

Homeless/Displaced Student Assistance

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Homelessness Defined:

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homelessness as the following living situations:

- Residing in a shelter, vehicle, campground, on the street, in 24-hour restaurants, at bus stations or in a motel, etc.
- Displaced due to natural disaster (hurricane, flood, earthquake, etc.)
- Staying in an abandoned building, trailer or other inadequate accommodations
- Doubled up with friends or relatives due to inability to find affordable housing
- “Couch Surfing”
- “Bounced Around” from family member to family member
- An unaccompanied youth living on his/her own

Rights of Homeless Students and School\District Responsibilities:

- Homeless students have the right to register for and attend school, even if they do not have their full documentation such as immunization records, proof of residency, utility bill, birth certificate, special education records, etc.
- Registration must be immediate! Attendance will begin as soon as possible. As with all new students, secretaries/registrars may need time to contact the teacher(s) and make sure there is a desk and appropriate classroom materials. The school counselor will arrange assistance with school breakfast and lunch, as well as transportation (as determined by counselor and homeless liaison in cooperation with the parent/guardian).
- Homeless students have the right to stay in the same school, even if they move to another enrollment area or a new school district, if it is reasonable, feasible and in the best interest of the child. This helps children maintain stability. Research shows that students who change schools lose between 2-6 months of academic achievement with each move.
- Transportation must be provided by the school district in the form of school bus, city bus passes, or gas vouchers. Counselors will assist with transportation planning and implementation.
- Students are entitled to free breakfast and lunch without the need to fill out the forms. Counselors make this referral.
- The services above will continue until the end of the school year in which homelessness ends for that family.

We provide assistance with:

- Free food services
- Medical, dental and mental health referrals
- Appropriate support programs, if eligible, such as Highly Capable, Special Education, preschool, ELL
- School supplies and clothing
- Assistance obtaining records and documentation
- Academic support through the district's federally funded Title I program
- Parent and guardian involvement in schools

Our counselors form the first line of support for homeless children within their respective schools.

District Homeless Liaison:

Doris Bolender
Superintendent
360-426-8437