Number of Homeless Students *Decreases* Throughout U.S., *Increases* in Pennsylvania

Total Enrolled U.S. Homeless Students SY 2016-17 to SY 2018-19

- 2016-17: 1,358,077
- 2017-18: 1,508,265
- 2018-19: 1,387,573

Total Number of PA Students Who Experienced Homelessness, SY 2016-17 to SY 2018-19

- 2016-17: 25,109
- 2017-18: 30,624
- 2018-19: 31,822
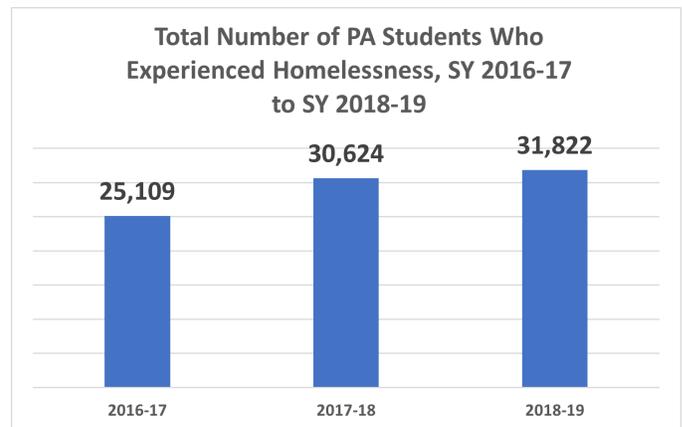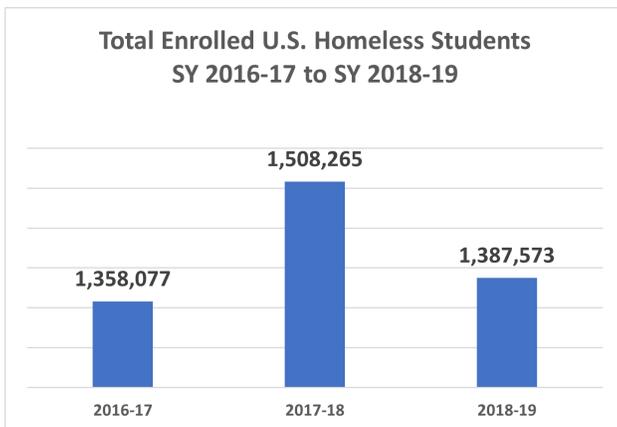
A newly released report shows that homelessness among children and youth is increasing dramatically in Pennsylvania while rising unevenly in other states during School Year (SY) 2018-19.

PEC reviewed the report from the National Center for Homeless Education called **Federal Data Summary School Years 2017 - 2019**, and summarized key data points for the convenience of educators, advocates, policy makers, and housing and youth program staff.

Find the original report here: https://bit.ly/3tYXjBz

NOTE: Data reported is only on those children enrolled in a school that reported data. This does not include data reported by the homeless housing system. Readers are encouraged to read the original paper for definitions and methodology.

This report is PEC's **fourth** in a series called **Looking Back to Plan Ahead** that summarizes data from the education system. Read those reports at Policy Publications - PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY CENTER (pec-cares.org).

