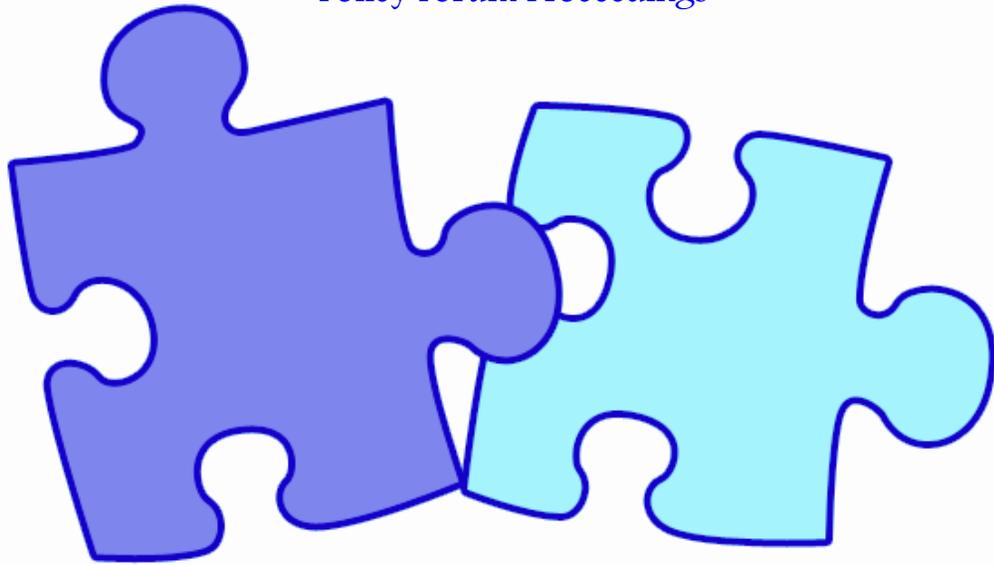


Policy Forum Proceedings



Homeless and Special Education Administrative Collaboration: Recommendations

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Homeless and Special Education Administrative Collaboration: Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Families experiencing homelessness are not a static group. Due to catastrophic events such as hurricanes, and personal events such as a parent losing a job, families fall into and climb out of homelessness every day. According to the latest statistics gathered for the 2006-07 school year from 78% of the local education agencies (LEAs) across the country, more than 679,000 homeless students were enrolled. These numbers are less than the 2005-06 school year (906,680 enrolled), likely due to the effects of hurricanes that year.¹

Homelessness that co-occurs with the need for special education services compounds the problems for families and their children. Social and educational services are designed to be supportive; however, when service providers are not prepared to work across systems, they can inadvertently cause more distress to this particular population. Service providers must purposefully and collaboratively prepare to serve this unique group in the most efficient manner possible.

Project Forum at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) worked together to collect information regarding the need for a policy forum on the topic of administrative collaboration between school personnel who support homeless education under the McKinney-Vento Act and those who provide early intervention and special education services. When it was decided to convene such an event, Project Forum and NCHE jointly developed the purpose and expected outcomes. In July 2007, NCHE and the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) conducted a survey with state coordinators for the education of homeless students regarding collaboration between homeless education, early intervention and special education program administrators. In September 2007, Project Forum conducted a similar survey with state directors of special education, 619 directors (those who serve students with disabilities ages three through five), and LEA special education and early intervention administrators. The questions asked in both surveys were:

- What are some specific issues that have caused confusion regarding school placements and services for children with disabilities who are homeless?
- What, if any, coordination or collaboration has occurred between you and your [homeless program liaison or special education/early intervention] liaison?
- What activity/resource/opportunity was most helpful in developing a collaborative relationship with your [homeless or special education/early intervention] program liaisons?
- What have been the most challenging barriers to collaboration with [homeless or special education/early intervention] staff?
- What suggestions do you have for colleagues regarding how they can build strong collaborative relationships across these programs?

¹ Data taken from “Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Analysis of Data” July 2008, at http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/data_comp_03-06.pdf.

The information gleaned from these surveys guided development of the policy forum. (See Appendix A for a synthesis of the findings from these surveys.)

This document contains the following: 1) the need for, and description of, the policy forum; 2) a review of laws pertinent to the education of students with disabilities who are homeless; 3) a summary of the collaborative process designed specifically for IDEA and homeless education administrators; and 4) the findings from the policy forum. These findings include both barriers to collaboration and recommendations to overcome these barriers in order to better serve this student population.

This activity was conducted as part of Project Forum's cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Need for the Policy Forum

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included many provisions to ensure that homeless children and youth with disabilities are evaluated and served expeditiously to eliminate educational barriers resulting from high mobility. Instrumental to the implementation of these provisions is the need for collaboration between IDEA early intervention (Part C) and special education (Part B) and homeless education programs to provide services to these children in a coordinated and comprehensive way. However, state- and local-level IDEA and homeless coordinators report that most states, school districts and communities do not have collaborative practices in place. Although coordinators from homeless education programs and IDEA know the legislative provisions of their own programs and are familiar with those of the other, the lack of coordination impedes the smooth implementation of both laws for children with these multiple needs.

Description of the Policy Forum

Project Forum and NCHE convened teams from three states consisting of state- and local-level administrators from homeless education, IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B. The three teams were from Colorado, Texas and Virginia. (See Appendix B for a list of participants.) The forum was conducted through a conference call and online meeting. Each state team was convened physically and participated online in a virtual meeting space. Prior to the online forum, these teams used a template to examine and report on policy and practice issues as well as current and possible strategies that states might use to address these issues. Two state teams met in person and one team used conference calls to prepare this information. All teams said that this was a critical foundational aspect for developing and continuing this collaborative relationship. (See Appendix C for the template.) The information was shared across states prior to the online forum held June 17, 2008. The purpose of the forum was to develop specific recommendations to overcome policy and practice issues around implementation of McKinney-Vento and IDEA both within the participant states and throughout the nation. Patricia Julianelle, legal counsel for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), designed a collaborative process prior to the forum. This process was utilized to model the development of recommendations. The findings section provides the information gathered from the pre-forum and forum work. (See Appendix D for the forum agenda.)

BACKGROUND

Federal Law

Two federal laws address the needs of students with disabilities who are homeless: the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program most recently reauthorized in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.]. Due to the confluence of disabilities and homelessness, these students often experience substantial educational challenges. Both IDEA Part C and Part B contain specific obligations to serve children and youth with disabilities who are homeless. Part C requires states to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless. Similarly, Part B requires state special education programs to identify, locate and evaluate children with disabilities who are homeless. These efforts are part of IDEA's "Child Find." Part B further mandates that states implement the McKinney-Vento Act and provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities who are homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act contains a parallel obligation to provide FAPE. IDEA ensures FAPE within the least restrictive environment (LRE), which requires that children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate. McKinney-Vento ensures FAPE through access language that allows students to remain in their school of origin (i.e., the school they attended before becoming homeless or the school in which they were last enrolled), or to enroll immediately in the school that serves the area where they are currently lodging. Therefore, staff of both homeless education and special education programs must work together to meet their legal obligation and serve children effectively. (See Appendix E for pertinent excerpts from IDEA and McKinney Vento and additional information.)

The Collaborative Process for Homeless and Special Education Programs

Despite legal requirements, children with disabilities who are homeless often do not receive the early intervention or special education services to which they are entitled and need. Mobility, poverty and the stressors of homelessness pose barriers to identifying, evaluating and serving children and youth in homeless situations. Robust collaborations between homeless education liaisons and special education staff and Part C agencies can overcome the barriers and ensure that children with disabilities who are homeless receive the services they need.

The literature on collaboration notes that an important first step for any effective collaboration is for individuals to recognize common goals. For homeless education liaisons, Part C agency staff and special education personnel, the overall goals of collaboration are clear: to identify and serve homeless children and youth with disabilities. Collaboration requires three general steps: (1) get to know the individuals involved; (2) take advantage of existing vehicles for collaboration and create new ones; and (3) develop and implement collaborative projects with tangible, common goals. Within these general steps, the following proposed process specific to IDEA/McKinney-Vento administrative collaboration will support services to children with disabilities who are homeless.

