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I remember being homeless with my mom. I was never dealing with my own problems, my own insecurity, because I felt like I'm the man and I had to be strong for my mom and my baby sister. I would sacrifice going to the park, going out to school parties so I could go home and take care of my baby sister so my mom could go to work.

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College graduate, former participant in NYC Department of Education Students in Temporary Housing (STH) Unit supportive program

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A [first-grade] student talked about getting kicked out of a family friend's home in the middle of the night. He struggled to understand why someone who cared about him would kick him and his family out. He said, 'I don't get why someone would do that to us!'

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Social Work Director, Partnership with Children, working in New York City public school(s)

Section 7

Homeless Students by School District

Homeless students attend school in every New York City school district. Schools are often the first public agency to discover a child's housing instability. Once identified, these schools provide vital supportive services to children experiencing housing instability and in some cases to their parents as well. Increasing understanding of student homelessness at the district and school levels is vitally important to meeting the needs of children who are struggling with instability and at risk for poor educational outcomes.

This section provides data on each New York City public school district, including both the ratio of elementary students who will experience homelessness by fifth grade unless current trends change, and the ratio of pre-K-12 students who experienced homelessness in the last six years. Each geographic school district is ranked by the proportion of students experiencing homelessness to provide a city- and borough-wide comparison. Additional information on this year's district pages includes the number of students who are housed but have experienced homelessness in prior school years (formerly homeless) and a comparison of the grades homeless and housed students attend in the district.

Educational outcomes are also shown for each school district, providing context for how homeless students are faring compared to their housed peers. Additionally, changes in the district's chronic absenteeism and mid-year transfer rates over time provide a detailed picture of challenges with school stability for both homeless and housed students in the district, as well as those living in shelter and doubled up. Examining practices in districts where these rates are low or declining can provide ideas for support in other districts. Suspension rates over time are also shown as an indicator of how schools address the behavioral difficulties that homeless students face, particularly those living in shelter, and reveal districts where disciplinary actions are declining and where they are stagnant. Key district findings to facilitate further interpretation by policymakers and educators are also included.

What's New?

Homelessness increased in every school district in New York City between SY 2014–15 and SY 2015–16.

The rate of student homelessness ranged from a low of 2.5% in **Bayside**, Queens to a high of 20% in the Bronx's **Highbridge/Concourse**. (Districts 26 and 9)

The district with the highest percentage of homeless students is District 9 (**Highbridge/Concourse**) at 20%. It is also home to the highest number of family shelter units citywide at over 1,700 units, including hotels and cluster sites.

School districts located in the **Bronx**, **northern Manhattan**, and **central Brooklyn** not only have large numbers of homeless students, but also have an additional 6%–7% of their students who were formerly homeless in a previous year.

By district, the share of homeless students with English Language Learning (ELL) needs ranged from just 5% of homeless students in **Bedford-Stuyvesant** to over half of homeless students in **Bay Ridge**. (Districts 16 and 20)

Brownsville in Brooklyn had the highest percentage citywide of chronically absent homeless students at 44%. (District 23)

East Tremont had the largest decrease in the suspension rate of homeless students from SY 2010–11 to SY 2015–16 at 5% (from 8% to 3%). (District 12)

The district with the highest percentage of homeless students transferring mid-year was District 31 (**Staten Island**), where 34% of homeless students transferred in SY 2015–16.

Homeless students in **Bedford-Stuyvesant** have seen an improvement in school stability, with declines in both the chronic absenteeism rate (53% to 41%) and the mid-year transfer rate (37% to 26%) since SY 2010–11. (District 16)

Homeless students in **East New York** have the highest rate of late IEP identification in the city at 78%. This was 50% higher than the rate for housed students in the district and roughly twice the overall citywide rate. (District 19)

Roughly 2,750 doubled-up homeless students and 165 students in shelter attended **Bay Ridge** schools. (District 20)

Policy Considerations

Students living in shelters face heightened academic risks and school instability, but their risk is not the same in every district. Learning from collaborations between schools and shelters may be key to improving stability and outcomes for students in shelter.

Identifying the supports that are helping homeless students in some districts maintain stability in the classroom and replicating those in other districts could help students in shelter across the city succeed.

Many districts educate large numbers of homeless students living in shelter and doubled up, yet have few family shelters located nearby. Understanding the specific challenges of students in shelter who may be traveling long distances to attend school—and the instability faced by doubled-up students who may not be able to enter a shelter—is critical for educators and administrators.
