Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in the School District of Philadelphia, Analysis of 2022-23 Data

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Key Findings

- ECYEH identified a larger percentage of students experiencing homelessness in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.

- Students identified as "doubled up" represented the most frequent living arrangement for those experiencing homelessness.

- In addition to having a higher rate of chronic truancy, students identified as experiencing homelessness also scored lower on standardized assessments, had higher rates of suspensions, and had lower rates of on-time graduation.

- ECYEH continued their Teen Evolution Experience Network (TEEN) program and created new partnerships that supported students experiencing homelessness.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides grant funding to eight regions in Pennsylvania to serve students experiencing homelessness through the Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) program. ECYEH's priorities include identifying and tracking the number of students experiencing homelessness and providing supports such as school enrollment assistance, uniforms, transportation, backpacks/school supplies/other needs, and referrals.[1]

Research Questions

This project is guided by the following research questions that address both the services provided by ECYEH (questions 1-3) and the student outcomes of attendance, achievement, and suspensions (questions 4-7):

1. During the 2022-23 school year, did ECYEH approaches result in:

    a. The identification of school-age students as experiencing homelessness at some point during the 2022-23 school year?

    b. The identification of unaccompanied youth as experiencing homelessness at some point during the 2022-23 school year?[2]

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[1] See https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/#homeless for additional information about programming for Philadelphia students experiencing homelessness.
[2] An "unaccompanied youth" is defined as a child who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who is also displaced.

2. How many students did ECYEH serve in the 2022-23 school year?

   a. How many students received the following supports: enrollment assistance, uniforms, school supplies, and transportation assistance?

   b. In the 2022-23 school year, how many students participated in the TEEN program?

3. In the 2022-23 school year, to what extent was ECYEH able to implement professional development, training, or awareness opportunities for educators/school personnel, social service agencies, and shelters?

4. How does the percentage of school-age children and youth identified as chronically truant and experiencing homelessness in the 2022-23 school year compare to the percentage of other School District of Philadelphia (SDP or District) students identified as chronically truant?

5. How does the percentage of school-age children identified as experiencing homelessness scoring advanced/proficient on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) for Math and English Language Arts (ELA) compare to other District students scoring advanced or proficient on these same assessments?

6. How do the suspension rates for school-age children identified as experiencing homelessness compare to other District students?

7. How do graduation rates for school-age children identified as experiencing homelessness compare to other District students?

Data Sources and Methods

The ECYEH office provided the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) with two primary sources of information:

- **ECYEH list of identified students**. ECYEH provided a list that identified students as homeless at any point during the 2022-23 school year.[3] The ECYEH office identified these students by several different methods. The District's online enrollment system asks about housing and will flag students who are experiencing homelessness. Students can also be identified by their SDP teachers, counselors, and administrators. The City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS), SDP offices (including the Office of Early Childhood

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[3] The number of students that ECYEH identifies and is presented here differs from the total number reported by the state for Philadelphia (Region 1) because other reporting agencies (e.g., the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS) and charter schools) provide numbers directly to the state which are then combined with the numbers provided by ECYEH. For example, there may be a child living in a shelter who ECYEH never works with so they are not on the ECYEH list, but they are on the list that the Office of Homeless Services submits, so the state counts them as Region 1. While the Office of Homeless Services and charter schools report their numbers directly to the state, ECYEH does service some of these students directly, and those students are therefore included in this report. ECYEH serves all of these children indirectly through their work with shelter and charter school staff.

Education, The Office of Family and Community Engagement, The Office of Student Enrollment and Placement, The Re-Engagement Center, ELECT, and the Transportation Office), and area shelters also provide information to the ECYEH office identifying students experiencing homelessness.

Finally, ORE used District administrative data to generate descriptive information about student attendance, achievement, and suspensions.

Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness

A larger percentage of students were identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2022-23 school year compared to the 2021-22 school year.

In the 2022-23 school year, 6,217 students were identified as experiencing homelessness (Table 1), which represents a higher percentage of students than were identified in the previous school year (Table 2). The actual number of students experiencing homelessness is most likely higher, due to the challenging nature of identifying this particular population.

Table 1. Students identified as experiencing homelessness at any point during 2022-23

Category[a]	Number of Identified Students
SDP Students[b]	4,451
Charter Students[c]	416
Not yet school-aged (0-5 year olds)	1,121
Other Students Identified[d]	229
Total	**6,217**

Source: Data file provided by ECYEH office merged with information from the SDP's Student Information System (SIS)

[a] Categories are based on final day of enrollment recorded.

[b] The total number of SDP students includes students in alternative and special education schools. These students are excluded from attendance and achievement analyses.

[c] This number does not include certain charter schools that did not report to ECYEH and who were not included in below analyses but were identified by the ECYEH Region 1 office.

[d] Other students identified includes students without IDs, students who could not be located in the SIS, or students enrolled in cyber charter schools. These students may be in private school, awaiting enrollment, or unenrolled. All "other students identified" were excluded from analyses that used SDP data.

Table 2. Students enrolled in SDP or charter schools that were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years

Population	N (2021-22)	N (2022-23)
Students experiencing homelessness enrolled in SDP or charter	3,705	4,867
Total SDP & charter enrollment[a]	198,645	197,228
Percentage of total enrollment represented by students identified as experiencing homelessness	1.9%	2.5%

Source: ECYEH data files for identified students and Qlik Enrollment Overview sheet (which uses official October 1 enrollment counts) for total enrollment

[a] Includes alternative and special education schools and charter schools that may not have reported directly to ECYEH.

The majority of students in District and charter schools identified as experiencing homelessness were Black/African American (2,552 out of 4,867 identified students; Table 3). About an equal proportion were male and female (Table 4), and grade 9 had the highest number of students identified as experiencing homelessness (Table 5).

Table 3. SDP and charter students identified as experiencing homelessness, by race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness
Black/African American	2,552
Hispanic/Latinx	1,418
White	460
Multi-Racial/Other	141
Asian	274
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	12
Unknown	3
Total	**4,867**

Source: Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, retrieved May 10, 2024

Table 4. SDP and charter students identified as experiencing homelessness, by gender

Gender	Number of Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness
Male	2,460
Female	2,400
Non-Binary	7
Total	**4,867**

Source: Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, retrieved May 10, 2024

Table 5. SDP and charter students identified as experiencing homelessness, by grade

Grade	Number of Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness
K	450
1	401
2	358
3	383
4	350
5	350
6	348
7	321
8	332
9	664
10	371
11	273
12	266
Total	**4,867**

Source: Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly retrieved May 10, 2024

"Doubled up" was the most frequent living arrangement for students identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2022-23 school year.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) guarantees a free public education that is appropriate for all children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness.[4] McKinney-Vento defines homelessness as a lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and this may include youth who are "doubled up" (i.e., sharing housing with another family). A majority of K-12 students identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2022-23 school year were doubled up (Table 6).

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[4] See https://www.icphusa.org/mkv/ for detailed information about the McKinney-Vento Act.

Table 6. Number and percentage of students experiencing homelessness by age and living arrangement

Living Arrangement	K-12 Students Experiencing Homelessness		Children Experiencing Homelessness, Ages 0-5	
	Number of students	% of identified students experiencing homelessness[a]	Number of students	% of identified students experiencing homelessness[b]
Doubled up	4,102	80%	962	86%
Shelter/transitional	845	17%	147	13%
Unaccompanied	766	15%	23	2%
Other/hotel	99	2%	6	1%
Unsheltered	49	1%	5	0.5%

Source: Data file provided by the ECYEH office

[a] Percentages are out of the 5,096 students identified in Table 1 as SDP, Charter, and 'Other' students. Students may fall into more than one category of living arrangement.

[b] Percentages are out of the 1,121 students identified in Table 1 as children ages 0-5. In this group, ECYEH generally provides referrals to other services such as Early Intervention and housing support.

ECYEH Initiatives

In 2022-23, 42% of the K-12 students identified as experiencing homelessness received enrollment assistance.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, students' enrollment cannot be denied or delayed due to lacking proof of residency. When a school requests a verified address for enrollment, ECYEH provides a homeless verification form to the school, ensuring the enrollment of these children. In 2022-23, ECYEH staff continued to work with parents and students to assist with enrollment paperwork, either in person or via phone. ECYEH staff also contacted schools to verify the status of the student, with shelters assisting in this process by providing a letter of residency for families. In the 2022-23 school year, 2,048 students (42% of K-12 students identified as experiencing homelessness) received assistance with enrollment.

In 2022-23, a slightly higher percentage of students experiencing homelessness received uniform vouchers and transportation assistance than in 2021-22.

One of the supports that the ECYEH provides is uniform vouchers and transportation assistance. In 2022-23, 38% of K-12 and 0-5 year old students who were identified as experiencing homelessness received uniform vouchers, a slight increase from 2021-22 when it was 36% (Table 7).

Because transportation to and from school can be a major challenge for students experiencing homelessness, the ECYEH office provides transportation in the form of either a SEPTA key card, a school bus, or a cab. The percentage of students experiencing homelessness that received

transportation assistance was 14% in 2022-23, slightly higher than the 12% that received this assistance in 2021-22.

Table 7. Services provided by the ECYEH program in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years

Service	2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of identified K-12 students who received service	% of identified K-12 students who received service	Number of identified K-12 students who received service	% of identified K-12 students who received service
Uniform vouchers	1,614	36%[a]	2,254	38%[a]
Transportation assistance[b]	461	12%	685	14%

Source: Data file provided by the ECYEH office

[a] As there were younger students who received uniform assistance, this percentage is out of the 4,867 K-12 SDP and charter students and 1,121 0-5 year old students.

[b] Transportation assistance usually takes the form of SEPTA passes for students who qualify. ECYEH assists in this process along with the Office of Transportation and the school counselor.

In the 2022-23 school year, ECYEH led 154 professional development (PD) trainings, 57 technical trainings, and 66 external event collaborations.

ECYEH program staff provided professional development about the McKinney-Vento Act to school staff, central office staff, and providers. Sessions emphasized the prevalence of homelessness in Philadelphia and outlined the types of assistance available to students experiencing homelessness. In the 2022-23 school year, EYCEH had 154 PD trainings, which reached 4,265 attendees. Additionally, there were 57 technical trainings, with each training attended by an average of one to four participants. There were also 66 external events including:

- the annual Winter Coat Giveaway event in collaboration with the Auto Dealers Association of Greater Philadelphia.
- a collaboration with Broad Street Ministry for their Open House: How to Help with Homelessness in Philadelphia event.
- a collaboration with the Eva Newsome-George W. Lee Scholarship to table for their College, Career, and Vocational Fair at the Ministry of Corinthian Baptist Church of Germantown.

Additional Initiatives

The ECYEH program office implemented additional initiatives during the 2022-23 school year that were designed to support students, including:

- **TEEN Program.** The Teen Evolution Experience Network or TEEN Program provides extra support to high school students experiencing homelessness with an interest in learning about career readiness and post-secondary education options. It provides one-on-one support as well as biweekly group sessions. Students earn stipends for attending groups. Programming focuses on professional development, college preparation, and life skills. The

program helps students develop socially and emotionally by offering them both basic personal development skills and interpersonal skills. The program also provides a variety of field trips. For students exploring a post-secondary option, assistance with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is also provided. In the 2022-23 school year, 32 students between the ages of 14-18 participated in at least one TEEN activity. The year ended with a celebration to recognize the students who participated and highlight the graduating seniors.

- **Partnerships.** ECYEH was able to expand its capacity to support additional students/families using American Rescue Plan Act funding, as well as contracted partners. These partners include community agencies such as Valley Youth House, HopePHL, and Eddie's House. Additionally, ECYEH contracts with the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homelessness, which provides McKinney-Vento support to students and families upon entering the shelter system. This was a contributing factor to the increase in the identification and support of students experiencing homelessness.

Attendance and Achievement

A higher percentage of students identified as experiencing homelessness were chronically truant compared to District students as a whole.

