Amplify!
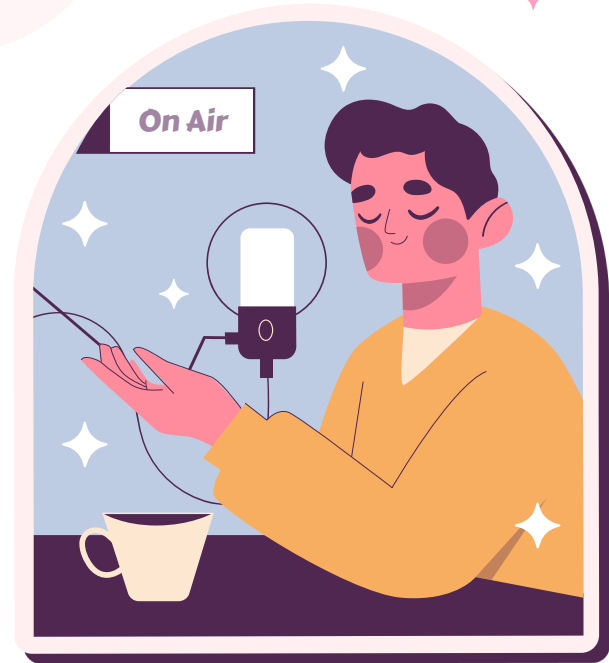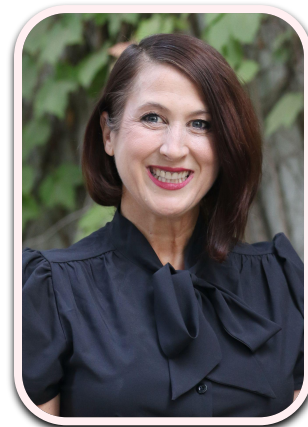## The Power of Podcasting with Homeless Students

Audio by
Kim Silva

Homeless Education Services Program
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Bakersfield, California

On Air

KCSOS
Kern County Superintendent of Schools
Office of John G. Mendiburu, Ed.D. — Advocates For Children

YOUTH VOICE
AMPLIFIED
PODCAST

Who We Are

Kim Silva

Research Associate with 15+ years of experience of working with students experiencing homelessness.

Producer of Youth Voice Amplified.

Our Homeless Education Services Program's Goals:
- Increase homeless youth educational outcomes through innovative programs & student voice.
- Increase collaboration & communication among youth, schools & homeless youth serving agencies.
- Increase community knowledge about the issues that children & youth who are homeless experience.

Youth Voice Amplified Podcast

Youth Voice Amplified is a monthly youth-led interview podcast, where youth who have overcome adversity share their stories of hope, strength & resilience.

*Where every youth is heard.
And every voice matters.*

Listen to new episodes
every 1st Wednesday of the Month!

YOUTH VOICE
AMPLIFIED
PODCAST

www.kern.org/yva

Listen on **Spotify**

Listen on **Google** Podcasts

Listen on **Apple Podcasts**

Learning Objectives

01 Understand

The benefits of using podcasting as a student voice strategy for K-12 students who experience homelessness.

02 Learn

Practical steps to start podcasting with homeless students, including content development, equipment & software recommendations & evaluation.

03 Explore

Best practices for fostering student voice & engagement while working with homeless students, with a focus on avoiding tokenism & adultism.

04 Gain

Strategies to engage the school community, showcase student podcasts, & evaluate the impact of podcasting with homeless students.

What Is Student Voice?

