



Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin

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NCHE Profile

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is a national resource center of research and information enabling communities to successfully address the needs of children and their families who are experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youth in homeless situations. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, NCHE provides services to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth in our nation's school communities. NCHE is housed at SERVE, a consortium of education organizations associated with the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The goals of NCHE are the following:

- Disseminate important resource and referral information related to the complex issues surrounding the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Provide rapid-response referral information
- Foster collaboration among various organizations with interests in addressing the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness
- Synthesize and apply existing research and guide the research agenda to expand the knowledge base on the education of homeless children and families, and unaccompanied youth

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Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin

Executive Summary

Underscoring the importance of school stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires that school districts provide transportation to enable children and youth to remain in their school of origin (the school a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled). Although this mandate increases the complexity and expense of pupil transportation, school districts have developed resourceful strategies to provide children and youth experiencing homelessness transportation to their school of origin.

In order to provide ideas to school districts that experience challenges to implementing the mandate for transportation to the school of origin and those that seek additional implementation strategies, in 2003-2004, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) interviewed local homeless education liaisons and pupil transportation directors from eight school districts that have instituted a variety of approaches to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness receive transportation services to their school of origin.

Following is a summary of recommendations to school districts for providing transportation for children and youth experiencing homelessness to attend the school of origin:

(1) Establish strong networks of community support.

- Initiate conversations with the department of social services, housing authorities, foster care, juvenile justice, child protective services, and public and private transportation agencies
- Create partnerships with shelters, group homes, and community agencies
- Develop memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and expectations
- Participate in local homeless coalitions or councils
- Sponsor meetings to familiarize these agencies with educational needs for children and youth experiencing homelessness and to identify strategies for collaboration

- Identify a contact in each agency with whom routine communication takes place
 - Sensitize private sector businesses to the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness
- (2) *Develop a strong partnership between the homeless education program and the department of pupil transportation.*
- Develop a team approach to coordination between the homeless education program and department of pupil transportation
 - Provide training to department of pupil transportation staff to increase sensitivity to and buy-in for the needs of homeless children
 - Review data on homeless children and youth in the district to identify what the transportation needs are and how the current transportation system might meet those needs
- (3) *Establish inter-district collaboration.*
- Have frequent communication between local liaisons and pupil transportation directors across districts
 - Designate which district has the primary responsibility to ensure that children and youth do not “fall through the cracks”
 - Host collaborative cross-district meetings of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors to plan strategies and review their effectiveness
- (4) *Establish formal procedures for equity, transparency, and consistency.*
- Involve all stakeholders in the development of procedures and publicize them in the school system and community
 - Establish inter-district policies and memoranda of agreement
 - Review procedures periodically and revise as needed
 - Develop forms for intake and record keeping
 - Develop informational brochures for parents
 - Develop procedures for inter-district transportation and put in place before the need arises
- (5) *Establish policies to support federal legislation.*
- Develop state and/or local policies that reinforce the McKinney-Vento legislation
 - Develop state and/or local policies that clarify roles and responsibilities related to transporting children and youth experiencing homelessness to their school of origin
 - Review policies from other states or districts to serve as models

(6) Establish a database and system for data collection.

- Establish an electronic database that can be shared among school and school district staff, shelters, and other agencies involved with homeless children and youth
- Attend to confidentiality issues
- Ensure regular and accurate data input
- Use data to facilitate and expedite transportation arrangements
- Use data to report on the transportation needs of homeless children and youth for advocacy and funding purposes

(7) Seek economical and creative solutions.

- Seek the most economical solutions first
- Identify potential resources in the community
- Involve private sector businesses and foundations
- Plan ahead; have resources identified and procedures in place
- Be flexible with bus routes and use of special education or magnet school buses

(8) Keep in mind the safety of the child or youth

- Ensure that transportation modes for transporting children to the school of origin are equally as safe as those for other children
- Follow state and local policies related to approved vehicles and drivers
- Ensure taxis and public vehicles meet guidelines outlined in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration *Guideline #17: Pupil Transportation Safety* (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/tea21programs/402Guide.html#g17>)
- Screen all drivers for background checks and driving records

(9) Inform policymakers of the need for school stability for highly mobile children

- Provide accurate and concrete data
- Visit the website of NAEHCY (www.naehcy.org) to become aware of national advocacy efforts

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Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin

Introduction

Underscoring the importance of school stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires that school districts provide transportation to enable children and youth to remain in their school of origin (the school a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled).

Many school districts have devised resourceful strategies for implementing the mandate. Local homeless education liaisons, now required in every school district, work with pupil transportation directors and other administrators, community agencies, municipal transportation systems, or private transportation providers seeking ways to coordinate efforts and pool resources to ensure that children can remain in their school of origin when they or their families become homeless. States and local districts throughout the nation have developed policies that support the federal legislation and facilitate inter-district transportation when necessary.

Many school districts implemented systems to keep children in their school of origin even before the 2001 legislation and have lessons to share on ways to establish an effective transportation system for this purpose. Other school systems are just beginning the conversation and are struggling to meet the requirement.

Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin, developed by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), targets school districts that are in the initial stages of addressing the school stability and transportation needs of homeless students and those that wish to refine their current system. Information from interviews with local administrators in eight school districts that successfully provide transportation to the school of origin provides strategies and guidelines for establishing effective transportation programs to serve the needs of homeless children and youth.

Included in the publication are:

- Rationale for school stability
- Overview of the McKinney-Vento legislation relating to transportation to the school of origin
- Challenges and strategies for transporting homeless children to their school of origin—summary of interviews
- General recommendations for implementing the mandate for transporting children to their school of origin

Rationale for School Stability

Currently, an estimated 1.35 million children are homeless in the United States (NCH, 2003; Noll & Watkins). Families with children now represent the fastest-growing segment within the homeless population (Noll & Watkins, Nunez & Collingnon, Stronge & Hudson). An inevitable reality of homelessness for these families and children is a life of frequent moves. Families who are experiencing homelessness often must move from shelter to shelter, as their allowable stays come to an end. They may move in with family members temporarily, stay at hotels or motels for short stints, live out of their cars or live in temporary housing through government or non-profit programs. In cases where these families must move a distance to find temporary housing, they are not only burdened with the stresses of a new living situation, but often are moving into different school districts and faced with the possibility of their children having to enroll in a new school with new teachers, curriculum, and classmates.

Not surprisingly, children and youths who move frequently, due to their families' homelessness or other unstable work and home situations often related to high poverty, are vulnerable to educational difficulties. It is important to note, however, that not all children and youths move because of crisis or other difficulty. There are those who move for "strategic" reasons to enter a better educational situation, according to Rumberger, and those who make "reactive" school changes "due to intolerable social or academic situations" (2003). Students moving for reactive reasons, such as homelessness, were more likely to report negative educational impacts in Rumberger's study of mobility in California schools (1999).

Despite the different motivations for moves, there is a significant body of research to show that highly mobile students often perform less well than their stable peers (Attles, 1997; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1996; Family Housing Fund, 1998; Temple & Reynolds, 1999; Hofstetter, 1999; Lee & Smith, 1999; Wood, Halfon,

Scarla, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993). In a national study of third-graders conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office, students who had changed schools frequently were more likely to have repeated a grade or have performed below grade level on reading assessments (1994). One study conducted by the Texas Education Agency in 1997 found that the difference between mobile and non-mobile students' standard test scores positively increased with the students' grade level; that is, the higher the grade level, the greater the gap between the mobile and non-mobile students' achievement, with the mobile students falling further and further behind. Even after controlling for previous test scores and socio-economic status, mobile students still performed one to two points lower than their non-mobile counterparts (Texas Education Agency). School mobility has also been found to be associated with higher dropout rates in high schoolers (Rumberger, 1995; Swanson & Schneider, 1999; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996). In these instances, it was clear that highly mobile students were at an educational disadvantage.

In addition to educational difficulties, highly mobile students have been found to experience other significant problems. The same study of third-graders conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office found nutritional and health deficiencies in these highly mobile students. Other studies found that students who change schools often experience more behavioral problems (Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Wood, Halfon, Scarla, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993; Swanson & Schneider, 1999), including an increased risk for violent behavior (Ellickson & McGuigan, 2000). According to Mantzicopoulos and Knutson (2000), frequent school moves and the transitions associated with them may overburden young children's limited emotional resources as they try to cope with such major changes.

While it is clear that children and youths can benefit from remaining in their school of origin, the *U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000* cited transportation as the primary barrier for children attempting to enroll in and regularly attend their school of origin. Fortunately, with the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento legislation, local school districts are now required to not only remove barriers to enrollment, but to provide students transportation services to their school of origin when requested, once remaining in the school of origin is determined to be in the best interest of the child or youth.

With both the legislative mandate and increased awareness of the critical nature of school stability for homeless children and youth, new collaborations abound among school districts and state and federal agencies. Building on a 2000 NCHE national symposium on transportation for homeless children and youth, a strong partnership

between NCHE and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) resulted in a NASDPTS resolution committing to serving the transportation needs of homeless children and youth. (See Appendix D). In addition, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) has facilitated many opportunities for states and school districts to share transportation strategies through its annual conference, listserv, and newsletters. (See Appendix J.)

Overview of Provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 Relating to Transportation to the School of Origin

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C, No Child Left Behind Act). Key provisions in the McKinney-Vento legislation related to transportation to the school of origin include:

- Local Education Agencies (LEAs), otherwise known as school districts, must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian's request, once remaining in the school of origin is determined to be in the best interest of the child. The LEA must provide transportation to the school of origin whether or not it receives funding through a McKinney-Vento subgrant. In addition, the LEA must provide transportation to the school of origin even if it does not provide transportation to non-homeless students.
- For unaccompanied youth, LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the LEA homeless liaison's request.
- "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.
- If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation. If the student is living outside the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally. (See Appendix A for relevant portions of the statute.)

U.S. Department of Education 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance. Further clarification of the statute is provided in the July 2004 *Non-Regulatory Guidance* issued by the U.S. Department of Education (See Appendix B for relevant portions of the *Guidance*.) The *Guidance* reinforces that State Education Agencies (SEAs) and LEAs are responsible for reviewing and revising policies, including transportation policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth.

In determining a child's or youth's best interest for school placement, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, continue a homeless child or youth in the "school of origin" for the duration of homelessness unless contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parents or guardian. Factors that an LEA may consider when determining feasibility include the age of the child, the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on a student's education, personal safety issues, a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services), the length of the anticipated child's stay in a shelter or other temporary location, and the time remaining in the school year. Determining the most appropriate placement for a child or youth experiencing homelessness is a student-centered, individualized determination.

If the student continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, then the LEA must provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin. If the student is continuing his or her education in the school of origin but begins to live in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs or share the costs equally. LEAs should establish inter-district agreements, where appropriate, that address potential issues that may arise as homeless students transfer from one district to another.

The *Guidance* recommends a team approach to addressing the transportation needs of homeless and other highly mobile students. Based on the best interest of the student and in consultation with the parents or guardian, the LEA will determine the mode of transportation. The LEA transportation director is a key figure in the process and should work with district leadership, the local liaison for homeless education, neighboring districts, and service providers.

If the appropriate school placement of a child is in dispute, the LEA must provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin until the dispute is resolved. Inter-district transportation disputes should be resolved at the SEA level.

Regarding the use of Title I or other federal funds to support the transportation of a child or youth to the school of origin, although

LEAs are required to set aside Title I, Part A, funds to serve homeless children and youth, these funds or other federal funds may not be used to provide transportation to the school of origin, due to supplanting issues.

The legislation allows a child or youth who becomes homeless during the academic year to continue in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year if he or she becomes permanently housed. It is within the intent of the McKinney-Vento legislation to continue to provide transportation to the school of origin in order to prevent fragmentation of school services for formerly homeless students who may not be able to maintain the continuity of their education in the school of origin if transportation support is no longer provided. An LEA may use district Title I, Part A funds reserved under Section 1113(c)(3)(A), other Title I, Title V or McKinney-Vento subgrant funds to pay the excess costs of transportation for formerly homeless students remaining in their school of origin.

Challenges and Strategies for Transporting Homeless Children to their School of Origin Summary of Interviews

In 2003, NCHE invited its national partners (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, National Coalition for the Homeless, and National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty) to recommend school districts that have implemented effective systems for transporting homeless children to their school of origin. Of the ones recommended, NCHE staff selected eight that were willing to provide interviews. (See Appendix E for the Interview Questionnaire.) The LEAs represented in the interviews are Anchorage (AK), Cincinnati (OH), Houston (TX), Putnam County (FL), San Antonio (TX), Spokane (WA), St. Paul (MN), and Vancouver (WA). Following is a summary of issues and strategies compiled from the interviews. (Readers are strongly encouraged to review individual district responses to the interview questions in Appendix F.)

Profile of Participating School Districts. Table 1 provides an overview of the eight districts included in this document. Although most of the districts are urban, the Putnam County (FL) district is rural. The San Antonio Independent School District covers 16 local districts in the metropolitan area, and ESD 112 in Vancouver (WA) covers six counties that include urban, suburban, and rural districts through their transportation cooperative. All of the districts included in the interviews provide bus transportation to their students, and

most are able to utilize the public transportation system to assist with providing transportation to the school of origin. Six out of the eight districts receive funding through McKinney-Vento subgrants, yet five out of the six use only a small portion of their McKinney-Vento subgrant for transportation. Most of the districts are able to provide transportation through additional or extended bus routes. They most frequently supplement school district transportation with public transportation, taxis, and reimbursement to families for mileage.

Table 1: Profile of School Districts Interviewed

LEA	Type	Est. No. Homeless Children	Est. No. Homeless Children Transported	School Transportation System?	Public Transportation Available?	McKinney-Vento Subgrant?	% M-V Subgrant Spent on Transportation	Top 3 Modes of Transportation Most Frequently Used
Anchorage, AK	urban	2,121	759	Yes	Yes, but limited	Yes	0-10%	Taxis, mileage reimbursement, additional or extended bus routes
Cincinnati, OH	urban	2,000	300	Yes	Yes	Yes	0-10%	Contracted transportation services with additional or extended bus routes, public transportation, taxis
Houston, TX	urban	1,600	1,520	Yes	Yes	Yes	0-10%	Existing bus routes, public transportation, additional or extended bus routes
Putnam Co., FL	rural	736	700	Yes	Yes, but limited	Yes	0-10%	Additional or extended bus routes, personal vehicles, mileage reimbursement
San Antonio, TX (1 LEAs in the metro region)	urban	1300	340	Yes	Yes	Yes	0-5%	Additional or extended bus routes, public transportation, special education buses
Spokane, WA	urban	572	400	Yes	Yes	Yes	10-25%	Public transportation, additional or extended bus routes, taxis
St. Paul, MN	urban	1,000	900	Yes	Yes	Yes	75-100%	Existing bus routes, LEA program vans, public transportation, additional or extended bus routes
Vancouver, WA (6 county region, not school district)	rural, suburban, urban	235	235	Yes - Cooperative	Yes—approximately 10%	No	NA	Special education buses only

Challenges and strategies—funding. Funding is overall the biggest challenge for LEAs to provide transportation to the school of origin. Because the McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to provide transportation to the school of origin, school districts may not use federal funds from other programs to do so. However, many LEAs have committed district funds for this key to school stability for homeless children and youth and have resourcefully sought additional

funds and strategies to implement the mandate. Even districts that receive McKinney-Vento subgrants generally seek additional funding sources, rather than use their subgrants solely for this purpose.

The LEAs participating in interviews each rely primarily on district funds to support the transportation of homeless children to their school of origin. LEAs from Texas and Washington receive additional support from the state level. Cincinnati and St. Paul receive foundation, local agency, and/or donor support as well. Some school districts have explored funding sources from the Department of Health and Human Services, their state Department of Transportation, and from federal programs such as Medicaid and TANF.

Many school districts are creative and economical in their use of resources to provide transportation to the school of origin. Most of the districts interviewed for this document extend or add on to existing bus routes, and some are able to use special education buses. The homeless education liaison from the Houston Independent School District states, “The district has been willing to place students on any route that is necessary to accommodate them. For example, the district has placed elementary-aged students on high school routes, used ambulatory special education routes, and even transferred students from one route to another, to make sure that they were transported where they needed to go.”

The Vancouver (WA) Specialized Transportation Cooperative is a unique approach to transporting students with special needs. Initiated in 1988, the cooperative is funded by the state and 23 LEAs that pay annual fees. Participating districts pooled resources to purchase a fleet of buses to transport students on a daily basis to education, treatment, and specialized programs in the region. In 2002, members voted to add to the cooperative the responsibility of transporting homeless children to their school of origin. In 2003-2004, the Cooperative transported 235 homeless children and youth, averaging 27 per day. Local liaisons approve applications for transportation and send them to the Cooperative.

Challenges and strategies—intra-district logistics and coordination. Because of the variation in each family’s needs and mobility, arranging for transportation to the school of origin can be logistically complex. Compounded by school bus availability and schedules, shelter schedules, and geographical distance, LEAs must coordinate with departments within the LEA, external agencies, and other school districts to arrange transportation in a timely way. Community partnerships are key to coordinating transportation.

- The Anchorage (AK) school district has established partnerships with shelters, group homes, and community

agencies (housing, medical, mental health, children's services).

- Project Connect (Cincinnati, OH) staff members attend meetings of the community homeless coalition.
- The Houston (TX) homeless project schedules regular visits to local shelters, and staff members attend meetings of the homeless coalition where other homeless providers are present.
- St. Paul (MN) school staff works each day with families in shelters to determine the best ways of providing transportation for their children.

The San Antonio Independent School District (TX) played a pivotal role in establishing the San Antonio Area Homeless Education Council that includes shelter personnel, community agency representatives, health agencies, social service agencies, child protective services, juvenile justice, and LEAs. The Council provides a setting in which to train service providers on the rights of children and youth in homeless situations, a forum to discuss issues and strategies for interagency collaboration, and an entry point for community members into the school system.

The San Antonio Area Homeless Education Council holds meetings and workshops during brown bag lunch sessions.

The Anchorage (AK) homeless education program convened a transportation summit in 2004 that included the LEA director of pupil transportation, transportation director for Head Start, district Title I coordinator, risk management and safety director, and a representative from United Way and a taxi company to discuss ways to meet the school transportation needs of homeless students.

Most of the LEAs interviewed stated that no formal agreements exist between the department of social services or child protective services. As a result, placing families and children near their school of origin is generally not a high priority among these agencies. However, some of the LEAs have working relationships with the department of social services or child protective services that encourage placement of children and families near their school of origin. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (child protective agency) has created a new staff position whose role is to work with schools regarding children placed in foster care or other temporary placements and work with LEAs to support the educational continuity of the children in the child protective agency system. At this time, formal agreements are not in place but are under consideration.

Houston school administrators and shelter providers link with homeless education staff to discuss issues such as rerouting bus services and relocating pick up and drop off to avoid stigmas associated with being homeless.

The Spokane (WA) Neighborhood Action Program works with the LEA to place children and families near the school of origin. Also, agreements exist through the Putnam County (FL) school board to

work with the division of children and youth services that includes children in foster care and adjudicated children and youth.

Interaction between homeless education staff and other district program staff is critical to arranging transportation for homeless children and youth. The LEA staff members interviewed generally agreed that the local homeless education liaison is a key figure to provide awareness to other departments on the McKinney-Vento legislation and to initiate the establishment of a system to serve the transportation needs of homeless children and youth. In addition, the liaison should seek funding and troubleshoot.

The role of the director of pupil transportation is to coordinate his or her staff, vehicle availability, and bus routes to ensure that children and youth are picked up and dropped off safely and efficiently. Regarding the role of the transportation director, the homeless education liaison from St. Paul(MN) stated: “It’s important to understand that in some cases, the director of transportation runs a huge program, of which McKinney-Vento is just one piece. Despite this, it is imperative that he/she understands the McKinney-Vento Act, supports the transportation mandates, and trains his/her staff to support it as well. The transportation director must also have access to enough vehicles and staff to make it work effectively, for example, hiring part time staff to cover as needed.”

Several of the LEAs reinforced that collaboration is necessary for the system to work. The homeless education liaison from Spokane (WA) said, “The only way to make this program work is to share the responsibility. No one person or department takes these families on as their own. We all must work together to see each situation through ... We must have good communication and mutual respect for the process to work.”

The LEAs interviewed emphasized the importance of having a system in place so that all parties know their roles in facilitating transportation to the school of origin. In Project Connect (Cincinnati, OH), for example, homeless families typically contact McKinney-Vento program staff after being referred from a shelter or other agency. For homeless students who come to school without contacting the McKinney-Vento program, the schools know to send them to Project Connect. Staff members at Project Connect arrange transportation, which is more efficient than schools trying to make arrangements. The McKinney-Vento staff contacts the pupil transportation department via phone or email, and transportation is arranged individually in each case.

Similarly, in Spokane (WA), a McKinney-Vento program staff member interviews families experiencing homelessness and assesses their transportation needs. The staff member uses a form that details

“The intake form has been a lifesaver. It holds the family accountable, communication is clear and concise, everyone is on the same page, and parents know what is expected.”
(Spokane, WA)

In outlying rural areas of Putnam County (FL), the LEA assists homeless parents with getting their children to school by providing reimbursement for gas when necessary.

the types of transportation, policies for each, and expectations the family must meet. All relevant phone numbers are included as well. (See Appendix G for a copy of the form.) A family signs the form and is told that staff will notify them of the district's transportation arrangements. The McKinney-Vento staff member faxes the request to the pupil transportation department. Pupil transportation department staff looks at existing bus routes first, then at special education bus routes, then at public transportation, and then at taxi or mileage reimbursement for parents. The transportation department makes a decision and emails the McKinney-Vento staff with arrangements, and the staff contacts the family, school, taxi company, etc.

Details are crucial. For example, more than one school might need to be notified, as in the case of a child who will walk to a nearby school to catch an "overflow" bus to take him or her to the school of origin. The nearby school must be notified of its responsibility to welcome the child and ensure that he or she catches the bus. To address the problem of coordinating transportation with differing school schedules, the San Antonio homeless education program developed a master calendar and schedule of all schools (see Appendix G) to ensure that schools where children are taken will be open or will have supervising staff available to meet them.

Because of the importance of ensuring the child attends school while LEA transportation arrangements are being made, in Spokane, a family is given temporary means for transportation, such as bus tokens for public transportation. Social workers and shelters frequently take responsibility for making initial transportation arrangements.

Homeless shelters in Anchorage fax the homeless education program staff a list with the names of children staying there and include signed releases for them to attend school. The children are added to the list for the Shelter Shuttle, which picks up children from shelters and motels. For children not staying in shelters, families self-refer or are referred by school staff. Once a student or family is identified as homeless, a homeless education program staff member contacts the family and decides on a transportation plan. Two administrative staff members assist with daily dispatching of information.

In Putnam County (FL), if a family is staying at a shelter, the shelter program staff makes the initial call to McKinney-Vento program staff. Parents are referred to the transportation department by McKinney-Vento program staff in order to make arrangements because it may be easier for parents to discuss pick up locations, etc., with the route supervisor.

St. Paul (MN) facilitates transportation arrangements through the use of an electronic database. A McKinney-Vento staff member

Project Connect (Cincinnati, OH) arranges public bus transportation while planning school bus service. For young children, bus tokens are provided for a parent or guardian to accompany the child to and from school.

In San Antonio, homeless parents are provided with transportation brochures in English and Spanish on policies, modes, and procedures. Parents are informed of what they need to do, how to keep in touch, etc. (See Appendix G for a copy of the brochures.)

meets with the parents, assesses the transportation needs, and makes a transportation plan (program van, tokens, cab, existing route, or request for an additional route). Then he or she informs the parents, the school, and the shelter staff of the plan. All alternative route requests are made through the district transportation department with an ongoing log (form), which is faxed daily. The transportation requests are entered in the database and used for planning, cost analysis, and program evaluation. If the child is on an alternative route outside of the district, a form is given to the parent indicating who they need to call if they are not going to need the transportation that day or if a vehicle is late in picking them up. This helps with not sending vehicles out when they are not needed. The transportation department also calls the McKinney-Vento staff daily telling them which students did not ride the alternative bus that morning. The staff calls each school and asks them to call if the child arrives to school and will need the bus home in the afternoon. This helps with not having to send a bus at the last minute for a stranded child. The Anchorage program also utilizes an electronic database that inputs every school transfer.

The San Antonio homeless education program reinforces the importance of communication. The San Antonio coordinator of family/student services said, “Staff from two offices (transportation and McKinney-Vento) are working together, communicating through about 10-15 emails/phone calls per day to see that all services are in place and all parties are notified.” The San Antonio program also convenes transportation and homeless education staff annually to review the year’s activities. The program continually refines and retunes its approach, forms, and procedures.

Challenges and strategies—inter-district coordination. Many LEAs face particular challenges with arranging inter-district transportation. In San Antonio, for example, because the district houses 27 homeless shelters, it is required to transport a large number of children and youth out of the district to their school of origin.

The LEAs interviewed report various levels of cooperation from districts regarding the sharing of transportation responsibilities. LEAs that have policies and collaborations relating to inter-district transportation for homeless children and youth are more successful in arranging transportation expediently and in sharing the costs fairly than those that do not.

Formal or informal agreements are helpful in designating responsibility so that homeless children do not “fall through the cracks.” The Spokane school district developed an informal agreement with surrounding districts stating that the school district where a child

Spokane homeless education staff provides a list to all homeless shelters in adjoining districts with the homeless education program contact person and phone number in each. Also included is information for how to initiate the process of arranging transportation to the school of origin.

In San Antonio, interdistrict coordination entails first getting students onto the appropriate bus routes, then working with district transportation departments to coordinate bus routes, allowing for convenient and safe locations for children to transfer buses.

is currently residing is responsible for coordinating transportation services back to the school of origin. Although all districts must work together, the district of residence holds the primary responsibility.

In explaining the background of this agreement, the Spokane homeless education liaison explains, “As we received students in the shelters from other districts, we discovered we were doing all the leg-work and frequently did not hear back from the other districts because they did not understand the McKinney-Vento legislation. We finally decided that we would train the shelters to call the school where students were enrolled and allow *them* to begin the process with their school district’s transportation director, who would then contact the Spokane transportation director. That way they had some buy-in. It worked so well that it became an informal agreement.”

The Houston pupil transportation department maintains collaborative relationships with surrounding school districts to coordinate transportation services for homeless students. The department hosts meetings of transportation directors to establish a system to receive and conduct referrals. Designated staff members in each of the surrounding districts handle inter-district transfers on a case-by-case basis throughout the year.

State and local policies that support transportation to the school of origin. State and local policy support ranges from documents sent to LEAs and schools by the State Coordinator for Homeless Education, local superintendent, or legal counsel outlining responsibilities under the McKinney-Vento legislation, to state and local policies developed and implemented to clarify and supplement the McKinney-Vento legislation.

Minnesota has a state policy that specifically addresses the transportation needs of homeless children and youth. While mirroring the federal legislation, it both bridges homeless education policy with Minnesota education statutes and includes specific requirements for ways to provide transportation for homeless children and youth above and beyond what is required in the federal legislation.

Most of the LEAs included in this document have local policies in place. The Houston Independent School District established Board Policy FBD 10192 on Admissions and Attendance: Intra-district Transfers. The policy indicates that the parent or person standing in parental relation to any student may request, by petition in writing, the assignment of the student to a designated school or to a school to be designated by the Board of Education. This policy is also indicated in TEC 25.033(1), 26.003(a)(1). Additionally, the Board of Education must grant the request made in the petition unless the Board

In 2002, the Houston Independent School District convened a meeting of neighboring school districts and developed a cooperative agreement to ensure timely creation of routes that cross district lines. A list of neighboring districts was created to assist local liaisons in advising parents how to arrange transportation services when their family moves.

determines that there is a reasonable basis for denying it. This policy is indicated in Education Code 25.034(e).

Local policy in Putnam County (FL) supports and clarifies requirements in the McKinney-Vento legislation and has helped facilitate the smooth implementation of transportation to the school of origin throughout the district. (See Appendix G for a copy of the local policy.)

State-level support. The LEAs stated that state-level support (beyond state policies that supplement the McKinney-Vento legislation) entails primarily funding through subgrants and assistance from State Coordinators in answering questions and resolving difficult situations.

In Texas, school districts receive reimbursement from the state for transporting children to their school of origin on the same basis as for transporting all children. Local funds must provide for the additional costs of transporting children to the school of origin.

In 2004, through advocacy on the federal level, the Washington Department of Transportation received a one-time million-dollar grant to assist with transportation for homeless children and youth. Initial discussions on how to allocate the funds have brought together a variety of stakeholders and representatives from both the school district and private sector. Plans for disbursement will be forthcoming.

General Recommendations for Implementing the Mandate for Transporting Homeless Children to their School of Origin

(1) Establish strong networks of community support. Many community stakeholders are vested in the wellbeing of children and families in homeless situations. Schools are just one element in a continuum of services. Therefore, the local homeless education liaison should be involved with all agencies that impact the lives of homeless children and youth. Community partners can provide valuable resources and strategies to assist with transportation and school stability.

Even more importantly, however, because schools and school districts have not historically been part of community discussions surrounding the needs of homeless children and youth, many agencies do not consider educational and school placement needs when determining social services and placement of families. Community agencies need to be informed of the educational needs of and legislative requirements for homeless children and youth. In particular, local liaisons should initiate conversations with the department of social services, housing authorities, foster care, juvenile justice, and child

protective services. In addition to providing information to these agencies, the LEA may wish to host meetings to familiarize agencies with one another's culture, procedures, funding, etc. The LEA may explore formal collaborative strategies with agencies such as developing memoranda of understanding for how a community agency and LEA can support one another's services. The local homeless education liaison should have a contact person in each agency with whom routine communication takes place.

Public and private transportation agencies should also be part of the conversation. Many are willing to provide services for free or at a reduced rate as a community service. Also, public transportation agencies must become aware of and sensitized to the needs of homeless children, youth, and families so that their services are safe, efficient, and non-stigmatizing. With a wealth of experience in providing transportation, these agencies may contribute valuable ideas to LEAs on meeting the transportation needs of homeless children and youth.

LEAs should involve local foundations and private sector businesses. Local foundations and businesses, when sensitized to social issues, are great sources of funding and support. Educational stability helps ensure well-educated, self-sufficient citizens of the future. This provides a great economic incentive for businesses to help meet the current educational and transportation needs of homeless children and youth. Local homeless education liaisons should promote the homeless education program to the private sector.

(2) Develop a strong partnership between the homeless education program and the department of pupil transportation. LEAs that are able to provide transportation services for homeless children and youth have developed a team approach to coordination between the homeless education program and department of pupil transportation. In districts where this collaboration does not exist, the homeless education liaison should initiate conversations with the director of pupil transportation to underscore the importance of school stability and to familiarize him or her with the McKinney-Vento legislation. In addition, the homeless education liaison should provide awareness training on homeless issues for the transportation staff to increase sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and create buy-in.

The homeless education liaison and director of pupil transportation should review data on homeless children and youth in the district to identify what the transportation needs are and how the current transportation system might meet these needs. A collaborative approach to identifying strategies and resources will reinforce the concept that homeless children are everyone's responsibility.

(3) Establish inter-district collaboration. Inter-district collaboration is essential to establish and smoothly implement procedures and policies for transporting children and youth to their school of origin. Local liaisons and pupil transportation directors from LEAs where homeless families frequently cross district lines should communicate regularly and determine how transportation responsibilities and expenses will be shared. Although some transportation arrangements to the school of origin can be planned ahead of time, such as in an area where students frequently move with their families to a shelter across district lines, staff members from both LEAs must also be willing to problem-solve on a case-by-case basis when necessary.

Regular meetings of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors from LEAs that frequently share homeless students help to identify emerging issues and provide opportunities to review the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures.

Inter-district collaborations that designate which district has the primary responsibility to make arrangements (such as the district where the child is currently residing) help ensure that children and youth “do not fall through the cracks.”

(4) Establish formal procedures for equity, transparency, and consistency. A key to providing transportation for homeless children and youth is helping all stakeholders to understand the procedures by which these services are provided and their role in the process. The local homeless education liaison and pupil transportation director should develop a procedure to identify points of contact both in the school system and in the community. Shelter and service providers and parents should be made aware of the system and invited periodically to provide input on how the system could be improved.

Forms for intake facilitate tracking and record keeping. Informational brochures for parents and service providers detailing both children’s rights under the McKinney-Vento legislation and procedures by which the LEA enacts the legislation will also help everyone understand how the children’s needs will be met.

LEAs that typically share homeless children and families across school districts should develop procedures for inter-district transportation. Disputes arise when school districts are unsure about how the transportation responsibilities for homeless children and youth are shared. Unnecessary delays and ill will frequently result when districts wait until the occasion arises to develop transportation and funding arrangements while under pressure to make arrangements for a child as quickly as possible.

(5) Establish policies to support the federal legislation. Though clear in its mandate to provide transportation to the school of origin, federal legislation provides flexibility for states and LEAs to implement the mandate in ways most appropriate to their locality. Many states have developed policies and procedures outlined in their state homeless education plans to further guide LEAs in areas such as enrollment and inter-district transportation. In addition, many LEAs create local or school board policies to further clarify and institutionalize the implementation of the mandate.

The local homeless education liaison should review current policies and initiate a process to develop policies related to homeless education if none exist. Sample policies are available from the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (See Appendix J), and states and local districts are generally very willing to share their policies.

(6) Establish a database and system for data collection. An electronic database can be an effective technological solution for keeping up with the high mobility of homeless families. Information on homeless children and youth can be input and shared immediately among LEAs, schools, school districts, shelters, and other agencies.

However, electronic databases are not without their complications. Confidentiality issues over which agencies can share information and what information can be shared often create barriers to an efficient use of a database. Also, a database is only as good as the information put into it. Information must be entered continually, and staff time must be allocated for this purpose. Still, the benefits outweigh the effort spent to resolve these issues with agencies for which such information would enhance their ability to collaborate.

Furthermore, a great need exists for data that illustrate the needs of homeless children and youth. Because collecting data on highly mobile children, particularly with regard to transportation, is often difficult, many LEAs have inadequate documentation of the needs and costs of meeting the mandates. Subsequently, advocates and educators face great challenges in making the case for increasing commitment to and funding for school stability. Policymakers and legislators who want hard data on school achievement directly related to school stability or on the amount of funds LEAs are spending on transporting children and youth to their school of origin remain unconvinced by anecdotal evidence and ballpark estimates. LEAs must work with their data and research staff to collect valid data on transporting children to their school of origin. Such data, shared locally and nationally, will facilitate the understanding of the effects of homeless education policies.

“We took charge when setting up many of our policies so that they work to our advantage, meaning this is how we need [the system] to work in order to accommodate our needs and work load.” (San Antonio, TX)

(7) Seek economical and creative solutions. Many alternatives for arranging transportation to the school of origin are quite expensive. Taxis, for example, are usually one of the most expensive ways to transport children. However, LEAs that seek more economical solutions at first, such as utilizing existing buses and bus routes, and select more expensive alternatives only after they determine that the most cost-effective alternatives will not work are able to handle the expenses more effectively. Many LEAs have demonstrated creativity and resourcefulness as they have developed systems of transferring students at various bus route locations or assisted parents with mileage reimbursements for transporting their children. Arranging to use community agency vehicles or obtaining discounted prices on public transportation also help to defray the costs of transportation.

Homeless program liaisons and pupil transportation directors need to assess resources available in the LEA and community with an attitude of doing the most with what is available. The extent to which LEAs can plan ahead will increase the likelihood that economical solutions can be found, rather than trying to identify economical solutions when under pressure to arrange transportation as quickly as possible for a child or youth who is waiting to continue in his or her school of origin.

(8) Keep in mind the safety of the child. Although the necessity to get homeless children and youth to school frequently drives decisions on the method of transport, LEAs are responsible for ensuring that the transportation of homeless children and youth to school is equally as safe as the transportation of all other students as regulated by federal guidelines. LEAs must follow their state and local policies regarding transportation safety and approved vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's *Guideline #17: Pupil Transportation Safety* establishes minimum recommendations for the transportation of students to and from school and school-related activities. (See Appendix H for *Guideline #17*.) Taxis and public vehicles should meet these safety guidelines, and all drivers should have background checks and be screened for driving records.

(9) Inform policymakers of the need for school stability for highly mobile children. The financial demands to meet the mandate for transportation to the school of origin pose challenges for many school districts. Individuals involved in the education of homeless children and youth need to create greater awareness of the strategies that foster educational achievement and wellbeing of homeless children and youth. The result can be greater funding through federal, state, and

local budgets. (See Appendix I for a description of the work of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and its legislative advocacy work.)

Conclusion

School stability is a key to helping children and youth experiencing homelessness maintain educational continuity. Preventing homeless children and youth who are highly mobile from falling behind in their education will help them to succeed and break the cycle of poverty that condemns many to a future of limited opportunity and economic insufficiency.

To promote school stability, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures the rights of homeless children and youth to attend their school of origin when feasible and requires school districts to provide or arrange for transportation to the school of origin.

Although this mandate increases the complexity and expense of pupil transportation, the interviews with staff included in this document illustrate that with persistence, creativity, and collaboration, LEAs can establish effective systems to accommodate the transportation needs of homeless children and youth to keep them in their school of origin. With all stakeholders, both within the school system and in the community, taking responsibility for addressing the needs of these children and youth, each agency can support the others to increase school stability.

Homeless education program staff members are usually the initiators of awareness and collaboration among departments and agencies, but once policies and procedures are in place, most LEAs are able to provide homeless children and youth with the school stability and educational support they need. With collaboration and commitment, transportation to the school of origin can help eliminate school instability as a barrier to the education of homeless children and youth.

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APPENDIX A

Excerpts from the McKinney-Vento Act Relating to Transportation

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, Sec. 1032 Education for Homeless Children and Youths, reauthorized as Title X of the No Child Left Behind Act

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)

(g) STATE PLAN-

(1) IN GENERAL- Each State shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youths within the State. Such plan shall include the following ...

(J) Assurances that ...

(iii) the State and its local educational agencies will adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin, as determined in paragraph (3)(A), in accordance with the following, as applicable:

(I) If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located.

(II) If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the local educational agency of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another local educational agency, the local educational agency of origin and the local educational agency in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the local educational agencies are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(3)(A)

3) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REQUIREMENTS-

(A) IN GENERAL- The local educational agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest--

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness--

(I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
(II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(3)(B)

(B) BEST INTEREST- In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall--
(i) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian;
(ii) provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (E), to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local educational agency sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and
(iii) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the homeless liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii) assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal under subparagraph (E).

