



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

LA Promise Fund recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same, free, and appropriate public education provided to all other students within Russell Westbrook Why Not? High School (RWWNMS). RWWNMS shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging performance standards as other students. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homelessness, nor shall homeless students be stigmatized in any way.

The Chief Academic Officer or designee shall ensure that placement decisions for homeless students are based on the student's best interest as defined in law and United States Department of Education's regulations.

Definitions

Homeless means students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who: (42 USC 11435)

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
2. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in conditions described in (1)-(3) above.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, status is determined by RWWNMS Liaison.

School of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. (42 USC 11432)

Best interest means, to the extent feasible, continuing a student's enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of his/her homelessness, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of his/her parent or guardian. (42 USC 11432)

Russell Westbrook Why Not? High School Liaison for Homeless Students

The Chief Academic Officer or designee must designate a staff person as the RWWNMS liaison for homeless students: (42 USC § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

This person is:

Justin Shahbaz, Principal
1700 W. 46th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90062
(323) 403-0770
justins@lapromisefund.org

The RWWNMS liaison for homeless students shall ensure that: (42 USC § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools;
3. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start Programs) under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any other preschool programs administered by RWWNMS, if any, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, housing services, social services, and other appropriate services;
4. Parents/guardians of homeless students 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;
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth;
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, RWWNMS's charter, Board policy, and the California Department of Education's Dispute Resolution Policy;
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services and are assisted in gaining access to transportation to and from the school of origin or the current attendance area;
8. Children and youth who do not have immunizations or medical records are assisted to obtain necessary immunizations or medical records; and,
9. RWWNMS Liaison collaborates with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

10. Charter School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
11. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that the youths may obtain assistance from RWWNMS Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Act.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>

Enrollment

Placement decisions for homeless students shall be based on the student's best interest. In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her school of origin, unless his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise. (42 USC 11435)

The student may continue attending the school of origin for the duration of the homelessness and/or until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing. (42 USC 11435)

RWWNMS shall utilize the School Enrollment Affidavit of Residence and Caregiver's Authorization, in order to ensure immediate enrollment at the school selected as indicated above, thereby eliminating any possible enrollment barriers for homeless students.

The principal or designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the principal or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the RWWNMS homeless liaison. The liaison shall refer the parent/guardian to the appropriate medical service providers to obtain the necessary immunizations.

If the student is placed at a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian, the Chief Academic Officer or designee shall provide the parent/guardian and/or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision along with a statement regarding the parent/guardian and/or unaccompanied youth's right to appeal the placement decision. (42 USC 11435)

High School Graduation Requirements: Homeless students who transfer to RWWNMS any time after the completion of their second year of high school shall be exempt from any of RWWNMS's graduation requirements that are in excess of the California minimum graduation requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3 ("additional graduation requirements") unless RWWNMS makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete RWWNMS's graduation requirements by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

To determine whether a homeless student is in their third or fourth year of high school, either the number of credits the student has earned to the date of transfer or the length of the student's school enrollment may be used, whichever will qualify the student for the exemption.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of the date that a student who may qualify for exemption under the above requirements transfers into RWWNMS, RWWNMS shall notify the student, the student's educational rights holder, and the School Liaison of the availability of the exemption and whether the student qualifies for an exemption.

RWWNMS shall notify students who are exempted from RWWNMS's additional graduation requirements and the student's educational rights holder of how any of the requirements that are waived will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.

RWWNMS shall not require any student who would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at RWWNMS to accept the exemption from RWWNMS's additional graduation requirements or deny the student enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which the student is otherwise eligible. RWWNMS shall not revoke an exemption and shall grant an eligible student's request for the exemption at any time if the student qualifies, regardless of whether the student previously declined the exemption. An eligible student's exemption from RWWNMS's additional graduation requirements will continue to apply while the student is enrolled in RWWNMS or if the student transfers to another school even after the student no longer meets the definition of homeless child.

RWWNMS shall not require or request that a student transfer schools in order to qualify the student for the exemption. Nor shall a student, a student's parent/guardian or educational rights holder, or a student's social worker or probation officer request a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption from RWWNMS's additional graduation Requirements.

If a student who is exempted from RWWNMS's additional graduation requirements completes the California minimum coursework requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3 before the end of the student's fourth year of high school and would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at RWWNMS, RWWNMS shall not require or request that the student graduate before the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

If RWWNMS determines the student is reasonably able to complete RWWNMS's graduation requirements by the end of the student's fifth year of high school, RWWNMS shall do the following:

1. Inform the student of the student's option to remain at RWWNMS for a fifth year to complete RWWNMS's graduation requirements.
2. Inform the student, and the educational rights holder for the student, about how remaining in school for a fifth year to complete RWWNMS's graduation requirements will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution.
3. Provide information to the student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.

4. Permit the student to stay at RWWNMS for a fifth year to complete RWWNMS's graduation requirements upon agreement with the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older, or, if the student is under 18 years of age, upon agreement with the educational rights holder for the student.

Acceptance of Course Work: RWWNMS will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a homeless student.

RWWNMS will provide homeless students credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, RWWNMS shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless RWWNMS, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high

Enrollment Disputes

The following are five components for resolving disputes regarding school selection and enrollment for homeless children and youths.

- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute (PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)(iv)). Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.”
- The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the LEA's homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.
- A written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal [PL 107-110, 722(g)(3)(E)(!!)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.
- If a dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the county office of education (COE). The COE's homeless liaison will review these materials and determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the materials. The COE homeless liaison will notify the LEA and parent of the decision. Contact information for COE's homeless liaisons can be found at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>
- If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, the COE homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the State Homeless Coordinator. Upon the review of the LEA, COE, and parent information, the CDE will notify the parent of the

final school selection or enrollment decision within ten (10) working days of receipt of materials. You may reach the State Homeless Coordinator, Leanne Wheeler, by phone at (916) 319-0383 or by e-mail at lwheeler@cde.ca.gov

Transportation

RWWNMS shall provide or arrange transportation for a homeless student to and from school of origin when the student is residing within RWWNMS vicinity and the parent/guardian requests that such transportation is provided.

If the homeless student moves to an area served by another LEA, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEA's cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility must be shared equally.