You want me to go WHERE?!?

McKinney-Vento UPDATE: Transporting Homeless Students

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

A federal law designed to protect
the education rights
of children and youth
who are experiencing homelessness.

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Main Provisions:

- School stability
- School access
- Support for academic success
- Access to services, including transportation
- Child-centered focus
- Decision making in the best interest of child
- Homeless Liaison in every district

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Who is considered homeless?

Children who lack a

fixed, regular, and adequate

nighttime residence

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,

Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015

Who is considered homeless?

Children/youth who lack a *fixed, regular, and adequate* nighttime residence:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason ("doubled-up")
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; no lease available
- Living in emergency or other shelters
- Public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above
- Abandoned in hospitals

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act; *Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015*

Child & Youth Homelessness

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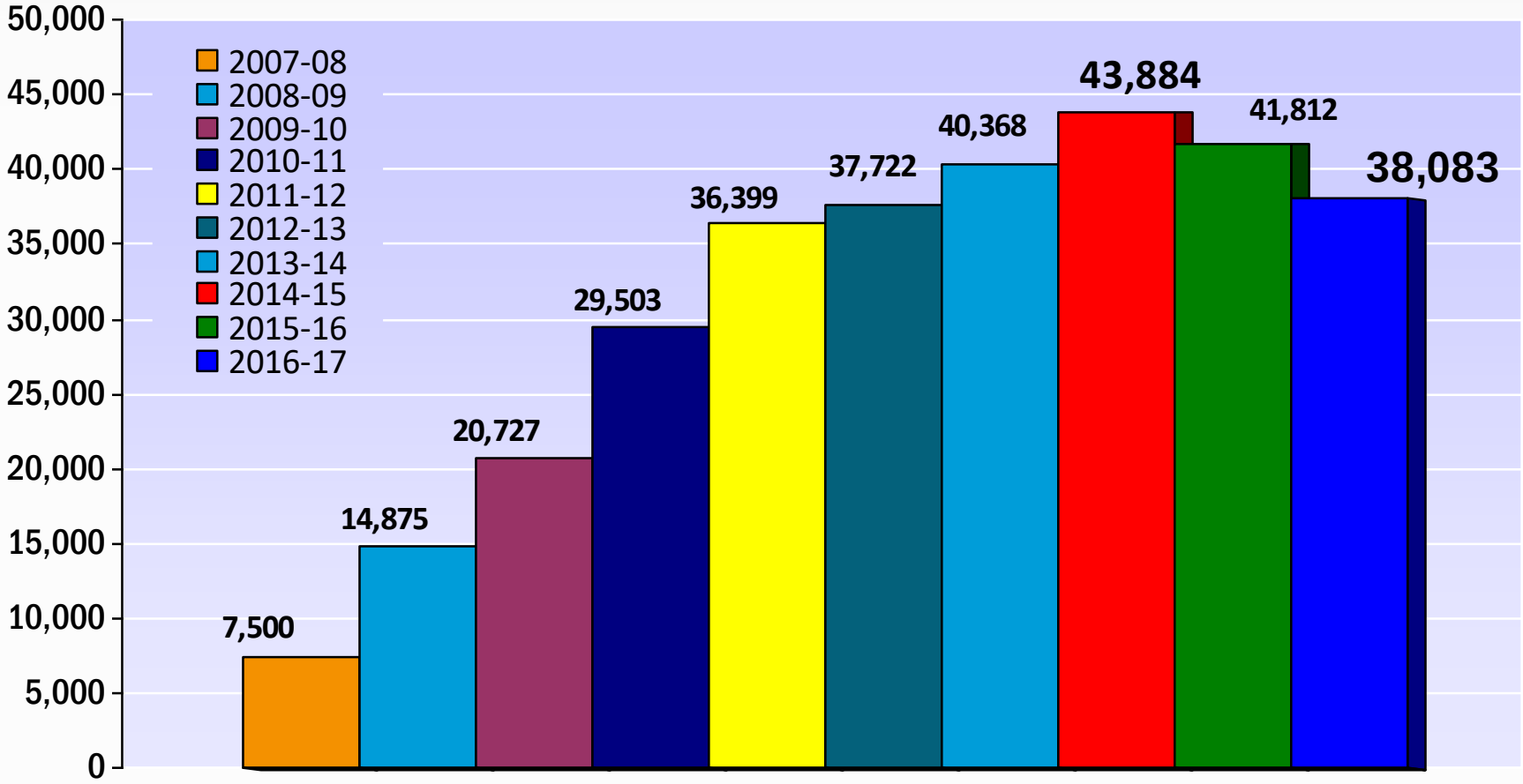
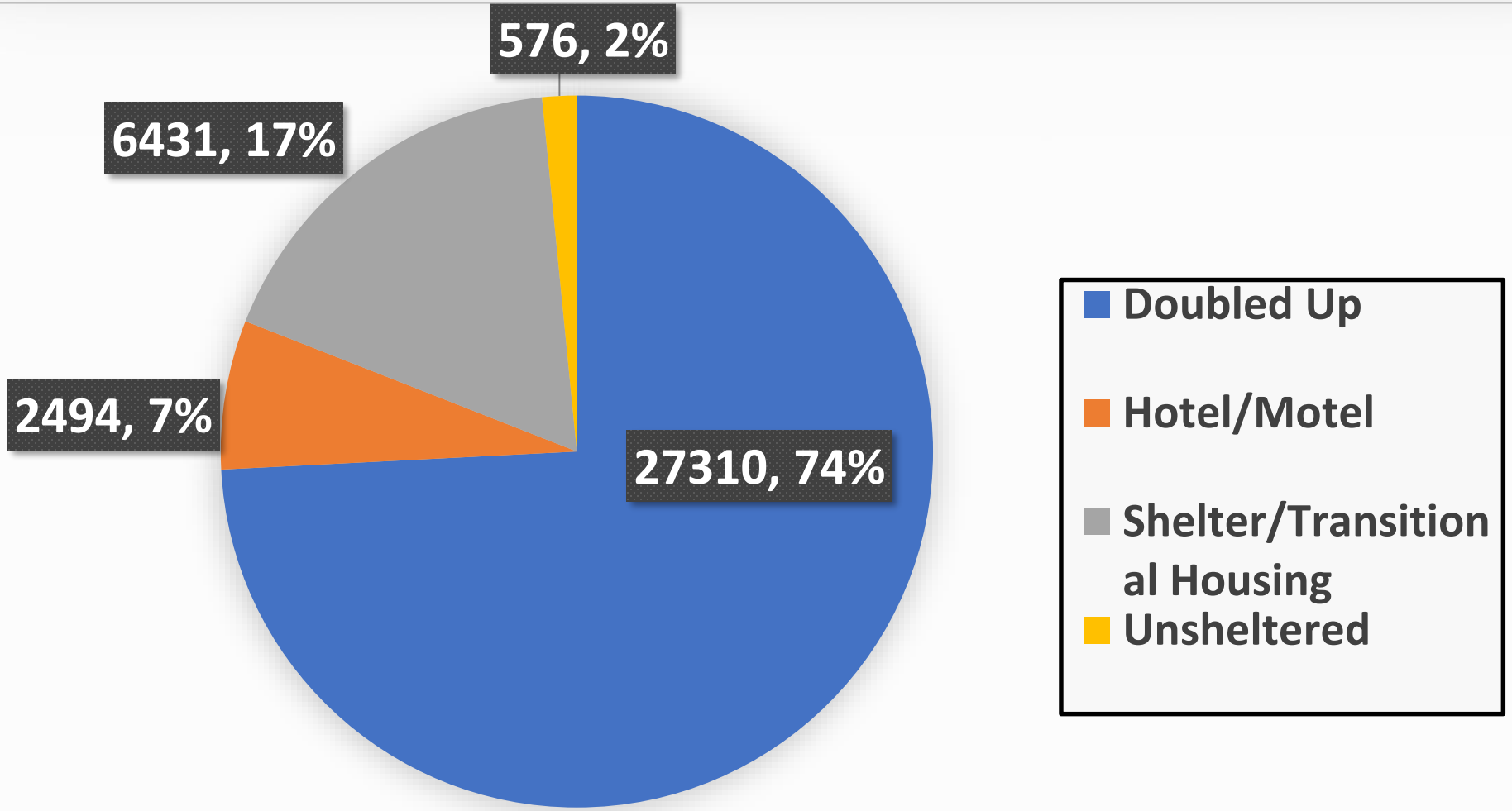
Homeless Student Enrollment Data, 2016-17



