251 STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Authority

The School Reform Commission recognizes the need to promptly identify students experiencing homelessness within the District, facilitate their immediate enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.[1][2][3]

The SRC shall ensure that students experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students.[1][2][3][4]

The SRC authorizes the Superintendent to waive District policies and administrative procedures that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of students experiencing homelessness. [3]

It is the policy of the SRC that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.[5][6]

Definitions

Enroll or enrollment - attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[7]

Students experiencing homelessness - individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:[7][8]

1. Children and youths who are:

   a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
   b. Living in motels, hotels, other temporary locations due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
   c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or
   d. Abandoned in hospitals.
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. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;

4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and

5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.

School of origin - 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.[6]

Unaccompanied youth - a student experiencing homelessness 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.[7]

**Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent shall designate a District liaison for students experiencing homelessness, who shall have the duties and responsibilities imposed by law and SRC policy.[6]

The district's Regional Coordinator shall work with the Pennsylvania Department of Education designated to ensure outreach and coordination with:[6]

1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to students experiencing homelessness and their families.

2. Other LEAs on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.

3. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[9][10]

4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.
5 Law enforcement agencies, juvenile and family courts, and providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

The District’s Regional Coordinator shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness, and unaccompanied youths.[6]

The District’s Regional Coordinator 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.[6]

The District’s Regional Coordinator shall conduct an annual assessment of need in order to ensure that the District continues to provide optimal services and resources relevant to the regional context. The District’s Regional Coordinator will engage in ongoing progress monitoring and evaluation to be conducted annually, at minimum, to ensure that the District’s ECYEH program continues to meet the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

**Mandatory Regulatory Procedures**

The District’s Regional Coordinator shall propagate Administrative Procedures enacting this policy including procedures for:

1. Enrollment of Students
2. Best Interest Determination for Students
3. School Placement
4. Homeless Status Dispute Resolution
5. Comparable Services

**Education Records**

Information about a student experiencing homelessness’ living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.[16][17]

**Uniforms**

No school shall create uniform and dress requirements that create financial hardships for students and their families experiencing homelessness. Nor shall any student in a homeless situation receive disciplinary actions for not having a uniform due to financial
hardship. Every effort must be made to protect the privacy of students in this situation. [26]

Transportation

The District shall provide transportation for students experiencing homelessness to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.[1][6][20]

If the school of origin is outside District boundaries or students experiencing homelessness 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.[6]

Legal References:
1. 24 P.S. 1306
2. 22 PA Code 11.18
3. 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq
4. 34 CFR 299.19
5. 42 U.S.C. 11431
6. 42 U.S.C. 11432
7. 42 U.S.C. 11434a
8. 34 CFR 200.30
9. Pol. 103.1 - Nondiscrimination-Qualified Students With Disabilities/Protected Handicapped Students
10. Pol. 113 - Special Education
11. Pol. 200 - Enrollment of Students
12. Pol. 201 - Admission of Students
13. Pol. 203 - Immunizations and Communicable Diseases
14. Pol. 204 - Attendance
15. Pol. 209 - Health Examinations/Screenings
16. Pol. 216 - Student Records
17. Pol. 113.4 - Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information
18. Pol. 206 - Assignment Within District
19. Pol. 146 - Student Services
20. Pol. 810 - Transportation
21. Pol. 808 - Food Services
22. Pol. 115 - Career and Technical Education
23. Pol. 918 - District-Wide Parent and Family Engagement
24. Pol. 138 - English as a Second Language/Bilingual Education Program
25. Pol. 114 - Gifted Education
26. Pol. 221 - Dress and Grooming

Related Information:
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
PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan