SchoolHouse Connection

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Practices and Recommendations for Success

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I: INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 1.5 million K-12 students and an additional 1.4 million children under the age of six experiencing homelessness across the United States. [1] While many of these students attend traditional public schools, a growing number, at least 60,000, are enrolled in charter schools. [2] Charter schools are independently-operated public schools that have additional flexibility to design classrooms that meet their students' academic and other needs. All charter schools operate under a contract with a charter school authorizer – usually a nonprofit organization, government agency, or university – that holds them accountable to the high standards outlined in their "charter." [3]

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

1.5 MILLION

1.4 MILLION

60,000

k-12 Students

Children under age six

Students enrolled in charter schools
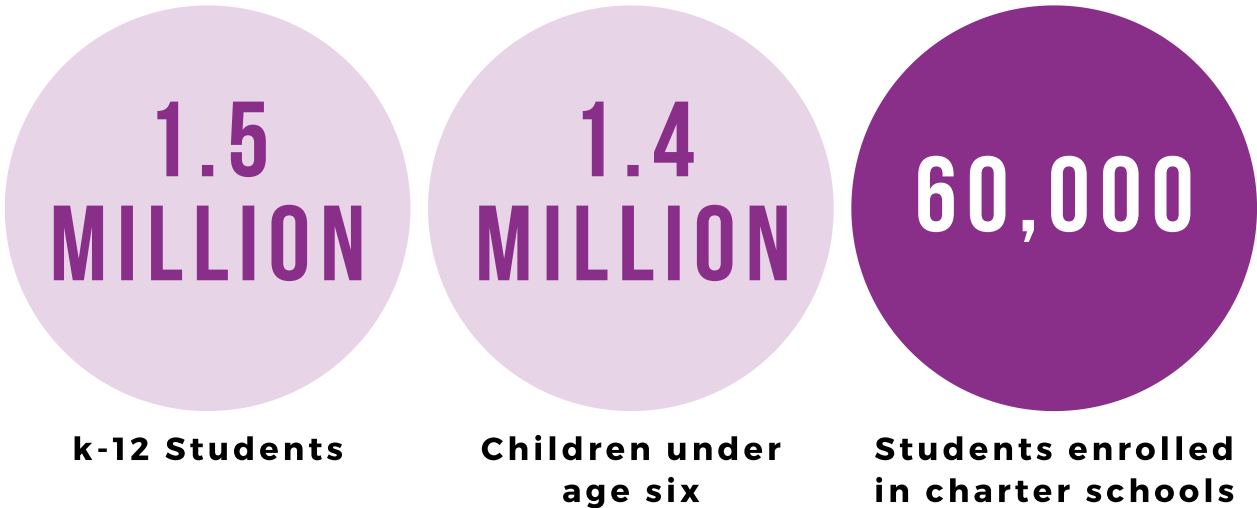
The purpose of this report is to begin to paint a clearer picture of the experiences and outcomes of students experiencing homelessness enrolled in charter schools. In this document we offer basic information about the McKinney-Vento Act, case studies highlighting best practices across charter schools and networks, and key questions for charter school educators, administrators, authorizers, support staff, advocates, and others. We hope charter schools and partners will use this document as a starting point for conversations and action within your schools, networks, communities, and states.

II: THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT: THE FEDERAL BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The McKinney-Vento Act, originally passed in 1987 and most recently amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, is a federal law that provides civil rights and education services for students experiencing homelessness. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homeless living situations include:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Staying in emergency or transitional shelters; and
- Sleeping in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

For more information about McKinney-Vento and Charter Schools, please visit: How Charter Schools can Support Students Experiencing Homelessness.
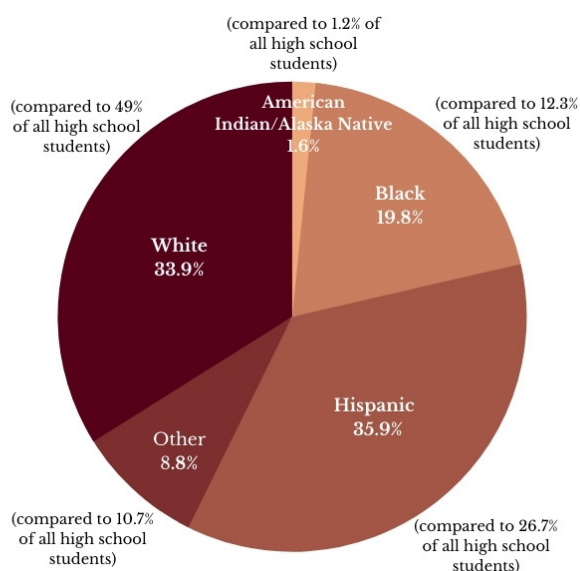
In the 2018-19 school year, charter schools that are local educational agencies (LEAs) - which represent about 67% of charter schools [4] - reported approximately 59,741 students experiencing homelessness. Given that not all charter schools are their own LEAs, there are likely many more students experiencing homelessness being served in charter schools than included in that count. States, LEAs, and schools, including charter schools, have legal requirements related to identifying, enrolling, and serving students experiencing homelessness, including:

- Ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified and immediately enrolled in school, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school;
- Providing educational stability for students experiencing homelessness, by allowing them to remain in their school of origin and providing transportation;
- Ensuring school personnel receive professional development and other support;
- Disseminating public notice of McKinney-Vento rights in locations frequented by parents and youth, in a manner and form understandable to them;
- Ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are informed and receive a determination of their status as independent students for college financial aid;
- Ensuring that children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services;
- Ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness are not stigmatized, and prohibiting separate schools or programs for such students; and
- Reviewing and revising policies to remove barriers to identification, enrollment, and retention in school, including barriers due to fees, fines, and absences. [5]

Additionally, the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant requires that states work with charter schools to eliminate barriers to enrollment for unaccompanied homeless youth.

Charter Schools and Students Experiencing Homelessness: Practices and Recommendations for Success

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness disproportionately affects communities of color. In schools, Black, Latinx, and Native American high school students are more likely to experience homelessness than their white peers. In the United States, race is often a predictor for homelessness because of pervasive systemic and structural racism across housing, education, health care, employment, and other systems, providing more obstacles than opportunity for communities of color. Simultaneously, public charter schools serve larger percentages of Black and Latinx students (25% and 34% respectively) than traditional public schools (14% and 25% respectively). [6] Public charter schools are in a unique position and have the imperative to build programs and services that are responsive to the needs of their students, many of whom are more likely to experience the oppression of racist systems, including homelessness.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES ARE OVER-REPRESENTED AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Data: SchoolHouse Connection's analysis of 2019 YRBS data from 27 states (AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, ID, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MT, NH, NM, NC, ND, PA, RI, SC, SD, VT, VA, WI)

(compared to 1.2% of all high school students)
American Indian/Alaska Native 1.6%
(compared to 12.3% of all high school students)
Black 19.8%
(compared to 49% of all high school students)
White 33.9%
Hispanic 35.9%
(compared to 26.7% of all high school students)
Other 8.8%
(compared to 10.7% of all high school students)

Education is a bridge to lifelong opportunity, and is uniquely able to protect against future homelessness: in fact, research shows that lacking a high school degree is the greatest single risk factor for young adult homelessness. [7] Tragically, students experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to detours or roadblocks that impact their educational opportunities and success:

- 42% of students who experienced homelessness say they dropped out of school at least once. [8]
- 60% say it was hard to stay in school while they were homeless. [9]
- Only 67.5% of students experiencing homelessness graduate on-time, compared to a national on-time graduation rate of 85.3%. This is 12% lower than economically disadvantaged students, underscoring that the impact of homelessness on educational outcomes is much greater than poverty alone. [10]
- Homelessness is associated with an 87% likelihood of dropping out of school. [11]

The good news is that research and evidence have shown what effective policy and practice to support students experiencing homelessness look like; and because many charter schools were established to respond to the needs of a specific population(s), they are well-positioned to provide supports for McKinney-Vento students. Many of those supports do not look much different from what is known to be effective for all students. However, to increase graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness, schools must intentionally and specifically target those students for support. Effective policy and practice interventions include:

- Identification of circumstances that require special attention and/or accommodations;
- Trauma-informed approaches to school culture and relationships;
- Family supports and community engagement;
- Specialized training and support for all school staff; and
- Analysis of disaggregated data.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you know how many students at your school have been identified as homeless? If not, do you know whom to ask to find out?
2. Do you know your school's or network's McKinney-Vento liaison and your state McKinney-Vento Coordinator?
3. Do you feel comfortable with the basics of what the McKinney-Vento Act requires and provides for students experiencing homelessness?
4. Does your school offer specific training or professional development to registrars, teachers, and other staff about how to identify and support students and families experiencing homelessness?

RESOURCES:THE BASICS OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

- Directory of State Coordinators and local McKinney-Vento liaisons
- McKinney-Vento Act Quick Reference
- Homeless Education Training Resources

III: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

COVID-19 has thrown life into chaos and uncertainty for many schools and students. Schools across the country have had to make difficult decisions about whether to convene students and teachers in-person, online, or through hybrid models. For students experiencing homelessness, the school building often represents a safe, stable place to go each day. Many students and families rely upon school meals, after-school activities, access to resources like computers, washing machines and showers, and so much more. While many schools have determined the safest course of action is to offer remote learning, that also means many students and families experiencing homelessness are under greater levels of stress and hardship because the school building is no longer a reliable place to access basic needs and services. Additionally, while students experiencing homelessness struggle to access and engage in distance learning, many states and schools did not plan for or even acknowledge the needs of students experiencing homelessness in their reopening plans. [12] Many LEAs also are finding that students have gone "missing" from attendance rosters, with one report from Bellwether Education Partners estimating approximately 3 million students who have minimal to no access to education. [13] Special attention from charter schools is required to ensure the needs of all families are being met, including those experiencing homelessness.

For more information about charter schools serving McKinney-Vento students during the pandemic, watch these webinars:

- Charter Schools Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness during the COVID-19 Crisis
- Coronavirus, Charter Schools, and Students Experiencing Homelessness

CASE STUDY: BRIYA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
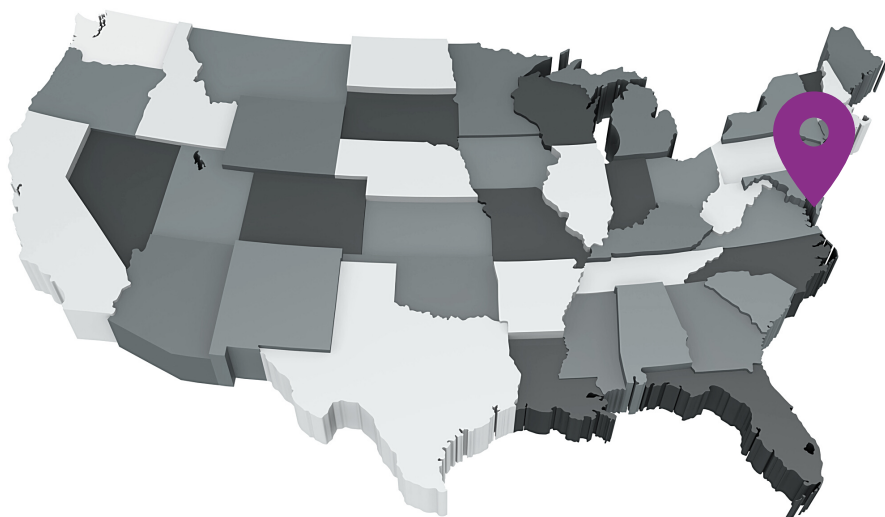
WASHINGTON, DC

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 640

STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS: 12 (1%) [14]

NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE

Briya Public Charter School is a two-generation community school that offers classes for English Learners and a workforce development program for adults, as well as early childhood classes for their children under the age of five. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Briya has been able to secure funding to distribute Chromebooks to all students to ensure their access to online learning, as well as supporting numerous families in applying for affordable internet. They also received funding to give all students a $100 debit card for groceries, and are able to reload the card in case of emergency. Through their collaboration with DC Cares, a program that received $5 million to provide financial assistance for immigrant families who were not eligible for stimulus payments, they helped 250 Briya students apply for and receive a $1,000 debit card. School staff also have plans to start a virtual coat drive, as many students have lost their jobs during the pandemic and are not able to afford winter coats. Lastly, Briya has been offering an online "Wellness Wednesday" activity to practice community and self-care with yoga, zumba, exercise or art. More than 60 students are participating in zumba.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is your school using CARES Act or other COVID-19 supplemental funding to meet the specific needs of students and families experiencing homelessness?
2. Does your school's reopening plan specifically account for students and families experiencing homelessness?
3. If your school is offering a hybrid or all-remote schedule this semester, do you have a plan to ensure students experiencing homelessness receive the supplies, technology, and academic encouragement they will need to learn?
4. If your school is reopening under a hybrid model, are you prioritizing students experiencing homelessness for in-person instruction (if desired), and providing transportation?
5. If your school is all remote, have you thought about ways to protect the privacy of students experiencing homelessness (for example, ensuring they can use a virtual background in case they do not want their environment to be visible to others)? Relatedly, does your school have a plan to proactively identify students experiencing homelessness during virtual learning?
6. Is your school reaching out directly to unaccompanied homeless youth to keep them engaged and progressing?

RESOURCES: COVID-19 & STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- COVID-19 and Homelessness: Strategies for Schools, Early Learning Programs, and Higher Education Institutions
- Let's Educate Every Child: Resources for Parents, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness During the Pandemic
- Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness During School Building Closures

IV: CHARTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

SchoolHouse Connection conducted interviews with 73 charter schools and charter management organizations across 16 states to learn more about how they are supporting students and families experiencing homelessness. Staff also conducted site visits of seven schools in San Diego, Washington DC, and Santa Fe. Interviews and site visits occurred between November of 2018 and February of 2019. These schools serve approximately 70,000 students, approximately 3,500 of which have been identified as experiencing homelessness. Schools were selected through recommendations from McKinney-Vento State Coordinators and an analysis of federal education data to determine the charter schools with highest enrollment of McKinney-Vento students. (For a list of interview questions, please see Appendix A.)

An analysis of these interviews revealed several trends:
- All of the schools interviewed have systems in place to identify and track the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.
- Many schools conduct special outreach to students and families in the community who might be experiencing homelessness.
- Few schools were able to share outcomes data of students experiencing homelessness, including graduation rates, attendance data, discipline rates, academic achievement, etc.
- There were variations across schools and networks regarding priority enrollment of students experiencing homelessness, which is likely the result of different policies across states.
- Schools offer a variety of supports for students experiencing homelessness, ranging from providing basic school supplies and laptops, to offering transportation and providing child care for families with young children.

IDENTIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

Identification and immediate enrollment of students experiencing homelessness are critical first steps to ensuring students receive their rights and have their needs met, and that all children and youth have access to high-quality learning. Many charter schools have adopted policies and practices to implement these requirements robustly.

GIRLS PREP LOWER EAST SIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Total student enrollment: 320

Students identified as homeless: 46 (14%)

Noteworthy practice: At Girls Prep, staff created a housing survey questionnaire to distribute to families, which includes a clear definition of homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento Act. A social worker works to identify students who might be experiencing homelessness, and has developed a training to inform parents and students of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, including enrollment.

RENEW SCHOOLS
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Total student enrollment: 2,489

Students identified as homeless: 247 (9.5%)

Noteworthy practice: In addition to identification at the start of the school year, Renew is working to develop a mid-year survey to help identify students who might have missed the start of the school year, whose status might have changed, or who were not previously identified. Additionally, the school runs two early childhood programs - one exclusively for infants and toddlers, and preK3 (children ages birth - three) - and proactively assesses the needs of families experiencing homeless who might have young children. Renew asks if families have any children ages 0-3, and provides information about the early childhood programs and how they can try to enroll. For families who might not qualify for city- or state-funded early childhood slots, Renew is able to provide community scholarships.

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY
VIRTUAL ACROSS GEORGIA

Total student enrollment: 9,411

Students identified as homeless: 484 (5%)

Noteworthy practice: In addition to traditional enrollment periods, Georgia Cyber Academy has a mid-year enrollment opportunity that is only available to students experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the Governing Board has prioritized the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness, and provides all necessary technology to students to ensure their immediate participation in learning.

IDENTIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Are classroom teachers, registrars, counselors, and other school staff aware of the signs of homelessness?
2. Does your school or charter network use a housing status questionnaire (or, does your enrollment form/process include questions about housing status) with clear, non-stigmatizing definitions of what "homeless" means under the McKinney-Vento Act?
3. Does your school provide multiple opportunities for enrollment throughout the year for students identified as homeless?
4. Does your school track students who have been identified as homeless throughout the year to ensure their needs are being met?
5. Does your school provide the necessary supplies and supports that students experiencing homelessness need in order to be able to participate in learning immediately (i.e. laptop, wifi access or hot spot, clothing, transportation, etc.)?

RESOURCES: IDENTIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

- Definitions and Signs of Homelessness for Schools
- Tools to Identify Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Removing Barriers to Online Enrollment for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Supporting the Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Awarding and Accepting Partial Credits for Students Experiencing Homelessness

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to face multiple forms of trauma and therefore are best served when they are in a school environment that promotes trauma-informed approaches to education and learning. [15] This includes: [16]

- Safe, reliable, and predictable school buildings and routines;
- Trusting relationships with teachers and other adults in the school;
- Staff who are trained to identify, mitigate, and respond to possible behavioral triggers; and
- Positive behavior supports that promote social-emotional care and learning.

MAYA ANGELOU PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
WASHINGTON, DC

Total enrollment: 190

Students identified as homeless: 40 (21%)

Noteworthy practice: In addition to rigorous academic coursework and expectations, a hallmark of Maya Angelou Public Charter School is an environment that fosters social-emotional support and wrap-around services, particularly for students experiencing homelessness. The school employs several licensed clinical social workers who have deep experience recognizing the signs of homelessness and the trauma that students might be experiencing as a result. Many students at Maya Angelou have moved around throughout the course of their education as a result of unstable or unsafe living situations. In particular, the school serves many older, unaccompanied youth, and its staff - including counselors, teachers, and the school culture, recruitment, and retention teams - receive special training that emphasizes a culture of respect for individual students' experiences and identities.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Does your school or charter network offer specialized professional development or training to identify the connections between homelessness, trauma, academics, and behavior?
2. Do your school policies promote positive and restorative behavioral and discipline practices (rather than punitive, zero tolerance practices)?
3. Does your school offer social-emotional resources to students and families experiencing homelessness, such as trained social workers or referrals to counselors in the community?

RESOURCES: TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

- Positive School Discipline Practices for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Student Homelessness: Lessons from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND STUDENTS, IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL

Creating environments and relationships that are supportive of students, as well as their families, is important for student success. Research shows that meaningful relationships with teachers and educators are the greatest in-school factor for student attendance and success. [17] These relationships are even more important for students experiencing homelessness, who are chronically absent from school at a rate at least twice that of the overall student population, and significantly more often than their housed, low-income peers. [18] Teachers and adults in the school are often the first to notice if a young person is experiencing homelessness, and can build healthy, trusting relationships that promote social-emotional health in addition to academic success. For these reasons it is important to offer training, development, and other resources to all staff, so that in turn, they can support students and families better. Support for families and students also includes building partnerships with community-based organizations and offering families and youth referrals for medical care, housing, job training and continuing education services.

MONTE DEL SOL CHARTER SCHOOL
SANTE FE, NEW MEXICO

Total enrollment: 360

Students identified as homeless: 42 (11%)

Noteworthy practice: Staff at Monte del Sol have worked over the past four years to fine tune their process for identifying students and families experiencing homelessness, and have built their follow-up services to ensure students are able to participate fully and immediately in school. Their approach includes offering basic services that many schools provide to students experiencing homelessness (transportation, waived fees, etc.), as well as additional critical needs, including referrals for immunizations and food supplies. They have forged partnerships with community organizations including utility companies and health care providers, leveraging those partnerships to assist families with rent and move-in costs, electricity bills, and medical care. Most recently, Monte del Sol applied for and received $20,000 from the City of Santa Fe to provide housing assistance to families impacted by COVID-19.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND STUDENTS, IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What kinds of support, beyond academic enrichment, does your school currently offer?
2. What additional support might be helpful to students and families experiencing homelessness in your school?
3. Do you currently have a way of asking students and their families for input about what they need?
4. Do you offer opportunities for teachers and staff to build their knowledge of relationship-centered practice and social-emotional supports?

RESOURCES: SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND STUDENTS, IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

- Tips for Teachers & Staff: How to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness
- School-Community Partnerships: A Guide
- School-Community Partnerships

ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

Collecting and analyzing data about all students is important in order to begin to understand their experiences and the support they might need. Data about students experiencing homelessness is especially important, as it can help uncover trends and challenges, and lead to better decision-making about school policies and practices impacting students experiencing homelessness. Schools should collect and analyze disaggregated data about students experiencing homelessness that includes high school graduation rates, attendance rates, and rates of suspension and expulsion.

ALTUS SCHOOLS
## SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Total enrollment: 3,000

Students identified as homeless: 150 (5%)

Noteworthy practice: Altus' award-winning practice model centers on providing individualized instruction to their students, many of whom enroll 2-4 grade levels behind where they should be and are not on-track to graduate. A cornerstone of the Altus model is to rely upon data to guide decisions about instruction and support for students. Administrators and staff use data to create a profile of the school's homeless student population, including attendance and chronic absenteeism, discipline rates (suspension and expulsion), and English and Math proficiency. Tracking and analyzing this data allows for more nuanced conversations across the school about how Altus is serving its students experiencing homelessness, and where there might be areas for improvement.

ALTUS SCHOOLS STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
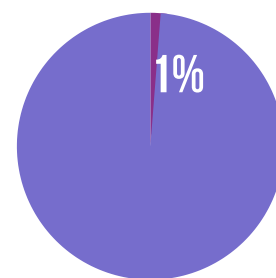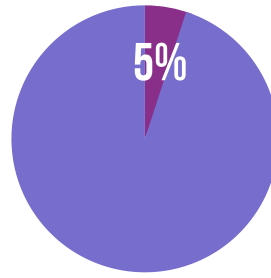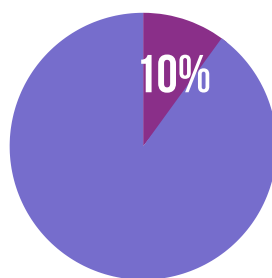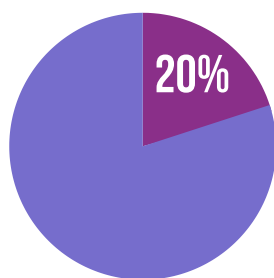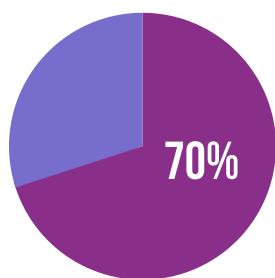
70% — ■ Socio-economically Disadvantaged

20% — ■ Special Education

10% — ■ GATE (Gifted and Talented)

5% — ■ Homeless

1% — ■ Foster Youth

Charter Schools and Students Experiencing Homelessness: Practices and Recommendations for Success

ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED DATA: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Does your school disaggregate common data by students experiencing homelessness? This might include graduation rates, attendance rates, academic achievement, etc.
2. Do you know who in your school collects and disaggregates student data?
3. If your school does not currently disaggregate student data, how might you go about learning how to do this?
4. What additional data points would be useful to collect about students experiencing homelessness?

RESOURCES: ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

- Shine a Light: How Do You Track the Educational Progress of Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Using Chronic Absence Data to Identify and Support Students Experiencing Homelessness

V: KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are intended for charter school operators, administrators, staff, and others to implement the McKinney-Vento Act fully and to improve the educational opportunities and experiences of students experiencing homelessness.

Identification, Immediate Enrollment, and Retention
- Include clear, non-stigmatizing questions about housing and homelessness on enrollment forms, along with clear definitions of what "homelessness" is under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Issue mid-year surveys and conduct ongoing outreach to check-in with families about their housing status, to capture new students who may have lost their housing mid-year.
- Offer support for older, unaccompanied homeless youth to self-enroll and ensure immediate enrollment without proof of residency, school records, or a parent or guardian, as required by federal law.
- Eliminate barriers to enrollment for students who qualify for McKinney-Vento services, such as offering priority enrollment and elevating them to the top of waitlists (to the maximum extent allowed under state laws and authorizing charters).
- Review school and/or network policies that might act as barriers to student attendance, persistence, and completion. This might include attendance policies that do not allow for flexibility and understanding of individual circumstances that students experiencing homelessness might face.

Trauma-Informed Practice
- Provide training for teachers and staff on the signs of homelessness, including the ways in which homelessness often leads students and families to experience trauma in different ways.
- Adopt positive and restorative behavioral and discipline practices, schoolwide.
- Consider recruiting teachers, administrators, social workers and/or counselors of color and those with lived experience of homelessness.

Supporting Students and Families, In School and Out of School
- Provide transportation to school and extra-curricular services, including to the school of origin, as required by federal law, so students and families can have the stability and consistency of school connections even after they move.
- Build partnerships with community-based organizations that can assist families and youth with medical care, housing, job training, child care, and other services.
- Create mechanisms to elevate parent and student voice, such as surveys, focus groups and parent and student councils

Analysis of Disaggregated Data
- Disaggregate existing data for students experiencing homelessness, including data about enrollment, attendance, achievement, graduation, and discipline.
- Collect and analyze data on students experiencing homelessness, including participation in advanced courses, participation in extracurricular activities, access to basic services like transportation, etc.
- Create school-level data teams to analyze all student data and develop intervention and service strategies based on the data. If such teams already exist, ensure they prioritize students experiencing homelessness.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The estimated 1.4 million children under age six experiencing homelessness need access to high-quality early childhood programs to promote their healthy development and school-readiness. Positive strategies for this population include:

- Increase the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness in early childhood programs through targeted outreach. For example, include a question on K-12 student enrollment forms asking if there are any children or siblings under the age of six in the family, and connect those families directly to early childhood partners.
- Streamline enrollment procedures so schools can help families apply to early childhood programs, and early childhood programs can facilitate transitions into charter schools.
- Build and strengthen practice models that offer two-generation family support, including onsite, high-quality care for children of families experiencing homelessness, and child care support for pregnant and parenting students.
- Offer ongoing information and support to early childhood educators and administrators, so they are aware of the definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act, and ways to remove barriers to access to early childhood programs for children and families experiencing homelessness.

RESOURCES:
EARLY CHILDHOOD HOMELESSNESS

- Young Children Experiencing Homelessness: An Overview
- Access to Early Learning for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness
- Deeper Dives for Schools: Practical Strategies to Serve Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

TOWARD THE FUTURE

With over 60,000 students experiencing homelessness enrolled in charter schools, there is both an imperative and an opportunity to ensure schools are supported in their efforts to identify, enroll, and assist these young people. The best practices and recommendations offered in this report are a starting point for conversations at the school and network levels regarding students experiencing homelessness and reviewing charter policies with a lens toward improving the experiences of students and families impacted by homelessness. Some considerations for future, long-term work include:

- Strengthening connections among charter schools, other LEAs, McKinney-Vento State Coordinators and state charter school associations, to ensure charter schools receive robust McKinney-Vento training and professional development;
- Reviewing and revising policies in charter networks and state laws that might serve as barriers to students and families experiencing homelessness; and
- Continuing to build awareness and partnerships across educational systems, community-based providers, and state agencies to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified, served, and supported.

FOOTNOTES

[1] K-12 data are for the 2017-18 school year. National Center for Homeless Education (2019). National Overview. Additional data available from the U.S. Department of Education for the 2018-19 school year are preliminary, and indicate approximately 1.45 million McKinney-Vento students. U.S. Department of Education (2020). EDFacts Data Files. The data on children birth to six years old are from the 2016-17 school year. U.S. Department of Education (2020). Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles.

[2] Preliminary data for the 2018-19 school year, for charter schools designated as local educational agencies by their state laws. U.S. Department of Education (2020). EDFacts Data Files.

[3] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2020). What is a Charter School?

[4] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2020). How Are Charter Schools Financed?

[5] For more information, please see SchoolHouse Connection (2020). McKinney-Vento Act: A Quick Reference.

[6] National Alliance for Public Charters Schools (2020). Who Are Charter Schools Serving? See also, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2020). Public Charter School Enrollment.

[7] Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (2019). Missed Opportunities: Education Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America.

[8] Civic, Hart Research, and America's Promise Alliance (2016). Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools.

[9] Civic, et al (2016).

[10] America's Promise Alliance (2020). Building a Grad Nation.

[11] America's Promise Alliance (2014). Don't Call Them Dropouts: Understanding the Experiences of Young People Who Leave High School Before Graduation.

[12] Center on Reinventing Public Education (2020). Students Experiencing Homelessness are Largely Invisible in School Reopening Plans.

[13] Bellwether Education Partners (2020). Missing in the Margins: Estimating the Scale of the COVID-19 Attendance Crisis.

FOOTNOTES

[14] Because Briya's unique two-generation model serves primarily adults who have passed the age of eligibility for the McKinney-Vento Act, their reported homeless data are low. However, many of their students experience homelessness.

[15] To learn more about trauma and its impact on learning, see Education Law Center (undated). Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Transformational Schools.

[16] WestEd (2019). Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments.

[17] Isaac M. Opper (2019). Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement.

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APPENDIX A:
CHARTER SCHOOL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many students experiencing homelessness did you have enrolled last year (and what was your total enrollment)?
2. Do you do outreach to students experiencing homelessness in the community?
3. How do you identify students experiencing homelessness in your schools?
4. Do you have any policies or procedures in place to prioritize enrollment of students experiencing homelessness (like putting them at the top of waitlists, holding spots open for them, accepting late applications, etc.)?
5. How do you help make sure students experiencing homelessness can participate fully in school, immediately?
6. What services do you provide to students/families experiencing homelessness?
7. How do you arrange transportation for students who move out of your area but remain with you as their school of origin?
8. Do you have data on how your homeless students are doing in school? (such as disaggregated graduation rates, attendance data, achievement data, etc.?