

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Strategies for Implementation

October 29, 2020



LaDewayne Harris (lharris@mdek12.org)
State Homeless Ed. Coordinator

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

1

**All
Students
Proficient
and Showing
Growth in All
Assessed
Areas**



2

**Every
Student
Graduates
from High
School and
is Ready for
College and
Career**



3

**Every
Child Has
Access
to a High-
Quality Early
Childhood
Program**



4

**Every
School Has
Effective
Teachers and
Leaders**



5

**Every
Community
Effectively
Uses a
World-Class
Data System
to Improve
Student
Outcomes**



6

**Every
School and
District is
Rated “C” or
Higher**



Agenda

- Identification Requirements/Strategies
- Enrollment Requirements/Strategies
- Transportation Requirements/Strategies
- Dispute Resolution Requirements/Strategies

Identification

- Ensure that homeless students are identified “by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies” [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(i)].
- All districts must also have an application approved by the SEA that addresses Title I, Part A coordination with McKinney-Vento. Child Find provisions in IDEA include a specific requirement that states ensure homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated [20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(3)(A)].

Identification

- Required activity to increase identification: public notice about the rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where families are likely to receive services [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(vi)].

Identification Strategies

- Observe students' behaviors and data.
- Ask probing yet considerate questions.
- Create a platform for identification.
- Adhere to the McKinney-Vento definition of “homeless.”
- Adequately and properly train all relevant school personnel.
- Communicate with outside agencies, other school districts, and within your own school district.

Identification Strategies

- Include housing questionnaires in enrollment packets.
- Review enrollment forms for programs serving at-risk students
- Maintain a list of local hotels, motels, and shelters
- Conduct awareness trainings for school staff and community members
- Establish relationships within the community you serve
- Post homeless contact information on your district's website
- Verify student addresses when in doubt

Key Personnel in Identification

- School Nurses
- Front Office/Registration Staff
- Truancy and Attendance Officers
- Cafeteria Staff
- Bus Drivers
- School Social Workers and Counselors
- Classroom Teachers and Aides
- School Administrators

Benefits of Homeless Identification

- Allows homeless liaisons to assist with enrollment difficulty
- Allows homeless liaisons to connect students with educational support/community services
- Increases the likelihood of homeless students overcoming educational challenges they may face
- Playing a vital role in the success of students experiencing homelessness.

- The term *enrollment* is a critical part of the law and is defined as, “attending classes and participating fully in school activities” [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1)]. Schools are required to enroll homeless students immediately, even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines while experiencing homelessness and regardless of what point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

Enrollment Strategies

- Create online registration (with living status surveys).
- Assist families with obtaining adequate records.
- Communicate with colleagues about students.
- Develop a private platform to discuss homelessness.
- Be approachable and accessible (district's website).

Enrollment Strategies

- Adequately and frequently train school personnel/bus drivers.
- Contact previous schools of potential homeless students.
- Develop a protocol for students who have issues with residency.
- Educate the community on homeless education.

Transportation

- Each school district must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent of a homeless student or unaccompanied homeless youth.
- An LEA may not refuse to provide transportation to the school of origin due to lack of an available bus or other resources once this best interest determination has been made.
- Special cases should be agreed upon and followed by all parties involved.

Transportation Strategies

- Remove barriers to a homeless student's education.
- Consider the commute time for homeless students traveling to and from school.
- Respect the privacy and honor simple requests of homeless students.

Transportation Strategies

- Transportation arrangements should ensure that a homeless student is able to participate for the full school day, neither arriving late nor leaving before the school day has ended. Extremely early pick-up times or public bus transfers for young children also may be problematic and should be considered carefully when arranging transportation.

Transportation Strategies

- The mode of transportation also should not stigmatize a homeless student or betray the confidentiality of his or her living status. Bus routes should be arranged such that students staying in homeless shelters can be picked up and dropped off in a way that does not reveal their place of temporary residence.

Transportation Strategies

- Another consideration for determining the most logical mode of transportation includes safety policies. The McKinney-Vento Act does not override state educational agency (SEA) and LEA safety policies. If, for example, a state or district policy allows students to travel only on a yellow school bus, then the LEA must arrange bus transportation for homeless students.
- If students are allowed to be transported in cars or taxis, local liaisons should consult with the school district attorney regarding liability and requirements for background checks for the drivers.

Dispute Resolution

- The dispute resolution process is an important tool to protect the rights and best interests of homeless children and youths, as well as those of the local educational agency (LEA). Therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act requires each State educational agency (SEA) to include a written procedure for the prompt resolution of disputes in its state plan for homeless education [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(C)].

Dispute Resolution Strategies

- Attempt to resolve these issues before entering into a formal dispute.
- Thoroughly train records clerk and principals on McKinney-Vento.
- Explain the legal requirements of McKinney-Vento.
- Listen and be understanding of students' needs.
- Develop a system on how to report issues within the LEA.

Dispute Resolution Strategies

- Align LEA dispute resolution policy with State Board Policy 40.1
- Ensure that the child in question still receives comparable services throughout the dispute process.
- Submit a formal letter explaining rationale for denial along with dispute resolution.



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

LaDewayne Harris

State Homeless Ed. Coordinator

laharris@mdek12.org

601-359-3499

mdek12.org

