



SECTION: STUDENTS

POLICY: 235

TITLE: HOMELESS STUDENTS

ORIGINAL: February 27, 2017

CURRENT REVISION: June 1, 2021

**LAST REVIEWED BY THE
COMMITTEE:**

I. PURPOSE

The Board shall ensure that homeless children and youths have equal access to the same educational programs and services provided to other District students. The Board shall identify homeless children within the District, facilitate their immediate enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Enroll or Enrollment** means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- B. **Homeless children and youth** are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which includes children and youth who:
1. Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
 2. Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 3. Live in emergency, transitional, runaway or domestic violence shelters;
 4. Have been abandoned in hospitals;
 5. Await foster care placement;
 6. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
 7. Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
 8. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in conditions described above;
 9. Live as run-away children;
 10. Have been abandoned or forced out of homes by parents, guardians or caretakers; and
 11. Are school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents-if they have no other living accommodations.

- C. **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, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.
- D. **Unaccompanied youth** means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.

III. POLICY

- A. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive District policies, procedures and administrative guidelines that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of homeless children and youth.
- B. Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on their status as homeless children or youth or unaccompanied youth..
- C. Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other District students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar state or local programs, English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.
- D. The District shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they attend within the School District. If the school of origin is outside District boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this District, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation
- E. In determining the best interest of the homeless child or youth for placement or enrollment, the District shall:
 - 1. Presume that keeping the homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parents/guardians of the child or youth, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth; and
 - 2. Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of the homeless child or youth, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parents/guardians, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth.

IV. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- A. The Board designates the Assistant Superintendent or his/her designee to serve as the District's liaison for homeless children and youth.
- B. The District's liaison shall ensure outreach and coordination with:

- a. Local social service agencies and other agencies that provide services to homeless children, youth and families.
 - b. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification of homeless children and youths, records transfer, transportation, and other inter-District activities.
 - c. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies; and
 - d. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act
- C. The District's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.
- D. The District's liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated in locations in the District frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youth, and unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth.
- E. The District's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.
- F. The District's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.
- G. School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:
- a. Improve identification of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth;
 - b. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
 - c. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

V. REFERENCES

24 P.S. 1306
 22 PA Code 11.18
 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq
 34 CFR 299.19
 42 U.S.C. 11431
 42 U.S.C. 11432
 42 U.S.C. 11434a
 34 CFR 200.30
 Pol. 103
 Pol. 113
 Pol. 200
 Pol. 201
 Pol. 204
 Pol. 209

Pol. 216
Pol. 206
Pol. 146
Pol. 810
Pol. 115
Pol. 138
22 PA Code 403.1
20 U.S.C. 1232g
20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq
34 CFR Part 99
67 Fed. Reg. 10698