

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 29, 2024

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CHILD AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND EDUCATION

- HEARD

CHILD IN TRANSITION SERVING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- HEARD

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION PRESENTATION TO THE
ALASKA SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

BARBARA DUFFIELD, Executive Director
SchoolHouse Connection
Washington D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented the presentation Child and
Youth Homelessness and Education.

RODD MONTS, Director
State Policy

SchoolHouse Connection
Detroit, Michigan

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented the presentation Child and Youth Homelessness and Education.

LIKKA MCCAULEY, Director
Federal Programs
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented the presentation Child in Transition Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness.

DAVID MAYO-KIELY, Program Coordinator
Child in Transition Program
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented the presentation Child in Transition Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness.

ERIC GREBING, Co-Director
National Center for Homeless Education
Brown's Summit
North Carolina

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered the presentation National Center for Homeless Education to the Alaska Senate Education Committee.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:35 PM](#)

CHAIR LÖKI TOBIN called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Gray-Jackson, Stevens, Kiehl and Chair Tobin.

PRESENTATION:

CHILD and YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND EDUCATION

[3:32:12 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of a presentation on Child and Youth Homelessness and Education by SchoolHouse Connection.

[3:33:01 PM](#)

BARBARA DUFFIELD, Executive Director, SchoolHouse Connection, Washington D.C., said SchoolHouse Connection is a national organization working to overcome homelessness through education. The organization provides prenatal to post-secondary practical

education assistance to schools across the country. It also has a youth leadership and scholarship program that directly supports young people.

[3:33:41 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 3 and discussed student homelessness in Alaska before and after the pandemic. The slide provided a chart showing the number of homeless students from 2019 to 2023 and the percentage of total enrollment. She said student homelessness in Alaska mirrored the national trend of decreased homelessness during the pandemic when virtual learning limited the school system's oversight. With the return to classroom learning, the number of homeless students increased, and now homelessness is higher than it was during the pandemic. She made the following three points.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Challenge: Underidentification
 - Research indicates the actual prevalence is 50-100 percent higher than school-identified numbers
- Prevalence is the same in rural, suburban, and urban areas, but more hidden in non-urban settings
- Identification is correlated with targeted funding for homeless students

[3:34:58 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 4 and said we typically do not see homeless children. She stated that the pie graph breaks down where students are staying when they first begin experiencing homelessness and discussed four points:

School Year 2022 -2023

9 percent Unsheltered
18 percent Shelters
8 percent Motels
65 percent Staying with others temporarily

- Students move between these situations during the school year
- Lack of shelter in most communities; fear of shelter
- Lack of motels/hotels in most communities; inability to pay

- Children and youth "staying with others temporarily" are extremely vulnerable to predation/harm but more difficult to identify

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MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 5 and said homelessness is a cross-cutting issue and provided the following data:

Student Homelessness is an Intersectional Issue

Student with Disabilities

25 percent Students Experiencing Homelessness
15 percent All Students

English Learners

17 percent Students Experiencing Homelessness
11 percent All Students

[3:36:24 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 6 and said this slide sums up the intersection of homelessness and education.

[Original punctuation provided.]

Barriers and Impacts of Homelessness

Barriers:

- High mobility
- Trauma/Fear
- Invisibility
- Enrollment requirements
- Poor health/hunger/sleep
- Caring for siblings and parents

Leading to:

- Declining enrollment
- Higher rates of chronic absenteeism
- Mental health challenges
- Lower high school graduation rates
- Lower postsecondary enrollment

And the **lack of a high school degree or GED** is the Single greatest risk factor for young adult homelessness.

