



Rochester Area School District

District Plan
for
Identifying Students in Homeless Situations
and
Providing Services

Per McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act
Updated January 30, 2026

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by ESSA and reauthorized in December 2015, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Services to homeless children required by Local Educational Agencies are primarily found under the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, as amended by ESSA, and under Title I.

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, each school district must have a designated District Homeless Liaison who is responsible for ensuring the identification, school enrollment, attendance, and opportunities for academic success of students in homeless situations. Some of these activities may be performed by the local liaison himself or herself, while others are accomplished by coordinating the efforts of other staff in the district.

The Rochester Area School District has a District Level Homeless Liaison team to support needs assessment and coordinate appropriate services when determining transportation arrangements and in confirming accurate reporting of homeless students for regional and state reporting requirements.

2025-2026 Homeless Liaison District Level Team

District Support Personnel	Position	Responsibility
Dr. Jane Bovalino bovalinoj@rasd.org	Superintendent	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mrs. Kathleen Onuska onuskak@rasd.org	Business Manager	Transportation Arrangements
Mr. Michael Damon damonm@rasd.org	Middle School/High School Principal	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Ms. Rachael Cipolla cipollar@rasd.org	Elementary Principal	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mr. Nathan Leeman leemann@rasd.org 724-775-7500 ext. 1193	Director of Student Services/ Homeless Liaison	Transportation Arrangements Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mrs. Dawn Greene greened@rasd.org	Child Accounting/ Central Registration/PIMS	State and Regional Reporting Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Ms. Megan Mouas mouasm@rasd.org	High School Guidance Counselor	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mrs. Benita Lambert lambertb@rasd.org	Elementary/Middle School Guidance Counselor	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mr. Steve Proctor proctors@rasd.org	K-12 Social Emotional Counselor	Needs Assessment Services Coordination
Mrs. Molly Goedeker goedekerm@rasd.org	Social Worker	Needs Assessment Services Coordination

Definition of Homelessness

[McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725(2)]

The term “homeless children and youths”

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence

(B) includes —

- i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);
- ii) living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations;
- iii) living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
- iv) are abandoned in hospitals;
- v) children and youths who 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;
- vi) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- vii) migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Unaccompanied Youth

The term, “unaccompanied youth” includes youth in homeless situations who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Notice of Educational Rights

The Rochester Area School District shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated. Posters in English will be posted prominently at all schools. School Principals will directly provide notification of rights either orally or in writing to families and unaccompanied students who meet eligibility.

School Selection/School of Origin

Homeless students may choose to enroll in the same public school as students living in the same attendance zone are eligible to attend, or to enroll in their school of origin. “School of Origin” is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled when deemed homeless. Rochester Area School District will enroll the child in the attendance zone school or continue the child’s enrollment in the school of origin based upon what is in the best interest of the child. It is highly suggested that the parent discuss these options with the Homeless Liaison.

Rochester School District must enroll homeless students in their schools of origin, to the extent feasible, unless it is against the parent or guardian’s wishes. Students are permitted to remain in their schools of origin

until the end of the academic year or for the duration of their homelessness or until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.

Eligibility Provisions

A homeless student's residential status (whether or not the student is currently homeless) should have no bearing on eligibility to participate in a specific program, except in instances where homelessness automatically confers eligibility. Students experiencing homelessness should be able to participate in programs as any other student would. They must meet any eligibility requirements but should not be excluded solely because they are homeless. However, district rules apply to enforcement of policies and procedures regarding discipline and behavior.

Dispute Resolution

If a homeless student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by a parent/guardian, the school district must provide a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal, whether or not the parent/guardian disputes the placement. A written explanation of the school's decision must also be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes a school placement or enrollment decision. Whenever a dispute arises, the student must be immediately admitted to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved. The school liaison team must carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The Homeless Liaison, with district office support, must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth who meet the definition/criteria in McKinney-Vento (see Appendixes E & F).

Eligibility of Homeless Students for Title I Services

A child or youth who is homeless and is attending Rochester School District is automatically eligible for Title I homeless services, regardless of their current academic performance.

