

When School is Your Home

WHY HOUSING STATUS IS A CRITICAL EDUCATION ISSUE



**HOMELESS STUDENTS FEEL UNSEEN,
UNHEARD AND UNSUPPORTED.**

**THESE STUDENTS ARE PRESENT IN
OUR CLASSROOMS AND COMMUNITIES
AND THEY NEED OUR HELP!**

#UNSEENSTUDENTS

Source: *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools* www.GradNation.org/Homeless



1,304,446

NUMBER OF HOMELESS STUDENTS ACROSS THE U.S. IN THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Homeless Students are Rarely “Just” Homeless

“Homelessness, over and above poverty, has a disproportionate impact on the education, health, and well-being of students: compared with students who are merely low-income, homeless students suffer from higher rates of health and mental health problems, and lower graduation rates.”

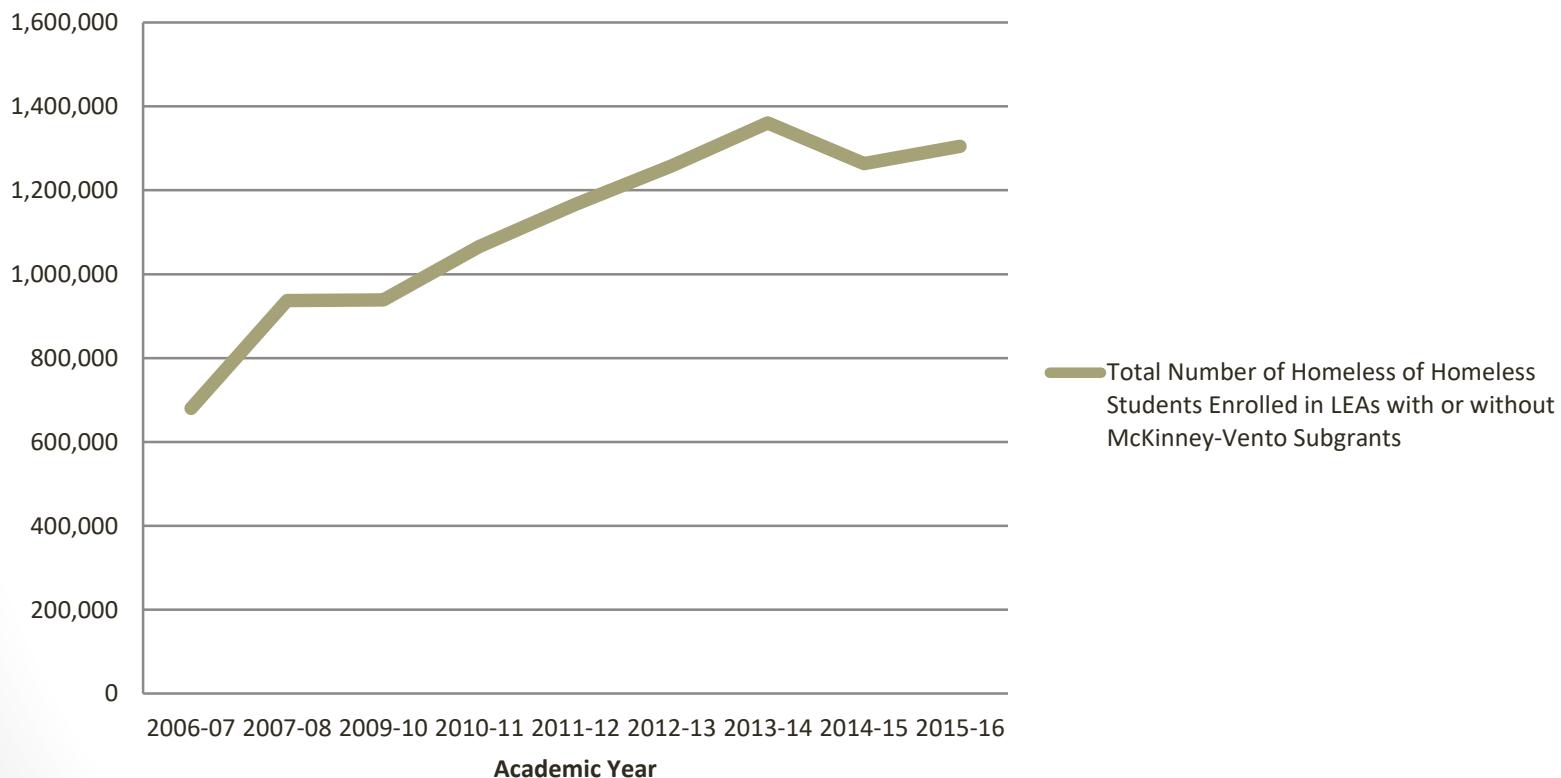
“...To be successful, efforts to prevent and end homelessness must prioritize education—from birth through post-secondary graduation—as an intervention that is equal to housing in urgency and impact, particularly with the long lens of child development.”

Homeless Students in America's Public Schools

The National Perspective

Student Homelessness is Rising

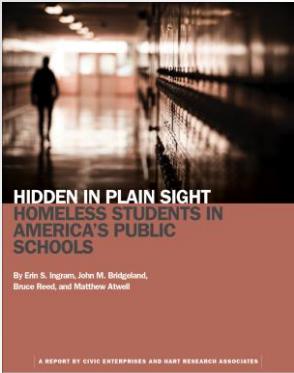
Graph 1: Rising Rates of Student Homelessness, 2006-07 to 2015-16



Negative Impacts of Homelessness

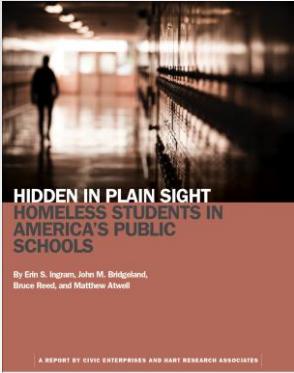
Compared to their stably housed peers, homeless students are more likely:

- To be **held back** from grade to grade
- To have **poor attendance** or be **chronically absent**
- To **fail courses**
- To have **disciplinary issues**
- And ultimately, to **drop out of school**



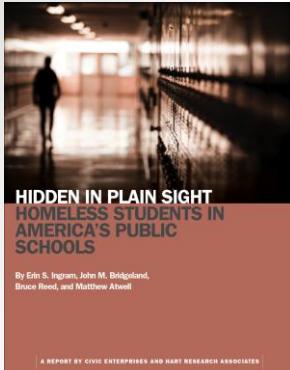
Disruption and Trauma

- 78 percent of formerly homeless students surveyed say **homelessness was something they experienced more than once.**
- 94 percent say they **stayed with other people rather than in one consistent place;**
- 50 percent say they **slept in a car, park, abandoned building, bus station or other public place.**
- 47 percent say they were **homeless both with a parent and alone.**



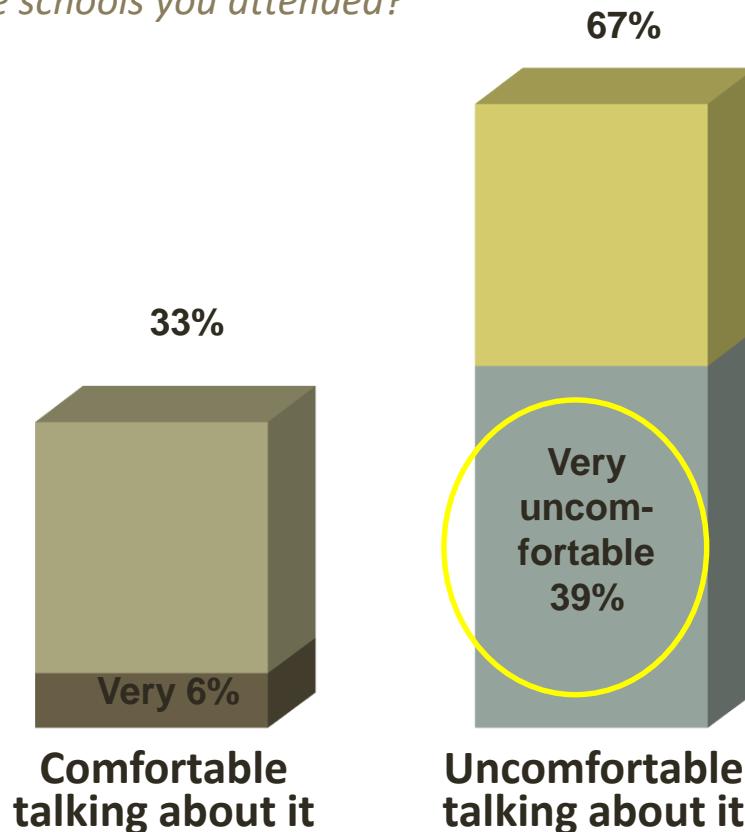
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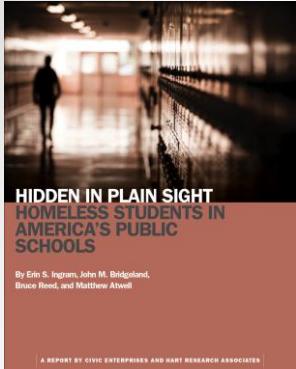
- 82 percent said being homeless had **big impact on their life overall**
 - 72 percent on their ability to feel safe and secure
 - 71 percent on mental and emotional health; 62% on physical health
 - 69 percent on their self-confidence
- 60 percent said it was **hard to stay in school** while they were homeless, and 68 percent it was **hard to do well** in school
- 42 percent said they **dropped out of school** at least once
- 50% say they had to **change schools** during their homelessness, and many did so multiple times.



Invisibility

Youth: During the time(s) you were homeless or in a very unstable housing situation, how comfortable were you talking about your housing situation and the challenges it caused with people who worked at the schools you attended?



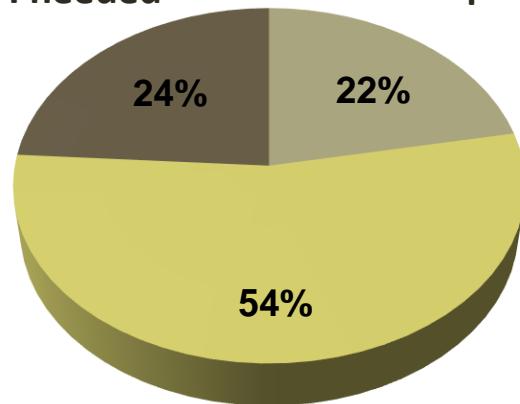


Supports Needed to Stay in and Succeed in School

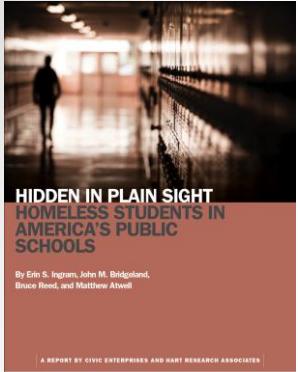
Youth: Which was a bigger challenge for you in being able to stay in school and focus on doing well in school?

Feeling safe and a sense of stability, and getting the emotional support I needed

Making sure I had the specific things I needed, such as school supplies, transportation, and help with school work

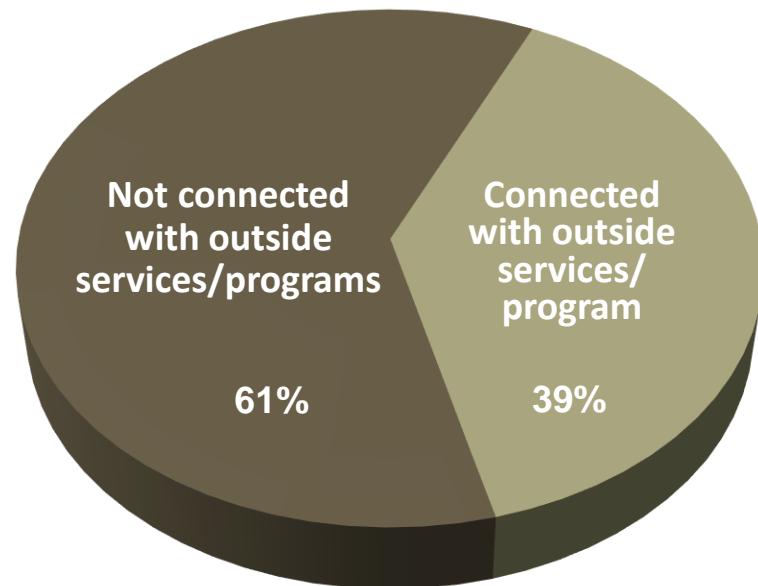


Both were equally important



Frequency of Connections Beyond School

Youth: When you were homeless or in very unstable housing, were you connected with any services or programs outside school?



State Data Comparisons

Florida

- **73,117** students in Florida were identified as homeless
- **5.6% of children under age six** in Florida experience homelessness
- **1,853 FAFSA applicants** in Florida were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

Texas

- **113,063** students in Texas were identified as homeless
- **4.2% of children under age six** in Texas experience homelessness
- **3,397 FAFSA applicants** in Texas were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

State Data Comparisons

Maryland

- **16,096** students in Maryland were identified as homeless
- **3.6% of children under age six** in Maryland experience homelessness
- **558 FAFSA applicants** in Maryland were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

Virginia

- **17,876** students in Virginia were identified as homeless
- **3.0% of children under age six** in Virginia experience homelessness
- **506 FAFSA applicants** in Virginia were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

State Data Comparisons

California

- **235,983** students in California were identified as homeless
- **9.0% of children under age six** in California experience homelessness
- **3,660 FAFSA applicants** in California were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

Washington State

- **35,511** students in Washington were identified as homeless
- **6.0% of children under age six** in Washington experience homelessness
- **1427 FAFSA applicants** in Washington were determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth

Schools as the Hub

- Schools may be the **only service provider in the community** (no shelters in most places)
- Schools may be the most consistent component of a student's life, and their best source to **connect with caring adults** for help and support
- Most schools receive **limited/no federal or state funds for homeless students** (only one in five school districts receives an EHCY subgrant; Title I funds are under-utilized for homeless students)

Recent Policy Wins

- **Early Childhood:** Head Start and Child Care and Development Fund rules now require identification, outreach, and priority given to children and families experiencing homelessness
- **Pre-k—12:** ESSA amended the McKinney-Vento Act to strengthen identification, enrollment, and stability; Title I Part A amendments increase resources for homeless children and youth.
- **Higher Education:** New FAFSA includes improvements for homeless youth; pending legislation would do even more to create support for transition and success in higher education.

What Can Funders Do?

Partnerships for educational success must:

- Address comprehensive needs (housing, food, health, mental health, transportation)
- Be built with direct input from families and youth
- Be flexible, individualized, and adaptable over time

Key partners include:

- School district homeless liaisons
- Local service providers working in collaboration with school liaisons
- Faith-based organizations
- Housing agencies

Promising Practices: Housing/School Collaborations

- Roadmap to Graduation, Adrian, MI – host home collaboration with Catholic Charities.
- Alternative House, Fairfax, VA – provides a range of housing options, and support to keep students in school
- King County Housing Authority – Student and Family Stability Initiative – partnership between housing authority, schools, and nonprofits to assist homeless families with young children

"I just so sincerely believe that, if we can create change for them while they're young, and empower them with the tools to be successful in school, to graduate on time, to understand that they have a right to remain in their school of origin and not have to go to four or five different schools in the school year...those are the small things that may seem insignificant to the layman, but in the end, I believe we're creating change so that our children that are in our schools don't end up being homeless adults."

– State Coordinator

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Guiding Questions for Table Discussions

Are you funding any area that directly or indirectly addresses the experience of student homelessness? Are there ways you can make those grants and strategies more effective?

What surprises you most about what you've heard?

What do you still wonder?

What most intrigues you about possible interventions?

What barriers do you see in mobilizing wrap-around supports for schools and homeless students?

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Stay in touch!

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