Glossary of Terms

All Homeless/Currently Homeless

Students who were homeless at any time during school year 2014–15, regardless of whether they were living doubled up, in shelter, unsheltered, or in another temporary living situation.

Always Housed

A student who has not experienced homelessness at any time between SY 2010–11 and SY 2014–15.

Awaiting Foster Care

Students who are living in a non-permanent, transitional, or emergency out-of-home foster care placement.[1]

Chronically Absent

Missing 20 or more days in the school year. Absences do not include days missed due to suspension or school-wide releases.

Dropout Rate (Four-Year)

The percentage of students who entered ninth grade in 2011 and within four years left high school without graduating.

Educational Outcomes

Events that take place during a student's time in school (such as graduation, dropping out, repeating a grade, chronic absenteeism, and standardized test scores) that are recognized indicators of educational challenges and successes.

Elementary School

Kindergarten through 5th grade.

English Language Arts (ELA) Test

Every year, the New York State Education Department administers a standardized test to students in 3rd through 8th grade to assess the proficiency of students across New York State in reading, writing and comprehension.

English Language Learner (ELL)

A student who speaks a language other than English at home and scores below proficient on English assessments upon entering the New York City Public School system. Students determined to be English Language Learners receive targeted instruction in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, and English Language Arts.

1 Patricia Julianelle, *The McKinney-Vento Act and Children and Youth Awaiting Foster Care Placement: Strategies for Improving Educational Outcomes Through School Stability*, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 2008.

Enrollment

Audited Register: The count of students taken every year on October 31. This is the official enrollment figure, off of which school funding is estimated.[2]

Biographic Register: The count of students who are enrolled in a school at any point during a particular school year.

End-of-Year Enrollment: The count of students who are enrolled in a school on the last day of a particular school year.

Late Enrollment: Students who enter a school after October 31 of a particular school year from outside of the New York City Public School system.

Ever Homeless

Students who were homeless at any point between SY 2010–11 and SY 2014–15, the years for which data were available.

Ever in Shelter

Students who lived in a shelter at any point during a specified time period. In this report, "ever in shelter" refers to students enrolled in high school who were in shelter at any point between SY 2011–12 and SY 2014–15. This term is used in this report when measuring the four-year dropout rate and graduation rate by school district.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records for schools that receive applicable program funds from the U.S. Department of Education.[3]

Family Homelessness

Homeless families are defined by two separate categories: "families with children" are one- or two-parent households with children under 21, while "adult families" consist of couples or related family members without children under 21. Families with children and adult families have separate shelter systems and must be screened for eligibility upon applying for shelter, although the law requires that they be temporarily housed during this process. Prior to 2008, data that separate families with children and adult families were not available.

Family Homeless Shelter

Most family homeless shelters receive payments from the City but are privately owned. Shelter operators provide private rooms for homeless families, along with cafeteria meals, kitchen facilities, or restaurant vouchers. Family shelters are divided into three categories (cluster site, hotel shelter, and Tier II shelter), depending in part on the services that are available. The level and availability of social services, including childcare and case management, at each shelter location varies greatly.

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2 New York City Department of Education Division of Finance, June 2016, *Fair Student Funding and School Budget Resource Guide FY 2016.*

3 U.S. Department of Education, "Laws & Guidance: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)," http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html (accessed July 15, 2015).

Cluster Sites: DHS utilizes space in privately-owned residential buildings that house both rent-paying tenants and DHS clients or exclusively DHS clients. Cluster site apartments were found by the New York City Department of Investigations to be the worst maintained and most poorly monitored of all three types of family shelters, as well as offering the least adequate social services to families. Many cluster site apartments do not have contracts with the City.[4]

Hotel Shelters: DHS utilizes private hotel capacity to shelter homeless families. These hotels are for-profit institutions that do not operate under City contracts. Hotel operators provide private rooms with kitchenettes and generally limited services. In some instances, individual rooms are rented in hotels and motels on a per diem basis.[5]

Tier II Shelters: Typically the best maintained of all types of family shelters with the most social services to occupants. Most Tier II shelters are run by nonprofit organizations in privately-owned buildings, operate under contracts with the City, and are regulated by both the City and State. Shelter operators provide private rooms for homeless families, along with kitchen facilities or food service.[6]

Family Shelter Unit: A self-contained, furnished unit in a family shelter. Family shelter capacity is counted in units, which usually serve two to four people, rather than being counted as beds, as is done in the single individual homeless population.

