



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, 2024–25

*This brief summarizes data on a subset of the more than 154,000 New York City students who were [identified as homeless](#) during the 2024–25 school year.**

KEY INDICATORS

- » **One in every five students in shelter transferred schools** at least once during the 2024–25 school year, more than quadruple the transfer rate for permanently housed students.
- » **Almost half of all students experiencing homelessness and 63% of students living 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.
- » The proportion of students in temporary housing who scored proficient on the grades 3–8 English Language Arts exam rose from 2023–24 to 2024–25, but **the disparity in reading proficiency rates between students who were and were not homeless grew larger**.

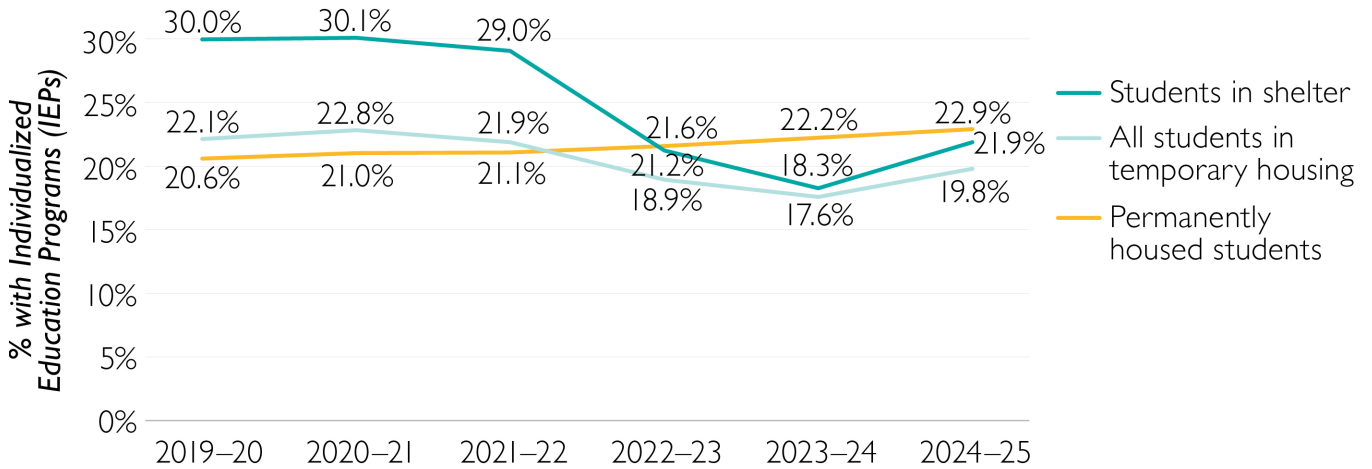
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Homelessness disproportionately impacts children of color in New York City. In 2024–25, **86% of all students in temporary housing and 93% of those in shelter were Black or Hispanic, as compared to 58% of permanently housed students**. Students experiencing homelessness are also more likely to be learning English as a new language; last year, **42% of students who did not have a permanent place to call home were English Language Learners (ELLs)**.

Students experiencing homelessness were less likely than students with permanent housing to have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in 2024–25. However, the special education classification

* The federal McKinney-Vento Act defines students experiencing homelessness as those who lack a nighttime residence that is fixed, adequate, and regular, and includes students living in shelters and students living in temporary doubled-up situations. In this brief, the terms “students experiencing homelessness” and “students in temporary housing” are used interchangeably. All data were obtained from New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) by Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) and include 135,344 students identified as homeless during the 2024–25 school year, of whom 44% (almost 60,000 children) spent time living in City shelters. Students attending charter schools are not included.

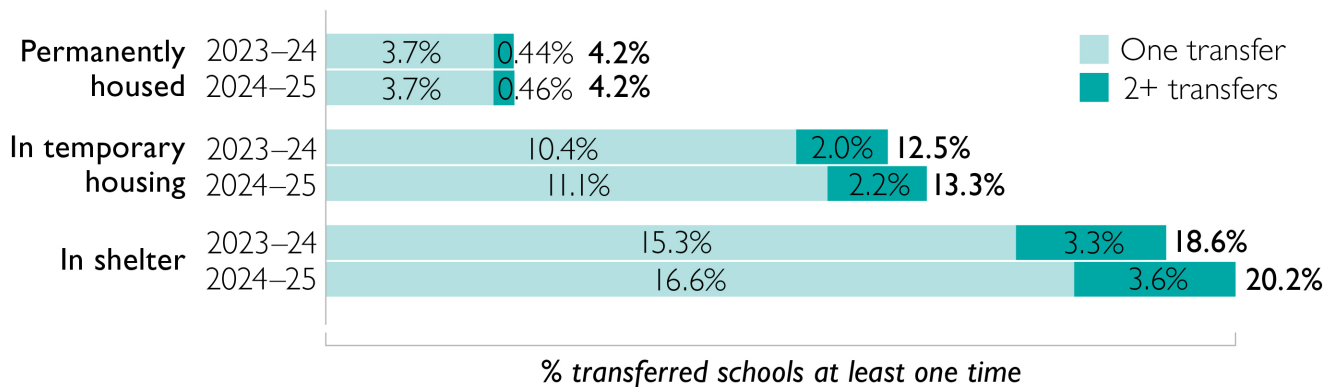
rate for students in temporary housing appears to be trending upward after experiencing a notable dip beginning in the 2022–23 school year. While the proportion of permanently housed students who had IEPs held relatively steady from 2023–24 to 2024–25, rising by less than a percentage point, the special education classification rate for all students in temporary housing increased by 2.2 percentage points and the rate for students in shelter by 3.6 points.



