

# State and Local Implementation Studies of the American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth Program

## National Outcomes Summary

This study examined data from local educational agencies (LEAs)<sup>1</sup> receiving American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funding<sup>2</sup> to assess the impact of the ARP-HCY program. The goals were to assess the number of ARP-HCY LEA subgrantees that made improvements in student identification, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates, and academic achievement for students experiencing homelessness. The analysis examined year-to-year changes in the student outcomes among ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs, while also comparing trends in the current metrics to pre-pandemic and peak pandemic levels. Of the 11,845 LEAs identified from the ARP-HCY subgrantee list, the final sample comprised 11,760 LEAs.

### Key Findings

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- *Identification rates among ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs rebounded from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, showing a **25% increase** from school year (SY) 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. This is encouraging as one of the stated purposes of the ARP-HCY program was to improve the identification of students experiencing homelessness so that the LEAs could provide supports and wraparound services.*
- *Chronic absenteeism<sup>3</sup> among ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs experienced a 5-percentage point decrease from SY 2021-22 to SY 2022-23 (in SY 2021-22, 52% of students experiencing homelessness in subgrantee LEAs were chronically absent compared to 47% in SY 2022-23). This aligned with national year-to-year trends.*
- *4-year adjusted-cohort graduation rates improved from the peak of the pandemic (SY 2020-21) through SY 2022-23, surpassing pre-pandemic levels from SY 2018-19.*

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<sup>1</sup> The file specifications are the technical documents used by the state stakeholders to build their data files containing ED Facts data to submit via the EDPass system. This analysis utilized EdFacts LEA data files from ED for school years (SY) 2018-19, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23, focusing on file specifications 118, 150, 175, 178, 179, 195. Data from SY 2019-20 was excluded due to pandemic-related disruptions, as no academic assessments or chronic absenteeism data were collected, and other reported data showed quality inconsistencies. Instead, SY 2018-19 serves as a pre-pandemic baseline for comparison across these key metrics.

<sup>2</sup> The ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs were identified using the following source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 22-23 ARP-HCY LEA Subgrantee List by State - July 2024, Extracted August 14, 2024, from the Fiscal Information, American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief - Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY). Data may be accessed publicly on <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/formula-grants/response-formula-grants/covid-19-emergency-relief-grants/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief-mdash-homeless-children-and-youth-arp-hcy#Fiscal-Information>.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this brief, a student who misses 10% or more of the days in which they are expected to attend school are chronically absent. This is the same across all SEAs and LEAs reporting this information. See ED Facts File Specification 195 more information.

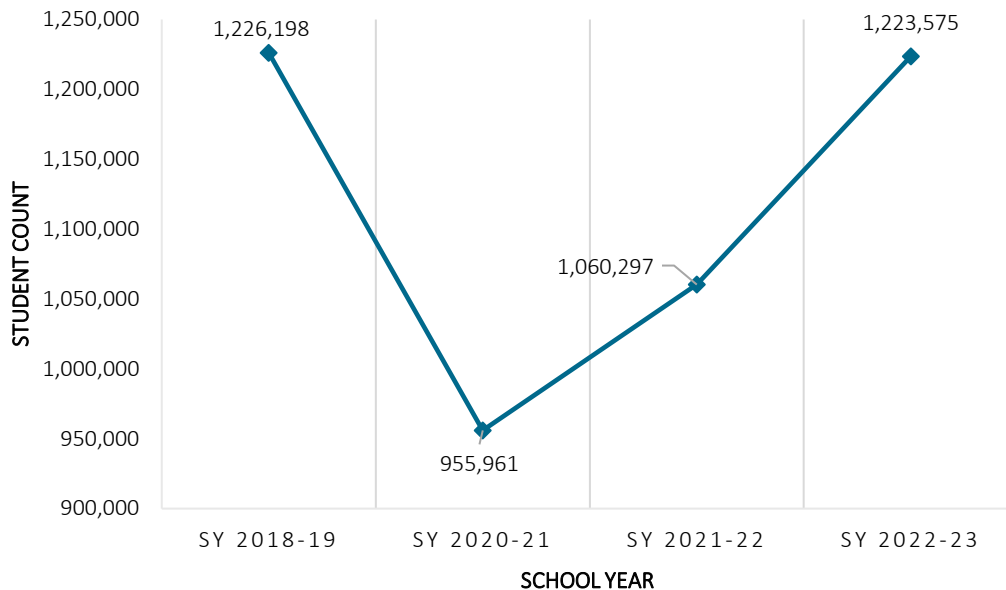
- By SY 2022-23, students at ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs achieved higher average proficiency rates in *mathematics, reading/language arts, and science* compared to pre-pandemic levels (SY 2018-19).

