



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

August 7, 2017

██████████
Resident of the District of Columbia

Dear ██████████

On July 20, 2017, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) received your request for assistance in resolving an enrollment dispute with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) regarding DCPS' denial of the enrollment of your ██████████ in ██████████ (MS). Your letter disputes DCPS' enrollment decision as noncompliant with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MKV), as amended by the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specifically, we understand that you are contesting the denial in accordance with the MKV requirement that school districts allow homeless students to remain in their school of origin when it is in the best interest of the student. Included with the request for resolution was a copy of a letter written by Advocates for Justice in Education (AJE) on your behalf, requesting resolution in accordance with MKV. This letter lays out our decision.

The dispute is based on your assertion that the school of best interest for your ██████████ is the school of origin, ██████████ (ES). MKV defines the school of origin as the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled (Section 722(g)(3)(I)(i)). When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools (Section 722(g)(3)(I)(ii)). ██████████ serves children from pre-kindergarten until the fifth grade, after which students graduate to ██████████ (MS). We note that ██████████ will enter the ██████████ grade in school year 2017-2018.

Since there is no dispute that ██████████ is currently in unstable housing and eligible for the protections and rights mandated by MKV, OSSE's review of documentation focused on the determination of the enrollment that was in ██████████ best interest. MKV calls for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to maintain students in their school of origin to promote school stability and greater educational outcomes overall, unless it is not in the student's best interest.

A review of documentation provided by DCPS shows that ██████████ attended kindergarten at ██████████ ES from May 4, 2012 - July 5, 2012 and attended ██████████ again in the 2014-2015 school year, using an address that you have identified as the last address in which you had permanent housing. DCPS asserted that a residency investigation revealed that this address does not exist, and provided a communication to DCPS from the US Post Office to that effect. OSSE also reviewed documentation from a shelter confirming that you have been in temporary housing since 2014.

Summary and Determination

Based on the documentation reviewed, it appears that DCPS approved ██████████ for enrollment in ██████████ ES in 2012, and 2014, and most recently on ██████████, 2017. ██████████ last attended ██████████ ES in

2014-2015 school year. Although DCPS indicates that there were concerns about the validity of the address used to enroll [REDACTED], DCPS did not present evidence that you were notified or given an opportunity to address its concerns about the validity of your address.

While [REDACTED] attended [REDACTED] Public Charter School (PCS) in the 2015-16 and 2016-2017 school years, it appears that DCPS accepted [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] in boundary school throughout [REDACTED] enrollment in DCPS because each time that you requested enrollment in [REDACTED] ES (in 2012, 2014, and 2017) DCPS granted your request.

DCPS stated in an email correspondence with you (May [REDACTED] 2017) that it was denying your request to enroll in [REDACTED] because of [REDACTED] prior history at the school, the limited amount of time remaining in the school year, and [REDACTED] current enrollment in a PCS. However, because of [REDACTED] prior enrollment at [REDACTED] and the fact that [REDACTED] is the last DCPS school which [REDACTED] attended, OSSE believes that upon confirmation of the student's homeless status under MKV, [REDACTED] in fact became [REDACTED] school of origin.

Given this fact, and since there was insufficient evidence presented by DCPS to OSSE that [REDACTED] MS, the receiving school for [REDACTED] (and thus the grade appropriate school of origin) for serving [REDACTED] was not in the child's best interest, OSSE has determined that [REDACTED] MS should be considered [REDACTED] current school of origin and [REDACTED] should remain enrolled.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 741-6404 or at Sheryl.Hamilton@dc.gov with any questions you may have regarding this determination.

Sincerely,



Sheryl R. Hamilton
Director
Homeless Education Program, Community Learning Unit

cc: Tierra Washington, Specialist, Homeless Children and Youth Program
District of Columbia Public Schools

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