



# BrainGain@PEC

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**Date: September, 2015**

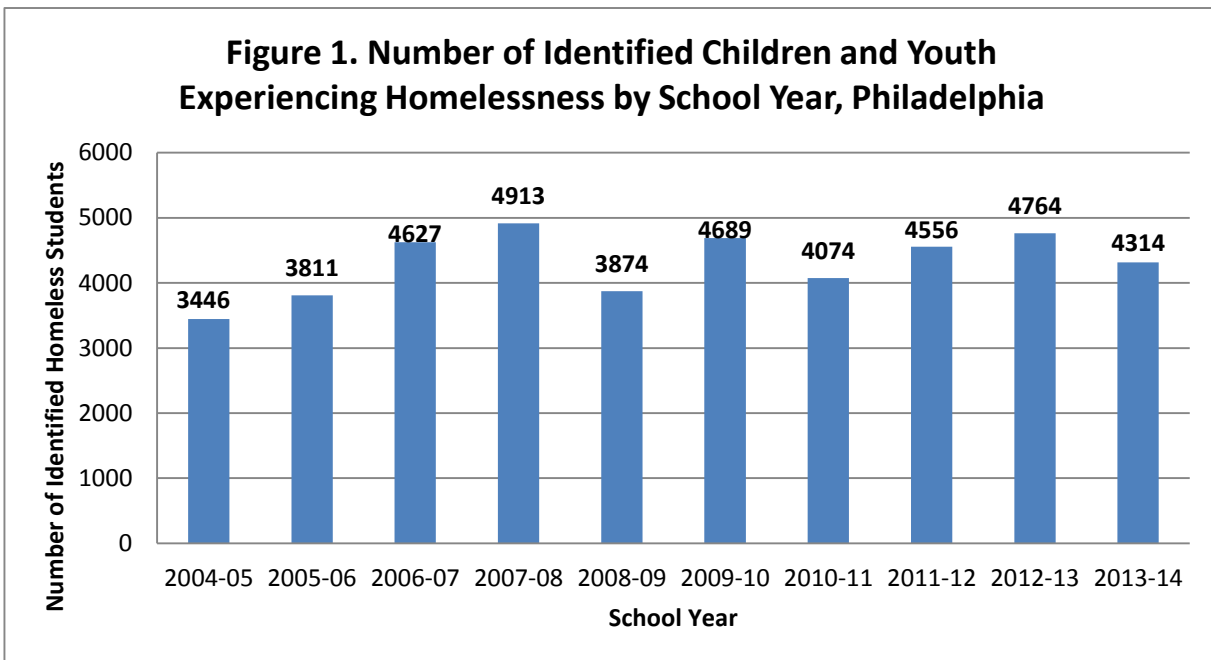
PEC publishes "BrainGain@PEC" to provide brief summaries of research or publications on family homelessness and related issues. Previous issues of BrainGain@PEC can be found at <http://bit.ly/1JQKdYw>. Much of the following text was taken verbatim from the source document.

## ***What do we know about Philadelphia's homeless students?***

People's Emergency Center has summarized the findings and recommendations of the School District's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) report Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Evaluation Report SY 2013-2014 (ECYEH). This summary looked at whether the ECYEH program was meeting the needs of Philadelphia's homeless students according to ORE. The ORE's full report can be read at <http://bit.ly/1G11y7p>.

The purpose of this summary is to contribute to the City's knowledge-base on issues relating to youth homelessness, especially as school districts embark on a new school year.

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) identified **4,314 homeless<sup>i</sup> children and youth** during the 2013-2014 school year (SY), a 9% decrease from the previous year.



## **Background:**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides grant funding of the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth to eight regions in Pennsylvania, including the SDP.

## **Overall Findings:**

- The district identified 4,314 children and youth as homeless in Philadelphia during SY 2013-2014
  - 78% (n=3,345) of these were students and 22% (n=954) were children not yet school-aged, 0-5 years old
  - Of youth identified, 18% (n=601) were high school students
  - Fifty percent of homeless students identified were classified as “doubled-up<sup>ii</sup>”. This is a 9% increase from SY 2012-2013 when 41% of homeless students were identified as “doubled-up”
- Of school-aged youth identified as homeless, 74% (n=2,495) received at least one service from the ECYEH office. The most common services provided by the ECYEH Office were uniform vouchers (41% of students) and transit passes (41%).