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(3)(G)

(G) SCHOOL OF ORIGIN DEFINED- In this paragraph, the term 'school of origin' means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(4)(A)

(4) COMPARABLE SERVICES- Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected under paragraph (3), including the following:
(A) Transportation services ...

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725. Definitions

For purposes of this subtitle ...

(2) The term 'homeless children and youths'--
(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
(B) includes--

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)...

(6) The term 'unaccompanied youth' includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

APPENDIX B

U.S. Department of Education Education for Homeless and Youth Program

Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act As amended by the No Child Left Behind Act

Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004 Excerpts

G. School Placement and Enrollment

G-1. On what basis does an LEA make school placement determinations for homeless children and youth?

Homeless children and youth frequently move, and maintaining a stable school environment is critical to their success in school. To ensure this stability, LEAs must make school placement determinations on the basis of the “best interest” of the homeless child or youth. Using this standard, an LEA must --

- (a) Continue the child or youth’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; or for the remainder of the academic year if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- (b) Enroll the child or youth 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.

G-2. How does an LEA determine the child or youth’s “best interest”?

In determining a child or youth’s best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the “school of origin” unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth’s parent or guardian. If an LEA wishes to send a homeless child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, the LEA must provide a written explanation of its decision to the parent or guardian, together with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

G-3. Why is it so important to maintain a stable education for homeless children and youth?

Changing schools significantly impedes a student’s academic and social growth. The literature on highly mobile students indicates that it can take a student four to six months to recover academically after changing schools. Highly mobile students have also been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. Therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act calls for LEAs to maintain students in their school of origin to the extent feasible.

G-4. What should a school district consider when determining the extent to which it is feasible to educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin?

As stated above, to the extent feasible, a district must educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. The placement determination should be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that an LEA may consider include the age of the child or youth; the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on student's education; personal safety issues; a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services); the length of anticipated stay in temporary shelter or other temporary location; and the time remaining in the school year.

G-5. What procedures must an LEA follow if a dispute arises between a school and a parent or guardian regarding placement of a homeless child or youth?

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the LEA must immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent or guardian, pending resolution of the dispute. Similar provisions apply to placement of unaccompanied youth. Inter-district enrollment disputes should be resolved at the SEA level (*See G-9*).

Homeless families and youth may be unaware of their right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. Therefore, the LEA must provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights. The LEA must refer the unaccompanied youth, parent or guardian to the LEA liaison, who must expeditiously carry out the dispute resolution process.

When enrollment disputes arise, it is critical that students not be kept out of school. Interruption in education can severely disrupt the student's academic progress. To avoid such disruptions, LEAs need an established process for resolving school placement disputes. Permitting students to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of disputes helps provide needed stability.

LEA homeless liaisons help ensure that disputes are resolved objectively and expeditiously. Written notice protects both students and schools by outlining the specific reasons for the school's decision. It facilitates dispute resolution by providing decision-makers with documents to guide their determinations.

G-6. In providing special services to homeless children and youth, how does a school or district avoid stigmatizing those children?

As stated above, a district or school may not segregate homeless children and youth from the mainstream school environment. Homeless children and youth are entitled to receive all of the services that are provided to their non-homeless counterparts and in the same setting as their non-homeless peers.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to provide additional services to homeless children and youth in a separate setting. In doing so, a district should be careful not to stigmatize these students. If a district does implement a supplemental program exclusively for homeless children, such as a shelter-based evening tutoring program, it should not be called “the homeless tutoring program” or the “shelter tutoring program.” Instead, the district should use a name such as “Discovery Club” or “Homework Club” to avoid stigmatization.

Enrollment and Attendance Statistics

The Department’s FY 2000 Report to Congress stated that 87 percent of homeless K-12 children and youth are enrolled in school. However, only 77 percent attended school regularly. Less than 16 percent of eligible preschool aged children are enrolled in preschool programs.

U.S. Department of Education’s McKinney-Vento Report to Congress or Fiscal Year 2000

G-7. What are a school’s responsibilities for enrolling homeless children and youth?

A school selected on the basis of the best interest determination (*see* G-1 and G-2) must immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation). The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.

If a child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or medical or immunization records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent or guardian to the LEA homeless liaison, who must assist in obtaining the immunizations or records. The records must be maintained so that they are available in a timely fashion when the child enters a new school or school district. To facilitate immediate enrollment, timely transfer of records from school to school should also take into account procedures for State-to-State record transfers.

The McKinney-Vento legislation provides a broad mandate to States and districts to change policies or practices that act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless children. It is important for them to review policies and practices on an on-going basis, so that new barriers do not prevent children from receiving the free, appropriate public education to which they are entitled.

G-8. What are some steps that LEAs can take to ensure immediate enrollment?

Homeless children and youth often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment. Enrolling them in school immediately not only provides these children and youth needed stability, but is a legal requirement.

To facilitate immediate enrollment, LEAs should consider the following practices:

- Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, guidance counselors, school social workers, and principals on the legal requirements regarding immediate enrollment;
- Review all regulations and policies to ensure that they comply with the McKinney-Vento requirements;
- Develop affidavits of residence or other forms to replace typical proof of residency. Such forms should be carefully crafted so that they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment;
- Develop caregiver affidavits, enrollment forms for unaccompanied youth, and other forms to replace typical proof of guardianship. Again, such forms should be carefully crafted so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment;
- Establish school-based immunization clinics or other opportunities for on-site immunizations;
- Collaborate with community-based or public agencies to provide school uniforms within a district and among neighboring districts;
- Accept school records directly from families and youth;
- Contact the previous school for records and assistance with placement decisions;
- Develop short educational assessments to place students immediately while awaiting complete academic records;
- Inform families and youth in a language they can understand or in an accessible format, as appropriate, of their right to attend either their school of origin or local school;
- Inform families and youth in a language they can understand or in an accessible format, as appropriate, of their right to transportation and immediate enrollment;
- Develop clear, understandable and accessible forms for written explanations of decisions and the right to appeal; and
- Expediently follow up on any special education and language assistance referrals or services.

G-9. What are effective strategies for a LEA to use to resolve enrollment disputes?

An LEA should consider the following strategies for effectively resolving school enrollment disputes:

- Disputes should be resolved at the district level rather than the school level;
- When inter-district issues arise, representatives from all involved districts and the SEA should be present to resolve the dispute;
- A State-level appeal process, involving the State coordinator, should be available for appeals from district-level decisions and resolution of inter-district disputes (*See Section 722(g)(1)(C)*);

- The dispute resolution process should be as informal and accessible as possible, and allow for impartial and complete review;
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be able to initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose, as well as at the school district or LEA homeless liaison’s office;
- States should establish timelines to resolve disputes at the local and State level;
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their position;
- Students should be provided with all services for which they are eligible while disputes are resolved;
- Written notice should be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand. The notice should include:
 1. Contact information for the LEA homeless liaison and State coordinator, with a brief description of their roles;
 2. A simple, detachable form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute process. (The school should copy the form and return the copy to the parent, guardian or youth for their records when it is submitted);
 3. A step-by-step description of how to dispute the school’s decision;
 4. Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute;
 5. Notice that “immediate enrollment” includes full participation in all school activities;
 6. Notice of the right to appeal to the State if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory; and
 7. Timelines for resolving district- and State-level appeals.

G-10. Are children who are awaiting foster care placement eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act?

Yes. As stated in A-3, children who are awaiting foster care placement are considered homeless and eligible for McKinney-Vento services. (See Section 725(2)(B)(i) of the McKinney-Vento Act.)

Children who are already in foster care, on the other hand, are not considered homeless. LEA liaisons should confer and coordinate with local public social service agency providers in determining how best to assist homeless children and youth who are awaiting foster care placement.

G-11. Are children displaced from their housing by naturally occurring disasters eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act?

When children and their families are displaced from their housing as a result of a natural disaster, there is often a period of instability in which various private organization and local, State, and Federal agencies provide assistance. SEAs and LEAs should determine such children's eligibility for McKinney-Vento services on a case-by-case basis. In making this determination, they should take into consideration the services that are available through these other sources.

Following a disaster, one of the LEA's first priorities is to re-open impacted schools as soon as possible and take steps to normalize school routines. LEAs should then proceed to examine whether children who have been displaced by the natural disaster are eligible for McKinney-Vento services on a case-by-case basis. In such circumstances, the Department would provide technical assistance and other assistance, as available, to help the LEA.

H. Transportation

Transportation: The Number One Barrier

The FY 2000 Report to Congress cited lack of transportation as the number one barrier that homeless children and youth faced in attempting to enroll in and attend school regularly.

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

H-1. What responsibilities do SEAs and LEAs have regarding providing transportation services to homeless children and youth?

SEAs and LEAs are responsible for reviewing and revising policies, including transportation policies, that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth are entitled to receive the transportation and other services that are available to non-homeless students.

SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to or from the "school of origin" (*see* definition in Appendix A) in accordance with the following requirements:

- If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, that LEA must provide or arrange for the child's or youth's transportation to or from the school of origin.
- If the homeless child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for

providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

Steps to Improve Transportation for Homeless Students

Although the McKinney-Vento Act permits homeless students to remain in their schools of origin despite their residential instability, lack of transportation commonly prevents them from doing so. Given that transportation has been one of the foremost enrollment barriers, in guidance to districts, States should highlight the transportation responsibilities of LEAs under the reauthorized McKinney-Vento legislation.

Additionally, highly mobile students have been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. This diminished achievement hurts students and schools. States should work in concert with LEAs to develop practices and policies to ensure that transportation is provided as required under the statute.

Adopting a “One Child, One School, One Year” policy and providing transportation to enable a student to remain at his/her school of origin assures that a homeless student need not change schools before the end of a current academic year.

A systematic process—with agreed-upon steps and individual roles—can help homeless students get to and from school efficiently and reliably. LEAs should—

- (1) Identify one individual as the key contact regarding transportation;
- (2) Develop a process to determine the best interests of the student regarding travel to a particular school;
- (3) Standard transportation-related data collection and processing;
- (4) Plan for transportation emergencies with back-up support; and
- (5) Identify other sources for funding or arranging transportation.

U.S. Department of Education’s McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

H-2. How can LEAs ensure that the education of homeless students is not disrupted during inter-district transfers?

LEAs should have in place inter-district (and inter-State, where appropriate) agreements that address potential transportation issues that may arise as homeless students transfer from one district to another.

H-3. May funds under Part A of Title I or Part A of Title V of the ESEA be used to transport homeless students to and from the school of origin?

No. LEAs may not use funds under Title I, Part A or Title V, Part A to transport homeless students to or from their school of origin. Transportation services to the school of origin are mandated under the McKinney-Vento Act’s statute. The “no-supplanting” provisions in Title I and Title V prohibit those funds from being used to support activities that the LEA would otherwise be required to provide.

H-4. Who should be involved in developing and implementing transportation policies for homeless students?

School districts can best address the transportation needs of homeless and other highly mobile students through a team approach. However, based on the best interest of the student and in consultation with the parent, the LEA ultimately determines the mode of transportation. The LEA's transportation director is a key figure in the process and should work with district leadership, the local liaison for homeless students, neighboring districts, and homeless service providers to develop effective transportation policies and procedures.

Steps district directors of pupil transportation can take to support the transportation of homeless children and youth

- Communicate regularly with the district homeless liaison
- Establish procedures to receive information about the transportation needs and pickup location of homeless students
- Train bus drivers and dispatchers on the rights and needs of homeless students, as well as on the need for sensitivity and confidentiality
- Develop a bus routing system that can respond flexibly and quickly to new "pickups"
- Be aware of new motel and shelter locations and prepare to include bus stops nearby
- Support increased district commitment to provide homeless students transportation to school, as well as to before- and after-school programs.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Learning to Succeed

H-5. Is an LEA required to transport homeless students to and from their school of origin, if needed, while enrollment disputes are being resolved?

Yes. The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved. Therefore, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), the LEA must provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin. Inter-district transportation disputes should be resolved at the SEA level (*See* section 722(g)(1)C).

H-6. If an LEA does not provide transportation to non-homeless students, is it required to transport homeless students?

Yes. As discussed above, the legislation not only requires an LEA to provide comparable services, including transportation services, to homeless students, it also requires an LEA, at the request of a parent or guardian, to provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin.

H-7. Do LEA transportation responsibilities apply to all LEAs in the State or only to those LEAs that receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant?

This requirement applies to all LEAs in the State.

H-8. Does McKinney-Vento require an LEA to provide transportation services to homeless children attending preschool?

To the extent an LEA offers a public preschool education, McKinney-Vento requires that homeless children have equal access to that preschool education as provided to non-homeless children. Furthermore, the statute requires that the services provided to homeless children be comparable to those provided to non-homeless children, it must also provide comparable transportation services for homeless preschool children.

McKINNEY-VENTO 2001—LAW INTO PRACTICE

Transportation

Who is homeless? (Sec. 725)

The term “homeless children and youth”–

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ...; and

(B) includes–

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings ...
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

This document was collaboratively developed by:

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)—512-475-8765—www.naehcy.org

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)—800-308-2145—www.serve.org/nche

National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH)—202-737-6444 ext. 18—www.nationalhomeless.org

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)—202-638-2535—www.nlchp.org

National Network for Youth (NN4Y)—202-783-7949—www.NN4Youth.org

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B—Education for Homeless Children and Youth), reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This brief explains the legislation and offers strategies for implementing it in a school district. Additional briefs on various topics in the law may be found on the websites of the organizations listed below.

Key Provisions

- Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), otherwise known as school districts, must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian’s request.
- For unaccompanied youth, LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the LEA homeless liaison’s request.
- “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.
- If the student’s temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation. If the student is living outside the school of origin’s LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin’s LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally.
- In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.

(See Endnotes for the text of the law.)

Changing schools greatly impedes students’ academic and social growth. A “rule of thumb” is that it takes a child four to six months to recover academically after changing schools. Highly mobile students have also been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. This diminished achievement hurts students and schools.

Although the McKinney-Vento Act permits students in homeless situations to remain in their schools of origin despite their residential instability, lack of transportation commonly prevents them from continuing in their schools of origin. Therefore, LEAs are now required to provide transportation to the school of origin. The resulting educational stability will enhance students’ academic and social growth, while permitting schools to benefit from the increased test scores and achievement shown to result from student continuity.

Strategies for Implementation

- Coordinate with local housing authorities and community-based organizations to house students near their schools of origin.
- Re-route school buses (including special education, magnet school, and other buses).
- Ensure that school buses travel to shelters, transitional living projects, and motels where homeless students reside.
- Provide sensitivity training to bus drivers and arrange bus stops to keep students’ living situations confidential.

continued on reverse

Transportation (continued)

- Develop close ties among LEA homeless liaisons, school staff, and pupil transportation staff.
- Designate a district-level point of contact to arrange and coordinate transportation.
- Provide passes for public transportation, including passes for caregivers when necessary.
- Collaborate with local public agencies and service providers to develop transportation plans or provide transportation.
- Take advantage of transportation systems used by public assistance agencies.
- Coordinate with public assistance agencies, whose clients cannot work unless their children are in school.
- Reimburse parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth for gas.
- Obtain corporate or other sponsorship for transportation costs.

For many more implementation strategies, call 800-308-2145 or e-mail homeless@serve.org to request a copy of the National Center for Homeless Education's FREE publication on transportation for children and youth in homeless situations developed from the 2000 National Symposium on Transportation.

Sources for mobility data:

Dr. Joy Rogers of the Loyola University Department of Education, Education Report of Rule 706 Expert Panel presented in B.H. v. Johnson, 715 F. Supp. 1387 (N.D. Ill. 1989), 1991.

"Pervasive Student Mobility: A Moving Target for School Improvement," Finding #9, Study of the Chicago Panel on School Policy and the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago (1996).

Victoria, Texas' "One Child, One School, One Year" policy, which led to increased attendance in district schools and a significant increase in state education funds, as well as improved test scores.

Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your state coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at www.serve.org/nche.



For further information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE HelpLine at 800-308-2145 or e-mail homeless@serve.org.

Local contact information:

Endnotes

(1) *In General—Each State shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youths within the State. Such plan shall include the following: ... (J) Assurances that ... (iii) the State and its local educational agencies will adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin, as determined in paragraph (3)(A), in accordance with the following, as applicable:*

(I) *If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located.*

(II) *If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the local educational agency of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another local educational agency, the local educational agency of origin and the local educational agency in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the local educational agencies are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally....*

(4) *Comparable Services—Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected under paragraph (3), including the following: (A) Transportation services...."*

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(iii) and (g)(4)(A); 42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii) and (g)(4)(A).

APPENDIX D

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services Resolution to Support the Transportation of Homeless Children and Youth

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) passed a resolution at its annual meeting in November 2000 stating its commitment to providing transportation services for homeless children.

The NASDPTS represents a cross section of individuals and organizations involved in the safe transportation of school children. Individuals with the primary responsibility for school transportation in each state are members. In addition, the school bus manufacturers, many equipment suppliers to the school bus industry, private school transportation contractors, and a number of associations whose members include school transportation officials, drivers, trainers, and mechanics are also members of affiliated councils within the association. During the past several years, the NASDPTS has been deeply involved in all Federal activities dealing with pupil transportation. In addition, the association has become the television, radio, and print media's most frequently interviewed and quoted source of information on school transportation.

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services Resolution #8

Transportation for Homeless Children and Youth

WHEREAS an estimated 1.35 million children in the United States, nearly two percent of the total number of children and nearly ten percent of poor children, are likely to experience at least one homeless episode over a year, and

WHEREAS the lives of homeless children and youth tend to be fragmented and chaotic, and school can be a source of stability, a haven of emotional and social support, and a means to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness, and

WHEREAS homeless students encounter problems gaining access to transportation, and

WHEREAS transportation rights are ensured for homeless children and youth through the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services supports the goals of the National Center for Homeless Education and encourages all associated with pupil transportation to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided appropriate transportation services for access to schools.

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

Transportation Monograph Project

“Increasing School Stability: Transportation to the School of Origin for Children and Youth in Homeless Situations”

Overview

NCHE is in the process of developing a new monograph that will include information from the reauthorized McKinney-Vento legislation and U.S. Department of Education 2003 Guidance; an overview of the importance of school stability; and descriptions of strategies and approaches to meeting the mandate from school districts that have experienced success in implementing the mandate.

Program

Interview Participants & Titles

Interview Date / Time

Phone number / arrangements

1. Describe your district’s demographics.
 - a. Size? (geographically, number of students)
 - b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)
 - c. Number of homeless children & youth?

