Piecing it Together:
Meaningful Collaboration Between School Districts and Universities

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1

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Serving Students ▪ Supporting Communities
Leading Educators

long beach unified school district

Workshop Objectives

Overview regarding homeless children and youth in Los Angeles County and LBUSD

Discuss causes and impacts of homelessness

Discuss barriers to homelessness

Discuss barriers of higher education access

Discuss recommendations for improve college access for homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY)

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Causes of Homelessness

Natural disaster

Domestic violence

Loss of job

Loss of loved one

Poverty

Eviction/ Foreclosures

Lack of affordable housing

Divorce/family disputes

Serious illness/ disability/ depression/PTSD

Data

NATIONAL

- 2.3% of all school-age children will experience homelessness[1]

- More than half of all children in HUD shelters are under the age of five [2]

- 13% of school-age children live in poverty; 30% live in extreme poverty [1]

- Approximately 20-40% of unaccompanied homeless youth identify as LGBTQ – compared to 5-10% of the general youth population in the U.S. [3]

STATE

- **Over 270, 000 children experience homelessness each year, *23% of homeless students in the nation* [4]**

- 52% are PK – 5th grade, 21% are 6th – 8th grade, 27% are 9th– 12th grade [4]

- An increase of 8% since 2011[4]

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- The number of homeless students **increased by 25% since 2011**[5]

- **54,916 homeless students, *25% of the homeless students in CA***

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates.
[2] 2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR): Volume 2: https://www.onecpd.info/resource/3297/2012-ahar-volume-2-estimates-of-homelessness-in-the-us/
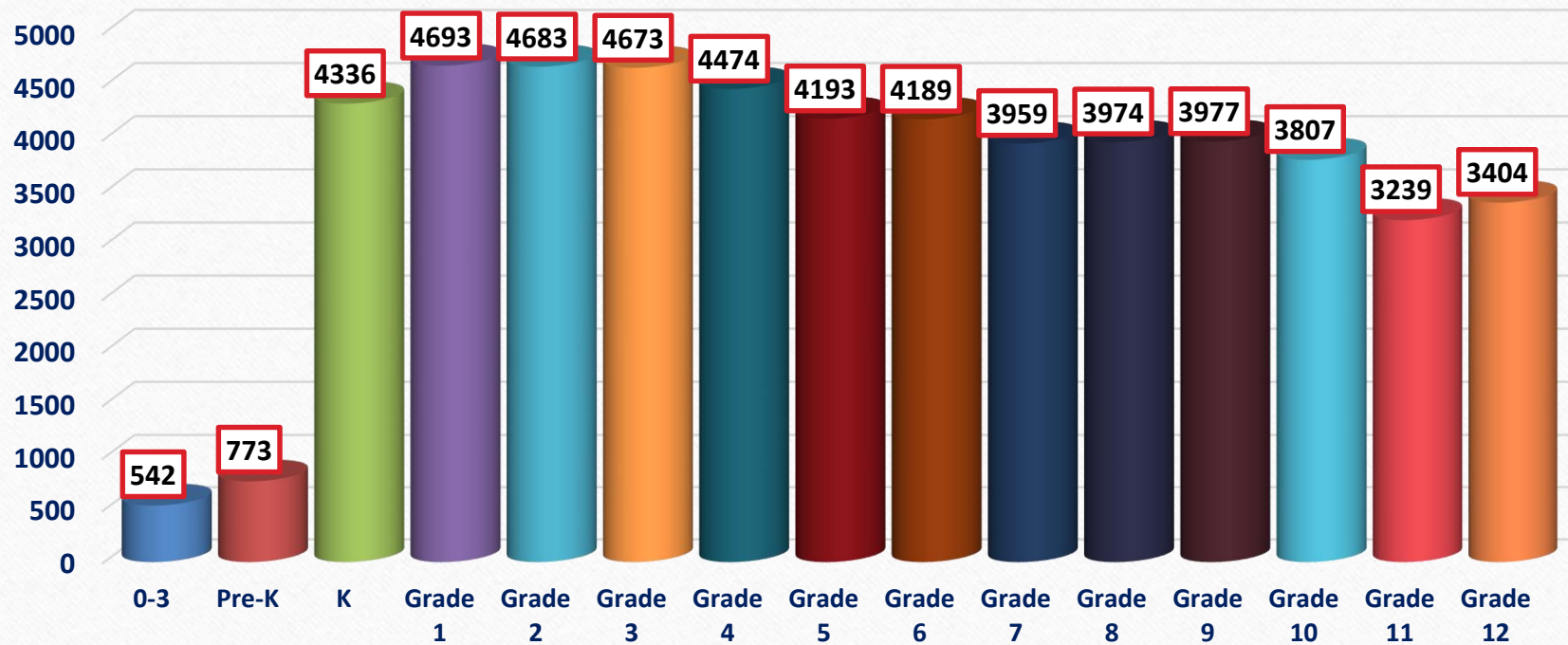[3] Safe horizon, www.safehorizon.org ; 2014
[4] CA Homeless Youth Project, California's Homeless Students, A Growing Population; September 2014
[5] Los Angeles County Office of Education; September 2015
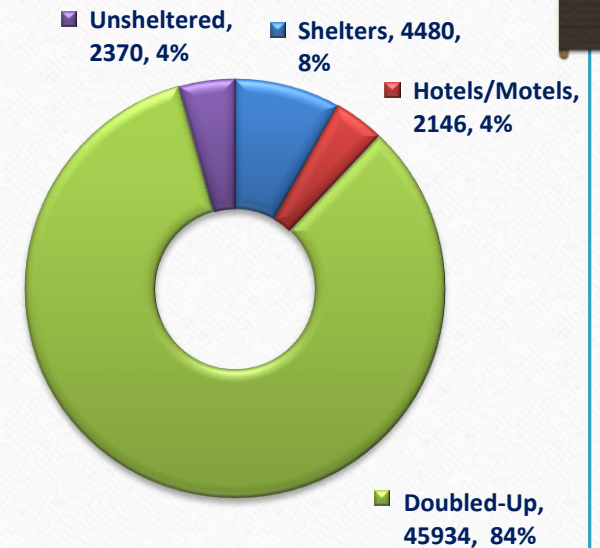
Impact on Education

