Enrollment and Support for Foster Care, Homeless, and Migrant Youth

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Slide Title

OVERVIEW

This training equips school leaders with the knowledge to meet federal mandates for enrolling and supporting homeless, foster care, and migrant students. It covers federal laws, procedures, and best practices for eliminating barriers for these students.

OUTCOMES

By the end of this training, school leaders will understand the laws for supporting homeless, foster care, and migrant students. They will know how to enroll these students quickly and help keep them in school. Leaders will also learn simple strategies to remove barriers and make sure all students have access to the support they need.

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Special Populations

- **Foster Care Youth:** Youth removed from their parents' custody due to neglect or abuse
- **Homeless Youth:** Youth lacking a stable nighttime residence, including those sharing housing, living in cars, hotels, or shelters
- **Unaccompanied Youth:** Youth not under the custody of a parent or guardian, including runaways, those abandoned, or opting out of foster care
- **Migrant Youth:** Youth with a parent or guardian working in migratory industries (agriculture, dairy, lumber, fishing) who have moved in the past three years for work

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Enrollment Data

Special Groups	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Foster Care Youth	323	278	317
Homeless Youth	2926	2380	1516
Migrant Youth	28	39	59



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Foster Care Youth Mandates

Protection of Education: The education of foster care youth is safeguarded by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Point of Contact: LEAs must identify a Point of Contact to serve as the liaison between the LEA and the Department of Child Services (DCS).

Policy Establishment: ESSA mandates the creation of policies to protect the rights of foster care students.

Collaboration and Training: Regular weekly collaboration and training are required between the LEA and DCS to ensure effective support for foster youth.

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DCS Key Roles and Duties

- **Family Service Worker:**
  State-recognized custodian responsible for attending all meetings, hearings, and medical appointments for the child
- **Education Specialist:**
  Oversees educational needs and must participate in all school meetings to support the child's academic progress
- **Agency Worker:**
  Appointed by DCS, acts as an extension of the DCS case manager to ensure continuity of care
- **Foster Parent:**
  Provides care, shelter, and a stable environment for the custodial child



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DCS Key Roles and Duties

- **Guardian Ad Litem:**
  Court-appointed advocate representing the interests of students in DCS custody
- **Child Protective Services:**
  Investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect to ensure the safety of children
- **Local Contracted Agencies:**
  No home visits allowed during school hours to maintain a focused educational environment

Note: A DCS employee is only required to present a copy of their DCS work identification card and may see a foster care youth at any time.

CPS is a division of DCS and can see ANY STUDENT at any time.

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Foster Care Youth Supports

- **Immediate Enrollment:** Youth can enroll immediately without required records or transcripts
- **Education Passports:** An education passport should be presented by DCS Caseworker upon enrollment
- **School of Origin Protection:** Protection for school of origin, with Best Interest Determinations (BID)/ transportation plans
- **BID Meetings:** BID meetings must be held before withdrawing foster care youth from their school of origin
- **Transportation**: Access to transportation must be granted, but cost maybe be shared as determined in the transportation plan
- **Enrollment Deadlines:** Deadlines for kindergarten and Pre-K youth do not apply
- **Grade Placement:** Grade placement should be determined by Education Passport or other school records when available or youth should be placed in grade corresponding with their age

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Foster Care Youth Support

- **Immediate Release of Records:** Schools must release records upon request…No holds!
- **Truancy Support**: Truancy and other support must be exhausted and DCS must be informed before foster care youth can be withdrawn
- **McKinney-Vento Support:** Youth staying in DCS facilities due to lack of foster placements are eligible for McKinney-Vento supports
- **Access to Programs:** Full access to all school programs and extracurricular activities, including athletics
- **Wraparound Supports:** Access to additional wraparound services to support families and students
- **Notification and Consent:** DCS must be notified of all education changes and invited to all related meetings for foster youth. This includes, suspensions, discipline hearings, evaluations, IEP meetings, etc.

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Homeless Youth Mandates

- The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** ensures support for youth aged 3 to 24 and their families, providing clear guidelines for Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

- Each LEA receiving federal funds must appoint a Homeless Liaison to protect the rights of youth and families experiencing homelessness and ensure that all youth have access to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

- The **law also guarantees immediate enrollment, even without typical documentation, and school stability, allowing students to remain in their school of origin when it's in their best interest.**

- LEAs must also provide transportation and remove barriers to full participation in academic and extracurricular activities.

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Homeless Youth Support

- **Identification and Enrollment Support:** Immediate enrollment without records **(birth certificates, social security cards, or residency, school or shot records). Pre-K and kindergarten children can enroll after state or district deadlines**
- **Immunizations:** Are needed, but are **NOT REQUIRED** for enrollment
- **Transportation:** Transportation provided to the school of origin, new school or local school **(Parents or caregivers may opt to be reimbursed for transporting youth)**
- **Essential Items:** Clothing, school supplies, school fees, hygiene products, food, et.
- **Collaboration:** Partnership with city government, Continuum of Care (COCs), and the Youth Homeless Development Program (YHDP) to support families and youth with wraparound access

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Homeless Youth Support

- **Grade Placement:** Should be determined by previous school records when available or students should be placed in grade corresponding with their age
- **Records:** Must be released immediately to the new school to ensure immediate enrollment…**No holds!**
- **IEP Support:** Ensures the rights of parents and students are protected
- **Confidentiality:** Maintains confidentiality regarding living arrangements, hardships, and records
- **Grade Retention and Withdrawal:** Students experiencing homelessness should not be penalized due to their situation…**All resources must be exhausted to support prior to retention and withdrawal.**

