

**POLICY 542  
EDUCATION OF HOMELESS / HIGHLY MOBILE STUDENTS**

Adopted: January 9, 2018 (District Policy)  
Reviewed by Policy Committee: February 8, 2022

**I. POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children and youth who are experiencing homelessness receive the same educational opportunities as other students who are not homeless. This policy is intended to ensure that the district is in full compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT**

Children and youth who are homeless and highly mobile will have the opportunity to meet the same challenging state and district standards expected for all students. Children and youth who are homeless and highly mobile are to be provided educational services comparable to those received by any student of the district, and all appropriate educational and support services available at all grade levels K-12.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence as those terms are defined in law. They include:
1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  2. Children and youths 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 youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and,
  4. Migratory children, as this term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this definition because the children are living in circumstances described in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistant Act.

- B. The School of Origin means the school the student attended when they last had permanent housing or the school last attended.
- C. The Homeless Liaison is a person designated by the district as the district contact for students in homeless situations. A Homeless Liaison must carry out the provisions of law.

**IV. SCHOOL SELECTION AND ENROLLMENT:**

- A. School sites will enroll each homeless child/youth as placed by district student placement guidelines in accordance with class size limitations. When a student is placed in a school by the student placement center and/or district guidelines, school sites will enroll any child/youth whether he or she is living in a shelter, lacks a permanent address, or is living in conditions covered by the homeless definition.
- B. The school district shall, to the extent feasible, provide each homeless child/youth with:
  - the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year or if the child/youth becomes homeless between academic years for the following academic year; or
  - the schools in the same attendance area offered to a non-homeless students, following placement guidelines
  - permission to remain in the school selected for as long as the child/youth remains homeless or until the end of the academic year if the child/youth becomes permanently housed.
- C. Written explanation of placement decision: If a student is placed in a school other than the school of origin or that requested by the parent/guardian, a written explanation of the placement decision will be provided, including information concerning the right to appeal.
- D. Records: School sites cannot deny enrollment to or delay the enrollment or transfer of any homeless child/youth solely because the student is unable to produce school, medical or residency records. It is the responsibility of the receiving school to immediately enroll the child/youth and make a reasonable effort to verify the student is homeless; to contact the sending school for proper transfer documentation; and to refer the student immediately to a physician or clinic, including free clinics, for any examination or immunization that may be necessary.
- E. Student File Coding: Upon enrollment, each student must be coded on their student file as homeless/highly mobile according to procedures determined by Student Accounting.
- F. Transfers and withdrawals: School sites should follow established procedures for student transfer or withdrawal as homeless students may change or leave school prior to graduation and without officially transferring.

- G. Free and reduced price meals: Students who are identified as homeless on their student file automatically qualify for meals at no cost. If there is a change in homeless status, the parent/guardian must complete an application for free and reduced price meals.
- H. Homelessness alone is not a reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. This does not prohibit special programs for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies or to provide temporary, special and supplemental services for the students.

V. **TRANSPORTATION**

- A. Homeless/highly mobile students, including unaccompanied youth, must be provided transportation to and from their school of origin at the request of parent/guardian, or by the Homeless Liaison, consistent with district regulations regarding miles from school, routes and other transportation policies and regulations.
- B. When the homeless student's school of origin is outside the district in which he/she is currently staying, the two districts will apportion the transportation costs.

VI. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Any disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth shall be expeditiously addressed through the process outlined below:

1. The child or youth (including unaccompanied youth) shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. While disputes are pending, the students will be allowed to participate fully in school and receive all services that they would normally receive. If the placement decision is not satisfactory:
2. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions. The written explanation of the reasons for its determination will be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal. If this explanation is not satisfactory:
3. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will be referred to the local liaison, who will work with the superintendent to ensure the student is immediately placed in the school requested if this placement meets district guidelines and is comparable to other students. If this decision is not satisfactory, the local liaison will implement state grievance procedure.