

General Overview

What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B- Education for Homeless Children), a federal law first enacted in 1987, is designed to ensure educational rights and protections for students experiencing homelessness. School districts can apply for a local sub-grant to be spent on activities that promote the ability of homeless students to gain access to a free, appropriate education. Because the state of North Dakota accepts federal McKinney-Vento grant money, all school districts in the commonwealth must comply with the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act, even if they are not receiving a local sub-grant. The Act was reauthorized in January 2002 and contains several new protections for homeless students that went into effect on July 1, 2002.

McKinney Highlights:

1. Maintaining students in their school of origin;
2. Providing transportation to ensure access to the school of origin;
3. Enrolling homeless students immediately, even if regularly required documentation is missing;
4. Requiring school districts to review and revise all local policies that may act as a barrier to retention and enrollment of homeless students;
5. Requiring a local homeless education liaison in all school districts with specific responsibilities to ensure that the provisions listed above will be met.

What Is A Homeless Education Liaison?

Liaisons ensure that students in homeless situations "enroll in, and have a full and fair opportunity to succeed in, the schools in their district." The job may seem daunting, but its importance cannot be overstated. A dedicated liaison can have a profound effect on individual children's lives and the school community as a whole.

"In districts that operate successful programs to serve students in homeless situations, there is one common denominator: a homeless liaison. Whether funded through the McKinney program or another source, the liaison is the person who orchestrates opportunities for students and families to begin to break the cycle of homelessness."

Charles A. Dana Center. 1997. Austin, Texas
*Pieces of the Puzzle: Awareness, Understanding, Opportunity Creating
Success for Students in Homeless Situations*



General Liaison Responsibilities

Identification- locate and reach out to students experiencing homelessness.

Outreach- inform parents, guardians and students of their rights; providing public notice of those rights.

Training- educate school personnel on the educational rights of homeless students and their responsibilities in protecting them.

Facilitate Enrollment- ensure students missing documentation are still enrolled immediately; assist in gathering missing records once enrolled.

Ensure Access to Services- make referrals, inform families and students of the available opportunities (including pre-school and **transportation**); ensure they are able to access them.

Resolve Disputes- carry out dispute resolution procedure.



General District Responsibilities

Maintain students experiencing homelessness in their **School of Origin** whenever feasible.

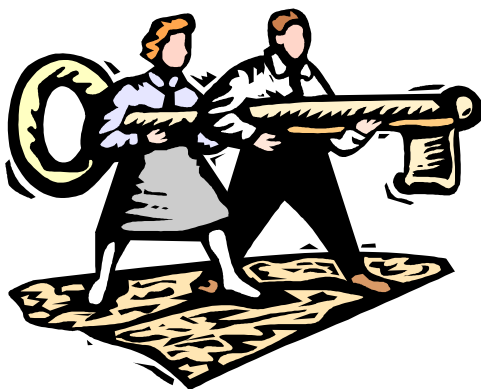
Transportation- arrange and provide transportation services between the homeless student's school and temporary living situation; collaborate with other districts when cross-district transportation is required.

Immediate Enrollment- allow homeless students to enroll and attend classes even when they are missing regularly required documentation (e.g. immunization records, proof of residency).

Provide Appropriate Services to homeless students, including special education, pre-school, free and reduced price meals.

Review and Revise Policies that act as a barrier to homeless students accessing education (e.g. residency, credit and absence policies).

Coordination and Collaboration with the state coordinator, state agencies, service providers, advocates and school personnel in other districts to carry out the above tasks.



The Importance of Having a Homeless Liaison

HOMELESSNESS AND EDUCATION

- It takes a child, on average, **four to six months** to recover academically after changing schools. (Rogers, Loyola University Department of Education, *B.H. v. Johnson* 715 F.Supp.1387)
- In a single year, 97% of homeless students move, many up to **three times**. ("Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts," The Better Homes Fund, 1999).
- Students who moved three or four times scored nearly **20 points lower** on reading tests than students who did not move. (Del Stover, *Schools Grapple with High Student Mobility Rates*, 20 SCH. Board News 11, June 13, 2000)
- Average student test scores for **non-mobile students** are significantly lower in high schools with high student mobility rates. (*The Educational Consequences of Mobility for California Students and Schools*, 1 PACE Policy Brief, May 1999)

The Impact of Homelessness

All children and youth in transition experience two things – they lack a permanent residence and they live often invisible in extreme poverty.

