Improving Academic Outcomes and Graduation Rates for High School Students Experiencing Homelessness

Elk Grove Unified School District-FACE Department

Student and Family Empowerment Program
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CALIFORNIA

MAY 7-9 ~ SAN DIEGO

HOMELESS EDUCATION

CONFERENCE

2025

HETAC
Los Angeles County Office of Education
SchoolHouse Connection

SAFE Program
Student and Family Empowerment

Welcoming Activity

If you could be outdoors right now doing an activity of your choice, what would it be? Who, if anyone, would you be with?

Objectives

- Understand the impact of homelessness on high school completion

- Demonstrate the positive impact of educational support for students

- Share strategies for providing academic intervention

SAFE Program
Student and Family Empowerment

Mission: The mission of the Student and Family Empowerment Program is to remove barriers that impede access to education by collaborating with students, their families, and community partners in order to meet student's basic needs.

What we do: We do this by providing case management and direct service for students and families that are facing challenges such as economic hardships, homelessness, food insecurity, health, dental, vision, mental health concerns, and lack of resources.

The SAFE Program Team

- Program Specialist/Homeless Liaison

- Two Social Workers

- Six Case Managers

- Two Program Assistants

- One Academic Intervention Teacher

- Two Project Implementers

- Two Family Advocates

EGUSD

The Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) is the fifth-largest school district in California located in southern Sacramento County. EGUSD covers 320 square miles and encompasses rural, suburban and urban communities.

Our Mission:
Elk Grove Unified School District will provide a learning community that challenges ALL students to realize their greatest potential.

EGUSD has 62,603 enrolled students

- 32,433 Grades TK-6

- 30,170 Grades 7-12

68 schools:

- 43 elementary (TK-6)

- 9 middle (7-8)

- 9 high schools (9-12)

- 5 alternative ed. schools, 1 adult school, 1 charter school and a virtual academy

EGUSD Homeless Education Student Population has Increased Since 2020

2020-2021

- 746 Students (PreK-12)
- 71 Unaccompanied
- Nighttime Residence
  - 55 Temp Shelter
  - 540 Doubled Up
  - 41 Unsheltered
 - 118 Hotel/Motel

2022-2023

- 1,177 Students (Prek-12)
- 161 Unaccompanied
- Nighttime Residence
  - 73 Temp Shelter
  - 933 Doubled Up
  - 56 Unsheltered
  - 115 Hotel/Motel

