Perry County School District

McKinney Vento Act (Homeless) Plan

2025-2026

BOARD APPROVED

JUL 10 2025

PERRY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Perry County School District's McKinney Vento (Homeless) Plan

The Perry County School District's strategy for supporting homeless children and youth adheres to the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Education, as detailed in the Mississippi Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. This strategy ensures full compliance with all relevant regulations.

During the annual registration process, families complete the district's McKinney-Vento Questionnaire. The Office of Federal Programs evaluates responses to identify potential eligibility. Upon confirmation by the Homeless Liaison that a student meets McKinney-Vento criteria, the designation is entered into SAMSpectra by the Information System Specialist. The school's designated Homeless Point of Contact (POC) is also notified to initiate the assessment of required services.

Each school administrator and POC participate in semi-annual training sessions. Additionally, POCs receive a Homeless Services packet containing procedural guidelines and board policies. Necessary forms, including dispute and complaint forms and McKinney-Vento enrollment documentation, are accessible on the district shared Google Drive for Homeless POCs.

Homeless students identified by schools will receive necessary support and supplies. Those identified as academically at risk will have access to services aimed at helping them achieve high academic standards.

Enrollment for homeless children will not be denied or delayed due to the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization of health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements
- Unaccompanied Youth

Students needing assistance with immunizations will be referred to the Homeless Liaison, who will ensure that necessary immunizations are obtained promptly without delaying enrollment.

Identification of Homeless Children and Youth

Definition:

Homeless children and youth are those who:

- Lack a fixed, regular, and/or adequate residence; or
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is:
  a) Shared housing with other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason: are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals, or awaiting foster care placement.
  b) A public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings (within the meaning of Section 103(a)(2)(c);
  c) In automobiles, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Related to migratory children (as such term is defined in Section 1309 of the ESEA of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (a) through (c).
- Unaccompanied youth who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above. The term "unaccompanied youth" includes a youth, not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Educational Placement

The Perry County School District is committed to ensuring that homeless children and youth receive equitable services comparable to those provided to other students. This includes all educational services for which they are eligible. Available educational programs encompass, but are not limited to, the following:

- Programs for disadvantaged students
- Services for students with disabilities
- Support for students with limited English proficiency
- Career and technical education
- Academically gifted and talented programs
- Title I services
- School meal programs

Whenever applicable, parents or guardians will have the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process regarding the educational planning for their homeless child. Additionally, representatives from community agencies (such as the Department of Human Services (DHS), Mental Health services, Juvenile Court, etc.) may be involved in educational planning when appropriate.

The district will ensure that transportation to and from the school of origin is provided upon request by the parent or guardian. For unaccompanied youth, transportation requests can be made through the liaison.

School Records

The Perry County School District will maintain records for homeless children and youth in the same manner as records for other students, ensuring consistency and confidentiality.

Records will be kept in compliance with the Protection of the Rights and Privacy of Parents and Students, as outlined in the General Education Provisions Act.

If a homeless child or youth transfers to another school, their records will be promptly transferred to the new location.

Homeless students or those in transition will receive full or partial credit for coursework successfully completed at previous schools. The Perry County School District will prorate credits to ensure students receive appropriate recognition for their academic work, even if they enter the district late or leave early.

Resolution of Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Students

Homeless children and youth in the Perry County School District are entitled to the same rights and protections, including due process, as other students.

Parents and guardians of homeless youth who disagree with the school assignment decision have the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Education.

If a dispute cannot be resolved at the district level, the involved parties will immediately notify the State Department of Education, Office of Homeless Children and Youth. The

dispute will then be addressed through the federal programs compliance procedure. Importantly, a dispute over placement does not prevent the enrollment of the child or youth.

Compliance

The Perry County School District will comply with the requirements of the Mississippi Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

Assessment

Homeless students will participate in state assessments in the same manner as all other students. Assessments of homeless students will be included in school district accountability data when the students have been enrolled for the proper amount of time per the State Plan.

Services for Homeless Students

The Perry County School District will provide services to homeless children and youth that are comparable to those offered to other students. While the district does not receive specific funding for homeless children and youth, a portion of the Title I, Part A budget is allocated to support identified homeless students.

