



## McKinney-Vento Act Best Interest Determination for School Placement



The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the school in the residency the area where the child(ren) currently live (school of residency may also be referred to as local area attendance school). Individuals who may be consulted when determining what placement is in the child(ren)'s best interest include the following:

- child(ren) or youth experiencing homelessness,
- parent, guardian, or caregiver of the child(ren) or youth,
- district/charter homeless liaison,
- school site personnel (e.g. counselor, social worker, SPED teacher, etc), and
- homeless shelter personnel.

It is the school district's responsibility to determine the school of origin and residency, and to resolve any conflict concerning the school placement by focusing on the best interest of the child(ren). Whenever possible, the school district should comply with the wishes of the parent, guardian, caregiver, or unaccompanied homeless youth. If the school district and parent, guardian, caregiver, or unaccompanied homeless youth do not agree on the appropriate placement, the school district's Dispute Resolution Procedure must be followed. In such cases, the child(ren) should be enrolled in the school that the parent, guardian, caregiver, or unaccompanied homeless youth has chosen until the conclusion of the resolution process. If the school of origin is determined to be the best placement, the local homeless education liaisons both school of origin and local attendance area school must work together to arrange transportation.

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that a child or youth experiencing homelessness attend:

- **School of origin:** School of origin is defined as "the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool". Further, "when the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the term school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(I)]. or
- **Local attendance area school:** Local attendance area school is defined as "any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A)(ii)].

**Whether the child or youth will attend the school of origin or the local attendance area school, enrollment should take place immediately.**

See [42 USC CHAPTER 119, SUBCHAPTER VI, Part B: Education for Homeless Children and Youths. \(3A, 3B\)](#) for more information regarding the "Best Interest Determination".

The information collected supports the agreement in determining the school enrollment in the best interest of the child or youth experiencing homelessness, and will provide the input required to develop a written should the parent, guardian, caregiver or youth disagree with the decision.



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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student State ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's District ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School of Attendance (include district name): \_\_\_\_\_

Previous School(s) of Attendance (include district name if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Best Interest Determination Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

### Best Interest Determination: Checklist for Decision Making

Use the following checklist as a guide to assist with making the determination of what is in the best interest of the child or youth. Place a check in the box for each area of consideration that applies, either in the School of Origin Considerations or the Local School Considerations column. If needed, write notes on additional pages and attach to this form. Total scores does not equate to the best interest placement.

Check if yes	School of Origin Considerations	Check if yes	School of Residence Considerations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Overall continuity</i> Has your child attended the school of origin for a long time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Overall continuity</i> Has your child attended the school of origin for only a brief time?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Length of anticipated stay at current residence</i> Do you expect that you and your child will have to move again very soon, or are you unsure how long you can stay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Length of anticipated stay at current residence</i> Do you expect that you and your child will be able to stay where you are staying now for a while?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Time of year</i> Is it late in the academic year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Time of year</i> Is it early in the academic year?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Personal Safety of Student</i> Does the school of origin have advantages for the safety of your child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Personal Safety of Student</i> Does the local school have advantages for the safety of your child?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Interaction with peers</i> Is maintaining school friends important to your child's emotional well-being, meaningful school experience, and participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Interaction with peers</i> Would your child benefit from developing relationships with school peers who live closer to his/her new community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Academic Strength</i> Is your child likely to fall far behind if he/she transfer to another school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Academic Strength</i> Is your child likely to recover academically if he/she from a school transfer?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Social and emotional state</i> Has your child developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave the school? Do changes in the environment or routine provoke anxiety or other difficulties for your child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Social and emotional state</i> Has your child experienced challenges at the current school, and/or does not mind transferring to a new school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Impact of the commute on the student's education</i> Do the advantages of continuing to attend the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the commute?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Impact of the commute on the student's education</i> Would a shorter commute help your child's concentration in, attitude toward, or readiness for school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Student's need for special instruction</i> Does your child receive, or is he/she currently being evaluated for, special education or other special services at school? Is it best for your child to continue receiving those services or complete the evaluation at the school of origin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Student's need for special instruction</i> If your child receives, or is currently being evaluated for, special education or other special services at school, can the local school better meet your child's needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Participation in extracurricular activities</i> Is your child active in extracurricular activities that are meaningful and important to him/her at the school of origin, and will your child be able to continue those activities while living in your current living situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Participation in extracurricular activities</i> Would your child be better able to take advantage of extracurricular activities, if he/she so desired, at the local school?



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**Attach all documents relevant to the student's best interest determination. Check any that apply.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Report Cards/Progress Reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	IEP Plan or 504 Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement Data (test scores)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence from individuals consulted
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance Data	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal documents/orders of protection
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

### Best Interest Determination Meeting Participants

In reaching the best interest determination, the homeless liaison should make all reasonable efforts to include or consult individuals with knowledge of the student (parent, guardian, or caregiver) in addition to representatives of the school district and any other person with information relevant to the best interest determination, including the student, if appropriate. The following individuals provided input in determining the school placement.

Relationship to Student	Name	Contact Information
Liaison (school of origin):		
Liaison (school of residence):		
Parent, guardian or caregiver:		
Student:		
School personnel:		
School personnel:		
School personnel:		
School personnel:		
Shelter personnel:		

**The best interest determination decision was finalized on (date):** \_\_\_\_\_

It is in the student's best interest to remain enrolled in the school of origin.  
Name of School of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

It is not in the student's best interest to remain enrolled in the school of origin. The student will enroll in the school serving the current residence.  
Name of School of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** If a change in enrollment is in the student's best interest, enrollment should take place immediately at the new school. All other educational records will be provided to the new school promptly and in accordance with state and federal law.



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Use this section to include additional information.

SAMPLE