2023-2024

- 1,729 Students (Prek-12)
- 221 Unaccompanied
- Nighttime Residence
  - 76 Temp Shelter
  - 1,456 Doubled Up
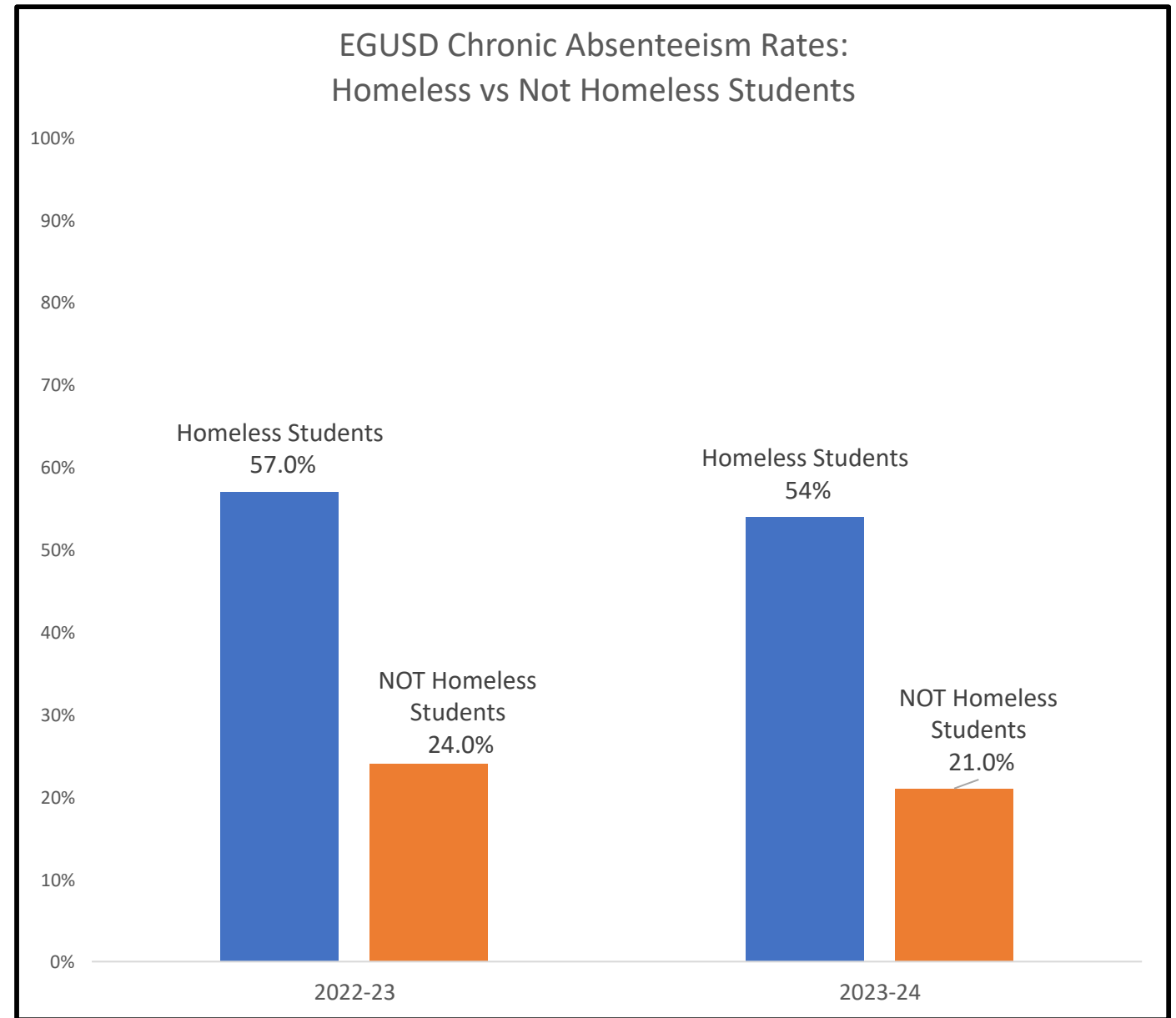 - 74 Unsheltered
  - 123 Hotel/Motel

The lives of youth experiencing homelessness are complicated not only by housing instability but by other systems (family, school, child welfare) and systemic inequities (race, gender, class, LGBTQIA, etc.)
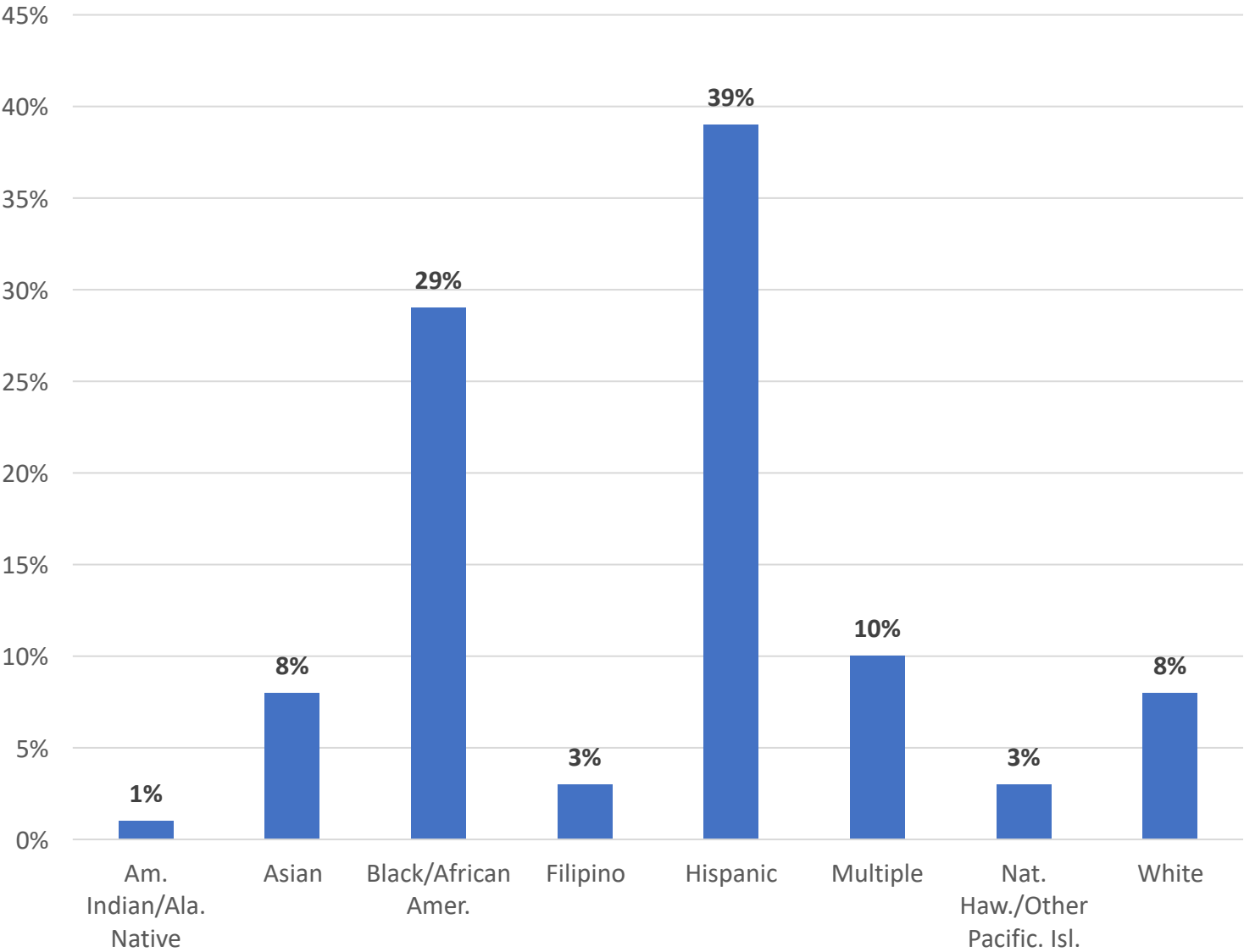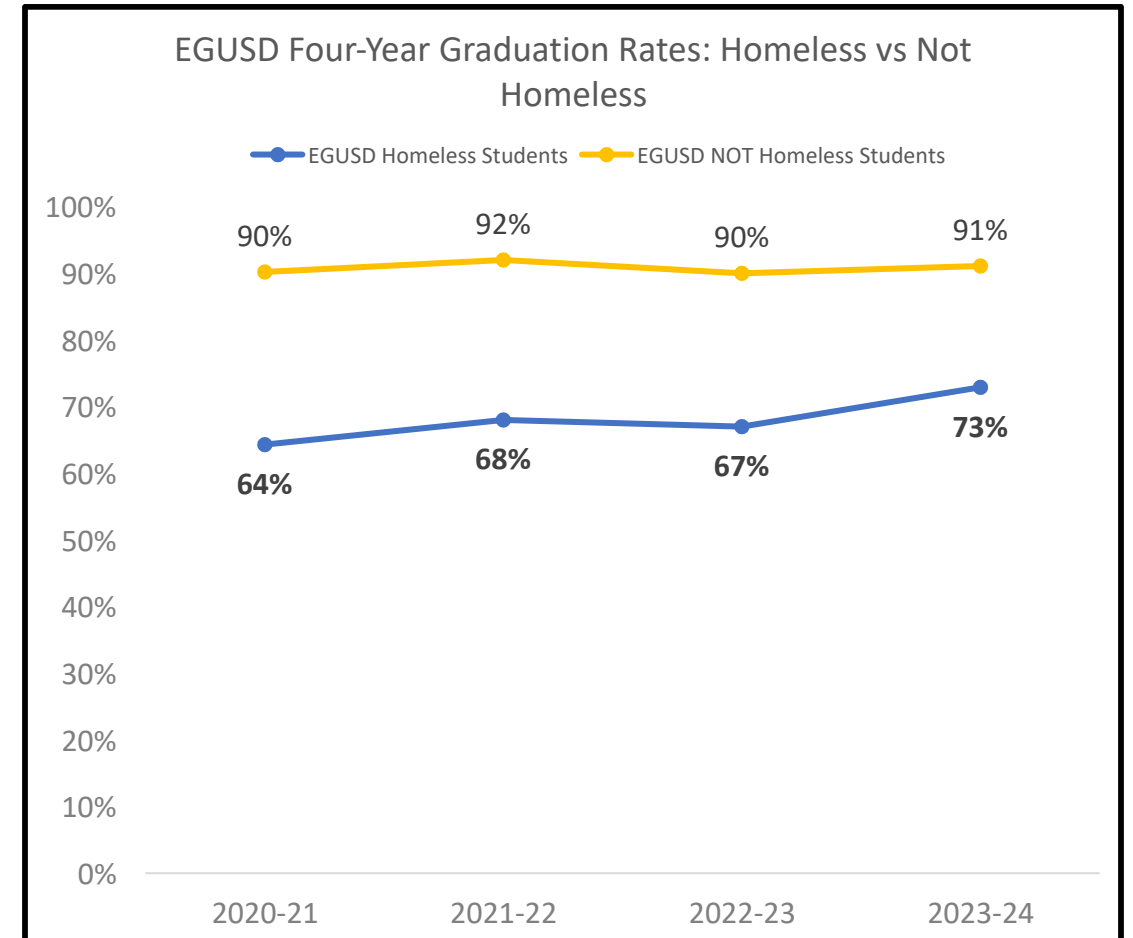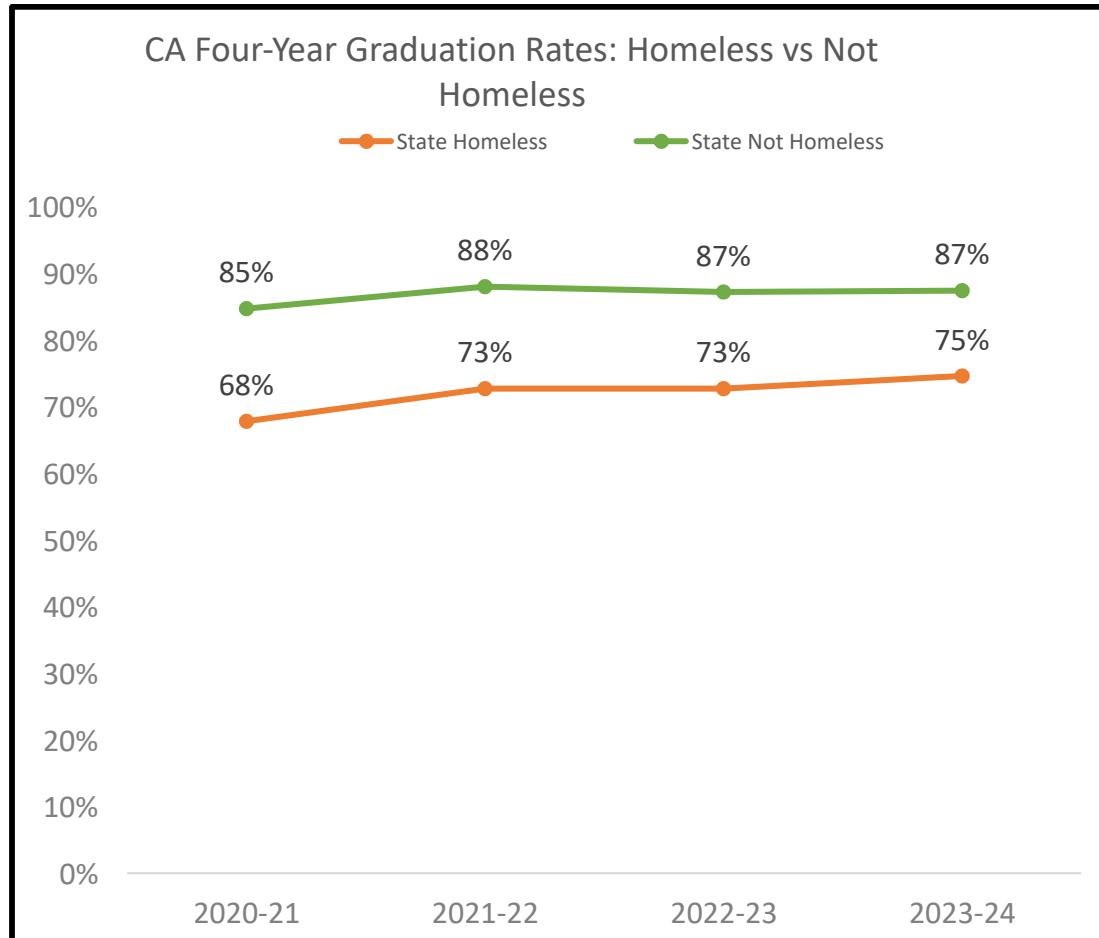

