

Student Homelessness In Camden City School District:

Mobility and Frequency 2014-15 through 2018-19



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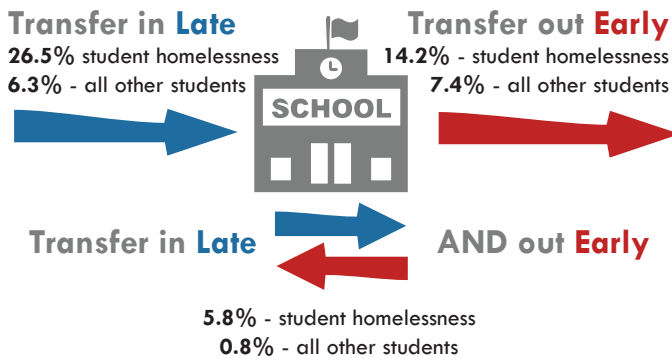
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Student Homelessness in the Camden City School District: Mobility and Frequency 2014-15 through 2018-19

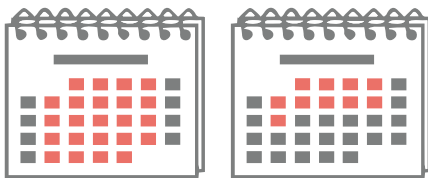
The Camden City School District (CCSD) identifies and serves students experiencing homelessness to support their education. These findings involve students in CCSD-operated public schools during the 2014-15 through 2018-19 school years.

Homelessness Leads To...

Enrolling **late**, Leaving **early**



33 Fewer Days Enrolled



217 more students

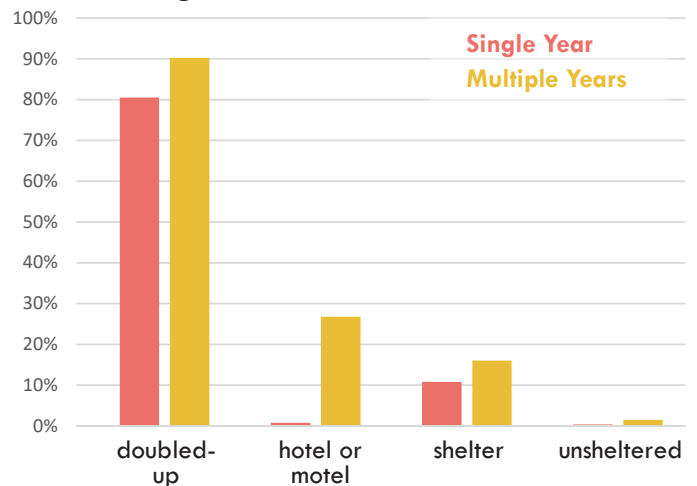
Homelessness is linked to more CCSD entries than exits, causing a net increase in enrollment

Differences When Homelessness Spans Single Year vs Multiple Years

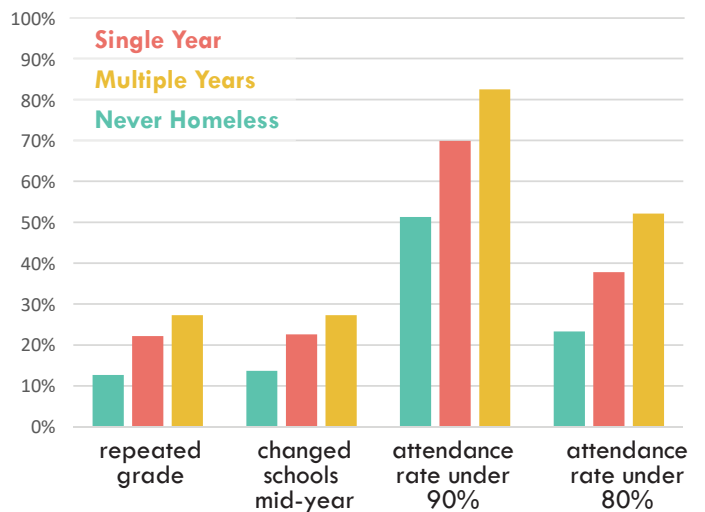


of students identified as homeless remain so for **two or more** school years

Nighttime Residence (Ever)



Educational Functioning



The Camden City School District (CCSD) proactively identifies and serves students who experience homelessness to ensure that they can access a quality education. This brief considers the 1,537 students identified by district staff as experiencing homelessness from the 2014-15 through 2018-19 school years, except where noted. These students were attending CCSD-operated public schools at some point across the five school years. We focus on mobility into and out of the district as well as between CCSD operated schools, and duration of homelessness across multiple years and its impact on attendance, grade retention, and school mobility. This brief is part of a series on student homelessness in CCSD. Additional information on patterns of student homelessness and its impact is available.¹

Entering and exiting the district.

Enrolling late and exiting early.