Strategies for Implementation

1. *Become familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act.*
2. *Educate the Superintendent, principals, teachers and other school officials about McKinney-Vento.* Most of them are frequently unaware that the law exists or that they are violating it. Often all that is needed to remove a barrier to a child or youth in transition's education is to make the right official aware of the law. Consider faxing a copy of relevant portions of the text to all the principals and directors of Head Start programs with whom you will be working.
3. *Learn about homelessness in the district.* Assess the nature and extent of homelessness in your area, the services - educational and otherwise - available, and current policies and procedures regarding student enrollment. Conduct a needs assessment.
4. *Make contact with key personnel at each school with which you will work.* Collaboration with and among these individuals will be crucial to success and making your job easier. Develop a contact sheet with contact information for key personnel. Consider making contact with liaisons in neighboring districts.
5. *Make contact with agencies that serve families, children and youth experiencing homelessness.* Add their information to the contact sheet. This will ease the tasks of identification and making referrals. Learn where to refer students and families for housing, health care), counseling, employment assistance, childcare, food and clothing.
6. *Initial outreach-* Print posters to inform homeless families and youth of their right to attend school and encourage them to contact the school district liaison for enrollment information and other assistance.

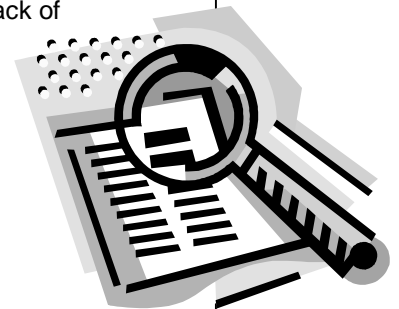
IDENTIFICATION

Definition – Who is Homeless?

The definition of “homeless” under the McKinney Act and the Plan reflects the realities of homelessness in Bismarck and around the country.

Children and youth who “lack a ***fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence***” are considered homeless for educational purposes. This includes those who:

- & are “**doubled up**”- sharing the housing of friends or relatives due to the 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**;
- & are **awaiting foster care** placement;
- & 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;
- & are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- & are **migratory children** who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above;
- & are **unaccompanied youths**- adolescents who are not in the physical custody of their parents



Many families and students who are experiencing homelessness are embarrassed by their situation and will try to hide the truth about their living situation. Students temporarily living with friends or relatives are particularly hard to detect. Schools cannot help these at risk students unless they are identified. Reaching out and finding the homeless students becomes the primary duty for the liaison.

Liaison Responsibilities to Students

Throughout the year the liaison must:

1. Reach out to children and youth in transition; coordinate activities with other entities and agencies to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified by school personnel.
2. Ensure that parents and students get notice and information about their educational rights under McKinney-Vento.
3. Disseminate public notice about the educational rights of homeless students under McKinney-Vento.

Strategies for Outreach

- Provide outreach materials and posters for those areas where there is a frequent influx of low-income families and youth in high-risk situations. Make sure the materials include information on educational rights, who is considered homeless and local telephone numbers to call for assistance.
- Compile addresses of shelters, motels, transitional living programs, and campgrounds and provide these addresses to district registrars and school secretaries. They can use this information to help identify homeless students and discreetly provide expedited enrollment and referrals to services students may need.
- Make contact with community service agencies to work on systems for identifying homeless students and issues surrounding their education. These organizations include:
 - ü shelters
 - ü soup kitchens
 - ü food banks
 - ü transitional living programs
 - ü street outreach teams
 - ü community action/ health agencies
 - ü welfare departments
 - ü faith-based organizations
 - ü local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices
- Contact managers of daily or weekly low-cost motels and campground managers to inform them of school enrollment assistance as well as contact information. Be persistent.
- -Use creative techniques to identify unaccompanied youth and children in homeless situations, such as administering surveys to peers, using enrollment questionnaires, or providing specific outreach to areas where students who are out of school might congregate.
 - Become familiar with and develop contacts in:
 - ü low-income neighborhoods
 - ü areas where young people who are out of school might congregate during the day
 - ü locations of public laundry facilities
 - ü Head Start centers
 - ü migrant housing developments
 - ü public housing complexes

Remember Identifying Homeless Student Can Be Difficult



Children and youth in homeless situations are difficult to identify for many reasons and often go unnoticed by school personnel.

