The Educational Success of Homeless and Highly Mobile Students in San Francisco Unified School District

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Hadar Baharav & Jacob Leos-Urbel
John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities

Jelena Obradović & Sarah Bardack
Stanford Graduate School of Education

Stanford
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION

**john w. gardner
center** for youth and their communities

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INTRODUCTION

Homelessness and unstable living arrangements for students are nationwide problems, with more than 1 million youth experiencing homelessness each year (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012). In San Francisco, where both housing costs and income inequality continue to grow (Berube & Holmes, 2015; Sinicrope, Clark, Thomason, & Lewis-Charp, 2015), the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is increasingly focused on supporting homeless children and families. To inform this work, SFUSD partnered with Stanford University's Graduate School of Education (GSE) and John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (Gardner Center) to conduct research aimed at helping SFUSD better track, understand, and support their homeless and highly mobile (HHM) student population. This research-practice partnership received funding support from the Stanford/SFUSD Partnership Incentive Fund. We aimed to further advance understanding of the student assets that promote resilient adaptation and educational success of HHM students. Specifically, we examined how HHM students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills—including self-management, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and social awareness—may support their academic achievement.

In consultation with SFUSD we proposed to address the following research questions:

1) What is the size and distribution of HHM students in SFUSD across different grades, schools, racial ethnicities, and language backgrounds?

2) How heterogeneous is this student population in terms of chronicity of HHM status, instability of living arrangement, placement in foster care, and number of siblings?

3) What promotes resilience and positive outcomes for HHM students?

   a) What are the implications of being HHM for students' school attendance, graduation rates, and academic achievement as indexed by GPA and standardized tests?
   b) What student assets (as measured by the CORE SEL survey) help explain variability in HHM students' academic outcomes?
   c) Do HHM students fare better in some schools than in others? Are there any shared attributes among these schools?

In this report we first introduce policy and research background information related to HHM students, then we briefly describe the research design and highlight considerations regarding data. Next, we present research related to students' demographics, educational experiences and outcomes, as well as the role of protective factors that relate to positive outcomes for these students. We conclude the report with a summary and a brief discussion of implications and possible next steps.

Overall, we find that, HHM students display lower attendance, GPA, standardized test scores, and high school graduation, and higher suspension rates on average compared to students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. However, despite lower achievement on average, some HHM students attend school at high rates and show high academic achievement. Moreover, while the data presented here are primarily at the individual student level, we recognize that

factors at the setting (e.g., neighborhoods, schools) and system level (e.g., school district, other public agencies, local/state government) have implications for educational challenges for HHM students. Hence, our research is informed by a tri-level lens (Dukakis, London, McLaughlin, & Williamson, 2009) which considers the system, setting, and individual levels. This framework asserts that the institutions within which youth are nested (including their schools) have the power to lead to changes in conditions supporting positive youth outcomes. Furthermore, schools are subject to the influences of system-level factors—such as district, state, and federal policy and funding—which have the power to facilitate (or frustrate) practices and processes in schools.

POLICY & RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Prior Research on Student Homelessness

Prior research indicates that experiencing homelessness can have negative effects on students' health, their close relationships, and their educational outcomes—including greater school mobility, likelihood of being chronically absent, lower achievement and graduation rates (e.g., Brumley et al., 2015; Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Herbers, et al., 2012; Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, 2015; Ingram, Bridgeland, Reed, & Atwell, 2016; Obradović et al., 2009; Tobin, 2016). However, Obradović and colleagues (2009) also found striking variability in the achievement trajectories of students experiencing homelessness, with some students displaying academic resilience despite the challenges. Further, this variability among students could not be explained simply by student demographics (e.g., gender, ELL status, attendance, and ethnicity). Related, a study of 5- to 6-year-old children living in an emergency homeless shelter revealed that their ability to manage their own behavior and attention was the most powerful predictor of school readiness and early school success over and above family-related risk factors, students' general intelligence, and parenting quality (Obradović, 2010). These findings are consistent with a growing body of research that broadly implicates social and emotional learning processes (e.g., self-management, social awareness, growth mindset and self-efficacy) in many aspects of school success, and suggests these skills may represent important protective factors for promoting resilience among HHM students (Cutuli & Herbers, 2014; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Moffitt et al., 2011).

Policy Context

McKinney-Vento Act

Federal policy provides requirements for school districts on how to define and serve school-age homeless students. The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, authorized under Subtitle VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) is designed to address the needs of homeless children and youth and ensure their educational rights and protections. The McKinney-Vento Act was signed into law in 1987 and was last reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).[1] The Act defines the term "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence including:

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[1] http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/ehcy_profile.pdf;
http://naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/legis/mvstrikethrough.pdf

- Those who are sharing the housing of other persons (i.e., doubled-up) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.

- Those who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

- Those who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

The Act requires school districts to remove all enrollment barriers and provide school access and support for the academic success for students experiencing homelessness. This includes the requirements to appoint a local homeless education liaison, to immediately enroll homeless youth to their school of choice, and to ensure transportation to and from school.

SFUSD Policy

In recent years, SFUSD has been placing greater emphasis on serving its population of students who are experiencing homelessness. These efforts have led to the development of a new policy, authored by SFUSD Commissioner Matt Haney. In the policy, the district identifies several central strands for providing "homeless students with a safe, positive learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and that promotes students' self-esteem and academic achievement." These strands include: (1) evaluating student outcomes; (2) considering schools with high concentrations of homeless students; (3) reviewing and revising policies that might disproportionately impact homeless students; (4) addressing enrollment barriers; (5) developing services for homeless preschoolers; (5) supporting homeless students' access to college and career; (6) developing and facilitating collaboration and coordination with various service providers; and, (7) assigning school liaisons to support homeless students on school sites.[2] We hope that the research presented below will help inform these efforts.

RESEARCH DATA & DESIGN

Data

We utilized administrative data for SFUSD students in grades K through 12, in the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 school years. Key data elements included: students' demographics; their educational experiences (classroom engagement as proxied by attendance, and classroom conduct as proxied by suspensions) and outcomes (including, for example, GPA, standardized

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[2] "In Support of Staff Training, Coordination and Delivery of Programs and Services to Meet the Needs of Homeless Children, Youth and Families in San Francisco Unified School District." Draft SFUSD School Board Policy. May 15, 2017.

tests scores, and high school graduation); a homeless and highly mobile flag (a binary variable identifying students experiencing homelessness[3]); an indicator of the type of housing for homeless students (i.e., shelter, temporarily doubled up, hotel/motel, temporarily unsheltered); and students' self-reports on social and emotional learning (SEL) survey items[4].

It is important to note the data limitations inherent in our analysis of the HHM population. First, the administrative flag identifying HHM students may not capture the full population of students experiencing homelessness. This is either because students/families choose not to disclose their living situation, or due to administrative challenges associated with collecting and entering this information into the data system.[5] In addition, aligned with the McKinney-Vento Act provisions, once a student is identified as homeless, the designation is kept constant throughout the school year, regardless of the student's current housing status. Furthermore, SFUSD's administrative data do not capture the dates associated with a student's entry or exit from homelessness, and do not reveal the length of the homeless experience. Therefore, we were not able to examine the relationship between the exact duration of being homeless and students' outcomes. Nevertheless, to examine the cumulative effect of being homeless over multiple years, we created a HHM chronicity indicator, which took into account the number of consecutive years that a student had been identified as HHM by SFUSD.

Design & Analyses

Analyses included descriptive statistics and multi-level regression models predicting students' academic achievement on state administered standardized tests. We examined the contribution of HHM students' social and emotional learning capacities to their academic achievements on state standardized tests. Where appropriate, we compared HHM students to the whole SFUSD student population and/or to the population of students eligible for free lunch. By controlling for students' free- and reduced-price lunch status, we were able to partially isolate the effects of homelessness from broad measure of economic disadvantage.

