Homeless Students

Section 1. General. To the extent practical and as required by law, the school corporation will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students shall be provided district services for which they are eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and/or adequate nighttime residence, including:

A. Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or RV 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. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
G. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; and
H. Are migratory children living in conditions described above.

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district’s homeless liaison for homeless students and their families.

To the extent feasible, homeless students shall continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents/guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living. Attendance rights accorded by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra-district choice
options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the school corporation.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the corporation’s decision and their appeal rights in writing. The corporation’s liaison shall carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to corporation policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the corporation liaison is directed to assist in this process. Records from the student’s previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to corporation policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with corporation policies.

Section 2. Transportation. Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different school corporation, or a homeless student is living in another school corporation but will attend his or her school of origin in this corporation, the two school corporations will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

Section 3. Services. The corporation’s liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school corporations on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The corporation’s liaison shall also review and recommend amendments to corporation policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Section 4. Enrollment.

1. The school corporation will consider the best interest of the child in enrollment decisions;

2. The school corporation shall not deny or delay enrollment of homeless students;

3. The school corporation’s need for student contact information shall not be in a form or manner that constructs a barrier for homeless students.
students. For example, homeless students may not be excluded for failure to have a mailing address or emergency contact information.

4. The district’s homeless liaison shall:

   A. Ensure that public notice is disseminated where homeless children receive services;

   B. Assure that students are identified by school personnel, enrolled in school and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed; and

   C. Inform parents/guardians of educational and related activities and inform parents/guardians of transportation services.

Section 5. Definitions.

1. **Homeless Children and Youth** - means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason, living in motels, parks or campgrounds; or children or youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation by human beings; or children or youth living in cars, abandoned buildings or substandard housing or similar situations; or migratory children because they are living in circumstances like those described above.

2. **Unaccompanied Youth** - means a youth not in the physical custody of a parents/guardians. Youth living on their own in any of the homeless situations described in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act.

Section 6. **Dispute Resolution Procedure**. The school corporation shall ensure that the child/youth attend the school in which they sought enrollment while the dispute process is being carried out.

1. **Notification of Appeal Process**. If the school corporation seeks to place a homeless child in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent, the school corporation shall inform the parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth of the right to appeal. The school corporation shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with written notice including:
A. An explanation of the child’s placement and contact information for the district’s homeless liaison.

B. Notification of the parent’s right to appeal(s);

C. Notification of the right to enroll in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute;

D. A description of the dispute resolution process including a petition form that can be returned to the school to initiate the process and timelines; and

E. A summary of the federal legislation governing placement of homeless students (McKinney-Vento Act).

2. Appeal to the District’s Homeless Liaison – Level I. If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the school corporation’s placement decision, they may appeal by filing a written request for dispute resolution with the school, the district’s homeless liaison. If submitted to the school, it will be immediately forwarded to the homeless liaison. The request for dispute resolution must be submitted within fifteen business days of receiving notification of the school corporation’s placement.

The liaison must log the complaint including a brief description of the situation and reason for the dispute and the date and time of the complaint was filed.

A. A copy of the complaint must be forwarded to the liaison’s supervisor and the Superintendent.

B. Within five business days of the receiving the complaint, the district’s homeless liaison must provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written decision and notification of the parent’s right to appeal.

C. The school corporation will verify receipt of the Level I decision.

D. If the parent or unaccompanied youth wishes to appeal, notification must be provided to the district’s homeless liaison within ten business days of receipt of the Level I decision. The district’s homeless liaison
shall provide the parent with an appeals package containing:

(1) The complaint filed with the district’s homeless liaison at Level I;

(2) The decision rendered at Level I; and

(3) Additional information provided by the parent/guardian, unaccompanied youth and/or homeless liaison.

3. Appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs – Level II. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal the district homeless liaison’s decision to the Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs using the appeals package provided at Level I.

A. The Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs will arrange for a personal conference to be held with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth within five business days of receiving the Level I appeals package.

B. Within five business days of the conference with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth the Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs shall provide that individual with a written decision with supporting evidence and notification of their right to appeal to the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee.

C. The school corporation will verify receipt of the Level II decision.

D. A copy of the Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs decision will be forwarded to the district’s homeless liaison.

E. If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth wishes to appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of School Management and Special Programs, notification must be provided to the district homeless liaison within ten business days of receipt of the Level II decision.
4. **Appeal to the Office of the Superintendent – Level III.**

A. The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee shall forward a copy of the Level II decision and all written documentation to the homeless liaison within five days of rendering a decision. The school corporation will submit the entire dispute package to the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee in one complete package by U.S. mail.

B. The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee shall make a final decision within fifteen business days of receiving the appeal;

C. The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee decision will be forwarded to the district’s homeless liaison. The liaison will distribute the decision to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and the local Superintendent.

D. The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee decision will be the final resolution for placement of a homeless child or youth in the school corporation.

E. The school corporation will retain the record of all disputes, at each level, related to the placement of homeless children.

Section 7. **Inter-district Disputes.** If school corporations are unable to resolve a dispute regarding the placement of a homeless student, either school corporation may submit a written request to the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee seeking resolution.

The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee will resolve the dispute within 10 business days of notification of the dispute and inform all interested parties of the decision.