

STUDENTS

Regulation 2260

Admission and Withdrawal

Homeless Students

Identification

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

1. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in hotels, motels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Children and youth who 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;
3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children who meet one of the above-described circumstances.

District Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth

The Board designates the following individual to act as the District's liaison for homeless children and youth:

Director of Secondary Education
21005 S. School Rd., PO Box 789
Peculiar, MO 64078
816-892-1300

The District liaison shall designate and train another District employee to serve as the District liaison in the absence of the District liaison.

School of Origin

For the purposes of this policy, "school of origin" is defined as the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student last enrolled, including a public preschool. When the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the term shall then include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Enrollment

The selected school 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 or other health records, proof of residency, or other documentation, and even if the student has missed any application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Outstanding fines, fees or absences shall not present a barrier to enrollment of the student. However, the District may require a parent/guardian of a homeless student to submit contact information.

Placement

The District will consider the best interest of the homeless student, with parental involvement, in determining whether he or she should be enrolled in the school of origin or the school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best interest of the student, the District will:

1. Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent/guardian. If the homeless student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the District liaison will consider the views of the homeless student in deciding where he or she will be educated.
2. Consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the homeless student's parent/guardian or the unaccompanied student.

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the homeless student lives with his or her parents/guardians or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

If the District determines that placement should be in the school of origin, the student will continue his or her education in the school of origin for the duration of the homelessness when the student's family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, and for the remainder of the academic year even if the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year.

If the District determines that it is not in the best interest of the student to attend either the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied student, the District shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be given in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians or unaccompanied student and shall include information regarding the right to appeal the District's decision.

Services

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to the services offered to other student in the District including, but not limited to, transportation services; education services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as education programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and gifted students; programs in career and technical education; school nutrition programs; preschool programs; before and after school care programs; and programs for English learners. Homeless students will not be segregated in a separate school or program within a school based on the students' status as homeless.

The District will coordinate services for homeless students with local social service agencies and other agencies or entities providing services to homeless students and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. The District will also coordinate transportation, transfer of school records and other inter-district activities with other school districts.

Transportation

If the homeless student's school of origin, including a public preschool, and temporary housing are located in the Raymore-Peculiar School District, the District will provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the parent/guardian or District liaison, provided it is in the best interest of the student.

If the homeless student's school of origin and temporary housing are located in two different school districts, the districts may agree on a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing transportation to the school of origin. If no agreement is reached, the districts will equally share the responsibility and costs for transporting the student. If a homeless student becomes permanently housed in the middle of the school year, the District will continue to provide transportation to the school of origin for the remainder of the school year.

Transportation to the school of origin shall be provided even if a homeless preschooler who is enrolled in a public preschool moves to another district that does not provide a widely available or universal preschool.

Records

When a homeless student enrolls in the district or a district school, the district will immediately contact the school the homeless student last attended in order to obtain academic or other relevant records.

Any records ordinarily kept by the school for each homeless student (including immunization or other health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs) shall be maintained so that the district is equipped to provide the student with appropriate services, make necessary referrals and transfer records 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/guardians in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record and shall not be deemed to be directory information under FERPA.

Responsibilities of District Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth

The District liaison will attend all required professional development and other technical assistance activities as determined appropriate by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The District shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the District liaison. The District liaison will ensure that:

1. Homeless students are enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the District;
2. Assistance with the enrollment of homeless students and provide assistance with obtaining academic and medical records;
3. School placement decisions are based on the best interest of the child and wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;
4. Parents, guardians, or unaccompanied 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. Ensure that homeless students and their families have access to and receive educational services including Head Start, Even Start, early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by the District, as well as referrals to healthcare services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services and other appropriate services based on their assessed needs.
6. Ensure that homeless students are not isolated or stigmatized because of their status as homeless;
7. Ensure that disputes over the placement of homeless students are resolved in a timely manner in accordance with law;
8. Transportation is provided/arranged and inform the parent/guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth of the transportation services the school district must make available and assist homeless students in accessing transportation to and from school;
9. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students *is* disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians, youth and unaccompanied youth, including schools, family shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians and youth;