EGUSD Homeless Student Population 2023-2024

Students Experiencing Homelessness Have Increased Barriers to Attendance

EGUSD Chronic Absenteeism Rates:
Homeless vs Not Homeless Students

- 2022-23: Homeless Students 57.0%, NOT Homeless Students 24.0%
- 2023-24: Homeless Students 54%, NOT Homeless Students 21.0%

Students Experiencing Homelessness Have Increased Barriers to High School Graduation

CA Four-Year Graduation Rates: Homeless vs Not Homeless

- State Homeless
- State Not Homeless

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
State Not Homeless	85%	88%	87%	87%
State Homeless	68%	73%	73%	75%

EGUSD Four-Year Graduation Rates: Homeless vs Not Homeless

- EGUSD Homeless Students
- EGUSD NOT Homeless Students

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
EGUSD NOT Homeless Students	90%	92%	90%	91%
EGUSD Homeless Students	64%	68%	67%	73%

CDE DataQuest - https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

Education Among Youth Experiencing Homeless in America

The relationship between education attainment and homelessness is bidirectional.

Low educational attainment is a risk factor for homelessness*...

Young adults with less than a high school diploma or GED were

4.5x

more likely to report experiencing homelessness than their peers who completed high school.

...and homelessness is a risk factor for lower education attainment.

Young adults who experienced homelessness were less than

1/3

as likely to be enrolled in four-year college as stably housed peers.

Supporting young people's housing stability makes it easier for them to focus on school and educational success. And supporting educational opportunity for young people experiencing homelessness increases long-term income and safety nets needed to make a sustainable exit from homelessness.

Kull, M. A., Morton, M. H., Patel, S., Curry, S., & Carreon, E. (2019). Missed opportunities: Education among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

