

Du Bois Integrity Academy Homeless Education Policies and Procedures

HOMELESS EDUCATION COMPLIANCE

Du Bois Integrity Academy fully complies with the Georgia Department of Education's guidance regarding the *McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth*. The program is authorized under Title VII-B of the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11431 et seq.)*, (*McKinney-Vento Act*).

Du Bois Integrity Academy seeks to ensure that each homeless student has equal access to the same, free, appropriate public education, including a public education, as provided to other students.

HOMELESS EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

Du Bois Integrity Academy complies with the *McKinney-Vento Act* defines homeless children and youth as 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 reason (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;
- Abandoned in hospitals; or
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- 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;
- Children 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.

Du Bois Integrity Academy students will be considered displaced or in transition as long as he or she is in a living situation described above. A child classified as displaced or in transition will retain that designation for the remainder of the academic year.

LEA/SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION OF HOMELESS EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

In compliance with the *McKinney-Vento Act*, *Du Bois Integrity Academy* considers an **unaccompanied child or youth** is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is displaced or in transition as defined above. **Enroll and enrollment** means attending school and participating fully in all school activities. **Immediate** means without delay.

Parent means a person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth. A **guardian** is someone legally appointed to manage the affairs of a person incapable of acting for himself, i.e., a child or youth. **The school of origin** is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. If the school of origin is determined not to be in the best interest of the child or youth, he or she may enroll in a local attendance area school at the parent's request.

LEA LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISON APPOINTED WITH DUTIES

The *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act* and the *Georgia State Plan* requires each local education agency to have a board-appointed homeless education local liaison. The local liaison is responsible for carrying out the duties required by the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*.

The duties of the LEA local liaison include:

- (1.) Assist with immediate enrollment of children and youth displaced or in transition and provide assistance with obtaining academic and medical records;
- (2.) In consultation with school administrators, make school placement decisions based on the best interest of the child and wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;

- (3.) Handle enrollment disputes;
- (4.) Prohibit the segregation of homeless children and youth;
- (5.) Provide/arrange transportation and inform the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the transportation services available and assist the with accessing transportation to and from school;
- (6.) Inform parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the educational and related opportunities available to them;
- (7.) Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth in places where he or she receives services;
- (8.) In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, identify children and youth displaced or in transition both in and out of school;
- (9.) Instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible displaced or transition situations upon enrollment and withdrawal of every student and refer any suspected cases;
- (10.) Keep data on the number of children and youth displaced or in transition in the school;
- (11.) Train school personnel on possible indicators that children and youth are displaced or in transition using well respected national and state resources. (<http://center.serve.org/nche/briefs.php>)

In meeting these responsibilities, local liaisons must assist homeless children and youth with such activities as the following:

- Enrolling in school and accessing school services;
- Obtaining immunizations or medical records;
- Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
- Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement;
- Collaborating and coordinating with State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL'S HOMELESS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Du Bois Integrity Academy's designated Homeless Education Coordinator responsibilities are:

- Develop and carry out the school's *McKinney-Vento plan*;
- Gather valid, reliable, and comprehensive information on the problems faced by homeless children and youth, the progress of the LEAs in addressing those problems, and the success of *McKinney-Vento* programs in allowing homeless children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school;
- Conduct a comprehensive survey twice per year to identify potential Homeless children and youth;
- Coordinate services on behalf of the *McKinney-Vento* school program;
- Provide professional development and technical assistance for the school's coordination with the teachers to ensure that LEAs comply with the *McKinney-Vento Act*; and
- Collect and transmit to the *U.S. Department of Education*, upon request, a report containing the information that the school determines is necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

DU BOIS INTEGRITY ACADEMY ENROLLMENT PLAN

Du Bois Integrity Academy Enrollment Plan ensures that enrollment under the *McKinney-Vento Act* may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of documentation normally required to enroll.

Such documentation includes:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunization or health records
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms
- Any factor related to the student's living condition
- Any other document requirements

UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH ENROLLMENT

Unaccompanied youth may enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison. The school's enrollment process includes completion of a *Displaced Student Enrollment Checklist* which is designed to ensure the student's rights are protected and that all needed services are provided. The law allows charter schools to adhere to enrollment caps imposed by its charter, however charter school enrollment policies, including enrollment caps, may not be used to override a displaced student's right to continue his or her education in the school of origin in any case in which the student becomes displaced between academic years, during an academic year, or for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed.

