

Admission of Homeless Students

Homeless Student Liaison

The Liaison appointed by the superintendent or designee shall work to identify homeless children and facilitate each homeless child's access to and success in school. By October 1 of each year, the Liaison shall report the number of homeless students enrolled in the school district to the Colorado Department of Education.

The primary functions of the Liaison shall be to mediate disputes concerning school enrollment, assist in making transportation arrangements, assist in requesting the student's records, provide information, and give referrals on services and opportunities. With respect to any homeless child who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian, the Liaison shall also assist the child in placement and enrollment decisions, consider the views of such unaccompanied child, and provide notice and information to such child regarding the right to appeal enrollment determinations as provided below.

Enrollment

A homeless student is deemed to reside, and may enroll and attend school in:

- A school in the District's attendance area where the child is presently located, or
- The District school that the student last attended before becoming homeless.

Homeless students seeking admission to a school shall be enrolled immediately, even if they are unable to provide records or documentation routinely required for enrollment and/or are unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The enrolling school shall immediately make arrangements to obtain any necessary records and to have the student receive any necessary immunizations. When feasible, the district shall seek immunizations through no- or low-cost health care providers. If an expense is incurred, the district shall seek reimbursement through Medicaid if possible. Students determined to be homeless also qualify automatically for the District's free breakfast and lunch program(s), and the school shall provide the District's Nutrition Services Office with the necessary information and paperwork for immediate enrollment in such program(s).

If a homeless student is eligible for or receiving special education or related services but is not in the custody of a parent or legal guardian, a surrogate shall be appointed for the student in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations concerning the education of disabled students.

If a homeless student becomes permanently housed outside the district during the school year, the student shall no longer be considered homeless and may only continue enrollment in the district for the remainder of the school year.

Tuition

Students defined in state and federal law as homeless children shall be admitted without payment of tuition.

Notice of Decision and Appeal

No homeless student shall be enrolled at a school other than the school where the student attended prior to becoming homeless or a school that is contrary to the expressed wishes of the student's parent or guardian (or the one requested by the student if such student is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian) except upon the direction of the Executive Director of Integrated Services or Designee. If the Executive Director of Integrated Services or Designee directs that the homeless student shall attend a school other than the school where the student attended prior to becoming homeless or a school other than the one desired by the student's parent or guardian (or the one desired by the student if such student is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian), such Director/Designee shall provide a written Notice of Decision to the homeless student's parent or guardian (or to the homeless student, if unaccompanied), explaining such decision, and a copy of such notice shall be provided to the liaison. Such Notice shall include:

1. Contact information for the Liaison and State coordinator, with a brief description of their roles;
2. A description of how to dispute the school's decision, including applicable timelines;
3. A simple, detachable appeal form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and submit to the Liaison to initiate the District's dispute resolution process;
4. Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of any dispute;
5. Notice that immediate enrollment includes full participation in all school activities;
6. Notice of the right to appeal to the State if the district-level resolution of the dispute is not satisfactory; and
7. The timelines for initiating and resolving district-level disputes as indicated below.

Resolution of Enrollment Disputes

A parent or guardian of a homeless student, or a homeless student not in custody of a parent/guardian, may dispute an enrollment decision by filing a written appeal with the Liaison on a form provided by the District within five (5) school days after receipt of the

Notice of Decision. Upon receipt of such appeal form, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the parent/guardian or student until the dispute is resolved, and a copy of the appeal form shall be forwarded to the Superintendent. The Liaison shall ensure such enrollment and services are in the best interest of the child, shall work with the Superintendent (or his or her Designee) to resolve the appeal as expeditiously as possible, and shall keep records concerning the dispute.

The Superintendent (or Designee) shall review the appeal and attempt to resolve the issues raised informally through communication with the Liaison and the homeless student and/or the parent or guardian of the homeless student. If no resolution of the dispute is achieved within ten (10) school days, the Superintendent (or Designee) shall issue a written decision regarding the appeal. Such decision shall notify the homeless student and/or the parent or guardian of the homeless student of their right to further appeal such decision to the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Such further appeal shall be governed by the state's dispute resolution procedure.

Transportation

Subsequent to a determination that a homeless student shall attend a school in this district, a request for transportation may be made by the student or by the student's parent/guardian.

If the student is located in the district, the district shall provide or arrange for the student's transportation to and from school in accordance with district transportation policies. All transportation services shall be comparable to those provided for other students in the district.

If the student is located outside of the district but a determination has been made that the student shall attend school in the district, both this district and the district where the student is located must either agree on a method to apportion cost and responsibility for the student's transportation or share the cost and responsibility equally.

NOTE 1: The term "homeless children" is defined in federal law to include the following:

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- 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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children who are living in circumstances described above.

Note 2: While the definition of homeless children in Colorado law closely tracks the definition in federal law, the federal law contains the following language, which is NOT found in Colorado law:

- “sharing the housing of other persons due to lack of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason”
- “trailer parks”
- “substandard housing”

Colorado school districts that receive federal funds are required to follow the more inclusive federal definition.

Adopted May 1, 2025.