

Benton County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually	Descriptor Term: Homeless Students	Descriptor Code: 6.503	Issued: 11/04/13
		Rescinds: 6.503	Issued: 12/05/11

1 In order to ensure that homeless students have equal access to the same free appropriate public
2 education as provided to other students, the following shall apply:¹

3 **DEFINITION**

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6 Homeless students are individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence
7 and include the following:

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- 9 1. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing,
10 economic hardship or a similar reason;
- 11 2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of
12 alternative adequate accommodations;
- 13 3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- 14 4. Abandoned in hospitals;
- 15 5. Awaiting foster care placement;
- 16 6. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place
17 not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for
18 human beings;
- 19 7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus
20 or train stations or similar settings; and
- 21 8. Migratory students who meet one of the above described circumstances.
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23 **PROCEDURE**

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- 25 1. Students are identified as homeless at time of enrollment and/or during the school
26 year;
- 27 2. Staff will contact the school office with student name and relevant information;
- 28 3. School office will contact the homeless liaison;
- 29 4. Homeless liaison will contact Food Service Coordinator and Attendance
30 Supervisor;
- 31 5. Homeless liaison will follow up and make necessary contact with parents/
32 families after thirty (30) days;
- 33 6. System will maintain communication between homeless liaison and school while
34 family is in transition; and
- 35 7. System will report any educational needs to administration or homeless liaison.
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ENROLLMENT/PLACEMENT

The Benton County School System will consider the best interest of the homeless student in determining where the student should be enrolled. To the extent feasible, the student should continue his/her education in the school of origin, except where contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian.

If the student is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless coordinator will consider the views of the student in deciding where the student shall be educated. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the student lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

The school selected for enrollment shall immediately enroll the homeless student even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation. However, the Benton County School System may require a parent or guardian of the homeless student to submit contact information.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The Benton County School System shall provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal to the homeless student's parent/guardian or to the homeless student if unaccompanied, if the student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or other than a school requested by the parent or guardian.

A school of origin is defined as the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

The student or parent/guardian shall be referred to the homeless coordinator who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

SERVICES

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the Benton County School System including but not limited to:

1. Transportation services;
2. Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria such as:
 - a. Educational programs for disadvantaged students;
 - b. Students with disabilities;
 - c. Gifted and talented students; and
 - d. Vocational programs and technical education

- 3. School meals program;
- 4. Pre-school programs;
- 5. Before and after school care programs; and
- 6. Programs for students with limited English proficiency.

Homeless students will not be segregated in a separate school or in a separate program within a school based on the student's status as homeless.

TRANSPORTATION

In the event that it is in the best interest of the homeless student to attend the school of origin, transportation to and from school shall be provided at the request of the parent/guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied student, the homeless coordinator.

If the student's temporary housing is outside the district of the school of origin, the Benton County School System will work with the school of origin to agree on a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for transporting the student. If an agreement cannot be reached, the costs will be shared equally.

RECORDS

Any records ordinarily kept by the school including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained so that appropriate services may be given to the student and so that necessary referrals can be made and records may be transferred in a timely fashion when a homeless student enters a new school district.

Copies of records shall be made available upon request to students or parents in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

COORDINATOR

The Board shall designate an individual to act as the Benton County School System's homeless coordinator. School personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families will be informed of the duties of the homeless coordinator. The homeless coordinator shall ensure that:

- 1. Homeless students and homeless youth including youth separated from public schools are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- 2. Homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in the Benton County School System;

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- 3. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which such families and students are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start and preschool programs administered by the school system, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services;
- 4. The parents or guardians of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- 5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where such students receive services such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens;
- 6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law;
- 7. The parent or guardian of a homeless student and any unaccompanied youth is fully informed of all transportation services including transportation to the school of origin and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected;
- 8. Unaccompanied youths will be assisted in placement or enrollment decisions, their views will be considered and they will be provided notice of the right to appeal; and
- 9. Students who need to obtain immunizations or immunization and medical records will receive assistance.

Legal References

- 1. McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 Subtitle B §§ 721-725

Cross References:

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

Student Residency Affidavit
(for all new students to Benton County Schools)

This affidavit is intended to address requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act and the residency policies of the Benton County Board of Education. The questions below are to assist in determining if the student meets the definition of "Children and Youth in Transition" and residency in Benton County. Our schools will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment.

Where does the student stay at night?

- home renting
- in a shelter
- in a motel/hotel temporarily with more than one family in a house, mobile home, or apartment (because the family does not have a place of its own).
- in a car other _____
- at a campsite _____

What is the address where the student stays at night? (P.O. Box is **NOT** an acceptable physical Address.)

Name of Student: _____ Birthdate: _____

1. I am the parent/legal guardian of _____, who is of school age And is seeking admission to the Benton County School System. (Exception: Children and Youth in Transition).
2. Since _____ (date) our family has had a permanent home in Benton County, or
3. Since _____ (date) our family has not had a permanent home, however we have been residing within the school district boundaries.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the law of this state that the information provided here is true and correct and of my own personal knowledge and that, if called upon to testify, I would be competent to testify. I also understand that if I have enrolled this child by fraudulent means, that my child will be subject to immediate removal from school and that I may be assessed tuition for the time the child has been enrolled but not a resident of Benton County.

Signature _____ Date: _____

I regularly receive my mail at: _____

Phone Number: _____

I can be reached for emergencies at: _____