Moss Point School District
McKinney -Vento
Homeless Education Plan

2025-2026

Moss Point School District

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Mission of Moss Point School District's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Plan

Our Mission:

The Moss Point School District will collaborate with students, families, and the community to graduate forward-thinking, globally competitive learners through relevant and rigorous learning experiences.

Our Beliefs:

- We believe all students are entitled to a superior education.
- We believe learning is an essential and life-long process.
- We believe teachers should challenge, engage and inspire all students to achieve their full potential.
- We believe all students are capable of learning and succeeding.
- We believe a positive, safe, secure, and well-maintained environment is conducive to student success.
- We believe learning should be fun.
- We believe family and community are vital to student success.

Our Goals:

Effective Teaching and Learning:
Our district will grow all students through effective teaching practices and engaging learning opportunities.
High Quality Employees:
Our district will recruit, develop and retain individuals that possess integrity, professionalism and superior job-related skills.
Supports for Students:
Our district will proactively provide appropriate student supports through various cultural, social-emotional and educational experiences to increase student success.
Collaboration and Connections:
Our district will build trust with the community through consistent collaboration and transparent communication.
Learning Environments:
Our district will provide positive learning environments that are safe, clean, secure and appropriately equipped.
Operational Effectiveness:
Our district will define, publish and execute effective control systems for each facet of operations

The Moss Point School District is dedicated to ensuring that each child who is deemed homeless has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education available to other students. This commitment includes services to preschool students and unaccompanied youth who are homeless. The district believes that all students are entitled to a superior education, learning is an essential and life-long process, teachers should challenge, engage and inspire all students to achieve their full potential, ALL students are capable of learning and succeeding, a positive, safe, secure and well-maintained environment is conductive to student success, learning should be fun, and family and community are vital to student success.

The mission of the Office of Federal Programs is to ensure that grant funds support and are aligned to the educational goals of the Moss Point School District.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act) requires all school districts to maintain compliance. The McKinney-Vento Act specifies rights for homeless students. Every school district must designate a McKinney-Vento Liaison to assist in identifying, supporting, and ensuring the rights of homeless students and families. These rights include waiving certain requirements, such as proof of residency, when students are enrolling and allowing categorical eligibility for certain services, such as free lunch. The McKinney-Vento Act also state:

- Students who are homeless may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Parents or guardians of homeless students must be informed of educational and related opportunities.
- Students who are homeless may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Students who are homeless and their families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other needed services.
- Students who are homeless have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must be enrolled in school and receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.
- Students are automatically eligible for Title I services.
- School districts must reserve a portion of Title IA funds to serve homeless students.
- School districts must review and revise policies that serve as barriers to homeless students.
- Schools must post information in the community regarding the rights of homeless students and unaccompanied youth in schools and other places where homeless families may frequent and written in a language they can understand.
- School districts must identify a McKinney-Vento Liaison to assist students and their families.

The Moss Point School District will abide by the requirements as instructed by the McKinney-Vento Act.

Chapter 40 McKinney-Vento
Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure Rule 40

1. INTRODUCTION

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act) acknowledges that disputes may arise between a local educational agency (LEA) and the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth, when the LEA seeks to place him or her in a school other than the school of origin or the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. Guidance regarding the definition of homeless, the responsibilities of the LEA in serving homeless children and youth, school selection, eligibility and enrollment is provided in the Act. The Act includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the LEA liaison and the State Educational Agency (SEA). The following procedures are specified in the Act:

a. Enrollment: Immediately enroll the homeless child or youth in the school preferred by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth until the dispute is settled and all available appeals have been exhausted. The statutory definition of "enroll" includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

b. Written explanation: Written explanations provided by the LEA shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of any decisions related to school selection, eligibility or enrollment made by the school or LEA, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions.

c. Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Rights: It is the responsibility of the LEA to inform the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the McKinney-Vento rights and the dispute resolution process. While the dispute is being resolved, the child or children in question must be enrolled in school and receive all services for which they are eligible, including transportation services. If the dispute is concerning the school of "best interest," the child must be enrolled in the school preferred by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Federal Programs, has adopted a dispute resolution process at the local and state levels. If a dispute arises regarding the eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth, the following procedures are to be followed:

Local Educational Agency Level: If the LEA makes a determination regarding school selection or enrollment that would result in the child or youth attending a school other than the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, a written explanation shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the LEA superintendent. The dispute resolution process shall be initiated at the local level by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth who wishes to appeal the school district's decision. The LEAs shall develop written policies and procedures with timelines that govern the dispute resolution process and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

a. Each LEA is required to have a designated McKinney-Vento liaison. In addition, each school should have a contact that has been trained on the McKinney-Vento Act.