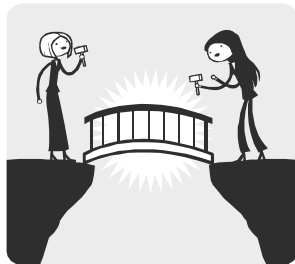
- ∅ Students and parents may try to hide their situation because they are embarrassed by their homelessness.
- ∅ In addition, the fear of having children taken away often prevents families from informing school officials of their living circumstances.
- ∅ Unaccompanied youth may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments.
- ∅ Children and youth who are not enrolled in school and who are not living in shelters are even more invisible to schools and their communities. Yet these students must be identified as homeless if they are to enroll, attend, and succeed in school.

Most Educators Feel A Connection To The Students They Teach.

*They want the best for them. However, few educators have had the experience of being homeless and may not be aware of what it is like to be homeless. They may not know the telltale signs of homelessness. When a **student is identified as homeless**, the teacher should be told privately and confidentially. Sensitivity to homeless issues must be nurtured and concrete strategies to meet the education needs of homeless students should be implemented.*

Building Relationships

School secretaries are also a good source of information to identify students who are doubled-up with another family or who have made numerous school transfers. They should look for repeated addresses among different families



Develop relationships with truancy officers and/or attendance offices so that they may learn how to recognize school absences that may be the result of homelessness. Please help you enforce the fact that the child needs to be in school

Bridge the gap between outside agencies so when you meet a student who is homeless you can provide immediate access to food, shelter, clothing, medical help, etc.



ADMINISTRATORS AND LIAISON'S MUST KNOW & DO!

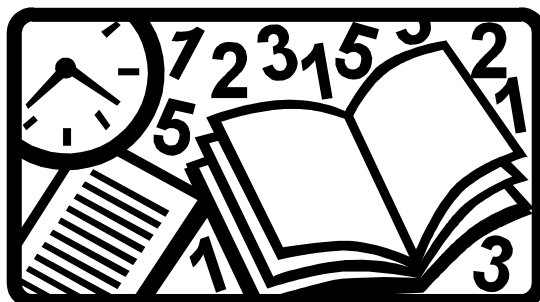
SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

1. A student who becomes homeless has the right to attend
 - a) their **school of origin**- either the school the student was attending prior to the loss of permanent housing or the last school the student attended (both are known as the school of origin).
 - OR –
 - b) their **local school** - any public school that students living in the same attendance area have the right to attend.
 2. To the extent **feasible**, the student should remain at the school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent, guardian or student. Feasibility is a child-centered determination and lack of an element required by law (e.g. transportation) does not mean remaining at the school of origin is not feasible. Further guidance on the definition of “feasible” will issued by the U.S. Department of Education in Fall 2002.
 3. Students are allowed to remain in their school of origin for the **duration of their homelessness** or if they secure permanent housing, the remainder of the school year.
- Q When the liaison becomes aware that a family (or student) has becomes homeless or must move during the school year, the liaison should:
1. Meet with the family/student and to the extent feasible, try to keep the student in their school of origin unless it is against the parent, student or guardian's wishes.
 2. In considering where to enroll the student, the liaison should consider the educational stability of the student, as well as the student and/or families' wishes.
 3. If the school or district makes an enrollment determination that conflicts with the parents (or students') wishes, the liaison must provide the family (or unaccompanied youth) with a written explanation of the decision and let the family know that they have the right to appeal the decision to the Bismarck Public School District or North Dakota Department of Education.
 4. Help gather documentation needed to transfer schools if the student's family or student decides to do so.
- Q Throughout the year, the liaison must:
1. Inform families and students of their right to attend either their school of origin or local school and disseminate public notice of that right.
 2. Ensure that relevant personnel are aware of homeless students' right to attend either school of origin or their local school.

ENROLLMENT

With Enrollment of Students

- R To protect privacy, take the family to a private location for enrollment.
- R Offer help in completing forms. Hesitation may indicate an inability to read.
- R Assure parent(s) their child can enroll even if the family doesn't have a "regular place to live" right now.
- R Enroll the child immediately (without medical records). Ask the name of the last school attended and call for records.
- R If school records are missing, solicit the help of a teacher or counselor in assessing academic status to avoid misplacement.
- R Give the child paper and pencils and other important school supplies.
- R Have a release form ready for Social Services.
- R Arrange for lunch and breakfast. (Use the Lunch Form attached).
 - o A child or family may temporarily reside with another household and still be considered homeless under the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act. In these cases the household size and income of the host family is NOT taken into considering in determining the free meal eligibility for the child(ren) designated as homeless by the local liaison. Additionally, when a host family applies for free and reduced price meals for their own children, the host family may include the homeless family as household members if the host family provides financial support to the homeless family, such as shelter, clothing or food. In such cases, the host family must also include any income received by the homeless family. School officials must determine eligibility for the host family in the traditional manner. Yet, the child or youth in transition can still be based on the documentation provided by the local liaison even when the child is included on the host family's meal application.
- R Be sensitive, patient, calm and reassuring. You can make a difference.



