

Homeless Children and Youth in Winona Area Public Schools are entitled to the following:

Services

Homeless children and youth, as defined by federal law, shall be provided services comparable to those received by other students including transportation to and from their school of origin to the extent possible. The district shall designate a liaison for homeless children and youth who shall ensure that their rights are protected and they have the opportunity to reach the same high academic standards expected of all students.

Enrollment

Immunizations, guardianship, residential status or other documentation shall not be barriers to immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth. Where appropriate, the enrolling school or office shall refer the parent or guardian to the district homeless liaison for assistance in obtaining appropriate documentation. The district homeless liaison shall also assist unaccompanied youth with placement and/or enrollment choices.

Placement

To the extent feasible, homeless children and youth shall remain in their school of origin and transportation shall be provided. To the extent provided by federal law, homeless children and youth have the right to stay in their school of origin for the entire time they are homeless, unless a parent or guardian chooses otherwise.

Dispute Resolution

Disputes regarding the educational placement of a homeless child or youth shall be expeditiously addressed through the dispute resolution process mandated by the Minnesota Department of Education. Parents or guardians and unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the process and in the event of a dispute; the homeless child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

Dispute Resolution Process for Homeless Situations

Families and youth in homeless situations may be unaware of their right to dispute placement and enrollment decisions. When disputes are raised, too often, students are kept out of school during the dispute resolution process. This interruption in education can severely damage students' academic progress. Winona Area Public Schools requires that disputes regarding the educational placement of a student in a homeless situation will be expeditiously addressed through a dispute resolution process. Parents or guardians and unaccompanied youth must be informed of the process and in the event of the dispute, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

If a family or youth in homeless situations attending school wants to pursue their right to a dispute or if the district disagrees with a parent, guardian or homeless youth regarding an issue related to the rights of a homeless student, the following steps must be taken:

The school district must immediately enroll the students and arrange for transportation and other services as appropriate.

With the involvement of the Title I Homeless Liaison, attempt to discuss the issues to determine if more information is needed to resolve the issue.

If the issue cannot be resolved, a letter will be issued the parent/guardian or youth explaining the district's position as to the homelessness-related dispute.

Either party may send a written request to the Minnesota Department of Education Homeless State Coordinator asking the State Coordinator to review such decision compliance with applicable law. Such request must include any documentation related to the dispute resolution proceeding.

The State Coordinator may request any additional information from either party he or she deems relevant in resolving the issue.