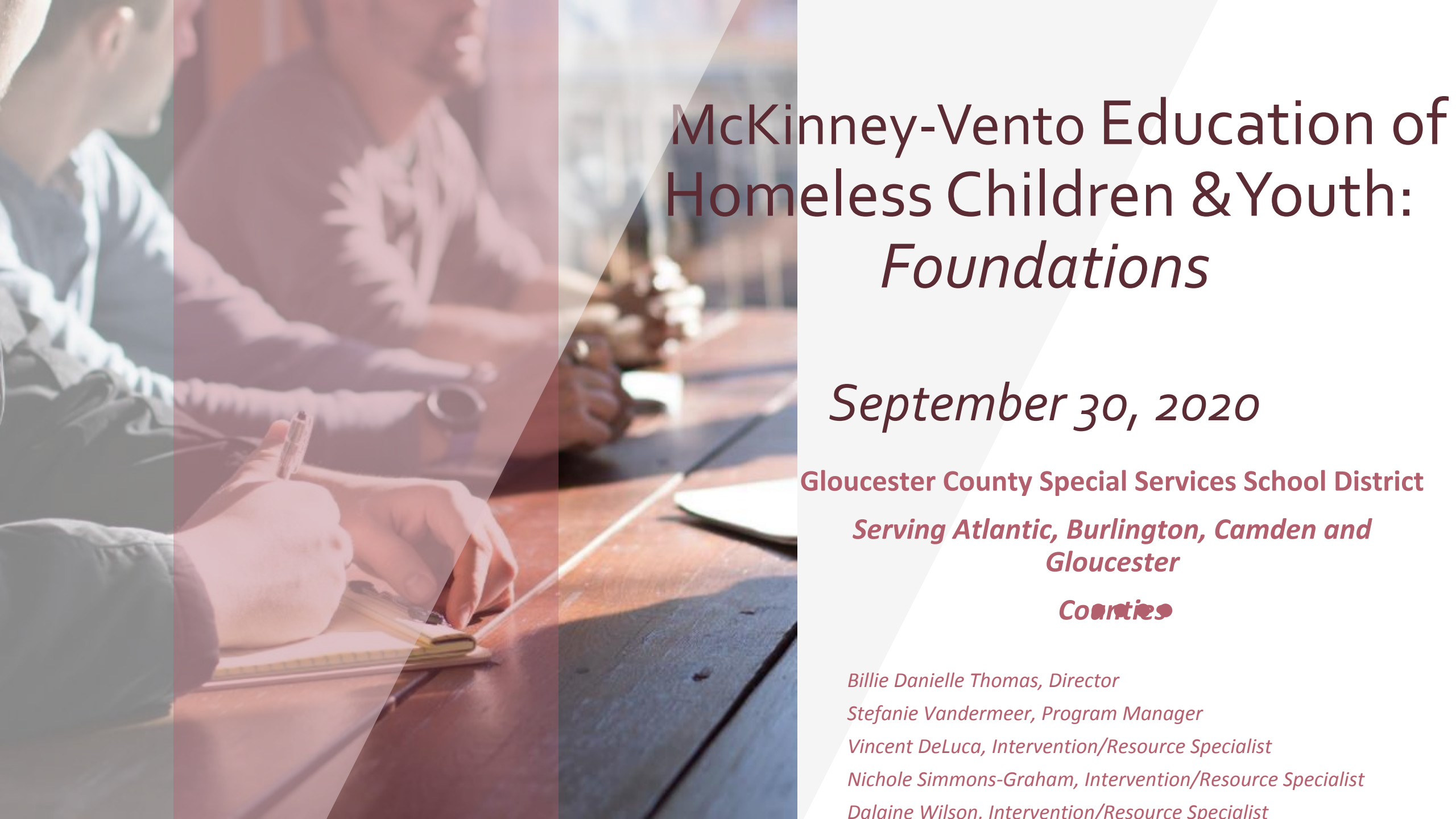




McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children & Youth: *Foundations*

September 30, 2020

Gloucester County Special Services School District

***Serving Atlantic, Burlington, Camden and
Gloucester***

Counties

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What is McKinney-Vento?

- The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that seeks to ensure the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school.
- Amended to widen protections in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Designed to ensure school success for children and youth experiencing homelessness, and mitigate challenges faced when enrolling in and attending school.





OUR GOALS

To broaden participant understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act and make sure that information and resources are provided in ensuring district compliance.

To clarify the educational rights and protections for children and youth who are experiencing homelessness.

