



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays
*Student Attendance,
Engagement, and Support Series*

Kari Sullivan, State Attendance Lead
John Frassinelli, Division Director

Connecticut State Department of Education
December 1, 2020

Meeting Outline

1. Welcome
Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE
2. Talk Tuesday Objectives
3. Latest Resources
4. Homelessness, Education, and Attendance
Louis Tallarita, LMSW, CT McKinney-Vento State Coordinator, Family Resource Center Consultant, CSDE
5. School District Challenges and Support for Homeless Students/Families
Carl Asikainen, Youth System Coordinator, CT Coalition to End Homelessness
6. Participant Engagement: Successes & Challenges
LeTanya Lawrence, Education Consultant, State Education Resource Center (SERC)
7. Closing & Next Meeting



Welcome!



Talk Tuesday Objectives

- To ***engage district attendance administrators in open dialogue*** around student engagement and participation during remote and hybrid learning.
- To ***work together*** to strengthen systems that support student attendance and engagement in hybrid and remote learning models.
- To ***share lessons learned, common concerns*** and provide overall support to each other.
- To ***ensure that participants' needs and interests*** inform future meetings, agendas and future guest speakers.
- To ***identify ways the state can support districts*** to improve student attendance in different learning models.



LATEST RESOURCES



Superintendent's Digest

Tuesdays & Fridays

November 30, 2020



- [Reminder Regarding FAQ 3, Question 12 – Face Coverings](#)
- [Virtual Town Hall for Parents and Families: Supporting Children in Remote Learning during COVID-19](#)
- [2021-22 Connecticut SAT School Day](#)
- [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\) 2021](#)

November 23, 2020

- [Reminder: Report All COVID-19 School Cases to DPH](#)
- [Remote Instruction Checklist](#)
- [CSDE Celebrates Computer Science Week December 7-13](#)

November 19, 2020



- [College Upper-class Students Serving as Substitutes; Flexible Staffing Strategies](#)
- [Best Practices - Communicating for Understanding - Engaging Families and Communities](#)
- [CSDE Newsletter - November 2020 - Subscribe](#)
- [CSDE and RESC Alliance Offer Free Blended Learning Professional Learning Modules and Coaching](#)

November 16, 2020

- [Suicide Prevention Public Health Alert](#)
 - [Suicidio Juvenil Alerta de Salud Pública de CT](#)
- [Firearm Safety Guide for Connecticut Schools](#)
- [CSDE Priority Standards for Essential Learning Handbook for SY21](#)





Connecticut State Department of Education Professional Support Series for Families

Please see below and join as we learn together and grow together.

Series 20 – November 30, 2020

Virtual Town Hall for Parents and Families: Supporting Children in Remote Learning during COVID-19 (Live webinar)

Q & A Session for Families

Families, do you have questions about remote learning?

The Connecticut State Department of Education is hosting a Virtual Town Hall for Parents and Families to discuss remote learning during COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting incredible challenges not only for schools but also for families. Families are coping with new terms like hybrid, remote, and asynchronous, along with multiple online platforms and various technology issues, all while trying to keep their children safe.

Parents and families are invited to join members of the Connecticut State Department of Education, and community, education and child development experts to provide tips and best practices, answer questions and highlight new resources to support students and families in remote learning in Connecticut. The Town Hall will be in a webinar format and participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of panelists.

Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Register: <https://ctserc.net/townhall>

Contact: judy.carson@ct.gov

Panelists:



- Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner, CSDE
- Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, CSDE
- Bryan Klimkiewicz, Division Director, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE
- Gladys Labas, Director of Equity and Language, CSDE
- Judy Carson, Program Manager, School-Family-Community Partnerships, CSDE
- Ingrid Canady, Executive Director, SERC
- Subira Gordon, Executive Director, Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN)
- Robert D. Keder, M.D., Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Connecticut Children's Medical Center; Assistant Professor, Pediatrics, UCONN School of Medicine

Save the dates! See next page for upcoming sessions.

Connecticut State Department of Education Professional Support Series for Families

Save-the-Dates!

