



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Data on Students Experiencing Homelessness

2024

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.540](#)

Veronica Gallardo

**Assistant Superintendent of Office of System and
School Improvement**

Deb Came, Ph.D.

**Assistant Superintendent of Assessment and
Student Information**

Prepared by:

- **Melinda Dyer**, Assistant Director, Education of Homeless Children and Youth
melinda.dyer@k12.wa.us | 360-725-6505

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
BACKGROUND	4
Legislation.....	4
UPDATE STATUS.....	6
Enrollment.....	6
Table 1: Change in the Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness	6
Table 2: Student Enrollment by Student Group, SY 2022–23.....	7
Table 3: Student Enrollment by Grade Level, SY 2022–23.....	8
Table 4: Student Enrollment by Nighttime Residence Type, School Year 2022–23.....	9
Student Outcomes.....	10
Table 5: Students Graduation Rates, 4-Year Adjusted Cohort, Class of 2022.....	10
Table 6: Homeless Students Graduation Rates, 5-Year Adjusted Cohort, Class of 2022.....	11
Table 7: Homeless Attendance and Truancy by Student Group, SY 2022–23.....	12
Table 8: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Group, SY 2021–22	13
CONCLUSION and NEXT STEPS.....	15
Legal Notice	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [federal McKinney-Vento Act](#) broadly defines homelessness in an effort to provide protections and supports for students living in a variety of unstable housing situations. This ensures school stability and continued enrollment at a time when a student's nighttime residence may be constantly changing. In Washington, the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness has increased since 2001, when the McKinney-Vento Act began requiring all school districts to annually report the number of students experiencing homelessness who are enrolled in schools.

In 2014, the Washington State Legislature passed [Senate Bill 6074](#), which aims to improve educational outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness by bolstering student homelessness identification and establishing further data reporting requirements. [RCW 28A.300.540](#) requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to report this data every other year.

BACKGROUND

Currently, there are more than 1.2 million children and youth experiencing homelessness who are enrolled in schools across the nation. Decades of research show that students experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer academically and are more likely to drop out of school when compared to their housed peers. Students experiencing homelessness are less likely to engage in school, have higher absentee rates, and have lower achievement test scores.

Legislation

The 2014 Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 6074 ([RCW 28A.300.540](#)) which requires OSPI to report data on student homelessness to the Governor and the Legislature every other year starting January 10, 2015. This report will provide a more in-depth analysis of homeless student data than is currently required by the US Department of Education under the federal McKinney-Vento Act. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, certain data are not available.

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)) defines **homeless** as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"--

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

*Per Title IX, Part A of the ESSA, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016.

The federal McKinney-Vento Act was reauthorized in December 2015 under ESSA and fully implemented in all public schools on October 1, 2016. The Act ensures that school districts provide identification, enrollment, and access to children and youth experiencing homelessness and serves to provide school stability for students experiencing homelessness, as each change of schools may cause a significant delay in a student's academic progress. The Act promotes the academic success

of students experiencing homelessness and ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll and participate fully in all school activities, ensuring a free, appropriate education. Provisions of the Act include immediate enrollment even if a student lacks records, the right to remain in their school of origin when in the student's best interest, transportation, and other academic supports. Washington currently provides approximately \$2 million in federal McKinney-Vento grant funding through two multi-district consortium grants and 29 individual school district grants.

In 2021, in an unprecedented action by Congress, \$800 million was awarded to states through the American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth fund (ARP-HCY). This grant provides a one-time funding opportunity through 2024 for learning recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to address the particular impacts of the pandemic on students experiencing homelessness. Washington received \$12 million in ARP-HCY funding, which was provided to 203 local school districts, most of which had never received Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) funding in the past. These funds are used to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including through wraparound services.

In addition to McKinney-Vento and ARP-HCY grant funding, in 2016, the Washington State Legislature passed the Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act, creating funding and a collaboration between OSPI and the Washington Department of Commerce to improve educational outcomes for students experiencing homelessness through increased identification, school-based services, community-based resources, and housing stability. The resulting program complements the Federal McKinney-Vento Act by providing grant funding to 49 school districts, to be used for a range of priorities determined by the local education agency (LEA).

UPDATE STATUS

Enrollment

During the 2022–23 school year, 42,438 Washington students experienced homelessness, which amounted to 3.8% of students statewide.