## **Recommendations from the Office of Research and Evaluation, which authored the report:**

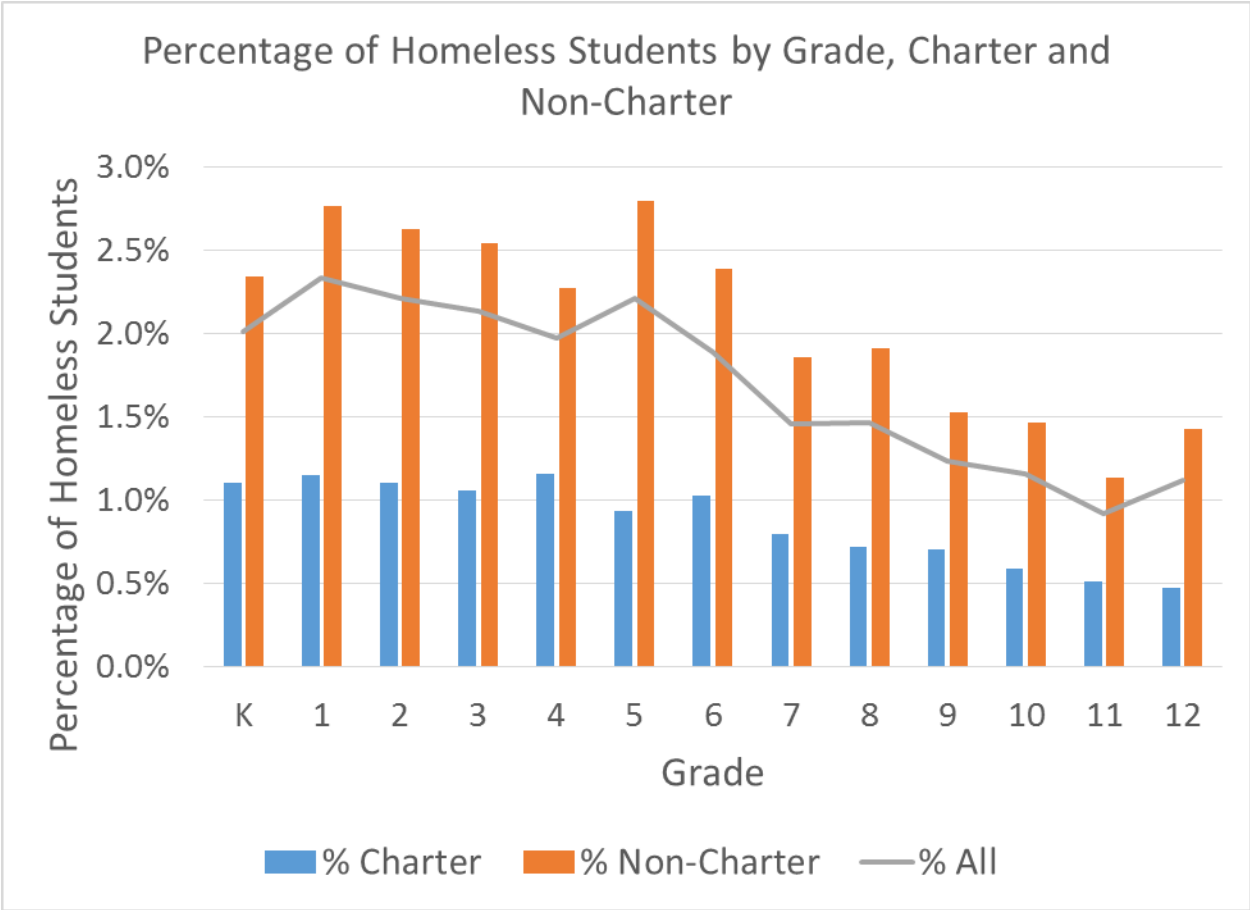
- Due to staffing shortages at SDP, many schools did not have a regular counselor in 2013-2014. Because counselors are a primary source for identifying homeless students within schools, this shortage impacted the number of students identified. It is recommended that teachers be educated about the signs of homelessness and homeless students’ rights and instructed to refer homeless students to the ECYEH office for services.
- Create arrangements with Philadelphia shelters to gather data on homeless youth, increasing identification.
- Directly contact homeless students via phone or email to inform students of the assistance they are eligible to receive from the ECYEH office.
- Begin the tutoring program sooner in the school year so there is more time to recruit teachers with secondary certification to tutor high school students and to provide on-going support to all students throughout the school year.
- Create a variable in the ECYEH Student Data File so ORE can better report information on students participating in the tutoring program.

## **Demographics:**

- Overall, there were 451 fewer youths identified and tracked during the 2013-2014 SY compared to SY 2012-2013.

<b>Table 1: Proportion of Identified Homeless Students Compared to Philadelphia Students Overall</b>		
<b>Population</b>	<b>SY 2012-2013</b>	<b>SY 2013-2014</b>
Identified SDP & Charter Homeless Enrollment	3,595	3,345
Total SDP & Charter Enrollment	205,160	192,136
Percent of Total Enrollment Represented by Homeless Students	1.8%	1.7%

- A smaller proportion of students attending charter schools were identified as experiencing homelessness, illustrated below. To address this, the EYCEH office has constructed a new effort and recruited a liaison that will specifically monitor homeless students attending charter schools.



- In the 2013-2014 SY, more students were identified as living in doubled-up arrangements than identified as living in shelters. The students living doubled-up are the most difficult to identify because it is not often acknowledged as a type of homelessness.

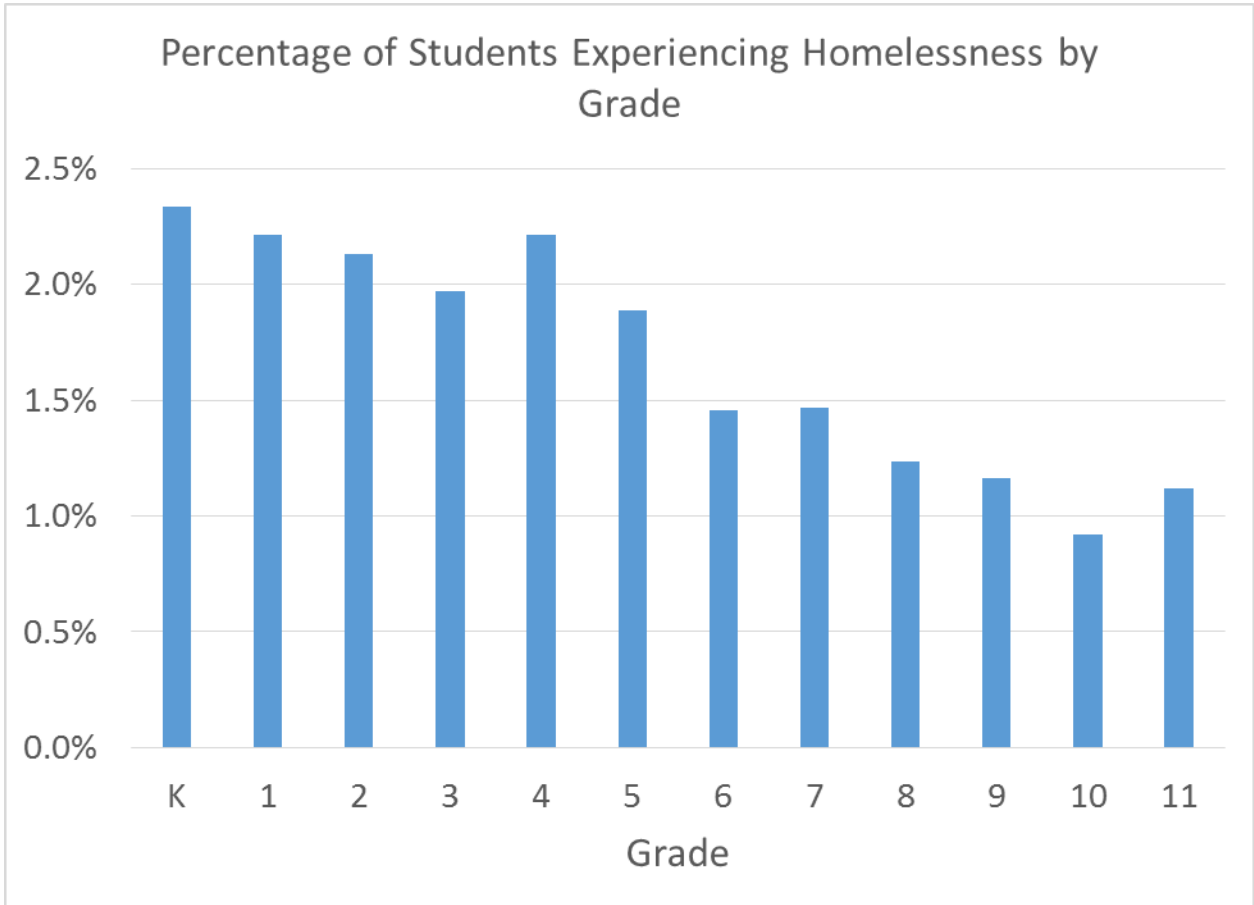
<i>Living Arrangement</i>	<i>Total Students (N=3,360)</i>	<i>Total 0-5 Children (N=954)</i>
Shelter	1,573 (47%)	903 (95%)
Doubled Up	1,696 (50%)	40 (4%)
Transitional	58 (2%)	10 (~1%)
Other/Hotel	33 (1%)	1 (<1%)

