LET HER LEARN

STOPPING SCHOOL PUSHOUT

for Girls Who Are Homeless

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The National Women's Law Center is a non-profit organization that has worked for more than 40 years to expand opportunities for women and their families, with a major emphasis on education and employment opportunities, women's health and reproductive rights, and family economic security.

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

LET HER LEARN

GIRLS WHO ARE HOMELESS

The United States has more homeless students than ever before—more than double the population from a decade ago.[1] In the National Women's Law Center's 2017 Let Her Learn Survey ("Let Her Learn Survey"), 11 percent of all girls ages 14-18 reported experiencing homelessness, and these rates were even higher for Black girls (19 percent) and LGBT girls (18 percent).[2] While there are large data gaps for this population of students, the limited data available show that homeless youth experience high rates of trauma and other physical, mental and emotional problems that affect their ability to attend and succeed in school. In addition, girls who are homeless have higher rates of teen pregnancy.[3] Policymakers, educators, and communities can and should do more to help this extremely vulnerable population.

This report presents the available data on homeless youth, examines the impact homelessness has on students' education, and offers recommendations to address the barriers these students face to succeeding in school.

METHODOLOGY for Let Her Learn Survey and Focus Groups:

To better understand what healthy and safe schools look like for all girls, the National Women's Law Center collaborated with Lake Research Partners to conduct a study of girls from January 5-19, 2017. The study included an online survey of 1,003 girls ages 14-18 nationwide. Black, Latina, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and LGBTQ girls were oversampled. The data were weighted by age, race, and census region to reflect the actual proportions of the population. Oversamples were weighted down to reflect their proportions in the population. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%. The margin of error is higher among subgroups. The study also included six focus groups on barriers facing girls who are survivors of sexual assault and girls who are either currently pregnant or those who are parenting children. The focus groups were conducted in Washington, D.C., Chicago, IL, and Atlanta, GA. The focus group guide and nationwide survey were reviewed by Schulman Institutional Review Board to ensure they protected the well-being of all girls involved in the study.

Background on Girls Who Are Homeless

The number of homeless youth is on the rise, but an accurate count still does not exist given the disincentives to reporting. There are also no data on how many girls or subgroups of girls are or have been homeless. There is evidence, however, that girls often are homeless due to abuse or hostility toward their sexual orientation and identity, and that homeless teens experience high rates of pregnancy.

11 percent of all girls ages 14-18 reported experiencing homelessness, and these rates were even higher for Black girls (19 percent) and LGBT girls (18 percent).

In the 2013-14 school year, there were approximately 1.36 million homeless students enrolled in public schools[4]—a more than 100 percent increase since the 2006-07 school year.[5] The large increase in the homeless student population may indicate that many families are continuing to struggle after the recent economic downturn or that schools are becoming better at identifying homeless students. Although the estimate of homeless students is high, it still likely does not accurately capture the entire population because some students do not want to report their situation to friends or adults for fear of stigma, bullying, or what will happen to them if they tell an authority figure.[6]

The typical homeless family is headed by a single mother in her late twenties with 2-3 preschool age children.[7] While homelessness affects people all over the country, of different ages, occupations, and ethnicities, Black people are disproportionately represented in the homeless population.[8] The Let Her Learn Survey reveals a similar trend for girls: 1 in 5 (19 percent) of Black girls reported experiencing homelessness, compared to 11 percent of all girls. Additionally, 18 percent of LGBT girls reported experiencing homelessness.[9]

HOMELESS YOUTH:
Young people who do not have a regular, fixed adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless. This includes children who are sharing housing with people due to a loss of housing or economic hardship and children who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, transitional shelters, are abandoned, or are waiting for foster care placement. This also includes children living in public spaces not designated for nighttime residence and children living in cars, abandoned buildings, substandard housing,[10] bus or train stations, or similar settings.[11]

