



SCHOOL BOARD OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
School Board Policy Executive Summary
 Form D

Policy Number:	5111.01
Title of Policy:	Homeless Students
Cabinet Member:	Chris Moore
Purpose of Revisions:	The purpose of the proposed revisions to the policy is to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, Florida State Board of Education Rules, Board policies, administrative rules, procedures, and guidelines. In addition, the proposed revisions promote transparency and accountability.
Tentative Schedule:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet – 6/01/2021 • Work Session – 6/22/2021 • Rule Development Workshop – 7/13/2021 • School Board Meeting Information – 7/13/2021 • School Board Meeting Approval – 7/29/2021 • Effective Date – upon approval
Summary of Proposed Policy Revisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy is being revised to clarify the procedures regarding the McKinney-Vento Act, and other changes in compliance with applicable Florida and federal law. • Particular areas of revision include the following: identification of homeless children, coordination of district programs and reducing barriers for homeless children to receive education, and to coordinate with state requirements for district policy. • These proposed revisions encompass in part the suggested language from NEOLA. Language has been added to ensure compliance with the state’s McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Students Policy Requirements Checklist.
Specific Authority:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F.S. 743.067; F.S.1003.01; F.S.1003.21; F.S.1003.22; F.S.1009.21; F.S.1009.25; 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.
Next Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to internal procedures • Training for BPS employees regarding revisions to policy and revised procedures

**Current
Version**

5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Florida law requires that all children have access to a free public education. Under federal law (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001), homeless children and youth must have access to a free and appropriate public education, including preschool, and be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.

Definitions:

- A. A homeless child or youth is defined as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes children and youth who:
 - 1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - 2. Are living in motels, hotels, travel trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - 3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement;
 - 4. 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;
 - 5. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - 6. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in 1 through 5. (Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, Section 725(2), Public Law 107-110)
- B. The term "unaccompanied youth" means a student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- C. The term "school of origin" means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled.
- D. The terms "enroll and enrollment" mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.
- E. The term "immediate" means without delay.
- F. The term "parent" means parent or guardian of a student.
- G. The term "liaison" means the staff person designated by our LEA and each LEA in the state as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Act.

The Brevard School District:

- A. Identifies homeless students based on the McKinney-Vento Act definition shown above.
- B. Ensures that all homeless children and youth are afforded the same free; appropriate public education; and receive comparable services (such as transportation services; educational

services, including special/exceptional education and related services and programs for English language learners; career and technical education programs; gifted programs; school nutrition programs (free meals); Title I, Part A; and before and after school programs offered to other children and youth, and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school.

- C. Provides access of homeless preschool-aged children and their families to educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs administered by the school district.
- D. Seeks to remove barriers and provide exemptions as needed to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth, such as guardianship, transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, and other documentation.
- E. Ensures the immediate enrollment and retention of homeless students.
- F. Ensures that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized, segregated, or separated in another educational program, on the basis of their status as homeless.
- G. Ensures the rights of homeless students to remain in their school of origin with transportation services and their right to dispute school selection, if other than school of origin, and communicate these rights and the dispute process to the homeless parents or guardians or unaccompanied youth. If requested by the parent or homeless unaccompanied youth, the District shall provide transportation to and from the school of origin if feasible. If the homeless student is living in this district but attending school in another, or attending school in this district but living in another, this district will coordinate with the neighboring district to arrange transportation.
- H. Follows the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

McKinney-Vento is the primary piece of Federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in U.S. public schools. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002.

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

Adopted 4/12/05

Revised 2/28/06

Revised 3/19/10

Neola Template

NEOLA Template

5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Definitions

Children who are identified as meeting the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the same manner as all other students of the District. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness. The District shall regularly review and revise its policies, including school discipline policies that impact homeless students, including those who may be a member of any of the protected classes (Policy 2260).

