

The School District of Philadelphia
Office of Research and Evaluation

Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Evaluation Report

The School District of Philadelphia



2011-12

The School District of Philadelphia
Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) reported on the 2011-12 program year of the District's Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) program. The District's ECYEH program is funded through the McKinney-Vento Act federal program, as disbursed and overseen by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. With the support of Title I funds, the ECYEH Coordinator and three staff identify students, train District staff, parents, and community service providers, and deliver services to students via school counselors, including uniform vouchers, school supply vouchers, and transportation assistance. The ECYEH office also distributes funds to community organizations for after school programs and service supports. During the 2011-12 school year, the program received a positive monitoring visit, which found the program in compliance with its 19 requirements. Services provided and student achievement gaps were consistent with the findings of the state-wide ECYEH evaluation report of 2010-11. Based on findings of this report, it is recommended that school-based initiatives are enhanced to better reach and serve students. Educating and empowering school-based staff requires District endorsement through opportunities to present at District-wide principal meetings and trainings.

Process Findings

- The ECYEH office identified a total of 3,767 school-aged students and 789 children ages 0-5, consistent with identification rates of previous years.
- Trainings were provided to school-based staff, community providers, and parents at a rate comparable to the 2010-11 school year.
- The ECYEH office collected survey data from over 300 meeting participants, which provided a valuable supplement to the surveys collected by the ORE.
- Dissemination of forms and information continued to counselors via e-mail and to consumers and other community members via the ECYEH web page.
- The ECYEH office maintained contracts with 13 community providers for after school programs and other support services to students.

Outcome Evaluation

- Compared to District rates, ECYEH students struggle with attendance and tardiness, especially in the high school grades.
- Grade 12 drop-out rates were found to be consistent with state-wide rates reported in the 2010-11 state-wide evaluation report.
- The performance gap in ECYEH student PSSA scores lessens when the schools with the highest concentration of ECYEH are analyzed only, as identified ECYEH students tend to enroll in the lowest-performing schools. Truancy also has a significant effect on scores.
- A District-wide counselor survey found the ECYEH office to be accessible and responsive. However, there was lack of counselor awareness of homeless shelters in their catchment area.
- 20 ECYEH students visited three colleges on the TEEN college tour in April 2012.

I. Introduction

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento, 1987) is federal legislation that makes funds available to states for providing education-related assistance to children experiencing homelessness. A 1990 revision of the act required states to eliminate all enrollment barriers and provide school access and support for students experiencing homelessness. McKinney-Vento was further strengthened by reauthorization in 1994 that added preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration. Since its latest reauthorization in 2002, all school districts are required to appoint a local liaison to ensure the law is implemented effectively at the local level. Under the Pennsylvania Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan, homeless children are defined as children living with a parent in a domestic shelter; runaway children and children, and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers; and school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2010). The legislation is not only to fund services, but to ensure continuity of education and expedited school enrollment. Services to youth experiencing homelessness are funded through the federal McKinney-Vento program and also by Title I. All students identified as experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title I services.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education implements McKinney-Vento as the Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (ECYEH) and disburses the funds to eight regions. Philadelphia is a single regional for which funds are disbursed to the School District of Philadelphia (the District) to service children in Philadelphia. The ECYEH office is part of the District's Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards. The primary tasks of the District's ECYEH office are to identify students experiencing homelessness, provide assistance with expenses related to education (along with Title I funding), distribute funds to shelters for after-school and summer programs, and work with community providers on service coordination. In addition, the ECYEH office educates all stakeholders, including parents, school administration, and service providers, about the McKinney-Vento Act, including the definition of homelessness, the rights of children experiencing homelessness, and services available.

An evaluation report of the Pennsylvania state-wide ECYEH initiative (formerly, Pennsylvania Homeless Children's Initiative) was conducted during the 2010-11 school year and distributed as a report in May 2012. According to the report, in 2010-11 there were 18,621 Pennsylvania youth who were enrolled in school and experiencing homelessness. Data presented in the report represents 499 school districts across Pennsylvania and will be used as comparison data throughout this report.

The District's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) conducted the evaluation of Philadelphia's ECYEH program for the 2011-12 program year. ORE collected data, reviewed program records, and generated quarterly evaluation reports for formative feedback throughout the program year.

II. Methods

The 2011-12 evaluation of the ECYEH program covered the period from July 2011 – June 2012 and relied on quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The evaluation is structured using five research questions:

1. Did the computerized tracking system for students experiencing homelessness enrolled in Philadelphia public schools expand and improve?
2. How accessible were ECYEH services to identified students?
3. What is the performance gap between ECYEH identified students and their peers?
4. Was communication and coordination between the ECYEH office, parents, and shelter or transitional housing staff, schools, and regional academic offices maintained and enhanced?
5. Was capacity of parents, shelter/transitional housing staff, and schools increased to help minimize disruptions and close the performance gap in the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness?

Measures used to evaluate program implementation and outcomes included documents analysis, observations, feedback surveys, and student outcomes. In combination, these methods provided ORE data to gain an understanding of the prevalence and effect of homelessness on District students.

Document Analysis

Documentation of meetings, professional development sessions, and presentations that were either hosted or facilitated by ECYEH staff were collected and reviewed to verify that trainings occurred. The student tracking data file that documents services provided to students experiencing homelessness by the program office was reviewed and analyzed.

Participant Surveys

A total of 310 surveys were administered by the ECYEH office at 30 trainings during the 2011-12 school year (Appendix A). Surveys asked participants to rate the content of the presentation, provide comments, and report how long it took requested services to be filled by the District.

Observations

The ORE evaluator attended all meetings, trainings, and programming opportunities communicated by the ECYEH office. The purpose of the observations were to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the ECYEH office and community providers, and also to see services delivered to students. ORE observations included two providers' meetings, one on-site provider training, one vendor training of a new education computer program purchased by ECYEH for students living in shelters, one after-school program delivered by a community provider, one meeting of the Mayor's Office Children's Workgroup Subcommittee, and two Teen Evolution Experience Network (TEEN) program meetings.

School Counselor Survey

A survey was administered to all school counselors via e-mail (Appendix B). The survey was sent out by the ORE office on May 16, 2012 and administered using Survey Monkey. 417 counselor e-mail addresses were provided to ORE by the Co-Deputy Chief of the Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards and 138 surveys were returned (33% response rate).

