

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

A. Statement of Policy

The Board of Education is committed to providing homeless children equal access to educational opportunities as all other children. The Board recognizes the importance of removing barriers for homeless students to enroll and participate in school in order to continue their education despite homelessness. 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, or other documentation (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C) and (g)(1)(H), (I)).

B. Definitions

1. “Homeless child” or “homeless children” means a child or children 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 motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - 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;
 - c. children who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - d. migratory children who qualify as homeless for one of the reasons listed in this subsection.
2. “Unaccompanied child” or “unaccompanied youth” means a homeless child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

C. School Procedures

1. The district shall make information regarding the McKinney-Vento Act, including application forms, available to children and parents.
2. Upon receipt of a homeless application, school administrators shall review the application to determine whether the child is a homeless child. If there is an

eligibility question, schools shall enlist the assistance of the district homeless education liaison.

3. Qualifying homeless students should be enrolled immediately.
4. The district homeless education liaison should be contacted without delay to assist students asserting unaccompanied youth status.
5. A homeless child should continue in the school the child attended prior to becoming homeless.
6. 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 or guardian, the homeless child may attend:
 - a. The school the child most recently attended or
 - b. The public school that non-homeless children who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend.
7. 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 window and special permit procedures.
8. Homeless students will be granted the same participation in school activities and programs as their non-homeless peers. They are not to be excluded based on their inability to present the following information:
 - a. Birth certificate
 - b. Proof of residence
 - c. Guardianship records
 - d. Previous school records or transcripts
 - e. Immunization records
 - f. Other medical records, insofar as these are necessary for enrollment
 - g. Other documents ordinarily required for enrollment
9. The school and the district homeless education liaison will assist the student to obtain the required records after enrollment.
10. School principals should refer homeless children to the district homeless education liaison to provide assistance. Such assistance may include:

- a. The provision of tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services that are linked to the achievement of the same challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards the State establishes for other children.
- b. The provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (such as educational programs for gifted and talented students, children with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency, services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, programs in vocational and technical education, and school nutrition programs).
- c. Professional development and other activities for educators and student services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children, the rights of such children, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless.
- d. The provision of referral services to homeless children for medical, dental, mental, and other health services.
- e. The provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for children not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable children to attend the school selected for enrollment.
- f. The provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, for preschool-aged homeless children.
- g. The provision of services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children, and unaccompanied youths, in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children.
- h. The provision for homeless children of before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs in which tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities are provided.
- i. If necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary 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. The provision of education and training to the parents of homeless children about the rights of, and resources available to, such children.
- k. The development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children.
- l. The provision of student services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services.
- m. Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children that may arise from domestic violence.
- n. The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities made available under 42 U.S.C. § 11432(a)(2).
- o. The provision of school supplies, including those supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations.
- p. The provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children to attend school.

D. Dispute Resolution

1. The Division of School Services will develop procedures consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act to resolve disputes which may arise under this policy. This shall include procedures for convening ad-hoc committees 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 the event of a dispute over eligibility or other area, the school administrator shall provide written notification of the decision to the child or the child's parent or guardian and refer the matter to district homeless education liaison for resolution. School Services will convene an ad-hoc committee of district personnel with responsibility regarding the circumstances of each child's case.
3. The homeless education liaison will assist the school and the student in case of dispute or a disapproved application.
4. The child must be enrolled until the dispute is resolved.