SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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( ) Action Required
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 048-18 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
School District Homeless Liaisons

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Participation in Extracurricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness

CONTACT: Melinda Dyer, Program Supervisor
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PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

In an effort to support local school districts as they identify, enroll, and serve children and youth experiencing homelessness, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) are working in collaboration to help districts understand and implement the reauthorized language of the McKinney-Vento Act regarding access to extracurricular activities. OSPI and WIAA recognize the benefits of participation in extra-curricular activities and athletics. Involvement in extracurricular activities, athletics, music, and other activities can play an important role in school engagement and academic success for students, particularly students who are experiencing homelessness.

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, state and local education agencies (LEAs) must develop procedures to ensure that homeless students who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities (McKinney-Vento Sec. 722(g)(F)(3). The Act also requires LEAs to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school (McKinney-Vento Sec. 722(g)(6)(A)(2). Enrollment is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as attending classes and participating fully in school activities (McKinney-Vento Sec. 725(1)).

The district McKinney-Vento liaison and the district athletic director should work collaboratively to eliminate barriers to full participation when addressing the needs of students experiencing homelessness. According to the McKinney-Vento Act, it is the responsibility of the district McKinney-Vento liaison to determine whether a child or youth is homeless and therefore eligible for McKinney-Vento services. Once McKinney-Vento eligibility is established by the district liaison, the majority of homeless students will be allowed to fully participate in extracurricular activities without barriers. Most students experiencing homelessness will meet all WIAA eligibility requirements as determined by the athletic director of the school and eligible for all levels of participation. However, there may be situations when additional information is needed to ensure the student has met the eligibility criteria for athletic participation. In cases when the residency requirements are in question, it is the district

homeless liaison's duty to make the determination regarding residency (McKinney-Vento Sec.722 (g)(6)(A)). This information is to be shared with the school's athletic director as appropriate. Because the school athletic director has the role of determining students' WIAA eligibility status, athletic directors are strongly encouraged to seek out and work together with district McKinney-Vento liaisons when serving students who are experiencing homelessness.

Homeless students should not expect to undergo a WIAA hardship hearing except in cases where the liaison is unable to gather enough information to adequately determine the student's residency status, academic standing, age and/or season limitations, and therefore their eligibility for full participation under the McKinney-Vento Act. In these situations, WIAA eligibility will be established through an expedited process managed by the WIAA District Eligibility chairperson. The WIAA and each of the WIAA's nine districts will work to ensure that any hearing process to determine eligibility will not create additional barriers to full participation in extra-curricular activities for students experiencing homelessness.

OSPI and the WIAA want to ensure that the academic education of all students is the primary goal of education based activities and athletics. With this in mind, it is important that students experiencing homelessness have access to all school activities while meeting the academic standards set forth for participation in interscholastic activities. Information regarding the eligibility standards for extracurricular activities can be found on the WIAA website.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE
For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Melinda Dyer, Program Supervisor, at 360-725-6505 or email, melinda.dyer@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the Bulletins page of the OSPI website at www.k12.wa.us/BulletinsMemos/bulletins2018.

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