

# **Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2013-14 State Evaluation Report**

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Executive Summary

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program exists to ensure that each child of an individual experiencing homelessness and each youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. As such, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) created a state plan that outlines Pennsylvania's implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and issued a *Basic Education Circular* on homeless youth to offer guidance to local education agencies (LEAs) regarding implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. The current *State Plan* and *Basic Education Circular*, as well as other Basic Education Circulars related to homelessness can be found on PDE's website at [www.education.state.pa.us](http://www.education.state.pa.us), keywords "homeless education."

The ECYEH Program structure is designed so that every child or youth identified as experiencing homelessness has an opportunity to receive needed support and services. Pennsylvania is divided into eight regions, each with a regional coordinator. Eight regional coordinators and their subcontracted site coordinators provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to LEAs, and work to link children, youth, families, and LEAs to additional support services or resources specializing in serving individuals experiencing homelessness. The Center for Schools and Communities, a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, provides statewide technical assistance to regions and LEAs. The statewide technical assistant is set up to monitor the regions to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and maintains a resource website<sup>1</sup>. The state coordinator, based at PDE, is responsible for program coordination and collaboration at the state level and manages dispute resolutions among LEAs should they occur.

The purpose of the evaluation is to: examine the extent to which regions provide support to LEAs to meet the goals and objectives of the ECYEH Program; examine the extent to which children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness receive services and support; identify the types of services and supports children and youth received; build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and provide recommendations for overall program improvement. Evaluators collected and analyzed data for the evaluation from several sources to provide a picture of homelessness as it relates to the McKinney-Vento Act.

### PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

Evaluators examined the extent to which the ECYEH Program offered outreach, professional development, technical assistance, or support to LEAs, other entities who serve the homeless population, or on behalf of the families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness.

Overall there were 798 unique professional development or training events offered by or in collaboration with ECYEH coordinators. In terms of the types of professional development or

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<sup>1</sup> <http://homeless.center-school.org/index.cfm>

technical assistance that occurred, 200 of the events focused on increasing awareness of the ECYEH Program and the rights of students experiencing homelessness. LEAs were most often the participants for awareness events. Information sharing was the next-largest number of professional development or technical assistance events with 181 events. LEAs were again the largest group of participants for information sharing events. Interagency collaboration (131 events) was the third most frequent professional development type, with social service agencies and community organizations being the largest numbers of participants.

Of the events held in 2013-14 the majority were one-time events (583), the same event at multiple sites (36), an on-going series (155), or an on-going series at multiple sites (24). The largest number of professional development or technical assistance events occurred with LEAs (455 events), followed by social service agencies (79 events) and community organizations (57 events). Events for parents and shelters tied with 54 events each. There were 395 events with five or fewer participants, 81 events with five to 10 participants, 96 events had between 10 and 20 participants, 113 events with 21-50 participants, and 82 events that had more than 50 participants. Thirty-one events did not indicate numbers of participants.

Site visits and technical assistance to the regions continue to reveal that families' homeless situations (and those of unaccompanied youth) are becoming more complicated. As such, these situations take more of the coordinators' time, resources, and collaboration efforts to resolve.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOME FINDINGS**

As a result of the coordinators' outreach and ongoing collaboration work, 24,504 children or youth were reported as being served during the 2013-14 program year (directly or indirectly)<sup>2</sup>, of which 20,785 were also identified as being enrolled in school<sup>3</sup>. The 24,504 children and youth represent 96 percent of school districts, 72 percent of charter schools, and 100 percent of full-time comprehensive career and technical education centers. Students experiencing homelessness comprised about 1 percent of the total Pennsylvania public school enrolled population in 2013-14.

Key findings about the children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness include:

- 63 percent (enrolled) were doubled-up; 29 percent were in shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement; 6 percent were in hotels or motels; 1 percent was unsheltered; and 1 percent were unknown.
- 10 percent (served) were identified as being an unaccompanied youth<sup>4</sup>.
- 22 percent (served) were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2012-13.
- 77 percent (served) were classified as economically disadvantaged, though it is likely that many of the balance (18 percent) with unknown status may have been economically

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<sup>2</sup> "Direct services" refers to the 16 authorized activities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act (Sec. 723). "Indirect services" are those services provided by a staff member whose position is supported through McKinney-Vento Act funds. Included in indirect services is technical assistance, training, or services ECYEH staff provided to an entity.

<sup>3</sup> The federal age/grade category designation of a child or youth determines if they are considered served or enrolled.

<sup>4</sup> An unaccompanied youth is any person age 21 or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

disadvantaged as well. For the most part, children/youth included in the 18 percent with unknown economic status were children who were birth-2, or ages 3 to 5 and not enrolled in pre-kindergarten and resided in shelters or were migrant children. Migrant out of school youth were also included in the 18 percent.

- 30 percent (served) were White/Caucasian (not Hispanic), 28 percent were Black/African American (not Hispanic), 15 percent were Hispanic (any race), and 6 percent were classified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Multi-Racial, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.
- In terms of the state's public school enrollment, students experiencing homelessness comprised 1 percent of the state's White/Caucasian (not Hispanic) population, 3 percent of the state's Black/African American (not Hispanic) population, and 1 percent of the state's Hispanic (any race) population.
- Less than 10 percent (served) were designated as English language learners.
- 6 percent (served) were migrant, which translates to 27 percent of migrant children/youth experiencing homelessness.
- Most enrolled students (79 percent) did not have a special education disability. Of those students with a disability, 42 percent were categorized as having a "specific learning disability."
- 53 percent (enrolled) attended schoolwide Title I schools, 13 percent attended targeted Title I schools, and 28 percent attended non-Title I schools.
- Based on National Center for Education Statistics school classifications<sup>5</sup>, the majority (71 percent) of students attended LEAs categorized as either city (8,384 students) or suburban (6,444 students).
- 56 percent of schools in which enrolled students attended had free or reduced price lunch rates of 40 percent or higher according to the National School Lunch Program.

## **PROGRAM IMPACTS**

Program impacts include findings that document the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the ECYEH Program are occurring, including reducing or eliminating enrollment or education barriers, remaining in the school of origin, and receiving services aligned with the authorized activities outline in the McKinney-Vento Act. Student academic outcomes are also included. Barriers are situations that interfere with children/youth's enrollment, attendance, and/or educational success. Barrier information is only collected through ECYEH Program's Student Information and Service Delivery instrument. Of the 20,785 enrolled children and youth, 18,247 (88 percent) had barrier information.

Overall, 12 percent of enrolled students (2,104) students were reported as having barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. The most common barrier was transportation followed closely by determining if a student was eligible for homeless service, and then school selection. Transportation and determining if a student was eligible for homeless services have been in the top three reported barriers since the inception of the evaluation. Transportation

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data\\_and\\_statistics/7202/school\\_locale/509783](http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data_and_statistics/7202/school_locale/509783)

issues continue to grow (up from 168 students in 2012-13) especially in light of LEA financial constraints or logistical challenges in arranging transportation.

One of the rights of eligible students is to remain in their school of origin if it is in the best interest of the student. Of the 20,785 students identified as being enrolled in school, LEA-school mobility could be determined for 19,585 or 96 percent of students. Almost three quarters of enrolled students remained in their LEA-school combination during the program year and 20 percent had two LEA-school combinations.

One of the rights of students experiencing homelessness is the right to support services that promote academic success. Overall, 81 percent of the 24,504 children and youth are documented as receiving service at the individual child/youth level. Tutoring or other instructional support was by far the most prevalent service children/youth received; 77 percent of all children/youth were documented as receiving tutoring or instructional support. Coordination between schools and agencies (28 percent of all children/youth), transportation (25 percent of all children/youth), school supplies (25 percent of all children/youth), and clothing to meet a school requirement (25 percent of all children/youth) were the next-largest cluster of services children/youth received.

All students identified as experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of whether his or her school is a Title I school. A total of 13,434 (65 percent) of enrolled students (13,434 of 20,785 students) were documented as receiving Title I services and those services were most often instructional support services. Almost two-thirds of students (4,613 students) not receiving any Title I services attended a school that was not designated as schoolwide or targeted assistance and 2 percent of students (1,531) students attended targeted assistance schools. For the remaining enrolled students (1,207 students) who were not documented as receiving Title I services, no school was identified, therefore the Title I status of the schools was unknown. However, of the 3,750 students in assessment grades and not having Title I services indicated, 81 percent had reading/literature proficiency levels reported and 80 percent had math/Algebra I proficiency levels reported. Slightly more than half (53 percent) scored proficient or advanced on the reading/literature assessment and math/Algebra I assessment. Many of these students documented as not receiving Title I services did not have academic need to trigger Title I services in non-Title I schools.

State academic assessment data for 2013-14 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternative State Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. The PSSA is given in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. The reading and math assessments are given in grades three through eight; the science assessment is given in grades four and eight; and the writing assessment is administered in grades five and eight. The PASA assesses students with the most severe cognitive disabilities in four grade level spans (third/fourth, fifth/sixth, seventh/eighth, and 11<sup>th</sup>). The 2013-14 Keystone Exams were offered in literature, Algebra I, and biology for grades seven through 11 in the fall, spring, and summer. Students can re-take the Keystone Exams until they demonstrate proficiency.

There were 10,444 students experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the reading PSSA (grades 3-8), the literature Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the reading PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11) during the 2013-14 school year, of which PSSA, PASA, or Keystone

Exam results were available for 8,463 students (81 percent), of which 42 percent scored in the proficient or advanced levels. This percentage varied by grade with eighth grade having the greatest percentage of students (55 percent) scoring proficient or advanced, and fifth grade having the smallest percentage of students (30 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

There were 10,444 students experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the math PSSA (grades 3-8), the Algebra I Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the math PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11) during the 2013-14 school year, of which PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results were available for 8,611 students (82 percent), of which 43 percent scored in the proficient or advanced levels. This percentage varied by grade with fourth grade having the greatest percentage of students (49 percent) scoring in the proficient or advanced levels and 11<sup>th</sup> grade having the smallest percentage of students (32 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

There were 4,210 students experiencing homelessness who were enrolled in a grade level eligible to take the science PSSA (grades 4 and 8), the science PASA (grades 4, 8, and 11), or the biology Keystone Exam (11<sup>th</sup> grade) during the 2013-14 school year, of which results were available for 3,303 students (78 percent), of which 38 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced levels.

Nationally, reading and math assessment data for students experiencing homelessness is examined for grades three through eight. In Pennsylvania, 42 percent of students in grades three through eight scored proficient or advanced on the state reading assessment and 45 percent scored proficient or advanced on the state mathematics assessment. This is similar to the national percentages of 46 percent in reading and 43 percent in mathematics.<sup>6</sup>

## **REFLECTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

As reporting has become more complete and accurate there are some things that appear to be improving, such as a decrease in barriers, an increase in services, and an increase in the number of pre-kindergarten children being reported. Observed improvements may be a result of better reporting, more entities reporting, and a better understanding of what needs to be reported rather than actual improvements, though it is possible that they are actual improvements as well.

Also noteworthy is the concept of LEA monitoring by regional coordinators. Though barely initiated in 2013-14, LEA monitoring is raising the awareness of LEAs and serves as a way in which coordinators can engage LEAs in their responsibilities in educating children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Given the findings that have emerged and previous year's recommendations, evaluators suggest that PDE consider a few recommendations related to program management of the ECYEH Program to optimize program implementation at the regional and local levels in the areas of transportation, Title I services for students with academic needs in non-Title I schools, and instructional supports through collaboration with other state, national, or local initiatives.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-1011-1213.pdf>

## Introduction

### MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT OVERVIEW

In 1987 the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into federal law, requiring states to review and revise residency requirements for the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. In 1990 the McKinney Act was amended, requiring states to eliminate all enrollment barriers and provide school access and support for academic success for students experiencing homelessness; McKinney Act funds could then be used to provide direct educational services for eligible students. In 1994 the education portion of the McKinney Act was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, adding preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration. The latest revision occurred in 2001 when the law was reauthorized as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act)(Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), strengthening legislative requirements and requiring all local education agencies (LEAs) to appoint a local liaison to ensure the law is implemented effectively at the local level.

The McKinney-Vento Act outlines how state educational agencies must ensure that each child of an individual experiencing homelessness and each youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as other children and youth. This includes a public preschool education as provided to other children and youth. The McKinney-Vento Act defines children and youth experiencing homelessness as:

“Homeless children and youth:

(A) Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) Includes:

- i. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason: children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations. As well as living in emergency or transitional shelters, are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- ii. Children and youths 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 (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
- iii. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- iv. Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).”

Children or youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless may also be identified as an “unaccompanied homeless youth,” meaning any child who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. There is no age range specified for an unaccompanied youth in

the federal law. The upper age range is determined by what a state defines as school age, unless the child is in special education in which case, the upper age range is 21 years old. There is no lower age range.

The McKinney-Vento Act also outlines the rights of students experiencing homelessness, including: the right to immediate enrollment even when records are not present; the right to remain in the school of origin, if in the student's best interest; the right to receive transportation to the school of origin; and the right to support services that promote academic success. The complete McKinney-Vento Act can be found on the United States Department of Education's website: <http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2002-1/030802a.html>.

## **EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) homeless children's initiative, known as the Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program<sup>7</sup>, exists to ensure that each child of an individual experiencing homelessness and each youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. As such, PDE created a state plan that outlines Pennsylvania's implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act and issued a *Basic Education Circular* on homeless youth to offer guidance to LEAs regarding implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. The current *State Plan* and *Basic Education Circular*, as well as other basic education circulars related to homelessness, can be found on PDE's website at [www.education.state.pa.us](http://www.education.state.pa.us), keywords "homeless education."

Instead of providing federal McKinney-Vento Act funds directly to local education agencies, Pennsylvania employs a regional model for dispersing the funds. Pennsylvania is divided into eight regions with each region having one regional coordinator whose primary responsibility is to implement the goals and objectives of the program. The regional coordinator position is filled by competitive bid on a three-year cycle. In some cases the regional coordinators subcontract for additional support (site coordinators) within their region.

The ECYEH state coordinator, based at PDE, is responsible for program coordination and collaboration at the state level and manages dispute resolutions among LEAs should they occur.

PDE contracts with the Center for Schools and Communities, a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, to provide technical assistance to the regions and LEAs. As part of that technical support the Center maintains a website that includes statewide directories of the ECYEH Program regional and site coordinators, the LEA homeless liaisons, and Pennsylvania shelters for families, domestic violence, and runaway youth. Other resources are posted there as well. Additionally, the Center conducts compliance monitoring of or technical assistance visits for the regions and prepares a comprehensive report of each region's results.

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<sup>7</sup> The program name was changed for the 2011-12 academic year from Pennsylvania's Homeless Children's Initiative (PAHCI) to Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH).

The goals of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

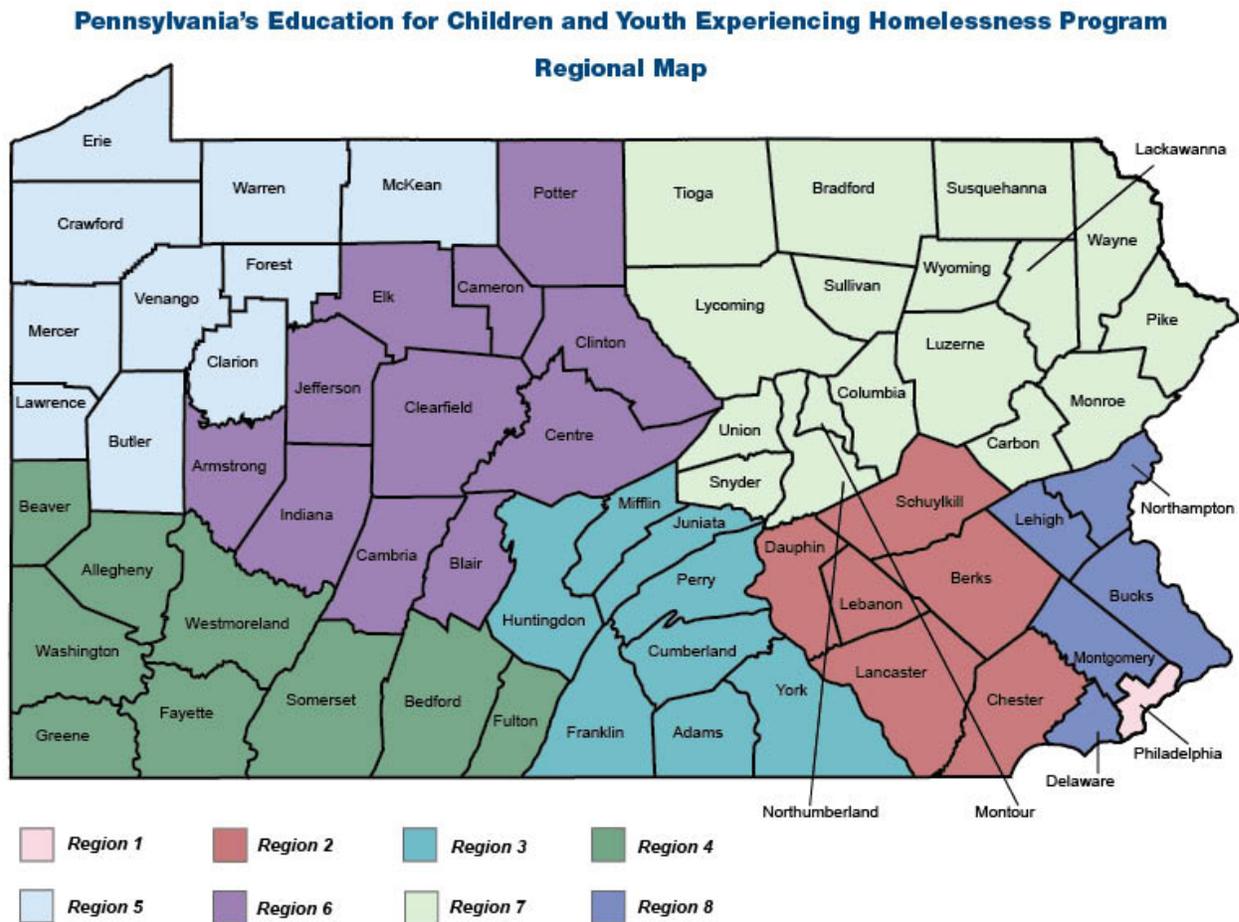
- Ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll, participate, and have the opportunity to succeed in school;
- Ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state; and
- Eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers through the use of local best practices and the authorized activities of the McKinney-Vento Act.

The main objectives of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

- Reduce the disruption in the educational lives of children and youth experiencing homelessness;
- Increase awareness about the nature and extent of the problems children and youth experiencing homelessness have enrolling in and gaining access to educational programs and services;
- Explain laws and policies already in place that help students overcome these barriers to education;
- Build on laws and policies already in place that help students overcome these barriers to education;
- Build the capacity of others to assist in identifying, enrolling, and ensuring the educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness; and
- Provide opportunities to collaborate with other statewide initiatives to improve academic achievement of students experiencing homelessness.

The coordinators' primary role is to make sure the McKinney-Vento Act is being followed in every public LEA in Pennsylvania. Coordinators train, troubleshoot, intervene, support, and collaborate with LEAs, shelters, agencies, and organizations to eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers and ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state.

The following map illustrates the eight ECYEH regions in Pennsylvania.



**EVALUATION DESIGN AND ACTIVITIES**

PDE's Division of Student Services contracts with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the ECYEH Program to fulfill the federal evaluation requirement. Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

SEC. 724. SECRETERIAL REPSONSIBILITES. (d) EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION- The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students, and may use funds appropriated under section 726 to conduct such activities.

The purpose of the evaluation of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program is to: examine the extent to which regions are providing support to LEAs to meet the goals and objectives of the program; examine the extent to which those students identified as experiencing homelessness receive

services and support; identify the types of services and supports students received; build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and provide recommendations for overall program improvement. The 2013-14 program evaluation was the fourth year of program evaluation.

In addition to program evaluation, which examines the implementation, outcomes, and impacts of the ECYEH Program, evaluators worked with PDE to prepare the portions of required annual federal reporting related to homeless children and youth.

Evaluators used the *EDFacts* file formats and the *Comprehensive State Performance Report* to identify all the required federal reporting data elements. Evaluators also used the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth quality standards and evaluation guidance to ensure adequate data was included in the evaluation. Evaluators then worked with PDE to ensure that all data elements were identified and no duplication of work was required on the part of the LEAs. This meant that some data was collected at the program level and some data was collected at the state level; whenever possible, existing data sources were to be used to reduce the burden on the LEAs.

Evaluators created the Student Information and Service Delivery data instrument<sup>8</sup> to collect information about identified children/students/youth, any barriers to enrollment, and the services received in school, in shelters, or from the ECYEH Program. The funding source(s) supporting the services(s) are also captured. The PAsecureID<sup>9</sup> was one of the data elements collected for students who were enrolled in school. The PAsecureID was used to pull data from other sources or when matching data from multiple data sources.

The homeless liaison in LEAs where students were enrolled, pre-kindergarten program staff, representatives from shelters where children and youth resided, and regional or site coordinators provide the information requested in the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument. Each regional office collects and compiles information for the region and submits it to the state evaluator at designated times throughout the year.

In addition to the data collected about identified children/youth, evaluators also created instruments to collect information on the work of the ECYEH Program staff. Instruments are reviewed each year and fine-tuned as needed to better capture work of the ECYEH Program staff.

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<sup>8</sup> Evaluators offer annual training for data collection via webinar. The webinar is offered to all reporting entities in collaboration with the Center for Schools and Communities and the state coordinator. The webinar is recorded each year and frequently asked questions are compiled and answered. The Center emails to all LEAs and posts to its website a link to the webinar, the PowerPoint, and the frequently asked questions. An evaluation website also includes all information regarding data collection.

<sup>9</sup> PAsecureID is a unique, permanent, anonymous statewide student identification number assigned to all students upon their first entry into Pennsylvania's public school system. The single, unique PAsecureID remains with an individual student throughout their educational career. The PAsecureID is the key to the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) longitudinal data system. It does or will in the future:

- Reduce the number of unique reports required by PDE and the effort to produce them,
- Provide districts' access to longitudinal data to support local instructional decision making,
- Link student records between districts and across years to increase the accuracy and utility of data gathered, and
- Streamline reporting processes from LEA to PDE and United States Department of Education.

Each region's monitoring and technical assistance reports from the Center for Schools and Communities or the PDE state coordinator were also collected by the evaluators to further examine program implementation.

In addition to information gathered at the program level, evaluators collected individual student information at the state level utilizing existing information in PIMS, MIS2000<sup>10</sup> (the state migrant database), and through the state assessment office<sup>11</sup>. LEA and school Title I funding information and National School Lunch Program data was also collected at the state level.

Finally, to adhere to confidentiality in reporting afforded to domestic violence shelters, evaluators used a separate data collection instrument and procedure for children and youth residing in domestic violence shelters. Evaluators developed this instrument and procedure in 2010-11 in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The instrument captured some demographic information related to school attendance, data related to student services received at the facility, and information related to working with the ECYEH Program. Only domestic violence shelters receiving direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program are required to be included in reporting.

Ultimately, it is the ECYEH Program's responsibility to verify children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness. Given this responsibility, PDE ECYEH Program staff, evaluators, and PIMS staff worked together after the first year of the evaluation to secure permission for the ECYEH evaluation data collection to serve as the official source for flagging students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania. To accomplish this, an extensive cross-referencing and follow-up process is conducted by evaluators using data collected through the ECYEH Program, PIMS, MIS2000, and the state assessment office.

After the cross-referencing and follow-up process is complete evaluators compile a unique, comprehensive list of children/youth and their accompanying information. From this information evaluators: 1) prepare the *EDFacts* files and information for the annual federal *Comprehensive State Performance Report*; 2) provide the homeless flag for the PIMS system for all other PDE reporting that might include this population; and 3) prepare the annual evaluation report.

## **HOW TO USE THIS REPORT**

The state evaluation of the ECYEH Program for 2013-14 examined information about children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness, the services the children and youth received, and the work of the ECYEH Program staff. The Executive Summary provides a condensed representation of the findings explained throughout this report.

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<sup>10</sup> Migrant Education Program staff receive ongoing training related to ECYEH eligibility to support this process and collaboration. Migrant Education Program staff document, in the state migrant database, homelessness among migrant children/youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness. All children/youth eligible for migrant services between July 1 and June 30 are incorporated into the homeless identification and verification process.

<sup>11</sup> PDE contracted with Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct the statewide evaluation. As such, the evaluation team completed the necessary confidentiality protocols for data collection at the state level.

The primary audiences for this report are the program management at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the state technical assistance providers, and ECYEH Program regional staff, though the results can be useful for other groups. The findings and results provided within this report should be used to guide program management and assist the state program team to provide technical assistance and support to regional staff in order to improve implementation, outcomes, and results.

Findings presented in this report are provided overall for the state and by region as the regions are the sub-grantees and the means by which the McKinney-Vento Act is implemented in Pennsylvania. This report provides an overall picture of implementation, outcomes, and impacts of the ECYEH Program and addresses statewide and regional issues. However, detailed information at the county, LEA, or school level, when appropriate, is provided to the regional coordinators and the program staff at PDE to assist with internal program implementation, improvement, and decision making.

Evaluators have included graphical representations of results along with the supporting data table. Pertinent percentages and counts are provided in the narrative sections. Throughout this report, for ease of reading, percentages may be rounded and as such, may not total 100 percent. Furthermore, evaluators have eliminated any instances of zero in tables (shown as a blank cell) or “0%” in graphs where the result represents no instances. In cases where zero percent is included in a graph, it means less than 1 percent.

Throughout this report individuals identified as experiencing homelessness are categorized by being enrolled or served based on the federal reporting definitions, which are described in detail in the report. “Enrolled” includes any student enrolled in an LEA (public or nonpublic). “Served” is any child/youth identified as experiencing homelessness, regardless of their school enrollment status. Enrolled students are a subset of the served population and are included as part of the child/youth counts.

References to relevant prior state years’ results are provided in the narrative where explanations are pertinent. Additionally, references to national results are included as appropriate. If the reader is interested, prior year evaluation reports (2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13) are available on PDE’s website:

[http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania's\\_education\\_for\\_child\\_ren\\_and\\_youth\\_experiencing\\_homelessness\\_program/7491](http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania's_education_for_child_ren_and_youth_experiencing_homelessness_program/7491)

This report should also be used to highlight especially positive and successful implementation, outcomes, and programs as models. Care should be taken to avoid making comparisons across regions, as each region has differing numbers of LEAs, collaborating entities, ECYEH Program staff, and total child/youth counts. Additionally, regions have differing areas of focus based on regional need within the population experiencing homelessness. However, differences among the regions may also guide program improvement and state level technical assistance.

This report highlights findings regarding the ECYEH Program based on available data from the 2013-14 program year.

## **Findings**

Findings are grouped by program implementation, program outcomes, and program impacts including student outcomes. As described in the Evaluation Design and Activities section of this report, data came from several sources and was pulled together to provide a picture of child/youth homelessness in Pennsylvania as it relates to the McKinney-Vento Act.

Program implementation findings reveal the extent to which the ECYEH Program offered professional development, technical assistance, or support to LEAs, other entities who serve the homeless population, or on behalf of the families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness. This information is collected via the Professional Development and Technical Assistance instrument and from information documented in the region's monitoring or technical assistance reports.

Program outcomes findings reveal information about the children/youth identified and served through the ECYEH Program and information about LEAs and schools identified students attended. Children/youth information is collected through the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument, PIMS, MIS2000, and domestic violence shelter reporting. LEA and school information comes from PDE's Division of Federal Programs for Title I, the National Lunch Program, the National Center for Education Statistics, and LEAs.

Program impact findings reveal the extent to which the anticipated outcomes for children/youth of the ECYEH Program are occurring. Anticipated child/youth outcomes include reducing or eliminating enrollment or education barriers, remaining in the school of origin, and receiving services aligned with the authorized activities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. Student academic outcomes are also included in this section. This information comes from the service delivery portions of the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument, the Student Activities instrument, PIMS, MIS2000, domestic violence shelter reporting, and the PDE assessment office.

### **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

Coordinators train, troubleshoot, intervene, support, and collaborate with LEAs, shelters, agencies, and organizations to eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers and ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state.

#### **Professional Development and Technical Assistance Services by Regions**

Professional development and technical assistance to LEAs, parents, shelters, and other organizations serving the homeless population command a large portion of the coordinators' time and play a very large role in implementing the McKinney-Vento Act as outlined in the state plan.

Evaluators have worked with coordinators to improve the data collection instruments to more precisely capture the work that coordinators do and also to increase the consistency of the information the regions' reports. As a result of these improvements, evaluators were able to better capture the wealth of professional development and technical assistance that the coordinators offered or where the coordinators were active collaborators.

ECYEH Program coordinators reported the services they provided to LEAs, shelters, parents, social service agencies, and other organizations on the Professional Development and Technical Assistance instrument. Overall there were 798 unique events in which the eight regional or 16 site coordinators were involved. These events were designated as a one-time event (583), the same event at multiple sites (36), an on-going series (155), or an on-going series at multiple sites (24). The largest number of professional development or technical assistance events occurred with LEAs (455 events), followed by social service agencies (79 events) and community organizations (57 events). Events for parents and shelters tied with 54 events each.

In terms of the types of professional development or technical assistance that occurred, 200 of the events focused on increasing awareness of the ECYEH Program and the rights of students experiencing homelessness. LEAs were most often the participants for awareness events. Information sharing was the next-largest number of professional development or technical assistance events with 181 events. LEAs were again the largest group of participants for information sharing events. Interagency collaboration (131 events) was the third most frequent professional development type, with social service agencies and community organizations being the largest numbers of participants.

Coordinators were asked to select a range category that most accurately reflected the total unique number of participants for each professional development or technical assistance event listed. There were 395 events with five or fewer participants, 81 events with five to 10 participants, 96 events had between 10 and 20 participants, 113 events with 21-50 participants, and 82 events that had more than 50 participants. Thirty-one events did not indicate numbers of participants.

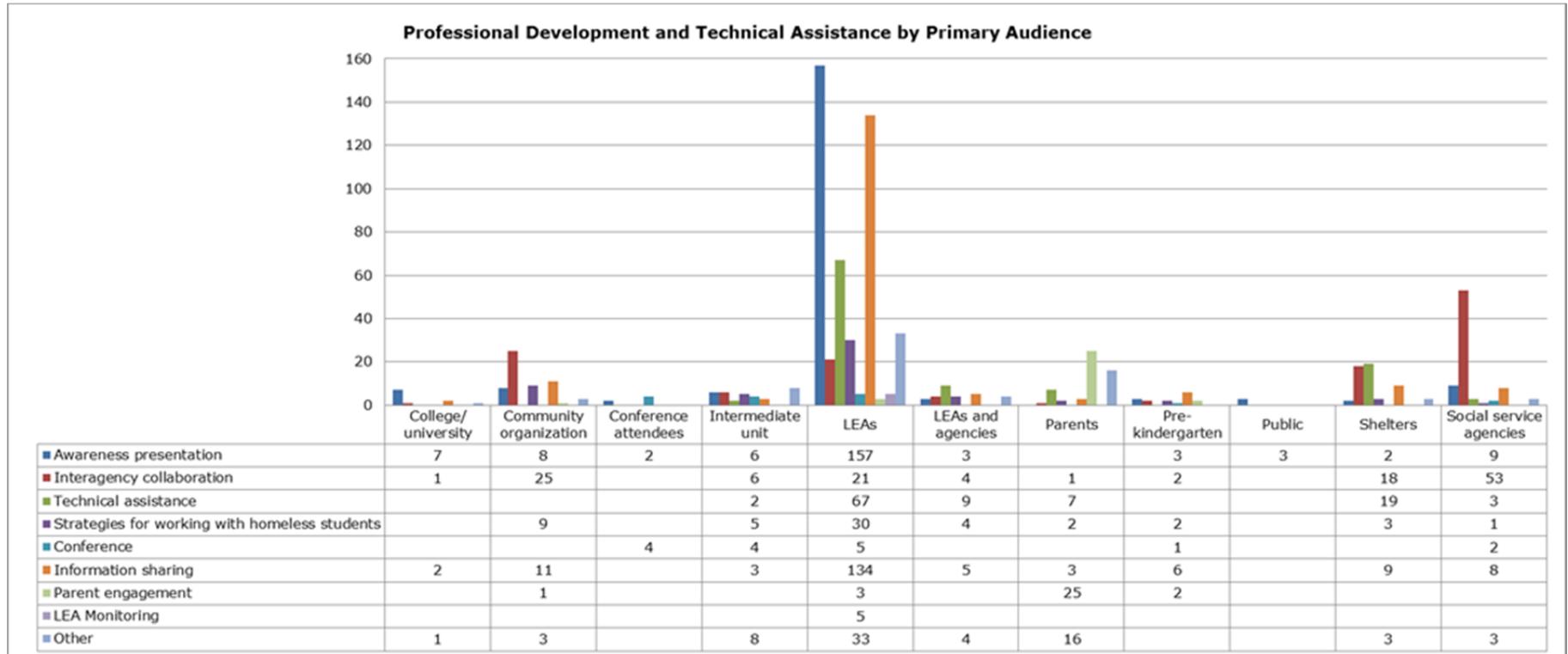
Overall, reported professional development and technical assistance provided by the ECYEH Program increased drastically from the prior year using the same data collection tool. The total number of unique events reported in 2012-13 was 467. Most notable was an increase in the documented services to LEAs.

Even though reporting to capture the work of the ECYEH Program has improved each year evaluators have completely revamped how professional development and training, technical assistance and support via resources or materials, and collaborations in the community are captured. New instruments were developed for the 2014-15 program year in order to better document the recipients of the services and guide ongoing training, technical assistance, and the newly-implemented monitoring of LEAs by regional coordinators<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Regional coordinators are to monitor LEAs on a seven-year cycle. Evaluators, in collaboration with the state team, developed the LEA monitoring document. LEA monitoring results will be incorporated into the regional monitoring/technical assistance/site visit reports conducted and prepared by the state technical assistant and findings will be addressed in the monitoring/technical assistance section of this evaluation report.

The graph below shows the different types of professional development or technical assistance and the primary audience that participated.



Common or typical activities, which are reflected in the professional development/technical assistance graph above, included such things as: serving on the board of local community agencies or groups; collaborating with other agencies that serve the homeless population; making presentations to community or school groups in order to increase awareness about the McKinney-Vento Act and the ECYEH Program; facilitating student access to or LEA provision of transportation to and from school; providing referrals for families and children to other community or government agencies; holding or collaborating on supplemental academic programs or tutoring; providing LEA homeless liaisons with training and technical assistance related to their role as a liaison; developing and maintaining informational websites; summer programs and activities; and facilitating donations of goods and money to serve the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

In implementing the above activities, unique or innovative events or collaborations have emerged as ways to meet the needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. Coordinators were asked to provide examples of such practices in their region. Highlighted below are events that coordinators identified and monitoring and site visits have confirmed. In some cases, variations of these highlighted activities may also occur in other regions, though they may not be as comprehensive as the highlighted examples.

- Region 1: The regional office maintains a full-time teen program coordinator to focus on ensuring that homeless and displaced youth have opportunities and support with their postsecondary plans, including financial assistance. Special events have included culinary classes for displaced teens and attending a college fair in which several students were accepted on the spot. Fundraising events help to support the teen program and other activities to serve students experiencing homelessness. The region once again raised over \$1,600 during the holiday drive to be used for gift cards as incentives for the students and to provide food for the teen program meetings and activities.
- Region 2: In Berks County, regional staff collaborates with Family Promise/U-Turn program to connect youth with local service agencies for assistance with locating and securing housing and life skills training. Partnership with a local resource provides college preparation activities such as applying for financial aid and visiting colleges for interested youth. The regional staff assists with the coordination of People First, a large community event offering free meals and health screenings to homeless families. In Dauphin County, the site coordinator is a committee chair with the Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness and assists in the organization of Project Homeless Connect, a one-day event bringing together numerous community services available for families experiencing homelessness.
- Region 3: Spearheaded by the Region 3 coordinator, a resolution to create an annual PA's Education for Youth Experiencing Homelessness Awareness Week (last week in October) was drafted and presented to and confirmed by the state Senate. November is national Hunger and Homeless Month. Having ECYEH Awareness Week prior to the month of November provided continuity and an additional avenue to promote the ECYEH Program. October 2013 was the first year for this event. The goal is for this to become a coordinated annual event that occurs in each region where districts within a region participate in awareness activities, classroom discussions and activities, local and school newspaper

articles, and clothing, food, or miscellaneous drives. Increasing the awareness about the ECYEH Facebook page is another passion of the Region 3 coordinator.

- Region 4 has expanded their partnership with Carlow University and the Together Time Program offering a service learning option in two different college courses – in both the fall and spring semesters. Together Time promotes parent/child interaction and parents as a child’s first teacher for preschoolers residing in housing programs. In the fall, through an intensive semester-long relationship, students are trained in the Together Time curriculum and learn about working with families experiencing homelessness. Each student is assigned a housing program and completes 15 hours working with the children and families. The college students also prepare an activity for young children and participate in our community fair held in December. The community fair is an outreach event to families experiencing homelessness who are living doubled-up. The community fair was a collaborative effort of the ECYEH Program, Woodland Hills School District, and Carlow University. Community partners who provide services for young children (including early childhood education, early intervention, and family support) came together with the Carlow students to provide engaging activities for a resource fair. The college students also held a homelessness awareness campaign and toy drive on campus prior to this event. In the spring, the ECYEH Program collaborated again with Carlow University to offer a fun evening of educational activities for families with young children living in housing programs. Students planned and executed activities engaging parents and children.

In the summer, the ECYEH Program facilitated a seven-week literacy program in three housing programs in Allegheny County. This included a large kick-off event at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit with literacy-based activities for parents and children, five weekly facilitated literacy activities and stories at the housing programs, motivational incentives for children as they accomplished reading goals, and a celebratory family day at Idlewild Park. The ECYEH Program also facilitated a science-themed weekly camp at two housing providers in Washington County.

- Region 5: During the past year, Region 5 collaborated with the arts community in three of the counties served. The documentary “Inocente” was screened for the local community at three locations, and an “upcycle” workshop was held for local students to increase resiliency through exposure to the arts. At the screenings, each location hosted an art show showcasing submissions from local students related to this theme. Monies were collected at these events and a scholarship fund was established to allow students experiencing homelessness to engage in the arts in each of the three targeted counties.

The regional office also actively collaborates with the Community Service Corps at Slippery Rock University to offer tutoring for student shelter residents outside of the shelter locations. University students receive credit for this volunteer activity. Unique to Region 5 is the close coordination with the Migrant Education Program. One of the ECYEH Program site coordinators is also the program manager of the Migrant Education Program. This arrangement facilitates collaboration and coordination of services and programming, especially for those individuals who meet both programs’ eligibility criteria.

- Region 6: Ongoing efforts continue to coordinate and work collaboratively with several existing groups to mitigate barriers efficiently so that children and youth experiencing homelessness receive appropriate services. Groups include LEA Title I coordinators, LEA Student Assistance Program teams, LEA and county pre-kindergarten programs, and Children and Youth Services. Additional collaborations include church groups in Indiana County for the “Host Family” program for 17-18 year olds. Ongoing work with school groups, Girl Scouts, or civic groups in making and/or purchasing material for “no sew” blankets/pillow cases for children in shelters and local homeless children; collecting toiletries, socks, and underwear for care packages; collecting school supplies and books; and finding beds and other household items for children and families.

Region 6 also built on its “Blue Shirt Day” to spread homelessness awareness to a week-long event. The region collaborated with other regions in the state and designated a day for all the districts and community agencies (Head Start, children and youth services) to wear their Blue Shirt. The region sent the schools facts regarding homeless education and students to share during announcements. Some schools did interviews with the regional coordinator regarding the program: Homer Center in Indiana County and Central Cambria in Cambria County. Many schools collected items such as toiletries, school supplies, and nonperishables to be shared with the program or a local agency in need. Schools are now planning to participate in the event yearly.

- Region 7: The Region 7 coordinator participates in Continuum of Care and Housing for Urban Development housing coalition meetings. The regional office has also developed a community resources booklet that is provided to various regional stakeholders and includes contact information (by county and state-level) for agencies and resources for assistance with housing/shelter, food, counseling, medical services, employment, financial services, and child care. Each year, the ECYEH Program provides 500 backpacks and school supplies to school districts in the region. The ECYEH Program has also been able to provide and fund transportation for homeless children in several local districts in Luzerne County.
- Region 8: New in the 2013-14 year was a collaboration with a warehouse in Warrington, PA called Hands In Service. They are given supplies and products from manufacturers and stores when the items cannot be sold in stores. So, if an item was for promotion use only (i.e. diapers individually wrapped with an outdated coupon inside) or an item had a small flaw or a shipment was unused or unneeded, stores and manufacturers will send the items to this warehouse for distribution to local charitable organizations and homeless families and youth. Region 8 has received many boxes of brand-new thermals, wet wipes, bug sprays, toys at Christmas, pants, sneakers, a new bike, a new electric scooter, and more, and these items can be used to assist the region’s children and families. This relationship also led to the ECYEH Program being able to receive and distribute a shipment from Feed the Children using the Hands In Service warehouse, volunteers, and forklift. This collaboration has benefited all parts of Region 8.

To support sharing and collaboration among the regions, an online program resource was developed that makes available to the network of ECYEH coordinators descriptions of programs, activities, and events coordinated by regional staff. This online resource grew out of the ECYEH

Program marketing committee, comprised of several regional and site coordinators and the statewide technical assistant. This resource was designed to promote the development and enhancement of program activities across Pennsylvania so that each region can tailor the chosen activities to meet their local needs while using their existing resources. It has not yet been utilized to the extent in which the designing team had envisioned. However, coordinators reach out to and contact each other as needed based upon what they hear from other coordinators at the meetings throughout the year.

### **Regional Monitoring, Technical Assistance, or Site Visits**

Historically, coordinators maintain a plethora of information to document their work within the region and are monitored annually by the Center for Schools and Communities, which is PDE's contractor for ECYEH Program monitoring.

The monitoring protocol was augmented in 2013-14 to better meet the needs of the regions based on recommendations from the state technical assistant following the 2012-13 monitoring visits. The state technical assistant recommended that the program alternate annually between formal monitoring, which examines the federal requirements in great detail and documents regional compliance, to more informal technical assistance visits, which would change the focus from compliance to program expansion and improvement. The premise for this recommendation was that the regional staff had demonstrated for contiguous years their compliance with all McKinney-Vento Act components.

Technical assistance visits by the monitor were conducted during the first half of the program year. Whenever possible the monitor attended an ECYEH Program event or training. Not every site received a technical assistance visit (Regions 1 and 5) and some regions had more than one technical assistance visit depending on need and staffing changes (Regions 2, 6, and 8). In 2013-14, the Region 2 regional coordinator left mid-year, the Region 2 Dauphin County site coordinator was new as of spring 2013, and the Region 8 site coordinator was new as of summer 2013. Likewise, funding cuts prompted additional technical assistance support in Region 6.

Documentation for the technical assistance visit included a listing of materials provided to the region by the monitor, key discussion issues during the visit, a description of the event attended, if applicable, and any follow-up activities that needed to occur.

Evaluators, in collaboration with the state technical assistant and PDE, created a formal interim site visit instrument to be used in the alternate years. Interim site visits using the new tool were conducted during the second half of the 2013-14 program year.

The state technical assistant completed five of the site visits while the state coordinator completed three. Site visitors rated the following items either yes, somewhat, no, not observed, or not applicable and provided an explanation to support the rating.

Documentation, observation, and other evidence indicate that...

- Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including access to Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEAs in the region.
- The region/site's protocols ensure:
  - prompt/accurate identification of McKinney-Vento-eligible students;
  - immediate enrollment of homeless children/youth in school (as applicable);
  - "school of origin" rights for homeless children/youth; and
  - appropriate educational services for eligible students, including transportation.
- Homeless children and youth receive K-12 after-school or supplemental instruction in LEA or shelter locations.
- The region ensures that homeless children and youth receive free meals through the National School Lunch Program.
- The region appropriately provides homeless families, children, and youth referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
- The regional office reviews/monitors LEA policies and practices (such as those regarding immunization and health records, residency requirements, birth certificates, school records, and guardianship) to ensure they do not act as barriers when enrolling homeless students.
- Each LEA has designated a liaison for homeless children and youth to carry out the duties described in Title X, Part C, Section 722(g)(6)(A).
- The region/site's protocols ensure the appropriate use of Title I monies, including the Title I set-aside, for eligible students.
- The region ensures that there is public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth disseminated where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.
- The regional office complies with all ECYEH data collection/submission requirements and other reporting requirements.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with Pennsylvania's dispute resolution process.
- The regional/site office effectively facilitates community collaboration and interagency coordination to support the education of McKinney-Vento-eligible students.
- The regional/site office effectively facilitates inter-region collaboration and coordination (for areas where counties/intermediate unit service areas intersect).
- The regional office effectively facilitates site management (for regions with paid and/or unpaid site coordinators).

The site visitor was also asked to note if the operations and programming observed during this visit closely resemble programming observed during the most recent monitoring site visit. Additional comments, program strengths, and recommendations were also provided by the site visitor.

Completed technical assistance and site visit reports are submitted to PDE and to the evaluator and assist with program management among the state team. Findings from technical assistance

or sites visits are discussed as needed during monthly state team conference calls and are used to guide the agenda for coordinator meetings throughout the year.

Evaluators reviewed each region's technical assistance and/or site visit reports. As with the monitoring reports of prior years, all regions receiving a site visit were documented as a 'yes' in the above items with ample evidence that the included items were in place.

Also new during the 2013-14 program year was the implementation of regional coordinators monitoring LEAs. The state team (evaluators, PDE program staff, Center for Schools and Communities technical assistance staff) worked together to create an LEA monitoring tool for coordinators to use. Coordinators are to report any issues discovered during LEA monitoring to PDE and a review of the LEA monitoring is now included as part of the regional monitoring.

Since the statewide technical assistant is out in the field conducting technical assistance, site visits, or monitoring visits, evaluators asked the statewide technical assistant to comment on new issues that are emerging, other issues that are resolving, and challenges coordinators are experiencing. This information is useful when evaluators consider program implementation recommendations at the state or program level. The observations of the state technical assistant included:

- The new LEA monitoring requirement has yielded positive benefits for the regional staff. Anecdotal reports demonstrate that these monitoring visits and outreach have increased the awareness of the LEAs and shelters and reinforced the components and required responsibilities of school district staff in the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. The regional staff continue to report questions regarding unaccompanied youth. However, ongoing outreach/training by the regional staff has minimized problems and promoted collaboration with Children and Youth Services and the juvenile courts.
- Each program year the reporting of and requested assistance for children/youth experiencing homelessness has increased. Pennsylvania families' homeless situations (and those of unaccompanied youth) continue to become more complicated, which requires regional staff to expend additional time and resources to effectively support these students and their families, which is difficult when the resources available are not increasing accordingly – especially in the rural areas of the state.
- The advent of LEA monitoring provides a perfect vehicle to minimize the inaccurate interpretations of homelessness sometimes made by LEA staff (contrary to the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness). As LEAs become more familiar with the law and their specific responsibilities, the identification of and services to students experiencing homelessness become more fine-tuned.
- Full and accurate reporting of the doubled-up population continues to be a challenge in some regions partially due to varying interpretations of doubled-up, cultural differences, and community awareness and acknowledgement of homeless situations.
- While the ECYEH coordinators continue to provide support for full and accurate determination of homeless eligibility on a case-by-case basis, the complexity of the families' and youths' situations and more restrictive budgets to address the needs of these children and youth present challenges for the regional staff. Therefore, the regions do not experience uniformity in the number of children and youth served or sufficient ECYEH

Program staff to meet the growing needs. This is especially true in the rural areas of the state where the larger geographic area limits staff's ability to support the work.

The state team continues to collaborate to keep abreast of any documentation or program implementation issues that arise during the program year. Part of that work includes a monthly phone conference with the PDE program officer, bi-monthly regional coordinator meetings with site coordinators attending in the fall and spring, and conference calls with all parties as needed throughout the year.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Outreach and increased awareness regarding the McKinney-Vento Act and the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness are addressed in the objectives of the ECYEH Program and are the primary focus of program implementation. Meeting these objectives is reflected by the number of entities represented in reporting and also the number of children/youth who were identified, served, and reported. Program outcomes include findings about the reporting entities and also demographic and homeless information about the children/youth identified and served through the ECYEH Program.

Per federal reporting requirements, all public LEAs are required to report on students attending their schools who are experiencing homelessness. Additionally, all entities who receive training/professional development, technical assistance, or resources from the ECYEH Program are required to report on students experiencing homelessness who reside in the facility or attend their pre-kindergarten programs.

Public LEAs include school districts, charter schools, intermediate unit-operated pre-kindergarten programs,<sup>13</sup> and full-time (comprehensive) career and technical centers<sup>14</sup>. In Pennsylvania, there were 499 school districts, 176 charter and cyber charter schools, and 12 career and technical centers in the 2013-14 academic year.

Based on the unique, comprehensive list of identified students from across Pennsylvania, nearly all LEAs were represented. Almost 4 percent of school districts (18) and 28 percent of charter/cyber charter schools (50) did not identify any students as experiencing homelessness based on the McKinney-Vento Act definition during the program year. All of the full-time (comprehensive) career and technical centers were included in the findings.

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<sup>13</sup> Not all intermediate units offer all pre-kindergarten programs (Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts). Additionally, Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver IU2 and Philadelphia IU26 are incorporated into Pittsburgh and Philadelphia school districts, respectively. School-age students who attend intermediate unit schools or classrooms for instruction are attributed and reported by their home district, even if the student may be receiving instruction in another school in the district or in another school district.

<sup>14</sup> Students who attend part-time career and technical centers are attributed to their home school for data and reporting purposes. Students who attend full-time career and technical centers are attributed to the career and technical center.

Further exploration of the 68 LEAs with no identified<sup>15</sup> students revealed that the many of the LEAs were small (37 LEAs had fewer than 500 students), they served a subset of the total K-12 population (43 LEAs), the LEA (35) had very low free or reduced lunch percentages<sup>16</sup>, or had some combination of these conditions. That said, each year regional coordinators make it a priority to reach out to LEAs where no students are being identified. It should be also noted that outreach to charter schools is relatively new and new charter schools are established each year making outreach to these LEAs especially challenging.

As a result of the ECYEH Program providing training, professional development, technical assistance, or resources to shelters and non-LEA pre-kindergarten programs, 74 different facilities reported on 3,125 children/youth. These children/youth were only identified by a non-LEA facility. Many of the children/youth identified by these facilities were birth to age two, ages three to five (not enrolled in pre-kindergarten), attending non-LEA pre-kindergarten programs, or attending nonpublic, parochial, or private schools. The number of non-LEA facilities reporting has increased each year due to ongoing coordinator outreach. The most dramatic increase was in the most recent year, as 59 facilities reported on identified children/youth in 2012-13.

### **Served and Enrolled Children and Youth**

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified by their nighttime status (fixed, regular, adequate) and are reported based on their age or grade category, which determines if they are ‘served’ by the program and/or ‘enrolled’ in school. The sections that follow provide demographic and homeless information for identified children/youth experiencing homelessness based on all reported children/youth included in the unique, comprehensive list of individuals identified as experiencing homelessness at any point during the ECYEH Program year (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014).

The term ‘served’ includes all children and youth identified as meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless by age/grade categories including birth to age two, ages three to five (not enrolled in pre-kindergarten), pre-kindergarten (LEA or non-LEA pre-kindergarten programs), kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (including ungraded), and out-of-school youth. Pre-kindergarten (LEA only) through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (including ungraded) students make up the ‘enrolled’ category, which is a subset of the served population.

In 2013-14, a unique count of 24,504 children or youth were identified and reported as experiencing homelessness and receiving direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program<sup>17</sup>,

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that even if an LEA did not identify any students, students experiencing homelessness may have attended that LEA at some point during the program year either before a precipitating event or after becoming housed. Likewise, students identified in a shelter with no identifying LEA and students in domestic violence shelters may have also attended a non-reporting LEA.

<sup>16</sup> National trends indicate that there is a relationship between higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch and greater likelihood of homelessness.

<sup>17</sup> Through a new collaboration with the Early Intervention program at the state level, 248 children were identified by that program as experiencing homelessness. However, at the time of this report’s writing, detailed nor identifying information about these individuals was not available. Because of the timing of the information’s receipt it could not be determined if any of the children were identified elsewhere, so these counts were not incorporated

of which 20,785 were also identified as enrolled in school. The numbers of identified children and youth, for the most part, have increased with each year of reporting. However, caution should be used in comparing counts of children/youth, as fluctuation among years is most likely due to increasing outreach, identification, and reporting of children and youth, not necessarily an increase in the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness. This is especially true for the non-enrolled population, as outreach prior to the state evaluation primarily focused on school-age students. In 2010-11, 20,556 were identified as served and 18,621 were identified as enrolled in school. In 2011-12, 19,914 were identified as served and 18,231 were identified as enrolled in school. In 2012-13, 22,618 were identified as served and 19,459 were identified as enrolled in school.

Pennsylvania public school enrollment, based on third-day enrollment for the 2013-14 academic year, was 1,792,258 students. Enrolled students experiencing homelessness made up about 1 percent of the total public school enrolled population. Even though the numbers of identified students has increased, students experiencing homelessness have consistently been about 1 percent of the total public school population.

### Age/Grade Categories

The graphs that follow show the age/grade breakdowns for both the served and enrolled populations. 'Unknown' indicates that age/grade category was not provided for an identified individual. The counts in the unknown category for both served and enrolled children and youth were excluded from federal reporting as every identified person must have an age/grade designation.<sup>18</sup>

The most notable increase in served population from the prior year is that of out-of-school youth and the under-five categories. Out-of-school youth increased from 256 in 2012-13 to 412 youth in 2013-14; children birth to age two increased from 1,248 children in 2012-13 to 1,577 children in 2013-14; and children ages three to five and not enrolled in pre-kindergarten increased from 1,257 children in 2012-13 to 1,419 children in 2013-14. Increases in both the out-of-school and pre-kindergarten populations are most likely due to a combination of factors: increased outreach to pre-kindergarten programs, increased reporting of non-enrolled children and youth by shelters or LEAs, and more complete reporting by the Migrant Education Program, which serves both the under-five and out-of-school populations.

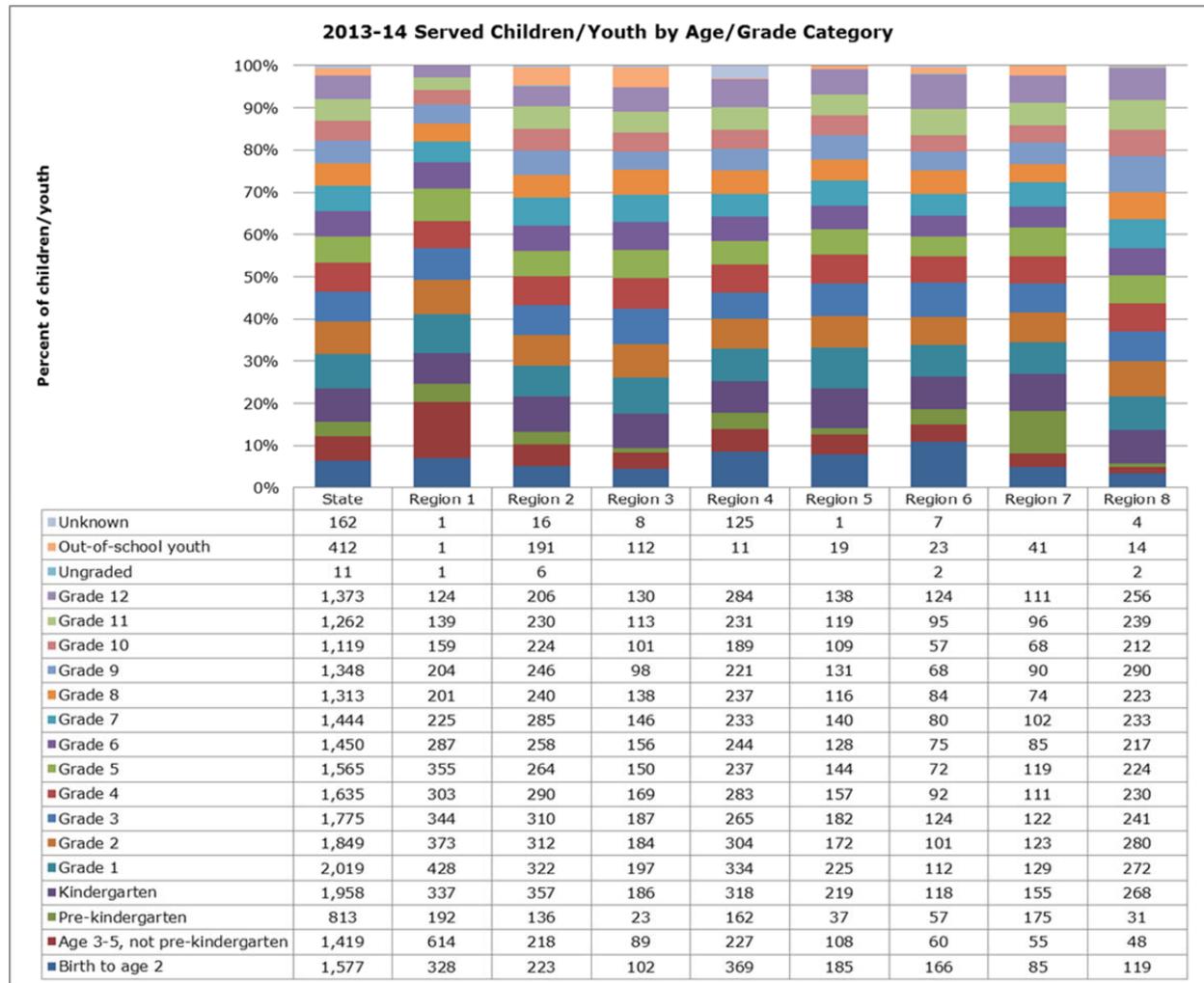
Differences among regions in the pre-kindergarten categories are most likely reflective of differing migrant populations, differing numbers of pre-kindergarten programs, differing numbers of domestic violence shelters among regions and the reporting choices of those shelters, and the extent to which each of these reporting entities reported on children in the pre-kindergarten categories. The large number of out-of-school youth in Regions 2 and 3 are directly related to the migrant out-of-school population in this area.

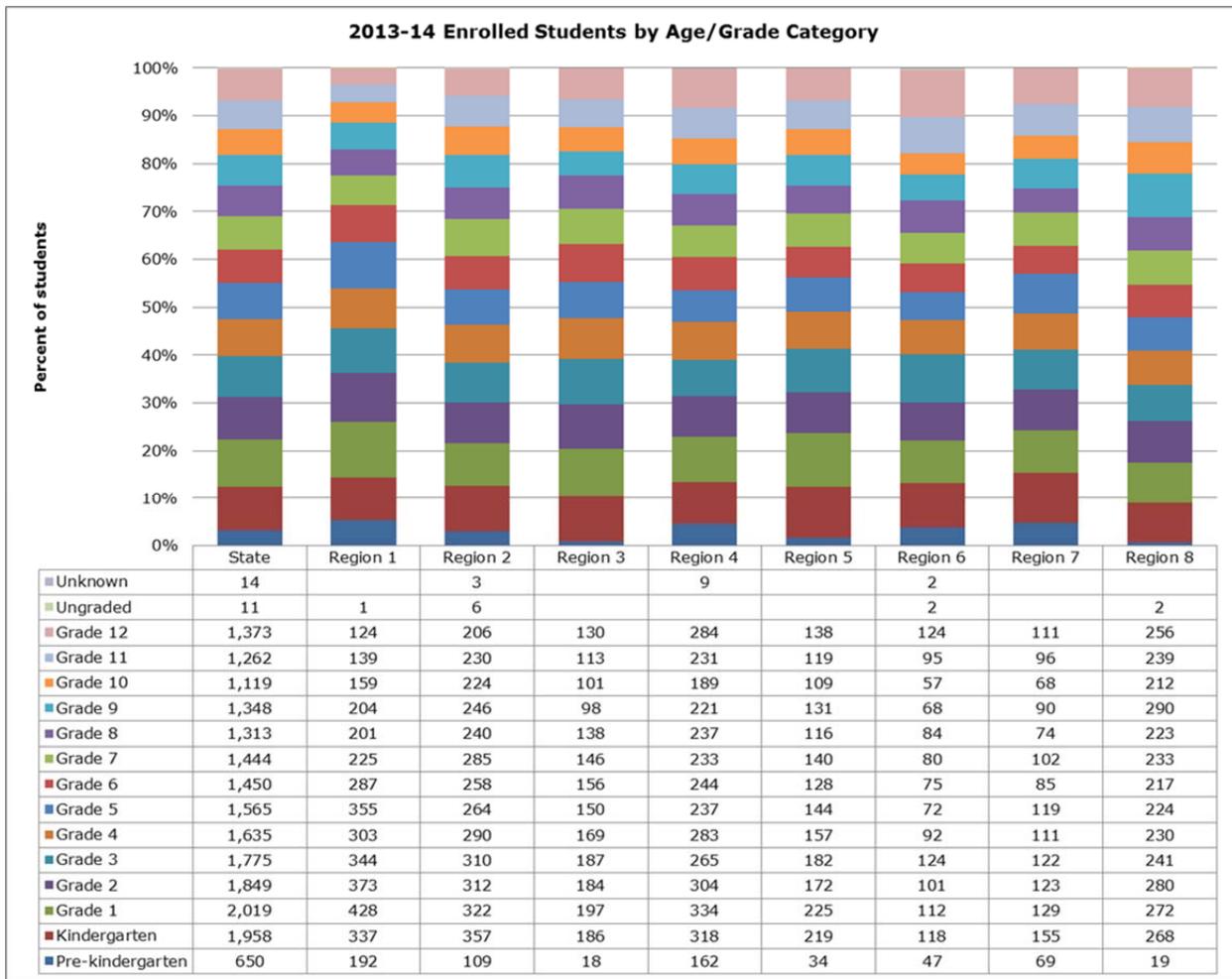
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into the unique count of children and youth. The collaboration will continue with this program so that individual child information will be available for 2014-15.

<sup>18</sup> 'Unknown' counts are included in the evaluation report as they represent individuals identified as experiencing homelessness and contribute to identifying areas for program improvement.

Differences in the pre-kindergarten counts between the served (813 children) and enrolled (650 children) graphs are reflective of non-LEA pre-kindergarten programs that are counted in the served population. As a reminder, only LEA-operated pre-kindergarten programs are counted in the enrolled in school population. There was an increase in the LEA-operated pre-kindergarten programs (enrolled) from 545 students in 2012-13. This increase is a direct result of LEAs including pre-kindergarten students in their reporting, which resulted from ECYEH Program outreach, training, and professional development.





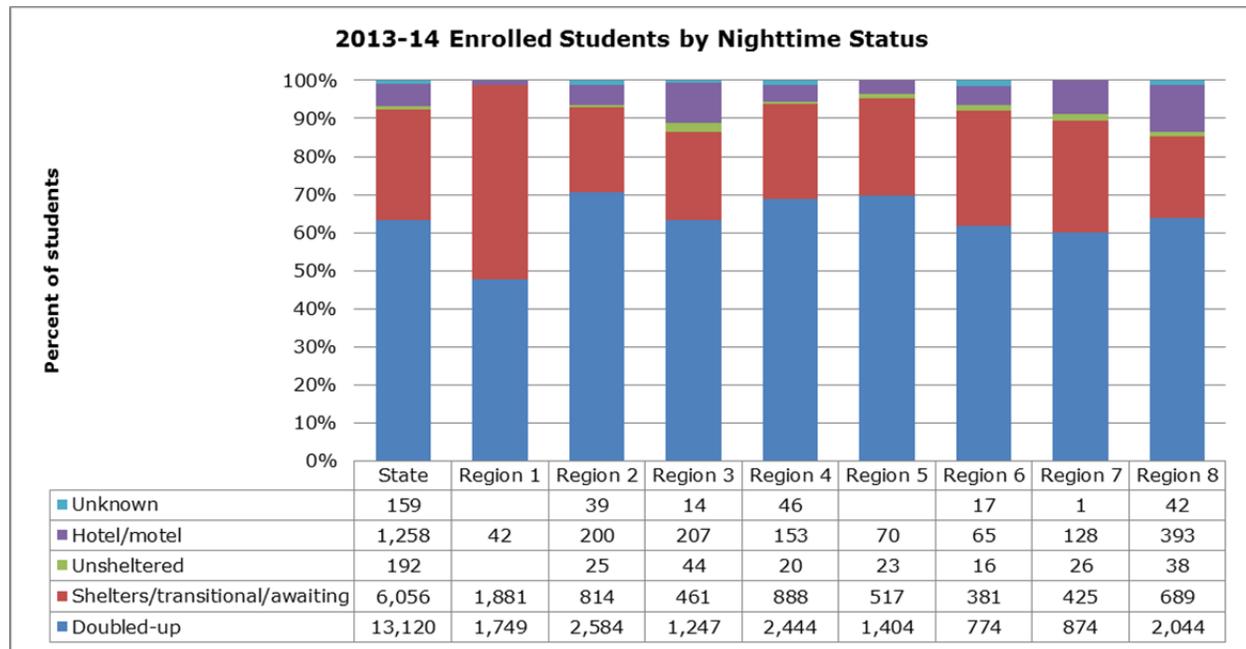
## Nighttime Status

Nighttime status is what determines if a child or youth is identified as eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Nighttime status is a required federal reporting category for the enrolled population. Nighttime status reporting categories include doubled-up; hotels/motels; shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care; or unsheltered. The graph that follows shows the nighttime status for the 20,785 enrolled students.

Overall, 63 percent of enrolled students had a nighttime status of doubled-up and 29 percent of enrolled students had a nighttime status of shelter, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care. This differs from the national percentages of 75 percent for doubled-up and 15 percent for sheltered<sup>19</sup>, but this may be reflective of ECYEH Program’s outreach to shelters. Students identified through shelter visits or shelter reporting may otherwise go unreported as a student’s homeless status may have remained unknown to the LEA.

<sup>19</sup> <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-1011-1213.pdf>

Region 1, though still lower than the other regions with regard to doubled-up numbers, improved its reporting in this category and has shown increases in child/youth counts each year from 402 students in 2010-11 to 1,624 in 2011-12 to 1,696 in 2012-13 to 1,749 in 2013-14. Prior to 2010-11 the focus of programming in this region had been with the shelter, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care population. Consequently, this region had not been systematically collecting information on children/youth having doubled-up status. Region 1 continues to implement specific strategies to better identify the doubled-up population and their efforts are showing in the steady increase in the reporting of the doubled-up population.



## Unaccompanied Youth

Unaccompanied youth is a federally-defined term and is reported for the served population. Children or youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness may also be identified as an “unaccompanied homeless youth,” meaning the child is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. An unaccompanied youth can be any age, birth to 21 years old.<sup>20</sup>

Overall, 2,458 (10 percent) of the 24,504 served children and youth were identified as being unaccompanied youth. This is down slightly from 13 percent in 2012-13, 19 percent in 2011-12 and 24 percent in 2010-11. The national percentage of unaccompanied youth is approximately 7%<sup>21</sup>. Pennsylvania’s percentage may be slightly higher due to the out-of-school migrant population. In Pennsylvania, the Migrant Education Program and the ECYEH Program

<sup>20</sup> This definition of unaccompanied youth differs from the Housing and Urban Development definition, which extends to under 25 years of age <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-1011-1213.pdf>

collaborate to identify children/youth who are eligible for migrant services and meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness.

Identifying and documenting unaccompanied youth has been an area of focus and training each year in order for regions and LEAs to more accurately identify and report on this population. Consequently, each year the information being reported is more complete and accurate.

### Demographics

Additional child/youth or school demographic information provides context to the evaluation findings to the extent that it further describes the population that is being identified and served as a result of ECYEH Program outreach and education. Demographic information is not available for every individual identified. What exists is based upon the data system from which the information was collected. Each section that follows will indicate the population of child/youth included in the demographic data element.

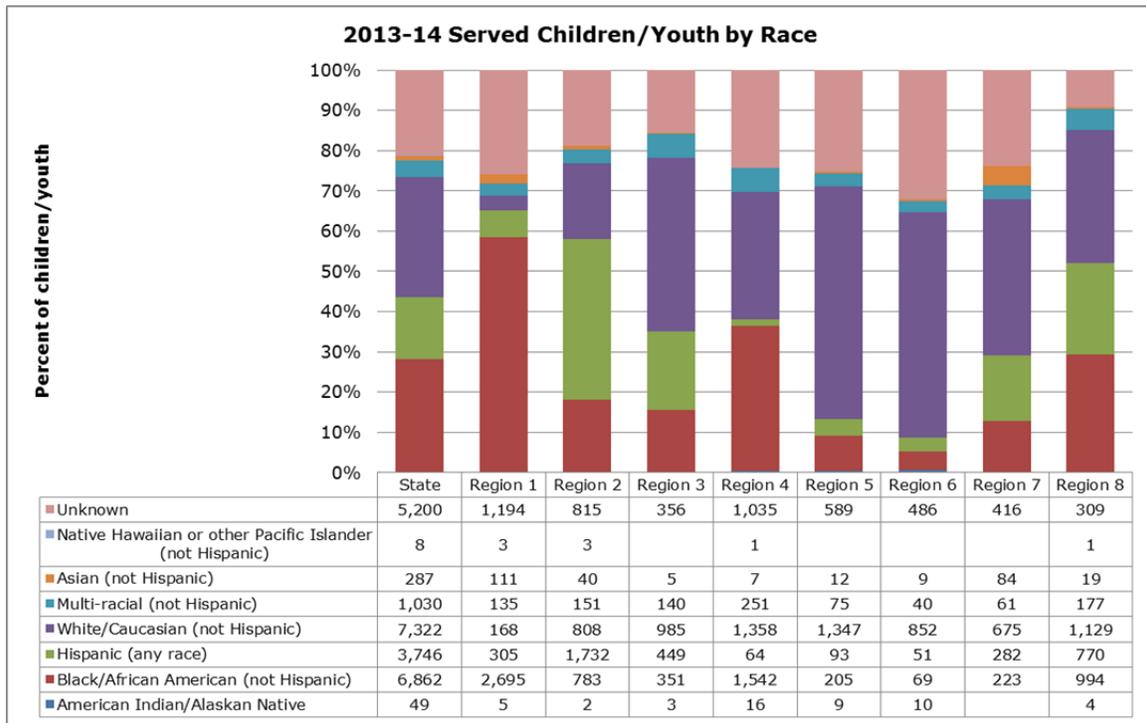
Demographic information presented here includes race, economic status, special education status, English language learner status, migrant status, and history of homelessness of identified children/youth. LEA or school demographics, such as Title I status and percentage of free and reduced lunch students is also included and provides further information regarding the economic status of the communities of the schools where identified students attend. Urban-centric locale of LEAs is included to show LEA location in context to population and distance variables.

Race information was collected through the PIMS extract for all enrolled students and through the MIS2000 extract for migrant children/youth also identified as experiencing homelessness. Therefore, race results are provided for the served population. Race information was not collected for non-enrolled students with the exception of the migrant population.

Evaluators used federal race reporting categories in the graph that follows. Race disaggregation among the children/youth experiencing homelessness has remained almost the same each year. White/Caucasian (not Hispanic) children and youth comprise 30 percent of the identified children/youth and Black/African American (not Hispanic) comprise 28 percent. The Hispanic (any race) category is the next largest with 15 percent of children/youth experiencing homelessness. Race varies by region reflecting the urban, rural, and migrant populations of the regions. For example, Regions 1 (Philadelphia) and 4 (Pittsburgh) have large urban areas while Regions 5 and 6 are more rural, and Region 2 has large Hispanic communities. Race information could not be determined for 21 percent of the served population. Race categorization for those individuals not having a race designation may reflect that of the region, though it cannot be assumed.

As stated in the enrolled section, students experiencing homelessness comprise approximately 1 percent of the state public school enrolled population. Seventy percent of the state public school population is White/Caucasian (not Hispanic), 15 percent is Black/African American (not Hispanic), and 9 percent is Hispanic (any race).

When looking at the race of students experiencing homelessness in comparison to state race categories, White/Caucasian (not Hispanic) students experiencing homelessness were approximately 1 percent of the state White/Caucasian (not Hispanic) public school population, Black/African American (not Hispanic) students experiencing homelessness were approximately 3 percent of the state Black/African American (not Hispanic) population, and Hispanic (any race) students experiencing homelessness were approximately 1 percent of the state Hispanic (any race) student population. These percentages remain the same as 2012-13.

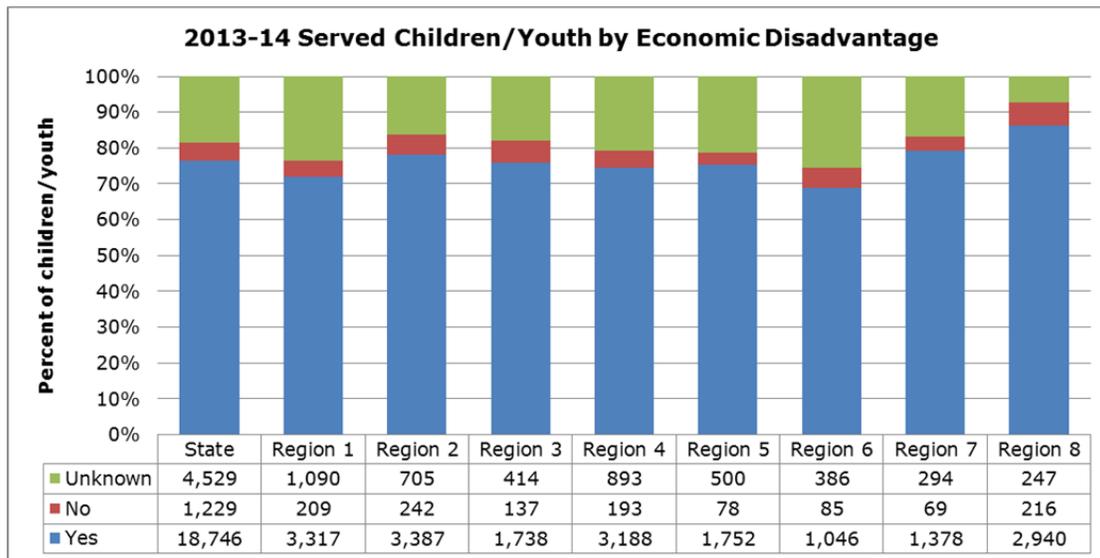


Economic disadvantage information was collected from PIMS for all enrolled students. Additionally, evaluators were also able to include pre-kindergarten children who attended Head Start or Early Head Start programs as being economically disadvantaged because all children who attend such programs are eligible based on economic need. Because many of the pre-kindergarten programs are not operated by LEAs, economic disadvantage status is provided for the served population.

Economic disadvantaged status is a demographic element collected for all students enrolled in school, not just the homeless population. It is also an eligibility criterion for all children who attend Early Head Start or Head Start programs. Of the 24,504 served children and youth, 77 percent were designated as being economically disadvantaged.

The 18 percent of children/youth whose economic status is unknown includes children/youth that belong to the birth to age two, three to five and not enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, or out-of-school youth populations. These individuals, for the most part, would have been identified in shelters or were migrant children/youth not enrolled in school. While some portion,

or even a majority, of such children/youth may be economically disadvantaged, because the information is not collected for these populations, it cannot be assumed.



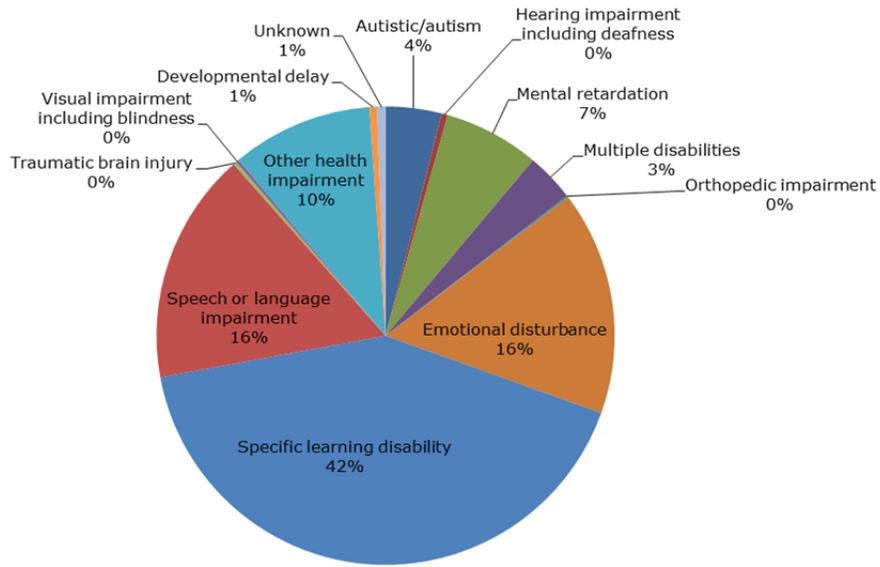
Specific special education status information was collected from the PIMS extract for students enrolled in school. Additionally, children identified in early intervention programs were documented as receiving special education services even though no disability was indicated. Therefore special education status information is based on the served population. Of the 24,504 served children and youth 5,206 (21 percent) were identified as having a disability, 14,760 (60 percent) were identified as not having a disability, and for 4,538 (19 percent) disability status was unknown.

Nationally, the portion of served children and youth with disabilities was 14 percent in 2012-13<sup>22</sup>.

Of the 5,206 students designated as having a disability, the largest percentage of students (42 percent) was categorized as having a “specific learning disability.” The graph that follows shows the breakdown of the disability categories for those students with a disability designation. Because of small numbers in several of the categories, for confidentiality, regional findings are not included. Evaluators used federal reporting categories in the graph below.

<sup>22</sup> <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-1011-1213.pdf>

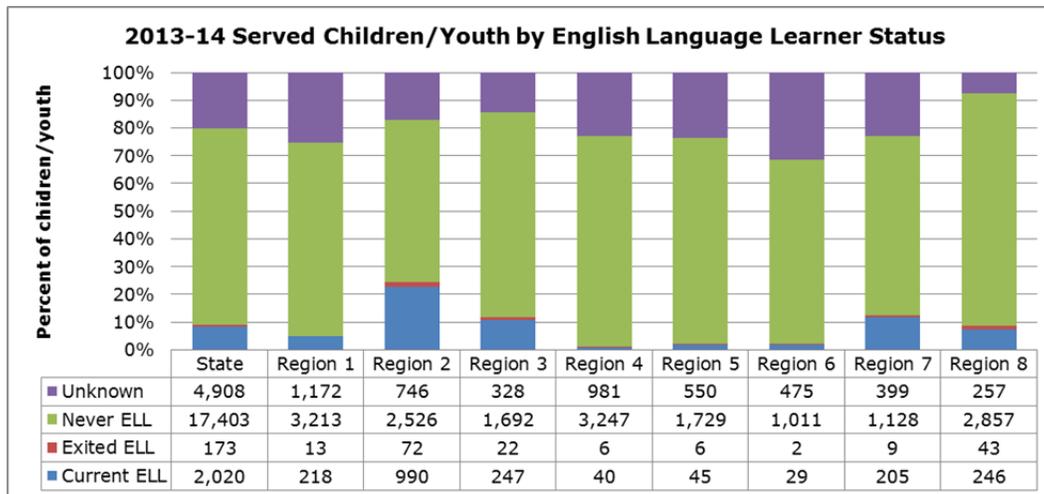
**2013-14 Disability Designation of Enrolled Students with a Special Education Disability**



Autistic/autism	Hearing impairment including deafness	Mental retardation	Multiple disabilities	Orthopedic impairment	Emotional disturbance	Specific learning disability	Speech or language impairment	Traumatic brain injury	Visual impairment including blindness	Other health impairment	Developmental delay	Unknown
205	23	351	179	6	823	2,166	852	12	12	518	28	31

English language learner information was collected through the PIMS extract for all enrolled students and through the MIS2000 extract for migrant children/youth also identified as experiencing homelessness. Therefore, English language learner findings are provided for the served population. English language learner information was not collected for non-enrolled age/grade categories with the exception of the migrant population.

Consistent with prior years English language learners comprised close to 10 percent of the children/youth experiencing homelessness. Children/youth in Region 2 had the greatest percentage of English language learners followed by Region 7 and then Region 8. Each of these regions is in the eastern portion of the state and reflect migrant patterns, which are reported next. Nationally, children and youth experiencing homeless who are English language learners services make up about 12 percent of the homeless population.



Migrant status can be determined for all children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness. MIS2000, the state migrant education database, captures homeless eligibility information.

Of the 24,504 served students, 6 percent (1,450 children and youth) were also identified as eligible for services through the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program. This is up slightly from 5 percent in 2012-13.

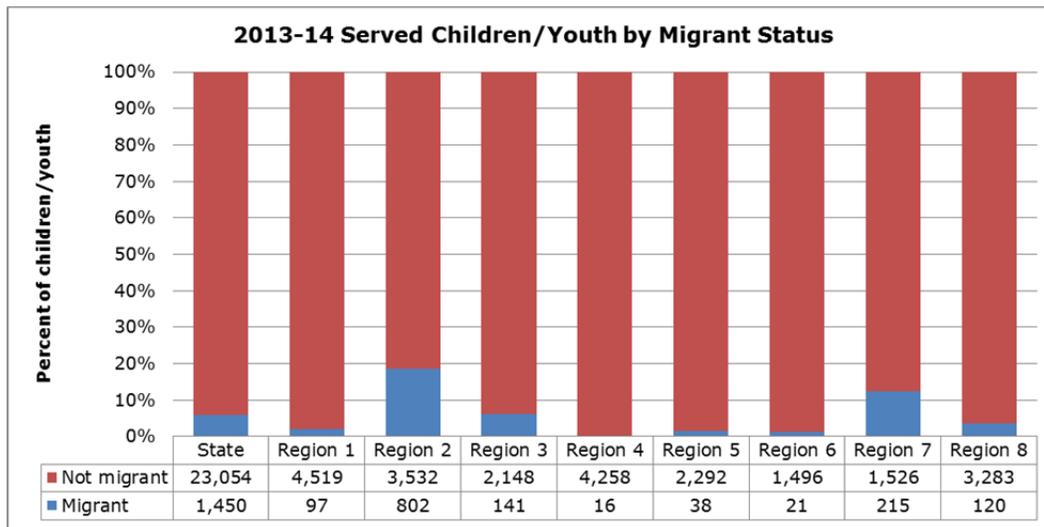
Looking at homelessness within the migrant population, there were 5,308 migrant children and youth between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014 (the ECYEH Program year); 27 percent of the migrant population was identified as homeless during this time period. This is an increase from 18 percent in 2011-12 and 22 percent in 2012-13. This increase could be due to better identification and reporting and ongoing training and collaboration between the Migrant Education Program and the ECYEH Program.

The numbers of migrant children/youth vary considerably across Pennsylvania depending on where migrant work is located. While migrant children and youth only make up 6 percent of the total homeless served population it is important to see the differences among the homeless regions. Migrant status may also influence other demographics such as English language learner status, mobility, or economic status, especially in the regions where there is a larger migrant population.

As can be seen in the graph that follows, ECYEH Program Region 2 has the largest numbers of migrant children/youth. It is important to note that the migrant population is greater in the eastern half of Pennsylvania (Regions 2, 7, 3, 8, and 1). As such, the numbers of migrant homeless youth are greater in these regions than the rest of the state.

Nationally, children and youth experiencing homeless and also eligible for migrant services make up about 1 percent of the homeless population. Pennsylvania's higher percentage of homeless migrant/youth may be directly related to the increased collaboration of the two programs and also that homeless status is documented and reported for the most part by the

Migrant Education Program. Additionally, due to this collaboration and reporting, migrant out-of-school youth homeless status is being captured and reported.



### History of Homelessness

Approximately 22 percent of children and youth could be identified as experiencing homelessness in the prior year. In 2012-13 approximately 20 percent were identified as such. For the children/youth reported only by domestic violence shelters, approximately 1 percent were reported as having been to the shelter in the prior program year. It is important to note that with the exception of the migrant population, there is no consistent coding of children and youth not enrolled in school across program years. As such, history of homelessness could not be determined for approximately 11 percent of the 24,504 children/youth.

### **LEA Poverty Indicator**

The percentage of students who receive free and reduced lunch serves as an indicator of the economic status of the community in which the identified student attended school and/or resided. Student eligibility for free and reduced lunch is based upon several criteria<sup>23</sup> and the National School Lunch Program reports the percentage of students eligible for a free or reduced lunch for each LEA and school within the LEA that it funds.<sup>24</sup> Typically, 40 percent or more of students receiving free or reduced lunch in an LEA is used as an indicator to determine higher poverty LEAs.

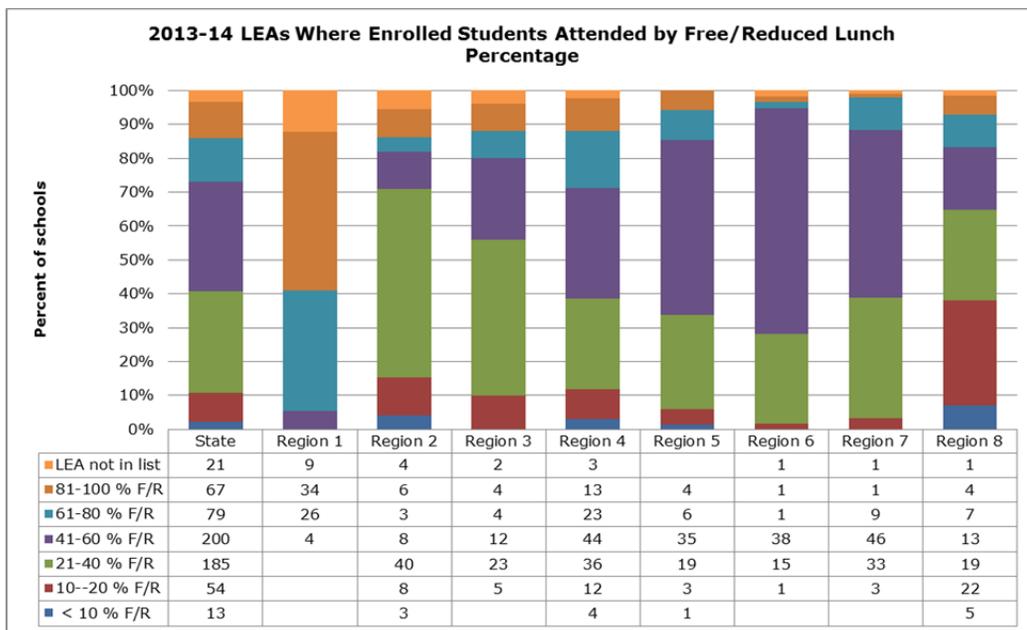
There were 619 LEAs (of 687) in which students experiencing homelessness were identified. The graph that follows shows the percentage of students within an LEA that were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch regardless of their homelessness status. Overall, 56 percent of LEAs (346) where identified students attended had 40 percent or more of the student population

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/EliMan\\_highlighted.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/EliMan_highlighted.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/national\\_school\\_lunch/7487](http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/national_school_lunch/7487)

classified as eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch by the National School Lunch Program. ‘LEA not in list’ means the LEA was not on the National School Lunch Program list so an eligibility percentage was not available. Regions 1, 6, 5, 4, and 7 had the greatest percentages of LEAs with students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

What is important to glean from these findings is that poverty is a factor for the student body in more than half of the LEAs where students identified as experiencing homelessness attended and depending on the region, poverty may be a factor in two-thirds or more of LEAs.



## School Title I Status

The percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch is used to determine the Title I funding and the type of Title I services<sup>25</sup> offered in the school. Each school within an LEA can have a different Title I status. Title I type<sup>26</sup> is based on the poverty level of the whole student body attending a school. As stated in the previous section, poverty rate is determined by the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Typically, in buildings with a poverty rate of 40 percent or greater, LEAs may use Title I funds to upgrade the entire curriculum of the school and are considered schoolwide programs. All students in a schoolwide building benefit from Title I funds and services.

In buildings with poverty rates of less than 40 percent, programs are designed to help specific children and are targeted assisted programs. Specific grade bands or students with academic need within those grade bands may be targeted for services. Students experiencing homelessness

<sup>25</sup> Title I type – schoolwide or targeted assistance - are determined at the school level.

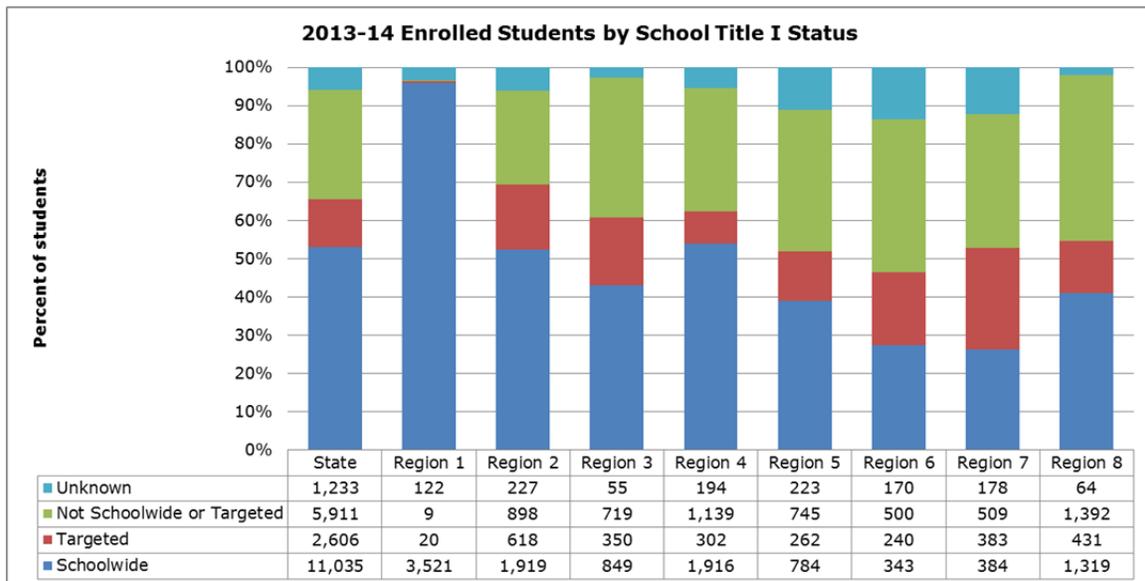
<sup>26</sup> [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/title\\_i/7382](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/title_i/7382)

are eligible for Title I services in targeted assistance schools even if they were not included in the targeted population prior to becoming eligible for McKinney-Vento Act supports.

Title I status is only applicable to enrolled students. Title I school status information comes from PDE’s Division of Federal Programs. Typically, Title I schools are elementary or middle schools though there are some cases, especially in high poverty areas, where high schools may also receive Title I funds.

Evaluators linked the type of Title I school funding to each enrolled student. Of the 20,785 enrolled students, 53 percent attended schoolwide Title I schools, 13 percent attended targeted schools, 28 percent attended schools that were not identified as either schoolwide or targeted, and the Title I status could not be determined 6 percent of students’ schools. These percentages have remained relatively similar to prior years. The graph that follows shows enrolled students by their school’s Title I status. Not targeted or schoolwide means that a student’s school was not identified as either schoolwide or targeted. Students’ receipt of Title I services is discussed later in the service delivery section of this report.

These findings echo free and reduced lunch eligibility findings. More than half of students (11,035 students) identified as experiencing homelessness attended schools with a schoolwide status, meaning that poverty was a factor of the school regardless of the student’s homeless status.



To summarize, the percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch and a schools’ Title I status conveys something about the economic status of the community in which the student resided or attended school. The above findings indicate that about half of the identified students (11,035 of 20,785 students) attended schools where poverty is prevalent based on the Title I status of the school. Likewise, more than half of the LEAs (346 of 619 LEAs) students attended had 40 percent or more of all students experiencing poverty, based on the LEA’s percentage of

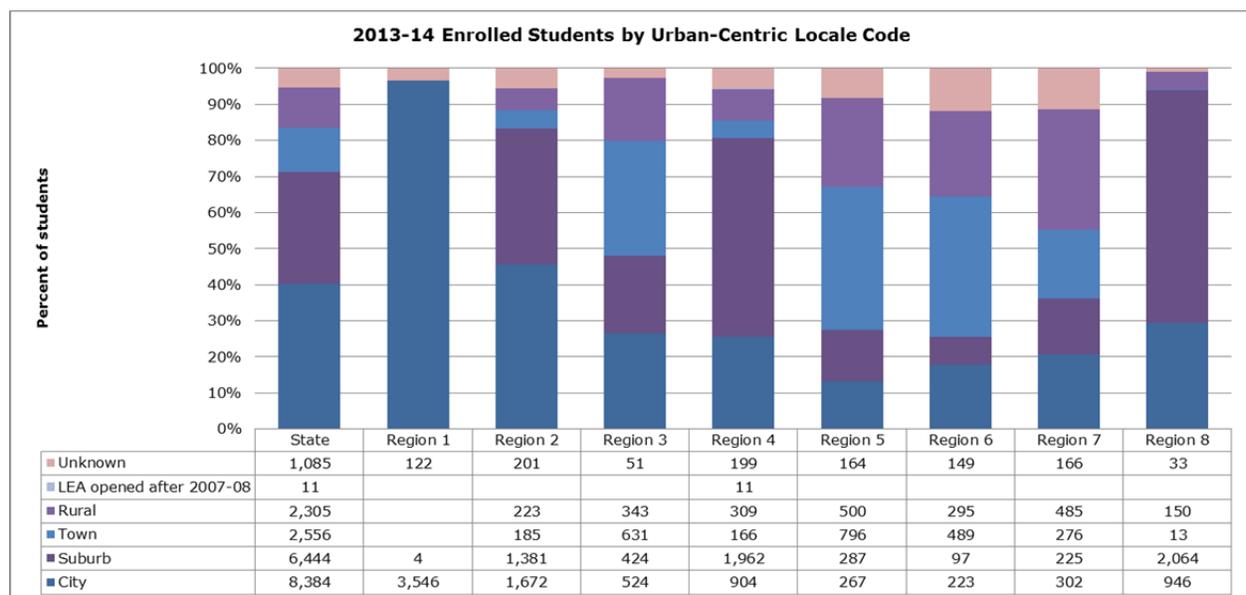
students eligible for free or reduced lunch. In other words, poverty is a prevalent factor of the community regardless of the homeless status of the identified students.

### Urban-Centric Locale Code

In 2009-10 public LEAs<sup>27</sup> were coded using an urban-centric locale code system from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). The urban-centric locale code system uses 12 categories to designate the region type and population size and replaced the previously-used eight metro-centric locale codes. The 12 category descriptions can be found on the NCES website<sup>28</sup>. These 12 categories were further collapsed by the evaluator to gain a better picture of the key categories - city, suburban, town, rural, LEA opened after 2007-08, and unknown.

The graph that follows shows the student population by their public school’s locale code. ‘LEA opened after 2007-08’ is an actual category in the data file. In cases where the LEA locale could not be determined, this classification remained. The unknown category includes 1,085 students who attended LEAs that did not appear in the file, most often because they were intermediate unit-operated pre-kindergarten programs (63 students), nonpublic LEAs (2 students), or the LEA was unknown (1,020 students).

Overall, 71 percent of the enrolled students (20,785) attended LEAs categorized as either city (8,384 students) or suburban (6,444 students). However, distinct variations can be seen across the regions, with Region 1 being almost exclusively city, Regions 2, 4, and 8 having large suburban populations, and Regions 3, 5, 6, and 7 having more town or rural designations. The variations across the regions contribute to differences in the numbers and types of agencies and resources that exist to support children, youth, or families experiencing homelessness.



<sup>27</sup> [http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data\\_and\\_statistics/7202/school\\_locale/509783](http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/data_and_statistics/7202/school_locale/509783)

<sup>28</sup> [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural\\_locales.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp)

## **PROGRAM IMPACT**

As a result of coordinators' work, LEAs should increase their capacity to ensure that students enroll in a timely fashion, remain in the school of origin if it is in the best interest of the student, and receive the services to which they are entitled based upon the student(s) need(s).

This section of the report examines the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the ECYEH Program occurred for the program year. Included here are reducing or eliminating enrollment or education barriers, remaining in the school of origin, and receiving services aligned with the authorized activities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act offered through the ECYEH Program, the LEA in which they attended, the Migrant Education Program, and/or the shelter in which they resided.

### **Barriers**

Barriers are situations that interfere with children/youth's enrollment, attendance, and/or educational success. Barrier information is only collected through ECYEH Program's Student Information and Service Delivery instrument. Of the 20,785 enrolled children and youth, 18,247 (88 percent) had barrier information.

The table that follows shows the prevalence of barriers as reported by LEAs or ECYEH Program staff. Overall, 12 percent of enrolled students (2,104) students were reported as having barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. The most common barrier was transportation followed closely by determining if a student was eligible for homeless service, and then school selection. This is a slight change from prior years where determining if a student was eligible for homeless service was the most common barrier followed by obtaining medical records and transportation responsibilities.

Transportation and determining if a student was eligible for homeless services have been in the top three reported barriers since the inception of the evaluation. Transportation issues continue to grow (up from 168 students in 2012-13) especially in light of LEA financial constraints or logistical challenges in arranging transportation. Transportation as a barrier has increased in every region except for Region 1 and has been especially difficult in Region 4. Steps to address the transportation issue in Region 4 began in the 2013-14 program year and continue.

Ongoing clarification of barrier documentation by coordinators and data collection training for reporting entities has most likely contributed to a better understanding of this reporting element. The percentages of students experiencing barriers had decreased substantially from 35 percent since the 2010-11 analysis when it was revealed that there was a misunderstanding of the 'determining eligibility for homelessness services' barrier.

However, the percentage of students experiencing barriers is up slightly from 9 percent in 2012-13 most likely to due to the increase in transportation issues.

Most notable is the decline in barriers related to obtaining records – immunization (down from 121 students in 2012-13), other medical (down from 351 students), or school records (down from

111 students). Each of these are rights of students identified as experiencing homelessness and should not delay enrollment. It appears in the substantial decrease in these barriers reflects ongoing training and technical assistance of the ECYEH Program with LEAs.

Barriers to School Enrollment									
	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Determining eligibility for homeless services	1,055	4	211	459	98	56	153	7	67
Transportation	1,205	2	62	87	805	60	53	95	41
Obtaining other medical records	65		5	4	11	10	2	29	4
Immunization records	87		5	15	17	8	1	36	5
School records	88		3	18	17	8	2	34	6
School selection	153		8	37	44	24	1	36	3
Other	86		7	13	23	16	3	12	12
<b>Any barriers</b>	2,104	5	230	486	878	106	167	125	107
<b>Total youth for whom data was available</b>	18,247	3,476	2,591	1,801	3,392	1,766	1,075	1,152	2,994
<b>Percentage of youth with any barrier</b>	12%	0%	9%	27%	26%	6%	16%	11%	4%

Barriers were examined separately for the pre-kindergarten population (attending both LEA and non-LEA pre-kindergarten programs) regardless of if they were enrolled or served. There were 813 children identified as experiencing homelessness who attended a pre-kindergarten program<sup>29</sup>. Of those 813 children, 21 children (3 percent) were identified as having one or more barriers. Determining eligibility for services and transportation were the primary barriers indicated. This finding is similar to 2012-13 findings where 28 children (4 percent) experienced transportation or eligibility for services barriers.

## Student Mobility

One of the rights of eligible students is to remain in their school of origin if it is in the best interest of the student. To examine student mobility evaluators identified every school in which a student attended during the program year, July 1 through June 30, even if the student was not identified as being homeless by that particular LEA.

Of the 20,785 students identified as being enrolled in school, LEA-school mobility could be determined for 19,585 or 96 percent of students. The unable to determine students (900) is comprised of two groups of students, those students who were reported through the ECYEH Program, but no school, LEA, or PAsureID information was provided (4 students) and those students who were identified only by domestic violence shelters (896 students). Students reported in these ways could be identified at the county or regional levels. Reporting and follow-up has improved each year for the enrolled population. Consequently very few students identified through the ECYEH Program cannot be attributed to an LEA and school.

The following table shows LEA-school moves and includes the number LEA-school combinations a student had and the number and percentage of students associated with each move. Almost three quarters of enrolled students remained in their LEA-school combination during the program year and 20 percent had two LEA-school combinations. This is an

<sup>29</sup> A considerable portion (79 percent) of the under-five age group (3,799 children) are children birth to age 2 (1,577 children) and children ages 3 to 5 not enrolled in pre-kindergarten (1,419 children).

improvement over 2012-13 where 64 percent of students remained in their LEA-school combination for the program year and 25 percent had two LEA-school combinations during the program year. The improvement in mobility from the prior year may be a result of more complete school information and, therefore, an improved ability to determine mobility.

Further examination of students with more than one LEA-school combination revealed that moves were often to a charter or cyber charter school, an approved private school, or a private residential rehabilitation institution, or a comprehensive technical school. Consequently, these moves may have been a move based upon the best interest of the student.

Students Enrolled in Multiple LEA-Schools																		
# LEA-Schools	State		Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Region 4		Region 5		Region 6		Region 7		Region 8	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	14,881	72%	2,742	75%	2,611	71%	1,365	69%	2,503	70%	1,320	66%	845	67%	980	67%	2,513	78%
2	4,168	20%	741	20%	734	20%	449	23%	744	21%	421	21%	229	18%	272	19%	578	18%
3	745	4%	61	2%	135	4%	101	5%	146	4%	94	5%	59	5%	75	5%	74	2%
4	85	0%	6	0%	21	1%	8	0%	20	1%	15	1%	4	0%	4	0%	7	0%
5	8	0%			1	0%	1	0%	1	0%			4	0%	1	0%		
Unable to determine	900	4%	122	3%	160	4%	49	2%	137	4%	164	8%	112	9%	122	8%	34	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,785</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,672</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,662</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,973</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,551</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Unable to determine

## Service Delivery

One of the rights of students experiencing homelessness is the right to support services that promote academic success. As such, the McKinney-Vento Act outlines authorized activities for which funds can be used. This section of the report addresses services provided to eligible children or youth. Services reported in this section may have been provided by the ECYEH Program directly or through use of McKinney-Vento funds, by an LEA, by a pre-kindergarten program, by the Migrant Education Program, or by domestic violence shelters. Documentation of these services was reported through the service delivery section of the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument, PIMS Program Fact Template, MIS2000, or the domestic violence shelter spreadsheet.

All information was pulled together for each child/youth and categorized under the McKinney-Vento Act authorized activities categories. Those categories include: tutoring or other instructional support; expedited evaluations; referrals for medical, dental, and other health services; transportation; early childhood programs; assistance with participation in school programs; before-school, after-school, mentoring, and summer programs; obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment; coordination between schools and agencies; counseling; addressing needs related to domestic violence; clothing to meet school requirements; school supplies; referrals to other programs and services; emergency assistance related to school attendance; and other services not previously listed. Additionally, any children attending an LEA-operated pre-kindergarten program were considered to have received instructional support and any children attending a non-LEA pre-kindergarten program were considered to have received early childhood support. Likewise, any student attending a Title I schoolwide school was treated as having received instructional support.

Services in each category were documented by the funding source for the service: McKinney-Vento Act, Title I, or other funds. Other funds included services or programming offered by the LEA, pre-kindergarten program, Migrant Education Program, domestic violence shelter, collaborating agency/organization, or donations.

The table that follows shows the services received and the funding source with which the service was affiliated. All services documented here were reported at the child/youth level. Although service delivery documentation has improved, the table should be read with caution as there is no way to assure that individuals completing the spreadsheets report all services provided or selected the correct funding option. However, the table can show what types of services identified children/youth received.

Overall, 81 percent of the 24,504 children and youth are documented as receiving service at the individual child/youth level. Regions 1 and 5 show the largest percentages of children and youth receiving services, 94 percent and 96 percent, respectively. Region 4 shows 88 percent, Region 6 shows 87 percent, Region 2 shows 72 percent, Region 7 shows 73 percent, Region 3 shows 67 percent, and Region 8 shows 69 percent of all students receiving services.

The overall percentage of children/youth receiving services is a slight increase from 80 percent in 2012-13. However, some regions substantially increased the percentages: Region 3 is up from 56 percent, Region 4 is up from 76 percent, and Region 6 is up from 77 percent. Caution should be noted in these regional increases as this may be a result of better documentation of services rather than more students receiving services. So not only are the numbers of children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness increasing, but greater percentages of these individuals received services.

Tutoring or other instructional support was by far the most prevalent service children/youth received when all three funding categories were combined; 77 percent of all children/youth were documented as receiving tutoring or instructional support. This is an increase from the 70 percent in 2012-13.

Coordination between schools and agencies (28 percent of all children/youth), transportation (25 percent of all children/youth), school supplies (25 percent of all children/youth), and clothing to meet a school requirement (25 percent of all children/youth) were the next cluster of services children/youth received when all three funding categories were combined.

When looking at individual funding sources, coordination between schools and agencies was the most frequent service provided with McKinney-Vento Act funds. Given the role of the coordinators, it is not surprising that coordination between schools and agencies is the most frequent service. Documentation of professional development and technical assistance also supports these findings.

Tutoring and instructional support are the most frequent services provided with both Title I funds and other district funds. Again, this is not surprising given that other sources of data that captured tutoring and instructional support activities were included in the analysis.

	Service Delivery and Funding Source																										
	State			Region 1			Region 2			Region 3			Region 4			Region 5			Region 6			Region 7			Region 8		
	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O	TI	MV	O
Tutoring or other instructional support	12,557	742	5,064	3,377	11	783	2,125	480	1,843	970	4	340	2,213	28	496	1,007	34	310	480	30	192	616	-	527	1,769	155	573
Expedited evaluations	372	45	135	-	-	10	1	1	6	1	-	-	32	4	19	175	2	11	11	-	24	113	-	9	39	38	56
Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services	775	779	2,327	11	11	58	475	482	275	4	4	95	5	7	815	16	93	561	5	24	55	112	-	136	147	158	332
Transportation	439	798	4,798	10	8	1,399	43	86	952	62	22	233	60	31	703	28	120	164	21	27	519	-	7	228	215	497	600
Early childhood programs	186	273	1,764	-	-	660	1	-	246	-	-	79	8	200	399	23	17	149	1	7	85	113	-	65	40	49	81
Assistance with participation in school programs	494	173	666	8	9	41	37	3	129	1	-	27	132	9	159	28	-	28	39	7	47	113	-	46	136	145	189
Before-, after-school, mentoring, summer programs	351	428	1,743	40	21	51	40	1	622	2	-	121	10	236	364	6	2	65	2	27	65	112	1	192	139	140	263
Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment	812	746	871	11	11	15	475	485	495	4	5	13	57	4	113	1	2	10	4	1	41	112	1	7	148	237	177
Coordination between schools and agencies	1,111	3,647	2,023	11	12	76	516	618	529	4	13	29	122	111	201	44	1,716	515	145	396	346	113	10	32	156	771	295
Counseling	933	681	2,534	11	11	54	475	478	936	4	4	15	128	5	310	33	44	693	21	-	148	114	-	163	147	139	215
Addressing needs related to domestic violence	325	151	2,106	8	8	276	-	1	375	-	-	43	53	2	380	13	4	436	-	2	213	114	-	163	137	134	220
Clothing to meet a school requirement	2,620	1,255	2,335	1,379	12	161	497	536	918	7	11	28	31	243	105	86	112	580	22	117	207	121	63	41	477	161	295
School supplies	1,322	2,214	2,500	289	12	112	478	536	671	9	12	98	142	345	311	118	692	491	22	349	93	114	68	68	150	200	656
Referral to other programs and services	918	1,234	3,170	11	11	106	476	518	1,175	4	4	137	142	12	381	15	180	703	2	17	59	112	5	169	156	487	440
Emergency assistance related to school attendance	163	302	369	-	-	20	1	2	13	2	-	15	1	1	47	5	3	21	1	3	-	112	5	5	41	288	248
Other Services	72	431	3,211	-	272	205	3	24	722	-	1	184	17	4	290	11	6	473	1	67	658	-	2	210	40	55	469
Unique count of children/youth receiving Title I services		12,899			3,398			2,139			1,004			2,287			1,097			575			620			1,779	
Unique count of children/youth receiving MV services		5,066			298			723			41			762			1,769			528			83			862	
Unique count of children/youth receiving Other services		13,411			2,867			2,655			716			2,139			1,378			1,229			888			1,540	
Unique count of children/youth receiving any services		19,662			4,295			3,100			1,455			3,708			2,244			1,313			1,235			2,312	
Total children/youth		24,504			4,616			4,334			2,289			4,274			2,330			1,517			1,741			3,403	
Percentage of children/youth receiving any services		80%			93%			72%			64%			87%			96%			87%			71%			68%	

Some services provided to children/youth by the ECYEH Program are not captured at the individual student level. The Student Activity instrument was designed to track services provided to youth at the group level and, therefore, not captured in the service delivery portion of the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument. Services documented in this instrument include services where the ECYEH Program provided funds, supplies, and clothing to an entity (school, shelter, or organization) for children or youth experiencing homelessness, but the individual recipient of the service was not known to the ECYEH Program coordinator. The distribution of bus passes, clothing, school supplies (back packs, college preparation materials, curriculum materials, hygiene items), fees for school activities, or recreational, social, or holiday activities and events were the types of services that were typically provided in bulk, where the recipient was unknown. Evaluators found that most of the services that children/youth received were documented at the individual child/youth level in the service delivery portion of the Student Information and Service Delivery instrument, which is positive.

## **Title I Services**

All students identified as experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of whether his or her school is a Title I school. LEAs must reserve (or set aside) the funds necessary to serve homeless children and youth who do not attend Title I schools, including educational-related support services. As noted earlier in this report, 66 percent of enrolled students (13,781 of 20,785 students) attended schoolwide (53 percent) or targeted assistance schools (13 percent).

As indicated in the service delivery table, 13,434 (65 percent) of enrolled students (13,434 of 20,785 students) were documented as receiving Title I services and those services were most often instructional support services. This is an increase from 54 percent in 2012-13 and 39 percent in 2011-12 were designated as receiving Title I services. Again, caution should be noted with these increases as it is uncertain at this time if this is a result of better documentation of services, more students receiving services, or both.

Evaluators further examined students who did not have any Title I services documented in the previous service delivery section, which included 7,351 such students (or 35 percent) of the enrolled students. Almost two-thirds of the students (4,613 students) not receiving any Title I services attended a school that was not designated as schoolwide or targeted assistance and 2 percent of students (1,531) students attended targeted assistance schools. For the remaining enrolled students (1,207 students) who were not documented as receiving Title I services, no school was identified, therefore the Title I status of the schools was unknown.

Evaluators also examined academic needs of students not receiving Title I services, because while a student may be eligible for Title I services by virtue of their homeless status, they are eligible for Title I academic services based on academic need. To examine this, evaluators analyzed students' state assessment (PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam) proficiency levels for students who were enrolled in a grade where these assessments were administered, grades 3-8 and 11.

Of the 7,351 students not reported as receiving Title I services, 3,570 students were in assessment grades. Of these 3,750 students, 81 percent had reading/literature proficiency levels reported and 80 percent had math/Algebra I proficiency levels reported. Slightly more than half (53 percent) scored proficient or advanced on the reading/literature assessment and math/Algebra I assessment. These findings are consistent with both 2012-13 and 2011-12, where about half of the students who did not receive Title I services scored proficient or advanced on the reading and math state assessments. Given these consistent results, it appears that many of these students documented as not receiving Title I services did not have academic need to trigger Title I services in non-Title I schools. That said, efforts should continue to educate LEAs in serving students experiencing homelessness having an academic need and attending a non-Title I school.

## **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Academic outcomes and example positive student outcomes scenarios are highlighted in this section. Examples of positive outcomes are new for the 2013-14 report and highlight situations where positive outcomes for students occurred as a result of the ECYEH Program.

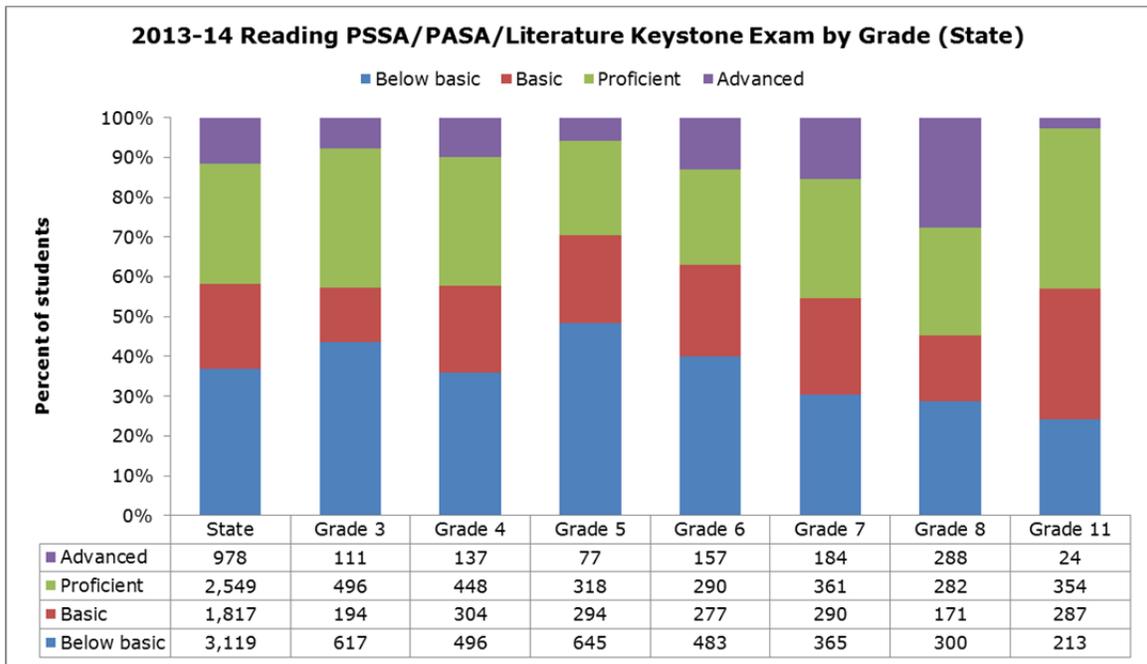
Academic outcomes include state assessment results for students experiencing homelessness. Graduation and drop-out results at the state level are not available at the time of this report. As noted earlier in this report, once a unique list of identified homeless students is finalized a listing of homeless students via PASecureID is provided to PDE PIMS program administrators. This listing of homeless students is used for other state reporting requirements including graduation and drop-out results. These results are provided to the PDE state homeless staff upon request when the data is finalized, which typically occurs in the spring following the program year.

State academic assessment data for 2013-14 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternative State Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. The PSSA is given in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. The reading and math assessments are given in grades three through eight; the science assessment is given in grades four and eight; and the writing assessment is administered in grades five and eight. The PASA assesses students with the most severe cognitive disabilities in four grade level spans (third/fourth, fifth/sixth, seventh/eighth, and 11<sup>th</sup>). The 2013-14 Keystone Exams were offered in literature, Algebra I, and biology for grades seven through 11 in the fall, spring, and summer. Students can re-take the Keystone Exams until they demonstrate proficiency. Once they score at the proficient level, their scores are banked and used for 11<sup>th</sup> grade state and federal assessment and accountability reporting. All students enrolled in public school in these grades should participate in the appropriate state assessments unless they meet one of the exemption criteria. For the purposes of this program, evaluators analyzed reading, math, and science PSSA data; reading, math, and science PASA data; and literature, Algebra I, and biology Keystone Exam data.

### **Reading PSSA/PASA and Literature Keystone Exam**

There were 10,444 students experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the reading PSSA (grades 3-8), the literature Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the reading PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11) during the 2013-14 school year, of which PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results were available for 8,463 students (81 percent). The graph that follows shows student results in reading/literature by the proficiency categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

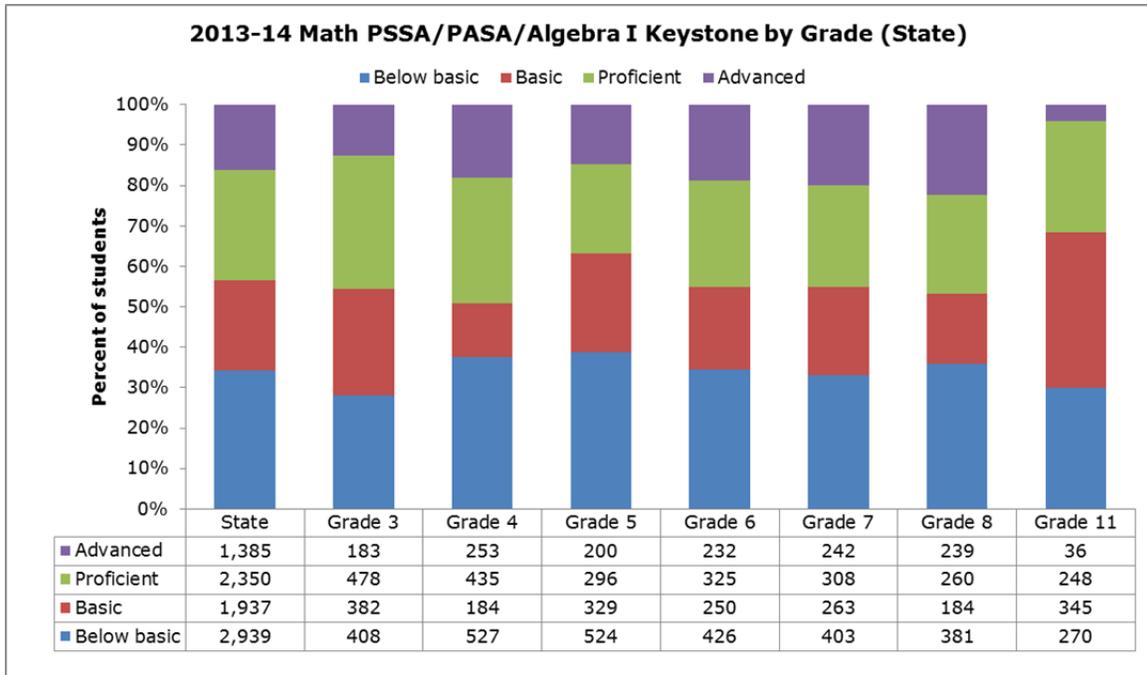
Overall, 42 percent scored in the proficient or advanced levels. This percentage varied by grade with eighth grade having the greatest percentage of students (55 percent) scoring proficient or advanced, and fifth grade having the smallest percentage of students (30 percent) scoring proficient or advanced. Since 2011-12, the percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in reading/literature has ranged between 41 and 44 percent depending on the year and each year eighth grade had the greatest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced and fifth grade had the smallest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced.



### Math PSSA/PASA and Algebra I Keystone Exam

There were 10,444 students experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the math PSSA (grades 3-8), the Algebra I Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the math PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11) during the 2013-14 school year, of which PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results were available for 8,611 students (82 percent). The graph that follows shows student results in math/Algebra I by the proficiency categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

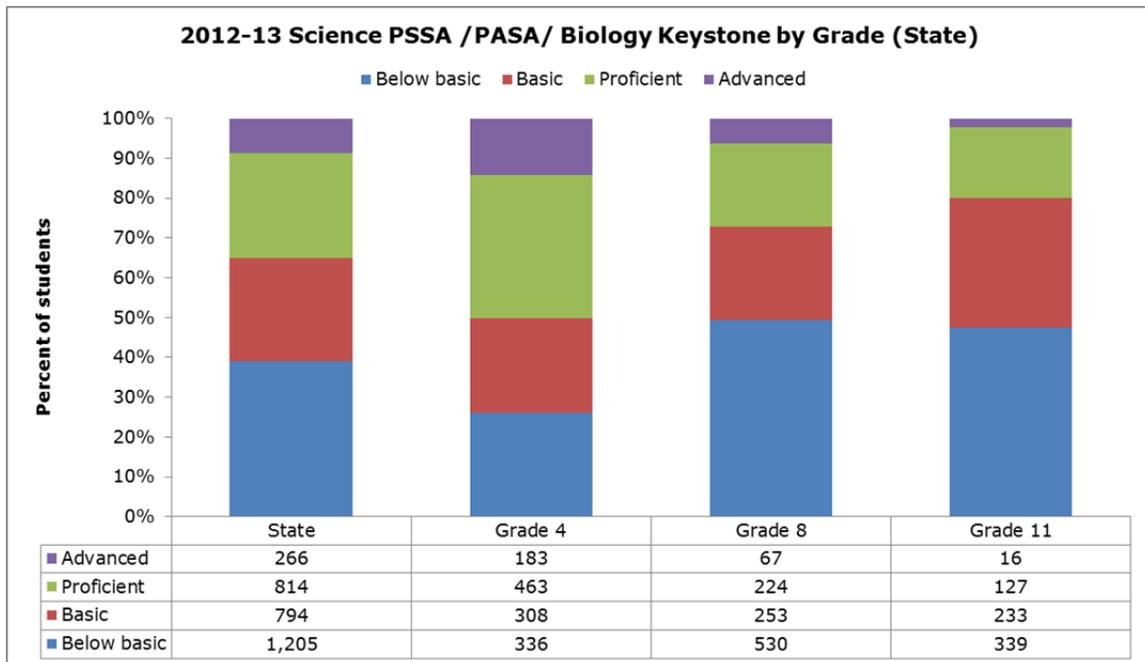
Overall, 43 percent scored in the proficient or advanced levels. This percentage varied by grade with fourth grade having the greatest percentage of students (49 percent) scoring in the proficient or advanced levels and 11<sup>th</sup> grade having the smallest percentage of students (32 percent) scoring proficient or advanced. Since 2011-12, the percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I has ranged between 43 and 49 percent depending on the year. Eleventh grade has had the smallest percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced each year and fourth grade has had the greatest percentage of students score proficient in both 2013-4 and 2011-12. In 2012-13 seventh grade had the greatest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced.



### Science PSSA/PASA and Biology Keystone Exam

There were 4,210 students experiencing homelessness who were enrolled in a grade level eligible to take the science PSSA (grades 4 and 8), the science PASA (grades 4, 8, and 11), or the biology Keystone Exam (11<sup>th</sup> grade) during the 2013-14 school year, of which results were available for 3,303 students (78 percent). The graph that follows shows student results in science/biology by the proficiency categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Overall, 38 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced levels. Since 2011-12, the percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in science/Biology has ranged between 35 and 38 percent depending on the year. This percentage varied by grade with fourth grade having the greatest percentage of students (53 percent) scoring proficient or advanced, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade having the smallest percentage of students (22 percent) scoring proficient or advanced. Every year fourth grade has had the greatest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced and 11<sup>th</sup> grade has had the smallest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced.



PSSA/PASA/Keystone results have been relatively stable since 2011-12. Results are available for about 80 percent of students experiencing homelessness. Approximately 40-45 percent of students score proficient or advanced in reading/literature, 43-49 percent scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I, and 35-38 percent proficient or advanced in science/Biology. This is far lower than the state performance of 72 percent proficient or advanced in math and 70 percent proficient or advanced in reading/literature. Science is not included in accountability reporting at the state level. However, given that approximately 80 percent or perhaps more of the students experiencing homelessness are also economically disadvantaged, comparison to the state economically disadvantaged performance might be more applicable. In 2013-14, 56 percent of the economic disadvantaged subgroup scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I and 59 percent did so in reading/literature.

Nationally, assessment data for students experiencing homelessness is examined for grades three through eight. In Pennsylvania, 42 percent of students in grades three through eight scored proficient or advanced on the state reading assessment and 45 percent scored proficient or advanced on the state mathematics assessment. This is similar to the national percentages of 46 percent in reading and 43 percent in mathematics.<sup>30</sup>

In prior years' of analysis, students experiencing homelessness did not score significantly different from peers in their school. This analysis was not conducted in 2013-14 because state assessment data are no longer publically available at the LEA or school level in a format that can be analyzed in such fashion. However, given that students experiencing homelessness have had such consistent state assessment results, attend almost all LEAs and schools in the commonwealth, and remain for the most part in their school of origin, it is fair to extrapolate that

<sup>30</sup> <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-1011-1213.pdf>

students experiencing homelessness assessment results are more reflective of their school and community than solely their homeless status.

### **Examples of Positive ECYEH Program Impact**

It is easy to forget that behind the numbers and all of the efforts of the ECYEH Program across the state there are children, youth, and families struggling to survive in the face of homelessness and the situations that precipitated their homelessness. During the bi-monthly state coordinators meetings coordinators often share exceptional stories about children/youth or families with which they were involved or assisted through a crisis. Evaluators asked coordinators to share a story resulting in a positive outcome in their region. What follows are examples from each region.

Region 1: When a senior student first came to the region's ECYEH T.E.E.N. program, he was "couch surfing," having lived with his aunt on one occasion and his cousin at another point. While doing this, he was desperate to get into a steady educational program that met his needs due to his desire to acquire a job as a means of independent income. He had attended several different schools in the area, but found that he would be able to best excel in an alternative program. Now in such a program through the support of the ECYEH Program he is doing well in school while working at a local retailer. Whenever he has needed extra assistance, he has taken the opportunity to utilize his resources through the ECYEH Program to get issues resolved and press onward and upward. This young man demonstrates success because no matter what obstacles have come his way, he motivates himself, garners encouragement through the ECYEH Program staff, and put his mind and hands to the tasks to accomplish his dreams.

Region 2: A 17-year-old in Berks County was kicked out of his home and had nowhere to go. Within 24 hours, the ECYEH site coordinator connected the student with the local Family Promise program to secure housing, connected with the school districts' transportation departments, and made sure that the student had everything he needed. This all took place within 24 hours and there was no disruption in his education.

Region 3: In October a district identified an unaccompanied youth who was experiencing homelessness. He was bouncing from place to place, staying wherever he could for the night. After one of the presentations that a coordinator did at the high school during the ECYEH Program awareness week, the student came forward looking for assistance. The student was a junior and his grades were slipping. He had been late to school and missed a couple of days due to his homeless situation. After being identified, the student was able to get all services he was eligible for in school. Transportation picked him up at a central location so he could get to school early enough for a shower, do some wash if needed, and get breakfast. By the end of the year, the student's grades were honor roll-worthy and he is now currently enrolled as senior and taking advanced placement classes. While his housing situation remains unsettled, his educational needs are stable. With the assistance of the school district, the regional office, and outside resources, this young man is thriving within the situation he is living.

Region 4: In the 2013-14 year, the Together Time program was implemented in 12 housing programs within two counties and reached 181 children. This program provides the opportunity

for positive parent/child interaction (for children under six years old) in a group setting, while also providing parents with materials and information about how they can use the activities learned in the session to continue teaching their child. The idea behind Together Time is to engage the parents and to provide them with a time to just enjoy their children and to also be their child's first teacher. In addition to the groups, program staff are trained on early childhood services that are available to the children within the community. It is the program's goal to have children experiencing homelessness and residing in housing programs to have a developmental screening, enroll in early childhood program when appropriate, and receive early intervention if necessary.

Region 5: A student who lived in her car during her junior and senior year just graduated from a local university and is applying to doctoral programs. Similarly, a couch-surfing and sometimes unsheltered youth graduated last year and is currently attending college and doing well at a local university. While experiencing homelessness, he maintained good grades, worked at a local bakery, and also played on the high school football team. Once identified, the coordinator worked with the local faith community to find a local family willing to "host" him and they found a couple who is still hosting him now that he's off to college. In addition to the ECYEH program connecting him with a host family, it also provided him with referrals, school clothing, toiletries, and supplies during his senior year - assisting with keeping him in school during this time.

Region 6: An 18-year-old senior girl had to leave her home due to domestic violence. She wanted to stay in the school of origin to graduate. The only place that she had at the time where she could go was a few counties away. Program staff contacted a local church pastor and explained her story and asked if any of his parishioners would be willing to give her a place to live so that she could finish high school. The pastor contacted a few families and then one family called the ECYEH Program. Program staff and the family discussed the student and expectations. The family wanted to meet the student and talk with her. Program staff set up the meeting; they met and the student lived with the family until she graduated. The student worked to pay for her personal items and received assistance to help with food and did chores around the house to help and thank the family for their support. The ECYEH Program office assisted with toiletries and services when needed. The student and the ECYEH Program coordinator stayed in contact throughout the year and the coordinator also corresponded with the family to have continued contact and support for them. While staying with the family, the student wanted to attend church and go on to college. The ECYEH Program assisted the student with the necessary paperwork that she needed to attend college. During the summer, the student came to the regional office to thank the coordinator and share her plans.

Region 7: A girl was having issues with her mother during her junior year of school. In her senior year her mother kicked her out of the house. The district she was attending did support the ECYEH Program, but it was minimal and the liaison was relatively new. The regional staff and the district had a few meetings about reporting and other district responsibilities concerning homeless children. In turn, the liaison established a great protocol for identification inside the school district. Through the new identification process the liaison became aware of this student. After she was identified as experiencing homelessness, the district made sure she was transported, and got free lunch, supplies, and anything else she needed for school. They also made sure she got to several very important appointments. The reward was unbelievable, as it

turned out she got a fully paid scholarship to Harvard University. The liaison was very appreciative of the ECYEH Program and what we have accomplished together. His words...“If we didn't build up this program together, this situation might not have worked out for this girl.” This outcome was the highlight of the year.

Region 8: An ECYEH site coordinator received a call on behalf of a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student - a good student, involved in ROTC and other school activities, and planning to attend college after graduation. She had been living with an uncle and aunt in housing project. The housing authority said she could not stay or they all would be evicted. The reason she was living with the aunt and uncle was she had cared for her mother who had cancer until she died and she could not keep her mother's apartment.

To avoid the eviction of the family, this girl looked into the Job Corp which is residential program, because she had no other available options. This choice meant that she would need to leave her high school and her college plans.

The ECYEH site coordinator contacted Valley Youth House, with whom he had a long standing and good collaboration, to advocate for this young lady. After a couple of meetings and phone calls this girl was accepted and entered the Valley Youth House program. The apartment is only three blocks away from her high school, her college plans remain intact, and she can visit her aunt and uncle. The site coordinator continues to maintain contact and offer support as needed.

## **Evaluator Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations for Improvement**

The Pennsylvania regional model to implement the McKinney-Vento Act provides an opportunity for every child or youth identified as experiencing homelessness to access needed resources or services especially related to school enrollment, including pre-kindergarten, and academic success.

Regional coordinators and their staff train, troubleshoot, intervene, and collaborate on behalf of children and youth and their families, the schools they attend, or the shelters in which they reside. The nature of their work and the differences among the regions provide challenges unique to each region. There are differences in geographic territory and urban-centric locale of communities and schools in their region. There are differences in the numbers of LEAs (including the growing number of charter and cyber charter schools), shelters, pre-kindergarten programs, and kinds of organizations that provide services to children, youth, or families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, there are differences in the numbers and roles of ECYEH Program staff within the regions. These challenges and differences contribute to the recommendations that follow.

Each year reporting is more complete and accurate. As such there has been an increase in the number of children and youth reported. As reporting has become more complete and accurate there are some things that appear to be improving, such as a decrease in barriers, an increase in services, and an increase in the number of pre-kindergarten children being reported. Evaluators caution that these observed improvements may be a result of better reporting, more entities reporting, and a better understanding of what needs to be reported rather than actual improvements, though it is possible that there is actual improvement as well.

There are several themes that have remained consistent throughout the evaluation years.

- Slightly more than 20 percent of identified children/youth experience homelessness for more than one year.
- Almost 80 percent of children/youth are documented as economically disadvantaged.
- The majority of students remain in their LEA-school of origin.
- Academic outcomes of students experiencing homelessness may be more an indicator of the educational experience of the school and community and not the individual's homeless status.
- Despite some consistency for a large portion of children/youth, there are students who experience extreme mobility, are homeless for more than two years, or experience barriers to enrollment.

What has been the most notable in 2013-14 is that barriers that relate to rights of students have declined yet barriers related to transportation are becoming a growing issue across the state. It appears that more students are receiving Title I services or at least these services are being documented. Both of these seem to indicate that ongoing ECYEH Program outreach, training, and technical assistance is influencing LEAs.

Also noteworthy is the concept of LEA monitoring by regional coordinators. Though barely initiated in 2013-14, LEA monitoring is raising the awareness of LEAs and serves as a way in

which coordinators can engage LEAs in their responsibilities in educating children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Finally, examples of innovative practices or collaborations and stories of positive student outcomes highlight the creative and compassionate ways in which the ECYEH Program is making a difference in lives of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

At this time evaluators offer a few recommendations for improvement related to program management of the ECYEH Program to optimize program implementation at the regional and local levels.

- Transportation for students experiencing homelessness is a growing challenge among the regions. PDE should consider exploring root causes of the increasing of transportation issues and assist the regions in creating solutions. A broader perspective of solutions may be helpful to LEAs struggling with transportation issues.
- Continue to reinforce Title I services to students with academic need and attending non-Title I schools. Though this has improved there are still students with academic need attending non-Title I schools and not receiving [documented] instructional services.
- Students experiencing homelessness are underperforming on state assessments compared to the economic disadvantaged subgroup, though their performance may be comparable to their classmates and national performance. Continue to collaborate and explore any options that offer additional instructional support to students experiencing homelessness such as tutoring in shelters by college students, priority for service in LEA or community after-school or summer programs, or inclusion in other state or federally funded programs such as Migrant Education, English as a second language, or 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers.

The evaluation of the ECYEH Program is intended to provide a statewide and regional picture of program implementation, outcomes, and impacts. These findings, along with detailed information at the county, LEA, or school level, when appropriate, is provided to the regional coordinators and the program staff at PDE to assist with internal program implementation, improvement, and decision making. Additionally, regions received individual child/youth information from the data collection process. Results are based upon the data available.