Highlights

1. The number of homeless students **decreased** throughout the United States over the three-year period from SY 2017 to SY 2019, while the number of homeless students **increased** in Pennsylvania.
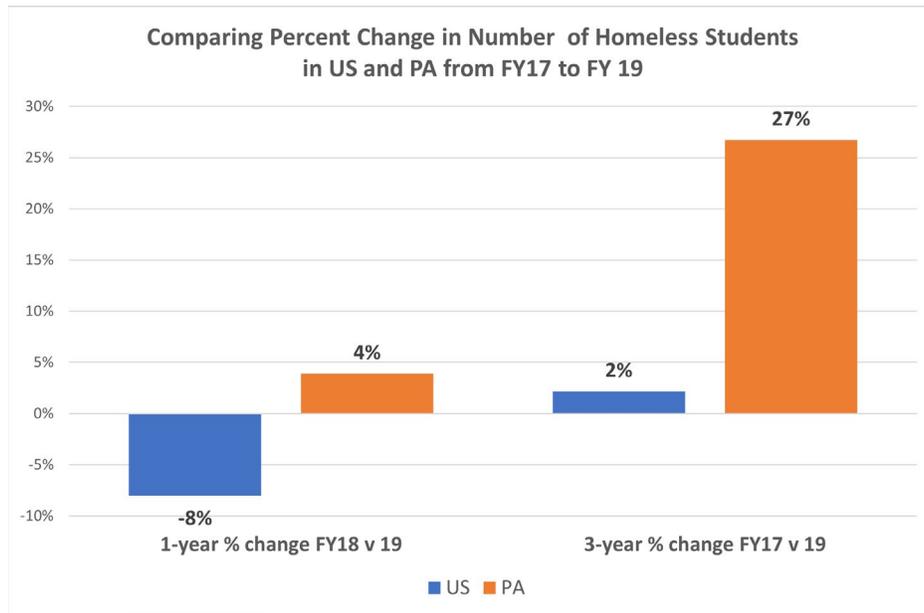
2. Pennsylvania **tied for first** among states in **experiencing the highest rate of increased number of homeless students over the three years at 27%.**

3. The number of children ages 3-5 increased seven percent over the three years.

4. Pennsylvania reported the **twelfth highest total** of the number of homeless students.

5. Homeless students, including Pennsylvania's, **scored lower** than *economically disadvantaged* students on statewide assessments by approximately eight to nine percentage points.

6. Many homeless students are **living doubled up** (with other students, or friends due to homelessness) and are **not in shelter**.
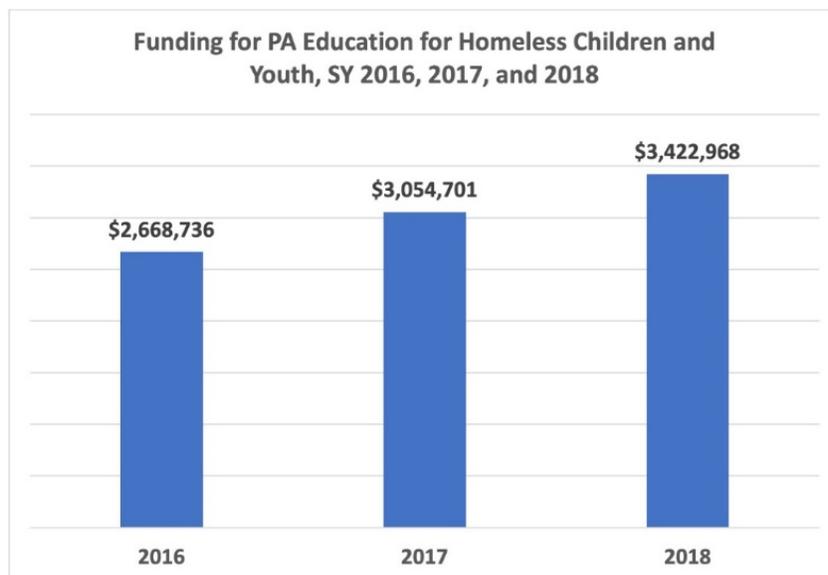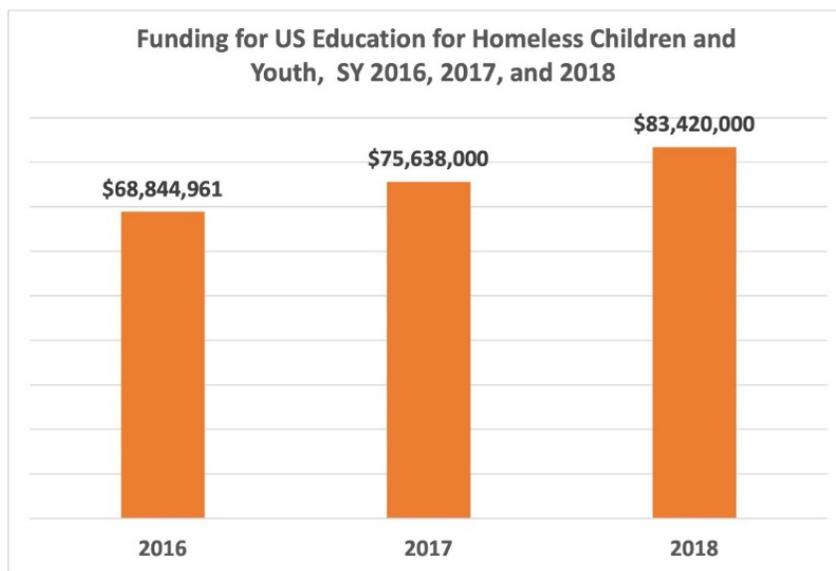
Why is this Important?

