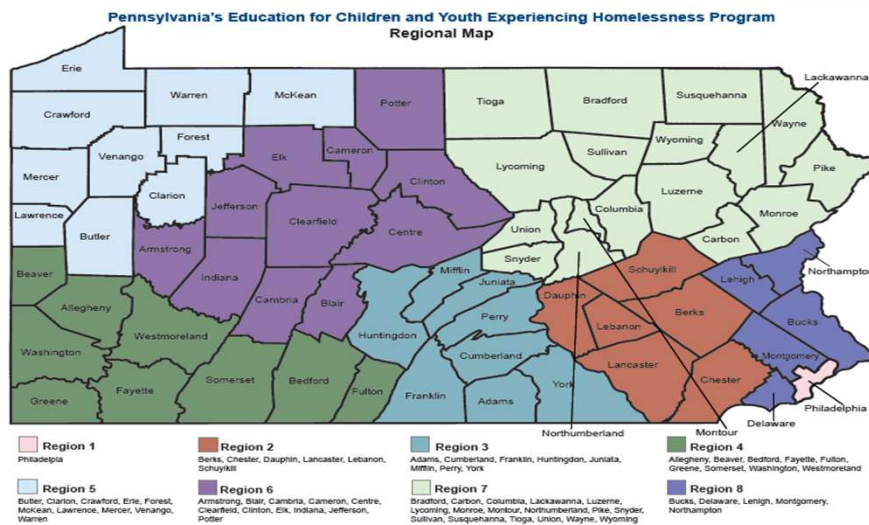


## School Districts & the Pennsylvania Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program



1

## PENNSYLVANIA'S EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM



2

### ECYEH Region 5:



10 counties, 73 LEA's, 24 shelters, 4 Intermediate Units

2,826 children & youth experiencing homelessness in 2019-2020

Where were they?  
1,808 Doubled-up, 433 Shelter, 132 Hotels/Motels, 112 Unsheltered

Approximately 70% of students identified as experiencing homelessness are living in "doubled-up" situations

22% are "unaccompanied youth"



3

### Homeless. . .

- What do you think of?



4

## Did you know?

- Program funds and guidance are provided by the **McKinney-Vento Act**, originally passed in 1987.
- Each of the **school districts** in the state has a **Homeless Liaison** to serve their homeless students.
  - <https://directory.center-school.org/homeless/?page=liaison>
- The average age of a homeless individual in the United States is **7 years**.



5

## Role of the Homeless Liaison

- Identification and reporting
- Ensuring immediate enrollment and access to services
- Referrals to health care, mental health, substance abuse, housing and other needed services
- Students, parents/guardians informed of educational rights
- Inform public of the rights of students experiencing homelessness (posters, webpage, letters, outreach)
- Attend professional development opportunities and also provide training to district staff
- Dispute resolutions

- <https://directory.center-school.org/homeless/liaison>

6

## How Schools Determine Homelessness:

- **Was there an event?**
  - Flood
  - Fire
  - Mold
  - Domestic Violence
  - Thrown Out
  - Eviction
  - Runaway



Or... is it

- **Substandard Housing?**

Legal Definition:  
"fixed, regular, adequate"

7

## Substandard Housing?

- No utilities (heat, water, etc.)
- Tarp over roof
- Boards on windows
- Overcrowded
- Dirt Floor
- Holes to outside
- Motel
- Hotel
- Camper
- Tent
- Pest Infestation



8

## Eligibility – Who is Homeless?

- Sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (“Doubled up”)



9



### Is the situation temporary?



- Has the family tried to access other services to find housing?
- Do they talk about wanting “a place of their own”?
- Do the children have their own bedrooms?
- Can the family afford other housing, but are choosing not to move?



10

## Who is Homeless?

- Living in motels, hotels



11

## Who is Homeless?

- Trailers, camping grounds, tents



12

## Who is Homeless?

- Barns, sheds, hunting cabins, storage units



13

## Who is Homeless?

- Garages



14

## Who is Homeless?

- Cars



15

## Who is homeless?

- abandoned buildings



16



## Who is Homeless?

- Living in emergency or transitional shelters



17

## Who is Homeless?

- Migratory children living in homeless circumstances



18

## Who is Homeless?

- Abandoned, throw-away, runaway children not living with a parent or legal guardian



19

## Defining “Unaccompanied Youth”:

- Unaccompanied: children and youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- Many children **under the age of 18** who temporarily reside with someone who is not a parent or legal guardian falls under this definition.
- The Homeless BEC states that this can be for “any reason.”
- Children **over the age of 18** who have been “kicked out” of their home, or left due to safety reasons or who are “doubled up” will also meet this definition.
- There is no age range or citizenship requirement.



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## “Host” Families:

- Schools cannot require that a family who “takes in” a student obtain guardianship.
- Legal guardianship can only come from a judge. A notarized affidavit does not transfer parental rights.
- A “host” adult (or “in loco parentis”) has some limited rights under FERPA/PA law and might be able to file for custody after 6-12 months.