- 1. Create and nurture policies and practices for regular, on-going communication and collaboration among IDEA and homeless education staff.*

Any question regarding a child with disabilities who is experiencing homelessness will likely involve needs related to both conditions, requirements under both laws and services available through both programs. Therefore, it is imperative that homeless education and IDEA program staff know each other, are familiar with each other's legal requirements and services and work together to meet students' needs.

2. Review and, if necessary, revise state and local policies and practices so you have the tools you need to address complex situations creatively, flexibly and expeditiously.

State and local education policies generally are not designed with homeless students in mind. Policies that work well for students who enroll on the first day of school and remain in the district for an extended time may create insurmountable barriers for students experiencing homelessness. IDEA and homeless education personnel who work on a daily basis with children with disabilities who are homeless are aware of how policies and practices can complicate their efforts. Therefore, these personnel must be involved in reviewing and revising state and local policies so they streamline students' enrollment, attendance and receipt of appropriate services.

3. When a complex situation arises, work as a team to apply a clear and consistent process to resolve the situation.

Assemble the team based on who has information about the child, his/her educational needs and relevant law. Then gather and confirm the relevant facts by discussing the situation among all team members (e.g., the homeless liaison, special education and/or Part C administrator and the parent and/or youth). Next, break the situation into its component parts, since a complex issue regarding a student with disabilities who is homeless is likely to involve several discrete issues. Gather and confirm the relevant laws and regulations that apply to each component and use them while concentrating on the child's best interests. Finally, be sure the parent and/or youth understands the decision and his/her rights to appeal the decision.

4. Repeat steps 1 and 2 at least annually.

The preceding collaborative process, adapted specifically for IDEA and homeless education administrators' use, was employed prior to and during the forum.² The following issues/barriers and recommendations for collaboration were developed through this process.

FINDINGS

Project Forum and NCHE staff synthesized the issues gathered from the surveys and the state profile templates into the following five overarching categories:

- overcoming problems caused by mobility;
- coordinating between school districts/service areas;
- determining where services are provided;
- serving the whole child within a school district or service area; and
- collecting and using data.

² This collaborative process is a combination of two documents, both of which can be found in Appendix F. They are entitled *Navigating the Intersections of IDEA and McKinney-Vento: A Problem-Solving Process* and *Homeless Education and Special Education: Strategies for Effective Collaboration*.

Each of these issue categories was addressed by at least one state team to gain depth on both the issues and recommendations to address these issues. Because the recommendations that were given address numerous concerns, the issues and recommendations will be presented separately. A compilation of the issues given both prior to and during the forum are discussed in the next sections.

Policy and Practice: Digging into the Issues

Overcoming problems created by mobility

- Child Find for homeless children and youth without access to typical primary referral sources (e.g., pediatrician, the Department of Human Services, child care) may not be functional in finding all children who qualify for services under IDEA.
- Continuation and coordination of services when working with families who do not have stable contact information (e.g., phone numbers or residences) is difficult.
- Preventing mobility for students (i.e., from school to school) is a challenge when parents are unaware of their rights to attend the "school of origin."
- Keeping track of paperwork can cause stress to the systems especially when a student arrives for enrollment with no IEP or IFSP.

Coordinating between school districts/service areas

- Lack of structured, regular communication across LEAs or service areas prior to an immediate need for collaboration creates problems for proper identification of children as eligible for IDEA services; timely transfer of records, including transfer of credits; and location of appropriate community resources for students.
- In the absence of clear policy from the state or federal level, many districts struggle with how to allocate the cost and responsibility for services and transportation of children with disabilities who are homeless.
- The lack of common understandings across service providers regarding confidentiality guidelines (e.g., FERPA and HIPAA) causes a roadblock to sharing information that should support appropriate decision making and service provision.

Determining where services are provided

- Developing trust between families and service providers in order to discuss service location can be particularly difficult when the family is homeless and the student has a disability, both deeply personal challenges for families.
- The provision of Part C services in the natural environment, especially the home environment, when there is no stable home, is challenging.
- Determining attendance at the school that is in the best interest of a homeless child or youth requires careful review of feasibility considerations, such as education continuity, length of the commute and the age of the child. McKinney-Vento allows homeless students to remain in their school of origin when feasible. When the student also has a disability, IDEA requires a "least restrictive environment" layer be added into the decision-making process. These two laws may appear to be in conflict.

Serving the whole child within a school district or service area

- A general lack of awareness in communities and local agencies of the needs and barriers faced by students with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness causes problems in the acquisition of necessary services for this population of children.
- An inability to gauge how well public awareness campaigns are working creates added difficulty for agencies to determine how to reach the audiences who provide support to this population of children.
- Families struggle with navigating the many, distinct systems that provide services to children with disabilities. Homelessness greatly exacerbates that challenge.

Collecting and using data

- There has been no consensus developed to determine what data local agencies (both LEAs and Part C agencies) need to make quality decisions for this population, birth through 21; therefore, data systems often collect duplicate data or lack the appropriate information or ability to allow data to be used across systems (i.e., sharing information across databases).
- Based on current data systems, many states are unable to discern the number of and which children experiencing homelessness are currently served by IDEA, particularly children ages 0-5, in order determine the extent of the problem, provide modified enrollment and evaluation practices (i.e., expedited evaluations and transportation) and prevent duplication of services.

Change: The Recommendations

Many of the recommendations developed by members of the three state teams address more than a single issue. The following is a consolidation of recommendations suggested in the pre-forum state profiles and those provided during cross-state discussions during the forum.

Policies to expedite enrollment and services

- Develop policies for enrollment, evaluation and placement of children with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness that includes a “point of contact” in early intervention. Delineate systemic follow up with all service provision agencies in order to provide consistent evaluation and placement procedures for LEAs and early intervention service providers to ensure that appropriate services are provided to families and children.
- Include homeless education rights in parental rights for both early intervention and special education.
- Develop consistent transportation policies within school districts, especially for students who have transportation included as a service on their IEP. (See, for example, Richmond, Virginia’s transportation agreement in Appendix G.)
- At the local level, develop an electronic “passport” for education and other records to allow records to be transmitted and accessed quickly via an electronic system with appropriate protections for privacy and confidentiality. (The Migrant Education Program has developed several approaches to electronic passports to expedite the transfer of records for highly mobile students.)

Policies to coordinate programs and services

- Develop guidance that requires meetings and information exchanges among LEA homeless liaisons, Part B staff and Part C service providers to increase collaboration and facilitate problem-solving.
- Integrate issues of homelessness into special education and early intervention state improvement and performance plans so that success in serving students with disabilities who meet the educational definition of homelessness is integrated into overall Part B and C goals, outcomes and accountability.
- Develop, fund and implement longitudinal studies to determine the co-occurrence of homelessness and disability and to capture outcomes for this population as a method to inform program improvement, policy and identify possible funding sources.
- Enact a common homeless definition across federal programs.
- Align the U.S. Department of Education and the Health and Human Services data collection and sharing processes.

Practices to expedite enrollment and services

- States could design a district policy template that includes best practice examples addressing, among other things, immediate enrollment of students with disabilities who are homeless. LEAs could adopt those policies, tailoring them to local needs.
- The homeless coordinator, special education and/or early intervention director and parents/youth liaison should meet as soon as possible to resolve any placement or enrollment disputes. All situations should be examined on a case-by-case basis.
- Child Find teams must ensure that students, including youth who have dropped out of school, are found in shelters and other places where homeless families temporarily reside. Furthermore, Child Find activities should thoroughly cover students in alternative and charter schools.
- Develop and implement a training program for older youth on where to find a variety of services, including services addressing homelessness and disabilities.
- Develop or enlist an advocate with connections at higher levels (e.g., state legislator, state superintendent of education) to support policies and practices for students with disabilities who are homeless, including the alignment of data collection and sharing of data across programs.

Examples of this recommendation include:

- In Colorado, the State Education Commissioner invited state staff to share their concerns and recommendations at “dish with the commish” lunches. The state homeless coordinator “took him up on it.” The commissioner became interested and a state legislator was already supportive, so the advocacy grew from there.
- In Texas, the Interagency Council for the Homeless has held its meetings in the state capital building where legislators have their offices. A state legislator attended one meeting and mentioned that his door would always be open to the council.
- In Virginia, the team discussed approaching the governor’s working group on early childhood as a vehicle to increase the visibility of needs of children experiencing homelessness since this group has key participants from multiple agencies across the commonwealth.
- Utilize universal practices of assessment across the state and nation that focus on what the child needs instructionally in order to decrease time spent on re-assessment when a child changes service providers or schools.

- Ensure that early intervention awareness materials reach homeless outreach projects, homeless shelters, family resource centers, libraries, motels known for housing the homeless, food banks, health clinics and other locations that serve homeless families.
- Develop consistent enrollment practices across the state and between early intervention and school for enrollment/intake staff and ask how the family found out about the services available in order to gauge the reach of the awareness campaigns.
- Provide consistent, general awareness and information training regarding the basic resources available for families and how to ask the right questions in a sensitive manner in order to determine residency issues. This training should be for “front line” enrollment/intake/points of entry staff (including hospital prenatal staff).
- Monitor and ensure compliance with current state and federal mandates for crossover issues in homeless education, special education and early intervention, including immediate enrollment issues, placement based on the best interest of the child and transportation.

Practices to coordinate programs and services

- Seek federal or other support to develop and disseminate models of effective school/community collaborations across service providers and programs that serve the “whole child” or provide “wraparound services” that address social/health/mental health/educational needs.
- Clarify responsibility/authority of all agencies, specifically local lead agencies, to share data to ensure that there is no break in needed services and that confidentiality concerns are addressed. (See Colorado’s HIPAA and FERPA Consent to Share Form, Colorado’s template for release of information form in Appendix H and OSEP’s policy Letter to Elder found at www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/letters/2004-1/elder021104ifsp1q2004.pdf.)
- Ensure that early intervention, special education and homeless education representatives are all on each other’s advisory boards and inform other community service boards of the issues for this population. Overlapping membership will allow members of each board to hear the same message. Similarly, ensure that education representatives are part of any home-visiting type of consortium that supports families of students with disabilities who are homeless. Present at each other’s conferences, provide joint training and technical assistance and write informative articles for each other’s newsletters. From this practice, create and enlist peer champions on the issues of homelessness and special education.
- State Part C coordinators, special education directors and homeless coordinators should work with their information technology departments to ensure that appropriate data elements are included in a database across programs and age levels in order to improve service provision.
 - Develop a unique student identifier that stays with a child from early childhood services through high school in order to inform appropriate services for individual students.
 - Include a field for residency (i.e., homelessness) and ensure that these students can be tracked throughout the state.
 - Get input from localities and ensure that proper groups, including information technology, are involved in designing the database.
 - Develop a form that collects the correct data upon enrollment. (See Appendix I for an example from Jefferson County school district.)

- Based on this consensus, develop a common, statewide database and track services provided, outcomes and status of students.
- Develop a state structure to represent homeless education as an integral part of other programs, including early intervention and special education, from birth to age 21 that can be replicated at the local level.

CONCLUSIONS

Some of the recommendations established are equivalent to the mandates in McKinney-Vento and IDEA (e.g., outreach, homeless program staff should be on the Part C interagency coordinating council and the Part B state education advisory panel). Many of the recommendations, if implemented, will support compliance with the legal mandates (e.g., include monitoring of homeless issues on the Part B and C monitoring protocol, collect data about residency across the state and identify those students with co-occurring special education needs and homelessness). More administrative-type recommendations focus on serving the whole child or the whole family and improving outcomes, such as using universal assessment practices to decrease off-task (learning) time. Together, these two types of recommendations (i.e., child-centered and administrative) will provide a stronger foundation for improving the collaboration between homeless and IDEA administrators, therefore improving service provision and outcomes for this vulnerable population, and possibly others.

APPENDIX A
**Synthesis of July and September 2007 Surveys of Homeless Education,
 Early Intervention and Special Education Program Administrators**

Policy Issues Raised	Practice Issues Raised	Strategies Suggested to Resolve
<p>McKinney-Vento (MV) and IDEA appear to be in direct conflict in some instances (e.g., MV: provide services immediately, IDEA: provide services only for students identified as meeting criteria and with paperwork)</p> <p>How is the district that is responsible for services and/or financial aspects identified when students live in one district but are educated in another district?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed in private or residential school and family becomes homeless/moves to another district, which district provides transportation, which one continues the placement? • Who provides/pays the transportation across school boundaries? • Parent school choice: Who pays/provides transportation? <p>What does “least restrictive environment” mean for homeless students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part C infants and toddlers and Section 619 preschool students—what is meant by “school of origin?” • Transportation: long distances between school of origin and where the student is living. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for most young children would be closer to home: How far is too far for child’s best interest? • How can an LEA provide LRE without adequate special education records upon enrollment? 	<p>Paperwork issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment and special education placement without paperwork • Lack of evaluation information to help ensure placement in the LRE with appropriate supports and services. <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous and current district are supposed to collaborate to provide services. Can cause service delays and lapse in attendance. • Parents might want pick up and drop off at different locations <p>Frequent lack of collaboration between preschool special education staff and MV liaisons.</p>	<p>Co-location of administrators (MV, IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C)</p> <p>Frequent meetings with cross-program attendance including case review and problem solving.</p> <p>Present at each other’s conferences and provide inservice for each other’s staff (cross train staff).</p> <p>Collaboratively design guidance to clarify IDEA and MV so school districts receive information that is not in conflict.</p> <p>Ensure MV membership and activity on special education advisory panels (Part B, IDEA) and interagency coordinating council (Part C, IDEA).</p> <p>Place MV, Part C and Part B on Governor’s Council on Disability</p>

Policy Issues Raised	Practice Issues Raised	Strategies Suggested to Resolve
<p>Identification and Outreach: Determining if student is homeless and/or in need of services under IDEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are in custody of the state? • Homeless if in foster care? • Homeless if “awaiting foster care placement”? • Homeless if living with other family members “doubled up”? • Delay in identifying young children in need of services under IDEA because of nature of homelessness (lack of medical home, limited exposure to professionals who could recognize delayed development, lack of or frequent changes in preschool or public school, possibly lack of parent or surrogate parent, etc.). Evaluations are often not done in a timely or appropriate manner for this population. Child Find requirements don’t always address issues for emergency shelters and transitional programs. • Referral from Part C program to school program is difficult when family moves between school districts. <p>Evaluation Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty diagnosing homeless children due to mobility and multiple stressors. How can IDEA programs ensure that evaluation process is accurate and takes into account impacts from mobility, poverty and homelessness? • Expediting and coordinating evaluations is difficult when parent or surrogate parent is not available and/or when working across school districts or service providers. <p>Surrogate parent issues.</p> <p>How to find, train, use well, who can be a surrogate, etc.</p>	<p>Lack of awareness of who is the homeless liaison at the LEA level.</p> <p>Lack of support/clarification from the state level.</p> <p>Lack of staff (staff turnover, staff with multiple responsibilities and insufficient time for coordination).</p> <p>Inadequate data system to track outcomes and challenges across multiple program models.</p> <p>Finding homeless families with preschoolers (outreach to them is insufficient).</p>	<p>Develop local memoranda of agreements to better define roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Share and blend available resources and funding.</p> <p>Share contact information (make all contact information easy to find and keep updated).</p> <p>Cross-report on mobility of homeless students (i.e., special education staff notify MV and vice versa when student moves and to where).</p> <p>Include parent groups such as the parent information education resource centers in training, development of resources for parents, etc.</p> <p>Share effective practices and documents from across the country.</p>

APPENDIX B
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APPENDIX C

**Template for Beginning Collaboration among IDEA Part B,
IDEA Part C and Homeless Education Administrators/Programs**

Local Participants Area: (e.g., Richmond City, etc.)		State Participants	
Name	Role	Name	Role

Local Area Demographics

Size (number of students)	
Size (other – geographical area, number of homeless families, etc. as pertinent)	
Number of homeless children (school-aged)	
Number of students receiving special education services (Part B)	
Number of homeless students receiving Part B services	
Number of homeless children under age 3 or 5 in local area	
Number of children receiving Part C services	
Number of homeless children receiving Part C services	
Other information	

State demographics

Size (number of students)	
Number of school-aged homeless children	

Number of students receiving Part B services	
Number of homeless students receiving Part B services	
Number of homeless children under age 3 or 5 in the state	
Number of children receiving Part C services	
Number of homeless children receiving Part C services	
Other information	

Collaboration Information (Across and within state, local, and community)

Policies	Practices	Strategies
Example: How to determine which district is responsible for services and/or financial aspects when child resides in one district and educated in another.		Example: Frequent meetings with cross program and cross district attendance.
	Example: Lack of evaluation paperwork upon enrollment to ensure appropriate placement and services.	Example: Co-location of administrators (MV, special education, preschool, IDEA 619)
	Example: Transportation: districts are supposed to collaborate, but this causes lapse in services and attendance.	Example: No solutions yet.
	Example: A practice that is working because of a particular policy.	Example: The policy that is in place that supports the practice.

APPENDIX D

**Policy Forum Agenda
McKinney-Vento and IDEA Administration Collaboration
June 17, 2008**

Expected Outcomes

- Deeper awareness and clarification of how McKinney-Vento and IDEA intersect to meet the needs of children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities.
- Identification of challenges that impede the implementation of McKinney-Vento and IDEA for children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities.
- Process for collaboratively addressing the challenges.
- Recommendations for policy guidance and administrative practice to facilitate a collaborative approach among MV and IDEA administrators to overcome the challenges to serving children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities.

Facilitators: Paula Burdette (NASDSE), Diana Bowman (NCHE), Patricia Julianelle (NAEH CY), Christina Dukes (NCHE)

Teams: VA, TX, CO

State Level – MV Coordinator, IDEA Part B Coordinator, IDEA Part C Coordinator

Local Level (from one school district/community) – Local Homeless Liaison, IDEA Part B Coordinator, IDEA Part C Coordinator

<p>Before Meeting Date</p>		<p>Team leaders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you can log onto the meeting site from the computer in the meeting room • Ensure speaker phone available • Email speaker phone number to Paula Burdette • Download Power Point templates for Off Line Activity #1 and #2 onto the computer in the meeting room • Determine how you will email the Power Point presentations your team develops when they are completed • Arrange for water, lunch, snacks, etc. in the meeting room
<p>Right before the meeting</p>		<p>Log onto the meeting website: Call into the conference number. Have handouts and working agenda available.</p>
<p>30 min (10:00 EDT; 9:00 CDT; 8:00 MDT)</p>	<p>Opening and Welcome –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and overview of the day • Desired outcomes NASDSE and NCHE collaboration and origination of the idea of the Forum (surveys, discussions with administrators) • Introductions 	<p>Paula Burdette and Diana Bowman</p>

<p>30 min (10:30 EDT; 9:30 CDT; 8:30 MDT)</p>	<p>Making sure we're all on the same page – an interactive review of IDEA B and C and MV</p>	<p>Patricia Julianelle, Evelyn Shaw Each team will discuss answers and respond to True-False questions in online polls (on the meeting site) related to MV, IDEA Part B, and IDEA Part C; facilitators will process the results</p>
<p>10 min (11:00 EDT; 10:00 CDT; 9:00 MDT)</p>	<p>Findings from Surveys of Administrators of IDEA and McKinney-Vento</p>	<p>Paula Burdette and Diana Bowman Summary of surveys of IDEA and MV state coordinators and Forum state team profiles regarding issues identified Handout: "Synthesis of Surveys."</p>
<p>10 min (11:10 EDT; 10:10 CDT; 9:10 MDT)</p>	<p>Problem Solving Approach Ways to think through MV-IDEA issues at the state and local level – modeling a process for 3-4 issues</p>	<p>Patricia Julianelle Overview of a problem solving process to increase coordination between MV and IDEA. Handout: "Navigating the Intersections of IDEA and McKinney-Vento: A Problem-Solving Process"</p>
<p>10 min (11:20 EDT; 10:20 CDT; 9:20 MDT)</p>	<p>Set the stage for Off Line Activity #1 – Creating a Foundation for Collaboration: Beyond the Basics</p>	<p>Paula Burdette and Diana Bowman Handout: "Off Line Activity #1 Instructions – Creating a Foundation for Collaboration: Beyond the Basics"</p>
<p>60 min (off line) (11:30 EDT; 10:30 CDT; 9:30 MDT)</p>	<p>Off Line Activity #1 Teams select a group facilitator, recorder, and reporter; discuss questions on the instruction sheet; complete the PPT template</p>	<p>Teams should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the meeting site. • Disconnect from the conference call. • Open the Power Point Template for Off Line Activity #1. • Select a facilitator, recorder, and reporter. • Follow the instruction sheet for the sequence of questions to address. • Ask questions for clarification when your off line facilitator calls (beginning of the activity, during, end) or call your assigned facilitator as needed Diana Bowman (CO); Patricia Julianelle (TX); Paula Burdette (VA). <p>Teams should have snacks or lunch or breaks as needed (VA team may want to have lunch during this time).</p>
<p>15 min (12:30 EDT; 11:30 CDT; 10:30 MDT)</p>	<p>Break – Preparation for Team Sharing</p>	<p>Teams should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email their presentations to Christina Dukes for uploading to the meeting site. • Maximize the meeting site for viewing. • Call into the conference call at the end of the break.

<p>60 min (12:45 EDT; 11:45 CDT; 10:45 MDT)</p>	<p>On Line State Sharing #1 States share round robin with questions and comments from the group (approximately 20 minutes for each team)</p>	<p>Each team will share its Power Point presentation and entertain questions and comments from the group (approximately 20 minutes per team). Teams should have snacks or lunch or breaks as needed (TX team may want to have lunch during this time).</p>
<p>15 min (1:45 EDT, 12:45 CDT, 11:45 MDT)</p>	<p>Prioritization of Issues</p>	<p>Diana Bowman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams will review a list of broad topics with subtopics that have been identified as issues. • Teams will add subtopics to the broad topics as needed. • Teams will select one broad topic it would like to discuss and develop policy and practice recommendations. • Team leaders will note this topic on the online poll. • Each team will select another topic after seeing what other topics have been selected by teams. <p>Handout: “Prioritizing Topics for Discussion”</p>
<p>5 min (2:00 EDT, 1:00 CDT, 12:00 MDT)</p>	<p>Set the stage for Off Line Activity #2 - Policy, Practice, Change: Digging into the Issues</p>	<p>Paula Burdette and Diana Bowman Handout: “Off Line Activity #2 Instructions - Policy, Practice, Change: Digging into the Issues”</p>
<p>60 min (off line) (2:05 EDT, 1:05 CDT, 12:05 MDT)</p>	<p>Off Line Activity #2 – Policy, Practice, Change: Digging into the Issues</p>	<p>Teams should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the meeting site. • Disconnect from the conference call. • Open the Power Point Template for Off Line Activity #2. • Select a facilitator, recorder, and reporter. • Follow the instruction sheet to address questions and develop recommendations. • Record recommendations and other information requested on the Power Point presentation. • Ask questions for clarification when your off line facilitator calls (beginning of the activity, during, end) or call your assigned facilitator as needed. <p>Teams should have snacks or lunch or breaks as needed (CO team may want to have lunch during this time).</p>

inForum

<p>15 min (3:05 EDT; 2:05 CDT; 1:05 MDT)</p>	<p>Break – Preparation for Team Sharing Teams will email their presentations to Christina Dukes and she will upload to the meeting site; teams will take a short break and call in and return to the online meeting site.</p>	<p>Teams should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email their presentations to Christina Dukes for uploading to the meeting site. • Maximize the meeting site for viewing. • Call into the conference call at the end of the break.
<p>60 min (3:20 EDT; 2:20 CDT; 1:20 MDT)</p>	<p>State sharing #2</p>	<p>Each team will share its Power Point presentation and entertain questions and comments from the group (approximately 20 minutes per team).</p>
<p>25 min (4:20 EDT; 3:20 CDT; 2:20 MDT)</p>	<p>Group Discussion – Action Planning</p>	<p>Paula Burdette will facilitate a whole group discussion on what is needed to ensure the recommendations are considered and implemented.</p>
<p>15min (4:45 EDT; 3:45 CDT; 2:45 MDT)</p>	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjourn (5:00) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paula Burdette will explain what will happen with the information generated in today’s forum. • Diana Bowman will debrief the meeting – what worked; what could have been improved. • Paula will provide instructions for the unopened box.
<p>(5:00 EDT, 4:00 CDT, 3:00 MDT)</p>	<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Teams should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log off from the meeting. • Disconnect from the conference call.

APPENDIX E

Pertinent IDEA and McKinney-Vento Excerpts and Additional Information**IDEA Statute Excerpts**

20 U.S.C. 1401(9)

(a) IN GENERAL—A statewide system described in section 633 shall include, at a minimum, the following components:...

(2) A State policy that is in effect and that ensures that appropriate early intervention services based on scientifically based research, to the extent practicable, are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including Indian infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families residing on a reservation geographically located in the State and infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless children and their families.

20 USC §1412(a)(21); 34 CFR §§300.167, 300.168(a)(5), 300.169.

IN GENERAL—The council shall be composed as follows:...

(K) OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH—Not less than 1 member shall be a representative designated by the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.

20 USC §1441(b)(1)(K)

IDEA Regulations Excerpts

Section 612(a)(3)(A); 34 CFR §300.111

(A) IN GENERAL—The State educational agency is responsible for ensuring that—...

(iii) in carrying out this part with respect to homeless children, the requirements of subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) are met.

Section 612(a)(11)(A)(iii); 34 CFR §300.149(a)(3)

(4) COMPARABLE SERVICES- Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected under paragraph (3), including the following:

...(B) Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as... educational programs for children with disabilities.

(21) STATE ADVISORY PANEL—

(A) IN GENERAL—The State has established and maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State.

(B) MEMBERSHIP—Such advisory panel shall consist of members..., including—
...(v) State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)

Section 635(a)(2)

(3) CHILD FIND—

(A) IN GENERAL—All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

McKinney-Vento of NCLB Statute Excerpts

42 USC §721

(1) Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth.

§722(e)(3)(C)(ii)

SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS – For the State to be eligible ... to receive funds under this subtitle, the school ... shall –

(I) provide assistance to the parent or guardian of each homeless child or youth (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) to exercise the right to attend the parent’s or guardian’s (or youth’s) choice of schools ...

(II) coordinate with the local educational agency with jurisdiction for the school selected by the parent or guardian (or youth), to provide transportation and other necessary services;

§722(g)(3)

- (A) IN GENERAL – The local educational agency serving each child or youth ... 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 ...
 - (ii) enroll the child or youth in 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.
- (B) BEST INTEREST – In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall –
- (i) To the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school or origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian;
- (C) ENROLLMENT –
- (i) The school selected ... shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.

- (ii) The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended ... to obtain relevant ... records.
- (D) RECORDS – Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including ... evaluations for special services or programs ... shall be maintained -
 - (i) So that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school.

Additional Resources

- *Interagency Coordination: Vermont's Educational Surrogate Parent Program*, retrieved July 24, 2007 from http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_interagency/surrogate_parent.html
- Luzanne Pierce & Eileen Ahearn (March 2007). *Highly Mobile Children and Youth with Disabilities: Policies and Practices in Five States*. Alexandria: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, www.projectforum.org.
- Faces Without Places is a nonprofit organization that generates awareness and funds to keep children and youth who are experiencing homelessness connected to their education in Cincinnati, Ohio. Faces Without Places has a strong collaborative relationship with Cincinnati's homeless education project, Project Connect. The organization's website is www.faceswithoutplaces.org.
- The Louisiana Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (LAEHCY) is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1999 by the liaisons working in the homeless education program. The organization was formed due to the lack of available resources and services to assist homeless families and children. The association's website is www.laehcy.com.
- NCHE has fact sheets and sample presentations on the McKinney-Vento Act available for download on its web site: <http://www.serve.org/nche>.

APPENDIX F
Two Collaborative Process Documents

**Navigating the Intersections of IDEA and McKinney-Vento:
A Problem-Solving Process**

There are many areas in which actual or perceived tensions exist between the mandates of IDEA and those of the McKinney-Vento Act. Often, these tensions result from misunderstandings about what the laws truly require or lack of specificity in the federal laws. In other cases, differences in perspectives and procedures complicate our efforts to act in the student's best interest. Whether these challenges are based in law, policy, or practice, navigating the intersections of IDEA and McKinney-Vento requires creativity, flexibility, and above all, collaboration.

Some common questions regarding the interplay of IDEA and the McKinney-Vento Act include:

1. Christopher and Josie

a. Christopher and his mother just arrived at our school to enroll. Christopher meets the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless, and his mother informed us that he was receiving some special services in his previous school. How do we implement the McKinney-Vento Act's requirement to enroll Christopher in school and provide him with full participation immediately, if we don't yet have a copy of the IEP from his previous school?

b. Christopher's sister Josie and her mother just contacted our Part C agency seeking services. Josie meets the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless, and her mother informed us that she was receiving some special services in her previous community. How does the McKinney-Vento Act apply to Josie? How can the Part C agency determine whether she was receiving Part C services? What would be the appropriate plan of action if Josie were receiving services in her previous community? What if she were not?

2. Mariela

a. Mariela was living in our school district and placed by us in a nonpublic school pursuant to her IEP. She lost her housing and is staying temporarily in another school district. Is the nonpublic school Mariela's school of origin under the McKinney-Vento Act? How do we determine if remaining in the nonpublic school is in her best interest? How does the IDEA requirement to educate Mariela in the least restrictive environment influence the determination?

b. If we determine that it is in Mariela's best interests to continue to attend our school as her school of origin, how do we determine which school district is responsible for services and/or financial aspects in this situation? Who pays for Mariela's education and

transportation: our district or her district of residence? The special education department, McKinney-Vento, or district general funds?

Each of these questions has both legal and practical responses. However, more important than the final “answer” is the process in which school district and Part C agency staff must engage to arrive at answers that are consistent with federal laws, state laws and regulations, and, most importantly, the best interest of the child or youth.

The following pages suggest a Problem-Solving Process for IDEA and McKinney-Vento staff to use in resolving tough questions such as those above.

Problem-Solving Process

1. Create and nurture policies and practices for regular, on-going communication and collaboration among IDEA and McKinney-Vento staff.

Any question regarding a student with disabilities experiencing homelessness will likely involve needs related to both conditions, requirements under both laws, and services available through both programs. Therefore, it is imperative that McKinney-Vento and IDEA program staff know each other, are familiar with each other’s legal requirements and services, and work together to meet students’ needs.

Some sample policies for regular, on-going communication and collaboration are:

- a. Mandatory McKinney-Vento training for all IDEA administrators on an annual basis.
- b. Mandatory IDEA training for all McKinney-Vento liaisons on an annual basis.
- c. Consistent participation of the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator on the IDEA Part B State Advisory Panel and Part C State Interagency Coordinating Council.
- d. A requirement that McKinney-Vento liaisons be invited to IEP meetings about students experiencing homelessness; the liaison can participate in the meeting, send a designee, help the parent participate by providing transportation or other resources, provide a written report to the team, or share comments and impressions orally with other IEP team members.
- e. A requirement that an IEP team member be consulted in McKinney-Vento best interest determinations for students with disabilities.

Some sample practices for regular, on-going communication and collaboration are:

- a. Staff from one program are routinely invited to trainings and workshops given by the other program.
- b. IDEA and McKinney-Vento staff meet informally for a brown-bag lunch once a month.
- c. Various programs join together to form an Advisory Committee on inter-disciplinary issues (e.g., IDEA, McKinney-Vento, Title IA, Migrant, Attendance/truancy, preschool, etc.). The Committee has formal meetings three times a year, with any member empowered to call a special meeting at any time to

discuss a new policy change, share important information, or seek advice on a challenging case.

2. Review and, if necessary, revise state and local policies and practices so you have the tools you need to address tricky situations creatively, flexibly, and expeditiously.

State and local policies generally are not designed with homeless students in mind. Policies that work well for students who enroll on the first day of school and remain in the district for several years may create insurmountable barriers for students experiencing homelessness. IDEA and McKinney-Vento personnel who work on a daily basis with homeless students with disabilities are aware of how policies and practices complicate, rather than facilitate, their efforts. Therefore, IDEA and McKinney-Vento personnel must be involved in reviewing and revising state and local policies so they streamline children's enrollment, attendance, and receipt of appropriate services.

