



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

5 **WHEREAS**, the D.C. State Board of Education received testimony from the Office of the Student
6 Advocate, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project, SchoolHouse Connection, and Latin American
7 Youth Center (LAYC) regarding the challenges that District students experiencing homelessness
8 are facing at a public meeting on December 19, 2019;
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10 **WHEREAS**, the State Board is committed to ensuring that all District students have equitable
11 access to a high-quality public education, regardless of their housing status;
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13 **WHEREAS**, a homeless person is an individual who lacks fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime
14 residence or an individual who is “doubled-up”—meaning they are staying with friends and family
15 out of necessity;
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17 **WHEREAS**, according to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), 7,728
18 children and youth were reported to have experienced homelessness in the District during the
19 2018–19 school year;
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21 **WHEREAS**, because it is difficult to assess the number of students experiencing homelessness, it
22 is likely that the current number of homeless students is an undercount;
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24 **WHEREAS**, one in 15 District students experience homelessness each year, compared with a rate
25 of one in 30 nationwide;
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27 **WHEREAS**, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness, children experiencing
28 homelessness are more likely to show delayed development, exhibit emotional and behavioral
29 problems, repeat a grade, and drop out of school;
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31 **WHEREAS**, the Office of the Student Advocate, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project, and
32 SchoolHouse Connection shared that multiple barriers prevent District students experiencing
33 homelessness from educational access and success, including lack of communication, lack of local
34 supports and funds, transportation, school uniforms, school push-out, and difficulties identifying
35 homeless students;
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37 **WHEREAS**, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act protects the rights of students
38 experiencing homelessness to attend school;
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40 **WHEREAS**, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, LEAs are required to provide
41 homeless students transportation to and from school at the request of the parent or guardian;
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43 **WHEREAS**, the Homeless Children’s Playtime Project has reported that families living in shelters
44 and hotels report up to three-hour commutes to get to school and hundreds of dollars spent on ride-
45 share services;

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

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

55
56 **WHEREAS**, the District currently supplements LEAs via the at-risk funding structure to assist in
57 the support of homeless students among other at-risk populations including students in the foster
58 care system, students who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the
59 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and high school students who are older than
60 expected for their grade—however, there is no public mechanism to report and share the individual
61 funding spent per each population group; and

62
63 **WHEREAS**, the D.C. State Board of Education recognizes the unique barriers that homeless
64 students face in enrolling in school, accessing the necessary supports and resources to stay in
65 school, and succeeding academically because of a lack of a fixed and adequate residence.

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

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

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77 Date Adopted: ___April 22, 2020_____ Signed: 

