

McKinney-Vento and Homeless Liaison Collaboration

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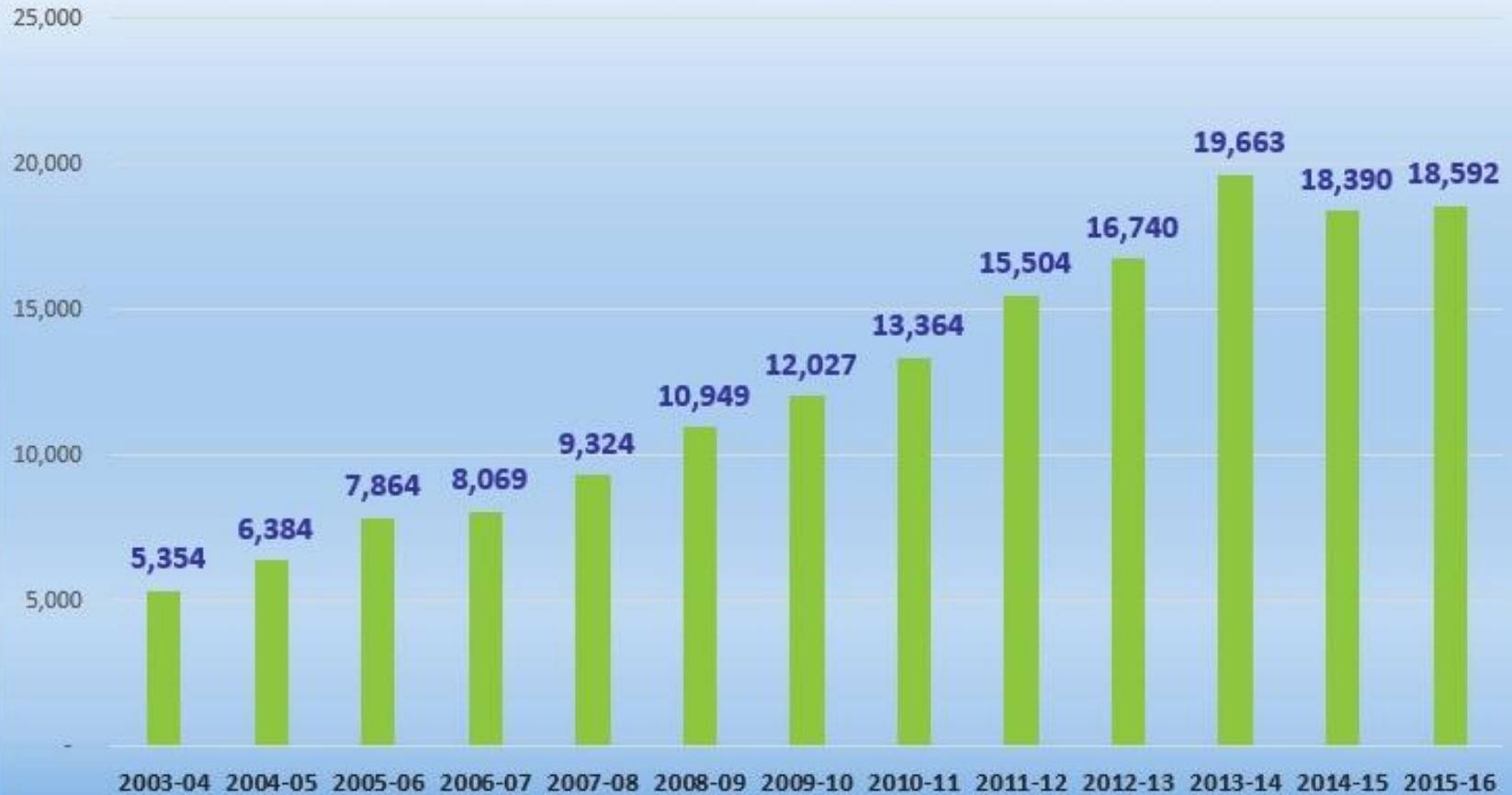
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

Our Agenda

- Context and data
- Review McKinney-Vento
- Role of the Homeless Liaison
- Collaboration discussion



Homeless Student Enrollment in Wisconsin 2003-2016



Young Children and Homelessness

- 51 percent of all children in HUD homeless shelters are under the age of 6
- The age at which a person is most likely to stay in a homeless shelter in the United States is infancy (under age 1)
- Nearly 50,000 homeless children ages 3-5 were enrolled in public preK programs in 2013-2014



Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

- Higher incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety
- Homelessness in early childhood is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school
- The achievement gap between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen, over time
- A youth who experiences homelessness is 87 percent more likely to drop out of school



Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety
- Stereotypes and lack of awareness
- Under-identification
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence, guardianship)
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.



History of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Originally passed in 1987
- Reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Works hand-in-hand with Title I-A and other federal education programs



McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Main themes:

- Identification
- School stability
- School enrollment
- Support for academic success
- Child-centered, best interest decision making



Homelessness Defined

The term “homeless” children and youth means:

“Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—”

What exactly is a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence?



