



# COVID-19 and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: School-Based Strategies for Support

**December 14, 2021**

Patricia Julianelle, JD SchoolHouse Connection

Barbara Duffield SchoolHouse Connection

Levi Bohanan U.S. Department of Education







[www.sbh4all.org](http://www.sbh4all.org)





**We Believe...**


**In the transformational power  
of the health and education  
intersection**

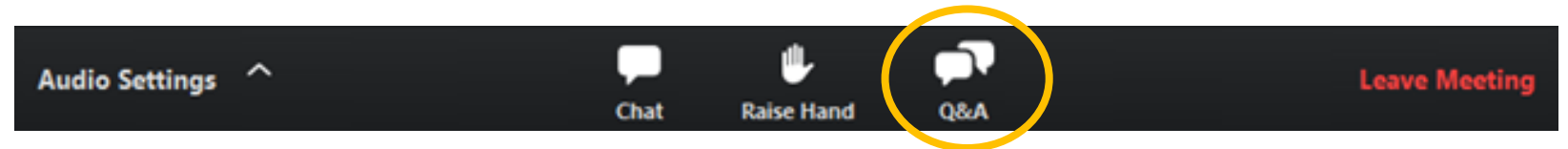
**HEALTHY STUDENTS**  
*make better learners*



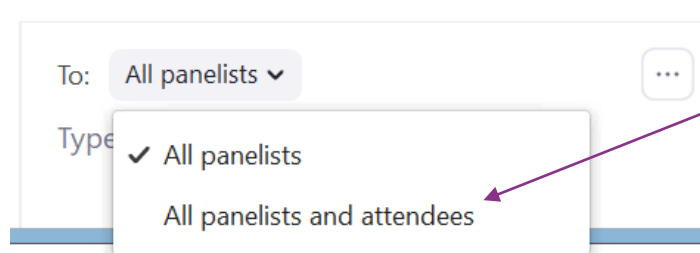
# REMINDERS

 All attendees are in listen-only mode.

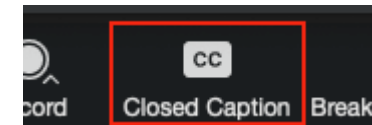
 To ask a question during the session, use the “Q&A” icon that appears on the bottom your Zoom control panel.



 When using the chat, please select “all panelists and attendees” before typing a message.



 To turn on closed captioning, click on the “CC” button



 Please complete evaluation poll questions at the end of the presentation.



## OBJECTIVES

- Understand the unique experience of unaccompanied youth who experience homelessness, and the barriers they face during the pandemic.
- Understand the federal education rights afforded to unaccompanied homeless youth, as well as the state laws related to minors' ability to consent to COVID-19 resources.
- Be equipped to find resources to implement federal and state laws related to unaccompanied homeless youths' education and health care.



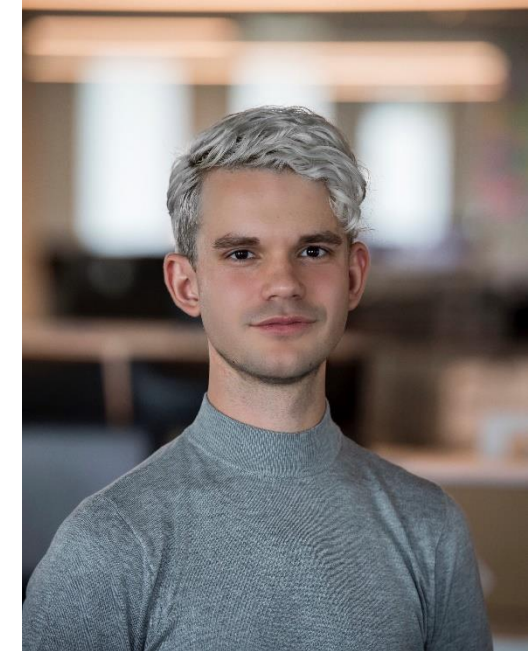
# TODAY'S PRESENTERS:



**Patricia Julianelle, JD**  
Senior Strategist for Program  
Advancement and Legal Affairs  
SchoolHouse Connection



**Barbara Duffield**  
Executive Director  
SchoolHouse Connection



**Levi Bohanan**  
Special Assistant, Office of  
Elementary and Secondary  
Education  
U.S. Department of Education








**SchoolHouse Connection** works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

Federal and state policy advocacy  
Q&A from our inbox  
Webinars and implementation tools  
Youth leadership and scholarship