Unduplicated at the State level; Michigan Student Data System, MDE

Homeless Student Nighttime Residency 2016-17



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Homeless Student Subgroups

School Year	IEP/IDEA (Std with Disability)	UHY (Unaccompanied Homeless Youth)	LEP/ELL (English Learner)	MIGRANT
2008-09	1,608	3,114	249	88
2009-10	4,238	2,626	730	166
2010-11	5,690	3,543	1,078	447
2011–12	7,892	4,769	1,709	462
2012-13	7,709	4,861	1,706	383
2013-14	7,911	4,807	1,223	471
2014-15	9,532	5,629	1,799	448
2015-16	8,522	5,077	1,737	545
2016-17	7,970	5,012	1,742	563

Homelessness is an economic issue…

- Lack of affordable housing
  - Foreclosures
- Poverty
  - Economic insecurity
  - Unemployment
- Health problems
  - Lack of health insurance
  - Addiction disorders
  - Mental health issues
- Domestic violence
- Abuse/neglect (unaccompanied youth)

Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Enrollment requirements (lack of school records, immunizations, proof of residence and guardianship)
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- Lack of access to programs
- Lack of transportation
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice and misunderstanding
- Lack of awareness about homelessness (including the definition) and about mandated and available services

Impact of Homelessness on Children & Youth

- Higher incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety.
- Homelessness in early childhood is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school.
- The achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen, over time.
- A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.

Rights of Eligible Children/Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act

- Right to immediate enrollment even when records not present
- Right to remain in the school of origin, if in the student's best interest
- Right to receive transportation to the school of origin
  (last attended or attended when last permanently housed)
- Support for academic success

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District Responsibilities in the Law

- Identify homeless students
- Ensure homeless students are immediately enrolled and receive full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
- Link students with appropriate services and facilitate service provision
- Ensure homeless students receive transportation
- Handle disputes between schools and parents or unaccompanied youth

District Responsibilities in the Law

- Inform parents, guardians, or youth of educational rights
- Support unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) with school selection
- Provide professional development and ensure the public posting of educational rights through the school district and community
- Collaborate with other district programs and community agencies on identification and services

ESSA UPDATES TO MV ACT

- DEFINITION: Foster youth are no longer considered homeless, at any stage of placement
  - Now supported by Title I-A
  - New State Coordinator for Education of Foster Youth
- SCHOOL STABILITY: ***Now extends to preschool***
- REMOVAL OF BARRIERS: Includes deadlines, fees/fines, records, credit transfer/accrual, etc.
- STRONGER FOCUS ON:
  - Privacy of student records
  - Dispute resolution
  - Collaboration
  - Unique needs of Unaccompanied Youth

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Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015

Includes new requirements that will directly assist foster and homeless students' transition to higher education:

- School counselors must provide advice to homeless and foster youth to prepare and improve their readiness for college.
- School district homeless liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth and foster youth are informed of their status as independent students for college financial aid and obtain verification for the FAFSA.

ESSA Impact on District Pupil Transportation

ESSA amends the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- **As of December 10, 2016**, "awaiting foster care placement" is removed from the law
- Foster youth will NO LONGER be considered homeless under McKinney-Vento at this time
- Foster youth can no longer receive MV services
- School districts will NO LONGER be responsible for transportation costs for foster youth after this date
- MDHHS will have responsibility for transportation costs, as of Dec. 10, 2016

ESSA Impact on District Pupil Transportation

- While districts are being forced to make cuts in other areas of education, homeless transportation must continue to be provided, based on this law.
- The ONLY WAY for schools to continue to comply with this element of the law is for schools and communities to…

COLLABORATE & COORDINATE!

Why is Transportation Important?

The FY 2000 Report to Congress cited lack of transportation as the **number one barrier** that homeless children and youth faced in attempting to enroll in and attend school regularly.

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

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District Pupil Transportation Responsibilities

- Districts are responsible for **reviewing and revising transportation policies that may act as barriers** to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth are entitled to receive transportation and other services that are available to non-homeless students.
- Districts must **adopt policies and practices to 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"
- Transportation must be **arranged promptly** to ensure immediate enrollment and not create barriers to attendance, retention or success. ."

(Section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)(I))

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District Pupil Transportation Responsibilities - 2

LEAs must provide transportation to and from the *school of origin*, at the parent's or guardian's request (or at the liaison's request for unaccompanied youth).

