

ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

I. BACKGROUND

The Board of Education affirms its belief in the success of each student. Students who are homeless are at risk for developmental delays, poor academic performance, serious psychological stress, poor attendance and increased risks to health, nutrition and safety. The Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") Section 13A.05.09 establishes minimum requirements for providing educational programs to homeless students in Maryland which ensures that homeless students have equal access to educational programs and are protected from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness. This COMAR regulation is consistent with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. § 11431, et seq.

II. DEFINITIONS

"McKinney-Vento Act" refers to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. § 11431, et seq.

"School of origin" means the school that the student attended or was last enrolled before becoming homeless.

The term "homeless student" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

- A. children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- B. children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human being;
- C. children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and,
- D. migratory children (as defined by Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this section because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses a through c.

ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

III. POSITION

Homeless students shall be provided full and equal opportunity to services needed to eliminate barriers to enrollment, retention and success in school. Administrative regulations will address school placement and determination of best interest, school enrollment, school transportation, school records/lack of school records, guardianship issues, and dispute resolution as outlined by COMAR 13A.05.09.

It is the policy of the Talbot County Board of Education not to exclude any homeless student eligible to attend Maryland public schools from enrolling in a Talbot County public school or having equal access to educational programs.

IV. GUIDELINES

Administrative regulations for implementation are included with this policy as items of information.

V. IDENTIFICATION, REVIEW AND REPORTING

Data will be collected and reported to the Maryland State Department of Education, local schools and other agencies as required by the Maryland State Department of Education and the McKinney-Vento Act. The Superintendent shall designate a homeless education coordinator to ensure the identification of homeless students, the implementation of policy, coordination of student services, data collection, coordination with local agencies, staff training and communication to all relevant parties.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with established practices.

-END-