[3:37:31 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 7 and discussed chronic absence and its impact on education in Alaska:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Chronic Absence Rates in Alaska

	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022
Students Experiencing Homelessness (percent)	40.5	55	72.1
All Students (percent)	18	20.2	45.8

High School Graduation Rates in Alaska

	2019-2020	2020-2021
Students Experiencing Homelessness	58 percent	51 percent
Economically Disadvantaged	72.3 percent	69.9 percent
All Students	79.1 percent	78.2 percent

MS. DUFFIELD said students need regular attendance to learn, a challenge worsened by the pandemic, especially for those experiencing homelessness. Nearly three out of four homeless students in Alaska are chronically absent, impacting graduation rates significantly more than poverty alone. There is a notable difference between the graduation rates of homeless students and those who are poor, highlighting the need to address the specific impact of homelessness on education.

[3:38:27 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 8 and shared federal protections and services, stating the McKinney-Vento Act is the blueprint for success in U.S. schools because it provides protections for youth experiencing homelessness in their K-12 education. The other acts and programs attempt to provide the same protection to prenatal and post-secondary education.

Federal Protections and Services

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Liaisons in each LEA
- Identification
- Immediate enrollment
- Right to stay in same school, if best interest
- Transportation
- PreK
- FAFSA assistance

Title I Part A of ESSA

- Categorical Eligibility
- Required reservation of funds for homeless students
- Disaggregated achievement and graduation rates
- Head Start
- Child Care and Development Fund
- Higher Education Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Child Nutrition Act Federal Protections and Services

[3:39:28 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 9 and discussed targeted federal funding for homeless children. She said the last allocation from the Federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Funding (FY2023) was \$372,689, with 5 school districts in Alaska that can receive funding. There are 16 authorized uses for the funds, including outreach, transportation, staffing, and supplies.

MS. DUFFIELD discussed the American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth Funding, part of the last federal pandemic package. This funding was eight times the usual amount and was advocated for due to other COVID packages not reaching homeless students. Alaska's Senators Murkowski and Sullivan played leading roles in securing this funding. It provided significantly more money to many more school districts and was more flexible, allowing for items like store cards, gas cards, and car repairs. The concern now is the timeline: funds had to be obligated by September. Many schools were told to spend by June. The advocacy focus is on pushing Congress to extend the deadline so schools can spend effectively and strategically. Based on the latest data, Alaska still has about 55 percent of its funds left.

[3:41:26 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD moved to slide 10 and emphasized that students experiencing homelessness can and do succeed. She shared a story about a former scholarship recipient now close to earning his MD. Key factors for success include having trained school staff who understand homelessness and can support and mentor students, which improves graduation rates. Policies that create barriers need continuous review to ensure they account for homelessness. Effective outreach and identification are crucial to provide necessary protections and school stability. Ensuring students receive credit for their work is essential for their motivation and success. Re-engaging and building trust, lost during the pandemic, with flexible services is also vital.

[3:43:08 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked whether there is assistance for homeless youth that experience mental health issues.

MS. DUFFIELD replied that homeless students face higher risks for mental health challenges, and funds can be used to address these issues. She noted an increase in mobile mental health and other outreach services.

[3:43:52 PM](#)

RODD MONTS, Director, State Policy, SchoolHouse Connection, Detroit, Michigan, moved to slide 11 and briefly discussed three state policy levers:

[Original punctuation provided.]

State Policy Levers

#1

Promoting PreK-12 attendance and high school graduation:

- Targeted funding for outreach and school -based services
- Partial credits
- Alternative diplomas
- Positive school discipline

#2

Promoting higher education access and completion:

- Housing priority
- Tuition/fee waivers
- On -campus supports
- FAFSA completion

#3

Promoting early childhood development:

- Streamlined access to child care
- Automatic eligibility and prioritization
- Dedicated housing vouchers for ECE programs

[3:45:35 PM](#)

MR. MONTS moved to slide 12-15 and briefly mentioned the following four examples of state's with policies that addresses student homelessness:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Washington:

Homeless Student Stability Act
WA HB 1682 (2016; amended 2023)

Awards grants to school districts and nonprofits to improve educational outcomes for students experiencing homelessness through a statewide competitive grant program. Strong bipartisan support. Provides:

