

2021-22

McKinney-Vento Program Guidebook



McKinney-Vento
Serving Students In Transition



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**Portions of this handbook were adopted from the OCPS Homeless Program and the Title I Homeless Program St. Paul, MN.*

The McKinney-Vento Program promotes school stability and academic success of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Federal Definition/Eligibility

The following definition of *homeless* is given in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725):

The term “homeless children and youth” – Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and

Includes:

1. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
2. Children and youth 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. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (1) through (3).
5. Unaccompanied youth (emancipated) includes youth in a homeless situation who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

*A student who is in a home for Child Protection Services (CPS) placement or in Foster Care does not classify as **homeless**. (There are still protections for children in foster care however).*

Note: Once a student is classified as homeless they remain classified and are eligible for services for the entire year.

Student Rights

- Students who are homeless may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Parents or guardians of homeless students must be informed of educational and related opportunities.
- Students who are homeless may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Students who are homeless and their families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other needed services.
- Students who are homeless have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must be enrolled in school and receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.
- Students are automatically eligible for Title I services

Services Provided to Students Qualifying for McKinney Vento

McKinney-Vento students shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

- Enrollment and registration assistance
- Title I services

- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs
- Before and after school programs
- School Uniforms
- School Supplies
- Referrals to Community Resources
- Summer Enrichment Programs
- Tutoring
- Parent Training/Informational Workshops
- Student Training/Informational Workshops

District and School Level Supports

The Roles of the District McKinney-Vento Program Liaison

The Hattiesburg Public Schools' ***McKinney-Vento Liaison*** is responsible for ensuring the identification, school enrollment, attendance, and opportunities for academic success of students in homeless situations. Some of these activities may be performed by the HCCSD McKinney-Vento Liaison while others are accomplished by coordinating the efforts of other staff, departments, school personnel, and/or community organizations.

District McKinney-Vento Liaison must ensure that:

- Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and Enrollment Services through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- Students experiencing homelessness enroll, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed, in school.
- Families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Pre-K programs provided by Hattiesburg Public Schools; and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

- Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
- Parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness 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.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are fully informed of all transportation services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing these services.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunization or medical records to obtain such records.

Removing Barriers

The District shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children. The District shall give consideration to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. The District shall give special attention to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children who are not currently attending school. In addition, the District shall adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homeless status.

Roles of School level McKinney Vento Contact

Procedures/ Responsibilities

- Serve as a point of contact for district McKinney-Vento Liaison
- Serve as a point of contact for school staff and parents regarding homeless issues
- Post given materials (posters) at your school and ensure given brochures are available in your school's front office.
- Keep a file/list of current students identified experiencing homelessness available at all times. This should include all residency questionnaires that indicate homelessness. This information will be reported to the District's McKinney-Vento Liaison twice a year.

- Design a procedure for your registrar/teachers to keep you informed of any student who becomes homeless during the year.
- Coordinate services for the identified homeless children and youth at your school. You will need to work directly with your office staff, guidance counselor, administration, classroom teacher, district liaisons and/or anyone else appropriate.
- Bring awareness of the growing population to your school staff and educate them on the rights of homeless children and youth. You may do this by disseminating information and materials provided by the district office, or you may conduct your own awareness activity ensuring confidentiality of students.
- Contact the McKinney-Vento district office with any questions or concerns involving homeless children and youth.

Supporting Homeless Youth

Credit for Full and Partial Coursework

Accumulating enough credits to graduate can be very difficult for mobile students due to the variety of class offerings/requirements, methods of calculating credits, and graduation requirements across school districts. When students transfer, it is the responsibility of the counselor to ensure that homeless students receive credit for full and partial coursework completed in the prior school. When appropriate, counselors will work with students to ensure access to programs such as credit recovery.

College and Career Readiness

High school counselors will assist homeless students prepare for college including providing counseling related to college selection, completing the application process, and financial aid options. Additionally, graduation planning will address career paths and related decision-making.

Policies and Procedures

Disputes

Varying interpretations of homelessness, school placement and Mississippi residence laws have led to confusion and in certain instances have prevented homeless students from enrolling in and attending school. Students experiencing homelessness have the right to attend either their *school of origin* (i.e. the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled) or, if

that is not in the student's best interest (taking into account feasibility and the wishes of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth), the local school.

Disputes regarding school placement decisions should be promptly resolved, and students should be enrolled in the school requested while placement disputes are resolved.

Preschool

Preschool education is a very important element of later academic success. Children experiencing homelessness have experienced many difficulties accessing preschool opportunities. To facilitate preschool enrollment and attendance, the provisions of this policy will apply to preschools. Our district will ensure that children experiencing homelessness receive priority enrollment in preschool programs operated by the district, including exempting homeless children from waiting lists.

Laws Implemented 42 U.S.C 11431-11435

Homeless Education Procedures

The McKinney-Vento Act protects the rights of homeless children and youth for the ***duration*** of their homelessness. This means students have access to all rights and services from school year to school year if their living circumstance meets the definition of *homeless*. Once a student has been identified as experiencing homelessness, he/she has access to services for one academic school year.

If students experience homelessness beyond one academic school year, all services are still accessible to these students, although there are a few steps to take. Students must be re-identified and coded in the STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM. Once that has been done, procedures provided in this manual to access transportation, free lunch and additional services must be repeated.

If a student is identified as experiencing homelessness and becomes permanently housed ***during*** the school year, all rights and services remain for the full academic year. This includes the right to remain at the school or origin, request transportation, free meals, etc. Parents may choose to enroll their child in the zoned school for their new residence although decision making should be based on the best interest of the student.

The ***following school year*** in which a student is permanently housed, students no longer meet the definition of *homeless* and must enroll in the zoned school for their permanent residence.

Identification

Procedures

The Hattiesburg Public Schools McKinney-Vento Program has implemented a ***McKinney-Vento Questionnaire*** to assist in the identification of homeless children and youth. These questionnaires are printed by the McKinney- Vento Program and are a component of the registration packet and are completed during the registration process.

At the conclusion of the registration process, students identified as homeless will be referred to the school counselor.

Enrollment and Coding Procedures

The McKinney-Vento Act ensures the **immediate enrollment** of children and youth experiencing homelessness even if the students lack records (academic, medical, proof of residency or other documentation). Immediate enrollment includes attending classes and fully participating in school activities. All schools are required to follow these enrollment guidelines when registering a homeless student in school.

After students are identified homeless (MV), the following will occur:

- Office personnel will inform counselor of student identified under MV.
- Counselor will interview parent/guardian to determine student needs.
- Counselor will give parent/guardian Notice of Education Rights of Homeless Students including the counselor's contact information.
- Counselor will scan MV Affidavit and email to District Homeless Coordinator & Parent/Family Office Assistant.
- Counselor will send uniform and supply to District Homeless Coordinator & Parent/Family Office Assistant.
- Counselor will send transportation request to District Homeless Coordinator & Parent/Family Office Assistant and Transportation via email.
- Counselor will identify student as homeless in SAMS.
- Counselor will assign a mentor for student and will ensure mentoring occurs weekly.
- Counselor will provide counseling as needed and monitor the academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of the student. Resources will be provided as needed.

- Counselor will record services provided to homeless student on the electronic McKinney Vento Survey.
- Counselor will submit homeless survey per student on the last working day of first month student is enrolled.
- Counselor will maintain all homeless documentation in notebook for review.
- Counselor will review homeless roster in school information system after each homeless student enrolls or withdraws to ensure the roster is updated (please check rosters monthly by the last working day of the month). Print rosters monthly (by the last working days of the month) and place in counselor binder to show updates. Email a copy of homeless roster, initial and send to Anita Vickie Smith (anita.smith@hattiesburgpsd.com) and Kenya Horn (kenya.horn@hattiesburgpsd.com) by the last working day of the month.

Homeless/Unaccompanied Youth—Additional Procedures Enrollment

In addition, in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, the following provisions specific to (homeless) unaccompanied youth will be allowed:

- The right to immediate enrollment without proof of guardianship
- Assistance from the homeless liaison to:
 - Select a school of attendance, whether the local attendance area school or the school of origin
 - Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested
 - Ensure the prompt and fair resolution of any disputes

If there is any question regarding enrollment or eligibility for services, the homeless liaison should be contacted to provide assistance.

Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Prepare for College

The district liaison will work with school guidance counselors to make certain that students are informed of their options after high school and are college ready. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007 stipulates that unaccompanied youth determined to be homeless by a local liaison, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act funded shelter, HUD program, or college financial aid administrator may apply for federal financial aid as independent students. It will be the responsibility of the homeless liaison to work with counselors to make sure these homeless students have help to complete the FAFSA, including informing them of their status as independent students and providing verification of that status.

Each unaccompanied homeless youth will be informed of the following during his or her

senior year:

- Unaccompanied homeless youth can complete the FAFSA without a parent or guardian's signature, and the parent or guardian's income is not considered when determining an independent student's need for financial aid.

Free Meal Procedures

Students attending Hattiesburg Public Schools receive breakfast and lunch meals at no cost as part of the Community Eligibility Program (CEP). The CEP allows schools that predominantly serve low-income children to offer nutritious school meals at no cost to students through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

Please be reminded to notify Child and Nutrition services when new students enroll to ensure the students are accounted for in their system.

Transportation Procedures

Working to keep students experiencing homelessness in school is a key component of the McKinney-Vento Program. The district provides transportation to and from the school of origin, at the parent or guardian's request whenever possible. All transportation is provided through the district's transportation department.

If a student who is experiencing homelessness requests transportation back to their school of origin (**over 2 miles**), it is important to follow these steps:

1. Make sure the current address and phone number is reflected in the student information system.
2. Email the completed transportation request to the Director of Operations, McKinney-Vento District Liaison, and other designated district staff.
3. Contact the McKinney-Vento liaisons for gas reimbursement, if needed, for the temporary period of time it takes to establish a district bus.

The parent will be contacted by the McKinney-Vento Liaison and/or the Transportation Department once a route is established.

Request for Services Procedures

The Hattiesburg Public Schools' McKinney-Vento Program has grant funding to help meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth. If

items or funding is needed to assist students in participating fully in school or school activities, these procedures need to be followed:

1. Make sure the student is coded appropriately as *Homeless* in the STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM.
2. Download a copy of the most current ***Request for Services Form***, located on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education website.
3. Complete the form and attach any required documents (i.e. field trip flyer, product quote)
4. Obtain the school principal's—and/or school designee's—signature.
5. Scan all documents and forward them to the district's McKinney-Vento Liaison.

Notice of Rights

At enrollment the District shall provide written notice to the parent or guardian of the child (or directly to an unaccompanied youth) of the general rights provided under McKinney- Vento and contact information for the District's homeless liaison. This information will be publicly posted at all schools, on the district website, and in community locations. Also, schools will share homeless information with parents. This may include posting McKinney- Vento information in school newsletters and/or school websites.

Tips for School Social Workers and Counselors

- Be familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Recognize the common characteristics of children experiencing homelessness.
- Possible signs of homelessness may include: a history of attending many schools, erratic attendance and tardiness, consistent lack of preparation for class, sleeping in class, hostility and anger or extremes in behavior [shyness, withdrawal, nervousness, depression], needy behavior (attention-seeking) or withdrawn behavior, poor hygiene and grooming, inadequate or inappropriate clothing for the weather, hunger and/or hoarding food, resistance to parting with personal possessions (i.e., not wanting to put coat in a locker). These signs could indicate other problems. It is worth further exploration and discussion.

- If you are your school's homeless coordinator, ensure students receive free meals without the necessity of additional paperwork.
- Work with breakfast program staff to ensure that children who arrive late to school (due to transportation route) get fed.
- Ensure that homeless students are afforded every opportunity that non-homeless students have.
- Assist in the waiving of fees or securing of materials necessary for activities.
- With the parent/guardian's permission, talk to the student's teachers to inform them of the current living situation and how this may affect the student's ability to perform academically. For example, the student may not have access to the necessary materials to complete assignments such as a computer.
- Advocate for alternative consequences for poor behavior (i.e., don't withhold recess because it may be the only time the children who are homeless get to play and/or play outdoors)
- Assist student getting the correct bus when it is first set up.

Tips for Teachers of Students Experiencing Homelessness

The child's classroom may be the only place where the child can experience quiet, interact with students his/her own age, and experience success. School is the most *normal* activity that most children experience collectively. For homeless children it is much more than a learning environment. It is a place of safety, personal space, friendships, and support. [Oakley & King, in *Promising Practices For Educating Homeless Students* by Stronge & Reed-Victor, 2000.]

- Connect with your school's homeless coordinator to understand the student's situation.
- Maintain homework/school supply kits. The Homeless Education Liaisons have backpacks and basic school supplies. If you use additional supplies, have some available for homeless students or contact the liaisons to make a special request.
- Use tutors/mentors to provide one-on-one support.
- Plan accommodations for homework. Students may not have access to computers, encyclopedias and other tools to complete assignments.

- For students with attendance concerns, connect with your school's homeless coordinator. This child may qualify for district-provided transportation.

Tips for Enrollment Personnel

You are the first contact the family may have with Hattiesburg Public Schools. Be sensitive, patient, calm and reassuring. Provide the student and family with confidentiality; take them to a private room to address questions. Have the parent fill out a ***Student Residency Questionnaire*** to identify homelessness.

Learn to identify possible signs of homelessness:

- Chronic hunger or tiredness
- Erratic attendance in schools
- Attendance in multiple schools
- Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention
- Lack of records, such as birth certificate, immunization record, pre-school physical, or incomplete records.
- Parent who seems confused when asked about the last school attended.
- Low income hotel address on enrollment form
- Statements from family such as "We've been having a hard time lately." "It's a new address, I can't remember it." "We move a lot and are staying with friends until we can find a place."

Assure families that children can enroll if they are in *housing transition* due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason. Enroll the child immediately (even without records).

Tips for School Administrators

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth who are homeless.
- Welcome the student and the family and let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.
- Ensure there is a process to immediately notify the school's Food Services department of new student enrollment.

- Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for participation in after-school activities and in-school programs.
- Inform parents about their child's educational rights.
- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- Secure city bus passes or other transportation assistance to get parents to school for conferences, school events, or PTA meetings.
- Encourage parents to volunteer. Discuss their interests and offer suggestions that allow them to use their expertise. Many parents will help if invited to do so.
- Support the school staff as they work with the student.
- Contact the school district's McKinney-Vento liaison for additional support.

Facts about Homelessness

- Families with young children are the fastest growing homeless population.
- No single factor causes homelessness.
- Abuse, chronic neglect, the death of a parent, or economic crisis are factors commonly reported as precursors to homelessness.
- Lack of a livable wage and a shortage of affordable housing are the primary problems facing homeless families.
- The physical and emotional wellbeing of homeless children is compromised by homelessness and the poverty they experience.
- The primary causes of homelessness among unaccompanied youth are physical and sexual abuse by a parent or guardian, neglect, parental substance abuse, and extreme family conflict.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the program find housing or rental/utility assistance for families?

No. Liaisons assist in providing educational services for students experiencing homelessness. However, liaisons do make referrals to community agencies providing these types of services.

Do students living in transitional shelters or scattered sites qualify for the program?

Yes. The McKinney-Vento Act specifically applies to children and youth living in transitional living programs.

If a child moves into permanent housing, do they qualify for services for the remainder of the school year?

Yes.

Can children experiencing homelessness get transportation if they are living outside of the school district?

Student experiencing homelessness residing out of district may request transportation back to their school of origin. Transportation will be provided if it is in the best interest of the child and feasible for the district.

Are children experiencing homelessness exempt from providing immunization records for enrollment?

Yes. Students experiencing homelessness are **not** required to produce immunization or other medical records to get enrolled in school and continue attending. After enrollment, contact the McKinney-Vento Liaison if assistance is needed to obtain documents.

What ages does the McKinney-Vento Act cover?

21 and under. For special education students, federal law provides the right to access services until age 22.

Is there any procedure in place to prevent families who have permanent housing from claiming to be homeless just to obtain McKinney-Vento services?

Yes. School districts must enroll students experiencing homelessness immediately. If, after enrollment, it is determined that a student is not experiencing homelessness as defined in the law, school districts should follow the policies that are in place to address other forms of fraud.

If a student experiencing homelessness enrolls in a new school because the parent/ guardian was not informed of the student's rights to remain at the school of origin, does the student still have the right to go back to their school of origin?

Yes. School districts are required to inform families of their rights. Not knowing one's rights does not mean not having rights.

How does the McKinney-Vento Act define "unaccompanied youth"?

Unaccompanied youth is defined as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. If their living circumstance meets the homeless definition, they have full access to services under McKinney-Vento.

Can a school require a caregiver to get legal guardianship to enroll a student in school?

No. The McKinney-Vento Act requires states to address the problem of guardianship issues in school enrollment and requires school districts to enroll youth experiencing homelessness in school immediately, even if they lack typically required enrollment documents. The decision to seek legal guardianship is a serious decision that significantly affects the legal rights of the parent and caregiver well beyond the school arena. While that step will be appropriate in school cases, it will not be in others.

A full list of ***Frequently Asked Questions on the Educational Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations***, drafted by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, may be found on the OCPS Homeless Education website.

Definitions

ENROLLMENT *Enroll* and *enrollment* include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

HOMELESS CHILDREN OR YOUTH: *Homeless child* means a child or youth lacking a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence.

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN: *School of origin* means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

**School of origin also includes the feeder school pattern ("sister school") if applicable.*

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH *Unaccompanied youth* includes a child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Unaccompanied youth **who meet the McKinney- Vento definition of homeless** do have the right to enroll in school even without a parent or legal guardian. Not all unaccompanied youth are homeless.

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) Scholarship Fund

The NAEHCY scholarship provides scholarship assistance for students who are homeless or have experienced homelessness. For additional information on deadlines, selection criteria and application forms, please visit www.naehcy.org, or contact the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) at (470) 203-6465.

Hattiesburg Public Schools' Policy on Education for Homeless Children and Youth (JQN)

Homeless students in the district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law.

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

The superintendent or designee will produce written guidelines for distribution to each school that explains the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities of the schools to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. This information shall also be disseminated in writing and by other means designed to raise awareness of these rights and responsibilities to staff, homeless families and students, the public, and homeless service providers.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, children are deemed to be homeless under the following conditions:

1. A child who is lacking a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, a temporary residence prior to being placed in an institution, or a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
2. A child who is placed in a transitional or emergency shelter before placement in a foster home or home for neglected children.
3. A child who is temporarily living in a trailer park or camping area due to lack of adequate living accommodations.
4. A child who is living in doubled-up accommodations due to loss of housing or other similar situation.
5. A child who is placed in a foster home due to lack of shelter space.
6. A migratory child who is staying in accommodations not fit for human habitation.
7. A child who has run away from home and lives in a runaway shelter, abandoned building, the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
8. A child who is placed in a state institution because s/he has no other place to live.
9. A child who has been abandoned by his/her family and is staying in a hospital.
10. A child whose parents or guardian will not permit him/her to live at home and who lives on the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
11. School-age unwed mothers or expectant mothers who are living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other available living accommodations.
12. A child who is living in a hotel/motel due to loss of housing.

Services to be Provided

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990, 42USC11431, it shall be the policy of this school district, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.

2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils, and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the *school of origin* or the school serving the *place of abode* will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by this school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district; and in a manner consistent with S1232g of Title 20.
6. Should this school district receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.
7. Should this school district receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to insure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and, homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. This school district has and will continue to review and revise, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above.

10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.
11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
State Homeless Education Coordinator
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, MS 39205

LEGAL REF.: McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

P. L. 107-110 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) CROSS REF.:

Policies JAA - Equal Educational Opportunities

JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils

Hattiesburg Public Schools – Dispute Policy

Policy & Procedure for Resolving School Enrollment Disputes for Homeless Students Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.