Student Data

ORE utilized student identification numbers provided by the ECYEH staff to explore school and grade-level distributions of homeless students served by the program. School attendance rates, truancy rates, and standardized test proficiency levels were also obtained for all identified students.

III. Evaluation Results

1. DID THE COMPUTERIZED TRACKING SYSTEM FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ENROLLED IN PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPAND AND IMPROVE?

The ECYEH office at the District records students identified as experiencing homelessness. Student referrals are received primarily from school counselors, city shelters, and self-referrals. Students are entered into a spreadsheet that records the services provided to the students by the ECYEH office and the student's housing situation. ORE assists the ECYEH office by validating the students listed and conducting student searches using addresses of known shelters and transitional homes. The address searches provide the ECYEH office with students who may be eligible for services.

There were a total 4,556 students experiencing homelessness identified during the 2011-12 school year. Of the 4,556 identified, 789 children were 0-5 years-old. Of the 0-5 year-olds identified, 307 (39%) were reported as enrolled in a District early childhood program and the remaining 482 (61%) children were referred by Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing's Apple Tree Family Center or other housing program. 3,767 identified students were enrolled in K-12 public schools and other publically funded programs. These students attended a total of 267 public schools, 63 charter schools, and 3 approved private/alternative schools. Distribution of identified students by school type is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of identified students by school type

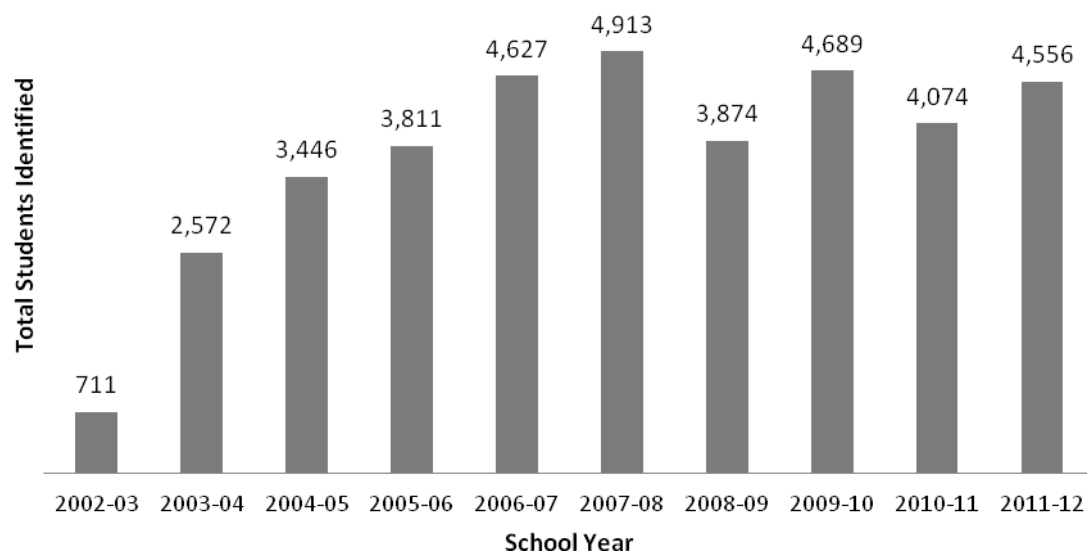
School Type	Identified Students N (%)
SDP Public	3,221 (86%)
Charter/Approved Private Schools/Alternative	546 (15%)
Total	3,767 (100%)

Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file & EDW pull December 2012

Total identified ECYEH students are compared over the last ten years in Figure 1. Total identified students in 2011-12 exceeded total students identified in 2010-11; however the 2010-11 total represents a 10-month period, as the funding period changed so that July and August 2011 were included in the 2011-12 total.

To determine whether the number of identified students experiencing homelessness has changed over the years, percent of total enrollment was compared across the last three school years (Table 2). For this table, total enrollment is defined as total District and charter students in attendance on October 15 of a given school year. This comparison shows a similar identification rate across years. This means that the rate at which students experiencing homelessness are identified has not changed. There is no actual number of students experiencing homelessness available, so prevalence of homelessness should not be inferred from this comparison.

Figure 1. Number of identified students experiencing homelessness by school year



Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file

Table 2. Percent of ECYEH per District enrollment by year

School Year	Number of K-12 District & Charter Students Enrolled	Total ECYEH K-12 Students Identified	Percent of Total Student Enrollment Represented by ECYEH Students
2009-2010	207056	3,929	1.9%
2010-2011	206396	3,699	1.8%
2011-2012	204363	3,767	1.8%

Sources: EDW (December 2012), 2012 ECYEH student data file, 2011 ECYEH District Report, 2010 ECYEH District Report

Total students identified by grade and percentage of District students identified per grade are represented in Table 3. The primary methods of referral to the student data file are self-referrals and referral by the school counselor. Both methods require the consumer (parent or student) to seek assistance. As the grade level increases, the percentage of students represented in the data file decreases. This trend may be due to decreased parent involvement as students become older. It is possible that students are less likely than their parents to self-refer due to the stigma of homelessness. Also, older students may not be aware of services available to them, or that they qualify for services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Table 3. 2011-12 ECYEH enrollment and average daily attendance (ADA) compared to District

Grade	Homeless Student Enrollment	District Wide Enrollment	% of Homeless Students Enrolled Per Grade	Homeless Student ADA	District Wide ADA*
K	223	17,845	1.2%	88%	92%
1st	451	17,844	2.5%	88%	93%
2nd	414	16,840	2.5%	89%	93%
3rd	416	16,332	2.6%	90%	94%
4th	359	15,698	2.3%	91%	94%
5th	314	15,664	2.0%	91%	94%
6th	329	15,310	2.2%	90%	94%
7th	292	15,221	1.9%	90%	93%
8th	237	14,664	1.6%	88%	92%
9th	223	17,113	1.3%	77%	86%
10th	182	15,631	1.2%	78%	87%
11th	148	13,310	1.1%	83%	88%
12th	167	14,458	1.6%	79%	85%
NG/UG	12	675	1.8%	92%	92%
Total	3,759	206,585	1.8%	88%	91%

Sources: EDW pull December 2012 and 2011 ECYEH District Report

*Charters excluded from District ADA analysis¹

Of the 3,767 K-12 students identified, 3,762 had data available for limited English proficiency (LEP) status and whether or not they were identified as having a disability. Six hundred and eight (16%) K-12 students had a disability and 301 (8%) were LEP learners. These rates are consistent with the overall District population and lower than the rates reported in the 2010-11 state report, for which one-third of ECYEH students were identified as receiving special education services and 25% were identified as LEP learners.

