

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Children who are homeless, as defined by appropriate State and Federal law will be provided a free and appropriate public education in the same manner as all other students of the District. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and will be assigned to the school serving those non-homeless students residing in the area in which the homeless child is actually living or the school of origin. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include those who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (referred to as "Doubled-up");
- B. Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. Live in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Are abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Are awaiting foster care placement;
- F. 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; or
- G. Live in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-G above are also considered homeless.

Homeless preschool-aged children and their families shall be provided equal access to the educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs administered by the School District.

The District shall remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students in schools in the District. Homeless students shall be enrolled

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immediately, even if they do not have the necessary enrollment documentation such as immunization and health records, proof of residency or guardianship, birth certificate, school records, and other documentation. The district has ensured the enrollment of homeless children is ongoing and is not delayed due to scheduling issues.

Homeless students will be provided services comparable to other students in the District including:

- A. transportation services;
- B. educational services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or similar State and local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency;
- C. programs in vocational and technical education;
- D. programs for gifted and talented students; and
- E. school nutrition programs, and
- F. before- and after-school programs.

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the child's best interest. The school of origin is the school that the student attended when permanently housed or last enrolled. The local attendance area school is any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

Homeless students have the right to dispute their school assignment, if their assignment is other than their school of origin. In determining the best interest of the student, the District shall, to the extent feasible, keep the student in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the homeless student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. If the student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, will be provided to the homeless student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. The appeal process shall be as set forth in Policy 9130 – Public Complaints and Grievances.

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The Board of Education requires that these rights and the dispute process be communicated to the parent or guardian of the homeless student or unaccompanied youth.

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or unaccompanied youth of the rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school.

At the request of the parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local homeless liaison, transportation shall be provided for a homeless student to and from the school or origin as follows:

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the School District in which the school of origin is located, transportation will be provided in accordance with District policy/administrative guidelines.
- B. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his/her education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the districts cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

The Superintendent or designee will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent or designee. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

After a period of eighteen (18) months and annually thereafter, the School District may conduct a review of the student's situation in order to assess if the economic or other hardship still exists. If, on the basis of the review, the District determines that the family no longer suffers such hardship, it will notify the family in writing and begin the process of dispute resolution as set forth by law.

Any change as a result of this review and determination shall be effective solely at the close of the school year.

105 ILCS 45/1-1 et seq.
42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. (McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act)

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