

McKinney Homeless Children Education Program: 2005-06

EA06-191-4

At a Glance

The McKinney Homeless Children Education Program was designed to create and provide enrichment and support services to homeless children and their families. It also advocates on behalf of homeless families by educating staff and community about their responsibilities to the homeless, and about the rights and issues of homeless children, youth, and their parents.

The program manager and counselor coordinate the program. Student interns and teacher/intern supervisors also help the children of homeless families. The interns are Dallas Independent School District students who were hired through the cooperative education programs at Skyline High School and Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center to work with children who live in homeless shelters and attend district schools. A student intern's teacher/intern supervisor and the program manager must approve an application before a student is hired.

Student interns tutor homeless children and help with other school-related issues. They also serve as role models and sources of information for homeless children. Regular district teachers and intern supervisors teach in the homeless education program. Case managers employed by homeless shelters assist homeless families with such concerns as purchasing medicines, receiving dental care, and obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Evaluation Methodology

The 2005-06 evaluation's focus was to survey student interns, teachers/intern supervisors, and other case managers about the program, examine the program's strengths and weaknesses, and recommend improvements. The evaluator analyzed and reported the survey data.

FINDINGS

Budget and Expenditures

The program's budget for the 2005-2006 school year was \$270,000. Staff salaries, program training, and instructional materials accounted for the largest expenditure categories. The budget allocated \$3,000 for the program's evaluation.

Program Outcomes

- A total of 53 respondents (22 student interns, 14 teachers/intern supervisors, and 17 case managers) completed the surveys for the 2005-06 school year.
- The majority (57%) of the respondents were African American, followed by white (20%), and Hispanic (18%). Four respondents did not answer the question about their ethnicity.
- The interns said they were assigned duties directly related to the homeless students' needs.
- They said that besides getting along well with the homeless students, they also helped them deal with life's problems.
- The interns said they were emotionally mature enough to help with the homeless students' problems.
- Interns found their work with the homeless personally rewarding.
- Interns said they exhibited empathy for the homeless students with whom they worked.

- The teacher/intern supervisors said their interns were adequately trained for the duties the school staff asked them to perform.
- Most teacher/intern supervisors said the interns made their work more personally rewarding.
- Overall, the teacher/intern supervisors said that the interns performed their duties satisfactorily.
- The majority of teachers/intern supervisors and student interns said the teachers and administrators at their schools supported them in their work with the homeless.
- Most of the teacher/intern supervisors and student interns felt that their work positively impacted homeless students they served.
- The majority (64%) of the case managers considered the program-related meetings productive.
- The case managers said they had enough time to meet individually with the Homeless Education Program manager before or after the program meetings.
- The majority (86%) of the case managers found the program, the schools, and the DISD administration responsive to the needs of the children and families they served.
- The interns recommended more activities for homeless students, additional personnel to help the students and their families, and improved communication between interns and supervisors.
- One of the interns commented that her work with homeless students made her more thankful to have a strong family and a good home.
- The case managers suggested that the program provide transportation, after-school activities, and additional counselors for homeless students and their families.
- The case managers said the services that would be most useful to the families they served included counseling, transportation, parental workshops, summer camps, and communication with other district schools.
- Teachers/intern supervisors recommended more crafts, arts, and science subjects (e.g., Chemistry and Physics) for homeless students.