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Homeless Youth Support

- **School-Based Support:** Provides a designated point of contact within the school for assistance
- **Progress Monitoring and Data Reporting**: Monitors attendance and academic achievement regularly and reports to TDOE
- **Post-High School Planning:** Supports youth in planning for post-high school opportunities and transitions
- **Access to School Services:** Eligibility for all school programs, including free and reduced meals, ELL support, SPED services, extracurricular activities, tutoring, and academic interventions

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Dispute Resolution Process

- Homeless and unaccompanied youth may immediately enroll in: **a) their school of origin; b) the school that is assigned to the address, shelter, or hotel they are temporarily staying; c) any local school that non-homeless youth residing in the area they are temporarily staying are able to attend; or d) the school that is most accessible in extenuating circumstances.**

- Once youth are identified as homeless, they are coded and eligible for protection under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for the entire school year, even if stable housing is secured. **Note: Certification for homeless support must be determined each school year.**

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Dispute Resolution Process

- If a School Administrator disagrees with enrollment of a homeless youth, he or she may request a dispute resolution.

- **Youth must still be enrolled and remain enrolled until the dispute resolution process is completed.**

- All dispute resolutions must be submitted in writing to Mrs. Rosamond Griffin, McKinney-Vento Compliance & Enrollment Manager, using the **Dispute Resolution Form** located in SharePoint. **Please follow the instructions on the form to ensure timely processing.**

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Dispute Resolution Process

- Upon receipt of the Dispute Resolution Form, an investigation including, but not limited to, the verification of active utilities, property taxes and ownership, support from community agencies, Homeless Management Interagency System (HMIS) entry, and court eviction records will be completed.

- Once a determination is reached, the School Administrator and the Parent, Caretaker, or Youth will be informed of the decision, which will include whether the youth will remain coded as homeless and the youth's school of enrollment based on the investigation.

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Dispute Resolution Process

- If either party disagrees with the decision rendered by the McKinney-Vento Compliance & Enrollment Manager, the decision may be appealed to:

  Vanessa Waters, TDOE McKinney-Vento Coordinator
  (615) 917-3750
  vanessa.waters@tn.gov

- Please be advised the student must remain enrolled until a final decision is rendered.

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Migrant Youth



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Migrant Youth Mandates

- **Right to FAPE:** Ensures the right to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) regardless of students' or their parents' immigration status
- **Surveys:** Parents complete surveys in PowerSchool, which are uploaded into Title I crates by the LEA for review and certification
- **Eligibility Certification:** Certification of migrant eligibility is managed by Arroyo, a contractor for the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE)
- **Eligibility Duration:** Eligibility is valid for three years
- **Age Range:** Protects youth ages 3 to 21
- **Parent Involvement and Participation:** Parent Advisory Council is required
- **Remedial Education Services:** Interventions and tutoring are required for migrant youth identified as priority for service

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Migrant Youth Support

- Ensure parental participation in the MEP
- Provide options for credit accrual and recovery to ensure that migrant secondary youth are accessing opportunities available to earn required credits and makeup courses lacking due to late entry or early withdrawal
- Coordinate and collaborate with other LEAs to ensure continuity of services for migratory youth as they move from LEA to LEA
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of the MEP and meet regularly with contracted support agency

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Assessment

- Is it possible for foster care and migrant youth to qualify for McKinney-Vento support?
- Are shot records required for homeless, foster care, or migrant youth?
- How many days does a family or caretaker supporting a homeless, foster care, or migrant youth have to submit required records?
- What should the Foster Care Caseworker present upon enrollment? What happens if this document is not available?
- Does the district certify youth for migrant supports?
- What qualifies a youth for migrant services?
- At what point can records be placed on hold for homeless, foster care, or migrant youth?
- What grade should a homeless, foster care, or migrant youth who has never been to school be placed?
- Can a homeless, foster care, or migrant youth be withdrawn for truancy or immunizations?
- Can Principals dispute placements for homeless youth?
- Can parents or caretakers dispute decisions regarding identification or school placement?
- Can a homeless youth remain enrolled during the dispute resolution process?

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Contact Information

Dr. Karen Ball-Johnson, Senior Manager
901-416-7393 | ballkf@scsk12.org

Mrs. Rosamond Griffin, McKinney-Vento Compliance & Enrollment Manager
901-416-0202 | griffinr1@scsk12.org

Mr. Micah Towns, Migrant Education Manager
901-416-8069 | townsm@scsk12.org

Mrs. Vequitia Barnes, McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison
901-416-9875 | barnesvl@scsk12.org

Ms. Stephanie Golden, Federal Program Specialist
901-416-9825 | goldens2@scsk12.org

Mrs. Cornelia Jackson-Scott, Clerical Assistant
901-416-8119 | jacksonc10@scsk12.org



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Migrant Youth Support

- Enrollment and registration assistance/immediate enrollment upon identification
- Identify educational needs of migratory youth that result from migratory lifestyle
- Address the unique educational needs of migratory youth that are not addressed by services available from other federal or non-federal programs
- Administer Title I, Part C funds to address priority for service (PFS) to qualifying migratory youth (tutoring and summer learning programs)
- Collect migratory youth data and enter that data into the state or federal databases
- Utilize the national database for migrant youth information, the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), to promote interstate coordination and timely records exchange as appropriate

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Homeless Youth





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