DOCUMENTATION

1. Students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have documents normally required for enrollment. Homeless students may not be kept out of school even if they are missing:
 - P immunization records
 - P proof of residency
 - P proof of guardianship
 - P previous academic records
 - P medical records
 - P social security card

- Q When a homeless student seeking to enroll in a new school is referred to the district liaison, the liaison must:
 1. Help the student to enroll in school immediately, even if he or she does not have the required documents.
 2. If the student is missing immunization records or requires immunizations, the liaison must assist in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records.
 - the student **must** be enrolled while the records and/or immunizations are obtained.

- Q Throughout the year the liaison must:
 1. Inform families and youth of their right to immediate enrollment even when regularly required documentation is missing.
 2. Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, counselors, social workers, and principals on the legal requirements for enrollment.



TRANSPORTATION

Whether students remain at the school of origin or transfer to a new school, they must be able to get to school in order to get an education.

1. Local school districts are responsible for providing transportation to the **school of origin**. If it is feasible for the student to stay in the school of origin and the parent or guardian (or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the liaison) request it, transportation must be provided in the following manner:
 - a) If the student continues to live in the district where the school of origin is located that district must provide or arrange transportation.
 - b) If the student moves outside of the district but wishes to continue attending the school of origin, the district of origin and the district where the student resides must work out a means of apportioning cost and responsibility for transportation.
 - c) If the districts cannot agree, the costs and responsibility must be shared equally.
2. Students who transfer to a school located in the attendance area of their temporary residence must receive comparable transportation services to any other student residing in the district.
3. If there is a dispute about school placement, students are entitled to transportation to the school requested pending the resolution of that dispute.



- Q When a liaison learns of family or student experiencing homelessness in the school district the liaison must:
 1. Inform parents and unaccompanied youth, in the language of the home, of their right to transportation and of the local transportation services available to them. This includes transportation back to the school of origin.
 2. Assist in arranging transportation to the school of origin if it is requested.
 3. Arrange transportation back to the requested school pending the resolution of a dispute.
 4. Assist in arranging transportation between the student's temporary residence and the new school if the student is in the process of enrolling.



- Q Throughout the school year the liaison must:
 1. Train school officials about their responsibilities concerning transportation.
 2. Try to make sure you know when a student is or isn't in school if you are paying for transportation both ways.

Checklist for Student Needs

Service	Needed	Date To Start	Person To Contact	Done
Tutoring	Yes No			
Special Education	Yes No			
Counseling	Yes No			
Transportation	Yes No			
Free Meals	Yes No			
School Supplies	Yes No			
Activity Fees	Yes No			
Medical Services	Yes No			
Clothing	Yes No			
Emergency Shelter	Yes No			
Abuse Intervention	Yes No			
Other	Yes No			

Parents Information

Questions Parents May Ask

- § If we have to change schools can someone help us transfer records quickly?
- § Is transportation available for my child?
- § Can my child stay in this school if we move within the district?
- § Can my child receive free meals at school?
- § What school supplies does my child need, can you provide them?
- § Is there a preschool program?
- § Is there a summer school program?
- § What fees do parents need to pay? Is help available to pay fees?
- § Can we use the school for an after school study place?
- § Who can I contact at school for help? (Person and Phone Number)
- § Can my child get help with schoolwork, e.g. tutoring, and other support?
- § Should my child be tested for special education services?
- § Are there special classes to benefit a talent my child has?
- § Are there sports, music, or other activities my child can be a part of?
- § Does the school provide needed equipment?
- § Will my child be able to go on field trips if we are unable to pay?



Important Records For Parents in Homeless Situations to Keep

- § Your child's school records (IEP, teachers names, schools attended)
- § Your child's grades and report cards
- § Your child's standardized test results
- § Samples of your child's school work
- § Your child's birth certificate
- § Health records regarding your child
- § Social Security Number

What Peers and Their Families Can Do

- § Arrange for presentations regarding homelessness at parent-teacher meetings.
- § Identify and implement supportive actions, e.g. supply closet, volunteer tutoring, programs like "breakfast and book buddies."
- § Befriend a homeless student through inclusion in after school activities.
- § Link corporate sponsors to school-based support programs, e.g. enrichment, mentoring, supplies.
- § Serve as peer mentors by modeling competent, supportive, and cooperative behaviors.
- § Serve as "peer buddies."