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	
Doubled-up	
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	
Hotels/Motels	
Other (specify)	
Unknown	

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?
5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?
6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?
7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES ___ NO ___

If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?
 0-10% ___ 10-25% ___ 25-50% ___ 50-75% ___ 75%-100% ___

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?
9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?
10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

- Additional or extended bus routes
- Public transportation
- Taxis
- Contracted transportation services
- Special education buses
- Non-school agency transportation
- Personal vehicles
- Reimbursing families for mileage

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

- The size of the region served by the district
- Placement of families and youth (i.e. distance from school)
- Scheduling conflicts
- Lack of vehicles
- Unavailability of parent/guardian to travel with younger children to/from school?
- Funding
- Recurring moves / mobility
- Difficulties getting in touch with parents

- **Time to make arrangements, considering the immediate enrollment provisions**

12. **How has your district addressed these challenges?**
13. **Which strategies do you consider the most successful?**
14. **What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?**
15. **Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)**
16. **How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?**
17. **What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?**
18. **What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?**
19. **What additional support do you get from the state level?**
20. **What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?**
21. **What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?**

APPENDIX F

Interviews with LEA Staff

Anchorage School District, Anchorage, AK

Ms. Patricia O’Gorman, Program Coordinator for Child in Transition/Homeless Project

Cincinnati School District (Project Connect), Cincinnati, OH

Ms. Debbie Reinhart, Executive Director

Mr. Paul McDole, Operations Manager

Houston Independent School District (HISD), Houston, TX

Dr. Connie Thompson, Director/District Liaison, HISD

Putnam County District Schools, Putnam County, FL

Mr. Bob Pugh, Director of Federal Programs

San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), San Antonio, TX

Ms. M. Estella Garza, Coordinator of Family/Student Services

Mr. Mike Daly, Executive Director, Transportation Services

Dr. Patricia Karam, Executive Director for Student Services

Spokane Public Schools, District 81, Spokane, WA

Ms. Edie Sims, Homeless Facilitator

St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul, MN

Ms. Becky Hicks, McKinney-Vento Liaison

Educational Service District (ESD) 112, Vancouver, WA

Mr. Lionel Pinn, Manager, Specialized Transportation Cooperative

Program

Anchorage School District, AK

Interview Participants & Titles

Ms. Patricia O’Gorman, program coordinator for Child in Transition / Homeless Project (Title One funded program)

Interview Date / Time Tuesday, March 02, 2004

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

Almost 2000 sq miles (1956 sq miles)

49,600 students

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

Urban

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

Identified: 2121

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	1370
Doubled-up	326
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	36
Hotels/Motels	212
Other (specify)	0
Unknown	0

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Public Bus system—but not too extensive (FYI note: Population of Anchorage: 265,000)

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

Everyone living outside of 1½ mile radius or if they have an IEP for special education that warrants transportation (regular yellow school buses)

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

2121 identified.

759 received transportation.

Of the 2121, some didn’t need transportation to stay in their school of origin

Majority of the 2121 remained in their school of origin (We don’t separate out this data in the way it was requested)

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

District spent \$40,000 on shelter shuttle

Program spent an additional \$107,000 ---(Title I funding) on gas vouchers, bus passes, cabs, and a vendor called Anchor Rides – (municipal vendor you can contract to provide bus transportation). These avenues are used for kids living in areas where shelter shuttle does not go

Shelter shuttle only picks up in certain areas and only goes to certain schools.

“Shelter Shuttle” not only goes to the shelters, but to the motels as well

Children may be picked up by the Shelter Shuttle, taken the to “bus barn,” and they switch buses to complete their journey to school

Unfortunately, a lot of these students have very long bus rides (usually over an hour).

AND – there are a couple of cases where it is impossible for the buses to get the children to certain schools on time -- in these cases, the children routinely miss a ½ hour a day because that’s the only way to do it.

Then, \$26,000 was spent for busing pre-school kids – district transportation dept absorbed this cost.

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES

If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% X 10-25% _____ 25-50% _____ 50-75% _____ 75%-100% _____

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

District covers a substantial cost, and Title I funds, along with McKinney-Vento grant covers the rest. But we can no longer use Title I funds for this.

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

24 hours

Program office gets a faxed list from the shelters every morning with the names of the kids at the shelter (signed releases for kids – since they are required to go to school). Those kids are then added to Shelter Shuttle list.

For those kids not in shelters, they get connected by self-referrals, or are referred by school staff (nurses, teachers, principals). (Posters sent to every school.)

Once a student/parent is identified as homeless, the program office does an intake over the phone or in person. We talk with families ourselves. If school staff refers a child, we will then talk to family – no cold calls. A staff person calls on behalf of the family or suggests to the family that someone calls the program office. Three staff people to do in-take, they decide on transportation plan, two administrative staff help with daily dispatching of information.

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Shelter Shuttle – that operates in conjunction with the special education program.

We are a district program (child in transition / homeless program), but the district transportation office handles the Shelter Shuttle – we give them all the information and ask them to add students.

Contracted bus is done through the program office. We contract with a cab company, buy gas coupons from gas company—all of this is done exclusively by the program staff.

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

#3 Additional or extended bus routes

- #4 Public transportation
- #1 Taxis
- #5 Contracted transportation services
- #2 Reimbursing families for mileage ...in this case, gas coupons

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

#1 need more bus routes and need more money

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

Placement of families and youth (i.e., distance from school)

Foster care is a challenge (office of children's services: OCS); they often don't take into account the educational needs of child. The goal is often to just get children into a safe house, and children may be placed with families a long distance from school of origin

Scheduling conflicts

Funding

Recurring moves / mobility—A family may be in a shelter, then moves to other temporary housing (motel) or doubles up

How do you deal with that? Families are told to stay in touch with us if they move – families are good to keep in touch for the most part. When kids are no longer there – the school staff sometimes knows and gets the updates from a variety of sources. Sometimes the shelter knows where they are going and will encourage family to contact program. Sometimes the children will show up at another school, and that school knows to contact the program office.

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

Hoping to get an expanded budget – within our use of Title I funds. Also, we have have had to have meetings with asst superintendent and director of transportation. The transportation department agreed to share money (came in under budget) to transport these kids.

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

Great database – keeps track of families – contact numbers. Can locate family if they “disappear” to help get kids back into transportation system. We input every switch to a new school so the database can track homeless kids. We know how many in which schools at any given time. We send lists to schools (to a point of contact) every month that the homeless students are in their school. In Title I schools, it is the same contact. In non-Title I schools the contact is the principal, nurse, or counselor.

Ongoing partnerships / relationships with shelters (4 main shelters: women and children, families or single dads with kids, domestic violence, native families), Covenant House – youth on their own, and a couple of group homes. We've made a real effort to have partnerships and collaborations with agencies in community (housing, medical, OCS, mental health).

In services -- This year we provided an in-service for new staff. We did more training for people in the district (admin assistants and secretaries in Title I schools)

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

Ongoing problem solving –

Example: We co-hosted a transportation summit in April. Numerous people from community attended, such as people in key roles in school administration (for example, the director of public transportation, the United Way director, the transportation supervisor from Head Start programs, the risk management and safety director, the Title I coordinator, the president of Checker Cab Company). Approximately 20 people attended.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

Arranging transportation is our staff only.

Our program also provides school supplies,

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

It has evolved over time from an initial meeting with the transportation director and program director. Now we have daily contact between the program staff and transportation department, cab companies, etc.

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

We meet with OCS monthly just for general issues (not related to transportation necessarily), but currently no policy that helps ensure they are placed close by.

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

We have a local policy that addresses schools' responsibility under McKinney-Vento. Currently we have a revised draft. We are waiting for the school board to help with final revisions.

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

State Coordinator; we get funding from a McKinney-Vento subgrant.

20. What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

This issue has not come up for us yet. Districts are not close together.

21. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

Nothing yet. Have set up a system internally to flag kids and track them for assessment.

NOTE: FYI...The mobility rate at the elementary system: Transfers in and transfers out = 33%
(Anchorage seasonal jobs with fishing, military bases, oil companies)

Program

Project Connect, Cincinnati School District, Ohio

Interview Participants & Titles: Debbie Reinhart, Executive Director Project Connect
Paul McDole, Operations Manager Project Connect

Interview Date / Time Wednesday, 8/27/03

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

Approximately 42,000 students

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

Urban

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

Estimated 2,000 / year, on average. This number varies.

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	80%
Doubled-up	14%
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	1%
Hotels/Motels	5%
Other (specify)	
Unknown	

*Note: these are estimated percentages

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Yes; metro bus system

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

Transportation provided to any student outside of 1-mile radius, through traditional bus routes

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

An estimated 15% were able to stay in their school of origin

Pilot programs – currently in the 3rd year of pilot

There are “site managers” at three schools who work with shelters in their districts, consult with families regarding enrollment for their children, and provide appropriate services to children/youth.

95% of the families at these shelters choose to send their children to the schools with the pilot programs because of the services offered.

In reality, transportation is not readily available for children to attend their school of origin. It is much easier to get them connected with these pilot programs, which quickly provide transportation services.

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

Estimates only: Last year, two buses were provided for the McKinney-Vento pilot programs at a cost of approximately \$75,600 / year. The district paid for these buses, not the McKinney-Vento program. This year, the district anticipates using three school buses. Add to that bus passes and taxi cabs used for older children's transportation (when traditional bus routes don't work).

NOTE: Most students stay within district. The district is large and most shelters are located within the district, so there is little need for interdistrict transfers.

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES

If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% X 10-25% ____ 25-50% ____ 50-75% ____ 75%-100% ____

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

District pays for transportation for the most part.

In addition, a private foundation supports the program with an estimated \$50,000 grant each year, which goes to provide services to homeless students in the district.

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

Within 24 hours.

If the district transportation dept cannot put transportation services in place immediately, foundation monies are used to arrange for temporary transportation until buses, alternate routes, etc. can be arranged.

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Process:

Typically homeless families go through the McKinney-Vento office first (referred from shelter, etc).

For homeless students who show up at the school, not having been in touch with McKinney-Vento program, the schools know to send them to Project Connect.

The staff at Project Connect arranges the transportation (works much more quickly through their office than if the individual schools were trying to arrange this themselves).

Each request for transportation is arranged individually – the McKinney-Vento office contacts the transportation dept (via phone or email) and the arrangement is made individually for each case.

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

#2 Additional or extended bus routes

#1 *Public transportation – tokens/passes provided for all older children (children age 10 or older may ride the Metro unaccompanied)

#3 Contracted transportation services - Taxis

**** Special education buses** – also used when appropriate (for special education students)

#4 Reimbursing families for mileage –also will buy families gas cards

*Public transportation can also be used as interim transportation for younger children while traditional bus service is being arranged. In those cases, tokens can be provided for the whole family or a guardian to accompany the child to school.

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

Cooperation with transportation office – it is not really a problem for this district anymore due to all parties being “on board” and aware of what is required. The key is educating all those involved in the process in order to have a successful, seamless program.

Transportation outside of the district has proved to be particularly challenging. Problems have included getting the other districts to accept responsibility for transporting their students; and problems in long delays in arranging the transportation. We would very much like to see better interdistrict cooperation.

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

Placement of families and youth (i.e. distance from school) –ex. from one end of district to another

Unavailability of parent/guardian to travel with younger children to/from school?

Recurring moves / mobility --In pilot programs, staff communicates with parents very regularly. Lots of calls are exchanged to keep transportation arrangements up to date, even when families move. For those students not in the pilot program, it is up to the family to keep in touch re: transportation changes, needs, moves, etc. Many of these students end up fading in and out.

Time to make arrangements, considering the immediate enrollment provisions – this problem is overcome by giving families bus tokens to use until more permanent arrangements are in place.

None of these are major challenges.

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

Educating the various parties involved.

Conducting district-wide inservices – for school clerks, new principals, etc.

Developing relationships with key people in key positions to ensure it happens

Developing ties with transportation dept – working to get to know the staff and letting them know their work on behalf of the children/youth is appreciated (coffee mugs as gifts, for example).

Helping to encourage all to embrace the cause.

NOTE: There is a staff of 7 in the McKinney-Vento program for the district – and the program is very well supported.

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

Development of a team concept. This is not a one person job!!!

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

The transportation office has provided 3 school buses for the three pilot sites (at no charge to Project Connect). The district also provides bus passes to families – given at no cost to the homeless program (approx. \$60-\$70 per card). It is preferred that the child ride a traditional school bus and if that can be arranged, it is done usually within 2 days.

In addition, with McKinney-Vento funds, Project Connect purchases and makes available bus tokens in emergency cases when there is a delay in arranging transportation—so children and families are always covered.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

Paul McDole handles most of the district transportation. He works with shelter staff, school personnel (school social workers, principals, secretaries, etc.) as well as parents to make arrangements.

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

- The staff of Project Connect holds weekly staff meetings (8 staff people)
- Project Connect staff members attend homeless coalition meetings in the community
- No regular meetings with transportation department are necessary; these relationships have been built on existing relationships and continue to thrive; the transportation department and

Project Connect constantly work together to help provide more resources (ex. 3 buses were provided for the pilot programs this year.)

- Staff members meet, as needed, with personnel at bus company (all buses are contracted out by the transportation department).

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

No known policies; it is believed that they do not take the child's educational situation into account when arranging placements.

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

At the state level, there are no known policies in existence

At the local / district level there is a legal document sent to the counties describing their obligations under McKinney-Vento.

Letter from legal counsel in the district is sent to the Cincinnati Public Schools at the beginning of each year (due to staff turnover each year and as reminder to all)

(NOTE: Project Connect works with 4 surrounding counties – some outside of the Cincinnati School District so these policies are relevant in all 4 counties, not just within the Cincinnati School District).

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

At the state level, we have access to the State Coordinator and to State Education Agency staff who serve as support for our programs

20. What policies and arrangements exist for interdistrict transfers?

Most students stay within district. The district is large and most shelters are located within the district, so there is little need for interdistrict transfers. When interdistrict transfers are necessary, there is no formal procedure, and in fact, arranging for interdistrict transfers has not worked well.

21. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

The impact of remaining at the school of origin is difficult to measure, because there are so many factors involved. In all actuality, the impact of remaining at one school for an entire year is unique and different for every student. In the past few years, Project Connect has moved away from shelter-based tutoring and opened school-based programs in close proximity to emergency shelters. Transportation is a key component of the school-based programs. Customized yellow bus service, metro bus cards, bus tokens and taxis are utilized to ensure that students can remain at the school of origin as long as it is in their best interest and in accordance with the parent or guardian's wishes.

During the 2003-04 school year, one hundred and fifty-four (154) students participated in the school-based programs. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the students remained enrolled in the program for the entire year even though sixty-five (65) students moved two or more times. The students had an average attendance rate of eighty-nine percent (89%), and ninety-six percent (96%) of the students were promoted to the next grade level. The academic results for the students experiencing homelessness were comparable to the results of the nonhomeless students. The impact of remaining at the school of origin can also be seen in the ways in which the students are integrated into the school community and receive specialized services. Many students are involved in school sports, school clubs and attend school field trips for the first time in their school careers. Students at one of our sites received school yearbooks and were thrilled to find their names and photographs printed in them. Many students received psychological assessments and either began counseling services or special education services as a result. Ultimately, the specialized transportation services emerge as a key factor in determining the quality of a student's school experience.

Program

Houston Independent School District, Texas

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is the largest school district in the state of Texas and the sixth largest district in the nation. The growing student population has reached nearly 211,000 students in 308 schools. Each school is assigned to one of 13 administrative districts. The HISD student body represents approximately 90 countries, with 14,000 immigrants and 1,600 migrants. About 60,000 students are limited English proficient (LEP) as identified by 86 home languages. Moreover, 28% of the LEP students participate in regular education, while 8% participate in special education. The ethnic composition of the district’s students is 55% Hispanic, 32% African American, 10% White, and 3% Asian. As reflected by the free and reduced lunch status, the economically disadvantaged currently comprise 79% of the total student population. Consequently, 63% of the students in the district are eligible for Title I services. Furthermore, an astonishing 59% of HISD students are at risk of dropping out of school and about 1,600 students dropped out of school during the past school year (HISD District and School Profiles, 2001-2002). The mobility rate in HISD is an alarming 38%.

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

HISD is an urban school district that encompasses 301 square miles within the greater Houston area. Each school is located in residential communities.

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

There are approximately 1,600 homeless children and youth in the Houston Independent School District.

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	400
Doubled-up	1,100
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	30
Hotels/Motels	60
Other (specify) friend to friend	10
Unknown	0
Total	1,600

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) provides public transportation for the city of Houston. HISD students have access to bus services through METRO. Discount fares are offered to students who utilize these services.

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

HISD has established board policies that govern students' access to transportation that is supported by the district. Specifically, under the Fixed Bus-Stop Plan, non-special needs students may be assigned to bus stops up to two miles from their residence. Students are classified according to eight principal program categories for purposes of determining transportation eligibility: (1) standard education, (2) magnet and majority-to-minority, (3) special education, (4) special transfers, (5) career and technology, (6) parent education, (7) mandatory alternative education, and (8) capped school programs. A description of transportation eligibility guidelines follows.

- Students eligible for transportation to *standard education* programs (attending zoned school) or *magnet* and *majority-to-minority programs* (attending such programs on approved transfers) must reside two or more miles from their assigned campuses.
- Students eligible for transportation to *special education programs* are resident district students with disabilities, impairments, or both. These students are eligible for special education services and would be unable to attend school and benefit from their special education instruction without the availability of specialized transportation. To be eligible for *special education* transportation, a student must attend the closest appropriate program to his or her zoned school of attendance.
- Transportation to *special transfer* programs is provided with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools and the board if it is in the best interest of student achievement and learning. In addition, transportation is provided to JROTC, vocational, as well as *career and technology* programs, particularly if the programs are not offered at the student's zoned school.

Students eligible for parent education program transportation are resident district students enrolled in approved parent education programs. Parent education program students and the students' infant children may be provided round-trip transportation between district-designated stops and their daycare facilities to their assigned campuses provided they are attending the closest programs with available space to their zoned schools of attendance. However, no infant child will be transported outside of HISD district boundaries or transported without a parent.

Students eligible for mandatory alternative education program transportation are resident district students who have been placed in a mandatory alternative education program at the district's direction. Mandatory alternative education students may be provided round-trip transportation between district-designated stops and their assigned campuses.

- Students eligible for capped school program transportation are resident district students whose attendance at their zoned schools of attendance would cause those schools to exceed their legal capacities. These students have been assigned to other campuses by the Student Transfers Department and reside two or more miles from their campuses of attendance.

Specific geographic areas within the attendance boundaries of HISD schools, which are also within two miles of the school (as measured along the shortest route that may be traveled on public roads) may be considered for transportation eligibility on a case-by-case basis for designation as Special Transportation Assignment Zones. Such zones may be established when it is deemed a necessity to provide transportation services for students residing in these specific areas to assure student safety and attendance.

Lastly, resident district students who are subject to extreme hardship circumstances may be considered for transportation eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Extreme hardship circumstances are circumstances of sufficient extent and severity to prohibit a student's attendance at his or her assigned campus without the availability of transportation services.

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

While HISD makes efforts to accommodate all homeless children and youth, it is estimated that 1,520 out of the approximate 1,600 homeless students in the district were allowed to remain in their school of origin and received transportation to their school of origin. This figure reflects 95% of the total approximate homeless student enrollment in the district. Any known exceptions are primarily at the pre-kindergarten through third grade levels due to safety issues or the amount of time required transporting the student to and from school. Specifically, since the greater Houston area extends far beyond HISD, extremely early pick-up times and late arrival times are likely to occur. In these cases, transporting students to their school of origin may not be in the best interest of elementary students. Otherwise, elementary students are granted the request. At the secondary level, students are usually granted their request to remain at the school of origin, regardless of distance.

