

PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Board of Education recognizes and values parents and families as children's first teachers and decision-makers in education. The Board believes that student learning is more likely to occur when there is an effective partnership between the school and the student's parents and family. Such a partnership between the home and school and greater involvement of parents in the education of their children generally result in higher academic achievement, improved student behavior, and reduced absenteeism.

In accordance with statute and the State Board of Education Parent and Family Involvement Policy, use of the term "families" is used in order to include children's primary caregivers, who are not their biological parents, such as foster caregivers, grandparents, and other family members.

In cultivating partnerships with families and communities, the Board is committed to the following:

A. Relationships with Families

- ✓ cultivating school environments that are welcoming, supportive, and student-centered; <sup>4</sup>
- ✓ providing professional development for school staff that helps build partnerships between families and schools; <sup>2,3, 4</sup>
- ✓ providing family activities that relate to various cultures, languages, practices, and customs, and bridge economic and cultural barriers; <sup>2,3</sup>
- ✓ providing coordination, technical support and other support to assist schools in planning and implementing family involvement activities. <sup>3</sup>

B. **Effective Communication**

- ✓ providing information to families to support the proper health, safety, and well-being of their children;
- ✓ providing information to families about school policies, procedures, programs, and activities; <sup>2,3,4</sup>
- ✓ promoting regular and open communication between school personnel and students' family members; <sup>1,4</sup>
- ✓ communicating with families in a format and language that is understandable, to the extent practicable; <sup>2,3</sup>
- ✓ providing information and involving families in monitoring student progress; <sup>3</sup>
- ✓ providing families with timely and meaningful information regarding Ohio's academic standards, State and local assessments, and pertinent legal provisions; <sup>2,3,4</sup>
- ✓ preparing families to be involved in meaningful discussions and meetings with school staff. <sup>2,3,4</sup>

C. **Volunteer Opportunities**

- ✓ providing volunteer opportunities for families to support their children's school activities; <sup>1,3</sup>
- ✓ supporting other needs, such as transportation and child care, to enable families to participate in school-sponsored family involvement events. <sup>3,4</sup>

D. **Learning at Home**

- ✓ offering training and resources to help families learn strategies and skills to support at-home learning and success in school; <sup>1,2,3,4</sup>
- ✓ working with families to establish learning goals and help their children accomplish these goals; <sup>1</sup>
- ✓ helping families to provide a school and home environment that encourages learning and extends learning at home. <sup>1,2,4</sup>

E. **Involving Families in Decision Making and Advocacy**

- ✓ involving families as partners in the process of school review and continuous improvement planning; <sup>3,4</sup>
- ✓ involving families in the development of its District-wide parent involvement policy and plan, and distributing the policy and plan to families. <sup>2,3,4</sup>

F. **Collaborating with the Community**

- ✓ building constructive partnerships and connecting families with community-based programs and other community resources; <sup>2,3,4</sup>
- ✓ coordinating and integrating family involvement programs and activities with District initiatives and community-based programs that encourage and support families' participation in their children's education, growth, and development. <sup>2,3,4</sup>

**Implementation**

The Superintendent will provide for a comprehensive plan to engage parents, families, and community members in a partnership in support of each student's academic achievement, the District's continuous improvement, and individual school improvement plans. The plan will provide for annual evaluation, with the involvement of parents and families, of the plan's effectiveness and identification of barriers to participation by parents and families. Evaluation findings will be used in the annual review of the Parent and Family Involvement policy and to improve the effectiveness of the District plan.

<sup>1</sup>Indicates R.C. 3312.472 State Requirements

<sup>2</sup>Indicates IDEA 2004 Section 650 & 644 parent involvement requirements

<sup>3</sup>Indicates Title I Section 1118 parent involvement requirements

<sup>4</sup>Indicates State Board Parent and Family Involvement Policy recommendations

**[NOTE: Districts should select all ( ) options included in this template in order to have a policy that meets the requirements of State and Federal law and program requirements of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Title I.]**

R.C. 3313.472

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# policy

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## HOMELESS STUDENTS

### Definitions

Children who are identified as meeting the Federal definition of "homeless" will be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the same manner as all other students of the District. To that end, homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. The District shall establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness. The District shall regularly review and revise its policies, including school discipline policies that impact homeless students or those who may be a member of any of the Protected Classes (Policy 2260).

