PUBLIC NOTICE: EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The **Guthrie Center CSD and Adair-Casey CSD (a.k.a. AC/GC)** is committed to providing an educational environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. In accordance with the federal **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** and **Iowa Administrative Code 281-33**, our district ensures that children, youth, and unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness or housing transitions have equal access to a free, appropriate public education.

Who Qualifies for Services?
A student (ages 3 through 21) qualifies for protections and resources if they lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**. This includes children and youth who are:

- **Doubled-Up:** Sharing housing with friends or relatives due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or eviction.
- **Living in Temporary Lodging:** Staying in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to a lack of alternative accommodations.
- **Sheltered:** Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program.
- **Unsheltered:** Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, or bus/train station.
- **Migratory Students:** Living in any of the temporary situations listed above.

Guaranteed Educational Rights
Students who meet the criteria above have the right to:

1. **Immediate Enrollment:** Enroll in school immediately, even if they are missing documents normally required at registration, such as birth certificates, academic records, proof of residency, or immunization/medical forms.
2. **School Selection:** Remain enrolled in their **School of Origin** (the school the student attended when permanently housed or last enrolled) or attend the local attendance area school where they are temporarily staying.
3. **Transportation Services:** Receive free transportation to and from their School of Origin for the duration of their housing transition.
4. **Academic Programs & Free Meals:** Automatically qualify for free breakfast and lunch programs. Students receive equal access to all district services, including Title I, Special Education, English Language Learner (ELL) resources, and extracurricular activities.
5. **No Segregation:** Attend classes alongside students who are not experiencing housing transitions; segregation based on a student's housing status is strictly prohibited.

Dispute Resolution & Appeals
If the district makes a placement or enrollment decision that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with, the district must provide a written explanation of the decision. The family has the immediate right to appeal the decision to the **Iowa Department of Education**. During the appeal process, the student will be immediately enrolled and allowed to fully participate in classes and activities at the requested school until a final resolution is reached.
Free legal assistance regarding enrollment disputes can be obtained by contacting Iowa Legal Aid at **1-800-532-1275**.

Contact Your Local Advocate
If you or someone you know is going through a housing transition, please reach out to our dedicated advocate for confidential help, enrollment assistance, and supply distribution:

- **Local Homeless Liaison Name:** Karla Mahaffey
- **Title:** Homeless Liaison for Students and Parents
- **Phone Number:** (641) 332-2972