Prince George's County Public Schools

EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation of the PGCPS Homeless Education Program, SY2018-SY2020

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Program Description

The McKinney–Vento Act requires that local education agencies provide homeless[1] students equal access to the same educational opportunities that are provided to other students. Public schools are required to allow immediate school enrollment for homeless students, provide transportation services so that homeless students can have continuity in school enrollment, and provide specialized services that will allow homeless students to meet the same state academic standards to which non-homeless students are held. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed specific regulations that complement the McKinney–Vento Act requirements and provide further specificity for the components of Maryland school systems' Homeless Education program. To ensure that Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is fulfilling its obligation to provide said education to students experiencing homelessness, the PGCPS McKinney Vento-Program Office (MVP) is tasked with ensuring the school district is in compliance with federal laws and provisions for homeless students and to provide guidance to schools in an effort to minimize the impact that homelessness can have on educational success.

Thus, the PGCPS Homeless Education Program (HEP) was established to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to a free and appropriate public education without barriers to school enrollment, educational programs, services, and transportation. Guidelines and procedures for implementing the requirements of the McKinney–Vento Act and other regulations relating to homeless students are outlined in PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5010 and 5010.1. Ideally, the resources provided to homeless students and families through the HEP would facilitate academic performance at a level comparable to demographically and academically similar non-homeless students.

B. Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation

PGCPS is required to conduct a three-year evaluation of its HEP to ensure that the district is in compliance with laws and policies governing the provision of education to homeless students. The standards by which the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires PGCPS to evaluate the HEP are as follows:

[1] The term "homeless" is used in this report to refer to students and families who lack "a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence," in accordance with the definition set forth in the McKinney–Vento Act.

- Standard 1–Within one full day of an attempt to enroll in a school, homeless children and youth will be in attendance.
- Standard 2–Homeless pre-k to 12 children and youth will have stability in school.
- Standard 3–Homeless children and youth will receive specialized services when eligible.
- Standard 5–Homeless children and youth in grades 3-12 will meet the State's academic standards.

This evaluation will cover the following school years; 2017-2018 (SY18), 2018-2019 (SY19), and 2019-2020 (SY20).

C. Evaluation Questions

Based on the parameters described above, the following evaluation questions were addressed in this evaluation:

1. *To what extent did PGCPS provide services mandated by the McKinney–Vento Act for each year during the SY18-SY20 grant period?*

2. *To what extent did experiencing homelessness impact attendance during SY18-SY20?*

3. *How do students who experienced homelessness fare academically compared with similar non-homeless students?*

4. *How did attendance rate among students who experienced homelessness during SY18-SY19 account for the observed academic differences compared with similar non-homeless students?*

D. Organization of Report

This report is organized into five major sections. Following this introductory section, the second section describes the methods and procedures used in data collection and the analysis plan developed to answer the aforementioned research questions. Section III contains the findings, which provides the answers to the research questions. A summary of the key findings is contained in Section IV, which includes the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. Finally, in Section V, we present the recommendations related to improvements in future implementation of HEP.

II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

To complete this evaluation the Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) within the Department of Testing, Research, and Evaluation (DTRE) utilized administrative data gathered by the MVP, Transportation, and the Food and Nutrition offices, as well as student enrollment, demographic, and achievement data. The methods and procedures that were used to answer each of the evaluation questions are described in this section. A summary of the evaluation questions, sample, data sources, and analytic procedure for each research question is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analysis Techniques

Research Questions	Sample	Data Sources	Analytic procedure
1. To what extent did PGCPS provide services mandated by the McKinney–Vento Act for each year during the grant period?	Families applying for services, SY15-SY17	SY18-SY20 Homeless Ed. application data, Transportation data, Food and Nutrition data	Descriptive Statistics
2. To what extent did experiencing homelessness impact attendance during SY18-SY20?	Homeless students, SY18, SY19 & SY20, and comparison group of non-homeless students	SY18-SY20 Homeless Ed. application data, and Enrollment Data	Propensity score matching, Comparison of Means
3. How do students who experienced homelessness fare academically compared with similar non-homeless students?	Homeless students, SY18 & SY19, and comparison group of non-homeless students	PARCC Results, SY18 and SY19, Enrollment Data	Propensity score matching, Comparison of Means
4. How did attendance rate among students who experienced homelessness during SY18-SY19 account for the observed academic differences compared with similar non-homeless students?	Homeless students, SY18 & SY19, and comparison group of non-homeless students	PARCC Results, SY18 and SY19, Enrollment and Attendance Data	Propensity score matching, Comparison of Means, Regression Adjustment

A. Data and Sampling

The sample used in the analyses conducted in this study to answer Question 1 is the entire population of students identified as homeless during SY18, SY19, and SY20. To answer the second research question, we used a sample of homeless students from SY18-SY20 and identified a comparable group of non-homeless students that have identical demographic characteristics. Finally, to answer questions 3 and 4, we matched a sample of homeless students from SY18 and SY19 who had PARCC assessment data and identified a comparable group of non-homeless

students that have identical demographic characteristics as well as PARCC assessment data. SY20 sample was not used as there was no PARCC data available.

This evaluation utilized student demographic and enrollment data. Student enrollment and program participation data were extracted from the multiple databases the district uses to archive student data. These databases include SchoolMax (which houses student enrollment, demographic, and attendance data), the student transportation database from the Department of Transportation, and Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) participation records from the Food and Nutrition Department. Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment data was provided by the data management team within the DTRE.

We also used HEP participant data gathered from Homeless Student Services Forms (HSSFs). The HSSF is the form PGCPS uses to enroll students and families in the HEP. Families indicate when they first became homeless and are asked to identify the school they would like their child to attend. Parents also request services provided as part of the HEP, such as transportation and food services, on the HSSF.

