

(HB3244, signed 9/9/94; amended on SB881, signed 1/24/95; amended on SB1931, signed 7/14/05)

AN ACT concerning education.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN ACT

ARTICLE ONE

(105 ILCS 45/1-1)

Section 1-1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the **Education for Homeless Children Act**.

(Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-5)

Section 1-5. Definitions. As used in this Act:

"School of Origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

"Parent" means the parent or guardian having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

"Homeless person, child or youth" includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- (1) An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime place of abode.
- (2) An individual who has a primary nighttime place of abode that is:
 - (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing);
 - (B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - (C) a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

(Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95; 88-686, eff. 1-24-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-10)

Section 1-10. Choice of Schools.

(a) When a child loses permanent housing and becomes a homeless person within the meaning of Section 5, or when a homeless child changes his or her temporary living arrangements, the parents or guardians of the homeless child shall have the option of either:

- (1) continuing the child's education in the school of origin for as long as the child remains homeless or, if the child becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year during which the housing is acquired; or
- (2) enrolling the child in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

(Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-15)

Section 1-15. Transportation to the school of origin. Subject to the provisions of Article 29 of the School Code, if a child becomes a homeless child or if a homeless child changes his or her temporary living arrangements, and if the homeless child's parents or guardians decide to continue the child's education in the school of origin, the parents or guardians shall make a good faith effort to provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin, including authorizing relatives, friends, or a program for homeless persons to provide the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If transportation to and from the school of origin is not provided in that manner, it shall be provided in the following manner:

- (1) if the homeless child continues to live in the school district in which the school of origin is located, the child's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the school district in which the school of origin is located consistent with the requirements of Article 29 of the School Code; and
- (2) if the homeless child's living arrangements in the school district of origin terminate and the child though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in another school district, the school district of origin and the school district in which the homeless child is living shall meet to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the school districts are unable to agree, the responsibility and the costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

If a parent or guardian chooses to have the child attend the school of origin, that parent or guardian, a teacher of the child, and the principal or his or her designee from the school of origin may meet at the option of the parent or the school to evaluate whether that travel is in the best interest of the child's development and education as compared to the development and education available in attending the school nearest the child's abode. The meeting shall also include consideration of the best interests of the homeless family at their current abode. A parent may bring a representative of his or her choice to the meeting. The meeting shall be convened if travel time is longer than an hour each way. (Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95; 88-686, eff. 1-24-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-20)

Section 1-20. Enrollment. If the parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth choose to enroll the child in a school other than the school of origin, that school shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit school districts from requiring parents or guardians of a homeless child to submit an address or other such contact information as the district may require from parents or guardians of nonhomeless children. It shall be the duty of the enrolling school to immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the child or youth must

obtain immunization, it shall be the duty of the enrolling school to promptly refer the child or youth for those immunizations. (Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95; 88-686, eff. 1-24-95.)

(105 ILCS 45/1-25)

Section 1-25. Ombudspersons; dispute resolution; civil actions.

- (a) Each regional superintendent of schools shall appoint an ombudsperson who is fair and impartial and familiar with the educational rights and needs of homeless children to provide resource information and resolve disputes at schools within his or her jurisdiction relating to the rights of homeless children under this Act. If a school denies a homeless child enrollment or transportation, it shall immediately refer the child or his or her parent or guardian to the ombudsperson and provide the child or his or her parent or guardian with a written statement of the basis for the denial. The child shall be admitted and transported to the school chosen by the parent or guardian until final resolution of the dispute. The ombudsperson shall convene a meeting of all parties and attempt to resolve the dispute within 5 school days after receiving notice of the dispute, if possible.
- (a-5) Whenever a child and his or her parent or guardian who initially share the housing of another person due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar hardship continue to share the housing, a school district may, after the passage of 18 months and annually thereafter, conduct a review as to whether such hardship continues to exist. The district may, at the time of review, request information from the parent or guardian to reasonably establish the hardship, and sworn affidavits or declarations may be sought and provided. If, upon review, the district determines that the family no longer suffers such hardship, it may notify the family in writing and begin the process of dispute resolution as set forth in this Act. Any change required as a result of this review and determination shall be effective solely at the close of the school year. Any person who knowingly or willfully presents false information regarding the hardship of a child in any review under this subsection (a-5) shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.
- (b) Any party to a dispute under this Act may file a civil action in court of competent jurisdiction to seek appropriate relief. In any civil action, a party whose rights under this Act are found to have been violated shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees and costs.
- (c) If a dispute arises, the school district shall inform parents and guardians of homeless children of the availability of the ombudsperson, sources of low cost or free legal assistance, and other advocacy services in the community.

(Source: P.A. 94-235, eff. 7-14-05)

(105 ILCS 45/1-30)

Section 1-30. McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children Act implementation and technical assistance. The Homeless Children Committee is abolished on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly. The Office of the Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, established pursuant to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, shall convene meetings throughout the State for the purpose of providing technical assistance, education, training, and problem-solving regarding the implementation of this Act and the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. These meetings shall include lead liaisons, local educational agency liaisons, educators, shelter, housing, and service providers, homeless or formerly homeless persons, advocates working with homeless families, and other persons or agencies deemed appropriate by the Coordinator. (Source: P.A. 94-235, eff. 7-14-05)

(105 ILCS 45/1-35)

Section 1-35. Application of the Act. The provisions of this Act apply to all school districts organized under the School Code, except that provisions that relate to transportation with respect to school districts organized under Article 34 of the School Code shall be phased in during that 2 year period, school districts organized under Article 34 shall continue transportation programs serving homeless children. (Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-40)

Section 1-40. Federal obligations unaffected. Nothing in this Act shall limit the obligations of school districts under the Federal Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. (Source: P.A. 88-634, eff. 1-1-95)

(105 ILCS 45/1-45)

Section 1-45. Penalties. No person shall, under the provisions of this Act, enroll or attempt to enroll in a school other than the school of origin a child who he or she knows is not a homeless person as defined in this Act. No person shall knowingly or willfully present to any school district false information regarding the homelessness of any child or family for the purpose of enabling that child to attend a school other than the school of origin. Any person who violates this Section shall be guilty of Class C misdemeanor. (Source: P.A. 88-686, eff. 1-24-95)