

HOMELESS STUDENTS

6170

Authority

The Board of School Directors recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Administration shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Children who are awaiting foster care placement including living in emergency, interim or respite foster care, kinship care, evaluation or diagnostic centers or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, temporary shelters, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children under the age of 18, abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers, or separated from parents/guardians for any other reason.
10. Living as school age parents/guardians in houses for school age parents/guardians if they have no other living accommodations.

HOMELESS STUDENTS (continued)

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

The Board designates the Superintendent or his/her designee to serve as the District's liaison for homeless students and families.

The District's liaison shall coordinate with:

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The District's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens within the District.

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless.

Enrollment/Placement

To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, homeless students shall 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.

Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the District liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. The District will request a parent/guardian submit contact information. If the parent/guardian is unable to do so, the District Liaison will work with the parent /guardian to establish a reliable method of communication. The District Liaison may also contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but this must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between two professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The enrolling district's liaison will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

If the District is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the District shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

HOMELESS STUDENTS (continued)

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parents/guardians shall be provided with a written explanation of the District's decision, their right to appeal and the procedures to use for the appeal.

Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

Transportation

The District shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the School District.

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 11.18, 403.1

No Child Left Behind Act – 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.

Education for Homeless Children 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 et seq.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations – 34 CFR Part 99

Guidelines for Enrollment of Homeless Children – Federal Register, 67 Fed. Reg. 10698

PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan