



State of Arizona
Department of Education



Exceptional Student Services

Memorandum

Date: July 25, 2019

To: Public Education Agency Administrators
State Placing Agencies
Residential Treatment Center Administrators

From: Exceptional Student Services – Vouchers Unit

Subject: Home School Districts for Residential Vouchers

Following the passage of Senate Bill 1177 during the last legislative session, the definition of home school district (HSD) has changed. The Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) has reviewed this statutory change and the following guidance is being provided to clarify which PEA is a child's home school district for the purposes of vouchering a student. This guidance takes effect August 1, 2019.

Home School District is defined under A.R.S. § 15-761(9):

*"Home school district" means the **school district or charter school** that the child last attended or, if the child has not previously attended a public school in this state, the school district in which the person resides who has legal custody of the child, as provided in section 15-824, subsection B. If the child is a ward of this state and a specific person does not have legal custody of the child or is a ward of this state and the child is enrolled in an accommodation school pursuant to section 15-913, the home school district is the district that the child last attended or, if the child has not previously attended a public school in this state, the school district within which the child currently resides.*

The school district or charter school the child last attended is the home school district, but all entities should refer to the flowchart to determine the HSD. Note: charter schools are not identified as HSDs for students who are wards of the state. If a child is a ward of the state, the identification of the home school district is as follows:

- If the child is a ward of the state and a specific person does not have legal custody of the child, then the home school district is the age-appropriate school district the child last attended.
- If the child has not previously attended a public school in Arizona, the HSD is the age-appropriate school district within which the child currently resides.
- If the child is a ward of the state and the child is enrolled in an accommodation school pursuant to A.R.S. section 15-913, then the home school district is the age-appropriate school district the child last attended that is not an accommodation school.

Timely identification of the home school district will allow for a residential treatment center (RTC) to initiate the voucher application process. Under A.A.C. R7-2-404(2)(iv), the home school district shall prepare the HSD Application for Education Voucher Funding packet and submit it to the ADE/ESS. Appropriate documentation of eligibility for special education and provision of services, if applicable, shall be included.

The timeline for submitting this material is detailed in A.A.C. R7-2-404(2)(vi). If the HSD cannot complete the requirements for the HSD application packet within the initial 60-day approval period, the HSD must apply for an Extension of Education Voucher Funding. Home school districts and RTCs should be proactive in providing timely and effective communication during the voucher application process. This will help facilitate timely voucher processing and ensure that funding arrangements are in place for vouchered students in Arizona.

Furthermore, it is important to timely and appropriately identify the HSD, because the HSD is responsible for overseeing services under A.R.S. § 15-1183(B):

If a state placing agency places a child in a private residential facility for care, safety or treatment reasons, the state placing agency is responsible for requesting an initial residential education voucher and notifying the home school district of the placement. The home school district is responsible for completing screening or other identification procedures for determining if the child is a child with a disability as defined in section 15-761 and for reviewing the placement of a child with a disability to determine whether a residential special education placement is necessary. Responsibility for monitoring the educational services during the time a child is placed in the residential facility and for planning for transition from the private residential facility to a public school remains with the home school district.

Please refer to the revised HSD Flowchart (active 8/1/2019) to accurately determine the home school district. The flowchart can be found at:

<https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5d35d5c91dcb2507ecbf1015>

If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the Exceptional Student Services Voucher Unit at VouchersUnit@azed.gov.