B. Analysis Plan

To answer the study research questions, we utilized descriptive statistics and comparisons of means. The descriptive analyses involve reporting frequencies and percentages on key variables for each research question. To answer the first research question, we report the percentage of students receiving services mandated by the state or PGCPS administrative procedure within the required time period.

For the second, third and fourth research questions, we created comparison groups of non-homeless students to determine the extent to which homeless students experience different outcomes in terms of academic performance and attendance from their non-homeless peers. To compile the comparison groups, we used one-to-one propensity score matching to match students on a number of key observable demographic variables. With this method, each homeless student was matched to a similar non-homeless student; that is, matching each subject to a single subject with the opposite treatment whose propensity score is closest. The key variables used for matching included students' race/ethnicity, gender, FARMS participation, ESOL participation, participation in SPED, and grade level.

After we compiled the homeless group and the non-homeless comparison group for each grade level, to answer the second and the third research questions, an independent-sample mean difference test (t-test) was conducted to determine if any differences found between the two groups were statistically significant as determined by the *p*-value. The closer the *p*-value is to zero, the higher the probability that the means between the two groups are different; *p*-values closer to one indicate that the two groups' means are statistically equal. That is, the analysis was conducted to estimate the size and statistical significance of the percentage-point differences between homeless students and non-homeless students in their attendance rate and PARCC scores. The mean difference test allows us to determine if the attendance rate or assessment scores is significantly lower for homeless students. The extent to which the impact of homelessness is educationally important was also assessed by calculating an effect size. We utilized the standards established by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards for program interventions in education. The specific effect size reported in this report is the standardized mean difference or Hedge's effect size index. According to the WWC handbook (2013), an effect size of 0.25 or larger is considered educationally important. For Question 4, we used regression adjustment to control for attendance rate so that we could determine if experiencing homelessness resulted in lower attendance rate that negatively affected outcomes of achievement.

Tables 2 and 3 display the socio-demographic characteristics of the samples used for the third and fourth research question. The tables show if the matched sample results indicate that matching on the estimated propensity score balanced the covariates. The *p*-values closer to one indicate that the matched samples are well balanced on all the demographic variables for both the SY18 and SY19 cohorts.

Table 2: SY18 Analytical Sample for Homeless and Non-Homeless Students

	Homeless	Non-Homeless	*p*-value
Student Characteristics	**N =906**	**N = 905**	
African American/Black	83%	83%	.899
Hispanic	13%	13%	.993
White	2%	2%	.998
Asian	1%	1%	.999
More than one, other, or not identified	1%	1%	.998
Male	52%	52%	.928
Free and reduced-price meals (FARMS)	95%	95%	.996
English as a Second Language (ESOL)	8.0%	8.0%	.995
Special Education (SPED)	18%	18%	.960

Table 3: SY19 Analytical Sample for Homeless and Non-Homeless Students

Student Characteristics	Homeless N =685	Non-Homeless N = 685	*p*-value
African American/Black	89.3%	89.3%	1.000
Hispanic	7.7%	7.7%	1.000
White	1%	1%	1.000
Asian	0.6%	0.6%	1.000
More than one, other, or not identified	0.8%	0.8%	1.000
Male	51%	51%	1.000
Free and reduced-price meals (FARMS)	100%	100%	1.000
English as a Second Language (ESOL)	4.2%	4.2%	1.000
Special Education (SPED)	17%	17%	1.000

III. FINDINGS

In this section we provide the answers to the established research questions. Each research question is answered sequentially.

A. Provision of Services to Homeless Students, SY18-SY20

When a student is identified as homeless, the parent completes at the school of enrollment (either the school of origin or the boundary school). Registrars and Professional School Counselors serve as the school-based MVP Liaison. They are responsible for enrolling the student in the MVP, notifying parents and unaccompanied youth of their rights and informing parents of public and private services offered to families experiencing homelessness. If there is a dispute regarding the school of enrollment (school of origin or the school serving the student's temporary residence), a meeting is convened to determine which school is in the student's best interest.

Students and families experiencing homelessness are also assisted (directly or indirectly) by other school system staff involved in subsequent steps in the service delivery process. These personnel include, but are not limited to, PGCPS Department of Transportation staff, Food and Nutrition Services staff, MVP office staff, and school-building principals. These staff members are expected to communicate regularly with the MVP office to ensure that all students who have been identified as homeless receive the services to which they are entitled under the McKinney–Vento Act and other relevant policies.

The following sections will focus on the extent to which PGCPS provided the services mandated by the McKinney–Vento Act and district administrative procedures in the SY18, SY19, and SY20. Specifically, we answer the first research question:

> *Research Question 1: To what extent did PGCPS provide the mandated services to students identified as homeless during SY18-SY20?*

These mandated services include immediate enrollment in school, provision of transportation services, and provision of food and nutrition services. Each component of the mandated services is addressed individually.

Immediate Enrollment

The McKinney–Vento Act requires local school systems to immediately enroll all homeless children and youth in school and to assist them in obtaining necessary records. According to Administrative Procedures 5010 and 5010.1, students are to be enrolled within one school day of HSSF completion. As Table 4 indicates, 86, 89, and 88 percent of students who experienced homelessness were enrolled immediately during SY18, SY19, and SY20, respectively. A large percent of homeless students (39% in SY18; 52% in SY19; and 41% in SY20) were already enrolled in PGCPS before they became homeless and the remaining students (47% in SY18; 37% in SY19; and 47% in SY20) were either enrolled within one workday of application or were enrolled in the first day of school if the homeless status was approved before the start of the school year.

On average, 87.3 percent of students were immediately enrolled in school upon being identified as homeless over the three-year period. Based on this statistic, PGCPS can be said to be substantially compliant with the immediate enrollment requirement for homeless students; however, this three-year average is lower than the compliance rate, of 92%, achieved during the SY15-SY17 period.

