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NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solano County Office of Education Receives Grant to Support Homeless Students

Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson announced that the Solano County Office of Education has been awarded a grant of \$37,638.06 by the California Department of Education in support of homeless students. Training will be offered to local school districts to increase awareness among school staff and ensure consistent and effective practices throughout Solano County regarding the identification of homeless students and available resources to meet their needs.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is federal legislation originally passed in 1987 and reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2016. The purpose of the Act is to guarantee that homeless students have the same access to education as other students. In compliance with McKinney-Vento, every school district designates a Homeless Education Liaison responsible for coordinating and facilitating services to homeless children.

Under the Act, students are identified as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence. They may share housing due to economic hardship or natural disaster; reside in substandard housing; reside in motels, hotels, shelters, or trailer parks that are inadequate for residency; or reside in public or private places not designated for sleeping such as cars, parks, and abandoned buildings. In addition, McKinney-Vento applies to foster youth awaiting emergency placement, migratory children who qualify under the above criteria, unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, and those who lack adequate nighttime residency.

Addressing the educational needs of homeless students continues to be an area of focus for the Solano County Office of Education. Using the above criteria, local school districts identified 1,545 homeless students during the 2016-17 school year. Superintendent Estrella-Henderson commented, “Supporting homeless students is a priority for all educators in our school districts, and, through this grant, the Solano County Office of Education will be able to continue supporting schools in their efforts to identify all homeless youth and provide them with the services they need.”

According to the 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, California had 118,242 homeless people last year; 20,482 were families with children experiencing homelessness, and 11,222 were unaccompanied homeless children and youth, 8,691 of whom were unsheltered.

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