Date: December 11, 2020, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

**Reimagining Family-School Partnerships in a Remote Learning Environment:
How Can We Co-Develop School and Family Capacity to Support Student Success?**

Guest: Elizabeth Chu, Director, Center for Public Research and Leadership and author of [Family Guide To Distance Learning](#)

Registration: Join the mailing list to receive registration information at [Friday CAFÉ: Connecticut's Professional Network for Family Engagement](#)

Date: To be announced

A Place at the Table: Connecting with Each Other to Support Our Kids in School

For more information and registration: kari.sullivan@ct.gov



Throughout today's presentation, ask yourself:

**WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE TO
SUPPORT STUDENTS EXPERIENCING
HOUSING INSTABILITY?**



CONNECTICUT STATE
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Talk Tuesday
December 1, 2020
Homelessness,
Education and Attendance

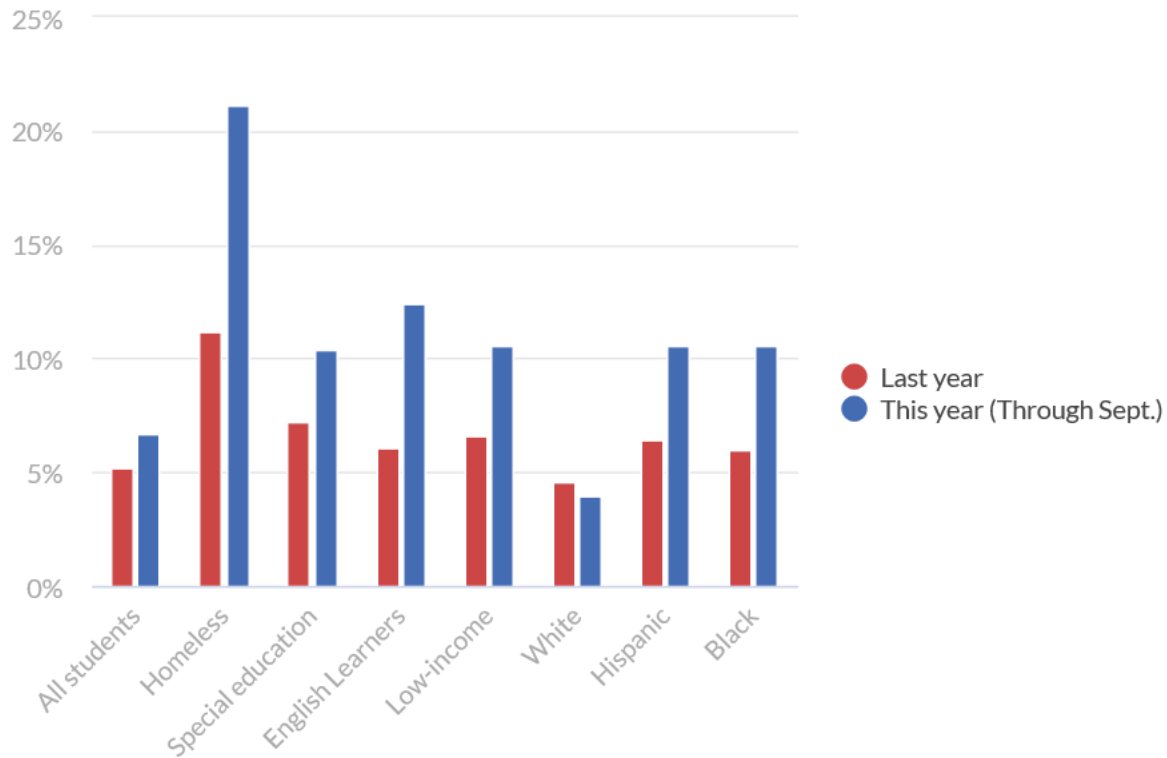
Talk Tuesday - Homelessness



Louis Tallarita, LMSW.,
CT McKinney-Vento State
Coordinator; Family Resource
Center Consultant

