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Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Georgia School for the Deaf

Leslie D. Jackson, Superintendent

GEORGIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

SCHOOL LEVEL HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH PLAN

Administrative Procedures

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et. seq.)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Georgia School for the Deaf shall provide an educational environment that treats homeless students with dignity and respect. Homeless students are provided with equal access to educational programs provided to other students, have an opportunity to meet state and district academic achievement standards to which all students are held and are not segregated or discriminated against on the basis of their homeless status. This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children and youth applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

(2) DEFINITION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Under McKinney-Vento (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. ss11431-11436, sec. 25), homeless children and youth are defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence." The term includes children and youth who:

- (a) are living with other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, including children and youth living doubled-up with family or friends;
- (b) are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative, adequate accommodations;
- (c) are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- (d) are abandoned in hospitals;
- (e) are temporarily housed while awaiting foster care placement;
- (f) have a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- (g) are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;



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- (h) are migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstance described above.

(3) RIGHTS OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

- a) Unaccompanied youth must also be immediately enrolled in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or district liaison/designee. If the youth is enrolled by an adult other than the parent or guardian, the adult will sign the Caretaker Authorization Form.
- b) The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" is defined to mean receiving a school assignment, attending school and participating fully in school activities. The school selected for enrollment must immediately (within one school day) enroll any homeless child or youth. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment.
- c) Once permanent housing is found, the family has a choice to stay in the school of origin until the end of the school year or attend the public school for which they are eligible where they have found housing. Out of region and cross-district transportation services will not be available once the family is in stable housing.
- d) books and school supplies.
- e) participate in all school-related activities, i.e. tutorial, instructional support, Community Learning Centers, etc.
- f) obtain information regarding how to get fee waivers, free uniforms, and referrals to low-cost or free medical services.

Procedures

1) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT

- A. Information regarding the Homeless Children and Youth, McKinney-Vento Assistance Act, including services available to homeless students and how to obtain these services,



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will be posted throughout the school and administration offices. Information will be placed in the Family/Student Handbook, and on the GSD web-site.

- B. In collaboration with school personnel, the staff at Georgia School for the Deaf will identify homeless children and youth.
- C. The school superintendent shall identify a full time staff member to serve as the Homeless Contact. The name of the school Homeless Liaison Coordinator shall be given to the Homeless Education Program (HEP) staff at Georgia Department of Education annually. The Homeless Liaison Coordinator will coordinate their schools' compliance with this policy along with the System Federal Grants Coordinator and will receive training annually. The role of the Homeless Liaison Coordinator is to;
- D. Ensure students who are eligible for Homeless Children and Youth services are identified by school personnel.
- E. Ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to succeed in school by receiving educational services for which they are eligible.
- F. Receive other support services as needed.
- G. Referred to School Social Worker; if the Homeless Liaison Coordinator is not the school social worker.
- H. The Homeless Liaison Coordinator at Georgia School for the Deaf will determine if the child or youth qualifies as homeless. All students identified as homeless must have a Homeless Education Program Enrollment (HEP) Form on file in GSD's Homeless Liaison Coordinator's office at Georgia School for the Deaf. Student Services staff at Georgia School for the Deaf will be responsible for entering the information into the student data base.
- I. Homeless status continues until the student is in stable housing. If the student continues to be homeless the following school year, he/she must reapply for the Homeless Education Program. This applies to the receipt of services. Data entry into Infinite Campus is completed one time for the school year.
- J. The Homeless Liaison Coordinator and System Federal Grants Coordinator will ensure that the following primary reporting groups have professional development opportunities on a regular basis to improve identification and services:
 - 1. Administrators
 - 2. Student Services staff



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3. School Social Worker
4. School Staff
5. School Psychologist
6. School Nurses
7. School Secretaries

- K. In addition to training regarding how to properly identify a student with a homeless status, these groups will be provided with access to the Homeless Education Program (HEP) form that will be located on the Georgia School for the Deaf staff intranet, the student services office, the school office, the office of the school social worker and nurses office.
- L. The above primary reporting groups will be trained on confidentiality of information.
- M. A referral to the Homeless Liaison Coordinator does not and will not automatically place the student into classification as Homeless; this information should be shared only for identification purposes and is confidential information.
- N. Other Professional development topics may include:
- a. students' rights under the McKinney-Vento Act,
 - b. indicators of homelessness,
 - c. sensitivity in identifying families and youth as homeless,
 - d. how to enroll students in the Homeless Education Program,
 - e. services to homeless families and unaccompanied youth,
 - f. compliance with GSD policies and procedures regarding homeless students.

(4) IDENTIFICATION

- 1) The enrollment/registration form will be updated to include identifiers that will alert the Students Services Staff (Program Associate) if a student may be eligible for Homeless Children and Youth Services. As families complete the Enrollment/Registration form process at the beginning of the year and throughout the year any identifier that has been indicated on the Enrollment/Registration form



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should be noted to prompt next steps. Identifiers will be questions such as place of residence and/or person(s) living in the home/residence with the student.

- 2) Once identifier of possible homeless status has been noted either on the Enrollment/Registration form or by other method, the Student Services Staff will notify the Homeless Liaison Coordinator to investigate possible homeless status of new student.
- 3) The Homeless Liaison Coordinator will meet with the family and/or student to determine status of eligibility. If student can be classified as eligible for homeless children and youth services, the Homeless Liaison Coordinator will provide a copy of the referral form indicating "McKinney-Vento Eligible" to the Student Services staff who shall enter the student into Infinite Campus as Homeless for reporting purposes.

4) Other Methods of Identification

- 1) Returned Mail
- 2) Reporting from Staff
- 3) Reporting from others

Professional Development opportunities for the primary reporting groups noted in section "J" will provide information on how to access the Homeless Education Program referral form and who to provide it to. Steps 2-3 will be followed from IDENTIFICATION (4) above.

SCHOOL SERVICES

School personnel must inform parents/caregivers of all educational and related opportunities available to homeless children and provide parents/caregivers with meaningful opportunities to participate in the homeless child's education. Services include but are not limited to:

- (a) free breakfast and lunch,
- (b) school supplies and books,
- (c) preschool programs,
- (d) transportation services (see details below),



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- (e) educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria such as programs for English Language Learners, special education services, or programs for gifted and talented students,
- (f) programs for "At Risk" students,
- (g) vocational and technical education programs,
- (h) Title I services,
- (i) waiver of school fees,
- (j) tutorial programs, before- and after-school programs,
- (l) school uniforms (when applicable),
- (m) referrals to community based agencies and services.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- STEP 1: HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE- THE COMMITTEE WILL ESTABLISH THE GSD SCHOOL POLICY FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH.
- STEP 2: POLICY SUBMISSION TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL
- STEP 3: POLICY SUBMISSION TO SCHOOL COUNCIL FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.
ANY AMENDMENTS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE POLICY MUST FOLLOW STEPS 2 & 3.