SCHOOL TRANSFERS

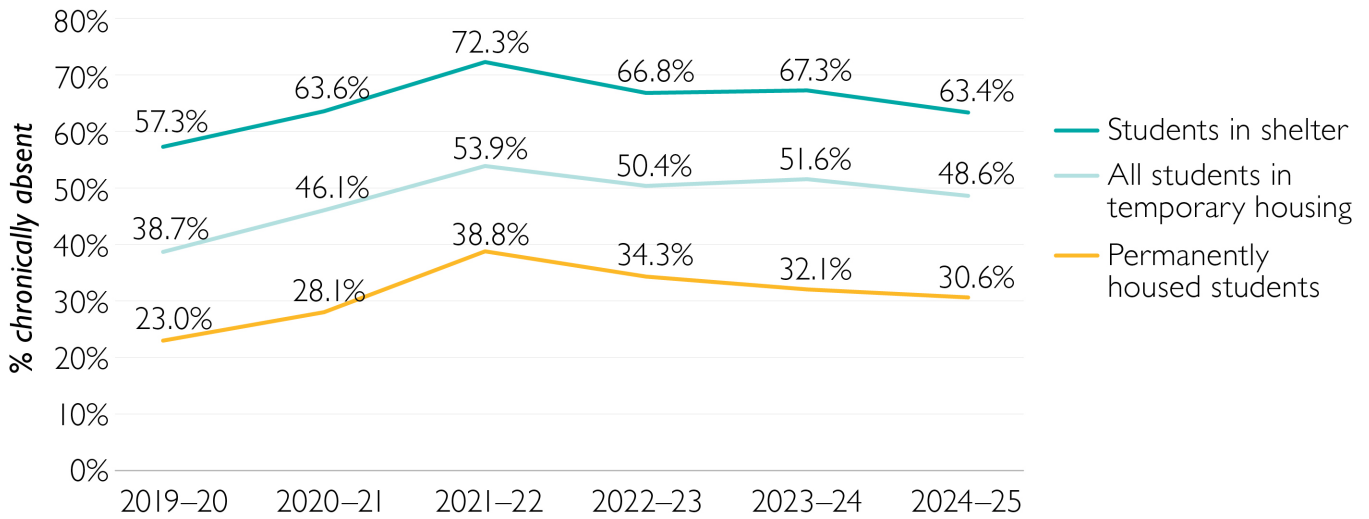
Students who are homeless are less likely than their permanently housed peers to maintain school stability. **More than one in eight students in temporary housing—and one in every five students living in shelter—transferred schools at least once during the 2024–25 school year**, as compared to only about one in 24 permanently housed students.

While the transfer rate for students in permanent housing was essentially unchanged from that seen in 2023–24, the proportion of students in shelter who switched schools mid-year was 1.5 percentage points higher in 2024–25 than it was the previous year. In other words, **students experiencing homelessness were more likely to transfer schools last year than they were the year before**; not only did the City fail to make progress towards improving school stability for students in temporary housing, the problem grew worse.



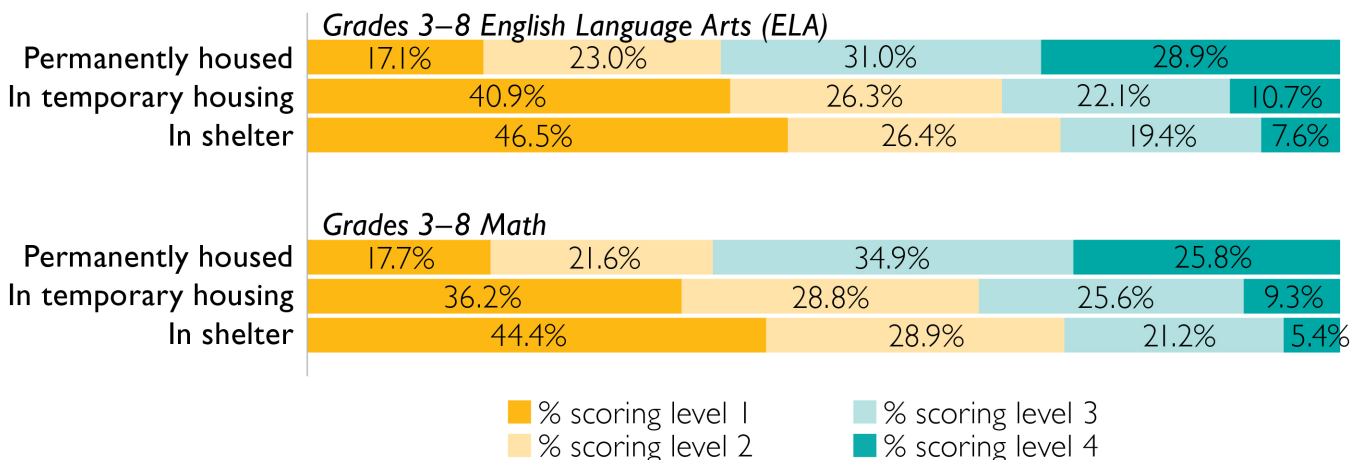
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

