



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 18, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Principals, School Nurses and All District Staff with Enrollment Responsibilities
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

Reminder: Enrollment of Children and Youths Experiencing Homelessness

Annually, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) provides guidance to assist school districts with fulfilling federal and state requirements regarding the enrollment of students who are experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) requires state and local educational agencies (LEAs) to remove barriers to school enrollment for homeless children and youth ([42 U.S.C. §11432\(g\)\(1\)\(I\)](#)). New Jersey school districts must review this memo and undertake steps to revise practices and/or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youths in school.

Children and youths experiencing homelessness often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment (i.e., proof of residency, school/immunization records, and/or birth certificates). Many students, especially those living in “doubled-up” situations (i.e., shared living arrangements, some of which may be considered homeless), may not be able to provide proof of residency. Though proof of residency affidavits may be intended to ensure that only eligible students are able to enroll in a district school, the use of such forms as a requirement for enrollment, or continued enrollment, constitutes an educational barrier for students who do not reside in permanent living situations. The right to enroll immediately in school, even without documents normally required for enrollment, is one of the core protections of McKinney-Vento. ([42 U.S.C. §11432\(g\)\(3\)\(C\)](#))

School districts must immediately enroll or continue to enroll students while the district reviews the parent’s and/or student’s residency claims. If the district disputes a claim of homelessness, it must continue the student’s enrollment for the duration of the dispute resolution process, as described at [N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.7](#). The requirement for immediate enrollment also applies to unaccompanied homeless youth who lack proof of guardianship.

If you have questions or need clarification, please visit the NJDOE’s McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth [webpage](#) or email McKinney.Vento@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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NJDOE Staff
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