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EXPLANATION: PROGRAMS FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

MSBA has amended this policy to reflect the changes brought about by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specifically, the ESSA amended the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in relation to the education rights of homeless children and youths. October 1, 2016, is the effective date for these changes.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, state and local agencies must ensure that homeless children and youths have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children. The new changes require local education agencies to review their policies, practices and procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are appropriately identified and enrolled and have the opportunity to attend and be successful in school. Further, districts must identify and remove any barriers that would prevent homeless youths separated from public schools from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework that was satisfactorily completed at a prior school.

Districts may not separate homeless students from the mainstream school environment simply because they are homeless.

The law requires districts to designate a liaison for homeless children and youth.

The policy language also reflects these key provision changes in the McKinney-Vento Act:

1) A greater emphasis on identifying homeless children and youth. Districts are now required to provide training and professional development opportunities for staff members so they are able to identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youths.

2) Requirements that eligible homeless students not face any barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet schools, summer schools, career and technical education, advanced placement opportunities, online learning and charter school programs.

3) A greater focus on preschool-age homeless children, including clarification that local liaisons must ensure that these children and their families have access to and receive services, if eligible, under district-administered preschool programs, including Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by the district.

4) Collaboration and coordination with other service providers, including public and private child welfare and social service agencies; law enforcement agencies; juvenile and family courts; agencies providing mental health services; domestic violence agencies; child care

providers; runaway and homeless youth centers; providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act; and providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, including public housing agencies, shelter operators, and operators of traditional housing facilities.

5) Requirements that district liaisons participate in state training.

6) Removing enrollment barriers, including those related to missed application or enrollment deadlines, fines, fees or records required for enrollment (including immunization or other required health records; proof of residency; and academic records, including documentation for credit transfer or other documentation).

7) Privacy of student records, including information about a homeless student's living situation.

8) A presumption that keeping homeless students enrolled in their "school of origin" is in the student's best interest, except when contrary to the request of the student's parent/guardian or the youth (if they are unaccompanied). "School of origin" is defined as the school the homeless student attended when he or she was permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. This now includes preschools and "receiving schools," which are defined as the school a student is to attend after completing the final grade level at the school of origin.

9) Requirements that the student must be able to remain in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness or until the end of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed.

10) Dispute resolution procedures that now address eligibility issues in addition to school selection and enrollment.

11) If a parent/guardian or youth initiates a dispute with a district, the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which placement is sought and, at the request of the parent/guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local liaison, be provided transportation to or from the school of origin for the duration of the dispute, including any appeals.

12) Local liaisons now have the authority to affirm the eligibility of identified homeless students who meet the definition of homeless programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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The ESSA has also removed the term "awaiting foster care placement" from the definition of "homeless children and youths." This means that children who are awaiting foster care placement will no longer be considered homeless and will therefore not be eligible for McKinney-Vento services unless they meet the revised definition of "homeless children and youths."

For more detailed information, please see the following links:

The U.S. Department of Education non-regulatory program guidance on McKinney-Vento:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html>

Fact sheet for teachers and administrators:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160315ehcyfactsheet072716.pdf>

Dear Colleague Letter:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/160726.html>

MSBA recommends that copies of this document be routed to the following areas because the content is of particular importance to them. The titles on this list may not match those used by the district. Please forward copies to the district equivalent of the title indicated.

	Board Secretary	X	Business Office		Coaches/Sponsors
	Facility Maintenance		Food Service		Gifted
	Human Resources	X	Principals		Library/Media Center
X	Health Services	X	Counselor		Special Education
X	Transportation		Public Info/Communications		Technology

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PROGRAMS FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS


The Camdenton R-III School District Board of Education recognizes that ~~homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment~~ **homeless students are particularly vulnerable and need special assistance to access and benefit from the education environment.** Therefore, the district, in accordance with state and federal law and the Missouri state plan for education of the homeless, will give special attention to ensure that homeless students in the school district **are promptly identified and** have access to a free and appropriate public education **and related support services.**

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

1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; **or** are abandoned in hospitals; ~~or are awaiting foster care placement.~~
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who meet one of the above-described circumstances.

District Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths

The Board designates the following individual to act as the district's liaison for homeless children and youths (district liaison):

~~Assistant Principal Laura O'Quinn~~ 
Camdenton R-III School District
P.O. Box 1409
Camdenton, MO 65020
Phone: ~~573-346-9239~~ / Fax: ~~573-346-9291~~

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 was 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.

Immediately upon identifying the student as being eligible for homeless services, the selected school shall ensure that the student is attending class and participating fully in school activities.

Enrollment/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 nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the homeless student's best interest, the homeless student should continue his or her education in the school of origin, except when contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. 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 or guardian, the homeless coordinator 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.

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The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the homeless student lives with the homeless 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 determination.

If the student is unaccompanied, the district liaison shall assist the student in placement or enrollment decisions, shall give priority to the views of the student, and shall provide the student with notice of his or her right to appeal the district's decision.

The school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless student even if he or she is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation. However, the district may require a parent or guardian of a homeless student to submit contact information.

The district must provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless student's parent or guardian, or to the homeless student if unaccompanied, if the district sends him or her to a school other than the school of origin or other than a school requested by the parent or guardian.