Homeless children and youth, including "certified homeless youth" under State law, are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include children and youth who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- B. live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- C. live in emergency or transitional shelters
- D. are abandoned in hospitals
- E. have a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, or
- F. live in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

NOTE: According to nonregulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), standards for adequate housing may vary by locality. Please see *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education (ED), for factors to consider when determining whether a child or youth is living in "substandard housing".

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, an unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth under the age of twenty-one (21) and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Under State law an unaccompanied homeless youth who is sixteen (16) years of age or older and found to be an unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for services under Federal law shall be issued a certificate by the District's Liaison for Homeless Children on District letterhead documenting his/her status which is to be accepted by medical providers and the courts.

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, children or youth who are experiencing homelessness also include migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-F above.

Services to Homeless Children and Youth

The District will provide services to homeless students that are comparable to other students in the District, including:

- A. transportation services;
- B. public preschool programs and other educational programs and services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including:
 - 1. programs for children with disabilities

2. programs for English learners (ELs) (i.e., students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP));
3. programs in career and technical education;
4. programs for gifted and talented students;
5. school nutrition programs; and
6. before - and after-school programs.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths. For more information on the role of the Liaison, refer to AP 5111.01.

School Stability

Maintaining a stable school environment is crucial to a homeless student's success in school. To ensure stability, the District must make school placement determinations based on the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth based on student-centered factors. The District must:

- A. continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- B. enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth, or the family of the child or youth, is actually living are eligible to attend.

When determining a child or youth's best interest, the District must assume that keeping the homeless student in the school of origin is in that student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is an unaccompanied youth. The school of origin is the school the student attended or enrolled in when permanently housed, including a public preschool. The school of origin also includes the designated receiving school at the next level for feeder school patterns, when the student completes the final grade level at the school of origin.

When determining the student's best interest, the District must also consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students and give priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or youth (if an unaccompanied youth). The District also considers the school placement of siblings when making this determination.

If the District finds that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the District must provide the individual with a written explanation and reason for the determination in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. This written explanation will include appeal rights and be provided in a timely manner.

Immediate Enrollment

The District has an obligation to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students. If a school other than the student's school of origin is chosen on the basis of a best interest determination, the homeless student must be immediately enrolled, even if the student does not have the documentation typically necessary for enrollment, such as immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificate, or previous academic records. The homeless student must also be enrolled immediately regardless of whether the student missed application or enrollment deadlines during the period of homelessness, fails to meet uniform or dress code requirements, or has outstanding fines or fees.

The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless student to obtain relevant academic or other records. If the student needs immunization or other health records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to the Liaison, who will help obtain the immunizations, screenings or other required health records. Records usually maintained by the school must be kept so that they are available in a timely fashion if the child enters a new school or district. These records include immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs. Procedures for inter-State records transfer between schools should be taken into account in order to facilitate immediate enrollment.

In addition, it shall be the District's responsibility to make sure that, once identified for services, the homeless student is attending classes and not facing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (if available).

Transportation

The District shall promptly provide homeless students with transportation services that are comparable to those available to non-homeless students. At the request of the parent or guardian, or the liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall provide, or arrange for, transportation to and from the student's school of origin.

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the District, transportation shall be provided, or the District shall arrange for the student's transportation, to/from his/her school of origin.
- B. If the homeless student resides in another school district, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in the District, the District and the school district in which the student now resides shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there is not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student from the district of residence to the school of origin in the District. Since Federal law requires that the responsibility and costs to be shared equally, the district of residence shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

- C. If the homeless student resides in the District, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in another district, the District and the school district in which the student's school of origin is located shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student to the school of origin in the other district. Since Federal law requires the responsibility and costs for transportation services to be shared equally, the district in which the school or origin is located shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

- D. When the student obtains permanent housing, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year.

The mode of transportation shall be determined in consultation with the parent or guardian and shall be based on the best interest of the student.

In accordance with Federal law, the above transportation requirements still apply during the resolution of any dispute. The District will work with the State to resolve transportation disputes with other districts. Until the Districts reach agreement, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally. Costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

If the disputing district is in another State, the District will turn to the State for assistance as Federal guidance says that both states should try to arrange an agreement for the districts.

