



Institute for Children,  
Poverty & Homelessness

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# Graduation Rates, School Stability, and College Readiness in New York City

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# ICPH: Bringing Family Homelessness into Focus

- The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH) is a New York City-based policy research organization focused on family homelessness in New York City and throughout the United States
- All materials we produce are available for free at [www.ICPHusa.org](http://www.ICPHusa.org)

# Reports

ICPH researches the causes of family homelessness, the demographics of this growing population, the conditions that make it difficult for homeless families to become self-sufficient, and the programs that are most effective in helping them transition out of poverty. ICPH works with programs and partners across the U.S. to conduct and disseminate this research in order to improve services and influence public policy.



# Interactive Data

ICPH produces interactive tools and data for users to further explore the effects of homelessness on children and their families. These tools allow people from different fields to tailor and engage with ICPH data in a way that is meaningful to them and the unique needs of their organization.



# We Will Discuss:

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## Part 1: Graduation rates and school stability

- ❖ How do graduation rates among homeless students compare to rates among housed students?
- ❖ What impact does school stability have on graduation rates?

## Part 2: College Readiness

- What does it mean to be college ready?
- How do college readiness rates among homeless students compare to rates of housed students?
- What are some early predictors of college readiness?





# Bridging the Graduation Gap: Why School Stability is Key for Homeless High School Students in New York City

- Data from New York City Department of Education
- Right to Shelter: Shelter system in New York City is unique, but can provide greater context
- Homeless students' graduation rates compared to housed students
- School instability factors: chronic absenteeism and mid-year school transfers
- How do school instability factors impact a homeless student's chances of graduating?

**IC PH** Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness  
Education  
December 2018

## Bridging the Graduation Gap: Why School Stability is Key for Homeless High School Students

*Homeless high school students who are not chronically absent and who do not transfer schools during the year graduate at rates similar to their housed peers.*

**Overview**  
High school graduation is key to breaking the cycle of homelessness and ensuring access to opportunity for all students. While four-year graduation rates in New York City have increased, from less than half of students graduating in 2005 to almost three-quarters in 2017, homeless students still graduate at substantially lower rates than their housed classmates. Yet analysis of New York City Department of Education (DOE) data shows that when students experiencing homelessness maintain stability in school, they graduate at similar rates to their housed peers. This report presents data on the four-year high school graduation rate of New York City's Class of 2017—those who were high school freshmen in SY 2013–14 and on track to graduate on time. The impacts of housing instability, mid-year school transfers, and chronic absenteeism on four-year high school graduation rates are explored, and the importance of maintaining school stability while experiencing homelessness is discussed.

**What Percent of Students Were Homeless At Some Point During High School?**  
Class of 2017

Almost 10% of students who were in the class of 2017 were "ever homeless," meaning they had been identified as homeless during at least one of their four years of high school.

Nearly one in every 10 graduates of New York City public schools in 2017 had experienced homelessness at some point during high school. Of those, almost two-thirds of homeless students had never been in shelter, but lived in doubled-up or other temporary living arrangements. The remaining one-third of homeless students lived in a shelter at some point during high school.

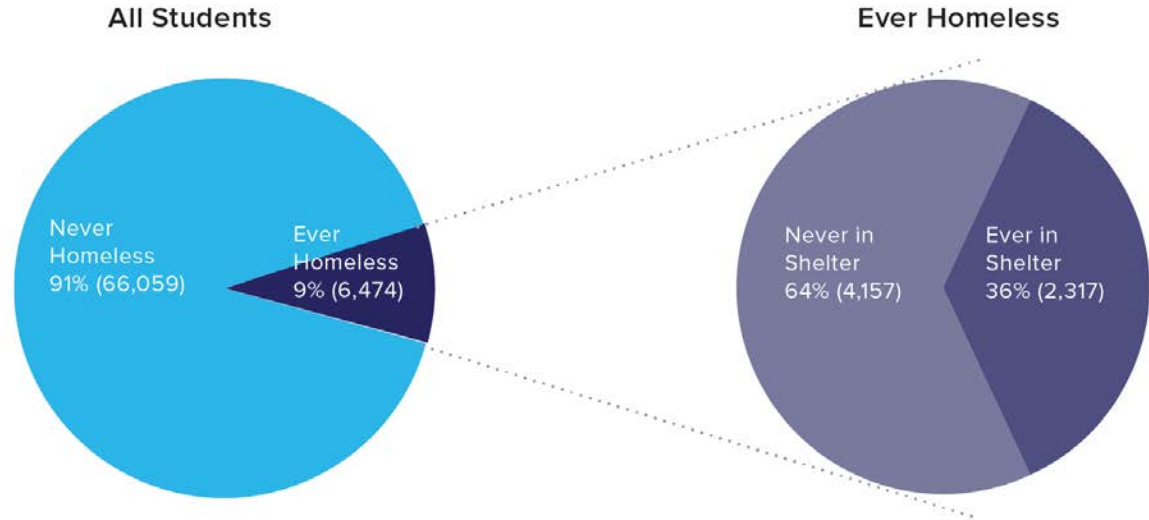
Category	Percentage	Count
All Students - Never Homeless	9%	66,259
All Students - Ever Homeless	1%	6,174
Ever Homeless - Never in Shelter	64%	4,157
Ever Homeless - Ever in Shelter	36%	2,217

Note: "Never Homeless" does not include 620 students listed in the Class of 2017 but for whom attendance data were not available.

