

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN



There is a large body of research documenting the negative effects of involuntary school transfers on a student's academic achievement. We know that with each school change a student can lose four to six months of academic progress. Families experiencing homelessness are highly mobile, causing students to change schools 2 to 3 times a year. These students can find themselves a year or more behind in no time. Students with multiple school changes have also been found to have lower test scores and academic performance overall. In order to mitigate these negative effects, the McKinney-Vento Act places great importance on school stability.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- School stability under the McKinney-Vento Act means a student's right to continue attending his/her school of origin regardless of their area of residency.
- 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.
 - In CA, a school attended in the prior 15 months which may not be last enrolled but where the student feels a connection may be deemed the school of origin. EDC §48852.7 (f)(2)
- School districts must presume that keeping a student experiencing homelessness in his or her school of origin is in their best interest, unless it is against the express wishes of the parent or guardian.
 - Schools must also give priority to the wishes of an unaccompanied youth.
- The student may remain in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness. He or she may also remain in their school of origin for the remainder of any academic year in which he or she becomes permanently housed.
 - In CA, a high school student may remain in their school of origin until graduation, even after becoming housed. EDC §48852.7 (b)(1)
- If a student is sent to a school other than one requested by a parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and of his or her right to appeal.

Students experiencing homelessness also have the choice to enroll in the local school serving students in the attendance area where they are currently spending their nights. District homeless liaisons are responsible for assisting **unaccompanied youth** in making the decision on which school to attend and enrolling in school.

HELPFUL RESOURCE

Issue Brief on School Selection: https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/school_selection.pdf