

**Supporting Homeless and Highly Mobile Families at
Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary School
Madison, Wisconsin
Submitted by: Jani Koester**

Abstract: Detailed is an approach to ensure that homeless and highly mobile students and their families are welcomed and connected to school. This essay provides examples of surveys and outlines how survey results were used to develop a plan to support students, families and teachers. Specific strategies and practices include: sharing up to date contact information with teachers; initiating a 2-week check-in to encourage more family participation; and facilitating easier transitions when difficulties arise. There is also a discussion on increasing community connections to develop support networks for students and families in need.

Keywords: Access to Resources; Classroom Management; Community Awareness; Elementary School; Homework; Parent /Family Involvement; Professional Development; School District; and Surveys

School and WBPB Profile

School: **Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary**

Grade levels: **K-5**

School District: **Madison Metropolitan School District**

City/Town: **Madison** State: **Wisconsin**

School enrollment size for 2006-07: 270

Number of students experiencing homelessness/high mobility at your school in 2006-07: **65**

Number of students experiencing homelessness/high mobility involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **65**

Number of educators/teachers involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **40+**

Number of administrators involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **1**

Number of parents/families involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **18**

Title I School: yes

Annual Yearly Progress Rating: **Satisfactory**

Number of public agencies involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **2**

Number of community members involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **1**

Number of non-profits involved in 2006-07 WBPB projects/actions: **2**

Homelessness rate of community: **In 2005, 3,039 individuals stayed at least one night in shelter**

High school graduation rate: **(05-06) 94%**

Other important information about your school: Reading Recovery, English as a Second Language, Tutor and mentor programs (including Big Brother Big Sister lunchtime program), VISTA worker, Talented and Gifted Program, National Institute for Urban School Improvement, Minority Student Achievement Network Elementary School, Talent Development Grant, School-wide interest group on Friday afternoons, Full time Instructional Resource Teacher, Photo Grant (Madison Foundation Grant), Rotary Grant for Homeless Families Health Initiative, Model school for district wide school-wide behavior plan, Partnerships with United Way and Edgewood college for student teachers and practicum teachers, ARMS p science program KIWANIS, BY Youth for Youth Grant – United Way, and over 100 community organizations and agency connections.

Emerson Elementary in Madison Wisconsin: Who we are

Madison is a medium-sized urban community in the south central part of Wisconsin. It is the state capital and houses the Big 10 University of Wisconsin, a vast community of aspiring students and staff that are involved in the local schools on an ongoing basis. Madison consistently ranks as one of the top places in the country to live, work, go to school, play and raise a family. Wisconsin's beautiful capital city, with a vibrant population of approximately 200,000, offers both small town charm and a range of leisure and cultural opportunities usually found in only much larger communities. Urban culture, natural beauty, small town charm make Madison a lovely place to live for many families.

Emerson Elementary is one of 31 elementary schools in Madison. We serve Kindergarten through 5th graders. Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) serves 24,576 students pre-K – 12th grades. Total district enrollment figures for ethnicity are as follows: 1% American Indian, 22% Black, 13% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 54% White (total students of color 43.8%). Of this population 17% are EEN (Exceptional Educational Needs), 15% are ESL(English-as-a-Second Language)/Bilingual, and 41% qualify for free and reduced lunch status. MMSD counted approximately 564 homeless students last year with 60 of them attending Emerson. Currently, Emerson has served 61 students. With the Wisconsin SAGE grant, average class size at Emerson is 15 for K-3. Class size for grades 4-5 is 15 for reading and math. Total enrollment is 280. Emerson Elementary itself has a Low Income percentage of 63%, EEN 17%, ESL 13 % and a mobility factor of 49. The diversity make up of Emerson is 54% students of color and 46% students who are white.

Supporting Homeless and Highly Mobile Families at Emerson

Since March of 1989, Emerson Elementary has housed all or part of the district's Transition Education Program (TEP). The TEP program is funded by district money and a grant from the McKinney-Vento Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) state grants. TEP provides direct services and supports for the identified homeless and highly mobile families in Madison's schools. The TEP program provides, and is not limited to the following: direct instruction, academic support, staff development, screening, advocacy, transportation for families, school supplies for students, resource development, community education about homelessness and mobility, coordination with community services and other

school related supports. The goal of TEP is to have all students who are homeless/highly mobile (H/HM) meet the high academic, behavioral and attendance expectations of MMSD. Emphasis is placed on overcoming all barriers that prevent children who are homeless from being successful.