Table 1: Change in the Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness

School Year	Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness
2014–15	33,642
2015–16	37,661
2016–17	39,189
2017–18	40,085
2018–19	39,888
2019–20	36,996
2020–21	32,335
2021–22	37,337
2022–23	42,436

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

Table Reads: In the 2022–2023 school year, 42,436 students enrolled in Washington public schools were experiencing homelessness.

Due to COVID-19 school building closures, districts had difficulty identifying and serving students experiencing homelessness during the 2020–21 school year. Many districts indicated that students previously enrolled under the protections of the McKinney-Vento Act failed to connect to remote instruction and were not in contact with the districts during the closure. The number of students experiencing homelessness identified and enrolled in districts declined significantly during the 2020–21 school year. With the return of in-person instruction, districts continue to identify and enroll increasing numbers of students identified as experiencing homelessness.

Table 2: Student Enrollment by Student Group, SY 2022–23

Student Group	Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness*	Total Student Population	Percent of Total Population that is Experiencing Homelessness
Statewide (All Students)	42,436	1,110,536	3.8%
Gender			
Female	20,669	534,636	3.9%
Male	21,313	570,828	3.7%
Gender X	454	5,072	9.0%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian/Alaskan Native	979	13,630	7.2%
Asian	1,086	96,245	1.1%
Black/African American	3,942	53,410	7.4%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	15,403	285,250	5.4%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1,906	16,199	11.8%
Two or More Races	4,588	101,929	4.5%
White	14,529	543,802	2.7%
Student Group			
Unaccompanied Youth	6,384	7,314	87.3%
Students with Disabilities	8,757	163,258	5.4%
English Language Learners	11,850	157,965	7.5%
Students from Low-income Families	40,624	558,037	7.3%
Students in the Learning Assistance Program	8,708	174,712	5.0%
Students who are Migrant	2,243	24,148	9.3%
Students with 504 plans	1,599	60,590	2.6%

Student Group	Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness*	Total Student Population	Percent of Total Population that is Experiencing Homelessness
Students in the Highly Capable Program	464	78,486	0.6%
Students Participating in Running Start	330	28,021	1.2%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

**Count of students enrolled at any point in the school year.*

Table reads: In the 2022–2023 school year, 42,436 or 3.8% of all students in Washington public schools were experiencing homelessness.

During the 2022–23 school year, students who identified as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and American Indian/Alaskan Native were most likely to experience homelessness (11.8%, 7.4%, and 7.2%, respectively). Students who identified as Asian (1.1%) or White (2.7%) were least likely to experience homelessness. The student groups that were most likely to experience homelessness were Unaccompanied Youth and Students who are Migrant, at 87.3% and 9.3%, respectively.

Table 3: Student Enrollment by Grade Level, SY 2022–23

Grade Level	Homeless Enrollment*	Percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness Enrollment	Enrollment	Percent of Enrollment
Pre-K	1,248	2.8%	37,470	3.2%
Kindergarten	3,396	7.8%	83,525	7.2%
1st	3,328	7.6%	83,889	7.3%
2nd	3,104	7.1%	79,828	6.9%
3rd	3,147	7.2%	82,977	7.2%
4th	3,167	7.2%	83,657	7.2%
5th	3,060	7.0%	82,755	7.2%
6th	2,927	6.7%	83,576	7.2%
7th	2,930	6.7%	84,116	7.3%

Grade Level	Homeless Enrollment*	Percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness Enrollment	Enrollment	Percent of Enrollment
8th	2,987	6.8%	87,279	7.6%
9th	3,399	7.8%	91,213	7.9%
10th	3,309	7.6%	90,989	7.9%
11th	3,480	7.9%	90,401	7.8%
12th	4,335	9.9%	93,176	8.1%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

**Count of students enrolled at any point in the school year.*

Table reads: In the 2022–23 school year, 1,248 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten. Of all students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten statewide, 2.8% experiencing homelessness.

The grade level with the highest percentage of students experiencing homelessness was 12th grade, with 9.9% of students, or 4,335 students. The grade level with the lowest percentage of students experiencing homelessness was Pre-Kindergarten, at 2.8%.

Table 4: Student Enrollment by Nighttime Residence Type, School Year 2022–23

Nighttime Residence	Description	Number of Homeless Students	Percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness
Doubled-Up	Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.	24,451	76.0%
Hotels/Motels	Living in hotels/motels due to lack of alternate adequate accommodations.	2,050	6.4%
Shelters	Supervised publicly or privately operated facilities designed to provide temporary living accommodations. (This category included children and youth who were “awaiting foster care” during the data collection period. As of December 10, 2016, the term	3,519	10.9%

	"awaiting foster care" was removed from the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.)		
Unsheltered	Includes living situations such as cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers, abandoned buildings, and substandard housing.	2,139	6.7%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

Table reads: In the 2022–23 school year, 24,451 students experiencing homelessness were in a "Doubled-Up" nighttime residence.

