

## **426 RULE Homeless Education Program Procedures**

The District will comply with current federal and state laws regarding homeless student status, and will fully implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The following procedures will be utilized under this policy:

### **Identification**

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the local homeless liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the District, both in and out of school. Each school will have a school-based homeless coordinator who will annually be trained by the District's designated homeless liaison. The District's homeless liaison will also train all school registrars and secretaries on the McKinney-Vento law and homeless program procedures. The homeless liaison will create a procedure for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the District's homeless liaison and provide methods of identifying homeless children without the use of stigmatizing terminology. The District will use a *Residency Questionnaire* to facilitate identity of homeless children and youth.

The District's homeless liaison will keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the district; where they are living, and their academic achievement.

### **School Selection**

Each child and youth in transition has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend the school that houses other students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living.

In selecting a school, children and youth in transition will remain at their school of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent or youth's wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing between academic years.

School selection decision will be a child centered determination made by a team. This team shall consist of a pupil service administrator, the District homeless liaison, building homeless coordinator, a teacher, and the building principal. This decision will be based on the needs and interests of the particular student and the parent or youth's wishes. Potential school selection considerations include:

- The age of the child or youth
- Safety of the child or youth
- Continuity of instruction
- Student's need for special instruction
- Distance of commute and impact it may have on the student's education
- Length of anticipated stay in temporary shelter
- Time remaining in school year
- School placement of siblings

## **Dispute Process**

If school enrollment is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent/guardian, the building principal will provide the parent with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision.

1. If a dispute arises over school selection, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending the resolution of the dispute.
2. The Homeless Liaison shall carry out the dispute process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.
3. Appeals will go to the Superintendent or his/her designee.
4. If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may file a timely appeal of the decision to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.

## **Enrollment**

Homeless children and youth must be immediately enrolled and permitted to attend classes and school activities with their non-homeless peers. Enrollment may not be denied due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment such as:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunizations or other health records
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth Certificate
- Unpaid school fees
- Any other required document
  - Unaccompanied youth must be immediately enrolled as well. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by the District's homeless liaison.

Once a child or youth is enrolled in and attending school in the District, the school-based homeless coordinator will work with the family to obtain all required documentation.

## **Services**

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the District including, but not limited to:

- Transportation services to the school of origin
- Free meals
- Early childhood and preschool programs
  - Children experiencing homelessness will receive priority enrollment in preschool programs operated by the District, including exempting them from waiting lists
- Before and after school programs
- Fee waivers
- Field trip fees

- School supplies
- Referrals to community resources
- Clothing and hygiene needs

When applying any District policy regarding tardiness or absences, any tardiness or absence related to a child's or youth's living situation shall be excused.

### **Transportation**

The District shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin at the parent's request. Transportation will be provided for the entire time the child or youth are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed.

- In the case where the school of origin and current residence are in two different school districts, the two school districts will agree on a method of transportation and share the costs.

The School District of Wisconsin Rapids does not discriminate in admissions to any school, class, program, or activity or in facilities usage on the basis of gender, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

Approved:            May 8, 2017