

Amite County School District



Homeless & Unaccompanied Youth Plan

FY 2026-2027

Dr. Chavis L. Bradford, Superintendent

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What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.) is a federal law that provides important educational rights and services to PreK-12 children and youth experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless as those students who “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes:

- Sharing housing with relatives or other families due to economic hardship (*doubled-up*)
- Living in shelters, motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of permanent accommodations
- Abandoned in medical facilities
- Living in non-housing places, such as cars, abandoned buildings, etc.
- Migratory Students

What are the requirements to maintain compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act?

- School districts must identify a McKinney-Vento Liaison to assist students and their families.
- Students who are homeless may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Parents or guardians of homeless students must be informed of educational and related opportunities.
- Students who are homeless may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Students who are homeless and their families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other needed services.
- Students who are homeless have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must be enrolled in school and receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.
- Students are automatically eligible for Title I services.
- School districts must reserve a portion of Title IA funds to serve homeless students.
- School districts must review and revise policies that serve as barriers to homeless students.
- Schools must post information in the community regarding the rights of homeless students and unaccompanied youth in schools and other places where homeless families may frequent and written in a language they can understand.

Procedures for Identifying a Homeless Student

- An affidavit of Residency (Appendix A) indicates a homeless status at the time of enrollment
- School District staff observes these signs of possible homelessness and reports suspensions to the ACSD Homeless Liaison:
 - ◆ Lack of supplies
 - ◆ Wearing same clothing
 - ◆ Poor Hygiene
 - ◆ Absenteeism
 - ◆ Student's Comments

Procedures for Enrolling a Homeless Student

- Immediately enroll the student, regardless of the lack of documentation normally required for enrollment
 - ◆ ACSD staff will make a diligent effort to make contact with their legal guardian if unaccompanied at registration.
 - ◆ The Department of Human Services will be contacted if the student is without a birth certificate and/or immunization records.
 - ◆ ACSD will request academic records from the previous school.
- Contact the ACSD homeless Liaison, Robert McDaniel, by sending him a copy of the residency form to verify homeless identification.
- Provide free meals after the student is enrolled.
- Provide the student with any needed instructional and/or hygiene supplies.
- Provide the student with the same opportunities as those not identified as homeless, such as:
 - ◆ Transportation services
 - ◆ Extra-Curricular Activities
 - ◆ Enrichment Activities
 - ◆ Vocational Programs
 - ◆ Dual-Enrollment
 - ◆ Educational Services
- Coordinate with community resources to offer any needed assistance.

School Selection

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, students will be provided the following school selection options:

- School of Origin (*The last school attended prior to becoming homeless.*)
- School District located in the area of their temporary residence.

School selection will be based on the best interest of the student and the following factors will be considered:

- Presume the student's best interest is the school of origin, except if this conflicts with the request of their legal guardian.
- Consider student-centered factors
- Provide written explanation if best interest determination is not the school of origin or conflicts with the legal guardian's request.
- Legal Guardian or unaccompanied youth can dispute the best interest determination.

Dispute Resolution Process

In the event a legal guardian or unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness disagrees with the student's eligibility for McKinney-Vento services, school selection, or school enrollment, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school requested by the legal guardian or unaccompanied youth until the final resolution of the dispute.

The following procedures will be followed:

- Written explanation of any decisions made about services, school selection, and/or school enrollment provided to the legal guardian or unaccompanied youth.
- Explanation will be provided in a manner understandable to the legal guardian or unaccompanied youth.
- The ACSD homeless liaison will attempt to resolve the dispute informally. In the event this is not possible, a formal dispute resolution process will be initiated.
- The formal dispute resolution process will be in compliance with Mississippi Board of Education Policy Part 3, Chapter 40, Rule 40.1 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure.

ACSD will make every effort to resolve any disputes in regard to services, school selection, and/or school enrollment. If our attempts do not resolve the dispute, the legal guardian or unaccompanied youth will be notified of their right to appeal to the Mississippi Department of Education. The Homeless Dispute Form from the Mississippi Office of Federal Programs will be made available and assistance will be provided to assist in filing the complaint.

Appendix A: ACSD Student Residency Form

Amite County School District Student Residency Form

Student's name: _____	Grade: _____	Age: _____	☐ Male	☐ Female
Student's name: _____	Grade: _____	Age: _____	☐ Male	☐ Female
Student's name: _____	Grade: _____	Age: _____	☐ Male	☐ Female
Student's name: _____	Grade: _____	Age: _____	☐ Male	☐ Female

Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please answer these questions about the student's residency. The information provided is confidential and protected by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act. We use the information to make sure the rights of a child, youth, or an unaccompanied youth are met based on the McKinney-Vento Act.

1. The student's living arrangements can be described as which of the following? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Sharing house with others
- ☐ Motel or hotel
- ☐ Sheltered (family or temporary housing)
- ☐ Unsheltered (car, campground, park, or abandoned building)
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Is the living arrangement checked in question No. 1 due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or another similar reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

3. The student lives with

- ☐ 1 parent
- ☐ 2 parents
- ☐ Relative(s), friend(s), or other adult(s)
- ☐ Alone with no adults
- ☐ An adult who is not the parent or the legal guardian

Please verify you have received "Family's Right to Know" information that outlines the educational rights for students that whom are covered under the McKinney-Vento Act.

- ☐ Yes, I have received "Family's Right to Know"
- ☐ No, I did not received "Family's Right to Know"

Parent/legal guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Amite County School District Affidavit of Shared Residency

Student's name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Male	Female
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Student's name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Male	Female
------	--------

Student's name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Male	Female
------	--------

Student's name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Male	Female
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TO BE COMPLETED BY HOMEOWNER:

I, _____, declare/certify that I am the primary resident/owner at the address listed below and that the above listed student(s) reside with me on a full-time basis.

Homeowner's Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

I hereby certify that the information provided in this form is true and correct. As the homeowner, I agree to notify Amite County School District (ACSD) promptly if there is any change in the status of residence of the persons listed above. I understand that home visitation and/or residency verification is part of the process when residency is established by an Affidavit of Shared Residence. I further agree to provide proof of residence to ACSD.

Homeowner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Residency Proofs provided by Homeowner: (Please select two required proofs)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Mortgage Document/Property Deed | ☐ Driver License/State ID |
| ☐ Filed Homestead Exemption | ☐ Automobile Registration |
| ☐ Lease/Rental Agreement | ☐ Government Mailing Document |
| ☐ Utility Bill: _____ | ☐ Voter's Registration Card |

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN/UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH:

Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth: _____

I hereby certify that the information provided in this form is true and correct. The address listed above is my only residence, and I hereby agree to notify Amite County School District promptly if there is any change in the status of my residence. I understand that home visitation and/or residency verification is part of the process when residency is established by an Affidavit of Shared Residence. I also understand that the above-named student(s) will be required to withdraw from ACSD should it be determined that he or she is attending this school system in violation of Mississippi's Residency Verification Procedures.

Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Signature: _____ Date: _____

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument. I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY and under the laws of the State of Mississippi that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct. WITNESS my hand and official seal.

(SIGNATURE OF NOTARY PUBLIC)

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: _____

Appendix B: ACSD Policy JQN: Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Board Policy Manual Amite County School District

Policy JQN: Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 01/11/2018 | Last Revised Date: 11/11/2021 | Last Reviewed Date: 03/13/2025

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Homeless students in the Amite County school district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law.

The Amite County district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

The superintendent or designee will produce written guidelines for distribution to each school that explains the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities of the schools to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. This information shall also be disseminated in writing and by other means designed to raise awareness of these rights and responsibilities to staff, homeless families and students, the public, and homeless service providers.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, children are deemed to be homeless under the following conditions:

1. Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1));
2. Children and youths 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 the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
3. Children and youths 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 (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C));
4. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
5. Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in numbers 2-4 above.

An unaccompanied is a homeless child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 42 U.S.C. § 11434a

SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

1. It shall be the policy of the Amite County school district, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.

2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA Assignment of Pupils, and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the "school of origin" or the school serving the "place of abode" will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by the Amite County school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district; and in a manner consistent with Section 1232(g) of Title 20.
6. Should the Amite County school district receive assistance under Section 11432, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.
7. Should the Amite County school district receive assistance under Section 11432, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to insure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and, homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. The Amite County school district has and will continue to review and revise, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above.
10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.
11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Coordinator of the Homeless Program

Mississippi Department of Education

P. O. Box 771

Jackson, MS 39205

Appendix C: Mississippi Education Board Policy Rule 40.1

Chapter 40 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure

Rule 40.1 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

The *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act)* acknowledges that disputes may arise between a local educational agency (LEA) and the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth, when the LEA seeks to place him or her in a school other than the school of origin or the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. Guidance regarding the definition of homeless, the responsibilities of the LEA in serving homeless children and youth, school selection, eligibility and enrollment is provided in the Act. The Act includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the LEA liaison and the State Educational Agency (SEA).

The following procedures are specified in the Act:

- a. **Enrollment:** Immediately enroll the homeless child or youth in the school preferred by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth until the dispute is settled and all available appeals have been exhausted. The statutory definition of “enroll” includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- b. **Written explanation:** Written explanations provided by the LEA shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of any decisions related to school selection, eligibility or enrollment made by the school or LEA, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions.
- c. **Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Rights:** It is the responsibility of the LEA to inform the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the McKinney-Vento rights and the dispute resolution process.