As in prior school years, students experiencing homelessness—and especially those living in shelter—missed school at alarmingly high rates in 2024–25. **Nearly half of all students in temporary housing and 63% of students in shelter were chronically absent**, meaning they missed at least one out of every ten school days. While both rates represented a modest improvement over the previous year, they were dramatically higher than the rate for permanently housed students, 31% of whom were chronically absent.



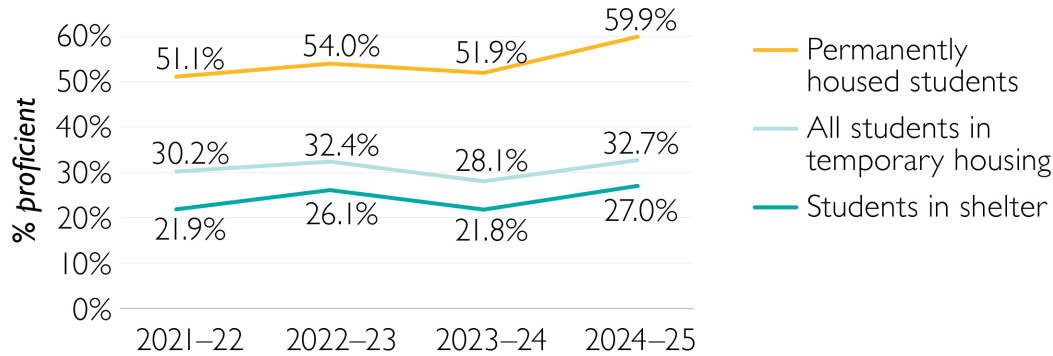
READING & MATH PROFICIENCY

Only 27% of students in shelter in grades 3–8 scored proficient (level 3 or 4) on each of the 2025 New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams. In both subjects, these proficiency rates were less than half those of permanently housed students, 60% of whom were proficient in reading and 61% of whom scored proficient in math. Well over 40% of students in shelter received the lowest score (level 1) on each exam, two and a half times the rate at which students in permanent housing received this score and an indication that they are *significantly* below grade level.

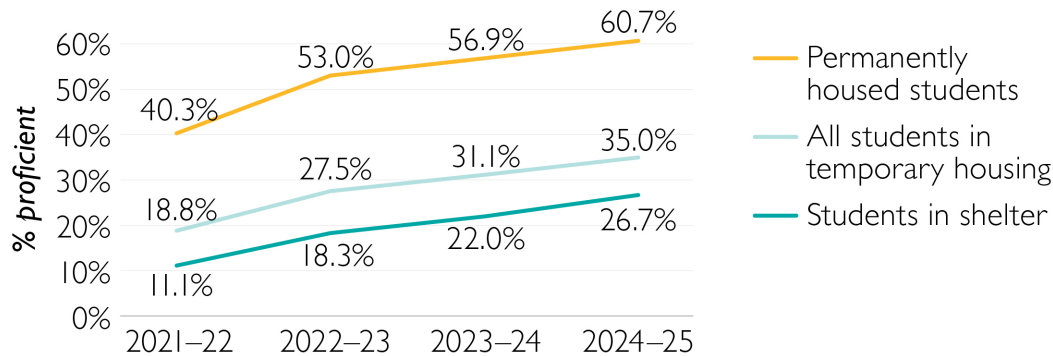


These results represent an improvement over the prior school year, when only 22% of third through eighth graders living in shelter were proficient in ELA or math. However, because test scores *also* rose for permanently housed students, **the gap in reading proficiency rates between students who were and were not homeless grew larger—from 24 percentage points in 2023–24 to 27 points in 2024–25—and there was no meaningful progress towards narrowing the 26-point disparity in math.** In other words, last year’s Citywide gains in reading and math proficiency reached students no matter their housing status, but students experiencing homelessness did not see the accelerated growth needed to narrow the gap with their permanently housed peers.

GRADES 3–8 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)



GRADES 3–8 MATH



NOTE: Both exams were aligned to new standards beginning in 2023; as a result, 2022 results are not precisely comparable to subsequent years.