Student housing arrangement is noted in the spreadsheet at the time of entry. Housing arrangements for identified students are summarized in Table 4. Most of the children

¹ Charter schools were excluded from attendance and tardy analyses due to a difference in the charter method of student data reporting.

identified lived in shelters, followed by a doubled-up living arrangement. The findings of the Pennsylvania Department of Education monitoring visit on February 22, 2012 noted the high rate of doubled-up students. The report includes an action item that the ECYEH office explore and research new strategies to identify and serve doubled-up students.²

Table 4. Identified students by living arrangement

Living Arrangement	Total K-12 Students (N =3,767)	Total 0-5 Children (N = 789)
Shelter	1,989 (53%)	668 (85%)
Doubled up with another family	1,466 (39%)	98 (12%)
Transitional housing	291 (8%)	23 (3%)
Other, includes hotel	21 (1%)	0

Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file

2. HOW ACCESSIBLE WERE ECYEH SERVICES TO IDENTIFIED STUDENTS?

The ECYEH office provided services to many of the identified students. Services included vouchers for school uniforms, transportation assistance for students traveling to their former school from a new housing placement, after school programs, summer programs, and additional funding for other school-related expenses, such as books and field trips.

Of the 3,767 K-12 students identified, 3,117 (83%) were indicated by the ECYEH office as receiving a service and 1,180 (31%) received more than one service. This finding exceeds the findings of the 2010-11 evaluation report of the Pennsylvania ECYEH program which states 54% of identified Pennsylvania youth received services. The 650 K-12 students who did not receive services represent 26% of kindergarten students identified, 22% of grade 10 students identified, and 31% of grade 12 students identified. The rates of identified students not receiving a service in the other grades ranged from 4-12% of identified students. No information on why students do not receive services is available. These data may be used in future years to follow-up with students, especially those in kindergarten and grades 10 and 12, to offer services. Documentation of services offered and reasons why they were not accepted would be useful data that could help identify barriers to access.

Of the 789 0-5 year-old children, 224 (28%) were indicated as receiving a service and 33 (4%) received more than one service. Total services delivered are summarized in Table 5.

² The other recommendation of the report was that building secretaries should be informed of McKinney-Vento requirements regarding immediate enrollment, discussed on page 13 of this report. Overall, the report was very positive and found the program as meeting all of the 19 requirements of the funder.

Table 5. Frequency of services provided by the ECYEH office in 2011-12

Service provided by District ECYEH Office	Total K-12 Students (N =3,767)	Total 0-5 Children (N = 789)
Transportation	1,139 (30%)	11 (1%)
Additional Funding	662 (18%)	18 (2%)
Voucher	1,775 (47%)	70 (9%)
After School Program	778 (21%)	159 (20%)
Summer Program	299 (8%)	8 (1%)

Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file

Table 6 displays services provided by grade. After school services are the most evenly distributed service across grades.

Table 6. ECYEH services provided by grade

Grade	Transportation	Additional Funding	Voucher	After School	Summer Program
K	53 (5%)	36 (5%)	96 (5%)	42 (5%)	8 (3%)
1	134 (12%)	88 (13%)	247 (14%)	71 (9%)	47 (16%)
2	128 (11%)	80 (12%)	208 (12%)	80 (10%)	37 (12%)
3	137 (12%)	63 (10%)	194 (11%)	72 (9%)	42 (14%)
4	150 (13%)	58 (9%)	172 (10%)	68 (9%)	34 (11%)
5	140 (12%)	46 (7%)	134 (8%)	64 (8%)	32 (11%)
6	140 (12%)	50 (8%)	140 (8%)	65 (8%)	34 (11%)
7	91 (8%)	47 (7%)	138 (8%)	61 (8%)	23 (8%)
8	80 (7%)	51 (8%)	107 (6%)	51 (7%)	18 (6%)
9	28 (3%)	41 (6%)	124 (7%)	70 (9%)	11 (4%)
10	24 (2%)	28 (4%)	80 (5%)	54 (7%)	8 (3%)
11	17 (2%)	20 (3%)	54 (3%)	54 (7%)	3 (1%)
12	16 (1%)	54 (8%)	78 (4%)	21 (3%)	2 (1%)
NG/UG	1 (<1%)	0	3(<1%)	5 (1%)	0
Total	1139	662	1775	778	299

Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file

Table 7 reflects the service delivery method and how housing arrangement affects available services. Regarding after school programs, the ECYEH office contracted with eleven after school providers, mostly housing programs, educational programs, or non-profits (i.e., faith-based organization, Salvation Army). The programs were offered at shelters or community centers near shelters so that students experiencing homelessness could access after school programming. The summer program consisted exclusively of the academic instruction contracted by the ECYEH office with the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Supportive Housing. The students who received these services in the summer were in transition while their families sought a shelter placement, which explains why the summer program was provided to students living in a shelter exclusively.

Table 7. Percentage of K-12 students receiving service by housing category

	Total Students	Transportation	Voucher	Additional Funding	After School	Summer Program
Shelter	1,989	451 (23%)	852 (43%)	166 (8%)	714 (36%)	299 (15%)
Doubled-Up	1,466	652 (44%)	747 (51%)	475 (32%)	48 (3%)	0 (%)
Transitional	291	28 (10%)	156 (54%)	9 (3%)	16 (5%)	0 (%)
Other/Hotel	21	8 (38%)	20 (95%)	12 (57%)	0 (%)	0 (%)