Homeless students who attend schools that do NOT receive Title I funds are entitled to services as are homeless students who attend schools that receive Title I funds. Title I services for students at schools that do NOT receive Title I funds include reading, mathematics, science, social studies, guidance and counseling, social services, clothing, tutoring, and health services.

Transportation

Federal law requires school districts to provide transportation to the school of origin, at the request of the parent or guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, at the request of the district's homeless liaison. The law does not necessarily mean door-to-door. A district must offer reasonable transportation comparable to what is offered to non-homeless peers. It is common for students to have to walk to a bus stop a few blocks from their home to catch a bus.

If the student is McKinney-Vento eligible and also qualifies for district transportation services, the Homeless Liaison or District Support Personnel will complete the "Transportation Request Form for McKinney-Vento Students" form (Appendix C) and will make arrangements to begin offering transportation services within three business days or sooner if possible.

The Homeless Liaison and the Business Office will work together to arrange transportation for homeless students who move but request to remain at the school of origin AND are transportation eligible by district

guidelines.

Nutrition Services

Rochester Area School District participates in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP). This program allows all students to eat both breakfast and lunch at no cost.

Withdrawal of Homeless Students

The choice of where a child attends school is governed by the *child's or youth's best interest (McKinney-Vento Act, Sec. 722 (g)(3)(A))*. The law specifies that in determining the best interest of the child the district will keep a homeless child in the school of origin, to the extent feasible, unless the parents want to enroll the child in the school where they now actually live. The decision about which school the student should attend the school that is in the best interest of the child-is left up to the parents. If the student is an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison shall assist in the placement or enrollment decisions and should consider the views of the unaccompanied youth. If a district sends the homeless student to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the family, including information regarding the right to appeal this decision.

Therefore, office staff responsible for the withdrawal of students will need to verify the homeless status of **any** student prior to completing paperwork for a school withdrawal. If the student is coded "homeless," a consultation clearly explaining the student's right to choose to remain at the school of origin or to change to the local attendance zone school should be held. If the family decides that they feel it is in the child's best interest to move to another school, they will need to sign and date the form entitled "Educational Stability Waiver" (Appendix D). Only after the parent or guardian has signed this waiver can they be allowed to withdraw from school.

Records Retention

Office staff will maintain each student's permanent record folder to comply with records retention requirements. These McKinney-Vento records include all forms utilized in this plan.

Identification Procedures

1. The school will inform parents/students identified as homeless about services provided by Rochester Area School District (RASD). The Homeless Liaison/District Support Personnel will work together regarding how to proceed.
2. RASD will provide school enrollment assistance to any homeless family who needs it.
3. Homeless students must be allowed to enroll without documentation, such as proof of residency or school immunization records or a birth certificate.
4. Every student/family seeking admission to RASD, must complete a RASD enrollment form which is available through Central Registration. The RASD student enrollment form contains a residency questionnaire which assists Central Registration with determining if a student will be eligible for McKinney-Vento services. If a living arrangement that meets the definition of homeless is marked, the family will be referred to the school Homeless Liaison for further review. Central Registration will engage the Homeless Liaison to complete the proper paperwork. This includes the Student Residency

Questionnaire and Transportation Request (if applicable).

5. When assistance is needed for determining eligibility for McKinney-Vento services, Central Registration will contact the district office to discuss with the Title 1 Coordinator, and Homeless Liaison and/or Superintendent. A needs assessment will be performed utilizing the Identification and Needs Assessment Form (Appendix H).
6. If the student is McKinney-Vento eligible and also qualifies for district transportation services, the Homeless Liaison will sign the "Transportation Request Form for McKinney-Vento Students" form, Appendix C, and send it to the transportation provider (i.e Frye Transportation).
7. Students who meet criteria for homeless identification must be identified in the Student Information System (CSIU) by Central Registration to ensure correct data entry for state reporting.
8. All records for homeless services will be kept in the student's file at the school of attendance as well as a district file with the Homeless Liaison.
9. Eligibility for homeless services as per the McKinney-Vento Act meets criteria for a student to be identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. Each school administrator will update any at-risk profiles.
10. Students who meet eligibility as homeless maintain that eligibility and the right to remain at the same school for the remainder of the school year regardless of changes in circumstances relating to parent's employment or place of residence.
11. Data for homeless students will be entered into the regional spreadsheet by the district support personnel and submitted as required.