## Findings

### STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

Figure 1 shows trends in student identification rates from SY 2018-19 (pre-pandemic) to SY 2022-23. These trends align with national patterns reported in ED’s report on [Student Homelessness in America, School Years 2020-21 to 2022-23](#), where the total number of students identified as experiencing homelessness in SY 2022-23 rose by 14% compared to SY 2021-22 (slightly below the 15% increase reported by ARP-HCY LEA subgrantees).<sup>4</sup> Over the three-year period from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23, the national increase was 25%, while ARP-HCY subgrantees saw a slightly higher rise of 28%.

**Figure 1. Total Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness Among ARP-HCY Subgrantee LEAs (SY 2018-19 – SY 2022-23)**



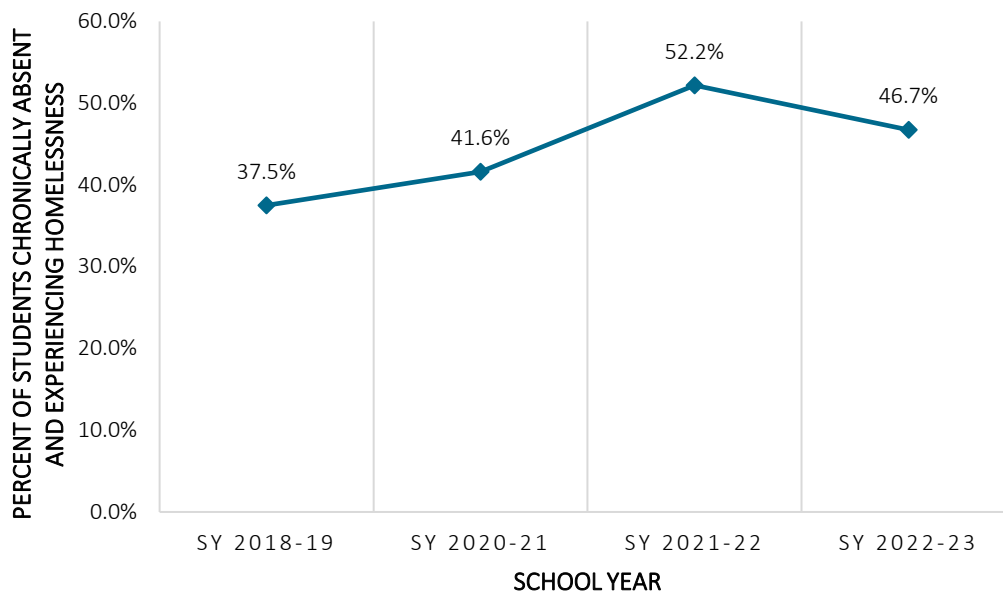
Student identification experienced a 22% decrease from SY 2018-19 to SY 2020-21, an 11% increase from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22, and a 15% increase from SY 2021-22 to SY 2022-23. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, EDData file 118: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 655. Data may be accessed publicly on <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/download>.

<sup>4</sup> The McKinney-Vento Act defines a student experiencing homelessness as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)).

## CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Figure 2 shows the rates of chronic absenteeism among students experiencing homelessness for ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs, which were comparable to national trends for students experiencing homelessness. In SY 2020-21, chronic absenteeism rose to 42% among students experiencing homelessness at ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs (397,741 students), which was the same as the national chronic absenteeism rate for students experiencing homelessness.<sup>5</sup> In SY 2021-22, there was an increase to 52% of students experiencing homelessness and chronically absent (553,297 students), compared to the national rate of 51% of students who experienced homelessness and chronic absenteeism. The increase in chronic absenteeism in SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22 correlates with the COVID-19 pandemic aftermath. However, by SY 2022-23, there was a five-percentage point decrease to 47% of students experiencing homeless who were chronically absent (571,915 students), which was slightly below the national rate of 48%.

**Figure 2. Year-to-Year Percentage Trends Among Students Experiencing Homelessness and Chronically Absent at ARP-HCY Subgrantee LEAs (SY 2018-19 – SY 2022-23)**



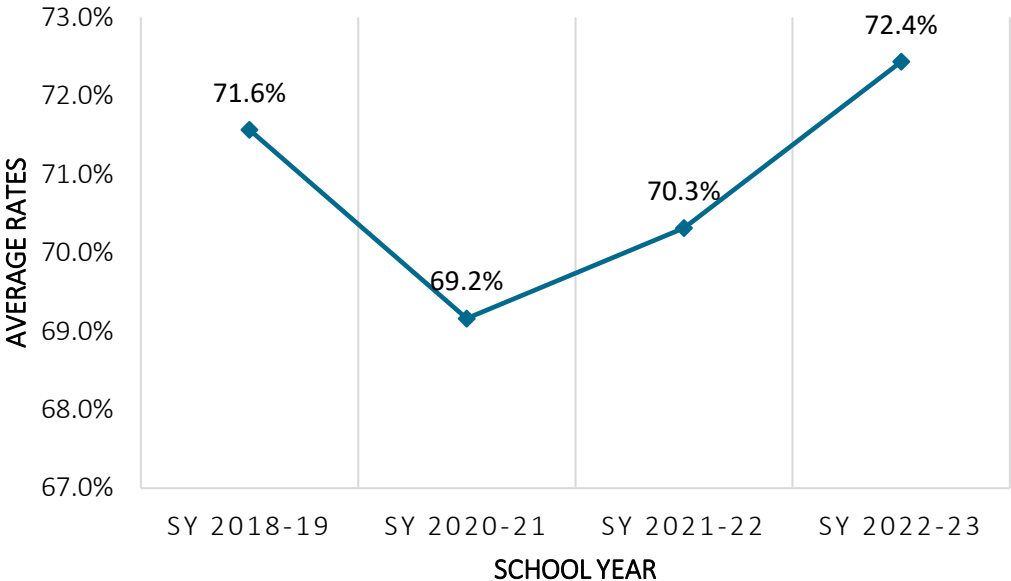
<sup>5</sup> According to NCHE's [Chronic Absenteeism Among Students Experiencing Homelessness in America, SY 2016-17 to SY 2020-21](#), the rate increased slightly every year leading up to the pandemic, going from 30% in SY 2016-17, to 34% in SY 2017-18, to 37% in SY 2018-19. Then, it decreased to 27% for SY 2019-20 when the pandemic began and many LEAs curtailed instruction, provided it only remotely, and stopped tracking or reporting attendance. It increased to 42% in SY 2020-21, during which time many LEAs offered only virtual instruction or a choice between that and in-person instruction later in the school year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, ED*Facts* file 195: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 814. Data may be accessed publicly on <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/download>.

### 4-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT GRADUATION RATE (ACGR)

Figure 3 illustrates year-to-year trends in the ACGR among students experiencing homelessness at ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs. Among those LEAs, the ACGR was 72% in SY 2018-19. In SY 2020-21, the ACGR among this group of students declined by three percentage points (to 69%). However, SY 2021-22 marked a turnaround, with an increase of one percentage point compared to the previous year (to 70%). This upward trend continued in SY 2022-23, which saw an increase of two percentage points (to 72%) from SY 2021-22. Notably, the ACGR in SY 2022-23 surpassed pre-pandemic levels from SY 2018-19. Additionally, the ACGR among ARP-HCY subgrantees outperformed national trends for all students experiencing homelessness (69%), with a difference of nearly three percentage points in SY 2022-23.