b. If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA's decision and wishes to appeal to the LEA superintendent or his/her designee, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall file a request for dispute resolution with the LEA liaison by completing a dispute resolution form or submitting a written request after receiving notification of the LEA's decision. The LEA superintendent's designee shall be someone other than the LEA liaison. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the LEA superintendent's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the local school board of education.

c. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA superintendent's decision and wishes to appeal to the local board of education, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall inform the LEA liaison of the intent to appeal. The LEA liaison shall ensure an appointment is made for the next, regularly scheduled board meeting to address the dispute. The LEA liaison shall also provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with the documentation collected up to that point, including the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth's request for dispute resolution, the LEA liaisons and local superintendent's written decisions and any other additional information submitted by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the local school board of education's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the MDE if aggrieved.

State Educational Agency Level: Appeals made to the MDE shall be submitted in writing, signed by the complainant, and forwarded by the LEA. The following steps are to be taken:

3. Address the complaint to: Mississippi Department of Education Office of Federal Programs State Homeless Education Coordinator 359 North West Street, Suite 111 Jackson, MS 39205

The complaint shall include the following:

1. A description of the situation that prompted the dispute

2. The name(s) and age(s) of the homeless child or youth

3. The name(s) of the LEA and personnel involved

4. A description of the attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the local level, including copies of any documentation used in making the decisions.

The State Homeless Coordinator will gather needed information from statements of the parties involved and forward the information to the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs, along with a recommendation for resolution or for further investigation. Within ten (10) business days after receiving a complaint, the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs will recommend a resolution

MOSS POINT SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROCEDURES FOR THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN
AND
UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth is a federal statute concerning the education of homeless children and unaccompanied youth. The act is designed to provide a stable educational environment by minimizing the effect of mobility on academic achievement. It guarantees equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. It also prohibits segregating homeless children and unaccompanied youth and requires that homeless children and unaccompanied youth have access to other services such children and youths need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student achievement standards to which all children are held. In accordance with McKinney-Vento, these procedures govern the identification, school registration, enrollment, coordination of services, transfer, and withdrawal of homeless children and unaccompanied youth.

I. Definitions

A. **Homeless**: McKinney-Vento provides that a student is homeless if:

1. S/he lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;

2. S/he is a child or youth who is:
   a. sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
   b. living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations;
   c. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
   d. abandoned in hospitals; or
   e. awaiting foster care placement;

3. S/he has 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;

4. S/he is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or

5. S/he is a migratory child (a child who is, or whose parent is, a migratory agricultural worker including a migratory dairy worker, or migratory fisher, and who in the preceding thirty-six months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent in obtaining temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural, or fishing work has moved from one school district to another) who qualifies as homeless because s/he is living in circumstances described in 1 through 4 above.

B. **Enrollment**: attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

C. **School of origin**: the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

D. **Parent**: biological parent, adoptive parent, guardian, or individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian.

E. **Unaccompanied youth**: youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

F. **Date identified**: the day on which the parent or unaccompanied youth orally states or puts in writing to a district employee that they are homeless or are determined by the district homeless liaison to be homeless whichever is earlier.

II. Identification of Homeless Children and Youth

A. All school personnel must be aware and sensitive to the signs of homelessness and work to actively identify homeless children and unaccompanied youth in a respectful and appropriate manner.

B. As part of the ongoing efforts to identify homeless children and unaccompanied youth, school personnel will rely on information provided on the district's **Residency Questionnaire Form** at the time of registration. This form is provided to all students or their parents who seek to enroll at a school. The **Residency Questionnaire Form** is designed to identify whether the applicant lives in temporary housing or lacks housing.

C. The district's homeless liaison will make the final determination as to whether a student is homeless or an unaccompanied youth. Until a final determination is made by the district's homeless liaison, the school shall proceed with immediate registration, enrollment, and coordination of services.

III. School Registration of Homeless Children or Youths

Identified homeless students and unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization, and medical records, proof of residency, or other similar documentation.

Homeless students and unaccompanied youth lacking required registration documentation will be enrolled temporarily, but not to exceed 30 calendar days. During this period, the student, parent(s), and school will work to put in place all required documentation to complete the registration process.

IV. School Choice

A. McKinney-Vento entitles homeless students and unaccompanied youth to continue their education:

1. At their school or origin (defined above) for the duration of his/her homelessness; or
2. At the school in the attendance area serving their temporary residency.