What data have you analyzed in your District/County? What trends are you observing?
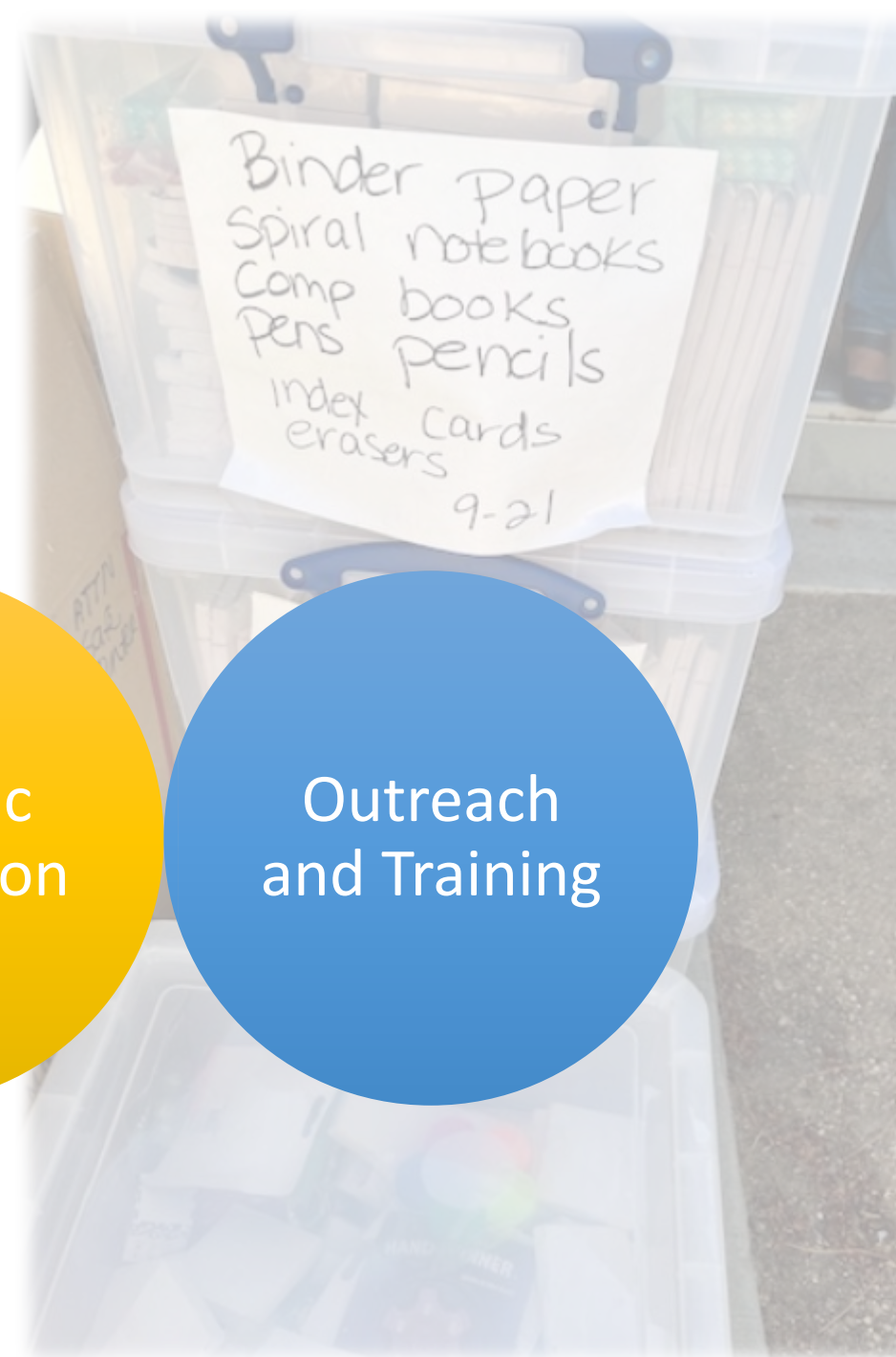
SAFE Academic Intervention Program

Focus:

Intervention and credit recovery strategies for high school students experiencing homelessness, developed in response to COVID learning loss, supports students to improve their academic outcomes and increase graduation rates.

Staffing:

Homeless Liaison, Academic Intervention Teacher, Two Project Implementers, Summer-School Teachers on Timesheet