Who is considered McKinney-Vento eligible (homeless)?

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless for educational purposes.

Definitions

- Fixed-one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change (finite)
- Regular-one which is used on a constant, reoccurring basis (nightly)
- Adequate-one that is sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments (electricity, running water, feelings of security)

Common McKinney-Vento Living Situations

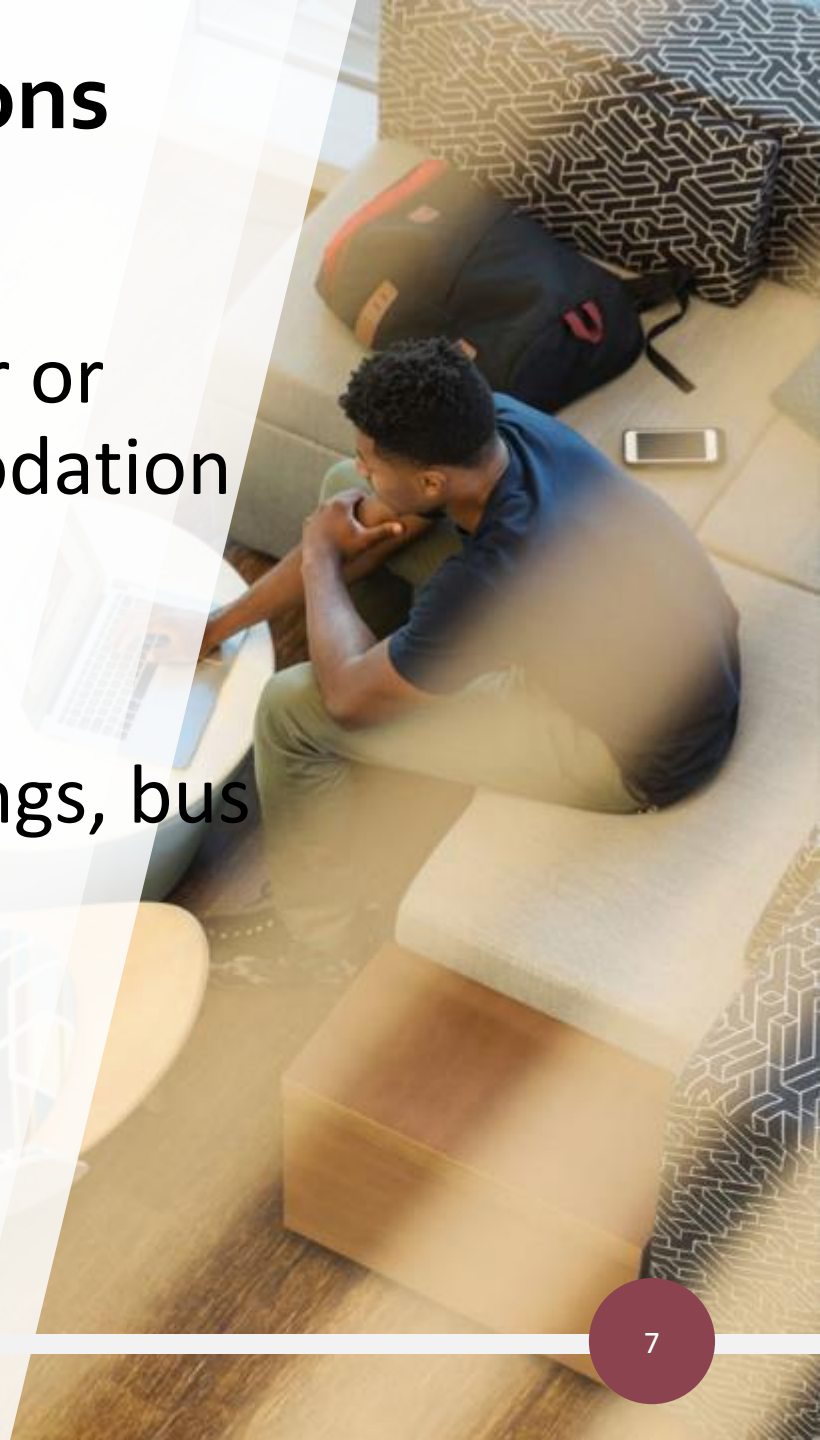
- Living with others out of necessity (doubled up housing)
- Motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds (due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations)
- Emergency, domestic violence or transitional shelters
- Hospitals (after being abandoned)



Common McKinney-Vento Living Situations

- Primary nighttime residences not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (storage facility units)
- Cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or similar settings

Determination of eligibility **MUST** be made on a case-by-case basis.



