



**Special School District
Homeless Services
Program Evaluation**

Mary Lee Burlemann, Chair

May 20, 2008



Homeless Services Standard Program Evaluation

Program Evaluation Question(s)

How many students were identified as homeless during the '06-'07 school year?

What resources are available to students who become homeless during the school year?

I. Program/Service Information

1. Name of Program or Services: Homeless Services

2. Personnel Responsible for Evaluation: Mary Lee Burlemann, Area Coordinator

3. Demographic Description of Program:

Homeless services are provided through an administrator at the Central Office, supported by other staff and social workers. Students are typically identified by their teachers and/or social workers. Transportation to and from the school of origin or the school of best interest is then arranged. Students identified as homeless are automatically eligible for free/reduced lunch. Students are connected with the SSD social worker who may be able to provide in-school support and other community resources to the family.

4. Date of Evaluation: April 2008

5. Goal/Objective of Program/Services:

To identify homeless students and ensure that they have immediate access to a free, appropriate public education in the school of origin or in the school of best interest.

6. Brief description of relationship between program goals, CSIP and MSIP Standards:

Program goals are related to CSIP and MSIP standards. Information gathered about homeless students would ensure that homeless students are afforded the full range of educational programs in the district (MSIP Standards 6.3.4, 8.1.1, and 8.3.1).

II. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered

Federal and State Requirements

SSD Identification Process

Homeless Children and Youth Census: DESE

Services and Supports Provided



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III. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation:

The Homeless Services Program Evaluation Committee consisted of SSD staff, community members, and a parent (Table 1). The committee members conferred via telephone and fax machine due to on-going communication.

Table 1. Homeless Services Program Evaluation Committee

Member	Role
Mary Lee Burlemann	Area Coordinator, SSD
Marsha Myers	Principal, SSD
Bob Molitor	Area Coordinator, SSD
Jo Ann Levering	Area Coordinator, SSD, Homeless Coordinator, Affton SD
Shalonda Haynes	Salvation Army Community in Partnership Program
Lennise Morris	Students in Transition Program, SLPS
Carmencita Stewart	Parent
Cheryl Thomas	Social Worker, Rockwood School District

IV. Results

Federal and State Requirements

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized by Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This federal law ensures that children experiencing homelessness can enroll, attend, and succeed in school and preschool programs. The Missouri State Plan for Homeless Children and Youth serves as legislation which enacts this law and assures that homeless children within the state are afforded a free and appropriate education and have an opportunity to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all students are held. The Missouri State Plan defines a homeless individual as one who:

- A. lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- B. includes
 - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternate adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation;
 - iii. children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or similar settings.



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Children and youth in homeless situations are entitled to services comparable to those offered to other students (e.g., special education, gifted and talented, limited English proficiency, free/reduced lunch, etc.). The Missouri School Improvement Program monitors compliance with all policies and procedures pertaining to homeless children and youth. In addition, a Homeless Children and Youth Census is conducted annually for reporting purposes (Appendix A).

SSD Identification Process

The Special School District, in accordance with state and federal law and the Missouri State Plan, actively seeks to identify homeless students and ensure that they have access to a free, appropriate public education. Identification usually begins with contact from a component district representative, a social worker or a parent alerting the Homeless Coordinator of homeless status. There are guidelines in determining eligibility for homeless status. The majority of homeless students receive services through the component district. Special School District becomes involved when a student receives self-contained (more than 60%) services or attends a Technical School.

Each identified homeless child or youth is to be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the district, either the component district program or service or through Special School District programs and services. Services to homeless students may include transportation, educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, vocational and technical education programs, school meal programs, preschool programs, before- and after-school programs, and programs for students with limited English proficiency. Homeless students are not to be segregated in a separate school or placed in a separate program within a school based on a child's status as homeless.

After eligible status is determined, transportation issues are addressed. If it is in the best interest of the homeless child or youth to attend the school of origin, transportation to and from that school is provided. If the student's temporary housing is outside of the district of the school of origin, the Homeless Coordinator for Special School District will work with the Homeless Coordinator of the school district of origin to arrange for, and share the costs for transportation.

All student records are maintained so that appropriate services can be given to the student, so that necessary referrals can be made, and so that records can be transferred in a timely manner if a homeless child or youth enters a new school district. In addition, the Special School District Homeless Coordinator regularly attends quarterly meetings of area Homeless Coordinators to discuss topics of interest and network with professionals responsible for providing immediate response to families facing a housing crisis.



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SSD Homeless Census Data

Special School District reports data related to students identified as homeless to DESE on an annual basis through the Homeless Children and Youth Census (Appendix A). Table 2 reflects the number of students identified as homeless in Special School District during the past 4 years.

Table 2. Homeless Student Census: Special School District

School Year	Number of Students
2004-2005	37
2005-2006	26
2006-2007	26
2007-2008	24*

* *Year-to-Date Total*

As noted in Table 2, the number of students identified as homeless has remained consistent during the past three years compared to slightly more students identified in the 2004-05 school year (n=37). Of the 24 homeless students identified thus far during the 2007-2008 school year, 10 students have now achieved a permanent residence and are no longer homeless as of this evaluation. As a component of census data collected, Special School District is required to report the grade level and primary nighttime residence of homeless children and youth at the time of initial identification. Grade level data of the 24 students identified thus far for 2007-2008 is reported in Table 3. Primary nighttime residence is reported in Table 4.

Table 3. Homeless Student Census: Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
2	1	4.2
3	2	8.3
4	3	12.5
6	2	8.3
8	3	12.5
9	1	4.2
10	3	12.5
11	6	25.0
12	3	12.5
Total	24	100

As noted in Table 3, the majority of homeless student and youth identified thus far for the 2007-2008 school year are at the 11th grade level.



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Table 4. Homeless Student Census: Primary Nighttime Residence

Primary Nighttime Residence: DESE Categories	Frequency	Percent
Shelters, transitional housing, awaiting foster care	4	16.7
Doubled-up (including runaway youth or unaccompanied youth who live with relatives or friends due to being homeless)	18	75.0
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, abandoned buildings, temporary trailer, substandard or inadequate housing)	0	0
Hotels/Motels	2	8.3
Total	24	100

The majority (75%) of homeless students identified thus far for 2007-2008 fall into the “doubled-up” category with regards to primary nighttime residence. No students have been identified in the “unsheltered” category at this point in the school year.

In addition to collecting the DESE census data indicated above, the district has recently implemented a tracking system and process to monitor what services (e.g., transportation, special education, referrals to agencies, etc.) homeless students are receiving. Services and supports received by the 24 homeless students identified thus far are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Homeless Students: Services and Supports Received

Services and Supports	Frequency	Percent
Transportation	24	100
Early Childhood Program	0	0
Special Education	21	87.5
Counseling	22	91.7
Limited English Proficient	0	0
Gifted/Talented	0	0
Vocational/Technical	5	20.8
Free / Reduced Lunch	24	100
Before / After School Program	13	54.2
Clothing	16	66.7
School Supplies	17	70.8
Referral for Medical, Dental and Other Health	21	87.5
Assistance with Record Transfers	1	4.2
Parent Education: Rights and Resources	3	12.5
Tutoring	5	20.8
Expedited Evaluation	1	4.2
Staff Professional Development and Awareness	8	33.3



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As noted in Table 5, students identified as homeless receive a wide variety of services and supports. The most common of these include transportation, free/reduced lunch, counseling, agency referrals, and special education services.

V. Discussion

Based on the review of data, the following strengths, concerns and recommendations were identified.

Strengths of program/service:

In accordance with state and federal law, Special School District has a process in place to actively seek and identify homeless students and ensure that they have access to a free, appropriate public education.

Special School District reports data regarding homeless students to DESE on an annual basis. Information required in the census includes (a) number of students identified, (b) grade level, and (c) primary nighttime residence.

Special School District has developed an internal tracking system and process to monitor what services (e.g., transportation, special education, referrals to agencies, etc.) homeless students are receiving.

The Special School District Homeless Coordinator meets quarterly with other area Homeless Coordinators to discuss topics of mutual interest regarding the needs of homeless students thereby creating a network of persons interested in providing immediate response to families facing a housing crisis.

Special School District social workers provide a wide range of services to students whose families are facing a housing crisis. Services provided may include parent contacts, referral to outside resources, and participation in school conferences.

Special School District building administrators and teachers are familiar with the process for referring a self-contained student who becomes homeless for services and transportation.

Concerns regarding program/service:

Families are reluctant to come forward to identify themselves as homeless for a variety of reasons. There is a stigma associated with homelessness, but families need to know that there are services available to them in order to maintain a consistent school life for their children even if home life is in crisis.



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School district Homeless Coordinators need to respond collaboratively when information becomes available about a homeless situation. The child's prompt return to school should be of foremost importance. Although the average period of time to arrange transportation to facilitate school attendance is two days, homeless coordinators sometimes do not respond to requests related to transportation in a timely manner. Failure to collaborate in a timely manner has delayed transportation arrangements and school entrance by an additional 1-2 days on two separate occasions this school year.

The DESE annual homeless census does not require delineating homeless student status based on whether or not the family unit is together (e.g., family unit is homeless versus runaways/unaccompanied youth). This delineation can be critical in determining appropriate support services early on. Although not required for reporting purposes, Special School District does record anecdotal information related to this distinction.

Recommendations regarding program/service:

Families need to be made aware that they are entitled to the same programs and services their children had prior to becoming homeless and that transportation to and from the school of origin or the school of best interest will be provided.

Social workers and teachers are usually the first to become aware of changes in a family's circumstances. An effort should be made to encourage the Homeless Coordinator or a representative in each school district to attend the quarterly meetings of Homeless Coordinators in an effort to work collaboratively and keep abreast of any changes in the McKinney-Vento Act. Quarterly meetings include updates provided by DESE representatives and are hosted by the Salvation Army Community in Partnership organization.

The continued use and refinement of the internal tracking system/process to monitor services and supports provided to homeless students will be pursued (e.g., family unit homeless versus runaway/unaccompanied). Data collected will provide an avenue to better assess strengths, concerns and appropriate services in a more methodical and timely manner.

Person responsible to champion action plan: Mary Lee Burlemann

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education: Annually

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation



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Appendix A

DESE: Homeless Children and Youth Census



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
 DIVISION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – FEDERAL DISCRETIONARY GRANTS
**HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENSUS
 REPORT FOR NON-GRANT RECIPIENTS**

SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME		COUNTY-DISTRICT CODE
NAME OF THE BOARD APPOINTED HOMELESS COORDINATOR AS REPORTED TO CORE DATA	PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER
HOMELESS COORDINATOR ADDRESS	CITY	STATE AND ZIP

DIRECTIONS

Each district **not receiving** McKinney-Vento funding during the 2006-2007 school year must complete this form.

Mail OR Fax (573) 526-6698 the completed form no later than **September 17, 2007** to: Federal Discretionary Grants, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, PO Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Questions, contact Federal Discretionary Grants: Phone: (573) 522-8763; Fax: (573) 526-6698; or e-mail to: webreplyimprfdg@dese.mo.gov; Visit DESE's website at: dese.mo.gov

SECTION I – NUMBER OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Grade Level	Number of homeless children/youth enrolled during the 2006-2007 school year
Age 3 through 5 (not Kindergarten)	
K	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
Total number of homeless children/youth enrolled during the 2006-2007 school year	

SECTION II – PRIMARY NIGHT TIME RESIDENCE OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Of the total number of homeless children/youth provide the numbers who had the following as their primary nighttime residence at the time of initial identification. (Initial identification is the time at which the local liaison documents the homeless status of a child or youth. This can be either at time of enrollment or when a currently enrolled child is determined to be homeless.) The primary nighttime residence is the basis for identifying homeless children and youth. **The total should match the total in Section I.**

Shelters, transitional housing, awaiting foster care	
Doubled-up (including runaway youth or unaccompanied youth who live with relatives or friends due to being homeless)	
Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, abandoned buildings, temporary trailer, substandard or inadequate housing, etc.)	
Hotels/Motels	
Total (Must equal total K-12 homeless children/youth enrolled during the 2006-2007 school year)	

SECTION III – NO HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH STUDENTS

If your district indicated that you did not have any homeless children and youth enrolled during the 2006-2007 school year, please explain.