



Administrative Guidelines

Department: Academics (OAAP)

Policy: JBCB

Topic: Enrollment of Homeless Students

Revised: July 2019

PROCEDURE

As required by law and State authority, Marietta City Schools will provide homeless students an educational opportunity to the same extent as resident students.

The Superintendent or designee shall assign a staff member to serve as the District's homeless liaison (DHL). The role of the DHL shall be:

1. Ensure each school has identified a staff person to serve as the School Level Homeless Liaison (HL).
2. Ensure homeless students and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY):
 - a. Are identified by school personnel;
 - b. Are assisted in enrolling in school and overcoming any barriers to enrollment and attendance at school;
 - c. Receive educational services for which they are eligible and to the same extent as resident students;
 - d. Are referred to the School Social worker (SSW), if other support resources are needed;
3. Ensure parents/guardians of homeless students are informed of their rights under McKinney-Vento and are made aware of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with a meaningful opportunity to participate in their children's educational program;
4. Ensure public notices of the educational rights of homeless students are disseminated in schools and such places homeless families receive services, such as family shelters;
5. Ensure enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
6. Ensure Parent/guardians and UHY are informed of the transportation services provided by the District, including transportation to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing transportation services, per the requirements of McKinney-Vento.
7. Ensure students who do not have immunization or medical records are assisted in obtaining required immunizations and medical records, as required by District policy;
8. Collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinators for the Education of

- Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.
9. Conduct training and sensitivity/awareness activities for HL and other staff involved in the identification, enrollment, or support of homeless students/UHY.
 10. Working with school staff to make sure that homeless students are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over student enrollment or placement.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS:

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC §11431, et seq., defines homeless students as those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

This includes:

1. Children and youth who:
 - Share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - Live in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - Are abandoned in hospitals; or
 - Are awaiting foster care placement.
2. Children and youth 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;
3. Children and youth who live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances set forth in Items 1, 2, and 3 above.

The parent/guardians of a student who claims to be or demonstrates evidence of living in a homeless situation will be given a Student Residency Statement (SRS) to complete and the school-level homeless liaison will determine eligibility according to the above definition. If the HL has questions regarding the determination of whether the student/UHY meets the qualifications as annotated above, he/she should contact the DHL immediately. Renewal of homeless status is not automatic each year. Eligibility for homeless education services is for one school year only. Each school year, families or students should submit a new SRS form or request for homeless eligibility to the DHL or HL after July 1 in order to determine if a student continues to qualify for homeless services.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL OF HOMELESS STUDENTS ENROLLMENT:

1. A homeless student should be enrolled immediately; even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment.
 - a. Homeless students may enroll in the school serving the attendance zone where the student resides; or
 - b. Continue enrollment in the school of origin, when feasible.
 - The school of origin is the school the student attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

- c. Determining which school the child attends will be based upon the student's best interest.
2. A homeless student who attends his/her school of origin in accordance with paragraph a.2.a. above may:
 - a. Attend that school for the duration of homelessness;
 - b. Stay in the school for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year;
or
 - c. Attend the school for the duration of homelessness if the student becomes homeless between academic years.
3. The principal or designee should notify the HL when a homeless student is identified by having a parent/guardian complete the SRS form.
4. The HL should provide the parent/guardian a copy of the Homeless Parent Information Brochure.
5. If a homeless student arrives at school without a parent/guardian, the UHY should be enrolled immediately and the SSW notified.
 - a. The SSW should attempt to contact the parent/guardian or notify DFACS/Law Enforcement; as the situation warrants.
 - b. Students must meet the District's age and/or school eligibility criteria in order to be enrolled in a school that has such criteria as a requirement for enrollment.
 - c. If a student meets the requirements for enrollment in the district's special needs pre-K program, they shall receive enrollment priority.
6. Homeless students qualify for free breakfast and lunch and should be enrolled in the program immediately.
7. Once enrolled, homeless students/UHY shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students at the school.
8. Homeless students/UHY shall be provided Title I services, regardless of the school they attend.
9. When students enroll without records (i.e. transcripts, grades, etc.) the principal or designee should have the HL:
 - a. Contact the former school to request the student's records and discuss immunization information and tentative placement;
 - b. Create a cumulative record if it is determined that the records are not available;
 - c. Refer the student to public health and provide follow-up to ensure that the student has been immunized, if there are no immunization records; and
 - d. If necessary, contact the SSW or DHL for assistance.
10. Parents/guardians shall provide the school with contact information; however, enrollment cannot be denied if the parent/guardian fails to provide such information.
11. As a part of the enrollment process, the HL should determine the transportation needs of the homeless student/UHY.
 - a. The HL should have the parent/guardian/UHY complete the Transportation Request Form at the time of enrollment and submit the form to the Director of Transportation or designee.
 - b. If other than school bus transportation is to be utilized, the

HL should contact the DHL to make arrangements for commercial bus tickets, gas cards or other resources as available and appropriate.

