



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

CATEGORY: **Students, Admission/Withdrawal**
SUBJECT: **Enrollment of Children and Youth
in Transition (aka Homeless)**

A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. To outline administrative procedures governing the enrollment and education of children and youth in transition.
2. **Related Procedures:**

Immunization verifications	6355
Preregistration and registration, K-6	6120
Preregistration and registration, 7-12	6123
Choice Enrollment	6127

B. LEGAL AND POLICY BASIS

1. **Reference:** Board policy: H-1500, H-1501, H-2100, H-2575, H-3000, H-7210, H-7600, K-1500, K-2100; Education Code Sections 1981, 1982.c, 8263, 48200, 48201, 48205, 48980-48984, 49068, 49408, 49505, 49510, 49530, 56026-53035; California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 438, Runaway & Homeless Youth Act, College Cost Reduction and Access Act, Fostering Connections Act (ACYF-CB-PI-10-11, July 2010, Section E), Individuals with Disabilities Act, (34CFR Parts 300 and 301 – 2006).
2. **Federal Law:** Elementary & Secondary Education Act, Subtitle B, Section 1034, now known as the McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children & Youth Act, 2007
3. **Academic Achievement.** It is the policy of the Congress that students who lack a fixed, adequate nighttime residence (homeless) have access to the education and other services they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all students are held.
4. **Segregation.** It is the policy of the Congress that homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. Schools must not provide services in settings within a school that segregate children and youth in transition from other children and youth, except as is necessary for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies, or to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services. District and site policies and practices must ensure that children and youth in transition are not segregated or stigmatized on the basis of their status as homeless.

C. GENERAL

1. **Originating Office.** Suggestions or questions concerning this procedure should be directed to the Student Services Department, Office for Children and Youth in Transition.
2. **Definitions**
 - a. **Children and youth in transition:** (It is the philosophy of our district to view children as individuals. Therefore, this policy will not refer to children as homeless; it will instead use the term “children and youth in transition.”). An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:
 - (1) Children and youth living with a friend, relative or someone else because they lost their home or cannot afford housing.
 - (2) Children and youth who are staying in a motel, hotel or campground due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
 - (3) Children and youth who are living in an emergency or transitional shelter or a domestic violence shelter, or are awaiting foster care placement.
 - (4) 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.
 - (5) Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station or similar setting.
 - b. **Unaccompanied youth:** A youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
 - c. **Enrolled:** Attending school and fully participating in school activities.
 - d. **School of origin:** The school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
 - e. **Liaison:** A staff person designated by the district and each school site to ensure the rights of students in transitional situations and their families. The name of the site liaison must be reported annually to the district liaison. Liaisons must ensure that:

- (1) Children and youth in transition are identified by school personnel and activities are coordinated with other entities and agencies.
- (2) Children and youth in transition enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
- (3) Families, children and youth in transition receive all educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and pre-school programs administered by the district; and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services.
- (4) Parents/guardians in transition are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- (5) Enrollment disputes are mediated (D.3.) and records of all disputes are kept in order to determine if particular issues or schools are repeatedly delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth in transition.
- (6) Parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth in transition are fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services.
- (7) Public notice of the educational rights of students in transition is disseminated where children and youth receive services, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens (district liaison's responsibility).
- (8) There is collaboration and coordination with state and county liaisons and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youth in transition.

D. IMPLEMENTATION

1. **School Selection.** The district must, to the extent feasible, keep students in transition in their school of origin (defined as the school attended when the students were last permanently housed, or the school in which they were last enrolled), unless it is against the parent's/guardian's wishes.
 - a. Students can remain in their school of origin the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.

- b. Students may also choose to enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area as the student's temporary home are eligible to attend. If a student in transition chooses to enroll in the neighborhood school of his/her temporary residence, this neighborhood school becomes the resident school/school of origin for the student for any further changes of residence.
 - c. If a student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by a parent/guardian, the district provides a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal, if the parent/guardian disputes the placement.
 - d. District liaison for students in transition assists unaccompanied youth (youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) to choose and enroll in a school, after considering youth's wishes, and provides youth with notice of his/her right to appeal an enrollment choice contrary to their wishes.
 2. **Feasibility.** Feasibility shall be a child-centered determination based on the needs and interests of the particular student and the parent's/guardian's or youth's wishes. Potential feasibility considerations include:
 - a. Safety of the student.
 - b. Continuity of instruction.
 - c. Likely area of family's or youth's future housing.
 - d. Time remaining in the academic year.
 - e. Anticipated length of stay in the temporary living situation.
 - f. School placement of siblings.
 - g. Whether the student has special needs that would render a commute harmful. The length of the commute will be considered in determining the feasibility of placement in the school of origin only when it relates to this consideration of potential harm to the student.
3. **Enrollment**
 - a. The district immediately *enrolls* students in transition, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency or other documents.

Note: The term “enrolled” is defined as attending classes and fully participating in school activities.

- b. The enrolling school obtains school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.
 - c. If a student does not have immunization or medical records, the liaison immediately assists in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in school in the interim.
 4. **Students With Disabilities or Suspected Disabilities.** Evaluations of children and youth in transition suspected of having a disability shall be given priority and evaluation coordinated with students’ prior school, as necessary, to ensure completion of a full evaluation.
 - a. When necessary, the district shall expeditiously designate a surrogate parent for unaccompanied youth suspected of having a disability.
 - b. If a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) the enrolling school will immediately implement it.
 - c. Any necessary IEP meetings or re-evaluations shall be conducted in accordance with state and Federal law.
 - d. If complete records are not available, IEP teams must use good judgment in choosing the best course of action, balancing procedural requirements and the provision of services. In all cases, the goal will be to avoid any disruption in appropriate services.
 5. **Free meals:** The U. S. Department of Agriculture has determined that all children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for free meals. On the day a child or youth in transition enrolls or is determined to meet the definition of being “in transition,” the school must submit a free lunch application for immediate processing.
 - a. Title I: Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for Title I services regardless of the school they attend.
 - b. LEAs must reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in Title I, Part A funded schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live.

7. **Dispute Resolution.** When a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute.
- a. A written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal. The written explanation shall be simply stated and provided in a language that the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth can understand.
 - b. The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth should be advised that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their positions about school selection or enrollment.
 - c. If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the liaison at the county office of education. The county liaison will review the materials and determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials. The county liaison will notify the district liaison and the parent of the decision.
 - d. If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, the county liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the state liaison. The state liaison will notify the parent of the final school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials.
8. **Transportation**
- a. At a parent's/guardian's request, a student in transition must be provided with transportation to and from his/her school of origin. The transportation service must be comparable to that provided to other students.
 - b. For unaccompanied youth, transportation to and from the school of origin must be provided at the liaison's request.
 - c. If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the San Diego Unified School District's boundaries, the district must provide transportation.
 - d. In cases of students in transition living outside the district whose school of origin is within the district, or of students in transition living within the district

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whose school of origin is outside the district, San Diego Unified School District consults with the other school district to determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or shares the responsibility and cost equally with the other district.

9. **Training.** At least once each year, there will be training for site personnel to increase staff awareness of homelessness, facilitate enrollment, ensure compliance with this policy and increase sensitivity to children and youth in transition. Site liaisons are responsible for this training.
10. **Preschool.** The provisions of this procedure apply to preschools.

E. FORMS AND AUXILIARY REFERENCES

F. REPORTS AND RECORDS

G. APPROVED BY

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Interim General Counsel, Legal Services
San Diego Unified School District