

6Gx53-4.001 PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Florida law requires that all children have access to a free public education.

I. Purpose: Under federal law (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act), homeless children (otherwise known as children & youth in transition) must have access to appropriate public education, including preschool, and be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state- and district-wide assessments and accountability systems.

II. This school district will: 1) ensure that all children and youth receive a free, appropriate public education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school; 2) follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and 3) ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment.

A. Definition: Homeless children and youth (otherwise known as children and youth in transition) means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free, public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. 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, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
2. 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 beings.
3. Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
4. Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

B. School Selection: Children and youth in transition have the right to remain at their schools of origin (the school in which the child or youth attended while permanently housed or the school last attended or enrolled) or to attend any school that housed students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

- C. Enrollment: Children and youth in transition have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents, including:
1. Transcripts/school records
 2. Medical records such as school physical, immunization records
 3. Proof of residency or guardianship
 4. Birth Certificate
 5. Unpaid school fees
 6. Any factor related to the student's living situation
- D. Transportation: Children and youth in transition have the right to receive transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian's or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the Local Liaison's request. In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth in transition will also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed-students.
- E. Services: Children and youth in transition will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the selected school, including:
1. Transportation (as described above)
 2. Title I, Part A, services
 3. Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
 4. Vocational and technical education program
 5. Gifted programs
 6. Before- and after-school programs
- F. Disputes: If a child and youth in transition is sent to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by a parent/guardian, the school district will provide a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal, whether or not the parent/guardian disputes the placement. A written explanation of the school's decision must also be provided if a

parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes a school placement or enrollment decision. Whenever a dispute arises, the student must be immediately admitted to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

G. Nutrition: Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for free lunch as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

H. Liaison:

1. The local Liaison, designated by the school district, must ensure that:
 - a. Children and youth in transition are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
 - b. Students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
 - c. Families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and pre-school programs administered by the school district, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services.
 - d. Public notice of the educational rights of students in transition is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
 - e. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of McKinney-Vento.
2. The local Liaison will:
 - a. Train school and district staff of possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as in transition, procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison, and assistance available to the children and youth in transition. The trainings and activities will be designed to increase staff awareness, facilitate immediate enrollment, ensure compliance with this policy, and increase sensitivity to children and youth in transition.
 - b. Keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the district; where they are living; their academic achievement (including performance on state- and district-wide assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

The School Board of Polk County, Florida
Policy 4.001

Statutory Authority: Florida Statutes 1001.32, 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43

Laws Implemented: Florida Statute 1003.21, Florida Administrative Code 6A-1.0985, 6A-1.984, and the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Readopted: April 28, 1987

Amended:

October 13, 1992

October 14, 2008