

2016-17 Evaluation of the Homeless Education Program

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At-a-Glance

The Homeless Education Program (HEP) is a federally funded program designed to provide support services to homeless children and their families. It advocates on behalf of homeless families by educating school staff and the community about their responsibilities to the homeless and about the rights and issues of the homeless. The purpose of the HEP is to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children. The program also attempts “to improve the means of identification of homeless families, children and youths by offering training and constantly increasing the range of services available to campuses to assist with their homeless students.”¹ The HEP helped to remove attendance barriers for homeless students by working with the Dallas ISD Transportation department, to ensure homeless students received school of origin transportation. The HEP provided homeless students with backpacks, school supplies, school appropriate clothing, hygiene items, mentoring and college preparation programs. The program sent a newsletter to the school registrars informing them of the HEP services offered.

Within the HEP, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B, Education for Homeless Children and Youths) guarantees educational rights and protections for children and youths experiencing severe homelessness. Section 725 (2) of the McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youths as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing or economic hardship”. This includes children and youths living in shared housing with other persons, cars, hotels, motels, bus or train stations, trailer parks, abandoned buildings, camping grounds, and emergency or transitional shelters. It also includes students abandoned in hospitals or waiting for foster care placement. This population of homeless children and youth live under more severe conditions and their housing arrangements are more precarious than homeless students who might live with relatives. These students are more transient than other homeless children are and many are regularly evicted from shelters, hotels and other transitional housing after a certain period.

Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the impact that program services had on homeless students’ attendance, discipline referrals and

achievement. Within the HEP, students served by McKinney-Vento were compared to the rest of the students. The budget for the 2016-17 school year was \$175,000, which came from Title I, Part A.

Data were obtained from the October 31, 2016 Chancery student database and the corresponding Attendance and Discipline Referral databases. Because of students’ transient nature, HEP students using HEP services were identified every six weeks through the attendance records maintained by program personnel.

Of the 4,336 HEP students, 2,354 (54.3%) were in elementary school, 903 (20.8%) in middle school and 1,079 (24.9%) in high school (Table 1). The total 4,336 homeless students represented 2.8 percent of the total district enrollment.

Table 1: Enrollment of Homeless Students and Total District Enrollment 2016-17

Grade	Homeless Students		All District Students	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary				
PK	298	6.9	10,929	0.2
KN	366	8.4	10,867	0.2
1	372	8.6	11,847	0.2
2	357	8.2	12,502	0.2
3	335	7.7	12,783	0.2
4	313	7.2	12,607	0.2
5	313	7.2	12,024	0.2
Total	2,354	54.3	83,559	1.5
Middle				
6	326	7.5	10,850	0.2
7	282	6.5	10,347	0.2
8	295	6.8	10,101	0.2
Total	903	20.8	31,298	0.6
High				
9	419	9.7	12,122	0.3
10	296	6.8	10,618	0.2
11	208	4.8	9,020	0.1
12	156	3.6	7,590	0.1
Total	1,079	24.9	39,350	0.7
All				
Total	4,336	100.0	154,207	2.8

Source: Chancery SMS database 10/31/2017.

Note: Some percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

The majority of homeless students were either Hispanic (47.9%) or African-American (43.3%). Ninety-two percent of homeless students were born in the United States.

Services Provided by the Homeless Education Program during 2016-17

The HEP, in partnership with Focus on Teens, provided services to ten high schools through Drop-In centers.

¹ The Homeless Education Program Action Plan, 2016-17

The ten Drop-In centers were located at North Dallas, Molina, Lincoln, Madison, Maya Angelou, Roosevelt, Wilson, Patton, Jefferson, and Samuell High schools. Drop-In centers were stocked with essential items such as food staples, backpacks, school supplies and hygiene items to help students be able to attend school on a regular basis.

In support of the district goal to increase the graduation rate, the HEP brought in agencies to present information about colleges and college admissions, career opportunities for individuals with only a high school diploma and information about new industries and career opportunities for students graduating from high school.

Attendance

Table 2 shows attendance rates for students served by the HEP and those covered under McKinney-Vento. McKinney-Vento is a subset of homeless students that received supplies from the HEP. There were 4,336 homeless students in the district as of the end of the first six weeks of the school year. Table 2 shows a comparison of average attendance for McKinney-Vento, other homeless and general education students for first semester, second semester and the entire year 2016-17. In general, homeless and McKinney-Vento students had lower attendance rates than general education students.