- There are 17 schools in Philadelphia that have more than 30 identified homeless students within their population, as shown in Table 3. Eleven of the schools, excluding charter schools, are elementary schools.

<i>School Name</i>	<i>School Reporting Category</i>	<i>N (%)</i>
George W. Childs School	Public	30 (5%)
Young Scholars Kenderton	Charter	30 (8%)
Southwark School	Public	33 (6%)
Benjamin Franklin High School	Public	34 (4%)
Horace Furness High School	Public	37 (5%)
Martin Luther King High School	Public	40 (4%)
Morton McMichael School	Public	43 (10%)
Tanner Duckrey School	Public	45 (8%)
Laura W. Waring School	Public	48 (14%)
Samuel B. Huey School	Public	50 (9%)
James Rhoads School	Public	50 (8%)
Young Scholars Frederick Douglas	Charter	51 (7%)
Mary Bethune School	Public	52 (7%)
John Barry School	Public	53 (6%)
Belmont School	Charter	56 (11%)
Anna B. Day School	Public	76 (16%)
Alain Locke School	Public	90 (18%)

- High school students were identified in lower numbers compared to younger students, illustrated in the below graph. There are many challenges to identifying youth experiencing homelessness, including perceived stigma, higher rates of being unaccompanied by parents or family members, and becoming disengaged or dropping

