The Lasting Academic Impact of Homelessness

Students who experience homelessness are less likely to perform at grade-level in English and math.

Only about a quarter of homeless students scored at or above grade level on their English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams, compared to nearly half of housed students.

Even when homeless students reach grade-level proficiency, they are more likely than their housed classmates to fall behind in later years.*

Students who do not meet grade-level proficiency standards before high school have difficulty graduating on time.

Four-Year Graduation Rates for Homeless Students, by 8th Grade Test Proficiency

- Passed both assessments: 94%
- Passed one assessment: 88%
- Passed zero assessments: 55%

94% of homeless students who passed both exams in 8th grade graduated on time. Only 5% of homeless students, however, passed both exams.

In contrast, just 55% of homeless students who did not pass either exam graduated on time. Unfortunately, as many as 80% of all homeless students did not pass either exam.

Early academic achievement is a good indicator of homeless students’ ability to complete high school. It is important that these students have access to educational supports before they enter high school so that they can have the same opportunity to graduate as their housed classmates.

*Note: Percentages of students performing at or above grade level is shown only for students who were not retained between grades 3 and 8.