Table 4: Distribution of Homeless Student Enrollment by Number of Elapsed Days between Application and Enrollment, SY18-SY20

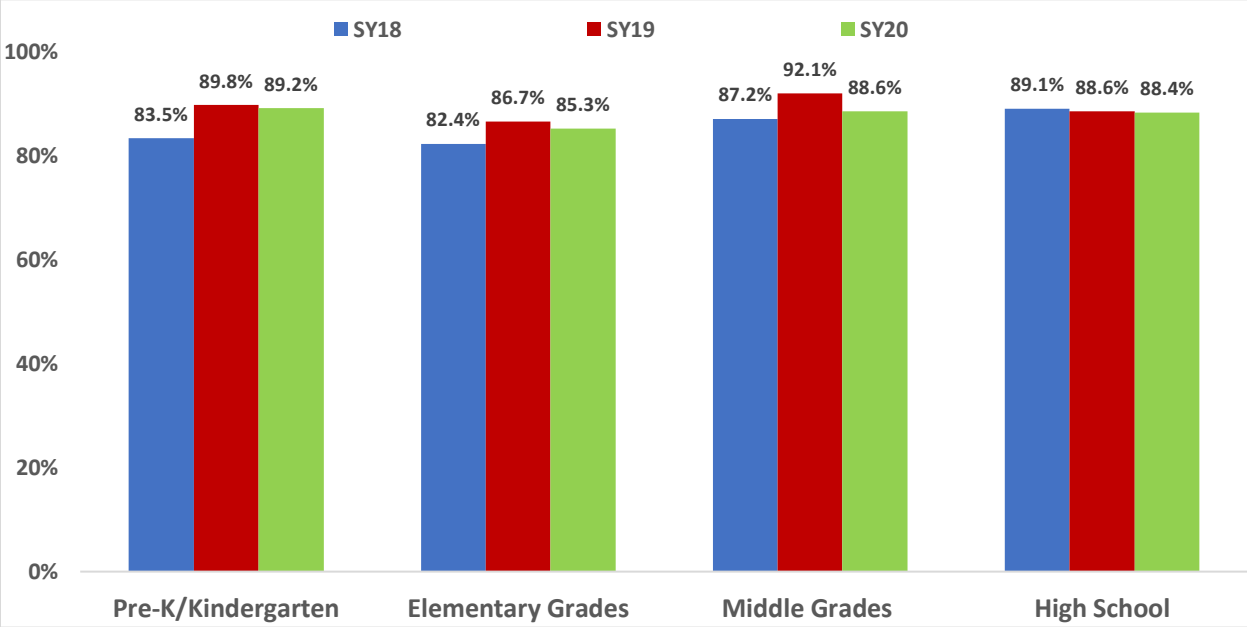
	2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
When Enrolled in School	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Enrolled in PGCPS before Homeless	680	39.2	672	51.6	424	41
0–1 day after application[2]	808	46.7	487	37.4	483	46.7
Subtotal Within Compliance Range	***1488***	***85.9***	***1159***	***89***	***907***	***87.6***
2–5 days after application	71	4.1	22	1.7	19	1.8
6–10 days after application	21	1.2	12	.9	12	1.2
More than 10 days after application	153	8.8	110	8.4	97	9.4
Total	**1733**	**100**	**1303**	**100**	**1035**	**100**
Three-Year Immediate Enrollment Average			**87.3%**			

Figure 1 displays the percent of homeless students who were enrolled in school within one school day of HSSF completion in SY18 (blue), SY19 (red), and SY20 (green) for each grade-level grouping.

[2] Also includes all HL application made before the start of school and a student was enrolled on the first day of school.

As displayed in Table 1, Figure 1 illustrates that the percentage of homeless students who were immediately enrolled was the highest in SY19 for all grade groupings but high school.

Figure 1: Percent of Homeless Students Immediately Enrolled by Grade-Level Grouping, SY18-SY20



Provision of Transportation Services

The McKinney–Vento Act and MSDE regulations require school systems to provide transportation to homeless students who attend their school of origin if it is within the school district for as long as the student is homeless and attends that particular school. If a homeless student resides in a shelter in a local school system other than the district where the school of origin is located, the two local school systems are expected to work out feasible transportation arrangements. PGCPS Administrative Procedures 5010 and 5010.1 further require the school district to provide transportation for homeless students within three school days of receipt of a formal request. The three-day requirement applies to homeless students remaining in their school of origin and to those students who transfer to a different school in the district.

Analyses conducted on data kept by the PGCPS Department of Transportation indicate that, 82, 83 and 86 percent of homeless students were provided transportation by the school system in SY18, SY19, and SY20, respectively. Figure 2 displays the breakdown of transportation for homeless students in SY18 (blue), SY19 (red), and SY20 (green). During the three-year period, 11 to 15 percent of homeless students walked to school, while four percent had to seek other transportation options or did not need transportation from the district and were provided transportation by caregivers or traveled to school by other means.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Homeless Students' Transportation to School, SY18-SY20

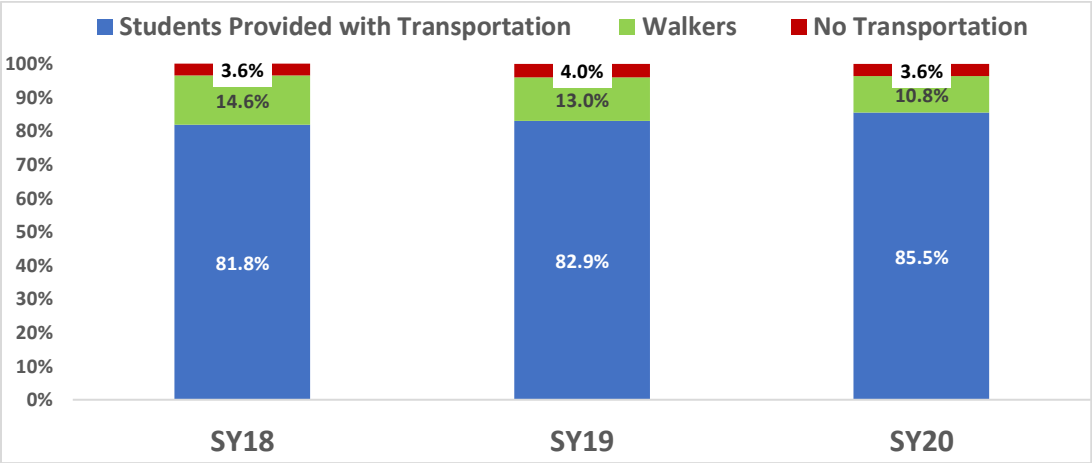


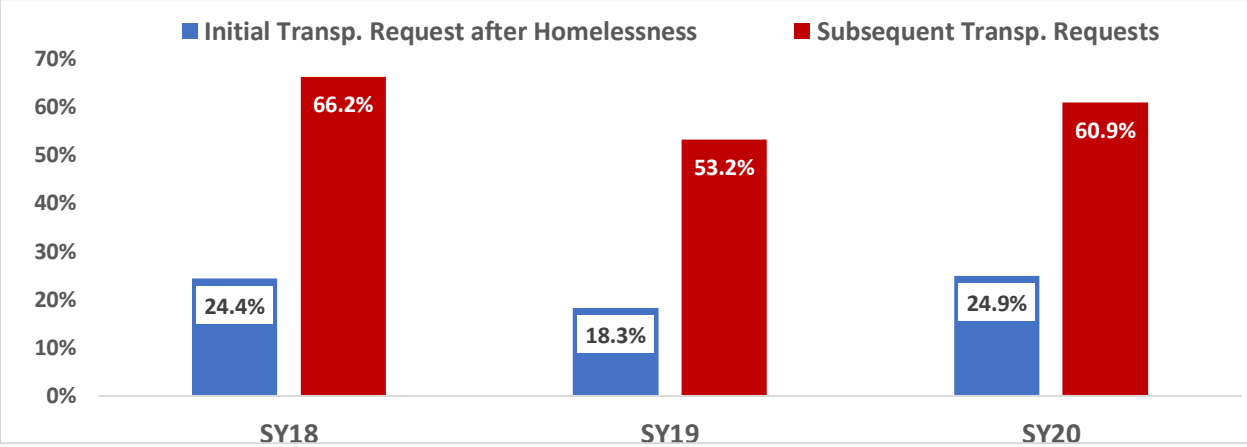
Table 5 displays the number of school days homeless students went without transportation in the three school years. The data presented indicate that for 38, 28, and 35 percent of homeless students, transportation services commenced within the required window of three school days in SY18, SY19, and SY20, respectively. Across the three years, the average percent of students who received transportation within the compliance window is 34 percent. These findings indicate that the district is least compliant with the requirement established by PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5010 relating to providing transportation services to homeless students. However, it is important to note that half of the students did receive transportation within five days of receipt of the transportation request. Unlike the immediate enrollment data, SY19 represents the lowest percentage of those served within the transportation compliance range.

Table 5: Number of School Days without Transportation for Homeless Students, SY18-SY20

	2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
Number of Days Before Transportation	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
0-1 days after request	78	3.2	38	2.3	115	8.1
2–3 days after request	855	34.5	421	25.6	382	27.0
Subtotal Within Compliance Range	**933**	**37.7**	**459**	***27.9***	**497**	**35.2**
4–5 days after request	524	21.2	223	13.5	149	10.5
6–10 days after request	669	27.0	512	31.1	473	34.8
More than 10 days after request	349	14.1	453	27.5	294	20.8
Subtotal Beyond Compliance Range	**1542**	**62.3**	**1188**	**72.1**	**916**	**64.8**
Total	**2475**	**100**	**1647**	**100**	**1413**	**100**
Three Year Compliance Average		**34.1%**				

Our analyses demonstrate that 68, 73, and 72 percent of the transportation requests comprised of initial requests after the homeless status was approved by the Homeless Education office in SY18, SY19, and SY20, respectively. The remaining requests were additional requests made to change a bus route to accommodate changes in school and/or residential address of the homeless student. Figure 3 displays a breakdown of the percent of homeless students who were provided transportation services within three school days of the transportation request by timing of the transportation request: first request for transportation (blue) and subsequent request (red). Across the three years, the average percent of students who received transportation within the compliance window is between 18 to 25 percent on the initial request and 53 to 66 percent in subsequent requests after the provision of first transportation service after declaration of homelessness. Similar to the overall compliance rate above, SY19 represents the lowest percentage of those served within the transportation compliance range regardless of the timing of the requests. Overall, these findings indicate that the district is moderately compliant with the requirement established by PGCPS in the subsequent requests, but the compliance range remains inadequately low for initial request for transportation.

Figure 3: Percentage of Homeless Students Receiving Transportation within Compliance, by School Year and Request Type



Provision of Food and Nutrition Services

The McKinney–Vento Act requires local school systems to immediately provide all homeless children and youth enrolled in school with free meals under the free and reduced-price meals (FARMS) program. The Food and Nutrition data received for SY18-SY20 indicates that almost every homeless student (over 95 percent for each year) was provided free meals (95% in SY18, 100% in SY19, and 99% in SY20. The three-year average was 97.6 percent. Based on these statistics, PGCPS can be said to be substantially compliant with the food and nutrition requirement for homeless students during the SY18-SY20 period.