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

The HISD Department of Transportation estimates that, on average, \$800.00 yearly is expended on transporting a regular education student. Considering an estimated 1,600 homeless children and youth are enrolled in the district, at least \$1,280,000 dollars is spent on transportation. Additional costs are expended if the student requires special instructional programs that are located outside of their zoned community, must be transported to another school district, or if a new bus route has to be created to ensure that the student remains in the school of origin.

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? NO

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

The Texas Education Code authorizes each school district in the state to establish and operate an economical, public school transportation service. Thus, the state provides an allotment of state Foundation School Program funds for eligible school transportation services. The Houston Independent School District Transportation Service, in accordance with established board policy, meets all reporting and service requirements set forth by the Texas Education Agency for the allotment of Foundation School Program funds.

In addition to funds attained through state taxes, HISD relies on local Houston taxpayers to support transportation services. Consequently, tax funds are collected as a result of local bond elections.

The district does not receive federal grants for the operation of transportation services. However, funds have been allotted through the McKinney Homeless grant to help bridge the gap in HISD transportation services by supplying students with bus tokens.

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

If the HISD Transportation Department has already established a bus route that encompasses the requested route, then it takes two days for the student to receive transportation services. On the contrary, if the transportation department has to create a bus route, then it may take from five to seven days for the student to receive transportation services. In most cases, the Transportation Department has been able to provide transportation in less than five to seven days.

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Because of a large and varied student transfer program in the district, HISD has been able to accommodate most of the in-district transportation needs of homeless students. The district has been willing to place students on any route that is necessary to accommodate them. For example, the district has placed elementary-aged students on high school routes, used ambulatory special education routes, and even transferred students from one route to another, to make sure that they were transported where they needed to go. Further, if transportation services were requested to a surrounding district, project staff e-mailed the routing and scheduling component of the transportation department. If necessary, a bus route or stop was created to accommodate the student. In addition, the HISD Transportation Department has worked with neighboring districts to establish a cooperative agreement that allowed for the exchange of information and facilitated cross school district transportation, where needed. Specifically, a meeting was held in 2002 involving neighboring school districts. A cooperative agreement was developed between these districts to ensure timely creation of routes that cross district lines. In addition, the school districts created a point of contact for handling McKinney-Vento issues. A list of the neighboring districts was created to assist the project liaison in advising parents of the best course of action for the student and in making informed decisions about the education of their children.

In your area, which of the following modes is most frequently used for transportation to school of origin.

Additional or extended bus routes

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

It is often difficult to respond quickly to transportation request, particularly when the most critical piece of information for transportation, i.e., pick-up location, is often missing or changing.

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

- The size of the region served by the district
HISD is a large district, but the existence of programs such as Magnet, Gifted and Talented, Special Education, as well as, Career and Technology, at the majority of HISD campuses makes transportation throughout the district feasible.
- Placement of families and youth (i.e. distance from school)
Since HISD covers 301 square miles and must comply with laws that allow students to remain at their school of origin, the distance from a school of origin impacts the student's ride time. Consequently, some parents have chosen not to subject their children to the long ride times and transfer to the school to which they are zoned.
- Scheduling conflicts
The most recurrent scheduling conflict is related to meeting the scheduling demands of the shelters. Specifically, shelters usually have very regimented meal times. Therefore, students who have long distances to travel may be in jeopardy of missing meals. This could make the parent's decision to remain at the school of origin difficult.
- Lack of vehicles
HISD has 1,000 fleets available, which is more than adequate to handle transportation needs of all of the enrolled students. Therefore, to date, that has not been an issue for the district.
- Unavailability of parent/guardian to travel with younger children to/from school?
HISD Board Policy and the Texas Education Code allow homeless students who are pregnant and are attending a school with daycare services to receive transportation services from the district. Otherwise, parents of students are not allowed to travel with their children on HISD buses.
- Funding
HISD receives funding from local and state taxes to transport students to their designated school. Consequently, funds to transport students have not been an issue for the district.
- Recurring moves / mobility
Obviously, arranging transportation takes time and effort by the school, transportation department staff, families, and homeless project staff. Therefore, a change in a route impacts all the students that ride. All students have to be informed of a time change. Even with a two-day turn-around, students moved before transportation services have begun.
- Difficulties getting in contact with parents
Contacting parents is usually an issue for the school or homeless project social workers. Communication with parents who live in shelters concerning their child's transportation needs is often difficult, particularly since messages have to be left with shelter staff.
- Time to make arrangements, considering the immediate enrollment provisions
As mentioned above, if a change in route is made, the transportation department has to have a two-day minimum to make sure all students on the bus are aware of the time changes. The project liaison's office does an efficient job covering the transportation needs of the parents and students until the district can establish bus transportation.

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

Homeless project staff makes regularly scheduled visits to many of the local shelters in Houston as well as to several schools that serve large numbers of homeless students. In addition, project staff attends monthly Harris County Coalition for Homeless meetings where other homeless service providers are present. As a result, communications concerning new students in the district, issues related to transporting HISD students, along with successful strategies are discussed. Further collaborative efforts occur between homeless project staff, school administrators, and

Transportation Service staff. Consequently, a nearly seamless system has been established that prevents any child from receiving an education in the district.

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

Since HISD has extensive experience transporting students to special instructional programs, additional strategies were incorporated to provide transportation services to homeless students. The primary goal of these strategies was to facilitate communication between the project liaison, social workers, transportation department director, schools, shelter providers, and other homeless service providers.

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

The local homeless education liaison works closely with the public transportation director to communicate current laws governing transportation of homeless students. In addition, the local homeless education liaison has developed, as a key role for one of the social workers in the program, to serve as the contact between the schools, transportation department, and the liaison concerning problems and issues that students face, particularly related to mobility, intra-district and inter-district transfers.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

Parents and guardians are involved as they inform the program social workers of changes in transportation needs in order to improve access to transportation services. School administrators and shelter providers link with project staff to discuss issues such as rerouting bus services as well as relocating pick-up and drop off locations to avoid stigmas associated with being homeless.

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

Program staff routinely attends meetings at the Harris County Coalition for the Homeless to educate service providers on how to arrange transportation, specifically for students who move within the school year. Although a system has been established to ensure that students do not miss school due to lack of transportation, project staff occasionally makes office visits to the HISD Transportation Department to expedite bus services for students. In addition, the shelter staff contacts social workers when they need information and if there are changes or problems.

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

Currently, specific mandated policies do not affect placement of students by DSS or other placement agencies near HISD schools. However, these agencies provide social services in several HISD schools, which fosters collaborative efforts between the organizations.

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

The Elementary and Secondary Guidelines 2002-2003 on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth has established policies on School Responsibility for Enrollment. Specifically, the guidelines state that the McKinney-Vento Act requires each homeless child be allowed to maintain enrollment in the school the child attended before becoming homeless, or to enroll in the school where the child is located, whichever is in the best interest of the child. The Texas State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth specifies that the parent or person acting as parent determines whether or not it is in the best interest of the child to enroll in the school where the child is located. This latitude is consistent with TEC 25.001(b). However, the state plan also specifies that the district of origin, the district in which the child is located, and the parent, or person acting as parent must concur in determining that it is in the best interest of the child to maintain enrollment in the school district of origin. This is consistent with TAC 105.23 that requires districts to serve children for the remainder of the school year in the district they attended before moving. Placement decisions must be made with the single consideration of the best interest of the child.

Further, HISD has established Board Policy FBD 10192 on Admissions and Attendance: Intra-district Transfers. The policy indicates that the parent or person standing in parental relation to any student may request, by petition in writing, the assignment of the student to a designated school or to a school to be designated by the Board of Education. This policy is also indicated in Education

Code 25.033(1), 26.003(a)(1). Additionally, the Board of Education must grant the request made in the petition unless the Board determines that there is a reasonable basis for denying it. This policy is indicated in Education Code 25.034(e).

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

State support is provided as expressed in the above mentioned policies and education codes in serving homeless students. Additionally, funding to support homeless education is awarded to the states through the McKinney-Vento Act.

20. What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

The HISD Transportation Department staff has worked closely with surrounding school districts to coordinate transportation services. This process usually has occurred by hosting collaborative meetings among transportation directors to establish a system to receive and conduct referrals. Telephone contact has been maintained throughout the school year. In addition, the transportation directors of surrounding districts have designated staff to handle inter-district transfers on a case-by-case basis; thus ensuring that homeless students can remain in their school of origin.

21. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS) is the state-mandated, criterion-referenced test that is based on the state's essential elements with subtests in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The TAKS results indicated that the majority of Project Su Casa students passed the reading (61%), mathematics (54%), writing (81%), and social studies (78%) subtests. At the same time, the passing rate on the science subtest was only 33%. When compared to the district, Project Su Casa students lagged behind the district on all subtests. However, the difference in percent passing on the writing subtest, was only one percentage point (82% versus 81%). The largest gap between Project Su Casa students and the district was on the science subtest (59% versus 33% percent passing).

Stanford 9 is a norm-referenced test that is used in the district. Stanford 9 results of Project Su Casa students on the spring 2002 test administration indicated Normal Curve Equivalents (NCEs) that were within the average range of performance (45-55 NCEs) at the third grade level on the mathematics subtest; at the first, third and ninth grade levels on the language subtest; at the third and eleventh grade levels on the environment/science subtest, and at the third grade level on the social science subtest. Stanford 9, spring 2003 test results of the same student cohort revealed NCEs that were within the average range of performance at the first grade level on the reading subtest, at the fourth, seventh, and tenth grade levels on the language subtest. Thus, a decline in performance was indicated during the two-year period for the 2002-03 Project Su Casa student subgroup.

Since TAKS and Stanford 9 results have indicated that homeless students lag behind the district on most grade levels and content areas in academic achievement, the project liaison is working more closely with tutors and after-school program staff to provide additional instructional resources for students. Shelter staff will be included in the collaborative process as well.

Program

Putnam County District Schools, FL

Interview Participants & Titles Mr. Bob Pugh, Dir of Federal Programs

Interview Date / Time 10/2/03 @ 2:00 pm

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

70,000 total population in Putnam Co.

11,800 students (unweighted FTE)

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

predominantly rural, county seat = Palatka

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

736 – currently identified for this year (2003) (and probably even higher)

661 – for 2002-2003 school year

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	very few -- less than 2% (about 10-15 kids)
Doubled-up	Almost all are doubled up 95%
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	0 (that they are aware of)
Hotels/Motels	6-8 kids
Other (specify)	

NOTE: In Putnam Co, there are a very limited number of shelters (1 for domestic violence; 1 emergency shelter for children only; two other shelters for families – these cost a fee to stay)

All shelters in the county are located in Palatka

Putnam County Homeless Coalition started this year

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Yes: throughout the district and the county

“Ride Solution” – Limited service – (ex: only travels so many trips in a day; must know the schedule to be able to take full advantage of the service)

Offers to the citizens a service by which any resident can call the Ride Solutions office and arrange for transportation to neighboring Gainesville for medical appointments.

Seems to be jointly funded by grants

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

All children in the district are eligible for bus transportation

All transportation is done by the district (no outsourcing or contracting for buses)

Depending on location of schools, some will have as few as 30% of kids riding the bus (schools in town where most kids walk), whereas other schools will have as many as 90% riding the bus (more rural locations).

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

Over 95% (other 5% choose not to go to School Of Origin or moved)

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

Per transportation dir = \$6,500

This was money spent by the district to provide traditional busing services to homeless children and youth in the district

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES

If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% X 10-25% _____ 25-50% _____ 50-75% _____ 75%-100% _____

Less than 2% was spent on transportation; the costs are absorbed through the district's transportation department.

(On occasion, McKinney-Vento grant money will be used to reimburse staff to transport homeless children /youth to their school until regular bus transportation can be provided. In addition, homeless program staff will work with families to ensure they can get kids to school while the bus transportation is being arranged (no more than a day or two); they will reimburse the family for gas, etc.

Philosophy of district is: "What would you do if it were your child?"

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

Title 1, Part A, funds—used only to transport children back home from after school programs or other supplemental opportunities,

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

2 days

If kids are at the shelters, transportation can begin the next day (routes are already established and children can be easily picked up).

For more out lying areas, we try to help parents get them to school (put gas in car, if necessary)

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Substitute bus drivers – for coordinating supplemental routes when necessary

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

Additional or extended bus routes

Personal vehicles (very small percent)

Reimbursing families for mileage (very small percent)

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

Geographical – size of region – several schools at 30-minute drive one way

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

The size of the region served by the district. The district is geographically spread out in a rural county
Funding -- #1 problem.

How has your district addressed these challenges?

We are fortunate to have a Superintendent, Director of Title 1, and Transportation Director who all believe in helping children. The feeling is, "Whatever it takes, we do it." We work together to make it happen for the kids.

12. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

Working with very good people who care about the children.

Understand the problem; understanding the system that the problem can be impacted by; looking for a probable solution that can be implemented as quickly as possible.

13. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

Route Supervisor in the Office of Transportation is the one who coordinates these efforts.

The Director of Transportation and Director of Title I have an established relationship and protocol for how these services will be implemented, It is then up to the staff in the Title I office and the route supervisor to arrange and contact the families / schools once arrangements have been made. (There are three staff persons or "resource teachers" in the Title I office who work with the homeless program.)

14. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

Once children and youth have been identified by the homeless program staff as "homeless," they can actually contact the Department of Transportation to make arrangements because it's easier for the parents to discuss pick up locations, etc with the route supervisor.

If a family is staying at a helter, the shelter staff calls the homeless program office first; homeless program staff makes sure the child or youth qualifies as "homeless," and the staff then begins to coordinate services for them.

15. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

Staff meetings periodically (once every two weeks on average).

Regular contact via phone or fax with the Department of Transportation; regular contact with families re: transportation arrangements

16. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

There are agreements, through the Putnam Co school board, to work with the division of children and youth services (CYS) ; children in CYS include those children in foster care, children and youth in the DJJ or department of Juvenal Justice (part of sheriff's department in Putnam Co.), etc.

17. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

Bob Pugh wrote the Putnam County School board policy a few years ago (based on policy of Richmond Co., Va.) with the help of Patricia Julianelle, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty that addresses the process and responsibilities of schools in meeting the requirements of McKinney Vento.

State of FL policy addresses immunizations/requirements for physicals, etc.

18. What additional support do you get from the state level?

None

Other programs that offer services that homeless children are eligible for (as well as other children) are under "Project PRAISE" and are supported in part by state funds. This program in Putnam Co. is an effort spearheaded by Bob Pugh. As an example of assistance provided for children (homeless and otherwise), the School Board contracted with Family Medical and Dental Services, a non profit group in Putnam Co., to provide medical and dental services for children. If the family has insurance, or other means by which to pay for the appointment , then payment is made. If they do not, the School Board agrees to pay for the initial visit and assist the family with getting connected

to other services. The school district pays for first visit and then they help family qualify for other federal and state medical care.

19. What policies and arrangements exist for interdistrict transfers?

No real interdistrict transfers

Neighboring cities – (ex: St. John’s Co., Voulsia Co.)

Those families who do leave the county to go to a shelter in another county; they tend to choose to go to the school there in the other county.

“Region 2” – very good relationship among staffers (in terms of setting up arrangements, etc.)

20. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

Still trying to get this info together –

Program**San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), TX**

Interview Participants & Titles Ms. M. Estella Garza, Coord. Family/Student Services (Local Liaison)
 Mr. Mike Daly, Exec. Dir., Transportation Services
 Dr. Patricia Karam, Exec. Dir. for Student Services

Interview Date / Time Tuesday, 8/19 @ 2:00 EST

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

16 school districts within Bexar County

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

75 sq miles; 92 schools (including 4 alternative campuses); 57,000 students

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

Urban / Inner-city; Metropolitan area of Bexar County

All schools in district receive Title I funds

Student population: 86% Hispanic; 10% black; 4% white

90% “economically disadvantaged”

100% of students receive free lunch --The San Antonio ISD submitted an application to the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. The school district met the requirements of Provision II of this program; consequently, every child in the SAISD gets free meals.

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

Last year, 1200-1300 homeless children and youth identified

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Actual children identified as homeless = 1,200 +

Children served by McKinney-Vento funds = 1,000

If someone asks me how many children in homeless situations we identified in SAISD – I give them the larger number. If someone asks me how many children in homeless situations did the M-V program serve during the year, I give them the smaller number. We are always able to identify more children than we are able to serve; therefore, the difference in the numbers.

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	608 (75 of these are in transition shelters)
Doubled-up	225
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	0
Hotels/Motels	11
Other (specify)	60 (accounts for “at risk” students)
Unknown	

Note: 2.5 professional staff positions dedicated to outreach; Additional professional staff position as Coordinator

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Yes – public buses

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

School bus and special education transportation (when appropriate) is provided to students in the district who live further than 2 miles from the school or live in “hazardous areas” (meaning near a four-lane highway, etc.).

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

Between 325 and 340 students; they used the traditional school bus services or metro bus system (tokens provided)

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

McKinney-Vento transported kids for 60,000 miles last year at a cost of \$3.95 / mile

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES

If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% ____ 10-25% 25-50% ____ 50-75% ____ 75%-100% ____

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

Local funding from school district only

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

Anywhere from same day (within 2-3 hours) to 2-3 days; average 1-1 ½ days

Depends on if you are transporting inter-district

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Three districts working very well together – three largest districts in city where most of the kids are housed. Coordination involves getting the kids onto the appropriate bus route first, then working with district transportation departments to coordinate bus routes—allowing for convenient and safe locations for kids to transfer buses

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

#1 **Additional or extended bus routes** – mostly for elementary kids

#2 **Public transportation** –give high school kids semester passes

#3 **Special education buses**

#4 **Personal vehicles** – although very few

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

The majority of shelters are in our district. There are 30 identified homeless shelters in the San Antonio metropolitan area that house families of which 27 are located in the SAISD boundary area. So we are required to transport a disproportionate number of kids out of our district to their school of origin. Other districts may transport 3-5 students only. This makes our district very unique in all of TX and our challenges are great.

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

- **Scheduling conflicts** --Differing school schedules and calendars. Must coordinate when the child will be picked up and dropped off at school – ensure that the school is open or a supervising staff person is available to meet the child in the a.m.; can they get into a before-school program to accommodate the early drop off time?
- **Lack of vehicles** --having additional buses would allow for more flexibility. We are currently transporting 100 kids so far this year. Last year we transported 300 kids.

All McKinney-Vento kids are transported to the school of origin. The SAISD has routes established; however, the current routes are not flexible enough to ‘add a child on the bus’ mostly due to the kid’s destination and bus route schedules; consequently, bus routes are created specifically for the McKinney-Vento kids. Additionally, the McKinney-Vento kids’ routes are in all directions and distances and it is difficult for the existing routes to ‘add a child’ and get them to their destination in time for school or most of them in time for breakfast at school in the mornings.
- **Recurring moves / mobility** --Families constantly moving from shelter to shelter and having to coordinate CUSTOM routing. You may even have a different driver on the bus the next day, after arrangements have been made, so you can’t just tell the driver what to do--much more documentation and implementation is necessary.
- **Difficulties getting in touch with parents** – many parents/families have no phone numbers, so we *have* to do visits to the shelters, etc. This takes an enormous amount of staff time – so lack of staff time becomes a problem.

Additional challenge mentioned: Governmental agencies pass mandates and require that local LEAs or SEAs “do it” without providing funding or guidelines for implementation.

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

We took charge when setting up many of our policies so that they work to our advantage – meaning this is how we need it to work in order to accommodate our needs and work load (again, more kids transported than in other districts due to number of shelters in this district). This was our means of survival and the only way to make all of this work.

