

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS IN NEW YORK STATE



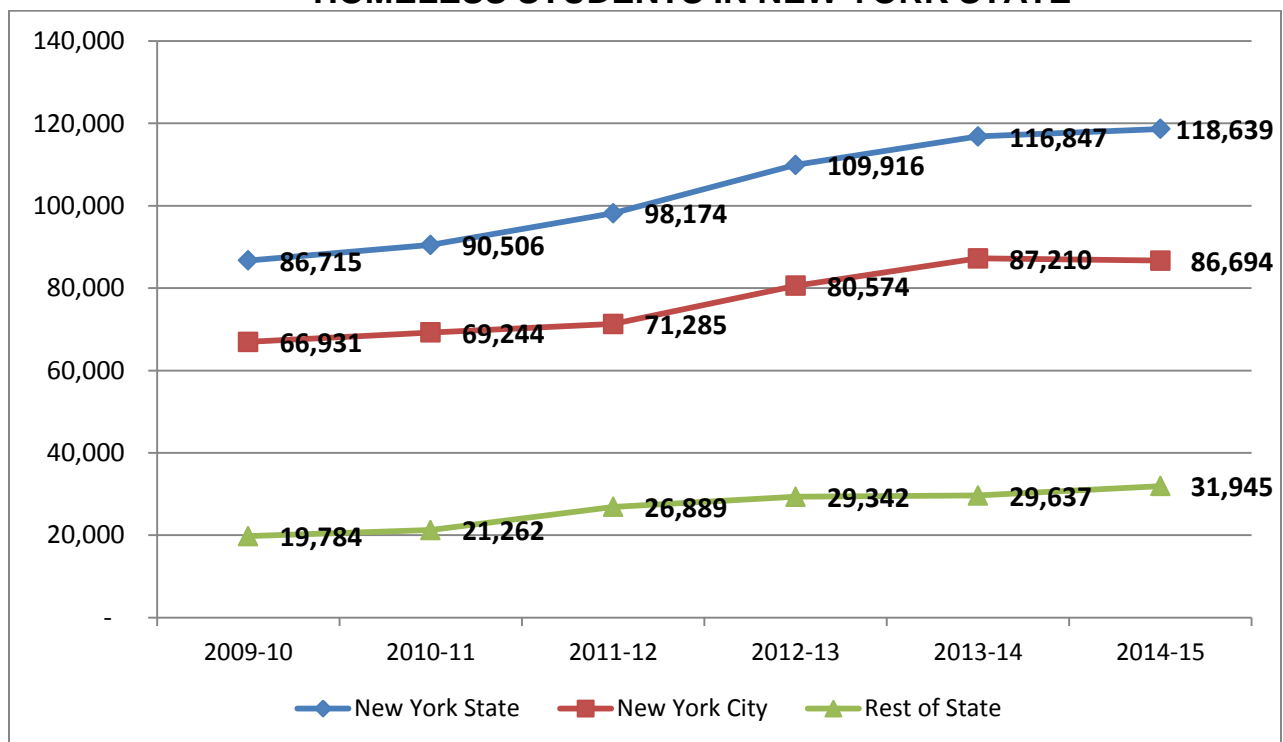
Fact Sheet No. 16-08

August, 2016

The New York State Board of Regents recently received a presentation from SED staff on the issue of student homelessness in New York State. According to SED, the number of homeless students has risen sharply in New York State—from 86,715 in the 2009-10 school year to 118,639 in 2014-15, an increase of 37 percent during this time period.

Although the vast majority of student homelessness in the state is in New York City, the incidence of student homelessness has been rising much faster in the rest of state, increasing by 61%, from 19,784 in 2009-10 to 31,945 in 2014-15.

HOMELESS STUDENTS IN NEW YORK STATE



Source: State Education Department Presentation to the Board of Regents, July 2016.

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that attempts to ensure the immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children. Under the act, the definition of homeless is a student who lacks a nighttime residence that is **fixed, regular** and **adequate**. This includes students that are:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- Living in motels;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Living in public or private places not designed for sleeping, and
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, etc.

Every school district, BOCES and charter school is required to have a McKinney-Vento Liaison whose duties include the removal of barriers to the enrollment and attendance and success of homeless children.

The act was originally authorized in 1987 and was reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and reauthorized again in 2015 as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). SED staff identified the following new requirements that were included in the latest reauthorization:

- Removes “awaiting foster care placement” from the definition of homeless as of December 10, 2016.
- Expands the definition of “school of origin” to include preschool and feeder schools.
- Requires continued enrollment and transportation during any enrollment dispute pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
- May expand transportation to the school of origin through the remainder of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed.
- Requires states and districts to have policies to remove barriers to identification, enrollment and retention of children who are homeless, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines or absences.
- Requires states to have procedures that ensure that students who are homeless do not face barriers to accessing academic and extra-curricular activities, including magnet schools, summer school, CTE, AP courses, online learning and charter schools.
- Requires districts to immediately enroll children who are homeless even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

It is expected that the Board of Regents will adopt revised regulations at their upcoming meeting in September in order to comply with these new requirements.