- Poor social skills in early elementary school.

- Achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen, over time.

- More likely to score poorly on standardized assessments across an array of content areas.

- More likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities.

- Homelessness in infancy and toddlerhood has been linked to later child welfare involvement and early school failure.

- **Homelessness is associated with an 87% increased likelihood of dropping out of school.**

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Los Angeles County Homeless student Count 2014-2015

Bar chart values:
- 0-3: 542
- Pre-K: 773
- K: 4336
- Grade 1: 4693
- Grade 2: 4683
- Grade 3: 4673
- Grade 4: 4474
- Grade 5: 4193
- Grade 6: 4189
- Grade 7: 3959
- Grade 8: 3974
- Grade 9: 3977
- Grade 10: 3807
- Grade 11: 3239
- Grade 12: 3404

Donut chart:
- Unsheltered, 2370, 4%
- Shelters, 4480, 8%
- Hotels/Motels, 2146, 4%
- Doubled-Up, 45934, 84%

TOTAL = 54,916

Long Beach USD Demographics

- Located in southern Los Angeles County, LBUSD serves the communities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill and Avalon on Catalina Island

- 3rd largest school district in California with 79,000 students and 85 public schools

- 68% socio-economically disadvantaged

- 23% English Language Learners

- 11-12% Students with IEPs

- Ethnic Breakdown:
  - ✓ 55% Hispanic
  - ✓ 14% African American
  - ✓ 14% White
  - ✓ 11% Asian
  - ✓ 2% Pacific Islander
  - ✓ 1% American Indian/Native Alaskan
  - ✓ 3% Other