"Student Voice" refers to educators intentionally, purposefully, and systematically seeking student viewpoints on a specific topic for improvement purposes.[1]
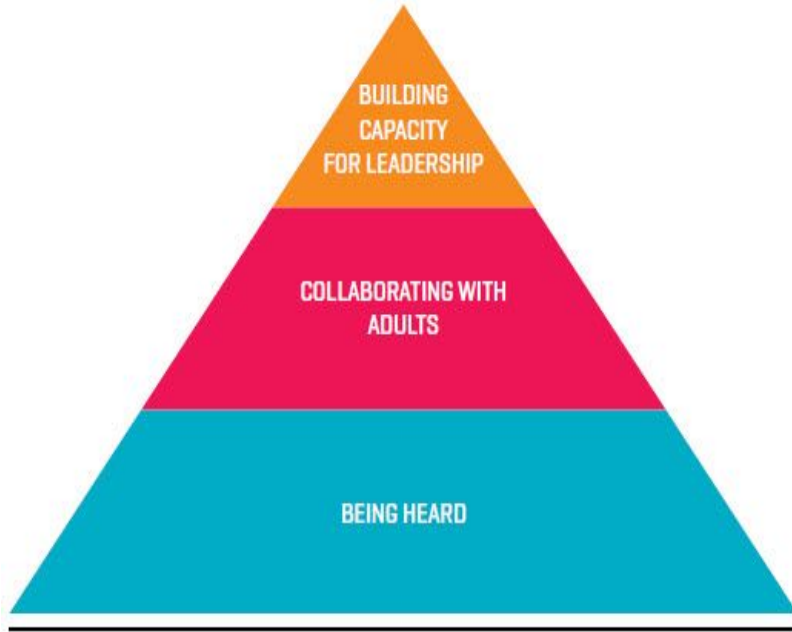
Valuing student experiences, opinions, & ideas is crucial in all aspects of school life.

Youth possess unique skills & perspectives that can drive transformative changes in learning environments & communities.

Student Voice is ANY expression of ANY learner ANY place about education.

[1]"Student Voice." *Washoe County School District* , https://www.washoeschools.net.

Mitra & Gross' (2009) "Pyramid of Student Voice"

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LEADERSHIP

COLLABORATING WITH ADULTS

BEING HEARD

- "Being heard" = School personnel acknowledging youth have unique & important perspectives
- "Collaborating with adults" = Students & staff working together to improve their school through action
- "Building capacity for leadership" = Youth partner with adults & are provided opportunities for civic development
- Systemically sharing leadership with youth opens up opportunities to re-engage disenfranchised youth
- As civic capacity & student voice integration increases, schools become more equitable[1]

[1]Mitra, D. L., & Gross, S. J. (2009). Increasing student voice in high school reform: Building partnerships, improving outcomes. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 37(4), 522-543.

Learn more about student voice at www.kern.org/hip

Why is Student Voice Important?

- Children as young as 9 years old can provide meaningful feedback on their learning.

- Increasing youth agency, self-esteem, belonging, competence, democratic skills, & leadership.

- Improvements in academic achievement, social & emotional learning, & overall well-being

- Positive changes in education policies and practices that better serve student needs.

[1] Holquist, S. (2019). Consider Student Voices: Striving to Understand Student Experiences to Support Learning and Growth. Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/blogs/blog19_consider-student-voices.asp.

Why Does Student Voice Matter for Homeless Students?

- Gives homeless youth a sense of agency over their personal lives & educational futures.

- Trauma includes a sense of powerlessness; "To be trauma-informed & equity-centered, we need to prioritize empowerment & agency."[1]

- Increases student engagement, lowering rates of chronic absenteeism & high school dropout rates.[2]

- Increases academic motivation. Students who believe they have a voice in school are 7x more likely to be academically motivated.[3]

[1] Venet, A. (2022) Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education.
[2] Mitra, D. L., & Gross, S. J. (2009). Increasing student voice in high school reform: Building partnerships, improving outcomes.
[3] quagliainstitute.org/dmsView/School_Voice_Report_2016

Why Does Student Voice Matter for Homeless Students?

Equity

"Without youth, school reform efforts are limited to adults' understandings of what counts as equity."[1]

–Great Lakes Equity Center

Empower

"Encouraging students' voice and choice is essential for students living with adversity, as it allows them to be empowered and have control in matters that are relevant to their lives."[2]

–Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development

[1]Gonzalez, T., McCabe, K.M., & Castro, C.L.D. (2017). Equity Tool: An Equity Toolkit For Inclusive Schools: Centering Youth Voice in School Change. Indianapolis, IN: Great Lakes Equity Center.
[2]https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/meeting-student-trauma-with-an-asset-based-approach

Golden Age of Student Voice

- 21st technology has given today's students a louder voice than ever before.

- Gen Z & Gen Alpha students:
    - Grew up with advanced technologies, our students' draw to multimedia.
    - Have strong inclination toward social justice & righting the wrongs.
    - Taking note of school practices & want a say…. *& schools are listening!*

Example Multimedia Tools to Promote Student Voice

Social Media

Post opinions & thoughts, find communities & lead student-led awareness campaigns.

Vlogging (Video Blogs)

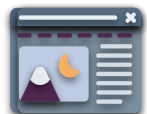Filming diary-like videos on thoughts & observations.

Photovoice

Participant-taken photographs & narratives to advocate for change.

Zines

Self-published mini magazines

Digital Arts

Animation, cartoons, comics, Manga

Podcasting

An audio (& sometimes video) medium for creative content.

What is a Podcast?

- An audio-based digital media format – the streaming age's answer to radio!
  - Can be created by individuals, organizations, or even students.
  - Covers wide range of topics, including education, entertainment, news, storytelling, & more.
  - Often feature interviews, discussions, narratives, or educational content.
- Available for streaming or downloading on various platforms, such as podcasting apps & streaming services (ex. Apple, Spotify, Amazon Music) & websites (YouTube),
- Listeners can subscribe to podcasts to receive automatic updates when new episodes are released.

iPod

Broadcast
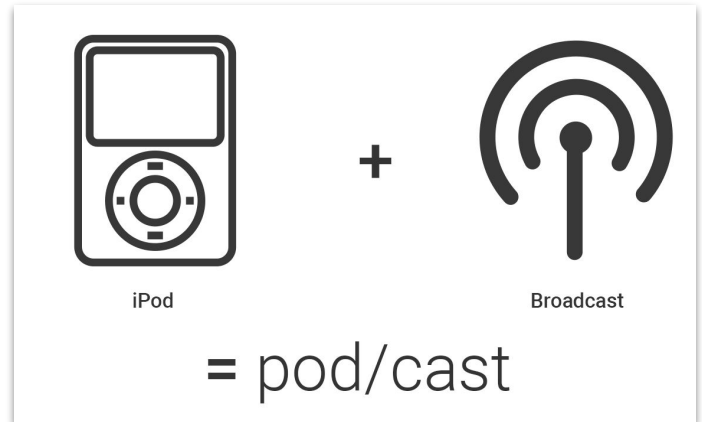
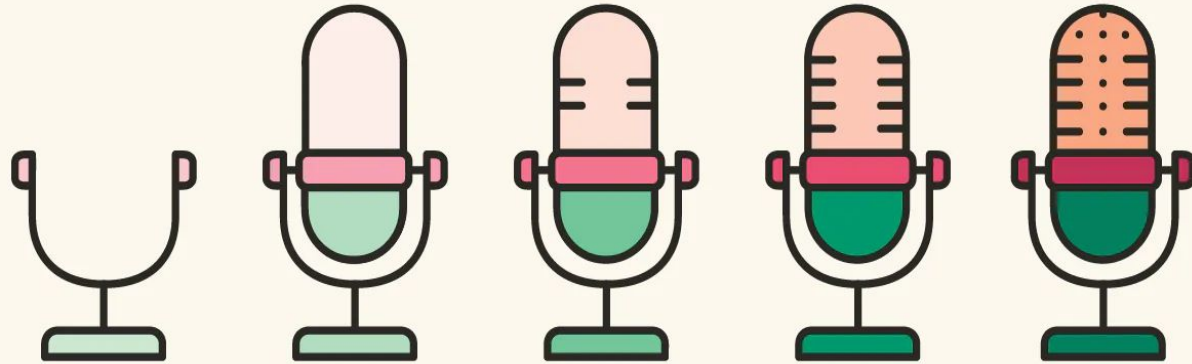= pod/cast

Why Podcast With Students Now?

