

Yav Pem Suab Academy Charter School

Homeless Education Program

The Yav Pem Suab Academy Charter School Homeless Education Program was designed to provide assistance to homeless student and their families in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, an integral part of No Child Left Behind.

MC-KINNEY VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. It states that all school-aged homeless children are entitled to the same free and appropriate public education that is provided to non-homeless students. Schools are to remove barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless students. Refer to BUL-1570.1; Enrollment/Support of Homeless Children and Youth in Schools, March 5, 2008.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

Any child or youth without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence is considered “homeless” under the law. This includes students who are:

- Living with a friend, relative or someone else because they lost their home or their family is having temporary financial problems;
- Staying in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camp ground (does not include trailers or mobile homes in a mobile home park) because they have nowhere else to go;
- Living in a shelter, including emergency or transitional shelters, domestic violence shelters, and runaway and homeless youth shelters;
- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings or substandard housing (for example, condemned buildings, or garages), bus or train stations, or other similar settings;
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement; or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

“**Unaccompanied Youth**” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. These young people may include those who:

- Were asked to leave home by a parent;
- Left home with the consent of a parent;
- Have no formal custody papers or arrangements while their parents are in jail, the hospital, or rehabilitation center; or
- Ran away from home.

SCHOOL SELECTION / STUDENT RIGHTS

- Placement decisions for homeless students shall be based on the student’s best interest. In determining a student’s best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her school of origin, unless, his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise.
- “**School of Origin**” is defined as the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

- When making a placement decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the age of the student, the distance of the commute and the impact it may have on the student's education, personal safety issues, the student's need for special instruction, the length of anticipated stay in the temporary shelter or other temporary location, likely area of future housing, school placement of siblings, and the time remaining in the school year.
- A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school or origin extends for the duration of homelessness.
- If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.
- Children or youth who become homeless in between academic years are entitled to attend their school of origin for the following year.
- If the LEA sends the child/youth to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, the LEA must provide written explanation to the parent/guardian, including the right to appeal under the dispute resolution provisions.
- In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the LEA homeless coordinator must assist in placement/enrollment decisions, consider the youth's wishes, and provide notice to the youth of the right to appeal under the dispute resolution provisions.
- The choice regarding placement must be made regardless of whether the child or youth resides with the homeless parent or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.
- School districts must provide or arrange transportation for student who want to stay at their schools of origin, even if students move to a different city, county, or school district. The law does not say what kind of transportation must be provided.
- Some school districts do not offer school bus service to non-homeless students. In those districts, homeless students would also not be able to ride a school bus to school.

ENROLLMENT

Schools must immediately enroll homeless students, allowing them to attend classes and participate fully in school activities. These students are able to enroll even if they do not have records or other items that are required for non-homeless students, such as:

- Immunizations or immunization records;
- Physical examinations or medical records;
- Academic records;
- Proof of residency;
- A parent or legal guardian
- Birth certificates and or other documents

The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records.

NUTRITION PROGRAMS – FREE MEALS

Homeless students automatically qualify for free breakfast and lunch at schools that offer meals. The student's name should be immediately sent to the cafeteria or placed on the appropriate list. Families do not have to fill out an application or provide proof of income. The Homeless Coordinator can verify names.

ACCESS TO COMPARABLE SERVICES

Children and youth are to be provided services comparable to those received by other students in the school selected, including transportation services, and education programs for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title 1 or similar state and local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for student with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- If a disagreement arises over school selection or enrollment, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is requesting enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute [Sec 722(g)(3)(E)(i)]. Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.”
- The parent/guardian must be provided with a written explanation of the schools’ decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal. [Sec 722 (g)(3)(E)(ii)]
- The parent/guardian must be referred to the homeless coordinator, who will carry out the state’s grievance procedure as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. [Sec 722(g)(3)(E)(iii)]
- In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless coordinator shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute. [Sec 722 (g)(3)(E)(iv)]

HOMELESS COORDINATOR DUTIES

The homeless coordinator shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in the schools of the LEA.
- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible.
- Parents and guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters, and soup kitchens.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulations.
- Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services
- Assist students who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.