

Executive Summary

In September 2011, the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Homeless Education Liaison requested information on homeless student performance in the Virginia State Assessment Program (VSAP). This brief report will provide context for these data by providing comparison to state and national statistics. Data used to prepare this report are from the ACPS application for the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, a report prepared by the ACPS Transportation Department, data extracted from the Educational Information Management System (EIMS) and other Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) data systems, reports, and announcements. This report provides background on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act including the definition of homeless children and youth, key elements of the act, the role of the Division Liaison, and school and division responsibilities for serving these students. This overview is followed by a discussion of homeless student performance on the VSAP, comparison of ACPS homeless student pass rates in state assessments with other local educational agencies (LEAs), and homeless student graduation cohort performance. The report concludes with recommendations for the division and schools to meet the needs of the homeless children and youth.

Highlights

- ACPS identified 185 homeless students served by the division in 2008-09, 143 students in 2009-10, and 176 students in 2010-11.
- The number of homeless students tested in ACPS was roughly equal in 2008-09 and 2009-10, but then fell by one-quarter to one-third in 2010-11 depending upon the content area.
- From 2008-09 to 2010-11, percent pass rates for homeless students in ACPS increased from less than one percent in English-Reading to about 20% in Math and English-writing; however, there was a four percent drop in History.
- From 2008-09 to 2009-10, the number of homeless students tested in grades 9 to 12 Reading increased from 7 to 12 students and in Math from 20 to 31 students.
- ACPS homeless students tended to have higher passing rates on state assessments than other LEAs with McKinney-Vento Subgrants over school years 2008-09 and 2009-10.
- The percent of homeless students in ACPS graduation cohorts remained roughly the same from 1.55% of students in 2007-08 to 1.84% in 2010-11, while the homeless anytime students roughly doubled from 1.97% of students in 2007-08 to 3.79% in 2010-11.
- By providing ACPS bus transportation to a majority of homeless students in 2010-11, the division was able to achieve a savings of over 80% in transportation costs from 2009-10.

Recommendations

1. Provide professional development for division and school personnel on local education agency (LEA) responsibilities regarding coordination of services for homeless children and youth.
2. Enhance professional development for division and school personnel on best practices regarding coordination of services for homeless children and youth.
3. Develop division and school indicators of quality to evaluate initiatives and programs that serve homeless children and youth.
4. Develop practices to monitor and evaluate division and school data on initiatives and programs for homeless children and youth on an ongoing basis to inform data-driven decision making.