

# Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2018-19 State Evaluation Report

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*March 2020*



**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 or youth experiencing homelessness has 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 to offer guidance to local educational 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, are available on PDE's website: [www.education.pa.gov/homeless](http://www.education.pa.gov/homeless).

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 staffers provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to LEAs and connect children, youth, families, and LEAs to additional services and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Center for Schools and Communities (CSC), a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, provides statewide technical assistance to regions and LEAs. The statewide technical assistant monitors 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. Additionally, the state office, through the CSC, contracts with external monitors who monitor LEA implementation and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Evaluators collected and analyzed data for the state evaluation from several sources to provide a picture of homelessness as it relates to the McKinney-Vento Act in Pennsylvania. 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;
- Examine the extent to which students identified as experiencing homelessness attend and succeed in school;
- Build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and
- Provide recommendations for overall program improvement.

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

## **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS**

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

A total of 694 unique entities participated in some type of ECYEH-provided training, professional development, or workshop in 2018-19. Approximately 9,676 individuals participated - though this may include duplicates, as some individuals may have attended more than one event; and in some cases, regions were not able to provide event participant counts. A unique participant count is not available. LEAs and liaisons were the most represented group and participant type, though this varied by region. This is not surprising since LEAs are the largest entity group and are the first priority of the ECYEH Program, with LEA liaisons being directly involved with this population.

While ECYEH offers professional development or training to various entities, technical assistance is most often “request-based help” initiated by the LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, agencies and organizations, or other groups. Individual entities may be counted in more than one of the technical assistance categories. Of the 672 entities receiving technical assistance:

- 73 percent (484) were LEAs; 11 percent (75) were shelters; 12 percent (82) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and 3 percent (21) were prekindergarten programs; and
- 90 percent received child-specific technical assistance; 90 percent received non-child specific technical assistance; 96 percent received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials; and 61 percent received bulk supplies, such as bus passes, backpacks, school supplies, clothing, or hygiene items.

In addition to conducting trainings, presentations, and workshops or providing technical assistance, ECYEH staff members spend a portion of their time collaborating with other agencies, organizations, or groups as part of committees, boards, meetings, or consortia. For 2018-19, ECYEH staff reported participating in 46 unique events under the umbrella of meetings, boards, consortia, or committees. These events occurred annually (six events), monthly (10 events), quarterly (22 events), or other (seven events). Other events were most often one time, bi-monthly, seasonal, or on an as-needed basis. ECYEH staff members’ role was most typically regular attendee, though in 15 instances staff held a leader/facilitator role. For the most part, events were county- or regional-level meetings with other entities that work with homelessness, such as children and youth agencies, shelters, housing-related organizations or groups, prekindergarten programs, runaway and trafficking prevention groups, mental health agencies, social workers, drug and alcohol agencies, or food pantries.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOME FINDINGS**

As a result of the coordinators’ outreach and ongoing collaboration work, 39,221 children or youth were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2018-19. This is an increase from

36,823 identified children and youth in 2017-18. Contributing to this increase was the addition of systemic collection of HMIS (shelter) data for all counties for the first time.

Students experiencing homelessness comprised about 2 percent of the total Pennsylvania population enrolled in public school during the 2018-19 school year.

Of the 31,822 children/youth in prekindergarten through grade 12, 68 percent were doubled-up;<sup>2</sup> 23 percent were in shelters or transitional housing; 8 percent were in hotels or motels; and 2 percent were unsheltered. Nighttime status was not required for the birth to age 2 population or for children ages three to five and not enrolled in an LEA-operated prekindergarten program.

Key findings about the 39,221 children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness include:

- 15 percent were identified as unaccompanied youth;<sup>3</sup>
- 65 percent were classified as economically disadvantaged, though it is likely that many of those with unknown<sup>4</sup> status (28 percent) may have been economically disadvantaged as well;
- 31 percent were Black/African American (not Hispanic); 31 percent were White/Caucasian (not Hispanic); 21 percent were Hispanic (any race); and 6 percent were classified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Multi-Racial, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Race could not be determined for 11 percent;
- 9 percent were identified as English learners;
- 4 percent were migrant; and
- 25 percent were identified as having a disability, with 35 percent of those identified categorized as having a “specific learning disability.”

Of the 31,822 students for which LEA data were available, 65 percent attended LEAs categorized as city or suburban, and 72 percent attended LEAs that had 40 percent or more of the student population classified as coming from low-income families.

## **PROGRAM IMPACTS**

Program impacts include findings that document the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the ECYEH Program occur, including 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.

Barriers are defined as situations that interfere with children/youth’s school enrollment, attendance, and/or educational success. Overall, 11 percent of enrolled students were reported

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<sup>2</sup> Doubled-up is defined as children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

<sup>3</sup> An unaccompanied youth is any person age 21 or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

<sup>4</sup> Children/youth with ‘unknown’ status were children in the birth to age 2 category, ages 3-5 and not enrolled in prekindergarten, residing in shelters, or migrant children.

as having one or more barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. The most common barrier was determining if a student was eligible for homeless services, followed by transportation. Transportation issues remain high 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 31,822 students identified as being enrolled in school, LEA/school mobility<sup>5</sup> could be determined for 91 percent, of which 90 percent remained in their LEA/school combination during the program year. Less than one percent had more than two LEA/school combinations.

Students experiencing homelessness have the right to support services that promote academic success. Overall, 72 percent of the 39,221 children and youth were 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.

State academic assessment data for 2018-19 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. State assessment data were available for approximately 75 percent of students experiencing homelessness in grades where the assessments are given. Overall, 34 percent scored in the proficient or advanced level in reading/literature, 18 percent scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I, and 39 percent of students scored proficient or advanced in science/biology.

School attendance data was available for 78 percent of enrolled students, of which 56 percent of students attended 90 percent or more of the days enrolled.

Of the 13,012 students enrolled in grades 7-12, 4 percent dropped out of school, with grade 12 having the highest dropout percentage at almost 9 percent, followed by grade 11 at 8 percent, and grade 10 at 5 percent.

In terms of graduation, 69 percent of grade 12 students graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma. Additionally, 58 grade 11 students (3 percent) graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

## **REFLECTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Reporting accuracy increases each year and reporting by new entities (such as Homeless Management Information Systems [HMIS] and prekindergarten programs) have contributed to an increase in the number of children and youth reported. As reporting has become more complete and accurate with more data available, several themes have emerged.

- ECTEH staff provide a wealth of training, technical assistance, and coordination of services to LEAs and entities that serve children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

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<sup>5</sup> LEA/school mobility measures the movement of an enrolled child or youth among multiple LEAs or between school buildings within an LEA during the program year.

- Most students remain in their LEA/school of origin.
- Many children/youth (72 percent for 2018-19) receive individual support/services and others may receive indirect services and/or supplies.
- Transportation remains one of the two most common barriers statewide.
- Children/youth experiencing homelessness are predominately economically disadvantaged and attend LEAs that have high levels of poverty.
- Despite some consistency for a large portion of children/youth, there are students who experience extreme mobility or experience barriers to enrollment.
- Students perform below the historically underperforming subgroup on state assessments, have higher rates of absenteeism, are at greater risk for dropping out of school, and have lower graduation rates than their housed classmates.
- Homeless counts vary considerably across the regions.
- There is a growing focus on the under-five population experiencing homelessness, yet prekindergarten programming and McKinney-Vento Act reporting guidance does not exactly align.
- ECYEH staff have increasing responsibilities with increasing numbers.

Considering these themes, evaluators recommend that:

- 1) State and regional ECYEH staff continue to explore creative transportation options to support LEAs with common barriers;
- 2) Regional staff continue to work with local Continuum of Care contemporaries;
- 3) Regional staff continue to explore options for instructional support to students;
- 4) Regional staff consider professional development or technical assistance to LEAs related to examining prekindergarten programming options for younger siblings of students; students' school attendance, dropout, and graduation rates; participation in academic support activities; and assessment data;
- 5) Regional staff and the state team should revisit how training, technical assistance, and collaboration are implemented across the state to accommodate growing needs and responsibilities of ECYEH staff; and
- 6) Regional staff should continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by, or with, other entities that work with or support homelessness to represent accurately the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program.

## Introduction

### McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT OVERVIEW

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into federal law in 1987, requiring states to review and revise residency requirements for the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The McKinney Act was amended in 1990, 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 to eligible students. In 1994, the education portion of the McKinney Act was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), adding preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration. 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), it strengthened legislative requirements by requiring all local educational agencies (LEAs) to appoint a local liaison to ensure the law is implemented effectively at the local level. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) again amended the McKinney-Vento Act in December 2015 with changes taking effect in October 2016. This report covers programming between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 and reflects the legal requirements outlined in the latest revision that began in 2016.

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, including a public preschool education. The McKinney-Vento Act uses the following definition for “children and youth experiencing homelessness.”

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; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;<sup>6</sup>

(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 youths 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

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<sup>6</sup> Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016. The only exception to this removal is that "covered states" have until December 10, 2017 to remove "awaiting foster care placement" from their definition of homeless.

of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Children/youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless may also be identified as an “unaccompanied homeless youth,” meaning they are not in the physical custody of their parent or legal 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:

- Immediate enrollment even when records are not present;
- Remaining in the school of origin, if in the student’s best interest;
- Transportation to the school of origin; and
- Provision of support services that promote academic success.

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

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) implements the McKinney-Vento Act through its Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program. As such, PDE created a state plan that outlines Pennsylvania’s implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act and a *Basic Education Circular* to offer guidance to LEAs regarding implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. PDE’s website provides information regarding homelessness and the ECYEH Program: [www.education.pa.gov/homeless](http://www.education.pa.gov/homeless). Updates, as they occur to align with ESSA, are posted there as well.

Instead of providing federal McKinney-Vento Act funds directly to LEAs, Pennsylvania employs a regional model for dispersing 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 program staff within their region or identify intermediate unit staff to support student identification and program activities. The regional model ensures that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have the opportunity to receive services or supports through the ECYEH Program.

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 (CSC), a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, to provide technical assistance to the regions and LEAs. As part of that technical support the CSC maintains a website that includes statewide directories of the ECYEH Program staff, LEA homeless liaisons, and Pennsylvania shelters for families, domestic violence, and runaway youth, in addition to other relevant resources.

Additionally, the CSC and PDE conduct technical assistance visits for the regions and prepare a comprehensive report of each region's results for continuous program implementation. Additionally, the state office, through the CSC, contracts with external educational professionals who monitor LEA implementation and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and ESSA and submit their reports back to the CSC and PDE.

The goals of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

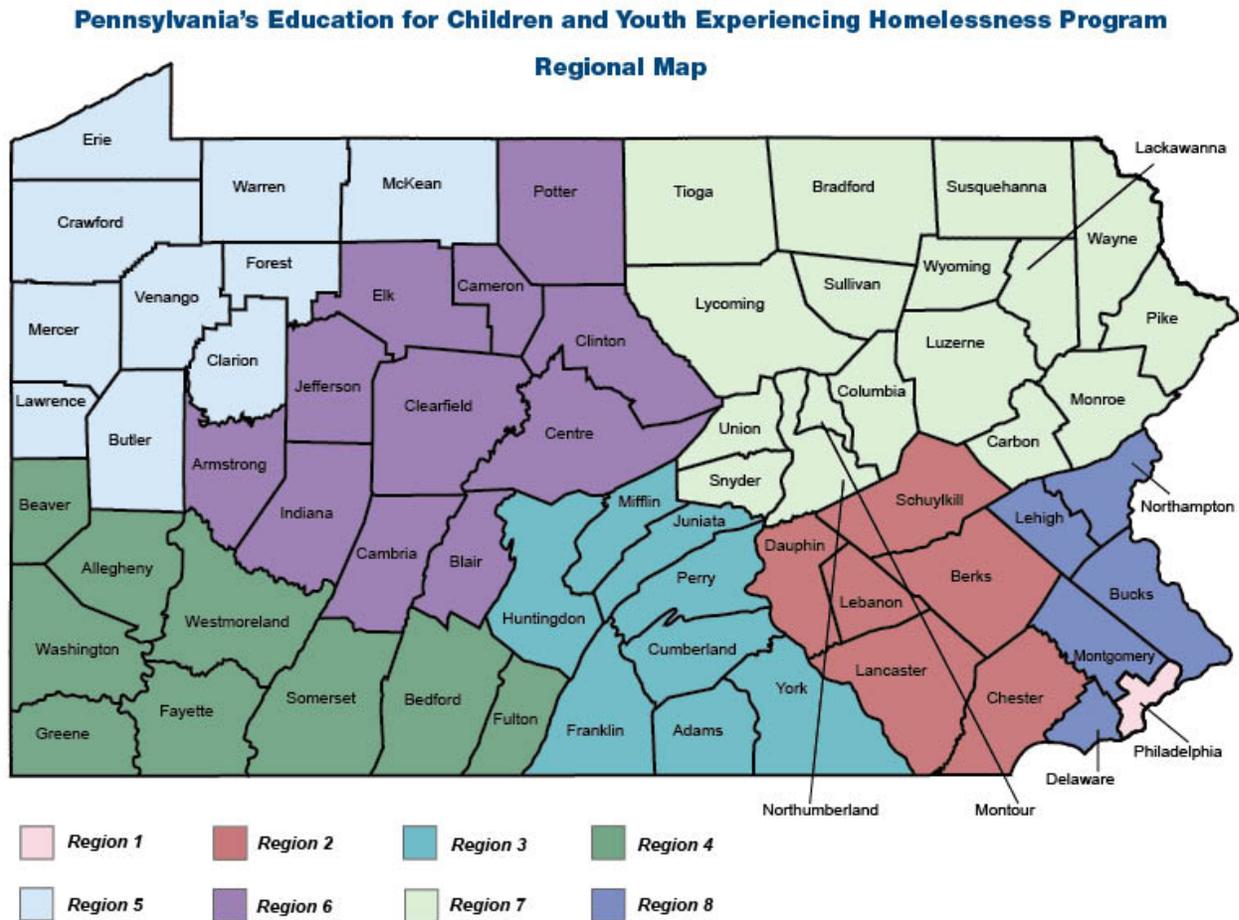
- Ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll, participate, and have the opportunity to succeed in school;
- Ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state; and
- Eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers through 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 ECYEH coordinators' primary role is to make sure the McKinney-Vento Act is being followed in every Pennsylvania public school. Coordinators educate, 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. With the advent of external LEA monitoring in 2017-18, coordinators also prepare LEAs for monitoring and conduct monitoring follow-up as needed to support LEAs in complying with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The following map illustrates the eight ECHYEH regions in Pennsylvania.



**EVALUATION DESIGN AND ACTIVITIES**

PDE's Bureau of School Support contracts with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the ECHYEH Program to fulfill the federal evaluation requirement. This requirement is laid out in subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) 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 2018-19 program evaluation was the ninth year of program evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation of Pennsylvania's ECHYEH 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;
- Examine the extent to which students identified as experiencing homelessness attend and succeed in school;
- Build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and
- Provide recommendations for overall program improvement.

In addition to program evaluation, evaluators work with PDE to prepare the portions of required annual federal reporting related to children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Evaluators used the U.S. Department of Education *EDFacts* file formats and the *Comprehensive State Performance Report* to identify the required federal reporting data elements. Evaluators also used the National Center for Homeless Education's 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 needed for federal reporting and program evaluation were identified and the most appropriate sources of data were used. Some data were collected at the program level and other data were collected at the state level; whenever possible, existing data sources were used, such as the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), MIS2000<sup>7</sup> (the state migrant education database), Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Homeless Management System (HMIS), and the state assessment office.<sup>8</sup> Evaluators also use publicly available data for Title 1, poverty, and urbanicity. The use of existing data sources was intended to reduce the burden on LEAs and other organizations required to report on their homeless populations.

Data collection procedures at the program level have evolved to a web-based reporting system that promotes more secure and accurate data through an easier data reporting interface. As such, improvements to the data collection process have reduced data management by ECYEH staff while providing ECYEH staff continuous access to monitor information reported by entities in their region.

The homeless liaison in LEAs where students were enrolled, prekindergarten program staff, representatives from shelters where children and youth resided, and regional or program staff provided the requested information. In some cases, ECYEH staff worked with shelters in their region to provide information at the county level instead of individual shelters reporting

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<sup>7</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 education database, criteria to determine those children and youth 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>8</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.

information.<sup>9</sup> Shelters receiving direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program are required to be included in McKinney-Vento Act reporting.

The PAsecureID<sup>10</sup> was a key data element for all individuals enrolled in school. The PAsecureID was used to pull data from other existing data sources or when matching data across multiple data sources.

To adhere to confidentiality in reporting afforded to domestic violence shelters,<sup>11</sup> 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. This process also evolved to reduce duplicate reporting as domestic violence shelters now have their own data collection systems from which staff can create the needed extract.

Ultimately, the ECYEH Program is responsible for verifying 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, evaluators conduct an extensive cross-referencing and follow-up process by using data collected through the ECYEH Program, PIMS, MIS2000, HMIS, 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 homeless *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 state and federal reporting for this population; and 3) prepare the annual evaluation report.

In addition to data collected about identified children/youth, evaluators collect information on the work of the ECYEH Program staff. This data collection has also evolved into a web-based system that collects details on the training/professional development and technical assistance ECYEH Program staff provide to LEAs, shelters, or other community organizations/agencies that work with homelessness, as well as information regarding homeless-related boards, consortia, or other meetings ECYEH staff attend to advocate and educate on behalf of McKinney-Vento Act implementation in Pennsylvania.

## **HOW TO USE THIS REPORT**

The state evaluation of the ECYEH Program for 2018-19 examined information about children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness, the services these children and youth

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<sup>9</sup> Shelters have their own reporting requirements and are required to report information in HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). In regions where data sharing agreements are in place, applicable data was extracted from the HMIS and provided to the coordinator or directly to the evaluator depending on the agreement, thus eliminating duplicate reporting.

<sup>10</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.

<sup>11</sup> Domestic violence shelters are exempt from reporting in the HMIS due to the confidentiality of programs.

received, and the work of the ECYEH Program staff. The Executive Summary provides a condensed representation of the findings explained throughout this report. Prior year evaluation reports are available on PDE's website: [www.education.pa.gov/homeless](http://www.education.pa.gov/homeless).

The targeted audiences for this report are the program management at PDE, 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 for the state and delineated 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 aggregated - at the county, LEA, or school level, when appropriate - is provided to the regional coordinators and PDE program staff to assist with needs assessment, internal program implementation, program 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.

This report should 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, numbers of collaborating entities, reporting practices, 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 can guide program improvement and technical assistance at the state level.

This report highlights findings regarding the ECYEH Program based on available data from the 2018-19 program year.

Disclaimer: The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program is authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), as amended. This tool/document and all its components were developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), Office of Safety and Healthy Students. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred. You are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, alteration, or copying of this tool/document or its components is strictly prohibited without prior approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, specifically the Pennsylvania Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program, Division of Student Services.

## Findings

Findings are grouped into three sections: 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 pulled together to provide a picture of child/youth homelessness in Pennsylvania as it relates to the McKinney-Vento Act. In all cases, children and youth identified by more than one type of entity or a non-LEA entity are reported with their LEA(s) whenever LEA information is provided.

**Program implementation findings** reveal the extent to which the ECYEH Program offered professional development, technical assistance, or support to LEAs, other entities that serve the homeless population, or on behalf of the families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness. Information on trainings and workshops, technical assistance and bulk supplies, and meetings, consortia, and board participation is collected at the regional level via a web-based data collection system. The process by which this information is collected has been refined each year to better capture services provided by the ECYEH staff.

**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 ECYEH Program data collection, PIMS, MIS2000, HMIS, or individual shelter or non-LEA prekindergarten reporting. LEA and school information comes from PDE public data, 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 attendance and academic outcomes are also included in this section. This information comes from the service delivery portions of the ECYEH student-level data collection, the bulk supplies portion of the technical assistance and bulk supplies web-based reporting process, PIMS, MIS2000, shelter reporting, and the PDE assessment office.

### **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

Coordinators train, troubleshoot, intervene, support, and collaborate with LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, 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.

#### ***ECYEH Professional Development and Technical Assistance Services***

Professional development and technical assistance to LEAs, parents, shelters, and organizations serving the homeless population command a large portion of the ECYEH Program's staff time and play an important role in implementing the McKinney-Vento Act as outlined in the state plan.

Outreach to LEAs and shelters has been a longstanding priority for the ECYEH Program. In recent years, there has been increased focus on outreach to non-LEA prekindergarten programs. Likewise, there has been a more systemic focus on ECYEH collaboration with agencies/organizations that work directly with homelessness or with organizations in the community to increase awareness of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Each year, evaluators work with coordinators to improve data collection to more precisely capture the work that coordinators and their staff do as well as improve the consistency of reporting across regions. A new web-based system was implemented in 2016-17. As with any new system, there were growing pains in how regions classified the differing services they offered. Though efforts in consistency are improving, variations among the regions should be viewed with caution as they may reflect differences innate to the natural variations of the region. The intent of this section is to highlight the scope and depth of the McKinney-Vento Act outreach provided across the state.

### Recipients of ECYEH Services

First, evaluators examined ECYEH-offered trainings, professional development, and/or workshops. Professional development captured here was categorized as liaison training, McKinney-Vento 101, ECYEH 101, and McKinney-Vento special topics, which included specific topics such as transportation or training geared to specific populations such as special education directors or various educational or community groups. Preparing LEAs for external monitoring or conducting monitoring follow-up is also reported in special topics under professional development.

Professional development could have been provided at the regional, county, LEA, entity, or individual level. Likewise, the same event could have occurred once at the regional level or multiple times at IU or county level. Furthermore, as liaisons change throughout the year, liaison training at the individual level also occurs. To mediate the variations in the number of events offered, professional development is examined by who received the professional development.

Figure 1 shows attendance by entity type: LEAs (including LEAs with prekindergarten programs); prekindergarten programs or services; shelters, emergency, or transitional housing; and agencies, organizations, or groups.

There were 694 unique entities that participated in one or more ECYEH-provided trainings, professional development, or workshops in 2018-19.

**Figure 1. Professional Development Attendance by Entity Type**

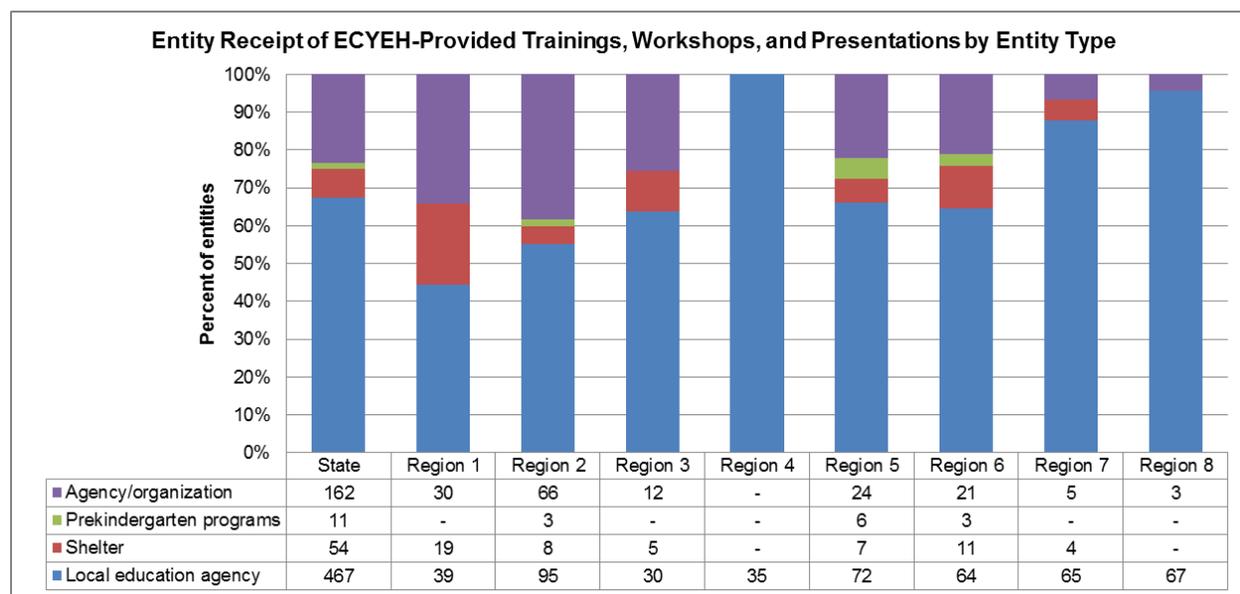
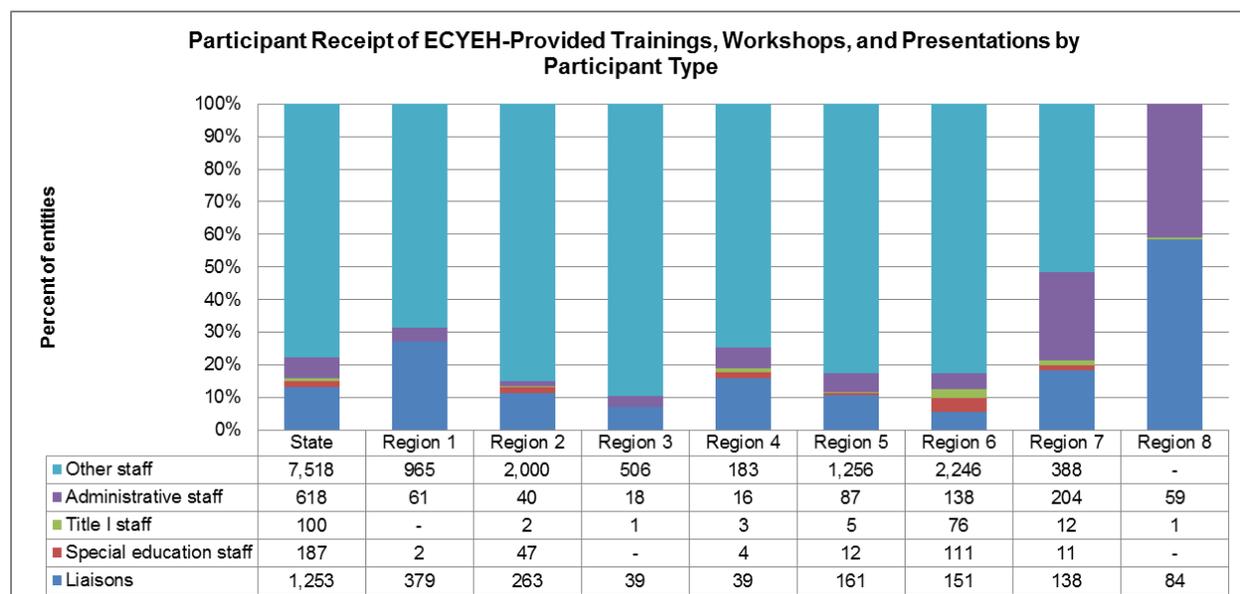


Figure 2 shows participation by participant count and type. Overall, 9,676 individuals participated, though this may include duplicates, as some participants may have attended more than one event and some events did not have a participant count reported. Furthermore, in some cases attendees held more than one of the designated roles though only one role was selected to represent that attendee. A unique participant count is not available.

**Figure 2. Professional Development Attendance by Participant Type**



Overall, LEAs and liaisons were the most represented group and participant type, though this varied by region. This is not surprising since LEAs are the largest entity group and are the priority of the ECYEH Program, with LEA liaisons being directly involved with this population. Some LEAs, especially those with large numbers of students experiencing homelessness, have

a separately designated liaison in each of their buildings and this building-level liaison works in collaboration with the required LEA-wide liaison. As such, liaison counts may look inflated. ECYEH staff typically hold at least two trainings specifically for LEA liaisons. They also supported LEAs that were scheduled to be monitored. In 2018-19, 1,253 liaisons (duplicate count) were reported as attending one or more liaison trainings held by ECYEH staff, and 196 liaisons were reported as participating in a session that focused on LEA monitoring preparation and/or follow-up.

While ECYEH provides professional development or training to various entities, technical assistance is most often request-based help initiated by the LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, agencies and organizations, or other groups. Technical assistance categories included child/family-specific, child/family non-specific, or McKinney-Vento Act-related materials or resources. Child/family-specific and child/family non-specific technical assistance typically occurred through phone calls or emails. Technical assistance frequency to an entity was captured as once, occasionally, or often. Receipt of McKinney-Vento Act-related materials or resources was documented as 'yes' or 'no' and in many cases, these were materials or resources provided in bulk to the entity. If applicable, child/family-specific technical assistance resulting in services provided to an individual child/youth or family is then documented in service delivery for that child/youth.

A particular entity may have received all four kinds of technical assistance over the course of the program year. As such, an individual entity may be counted in more than one of the technical assistance categories. Regions reported a total of 662 unique LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, and groups/agencies/organizations as receiving support through one or more of the technical assistance categories. Of the 672 entities receiving technical assistance, 73 percent (484) were LEAs; 11 percent (75) were shelters; 12 percent (82) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and 3 percent (21) were prekindergarten programs.

Of the 484 LEAs that received technical assistance support:

- 453 LEAs (94 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 233 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'often,' 201 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally,' and 19 received this child specific technical assistance 'once.'
- 432 LEAs (89 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 179 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'often,' 219 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally,' and 34 received this child specific technical assistance 'once.'
- 468 LEAs (97 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 312 LEAs (64 percent) received bulk supplies such a backpacks, blankets, clothing, bus passes, clothing, toiletries, or school supplies.

Of the 75 shelter, emergency, or transitional housing facilities that received technical assistance support:

- 75 facilities (100 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 38 facilities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 37 facilities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 71 facilities (95 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 22 facilities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 48 facilities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 74 facilities (99 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act related materials.
- 44 facilities (59 percent) received bulk supplies such a backpacks, blankets, clothing, bus passes, clothing, toiletries, or school supplies.

Of the 82 agencies, organizations, or groups that received technical assistance support:

- 61 entities (74 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 28 entities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 33 entities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 81 entities (99 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 26 entities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 55 entities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 81 entities (99 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 40 entities (49 percent) received bulk supplies.

Of the 21 non-LEA prekindergarten programs or services that received technical assistance support:

- 18 entities (86 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which six entities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 12 entities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 21 entities (100 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which five entities received this type of technical assistance 'often' and 16 entities received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 21 entities (100 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 16 entities (76 percent) received bulk supplies.

#### Meetings, Boards, Consortia, or Committees

In addition to conducting trainings, presentations, and workshops or providing technical assistance, ECYEH staff members spend a portion of their time collaborating with other agencies, organizations, or groups as part of committees, boards, meetings, or consortia. The number of entities that work with children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness varies greatly among the regions, though there are some commonalities.

For 2018-19, ECYEH staff reported participating in 46 unique events. These events occurred annually (six events), monthly (10 events), quarterly (22 events), or other (seven events). Other events were most often bi-monthly, seasonal, one-time or on an as-needed basis.

In almost all cases ECYEH staff members' role was typically regular attendee. In 15 instances staff held a leader/facilitator role in the event.

Event attendees ranged from three to 100 people, with 25 people being the average number of people at an event.

Generally, events were county or regional-level meetings with other entities that work with homelessness, such as children and youth agencies, shelters, housing-related organizations or groups, prekindergarten programs, runaway and trafficking prevention groups, mental health agencies, social workers, drug and alcohol agencies, or food pantries.

In summary, ECYEH Program efforts for outreach through training, technical assistance, or collaboration not only spread the word about the McKinney-Vento Act and the ECYEH Program, but also assisted in the identification of children/youth and families. Increasing counts of children and youth experiencing homelessness are a direct result of ECYEH staff outreach and collaboration. Likewise, the focused preparation of and follow-up with LEAs regarding monitoring has also increased identification and reporting of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

### ***State Technical Assistance***

In addition to the in-person regional technical assistance visits conducted twice a year, the CSC technical assistance staff conducts or coordinates several state-level professional development activities, often in collaboration with regional coordinators or other state personnel. State-level professional development activities not only support the regional coordinators, but also provide outreach and information to other state entities that work with children and youth. Included below is a list of highlighted activities for 2018-19.

- Provided resources for the Pupil Transportation Association of PA's training held June 20, 2018, in conjunction with a McKinney-Vento/Foster Care presentation by the ECYEH Region 3 Coordinator; approximately 70 individuals had access to the information/materials.
- Provided ECYEH exhibit materials for the September 12, 2018 PA Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers state conference.
- Coordinated an ECYEH exhibit table at the October 15-17, 2018 Early Childhood Education Summit; approximately 1,200 individuals had access to ECYEH posters and resources.
- Coordinated the 2018 ECYEH Conference held October 24-25, 2018 in Harrisburg; approximately 240 professionals working with homeless children and families had access to information and resources.

- Attended the October 27-30, 2018 National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Conference in California; attended sessions to increase knowledge and capacity of the ECYEH program and co-presented a workshop session on the ECYEH data collection results and how those data inform program improvements.
- Facilitated delivery of an ECYEH workshop and exhibit table at the October 29-31, 2018 Attendance/Child Accounting Professional Association (A/CAPA) conference.
- Coordinated two dropout prevention institutes in conjunction with the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) and the ECYEH evaluator on November 12, 2018 (19 attendees) and November 14, 2018 (42 attendees) to provide insight into the dropout problem and strategies for students experiencing homelessness.
- Coordinated and staffed an ECYEH exhibit table at the PA School Counselors' Association conference November 29-30, 2018 in Hershey; approximately 350 individuals had access to the ECYEH materials.
- Coordinated the ECYEH exhibit table and supported a McKinney-Vento Act presentation at the February 24-27, 2019 PA Association of Student Services Professionals Conference; approximately 500 individuals had access to information and resources.
- Ensured that an ECYEH presentation and exhibit table was provided for the 2019 Title I State Parent Advisory Council Conference.
- Coordinated and staffed the ECYEH exhibit table at the March 13-14, 2019 Extra Learning Opportunities Conference.
- Attended the March 2019 National Summit on Youth Homelessness and moderated the World Café roundtable session to increase knowledge of programmatic and legislative issues for an end to youth homelessness.
- Facilitated ECYEH exhibit table at the PDE Data Summit March 25-26, 2019; over 1,000 professionals had access to ECYEH information and resources.
- Coordinated an ECYEH exhibit table at the March 29-30, 2019 PA Association of School Nurses and Practitioners; approximately 260 school health professionals had access to ECYEH information and resources.
- Coordinated the June 26, 2019 ECYEH exhibit at the PA Housing Finance Agency Conference; approximately 700 individuals had access to program materials and information.

There is also a model of support, training, and technical assistance for the ECYEH regional staff. Bi-monthly staff meetings organized by the CSC give regional staff the opportunity to hear state team updates, engage with each other, and discuss and troubleshoot complicated situations. ECYEH staff also have the opportunity to attend and present at state and national

conferences to both promote the ECYEH Program as well as enhance their own professional development.

The CSC technical assistance staff conducts at least two on-site technical assistance visits to every region each year, and the PDE program officer annually monitors each region to ensure program compliance to the state plan and implementation of the regional contracts. Findings from these visits contribute to the statewide staff meetings and state conference.

All venues of program implementation – ECYEH-offered outreach, support, training technical assistance; ECYEH-received, training, technical assistance, and monitoring; and LEA monitoring – are all designed with the intention of improving outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

### **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. The program's success in meeting these objectives is reflected in 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 experience homelessness. LEAs are also encouraged to report younger siblings of enrolled students. Additionally, all entities that receive training, professional development, technical assistance, or resources from the ECYEH Program are required to report on children/youth experiencing homelessness who reside in the facility or attend their prekindergarten programs.

Public LEAs include school districts, charter schools, intermediate unit-operated prekindergarten programs,<sup>12</sup> and full-time (comprehensive) career and technical centers.<sup>13</sup> In Pennsylvania, there were 499<sup>14</sup> school districts, 180 charter and cyber charter schools, and 10 comprehensive career and technical centers in the 2018-19 academic year.

Based on the unique, comprehensive list of identified students from across Pennsylvania, nearly all LEAs were represented. There were four school districts and 25 charter or cyber charter schools for which no students meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness were

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<sup>12</sup> Not all intermediate units offer all prekindergarten 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 receives instruction in another school in the district or in another school district.

<sup>13</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.

<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania technically has 500 school districts; however, one very small district in suburban Philadelphia enrolls no students: Bryn Athyn School District, <http://www.brynathynschooldistrict.org/>.

reported; three school districts and nine charter schools confirmed that they had no eligible students to report.

Further exploration of the LEAs with no identified students or reporting zero students<sup>15</sup> revealed that many of the LEAs were small (18 LEAs had fewer than 500 students), served a subset of the total K-12 population (24 LEAs), had few low-income families (9 LEAs),<sup>16</sup> or had a combination of these conditions. Each of these conditions provides a plausible rationale as to why an LEA did not have/report any homeless students. Each year regional coordinators make it a priority to reach out to LEAs where no students are identified, and each year the number of entities not included in reporting or reporting zero students has decreased due to their efforts. However, outreach to charter schools remains a challenge. Liaison turnover appears to be more pervasive in charter schools and affects accurate and timely reporting. With new charter schools established each year, outreach to these LEAs is especially challenging. In an effort to identify liaison changes in a timely fashion, evaluators began sending automated email reminders for reporting identified youth. These reminders provided undeliverable notifications that regional staff could use to follow up. Evaluators also conducted periodic checks throughout the year and notified regional staff of LEAs that had not identified students at the time of the check. Furthermore, LEA monitoring has increased LEA awareness of the federal requirement. Each of these has contributed to fewer LEAs reporting zero students experiencing homelessness or not reporting at all each year. Since 2016-17 the total number of LEAs with no students identified decreased from 69 to 29, with more school districts reporting than ever before in 2018-19.

As a result of ECYEH Program outreach to non-LEAs, primarily shelters and prekindergarten programs, there is a substantial portion of children/youth reported only by such entities. These numbers have increased each year. Children/youth identified by a non-LEA and an LEA are always reported with the LEA. Children/youth identified by a non-LEA only but with LEA information are also reported with the LEA. Children/youth are only reported with a non-LEA entity if that entity is the only source of homeless identification and no LEA information can be verified. In 2018-19, 110 non-LEA entities<sup>17</sup> reported 9,055 children/youth/students (23 percent of identified children/youth) who could not be tied to an LEA. Many of the children/youth (6,241) reported by these facilities were birth to age 2, ages 3-5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten), or attending non-LEA prekindergarten programs. Non-LEA facilities reporting has increased each year due to ongoing coordinator outreach, state level collaboration, and increased awareness of reporting responsibilities of these entities. The 2018-19 year was the first that included every county in shelter data. However, with increased awareness and more accurate and complete reporting, more children and youth reported by non-LEA entities could be matched to their LEA and were reported with their LEA.

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<sup>15</sup> 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> The LEA's percent of low-income families was less than 40 percent.

<sup>17</sup> In almost every case, non-LEA entities are reported at the aggregate county level. As such, one non-LEA entity may be reporting several different sites within a county.

## ***Children and Youth Characteristics***

In alignment with federal reporting requirements, children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified by their nighttime status (fixed, regular, adequate) and are reported based on their age or grade category. One of the changes that occurred as a result of ESSA is the way in which children and youth are reported. While the under-five population is still captured in the same way, as of December 2016, awaiting foster care was no longer considered eligible for homeless identification and services under the McKinney-Vento Act and the out-of-school population – those youth who are 21 or younger, have not graduated, and meet the definition of McKinney-Vento Act homelessness – are no longer reported unless they are enrolled in an LEA-operated high school in college (grade 13) program.

Each year the ECYEH Program identifies more children and youth experiencing homelessness than in the prior year. This continued growth in identified children and youth is a direct result of the ECYEH Program outreach to LEAs, shelters, and prekindergarten programs. In 2018-19, 39,221 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness. This is an increase from 36,823 identified children and youth in 2017-18.

The increase in 2018-19 was a direct result of all counties being represented in shelter data as well as more LEAs and pre-kindergarten programs reporting students.

The sections that follow provide homeless information and demographics for identified children/youth experiencing homelessness based on all reported children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness at any point during the ECYEH Program year (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019).

PDE reports for 2018-19 year showed a public school (school districts, charter/cyber charter schools, comprehensive technical centers) October 1 enrollment count of 1,719,288 students.<sup>18</sup> In 2018-19, 31,822 of the 39,221 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness were identified as enrolled in school. Students experiencing homelessness made up 2 percent of the total public school enrolled population. The latest national percentage is from 2015-16 and is approximately 2.5 percent of the enrolled population experienced homelessness.<sup>19</sup>

Homeless information and demographics in this section reflect the required federal reporting elements: age/grade categories, nighttime status, unaccompanied youth status, migrant status, English learner (EL), and disability. Demographic information is not available for every individual identified. What exists is based upon the data source from which the information was collected. Each section that follows will indicate the population included in the demographic data element.

Figure 3 shows the age/grade breakdowns of the 39,221 children/youth/students identified as experiencing homelessness. The federal reporting categories include: birth to age 2, ages 3-5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten), prekindergarten (LEA or non-LEA prekindergarten programs),

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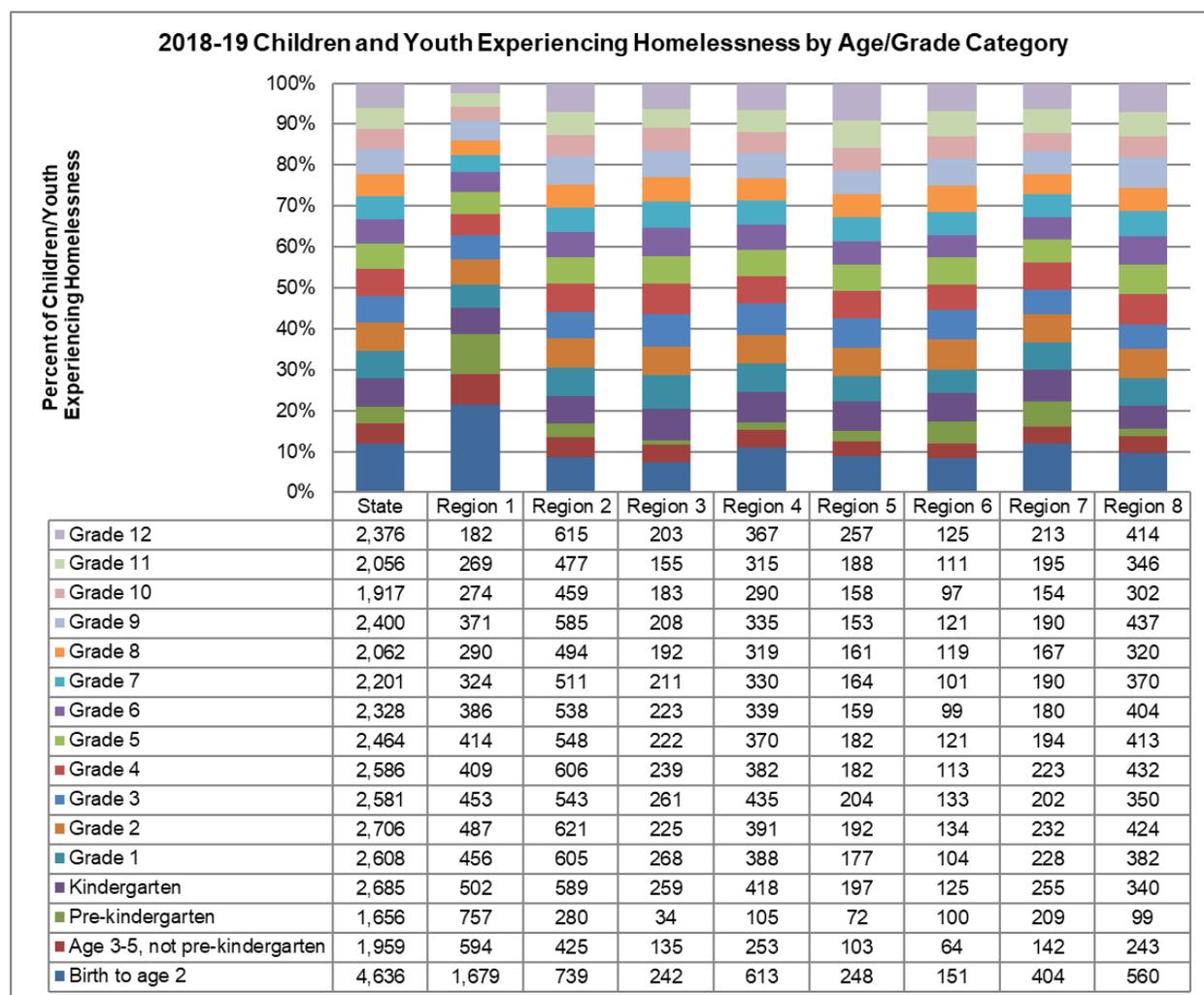
<sup>18</sup> <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> Appendix B of the Getting to Graduation Toolkit: <https://nche.ed.gov/getting-to-graduation/>

and kindergarten through grade 12 (including ungraded). No grade 13 students were identified as experiencing homelessness.

Focus continues to increase on the reporting of under-five children (not yet in kindergarten); this group has steadily increased even as changes in ESSA may have reduced eligibility criteria. Differences among regions in the prekindergarten categories are most likely reflective of differing migrant populations, differing numbers of prekindergarten programs (both LEA and non-LEA), differing numbers of shelters among the regions, the extent to which each of these reporting entities reported on children in the under five categories, and the extent to which LEAs report on non-enrolled siblings of identified students.

**Figure 3. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Age/Grade Category**



Nighttime status 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 students enrolled in public prekindergarten through grade 12 schools. Nighttime status was not required for the birth to 2 population or for children ages 3-5 and not enrolled in an LEA-operated prekindergarten program; therefore, while collected and used for program implementation and

management purposes, inclusion in the report is limited to the federally required nighttime status age/grade categories.

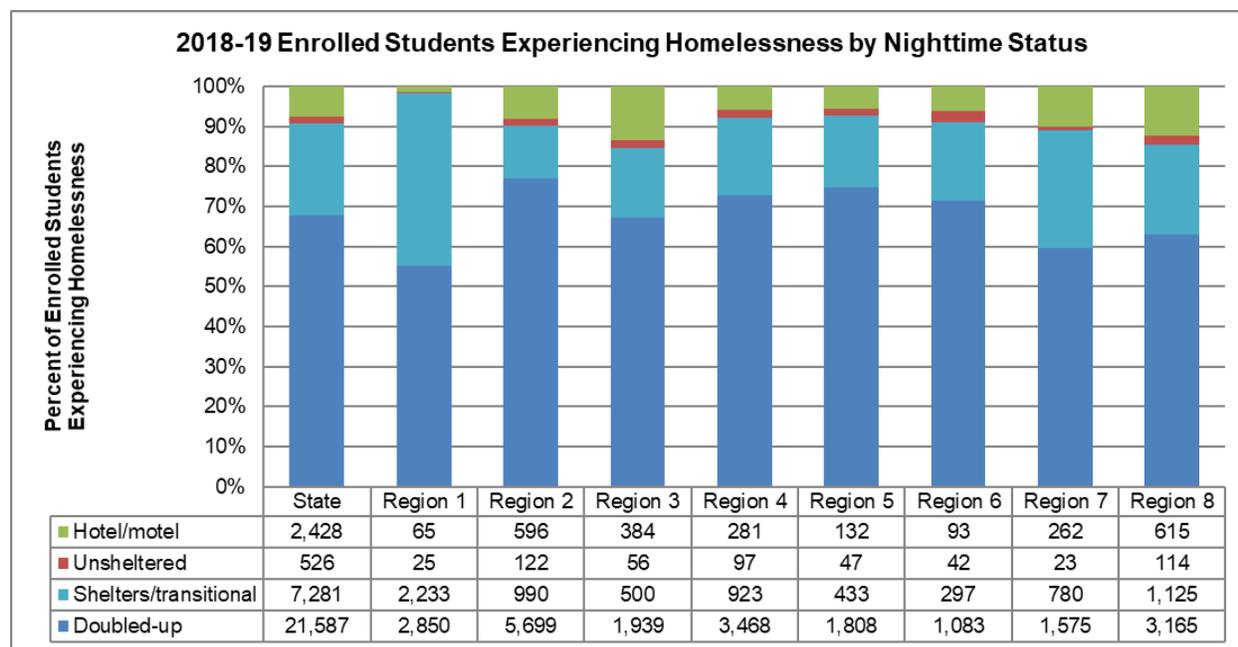
Nighttime status reporting categories include doubled-up, hotels/motels, shelters and transitional housing, and unsheltered. Per federal requirements, the first nighttime status category is reported.

Figure 4 shows the nighttime status for the 31,822 students who were enrolled in school, prekindergarten programs through grade 12.

Overall, 68 percent of students had a nighttime status of doubled-up and 23 percent of enrolled students had shelter as their nighttime status category. This is similar to prior years, even though 2018-19 included all counties in shelter identification. This similarity to the prior year – 70 percent and 21 percent respectively – supports the data in showing that students being identified by shelters are, for the most part, also being reported by the LEAs they attend.

Region 1, though still lower than the other regions with regard to doubled-up numbers, continues to implement specific strategies to better identify the doubled-up population and their efforts are showing in the steady increase each year in the reporting of that population. Since 2010-11, Region 1 child/youth doubled-up counts have increased from 402 students to 2,850 students in 2018-19. Prior to 2010-11, the focus in this region had been with shelters, thus reflecting such a low number in 2010-11.

**Figure 4. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Nighttime Status**

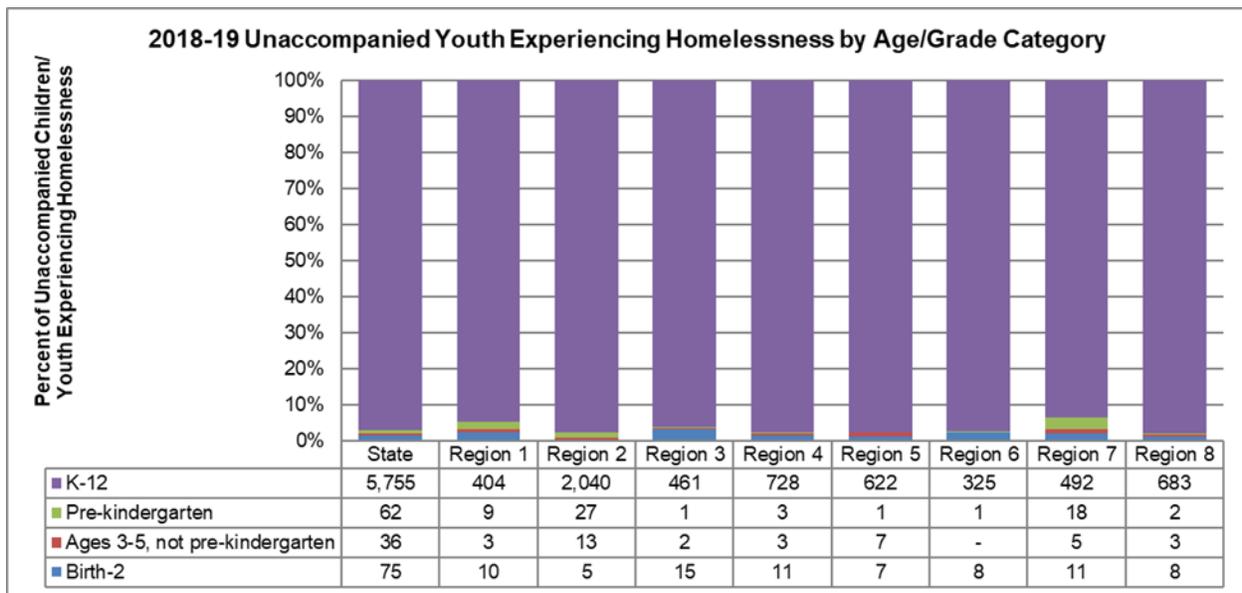


Unaccompanied youth is a federally defined term. Children or youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness may also be identified as an “unaccompanied homeless

youth,” meaning the child is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. An unaccompanied youth can be any age, birth to 21 years old.<sup>20</sup>

Overall, 5,928 (15 percent) of the 39,221 children and youth were identified as being an unaccompanied youth. Interestingly, though the number of identified children/youth/ students has increased each year, this percentage has stayed the same the past few years.

**Figure 5. Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Age/Grade Category**



Specific special education status information was collected from the PIMS extract for students enrolled in school. Additionally, evaluators coded children identified in early intervention programs as receiving special education services. They are included in either the developmental delay or the infant/toddler designation depending on the age/grade category. Students identified only in HMIS (shelter) reporting with a designation of disability are included; however, this designation in most cases did not specify the type of disability.

Of the 39,221 identified children and youth, 9,856 (25 percent) were identified as having a disability. Of the 9,856 children and youth designated as having a disability, the largest percentage of individuals (35 percent) was categorized as having a “specific learning disability.” These are similar percentages to the prior year - 26 percent and 35 percent, respectively. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the disability categories using federal reporting categories. Because of small numbers in several of the categories, for confidentiality, regional findings are not included.

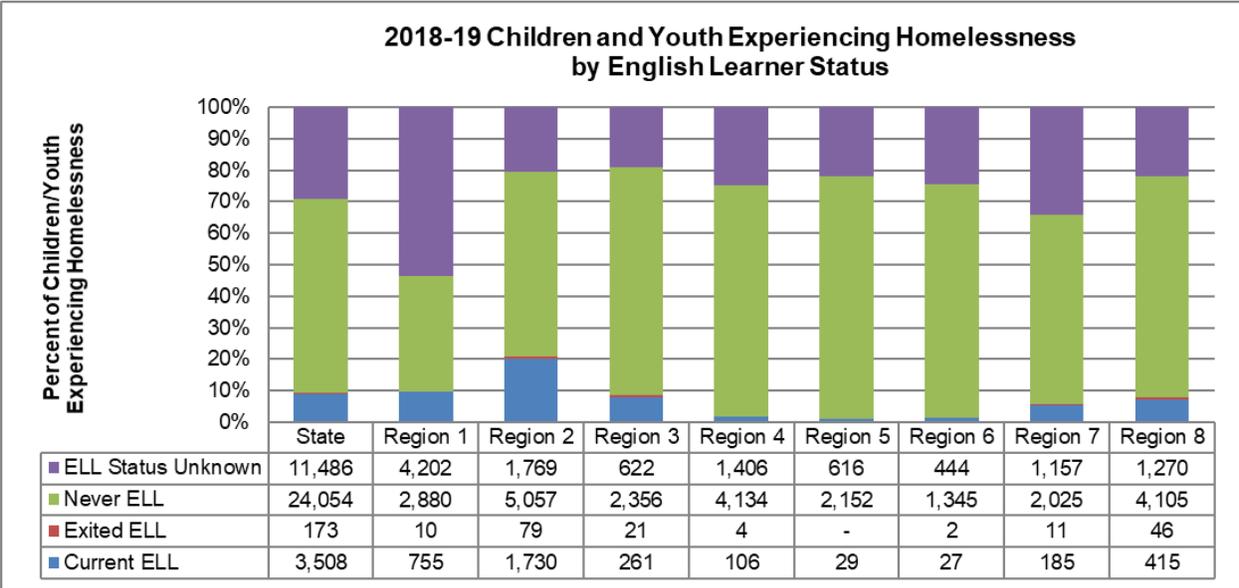
<sup>20</sup> This definition of unaccompanied youth differs from the HUD definition, which extends to under 25 years of age <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless>.

**Table 1. Disability Category for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness**

| Disability Category                    | Number of students | Percent of students |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| Specific learning disability           | 3,403              | 35%                 |
| Other health impairment                | 1,298              | 13%                 |
| Emotional disturbance                  | 1,168              | 12%                 |
| Disability type unknown                | 1,030              | 10%                 |
| Speech or language impairment          | 765                | 8%                  |
| Infants and toddlers with disabilities | 613                | 6%                  |
| Intellectual disability                | 549                | 6%                  |
| Autistic/autism                        | 446                | 5%                  |
| Multiple disabilities                  | 356                | 4%                  |
| Developmental delay                    | 125                | 1%                  |
| Hearing impairment including deafness  | 52                 | <1%                 |
| Visual impairment including blindness  | 21                 | <1%                 |
| Traumatic brain injury                 | 16                 | <1%                 |
| Orthopedic impairment                  | 14                 | <1%                 |
| Deaf-Blindness                         | -                  | -                   |

Evaluators collected English learner information through PIMS for all enrolled students and through MIS2000 for migrant children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness. English learner information was not collected for children/youth only identified through the HMIS (shelter) system or for the non-enrolled under five population, excepting migrant children also designated as experiencing homelessness. English learners comprise about 9 percent of the children/youth experiencing homelessness. Children/youth in Region 2 had the greatest percentage of English learners, followed by Region 8 and then Region 1. Each of these regions reflects migrant patterns and consistently have the highest proportions of English learners.

**Figure 6. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by English Learner Status**



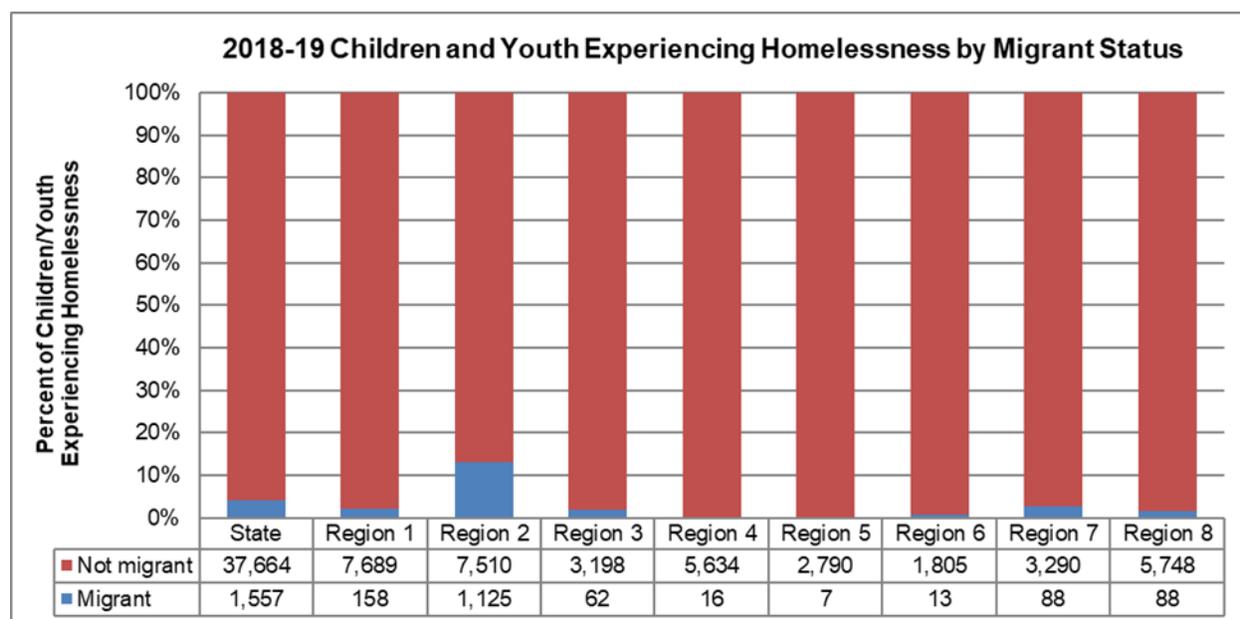
Migrant status can be determined for all children/youth identified as experiencing homelessness. MIS2000, the state migrant education database that tracks all eligible migrant children and youth, captures homeless eligibility information. As such, the migrant status of all eligible children experiencing homelessness can be documented.

Of the 39,211 identified children and youth, 4 percent (1,557 children and youth) were identified as eligible for services through the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program. This number and percentage is slightly higher than the prior year of 3 percent or 1,177 children/youth.

The numbers of migrant children/youth vary considerably across Pennsylvania depending on where qualifying migrant work is located. While migrant children and youth only make up 4 percent of the total homeless served population, it is important to note the differences among the ECYEH regions. Migrant status may also influence other demographics such as EL status, mobility, or economic status, especially in the regions where there is a larger migrant population.

Figure 7 shows that ECYEH Region 2 has the largest numbers of migrant children/youth. The migrant population is greater in the eastern half of Pennsylvania (regions 2, 7, 3, and 8). As such, the numbers of migrant youth experiencing homelessness are greater in these regions than in the rest of the state.

**Figure 7. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Migrant Status**



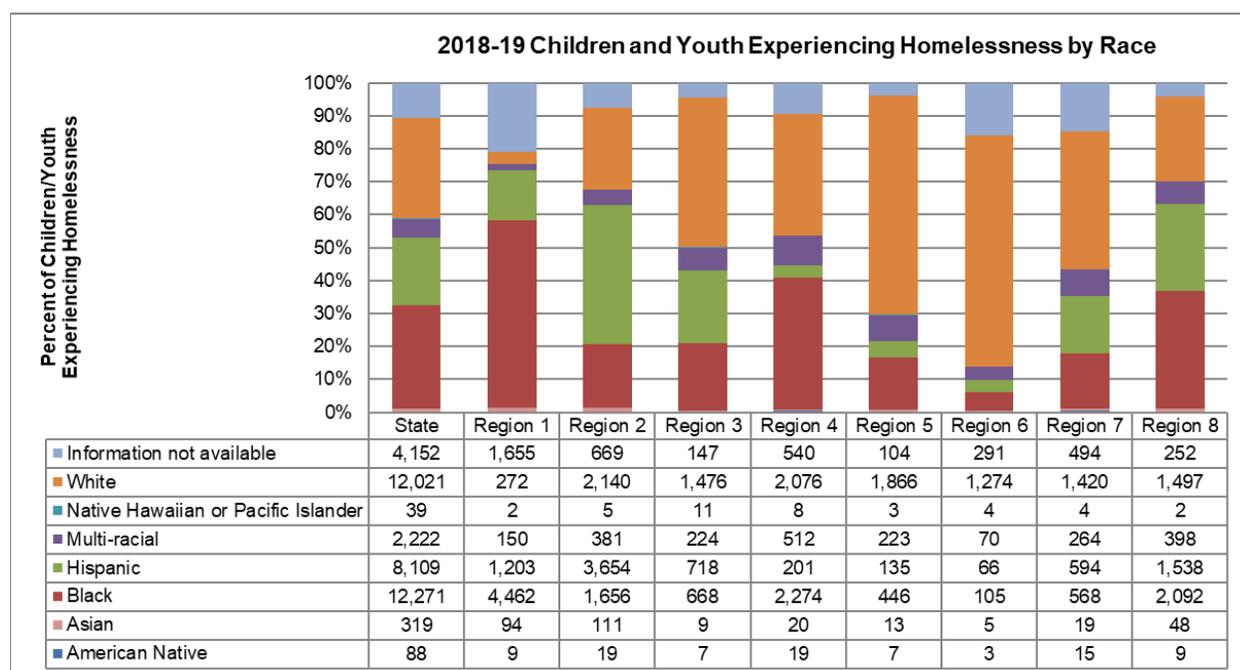
Additional child/youth or LEA demographic information provides context to the evaluation findings to the extent that it further describes the population that is being identified and served as a result of ECYEH Program outreach and education and the community in which the identified children/youth live and attend school.

Child/youth demographics presented here include race and economic status. LEA demographics include percent of LEA enrollment from low-income families and urban-centric locales of the LEAs.

Information about race and ethnicity was collected through the PIMS extract for all enrolled students and through the MIS2000 extract for migrant children/youth also identified as experiencing homelessness. In most cases, HMIS extracts also provided race/ethnicity information. Race and ethnicity information is available for 89 percent of the identified children/youth. It is likely that the unknown population would reflect the ethnic/racial composition of the region, though it cannot be assumed.

Evaluators present federal race reporting categories in Figure 8. The proportions of children and youth experiencing homelessness in the federal race categories have remained relatively consistent each year, though disaster-displaced children/youth elevated the Hispanic (any race) percentage in 2017-18 to 24 percent. In 2018-19 Hispanic (any race) individuals comprised 21 percent of children/youth experiencing homelessness, which may indicate a shift back to previously lower percentages – the Hispanic (any race) percentage was about 17 percent in 2016-17. Black/African American (not Hispanic) and White/Caucasian (not Hispanic) each comprised 31 percent of identified children and youth. Race varies by region, reflecting the populations of the regions. For example, regions 1 (Philadelphia) and 4 (Pittsburgh) have large urban areas with greater diversity; regions 5 and 6 (northwest and north central PA) are more rural and homogeneous; and Region 2 (southeastern PA) has large Hispanic communities.

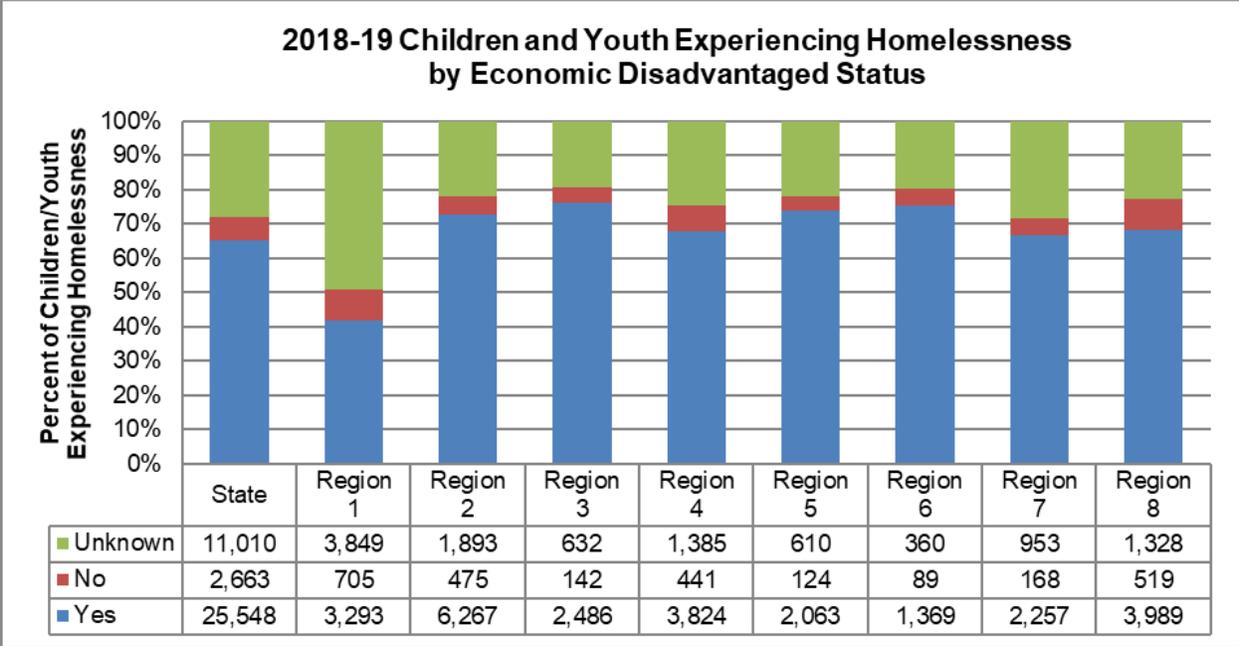
**Figure 8. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Race**



Economic disadvantage information was collected from PIMS for all enrolled students. It is also an eligibility criterion for all children who attend Early Head Start or Head Start programs. As such, evaluators were able to code prekindergarten children known to attend Head Start or Early Head Start programs as being economically disadvantaged.

Of the 39,221 identified children and youth, 65 percent were designated as economically disadvantaged, and 7 percent were reported as not economically disadvantaged. The 28 percent of children/youth whose economic status is unknown is comprised primarily of children/youth identified in shelters. 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.

**Figure 9. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Economic Status**



**LEA Demographics**

Enrollment from low-income families and urban-centric locale of the LEA provides further information regarding the communities of the schools that identified students attended.

PDE produces a public report that provides the percentage of students who come from low-income families.<sup>21</sup> This report is based on LEA third-day enrollment of economically disadvantaged students and shows the percentage of the enrollment from low-income families in each LEA.

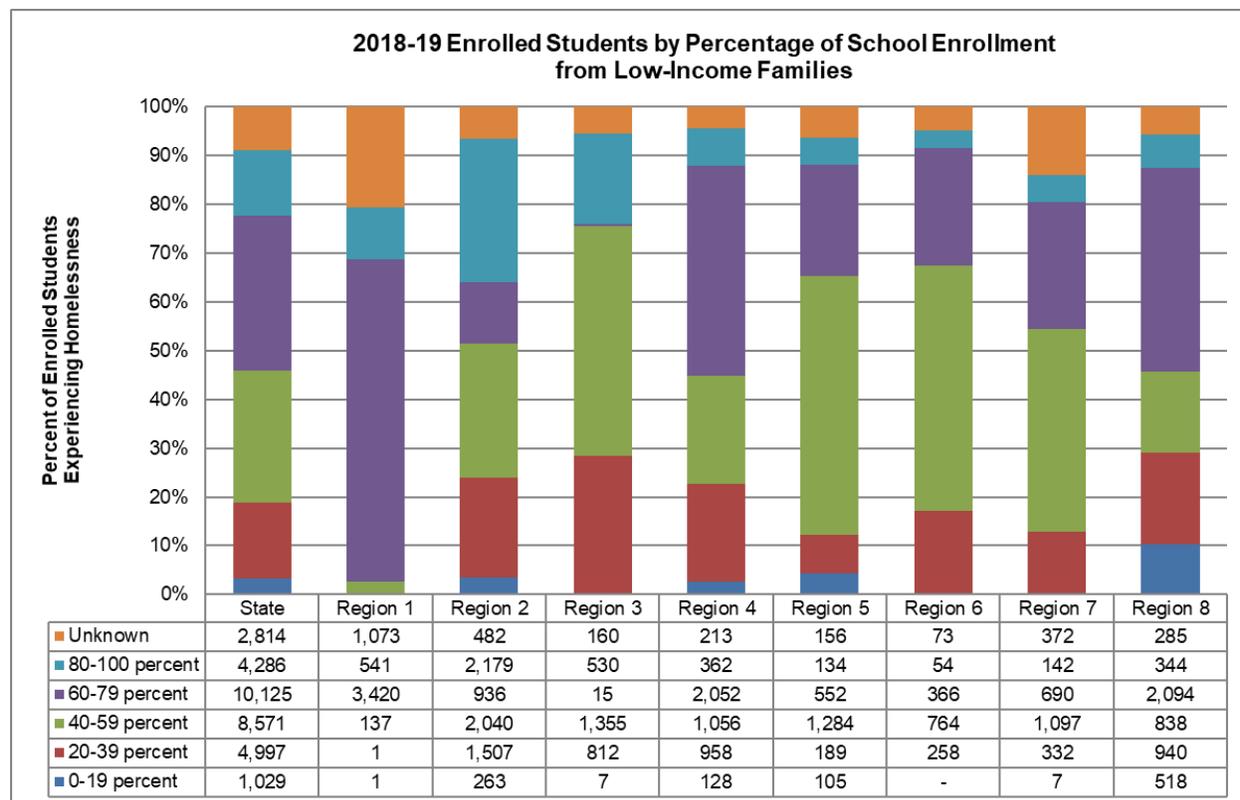
Evaluators examined the percentage of low-income families in the LEAs enrolled students attended to determine what percentage of the identified students attended higher poverty schools. The graph that follows shows percentage categories of low-income families in an LEA and the identified students attending LEAs within each low-income category.

Overall, 72 percent of students designated as being enrolled in school (31,822) attended LEAs that had 40 percent or more of the student population classified as coming from low-income families. This information was unknown for 9 percent of the enrolled population, those students who were identified only by shelters with no additional LEA information. Typically, LEAs with an economically disadvantaged identification rate of 40 percent or more are considered high-poverty LEAs. Region 5 had 81 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs with Region 1 having 79 percent and Region 6 having 78 percent of students attending high-poverty schools. Both regions 4 and 7 had 73 percent of identified students attending high-poverty schools with Region 3 having 70 percent. Regions 8 and 3 had the lowest percentage of students, 65 and 66 percent, respectively, attending high-poverty schools.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.education.pa.gov/Data-and-Statistics/Pages/Loan-Cancellation,-Low-Income.aspx>

What is important to glean from these findings is that poverty is a factor for the student body and the community at large where students identified as experiencing homelessness attended school.

**Figure 10. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by LEA Economic Status**



In 2009-10, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) used an urban-centric locale code system to classify LEAs.<sup>22</sup> The urban-centric locale code system uses 12 categories to designate 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>23</sup> Evaluators further collapsed these 12 categories to gain a better picture of the key categories - city, suburban, town, rural, and unknown.

Figure 11 shows the student population by the public school's locale code. The 'could not be determined' category includes 415 students who attended an LEA that served multiple LEAs, most typically intermediate unit prekindergarten programs and regional or cyber charter schools. There were 2,814 students who were reported as attending school but were identified in a shelter and the LEA was unknown.

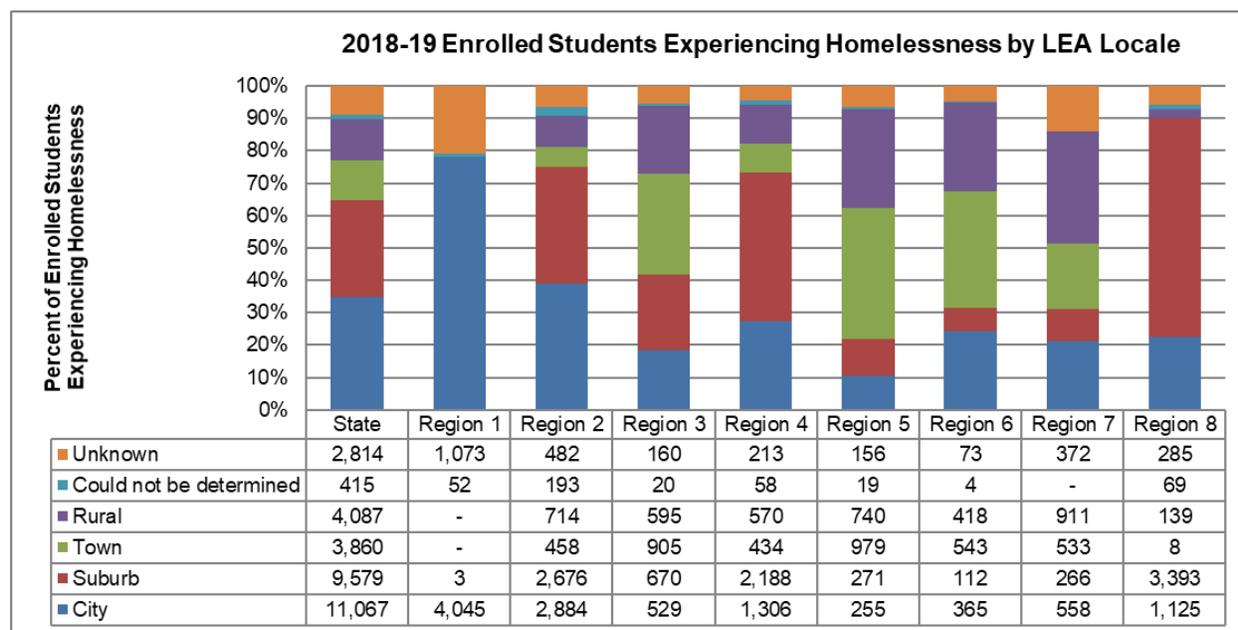
Overall, 65 percent of enrolled students (31,822) attended LEAs categorized as city (11,067 students) or suburban (9,579 students). However, distinct variations can be seen across the

<sup>22</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>23</sup> [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural\\_locales.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp)

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 and also needs to be considered when examining regional outcomes.

**Figure 11. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by LEA Locale**



## PROGRAM IMPACT

This section of the report examines the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the ECYEH Program occurred for the program year. Included 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 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 reported by LEAs or ECYEH staff who work to resolve a barrier situation. Understanding of barriers has increased as has reporting of such barriers, though this still varies considerably from LEA to LEA. Of the enrolled children and youth, 79 percent (25,021 of 31,822) had barrier data, of which 11 percent (3,618) were reported as having barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success.

Table 2 shows the prevalence of barriers that LEAs or ECYEH Program staff reported. The most common barrier was determining if a student met the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness and was, therefore, eligible to receive homeless services and support from the ECYEH Program, followed by transportation, and then other barriers. Other barriers reported included school breaks/holidays, hospitalization between identification and attendance, securing

childcare, incomplete disclosure of information during enrollment, or family-initiated delays in attendance. Determining if a student is eligible for homeless service and transportation have consistently been the top two barriers. Transportation issues, despite ongoing efforts to resolve, continue to be a huge barrier for Region 4 primarily due to the high volume of school districts in Allegheny County.

In some cases, items reported as barriers are actually rights regarding school enrollment for students experiencing homelessness. Those rights include immediate enrollment without medical or immunization records. This continues to be an ongoing topic of educating LEAs to the rights of students under the Mc-Kinney-Vento Act and is addressed via ongoing professional development, on-call LEA technical assistance, and annual monitoring visits.

**Table 2. Barriers to School Enrollment for Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness**

|  | State         | Region 1     | Region 2     | Region 3     | Region 4     | Region 5     | Region 6     | Region 7     | Region 8     |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Determining eligibility for homeless services  | 1,745         | 272          | 274          | 296          | 303          | 164          | 127          | 197          | 112          |
| Transportation                                 | 1,473         | 129          | 183          | 134          | 551          | 169          | 67           | 111          | 129          |
| Obtaining other medical records                | 133           | 10           | 13           | 1            | 19           | 9            | 9            | 10           | 62           |
| Immunization records                           | 184           | 16           | 23           | 1            | 33           | 14           | 15           | 16           | 66           |
| School records                                 | 239           | 24           | 26           | 5            | 72           | 22           | 11           | 15           | 64           |
| School selection                               | 270           | 55           | 16           | -            | 80           | 22           | 22           | 9            | 66           |
| Other  | 336           | 93           | 36           | 24           | 56           | 13           | 10           | 7            | 97           |
| <b>Any barriers</b>                            | <b>2,809</b>  | <b>332</b>   | <b>386</b>   | <b>339</b>   | <b>830</b>   | <b>268</b>   | <b>166</b>   | <b>285</b>   | <b>203</b>   |
| <b>Total youth for whom data was available</b> | <b>25,021</b> | <b>3,762</b> | <b>5,575</b> | <b>2,462</b> | <b>3,972</b> | <b>2,058</b> | <b>1,254</b> | <b>2,047</b> | <b>3,891</b> |
| <b>Percentage of youth with any barrier</b>    | <b>11%</b>    | <b>9%</b>    | <b>7%</b>    | <b>14%</b>   | <b>21%</b>   | <b>13%</b>   | <b>13%</b>   | <b>14%</b>   | <b>5%</b>    |

There has been ongoing interest related to barriers for the under-five population, yet a considerable portion (80 percent) of the under-five age group (8,251 children) are children birth to age 2 (4,636 children) or children ages 3-5 not enrolled in prekindergarten (1,959 children). Program access could be the issue that needs addressed for those children ages 3-5, identified as experiencing homelessness, and not enrolled in any prekindergarten programming; however, that is beyond the scope of this ECYEH Program evaluation. That said, coordinators continue to support coordination and collaboration for this population.

LEA prekindergarten is the only group where barrier information is collected unless an ECYEH staff actively worked to remove a barrier for a child attending a non-LEA prekindergarten program. Of the 1,656 children identified as experiencing homelessness who attended a prekindergarten program (LEA and non-LEA), 65 percent (1,073 children) had barrier data. Of those 1,073 children, 34 children (3 percent) were identified as having one or more barriers. Similarly, determining eligibility for services and transportation were the primary barriers indicated.

**Student Mobility**

Eligible students have the right 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, 2018 through June 30, 2019, even if the student was not identified as being homeless by that particular LEA.

Of the 31,822 students identified as being enrolled in school, LEA/school mobility could be determined for 29,008 students (91 percent). The ‘unable to determine’ group (2,814 students) is comprised of students who were reported as being enrolled in school, but did not have enough information to be able to determine mobility.

Table 3 shows LEA/school moves and includes the number of LEA/school combinations a student had and the number and percentage of students associated with each move. Eighty-two percent of enrolled students remained in their LEA/school combination during the program year, 9 percent of students had two LEA/school moves, and less than one percent (11 students) had more than two moves.

While a good portion of students (26,140) remained in one LEA/school combination, there are still students (395) who experienced two or more moves during the program year and 2,814 students for which moves cannot be determined. In these cases, it is possible that these students experienced at least one school move during the year.

**Table 3. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Mobility**

|                    | Total         | 1 LEA-School  | 2 LEA-Schools | >2 LEA-Schools | Unable to Determine | % 1 LEA-School | % 2 LEA-Schools | % >2 LEA-Schools | % Unable to Determine |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Region 1           | 5,173         | 3,672         | 417           | 11             | 1,073               | 71%            | 8%              | 0%               | 21%                   |
| Region 2           | 7,407         | 6,330         | 558           | 37             | 482                 | 85%            | 8%              | 0%               | 7%                    |
| Region 3           | 2,879         | 2,427         | 273           | 19             | 160                 | 84%            | 9%              | 1%               | 6%                    |
| Region 4           | 4,769         | 4,068         | 451           | 37             | 213                 | 85%            | 9%              | 1%               | 4%                    |
| Region 5           | 2,420         | 2,026         | 225           | 13             | 156                 | 84%            | 9%              | 1%               | 6%                    |
| Region 6           | 1,515         | 1,267         | 170           | 5              | 73                  | 84%            | 11%             | 0%               | 5%                    |
| Region 7           | 2,640         | 2,011         | 249           | 8              | 372                 | 76%            | 9%              | 0%               | 14%                   |
| Region 8           | 5,019         | 4,339         | 384           | 11             | 285                 | 86%            | 8%              | 0%               | 6%                    |
| <b>State Total</b> | <b>31,822</b> | <b>26,140</b> | <b>2,727</b>  | <b>141</b>     | <b>2,814</b>        | <b>82%</b>     | <b>9%</b>       | <b>0%</b>        | <b>9%</b>             |

**Service Delivery**

Students experiencing homelessness have 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 through multiple sources including the ECYEH Program directly or through use of McKinney-Vento Act funds, LEAs, prekindergarten programs, the Migrant Education Program, or shelters. Documentation of these services was reported through the service delivery section of the ECYEH data collection process, PIMS Program Fact Template, MIS2000, and the domestic violence shelter spreadsheet.