Some sample policies that can assist staff in resolving tricky situations include:

- a. Include the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless and basic requirements in IDEA policies.
- b. Create policies to address tricky situations that are not addressed specifically in federal laws (such as cost-sharing, allocating cost and responsibility for inter-district transportation, maintaining nonpublic school placements across district lines, procedures to resolve disputes between school districts, strict requirements and timelines for transmitting special education records for students experiencing homelessness, implementing IFSPs and coordinating assessments when children move between Part C service areas, etc.)

Some sample practices that can assist staff in resolving tricky situations include:

- a. Provide enrollment personnel with a checklist of questions to ask upon enrollment, designed to identify potential homelessness and eligibility for special education, along with contact information for the McKinney-Vento liaison and special education administrators. (NCHE has such a list of questions and a sample enrollment form available.)
- b. Maintain school records of homeless students, including special education records, in a location and format so they can be immediately transmitted to follow the student.
- c. Provide parents with copies of their children's records, including special education records, when they withdraw their children for reasons related to a loss of housing.
- d. Hold quarterly meetings among transportation, IDEA, and McKinney-Vento staff to address challenges and develop procedures to provide appropriate transportation quickly for students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

3. When a tricky situation arises, work as a team to apply a clear and consistent process to resolve the situation.

a. Assemble the team.

Who has information about the student, his or her educational needs, available services, and relevant law? These people should be invited to participate in resolving the situation, either through a formal meeting or informal sharing, including: parents, guardians, surrogate parents, caregivers of unaccompanied youth, unaccompanied youth themselves, special education administrators, teachers, the McKinney-Vento liaison, other appropriate school staff (transportation, counselors, nurses, social workers, etc.), and staff from other involved school districts. The liaison or a special education administrator should lead the team.

b. Gather and confirm all the relevant facts.

If we are working off different sets of facts, we are likely to come up with different answers. The liaison, special education administrator, and parent/surrogate parent/guardian/caregiver/youth should discuss the situation together, to ensure a complete, agreed-upon set of facts.

c. Break the situation into its component parts.

Any tricky situation regarding a student with disabilities who is homeless is likely to involve several discrete issues. Try to break the situation into its component parts. Taking Mariela's situation above as an example, the parts might be:

- i. Does the nonpublic school meet the definition of school of origin under the McKinney-Vento Act?
 - ii. What school is it in Mariela's best interest to attend? What are the best interest considerations under McKinney-Vento? What do we consider, and how do we analyze her best interest?
 - iii. How does the IDEA requirement to educate Mariela in the least restrictive environment influence the determination?
 - iv. If we determine that it is in Mariela's best interests to continue to attend the nonpublic school as her school of origin, how do we determine which school district must pay for her education and transportation her?
 - v. How do we determine what specific funds pay to transport her: The special education department, McKinney-Vento, or district general funds?
- d. Gather and confirm the laws and regulations that apply to each component part.

The McKinney-Vento liaison should provide the law and guidance regarding the rights to immediate enrollment and/or attendance at the school of origin, making best interest determinations, the right to receive transportation, and the requirements for cost-sharing. IDEA administrators should provide the law regarding special education placements, least restrictive environment, and the right to receive transportation. If there are other relevant federal laws (i.e. Title I, Part A; Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act; etc.), state laws or regulations or local policies, the team should gather and share information about them.

- e. Apply the laws and regulations to each component part, concentrating on the student's best interest.

Now we start to put our puzzle together, by applying the law to our agreed-upon facts. For example, in Mariela's situation, we might begin to apply the law as follows:

- i. Does the nonpublic school meet the definition of school of origin under the McKinney-Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines school of origin as the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which she was last enrolled. According to our facts, the school district placed Mariela in a nonpublic school pursuant to her IEP. It was not a unilateral, private school placement by her parents. In essence, Mariela is a public school student. She attended the nonpublic school when she was permanently housed. Therefore, it is her school of origin under the McKinney-Vento Act.

- ii. What school is it in Mariela's best interest to attend? What are the best interest considerations under McKinney-Vento? What do we consider, and how do we analyze her best interest?

The McKinney-Vento Act gives Mariela the right to remain in her school of origin for the duration of her homelessness and until the end of the academic year in which she finds permanent housing, unless this is against her parent's or guardian's wishes. She is currently homeless, so the right applies.

To determine whether Mariela should attend her school of origin, we must determine if it is in her best interest to do so. U.S. Department of Education Guidance establishes the following process for best interest determinations: "The placement determination should be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that an LEA may consider include the age of the child or youth; the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on student's education; personal safety issues; a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services); the length of anticipated stay in temporary shelter or other temporary location; and the time remaining in the school year."

Our team should analyze the best interest factors together, specifically considering her need for special education and related services and the impact a change in schools may have on her education. If her disability weighs heavily in favor of keeping her stable in school, she is doing well in her current program, her disability does not make the commute unsafe or unmanageable for her, etc., Mariela will remain in her school of origin.

- iii. How does the IDEA requirement to educate Mariela in the least restrictive environment influence the determination?

Under IDEA, schools are required to educate students in the least restrictive environment. This generally requires that students with disabilities be educated with students who are not disabled, to the maximum extent appropriate. The U.S. Department of Education's regulation further specify that students must be educated as close as possible to their home and in the school the student would attend if not disabled (under the IEP requires another arrangement). These requirements seem to conflict with the McKinney-Vento Act's provisions regarding the school of origin.

However, IDEA also requires that the McKinney-Vento Act be implemented for students with disabilities who are homeless. This establishes that the least restrictive environment requirements do not overrule the school of origin requirements. In essence, IDEA requires that Mariela be given the right to remain in her school of origin pursuant to McKinney-Vento. Our team has determined attendance at the school of origin to be in Mariela's best interest, considering her special needs, so she must attend that school. To ensure full compliance with both statutes, our team may decide to amend Mariela's IEP to specify that she will be attending her school of origin.

- f. Be sure the "parent" understands the decision and his/her rights to appeal the decision.

The parent/guardian/surrogate parent/caregiver/unaccompanied youth are important members of our team, under both IDEA and McKinney-Vento. By including these individuals in our team from the outset, we hope to reach an informed, consensual decision about the student's best interest. However, both laws require that notice of rights, including certain due process and appeal rights, be given to these parties.

4. Repeat steps 1 and 2 at least annually.

Now that you have addressed several tricky situations, consider how the collaborations you have in place could be strengthened or adjusted to prepare you to confront challenges better. Consider how your state's and/or school district's policies and practices hindered or supported your efforts to resolve tricky situations. How should those policies and practices be changed? Work with other IDEA and McKinney-Vento administrators to make those changes.

Homeless Education and Special Education: Strategies for Effective Collaboration

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvements Act of 2004 (IDEA) provides an extensive array of services for children and youth with disabilities. Part C of IDEA provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers under age three with disabilities, and their families, through the development and implementation of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs). Part B of IDEA provides special education and related services to children and youth ages three through 21 with disabilities, through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

The McKinney-Vento Act provides immediate school enrollment and school stability to children and youth who are homeless, despite their mobility or their inability to produce typically required documents. Every local educational agency must designate a homeless education liaison, whose role is to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and ensure they are enrolled in school and receiving all needed services. NCHE's web site has information and resources on IDEA Part B and Part C and the McKinney-Vento Act (<http://www.serve.org/nche>).

Both IDEA Part B and Part C contain specific obligations to serve children and youth with disabilities who are homeless. Part C requires states to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless. Similarly, Part B requires state special education programs to identify, locate, and evaluate children with disabilities who are homeless. These efforts are known as child find. Part B further mandates that states implement the McKinney-Vento Act for students with disabilities who are homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act contains a parallel obligation, requiring local educational agencies to ensure that children and youth with disabilities experiencing homelessness receive special education services. Therefore, staff of both homeless education and special education programs must work together to meet their legal duties and serve children effectively.

Despite these requirements, children and youth with disabilities who are homeless often do not receive the early intervention or special education services to which they are entitled and which they desperately need. Mobility, poverty, and the stressors of homelessness pose barriers to identifying, evaluating, and serving children and youth in homeless situations. Robust collaborations between homeless education liaisons and special education staff, including Part C agencies, can overcome the barriers and ensure that children and youth with disabilities who are homeless receive the services they need.