Some simple steps have been very good:

- Coordination of School Calendars. No central clearinghouse for this type of info, so we had to collect and maintain it ourselves to keep our services running smoothly (not only school hours, but work days, etc).
- Helped educate LEAs nearby on McKinney-Vento. Esp those who had not received McKinney-Vento funding – it took a little more education, and in some cases “the long arm of the law” to get them on board. This was difficult in some cases
- Working out logistics as far as expectations are concerned. For example, bus discipline: if a McKinney-Vento student misbehaves on a bus, who is it reported to and what do they do? Or what if a child is transported back home or to “exchange” point, but there is no one there to pick them up? Have had to work out those issues as they arose.
- Transportation brochures for parents (in ENG & SPN) re: policies/modes/procedures – outlines what parents are to do, how to keep in touch, etc.

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

- Keeping communication lines OPEN... We all understand the needs to be 100% coordinated – daily ... “And we all understand why”.—Estella Garza. And coordination does not equal implementation. For example, staff from two offices (transportation and McKinney-Vento/support) are working together, communicating about 10-15 emails/calls per day to see that all services are in place and all parties are notified. Especially important to ensure that parents know what’s happening.
- Workshop/Training – scheduled meeting at end of year for transportation staff and liaisons. All districts were invited and attended. Conducted “year in review”--provided an opportunity to assess year and process information from the year’s activities. Mike Daly’s office (transportation) had a follow-up meeting that included all transportation staff to further review their role and processes in transporting homeless children and youth.

- Also, bringing schools on board one at a time.
- Continually refining and re-tuning our approach, forms, procedures, etc.

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

To communicate with the various offices / staff persons – true partnership, and therefore share the load (no one is left with ultimate responsibility – it is a joint effort).

Understanding what needs to happen and not wasting time debating why we are doing it or why we have to. This is the law, this is our job, and this is how we plan to do it.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

90% of referrals come from shelters. School campuses are not really doing referrals, although they are working to educate staff at individual school campuses.

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

Last year, a large training session was conducted.

Daily communication takes place between the transportation department and homeless program (by phone and email).

Local liaisons in county meet monthly (Good group of local liaisons; able to come together to talk).

The Advisory Council consists of representatives from agencies as well as local liaisons. The San Antonio Area Homeless Education Council was created four years ago. At that time it was named Tri-District Homeless Advisory Council (at the time there were three M-V programs in Bexar County.) The name changed last year due to NCLB. The efforts of the council focused on being able to meet the demands of working collaboratively and coordinating services with community agencies and other LEAs. Additionally, it provided all participants the ability to make face-to-face contact with service providers that will (and did) enhance the referral system. It also provided an entry point for community members into the school systems. SAISD was pivotal in creating this entity due to the grant activities projected four years ago. Agencies represented in this forum included: shelter personnel, community agency reps [health agencies (mental, physical, dental)] social service agencies, Child Protective Services, Juvenile Probation, LEAs, etc. Meetings are held bi-monthly on the odd numbered months during the school year.

Secondary outcomes to this council: Greatly facilitated the access of support letters for grant applications. Community service providers were trained regarding the rights of children in homeless situations according to NCLB. The council has provided a forum to discuss issues of service providers and ways they can interact with their local LEAs. It has allowed for general announcements of community activities, workshops, conferences, etc. It is held during lunch which brown bagging is highly encouraged.

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

A new education liaison for region is in place.

But no formal policies or agreements currently exist.

This effort is still in the infancy stages. The Dept of Protective & Regulatory Services (TDPRS) (child protective service agency in Texas) has created a new job role. This role is Regional Educational Liaison. This person will be outreaching to the schools regarding the children that are placed in foster care or other temporary placements and working with the LEAs to support the continuation of children they are currently working with. In making contact with this person in San Antonio, we have begun our working relationship focusing on the foster children aging out of the system or those who run-away. Dialogue has begun in exploring other TDPRS children that we may work with and identifying their educational needs.

Because this role within TDPRS is so new, formal agreements or policies have not been discussed yet. Discussions have been held regarding possible awareness training of TDPRS staffs to the NCLB.

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

The only known policy is the state McKinney-Vento plan, coordinated or written by the state coordinator.

What additional support do you get from the state level?

The State Coordinator provides assistance or “back up” with difficult situations, but no funding is provided from the state level other than the M-V grant award.

19. What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

- Loose verbal communication
- Mutual understanding re: what needs to happen (ex: must choose safe spots for transfers of children)

20. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

None currently. We are able to identify all of the students, but we just need to look at the grades now.

Program

Spokane Public Schools, WA (District 81)

Interview Participants & Titles: Edie Sims, Homeless Facilitator

Interview Date / Time Thursday, 9/11/03 @ 3:30 pm (est)

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

29,500 students

Geographically spread out

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

Urban area

Most shelters in area are located in Spokane, so they are responsible for a great deal of transportation back to the school of origin.

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

Last year = 572 (not counting CrossWalk program)

CrossWalk [associated with Volunteers of America] serves runaway population (“real street kids”) –some choose and are able to enroll in school.

CrossWalk serves 300-400 high school aged kids/year; has a 30 bed shelter; kids can stay for 30 days at a time.

Kids in CrossWalk who want to be in school will connect with McKinney-Vento program at Spokane Public Schools to get them enrolled.

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	39%
Doubled-up	58%
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	Less than 1%
Hotels/Motels	2%
Other (specify)	n/a
Unknown	n/a

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Yes; public bus system

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

Transport 7,500 kids per day (including all special populations --special ed., homeless kids and regular bus routes).

All students in the district, living outside of the one-mile radius of their schools, are able to request bus transportation.

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

Out of 572 served, 268 were in the school of origin

Of those who were outside of school of origin district and needed transportation, 85% were transported (in the form of bus transportation, bus tokens for parents, taxis, etc.)

The children were transported that needed transportation—the rest were within normal walking or regular bus routes—just like all other kids in their neighborhood—some kids actually were housed in a shelter, etc. within their school of origin catchment. By protecting them in our McKinney-Vento program, they automatically received free lunch/breakfast. Also, they were protected if they received housing not in their school of origin for the remainder of the school year.

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

Minimum \$180,000—it is difficult to pull out costs for kids riding regular bus routes, etc. so this is a minimum estimate.

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES
If yes, what percentage of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% ____ 10-25% X 25-50% ____ 50-75% ____ 75%-100% ____

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

State and district funding

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

Immediately; At in-take with the family, transportation needs are assessed and if needed, the family is given temporary means for transportation until permanent arrangements can be made. Example: a family is given bus tokens for 2-3 days.

Homeless program sends transportation requests to the Transportation Department throughout the week, then Thursday @ 12 noon, all requests are processed and arrangements are coordinated and scheduled to begin the following Monday.

The Transportation Department handles arranging transportation (adding kids to existing bus routes, extending existing bus routes, coordinating taxi service, etc.), keeping in mind school schedules, timing, length of rides for kids, and cost effectiveness of different alternatives. Once the mode of transportation is determined, the Transportation Department notifies the McKinney-Vento program.

Staff of McKinney-Vento program then communicate these arrangements with: families, schools (more than one school, when necessary), etc.

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Form – At in-take, McKinney-Vento staff assesses the need for transportation services. If transportation is needed, the staff reviews possible modes of transportation with family, using a form that details types of transportation, policies for each and expectations families must meet. All relevant phone numbers are included as well. The family signs this form and keeps a copy. The second copy is filed in McKinney-Vento office.

“This has been a life saver”. It holds the family accountable; communication is clear and concise; everyone is on the same page; and parents know what is expected. Note: Transportation services can be removed if there are problems (too many infractions on part of family, child, or youth).

Example of other policies: If reimbursements are given, the family only gets money if the child arrives to school on time. The transportation staff checks attendance and tardy records before disbursing monies. This rule is also on the form—and explained to parents at in-take.

Public bus passes are not replaced; if they are lost; there are no refunds. Students must instead get tokens daily (a school representative gives them out each afternoon).

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

#2 **Additional or extended bus routes**

#1 **Public transportation**

#3 **Taxis**

Only a few used -- **Special education buses**

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

Funding #1!

Because our shelters are in the city, we must share costs with many surrounding districts. They receive the FTEs for students enrolled, and the district receives no money to assist keeping children in the school of origin. We believe firmly that keeping children and youth in the school of origin is best for the child but feel that districts need to be reimbursed for costs of transportation.

Getting in touch with parents. We also notify school offices and request them to send notes home with children if we have not been able to contact parents or the parents have not contacted us to receive a transportation plan.

Cuts, lay offs in district – so everyone is eyeing this funding

Size of region – very stretched out... population of students is spread out

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

Scheduling conflicts --Getting kids to school not too early and not too late

Lack of vehicles --Ex: "I just don't have a bus at that time..."

Scheduling to get the kid to school on time; balancing cost with when you get kid there (if child rides reg bus, it's cheaper, but they arrive 10 min late; otherwise, a taxi must be used... weigh the cost / benefits for each case).

Funding --#1 concern

Difficulties getting in touch with parents --Of course a challenge, but we are able to work around it; not a huge challenge.

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

- Form (see above)
- Stay open to all options – taxi, public transit (passes for parents to accompany younger kids)
- Must work it out case by case – talk with family and their needs; work with school to make accommodations (kids arrive early and get someone to supervise)
- Conduct meetings on difficult situations to try to resolve

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

The only way to make this program work is to share the responsibility. No one person or department takes these families on as their own. We all must work together to see each situation through (McKinney-Vento staff; transportation dept; school; family, etc)

Must have good communication – and **mutual respect!** for the process to work.

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

Process –

In-take with families by McKinney-Vento staff. Interview, assess transportation needs, discuss expectations and have family sign form. Explain to family that a decision will be made and the family will be notified Friday; new transportation to begin following Monday.

McKinney-Vento staff faxes a transportation request to the Transportation Department (includes the family's address and school to attend).

At the Transportation Department, the staff looks first at existing bus routes (all buses are contracted out), next at Special Education bus routes, then at possible public buses (provides passes or tokens), and then look at taxi or reimbursement for parents. In terms of taxi vs. parent transportation, just compare costs. The Transportation Department makes a determination and

documents the decision and emails the McKinney-Vento staff with arrangements. The McKinney-Vento staff also documents arrangements and contacts families, schools, taxi companies, etc. on Fridays to inform them all of arrangements.

NOTE: School staff is notified, including office managers and school counselors, with copies to principals and vice principals

EXAMPLE: More than one school might need to be notified. If a child is able to walk to a nearby school to catch an “overflow” bus that would take them to their school of origin, that nearby school is also notified so that they know a child (not their “own”) will be riding the bus and they know to look out for the child and welcome him or her.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

Social workers, occasionally will sometimes ask CPS (Child Protective Services) to take responsibility for arranging initial transportation until permanent arrangements can be made.

We also work with shelters, sometimes asking them to take responsibility for initial transportation as well.

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

Meetings with each other and with taxi companies, for example, as needed (a few times a year)

The McKinney-Vento director attends monthly homeless coalition meetings for area.

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

DSS refers families to us and tells families about us. However, because of available foster homes, it is difficult to place children in neighborhoods of their schools or origin.

SNAP – Spokane Neighborhood Action Program (private, grant funded organization)

Homeless program –provides emergency placements in motels, etc. Staff works work well with the district to place kids in areas close to the school of origin , whenever possible.

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

At the district level – policies re: homeless children and youth are part of the formal and official policies and procedures

As for adjoining districts – they are working on developing their own policies. Spokane Public Schools has sent out copies of their policies and procedures to fellow districts encouraging them to develop policies to address the issue. In general, adjoining districts work very well together to make arrangements for homeless children and youth – no problems there.

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

The State Coordinator is always available when we have questions, and we have annual trainings.

What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

Last year, there were bumps in the road due to other districts not knowing McKinney-Vento.

This year, a policy is in place that states that the school district where the child is currently residing is responsible for coordinating transportation services back to the school of origin, if requested. All districts work together, but ultimately it is that district’s responsibility.

Spokane Public Schools McKinney-Vento staff has compiled a list of all adjoining districts with Homeless Program contact person and phone number that is given out to all shelters. It explains the process and who to contact to initiate it. “This has helped a lot!”

20. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

No hard data currently, but lots of anecdotal evidence from counselors, teachers, principals. Test scores rose in all areas for the district last year and the McKinney-Vento program has been credited

with helping to pull up those scores through their programs that support better attendance and lower turn over rates.

Data has been collected for every child since the beginning of this program five years ago. Data from the past two years, especially, would be easy to pull out (as it is coded) and look for trends. It just hasn't been done yet.

Program:

St. Paul Public School, MN

Interview Participants & Titles: Ms. Becky Hicks, McKinney-Vento Liaison

Interview Date / Time: Thursday, 8/21 @ 1:30 pm (EST)

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

second largest district in state (behind Minneapolis)

Over 44,000 students in district

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

State Capital; urban

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

Approx. 1,000 + (last year was first year of computerized attempt to track numbers...this is just an estimate)

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	677
Doubled-up	57* * we estimate that this pop is much larger than indicated here
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	41
Unknown	157

NOTE: School district worked with a local homeless agency to collect these numbers based on a one night “snapshot” of homeless children/youth.

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Yes – bus system

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

All children who live outside of a one-mile radius of their school can ride the bus.

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

Estimated 85-90%

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

\$35,000 : alternate transportation: bus tokens/passes; cabs; gas for program vans

\$76,000: salaries + benefits for two full time van drivers (program vans)

unknown costs:

- existing bus routes that pick up homeless children / youth

- inter-district transportation: (very small # of children transported this way), district just picks up this bill and does not keep records of additional costs for homeless children/youth

*NOTE: Largest mode of transporting homeless children/youth is using existing bus routes, no cost estimates available.

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? YES

If yes, what % of the grant did you spend on transportation to school of origin?

0-10% ___ 10-25% ___ 25-50% ___ 50-75% ___ 75%-100% X

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

- Title I, Part A funds last year (prior to guidance being published, which does not allow for use of these funds anymore)
- Charitable contribution from individual: \$15,000+
- Received grant from local homeless agency: \$15,000
- Van donated so old van sold and profits paid for bus tokens, etc.

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

1-3 days ; goal is before 3 days (inter-district transfers sometimes take as long as 3 days)

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

- Significant collaboration with district transportation office for adding stops, etc.
- Real challenges—extra time/collaboration needed for arranging inter-district transfers and working to transport children to neighborhood schools where no city-wide transportation options exist (buses/vans must be sent)

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

- #1: existing bus routes
- #2: program vans (owned by district)
- #3: public transportation (bus tokens / passes; cabs)
- #4: extended / additional bus routes
- #5: special education routes

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

- This year, funding because of lack of ability to utilize Title I funds.
- Amount of staffing time it takes to coordinate transportation. Our program needed to hire a .5 FTE transportation coordinator to handle all the requests. This role was previously assigned to the program coordinator until it grew so large. If we had more funding, this could be a full time position.
- Collaboration between school districts. Some are unaware of the legislation, some do not have the resources, and some are unwilling. It gets difficult and unclear on what we are supposed to do when another district refuses to transport one of our students. We also need to know what is shelter staff responsibility, what is school staff responsibility, as it varies from shelter to shelter. The state department of education is trying to make the procedure more defined, but we are still experiencing difficulty.
- Collaboration – staff changes, especially in shelters!

Note: St. Paul Public School District is inside Ramsey County. There is a new shelter that is in the county but not in district. The county provides two vans for transporting kids. We must

collaborate with the county and adjacent school district to make transportation arrangements for children.

- Parents – so many challenges anyway, and so highly mobile; they are in and out of placements

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

Placement of families and youth (i.e. distance from school)—especially in the case of neighborhood schools or schools outside of city

Scheduling conflicts--especially with neighborhood schools; AND with all schools on different schedules (different start and end times – having to coordinate bus pick up and drop off at school with staff is around – getting them in a program so they aren't just left at the school door before opening in the a.m., etc.

Lack of vehicles--difficult to estimate how many buses (for example), we'll need or will use, based on number of kids and where they are at any given point in the school year. Some trends are beginning to emerge (ex: families are less mobile in the winter); but efforts are new (McKinney-Vento is new) and we plan to continue to look for trends in years to come to help in the planning process

Unavailability of parent/guardian to travel with younger children to/from school? --if children are too young to take public transportation alone, state funds won't pay for tokens and passes for parents and relatives to ride with these younger students; therefore, we must use McKinney-Vento funds to pay for parents

Funding – see notes above re: Title I funding (lack of)

Recurring moves / mobility

Difficulties getting in touch with parents –due to recurring moves / mobility!

Note: City of St. Paul does offer voice mail services for homeless individuals, but some don't use it...

Time to make arrangements, considering the immediate enrollment (problem really only with out-of-district transfers; can take up to 3 days to arrange)

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

By training school staff (through in-services); creating awareness

Working with: student placement center (registration), school nurses, bus drivers, clerical staff, principals, etc.

Also meetings with: community agencies: St. Paul Coalition for the Homeless, for example

Note: St. Paul school staff are in shelters every day (this helps tremendously with education, awareness, etc)

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

- Enough staffing / Staff Availability

--McKinney-Vento Staff in shelters on regular basis; McKinney-Vento staff knows what is happening and shelter staff know to contact us to get needs addressed

--McKinney-Vento Staff available to consult with families regarding what will work best for them in transporting children (Ex: bus tokens or reimbursements, etc.)

- Electronic Database:

--Staff using laptops in shelters (database) instead of paper trails related to where kids are located, etc. Instead of having to have a conversation at each staff meeting related to placement issues, simply consult the database.

- Access to different types of transportation

--Ex: use of special education routes for homeless children and youth; public transportation; etc.

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

It's important to understand that in some cases (as in the case for this school district), the director of transportation runs a HUGE program, of which McKinney-Vento is just once piece. Despite this, it is imperative that he/she understands the McKinney-Vento act, supports the transportation mandates, and trains his/her staff to understand and support it as well. The transportation director must also have access to enough vehicles and staff to make the system work effectively (ex: hire part-timers to cover as needed).

McKinney-Vento liaison's role is to determine how to best implement McKinney-Vento, looking at everything from:

- Policies
- Training / in-services
- Seeking additional funding
- AND, knowing the legislation in order to educate others and to encourage, support, and put in place effective, appropriate policies that enforce the legislation and ensure student success

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

- Parents (Staff works 1:1 with parents to discuss appropriate transportation arrangements)
- Foster care providers
- County social workers
- School district staff in shelters (20 shelters in St. Paul). Homeless education staff includes three full time education assistants, one part time education assistant, one full time social worker, and two van drivers. This direct contact with shelters is aimed at keeping kids in school and not setting up separate schools and supporting the education of kids in the local school district by having staff in school.

NOTE: There is a homeless contact at every school in the district; district staff know who to contact in each school.

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

- Shelter staff (daily contact with staff)
- McKinney-Vento program staff meet weekly
- Attend monthly homeless coalition meetings
- Ongoing meetings as needed with principals, transportation directors, etc.; most work is done over the phone / email
- Shelter directors meeting conducted every fall

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

Work closely with Ramsey Co DSS/ Child Protective Services

Children are usually placed within the St. Paul public school district, but not placed in the closest school. It is not a coordinated effort; DSS simply places in a location that happens to be available (school placement is very much a secondary issue in many of the circumstances).

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

There are school board policies in place

Board of Education has written policies

The MN Department of Education issued a policy beginning in 2004-5 indicating that the district where the student is residing is responsible, the opposite of what we were doing. The policy is tied into reimbursement legislation so we are hoping school district will get funding for the transportation of homeless youth residing in shelters.

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

None with our program

20. What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

Lots of phone conversations

The McKinney-Vento office at St. Paul will contact the school directly (in the other district) to make arrangements. We have plans in place because we are larger, we do more work with transporting homeless children /youth

Would like to have inter-district policies in place

21. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

Last year (2002-2003) = first year of tracking

Tracked standardized test scores and found that the students scores were slightly above the district average

Data show that 86% of all our homeless students remained in their school of origin. The mobility rate in our district is 6.79%. (K-6: 2.9%, 7-12: 3.88%). For the homeless population, the mobility rate is 13.61%. (K-6: 10.57%, 7-12 (3.04%). We actually have a better mobility rate for secondary students than the district average. Our attendance rate is 88% of school days attended; for the district it is 96%. We also had 37 homeless children with perfect attendance. We are still looking at standardized test scores but from initial screening, it appears they have dropped below the district average. We believe this may be because we have a better data collection system in place and more students were identified as being homeless. We are going to further analyze the data to see if homeless students in transitional sites are scoring better than students in emergency shelters or doubled up.

Program: Vancouver WA, ESD 112 (Educational Service District 112)

Interview Participants & Titles: Mr. Lionel Pinn, Manager, Specialized Transportation Cooperative

Interview Date / Time: Tues, 2/24/04 @ 4:00 EST /1:00 PCT

The cooperative began in 1988. It was originally established to handle transportation of special needs students (those with existing IEPs). In 2002, 23 district members voted to add to the co-op the responsibility of transportation of homeless students to their school of origin when it involves a transfer across districts. (The same requirement exists for the transportation of special needs students – across district lines only.)

The co-op is a state organization –funded primarily by the state, with some funding coming from the 23 member districts. Each district pays a set amount each year for this service.

About 10-15% of operation is for transporting homeless students; the rest is for the transportation of special needs children.

The co-op is unique in WA state – no other co-op like this in the state.

The co-op has a Constitution and bylaws – a regular business agreement between co-op and districts.

1. Describe your district’s demographics.

a. Size? (geographically, number of students)

ESD 112 is a region, not a district, with 35 school districts within the ESD 112 region. Of those, 23 school districts belong to the cooperative program

Geographically: covers 6 counties in SW Washington region

b. Location? (rural, urban, suburban)

Rural, urban and suburban

c. Number of homeless children & youth?

213 children who were referred for transportation services

2. Of the total number of homeless children and youth provide the estimated numbers who have the following as their primary night residence:

Primary night time residence	Estimated number of homeless children/ youth (Total LEAs with and without subgrants)
Shelters	181
Doubled-up	29
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.)	0
Hotels/Motels	3
Other (specify)	0
Unknown	0

We received 213 applications – 213 students were transported. 100% of those who requested transportation were able to receive it.

3. Is there a public transportation system in your community?

Varies from location to location – some areas do lack public transportation; but probably about 90% of region does have public transportation.

4. To what extent is transportation provided to school children in general?

This co-op only provides transportation for special needs children with an IEP and homeless students to their school of origin if outside of their current district. In other words, the co-op only provides inter-district transportation. Use special education buses.

5. How many homeless K-12 children and youth enrolled in school during the 2002-2003 school year remained in their school of origin and received transportation to their school origin?

213; 100% who requested it

(But keep in mind, the transportation co-op won't see applications for transportation until after the liaison approves it. The liaisons out in the districts may be denying some requests occasionally that we never hear about.)

6. What was the estimated total cost of transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth in your area?

approx. \$60,000 per year

7. Did your LEA receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds in 2002-2003? NO

8. What other sources of funds did your district use to transport children/youth to their school of origin (district, state, or other federal funding, private funding, other nontraditional sources)?

Largely funded by the state, some funding from districts – no other sources.

9. How long does it generally take for transportation services to be arranged once a parent/guardian requests for his/her child (or an unaccompanied youth requests) to remain in the school of origin?

Three days is the policy, but arrangements are generally made within a few hours.

(There are 5 shelters in area and 1 transitional home. Numerous other children are doubled-up or living in temporary housing.)

(Each district has a liaison that coordinates transportation needs. In the case where a student is living in a shelter, the shelter contacts the district liaison. The liaison fills out a form requesting transportation services and faxes it to the transportation office. (Sometimes the transportation office is notified ahead of time.) Arrangements are then made by transportation office.

The majority of shelters are in the downtown area. One bus is used exclusively for transporting students at those shelters. In other cases, the homeless students ride the special education buses. Stops are added to existing bus routes.

In general, bus routes and stops don't change a lot with families in shelters. Changes occur more often with the doubled-up families, which proves to be a challenge.

10. What specific strategies and systems has the district implemented to provide transportation to the school of origin?

Special education buses are used.

A system is already in place for special education students, therefore, it is easy to adapt to the needs of the homeless population.

Most important is communication, which is the link between the co-op, liaisons, shelters, parents, students and drivers.

In your area, which of the following modes is *most frequently* used for transportation to school of origin.

Special education buses –only means used

11. What are the biggest challenges to providing transportation to the school of origin?

#1—Funding

#2 – (a very close #2) coordination / logistics. For example, a student may be living in a doubled-up situation 50 miles away from the school of origin. This is tough.

To what extent do the following also present challenges?

Scheduling conflicts (#3 biggest challenge – see above)

Ex: Co-op policy requires that the student be met by a parent or guardian; problems arise if a parent can't be there.

Lack of vehicles—tied into funding issue

Unavailability of parent/guardian to travel with younger children to/from school---Co-op policy requires that student be met by parent; this isn't always possible.

Funding –identified as #1 problem

Recurring moves / mobility—tends only to be a problem with doubled-up families

Difficulties getting in touch with parents –Frequent changes in contacts for a student; sometimes the father is contact, then next week the mother is contact, etc.

Time to make arrangements, considering the immediate enrollment provisions --this we do very well and almost immediately

12. How has your district addressed these challenges?

Addressing them as an ongoing process

Changing the annual fees / assessments: Districts pay set rate at beginning of school year. The co-op may have to go back to ask for more money if more services were needed than expected.

13. Which strategies do you consider the most successful?

Communication is real key!

Finding funding is key. We are fortunate that the co-op had vehicles in place (for special needs students) that could be used to transport homeless students.

14. What are the roles of the pupil transportation director and local homeless education liaison in facilitating transportation?

See above

One bus is used specifically for downtown shelters

40 buses are in the co-op fleet – 15 of those are used to help pick up homeless kids as well as special education kids.

15. Who else is involved in arranging transportation to the school of origin? (parents / caregivers / guardians, social workers, etc.)

No one else at this level

16. How do all those involved work together (regular meetings, homeless coalitions, local policies)?

Two meetings are held per year. Regular meetings were already in place for the co-op. Agenda items include a review of procedures to determine what is working, not working, costs, etc. etc.

23 district representatives attend this meeting, one from each district in the co-op

23 school districts are in our cooperative / region. However, there are 35 school districts – not everyone is a cooperative member. When one is a co-op member and the other isn't – they have to bill that non-cooperative member

17. What agreements or policies exist between DSS or other placement agencies to ensure that homeless families are placed close to schools where their children are attending?

N/a

18. What state and local policies support keeping homeless children in their school of origin? Are there any written policies, MOUs, protocols, etc. in place?

Transportation request form – detailed

19. What additional support do you get from the state level?

Largely funded by the state.

20. What policies and arrangements exist for inter-district transfers?

Only work with inter-district transportation.

21. What data do you have that shows the impact of school stability (remaining in the school of origin) on the academic achievement of homeless students?

None available at this time.

Appendix G

Sample Documents

SAISD Transportation Request Form

SAISD Parent Brochure

SAISD Transportation Schedule

Spokane Intake Form

Putnam County Local Policy



San Antonio Independent School District

1103 Austin Street • San Antonio, Texas 78208-1156

Telephone (210) 223-9792 • Fax (210) 271-7204

Transportation Department

Supplemental Transportation Request

Date of Request:	McKinney-Vento <input type="checkbox"/>	LPS <input type="checkbox"/>
	Spec. Ed. <input type="checkbox"/>	

Student Information:

Student Name:	Grade:	SSN/ID:
Facility (if applicable)		
Facility Contact Person		
Address (location for pick-up)		Rm. / Apt. #
Parent/Guardian	Parent/Guardian Contact #	
2 nd Contact #	3 rd Contact #	

Destination School Information:

School Name	School District:
School Address	
Campus Contact Name / Phone	
Campus Bell Schedule	AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM <input type="checkbox"/>
Breakfast Time: (if SoO is in another LEA)	
Earliest Time a Student can be Dropped @ School with Supervision	
Special Accommodations	

Worker (please print) / Date

Authorized SAISD Staff

Date Faxed to Transportation

Request faxed to / date:

Alamo Heights <input type="checkbox"/>	Harlandale <input type="checkbox"/>	Northside <input type="checkbox"/>	South San Antonio <input type="checkbox"/>
East Central <input type="checkbox"/>	Judson <input type="checkbox"/>	San Antonio <input type="checkbox"/>	Southside <input type="checkbox"/>
Edgewood <input type="checkbox"/>	North East <input type="checkbox"/>	Schertz, Cibolo, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Universal City	Southwest <input type="checkbox"/>

Other: (identify) _____



**Together, our children will
attend school**

**Juntos nuestro niños
asistirán a la escuela**



**School Social Work Services
Transitions Program**
1702 N. Alamo Ste. 213
San Antonio, Texas 78215
210-227-1206
210-227-4737 (fax)

Transportation

Transportación



Transitions Program

Guidance & Counseling Department
1702 N. Alamo Ste. 213
San Antonio, Texas 78215
210-227-1206
Fax. 210-227-4737

Servicios de Transportación

Date/Fecha: 12/20/2002

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

The “No Child Left Behind” Law of 2001 provides students who are temporarily without a home with certain federal rights. Your child has the right to continue his/her education in the school of origin (school in which the child became homeless) or the school in the attendance area where the child is temporarily living.

1. Parents must be advised of their choice for school enrollment.
2. Student transportation should be made available to the school of origin should the parent desire.
3. Should the school of origin be located in another school district, transport to that school district must be made available in the best interest of the child.

The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) provides school transportation or VIA bus passes to the school of origin should it be in the best interest of the child. The best interest of the child is determined on a case by case basis with the assistance of the parent.



Students can help to keep SAISD buses on schedule for everyone.

To request the service, the parent must call the Transitions Program at 227-1206 and speak with the Transitions Program staff.

These guidelines are being provided for you, the parent, to assure a safe and enjoyable ride for your child. Please read the school bus rules on page 8 and help your child (ren) to abide by these rules.

Notice of receipt of information:

My signature below indicates that I have been provided with the rules and regulations for the SAISD transportation services. I understand that in order for my child to get continued uninterrupted transportation services, my child(ren) and I must abide by these rules. This booklet has been provided to me that includes phone numbers of school district offices that must be notified when my child (ren) are to be absent or if I change residence. I understand that my child(ren) can lose such benefits due to their behavior in the bus.

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver: _____

Date signed: _____



Aviso de recibo de información:

Mi firma indica que me han proporcionado las guías y las regulaciones para los servicios de transporte de el distrito escolar de San Antonio. Entiendo que para recibir los servicios, mi hijo/a y yo necesitamos seguir las reglas del autobús. Este pamflete informativo que me ha sido proporcionado incluye los teléfonos de las oficinas de los distritos que deben ser notificados en caso de que mis niños estén ausentes o si hay cambio de residencia. Entiendo que mi hijo/a puede perder este beneficio por mal comportamiento en el autobús.

Padre/Guardian: _____

Fecha de firma: _____

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENTS

HOMELESS LIAISONS

Alamo Heights ISD	832-5973	Alamo Heights ISD	442-3720
East Central ISD	649-2332	East Central ISD	337-5769
Edgewood ISD	444-4671	Edgewood ISD	444-8215
Harlandale ISD	977-1670	Harlandale ISD	921-4440
Judson ISD	659-0487	Judson ISD	945-5331
North East ISD	657-8815	North East ISD	804-7155
Northside ISD	690-6945	Northside ISD	678-2992
San Antonio ISD	223-9792	San Antonio ISD	227-1206
Schertz, Cibola, Universal City ISD	945-6224	Schertz, Cibola, Universal City ISD	945-6040
South San Antonio ISD	977-7075	South San Antonio ISD	977-7000
Southside ISD	626-3825	Southside ISD	626-0600
Southwest ISD	622-4352	Southwest ISD	622-4335

NINGÚN NIÑO DEJADO ATRÁS

La ley del 2001 “Ningún Niño Dejado Atrás” provee a estudiantes sin hogar con ciertos derechos federales. Su hijo/a tiene el derecho de continuar su educación en la escuela de origen (la ubicación escolar en la cual perdió su hogar) o la escuela en el área de ubicación residencial del hogar temporero.

1. Las escuelas deben de informar a los padres sobre las opciones de matrículas de escuelas.
2. El distrito transportará a su hijo/a a la escuela de origen si los padres desean.
3. Si su escuela de origen está localizada en otro distrito escolar entonces el distrito escolar de San Antonio (SAISD) transportará a su hijo/a a ese distrito con el mayor interés y beneficio para el estudiante.

El distrito de San Antonio provee transportación de autobús escolar o servicio de VIA a la escuela de origen. El servicio será determinado individualmente con la asistencia de los padres para el mayor interés y beneficio del niño/a



Para recibir el servicio, los padres pueden llamar al programa de Transición al 227-1206 y hablar con los empleados del programa.

Los estuadiates pueden ayudar a los chóferes que mantengan el horario.

Las reglas de autobús escolar son provistas a los padres para que instruyan a, sus hijos a tener una transportación segura. Lea la pagina 8.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

By Law, your school-aged children in these situations may be homeless and eligible for transportation to the school of origin and other services from the Transitions Program.

1. Families or unaccompanied youth living in emergency shelters.
2. Families living in domestic violence shelters
3. Youth living in youth shelters.
4. Children living in shelters awaiting placement in foster care.
5. Families or youth living in campgrounds or parks.
6. Families or youth living in automobiles.
7. Families or youth living in abandoned buildings.
8. Families or youth living in airports, bus stations, or train stations.
9. Families or youth that are doubled up with friends or relatives (sofa-surfing).
10. Families or youth living in substandard housing, such as colonias (no running water, no electricity).
11. Families living in transitional housing programs

REGLAS DEL AUTOBÚS ESCOLAR

Ayude a sus hijos a aprender y comprender las reglas. Estas ayudarán a sus hijos a llegar seguros a su escuela y estar listos para aprender.

1. Observar el código de conducta para estudiantes de SAISD y de otras escuelas.
2. Sean amables, no usar lenguaje profano.
3. No comer o tomar en el autobús escolar.
4. Siempre mantengan el autobús escolar limpio.
5. Cooperen con el chofer del autobús escolar.
6. No se permite fumar.
7. No destruyan el autobús escolar o el equipo del autobús .
8. Siempre mantenganse sentados.
9. Mantegan su cabeza, manos y pies dentro del autobús escolar.
10. Se prohíbe pelear o empujar.
11. Se prohíbe transportar animales domésticos
12. El chofer del autobús está autorizado a designar asientos.

SCHOOL BUS RULES

Please help your children know and follow these rules. These rules are made to help all children arrive to their school of origin safely and ready to learn.

1. Observe SAISD and/or other school districts' codes of conduct.
2. Be courteous, no profanity allowed.
3. No eating or drinking on the bus.
4. Keep the bus clean.
5. Cooperate with the driver.
6. No smoking allowed.
7. Do not damage the bus or equipment in the bus.
8. Stay in your seat.
9. Keep head, hands and feet inside bus.
10. No fighting, pushing or shoving.
11. No pets on the bus.
12. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats.

¿QUE SIGNIFICA NO TENER UN HOGAR?

Según la ley para niños de edad escolar, si Usted vive en cualquiera de estas situaciones, quizás sus hijo/a podrían ser elegibles para transportación a la escuela de origen y para otros servicios del programa de transiciones.

1. Familias o jovenes no acompañados viviendo en un refugio.
2. Familias viviendo en un refugio de violencia doméstica.
3. Jovenes viviendo en un refugio para jovenes.
4. Niños viviendo en un refugio esperando ser atendidos en hogares de crianza sustituta
5. Familias o jovenes viviendo en un campamento o parque.
6. Familias o jovenes viviendo en un automóvil.
7. Familias o jovenes viviendo en un edificio abandonado.
8. Familias or jovenes viviendo en aeropuertos, estación de autobuses, o estación de trenes.
9. Familias or jovenes que viven con otros familiares o amigos.
10. Familias o jovenes viviendo en hogares inferiores al nivel normal, como colonias (sin agua o electricidad).
11. Familias viviendo en programas de hogar transitorios.

McKinney-Vento Student Transportation – Parent Guide

1. All student absences must be called into the SAISD Transportation Department by 5:30 am at 223-9792. If your student is attending another school district, you will need to call their transportation department and provide them with the same information. Your child is attending _____ school district and their transportation department can be reached by calling _____.
2. The bus drivers are not responsible for transporting medicine or notes.
3. Students are expected to follow all regulations in the Student Code of Conduct.
4. Students are expected to be dressed, toileted and waiting outside five minutes before the bus arrives for pick-up. Your student's transportation services do not include participation in after-school activities such as sports and/or clubs.
5. Please tell you student that it is very important that they get outside to the bus pick-up area after school immediately. The buses are not scheduled to wait.
6. Buses may be late for the AM or PM pick-ups due to weather, traffic, etc.



School bus drivers need
your help and cooperation.

Transportación de Estudiantes McKinney-Vento—Guía de Padres

1. Todas las ausencias del estudiante deben ser reportadas a no más tardar las 5:30 am al **223-9792**. Si su hijo/a asiste a otra escuela en otro distrito escolar debe llamar al departamento de transportación en ese distrito y proveer la misma información. Su hijo/a asiste al distrito escolar _____. Llame al departamento de transportación al _____.
2. El chofer del autobús escolar no es responsable por transportar medicinas o notas.
3. Se espera que todos los estudiantes sigan las reglas en el código de conducta para los estudiantes.
4. Los estudiantes deben estar preparados y esperar afuera 5 minutos antes de que llegue el autobús escolar a recogerlos. Este servicio no participa en actividades extra-curriculares como deportes y/o clubes.
5. Hable con sus hijos sobre la importancia de la puntualidad en esperar el autobús escolar inmediatamente después de clases. Los choferes de autobuses escolares no pueden esperar a los estudiantes si no llegan a tiempo a su lugar de espera designado.
6. Los autobuses escolares podrían atrasarse tanto en las mañanas como en las tardes a causa del mal tiempo o eventos fortuitos, tráfico u otras condiciones,

MCKINNEY-VENTO TRANSPORTATION STUDENT SCHEDULE

STUDENT(S) NAME:

SCHOOL(S)

AM

PICK-UP TIME

LOCATION

BUS #

DRIVER

DROP-OFF

TIME

SCHOOL

PM

PICK-UP

SCHOOL

BUS#

DRIVER

DROP-OFF TIME @ RESIDENCE

START DATE





Spokane Public Schools
excellence for everyone

HEART

All transportation requests are faxed downtown to Transportation where routes and mode of transportation will be determined. We will notify you with pick up and drop off times as well as mode when that information is available.

