



POLICY 205 – HOMELESS STUDENTS

1. Authority

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Board 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 state and federal laws and regulations. The Board shall take reasonable steps to ensure that homeless students are not segregated or stigmatized and that decisions are made in the best interest of the student(s).

2. Definition

“Homeless students” are defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence including those

- A. sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- B. living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. abandoned in hospitals;
- E. awaiting foster care placement
- F. who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- G. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar setting; or
- H. migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

3. Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district’s liaison for homeless students and their families.

Enrollment

To the extent feasible, homeless students will 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 or guardians of the homeless student may request enrollment in the school attendance area in which the student is actually living. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other students’ assignment policies, or intra- and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families residing in the district. “School origin” shall be defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student pursuant to district policies. If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be informed of the district’s decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district’s liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exemption. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies including compliance with the state's Address Confidentiality Program when necessary.

Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his/her school of origin in this district, the district will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the students or will divide the cost equally.

Services

The district's liaison for the homeless student(s) and their families shall coordinate with: local social services that provide services to homeless children and youth and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.