Dispute Resolution

Homeless families and youths have the right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. If a dispute arises between a school and a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless student, the District must follow its dispute resolution procedures, consistent with the State's procedures. If such a dispute occurs, the District will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. The student will receive all services for which they are eligible until all disputes and appeals are resolved.

Pursuant to Federal and State law, State Board rule, and this policy, the District will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of all decisions regarding school selection and enrollment made by the District, along with a written explanation of appeal rights.

The District's notice and written explanation about the reason for its decision will include, at a minimum, an explanation of how the school reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, including the following:

- A. a description of the proposed or refused action by the school;
- B. an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused;
- C. a description of other options the school considered and why those options were rejected;
- D. a description of any other relevant factors to the school's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination such as the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources; and
- E. an appropriate timeline to ensure deadlines are not missed.

The District's notice and written explanation shall include contact information for the Liaison and the State Coordinator, and a brief description of the roles of each. The District's notice and written explanation shall also inform the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth that the Liaison is responsible for providing information describing the State-level dispute resolution process and distributing the appropriate forms to all parties wanting to file an appeal.

To initiate the State-level appeals process, within ten (10) working days after receiving written notification of the District-level or inter-district decision, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth may file an appeal with the Liaison, who must provide it to FLDOE. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Liaison is required to notify FLDOE of the State-level appeal and provide that appeal to the FLDOE. The local liaison also must log incidents of State-level appeals in the FLDOE Online Dispute Resolution Tracking System.

The FLDOE and the Commissioner of Education will render a decision on any appeal and provide a copy of such decision to the parties.

All decisions and notices shall be drafted in a language and format appropriate for low-literacy, limited vision readers, and individuals with disabilities.

For children and youth and/or parents or guardians who are English learners or whose dominant language is not English, the District will provide translation and interpretation services in connection with all phases of the dispute resolution process pursuant to federal laws.

The District will also provide electronic notices via email if the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth has access to email followed by a written notice provided in person or sent by mail.

Homeless Children in Preschool

Homeless preschool-aged children and their families shall be provided equal access to the educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs, including Head Start programs, administered by the District. Additionally, the homeless child must remain in the public preschool of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. When making such a decision on the student's best interest, the District takes into account the same factors as it does for any student, regardless of age. It also considers pre-school age specific factors, such as 1) the child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff; 2) the impact of school climate on the child, including school safety; the

quality and availability of services to meet the child's needs, including health, developmental, and social-emotional needs; and 3) travel time to and from school.

The District must also provide transportation services to the school of origin for a homeless child attending preschool. It is the District's responsibility to provide the child with transportation to the school of origin even if the homeless preschooler who is enrolled in a public preschool in the District moves to another district that does not provide widely available or universal preschool.

Public Notice

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth of the applicable rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school. In addition, the District shall post public notice of the McKinney-Vento rights in places that homeless populations frequent, such as shelters, soup kitchens, and libraries in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths.

Records

The local liaison will assist the homeless students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) or unaccompanied homeless students in their efforts to provide documentation to meet State and local requirements for entry into school.

All records for homeless students shall be maintained, subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Policy 8330, and in such a manner so that they are available in a timely fashion and can be transferred promptly to the appropriate parties, as required. Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, information regarding a homeless student's living situation is not considered directory information and must be provided the same protections as other non-directory personally identifiable information (PII) contained in student education records under FERPA. The District shall incorporate practices to protect student privacy as described in AP 5111.01, AP 8330, and in accordance with the provisions of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA).

No Board policy, administrative procedure, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of homeless children.

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Legal

F.S. 743.067

F.S. 1003.01

F.S. 1003.21

F.S. 1003.22

F.S. 1009.21

F.S. 1009.25

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

Cross References

ap5111 - ADMISSION TO THE DISTRICT

ap5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Redline Draft

~~NEOLA Template~~

5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Definitions

Children who are identified as meeting the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the same manner as all other students of the District. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness. The District shall regularly review and revise its policies, including school discipline policies that impact homeless students, including those who may be a member of any of the protected classes (Policy 2260).