Congress allocated a record high of **$800 million** for the **Education for Homeless Children and Youth** (EHCY) program, far surpassing the FY 2018 allocation of $83

million. EHCY seeks to remove educational barriers and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. States and School Districts can use this data to make informed decisions.

Read the U.S. Department of Education's announcement at [Education Department Announces State Allocations of $800 Million in American Rescue Plan Funds to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness | U.S. Department of Education (DOE)](#).

The U.S. DOE included in its announcement that states should *"…use this funding to identify homeless children and youth, provide wraparound services in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide assistance to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities, including in-person instruction this spring and upcoming summer learning and enrichment programs."*

Funding for US Education for Homeless Children and Youth, SY 2016, 2017, and 2018

2016	2017	2018
$68,844,961	$75,638,000	$83,420,000

Funding for PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth, SY 2016, 2017, and 2018

2016	2017	2018
$2,668,736	$3,054,701	$3,422,968

Pennsylvania will receive $32 million over the next few years, and recently received $8 million, double its 2018 allocation. To date, the PA Department of Education has not issued guidelines on how the funds will be spent.

Action Steps

PEC encourages the PA Department of Education and the School District of Philadelphia to organize public engagement strategies to identify effective methods of identifying and supporting students who experience homelessness. In addition, Pennsylvania's county commissioners, human service administrators, and mayors should **compel better coordination** between the education and homeless housing systems to ensure that most homeless families have access to housing supports.
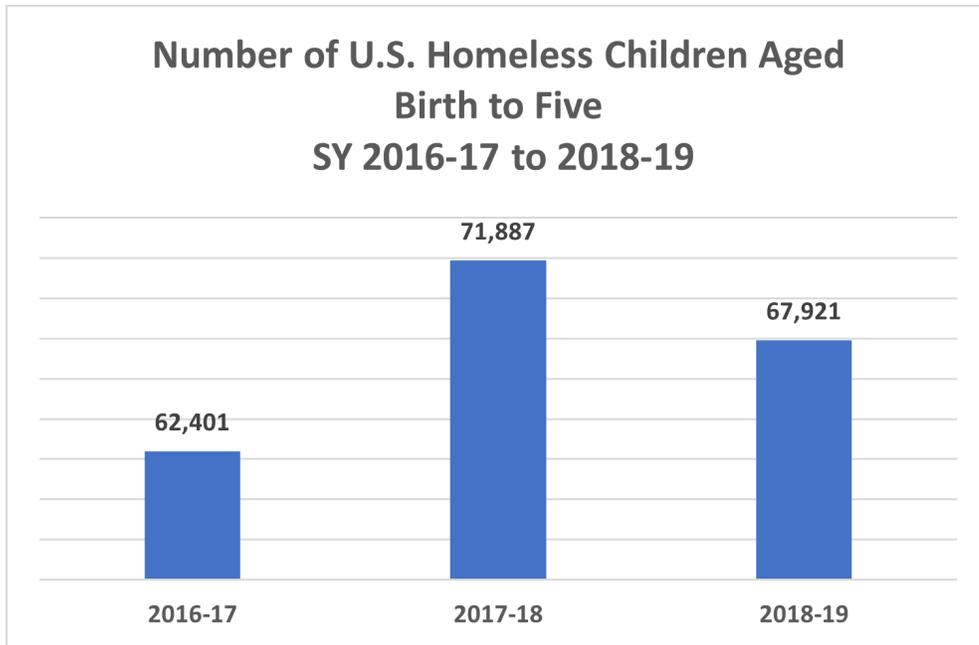
National Trends