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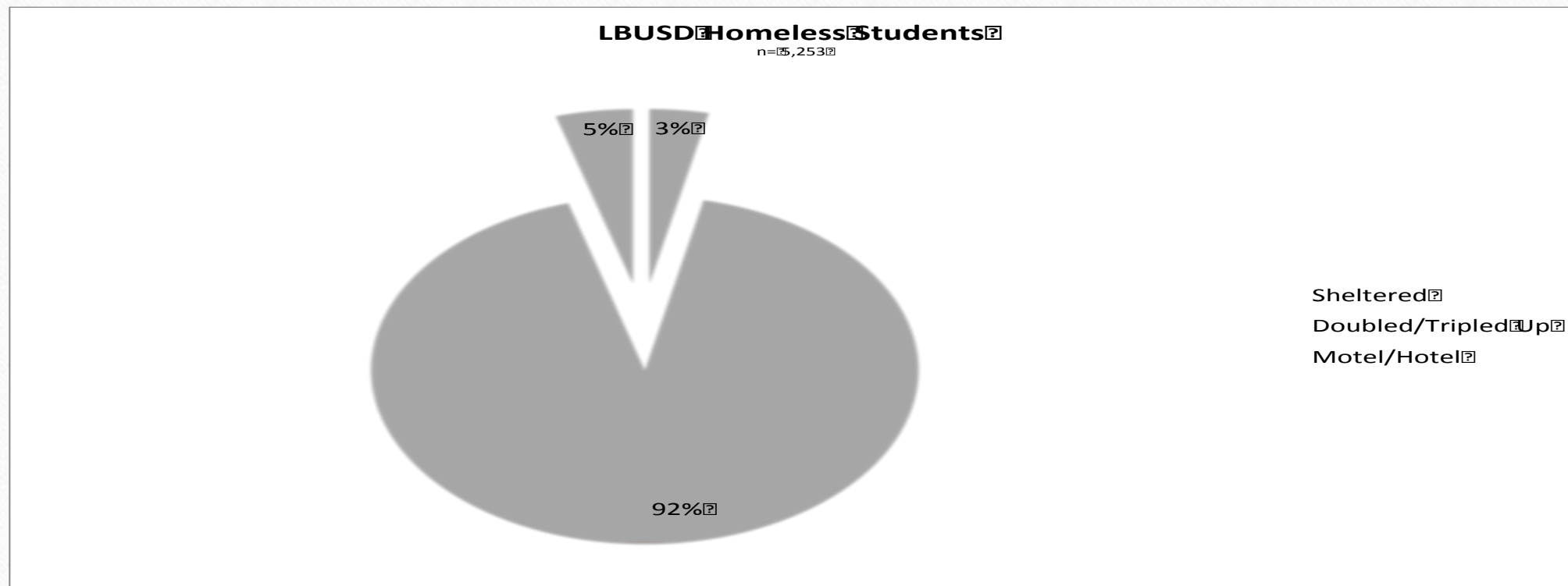
LBUSD Homeless Youth Breakdown 2015 - 2016

Homeless Ethnic Breakdown:

- ✓ 55% Hispanic
- ✓ 23% African American
- ✓ 5% White
- ✓ 9% Asian
- ✓ 3% Pacific Islander
- ✓ 0.2% American Indian/Native Alaskan
- ✓ 4% Other

Homeless Numbers by Grade

- Under 3   27
- Pre-K (3-5)   106
- Elementary (K-5)   1895
- Middle (6-8)   1392
- High School (9-12)   1425
- 12th grade only   165

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LBUSD Nighttime Residency 2015-16

LBUSD Homeless Students
n= 5,253

5%   3%

92%

Sheltered
Doubled/Tripled Up
Motel/Hotel

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McKinney Vento Overview: Main Themes

Educational Access

School Stability

Support for Academic Success

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Definition of a Homeless Student

The McKinney-Vento Act defines a "homeless" student as one between 0 to 22** years of age, who lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence, and may include

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason ("doubling or tripling up")
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Awaiting foster care placement (coming out one year after enactment of ESSA Dec 2016)
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or a similar setting
- Abandoned, runaway or pushed-out youth or migratory children living in any of the above circumstances

**due to early head start and special education service provisions

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Paths to Being on Their Own

- Ran away or pushed out…family conflict such as blended family issues, pregnancy, sexual activity or orientation, school problems, substance abuse, etc.
- Abuse and/or neglect within the home
- Parental incarceration, illness, hospitalization, or death
- Lack of space in temporary situations or shelter policies that prohibit adolescent boys

- Child welfare issues
  - ✓ Running away from a placement
  - ✓ Aging out of the system
  - ✓ Significant correlation between involvement with the child welfare system and experiencing homelessness as an adult

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Determination of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- 2-step process to determine eligibility as an unaccompanied homeless youth
    1) Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?
    2) Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?
- Unaccompanied = "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian"

Note: The Higher Education Act includes the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless and unaccompanied

- It is very difficult for LBUSD and school districts nationwide to track UHYs as they may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments or taken into the custody of the child welfare system.

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Barriers to Higher Education Access

Lack of access to parental financial information and support

Struggling to balance school and other responsibilities

Lack of financial means to live independently and safely

Inability to be financially self-sufficient once enrolled in college

Lack of adult guidance and support

Limited housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas

Failure to meet state residency requirements

Lack of information about available support systems

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Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY) Transition into Higher Education

- College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007
  - Verification is not required for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
  - Financial Aid Administrators and Homeless Education Liaisons can verify

- U.S. Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter
  - http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/attachments/GEN1516Attach.pdf

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Recent Legislative Changes

- **AB 1806 *and* AB 1166: Pupil services: homeless children or youth**

  o Graduation: allows partial credits for work that has been completed and also allows homeless students who enter a new high school after their second year or later to graduate if they complete state graduation requirements- specific criteria involved and notification process within 30 days of when student may qualify

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More Recent Legislative Changes

- **AB 1228: Public postsecondary education: campus housing: priority for homeless youth**

  o Provides priority for housing at the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC) to homeless youth under 25 years of age, that maintains student housing facilities.

  o Homeless or former foster youth verified at any time during the 24 months immediately preceding the receipt of his or her application for admission, shall retain that status for a period of six years from the date of admission to a campus

  o Campus must develop plans to ensure that homeless and foster youth have housing during breaks, *regardless of whether the campus maintains student housing facilities*.