**Figure 3. ACGR Among Students Experiencing Homelessness at ARP-HCY Subgrantee LEAs (SY 2018-19 – SY 2022-23)**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, ED*Facts* file 150: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 695. Data may be accessed publicly on <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/download>.

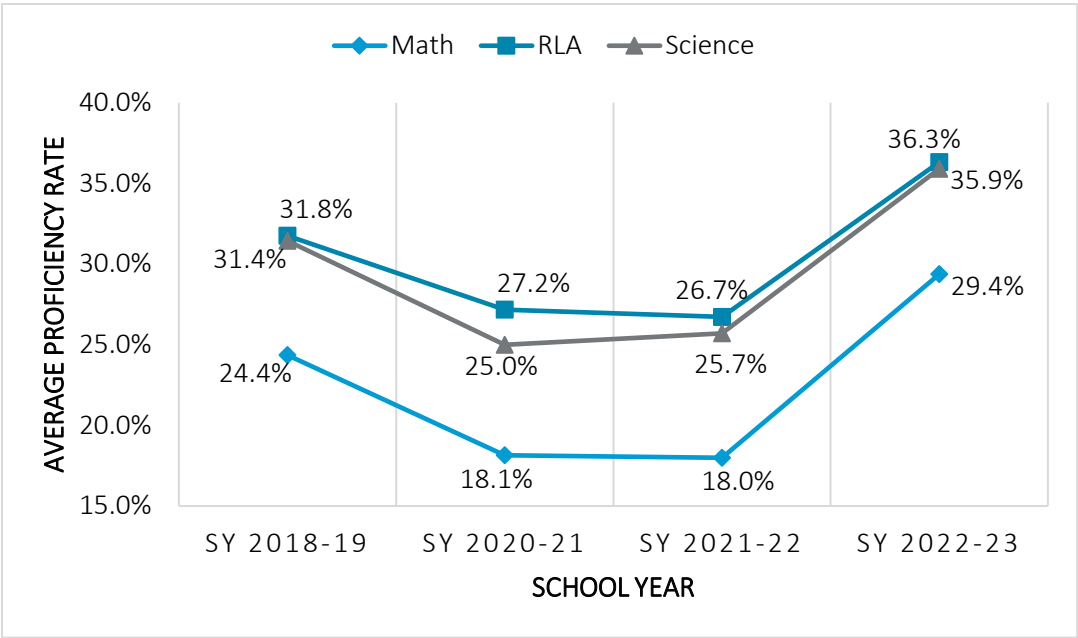
### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RATES

Academic achievement is evaluated by examining students’ proficiency status in mathematics, reading/ language arts (R/LA), and science. Proficiency status refers to whether a student has achieved a proficient level of academic performance as defined by each state and measured by standardized state

assessments. **Figure 4** presents the year-to-year trends in the average grade-level proficiency rates in mathematics, R/LA, and science among students experiencing homelessness in ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs.

Please note that every state sets different proficiency scores and uses different assessments, so being proficient at grade level in these subjects means something different in every state. Furthermore, SEA and LEA performance is not reported unless a certain N-size is attained (which varies by state). As a result, data were not reported for students experiencing homelessness in many LEAs at certain grade levels and overall. Therefore, the data presented reflects the outcomes for ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs that reported data on academic proficiency and is not generalizable to all ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs.

**Figure 4. Average Proficiency Rates in Mathematics, R/LA, and Science Among Students Experiencing Homelessness in ARP-HCY Subgrantee LEAs (SY 2018-19 – SY 2022-23)**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, *EDFacts* file 175: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 583; *EDFacts* file 178: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 584; *EDFacts* file 179: Homeless Students Enrolled, Data Group 585. Data may be accessed publicly on <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/download>.

**Mathematics Proficiency Rates**

In SY 2018-19, the average proficiency rate of students experiencing homelessness at ARP-HCY grantee LEAs was 24%, followed by 18% in SY 2020-21, and this rate remained stable in SY 2021-22. In SY 2022-23, there was a notable increase of 11 percentage points, reaching an average proficiency rate of 29%. Mathematics proficiency rates among ARP-HCY subgrantees aligned relatively closely with national and McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) trends from SY 2018-19 to SY 2021-

22.<sup>6</sup> In SY 2022-23, ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs saw a significant increase in math proficiency among students experiencing homelessness, with an average proficiency rate of 29%, compared to national (23%) and McKinney-Vento-receiving LEA (18%) rates. Note, however, that these data may be impacted by the fact that 40% of mathematics proficiency data was missing in SY 2022-23 (compared to a range of 23% to 33% of LEAs with missing data in previous years). Therefore, the findings reflect only the ARP-HCY subgrantee LEAs that reported data for that year and are not representative of all subgrantee LEAs.

### ***Reading/Language Arts Proficiency Rates (R/LA)***

In SY 2018-19, 32% of the students experiencing homelessness in ARP-HCY grantee LEAs achieved R/LA proficiency. This rate decreased by 5 percentage points to 27% in SY 2020-21, then remained steady through SY 2021-22. There was a 9-percentage point increase from SY 2021-22 to SY 2022-23, with 36% of students experiencing homelessness in ARP-HCY grantee LEAs achieving R/LA proficiency.

Compared to national trends, ARP-HCY subgrantees slightly outperformed national R/LA proficiency rates for students experiencing homelessness in all LEAs in SY 2018-19 and SY 2021-22. Notably, in SY 2022-23, ARP-HCY subgrantees surpassed national rates for this population by 10 percentage points, potentially reflecting the impact of ARP-HCY program efforts. As with mathematics proficiency rates, a significant number of LEAs did not consistently report R/LA proficiency data for students experiencing homelessness, with the amount of missing data ranging from 23% to 33% from year to year, limiting the interpretation of the results to those LEAs included in the analysis.

### ***Science Proficiency Rates***

In SY 2018-19, 31% of students experiencing homelessness in ARP-HCY grantee LEAs achieved science proficiency. This rate declined to 25% in SY 2020-21 and remained relatively stable at 26% in SY 2021-22. In SY 2022-23, science proficiency increased significantly, with 36% of students in this population achieving proficiency—a 10 percentage point improvement from the previous year. This increase may reflect the impact of ARP-HCY programming. However, it is important to note the high level of missing data, with 49% of LEAs not reporting science proficiency data for the homeless student subgroup in SY 2022-23, as those omissions may affect the interpretation of this trend.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, ARP-HCY LEAs increased the identification of students experiencing homelessness and reported reduced rates of chronic absenteeism, higher graduation rates, and better academic outcomes on mathematics, R/LA, and science assessments by SY 2022-23. A significant portion of LEAs consistently reported improvements in these student outcomes across the study period, with many returning to or exceeding pre-pandemic levels. While the phased research design offered a robust means of data collection, several limitations impacted the scope and completeness of the findings. Differences in the timing of when ARP-HCY funds were provided to states, and in turn to districts, led to staggered program implementation timelines across SEAs and LEAs. Also, this study did not cover the full period of

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<sup>6</sup> National performance of students experiencing homelessness who are proficient at grade level in mathematics and reading/language arts is reported for students experiencing homelessness enrolled in all LEAs and in LEAs with McKinney-Vento subgrants in the [Department of Education Justification of Appropriation Estimates](#) to Congress that are usually released in the first quarter of every calendar year. They are under School Improvement Programs.

ARP-HCY. For more information on the implementation of the ARP-HCY program that led to these improved outcomes, please read the Executive Summary and forthcoming report, *State and Local Implementation Studies of the ARP-HCY Program*.

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