# What Percent of Students Were Homeless At Some Point During High School?

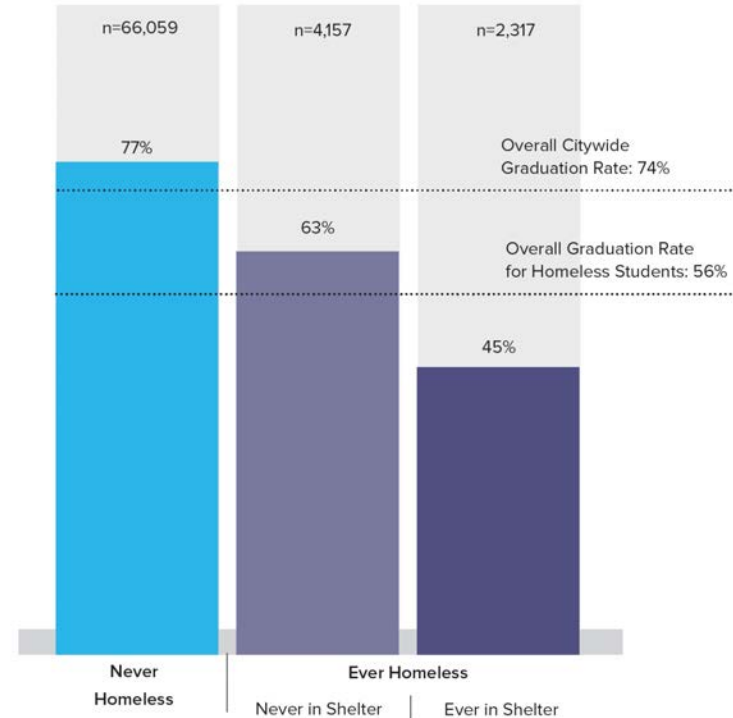
• **One in 10 graduates** experienced homelessness during high school.

**One-third of homeless students** lived in a shelter at some point during high school.



# How Do Graduation Rates Compare Between Housing Settings?

- 56% of homeless students and 77% of housed students graduated on time (in 4 years)
- Fewer than half of students who were ever in shelter graduated on time (45%)





# How Prevalent is Chronic Absenteeism Among High School Students?

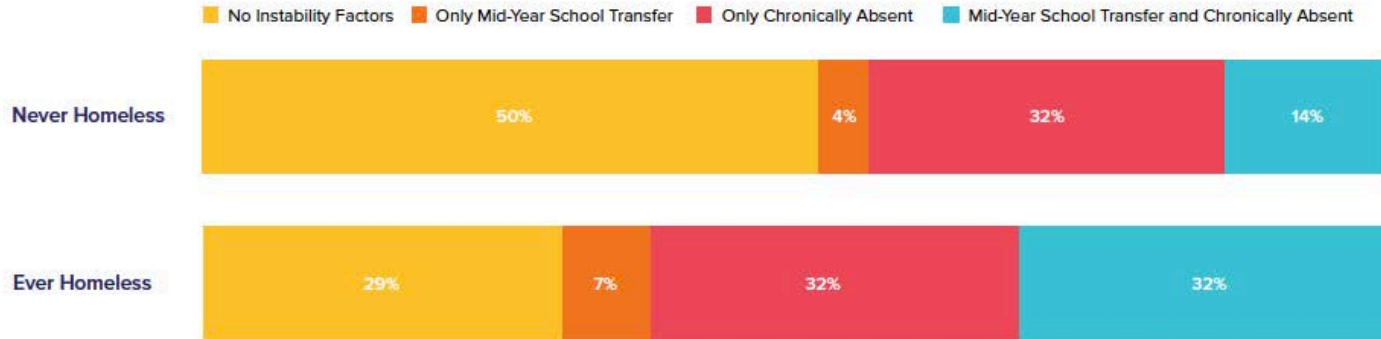
- Homeless students were much more likely to be chronically absent (missing more than 10% of the school year).
- 81% of homeless students who **were ever in shelter** were chronically absent.
- 44% of homeless students who were ever in shelter **transferred mid-year and were chronically absent.**



Categories are not mutually exclusive. Students who experienced both chronic absenteeism and a mid-year transfer would be counted in all percentages except "No Instability Factors."

