

Today we are here to share information about the McKinney-Vento Act and Federal Programs Parent Advisory Council:

First, we'll share what the McKinney Vento Act is and how it applies to Whiteriver Unified School District. The history of the McKinney Act began as the Homeless Persons' Survival Act introduced to both houses of Congress in 1986. Later it was renamed the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act signed into law July 22, 1987. Congress included a provision in the Act requiring states to ensure that all homeless children have the same right to a free and appropriate public education as non-homeless children. Congress again reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act and it was signed into law January 8, 2002 which provided clarification on students who qualify as homeless,

and to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility and choice.

Students experiencing housing instability or homelessness must meet certain requirements to be eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act. Once eligible, they receive access to resources to help with their academic journey.

“Homeless children and youths” are defined as those who “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”.

- 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; or abandoned hospitals.

- 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.
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- And migratory children.

How are students identified? When parent & guardians enroll their children in school, they are asked two main questions:

- 1) **Address of where the student slept last night – is this address based on a temporary living arrangement due to the loss of housing?** Yes or No If you checked “No” to the temporary living arrangement, you may STOP here. If you

checked “Yes”, please continue to the next section.

2) If the address you provided in section A is based on a temporary living arrangement, is it due to loss of housing or economic hardship?

Yes or No

Each school has a McKinney-Vento site liaison who reviews reports every two weeks to make sure eligible students receive resources and remove barriers to help students succeed in school. The site liaisons check for errors and interview families for eligible students.

The site liaisons are:

- Alchesay High School: Nurse Aide – Cheryl Burnette
- Canyon Day Junior High: Counselor – Monique Jaimes

- Seven-Mile Elementary School: Nurse Aide –
Moriah Jones
- Whiteriver Elementary School: Parent Liaison –
Norma Susan
- Cradleboard Elementary School: Nurse Aide –
Erica James
- District Liaison: Kayti Parker

Site Liaisons have reported difficulty in contacting families to complete the interview – which is completely confidential. If you receive a letter or phone call from Whiteriver Unified School District, please return their call. Site Liaisons have to conduct the interview process to determine eligibility and report accurate nighttime residence to the district student information systems director. The number of eligible homeless students and nighttime residence codes are then reported to the state. This is how

funding is secured for supporting students experience homelessness.

The questions are statutory requirements that ensure families share their stories with site liaisons; the interviews are confidential.

The interview process has a list of questions that determine if the student's housing meets the definition of "fixed" which means a home that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

The questions are:

- Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term?
- Do you have a key?
- Can you come and go as necessary?

- Does the homeowner or renter have a legal right to force you to leave without cause if they choose to do so?
- How long do you expect to be at this address?
- If you are residing in a shelter, do you know what your exit date is?
- If you are residing in a shelter, do you have a housing plan in place for when you exit shelter?
- Is this a short-term situation?
- Do you have a specific date you are suppose to move out by?
- Is this a temporary living arrangement?
- Where would you go if something happened between you as adults?
- Why did the family move in together?
- Was it for mutual benefit or due to a crisis or other event?
- Is your name going to be added to the lease at the shared residence?

- Have you signed a lease?

The next list of questions determine if the student's housing meets the definition of "regular" as stated in statute which means a residence that is on a regular, nightly basis.

- Do you stay in the same place every night?
- Do you move often?
- Is your address subject to change soon?
- If you were unable to stay here, where would you go?

The next list of questions determine if the student's housing meets the definition of "adequate" as stated in statute which means residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments:

- Are you safe where you are staying?

- Do you have access to a phone?
- Do you have adequate space for your belongings?
- Do you share a room or bed with your children?
- Is there adequate food in the home?

Follow up questions determine “temporary” which may be due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.

- Are you on a waiting list for housing?
- Are you currently employed?
- Did you lose housing due to an eviction or inability to pay rent or other bills?
- Did you lose housing due to destruction of or damage to the previous home?
- Where did you live previously?
- Students living on their own will be asked: Is your housing situation due to the absence of a

parent/guardian due to abandonment,
incarceration or another reason?

- Did unhealthy conditions such as an inadequate physical environment or infestation cause you to lose housing?
- Was there drug or alcohol abuse in the home where you were living?

Once students are identified as eligible, site liaisons will be contacting parent/guardians every two weeks. They will not go through the whole interview again, but will do quick check-ins to ask for updates with living situations or to offer referrals for assistance. It is not meant to harass or bother families, but to help families through this transition time. Our goal is to build trust and work with families. Our site liaisons are caring and want to connect with families.

I understand, it sounds like a lot of questions, these are necessary to determine eligibility under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition for: fixed, regular and adequate.

The Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youths guarantees an educational environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. Every student experiencing homelessness shall have access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless. This commitment to the educational rights of children, youth, and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available by Whiteriver Unified School District.

To remove educational barriers for children and youths experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-

Vento Homeless Assistance Act mandates the following:

- **Immediate Enrollment:** documentation and immunization records cannot serve as a barrier to the enrollment in school
- **School Selection and Maintained Enrollment:** McKinney-Vento eligible students have a right to select from the options below. Students may remain enrolled in their selected schools for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year upon which they are permanently housed or 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 living or eligible to attend.
- **Definitions of School of Origin means** the school the student attended when permanently housed. And the School in which the student was last enrolled

- **Definition of School of Residency means** the school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides.
- **Transportation Services:** McKinney-Vento eligible students attending their school of origin have a right to transportation to and from the school of origin.
- **Participation in Programs:** McKinney-Vento eligible students are guaranteed the right to services comparable to services offered to other students in the school.
- **Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** McKinney-Vento eligible students are guaranteed the right to immediate enrollment without proof of guardianship.
- **Access to Extracurricular Activities:** Removal of barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities for homeless students who meet relevant eligibility criteria.

- **Dispute Resolution.** If you disagree with school officials about enrollment, transportation, or fair treatment of a homeless child or youth, you may file a dispute with the school district by contacting the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison within 7 business days of receiving the written eligibility determination notification.
- **Appointment of a McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison:** The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act mandates the appointment of a local Homeless Liaison in every school district or local education agency to ensure that homeless children and youth are enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.

This is a lot of information, if you missed a section, or have any questions, contact me at the district office: 928-358-5728 or ask your school site liaison:

- Alchesay High School, 358-5690, ext. 5785 for Cheryl Burnette
- Canyon Day Junior High, 358-5680, ext. 5758 for Monique Jaimes
- Seven-Mile Elementary School, 358-5670, ext. 5767 for Moriah Jones
- Whiteriver Elementary School, 358-5660, ext. 5787 for Norma Susan
- Cradleboard Elementary School, 358-5650, ext. 5743 for Erica James

Finally, Federal Programs Parent Advisory Council will be meeting tonight, Monday, October 27 beginning at 5:30pm at the District Office Training Room. Boys & Girls Club will be presenting; Ms. Rayann Amos, School Safety & Preparedness Director will be sharing on Digital Education and Safety; the Title 6 Annual Performance Report (APR) will be shared; and Mr. Caleb Endfield, Transitions Academic Advisor will be

presenting on the district transitions plan. A lot of useful information will be shared, we welcome you to stay connected to the district by attending Federal Programs parent advisory council meetings.