Source: 2011-12 ECYEH student data file

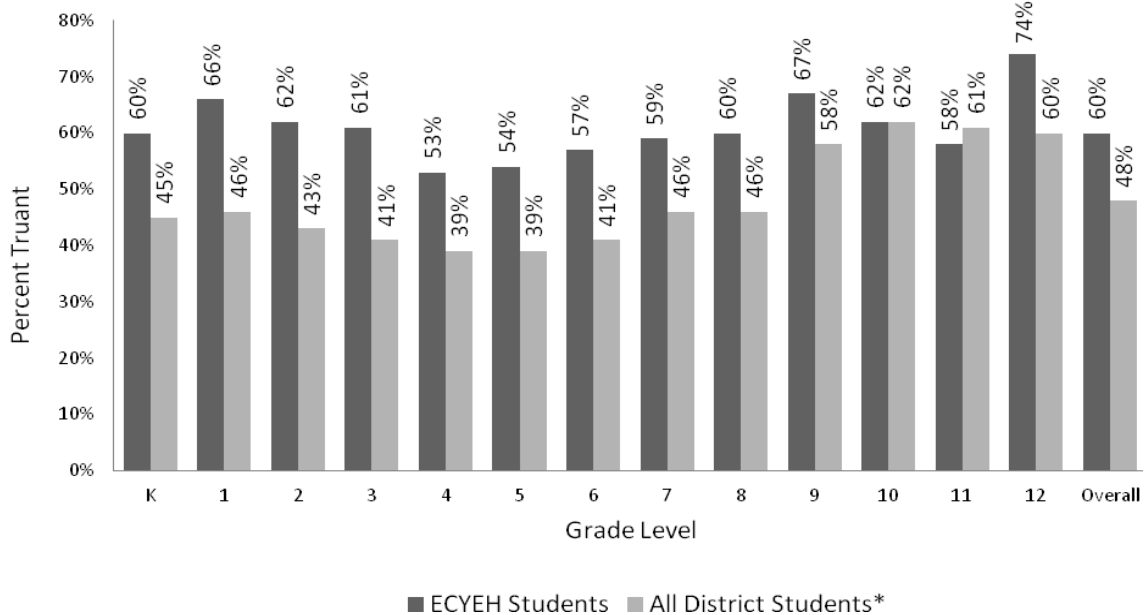
To better understand barriers to service delivery better, the parent survey was updated during the 2011-12 school year. Service providers were asked to provide feedback on the survey during a Children’s Workgroup Subcommittee meeting of the Mayor’s Office on February 22, 2012 and during a provider’s meeting hosted by ECYEH on May 10, 2012. Roundtable feedback was collected at the Children’s Workgroup Subcommittee meeting and recorded by the ORE evaluator. At the provider’s meeting, surveys were distributed for review and critical feedback and 17 were returned. Feedback from providers was used to develop the parent survey, attached as Appendix C. The survey will be piloted to parents during the 2012-13 school year in an effort to better understand the perspective of parents experiencing homelessness with school-aged children.

3. WHAT IS THE PERFORMANCE GAP BETWEEN ECYEH IDENTIFIED STUDENTS AND THEIR PEERS?

Average daily attendance (ADA) was analyzed to compare ECYEH students to District totals by grade in Table 3. The distance between the ECYEH students and all District students in the same grade is a difference of about 3-5 percentage points through middle school. The difference increases in grades 9 and 10, where the distance between ECYEH students and all grade-level District students increases to nine percentage points. Truancy rates are shown in Figure 2, by grade. Truancy is defined as ten or more total absences. Truancy rates are higher for ECYEH students than the District total by nine percentage points or more for all grades except grades 10 and 11. For these grades, ECYEH truancy drops and District truancy rates increase slightly.

To take a closer look at the magnitude of truancy, a severe truancy indicator was calculated as absent 20% of enrolled days or more. Attendance records of 12% of District students qualified as severe truancy compared to 19% of ECYEH students. Severe truancy is most prevalent in high school. The greatest difference between severe truancy of District students and ECYEH students was in grade 12, for which 46% of students met the criterion for severe truancy.

Figure 2. Truancy rates of ECYEH students compared to district, by grade



Sources: EDW report December 2012 and 2011 ECYEH District Report
 *Charters excluded from District truancy analysis, NG/UG excluded due to low n

Tardy rates were also calculated and compared to District totals (Table 8). A ratio of days tardy per student was calculated for ECYEH students and all District students (charter schools excluded). Like trends with truancy, days tardy per student increases in high school for both ECYEH students and the District as a whole. Interestingly, the difference in days tardy per student between ECYEH and total District students does not change from elementary to high school. The average difference in days tardy per student is five for grades K-8 and five for grades 9-12. To take a closer look, magnitude of tardy behavior was examined. Frequently tardy was calculated as tardy on 20% of days enrolled or more. When ECYEH frequently tardy rates are compared to District rates, there is a greater difference in the elementary and middle grades than in high school (with the exception of grade 12).

Dropout and graduation rates were also analyzed. Graduation rate was calculated as percentage of grade 12 students who graduated.³ Of the total grade 12 students enrolled at District and charter schools on June 5, 2012, 88% graduated. Of the 167 ECYEH grade 12 students identified, 128 graduated. This represents a 77% graduation rate, which exceeds the 12th grade graduation rate found in the 2010-11 evaluation report of the Pennsylvania ECYEH program.

Drop-out rates are reported in Table 9 by grade level. Drop-out rates are highest in grades 10 and 12. The 10% grade 12 drop-out rate is lower than the 33% grade 12 drop-out rate reported in the 2010-11 evaluation report of the Pennsylvania ECYEH program.

³ This is a non-conventional method of calculating graduation rate and was done this way for the purpose of this report. Official District graduation rates are calculated as 9th grade cohorts.

Table 8. Rates of days tardy by grade with District comparison

Grade	ECYEH Tardy (ratio of days per student)	District Tardy (ratio of days per student)	Difference	ECYEH Tardy 20% Enrolled Days or More (% of total students)	District Tardy 20% Enrolled Days or More (% of total students)
K	11	7	4	10%	5%
1	15	8	7	11%	6%
2	12	7	5	8%	5%
3	14	7	7	10%	4%
4	12	6	6	8%	4%
5	12	6	6	11%	4%
6	13	6	7	12%	5%
7	15	8	7	16%	6%
8	14	9	5	15%	7%
9	22	16	6	24%	20%
10	21	19	2	23%	23%
11	23	19	4	26%	21%
12	29	21	8	37%	25%
Total	15	11	4	14%	10%

Sources: EDW report December 2012 and 2011 ECYEH District Report

*Charters excluded from District tardy analysis, NG/UG excluded due to low n

Table 9. ECYEH 2011-12 drop-outs by grade

Grade	Total ECYEH Dropped-Outs	Percent ECYEH Drop-Outs	Total District Drop-Outs	Percent District Drop-Outs
K	1	>1%	268	2%
1	0	0	116	1%
2	2	>1%	111	1%
3	3	>1%	96	1%
4	1	>1%	72	>1%
5	0	0	74	>1%
6	4	1%	105	1%
7	2	1%	133	1%
8	5	2%	187	1%
9	17	8%	1,128	7%
10	23	13%	1,589	10%
11	6	4%	1,281	10%
12	16	10%	1,370	9%
Total	80	2%	6,732	3%

Source: EDW (December 2012)

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) was used to measure the degree to which there was an academic performance gap between ECYEH students and their peers. When summarized across grades by subject area, there is a difference in percentage advanced/proficient of 16 percentage points in PSSA Math and 13 percentage points in PSSA Reading (see Tables 10 & 11). At the grade-level comparison, ECYEH students scored lower than all District students with a percentage gap range of 7 to 20 percentage points. District

ECYEH students scored lower than their peers in Philadelphia as well as the students reviewed in the 2010-11 evaluation report of the Pennsylvania ECYEH program, for which ECYEH students scored advanced or proficient on the PSSA at a rate of 51% for PSSA Math and 47% in PSSA Reading (using 2011 PSSA data).

Table 10. ECYEH students who scored advanced / proficient on PSSA Math 2011-12 by grade

Grade	# of ECYEH Students who took PSSA Math	# of ECYEH Students who Scored Advanced or Proficient	% of ECYEH Students who Scored Advanced or Proficient	% All District Students* who Scored Advanced or Proficient
03	353	108	31%	51%
04	301	121	40%	56%
05	267	82	31%	45%
06	270	95	35%	54%
07	250	104	42%	57%
08	191	73	38%	54%
11	86	31	36%	43%
Total	1718	614	36%	52%

Source: District 2012 PSSA file and School Net dashboard (December 2012)

* Charters excluded from District totals

Table 11. ECYEH students who scored advanced / proficient on PSSA Reading 2011-12 by grade

Grade	# of ECYEH Students who took PSSA Reading	# of ECYEH Students who Scored Advanced or Proficient	% of ECYEH Students who Scored Advanced or Proficient	% All District Students* who Scored Advanced or Proficient
03	343	100	29%	46%
04	290	78	27%	43%
05	260	62	24%	36%
06	268	90	34%	44%
07	240	98	41%	53%
08	184	90	49%	58%
11	86	29	34%	49%
Total	1671	547	33%	46%

Source: District 2012 PSSA file and School Net dashboard (December 2012)

* Charters excluded from District totals

Factors that co-vary with homelessness, such as truancy and enrollment in low-performing schools, may contribute to the PSSA performance gap shown in Tables 10 and 11. A chi-square was used to explore the relationship between truancy and level of PSSA proficiency. Truancy is defined as absent 10 days or more. Table 12 shows truancy by PSSA Math proficiency category. Of the 614 students who achieved an advanced or proficient score on PSSA Math, 43% were truant. Of the 1,087 truant students taking the Math PSSA, 32% achieved an advanced or proficient score, and 68% scored in the basic or below basic range. The chi-square showed a statistically significant difference between performance on the Math PSSA for homeless

students who were truant and those who were not ($p < 0.05$). The odds ratio (1.51) indicated that students who were not truant had a 1.51 greater chance of scoring advanced or proficient on the Math PSSA than students who were truant.

Table 13 shows truancy by PSSA Reading proficiency category. Of the 547 students who achieved an advanced or proficient score on PSSA Reading, 61% were truant. Of the 1,075 truant students taking the Reading PSSA, 31% achieved an advanced or proficient score and 69% scored in the basic or below basic range. The chi-square again showed a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$), with truancy associated with lower performance. The odds ratio (1.26) indicated that students who were not truant had 1.26 greater chance of scoring advanced or proficient on the reading PSSA than students who were truant.

Table 12. Number of ECYEH student: PSSA Math proficiency level to truancy indicator

	Basic/Below Basic	Advanced/Proficient
Not Truant	367	264
Truant	737	350

Source: District 2012 PSSA file and EDW (December 2012)

Table 13. Number of ECYEH students: PSSA Reading proficiency level to truancy indicator

	Basic/Below Basic	Advanced/Proficient
Not Truant	381	215
Truant	743	332

Source: District 2012 PSSA file and EDW (December 2012)

Another possible factor contributing to the performance gap may be ECYEH students' enrollment patterns. Fifty percent of the 2012 ECYEH students attended 16% of the schools represented by the ECYEH population. That is, a small percentage of schools have a large percentage of ECYEH students. All the 53 schools represented by 50% of the ECYEH students enrolled more than 20 ECYEH students each during 2011-12. A comparison of PSSA percentage proficient/advanced for only these schools and their ECYEH students is shown in Table 12. This analysis narrows the performance gap between ECYEH students and their peers.⁴ Compared to the overall District scores, the high ECYEH enrollment schools included in Table 12 had lower percentage advanced/proficient (by 14 percentage points in PSSA Math and 12 percentage points in PSSA Reading). Using this comparison, the difference between ECYEH students and their peers is five percentage points in math (down from 16 percentage points) and five percentage points in reading (down from 13 percentage points). This analysis provides a more fair and more valid representation of the performance gap than comparison with District-wide performance.

⁴ PSSA scores were not available for 3 of the 53 schools qualifying for the analysis (2 were Charter schools and one was an alternative school). The students from these schools were excluded from the analysis ($n=110$). A total of 50 schools and 809 ECYEH students were included (representing 47% of all ECYEH students taking the PSSA).

Table 14. Comparison of ECYEH student scores to the scores of schools with >20 ECYEH students enrolled

	ECYEH students in selected schools (n=809)	All students in selected schools (n=16,320)	Difference
Math % Proficient/Advanced	33%	38%	5 percentage points
Reading % Proficient/Advanced	29%	34%	5 percentage points

Source: September 2012 District PSSA data file

4. WAS COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE ECYEH OFFICE, PARENTS, AND SHELTER OR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING STAFF, SCHOOLS, AND REGIONAL ACADEMIC OFFICES MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED?

A 3-year comparison of total trainings and attendees is shown in Table 15. This year, the program was successful in increasing the total number of service provider and teen attendees at training sessions. Though total counselor trainings were down, information dissemination continued through an e-mail listserv. Surveys were administered following all 12 parent workshops (Appendix A) to 104 workshop participants. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the workshops were very appropriate (95%) and very useful (96%). Trainings to District staff other than counselors were also overwhelmingly positive, with all 91 respondents agreeing that the information was appropriate and useful. The counselor trainings received identical feedback in the 31 participant surveys. Student workshops, consisting primarily of information on the TEEN program, were reviewed by 17 participants with 88% reporting the information was appropriate and 82% rating the session as interesting.

Table 15. Three-year comparison of training sessions and attendance by type

Target Population	# of Trainings			# of Attendees		
	09-10	10-11	11-12	09-10	10-11	11-12
Counselors	9	8	2	294	272	165
Teens	14	24	15	172	174	218
Service Providers	2	4	6	52	109	253
Parents	11	16	12	88	132	114
Other School Staff	16	8	6	297	178	139

Source: Agendas and sign-in sheets provided by ECYEH office and 2010-11 ECYEH evaluation report

Included in the other school staff trainings is a principal training offered to 23 principals during the principal convocation at Lincoln High School on August 18, 2011. The principal convocations are unique opportunities to reach District principals, however the convocation is designed like a conference, where sessions compete during the same time slot. This method of scheduling can make it difficult to reach a large number of participants. A survey was administered to 16 participants and responses to items regarding the usefulness of the training

were highly positive (100% positive per item). Thirteen survey respondents (81%) wrote-in that they felt the resources and definitions used by the ECYEH program to be most useful and one requested the training be provided to high school secretaries. The suggestion that secretaries be trained is consistent with the findings of the Pennsylvania Department of Education monitoring visit on February 22, 2012 that included an action item that building secretaries be trained in the McKinney-Vento requirements regarding immediate enrollment. The positive feedback from the principals, combined with the monitoring report findings, shows a need for District endorsement in getting the ECYEH training and resources to school-based administration. One possible solution would be to schedule the ECYEH office as the keynote speaker during the convocation or other principal gathering opportunities.

The ECYEH is charged with making school personnel and families aware of services available students experiencing homelessness. Information is accessible to all District staff, as well as to the public, via the ECYEH web page. The ECYEH office maintains a District web page geared toward consumers and counselors. The web page contains information on funding sources available, contact information of ECYEH staff, and a link to ECYEH forms. The ECYEH Coordinator also provides information using district e-mail. Charter school counselors/administrators and district counselors were contacted via e-mail during the 2011-12 school year with forms, procedures, and important reminders regarding services. In addition, the ECYEH Coordinator worked with administrators of the Office of Counseling and Promotion Standards to update information on the counselor resource web page.

School counselors are the primary link between students in schools and the ECYEH office. To better assess counselor knowledge and needs, a counselor District-wide survey was administered on May 16, 2012 via e-mail. According to the counselor survey, 76% (n=102) of survey respondents report being in communication with staff from homeless housing facilities a few times a year or more, with 12% (n=29) of total respondents reporting communication monthly, or more frequently. A barrier to communication between counselors and housing facilities may be due to lack of awareness. Thirty-six percent (n=49) of counselors indicated that they did not know whether there are homeless housing facilities within their school's feeder area and ten respondents wrote-in that they would like more information on shelters and services. To help with this issue, the ECYEH might consider facilitating initial contact between shelters and school counselors or school administrative staff. Communication between school counselors and the ECYEH office is strong, with 94% (n=120) rating the accessibility of the ECYEH office as "good" or "very good" and 75% (n=100) of survey respondents reporting that they contacted the ECYEH Coordinator during the 2011-12 school year. This high percentage also shows that the ECYEH Coordinator is accessible to school staff. With regard to resources, 99% of survey respondents indicated that they received information regarding educational resources for homeless children during the 2011-12 school year. When asked how materials were received, 87% (n=115) reported receiving resources over e-mail and 62% (n=82) reported receiving resources during a workshop.

5. WAS CAPACITY OF PARENTS, SHELTER/TRANSITIONAL HOUSING STAFF, AND SCHOOLS INCREASED TO HELP MINIMIZE DISRUPTIONS AND CLOSE THE PERFORMANCE GAP IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

Assistance with Education-Related Expenses

McKinney-Vento and Title I funds provided assistance to families for education-related expenses. Services were provided by the ECYEH office out of the District's central office building. Services included vouchers for school uniforms and checks issued to schools for the purchase of other clothing, school trips, school pictures, and other school-related expenses. The ECYEH office also receives and fulfills requests for temporary SEPTA transportation passes. The system for providing services is designed for school counselors to act as the intermediary, submitting applications, distributing vouchers, and making purchases with issued checks. Services provided to students are reviewed in Table 5 (page 7).

One method for assessing service delivery is how quickly requests are processed. The parent, provider, and counselor surveys asked participants to estimate the duration of time between their application for services and service delivery. A survey was administered at 12 parent workshops (Appendix A). Seventy-six respondents indicated that they requested assistance with uniforms and school supplies. Of those that requested the assistance, 53% (n=40) of respondents reported receiving the assistance within a week and 67% (n=51) within two weeks. Eight respondents reported waiting more than two weeks and 22% (n=17) reported requesting the assistance but never receiving it. When asked about transportation assistance from the ECYEH office, 59 parent workshop respondents indicated that they requested assistance. Of those that requested transportation assistance, 68% (n=40) received the assistance within a week and 86% (n=51) within two weeks. Three respondents reported waiting longer than two weeks and five respondents report that they asked for assistance and never received it. In contrast, when providers were asked the same question, 100% (n=12) reported receiving assistance within two weeks.

The school counselor survey also asked about the amount of time it took to receive services. When school counselors were asked how many days it took to receive transportation assistance (from date of request to actual receipt) 49% (n=100) of respondents reported 1-5 days, 25% (n=25) reported 6-10 days, 18% (n=18) reported 10-15 days, and 8% (n=8) reported 15 days or more. Regarding services utilized, 91% (n=92) of respondents requested uniform vouchers, 54% (n=55) transportation assistance, and 15% (n=15) provided school supplies.

