

2018

# Greenwood Public School District Homeless Plan 2018-19



*Nothing Less Than Success*

# GREENWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HOMELESS EDUCATION PLAN

Title IA (Section 111(a)(1)) requires that a district (including independent charter schools) receiving Title IA funds include in its district plan a plan to provide services to homeless students to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in December 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

### DEFINITIONS

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

- Living in 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, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings or substandard housing (*for example, condemned buildings or garages*), bus or train stations, or other similar settings
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (*does **not include** trailers or mobile homes in a mobile home park*) or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above

Unaccompanied youth includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

A child or unaccompanied youth shall be considered homeless for if he/she is in a living situation described above.

### HOMELESS LIAISON

The Greenwood Public Schools (GPSD) Homeless Liaison serves students at the district level. School designated liaisons at Bankston Elementary, Davis Elementary, Threadgill Elementary, Greenwood Middle, and Greenwood High Schools serve as the Homeless Liaisons for the respective school.

Current Liaison:

Mr. Charles Johnson  
Director of Federal Programs,  
Technology, and Accountability  
(66) 455-7064  
charlesjohnson@greenwood.k12.ms.us  
401 Howard Street, Greenwood, MS  
38930

**The Homeless Liaison is required to:**

- Ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the Local Education Agency (LEA).
- Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and pre-school programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.
- Ensure that parents and guardians 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.
- Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the Act (such as school, family shelters, and soup kitchens).
- Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, or any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing transportation services, if available and feasible.
- Assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

**GENERAL ASSURANCES**

Greenwood Public Schools provides the following general assurances:

- Homeless children and youth shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way.
- Homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to those received by other students in the school, including transportation services, and education programs for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title 1 or similar state and local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs.
- Homeless children and youth will have access to district administrative level reservation of funds (set-asides) for serving homeless students.
- GPSD shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.
- GPSD shall provide and post notices of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

**IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING**

Homeless children and youth will be identified through:

1. The application process for enrollment (self-identification)
2. School personnel recommendations
3. Coordinated activities with other entities and agencies

GPSD will comply with all federal, state, county (Leflore County), and other data collections and reporting requirements regarding homeless children and youth.

## **SCHOOL SELECTION**

Homeless students have a right to select from the following schools:

- The school he/she attended when permanently housed (School of Origin)
- The school in which he/she was last enrolled (School of Origin)
- The school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides (School of Residency)

A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

## **ENROLLMENT AND RECORDS**

Homeless students may be identified at the time of enrollment (through self-reports). Homeless youth will not be discriminated against in the registration process. Homeless children and youth will be allowed to apply for enrollment in accordance with current GPSD enrollment policies even if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, birth certificate, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The GPSD designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the homeless liaison. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student.

In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall assist in the enrollment process. Unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled despite lack of parent or legal guardian's supervision or permissions, or "power of attorney" by supervising adult.

Any confidential record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of each homeless child or youth will be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district.

## **NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

Homeless students automatically qualify for free breakfast and lunch at GPSD schools. Families do not have to fill out an application or provide proof of income. Homeless students will be added to the free meals program as soon as they have been identified.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, LEAs must provide services to homeless children/youth that are comparable to those received by other students in the school selected, including transportation. In addition, schools must provide transportation for homeless students to and from their school of origin, if feasible.

GPSD, where feasible, applicable, at the request of the parent/guardian and/or in the best interest of the homeless children and youth, shall provide transportation to students experiencing homelessness to ensure the students can stay at the GPSD School of their choice for the duration of their homelessness. GPSD may

work with the youth's district of residence or other agencies to provide transportation services.

#### **ENROLLMENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

If a disagreement arises over school selection or enrollment, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is requesting enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute. Enrollment is defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities."

The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the LEA's homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.

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 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 homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). The MDE's homeless liaison will review these materials and determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials. The MDE homeless liaison will notify the LEA and parent of the decision.

If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, the MDE homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the State Homeless Coordinator. Upon the review of the LEA, MDE, and parent information, the MDE will notify the parent of the final school selection or enrollment decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of materials.