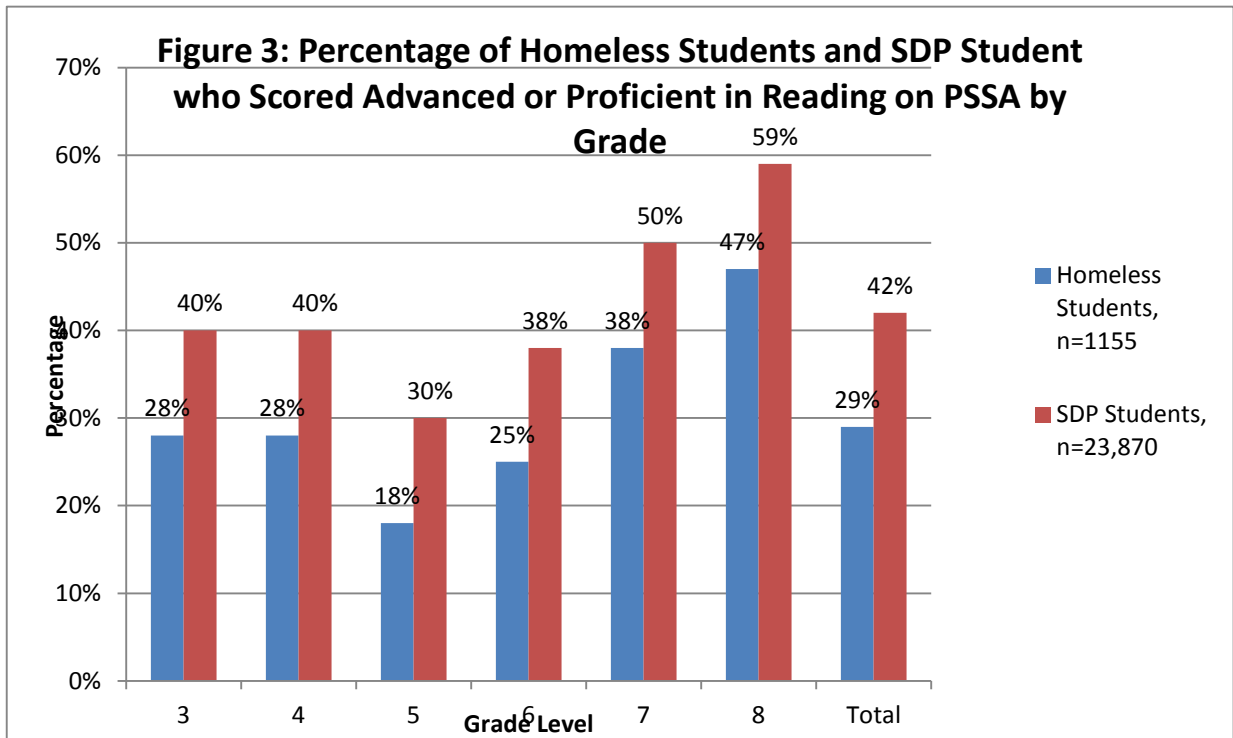
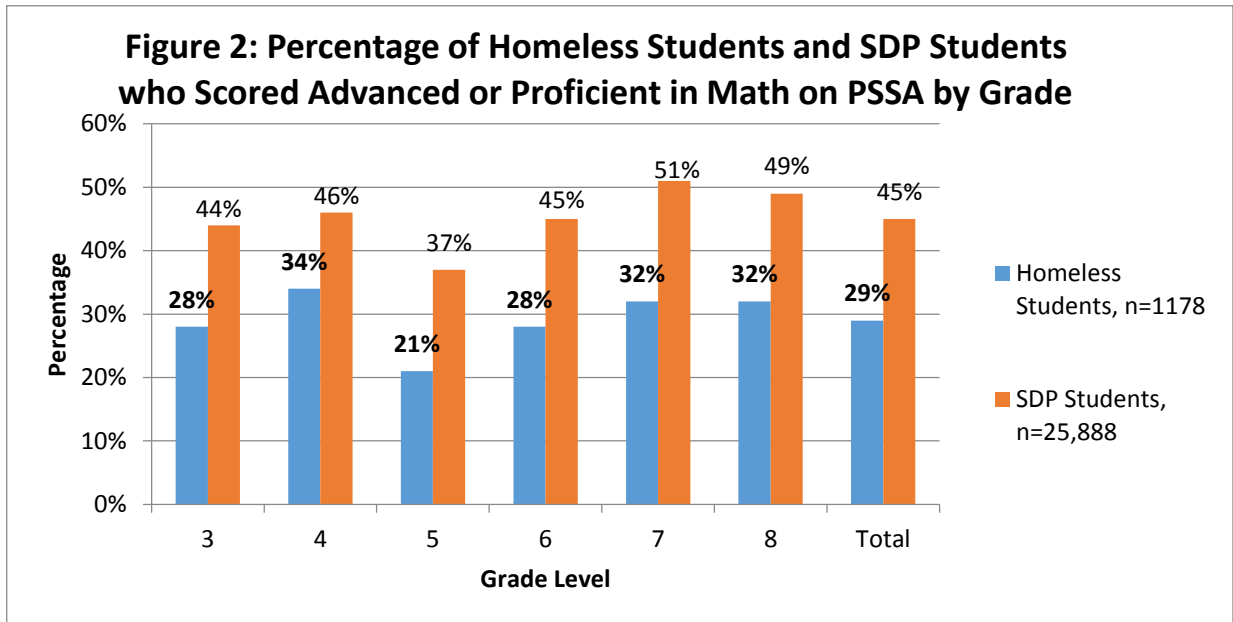
out of school. The district has several efforts specifically for youth experiencing homelessness, including an afterschool TEEN program aimed at engaging and supporting these students.



