

Students Experiencing Homelessness: Enrollment Rights and Services

The District will work with students experiencing homelessness as defined by the federal McKinney Vento Act and their families , to provide equal access to the same free, appropriate education (including preschool education) given to other students. The District will identify students experiencing homelessness, including students not currently attending school. The District will enroll these students and remove barriers to their academic success. The District will also make sure that students experiencing homelessness are not treated differently or moved into a separate school or separate program within a school based on their homeless status.

Students experiencing homelessness will receive district services for which they are eligible, including comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education services, multi-lingual education, career and technical education programs, advanced learning and school nutrition programs.

The definition of homelessness is lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those students who are:

- A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship, or similar reason;
- B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation;
- F. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; or
- G. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The superintendent will select a staff person to be the District's liaison for students experiencing homelessness and their families. The liaison may simultaneously serve as a coordinator for other federal programs, given that they are able to carry out the duties listed in the procedure that goes along with this policy.

The principal of each elementary, middle, and high school building will establish a point of contact for students experiencing homelessness and their families. The point of contact is responsible for identifying youth who are experiencing homelessness or unaccompanied and connecting them with the district's homeless student liaison. The district's homeless student liaison is responsible for necessary training and resources for the building points of contact.

Best interest determination

In deciding which school is in the student's best interest to attend, the District will assume that it is in the student's best interest to remain enrolled in their school of origin, unless such enrollment is against the wishes of a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Attendance options will be made available to families experiencing homelessness on the same terms

as families residing in the District, including attendance rights acquired by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, and intra and inter-district choice options.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian will be informed of the District's decision and the reasons therefore, (or informed if the student does not qualify for McKinney-Vento, if related) and their appeal rights in writing and in the language they can understand. The District's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state policy.

Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school will immediately enroll the student, according to District policies. However, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document needed for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address or other documentation, or denied or delayed due to missed application deadlines or fees, fines, or absences at a previous school.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student will be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to get current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the District liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school will be requested from the previous school according to District policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with District policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary. However, emergency contact information cannot be demanded in a form or manner that creates a barrier to enrollment and/or attendance at school.

Students experiencing homelessness are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a student experiencing homelessness is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this District, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally, as required by state law.

The District's liaison for homeless students and their families will coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to children, young people and their families experiencing homelessness; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters and food banks. The notice must be disseminated in a manner and form that parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth receiving services can understand, including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in their native language. The District's liaison will also review and recommend changes to District policies and procedures that may act as barriers to the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness and will participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities, as determined by the state-level OSPI coordinator for children experiencing homelessness.

Facilitating on-time grade level progression

The District will:

- 1.) Waive specific courses needed for graduation for students experiencing homelessness if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district; or
- 2.) Provide reasonable justification for denial of the waiver.

In the event the District denies a waiver and the student would have qualified to graduate from their sending school district, the District will provide a different process of getting the needed coursework so that the student may graduate on time.

The District will group together partial credit, unresolved or incomplete coursework and will provide students experiencing homelessness with opportunities to accrue credit in a manner that eliminates academic and nonacademic barriers for the student.

For students who have been unable to complete an academic course and receive full credit due to withdrawal or transfer, the District will grant partial credit for coursework completed before the date of the withdrawal or transfer. When the District receives a transfer student in these conditions, it will accept the student's partial credits, apply them to the student's academic progress or graduation or both, and allow the student to earn credits regardless of the student's date of enrollment in the District.

In the event a student is transferring at the beginning of, or during, their junior or senior year of high school and has met the graduation requirements of the sending district, but has not met the requirements of the Bellevue School District, the McKinney-Vento Liaison will work with the sending district to make sure the student will be awarded a diploma from the sending district.

In the event a student enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student, has met state requirements, has moved to the District, but is ineligible to graduate from the District after all alternatives have been considered, the District will waive its local requirements and issue a diploma.

Informed consent for healthcare

Informed consent for healthcare on behalf of a student experiencing homelessness may be obtained from a school nurse, school counselor, or homeless student liaison when:

- a. Consent is necessary for non-emergency, outpatient, primary care services, including physical examinations, vision examinations and eyeglasses, dental examinations, hearing examinations and hearing aids, immunizations, treatments for illnesses and conditions, and routine follow-up care customarily provided by a health care provider in an outpatient setting, excluding elective surgeries.
- b. The student meets the definition of a "homeless child or youth" under the federal McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance improvements act of 2001; and
- c. The student is not under the supervision or control of a parent, custodian, or legal guardian, and is not in the care and custody of the Department of Social and Health Services.

Upon the request by a health care facility or a health care provider, a district employee authorized to consent to care must provide to the person rendering care a signed and dated declaration stating under penalty of perjury that the employee is a school nurse, school counselor, or homeless student liaison and that the minor patient meet the requirements of RCW 7.70.065 (2) (b) listed above in this policy.

The district and district employee authorized to consent to care under this policy are not subject to administrative sanctions or civil damages resulting from the consent or non-consent for care or payment for care. Any declaration required by a health care facility, or a health care provider described in the above

paragraph must include written notice that the district employee is exempt from administrative sanctions and civil liability resulting from the consent or non-consent for care or payment for care.

Access to Academics and Extracurricular Activities

The superintendent will establish procedures to make sure that that students experiencing homelessness and meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic programs including but not limited to summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement and online learning. Also, outstanding fines, fees or absences must not present barriers to enrollment or participation in extra and co-curricular activities for students who qualify for support through this policy. Local liaisons will assist students experiencing homelessness with activities, such as enrolling in school and accessing school services, including free meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, the Fee Waiver Program, and approved co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in accordance with District policies and procedures through the district or one of its partner agencies and organizations.

The superintendent will use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness including posting information on the district’s website).

Cross

References:

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| Board Policy | 0130 | Equity and Accountability |
| | 2410 | Graduation Requirements |
| | 2420 | Grading and Progress Reporting |
| | 3120 | Enrollment |
| | 3116 | Students in Foster Care |
| | 3231 | Student Records |
| | 3413 | Student Immunization and Life-Threatening Conditions |
| | 3520 | Student Fees, Fines, Charges and Refunds |
| | 2150 | Co-Curricular Programs |
| | 2151 | Interscholastic Athletics and Activities |
| | 2320 | Field Trips |
| | 4218 | Language Access |
| | RCW 28A.320.142 | Unaccompanied youth – Building Point of contact – Duty of District |
| | 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. | McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act |
| | RCW 28A.225.215 | Enrollment of children without legal residences |
| | RCW 28A.320.145 | Support of homeless students |
| | 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. | Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) |

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Bellevue School District

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