



Piedmont City School District

EMPOWERING FOR THE FUTURE

Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Piedmont City Schools

502 Hood Street West

Piedmont, AL 36272

(256)447-8834

Mike Hayes
Superintendent

Rachel Smith
District Homeless Liaison

Introduction

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, signed into law on July 22, 1987 and reauthorized on January 8, 2003, provides comprehensive federal emergency and long-term assistance for homeless persons. Title X, Subtitle C of the Act, Education of Homeless Children and Youth, establishes appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, which would be provided to children of the residents of the state and are consistent with state school attendance laws. It further provides that residency requirements as a component of compulsory school attendance laws, regulations, practices or procedures, be reviewed and steps undertaken to assure these laws do not prohibit children and youth from school attendance. Homelessness alone is not a sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream of the school environment. Homeless children and youth should have access to the education and other services that such children and youth need to ensure that such children and youth have the opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. Homeless children and youth will be provided the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education regardless of their residency status. The program will ensure that these students are afforded equal access to academic and other services that will allow them to meet the same challenging state achievement standards as non-homeless students.

The Piedmont City Schools Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth is based on the guidelines established by the State Department of Education as outlined in the Alabama Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. This plan is designed to ensure that all services are administered in compliance with the Act and the State Plan.

The program provides procedural guidelines to ensure that homeless students are not denied enrollment due to the lack of registration documentation at the time of enrollment. Homeless students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have the required documents. The enrollment of homeless children shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements

The program provides for a homeless liaison who will ensure program implementation and coordinate efforts to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschool-age children, are provided the opportunity for academic success.

The homeless education program makes every effort to provide homeless children and youth with a stable school environment by enrolling students in the school of origin and providing them with transportation to and from the school of origin. Provisions are made for parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth to decline enrollment in the school of origin.

I. Goal Of The Plan

The goal of the Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in Piedmont City is to provide a framework to assure that equal educational access shall be given to homeless children and youth, in compliance with the State Plan and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 2002.

II. Identification

For the purpose of identifying homeless children and youth, the Piedmont City Schools shall use the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless children and youth. The Act defines homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
 - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up); o
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
 - abandoned in hospitals;
- 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.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above. The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the Act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. This includes youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing; children or youth denied housing by their families; and teen parents living in shelters or other facilities for pregnant and parenting teens who have no other housing available.

Homeless children and youth are often undetected. The system will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless children without stigmatizing terminology. The system will use the Student Housing Information Form to facilitate identifying homeless children and youth, as well as preschoolers. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will complete the Student Housing Information Form at the time of registration. The system registrar and/or school counselor may provide appropriate assistance to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth in answering the questionnaire if necessary.

A copy of the Student Housing Information Form must be submitted to the Central Office Homeless Liaison. The school will maintain the original form in a file separate from the student's permanent record for audit purposes during the year. This file should be housed in the school counselor's office.

III. Educational Rights

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in the students best interest. The school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin.
- enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records.

IV. Enrollment in School

The McKinney-Vento Act requires immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, immunizations, proof of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation. It is the responsibility of the Piedmont City Schools Homeless Education Liaison to ensure that documentation normally required for enrollment is gathered and submitted in a timely manner.

An unaccompanied youth may enroll himself/herself. In this case, the district registrar will immediately contact the Homeless Liaison to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth. The school will provide the youth with proper assistance in a language that the student understands. The Homeless Liaison will assist the homeless unaccompanied youth in obtaining eligible educational services.

V. School of Best Interest Selection

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that a homeless child or youth attend the school that is in his or her best interest. The school chosen may be either the school of origin or the school of residency. The school of origin is the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. The school of residency is the school that serves the area where the child or youth is currently physically dwelling. This may include the school that serves the community where a homeless shelter is located or where a child or youth is doubling-up with family or friends. When making decisions concerning the school of best interest, a homeless child or youth should, to the extent possible, remain in the school of origin unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian of the child or youth. Remaining in the school of origin must also be the wish of an unaccompanied youth. If Piedmont City Schools believes it is in the homeless child's or youth's best interest to enroll in a school other than the school of origin or the school of choice, the district will provide a written explanation of it's decision to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

VI. Dispute Resolution

When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The District Homeless Liaison will provide the complainant the Dispute Resolution Procedure and expeditiously take steps to resolve the dispute. If the dispute cannot be settled at the District level, the liaison will assist the complainant in seeking assistance from the ALSDE Coordinator of Homeless Education .