- Podcast audience is rapidly growing, with approximately 100 million listeners in US.
  - Awareness of podcasts among Americans age 12+ has increased by **over 30%** in past decade, reaching **nearly 80%**.
  - **12 to 34 year-olds**: primary consumer group of podcasts, although older generations also tune in.
- Podcasts provide a convenient & portable way to consume audio content using smartphones, tablets, or computers.
  - Listeners not tied to a screen while listening, allowing them to engage in various activities such as exercise, work, driving, & chores.
- Podcasts have gained popularity due to their accessibility, diverse content, & ability to explore niche interests.
  - Many podcasts offer discussions on current events, providing listeners with up-to-date & fresh content.

How Podcasting Supports Homeless Student Voice

- Provides homeless students an opportunity to share their unique perspectives & have their voices heard, promoting inclusivity & diversity.

- Leverages technology to remove barriers & provides platform that is accessible to everyone, fostering inclusivity & giving every student a chance to be heard.

- Provides a space for creative storytelling, personal narratives, & meaningful discussions, particularly for students who may face barriers in traditional forms of communication.

- Has a lasting impact & can be accessed at any time, so wider audience can learn from these student voices as well as revisit & share even beyond its initial release.

How Do You Start A Podcast?

Inviting Students To Join The Project

- Before meeting with students, define podcasting project's purpose & intended outcomes, ensuring alignment with student voice, equity, & academic and socio-emotional outcomes.

- Work closely with ed liaisons, social workers, & support staff with existing relationships with homeless students for their guidance in identifying & reaching out to potential students.

- Use personalized approaches with each student, respecting privacy & confidentiality.
  - Connect individually to explain project, discuss benefits, & address concerns.
  - Offer incentives like gift cards or extra credit, certificates, service hours, letters of recommendation, etc.

- Prioritize trust, respect, & empathy when building relationships with homeless students.

  - Understand their unique circumstances, challenges, & aspirations.
  - Don't make promises you can't keep
  - Student is the expert of their own life: Listen MORE, Talk LESS
  - Let your student teach YOU something.

Watch Out For Tokenism & Adultism

- **Tokenism** refers to the act of including students in a project or initiative solely for purpose of appearance, without genuinely valuing their contributions.

  - Beware of practices that involve "window dressing," where student participation is superficial & lacks meaningful engagement or influence in decision-making processes.

- **Adultism** refers to the prejudice & discrimination faced by young people based on their age, where their perspectives & opinions may be disregarded or seen as less valid compared to adults.

  - Be mindful of any biases or power dynamics that may diminish or dismiss the input & agency of students, a phenomenon known as adultism.

- Whenever engaging with students in student voice work, it is crucial to create an inclusive & equitable environment that values & respects the voices & agency of students.

CAUTION
Authentic Student Voice Work Ahead

First Steps: Planning The Podcast

- Foster a safe & inclusive environment where homeless students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives & experiences.
- Define the podcast's purpose, target audience, & tone with students.
  - Will it focus on personal stories, academic topics, community issues, or combo of subjects.
  - Consider how it will differentiate from other podcasts.
  - Align purpose with the interests & needs of the homeless students.
- Decide on podcast format (interviews, panel discussions, storytelling, or a combination) & hosting style (one host, multiple hosts).
- Write a short & engaging podcast description that tells listeners exactly what it is about.
- Create brand & identity that authentically reflects student voice & essence.
  - Select memorable, descriptive podcast name that reflects podcast's purpose.
  - Design visually striking logo & utilize colors, typography, & imagery that align with the podcast's theme.