Table 2: Average Attendance of McKinney-Vento and Other Homeless Compared to General Education Students, 2016-17

	First Semester	Second Semester	Year End
General Education	95.56	95.04	95.25
McKinney-Vento	91.02	90.46	90.78
Homeless	92.61	92.21	92.49

Source: Attendance Data File 2016-17

Average attendance rates for homeless students served by the Drop-In centers ranged from mid-80s to upper 90s. Their attendance rates were comparable to other homeless and general education students.

Most homeless students were served at the North Dallas High School Drop-In Center. Average attendance for these students ranged from 91.86 percent to 96.52 percent (Table 3)

Table 3: Average Attendance of Homeless Students Served by North Dallas Drop-In Center by Six-Week Period

	1 st Six Weeks	2 nd Six Weeks	1 st Sem.	4 th Six Weeks	5 th Six Weeks	Year End
N. Dallas	96.52	92.77	92.48	92.14	91.91	91.86

Source: Attendance Data File 2016-17.

Note: This Drop-In center is where most of homeless students go.

Discipline Referrals

Discipline referrals were similar for general education students and homeless students. Fighting was an offense for which general education students represented 30.3 percent of all referrals, while for homeless students it was 29.8 percent of all referrals. Classroom disruption was the second largest percentage of all referrals; general education students had a 22.7 percent referral rate while homeless students were at 16.9 percent. Given the conditions under which homeless students live, it is positive that homeless students had fewer discipline referrals than general education students did.

Graduation Rates

Forty (26%) of the 156 HEP seniors graduated in 2016-17. This included seven served in a Drop-In center.

Academic Performance

HEP and McKinney-Vento students' performance on *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End-of-the-Course (STAAR EOC)* is shown in Tables 4 to 6. Homeless students outperformed McKinney-Vento students in reading for grades 3, 5, 7 and 8. They also outperformed McKinney-Vento students in mathematics in grades 3 to 7.

Table 4: Homeless and McKinney-Vento Students Who Scored Approaching Grade Level on STAAR

	Reading		Mathematics	
	N	%	N	%
Grade 3				
Homeless	126	52.5	133	55.4
McKinney-Vento	37	44.0	38	45.2
Gen. Ed.	7,441	59.5	12,827	70.0
Grade 4				
Homeless	114	48.5	126	53.6
McKinney-Vento	32	50.0	31	48.4
Gen. Ed.	7,628	56.4	12,571	68.1
Grade 5				
Homeless	155	64.3	155	64.3
McKinney-Vento	47	59.5	49	62.0
Gen. Ed.	8,015	71.7	11,880	80.6
Grade 6				
Homeless	111	45.3	135	55.3
McKinney-Vento	29	46.0	34	54.0
Gen. Ed.	10,655	52.4	10,627	64.1
Grade 7				
Homeless	94	49.7	80	42.3
McKinney-Vento	18	40.9	10	22.7
Gen. Ed.	10,031	58.5	7,535	45.4
Grade 8				
Homeless	127	61.1	113	54.3
McKinney-Vento	35	57.4	27	64.8
Gen. Ed.	9,658	74.5	10,279	79.2

Source: STAAR data file 2016-17 and MyData Portal District Data Packet.

As seen in Table 5, General Education students outperformed Homeless students in all STAAR EOC content areas.

Table 5: 2016-17 Number and Percentage of Homeless and General Education Students Who Scored Approaching Grade Level on STAAR EOC by Content Area

Content	Homeless		General Education	
	N	%	N	%
Algebra I	95	60.1	9,580	73.8
Biology	78	70.9	8,643	78.3
English I	53	31.9	8,003	50.1
English II	68	47.6	7,411	53.1
US History	53	77.9	7,676	88.2

Source: STAAR EOC and Chancery SMS databases.

Homeless students slightly outperformed McKinney-Vento students on STAAR EOC in Algebra I but not in other content areas.

Table 6: 2016-17 Number and Percentage of McKinney-Vento and Homeless Students Who Scored Approaching Grade Level on STAAR EOC by Content Area

Content	McKinney-Vento		Homeless	
	N	%	N	%
Algebra I	32	59.3	95	60.1
Biology	25	71.4	78	70.9
English I	23	39.7	53	31.9
English II	18	50.0	68	47.6
US History	15	78.9	53	77.9

Source: STAAR EOC and Chancery SMS databases.

Recommendations

- **Continue to support the district high school Drop-In centers.** The Drop-In centers have helped stabilize and encourage homeless students to stay in school, to attend regularly and to connect with other students and faculty. The Drop-In centers provided homeless students with supplies and hygiene items needed to mitigate some of their most pressing needs.
- **Maintain the partnership with Focus on Teens.** This partnership will allow the program to provide tutoring and counseling support to homeless students.

This 2016-17 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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