Resources

Basic Education Circulars (BECs) | Department of Education | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/policies-acts-and-laws/basic-education-circulars-beacs/u-s-code/education-for-homeless-youth>

Board Policy #251 Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care and Other Educational Instability

<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/roch/board.nsf/public?open&id=policies#>

Appendix A

MCKINNEY-VENTO INFORMATION REFERENCE TABLE

Form	Who must complete?	Where do I obtain this form?	Special Notes
Appendix B Student Residency Questionnaire	Parent/ guardian or unaccompanied youth with assistance of District Homeless Liaison Team	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a document in which Central Registration must have available at all times. • Completed copy must be given to the school Homeless Liaison.
Appendix C Transportation Request Form	District, Homeless Liaison Team & Business Office if transportation is needed	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Registration will send this completed form to Homeless Liaison
Appendix D Educational Stability Waiver	Parent & Homeless Liaison Team when withdrawing any homeless student	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Registration will send this completed form to Homeless Liaison
Appendix E Non-qualifying Parent Notification Letter	District Homeless Liaison Team	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it has been determined that the student does not qualify for McKinney-Vento homeless designation, a letter shall be sent to the parent/ guardian.
Appendix F Placement Decision Appeal Information Form	Parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent or guardian may dispute/appeal a decision by the district not to place a student in the homeless program. This form is used to start that process.
Appendix G Choosing between School of Origin and Attendance Zone School	District Homeless Liaison Team with parent/guardian	Central Registration, Homeless Forms File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklist to help a parent decide to remain at the school or origin or to withdraw to attendance zone school

Appendix B

Rochester Student Resident Questionnaire (SRQ)

This form is required to meet the McKinney-Vento act 42 USC 1134a (2). The answers you give will help school personnel to better determine which services the student may be eligible to receive.

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____

Last School District Attended:	
Last Date of Attendance:	
Address where the student sleeps at night:	
Name of person student lives with:	
Relationship to student:	Parent Legal Guardian Friend Relative Other (specify): _____

Check the following condition that describes the student's living situation: (if none apply, check this box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporarily living with family or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reasons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in a motel, hotel or trailer park generally used by and for the housing of homeless families or camping grounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in an emergency or transitional shelter and/or awaiting foster care placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in a place not designed as regular sleeping accommodations, such as a car, park, abandoned building, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living with a parent who is a migratory agricultural worker

Factors contributing to the student's current living situation (mark all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Family issues (divorce, domestic violence, kicked out, conflict, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitation of parent/guardian due to physical health, mental health, drugs/alcohol, or other factors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incarceration of parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military: Parent/guardian deployed/injured/killed in action
<input type="checkbox"/>	House fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Home issues (repairs needed, overcrowding, mold, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of job	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of mortgage or evicted
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of affordable housing in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	High medical bills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor student unable to afford housing on own	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify): _____

Provide the following information for school-age siblings (brothers and/or sisters) of the student:

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Lives at same address?	Grade	School

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Relationship to student (circle one) Parent Legal Guardian Friend Relative Other (specify): _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date Entered Status	Transportation provided? YES NO	SRQ sent to Title I? YES NO
Date Exited Status	Transportation Request form sent to District? YES NO	CSIU updated? YES NO

Appendix C

Transportation Request Form for McKinney-Vento Student(s) (Send to Homeless Liaison/Business Office)

Today's Date: ___ / ___ / ___ From: _____

School Administrator Name

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Please set-up bus transportation for the following students:

Student Name:		School:	
Special Needs?	YES / NO	Grade:	
Cost Share Arrangement? YES / NO			
<p>TO BE COMPLETED BY FRYE TRANSPORTATION REPRESENTATIVE:</p> <p>Transportation Arrangement Description:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will utilize existing bus routes (no excess cost)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will need to modify existing bus routes. Excess cost for added/changed route is: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will need to secure a designated vehicle for this transportation. Excess cost is: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will split transportation between 2 district's existing routes (no excess cost)</p> <p>Please describe how student will be transported to school (include bus #s and times):</p> 			

Additional Students:

Student Name:		School:	
Special Needs?	YES / NO	Grade:	

Student Name:		School:	
Special Needs?	YES / NO	Grade:	

Student Name:		School:	
Special Needs?	YES / NO	Grade:	

For School Use Only -- I certify the above-named students qualify for Transportation Services under the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act.