ACCOMMODATING DISPLACED STUDENTS

Students who are displaced or in transition may have difficulty meeting enrollment deadlines. *Du Bois Integrity Academy* administrators in conjunction with the local liaison will explore enrollment options outside of the normal parameters to accommodate the wishes of displaced students and those in transition on a case-by-case basis.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided to and from the school if requested by the parent/guardian where required by federal law at 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii). In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the transportation request will be made by the Homeless Liaison (Form JBC(1)-3)

MEALS FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION STUDENTS

The *U. S. Department of Agriculture* has determined that all children and youth displaced or in transition are automatically eligible for free meals (*Child Nutritional WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-265, Sec. 104*). On the day a child or youth is identified as displaced or in transition enrolls in school, a school administrator will prepare a memo for the food service

provider identifying the student as eligible for free meals. The parent is not required to complete the customary free and reduced lunch application.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION STUDENTS

DuBois Integrity Academy offers children and youth displaced or in transition comparable services offered to other students in the selected school, including, but not limited to:

- School Bus Transportation (not available)
- Title I, Part A services
- Services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education,
- English language learners programs, etc.
- Before and after school programs

Children and youth displaced or in transition are frequently not evaluated or provided appropriate special education and related services. Children suspected of having a disability will receive a timely, complete evaluation. Frontier will fully comply with the provisions of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. If a displaced or in transition student has an existing *Individualized Education Plan (IEP)* it will be implemented immediately. Any necessary IEP meetings or re-evaluations will then be conducted expeditiously. If complete records are not available, IEP teams will determine the best course of action to avoid disruption in appropriate services. It is unlawful for children and youth displaced or in transition to be stigmatized or segregated from school services or activities based on their *McKinney-Vento* status.

STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING HOMELESS PRESCHOOLERS

Du Bois Integrity Academy's local liaison (Homeless Education Coordinator) will identify preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters, preschools, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, homeless shelters and transitional housing agencies, and social service agencies in our area. In addition, the liaison will work with school personnel, who can inquire, at the time they are enrolling homeless children and youth in school, whether the family has preschool-aged children.

The LEA liaison will also collaborate with the school district special education program. The *Individual with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires that highly mobile children with disabilities, such as migrant and homeless children who are in need of special education and related services, are located, identified and evaluated. Additionally, IDEA requires that homeless preschoolers and all homeless children be included in the *Child Find* process for early identification of special education needs.

LEA COLLABORATION OF TITLE I AND MCKINNEY VENTO ACT

Du Bois Integrity Academy uses the following strategies to ensure collaboration and coordination between the school's Title I services and *McKinney Vento Act*. The school's designated Local Homeless Education/Homeless Education Coordinator will:

- Ensure that LEA local liaisons attend Title I conferences and in-services, and that Title I coordinators attend homeless education conferences and in-service professional development.
- Ensure collaboration between local Title I coordinators and LEA local liaisons on a plan that identifies ways that Title I will serve children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure collaboration between the State Title I coordinator and the State McKinney-Vento coordinator on the State Title I plan or the State consolidated plan.
- Share Title I and Homeless Education handbooks with other program staff.
- Collect and share within and across districts concrete data on the needs of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Initiate district efforts to make organizational accommodations for eligible students, as necessary, in such areas as transportation, remaining in the school of origin, records transfer, class scheduling, and special services that will help them enroll, attend, and succeed in school.
- Ensure that the needs of highly mobile students are included in the school improvement plans and not addressed as a separate issue.
- Establish and widely disseminate information on district-wide policies, procedures, and guidelines to identify and serve eligible students.
- Ensure LEA homeless liaison representation on the State Committee of Practitioners.

- Include homeless parents in Title I parental involvement policies and create opportunities for homeless parents to be involved.

**Policy and Procedures Resource: EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM
TITLE VII-B OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, AS AMENDED BY THE
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001, NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE**