

BOARD POLICY

Descriptive Code: JBCA

**SCHOOL ADMISSIONS
OF HOMELESS STUDENTS
AND UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH**

Date: May 13, 2008

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, the Columbia County Board of Education is dedicated to the guiding principal that all eligible children and youth, including the homeless, who reside or whose school of origin is within the school district, are entitled to a free, appropriate education. As a result, all homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students. In addition, all homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for free meals, Title I services, and transportation to the student's school of origin, if deemed to be in the best interest of the child and requested by the parent or guardian. **Explicitly, the School District is committed to meeting the needs of all homeless students and unaccompanied youth who reside outside of Columbia County but whose school of origin is located within the Columbia County School District. The means of transportation of such youth shall be handled on an individual basis. If the student in transition is living in this district but attending school in another or attending school in this district but living in another, this district will coordinate with the neighboring district to arrange for appropriate transportation.**

The McKinney-Vento Act defines the term homeless as any individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence and

- Is sharing the housing of another person due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; is living in emergency or transitional shelter; has been abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement.
- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.
- Is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

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- Is classified as migratory.

The above definitions of homeless exclude "any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of Congress or a state law."

When a parent, guardian and/or student with a questionable place of residence present themselves for student enrollment at a local school, the school administration shall direct the family to the Homeless Liaison for a determination of the student's residential status. If the student meets the definition of homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, enrollment status of the student will be as follows:

1. To continue enrollment in the school and school district attended prior to homelessness; or
2. To enroll in the school and school district where the student is presently living. Before making a decision, school administrative personnel should consult with the parent, guardian and/or student and carefully consider what is in the best interest of the student. Enrollment considerations include: safety of the student, continuity of instruction, possible location of future housing, time remaining in the academic year, anticipated length in the temporary living situation, school placement of siblings, and special education needs of student.

If a homeless parent, guardian and/or student attempt to enroll the student without a transcript or grade record, birth certificate, or immunization health records, the school administration should contact the former school by phone to request the student's records and discuss immunization information and tentative placement. The school administration shall grant a conditional waiver in an attempt to acquire an adequate immunization certificate. The student should be enrolled and tentatively placed in the grade which, in the judgment of the school administration, best serves the student.

In exceptional cases where no parent or guardian can be located, the school administration should contact the Department of Family and Children Services for assistance and advice on working with the homeless student.

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The homeless parent, guardian, and/or student are required to report any change of status in residency to the school immediately. Likewise, if school officials have reason to believe there has been a change in residency of a homeless student, they must report this to the Homeless Liaison for review.

If a dispute arises over any issue covered by this board policy, the homeless student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is being sought, pending final resolution of the dispute by the Superintendent or designee.

It is the responsibility of the Homeless Liaison to coordinate with and seek support from the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, public and private service providers, and placement agencies. The Homeless Liaison will conduct training and sensitivity awareness activities for appropriate county and school personnel annually.

Procedure: NO

Adopted: 1/9/90

Revised: 7/10/01, 7/24/07, 12/11/07

Columbia County Board of Education