

Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. McKinney-Vento District Plan

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & GENERAL INFORMATION

Schools of Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc.

Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) operates 16 Charter Schools under 13 Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

| Building | Corporation Number | School Number |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Excel Center Anderson | 9750 | 4904 |
| Excel Center Bloomington | 8655 | 4209 |
| Excel Center Clarksville | 9050 | 2006 |
| Excel Center Decatur | 9910 | 5669 |
| Excel Center Kokomo | 9355 | 2976 |
| Excel Center Lafayette | 9345 | 8094 |
| Excel Center Meadows | 9910 | 5669 |
| Excel Center Michigan Street | 9910 | 5669 |
| Excel Center Muncie | 9160 | 1016 |
| Excel Center Noblesville | 9855 | 5748 |
| Excel Center Richmond | 9305 | 9012 |
| Excel Center Shadeland | 9910 | 5669 |
| Excel Center Shelbyville | 9995 | 1117 |
| Excel Center University Heights | 9840 | 5749 |
| Excel Center West | 9335 | 5912 |
| Indianapolis Metropolitan High School | 9670 | 5664 |

McKinney-Vento District Liaison

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McKinney-Vento State Liaison

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McKinney-Vento Building Liaisons

[List of Building Liaisons](#)

Resources

[Indiana Education for Homeless Children & Youth](#)
[Educational Rights - English](#)
[Educational Rights - Spanish](#)

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 US Code §§11431-11435) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently reauthorized in December 2015 by Title IX, Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).The

McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that students experiencing housing loss have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, State Educational Agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each student experiencing housing loss has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other students. McKinney-Vento eligible students must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. In addition, McKinney-Vento eligible students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. SEAs and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of students experiencing housing loss.

Federal Definition of “Homeless”

42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)

The term “homeless” means Individuals who lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate** night time residence. This includes the following housing loss situations:

- Sharing the housing of others due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans
- Unaccompanied Youth - Children or youth who meets the definition of homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- Migratory children who are living in any of the circumstances described above

Residency and Educational Rights

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and homeless living situations have the following rights:

- Enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment at the time of the next orientation;
- Access to free educational materials and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation;
- Attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations.

Procedures for the Dissemination of Educational Rights

Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) schools shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students and families in housing loss is situations disseminated where students receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Educational rights will be published on The Excel Center website (<https://excelcenter.org/policies>) and on the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School website (<https://indianapolismet.org/policies>).

SECTION 2: IDENTIFICATION & ELIGIBILITY

Title I Services

At Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, all children and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento services are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, whether or not they attend a Title I, Part A school or meet the academic standards required of other students for eligibility (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(E); 20 U.S.C. 6315(b)(2)(E)). This automatic eligibility acknowledges that the experience of housing loss puts students at significant risk of academic failure, regardless of their previous academic standing. Additionally, all students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services who are doing well academically are entitled to receive additional non-instructional education related support services needed to succeed in school.

School Selection

All Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. (GEI) schools will keep students in housing loss situations in their school of origin defined as the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled, unless it is against the parent or guardian's wishes or unless it is determined to be in the student's best educational interest. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to remain in their school of origin for the entire duration in which they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services may also choose to enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.

Procedures to Identify and Verify Eligibility of McKinney-Vento Students

Every current, returning, and new student in GEI schools must complete enrollment registration, which includes the GEI Housing Survey. This Housing Survey is utilized to determine if the student may be facing a housing loss situation. Follow-up contact to collect additional information about the student's situation to determine McKinney-Vento eligibility will be conducted within 5 days of the completion of online enrollment by the District McKinney-Vento Liaison, Building McKinney-Vento Liaison, or designee.

SECTION 3: SERVICES & STANDARDS

Transportation

GEI schools will provide students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services with comparable services offered to other students including transportation services.

Indianapolis Metropolitan High School Transportation Plan

Indianapolis Metropolitan High School students who are identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services and require transportation to and from school are provided with an IndyGo bus pass, which provides free access to the IndyGo bus service and is not limited to only travel to/from school. The bus pass remains active for the student as long as they are attending school at Indianapolis Metropolitan High School.

Excel Center Transportation Plan

The Excel Center will provide students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services with comparable transportation (typically an IndyGo bus pass or a gas card) to and from their school of origin, at a parent or guardian's request. For unaccompanied youth, The Excel Center will provide comparable transportation (typically an IndyGo bus pass or gas card) to and from the school of origin at the request of the District McKinney-Vento Liaison. The Excel Center enrollment is not bound by district lines, so students in a temporary residence may still attend their Excel Center of choice. Students who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive these transportation services through the end of the school year provided they remain enrolled at The Excel Center.

Note: "School of Origin" is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled

Food Services

Each Indianapolis Metropolitan High School student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services shall be provided school nutrition services comparable to those offered to other students in the school. Indianapolis Metropolitan High School students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch as offered by the school for the duration of the school year. The Excel Centers do not provide school nutrition services.

Educational Materials and Technology

GEI schools will provide students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services with comparable services offered to other students including access to instructional materials, assessments, and technology. Students who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive free instructional materials and technology fees as offered by each school for the entire duration of the school year. No student is required to pay a textbook or technology fee.

