HOMELESS CHILDREN

As a condition of receiving funds under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, the District shall serve homeless children according to their best interests. [See FD for definition of homeless students]

DEFINITIONS

BEST INTEREST

In determining the "best interest" of a child, the District shall:

1. To the extent feasible, keep a homeless child in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's parent or guardian;
2. Provide a written explanation to the homeless child's parent or guardian, including a statement of appeal rights, if the District sends the child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and
3. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, consider the views of the child and provide the notice required in the event of an enrollment dispute.

ENROLLMENT

"Enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

HOMELESS CHILDREN OR YOUTH

"Homeless child" means a child or youth. "Unaccompanied youth" includes a child not in the physical custody or a parent or guardian."

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

"School of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The District may require the parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.

ENROLLMENT

The school selected in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act shall immediately enroll a homeless child even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school shall immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the child needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the child's parent or guardian to the District's homeless liaison for assistance. [See FFC]

ENROLLMENT DISPUTES

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The District shall provide the child's parent or guardian with a written explanation of the decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the right to appeal the decision. The District shall refer

the child, parent, or guardian to the homeless liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

SCHOOL PLACEMENT

The District shall not segregate homeless children. The District shall, according to the child's best interest:

1. Continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, if the child's family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year;
2. Continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of the academic year, if the child becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
3. Enroll the child in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend.

The District shall make the choice regarding placement without regard to whether the child lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

COMPARABLE SERVICES

The District shall provide a homeless child with services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the child is enrolled, including:

1. Transportation services;
2. Educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria;
3. Programs in vocational and technical education;
4. Programs for gifted and talented students; and
5. School nutrition programs.

COORDINATION

The District shall coordinate the provision of services to homeless children with:

1. Local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and their families;
2. Other local educational agencies, on interdistrict issues such as transportation or transfer of school records; and
3. As applicable, state and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy described in the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable

Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705), to minimize educational disruption for homeless children.

The coordination shall be designed to ensure that homeless children have access and reasonable proximity to available education and related support services and to raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

The District shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children. The District shall give consideration to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. The District shall give special attention to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children who are not currently attending school.

In addition, the District shall adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homeless status.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS

At enrollment and at least twice annually while the homeless child is enrolled in the District, the District shall provide written notice to the parent or guardian of the child (or directly to an unaccompanied youth) that is signed by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and sets forth the general rights provided under the McKinney-Vento Act, specifically including:

1. The choice of schools homeless children are eligible to attend;
2. That no homeless child is required to attend a separate school for homeless children;
3. That homeless children shall be provided comparable services, including transportation, education, and meals through school meals programs;
4. That homeless children shall not be stigmatized by school personnel; and
5. Contact information for the District's homeless liaison [see FFC] and the state coordinator for education of homeless children and youths.

The notice must be in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in the native language of such parent, guardian, or youth.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, part of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. 11432, 11434a)

Other Related Policies:

AID — FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

CNA — STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

EHBD — FEDERAL TITLE I PROGRAMS

FB — EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

FD — ADMISSIONS

FFAB — IMMUNIZATIONS

FL — STUDENT RECORDS

FP — STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES