



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: LEA Leaders

FROM: Amy Maisterra, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: October 19, 2016

RE: Increase in the Number of Students Identified as Homeless on Enrollment Audit Lists

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is pleased to provide local education agencies (LEAs) with improved information regarding students experiencing homelessness beginning in school year 2016-2017. This information will help ensure compliance with the District's obligations to appropriately serve these students and report on their progress, pursuant to federal and local law.

Valid data is a necessary precursor for adequate planning and resource allocation. To that end, in SY 2014-2015, OSSE launched a new web-based data collection system designed to allow LEAs to submit real-time data on student homelessness and ensure that these data are integrated into the OSSE State Longitudinal Data System (SLED). This change from a paper-based to a web-based data collection system allowed for more accurate identification of students and ensured that their status was captured for at risk Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) payments.

In SY 2015-2016, OSSE worked with the Community Partnership (TCP), a non-profit corporation that coordinates services to homeless families on behalf of the city, to augment current homelessness data received by OSSE. As a result, OSSE was able to identify more homeless students in school year 2015-16 in comparison to the prior year. Beginning this school year, students identified as homeless through TCP are indicated as such in the enrollment audit module available in SLED. Although you will see that the overall identification of homeless students will increase, OSSE does not anticipate a significantly higher identification rate for the purposes of at-risk UPSFF funding, as most homeless students are already identified as at-risk through other sources like TANF or SNAP. However, in the case that students were newly identified, UPSFF at-risk funding is provided.

As before, **any information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation must be protected as required by applicable privacy laws, including but not limited to 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(G) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).** Parents of homeless students will be made aware of school-based data sharing, which is allowable under FERPA, through the intake process at TCP.

OSSE will continue to support each LEA's designated homeless liaisons to ensure that homeless students receive timely support. As we transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), it is important to note that ESSA emphasizes that the liaison must be able to carry out his or her legal duties. Of equal importance, we encourage you to instruct school-based staff to consult with their liaison before approaching any newly identified students, in order to ensure that outreach is conducted sensitively and without stigma. This will help LEAs develop and sustain school climates in which homeless families and students can seek support.

Enclosed is a fact sheet we have created for families which can also be used to assist with your schools' efforts. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Nicole Lee-Mwandha, Homeless Education State Coordinator, at (202) 654-6123 or at Nicole.Lee-Mwandha@dc.gov. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to effectively serve students who experience homelessness.