

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Students that are identified as meeting the Federal definition of “homeless” or “unaccompanied youth” residing in the Stanley-Boyd Area School District will have equal access to the free public school educational programs and services that are available to other students in the district, and will have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all students are held. Homeless students and unaccompanied youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless students and shall not be stigmatized by school personnel. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

The terms *homeless students* and *unaccompanied youths* (includes youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. It includes students and youths (preschool-grade 12) who meet any of the following criteria:

- “Doubled up” by sharing or living with friends or another family member.
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- Living in cars, parks, public or private spaces not designed for humans to live, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Unsuitable living conditions, such as lack of utilities, mold, infestations, or dangers.

Additionally, *migratory students* and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) may be considered homeless if they are living in a circumstance listed above. Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent/guardian.

Barriers for enrollment and retention of homeless students shall be removed by the District. A student that is homeless shall be enrolled immediately, even if they are missing or do not have access to necessary enrollment documentation such as health and immunization records, proof of residency or guardianship, birth certificate, school records, and other documents.

Comparable Services

Students that are homeless will be provided *comparable services* to other students in the District which include:

- preschool programs
- transportation services
- summer school programs
- Before or after school programs
- programs/courses for talented and gifted students
- include educational services for which the homeless child/youth meets the eligibility criteria (such as services for Title I programming, programs for children with disabilities and programs for English learners) in addition to the services listed below:
- school nutrition programs
- extracurricular activities
- programs for at-risk students

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Students that are homeless or unaccompanied youths have the right to attend their school of origin or the local attendance school, according to the child's best interest, throughout the remainder of the school year when the student obtains permanent housing. The school of origin is the school that the student attended when permanently housed or last enrolled.

Disputes

Homeless families and unaccompanied youths have the right to challenge enrollment or school selection decisions. If a dispute arises, the following steps will be followed:

1. The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.
2. The District homeless liaison will be immediately contacted. The building level principal and Homeless Liaison will conference and make a decision.
3. The District homeless liaison will then inform the parents of the decision both verbally and in writing as well as provide the notice of the right to appeal to the district superintendent and then to the Wisconsin Department of Instruction.
4. This appeal needs to be in writing and sent to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, State Superintendent's office.
5. The student shall also have the rights and access to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I services while the dispute is pending.

The Homeless Liaison shall complete the dispute process promptly after receiving notice of the dispute.

Transportation to and from school of origin shall be provided upon the request of the parent or guardian of the homeless student, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local homeless liaison, per guidelines below:

1. If the homeless student continues to reside in the school district in which the school of origin is located, transportation will be provided in accordance with Federal requirements.
2. In a case that the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, the district of origin and the district in which the student resides shall work together to discuss and agree on the responsibility and costs to transport the child or youth to and from the school of origin. If both districts cannot agree, then the cost must be shared equally between the two districts.
3. When the student obtains permanent housing, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year.

The Stanley-Boyd Area School District's Homeless Liaison will determine the mode of transportation in consultation with the parent or guardian and be based on the best interest of the student. In accordance with Federal law, the above transportation requirements still apply during the resolution of any dispute with other

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districts. If the disputing district is in another state, the District will ask the State for assistance as Federal guidance says that both States should try to arrange an agreement for the districts.

The district shall inform the parent or guardian of the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth all educational and related opportunities available to their children and provide parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education. Information given to parents regarding the administrative rule shall be provided in a form, manner, and language understandable to each parent.

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth of the applicable rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school. This post will also include the district's homeless liaison with their contact information.

Homeless Liaison

The District will designate a McKinney-Vento liaison for homeless children, youths, and families. The liaison will collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in addition to local community coordinators that are responsible for the arrangement of education and basic needs services to students who are homeless.

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