondary education and training programs.
- Link students to existing community educational and career development programs, such as TRIO Upward Bound programs and College Bridge Programs. Info on available programs can be found at www.cacollegepathways.org.