Over this three-year period, 14 states reported **growth** in their identified homeless student populations of 10% or more, **including Pennsylvania**.

- Five states experienced growth in the homeless student population of 20% or more, with **Pennsylvania** tied for the highest.
- In contrast, nine states reported a reduction of 10% or more. Of the nine states, three reported a decrease of 20% or more in the number of identified homeless students.
- The number of homeless students decreased eight percent between SYs 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- The number of children experiencing homelessness **decreased in the lower grades** while simultaneously increasing in the higher grades over the three-year period.
- Grades 5 through 7 and Grade 12 saw **the largest increases** in the number of homeless students enrolled in school.

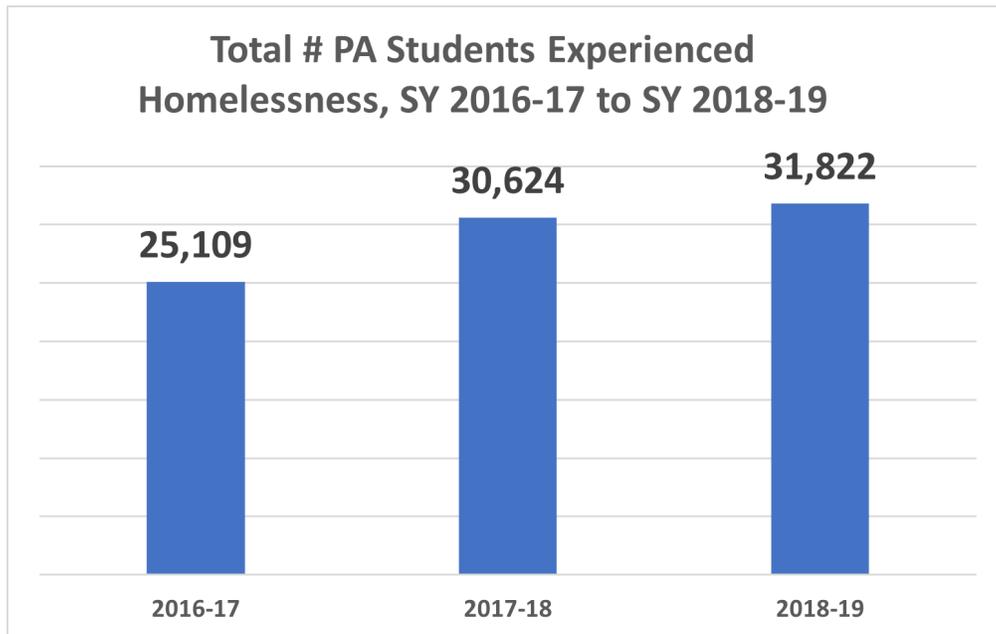The experience of homelessness is **nearly evenly split** across the grades.

- School districts **identified 8%** of homeless students in each grade from Kindergarten through Grade 5.
- Seven percent of homeless students were identified in each of Grades 6 through 9 and Grade 12.
- The number of children **ages 3-5 increased** 7.1% over the three years.

Children Younger than Age Five

Number of U.S. Homeless Children Aged Birth to Five SY 2016-17 to 2018-19

Year	Number
2016-17	62,401
2017-18	71,887
2018-19	67,921

State education agencies reported on the number of young children who were provided services but not by a Kindergarten program. These children may not be enrolled in public schools. The report did not provide individual state data.