B. The school counselor or district homeless liaison will consult with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, to determine the school enrollment that is in the best interest of the student. The school counselor or district homeless liaison shall, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the unaccompanied youth or youth's parent/guardian.

C. Transportation will be provided to the child or youth if the child or youth resides outside of the school's walking area.

D. In selecting the school that is in the best interest of the homeless student, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the school, and district homeless liaison should consider the following factors:

1. The student's age;
2. The school which the student's siblings attend;
3. The student's experiences at the school of origin;
4. The student's academic needs;
5. The student's emotional needs;
6. Any other special needs of the family;
7. Continuity of instruction;
8. Length of stay in the current living situation;
9. The likely location of the family's future permanent housing;
10. Time remaining in the school year;
11. Distance of the commute, and the impact it may have on the student's education, and other student-centered transportation related factors; and
12. The safety of the child.

E. The school or district homeless liaison will discuss with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth the school/district's decision concerning the final determination of the child's enrollment and placement. The school or district homeless liaison will verbally explain the right to appeal and the student's right to enrollment and services during the appeal.

F. The school will be notified of the approval for enrollment and placement. Immediate enrollment means that the student will be attending school and fully participating in school activities.

G. Students who become homeless during the school year or between academic years have the right to remain at their school of origin for the duration of their homelessness. If a homeless student becomes permanently housed during the academic year, that student has the right to remain at the school of origin for the remainder of the school year.

H. The school or district homeless liaison will notify the school where the student is residing to continue the enrollment of the student or immediately enroll the student.

I. Students identified as homeless or unaccompanied youth will be identified in the school's student data package (SAM) and reported monthly to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS).

J. Students identified as homeless or unaccompanied will be identified and reported for the remainder of the current school year.

K. At the beginning of the next school year, all schools will reset their student data packages, removing each homeless and unaccompanied student's identification tag. Homeless students and unaccompanied youth for the new school year will be identified through the Residency Questionnaire as in the previous school year.

V. Coordination of Services and Comparable Services
Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to the services offered to other students in the school that the homeless student or unaccompanied youth attends. School counselors and interventionists will provide case management services to homeless students to ensure coordination of services.

Schools will track the coordination of services through the schools' student data package (SAM7) and the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS).

Services include:

A. Transportation

B. Food and Nutrition

All homeless students are eligible for Food and Nutrition Services. Food and nutrition benefits are provided for the entire school year, even if the student becomes permanently housed during the school year.

C. Educational Services

The school's counselor shall review the student's available academic record to provide the most appropriate academic placement and to what extent the student meets eligibility criteria for services provided under:

Academic Education, Athletics, Career and Technical, Co-curricular, English Limited, Gifted and Talented, IDEA, and Title I; The school will facilitate the provision of all educational services and co-curricular services that the student is eligible to receive.

D. Referral to resources that can assist the family or unaccompanied youth.

E. Waiver of fees required by schools for, but not limited to uniform, field trips, books and materials, physical education, lab, class supplies, school records and high school graduation cap and gown fees. Fees needed for extracurricular activities **may** be waived if this will promote student success.

F. Schools are to ensure that homeless students have the opportunity to participate in all state academic proficiency examinations.

VI. Homeless Education Liaison Responsibilities

The district's Homeless Education Liaison is responsible for those duties assigned to the position under McKinney-Vento including ensuring that homeless children and unaccompanied youth are identified by school personnel are immediately enrolled; receive the educational services to which they are entitled; parents and guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities; public notice of McKinney-Vento rights are disseminated; enrollment disputes are mediated expeditiously; and parents and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of their transportation rights, including during any appeal process.

A. Homeless Education Liaison's Role and Responsibilities:

1. Train school-based personnel and student support services personnel in the identification, enrollment, and service of homeless children and unaccompanied youth, and related homeless education issues.

2. Provide the contact information to identified homeless students and families of agencies that have regular contact with homeless families, including but not limited to, shelter staff personnel, social service agencies, and other community agencies.

3. Disseminate information explaining the rights of homeless students under McKinney-Vento.
4. Review the case management of homeless students provided by schools to determine that such students are promptly identified, immediately enrolled, and receives educational services in accordance with McKinney-Vento.

6. Participate or assist with mediating with disputes that arise over enrollment, school selection, and services in accordance the district's dispute resolution process.

7. Represent the district to develop coordination with city and county agencies.

8. Represent the district to increase communication with and involvement with community groups and organizations.
9. Collaborate with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Homeless Education Coordinator to be apprised on guidance issued and revise the district's procedures for the enrollment and education of homeless students as needed.

