

Awarding Partial Credits to Students Experiencing Homelessness

WI Partial Credit Workgroup

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent


Using Microsoft Teams

- We will mute everyone while we are presenting, please do not unmute yourself.
- If you have a camera on your computer please turn off the video by clicking on the camera icon at the top of your screen. It should show a line through the camera.
- To be able to use the chat function, click on the chat bubble on your screen to have the chat pop up on the right side of the screen.
- You can enter full screen by clicking on the three dots and choosing Enter Full Screen.
- We are recording the webinar.
- Feel free to enter questions into the chat at any time. We will answer at the end as time allows.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the McKinney-Vento requirement to award partial credits to students experiencing homelessness.
 - Learn about the new resource for awarding partial credit to students experiencing homelessness.
 - Hear from homeless liaisons across the state who worked to create the recommendations.
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Workgroup Background

- Group began convening in February 2021
 - Goal of the group was to draft recommendations to share with Wisconsin homeless liaisons
 - Different size districts represented, including rural, urban, and suburban
 - Group researched other state practices and Wisconsin district practices
 - Stakeholder feedback was gathered
 - What does this currently look like in districts?
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Workgroup Members

Kaylee Cutler - Racine Unified School District

Shannon Stevens - Madison Metropolitan School District

Shoshanah Bruesewitz - Milwaukee Public Schools

Linda Tack - Fond du Lac School District

Elizabeth Webb - Green Bay Area Public Schools

Jessie Sloan - CESA 4

Dena Budrecki - Plymouth School District

Christina Teschendorf - Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

McKinney-Vento Requirement

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act addresses the barriers to credit accrual and graduation by requiring states to have procedures to “**identify and remove barriers** that prevent students experiencing homelessness from receiving **appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school**, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.”

McKinney-Vento Requirement

- While some states have laws that address awarding partial credits to students experiencing homelessness, Wisconsin does not.
- The document is a tool to ensure equitable practices for honoring partial credit are developed and implemented to reduce barriers to on-time graduation.
- McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons are required to review and revise policies and procedures to remove barriers to receive appropriate credits.
- **The recommendations from the workgroup are guidance for local liaisons to use and adapt to meet the needs of individual districts.**

Statement of Need

In the 2019-20 school year, public and charter schools in Wisconsin identified:

17,179 students experiencing homelessness

4,561 were high school students

These students face many challenges to credit accrual and staying on track for graduation. Often these challenges are found within the institutions and systems, rather than with individual students.

Statement of Need

Some of the factors that prevent students experiencing homelessness from keeping and earning credits include:

- frequent school changes
- loss of credits due to mid-semester transfers
- inconsistent graduation requirements among districts
- frequent absences
- incomplete records
- difficulty navigating the complicated systems that provide basic needs and support
- lack of support and advocacy
- trauma and other mental and physical health challenges

Statement of Need

During the 2019-2020 school year, these challenges resulted in a graduation rate of **67.2%** for students experiencing homelessness, well below the state average of **90.4%**.

Research has shown that a high school diploma is the single greatest factor in preventing young adult homelessness!

Recommended Responsibilities for Sending Schools

When the school receives records requests:

- Immediately send all records, including, but not limited to, the following: exiting/transfer grades, transcripts, IEPs and other SPED records, language plans for ELs, enrollment history, copy of current schedule, attendance, discipline records if needed, description of progress, and/or any other academic information.
- Award partial credit if the full course has not been completed or give an 'exiting grade' if unable to award partial credit.
- Homeless liaison should contact the receiving district's local homeless liaison to assist in a successful transition.
- Homeless liaison should contact the family/student to ensure that they are fully and adequately enrolled in school.

Recommended Responsibilities for Sending Schools

When the school is aware of a transfer before the student leaves:

- Give the student/family a copy of the student's unofficial transcript, schedule, current grade book, verification of McKinney-Vento identification and anything that may be helpful in the enrollment and scheduling process.
- Include a 'check-out form' completed by the student's current teachers. This form could include the following: comments, any useful information, course description, grades, college and career exploration, and partial credit/exiting grade.
- Homeless liaison should assist the receiving district with enrollment and provide records as needed.
- Notify the parent/student that their Family Access through the Student Information System will remain active until the enrollment end date, so they can access and view their grades, information, etc. from the sending school.

Recommended Responsibilities for Receiving Schools

Enrollment and Scheduling:

- Immediately enroll the student and request records from previous school, if partial credits or transfer grades are missing, send a request to the sending school and copy the homeless liaison on the request.
- Immediately meet with the student to review records and create a schedule.
- Review records and partial credits and strive to enroll the student in equivalent courses. If the same course is not available, enroll the student in equivalent credit type (See Accepting Partial Credit below).
- In the absence of records, enroll the student in courses based on graduation requirements and age equivalent grade-level courses (See Awarding Previous Credit below).
- If records have not been sent, the homeless liaison or school counselor must contact the sending school to obtain records.
- Provide teachers with transfer grades. If transfer grades are unavailable, begin grading at the date of enrollment. 'No-count' previous assignments that are dated prior to the enrollment start date.
- Meet with the student after a few weeks to ensure course placements and teachers are working for them and are appropriate. Make adjustments as needed.
- If updated records arrive and if credits are discovered, move the student into appropriate courses immediately without having a grade or work penalty for coursework completed.

Recommended Responsibilities for Receiving Schools

Accepting Partial Credit:

- Honor and accept partial credits awarded by sending school even if your school does not offer the same/equivalent courses.
- Convert credits to your system, if needed.
- Check transcripts at course completion to ensure full credit was awarded.
- Award credit for repeated courses.
- Exempt students from end of year assessments if they completed a course in a prior school.

Recommended Responsibilities for Receiving Schools

Honoring Previous Credit:


- Use professional judgement while focusing on the best immediate and long-term interests of the student.
- If the sending school does not award partial credit, the receiving school should ensure any work completed in the previous school is recognized and counted in their new courses.
- Award credit based on proficiency. Work with the teachers to utilize formative and summative assessments. Consider alternate avenues for demonstrating proficiency.
- Award credit for work experience, language proficiency, community service, project-based learning, portfolios, independent study, working with appropriate programs such as career and technical education (CTE), alternative education, and with administration, pupil services and special education (SPED) team, or other [work-based learning](#) experiences.
- Award multiple credits in cases where the student had to retake a course in previous districts they've already passed.
- Consider awarding retroactive credit for passing an advanced course (e.g., award Algebra I and Algebra II credits if the student takes and passes Algebra II with no record of an Algebra I class).
- Pass/Fail grade can be used to award credit.

McKinney-Vento Requirement

- McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons are required to review and revise policies and procedures to remove barriers to receive appropriate credits.
- The document is a tool to ensure equitable practices for honoring partial credit are developed and implemented to reduce barriers to on-time graduation.
- **The recommendations from the workgroup are guidance for local homeless liaisons to use and adapt to meet the needs of individual districts.**

Next Steps

How to take this back to your district

- It's OK if you do not have this set up right now in current practice.
 - It's OK if you don't create a formal policy or procedures, but this document is backing for awarding partial credit.
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Resources

- SchoolHouse Connection: [Awarding and Accepting Partial Credits for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [California's Partial Credit Model Policy](#)
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) [Credit Accrual](#)