An important first step for any effective collaboration is for the collaborators to recognize common goals. For homeless education liaisons, Part C agency staff, and special education personnel, the overall goals of collaboration are clear: to identify and serve homeless children and youth with disabilities. The following strategies can support collaboration between homeless education and special education programs to meet the needs of children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities. Robust collaboration requires three general steps: (1) Getting to know one another; (2) Taking advantage of

existing vehicles for collaboration and creating new ones; and (3) Developing and implementing collaborative projects with tangible, common goals.

1. Get to know one another.

Successful collaborations depend on good relationships based on mutual trust. One way to build trust is through earnest efforts to learn about the strengths and challenges of colleagues and share information about yours. Getting to know one another can be as simple as introducing oneself and starting a conversation. The following strategies can help lead to mutual understanding.

- Learn about the services each program provides. Develop a fact sheet and brief Power Point presentation for colleagues about the services your program offers and the children, youth, and families who are eligible for them. Invite colleagues to a brief presentation about your program.
- Ask for help. Homeless education liaisons who suspect a child may have a disability should contact colleagues in Part B or Part C for support in providing appropriate services. Special education staff working with a child who is homeless should contact the homeless liaison for help stabilizing the child's education and providing services and referrals.
- Step into each other's worlds. Homeless liaisons can invite early intervention and special education staff to visit shelters, low-income motels, campgrounds, or other areas where homeless families in your community live. IDEA staff can explain the evaluation and assessment process and the considerations involved in drafting IFSPs and IEPs.

NCHE has fact sheets and sample presentations on the McKinney-Vento Act available for download on its web site (<http://www.serve.org/nche>).

Project Forum's publication, "Highly Mobile Children and Youth with Disabilities: Policies and Practices in Five States" can introduce educators to both challenges and strategies in serving this population. It is available at <http://www.projectforum.org>.

2. Take advantage of existing vehicles for collaboration, and create new ones.

Once colleagues have gotten to know one another, the next step is to use and create vehicles to work together. From informal lunches to formal committees, frequent, clear communication with collaborative partners provides an essential space to share ideas and envision joint projects. The following are some vehicles for collaboration that have proven successful.

- Every State's IDEA Part B Advisory Panel and Part C Interagency Coordinating Council must include a representative of the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator. State Coordinators should use that seat at the table to pursue policies and procedures that address the needs of children and youth with disabilities who are homeless.

- Many local educational agencies have special education advisory committees that address such issues as child find, evaluations, IEPs, and service delivery. Homeless education liaisons should participate in such committees to support efforts to identify and serve homeless children with disabilities.
- Regional education service centers can support efforts at collaboration by calling staff together and leading efforts to brainstorm about challenges and joint strategies to identify and serve children and youth who are homeless.
- Workshops and meetings of Surrogate parent programs and Parent Training and Information Centers, which are funded under IDEA, offer ready-made opportunities for homeless liaisons and Part B and C staff to share information with parents and each other.
- Parent trainings to introduce the special education process can be offered to shelter staff. Consider hosting the training at a shelter to increase awareness of homelessness and allow special education and shelter staff to get to know one another.
- Sharing mailing lists can be a simple vehicle for circulating newsletters, resources, announcements about training opportunities and other information across programs. For example, state and local homeless education programs can enhance the child find efforts of IDEA Parts B and C by sharing contact information for shelters and other agencies serving children, youth and families experiencing homelessness, as well as by including special education programs and resource centers in their correspondence.

In Vermont, regional coordinators of the Surrogate Parent Program also serve as coordinators for the Homeless Children and Youth Project. These coordinators distribute information about IDEA and the McKinney-Vento to parents and community members and conduct outreach to identify children and youth who are homeless, as well as those with disabilities.

In Oregon, child find requirements for children who are homeless or highly mobile are included within the state special education monitoring system and related trainings.

3. Develop and implement collaborative projects with tangible, common goals.

The final step to launch a robust collaboration is to transform the good relationships and opportunities to cooperate into joint projects. Initially, short-term projects with clear, tangible objectives will help the group stay focused and productive. Although specific projects will depend on shared priorities, the following are some ideas for collaborative projects among homeless education, early intervention, and special education programs.

- A child find and identification team. On both the state and local level, experts in homeless education, special education, and early intervention should coordinate their efforts to identify and serve children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities. The group can develop and distribute joint posters and brochures and coordinate outreach efforts.
- A mobility task force for early intervention, special education, and homeless education. To enhance school stability and expedite evaluations and services for homeless and highly mobile children with disabilities, a task force of special educators and homeless liaisons from area school districts should meet regularly and develop inter-agency

agreements, policies and procedures. Administrators of migrant education, child welfare, parent involvement, and pupil transportation should also be invited.

- A special education-homeless education policy academy. The legal requirements of IDEA and the McKinney-Vento Act intersect on many issues, such as transportation, school placement, surrogate parents, and immediate enrollment. Clear state and local policies on these issues will help school district and Part C staff understand their duties and provide prompt, appropriate services.
- A professional development and awareness collaboration. IDEA and McKinney-Vento program staff can conduct joint trainings for teachers, school counselors, and administrators on the basics of each law and possible indicators of disabilities and homelessness.

In Louisiana, St. Tammany Parish Public Schools has established an Advisory Committee consisting of the homeless liaison and special education staff, as well as principals, transportation directors, parents, child nutrition supervisors, child welfare workers, and others. In addition to a regular meeting at the beginning of the school year, any Advisory Committee member can call a meeting at any time to share important information or discuss particular challenges. The homeless liaison has found the Advisory Committee to be a powerful tool for collaboration.

In 2003, Virginia's McKinney-Vento State Coordinator's office received a grant from IDEA's Preschool Grant Program (also known as "Section 619"). Through this grant, the State Coordinator was able to conduct a survey of early childhood special education programs, develop information briefs on homelessness and early childhood special education, and provide direct funding to local McKinney-Vento programs. In turn, the local programs coordinated with their local Section 619 preschool programs to offer summer programming at shelters, including training for staff and parents on developmentally appropriate play.

Conclusion

Children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities confront significant challenges to school readiness and success. Neither homeless liaisons nor special education experts can overcome those challenges alone. However, through robust collaborations between homeless education liaisons and special education staff, including Part C agencies, children and youth with disabilities who are homeless can receive the services they need to succeed in school and life.

APPENDIX G

Richmond, Virginia's Transportation Agreement

Procedures for Inter-District Collaboration for Providing Transportation to Homeless Children and Youth

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act "McKinney-Vento", reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, requires that school districts provide transportation to enable children and youth to remain in their school of origin. *See*, 42 U.S.C. 11431 *et. seq.* Under McKinney-Vento, homeless children and youth are entitled to receive transportation services that are available to non-homeless students. Local education agencies "LEAs" must ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison) to and from the school of origin.

In compliance with this requirement that homeless students be transported to and from their schools of origin, Chesterfield County Public Schools, Henrico County Public Schools, and the Richmond City Public Schools have developed an inter-district procedure for providing transportation for children and youth experiencing homelessness to attend the school of origin or a placement that is in the best interest of the student. Children may stay in the school of origin for the duration of their homelessness, which may exceed one academic year.

Responsibility of Transportation:

McKinney-Vento provides that generally when the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA of origin terminate and the child or youth begins living in an area served by another LEA, the child may continue to attend his/her school of origin. If the child remains in the school of origin after moving within the geographical boundaries of a different LEA, the LEA of origin will be responsible for transportation.

Effective _____, decisions to determine the best interest of the student regarding travel to a particular school will be made on a case-by-case basis between the parents/guardians, school districts' Directors of Transportation and/or the school districts' McKinney-Vento liaisons. Data of students receiving inter-district transportation will be forwarded to the McKinney-Vento liaisons to ensure regular and accurate data input as well as to facilitate and expedite transportation arrangements.

Potential transportation issues may arise as homeless students transfer from one school district to another. Students have the right to enroll immediately and to receive transportation services. Every effort will be made to arrange transportation within a reasonable time, not to exceed 10 working days from the date of notification to the LEA's transportation office.