Policy: Varying interpretations of homelessness, school placement and Mississippi residence law have led to confusion and in certain instances have prevented homeless students from enrolling in and attending school. Homeless students have the right to attend either their *school of origin* (i.e. the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled) or, if that is not in the student's best interest (taking into account feasibility and the wishes of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth), the local school. Disputes regarding school placement decisions should be promptly resolved, and students should be enrolled in the school requested while placement disputes are resolved.

Procedure:

1. If a parent/guardian or, in the case of unaccompanied youth, a student requests a school placement with which the district homeless liaison disagrees, the student must be enrolled in the school of his or her choice while the dispute is resolved. The District must give the student, in writing, an explanation of the District's enrollment decision and information about the student's right to appeal the decision. The district homeless liaison will generate the required letter and statement of appeal rights.
2. If the student is an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison contact at the school will assist him or her with this dispute resolution process.
3. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the district superintendent's decision and wishes to appeal to the local board of education, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall inform the district liaison of the intent to appeal. The district liaison shall ensure an appointment is made for the next, regularly scheduled board meeting to address the dispute. The district liaison shall also provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with the documentation collected up to that point, including the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth's request for dispute resolution, the district liaison's and superintendent's written decisions and any other additional information submitted by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the local school board of education's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the MDE if aggrieved.

State Education Agency Level

Appeals made to the MDE shall be submitted in writing, signed by the complainant, and forwarded by the school district. The following steps are to be taken:

Address the complaint to:

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
State Homeless Education Coordinator
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, MS 39205

- a. The complaint shall include the following:
 1. A description of the situation that prompted the dispute
 2. The name(s) and age(s) of the homeless child or youth
 3. The name(s) of the LEA and personnel involved
 4. A description of the attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the local level, including copies of any documentation used in making the decisions.
- b. The State Homeless Coordinator will gather needed information from statements of the parties involved and forward the information to the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs, along with a recommendation for resolution or for further investigation.
- c. Within ten (10) business days after receiving a complaint, the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs will recommend a resolution and will inform interested parties, in writing, of the decision.
- d. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision, that party may, within ten (10) business days, appeal to the State Superintendent. This appeal shall be made in writing and state why the party disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs.
- e. Within ten (10) business days after receiving an appeal, the State Superintendent or his/her designee will render a final administrative decision and notify all parties in writing.

If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision of the State 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.

Hattiesburg Public Schools
Notice of Enrollment Decision/Appeal
Rights

Date: _____

Name of Student(s):

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

School: _____

School Homeless Liaison: _____

District McKinney-Vento Liaison: _____

Dear _____:

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) named above, your enrollment request is denied for the following reasons:

Instead, the student(s) will be enrolled at:

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice. You can get help and further information from the Mississippi Department of Education Coordinator of Homeless Education.

Sincerely,

Federal Programs Director Hattiesburg Public Schools Copies of School Board Policy on Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process are attached.

Hattiesburg Public Schools
Enrollment Dispute Resolution Form (McKinney-Vento)

Student's Name	
Circle the School of Requested Enrollment	Hattiesburg High N.R. Burger STEAM Academy Rowan Grace Christian Woodley Thames Hawkins
Date of Dispute	
Date of Enrollment	
Parent's Name (or Unaccompanied Youth)	
Contact Information	
School of Origin and Address	
Local Attendance Area School & Address	
Reason for Dispute (Describe Situation/Attach Additional Information)	
Name of Homeless Education Liaison	Kenya Horn 301 Mamie St., Hattiesburg, MS 39401 601-582-5078 kenya.horn@hattiesburgpsd.com
Date Liaison Notified	
Signature of Liaison and Date	
Signature of Principal and Date	
<p style="text-align: center;">NOTICE to SCHOOL OFFICIALS: DURING THE DISPUTE PROCESS, THE SCHOOL IN WHICH THE STUDENT HAS REQUESTED TO ENROLL MUST IMMEDIATELY ENROLL THE STUDENT PENDING RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE. "IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT" INCLUDES FULL PARTICIPATION IN ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.</p>	

Hattiesburg Public Schools
Notification of Enrollment Decision (Homeless Education)

Date:

Dear Mr./Mrs. _____,

In compliance with Section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001, the following written notification is provided to you regarding the enrollment of your child

After reviewing your request to enroll the student listed above, the enrollment request is denied based upon the following:

You have the right to appeal this decision by submitting a written letter or by contacting the Hattiesburg Public Schools homeless liaison:

Kenya Horn
301 Mamie Street
Hattiesburg MS 39403-1569
601-582-5078
Kenya.horn@hattiesburgpsd.com

Please note that the student listed above has the right to immediately enroll in the school of residency or school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute. If after making your appeal, you are still not satisfied with the decision made regarding the student's enrollment, you may contact the state coordinator for homeless education.

