Subject: Education of Homeless Children
Effective Date: TBD Upon Board Approval
Approved By: Board of Directors
Policy: 5025.1

The Governing Board of Vista Springs Charter School (VSCS) desires to ensure that homeless students have access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to other students within the school. VSCS shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for them to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.

Further, the Governing Board of Vista Springs Charter School (VSCS) desires to ensure compliance with Federal and State requirements for schools serving homeless students. As such, the Board affirms the following:

The Superintendent or designee shall identify and remove any barriers to the identification and enrollment of homeless students and to the retention of homeless students due to absences or outstanding fees or fines.

When there are at least 15 homeless students in the school, the school's local control and accountability plan (LCAP) shall include goals and specific actions to improve student achievement and other outcomes of homeless students.

The Superintendent or designee shall designate an appropriate staff person to serve as a liaison for homeless youth. The liaison shall fulfill the duties specified in 42 USC 11432 to assist in identifying and supporting homeless students to succeed in school.

In order to identify students who are homeless, the Superintendent or designee may give a housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians during school

registration, make referral forms readily available, include the Homeless Youth liaison's contact information on the school web site, provide materials in a language easily understood by families and students, provide school staff with professional development on the definition and signs of homelessness, and contact appropriate local agencies to coordinate referrals for homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth.

Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be considered part of a student's educational record, subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and shall not be deemed to be directory information as defined in 20 USC 1232g. (42 USC 11432)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that placement decisions for homeless students are based on the student's best interest as defined in law and administrative regulation.

Each homeless student shall be provided services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school, including, but not limited to, transportation, educational programs for which the student meets the eligibility criteria (such as federal Title I services or similar state or local programs, programs for students with disabilities, and educational programs for English learners), career and technical education programs, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition programs. (42 USC 11432)

Homeless students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way. However, the Superintendent or designee may separate homeless students on school grounds as necessary for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies or to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services to meet the unique needs of homeless students. (42 USC 11432, 11433)

The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate with other agencies and entities to ensure that homeless children and youth are promptly identified, ensure that homeless students have access to and are in reasonable proximity to available education and related support services, and raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness. Toward these ends, the Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with local social services agencies, other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children and youth, and, if

applicable, transitional housing facilities. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate transportation, transfer of school records, and other collaborative activities with other local educational agencies. As necessary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate, within the school and with other involved local educational agencies, services for homeless students and services for students with disabilities. (42 USC 11432)

The Homeless Youth liaison and other appropriate staff shall participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities to assist them in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students and to provide training on the definitions of terms related to homelessness.

At least annually, the Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board on outcomes for homeless students, which may include, but are not limited to, student achievement test results, promotion and retention rates by grade level, graduation rates, suspension/expulsion rates, and other outcomes related to any goals and specific actions identified in the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Based on the evaluation data, the school shall revise its strategies as needed to better support the education of homeless students.