Common Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing/evictions
- Adolescent runaways/abandonment
- Low income/unemployment/lack of skills
- Health & mental health problems
- Domestic abuse & violence, family dysfunction
- Lack of safe & stable living environment
- Physical/sexual/emotional abuse by a parent or guardian
- Parent or guardian alcohol/drug addiction
- Natural disasters

Common Signs of Homelessness

- Numerous absences/erratic attendance
- Regular tardiness
- Lack of continuity in education (periods of not attending school)
- Enrollment at many different schools
- Inability to produce records needed for enrollment (birth certificate, immunization records, etc.)
- Gaps in skill development (overage for grade)

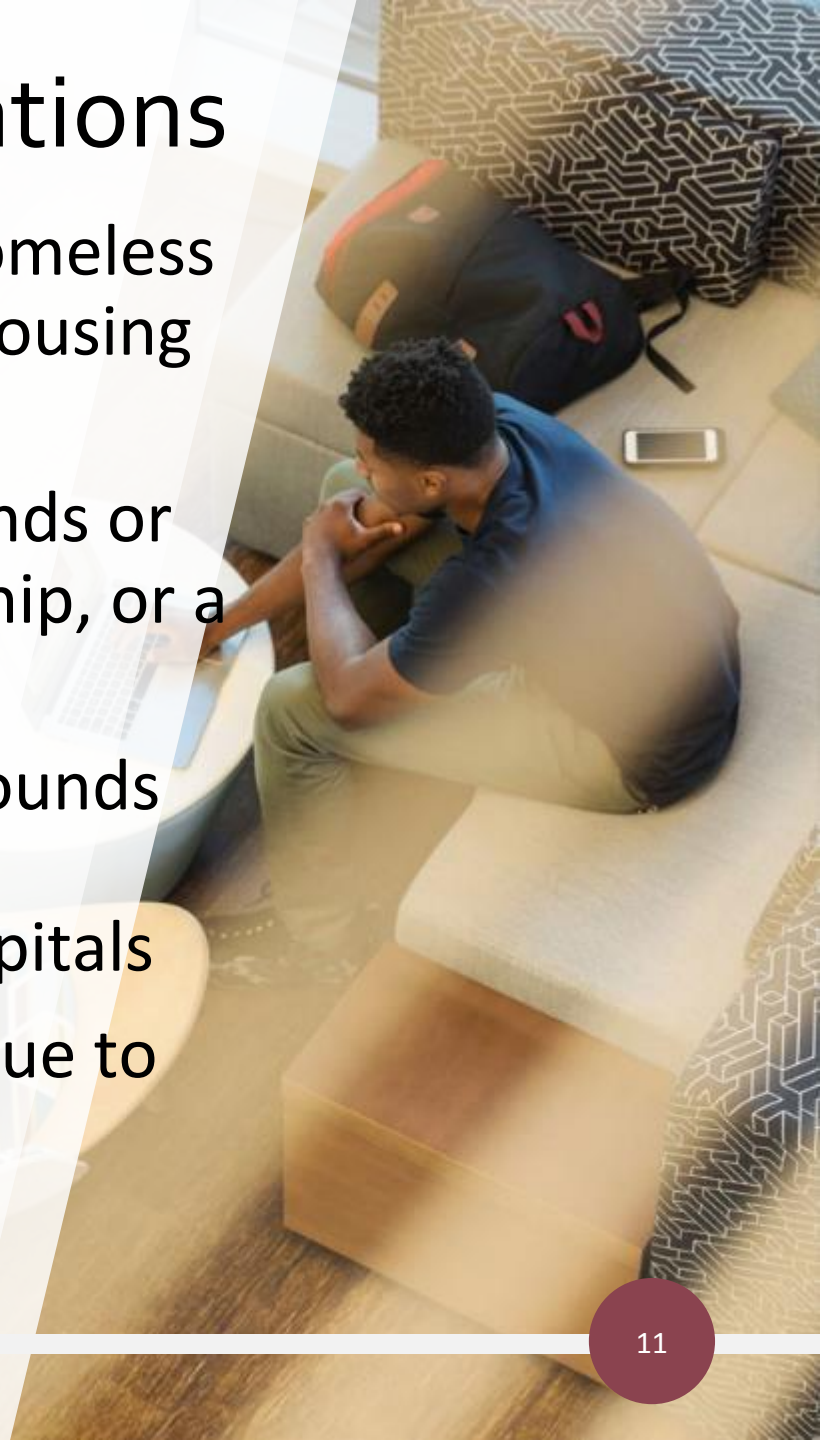


Common Signs of Homelessness

- Poor hygiene
- Lack of clean clothing
- Lack of basic school supplies/ unprepared for instruction
- Incomplete or missing homework
- Heightened concern over personal belongings
- Inability to concentrate
- Excessive fatigue
- Frequent illness leading to excessive absenteeism
- Inability to contact parents
- Avoid participating in school activities