# Today's Agenda

- **Understanding Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness**
- **Basic Overview of Federal K-12 Educational Rights**
- **Promoting Access to Vaccines**
- **Promoting Access to COVID-19 Testing**
- **Promoting Access to Education and Safety During Quarantines**





# Who is Considered Homeless Under Federal Education Law?

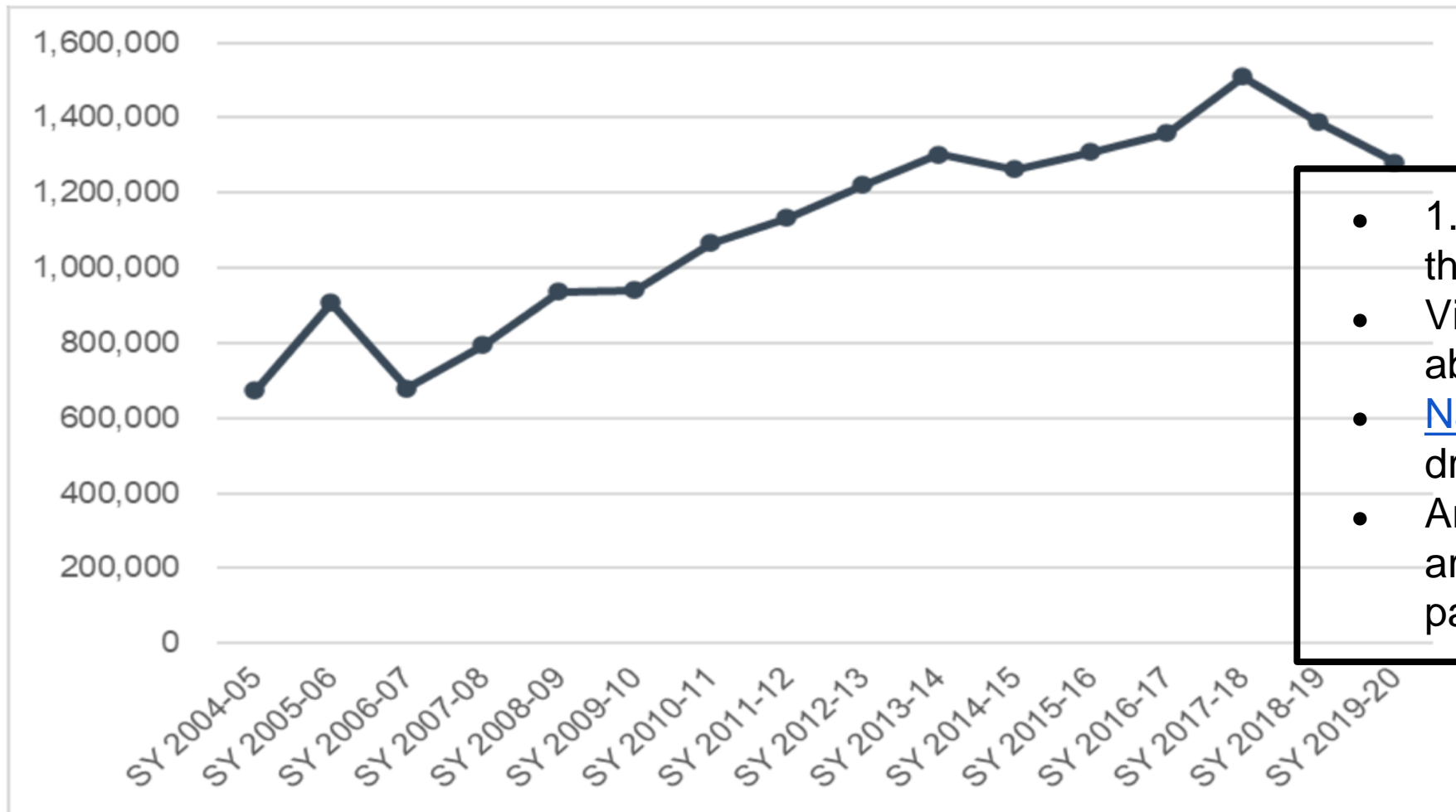
The McKinney-Vento Act definition: Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.  
*78% of identified M-V students in 2019–20*
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.  
*Motels: 7%*
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.  
*11%*
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings. *4%*
  - What is substandard? Check utilities; infestations; mold; dangers.