Educational programming

The ECYEH office contracted with 13 agencies for educational programming support. One of the contracts was to fund two educator positions at the City of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing. The educators provided lessons to students whose families were in transition to a shelter. The purpose of this service was to continue educational programming during housing transitions. Another contract, with the Public Health Management Corporation

(PHMC), was to provide case management to youth ages 13-18 who live in emergency shelters or transitional housing. The focus of the case management was to address attendance issues, communicate with school staff and parents, and provide support for career and college readiness.

The other 11 contracts were to support after school programming at shelters. After-school programs typically occurred Monday - Friday from 3:00 – 6:00pm, with modified scheduling for holidays and half days. The services described in the contracts included academic, recreational, and arts activities. The ORE evaluator visited an after school program provided by one of the ECYEH contractors, Build-A-Bridge, at the Jane Adams Place shelter on June 7, 2012. There were five children in attendance when the session began and seven when the session concluded. The children were elementary school-aged. The session was held in a large basement space with art on the walls, photos of heroes, and Build-A-Bridge Rules posted. Relaxing music was played throughout the session. Children began with a simple drawing assignment and were encouraged with notions such as, “If you make a mistake, turn it into something beautiful.” The learning environment was calm and the instructor was vigilant to changes in any child’s affect and disputes between children. One child became frustrated during the art project and the instructor worked through his issue one-on-one, encouraging him to continue his work and rejoin the group. All students were engaged and worked quietly when asked to do so. The session transitioned from drawing to a discussion of what defines a hero and children were presented with the opportunity to identify and describe heroes in their lives. The lesson also incorporated history, as children were asked to identify historic heroes. Following the lesson the class gathered in a circle and participated in a group song and dance. All children participated and had the opportunity to contribute their own moves to the dance. The group dance continued into an activity that encouraged children to express feelings with movement and provided the opportunity for all participants to physically interact. Following the movement portion of the session, children were asked to write a sentence using a spelling word. All students had the opportunity to share their sentence with the group. Overall, the Build-A-Bridge session observed could be characterized as a highly-engaging and educational program geared toward children who have stress and frustration. Skills covered by the program included reading, writing, spelling, social engagement skills, public speaking, and opportunities for creativity across various activities.

In addition to instructor-facilitated after-school programming, the ECYEH purchased software for interactive learning on the computer. Imagine Learning software was purchased for after school academic support. Licenses were installed on computers at four city shelters: People’s Emergency Center, Traveler’s Aid, Appletree, and Women Against Abuse. Training on the use of the software was offered by the vendor at the District central office on May 15, 2012. Four provider agencies were represented at the training. The ORE evaluator participated in the training as well as staff from local shelters. The program was very engaging through the use of animation, color, and music. A pre-assessment is used by the software to individualize lessons to students’ educational areas of need.

The Teen Evolution Experience Network (TEEN) program is administered by the ECYEH office to supplement high school students' knowledge of college and career readiness. The TEEN program met 14 times during the 2011-12 school year, from January 17, 2012 through May 14, 2012. The program contracted Ultimate Success 2 to deliver sessions to teens regarding college applications and resume development. Attendance at the weekly meetings ranged from 2 to 40 participants with an average of 12 participants per session. The highest number of participants, 40, was for the career fair session. The ORE evaluator attended two sessions. At both sessions, students were highly engaged in group discussions and activities regarding college and career preparation. In addition to the fourteen regular meetings, a college tour trip took place from April 2 to April 3, 2012. The college trip visited three schools: Howard University, Morgan State, and American University and 20 students participated.

The ECYEH Coordinator promoted the District's program on Philadelphia's local FOX 29 morning news with a senior ECYEH student. The student explained her housing situation and shared the positive experiences she had with the ECYEH office, including assistance with interviews for college. The ECYEH Coordinator also had the opportunity to describe the prevalence of homelessness in Philadelphia and barriers the office faces with regard to identifying students. The broadcast ended with a promotion for the TEEN Networking Event and College Tour Pep Rally that was held on March 19, 2012. The ECYEH Coordinator's phone number and e-mail were also displayed on-screen and viewer inquiries were encouraged.

IV. Conclusions

Overall, the District's ECYEH program was successful in providing services and training to students experiencing homelessness during the 2011-12 school year. The total number of students identified was consistent with previous years. The percentage of identified students receiving services exceeded the percentage of students receiving services reported in the state-wide ECYEH 2010-11 report. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Education found the program to be in compliance with all 19 program requirements during their annual monitoring visit. Moreover, the District ECYEH student achievement gap was consistent with that reported by the state-wide 2010-11 evaluation.

Recommendations for continued improvement include systems for reaching school-based staff with limited resources. A school secretary listserv or mailing might be pursued to keep secretaries, a common point of contact for students and parents, up to date on procedures and policies. The ECYEH office would also benefit from a stronger District endorsement of the ECYEH initiative, which might include opportunities to reach principals and key administrators through trainings and coordination of efforts. Finally, schools could become more involved with the effort to identify students by informing students of the services and minimizing the stigma for students in need to self-identify. In the same way, school administration and staff might target identified students at the school level to provide support with barriers to learning, such as absenteeism, and encouragement with future plans, such as support with college

applications. Relying on the ECYEH exclusively for long-term change is unreasonable, given the size of the ECYEH office and the size of the District, plus charter schools.

REFERENCES

Pennsylvania Department of Education. Education for Homeless Youth Basic Education Circular, http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania%27s_education_for_children_and_youth_experiencing_homelessness_program/7491, September 1, 2011.

Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Pennsylvania Department of Education's Homeless Children's Initiative Evaluation Report. Division of Student Services Bureau of Teaching and Learning of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Harrisburg, May 2012.

School District of Philadelphia
Office of Student Enrollment & Placement
ECYEH Providers Meeting

HCI Presenter:
Date:
Time:
Location:

Directions: Please evaluate your experience today by checking the appropriate categories. Your name is not required on this survey.

Content: Was this session appropriate for you?

Appropriate 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Not Appropriate

Interest: How interesting was this session?

Very Interesting 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Not Interesting

Practicality: Can the information be used to support your facility?

Useful 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Not Useful

Septa Assistance: If you or your agency asked for SEPTA passes or any other type of transportation assistance for your child (or children) to travel to and from school, about how many days from your request did it take to receive this assistance?