Resources You Will Need

Equipment

- Quality microphone(s) for capturing clear & professional audio (XLR or USB) for each talker.

- A dedicated laptop & internet.

- Good headphones help you monitor audio quality & ensure proper recording levels.

- Pop Filter for mic for cleaner audio sound. (Optional)

- Boom Arm or Mic Stand. (Optional)

- Audio Interface (Optional)

Software

- Software to record & edit podcast episodes.

  - Popular options include Audacity (free, open-source), Adobe Audition, GarageBand (for Mac users), or Reaper.

- A podcast hosting platform like Buzzsprout, Podbean, or Anchor to upload & distribute podcast episodes to various podcast directories (e.g., Apple Podcasts, Spotify, etc.).

Check out our shopping list at www.kern.org/hip

Additional Resources

- Locate recording space (ex: a medium size, square room with large rug & bookshelves on walls)

- Provide students training on equipment, conducting interviews, telling engaging stories, microphone usage, recording etiquette, & editing basics.

- Use web-based graphic design tools (Canva, Adobe Express) to create logo, artwork, & social media posts.

- Choose royalty-free stock or public domain music for intro, outro, transitions & sound effects.

- School social worker to ensure a trauma-informed approach podcast discussions & prioritize well-being of students.

- Time - Budget between 8 to 10 hours per episode.

Create Episode Subjects

- Help students brainstorm a list of relevant & engaging podcast topics.
  - Ask them to share their interests, experiences, & opinions to ensure their voices are reflected in content.
  - Consider subjects such as navigating school challenges, strengths & resilience, & showcasing student achievements or student-led interviews with school & community leaders on policies & resources impacting homeless students.
- Develop a plan for each podcast episode, including outlines, scripts, or talking points.
  - Encourage students to contribute ideas & shape the content throughout the process to ensure it resonates with their experiences.
  - Use digital scriptwriting tool (e.g., Google Docs, Microsoft Word) & planning tools (e.g., Trello, Asana) to help organize podcast episodes & stay on track with students.
- As experience & skills grow, promote student leadership by empowering them to take the lead of episode planning & scripting.

Student Consent, Confidentiality & Safety

- Obtain appropriate consent from students & guardians, following relevant privacy regulations & school policies.

- Maintain open communication with students & guardians to address privacy concerns & answer questions.

- Respect student decisions regarding consent & make necessary adjustments to ensure their comfort & safety.

- Establish clear guidelines for handling sensitive information & restrict access to authorized individuals only.

- Create a safe & confidential space for students to share stories, incorporating trauma-informed care principles, pseudonyms, & giving students control over final content.

- Incorporate expertise of a school social worker or other mental health professionals as part of the podcasting team to ensure that students have access to necessary support & resources throughout process.

Recording & Editing Episodes

- **Practice** the structure & format of the podcast episodes with students including types of questions they want to ask or how plan to engage with guest.

- **Guide & encourage** students in articulating their thoughts clearly & conveying their intended message during the recording.

- **Teach** students how to use editing software to refine recorded audio & apply basic editing techniques such as removing background noise, adjusting audio levels, & enhancing clarity to improve recording quality.

- **Involve** students in decision-making & creative choices during editing process, empowering them to take ownership of their podcast.

- **Seek assistance** from a professional editor or audio engineer if available to enhance podcast's production value & provide valuable learning opportunities for students.

Publishing & Promoting Podcasts

- Choose how & where the podcast episodes will be published.
  - Upload to a website or Google Drive, or
  - Consider a podcast hosting platform (Buzzsprout, Libsyn, Anchor) to upload & distribute podcast episodes to various podcast directories (e.g., Apple Podcasts, Spotify, etc.).

- Develop a schedule with students for releasing episodes to maintain consistency & engage audience like weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.

