

Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process

Bessemer City Schools Homeless Education Program Dispute Resolution Process

INITIATION OF THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS WILL BE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

If Bessemer City School District seeks to place a homeless child or youth in a school other than the school of origin, or the school requested by the parent or unaccompanied youth, the child's/youth's parent or the unaccompanied youth shall be informed in a language and format understandable to the parent or unaccompanied youth of their right to appeal the decision made by the school district. Level I of the appeal is to Bessemer City School's Homeless Liaison. If unresolved at this level, the case is appealed to the Bessemer City Schools Superintendent (Level II), and if the dispute continues to be unresolved at the district level, the final appeal (Level III) is to the Bessemer City School Board. Every effort must be made to resolve the complaint or dispute at the local level before it is presented to the Alabama State Department of Education.

Level I - A complaint regarding the placement or education of a homeless child or youth shall first be presented orally and informally to the district's homeless coordinator. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the complainant may present a formal written complaint (grievance) to the homeless coordinator. The written charge must include the following information: date of filing, description of alleged grievances, the name of the person or persons involved, and a recap of the action taken during the informal charge state. Within five (5) working days after receiving the complaint, the coordinator shall state a decision in writing to the complainant, with supporting evidence and reasons. In addition, the coordinator will inform the Superintendent or his/her designee of the formal complaint and the disposition.

Level II - Within five (5) working days after receiving the decision at Level I, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee by filing a written appeal package. This package shall consist of the complainant's grievance and the decisions rendered at Level I. The Superintendent or his/her designee will arrange for a personal conference with the complainant at their earliest mutual convenience. Within five (5) working days after receiving the complaint, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall state a decision in writing to the complainant, with supporting evidence and reasons.

Level III - If resolution is not reached in Level II, a similar written appeals package shall be directed through the Superintendent or his/her designee to the Board requesting a hearing before the Board at the next regularly scheduled or specially called meeting. The hearing before the Board may be

conducted in closed session upon the request of either the Board or the complainant. Within thirty (30) working days after receiving the appeals package, the Board shall state its decision and reply in writing to the parties involved. For district purposes, the decision of the Board is final.

Level IV - If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken by the school district, a written notice stating the reasons for the dissatisfaction may be filed with the State Homeless Education Coordinator. The state coordinator will initiate an investigation; determine the facts relating to the complaint, and issue notice of his or her findings within thirty (30) days to the school district and the complainant. If the findings support the action taken by the school district, such action will be confirmed. If the findings support the allegations of the complainant, the school district will be directed to take corrective action. An appeal of this decision can be made within ten (10) days to the State Department of Education. Within thirty (30) days after receiving an appeal, the State Department of Education will render a final administrative decision and notify the complainant and all other interested parties in writing.