



OUR HOME

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

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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 new 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
mcullen@isbe.net



Alphabet Soup

Understanding What's What, Who's Who and What's Due!



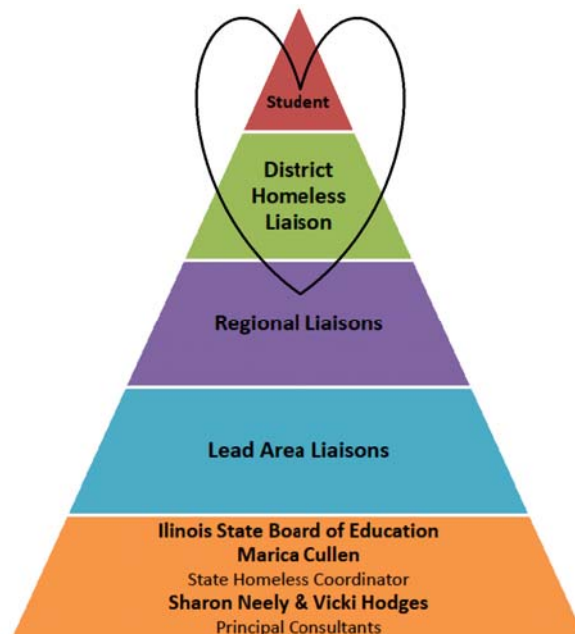
Third in a Series

Ann Schwarm, Area 5 Lead Liaison, ROE #3 Bond/Fayette/Effingham

State Coordinator, Principal Consultants, LALs, liaisons? "Who's who?" and "Who does what?" and "What in the world is an LAL?" In the world of homeless education, we are no different than the rest of the world of education. We like to throw around terms and titles expecting everyone involved to know just what we mean. In this last article of the *Alphabet Soup* series, we will focus on the people who provide the support necessary to help a homeless student and a district meet their educational goals.

As you study the illustration, you will see that Marica Cullen, Division Administrator, Curriculum and Instruction, Illinois State Board of Education, is the state coordinator for homeless education. She is assisted by principal consultants, Sharon Neely and Vicki Hodges. At the state level, Sharon and Vicki work with the Lead Area Liaisons and their staff to ensure homeless families are being served in their respective regions.

Next are the Lead Area Liaisons or LALs. These are the individuals who work with Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and districts in one of the seven geographic areas of the state. Check the back page of this newsletter to find your LAL. These LALs provide training, *(continued on page 2)*



Illinois McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Upcoming Events

National Refugee and Immigrant Conference

Holiday Inn
Chicago-Mart Plaza
350 N. Orleans
Chicago, IL
October 20-21, 2011
[http://
www.thecenterweb.org/
alrc/refugee.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/refugee.html)

23rd Annual National Dropout Prevention Conference

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

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/>

(continued from page 1) technical assistance and on-going support for the staff members of Regional Offices of Education and school districts. They also assist homeless students and their families enroll in schools. They work directly with the social service and housing agencies through their Continuum of Care organizations, all in an effort to bring services and resources to schools and homeless students. These LALs also manage the federal funding which flows to and through their offices to the ROEs and districts in their areas.

The Regional Liaisons are Regional Office of Education staff members who provide services directly to their own region's school districts and the homeless students who go there. These regional liaisons also provide training, technical assistance and on-going services to their own regions' school districts.

The District Homeless Liaison is the individual who has the closest relationship with the homeless student. This person makes sure that the homeless student is enrolled, follows up to make sure that the student's records are in order, works out the transportation arrangements, communicates with teachers and administrators on behalf of the homeless student, makes sure that information regarding homeless education is posted in the district's buildings, makes sure that the homeless information reported through SIS is up-to-date and accurate, assists in resolution of disputes, provides in-services to school personnel on homeless education issues, assists homeless students who do not have immunization or medical records in obtaining them, distributes school supplies, arranges for tutoring and other after school and/or summer educational programs, etc.

A heart is drawn around the relationship between the homeless student and the district liaison. The most important relationship in this pyramid is between these two with the student being at the very top of the drawing. All of the other levels exist to support this individual and this relationship.

District Homeless Liaisons are encouraged to call upon their Regional Liaisons and their Lead Area Liaisons to support their efforts to meet the needs of homeless students.

Homeless students graduating... What are the school's responsibilities?



Deb Foust, Regional Homeless Liaison, ROE #47 Lee/Ogle

It is always a celebration to have our seniors graduate, but this is especially true when it has been accomplished by a homeless student. Section 10-20.13 and 34- 21.6 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/10-20.13 and 105 ILCS 5/34-21.6) per the Illinois State Board of Education, requires "school fees" to be waived for the homeless student's participation in curricular and extracurricular programs of the school. Therefore, the graduation fees such as the diploma, cap and gown are waived for homeless students. The District Homeless Liaison needs to work with the student to insure proper graduation attire (i.e., shirt and tie). If needed, this cost should be covered by the school. The school does not have to waive the fee for the actual diploma cover, yearbook, announcements, and pictures; although schools are encouraged to seek other resources to cover these costs. Senior graduation is a milestone for many homeless students and they have earned this special day.

From High School to College: Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Access Financial Aid

Barbara Duffield, Policy Director

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Due to their severe poverty, youth who are homeless and on their own - unaccompanied homeless youth - are extremely unlikely to be able to access postsecondary education without federal student aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the federal application form that students must complete in order to apply for virtually all types of financial aid. The FAFSA requires students who are under age 24 to provide financial information from their parents or guardians in order to determine student eligibility for aid. Unaccompanied homeless youth do not receive financial support from their parents, and do not have access to parental information; therefore, this requirement has posed a tremendous barrier to accessing financial aid and transitioning to college.

Changes in federal law in 2009 addressed this barrier. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-84) expanded the definition of "independent student" to include youth who are verified as homeless and unaccompanied in the school year in which they are applying for aid. Independent students can apply for federal aid without parental information or signature. Verification must be made by one of the following: (1) a McKinney-Vento Act school district liaison; (2) a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development homeless assistance program director or their designee; (3) a Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program director or their designee, or; (4) a financial aid administrator.

McKinney-Vento school district liaisons and homeless service providers play a key role in ensuring that these new policies benefit youth. Important strategies include:

- Providing professional development to high school counselors so that they are informed about homelessness and the FAFSA questions, and can help identify and assist unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Informing unaccompanied homeless youth that they can go to college, even without parental financial support. Too often, unaccompanied youth assume that college is not an option for them because they are unaware of processes to access financial aid.
- Developing relationships with local financial aid administrators to inform them about unaccompanied homeless youth, the role of school district liaisons in identifying and assisting these young people, and new FAFSA provisions.
- Supporting unaccompanied homeless youth throughout the financial aid process, including by connecting them to college access organizations and events.
- Helping youth go to college, and stay in college, by assisting them to find scholarships for which they are eligible. www.FinAid.org and Student Aid on the Web are two excellent places to begin a search for scholarships.

Feed the Children



On March 22, the Area 5 Lead Liaison Program administered by ROE #3, accepted a semi-load of school supplies from Feed the Children. Assisting ROE #3 staff were: subgrantees from ROEs #13, #41, #45, and #50; Sharon Neely and Vicki Hodges, ISBE Homeless Education Program; along with students and volunteers from the ROE #3 Alternative Schools, Mulberry Grove Jr. High School, Effingham High School, and the Methodist Men from Vandalia's First United Methodist Church. Feed the Children is committed to nourishing the minds and bodies of children in need across America. To this end, their fleet of semi-tractor trailer trucks bring foods, supplies and books to boys and girls living in poverty. For more information go to <http://feedthechildren.org>.



NAEHCY LeTendre Education Fund Scholarships

Children and youth in homeless situations face numerous barriers to educational success. Deep poverty, high mobility, and school requirements often make attending and succeeding in school a challenge. Despite these challenges, many students who experience homelessness not only graduate from high school, but wish to pursue a college education.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth provides scholarship assistance to students who are homeless or have experienced homelessness through the LeTendre Education Fund for Homeless Children. LeTendre scholarship funds are available to students who are homeless or who have been homeless during their K-12 school attendance, and who have demonstrated average or higher than average achievement. Students who have not reached their 21st birthday by September 1, 2010, and who have completed no more than one year of college are eligible to apply. Applicants may be high school seniors, students enrolled in a GED or other alternative education program, or recent graduates/GED recipients. If you are in high school and not yet enrolled in a post secondary program, the committee will hold your scholarship for you pending your enrollment. To learn more or to apply, go to: <http://naehcy.org>.

Illinois McKinney-Vento Lead Area Liaisons <http://homelessed.net>

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|---|------------------------------------|
| Area 1 - Dave Levek, Lead Liaison – dlevек@willcountyillinois.com | ROE #56 - (815) 462-5404 |
| Area 2 - Lois Porter, Lead Liaison - lporter@leeogle.org | ROE # 47 - (815) 652-2054 ext. 234 |
| Area 3 - Eileen Worthington, Lead Liaison - mworthin@roe26.net | ROE # 26 - (309) 837-4821 |
| Area 4 - Jim Moberly, Lead Liaison - jmoberly@i-kan.org | ROE #32 - (815) 937-2952 |
| Area 5 - Ann Schwarm, Lead Liaison - aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us | ROE #3 - (618) 283-1763 |
| Area 6 - Mickey Sullivan, Lead Liaison - msullivan@roe21.org | ROE #21 - (618) 998-1283 ext. 212 |
| Area 7 - Tremel Daniel, Lead Liaison - tdaniel@cps.k12.il.us | CPS #299 - (773) 553-2242 |

BEST PRACTICES

Cross-Coordination of Funding and Resources Provides Emergency Services for Homeless Children and Youth

Barb Daly, Assistant Regional Superintendent, ROE #9 - Champaign/Ford

A partnership between ROE #9 - Champaign/Ford, the Champaign County United Way, and the Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation (CUSF), has generated \$16,232.00 over the past two years. These funds provide emergency basic services to homeless public school students in Champaign and Ford counties.

The ROE and the CUSF wrote the Emergency Basic Services Grant in the summer of 2009 seeking funding from the Champaign County United Way Community Impact Committee. The Committee was charged with identifying, funding and alleviating the most critical basic needs among the people in Champaign County.

The Emergency Basic Services Grant provides immediate emergency housing, clothing, shoes and food for verified homeless children and youth. The ROE Regional Homeless Liaison maintains a database of all referrals from district liaisons in the two counties. Verification of need for eligibility to access the grant is documented by this database. The CUSF is a charitable organization and is the fiscal agent for the grant.

The United Way deposits all grant money with the CUSF, and the CUSF provides a Wal-Mart credit card to two ROE staff for purchasing the emergency needs. Hotels will bill the CUSF directly. Reports from schools of emergency needs are funded and supplied within 24 hours. In two years we have funded 342 students.

Cross-coordination of programs and resources has ensured that our homeless children and youth have their basic needs met in order to be ready for school.

Opening Doors is an I.S.B.E. grant-funded project provided through the McKinney - Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. Under the direction of the Curriculum and Instruction Division, the goal of this initiative is to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to Illinois schools and shelters as to the educational rights and needs of homeless children and youth. The Opening Doors project partners include: Adult Learning Resource Center, 2626 Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005. Phone 224/366-8620 / Fax 847/378-6225
ROE #26 Hancock/McDonough, 130 S. Lafayette St. Suite 200, Macomb, IL 61455. Phone 309/837-4821 / Fax 309/837-2887
ROE #3 Bond/Fayette/Effingham, 1830 W. Fletcher St. Suite B, Vandalia, IL 62471. Phone 618/283-1763 / Fax 618/283-9833

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