Resources

Though the type and number of tasks assigned to the liaison can feel overwhelming, you do not have to accomplish each and every one alone. There are many people and organizations around the state and country committed to addressing the educational barriers facing children or youth in transition and youth who can provide assistance.

Office of the State Coordinator 701-328-4646

State Department of Public Instruction, is charged with the task of statewide implementation and enforcement of the McKinney-Vento Act. The law requires that they provide technical assistance to every school district and can be contacted for clarification on the requirements of the law as well as direct intervention.

Job Service of North Dakota Share Network

<http://www.sharenetworknd.org/>

SHARE Network is a unique resource to help customers become self-sufficient. It is a network like no other. It brings together... Workforce development partners , Faith-based organizations , Community organizations Businesses, Government agencies Use **SHARE Network** to: Access North Dakota's jobsnd.com; Link to service provider information including address, hours of operation, a list of services they offer as well as a point of contact; Search statewide, county, or by service provider; Create an online referral; and/or Print a map to the service provider.

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

<http://www.serve.org/nche/>

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Homeless Education is a national resource center of research and information enabling communities to successfully address the needs of homeless children and youth and their families. NCHE products include educational rights posters, parent brochures, the LEA Homeless Education Liaison Handbook, the State Coordinators' Handbook, and the NAEHCY listserv.

National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/>

NCFH is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to developing long-term solutions to family homelessness. The Center is committed to: (1) building a rigorous knowledge base in the areas of family homelessness and poverty; (2) creating model programs, service demonstrations and technical assistance products; and (3) disseminating information to increase public awareness and improve national, state, and local policies and programs.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP)

<http://www.nlchp.org/>

NLCHP monitors and enforces compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, providing technical assistance to attorneys, service providers, parents and educators across the country to ensure that homeless children gain access to public school. The NLCHP web site includes a self-advocacy kit, a flowchart for determining homelessness, reproducible Q&A booklets, and many other materials.

National Network for Youth (NN4Y)

<http://www.nn4youth.org/>

The National Network for Youth is dedicated to ensuring that young people can be safe and lead healthy and productive lives. In doing so, young people are championed, especially those who because of life circumstance, disadvantage, past abuse or community prejudice have less opportunity to become contributing members of their communities.

National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness (NPACH)

<http://www.homelessnesscouncil.org/>

NPACH works to accomplish its mission by educating the public and policymakers on the causes and consequences of homelessness, creating and advocating for appropriate federal policies in collaboration with local communities, connecting community-based organizations, schools, and work places to national anti-homelessness policy through advocacy and public education initiatives.

U.S. Department of Education: Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Program

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>

The U.S. Department of Education is the federal agency charged with the administration and oversight of the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youths program.

Youth Network

<http://www.youthnetwork.org/>

Youth Network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people find youth programs and services in their communities. Their goal is to provide information about every community resource for youth in the country.

School: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

McKinney-Vento – Homeless Education Assistance Act

The Rights must be posted in all schools and in the community.

Requirements

- School of Origin
- Definition of Students In Transition
- Transportation
- Free and Reduced Meals
- Enroll Students Immediately (Same Day Elementary Two Days for Secondary)

What We Want To Enforce

- Attendance – Absent and Tardy
- Academics and State Tests
- Tutoring/Peer Mentoring
- Lunch Form
- School Supplies
- Extra Curric Activities
- Parent Involvement
- Outside Agency Referrals for Clothing, Food, Shelter, Mental Health, Physical Health, etc.

Typical Stressful Experiences of Children in Homeless Situations

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse• Health problems• Low self-esteem• Malnutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleeping problems• Lags in language skills• Learning disabilities• Developmental delays |
|---|--|
-

The law, therefore, requires all schools, ensured by the Local Liaison and in coordination with school personnel and other agencies, to identify students in transition. Identifying students in transition is also an important way to create greater awareness of homelessness in the school district and community.

Dispute Resolution Process

Federal regulations require that Bismarck Public School adopt procedures for receiving and resolving disputes pertaining to transition of children and youth experiencing homelessness as identified under the McKinney-Vento Act. If the 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 [(PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)(iv)].

Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” The school must refer the student and parent or guardian to the Students In Transition Liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also applicable to unaccompanied youth.

