

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTHS POLICY

Summary: Young Scholars Charter School shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)

Contact: Director of Student Support

1. Authority 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 et seq SC 1306 Title 22 Sec. 11.18

The Board or Trustees recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Board shall identify homeless children within the district, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

The Board shall waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.

2. Definitions

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Awaiting foster care placement.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children.

10. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.

11. Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

3. Delegation of Responsibility

The Board and Executive Director designate the Director of Student Supports to serve as the district's liaison for homeless students and families.

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432

The district's liaison shall coordinate with:

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The district's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

4. Guidelines

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless.

Enrollment/Placement

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432

To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless student shall continue to be enrolled in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the district liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. However, the

district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The district liaison may contact the previous school for oral confirmation of immunizations, and the school shall request records from the previous district, pursuant to Board policy. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment.

School/Health Records

The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The instructional program should begin without delay after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed.

The enrolling district's liaison will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Placement/Disputes/Complaints

If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent/guardian/student will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal. The parent/guardian/student will be referred to the district liaison, who will carry out the state's grievance procedure as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the district liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

If disputes or complaints of noncompliance arise regarding the education of homeless students, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The person filing the complaint shall first contact the school or district through the district liaison, the principal, or Superintendent to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and most likely to be able to resolve it quickly.
2. If Step 1 is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Education Liaison, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.
3. Individual cases may be referred to the PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, as needed, by the State Homeless Coordinator.

PDE will deliver a response within fifteen (15) business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school/ district letter or on the Dispute Letter Form if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Initiative.

Services

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432 SC 1306

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

Transportation

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432 SC 1306

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

Fiscal Responsibilities

The following guidelines will be followed in cases when the education of the student is provided by the district where the homeless student is temporarily living. The guidelines shall also apply in cases when the district of prior attendance, where that is not the district the student attended when permanently housed, will educate the student:

1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students.
2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school district will send a form for the determination of district residence for students in facilities or institutions to the presumed district of residence.
3. If the form is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating district will enter the student on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating district will bill the resident district for tuition and will report membership data according to state child accounting procedures.
4. If the form is disclaimed and a district of residence cannot be determined, the student will be considered a ward of the state. The educating district will enter the student on its rolls as a

nonresident ward of the state and will report membership according to state child accounting procedures. The Department of Education will pay tuition to the educating district based on membership reported to child accounting.

In cases when the education of the student is provided by the district of origin, where that is the district the student attended when permanently housed, the district will continue to educate a homeless student for the period of temporary displacement and should maintain the student on its roll as a resident student.

In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not the district of new residence, the educating district will continue to educate the formerly homeless student on its roll as a nonresident student.