

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

Marin County Office of Education

## A Training Workshop January 21, 2004

Mary Jane Burke

Marin County Superintendent of Schools



# A Training Workshop

- Training for school administrators, instructional staff, district liaisons, support/clerical staff and homeless providers
- Presented by  
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Program Manager  
Marin County Office of Education  
Homeless Liaison



# Topics of Discussion



- Defining “homelessness”
- Equal access to all programs
- Immediate enrollment, eliminating educational barriers
- District liaison responsibilities
- Strategies for identification of homeless youth
- Attending “school of origin”
- Student support services – transportation, tutoring, rights
- End of year reporting requirements
- Resources/Contacts

# When you are in school, you have a desk.

By Beth McCullough, Homeless Liaison  
Inspired by a conversation with a homeless child in October 2002

At Aunt Elsie's I don't have a bed,  
But I have a couch,  
Which is more than my brother has.  
At Aunt Elsie's, we have a shelf in the fridge,  
But there isn't much on it,  
And it won't even fit a gallon of milk.  
At Aunt Elsie's, she yells at mom,  
And tells her to get out there  
And find a job.  
At Aunt Elsie's, you can not spill anything  
Or you will have to leave  
And then you wouldn't even have a roof.

But at school you will always have a roof!  
And you have your own desk. It is yours all year,  
Even if it gets moved around the classroom, it is yours.  
You can drink milk at your desk too.  
And lunch is free and it doesn't have to fit on a shelf.  
If it spills, the teacher never yells at your mom,  
And the teacher knows everybody is really trying hard.  
At school, you always have a desk,  
And you know that your brother has one too.



## Definition of Homeless:

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act,  
42 U.S.C. 11435,

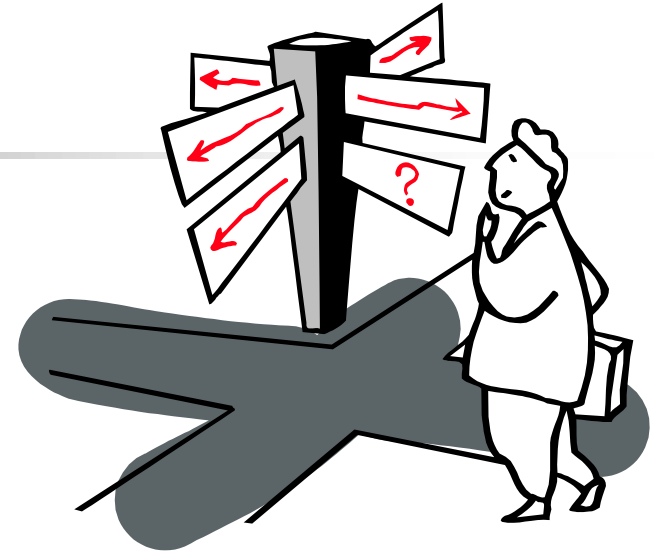
the term “homeless children and youth” means...

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- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Sharing of housing
- Motels, hotels
- Public or private place not designed for sleeping
- Trailer parks
- Cars, parks, and abandoned buildings

# Definition of Homeless Continued...

- Substandard housing
- Shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Campgrounds
- Unaccompanied youths
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless





# Equal Access

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- Homeless students have equal access to all school programs: GATE, Special Ed., Migrant Ed., ELL programs, Vocational Ed.
- They automatically qualify for Title I, School Meals, and After School Programs
- Unaccompanied youth have the right to enroll without a legal guardian



# Immediate Enrollment

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- “Enroll” and “enrollment” are defined to include attending classes and participating fully in school activities
- Homeless children must be immediately enrolled
- No prior records are needed, but should be obtained by the enrolling school as quickly as possible
- This includes birth certificates, social security numbers, immunization records, transcripts, and other records



# Enrollment Strategies

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- Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, school counselors, school social workers and principals on the legal requirements for enrollment
- Review and revise LEA policies, as necessary
- Develop residency forms to replace typical proof of residency
- Accept school records directly from families and youth
- Establish school-based immunization clinics or other opportunities for on-site immunizations

# Educational Barriers

- Enrollment Requirements
  - Residency requirements
  - School records
  - Immunizations
  - Legal guardianship requirements
- High mobility
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice/Stereotypes



# District Liaison



- All local educational agencies must have a district liaison
- LEA liaisons must ensure that:
  - Homeless children and youth are identified
  - Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA
  - Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services



# District Liaison

Continued...

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- Parents or guardians are informed of educational opportunities available to their children
- Public notice of the educational rights is disseminated
- Enrollment disputes are mediated
- Liaisons are required to assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions

# District Liaison

Continued...



- Liaisons are required to ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school
- Liaisons are required to assist children and youth who do not have immunizations
- Liaisons are required to collaborate with the state coordinator and community and school personnel



# Identification Strategies

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- Coordinate with community service agencies, such as shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, street outreach teams, drop-in centers, welfare departments, housing departments, public health departments, and faith-based organizations
- Provide outreach materials and posters where there is a frequent influx of low-income families and youth in high-risk situations, including motels and campgrounds



# Identification Strategies Continued...

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- Develop relationships with truancy officials and/or other attendance officers
- Provide awareness activities for school staff (registrars, secretaries, school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, teachers, bus drivers, administrators, etc.)
- Avoid using the word “homeless” in initial contacts with school personnel, families, or youth



# School Selection

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- Students have the right to stay in “school of origin” (to the extent feasible)
  - for the duration of homelessness;
  - if in the best interest of student; and,
  - parent requested
- “School of origin” is the school the child attended when permanently housed or last enrolled

