



FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH SCHOOL

FAMU DRS Homeless Students Policy 2011-2012

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FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH SCHOOL Education for Homeless Children and Youth Policy

1. Introduction

Florida A& M University Developmental Research School is committed to ensuring that homeless children and youth living in Leon County and surrounding areas have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education and comparable services as provided to other children and youth, including preschool-aged children; are given a full opportunity to meet state and local achievement standards; and are included in statewide assessments and accountability systems. The school district shall remove barriers that affect the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in Florida A& M University Developmental Research School. Homeless children and youth enrolled in Florida A& M University Developmental Research School shall not be stigmatized or segregated, separated, or isolated into other educational programs on the basis of their status as homeless.

2. Definitions

- a. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) defines a homeless child or youth as one who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who: are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, travel trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; are awaiting foster-care placement; 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; and/or are migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.
- b. Non-regulatory guidance from the United States Department of Education assists in clarifying which children and youth are considered homeless and includes: runaway/throwaway children, whether living in a runaway shelter, on the streets, or with other children and youth without adequate adult supervision; children and youth placed by the state in transitional emergency shelters because there was nowhere else to send them while awaiting a placement in a foster home or a home for neglected children and youth; school-aged unwed mothers or mothers-to-be who reside in a home for unwed mothers, who, in general, have no other available accommodations; and/or children residing in domestic violence crisis shelters that provide temporary living arrangements for victims of domestic violence.

- c. Unaccompanied youth means a student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian living in circumstances described above.
- d. School of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled.
- e. Enroll and enrollment means attending school and participating fully in school activities.
- f. Immediate means without delay.
- g. Parent means either or both parents of a student, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent.
- h. Homeless Liaison or Liaison the staff person designated by the Superintendent as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Act. The District homeless education liaison shall make a final determination of homeless status on a case-by-case basis.

3. Designation of District Homeless Liaison

The district shall designate a district homeless liaison to ensure that homeless students enroll and succeed in school; receive comparable educational services; and receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health and other appropriate services.

4. Determining the Status of Students

District and school personnel, particularly those involved in the initial registration and enrollment of students shall be aware of the definitions of homelessness to make accurate determinations concerning the status of enrolling students. To assist in this process, the Student Residency Form shall be completed as part of the initial registration and enrollment of all students. For homeless students, a copy of this completed form will be sent to the district homeless liaison.

5. School Enrollment

Special allowance shall be made to allow the homeless student to enroll in and attend school immediately regardless of immunization, guardianship, or program eligibility status. In no case shall enrollment be delayed pending receipt of documentation or previous school records.

- a. **Proof of Residence:** Florida A&M University Developmental Research School does not have a residency requirement. The student shall be considered eligible for enrollment whether living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis. Unaccompanied youth may enroll themselves in school with

the assistance of the Homeless Liaison. Students enrolled at FAMU DRS are not subject to district boundaries.

- b. Proof of Birth: The district shall accept alternative proofs of birth as allowed by Florida Statute for the homeless student.
- c. Eligibility for Programs: The assigned school shall determine the homeless student's most appropriate educational program based on information available at the time of enrollment.
- d. If a homeless student arrives without records, the receiving school shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records.
- e. The District shall assist the parent or guardian in obtaining necessary immunizations or other records if the student needs to obtain these records. The school should refer to the homeless liaison if additional assistance is needed.
- f. Documentation and Records: A "grace period" of thirty (30) school days from the date of enrollment shall be granted to the homeless student to provide all required documentation and records.

6. School Selection

The best interest of the homeless student shall be considered when determining school assignment.

- a. A student enrolled in a district school who becomes homeless during a school year shall be allowed to continue attendance and complete the school year in the school of origin.
- b. A student who becomes homeless between school years shall be allowed to continue attendance and complete the subsequent school year in the school of origin.
- c. A student who has been temporarily placed elsewhere by homeless parents shall be allowed to continue attendance and complete the school year or subsequent school year, as appropriate, in the school of origin.
- d. A student who enrolls in the district initially as a homeless student shall have the right to attend the school of origin, if feasible and in the best interest of the student, or be assigned on the basis of the school zone in which that student is currently residing.
- e. An unaccompanied homeless student shall have the right to attend the school of origin, if feasible and in the best interest of the student, or be

assigned on the basis of the school zone in which that student is currently residing. The district homeless liaison shall work with that student to resolve custody and other documentation issues.

- f. The district shall comply, if feasible and in the best interest of the student, with the request regarding school selection made by the parent/guardian of a homeless student regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parent/guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent/guardian.

7. Transportation

The homeless student shall be provided transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the parent/guardian. If the homeless student's living arrangement changes such that the homeless student begins living in an area serviced by another local educational agency, Florida A& M University Developmental Research School and the other local educational agency shall agree upon a method to transport the homeless student to and from the school of origin.

8. Notification of District Homeless Liaison

School personnel shall notify the district homeless liaison of the enrollment of a homeless student. School personnel shall contact the district homeless liaison if assistance is needed to make a determination of the homeless status of the student, to provide the homeless student and/or the student's family the required assistance with obtaining critical documentation, or the student appears to have special needs that the school lacks the resources to meet.

9. Notification of Rights

The homeless student and/or family shall be notified of rights afforded to homeless students verbally or through written materials. In particular, the student and/or student's parent/guardian and/or adult acting on behalf of the student shall be notified of the rights of homeless students to remain in their school or origin and their right to dispute school selection, if other than the school of origin. Additionally, the student and/or student's parent/guardian and/or adult acting on behalf of the student shall be notified that there is a "grace period" of thirty (30) school days to provide critical documentation such as the student's birth certificate, health and immunization records, or previous school records and transcripts, and that it is the school district's and/or the district homeless liaison's responsibility to assist with the process of obtaining such documentation.

10. Dispute Resolution

When a dispute occurs, the student shall be enrolled immediately, receive an enrollment decision in writing, and be referred to the district homeless liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(3)(E)).

11. Comparable Services

The homeless student shall be provided services comparable to services offered other students in the school of attendance, including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student is eligible, including programs associated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Title I, Part A services, vocational education programs; before- and after-school programs; and school meal programs.

12. Title I Services

A homeless student is automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, whether or not the homeless student lives within a Title I school attendance area, attends a Title I school, or meets the academic standards required of other children for eligibility. The district shall reserve funds under Section 1113(c)(3)(A) of the Title I law to provide comparable services to a homeless student.

13. Expedited Evaluations

A homeless student may receive an expedited evaluation in order to determine program eligibility or appropriate grade placement.

14. Records

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including health and immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of a homeless student shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when the student enters a new school district.

15. Fee Waiver

A homeless student shall not be charged tuition or activity fees.

16. Coordination of Services

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate with local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and youth and their families.

17. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43, and 1003.01(12) F.S.; 1003.21 F.S, 1003.22 F.S,
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§11431 – 11435.
Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§6311 – 6315.
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§1400 et seq.
April 6, 2002 Policy of the Child Nutrition Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
June 5, 1992 Policy of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.