

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOL TITLE I HOMELESS EDUCATION PLAN

In compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act), Henry County School Division has developed a system to identify homeless children. Each school has a designated “homeless contact.”

Each academic year, the homeless liaison shall provide new posters, and brochures (*what families need to know*), stating *all children and youth have the right to free, appropriate public education*. The federal McKinney-Vento Act guarantees school enrollment for anyone who, due to a lack of housing, does not have a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence. This information on the poster helps identify the definition of homelessness. Each administrator is requested, by the homeless liaison, to post this information in each school building (where it is easily identified, such as the office area, where parents/ visitors sign in the school buildings). In addition, this information is sent to the community service agencies such as Piedmont Community Services and the Department of Social Services.

Steps to ensure students experiencing homelessness are provided a free, appropriate education: schools will use all available technology and other resources to contact the last school attended to obtain student’s records. While waiting for documentation, the student is immediately enrolled according to school board regulation JECA.

The local homeless education liaison assures homeless students are identified and services are appropriately provided to all students and their families. The local liaison and the Title I coordinator have developed a matrix of available services to provide quick and appropriate delivery of educational supports. The matrix includes not only available services but also a system of actions to guide staff through the process of providing for the academic needs of homeless students within the requirements of the law.

Steps include: if a student is identified as experiencing homelessness, the student is to be enrolled immediately.

Contact the previous school and ask that records be sent electronically or shared over the phone (then sent through the mail system).

Students and their families are offered two options for school enrollment: attending the school where they reside or remaining in the school of origin. It is vital that the child be

allowed to enroll in their *school of origin, the school the child or youth attended before becoming homeless or was last enrolled.*

If the school of origin is different from the locality of the nearest school location, then the director of transportation needs to be contacted by the director of student support services regarding coordination of transportation to school of origin from any temporary location, where a child is residing. Special transportation arrangements are to be made for students needing access to appropriate educational programs.

Immunizations and Health Physicals Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless students are enrolled immediately and subsequent efforts are made to obtain birth records, required immunizations, and documentation of health examinations:

Children are enrolled immediately in their local school system. The local health department is notified immediately after enrollment for completion of physical examinations and records of immunizations. For example, in the case of Hurricane Katrina, the school system was allowed 30 days for families and or local health departments to complete the necessary physical examination and immunizations required by Virginia Code for school enrollment (Dr. DeMary regarding physicals and immunizations, Sept. 2, 2005). Documentation is requested to be placed in the student file, if the 30 day timeline is implemented. Retrieval of necessary documents (birth certificates, Social Security Cards, immunization records) is to be obtained and copies placed in the student file.

Also, it is recommended for the student to have contact with the school nurse, to address any additional health problems and or chronic illnesses that might impact the student's educational experience. The school nurse or homeless liaison can also provide information regarding community services that are available to the family. Clothing, school supplies, and food may be needed by the family, so calls to an agency such as the Red Cross may be appropriate.

Enrollment and record keeping:

If the parents/students/caretaker have records, those records are to determine placement. If they do not, then questions are asked to determine the student's grade level and whether they are general education or special education.

Update school personnel (administrator and cafeteria manager) that students who are homeless are automatically eligible for free and reduced meals.

In compliance with Title I, Part A of ESEA, all children/youth identified as homeless are eligible to receive Title I services. Once identified as homeless, referrals for Title I services can be initiated by classroom teachers, guidance counselors (homeless contacts), principals, or the liaison. The liaison collaborates with the director of student services to

assure accurate collection and reporting of homeless data. The Title I coordinator collaborates with the liaison to ensure compliance and the provision of educational support services to homeless children/youth. Students experiencing homelessness also have access to school-based after school programs.

To ensure immediate enrollment of homeless children, the liaison provides information to registration personnel about regulations under the McKinney Vento-Act, and the locally developed matrix of available services, including services provided with funds reserved under Title I, Part A, Section 1113 (c)(3)(A)

If considered homeless, under the McKinney Vento Act, the school division will make sure that the student record indicates” homeless status” that may prevent them from being counted in average daily membership (ADM).

Sources of financial support:

The McKinney-Vento Act requires states to ensure that “each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education as provided to other children and youths.” Students should be coded in your student record system as homeless. This ensures the state share of payments is made and the school division is required to provide the local share of costs, just as the division does for any other student in ADM.

System for tracking students experiencing homelessness in the student data system:

The students experiencing homelessness are documented through reports provided by the administrator and guidance counselors of each school system to the homeless liaison and director of student services.

Enrollment Disputes:

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school.....

- The homeless student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;
- The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or student to appeal the decision;
- The student, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the district’s homeless liaison who shall carry the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and

- In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

Appeal Process:

Oral complaint-

In the event that an unaccompanied student or the parent or guardian of a student (hereinafter referred to as the Complainant) disagrees with a school's decision regarding the student's eligibility to attend the school, the Complainant shall orally present his position to the division's homeless liaison.

Written complaint-

If the disagreement is not resolved within five (5) school days, the Complainant may present a written complaint to the homeless liaison. The written complaint must include the following information: the date the complaint is given to the homeless liaison; a summary of the events surrounding the dispute; the name(s) of the school division personnel involved in the enrollment decision; and the result of the presentation of the oral complaint to the homeless liaison.

Within five (5) school days after receiving the written complaint, the homeless liaison will reach a decision regarding the contested enrollment and shall provide a written statement of that decision, including the reasons therefore, to the Complainant. The liaison will inform the Superintendent of the formal complaint and its resolution.

Appeal to Superintendent:

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the written decision of the homeless liaison, the Complainant may appeal that decision to the Superintendent by filing a written appeal. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the Superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the response thereto. The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference with the Complainant to discuss the complaint. Within five (5) school days of receiving the written appeal, the Superintendent, or designee, shall provide a written decision to the Complainant including a statement of the reasons therefore.

Comparable Services:

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school attended by the homeless student including the following:

- Transportation services;
- Educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as

services provided under Title I, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency

- Programs in vocational and technical education
- Programs for gifted and talented students; and
- School nutrition programs