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## Unaccompanied Youth Guidance:

“The primary responsibility of the schools is to enroll and educate homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, which neither authorizes, nor requires schools to make judgments about the validity of why a student is not living with a parent or guardian.

Determinations of eligibility should be made on the student’s nighttime living arrangement, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home.”

~National Center for Homeless Education

22

## Key Provisions- Schools

- Students can stay in their **school of origin** the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.



23

## Key Provisions- Transportation

- Schools will (when deemed reasonable and in the child's "best interests") provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school or origin, at a parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth's request.



24

## Key Provisions- Enrollment

- Children and youth in homeless situations can stay in their school or origin (presumed to be “best interest”) or enroll in the public school that the student is living.
- The terms “enroll” and “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities, including extracurricular.



25

## Enrollment- continued

- Children can be enrolled immediately, even without school records, medical records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, or other documents.
- If a student does not have immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them. The student will be enrolled without them.



26

## Food and Nutrition

- All students experiencing homelessness are automatically entitled to free **meals**.
  - The Liaison can verify this status.



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## Preschool and Birth - 3

The McKinney-Vento Act applies to homeless children attending LEA-administered preschools. In addition, HeadStart programs share the same definitions of homelessness.

- Liaisons must ensure that children have access to public preschool programs.
- Liaisons must identify and report younger siblings of school age children who are experiencing homelessness.
- Shelters report children separately.
- Only 516 Birth - PreK children were reported in Region 5 in 2019-2020.



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## Title 1

- **Title 1 Homeless Set-Aside** monies must be used to support students with academic-related needs (tutoring, medical, counseling, supplies, uniforms, clothing, shoes, enrichment, extracurricular activities). Can also be used to pay for transportation and the Homeless Liaison salary.



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## American Rescue Plan Act Overview:

The **American Rescue Plan Act** (ARP), Congress' most recent package for COVID-19 relief provides nearly \$123 billion in aid for K-12 education through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), including **several reservations to support students experiencing homelessness and other marginalized student groups**.

In addition to the \$123 billion in ESSER funds, ARP includes \$800 million in funding **specifically dedicated to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness**, including through wrap-around services.

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### What we know about ARP funds and Homeless Students:

- This money will be used to support identification, enrollment, school participation and wraparound services for children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- The money will be distributed through the McKinney-Vento Act, which funnels federal funding to states and then local school districts to support the education of children who are homeless.
- This is critical now because during the pandemic the identification of homeless students has decreased. When children who are homeless are not identified they do not receive the support they need to attend and succeed in school.

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### Identification and Outreach

**Data** used to identify areas of need:

- Counties underreporting Unaccompanied Youth
- PreK population underreported
- Urban schools reported lower numbers during pandemic



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## Identification & Outreach - Outreach Specialists

Two Outreach Specialists added to Region 5 Team

- One with background in Mental Health, art therapy, domestic violence, trauma-informed services
  - Outreach to LEA's, mental health providers, domestic violence shelters, LGBTQ+ groups, Unaccompanied Youth, host home providers, colleges, hotels/motels
- One with background in School Counseling at a non-public school and connections to the faith community:
  - Outreach to churches, ministeriums, service providers, food pantries, non-DV shelters, Pre K providers, service groups, private colleges

**Note: In rural areas -  
"in person" outreach is important!**



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## Identification & Outreach -Marketing Campaign

### WHERE THEY SLEEP

- Saturation of the communities with information about non-traditional definitions of "Who is homeless?"
  - Unaccompanied Youth
  - Substandard Housing
  - Doubled Up
  - LGBTQ+ Population/Risks
- Posters, flyers, social media, etc.
- Where? bathroom stall doors, community bulletin boards, food pantries, laundromats, church bulletins, Med-express, Wal-Marts, pediatricians, hospitals, motels/hotels, campgrounds, etc.



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## Where Do You Sleep?



**Couches Don't Count as a "Home," and if you are sleeping on one you still have the right to go to school**

- Even without paperwork
- Or proof of residency
- Or a notarized form transferring "educational guardianship" to an adult
- Or a parent to enroll you
- Even if you ran away from home, you still are allowed to go to school

No one should miss school because of where they sleep at night. The McKinney-Vento federal law protects children and youth who are separated from their parents and legal guardians "for any reason" and requires IMMEDIATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT in a school where they sleep at night, and gives students the right to REMAIN IN THEIR SCHOOL OF ORIGIN (where they last attended classes).

Contact: 724/458-6700 X 1289 for help getting into school/ECYEH REGION 5

#WHERETHEYSLEEP

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## Academic Enrichment: Virtual Tutoring

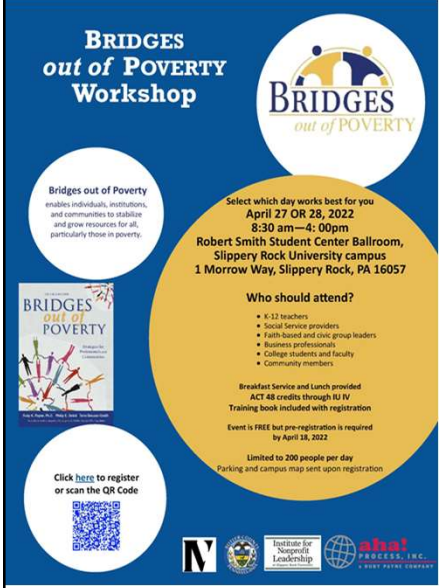
### How to reach 10 counties? Sustainability?

