California Department of Education
August, 2019

# Sample Protocol for Local Educational Agency Liaison and School Site Liaison Coordination

The California Department of Education is pleased to provide sample protocol for local educational agencies including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and special education local plan areas, to adapt for local use. The protocol is designed to promote effective and efficient implementation of federal and state laws.

## Local Educational Agency Liaison Duties

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act (McKinney-Vento Act) lists 10 specific local educational agency liaison (LEA liaison) duties. The McKinney-Vento Act establishes that the LEA liaison must ensure that those duties are fulfilled. Therefore, the LEA liaison can assign specific duties to a staff person, or persons, at each school site to identity students experiencing homelessness (school site liaison), as long as the LEA liaison ensures the duties are completed. Those duties are:

1. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
2. Homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that LEA;
3. Homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act Title 42 United States Code Section (U.S.C.) 9831 (42 U.S.C. Section 9831) et seq. early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA;
4. Homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;
5. The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
6. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths;
7. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with paragraph (3)(E);
8. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, as described in paragraph (1)(J)(iii), and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected under paragraph (3)(A);
9. School personnel providing services under this part receive professional development and other support; and
10. Unaccompanied youths—(I) are enrolled in school; (II) have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth, including through implementation of the procedures under paragraph (1)(F)(ii) (regarding the award of partial credits); and (III) are informed of their status as independent students under section 1087vv of Title 20 and that the youths may obtain assistance from the LEA liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) described in section 1090 of Title 20.

## Appropriate School Site Liaison Duties

This section will help LEAs in implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and applicable state laws.[[1]](#endnote-1) In the majority of LEAs, the LEA liaison alone will not be able to complete all legally required duties. It is recommended that the LEA designate school site liaisons to assist in completing those duties. The duties most appropriate for a school site liaison include:

* Disseminating information about the educational rights of homeless children and youths to parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth upon any attempt at enrollment and at various points throughout the school year;
* Having regular conversations with all school staff about possible indicators of homelessness;
* Ensuring that school personnel inform the school site liaison immediately any time they suspect a student may be experiencing homelessness; and,
* Posting public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths in the school building, in the school handbook, and on the school website.

School site liaisons shall share determinations of homelessness with the LEA liaison immediately. Determination shall be shared with teachers and counselors or other school staff on a case-by-case basis, and only after the school site liaison has explained the reasons for the disclosure to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and received permission to disclose from the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

Whenever the school site liaison has any doubt whether a student qualifies as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, the school site liaison shall contact the LEA liaison for guidance prior to sharing a determination with the parent, guardian, or student.

### Enrollment and Services

School site liaisons should work with registrars, counselors, and other school staff to ensure that McKinney-Vento Act students are enrolled in school immediately, even if they lack records normally required for enrollment. Enrollment includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities. School site liaisons should work with school counselors to ensure that homeless students receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, including through implementing California *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 51225.2, and receive notice of eligibility for exemption from local graduation requirements under *EC* Section 51225.1. The school site liaisons also should ensure all unaccompanied youth receive FAFSA independent student verification letters from the LEA liaison.

School site liaisons should provide parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with information about transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and work directly with the LEA liaison to ensure transportation services are provided without delay. Finally, school site liaisons should work with LEA liaisons and other appropriate school and LEA staff to ensure McKinney-Vento Act students receive all other services for which they are eligible and are able to participate fully in both academic and extra-curricular activities.

### Referrals

School site liaisons should be the first line for referrals to services outside the school building. They should provide parents and guardians with information about Early Head Start and Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the LEA. To facilitate enrollment of children in these early childhood programs, school site liaisons should provide parents and guardians with contact information for the LEA liaison and/or other appropriate personnel, and assist parents and guardians to connect with those personnel.

In addition, school site liaisons should provide parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with information about health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services available in the community. School site liaisons should provide contact information for the LEA liaison and/or other appropriate personnel to facilitate referrals to those programs, and assist parents, guardians and youth to connect with those personnel.

## Duties Retained by the LEA Liaison

As noted, the LEA liaison has ultimate responsibility to ensure that the duties under the McKinney-Vento Act are completed. Thus, even among the school site liaison duties outlined above, the LEA liaison should coordinate and monitor the provision of these school-level supports. In addition, the following duties will be the primary responsibility of the LEA liaison:

### Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment in a school, the school site liaison shall refer the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to the LEA liaison immediately, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth must be provided the opportunity to address any disputes directly with the LEA liaison.

### Professional Development

As required by the McKinney-Vento Act, LEA liaisons should provide professional development to school personnel, including school site liaisons, registrars, secretaries, principals, counselors, social workers, transportation teams, child nutrition staff, teachers, tutors, and others. Just as the McKinney-Vento Act requires LEA liaisons to participate in professional development as determined by the State Coordinator,[[2]](#endnote-2) school site liaisons should be required to participate in training with the LEA liaison.

### Educational Services

LEA liaisons ultimately are responsible for ensuring homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools in the LEA. This includes ensuring students receive all services for which they are eligible, such as free meals, Title I services, and career and technical education. It also includes ensuring their rights to full participation in extra-curricular activities under both the McKinney-Vento Act and *EC* Section 48850, and all other relevant programs and services.

1. For example, Assembly Bill 1068 (2013), Senate Bill 177 (2013), AB 1806 (2014), SB 252 (2015), and AB 16 (2019), if passed. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iv) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)