



**State Board of Education Resolution
On Protecting Homeless Youth in the District
SR20-4**

WHEREAS, the D.C. State Board of Education received testimony from the Office of the Student Advocate, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project, SchoolHouse Connection, and Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) regarding the challenges that District students experiencing homelessness are facing at a public meeting on December 19, 2019;

WHEREAS, the State Board is committed to ensuring that all District students have equitable access to a high-quality public education, regardless of their housing status;

WHEREAS, a homeless person is an individual who lacks fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or an individual who is “doubled-up”—meaning they are staying with friends and family out of necessity;

WHEREAS, according to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), 7,728 children and youth were reported to have experienced homelessness in the District during the 2018–19 school year;

WHEREAS, because it is difficult to assess the number of students experiencing homelessness, it is likely that the current number of homeless students is an undercount;

WHEREAS, one in 15 District students experience homelessness each year, compared with a rate of one in 30 nationwide;

WHEREAS, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness, children experiencing homelessness are more likely to show delayed development, exhibit emotional and behavioral problems, repeat a grade, and drop out of school;

WHEREAS, the Office of the Student Advocate, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project, and SchoolHouse Connection shared that multiple barriers prevent District students experiencing homelessness from educational access and success, including lack of communication, lack of local supports and funds, transportation, school uniforms, school push-out, and difficulties identifying homeless students;

WHEREAS, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act protects the rights of students experiencing homelessness to attend school;

WHEREAS, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, LEAs are required to provide homeless students transportation to and from school at the request of the parent or guardian;





WHEREAS, the Homeless Children’s Playtime Project has reported that families living in shelters and hotels report up to three-hour commutes to get to school and hundreds of dollars spent on ride-share services;

WHEREAS, even though the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires each LEA to designate a staff member to serve as the homeless liaison for each school and receive quarterly training, the Homeless Children’s Playtime project has found that because the liaison position is an unfunded mandate schools often do not have the capacity to appropriately support homeless students;

WHEREAS, LEAs may struggle to create a process for assessing needs of students and families whose living arrangements shift post enrollment;

WHEREAS, the District currently supplements LEAs via the at-risk funding structure to assist in the support of homeless students among other at-risk populations including students in the foster care system, students who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and high school students who are older than expected for their grade—however, there is no public mechanism to report and share the individual funding spent per each population group; and

WHEREAS, the D.C. State Board of Education recognizes the unique barriers that homeless students face in enrolling in school, accessing the necessary supports and resources to stay in school, and succeeding academically because of a lack of a fixed and adequate residence.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board recommends that OSSE break down the use of funds to support homeless students so that OSSE can better determine what next steps and recommendations should be;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the State Board urges OSSE to create a publicly available annual transportation plan for students and families experiencing homelessness or housing instability that ensures that transportation is eliminated as a barrier to a student’s ability to get to and from school;

Date Adopted: ____April 22, 2020_____ Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Lee", is written over a horizontal line.

