



BOARD POLICY ON HOMELESS EDUCATION

Title IA (Section 111(a)(1)) requires that a district (including independent charter schools) receiving Title IA funds include in its district plan a plan to provide services to homeless scholars to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in December 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Definitions

Homeless children and youth means children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:

- Living in 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, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings or substandard housing (*for example, condemned buildings or garages*), bus or train stations, or other similar settings.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (*does not include trailers or mobile homes in a mobile home park*), or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Unaccompanied youth includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

A child or unaccompanied youth shall be considered homeless for as long as he/she is in a living situation described above.

Homeless Liaison

It is the policy of the John Adams Academy to designate a member of the staff to serve as a Homeless Children and Youth Liaison. The John Adams Academy (JAA) Homeless Children and Youth Liaison oversees services provided to homeless scholars at each of the schools operated by John Adams Academies, Inc. The staff member designated as the Homeless Children

and Youth Liaison will be identified on the Academy website, staff directory, on enrollment paperwork, and in the Family/Scholar Handbook.

The duties of the Homeless Children & Youth Liaison include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Provided that there is space available, ensure that homeless scholars enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of JAA.
- Ensure that parents and guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless scholars is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the Act (such as school, family shelters, and soup kitchens).
- Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, or any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing transportation services, if available and feasible.
- Assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

General Assurances

John Adams Academies, Inc. provides the following general assurances:

- Homeless children and youth shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way.
- Homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to those received by other scholars in the academy, including transportation services, and education programs for which scholars meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title 1 or similar state and local programs; programs for scholars with disabilities; programs for scholars with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs.
- Homeless children and youth will have access to district administrative level reservation of funds (set-asides) for serving homeless scholars.
- JAA shall provide homeless scholars with access to education and other services necessary for these scholars to meet the same challenging academic standards as other scholars.

- JAA shall provide and post notices of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where such children and youths receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

Identification And Reporting

Homeless children and youth will be identified through:

1. The application process for enrollment (self-identification)
2. School personnel recommendations
3. Coordinated activities with other entities and agencies

JAA will comply with all federal, state, county (Sacramento County), and other data collections and reporting requirements regarding homeless children and youth.

School Selection

Homeless scholars have a right to select from the following schools:

- The school he/she attended when permanently housed (School of Origin)
- The school in which he/she was last enrolled (School of Origin)
- The school in the attendance area in which the scholar currently resides (School of Residency)

A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

Enrollment And Records

Homeless scholars may be identified at the time of enrollment (through self-reports). As JAA schools are independent charter schools, and therefore schools of choice rather than assigned district schools, placement decisions are based solely on parent request through the application process.

Homeless youth will not be discriminated against in the application process.

- Homeless children and youth will be allowed to apply for enrollment in accordance with current JAA enrollment policies even if the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, birth certificate, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.
- If a homeless child or youth applies for admission to a grade level that has no available spaces, or applies after the open enrollment period, he or she will be placed on the wait list in the order in which the application was received, even if the application is incomplete at the time of submission.
- In accordance with current JAA enrollment policies and state regulations regarding charter schools, if the grade level for which a homeless child or youth has applied has

open spaces, but more applicants than spaces available, a random public lottery will take place once following the open enrollment period in order to determine enrollment for the following school year.

- If the homeless child or youth receives an available seat in the lottery, or if while on the wait list a seat comes available, the JAA designee conducting admissions and enrollment shall immediately, upon identifying the scholar as homeless or unaccompanied youth, contact the school last attended by the scholar to obtain the relevant records.
- If the scholar needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the JAA designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the Homeless Children & Youth Liaison. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the scholar.
- In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall assist in the enrollment process.
- Homeless children and unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled if space is available even if unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment (as above), and despite lack of parent or legal guardian's supervision or permissions, or "power of attorney" by supervising adult.
- Any confidential record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of each homeless child or youth will be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district.

Academic And Emotional Supports

JAA will work to identify and support homeless and unaccompanied youth by working with community liaisons (Social Workers, County Office of Education personnel, etc.) to provide educational and social-emotional supports with strong advisory support from "Program for Accountable Scholars" and Scholar Success Teams.