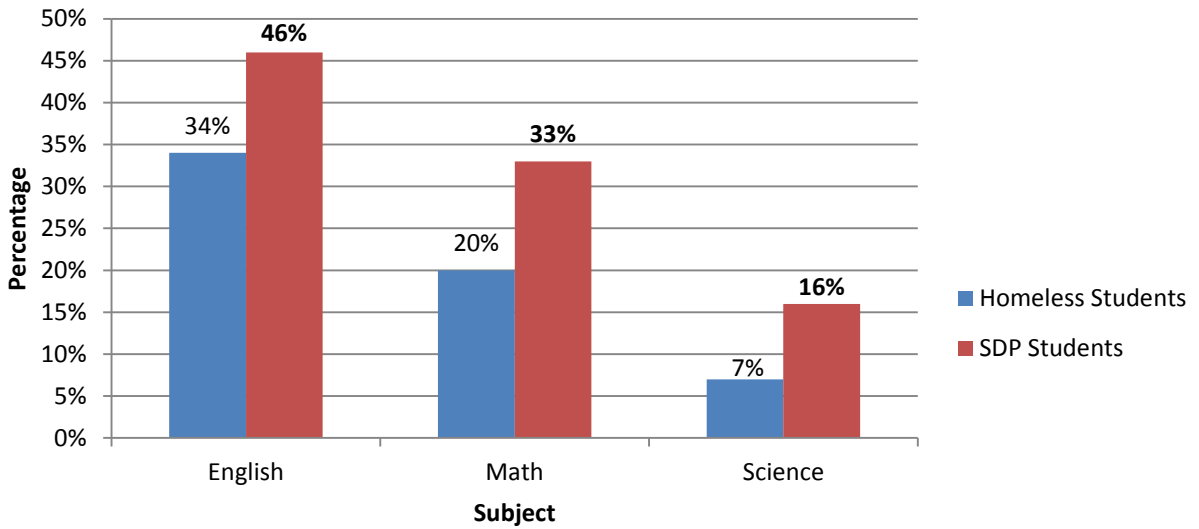
### Academic Achievement

- Homeless students in Philadelphia demonstrate lower performance on standardized tests. In SY 2013-2014:
  - 29% of homeless students scored Advanced or Proficient on the PSSA math exam, as compared to 45% of all SDP students that year
  - 29% of homeless students scored Advanced or Proficient on the PSSA reading exam, as compared to 42% of all SDP students that year
  - Homeless 11<sup>th</sup> graders scored lower on than the overall SDP student body in all three Keystone exams

- Detailed information regarding school achievement can be found in Figures 2, 3, and 4 below.



**Figure 4: Percentage of 11th Grade Homeless Students and SDP Students who Scored Advanced or Proficient on the Keystone Exams**