Academic Intervention

Support Strategies

School Supplies and Basic Needs

Tutoring, Coaching, Homework Assistance

School System Advocacy

Graduation Exemption

College & Career Readiness

Classroom Observations

Summer School Credit Recovery

College and FAFSA Application Assistance

Local College/Career Field Trips

Family Engagement
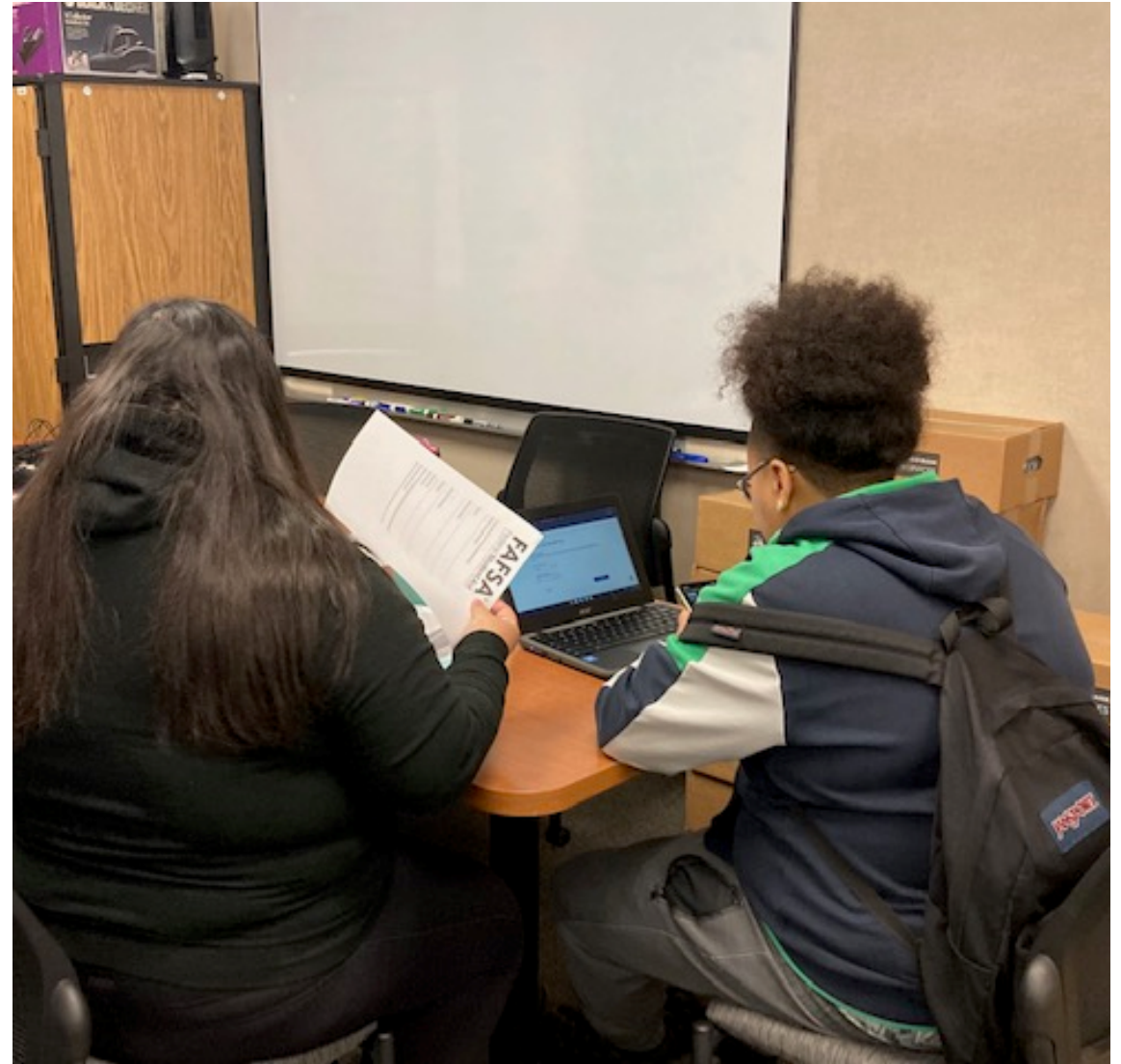
What academic supports are in place in your District?

College and Career Readiness

The two Project Implementers focus on college and career readiness for students at 13 high schools.

Intake – review transcripts, attendance, discipline, college/career goals, progress toward graduation

Ongoing student contact – daily or weekly check-ins, one on one FAFSA application and college application support

203 College, Scholarship and FAFSA applications completed this year

Field Trips to Sacramento State University, Cosumnes River and Sacramento City College

Collaboration meetings and advocacy with teachers, counselors, other staff

Academic Intervention Services

- The Academic Intervention Teacher (AIT), focuses on educational support for high school students at 13 high schools with a primary focus on students at Valley High School.

