



OUR HOME

**Opening Doors: Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth
ILLINOIS MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

September 2011

Volume 10 - Issue 1

Homeless Data In SIS

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is requesting that school districts provide more detailed information on homeless children and unaccompanied youth through the Student Information System (SIS). This tracking system will give those who work with homeless children and youth a better idea of what areas of need should be addressed. Information on the homeless data elements can be found at:
<http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/homeless.pdf>
Please work with your district staff to identify and report this very at-risk population.

To receive an electronic copy of OUR HOME, please send your request to:
mworthin@roe26.net.
This current issue of OUR HOME and back issues are available at
<http://homelessed.net/resource/newsletters.htm>

ISBE Homeless Assistance Hotline
800/215-6379
Marica Cullen,
State Coordinator
Curriculum & Instruction
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
Phone 217/557-7323
Fax 217/782-7937

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Welcome Back!

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Sharon Neely and Vicki Hodges, ISBE Homeless Education Staff

As the 2011-2012 school year approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back. Working together, we can ensure a successful educational experience for homeless children throughout our state.

As we all are experiencing financial hardships coupled with natural disasters in several regions of Illinois, please be aware there could be an increase in homeless families. Do your best to ensure that homeless children receive the needed services that all children deserve.

Please take the time to place current posters and distribute current materials that have been made available to you. Lead Area Liaisons will be offering trainings to administrators and their staff. These trainings include:

- ◆ Identification
- ◆ Immediate enrollment
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Other area support services
- ◆ Student Information Systems (SIS)

Try to make yourself available and allow staff to participate in these important trainings. McKinney-Vento 101 trainings are available at no cost to you by ISBE staff.

Have a great school year!

Locating Community Resources for Homeless Students

Homeless students often have needs outside the classroom which may include finding shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and counseling. The following tips may help:

- ◆ Use personal connections at a community-based agency to ask where they would refer homeless families for basic services.
- ◆ Call local organizations and ask for referrals to free or low-cost meals, shelter, and other basic needs, and if/when they sponsor special community programs for families in need.
- ◆ Check out resources as personally as possible by making a visit or a call to learn what services they really provide.
- ◆ Identify both public and private resources.
- ◆ Keep up-to-date with resources' phone numbers, addresses, and services by calling periodically.
- ◆ Some resources do not want to become widely-known as they may be providing services with very limited supplies. Find out their philosophy from the start.
- ◆ Avoid handing out resource listings that have a definite order; the first resource on the list can become overwhelmed while the final ones will be under-utilized.
- ◆ Carefully match families' needs to service providers' resources.
- ◆ Try to locate resources for services beyond the obvious, such as service clubs that provide mentoring or tutoring, camps for children, or summer employment for youth.
- ◆ Contacts you make at agencies may become your allies in getting children into school. Ask them to call you when they "hear" about homeless families in the community.

Upcoming Events

Sharing A Vision Conference

Springfield, IL
 Crown Plaza Hotel
 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway
 Springfield, IL
 Sept. 26-28, 2011
<http://www.sharingavision.org/conf/2011/index.html>

23rd Annual National Dropout Prevention Conference

Schaumburg, IL
 Renaissance Hotel and
 Conference Center
 October 9-12, 2011
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/conferences/23rd-annual-ndpn-conference>

Illinois Principals Association Annual Conference

Peoria, IL
 October 16 - 18, 2011
<http://www.ilprincipals.org>

NAEHCY 23rd Annual Conference

Pittsburgh, PA
 Pittsburgh Westin
 Convention Center
 November 5-8, 2011
<http://naehcy.org>

National Refugee and Immigrant Conference

Holiday Inn
 Chicago-Mart Plaza
 350 N. Orleans
 Chicago, IL
 November 7-8, 2011
<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/refugee.html>

97th Annual Illinois Association of School Boards Joint Annual Conference

Chicago, IL
 Hyatt Regency, Sheraton
 Chicago and Swiss Hotel
 November 18-20, 2011
<http://www.iasb.com/>

Transportation Services for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Patricia Rivera, Consultant, Opening Doors Project

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act requires a school district to provide or arrange transportation for homeless students:

- ◆ to and from their school of origin at the request of the family,
- ◆ to provide transportation for homeless students that is comparable to services provided to other students living in the attendance area; and
- ◆ to provide transportation for homeless students to eliminate barriers to school enrollment.

School of Origin and Transportation

One of the most important services a school district will provide homeless students, other than enrollment, will be transporting students to and from their school of origin when continuing at the school of origin is in the student's best interest. Transporting students from where they are currently living – in a shelter, doubled up with relatives, caregivers, or friends, or in transitional housing – to the school of origin is essential to stabilize the students in school, to reduce school mobility, and to support student achievement.

The U.S. Department of Education's guidance on transportation lists factors that families and districts can consider to determine the student's best interest, including:

- ◆ the student's age and need for special services,
- ◆ the commuting distance to the school of origin,
- ◆ the length of time the family expects to stay in temporary or transitional housing, and
- ◆ the time remaining in the school year.

School District Responsibilities

Although the McKinney-Vento Act permits students in homeless situations to remain in their school of origin despite their residential instability, lack of transportation commonly prevents them from continuing there. Therefore, school districts are required to inform families of their right to transportation and to provide and pay for transportation for the student. Transportation to and from the school of origin will be either intra-district (within the same district) or inter-district (between two different districts). If a dispute regarding enrollment or transportation has been filed, the student is entitled to receive transportation services while the dispute is being resolved.

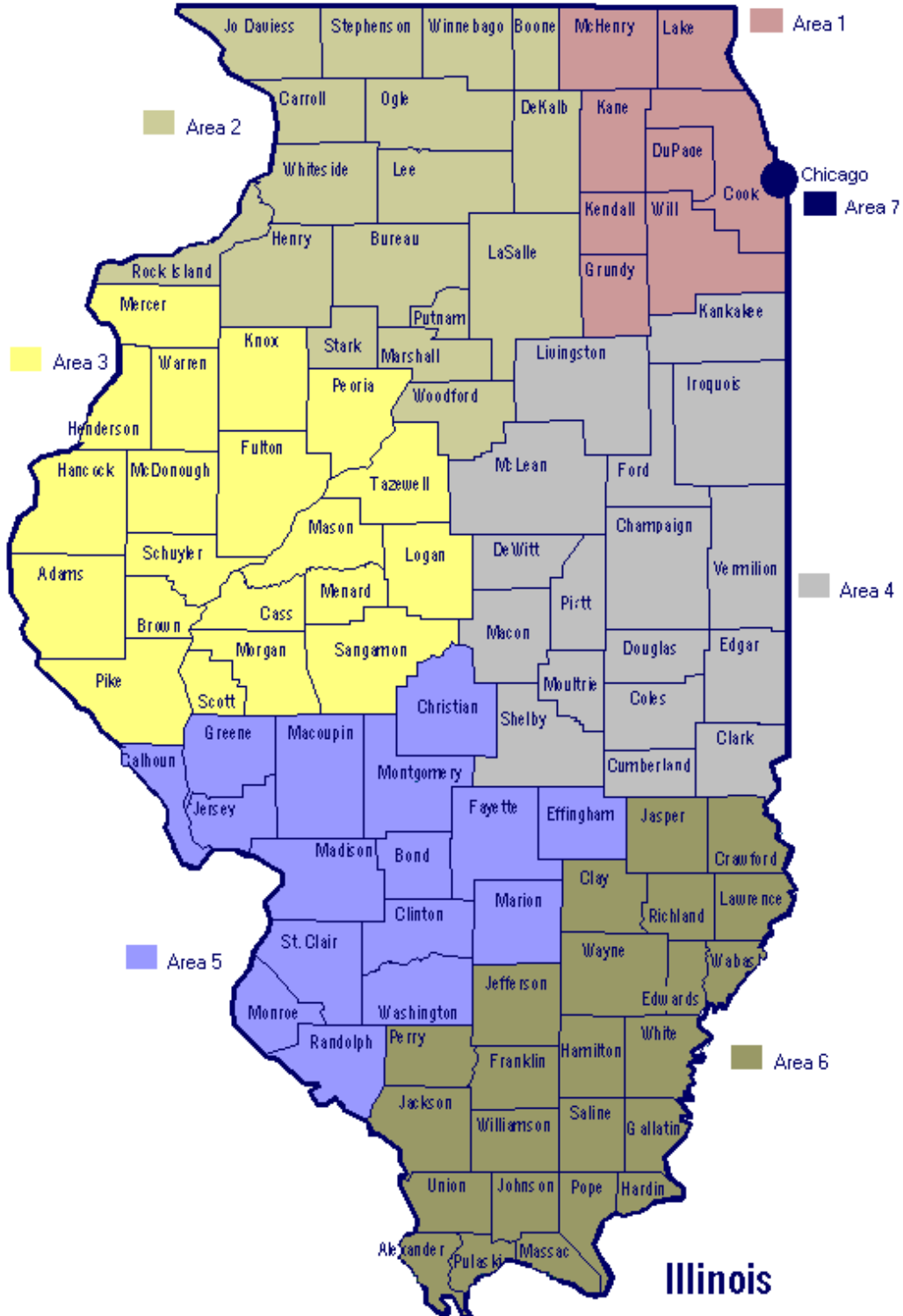
Transportation Costs

School districts may be tempted to include the cost of transportation as a factor in a feasibility analysis, but such consideration must not interfere with a student's right to receive transportation services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Currently, the cost of transportation services must be borne by the district and cannot be paid for using Title I, Part A funds. If the transportation is inter-district, the districts involved would share transportation costs.

