

Troy City Schools System

TROY CITY HOMELESS PLAN

2020-2021

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act was authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento is designed to address challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending and succeeding in school. The new or changed requirements focus on;

1. Identification of homeless children and youth;
2. Preschool-aged homeless children and their families have access to and receive services under LEA preschool programs, including Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers with Disabilities and other programs administered by the LEA;
3. Collaboration and coordination with other service providers, including public and private child welfare and social services agencies; law enforcement agencies, juvenile and family courts, mental health services, domestic violence agencies, child care under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act; and providers of emergency, transitional and permanent housing, including public housing agencies, shelter operators, and operators of transitional housing facilities.
4. Professional development and technical assistance at both the State and local levels.
5. Removing enrollment barriers, including barriers related to missed application or enrollment deadlines, fines, or fees, records required for enrollment, including immunization or other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation or academic records; including documentation of credit transfer;
6. School stability, including the expansion of school or district to include preschools and receiving schools and the provision of transportation until the end of the school year, even if a student becomes permanently housed;
7. Privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child or youth's living situation; and
8. The dispute resolution process.

Homeless Goal

The goal of the plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in the Troy City School System is to provide a framework to assure that equal educational access shall

be given to homeless children and youth in the school system in compliance with the State Plan and with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of ESSA.

Homeless Plan

The Troy City Homeless Plan for Children and Youth is based on the guidelines established by the State Department of Education as outlined in the Alabama Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The plan is designed to insure that all services are administered in compliance with The Act and the State Plan.

The district's McKinney-Vento Enrollment form is submitted to the district's Homeless Liaison upon the enrollment of a student meeting the criteria. A determination is made of the status of the application. If it is determined by the liaison that the student meets the criteria for Homeless, it is approved, notification is sent to the Child Nutrition Program Department for immediate processing for access to the free lunch program, and the student is identified in the student data information program at the Central Office. This process provides immediate access to a listing of the LEA's Homeless students.

School personnel are trained on identifying homeless students, procedures for enrolling homeless students, board policy concerning enrollment, dispute and complaint procedures. Dispute and complaint forms along with the McKinney-Vento enrollment form are available on the district website. Children identified as homeless can request services such as school supplies, clothes, medical, dental, tutoring services and transportation if applicable.

The enrollment of homeless children shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization of health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements

A temporary social security number can be obtained through the school office by the office staff or the counselor. Students needing assistance with obtaining immunization should be referred to the Homeless Liaison. Assistance will be provided to obtain needed immunizations. This process will not delay student enrollment.

Identification of Homeless Children and Youth

Definition:

Homeless children and youth are defined as those individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes-

- Children and youth who are:
 - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reasons (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”)
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
 - abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Child and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Educational Placement

- Services provided to Homeless Children and Youth will be equitable to those services offered to other students in the school system, including educational services for which the child/youth meets the eligibility criteria. Educational services will include all available programs but not limited to programs for the disadvantaged, handicapped, limited English proficiency, career/technical education, academically gifted and talented, Title I services and school meal programs.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s), when applicable, will be given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the educational planning for the homeless student.
- When deemed appropriate, representatives of community agencies (Department of Human Resources, Mental Health, Juvenile Court, etc.) may be involved in the decisions related to educational planning.
- The LEA will ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of the unaccompanied youth, the liaison) to and from the school of origin. (Provisions are made for transportation costs.)

School Records

- The records of the homeless child/youth shall be maintained in the same manner as those of other students.
- Records shall be maintained in a manner consistent with Section 438, Protection of the Rights and Privacy of Parents and Students, of the General Education Provisions Act.
- If a homeless child/youth transfers to another location, records will be transferred in a timely manner to the new school.

Resolution of Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Students

- Homeless children and youth are entitled to the same rights and protections including due process, afforded other students in the Troy City School System.
- Parents and guardians of homeless youth who are dissatisfied with the decision regarding the school assignment are entitled to appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Education.
- In the event that a dispute cannot be resolved, the parties involved will immediately notify the State Department of Education, Office of Homeless Children and Youth, wherein the dispute will be resolved through the federal programs compliance procedure. A dispute of placement does not preclude the enrollment of the child/youth.

Compliance

The Troy City School System will comply with the requirements of the Alabama Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

Assessment

Homeless students will participate in state assessments in the same manner as all other students. Assessments of homeless students will be included in school district accountability data when the students have been enrolled for the proper amount of time per the State Plan.

At the end of the school year, a survey will be mailed to the parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth of the current year homeless students. This survey will be used to evaluate the Troy City Homeless Program and to assess if students' needs were met and to make improvements the program for the next school year.

Services for Homeless Students

The Troy City School System will provide services to all homeless children and youth that are comparable to the services offered to all other students in the school system. Such services available include but are not limited to after school tutoring, cost of field trips, classroom supplies, clothing, transportation, and medical and dental needs of homeless students. Parents, homeless children and youth will be informed of services available through various ways. An informational packet is mailed to the available home address which includes a list of community resources available and the educational rights of homeless students. Homeless posters provided by the National Center for Homeless Education are posted in all schools and in community businesses. Information for homeless parents, children and youth, along with enrollment, dispute and complaint forms are available on the district website also. School counselors and the district social worker will work with families to find other community resources if needed. The Pike County United Way Fund will be used if needed to supplement additional resources.

Each schools' records clerk will enter all eligible students into INOW upon receiving documentation of a homeless student.

A written request for assistance for Homeless student(s) is made to the Homeless Liaison at each school when services are required and then sent to the central office Homeless Liaison to be processed.

Homeless status will be reviewed annually. However, there is no time limit on Homeless status.