# How Likely Are Homeless Students to Experience School Instability?

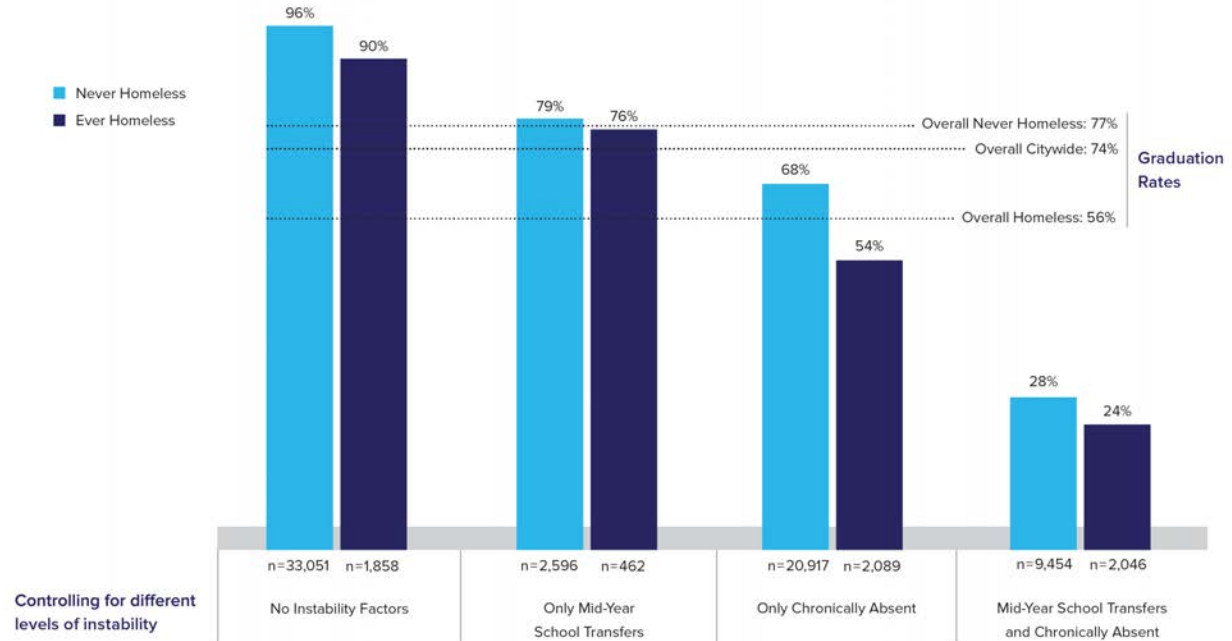
- Homeless students were **more than twice as likely** as housed students to be both chronically absent and transfer mid-year (32% vs. 14%).
- Only half of housed students experienced any instability factor, while 71% of homeless students experienced at least one instability factor.



Categories are mutually exclusive. Students are only counted in one of the four instability categories.

# How Do School Instability Factors Affect Graduation Rates?

- Homeless students with no instability factors graduated **well above the overall citywide graduation rate** (90% vs. 74%).
- Only one quarter of homeless students who experienced both mid-year transfers and chronic absenteeism graduated on time (24%).



# Key Takeaways

- **Instability factors**, including chronic absenteeism, have a large impact on graduation rates and are more prevalent among homeless students, reducing the overall graduation rate among homeless students
- Homeless students who stayed in shelter at some point during high school were more likely to experience chronic absenteeism and mid-year transfers, and less likely to graduate than students in other temporary arrangements

# Policy Implications

- Knowing that the prevalence of instability factors among homeless students has such a large impact on graduation rates, more than just housing status, shows that **with proper connection to services, high school students experiencing homelessness can graduate at the same rate as their housed peers**
- Importance of opportunities to **use real-time data to track absences**
- Collaboration between schools and shelters
- Importance of disaggregating data by income and housing status; implications for interventions

# Discussion

- How does your school district address absenteeism in high school? Are there any specific supports for homeless students?
- What does your district do to support students who transfer into a new school during the school year? What can be done to better support homeless students who transfer schools mid-year?
- In addition to school instability, what are some other factors that make it difficult for homeless students to graduate on time?



# Beyond Graduation:

## Are Homeless High School Students Prepared for College?

- Data from New York City Department of Education
- How New York City measures college readiness and some alternative measures
- Homeless students **are less likely to be college ready** than housed students, even for those who graduate high school
- Disparities in achievement between homeless and housed students begin long before high school



# Why Does College Readiness Matter?

- Students who complete high school but are not college ready will have to take remedial high school-level coursework in college
- Remedial courses do not count toward degree requirements, but do cost money and time
- Students who need remedial coursework are less likely to enroll in college, persist past the first year, and earn a degree



Photo by [Elliott Reyna](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# How Do Different States Measure College Readiness?

- In addition to using standardized test scores, such as the SAT and ACT, to evaluate college readiness, some states use other metrics:
  - AP or IB scores (e.g. Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Washington, D.C., etc.)
  - Postsecondary enrollment (e.g. Hawaii, Kansas)
  - Dual Enrollment credits (e.g. Nevada, Rhode Island, South Carolina)
  - No defined measure of college readiness (Maine, Oregon)



# How Do College Readiness Rates Compare Across States?

- Most states do not report college readiness rates for homeless students
- Reported rates of college and career readiness for homeless students vary substantially by state
  - In math, rates for homeless students range from 5% in **Nebraska** to 27% in **Alabama**
  - In English, rates for homeless students range from 5% in **Nebraska** to 37% in **Maine**
  - In most states, homeless students are more likely to be college ready in English than in math



# How Does New York City Measure College Readiness?

- Students who are college ready can enroll in college immediately after graduating high school without needing to take remedial courses in college
- Remedial course requirements are based on CUNY's (City University of New York) standards
- Students are required to achieve passing scores in English and math using any combination of SAT, ACT, or New York State Regents test scores
- Students are also college ready if they earned an Associate's Degree or Advanced Regents Diploma

