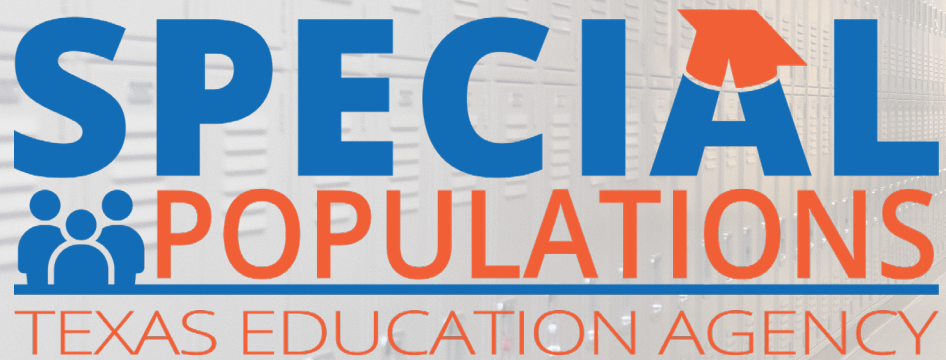
A background image showing a classroom of students. In the foreground, a young boy with blonde hair is wearing large black headphones and looking down at a laptop. Behind him, other students are visible, some wearing blue shirts, working at their desks. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a modern classroom environment.

**Unpacking Commissioner Rules to Support School
Transitions for Students Experiencing
Homelessness or in Substitute Care
(19 TAC Chapter 89, FF): Part 1**

Friday, October 22nd, 2021 | 10:00 – 11:30 AM



We equip school systems to increase awareness, promote equitable access, and improve outcomes for all special populations.



Presenters



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Webinar Objectives and Outline

To provide tools, processes, and procedures to support implementation of Commissioner Rules to support school transitions for students experiencing homelessness or in foster care.

- Introduction
- Background
- Welcome Packets
- Student Introductions
- Mentor/Student Ambassadors
- Nutrition Benefits
- Enrollment Conference
- Closing and Next Steps



Common Terminology

McKinney-Vento

Refers to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) Program

Refers to the Texas McKinney-Vento program

McKinney-Vento Eligible Students

Refers to students experiencing homelessness

McKinney-Vento Liaison

Refers to the designated LEA local homeless liaison



Common Terminology Cont.

Substitute Care

The placement of a child who is in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in care outside the child's home.

Foster Care

Twenty-four-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom DFPS has placement and care responsibility.

Foster Care Liaison

Refers to the designated LEA local foster care contact



On the Horizon - Future Updates:

- TAC § 89.1605(b), TAC § 89.1611, and TAC § 89.1607 will all be opened for revisions early the first half of 2022.
- Stakeholders have pointed out areas where the rules could be made clearer and could be better aligned.
- TEA looks forward to stakeholder feedback through the public comment process.



A photograph of a school staircase with large windows in the background. Several students are walking up and down the stairs. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue box containing the title text.

Rule Requirements to Ease Transitions for Students in Foster Care or Students Experiencing Homelessness

Commissioner Rules Concerning Transition Assistance



19 TAC Chapter 89. Adaptations for Special Populations

Subchapter FF. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Transition Assistance for Highly Mobile Students Who Are Homeless or in Substitute Care

- The adopted new rules assist with the transition of students who are homeless or in substitute care from one school to another and provide LEAs with guidance on the requirements of Texas Education Code § 25.007.
- **Effective Date: March 30, 2020**

Rule Requirements § 89.1605 Overview

LEAs must:

Develop systems to ease transitions of students who are homeless or in foster care during the first two weeks of enrollment at a new school.

Systems must include:

- Student welcome packets
- School Introduction to ease transitions
- Nutrition benefits
- Enrollment conference



Does your LEA provide welcome packets, staff introductions, and ensure that all Foster Care and McKinney-Vento eligible students receive nutrition benefits upon enrollment?



- Do your welcome packets include LEA and campus information (e.g., student code of conduct, campus staff contacts, tutoring opportunities, etc.) that help to ease student transitions at a new school?
- Do you have a student ambassador or mentor program?
- Is there a process to expedite the nutrition application process for Foster Care and McKinney-Vento eligible students?

STUDENT WELCOME PACKET REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES

TAC § 89.1605

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must provide welcome packets to students who are homeless or in foster care within the first two weeks of enrollment. LEAs may include the required welcome packet contents with any existing items being provided to new students.



