

HOMELESS EDUCATION POLICY, REQUIREMENTS, AND IMPLEMENTATION

(UPDATED AND ADOPTED BY BOARD ON September 7, 2023) AB408

Unhoused/unsheltered children and youth are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals; or
- awaiting foster care placement;
- who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children who qualify as unhoused/unsheltered because they are living in circumstances described above.

“The school enrollment and retention barriers that homeless children and youth most frequently face are the following: transportation, immunization requirements, residency requirements, providing birth certificates, and legal guardianship requirements.”

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

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 ensures that unhoused/unsheltered students have:

- equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other students.
- access to the educational and other services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.
- no separation from the mainstream school environment.

Districts are required to review and revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of unhoused/unsheltered

children and youth. Regulations include the process for handling appeals of school district decisions regarding enrollment and school placement by parents/guardians of unhoused/unsheltered children and youth and unaccompanied youth.

The Board of The Preuss School UCSD assures that it has:

1. Designated a staff person, Family Support Specialist, as the liaison for unhoused/unsheltered children and youth
2. Developed a policy to support enrollment and retention of unhoused/unsheltered children and youth which:
 - Includes policies and practices to ensure that unhoused/unsheltered children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as unhoused/unsheltered
 - Includes a dispute resolution process
 - Ensures that transportation is provided for an unhoused/unsheltered child or youth to and from the school of origin if requested by the parent, guardian or homeless liaison / Family Support Specialist
 - Disseminates public notice of the educational rights of unhoused/unsheltered children and youths where such children and youths receive services under the provisions of the Education for Homeless Children and Youths Act.

STANDARDS AND INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Standard 1: Within one full day of an attempt to enroll in a school, unhoused/unsheltered children and youth will be in attendance.

Standard 2: Unhoused/unsheltered grade 6 to 12 children and youth will have stability in school.

- Attendance rates will be at or above the relevant district average.
- Students will remain in the school of origin for the period of homelessness or, if permanently housed, for the remainder of the school year, unless parents or unaccompanied youth requested transfer to another school.

Standard 3: Unhoused/unsheltered children and youth will receive specialized services when eligible.

- Eligible unhoused/unsheltered children and youth can receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, educational and related aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and educational programs for students with limited

English proficiency.

- Unhoused/unsheltered children and youth will receive appropriate services, based on assessment of individual needs, through a combination of resources, including, but not limited to Title I, McKinney-Vento, and other federally funded programs.

Standard 4: Parents or persons acting as parents of unhoused/unsheltered children and youth will participate meaningfully in their children’s education.

- Parents or persons acting as parents will have a face-to-face conference with the teacher, guidance counselor, or social worker within 30 days of enrollment, as needed.
- Parents or persons acting as parents will be provided with individual student reports informing them of their child’s specific academic needs and achievement on academic assessments aligned with state academic achievement standards.
- Parents or persons acting as parents will report monitoring or facilitating homework assignments.
- Parents or persons acting as parents will share reading time with their children (i.e., parent reads to child or listens to child read).
- Parents who would like parent skills training will attend available programs.
- Parents or guardians will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.
- Unaccompanied youth will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.

Standard 5. Unhoused/unsheltered children and youth in grades 6-12 will meet their states’ academic standards.

- Performance on standards-based assessments in reading and math will be within or above the proficient range or will show a one-for-one gain.
- Rates of promotion to the next grade level will be at or above the district average.
- Rates of high school graduation or equivalent will be at or above the district average.

Key updates for 2026:

- Unaccompanied Youth Support (AB 673): This proposed bill establishes a grant program for 16- and 17-year-old unaccompanied homeless pupils to connect them with stable housing resources.
- Student Housing Access (AB 648): Effective Jan. 1, 2026, community colleges can construct housing for students and staff on owned/leased land within a half-mile of campus, bypassing certain local zoning requirements.

- Protection for Support Staff (SB 634): A new law prevents cities from penalizing outreach workers and "good samaritans" who provide aid, such as blankets or legal support, at homeless encampments.
- McKinney-Vento Compliance: Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must continue to reserve Title I, Part A funds for services that support the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth.
- Training & Resources: The 2026 California All Titles Conference (March 25-26) will focus on best practices for, among other, serving students experiencing homelessness.