

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE MCKINNEY HOMELESS CHILDREN EDUCATION PROGRAM: 2007-08

At-a-Glance

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B-Education for Homeless Children and Youth), ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. It defines the term “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homelessness is a result of extreme poverty, or in the case of “unaccompanied youth” (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian), the lack of a safe and stable living environment.

In accordance with this Act, the Dallas Independent School District’s (Dallas ISD) Homeless Education Program set goals “to create and provide enriching and supportive programming for homeless children and their families, to advocate on the behalf of homeless children by educating staff and the community of their responsibilities, and about the rights and issues of homeless children, youth and their parents”.

After School Program

Supportive programming services for student education encompassed academic tutoring, homework assistance, counseling, and enrichment activities, in after school programs at four participating elementary schools and seven shelters. The schools were City Park, Maple Lawn, J. J. Rhoads, and Arlington Park. The shelters were Annie’s House, Center of Hope, Dallas Life Foundation, Exodus Ministries, Family Place, Interfaith Housing, and Mosaic. Ten teachers, seven teacher assistants and 22 interns coordinated the after school program among the schools and shelters. The interns were high school and college students, who worked part-time (3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday). They assisted the teachers at the schools and provided homework and enrichment activities at the shelters, with the supervision of a shelter designee.

Enrichment Camps

A variety of activities were provided to homeless children through summer, winter, and spring break enrichment camps. Activities included acting, storytelling, dance, music, and performance and songwriting workshops. These activities helped the children develop self-esteem, character, language skills and good citizenship values. Interns were used to assist with camp activities.

Other Services

Other services included: a continuum of care for homeless students that facilitated a smoother transition in the enrollment process in all Dallas ISD schools; communication and coordination of services between the shelters and community agencies; parent education through GED and adult literacy classes; staff development training for principals, counselors, visiting teachers, and registrars; and transportation to the shelters each afternoon to facilitate safety and school attendance for homeless students. The No Child Left Behind Act allows students to remain enrolled at their school of origin. The Homeless Education Program provided Dart passes to those homeless students who chose to stay enrolled at their school of origin.

Student Demographics

A total of 3,814 homeless Dallas ISD students in grades Pk-12 were classified as living in a Temporary Living Arrangement in the 2007-08 school year. Of these, 1,041 students were served by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. Hispanics (49%) and African Americans (43%) comprised 92% of the served population. Fifty-one percent (51%) were male and forty-nine percent (49%) were female. Figure 1 reports the number of students by grade level. With the exception on grade nine, the lower grades had the highest number of students served.

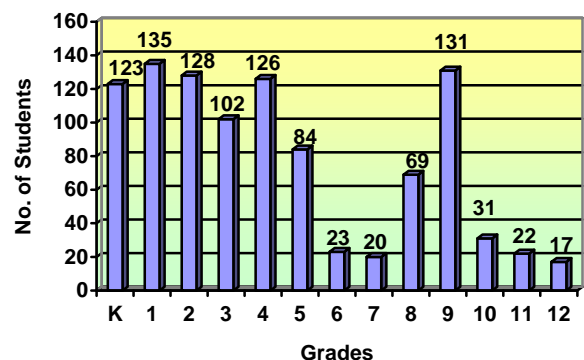


Figure 1. Number of McKinney-Vento students by grade level.

Budget and Expenditures

The program’s budget for the 2007-2008 school year was \$250,000 from Title I funds and \$216,000 from

McKinney-Vento funds. Staff salaries (including interns) and contracts for professional and enrichment services accounted for the largest expenditure categories. Title I funds were used for staff (not including interns) salaries and program expenses (Table 1).

**Table 1
Description of Budget Expenditures
for McKinney–Vento Homeless Budget**

Description	Budgeted Expenditures
Payroll	157,411.00
Professional & Contracted Services	43,600.00
Supplies and Materials	5,000.00
Other Operating Costs	7,364.00
Total Direct Costs	213,375.00
Indirect Costs	2,625.00
Total Costs	216,000.00

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Students in grades 3-12 were administered the *Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)* test districtwide. Of the 1,041 served McKinney-Vento students, 38% took the Reading and 39% took the Mathematics TAKS tests. Of these students, 81% met standard on the TAKS Reading and 61% met standard on the TAKS Math tests. Grade 8 had the greatest number of students (93%) who met standard on the reading test, followed by grades five (88%) and three (87%). Grade 12 (67%) had the fewest number of students who met standard for reading. Students who took the Math TAKS test did not perform as well. Eighty-two percent (82%) grade five students met standard on the math test followed by grades six (75%) and eight (70%). Only 36% of grade nine students met the standard on the math test (Table 2).

**Table 2
Number and Percent of McKinney-Vento Students
Who Met Standard on Reading and Math TAKS
2007-08**

Grade	Reading		Math	
	Number Tested	% Met Standard	Number Tested	% Met Standard
3	61	87	63	63
4	61	67	62	65
5	57	88	60	82
6	15	80	16	75
7	14	71	13	62
8	56	93	64	70
9	90	77	83	36
10	21	81	22	50

11	19	79	19	68
12	6	67	7	43
Total	400	81	409	61

Students in grades one and two were administered the Reading and Math *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)*. Of the students tested with the *ITBS*, fewer students performed at or above grade level in either reading or math. Data showed that of the students who tested, 33% of grade one and 25% of grade two students scored above the 40th percentile in reading. Thirty-two percent (32%) of grade one students and 29% of grade two students scored above the 40th percentile in math.

Recommendations

It is apparent that The Homeless Education Program is providing valuable services to homeless students in the Dallas ISD. Students are learning from the experiences provided by numerous activities that they participate in, which would otherwise be unavailable during a time of great need. The following recommendations are offered for program improvement:

- Continue to provide winter, spring, and summer enrichment camps to homeless students.
- Continue to provide after school tutoring and enrichment services to homeless students with more emphasis on math.