1-2 days	3-5 days	6-10 days	11-14 days	More than 14 days (2 weeks)	I <u>never received</u> my transportation assistance	Not Applicable (I never asked for transportation assistance.)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

School Supply/Uniform Assistance: If you or your agency asked for any types of school supplies or materials for your child (or children), about how many days from your request did it take to receive this assistance?

1-2 days	3-5 days	6-10 days	11-14 days	More than 14 days (2 weeks)	I <u>never received</u> my school supplies	Not Applicable (I never asked for school supplies.)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX A: ECYEH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Please Tell Us About Any Helpful/Interesting Aspect of Session:

Questions/Concerns That I Have:

**Would you like additional information or to be contacted by the HCI Staff?
If yes, please provide your contact information below.**

Name:

Contact Number:

Or contact us directly:

HCISupport@philasd.org

Philadelphia HCI Coordinator: Al B. Quarles Jr., M. Ed. 215-400-6045

School District of Philadelphia
Office of Student Enrollment & Placement
Education of Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program
PARENT WORKSHOP

Presenter:
Date:

Time:
Location:

Directions: Please evaluate your experience today by checking the appropriate categories. Your name is not required on this survey.

Content: Was this session appropriate for you?

Appropriate 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Not Appropriate

Knowledge: Do you understand your child's rights under the McKinney-Vento Act?

Understand Completely 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Do Not Understand

Practicality: Can the information be used to support your child/children?

Useful 5 _ 4 _ 3 _ 2 _ 1 _ Not Useful

Septa Assistance: If you asked for SEPTA tokens or any other type of transportation assistance for your child (or children) to travel to and from school, about how many days from your request did it take to receive this assistance?

1-2 days	3-5 days	6-10 days	11-14 days	More than 14 days (2 weeks)	<u>I never received my</u> transportation assistance	Not Applicable (I never asked for transportation assistance.)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

School Supply/Uniform Assistance: If you asked for any types of school supplies or materials for your child (or children), about how many days from your request did it take to receive this assistance?

1-2 days	3-5 days	6-10 days	11-14 days	More than 14 days (2 weeks)	<u>I never received my</u> school supplies	Not Applicable (I never asked for school supplies.)
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APPENDIX A: ECYEH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

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Please Tell Us About Any Helpful/Interesting Aspect of Session:

Questions/Concerns That I Have:

**Would you like additional information or to be contacted by the School District ECYEH Staff?
If yes, please provide your contact information below.**

Name:

Contact Number:

Or contact us directly:

HCISupport@philasd.org

Philadelphia HCI Coordinator: Al B. Quarles Jr., M. Ed. 215-400-6045

Homeless Children's Initiative: Counselor Survey

1. Name of your school:

2. Your position/title:

3. Please estimate the number of students at your school who

live in a shelter

live in transitional housing

are doubled-up with family or friends

4. Do any housing facilities for homeless families and/or children (shelters, traditional housing, etc.) lie within your school's enrollment feeder area?

Yes
 No
 I don't know

5. Please estimate the amount of time you or another staff member is in communication with staff from homeless housing facilities (shelters, transitional housing, foster care, etc.) regarding homeless students attending your school

Never
 A few times this year
 Monthly
 Weekly
 Almost daily
 Not applicable

Not applicable (please specify)

6. How familiar are you with:

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar
Resources for homeless families and/or children in the Philadelphia area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Office of Supportive Housing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Homeless Children's Initiative: Counselor Survey		
7. During this school year have you		
	Yes	No
Contacted the Office of Supportive Housing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contacted Alfred Quarles of the Homeless Children's Initiative in the School District's Office of Academic Support?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Have you, or your school, received any information this year regarding:		
	Yes	No
Education rights of homeless children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educational resources for homeless children (such as school supplies, uniforms, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation services for homeless children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	
9. How did you receive the information and/or materials? Check all that apply.		
<input type="checkbox"/> During a workshop		
<input type="checkbox"/> From my principal		
<input type="checkbox"/> Via email (from the Homeless Children's Initiative Office or School Counselor Office)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know		
<input type="checkbox"/> I did not receive materials		
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	

Homeless Children's Initiative: Counselor Survey

Survey

10. Does your school have any posters or documents displayed in public areas (school office or on walls where parents can see them) on the education right, services, and/or resources available to homeless students?

Yes
 No

11. How would you rate the following

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
Accessibility of the district's Homeless Children's Initiative office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication between your school and housing facilities serving students in your school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Not applicable (why?)

12. Are aware that schools are supposed to call the Homeless Children's Initiative office whenever school staff receives information that a student has become homeless?

Yes
 No

13. Are you aware of the following Homeless Children's Initiative-funded programs operating in area homeless shelters and transitional housing facilities?

	Yes	No
After-school programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. If your school enrolls any homeless students, please estimate the average number of school days it generally takes to obtain transportation assistance (Septa tokens) through the School District for homeless students in your school (from date of request to actual receipt):

Homeless Children's Initiative: Counselor Survey

15. If you reported any homeless students, please briefly describe any services or resources you have provided them that you think were effective:

16. Briefly describe one or two ways in which the Homeless Children's Initiative office could be more helpful to your school and its homeless student population:

APPENDIX C: PARENT SURVEY

PARENT SURVEY: HOMELESS CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE
School District of Philadelphia
Office of Research Evaluation

Do you have children in your care?

- NO YES

Did anyone help you enroll your child in school?

- NO YES who helped? _____

Were your children transferred to a different school when you came to this shelter?

- NO YES

Since kindergarten, how many times has your child transferred to a different school? _____

Which is your preference?

- I want my children to remain at the same school, even when we move
 I want my children to be in the closest neighborhood school to our current location

Did you receive information on the educational rights of children experiencing homelessness?

- NO YES

Did you receive any of the following?

	YES	NO
School uniform voucher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School supplies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tokens or bus passes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with school registration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there anything from the above list that you did not receive but would like?

- NO YES, I would like _____.

Since you began experiencing homelessness, have you ever been invited to a parent workshop at your housing facility?

- NO YES

Did you ever speak to anyone at your child's school about services available to you?

- NO YES, I spoke to the _____.

Were you aware that the district has a Homeless Children's Initiative office? The office provides assistance to students experiencing homelessness.

- NO YES
-

How can we better serve you? _____

*Please return this survey to the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Research and Evaluation
If you have any questions, please call (215) 400-6516*