Educational Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Congress reauthorized in January of 2002 the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, originally passed in 1987 to help people experiencing homelessness. 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;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- 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.

If your child is homeless, please contact the school's McKinney-Vento liaison, Katherine Becker (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/,
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, http://www.naehcy.org/,
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, https://www.nlchp.org,
- Overview of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, www.cfda.gov/static/p84196.htm National Coalition for the Homeless, http://nationalhomeless.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 or 1.800.755.3277. Helpline: 800.308.2145