During the 2022–23 school year, the most common nighttime residence type was "Doubled-Up," with 76% of students experiencing homelessness sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons. The next most common nighttime residence type were "Shelters" that provided temporary living accommodations (10.9% of students experiencing homelessness).

Student Outcomes

During the 2022–23 school year, 5,818 students experiencing homelessness graduated with their adjusted four-year cohort, which amounted to 63.2% of students experiencing homelessness in the 2023 adjusted four-year cohort.

Table 5: Students Graduation Rates, 4-Year Adjusted Cohort, Class of 2023

Student Group	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Continuing Rate	Rate of Students Who Left School Without Graduating
Statewide (All Students)	83.6%	6.4%	10.0%
Students Experiencing Homelessness (All)	63.2%	12.2%	24.5%
Gender			
Female	67.5%	11.2%	21.3%
Male	59.4%	13.4%	27.2%
Gender X	48.6%	10%	41.4%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian/Alaska Native	55.9%	15.0%	29.1%
Asian	80.3%	12.1%	7.5%
Black/African American	72.1%	10.3%	17.6%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	62.5%	13.2%	24.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	67.1%	11.9%	20.9%
Two or More Races	62.9%	12.4%	24.7%

Student Group	Adjusted 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Continuing Rate	Rate of Students Who Left School Without Graduating
White	60.7%	11.7%	27.6%
Student Groups			
Students with Disabilities	54.0%	19.5%	26.5%
English Learners	60.3%	14.7%	25.1%
Students from Low-income Families	63.4%	12.3%	24.3%
Students who are Migrant	68.8%	11.3%	19.9%
Students with 504 Plans	59.2%	13.4%	27.3%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

Table reads: For the adjusted four-year cohort expected to graduate in 2023, 83.6% of all students in Washington State graduated with their cohort. 6.4% of that cohort are continuing to attend high school and 10.0% have left school without graduating.

Table 6: Homeless Students Graduation Rates, 5-Year Adjusted Cohort, Class of 2022

Student Group	Adjusted 5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Continuing Rate	Dropout Rate
Statewide (All Students)	86.0%	2.4%	11.6%
Students Experiencing Homelessness (All)	65.6%	4.6%	29.9%
Gender			
Female	70.1%	4.2%	25.7%
Male	61.4%	4.9%	33.7%
Gender X	46.6%	4.3%	49.1%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian/Alaska Native	52.3%	4.5%	43.2%
Asian	78.6%	3.4%	17.9%
Black/African American	72.8%	5.3%	21.9%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	64.8%	4.9%	30.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	73.2%	0.9%	25.8%
Two or More Races	67.0%	3.6%	29.3%
White	63.7%	4.6%	31.8%
Student Groups			
Students with Disabilities	58.0%	9.1%	32.9%
English Learners	62.8%	4.8%	32.4%
Students from Low-income Families	66.0%	4.5%	29.5%
Students who are Migrant	69.7%	3.5%	26.7%

Student Group	Adjusted 5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Continuing Rate	Dropout Rate
Students with 504 Plans	60.8%	5.4%	33.8%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

Table reads: For the adjusted five-year cohort expected to graduate in 2022, 86.0 percent of Washington students graduated with their cohort. 2.4 percent of that cohort are continuing to attend high school and 11.6 percent have left school without graduating.

For the adjusted five-year cohort expected to graduate in 2022, students experiencing homelessness had a dropout rate of 29.9%, as compared to the 11.6% dropout rate of all students in Washington. Data shows that students experiencing homelessness who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native had the highest dropout rates, at 43.2%, followed by students who identify as White, at 31.8%.