# Homelessness Among PreK-12 Students

<https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2021.pdf>

**Figure 1. Enrolled students experiencing homelessness by state, School Years 2004-05 through 2019-20: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year olds, and Kindergarten to Grade 12**



- 1.2 million students K-12 in the 2019-20 School year
- Virtual schooling decreased ability to identify and enroll
- [National survey](#) found 28% drop in fall of 2020
- Anecdotally, many schools are on pace to exceed pre-pandemic levels

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED*Facts* file specification 118 (2006-2021), SEA level.



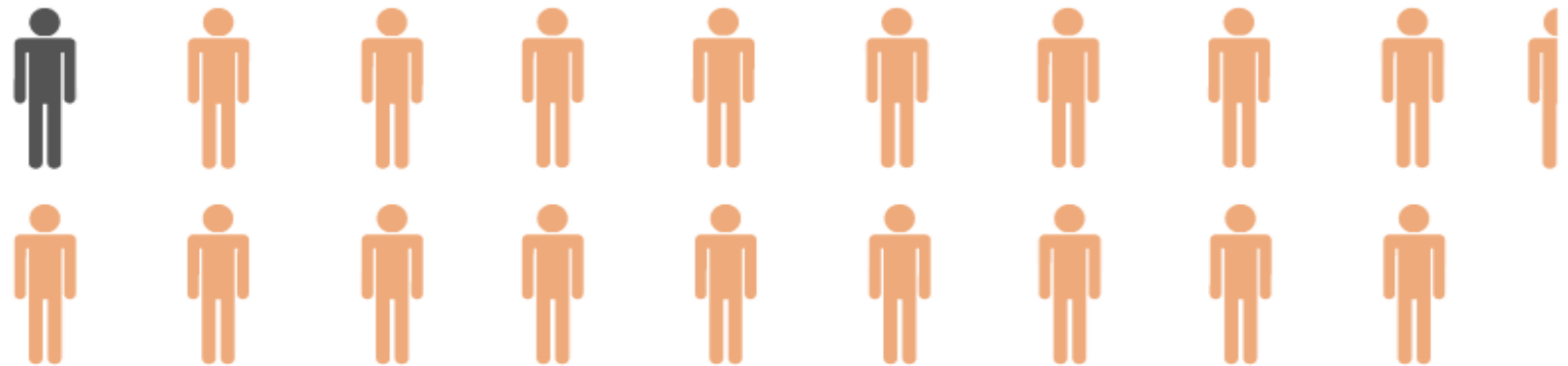
# Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Analysis



Survey results show:

**5.4% OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INDICATED THEY HAD EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS IN THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR**

For every 18.5 high school students, 1 has experienced homelessness.



Data: SchoolHouse Connection's analysis of 2019 YRBS data from 27 states (AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, ID, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MT, NH, NM, NC, ND, PA, RI, SC, SD, VT, VA, WI)

# Definition:

## Unaccompanied youth

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A child or youth without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence *and* not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- Youth run away from home due to abuse or neglect.
  - 40-60% of unaccompanied youth were abused physically at home.
  - 17-25% of unaccompanied youth were abused sexually at home.
  - Research links parental substance abuse and youth running away from home.
- Parents force youth out of the home due to conflicts.
  - Sexual orientation and gender identity
  - Pregnancy
- Loss of parent/caregiver
  - 35% of youth experienced death of parent or caregiver



## BEFORE COVID-19:

# Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults

*\*<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>*

**3.5 million young adults**

About 3.5 million young adults (18-25 year olds), about **1 in 10** experienced homelessness on their own over the course of a year

