School Counselors’ Role in Providing Advocacy and Support to Homeless Students in Rural Communities

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School Counselors’ Role in Providing Advocacy and Support to Homeless Students in Rural Communities

A Project Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Jessica Ann Gilsrud

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Counseling and Student Affairs

May 2018

Moorhead, Minnesota
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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my Plan B committee: Dr Taryn Akgul and Dr. Lisa Karch. Both of whom embody true professional counselors by supporting and inspiring myself and fellow students in our education. They are mentors and encouragers. I want to thank you both for your time.

I would also like to thank Julie Carlson. Julie has been with me throughout this journey as a colleague, advisor and friend. I appreciate her ability to always seem to have the right words for every situation I throw at her and her encouragement has seen me through many moments. I look forward to many more years working together and fortunate to work with a school counselor that demonstrates such kindness and bravery.

Lastly, I want to thank Nathan, my husband and our daughters Emily and Alayna. They have supported me and put up with a hectic time during the last couple years. I could not have done this without their love and patience.
Abstract

School counselors must play in an important role in providing advocacy and support for students and their families that are experiencing homelessness. ASCA has a position statement as well as information on confidentiality to provide clarity in our role. Furthermore, the McKinney Vento Act defines homelessness and requires schools to identify and assist families as well as educate all school staff members. Rural communities are less likely to have resources like shelters, so the homeless population may be more difficult to identify and school counselors may be in a unique position to recognize the signs of homelessness.
Introduction

The McKinney Vento Act and addressing the needs of homeless students became important to me during the 2016-17 school year. Our district was not identifying students because they did not understand the definition or understand the needs of this population. One of my students moved in with a family in a neighboring town and was about to be removed from enrollment. I researched a way to help keep her in the district as I believed this was not in her best interest. I found information regarding the McKinney Vento Act and began advocating for her to stay in our district and for the school to change policies that create barriers for homeless students.

Over the last couple of years, I have been working to educate school staff on the McKinney Vento Act. As of the 2017-18 school year I have provided information and education to the administration, counselors and secretaries and we have identified twenty-one students as homeless. In the next school year, I will be presenting to teachers as well as bringing in a poverty simulation for our fall in-service.

My goal for our district is to not only follow this act, but more importantly change our mindset. We must provide students with a safe place and immediately enroll them and welcome them to our school while providing them with the support they need to be successful.
Identifying Homeless Students in Rural Communities

The number of homeless students in the United States has continued to rise over the last thirty years. In order to understand rural homelessness and its impact one must also be aware of how homelessness is defined and what homelessness looks like in rural areas as it can be more difficult to pinpoint. The McKinney Vento Act was introduced to provide clarity in defining homelessness as well as federal funding for schools to deliver the services and resources that the students and their families need to help the students be successful at school. Homeless students may live in vehicles, shelters, on the street or even with friends or family. They often sleep on the floor or on couches and move often. It is sometimes difficult to identify homeless students because families may not even know that they are homeless or may feel a sense of embarrassment by the term. Once a student is identified as homeless they can remain in their school of origin for the remainder of the school year under the McKinney Vento Act even if they move out of the school district (Strawser, 2000).

Rural Homelessness

In working in a rural community with students and families there are differences in addressing needs and barriers. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2010) the reasons for homelessness differ in rural and urban communities because poverty rates in rural communities tend to be higher than urban which makes the threat of becoming homeless an issue. Also, rural communities are less likely to have resources like shelters, so the homeless population may be hidden. It is difficult to count homeless families that are staying with relatives and friends. Because of this lack of
resources and knowledge about homelessness it makes it even more important to identify these students, so needs can be assessed and supports can be put into place.

School counselors must assist in the identification, provide resources and/or services and help reduce barriers and stigma for the students in their schools. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016), addresses many of these themes as well as the role to create “systemic change.” In many schools, homeless students are not being identified and are at risk of being denied enrollment, forced to change schools or not given the services that would aid them and their families.

School counselors can work with their school’s designated homeless liaison to support homeless students while educating school staff members on distinct educational needs. In order to do that school counselors must realize the unique challenges that these students face to make available services and support that are evidence based.

**School Counselors Role in Identification and Support of Homeless Students**

The role of a school counselor in identification and support of homeless students in a school setting were examined. School counselors must be aware of the risk factors associated with being homeless as well as possible issues that homeless students are often faced with such as abuse, trauma, dissociation, perception of safety, frequent absences from school and lack of control. These issues coupled with frequent changes in schools may lead to lower academic performance.

The ASCA journal article written by Stone (2014) discusses the importance of school counselors in the process in relation to confidentiality. ASCA ethical standards allows for a balance regarding safety of students and collaboration while also following
the law. By following the law and addressing students’ needs Stone (2014) asserts the following:

At the end of the day, personally identifiable information must be provided to the homeless liaison officer, but prior to doing so the skilled school counselor will work with homeless students to help them understand why the breach is necessary.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Erickson’s stages of psychosocial development were considered in the recognition of challenges that are faced by homeless students. Cormack (2009) researched the perception homeless students have of counseling and factors counselors should be aware of to have more success in their sessions. Individual versus group counseling was also discussed as well as direct and indirect services, resources and referrals that may be necessary for school counselors to have knowledge of to provide support to these students and their families.

Resiliency was also a theme in working with homeless youth. School counselors that work with the students and families of the students can assist with promoting the understanding that resiliency is heightened through the strengthening of protective factors like relationships that students have with their teachers, calming strategies like mindfulness (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009).

Cormack (2008), used a qualitative approach on groups of homeless students that analyzed the students’ perceptions of counseling, trust, dislike of the counseling process and boundaries. The adolescent participants had low levels of trust in counseling and the counseling process as well as found the experience oppressive. Participants expressed the following views: “it’s like you can have a laugh as well as a chat” and “make it a bit
more casual as well and instead of one room with the two chairs or something.” The researchers found that amongst the group only one participant had not been forced to go to counseling (Cormack, 2008).

Another study utilized a sample of 145 homeless youth living on the street was used to learn about their ability to detect risk and protect themselves (Bender, 2014). The sample included participants that had high rates of victimization and were witness to serious injury, assault, robbery and death. Open-ended interviews were conducted with the participants and the questions had an emphasis on trauma such as “how do you know you are in a dangerous situation” and what do you do to protect yourself or keep yourself safe (Bender, 2014)?” The homeless youth described internal and external cues that prompted them to react to situations and were suspicious of people who “appeared too nice or friendly and got too close.” Forty-two percent of the participants reported that they were unable to detect risk and fifty-seven percent carried a weapon with them. Fifty percent of the participants thought it was important to have people in their lives that they trust to help stay safe, but thirty-one percent isolated themselves.

Another article researched resiliency and educating homeless and providing an educational environment for homeless students to be successful. Data from academics, attendance and assessments was analyzed from students that were identified as low-socioeconomic status and then homeless students. They found that immediately following homelessness students had an “acute risk for academic issues” (Masten, 2015). A series of studies was also done to assess quality of parenting and effective parenting related to better executive function in the homeless students. The results showed that a
student’s executive functioning was related to academic achievement and success (Masten, 2015).

In relation to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs homeless students are at risk academically because their physiological and safety needs are often not being met (Daniels, 1992). The need for love and belonging can also be affected because homeless students move frequently and are unable to form lasting friendships. The family is also under a large degree of stress and parents are often incapable of providing consistent care and direction to their children (Daniels, 1992). Erickson’s psychosocial stage of industry and interiority is also an issue for homeless children because they lack stability and consistency (Daniels, 1992).

**Conclusion**

As a result of the studies and their findings it is clear that there are services that school counselors must provide to homeless students. A number of themes emerged that I would like to incorporate in my career to help address the needs of homeless students and their families. Based on the results and readings group counseling would be beneficial in the school environment to provide support and help students develop friendships. These students are often highly mobile and providing an environment where they can build friendships would help satisfy their need for love and acceptance.

The results of the findings of the Knowledge and Skills with Homeless Students Survey showed how collaboration and advocacy in the schools is necessary to ensure homeless students are successful at school. According to Havlick & Bryan (2014):

Increasing knowledge of policies, agencies and supportive services within the community and school is imperative when assisting families like being
knowledgeable of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which addresses the enrollment and transportation needs of students experiencing homelessness, as well as other barriers they may face.

The ability to recognize safe people and environments is necessary for homeless students and has been found to sometimes be lacking. Assessing homeless students’ ability and providing education about safety in either a group or individual lesson may be needed. Also, finding creative ways to develop a rapport or relationship with students so that they feel comfortable is important. Adolescent homeless students had often been through mandated counseling and had negative feelings about the process so counselors may need to make themselves visible at the school and find an enjoyable activity to do with the student during the counseling process. Transportation to and from school, parenting skills and mental health of family members may also need to be addressed either directly or indirectly by the school counselor.

Homelessness is an important factor to consider for school counselors because it is not always straightforward to identify students that are homeless. School counselors are an important part of the team because they are a service to all students in the school and work closely with families and oftentimes may be the first to recognize signs of homelessness. School counselors must make sure an equitable and just atmosphere is accessible to homeless students as well as providing education about the challenges to other school staff members and resources to the families as needed.
Training Materials for Administration

The Training materials for administration on the following pages include Kahoot, a power point presentation and enrollment forms. Kahoot is an online tool that is used here to measure understanding of the McKinney Vento Act. The power point presentation covers the definition of homelessness and provides education to highlight the reason it is important to support students that are meeting this definition. It also advocates for a change in policy in regard to enrollment procedures. The enrollment forms are used at the time of enrollment for all students coming into the district. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.
98 percent of teachers interviewed say they are optimistic regarding the potential of youth they work with to graduate from high school, college, and beyond.

Those in turn young people interviewed 77 percent say they have seized control to fill the void that is their future, whether that is completing their education, or pursuing a career.
# Student Residency Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID#</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Check Yes or No to statements 1-5 below:

1. My family lives in an emergency or transitional shelter or FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] housing.
2. My family is sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, we are doubling up.
3. My family is living in a car, temporary RV park, or campground due to lack of alternative accommodations; a public space, abandoned building; substandard housing, bus or train station, public or private space not designed for human beings, or a similar setting.
4. My family lives in a hotel or motel.
5. I am an unaccompanied youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).

If YOU ANSWERED "NO" to all of the questions above STOP HERE.

If you answered "YES" to any question above, COMPLETE front and back.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/Guardian Name (first, last)</th>
<th>Parent Phone</th>
<th>Emergency</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Address</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Zip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list all children living with you from Pre-K through high school. If needed, use an additional sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID #</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I declare, under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, that the information provided here is true and correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Unaccompanied Youth

Date
| Medical | Dental | Counseling | Homeless Center | School Transportation | School Supplies | Other |

**I would like referral assistance with the following [check if applicable]:**

**ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY**

**Notes:**
Training Materials for Counselors

The training materials for school counselors on the following pages include a power point and ASCA position statement. The power point addresses confidentiality in regards to McKinney Vento. It also talks about the needs of the students and families. Schools are required to have the family fill out a needs assessment and this is something I think our school counselors could be in charge of. The ASCA position statement is another handout that is helpful to provide additional information to understand our role in working with homeless students. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.
What can school counselors do?

School counselors play a vital role in supporting students throughout their educational journey. They provide academic, social, and emotional guidance to help students navigate the challenges of school and beyond. Here are some key areas where school counselors make a difference:

1. Counseling: Providing individual and group counseling services to help students develop coping strategies, manage stress, and address personal or academic issues.
2. Academic Guidance: Assisting students with course selection, college planning, and career exploration. School counselors help students understand their interests, strengths, and goals to make informed decisions about their future.
3. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs): Working with teachers, parents, and administrators to develop and implement plans for students with special needs to ensure they receive appropriate educational services.
4. College Admissions: Guiding students through the college application process, helping them understand the financial aid options available, and providing information about scholarships and grants.
5. Community Resources: Connecting students with community resources such as mental health services, tutoring programs, and job placement agencies to support their overall well-being.

Importance of Identifying

- Equity: School counselors play a crucial role in advocating for equity and ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. They work with administrators and teachers to create inclusive environments where every student feels valued and supported.
- Resilience: School counselors help students develop resilience by teaching them coping skills and problem-solving techniques. They encourage students to set goals and celebrate their achievements, regardless of setbacks.
- Leadership: School counselors are leaders in their roles, often influencing school policies and practices to better support students. They engage in professional development to stay informed about best practices and innovative strategies in counseling.

List of Resources

- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- National Career Development Association (NCDA)
- American Guidance Service (AGS)
- College Board
- ACT
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Association of School Social Workers (NASSW)

Resilience

All parents of teens understand that their teens will struggle at times. It's important for parents to recognize and address these challenges, helping their teens build resilience and cope with stress. Here are some strategies for fostering resilience in your teen:

1. Encourage Positive Thinking: Teach your teen to focus on positive outcomes and solutions rather than dwelling on negative aspects of situations.
2. Promote Healthy Habits: Encourage a balanced diet, regular exercise, and adequate sleep, as these are essential for mental and physical well-being.
3. Foster Social Connections: Help your teen build and maintain a network of supportive friends and family members who can offer guidance and emotional support.
4. Encourage Problem-Solving: Teach your teen to think critically and develop strategies for overcoming challenges.
5. Celebrate Achievements: Recognize your teen's accomplishments, no matter how small, to boost their self-esteem and confidence.
6. Model Resilience: As a parent, demonstrate your own resilience by showing how you handle stress and overcome obstacles.
The School Counselor and Children Experiencing Homelessness
(Adopted, 2010)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
School counselors recognize the effects homelessness/displacement has on children's mental and physical health, and academic functioning. School counselors collaborate with community stakeholders, advocate to remove barriers to academic success, and implement educational and prevention programs to promote successful performance and interactions within the school environment.

The Rationale
Families with children make up 34% of the homeless population; more than 1.35 million children are identified as homeless annually (The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2007). Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to miss school and repeat a grade than other students from families with low-income (Backner, 2008). They have a significantly higher prevalence of developmental delays in communication, receptive vocabulary, and visual motor skills as well as performing below grade level performance in reading or mathematics (Gewirtz, Hart-Shegos, & Medhanie, 2008). In addition, students who are homeless have an increased incidence of mental and physical health concerns, with two times the rate of depression as the general population, and as much as four times the prevalence of disruptive behavior disorders as housed students from lower income families (Gewirtz et al., 2008).

Institutional barriers within schools, such as transportation, immunization and physical examination requirements, residency and birth certificate requirements, and lack of school records, impede homeless families' ability to enroll their children in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 outlined the rights of homeless students, and created directives for schools to ensure students are able to enroll and succeed in school (Hernandez, Jonestowicz-Simbeni, & Israel, 2008).

The School Counselor's Role
School counselors:
• advocate for students and collaborate with their parents/guardians to reduce barriers related to school enrollment and academic success
• establish educational and preventive programs for homeless parents and children
• collaborate with school and community personnel, and coordinate appropriate support services
• increase stakeholder awareness and understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act, and the rights of homeless students
• advocate for appropriate educational placement

Summary
School counselors promote awareness and understanding of the issues students face when experiencing homelessness. School counselors collaborate with students, parents/guardians, and community stakeholders to overcome the barriers to academic, career, and personal/social success associated with homelessness.

References


**Training Material for Secretaries**

Secretaries have an important role in the process of identifying homeless students as they are usually the first school member that new families meet. The training materials on the following pages include a power point, enrollment forms, tracking spreadsheet and quick guide. The power point is not only to provide an understanding of the definition, but also education on sensitivity in not using the term homelessness. They are also going to most often be in charge of having families fill out the enrollment forms and letting the appropriate staff members know about the family. The spreadsheet was created to share information between the building secretaries, homeless liaison and district office. The intent is to provide clarity, promote accuracy and ensure consistency among staff members. There is also a reminder about discretion and possible safety issues that might arise with families. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.
Schools at Risk:

- Students can continue attending their school or go to a new school.
- They receive counseling and can continue to receive educational support.
- The school district can contract for services to provide counseling and support.

Schools Matter...

According to the report "Middle to Main Street:"

"Schools are more than just schools; they are a significant part of the community. They provide a safe and caring environment for students to learn and grow. Schools can be a source of strength and resilience for communities."
# Student Residency Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID#</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Check Yes or No to statements 1-5 below:**

1. My family lives in an emergency or transitional shelter or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) housing.

2. My family is sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, we are doubling up.

3. My family is living in a car, temporary RV park, or campground due to lack of alternative accommodations; a public space, abandoned building; substandard housing, bus or train station, public or private space not designed for human beings, or a similar setting.

4. My family lives in a hotel or motel.

5. I am an unaccompanied youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).

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**IF YOU ANSWERED “NO” to all of the questions above**

STOP HERE.

If you answered "YES" to any question above, COMPLETE front and back.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/Guardian Name (First, Last)</th>
<th>Parent Phone</th>
<th>Emergency</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Address</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Zip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list all children living with you from Pre-K through high school. If needed, use an additional sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID #</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</table>

I declare, under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, that the information provided here is true and correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Unaccompanied Youth

Data
I would like referral assistance with the following (check if applicable):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Counseling</th>
<th>Homeless Center</th>
<th>School Transportation</th>
<th>School Supplies</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Notes:
### McKinney Vento/In transition Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Families</th>
<th>Every time a student registers or has a change of address have them fill out the residency form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If all boxes are check NO on the form</td>
<td>Discard form</td>
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<tr>
<td>If one or more are checked YES</td>
<td>Scan the form to Steve and Jess to make the determination. We would also like to meet with the family right away if possible to fill out a needs assessment. A free lunch form needs to be signed by Steve and sent to Roxane Check the student in power school Fill out the shared excel spreadsheet in One Drive Call if you have questions</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Tips for working with families

- Do not use the term homeless... use in transition or McKinney Vento
- We need to enroll while the determination is being made, so if they check the box start getting enrollment ready and start them in school as quickly as possible
- Make sure the family feels welcome
- Offer to help them fill out forms...may have difficulty reading or focusing
- If you suspect the kidnapping or unsafe situation alert your principal, law enforcement or child protection. Student can still be enrolled even if we suspect kidnapping as we let these agencies make this determination while the student is safe at school.
## Tracking Spreadsheet for secretaries and homeless liaison

| Student Name | School | Date of Interview | Date of Enrollment | Last Name to Sign and Send to Ramona | Data Tested Accomplished | McKinney Youths 0Y/0Y | Enter Info Power School | Additional Information for STARS睡觉
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</table>
Training Materials for School Staff

The power point presentation and Kahoot are included in this section. The presentation provides an explanation of the definition of homelessness and why it is important. A Pre and Post Assessment was created on Kahoot to be utilized during the training session. The pre assessment contains basic questions regarding the McKinney Vento Act and the number of students identified at our school. The post assessment contains hypothetical situations and how they would respond. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.
Resilience is optimized when protective factors are strengthened at all socioecological levels, including individual, family, and community levels (Bendes & Mychajliuk, 2009).

---

Post Assessment KAHoot

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"I just so rarely believe that the conventional things are the only way we are going to have a positive impact on this. We need to start to understand that there is a way to make these schools safe and support people to come to them. We can change the atmosphere in the schools and make it more welcoming for everyone. Just because we're schools for children doesn't mean that we can't make them feel safe and supported.

---

GRATEFULNESS

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References

Additional Resources

Included in this section are checklists, resources in Wahpeton, needs assessment and additional forms regarding homelessness.
## School Selection Checklist for Decision Making

(Adapted from the Texas Homeless Education Office)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Origin Considerations</th>
<th>Local Attendance Area School Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| □ Continuity of Instruction  
  Student is best served due to circumstances that look  to his or her past. | □ Continuity of Instruction  
  Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her future. |
| □ Age and Grade Placement of the Student  
  Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student’s meaningful school experience and participation. The student has been in this environment for an extended period of time. | □ Age and Grade Placement of the Student  
  Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student’s meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time. |
| □ Academic Strength  
  The child’s academic performance is weak and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school. | □ Academic Strength  
  The child’s academic performance is strong and at grade level; the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer. |
| □ Social and Emotional State  
  The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave. | □ Social and Emotional State  
  The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring. |
| □ Distance of the Commute and Its Impact  
  The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute. | □ Distance of the Commute and Its Impact  
  A shorter commute may help the student’s concentration, attitude, or readiness for school. The local attendance area school can meet all of the necessary educational and special needs of the student. |
| □ Personal Safety of the Student  
  The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student. | □ Personal Safety of the Student  
  The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student. |
| □ Student’s Need for Special Instruction  
  The student’s need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be better met at the school of origin. | □ Student’s Need for Special Instruction  
  The student’s need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met at the local attendance area school. |
| □ Length of Anticipated Stay  
  The student’s current living situation is outside of the school of origin’s attendance zone, but the living situation continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin. | □ Length of Anticipated Stay  
  The student’s current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from the developing relationships with peers in school who live in the local community. |
# Student/Family Needs Assessment Form

**McKinley-Vento**

**Student:**

**School:**

**Date:**

**Current living arrangement:**

(shelter, motel, relatives, friends, etc.)