With the high number of H/HM families attending Emerson, a team of professionals decided it was a good opportunity to look at the needs of the staff, families and students of this population. We wanted to know if the needs were being met that allow H/HM students to succeed and fully participate in school, thus providing the best opportunity for academic and social success. We hoped by that taking time to get to know more about our families and staff around the issue of mobility that we could successfully effect family school relations as well as community connections.

Our Project: The Beginning

Our study started with bringing together a team of three that would connect our Madison community with Emerson Elementary. Our team included Jani Koester (TEP teacher at Emerson Elementary), Erika H. Braunginn (Coordinator, Community Building), and Karen Kepler (Emerson Elementary Principal).

Our project started with basic research in the area of McKinney-Vento (Federal law that supports immediate enrollment and educational services to homeless children and youth) and the current research around the basic needs of homeless children and youth in schools. We were surprised to read that the McKinney-Vento law is interpreted in many ways around the country. Even within the same state, the interpretation of the law varies from district to district. Because of the variety of interpretations, we felt it would be important to assess our own staff and families understanding of the law and services. We contemplated if knowing the McKinney-Vento law would help meet the needs of homeless/highly mobile students and preserve their rights. Would understanding the law help gain common language and set a basis for district/school wide understanding our H/HM children?

We started our project with two surveys. The first survey was for H/HM families who started at Emerson this school year and who had experience with TEP. The second survey was given to all staff at Emerson. Both surveys focused on what people knew about McKinney-Vento, how connected staff and families were to each other and the larger Madison community, what they knew about making connections to community services and

if TEP services were helping to meet any of these needs. Our surveys provided us with some eye opening information.

Family Survey (*Attachment 1*) – We found that families were very appreciative of TEP services and that they felt very welcomed at Emerson. They loved Emerson and felt that their children were thriving there. They would like more communication with teachers at school and appreciated newsletters and notes when they went home. Families felt that their children were well served at Emerson.

Parents did not feel connected to the larger Madison community. They did not know how to connect to community services nor about the 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” services provided by the United Way. They did not feel connected to neighborhoods once they moved into permanent housing. Even our families that have been in the community for years did not fully feel grounded or connected to their neighbors and neighborhood centers/programs. They did not know what programs may be able to assist them in their areas of need. Most families did not know about the McKinney-Vento law or how it can support or affect them.

Staff surveys (*Attachment 2*) – At Emerson, even though TEP has been a part of the school for 18 years, we found that the staff did not really understand the McKinney-Vento law, though they knew it referred to homeless and highly mobile students. They were not well versed in the rights of homeless students and the schools’ responsibilities for service. Staff also had some ideas about signs or indicators of H/HM children but could use more up to date information.

The staff appreciated the support from the TEP program and felt that communication with parents was enhanced through this support. Being aware of family mobility, staff expressed a desire for more frequent updates of contact information for families. Staff also appreciated the overall resources that the TEP program provided at Emerson.

They felt connected to the children and engaged in some community-building activities to welcome all students. Although community-building was regarded as an important tool in welcoming our new students it did not always occur throughout the year, nor did it have the same intensity later in the year as it did at the beginning when everyone is new in their classroom.

Finally, staff did not fully know how to help families connect to some of the most useful community programs. Staff was curious about how to connect families to community services and many did not know about the 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” services.

We had planned to interview students individually but felt at this point in our research we needed to focus on what we had already knew about student perspectives and needs. TEP staff has daily contact with the students and we felt that Jani had a good idea of how the H/HM students were connecting and doing in the school.

We knew that if we could enhance relationships with our H/HM families then the connection to school would be stronger. The basis for building strong parent communities allows for staff to connect with parents on a variety of levels. We chose to focus on how to strengthen these connections while continuing to monitor student connections to school.

Project Points to Address

As we reviewed our surveys and began to look at what we already do to support our H/HM families, we brainstormed the following points to address:

Awareness:

- ☺ Increase awareness about McKinney-Vento law for staff and families
- ☺ Make posters/get 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” information for school staff and families
- ☺ Develop ideas for supporting H/HM families in our school

Home School Connections:

- ☺ Set up more communication between parents and staff regarding school concerns
- ☺ Connect with families as they enroll to provide more opportunities for school/home connections
- ☺ Provide more stability for homework pieces at home

Connecting Families to the Community:

- ☺ Connect families to community services before and after they are in permanent housing
- ☺ Connect families to local parenting groups if interested
- ☺ When case management by local support agencies who are working with H/HM families happens include children with their own goals especially if they need school support

School Staff Supports:

- ☺ Update the staff TIP book (a book put together years ago by TEP and Emerson staff with suggestions for supporting mobile students in the school) for working with H/HM students
- ☺ Provide a quick reference sheet of things to make sure to do or have in place for when new students arrive in their classrooms/schools
- ☺ Provide a quick reference sheet of indicators of homelessness for staff about H/HM students
- ☺ Improve home school communication
- ☺ Create an improved system to get new and current family addresses and phone numbers to school staff

New or Enhanced Projects

As a team, we decided that the following projects would be good places to focus our efforts. Some of the projects were already underway and we enhanced them, while others were new initiatives.

Awareness:

We felt that families would benefit from information about the McKinney-Vento law at intake. Along with this information, an opportunity to discuss what these rights meant and how they could access them was just as important. We also provided families with information about the 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” services and a sheet about local services so families would have some information to start with. We also felt that continuing to build community awareness with local businesses about H/HM families would help with additional services and supports.

Home School Connections:

Our families’ surveys clearly supported the desire our H/HM families had to stay involved and active with their children’s education. We gathered additional family information at enrollment in order to assist families and staff with current information and to provide immediate information to families about needed community services (***Attachment 6***). We also set up a date and time to do a two week check-in. This check-in would allow families to know how their children were doing in school and would give teachers an

opportunity to share their observations and concerns if they had any. It provided a positive experience for both staff and families to see how academic/social connections are going both at school and home (*Attachments 3 & 4*).

We wanted our families to feel truly connected to our school. We provided transportation for our H/HM families to any school event and we included meals for them as needed. Some of the events they attended included: fun night, open house, conferences, concerts, club performances, IEP meetings, science night, math night, school dance, class projects, class helper, school visits, etc. We made sure to schedule school activities in the evening when it was the easiest for our H/HM families to attend.

We tried to make sure that school was accessible on all fronts. We continued assistance with school supplies, clothes, field trip funds, rentals, birthday bags, books, and other school items as needed. We found that the school supplies were disappearing for homework. So, we had volunteers put together homework supply boxes to be used at home. We continued and updated our United Way Volunteer Opportunity web site projects. These projects included asking for tutors, birthday bags, and homework boxes. We also made sure we were part of the winter holiday book, so our families had holiday gifts if they needed them.

In order to share district wide the information we learned about our H/HM families, we developed a list of ideas to support H/HM families in our schools (*Attachment 5*). This is written so it can be shared district wide.

Connecting Families to the Community:

Our survey showed us that our families were not feeling very connected to our community. Through our experience we know that connecting to the community can help our families feel more grounded. Enhancing community connections can help develop a more stable support network and offers our H/HM students with some stability. We provided them with United Way 2-1-1 information at intake. By using the 2-1-1 services our families were able to find where community services were located, the hours they were open, how they could transport to them and what they needed to bring with them before they got there.

On a school level we discussed putting information in our school newsletter to let families know about free community events. We would put together information about the Emerson neighborhood; information about the local library, how to reach the homework help

line, other local services, religious communities, etc. This information would be offered to them at intake.

We plan to check with Family Enhancement about local parent groups and how they include H/HM families. We wanted to build a relationship with them to enhance these services and/or make referrals; allowing our H/HM families in crisis to receive services possibly moving up on waiting lists. While connecting with the local United Way group that meets on case management in our community, we wanted to see if they could prioritize H/HM children in their case management meetings, giving the children their own goals within the plans keeping them in the forefront of the family plans.

School Staff Supports:

Our survey clearly showed us that we needed to share with staff information about the McKinney-Vento law and discuss the rights of homeless and highly mobile children. This we want to keep in the forefront, so we plan share information at least twice a year at the April and August staff meetings.

We plan to provide some quick and easy references sheets for staff when they find out they have a new student. One of these sheets will be about ideas for supporting new students and what to put into place for them right away and the other will be more specific about H/HM students and who they are and how to provide supports for them on an ongoing basis at school.

We plan to re-examine our Staff Tip Book as a resource for supporting highly mobile children. We will simplify and update the information so that it is easier to access and use for all staff. From this resource more ideas for welcoming new students in the school will be available and old ideas will be enhanced (such as: 1st friends, Star of the Week, classroom community-building ideas, Big Brother Big Sister program)

We want to enhance communication with our H/HM families and staff by developing a notebook that has most current information about any of our H/HM families. This notebook will be located in an area that anyone can access when they need the most current information. Besides the notebook, a new routing slip that is easier to read will route most current information about families directly to classroom and office staff in a timelier manner.

Finally, once the two week check-in has occurred, a review of this information with key staff will occur to look at needed interventions in a timelier manner. We will be able to start collecting data and refer for further services if needed.

What We Learned: What the Families Taught Us

Homeless and highly mobile families want to be active in their children's education. Often they are prevented from this by a number of barriers; transportation, childcare for younger children, time away from work or mandatory meetings, health issues, physical mobility, etc. Removing these barriers help them become more connected to our school and stay involved in their children's education. Our H/HM families also appreciate the effort made by the schools to keep them more informed and aware of what is happening in the school. The effort we made to be inclusive needed to include transportation and/or meals. If these things were in place our families participated in every event offered to them.

Through our family and staff interactions we have had our understanding reinforced about how resilient our H/HM students are. They do not choose to be homeless. This is often thrust upon them. Our H/HM students respond from academic interventions and will fill in gaps quickly when provided the tools, tutoring, teacher support at their pace. Learning is something they want to do and do it willingly. School is often the most stable place for them at this point in their lives. By staying in contact with our H/HM parents we were able to keep on top of these things. Our two week check-ins proved to be invaluable tools for both staff and families.

The Staff at our school are committed to making school the best place possible for all children. They especially work hard to make sure our H/HM students are welcomed and served to the best of our ability. The new attempts at increasing communication enhanced all the other things we had in place already. The opportunity to have up to date information and two week check ins encouraged more family participation and allowed easier transitions when difficulties arose. The staff is committed to continue working on community building, providing more opportunities for building relationships and enhancing the ones that are just beginning to form.

We are providing more opportunities for all our families to participate in school and keeping those lines of communication open and current. Our project will continue to keep awareness in the forefront, already we are on the agenda for August's staff meeting. Staff

has been very responsive to ideas and suggestions moving toward initiatives beyond our own project to include and stay connected with our H/HM families.

Our Madison community is very willing to learn about homelessness and high mobility. Finding ways for them to become involved has been part of the reward of this project. Establishing connections between our families and community is an area that needs to be nurtured and strengthened. It has become a time consuming opportunity, but one that has provided immense support for the families.

Encouraging school and community connections with families has increased the attendance of our families at school events and in the classrooms. Parents feel more welcomed and involved in the school due to the time and energy put into these upfront efforts. These connections have been very positive and have made the times when needing to have more challenging conversation with parents (i.e. discipline issues) easier. We believe, that because of these efforts, families have wanted to stay at Emerson after they have found permanent housing. They have made huge efforts to remain at our school. Some are using bus tickets to come across town on long rides because they truly feel welcomed and wanted. We have found that connections are stronger with parents if the effort is made right away. Communication takes time and work but it is worth it, especially if it means a parent/family feels connected.

Where to go from here...

This journey has brought our team to different places in our lives. The project has made a difference for many families this year and in future years. We have much to learn from our H/HM families. We must take the time to listen to their ideas and concerns. Our staff has much to give to the children they work with and are willing to give their best to each student no matter how long they are at our school. We as a staff and community are committed to connecting families to school, this will continue as an on going effort with our H/HM families. We will continue our commitment to raise awareness and work with the TEP program to further support systems for our school staff.

The future holds new ideas and adventures that we haven't yet discovered. Asking students directly how they are feeling connected and welcomed is an avenue to explore. One of these endeavors may be to connect preschool-aged children to programs while their siblings are at school. We also need to focus our efforts on the needs of H/HM high-school

students. The need for continual discussion and awareness in the district will never go away, as new members join the district and old staff could use refreshers as the laws are consistently changing.

Our project has made a difference for the families we worked with this year. We welcome feedback and questions; feel free to connect with me.

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Attachment 1

General Information – Family Survey

My relationship with my child (i.e.: mother, uncle, etc.): _____

I have this many total children at each school level:

Elementary: _____ Middle: _____ High: _____ Adult: _____

How long I have lived in Madison: _____

My child has attended this many schools (including Emerson): _____

My race/ethnicity: _____

My primary language: _____

My secondary language (if any): _____

Section 1: School Environment, Services, and Parent/Child Interactions

Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n/a
1. My child feels accepted at Emerson.	4	3	2	1	
2. My child has enough support at school.	4	3	2	1	
3. I support my child with his/her homework at home every night.	4	3	2	1	
4. I help my child prepare for tests.	4	3	2	1	
5. I talk with my child about his/her school day every night.	4	3	2	1	
6. I frequently read to my child at home.	4	3	2	1	
7. I think it's important to participate in my child's education.	4	3	2	1	
8. My child has good attendance in school.	4	3	2	1	
9. I feel comfortable contacting the school with any questions/concerns about my child.	4	3	2	1	
10. I feel welcome at Emerson.	4	3	2	1	
11. I know the grade-level outcomes for m child.	4	3	2	1	
12. I have frequent communication with other parents.	4	3	2	1	
13. I know how to contact my child's teacher.	4	3	2	1	
14. I know who to contact at Emerson if my child has a problem at school.	4	3	2	1	
15. I can name at least one person at Emerson who I know and who knows me.	4	3	2	1	

16. Emerson staff have clearly explained to me my family’s rights due to our residency situation.	4	3	2	1
17. Emerson staff have clearly explained to me my family’s choices due to our residency situation	4	3	2	1
18. I attend most school events.	4	3	2	1

19. What, if any, situation might keep you or limit you from participating in your child’s education?

(check all that apply)

- Language
- Health issues
- Transportation
- Work schedule
- Childcare
- I don’t have enough time
- My stress
- Not my responsibility
- I’m not interested
- I’m unaware of events and/or meetings
- No books, games or school supplies at home
- I’m not comfortable at Emerson, judged by school staff
- I’m not comfortable at Emerson, judged by other parents
- Other: _____

Section 2: Knowledge of, Access to, and Communication with Community/Community Services

Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n/a
1. I know about the family-friendly community events.	4	3	2	1	
2. I know about the free family-friendly community events.	4	3	2	1	
3. I know where to go/who to call when my child is having problems at home.	4	3	2	1	
4. I know how to access the local food pantries.	4	3	2	1	
5. I know how to prepare healthy meals for my child.	4	3	2	1	
6. I have consistent access to reliable transportation.	4	3	2	1	
7. I regularly participate in my local community events.	4	3	2	1	
8. I know the name of at least one of my neighbors.	4	3	2	1	
9. I feel like my neighbors are there when I need them.	4	3	2	1	
10. I am there for my neighbors when they need me.	4	3	2	1	
11. I know where to go if/when I need help paying my rent.	4	3	2	1	
12. I feel safe in my neighborhood.	4	3	2	1	
13. My child feels safe in our neighborhood.	4	3	2	1	

Section 3: Communication with your child's school.

Please mark the line which best describes your common communication policies.

1. I currently communicate with my child's school through (top 3):

- My child
- Phone
- Notes
- Email
- Home visits
- No communication
- Other

2. I prefer to communicate with my child's school through (top 3):

- My child
- Phone
- Notes
- Email
- Home visits
- No communication
- Other

3. I communicate with my child's school on an average of:

- Once a day
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Never

4. When there is communication with my child's school, who usually initiates the communication?

- Principal
- Teacher
- Social Worker
- You
- No communication

5. I find out about school news from (check all that apply):

- School newsletter
- My child
- Classroom newsletter
- Neighbor
- Family member
- Newspaper
- Backpack mail
- Phone calls
- Computer/internet

Attachment 2**General Information – Staff Survey**

I am a: Teacher ____ Support Staff ____ Assistant ____

I have been at Emerson this many years (including this year): ____

I have been in education for this many years (including this year): ____

My race/ethnicity: _____

I live in the city of Madison: Yes No

I live in Dane County: Yes No

Section 1: School Environment & Services**H&HM= homeless & highly mobile****“classroom” = context where you work with Emerson children**

