ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

The Board believes that all school-aged students, including homeless students and unaccompanied youth, have a basic right to equal educational opportunities. Accordingly, the District must enroll each homeless student or unaccompanied youth in the District in the school determined to be in the student’s best interest. Enrollment is defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

A homeless student is defined as an individual who lacks fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including:

1. sharing the housing with other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;

2. living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

3. living in emergency or transitional shelters;

4. abandonment in hospitals;

5. 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;

6. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;

7. migratory students living in circumstances described above and

8. an unaccompanied youth who is homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

In compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the District must make school placement determinations on the basis of the best interest of the student. The District presumes that keeping the homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child or youth’s best interest, unless doing so is contrary to the request of the student’s parent or guardian, or the unaccompanied youth. When considering the school of best interest, the District considers student centered factors related to the homeless child or youth’s best interest including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of the child or youth and gives priority to the homeless child or youth’s parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth.
The District complies with a request made by a parent(s) regarding school placement regardless of whether the student lives with the homeless parent(s) or is temporarily residing elsewhere.

The Board ensures that:

1. it reviews and revises Board policies and regulations to eliminate barriers to the identification, enrollment, retention and success in school of homeless students including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences;

2. the District does not segregate homeless children or youth into separate schools or separate programs within a school, based on the student’s status as homeless;

3. it appoints a District liaison, able to carry out their duties, who ensures that homeless students are identified and enroll and succeed in school and ensures the liaison is trained in compliance with law;

4. it provides training opportunities for staff on identifying and serving homeless students;

5. homeless children or youth are immediately enrolled even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency or other documentation, or if the student has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;

6. homeless children or youth are provided with education, nutrition and transportation services that are at least comparable to the services provided to nonhomeless students and

7. homeless students and unaccompanied youth meeting the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities including: magnet school; summer school; career and technical education; advanced placement; online learning and charter school programs.

The liaison carries out all duties required by law, ensures compliance with the subgrant and coordinates services for homeless students with local social service agencies and programs, including those funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

A student who ceases to be homeless may continue to receive services until the end of the period of time for which the service was originally intended to be provided, which may be the end of the school year or the end of a program cycle.
Information about a homeless child or youth's living situation is part of the student education record and is not considered directory information.

The District complies with the Ohio Department of Education's Plan and State and Federal laws for the education of homeless students.

[Adoption date: December 18, 2001]
[Re-adoption date: June 17, 2003]
[Re-adoption date: July 23, 2007]
[Re-adoption date: April 19, 2010]
[Re-adoption date: February 27, 2017]
[Re-adoption date: April 23, 2018]

LEGAL REFS.: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
42 USC Sections 11431 et seq.
ORC 9.60 through 9.62
3313.64(F)(13)
OAC 3301-35-02; 3301-35-04; 3301-35-06

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
JEC, School Admission
JHCB, Immunizations
JO, Student Records
ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS  
(Dispute Resolution Process)

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the District will immediately enroll the child/unaccompanied youth in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. Enrollment is defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

1. District staff will refer the student, parent or guardian to the District liaison who will initiate the dispute resolution process as quickly as possible. The District liaison will make sure that the District follows the dispute resolution process. The liaison also must ensure that unaccompanied youth receive the same rights to appeal a district’s eligibility, school selection or enrollment decision as parents and guardians. The role of the District liaison is to assist the student, parent or guardian through the duration of the dispute resolution process. The process will be open and transparent among those involved.

2. Upon determination of eligibility, enrollment or school selection, the District will provide a written explanation of any decisions made to parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth. The written explanation will be easy to understand and free of jargon. When appropriate, the District will translate the decision into the recipient’s dominant language. At a minimum, the written explanation of how the District reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection or enrollment will include:

A. A description of the action that the District proposed or refused;

B. An explanation of why the District proposed or refused the action;

C. A description of any other options the District considered;

D. The reasons why the District rejected any other options;

E. A description of any other factors relevant to the District’s decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination. This includes the facts, witnesses and evidence relied upon and their sources;

F. Appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are met;

G. Contact information for the District liaison and state homeless education coordinator and a brief description of their roles and

H. Notice to the recipient of their right to file an appeal, including step-by-step instructions of how to file an appeal.
3. The student, parent or guardian has the right to appeal any district determination of eligibility, school selection or enrollment. The District liaison will guide the student, parent or guardian through the entire dispute resolution process. The liaison will assist in both the local and state-level appeals process, if necessary. This includes recording evidence that will be used to write an appeal if a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth cannot do so by him or herself and providing access to school materials, such as copiers and fax machines.

4. Following an appeal at the local level, if the student, parent or guardian still disagrees with the determination, they may appeal to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The District liaison will forward all written documentation and related documents to the ODE state coordinator for homeless education. Upon receipt of any requested documentation, the state coordinator for homeless education will investigate the dispute and request applicable documentation. ODE will make a decision within 15 school days from the receipt of all necessary materials and will provide the final decision to the District Superintendent, building principal, local liaison, and parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. All parties must immediately adhere to the final determination.

(Approval date: February 27, 2017)
(Re-approval date: April 23, 2018)