- Create a promotional strategy with students to share podcast with target audience (ex: admin, school community, families, wider public).
  - Use social media, school newsletters, websites, & community networks to increase visibility & listenership.
  - Include media (TV, radio, newspaper) with press release.
  - Create an email list to promote to supporters.
  - Interview well-known personalities & appear on other podcasts.
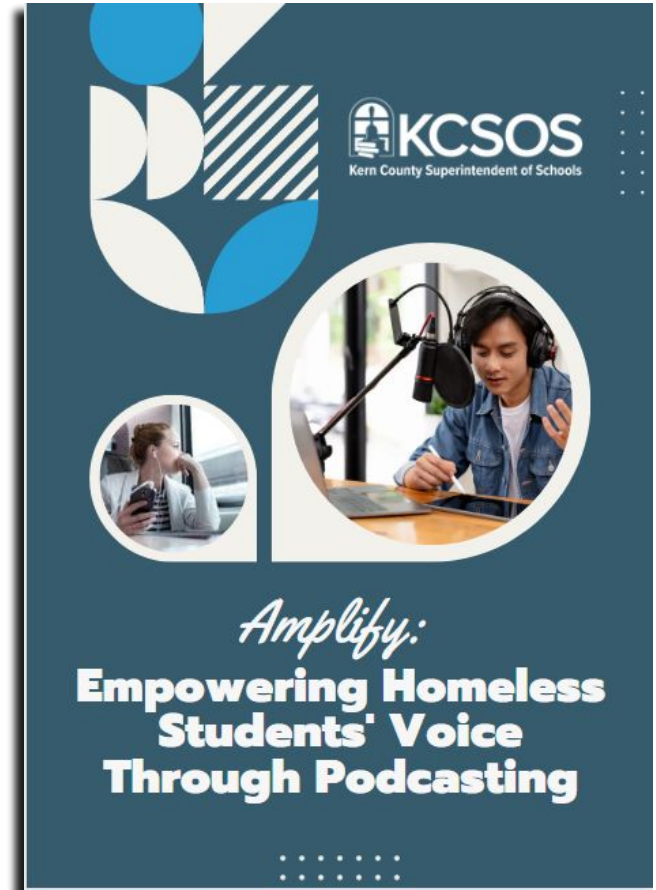
Evaluating Podcasts

- Monitor each student's growth in their podcasting skills such as interviewing, storytelling, & audio editing, as well as their confidence & self-expression.

- Evaluate if episodes reflect the experiences, challenges, & interests of homeless students authentically, shedding light on important issues.

- Track episode metrics like monthly downloads, unique page views to podcast page, average listening time, & demographic listener data to measure listener engagement.

- Gauge the positive impact the podcasts have on the audience's understanding, empathy, & attitudes towards homelessness through surveys, reviews, & online polls.

- Gather feedback from students, educators, parents, & community members to inform future improvements & adjustments.

- Involve students in discussions based on evaluation outcomes & encourage them to provide input ideas for enhancing future episodes.

Learn More!

- Recruiting & Training Students

- Planning Content & Episodes With Students

- Choosing Equipment & Editing Software

- Recording, Editing, Publishing, & Promoting First Episodes

- Best Practices Working With Students

- Tips, Equipment Lists, Sample Documents, & More!

KCSOS
Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Amplify:
Empowering Homeless Students' Voice Through Podcasting

Visit www.kern.org/hip

Student-Led Podcasting From Washington

Enterprise Middle School

Richland School District

West Richland, Washington

State Superintendent Chris Reykdal called into the school's student-led podcast last spring.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9thR0pWjnA

Schools Benefit From Homeless Student Podcasting

- Teachers & school staff develop empathy & deeper understanding of homeless student challenges & strengths.

- Podcast recordings of diverse student experiences help teachers & school staff to grow personally & professionally, strengthening their ability to create inclusive & equitable learning environments.

- Student voice podcasting promotes student agency & a sense of belonging, creating an environment where all students, including homeless students, feel valued & empowered to contribute to school community.

- Authentic voices shared through podcasts can drive change, influencing educational policies to better address the needs of homeless students.

