

1 As required by the North Carolina Constitution and North Carolina law, the [Transylvania County](#)
2 [Board of Education \(the “board”\)](#) is committed to providing a free public school education to all
3 children who are legally entitled to enroll in the school system. In accordance with the
4 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the North Carolina State Plan for Educating
5 Homeless Children, the board will make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and
6 youth of school age located within the area served by the school system, encourage their
7 enrollment, and eliminate barriers to their receiving an education that may exist in school system
8 policies or practices. Based on individual need, homeless students will be provided services
9 available to all students, such as preschool, free or reduced price school meals, services for
10 English learners, special education, career and technical education (CTE), academically or
11 intellectually gifted (AIG) services, and before- and after-school care.

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13 The provisions of this policy will supersede any and all conflicting provisions in board policies
14 that address the areas discussed in this policy.

15
16 **A. DEFINITION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS**

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18 Homeless students are children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate
19 nighttime residence. The term “homeless student” will also be deemed to include the
20 term “unaccompanied youth,” which includes a youth who is not in the physical custody
21 of a parent or guardian. Homeless children and youth include those students who are as
22 follows:

- 23
24 1. sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a
25 similar reason;
- 26
27 2. living in motels, hotels, transient trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack
28 of alternative adequate accommodations;
- 29
30 3. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
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32 4. abandoned in hospitals;
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34 5. living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not
35 designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human
36 beings;
- 37
38 6. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing,
39 bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- 40
41 7. living in a migratory situation that qualifies as homeless because the child lacks a
42 fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

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44 **B. HOMELESS LIAISON**

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46 The superintendent or designee shall appoint and train a school employee to serve as the
47 homeless liaison. The homeless liaison's duties include, but are not limited to, the
48 following:

- 49
50 1. ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth;
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52 2. ensuring school/preschool enrollment of and opportunities for academic success
53 for homeless children and youth;
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55 3. ensuring that homeless families and children have access to and receive
56 educational services for which they are eligible;
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58 4. ensuring that homeless families and children receive referrals to healthcare,
59 dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate
60 services;
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62 5. informing parents or guardians and any unaccompanied youth of available
63 transportation services and helping to coordinate such services;
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65 6. ensuring that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is
66 disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians and unaccompanied
67 youth;
- 68
69 7. informing parents or guardians of educational and related opportunities available
70 to their children and ensuring that parents or guardians have meaningful
71 opportunities to participate in their children's educations;
- 72
73 8. helping to mediate enrollment disputes, including ensuring that a homeless child
74 or youth is enrolled immediately pending final resolution of the dispute;
- 75
76 9. informing unaccompanied youth of their status as independent students and
77 assisting in verifying such status for the purposes of the Free Application for
78 Federal Student Aid;
- 79
80 10. ensuring that school personnel providing services to homeless students receive
81 professional development and other support;
- 82
83 11. working with school personnel, the student, parents or guardians, and/or other
84 agencies to obtain critical enrollment records, including immunization and
85 medical records, in a timely manner; and
- 86
87 12. working with the superintendent or designee to identify board policies or
88 procedures that might serve as a barrier to enrollment of homeless students,

89 including those related to immunization records, medical records, uniforms or
90 dress codes, school fees, and school admission.

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92 **The employee serving as the homeless liaison is Beth Branagan and may be contacted at**
93 **bbranaga@tcsnc.org or 828-884-9567.**

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95 **C. ACCESS TO STUDENTS' RECORDS**

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97 Homeless students transferring into the school system may provide cumulative and other
98 records directly to school system personnel. The superintendent or designee shall not
99 require that such records be forwarded from another school system before the student
100 may enroll. However, school personnel shall immediately request the official records
101 from the previous school.

102
103 School personnel shall immediately enroll homeless students, even if they do not have
104 proof of residency, school and immunization records, birth certificates, or other
105 documents; have missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of
106 homelessness; have outstanding fees; or are not accompanied by an adult. The homeless
107 liaison shall assist the students and parents or guardians in securing appropriate records
108 or otherwise meeting enrollment requirements.

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110 Information regarding a child or youth's homeless situation must be treated as a student
111 record and protected accordingly. See policy 4700, Student Records.

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113 **D. ENROLLMENT**

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115 A homeless student (or the student's parent or guardian) may request to attend his or her
116 school of origin or any public school that other students living in the same attendance
117 area are eligible to attend. The school of origin is defined as the school the student
118 attended before losing permanent housing or the school in which the student was last
119 enrolled, including a preschool. When a student completes the final grade level served by
120 the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the
121 next grade level for all feeder schools. Unless not in the student's best interest, a
122 homeless student who continues attending the school of origin will remain enrolled in the
123 school of origin for the entire time the student is homeless and until the end of any
124 academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing.

125
126 The superintendent shall designate the director of ~~student assignment~~ **support services** or
127 other appropriate personnel to decide, in consultation with the homeless liaison, which
128 school a homeless student will attend. The decision will be based upon the student's best
129 interest. The superintendent's designee must presume that keeping the student in the
130 school of origin is in the student's best interest unless contradicted by the student's parent
131 or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. The superintendent's designee must consider
132 student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors concerning

133 the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless
134 students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or the
135 unaccompanied youth.