Among girls, homelessness is often due to abuse and trauma, which leads many girls to run away from home. Each year over a million youth run away from home or are forced out of their homes by their parents; three out of four (75 percent) of these runaways are girls.[12] Unaccompanied homeless youth often report a variety of family problems—including hostility towards their sexual activity, sexual orientation or pregnancy; abuse; parental substance abuse; incarceration; illness; deportation; or death of a family member—as the reason they no longer live at home. In particular, studies estimate that 20-42 percent of unaccompanied youth were sexually abused in their homes and 40-60 percent were physically abused.[13] It is not surprising then that some studies have found that young people between the ages of 12-17 are more at risk of being homeless than adults.[14]

WHAT GIRLS SAY:

"I didn't choose to be on my own.
Well, being on my own has [been a] little rocky, but I have been on my own since I was like 14, 15. I'm 18 now. It was hard with high school in the beginning — freshman, sophomore year because I was like [living at] my friend's house, my family member house, my friends so it was like I'm not going to go to school because I'm already going to [fail]... My baby saved my life."
– *NWLC Focus Group Participant*

22% of girls who are survivors of violence or sexual assault have been homeless.
— National Women's Law Center, Let Her Learn Survey

Many girls who run away are exposed to additional abuse once they leave their homes.[15] Being homeless, along with other correlated factors such as childhood sexual abuse, being disconnected from school, and not having a caring adult, increases the risk that youth will engage in commercial sex or become victims of sex trafficking. In fact, a New York study found that one in four homeless youth engaged in survival sex— in exchange for money, food or shelter—or was the victim of trafficking.[16] This study also found that nearly half of those who engaged in commercial sex did so because they said they did not have a place to stay, and those who were forced into sex trafficking reported experiencing violence, intimidation, kidnapping and failed escape attempts.[17]

The Let Her Learn Survey sheds additional light on this particularly vulnerable population of girls:

- Girls who have experienced homelessness report being sexually assaulted—defined as being kissed or touched without their consent—at double the rate of girls overall (41 percent vs. 21 percent).
- 22 percent of girls who have experienced homelessness also said they have experienced dating violence.
- Nearly half (47 percent) of the teenage girls who reported experiencing homelessness also reported that a family member had been hurt or injured on purpose by another family member or someone they were dating.

Additionally, homeless teens also experience pregnancy at higher rates than their housed peers, although it is not clear which comes first. According to national estimates, between 6-22 percent of girls who are homeless are pregnant.[18] But rates in particular locations can be much higher. For instance, a study conducted in Chicago found that of the homeless girls surveyed, 50 percent were either pregnant or parenting.[19] This same study found that there was only one shelter in the area that accepted pregnant and parenting youth under 18, leaving these youth with very limited options. Moreover, young homeless mothers are at a higher risk than their housed peers for future pregnancies, sexual assault, mental health issues, and not graduating from high school.[20]

Barriers to Success in School for Girls Who Are Homeless

Homeless students face a number of barriers to succeeding in school. They are more likely to suffer from stress and trauma, and to have physical and emotional problems, learning disabilities, and poor educational outcomes.

Stress and Trauma

Trauma often leads young people to become homeless, and being homeless makes them vulnerable to even more trauma.[21] In a recent study,[22] homeless youth spoke to the impact their living conditions had on them:

- 72 percent said that being homeless had an impact on their ability to feel safe and secure.
- 71 percent said that being homeless had an impact on their mental and emotional health.
- 62 percent reported that being homeless negatively affected their physical health.

Schools can do more to address this stress and trauma: 77 percent of girls who reported experiencing homelessness said they would be interested in speaking to a counselor if one was made available. Of these girls, over 1 in 5 (21 percent) indicated that they would be very interested in speaking to a counselor.[23]

Physical and Emotional Issues and Learning Disabilities

Homeless children suffer from physical problems that hinder their success in school. They have twice as many ear infections, four times the rate of asthma, and five times the rate of diarrhea and stomach problems as other children, all of which may cause them to miss more days of school.[24]