After ten or more unexcused absences, students in SDP are considered chronically truant and may receive a citation for the District's Truancy Court. In the 2022-23 school year, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness in the District with ten or more unexcused absences was 58%, compared to 40% for all District students, a decrease from 2021-22 for both. Similar to previous years, the highest percentage of truancy for both the District overall and students experiencing homelessness was in grade 12 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. 2022-23 chronic truancy rate for students identified as experiencing homelessness compared to District students overall, by grade
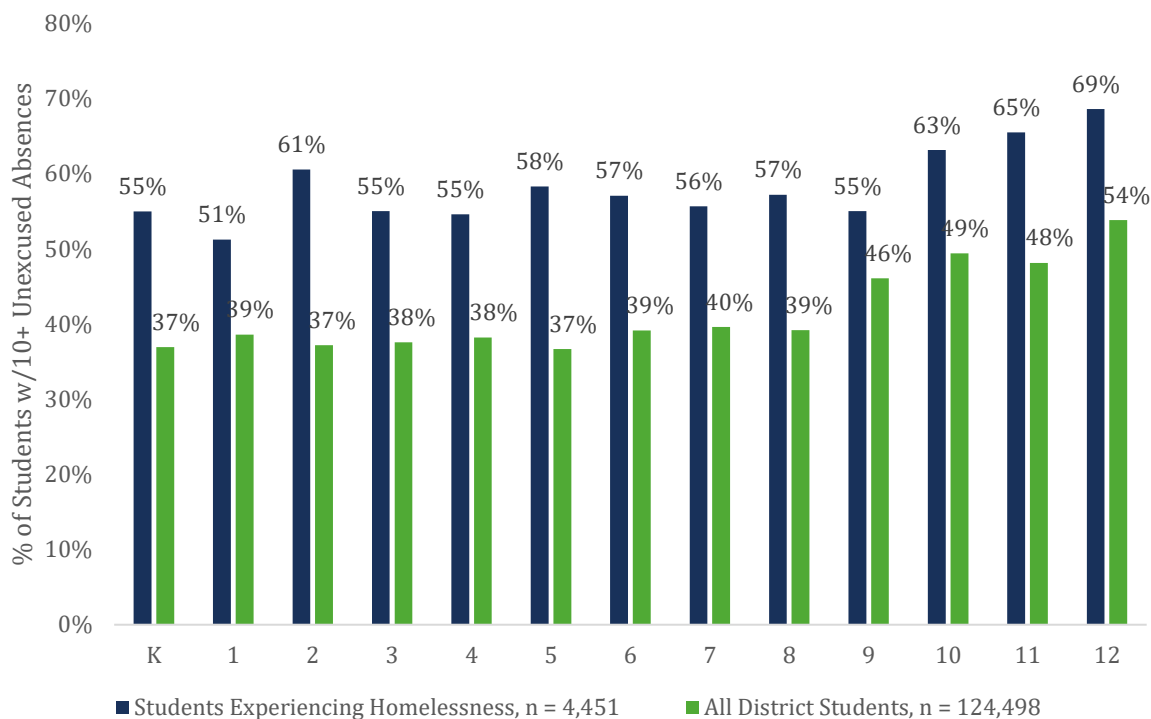
Source: Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly retrieved May 10, 2024

Students identified as experiencing homelessness had lower rates of proficiency on standardized tests compared to other SDP students in 2022-23.

Across all grades that take the PSSA in both math and ELA, fewer students experiencing homelessness scored advanced or proficient on the PSSA exam than other SDP students (Tables 8 and 9). This is consistent with prior research.[5]

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[5] Losinski, M., Katsyannis, A., Ryan, J. (2013). The McKinney-Vento education for homeless children and youth program: implications for special educators. Intervention in School and Clinic, 49(2), 92-98.

Table 8. 2022-23 PSSA ELA proficiency rates for grades 3-8 students identified as experiencing homelessness and District students overall

Grade	Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness who Took PSSA ELA Test	Number/Percentage of Students Experiencing Homelessness Scoring Proficient or Advanced	Number of SDP Students who Took PSSA ELA Test	Number/Percentage of SDP Students Scoring Advanced or Proficient
3	196	19 (10%)	8,136	2,524 (31%)
4	166	21 (13%)	8,171	2,414 (30%)
5	194	34 (18%)	8,191	2,652 (32%)
6	194	37 (19%)	7,698	2,825 (37%)
7	165	32 (19%)	7,699	2,941 (38%)
8	162	18 (11%)	7,740	2,846 (37%)
Total	**1,077**	**161 (15%)**	**47,635**	**16,202 (34%)**

Source: Report Library PSSA and Keystone Dashboard for students experiencing homelessness and Qlik PSSA & Keystone app for District rates
Note: Does not include charters. Students identified as experiencing homelessness are also included in the overall District rates.