- Podcasts can raise awareness about homelessness, challenge misconceptions, & foster support for homeless students, promoting equity & inclusion.

How Students Benefit From Student Podcasting

- Podcasting projects create a sense of belonging among homeless students & become part of a supportive community where their voices are valued, connecting them with peers, teachers, & potentially a wider audience.

- Podcasting offers homeless students a creative & alternative mode of expression, making learning more enjoyable & meaningful, ultimately increasing student engagement & positively impacting their academic performance & overall school experience.

- Teaches them important 21st-century skills, including public speaking, storytelling, interviewing, writing, audio editing, & project management, which can be transferable to future educational & career opportunities.

Lessons Learned

- Start small to make projects or mini-projects successful.

- Offer a range of roles & opportunities such as hosting, interviewing, scripting, editing, or managing social media.

- Ensure every student has a meaningful role in the podcast.

- Address barriers to participation & offer flexibility, provide necessary resources, & accommodate individual needs.

- Designate a staff member to advocate for & champion the voices & needs of homeless students throughout the podcasting process.

- RELAX!

Want To Learn Even More About Podcasting & Student Voice?

➜ STUDENT VOICE BASICS & IDEA MENUS
➜ YOUTH VOICE AMPLIFIED PODCAST
➜ STUDENT VOICE & MULTIMEDIA
➜ STUDENT VOICE RESEARCH
➜ YOUTH LED EVENTS & CONFERENCES
➜ YOUTH AS TRAINERS
➜ YOUTH ADVISORY BOARDS
➜ STUDENT VOICE & BEST INTEREST DETERMINATIONS
➜ STUDENT VOICE COHORTS & TA
➜ STUDENT VOICE IN THE LCAP
➜ STUDENT VOICE EVALUATION TOOLS

HOMELESS INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS (HIP)

KCSOS — Kern County Superintendent of Schools

ABOUT · PROGRAMS & SERVICES · SCHOOLS · HUMAN RESOURCES · STUDENT EVENTS · KCBOE

In 2022, the KCSOS Foster & Homeless Education Program applied for and was awarded the Homeless Innovative Programs (HIP) Grant from the California Department of Education to develop innovative practices that can be studied, adapted, and shared statewide, demonstrating the LEA's implementation of the EHCY Program authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Per CDE, "The purpose of the HIP grant is to identify innovative practices previously implemented and aligned with the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title 42 of the United States Code, Section 11431 et seq.) to improve the educational stability, access, support, and academic achievement of children and youth experiencing homelessness. To be eligible for HIP funding, LEAs must demonstrate that they have previously developed and implemented innovative practice(s) that support students experiencing homelessness, which can be shared statewide."

KCSOS Foster & Homeless Education Program was awarded the HIP grant for student voice projects. Student voice projects are instrumental in ensuring student engagement and lowering rates of chronic absenteeism & high school dropout rates for McKinney-Vento students. During the 2022-2023 school year, HIP grants are to be expanded upon within the awarded LEAs. In the 2023-2024 school year, awardees are to teach out their best practices at various conferences to other LEAs.

Kern's HIP grant falls under the following HIP target activities:

▸ Demonstrating increased educational outcomes in a variety of ways, including academic progress, attendance, student engagement, graduation rates, attendance, and social-emotional well-being;
▸ Implementing professional development for other educators and stakeholders, within or beyond the LEA as well as within the community

What is Student Voice?

Student Voice is the practice of educators intentionally, purposefully, and systematically eliciting student viewpoints on a specific topic for improvement purposes.

For more information about the Kern County Student Voice HIP Grant, please contact Curt Williams, Director of the Foster & Homeless Education Program at cuwilliams@kern.org or Allyson Baptiste, Prevention Specialist of the Foster & Homeless Education Program at albaptiste@kern.org.

Visit our Schools Amplifying Youth Voice (SAY) website at www.kern.org/hip

Have Questions? Need More Information?

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Happy Podcasting!