School Administrator Signature

Date

Appendix D

Educational Stability Waiver

Student Name:	
Current Physical Address of Student:	
School of Origin:	
Attendance Zone School:	

As per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by ESSA (ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness), I acknowledge that my child has the right to remain at his/her school of origin or the right to attend his/her attendance zone school.

I am signing this waiver as proof that I acknowledge the following:

[please check the appropriate box]:

- I feel that it is in my child's best interest to remain at the current school (aka: school of origin) thru the end of the current school year.

- I feel that it is in my child's best educational interest to attend his/her attendance zone school and am, therefore, willingly withdrawing my child from his/her current school.

Parent/Guardian Signature:	Today's Date:
Print Name:	Telephone Number:
School Official's Name:	

Appendix E

EXAMPLE – Non-Qualifying Parent Letter/Written Explanation of School Decision

Date: _____

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Re: Placement Decision for (list students' names): _____

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to inform you that the above-mentioned child(ren) does/do **not** qualify for placement in the homeless program at _____ School because he/she does not meet provisions set forth by the McKinney-Vento Act. The reason(s) for denial include:

If you do not agree with this decision you have the right to appeal the decision. You have 10 school business days from the date of this letter to file an appeal of this decision. During the appeal process, the student is able to remain at the selected school until the decision is finalized. Please contact me if you need further information or if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Homeless Liaison

Appendix F

Placement Decision Appeal Information Form (McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act)

Person Completing Form: _____

Date: _____ Grade: _____

Name of Student: _____

Student ID: _____ School Where Currently Enrolled: _____

School Where Seeking Enrollment: _____

Print Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Telephone Number(s) where you can be reached: _____

List specific reason why you believe your child qualifies as a homeless student as per McKinney- Vento Act and why you are appealing the placement decision:

Child / Youth living with (circle one): Both Parents Mother Father Legal Guardian Unaccompanied Youth
Other (specify): _____

Residing at (check one):

_____ Shelter (examples: family shelter, domestic violence shelter, youth shelter)

_____ Doubled-up

_____ Motel / Hotel

_____ Unsheltered (examples: car, campground, tent, park, home without running water / electricity)

Follow Up:

Date	Contact (Meeting, Telephone)	Participants	Details of Resolution

Appendix G

School of Origin Considerations

- Continuity of Instruction**
The student would be served best at the school of origin due to circumstances that look to his or her **past**.
- Age and grade placement of the student**
Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is **critical** to the students' meaningful school experience and participation. The student has been in this environment for an extended period of time.
- Academic Strength**
The student's academic performance is **weak**, and the student would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.
- Social and emotional state**
The student is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school and does not want to leave.
- Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education**
The advantages of continuing to attend the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.
- Personal safety of the student**
The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.
- Student's need for special instruction**
The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the school of origin
- Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location**
The student's current living situation is outside of the school of origin's attendance zone, but his/her living situation or location continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by continuing to attend the school of origin.

Local School Considerations

(attendance zone school)

- Continuity of Instruction**
The student would be served best due to circumstances that look to his or her **future**.
- Age and grade placement of the student**
Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is **NOT particularly critical** to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time.
- Academic Strength**
The student's academic performance is **strong** and at grade level and the student likely would recover academically from a school transfer.
- Social and emotional state**
The student seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.
- Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education**
A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school. The local school can meet all of the necessary educational and special needs of the student.
- Personal safety of the student**
The local school has advantages for the safety of the student.
- Student's need for special instruction**
The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the local attendance area school.
- Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location**
The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from developing relationships with school peers who live in his or her local community.