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
State Homeless Education Coordinator
359 North West Street-Ste. 111
Box 771 Jackson, MS 39205.

A copy of our state's Dispute Resolution Procedure concerning enrollment for students experiencing homelessness is attached.

Give this form to the Homeless Liaison contact at the school or to the Hattiesburg Public Schools' Director of Federal Programs.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure

Rule 40.1 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

The *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act)* acknowledges that disputes may arise between a local educational agency (LEA) and the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth, when the LEA seeks to place him or her in a school other than the school of origin or the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. Guidance regarding the definition of homeless, the responsibilities of the LEA in serving homeless children and youth, school selection, eligibility and enrollment is provided in the Act. The Act includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the LEA liaison and the State Educational Agency (SEA). The following procedures are specified in the Act:

- a. **Enrollment:** Immediately enroll the homeless child or youth in the school preferred by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth until the dispute is settled and all available appeals have been exhausted. The statutory definition of *enroll* includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- b. **Written explanation:** Written explanations provided by the LEA shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of any decisions related to school selection, eligibility or enrollment made by the school or LEA, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions.
- c. **Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Rights:** It is the responsibility of the LEA to inform the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the McKinney-Vento rights and the dispute resolution process.

While the dispute is being resolved, the child or children in question must be enrolled in school and receive all services for which they are eligible, including transportation services. 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.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Federal Programs, has adopted a dispute resolution process at the local and state levels. If a dispute arises regarding the eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth,

the following procedures are to be followed:

Local Educational Agency Level: If the LEA makes a determination regarding school selection or enrollment that would result in the child or youth attending a school other than the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, a written explanation shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the LEA superintendent. The dispute resolution process shall be initiated at the local level by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth who wishes to appeal the school district's decision. The LEAs shall develop written policies and procedures with timelines that govern the dispute resolution process and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Each LEA is required to have a designated McKinney-Vento liaison. In addition, each school should have a contact who has been trained on the McKinney-Vento Act.
- b. If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA's decision and wishes to appeal to the LEA superintendent or his/her designee, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall file a request for dispute resolution with the LEA liaison by completing a dispute resolution form or submitting a written request after receiving notification of the LEA's decision. The LEA superintendent's designee shall be someone other than the LEA liaison.
- c. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the LEA superintendent's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the local school board of education.
- d. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA superintendent's decision and wishes to appeal to the local board of education, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall inform the LEA liaison of the intent to appeal. The LEA liaison shall ensure an appointment is made for the next, regularly scheduled board meeting to address the dispute. The LEA liaison shall also provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with the documentation collected up to that point, including the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth's request for dispute resolution, the LEA liaison's and local superintendent's written decisions and any other additional information submitted by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
- e. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the local school board of education's written decision shall include a

statement of the right to appeal to the MDE if aggrieved.

State Educational Agency Level: Appeals made to the MDE shall be submitted in writing, signed by the complainant, and forwarded by the LEA. The following steps are to be taken:

- a. Address the complaint to:
Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
State Homeless Education Coordinator
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, MS 39205
- b. The complaint shall include the following:
 1. A description of the situation that prompted the dispute
 2. The name(s) and age(s) of the homeless child or youth
 3. The name(s) of the LEA and personnel involved
 4. A description of the attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the local level, including copies of any documentation used in making the decisions.
- c. The State Homeless Coordinator will gather needed information from statements of the parties involved and forward the information to the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs, along with a recommendation for resolution or for further investigation.
- d. Within ten (10) business days after receiving a complaint, the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs will recommend a resolution and will inform interested parties, in writing, of the decision.
- e. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision, that party may, within ten (10) business days, appeal to the State Superintendent. This appeal shall be made in writing and state why the party disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs.
- f. Within ten (10) business days after receiving an appeal, the State Superintendent or his/her designee will render a final administrative decision and notify all Parties in writing.

