

Enrollment Dispute Resolution

Disagreements and disputes are to be settled as close to the point of conflict as possible. Each local homeless education liaison shall assist the family and school to ensure compliance with federal and state legislation and policy governing the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The liaison shall work with appropriate local school division representatives to address any policies or procedures that are identified as barriers in the access to and success within a free appropriate public education. The Office of the State Coordinator of Homeless Education may be consulted at any time for technical assistance.

Dispute Resolution Process for School Selection or Enrollment

If a school chooses to send a child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or the school selected by the family or youth, the school shall consult with the local homeless education liaison prior to making a final placement determination. If the school's denial of enrollment is supported by a review of feasibility and best interest, the school shall provide the parent or guardian of the child or youth with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision. If an appeal is requested either in writing or verbally, the school shall:

- Immediately admit the student to the school in which enrollment is sought and provide all services for which the student is eligible, pending resolution of the dispute; and
- Refer the child, youth, parent, or guardian to the designated local homeless education liaison who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

Review Procedure

If disputes or complaints of non-compliance arise regarding the education for homeless children and youth, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recommends that:

- A. The person having the complaint first contact the school or school district (i.e., the local school district contact person for homeless students, the principal, or superintendent) to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and most likely to be able to resolve it quickly;
- B. If Step A is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Educational Liaison (if a site exists), or, PDE will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program at phone number (717) 772-2066;
- C. Individual cases may be referred to the PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education as needed by the State Homeless Coordinator; and,
- D. PDE will deliver a response within 15 business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school/district letter or on the Dispute Letter Form if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Children's Initiative.