Attendance and Homeless

Percentage of days absent for different student groups



Source: CT State Department of Education

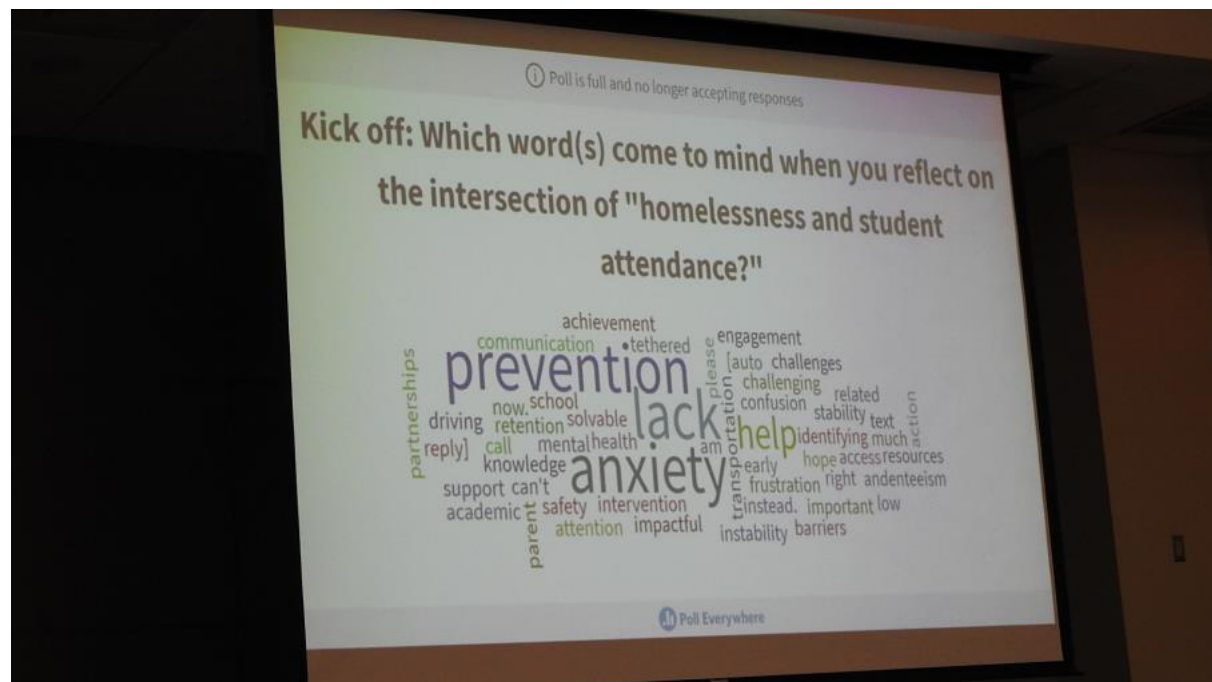


Students experiencing homelessness

- Attended 78.9% of membership days compared to 88.8% in 2019-20.
- Absent 2 out of every 9 days this September, compared to 1 out of every 9 days last September.
- Attendance rates for both Septembers below 90% - “chronically absent”.

Homelessness and School Attendance

- CSDE Roundtable, September 23, 2019



The Relationship between Homelessness, Attendance and Discipline

- **Nearly half** of unaccompanied students experiencing homelessness are **chronically absent**
- On average, an unaccompanied student experiencing homelessness
 - **Misses** nearly **one day of school per week**
 - **Misses 20 more days each year** than their classmates who are not homeless
 - **Has more than double the suspension rate** of accompanied students experiencing homelessness



Identification Declines

Pandemic has further impaired identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness:

- Nationally, estimated 420,000 fewer students identified and enrolled by schools so far this school year.
- In Connecticut, 25% fewer students identified/enrolled.
- Last year, 11.5% decrease in Connecticut's total number of identified/enrolled from 2018-29.
- Continues a 3-year downward trend, -16.5%.



Why Identification of Homelessness Matters



Highly Mobile Youth and Families

- Housing mobility associated with migrant workers, military and immigrant families, families experiencing domestic violence, unstable work, high poverty and homelessness.
- During COVID-19 may now include the separation of family members due to work (ex. essential employment) and health issues/concerns.
- Many new families and youth are likely to fall into homelessness due to current economic stressors.



What educational rights and supports are available for students experiencing homelessness during COVID-19?



Rights and Support:

Federal law, [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#), requires all school districts to ensure immediate enrollment and access to public education for children and youth experiencing homelessness, including:

- Choice of School;
- Comparable Services;
- Removing barriers; and
- Ensuring success.



“Homeless Children and Youth”

MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. includes —
 - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
 - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings...;
 - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - iv. migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

An unaccompanied youth must also fit the definition of *homeless* in the McKinney-Vento Act to receive assistance under the provisions in the law.

Homeless: lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)(a)].

Unaccompanied: not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)].



Implementing McKinney-Vento in COVID Era:

- Definition of “homeless” – *in full effect*
- MV Liaison Duties and Identification – *in full effect*
- “School of Origin” – *in full effect*
- Transportation – *in full effect*
- Immediate Enrollment – *in full effect*



Implementing McKinney-Vento in COVID Era:

Recommendations for Registration During COVID*:

- Mobile friendly online registration system.
- A central phone number and in-person support.
- Every school phone is answered and voice mails are returned promptly.
- Multiple options for parents to submit required documentation remotely.
- Registration outreach social-distancing style.
- Accommodate housing circumstances that warrant the protection of the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

*CSDE Memo to Superintendents (6-5-20)



What can schools do to stay connected
with families and unaccompanied
youth experiencing homelessness
during COVID-19?



Sharing Strategies:

- Use all available communication (Email, phone, texting, regular mail, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Reach out to emergency contacts, other students and local housing/homeless service partners for updated information, including .
- Make sure district communications, including websites and social media, share information on programs/ services available to help and offer home learning tips.
- Post flyers, brochures, and posters in community (grocery stores, pharmacies and essential services locations.)



Listening Strategies:

- Use food and learning packet distributions as opportunity to inquire about other basic needs and student learning.
- Encourage regular two-way conversations with parents and youth through mobile technology; if necessary, provide pre-paid cell phones, tablets and laptops.
- Develop regular “check-ins”, including virtual home visits, that inquire on supports needed to stay safe, healthy, and engaged in school.
- Urge families and students to stay in touch to share progress and challenges in building learning skills and share their progress.



What resource are available to help?



Resources:

- Title I, Part A funds, including both the homeless set-aside and regular Title I funds.
- McKinney-Vento funds.
- Supplemental federal funds available through CARES Act.
- Other local educational agency and early childhood program funds.
- Philanthropic and community support.



COVID-19 Resources for Families and Educators

Visit www.ct.gov/sde

- 2020-2021 School Year Guidance
 - Addendums and FAQs
- Resources for Families
- Resources for Educators
- School Districts 2020-2021 Reopening Plans



COVID-19 Resources for Families and Educators

Visit <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>

- CARES Act Emergency Relief
- Remote Learning: Resources for Educators, Administrators and Related Service Providers
- Resources for Learning at Home
- Waivers and Flexibility
- Program Information: FAQs and Responses



COVID-19 Resources for Families and Educators

- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#)





School District Challenges and Support for Homeless Students/Families

Carl Asikainen Youth System Coordinator CCEH

December 1, 2020

Background

Identification has been and continues to be challenging for students and families experiencing homelessness. COVID continues to complicate outreach in the homeless service system—although assessments have been successfully conducted remotely.

From Chalkbeat November 23 2020. ‘Across U.S. fewer students are being identified as homeless. Educators say that’s actually a bad sign.’

<https://apple.news/AGhMH02UjSVSsNtBOoiu3ag>.

Link to report from Schoolhouse Connection. More information about difficulties establishing and maintaining connections.

<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Lost-in-the-Masked-Shuffle-and-Virtual-Void.pdf>.

USICH Resources and CT Next Steps, Training

Link to USICH Community Network, best practices here <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/supporting-children-and-youth-experiencing-homelessness-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-questions-to-consider> .