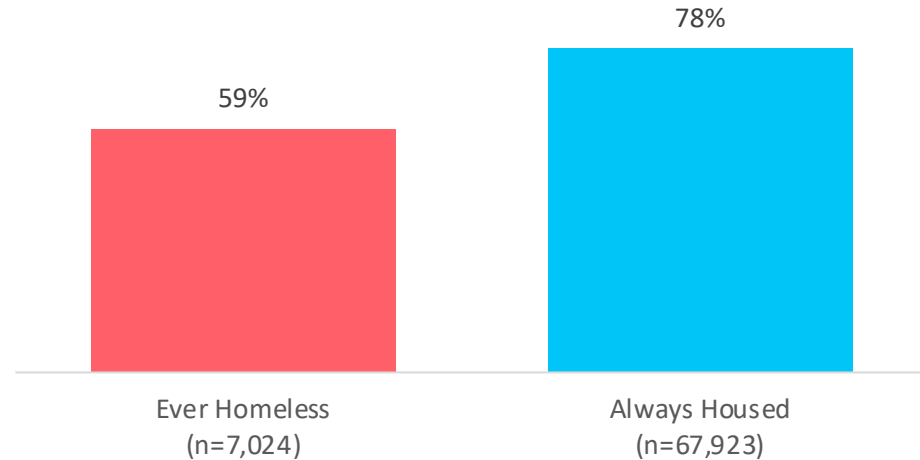


Photo by [Fabien Bazaneque](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# How Do College Readiness and Graduation Rates Compare Between Homeless and Housed Students?

- More than 7,000 students in the class of 2018 experienced homelessness during high school
  - This nearly 10% of the entire class
- Homeless students were less likely to graduate high school than housed students (59% vs. 78%)

Graduation Rates, by Housing Status  
Class of 2018

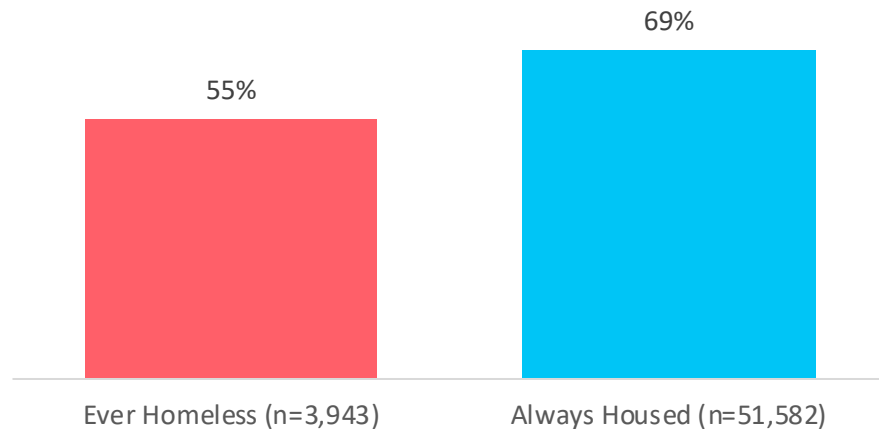




# Are Homeless High School Graduates as Likely to be College Ready as Housed Graduates?

- Of the entire class, only 1 in 3 homeless students (36%) were college ready. This includes students who did not graduate on time.
- **Even among students who graduated high school**, homeless students were less likely to be college ready than housed students (55% vs. 69%)
- Nearly half of high school graduates who experienced homelessness in high school were not college ready (45%)

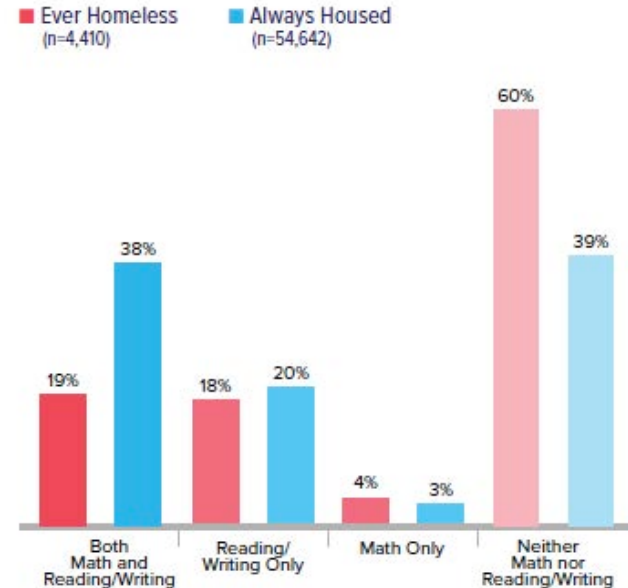
College Readiness Rates Among High School Graduates,  
by Housing Status  
Class of 2018



# How Likely Are Homeless Students to Meet College Readiness Standards on the SAT Exam?

- College readiness benchmarks are set by the College Board
  - They indicate that students have a 75% chance of passing a related college-level course with a C or higher
  - 530 in math; 480 in reading/writing
- Homeless students were only half as likely to meet the college readiness standards in both math and reading/writing compared to housed students (19% vs. 38%)

