

EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH

Self-Assessment Guide

Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

INTRODUCTION

The self-assessment guide was developed with the philosophy that schools can make a difference. Schools can provide a stabilizing environment, a haven from the chaos of homelessness. Schools can provide the quality of educational experience to empower homeless students to break the cycles of poverty, dependency, and homelessness. Schools can provide a critical link between the community and homeless children and their families. If Kansans truly believe that “all children can learn”, then they will recognize that homeless children and youth are indeed educable and very capable of a positive contribution to our society.

The guide, modeled on an exemplar produced by the Texas Education Agency’s Division of Special Programs planning and implementation, attempts to help schools answer the questions, “What can we do to help homeless children? How can we help homeless children learn?” This guide is not a compliance document. Rather, it is designed to assist schools to self-identify those policies and practices that inhibit the educational attainment of homeless children and youth.

The guide is divided into the following four sections: Enrollment and Identification; Awareness and Environment; Educational Access; and Support Services .

Each section consists of questions that serve as indicators of the extent to which a school is addressing the needs of homeless students. Affirmative answers to the questions listed in the guide should highlight areas in which the school demonstrates the concern, commitment, and creativity necessary to help ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school, attend classes, and achieve success. In situations where a school cannot answer affirmatively, the question may suggest an area in which the school can establish goals and seek to improve the quality of its services.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

1. The self-assessment guide was designed to help individual schools assess their effectiveness in meeting the needs of homeless students. Each school should assess itself. A small number of the questions address districtwide actions. Schools that cannot respond affirmatively to these questions may choose to encourage appropriate action at the district level.
2. The self-assessment process is most effective when conducted by individuals representing a variety of perspectives. Therefore, the school should select a committee to include teachers, professional and nonprofessional support staff, administrators, representatives of local shelters and service agencies, parents of homeless students, and, in some cases, homeless students.
3. After completing each section of the guide, the committee should recommend goals and objectives related to its findings. The committee may choose to make recommendations related to those issues which are most important to the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students.
4. The committee should develop a written report, including goals and objectives relating to responses to the self-assessment guide questions. The report should be considered in the development of all school plans, including school improvement plans and budgeting requests. The report should be made available to school personnel, shelter personnel, community members, and school board officials.
5. In adopting the report of the assessment committee, the school is urged to simultaneously adopt systems for monitoring progress toward accomplishing the goals.

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

- Strategy A:** The school actively seeks to enroll homeless children and youth.
- Strategy B:** All schools have provisions which help ensure immediate enrollment.
- Strategy C:** Homeless children or youth who are not living with their parents or legal guardians have prompt access to school enrollment.
- Strategy D:** Homeless children and youth are enrolled in the school which is most likely to respond to the educational needs of the student.
- Strategy E:** Homeless children and youth are enrolled in a manner that does not draw attention to their living arrangements.
- Strategy F:** So that student needs can be met, appropriate school personnel know which children and youth are homeless.
- Strategy G:** Care is taken to ensure that student confidentiality is respected and that students are not subjected to embarrassment, harassment, or danger because they are homeless.

SECTION II – Awareness/Environment

Outcome: School personnel are aware of the needs of homeless children and youth and create an environment conducive to their learning.

- Strategy A:** School personnel are aware of local facilities that serve homeless children and youth and are aware of the extent to which children and youth in the school's community experience homelessness.
- Strategy B:** School personnel understand the causes of homelessness, the needs of homeless children and youth, and the ways in which public schools can better respond to those needs.
- Strategy C:** School personnel create a receptive environment for homeless children and youth.

SECTION III – Educational Access

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

- Strategy A:** Homeless students have access to appropriate general education programs that are designed to help them experience school success.
- Strategy B:** Homeless students who need compensatory education have prompt access to appropriate services.
- Strategy C:** Homeless students who need special education promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy D:** Homeless students who are eligible for preschool services or parents-as-teachers programs promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy E:** Homeless students who have limited English proficiency receive appropriate services.

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SECTION III – Educational Access (continued)

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

- Strategy F:** Homeless students who are intellectually/academically gifted or talented promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy G:** Homeless students are provided access to before-school and after-school programs that address their academic, social, developmental, and emotional needs.
- Strategy H:** Homeless students are provided access to extra-curricular activities available to other students.
- Strategy I:** Homeless students have access to summer school programs that enable them to meet academic requirements, improve academic skills, and maximize opportunities for school success.
- Strategy J:** Recognizing that schools are at risk of failing to assure the school success of homeless students, the school success of homeless students is deliberately planned.
- Strategy K:** Homeless students who need work-study programs or desire to participate in community service programs have prompt access to appropriate services.
- Strategy L:** Homeless students who qualify for and wish to participate in vocational programs have prompt access to appropriate programs.
- Strategy M:** Homeless students are provided educational services in “shelter school” environments only on a temporary basis, when it is in the best interest of the student to do so, and when comparable services can be ensured.
- Strategy N:** The school works with shelter providers to actively encourage the parents of homeless students to become involved in school activities.
- Strategy O:** School personnel take steps to ensure that children moving out of the district or to other schools within the district experience minimal disruptions in services.

SECTION IV– Support Services

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

- Strategy A:** School personnel work with shelter personnel to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.
- Strategy B:** Homeless children and youth receive free meals.
- Strategy C:** School personnel work with other public and private community agencies to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.
- Strategy D:** The school district assumes a leadership role in improving services for homeless children and youth in the community.
- Strategy E:** Homeless students receive case management services that ensure they receive the support services they need.
- Strategy F:** Homeless children and youth receive transportation services that help them benefit from education.
- Strategy G:** Homeless students receive health services that enable them to benefit from education.
- Strategy H:** Homeless students receive counseling services that enable them to experience educational success.

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification Strategy A

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

Strategy A: The school actively seeks to enroll homeless children and youth.

- 1. Does the school provide written information on student enrollment policies and procedures, including actual enrollment forms, in English, Spanish, and other appropriate languages?
- 2. Is information on student enrollment policies and procedures, including actual enrollment forms, available to parents in places other than the school district central office, including:
 - a. school building offices and shelters
 - c. day care centers
 - d. churches, food banks, other community agencies, and local SRS offices?
- 3. Does the school provide information on student enrollment policies and procedures through any of the following:
 - a. enrollment hotlines,
 - b. training for shelter personnel about enrollment processes, and
 - c. radio, television, or print news and public service announcements?
- 4. Does the school provide advertisements in shelters of “at-risk” programs or alternative education programs to entice homeless youth to enroll or re-enroll in school?
- 5. Do school personnel encourage shelter providers to require school attendance for their clients who are eligible for public school services?
- 6. Do school personnel visit the shelter on a regular basis to encourage parents and students to enroll in school and attend regularly?
- 7. Do school personnel actively seek to re-enroll homeless students who have left school through communications with area service providers and visits to places frequented by homeless children and youth?
- 8. Do school personnel actively seek to re-enroll students even though remaining “seat time” will not permit credit toward graduation?
- 9. Do school personnel document any situations in which a child or youth is not immediately enrolled?
- 10. In situations in which a child cannot be immediately enrolled, do school personnel follow up with the family or with the child to ensure that efforts are being made to facilitate prompt enrollment?
- 11. Does the parent or person acting as parent, the student, the shelter official, or other person in a position of responsibility for the child or youth have, and are they made aware of, an avenue within the district and beyond to the Kansas State Board of Education to appeal attendance center placement?

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification Strategy B

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

Strategy B: All schools have provisions which help ensure immediate enrollment. Therefore, a parent should not have to make more than one school visit to enroll a child.

- 1. If the child has appropriate documentation of immunizations, do school enrollment procedures allow students to be enrolled without other school records or identification?
- 2. Does the school enroll homeless students who do not have documentation of immunizations, by providing a 90-day grace period for students to acquire immunizations or documentation of immunizations?
- 3. Does the school assist homeless children in acquiring needed immunizations?
- 4. In cases where a previous school district violates the Family Educational Rights and privacy Act by withholding student records, does the receiving school immediately enroll the student?
- 5. If the school requires proof of residency through such documents as lease agreements, utility receipts, or similar documents, are such requirements waived for homeless students? In other words, does the school enroll homeless students whose residence cannot be verified?
- 6. When homeless students have not officially withdrawn from their previous school, are they allowed to enroll immediately?
- 7. When a homeless student owes money to a previous school for lost textbooks, library fines, lab fees, breakage fees, lunch loans, picture money, or other fees or costs, does the receiving school allow the child to enroll immediately?
- 8. Are homeless students immediately enrolled in free and appropriate educational programs, regardless of the time during the school year when the student seeks enrollment?

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification Strategy C

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

Strategy C: Homeless children or youth who are not living with their parents or legal guardians have prompt access to school enrollment.

- 1. When homeless children and youth are living with friends or relatives, are they allowed to enroll in school without delays or conditions related to legal guardianship?
- 2. When runaway youth are living in youth shelters, are they allowed to enroll in school without the approval of their parents?
- 3. When homeless youth who are living on their own seek to enroll in school, are they allowed to enroll in school concurrent with appropriate referrals to child protective services?
- 4. Are homeless students who are not living with their parents or legal guardians allowed to enroll and attend school without any special conditions such as adherence to a standard of behavior or a standard of academic performance more rigid than that required for other students?

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification Strategy D

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

Strategy D: Homeless children and youth are enrolled in the school which is most likely to respond to the educational needs of the student.

- 1. Is determination of the child or youth's appropriate attendance center made through the district's homelessness liaison who obtains information from the parents or persons acting as parents, the homeless child or youth, school professional and support staff, social service agency professionals, and other knowledgeable sources?
- 2. Is each homeless child or youth allowed to enroll in and attend the school where the student's shelter or temporary residence is located, if it is in the student's best interest to do so?
- 3. For the remainder of the academic year, is each homeless child or youth allowed to maintain enrollment in and attend either the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled, if it is in the student's best interest to do so?
- 4. For the following school year, is each child or youth who becomes homeless during the summer allowed to maintain enrollment in and attend either the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled, if it is in the student's best interest to do so?
- 5. In determining the best interests of the homeless student for purposes of making a school assignment, is consideration given to a request made by a parent?

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification Strategy E, F, G

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

Strategy E: Homeless children and youth are enrolled in a manner that does not draw attention to their living arrangements.

- 1. Do registrars, secretaries, and other staff persons involved in the enrollment process treat homeless students and their families in a respectful manner that minimizes embarrassment or frustration?
- 2. Are provisions made to enable homeless parents to complete the enrollment process in a setting that is confidential such as a private office?
- 3. Are provisions made to allow homeless parents to complete required enrollment documents at local shelters or other social service agencies?

Strategy F: So that student needs can be met, appropriate school personnel know which children and youth are homeless.

- 1. Does the school have a procedure for making professional staff aware of the living arrangements of homeless children and youth?
- 2. Do teachers, administrators, and appropriate professional support staff, e.g., counselors, at-risk coordinators and visiting teachers, know which students in their school:
 - a. Sleep in shelters for the homeless, including domestic violence shelters and shelters for runaway youth;
 - b. sleep in the homes of friends or relatives because the child or youth lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence;
 - c. sleep in shelters awaiting institutionalization, adoption, foster care, or other placement; or
 - d. sleep in a car, a tent, an abandoned building, or other place not ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for human beings?

Strategy G: Care is taken to ensure that student confidentiality is respected and that students are not subjected to embarrassment, harassment, or danger because they are homeless.

- 1. Are the school records of homeless children (including cumulative records, attendance records, disciplinary records, immunization records, guardianship records, evaluations for special services, birth certificates, and other records and reports) kept so that inappropriate disclosure of the student's living status is prevented?
- 2. When records of children who are living in domestic violence shelters are requested by a parent who is suspected of being abusive, does the school provide the records after a 72-hour delay?
- 3. When records of children who are living in domestic violence shelters are requested by a parent who is suspected of being abusive, does the school provide the records after notifying the domestic violence shelter of the request?

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SECTION II – Awareness/Environment Strategy A

Outcome: School personnel are aware of the needs of homeless children and youth and create an environment conducive to their learning.

Strategy A: School personnel are aware of local facilities that serve homeless children and youth and are aware of the extent to which children and youth in the school's community experience homelessness.

- 1. Are school personnel aware of the shelters in the community or attendance area, including:
 - a. domestic violence shelters,
 - b. runaway youth shelters,
 - c. child protective services shelters,
 - d. emergency shelters associated with residential facilities, and
 - e. rescue missions and other emergency shelters?

- 2. Are school personnel aware of other places in the community or attendance area where homeless people live, including:
 - a. campgrounds,
 - b. motels/hotels,
 - c. abandoned buildings, and
 - d. other areas where homeless individuals may live?

- 3. Are school personnel aware of the agencies within the community that might provide services (other than shelter) to homeless children and youth, including:
 - a. community action agencies,
 - b. private industry councils,
 - c. food banks,
 - d. church/civic organizations,
 - e. counseling providers,
 - f. community recreation programs,
 - g. day care providers,
 - h. community support groups, and
 - i. other service providers?

- 4. Have school personnel visited shelters or other agencies within the community that provide services to homeless children and youth?

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SECTION II – Awareness/Environment Strategy B

Outcome: School personnel are aware of the needs of homeless children and youth and create an environment conducive to their learning.

Strategy B: School personnel understand the causes of homelessness, the needs of homeless children and youth, and the ways in which public schools can better respond to those needs.

- 1. Does the school provide on-going training on the special issues and needs of homeless children and youth for all building staff, including
 - a. teachers, aides, student teachers, tutors, and other instructional personnel;
 - b. principals, secretaries and other administrative personnel;
 - c. counselors, nurses, librarians, diagnosticians, social workers, therapists and other professional support personnel; and
 - d. cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, crossing guards, and other staff?

- 2. Have all school board members and central administrative staff been provided with training that includes:
 - a. definition of homelessness;
 - b. causes of homelessness;
 - c. barriers to enrollment confronting homeless children and youth;
 - d. barriers to school success confronting homeless children and youth;
 - e. federal regulations of the ESEA, Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and IDEA;
 - f. emotional impact of inappropriate or thoughtless comments or actions which focus on the child's homelessness as a way of singling out, ignoring, teasing, or disciplining a child;
 - g. potentially life-threatening consequences of revealing information about children from battered families;
 - h. community resources and services available to homeless students; and
 - i. Strategies, including community projects, for helping parents and students become aware of the issues confronting homeless students?

- 3. Do school personnel have access to materials (brochures, articles, books, curriculum materials, video presentations, etc.) that can assist personnel, parents, or students in understanding the causes of homelessness, the needs of homeless children and youth, and the ways in which public schools can better respond to those needs?

- 4. Do school personnel (particularly school administrators, professional support personnel, and teachers) utilize available materials in assisting other personnel, parents, and students in understanding the causes of homelessness, the needs of children and youth, and the ways in which public schools can better respond to those needs?

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SECTION II – Awareness/Environment Strategy C

Outcome: School personnel are aware of the needs of homeless children and youth and create an environment conducive to their learning.

Strategy C: School personnel create a receptive environment for homeless children and youth.

- 1. Do all school personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators, secretarial/clerical staff, custodians, cafeteria/food service staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, social workers/visiting teachers, diagnosticians, psychologists, nurses, librarians, aides, volunteers, student teachers, itinerant staff, and central office personnel) demonstrate sensitivity to the emotional-psychological needs of homeless children and youth without using home status to single out, tease, ignore, or discipline?
- 2. Do all school personnel serve as role models, demonstrating for students appropriate methods for interacting with homeless children and youth?
- 3. Are there special programs or projects that sensitize the school population to both the common and the special needs of others, including the needs of homeless children and youth?
- 4. Does the school utilize a “mentor system”, providing an adult with whom the homeless student can regularly talk?
- 5. Does the school utilize a “buddy system” for all new students, including homeless students, to help students become acquainted with school procedures, make friends, and feel accepted at school?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy A

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy A: Homeless students have access to appropriate general education programs that are designed to help them experience school success.

- 1. In classes, are homeless children given equal opportunity to participate in all classroom activities?
- 2. Are homeless students placed in classrooms that include students who live in a variety of living arrangements?
- 3. Are instructional groupings and seating arrangements made in such a way that homeless students are not segregated from their peers based solely on their residential status?
- 4. Do homeless students have access to tutorial services, adequate to meet their needs?
- 5. Do homeless students have access to assistance with homework, including either after-school tutoring, in-shelter tutoring, homework hotlines, or other strategies?
- 6. Are the living arrangements of homeless students taken into consideration when homework assignments are given?
- 7. Do homeless students receive school supplies immediately upon school enrollment?
- 8. When school supplies are provided to homeless students, are they provided in a confidential, non-identifiable manner that does not draw attention to the students or the materials?
- 9. When homeless students have not attended school the required number of days during the semester to receive credit, does the attendance committee consider homelessness and "extenuating circumstance" and give students reasonable opportunities to gain credit?
- 10. Is the student-teacher ratio low enough for teachers to promptly assess and meet the needs of homeless students?
- 11. Do teachers demonstrate academic and behavioral expectations for homeless students that are generally equal to the expectations held for other students?
- 12. Do teachers utilize behavior management strategies that reinforce the appropriate behavior of homeless students?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy B

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy B: Homeless students who need compensatory education have prompt access to appropriate services.

- 1. When homeless students indicate that they participated in compensatory education programs in a previous school, are there provisions for placing the students immediately in a comparable program until assessment or verification can take place?
- 2. Does the school immediately assess homeless students, who are enrolling late or without standardized test scores, with non-standardized assessments to determine their academic need and eligibility for compensatory placement?
- 3. When assessment is positive for compensatory education placement, are special efforts made to inform the student's parent or person acting as parent so that placement decisions can be made as soon as possible?
- 4. Does the school district waive the compensatory education residency requirement for homeless children and/or use compensatory education funds to place tutors in homeless shelters?
- 5. In all compensatory education processes, from referral through placement, are homeless students provided all of the rights and privileges required by federal, state, and local laws, rules and policies?
- 6. Does the school district make adequate outreach efforts to inform homeless parents and shelter personnel about compensatory education programs?
- 7. Does the school district provide training for local shelter personnel concerning referral procedures for children who may have compensatory education needs, including preschool children or does the district provide some other system for assuring that homeless children needing compensatory education are referred and assessed?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy C

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy C: Homeless students who need special education promptly receive appropriate services.

- 1. If homeless students exhibit characteristics of exceptional children, do school personnel promptly make referral for special education evaluation?
- 2. When referrals for special education evaluation are made, are special considerations made to ensure that evaluation occurs prior to the student moving away from the district?
- 3. When special education evaluations are conducted, are the necessary meetings convened immediately, so that placement decisions can be made prior to the student moving away from the district?
- 4. In all special education process, from referral through placement, are homeless students provided all of the rights and privileges required by federal, state, and local laws, rules, and policies?
- 5. When homeless students indicate that they participated in special education programs in a previous school, are they placed immediately in a comparable program until further evaluation or verification can take place?
- 6. Does the school district make adequate outreach efforts to inform homeless parents and shelter personnel about programs for handicapped infants and young children?
- 7. Does the school district provide training for local shelter personnel concerning referral procedures for children who may have handicapping conditions, including infants, toddlers, and other children who may not be in school; does the district provide some other system for assuring that handicapped homeless children are screened and evaluated?
- 8. When homeless infants and toddlers are identified through screening procedures as possibly needing special education evaluation, is evaluation promptly provided in accordance with all rights granted by federal, state, and local laws and policies?
- 9. When homeless infants and toddlers are determined to be eligible for special education early childhood services, are such services promptly provided?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy D, E

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy D: Homeless students who are eligible for preschool services or parents-as-teachers programs promptly receive appropriate services.

- 1. Does the school inform shelter personnel and the parents of homeless children about available preschool and parents-as-teachers programs?
- 2. When a homeless child seeks enrollment in a preschool or parents-as-teachers program, is eligibility determined promptly, based upon criteria that are no more restrictive than those used to determine eligibility for other children?
- 3. When homeless children are eligible for preschool services or a parents-as-teachers program, is prompt access provided?
- 4. Does the school provide all-day preschool services for students who need such services?

Strategy E: Homeless students who have limited English proficiency receive appropriate services.

- 1. When a homeless student's primary language is not English, are homeless students promptly assessed to determine their level of English proficiency?
- 2. If homeless students are eligible for services provided to limited English proficient students, are such services promptly made available?
- 3. In being assessed, identified, and served as a limited English proficient student, are homeless students provided all of the rights and privileges required by federal, state, local laws, rules, and policies?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy F

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy F: Homeless students who are intellectually/academically gifted or talented promptly receive appropriate services.

- 1. If homeless students exhibit characteristics of gifted students, do school personnel promptly make referral for gifted program evaluation?
- 2. When referrals for gifted evaluation are made, are special considerations made to ensure that evaluation occurs prior to the student moving away from the district?
- 3. When homeless students meet the criteria for placement in gifted programs, is appropriate placement made promptly?
- 4. In all evaluation processes for gifted program placement, are homeless students provided all of the rights and privileges required by federal, state, and local laws, rules, and policies?
- 5. When homeless students enroll who indicate that they participated in gifted programs in a previous school, are they placed immediately in a comparable program until further evaluation or verification can take place?
- 6. In the evaluation process for gifted program placement, are evaluation strategies used that do not disadvantage children who have had few middle-class experiences?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy G, H, I

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy G: Homeless students are provided access to before-school and after-school programs that address their academic, social, developmental, and emotional needs.

- 1. Does the school provide before-school programs that are available to all students, including homeless students?
- 2. Does the school provide after-school programs that are available to all students, including homeless students?
- 3. Does the school ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in existing before- and after-school care programs available through federal, state, or local funding?

Strategy H: Homeless students are provided access to extra-curricular activities available to other students.

- 1. Does the school make adequate outreach efforts to make homeless students and their parents aware of extra-curricular activities sponsored by the school?
- 2. Are special efforts made to ensure that transportation or personal finances are not barriers to homeless students who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities sponsored by the school?
- 3. Does the school ensure that access to extra-curricular activities is provided in a manner that does not draw attention to student living arrangements?

Strategy I: Homeless students have access to summer school programs that enable them to meet academic requirements, improve academic skills, and maximize opportunities for school success.

- 1. Does the school make adequate outreach efforts to inform homeless students and their parents about summer school offerings?
- 2. Are efforts made to ensure that transportation or personal finances are not barriers to homeless students who wish to participate in summer programs?
- 3. If summer school is offered, are homeless students provided access to the services if they otherwise meet eligibility requirements?
- 4. If summer school is not available, does the school district have plans that include the provision of summer school services for students who need such services, including homeless students?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy J

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy J: Recognizing that schools are at risk of failing to assure the school success of homeless students, the school success of homeless students is deliberately planned.

- 1. Does the school identify homeless students as at risk of dropping out of school?
- 2. Has the school conducted an assessment of each homeless student's needs?
- 3. Has the school identified academic options, services, alternative programs, and other strategies to be utilized in response to the needs of each homeless student?
- 4. Has the school notified the parents or caregivers of each homeless student concerning the services or strategies to be utilized in response to the needs of each homeless student?
- 5. Does the school provide ongoing evaluation of each homeless student's academic progress, including the monitoring of progress towards advancement or high school graduation and the monitoring of intervention activities provided to ensure that student needs are addressed?
- 6. Does the school successfully recruit homeless students, who may have dropped out or who may be reluctant to enroll, for at-risk or alternative education programs?
- 7. If a homeless student expresses interest in at-risk or alternative education programs, is eligibility for such programs promptly assessed using the same criteria used for other students?
- 8. If a homeless student is eligible for participation in an alternative education program, is access to the program provided, even when the student enrolls in mid-year or for a short period of time?
- 9. At minimum, does the school's at-risk coordinator provide the same services to homeless students as are provided to other at-risk students?
- 10. Does the at-risk coordinator provide services to homeless students in a confidential manner that does not draw attention to those receiving the services?
- 11. If the school provides special services for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, are these services accessible and available to homeless students?

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SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy K, L

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy K: Homeless students who need work-study programs or desire to participate in community service programs have prompt access to appropriate services.

- 1. Upon school enrollment, are homeless students provided information about work-study or community service programs for which they might be eligible?
- 2. Does the school make adequate outreach efforts to inform homeless students who may have dropped out or who may be reluctant to enroll about work-study and community service programs?
- 3. If a homeless student expresses interest in participating in a work-study or community service program, is eligibility assessed promptly and on the same basis as used for other students?
- 4. If a homeless student is eligible for participation in a work-study or community service program, is access provided, even when the student enrolls in mid-year?

Strategy L: Homeless students who qualify for and wish to participate in vocational programs have prompt access to appropriate programs.

- 1. Upon school enrollment, are homeless students provided information about vocational programs for which they might be eligible?
- 2. Does the school make adequate outreach efforts to inform homeless youth who have dropped out or who may be reluctant to enroll about vocational programs?
- 3. If a homeless student expresses interest in participating in a vocational education program, is eligibility promptly assessed and on the same basis as used for other students?
- 4. If a homeless student is eligible for participation in a vocational program, is access provided, even when the student enrolls in mid-year?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy M

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy M: Homeless students are provided educational services in “shelter school” environments only on a temporary basis, when it is in the best interest of the student to do so, and when comparable services can be ensured.

- 1. In situations in which homeless students cannot attend regular school programs, e.g., because of illness or the risk of domestic violence, are opportunities provided for homebound instruction or shelter school programs?
- 2. In situations in which homeless students may be better able to benefit from shelter school programs than regular campus programs because of the nature of therapy being provided in the shelter, are opportunities provided for homebound instruction or shelter school programs?
- 3. If shelter school programs are provided, are students given the option of attending regular public school programs?
- 4. Where shelter personnel are involved in providing educational services, are there agreements between the school district and the shelter that address the following issues:
 - a. the extent to which the district will provide support personnel;
 - b. the extent to which the district will provide transportation;
 - c. the extent to which the district will provide books, materials, and supplies;
 - d. the extent to which homeless students will participate in assemblies, field trips, and other activities with the neighboring regular campus;
 - e. the extent to which the district will provide school meal services;
 - f. the procedures to be employed for the referral, evaluation, and placement of homeless students in special programs; and
 - g. the procedures to be employed related to grading, attendance accounting, and the acquisition of course credits?
- 5. If shelter school programs are provided, are homeless students given access to resources and services, e.g., materials, supplies, textbooks, equipment, and ancillary services, comparable to those received by other students?
- 6. If shelter school programs are provided, are placement decisions made based upon the individual needs of the homeless student rather than school administrative concerns, e.g., transportation and enrollment requirements?
- 7. Do policies and practices ensure that homeless children and homeless youth are not isolated or stigmatized?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION III – Educational Access Strategy N, O

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

Strategy N: The school works with shelter providers to actively encourage the parents of homeless students to become involved in school activities.

- 1. Are outreach efforts made to ensure the participation of homeless parents in school activities, including teacher conferences, classroom visits, PTA meetings, parent training activities, volunteer activities, etc.?
- 2. Are efforts made to ensure that barriers such as transportation or personal finances do not prohibit homeless parents from participating in school activities?
- 3. Does the school provide training for homeless parents that might improve their capacity to help their children be successful in school?
- 4. Are parent training activities scheduled during times and in places that are accessible to homeless parents?
- 5. When appropriate, does the school provide literacy training for homeless parents that improves their capacity for personal, social and economic productivity?
- 6. Are homeless parents treated by all school personnel with respect and dignity, so that they might feel welcome at school?
- 7. Do teachers and other school personnel visit homeless parents at the shelter when parents do not come to school for conferences or meetings?

Strategy O: School personnel take steps to ensure that children moving out of the district or to other schools within the district experience minimal disruptions in services.

- 1. Do school personnel forward school records immediately upon request of the receiving school?
- 2. Do school personnel make school records available to parents of homeless children when parents make such a request?
- 3. Do school personnel forward school records or provide records to parents even though a homeless child has outstanding fees e.g., lost books, unpaid pictures, and lunch loans?
- 4. Once special services are offered to a child, are the services continued without interruption if the child is transferred to another school within the school district?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy A, B

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy A: School personnel work with shelter personnel to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.

- 1. Is there regular communication between appropriate school personnel and staff from emergency shelters or transitional housing programs?
- 2. Do shelter personnel provide training to school personnel based on the emotional/physical needs of homeless students?
- 3. Do school personnel provide training to shelter personnel based on the educational needs of homeless students?
- 4. Are shelter personnel invited to join and participate in parent/teacher organizations and school planning councils?
- 5. Does the school have a primary contact at each local shelter who can facilitate the flow of information?
- 6. Does the school have a designated homeless liaison who works with shelter personnel to ensure that homeless children and youth get enrolled and obtain appropriate services?

Strategy B: Homeless children and youth receive free meals.

- 1. Are homeless children determined eligible for free meals immediately upon enrollment?
- 2. When parent signatures are unable to be immediately obtained, does the school principal sign for the student to receive free breakfast and lunch?
- 3. Are homeless children provided food services in a manner that does not bring undue attention to their living arrangements?
- 4. Does the school participate in the federal summer meal program, allowing homeless students access to free meals year round?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy C

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy C: School personnel work with other public and private community agencies to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.

- 1. When a child enrolls, is there a formal assessment of need for services beyond that which may be provided by the school district, including counseling, health services, food services, transportation, psychological services, and shelter?
- 2. Are school personnel aware of the sources for the following services:
 - a. crisis psychiatric/suicide
 - b. counseling services (individual and/or family)
 - c. pregnancy
 - d. substance abuse
 - e. child abuse
 - f. emergency shelter
 - g. domestic violence hotline
 - h. runaway hotline
 - i. Nutrition assistance programs
 - j. emergency/non-emergency medical care
 - k. clothing
 - l. transportation
- 3. Is a current directory of social service agencies and the services they offer (or a computerized information and referral program) available and easily accessible to school personnel, including nurses, counselors, teachers, social workers, and administrators?
- 4. When it is determined that a child has needs that cannot be met through district programs, do school personnel actively assist in making referrals for the necessary services?
- 5. Once referrals are made, do school personnel routinely follow up to ensure that homeless students receive needed services?
- 6. Are efforts made through the school to educate the homeless and their children about available social services, health care services, and other needed services available in the community?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy D

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy D: The school district assumes a leadership role in improving services for homeless children and youth in the community.

- 1. Does the school participate in community efforts, including local and state coalitions, to assess and respond to the needs of homeless children in the community?
- 2. Does the school district have an ongoing homeless student task force or committee that includes representatives from the school, shelters, low-income housing programs, and social service agencies?
- 3. Does the homeless student task force have regularly scheduled meetings?
- 4. Does the homeless student task force have well-defined procedures for making recommendations to the board of education on policies affecting homeless students?
- 5. Does the school district routinely assess interagency and coordination and identify and address any referral/service gaps?
- 6. Does the school district routinely assess intradistrict coordination and identify and address any program/service gaps?
- 7. When homeless students have needs that are not being adequately addressed by any other agency and school funds are not available to respond to the needs, does the school district work with existing funding resources, e.g., United Way, urban league, private industry council, and local foundations, to ensure the availability of needed services?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy E

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy E: Homeless students receive case management services that ensure they receive the support services they need.

- 1. Does each homeless student have the services of an appropriately trained staff person who serves as case manager, ensuring that the student has access to all needed services?
- 2. Does the case manager regularly communicate with school/shelter personnel who have direct contact with the homeless student?
- 3. Does the case manager regularly communicate with other service providers who may assist in addressing needs that impact upon the student's educational success?
- 4. In situations where needed services are not provided by regularly assigned school personnel, does the case management system ensure that the needs of homeless students are communicated to itinerant district personnel who provide prompt services?
- 5. Does the case manager regularly follow-up on the provision of services to ensure that the needs of homeless students are met?
- 6. Are case management services provided in a confidential manner that does not draw attention to the students receiving the assistance?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy F

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy F: Homeless children and youth receive transportation services that help them benefit from education.

- 1. Are homeless children provided transportation services that are at least comparable to transportation services provided to other students?
- 2. Are homeless children evaluated immediately upon enrollment to determine eligibility for transportation services?
- 3. Do transportation services begin immediately once eligibility is determined?
- 4. In situations where walking to and from school is dangerous or unrealistic, even when the student resides within the district's designated walking distance, does the district provide transportation?
- 5. Are efforts made to minimize embarrassment or stress felt by homeless students by planning bus routes and bus stops in a way that does not draw attention to children's living arrangements?
- 6. In situations where homeless students attend a day care center before school, which is apart from the shelter in which they reside, is transportation provided to school from the day care center?
- 7. In situations where homeless students attend a day care center after school, which is apart from the shelter in which they reside, is transportation provided from school to the day care center?
- 8. When it is in the student's best interest to attend the school the student attended prior to becoming homeless and the student's shelter or other living arrangement is in a different school attendance area, are arrangements made to provide transportation for the student to and from school?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy G

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy G: Homeless students receive health services that enable them to benefit from education.

- 1. Are health services provided to homeless students that are at least comparable to health services provided to other students in the school district?
- 2. Do homeless students who have not been immunized receive required immunizations immediately upon school enrollment?
- 3. Are the health needs of homeless students assessed by qualified school health personnel immediately upon school enrollment?
- 4. Is there adequate availability of school health personnel to schools serving homeless students?
- 5. Do homeless students receive appropriate information about health concerns related to their individual needs?
- 6. Do homeless students have access to dental, vision, and hearing services when such services may better enable them to benefit from education?
- 7. Do homeless students have access to medical services when such services may better enable them to benefit from education?
- 8. Are homeless students provided with appropriate school clothing and school shoes when they lack apparel?
- 9. When school clothes or school shoes are provided, are they provided in a confidential or nonidentifiable manner that does not draw attention to the student receiving the items or the items received?
- 10. When homeless students have basic hygiene needs that are not being met, are their hygiene needs met in a way that does not draw attention to the students receiving the assistance?
- 11. Are the health needs of homeless students discussed with homeless parents, shelter personnel, and public health personnel to ensure collaborative responses to health needs?
- 12. Are homeless parents provided with information about strategies for preventing health problems to which their children might have greater vulnerability because of homelessness?

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Identification of Barriers to the Education of Homeless Children

SECTION IV – Support Services Strategy H

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

Strategy H: Homeless students receive counseling services that enable them to experience educational success.

- 1. Are counseling services provided to homeless students that are at least comparable to counseling services provided to other students in the school district?
- 2. Are the counseling needs of homeless students promptly and adequately assessed upon school enrollment?
- 3. Are there adequate counseling services available to meet the needs of homeless children and youth?
- 4. In allocating counseling and social work personnel, has the district given adequate consideration to the needs of schools that serve large numbers of homeless students?
- 5. Are support groups formed that help homeless students better manage the stresses in their personal/family lives so that they might be more likely to achieve success in school?
- 6. Do homeless students have access to individual counseling sessions with appropriately trained personnel, when necessary?
- 7. Are counseling services provided in a confidential manner that does not draw attention to the student receiving assistance?

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SECTION I – Enrollment and Identification

Outcome: Through deliberate outreach efforts, the school enrolls all homeless children and youth. In a manner which respects confidentiality, homeless students are identified to ensure that their needs are met.

- Strategy A:** The school actively seeks to enroll homeless children and youth.
- Strategy B:** All schools have provisions which help ensure immediate enrollment.
- Strategy C:** Homeless children or youth who are not living with their parents or legal guardians have prompt access to school enrollment.
- Strategy D:** Homeless children and youth are enrolled in the school which is most likely to respond to the educational needs of the student.
- Strategy E:** Homeless children and youth are enrolled in a manner that does not draw attention to their living arrangements.
- Strategy F:** So that student needs can be met, appropriate school personnel know which children and youth are homeless.
- Strategy G:** Care is taken to ensure that student confidentiality is respected and that students are not subjected to embarrassment, harassment, or danger because they are homeless.

SECTION II – Awareness/Environment

Outcome: School personnel are aware of the needs of homeless children and youth and create an environment conducive to their learning.

- Strategy A:** School personnel are aware of local facilities that serve homeless children and youth and are aware of the extent to which children and youth in the school's community experience homelessness.
- Strategy B:** School personnel understand the causes of homelessness, the needs of homeless children and youth, and the ways in which public schools can better respond to those needs.
- Strategy C:** School personnel create a receptive environment for homeless children and youth.

SECTION III – Educational Access

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

- Strategy A:** Homeless students have access to appropriate general education programs that are designed to help them experience school success.
- Strategy B:** Homeless students who need compensatory education have prompt access to appropriate services.
- Strategy C:** Homeless students who need special education promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy D:** Homeless students who are eligible for preschool services or parents-as-teachers programs promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy E:** Homeless students who have limited English proficiency receive appropriate services.

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SECTION III – Educational Access (continued)

Outcome: All homeless children and youth participate in appropriate educational programs, reflecting a knowledge of their individual needs.

- Strategy F:** Homeless students who are intellectually/academically gifted or talented promptly receive appropriate services.
- Strategy G:** Homeless students are provided access to before-school and after-school programs that address their academic, social, developmental, and emotional needs.
- Strategy H:** Homeless students are provided access to extra-curricular activities available to other students.
- Strategy I:** Homeless students have access to summer school programs that enable them to meet academic requirements, improve academic skills, and maximize opportunities for school success.
- Strategy J:** Recognizing that schools are at risk of failing to assure the school success of homeless students, the school success of homeless students is deliberately planned.
- Strategy K:** Homeless students who need work-study programs or desire to participate in community service programs have prompt access to appropriate services.
- Strategy L:** Homeless students who qualify for and wish to participate in vocational programs have prompt access to appropriate programs.
- Strategy M:** Homeless students are provided educational services in “shelter school” environments only on a temporary basis, when it is in the best interest of the student to do so, and when comparable services can be ensured.
- Strategy N:** The school works with shelter providers to actively encourage the parents of homeless students to become involved in school activities.
- Strategy O:** School personnel take steps to ensure that children moving out of the district or to other schools within the district experience minimal disruptions in services.

SECTION IV– Support Services

Outcome: All homeless children and youth receive the support services they need to succeed in school.

- Strategy A:** School personnel work with shelter personnel to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.
- Strategy B:** Homeless children and youth receive free meals.
- Strategy C:** School personnel work with other public and private community agencies to ensure that the needs of homeless students and their families are met.
- Strategy D:** The school district assumes a leadership role in improving services for homeless children and youth in the community.
- Strategy E:** Homeless students receive case management services that ensure they receive the support services they need.
- Strategy F:** Homeless children and youth receive transportation services that help them benefit from education.
- Strategy G:** Homeless students receive health services that enable them to benefit from education.
- Strategy H:** Homeless students receive counseling services that enable them to experience educational success.