Formerly Homeless

A student who was housed during SY 2014–15 but homeless at any point during SY 2010–11, SY 2011–12, SY 2012–13, and/or SY 2013–14.

Free Lunch

Students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch if their family earns 185% of the Federal Poverty Level or less—$37,167 or less for a family of three in 2015.[7]

Funding

Fair Student Funding: Refers to funds from the Department of Education's budget given to each school based on grade levels served, student poverty, English Language Learners, special education needs, and whether a school offers specialized programs. Not included in the funding formula is how many students at a school are homeless.[8]

Net Loss or Gain in Fair Student Funding: The estimated difference in funding between the beginning and end of a particular school year. The difference is based on changes in enrollment from the beginning of the school year to the end.

Per Student Fair Student Funding Based on End-of-Year Enrollment: A calculation that takes into consideration the real Fair Student Funding amount from SY 2014–15 reported by the Department of Education divided by the total number of students enrolled at the end of the school year.

4 New York City Department of Investigation, *DOI Investigation of 25 City-Run Homeless Shelters for Families Finds Serious Deficiencies*, March 12, 2015.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

7 Department of Health and Human Services, *Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines*, January 22, 2015.
8 New York City Department of Education Division of Finance, June 2016, *Fair Student Funding and School Budget Resource Guide FY 2016*.

Grade-Level Proficiency

English Language Arts and math test scores are recorded on a 4-point scale. A score of 3 indicates that the student has achieved grade-level proficiency in the subject, while 4 indicates above-grade-level proficiency. Although performance on assessment tests is not the only factor determining student retention, failure to pass can result in a student being retained.

Graduation Rate (Four-Year)

The percentage of students who entered ninth grade in 2011 and graduated within four years with a Local, Regents, or Advanced Regents diploma.

Health Center and Immunization Facility

Clinics run by the New York City Health and Hospitals system that provide sliding scale or no-cost health care services to uninsured and low-income New Yorkers, regardless of ability to pay or immigration status.[9]

High School

9th through 12th grade.

HomeBase

A program introduced citywide in 2008 by the New York City Department of Homeless Services to offer homelessness-prevention services in individual communities. Offices are operated by contracted social services providers and staffed with caseworkers offering services such as landlord mediation, emergency rental assistance, and benefits enrollment.

9 Nina Bernstein, "De Blasio to Propose $2 Billion for New York City's Hospital System," *New York Times*, April 25, 2016.

Homeless

The New York City Department of Education defines a student as homeless who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homeless students in the *2016 Atlas of Student Homelessness* are divided into the following subcategories:

Doubled up: Students living with another family or other person due to loss of housing or economic hardship.

In Shelter: Students living in a City-funded or City-operated emergency or transitional shelter.

Unsheltered: Students living in a space not meant for human habitation, such as in a car, on the street, or in an abandoned building.

Other: Students living in a hotel/motel outside of the City shelter system that involves payment, and those awaiting foster care placement.

Housed/All Housed

All students not identified as homeless during school year 2014–15, including both housed students eligible for free lunch and housed students not eligible for free lunch.

Housed, Free Lunch

Students not identified as homeless whose family income meets the threshold for receiving free or reduced-price lunch. This is a proxy for students who are poor but not homeless.

Housed, No Free Lunch

Students not identified as homeless who do not receive free or reduced-price lunch. This is a proxy for students who are neither homeless nor poor.

Individual Education Plan/Program (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan is created when a student is deemed eligible for special education services through the Department of Education. This plan details the programs and services that s/he will need in order to be successful in school.

