

Homeless Students

Policy

The Board of Education will provide educational and other appropriate services to homeless children as required by federal law. This law obligates school districts to assure that students enrolled in their schools who become homeless during a school year continue to receive services for that year. It further provides that students who become homeless between school years must continue to receive services for the following year. Torrington Public Schools is obligated to provide education in the school of origin unless the parents or guardians object. In both cases, the school district responsible for ensuring educational services is the district in which the student was last enrolled before becoming homeless. This obligation continues throughout the school year.

Accordingly, the Board of Education directs administration to develop procedural regulations to implement this legal obligation.

Administrative Regulations

1. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall work to identify homeless children and facilitate each homeless child's access to and success in school. By October 1 of each year, the appointed liaison shall report the number of homeless students enrolled in the school district to the Connecticut Department of Education.
2. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall mediate all disputes concerning school enrollment, assist in making transportation arrangements, assist in requesting the student's records, provide information and give referrals on services and opportunities, and assist any homeless child who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian with enrollment decisions.
3. Enrollment shall be immediate even if the student lacks records routinely required prior to enrollment. The school shall make arrangements to obtain any necessary records and to have the student receive any necessary immunizations. If a homeless student becomes permanently housed outside the District during the school year, the student may only continue enrollment in the district for the remainder of the school year.
4. **Tuition** - Students defined in state and federal law as homeless children shall be admitted without payment of tuition.

Enrollment Determination

a) Scenario One

- student enrolled in this district
- becomes homeless
- remains located in this school district

If a District student becomes homeless, but remains located in this school District, the student shall continue to attend school in his or her school. If the student is no longer located in the attendance area of the school he or she previously attended, the liaison shall meet with the student and the student's parent/guardian, if the student is in the custody of the parent/guardian, to determine which District

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school would best meet the student's educational and other services needs, taking into account the wishes of the student and the parent/guardian, the feasibility of keeping the student in his or her previous school, and the student's transportation needs related to various enrollment options.

b) Scenario Two

- student enrolled in another school district
- becomes homeless
- is presently located in this school district
- seeks to enroll in the district previously attended

If a student becomes homeless and is presently located in this school district, but seeks to enroll in the District he or she previously attended, the previous school District shall determine enrollment. If this school District has knowledge that a homeless student is presently located in this school District but seeks to enroll in the school district he or she previously attended, the District's homeless student liaison shall assist the student in accessing enrollment in the previous school district, work with the homeless student liaison in the previous school district to mediate disputes concerning enrollment, assist in making transportation arrangements, assist in requesting/sending the student's records, provide information and give referrals on services and opportunities, and assist any homeless student who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian with enrollment decisions.

c) Scenario Three

- Student who previously attended school in this district
- becomes homeless
- is presently located outside of this school district
- seeks to enroll in this school district

If a student who previously attended school in this District becomes homeless and is presently located outside of this school District, but seeks to enroll in this school District, the Superintendent (or designee) shall make a reasonable determination as to whether the student should be enrolled in this District or the district where the student is presently located. In making the reasonable determination, the Superintendent (or designee) shall consult with:

- the homeless student or the homeless student's parent/guardian if the student is in the custody of a parent/guardian, and
- the homeless student liaison for this District and the liaison for the district where the student is presently located The Superintendent (or designee) shall consider all relevant factors in making the reasonable determination including but not limited to:
 - the best interests of the homeless student
 - to the extent feasible, keeping the homeless student in this district
 - the wishes of the student and the student's parent/guardian if the student is in the custody of a parent/guardian

- the student's transportation needs related to various enrollment options (the district where the student is located and the district where the student will attend school must either agree on a method to apportion cost and responsibility for the student's transportation or share the cost and responsibility equally)
- which school district can best meet the student's educational and other service needs

d) Scenario Four

- student who has never attended school in this district
- becomes homeless
- is presently located in this school district
- seeks to enroll in this district

If a student who has never attended school in this District becomes homeless and is presently located in this school District and seeks to enroll in this District, the student shall be enrolled. This District's liaison shall meet with the student and the student's parent/guardian, if the student is in the custody of the parent/guardian, to determine which District school would best meet the student's educational and other services needs, taking into account the wishes of the student and the parent/guardian, and the student's transportation needs related to various enrollment options.

5. Notice of Determination and Appeal - The Superintendent or designee shall hand deliver to the student and/or his parent/guardian a written notice of the District's determination and of the right to appeal. If the Superintendent or designee determines that the homeless student shall attend a school other than the student's previous school or a school other than the one requested by the student's parent or guardian, the Superintendent or designee shall also provide written explanation regarding that decision to the parent/guardian.
6. Enrollment Disputes - If an enrollment dispute arises between the student's custodial parent/guardian (or the student not in custody of a parent/guardian) and the District, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the parent/guardian or student until the dispute is resolved.
7. The parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may appeal an enrollment determination made by this district to the district's homeless student liaison within ten (10) working days after receiving the written determination and notice of right-to-appeal.
8. The liaison shall issue a written decision on the dispute within five (5) working days of the receipt of the appeal and hand deliver a written decision and notice of right-to-appeal to the Board of Education to the parent/guardian (or student, if applicable).
9. Within ten (10) calendar days of delivery of the decision and right-to-appeal notice, the parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may appeal the decision to the Board of Education.
10. The Board shall issue a written decision on the dispute within 20 calendar days of the receipt of the appeal and hand deliver the written decision and notice of right-to-appeal to the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths to the parents/guardian (or student, if applicable). The decision of the State Coordinator shall be final.

11. Transportation - Subsequent to a determination that the student shall attend a school in this District a request for transportation may be made by the student, or by the student's custodial parent/guardian. If the student is located in the District, the District shall provide or arrange for the student's transportation to and from school in accordance with District transportation policies. All transportation services shall be comparable to those provided for other students in the district.
12. If the student is located outside of the District but a determination has been made that the student shall attend school in the District, both this district and the district where the student is located must either agree on a method to apportion cost and responsibility for the student's transportation or share the cost and responsibility equally.

Legal references:

Title IX, sec. 1032 of the No Child Left Behind Act, known as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C.