For more information to develop a school district transportation plan, or ideas to defray the cost of transportation services, the brochure, *Removing Barriers to Transportation Services for Homeless Students: A Guide for Homeless Education Liaisons*, is available from the Lead Area Liaison in your region, or online at www.homelessed.net.

Illinois McKinney-Vento Lead Liaison Programs

<http://homelessed.net>



ILLINOIS LEAD LIAISON PROGRAMS

Area 1 – Erin Locke, Lead Liaison – elocke@willcountyllinois.com - Regional Office of Education #56
Address: 702 West Maple Street
City State Zip: New Lenox, IL 60451
Phone: (815) 740-4326 Fax: (815) 740-4788
Web Site: <http://www.willroe.org>

Area 2 – Deb Foust, Lead Liaison - dfoust@leeogle.org - Regional Office of Education #47
Address: 7772 Clinton Street
City State Zip: Dixon, IL 61021
Phone: (815) 652-2054 ext. 242 Fax: (815) 652-2053
Web Site: www.leeogle.org

Area 3 - Eileen Worthington, Lead Liaison - mworthin@roe26.net - Regional Office of Education #26
Address: 130 South Lafayette Street
City State Zip: Macomb, IL 61455
Phone: (309) 837-4821 Fax: (309) 837-2887
Web Site: www.roe26.net

Area 4 – Jim Moberly, Lead Liaison - jmoberly@i-kan.org - Regional Office of Education #32
Address: 50 Industrial Park Drive
City State Zip: Kankakee, IL 60901
Phone: (815) 937-2902 Fax: (815) 933-1742
Web Site: www.ikan.k12.il.us/

Area 5 – Ann Schwarm, Lead Liaison - aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us - Regional Office of Education #3
Address: 1805 W. Fletcher St.
City State Zip: Vandalia IL 62471
Phone: (618) 283-5011 Fax: (618) 283-5013
Web Site: www.fayette.k12.il.us/roeweb

Area 6 – Mickey Sullivan, Lead Liaison - msullivan@roe21.org - Regional Office of Education #21
Address: Williamson County Courthouse - 200 W. Jefferson St.
City State Zip: Marion, IL 62959
Phone: (618) 998-1283 ext. 212 Fax: (618) 998-9226
Web Site: www.roe21.k12.il.us

Area 7 – Tremel Daniel, Lead Liaison - tdaniel@cps.k12.il.us - Chicago Public Schools District #299
Address: Chicago Public Schools, Office of School Coordination - 125 S. Clark
City State Zip: Chicago, IL 60603
Phone: (773) 553-2242 Fax: (773) 553-2182
Web Site: www.cps.edu

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Phone: (217) 557-7323

Fax: (217) 782-7937

Web Site: isbe.net/homeless

OPENING DOORS – <http://homelessed.net>

Adult Learning Resource Center

2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Phone: (224) 366-8620 Fax: (847) 378-6225

ROE 26 – Hancock/McDonough

130 S. Lafayette – Suite 200, Macomb, IL 61455

Phone: (309) 837-4821 Fax: (309) 837-2887

New From Opening Doors

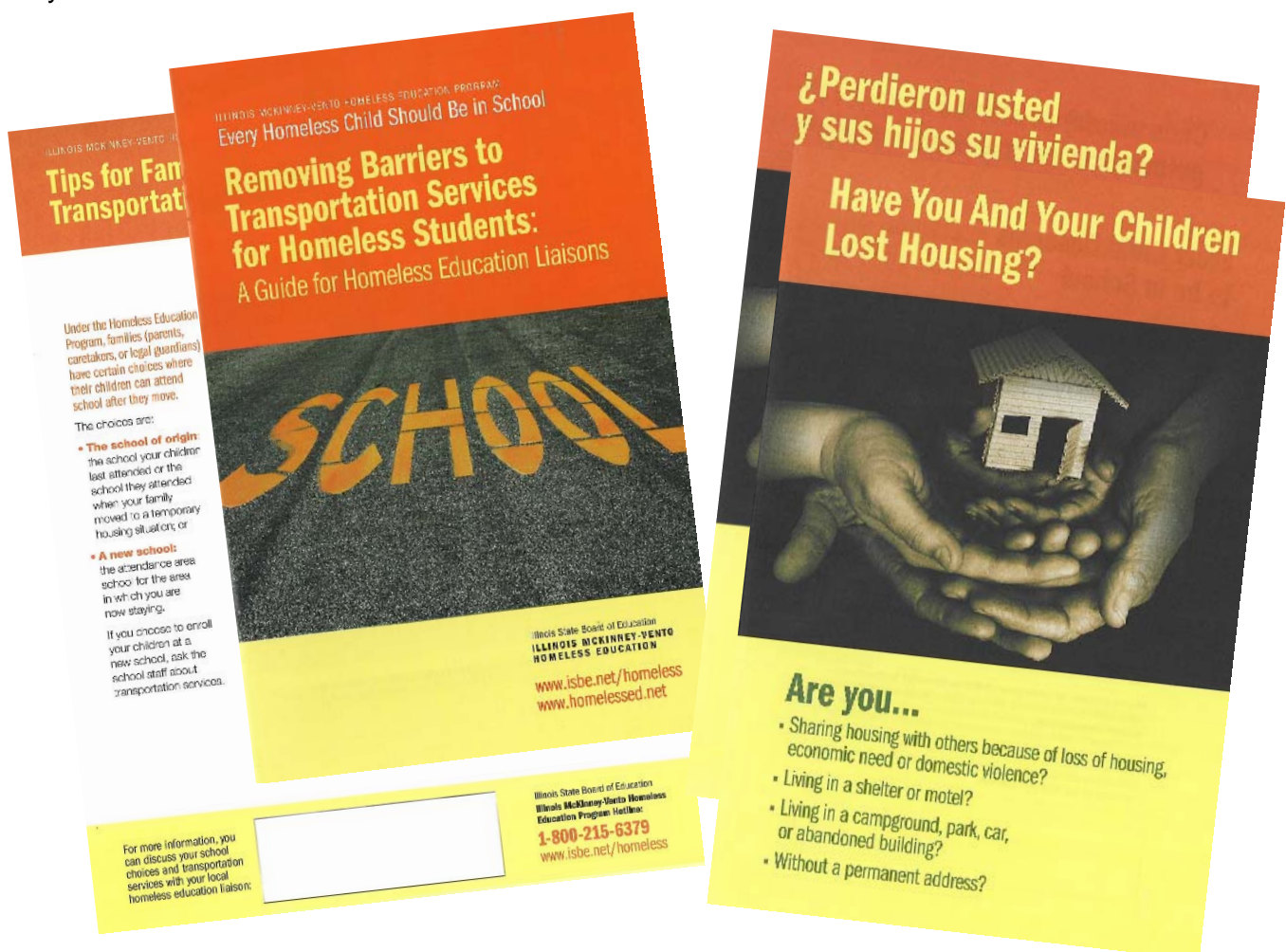
Parent Outreach Brochure

The brochure, *Have you and your children lost housing?*, was developed for parents as a companion piece to the school poster that increases awareness of services for children, youth, and their families who are experiencing homelessness. The brochure, available in English and in Spanish, summarizes the rights and services available to students, including remaining at their school of origin.

Local liaisons can personalize the brochure by adding their school or district contact information before making it available to parents.

Removing Barriers to Transportation Services for Homeless Students

The brochure, *Removing Barriers to Transportation Services for Homeless Students: A Guide for Homeless Education Liaisons*, will assist districts in developing a transportation plan for homeless children and youth.



Additional Resources

Additional resources can be found by visiting the following pages:

- ◆ Opening Doors - <http://homelessed.net>
- ◆ ISBE Homeless Education Program - <http://isbe.net/homeless/default.htm>
- ◆ National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE - <http://center.serve.org/nche/>
- ◆ NAEHCY (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth - [http://www.naehcy.org./](http://www.naehcy.org/)



BEST PRACTICES

The Dispute Resolution Process

Marica Cullen, State Coordinator Illinois McKinney-Vento Programs

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the National Technical Assistance Center have formed a partnership to work towards a deeper understanding of the dispute resolution process under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The materials and training created through this work will be used as a national resource for the resolution of disputes. Existing federal guidance outlines strategies districts and states may use concerning enrollment of students experiencing homelessness. Some effective strategies include:

- ◆ Parents, guardians, caregivers, and unaccompanied youth should be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their enrollment;
- ◆ Students registering under McKinney-Vento should be immediately enrolled and be provided with all services for which they are eligible;
- ◆ Written notices generated by the school or district should be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language the parent, guardian, caregiver or unaccompanied youth can understand;
- ◆ School and district personnel must follow established timelines to resolve disagreements surrounding enrollment at the local level; and,
- ◆ When inter-district issues arise, representatives from all involved districts and the ROE or ISBE should be present to resolve the issues.

Illinois law mirrors many of the federal guidance elements concerning dispute resolution. One notable exception is the Illinois requirement of the appointment of an ombudsperson to be an impartial judge of the formal dispute resolution process. According to state law (105 ILCS 45/1-25), "each regional superintendent of schools shall appoint an ombudsperson who is fair and impartial and familiar with the educational rights and needs of homeless children."

The State Board of Education encourages open communication between school personnel, parents, guardians, caregivers, and unaccompanied youth to circumvent disagreements or conflicts before they reach the dispute resolution process. The dispute process can often be time consuming and costly to school districts and may often create an adversarial relationship between schools and families which is not helpful to children or school personnel. If you would like more information on the dispute resolution process, go to: www.isbe.net/homeless.

SUCCESS BOXES

Krista Kunz, Liaison ROE #46 - Cass/Brown/Morgan/Scott

Principals and Homeless Education Liaisons in Scott and Morgan counties were surveyed to determine what student needs were not being met. The answer was that, for many children, the lack of basic hygiene, clothing, and school supplies were a barrier to school attendance and success. The lack of resources in the home meant that some families were unable to provide those basic necessities. The school cannot meet all of the needs of a child, but can help with his or her well-being by providing some of the basics. By providing children with items that improve their social and economic status at school, we are increasing their chances of a successful school day and year.

The Regional Office of Education #46 is working with districts to meet these basics and removed barriers to attendance for students in Scott and Morgan counties. By placing a "success box" in each of the grade schools and junior high school buildings in these counties with personal hygiene supplies, and clothing, such as t-shirts and sweatshirts, coats, laundry supplies, shoes, and head lice supplies, anything that a student could have an immediate need for during the school day is readily available. The items in the "success box" can be utilized for any child who is suffering from a situation over which he or she has no control and that impedes a successful school experience.

Funding for this project was provided by the local United Way Campaign. To date, the "success boxes" have provided over 10 boxes of head lice treatments, 40 packages of underwear and socks, 60 pairs of pants, 60 t-shirts and sweatshirts, 10 coats, 50 bars of soap, 50 packages of toothpaste, 100 toothbrushes, 50 bottles of mouth wash, 70 deodorants, and 30 bottles of shampoo and conditioner. Other items that have been purchased to disseminate are snow boots, gloves and hats, shaving cream, laundry detergent, hair brushes, hair pins, hair bands, and Chap Stick. "Success boxes" are a useful tool to help homeless children thrive in school.