McKinney-Vento Homeless Children Education Program: 2009-2010

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At-a-Glance

The Homeless Education Program is a federal and state funded program designed to provide enrichment and support services to homeless children and their families. It also promotes understanding and acts as an advocate on behalf of homeless families by educating staff and the community about their responsibilities to the homeless, and about the rights and issues of homeless children, youth, and their parents. The ultimate purpose of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program is to facilitate the enrollment, attendance and success in school of homeless children and youths.

During the program period including the current academic year, 2009-2010 and through the 2011 fiscal year the Homeless Education Program is expected to receive $596,144 from McKinney-Vento ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) funds. The amount of Title I, Part A funds set aside for students in homeless situations was $162,000.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Children Education Program Context and Goals

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. Section 725 (2) of the McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. This includes children and youth living in shared housing with other persons; living in cars, hotels, motels, bus or train stations, trailer parks, abandoned buildings or camping grounds; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals or waiting for foster care placement.

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and No Child Left Behind, Title X, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) responded with the Homeless Education Program to provide direct services to homeless children and youth such as tutoring, homework help, mentoring, referrals, school supplies, food, backpacks, and school uniforms. The Homeless Education Program has also served the children, families, and youth indirectly by providing training to Dallas ISD personnel and shelter personnel. The Homeless Education Program outlined the following goals:

- Increase the number of homeless students directly served by the Homeless Education Program,
- Increase directly served homeless students’ academic success.

Program Participants

A total of 3,943 homeless students were enrolled in Dallas ISD schools. Of these, 1,449 students in grades prekindergarten through 12th were served through the Homeless Education Program. Students served directly by the Homeless Education Program are referred to as McKinney-Vento students throughout this evaluation report, homeless students enrolled in Dallas ISD but not being served directly by the Homeless Education Program are referred to as Temporary Arrangement students as a comparison. Thirty-six percent of all McKinney-Vento students were African American, 56 percent were Hispanic, and seven percent were white. Twenty-five percent of the McKinney-Vento students were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and seven percent were special education students, compared to Temporary Arrangement students, where 32 percent were LEP classified.

Felix Botello Elementary served the largest number of McKinney-Vento students (108), followed by Frank Guzick Elementary (105), Caesar Chavez Elementary (97), and Edna Rowe Elementary (95). The number of students enrolled at a particular school varied throughout the year. The number of campuses serving 20 or more McKinney-Vento students increased to 14 this year, up from 11 during the 2008-2009 school year.

Program Activities

The Homeless Education Program staff (program manager and a counselor) worked in conjunction with the Psychological and Social Services Department, coordinating efforts with psychologists, teachers, and social workers to provide services to homeless students.

The program also collaborated with various local agencies including: Big Thought, Dallas Parks and Recreation, University of Texas at Dallas, West Lake YMCA, Rainbow Days and Camp Hoblitzelle in
Midlothian to provide enrichment and summer camps throughout the year.

Program Outcomes

Attendance

Figure 1 shows the attendance rates for both the total number of McKinney-Vento and Temporary Arrangement students by number of days enrolled. Due to the transient nature of the population, some students were enrolled for a short time, while others attended school for the whole year under the program. For students enrolled less than 70 days, (0-35 days and 36-70 days) McKinney-Vento students had higher rates of attendance than Temporary Arrangement students. However, Temporary Arrangement students that were enrolled most of the year (106-140 and 141-175 days) had higher rates of attendance than McKinney-Vento students. Overall, approximately 79 percent of McKinney-Vento students were enrolled at least 106 days; this is an increase from last year (74%). Approximately 83 percent of Temporary Arrangement students were enrolled at least 106 days; this is also an increase from last year (81%). Both groups of students had increases in overall enrollment and attendance from the 2008-2009 school year.

Mathematics increased to 69.3 percent this year, up from 62.9 percent during the 2008-2009 school year.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

Overall, McKinney-Vento served students performed at higher levels on both portions of the TAKS Reading and Mathematics test as well as at the Commended level than Temporary Arrangement students. Table 1 shows the percent of McKinney-Vento and Temporary Arrangement students that Met Standard and performed at the Commended level on the TAKS Reading and Mathematics tests. The number of McKinney-Vento students that Met Standard in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Student Group</th>
<th>Reading Met Standard</th>
<th>Mathematics Met Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
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<tr>
<td>McKinney-Vento Served</td>
<td>572 77.3</td>
<td>577 69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Arrangement</td>
<td>1208 66.9</td>
<td>1209 59.4</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKinney-Vento Served</td>
<td>374 19.5</td>
<td>377 14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Arrangement</td>
<td>889 15.6</td>
<td>888 11.9</td>
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</tbody>
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(N) = students tested.

Note: 1) Met Standard percentage (%) includes results for students tested at the campus during the March/April/May administration of the TAKS test. 2) Commended percentage includes results for students tested at the campus during the March/April administration of the TAKS test.

Summary and Recommendations

The major goal for the 2009-2010 year was program improvement, emphasizing the number of homeless students that were directly served by the Homeless Education Program and increasing student achievement among program participants. During the 2009-2010 school year the number of homeless students served directly by the Homeless Education Program (McKinney-Vento served) was 1,449 or 36.7 percent of all Dallas ISD homeless students (3,943). This is an increase from 30 percent of homeless students directly served during the 2008-2009 school year. The number of campuses serving 20 or more McKinney-Vento students increased to 14 this year, up from 11 during the 2008-2009 school year. Strong gains were also shown in the number of McKinney-Vento students that Met Standard in TAKS Mathematics which increased to 69.3 percent this year, up from 62.9 percent during the 2008-2009 school year.

Program improvement should continue to be a major focus of the program; results show increases in the number of homeless students that were directly served through the Homeless Education Program in Dallas ISD, and also show marked improvement in mathematics scores for program students. It is recommended that the Homeless Education Program continue to advance their outreach activities, staff development sessions throughout the district, academic student tutoring and enrichment camps.
For more information, see EA10-191-3, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/.