

## **Elba City School's**

### **Education of the Homeless Children and Youth**

#### **Homeless Procedures**

The Elba City Board of Education is committed to meeting the needs of homeless students. The McKinney-Vento Act protects the rights of children and youth in homeless situations to attend and succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act applies to all children and youth who do not have a fixed, regular and adequate residence, including children and youth who are:

- Staying with friends or relatives because they lost their housing;
- Awaiting foster placement;
- Or living in emergency or transitional shelters, motels, domestic violence shelters, campgrounds, inadequate trailer parks, cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings and bus/train stations.

Children and youth in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there;
- Choose between the local school where they are living, the school they attended before they lost their housing, or the school where they were last enrolled;
- Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents;
- Get transportation to school
- Get all the school services they need;
- Be free from harassment and isolation; and
- Have disagreements with the school settled quickly.

If there is a dispute about the proper placement of a homeless child between the school district of the child's school of origin and the school district where the child is presently living, administrative personnel from both districts have the responsibility to bring the matter to the attention of an Assistant State Superintendent (or other designee of the State Superintendent, Alabama Department of Education) immediately for an interim resolution to avoid any delay in the enrollment of a homeless child. The school districts involved shall enroll the child without delay in accordance with the decision of the Assistant State Superintendent or other designee.

All children in Elba City Schools, regardless of their living circumstances, will be given the same opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic achievement standards. All children in Elba City Schools will be provided the support and same services offered to other students in the school system that they need to succeed in the challenging educational environment.

School administrators, faculty and staff are trained to identify homeless students as well as how to use non-stigmatizing enrollment procedures. Professional development in regards to homeless issues will be provided. A contact person at each building will oversee the collection and dissemination of information on the needs and rights of homeless children and youth are addressed in each school.

Elba City Schools realizes that homeless children are not responsible for their plight, but rather they are victims of circumstances beyond their control. The school system and community agencies have united their efforts to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, counseling and referral services for medical, dental and mental/other health services. Identification and assistance are provided for needy children through collaborative efforts with community agencies such as Coffee County Family Services, Elba Housing Authority, Human Resource Development Corporation, South Central Alabama Mental Health Center, Elba Ministerial Association, Elba Housing Authority and the Elba Christian Mission. Posters and flyers regarding contact information and services for students in homeless situations are distributed to areas within the city as well as being posted at each school site. Brochures are available providing information pertinent to families who are homeless. Students and their families are treated with respect and privacy. However, their basic needs must first be met. Homeless children must be supplied with clothing, a secure environment, clean facilities and opportunities as offered to other children. School counselors are available to identify specific needs and provide assistance and/or contacts to assist with needs such as clothing, supplies, transportation, medical needs and educational information. A "school supply closet" will be maintained at each building where needy children may receive school supplies at no cost to them or their families.

Every effort is made to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, educational exposure, and success of homeless children and youth in school or preschool programs while providing free, equal educational opportunities as are provided to all other school-age children in our city. Our primary objectives are to:

- Eliminate barriers and to relive the burdens of homeless families with school-age children by supporting a stable environment and a quality educational experience for homeless children;
- Provide additional opportunities for educational success for Elba's homeless children/youth by providing tutorial assistance as needed;
- Provide appropriate incentives for children to encourage educational and behavioral success;
- Heighten awareness of all school personnel as to the specific needs ad rights of homeless children and youth.