- Increased staffing capacity (coaches, outreach)
- Housing-related assistance
- Supplements federal homeless education dollars to reach more LEAs

Maine:

School-Based Emergency Assistance
ME LD 1609 (2023)

Allows school district homeless liaisons to facilitate emergency financial assistance up to \$750 to a student's family for housing-related needs, including those not currently authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, including:

- Rental assistance
- Utilities
- Critical home repairs and more

Kentucky:

Promoting High School Graduation
KY HB 378 (2019)

- Requires the SEA to promulgate regulations regarding students experiencing homelessness, including: awarding and accepting partial credit; facilitating enrollment in required classes; and providing for diplomas from a prior district or for meeting state minimum requirements for students who change schools in their last two years of high school.
- Regulations require LEAs to adopt written procedures to ensure partial credit is awarded.

Florida:

Promoting Higher Education Access and Completion
FL HB 1577 (2022)

- State colleges and universities must designate higher education campus liaisons to support youth experiencing homelessness or foster care; provide the liaison's contact information to all students receiving the homeless/foster tuition waiver, as well as publish it on the institution's website.
- Students experiencing homelessness are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees for a school district workforce education program, Florida College System institution, or state university.

MR. MONTS said there is a wealth of research and policy reform examples addressing youth homelessness posted on SchoolHouse Connection's website.

[3:47:31 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN CHAIR TOBIN expressed interest in the advocacy work for extending American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for homeless youth. She asked how to support these efforts to ensure the remaining 50 percent of Alaska's funds reach the communities in need.

[3:47:59 PM](#)

At ease

[3:48:25 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting and repeated her question.

[3:48:50 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD replied that more time is essential since many school districts are new to these funds. The data shows that the state focused on the larger funding pool. She urged Alaska's congressional delegation to extend the deadline to September 2025 through the current budget bill. She mentioned that while training efforts are ongoing, more time is needed to spend the funds wisely and meet needs effectively, not just buy a bunch of coats. The primary request is for the congressional delegation to push for this extension.

[3:49:41 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN thanked the testifiers for their informative presentation.

PRESENTATION:
CHILD IN TRANSITION SERVING STUDENTS
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

[3:49:50 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of the presentation Child and Youth Homelessness and Education.

[3:50:31 PM](#)

LIKKA MCCAULEY, Director, Federal Programs, Anchorage School District, Anchorage, Alaska, moved to slide 2 and said the presentation would be specific to the issue of homelessness in the Anchorage School District, the largest district in Alaska. She provided the following definition of homelessness to meet eligibility for the district's Child in Transition (CIT) program:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Eligibility

Lacking Fixed Regular and Adequate Nighttime Residence

- Shelters
- Families Sharing Housing- Economic Constraints
- Substandard Housing - Overcrowded or Inadequate Resource
- Motels
- Transitional Housing
- Camping/Sleeping in Vehicle

[3:52:05 PM](#)

MS. MCCAULEY moved to slide 3 and listed ways students are identified as homeless. She stated it is believed more students are impacted than are identified:

Identify Students Experiencing Homelessness

- Student Housing Questionnaire
- School Referrals
- Community Partners
- Self Referral

[3:52:31 PM](#)

MS. MCCAULEY moved to slide 4, a chart showing the number of homeless students in the Anchorage School District (ASD), the percent enrolled and the number of secondary unaccompanied youth for school years 2018 - 2023. She said that in the Anchorage School District (ASD), the number of students identified as eligible for the CIT program has ranges between 1,500 and 2,000 for several years. There was a dip in the percentage of total enrollment identified during the pandemic due to fewer eyes on students. In 2023, ASD went up to 4.25 percent of the district enrollment accessing the program, with 323 secondary students not living with their families.

