

Students Experiencing Homelessness

The district will ensure that students experiencing homelessness are enrolled and receive the appropriate educational services. Our students experiencing homelessness will have access to services needed to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

District Homeless Liaison

The district homeless liaison will help to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school and receive the educational services for which they are eligible, including through Head Start, Early Intervention, and preschool services. The district's liaison will ensure that:

1. Students experiencing homelessness are identified;
2. Students experiencing homelessness are enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in district schools;
3. Families and students experiencing homelessness receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services;
4. Parents of students experiencing homelessness are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to the students and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students;
5. Public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness is distributed where such students receive services (e.g. schools, shelters, soup kitchens, public library);
6. The parent of the student experiencing homelessness, or any unaccompanied student, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected;
7. Enrollment disputes are mediated;
8. Record student names in the district's electronic student information system;
9. Track academic progress and attendance of students experiencing homelessness at least twice each term, with more frequent checks of progress for students not on track;
10. Inform an administrator of concerns regarding academic progress and attendance;

11. Develop and update annually the district web page information pertaining to the resources and information for children and youth experiencing homelessness;
12. Develop and update annually the information brochure to be included in registration packets and parent correspondence at the beginning of each school year;
13. School personnel, service providers and advocates working with students experiencing homelessness and their families are informed of the liaison duties.
14. A student shall be granted enrollment even if he or she has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of experiencing homelessness.
15. Coordinate and collaborate with the ODE state coordinator, community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to students experiencing homelessness.

All staff will participate in annual trainings on the duties and responsibilities of the district homeless liaison during the August inservice or shortly thereafter in a building level training. This inservice will include the definitions of students experiencing homelessness, appropriate procedures in identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness, reviewing the services provided to staff, students, and families as coordinated by the liaison, and the location of the Confidential Intake Forms and process for submission.

Identification of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

School personnel will submit a Confidential Intake Form (Appendix A) to the liaison whenever there is any reason to believe that a student may be considered as experiencing homelessness. Determinations of whether a child or youth is experiencing homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis by the district's homeless liaison.

Students that have been identified as experiencing homelessness will be flagged on the district's electronic student information system. This "flagging" will be accessible only to those that provide state reporting or monitoring academic success. At a minimum the liaison will monitor students' progress, grades and attendance quarterly.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines an experiencing homelessness individual as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youth who:

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; or, in the case of unaccompanied youth, lack a stable or safe living environment;
2. Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals; or

5. 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;
6. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
7. Migrant children and youth (as defined under NCLB Title IC - Migrant Education) who qualify as experiencing homelessness because they are living in circumstances described above.

School Placement Determinations

The district will immediately enroll the student in the school selected even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. The district will pay fees and costs associated with tracking, obtaining and transferring records necessary for the enrollment of homeless children and youth in the school. The records may include birth certificates, guardianship records, immunization records, academic records and evaluations of children and youth experiencing homelessness determining eligibility for other programs and services.

The district shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. The liaison shall enroll each homeless child or youth in the school determined to be in the child's or youth's best interest:

1. Continued enrollment at the student's school of origin for the duration of experiencing homelessness, or for the remainder of the school year if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, or
2. Enrollment in the school in which students not experiencing homelessness who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

To the extent feasible, students experiencing homelessness should be kept at the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's parent or guardian. Should a dispute regarding the placement decision occur, a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision, must be provided to the parent or guardian, or if unaccompanied, to the youth. During the appeal process, the child or youth has the right to maintain attendance at the school in which enrollment is sought – the school of origin or the school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides – pending resolution of the dispute.

When the student has completed the final grade served by the school of origin, the term "school of origin" shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Educational Services

Each student experiencing homelessness shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students, as determined to be in the student's best interest. Access will be given programs such as:

1. Title 1A;
2. Special education;
3. Programs for English language learners;
4. Career and technical education; and
5. Talented and gifted programs.

Transportation

The district will provide transportation to students experiencing homelessness to attend their school of origin if requested, even if the school district does not provide school transportation to students not experiencing homelessness. (McKinney-Vento Act). This provision applies even if a student experiencing homelessness school of origin is in another district, as long as the transportation is feasible. The feasibility determination must be made based on the best interest of the student (e.g. length and distance of the commute, safety concerns) not on financial concerns of the district.

Whenever an inter-district case occurs, it is imperative that the liaisons of both districts work together to establish procedures to ensure that transportation is expedited. Inter-district disputes cannot delay immediate enrollment. In the absence of agreement between districts on inter-district cases, the two districts are required to apportion the costs and responsibilities equally (McKinney-Vento Act).

Dispute Resolution

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, if a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment:

1. The student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;
2. The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the decision, including the right to appeal the decision and the process to do so;
3. The liaison will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible upon receiving notice of the dispute; and
4. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

Determination by the homeless liaison or district may be appealed. The process of dispute resolution will follow the public complaint process outlined in Board Policy (KL - Public Complaints). It is important to note that the student(s) will be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.