



**WYOMING**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Creating Opportunities  
for Students to Keep  
Wyoming Strong*

**Jillian Balow**

Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Dicky Shanor**

Chief of Staff

**Brent Bacon**

Chief Academic Officer

**Brent Young**

Chief Policy Officer

**Dianne Bailey**

Chief Operations Officer



**Cheyenne Office**

Hathaway Building, 2nd Floor  
2300 Capitol Avenue  
Cheyenne WY 82002-0206  
Phone: (307) 777-7690  
Fax: (307) 777-6234

**Riverton Office**

320 West Main  
Riverton, WY 82501  
Phone: (307) 857-9250  
Fax: (307) 857-9256

**On the Web**

edu.wyoming.gov  
wyomingmeasuresup.com

## MEMORANDUM NO. 2016-066

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Homeless Education Liaisons  
Building Principals  
School Counselors

**FROM:** Brent Bacon, Chief Academic Officer

**DATE:** April 18, 2016

**SUBJECT:** McKinney-Vento Homeless Amendments in ESSA

## FEDERAL HOMELESS EDUCATION AMENDMENTS EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1

Amendments to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act go into effect October 1, 2016. Under these amendments, districts will be subject to some new and expanded requirements.

Training on these amendments will take place from June 13-15, 2016, at the WDE STAR Conference in Laramie. Register for the conference here: <http://www.event.com/d/dfqc4y/4W>.

A summary of major changes is below:

- The definition of an eligible homeless student will change under the new statute. Students “awaiting foster care” will no longer be served under this Act after December 10, 2016.
- Districts must complete a review of current policies and procedures regarding the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students in school, and revise any policies or procedures that create barriers to the successful participation of homeless children and youth. These include barriers related to fees, fines, and absences. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will be establishing a timeline for submission and review of district-level homeless education policies for Every Student Succeeds Act compliance.
- Districts are required to ensure that the local homeless education liaison participates in training provided by the State Coordinator for Homeless Education. The next training will be held during the STAR Conference in Laramie, June 13-15, 2016. Liaison training requirements for the 2016-2017 school year can be met through participation in the homeless

education strand of this conference. The cost of attending the conference may be paid through McKinney-Vento subgrant funds, Title I, Part A funds, or general funds. Liaisons can register at: <http://www.cvent.com/d/dfqc4y/4W>.

- Local homeless liaisons must refer homeless families and youth to housing services, in addition to other services. Local liaisons are now authorized to affirm whether children and youth meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness, to qualify them for HUD homeless assistance programs.
- Local homeless education liaisons are required to ensure that building principals, attendance officers, enrollment personnel, other school leaders, and specialized instructional support providers receive training on McKinney-Vento provisions.
- Districts must ensure that homeless students receive assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare and improve readiness for college.
- Districts must implement procedures to remove barriers that prevent homeless youth from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school.
- Districts must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of their status as independent students for college financial aid, and may obtain assistance to receive verification for the FAFSA.
- Districts must treat information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation as a student education record, subject to all of the protections of FERPA.
- Local liaisons must post information on the educational rights of homeless children at schools, public libraries, shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens and other locations homeless families may frequent. Information must be posted in a language that parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth can understand.
- Districts must ensure homeless families can access early intervention services under IDEA, Part C, if eligible.
- Districts must include feeder patterns, including public preschool, in school of origin determinations.
- Districts must enroll homeless children and youth immediately, even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- In the case of a dispute over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the child or youth must be immediately admitted to the school in which the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth seeks enrollment (pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals).

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*For questions on amendments to the homeless education statute, contact Kenya Haynes, State Coordinator for Homeless Education, at [kenya.haynes@wyo.gov](mailto:kenya.haynes@wyo.gov).*