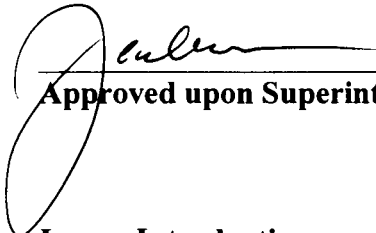


Superintendent's Regulations 5110-R

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS



Approved upon Superintendent's Initials

March 31, 2010
Date

I. Introduction

The Rochester City School District (the "District") understands that homeless children and youth (children and youth in transition) are entitled to equal access to the same free appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth within the District. The District has designated a staff person to serve as the Homeless Education Liaison, whose role it is to assist children and youth in transition and their families to enroll in school, receive the educational services for which they are eligible, and to ensure that children and youth in transition participate fully in the opportunities without segregation or stigmatization.

II. Procedures

A. Determination of Homeless

The identification of a child as "homeless" or child or youth in transition, will begin at the time of registration, using the Form "Residency Questionnaire." (See Exhibit A.) This form is available at the District's Department of Student Equity and Placement ("Placement").

The Homeless Education Liaison will review the Residency Questionnaire to determine if the child or youth qualifies as homeless.

1. If the child or youth qualifies as homeless, the Homeless Education Liaison will communicate the acceptance to Placement. The Homeless Education Liaison will then enter the child into the Homeless Program in Chancery and begin services. The Homeless Education Liaison will notify any previous district of the child's homeless status and the need for receipt of the student's records within five days. The Homeless Education Liaison will receive the previous school records of the student and coordinate forwarding the records to school in the District.
2. If the child or youth does not qualify as homeless, the Homeless Education Liaison will notify Placement using the spreadsheet. The Homeless Education Liaison will then notify the school's social worker of the declined referral so that the social worker can contact the family to determine other needs.

B. Procedures at District's Department of Student Equity and Placement:

1. Once a decision is made that a child or youth in transition is homeless, Placement will then immediately place the child. Placement **will not require** the usual registration documents: e.g. birth certificate, immunization, photo identification for parent, proof of residency in the City Rochester, or guardianship records if the child is not accompanied by the parent(s). Placement will place the child without records and by interviewing the parent or guardian with regard to status and previous services. The child whose family is in temporary housing will be accorded all of the registration and enrollment rights of a child in permanent residence in the District.
2. Children who are eligible for Pre-Kindergarten because of their age will also be registered and enrolled if they qualify for McKinney Vento services.
3. Families will be invited to consider all open seats in their child(ren)'s grade level and program, with no requirement that they enroll in a geographic zone based on their temporary address.
4. Once enrolled, children shall have the right to continue at the school of enrollment, provided they continue to live in the District or otherwise qualify to attend the District pursuant to federal and state law.
5. Families also have the right to access the transfer process, the same right extended to children in permanent residences. Families of elementary students have a right to request a transfer annually. Families of secondary age children can request a transfer at any time, but transfers can only be accomplished if the receiving school can write a schedule.
6. Families who have difficulty with reading and writing the required registration forms will have assistance provided by Placement.
7. Every effort will be made to provide a private setting to have a discussion with families regarding their homeless status.
8. After registration is completed, Placement will enter the child's name into a spreadsheet shared with the Homeless Education Liaison with name, date of birth, identification number, assigned school and arrival date, so that the Homeless Education Liaison knows about the family.

C. Ongoing training

Placement commits to ongoing training for all relevant staff regarding the rights of families with school-eligible children who are living in temporary housing. This training will occur at least annually.

III. Responsibilities of the Homeless Education Liaison

- A. The Homeless Education Liaison for the District will serve as one of the primary contacts with children and youth in transition, families and school staff, District personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The Homeless Education Liaison will coordinate services to ensure that children and youth in transition who enroll in District's schools are afforded a full and equal opportunity to succeed academically. The Homeless Education Liaison will:
1. decide if a family meets the criteria for homelessness and communicate the decision to Placement (using the shared spreadsheet) and to the school(s) in which the child is enrolled;
 2. facilitate the immediate provision of school meal benefits to children and youth in transition;
 3. oversee the transportation to and from school according to the laws and regulations of the New York State Department of Education, Board of Education Policies and Superintendent's Regulations;
 4. provide parents and unaccompanied youth with a list of their rights and the opportunities for parent participation in the Homeless Program;
 5. provide needed documentation to Special Education Department so they can generate the STAC-form, which is submitted to New York State Department of Education for funding;
 6. communicate with agencies having care and custody of youth and related services providers who may learn of children and youth in transition;
 7. maintain a register of homeless students;
 8. contact the previous school district, to receive records and information about services for which the student is eligible;
 9. inform the District's Special Education Department of homeless students and needed services;
 10. review school activities, schedules, programs for possible barriers;
 11. solve problems preventing full participation of students and/or parents;
 12. provide for the availability of additional programs or services for which other students are eligible, including transportation for all youth in transition enrolled in any additional programs or services; and

13. identify means of communication with parents of homeless students, and develop alternative means if necessary.

B. Training and Dissemination of Information

The Homeless Education Liaison will conduct:

1. Annual information sessions for appropriate school staff on homelessness ; and
2. Training for District administrators and others as requested.

C. Student Records

The Homeless Education Liaison will collaborate with Homeless Education Liaison in other school districts that the homeless student has attended or will attend, in order to obtain and provide student records.

D. Policy Review and Public Notice

The Homeless Education Liaison or designee(s) will:

1. Attend trainings conducted by the Office for the Education of Homeless Youth;
2. Disseminate information about homelessness through flyers, posters and newsletters; and
3. Implement the dispute resolution process when necessary.
4. Placement will review the procedures, as well as the protocol and recommend updates and changes as necessary.