- If current residence is in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin.
- If current residence is outside LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.
- Transportation must be provided until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing.

(Section 722(g)(3)(A)

District Pupil Transportation Responsibilities - 3

If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the district/LEA in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA in which the school of origin is located.

McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)

Translation:
Transportation of homeless students is the <u>responsibility of the LEA</u> the student is enrolled in, as long as the student is living in that district's attendance boundaries.

District Pupil Transportation Responsibilities - 4

- If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the local educational agency in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin.
- If the local educational agencies are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally… **McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)**

Translation:

If a homeless student begins living outside the district boundaries of the school of origin, BOTH DISTRICTS MUST AGREE ON OR SPLIT COSTS OF THE TRANSPORTATION METHOD.

District Pupil Transportation Responsibilities - 5

- The law specifically states that COST cannot be used as a reason for declining a school of origin transportation request.
- Districts that do not provide transportation to any other students still MUST PROVIDE IT for homeless students.
- Districts in which shelters and low income housing are located are responsible for half the cost of transporting homeless students for which they receive no funding.

Magnet and Charter Schools

A student who is homeless and decides to attend a magnet school or a charter school…

- would receive the same type of transportation to the magnet school or charter school like all other students.
- The LEA is not responsible for ensuring that the child who is attending a magnet school can get to the shuttle stop. However, LEAs may decide to provide transportation to assist the student to the shuttle stop.

A student who is attending a magnet school or a charter school and becomes homeless

- has the right to receive transportation to the shuttle station or the charter school if a parent cannot provide it.
- The law reads that it is provided at the request of a parent, guardian or homeless liaison. When a student who is attending any public school, including a magnet or charter school, becomes homeless, the school they are enrolled in at the time is their school of origin.

What About Preschool?

- If your district offers a public preschool or GSRP Program, then you must provide transportation to homeless students.
- Homeless preschoolers who receive special education services through your district are enrolled students and are also eligible for transportation services if they attend a preschool program on a district campus.
- Encourage schools to schedule services at times that will allow the child to participate in school meals.

Federal Funds for Transportation

Federal funds to defray the excess cost of school of origin transportation?

- An LEA may use Title I, Part A funds reserved to defray the excess costs of transporting homeless students to and from their school of origin. *(ESEA section 1113 (c)(3)(C)(ii)(II)).*
- An LEA receiving McKinney-Vento subgrant funds may use up to 20% of these funds to defray the excess cost of school of origin transportation.

Section 723 (d)(5)

Excess Cost of Transportation

The excess cost is the difference between the average per pupil transportation cost and the cost of transporting a homeless student to school.

The additional cost of transporting a homeless student to his or her school of origin by:

- rerouting a bus
- providing a taxicab or special bus service
- paying or reimbursing a parent or guardian for gas or mileage to transport a child back and forth from the eligible nighttime residence to the school of origin.

A district should consider what is in the best interest of the child and family. After that, they may consider the most cost-effective option.

Rerouting a district bus service would be based on additional per pupil costs for the homeless students served by this method.

Transportation Strategies

- Develop close ties among local liaisons, school staff, pupil transportation staff, and shelter workers.
- Use technology such as a transportation database to maintain records, plot routes and make requests.
- Use school buses (including special education, magnet school and other buses).
- Develop formal or informal agreements with school districts where homeless children cross district lines.
- Use public transit where feasible, including supporting parents to travel with younger children.
- Use approved carpools, van or taxi services.
- Develop a system for gas vouchers for parents and youth with access to cars.
- Pursue inter-agency solutions.

Best Practices

- Add route near school of origin using bus drivers who live near student's temporary address
- Use special education buses with more flexible schedules
- Database helps troubleshoot when a student misses the bus or when a bus is late
- Create contracts with parents to ensure services are appropriate for homeless children and youth or if alternative arrangements must be made
- Contract with individuals and organizations (DSS, school personnel, taxi company, etc.)

Best Practices (cont.)

- Reimburse parents or students to transport themselves to and from school
- Ask liaison, parent or student for ideas
- Track homeless student mileage, costs incurred and other factors that impact transportation and meet regularly with homeless liaison to discuss
- Work with neighboring LEAs for assistance
- Be creative in developing drop off and pick up points

Other ideas?

Questions

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Contact Information

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