

---

# Glossary of Terms

## Awaiting Foster Care

Students who are living in a non-permanent, transitional, or emergency out-of-home foster care placement.<sup>1</sup>

## Charter Schools (District 84)

Charter schools are public schools that operate under their own not-for-profit Boards of Trustees. The schools have a contract or charter of up to five years.<sup>2</sup> Charter schools operate within the non-geographic District 84, so the physical location of the schools can be anywhere across the city. This *Atlas of Student Homelessness* only provides data on where homeless students attend charter schools. Data on educational outcomes of homeless students in these schools are not publicly available.

## Chronically Absent

Missing 20 or more days in the school year. Absences do not include days missed due to suspension or school-wide releases.

## Dropout Rate (Four-Year)

The percentage of students who entered ninth grade in SY 2012–13 and left high school without graduating within four years.

## Educational Outcomes

Events that take place during a student's time in school (such as graduation, dropping out, repeating a grade, chronic absenteeism, and standardized test scores) that are recognized indicators of educational challenges and successes.

## Elementary School

Kindergarten through 5th grade.

## English Language Arts (ELA) Test

Every year, the New York State Education Department administers a standardized test to students in 3rd through 8th grade to assess the proficiency of students across New York State in reading, writing, and comprehension.

## English Language Learner (ELL)

A student who primarily speaks a language other than English at home and scores below proficient on English assessments upon entering the New York City Public School system. Students determined to be English Language Learners receive targeted instruction in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, and English Language Arts.

## Family Homeless Shelter

Family shelters are divided into three categories (Tier II shelter, hotel, and cluster site). Most family homeless shelters receive payments from the City but are privately owned and operated. Shelter operators provide private rooms for homeless families, along with cafeteria meals, kitchen facilities, or restaurant vouchers. The level and availability of social services, including childcare and case management, at each shelter location varies greatly. In general, Tier IIs are operated by nonprofits and under contract, hotels are not operated by nonprofits and are not under contract, and cluster sites are a mix.

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Julianelle, *The McKinney-Vento Act and Children and Youth Awaiting Foster Care Placement: Strategies for Improving Educational Outcomes Through School Stability*, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Department of Education, "What Are Charter Schools," [schools.nyc.gov](http://schools.nyc.gov), accessed July 10, 2017.

## Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records for schools that receive applicable program funds from the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>3</sup>

## Free Lunch

Students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch if their family income is 185% of the Federal Poverty Level or less.<sup>4</sup>

## Formerly Homeless

A student who was housed during SY 2015–16 but homeless at any point during the previous school years since SY 2010–11.

## Grade-Level Proficiency

On 3rd–8th grade State English Language Arts and math assessments, scores are recorded on a 4-point scale. A score of 3 indicates that the student has achieved grade-level proficiency in the subject, while 4 indicates above-grade-level proficiency. Scores of 1 and 2 indicate a student performed well below or partially below proficiency.<sup>5</sup> Although performance on assessment tests is not the only factor determining student retention, failure to pass can result in a student being retained.

## Graduation Rate (Four-Year)

The percentage of students who entered ninth grade in SY 2012–13 and graduated within four years with a Local, Regents, or Advanced Regents diploma.

## High School

9th through 12th grade.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, “Laws & Guidance: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA),” [www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov), accessed July 10, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, “School Breakfast and Lunch Programs,” [otda.ny.gov](http://otda.ny.gov), accessed July 10, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> New York State Education Department, “2016 Parent Score Reports,” [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov), accessed July 10, 2017.

## Homeless/All Homeless

Students who were identified as homeless at any time during school year 2015–16, regardless of the type of homeless setting. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act defines a student as homeless who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.<sup>6</sup> Homeless students in this *Atlas* are divided into the following subcategories:

**Doubled up:** The McKinney-Vento definition of “doubled up” refers to children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

**In Shelter:** Students living in a City-funded or City-operated emergency shelter, including Tier IIs, hotels, and cluster sites. When housing status is looked at over multiple years in this *Atlas of Student Homelessness*, students in shelter include those who lived in shelter during any year.

**In Temporary Arrangement:** A grouped category that includes students who were identified as homeless at some point but did not live in a shelter.

**Unsheltered:** Students living in a space not meant for human habitation, such as in a car, on the street, or in an abandoned building.

**Other:** Students living in a hotel/motel outside of the City shelter system that involves payment and those awaiting foster care placement.

**Other Homeless:** A category that combines students who were unsheltered, living in a hotel/motel outside of the City shelter system that involves payment, and those awaiting foster care placement.

<sup>6</sup> New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students, “Frequently Asked Questions: Definitions/Eligibility,” accessed July 10, 2017.