## Tardiness and Truancy

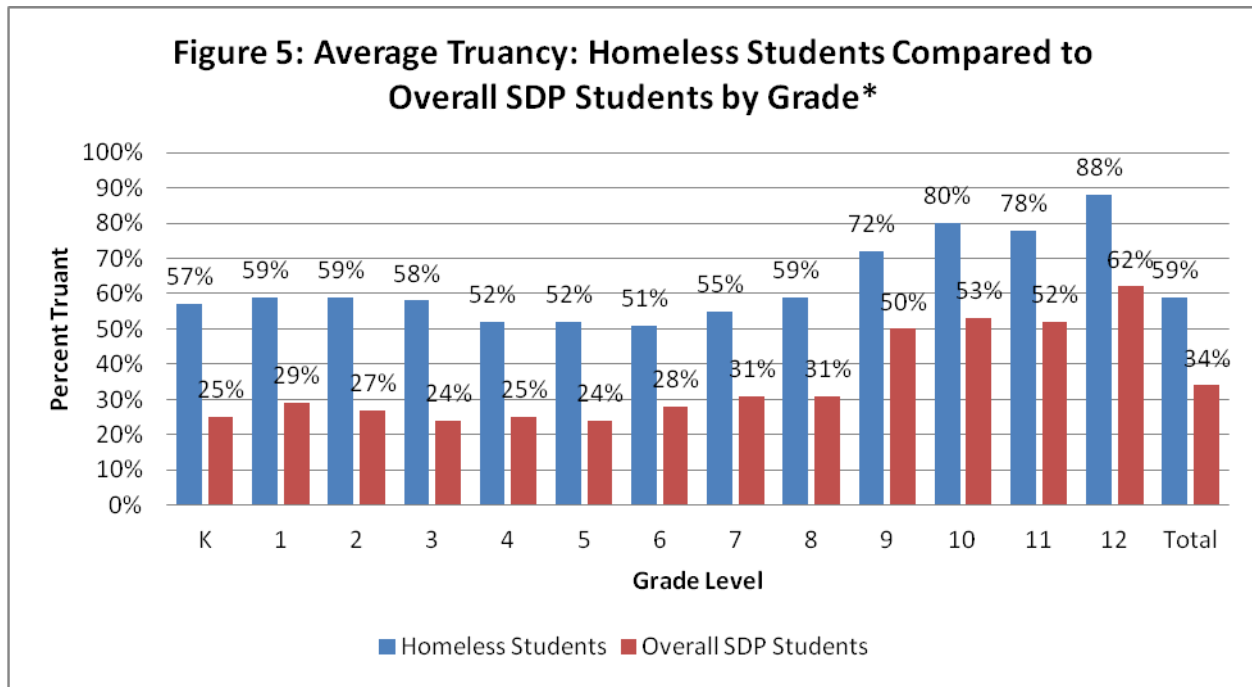
- Tardiness is defined as being late to school. On average, homeless SDP students were tardy about 18 times during the 2013-2014 SY, as compared to the rest of the SDP's student population who averaged 13 tardy days during the same period.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>SDP</i>
K	16	8
1	18	10
2	17	9
3	16	9
4	14	8
5	15	8
6	16	9
7	17	10
8	15	12
9	24	21
10	29	23
11	35	24
12	35	28
Overall	18	13

\*Students attending charter schools were excluded

- Truancy is defined by the SDP as ten or more total unexcused absences incurred by a student during an academic year. Figure 5 illustrates truancy rates by grade.





\*Students attending charter schools were excluded

### ECYEH Services

- During SY 2013-2014, 74% of identified homeless students in Philadelphia received services from the ECYEH office.
- While many children 0-5 years old did not receive services from the ECYEH office, identifying homeless children prior to their starting school, ensures that the ECYEH office will be aware of these students' needs.

<i>Service</i>	<i>Total Students 2012-2013</i>	<i>Total Students 2013-2014</i>	<i>Total 0-5 Children 2013-2014</i>
Uniform Voucher	1,893 (53%)	1,385 (41%)	0
Transit Pass	1,313 (36%)	1,384 (41%)	1
Additional Funding	598 (17%)	283 (8%)	0
Coat & Sneaker Donation	---	141 (4%)	2
After-School & Summer Program	1,173 (33%)	---	---
No Service Indicated	274 (8%)	865 (26%)	951 (100%)
<b>Total Number Identified</b>	<b>3,595</b>	<b>3,360</b>	<b>954</b>

Students may receive more than one service.

- The Office of Research and Evaluation's report also provides a comprehensive review of how well Philadelphia's ECYEH program meets three established priorities for grant implementation. The full research report can be found here: [http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/0j/KG/0jKGLzmOK01o-RrUBax6IA/ECYEH-2013-2014\\_FINAL-January-23-2015--1.pdf](http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/0j/KG/0jKGLzmOK01o-RrUBax6IA/ECYEH-2013-2014_FINAL-January-23-2015--1.pdf)

The **People's Emergency Center's** mission is to nurture families, strengthen neighborhoods and drive change in West Philadelphia. Through a community of more than 240 housing units and five educational centers offering job training, parenting and early childhood education, financial education and planning, life skills and technology coursework, PEC seeks to change the life trajectory for the women and children who seek its services and inspire them to aspire to new heights. This BrainGain was written by PEC's Julia Levin and Joe Willard. All inquires can be sent to [policy@pec-cares.org](mailto:policy@pec-cares.org).

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<sup>i</sup> This report uses the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness which is a lack of fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition includes individuals whose nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for humans to sleep (cars, abandoned buildings, buses or train stations) and individuals who are doubled-up, sharing housing with another family.

<sup>ii</sup> Those who are sharing housing with another family due to a lack of affordable housing.