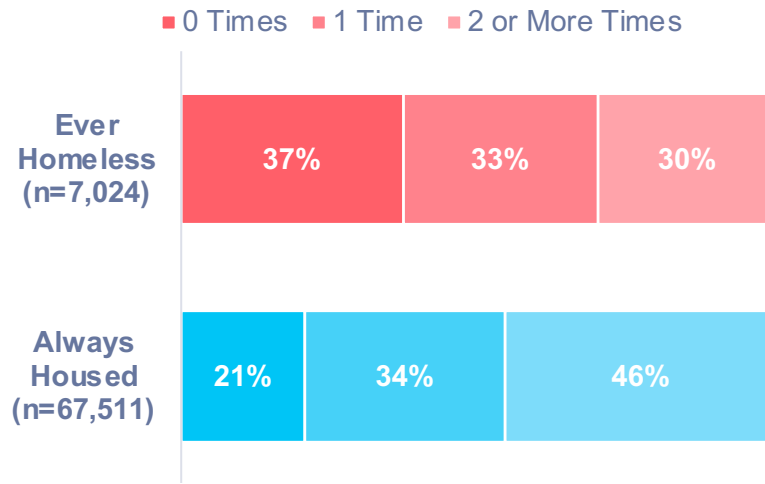
Percent of Students Meeting College Readiness Requirements on SAT Exams, by Subject and Housing Status  
Class of 2018



# How Many Times Do Homeless Students Take the SAT Exam?

- SAT School Day has expanded access to the SAT exam—allowing students to take the SAT on a regular school day free of charge
- Still, more than 1 in 3 homeless students did not take the SAT compared to 1 in 5 housed students (37% vs. 21%)
- Housed students were 1.5x as likely as homeless students to take the SAT exam 2 or more times (46% vs. 30%)

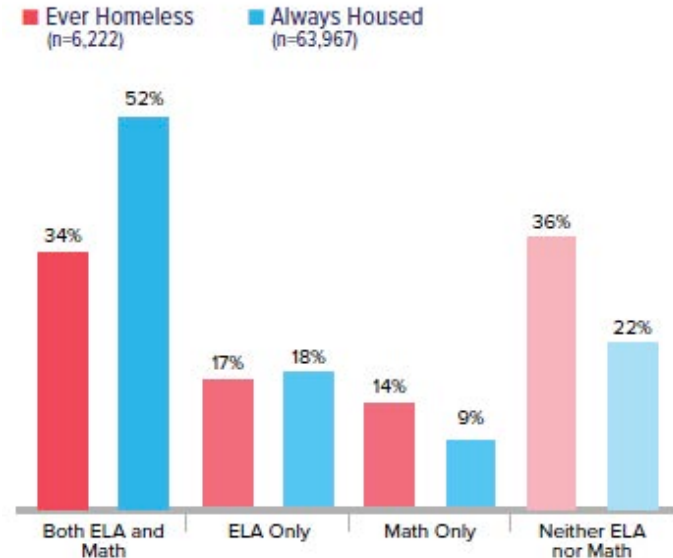
Number of Times Students Took the SAT Exam,  
by Housing Status  
Class of 2018



# How Likely Are Homeless Students to Meet College Readiness Standards on the Regents Exams?

- Regents exams are statewide tests taken by all high school students in New York State
  - Students must pass 5 Regents exams in core subject areas to graduate
  - To meet college readiness standards, students must meet higher benchmarks in math and English Language Arts (ELA) exams
- 1 in 3 homeless students met college readiness standards in both the ELA and math Regents exams compared to half of housed students (34% vs. 52%)

Percent of Students Meeting College Readiness Requirements on Regents Exams, by Subject and Housing Status  
Class of 2018

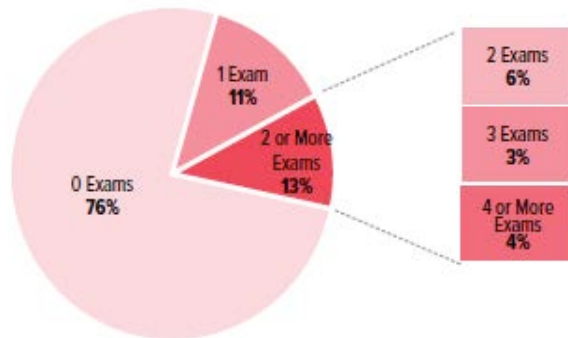


# Are Homeless Students Taking Advanced Placement (AP) Courses in High School?

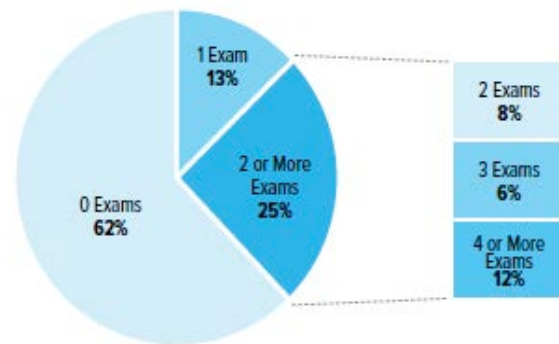
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses are college-level courses offered in many high schools that allow students to earn college credit. They culminate in an optional end-of-year exam.
- Homeless students were less likely to take an AP exam, with 76% taking 0 exams compared to 62% of housed students.