Received IEP Late: Includes all special education students who received an IEP after Kindergarten. For the purposes of this report, late IEP calculations are limited to a cohort of students who entered Kindergarten in SY 2010–11 and received an IEP at some point during the next five years.

Math Test

Every year, the New York State Education Department administers standardized tests to students in 3rd through 8th grade in the subjects of math and English Language Arts (ELA).

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

A federal law that guarantees equal access to public education for homeless children and youth. As a part of the law, schools are required to identify and immediately register homeless children for school even if they do not have required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence.[10]

10 U.S. Department of Education "Laws & Guidance: Part C–Homeless Education," http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg116.html (accessed July 20, 2015).

Middle School

6th through 8th grade.

Mid-Year Transfer

Students who transfer from one school to another at any point during a school year.

Never Homeless

Students who were housed during the entire time period between SY 2010–11 and SY 2014–15.

Never in Shelter

Students who are homeless but have not lived in a City shelter at any point. In this report, "never in shelter" refers to students enrolled in high school and who did not live in shelter at any point between SY 2011–12 and SY 2014–15. This term is used in this report when measuring the four-year dropout rate and graduation rate by school district.

New York State Technical & Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS TEACHS)

The New York State Technical Assistance Center for Homeless Students is an organization funded by the New York State Education Department. It collects data and provides services to schools and other educational agencies pertaining to homeless students and their legal rights.

Non-Geographic School Districts

While most school districts are defined by geography in New York City, a small number of districts are defined by an area of specialization. These districts include District 75 (special education), District 79 (alternative schools and programs), and District 84 (charter schools). The physical location of the schools administered under these districts can be anywhere across the city. Some categories in the *2016 Atlas of Student Homelessness* are not shown for non-geographic districts due to the special nature of the districts. Because information on the outcomes of homeless students attending charter schools is not publicly available, the *2016 Atlas of Student Homelessness* does not include data from District 84.

Poverty (Federal Poverty Level)

The Federal Poverty Level was first calculated to represent the minimum income an average family needed to afford food and other basic expenses. The 2015 Federal Poverty Level for a family of three was $20,090.[11]

Pre-K

All children who turn four before January 1st of a given school year are eligible to apply for New York City's Universal Pre-K program. Programs are operated by both the New York City Department of Education and community-based organizations.

Retention/Held Back

When a student repeats a grade one or more times. The decision to retain a student considers multiple factors and varies across grade levels but can include standardized State testing results, portfolios of students' work throughout the school year, and satisfactory completion of the required number of class credits.[12]

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services

Facilities that provide shelter and/or services to runaway youth or homeless youth. Runaway youth are those under age 18 who do not live at their legal residence and lack parental or guardian consent. Homeless youth are those under age 21 (see "Homeless").[13]

School District 75

District 75 provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, have significant cognitive delays, are severely emotionally challenged, sensory impaired, and/or multiply disabled. District 75's schools and programs are located at more than 310 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Syosset, New York.[14] Some categories in the *2016 Atlas of Student Homelessness* are not shown for District 75 due to the special nature of the district.

12 New York City Department of Education, *2013–2014 Promotion Guide*.

13 New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, *Subpart 182-1. Runaway and Homeless Youth Regulations for Approved Runaway Programs*, October 22, 2014.

14 The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, "City School District 75: Citywide Alternative Schools and Programs," December 2015.

11 Department of Health and Human Services, *Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines*, January 22, 2015.

School District 79

District 79 helps students under 21 years old who have experienced an interruption to their studies.[15] Some categories in the *2016 Atlas of Student Homelessness* are not shown for District 79 due to the special nature of the district.

Students in Temporary Housing Unit

A division within the New York City Department of Education responsible for maintaining records on all students' housing statuses and providing shelter and school-based liaisons to assist homeless families with basic educational needs.

Suspension Rate

The percentage of students who received one or more suspensions during the school year. In this report, students were counted if they were suspended at their final school of enrollment for SY 2014–15. (Note: when students are suspended they are provided with an alternate school assignment and are not considered absent from school unless they do not show up for their alternate assignment.)

15 Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, "City School District 79: Citywide Special Education," December 2015.