

HOMELESS STUDENTS -
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

This administrative procedure implements Board policy JLG, Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth

The Superintendent shall designate a Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth ("Homeless Liaison"). The Homeless Liaison is responsible for coordinating school unit services for homeless students. All questions regarding enrollment, programming and services for homeless students will be referred to the Homeless Liaison. The Homeless Liaison is expected to consult with school administrators and the Superintendent in making determinations of homelessness, enrollment and programming decisions for students.

Determination of Homelessness

- A. If a student seeks to enroll in the Messalonskee School District as a homeless student, the Homeless Liaison shall be informed as soon as possible by the building administrator or designee.
- B. The Homeless Liaison shall take the following steps:
 - 1. Meet with the student's parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth (a student not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian), with the student.
 - 2. Determine whether the student is a "homeless child or youth" as defined in the Act, in consultation with appropriate administrators. In making this determination, the Homeless Liaison will gather relevant information, including, but not limited to, information about the student's and parent/guardian's current and past living situations, the reasons for the student's current living situation, the availability of other living arrangements for the student, and records required for enrollment.
 - 3. If the student is determined to be homeless, the parent/guardian (or student if an unaccompanied youth) will be informed of the enrollment options available to the student and transportation services available.
 - 4. If it is determined that the student is not homeless, the parent/guardian (or student if an unaccompanied youth) will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision, including a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision (see below).

Student Enrollment

- A. Enrollment options for homeless students subject to the criteria set forth in sections B, C and D include:
1. Continuing to attend the student's "school of origin" (the public school the student attended when permanently housed or, if the student was not attending school when he/she became homeless), the school last attended; or
 2. Attending the public school in the attendance area where the student is now actually living.
- B. The student is to be enrolled in a school according to the student's "best interests." This means that, to the extent feasible, the student will continue to attend his/her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's parent or guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, contrary to the enrollment decision of the Homeless Liaison after considering the views of the student.
- C. If a student is to be enrolled in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, the Homeless Liaison shall provide the parent/guardian (or unaccompanied youth) with a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision (see below).
- D. A student determined to be homeless shall be immediately enrolled in a Messalonskee School District school, if found to be in the student's best interests, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (such as academic records and immunization records), or pending any appeal of a school enrollment decision.

Appeal Procedure

- A.
1. If a parent/guardian (or unaccompanied youth) is dissatisfied with the determination by the Homeless Liaison that a student is not homeless or with the enrollment decision, he/she may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent within five (5) school days.
 2. The Superintendent shall review pertinent records and conduct further investigation if deemed appropriate. The Superintendent shall notify the parent/guardian (or unaccompanied youth) of his/her decision in writing within twenty (20) school days.

3. If the parent/guardian (or unaccompanied youth) is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, he/she may ask the Homeless Liaison to forward the appeal to the Department of Education for final resolution. This request must be made within five (5) school days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the decision.

- B. In the event that there is a dispute between school units concerning the enrollment of a homeless student, the Superintendent will follow the dispute resolution procedure specified in Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 14.

Educational and Transportation Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other students in the same school, including:

- A. Educational services for which the student is eligible, including but not limited to special education, gifted and talented programs, vocational programs, Title I and limited English proficiency programs.
- B. Transportation services. If a homeless student residing in the school unit is enrolled in his/her school of origin in another school unit, or if a homeless student residing in another school district continues to attend his/her school of origin, the Messalonskee School District shall share the responsibility and reasonable costs for providing the student with transportation to and from the school of origin with the other school unit.

Coordination With Other School Units and Agencies

The Homeless Liaison shall be responsible for coordinating with local social service and other agencies and other school units as necessary to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to education and related support services.

Notice Requirements

The Homeless Liaison is responsible for providing notice and information required by law, including:

- A. Informing parents/guardians (and unaccompanied youth) of education and related opportunities available as well as transportation services;
- B. Posting notices regarding the education rights of homeless children and youth in local facilities where such children and youth receive services under the Homeless Act (such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens);
- C. Providing school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the Homeless Liaison.

Legal References: 42 U.S.C. . § 11431 et seq. (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
20-A M.R.S.A. . §§ 13-A, 261 and 5205
Maine Department of Education Reg. 14

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