

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Board of Education adopts the following policy regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth. A basic foundation of this policy is that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated within the educational program on the basis of their status as homeless.

A. Definitions

1. *Enroll*-means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
2. *Homeless student*-means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth who are:
 - a. sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason;
 - b. living in motels, hotels, mobile trailer homes, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - d. abandoned in hospitals;
 - e. awaiting foster care placement;
 - f. using 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;
 - g. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
 - h. living in residential programs for runaway and homeless youth established pursuant to and
 - i. Migratory children.
3. *Regional Placement Plan*-means a comprehensive regional approach to the provision of education placements for homeless students, which has been approved by the Commissioner.
4. *School of Current Location*-means the public school district in which the child or youth is actually living and is eligible to attend.
5. *School of Origin*-means the school district that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
6. *Unaccompanied Youth*-means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
7. *LEA*-means Local Education Agency

B. The Liaison

The Board shall annually appoint a Liaison for homeless students. It shall be the responsibility of the Liaison to ensure that:

1. homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies;
2. where appropriate, homeless students are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in Town of Webb School
3. homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, including other appropriate services via agencies for referrals to health care services, dental services, and mental health services;
4. the parents or guardians of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
5. public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where such students receive services, such as the school, post office etc.
6. enrollment disputes are mediated as set forth in Section D of this policy;

7. the parent or guardian of a homeless student is fully informed of all transportation services;
8. he/she coordinates and collaborates with State Coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless students.

C. Enrollment

When a homeless student chooses to enroll in the district, the student, parent or guardian must complete the Town of Webb registration form and designate that this is the district that is the student's school of choice. The Town of Webb Union Free School District enrolls students who are deemed homeless, whether accompanied by an adult or not. The district will make a referral to the homeless liaison for any documentation that is not presented at the time of enrollment. This documentation includes: immunization records, previous academic records, proof of residency or other documentation. The district liaison will follow up with appropriate agencies to obtain such documentation.

Within five days of request from another LEA, the guidance department along with the homeless liaison will forward all necessary documentation regarding the homeless student. This will be done via US mail or fax upon the request of the other LEA. This documentation includes all school records such as proof of age, birth certificate, academic records, evaluations, immunization/medical records etc.

D. School Choice/Enrollment Disputes

To the extent feasible, the district shall maintain a homeless student in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian. A homeless student may choose to enroll in the school of current location or in a school district participating in a regional placement plan. If the district is the school district of origin and a homeless student whose temporary housing is located outside the district chooses to attend its school, that student may remain in the school he/she previously attended until the end of the school year.

If the district sends a homeless student to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, the district shall provide the parent or guardian with a written explanation of the decision, including a statement regarding the right to appeal to the Board. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the district shall ensure that the Liaison assists such youth in placement or enrollment decisions.

If a homeless student disputes the district decision relative to school choice or enrollment, the district shall immediately admit the student to the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The district shall follow up with appropriate notification to the parent. The district will refer the homeless student, parent/guardian to the district Liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process.

E. Dispute Resolution Process

- a. After receiving notice of the dispute, the Liaison will invite the homeless student and/or the parent/guardian to submit information concerning the student's right to attend school in the district.
- b. Within five school days of receiving notice of the dispute, the Liaison shall schedule a meeting with the homeless student/parent/guardian. A member of the guidance department and liaison will review the family's concerns and submitted information.
- c. Following this meeting the district within two school days will provide written notice to the homeless student/parent/guardian of the determination regarding the dispute. If the district determines that the student is not eligible to attend its school, the following must be noted:
 - That the student is not entitled to attend the district school
 - The basis for the determination
 - The date which the student will be excluded from school
 - That the district determination may be appealed to the Board of Education by making a written request to the Superintendent of School within ten calendar days of the decision

F. Comparable Services

The Town of Webb Union Free School District follows the academic progress of all students who might be deemed homeless. These students are given opportunities to make up work in after school programs. They can receive extra help and tutoring after school in order to accomplish this. Any homeless student in this district will be given the same services offered to all other students in the school setting. These include transportation, educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I, educational programs for students with disabilities, educational programs for students with limited English proficiency, programs in vocational and technical education, and school nutrition programs. Transportation to a school of origin outside of this district will be worked out with the other LEA.

Communication takes place with the parent/guardian of a homeless youth via letter denoting the educational opportunities available for the student. Additionally transportation efforts are worked out with the parent/guardian so that information and follow through are communicated and carried out.

The Town of Webb Union Free School District and its liaison work with the Prevention Service Coordinator who collaborates with local social service agencies in order to provide necessary assistance for homeless youth. Public notice of the rights of the homeless is posted in this LEA along with available pamphlets for public review. Meetings were held with key staff in order to ensure the identification of homeless students. Identifying factors were reviewed along with the rights of the homeless.

The Town of Webb Union Free School District has no policy barriers in terms of the admittance and educational services provided to homeless youth. The homeless liaison has reviewed and filed the questions and answers on the education of homeless students. These were shared with key staff members in this LEA. Other regulatory documentation has been reviewed and kept on file.

APPROVED: September 6, 2005
 May 2, 2017