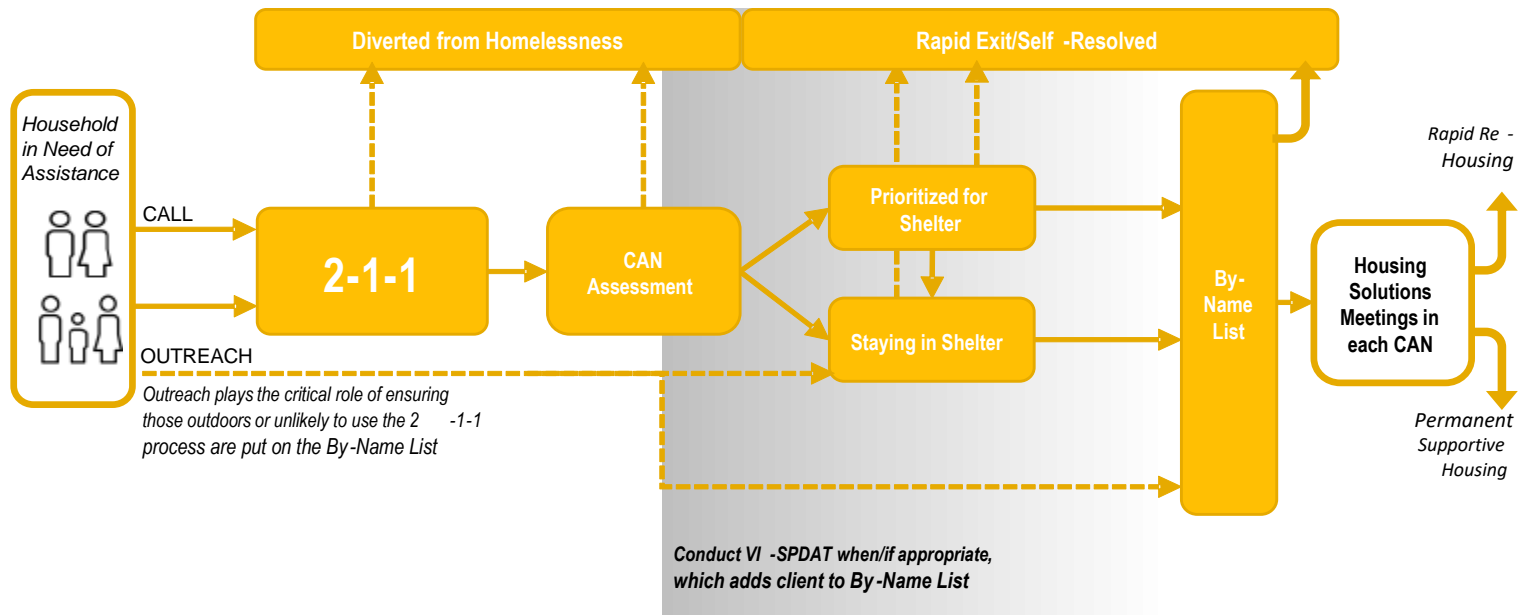
CCEH is engaged in a municipal level campaign in partnership with Sustainable CT and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. More information here <https://www.cceh.org/municipal-campaign/>.

Training calendar links here <https://cceh.org/events/>. Motivational Interviewing and Diversion Training upcoming.

