DeKalb County Regional Office of Education

Amanda M. Christensen, Regional Superintendent
2500 North Annie Glidden, Suite C
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Phone: 815.217.0460
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www.dekalbcounty.org/ROE/roe.html

Rights of Homeless Students

The school district shall provide an educational environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. Every homeless student shall have equal access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless. This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children, youth, and youth not living with a parent or guardian applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

A student is considered "*homeless*" if he or she is presently living:

- In a shelter
- Sharing housing with relatives or others due to lack of housing
- In a motel/hotel, camping ground, or similar situation due to lack of alternative, adequate housing
- At a train or bus station, park, or in a car
- In an abandoned building

All homeless students have a right to:

- Immediate school enrollment. A school must immediately enroll even if they lack health, immunization or school records, proof of graduation, or proof of residency.
- Enroll in:
    - the school, he/she, was attending when permanently housed (school of origin)
    - the school in which he/she was last enrolled (school of origin)
    - the school that non-homeless students living in the same attendance area where the homeless child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- **Remain** enrolled in his/her selected school for as long as he/she remains homeless or, if the student becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year.
- **Priority** in specific preschool programs
- **Participate** in tutorial-instructional support programs and school-related activities and/or receive other support services.
- **Obtain information** on getting fee waivers, free uniforms, and low-cost medical referrals.
- **Transportation services**: A homeless student attending the school of origin has the right to transportation to and from the school of origin as long as they are homeless and live outside the designated walking distance set by law or, if the student becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year.

Dispute resolution: If you disagree with school officials about enrollment, transportation, or fair treatment of a homeless child or youth, you may file a complaint with the school district. The district liaison should respond quickly and attempt to resolve the situation. If you desire, the district should refer you to free or low-cost legal assistance to help you. If the district cannot settle the dispute

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satisfactorily, you can appeal to the Regional Office of Education, which will appoint an ombudsman hearing officer. The district homeless liaison will assist you in providing notice of any appeals process and filling out dispute forms. This right of appeal is outlined on the Illinois State Board of Education website, www.isbe.net. During the dispute, the student should be immediately enrolled in school and provided transportation as described above.

If you have questions about the rights of homeless students, please get in touch with the school district liaison from the list on this website, the Regional Office of Education Region Liaison, Monique Shaw, at 815-217-0465 or State Area Liaison Deb Foust, 815-625-1495.