

STANDARD COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS AS IT APPLIES TO DISPUTES REGARDING THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Following is the complaint resolution process recommended by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education when a dispute arises regarding the education of a homeless child or youth:

- I. School District Level -- Every effort must be made to resolve the complaint or dispute at the school district level before it is brought to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. It is the responsibility of the school district (the district) to inform the complainant of the district's Complaint Resolution Procedure when a question concerning the education of a homeless child or youth arises.
 - A. Notify the district's homeless coordinator. The homeless coordinator serves as a liaison between the homeless child and the school the child attends. Someone in the school or in the superintendent's office will be able to identify the homeless coordinator.
 1. Request a copy of or access to the district board of education policies addressing the education of homeless children and youths and review them. Make an appointment with the homeless coordinator to discuss the complaint.
 2. If the dispute is not resolved after the initial discussion with the district's homeless coordinator, the complainant can file a complaint in writing to the district's homeless coordinator for further review.
 3. In the complaint include a request that a written proposed resolution of the dispute or a plan of action be provided within five (5) days* of the date the complaint was received by the district's homeless coordinator. A review of the proposal or plan of action with the homeless coordinator should follow.
 - B. If the dispute is not resolved at the homeless coordinator level, the complaint may be forwarded to the superintendent of the district for review followed by a meeting with the superintendent to discuss the dispute. The complainant should request from the superintendent a written resolution within five (5) days* of the date of the discussion.
 - C. If the dispute is not resolved at the superintendent level, the complainant may take the matter before the school district board of education for resolution.
- II. State Level -- If the dispute is not resolved in a satisfactory manner at the school district level, the complaint may be brought to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Complaints made under this process must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The following steps are to be taken:
 - A. Address the complaint to the State Homeless Coordinator, Federal Discretionary Grants, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0480.
 - B. Include in the complaint:
 1. a detailed description of the dispute
 2. the name(s) and age(s) of the children involved
 3. the name(s) of involved school district personnel and the district(s) they represent
 4. a description of attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the school district level
 - C. The Director of Federal Discretionary Grants (the director) will inform the involved school district(s) of the complaint. The director or the director's designee will gather needed information including documentation and statements of the parties and may conduct an independent investigation through an on-site visit if necessary.
 - D. Within thirty (30) days* after receiving a complaint, the director will resolve the complaint and will inform the parties, in writing, of the decision.
 - E. If a complainant disagrees with the director's decision, the complainant may, within ten (10) working days, appeal the decision to the Deputy Commissioner of Education. This appeal must be in writing and state why the complainant disagrees with the decision.

F. Within (thirty) 30 days** after receiving the appeal, the Deputy Commissioner of Education will render a final administrative decision and notify the complainant and all other interested parties in writing.

G. While the dispute is ongoing, the child(ren) in question must be enrolled in school. If the dispute revolves around which school is the school of best interest for the child, the child shall remain in the school they currently attend until the dispute is resolved, unless arrangements already implemented allow the child to attend the school of origin.

* The parties may mutually agree on an extension; however every effort should be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.

** Although the standard procedure allows thirty (30) days for a response, every effort will be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.