

Terrell County Charter School System Services for Homeless Children and Youth FY 24

Introduction

The Terrell County School System will follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 to ensure that all children and youth receive a free appropriate public education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in our schools. Terrell County Schools' homeless liaison works closely with the system social worker and school counselors to assure students receive needed services.

Definitions

- *Children and youth experiencing homelessness* means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education, including preschool, and lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including 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, camping grounds or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - are abandoned in hospitals;
 - have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; and
 - are migratory and living in a situation described above.
- A child or youth shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above and to the end of the school year in which the student moves into permanent housing.
- *Unaccompanied youth* means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is experiencing homelessness as defined above. The more general term *youth* also includes unaccompanied youth.
- *School of Origin* means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
- *Liaison* is the staff person designated by a Local Education Agency (LEA) as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Act.
- *Immediate* means without delay.

Identification

The Terrell County School System Homeless Liaison works with school counselors in the registration and counseling processes to identify homeless children. The LEA also coordinates with social workers, DFACS, and other agencies to identify homeless children. The Title I director and Homeless Liaison assesses related needs of the homeless children and youths and plans strategies to meet those needs. Case study information is used to identify related needs such as a need for personal school supplies or tutoring. To identify the educational needs of the

homeless children, Terrell County uses attendance and discipline data, as well as grades and achievement test results. Available data and information is used to produce a summary of needs. The LEA provides training to all teachers and administrators on educational needs of homeless youth. Homeless children that are identified as students in need of special services follow the procedures as indicated by the Special Education department for identification and services.

Program Procedures

- The district is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison.
- Homeless students will be identified based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a numeric code in Infinite Campus, the district's student information system. All teachers and administrative staff in the district will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless students.
- The homeless liaison will provide annual training for all district level and school staff having contact with homeless students.
- All schools will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the Homeless Liaison contact information.
- Services for homeless students (tutoring, etc.) will be evaluated based on student academic achievement.
- Follow BOE policy.

School Selection

The Terrell County School System only has one school per grade span: Pre-K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Therefore, school selection is not an issue.

Enrollment

Homeless children and youth have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment. Enrollment of Homeless students occurs at the appropriate school to which they are assigned based on their grade level. School registrars are trained and attentive to the identification of homeless students during the enrollment process. If a student does not have an immunization, or immunization or medical records, the Homeless Liaison will assist immediately in obtaining them and the student will be enrolled in the interim. A Homeless survey is completed upon enrollment and any homeless survey that indicates a student is homeless should be sent directly to the Homeless Liaison for further investigation. Upon identification, the Homeless Liaison will submit a homeless tracking form to the Student Information Systems clerk to guarantee accurate coding.

Information Dissemination

The Homeless Liaison and/or Principals provide information to faculty and staff on the Homeless program annually. The Homeless Liaison distributes posters and brochures in the counselor's office and Parent Involvement Resource Room. Posters and brochures are also distributed to the community at DFACS, the Housing Authority, the Terrell County Health Department, the Post Office, and the Police Station.

Transportation

As with all students served in the Terrell County School System, transportation is provided for homeless students. Terrell County will transport homeless students to and from the school of origin, at a parent's or guardian's request (or at the local liaison's request for unaccompanied youth) if it is feasible. Parents may complete School of Origin Request Form (found in the Parent Packet). If the student is living outside the district of origin, the district where the student

is living and the district of origin will determine how to divide the responsibility and cost, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally. Parents will be notified on the Written Notification Form, which includes a Disputes Resolution form if needed.

Disputes (Complaint Procedures)

Any individual, organization, or agency (complainant”) may file a complaint with the Terrell County Schools if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that TCCSS is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systematic or ongoing. The school must refer the parent, guardian, or youth to the local liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. Whenever a dispute arises, the parent, guardian or youth will be provided with a written explanation of the school’s decision, including the right to appeal.

While a dispute is being resolved, the student will be admitted immediately into the requested school and provided with services.

Training

The liaison or designee will conduct training and sensitivity/awareness activities for the LEA and school staff at least once each year. This may be virtual or in person.

Coordination

The liaison shall coordinate with and seek support from the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, public and private service providers in the community, housing and placement agencies, liaisons in neighboring districts and other organizations and agencies.

Credit for full or Partial Coursework

The district recognizes that children and youth experiencing homelessness face unique challenges in accessing and succeeding in school. Homeless students, including those who have been out of school, can receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. Every effort will be made to meet the unique needs of students. Counselors will check student information systems to review student’s coursework and grades. The system will use the PLATO online learning program to provide independent study program that target specific learning gaps and allows students to work for credit, regardless of seat time. The academic coach will be responsible for monitoring progress and completion of assignments for partial or full credit.