

Hancock County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in April	Descriptor Term: Homeless Students	Descriptor Code: 6.503	Issued Date: 11/10/16
		Rescinds: 6.503	Issued: 08/06/15

1 A homeless student shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided
2 to other children and youths.¹

3 Homeless students are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.²
4 Homeless students include:²

- 5 1. Students sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or
6 similar reason; students living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack
7 of alternative adequate accommodations; students living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
8 students abandoned in hospitals;
- 9 2. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed
10 for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- 11 3. Students living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or
12 trains stations, or similar settings; and
- 13 4. Migratory students who are living in circumstances described above.

14 ENROLLEMENT

15 Homeless students shall be immediately enrolled, even if the student is unable to produce records
16 normally required for enrollment (i.e. academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of
17 residency), or missed the district's application or enrollment deadlines.³ Parents/guardians are required
18 to submit contact information to the district's homeless coordinator.³

19 PLACEMENT

20 For the purposes of this policy, school of origin shall mean the school that the student attended when
21 permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool/pre-k
22 program.⁹ School of origin shall also include the designated receiving school at the next grade level when
23 the student completes the final grade level served by the school or origin.⁹

24 Placement shall be determined based on the student's best interest.⁴ At all times, a strong presumption
25 that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest shall be maintained, unless
26 doing so would be contrary to a request made by the student's parent/guardian or the student in the case
27 of an unaccompanied youth.⁵ When determining placement, student-centered factors, including but not
28 limited to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety shall be considered.⁵ The
29 choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the student lives with their homeless
30 parents/guardians or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.⁶

31 If it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin, or the school requested by the
32 parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the director or his/her designee shall provide a written

1 explanation of the reasons for the determination, in a manner and form that is understandable to the
2 parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.⁵ The written explanation shall include a statement regarding
3 the right to appeal the placement decision.⁵ If the placement decision is appealed, the district shall refer
4 the parent/guardian or unaccompanied student to the homeless coordinator, who shall carry out the
5 dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible and in accordance with the law.⁷ Upon notice of
6 an appeal, the director of schools shall immediately enroll the student in the school in which enrollment
7 was sought pending a final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.⁷

8 **RECORDS**

9 Records ordinarily kept by the school shall be maintained for all homeless students. Information
10 regarding a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall
11 not be considered directory information.⁸

12 **SERVICES¹⁰**

13 The director of schools shall ensure that each homeless student is provided services comparable to those
14 offered to other students within the district, including transportation, special education services,
15 programs in career and technical education (CTE), programs for gifted and talented students, and school
16 nutrition.

17 The director of schools shall designate a district homeless coordinator who shall ensure this policy is
18 implemented throughout the district. The homeless coordinator shall ensure:

- 19 1. Homeless students are quickly identified and have access to education and support services, to
20 include Head Start and district pre-k programs;
- 21 2. Coordination with local social service agencies and other entities providing services to homeless
22 students;
- 23 3. Coordinate transportation, transfer of records, and other interdistrict activities with other school
24 districts;
- 25 4. Coordinate transportation to the school or origin or choice for homeless students;
- 26 5. Refer homeless students and their families to health care services, dental services, mental health
27 and substance abuse services, and housing services;
- 28 6. Assist homeless students in obtaining immunizations, medical or immunization records, and any
29 additional assistance that may be needed;
- 30 7. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in places frequented
31 by parents/guardians of homeless students, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup
32 kitchens; and
- 33 8. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled and informed of their status and independent students.

34 The director of schools shall develop procedures to ensure that homeless students are recognized
35 administratively and that the appropriate and available services are provided for these students. The
36 director shall ensure professional development is provided to school personnel providing services to
37 homeless students.

Legal References

1. 42 USCS §§ 11431 to 11435; McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, Part C, § 721
2. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95), § 725
3. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(C)(i), § 722(g)(3)(H)
4. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(A)
5. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(B)
6. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(F)
7. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(E)
8. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(G)
9. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(3)(I)
10. McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by ESSA (Pub. L. 114-95, § 722(g)(4) - (6)

Cross References

Student Transportation 3.400
Parental Involvement 4.502
Promotion and Retention 4.603
School Admissions 6.203
Migrant Students 6.504