136
137 If the superintendent's designee determines that it is not in the student's best interest to
138 attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian or
139 unaccompanied youth, he or she must provide a written explanation of the reasons for the
140 determination to the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, along with information
141 regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

142 143 **E. ENROLLMENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

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145 The school system will implement an enrollment dispute resolution process that is
146 consistent with the process required by the State Board of Education in the North
147 Carolina Administrative Code, 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0112.

148 149 **1. Initiation of the Dispute and Stay Put**

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151 If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school for a homeless
152 student, the following must occur:

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154 a. The homeless student will be immediately admitted to the school in which
155 enrollment is sought, will receive all services for which he or she is
156 eligible, and will be allowed to participate fully in school activities,
157 pending resolution of the dispute.
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159 b. The unaccompanied youth or parent or guardian of the student will be
160 provided a written explanation of the school's decision regarding the
161 enrollment, including the right to appeal the decision. Such information
162 must be provided in a language that the parent or guardian or
163 unaccompanied youth can understand. The information must contain:
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165 1) contact information, including telephone number and address of
166 the homeless liaison and of the State coordinator for homeless
167 education, with a brief description of their roles;
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169 2) the right to initiate the dispute resolution process either orally or in
170 writing;
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172 3) a simple form that parents or guardians or unaccompanied youth
173 can complete and submit to the homeless liaison to initiate the
174 dispute resolution process;
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176 4) a step-by-step description of how to dispute the school's decision;

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- 5) notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice or remain in the school of origin with transportation provided pending resolution of the dispute;
 - 6) notice that immediate enrollment includes full participation in all school activities; and
 - 7) notice of the right to obtain assistance of advocates or attorneys.
- c. The student or parent or guardian will be referred to the system’s homeless liaison, who shall carry out the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

2. Homeless Liaison Review

- a. Any parent or guardian or student initiating an enrollment dispute (hereinafter “complainant”) is encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute informally through discussion with the homeless liaison. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may present a formal complaint orally or in writing to the homeless liaison either directly or through the principal of the school at which enrollment is sought.
- b. The complaint should include the date of the filing, a description of the disputed enrollment action, the name of the person(s) involved, and a description of the relief requested. The complainant must be informed of the right to provide supporting written or oral documentation and to seek the assistance of an advocate or attorney.
- c. Within five school days after receiving the complaint, the homeless liaison shall provide a written decision, including the reasons for the decision, to the complainant and the superintendent.

3. Appeal to the Superintendent of the Liaison’s Decision

- a. Within five school days of receiving the liaison’s decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the superintendent in writing. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the response.
- b. The superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference with the complainant to discuss the complaint.

220 c. Within five school days of receiving the appeal, the superintendent or
221 designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a
222 statement of the reasons for the decision.
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224 4. Appeal to the Board of the Superintendent's Decision

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226 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's decision, he or she
227 may file a written appeal with the board of education. The board will provide the
228 complainant with a written decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The
229 board's decision will constitute the final decision of the school system. The
230 written statement of the board's opinion will include the name and contact
231 information of the State coordinator for homeless education and will describe the
232 appeal rights to the State coordinator.
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234 5. Appeal to the State Coordinator of the Board's Decision

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236 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken by the board of education,
237 he or she may file an appeal with the State coordinator for homeless education,
238 who will issue a final decision on the complaint. Within five school days
239 following a request from the State coordinator, the homeless liaison shall provide
240 the record of complaint and a copy of the board's decision along with any other
241 information requested regarding issues in the appeal.
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243 F. TRANSPORTATION

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245 The board of education will provide homeless students with transportation services
246 comparable to those of other students. In addition, at the parent or guardian's request (or
247 at the request of the homeless liaison for unaccompanied youth), the board will provide
248 transportation services to/from the school of origin. The superintendent or designee and
249 the homeless liaison shall coordinate homeless students' transportation needs, based on
250 the child's best interest. In situations in which a student attends school in this system but
251 his or her temporary housing is in another system (or vice versa), the superintendent or
252 designee shall work with the other system to share the cost and/or responsibility for
253 transportation. If an agreement cannot be reached between the systems, the cost of such
254 transportation will be divided evenly.
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256 If a homeless student becomes permanently housed and chooses to remain in his or her
257 school of origin, the board will provide transportation to the student for the remainder of
258 the school year.
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260 G. TITLE I

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262 Homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services. The homeless liaison
263 and the ~~Title I director~~ **chief academic officer** shall collaborate to identify the needs of
264 homeless students.

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266 Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; *Non-*
267 *Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program*, U.S.
268 Department of Education (July 2016); G.S. 115C-366(a2); 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0112; State Board of
269 Education Policy SPLN-000

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271 Cross References: Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110),
272 Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Discretionary Admission (policy 4130),
273 School Assignment (policy 4150), Student Records (policy 4700)

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275 Adopted:

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