

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational programs, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State of Wisconsin and School District of Phillips academic standards, are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

The School District of Phillips, when applicable, coordinate with local social service agencies and State and local housing agencies to assist in providing services and housing to minimize educational disruption for children and youths who become homeless.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Liaison for Homeless Children

A district-assigned liaison for homeless children and youth shall ensure that --

- 1) homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- 2) homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that district.
- 3) homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including preschool programs , and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services.
- 4) the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths 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 children and youths is disseminated where such children and youths receive services under this Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens, as well as to students and parents.
- 6) parents/guardians of a homeless child or youth are informed of their transportation rights.
- 7) enrollment disputes are mediated according to state and federal guidelines.
- 8) district policies and procedures do not serve as barriers for the enrollment and participation of homeless children and youth.

Definitions

- 1) Homeless children and youth – individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youth who:
 - a. are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
 - b. are living in motels, hotels, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
 - c. are living in emergency shelters
 - d. are abandoned in hospitals or waiting in foster care placement
 - e. have nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

- f. are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing , or bus or train stations
- g. are runaway children or abandoned
- 2) Unaccompanied Youth – youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- 3) School of Origin - the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
- 3) Resident – a homeless child or youth is a resident if the child is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain, but not necessarily to remain permanently.
- 4) Permanent Housing – any signed lease or long-term approved living situation.

Enrollment – Homeless students have the right to:

- 1) continue attending their school of origin, if that is their preference and is feasible. If the school district believes that the school selected is not in his/her best interest, then the district must provide the student with a written explanation of its position and inform the student of his/her right to appeal its decision.
- 2) enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- 3) attend classes and participate fully in activities while the school gathers needed documents.
- 4) enroll themselves in school if they do not live with parents. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the request of such unaccompanied youth.
- 5) If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school will refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local liaison who shall assist in obtaining necessary records.

Comparable Services – Homeless students have the right to:

- 1) transportation services to the school of origin until the end of the school year if feasible. In the case where the school of origin and current residence are different districts, the two school districts will agree on a method for transportation and share costs.
- 2) educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as Title I, special education, after-school program, limited English language proficiency.
- 3) vocational and technical education.
- 4) programs for gifted and talented students.
- 5) school nutrition programs.

Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

The local education liaison shall carry out the dispute process as expeditiously as possible after receiving the notice of the dispute.

Appeals will go to the superintendent. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Legal References: Title X, Section 721, 722(g)3
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Cross References: 411 Equal Educational Opportunities
420 School Admissions

Approved: 12-16-2013