

## **BP 5112.6 EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

### **Homeless children**

The Board believes that all students should have stability in school attendance and services and that this stability should not be denied as a result of homelessness. To this end, it is the Board's intent to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in school. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless youth not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs. Homeless students will not be segregated in a separate school or in a separate program within a school.

(cf. 5111 – Admission)

(cf. 5112.1 – Exemptions from Attendance) (cf. 5112.2 – Exclusions from Attendance)

### **Homeless Student Liaison**

The Superintendent shall designate at least one staff person to serve as the Homeless Student Liaison to fulfill the duties set forth in law. The Liaison shall work to identify homeless children and facilitate each homeless child's access to and success in school. The Liaison will: assist parents, students, and unaccompanied youth in enrolling and attending school, with the opportunity to meet the same high academic standard as other students; mediate disputes concerning school enrollment; assist in making transportation arrangements; assist in requesting the student's records; provide information and give referrals on services and opportunities, including assistance with status verifications for federal student aid applications; provide public notice of educational rights for homeless students in locations frequented by homeless youth and their families; and assist any homeless child who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian with enrollment decisions. The Liaison will also be responsible for periodic review and evaluation of this policy and recommending changes to reduce barriers for homeless children enrolling in and attending school.

### **Homeless Student Defined**

A homeless child is defined as a child or youth between the ages of 5 and 21 who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes a child or youth who is living on the street, in a car, tent, or abandoned building or some other form of shelter not designed as a permanent home; who is living in a community shelter

facility; or who is living with non-nuclear family members or with friends, who may or may not have legal guardianship over the child or youth of school age.

## **School Enrollment and Attendance**

The District, in consultation with the child's parent or guardian, will consider the best interest of the child in determining whether the child should be enrolled in the school of origin or the current neighborhood school. The District presumes that keeping a homeless student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth. To the extent feasible, 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, except when contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in which attendance area the student is actually living, or other schools.

(cf. 5116 – School Attendance Boundaries)

(cf. 5117 – Interdistrict Attendance)

The school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization and health exam records, proof of residency, or other documentation. However, the District may require a parent or guardian of a homeless student to submit contact information.

(cf. 5141.3 – Health Examinations)

(cf. 5141.31 – Immunizations)

The District must provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless student's parent or guardian, or the homeless student if unaccompanied, if the District sends the student to a school other than the school of origin or other than a school requested by the parent or guardian. If a dispute arises over school selection, the student shall immediately be admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent or guardian or by the youth if unaccompanied, pending resolution of the dispute. The child, parent or guardian shall be referred to the Homeless Student Liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

## **Transportation**

In the event that it is in the best interest of the homeless child or youth to attend the school of origin, transportation to and from that school may be provided at the request of the parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied student, the Homeless Student Liaison. Policies or practices regarding transportation of students

which might cause a barrier to the attendance of a homeless child or youth may be waived by the [Superintendent/Chief School Administrator].

## **Records**

Any records ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child shall be maintained so that appropriate services may be given the student, so that necessary referrals can be made, and so that records may be transferred in a timely fashion when a homeless child or youth enters a new school district. Copies of records shall be made available upon request to students or parents. Information about a homeless student's living situation is an education record and shall not be deemed to be directory information.

## **Children And Youth in Foster Care**

The [Superintendent/Chief School Administrator] will designate a District point of contact regarding children in foster care in order to facilitate communication and cooperation with child welfare agencies.

## **School Enrollment and Attendance**

The District recognizes that educational stability is critical for all students and particularly for children in foster care. Accordingly, educational disruption should be minimized for children with changing foster care placements by maintaining foster children in their schools of origin for the remainder of the school term, unless it is determined to be in their best interest to change schools.

The school of origin is the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care or when foster care placement changes. In determining whether it is in a child's best interest to remain in his or her school of origin, the District should take into consideration all factors relating to a child's best interest, including the appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of placement.

Districts should coordinate with State and local child welfare agencies when a foster child is transferred from one placement setting to another to ensure the child is permitted to attend their school of origin through the end of the school term when reasonable to do so and in the child's best educational interest.

## **Transportation**

In the event that it is in the best interest of the foster youth to attend their school of origin, transportation to and from that school may be provided through coordination with State or local child welfare agencies. This coordination shall address transportation to their school of origin in a prompt and cost-effective manner.

*Legal Reference:*

**UNITED STATES CODE**

*McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C.*

*§§ 11431, et seq.*

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1112(c)(5),, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act.*

*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g  
FEDERAL REGISTER*

*McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, Vol. 81 No. 52, Department of Education (March 17, 2016).*

**ALASKA STATUTES**

*AS 47.10.080 Judgments and Orders.*

Revised 3/2017

**9/92**

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