Homeless children and youth, including "certified homeless youth" under State law, are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include children and youth who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- B. live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- C. live in emergency or transitional shelters
- D. are abandoned in hospitals
- E. have a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, or
- F. live in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

NOTE: According to nonregulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), standards for adequate housing may vary by locality. Please see *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education (ED), for factors to consider when determining whether a child or youth is living in "substandard housing".

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, an unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth under the age of twenty-one (21) and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Under State law an unaccompanied homeless youth who is sixteen (16) years of age or older and found to be an unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for services under Federal law shall be issued a certificate by the District's Liaison for Homeless Children on District letterhead documenting his/her status which is to be accepted by medical providers and the courts.

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, children or youth who are experiencing homelessness also include migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-F above.

Designated receiving school could include the next level school, elementary from prekindergarten, middle from elementary, high from middle, that a homeless child or youth, whose homelessness continues into the next school year, may attend when that next level school is the district designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.

Services to Homeless Children and Youth

The District will provide services to homeless students that are comparable to other students in the District, including:

- A. transportation services;
- B. public preschool programs and other educational programs and services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including:
 - 1. programs for children with disabilities
 - 2. programs for English learners (ELs) (i.e., students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP));
 - 3. programs in career and technical education;
 - 4. programs for gifted and talented students;
 - 5. school nutrition programs; and
 - 6. before - and after-school programs.

C. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths. For more information on the role of the Liaison, refer to AP 5111.01. The liaison will coordinate District operations and services so that:

- 1. Homeless children/youth are immediately enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the District as required;
- 2. Homeless youth receive credit for full or partial schoolwork (when the state develops guidelines regarding how to do so).

The liaison will coordinate district programs and collaborate with other school districts, community service providers and organizations, including local social services and other community agencies to provide support of homeless students and their families, other school districts regarding homeless student-related transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities as needed, and housing authorities. The liaison will also ensure that all placement disputes are handled according to legal requirements, and this policy.

School Stability

Maintaining a stable school environment is crucial to a homeless student's success in school. To ensure stability, the District must make school placement determinations based on the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth based on student-centered factors. The District must:

- A. continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the

remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

- B. enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth, or the family of the child or youth, is actually living are eligible to attend.

When determining a child or youth's best interest, the District must assume that keeping the homeless student in the school of origin is in that student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is an unaccompanied youth. The school of origin is the school the student attended or enrolled in when permanently housed, including a public preschool. The school of origin also includes the designated receiving school at the next level for feeder school ~~patterns, when~~patterns when the student completes the final grade level at the school of origin.

When determining the student's best interest, the District must also consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students and give priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or youth (if an unaccompanied youth). The District also considers the school placement of siblings when making this determination.

If the District finds that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the District must provide the individual with a written explanation and reason for the determination in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. This written explanation will include appeal rights and be provided in a timely manner.

Immediate Enrollment

The District has an obligation to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students. If a school other than the student's school of origin is chosen on the basis of a best interest determination, the homeless student must be immediately enrolled, even if the student does not have the documentation typically necessary for enrollment, such as immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificate, or previous academic records or other required documents. The homeless student must also be enrolled immediately regardless of whether the student missed application or enrollment deadlines during the period of homelessness, fails to meet uniform or dress code requirements, or has outstanding fines or fees.

The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless student to obtain relevant academic or other records. If the student needs immunization or other health records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to the Liaison, who will help obtain the immunizations, screenings or other required health records. Records usually maintained by the school must be kept so that they are available in a timely fashion if the child enters a new school or district. These records include immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs. Procedures for inter-State records transfer between schools should be taken into account in order to facilitate immediate enrollment.

In addition, it shall be the District's responsibility to make sure that, once identified for services, the homeless student is attending classes and not facing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (if available).