All information was compiled 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, many children and youth were designated as receiving instructional support services. These included children who were identified as attending federal, state, or locally funded prekindergarten programs, receiving services from the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development Early Intervention, or identified as receiving special education or Title III services. Likewise, any student attending a Title I schoolwide school was treated as having received instructional support since schoolwide schools may use Title I funds to upgrade curriculum of the school and all students in a schoolwide building benefit from Title I funds and services. All children/youth identified by a domestic violence shelter were designated as receiving services that addressed needs related to domestic violence. However, even with designating services, service delivery percentages are lower this year. This is likely a direct result of comprehensive shelter reporting that increased the number of shelter-only reported individuals. Documentation of services received is not included in that reporting. While it is expected that families received services as part of their shelter stay, we cannot assume or attribute services to children/youth residing in those shelters. ECYEH staff report on direct and indirect services they provide to a child, their family, LEAs, and other service providers. This information is reported in the program implementation section of the report (pages 16-17).

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, prekindergarten programs, the Migrant Education Program, shelters, collaborating agency/organizations, or donations.

All services documented here were reported at the child/youth level. Although service delivery documentation has improved each year, the table should be read with caution as there is no way to ensure that individuals report all services provided or selected the correct funding option. Additionally, each region has varying sources of other funding resources available, and each region has varying collaborations with entities that work with children/youth/families experiencing homelessness. The goal of this section is to highlight that almost all children/youth/families identified as experiencing homelessness are receiving supports in one or more of the designated areas.

Overall, 72 percent (28,103) of the 39,221 identified children and youth were documented as receiving service at the individual level. Region 4 showed the largest percentages of children and youth receiving services followed by regions 2, 5, and 6.

Table 4 shows state level results for the designated services and the funding sources for those services. Tutoring or other instructional support was by far the most prevalent service children/youth received. This is influenced by the number of students attending schoolwide Title I schools and the number of children and youth who received additional educational services such as prekindergarten programs, special education, or Title I services.

School supplies, transportation, and other services were the next largest cluster of services children/youth received when all funding categories were examined. Other services include hygiene items, clothing donations, or gift cards. A relatively new and increasing service is providing afterschool or weekend backpacks filled with food items.

When examining individual funding sources, tutoring and instructional support remained the number one service provided under Title I and other funds. For Title I funds, school supplies and clothing to support a school requirement were the next most common services provided. For McKinney-Vento Act funds coordination between schools and agencies, referrals to other programs and services, and clothing to meet a school requirement were the next most common services offered. Given the role of the ECYEH Program regional offices, it makes sense that coordination between schools and agencies is the most frequent service supported by McKinney-Vento Act funds. For other funds, transportation and other services that did not fall under the designated categories were the second and third most common services provided.

**Table 4. Children and Youth Served Statewide by Service Type and Funding Source**

| Service  | Title I Funds | McKinney-Vento Act Funds | Other Funds |
|--|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Addressing needs related to domestic violence              | 346           | 75                       | 2,675       |
| Assistance with participation in school programs           | 659           | 306                      | 2,439       |
| Before-, after-school, mentoring, summer programs          | 567           | 666                      | 2,085       |
| Clothing to meet a school requirement                      | 4,036         | 1,227                    | 2,339       |
| Coordination between schools and agencies                  | 1,583         | 1,682                    | 2,390       |
| Counseling   | 1,321         | 815                      | 3,490       |
| Early childhood programs                                   | 224           | 744                      | 1,208       |
| Emergency assistance related to school attendance          | 379           | 868                      | 1,709       |
| Expedited evaluations                                      | 493           | 147                      | 926         |
| Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment | 1,250         | 813                      | 1,155       |
| Other Services   | 752           | 216                      | 4,383       |
| Referral to other programs and services                    | 1,398         | 1,262                    | 2,746       |
| Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services   | 1,215         | 800                      | 3,269       |
| School supplies  | 2,997         | 1,417                    | 4,130       |
| Transportation   | 1,635         | 868                      | 6,130       |
| Tutoring or other instructional support                    | 13,657        | 846                      | 15,163      |
| Unique count of children/youth receiving MV services       |               | 5,117                    |             |
| Unique count of children/youth receiving Other services    |               |                          | 22,790      |
| Unique count of children/youth receiving Title I services  | 15,534        |                          |             |

Table 5 provides counts of children/youth served by funding source, where each child or youth is counted once within that funding source category, for the state overall and each region

individually. For context, the number of children and youth served, total number of children and youth, and the percentage of children or youth served is also provided.

**Table 5. Children and Youth Served by Region and by Funding Source**

| State/<br>Region | Unique<br>count of<br>children/<br>youth<br>receiving<br>Title I<br>services | Unique<br>count of<br>children/<br>youth<br>receiving<br>MV<br>services | Unique<br>count<br>of children<br>youth<br>receiving<br>Other<br>services | Total<br>children/youth<br>receiving<br>services | Total<br>children/<br>youth | Percentage<br>of children/<br>youth with<br>any<br>services |
|------------------|--|---|---|--|-----------------------------|---|
| State            | 15,534   | 5,117   | 22,790  | 28,111   | 39,221                      | 72%   |
| Region 1         | 3,347  | 1,791   | 4,534   | 5,506  | 7,847                       | 70%   |
| Region 2         | 3,407  | 1,339   | 5,792   | 6,330  | 8,636                       | 73%   |
| Region 3         | 1,254  | 58  | 1,569   | 2,182  | 3,260                       | 67%   |
| Region 4         | 2,567  | 362   | 3,051   | 4,271  | 5,650                       | 76%   |
| Region 5         | 1,168  | 462   | 1,596   | 2,033  | 2,797                       | 73%   |
| Region 6         | 592  | 80  | 1,060   | 1,324  | 1,818                       | 73%   |
| Region 7         | 1,012  | 189   | 1,882   | 2,308  | 3,378                       | 68%   |
| Region 8         | 2,187  | 836   | 3,306   | 4,157  | 5,836                       | 71%   |

Some services documented at the individual level are also provided to some children/youth by the ECYEH Program and are not captured at the individual student level: distribution of bus passes, clothing, school supplies (backpacks, college preparation materials, curriculum materials, hygiene items), fees for school activities, or recreational, social, or holiday activities and events where the services were typically provided in bulk and where the recipient was unknown. This information is captured in the Technical Assistance and Bulk Supply section of the web-based data collection system. Details regarding technical assistance and bulk supplies provided by the ECYEH Program are detailed earlier in the report (pages 16-17).

### ***Title I Services***

All students identified as experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of whether their school is a Title I school or the student has an academic need.<sup>24</sup> LEAs must reserve (or set aside) the funds necessary to serve children and youth

<sup>24</sup> When a school has 40 percent or higher of the school's enrollment comprised of low-income families, the school is eligible to apply for schoolwide Title I funds. 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.

experiencing homelessness who do not attend Title I schools, including educational-related support services. Before ESSA, if all schools in an LEA received Title I funds then the LEA was not required to set aside funds. However, beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, all LEAs receiving Title I funding must set aside funds for students experiencing homelessness.

As described in the service delivery section previously, receipt of Title I services is collected or designated in several ways. And, as indicated in Table 4, 15,518 students (49 percent of 31,822 enrolled students) were documented as receiving Title I services. Those services were mostly tutoring or other instructional support.

Of the 31,822 students, 90 percent (28,631 students) attended an LEA with one or more schools that received Title I funds, of which 40 percent (12,472 students) attended an LEA with one or more schools receiving school-wide funding. Poverty is pervasive not only to the identified homeless youth, but to the LEAs they attend.

## **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Academic outcomes are highlighted in this section and include state academic assessments, school attendance, graduation, and drop-out results. As noted in the Evaluation Design and Activities section of this report, evaluators provide the homeless flag to PDE for all enrolled students and requests available data for those students.

For the evaluation report, evaluators examine all available data for students experiencing homelessness as they do not have the capacity to include/exclude students based on the various reporting criteria for PSSA, school attendance, graduation, or drop-out. Plus, looking at the outcomes for all students with data provides an overall snapshot of academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

For federal reporting, the designated PDE departments use the homeless flag to prepare their department's *EDFacts* files. *EDFacts* homeless subgroup reporting outcomes are available from the *EDFacts* website.<sup>25</sup>

### ***State Academic Assessments: PSSA/PASA and Keystone Exam***

State academic assessment data for 2018-19 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. The PSSA is given in reading, math, science, and writing. The reading and math assessments are given in grades 3-8; the science assessment is given in grades 4 and 8; and the writing assessment is administered in grades 5 and 8. The PASA assesses students with the most severe cognitive disabilities in four grade level spans (grades 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8, and 11). The 2018-19 Keystone Exams were offered in literature, Algebra I, and biology for grades 7-11 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 grade 11 state and federal assessment and accountability reporting. This means that students taking the Keystone Exams who are not yet in grade 11 are being tested on grade 11 standards and content. As such, Keystone Exam data may not be used for accountability or

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html>

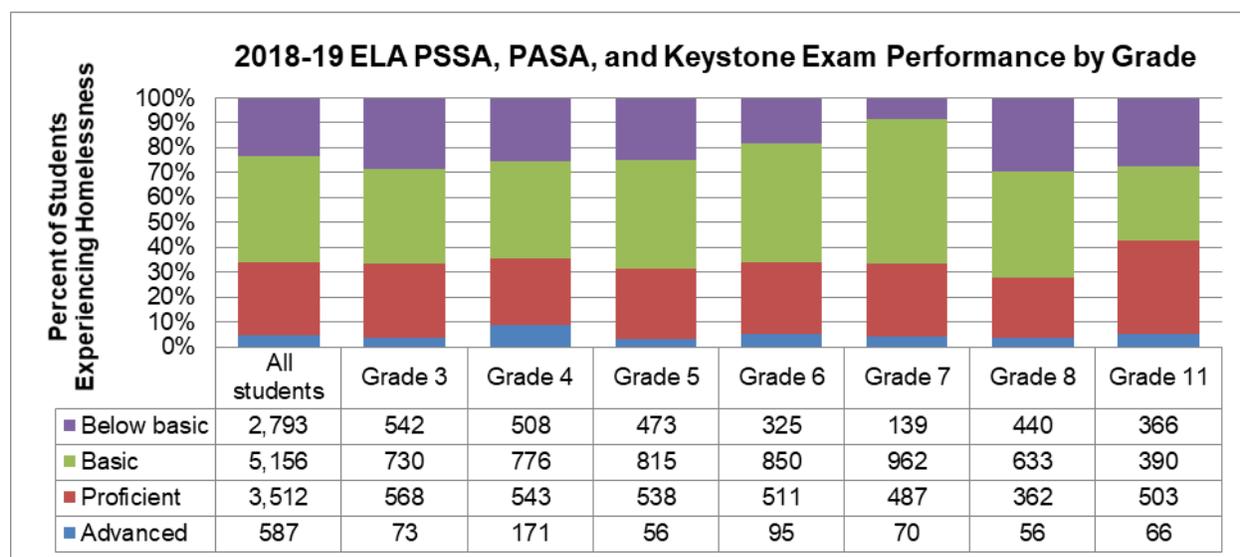
reporting until they are enrolled in grade 11. All students enrolled in public school in these grades should participate in the appropriate state assessments unless they meet one of the exemption criteria.

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.

During the 2018-19 school year, 16,278 students experiencing homelessness were 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), of which 12,048 students (74 percent) had PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results available.<sup>26</sup> The graph that follows shows student results in these ELA subjects by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Overall, 34 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level. This percentage varied by grade level with grade 11 having the greatest percentage of students (43 percent) scoring proficient or advanced and grade 5 having the smallest percentage of students (32 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

**Figure 12. ELA PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exam Performance by Grade**

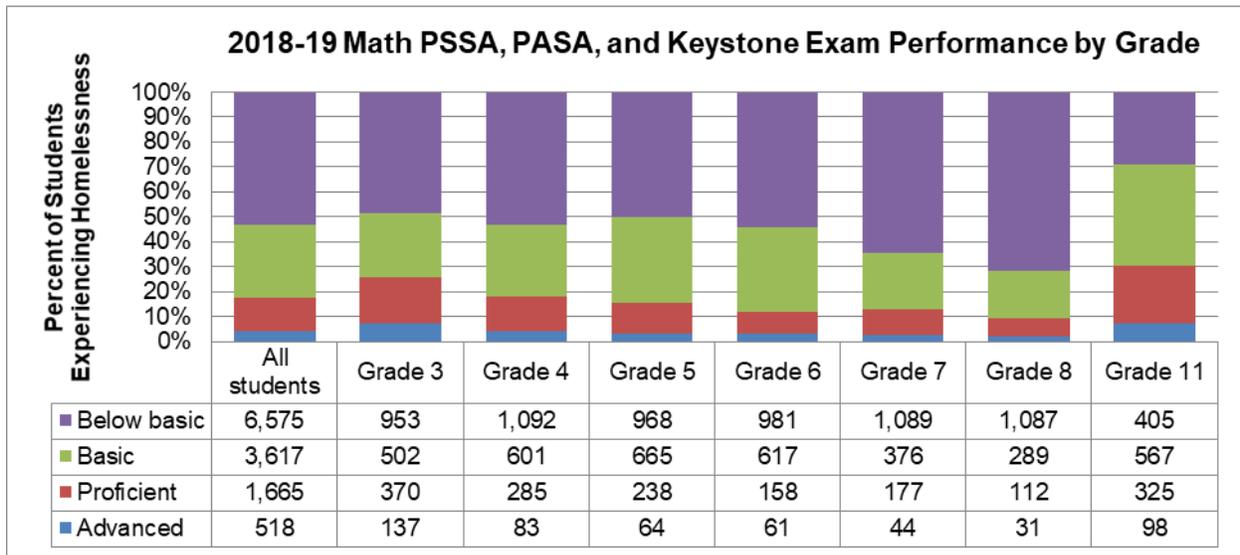


During the 2018-19 school year, 16,278 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the math PSSA (grades 3-8), the Algebra I Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the math PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11), of which 12,375 students (76 percent) had PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results. Figure 13 shows student results in math subjects by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

<sup>26</sup> English Learner students who have not been in the United States for at least one year are exempt from taking the Reading/Literature Exam.

Overall, 18 percent of students assessed scored in the proficient or advanced level. This percentage varied by grade level, with grade 11 grade having the greatest percentage of students (30 percent) scoring in the proficient or advanced level and grade 8 having the smallest percentage of students (9 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

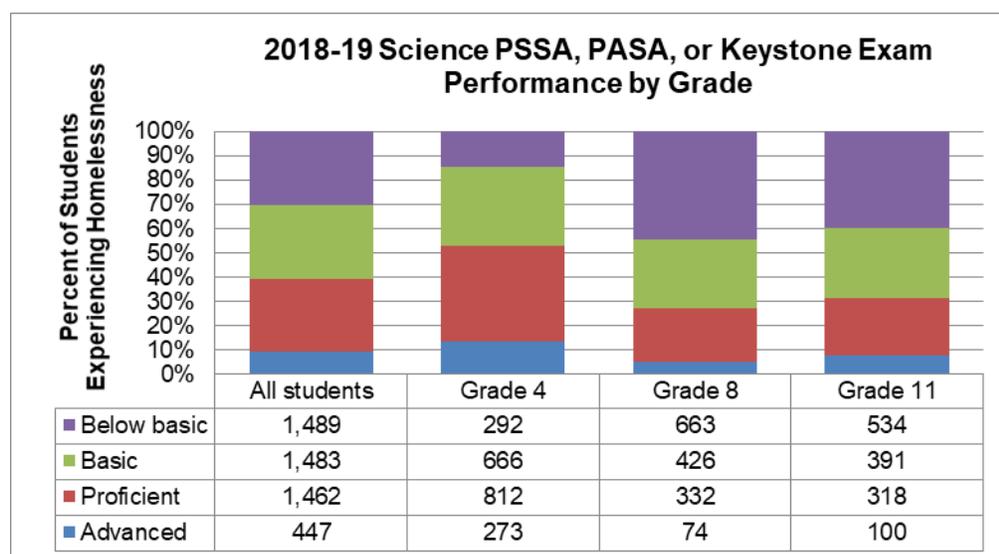
**Figure 13. Math PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exam Performance by Grade**



During the 2018-19 school year, 6,704 students experiencing homelessness 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 (grade 11), of which 4,881 students (73 percent) had results available. Figure 14 shows student results in science subjects by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Overall, 39 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level, with grade 3 having the largest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (53 percent) and grade 8 having the smallest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (27 percent).

**Figure 14. Science PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exam Performance by Grade**



Overall, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness taking the state assessments is lower than the state’s designated criteria of 95 percent. The nature of homelessness itself, coupled with mobility and transportation issues and their effects on attendance, is the most likely factor that contributes to not attaining the PSSA participation criteria.

Furthermore, students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania typically score far below their peers and about 10 percentage points lower than the historically underperforming population<sup>27</sup> in all grades and content areas. This has been a consistent pattern each year.

### **School Attendance**

McKinney-Vento Act recipients became a subgroup for chronic absenteeism in federal reporting (EDFacts) as a part of ESSA changes and was added as a data element to the evaluation report in 2017-18. Student absence is defined as: “a student was absent if he or she was not physically on school grounds and was not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for at least half the school day.”<sup>28</sup>

Chronic absenteeism for EDFacts reporting is defined as: “the unduplicated count<sup>29</sup> of students absent 10 percent or more of school days during the year.” Students (K-12) should be counted in the chronic absenteeism data once they have been enrolled in a school for a minimum of 10 school days.

Evaluators examined attendance data for all students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. Evaluators looked at a student’s total days attended across all schools so that each student had

<sup>27</sup> Historically Underperforming Students are defined as a non-duplicated count of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Learners enrolled for a full academic year taking the PSSA/PASA/Keystone Exams.

<sup>28</sup> FS195-Chronic Absenteeism File Specifications v15.0

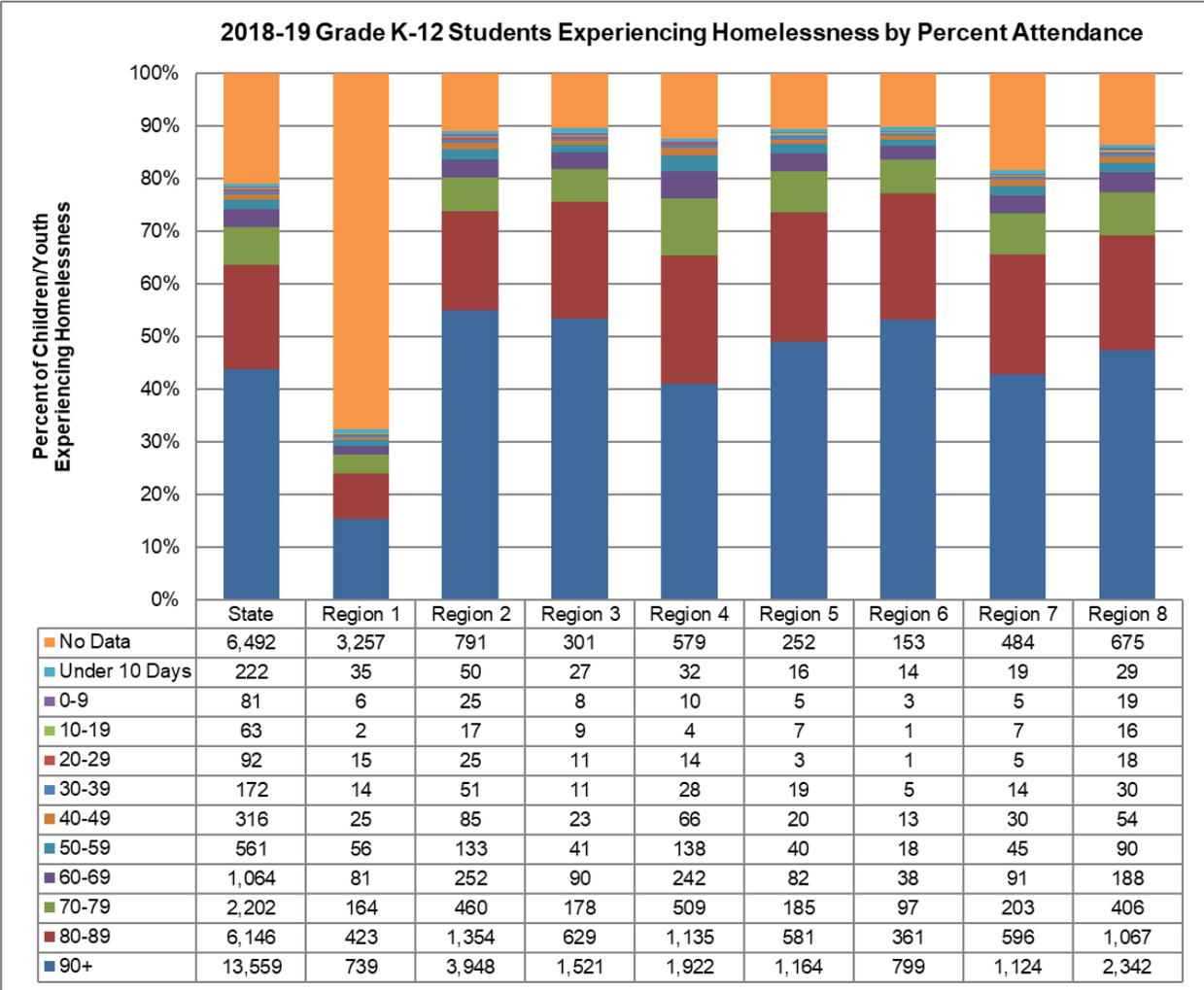
<sup>29</sup> Students should be counted once at each school he/she attends. For example, a student is enrolled in school A for half the school year and school B for the other half of the school year. This student should be counted at both school A and B.

one complete record for the academic calendar as opposed to each school attended. This provides for a more accurate picture of a student's school attendance in a given year than within each school attendance and takes into consideration attendance gaps between school enrollments.

Of the 30,970 identified enrolled K-12 students, 78 percent (24,256) of students had school attendance data, 21 percent (6,492) did not have attendance data, and 1 percent (222) were not enrolled in an LEA for 10 or more days.

Of the 24,256 students with data, 56 percent (13,559) attended school 90 percent or more of the days in which they were enrolled, 25 percent (6,146) attended 80-89 percent of days enrolled, and 9 percent (2,202) attended 70-79 percent of days enrolled. The remaining 10 percent of students (2,349) attended 69 percent or less of the days in which they were enrolled. Based on these data, 44 percent of students would be considered chronically absent. Figure 15 shows school attendance by the attendance percentage categories. Region 1's high no data numbers warranted further investigation. Of the 3,257 students with no attendance data, 63 percent had enrollment records but no attendance data, 37 percent did not have any enrollment records, of which, 36 percent of those students were only identified by a shelter.

**Figure 15. Grade K-12 Students Experiencing Homelessness by Percent Attendance**



**Graduation and Dropout**

McKinney-Vento Act recipients are a subgroup for graduation and dropout in federal reporting (EDFacts) and as such evaluators examined all available graduation and drop-out data. Drop-out data is examined for students in grades 7-12 and graduation data is examined for grade 12 students, though grade 11 students who graduated are noted as well.

There were 13,012 students identified as experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grades 7-12. Four percent of all students experiencing homelessness in grades 7-12 dropped out of school, which is about the same as the prior year, but much higher than the state rate of almost 2 percent.<sup>30</sup> However, it is lower than the drop-out rate of charter schools, which is almost 5 percent.

<sup>30</sup> The 2018-19 state drop-out rate is not yet available. As this rate does not change dramatically year to year, 2017-17 provides an approximation for comparison.

Grade 12 had the highest percentage of students dropping out at almost 9 percent (207 of 2,376 students); grade 11 had the next highest rate at 8 percent (160 of 2,056 students); and grade 10 had a rate of 5 percent (101 of 1,917 students).

In terms of graduation, 69 percent (1,644 of 2,376) of grade 12 students graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma. This is the same as the prior year.

For 22 percent (525) of grade 12 students, no dropout or graduation information was available. These students most likely are in grade 12 but did not earn enough credits to graduate on time. It should also be noted that 58 students (3 percent) designated as being in grade 11 either graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

## **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 prekindergarten, and academic success.

Regional coordinators and their staffers 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, prekindergarten 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, LEA identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness is more complete and accurate and there is increased reporting by LEAs overall, for non-enrolled younger siblings of enrolled students, for children enrolled in LEA prekindergarten programs, and by non-LEA entities, especially through HMIS reporting. The 2018-19 year was the first that all shelters were included in HMIS reporting. All of these factors have contributed to the overall increase of identified children and youth in 2018-19.

These increases are also the result of both LEA monitoring, which has contributed to the awareness and reporting of identified children/youth/students, and ECYEH Program outreach work to engage regional resources to identify and support youth and families experiencing homelessness, and the collaboration at the state and regional levels in regard to establishing the necessary agreements for HMIS data sharing. There are several trends that remain consistent for this population.

- Children/youth experiencing homelessness are predominately economically disadvantaged.

- A majority of students experiencing homelessness attend LEAs that have high levels of poverty.
- The majority of students remain in their LEA/school of origin.
- Transportation remains one of the most common barriers statewide.
- Despite some consistency for a large portion of children/youth, there are students who experience extreme mobility or experience barriers to enrollment.
- Students experiencing homelessness are performing substantially lower than historically underperforming students on Pennsylvania state academic assessments.
- Almost half of students experiencing homelessness experience chronic absenteeism, which may be a result of the ongoing transportation barriers and mobility and may contribute to lower outcomes on Pennsylvania academic assessments, on-time graduation, and high drop-out rates, especially in grades 10-12.

In a more global sense, there continues to be a disconnect between an increased focus on under-five children experiencing homelessness enrolling in and attending prekindergarten programs and McKinney-Vento Act reporting criteria. Few LEAs operate or fund prekindergarten programs and non-LEA prekindergarten programs are only required to report if they receive direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program. ECYEH staff, while charged with reaching out to all prekindergarten programs, many of which are non-LEA, also have a primary priority to support LEAs and their liaisons.

At this time, evaluators offer the following specific recommendations to optimize program implementation at the regional and local levels.

- Transportation for students experiencing homelessness remains a challenge among the regions. Continue to explore creative transportation options and engage the state office to identify or support solutions that may be helpful to LEAs struggling with transportation issues.
- Continue to maintain relationships and data sharing agreements with local, regional, or state Continuum of Care contemporaries to ensure that HMIS reporting continues for all 57 counties
- Continue to educate and support LEAs in the requirement of reporting their under-five population, be it those children who attend their prekindergarten programs, or non-enrolled younger siblings of enrolled students.
- Continue to build collaborations with prekindergarten partners at the state and regional levels and ensure that all LEAs know the prekindergarten programs in their area and have the capacity to make referrals when they enroll students who have under-five siblings not enrolled in prekindergarten programs. Connections between shelters and prekindergarten programs may need to be established.

- Students experiencing homelessness are performing lower than historically underperforming students in Pennsylvania. They appear to have high chronic absenteeism and drop-out incidences and a lower graduation rate. Continue to collaborate and explore interventions that offer additional instructional support – 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 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Use LEA outcomes to identify struggling LEAs and consider increasing professional development or technical assistance opportunities designed to assist LEAs with examining students' experiencing homelessness school attendance, participation in academic support activities, and assessment data. LEAs should examine their homeless students much like they examine other subgroups of students in their schools.
- Given the increased needs, collaboration, or services resulting from increased reporting of children/youth experiencing homelessness, increased outreach to non-LEA entities, and the addition of LEA monitoring preparation and follow-up, consideration may need to be given to restructuring of ECYEH staff duties. Consider the most time-effective delivery methods for training, technical assistance, and outreach, such as more regional, county, or IU located trainings, the utilization of technology for 1:1 or small group technical assistance, or participation in the most critical meetings, boards, consortiums, etc.
- Continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by or with other entities that work on or support homeless populations to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program. Utilize state technical assistance to monitor and assure that regions are accurately reporting the services they provide.

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, are provided to the regional coordinators and PDE program staff 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.