	All the Time	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Never	Not sure
I feel like my H&HM students receive adequate services in school.	4	3	2	1	
I know where to go at Emerson for support for myself when I have H&HM students in my classroom.	4	3	2	1	
I clearly understand the services that TEP offers to H&HM students in school.	4	3	2	1	
I clearly understand the services that TEP offers to H&HM families.	4	3	2	1	
I feel comfortable having H&HM students in my classroom.	4	3	2	1	
I think other students are comfortable having H&HM students in the classroom.	4	3	2	1	
I feel comfortable talking about home life when I know a child in my classroom is homeless.	4	3	2	1	
I know how to communicate with the family/caregiver of my H&HM students.	4	3	2	1	
I think my communication with the family/caregiver of my H&HM students is important.	4	3	2	1	
I think communicating with the family/caregiver of my H&HM students is easy.	4	3	2	1	
I am adequately informed about the H&HM students in my classroom.	4	3	2	1	
I am adequately informed about the family/caregivers of the H&HM students in my classroom.	4	3	2	1	
Individualized information about new H&HM students is helpful. (i.e.: PLAA, PMA, medical)	4	3	2	1	
H&HM students should be treated differently than the other students in my classroom.	4	3	2	1	
New H&HM students can join my classroom on their very first day of school.	4	3	2	1	

On any given year, how many identified homeless students attend Emerson?

On any given year, how many identified homeless students attend MMSD-wide?

At Emerson, who has the most updated information on H&HM students?

Name 3 key people at Emerson who you can go with questions about your H&HM students:

What do you do to build community within your classroom during the first week of school?

I have utilized TEP to:

- Access school resources for my H&HM students
- Access school resources for myself
- Access community resources for my H&HM students
- Transportation for my H&HM students
- Access support in my classroom
- Fieldtrip support
- Communication to the homes of my H&HM students
- I have not utilized TEP

On student's first day of school, it is most beneficial for them to do which of the following (rank top 3):

- Assessments
- Join the classroom
- Tour the school
- Have a 1-on-1 in the classroom
- Enroll the student and start them in the classroom the 2nd day.
- Tour and Join the classroom only
- Tour and Assessments only
- Join the classroom and Assessments only
- Tour, Assessments, and Join the classroom
- I really don't know

Section 2: Knowledge of Homeless, Mobility, and High Mobility Issues

	All the Time	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Never	Not sure
I understand the McKinney-Vento rights of my H&HM students.	4	3	2	1	
I understand what Section 8 means.	4	3	2	1	
I think that H&HM families have priority access to community programs.	4	3	2	1	
I think that H&HM families have priority access to community waitlists.	4	3	2	1	
Homeless families are guaranteed a Section 8 certificate.	4	3	2	1	
I know the signs/symptoms of H&HM in my students.	4	3	2	1	
I feel like my H&HM students receive adequate services in the community.	4	3	2	1	
I know where to go in the community for services for my H&HM students.	4	3	2	1	
I know how my H&HM students get to and from school each day.	4	3	2	1	
I have a clear understanding on the rights of H&HM children.	4	3	2	1	
I understand the differences between homelessness, mobility, and high mobility.	4	3	2	1	

What does Section 8 mean?

How many definitions are there for Section 8? _____

What are the uses for the following numbers:

911: _____

411: _____

211: _____

In the city of Madison, how long do people have to live on one place before their considered stable (not homeless)? _____

Name at least 5 symptoms/signs where you could identify that a student is homeless.

What are the definitions for the following?

Mobility:

High Mobility:

Homeless:

Attachment 3

Parent 2 weeks Contact Form

Student Name _____
Parent Name _____
Teacher Name _____
Current place of residence _____
Current Phone number _____

Date of enrollment _____

Date of Check in _____

How has attendance been?

Any tardies? If yes reasons for tardies?

How do you think your child is doing at school?

Does your child talk about school at home? How is that conversation going?

Does your child read at home? How often?
By themselves or with you?

How is homework going at home?

Do you have the supplies you need to do homework?

Do you have any academic/school concerns?
If Yes –plan with parent to address issue(s)

How are your child's social skills at home?
With peers?
With adults?

Are you worried about their language? Articulation / Language use

How do your child's connections to the classroom seem to be going?
Connections to classmates?
Connections to school?

Have you had teacher contact yet? Positive reasons/Challenging reasons

Would a teacher conference be helpful or meaningful at this point? Y/N
When would be a good time for a conference?
Anything else you would like to add about your child?

Attachment 4

Teacher 2-week Contact Form

Student Name _____
Parent Name _____
Teacher Name _____
Current place of residence _____
Current Phone number _____

Date of enrollment _____
Date of Check in _____

How has attendance been?
Any tardies?

How is the student currently doing in:
Reading:

Math:

Writing:

Other subjects:

Engagement in class discussions:

Any need for support or adaptations needed?
Plan if Yes

How are Social Skills?
With peers?
With adults?

How is language? Articulation/Language usage
How do connections to the classroom seem to be going?
Connections to classmates?
Connections to school?

Have you had parent contact yet? Positive reasons/Challenging reasons

Would a parent conference be helpful or meaningful at this point? Y/N
When would be a good time for a conference?
Anything else you would like to add about this student?

Attachment 5

Some Ideas for Supporting Homeless/Highly Mobile Families

Jani Koester, TEP Emerson Elementary, 608-204-2063

Start with Awareness:

- Share with staff information about the McKinney-Vento law and discuss the rights of homeless and highly mobile children (Aug staff meetings)
- Connect with United Way to share with staff information about the 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” services

Make Home School Connections:

- Gather family information at enrollment to assist families and staff in community information and school information
- Put together homework boxes to assist with needed items to do homework at home
- Do a 2-week check-in with teachers and families to see how academic/social connections are going both at school and home
- Put together information about the Emerson neighborhood for new to the area families; library, homework help line, local services, etc..
- Provide transportation for H/HM families to school events, include meals when needed. (fun night, open house, conferences, concerts, club performances, IEP meetings, science night, math night, school dance, class projects, class helper, school visits, etc)
- Continue assistance with school supplies, clothes, field trip funds, rentals, birthday bags, books, other school items as needed.
- Schedule school activities in the evening when families find it easier to attend them.

Help Connect Families to the Community:

- Give out United Way 2-1-1 “First Call for Help” services cards to give to families
- Gather monthly information to put in the monthly school newsletter about free community events for families
- Check with Family Enhancement about parent groups and the inclusion of homeless/highly mobile families
- Check with Community Case management providers to see if doing case management specifically for children is possible
- Put together information about the Emerson neighborhood for new to the area families; library, homework help line, local services, etc

Strengthen School Staff Supports:

- Share with staff information about the McKinney-Vento law and discuss the rights of homeless and highly mobile children (April and Aug staff meetings)
- Put together a quick teacher reference sheet with suggestions for ways to welcome and support new students
- Put together a quick reference sheet on indicators of H/HM students, so that staff can watch for signs and symptoms during school
- Re-examine Staff Tip Book as a resource for supporting mobile children
- Encourage more Welcoming activities for new students in the school (1st friends, Star of the Week, community-building in classrooms, Big Brother Big Sister program)
- Continue United Way Volunteer Opportunity web site projects (tutors, birthday bags, homework boxes–holiday bk., etc)
- Develop a notebook (by office phone) that has most current information about H/HM families – so that there is one spot that has the most current info.
- Develop a routing slip to route new family information for school staff
- Provide intervention for struggling students as soon as possible, collect achievement data as necessary, refer for further services if needed.

Attachment 6

Good day _____ (teacher name) _____

A new TEP student _____ will be starting in your classroom (Mon. Tues. Weds. Thurs. Fri.) _____. *McKinney-Vento federal law states that all homeless students are entitled to start in their classrooms the day of enrollment.*

From 7:30 until 8:30, I will give them their school supplies and take them on a tour of the school while meeting key folks in the building. During this time you should have time to let your class know about the new students and find a space for them to sit (and locker if there is time). We will arrive at your classroom by 8:30. Please let me know if this conflicts with a special schedule.

What we currently know about the student (boxes left unchecked indicate unknown information)

- Student Strengths:
- TAGS _____
- ELL _____
- EEN _____
- Previous reading interventions
- Previous math interventions
- Glasses _____
- Hearing aid _____

Parent name(s) _____

Siblings:

Housing is located at _____

Phone contact with parent(s)

- Family Strengths:
- Safety concerns:
- Health concerns:
- Parent concerns:
- Family concerns:
- School History:

Other things you might want to know:

Other Resources referred to in paper:

Staff Tip Book – Madison Metropolitan School district put together a resource of information that provides a variety of information about supporting H/HM students on our schools. The project was done in conjunction between the Transition Education Program and staff at Emerson Elementary.

This book was modified by Project Hope (Virginia Dept of Education) into a Tips for Supporting Mobile Students packet Please contact them for more information.....e-mail: homlss@wm.edu

Information about the Transition Education Program can be found at <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/hep/>

Information about Emerson Elementary can be found at <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/007.htm>

Emerson's website is <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/emerson/>