JAA will provide full access to core programming and curriculum free from segregation. JAA will review course offerings and content on a regular basis to assess and identify any alternatives needed to increase the likelihood of success for scholars struggling academically.

The Academy will provide access to academic supports such as tutoring and academic learning labs to all scholars, including those designated as English Learner, FRPM, foster children, homeless children, and children with disabilities. These academic supports are not to be segregated based on grouping or identification as homeless or any other unduplicated classification. As such additional academic support is provided to homeless children and youth while avoiding any stigmatization.

JAA will utilize its 10 Core Values to create a culture of success and high expectations for all scholars, including homeless and unaccompanied youth. The core values are woven throughout the curriculum, scholar activities and events. The core values become the positive reinforcements and pillars for success at the Academy and in life. Through living the core values scholars identify their internal excellence and grow to be contributing members of society and servant leaders. The 10 Core Values are:

- Appreciation of our National Heritage
- Public and Private Virtue
- Emphasis on Mentors and Classics
- Scholar Empowered Learning
- Fostering Creativity and Entrepreneurial Spirit
- High Standards of Academic Excellence
- Modeling What We Teach
- Abundance Mentality
- Building a Culture of Greatness
- Self-Governance, Personal Responsibility and Accountability

Transportation

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, LEAs must provide services to homeless children/youth that are comparable to those received by other scholars in the school selected, including transportation. In addition, schools must provide transportation for homeless scholars to and from their school of origin, if feasible.

JAA, where feasible and applicable, at the request of the parent/guardian and/or in the best interest of the homeless children and youth, shall assist in providing transportation to scholars experiencing homelessness to ensure the scholars are able to stay at the JAA school of their choice for the duration of their homelessness.

JAA may work with the youth's district of residence or other agencies to provide transportation services.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act Of 2001 Enrollment Dispute Resolution Process (per CDE Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process - <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cv/disputeres.asp>)

State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool program, as other children and youth.

1. The Law

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (PL 107-110, Section 722) expands the responsibility of CDE and LEAs to ensure educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. All LEAs must ensure coordination of their efforts on behalf of homeless children and youth with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act, Title X, Part C and CDE directives. Part of that

coordination is to implement CDE's procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding school selection and enrollment for homeless children and youth.

McKinney-Vento defines:

- “School of selection” as school of origin, or the school of residence
 - “School of origin” as the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled
 - “Enrollment” as attending classes and participating fully in school activities
- parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth must be able to initiate the dispute resolution process either in writing or orally directly at the selected school site.

2. Dispute Resolution Process

Below are five components for resolving disputes regarding school selection and enrollment for homeless children and youth:

- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute [PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)(iv)]. Enrollment is defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities."
- The Academy must refer the scholar, parent, or guardian to the LEA's homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.
- A written explanation of the Academy's decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal [PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.
- If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the county office of education (COE). The COE's homeless liaison will review these materials and determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials. The COE homeless liaison will notify the LEA and parent of the decision. Please see the contact information for COE's homeless liaisons.
- If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, the COE homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the State Homeless Coordinator. Upon the review of the LEA, COE, and parent information, the CDE will notify the parent of the final school selection or enrollment decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of materials.

School districts must enroll scholars experiencing homelessness immediately. If, after enrollment, it is determined that a scholar is not homeless as defined in the law, school districts should follow the policies that are in place to address other forms of fraud.

Written notice should be given to the parent, guardian, or youth, including his or her right to appeal the decision.

3. Notice to Parents and Unaccompanied Youth

In the course of working with parents/guardians of homeless children and youth, and unaccompanied youth JAA will:

- Inform parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their positions about school selection or enrollment.
- Inform parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth that they can seek the assistance of social services, advocates, and/or service providers in the dispute process.
- Provide a simple dispute form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute resolution process.
- Provide a copy of the completed dispute form to the parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth for their records when the dispute form is submitted to the school.
- Provide a letter to the parents, guardians, or youth for their records of the outcome of the dispute, even when the dispute is immediately resolved satisfactorily without a dispute hearing.