

HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and youth and unaccompanied youth and their families or legal guardians to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to, ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided services the district may offer, for which they are eligible, including, but not limited to Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, school nutrition programs, summer programming and extracurricular activities.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra- and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families residing in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

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Homeless students who are on Nantucket Island are entitled to transportation to their school of origin on Nantucket Island or the school where they are to be enrolled on Nantucket Island. For homeless students whose school of origin was in the Nantucket public school district, but who are no longer on Nantucket Island, the district's liaison will review each situation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the district will provide transportation to the Island for the student; in such a review the liaison will consider the age of the student, the time the student would spend in commuting on and off the island and the impact such a commute may have on the student's education, personal safety issues associated with the commute on and off the island, the time remaining in the school year, the anticipated length of the student's stay in the temporary shelter or other temporary living situation, and any other relevant factors. If a determination is made to transport a homeless student who is not living on Nantucket Island to the Nantucket Public Schools, the district where the student is living and the Nantucket Public School will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student and will negotiate a cost sharing agreement for such transportation. In the event that the Nantucket Public Schools and the district where the student is living do not reach an agreement on cost sharing, the cost of transporting the student will be divided equally between the two districts.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social services agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the education rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

LEGAL REFS.: Title I, Part C
No Child Left Behind Act, 2002