McKinney-Vento Eligible Living Situations

- **Sheltered**-residing in temporary shelters, such as homeless shelter, domestic violence shelters, or transitional housing programs (i.e. Interfaith Hospitality Networks)
- **Doubled Up**-temporarily sharing the housing of friends or relatives due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- **Unsheltered**-living in abandoned buildings, campgrounds and vehicles, inadequate trailer parks, bus and train stations, substandard housing, or abandoned in hospitals
- **Hotel/Motel-temporarily** living in motels or hotels due to not having fixed, regular, or adequate living accommodations



McKinney-Vento Protections

The McKinney-Vento Act and N.J.A.C. 6A:17 **guarantee immediate school enrollment.**

Enrollment is completed at the time that need for enrollment is made known. All perceived barriers, including but not limited to the absence of school records, health/medical records, proof of residence, transportation etc., **should not preclude** prompt and immediate enrollment.



Options for School Enrollment

- **School of Origin** (presumptive option): The term “school of origin” means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed;
- **School of Temporary Residence**: The school designated for the attendance area in which the student currently resides. Students experiencing homelessness have the right to remain in their school of origin until the end of the academic year that they are permanently housed; or
- **School of Last Attendance**: The school in which the student last attended, if other than the school of origin or school of temporary residence.

Example: A family becomes displaced from District A. The family doubles up with relatives in District B and enrolls child in local school. After conflict, the relatives ask the family to leave. The Department of Social Services places the family in a transitional living facility in District C. Rather than enrolling the child in District C, the parents/guardians opt to keep the child enrolled in District B to minimize additional educational disruption.

This illustrates the **school of last attendance** option.

Protections Under the McKinney-Vento Act

- Transportation to and from the “school of attendance”
- Provision of appropriate support services, including gifted and talented, special education (if eligible), etc.
- Categorical eligibility for free school meals
- Expedited evaluations
- Access to LEA administered preschool programs, including Head Start
- Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

District McKinney-Vento Liaisons: The Connector

The role of the liaison includes but is not limited to ensuring:

- students are **IDENTIFIED** through outreach and coordination activities
- students are **ENROLLED** and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed
- families & students have **ACCESS** to and receive educational services they are eligible for (pre school, lunch program, special programs, etc.)
- families and students **RECEIVE** referrals to health, dental, mental, housing, and other appropriate services.

District McKinney-Vento Liaisons: The Connector

- parents/guardians are INFORMED of the educational and related opportunities available with meaningful opportunities to participate
- PUBLIC NOTICE of educational rights are displayed
- DISPUTES are mediated
- parents/guardians are fully informed of all TRANSPORTATION services and is assisted in accessing them

Support Services Offered by Gloucester County SSSD

- Advocacy and support services for students and families
- Supplemental transportation
- School supplies (backpacks), uniforms
- Supplemental instruction (tutoring)
- Trainings and activities to promote school, district, and community awareness

Support Services Offered by Gloucester County SSSD

- Parent meetings and informational sessions
- Collaboration with districts in the review and revision of policies that act as barriers to McKinney-Vento students
- Medical, dental, vision and mental health referrals
- Outreach to community agencies (food and clothing banks)
- Other

The “Why” to Support Services to McKinney-Vento Eligible Students

“Research shows that frequent school changes have a cumulative affect on students’ achievement that can place them as much as a year behind their peers.” (Kerbow,1996)

Students who are highly mobile are also at a greater risk of:

- Lower academic achievement (due to discontinuity of curriculum between schools)and twice as likely to repeat a grade
- Dropping out
- 3 times the rate of behavioral problems—anxiety/depression
- Get sick twice as often

The Numbers: McKinney-Vento Counts by County and Year

School Year	Atlantic County	Burlington County	Camden County	Gloucester County
2016-2017	631	911	1,352	612
2017-2018	708	987	1,639	716
2018-2019	741	1,054	1,482	765

THANK YOU

Gloucester County Special Services School District



Regional McKinney-Vento Project



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