BEST PRACTICES FOR COURT HEARINGS REGARDING GRADUATION (HEARINGS HELD FOR HIGH SCHOOL AGED YOUTH)

Before Every Court Hearing

STEP 1

Transcript Request: ERH/CSW/PO send a Requesting Education Records: Step-by-Step Guide to the youth's school for an up-to-date copy of the youth's transcript, current course schedule, graduation check, and district graduation requirements. See "Requesting Education Records: Step-by-Step Guide" of the **Court Companion Toolkit**, **ERH Checklist**, **CSW/PO Checklist**.

STEP 2

Determine Graduation Status: ERH/CSW/PO determine whether the youth is on track for high school graduation by identifying whether they have earned the number of credits typically required at that school.[21] If the youth has failed more than one class per school year and not made up the credits in summer school, the youth is at risk of being off track for high school graduation. **See High School Graduation Check.** Other college preparatory suggestions can be found in **California College Pathway's College Guide**.

STEP 3

Off Track Youth: If the youth is off track for high school graduation, the ERH meets with the youth to identify their barriers to success and creates a plan for accessing necessary services to help the youth be successful in school. The ERH reports this plan to the CSW/PO.

STEP 4

AB 167/216 Graduation: ERH/CSW/PO identify whether the youth has transferred schools after completing their second year of high school. A youth has completed their second year of high school if two school years have passed since they first enrolled in the 9th grade. If the youth has transferred schools after completing their second year of high school, determine whether the youth, ERH, and CSW/PO have received written notification of whether the youth is AB 167/216 eligible within 30 days of enrollment. If not, send **Uniform Complaint Procedures Act Complaint Form.**

STEP 5

Best Interest Determination: If the youth is eligible, the ERH and the youth should discuss whether it is in the youth's best interests to accept or decline AB 167/216 graduation.

STEP 6

College Preparation: If the youth is on track for high school graduation and a senior, ERH/CSW/PO assist youth in: (1) completing the FAFSA; (2) touring colleges; (3) completing college applications and/or entrance examination requirements (e.g., community college placement test; SAT/ACT); and (4) exploring additional scholarship options. See **Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth**.

STEP 7

Preparing Court Report: ERH and CSW/PO confer about youth's education needs as it relates to their graduation status. The CSW/PO includes information regarding graduation in the court report and makes any necessary recommendations (e.g., if the youth should have but has not yet received their AB 167/216 graduation notification letter, the CSW/PO could recommend that the court order the youth's school district to provide the letter). **See CSW/PO Court Report Language.**



[21]Most schools in California expect students to earn 30 credits during each semester (60 credits per year) although some schools have different credit accumulation schemes. Completing this step may require consultation with the youth's guidance counselor.



At Every Court Hearing

STEP 1

ERH Attends Hearing: When appropriate, ERH attends court hearing to discuss graduation needs of the youth.

STEP 2

Parties Inform Court: Attorney for Parent, Attorney for Youth, and Attorney for County Placing Agency provide all necessary information to the court about the youth's graduation status and any barriers to success. **See Attorney for Parent Checklist, Attorney for Youth Checklist**.

STEP 3

Court Inquires About Graduation Status of Youth: Court inquires about the youth's graduation status including whether or not the youth: (1) is on track for high school graduation; (2) if necessary, is receiving any academic support services; (3) has access to A-G, Honors/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate, or CTE courses; (4) has transferred schools after completing their second year of high school; (5) has received their AB 167/216 eligibility notification within 30 days of enrollment; (6) has an ERH who has made a best interest decision about utilizing the AB 167/216 graduation option; (7) has completed the FAFSA, toured colleges, submitted college applications (for high school seniors only); (8) has explored vocational/employment options; and/or (9) has any need for additional funds for graduation-related activities. **See Judge's Checklist.**

STEP 4

Court Orders Regarding Graduation: Court makes any orders necessary to ensure the youth has the services necessary to get back on track for high school graduation or stays on track for high school graduation, including having meaningful access to college and work preparatory courses.

After Every Court Hearing

ERH/CSW/PO follows up on any court orders. This can include requesting AB 167/216 Certification using the **Uniform Complaint Procedures Act Complaint Form**.