



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

News Release

For immediate release

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Educational Disparities for Students Experiencing Homelessness Underscore Need for Funding Equity & Coordinated Citywide Response

April 6, 2026 (NEW YORK CITY) — Today, Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) released a new brief highlighting key educational indicators for a subset of the [more than 154,000](#) New York City students who were identified as homeless during the 2024–25 school year. The data, which were obtained from New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) by AFC, show that students in temporary housing—and *especially* those living in shelter—continue to trail their permanently housed peers on a variety of measures, driving home the urgent need for City and State leaders to act. Key findings include:

- Nearly half of all students in temporary housing, and 63% of students in shelter, were chronically absent last year, meaning they missed at least one out of every ten school days. At minimum, such rates of absenteeism represent a combined 1.1 million days of lost instructional time.
- One in every five students in shelter transferred schools at least once during the 2024–25 school year, more than four times the transfer rate of permanently housed students. The 12,000 students in shelter who changed schools mid-year not only lost a permanent place to call home, they *also* lost the stability of a familiar school environment and had to adjust to new teachers, peers, curricula, and routines, often with little advance warning.
- Only 33% of students who were homeless scored proficient on the grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA) exam in 2025, compared to 60% of their permanently housed peers—a disparity even larger than the one seen in 2024.

New York City and State must do more to ensure students experiencing homelessness can access a quality education and receive the support they need to succeed in school. One immediate step Governor Hochul and the Legislature can take is to ensure that the final FY 2027 State budget updates the Foundation Aid per-pupil funding formula to add a weight for students who are homeless or in foster care, as proposed by both the Assembly and the Senate in their one-house budgets. At present, Foundation Aid provides *no* additional resources to help districts address the unique needs of such students, who face barriers above and beyond those associated with poverty. The Assembly's proposed weight (.65) would be especially helpful, driving an estimated \$486M to NYC schools according to the NYC Independent Budget Office, while the Senate's proposed weight (.12) would bring an estimated \$93M.

“It is long past time for the State to update its education funding formula to recognize the significant needs of students who are homeless,” said Maria Odom, Executive Director of AFC. “As Governor Hochul and the Legislature negotiate a final budget, they must ensure that the Foundation Aid formula does not continue to shortchange districts like New York City that have high rates of student homelessness.”

At the City level, we urge Mayor Mamdani to launch a bold interagency initiative to focus attention on the needs of students who are homeless and tackle the educational barriers they face. NYCPS cannot address underlying structural issues—and thereby meaningfully tackle the dismal educational outcomes for students in temporary housing—on its own. City agencies should work together, for example, to place children in shelters closer to where they attend school to avoid long commutes and unnecessary school transfers, minimize school absences and ensure the needs of students are taken into account as the City closes hotels used as shelters, fix the process for arranging bus service for students in shelter, and increase access to early childhood education programs.

“Making New York City a more affordable place to live is essential, but the tens of thousands of students who are homeless *right now* cannot wait for long-term policy changes to take effect. Education is the best tool we have to prevent future homelessness, and only bold leadership from City Hall can bring the urgency and coordination needed to ensure students who are homeless can get to school every day and access the educational support they need to thrive,” said Jennifer Pringle, director of AFC’s Learners in Temporary Housing Project.

The new brief is available at <https://advocatesforchildren.org/policy-resource/sth-educational-indicators-2025/>.

About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)

Since 1971, Advocates for Children of New York has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC uses four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.