



East Dubuque Unit School District #119

East Dubuque, Illinois 61025

August 29, 2011

TO: Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
FROM: Mr. Greg Herbst, Superintendent
RE: Assistance for Families of Students Who Satisfy the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) Definition of Homelessness

This letter is being sent to each student's home. I do so knowing its contents will not apply to most but hoping that the information contained herein will reach those to whom it does apply, be it through this correspondence or by word-of-mouth.

Because of the recent flooding, some people may, by lawful definition, be considered homeless. As such, assistance may be available to you. The following excerpts are taken from the ISBE's policy on the education of homeless children. Much of the text has been condensed to conform with a school district of our size. The full text of the ISBE Homelessness Policy is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf>, and other resources can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/homeless/default.htm>.

Definition of "Homeless"

Both Illinois and federal law define "homeless." Homeless students include, but are not limited to, children or youth who:

- are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- are living in motels, hotels, . . . or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- are abandoned in hospitals;
- are awaiting foster care placement;
- are staying in public or private places not ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations;
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- are otherwise not residing in a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

There is no specific time limit on how long a child or youth can be considered homeless. Whether a child or youth meets the definition of homeless depends on the living situation and the individual circumstances.

Choice of Schools

Children who have experienced homelessness are permitted to attend their school of origin for as long as they remain homeless, or if the child becomes permanently housed, for the remainder of the academic year in which housing is acquired.

Transportation

Where a homeless child or youth chooses to continue enrollment in his or her school of origin, the local school district must ensure that transportation is provided. If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the local educational agency (LEA) where the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA where the school of origin is located. If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA of origin terminate, and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEA's are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally. Parents/guardians, in either scenario, shall make a good-faith effort to provide or arrange for transportation to the school of origin, including authorizing relatives, friends or a program for homeless persons to provide the child with transportation; however, it is ultimately the school districts' responsibility to ensure that appropriate transportation is provided and in no event shall appropriate transportation not be provided to a homeless student on any given school day.

Free Lunches and Waiver of Fees

Once a student is deemed homeless under the law, the school should immediately enroll all homeless students in free breakfast and lunch programs and to waive any of the fees or charges that are subject to waiver under the Illinois fee-waiver rules.

In simplest terms, if a child is considered to be homeless by definition of the law, then he/she may attend their home school, the district will provide transportation, and the student will receive free lunches for at least the remainder of the school year. Other school fees may also be waived, contingent upon individual circumstances.

If you feel your student qualifies as homeless, or if you have any questions or require additional information, please call me directly at 815.747.2111.

Sincerely,

Greg Herbst

Board of Education

Mrs. Shirley Horstman
President
Mr. Terry Schulting
Vice-President
Mrs. JoAnne Loeffelholz
Secretary
Mr. Ben Andersen
Mr. Steve McClain
Mr. Harold Middendorf
Mrs. Donna Quinn

District Office

100 School Road
P: 815.747.2111
F: 815.747.3201

Mr. Greg Herbst
Superintendent
Ext. 3011

High School and

Junior High School

200 Parklane Drive
P: 815.747.3188
F: 815.747.3516

Mr. Darren Sirianni
Principal
Ext. 1103

Elementary School

100 School Road
P: 815.747.3117
F: 815.747.3827

Mrs. Michelle J. Till
Principal
Ext. 2101

Transportation and

Maintenance

200 Parklane Drive
P: 815.747.3188
F: 815.747.3516

Mr. Don Loeffelholz
Director
Ext. 1107