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include children and youth who meet any of the following criteria:

- A. share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- B. live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- C. live in emergency or transitional shelters
- D. are abandoned in hospitals
- E. have a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, or
- F. live in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing<sup>1</sup>, bus or train station, or similar setting

<sup>1</sup> According to nonregulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), standards for adequate housing may vary by locality. Please see ED guidance for factors to consider when determining whether a child or youth is living in "substandard housing."

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Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, an unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Additionally, pursuant to Federal and State law, migratory children who are living in circumstances described in A-F above are also considered homeless.

## Services to Homeless Children and Youth

The District will provide services to homeless students that are comparable to other students in the District, including:

- A. transportation services;
- B. public preschool programs and other educational programs and services for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria including:
  - 1. programs for children with disabilities;
  - 2. programs for English Learners (ELs) (i.e., students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP));
  - 3. programs in career and technical education;
  - 4. programs for gifted and talented students;
  - 5. school nutrition programs; and
  - 6. before - and after-school programs.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths. For more information on the role of the Liaison, refer to AG 5111.01.

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## School Stability

Maintaining a stable school environment is crucial to a homeless student's success in school. To ensure stability, the District must make school placement determinations based on the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth based on student-centered factors. The District must:

- A. continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- B. enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

When determining a child or youth's best interest, the District must assume that keeping the homeless student in the school of origin is in that student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is an unaccompanied youth. The school of origin is the school the student attended or enrolled in when permanently housed, including a public preschool. The school of origin also includes the designated receiving school at the next level for feeder school patterns, when the student completes the final grade level at the school of origin.

When determining the student's best interest, the District must also consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students and give priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or youth (if an unaccompanied youth). The District also considers the school placement of siblings when making this determination.

If the District finds that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the District must provide the individual with a written explanation and reason for the determination in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. This written explanation will include appeal rights and be provided in a timely manner.

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## Immediate Enrollment

The District has an obligation to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students. A school chosen on the basis of a best interest determination must immediately enroll the homeless student, even if the student does not have the documentation typically necessary for enrollment, such as immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificate or previous academic records. The homeless student must also be enrolled immediately regardless of whether the student missed application or enrollment deadlines during the period of homelessness or has outstanding fines or fees.

The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless student to obtain relevant academic or other records. If the student needs immunization or other health records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to the local liaison, who will help obtain the immunizations, screenings or other required health records. Records usually maintained by the school must be kept so that they are available in a timely fashion if the child enters a new school or district. These records include immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs. Procedures for inter-State records transfer between schools should be taken into account in order to facilitate immediate enrollment.

In addition, the District will also make sure that, once identified for services, the homeless student is attending classes and not facing barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs (if available).



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## Transportation

The District provides homeless students with transportation services that are comparable to those available to non-homeless students. The District also provides or arranges for transportation to and from the school of origin at the parent or guardian's request, or the liaison's request in the case of an unaccompanied youth. Transportation is arranged promptly to allow for immediate enrollment and will not create barriers to a homeless student's attendance, retention, and success.

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the District, where the school of origin is located, transportation will be provided or arranged for the student's transportation to or from the school of origin.
- B. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his/her education at the school of origin (which is in the District), the District and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the districts cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs will be shared equally.
- C. When the student obtains permanent housing, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year.

The District determines the mode of transportation in consultation with the parent or guardian and based on the best interest of the student.

In accordance with Federal law, the above transportation requirements still apply during the resolution of any dispute. The District will work with the State to resolve transportation disputes with other districts. If the disputing district is in another State, the District will turn to the State for assistance as Federal guidance says that both States should try to arrange an agreement for the districts.

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## Dispute Resolution

Homeless families and youths have the right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. If a dispute arises between a school and a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment of a homeless student, the District must follow its dispute resolution procedures, consistent with the State's procedures. If such a dispute occurs, the District will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. The student will receive all services for which they are eligible until all disputes and appeals are resolved.

Pursuant to State, District and Board of Education policies, the District will provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of all decisions regarding school selection and enrollment made by the school, District, or State, along with a written explanation of appeal rights.

The District's notice and written explanation about the reason for its decision will include, at a minimum, an explanation of how the school reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, including 1) a description of the proposed or refused action by the school, 2) an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused, 3) a description of other options the school considered and why those options were rejected, 4) a description of any other relevant factors to the school's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination such as the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources, and 5) an appropriate timeline to ensure deadlines are not missed. The District must also include contact information for the Liaison and the State Coordinator, and a brief description of their roles. The District will also refer the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to the Liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process.

The District ensures that all decisions and notices are drafted in a language and format appropriate for low-literacy, limited vision readers, and individuals with disabilities. For children and youth and/or parents or guardians who are English learners or whose dominant language is not English, the District will provide translation and interpretation services in connection with all phases of the dispute resolution process pursuant to Federal laws. The District will also provide electronic notices via email if the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth has access to email followed by a written notice provided in person or sent by mail.

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## Homeless Children in Preschool

Homeless preschool-aged children and their families shall be provided equal access to the educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs, including Head Start programs, administered by the District. Additionally, the homeless child must remain in the public preschool of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. When making such a decision on the student's best interest, the District takes into account the same factors as it does for any student, regardless of age. It also considers pre-school age specific factors, such as 1) the child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff; 2) the impact of school climate on the child, including school safety; the quality and availability of services to meet the child's needs, including health, developmental, and social-emotional needs; and 3) travel time to and from school.

The District must also provide transportation services to the school of origin for a homeless child attending preschool. It is the District's responsibility to provide the child with transportation to the school of origin even if the homeless preschooler who is enrolled in a public preschool in the District moves to another district that does not provide widely available or universal preschool.

## Public Notice

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth of the applicable rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school. In addition, the District shall post public notice of the McKinney-Vento rights in places that homeless populations frequent, such as shelters, soup kitchens, and libraries in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths.

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## Records

The local liaison will assist the homeless students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) or unaccompanied homeless students in their efforts to provide documentation to meet State and local requirements for entry into school.

All records for homeless students shall be maintained, subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Policy 8330, and in such a manner so that they are available in a timely fashion and can be transferred promptly to the appropriate parties, as required. Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, information regarding a homeless student's living situation is not considered directory information and must be provided the same protections as other non-directory personally identifiable information (PII) contained in student education records under FERPA. The District shall incorporate practices to protect student privacy as described in AG 5111.01, AG 8330, and in accordance with the provisions of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA).

No Board policy, administrative procedure, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of homeless children.

Note:

*Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs, Non-Regulatory Guidance, U.S. Department of Education (ED), Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, at A-3 (July 27, 2016).*

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. (McKinney - Vento Homeless Act)

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## ATTENDANCE

The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session.

or during the attendance sessions to which s/he has been assigned.

A student in grades 9 through 12 may be considered a full-time equivalent student provided the student is enrolled in at least five (5) units of instruction, as defined by State law, per school year.

In accordance with statute, the Superintendent shall require, from the parent of each student of compulsory school age or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a  **written** statement of the cause for such absence. The Board of Education reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence or prolonged absence.

Repeated infractions of Board policy on attendance may result in suspension or expulsion.

The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

- A. personal illness (a written physician's statement verifying the illness may be required)
- B. illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child
- C. quarantine of the home
- D. death in the family
- E. necessary work at home due to absence or incapacity of parent(s)/guardian(s)

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- F. observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- G. out-of-state travel (up to a maximum twenty-four (24) hours per school year that the student's school is open for instruction) to participate in a District-approved enrichment or extracurricular activity

Any classroom assignment missed due to the absence shall be completed by the student.

If the student will be absent for twenty-four (24) or more consecutive hours that the student's school is open for instruction, a classroom teacher shall accompany the student during the travel period to provide the student with instructional assistance.

- H. such good cause as may be acceptable to the Superintendent
- I. medically necessary leave for a pregnant student in accordance with Policy 5751

✓ service as a precinct officer at a primary, special or general election in accordance with the program set forth in Policy 5725

✓ Attendance need not always be within the school facilities, but a student will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board.

✓ The Board shall consider each student assigned to a program of other guided learning experiences to be in regular attendance for the program provided that s/he reports to such staff member s/he is assigned for guidance at the place in which s/he is conducting study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of the course of study.

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The Superintendent may excuse a student over fourteen (14) years of age from attendance at school for a future limited period for the purpose of performing essential work directly or exclusively for his/her parents or guardians. Such excuse should not exceed five (5) days and may at the discretion of the Superintendent be renewed for five (5) additional days. At no time, however, shall such excuse cause a student to be absent from school for a period of more than ten (10) consecutive days.

At the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee, a student may be excused for a longer period of time than ten (10) days if a child's parent or guardian has recently died or become totally or partially incapacitated and there is no older brother or sister living in the home who is out of school. (The Superintendent may request a certificate of a physician attesting to the physical condition of the parent or guardian.)

A student will be considered habitually truant if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for thirty (30) or more consecutive hours, for forty-two (42) or more hours in one (1) school month, or for seventy-two (72) or more hours in one (1) school year.

Legitimate excuses for the absence of a student who is otherwise habitually truant include but are not limited to:

- A. the student was enrolled in another school district;
- B. the student was excused from attendance in accordance with R.C. 3321.04; or
- C. the student has received an age and schooling certificate.

If a student is habitually truant and the student's parent has failed to cause the student's attendance, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to file a complaint with the Judge of the Juvenile Court and/or to take any other appropriate intervention actions as set forth in this Board's policy.

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If a student who is habitually truant violates the order of a Juvenile Court regarding the student's prior adjudication as an unruly child for being a habitual truant, s/he may further be adjudicated as a delinquent child.

In order to address the attendance practices of a student who is habitually truant, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to take any of the following intervention actions:

- assign the student to a truancy intervention program
- provide counseling to the student
- request or require the student's parent to attend a parental involvement program
- request or require a parent to attend a truancy prevention mediation program
- notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles of the student's absences
- take appropriate legal action
- assignment to an alternative school (Note: If the District has established an alternative school, it must appear as an alternative intervention strategy.)

The Superintendent is authorized to establish an educational program for parents of truant students which is designed to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Any parent who does not complete the program is to be reported to law enforcement authorities for parental education neglect, a fourth class misdemeanor if found guilty.



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The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines that:

- (v) establish proper procedures so the student and his/her parents are provided the opportunity to challenge the attendance record prior to notification and that such notification complies with R.C. 3321.13 (B)(2);
- (v) establish a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the rules of the State Board;
- (v) govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with the rules of the State Board;
- (v) identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs and interests;
- (v) provide students whose absence has been excused an opportunity to make up work they missed and receive credit for the work, if completed;
- (v) refer for evaluation any student who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed the District's limit on excused absence to determine eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or other appropriate accommodation.

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Whenever any student of compulsory school age has sixty (60) consecutive hours in a single month or a total of ninety (90) hours of unexcused absence from school during the school year, s/he will be considered habitually absent. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to inform the student and his/her parents, guardian, or custodian of the record of excessive absence as well as the District's intent to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, if appropriate, and the Judge of the Juvenile Court of the student's excessive absence.

R.C. 3313.664, 3317.034, 3321.01 et seq., 3321.13(B)(2), 3321.19, 3321.191  
R.C. 3321.22, 3321.38, 3323.041, 3331.05  
A.C. 3301-35-03(G), 3301-47-01, 3301-69-02

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