Any individual who believes that Bismarck Public School has violated the regulations or law governing the McKinney-Vento Act should submit a detailed statement of facts supporting the allegation to the Bismarck Public School District’s Assistant Superintendent that is appropriate for the grade level. The Assistant Superintendent shall investigate the complaint and provide the individual with the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment within thirty (30) days. This response must include information on their right to appeal the school’s decision [PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

If the dispute remains unresolved the individual can file a complaint with the Bismarck Public School District’s Superintendent. The Superintendent shall investigate the complaint and provide the individual with the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment within 5 (5) days. This response must include information on their right to appeal the school’s decision [PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district’s homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to Department of Public Instruction: at the state level via mail or email to:

**Department of Public Instruction
600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440**

Any complaint must include the following:

- ž The date;
- ž The name of the school district, unit, or individual the complaint is against;
- ž The name, address, and telephone number of the individual filing the complaint;
- ž A detailed description of the complaint, including specific facts; and
- ž The signature of the person making the complaint.

When a written complaint is filed, the Department of Public Instruction will investigate and issue a written response within sixty (60) calendar days from the date the complaint is received. The Department of Public Instruction will notify the Bismarck Public School District, and Individual of the final school selection or enrollment decision.

Reconsideration: If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the individual, the individual may forward a complaint to:

**The Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208**

10 Top Ways to Avoid a McKinney-Vento Lawsuit

1. Provide strong district wide leadership for compliance. Ensure that homeless students and youth district wide have equal access to all programs and services available to students in the district. Do not segregate or isolate homeless students.
2. Provide a Homeless Liaison to work with homeless students and youth. Provide training and support for the liaison to work with the students and parents.
3. Enroll homeless students and allow students who become homeless to remain at their school of origin. Operate with the understanding that the usual rules **DO NOT** apply. Do not send homeless students home due to a lack of paperwork, enroll them today!
4. Develop the appropriate Policies and Procedures to enroll and service homeless students in your school district. Have policies and procedures in place that provide for enrollment, transportation and all educational rights of homeless students.
5. Have in place a dispute resolution process for homeless students. Be sure that parents are aware of the process and how to use it for any disputes over enrollment, transportation and other services.
6. Provide training for school personnel regarding McKinney Vento. Be certain that district staff understand the definition of "Homeless" under McKinney Vento. Train staff on your districts policies and procedures for implementation of McKinney Vento.
7. .Make certain that your school district has a viable plan in place for the transportation of homeless students.
8. Develop a viable system of outreach. Develop and distribute materials to inform homeless students and their parents of their rights under McKinney Vento. Distribute materials to areas in your district where homeless students and their families are likely to be found. Make every effort to locate and enroll students who are not attending school.
9. Be collaborative with surrounding school districts in order to obtain and share enrollment information. Cooperate with service providers, agencies and shelters and other organizations that serve homeless families.
10. If you are challenged on your implementation of McKinney-Vento, be willing to listen and to make any changes needed to comply with the law.



Bismarck Public Schools

Students In Transition

806 North Washington Street
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501
(701) 323-4051
Fax: (701) 323-4001

Wilda Lu Nelson
District Homeless Coordinator
Principal Riverside Elementary
701.323.4230

Carrie Grosz
Local Liaison
701.527.4927

August 2008

RE: Students In Transition

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached to this letter is a poster for Students In Transition with Bismarck Public Schools.

Students in Transition is a program that works to identify and locate children and youth who are experiencing homelessness and overcome their barriers to education. The **Students in Transition** offers children and youth immediate enrollment in school, free meals at school, connection with services to help reach stability, transportation to and from school and so much more.

With your help we can reach many more children and youth. Please consider hanging this poster in your building and handing out the attached brochures. I would also respectfully request that the poster stay hanging for the school year. If the poster begins to look tattered and torn, please notify me and I will be happy to send a new one or come and hang it myself. If for some reason company policy only allows items to be hung up for a period of time, please let me know the time frame and when it would be appropriate for me to hang another poster.

The **Students in Transition** is excited about extending this chance to children and youth so they can obtain an education.

If you or anyone would wish to discuss this, please feel free to call me, Carrie Grosz, at 527-4927. Thank you for your willingness to make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

Carrie Grosz

Information for Parents

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, your preschool-aged and school-aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended, if you or a guardian request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrolling your children.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling your child in a new school or arranging for your child to continue in his or her former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Contact the school and provide any information you think will assist the teachers in helping your child adjust to new circumstances.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

Carrie Grosz
701-527-4927

State Coordinator:

ND Dept of Public Instruction
701-328-4646

If you need further assistance, call the
National Center for Homeless Education
at the toll-free HelpLine number:

1-800-308-2145

