



# OUR HOME

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

January 2011

Volume 9 - Issue 2

## 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 is more accurate and 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.

The receive an electronic copy of OUR HOME, please send your request to: [mworthin@roe26.net](mailto:mworthin@roe26.net) or this current issue of OUR HOME and back issues are available at <http://homelesshed.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](mailto:mcullen@isbe.net)

**A B**

## Alphabet Soup *Understanding What's What, Who's Who and What's Due!*

**C**

*Second in a Series*

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

Homeless student information should be reported on SIS, ASAP by the LEA. The information which previously was reported on IWAS every June should now be reported through SIS on an on-going basis. That changed last year when all student information was moved to SIS. Got that?

Okay....let's start over! Here are the definitions for all those acronyms.

S.I.S. – Student Information System, which is the electronic system into which homeless education data is recorded on an on-going basis.

LEA – Local Education Agency and another term for “school.”

IWAS – ISBE Web Application Security System and the system in which homeless education data used to be gathered.

ASAP – Yesterday!

Collecting information on behalf of homeless education in the Student Information System is vitally important to both the local system and the state-wide system. It is imperative that when a student experiencing homelessness enrolls in a school district that his or her information be properly collected and recorded in SIS. By identifying a student as McKinney-Vento-eligible (or homeless) the school district officials are able to be better informed and better prepared to serve the student by recognizing that there may be some additional needs for services and resources.

Prior to last year (2009), homeless education data was collected at the end of the school year and the information collected was general and not specifically tied to individual students. While this gave the state an overall “picture” of homelessness in Illinois, it was not helpful in transferring information already gathered about a student to the student's next school if necessary. Thus, the change to SIS allows both the schools and the students to be better served by the transfer of confidential information in a secure system.

Often times, the person at the LEA who enters information into SIS is not the homeless education liaison. In fact, most times, the person responsible for SIS is someone else. Therefore, it is important that the homeless education liaison and that individual develop their own protocol or system for entering and/or confirming information so that SIS is up-to-date and accurate. Each school handles this type of task differently. Some enter information daily; others enter it weekly or monthly. While it might make sense to handle some of the SIS reporting (for other programs) on a weekly or monthly basis, that method can prove problematic for homeless education reporting. Often times, homeless students are highly mobile and may move on before their information is updated at a school site. So, updating in a timely matter is important to providing the best data to the state and the best possible services to the student.

If you have questions about SIS reporting, don't hesitate to contact your LAL (that is Lead Area Liaison) whom you can locate on the map which is a part of this newsletter.

## Upcoming Events

### Illinois School Counselor Association 2011 Conferences



The Illinois School Counselor Association Spring Conferences will be held February 3-4, 2011 at the Chicago O'Hare Marriott and April 29, 2011 at the University of Illinois-Springfield. Visit <http://www.ilschoolcounselor.org/> for conference information and registration.

### Annual Statewide ESEA/NCLB Conference

February 8 - 10, 2011

Designed in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education this conference brings the latest news to Illinois educators regarding federal and state programs, innovative and research-based classroom techniques, and hands-on workshops. Again this year a strand on Homeless Education will be offered. For more information on the homeless education sessions offered go to: <http://homelessed.net/Calendar/calendar.htm>  
For conference information and registration go to: [http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f\\_events-nclb.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_events-nclb.html)



## RTI: Response to Intervention

Vicki Hodges, State Homeless Education Staff  
Curriculum & Instruction, ISBE



RTI is a general education systematic problem-solving process designed to allow for early identification of students' difficulties. It provides students with a level of instructional intensity matched to their demonstrated response to intervention. It provides a data-based method for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional approaches and changing/improving them. There is a high quality of general intervention and resources and services are added as needed.