[3:53:21 PM](#)

MS. MCCAULEY moved to slide 5 and said immediate enrollment is always the goal for homeless students to ensure students can start school without delay. Assistance is provided to enroll new students in the school zone where they live. Documentation requirements, such as immunizations, birth certificates, and transcripts, are waived temporarily to expedite classroom entry. This is particularly important for families moving quickly due to situations like domestic violence.

[3:54:17 PM](#)

MS. MCCAULEY moved to slide 6 and stated that the program's goal is to support maintaining the school of origin within the school year if it's in the student's best interest. Often, students move to different areas around town, so the aim is to provide school stability when housing is unstable. Assistance is provided for the full duration of the family's homelessness, which can last one school year for some families and multiple years for others.

[3:54:53 PM](#)

MS. MCCAULEY moved to slide 7 and provided a chart showing families that have moved multiple times during a school year:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Highly Mobile Families

Number of Students	Number of Addresses	Number of Households
197	3	116
99	4	61
49	5	32
101	>5	55
466	3 or More Addresses	264

[3:55:31 PM](#)

DAVID MAYO-KIELY, Program Coordinator, Child in Transition Program, Anchorage School District, Anchorage, Alaska, moved to slide 8 and said one of the ways ASD provides school stability is through transportation. He discussed the following points:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Transportation Assistance

- \$500,000 annually from ASD General Fund
- Required to provide to maintain school of origin
- ASD buses, gas reimbursement, public transit and taxicabs

MR. MAYO-KIELY noted that the goal is that students remain in one school, even if they have moved multiple times.

[3:56:16 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 9 and discussed supportive services:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Supportive Services

- Backpacks and school supplies
- Referrals to community partners
- Early childhood education referrals

MR. MAYO-KIELY listed the names of numerous organizations and associations that ASD works to meet students' needs as quickly as possible.

[3:57:34 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 10 and discussed the following academic support programs for the students that perform below their housed peers:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Academic Support

- Back on Track Classroom
- Wednesday evening tutoring
- Credit Recovery Summer School

[3:59:04 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 11 and said ASD receives \$500,000 in federal funds for transportation, and additional sources bring the total to \$1.7 million.

[Original punctuation provided.]

Overall Annual Program Costs

- ASD General Fund (Transportation) \$500,000
- Other Funding Sources \$1,700,000

[3:59:23 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 12 and said a significant difference this year is the American Rescue Plan's Homeless Children and Youth I & II. When these funds were released, program staff were extremely excited, as they typically do not receive much funding despite the high needs of their students. The funds are used for student identification, supporting students in schools, and providing better access to recovery services:

[Original punctuation provided.]

ARP HCY I & II: \$667,783

- Rationale: To support decreased attendance and academic achievement of homeless students after the Covid-19 pandemic, ARP funds have been used primarily to address the following needs and disparities related to ASD goals and guardrails

- On Track Status: 47.04 percent CITH (74.32 percent ASD) 90 percent Attendance: 33.27 percent (57.22 percent ASD)

[3:59:46 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 13 and stated that the CIT program had never previously had a dedicated person in the schools to serve CIT students. While there have been allies such as counselors, nurses, and certain teachers, there was no single person for students to approach for assistance specific to the CIT program. Federal funding allowed a partnership with the English Language Learner Program to place dedicated personnel in Anchorage's largest high schools. These staff members check in on students, monitor attendance and grades, and organize lunchtime gatherings to ensure students know they have an ally in the building. Additionally, they support social service coordinators in the Back on Track classroom, which is part of Covenant House:

[Original punctuation provided.]