- One on one with students

- Family outreach

- Daily/weekly check-ins

- Classroom observations

- Tutoring and homework assistance

- Transportation Support

- School system advocacy (IEP/504 meetings, SARB, consulting with school counselors, meeting with teachers)

- Food and Snacks!

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION PROGRAM TIMELINE

"A STRATEGIC YEAR AT A GLANCE"

Elk Grove Unified School District
EGUSD
SAFE Program
Student and Family Empowerment

Fall Term
Aug-Nov

- Identify students.
- Review transcripts.
- Meet with counseling teams.
- Begin intakes with students.
- Family outreach.
- Identify graduate exempt students (11th/12th).
- School staff training.
- Start college field trip planning.
- Start planning for holiday giving event.
- Frequent school site visits, build campus and staff familiarity.
- Complete early decision college application.

Winter Term
Dec-Feb

- Continue student check-ins.
- Assess mid-term grades/credits.
- Promote college & career events.
- Discuss FAFSA and college applications.
- Host college field trips.
- Host "Holiday Giving" events.
- Follow up with letters of recommendations, test scores and transcripts.
- Check in February for student engagement "Senoritis" is in fact a thing!

Spring Term
Feb - May

- College application and class registration support.
- Cap & gown ordering support.
- Scholarship support & resources.
- Identify credit deficient students, sign them up for summer school (9th-11th).
- College decision by May 1st.
- Create Webgrants portal.
- Create college "Student Portal" for college applied, for Cal Grants to send awards.
- FAFSA deadline.
- Discuss alternative options for students not on-track for graduate.

Graduation Countdown

- Plan senior activities and events.
- Connect with community resources for graduate recognition event.
- Reach out for donations towards grad. events. (yearbooks, prom, cap and gowns, tassels, lei's, senior trips)
- Check transcripts for errors.
- Research, connect or seek post-grad housing options. (especially for UHY students)
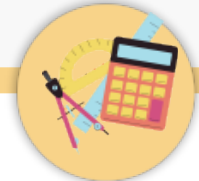
Summer Session
June-July

- Check in with credit deficient students enrolled in summer school.
- Ensure student participation & engagement in summer school.
- Donation requests for next school year.
- Seek new community resources for students and families.
- Enrichment or tutoring opportunities.
- Summer volunteering or employment opportunities
- And the cycle begins again, start planning for fall term!

Summer School Credit Recovery

Staffed by Credentialed Teachers and Project Implementor Support

Targeted support for identified students to increase retention and completion of summer school classes for credit recovery

Identification of students who need credit recovery

- Review transcripts for students who have failed one or more classes
- Emphasis on incoming 11th/12th graders for graduation

Assistance in registering for summer school including family communication

On-site daily support of students at high schools with the highest enrollment

Teachers facilitate daily/weekly check-ins, offer tutoring, classwork support and snacks!

Collaboration with Case Management Team to ensure basic needs are met during summer break

Summer School Credit Recovery Accomplishments

2022-2023

- 54 students provided support at 4 high schools
- 319 student contacts/check-ins completed
- 300 total credits recovered

2023-2024

- 69 students provided support at 7 high schools
- 380 student contacts/check-ins
- 410 total credits recovered

What's Worked

- Creating a welcoming environment and safe space for students
  - A space to check-in, get a smile, work quietly, encouragement
- Snacks and noodles!
- Building relationships and collaborating with teachers, counselors, Administration, Expanded Learning, SPED, MLE, local colleges, and community partners
- Advocacy – responsive and individualized
- Supporting students with extra-curricular events (Prom, Senior Trip)
- College/FAFSA support - workshops and individual
- Celebrating achievements and milestones
- Continuous improvement process

What's Been Challenging

- Absenteeism
- Field trips – absenteeism, parent permission, missing classes
- Staff knowledge and overcoming bias
- Circumstances outside of school that we can't control or change
- Student anxiety as graduation approaches
- Family engagement events
- Out-of-school activities
- Student mobility