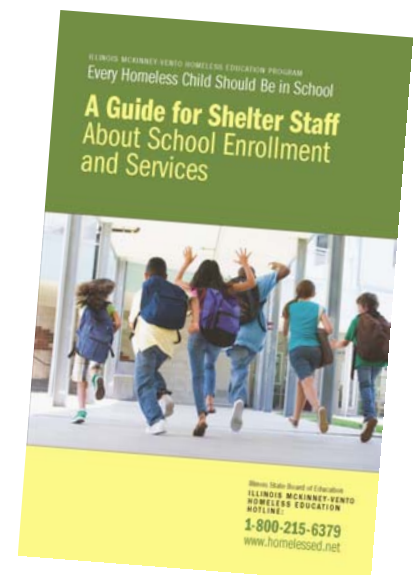
How does RTI benefit McKinney-Vento identified students? McKinney-Vento (MKV) identified students may have many barriers to their education, i.e. high mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity, enrollment requirements (school records immunizations, proof of residence and guardianship) that have prevented them from attending school, lack of access to special programs, lack of transportation, lack of school supplies, clothing, etc., poor health, fatigue, hunger, and/or prejudice and misunderstanding. Research states that each time a child changes schools they lose at least 6 months of academic growth in addition to encountering social/emotional challenges. With the RTI model in place, MKV students will be immediately assessed for weaknesses in academic areas and receive differentiated instruction based on their individual needs. As the intervention is delivered, progress monitoring will continue to assure that the intervention is working. While the child is receiving the differentiated instruction, the school has time to secure records from past schools and make any necessary adaptations to the child's educational plan.

## A Guide for Shelter Staff About School Enrollment and Services

The Illinois McKinney-Vento Opening Doors Project has developed "A Guide for Shelter Staff About School Enrollment and Services." Shelter staff are in a unique position to help children and their families and unaccompanied youth learn about their educational rights and school services and supports under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program in Illinois. This quick reference guide is a tool that shelter staff can use to assist families to keep their children in school.

Shelter staff can download the Guide for use or school staff may download the Guide and distribute it to area shelters at <http://homelessed.net/Publications/shelterguide.pdf>

For questions on the Guide, contact Opening Doors at 224/366-8632.





### ILLINOIS LEAD LIAISON PROGRAMS

**Area 1** – Dave Levek, Lead Liaison – [dlevek@willcountyillinois.com](mailto:dlevek@willcountyillinois.com) - Regional Office of Education #56  
 Address: 702 West Maple Street  
 City State Zip: New Lenox, IL 60451  
 Phone: (815) 462-5404 Fax: (815) 740-4788  
 Web Site: <http://www.will.k12.il.us/>

**Area 2** – Lois Porter, Lead Liaison - [lporter@leeogle.org](mailto:lporter@leeogle.org) - Regional Office of Education #47  
 Address: 7772 Clinton Street  
 City State Zip: Dixon, IL 61021  
 Phone: (815) 652-2054 ext. 234 Fax: (815) 652-2053  
 Web Site: [www.leeogle.org](http://www.leeogle.org)

**Area 3** - Eileen Worthington, Lead Liaison - [mworthin@roe26.net](mailto: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.mcdonough.k12.il.us/roe26](http://www.mcdonough.k12.il.us/roe26)

**Area 4** – Jim Moberly, Lead Liaison - [jmoberly@i-kan.org](mailto:jmoberly@i-kan.org) - Regional Office of Education #32  
 Address: 189 East Court Street - Suite 600  
 City State Zip: Kankakee, IL 60901  
 Phone: (815) 937-2952 Fax: (815) 937-2921  
 Web Site: [www.ikan.k12.il.us/frconten.htm](http://www.ikan.k12.il.us/frconten.htm)

**Area 5** – Ann Schwarm, Lead Liaison - [aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us) - Regional Office of Education #3  
 Address: 1830 W. Fletcher St. - Suite B  
 City State Zip: Vandalia IL 62471  
 Phone: (618) 283-1763 Fax: (618) 283-9833  
 Web Site: [www.fayette.k12.il.us/roeweb](http://www.fayette.k12.il.us/roeweb)

**Area 6** – Mickey Sullivan, Lead Liaison - [msullivan@roe21.org](mailto: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](http://www.roe21.k12.il.us)

**Area 7** – Tremel Daniel, Lead Liaison - [tdaniel@cps.k12.il.us](mailto: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.oism.cps.k12.il.us/hep.shtml](http://www.oism.cps.k12.il.us/hep.shtml)

#### ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Marica Cullen**, State Coordinator  
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 ISBE Homeless Hotline 800-/215-6379  
 Phone: (217) 557-7323  
 Fax: (217) 782-7937  
 Web Site: [isbe.net/homeless](http://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  
**ROE 3 – Bond/Fayette/Effingham**  
 1830 W. Fletcher St. - Suite B, Vandalia IL 62471  
 Phone: (618) 283-1763 Fax: (618) 283-9833

## Special Education & Homeless Students

### Tremel Daniel, Area 7 Lead Liaison

Many of our homeless students have special needs and may require special education services. While working with these students, you may have heard the acronym **IEP**. Have you ever wondered exactly what those letters mean or what an IEP actually is?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines homeless children to include any children or youth considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act. Special education students who are homeless should be immediately enrolled and be able to attend classes and participate in any school activities. Once it is determined that a student meets the criteria to receive special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed.

*Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois* states an IEP is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet the student's needs and is developed by a team that includes parents, the student, general education teacher, special education teacher, school administrator, evaluation personnel, and others with knowledge or expertise about the student. The IEP includes a detailed description of what will be done to give the student the extra help needed to succeed in school. The IEP will change based on the student's need, will show the student's current standing, and will help guide the student as he/she progresses through the school year.

Timelines to remember about homeless students who have IEPs are:

- an IEP meeting must occur within 60 school days from the date of referral
- a meeting must occur within 30 days after the team determines that a student is eligible to receive services
- an IEP must be reviewed at least once a year

For further information, visit [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/parent\\_rights.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/parent_rights.htm).

## Patricia Rivera Receives Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award

The first thing many of us who work with the homeless student populace realize is everything that we can't do for our students. None of us realize this as concretely as Patricia Rivera. Because of this, Pat used the platform provided by Chicago Public Schools to coalition build with the purpose of extending a holistic range of services to homeless students in Chicago. During her tenure, Pat Rivera increased awareness about the program and services available to homeless families/students and dedicated time to creating long-lasting partnerships and collaborations with social service agencies, shelters, and many other not-for-profit entities. The Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Patricia C. Rivera at the 2010 NAEHCY Conference, the perfect award for her tireless work for the student homeless population in Chicago.



Pat Rivera (*center*) with ISBE Homeless Education Staff  
Sharon Neely (*l*) and Vicki Hodges (*r*)



# Opening Doors

Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth — <http://homelessed.net>

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

### Making A Difference In The New Year

*Sharon Neely, State Homeless Education Staff  
Curriculum & Instruction, ISBE*

Every single day over 1.5 million children in the United States go without food, shelter, access to health care and opportunities for an education. Let all of us as citizens of this country make 2011 a year of change for homeless children and youth.

Did you know that in the United States:

- Approximately 1,555,360 children have no place to call home.
- Fifty-six percent of homeless children are doubled-up, 24% live in shelters, 10% unknown or other, 7% live in hotels or motels and 3% are unsheltered.
- Forty-two percent (approximately 650,000) of homeless children are under 6 years of age, compared to 34% of all children living in America.
- Seventy-seven point three percent (697,130) enrolled homeless children are in grades K-8.
- Twenty-two point seven percent (204,978) enrolled homeless children are in grades 9-12.
- Proficiency rates for homeless children in reading and math are an average 16% lower than scores for all students.
- Less than 1 in 4 children who have experienced homelessness graduate from high school.

More than 1 in 7 homeless children have moderate to severe health conditions including asthma (1 in 9), traumatic stress (one in 18) are members of families where adults hit or throw things, and emotional disturbance (1 in 6) suffer from emotional problems.

We can make a difference in the lives of homeless children and youth. Ask yourself what you can do to end childhood homelessness in 2011? For more information about ending childhood homelessness go to [www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org](http://www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org).

## BEST PRACTICES

### Funding Your District's McKinney-Vento Liaison

*Matt Hanafee, Area 1 Assistant Program Director*

While rereading ISBE's Policy on the Education for Homeless Children and Youth, I thought that in many districts this would be at least one full-time job. Identifying and working with McKinney-Vento families can be rewarding, but it takes time and energy.

To provide a full-time person with tight budgets and cutbacks, we can consider using the mandated Title 1 funding set-aside for McKinney-Vento eligible students because McKinney-Vento eligible students automatically qualify for Title 1 services.

Starting in 2006, part of the Title 1 set-aside has been dedicated to funding a full-time Liaison in Elgin U-46. This allows for going beyond the basics of identifying eligible students, arranging transportation, free lunch and fee waivers, to working directly with families to ensure their children achieve success.

Also creative in assisting families in transition, Crete-Monee hired a full-time Liaison using a state grant awarded several years ago. This year, Title 1, the ARRA grant, and a McKinney-Vento subgrant from the Area 1 program were used to continue this vital position.

Smaller districts might look at the model used by two small DuPage county districts collaborating on a McKinney-Vento subgrant. Homelessness does not stop at our district boundaries, so this is a great way to do more with less to help children.

We all feel the pinch of our current economic situation. Hopefully, these suggestions can help you assist the tens of thousands of our children who are not sure when or if they will ever have a home of their own.

**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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