In addition, homeless students have triple the rate of emotional and behavioral problems as their non-homeless peers.[25] Yet they often do not receive the services they need to help them deal with these problems. For example, even though more than 1 in 5 homeless preschoolers have emotional problems that require professional care, less than a third receive treatment.[26]

Girls who have experienced homelessness report triple the rate of exclusionary discipline (31 percent report being suspended or expelled) compared to housed girls (11 percent report being suspended or expelled).[27]

With respect to learning disabilities, children who are homeless are particularly likely to be misdiagnosed. Nationally, 13 percent of students had a diagnosed disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).[28] Homeless students in all but four states (Alabama, Texas, New York, and Colorado) had higher rates of a diagnosed disability than the national average (**Figure 1**).[29] One reason homeless students may be overidentified is that teachers improperly refer students for evaluation because it is difficult to disentangle trauma and other effects of homelessness (such as trouble concentrating or poor grades) from learning disabilities. Children who are homeless also may be underidentified as having learning disabilities because they may not have access to quality early childhood programs or regularly see pediatricians who can help evaluate and refer them.[30] Additionally, parents who experience the stress of homelessness may not know how to advocate for their children during the disability diagnosing process. The confluence of these factors may lead to homeless students being more likely to be misdiagnosed when it comes to learning disabilities.

Poor educational outcomes

As a result of unstable living conditions, homeless students may find it difficult to do well in school. Residential moves affect students' lives inside and outside of school; it can be difficult for young people to focus on schoolwork when they have not had a good nights' rest, are worried about a stable and safe place to sleep, or where they will get their next meal. As a result, homeless students face a number of challenges to succeeding in school. Research has found that:

- 71 percent of girls who experienced homelessness said that it was difficult to stay focused in school – compared to 46 percent of girls overall.[31]
- 68 percent said it was hard to succeed in school while they were homeless.[32]
- 60 percent of formerly homeless youth said it was hard to stay in school.[33]
- 32 percent of girls who experienced homelessness reported being in a physical fight at school,[34] which can happen after students are harassed and bullied about being homeless.[35]

GOOD POLICY:

California's Homeless Youth Education Success Act ensures immediate enrollment and full participation in school for students experiencing homelessness. It also creates a state-level working group to develop policies and practices to support homeless children and youth and make sure that child abuse and neglect reporting requirements do not create barriers to the school enrollment and attendance of homeless children or youth.

— 2014 Cal. Stat. 48850

A statewide survey indicated that this law helped over 27,000 homeless youth enroll in and attend school.

— National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, *Policy -to- Practice: Implementation and Impact of California Policies on Youth Homelessness from 2013* (2014)

School Mobility

For many homeless families and children, the search for stable housing means shifting school placements. Some research suggests that 50 percent of homeless students change schools multiple times.[36] Each time a student changes schools, she also changes peer groups, teachers, and curriculum. This mobility makes it difficult for students who are homeless to keep up, creating an additional barrier for these children who already live in high stress and unstable conditions.

In addition, according to a recent study, homeless students said it was very difficult to reenroll in school after experiencing homelessness. Many students cited the need for proof of residence and lack of cooperation between new and past schools, which made the enrollment process difficult to navigate.[37] These obstacles make school even less accessible, particularly for students who do not have proper documentation, such as a physical address or immunization records. Such hurdles can be especially daunting for runaway youth who do not have a parent or guardian to help them through the process. And just sorting out these issues costs students a significant amount of time out of the classroom, causing them to fall further behind.

