

## HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Are abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Awaiting foster care placement;
- F. Living in public places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- G. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
- H. Are migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

**According to the child's or youth's best interest**, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in which attendance area the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state **policy**. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. **However, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address or other documentation.** If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a person exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization



## **Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services**

### **A. Enrollment:**

**The district will consider the best interest of the child in enrollment decisions;**

**The district shall not deny or delay enrollment of homeless students;**

**The district's need for student contact information shall not be in a form or manner that constructs a barrier for homeless students. For example, homeless students may not be excluded for failure to have a mailing address or emergency contact information;**

**The district's liaison shall:**

- a. Ensure that public notice is disseminated where homeless children receive services;**
- b. The district's liaison shall assure that students are identified by school personnel, enrolled in school and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed; and**
- c. The district liaison shall inform parents and guardians of educational and related activities and inform parents of transportation services.**

### **B. Dispute Resolution Procedure**

The District shall insure that the child/youth attends the school in which they sought enrollment while the dispute process is being carried out.

#### **Notification of Appeal Process**

If the district **seeks** to place a homeless child in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested for the parent, the school district shall inform the parent of the right to appeal. The district shall provide the parent with written notice including:

- a) An explanation of the child's placement;
- b) Notification of the parent's right to appeal;
- c) A description of the dispute resolution process; and
- d) A summary of the federal legislation governing placement of homeless students (McKinney-Vento Act).

#### **1. Appeal to the School District Liaison – Level I**

If the parent disagrees with the district's placement decision, the parent may appeal by filing a written request for dispute resolution with the district's homeless liaison or a designee.

The liaison must log the complaint including the date and time of the complaint was filed.

- A copy of the complaint must be forwarded to the liaison's supervisor and the Superintendent.
- Within three working days of the receiving the complaint, the liaison must provide the parent with a written decision and notification of the parent's right to appeal.
- If the parent wishes to appeal, the liaison shall provide the parent with an appeals package containing:
  1. The parent's grievance,
  2. The decision rendered at Level 1; and
  3. Additional information provided by the parent and/or homeless liaison.

**2. Appeal to the School Superintendent – Level II**

The parent may appeal the district's liaison's decision to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee using the appeals package provided at Level I.

- a) Within three working days of the Level I decision, the parent must request a conference and submit the appeals package to the Superintendent;
- b) The Superintendent will arrange for a personal conference to be held with the parent within three working days of receiving the Level I appeals package.
- c) Within three working days of the conference with the parent the Superintendent will provide the parent with a written decision and notification of the parent's right to appeal.
- d) A copy of the Superintendent's decision will be forwarded to the district's homeless liaison.

**3. Appeal to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – Level III**

- a) The parent may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- b) The parent must request, within three working days of the parent's notification of the Level II decision, that the Superintendent initiate a review by the OSPI;
- c) The Superintendent shall immediately forward all written documentation and related paperwork to OSPI's homeless education coordinator;
- d) OSPI shall make a decision within three working days of receiving the appeal;
- e) OSPI's decision will be forwarded to the district's homeless liaison. The liaison will distribute the decision to the parent, the local superintendent and the Board.

**4. Final Review by the School Board**

At the next regularly scheduled board meeting after receipt of the OSPI recommendation, the board shall accept or reject the recommendation.

At the Board's discretion, the parent and/or the district's homeless liaison acting on behalf of the parent may present information at the Board meeting.

The Board's decision shall be the final resolution for placement of a homeless child or youth in the district.

Date: February 23, 2005