**STATE LEVEL HOMELESS EDUCATION DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

1. **Right to State Level Appeal:** If a parent or guardian of a homeless student or an unaccompanied homeless student disagrees with either the school administrative unit of origin’s or the school administrative unit of current residence’s determination of eligibility or best interest and remains in disagreement after completing all steps of the local dispute resolution process, the local decision may be appealed to the State Department of Education.

2. **Forms and Instructions:** The Department will make forms and instructions for the state level appeal process available on its public website. The local liaison must assist the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless student in assembling the appeal packet and assure that it is sent to and received by the State Homeless Education Coordinator. The appeal packet must include the school administrative unit’s original letter of determination, all documentation related to the local dispute resolution process, and the State dispute resolution appeal form.

3. **Initial State Review:** Upon receipt of the packet, the State Homeless Education Coordinator will review the materials provided, request any additional information deemed necessary to make his or her determination, and document all additional information received in response to the request(s). Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal packet, the Coordinator will provide written findings and a determination to the disputant and the school administrative unit(s). If all parties are satisfied with the resolution provided by the Coordinator, this finding will constitute the final resolution.

4. **Final Review by the Commissioner:** If any party remains dissatisfied with the determination of the Coordinator, a final appeal may be made to the Commissioner of Education. That party has seven (7) working days to inform the Coordinator in writing of their appeal to the Commissioner. The Coordinator will provide the parties no less than ten (10) working days to respond in writing to the proposed determination, and will convey the original appeal packet, the proposed determination, and any timely written responses to the Commissioner. At the Commissioner’s request, a hearing may be held to clarify issues related to the dispute. In any case, the Commissioner will issue a decision within twenty (20) working days of receiving the appeal. The Commissioner’s decision is final.

5. **Disagreements between School Administrative Units**: In situations where the school unit of origin and the school unit of residence are in disagreement over a determination of eligibility or best interest, either unit may request informal assistance from the State Homeless Education Coordinator. Should the dispute persist after such consultation, either district may initiate the state level dispute resolution process described above. The parent, guardian or homeless student must receive copies of all documents sent to the Department with respect to the dispute, and must be given the opportunity to submit their own statement and/or documents with respect to the dispute. The local liaison must assist the parent, guardian or homeless student in assembling any statement or documents they wish to submit and ensuring that they are sent to and received by the State Homeless Education Coordinator. In any situation where the school units of origin and residence are in disagreement, the student must be immediately enrolled and receiving services in the school chosen by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth until the dispute resolution process is concluded.