

Homelessness: Today's Definition Is More Different Than Ever Before

Lakeview Community Schools

When we hear the word homeless, we tend to think of a person that does not have a home to call their own. We often think of the homeless as living in parks, alleys, motels, cars, trailers, or tents. Today, there are more homeless families than ever before. Under the federal law, No Child Left Behind, the McKinney Vento Act spells out the definition of being homeless in much broader terms. School districts all across the country are charged with the task of identifying, assisting, and reporting families and/or students in homeless situations.

The McKinney Vento Act defines homeless families as those families or students that meet one of the following criteria:

- ◆ Any family or youth without a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence is considered “homeless” under the law. This includes children who are:
 - Living with a friend, relative, or someone else because they lost their home or cannot afford a home;
 - Staying in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground because they have nowhere else to go;
 - Living in a shelter, including emergency or transitional shelters, domestic violence shelters, and runaway and homeless youth shelters;
 - Staying in substandard housing;
 - Living in places not ordinarily used for sleeping including cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, or bus or train stations;
 - Awaiting foster care placement;
 - Abandoned in hospitals

Youth not living with a biological parent or legal guardian through the probate courts are considered homeless and the term “Unaccompanied Youth” is used to identify these children. This may include youth who:

- ◆ Are asked to leave home by the parents;
- ◆ Left home without the consent of a parent;
- ◆ Have no formal custody papers or arrangements while their parents are in jail, the hospital, or a rehabilitation center;
- ◆ Ran away from home.

The Lakeview Community Schools has identified Sara Shriver as the Homeless Liaison for the district. The ways in which school homeless liaisons can assist homeless families and youth include:

- ◆ Assisting with immediate enrollment in their school;
- ◆ Assisting with appropriate services such as transportation, preschool, special education, bilingual services, vocational education, Title I and similar services;
- ◆ Make referrals to health care services, dental services, or other care providers;
- ◆ Publicly post the education rights of homeless children and youth in places such as schools and family shelters;
- ◆ Assist unaccompanied youth with enrollment, transportation and disagreements with schools;
- ◆ Assist student with getting immunizations and immunization records;
- ◆ Making sure that disagreements between students and schools are always resolved;
- ◆ Assisting student with eligibility for free breakfast and lunches.

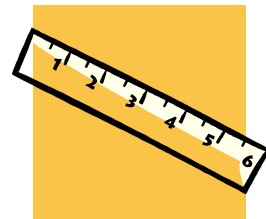
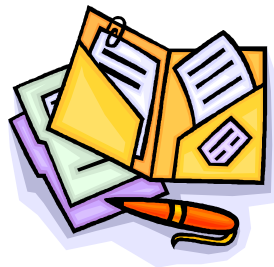
Whenever there is a disagreement or dispute between a school and parent, guardian, or youth the school must:

- ◆ Provide written documentation explaining the school's decision and the student's right to appeal if there is a disagreement;
- ◆ Allow students the right to enroll in their desired school until the dispute has been resolved;
- ◆ Refer the student and family to the liaison who must help to resolve the dispute quickly.

If the disputes are not resolved in a timely manner, the student or family can call their state coordinator at the Michigan Department of Education; call a lawyer for assistance; or contact the United States Department of Education.

A wonderful thing happened this fall! Sara Shriver was contacted by Kim Covey and Liz Perez from the Brockway Wesley Church to inquire about a servant event their members were doing for the locally identified homeless families and students. Members of Brockway graciously collected and donated school supplies to Lakeview Community Schools for these families. These supplies include pencils, pens, markers, crayons, pencil sharpeners, paper, folders, backpacks, glue sticks, colored pencils, and much more. These students have been blessed with such generosity from the members of Brockway.

Again, please contact Sara Shriver at the Central Office, Lakeview Community Schools (989-352-6226) or by email at (shrivers@lakeviewschools.net) if you feel there are families and/or students in the school district that fit the criteria listed for homeless. If you know of any student or family that is in one of these homeless situations, please feel free to complete a referral form and send it to Sara Shriver, 124 Fifth Street, Lakeview, MI 48850 or email it to the address above.



**McKinney Vento Act
Lakeview Community Schools**

Homeless Student Referral Form

Date of Referral	
Referral Made By	

Student School Id Number	
Student Full Name	
Student Grade	
Student Birthdate	
Student SS# if available	
Address where living	
City & State & Zip Code	
Phone Number if available	
Contact Person	
Contact Person's Phone	

Please check the appropriate reason for the referral for homelessness.

- Doubled-Up living with another family, and/or Unaccompanied Youth
- Foster Care 0-6 months
- Living in shelter
- Other, please explain

Other pertinent information:

**Please send form to: Sara Shriver, Homeless Liaison at Central Office
Lakeview Community Schools
123 Fifth Street
Lakeview, MI 48850**