

## 2.27 Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth in Highly Mobile Populations

*Resolution passed 2021*

**Whereas**, highly mobile populations include, but are not limited to, students in foster care, students facing homelessness or housing instability, incarcerated students, migrant students, and students in military families, and Washington State Report Card Data shows gaps evident in kindergarten readiness, high school graduation rates, and state assessment scores for most of these groups; and

**Whereas**, highly mobile populations face systemic racism and other systemic challenges that negatively impact outcomes for these children and youth, and while these situations can be different, all of these children and youth have opportunities for success if support can be made available; and

**Whereas**, highly mobile student populations face educational challenges to complete on-time grade level progression and graduation as well as be college- and career-ready because they face significant hurdles such as access to transportation, adequate food, educational supports, consolidating credit for work completed between schools and consistent advice from academic counselors; and

**Whereas**, each year, more than 9,000 young people enter foster care in Washington state. For the majority, entering the system leads to poor outcomes, with one in four becoming involved in the criminal justice system within one year, two in four not finishing high school, only 3% achieving a bachelor's degree, and one in three experiencing homelessness within one year of exiting the foster care system; and

**Whereas**, students involved in the juvenile justice system are less likely to graduate, more likely to drop out or obtain a GED, less likely to enroll in a 4-year college, and earn less on an hourly and annual basis; and

**Whereas**, the purpose of the Migrant Education Program through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is to meet the unique educational needs of migratory children and their families. Specifically, to design programs based on the comprehensive needs assessment (that shows inequities in math, English Language Arts, preschool/kindergarten readiness, graduation rates, and other educational barriers) to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, health-related problems, and other factors inhibiting migratory children from doing well in school and making the transition to post-secondary education or employment; and

**Whereas**, it is difficult to capture the true number of homeless/houseless as many youth/families experience a fluid state of homelessness, cycling from sleeping in cars or parks to a shelter to a friend’s home and back again to a shelter in which improvements in income, housing, health, safety, and education are hard to achieve and maintain; and

**Whereas**, statewide, there are more than 40,000 students experiencing homelessness, both accompanied and unaccompanied. The academic outcomes for those students are much lower than those for students who are housed, including lower attendance rates, increased suspensions, and lower rates of English language and math proficiency; and

**Whereas**, there are 3,000 – 15,000 unaccompanied young people in Washington state who are surviving homelessness on their own, and youth and young adults of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+ experience homelessness at disproportionately high rates; and

**Whereas**, the causes of housing instability and homelessness typically stem from the impact of several factors over time, such as structural factors (e.g., lack of adequate income, affordable housing, and affordable health care, as well as discrimination and inequitable policies and practices throughout systems of care), system failures (e.g., inadequate transitioning from child welfare, foster care, hospitals, immigrant/refugee, corrections, mental health, addiction support or facilities), and individual factors (e.g., job loss, family breakup, pregnancy, domestic violence, and addiction).

**Therefore, be it**

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for equitable, anti-racist public policies and legislation that improve outcomes and graduation rates for all highly mobile children and youth such as students experiencing foster care, homelessness, housing instability, incarceration or who are in migrant or military families by:

- Providing the needed educational and social-emotional supports;
- Removing barriers to on-time grade level progression and graduation;
- Addressing their medical, dental, and mental health needs;
- Protecting their right to a healthy, safe, stable, and crisis-free environment;
- Preventing homelessness and reducing housing instability and food insecurity for children, youth, and families;
- Continuing to ensure that the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 are improving homelessness equitability and increasing access to education;
- Encouraging collaboration between the state legislature, relevant state agencies and departments, other groups, especially those that create authentic family and community engagement that centers the voices of the communities that represent

highly mobile students groups listed above, school districts, teachers, and families; and be it further

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for equitable, anti-racist school district policies that improve outcomes and graduation rates for all highly mobile children and youth including, but not limited to:

- Ensuring adherence to the laws providing protection and access to education;
- Supporting research-based instructional supports and best practices shown to close gaps;
- Removing barriers to on-time grade level progression and graduation;
- Encouraging deficit-based dropout prevention, intervention practices, and alternative pathways;
- Addressing food insecurity;
- Requiring comprehensive guidelines and anti-racist and anti-bias training for all school staff about when it is, or is not, appropriate to involve law enforcement or child protective services;
- Creating authentic family and community engagement that centers the voices of the communities that represent highly mobile students;
- Fostering collaboration and partnership among school districts, parents, government organizations, partner organizations, and other relevant groups; and be it further

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for robust state and federal funding to support education and other services that improve outcomes for Washington state's highly mobile students and their families so that all students may reach their highest potential.