



Homeless Education and Community Schools: A Primer on Pillar Alignment

This HETAC primer explores alignment of the [Education for Homeless Children and Youths \(EHCY\) Program](#) and the [Community Schools \(CS\) strategy](#) across the four CS pillars. This primer serves as a summary companion piece to the HETAC’s [Homeless Education and Community Schools: A Crosswalk of Partnership Opportunities](#) tip sheet.

EHCY Program	CS Strategy
Pillar 1: Integrated Student Supports	
<p>Under federal and California law, schools must provide integrated supports for students experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing barriers: State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) must review and revise any laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the full school participation of students experiencing homelessness, including participation in academic and extracurricular activities. • Referring to services: LEAs must ensure that students and families experiencing homelessness receive referrals to needed services, including health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate services. • Training: LEAs must train school personnel on the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness and the effects of homelessness and trauma on these students’ education and well-being. 	<p style="text-align: center;">About CS Pillar 1</p> <p>Community schools provide integrated student supports focused on students’ educational and life success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They pay explicit attention to students’ social and emotional development as well as their academic learning, recognizing that they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. • They provide and coordinate a range of on-site services and supports to overcome both academic and nonacademic barriers to students’ educational and life success. • Common services and supports include medical, dental, and mental health care services; tutoring and other academic supports; and resources for families, such as parent education classes, job training and placement services, housing assistance, and nutrition programs. • Community schools’ integrated student supports also may include conflict resolution training, trauma-informed care, and restorative practices to support mental health and lessen conflict, bullying, and punitive school disciplinary actions.
Pillar 2: Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities	
<p>Under federal and California law, schools must provide expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities for students experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate enrollment and full school participation: LEAs must ensure that students experiencing homelessness who meet relevant program eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic, extracurricular, and summer school activities. • Priority enrollment in state expanded learning programs: Students experiencing homelessness must be prioritized for enrollment in California’s After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program and Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP). ASES and ELOP sites that charge fees must waive them for students experiencing homelessness. 	<p style="text-align: center;">About CS Pillar 2</p> <p>Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities are essential to schools’ capacity to support students’ academic growth, as well as to help them develop socially, emotionally, and physically. In addition to supporting rich, student-focused instruction in classrooms, community schools provide students with as much as one-third more learning time during which they experience arts, physical activity, small group or individualized academic support, and hands-on learning activities across a range of subject areas.</p>

Pillar 3: Active Family and Community Engagement

Under federal law, schools support family and community engagement to assist students experiencing homelessness.

- **Parent involvement:** LEAs must ensure that the parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children’s education.
- **Early care and education programming:** LEAs must ensure that children and families experiencing homelessness have access to and receive early care and educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other LEA-administered preschool programs.

[About CS Pillar 3](#)

Active family and community engagement is essential to fostering trusting and respectful partnerships.

- Community schools build the capacity of all stakeholders and the school by creating empowered decision-making processes and leveraging local resources and expertise to address educational inequities.
- Community schools prioritize meaningful and ongoing engagement with families and community partners and establish the systems, structures, and supports to make this happen.
- Engagement can take many forms, including partnering with parents to develop and promote a vision for student success; offering activities for parents and community members; and creating structures and opportunities for shared leadership.

Pillar 4: Collaborative Leadership and Practices

Under federal and California law, schools support collaborative leadership and practices.

- **Professional development and technical assistance:** LEAs must ensure that school personnel providing services to students and families experiencing homelessness receive professional development at least annually on the LEA’s homeless education program policies and recognizing signs that students are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- **Shared responsibility:** Multiple federal education programs require partnership across SEAs and LEAs to ensure that the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness are met, including [Title I, Part A; career and technical education](#); and [special education](#).

[About CS Pillar 4](#)

Collaborative leadership and practices provide the relational “glue” that connects and reinforces the other CS pillars, making it foundational and critical for the success of a community school strategy. Under this pillar, parents, students, teachers, principals, and community partners build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility. Examples of this pillar include professional development and technical assistance, site-based leadership teams, and teacher learning communities.

Learn more about the EHCY program—including a full list of the educational rights of and supports available to students experiencing homelessness—by visiting the HETAC’s [Educational Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness webpage](#). Learn more about the CS strategy—including the four key conditions for learning, four cornerstone commitments, and four proven practices—by downloading CDE’s [California Community Schools Framework](#) for more information. *(Note: This file will download as a Microsoft Word document.)*



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