

UPDATED VERSION

ODE MODEL LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE
ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS
(Dispute Resolution Process)

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the District will immediately enroll the child/unaccompanied youth in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute, including all appeals. Enrollment is defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

1. District staff will refer the student, parent or guardian to the District liaison who will initiate the dispute resolution process as quickly as possible. The District liaison will make sure that the District follows the dispute resolution process. The liaison also must ensure that unaccompanied youth receive the same rights to appeal a district's eligibility, school selection or enrollment decision as parents and guardians. The role of the District liaison is to assist the student, parent or guardian through the duration of the dispute resolution process. The process will be open and transparent among those involved.
2. Upon determination of eligibility, enrollment or school selection, the District will provide a written explanation of any decisions made to parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth. The written explanation will be easy to understand and free of jargon. When appropriate, the District will translate the decision into the recipient's dominant language. At a minimum, the written explanation of how the District reached its decision regarding eligibility, school selection or enrollment will include:
 - A. A description of the action that the District proposed or refused;
 - B. An explanation of why the District proposed or refused the action;
 - C. A description of any other options the District considered;
 - D. The reasons why the District rejected any other options;
 - E. A description of any other factors relevant to the District's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination. This includes the facts, witnesses and evidence relied upon and their sources;
 - F. Appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are met;
 - G. Contact information for the District liaison and state homeless education coordinator and a brief description of their roles and
 - H. Notice to the recipient of their right to file an appeal, including step-by-step instructions of how to file an appeal.

3. The student, parent or guardian has the right to appeal any district determination of eligibility, school selection or enrollment. The District liaison will guide the student, parent or guardian through the entire dispute resolution process. The liaison will assist in both the local and state-level appeals process, if necessary. This includes recording evidence that will be used to write an appeal if a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth cannot do so by him or herself and providing access to school materials, such as copiers and fax machines.
4. Following an appeal at the local level, if the student, parent or guardian still disagrees with the determination, they may appeal to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The District liaison will forward all written documentation and related documents to the ODE state coordinator for homeless education. Upon receipt of any requested documentation, the state coordinator for homeless education will investigate the dispute and request applicable documentation. ODE will make a decision within 15 school days from the receipt of all necessary materials and will provide the final decision to the District Superintendent, building principal, local liaison, and parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. All parties must immediately adhere to the final determination.

(Approval date:)

*NOTE: All school districts are required to have a dispute resolution process. The language incorporated here is based on the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) model dispute resolution policy. While not required to appear in board policy, this regulation helps document the district's process to ensure compliance with requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. **ODE also has developed forms that may be used for purpose of managing the dispute resolution process. Information and resources are available on ODE's homeless students web page.***