Your transportation will be one of the following:

School Bus

- * Student should be outside at least five minutes early waiting for the bus
- * Proper school bus behavior is expected.

Taxi

- * You **must call 353-7675** by 7:45am if your student is ill or not needing the taxi (the answering machine is on 24/7).
- * The student should be outside waiting for the cab five minutes early
- * If you have questions, call the HEART number: **353-7675** – NOT Spokane Cab
- * A Parent/Guardian must be home to meet the student when he/she is dropped off.
- * Too many infractions could result in the loss of taxi service.
- * Students must wear seat belts.

In Lieu Of

- * Can only be used when other methods of transportation are not available.
- * Checks are issued once each month – to be picked up at the HEART office; you will be called.
- * District 81 will measure mileage and check attendance – you will receive no pay for days the student is tardy or absent.
- * Mileage, when approved, will begin on the day “in lieu of” form is signed – it will not be retroactive.

STA Pass/Tokens

- * Bus passes are left at the end of each month in the school office – the student will be notified.
- * Adult pass expectations are that the parent/guardian will accompany the student(s) to and from school.
- * Lost bus passes will NOT be replaced – the student will be placed on the “two token a day” program.
- * Loss of second buss pass will result in the “two token a day” program for the remainder of the school year.
- * Lack of attendance will result in the loss of bus pass.

I understand and agree with the information provided.

 Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth Signature

 Date

Children: _____

Putnam County Schools, Florida

Admissions Procedures for Homeless Students

I. Residency Requirements (Definition of Homelessness)

Homelessness is a sensitive issue. In some cases, a student's homelessness will be apparent during registration, i.e. residing at a homeless shelter or "doubled-up" with a relative or friend. In other cases, the registrants may be reluctant to discuss their homelessness. School personnel should be alert and sensitive to the issue. However, Putnam County District Schools needs to identify and track its homeless student population. School personnel should make a determination of the student's homelessness based upon the following criteria:

- A. Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence; or
- B. Sleeps in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (abandoned cars and buildings, parks and streets); or
- C. Has a primary nighttime residence that is supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, emergency shelters, and transitional housing); or
- D. Is living in "doubled-up" accommodations, that is, sharing housing with other families or individuals. Students are considered homeless if they are doubled-up because of loss of housing or other similar situations. (Families living in doubled-up accommodations voluntarily to save money generally should not be considered homeless).

II. School Registration of Homeless Students

- A. At the time of registration, the principal or the principal's designees should discuss with the parent, guardian, and/or the student the school enrollment that is in the best interest of the student with reference to such factors as stability of school placement, transportation, special programs, and family plans. Among the options for school registration are the following:
 - The homeless student may maintain the status of a registered student in the school attended before the homeless situation developed, or
 - The homeless student may be registered in the zoned school serving his/her current address.
- B. Subsequent to being registered, the homeless student should be immediately referred to the project coordinator who will assist the student, parents, and school personnel in areas of need.

III. Custody/Guardianship Requirements

- A. All students, including homeless, must be registered by their parent or legal guardian. If the parent/legal guardian is not available, every effort should be made by the principal or principal's designee to contact the parent or guardian to complete the registration process. If local school personnel are unable to contact the parent or legal guardian, the student should be referred to the school social worker or contact in the Student Services Department. Written documentation should be maintained of all written and verbal communication, home visits, and efforts to contact the parent or guardian.
- B. In unusual situations in which no parent or legal guardian can be contacted, a referral should be made to the Student Services Department for Putnam County Schools to report a homeless student as a child in need of services.

IV. Health Records and Birth Certificate Requirements

- A. If a homeless student seeks to register without a record of immunization, the principal or the principal's designee should contact the student's former school by telephone to request the student's records and to discuss immunization and other enrollment/placement issues. If information is given that satisfies compliance with immunization requirements, the student should be enrolled. If information is not available to satisfy immunization compliance, this requirement should be temporarily waived (up to 30 days extension) and the student enrolled pending efforts to obtain the medical records. In the interim, the school should collaborate with the Public Health Department for an appointment for proper immunization. The student should be allowed to attend classes while the process of immunization is completed. Assistance in this matter is available through the project coordinator for Project PRAISE.
- B. If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be registered and subsequent appropriate steps should be taken to resolve this issue.

V. Education Records and Transfer

- A. Educational information needed for proper placement should initially be obtained through a telephone contact with the student's former school. If educational records or educational information are not available, the student should be registered and an educational record developed in accordance the Putnam County School Board policies and guidelines. In these cases, an academic diagnostic test

may be administered to assist in the determination of the student's skill levels and appropriate placement.

- B. If a homeless student seeks to register without having appropriate transfer forms, the receiving school should register the student, telephone the former school for transfer information, and request that the education record be forwarded. The sending school should provide requested information during the telephone contact and forward education records promptly.

APPENDIX H

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM GUIDELINE No. 17 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

- I. Scope. This guideline establishes minimum recommendations for a State highway safety program for pupil transportation safety including the identification, operation, and maintenance of buses used for carrying students: training of passengers, pedestrians, and bicycle riders; and administration.
- II. Purpose. The purpose of this guideline is to minimize, to the greatest extent possible the danger of death or injury to school children while they are traveling to and from school and school-related events.
- III. Definition.

Bus

A motor vehicle designed for carrying more than 10 persons (including the driver).

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR)

The regulations of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce, including buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 10,000 pounds or designed to carry 16 or more persons (including the driver), other than buses used to transport school children from home to school and from school to home. (The FMCSR are set forth in 49 CFR parts 383-399.)

School-chartered bus

A "bus" that is operated under a short-term contract with State or school authorities who have acquired the exclusive use of the vehicle at a fixed charge to provide transportation for a group of students to a special school-related event.

School bus

A "bus" that is used for purposes that include carrying students to and from school or related events on a regular basis, but does not include a transit bus or a school-chartered bus.

- IV. Pupil Transportation Safety Program Administration and Operations.--
Recommendation. Each State, in cooperation with its school districts and other political subdivisions, should have a comprehensive pupil transportation safety program to ensure that school buses and school-chartered buses are operated and maintained so as to achieve the highest possible level of safety.
 - A. Administration.
 1. There should be a single State agency having primary administrative responsibility for pupil transportation, and employing at least one full-time professional to carry out these responsibilities.

2. The responsible State agency should develop an operating system for collecting and reporting information needed to improve the safety of operating school buses and school-chartered buses. This includes the collection and evaluation of uniform crash data consistent with the criteria set forth in Highway Safety Program Guidelines No. 10, "Traffic Records" and No. 18, "Accident Investigation and Reporting. "
- B. Identification and equipment of school buses. Each State should establish procedures to meet the following recommendations for identification and equipment of school buses.
1. All school buses should:
 - a. Be identified with the words "School Bus" printed in letters not less than eight inches high, located between the warning signal lamps as high as possible without impairing visibility of the lettering from both front and rear, and have no other lettering on the front or rear of the vehicle, except as required by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), 49 CFR part 571.
 - b. Be painted National School Bus Glossy Yellow, in accordance with the colorimetric specification of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Federal Standard No. 595a, Color 13432, except that the hood should be either that color or lusterless black, matching NIST Federal Standard No. 595a, Color 37038.
 - c. Have bumpers of glossy black, matching NIST Federal Standard No. 595a, Color 17038, unless, for increased visibility, they are covered with a reflective material.
 - d. Be equipped with safety equipment for use in an emergency, including a charged fire extinguisher, that is properly mounted near the driver's seat, with signs indicating the location of such equipment.
 - e. Be equipped with device(s) demonstrated to enhance the safe operation of school vehicles, such as a stop signal arm.
 - f. Be equipped with a system of signal lamps that conforms to the school bus requirements of FMVSS No. 108, 49 CFR 571.108.
 - g. Have a system of mirrors that conforms to the school bus requirements of FMVSS No. 111, 49 CFR 571.111.
 - h. Comply with all FMVSS applicable to school buses at the time of their manufacture.
 2. Any school bus meeting the identification recommendations of sections 1, a-h above that is permanently converted for use wholly for purposes other than transporting children to and from school or school-related events should be painted a color other than National School Bus Glossy Yellow, and should have the stop arms and school bus signal lamps described by sections 1, e & f removed.

3. School buses, while being operated on a public highway and transporting primarily passengers other than school children, should have the words "School Bus" covered, removed, or otherwise concealed, and the stop arm and signal lamps described by sections 1, e & f should not be operated.
 4. School-chartered buses should comply with all applicable FMCSR and FMVSS.
- C. Operations. Each State should establish procedures to meet the following recommendations for operating school buses and school-chartered buses:
1. Personnel.
 - a. Each State should develop a plan for selecting, training, and supervising persons whose primary duties involve transporting school children in order to ensure that such persons will attain a high degree of competence in, and knowledge of, their duties.
 - b. Every person who drives a school bus or school-chartered bus occupied by school children should, as a minimum:
 1. Have a valid State driver's license to operate such a vehicle. All drivers who operate a vehicle designed to carry 16 or more persons (including the driver) are required by FHWA's Commercial Driver's License Standards by April 1, 1992 (49 CFR part 383) to have a valid commercial driver's license;
 2. Meet all physical, mental, moral and other requirements established by the State agency having primary responsibility for pupil transportation, including requirements for drug and/or alcohol misuse or abuse; and
 3. Be qualified as a driver under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations of the FHWA. 49 CFR part 391. if the driver or the driver's employer is subject to those regulations.
 2. Vehicles.
 - a. Each State should enact legislation that provides for uniform procedures regarding school buses stopping on public highways for loading and discharge of children. Public information campaigns should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that the driving public fully understands the implications of school bus warning signals and requirements to stop for school buses that are loading or discharging school children.
 - b. Each State should develop plans for minimizing highway use hazards to school bus and school-chartered bus occupants, other highway users, pedestrians, bicycle riders and property. They should include, but not be limited to:

1. Careful planning and annual review of routes for safety hazards;
 2. Planning routes to ensure maximum use of school buses and school chartered buses, and to ensure that passengers are not standing while these vehicles are in operation;
 3. Providing loading and unloading zones off the main traveled part, of highways, whenever it is practical to do so;
 4. Establishing restricted loading and unloading areas for school buses and school-chartered buses at or near schools;
 5. Ensuring that school bus operators, when stopping on a highway to take on or discharge children, adhere to State regulations for loading and discharging including the use of signal lamps as specified in section B.1.f. of this guideline;
 6. Prohibiting, by legislation or regulation, operation of any school bus unless it meets the equipment and identification recommendations of this guideline; and
 7. Replacing, consistent with the economic realities which typically face school districts, those school buses which are not manufactured to meet the April 1, 1977 FMVSS for school buses, with those manufactured to meet the stricter school bus standards, and not chartering any pre-1977 school buses.
 8. Informing potential buyers of pre 1977 school buses that these buses may not meet current standards for newly manufactured buses and of the need for continued maintenance of these buses and adequate safety instruction.
- c. Use of amber signal lamps to indicate that a school bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children is at the option of the State. Use of red warning signal lamps as specified in section B, 1, f, of this guideline for any purpose or at any time other than when the school bus is stopped to load or discharge passengers should be prohibited.
- d. When school buses are equipped with stop arms. such devices should be operated only in conjunction with red warning signal lamps, when vehicles are stopped.
- e. Seating.
1. Standing while school buses and school-chartered buses are in motion should not be permitted. Routing and seating plans should be coordinated so

as to eliminate passengers standing when a school bus or school chartered bus is in motion.

2. Seating should be provided that will permit each occupant to sit in a seat intended by the vehicle's manufacturer to provide accommodation for a person at least as large as a 5th percentile adult female, as defined in 49 CFR 571.208. Due to the variation in sizes of children of different ages, States and school districts should exercise judgment in deciding how many students are actually transported in a school bus or school -chartered bus.
3. There should be no auxiliary seating accommodations such as temporary or folding jump seats in school buses.
4. Drivers of school buses and school-chartered buses should be required to wear occupant restraints whenever the vehicle is in motion.
5. Passengers in school buses and school-chartered buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less should be required to wear occupant restraints (where provided) whenever the vehicle is in motion. Occupant restraints should comply with the requirements of FMVSS Nos. 208, 209 and 210, as they apply to multipurpose vehicles.

- f. Emergency exit access. Baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment should be stored and secured so that the aisles are kept clear and the door(s) and emergency exit(s) remain unobstructed at all times. When school buses are equipped with interior luggage racks, the racks should be capable of retaining their contents in a crash or sudden driving maneuver.

D. Vehicle maintenance. Each State should establish procedures to meet the following recommendations for maintaining buses used to carry school children:

1. School buses should be maintained in safe operating condition through a systematic preventive maintenance program.
2. All school buses should be inspected at least semiannually. In addition, school buses and school-chartered buses subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations of FHWA should be inspected and maintained in accordance with those regulations (49 CFR Parts 393 and 396).
3. School bus drivers should be required to perform daily pre-trip inspections of their vehicles, and the safety equipment thereon (especially fire extinguishers), and to report promptly and in writing any problems discovered that may affect the safety of the

vehicle's operation or result in its mechanical breakdown. Pre-trip inspection and condition reports for school buses and school-chartered buses subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations of FHWA should be performed in accordance with those regulations (49 CFR 392.7, 392.8, and 396).

E. Other Aspects of Pupil Transportation Safety.

1. At least once during each school semester, each pupil transported from home to school in a school bus should be instructed in safe riding practices, proper loading and unloading techniques, proper street crossing to and from school bus stops and should participate in supervised emergency evacuation drills, which are timed. Prior to each departure, each pupil transported on an activity or field trip in a school bus or school -chartered bus should be instructed in safe riding practices and on the location and operation of emergency exits.
2. Parents and school officials should work together to select and designate the safest pedestrian and bicycle routes for the use of school children.
3. All school children should be instructed in safe transportation practices for walking to and from school. For those children who routinely walk to school, training should include preselected routes and the importance of adhering to those routes.
4. Children riding bicycles to and from school should receive bicycle safety education, wear bicycle safety helmets, and not deviate from preselected routes.
5. Local school officials and law enforcement personnel should work together to establish crossing guard programs.
6. Local school officials should investigate programs which incorporate the practice of escorting students across streets and highways when they leave school buses. These programs may include the use of school safety patrols or adult monitors.
7. Local school officials should establish passenger vehicle loading and unloading points at schools that are separate from the school bus loading zones.

- V. Program evaluation. The pupil transportation safety program should be evaluated at least annually by the State agency having primary administrative responsibility for pupil transportation.

Downloaded from:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/tea21programs/402Guide.html#g17>

APPENDIX I

National Center for Homeless Education



The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is a national resource of research and information enabling communities to successfully address the needs of children and their families and youth experiencing homelessness.

*Call the NCHE HelpLine
1-800-308-2145*

Visit the NCHE Website: www.serve.org/nche

The NCHE website provides current and comprehensive information on the following:

- Understanding the McKinney-Vento legislation
- Contacting state coordinators for homeless education
- Accessing state and local resources
- Linking to other organizations that address homeless issues
- Linking to documents and reports
- Accessing information by topic

Join the Listserv (Contact: bhartnes@serve.org)

NCHE Publications

Awareness Materials

Poster: Information for Parents (Education Rights; English and Spanish)

Poster: Information for School-Aged Youth (Education Rights; English and Spanish)

Brief: Homeless Education: An Introduction to the Issues (English only)

Brochure: NCHE: Linking Resources for Children and Youths Experiencing Homelessness

Brochure: What You Need to Know to Help Your Child Do Well in School (English and Spanish)

Parent Packs

To order posters, brochures, and Parent Packs, call 1-800-308-2145.

Handbooks—Available on the NCHE website

Local Homeless Education Toolkit. (Revised 2004). Popp, P.A., Hindman, J.L., Stronge, J.H.

McKinney-Vento Program Standards and Indicators Data Collection Users Manual. (2004).

Mooney, K.

State Coordinators Handbook for Supporting Local Homeless Education Liaisons. (2003). Popp, P.A., Hindman, J.L., Stronge, J.H.

Informational Publications—Available on the NCHE website

Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin. (2004). Bowman, D.B., Barksdale, K.

McKinney-Vento Policy to Practice Briefs. (2002). Bowman, D.B., Duffield, B., James, B., Julianelle, P.

Reaching and Teaching: Improving Literacy Skills for Children Experiencing Homelessness and School Mobility. (2004). Popp, P.A., Stronge, J.H., Hindman, J.L.

Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth. (2003). Popp, P.A.

APPENDIX J

National Partners in Homeless Education

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

Contact: Diana Bowman, Director, 800-755-3277, dbowman@serve.org

Web Address: www.serve.org/nche

NCHE, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a national resource center, providing valuable information, training, and materials to educators and community members seeking to address the educational needs of homeless children and their families. These materials are made available to the public at no charge and include such items as educational rights posters, parent packs, training resources, and “law into practice” briefs.

U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

Contact: Gary Rutkin, Coordinator, 202-260-4412, gary.rutkin@ed.gov

Web Address: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program oversees the education of homeless children and youth in our nation’s public schools, including the granting of McKinney-Vento funds and the monitoring of their usage. Program Coordinator Gary Rutkin, working with other Department officials and national partners, provides official guidance to states and school districts on implementing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

Contact: Patricia Popp, President, 757-221-7776, ppopp@naehcy.org

Web Address: www.naehcy.org

NAEHCY, a national grassroots membership association, serves as the voice and the social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations. NAEHCY brings together educators, parents, advocates, researchers and service providers to ensure school enrollment and attendance, and overall success for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY accomplishes this through advocacy, partnerships and education. NAEHCY also hosts an annual national conference on homeless education, which brings together educators and service providers to learn about new developments within the field.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)

Contact: Joy Moses, Education Staff Attorney, 202-638-2535, jmoses@nlchp.org

Web Address: www.nlchp.org

The mission of NLCHP is to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness. To achieve its mission, the Law Center pursues three main strategies: impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. The Law Center strives to place homelessness in the larger context of poverty. By taking this approach, the Law Center aims to address homelessness as a very visible manifestation of deeper causes: the shortage of affordable housing, insufficient income, and inadequate social services. NLCHP provides guidance and produces high-quality publications on legal issues pertaining to homelessness and poverty.

The National Network for Youth (NNY)

Contact: Mishaela Duran, Director of Public Policy and Public Affairs, 202-783-7949 x3109, mduran@nn4youth.org

Web Address: www.nn4youth.org

The National Network for Youth is the leading advocacy organization for runaway and homeless youth. NNY seeks to promote opportunities for growth and development for youth who face greater odds due to abuse, neglect, family conflicts and disconnection from family, lack of resources, discrimination, differing abilities, or other life challenges. NNY achieves this through advocacy on national policy related to at-risk youth and the provision of training, technical assistance, consultation services, and publications on the issue of supporting and protecting at-risk youth.

National Association of State Directors for Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS)

Contact: Charlie Gauthier, Executive Director, 540-253-5520, execdir@nasdpts.org

The purpose of the association is to provide leadership, assistance, and motivation to the Nation’s school transportation industry. The association aims to provide safe, efficient, economical, and high-quality transportation to school children on their trips to and from school and school-related activities.