Transportation

The District shall promptly provide homeless students with transportation services that are comparable to those available to non-homeless students. At the request of the parent or guardian, or the liaison in the

case of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall provide, or arrange for, transportation to and from the student's school of origin.

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the District, transportation shall be provided, or the District shall arrange for the student's transportation, to/from his/her school of origin.
- B. If the homeless student resides in another school district, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in the District, the District and the school district in which the student now resides shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there is not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student from the district of residence to the school of origin in the District. Since Federal law requires that the responsibility and costs to be shared equally, the district of residence shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

- C. If the homeless student resides in the District, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in another district, the District and the school district in which the student's school of origin is located shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student to the school of origin in the other district. Since Federal law requires the responsibility and costs for transportation services to be shared equally, the district in which the school or origin is located shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

- D. When the student obtains permanent housing, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year.

The mode of transportation shall be determined in consultation with the parent or guardian and shall be based on the best interest of the student.

In accordance with Federal law, the above transportation requirements still apply during the resolution of any dispute. The District will work with the State to resolve transportation disputes with other districts. Until the Districts reach agreement, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

If the disputing district is in another State, the District will turn to the State for assistance as Federal guidance says that both states should try to arrange an agreement for the districts.

Dispute Resolution

Homeless families and youths have the right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. If a dispute arises between a school and a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless student, the District must follow its dispute resolution procedures, consistent with the State's procedures. If such a dispute occurs, the District will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. The student will receive all services for which they are eligible until all disputes and appeals are resolved.

Pursuant to Federal and State law, State Board rule, and this policy, the District will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of all decisions regarding school selection and enrollment made by the District, along with a written explanation of appeal rights.

The District's notice and written explanation about the reason for its decision will include, at a minimum, an explanation of how the school reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, including the following:

- A. a description of the proposed or refused action by the school;
- B. an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused;
- C. a description of other options the school considered and why those options were rejected;
- D. a description of any other relevant factors to the school's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination such as the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources; and
- E. an appropriate timeline to ensure deadlines are not missed.

The District's notice and written explanation shall include contact information for the Liaison and the State Coordinator, and a brief description of the roles of each. The District's notice and written explanation shall also inform the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth that the Liaison is responsible for providing information describing the State-level dispute resolution process and distributing the appropriate forms to all parties wanting to file an appeal.

To initiate the State-level appeals process, within ten (10) working days after receiving written notification of the District-level or inter-district decision, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth may file an appeal with the Liaison, who must provide it to FLDOE. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Liaison is required to notify FLDOE of the State-level appeal and provide that appeal to the FLDOE. The local liaison also must log incidents of State-level appeals in the FLDOE Online Dispute Resolution Tracking System.

The FLDOE and the Commissioner of Education will render a decision on any appeal and provide a copy of such decision to the parties.

All decisions and notices shall be drafted in a language and format appropriate for low-literacy, limited vision readers, and individuals with disabilities.

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The District will also provide electronic notices via email if the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth has access to email followed by a written notice provided in person or sent by mail.

Homeless Children in Preschool

Homeless preschool-aged children and their families shall be provided equal access to the educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs, including Head Start programs, administered by the District. Additionally, the homeless child must remain in the public preschool of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. When making such a decision on the student's best interest, the District takes into account the same factors as it does for any student, regardless of age. It also considers pre-school age specific factors, such as 1) the child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff; 2) the impact of school climate on the child, including school safety; the quality and availability of services to meet the child's needs, including health, developmental, and social-emotional needs; and 3) travel time to and from school.

The District must also provide transportation services to the school of origin for a homeless child attending preschool. It is the District's responsibility to provide the child with transportation to the school

of origin even if the homeless preschooler who is enrolled in a public preschool in the District moves to another district that does not provide widely available or universal preschool.

Public Notice

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth of the applicable rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school. In addition, the District shall post public notice of the McKinney-Vento rights in places that homeless populations frequent, such as shelters, soup kitchens, and libraries in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths.