VII. Automatic Eligibility for Free School Meals:

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 includes the provision that homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth automatically become eligible for free school breakfast and lunch. A list of homeless children and youth will be acceptable in lieu of the school meal application usually submitted by the child's parent or guardian and will be sufficient for school officials to approve the child's eligibility for free school meals.

When a student has been certified as eligible for free meals, based on designation as homeless, the eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year and up to 30 days into the next school year. This will remain in effect even if the homeless child or youth moves into permanent housing and is no longer homeless.

VIII. Services Provided to Homeless:

Piedmont City Schools will provide services to every homeless child or youth that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school. Funds will be set aside funds in Title I, Part A to help provide services to identified homeless students. Such services include, but are not limited to tutoring, cost of field trips, classroom supplies, clothing, transportation, eye glasses, dental work, etc. Each school maintains a list of homeless students in their school. A verbal or written request for services is made to the Homeless Liaison. There are no barriers within the school system either in the form of school board policies, procedures, or practices that would inhibit a homeless student's full participation in all phases of the school program.

IX. Homeless Liaison

The homeless liaison shall work to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschoolers are identified, enrolled in school, and receive all eligible services to facilitate student academic success. The responsibilities listed below are not all inclusive but shall be primary duties of the liaison.

The homeless liaison shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the system;
- Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs administered by the school system, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaning opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- Transportation cost disputes between the school system and school system of enrollment are resolved;
- Sensitivity and confidentiality training is provided to transportation and school personnel regarding the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;

- Public notice of educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services under Act;
- Required reports concerning the homeless education program are submitted to appropriate agencies and the State Department of Education; and
- Evaluation of the homeless education program is conducted annually and necessary program and implementation adjustments are made in a timely manner

Appendix

Forms Include:

- Written Notification of Enrollment Decision
- Dispute Resolution Procedures
- Enrollment Dispute Form
- Factors for Best Interest Determination
- District Enrollment Dispute Meeting
- Best Interest Determination for Enrollment
- Student Housing Information Form
- Caregiver Authorization Form
- Receipt of Support - Verification Form
- Assistance Request Form

Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the District when an enrollment request is denied.

In compliance with section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the following written notification is provided to:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) or Unaccompanied Youth: _____

Name of Student(s): _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied. This determination was based upon:

You have the right to appeal this decision by contacting the District's Homeless Education Liaison and following the Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Rachel Smith
Piedmont City Schools
256-447-8834
rsmith@pcsboe.us

The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.

Date: _____ Form Complete by: _____

As the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, I wish to appeal the enrollment decision.

Printed Name Signature Date

I have been provided with (please check all that apply):

____ A written explanation of the school's decision.

____ The contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison.

____ A copy of the Dispute Resolution Procedure for students experiencing homelessness.

McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Policy

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the schooling which the child was last enrolled.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for the transfer of records.
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student's status as homeless is prohibited.

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1 Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

Persons with complaints, grievances, or requests should follow the McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Procedure. In the event the dispute cannot be resolved locally, the parent or guardian will be referred to the ALSDE Coordinator for Homeless Education

Dispute Resolution Procedure

If a school selection or eligibility dispute develops regarding the options available under the McKinney-Vento Act, the child or youth will be immediately enrolled to the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute.