The McKinney-Vento Act gives students experiencing homelessness the right to continue attending their school of origin. Local school districts must consider a series of factors including safety issues, the age of the child, the distance of the commute, and the wishes of the parents when deciding the best placement for the child. If the parent and school district decide it is in the best interest of the child to remain in their school of origin, they must provide or arrange transportation to and from school.[38]

Chronic Absenteeism

Homeless students suffer from chronic absenteeism, defined as missing more than 3 weeks in a school year. Chronic absenteeism is connected to lower test scores, an increased risk of grade retention and lower graduation rates, along with poor health, involvement in the criminal justice system, and poverty.[39]

More specifically, homeless elementary students missed an average of four weeks of school in the 2013-14 school year. Housed students miss substantially less school than students who are homeless: non-low income, housed students missed an average of two weeks, while low-income, housed students missed an average of 2.5 weeks of school.[40] The available data does not paint a much better picture in middle and high school. In the Let Her Learn Survey, half (50 percent) of the girls who have experienced homelessness reported missing at least three weeks of school. Thirty-five percent report being absent from school because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to school.[41]

Part of the problem is that students who are homeless are more likely to enroll in schools where chronic absenteeism is a school-wide problem, making homeless students harder to identify. Twenty-eight percent of homeless elementary students were enrolled in schools where one third of the students were chronically absent.[42] And the negative effects are clear: "Chronically absent homeless children repeated a grade at over three times the rate of homeless students who missed fewer than five days in school."[43] Similarly, 38 percent of homeless students who missed less than five days of school achieved proficiency in state assessment tests, but only 12 percent of chronically absent homeless students reached proficiency in their state assessments.[44]

Lower Test Scores

Homeless students perform worse than their peers on standardized tests. A number of factors help students perform well on standardized tests, including having breakfast and a good night's sleep, so it is unsurprising that homeless children do not fare as well

when they live in shelters, on the streets, or with other people. A study conducted in Los Angeles found that 47 percent of homeless children performed below the 10th percentile in vocabulary and nearly 40 percent had a reading delay.[45]

Homeless students also perform worse than other economically disadvantaged students. For instance, data from 2013 state achievement tests show large proficiency gaps between economically disadvantaged students and homeless students.[46] The largest gaps occur in high school, and the data show that homeless students in New York, Iowa, and Texas experience the largest proficiency gaps in math (**Figure 2**). For example, in New York, 10.2 percent of homeless high school students reached a proficiency level on the high school math achievement test, compared to 89.3 percent of economically disadvantaged high school students. This results in a high school math gap of 79.1 percentage points.