If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision of the State 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.

Visit the Mississippi Department of Education website, Office of Federal Programs, Title IX, Part A Education for the Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento) for more information.

Sources:

42 *U.S. Code* § 11432(g)(1)(C) (Rev. 2017);

42 *U.S. Code* § 11432(g)(3)(E)(i)-(iv) (Rev. 2017);

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-11(c) (Rev. 2017);

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3 (Rev. 2017)

School Name _____
School Homeless Liaison _____

McKinney Vento Interview Questionnaire

The answers to the following questions can help determine the services this student may be eligible to receive under the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435. The McKinney-Vento Act provides services and supports for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Current Living Situation:

- ☐ In a motel ☐ A car, park, campsite, or similar location
☐ In a shelter ☐ Transitional Housing
☐ Moving from place to place/couch surfing ☐ Other _____
☐ In someone else's house or apartment with another family
☐ In a residence with inadequate facilities (no water, heat, electricity, etc.)

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____
First Middle Last

Grade: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day/Year): _____ Age: _____

Gender: _____ ☐ Student is unaccompanied (not living with a parent or legal guardian)
☐ Student is living with a parent or legal guardian

ADDRESS OF CURRENT RESIDENCE: _____

PHONE NUMBER OR CONTACT NUMBER: _____

NAME OF CONTACT: _____

Print name of parent(s)/legal guardian(s): _____

(Or unaccompanied youth)

Student Needs:

_____ Transportation _____ Supplies

Address: _____
_____ Uniforms/Clothing: _____ Pants Size _____ Shirt Size _____ Belt
_____ Coat _____

Other (_____)

Kenya L. Horn 601-582-5078 kenya.horn@hattiesburgpsd.org 301 Mamie Hattiesburg, MS
District Homeless Liaison Phone Number Email Address

McKinney-Vento Process Checklist

- ✓ Complete Affidavit marked McKinney Vento and signed by parent
- ✓ Have notary to notarize
- ✓ Give parent "Notification of Rights"
- ✓ Complete school registration
- ✓ Mark Homeless in SAMS
- ✓ Submit copy (email) of affidavit to Kenya Horn (kenya.horn@hattiesburgpsd.com & Anita Vickie Smith (anita.smith@hattiesburgpsd.com), include requests for services needed (uniforms, supplies, transportation, etc.)
 - *****If there is an issue or question(s), Ms. Horn will contact you.**
- ✓ Transportation request should be emailed to Willie Burton (willie.burton@hattiesburgpsd.com, Beverly Edmon(beverly.edmond@hattiesburgpsd.com) along with Kenya Horn.
- ✓ Fill out Google Form survey and submit by the end of the student's **first month** (in order to capture all services provided in the first month of school attendance). The form only has to be completed once for each MV student enrolled unless services change.

✓

This form must be completed on each student enrolled as MV before the end of the student's first month.

*******This is a very important task to keep MSIS reporting data correct.***

REQUEST FOR SERVICES FORM

Please use this form when requesting services, supplies, or funds for students experiencing homelessness if items or fees are unable to be waived. Please scan and email the completed form along with all the supporting documentation to Family Parent Engagement Office Assistant.

Student Name: _____ MSIS #: _____

School: _____ School # _____ Grade: _____

(If more than one student, attach a list that includes the information required above.)

Person making Request: _____ Phone #: _____

Program/Organization	Description of Fees Needs	Costs (please attach flyer/letter)

Item(s) Requested	Book bag/ School Supplies	Boys Pants	Boy s Shirt	Girls Pants	Girl s Shir t	Belt
Size						
Quantity						

FIELD TRIP *Flyer must be attached/FEEs (Graduation)/OTHER (be specific)		
Need by Date:	Description	Cost

School Coordinator/Principal's signature: _____ Date: _____

Date Received: _____ Student Coded Y/N

Approved: YES/NO