Homelessness contributes to students enrolling in CCSD late, leaving early, or both. Students who experienced homelessness were much more likely to transfer into or out of CCSD during the school year compared to students who were not identified as homeless (46.4% compared to 14.4%). Student homelessness contributed to enrolling in CCSD late (26.5% of students experiencing homelessness arrived after October 15) more than leaving the district before the end of the year (14.2% arrived before October 15th but transferred out before June 1st), while 5.8% did both

(transferred in late and transferred out early). These rates for students who experienced homelessness were far greater than rates for all other students in CCSD: 6.3% transferred into CCSD schools late, 7.4% transferred out early, and 0.8% enrolled late and left early. See Table 1. This pattern meant that students who experienced homelessness were enrolled in CCSD schools for about 33.6 fewer days, on average, than their peers who were more stably-housed. This is roughly 18% of the academic year, or almost 1 out of every 5 additional school days that students experiencing homelessness were not enrolled in CCSD. It is possible that these students were enrolled in a non-CCSD-operated school for all or some of these days. It is also possible that they were not enrolled in school at all.

Table 1. Mid-year student transfers

	Not Homeless	Homeless
Transfer in	6.31%	26.47%
Transfer out	7.37%	14.16%
Transfer in/out	0.76%	5.81%
Avg Days of Enrollment	164.3	130.6

Leaving the district between school years.

Students who experienced homelessness were more likely than others to leave the district between school years. About 40.8% of students experiencing homelessness in preschool through 11th grade did not return to CCSD the following year. This rate was only 27.5% for more stably-housed peers.

Compared to their more stably housed peers, students experiencing homelessness left the district at higher rates in every grade *except* when there was a normative school transition: from preschool to kindergarten; from 8th grade to high school; and from 12th grade to graduation. After these three

¹ Cutuli, Cintron, Iko, & Truchil (2020). Identified student homelessness in Camden City Schools. Available at <https://camdenhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CCSD-2018-2019-Homelessness-Report-Final.pdf>

grades, students experiencing homelessness were about as likely or were more likely to return to CCSD the following year. See Table 2. The percentage of stably housed students returning to CCSD declined during the transitions to kindergarten and to high school when they were about as likely, or less likely, as students experiencing homelessness. Students who were more stably housed appear to have left the district at greater rates specifically during these years, perhaps reflecting families who choose to start elementary or high school at a charter school, renaissance school, or leaving Camden City for another school district. Meanwhile, more students who experience homelessness return to CCSD schools after 12th grade. These students are still working towards their high school diplomas, some participating in alternative programs.

CCSD enrollment showed a net-increase of 217 students related to homelessness from SY 2015-16 through 2018-19. This count takes into consideration 1st-12th grade students who newly entered CCSD and experienced homelessness, and subtracts the number of K through 11th grade students who experienced homelessness and did not return to the district the following year. These enrollment increases occurred largely during SY 2017-18 and 2018-19, two years when the counts and rates of student homelessness increased markedly in CCSD as students impacted by major hurricanes in Puerto Rico and other nations relocated to Camden.

Table 2. Students returning to CCSD the following year

Grade	Not Homeless	Homeless	Difference
PK3	87.04%	74.14%	-12.90%
PK4	54.64%	57.14%	2.50%
K	69.38%	57.36%	-12.01%
1	74.56%	61.68%	-12.89%
2	76.31%	59.88%	-16.43%
3	74.43%	58.00%	-16.43%
4	70.50%	57.93%	-12.56%
5	76.03%	52.14%	-23.90%
6	76.45%	64.71%	-11.74%
7	80.58%	63.48%	-17.10%
8	49.84%	49.06%	-0.78%
9	75.28%	60.99%	-14.28%
10	79.86%	64.76%	-15.10%
11	78.30%	53.25%	-25.05%
PK-11 Total	27.50%	40.80%	-13.30%
12	4.97%	10.34%	5.37%

Multi-year homelessness and its implications for education.

Some students experience homelessness during only one school year. Others experience homelessness in multiple school years, a situation that may place them at greater risk and signal greater need. This section focuses on the majority (59.2%) of students who experience homelessness and are enrolled in CCSD for more than one year. More than one out of five of these students were identified as experiencing homelessness a second time (about 1.5% of all students in CCSD were identified as homeless during 2 or more school years; 5.7% were identified during only one school year). Among students enrolled in 3 or more years, 7.2% of students who experienced homelessness experienced it during 3 or more years.

Differences in homeless situations.

Most students who experienced homelessness were doubled-up, sharing a residence with family or friends. Across all students experiencing homelessness with multiple years of CCSD enrollment, doubled-up living situations were most common form of homelessness: 80.5% of students with 1 year of

homelessness were doubled-up and 90.2% of students with multiple years of homelessness were doubled-up at least once. Students with multiple years of homelessness also experienced greater rates of the other forms of homelessness than their single year homelessness counterparts: 26.8% vs 8.0% resided in a hotel or motel; 16.0% vs 10.8% stayed in shelters; and 1.5% vs 0.4% were unsheltered. See Table 3.