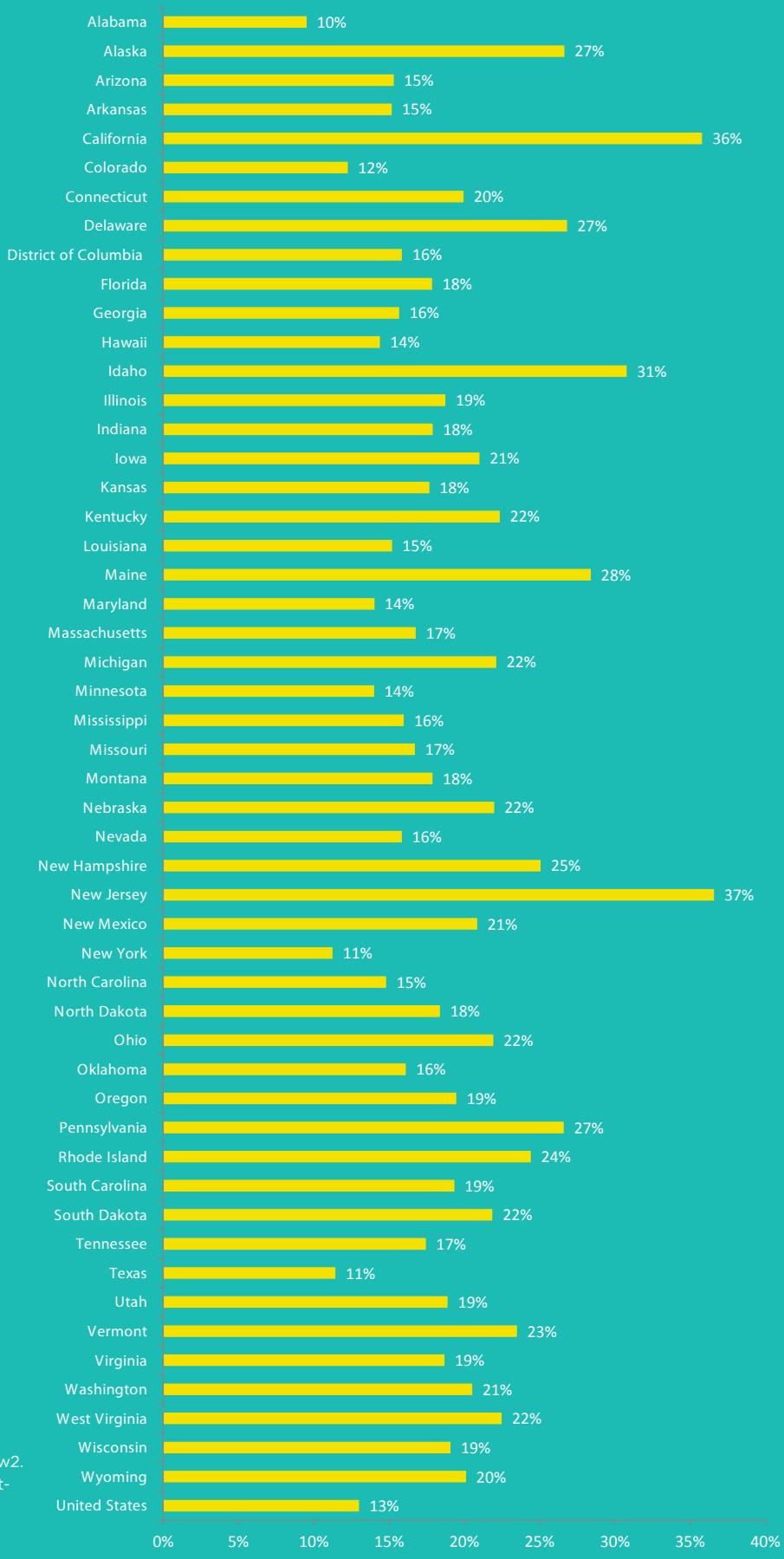
Summer Learning Loss

Another barrier for homeless children is summer learning loss. During the summer months, children living in poverty do not have access to the resources and support they need to continue educational progress, and homeless students have even less access. In general, low-income children are at risk for summer learning loss because of the cost of keeping children engaged during the summer. In 2012, the national cost of activities that keep children learning and engaged during the summer—such as camps, sports, day trips and child care—was estimated at $16.6 billion.[47] Given that summer activities cost families an estimate of $601 per child, it is not surprising that on average, low-income students lose two months of reading skills during the summer due to a lack of quality summer programs.[48] This loss can be even greater for homeless students, as families struggling to find housing cannot afford activities such as summer camps that help children continue learning. Therefore, homeless students are in great danger of falling further behind during summer break, and even worse, they lose access to the many supports they receive during the school year, such as guaranteed meals.

Lower Graduation Rates

Homeless youth are at a greater risk of not graduating from high school: One study found that a student who experienced homelessness was 87 percent more likely than their non-homeless peers to stop going to school.[49] They are also twice as likely to repeat a grade compared to non-homeless children.[50] And while extracurricular activities such as sports, music, art or school clubs can help students stay engaged and in school, homeless youth may have a hard time accessing these valuable programs. One study showed that 82 percent of formerly homeless youth said that participating in extra-curricular activities was critical to navigating the difficulties of homelessness.[51] These activities are important because they provide them with a "sense of belonging, stability, pride and responsibility."[52] However, transportation and financial obstacles make it more difficult for homeless students to access these programs.

Figure 1. Percentage of Homeless Students Served Under IDEA



Source: National Women's Law Center Calculations, U.S. Department of Education, 2013-14 Consolidated State Performance Reports Part 1, https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/sy13-14part1/index.html#ak.

Figure 2. State Assessment Proficiency: Percentage Point Gap in Proficiency between Economically Disadvantaged and Homeless Students

States	4th Grade Math Gap	7th Grade Math Gap	High School Math Gap	4th Grade Language Arts Math Gap	7th Grade Language Arts Gap	High School Language Arts Gap
Alabama**	1%	3%	-	3%	7%	-
Alaska	8%	11%	36%	11%	16%	47%
Arizona	23%	25%	48%	25%	30%	72%
Arkansas	6%	11%	39%	11%	8%	50%
California	70%	73%	45%	73%	81%	39%
Colorado	16%	15%	14%	15%	18%	35%
Connecticut*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Delaware	22%	20%	51%	20%	23%	55%
District of Columbia	3%	5%	34%	5%	4%	31%
Florida	27%	25%	40%	25%	23%	32%
Georgia	28%	30%	25%	30%	28%	77%
Hawaii	26%	19%	28%	19%	23%	50%
Idaho*	-	-	51%	-	-	72%
Illinois	18%	16%	29%	16%	17%	33%
Indiana	13%	18%	62%	18%	16%	56%
Iowa	34%	28%	64%	28%	28%	57%
Kansas*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kentucky	15%	14%	40%	14%	17%	38%
Louisiana	17%	17%	39%	17%	16%	54%
Maine	20%	16%	30%	16%	21%	29%
Maryland	21%	18%	61%	18%	19%	58%
Massachusetts	14%	17%	54%	17%	23%	68%
Michigan	15%	14%	14%	14%	24%	40%
Minnesota	30%	20%	27%	20%	18%	37%
Mississippi	49%	6%	57%	6%	6%	36%
Missouri	18%	27%	37%	27%	25%	56%
Montana*	-	-	-	-	-	83%
Nebraska	25%	19%	38%	19%	22%	47%
Nevada	20%	21%	56%	21%	12%	73%
New Hampshire	26%	21%	18%	21%	24%	57%
New Jersey	27%	25%	55%	25%	27%	76%
New Mexico	15%	16%	22%	16%	17%	26%
New York	15%	11%	79%	11%	9%	78%
North Carolina	13%	10%	20%	10%	11%	32%
North Dakota	35%	19%	36%	19%	23%	46%
Ohio	26%	31%	59%	31%	32%	70%
Oklahoma	17%	24%	53%	24%	26%	65%
Oregon	17%	22%	51%	22%	22%	66%
Pennsylvania	28%	28%	39%	28%	25%	50%
Rhode Island	4%	18%	14%	18%	21%	62%
South Carolina	17%	18%	29%	18%	18%	42%
South Dakota*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tennessee	17%	15%	45%	15%	16%	44%
Texas	33%	32%	62%	32%	34%	40%
Utah	12%	8%	45%	8%	7%	21%
Vermont	26%	34%	16%	34%	35%	57%
Virginia	18%	22%	37%	22%	17%	68%
Washington	29%	26%	60%	26%	30%	65%
West Virginia	11%	13%	30%	13%	15%	31%
Wisconsin	25%	22%	24%	22%	16%	24%
Wyoming	21%	13%	22%	13%	13%	20%

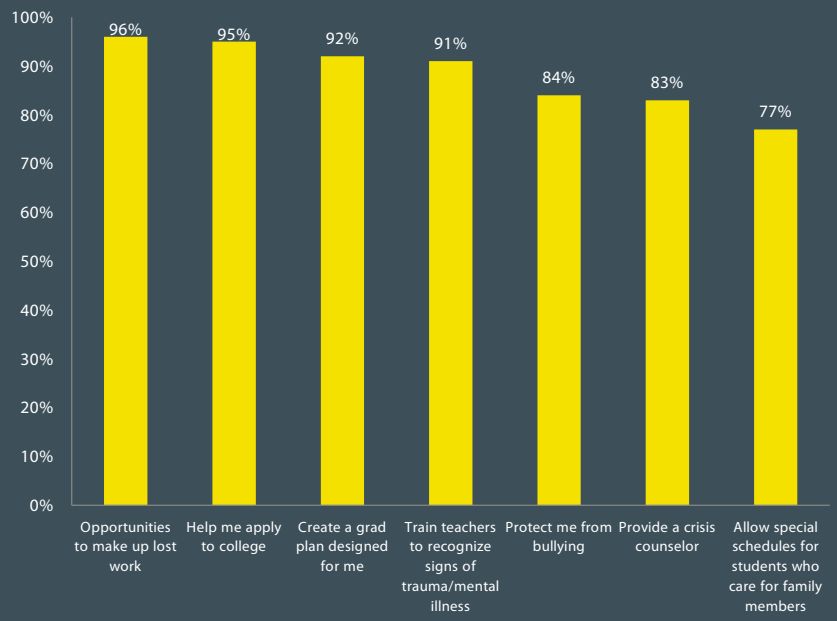
* Indicates that state did not report number of homeless students who reached proficiency.
** Alabama did not report the number of high school homeless students who reached proficiency.
Source: National Women's Law Center Calculations, U.S. Department of Education, 2013-14 Consolidated State Performance Reports Part 1, https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/sy13-14part1/index.html#ak.

Recommendations for Helping Girls Who Are Homeless Succeed in School

Policymakers, educators and communities can help girls who are homeless get the support and services they need to be able to stay in school and do well. The Let Her Learn Survey sheds light on what policies girls ages 14-18 who have experienced homelessness would like to see from their schools (**Figure 3**):

- 96 percent would like opportunities for extra credit and to make up lost or incomplete work.
- 92 percent want an individualized graduation plan.
- 84 percent said they need schools to protect them from bullying.
- 83 percent highlighted the need for crisis counselors.

Figure 3. Girls Who Have Experienced Homelessness Speak Out: How Schools Can Do Better



Source: National Women's Law Center, Let Her Learn Survey, Conducted by Lake Research Partners (2017).

The recommendations below describe ways to make schools and community spaces where homeless girls can thrive.

Two federal laws—the McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Assistance Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)—provide homeless students with protections and support they need so that they can enroll in school, complete their high school education, and continue on to higher education.[53] Under ESSA, schools must begin to report homeless student achievement and graduation rates by race and gender in the 2017 school year.[54]

Policymakers

- Policymakers should engage girls in the process of crafting solutions to the educational barriers they face, making sure to include a diverse set of voices. (One way of doing this is by creating youth advisory committees like the Young Women's Initiatives, first launched in New York City, http://www.shewillbe.nyc/.)
- Congress should significantly increase funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, which provides resources for street outreach, emergency shelters for minors, and transitional living programs for youth ages 16 to 22.[55]
- Congress should significantly increase funding for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Act Program, which requires school districts to remove the barriers that homeless children face enrolling in, attending and succeeding in school.[56]
- States should require schools and homeless youth service providers to collaborate, including through formal agreements between school districts and such providers, to help homeless students engage or re-engage with school.[57]
- States should ensure that their laws and policies do not criminalize homeless youth for being homeless or for offenses related to their homelessness, such as truancy.[58]
- Federal and state agencies should collect data on homeless youth, disaggregated and cross-tabulated based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, and actual or perceived gender identity. This data should include information on student performance, graduation rates, discipline, attendance, and disability status.
- States should increase the number, security, quality and safety of shelters.
    - State and local agencies should ensure that there are enough shelters for pregnant and parenting youth and that those shelters allow them to stay with their children.
    - States and local agencies should ensure that shelters serving LGBT homeless youth are welcoming and inclusive, support transgender and gender non-conforming youth, and that employees receive competency training.[59]

- States should address food insecurity for homeless youth by eliminating barriers for unaccompanied youth to participate in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance/food stamps program—specifically, by clarifying that there is no minimum age requirement for unaccompanied homeless youth applying for SNAP and making sure that school liaisons and homeless shelters promote the program and assist students in applying for benefits.
- State and local agencies should eliminate costs for identification documents and birth certificates for homeless youth.
- State and local agencies should provide transportation for youth who are far away from their school of origin or preference.
- States should help children who age out of foster care secure job and educational opportunities and affordable housing so that they can successfully transition into adulthood and do not become homeless once they are too old to remain in the foster care system.[60]

