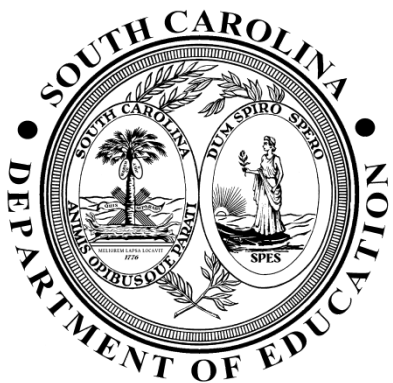




Putting the Pieces Together: Navigating the Eligibility Process for McKinney-Vento Determination

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Molly M. Spearman – State Superintendent of Education

Audience Poll

How would you best describe yourself?

(please introduce yourself and type your answer in the chat)

- A. Well-versed in McKinney-Vento and the decision-making process*
- B. Still learning but have some knowledge on McKinney-Vento eligibility.*
- C. Completely new to McKinney-Vento and the decision-making process.*

Agenda

- Introduction to McKinney-Vento Eligibility vs. Best Interest Determination
- Review SC McKinney-Vento data and trends
- Rosa's Scenario Activity
- Review key McKinney-Vento definitions of homelessness that support decision making process
- Decision-making process and best practice strategies

South Carolina McKinney-Vento Stats

2018-19 School Year	2019-20 School Year	2020-21 School Year
Total # of students identified as McKinney-Vento:	Total # of students identified as McKinney-Vento:	Total # of students identified as McKinney-Vento:
12,787	11,906	11,970

Eligibility vs. Best Interest

Each case can be looked at in two parts:

1. McKinney-Vento Eligibility

2. Best Interest

-
- ✓ First decide if the student is eligible for McKinney-Vento, THEN look at best interest.
 - ✓ Eliminate information unrelated to the student's nighttime status to determine eligibility.
 - ✓ Recognize when you need to ask more questions.

Rosa's Story



Rosa's Activity Part 2

Directions: Place the information/notes from the phone call in the appropriate category.

**McKinney-Vento
Eligibility
Considerations**

**Best Interest
Considerations**

**Unrelated to Eligibility
or Best Interest**

**Missing Information/
Questions to Ask**

Activity- Part 3

Additional Questions:

Do you have any questions for the liaison related to McKinney-Vento eligibility or best interest?

Additional Questions:

How is Rosa doing in school?

Where does Rosa want to go to school?





What are your additional questions?



Determining Homelessness

Review Definition of McKinney-Vento

McKinney-Vento defines homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

- **Fixed:** Stationary
- **Regular:** Normal, routine, used on a regular basis.
- **Adequate:** Sufficient for meeting both physical and psychological needs. (adequate privacy, space, infrastructure, etc.)

Determining Homelessness

Traumatic events leading to homelessness

- Fire, flood, natural disaster
- Home infestation
- Eviction
- Loss of job, loss of housing due to economic hardship
- Domestic violence
- Incarceration
- COVID-19 related issues
- Variety of other reasons

Determining Homelessness

Considerations:

Is this current living situation temporary or permanent?

How long does the family plan on maintaining this living arrangement?

Did the living arrangement begin as temporary, but eventually become a permanent residence?



Determining Homelessness

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- Not in the physical custody of a parent/ guardian.
- Does not have a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.
- Unaccompanied youth do not need a precipitating event to be classified as homeless.

McKinney-Vento Best Interest Determinations

How does an LEA determine the students “best interest”?

Some considerations:

- Age/grade
- Sibling placement
- Availability of appropriate educational programming
- Connection to present school
- Time of year
- Length of commute (city vs. rural)

Best Interest Determination

It is assumed staying in the school of origin is in the best interest of the student.

Prioritize parent's and/or student's request and legal right to remain in the school of origin

Homeless liaison is responsible for determining eligibility and making best interest determinations.

Best Interest and Early Childhood Students

Best interest determinations for birth to 5 children should consider the following:

- The child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff
- The impact of the school climate on the child, including the school's safety
- The availability and quality of services to meet the comprehensive needs of the child including health, developmental, and social-emotional needs
- Travel time to and from school

Activity- Part 4

Scenario Review

1. McKinney-Vento Eligibility Considerations
2. Best Interest Considerations
3. Unrelated to Eligibility or Best Interest



Decision-Making Process

1. Gather all eligibility facts
2. Analyze the eligibility facts
3. Seek additional guidance as needed
4. Make a final determination on McKinney-Vento eligibility
5. Make a best interest determinations

National Center for Homeless Education

Decision-Making Strategies

- Complete home visits as needed.
- Ensure families fully understand their rights under McKinney-Vento.
- Communicate with previous district's homeless liaison.
- Build relationships with school staff including Administrators, Transportation Directors, Title 1 Directors, Teachers, etc.
- Build relationships with local community agencies and early childhood education providers.
- Re-evaluate student's eligibility and best interest yearly.
- Use Enrollment Survey to help screen for McKinney-Vento eligibility then follow district protocol for eligibility determination.

Resources and Questions

[National Center Homeless Education \(NCHE\)](#)

[School House Connection](#)

[National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(NAEHCY\)](#)

Thank you

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