Academic Services and Standards

GEI schools will provide students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services with comparable services offered to other students in the school including educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria. These educational services include Title I services (Indianapolis Metropolitan High School only), educational programs for students with disabilities, educational programs for English Learners, and programs in career and technical education, as available.

SECTION 4: ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Procedures

Any student who claims to be experiencing housing loss will be immediately enrolled in The Excel Center upon completion of orientation or in Indianapolis Metropolitan High School upon completion of enrollment registration, even if they do not have required documents such as:

- school records
- medical records
- proof of residency
- Guardianship papers or other documents

Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.

The McKinney-Vento District Liaison and McKinney-Vento Building Liaison will assist unaccompanied youth in choosing and enrolling in a school after considering the youth's wishes, informing the youth of their rights to transportation and assisting the youth in accessing transportation, and informing the youth of their right to appeal school or school district decisions. The McKinney-Vento District Liaison and McKinney-Vento Building Liaison must ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that may arise over school enrollment or placement.

Unaccompanied youth have the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin
- Transportation to and from the school of origin
- Immediately enroll in a new school serving the area in which they are currently living even if they don't have typically required documents (e.g. proof of guardianship)
- Equal access to programs and services such as gifted and talented education, special education, vocational education, and English Language Learners services.

The Excel Center and Indianapolis Metropolitan High School shall remove any and all barriers to the enrollment and retention of student in housing loss situations. Students in housing loss situations shall be free from segregation, isolation, and stigmatization.

Appeal and Dispute Processes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The student or legal guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as detailed below. The McKinney-Vento District Level Team consists of McKinney-Vento District Liaison, McKinney-Vento Building Liaison, School Principal or Director, Director of Student Services and Supports, and Senior Director of Education Initiatives.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District Liaison and McKinney-Vento Building Liaison to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows:
 - I. the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;
 - II. the student or legal guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision

- regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal
- III. the student or legal guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
- IV. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

If a dispute arises over qualification for McKinney-Vento services, the student shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services, pending resolution of the dispute. The student or legal guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as detailed below. The McKinney-Vento District Level Team consists of McKinney-Vento District Liaison, McKinney-Vento Building Liaison, School Principal or Director, Director of Student Services and Supports, and Senior Director of Education Initiatives.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District and Building Level Liaisons to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney- Vento Act as follows:
 - I. the student shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services, pending resolution of the dispute;
 - II. the student or legal guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the student or legal guardian to appeal
 - III. the student or legal guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the Dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
 - IV. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth receives all McKinney-Vento rights and services pending resolution of the dispute.

SECTION 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

McKinney-Vento Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will be provided to all GEI staff members including but not limited to the following opportunities:

- Annual McKinney-Vento basic training for all staff
- McKinney-Vento Liaison positional meetings
- Individual training for new McKinney-Vento Building Liaisons
- McKinney-Vento Monthly Newsletter
- Training in daily barrier removal for Coaches and related positions

District Website

The Excel Center and Indianapolis Metropolitan High School websites will communicate McKinney-Vento information with students, parents, staff, and community members. Information will be located in the “Policies” section of each website and will include the following:

- Contact Information for the District McKinney-Vento Liaison
- Contact information for the State McKinney-Vento Liaison
- Educational Rights for McKinney-Vento students and families
- Link to McKinney-Vento Resources
- McKinney-Vento District Plan

SECTION 6: EDUCATIONAL STAFFING & SUPPORT

McKinney-Vento District Liaison's Roles and Responsibilities:

The District McKinney-Vento Liaison will:

- Ensure that procedures are established and followed across the school district and provide each student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento Services with a free and appropriate education.
- Disseminate critical information concerning the rights of students in housing loss situations to all schools.
- Plan and facilitate professional development regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to all staff responsible for identifying and working with students facing housing loss situations.
- Work with building level staff and administration to facilitate success of the McKinney-Vento program and each student facing a housing loss situation.
- Monitor all district data collection and reporting requirements on each student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services.
- Attend State and National level professional development opportunities.

McKinney-Vento Building Liaison's Roles and Responsibilities:

Each GEI school will identify one staff member who will serve as a representation on the McKinney-Vento District Level Team and will:

- Identify students that may be facing housing loss situations.
- Monitor school attendance.
- Facilitate training at the building level.
- Ensure that building level procedures are established and followed to provide each student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services with a free and appropriate education.
- Work collaboratively with transportation and food services personnel to coordinate appropriate services for any student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento Services.
- Post public notice of the educational rights of students in housing loss situations at the school.
- Make sure parents feel welcome and set the tone for further parental involvement.
- Establish a trusting relationship with students and parents.
- Work with building level staff and administration to facilitate success of the McKinney-Vento program and each student facing a housing loss situation.
- Post information regarding the availability of school programs and services for students facing housing loss situations in local shelters, local hotels, the local post office building, city hall, local library, and local food banks.
- Meet with community agencies and volunteers to share resources and information and to evaluate impact of services.
- Maintain a McKinney-Vento Liaison Log to document the McKinney-Vento process for each student who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services.