

Policy 6173: Education For Homeless Children

Status: ADOPTED

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The Board of Trustees believes that the identification of homeless students is critical to improving the educational outcomes of such students and ensuring that homeless students have access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to other students within the district. The district shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.

When there are at least 15 homeless students in the district or a district school, the district's local control and accountability plan (LCAP) shall include goals and specific actions to improve student achievement and other outcomes of homeless students. (Education Code 52052, 52060, 52064)

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly review and recommend updates to district policies to ensure removal of any barriers to the education of homeless students and unaccompanied youth. Any such review shall address identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students, including those barriers that due to absences or outstanding fees or fines. (42 USC 11432)

The Superintendent or designee shall designate an appropriate staff person to serve as a liaison for homeless children and youths. The district liaison for homeless students shall fulfill the duties specified in 42 USC 11432 to assist in identifying and supporting homeless students to succeed in school.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each district school identifies all homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths at the school. (Education Code 48851)

To ensure each identification of homeless students, the Superintendent or designee shall annually administer a housing questionnaire developed by the California Department of Education (CDE) to all parents/guardians of students and all unaccompanied youths. (Education Code 48851)

If the primary language of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth is not English, either the housing questionnaire shall be made available in the primary language of the student's parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth pursuant to Education Code 48985, or an appropriate translation of the housing questionnaire shall be provided upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. (Education Code 48851)

In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district liaison's contact information and other information on homelessness, including, but not limited to, information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness, are posted on the district and school websites as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 48852.6)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that placement decisions for homeless students are based on the student's best interest as defined in law and administrative regulation.

Each homeless student shall be provided services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school, including, but not limited to, transportation, educational programs for which the student meets the eligibility criteria (such as federal Title I services or similar state or local programs, programs for students with disabilities, and educational programs for English learners), career and technical education programs, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition programs. (42 USC 11432)

Homeless students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way. However, the Superintendent or designee may separate homeless students on school grounds as necessary for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies or to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services to meet the unique needs of homeless students. (42 USC 11432, 11433)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that information and/or materials for homeless students are provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless students and to unaccompanied youth.

Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be considered part of a student's educational record, subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, shall not be deemed to be directory information as defined in 20 USC 1232g, and shall not be released without our written consent. (42 USC 11432)

The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate with other agencies and entities to ensure that homeless children and youth are promptly identified, ensure that homeless students have access to and are in reasonable proximity to available education and related support services, and raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness. Toward these ends, the Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with local social services agencies, other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children and youth, and, if applicable, transitional housing facilities. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate transportation, transfer of school records, and other interdistrict activities with other local educational agencies. As necessary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate, within the district and with other involved local educational agencies, services for homeless students and services for students with disabilities. (42 USC 11432)

At least annually, the district liaisons and other appropriate staff shall participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities to assist them in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students. Such professional development and technical assistance shall include, but are not limited to, training on the definitions of terms related to homelessness, signs of homelessness, the steps that should be taken once a potentially homeless student is identified, and how to connect homeless students with appropriate housing and service providers. (Education Code 48852.5; 42 USC 11432)

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled in the district as identified from the housing questionnaire described above. (Education Code 48851)

At least annually, the Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board on the identification of and outcomes for homeless students, which may include, but are not limited to, the housing questionnaire responses, school attendance, student achievement test results, promotion and retention rates by grade level, graduation rates, suspension/expulsion rates, and other outcomes related to any goals and specific actions identified in the LCAP. Based on the evaluation data, the district shall revise its strategies as needed to more effectively identify and support the education of homeless students.
