

CHAPTER 83

AN ACT concerning the educational costs of students residing in homeless shelters and amending P.L.1979, c.207, P.L.1989, c.290, and P.L.2012, c.80.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 19 of P.L.1979, c.207 (C.18A:7B-12) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:7B-12 Determination of district of residence.

19. For school funding purposes, the Commissioner of Education shall determine district of residence as follows:

a. (1) In the case of a child placed in a resource family home prior to the effective date of P.L.2010, c.69 (C.30:4C-26b et al.), the district of residence shall be the district in which the resource family parents reside. If such a child in a resource family home is subsequently placed in a State facility or by a State agency, the district of residence of the child shall then be determined as if no such resource family placement had occurred.

(2) In the case of a child placed in a resource family home on or after the effective date of P.L.2010, c.69 (C.30:4C-26b et al.), the district of residence shall be the present district of residence of the parent or guardian with whom the child lived prior to the most recent placement in a resource family home.

b. The district of residence for children who are in residential State facilities, or who have been placed by State agencies in group homes, skill development homes, private schools or out-of-State facilities, shall be the present district of residence of the parent or guardian with whom the child lived prior to his most recent admission to a State facility or most recent placement by a State agency.

c. The district of residence for children whose parent or guardian temporarily moves from one school district to another as the result of being homeless shall be the district in which the parent or guardian last resided prior to becoming homeless. For the purpose of this amendatory and supplementary act, "homeless" shall mean an individual who temporarily lacks a fixed, regular and adequate residence.

d. If the district of residence cannot be determined according to the criteria contained herein, if the criteria contained herein identify a district of residence outside of the State, or if the child has resided in a domestic violence shelter, homeless shelter, or transitional living facility located outside of the district of residence for more than one year, the State shall assume fiscal responsibility for the tuition of the child. The tuition shall equal the approved per pupil cost established pursuant to section 24 of P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-24). This amount shall be appropriated in the same manner as other State aid under this act. The Department of Education shall pay the amount to the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections or the Juvenile Justice Commission established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.284 (C.52:17B-170) or, in the case of a homeless child or a child in a family resource home, the Department of Education shall pay to the school district in which the child is enrolled the weighted base per pupil amount calculated pursuant to section 7 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-49) and the appropriate security categorical aid per pupil and special education categorical aid per pupil.

e. If the State has assumed fiscal responsibility for the tuition of a child in a private educational facility approved by the Department of Education to serve children who are classified as needing special education services, the department shall pay to the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children and Families or the Juvenile Justice

Commission, as appropriate, the aid specified in subsection d. of this section and in addition, such aid as required to make the total amount of aid equal to the actual cost of the tuition.

2. Section 3 of P.L.1989, c.290 (C.18A:7B-12.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:7B-12.1 Homeless child, determination of district of residence; tuition costs, transportation.

3. The district of residence for a homeless child determined pursuant to section 19 of P.L.1979, c.207 (C.18A:7B-12) shall be responsible for the education of the homeless child. The district of residence shall determine the educational placement of the child after consulting with the parent or guardian. This determination shall be: a. to continue the child's education in the school district of last attendance, b. to enroll the child in the district of residence if the district of residence is not the district of last attendance, or c. to enroll the child in the school district where the child is temporarily living, whichever is in the child's best interest. If the parent or guardian objects to the determination made by the district of residence, the executive county superintendent of schools shall be notified and within 48 hours shall determine the placement of the child based on criteria established by the State Board of Education. Any appeals regarding the determination shall be resolved according to rules established by the State Board of Education.

When the homeless child attends school in a district other than the district of residence, the district of residence shall pay the costs of tuition for the child to attend school in that district and shall pay for any transportation costs incurred by that district; except that in the case of a child who has resided in a domestic violence shelter, homeless shelter, or transitional living facility located in a district other than the district of residence for more than one year, the State shall pay the costs of tuition for the child to attend school in that district. When the homeless child attends school in the district of residence while temporarily residing in another district, the district of residence shall provide for transportation to and from school pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.18A:58-7.

3. Section 3 of P.L.2012, c.80 (C.18A:7B-12.2) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:7B-12.2 Rules.

3. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, shall promulgate rules pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the provisions of this act and P.L.2017, c.83. The rules shall identify those facilities that qualify as transitional living facilities, homeless shelters, or domestic violence shelters.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year following the date of enactment.

Approved May 11, 2017.