

Access & Opportunity in Education and Student Transportation

Questions regarding Student Transportation and the McKinney – Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act

Overview

This paper provides information on how the McKinney - Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act relates to student transportation in Washington State and describes transportation choices and requirements.

What does the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act require for students experiencing homelessness?

LEAs must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian's request. For an unaccompanied youth, the request would be from the LEAs homeless liaison.

Is transportation for students experiencing homelessness required regardless of the distance involved?

There is an assumption of reasonableness with the transportation of students experiencing homelessness. The district's designated McKinney-Vento liaison is responsible for making the determination of whether the student should remain enrolled in their school of origin. According to the McKinney-Vento Act, the district is to presume that keeping the student in their school of origin is in the student's best interest, except when the parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth, requests otherwise. Once the best interest determination is made, the student is to be immediately enrolled and the district is required to provide or arrange for the student's transportation. For students experiencing homelessness, LEAs must also provide or arrange transportation to and from extracurricular activities if a lack of transportation would be a barrier to "participating fully in school activities." This transportation may be arranged by the district, or by a program other than student transportation.

Air flights, extensive travel time, or other circumstances that result in extremely unusual travel demands may all result in appropriate denial of transportation to the school of origin because it is not in the student's best interest. There is an appeal process that a parent can use when they disagree with the decision of the school district. Again, there is no requirement that provided transportation be of any specific mode (school buses are not necessarily required).



What else needs to be considered with transportation of students experiencing homelessness?

Providing sensitivity training to bus drivers and arranging bus stops to keep student's living situations confidential is important in being able to assist these students through this difficult time in their lives with as little disruption as possible. Developing close ties between school district homeless liaisons, school staff, and student transportation staff will help make this process work smoothly.

Which school district is responsible for transportation costs when a student experiencing homelessness requires transportation across district boundaries?

When a homeless student requires transportation to the school of origin, and that school is outside the current school district, the two districts involved should collaborate to provide the transportation service, and how the districts will split the cost. If there is no agreement between the two districts, the district in which the school of origin is located is responsible to provide transportation services, and each district is required to pay half the cost.

How is funding provided?

Transportation is provided through the standard state funding system. If the level of funding is such that it does not cover the cost of the transportation, other state or local funding may be used.

What are the reporting requirements?

For students being transported on existing routes, there are no additional reporting requirements. Care should be taken to clearly estimate the state funding received for a particular route, and the complete costs associated with that route.

How long must transportation be provided after a student experiencing homelessness has moved into permanent housing?

Students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.

For additional information regarding Student Transportation in Washington State, please go to [Student Transportation's](#) website.

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This material is available in alternate format upon request.

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