<Signature Page>

APPENDIX H
Colorado's Sample HIPAA FERPA Consent to Share Form
Found at <http://www.earlychildhoodconnections.org/>

SAMPLE
Authorization to Release Information

As the parent or legal guardian of _____ (child's name), I authorize

_____ (Community Centered Board or School District/BOCES name)

to release the following records:

- Referral Information
- Medicaid Eligibility/Identification Number
- Developmental Assessment
- Occupational Therapy Evaluation
- Physical Therapy Evaluation
- Speech Therapy Evaluation
- _____
- _____
- _____

to the following agencies and programs, and for the following reasons:

- Community Centered Board in order to establish my child's eligibility for early intervention supports and services
- School District/BOCES in order to complete Child Find activities and evaluations of my child
- Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs to: consult with my family's service coordinator; and early intervention service providers about the impact of my child's medical condition; and to interpret medical and health records for eligibility determination and program planning.
- _____ in order to _____

I understand that signing this authorization is not a condition of receiving future medical or treatment services. I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by notifying the Community Centered Board or School District/BOCES in writing and that any information shared prior to revoking this authorization will not be affected by a revocation. I also understand that before any specific assessment or evaluation of my child is performed, I have the right to this prior authorization any such assessment or evaluation.

This authorization expires _____ (expiration date or

event).

I understand that once released, my information may be disclosed and may no longer be protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), but will not be re-disclosed by the Community Centered Board or School District/BOCES, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Signed: _____ (child's parent or legal guardian) Date: _____

copy to parent or legal guardian

Information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) can be found at 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 164.508, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at 34 CFR § 300.560 through 300.576, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34 CFR Part 99.

The following elements are required on an Authorization to Release Information form for it to be considered both HIPAA and FERPA compliant:

- 1 Name or class of person(s) authorized to make the disclosure.
- 2 Description of information or records to be disclosed.
- 3 Person or class of persons to receive information.
- 4 Purpose of disclosure or use.
- 5 Cannot condition future medical services or treatment on parent signing the authorization.
- 6 Right to revoke the authorization in writing.
- 7 Expiration date or event that relates to the individual or the purpose of the use or disclosure.
- 8 Potential for information disclosed to be re-disclosed by the recipient (although FERPA does NOT allow re-disclosure without parent consent).
- 9 Signature and date of parent or legal guardian.
- 10 The parent or legal guardian must be given a copy of the signed authorization.

APPENDIX I
Sample Enrollment Form



School personnel only
 Start Date _____/_____/_____ Start Code _____ Records Requested Yes _____ No _____ From Where _____
 Birth Certificate Yes _____ No _____ Immunization Yes _____ No _____ Proof of Residence Yes _____ No _____
 (Exemption for Students in Homeless Situations)

Please Print (use black/blue ink) Student Information Card 2007-2008 Please Print

STUDENT'S LEGAL NAME

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Name _____ Suffix _____
 Nickname _____ Grade _____ Gender _____ Birthdate ____/____/____ Student's Email _____
Home Phone _____ Is this your youngest student in the school? Yes__ No__ Your only student in the school? Yes__ No__
 Primary Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____
 Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____
 (If different than above)
 Country of Student's Birth _____ If not born in U.S., date of entry into U.S. _____
 Student new to Jeffco? Yes__ No__ Last school attended _____ City _____ State _____
 District _____ Phone Number of School _____ Withdraw Date _____ Grade _____

Student Information

Race/Ethnicity

Current Residence Status

- 1-American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 2-Asian/Pacific Islander
- 3-Black
- 4-Hispanic
- 5-White
- Comments _____

Residency information is important as it directly relates to Educational Rights under the McKinney- Vento Act.

- House/Apt/Condo/Duplex
- Transitional Housing Program
- Campground/RV/Car/Unsheltered
- Emergency Shelter
- Hotel/Motel
- Relatives/Friends (*due to loss of housing or economic hardship*)
- Other _____

Your student has been continuously enrolled in any school in United States (not including Preschool and Kindergarten) since _____ (please insert date)
 Your student has been continuously enrolled in a Colorado public school (not including Preschool and Kindergarten) since _____ (please insert date)
Has your student been enrolled in Special Education Services? Yes _____ No _____
Has a 504 Plan been developed for your student? Yes _____ No _____

Parents/Guardians Who Reside With Student

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq.(1-4) _____
 Email Address _____

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq.(1-4) _____
 Email Address _____

In addition to English, in what other language would you prefer to receive communication from the school, if available? (written translations and/or oral interpretation for meetings/conferences) Spanish Russian Vietnamese Other _____

Household Information

Parents/Guardians Who Reside at Another Address

Parenting Responsibility Shared _____ Not Shared _____
(If shared, the school will create a secondary household)
 Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
Primary Address
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Mailing Address

 (If different than above)
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq.(1-4) _____
 Email Address _____

Parenting Responsibility Shared _____ Not Shared _____
(If shared, the school will create a secondary household)
 Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
Primary Address
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Mailing Address

 (If different than above)
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq.(1-4) _____
 Email Address _____

Is there a court order restricting this parent/guardian's access to the student? Yes _____ No _____ (If yes, a copy of the court order must be provided)

In addition to English, in what other language would you prefer to receive communication from the school, if available? (written translations and/or oral interpretation for meetings/conferences) Spanish Russian Vietnamese Other _____

Additional Emergency Contact Information (Other than Parent)

Emergency Contacts

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
 Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq. _____

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Gender _____ Relationship to Student _____
 Home Phone _____ Work _____
 Cell _____ Call Seq. _____

Siblings Living Within Household

Sibling Information

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Birthdate ____/____/____ Gender ____ Grade ____
 Currently Attending a Jeffco School Yes ____ No ____
 Name of School _____

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ MI _____
 Birthdate ____/____/____ Gender ____ Grade ____
 Currently Attending a Jeffco School Yes ____ No ____
 Name of School _____

Health Information

What type of health insurance coverage, if any, does your student have?
 Child Health Plan (CHP +) Medicaid* Private Insurance No Health Insurance

**I understand that for those school health and health-related services that the Medicaid-eligible student may be receiving (including but not limited to vision and hearing screenings, nursing services, speech therapy, occupational and/or physical therapy), the school district has the right to receive partial reimbursement from Medicaid for those services rendered.*

Health Provider's Name _____ Address _____
 Phone Number _____

Please list any student health concerns (including allergies, asthma, attention deficit, bowel/bladder, diabetes, emotional/behavioral, heart, headaches, hyperactivity, seizures, feeding disorders, etc): _____

Does your child use any of the following? Glasses ____ Contacts ____ Hearing Aids ____ Prosthesis or Physical Aids ____

Is your child allergic to any medications? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, please list the medication and reaction: _____

Medication: Acetaminophen (Tylenol or other brand names of Acetaminophen) will be given as outlined in the District's Medication Procedures and with the signed consent of a parent/guardian. The Medication Procedures are available at the school.

Permission for Acetaminophen: Yes ____ No ____ Student Health Plan: Yes ____ No ____

Complete This Section for All Students in Jefferson County Public Schools

Language Information

This information will determine whether your child is assessed for English Language Acquisition Services.

Which language did the student learn when he/she first began to talk? _____
 (Student's First Language)

Please check one of the following to describe the student's **current** language skills:
 (1) __ No English spoken/understood (3) __ English / another language spoken/understood (5) __ Only English spoken/understood
 (2) __ Some English spoken/understood (4) __ Mostly English spoken/understood

If (3) or (4) was checked above, what language other than English does the student speak/understand? _____
 (Student's Language Background)

If "Only English" (5) was checked above, you may skip the following questions:
 Has the student attended school in another country? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, which country? _____ How Long? ____
 Has the student been enrolled in: (1) English as a Second Language Program? Yes __ No __ (2) Bilingual program? Yes __ No __

Signature Information

Permission for Publishing Name, Address and Phone Number in Student Directory Yes ____ No ____

The school will attempt to reach one of the people listed on this card, but if none of these people can be reached, the school personnel have my permission to use discretion in securing medical aid in an emergency. **IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT NEITHER THE SCHOOL NOR THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING THIS MEDICAL AID WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXPENSE INCURRED.** To the best of my knowledge the above information is correct. I agree to and approve all information.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