Schools

- Schools should take steps to help improve educational outcomes for homeless students by:
    - Creating individualized graduation plans for homeless students.
    - Utilizing technology and providing other accommodations to allow them to keep up with schoolwork remotely or from different locations as necessary.
    - Provide access to credit recovery programs that allow them to work at their own pace, are flexible in terms of scheduling, have rolling enrollment, and include individualized support.
- Schools should annually provide all members of their community with mandatory, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, age-appropriate, and gender identity-sensitive training on issues affecting homeless youth, such as:
    - How to identify signs of homelessness or home instability and information about available services to provide to students.
    - How to support and accommodate pregnant and parenting girls.
    - How to identify and support sexual violence and trafficking survivors.
    - How to address harassment and bullying.
- Schools should ensure that they have designated a staff member to serve as a local homeless education liaison, as required by federal law, and that this person is equipped to help identify homeless students, make sure they are receiving equal opportunities to succeed in school, and provide or refer them to the services they need.[61]
- Schools should create safe spaces where students feel comfortable talking to trusted adults (such as teachers or counselors) about the challenges of being homeless and should address students' fear that they might report their situation to child services or the police.
- Schools should ensure that teachers are sensitive when assigning homework and asking students to bring in food, favorite toys, pictures or other items to which homeless students may not have access.

- Schools should address the summer learning loss for homeless students by:
  - Investing in quality summer programs that aim to prevent this loss and providing them at no or low cost to homeless students.
  - Training teachers on best practices to prevent summer learning loss and providing students and parents with grade-level appropriate books and assignments that prepare students for the next school year.
- Schools should ensure that classroom, attendance, truancy and discipline policies do not punish homeless students for difficulties they face due to their living situations (they may need extra time to get to school or access to school supplies, for example).[62] Schools should also consider homelessness when imposing out-of-school suspensions and expulsions and not exclude a homeless child from school when they do not have a home to go to or food if they are not in school.
- Schools should help homeless students apply to college and begin this process in the 10th or 11th grade by making sure they are taking the right classes, applying for scholarships, taking entrance exams, and have opportunities to adequately explore school options.
- State colleges and universities should give homeless students priority for on-campus housing and allow them to remain in campus housing during school breaks.

Parents/Guardians and Advocates

- Parents/guardians and advocates can arrange to meet with their local homeless education liaison to ensure that homeless students are receiving the supports and services they need to succeed in school.
- Advocates should ensure that there is public notice of educational rights for homeless students in their communities.
- Advocates should make sure that homeless parents in local shelters know their transportation rights.
- Advocates should help connect parents and youth experiencing homelessness with healthy food and early childhood education programs so that young children can build a strong foundation for future learning.
- Parents/ guardians and advocates can obtain information about the laws related to special education—namely, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—and the services and accommodations to which students are entitled. (See, for example, https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans.)

1 Erin S. Ingram et al., *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools* (2016), 10, *available at* http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf.
2 National Women's Law Center's Let Her Learn Survey was conducted online from January 5-19, 2017 by Lake Research Partners. The questions reached a total of 1,003 girls ages 14 to 18 nationwide. Black girls, Latinas, Asian/Pacific Islander girls, Native American girls, and LGBTQ girls were oversampled. The samples were drawn from online panels. The data were weighted by age, race, and census region to reflect the actual proportions of the population. Oversamples were weighted down to reflect their proportions in the population. The margin of error is +/-3.1%. The margin of error is higher among subgroups.
3 Marcela Smid, Philippe Bourgois and Colette Auerswald, *The Challenge of Pregnancy among Homeless Youth: Reclaiming Opportunity* (May 2010), *available at* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3037014/.
4 Total Number of Students Enrolled in LEAs with or without McKinney-Vento Subgrants 2013-14, *available at* https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-element-explorer.cfm/tab/trend/deid/5353/state/US/.
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