B. Homelessness and Attendance, SY18-SY20

Becoming homeless is one of the most disruptive events that a student could experience. To help newly unhoused students maintain consistent school attendance, PGCPS requires that they receive immediate enrollment in school, access to free meals, and transportation within three days. To determine if provision of these services helped prevent excessive absenteeism, we asked the second research question:

> *Research Question 2. To what extent did experiencing homelessness impact attendance during SY18-SY20?*

To analyze the effect of becoming homeless on school attendance, we matched non-homeless students with similar social-demographic profiles to students who became homeless. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Attendance Rates for Homeless and Non-homeless Students, SY18-SY20

	HOMELESS		Matched Sample of NON- HOMELESS		Percentage-Point difference	*p*-value	*Effect Size*	*PGCPS DISTRICT AVERAGE*
	N	mean	N	mean				
SY2020 Attendance Rate	1021	85.9%	1021	91.4%	-5.5	.000	.42	93.0%
SY2019 Attendance Rate	1286	85.6%	1286	90.7%	-5.1	.000	.40	92.3%
SY2018 Attendance Rate	1728	86.6%	1728	90.9%	-4.3	.000	.34	92.1%

During SY18-SY20, students who experienced homelessness were present in school between 86 to 87 percent of the time, on average. In a full 180-day school year, that means that the average student who experienced homelessness missed between 24 to 26 days of school, which is about five weeks of learning. In comparison, the non-homeless comparison students were present about 88 to 91 percent of the days school was in session, thereby missing approximately between 15 to 22 days of school. That is, compared to demographically identical students, homeless students' attendance rates were 4.3, 5.1, and 5.5 percentage points lower deficit in attendance rates for SY18, SY19 and SY20, respectively. In other words, non-homeless students received between one to two additional weeks of instruction than homeless students with similar socio-demographic profiles and grade-level. The differences in the attendance rates are statistically significant ($p<.05$) and substantively important with an effect size of >.25. Furthermore, the attendance rate for homeless students is more than six percentage points below the district average. Homeless students were absent over 1.7 times as much as the average PGCPS student. The absenteeism problem for homeless students has gotten worse each year between SY18 and SY20.

C. Homelessness and Academic Achievement, SY18-SY19

One of the goals of the Homeless Education program (HEP) is to minimize the impact of homelessness on a student's educational progress. Therefore, PGCPS provides sustained academic supports to homeless students, including academic programs and waivers for credit recovery and summer school fees. The third research question we considered sought to determine whether becoming homeless impacted a student's academic performance.

Research Question 3. How did students who experienced homelessness during SY18-SY19 fare academically compared with similar non-homeless students?

We performed statistical tests to determine if the academic performance of homeless students was different from similar non-homeless students during the SY18 and SY19 school years. The findings from these analyses are presented below. The data presented in Table 7 show that the percentage of homeless students who met or exceeded expectations (i.e., were on track to be college ready) on the ELA PARCC test during SY18 was significantly different (p<. 05) and substantively important (effect size of >.25) from the percentage of students in the non-homeless comparison group in grade five and grade seven. In these grades, the percent who met or exceeded expectations was significantly lower for homeless students, while in grade eight the percent was slightly higher for homeless students (p=.076 and ES of .20). For the remaining grades, none of the differences were statistically significant or substantively important and we cannot say with confidence that there truly was a difference between how well homeless students and non-homeless students performed on the ELA PARCC assessment.

Table 7: Percent Proficient on PARCC ELA Assessment: Homeless Students, Non-Homeless Students, and All Students, SY18

Grade	HOMELESS		NON-HOMELESS Comparison		HL – Non-HL Percentage-Point difference	Effect Size	*% Proficient PGCPS-wide*
	N	% Proficient	N	% Proficient			
ELA 3	125	12	125	15.2	-3.2^{ns}	0.09	26.2
ELA 4	118	21.2	118	22.0	-0.9^{ns}	0.02	29.9
ELA 5	104	16.3	104	26.0	**-9.6****	0.24	28.3
ELA 6	109	20.2	109	27.5	-7.3 ^{ns}	0.17	27.8
ELA 7	100	14	100	30.0	**-16.0*****	0.39	34.1
ELA 8	106	21.7	106	14.2	***7.5****	0.20	31.2
ELA 10	150	11.3	165	15.1	-3.8^{ns}	0.11	27.4
GRADE 11	94	18.1	78	20.5	-2.4^{ns}	0.06	26.3

***Note*.** Significance levels: ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < 0.1; and ns – not statistically significant.

Table 8 presents the difference in the percentage of homeless students who met or exceeded expectations on the ELA PARCC assessment compared with the non-homeless students in the SY19 analytical sample. The results show that the percentage of homeless students who met or exceeded expectations on the ELA PARCC test during SY19 were not statistically significant (P <.05) and substantively different (ES >.25) from the percentage of students in the non-homeless comparison group in all grades. However, homeless students slightly underperformed in grades three, four and six (P<0.1) and performed better than non-homeless students on ELA 10 (p<. 05) but in both cases the differences were not substantively important.

There were significant differences on the impact of homeless on students' achievement on ELA between SY18 and SY19. A higher percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grade eight for SY18, and a lower percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grade eight for SY19. Whereas a lower percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grades five and seven for SY18, there was no significant difference in reading proficiency for homeless students compared to the non-homeless students in grades five and seven for SY19. Finally, it is clear from the results that homeless and non-homeless students with similar socio-demographic profiles performed far below the average PGCPS student, with the exception of Grade 6.

Table 8: Percent Proficient on PARCC ELA Assessment: Homeless Students, Non-Homeless Students, and All Students, SY19

Grade	HOMELESS N	HOMELESS % Proficient	NON-HOMELESS Comparison N	NON-HOMELESS Comparison % Proficient	HL – Non-HL Percentage-Point difference	Effect Size	*% Proficient PGCPS-wide*
ELA 3	84	15.5	84	23.8	***-8.3****	0.21	27.8
ELA 4	108	13.9	108	22.2	***-8.3****	0.22	32.3
ELA 5	100	23.0	100	25.0	-2.0^{ns}	0.05	28.8
ELA 6	84	22.6	84	33.3	***-10.7****	0.24	30.3
ELA 7	83	20.5	83	24.1	-3.6^{ns}	0.09	37.2
ELA 8	82	19.5	82	26.8	-7.3 ^{ns}	0.17	31.7
ELA 10	143	21.7	142	13.3	**8.3****	0.22	28.4

***Note*.** Significance levels: ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < 0.1; and ns – not statistically significant. Sufficient data were not available for Grade 11.

Table 9 presents the difference in the percentage of homeless students who met or exceeded expectations on the Mathematics PARCC assessment compared with non-homeless students in the SY18 analytical sample. While a higher percentage of comparison group students met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC math assessment in grades five, six, and seven; a higher percentage of homeless students did so in grade eight. These differences are statistically significant and substantively important. However, there was no significant difference in performance for homeless students compared to the non-homeless students in grade four and those students who participated in the PARCC Algebra I test. When compared with the percentage that met or exceeded expectations district-wide, we find that both the homeless students and the comparison group fall well below the district average (with the exception of the Grade 8 Homeless group, and grade 6 and grade 7 comparison group).

Table 9: Percent Proficient on PARCC Mathematics Assessment: Homeless Students, Non-Homeless Students, and All Student, SY18

Grade	HOMELESS N	HOMELESS % Proficient	NON-HOMELESS Comparison N	NON-HOMELESS Comparison % Proficient	HL – Non-HL Percentage-Point difference	Effect Size	*% Proficient PGCPS-wide*
Math 3	126	11.9	126	18.3	***-6.3****	0.18	24.1
Math 4	119	10.9	119	11.8	-0.8^{ns}	0.03	18.3
Math 5	103	5.8	103	15.5	**-9.7****	0.32	19.0
Math 6	111	8.1	111	18.0	**-9.9****	0.29	15.8
Math 7	103	5.8	103	15.5	**-9.8****	0.32	15.4
Math 8	95	9.5	105	1.9	**7.6****	0.33	7.4
Algebra I	255	3.1	244	4.1	-0.96^{ns}	0.05	13.0

***Note*.** Significance levels: ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < 0.1; and ns – not statistically significant.

Table 10 presents the percentage point differences in Mathematics between homeless students and the comparison non-homeless students in SY19. There were no significant differences between the two groups in grades five and six but there was statistically significant (P<.01) and substantively important (ES>.25) difference in grades three and four. The differences in mathematics scores were barely statistically significant (P<0.1) but substantively important for grades seven and eight. Homeless students also performed statistically and substantively lower than their non-homeless counterparts in Algebra I. Similar to the results above, homeless and non-homeless students with similar socio-demographic profiles performed far below the average PGCPS student, with the exception of Grade 8 comparison group.

There were three significant differences on the impact of homelessness on students' achievement in Mathematics between SY18 and SY19. First, a higher percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grade eight for SY18, and a lower percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grade eight for SY19. Second, whereas a lower percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grades five and seven for SY18, there was no significant difference in proficiency in mathematics for homeless students compared to the non-homeless students in grade five for SY19. Finally, whereas there was no substantive difference in SY18, a lower percentage of homeless students met or exceeded expectations compared to the non-homeless students in grades three and four in SY19.

Table 10: Percent Proficient on PARCC Mathematics Assessment: Homeless Students, Non-Homeless Students, and All Student, SY19

Grade	HOMELESS N	HOMELESS % Proficient	NON-HOMELESS Comparison N	NON-HOMELESS Comparison % Proficient	HL – Non-HL Percentage-Point difference	Effect Size	*% Proficient PGCPS-wide*
Math 3	84	8.3	84	26.2	**-17.8*** **	0.48	26
Math 4	107	3.7	107	15.0	**-11.2*** **	0.39	20.9
Math 5	102	9.8	102	13.7	-3.9^{ns}	0.12	17.9
Math 6	85	8.2	85	7.1	1.2^{ns}	0.04	14.2
Math 7	83	6.0	82	13.4	***-7.4****	0.25	13.7
Math 8	77	2.6	69	10.1	***-7.6****	0.31	7.1
Algebra I	138	4.3	146	10.2	***-5.9****	0.23	10.9

***Note*.** Significance levels: ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < 0.1; and ns – not statistically significant.

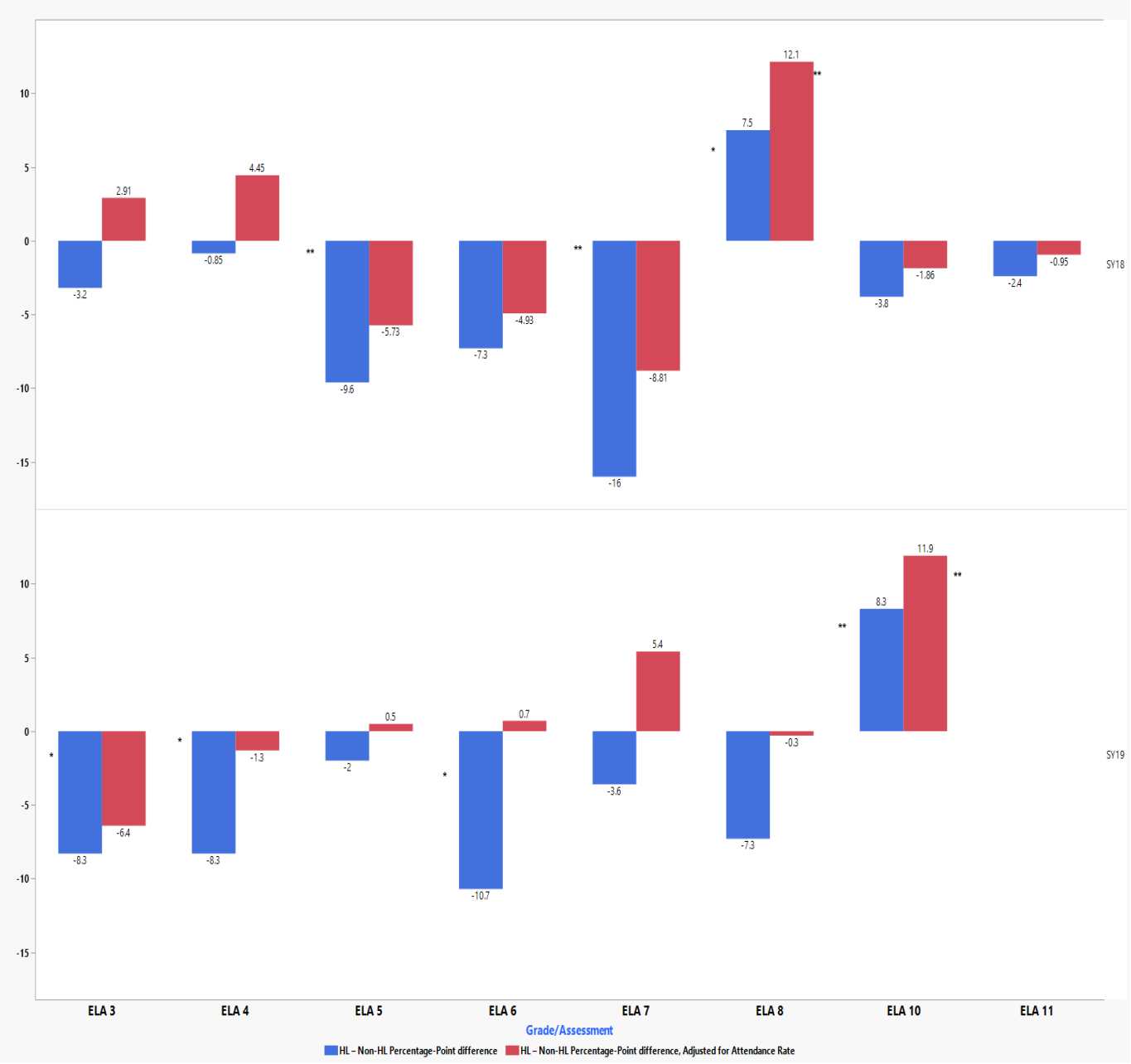
D. Homelessness, Absenteeism and Academic Performance, SY18-SY19

The results from the analysis of the impact of homelessness on academic achievement reported above demonstrate that homeless students experienced significant deficit in academic performances in several grades. The analysis of differences in attendance rates also showed that homeless students were absent for significant amount of school days compared to non-homeless students with similar demographic characteristics. In the fourth research question, therefore, we considered whether the low attendance rate for homeless students impacted their academic performance.

> *Research Question 4. How did attendance rate among students who experienced homelessness during SY18-SY19 account for the observed academic differences compared with similar non-homeless students?*

Figures 4 and 5 display the percent-point differences between homeless students and non-homeless students reported in the previous section (blue), and the percentage-point differences between homeless students and non-homeless students once the differences in attendance rates are accounted for (red). In other words, the red bars represent what the results would have been if both the homeless and the non-homeless students had the same rate of attendance. After controlling for attendance rate in our analysis, we observed changes in the size and significance of the impact of homelessness on students' achievement on ELA in SY18 and SY19 (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Percentage-Point Difference in Proficiency on PARCC ELA Assessment: Homeless Students Vs. Non-Homeless Students, SY18-SY19

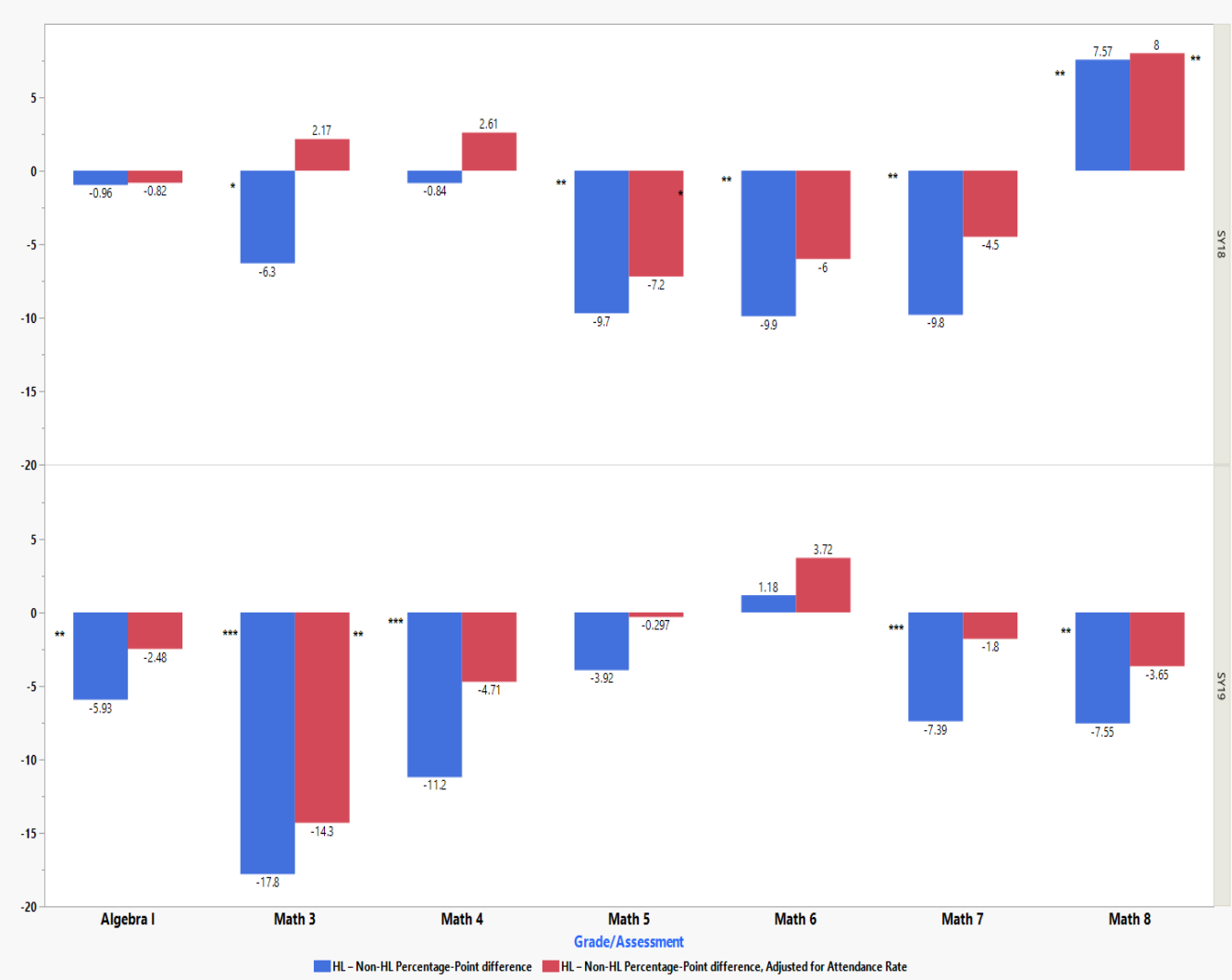


***Note*.** Significance levels: **p < .05; *p < 0.1

First, all the statistically significant percentage-point differences between homeless and non-homeless comparison group become insignificant, except for the differences in ELA 8 in SY18 and ELA 10 in SY19 (Note that the ELA 8 and ELA 10 percentage-point differences were over-performance by homeless students). Second, the insignificant results are either reduced in size when the homeless groups underperform (grades 5 and 7 for SY18; grade 8 for SY19) or the deficit for homeless students becomes a gain after controlling for attendance rate (grades 3 and 4 for SY18; grades 5, 6 and 7 for SY19).

Similarly, the analysis that controls for attendance rate shows the same pattern of change in the size and significance of the impact of homeless on students' achievement on Mathematics in SY18 and SY19 (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percentage-Point Difference in Proficiency on PARCC Mathematics Assessment: Homeless Students Vs. Non-Homeless Students, SY18-SY19



***Note*.** Significance levels: ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < 0.1.

As in the ELA results, all the statistically significant percentage-point differences between homeless and non-homeless comparison group become insignificant, except for the differences in Math 8 in SY18 (which was already an over-performance by homeless students) and Math 3 in SY19. Second, the insignificant results are either reduced in size when the homeless students underperform on the PRCC math assessment (as in grades five to seven for SY18; grades 4, 5, 7, 8, and Algebra I for SY19) or when homeless students have a gain after controlling for attendance rate (grades 3 and 4 for SY18; grades 6 for SY19).

In both the analyses for ELA and Mathematics, there is clear pattern that emerges: the under-performance of homeless students compared to demographically identical students is largely due to the lower attendance rate, or significantly higher absenteeism rate.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this evaluation was to document the extent to which PGCPS is complying with federal laws and district procedures in providing the district's homeless student population with the services they need to continue to progress in school during the SY18-SY20 period. In addition, we examined the differences in academic performance and attendance between homeless students and similar students who had not experienced homelessness. A summary of the key findings presented in the previous sections along with conclusions are presented here.

A. Compliance with Requirements for HEP Services

The three main services, for students experiencing homelessness, that PGCPS is required to provide are immediate enrollment in school, free meals, and transportation services from wherever they reside to their school. The evidence gathered in this report show that the district has shown great success in enrolling students immediately and providing them with free meals. Conversely, the data analyzed indicate that the provision of transportation does not fully meet PGCPS requirements. The findings indicate that the district is moderately compliant with the requirement established by PGCPS in the subsequent requests, but the compliance range remains inadequately low for initial request for transportation.

B. Absenteeism Problem among Homeless Students

During the SY18-SY20 period, Homeless students were absent between one to two weeks more than similar non-homeless students and are absent over 1.7 times as much as the average PGCPS student. The absenteeism problem for homeless students has gotten worse each year between SY18 and SY20.

C. Impact of Homelessness on Academic Achievement and role of Absenteeism

The analysis of academic performance data showed that in several grades, mostly middle school grades, homeless students overall had lower performance compared to students with similar observable socio-demographic traits. The under-performance of homeless students compared to demographically identical students is largely due to the lower attendance rate, or significantly higher absenteeism rate.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Service Provision**: While the district was successful in providing services for the majority of students experiencing homelessness during the SY18-20 period, there were difficulties with meeting district-mandated guidelines for transportation. Across the three years, only an average of 34 percent of students received needed transportation services within three days, which represents a stark decline from the 99 percent success rate documented in the SY2012 Homeless Education Report (Taylor & Adams, 2013) and the 64 percent of compliance rate for SY15-SY17 reported in the SY2017 Homeless Education Report (Swinton, 2017). This decline could be due to the district-wide problem in the provision of reliable transportation service that resulted in the establishment of a task in 2020. However, the decline in the timely provision of transportation service of students who become homeless is more concerning as the number of students who report becoming homeless has declined in the last three school years. We therefore recommend that the MVP office and Transportation work together to determine the cause and develop an action plan to ensure timely delivery of transportation services following homelessness.

- **Academic Achievement and Attendance**: The analysis showed that the academic performance of homeless students was generally statistically different from the performance of a matched group of similar students and any observed under-performance of homeless students is largely due significantly higher absenteeism rate. We recommend that the district continue to create and enhance academic supports as well as address transportation issues to combat absenteeism.

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