**Prior living arrangement:**

**Primary Contact Information:**

**Emergency/Alternate Contact Information:**

**Name:**

**Name:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Cell #**

**Cell #**

**Home #**

**Home #**

**Work #**

**Work #**

**Email:**

**Email:**

**Relationship:**

**Employer:**

**Others living in residence & relationship to student:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>List of schools in district</th>
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**Additional:**

**Family status:**
- □ Couple, married
- □ Couple, unmarried
- □ Single parent
- □ Divorced
- □ Separated
- □ Relatives
- □ Friends

**Comments:**

**Emotional Concerns for your child:**
- □ Sad
- □ Anxious
- □ Nervous
- □ Sleepiness
- □ Bedwetting
- □ Refusal to obey
- □ Tantrums
- □ Stealing
- □ Lying
- □ Bratty
- □ Running away
- □ Fighting
- □ Hurting pets
- □ Difficulty: □ Concentrating
- □ Sleeping

**Agency Involvement:**

**Child:**
- □ DSS
- □ Juvenile Court
- □ Behavior/Mental Health
- □ Health Dept.
- □ Other

**Parent:**
- □ DSS
- □ Juvenile Court
- □ Mental Health
- □ Health Dept.
- □ Other

**Benefits received:**
- □ WFFA
- □ SSI
- □ Food Stamps
- □ Other
Counseling Resources

St. Francis Hope Unit
2400 St. Francis Drive, Breckenridge, MN
(218) 643-0499

Sanford Health - Wahpeton
Ariane Getz, PSYD
Child and Adolescent Psychology
(701) 642-7000

Solutions Counseling Services
Pam Thompson
415 Nebraska Ave, Breckenridge, MN
(218) 643-9330

Three Rivers Crisis Center
Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse
509 Dakota Ave Wahpeton, ND
Local line: 701-642-2115
Toll Free: 1800-627-3659
(24 hour crisis line)

Prairie St. John's
Free needs assessment or referral (24 hours)
501 4th Street South, Fargo, ND
(701) 476-7216 or (877) 33-9565

NDSU Family Therapy Center
212 Ceres Hall, NDSU
(701) 231-8534

Southeast Human Service Center
Sliding Fee Scale
2624 9th Ave S Fargo, ND
(701) 298-4500

Lakeland Mental Health Services
21333 County Hwy 1
Fergus Falls, MN
(218) 736-6987

Tischer Therapeutic Services
115 5th St. N Breckenridge, MN 56520
(218) 651-0212

FARGO
Suicide Line
(701) 232-HELP
(701) 232-4357

Mental Health Association
in North Dakota
24 hours / 7 days
2-1-1
1-800-472-2911

MSUM Community Outreach Center
Lommen Hall 113, MSUM, 1104 7th Ave
South Moorhead MN
(218) 477-2513
The Richland/Wilkin Collaborative to end Childhood Hunger
The Food Backpack Program for Kids

Dear Parent,

All of the children of your school have been invited to participate in the 2017-2018 Food Backpack program. This program is a partnership with several community agencies to address hunger and unmet nutritional needs of children in our area. Research has shown the impact of unmet nutritional needs to social, academic, behavioral and physical health.

The Backpack program will provide a bag of kid-friendly, shelf stable food for your child to take home and eat over the weekend. This bag will be placed discreetly into their school backpack. They will receive foods like cereal, pudding, soup, fruit juice, granola bars, and other items. With your approval, we will send a bag of food home with your child every Friday during the school year. If you have more than one child in elementary in the school district, each child can receive food for the weekend. Parents are responsible for checking items in the bag for any potential food allergies.

This program is funded through grants and private donations so there is no charge. Participation is voluntary. If you do not have a need in your home for hunger assistance, your child and family may participate by making monetary or food donations.

We respect your privacy and the information that you share to participate in this program will be kept confidential. The sign up forms are maintained at the School District office.

Please indicate below if you would like your child/children to receive the food and sign:

Yes, I would like my child to receive food from the Backpack Program. Please complete information below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Teacher's Name</th>
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Please list any known food allergies below and attach the Physician’s note determining the allergies: Parents are responsible for checking items in the bag for any potential food allergies.

Please inform your child they will be receiving the food. Please instruct your child not to open the food bag on the bus.

Parent/Guardian Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Address:________________________________________ City:__________ State: ________
Zip:______________________________ Phone:________________________
Email:_________________________

Please return this form to the School Office or send with your child to school. If you have any questions please contact Colette, United Way, at 701 642-1250, colette@unitedwayrw.org
References


https://www.schoolcounselor.org/magazine/blogs/january-february-2014/helping-homeless-students