FAFSA Barriers

- Youth cannot supply the information required by the FAFSA (such as documentation)

- Need help walking through the FAFSA process, especially if unaccompanied and may need help with understanding homeless verification process.

- Youth may not know how to fill out the form and can become overwhelmed by the amount of information requested

- The FAFSA requires most students to provide financial information and signatures from parents/guardians

Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth: FAFSA Completion

48. At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.)?.. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

49. Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training? **See Notes page 9.** .... Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

50. Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? **See Notes page 9**.. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

51. Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017?.. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

52. Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2017? .... Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

53. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court? **See Notes page 10**.. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

54. As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor? **See Notes page 10.** .. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

55. Does someone other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence? **See Notes page 10.** .... Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

56. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? **See Notes page 10**....... Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

57. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? **See Notes page 10**.. Yes ◯ 1   No ◯ 2

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Online FAFSA Completion

Homeless Circumstances

You indicated that you were homeless or at risk of being homeless and you answered "no" to all of the specific homeless questions.

However, your financial aid administrator could make a determination that you are a **homeless youth**, and do not need to provide parental information, if you meet both of the following conditions:

- **You are homeless**, which means you are lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, parks, motels or cars, or temporarily living with other people because you had nowhere else to go. Also, if you are living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent you may be considered homeless even if your parent would provide support and a place to live; and
- **You are unaccompanied**, which means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian.

If you believe that you meet these conditions and would like to follow up with the financial aid administrator at your college, select "I am homeless or at risk of being homeless" and click **Next** to get additional information.

If you do not meet the above conditions and will be providing parental information, select "I will provide parental information" and click **Next** to continue.

○ I will provide parental information
◉ I am homeless or at risk of being homeless

Help and Hints

Homeless Circumstances

Select **I will provide parental information** to continue to Parent Demographics.

Select **I am homeless or at risk of being homeless** to get additional information.

Recommendations to Support Homeless Students on College Campuses

- Identification of homeless youth on your campus
  - Posters and brochures with on campus contact information
  - Create awareness among faculty and staff about UHY and the challenges they face.
- Determination of status as an independent student

  - Utilize the USDOE's Application and Verification Guide which provides instruction/guidance on determining UHYs independent status
  - Each case is unique and reviewed on its own basis
  - Incorporate a thoughtful process for the student to make the determination, don't make the student retell of past abuse, etc.

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Recommendations to Support Homeless Students on College Campuses cont…

- Establish coordination between financial aid offices, campus support services & housing
- Connect with previous school district homeless liaison if needed for verification purposes
- Allow late housing deposit payments
- Open a food and clothing bank on campus
- Consider housing options for homeless students when dorms close:
  - Leaving one residence hall open
  - Allow UHY to stay in housing for international students
  - Provide a list of "host homes" in the community
- Establish Single Points of Contact (SPOC) in colleges/universities to help eliminate barriers to higher education access

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Recommendations to Support Homeless Students on College Campuses cont…

- Provide information to help homeless youth obtain information about college resources such as Pell Grants, vouchers, waivers for college admission tests, etc.

- Provide workshops on high school campuses in regard to financial aid and other programs that will assist homeless youth in enrolling into college.

- Convene a monthly/quarterly meeting with local stakeholders from LBUSD or other school districts, Foster Care, Higher Education, and RHYA/HUD shelter communities as well as other local service providers and advocates to share knowledge about their expertise and to build an action plan for serving homeless and UHY that is uniquely crafted for your community.

- Connect homeless and UHY with programs such as Gear-Up, Upward Bound, other TRIO programs, Campus Student Services and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

NAEHCY Resources for Higher Education

- NAEHCY's Higher Education Webpage
  - http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/higher-ed
- NAEHCY Higher Education Helpline: 855-446-2673 or highered@naehcy.org
- Text Hotline text "NAEHCY" to 335577
- NAEHCY Statewide Higher Education Networks
  - http://naehcy.org/legislation-and-policy/state-henetworks
- NAEHCY Scholarship
  - http://www.naehcy.org/naehcy-scholarship-fund/about-the-fund
- College Access and Success Toolkit for Students Experiencing Homelessness
  - http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/he-toolkit

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Final Thoughts/Questions

- What thoughts/ideas/activities can you take with you from this presentation and implement when you go back to your college campus or agency?

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