While the dispute is being resolved, the child or children in question must be enrolled in school and receive all services for which they are eligible, including transportation services. If the dispute is concerning the school of “best interest,” the child must be enrolled in the school preferred by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Federal Programs, has adopted a dispute resolution process at the local and state levels. If a dispute arises regarding the eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment of a homeless child or youth, or unaccompanied youth, the following procedures are to be followed:

Local Educational Agency Level: If the LEA makes a determination regarding school selection or enrollment that would result in the child or youth attending a school other than the one requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, a written explanation shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the LEA superintendent. The dispute resolution process shall be initiated at the local level by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth who wishes to appeal the school district's decision. The LEAs shall develop written policies and procedures with timelines that govern the dispute resolution process and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Each LEA is required to have a designated McKinney-Vento liaison. In addition, each school should have a contact who has been trained on the McKinney-Vento Act.
- b. If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA's decision and wishes to appeal to the LEA superintendent or his/her designee, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall file a request for dispute resolution with the LEA liaison by completing a dispute resolution form or submitting a written request after receiving notification of the LEA's decision. The LEA superintendent's designee shall be someone other than the LEA liaison. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the LEA superintendent's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the local school board of education.
- c. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the LEA superintendent's decision and wishes to appeal to the local board of education, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall inform the LEA liaison of the intent to appeal. The LEA liaison shall ensure an appointment is made for the next, regularly scheduled board meeting to address the dispute. The LEA liaison shall also provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with the documentation collected up to that point, including the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth's request for dispute resolution, the LEA liaison's and local superintendent's written decisions and any other additional information submitted by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to appeal and the local school board of education's written decision shall include a statement of the right to appeal to the MDE if aggrieved.

State Educational Agency Level: Appeals made to the MDE shall be submitted in writing, signed by the complainant, and forwarded by the LEA. The following steps are to be taken:

- a. Address the complaint to:

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
State Homeless Education Coordinator
359 North West Street, Suite 111
Jackson, MS 39205

- b. The complaint shall include the following:

1. A description of the situation that prompted the dispute
2. The name(s) and age(s) of the homeless child or youth
3. The name(s) of the LEA and personnel involved
4. A description of the attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the local level, including copies of any documentation used in making the decisions.

- c. The State Homeless Coordinator will gather needed information from statements of the parties involved and forward the information to the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs, along with a recommendation for resolution or for further investigation.
- d. Within ten (10) business days after receiving a complaint, the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs will recommend a resolution and will inform interested parties, in writing, of the decision.
- e. If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision, that party may, within ten (10) business days, appeal to the State Superintendent. This appeal shall be made in writing and state why the party disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs.
- f. Within ten (10) business days after receiving an appeal, the State Superintendent or his/her designee will render a final administrative decision and notify all parties in writing.

If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision of the State Superintendent in a matter concerning homeless children or youth, the party may request a review of the decision by the United States Secretary of Education in accordance with *34 CFR Part 299.11*.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



IF YOUR FAMILY LIVES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

In a shelter



In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation



In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station



Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

*Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the
federal McKinney-Vento Act.*

Your eligible children have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference and is feasible.
 - * If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children's needs.

If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. There also may be supports available for your preschool-age children.



Local Liaison

Robert McDaniel
601-657-4361

State Coordinator

Dr. Quentin Ransburg
769-208-4674

If you need further assistance with your children's educational needs,
contact the National Center for Homeless Education:
1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • www.serve.org/nche

INFORMACIÓN PARA LOS PADRES



SI SU FAMILIA VIVE EN CUALQUIERA DE LAS SITUACIONES SIGUIENTES:

En un albergue



En un motel o un sitio para acampar debido a la falta de una alternativa adecuada



En un parque, un edificio abandonado, o una estación de trenes o de autobuses



Compartiendo la vivienda de otras personas debido a la pérdida de su casa
o a una dificultad económica

*Sus hijos de edad escolar podrían calificar para recibir ciertos derechos y protecciones bajo la
ley federal McKinney-Vento.*

Sus hijos elegibles tienen derecho a:

- Recibir una educación pública gratuita y apropiada.
- Inscribirse en la escuela inmediatamente, aunque falten documentos normalmente requeridos para la inscripción.
- Inscribirse y asistir a clases mientras que la escuela obtiene los documentos necesarios.
- Inscribirse en la escuela local; o continuar asistiendo a la escuela de origen (la escuela a la cual su hijo asistió cuando tenía una residencia permanente, o la última escuela en la cual estaba inscrito), si esto es su preferencia y es factible.
 - * Si el distrito escolar cree que la escuela escogida por usted no es la mejor para sus hijos, el distrito tiene que darle a usted una explicación escrita de su posición e informarle de su derecho de apelar su decisión.
- Recibir transporte a/de la escuela de origen, si usted lo pide.
- Recibir servicios educacionales comparables a los que están provistos para otros estudiantes, según las necesidades de sus hijos.