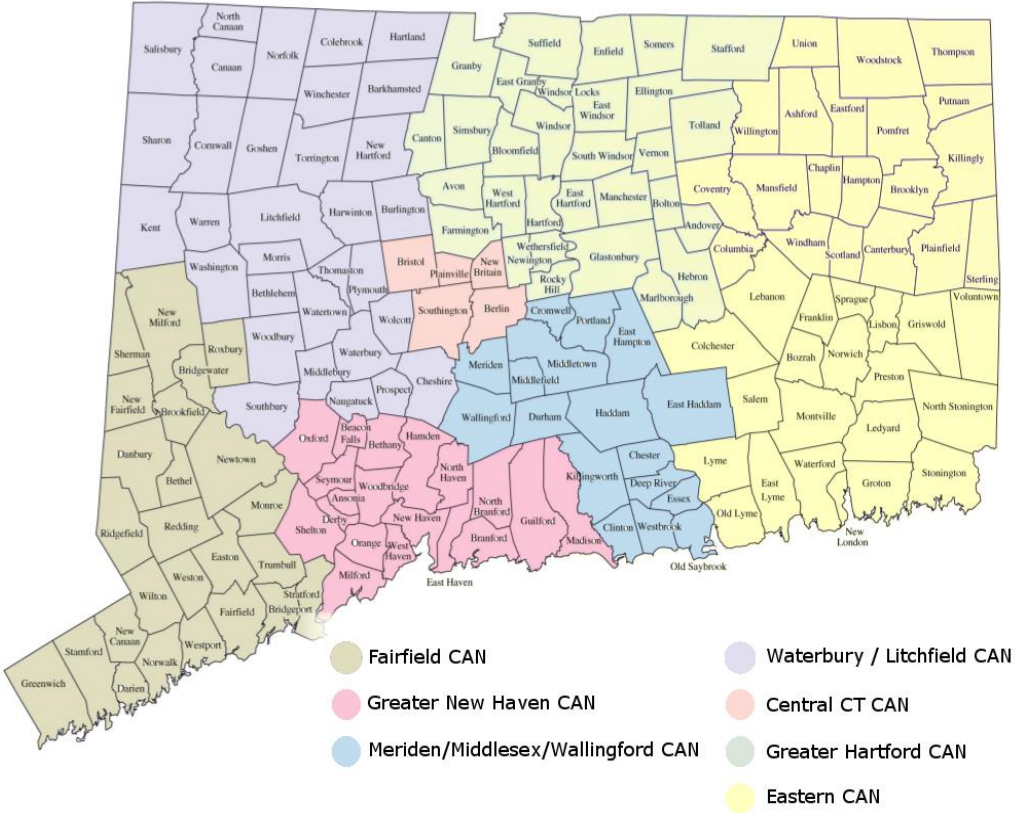
Connecticut's Homeless Response System

CAN System Overview

A high-level diagram of the coordinated access process from entry to exit



Coordinated Access Network Regions



Homeless services in Connecticut are organized into seven regional networks, known as ‘Coordinated Access Networks’ or ‘CANs.’

CANs receive referrals for homeless assistance from 211.

Within each CAN region, homeless services providers coordinate to divert households from shelter, manage access to shelter, conduct homeless outreach, and match homeless households to housing program vacancies.

Data on CAN performance is available at <https://ceh.org/data/interactive/> and <https://ctcandata.org/>.

Best Practices for Improving Attendance by Addressing Homelessness and Housing Instability

Why a separate guidance document for addressing homelessness and Housing?

- We know that students experiencing homelessness have among the lowest of attendance rates.
- Students struggling with housing may:
 - Present a unique set of challenges to getting to school;
 - Prefer that their housing status may be kept secret to avoid unwanted attention;
 - Show a higher prevalence in LGBTQ and POC students; or
 - Experience lack of access to resources and support.
- Schools can not provide all of the supports alone.

Who should be involved?

- What Districts Can Do?
- What Schools Can Do?
- What Housing and Homeless Service Providers Can Do?
- What Everyone Can Do?



What Districts Can Do

- Follow protocols established for homeless children and youth to ensure they are in school through the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Develop structures and systems for early identification of who may be homeless or experiencing housing instability
 - District Attendance Lead
 - Role of McKinney-Vento Liaison
 - Capacity building for identifying students who may be struggling with stable housing
 - District & School Attendance Teams
 - Monitor attendance early and often
 - Identify and connect students to services they need
 - Ensure transportation needs are addressed without delay
 - Transfer Records in a timely fashion



What Schools Can Do

- Identify and implement strategies to help meet the variety of needs facing homeless students and reduce chronic absence:
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Breakfast Beyond the Bell
 - Check & Connect
 - Laundry at School
 - Afterschool Programs
- Foster a supportive school climate



What Housing and Homeless Service Providers Can Do

- Engage your local McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Ensure student needs are assessed during intake and screening
- Raise awareness among policy and decision makers
- ?
- ?
- ?



What Everyone Can Do

- Ensure all homeless students are identified
- Organize easy access to clothing, food, hygiene and school supplies
- Prioritize homeless families and youth



Ways schools can support students experiencing homelessness

1. Create supportive, affirming and loving environments where students feel safe, nurtured and supported such that homeless students and students in foster care do not fear stigmatization or bullying as a result of disclosing the need for housing stability or assistance.
2. School faculty and staff should receive professional development designed to identify signs of housing instability and to support the needs of homeless students and students in foster care (including familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act and other federal, state and local sources of supports for foster care students and homeless students and families).
3. Connect students to in-school and community support services. Coordinate with mental and physical health service providers as well as housing agencies to meet the needs of homeless and foster care children and their families to the greatest extent practicable.
4. Provide homeless and foster care youth with the support required to graduate on time with the skills, experiences and credentials required to be successful in college or a career in the global 21st-century labor market. (Justin Lang, 2016)

Resource:

[Five Strategies to Help Homeless Youth Transition to College During COVID-19 | SchoolHouse Connection](#)

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT: SUCSESSES & CHALLENGES



Closing & Next Meeting

December 15, 2020

10 to 11 a.m.

Topic: Kindergarten is Key!

Looking ahead to improving attendance and engagement in the coming year for this year's and next year's kindergarteners.

Gemma Joseph Lumpkin asks, "What can we be doing now?"

Gemma Joseph Lumpkin
Chief of Youth, Family and Community Engagement
New Haven Public Schools



Keep in touch!



**Kari
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860-807-2041

Connect with CSDE for more information
on student attendance and engagement:



[Facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation](https://www.facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation)



<http://www.ct.gov/sde/chronicabsence>



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