Topic: HomeRoom Network Community of Practice
Session 4 – Increasing and Sustaining McKinney Vento Awareness, Outreach, and Professional Development
Date: 8/9/2022
Time: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST

Materials
Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7tFewGo_9w

1. Introduction & Activity
2. Awareness Best Practices & Discussion
   a. District McKinney-Vento awareness on a scale of 1 – 5
   b. Work as a team
      i. Ensure staff are aware of your role
      ii. Ensure staff can identify the signs of homelessness within their respective roles
      iii. Staff who may be particularly effective in identifying students experiencing homelessness are:
         1. School nurses
         2. Front office staff
         3. Resource officers
         4. Cafeteria staff
         5. Bus drivers
         6. Teachers, social workers, and guidance counselors
         7. Librarians, classrooms aids
         8. Administrators
         9. Coaches
         10. ESC liaisons
   c. Incorporating the topic
      i. The topic of homelessness can be incorporated into school curriculum or school assemblies
      ii. Incorporating the topic reduces stigma around homelessness, allowing for more communication and identification
   d. Awareness trainings
      i. Strategies for raising the awareness of school staff and community members can include brief updates during regular staff meeting or more
intensive workshops that target specific goals related to homelessness and educational outcomes

e. Discussion
   i. Which collaborative relationships with staff have been most effective in increasing the identification of students experiencing homelessness?
   ii. Which relationships could be strengthened to increase McKinney-Vento awareness?

3. Outreach & Engagement Best Practices & Discussion
   a. Targeted outreach
      i. Post information regarding the rights of students experiencing homelessness in places that youth and their families are likely to see them
         1. Schools, family and youth shelters, public libraries, soup kitchens, etc.
      ii. Share information about McKinney-Vento eligibility and services in student handbooks, on the district website, and in other informational materials distributed throughout the district
   b. Housing focused outreach
      i. Goes beyond meeting basic needs
      ii. Includes a navigational component of getting a student out of their current situation and into stable housing
      iii. Outreach should not be a one-time interaction, but the beginning of a relationship with on-going support and follow-up
   c. Relationship building
      i. Collaboration with other educational programs, agencies, and organizations outside the district is not only encouraged but expected
      ii. By making contact with low-cost hotels, social services agencies, local law enforcements, and other public service agencies, liaisons can increase the number of people on the lookout for students in need
   d. Building trust
      i. Promote collaborate, shared decision-making, and partnership between staff and youth at all levels
      ii. Utilize a youth-driven, strengths-based approach that maximizes opportunities for youth to make decision about what they need and to regain a sense of control over their lives
      iii. Create mechanisms to elevate parent and student voices, such as surveys, focus groups, and parent/student councils
   e. Be flexible, considering access issues such as:
      i. Availability
      ii. Language
      iii. Transportation
   f. Use a trauma-informed approach when communicating with parents, guardians, and students about their needs. This means:
i. Recognizing that youth experiencing homelessness or who have run away have higher rates of multiple forms of adverse experiences

ii. Understanding that the impacts of trauma are far reaching and can affect youths’ ability to:
   1. Form healthy and trusting relationships
   2. Regulate emotions
   3. Avoid risky behaviors
   4. Problem-solve, pay attention, and retain information
   5. Have a positive self-concept and plan for the future

4. Professional Development Best Practices & Discussions
   a. Frequency of professional development across districts/ESCs registered for this session
      i. Monthly: 6%
      ii. Quarterly: 6%
      iii. Every 6 months: 6%
      iv. Annually: 38%
      v. As needed: 22%
      vi. Other: 22%
   b. Train district and school personnel on the McKinney-Vento Act and related policies
      i. Prepare your staff to understand and respond to the needs of families experiencing homelessness
      ii. Train your staff to identify the signs of homelessness and connect students to their local liaison
      iii. Provide training on homelessness and poverty locally and trauma-informed care
      iv. Provide information to staff in multiple ways, including paper copies, online resources, videos, and social media
      v. Trainings should not be “one and done”, but ongoing and informed by the needs of students in your district
   c. Train district and school personnel about the effects of trauma on service providers, understanding that direct exposure to trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious trauma can lead to:
      i. Increased depression and anxiety
      ii. Trouble regulating emotions
      iii. Diminished concentration, difficulty with decision-making
      iv. Fatigue and physical complaints
d. Engagement and safety are compromised when both school personnel and students are affected by trauma, train district and school personnel to avoid retraumatizing practice when working with youth experiencing homelessness by:
   i. Practicing self-care
   ii. Maximizing youth voice and choice
   iii. Avoiding harsh, punitive, shaming practices
   iv. Adopting positive and restorative practices

e. Discussion
   i. How do you train your staff on McKinney-Vento law?
   ii. What has been effective in building staff awareness?
   iii. Where are there gaps in staff knowledge and capacity to support students experiencing homelessness?

5. Challenges
   a. Awareness
     i. “Minimal McKinney-Vento awareness from high level administration.”
     ii. “Identification is one of the biggest challenges our districts face.”
     iii. “Staff remembering that we are a resource.”
   b. Outreach/Engagement
     i. “Connection of trauma with families experiencing homelessness.”
     ii. Determining eligibility when homeless experience extends beyond one school year.”
   c. Professional Development
     i. “Staff and community having the time to do professional development around homelessness.”
     ii. “This topic often gets pushed back on PD agendas.”
   d. Discussion
     i. Why is this issue important?
     ii. What has been done to date to address this issue?
     iii. How can our Community of Practice help address this issue?
     iv. What action steps can be taken to further address this issue?

6. Upcoming sessions:
   a. 10/11/2022: Meeting the Needs of Marginalized Students Experiencing Homelessness; A Focus on: Unaccompanied Youth and English Learners
   b. 12/6/2022: Developing, Maintaining, and Sustaining Transportation for Vulnerable Youth Experiencing Homelessness