

Article IX.D.1. Continuity of Education for Homeless Students

A. Statement of Policy

The Board of Education of Granite School District (Board) is committed to providing homeless students the same access to educational opportunities as all other students. The Board recognizes the importance of removing barriers for homeless students to enroll and participate in school. This policy is intended to be a tool to preserve continuity of education.

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless students are entitled to immediate enrollment and full participation even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, birth certificate, immunizations, or other documentation (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(C) and (g)(1)(H), (I)).

B. Definitions

1. “Homeless child” or “homeless children” refers to children and youths who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence including:
  - a. children who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in a motel, hotel, camping trailer, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - b. children who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; and
  - c. children who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
2. “School of origin” is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
3. “Unaccompanied child” refers to homeless children and youths who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

C. School Procedures

1. The Granite School District (District) shall make information regarding the McKinney-Vento Act, including application forms, available to children and parents.
2. School personnel shall help identify students who may be eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act by recognizing the signs of homelessness. If

there is an eligibility question, it should be reported to the district homeless education liaison without delay to determine eligibility.

3. Caretakers of an unaccompanied child shall be allowed to make decisions for and provide consent on behalf of the unaccompanied child for any school related services or activities.
4. Homeless children shall be enrolled in school immediately. Homeless children should not be unenrolled for unexcused absences without first consulting with the homeless education liaison.
  - a. Homeless children shall not be excluded from a school based on an inability to present the following:
    - i. birth certificate;
    - ii. proof of residence;
    - iii. guardianship records;
    - iv. previous school records or transcripts;
    - v. immunization records;
    - vi. other medical records, insofar as these are necessary for enrollment; and/or
    - vii. other documents ordinarily required for enrollment.
  - b. The school and the district homeless education liaison will assist the student in obtaining the required records after enrollment.
5. Schools may enroll an unaccompanied high school student without an adult present with permission of the homeless education liaison. The student must provide contact information of a trusted adult as an emergency contact. The school shall alert the liaison immediately of an unaccompanied student to ensure the student is safe and has basic needs met.

D. Enrollment

1. Students shall be permitted to continue in the school of origin, to the extent feasible, except if doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent, guardian, or caretaker;
  - a. Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed.
  - b. If a student becomes homeless between academic years, he or she can continue attending the school of origin for the following school year.
2. If it is not feasible for a homeless child to continue in the school attended prior to becoming homeless, or continued attendance in that school is contrary to the wishes of the child's parent, guardian, or caretaker, the homeless child may attend the boundary school in the area in which the child is currently living.
3. The school in which a homeless child enrolls becomes the child's school of residence. Absent a new physical relocation, further transfers are subject to open

enrollment procedures. Exceptions may be made by a homeless education liaison if the liaison determines an exception is in the best interest of the student.

E. Assistance

1. Homeless students will be granted the same participation in school activities and programs as their non-homeless peers.
2. Schools should refer homeless children to the district homeless education liaison for assistance. Such assistance may include:
  - a. clothing, shoes, hygiene items, fee waivers, school supplies, and free lunch;
  - b. tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services linked to the achievement of the same academic content standards and student academic achievement standards the state establishes for other children;
  - c. waiver of all previous school fees when a student is designated McKinney-Vento;
  - d. expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children, such as assessments for programs and services (e.g., gifted and talented, children with disabilities, limited English language proficiency, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar state or local programs, vocational and technical education, and school nutrition);
  - e. referral services for medical, dental, mental, and other health services;
  - f. assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for children not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding, to enable children to attend the school selected for enrollment;
  - g. developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding for preschool-aged homeless children;
  - h. services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and unaccompanied youths in public schools;
  - i. payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records to enroll homeless children in school, including birth certificates, immunization or medical records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services;
  - j. education and training to the parents of homeless children about the rights of and resources available to such children;
  - k. coordination between schools and local agencies providing services to homeless children;
  - l. expedited special education assessments and services; and
  - m. any other emergency assistance that can be reasonably provided to enable homeless children to attend school.

F. Dispute Resolution

1. The Family and Community Engagement Department will develop procedures consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act to resolve disputes which may arise under this policy. This shall include procedures for convening an ad-hoc committee of district personnel with expertise in the areas of specific circumstances in the situation of the child seeking homeless designation or other area of dispute.
2. In a dispute over eligibility the homeless education liaison shall provide written notification of the decision to the child or the child's parent, guardian, or caretaker. The homeless education liaison will convene an ad-hoc committee of district personnel with responsibility regarding the circumstances of the child's case.
3. The homeless education liaison will assist the school and the student in case of dispute or a rejected application. Parents, guardians, and caretakers may appeal decisions to the USBE, and the homeless education liaison shall facilitate any appeals.
4. The child must be enrolled and fully attending at their preferred school until the dispute is resolved.

**REFERENCES**

42 USC §11431 *et seq.*, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

34 CFR §300.19, Homeless Children

Utah Code §80-5-602, Homeless Youth

Utah Admin. Code, R277-616, Education for Homeless and Emancipated Students

**FORMS**

**McKinney-Vento Assistance Questionnaire**

English – <https://www.graniteschools.org/edequity/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/11/McKinney-Vento-Request-Form.pdf>

Spanish – <https://www.graniteschools.org/edequity/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/11/Cuestionario-Mckinney-Vento-Espan%CC%83ol-2020.pdf>