WELCOME PACKET REQUIRED ITEMS:

- ▶ Extracurricular activities (e.g., fine arts, athletics, etc.)
- ▶ Club activities
- ▶ Information on fee waivers
- ▶ Tutoring opportunities
- ▶ Student code of conduct
- ▶ Contact information for pertinent school staff

- ▶ Contact information for pertinent school staff:
 - ▶ Counselors
 - ▶ Nurses
 - ▶ Social workers
 - ▶ Foster Care Liaison
 - ▶ McKinney-Vento Liaison
 - ▶ Principal & assistance principals
 - ▶ Additional support staff (e.g., special education, EL contact, G/T contact, 504 programs, PRS.)



ADDITIONAL FOSTER CARE AND MCKINNEY-VENTO ITEMS:



- ⊕ Student clubs
- ⊕ After school programs
- ⊕ Enrichment programs
- ⊕ Mentor programs
- ⊕ Family engagement opportunities
- ⊕ Student ambassador programs
- ⊕ Post-secondary planning activities
- ⊕ Summer and holiday resources
- ⊕ Other community resources available in your area (e.g., FindHelp.org)

New Tools

Key Content:

- Welcome packet required items
- Considerations for students experiencing homelessness or in foster care.



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SCHOOL INTRODUCTIONS TO EASE TRANSITIONS

TAC § 89.1605

School introductions are welcoming activities provided by the school to new students. Staff can introduce students to the school in a variety of ways, such as giving tours the campus, hosting welcome events, and providing one-on-one student support. These activities can help students acclimate to their new environment, adjust academically, meet new friends, and participate in extracurricular activities. While LEAs are required to provide introductions to students who are homeless or in foster care, these supports are beneficial for easing the transitions of all newly enrolled students.

STRATEGIES TO EASE TRANSITIONS

- » Provide introductions (e.g., staff introductions, campus tours, activities, welcome events, etc.) within two weeks of enrollment.
- » Implement mentoring programs in which staff or community mentors can facilitate introductions, have lunch with students, and check-in with students throughout the day.
- » Provide information on peer-to-peer programs, such as student-led activities, clubs, programs, extracurriculars, etc.
- » Designate a staff member to whom the student can reach out for support and services. This person provides a safe space for the student to share any concerns, needs, or life changes.

 Ensure privacy and confidentiality for student situations. Do not label students as homeless or in foster care.



KEY CONTACTS

- ▷ Campus staff members.
- ▷ Staff members who have been designated as student mentors.
- ▷ Community mentor sponsor. Student-led groups.
- ▷ Student ambassadors and faculty sponsors.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Student ambassadors are students who represent the school and introduce new students to the campus and its culture. Student ambassadors are familiar with the campus environment and have a positive attitude, great communication skills, leadership qualities, and are accepting of others.

Student ambassadors can organize and/or participate in the following activities:

- ▶ Newcomer social events throughout the school year.
- ▶ Tours of the campus library, nurse's office, counseling office, gym, and cafeteria.
- ▶ Accompanying new students to lunch during the first week of school.

New Tools

Key Content:

- Strategies to ease school transitions
- Key points of contact
- Student Ambassadors

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NUTRITION BENEFITS

TAC § 89.1605

All students who are identified as homeless or in foster care are eligible for the US Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Program.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must ensure there is an expedited process in place for all students who qualify to receive nutrition benefits upon enrollment. The process must expedite communication with the LEA nutrition coordinator to ensure that eligible students are not charged in error or experience delays in receiving these benefits.

BEST PRACTICES



Appropriate LEA or campus staff should immediately notify food services when a new student enrolls.



Verify student coding is in alignment with effective date.



Ensure student confidentiality.



Collaborate with your Nutrition Coordinator to establish processes, such as sending an approval notification via email.



LEAs should provide annual training to new and returning staff on nutrition eligibility and application processes.



REMINDER: Applications must be expedited when the student qualifies for SNAP benefits. Ensure systems and supports are student and family-centered!

New Tools

Key Content:

- Reminder of nutrition benefits eligibility
- Strategies to streamline and expedite approval process

Nutrition Benefit Best Practices



Appropriate LEA or campus staff should immediately notify food services when a new student enrolls.



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Ensure student confidentiality.



Collaborate with your Nutrition Coordinator to establish processes, such as sending an approval notification via email.



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REMINDER: Applications must be expedited when the student qualifies for SNAP benefits. Ensure systems and supports are student and family-centered!





Enrollment Conference Implementation

Rule Requirements § 89.1605- Enrollment Conference

Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must:

Convene an enrollment conference with the student within the first two weeks of enrollment (**at a new school*) or within the first two weeks after the student is identified as homeless or in substitute care.



Enrollment Conference – Implementation Considerations:

Capacity

- The enrollment conference must be implemented in the first two weeks for all new students. TEA, however, recognizes that there may be capacity concerns that impact an LEA's ability to complete this requirement. It is important that LEAs strive to complete enrollment conferences, as close to two-weeks as possible.

Similar meetings/Alignment

- An enrollment conference or similarly purposed meeting may already be occurring. The intent is not to duplicate this process. Ensure that all components of the enrollment conference are addressed and if there is an opportunity to supplement or enhance an existing process to address these items, feel free to do so.

Meeting Structure Flexibility

- An enrollment conference or similar meeting can occur in many forms. LEAs have flexibility with the location and venue for how these meetings occur. The student's participation in meeting should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Record's Retention

- LEAs should follow local procedures for meeting and records retention, concerning enrollment conferences and student education records.



Enrollment Conference – Implementation Considerations FAQs:

Is the enrollment conference just with the student or do we meet with the parents as well?

- It is highly encouraged to include the parent or guardian of the student, but it is not required by the rule.

What about families for students at different campuses within the district? Can one [enrollment conference] be carried out for all of them, in one setting?

- If it meets the need of the family, then one meeting can be implemented, provided each of the students' individual needs are discussed.

Is the enrollment conference for students of all grade levels?

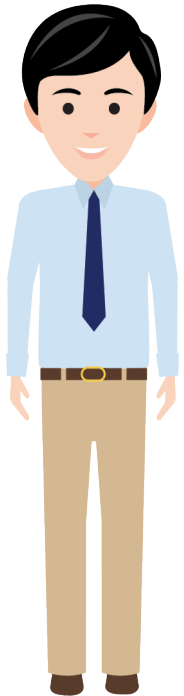
- Yes, however the topics and format of the meeting may need to be adjusted, so that the meeting is age and topic appropriate and addresses the unique and individualized needs of each student, depending on their grade, age, etc.

Is the enrollment conference meant for newly enrolled students?

- Yes, the Enrollment Conference is intended for newly enrolled students. If a student should have been flagged at enrollment, but wasn't, the LEA should revisit to ensure all of the components that are required within the enrollment conference have been addressed.



Does your LEA have systems to facilitate the convening of an enrollment conference within the first two weeks of enrollment or within the first two weeks after a student is identified as McKinney-Vento eligible or in Foster Care?



- Are there any written LEA or campus policies or systems to support the convening of enrollment conferences within the first two weeks of enrollment or within the first two weeks after a student is identified for Foster Care or as McKinney-Vento eligible?
- Are annual trainings provided to LEA and campus staff on the process to facilitate the convening of enrollment conference?
 - When does this training occur?
 - Who attends this training?



ENROLLMENT CONFERENCE 101

TAC § 89.1605

Local Education Agencies must convene an enrollment conference with a student who is homeless or in foster care within the first two weeks of enrollment at a new school or within the first two weeks after the student is identified as homeless or in foster care when enrolling at a new school. The student's participation in the meeting should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The convening cannot delay or impede enrollment.



The enrollment conference may be used in conjunction with an existing meeting that is designed for a similar purpose for newly enrolling students.

An **Enrollment Conference** is a student-centered meeting for a newly enrolled student designed to:

- » Identify academic and extracurricular interests.
- » Introduce school processes and opportunities for engagement.
- » Develop course and instructional strategies.
- » Review credits and assessment information.
- » Determine social-emotional support.
- » Communicate confidential information that may impact a student's success, if needed.



KEY PEOPLE TO CONSIDER INCLUDING:

- School Administrators
- Foster Care Liaisons
- McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Counselors

OTHERS TO INCLUDE*:

LEA AND CAMPUS STAFF

- » Special Program Staff (e.g., Special Education, English Learner, Gifted and Talented, etc.)
- » Teachers
- » Social Workers
- » Dropout Prevention Specialist
- » Attendance/Tuancy Officer

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- » Parent or Guardian
- » Relative or Foster Placement Caregiver
- » Case Manager
- » DFPS Educational Decision Maker
- » CASA Volunteer

*Additional people may be invited, as needed.

**Discussion topics are required in TAC § 89.1605(b)(2) and should be adapted to meet the unique needs of each student.



KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS**:

- Student's interests, strengths, and previous successes
- Student's attendance, grades, credits, etc.
- Social, emotional, and behavioral supports
- LEA policies to support enrollment and withdrawal processes
- Communication preferences of parent/guardians or unaccompanied youth
- Post-secondary readiness

New Tools

Key Content:

- Enrollment Conference definition
- Topics for discussion
- Key people to include

Enrollment Conference – Next Steps and Considerations

Must occur within two weeks of enrollment or identification as homeless or in substitute care



Convening cannot delay or impede enrollment



Address student's attendance, grades, credits, interventions, social supports, etc.



Invite key LEA and campus staff



Invite parents, guardians, caregivers and case managers



Enrollment Conference Intent

- Identify academic and extracurricular interests.
- Introduce school processes and opportunities for engagement.
- Develop course and instructional strategies.
- Review credits and assessment information.
- Determine social-emotional support
- Communicate information that may impact a student's success, if needed. *Always maintain confidentiality and discretion when sharing information about a student.

Key People to Consider Including During the Enrollment Conference



KEY PEOPLE TO CONSIDER INCLUDING:



School
Administrators



McKinney-Vento
Liaisons



Foster Care Liaisons



Counselors



Enrollment Conference: Others to Include

OTHERS TO INCLUDE*:

LEA AND CAMPUS STAFF

- » Special Program Staff (e.g., Special Education, English Learner, Gifted and Talented, etc.)
- » Teachers
- » Social Workers
- » Dropout Prevention Specialist
- » Attendance/Truancy Officer

- *Additional people may be invited, as needed.



Enrollment Conference: Community Support Considerations

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- » Parent or Guardian
- » Relative or Foster Placement Caregiver
- » Case Manager
- » DFPS Educational Decision Maker
- » CASA Volunteer

- *Additional people may be invited, as needed.



KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS**:

- Student's interests, strengths, and previous successes
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- LEA policies to support enrollment and withdrawal processes
- Communication preferences of parent/guardians or unaccompanied youth
- Post-secondary readiness



**Discussion topics are required in TAC § 89.1605b(2) and should be adapted to meet the unique needs of each student.

Positive Student Outcomes

- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Grades
- Course Credit
- Assessment
- Discipline Data

Summary and Next Steps

- What are some key take-aways from today?

- Identify three key-actions you will take back to implement what you've learned today in your district or campus.

Transition Assistance Training Series

■ Part 2: Wednesday, 11/10 (10:00 am – 11:15am)

- Transfer of Student Records
- Award of Credit
- Placement in Educational Programs & Courses

■ Part 3: Friday, 12/3 (10:00 am – 11:15 am)

- Promotion of Access to Educational & Extracurricular programs
- Promotion of Postsecondary Information
- Provision of Special Education Services
- Notice to Student's Educational Decision-Maker & Caseworker



For More Information

MCKINNEY-VENTO QUESTIONS



HomelessEducation@tea.texas.gov

FOSTER CARE QUESTIONS



Fostercareliaison@tea.texas.gov



Sign Up for Updates!

The screenshot shows the TEA website header with navigation links: Popular Applications, AskTED, ECOS for Educators, Grant Opportunities, Secure Applications, TEAL Login, TSDS, and Help Desk. The TEA logo is on the left. A search bar is in the center, and a navigation menu includes A-Z Index, Contact, Employment, Sign Up for Updates (circled in red), and TEA Correspondence. Below the header are icons for About TEA, Texas Schools, Academics, Finance & Grants, Reports & Data, Student Assessment, and Texas Educators. A main banner features a COVID-19 update with a 'GET UPDATES' button and a photo of Governor Greg Abbott. Below the banner are sections for 'The Latest TEA News' and three categories: Emergency Support, Texas Schools, and About.

Special Student Populations

At-Risk and Highly Mobile Student Program Division [i](#)

Early Childhood Education [i](#)

English Learners [i](#)

Foster Care and Student Success [i](#)

Gifted/Talented Education [i](#)

Languages Other Than English [i](#)

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Mental and Behavioral Health

Military Connected Students

Pregnancy Programs [i](#)

Spanish Curriculum Standards

Special Education Updates [i](#)



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