Si usted cree que sus hijos podrían ser elegibles, contacte al oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar de su distrito escolar para averiguar los servicios y ayudas que podrían estar disponibles. También puede haber apoyo disponible para sus hijos de edad preescolar.



Oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar

Robert McDaniel
601-657-4361

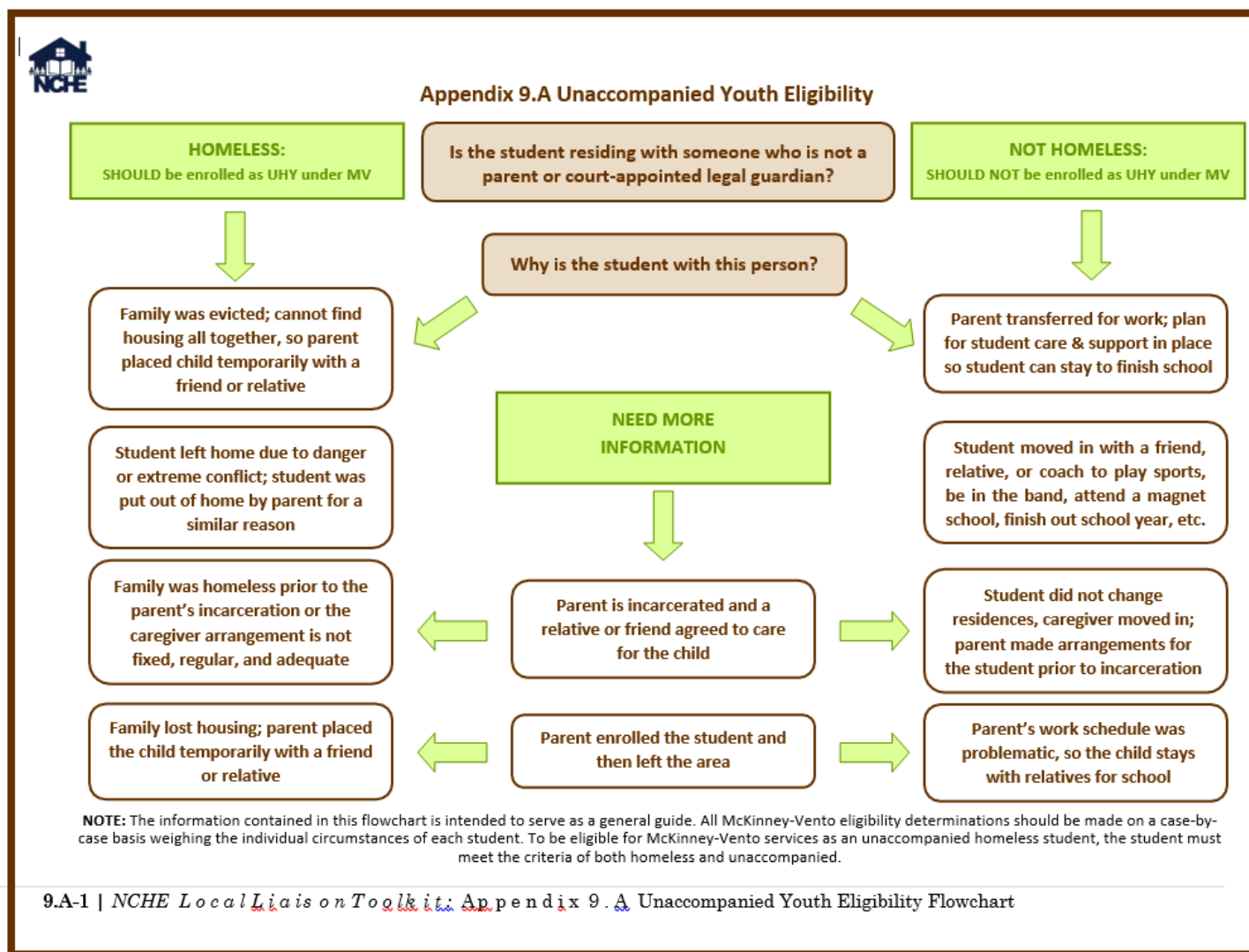
Coordinador estatal

Dr. Quentin Ransburg
769-208-4674

Si usted necesita ayuda adicional con las necesidades educacionales de sus hijos, contacte
al Centro Nacional de Educación para los Niños y Jóvenes sin Hogar:

1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • www.serve.org/nche

Appendix E: NCHE Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart



Appendix F: NCHE McKinney-Vento Eligibility Flowchart

Flowchart for McKinney-Vento Eligibility Determinations

This flowchart is meant to aid you in making decisions about a student's eligibility as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 *et seq.*), but it may not capture every housing situation. For the complete definition of *homeless*, visit <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>. For more information on making determinations, see the related issue brief from the National Center for Homeless Education at https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/det_elig.pdf.

