



Process for determining the “Best Interest” and School-of-Origin Decisions for the Adams 12 Homeless Assistance Program

The Adams 12 Five Star Schools’ Homeless Assistance Program determines the “best interest” of the child and youth experiencing homelessness using the language of the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S. C. § 11432(g)(3)(A) which states,

“(A) In General-The local educational agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child’s or youth’s best interest—(i) continue the child’s or youth’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness—(I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or (II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or (ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend,”

And the guidelines set forth in National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at SERVE [www.serve.org/nche].

I.) Establishing School-of-Origin

The Homeless Education Liaison determines where the school-of-origin was prior to the family becoming homeless through parent/guardian contact via phone or face-to-face interview. There are several tools at the Homeless Liaison’s disposal such as the Adams 12 Five Star School boundary locator and/or Google Maps to determine where the student’s new school boundary is when he/she enrolls in our school based on current address or where the student spent the night before. If the student’s new boundary address falls within the district and within a school’s zone then that is the school they will enroll and attend for the year; unless, the parent wishes the child to continue at their previous year’s school.

II.) Determining the Student’s Best Interest

A.) Priority Factors- the following factors are weighted as the most important in determining whether a student remains at their school-of-origin or attends their new boundary area school:

- 1.) The age of the child or youth,
- 2.) The distance of the commute to and from the school of origin and its impact the student’s education, quality of life, and health/well-being,
- 3.) Personal safety issues,
- 4.) The student’s need for special instruction (deaf/hard of hearing, IEP, etc...),
- 5.) The anticipated length of stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location, and
- 6.) The time remaining in the school year.



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B.) Other Factors-the following factors are considered when determining the best-interest of the child are:

- 1.) Permanency of family’s current living situation,
- 2.) Depth of ties to the student’s school,
- 3.) Anxiety or anxiousness of upcoming or recent move,
- 4.) Academic strength of student(s), and
- 5.) Comparison of programs and activities between local school and school of origin.

III.) Immediate Notification of Decision for Best Interest

A.) In most cases, parent/guardian(s) and student(s) are given an opportunity to participate in a face-to-face interview where the Homeless Education Liaison explains the school selection options, reinforces the importance of school stability and continuity, and discusses the family’s circumstances to assist them in making the best and most appropriate choice for their student.

B.) Parent/guardian(s) are immediately notified through a telephone call and email/letter of the decision made by the district liaison.

IV.) Dispute/Resolution

A.) In the case where parent/guardian(s) disagree about the decision then they are notified of their right to appeal the decision.

B.) Our district has an established dispute resolution process. Please see “Adams 12 Five Star School District’s Enrollment Dispute/Resolution Process.”