- Collaboration with Slippery Rock University
- Students provide tutoring
  - All clearances
  - No direct contact
  - Diverse campus
- Campus part-time liaison to recruit and supervise students
- MIU IV staff train students on Boundaries, Tutoring Goals, Homelessness
- LearnSpeed staff provide technical support, create, monitor virtual platform
- Planned campus visit days, outreach, FAFSA workshops
- Can be continued after grant funds are exhausted - Title 1, Foster Care, etc.



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April 27, 28 - Bridges Out of Poverty Training and  
 May 25, 26 - Emotional Poverty at Slippery Rock University



**BRIDGES out of POVERTY Workshop**

Bridges out of Poverty enables individuals, institutions, and communities to stabilize and grow resources for all, particularly those in poverty.

Select which day works best for you  
**April 27 OR 28, 2022**  
 8:30 am—4: 00pm  
**Robert Smith Student Center Ballroom, Slippery Rock University campus**  
 1 Morrow Way, Slippery Rock, PA 16057


**Who should attend?**

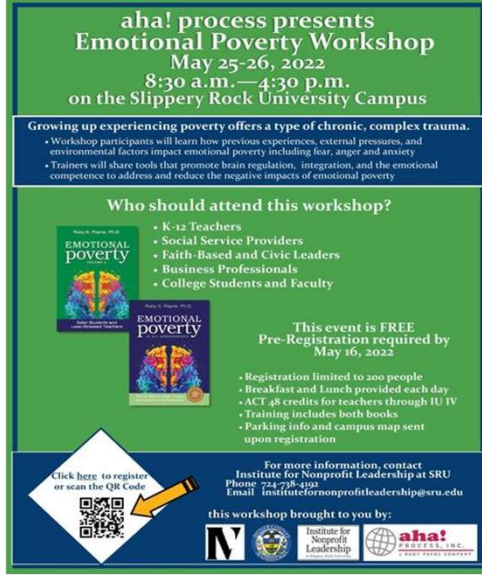
- K-12 teachers
- Social Service providers
- Faith-based and civic group leaders
- Business professionals
- College students and faculty
- Community members

Breakfast Service and Lunch provided  
 ACT 48 credits through IU IV  
 Training book included with registration  
 Event is FREE but pre-registration is required by April 18, 2022

Limited to 300 people per day  
 Parking and campus map sent upon registration

Click [here](#) to register or scan the QR Code





**aha! process presents Emotional Poverty Workshop**  
 May 25-26, 2022  
 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.  
 on the Slippery Rock University Campus

Growing up experiencing poverty offers a type of chronic, complex trauma.

- Workshop participants will learn how previous experiences, external pressures, and environmental factors impact emotional poverty including fear, anger and anxiety
- Trainers will share tools that promote brain regulation, integration, and the emotional competence to address and reduce the negative impacts of emotional poverty

**Who should attend this workshop?**


- K-12 Teachers
- Social Service Providers
- Faith-Based and Civic Leaders
- Business Professionals
- College Students and Faculty

This event is FREE  
 Pre-Registration required by May 16, 2022


- Registration limited to 200 people
- Breakfast and Lunch provided each day
- ACT 48 credits for teachers through IU IV
- Training includes both books
- Parking info and campus map sent upon registration

For more information, contact  
 Institute for Nonprofit Leadership at SRU  
 Phone: 724.795.4925  
 Email: [institute@nonprofitleadership@sruc.edu](mailto:institute@nonprofitleadership@sruc.edu)

Click [here](#) to register or scan the QR Code



this workshop brought to you by:



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## Emotional Poverty Workshop

[https://www.smore.com/3n1gw?fbclid=IwAR0ENQKAjAnjF2InS18mJxlxkZPH6rREwE3yjCnpgfrk40h0wfSJDF\\_wnuM](https://www.smore.com/3n1gw?fbclid=IwAR0ENQKAjAnjF2InS18mJxlxkZPH6rREwE3yjCnpgfrk40h0wfSJDF_wnuM)

### Author Ruby Payne

Ruby K. Payne is an American educator and author best known for her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* and her work on the culture of poverty and its relation to education. She holds a Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy studies from Loyola University in Illinois, and is the founder of aha! Process, Inc.

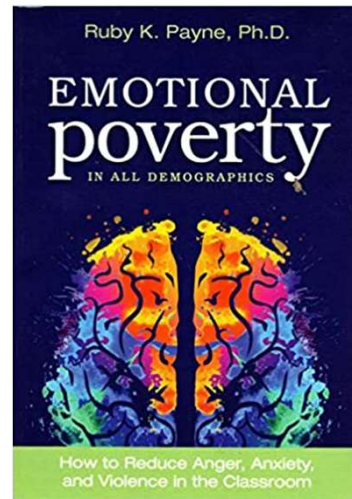
### You won't want to miss this FREE event!

\* When: April 11 & 12, 2022 Two-Day Presentation

\* Time: 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM (Both Days)

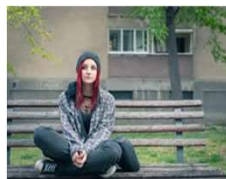
\* Where: Edinboro University (Pogue Multipurpose Room)

**Receive a free Emotional Poverty book just for attending!**



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## Virtual Tutoring



- Region 5 is contracting with SRU to provide a Virtual Tutoring Platform to offset LEARNING LOSS:
  - Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango & Warren - 10 County Region
  - **LearnSpeed Platform** - can be revised and developed as needed
  - Sessions can be rescheduled
  - One hour in length
  - Sessions can be recorded if needed
  - Checks and balances will be in place to ensure safety and integrity

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## Services and Supports - Collaboration with YAB

- Collaboration with Western Region CoC Youth Action Board (YAB)
  - Consultation
  - Training
  - Mentoring
  - Lived Experience
  - Diverse Group
  - Paid for Time



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## Services and Supports - Collaboration with Community Theater and Art Programs

- Scholarships to Theater and Arts camps and enrichment programs
  - Increase resilience
  - Build skills and confidence
  - Connection to new school activities and extracurriculars
  - Accepting, diverse community



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## ARP II Funds: How Are Region 5 Districts Using

- Create new online enrollment system
- Incentive programs
- Summer programming
- Transportation enhancement
- Gas cards for students/families
- Vouchers at local stores/gas stations
- Training for staff
- Expanding existing staff time and duties
- Supplies for students
- Mental Health Supports



Think “Outside the Box” - not just replicate what is being done  
 Purchase long term “changes” - not just “things” to give away

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## Identification Strategies



- Do not use the word “homeless”
- Provide forms to allow self-identification, such as a checklist or on-line survey
- Train all staff in district. Everyone - from teachers to bus drivers to front office staff need to understand:
  - McKinney-Vento definitions. Remember that most people do not know about things like “substandard housing” and “doubled up” as a definition of homelessness
  - Unaccompanied Youth
  - Basic components of the law and the rights of students experiencing homelessness

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## Identification Strategies



- **Partner with your community:**
  - Hang posters and flyers in campgrounds, motels, food pantries, laundromats, Wal-Marts, Med Express offices and other community places where families in poverty might congregate
  - Work with local housing groups and shelters. Attend local housing and social services meetings. Most are being conducted by zoom.
  - Remember law enforcement, juvenile probation and Children and Youth Services.
  - Highlight partnerships, donations and collaborative efforts on your district webpage and social media sites.

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## Identification Strategies



- Communicate with youth where they are. Expand social media presence to provide outreach. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and other platforms are good ways to do outreach in your communities.
- Word of mouth. Other students and district parents can share information.
- Scheduled awareness days and activities (Red Shirt Day in Pennsylvania, Virtual art shows, etc.)
- “Open gym” days and community days

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## Homeless Awareness Activities



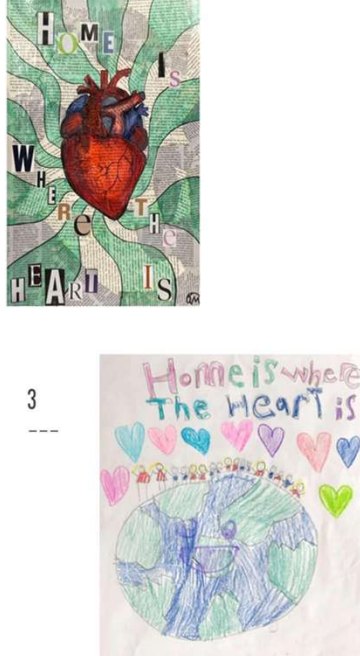
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Virtual Art Show ---

1 ---



3 ---



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## Resources

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth -  
<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Center on Homeless Education -  
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty -  
<http://www.nlchp.org>

Horizons for Homeless Children -  
<http://www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org>

Pennsylvania's Homeless Children's Initiative -  
<http://homeless.center-school.org/index.cfm>

Pennsylvania Department of Education -  
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/>


Center for Schools and Communities -  
<http://www.center-school.org/>




**State Coordinator: Mr. Storm Camara**

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## The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Educational Stability for Foster Care Youth

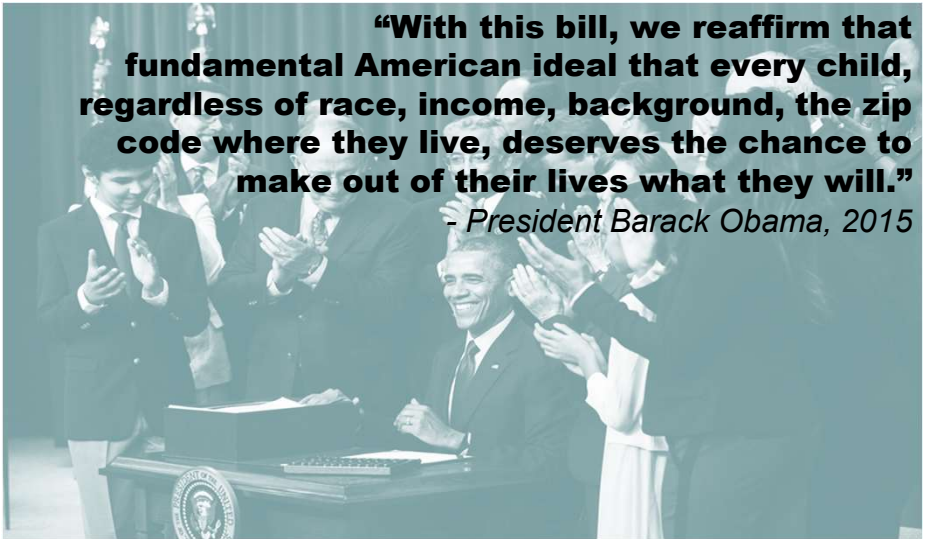


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### Background: ESSA


**“With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamental American ideal that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make out of their lives what they will.”**  
- President Barack Obama, 2015



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## Foster Care Definition


- ✓ 24-hour substitute care away from parent/guardian
- ✓ Placed in out of home placement
- ✓ Child welfare agency has placement and/or care responsibility
- ✓ Typically, placed under order of court



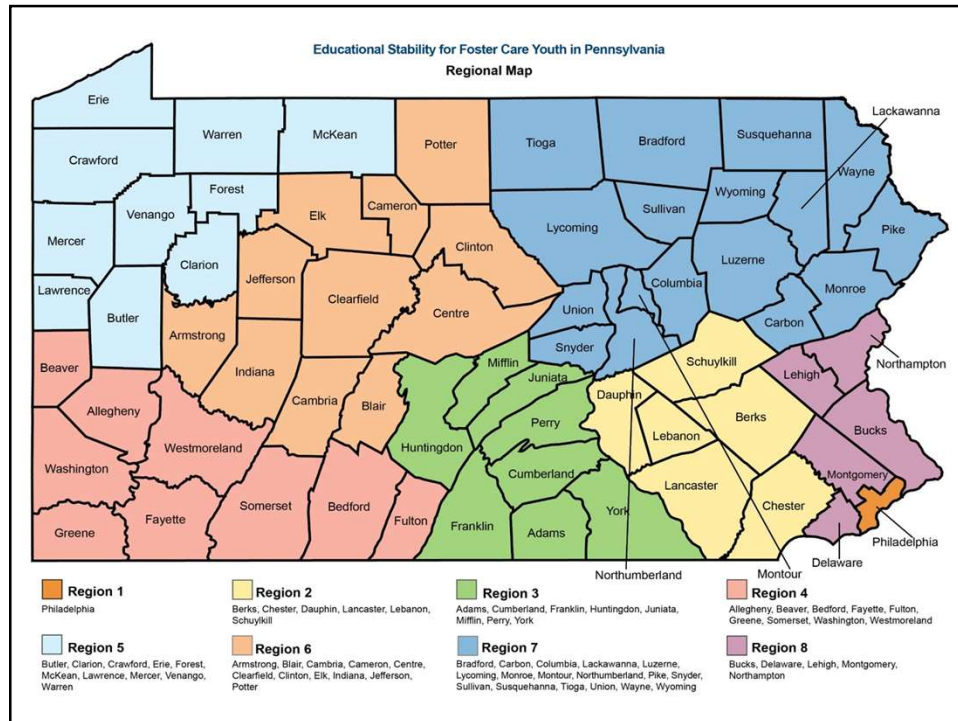
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## Placements can include 1305 and 1306 Settings

- ✓ Foster family homeless or resource families
- ✓ Residential treatment facilities (RTFs)
- ✓ Foster homes of relatives (formal kinship care)
- ✓ Child care institutions
- ✓ Group homes
- ✓ Independent living settings
- ✓ Emergency shelters
- ✓ Pre-adoptive homes



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## Compared to their peers, youth in foster care experience:

- Lower graduation rates;
- Higher rates of grade retention and dropping out;
- Lower academic performance; and
- Higher discipline rates.



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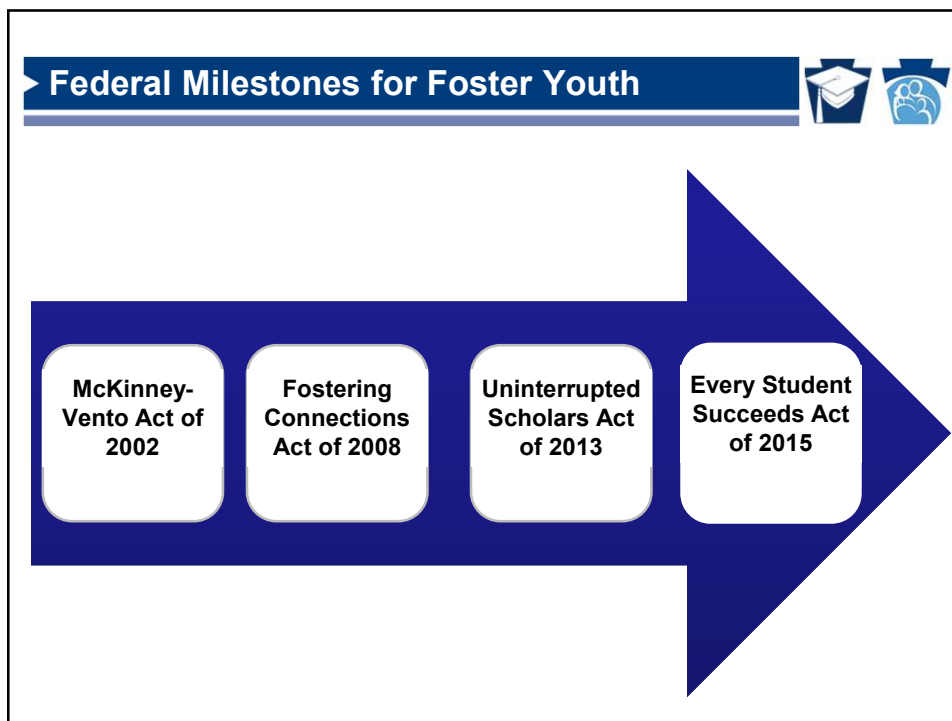
- 56-75% of foster youth change schools when first entering care
- 34% of 17-18 year olds in care have experienced 5+ school changes
- The average reading level of 17-18 year olds in foster care is 7th grade
- Only 50% of foster youth complete high school by 18



Sources: [ED/HHS Federal Joint Guidance](#) (p.3, Intro); [National Factsheet](#) of the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education



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## ▶ Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