Pennsylvania Trends

Total # PA Students Experienced Homelessness, SY 2016-17 to SY 2018-19

Year	Number
2016-17	25,109
2017-18	30,624
2018-19	31,822

- Pennsylvania **tied** New Jersey by recording the **highest percentage change** over three years.

- The number of Pennsylvania's homeless students increased:
    - From SY 17 to SY18 was 22%
    - From Sy18 to SY 19 was 4%
    - Over 3 years from SY 17 to SY19 was 27%.

Pennsylvania reported the **twelfth highest total** of the number of homeless students.

State	# Homeless Students SY '19
California	271,528
New York	148,485
Texas	114,055
Florida	91,068
Illinois	55,751
Washington	39,972
Georgia	38,891
Michigan	34,853
North Carolina	34,725
Missouri	34,029
Ohio	32,780
Pennsylvania	**31,822**

Comparing PA and U.S. Homeless Students' Academic Achievement to 'Economically Disadvantaged' Students

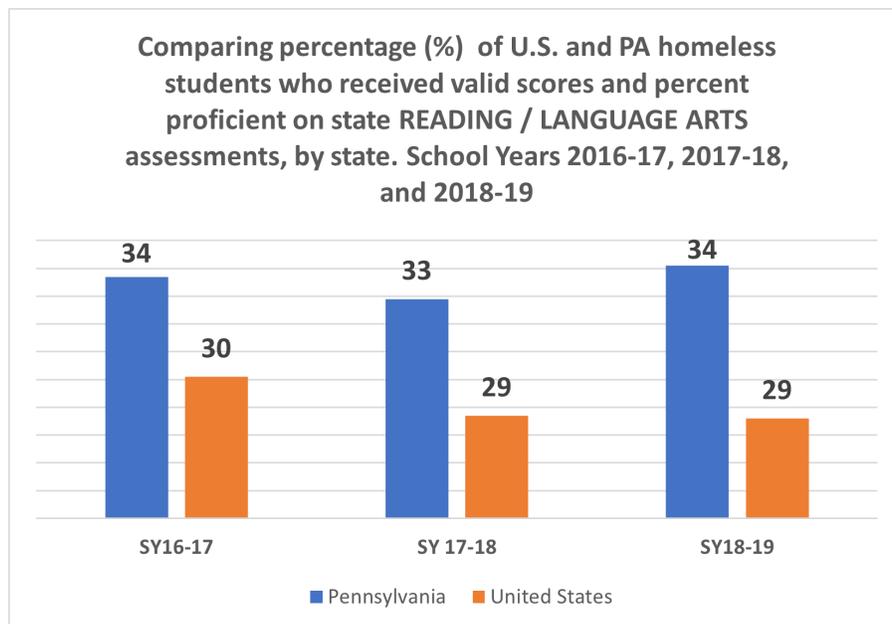| Percentage (%) of homeless students who received valid scores and percent proficient on state reading/math/science assessments, School Year 2018-19				
	% PA homeless students	**% US homeless students**	**% PA economically disadvantaged students**	**% US economically disadvantaged students**
Reading	34.1	29.6	45.7	37.9
Math	17.7	24.5	27.8	33.9
Science	39.1	28.4	50.6	37.3