Records

The local liaison will assist the homeless students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) or unaccompanied homeless students in their efforts to provide documentation to meet State and local requirements for entry into school.

All records for homeless students shall be maintained, subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Policy 8330, and in such a manner so that they are available in a timely fashion and can be transferred promptly to the appropriate parties, as required. Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, information regarding a homeless student's living situation is not considered directory information and must be provided the same protections as other non-directory personally identifiable information (PII) contained in student education records under FERPA. The District shall incorporate practices to protect student privacy as described in AP 5111.01, AP 8330, and in accordance with the provisions of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). The District will work to obtain and maintain for each homeless child and youth all necessary records including immunization or other required health records, birth certificates, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services. The District will make all these records available consistent with the law when a child or youth enrolls in a new school.

No Board policy, administrative procedure, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of homeless children.

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F.S. 743.067

F.S. 1003.01

F.S. 1003.21

F.S. 1003.22

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F.S. 1009.25

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

Cross References

ap5111 - ADMISSION TO THE DISTRICT

ap5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

**Clean
Version**

5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Definitions

Children who are identified as meeting the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the same manner as all other students of the District. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness. The District shall regularly review and revise its policies, including school discipline policies that impact homeless students, including those who may be a member of any of the protected classes (Policy 2260).

Homeless children and youth, including "certified homeless youth" under State law, are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include children and youth who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- B. live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- C. live in emergency or transitional shelters
- D. are abandoned in hospitals
- E. have a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, or
- F. live in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

NOTE: According to nonregulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), standards for adequate housing may vary by locality. Please see *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education (ED), for factors to consider when determining whether a child or youth is living in "substandard housing".

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, an unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth under the age of twenty-one (21) and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Under State law an unaccompanied homeless youth who is sixteen (16) years of age or older and found to be an unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for services under Federal law shall be issued a certificate by the District's Liaison for Homeless Children on District letterhead documenting his/her status which is to be accepted by medical providers and the courts.

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, children or youth who are experiencing homelessness also include migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-F above.

Designated receiving school could include the next level school, elementary from prekindergarten, middle from elementary, high from middle, that a homeless child or youth, whose homelessness continues into the next school year, may attend when that next level school is the district designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.

Services to Homeless Children and Youth

The District will provide services to homeless students that are comparable to other students in the District, including:

A. transportation services;

B. public preschool programs and other educational programs and services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including:

1. programs for children with disabilities
2. programs for English learners (ELs) (i.e., students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP));
3. programs in career and technical education;
4. programs for gifted and talented students;
5. school nutrition programs; and
6. before - and after-school programs.

C. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths. For more information on the role of the Liaison, refer to AP 5111.01. The liaison will coordinate District operations and services so that:

1. Homeless children/youth are immediately enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the District as required;
2. Homeless youth receive credit for full or partial schoolwork (when the state develops guidelines regarding how to do so).

The liaison will coordinate district programs and collaborate with other school districts, community service providers and organizations, including local social services and other community agencies to provide support of homeless students and their families, other school districts regarding homeless student-related transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities as needed, and housing authorities. The liaison will also ensure that all placement disputes are handled according to legal requirements, and this policy.

School Stability

Maintaining a stable school environment is crucial to a homeless student's success in school. To ensure stability, the District must make school placement determinations based on the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth based on student-centered factors. The District must:

A. continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

B. enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth, or the family of the child or youth, is actually living are eligible to attend.

When determining a child or youth's best interest, the District must assume that keeping the homeless student in the school of origin is in that student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is an unaccompanied youth. The school of origin is the school the student attended or enrolled in when permanently housed, including a public preschool. The school of origin also includes the designated receiving school at the next level for feeder school patterns when the student completes the final grade level at the school of origin.

When determining the student's best interest, the District must also consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students and give priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or youth (if an unaccompanied youth). The District also considers the school placement of siblings when making this determination.