STEP 1: How to Start a Dispute or Challenge a Decision by the School

System The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth must complete the Enrollment Dispute Form and submit the form to the District's Homeless Liaison, Rachel Smith, within 10 school days from date of the Written Notice of Enrollment Decision that was provided to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth. The form may be mailed to Rachel Smith at the following address:

Piedmont City Schools
Rachel Smith, District Homeless Liaison
502 Hood Street West
Piedmont, AL 36272

Additionally, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may begin the dispute process by emailing the dispute to the District's Homeless Liaison, Rachel Smith (rsmith@pcsboe.us).

STEP 2: Meeting with Superintendent and Homeless Liaison

After the Enrollment Dispute Form is received, the superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, will schedule a meeting with the complainant, the student (if appropriate), the district's homeless liaison, and a person representing the school where enrollment has been requested in order to discuss the factors related to the best interest of the student. The meeting must occur within ten (10) days of the district's receipt of the Enrollment Dispute Form. Within five (5) business days after the meeting, the Superintendent will provide the complainant with the Best Interest Determination for Enrollment.

STEP 3: Appeal to the Alabama State Department of Education

After you receive the Superintendent's decision in writing, you may file an appeal with the Alabama State Department of Education:

LaDonna Rudolph, Coordinator for Homeless Education
Alabama State Department of Education
50 North Ripley Street Montgomery, AL 36130
1-888-725-9321

The Alabama State Department of Education will review your dispute and will address the issues within 10 days from the receipt of your written request for resolution.

See Ala-Admin-Code-r-290-3-1-.02(7)(j)(i).

Enrollment Dispute Form

Parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth must complete this form in case of a dispute regarding the enrollment decision of the district.

Student's Name _____ Student Contact Number _____ School

Name _____ Grade _____

School Name _____ Telephone #: _____

School Address _____

Complainant Information

Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Current Address _____ Telephone Number _____

Name of school that the complainant chooses for student to be immediately enrolled in/or transported to/from until dispute is resolved:

Is this the school of origin? _____

If not, from what is the student's school of origin? _____

Reason for complaint _____

_____ Complainant Signature

Date

DISTRICT USE ONLY

Action on the Compliant:

Taken within _____ school day(s) after receiving notice of the complaint.

Date District Liaison was notified of the dispute: _____

Action taken by the District to resolve the dispute: _____

Was the dispute resolved? _____

Best Interest Determination

Factors to be considered when making decisions regarding school placement(s):

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well is she/he performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have the past school transfers impacted the student?
3. How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities and other interests? How could the new school serve these needs?
4. What are the student's academic and career goals? How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, graduate on time, or receive an industry credential?
5. How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional, and cultural needs? Does the student access school-based supportive services? How could the new school serve these needs?
6. Describe the nature, quality, and duration of the student's relationship in the current school. Specifically, consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the school of origin. Consider where the students go to school.
7. Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities? 8. Is the student's new living arrangement to be short or long term? How is this impacted by school selection?
9. How would the commute to the current school impact the student? Consider the child's age and developmental functioning as well as the commute with various modes (e.g., car, school bus). Note: The cost of transportation cannot be a factor when determining best interest.
10. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so it coincides with a logical time on academic calendars of the new school and the current school?
11. What other factors were considered when making this decision?

District Enrollment Dispute Meeting

Student's Name _____ Student Contact Number _____ School

Name _____ Grade _____

Complainant Information

Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Current Address _____ Telephone Number _____

DISTRICT ACTION ON COMPLAINT

Date of Meeting: _____ The meeting was held within _____ school days after receiving notice of the complaint.

Within five (5) business days after the meeting, the Superintendent will provide the complainant with a written notification of the Best Interest Determination for Enrollment for the student(s).

If a resolution cannot be derived at the district level, the system homeless liaison will provide the complainant with the contact information for the ALSDE Coordinator of Homeless Education:

LaDonna Rudolph, Coordinator for Homeless Education
Alabama State Department of Education
50 North Ripley Street Montgomery, AL 36130
1-888-725-9321

If the dispute was resolved at the district level, describe the action taken to resolve the dispute:

Superintendent Signature System Homeless Liaison Signature

Best Interest Determination for Enrollment

Placement decision for: _____

Name of Student

_____ It is in the best interest of the student to remain in the school of origin.

_____ It is in the best interest of the student to not remain in the school of origin. _____ The student must immediately be enrolled in the school of residence.

_____ The school of residence will request the student's records from the school of origin in order to enroll the student. Enrollment means attending and actively participating in class.

_____ The school of origin will send the student's records immediately upon request.

The student will remain in the school of origin.	A change in school placement is needed.
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Transportation will be provided by: _____

Responsible party/parties for transportation cost:

Enrollment in the new school must take place without interruption. The student will be enrolled in:

_____ (school)

_____ (system)

_____ on (date)

The person responsible for enrolling the student in the new school is:

Student Housing Information Form

Answers to the questions below will determine if your child is eligible for additional educational services through the McKinney-Vento Act. Please complete and return it to your child's school.

Last Name _____ First Name _____
Age _____ DOB _____ Grade _____ School _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

1. Please mark the student's nighttime residency:

<p>A. Living in a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (permanent dwelling rented or owned) with a parent or guardian. Please note: if A is marked skip B-F.</p> <p>B. Doubled-up: Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. <u>If doubled-up:</u> Name of person you reside with _____ and relationship to that person: _____</p> <p>C. Living in a car, park, campground, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing or similar.</p> <p>D. Temporarily living in a motel or hotel due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason.</p> <p>E. Unknown nighttime residence.</p> <p>F. Staying in a shelter or FEMA trailer. (FEMA trailer is housing assigned to victims of natural disasters.)</p>
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2. Unaccompanied Youth: not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian. Check one.

<p>Is the student with an adult that is not a parent or legal guardian, or alone without an adult?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES If answered yes: Indicate person that the student resides with or if the student is alone. _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
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Housing and Educational Rights

Students without fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residences have the following rights: 1. Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the local school where they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations; 2. Transportation to the school of origin for the regular school day; 3. Access to free meals, Title I and other educational programs, and transportation to extra-curricular activities to the same extent that it is offered to other students.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and understand the above rights.

Signature of Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Signature Date

Signature of McKinney-Vento Liaison

Caregiver Authorization Form

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian; however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

Instructions: Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete the following:

1. Name of minor: _____

2. Minor's date of birth: _____

3. Caregiver's name (adult giving authorization): _____

4. Caregiver's home address: _____

5. Caregiver's date of birth: _____

6. Caregiver's driver's license or state identification card number: _____

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Caregiver Signature: _____ Date: _____

Unaccompanied Youth Signature: _____ Date: _____

Homeless Liaison Signature: _____ Date: _____

McKinney-Vento

Receipt of Support - Verification Form

Student Name: _____ Age: _____ DOB: _____

School _____ Current Grade _____

Student Name: _____ Age: _____ DOB: _____

School _____ Current Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Name of Vouchers/Cards Received _____

Total Amount of Vouchers /Cards: \$ _____ Date _____

The purpose of this gas voucher/card:

_____ Purchase clothing or school supplies needed for school.

_____ Purchase items necessary to support academic achievement of the student(s) during the school day.

_____ Transportation of student(s) to or from school or school-related events.

_____ Transportation of student(s) to or from personal doctor's appointments that are directly related to school attendance.

_____ Transportation of student(s) for other reasons related to school attendance.

Do you understand that this voucher/card is provided by the McKinney-Vento grant through Piedmont City Schools, and that the voucher/card may ONLY BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE(S) INDICATED ABOVE?

Yes _____ or No _____ Parent/Guardian

Signature Date

McKinney-Vento Assistance Request Form

Student's Name:	School:
Clothing: (Include sizes)	Classroom Materials/Supplies Needed:
Non-Instructional Materials:	Health/Hygiene Needs: List service(s), name and place of service provider.
Field Trip/Conference Travel Assistance Needs/Amount Request: (attach agenda/registration) Make Check Payable To:	School Fees/Amount Requested:
Other Needs (describe):	
Counselor Signature/Date:	Homeless Coordinator Signature/Date: