

5.14 - HOMELESS STUDENTS 5.14

(1) Homeless children shall have access to free public education.

(2) Definitions:

(a) As used in this policy, the terms “homeless child” and “homeless student” shall mean a child or student who: Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including any child or student who:

(i) Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;

(ii) Is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

(iii) Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;

(iv) Has been abandoned in a hospital;

(v) Is awaiting foster care placement;

(vi) Has 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;

(vii) Is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; or

(viii) Is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in the circumstances described above.

(b) “Liaison” shall refer to the staff person designated by the District carry out the responsibilities of a liaison under the Act.

(c) “School of origin” shall mean the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled;

(3) District requirements. In accordance with governing law, the District shall:

(a) Ensure that all homeless children are afforded the same free, appropriate public education and receive comparable services offered to other children for which they are eligible such as transportation services, educational services including special education and related services, programs for English language learners, vocational and technical training programs, gifted programs, Title 1, Part A, preschool, and before and after school programs.

(b) Approve homeless students’ eligibility for free lunch.

(c) Designate a liaison for homeless children, who will identify homeless students, ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless children, and see that they have equal opportunities for success.

(d) Seek to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and provide exemptions, as needed, to documentation requirements such as proof of immunization, proof of residency, birth certificates, medical records, and previous school records. The Liaison shall assist

homeless children that do not have immunizations or medical records to obtain the necessary immunizations or retrieve the medical records.

(e) Ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated by the District based on their status as homeless.

(f) Ensure the rights of homeless students to remain in and receive transportation to their school of origin, if feasible, and communicate these rights to the parents or guardians.

(4) Enrollment Disputes. If a school selection or enrollment dispute develops over the selection or enrollment options available under the Act, the District must notify the District Liaison for homeless children and refer the parent or guardian to the Liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process. The District shall review the enrollment decision and provide a written explanation of the District's enrollment decision to the parent or guardian of the homeless child within ten (10) working days along with a statement regarding the parent or guardian's right to appeal the decision to the Florida Department of education ("FDOE"). If the parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the District's determination, he/she may file an appeal with the Liaison within ten (10) working days after receiving written notification of the District's enrollment decision that he/she wishes to appeal, and the Liaison will provide the appeal to the FDOE. While the dispute is in process, the student has the right to remain in the school of origin, if that is where enrollment is sought, pending resolution. The Liaison shall report each incident of a selection/enrollment dispute in the FDOE's Dispute Resolution Tracking System.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: 1001.43, 1003.01, 1003.21, 1003.22, F.S.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.)

History: Adopted: _01/09/07

Revision Date(s): _____

Formerly: NEW