---

## Housed/All Housed

All students not identified as homeless during SY 2015–16, including both housed students eligible for free lunch and housed students not eligible for free lunch.

## Housed, Low Income

Students not identified as homeless whose family income meets the threshold for receiving free or reduced-price lunch. This is a proxy for students who are poor but not homeless. When housing and poverty status are looked at over multiple years in this *Atlas*, low-income housed students include those who were always housed and had received free or reduced-price lunch during any year.

## Housed, Not Low Income

Students not identified as homeless who do not receive free or reduced-price lunch. This is a proxy for students who are neither homeless nor poor. When housing and poverty status are looked at over multiple years in this *Atlas*, housed students who were not low income include those who were always housed and had never received free or reduced-price lunch.

## Individual Education Plan/Program (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan is created when a student is deemed eligible for special education services through the Department of Education. This plan details the programs and services that the student will need in order to be successful in school.

Received IEP Late: Includes all special education students who received an IEP after Kindergarten. For the purposes of this report, late IEP calculations are limited to a cohort of students who entered Kindergarten and received an IEP at some point during the next four years.

## Math Test

Every year, the New York State Education Department administers standardized tests to students in 3rd through 8th grade in the subjects of math and English Language Arts (ELA).

## McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

A federal law that guarantees equal access to public education for homeless children and youth. As a part of the law, schools are required to identify and immediately register homeless children for school even if they do not have required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence.<sup>7</sup>

## Middle School

6th through 8th grade.

## Mid-Year Transfer

Students who transfer from one school to another at any point during a school year.

## New York State Technical & Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS TEACHS)

The New York State Technical Assistance Center for Homeless Students is an organization funded by the New York State Education Department. It collects data and provides services to schools and other educational agencies pertaining to homeless students and their legal rights.

## Non-Geographic School Districts

While most school districts are defined by geographic boundaries in New York City, a small number of districts are defined by an area of specialization. These districts include District 75 (special education), District 79 (alternative schools and programs), and District 84 (charter schools). The physical location of the schools administered under these districts can be

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education “Laws & Guidance: Part C – Homeless Education,” [www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov), accessed July 20, 2015.

anywhere across the city. Some categories in this *Atlas* are not shown for non-geographic districts due to the special nature of the districts. This *Atlas* only provides data on where homeless students attend charter schools, because data on educational outcomes of homeless students in these schools are not publicly available.

## Poverty (Federal Poverty Level)

The Federal Poverty Level was first calculated to represent the minimum income an average family needed to afford food and other basic expenses. The 2016 Federal Poverty Level was \$20,160 for a family of three and \$24,300 for a family of four.<sup>8</sup>

## Pre-K

All children who turn four before January 1 of a given school year are eligible to apply for New York City's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program. Programs are operated by both the New York City Department of Education and community-based organizations.<sup>9</sup>

## Retention/Held Back

When a student repeats a grade one or more times. The decision to retain a student considers multiple factors and varies across grade levels but can include standardized state testing results, portfolios of students' work throughout the school year, and satisfactory completion of the required number of class credits.<sup>10</sup>

## School District 75

District 75 provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavioral support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, have significant cognitive delays, are severely emotionally challenged, sensory impaired, and/or multiply disabled. District 75's schools and programs are located at sites in the Bronx,

Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and one site in Syosset (Nassau County, New York).<sup>11</sup> Some categories in this *Atlas of Student Homelessness* are not shown for District 75 due to lack of reporting.

## School District 79

District 79 helps students under 21 years old who have experienced an interruption to their studies.<sup>12</sup> Some categories in this *Atlas of Student Homelessness* are not shown for District 79, because the data are not relevant to the age of the students.

## Students in Temporary Housing Unit

A division within the New York City Department of Education responsible for maintaining records on all students' housing statuses and providing shelter and school-based liaisons to assist homeless families with basic educational needs.

## Suspension Rate

The percentage of students who received one or more suspensions during the school year. In this report, students were counted at their final school of enrollment for SY 2015–16.<sup>13</sup> (Note: when students are suspended, they are provided with an alternate school assignment and are not considered absent from school unless they do not show up for their alternate assignment.)

8 Department of Health and Human Services, *Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines*, January 2016.

9 New York City Department of Education, "All About Pre-K for All," schools.nyc.gov, accessed July 10, 2017.

10 New York City Department of Education, *2013–2014 Promotion Guide*.

11 New York City Department of Education, "District 75," schools.nyc.gov, accessed July 10, 2017.

12 New York City Department of Education, "District 79," schools.nyc.gov, accessed July 10, 2017.

13 New York City Department of Education, "Citywide Behavioral Expectations To Support Student Learning: Grades K-5, Effective April 2017," accessed July 10, 2017.