



Homeless Students

(July 2025)

LEAD Public Schools is committed to ensuring that students experiencing homelessness have equitable access to educational opportunities, maintain school stability, and receive comprehensive support to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs. We adhere to federal, state, and authorizer requirements, including the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) guidelines, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC) LEA Policy 6503 and Procedures 1021 for TPCSC-authorized schools, and Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) policies (e.g., 6.503 series) and HERO Program for MNPS-authorized schools, to remove barriers, promote educational continuity, and empower homeless students to achieve academic success.

TPCSC-Authorized Schools

LEAD Neely's Bend
LEAD Southeast Elementary

MNPS-Authorized Schools

LEAD Cameron
LEAD Academy High
LEAD Southeast Middle
LEAD Southeast High

Definitions

Homeless students are those lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those living in shelters, motels, vehicles, doubled-up housing, or unaccompanied youth, per 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2).

Identification

LEAD Public Schools will identify homeless students through the McKinney-Vento questionnaire during registration and re-registration.

- **TPCSC Schools:**
 - Parents/guardians complete the Student Residency Questionnaire (TPCSC template or adaptation).
 - If a non-permanent, fixed, or adequate residence is indicated, the Homeless Education Liaison initiates the McKinney-Vento checklist and provides the Notification of Rights form (TPCSC template or adaptation).
 - Schools conduct ongoing awareness through posters, parent/guardian training, and outreach to shelters/community organizations.
 - Mid-year status changes trigger completion of the questionnaire and checklist.
 - Completed checklists and documents are placed in the student's cumulative file and sent to the Commission's homeless liaison via Teams within two (2) business days.
 - Posters with Commission and State liaison contact information are displayed in well-trafficked areas in a language parents/guardians understand.
- **MNPS Schools**
 - Parents/guardians complete a residency questionnaire to identify homeless students.
 - If indicated, the Homeless Education Liaison provides the Notification of Rights and coordinates with the MNPS HERO Program for support.
 - Ongoing awareness includes posters and community outreach.
 - Mid-year status changes prompt questionnaire completion and HERO Program coordination.

Enrollment

Homeless students are enrolled immediately, even without typical records (e.g., academic, immunization, health, proof of residency) or if application/enrollment deadlines are missed, per McKinney-Vento. Eligible students submitting timely applications are enrolled, with lotteries if applications exceed capacity, per the LEAD Public Schools Enrollment policy on the school website.

Records

The Homeless Education Liaison ensures accurate coding of homeless students in the student information system.

- **TPCSC Schools:** Maintain a list of students enrolled without immunization/proof and time to obtain records. An annual report is submitted to the Commission using the provided template.
- **MNPS Schools:** Records are maintained per MNPS requirements and shared with the HERO Program, consistent with FERPA.

School Stability and Best Interest Determination

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, LEAD Public Schools conducts Best Interest Determination (BID) meetings to ensure students remain in their school of origin (the school attended when permanently housed or last enrolled, including preschool/pre-k), unless not in their best interest.

- **Process:**
 - **Presumption:** The school of origin is presumed to be in the student's best interest.
 - **Determination:** The Homeless Education Liaison collaborates with the student, parent/guardian, or unaccompanied youth to assess continuity of instruction, safety, transportation feasibility, and educational/social needs.
 - **Enrollment/Participation:** If the school of origin is in the student's best interest, immediate enrollment and full participation in all programs, including transportation, are ensured.
- **TPCSC Schools:**
 - The Liaison works with the school leader/designee, completes the Checklist for Decision Making, and notifies the Commission's homeless liaison if placement is discussed.
 - If the school of origin or requested school is not in the student's best interest, a written explanation is provided using the Written Enrollment Decision Notice template.
- **MNPS Schools:**
 - If the selected school is not in the student's best interest, a written explanation with appeal rights is provided, and the issue is referred to the MNPS HERO Program.

Transportation

LEAD Public Schools collaborates with TPCSC, MNPS, or other LEAs to provide transportation to the school of origin for the duration of homelessness. Transportation is provided promptly during cost disputes, and students remain in the school of origin if feasible.

- **TPCSC Schools:** A transportation policy outlines available options. Transportation is arranged promptly upon parent/guardian request, with excess costs potentially covered by Title I, Part A, or McKinney-Vento subgrant funds. A Parent Transportation Contract (TPCSC template or adaptation) outlines pick-up, drop-off, absence communication, and behavioral expectations.
- **MNPS Schools:** Transportation is provided upon request by the parent/guardian or liaison for unaccompanied youth, coordinated with the MNPS HERO Program.

Dispute Resolution

If disputes arise over BID, enrollment, or McKinney-Vento rights, the student remains enrolled in the school of origin pending resolution.

- **TPCSC Schools:** Follow TPCSC Procedures 1021, including:
 - **Level 1:** Appeal to the Commission's homeless liaison within 5 business days using the Written Appeal of Enrollment Decision form. The liaison reviews, interviews if possible, and decides within 5 business days.
 - **Level 2:** Appeal to the Commission's Director of Schools/designee within 5 business days of Level 1 decision. A conference is scheduled, and a written decision is provided.
 - **Level 3:** Appeal to the McKinney-Vento state coordinator within 5 business days of Level 2. The coordinator decides within 7 business days.
 - **Level 4:** Appeal to the TDOE Assistant Director of Federal Programs and Oversight within 5 business days of Level 3. A final decision is made within 7 business days. The Commission maintains dispute records.
- **MNPS Schools:** Provide a written explanation with appeal rights and refer to the MNPS HERO Program for resolution per MNPS policies and TDOE guidelines.

Homeless Education Liaison

Each school designates a Homeless Education Liaison, with contact information submitted annually to the authorizer. Responsibilities include identifying homeless students, ensuring immediate enrollment and services, coordinating transportation, managing BIDs and disputes, facilitating FERPA-compliant data sharing, coordinating staff training, and submitting compliance documentation.

- **TPCSC Schools:** Liaisons communicate monthly with the Commission's homeless liaison and complete the Sub-recipient Monitoring Self-Assessment.
- **MNPS Schools:** Liaisons coordinate with the MNPS HERO Program Coordinator.

Liaison Contacts:

- **LEAD Cameron (MNPS)**
Courtney Proffit, Assistant Principal of Students
(615) 806-6320
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- **LEAD Academy High (MNPS)**
Brittney Boucher, Assistant Principal of Students
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- **LEAD Southeast Elementary (TPCSC)**
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- **LEAD Southeast Middle (MNPS)**
Delano James, Assistant Principal of Students
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- **LEAD Southeast High (MNPS)**
Roy Word, Assistant Principal of Students
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- **LEAD Neely's Bend (TPCSC)**
Ebony Freeman, Assistant Principal of Students
(615) 645-6461
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Services and Support

Homeless students have access to school programs (e.g., Title I, tutoring, special education, counseling, extracurriculars) at no cost, in collaboration with TPCSC or MNPS.

- **TPCSC Schools:** Liaisons ensure comparable services and complete the Annual Needs Assessment for Homeless Students by March 31, submitted via the Commission's reporting calendar. Title I set-aside funds are requested via the Homeless Set-Aside Reimbursement Form, demonstrating exhaustion of school/community resources.
- **MNPS Schools:** Services are coordinated with the HERO Program, including supplies, uniforms, and referrals for medical/dental care or food assistance.

Data Sharing and Reporting

Accurate records are maintained and shared with TDOE per FERPA.

Compliance and Training

Annual staff training ensures compliance with McKinney-Vento, ESSA, TCA, and authorizer requirements. The Homeless Education Liaison and network Compliance Manager oversee training and policy updates. Compliance documentation is maintained and reported to the authorizer as required.