ARP HCY I & II: \$667,783

- 6 Student Support Specialists at comprehensive high schools, partially funded by ELL
- 2 Social Services Coordinators in Back on Track classroom

[4:00:42 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIELY moved to slide 14 and discussed additional things done to assist students:

Remaining \$60,000

Connectivity

- Mobile hotspots for students without internet access
- Smartphones and data plans so students can stay connected to CIT staff Transportation Assistance
- Funds for car repairs for families that use their vehicle to transport students to school
- Funds are used so that taxicab transportation is not needed Professional Development
- Funds for three CIT staff to travel to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

[4:01:30 PM](#)

MR. MAYO-KIEELY moved to slide 15:

Moving Forward

- Need to sustain ARP partial funded positions
 - Provide direct support to students and families
 - HR need if this funding cannot continue
 - If not funded, prioritize but displace other priorities
- Wish list
 - Desire for one or more classified positions to support Back on Track classrooms

MR. MAYO-KIEELY said that unfortunately, the Homeless Children and Youth (HCY) funds are ending. Moving forward, efforts are being made to ensure those supports remain in place, with federal programs working closely to avoid gaps. However, some additional programs may go unfunded in the future.

[4:02:03 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked if there are homeless students in charter schools and what access challenges they face.

MR. MAYO-KIEELY replied that several students access charter schools, including the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School and others. Transportation becomes complicated under the Homeless Assistance Act. If a family attending a charter school without transportation becomes homeless, transportation can be provided. However, if a homeless family chooses a charter school, transportation assistance is not offered because it is a choice. If the family subsequently moves from one temporary housing situation to another, transportation assistance can be provided. While the Anchorage School District supports families' educational choices, transportation assistance is contingent on the specific situation. Other services remain available regardless of transportation support.

MS. MCCAULEY clarified that charter schools in the Anchorage School District are publicly funded and are part of the public system, unlike private charters. She noted that barriers to entry or retention in charter programs might include family involvement and volunteer requirements.

CHAIR TOBIN thanked the presenters and noted that the 2023 report card showed an impressive 86 percent attendance rate among youth experiencing homelessness.

PRESENTATION:
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION PRESENTATION TO THE
ALASKA SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

[4:04:58 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of a presentation to the Alaska Senate Education Committee by the National Center for Homeless Education.

[4:06:04 PM](#)

At ease

[4:06:39 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting and asked Mr. Grebing to begin his presentation.

[4:06:53 PM](#)

ERIC GREBING, Co-Director, National Center for Homeless Education, Brown's Summit, North Carolina, noted the organization has staff working with homeless youth across the nation. She moved to slide 2 and introduced the National Center for Homeless Education:

[Original punctuation provided.]

NCHE is the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program.

- o Website: <http://nche.ed.gov>
- o Helpline: 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org
- o Products: <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/>
- o Webinars: <https://nche.ed.gov/group-training/>
- o Listserv: <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/> (click Listserv tab)

[4:07:53 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 3 and said he would briefly walk through a few high-level topics:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Topics

- The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness
- Data on Students Experiencing Homelessness (SEH) in Alaska
- Funding Sources
- The Role of the Local Homeless Liaison
- Q&A

[4:08:24 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 4 and discussed the McKinney-Vento law:

[Original punctuation provided.]

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness

Children or youth who lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence

- o Fixed - stationary, permanent, not subject to change
- o Regular - used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis (e.g., nightly)
- o Adequate - lawfully and reasonably sufficient to meet physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment

42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)

The abbreviation "HCY" is often used in materials as an acronym for "Homeless Children and Youth." We prefer using the term "students experiencing homelessness" when possible, so you will see the acronym "SEH" throughout the presentation. McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness

[4:09:56 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 5 and discussed a subset of students that experience homelessness:

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- The term unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or (legal) guardian.

- Liaisons must assist UHY with enrollment, school selection, & dispute resolution
- Have the same right to immediate enrollment & educational services as other students

MR. GREBING said the following statistics highlight the complex and varied backgrounds of unaccompanied youth. Understanding these factors is crucial, as they indicate the need for tailored support to address the different circumstances that lead to student homelessness. The concept of intersectionality is important, as it emphasizes the multiple, overlapping factors contributing to these youths' situations.

- **35 percent** of unaccompanied youth have experienced the death of at least one parent or caregiver.
- **44 percent** have been in foster care.
- **24 percent** experienced homelessness with their families before becoming unaccompanied.

[4:11:15 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 7, a bar graph showing homelessness of students between SY 2018-2022. He said the number of students identified as experiencing homelessness was highest before the pandemic and is starting to rise again. The statewide rate of 2.4 percent is equal to the national rate, indicating a similar proportion of students served by the McKinney-Vento Act across the United States.

[4:11:58 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 8, highlighting the distribution of students served by the McKinney-Vento Act across grade levels for SY 2021-22. He noted that preschool has the fewest students experiencing homelessness, partially because fewer students are enrolled in preschool, while the numbers remain consistent from kindergarten through 10th grade, ranging from 1.9 to 2.5 percent. The percentage of students identified as McKinney-Vento increases to 3 and 4.2 percent in grades 11 and 12, providing insight into the identification and service reach of the Act.

[4:12:55 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 9 and said he wanted to discuss identification across the state, emphasizing that homelessness is not only an urban issue but affects students in various settings. He presented a filled map of Alaska indicating the

percentage of overall enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness through McKinney-Vento, noting that Anchorage is the Local Education Agency (LEA) with the highest enrollment of homeless students, accounting for over half of the state's total. He said the map also shows Kuspuk as the rural area with the highest percentage. He highlighted that while about half of the school districts reported identifying some homeless students, the other half did not, suggesting a need for LEAs to improve identification efforts for students who may be experiencing homelessness but have not yet been recognized within the school system.

[4:14:51 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 10 and said he wanted to share data regarding statewide primary nighttime residency for SY 2021-22. He noted that the vast majority, 61.9 percent, of students experiencing homelessness are in doubled-up situations. About 20 percent of these students are in shelters, 11 percent are in hotels and motels, and the remaining are unsheltered. He compared this data to the subset of unaccompanied homeless youth, highlighting that an even larger percentage, 81.4 percent, are living in doubled-up situations. This data provides more context on the primary nighttime residences of these students.

[4:15:39 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 11 and noted that youth homelessness is a cross-cutting issue across all students from different races and ethnicities. He pointed out that the categories in bold font represent groups that are fully overrepresented in terms of homelessness. He explained that there is a larger proportion of students from those race and ethnicity groups experiencing homelessness compared to those enrolled in schools overall. These figures are similar to the disproportionality seen across the entire country.

Categories representing groups that are fully overrepresented are:

- Black/African American 5 percent
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander 12 percent
- American Indian/Alaskan Native 29 percent
- Hispanic/Latino 8 percent
- Two or More Races 18 percent

[4:16:14 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 12 and shared information about statewide academic proficiency. He stated that these percentages reinforce the notion that students who are economically disadvantaged achieve at lower rates on state tests in both reading/language arts and math. Students experiencing homelessness have an even lower success rate than students who are economically disadvantaged.

Reading/Language Arts

All students 29.5 percent
 Economically Disadvantaged 17.4 percent
 Students Experiencing Homelessness 15.2 percent

Mathematics

All students 22.9 percent
 Economically Disadvantaged 12 percent
 Students Experiencing Homelessness 9.5 percent

[4:16:47 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 13 and provided more information about the adjusted cohort graduation rates. He noted that the gap between economically disadvantaged students and students who experienced homelessness is similar to what is seen at the national level:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Statewide Four-Year Adjusted Cohort (Started 9th Grade in the Same Year) Graduation Rate Trends by Subgroup

<u>School year</u>	<u>All students</u>	<u>Economically disadvantaged students</u>	<u>Students who experienced homelessness</u>
2021-22	77.9 percent	70.3 percent	58.8 percent
2020-21	78.1 percent	69.8 percent	50.8 percent
2019-20	79.0 percent	72.3 percent	58.4 percent

[4:17:11 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slides 14 - 15 and discussed the following points of Homeless Children and Youth (HCY) funding sources:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Funding Programming for Students Experiencing Homelessness to Participate Fully in Education

Funding Sources for HCY

- State and local education funds
- Community partners and foundations
- Federal funds
 - Title I-A set aside
 - McKinney-Vento subgrant
 - American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)

MR. GREBING said he wanted to discuss broader funding sources for Homeless Children and Youth (HCY) programs. He noted these funds come from various sources, with a significant focus on federal funding. The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is heavily centered on federal funding, but also encourages localities and states to creatively blend and amplify state and local education funds with community partners and foundations alongside federal funds.

MR. GREBING said all states receive McKinney-Vento grants from the U.S. Department of Education based on the state's proportion of the Title I-A allocation. States reserve a portion of these funds to support the Office of the State Coordinator and conduct statewide activities. Additionally, they provide flow-through subgrants to districts through a competitive process to support local programming. Currently, six Local Education Agencies (LEAs) within Alaska are making McKinney-Vento subgrants, as of SY 2021-22.

MR. GERBING said the purpose of Title I Part A funds is to provide all children with a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. Districts are instructed to set aside a portion of their Title I-A funds to support the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness. These funds can cover additional transportation costs and other sources to help provide stability and consistency for students to attend their school of origin. McKinney-Vento subgrants to districts and charter schools can be used to establish programs and services that meet the purpose of the McKinney-Vento act, which is to promote the enrollment, attendance, and success of students experiencing homelessness. These services must expand upon or improve the regular academic program but cannot replace it.

MR. GREBING emphasized the importance of utilizing American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP HCY) funds before they expire. The obligation deadline is currently September 30, 2024.

[4:20:11 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 17 and mentioned additional resources regarding funding and highlighted a few recent resources particularly relevant to the presentation:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Additional Resources Regarding Funding

- NCHE's Use of Funds Tip Sheet for Subgrants Serving Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
<https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/use-of-funds-tipsheet.pdf>
- McKinney-Vento Act, Authorized Activities
<https://nche.ed.gov/mvauth-activities/>
- NCHE (September 2023). Chapter 7: Managing McKinney-Vento Subgrants. State Coordinators Handbook.
<https://nche.ed.gov/statecoordinator-handbook/>

[4:20:41 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slides 19 - 20 and discussed the following duties of local McKinney-Vento Liaisons:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Local Liaison Duties

- Ensure SEH (students experiencing homelessness) are identified in coordination with others
- Ensure immediate enrollment & access to services
- Provide information about rights & opportunities
 - Includes meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education
 - Includes transportation, school meals, & other programs
- Ensure disputes are mediated
- May affirm for Housing and Urban Development programs that SEH meet McKinney-Vento eligibility criteria

Local Liaison Duties

- Support unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) in school selection & dispute resolution
- Ensure UHY are provided verification of their status for FAFSA purposes

- Provide training & other support for school personnel
- Provide referrals to services in the community
- Collaborate & coordinate services with State Coordinators, community and school personnel
 - Includes collecting & reporting data

Local Liaison Toolkit: <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Local-Liaison-Toolkit-2020.pdf>

[4:22:23 PM](#)

MR. GREBING moved to slide 21 and provided contact and resource information for the NCHE:

[Original punctuation provided.]

NCHE Resources

Determining Eligibility Flow Chart

- <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NCHE-Eligibility-Flowchart.pdf>

NCHE Resource Page for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- <https://nche.ed.gov/unaccompanied-youth/>

Homeless Liaison Toolkit - Appendix 9.A UHY Flow Chart

- <https://nche.ed.gov/homeless-liaison-toolkit/>

[4:23:26 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked about the ratio of girls to boys experiencing homelessness.

[4:23:42 PM](#)

MR. GREBING replied he didn't know but would provide the information to the committee.

[4:23:56 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked if other presenters might know the answer.

[4:24:05 PM](#)

MS. DUFFIELD replied that she did not know the answer.

[4:25:19 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 4:25 p.m.