

ALTON C.U.S.D. #11



**DISTRICT HOMELESS PLAN
2020-2021**

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW/GENERAL INFORMATION:

Background on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 10th, 2016 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youths have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, State educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youths. Homeless children and youths must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. SEAs and local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths.

Definition of Homeless (McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C 11435(2)):

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence:

- * "Double up" - Sharing the housing of others due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.
- * Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
- * Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- * Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.
- * Migratory children living in above circumstances
- * Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- * Unaccompanied Youth - Children or youth who meets the definition of homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Residency and Educational Rights:

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and homeless living situations have the following rights in Alton CUSD #11:

- * Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment;
- * Access to free meals and textbooks, Title I and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation;
- * Attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations.

Procedures for the Dissemination of Educational Rights

All schools within Alton CUSD #11 shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students and families in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Posters will be posted in all school buildings, local shelters, local hotels, local library, and local food banks.

SECTION 2: IDENTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Title 1 Services and Funding:

Alton CUSD #11, all children and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento services are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, whether or not they attend a Title I, Part A school or meet the academic standards required of other students for eligibility (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(E); 20 U.S.C. 6315(b)(2)(E)). This automatic eligibility acknowledges that the experience of homelessness puts children and youth at significant risk of academic failure, regardless of their previous academic standing. Additionally, all Alton CUSD #11 children and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento services who are doing well academically are entitled to receive additional non-instructional education related support services needed to succeed in school.

School Selection:

Alton CUSD #11 will keep students in homeless situations in their school of origin defined as the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled, unless it is against the parent or guardian's wishes or unless it is determined to be in the student's best educational interest. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to remain in their school of origin for the entire duration in which they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services may also choose to enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.

Procedures to Identify and Verify Eligibility of McKinney-Vento Students:

Every current, returning, and new student in the district must complete online enrollment via the district's School Management System known as Skyward. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing Skyward, do not have the proofs of residency required and/or are experiencing an unstable housing/shelter situation, please call (618) 474-2600 for immediate assistance with enrollment.

SECTION 3: SERVICES AND STANDARDS

Transportation:

Each Alton CUSD #11 child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including transportation services. Alton CUSD #11 will provide students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian's request. For unaccompanied youth, Alton CUSD #11 will provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the District McKinney-Vento Liaison. If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same district, Alton will provide and/or arrange transportation to and from school. If the student is living outside of Alton CUSD #11 will assume the responsibility and cost of providing transportation to and from school. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive these transportation services for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

"School of Origin" is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Food Services:

Alton CUSD #11 schools child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including school nutrition programs. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services

are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch as offered by each school for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

Textbooks and Technology:

Each Alton CUSD #11 child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including access to instructional materials, assessments, and technology. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive free textbooks and technology fees as offered by each school for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

Academic Services & Standards:

Each Alton CUSD #11 child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including educational services for which the child or youth meet the eligibility criteria (Title I services, preschool, educational programs for children with disabilities or for students with limited English proficiency), programs in vocational and technical education, and programs for gifted and talented students as available.

SECTION 4: ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Procedures:

Any child or youth who claims to be homeless will be immediately enrolled in Alton CUSD #11 even if they do not have required documents such as:

- school records
- medical records
- proof of residency
- guardianship papers or other documents.

Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained. The McKinney-Vento District Liaison will assist unaccompanied youth in choosing and enrolling in a school after considering the youth’s wishes, informing the youth of their rights to transportation and assisting the youth in accessing transportation, and informing the youth of their right to appeal school or school district decisions. The McKinney-Vento District Liaison must ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that may arise over school enrollment or placement. Unaccompanied youth have the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin
- Transportation to and from the school of origin
- Immediately enroll in a new school serving the area in which they are currently living even if they don’t have typically required documents (e.g. proof of guardianship)
- Equal access to programs and services such as gifted and talented education, special education, vocational education, and English Language Learner services.

Alton CUSD #11 shall remove any /all barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations. Students in homeless situations shall be free from segregation, isolation, and stigmatization.

****The term “enroll” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.****

****“School of Origin” is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.****

Appeal and Dispute Processes:

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child or youth shall be

immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The child, youth parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District and Building Level Liaisons to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows:

I. the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;

II. the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal

III. the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the Dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and

IV. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

***The McKinney-Vento District Level Team consists of McKinney-Vento District Liaison, Building Level Liaisons/Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Transportation and the Title I Secretary.*

If a dispute arises over qualification for McKinney-Vento services, the child or youth shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services provided by Alton CUSD #11, pending resolution of the dispute. The child, youth parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act as follows.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District and Building Level Liaisons to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows:

V. the child or youth shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services, pending resolution of the dispute;

VI. the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal (Appendix A)

VII. the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the Dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and

VIII. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth receives all McKinney-Vento rights and services pending resolution of the dispute.

SECTION 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

McKinney-Vento Professional Development Opportunities:

Professional development for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will be provided to all staff members of Alton CUSD #11 via the following ways:

- Handbook
- Beginning of the Year Principal Meeting -McKinney-Vento Agenda Item
- 1 Professional Development Meeting per semester at each school building

District Website:

The Alton CUSD #11 website will include a page that will be used to communicate

McKinney-Vento information with students, parents, staff, and community members under the parent link and including this handbook.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DIRECT SUPPORT:

Pamela Kennedy or Elaine Kane
Alton CUSD #11
550 Landmarks Blvd – Ste. A
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 474-2600

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL
APPENDIX A

Dear Parent:

Be advised that you have the right to appeal the decisions made by Alton ACUSD #11 regarding your student's eligibility and enrollment under Title X, Part C of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Students involved in a McKinney-Vento dispute process have the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute. Immediate enrollment includes full participation in all school activities. As the district's McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison designee, notification should be made to Kristie Baumgartner in writing within 10 business days of receipt of this letter if you want to appeal the district's decision outlined above. If we cannot reach a resolution at the district-level, the dispute will be moved to the state level for final resolution, facilitated by the Illinois State Board of Education – Vicki Hodges – (217) 785-1969. Attached you will find a copy of the Illinois McKinney- Vento Dispute Resolution Process that provides additional details on the state's McKinney-Vento dispute and appeals process, including key timelines. Feel free to contact me if you have questions on this decision or the McKinney-Vento dispute or appeal process.

Sincerely,

Elaine Kane
Assistant Superintendent