**Number of AP Exams Taken, by Housing Status**  
Class of 2018

**Ever Homeless (N=7,024)**



**Always Housed (N=67,511)**

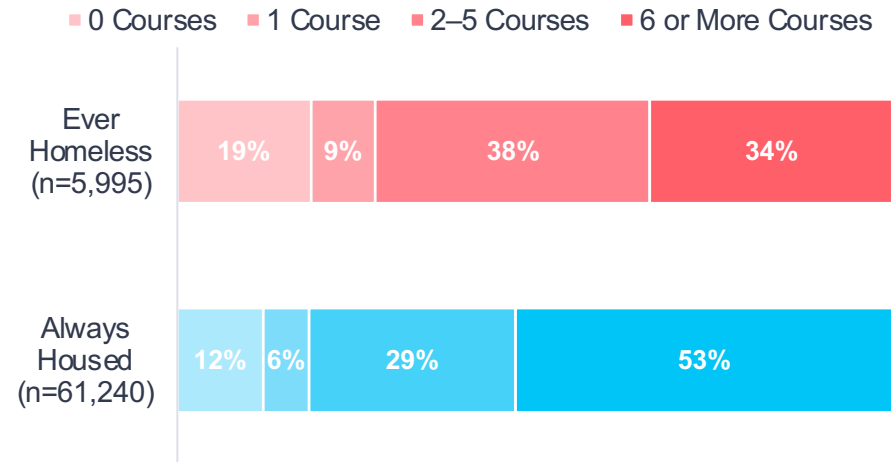


Note: Percentages in charts may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

# Do Homeless Students Have Equal Access to AP Courses?

- AP for All initiative expands access to Advanced Placement courses to high schools that had few or no AP course offerings.
- Homeless students were 1.5x as likely to attend a high school that offered no AP courses as housed students (19% vs. 12%).
- Homeless students were also less likely to attend a high school with 6 or more AP course offerings than housed students (34% vs. 53%).

Number of AP Courses Offered, by Housing Status  
Class of 2018

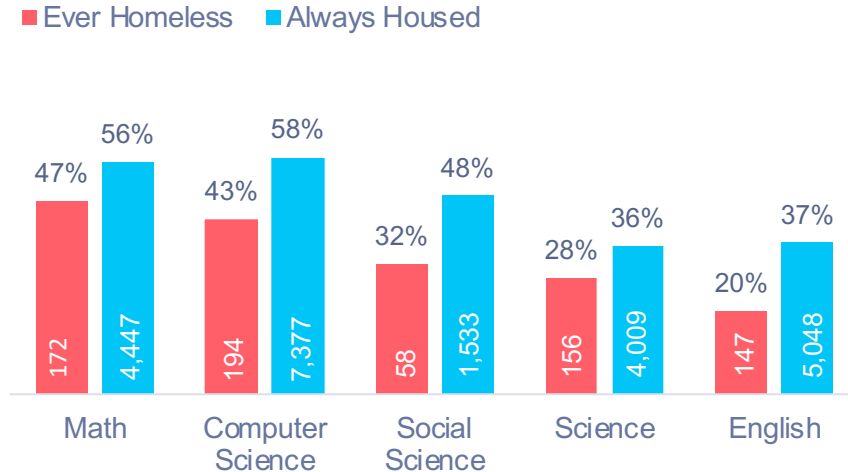




# Do Homeless Students Pass Their AP Exams at the Same Rate as Housed Students?

- While homeless students were less likely to take an AP exam, they were also less likely to pass an AP exam in every subject shown compared to housed students.
- The disparity in pass rates between homeless and housed students was smallest for science exams (28% vs. 36%) and greatest for English exams (20% vs. 37%).
- Homeless students were most likely to pass an AP math exam (47%) and least likely to pass an AP English exam (20%).

Percent of Students Passing an AP Exam, by Subject and Housing Status  
Class of 2018



# Discussion

- Does your district keep track of college readiness? If so, what measures of college readiness are used?
- Do you think these measures do a good job of assessing college readiness, or do they fall short?
- What supports do homeless students need to prepare them for college?



# What Are Some Early Predictors of College Readiness?

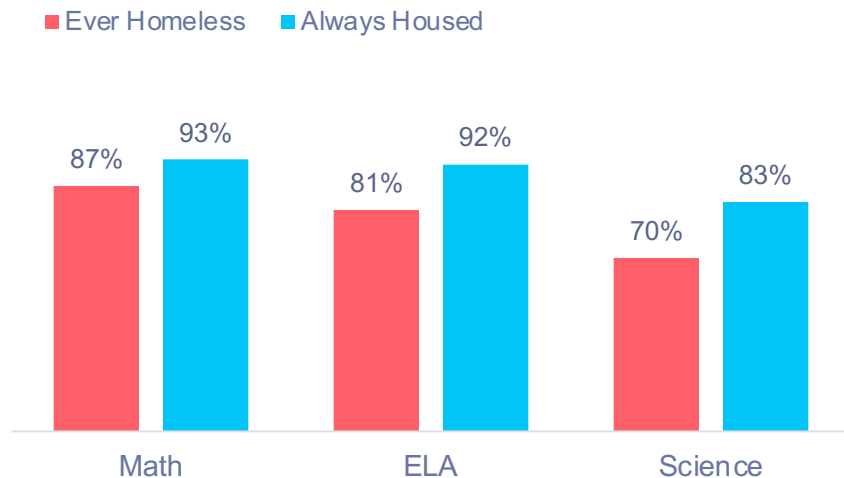
- Homeless high school students are less prepared for college.
- How can these students be identified early and be provided the proper supports?
- Some predictors of college readiness:
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores
  - Credit accumulation
  - 10<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT scores
  - Mid-year school transfers



