

Educational Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Subtitle VII-B of The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. It was reauthorized in December 2015 by Title IX, Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This federal law includes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program that entitles children who are homeless to a free, appropriate public education and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school. This Act protects all students who do not have a fixed, regular and adequate residence, such as students living in the following situations:

- Doubled-up housing with other families or friends due to hardship;
- Runaway/homeless youth shelters (even if parents invite the youth home);
- Hotels or motels;
- Shelters, including domestic violence shelters;
- Transitional housing shelters;
- Cars, abandoned buildings, parks, the streets or other public spaces;
- Campgrounds or inadequate trailer homes;
- Abandoned in a hospital.

Every LEA must designate a homeless education liaison/coordinator to assist families and school personnel in ensuring that students who are homeless can enroll and succeed in school. Compliance with the law also requires LEAs to publish prior-year data regarding number of students identified under McKinney-Vento; however, due to their smaller student populations and the likelihood that this data could be identifying for students, charter schools are not required to post this data publicly. Enrollment statistics for students experiencing homelessness in North Carolina can be found at the North Carolina Homeless Education Program's website: <http://hepnc.uncg.edu/about/>

If your child is homeless, please contact the school's McKinney-Vento liaison, Katherine Becker at 828-318-8140 or kbecker@thefsi.us, for an explanation of his/her educational rights. You may also find information on the following web sites:

- National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE, <http://nche.ed.gov/>,
- North Carolina Homeless Education Program, <http://hepnc.uncg.edu/>,
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, <http://www.naehcy.org/>.

Parents in North Carolina may also contact: Lisa Phillips, State Coordinator for Homeless Education National Center for Homeless Education SERVE Center at UNCG 336.315.7491.