

### HOMELESS STUDENTS

The Superintendent, or his her designee, will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children whose general duty will be to safeguard the rights of homeless children attending school in this District. The Liaison must be notified immediately upon the enrollment or assignment of a homeless child. The Liaison will coordinate District operations and services so that:

- A. homeless children are identified, with special attention given to the enrollment and attendance of homeless children who are not currently attending school;
- B. homeless children have a full and fair opportunity to succeed in school;
- C. homeless families and children receive educational services for which they are eligible, including any District preschool programs, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
- D. parents or guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- E. public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated where such children receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- F. enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with Board Policy and the State Consolidated Plan;
- G. the parents or guardians of any homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless minor are fully informed of transportation services and assisted in accessing such transportation.

Upon enrollment of a homeless child, the Liaison will coordinate with appropriate administrative staff to assure that the school last attended by a homeless child is immediately contacted to provide relevant academic or other relevant records. If upon enrollment the homeless child is found to be in need of any immunization required for enrollment by State law or any other medical records, the Liaison will assist the family or student in obtaining the immunizations or necessary medical records. The Liaison will also contact the Manager of Transportation to assure transportation of the homeless student is provided in accordance with the Board's Transportation Policy.

Any disputes regarding the enrollment or assignment of a homeless student will be referred to the Liaison for expeditious resolution.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act acknowledges that disputes may arise between the school district and homeless students and their parents/guardians when the student is placed in a school other than the one requested. Guidance for school selection is provided in the law. The law includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the LEA Liaison.

The following procedures are specified in the Act:

- Enrollment: Immediately enroll the homeless student in the school preferred by the parents until the dispute is settled.
- Written explanation: Provide a written explanation of the school placement decision to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
- Liaison: The designated LEA liaison is assigned to carry out the dispute resolution in an expeditious manner.
- It is the responsibility of the district's homeless liaison to inform the parents/guardians of homeless students of the Complaint Resolution Procedures.

**Local Level:** Every effort must be made to resolve the complaint or dispute at the local level before it is brought to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

- If a question concerning the education of the homeless child arises, the first person to contact in the school district is the homeless liaison. Each school district is required to have a designated homeless liaison, with someone in every school or in the central office for the school district able to identify said homeless liaison. If there is a complaint about services for the homeless student(s), the complainant is to be provided a copy of the local complaint procedure. The following explains the complaint procedure:
  - The homeless liaison should discuss the complaint with the complainant and the complainant is to be provided copies of the policies and administrative guidelines that the **local** Board of Education has adopted concerning the education of homeless children and youth.
  - A determination is to be made as to whether the requested services for the homeless student are consistent with local school board policy.
  - If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant will be advised to present it in writing to the homeless liaison.
  - A written proposed resolution of the complaint or plan of action is to be provided to the complainant within five (5) days of the date of receipt of the written complaint.

- If the complaint is not resolved at this level within five (5) days, it may be taken to the superintendent, or his/her designee, of the district the student is attending or wishes to attend. In addition to presenting the written complaint, an appointment will be made for the complainant to meet with the superintendent, or his/her designee, to discuss the complaint. At the end of the discussion with the superintendent, or his/her designee, a written resolution will be provided within five (5) days of the date of the discussion.
- If the complaint is still not resolved, it may be appealed to the local Board of Education.

**State Level:** If the complaint is not resolved in a satisfactory manner at the local level, the complaint may be directed to MDE. Complaints made under this process must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The following steps are to be taken:

- Address the complaint to the Michigan Department of Education, State Homeless Coordinator, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.
- Include in the complaint:
  - A description of the situation that prompted the complaint.
  - The name(s) and age(s) of the child or children involved.
  - The name(s) of the involved school district personnel and the school district or districts involved.
  - A description of the attempts that were made to solve the issue at the local level including copies of any documentation used up to that point.
- The State Homeless Coordinator will gather needed information from statements of the parties involved and will forward the information to the director of the Office of School Improvement along with a recommendation for resolution or for further investigation.
- Within thirty (30) days after receiving a complaint, the Director of the Office of School Improvement will recommend a resolution and will inform interested parties in writing of the decision.
- If a complainant or one of the parties involved in the complaint disagrees with the decision, that party may, within ten (10) working days, appeal to the Deputy Superintendent. This appeal must be in writing and state why the party disagrees with the decision of the Director of the Office of School Improvement.

- Within thirty (30) days after receiving an appeal, the Deputy Superintendent will render a final administrative decision and notify the complainant and the school district(s) involved in writing.

If the party disagrees with the decision of the Deputy Superintendent in a matter concerning homeless children or youth, the party may request a review of the decision by the United States Secretary of Education in accordance with 34 CFR Part 299.11.

While the dispute is being resolved, the child or children in question must be enrolled in school. If the dispute is concerning the school of “best interest,” the child must be enrolled in the school preferred by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth unless previous arrangements have been implemented.

As part of his/her assigned duties, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for Homeless Children and other community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related services to homeless children including but not limited to:

- A. School District services with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and their families; and
- B. Other school districts on inter-district issues, such as transportation or the transfer of school records.

Such coordination should be designed to: (1) facilitate homeless children having access and reasonable proximity to available education and related support services; and (2) raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

As part of his/her assigned duties, the Liaison for Homeless Children will inform school personnel, services providers and advocates working with homeless families about his/her duties.

*October, 2010*