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HOMELESS STUDENTS

5.14*

- I. Children and youth in this school district who experience homelessness, including those not currently enrolled due to homelessness, will have equal access to the same free, appropriate education including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths and other services needed to ensure an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held and to fully participate in the District's academic and extracurricular activities and not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- II. The District will:
 - A. Designate an appropriate staff person able to carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Act, as the district's liaison for homeless children and youth; including but not limited to ensuring families and children experiencing homelessness have access to a public preschool program; providing appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by the homeless student; providing access to academic and extracurricular activities; and carrying out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
 - B. Remove barriers to:
 1. Identifying homeless children and youth
 2. Enrolling and retaining of homeless children and youth in school
 3. Provide access to homeless children to public preschool programs administered by the District
 4. Provide appropriate full credit for or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior school
 5. Provide access for homeless children and youth to academic and extracurricular activities
 6. Immediately enroll homeless children and youth to a qualified school
 - C. Coordinate district programs and collaborate with other school districts, community service providers and organizations, including:
 1. Local social services and other community agencies to provide support to homeless students and their families;

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2. Other school districts regarding homeless student-related transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities, as needed;
3. Housing authorities, and;
4. ESE

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III. Definitions

- A. **School of Origin**--the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
- B. **Enroll and enrollment**—includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- C. **Designated receiving school**—includes the next level school, elementary from prekindergarten, middle from elementary, high from middle, that a homeless child or youth, whose homelessness continues into the next school year, may attend when the next level school is the district designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.
- D. **Homeless children and youths**—individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residences, and includes:
 - 1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - 2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - 3. Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - 4. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters, or FEMA trailer;
 - 5. Are abandoned in hospitals or not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian;
 - 6. Have a primary nighttime residence that is:
 - a. A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 - b. An institution providing temporary residence for persons who are to be institutionalized; or
 - 7. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similarly settings; and
 - 8. Migratory children living in circumstances described above.

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- E. **Unaccompanied homeless youths**—a child or youth that is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- F. **Eligible school**—the school of origin, the school zoned for the address where the student is temporarily residing, or another school which students reside in that attendance zone are eligible to attend.

IV. Enrollment. The District assures that:

- A. A homeless child or youth may continue their education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year.
- B. Keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is presumed to be in the child's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth.
- C. When considering placement in a school other than the child's or youth's school of origin, the district will consider student-centered factors to determine a placement that is in the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent/guardian. The school selected in accordance with this policy immediately enrolls the homeless student, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; or has missed the application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- D. The eligible school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness.
- E. When a school other than the school of origin is selected, the district will remove barriers to enrollment and enroll homeless children and youths immediately, even if they cannot produce records or otherwise meet enrollments including:
 - 1. Previous academic records;
 - 2. Immunizations or other health records;
 - 3. Birth certificate and;
 - 4. Proof of residency;

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5. Guardianship is;
6. Uniform or dress code requirements;
7. Outstanding fees, fines, or absences;
8. Other required documentation

V. Full Participation and Comparable Services—The District assures that:

- A. A homeless student who becomes permanently housed during the academic year, may remain at their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year and receive all McKinney-Vento benefits.
- B. Children and youths experiencing homelessness, and who meet the eligibility criteria, will have access to all available academic and extracurricular activities for which they meet relevant eligibility criteria.
- C. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve readiness for postsecondary education.
- D. Each school provides services to homeless children and youths that are comparable to services offered to non-homeless students in their school including the following:
 1. Transportation services
 2. Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria
 - a. Title I
 - b. ESE
 - c. Educational programs for English learners
 3. Programs in career and technical education
 4. Programs for gifted and talented students
 5. School nutrition programs
 6. Preschool programs administered by the LEA

VI. Student records. The District Assures that:

- A. Treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information, under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C 1232g)
- B. Maintained for each homeless child or youth, including:

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1. Immunization or other required health records;
2. Academic records;
3. Guardianship records; and
4. Evaluations for special services

C. Made available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school.

D. Held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g)

VII. Transportation. The District assures that:

- A. Transportation to and from a child's or youth's school of origin will be provided or arranged, at the request of the parent or guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied child or youth, the district's designated liaison for homeless children and youth.
- B. When the child's or youth's living arrangements are in an area served by another school district (district of residence), this school district (district of service) will coordinate with the district of residence upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin.

VIII. Disputes. The District assures that:

- A. When considering placement in a school other than the child's or youth's school of origin, the district will consider student-centered factors to determine a placement that is in the student's best interest.
- B. When the district determines that a placement other than the school of origin is in the best interest, the district will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth with:
 1. A written explanation;
 2. In a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth; and
 3. Information on the right to appeal the placement determination
- C. During a school selection dispute,
 1. The child or youth will either remain enrolled in the student's school of origin or shall be immediately enrolled in the eligible school in which enrollment is sought, either the school zoned for the address where the student is

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residing or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend, pending final resolution of the dispute including all available appeals;

2. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school or the district, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions; and
3. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's designated homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.S.

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