

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Background

The McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act (the "Act") provides, at Subchapter VI, Part C, Subtitle B, entitled Education for Homeless Children and Youths, that it is the policy of Congress that state educational agencies shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define various terms found in the Act related to homeless youths and to outline the District's responsibilities with respect to homeless students.

Definitions

"Homeless Children and Youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes: (1) children and youths 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 or are abandoned in hospitals; (2) children and youths 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; (3) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; (4) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (1) through (3); and (5) "Unaccompanied Homeless Youth".

"School of Origin" means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

"Unaccompanied Homeless Youth" means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

"Homeless Student Liaison" is the person(s) designated by the Superintendent as the District contact for students in homeless situations.

Policy

1. The Local Education Agency (LEA) shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. 42 U.S.C. Section 11431. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. Section 11432 (g)(3)(A) indicates that the LEA shall, according to the child's best interest:
 - a. Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or

- b. For the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
 - c. Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
2. In determining the best interest of the child or youth, the LEA will:
 - a. To the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian;
 - b. Provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the LEA sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and
 - c. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the Homeless Student Liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal.
3. The selected school shall immediately enroll the child or youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.
4. At the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth the Homeless Student Liaison), homeless students are entitled to transportation to and from their school of origin. If the homeless student continues to live in the area served by the local education agency in which the school of origin is located, that local education agency must provide or arrange transportation. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another local education agency, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the local education agency of origin and the local education agency in which the student is now living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the local education agencies cannot agree upon a method of apportionment, the responsibility and costs of transportation must be shared equally.
5. The Superintendent shall appoint a District Homeless Student Liaison. The Homeless Student Liaison shall act in accordance with the expectations outlined in the Basic Education Circular (BEC) – "Education for Homeless Youth".
6. The District shall comply with Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act) which mandates that funds be reserved to serve homeless children. Title I states, "A local educational agency shall reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools funded under this part to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live."

7. Homeless and migrant children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

Administrative Responsibility

1. The Superintendent shall appoint a District Homeless Student Liaison.
2. It is the responsibility of the Administration to implement and enforce this policy, and to develop Administrative Procedures for implementation or enforcement where necessary.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to the public and to all school district personnel, students and parents.

Adopted: January 17, 2005
Revised October 21, 2013
Revised November 21, 2016