Table 7: Homeless Attendance and Truancy by Student Group, SY 2022–23

Student Group	Number of Students Regularly Attending*	Percent of Students Regularly Attending	Number of Students Reported as Truant**	Percent of Students Reported as Truant
Statewide (All Students)	759,250	69.8%	100,187	8.7%
Students Experiencing Homelessness (All)	18,220	45.7%	11,285	25.8%
Gender				
Female	8,790	45.1%	5,526	26.0%
Male	9,266	46.5%	5,588	25.4%
Gender X	164	38.9%	171	36.9%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian/Alaska Native	358	38.6%	335	33.8%
Asian	635	63.1%	195	17.3%
Black/African American	1,540	42.2%	1,402	34.3%
Hispanic/Latino	6,715	47.1%	3,891	24.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	677	37.8%	705	36.2%
Two or More Races	1,718	38.7%	1,532	32.5%
White	6,575	47.7%	3,225	21.6%
Student Group				
Students with Disabilities	3,448	40.7%	2,536	27.7%
English Learners	5,598	52.0%	2,462	20.8%
Students from Low-income Families	17,333	45.1%	10,964	26.3%

Student Group	Number of Students Regularly Attending*	Percent of Students Regularly Attending	Number of Students Reported as Truant**	Percent of Students Reported as Truant
Students who are Migrant	1,124	55.0%	386	17.0%
Students with 504 Plans	607	39.0%	460	28.7%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/2024

*Students are considered to be regularly attending if they have fewer than two absences per month on average. It does not matter if the absences are excused or unexcused.

**Students are considered truant if they have one of the following: Seven or more unexcused absences in a 30-day period or 15 or more unexcused absences during a school year. Truancy rates are based on reported absences, not if a truancy petition was filed.

Table reads: In the 2022–23 school year, 759,250 students in Washington public schools attended school regularly. That figure equates to 69.8% of all the state’s public-school students. In the same year, 101,187 students were truant, or 8.7% of all the state’s public-school students.

In the 2022–23 school year, 101,187 students were truant, or 8.7% of all the state’s public-school students. By comparison, 11,285 students experiencing homelessness, or 25.8% were reported as truant.

Table 8: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Group, SY 2022–23

Student Group	Number of Students that were Suspended or Expelled*	Percent of Subgroup that were Suspended or Expelled
Statewide (All Students)	39,142	3.5%
Students Experiencing Homelessness (All)	3,460	8.8%
Gender		
Female	1,267	10.3%
Male	2,175	8.1%
Gender X	31	14.2%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	84	8.8%
Asian	30	3.2%
Black/African American	518	14.7%
Hispanic/Latino	1,054	8.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	143	15.4%
Two or More Races	521	11.7%
White	1,175	7.3%
Student Groups		
Students with Disabilities	1,139	10.1%

English Learners	585	9.5%
Students from Low-income Families	3,387	11.5%
Students who are Migrant	133	10.8%
Students with 504 Plans	194	6.7%

Source: CEDARS, 3/28/24

**Students that received one or more of the following: short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion.*

Table reads: In the 2022–23 school year, 39,142 students in Washington’s public schools were suspended or expelled. That figure equates to 3.5% of all students.

In the 2022–23 school year, students experiencing homelessness faced suspension and expulsion at more than twice the rate of Washington’s entire student population. The student group with the highest rates of suspension and expulsion based on percentage were students experiencing homelessness from low-income families at 11.5%. Students who identify as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Students who identify as Black/African American were the most likely to be suspended or expelled when stratifying by racial and ethnic group, at 15.4% and 14.7% respectively.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

There is growing recognition that schools are often the safest, most stable, and supportive places for students experiencing homelessness and that stability is critical to the academic success of those students. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides training, technical assistance, and opportunities for grant funding to local school districts as they work to serve the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

For more information related to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the education of homeless youth, please visit the [OSPI Homeless Children and Youth](#), the [National Center for Homeless Education](#), [SchoolHouse Connection](#), or the [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#) websites.

REFERENCES

Department of Education. (n.d.). ED Data Express. <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>

National Center for Homeless Education. (2022). *Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2018-19 to 2020-21*. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Greensboro, NC. Extracted on November 30, 2022, from: <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2022.pdf>

LEGAL NOTICE



Except where otherwise noted, this work by the [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](#). All logos and trademarks are property of their respective owners. Sections used under fair use doctrine (17 U.S.C. § 107) are marked.

Please make sure permission has been received to use all elements of this publication (images, charts, text, etc.) that are not created by OSPI staff, grantees, or contractors. This permission should be displayed as an attribution statement in the manner specified by the copyright holder. It should be made clear that the element is one of the "except where otherwise noted" exceptions to the OSPI open license. For additional information, please visit the [OSPI Interactive Copyright and Licensing Guide](#).

OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.

Download this material in PDF at [OSPI Reports to the Legislature webpage](#). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 24-0010.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Chris Reykdal | State Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building | P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200