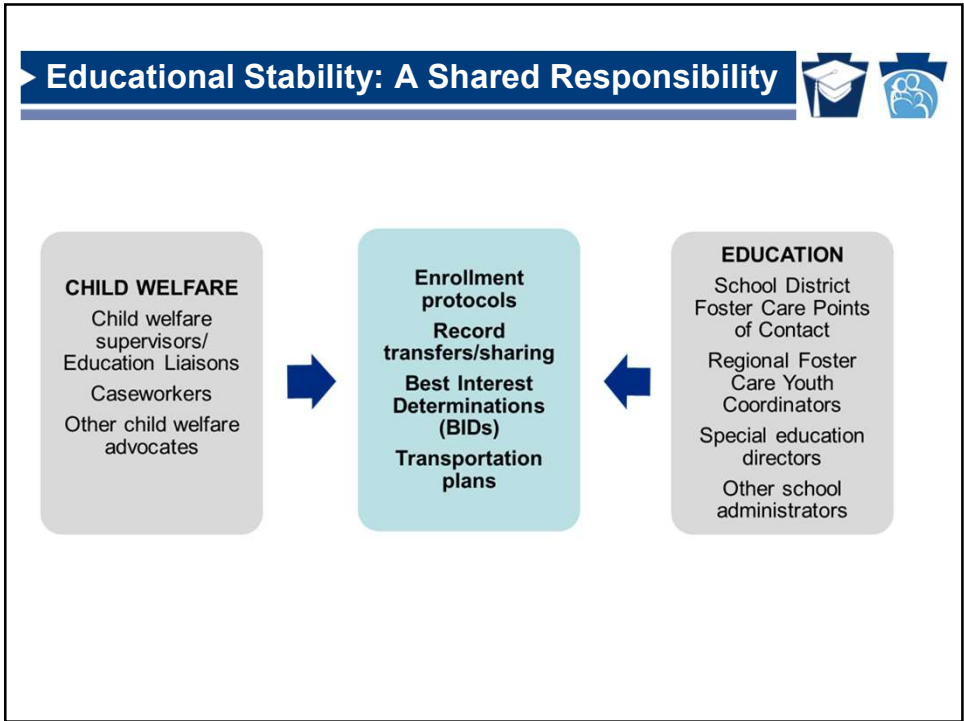



Foster care provisions became effective December 10, 2016

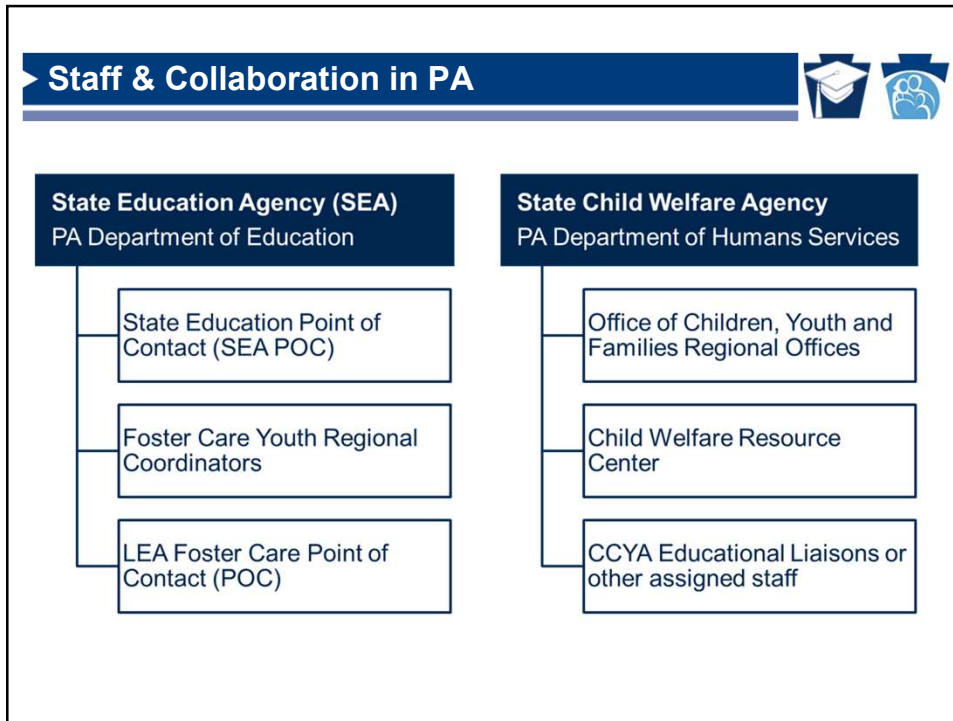
- **School of origin:** Foster youth be enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless there is a determination that it is not in their best interest to do so.
- **Immediate enrollment:** When a foster youth does not remain in the school of origin, the student must immediately be enrolled in a new school, regardless of whether the youth can produce the records typically required for enrollment.
- **Records transfer:** When a foster youth changes schools, the enrolling school must immediately contact the previous school to obtain academic and other records.
- **Transportation:** Can be a shared responsibility.
- **Best Interest Determination (BID) Meetings.**



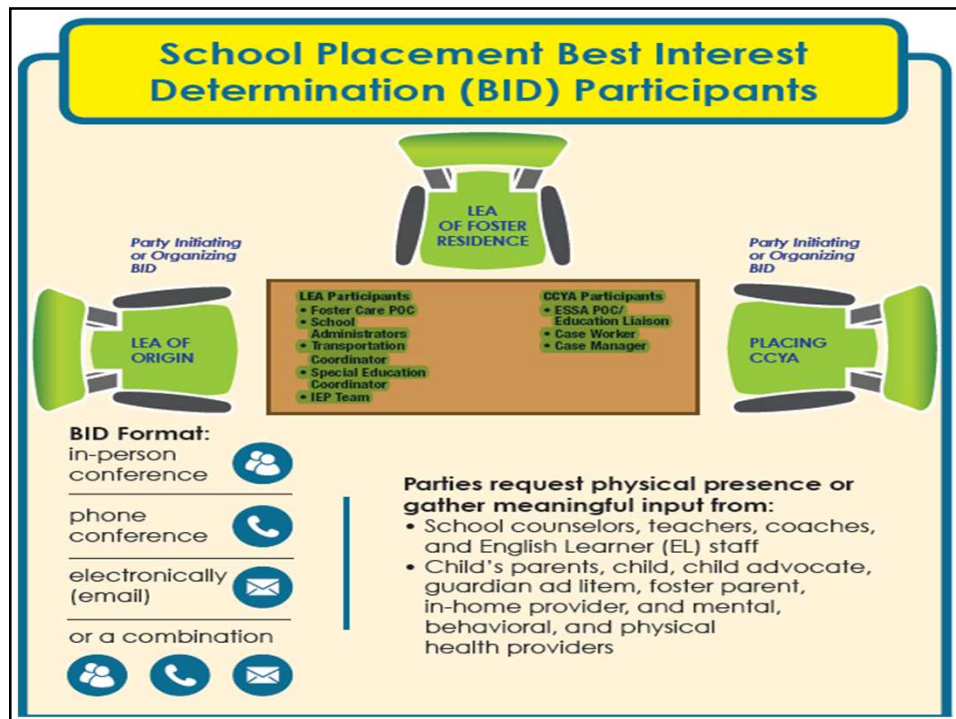
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## Best Interest Determinations (BIDs)



- LEAs must formalize a Best Interest Determination (BID) Process in conjunction with CCYAs
- To the extent feasible and appropriate, a child must remain in his or her school of origin while awaiting a BID meeting.
- Cost of school transportation should not be a factor in determining the best interest
- Should consult student, if appropriate, and adults who have meaningful relationships with child



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## Sample BID Sequence: LEA Perspective



- 1) Placing CCYA informs LEA POC (the school of origin) of new or change in foster care placement and initiates the BID process.
- 1) The LEA(s) and CCYA coordinate to make every effort not to disrupt the child's educational stability.
- 1) LEA POC (school of origin) gathers student records and refers to BID School Placement Form.



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## ▶ Sample BID Sequence: LEA Perspective



- 4) In conjunction with the placing CCYA, the LEA school of origin conducts a formal, documented BID. The POC's from all involved districts should be invited to participate.
- 4) If the student remains in the school of origin, the LEA immediately implements all formal written transportation procedures and protocols.
- 4) If the student does not remain in the school of origin, the LEA immediately facilitates a records transfer.



