

The Balancing Act



How to Mediate Disputes Without Alienating Parents or
School Staff

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Defining the Issue

The McKinney-Vento Act requires states and school districts to follow a dispute resolution process when parents, guardians, and schools or LEAs or school districts disagree on the enrollment or education placement of homeless children and youth.

- What is the nature of the dispute?
 - McKinney-Vento eligibility determination
 - School of origin decision

McKinney-Vento Requirements for Dispute Resolution

- Immediate enrollment to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute
- Written explanation to the youth, parent or guardian of the school's decision regarding enrollment or school selection, including the right to appeal
- Refer youth, parent or guardian to the local homeless liaison so the dispute resolution process can be followed

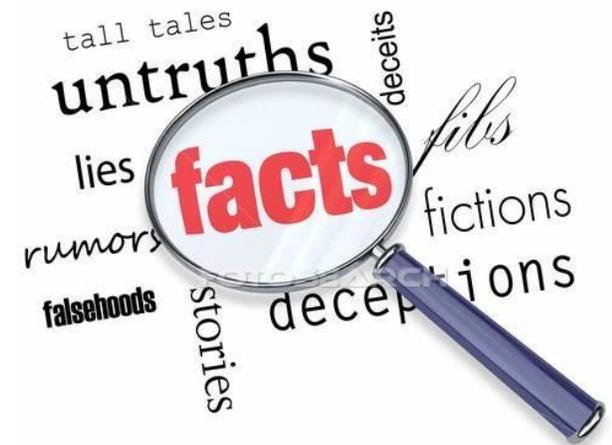
Steps to Successfully Navigate Disputes

- Start with the facts
- Get the documentation
- Get the details
- Protect the integrity of your McKinney-Vento Program



Get the facts

- Acknowledge the emotions involved but remove them from the process
- Combat urban myths and legends
- Get youth, parents/guardians and schools to “commit to a story”



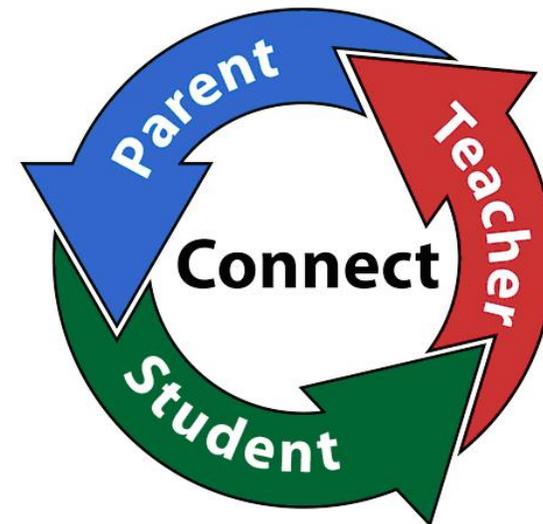
Documentation

- Student Residency Questionnaire or McKinney-Vento Eligibility Paperwork
- Dispute Form
- Document Request Letter



Details

- Connect with the youth, parent, guardian and the school
- Stick to the facts, district policy and McKinney-Vento law



Program Integrity



- Listen to all sides and hear their concerns
- Reference district policy and the law
- Enlist support from your State Coordinator and other resources as needed
- Resolve disputes quickly
- Document all outcomes and notify involved parties in writing

Best Practices

- Eligibility
 - Student Residency Questionnaire
 - Dispute Form
- School of Origin
 - ESSA reauthorization of McKinney-Vento Act
 - District Continuity Policy
 - Withdrawal Forms



Scenarios

- I know they are lying because...
- But the student told me...
- They don't look/act like they are homeless...

Sleuthing 101



- Gather concrete information
- Keep student information confidential
- Don't "stalk" the youth or parent/guardian

Resources

- <http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/resolution.pdf>
- www.naehcy.org/dl/ferpa_ta_tool.pdf

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