10. Unaccompanied students will be assisted in placement or enrollment decisions, their views will be considered, and they will be provided notice of the right to appeal.
11. School personnel providing services to homeless students and their parents/guardians receive professional development and other support.
12. Unaccompanied students are enrolled in school;
Have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards that are established for other students; and
Are informed of their status as independent students under laws applicable to higher education and that they may obtain assistance from the District liaison in order to receive verification of this status for the purposes of applying for federal student aid.
13. The District collects and reports reliable, valid and comprehensive data to DESE regarding homeless students
14. All homeless high school students receive information and individualized counseling regarding college readiness, college selection, the application process, financial aid and the availability of on-campus supports.

All school personnel, District service providers and locally known advocates working with homeless families will be informed of the identity of the Coordinator and the Coordinator duties.

Disputes Over School Selection or Enrollment in a School

The LEA homeless liaison will handle disputes concerning eligibility, school selection or the enrollment in school for homeless students or youth. During the dispute, homeless children or youth must be enrolled and fully participating in school activities as well as receive transportation, if requested, to the school in which the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth seeks enrollment during the dispute. LEA liaisons will carry out the dispute resolution procedures as quickly as possible after receiving notice of a dispute.

Every effort must be made to resolve the complaint or dispute at the LEA level before it is brought to MO-DESE. It is the responsibility of the LEA to inform the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth of the LEA's Complaint Resolution Procedure when a question arises concerning the education of a homeless child or youth. MO-DESE recommends that LEAs use the following complaint resolution process when a dispute arises regarding the education of a homeless child or youth:

LEA Level

- A. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth notifies the LEA's homeless liaison in writing of their complaint. The homeless liaison serves as the intermediary

between the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth and the school where the child is seeking enrollment.

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth shall receive a copy of or access the LEA's policies addressing the education of homeless children and youths from the LEA.
 2. The Leas's homeless liaison will provide a written resolution of the dispute or a plan of action with five days of the date the written complaint was received.*
- B. If the dispute is not resolved with the LEA's homeless liaison, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth can file a complaint in writing to the superintendent/administrator for further review.
1. The LEA's superintendent/administrator will provide a written resolution of the dispute or a plan of action within five days of the date the written complaint was received by the superintendent/administrator.*
- C. If the dispute is not resolved at the superintendent/administrator level, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth may file the written complaint before the LEA's board of education for resolution.
1. The LEA's board of education will provide a written resolution of the dispute or a plan of action within thirty days of the date the written complaint was received by the board of education.*

State Level

If the dispute is not resolved in a satisfactory manner at the LEA level, the complaint may be brought to MO-DESE. Complaints made under this process must be made in writing and signed by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth. The following steps are to be taken:

- A. Address the complaint to: State Homeless Coordinator, Federal Programs, P.O. Box 480, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0480.
- B. The complaint must include:
 1. A detailed description of the dispute;
 2. The name(s) and age(s) of the children involved;
 3. The names(s) of involved LEA personnel and the LEA(s) they represent; and
 4. Copies of the unresolved written resolutions from the LEA.
- C. The director of Federal Programs (director) will inform the involved LEA(s) of the complaint. The director or the director's designee will gather needed information including

documentation and statements of the parties and may conduct an independent investigation through an on-site visit if necessary.

- D. Within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, the director will inform the parties, in writing, of the decision.**
- E. If a parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth disagrees with the director's decision, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth may, within 10 business days, appeal the decision to the Deputy Commission of Learning Services. This appeal must be in writing and indicate why the complainant disagrees with the decision.
- F. Within 30 days of receiving the appeal, the Deputy Commissioner of Learning Services will render a final administrative decision and notify the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth and all other interested parties in writing.**
- G. During the dispute, the child(ren) or unaccompanied homeless youth must be enrolled and fully participating in school activities as well as receive transportation, if requested, to the school in which the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth seeks enrollment.

*The parties may mutually agree to an extension; however, every effort should be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.

**Although the standard procedure allows 30 days for a response, every effort will be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.

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Raymore-Peculiar R-II School District

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