Information about available services will be communicated to parents, homeless children, and youth through various channels. School counselors, along with the district's social workers and behavior specialists, will collaborate with families to locate additional community resources as needed. The Perry County School District Office of Federal Programs will assist in providing or locating necessary resources and services. Homeless education posters, provided by the National Center for Homeless Education, are displayed in all schools and community businesses. Information for homeless parents, children, and youth, including enrollment, dispute, and complaint forms, is available at the Perry County School District Administrative Office.

Upon notification from the Office of Federal Programs, each school will enter eligible students into SAMSpectra. The Office of Federal Programs will conduct a monthly review of all students assigned homeless. This system serves as an internal control and

data review component to ensure that all necessary parties are monitoring, adjusting, and providing for the needs of students identified under McKinney-Vento.

Requests for assistance for homeless students can be made verbally or in writing to the Office of Federal Programs as needed.

Homeless status will be reviewed annually. However, there is no time limit on maintaining this status.

Services to Be Provided

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990, 42USC11431, it shall be the policy of this school district, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided to the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.
2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA Assignment of Pupils and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the "school of origin" or the school serving the "place of abode" will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by this school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district, and in a manner consistent with S1232g of Title 20.
6. Should this school district receive assistance un S11432 of the Act, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.
7. Should this school district receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth

enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and, homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. This school district has and will continue to review and revise, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above.
10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to an education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.
11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Coordinator of the Homeless Program
Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205

Procedures for Enrolling a Homeless or Unaccompanied Youth

The Perry County School District ensures that enrollment is not denied, delayed, or transferred solely due to a student's homeless status or the inability to produce school, medical, or residency records.

When enrolling or about to enroll a homeless student, the school will:

- Make a reasonable effort to verify the child's homeless status.
- Immediately enroll the student, regardless of the availability of educational and immunization records. If the student attempts to register without a parent or guardian, the school will attempt to contact them.
- Not refuse enrollment due to lack of immunization records until efforts have been made to obtain these records. If the records cannot be obtained, assistance

will be provided to get the student immunized.

- Register the student even if a birth certificate is not available. The Department of Human Services may be contacted to assist in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate.
- Identify the student as "homeless" in the student information system under the at-risk category.
- Contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. If records cannot be obtained, an educational record (cumulative folder) will be developed. In such cases, an academic diagnostic test may be administered to determine the student's skill levels and appropriate placement.
- Notify the school district liaison of the enrollment and send a copy of the homeless survey. The district liaison or their designee will contact the parent or guardian.
- Notify the Office of Child Nutrition of the student's enrollment through the District liaison. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals, and assistance will be provided in completing free and reduced lunch forms if necessary.
- Provide access to the same services as those offered to other students, including:
    - Transportation services
    - Educational services
    - School nutrition programs
    - Vocational and technical programs
    - Extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- Coordinate with and/or refer the student to other community resources to offer additional assistance to the homeless student and their family.
- Contact the district homeless liaison if assistance is needed for enrollment:

Allison Temple
Federal Programs Director
601-946-3211
atemple@pcsdms.us

District: Perry County School District
Policy Code: JQN Education for Homeless Children and Youth
Policy: Admission of Homeless Students

It shall be the policy of the Perry County School District to comply with PL 101-645—Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendment Act of 1990.

All homeless children and youth, as defined in federal legislation, seeking admission in the school district shall be afforded educational and supportive services—for which they meet eligibility criteria—in an environment and manner that does not stigmatize, isolate, label or penalize the child, youth or family for being homeless, including, but not limited to, compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged, migrant services, educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency, programs in vocational-technical education, and programs for the gifted, creative and talented. Additionally, supportive services shall include, but not limited to, transportation, child nutrition, tutorial services, counseling services, health services, extra-curricular programs, and immunization requirements as required by MS Code §37-7-301(i) and 41-23-37.

The permanent and cumulative records for homeless children and youth will contain the same data as required of all other students. Records will be maintained and disseminated in compliance with MS Code §37-3-49, §37-15-1 through §37-15-3 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (PL 93-380).

The superintendent, or designee, shall designate a staff person as the liaison who will resolve disputes regarding enrollment and placement, and will provide training to school personnel and the community to promote awareness and sensitivity of homelessness. The superintendent is directed to develop administrative guidelines necessary to implement this policy. PL 100-117 and PL 101-645—Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990 as amended, PL 93-380— Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, MS Code §37-13-91, §37-15-1 through §37-15-3, §37-15-9, §37-15-13 through §37-15-21, §37-15-29, §37-15-31, §37-19-27, §37-7-301 (h)(i), and §41-23-37

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Section I. POLICY

The Perry County School District shall provide a free and appropriate education and supporting services to all homeless children and youth, in compliance with the guidelines of the McKinney-Vento Act.