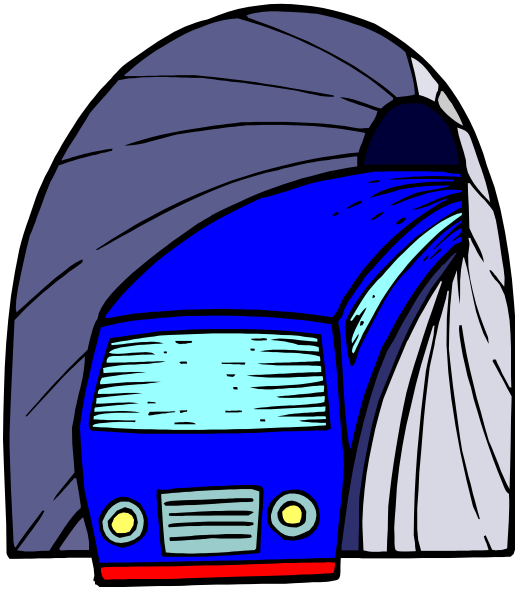
# School Selection

Continued...

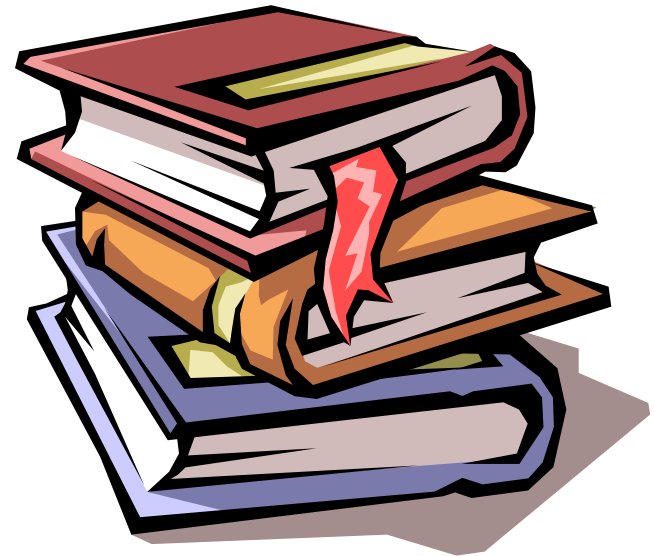
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- Students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing. [722(g)(3)(A)(i)]; [722(g)(3)(A)(i)(II)]
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and their right to appeal. [722(g)(3)(B)(ii)]

# Student Support Services



- Transportation
- Tutoring
- Rights





# Transportation

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- Must be provided or arranged to and from the school of origin
- School districts that provide transportation to and from the school of origin have documented an increase in attendance and achievement which resulted in an increase in funding to the districts
- For unaccompanied youth, LEA's must provide or arrange transportation to and from the school of origin at the LEA homeless liaison's request [722(g)(1)(J)(iii)]



# Transportation Strategies

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- Coordinate with local housing authorities and placement agencies to house students near their school of origin
- Re-route school buses (including special education, magnet school and other buses), and ensure that buses travel to shelters, transitional living programs, and motels
- Develop close ties among LEA homeless liaisons, school staff, and pupil transportation staff to arrange and coordinate transportation

# Transportation Strategies

Continued...



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- Coordinate with local housing authorities, placement agencies, and social services for foster care placement to house students near their school of origin
- If the districts cannot agree on who will pay the costs, the districts must share the costs
- In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEA's must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students

# Transportation Strategies

Continued...

- Provide passes for public transportation, including passes for caretakers when necessary
- Take advantage of transportation systems used by public assistance agencies
- Reimburse parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth for gas
- Use approved van or taxi services
- Use local funds for transportation





# Tutoring

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- Programs must be aligned to state standards and curricula
- Children/youth must be educated as part of a school's regular academic program
- District/school may not segregate homeless children/youth from the mainstream school environment
- Homeless children/youth should receive services that are provided to their non-homeless counterparts in the same setting as their non-homeless peers



# Student and Parent/Guardian Rights

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- Go to school
- Continue in the school you attended before you became homeless
- Attend a school with students who are not homeless
- Receive transportation to school attended prior to being homeless or school last attended, if requested
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address



# Student and Parent/Guardian Rights Continued...

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- Enroll and attend classes while school arranges transfer of records
- Enroll and attend school of choice even while school and you resolve any dispute over enrollment
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other students
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs



# End of Year Reporting Requirements

...what I need from all of you...

- Grades Preschool-12, # of homeless students served by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Program
- Grades 1-12, # of homeless students enrolled
- Grades 1-12, # of homeless students assessed by the state in math and reading
- Grades 1-12, # of homeless students at or above state's proficient level in math and reading
- # of homeless students served by the program that lived in various living situations



# Resources

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- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth [www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)
- National Center for Homeless Education [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)
- National Coalition for the Homeless [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)
- National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)
- National Network for Youth [www.nn4youth.org](http://www.nn4youth.org)

# Contact: Leanne Wheeler

## Title I Policy & Partnerships Office

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- Telephone: 916-319-0383
- Fax: 916-319-0151
- Email: [lwheeler@cde.ca.gov](mailto:lwheeler@cde.ca.gov)
- Website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/homeless/homelesstoc.html](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/homeless/homelesstoc.html)



# Next Steps/Needs

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- Further training/information
- Transportation
- Tutoring
- Website

# Thank You For Coming and Serving Homeless Youth and Their Families!



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