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## ▶ Ensuring Educational Stability



### Transportation:

- LEA's must provide assurances that they will collaborate with State and local CCYA's to:
  - Develop and implement clear written procedures
  - Local written transportation plans should be updated every 3 years



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## Ensuring Educational Stability



### Transportation:

- When additional costs are incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs will provide if:
  - They are reimbursed by the child welfare agency;
  - The LEA agrees to pay the costs;
  - The LEA and the child welfare agency agree to share the costs; or
  - LEA of origin, LEA of residence, and the placing CCYA agree to share the costs \*Most common plan in Region 5.



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## Transportation (continued)



- Even if an LEA doesn't transport other students, it must ensure that transportation is provided to children in foster care.
- Transportation must be provided in a "cost-effective" manner and in accordance with section 475 (4)(A) of the Social Security Act;
- "Additional costs" represent the difference between what an LEA would normally spend on transportation to the child's assigned school and the cost of transportation to the school of origin.



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## ▶ Transportation (continued)



- Local written procedures and local protocols must be developed to ensure that transportation requirements will be met in the event of a dispute.
- Must establish which agency or agencies will provide and pay any additional costs **during the pendency of a dispute.**
- Must outline how dispute resolution will be conducted.



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## ▶ McKinney-Vento



- The phrase “**awaiting foster care placement**” has been removed from the definition of “homeless children and youths”
- Some children in foster care may still be eligible for McKinney-Vento services
  - “Unaccompanied homeless youth”
  - Children living in emergency or transitional shelters



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### ▶ Immediate Enrollment:



- ✓ Foster youth must be immediately enrolled into new school
- ✓ Must be enrolled even if they lack records normally required for enrollment
- ✓ Contact prior school for records
- ✓ Prior school should anticipate this request as a result of a BID
- ✓ Placing CCYA should assist as needed and in accordance with confidentiality laws
- ✓ 30 days for immunization records
- ✓ Foster students eligible for free lunch

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### ▶ Foster Care Point of Contact (POC):



- ✓ Coordinate with CCYA (primary contact for agency)
- ✓ Coordinate with other LEAs
- ✓ Collecting and presenting all important records and documentation
- ✓ Attending training and professional development
- ✓ Ensure BID process occurs
- ✓ Facilitate transfer of records



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## Foster Care POC - Continued



- ✓ Facilitate immediate enrollment
- ✓ Facilitate data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols
- ✓ Developing and coordinating transportation procedures
- ✓ Managing BIDs and disputes
- ✓ Ensuring attendance/needs of foster students
- ✓ Providing professional development
- ✓ Ensure communication and collaboration with Regional office

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## Higher Education



Pennsylvania's **Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program** seeks to remove barriers to higher education for youth who are or have been in foster care. The program provides **tuition and fee waivers** for eligible youth.

- An eligible student's remaining tuition and mandatory fees will be eliminated after all federal and state gift aid is applied.
- Every school has a higher education Point of Contact (POC) for youth.
- The program does **not** cover room and board. Postsecondary institutions are required to waive **only** tuition and mandatory fees.
- Prospective youth must submit the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and the [Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program application](#).
- Waivers began in fall 2020.
- The tuition waiver may be applied up to five academic years or until age 26.



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## ▶ Key Resources



The U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) issued joint non-regulatory guidance on ESSA's provisions for Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care.

The PA Departments of Education (PDE) and Human Services (DHS) issued a joint guidance document to promote awareness among LEAs and CCYAs of key changes and requirements.

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## ▶ Additional Key Resources



PDE and DHS issued sample templates and guides, including:

- [Best Interest Determination School Placement Form](#)
- [PA Transportation Plan Guide](#)
- [Local Transportation Plan Template](#)
- [Transportation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#)
- [Point of Contact Directories](#)
- [Frequently Used Terms Guide](#)

Visit [PAFosterCare.org](http://PAFosterCare.org) for resources, guides, best practice, news and sample templates.

Visit PDE's [Every Student Succeeds Act webpage](#).

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## Contact Information



Jillian Schreib, Program Specialist  
 Office of Children, Youth and Families  
 Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations  
 Division of Policy  
 (717) 214-3809  
[jschreib@pa.gov](mailto:jschreib@pa.gov)



Matthew Butensky, Youth Development  
 Coordinator  
 Educational Stability for Foster Care Youth  
 Center for Schools and Communities  
 (717) 763-1661 ext.171  
[mbutensky@csc.csiu.org](mailto:mbutensky@csc.csiu.org)

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## For Assistance Contact:



Wendy Kinnear  
 Regional Coordinator, Region 5  
 Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing  
 Homelessness Program (ECYEH)/Foster Care Program  
 Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV  
 453 Maple Street  
 Grove City, PA 16127  
 CELL: 724/730-4859  
 Fax: 724.458.5083  
[wendy.kinnear@miu4.org](mailto:wendy.kinnear@miu4.org)

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