If the District finds that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the District must provide the individual with a written explanation and reason for the determination in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. This written explanation will include appeal rights and be provided in a timely manner.

Immediate Enrollment

The District has an obligation to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students. If a school other than the student's school of origin is chosen on the basis of a best interest determination, the homeless student must be immediately enrolled, even if the student does not have the documentation typically necessary for enrollment, such as immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificate, or previous academic records or other required documents. The homeless student must also be enrolled immediately regardless of whether the student missed application or enrollment deadlines during the period of homelessness, fails to meet uniform or dress code requirements, or has outstanding fines or fees.

The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless student to obtain relevant academic or other records. If the student needs immunization or other health records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to the Liaison, who will help obtain the immunizations, screenings or other required health records. Records usually maintained by the school must be kept so that they are available in a timely fashion if the child enters a new school or district. These records include immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs. Procedures for inter-State records transfer between schools should be taken into account in order to facilitate immediate enrollment.

In addition, it shall be the District's responsibility to make sure that, once identified for services, the homeless student is attending classes and not facing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (if available).

Transportation

The District shall promptly provide homeless students with transportation services that are comparable to those available to non-homeless students. At the request of the parent or guardian, or the liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall provide, or arrange for, transportation to and from the student's school of origin.

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the District, transportation shall be provided, or the District shall arrange for the student's transportation, to/from his/her school of origin.
- B. If the homeless student resides in another school district, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in the District, the

District and the school district in which the student now resides shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there is not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student from the district of residence to the school of origin in the District. Since Federal law requires that the responsibility and costs to be shared equally, the district of residence shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

C. If the homeless student resides in the District, but the best interest determination is that the student should continue his/her education at the school of origin in another district, the District and the school district in which the student's school of origin is located shall agree upon a method to equitably apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

If there not agreement, the District shall assume responsibility to transport the student to the school of origin in the other district. Since Federal law requires the responsibility and costs for transportation services to be shared equally, the district in which the school or origin is located shall be invoiced for their share of the cost for transportation.

D. When the student obtains permanent housing, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year.

The mode of transportation shall be determined in consultation with the parent or guardian and shall be based on the best interest of the student.

In accordance with Federal law, the above transportation requirements still apply during the resolution of any dispute. The District will work with the State to resolve transportation disputes with other districts. Until the Districts reach agreement, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

If the disputing district is in another State, the District will turn to the State for assistance as Federal guidance says that both states should try to arrange an agreement for the districts.

Dispute Resolution

Homeless families and youths have the right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. If a dispute arises between a school and a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless student, the District must follow its dispute resolution procedures, consistent with the State's procedures. If such a dispute occurs, the District will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. The student will receive all services for which they are eligible until all disputes and appeals are resolved.

Pursuant to Federal and State law, State Board rule, and this policy, the District will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of all decisions regarding school selection and enrollment made by the District, along with a written explanation of appeal rights.

The District's notice and written explanation about the reason for its decision will include, at a minimum, an explanation of how the school reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, including the following:

A. a description of the proposed or refused action by the school;

B. an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused;

C. a description of other options the school considered and why those options were rejected;

D. a description of any other relevant factors to the school's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination such as the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources; and

E. an appropriate timeline to ensure deadlines are not missed.

The District's notice and written explanation shall include contact information for the Liaison and the State Coordinator, and a brief description of the roles of each. The District's notice and written explanation shall also inform the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth that the Liaison is responsible for providing information describing the State-level dispute resolution process and distributing the appropriate forms to all parties wanting to file an appeal.

To initiate the State-level appeals process, within ten (10) working days after receiving written notification of the District-level or inter-district decision, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth may file an appeal with the Liaison, who must provide it to FLDOE. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Liaison is required to notify FLDOE of the State-level appeal and provide that appeal to the FLDOE. The local liaison also must log incidents of State-level appeals in the FLDOE Online Dispute Resolution Tracking System.

The FLDOE and the Commissioner of Education will render a decision on any appeal and provide a copy of such decision to the parties.

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