

## **503.1 HOMELESS STUDENTS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

- A. Federal law defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Such individuals include children and youth in the following categories.
- a. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (excluding mobile home communities) or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals, or are awaiting foster care.
  - b. Children and youth who have 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.
  - c. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
  - d. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

### **II. EDUCATIONAL STABILITY**

- B. Federal law requires local school districts to provide educational stability for homeless students, as described below.
- a. District 2180 will keep homeless students in their schools of origin, to the extent feasible, unless it is against the parent's or guardian's wishes. Homeless students will be permitted to remain in their schools of origin for the duration of their homelessness and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.
  - b. District 2180 will provide transportation for homeless students to the school of origin at the request of the parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, at the request of the district's homeless liaison.
    - i. If the school of origin is in District 2180, District 2180 will provide and pay for the transportation.
    - ii. If the school of origin is outside of District 2180, District 2180 will work with the school of origin's district to jointly provide and pay for transportation.

### **III. IMMEDIATE SCHOOL ACCESS**

- C. Federal law requires local school districts to provide immediate school access for homeless students, as described below.
  - a. District 2180 will immediately enroll homeless students, even if they do not have required documents such as school records, medical records, proof of residency or other documents. In this context, “enroll” means to allow the students to attend classes and participate fully in school activities.
  - b. A school in which a homeless student enrolls will obtain school records from the student’s previous school, while the student is enrolled in school.
  - c. The district’s homeless liaison will immediately help obtain immunizations or immunization records or medical records for homeless students who do not have them.
  - d. A school will provide a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal if a homeless student is sent to a school other than the one requested by the student’s parent or guardian (Procedure – Transferring Criteria).

### **IV. HOMELESS LIAISON**

- D. Federal law requires local school districts to appoint a liaison for homeless students.
- E. The High School Social Worker shall be the homeless liaison for District 2180. The liaison is responsible for the following:
  - a. Ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified;
  - b. Ensuring that homeless children and youth enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to success in, District 2180 schools;
  - c. Ensuring that homeless children and youth and their families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, and preschool programs administered by the district, as well as referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
  - d. Ensuring that public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services, and
  - e. Ensuring that parents or guardians are informed about educational and related opportunities available to their children, are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children, and are informed of and assisted in accessing all transportation services, including to the school of origin.

## V. TITLE I SERVICES

- F. Federal law requires local school districts to serve homeless students with Title I funds.
  - a. A child or youth who is homeless and is attending any District 2180 school is automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of their current academic performance.
  - b. District 2180 will reserve or set aside funds needed to provide services to those provided to children in Title I-funded schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children experiencing homelessness may live.

*Legal References:* McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle VII-B – Education for Homeless Children and Youths, January 2002