# Eighth Grade Test Scores Are Early Predictors of College Readiness

- Students who passed any 8<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment were very likely to be college ready, regardless of high school housing status.
- About 7 of 8 homeless students who passed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math assessment were college ready (87%).
- Among homeless students, only 13% passed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math exam, 14% passed the ELA exam, and 34% passed the science exam.

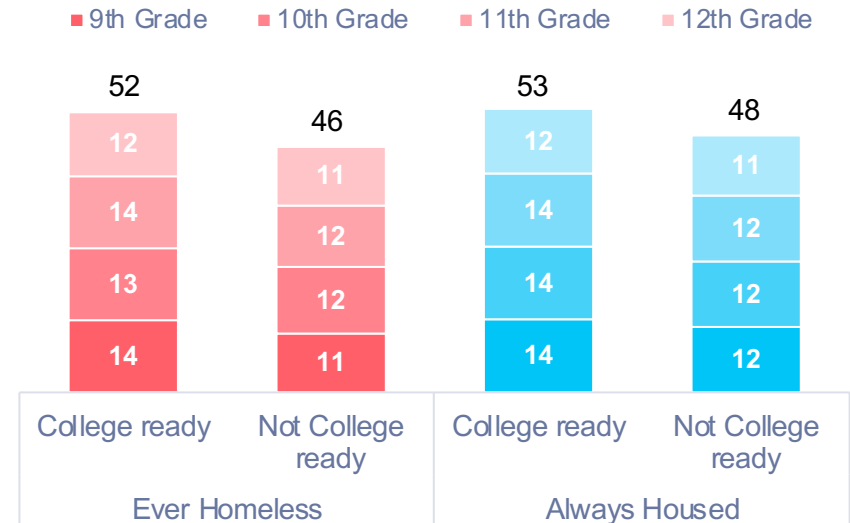
College Readiness Rates Among Students Who Passed Eighth Grade Assessments, by Subject and Housing Status  
Class of 2018



# What Do Patterns in Credit Accumulation Look Like?

- Disparities in the number of credits earned between college ready and non-college ready students can be seen as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- At the end of their first year, homeless students who were not college ready were already 3 credits behind homeless and housed students who were college ready (11 vs. 14).

High School Credits Earned, by Year, College Readiness, and Housing Status  
Class of 2018

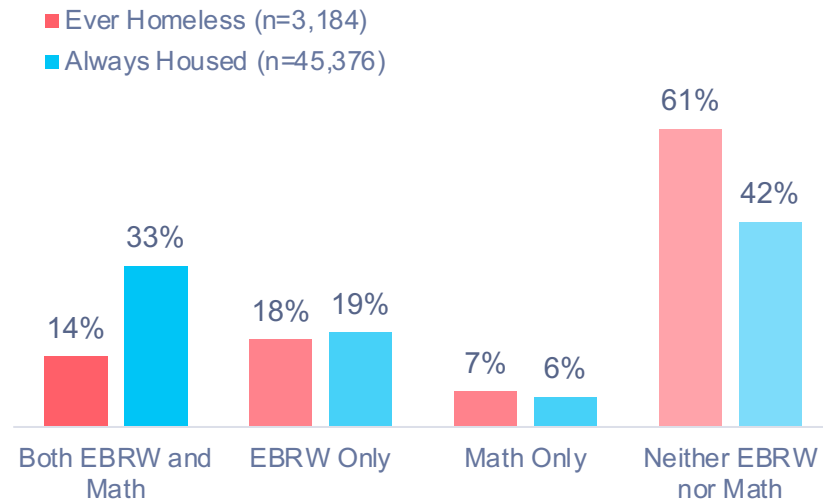


Data note: Numbers represent the median number of credits earned in each category and include only students who were enrolled all 4 years.

# How Do Homeless Students Score on the 10<sup>th</sup> Grade PSAT Exam?

- The College Board sets college readiness benchmarks for 10<sup>th</sup> graders taking the PSAT
  - 430 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and 480 in math
- Homeless students were less than half as likely to meet both benchmarks compared to housed students (14% vs. 33%)
- Three in five homeless students (61%) did not meet the benchmark in either EBRW or math—1.5x the rate of housed students

Percent of Students Who Met College Readiness Benchmarks on the Tenth Grade PSAT Exam



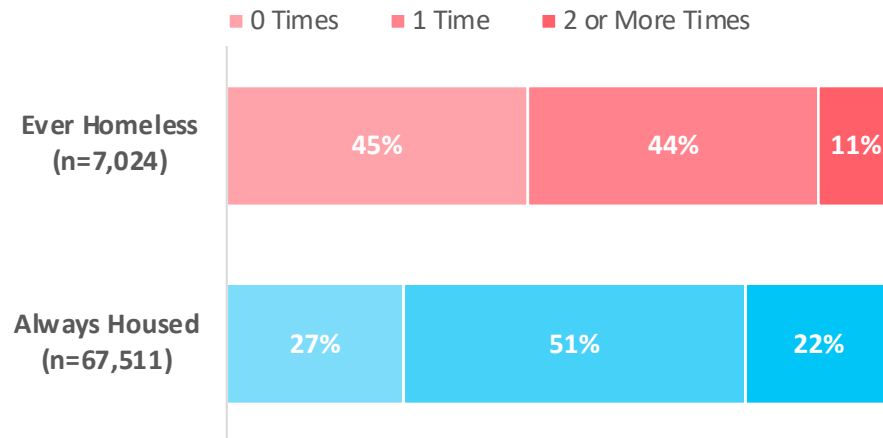


# How Many Times Do Homeless Students Take the PSAT Exam?

- NYC offers the PSAT exam to all 10<sup>th</sup> graders during a normal school day free of charge.
- Nearly half of homeless students did not take the PSAT compared to about 1 in 4 housed students (45% vs. 27%)
- Homeless students were only half as likely as housed students to take the PSAT exam 2 or more times (11% vs. 22%)

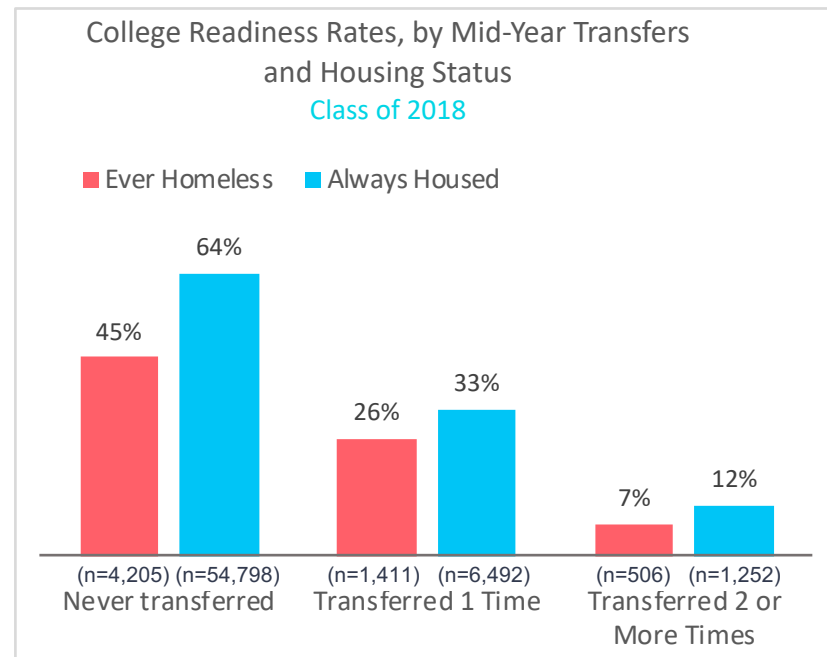
Number of Times Students Took the PSAT Exam, by Housing Status

Class of 2018



# How Do Mid-Year School Transfers Impact College Readiness?

- More than 1 in 3 (37%) homeless students transferred at least once during high school—2x the rate of housed students (17%).
- Among students who never transferred, fewer than half of homeless students were college ready compared to about two-thirds of housed students (45% vs. 64%)
- 1 in 4 homeless students who transferred once was college ready (26%) compared to 7% of those who transferred 2 or more times.



# Key Takeaways

- Students who experience homelessness during high school are less likely to graduate high school on time compared to housed students.
- **Nearly half of homeless graduates were not prepared to take college courses.**
- Homeless students often fall behind their housed peers academically **before they even begin high school.**
- Eighth grade test scores as well as credit accumulation, PSAT scores, and mid-year transfers, are early predictors of college readiness.

# Policy Implications

- Importance of tracking students at risk of falling behind in high school and giving them increased support early on
- School district initiatives to expand access to college are important, and they need to be **targeted to homeless students**
- ESSA requirement to report graduation rates for homeless students will allow for increased visibility of the unique issues they face, and college readiness among homeless students should also be tracked.
- Test scores are only one part of college readiness. Success in college requires soft skills, too.

# Resources



- Student Homelessness in New York City report series
  - College Readiness  
[www.ICPHusa.org/reports/beyond-graduation](http://www.ICPHusa.org/reports/beyond-graduation)
  - Graduation Gap  
[www.icphusa.org/reports/grad-gap/](http://www.icphusa.org/reports/grad-gap/)
- Interactive data on school stability  
[https://www.icphusa.org/interactive\\_data/nyc-trends/#number-of-homeless-students](https://www.icphusa.org/interactive_data/nyc-trends/#number-of-homeless-students)
- United States of Homelessness: compare trends in student homelessness by state <http://www./icphusa.org/USH>

# Questions?





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