Unaccompanied Homeless Youth:

Ongoing Efforts to Support Their Success in School

2012 – 2013 FASFEPA/ECTAC SPRING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FORUM

May 8, 2013
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay
Tampa, Florida

1

McKinney-Vento 101 Review

- **Reauthorized in 2002 as part of the NCLB Act**

- **Main themes:**
  - School stability
  - School access
  - Support for academic success
  - Child/youth-centered, best-interest decision making

2

Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act?

- **Unaccompanied Youth**
  Children and Youth experiencing homelessness and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- *Is there an age range?*
  No. McKinney-Vento applies to all school-aged children and youth as defined by state law.

- *Is there a citizenship requirement?*
  No. Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) makes it unlawful for schools to deny access to undocumented immigrants or ask about immigration status. McKinney-Vento must be equally applied to undocumented students.

3

Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act?

- 2-step Process
    1) Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?
    2) Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?
- Unaccompanied = "Not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian"
- In practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian

4

Eligible or Not?

- **Ashley shows up at your school to enroll herself without an adult. She tells you that she can't get along with her stepdad and had to leave home.**
- **Her mom calls the school and says Ashley just wants to live with her boyfriend.**
- **Would you qualify Ashley for McKinney-Vento?**

- Eligible? Is she homeless? Is she unaccompanied?
- Would you like to have additional information? If so, what questions would you ask?
- Questions?

5

Eligible or Not?

- **Sara's dad is a professor at a local college. He will be teaching in another state for one semester as a visiting professor.**
- **Because Sara is going into her senior year of high school, she plans to stay with a neighborhood friend while her dad is away.**

- Eligible? Is she homeless? Is she unaccompanied?
- Would you like to have additional information? If so, what questions would you ask?
- Questions?

6

Eligible or Not?

- **Javier's parents went back to Mexico and left him.**
- **Javier stayed with three different relatives over the last few years. He has been with one relative for over a year now and it appears this is where he will be indefinitely.**
- **Would you qualify Javier for McKinney-Vento?**

- Eligible? Is he homeless? Is he unaccompanied?
- Would you like to have additional information? If so, what questions would you ask?
- Questions?

7

Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth in your Community?

- **Family Separation**
- **Parental Incarceration**
- **Illness, Hospitalization, Death**
- **Economics**
  - Youth are leaving home or being asked to leave to free up resources for younger siblings.
- **Pregnancy**
  - Ten percent (10%) of currently homeless female teenagers are pregnant.

- **Abuse/Neglect**
  - 20-40% were sexually abused in their homes.
  - 40-60% were physically abused.
  - 21-53% have a history of child welfare placement.
- **Family Dysfunction**
  - Over 2/3 of callers to the Runaway Hotline report at least one parent abuses drugs or alcohol.
  - Over ½ of youth living in shelters report that their parents told them to leave or didn't care.
  - Many youth have been thrown out because of their sexual orientation (20-40% identify as GLBTQ).

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

8

2011-2012 School Year
Florida Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

- Total in grades PreK-12: 6,761 (11%)

- Total in grades 9-12:   4,127 (61%)
  - Total in grade 9:   764 (11%)
  - Total in grade 10:   747 (11%)
  - Total in grade 11:   982 (15%)
  - Total in grade 12:   1,634 (24%)

Source: 2011-12 Survey 5, Florida Automated Student Database, 01/25/13

9

2011-2012 School Year
Florida Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

PK 1% KG 4% 1 4% 2 3% 3 4% 4 3% 5 4% 6 5% 7 6% 8 7% 9 11% 10 11% 11 14% 12 24%
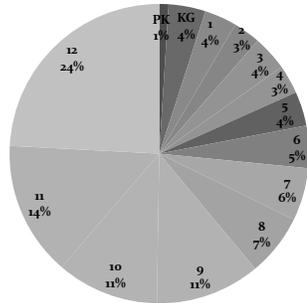
Source: 2011-12 Survey 5, Florida Automated Student Database, 01/25/13

10

What are potential signs that a child or youth may be homeless?

- Chronic hunger and fatigue
- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Lack of grooming and personal hygiene/tattered clothing
- Consistent lack of preparation for school—coming in without books, supplies, homework completed, or papers signed
- Behavioral extremes—withdrawn, extreme shyness, nervousness, aggression, anger
- Resistance to part with personal possessions

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

11

What education barriers do Unaccompanied Children and Youth face?

- Lack of a parent or guardian
- Lack of school records and other paperwork
- Lack of stable housing
- Emotional crisis/mental health issues
- Employment (need to balance school and work)
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing
- Fatigue, poor health, hunger
- Credit accrual policies, attendance policies
- Concerns about being apprehended by authorities

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

12

What is the Impact of Homelessness on Unaccompanied Children and Youth?

With each move, fall four to six months behind academically

One in ten report being raped

One in 100 die each year, the vast majority from suicide

Less likely to participate in extracurricular activities and more likely to get into trouble

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

13

Local Educational Agencies
Roles and Responsibilities

Under McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison's must:

✓ **Identify** unaccompanied children and youth (including those not attending school) through school and community

✓ Help them select and **enroll** in school

✓ Help them **attend** school

14

Local Educational Agencies
Roles and Responsibilities

How do liaisons help unaccompanied children and youth attend school?

- Inform them of rights to transportation to the school of origin and assist with arranging transportation
- Work with school counselors and administrators to modify class schedules to meet student needs (late arrival, early departure, online classes, etc.)
- Inform youth of right to appeal school selection decisions counter to their wishes
- Inform school personnel of requirements of the law and needs of unaccompanied children and youth
- Ensure youth have a full opportunity to *succeed* in school

15

Providing support IN school...

Strategies to Assist

- Education Planning
  - What is the best school for the student?
- Credit Accrual
  - Are there credits missing from student's transcript?
  - Partial credit earned or in progress?
- Attendance Issues
  - Flexible schedule needed?
- Transportation Support

16

Practices that Ensure Full Participation

- Enroll homeless student immediately in school, including full participation in all classes and school activities

- Help youth become involved in school sports, clubs, extracurricular activities, and special classes, based on their interests and abilities

- Ensure that deadlines and fees for participating in school programs, classes and extracurricular activities are waived for homeless children and youth

17

Practices that Ensure Full Participation, continued

- Use Title I-A funds, donations, or other funding to help pay fees
- Decide who can make decisions for an unaccompanied youth regarding participation in classes, activities, field trips, etc.
- Determine or establish policy about who can make decisions for an unaccompanied youth regarding participation in classes, activities, field trips, etc.

18

Education Planning and Strategies

- Help students get the most out of their high school experience
- Prepare them for higher education and/or employment
- Strategies to assist unaccompanied youth with educational planning:
    - Ensure that students have access to and understand the district's education planning guide
    - Review transcripts from each school attended to ensure credits received were properly transferred

19

Education Strategies, continued

- Assist students with determining post-high school plans:
    - Employment
    - Vocational Training
    - Community/Public College
    - Four-year College or University
- Identify elective courses needed for chosen career plans
- Assist with completing FAFSA

20

Helping Youth Feel Productive and Valued: Credit Accrual

The school/district helps unaccompanied youth make up lost credits and accrue credits.

- Act requires that schools/districts remove barriers to enrollment and retention. Barriers to accruing credits fall under this requirement.
- Many unaccompanied youth are absent or tardy due to homelessness, often resulting in youth not earning credits due to credit accrual policies.
- Some youth miss long periods of school due to their struggle to meet their own basic needs, making it difficult to earn credits.

21

Helping Youth Feel Productive and Valued: Credit Accrual

How can schools help unaccompanied youth make up lost credits?

- Revise credit accrual policies to excused absences and tardies caused by homelessness
- Award partial credit for work completed
- Offer flexible school hours, particularly evening hours
- "Chunk" credits into smaller time frames, so youth can earn some credits every three or four weeks

22

Helping Youth Feel Productive and Valued: Credit Accrual, continued

How can schools help unaccompanied youth make up lost credits?

- Award credit for employment
- Provide independent study opportunities
- Provide self-paced computerized learning opportunities, attached to regular High School programs
- Partner with local colleges and universities
- Use M-V funds and Title I-A set-aside funds
- Partner with dropout prevention/recovery programs, adult education, 21st Century Learning Centers, and other programs

23

Attendance Issues

How can schools help unaccompanied youth address attendance issues?

- Provide alternative means of transportation
- Monitor attendance closely
- Track moves
- Attend re-admit conferences
- Assist with demanding circumstances that may be hindering students from attending school (i.e., childcare, housing, health, mental health, etc.)

24

Transportation Support

How can schools help unaccompanied youth address transportation challenges?

- Establish a strong collaboration between Homeless Liaison and district's Transportation Department
- Establish a strong collaboration between neighboring districts
- Explore alternative transportation options:
  - Special routes within district
  - Public transportation
  - Private transportation
  - Transportation vouchers
  - Reimbursement for mileage

25

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth:

Ongoing Efforts to Support Their Success in School

Sarasota

26

Sarasota County

- Youth Education Advocate Position

- Provides ongoing one-on-one school visits to help identify and meet youth needs
  - Connections to Social Services (Food Stamps, Health, Bus Passes)
  - Create programs to address unmet needs

27

Sarasota County

- Over 100 students are homeless and unaccompanied

    "We love the fact that we have you (Schoolhouse Link) as a resource. We, as counselors are overwhelmed with increased number of students on our caseload who are living on their own and have a variety of needs.

    We so appreciate being able to email you and have an almost immediate response to our student in need. I love the fact that your team meets with the students form time to time to check up on them and coordinate services." --Michelle Cross, Guidance Counselor, VHS

28

Sarasota County

- Dylan's Story

- Justine's Story

- Brittley's Story

29

Sarasota County

- Tutoring assistance
- Providing for special needs (prom tickets, prom clothing, grad bash, graduation supplies)
- Goodwill employment program
- SRQ CLASS (Community Living for At-Risk Student Success) Program

30

Sarasota County

- Less than 3% school withdrawal (dropout) rate for identified homeless unaccompanied youth this school year
- Nearly 40% of homeless unaccompanied high school youth have Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- 37 homeless unaccompanied youth will graduate from high school this spring
- 21 homeless students were assisted with their FAFSA and plan to continue their education

31

Sarasota County

- Title I Funded and Donor Supported

  "This service has been a tremendous asset."

  --Barbara Coury, ESE Liaison, Sarasota Military Academy

  "The advocacy, awareness, additional resources, and additional staff are definitely helpful and desperately needed. Other districts would be wise to provide similar services for their students."
  --Lem Andrews, Postsecondary Advisor, BHS

  ...Priceless Results!!!! 32

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth:

Ongoing Efforts to Support Their Success in School
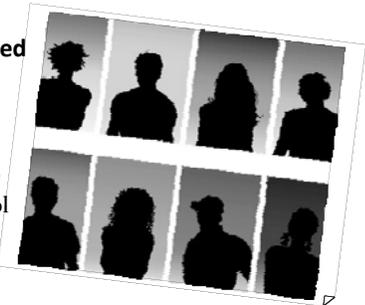
Polk

33

Polk County

- Unaccompanied Homeless High School Youth Social Worker (funded by Title I)

- Provides case management to each student (260 identified last school year)

- Assists with:
  - Food stamp application
  - FAFSA application and college applications
  - Cap and gown
  - Tutoring services
  - School supplies
  - Bus passes, food gift cards
  - Clothes, Survival Guide
  - Dissemination of important information to students, etc.

34

Polk County

- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Taskforce (UHYTF)

- Formed March, 2013

- Purpose is to identify gaps in services for our unaccompanied homeless youth

  - Two age groups:
    - 17 and under
    - 18 and over

35

Polk County - Members

• Department of Health*	• FL Baptist Children's Home
• Heartland for Children*	• Legal Aid Society*
• Department of Children and Families	• ACCESS Florida
	• Tri-County*
• George Harris Youth Shelter*	• Sheriff's Office
• LKLD Housing Authority	• Polk Works
• Peace River Center	• United Way*
• Polk County School Board*	• Salvation Army
• Catholic Charities*	• Polk Transit*
• Polk Rescue and Restore	• Polk Health Care Plan
• Polk County Commissioner*	• * = Executive Director
• Homeless Coalition*	

36

Polk County

- Started by calling important community members and sharing the facts about homeless unaccompanied high school youth and the additional support they need to at least complete high school

- Stated the realization that some of the barriers may not be able to be removed for ALL youth, but if we, as a group, can make a difference for one, five, or ten youth, then it is worth our efforts

37

Polk County

- Initial meeting
  - Three youth shared their stories of how they became homeless and their support systems

- Identified barriers and divided into three focus groups:
  1. Housing
  2. Health
  3. Additional Services – employment, transportation, etc.

38

Polk County

- Currently, housing and medical service charts are being developed divided by age group

- Identified two new housing options that are being started in Polk County

- No cost, except individuals' time to network and research

39

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth:

Ongoing Efforts to Support Their Success in School

Wells Fargo Mini-grants

40

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Lake

- **Amount:** $14,550
- **Target Population:**
  - 24 eleventh graders (2013-2014) on course to graduate in 2014
  - Closed group that will be served and tracked through the 2014-2015 school year
- **Project Approach:**
  - Provide information technology in the form of netbook computers to unaccompanied homeless 11th graders, combined with case management services
  - Track student academic progress and graduation credit accumulation

41

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Leon

- **Amount:** $15,000
- **Target Population:**
  Current unaccompanied and homeless high school seniors and who are on course to graduate in 2014.
- **Project Approach:**
  - Develop a college scholarship database
  - Provide laptop computers to college-bound high school seniors
  - Guide through college and scholarship application processes, college tours
  - Assist with graduation and college application costs

42

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Manatee

- **Amount:** $8,987
- **Target Population:**
  Current unaccompanied and homeless high school seniors and who are on course to graduate in 2014.
- **Project Approach:**
  - Provide school supplies, clothes, graduation fees, and college entrance test fees
  - Determine needs through regular reassessment of student circumstances using a case management strategy
  - Distribute laptop computers to dual-enrolled and college-bound seniors

43

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Nassau

- **Amount:** $15,000
- **Target Population:**
  Unaccompanied high school students who are experiencing homelessness in the 12 months prior the first session of the *Six Weeks to Success* program scheduled for the Fall of 2013
- **Project Approach:**
  - Participate in the *Six Weeks to Success (SWS)* program conducted by Cities in Schools
  - Receive transportation to SWS and work sites
  - Receive laptop computers, and case management services

44

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Palm Beach

- **Amount:** $15,000
- **Target Population:**
  Unaccompanied and homeless high school juniors (2014 Graduation Cohort) and seniors (2013 Graduation Cohort)
- **Project Approach:**
  - Provide "Student Survival Kits" to meet basic needs while students wait for approval for state-sponsored housing and food support
  - Conduct tours of nearby colleges and universities
  - Place washer/dryer sets at the two high schools with the highest rates of unaccompanied homeless youth

45

Wells Fargo Bank Project: Santa Rosa

- **Amount:** $15,000

- **Target Population:**
  Unaccompanied, homeless 2013-2014 high school juniors and seniors on course to graduate

- **Project Approach:**
  - Provide tours of nearby colleges for high school juniors and seniors
  - Provide laptop computers for college-bound students, combined with the provision of basic living supplies, "Backpacks 4 Teens," and case management services

46

Wells Fargo Bank Project: St. Johns

- **Amount:** $8,811
- **Target Population:**
  Unaccompanied and homeless high school students with a focus on 2013-14 juniors and seniors who are on course to graduate

- **Project Approach:**
  College tours, a life skills education course and distribution of laptop computers to participating students who have successfully enrolled in a postsecondary education program.

47

Legislation Affecting
Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

48

Florida Certified Homeless Youth

- S. 382.002, F.S. - Defines the term "certified homeless youth" as a minor who is a homeless child or youth, including an unaccompanied youth, as defined in 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a, and has been certified as homeless or unaccompanied by:

  - A school district homeless liaison;
  - The director of an emergency shelter program funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, or the director's designee; or
  - The director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, or the director's designee.

- S. 382.025, F.S. - Allows a "certified homeless youth" (age 16 or 17) to access his or her birth certificate, without parent or legal guardian.

49

Florida Certified Homeless Youth

- S. 743.067, F.S. - Unaccompanied youths.—An unaccompanied youth, as defined in 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a, who is also a certified homeless youth, as defined in s. 382.002, and who is 16 years of age or older may petition the circuit court to have the disabilities of nonage removed under s. 743.015.

  The youth shall qualify as a person not required to prepay costs and fees as provided in s. 57.081. The court shall advance the cause on the calendar.

50

Florida Identification Card – Fee Waiver

- S. 322.051(9), F.S., grants authority to waive identification card fees for the homeless

  - Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or s. 322.21 to the contrary, the department shall issue or renew a card at no charge to a person who presents evidence satisfactory to the department that he or she is homeless as defined in s. 414.0252(7).

- **Identify Requirements**
  - Birth certificate from Vital Statistics
  - Proof of Social Security Number
  - Proof of residential address
    - Homeless certification letter
    - Certification of address form (HSMV 71120)

51

Sample Homeless Certification Letter

Department is requesting form be dated
Within 90 days of ID card issuance.

52

Providing support OUT of school…

So youth can succeed IN school!

- Food Stamps and Florida Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Child Support
- SSI
- Housing
- FAFSA & Higher Education

Questions?

54

Evaluations

55

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FDOE Homeless Education Program

http://www.fldoe.org/bsa/title1/titlex.asp

56