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[3] Henceforth, when reporting on SFUSD's data on students experiencing homelessness and their families, we will be referring to them as HHM students, as indicated by the data flag/descriptor.
[4] SEL data were collected from the California Office to Reform Education (CORE) survey and only available for 2014-15 and 2015-16.
[5] See Carlisle, M. (2017) "Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act by SFUSD Social Workers."
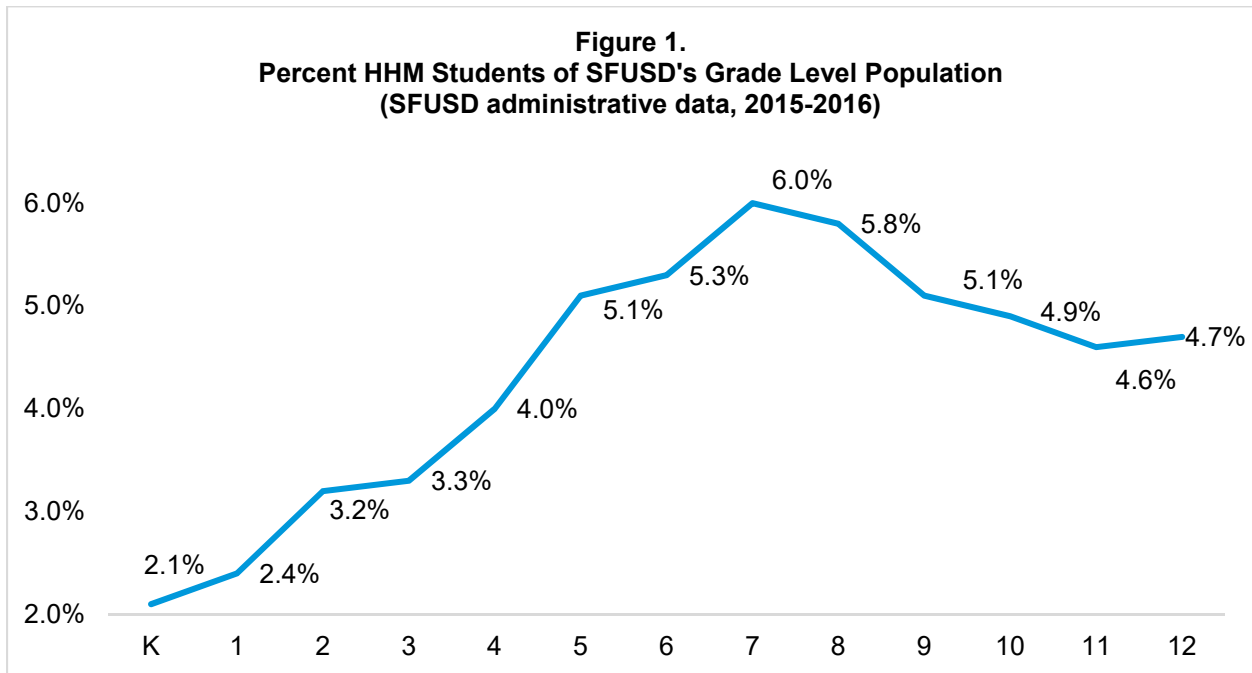
FINDINGS

Describing the HHM Student Population

Size of HHM Population

Based on school year 2015-16[6] records, approximately 4% of the school district population is reported HHM, a total of 2,495 students[7]. This number remained more or less constant over the past three years (2,109 HHM students in 2013-14, and 2,558 in 2014-15).

HHM Population by Grade Level

The HHM student population in the school district is unevenly distributed across grade levels (See Figure 1). In particular, in grade 1, about 2% of the student population is identified as HHM; then the relative proportion of HHM students gradually increases in each grade until it reaches a high of 6% in 7th grade, and then slightly declines in high school to below 5%.

Figure 1.
Percent HHM Students of SFUSD's Grade Level Population
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

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[6] Findings are presented for 2015-16 school year unless otherwise stated.

[7] If we consider households as the unit of analysis, we find that the school district serves 2,110 unique families whose children were identified by the district as HHM students. Eighty-five percent of the families (n=1,789) had only one homeless child enrolled in the district. About 13% of the families (n=270) had two homeless children enrolled in the district; 42 families enrolled three HHM children in the district, and another nine families enrolled a total of four, five, or six children each.

Student Demographics

Gender and Race/Ethnicity

HHM status is distributed fairly evenly between males (52.9%) and females[8]. Compared to their group's size in the overall student population, Hispanic and Black students are overrepresented in the homeless population, whereas Asian/Pacific Islander and White students are underrepresented (see Figure 2). Among HHM students, Hispanic students comprise about 51% of the population compared to 28% of the entire district's student population. Asian/Pacific Islander students make up 18.5% of the HHM population compared to 39% overall. Black students account for 17% of the HHM student population versus 8% district-wide. Finally, White students make up 9% of the district's HHM population compared to 19% overall.

Figure 2.
Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
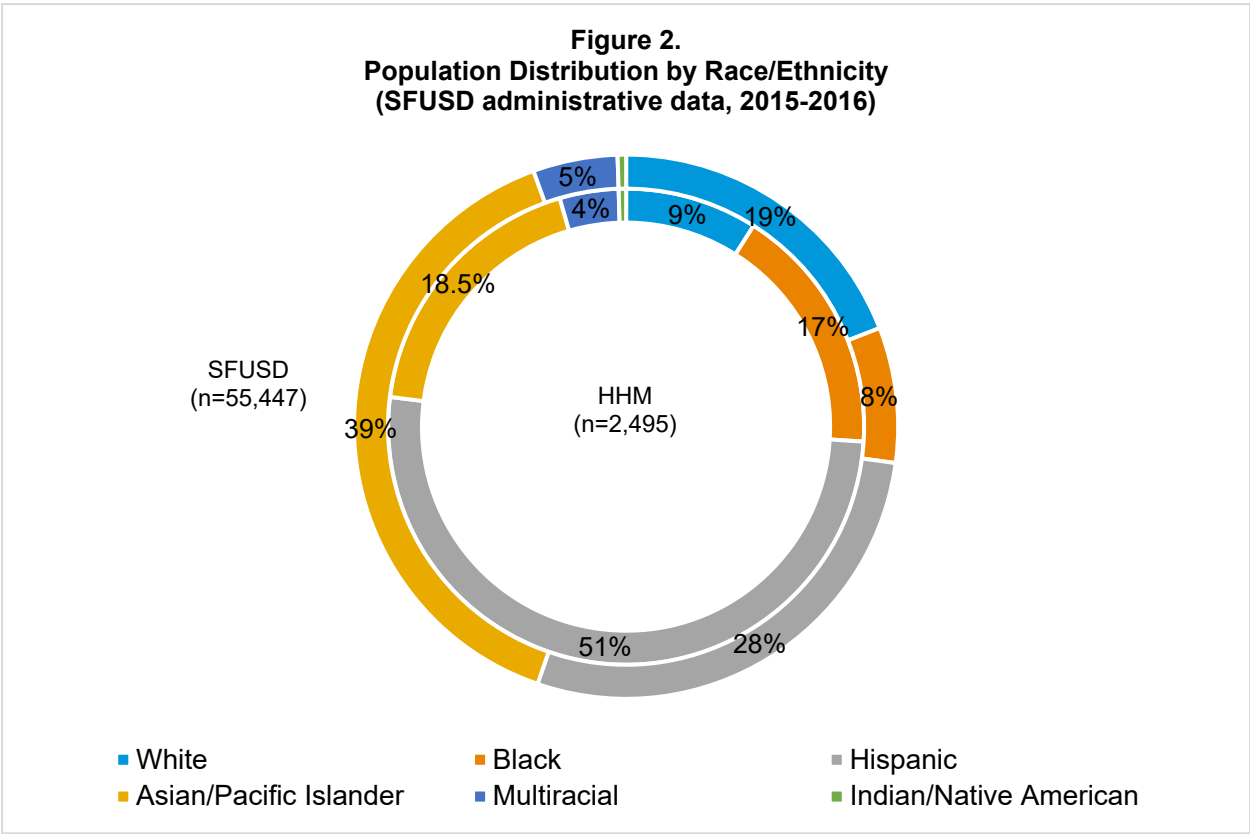
Home Language

The two most common home languages among HHM students are English (44%) and Spanish (40%). Seven percent of HHM students report Cantonese as their home language. Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Tagalog combined, are spoken in the homes of 4% of HHM students. By comparison, 48% of all students in the district reported English, and 20% reported Spanish, as the language spoken at home, Cantonese is the home language of 19% of the students in the

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[8] There is a slightly higher percent of males (51.6%) compared to females in the SFUSD's student population.

district; Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Tagalog combined are spoken in the homes of 6% of the district's student population.

Chronicity of Homelessness

Data indicate that the majority of SFUSD students identified as HHM experience homelessness for multiple years. Among students who were reported homeless in 2013-14, 2014-15, or 2015-16, more than half were reported homeless in all three years (n=1,413). Another 827 students experienced homelessness for two consecutive years, and 1,237 students were identified as experiencing homelessness during one of the three years.

HHM Chronicity by Race/Ethnicity

Chronicity of HHM status varied by race/ethnicity (see Figure 3). Among HHM students, Hispanic and Asian students are more likely than White and Black students to experience multiple years of homelessness. Almost 50% of Hispanic and Asian HHM students were repeatedly identified as homeless in each of the three years of data, compared to 21% of White and 30% of Black HHM students.

Figure 3.
Chronicity of HHM by Race/Ethnicity
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
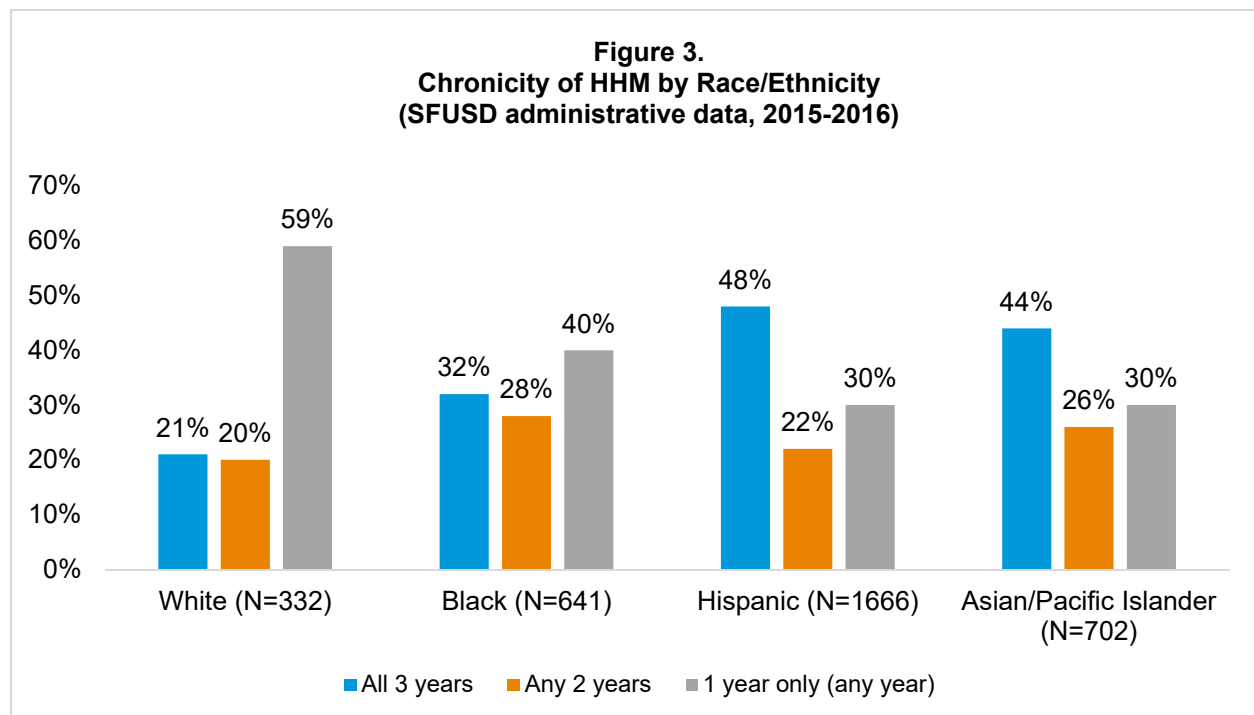
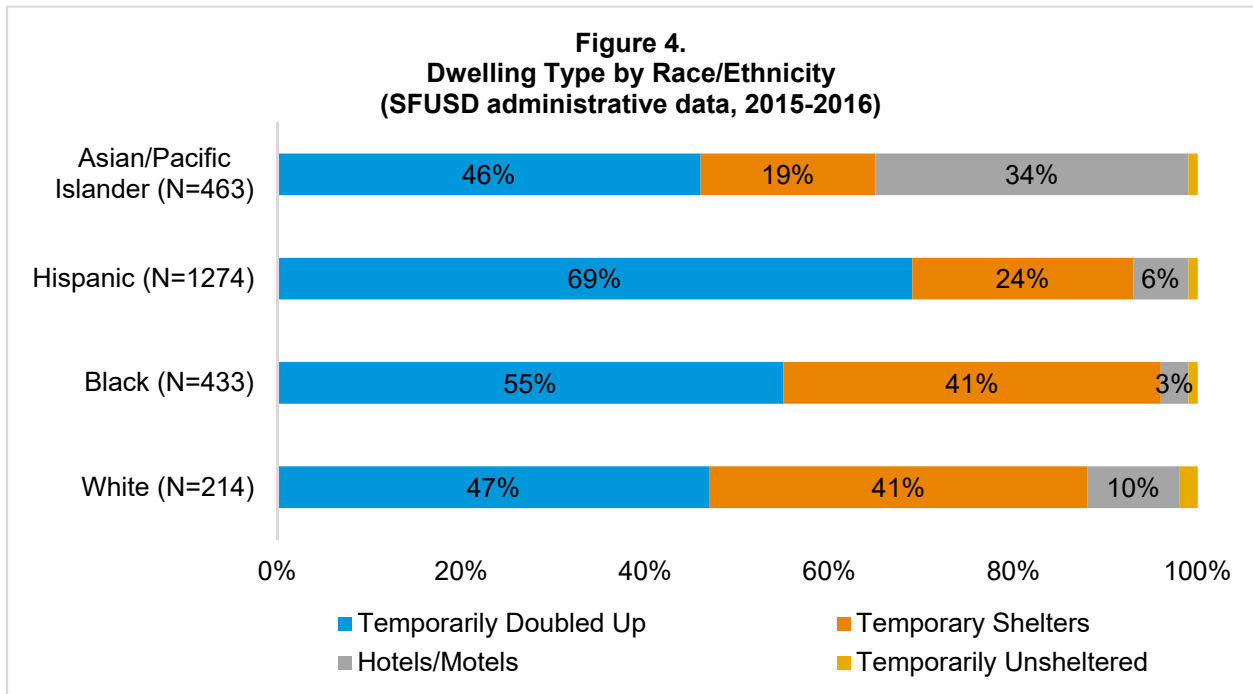*Dwelling Type among HHM Students*

HHM students in SFUSD are classified into four categories of living conditions as detailed in the McKinney-Vento Act. The majority of SFUSD HHM students (60%) share the housing of other persons (i.e., "temporarily doubled up"), followed by those living in temporary shelters (28%) or hotels/motels (11%), and a small percentage (1%) who are temporarily unsheltered.

Dwelling Type for HHM Students by Race/Ethnicity

Dwelling type also varied by ethnicity. Sharing the housing of other persons was reported by HHM Hispanic students (69%) far more than it was reported by HHM Black (55%), White (47%) or Asian/Pacific Islander (46%) students. Living in hotels/motels was much more common among HHM Asian students (33%) compared to their peers of other race/ethnicities (3%-10%). See Figure 4 for details.

Figure 4.
Dwelling Type by Race/Ethnicity
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

Race/Ethnicity	Temporarily Doubled Up	Temporary Shelters	Hotels/Motels
Asian/Pacific Islander (N=463)	46%	19%	34%
Hispanic (N=1274)	69%	24%	6%
Black (N=433)	55%	41%	3%
White (N=214)	47%	41%	10%

Legend: ■ Temporarily Doubled Up ■ Temporary Shelters ■ Hotels/Motels ■ Temporarily Unsheltered

HHM Students in Foster Care

Finally, examination of the overlap between HHM status and foster care status indicates that HHM students have higher rates of placement in foster care compared to the district student population as a whole (2.5% of HHM students are in foster care versus less than 1% of general SFUSD student population).

Educational Experiences and Outcomes

Relative Risk Among SFUSD Students

HHM students may be at educational risk for multiple reasons including the stress associated with housing mobility and inadequate living conditions as well as those related to poverty in general. In describing the HHM population in relation to the remaining SFUSD student population, we divide the students into four distinct and mutually exclusive categories based on their socioeconomic status and anticipated life stressors as follows (and in order): HHM students, free lunch students, reduced price lunch students, and non-HHM/FRPL students (see Figure 5).

Figure 5.
SFUSD Student Population by Economic Risk Level
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

Legend: ■ Not FRPL/HHM ■ Reduced Price Lunch ■ Free Lunch ■ HHM
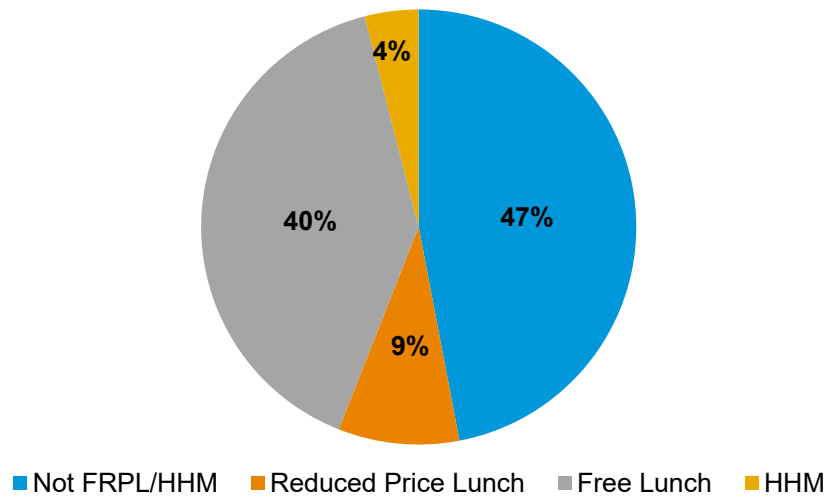
In 2015-2016, HHM students were, on average, more likely to change schools mid-year, miss days of school, spend time in out-of-school suspension, or leave the district, compared to students eligible for free lunch[9]. Compared to students eligible for free lunch, HHM students also had lower achievement (as measured by Grade Point Average and standardized test scores), lower high school graduation rates, and lower rates of completion of A-G requirements. Below we describe these patterns which suggest increased challenges for HHM students on average. We also highlight the variability in these outcomes which indicate that, in fact, many HHM students are resilient and are able to thrive despite facing high levels of adversity.

School Mobility, Attendance, and Chronic Absenteeism

Among HHM students, 12% changed SFUSD schools[10] at least once during the school year, compared to just 2% of free lunch students. Furthermore, HHM students, on average, attended school 92% of the time, whereas their peers who are eligible for free lunch had an average attendance rate of 95% (see Figure 6).

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[9] In 2015-16 there were 23,279 students identified as eligible for free lunch through the federal's National School Lunch Program (NSLP). We compare HHM students to students receiving free lunch as these two groups of students face the greatest economic hardship.
[10] Based on the number of *unique* schools the student attended.

Figure 6.
Average Attendance Rate
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
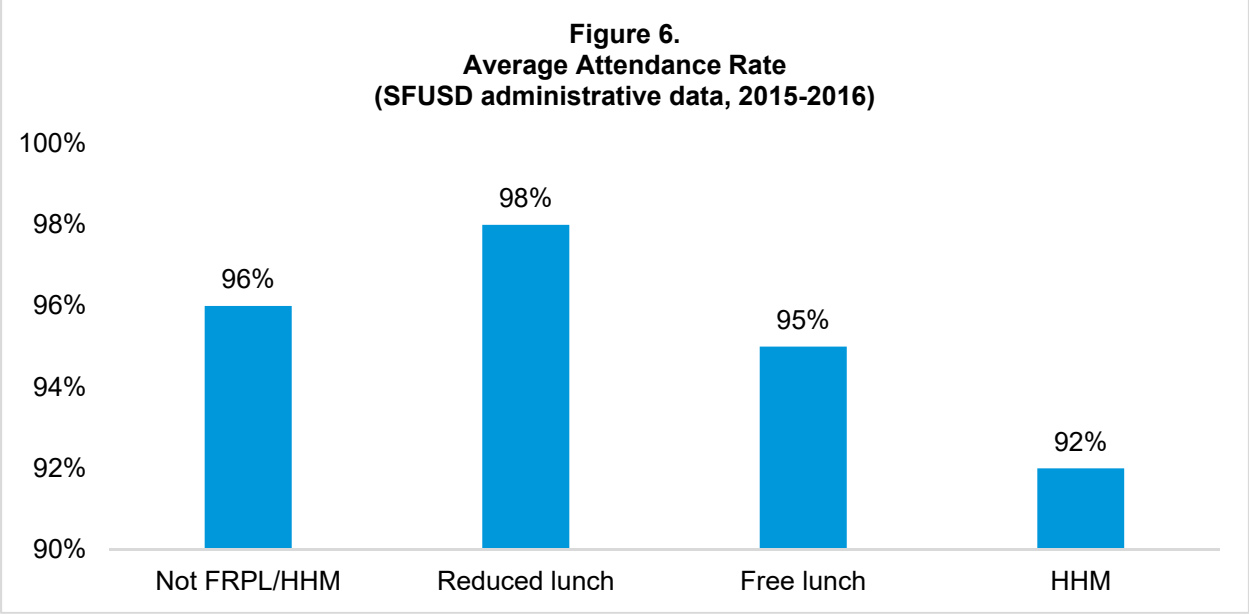
Moreover, more than twice as many HHM students are chronically absent (below 90% attendance rate) compared to their free lunch peers (25% vs. 11%) (see Figure 7). Lastly, in 2015-16, 5% of HHM students left the district for reasons other than school completion[11], compared to 2% among free lunch students.

Figure 7.
Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Group
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

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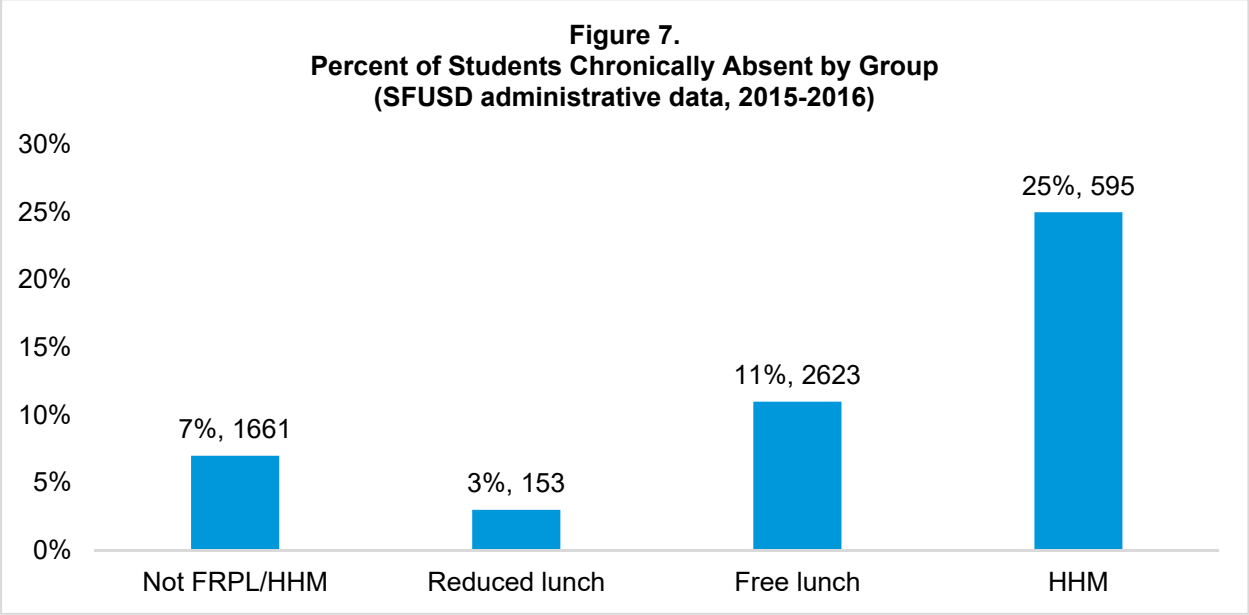
[11] In this calculation we counted the following descriptors for leaving the district for reason other than school completion: transferred to a California public school, transferred to a school in the U.S., transferred to a school outside of the U.S., transferred to home school, entered institution for HS diploma, and left— no known enrollment.

Suspensions

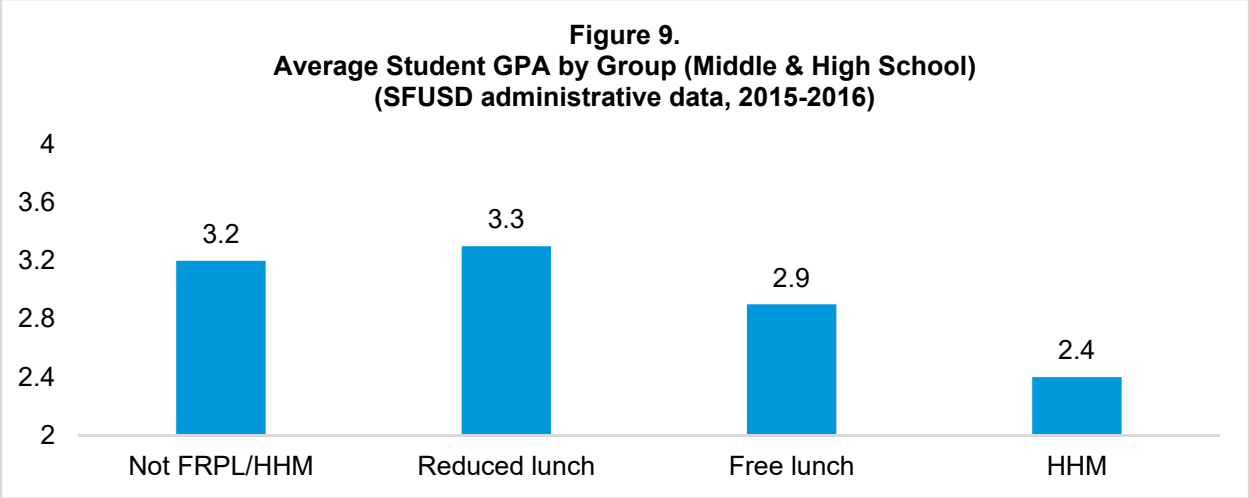HHM students were 2.5 times more likely to be suspended out of school than free lunch students (see Figure 8). Among students who were suspended, there were no meaningful differences between HHM and free lunch students in the number of suspensions or the number of cumulative days in suspension.[12]

Figure 8.
Percent of Students Suspended by Group
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

Group	Percent
Not FRPL/HHM	0.7%
Reduced lunch	0.6%
Free lunch	1.7%
HHM	4.4%
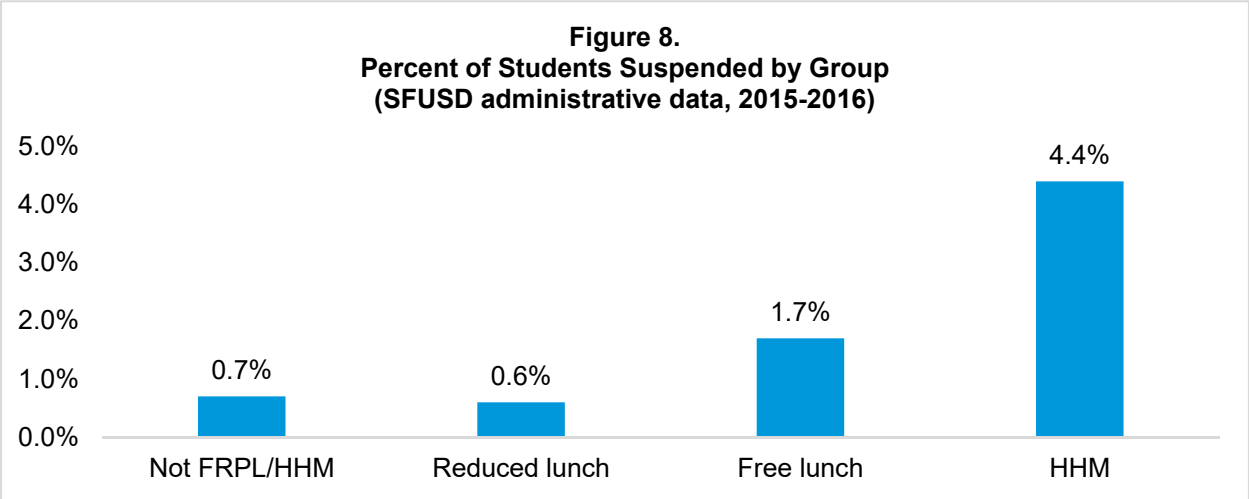
Academic Achievement

On average, middle and high school HHM students' Grade Point Average[13] (GPA) was half a point lower compared to the GPA of their free lunch peers (2.4 vs. 2.9), and almost a full point below the GPA of their reduced price lunch peers (see Figure 9).

Figure 9.
Average Student GPA by Group (Middle & High School)
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

Group	GPA
Not FRPL/HHM	3.2
Reduced lunch	3.3
Free lunch	2.9
HHM	2.4

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[12] On average, HHM students who were suspended, experienced 1.7 suspensions for an averaged cumulative length of 3.5 days in suspension, whereas their suspended free lunch peers experienced an average of 1.5 suspensions and 3.2 days in suspension.
[13] GPA is not reported for elementary school students.

HHM also scored lower on standardized tests in English language arts (ELA), math, and science (see Figure 10) bar charts comparing the achievement of HHM, free-, reduced-price, and Not FRPL/HHM students on state tests in ELA and math).

Figure 10.
Student Mean Scores on State Standardized Tests
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
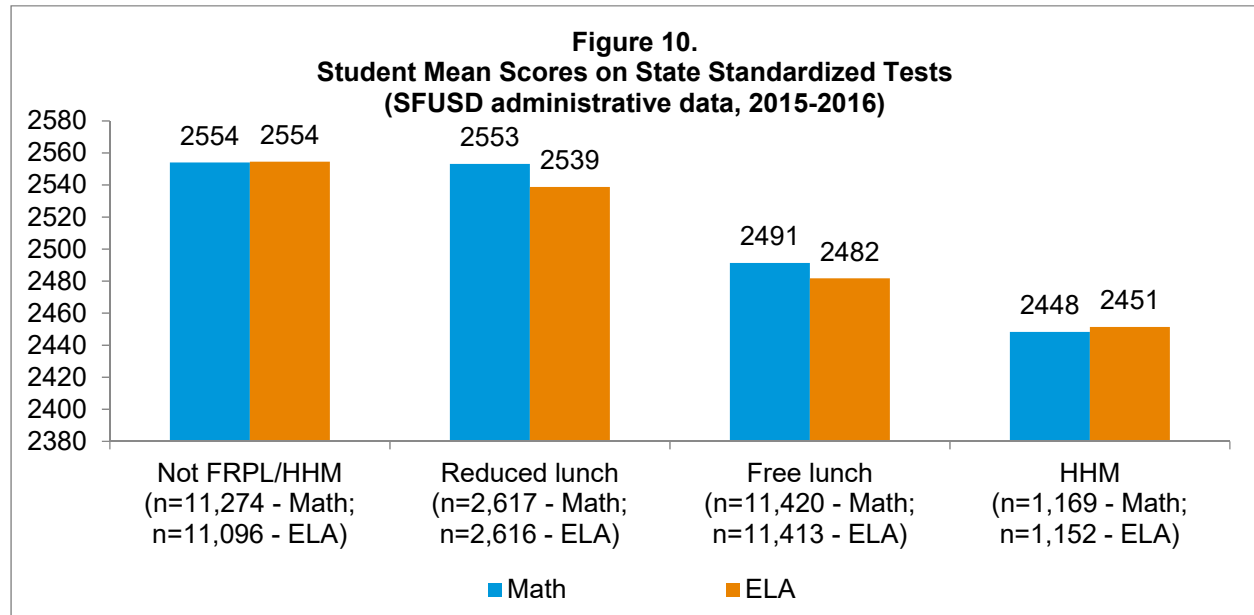
Finally, multi-level regression analyses indicated that being HHM was associated with lower standardized test scores in math even when controlling for the significant contribution of gender, race/ethnicity, grade level, and prior achievement. These findings are statistically significant and indicate that being HHM is associated with a 0.05 point reduction in standardized math scores even when controlling for these other factors.

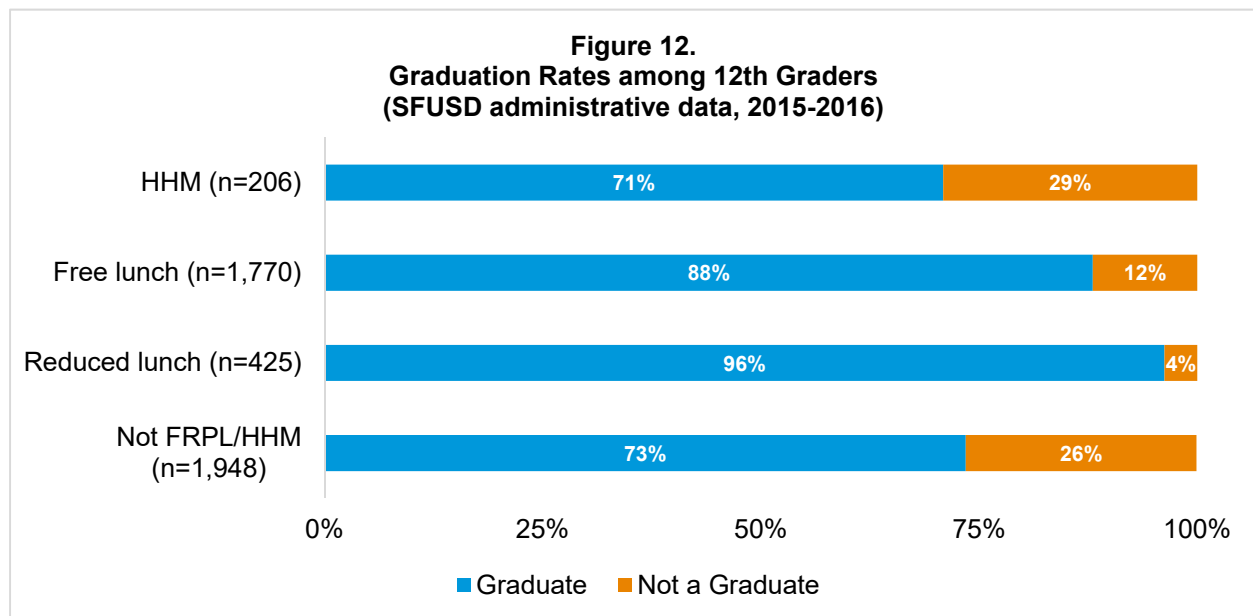Lastly, the education outcomes for HHM 12th graders were less favorable than for their peers who are eligible for free lunch. Of HHM 12th graders, only 32% completed the A-G course portfolio that is required of students for graduation, compared to 52% of 12th graders who are eligible for free lunch (see Figure 11).

Figure 11.
A-G Completion Rates among 12th Graders
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

Group	Completed A-G	Did not Complete A-G
HHM (n=206)	32%	68%
Free lunch (n=1,770)	52%	48%
Reduced lunch (n=425)	75%	25%
Not FRPL/HHM (n=1,948)	51%	49%
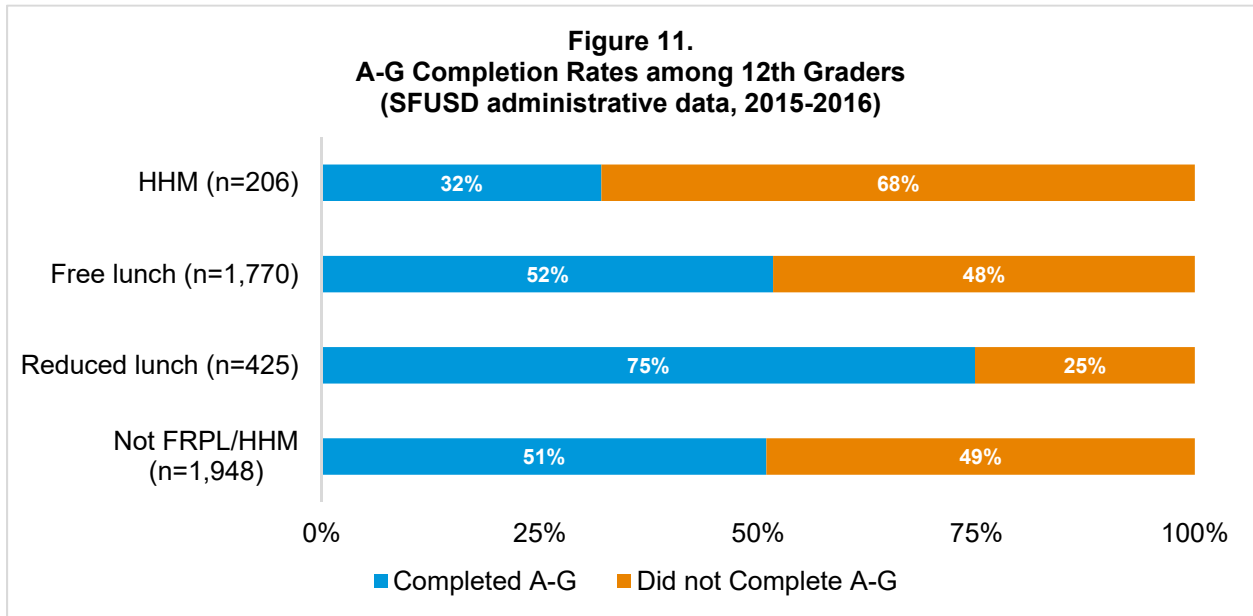
Only 71% of HHM students graduated, compared to 88% for 12th graders who are eligible for free lunch (see Figure 12).

Figure 12.
Graduation Rates among 12th Graders
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)

| Group	Graduate	Not a Graduate
HHM (n=206)	71%	29%
Free lunch (n=1,770)	88%	12%
Reduced lunch (n=425)	96%	4%
Not FRPL/HHM (n=1,948)	73%	26%

Resilience Among HHM Students

Attendance

Despite educational challenges and lower outcomes on average, many HHM students are highly engaged in school and achieve academically. Three-quarters of HHM students have an attendance rate of 90% or above; 68% have an attendance rate of 92% or above; and 55% come to school at least 95% of the time (see Figure 13).

Figure 13.
Attendance Among HHM Students
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
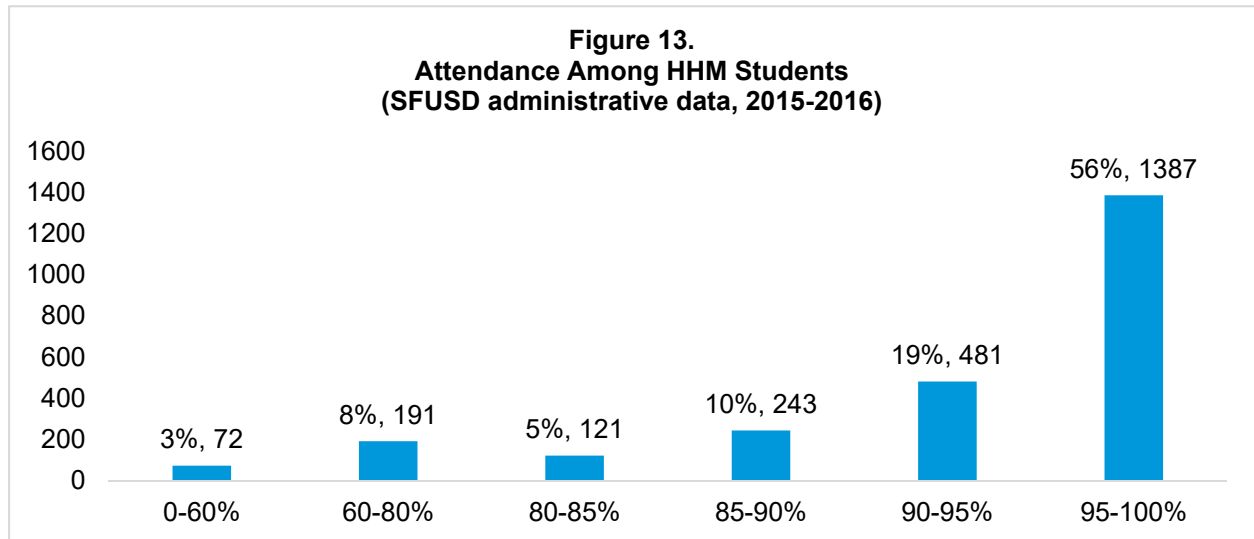
Academic Outcomes
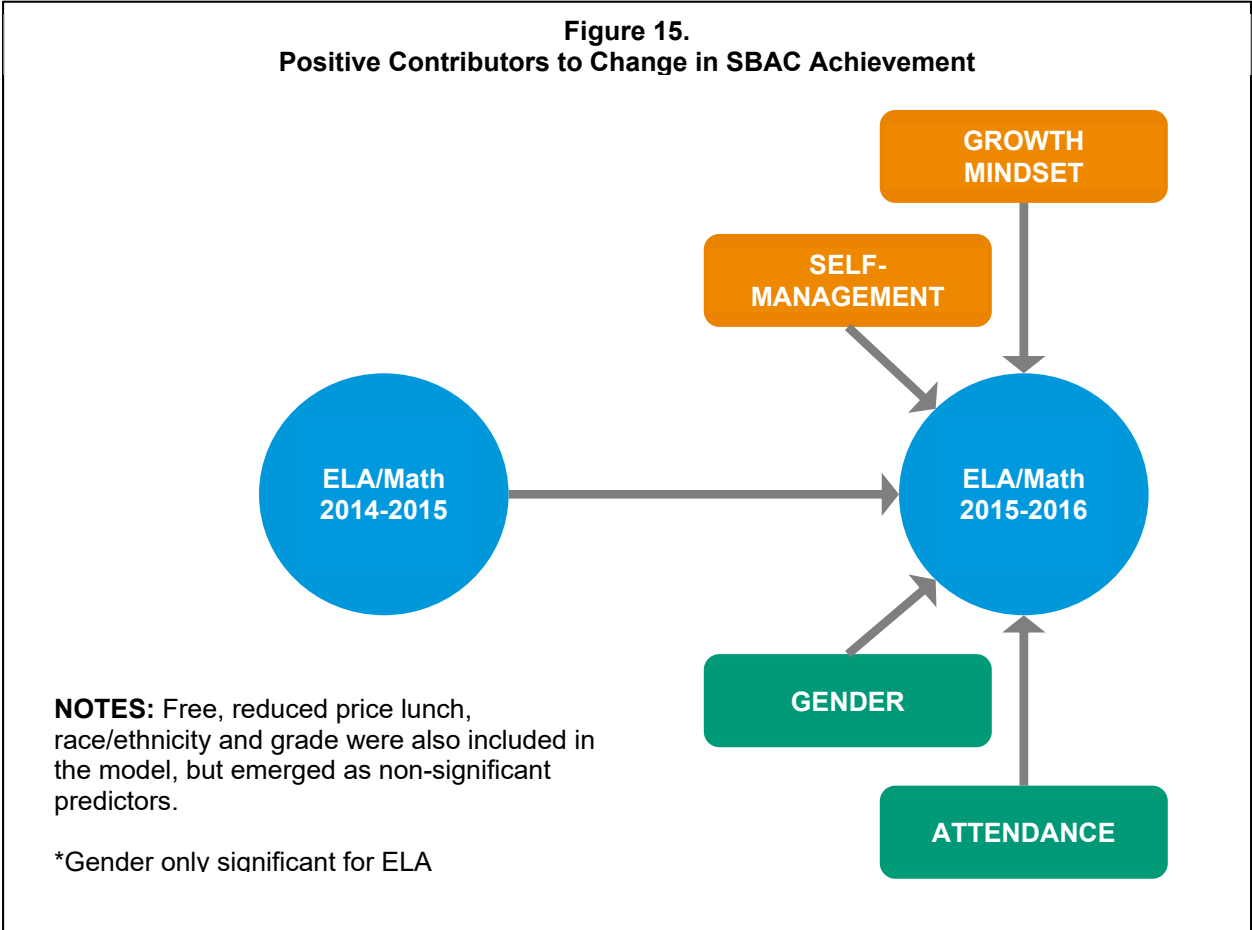
Furthermore, the majority (52%) of HHM students have a GPA of 2.5 or higher; 32% have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and 15% have a GPA of at least 3.5 (Figure 14). Furthermore, about one-third of HHM students score at or above the district mean on standardized state tests (SBAC); 30% on ELA and 34% on math.

Figure 14.
GPA Among HHM Students
(SFUSD administrative data, 2015-2016)
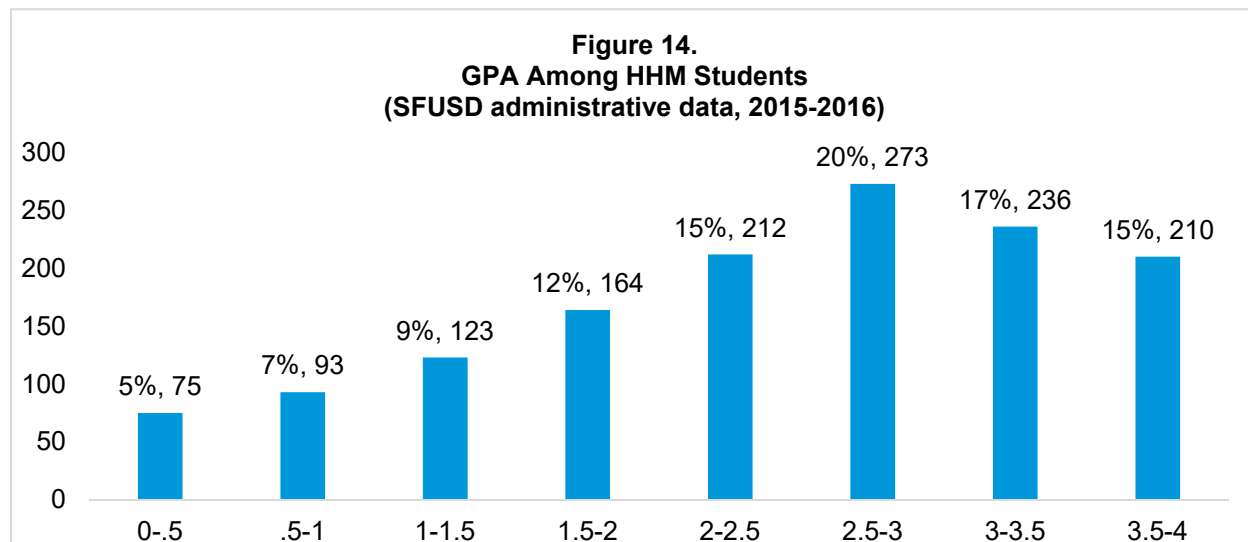
Social and Emotional Learning

To better understand positive school adaptation among HHM students, we tested whether multiple domains of students' self-reported social and emotional learning[14] (i.e., self-management, social awareness, growth mindset and self-efficacy) predict growth in academic achievement during the 2015-16 academic year (see Figure 15).[15] Student self-management and growth mindset positively predicted ELA and math achievement, controlling for race/ethnicity and attendance, which did not emerge as significant predictors over and above measures of prior achievement and social and emotional learning. Our findings are consistent with other work showing that self-management and growth mindset positively predicted academic success (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Duckworth, Tsukayama, & May, 2010) and also identify these social and emotional learning processes as important protective factors for HHM students who are a greater risk for lower academic achievement.

Figure 15.
Positive Contributors to Change in SBAC Achievement

GROWTH MINDSET

SELF-MANAGEMENT

ELA/Math 2014-2015

ELA/Math 2015-2016

GENDER

ATTENDANCE

NOTES: Free, reduced price lunch, race/ethnicity and grade were also included in the model, but emerged as non-significant predictors.

*Gender only significant for ELA

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[14] Analyses only included data from the 2015-16 CORE survey.
[15] Control variables included gender, race/ethnicity, free and reduced price lunch status, grade level, attendance rate, and prior math and ELA achievement. Summary of significant results from the two multilevel regression models are presented in Figures X and X (see Appendix B for full regression results). Results indicated that academic achievement showed strong longitudinal stability, as indexed by significant predictors for math ($\beta = -.051$, SE = .017, $p < 0.01$), and ELA ($\beta = -.033$, SE = .016, $p < 0.05$). Results also showed that gender significantly predicted ELA, but not math.

Variability in HHM Students' School Experience

The prevalence of student homelessness varies considerably among schools, in both absolute number and percent of students categorized as HHM[16]. Among SFUSD schools, ten have 50 or more students flagged as HHM (one elementary school, four middle/K-8 schools, and five high schools). In 13 SFUSD schools, 11% or more of the student body is HHM (six elementary schools, three middle/K-8 schools, and four high schools). Among these schools, four schools have both 50+ HHM students and more than 11% of the student population is HHM. See Appendix C for a list of schools that have more than 50 and/or 11% or more HHM students.

As a first step in exploring whether HHM students may be faring better in some SFUSD schools than others, we examined school-by-school differences in attendance rates for HHM students and their peers. In particular, we explored whether HHM students have high attendance rates (93% or higher) in some schools, and also how attendance for HHM students compared to that of free lunch students.[17] For the 46 schools with at least 20 HHM students, we found that in 12 schools, HHM students have high attendance rates compared to their peers; in ten schools, HHM students have high attendance of 93% or more but their attendance is significantly lower than that of their classmates. In five schools HHM student attendance is low but comparable to students eligible for free lunch in that school; and, in 19 schools, HHM students have low attendance which is significantly lower than their peers.

As a follow-up step in the analysis, we considered school characteristics as reported in the administrative data including school level, school size, and percent HHM in the school, to examine if any of these factors are statistically predicted, school-level differences in attendance. However, we did not find that any of these school-level factors significantly explained attendance patterns for HHM students. A follow-up qualitative inquiry that considers additional school-level factors such as leadership, school culture and programs, the geographical location of the school, and school staff, may shed additional light on important protective site-level practices. Appendix D provides more information about the analysis design and the findings (by school).

SUMMARY, CONSIDERATIONS, & NEXT STEPS

The study and its findings demonstrate that HHM students face significant challenges in their educational trajectories, yet many are able to thrive. In this section we highlight and discuss some of the key findings of this research which will inform and support the priorities listed in the new board policy.

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[16] Percent of HHM students in school depends on the combination between the absolute counts of HHM students in the school and the size of the school as determined by student enrollment.

[17] Within schools, we compared the attendance rates of two student subgroups: HHM students and free lunch students by examining group averages and testing the significance of the gap (using independent t-tests). We then classified schools using a 2x2 matrix based on the average attendance rate of HHM students in the school and whether the gap in attendance rates between the two groups in that school was significant. Utilizing this method, we classified schools into one of four categories: (1) HHM show high (93% or above), and comparable to their peers, Average Attendance Rate (AAR); (2) HHM show high AAR (93% or above), yet their AAR is significantly lower compared to their peers; (3) HHM students' AAR is at 90-92% and comparable to their peers; and, (4) HHM students' AAR is at 90% or below and their peers are doing significantly better.

Understanding Student Homelessness Depends on Available Data

It is important to reiterate that only students flagged as HHM in the district's data system were counted and considered homeless in the study. The real number of students experiencing unstable housing could be considerably higher if some students and families do not share information about their housing status with school officials, or due to a variety of administrative challenges in collecting and reporting data at school sites or by the district. Another recent Stanford/SFUSD research project which included interviews with a small number of social workers suggested that some may avoid reporting due to frustration with data collection procedures and insufficient services and resources available to HHM students.[18] In addition, since no entry or exit dates are attached to a student's designation as HHM (and since designation carries backward to the beginning of the school year), it is possible that some students included in the count either became homeless at some point after the beginning of the school year or transitioned into stable housing at some point during the school year. Ongoing efforts to improve HHM student identification and refine SFUSD data collection could advance our understanding of the experiences of HHM students.

Scope and Concentration of Student Homelessness

Based on available data, a substantial proportion of SFUSD students (about 2,500 students each year) face homelessness or unstable housing. The majority of these students (60%) are "doubled-up" in a temporary living situation. Concentration of homelessness varies considerably from school to school, with 10% of the schools accounting for 30% of the district's homeless student population. Furthermore, there are higher concentrations of HHM students in the middle school grades compared to the earlier and later grades. Hispanic and Black students are overrepresented in the homeless population (about double their rate in the overall student population in the district), whereas Asian/Pacific Islander and White students are underrepresented. Using available data, it appears that most homeless students experience housing instability for multiple years, with the majority of these students identified as HHM for three consecutive years.

Educational Challenges and Success of HHM Students

Findings indicate that HHM students experience less consistency in their education. Although homeless students have a right to remain in the school of origin even after a residential move as specified by law, they are much more likely to change schools (within the district) during the school year than their peers. They are also more likely to leave the district. Further research could help us understand the reasons underlying HHM students' mobility. HHM students also experience suspensions disproportionally and are at least 2.5 times more likely to be suspended than their peers. Additional inquiry could shed light on the nature of and reasons for these differences in suspension rates.

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[18] See Carlisle, M. (2017) "Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act by SFUSD Social Workers."

HHM students are more likely to be absent from school, achieve lower GPA and score lower on standardized tests, and fewer are eligible for college as suggested by their A-G completion and graduation rates. Notably, these findings are based on group averages; and in fact, some HHM students, attend school at high rates and achieve academic success.

Improving Conditions for HHM Students

The research presented here informs some (but certainly not all) of the priorities of a recent district policy aimed at improving conditions for HHM students, which include: (1) evaluating student outcomes; (2) considering schools with high concentrations of homeless students; (3) reviewing and revising policies that might disproportionately impact homeless students; (4) addressing enrollment barriers; (5) developing services for homeless preschoolers; (6) supporting homeless students' access to college and career; (7) developing and facilitating collaboration and coordination with various service providers; and, (8) assigning school liaisons to support homeless students on school sites.

Our findings point to considerable variability in educational outcomes (policy strand #1 above) for district HHM students. We find that HHM students are largely concentrated in a sub-set of SFUSD schools (policy strand #2), and that in some of these schools HHM students appear to be faring better than others when it comes to attendance rates. Further investigation into school site practices may shed light on key strategies for supporting and engaging HHM students. Further, our findings related to higher rates of school mobility, absence, and suspensions for HHM students may point to areas of focus related to district policies (#3) and enrollment barriers (#4).

The findings presented here are based on data at the student level. Nevertheless, we know that school- and district-level practices and policies, as well as family and neighborhood factors, play a crucial role in determining conditions for students' success. Another recent Stanford/SFUSD research project sheds light on some of the school- and site-level issues related to coordination of services (#7) and the role of school liaisons (#8). Specifically, in a survey of 58 SFUSD school social workers, 87% agreed that SFUSD has policies in place to work with HHM students. However, only about one-third (37%) agreed that their school had policies in place to identify HHM students, and about one-third (30%) answered "I don't know" to survey questions about requirements for school enrollment (e.g., proof of residency, immunization records).[19]

As the district further considers system- and school-level strategies for supporting HHM students, it will be helpful to consider the student-focused analyses presented here, which point to the high concentration of HHM status in certain schools, grades, and ethnic groups, as well as variation in the types of housing arrangements and duration of HHM status. Importantly, social and emotional learning capabilities relate to greater academic success for HHM students. Specifically, results point to the importance of self-management and growth mindset as protective factors for HHM students and suggest the benefit of targeting these skills to promote positive school outcomes for this vulnerable population. However, more research is needed to develop a better understanding of how exposure to specific policies or interventions may foster SEL for high-risk student populations and improve their educational success.

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[19] See Carlisle, M. (2017) "Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act by SFUSD Social Workers."

Finally, promising areas for future inquiry and investigation to inform this work could focus on improving both understanding and sharing of school site practices and strategies that appear to effectively support HHM students, as well as barriers to doing so (in line with #7 and #8 above). Specifically, additional information regarding key strategies that school site staff use to identify and engage with HHM students, coordinate with partner organizations serving this population, and collaborate with other school as well as district staff, would support learning and continuous improvement of these important efforts to foster educational success for all SFUSD students.

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APPENDIX A

Predicting Academic Achievement from Student Report of SEL for Subsample of HHM Students

	2016 SBAC ELA		2016 SBAC Math	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Constant	0.0797	(0.24)	0.077	(0.245)
2015 SBAC achievement	0.578***	(0.0251)	0.625***	(0.0249)
Female	0.0882*	(0.0401)	0.025	(0.0416)
Attendance	0.0743*	(0.0372)	0.139***	(0.0396)
Free and reduced priced lunch	-0.0801	(0.188)	0.0142	(0.199)
American Indian/Alaska Native	-0.483	(0.357)	-0.00456	(0.376)
Asian	-0.0215	(0.1)	0.0161	(0.106)
Hispanic	-0.117	(0.0954)	-0.121	(0.0995)
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.204	(0.107)	-0.0759	(0.113)
White, non-Hispanic	-0.219	(0.156)	-0.135	(0.163)
Grade	0.0201	(0.0181)	-0.00309	(0.0157)
CORE self-management	0.0773**	(0.0267)	0.0850**	(0.0279)
CORE social awareness	0.0193	(0.0251)	-0.0304	(0.0263)
CORE growth mindset	0.0640**	(0.0212)	0.103***	(0.0217)
CORE self-efficacy	0.0345	(0.0237)	0.0338	(0.0248)
N	638		650	

Notes:* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium=SBAC. CORE=California Office to Reform Education. ELA=English Language Arts.1= Free and reduced priced lunch, 0=Not free and reduced price lunch.

Schools with more than 50 or/and 11% or above HHM students

School Name	Total Enrollment	Count HHM	Percent HHM
Elementary			
John Muir John	311	66	21
Dr. William L. Cobb	125	25	20
Mission Education Center	221	28	13
Redding	280	34	12
Dr. George W. Carver	230	26	11
Malcolm X Academy	99	11	11
K-8			
Bessie Carmichael	633	98	15
Middle			
Visitacion Valley	573	67	12
James Lick	629	69	11
Marina	793	53	7
High			
Hilltop	77	15	19
International Studies Academy	129	19	15
Downtown	228	29	13
Ida B. Wells	214	27	13
Mission	1188	87	7
Phillip And Sala Burton	1074	73	7
Balboa	1304	59	5
George Washington George	2106	87	4
Abraham Lincoln	2137	56	3