Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services

To the extent practical and as required by law, the corporation will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided corporation services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Title 1, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; or
7. Are migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

An unaccompanied youth is a homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

The superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the corporation's liaison for homeless students and their families.

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. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area the student is actually living. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment or student choice or transfer policies are available to homeless families on the same terms as families who are resident in the school corporation.

If there is an eligibility or enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the corporation's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The corporation's liaison will carry out the dispute resolution as provided by state rule.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to corporation policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the corporation liaison is to assist in this process. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to corporation policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with corporation policies.

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 school corporation, or a homeless student is living in another school corporation but will attend his or her school of origin in this corporation, the two school corporations will coordinate to determine the responsibilities and costs of each corporation to provide the transportation services necessary for the student. If the two school corporations do not agree upon an arrangement, the responsibilities and costs for the transportation services will be shared equally by the two school corporations.

The corporation's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school corporations 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 education and appeal rights of homeless students in a manner understandable to the homeless students, their parents or guardians, and unaccompanied youth. The notice shall be disseminated in locations frequented by homeless students, their parents or guardians, and unaccompanied youth.

The corporation's liaison will be responsible to review and recommend amendments to corporation policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. Section 11431
42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g)
42 U.S.C. Section 11432a