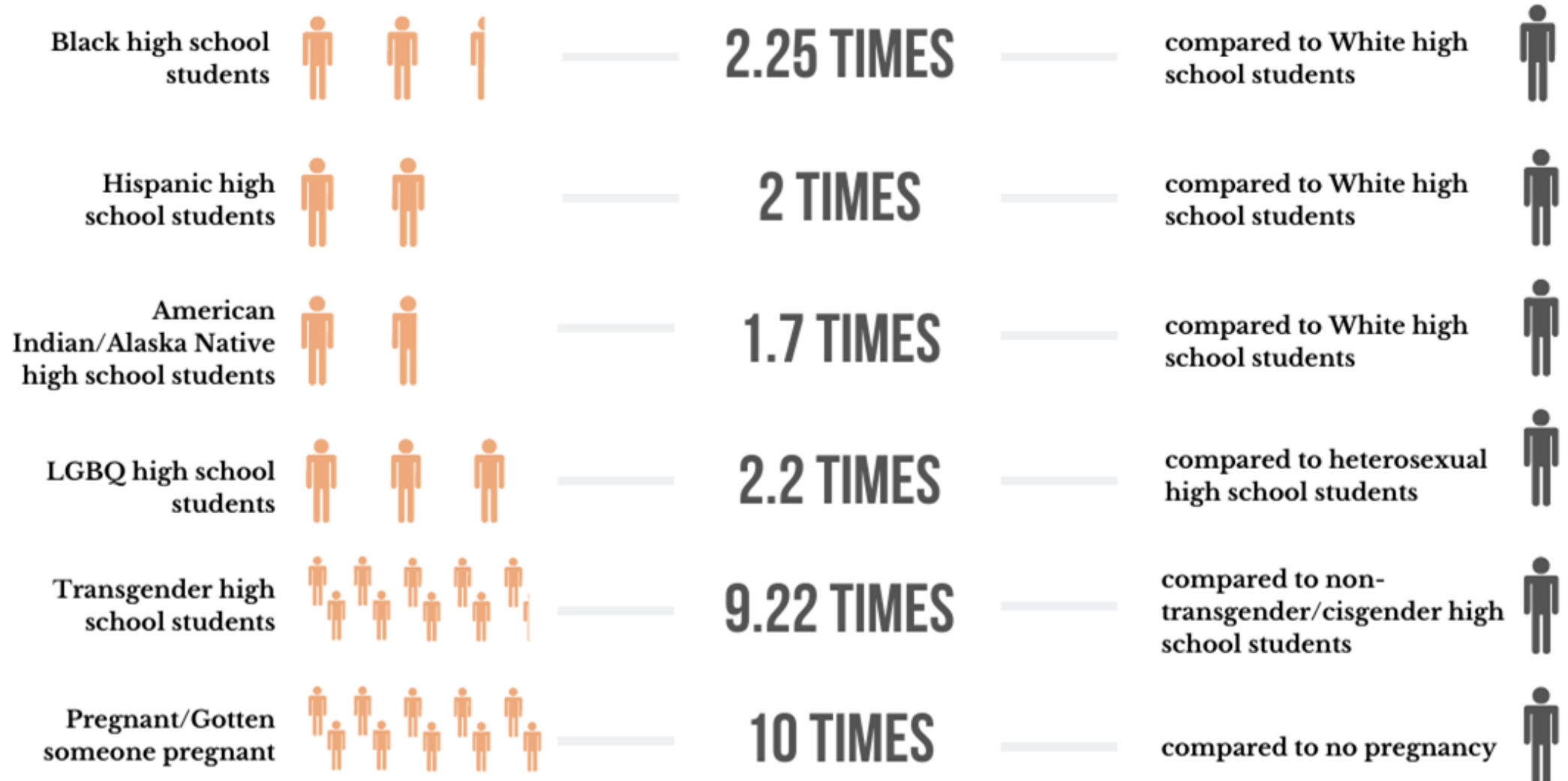
**700,000 minors**

**1 out of 30 youth** between the ages of 13-17.

**112,822 identified by public schools**

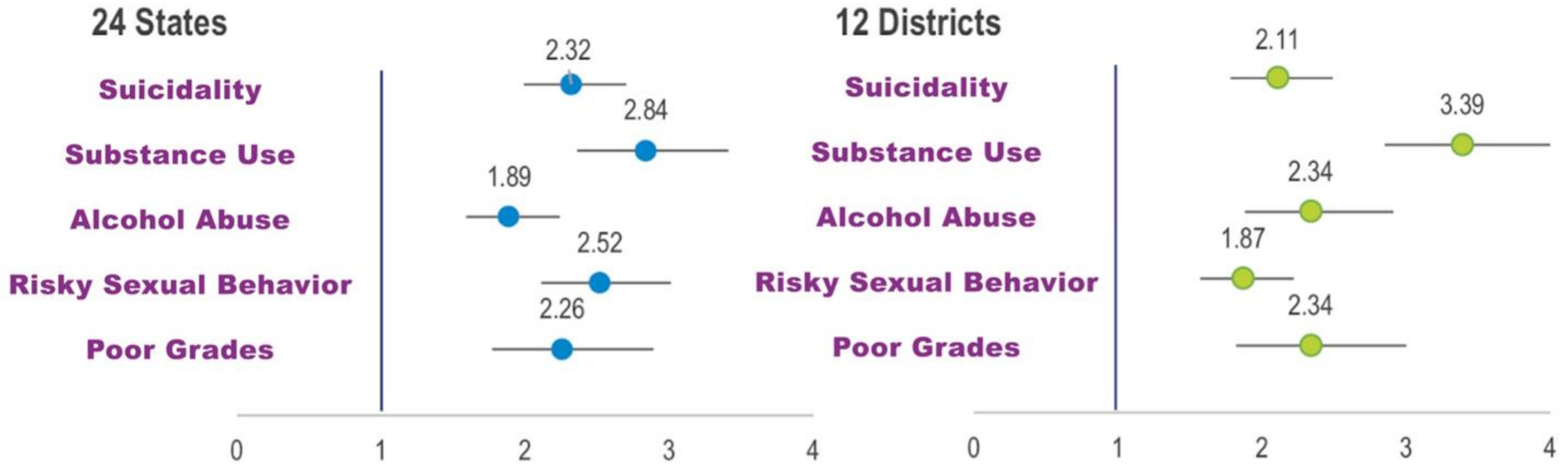
were identified by public schools in 2019-2020 (**9% of all identified homeless students K-12**)

# Disproportionate Incidence of Homelessness: Analysis of CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey





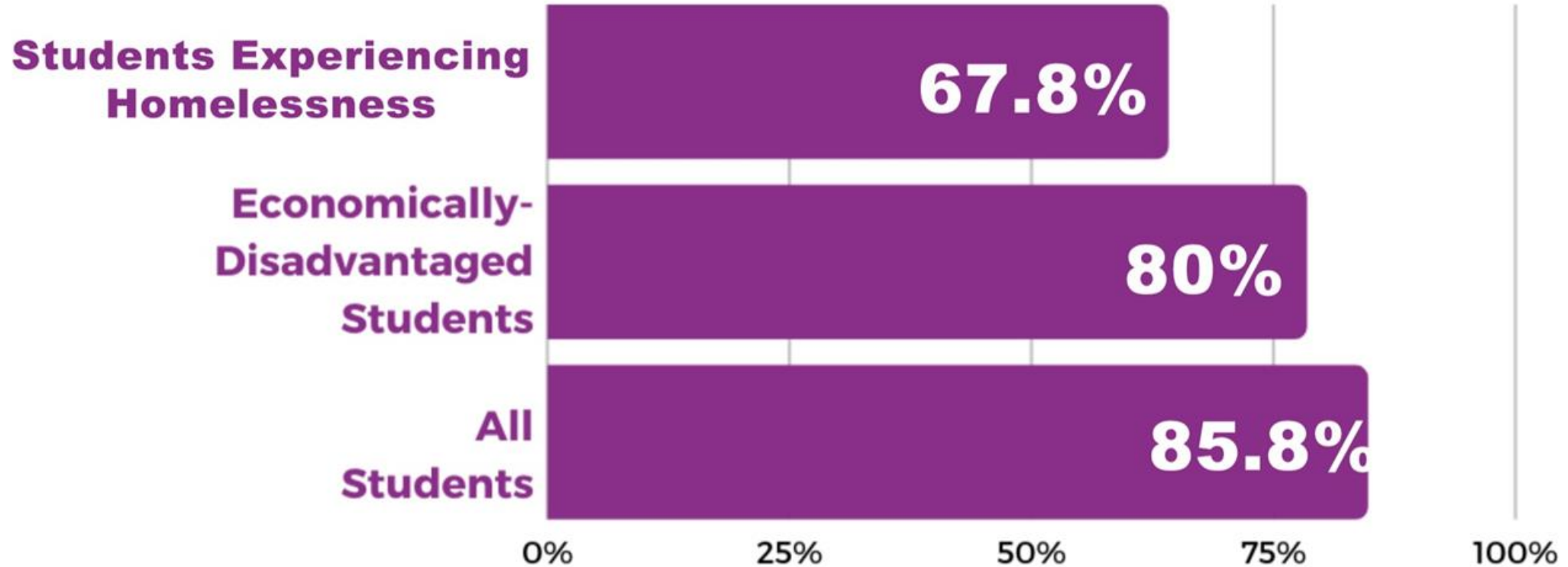
# Vulnerabilities: CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey



*Note. Odds ratios describe association of homelessness with poor outcomes, controlling for race/ethnicity, sex, age, and victimization. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. All models control for demographics and victimization.*

[High School Students Experiencing Homelessness, Nemours Children's Health System](#)

# National High School Graduation Rates 2018-2019





# Homelessness and Education

## Homelessness causes:

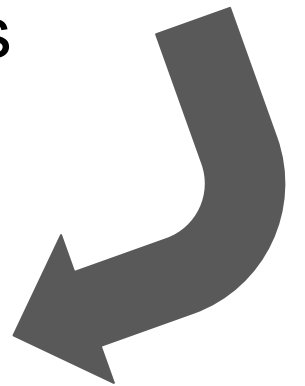
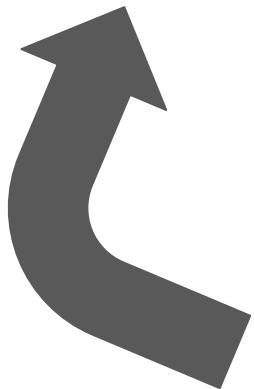
- Chronic health problems
- Trauma
- Mobility



## Leading to:

- High rates of chronic absenteeism
- Double the rates of punitive discipline
- Lower graduation rates

And the **lack of a high school degree** is the Greatest single risk factor for young adult homelessness.



# Impact of COVID-19

- More homelessness (evictions, family stress)
- More mobility (fewer shelter options)
- More isolation
- More basic needs and mental health issues
- Drop in school enrollment and attendance, lack of transportation, devices/connectivity
- Barriers to vaccines/tests

# Basic McKinney-Vento Rights

- School of origin
- Transportation
- Immediate enrollment
- Removing barriers

<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/mckinney-vento-act/>



# McKinney-Vento Liaisons

- Required to be designated in every LEA.
- Ten specific duties
  - Identification
  - Enrollment
  - Early childhood services
  - Referrals to outside agencies
  - Public notice
  - Professional Development within the LEA
- [Directory of State Homeless Education Coordinators and Local Homeless Liaisons](#)

# Main purposes of American Rescue Plan- Homeless Children and Youth program

Areas of focus include supporting the

**Identification**

**School engagement and**

**Provision of wrap-around  
services**

to children and youth experiencing  
homelessness

Particularly for underserved populations

## TITLE II—COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

### Subtitle A—Education Matters

#### PART 1—DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

##### SEC. 2001. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to amounts otherwise available through the Education Stabilization Fund, there is appropriated to the Department of Education for fiscal year 2021, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$122,774,800,000, to remain available through September 30, 2023, to carry out this section.

(b) GRANTS.—From funds provided under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) use \$800,000,000 for the purposes of identifying homeless children and youth and providing homeless children and youth with—

(A) wrap-around services in light of the challenges of COVID-19; and

(B) assistance needed to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities; and

(2) from the remaining amounts, make grants to each State educational agency in accordance with this section.

(c) ALLOCATIONS TO STATES.—The amount of each grant under

# ARP-HCY Funds

- \$800 million in ESSER funds “set-aside” for homeless children and youth under ARP section 2001(b)(1)
- ARP Homeless I: \$199,750,000 disbursed to SEAs in late April
  - Distributed primarily to local educational agencies (LEAs) already receiving McKinney-Vento subgrant funds
- ARP Homeless II: \$599,250,000 disbursed to SEAs in late July
  - Distributed to LEAs via a [formula established via emergency rulemaking](#)
- ARP-HCY State Plans under review and revision
  - 28 state plans by mid-December

# The opportunities and priorities for ARP-HCY

- Collaborating and contracting with state and local agencies and community-based organizations to plan for and provide wrap-around services
- Engaging CBO's that are **well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness from historically underserved communities:**
  - rural children and youth
  - tribal children and youth
  - students of color
  - pregnant, parenting, or caregiving English learners
  - LGBTQ+ youth
  - justice-involved youth
  - children and youth with disabilities
- Innovative practices to support unaccompanied homeless youth
  - State or regional systems navigators for housing and higher education
  - State and school district advisory councils incl. people with lived experience of homelessness





A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a dark t-shirt with a NASA logo, is seated at a table in a clinical setting. A healthcare worker in light blue scrubs is leaning over him, administering a vaccine into his upper arm. The background shows a clean, well-lit room with medical equipment and other staff members in scrubs.