Fixed, Regular and Adequate

- Fixed:
 - Stationary, permanent, not subject to change
- Regular:
 - Used on a predictable, routine, consistent basis
 - Consider the relative permanence
- Adequate:
 - Lawfully and reasonably sufficient
 - Sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment

Can the student go to the **SAME PLACE** (fixed) **EVERY NIGHT** (regular) to sleep in a **SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE** (adequate)?



Eligibility

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up)
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in a public or private place not designed for ordinary use as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans (cars, parks, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, etc.).
- Children from migrant families who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- Unaccompanied youth living in the above circumstances



Eligibility: Context for the Definition

- Shelters do not exist in many suburban and rural areas, and often are full where they do exist
- Eligibility conditions of shelters sometimes exclude families with boys over the age of 12, or unaccompanied minors
- Youth on their own fear adult shelters and have no safe living options in many communities
- Shelters often have 30, 60, or 90 day time limits
- Motels may not be available, or may be too expensive or unsafe
- Families and youth may be unaware of alternatives, fleeing in crisis



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- Definition: Youth who meet the definition of homeless AND are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (ie: youth living with relatives on an emergency basis, youth living with a friend or runaway)



School of Origin and Residence

- School of origin: school that child or youth attended when permanently housed or last enrolled
- School of residence: school in the local attendance area where the child or youth is staying



Transportation

- LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at a parent's or guardian's request (or at the liaison's request for unaccompanied youth)
 - If staying in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin
 - If crossing LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally



Transportation—Key Provisions

- LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students
- LEAs must eliminate barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of students experiencing homelessness (including transportation barriers)



Transportation Strategies

- Develop close ties among local liaisons, school staff, pupil transportation staff, and shelter workers
- Use school buses (including special education, magnet school and other buses)
- Develop formal or informal agreements with school districts where homeless children cross district lines
- Use public transit where feasible
- Use approved carpools, van or taxi services
- Reimburse parents and youth for gas
- Pursue interagency solutions



School Enrollment

When remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest or what the parent, guardian or youth requests:

McKinney-Vento students are entitled to immediate enrollment in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend; even if:

- Students do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents; or
- Students have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.



Enrollment (*continued*)

The terms “enroll” and “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities



Enrollment of Unaccompanied Youth

- Immediate enrollment applies, even without parent or guardian
 - Youth self-enrollment; Caregiver forms
- Liaisons must help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, give priority to the youth's wishes, and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights
- School personnel (administrators, teachers, attendance officers, enrollment personnel) must be made aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth



Enrollment in Preschool

- States must ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs administered by the SEA or LEAs.
- Preschools are included in the school of origin definition.
- Liaisons must ensure access to Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA.



School Stability

Each LEA shall, according to each child's or youth's best interest:

- Continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; OR
- Enroll in any public school that housed students living where the student is living are eligible to attend.



School Stability (*continued*)

- Applies when students lose housing during the year or during the summer
- School of origin:
 - Includes a preschool
 - Includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for feeder school patterns, when the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin



School Stability (continued)

In determining best interest, the LEA shall:

- Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest
 - Unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth
- Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety
- Give priority to the parent's/guardian's request.
- Give priority to the youth's request (in the case of an unaccompanied youth)



Role of the Homeless Liaison

- **Assist** unaccompanied youth/parents with placement, enrollment, and knowing their rights
- **Disseminate** public notices of educational rights
- **Inform and assist** with accessing transportation
- **Mediate** enrollment disputes



Role of the Homeless Liaison

Directory: <https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/liaisons>

- Every LEA must designate a McKinney-Vento liaison able to carry out their legal duties.
- Ensure that:
 - Homeless children and youth are identified; enrolled in and have a full opportunity to succeed in school; receive educational services, including preschool; and are referred to healthcare, dental, and mental health services
 - Parents and guardians are informed of MV rights and can participate in their children's education



Role of the Homeless Liaison (*continued*)

- Ensure that:
 - Public notice of educational rights is posted
 - Enrollment disputes are mediated
 - Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of transportation services and assisted with transportation arrangements to the school of origin
 - Data on homeless students are collected and submitted
 - School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other support



Role of the Homeless Liaison (*continued*)

- Ensure that:
 - Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school and that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent them from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.
 - Liaisons must participate in professional development and technical assistance as determined appropriate by the state coordinator.
 - SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences



Collaboration with the Homeless Liaison

- Reach out to liaisons every school year
 - Have a strategic plan for partnering
- Recognize that often liaisons wear multiple hats, especially in rural districts
- Connect with school staff that provides services (not just liaison)
 - Counselors, social workers, etc.
- Connect with other community agencies that have partnerships with schools
- Know the needs in your community's schools
- DPI will encourage liaisons to connect with and attend meetings with CoCs



Collaboration with the Homeless Liaison (continued)

- Know the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness
- Create MOU for information sharing
- Develop referral protocols for identification
- Develop plan to support educational stability
- Include school stability as a criterion for placement decisions
- Keep in mind proximity to school of origin (for extracurriculars)



Collaboration Discussion

- What strategies for collaboration have you tried with local liaisons?
- What has gone well?
- What challenges have you encountered?
- What do you envision the collaboration will look like?
- What concrete steps can you take to move toward increased collaboration?



Collaboration Resources

- [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)
- [Housing and Urban Development](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)

