



ELKHART INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Plan for Homeless Children and Youth 2017-2018

Title I and McKinney-Vento Provisions

The Elkhart Independent School District Plan for Homeless Children and Youth follows the guidelines of the Texas Homeless Education Office at the University of Texas Charles A. Dana Center. It will be updated as guidelines are revised.

Board of Trustees Approval Date June 2001

Most Recent Update February 2017

“Academic Excellence Through Innovative Instruction”

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B-Education for Homeless Children and Youth), reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Services to homeless children are required by Local Educational Agencies in the No Child Left Behind Act, and are primarily found under the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2002 (Title X, Part C No Child Left Behind Act) and under Title I.

District Commitment

Elkhart ISD is committed to ensuring that all homeless students have equal access to the same free public education that other students have. This policy explains the District's responsibilities under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for identifying and serving homeless students. (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA] has not provided guidance in replacing NCLB rules as of February 2017)

Definition of Homeless Students

(This definition may be updated by ESSA in 2017-2018 School Year)

Homeless students are children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes those who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons because of loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds because of the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- Living in a migratory situation that qualifies as homeless because a child lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Policies and Procedures

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, Sec. 722(g); 42 U.S.C. 11432(g):

Students must be provided the opportunity to enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of Elkhart Independent School District. The intent of the McKinney-Vento Act is to ensure that students in homeless situations are or will be given the opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic achievement standards all students are expected to meet. It is the policy of Congress that students in homeless situations have access to the education and other services they need in order to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

Schools must not provide services in settings within a school that segregate homeless children and youth from other children and youth, except as is temporarily necessary. Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. States that receive McKinney-Vento assistance (as Texas does) are prohibited from segregating homeless students in separate schools, separate programs within schools, or separate settings within schools.

Dissemination of Educational Rights

All schools within the Elkhart Independent School District shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated in places where children and youth receive services under the Act. Posters in English and Spanish will be posted on all campuses and in public locations within the district.

Identifying Homeless Students

Children and youth in homeless situations are difficult to identify because students and parents may try to hide their situation due to embarrassment or for fear of having children taken away. Unaccompanied youth may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments. The law requires all school districts to identify students in homeless situations. The District Homeless Liaison, in coordination with other school personnel and other agencies, is responsible for seeing that this is done. (A Home Residency Survey is sent home with all students at the beginning of each school year and at the time of enrollment for new arrivals during the school year.)

Eligibility of Homeless Students for Title I Services

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(E); 20 U.S.C. 6315(b)(2)(E):

A child or youth who is homeless and attends Elkhart Independent School District is automatically eligible for Title I homeless services, regardless of his/her current academic performance or campus of attendance.

District Liaison for Homeless Students

Elkhart ISD has appointed the Curriculum Director as the Liaison for homeless students. The Liaison for homeless students will provide enrollment support and coordinate services within the school district and through community agencies in order to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to an education in the District. Specifically, the Liaison has the following responsibilities:

- Making sure that homeless children enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in district schools;
- Making sure that homeless families and children receive educational services they are entitled to, such as preschool care, and referrals to services, such as health care;
- Making sure that the parents and guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational opportunities available to their children and are given opportunities to participate;
- Distributing a public notice of the educational rights of homeless children in places where such children may receive services and at other locations within the district. (Doctor's offices, schools, etc.)
- Making sure that enrollment disputes are mediated appropriately. If a dispute arises between the District and parents about school selection or enrollment, the district must immediately enroll the student in the requested school, pending resolution of the dispute.

Enrollment Records

Homeless students will enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in Elkhart ISD activities. If critical enrollment records, including immunization and medical records, are not immediately available for homeless children, the Liaison and school staff will work with these children and other agencies to obtain them in a timely manner.

Placement

The Liaison for Homeless Students, with help from other school staff, will decide on each homeless student's placement based on the student's "best interests." In making this determination, Elkhart ISD must, to the extent feasible, continue the student's education in his or her "school or origin"—that is, the district school the student attended prior to becoming homeless—unless the student's parents or guardians want him/her placed in another school. (Since Elkhart ISD is a single attendance area school, there are no alternate schools within our district in which a student might enroll at the appropriate grade level. This ruling applies to multiple attendance area schools.)

Transportation

Elkhart ISD will provide Homeless Students in the district with transportation services comparable to those of other students. Also, individual accommodations will be considered. If a homeless student moves out of the district but continues to attend a district school, the district will coordinate services with the new district to meet the student's transportation needs. The school principal, the Liaison, and the transportation manager will coordinate a homeless student's transportation needs.

Transportation for Foster Care Students will be conducted according to FFC Regulation based on TAC Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Rule §97.66 and the ESSA interpretation of the McKinney-Vento Act effective October 1, 2016.

The procedures must ensure that the transportation will be provided promptly, in a cost-effective manner, in accordance with federal child welfare Title IV-E funding requirements [section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675(4)(A))], and ensure that if there are any additional costs incurred in providing transportation to maintain the student in his or her school of origin, the district will provide the transportation if:

- The child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the district for the additional costs;
- The district agrees to pay the additional costs; or
- The child welfare agency and district agency split the additional costs.

Student Residency Questionnaire/Information Posters

A Student Residency Questionnaire will be used by each Elkhart ISD Campus to assist in the identification and placement of homeless children and youth. Posters will be displayed in English and Spanish on each campus and in public locations within the district.

Resources

Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO)
800-446-3142
www.utdanacenter.org/theo

Texas Homeless Network (THN)
<http://www.thn.org>

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth (NAEHCY)
www.naehcy.org

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
1-800-308-2145
www.serve.org/nche

National Coalition for the Homeless (NCHC)
1-202-737-6444
www.nationalhomeless.org

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)
1-202-638-2535
www.nlchp.org

U.S. Department of Education Homeless Education Program
1-202-260-4412
www.ed.gov