To: Administrative Leadership Team, Counselors and School Secretaries

From: Pupil Services Team

Date: September, 2012

Re: Procedures for Responding to Student Homelessness

The Federal McKinney-Vento Act (‘Act”) defines homeless children and youth as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons (i.e.; “doubled up”);
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- awaiting foster care placement;
- living in a primary nighttime residence not 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; and/or
- migratory children living in any of the above circumstances.

The standards listed above also apply to “unaccompanied youth,” which are defined under the Act as youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian. Moreover, the term “unaccompanied youth” includes youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the street, or in other inadequate housing. Further, this term includes children and youth who were denied housing by their families, as well as school-aged unwed mothers who may be living in a home for unwed mothers or who have no other available housing.

In addition, although the above scenarios are provided as examples of living situations that would likely meet the criteria of “homeless,” the Act makes it clear that determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that, in May of 2009, Congress passed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (“HEARTH”) Act. Some of the provisions found within HEARTH Act may impact schools. In addition, on May 12, 2010, the Educational Success for Children and Youth Without Homes Act of 2010, H.R. 5285, was introduced. The Educational Success for Children and Youth Without Homes Act of 2010 may amend the McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. We will continue to keep the School District of St. Francis (“District”) staff updated as to the possible implications of both the HEARTH Act and the Educational Success for Children and Youth program. Additional information on the aforementioned legislative updates can be obtained at the following link: [http://www.naehcy.org/update.html](http://www.naehcy.org/update.html)
The United States Department of Education reports 800,000 children nationwide as homeless, 3,000 in the Milwaukee Metro area alone. During the 2009-10 school year, the District had 4 students who were homeless for part or all of the school year. During the 2010-11 school year, the District’s homeless number increased to 17 students. To everyone’s credit we handled each case in an extremely effective and professional manner. Keep up the good work!!!! For further information on statewide statistics on homelessness, please visit the following link: http://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/pdf/06-07_night-ethnic.pdf

The following procedures will continue to be implemented when responding to student homelessness:

1. If student homelessness is suspected, a guidance counselor or school administrator should obtain information and relay that information in a timely manner to School Social Worker Erin Robers (erobers@sfsd.k12.wi.us or 486-6309). Please keep in mind that, while the District does need to obtain information, we must still respect the privacy of these students and their families. One way to further this goal is to avoid using the word “homeless” in our initial contacts.

2. If it is determined by Erin that a student is homeless, and the student is not already enrolled in our school, we must immediately enroll the student even without academic or medical records, including immunization records. If immunization records, or other medical records, are needed, we must assist the student and/or their family in obtaining said records.

3. Erin will work with school staff to provide support, services, materials, etc., in order to remove all barriers to education for the student. A good source of community resources may also be obtained from the DPI website at http://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/doc/serv_for_families_08.doc. In addition, a community resource guide for Milwaukee County was put together by the Milwaukee Teen Parent Task Force and the Milwaukee Public Schools’ Homeless Education Program. This resource guide can be obtained at the following link:


4. Ensure that no barriers exist for full educational participation and that homeless students are not segregated or stigmatized. The most frequent barriers encountered by homeless students include the following: lack of transportation; lack of financial resources (i.e., school fees; lunch money; field trip money; etc.); residency requirements; immunization requirements; legal guardianship requirements; and the provision of birth certificates. Please note that, because maintaining some measure of consistency is very important in these situations, the Act specifies that, to the extent feasible, homeless students should continue in their "school of origin" for the duration of their homelessness, unless this is contrary to wishes of their parent(s)/guardian. School of origin is defined as either the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school of last attendance.

5. Every student identified as homeless has access to funds to maintain comparable services through Title I A regardless of whether the student attends a Title I school or not. Title I funding is to be used to support student academic success and to meet academic standards. To help students effectively take advantage of educational opportunities, and when the items or services are not available from other sources, Title I funds can be used to provide:
• Items of clothing, particularly if necessary to meet a school’s dress or uniform requirement;
• Clothing and shoes necessary to participate in physical education classes;
• Student fees that are necessary to participate in the general education classes:
• Personal school supplies such as backpacks and notebooks;
• Birth certificates necessary to enroll in school;
• Immunizations;
• Food;
• Medical and dental services;
• Eyeglasses and hearing aids;
• Counseling services to address anxiety related to homelessness that impeding learning;
• Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences;
• Extended learning time (before and after school, summer school);
• Tutoring services;
• Fees for AP/SAT/ACT testing.

In the event that a homeless student needs any of the above services or items, cost will be covered through Title I funding. When items or services can be secured using a purchase order (PO), said purchase order must be sent to the business office for processing. The PO must be marked “homeless supplies/services.” When items or services cannot be secured using a PO, reimbursement will be provided. Purchase the items or services and send a receipt to the business office attached to a PO indicating “homeless supplies/services” reimbursement; indicate the name of the purchaser needing reimbursement. Any questions regarding the purchase of supplies or services for homeless students using Title I funds can be directed to Laurie Pogorzelski.

6. Erin will work with school personnel to inform parents/guardians of the educational rights of their children.

7. Erin will work with Student Services Secretary Suellyn Wittlieff (swittli@sfsd.k12.wi.us or 482-8461) in setting up transportation and agreements between the involved districts.

8. Erin will complete the homeless form (include date) and then send it to Carol Murack at District Office.

9. If and when the living status of the student changes please contact Erin immediately so we can re-examine their particular situation.

10. For further information and/or resources go to: http://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/

St. Francis School District
We truly appreciate everyone’s attention and professionalism when dealing with these unfortunate and
delicate situations. Please remember the two guiding principle of the Act: remove all educational barriers
that may be caused by homelessness; and respond in such a way that homeless students are not segregated
or stigmatized.

If you should have any questions regarding student homelessness and our responsibilities please feel free
to contact Erin Robers at erobers@sfsd.k12.wi.us.

This Memo will be posted on the website in the Student Services Area.