IV. Transportation

Children and youth in transition shall be provided transportation to and from the school of origin and the location where the student is sheltered within 50 miles of the District.

- A. All children and youth in transition, including students receiving special education services, in Grades Pre-K through 12 who are in temporary or transition housing are exempt from age and distance requirements, except the 50 mile limitation, and are eligible for free transportation as long as they are living in transition.
- B. For children and youth in transition, the Homeless Education Liaison will coordinate with the District's Transportation Department to provide required transportation.
- C. If a school bus is not available or appropriate, children and youth in transition are eligible for a full fare bus pass.

- D. Parents of children and youth in transition in Grades K through 6 who receive a bus pass to travel to/from school are eligible for a 14-day bus pass in order to accompany their children to/from school. The Homeless Education Liaison will provide a 14-day bus pass to parents upon request as warranted.
- E. If the Individual Education Program (IEP) recommends special transportation, the Special Education Department will contact the District's Transportation Department and make appropriate arrangements.
- F. If the student changes his or her address and remains in the same school, the school is responsible for updating the student's new address and informing the District's Transportation Department. Once the change is completed, the District's Transportation Department will arrange the new bus route within five business days. If a child using this service is absent for more than three consecutive school days, the District's Transportation Department must contact the Homeless Education Liaison. In such cases, transportation services for the child may be suspended until further notice.
- G. If a student is residing in a Domestic Violence Shelter, the address of that shelter must remain anonymous.

V. Provision of Free Meals to Students in Transition

All identified children and youth in transition are eligible for free meals without completing an application. It is the responsibility of the Homeless Education Liaison to provide the name of the student(s) to the District's Director of Food Services in order to ensure that all children and youth in transition receive free school meals without having to fill out an application. The Homeless Education Liaison will immediately contact the District's Director of Food Services and then follow up with a written memorandum.

VI. Dispute Resolution Process

- A. If there is a dispute regarding a student's homeless status, school selection/enrollment and/or request for transportation, the student in transition will be enrolled immediately in a selected school which has openings at the grade level and in the student's required program, pending resolution of the dispute, and provided with transportation services. The District then must follow its procedures to resolve disputes.

B. Procedures

District procedures are as follows:

- 1. If the Homeless Education Liaison determines that a family is not homeless then the student in transition or unaccompanied youth or parent or guardian should fill out the Dispute Form which is attached as Exhibit B in order to challenge the determination.

2. The Dispute Form should be emailed to mvappeal@rcsdk12.org or mailed to: Rochester City School District, 131 West Board Street, Rochester, New York 14614, Attention: Director of Social Work.
3. The Director of Social Work will determine if the student is entitled to homeless service within 10 days of receiving the Dispute Form.
4. If the District makes a final determination that a student is not homeless, the Director of Social Work will provide the student's parent or guardian, or the student, if the student is an unaccompanied youth, with written notice that the student is not entitled to receive homeless services.
5. The student must remain enrolled and provided with transportation for a minimum of 30 days after the final determination in order to give the student's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth the opportunity to appeal to the Commissioner.

C. Appeal to the Commissioner of Education: 310 Appeals Process

The student's parent, guardian, or the unaccompanied youth is entitled to challenge the District's final determination to deny enrollment and/or services and/ or transportation by filing a section 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education. This information will be provided by the Homeless Education Liaison.



**Superintendent's Regulations 5110-R
Education of Homeless Students**

Exhibit A

Every child is a work of art.
Create a masterpiece.

Residency Questionnaire

Dear Parent/Guardian/Student:

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435, and must be completed for each student. The information you provide is confidential. Your child will not be discriminated against based upon the information provided.

Please complete the following questions regarding the student's housing in order to help determine services the student may be eligible to receive.

Note to schools and registration staff: Please assist students and families in filling out this form. If the student qualifies as residing in temporary housing, the **student is not required to submit proof of residency** and other required documents that may be part of the registration packet.

Last	First	Middle

Please identify the student's current living arrangements. Please check ONE box:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Doubled- Up With another family or other person because of loss of housing or as a result of economic hardship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelter Emergency or transitional shelter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Awaiting Foster Care Placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hotel/Motel Living in what is NOT an emergency or transitional shelter and involves payment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Temporary Living Situation Trailer park, campground, car, park, public places, abandoned building, street, or any other inadequate living space
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Housing Student who is living in a fixed, regular, and adequate housing situation

If the student is NOT living in permanent housing, also indicate if the below applies:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Unaccompanied Youth Youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
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Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Please return this form to the registrar or to your child's school as requested note:

<p>Note: The answer you give will help determine what services you or your child may be eligible to receive under the McKinney-Vento Act. Students who are protected under the Act are entitled to immediate enrollment in school even if they do not have the documents normally needed, such as proof of residency, school records, immunization records, or birth certificate. After the student has been enrolled, the new school must contact the last school attended to request the student's educational records, including immunization records. Students who are protected under the McKinney -Vento Act may also be entitled to free transportation and other services.</p>
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**Exhibit
B**

Education of Homeless Students

Dispute Form

To be completed by the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises.

Date submitted: _____

Student Name: _____ ID: _____

Person completing form: _____

Relation to student (s): _____

I may be contacted at:

Please explain why you are entitled to homeless services: You may include a written explanation to support your appeal in the space below. (Please attached additional sheets if necessary)

Please email this form to mvappeal@rcsdk12.org or mail the form to Rochester City School District, 131 West Board Street, Rochester, New York 14614, Attention Director of Social Work

For Office Use Only:
Determination of Homeless Only Yes _____ No _____

Director of Social Work _____ Date: _____