During SY 2018-19, **29.6% of US students experiencing homelessness** achieved academic proficiency in reading/language arts.
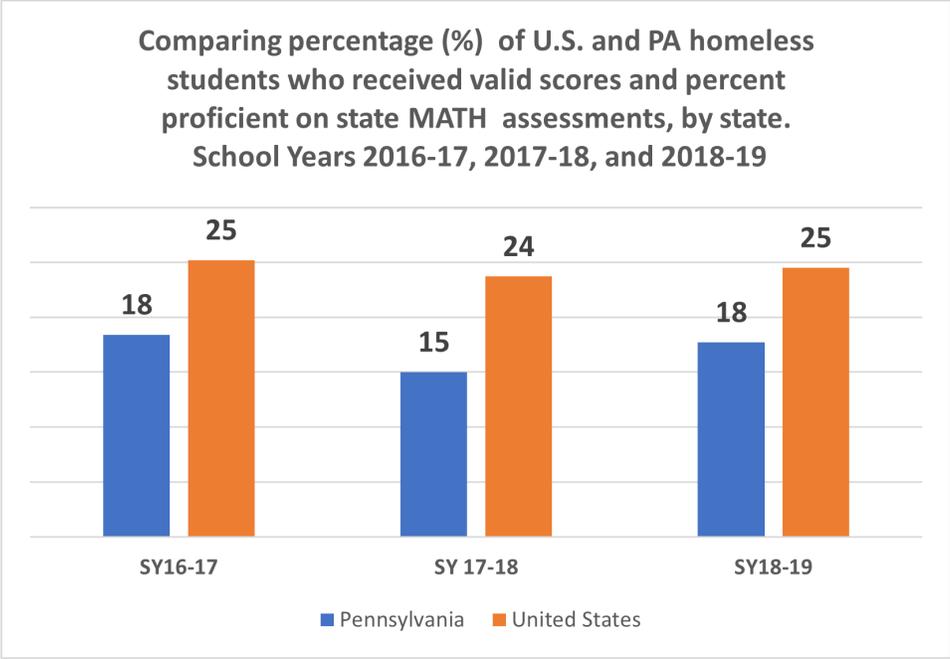
- During the same school year, **24.5% of the students achieved proficiency in mathematics** and **28%** achieved proficiency in **science**.

- Homeless students **scored lower** than *economically disadvantaged* students on statewide assessments by approximately eight to nine percentage points.

- Pennsylvania's homeless students **score lower** than their economically disadvantaged peers.

It is important to note that the definitions for and measurements of student achievement vary across states and years. States have the authority to define "economically disadvantaged," so data from state to state is not readily comparative. States also adopt new standards, administer new assessments, change scoring related to each level of academic proficiency, or make other significant changes to their statewide assessment, charging the comparative value of the data over time.

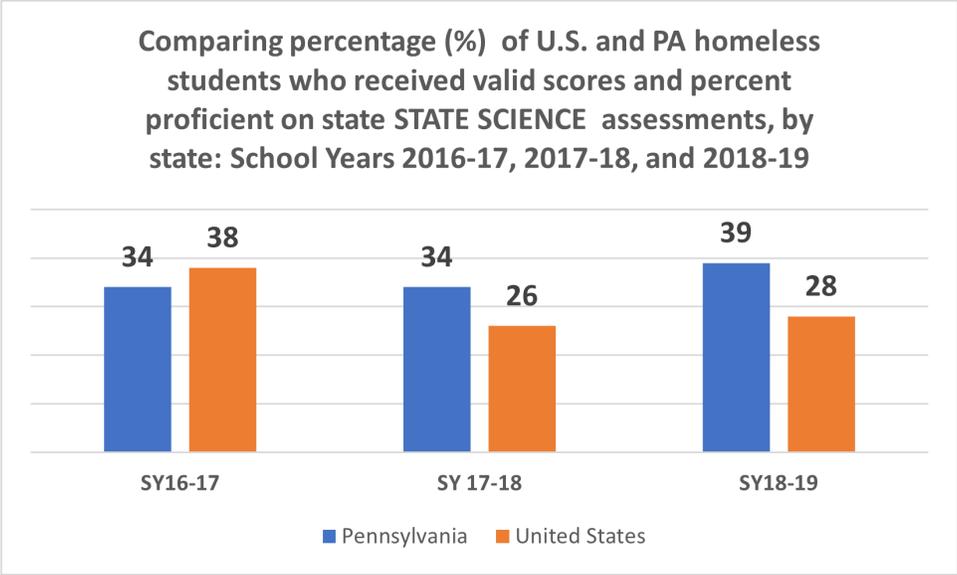## Comparing PA and U.S. Homeless Students Who Score 'Proficient'

PA homeless students do **better** than their U.S. peers in **reading and language arts** and **worse** in **math** on standardized tests.

Comparing percentage (%) of U.S. and PA homeless students who received valid scores and percent proficient on state READING / LANGUAGE ARTS assessments, by state. School Years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19

Comparing percentage (%) of U.S. and PA homeless students who received valid scores and percent proficient on state MATH assessments, by state. School Years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19

	SY16-17	SY 17-18	SY18-19
Pennsylvania	18	15	18
United States	25	24	25

■ Pennsylvania ■ United States

PA homeless students perform better than their U.S. peers and **increased science** scores between SY 18 and SY 19.

Comparing percentage (%) of U.S. and PA homeless students who received valid scores and percent proficient on state STATE SCIENCE assessments, by state: School Years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19

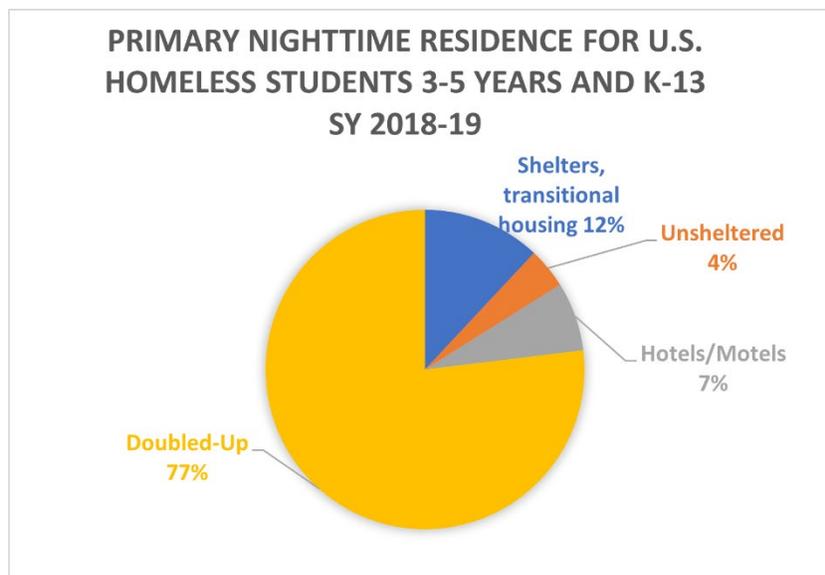|	SY16-17	SY 17-18	SY18-19
Pennsylvania	34	34	39
United States	38	26	28

■ Pennsylvania ■ United States

Graduation Rates

States submitted data on the number of students who graduated from high school in SY 2018-19, based on an adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). For the homeless student subgroup, state graduation rates for students who graduated within four years ranged from 49% to 86% of students experiencing homelessness. The five-year ACGR for homeless students was higher than the four-year ACGR in 21 of the 26 states reporting the optional extended year rate, including Pennsylvania.

- Pennsylvania tracked a cohort of 2,159 students over 4 years, of which 70% graduated.
- Pennsylvania also tracked a 5-year cohort of 2,111 homeless students, of which 77% graduated.
- The report does not show rates for all states due to lack of comparable data. See the original report for further explanation.

Trends in Nighttime Residence

PRIMARY NIGHTTIME RESIDENCE FOR U.S. HOMELESS STUDENTS 3-5 YEARS AND K-13 SY 2018-19

- Shelters, transitional housing 12%
- Unsheltered 4%
- Hotels/Motels 7%
- Doubled-Up 77%

During SY 2018-19, **students sharing housing with others** due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason **comprised 77% of the students who experienced homelessness** (a four percent increase over prior year). Other trends in nighttime residence include:
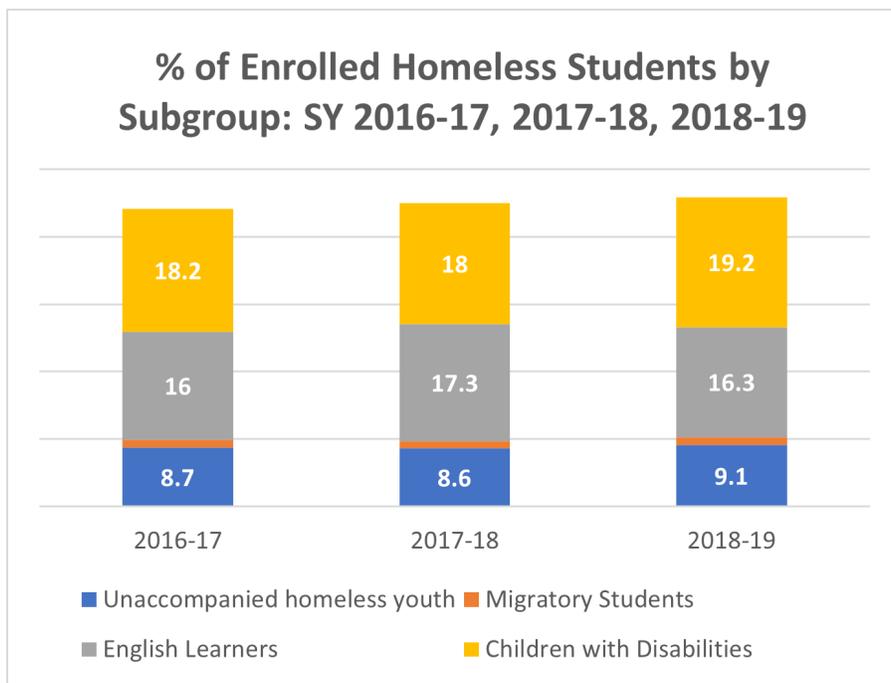
- Twelve percent of homeless students resided in shelters.
- Seven percent had a primary nighttime residence of hotels or motels, and 4% were identified as unsheltered.

Over the three-year period SY2017 to SY2019, the number of students in sheltered situations at the time they were first identified decreased by 11%.

The source material suggests that the decrease can be partly attributed to a change in the definition of a homeless student under the McKinney-Vento Act that resulted in the exclusion of students awaiting foster care placement. States began a transition to the new definition starting in SY 2016-17 and completed it in SY 2017-18.

Subgroups of Homeless Students

Four subgroups of homeless students are reported on at the national level. They are unaccompanied youth, migratory students, English learners, and children with disabilities.

% of Enrolled Homeless Students by Subgroup: SY 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Children with Disabilities	18.2	18	19.2
English Learners	16	17.3	16.3
Unaccompanied homeless youth	8.7	8.6	9.1

Legend: ■ Unaccompanied homeless youth ■ Migratory Students ■ English Learners ■ Children with Disabilities

According to the source document these categories are non-exclusive. Thus, it is possible for a single student to belong to, and be counted in, more than one category. Also, some students experiencing homelessness are not captured in these four categories.

About People's Emergency Center (PEC)
[People's Emergency Center (PEC)](#) uplifts our community by providing housing, social services, and quality of life supports that empower people and encourage more prosperous and safer neighborhoods for all residents of West Philadelphia.

For families and youth experiencing homelessness, we offer housing, social services, access to early childhood education, and educational programs in career training, parenting, financial literacy, life skills, and technology.

The PEC Community Development Corporation programs respond to community needs and build on neighborhood assets to help bridge the digital divide, expand mixed-income housing opportunities, stimulate economic growth, create wealth, and improve the quality of life for all West Philadelphia residents.

PEC advocates for urgently needed public policy changes on behalf of families and youth experiencing homelessness and the neighborhoods we serve. We have worked successfully with local, state, and federal government agencies to advance legislation and budgets that prioritize these communities.