



*State of New Jersey*  
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November 5, 2012

TO: Chief School Administrator  
Charter School Leader

FROM: Christopher D. Cerf  
Commissioner

SUBJECT: Displaced Students as a Result of Hurricane Sandy

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is issuing this guidance to assist those districts that need to provide educational services to students impacted by Hurricane Sandy. With the devastation caused by the hurricane, there will be a significant increase in the number of displaced families. While not all students displaced by disasters are eligible for McKinney-Vento services, most are. Students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and are eligible for services. Section 725 of the legislation defines homeless children as “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing,” often referred to as “doubled-up” or “are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations or are living in emergency or transitional shelters.”

The purpose of the McKinney-Vento Act is to promote school continuity for children who are experiencing instability with their housing. Children have the right to continue in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness, even if they become permanently housed prior to the end of the school year. Districts should immediately make a determination regarding a student’s ability to continue in their school of origin based upon the best interest of the student and feasibility, or whether the student should be immediately be enrolled and attend school in the student’s current district of residence. Districts should arrange for any transportation needed to allow the student to remain in the school of origin or to attend school in the current district of residence.

Therefore, it is imperative that your district has a system to identify, enroll and provide expedited instructional and supportive services, including transportation, to students who have been deemed McKinney-Vento eligible and whose educational programs have been disrupted as a result of Hurricane Sandy. Your district homeless liaisons are central to this process and should work in collaboration with district enrollment personnel, school counselors and other student support services personnel. Your district homeless liaisons should be known and accessible to individuals who have been displaced, in addition to all district personnel.

Attached for your review is the link to *A McKinney-Vento Toolbox: Constructing a Robust and Rigorous Homeless Education Program, In Case of Disaster and Every Day* at: [http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/dis\\_hb/toolbox.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/dis_hb/toolbox.pdf) Appendix 20 of the toolbox, Quick-Start Disaster Response Tool, provides a step by step template to assist your district homeless liaison in evaluating displaced students' eligibility for McKinney-Vento services.

If the student will attend school in the district in which he or she is currently residing, the school district must suspend the request for the documents normally required and enroll students **immediately** under the provisions extended to all homeless children and youth pursuant to Section 722 (3)(C )(i) and N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.6(g). These students must be allowed to enroll in the local school district in which they are temporarily residing or relocating. For guidance in the enrollment process, district registrars and homeless liaisons may contact the designated regional Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program directors to obtain further assistance. The table below lists their names, counties, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for your convenience.

Region 1 (Warren, Sussex, Passaic, Bergen )	Ms. Diahann DeRuggiero	(201) 343-6000 ext. 6588	<a href="mailto:diader@bergen.org">diader@bergen.org</a>
Region 2 (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Union)	Dr. Joram Rejouis	(973) 405-6262 ext. 230	<a href="mailto:joram@ecesc.com">joram@ecesc.com</a>
Region 3 (Essex, Hudson)	Dr. Joram Rejouis	(973 ) 405-6262 ext. 230	<a href="mailto:joram@ecesc.com">joram@ecesc.com</a>
Region 4 (Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean)	Mr. Alan Ferraro	(732) 262-2500 ext. 2803	<a href="mailto:aferraro@brickschools.org">aferraro@brickschools.org</a>
Region 5 (Mercer, Burlington, Atlantic)	Ms. Monique Harvey	(609) 656-4900 ext. 5451	<a href="mailto:mharvey@trenton.k12.nj.us">mharvey@trenton.k12.nj.us</a>
Region 6 (Camden, Gloucester)	Ms. Joan Geraci	(856) 468-6530 ext. 1052	<a href="mailto:jgeraci@gcecnj.org">jgeraci@gcecnj.org</a>
Region 7 (Salem, Cumberland, Cape May)	Dr. Celeste Merriweather	(856) 455-8030 ext. 2021	<a href="mailto:cmerriweather@bridgeton.k12.nj.us">cmerriweather@bridgeton.k12.nj.us</a>

For additional information regarding the educational rights of children and youth displaced by disasters and current advisories, please consult the National Center for Homeless Education's (NCHE) website at [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche) and the NJDOE's homeless education website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/homeless/>.

It is our goal to ensure that all children are enrolled and provided educational continuity. Please do not hesitate to contact your respective executive county superintendent or Danielle Anderson Thomas, state coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program, at 609 984-4974 or [danielle.anderson-thomas@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:danielle.anderson-thomas@doe.state.nj.us), if you have any questions regarding this memorandum.

c: Members, State Board of Education  
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