# **Promoting Access to Vaccines**

# Promoting Access to Vaccines

## Understanding state law

- [34 states and DC](#) provide rights for minors who are living on their own, including unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness, to consent for routine health care without a parent or legal guardian.
- This should include vaccinations unless explicitly exempted.
- Additional state laws also exist regarding consent for infectious diseases, reproductive health care, STIs, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment.
- Note: Local jurisdictions can enact their own broader emergency ordinances, see San Francisco's [here](#).

# Promoting Access to Vaccines

**Ensure health care providers, especially school nurses, and school officials know these laws and fully implement them:**

- Explain state laws (don't just link to them) on school district and health provider web sites and other outreach materials.
- Create forms and other tools to help implement.

**Ensure youth know about these laws:**

- Work with youth to create youth-facing outreach/materials.
- Partner with CBOs and faith-based organizations that serve marginalized populations.

# Promoting Access to Vaccines

**Note: Child welfare referrals are not appropriate.**

- Being UHY should not be construed as de facto abuse and neglect. Research shows youth avoid services if they believe they will be reported.

**Offer vaccines at schools and prioritize unaccompanied youth for access at school,** where school nurses and others administering vaccines may be more likely to understand both MV and state minor consent laws.

**Offer transportation and support accessing off-site vaccination clinics for UHY in particular.**





# Promoting Access to Testing

# Promoting Access to Testing

Understand state laws on [minor consent to testing](#).

Help youth, providers, and educators understand and implement these laws .

**Make necessary testing available immediately at schools at no cost.**

- Allow the youth, school district liaison or other caretaker to sign any necessary paperwork, consistent with state law.
- Permit over-the-counter tests to satisfy testing requirements if other tests are not immediately available.
- Allow unaccompanied homeless youth who are not able to consent on their own for a vaccine, but who can consent to a test, to be tested at school and at no cost, and return to the classroom with a negative test, so that they are not relegated to virtual learning, or shut out of school altogether.

An empty room with beige walls, a grey carpet, and a window looking out onto trees. The room is empty, with a few electrical outlets visible on the wall. The window is on the right side of the frame, showing some greenery outside. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat somber.

# **Quarantines and Homelessness**

# Quarantines and Homelessness

- Children and youth who experience homelessness often have no safe, stable place to quarantine.
- Access to education, health and safety are jeopardized during these periods.
- Virtual learning creates many challenges for homeless students:, including accessing wifi and devices, no quiet place to do schoolwork, greater isolation, more mobility, and fewer opportunities to disclose needs confidentially to trusted adults.



A photograph showing three young people sitting in a circle, listening intently to a speaker whose back is to the camera. The speaker is a Black man with a beard, wearing a dark shirt. The three students are a young man in a red shirt, a young woman in a maroon shirt, and a young woman in a blue shirt. They are all looking towards the speaker. The background is a large, brightly lit indoor space, possibly a school gymnasium, with other people and chairs visible. A white text box with a black border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text.

**Promoting Access to Education, Health, and Safety During School Quarantines**

# Promoting Access to Education, Health, and Safety During School Quarantines

- Provide access to needed testing at schools and at no cost to children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Assist families and youth with any needed transportation to testing sites.
- Work with McKinney-Vento liaisons to establish a district-wide plan for communicating with and supporting students experiencing homelessness during any necessary quarantines.

# Promoting Access to Education, Health, and Safety During School Quarantines

- Check in on identified children and youth experiencing homelessness daily throughout their quarantine period, to ensure that they can access testing, help them find safe/stable places to stay, food, and all that they need to participate in virtual learning.
- Publicize information about the definition of homelessness, and make available youth- and parent-facing information about McKinney-Vento rights and services.
- Work with community-based youth homelessness and housing partners to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are able to continue accessing their classes virtually or otherwise.



**QUESTIONS?**





# THANK YOU!

Additional Questions? Contact us at: [info@sbh4all.org](mailto:info@sbh4all.org)