A. Under the provisions of this Act the district shall:
Continue the child's or youth's education in the school or origin;

For the remainder of the academic year, or

In any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, for the following

academic year, or

Enroll the child or youth in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend; whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.
In determining the best interest of the child or youth for purposes of making a school assignment, consideration shall be given to a request made by a parent regarding school selection.

The term "school of origin" shall mean the school that the child or youth attendee when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Section II. PLACEMENT

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

Classroom assignments shall be the sole responsibility of school principals. Assignments are to be made in a non-discriminatory manner and in compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and court decisions. See also Policy JCA, Policy JF, Policy JFAA, and Policy JFABC.

Section III. SUPPORTING SERVICES

Perry County School District will provide comparable educational and supporting services to all homeless children and youth. These services may include but are not limited to, Special Education Services, Migrant Services, Title I Services, Disability Services, Vocational Education Services and services for the Gifted. Additionally supportive services include but are not limited to transportation, feeding programs, tutorial services, counseling services and extracurricular activities.

Section IV. STUDENT RECORDS

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained.

So that records are available in a timely fashion when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

In a manner consistent with Section 438b of the General Education Provisions Act.
Section V. SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

The Perry County School District shall coordinate with local social service agencies, and other agencies, or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.

Section VI. ASSURANCES

The superintendent or designee shall ensure the following:

Homeless children and youth are enrolled and provided appropriate educational opportunities in the school of that agency.

Homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

State coordinators and local educational agency liaisons shall inform school personnel, service provides and advocates working with homeless of the duties of the liaisons.

Section VII. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Plan, the following definitions apply:

"Homeless," a homeless individual is one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence, or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designed for, ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (Section 103 (a)(1)(2) or the Act.)

Using the definition, in addition to residence in homeless shelters and on the streets the following children would also be considered homeless:

Children who are temporarily staying with relatives or friends (temporarily means homelessness as a recent development related to loss of jobs, housing or finances as opposed to living together for cultural or traditional reasons). Agricultural migrant children (children who typically do not remain in one location for more than two (2) weeks).

Children who are runaways who reside in special shelters for runaways or who are on the street are considered to be homeless.

Children who are in special shelters as a result of domestic violence when they legally have a home but cannot live in it because of fear of harm are considered homeless.

Children who reside in non-standard domiciles such as tents and vehicles are considered homeless.

The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained by an Act of Congress or a State law (Section 103 (c)).

"Child" and "Youth" are persons who, if they were children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education.

Section VIII. STIGMATIZATION AND ISOLATION

Perry County School District will enroll and provide technical, educational and supporting services to homeless children and youth in an environment and manner that does not stigmatize, isolate, label or penalize the child, youth or family for being homeless.

Perry County School District's homeless liaison will provide training to school personnel and the community to promote awareness and sensitivity of homelessness. If the school district does not have a liaison, these services can and will, be provided by the State Homeless Children Education Coordinator upon request.

Section IX. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE

The Superintendent or designee shall investigate and report complaints that are believed to be in non-compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and/or issues that deal with the educational placement of homeless children and youth. The Superintendent will initiate steps to resolve the dispute. In the event the dispute cannot be solved locally, the parent, the guardian and/or Superintendent may request a formal review of the dispute by the State Department of Education's Coordinator of the Homeless Program. The review must be requested in writing immediately after the dispute takes place.

Admission of Homeless Students— Regulations

To be in compliance with PL 101-645—Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendment Act of 1990-the following regulations are to be implemented.

A homeless individual is defined as one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate residence of (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. §103(a)(1)(2) of the act. Using this definition, in addition to residence in homeless shelters and on the streets the following children would also be considered homeless:

Children who are temporarily staying with relatives or friends (temporarily means homelessness as a recent development related to loss of job, housing, or finances as opposed to living together for cultural or traditional reasons).

Agricultural migrant children—children who typically do not remain in one location for more than two weeks.

Children who are in special shelters as a result of domestic violence when they may legally have a home but cannot live in it because of fear of harm are considered homeless.

The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained by an Act of Congress or a state law. In §103 of the act, "Child" and "Youth" are defined as persons who, if they were children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education.