10. Report homeless and unaccompanied youth data as required by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

11. Assist homeless families, children, and youth with referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

12. Provide homeless parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth with information about the district's enrollment dispute process.

13. Maintain contact and communication with the area shelters that serve children and youth.

VII. Custody/Guardianship Requirements

A. A homeless student who seeks registration as unaccompanied should be immediately referred to the school counselor or district homeless liaison. The school counselor or district homeless liaison will refer to sections I through IV above when making the best placement. The school counselor or district homeless liaison will verify the residency of the parent or guardian. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the school counselor or district homeless liaison will assist in placement/enrollment decisions, consider the youth's wishes and provide notice to the youth of the right to appeal under the district's dispute resolution provisions. Documentation should be maintained of all written and verbal communications, home visits, and efforts to contact the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth.

B. In situations in which no parent or guardian can be contacted; the school counselor or district homeless liaison should refer the homeless student to the Department of Human Services, to report the homeless student as a child in need of assistance. The appropriate documentation of this referral will be maintained by the school counselor. In cases in which no parent or legal guardian can be contacted and the homeless student is subsequently identified as a student in need of special education, the guidelines for implementing the parent surrogate procedure relating to special education services should be followed.

IX. Health Records and Birth Certificate Requirements

A. In situations in which a homeless student or unaccompanied youth registers at a school without having a record of immunization, the school should immediately contact the student's former school by telephone to request the student's records and to discuss immunization information and initial placement. If information is not available at the former school to satisfy immunization requirements, the school should contact the student's health care provider. If immunization records are not available, the school will work with the Department of Health to arrange for an appointment for proper immunization or reconstruction of lost records. The student will be allowed to attend classes as the immunization requirements are being met. A note stating that the child is homeless or unaccompanied should be attached to the child's enrollment information to satisfy state audit requirements.

B. If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be immediately registered and enrolled and appropriate steps should be taken to obtain verification of birth.

X. Educational Records, Transfer, and Withdrawal

A. Educational records needed for proper academic placement should be obtained by contacting the student's former school. If educational records are not available, the student should be immediately registered and enrolled; a new educational record should be developed in accordance with district and Mississippi Department of Education guidelines.

B. If a homeless child or unaccompanied youth seeks to register without educational records, the receiving school should immediately register and enroll the child and telephone the former school for transfer information and to request that the child's educational record be forwarded.

The sending school should provide requested information during the telephone contact and then forward the homeless student's educational record as promptly as possible.

C. Withdrawal of homeless students or unaccompanied youth is to be made only after consultation with the school counselor and principal has taken place.

XI. Tracking System for Homeless Students

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requires that each school district track and report monthly the number of identified homeless students through the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS). Each school will record identify homeless students in the district student data package (SAM).

XII. Dispute Resolution Process

A. In accordance with McKinney-Vento, the dispute resolution process regarding disputes that arise over enrollment, school selection, and other services shall be resolved in an expedited manner. The homeless student must remain in the school of origin or the geographical area school until the dispute is resolved. Transportation must be provided until the dispute has been resolved.

B. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal in writing to the school or district homeless education liaison by completing the Homeless Dispute Resolution Form.

C. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal the district's decision concerning the dispute to the state homeless coordinator at the Mississippi Department of Education.

The Moss Point School District McKinney-Vento Residency Form

Student Name _____

Date of Birth_____ Grade Level_____

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act) defines "homeless" as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This includes children who "are **temporarily** sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing or economic hardship."

Please check *one* of the following statements if your family is experiencing temporary homelessness:

Living in a shelter, including transitional housing shelters; awaiting foster care, etc.
Please provide name of shelter: _____
and address: _____

Living on the streets, abandoned buildings, in cars, trailers, campgrounds, public places, housing not fit for habitation--Please provide information regarding area in which student is living: _____

Living in hotels/motels for lack of other suitable housing – Please list name and address of hotel/motel: _____
_____

*Doubled-up; **Temporarily** living with family or friends due to lack of adequate housing or financial conditions. Please provide address of where student is living:*
Address: _____

Please answer the following if you checked one of the four boxes above:

How long do you expect to be at this address? _____
Are you seeking permanent housing? _____
Date student moved to this address: _____
Is a parent living in the home with the student? _____
If no, with whom is student living? _____ Relationship: _____
The School Social Worker may be in contact with you if clarification is needed.
I certify that the information provided about our living circumstances above with regard to the McKinney-Vento Act is true:

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Date

Office Use Only:

_____Does Qualify under McKinney-Vento Act _____Does NOT Qualify

_____ _____
McKinney-Vento Liaison/Appointee Signature Date

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