

HOMELESS STUDENTS

5.14*

- (1) Homeless children and youths in this school district shall be enrolled immediately in school in the District, shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool, as provided to other children and youths and other services needed to ensure an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all students are held, and shall be included in state and District assessments and accountability systems.

(2) Definitions

(a) Homeless Child or Youth

One who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth who

- i. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- ii. Are living in motels, hotels, travel trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- iii. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters, or abandoned in hospitals
- iv. 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;
- v. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- vi. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in (2)(a)i. through (2)(a)v.

- (b) Unaccompanied Youth – A homeless child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- (c) Certified Homeless Youth – A minor, homeless child or youth, including an unaccompanied youth, who has been certified as homeless or unaccompanied by a school district homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or designee, or the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services or designee, a licensed clinical social worker, or a circuit court.

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- (d) School of Origin – The school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
 - (e) Enroll and Enrollment – Attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
 - (f) Immediate – Without delay.
 - (g) Parent – Parent or guardian of a student.
 - (h) Liaison – The staff person designated by the District as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
 - (i) Designated Receiving School – includes 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’s designated school for those students in the homeless student’s school of origin.
 - (j) Eligible School – the school of origin, the school zoned for the address where the student is temporarily residing, or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend.
- (3) The District shall identify homeless students as defined by federal and state law. If the District’s liaison for homeless children and youth determines that the minor is an unaccompanied homeless youth, the liaison shall issue to the youth a certificate documenting his/her status as required by law.
 - (4) The District shall remove barriers to the immediate enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth, and provide appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior school.
 - (5) The District shall ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless students even if they missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness or if they cannot produce records, including previous academic records; immunizations or other health records; birth certificate; proof of residency; guardianship; or other required documentation; or otherwise cannot meet enrollment requirements including uniform or dress code requirements; or have outstanding fees, fines, or absences.
 - (a) The District and homeless liaison shall assist homeless children or youth to provide documentation to meet state and local requirements for entry into school.

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- (b) A homeless child or youth shall be given a thirty (30) school day exemption to provide proof of age, certification of a school-entry health examination, proof of immunization and other documentation required for enrollment.
- (6) Each homeless student shall be provided the comparable services that are available for all other students including transportation, school nutrition programs, before and after school programs, and education services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria such as exceptional education, gifted education, career and technical programs, preschool programs, Title I, and limited English proficiency programs. In addition, unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.
- (7) Homeless students shall be given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school and shall have the opportunity and access to fully participate in all of the district's academic and extracurricular activities, for which they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.
- (8) Homeless students may continue their education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and in any case in which their family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year. Keeping them in the school of origin is presumed to be in their best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent or guardian. When considering placement in a school other than the students' school of origin, the district will consider student-centered factors to determine a placement that is in students' best interest. Homeless students who become permanently housed during the academic year, may remain in their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year and continue to receive all McKinney-Vento Act benefits.
- (9) Homeless students, including unaccompanied youth, and/or parent or guardian shall have the right to dispute eligibility and/or school selection/enrollment if placement is in a school other than the school of origin or eligible school. The District shall ensure that unaccompanied youth or the parent or guardian of homeless students are provided a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment, in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, and informed of their right to appeal the placement determination.

While the dispute is in process, students shall immediately be enrolled and have the right to remain in the school of origin or eligible school, shall be referred to the district's homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible, and, if necessary, shall be provided transportation to and from the school in dispute.

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- (10) If requested by the parent of a homeless child or by the liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall be responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin throughout the duration of homelessness or, if the homeless student becomes housed permanently during the school year, providing transportation for the remainder of the school year in which the student was homeless. The District shall share the responsibility for transportation if a homeless student begins living in another district in a homeless status and continues to attend the school of origin.
- (11) Homeless students shall not be stigmatized, segregated, or separated in any educational program on the basis of their homeless status.
- (12) The District will coordinate district programs and collaborate with other school districts regarding homeless student-related transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities as needed, and community services providers and organizations including local social services and community agencies that provide support to homeless students and their families and housing authorities.
- (13) The District assures that records of homeless students shall be treated as a student education records, and shall not be deemed to be directory information, under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g). These records shall be maintained for each homeless child or youth and include immunization or other required health records; birth certificate; academic records; guardianship records; and evaluation for special services; and shall be made available in a timely fashion, when a homeless student enters and new school, and shall be held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).
- (14) The District shall follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Florida Statutes.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.

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LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: 382.002, 743.067, 1000.21, 1001.43, 1003.01, 1003.21, 1003.22, F.S.; MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, P.L.100-77 NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001, P.L. 107-110

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