

DATE: Monday, October 2, 2017
TO: Principals, Vice Principals, Guidance Counselors, Clerks, Community Engagement Specialists, CSTs, BNATs and all School Staff Involved with the School Registration Process
FROM: Gabrielle D. Ramos-Solomon
Chief - Division of School Planning, Student Enrollment, Data Transparency and Family Support
RE: Enrollment & Registration of Students Impacted by Hurricane Maria

BACKGROUND:

Earlier this month a devastating Category 5 hurricane hit the island of Puerto Rico, knocking out 100% of the power across the island. Nearly three weeks later, families are still without basic amenities like clean water or food. It is reported that schools are likely to be closed for months.

Currently, there are limited flights in and out of San Juan. Commercial flights departing the island were slated to begin the first two weeks of October, though these continue to be delayed and cancelled as flights are re-prioritized for relief aid.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census 35,000 people self-identified as Puerto Rican in Newark. It is likely that many families who have relatives in Newark will relocate over the next several weeks and months as flights become more available, *though the rate at which students and families will arrive to Newark is unpredictable.* Nevertheless, we will do all we can to support any and all families who relocate to Newark from Puerto Rico.

NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS:

Given the devastating circumstances Puerto Ricans currently face, Newark Public Schools will do all it can to be sure that students are enrolled and registered in school and provided with necessary supports as quickly as possible. Our goals are:

- 1) **To enroll students in school as soon as possible with no barriers to entry.**
- 2) **To keep students together with siblings and family members as much as possible.**
- 3) **To ensure students/families have information and resources needed as they transition into school.**

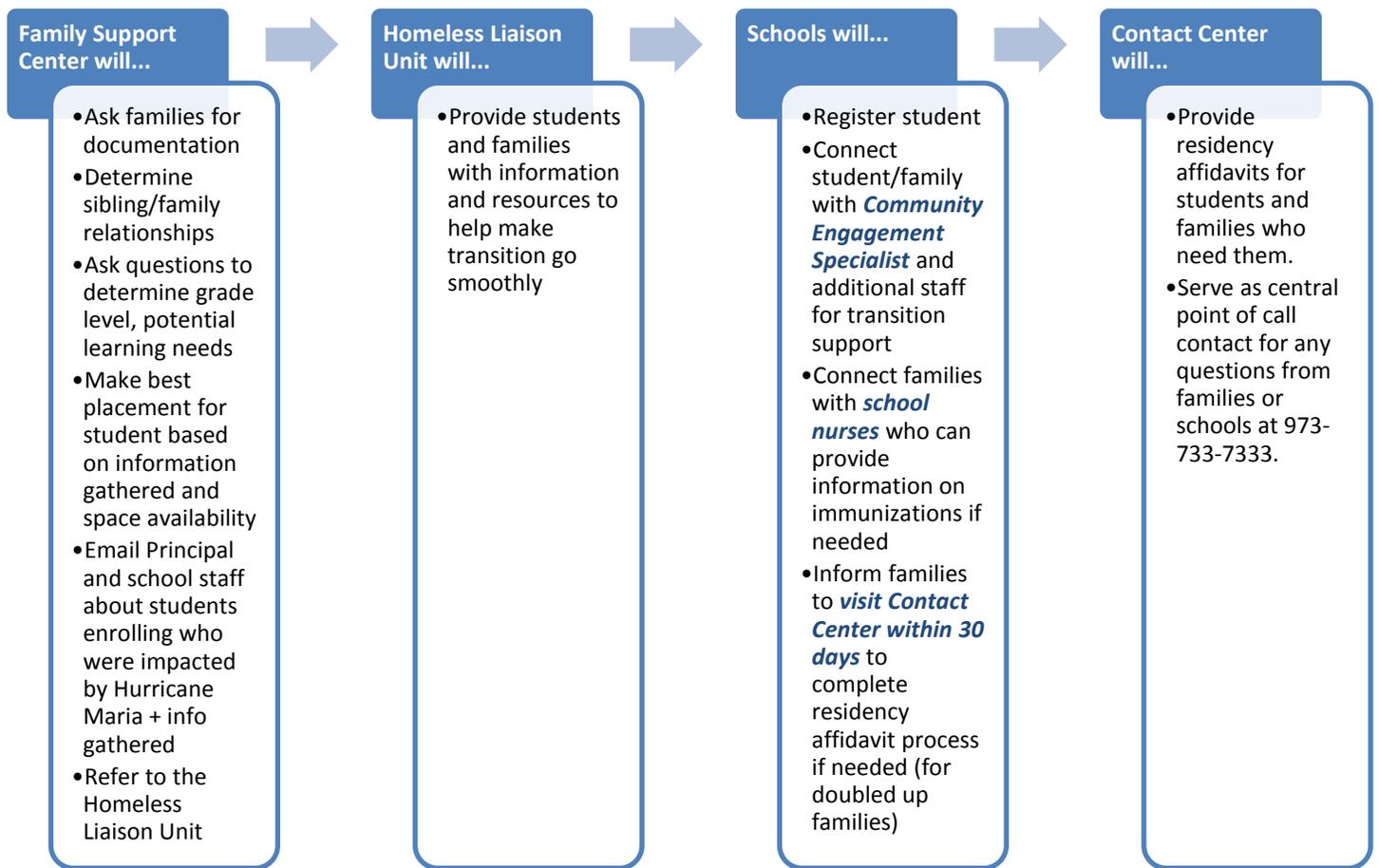
We anticipate that the district will face challenges in enrolling and registering students; however, ***none of the below should delay enrollment or registration of students:***

Challenges	Our Response: Upholding Students' Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students arriving from Puerto Rico will likely have no documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This includes birth certificates, immunization records, or residency documentation. ○ This also includes transcripts and/or report cards, IEPs or other documentation that indicates students receive special education or bilingual education services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These students are considered homeless/displaced under McKinney Vento • Because of their status, <u>students do not need documentation to begin school. Please do not delay registration for any student who does not have documentation at the time of registration (see state memo attached)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Students do not need immunization records to begin school.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anyone arriving from outside of the state or country has 30 days to provide immunization records. After the 30 days the families will need to go to the Health Department (free), a school based clinic (FQHC) or a provider of their choice to receive vaccinations. ▪ Dr. Leuze is sending out information to school nurses regarding community providers who can support with immunizations. ○ <u>Students do not need residency affidavits to begin school.</u> (see attached state memo).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may not arrive with parents/guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students/families with <u>no proof of legal guardianship cannot have enrollment/registration delayed</u> (see attached state memo).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level placement may be unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade levels will be determined based on information we can gather from family. If no information is available, students will be placed based on age similar to placement of students who come from other countries.

DISTRICT PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER:

Here's how we will work together to help families and students navigate school enrollment and registration:



If you have questions, please contact us!

Samantha Lopez

Executive Director of Family Support

s2lopez@nps.k12.nj.us

Family Support Center

Denise Rodriguez - *Senior Manager*

d7rodriguez@nps.k12.nj.us

For questions around student placements, documentation received from families, overall registration process

Contact Center

973-733-7333

For questions about residency affidavits, overall registration process



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Commissioner

August 29, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

ROUTE TO: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Principals, School Nurses and All Staff Involved in Enrollment

FROM: Peggy McDonald, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services

SUBJECT: Reminder: Enrollment of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Annually, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) provides guidance to assist school districts in fulfilling federal and state requirements regarding the enrollment of students who are experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth. This is done to ensure that these children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other students. New Jersey school districts should review this memo and undertake steps to revise practices and/or policies that may act as a barrier to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youth in school.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment, such as proof of residency, school and immunization records, and birth certificates. Many students, especially those living in "doubled-up" situations, will not be able to provide proof of residency. Though proof of residency affidavits may be intended to ensure that only eligible students are able to enroll in a district school, the use of such forms as a requirement for enrollment, or continued enrollment, constitutes an educational barrier for students who do not reside in permanent living situations. Therefore, the requirement to present the aforementioned and other documents normally needed for school enrollment is waived for students experiencing homelessness.

School districts must immediately enroll or continue to enroll students while the district reviews the parent's and/or student's claims. If the district disputes the claims of homelessness, it must continue the student's enrollment for the duration of the dispute resolution process, as described at *N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.7*. The requirement for immediate enrollment also applies to unaccompanied homeless youth who lack proof of guardianship.

Please distribute this memorandum to principals, school nurses and physicians, and all staff involved in the student enrollment process.

Should you have questions or require additional information on the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness, contact your [Executive County Superintendent of Schools](#), or the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs at (609) 984-4974 or homeless@doe.state.nj.us.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Kimberley Harrington, Commissioner
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Karen Campbell
Anthony Hearn
Danielle Anderson Thomas
Executive County Superintendents
Executive County Business Officials
Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group