Within-year school mobility.

School mobility is disruptive to education, especially when it occurs during a school year. Students who experienced homelessness more than once changed schools mid-year at a very high rate (27.3% with at least one school move), followed by students who experienced homelessness for only one year (22.6%), and lowest was the rate for students who were more stably-housed (13.7%).

Grade retention.

A similar pattern of risk occurs for grade retention. Students who experienced homelessness during multiple school years had the highest likelihood of being held back to repeat a grade at least once (27.3%) compared to students who were identified as homeless during only one year (22.6% retained) and compared to more stably-housed peers (12.7% retained).

Attendance.

Homelessness interferes with attendance, especially if the homelessness persists or recurs. Students who experienced homelessness also had higher rates of chronic absenteeism than the broader CCSD population and multiple years of homelessness resulted in even higher likelihoods of chronic absenteeism (attendance less than 90% of enrolled days). Over 8 out of 10 (82.5%) of students who experienced homelessness during more than one year were chronically absent during at least one year, compared to 69.9% of students who identified as homeless during only one year, and roughly half (51.3%) of students who were more stably housed. These absentee rates are the percentage of days attended divided by the number of days enrolled.

Table 3. School indicators and nighttime residence

	Enrolled 1 year only		Enrolled 2+ years		
	Never Homeless	Homeless	Never Homeless	Homeless 1 Year	Homeless 2+ Years
Number of students	6,514	605	11,905	738	194
Retained	n/a	n/a	1,509 (12.7%)	164 (22.2%)	53 (27.3%)
Changed school mid-academic year	378 (5.8%)	60 (9.9%)	1,634 (13.7%)	167 (22.6%)	53 (27.3)
Attendance < 90%	2,420 (37.2%)	270 (44.6%)	6,113 (51.3%)	516 (69.9%)	160 (82.5%)
Attendance < 80%	1,105 (17.0%)	125 (20.7%)	2,770 (23.3%)	27 (37.8%)	101 (52.1%)
Homelessness Type					
Doubled up	n/a	534 (88.3%)	n/a	594 (80.5%)	175 (90.2%)
Hotel or motel	n/a	20 (3.3%)	n/a	59 (8.0%)	52 (26.8%)
Shelter	n/a	41 (6.8%)	n/a	80 (10.8%)	31 (16.0%)
Unsheltered	n/a	6 (1.0%)	n/a	3 (0.4%)	3 (1.5%)

Conclusions

- 1) Students identified as experiencing homelessness are more likely to enroll in the district late and/or leave the district before the end of the school year, resulting in about 33 fewer enrolled days. Since this group, on average, is enrolled for fewer days in CCSD, and also attend fewer of those enrolled days because of high rates of chronic absenteeism, students experiencing homelessness appear to be at extreme risk for spending considerably less time in the classroom.
- 2) Camden City School District serves and reenrolls many students experiencing homelessness. CCSD's enrollment showed a net-increase of 217 students experiencing homelessness during recent years. Even though students experiencing homelessness exited CCSD at high rates, a greater number of students who were homeless entered the district. This resulted in greater enrollment over time.
- 3) Students experiencing homelessness, in general, left the district between school years at higher rates than other students. However, this was not true during the transitions into kindergarten and transitions into high school because similar or higher rates of *stably housed (not homeless)* students likely enrolled in schools that were not operated by CCSD (e.g., charter schools, renaissance schools, non-public schools, or other school districts). More research is needed to understand these patterns.
- 4) Students who are identified as experiencing homelessness during two or more school years demonstrated challenges in staying connected to school, attending school, and progressing in school. They were more likely to repeat a grade, more likely to change schools, and more likely to be chronically absent when compared to students identified as experiencing homelessness only once and compared to students who were more stably-housed.

Recommendations:

- Students and families experiencing homelessness may require greater assistance in promptly enrolling their children in CCSD, or remaining enrolled in CCSD, following a residential move. The CCSD Office of Human Services helps ensure families can enroll quickly and support them to stay enrolled in school. Additional education and outreach to families, as well as referrals to local agencies, can help support efforts to stabilize students and families experiencing homelessness.
- These findings are based on under-identification of student homelessness. Often families do not know that assistance is available and do not report homelessness, fear negative agency interactions (e.g., child welfare; immigration) if they reveal homelessness, do not consider themselves homeless, or wish to avoid stigma and go unrecognized by CCSD. **Educating school staff, guiding outreach using district information, and collaborating with outside agencies can help identify and support more students.**
- Students who experience homelessness for more than one year are at higher risk. District responses should especially focus on supporting students experiencing homelessness for multiple years.

Acknowledgement

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