

# To Matriculation and Beyond: Facilitating Homeless Students To and Through Postsecondary Education



FASFEPA: Spring Forum  
Orlando, FL  
May 12, 2016

Skip Forsyth and Courtney Walker  
Homeless Education Program

Dianne Sepielli  
Consultant



1

Matriculation: Helping Homeless  
Students Meet the Challenge

**This is a WORKshop.**

**We will talk.**

**We will produce a description of the  
barriers and challenges facing  
homeless high school students in  
accessing postsecondary education.**



2

## Who is homeless? (PreK-12)

PreK-12: McKinney-Vento Act: Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- ▶ 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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- ▶ 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
- ▶ children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- ▶ migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

3

## Who is homeless? (Postsecondary)

Section 1009.25(1)(f), Florida Statutes

(1) The following students are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:

- (f) A student who **lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence** OR whose **primary nighttime residence is a public or private shelter** designed to provide temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, OR **a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.**



4

## What we know: Data

- ▶ Homeless High School Seniors/Regular Diploma
  - ▶ 2014-2015: 3,857/2,308 (60%)
  - ▶ 2013-2014: 3,662/2,171 (59%)
  - ▶ 2012-2013: 3,483/1,994 (57%)
- ▶ State Tuition and Fee Exemption Utilization (Fall 2015)
  - ▶ SUS: 16
  - ▶ FCS: 67
  - ▶ CAE:



5

## Case Study

Dr. Karen Barber  
Director of Federal Programs  
Santa Rosa County School Board



6

## Where we want to go: PreK-12

**Short-term Goal:** To double the use of Florida's postsecondary tuition and fee exemption (s. 1009.25(1)(f), F.S.) by matriculating high school seniors experiencing homelessness from the fall semester of 2015 to the fall semester of 2017.

**Long-term Goal:** To identify and remove barriers and challenges to a path to a postsecondary degree or certificate for matriculating high school seniors experiencing homelessness.



7

## Actions To Date

- ▶ August 2014: LEA and Postsecondary Representatives meet to discuss the development of a statewide network for supporting homeless postsecondary students.
- ▶ February 2016: State Board of Education (SBE) member Mike Olenick requested an update on the utilization of the state tuition and fee exemption by graduating homeless high school seniors.
- ▶ April 18, 2016: State Leadership Team on Postsecondary Education for Homeless Students met to coordinate preparation for the June 2016 SBE meeting.
- ▶ May 12, 2016: Division of Educator Quality hosting a meeting with LEAs and Postsecondary representatives to identify barriers and challenges to accessing the state tuition and fee exemption and progressing through to a degree or certificate.

8

## Next Steps

- ▶ June 2016:
  - ▶ SBE update presentation (Orlando)
  - ▶ State Leadership Team (SLT) meets to consider further action.
  - ▶ Communicate results of the SLT.



9

# QUESTIONS?



10

## Purpose of Today's Meeting

Begin to identify the barriers and challenges experienced in Florida's various education systems and current interventions for assisting graduated homeless high school seniors to:

- ▶ Access the state tuition and fee exemption for
- ▶ Access sufficient financial aid to continue through to completion of a degree or certificate
- ▶ Achieve initial and continued enrollment
- ▶ Receive academic support

In order to

- ▶ Break the cycle of homelessness.



11

## Today's Output

**Barriers, Challenges, and Effective Practices Matrix**

	Homeless Students	School Districts	Postsecondary Inst.
<b>Determination of Homelessness</b>	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)
	(effective practices)	(effective practices)	(effective practices)
<b>Awareness of PS Benefits for Homeless HS Grads</b>	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)
	(effective practices)	(effective practices)	(effective practices)
<b>Initial &amp; Continued Enrollment</b>	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)
	(effective practices)	(effective practices)	(effective practices)
<b>Academic Support</b>	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)	(barriers/challenges)
	(effective practices)	(effective practices)	(effective practices)

12

## Definition of Terms

- ▶ Barrier: a state or institutional policy or practice that requires state or institutional leadership action to change.
- ▶ Challenge: a cultural attitude or bureaucratic structure or practice that can be changed at the staff level.
- ▶ Practice: actions that identify or remove barriers or challenges and support students experiencing homelessness to enroll, attend, and progress in their postsecondary education.



13

## Introductions

Introduce yourself to others at the table:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Organization
- ▶ Position
- ▶ In what ways do you interact with students experiencing homelessness?



14

## Conversation Starters

- ▶ In your role with homeless students:
  - ▶ What institutional, process, or cultural barriers and challenges do you experience for this issue? What is an example of this experience?
  - ▶ What current practices work for you in overcoming barriers or challenges? What evidence of effectiveness is there for this practice?
- ▶ Write your main points in the newsprint matrix – we will pick the big sheets up at the end. Readability counts!
- ▶ Use the individual sheets to jot your own notes – we'd love to have them, too



15

# QUESTIONS?

## Start the Conversation!



16



## Conversation Instructions: Part 2

- ▶ Prepare a group report
  - ▶ Identify and explain the most important barrier or challenge to remove
  - ▶ Identify and explain the easiest barrier or challenge to remove
  - ▶ Identify and explain the hardest barrier or challenge to remove



17

## Conversation Instructions: Part 3

- ▶ Introduce yourselves: Name, organization, position
- ▶ Discuss and record the following:
  - ▶ What did you learn?
  - ▶ What do others not on your kind of institution need to know or understand?
  - ▶ Who needs to be at the table for this discussion in the future?
- ▶ Prepare a group report (one group response for each):
  - ▶ What you learned.
  - ▶ What others need to know or understand.
  - ▶ Who needs to be at the table in the future.



18

# QUESTIONS?

## Complete the session evaluation!




19

### Contact Information

Florida Department of Education  
Federal Educational Programs (BFEP)  
Homeless Education Program

Skip Forsyth, Director  
Phone: (850) 245-0089  
[skip.forsyth@fldoe.org](mailto:skip.forsyth@fldoe.org)

Courtney Walker, Program Specialist  
Phone: 850-245-9946  
[courtney.walker@fldoe.org](mailto:courtney.walker@fldoe.org)



20

THANK YOU!