WITHDRAWAL:

- a. Homeless students often leave school without officially withdrawing.
- b. If the school is contacted by another district for a homeless student's records, the records should be sent as soon as possible but no later than 10 calendar days after receiving the request.
- c. The DHL shall be notified on a quarterly basis of the enrollment status of all homeless students/UHY.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

In the event a dispute arises over the enrollment or placement of a homeless student/UHY, the following procedures will be followed:

- a. The child or youth must be immediately enrolled or remain enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment or seeking to remain, pending resolution of the dispute.
 - Enrollment includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
 - It is critical that students not be kept out of school.
- b. The school must refer the student, parent/guardian, or UHY to the DHL to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
- c. The DHL must provide the parent/guardian or UHY with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, and the parent/guardian's or UHY's right to appeal that decision (See Exhibit 1).
 - The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent/guardian or UHY can understand.
 - Non-English speaking parents/guardians or UHY must receive the communication in their native language or other language in which they are literate.
 - The explanation should include a form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn in to the HL or DHL to initiate the dispute process. (The HL or DHL should copy the form and return the copy to the parent, guardian or youth for their records when it is submitted);
 - The form should also include a step-by-step description of how to dispute the school's decision; Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute; Notice that "immediate enrollment" includes full participation in all school activities; Contact information for the DHL and State coordinator, with a brief description of their roles; Notice of the right to appeal to the State if the School System-level resolution is not satisfactory; and Timelines for resolving School System and State-level appeals.

- d. If the parent/guardian or UHY is not in agreement with the DHL's decision, the parent/guardian or UHY may appeal in writing to the Superintendent.
 - The parent/guardian or UHY must submit a written appeal of the DHL decision within 2 school days of receiving the written explanation of the selection or enrollment decision.
 - The Superintendent or designee shall render a decision regarding the appeal as expeditiously as possible but no later than 10 school days after receipt of the written appeal.
 - The Superintendent's or designee's decision shall be in writing and cite the specific reason(s) reason for denial.
 - The DHL shall deliver via first class mail or by hand delivery a copy of the decision and inform the parent/guardian of their right to appeal the decision to the appropriate Federal Program Manager at the Georgia Department of Education.
- e. If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level the parent/guardian or UHY may request a review of the dispute by the appropriate Federal Program Manager at the Georgia Department of Education.
 - The parent must file a written appeal of the Superintendent's decision within 2 school days of receiving written notice of the Superintendent's decision.
 - The DHL shall provide the parent/guardian or UHY the additional instructions/forms needed for filing an appeal to Georgia Department of Education (DOE).
 - Complaint procedures and the complaint form can be downloaded at <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/SchoolImprovement/FederalPrograms/Pages/Resources.aspx>.
- f. If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed after the Associate Superintendent at the DOE has issued his or her decision, the LEA or parent/guardian/UHY has the right to request review of the decision by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The review is at the Secretary's discretion. Appeal procedures to US Secretary of Education can be obtained from the DOE at the above website or by contacting the DHL.

CREDIT ACCRUAL:

The LEA works to maximize credit accrual for all students. ESSA now requires states to identify and remove "barriers that prevent [homeless youth] from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies." LEAs must have clear procedures in place to ensure that homeless students receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. (Section 722(g)(1)(F)(ii)).

Marietta City Schools will implement the following procedures to ensure homeless children and youth receive appropriate credit for satisfactorily completed full or partial coursework.

- a. The McKinney Vento Program works with homeless children, youth, their families, school staff, and transportation to ensure that the students have the ability to remain at their school of origin.

- b. Elementary students attain credit accrual through the school-wide MTSS process, supports set-in place by instructional extension and/or EIP segments. Remediation, compacting and/or acceleration are available to help support the academic progress of homeless children and youth. McKinney-Vento Tutoring supports students attaining academic success.
- c. Middle Schools students meet with school counselors to build a schedule and ensure the student is enrolled in equivalent courses.
- d. Middle School students are monitored through the school-wide MTSS process. Additional academic interventions include department-led before and after school academic study sessions and instructional extension. Additionally, supplemental McKinney-Vento tutoring supports students in need of additional academic intervention for credit recovery.
- e. High School counselors meet with students to develop a success plan to ensure that students are on track for graduation.
- f. High Schools throughout the district offer a variety of supports including afterschool learning labs, support opportunities during the school-day, before and after-school study support, instructional extension, and peer tutoring.
- g. Students transferring with partial credit are placed in equivalent courses. If the student will lose credits, he/she is assigned in a credit recovery setting.
- h. High School Students receive partial credit through independent study options High School offers settings where a student may test-out of portions of the class he/she successfully completed, and accelerate through the portions needed for graduation credit.
- i. The LEA offers alternative programs such as:
 - Dual Enrollment
 - CTAE courses (with technical certification tracks)
 - Hybrid programs through the Performance Learning Center (PLC), a digital learning environment with flexible scheduling.
- j. The McKinney-Vento Program offers:
 - Tutoring for academically at risk students
 - Tutoring by highly qualified staff.
- k. The McKinney-Vento Program coordinates with other Federal Programs including, but not limited to Special Education, Migrant, Title III, and Title I to ensure that the students attain academic credits, school stability, and collaborative supports.