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 homeless student, parent or guardian shall be referred to the district homeless coordinator, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

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 was last enrolled.

Services

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to the services offered to other students in the district including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for

which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and gifted students; vocational programs in career and technical education; school meals nutrition programs; preschool programs; before- and after-school care programs; and programs for students with limited English proficiency learners. Homeless students will not be segregated in a separate school or in a separate 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 interdistrict 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 Camdenton R-III School District, the district will provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian or homeless coordinator 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, may be given the student, so that make necessary referrals can be

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made and so that transfer records may be transferred 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.

Coordinator

The Board designates the following individual to act as the district's homeless coordinator:

Assistant Principal Laura O'Quinn
Camdenton R-III School District
P.O. Box 1409
Camdenton, MO 65020
Phone: 573-346-9239 / Fax: 573-346-9291

Responsibilities of District Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths

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 homeless coordinator liaison. The homeless coordinator district liaison will ensure that:

1. Homeless students, including homeless preschool-age children, are identified by school personnel and by other entities and agencies with which the school coordinates activities through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students are enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the district.
3. Homeless families and students have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Early Head Start, Even Start early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and preschool programs administered by the district, as well as referrals to health-care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services and other appropriate services based on their assessed needs.

4. The parents or guardians of 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. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where such students receive services, such as 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.
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law.
7. The parents or guardians of a homeless student and any unaccompanied student is are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is are assisted in accessing transportation to the selected school selected.
8. 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.
9. School personnel providing services to homeless students and their parents/guardians receive professional development and other support.
10. 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.
11. Students who need to obtain immunizations; or immunization or medical or immunization records; will receive assistance.
12. The district collects and reports reliable, valid and comprehensive data to DESE regarding homeless students.
13. 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.

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14. Every effort is made to enroll preschool-age homeless children in preschool if they are not already enrolled.

Disputes

Parents/Guardians or unaccompanied youth may appeal district decisions regarding eligibility, enrollment or placement in accordance with the Standard Complaint Resolution Process adopted by DESE.

1. Parents/Guardians or unaccompanied youth will submit disputes to the district liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The liaison will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth a written explanation of any decisions relating to eligibility, enrollment or placement. The written explanation will include:
 - ▶ A description of the action proposed or refused by the district;
 - ▶ An explanation of why the action was proposed or refused;
 - ▶ A description of any other options the school considered;
 - ▶ The reasons other options were rejected;
 - ▶ A description of any other relevant factors to the district's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination including the facts, witnesses and evidence relied upon and their sources;
 - ▶ Appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are not missed; and
 - ▶ Contact information for the local liaison and the state coordinator for homeless children and youth (state coordinator) and a brief description of their respective roles.
2. The liaison will discuss the explanation with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and answer any related questions.
3. If the explanation provided to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth does not resolve the dispute, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth should notify the liaison, who will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with the standard state complaint resolution process and ensure that the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth has the contact information for the state coordinator. If requested, the liaison will assist any unaccompanied youth in submitting the appeal.

The student will remain enrolled and will be allowed to attend and fully participate in all school activities during the dispute process.

If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth are English learners, use a native language other than English, or need additional supports due to a disability, the district shall make translators, interpreters or other support services available without charge and in the appropriate language.

Resolving Grievances

Level I – A complaint regarding the placement or education of a homeless student shall first be presented orally and informally to the district's homeless coordinator. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the complainant may present a formal written complaint (grievance) to the homeless coordinator. The written charge must include the following information: date of filing, description of alleged grievances, the name of the person or persons involved and a recapitulation of the action taken during the informal charge stage. Within five business days after receiving the complaint, the coordinator shall state a decision in writing to the complainant, with supporting evidence and reasons. In addition, the coordinator will inform the superintendent of the formal complaint and the disposition.

Level II – Within five business days after receiving the decision at Level I, the complainant may appeal the decision to the superintendent by filing a written appeals package. This package shall consist of the complainant's grievance and the decision rendered at Level I. The superintendent will arrange for a personal conference with the complainant at his or her earliest mutual convenience. Within five business days after receiving the complaint, the superintendent shall state a decision in writing to the complainant, with supporting evidence and reasons.

Level III – If a resolution is not reached in Level II, a similar written appeals package shall be directed through the superintendent to the Board of Education requesting a hearing before the Board at the next regularly scheduled or specially called meeting. Within 30 business days after receiving the appeals package, the Board shall state its decision and reply in writing to the parties involved. For district purposes, the decision of the Board of Education is final.

Level IV – If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Board of Education, a written notice stating the reasons for dissatisfaction may be filed with the State Homeless Coordinator, Federal Discretionary Grants, P. O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO, 65102-0480. An appeal of this decision can be made within ten days to the Deputy Commissioner of Education.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

Adopted: 08/08/1994

Revised: 01/12/2004; 10/13/2008;

Cross Refs: EEA, Student Transportation Services
JEC, School Admissions
JECA, Admission of Resident Students
~~JECB, Admission of Nonresident Students~~
JECC, Assignment of Students to Grade Levels/Classes

Legal Refs: §§ 167.020, .181, 210.003, RSMo.
19 C.S.R. 20-28.010
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g
34 C.F.R. Part 99
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. §§ 11431 *et seq.*- 11435

Camdenton R-III School District, Camdenton, Missouri