Table 9. 2022-23 PSSA Math proficiency rates for grades 3-8 students identified as experiencing homelessness and District students overall

Grade	Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness who Took PSSA Math Test	Number/Percentage of Students Experiencing Homelessness Scoring Proficient or Advanced	Number of SDP Students who Took PSSA Math Test	Number/Percentage of SDP Students Scoring Advanced or Proficient
3	225	14 (6%)	8,316	2,205 (27%)
4	186	13 (7%)	8,342	1,961 (24%)
5	208	10 (5%)	8,312	1,805 (22%)
6	206	10 (5%)	7,832	1,339 (17%)
7	173	8 (5%)	7,822	1,495 (19%)
8	164	2 (1%)	7,756	1,210 (16%)
Total	**1,162**	**57 (5%)**	**48,380**	**10,015 (21%)**

Source: Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly for homeless students and Qlik PSSA & Keystone app for District rates
Note: Does not include charters. Students identified as experiencing homelessness are also included in the overall District rates.

A larger percentage of students experiencing homelessness were suspended compared to other District students.

We examined the number and percentage of students who experienced at least one out-of-school suspension in the 2022-23 school year. Across all grades 3-12, a larger number of students experiencing homelessness were suspended compared to other District students (Table 10).[6]

Table 10. Suspension rates for students identified as experiencing homelessness and District students overall

Grade	Number of SDP Students Experiencing Homelessness	Number/Percentage of SDP Homeless Students who Had at Least One Suspension	Number of SDP Students	Number/Percentage of SDP Students who Had at Least One Suspension
3	349	15 (4%)	9,372	211 (2%)
4	328	18 (5%)	9,413	338 (4%)
5	314	23 (7%)	9,301	483 (5%)
6	319	44 (14%)	8,875	820 (9%)
7	300	51 (17%)	8,943	1,032 (12%)
8	292	66 (23%)	8,972	1,066 (12%)
9	618	64 (10%)	11,827	1,411 (12%)
10	331	35 (11%)	11,051	904 (8%)
11	249	21 (8%)	9,075	530 (6%)
12	242	27 (11%)	9,700	414 (4%)
Total	**3,342**	**364 (11%)**	**96,529**	**7,209 (7%)**

Source: Total Student Enrollment Yearly for homeless students and Qlik Climate Matters app for District rates
Note: Does not include charters. Students identified as experiencing homelessness are also included in the overall District rates.

[6] Students cannot be suspended in grades K-2 unless the behavior results in serious bodily injury.

Students experiencing homelessness graduate at a lower rate than other District students.

A student is an on-time graduate if they graduate after four years in high school. In 2022-23, students experiencing homelessness had a lower on-time graduation rate compared to other District students.[7]

Table 11. 2022-23 graduation rates of students identified as experiencing homelessness and District students overall

Number of Homeless SDP Students (19-20 9th Grade Cohort)	Number/Percentage of SDP Homeless Students who Graduated (%)	Number of SDP Students (19-20 9th Grade Cohort)	Number/Percentage of SDP Students who Graduated (%)
239	168 (70%)	9,637	7,142 (74%)

Source: Total Student Enrollment Yearly for homeless students and Qlik Graduation and College Enrollment app for District rates

Note: Does not include charters. Students identified as experiencing homelessness are also included in the overall District rates.

Conclusions

The ECYEH program office identified a larger proportion of students experiencing homeless in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22. In addition, both the TEEN program and new partnerships continue to be a source of support for some of these students. However, even with various supports in place, SDP students identified as experiencing homelessness continue to have higher chronic truancy rates and suspension rates and lower standardized test scores and graduation rates than other District students. ECYEH continues to improve systems and relationships in order to increase identification and support for students experiencing homelessness each year.

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[7] For briefs and reports about SDP graduation rates, how they are defined, and research related to graduation see: https://www.philasd.org/research/category/college-career/high-school-graduation/