



Using Data to Understand Mental Health Needs and Access to Supports for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

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School Health Evaluation and Research Team

Learning Objectives

- Describe the mental health needs of youth experiencing homelessness statewide
- Identify public sources of data on youth experiencing homelessness to understand local needs
- Describe evaluation methods that can be used to document the reach and impacts of programs supporting students experiencing homelessness



Health and Wellness of Youth Experiencing Homelessness:

California Healthy Kids Survey Findings

California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)

- Administered by WestEd on behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE)
 - Traditionally bi-annually to students in 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th and non-traditional grades
 - Elementary and secondary versions
- Core module assesses self-reported:
 - Student engagement and school connectedness
 - School safety (social-emotional & physical), violence, and victimization (bullying)
 - Mental, behavioral, and physical health, including substance use, depression/suicide risk, and other health risks and learning barriers



CHKS Behavioral Health Module

- *Mental Health Supports* (MHS) module
 - Originally developed by UCSF with CDE, WestEd, and education partners as a custom module for CDE's Project Cal-Well mental health initiative evaluation in 2015–16
 - Assessed students' self-reported:
 - Perceived stigma related to mental health
 - Mental health help-seeking attitudes, behaviors, and perceived barriers
 - Access to and utilization of mental health services and supports
 - In 2018, WestEd and CDE began offering the module as an optional add-on module to the Core
- In 2023-24, WestEd incorporated the MHS module into the new Behavioral Health (BH) module
 - Form A focuses on substance use
 - Form B focuses on mental health



CHKS Study Sample

Data presented today are from the 2023-24 school year:

564,891

Secondary* student respondents to
the Core module statewide

**Students in grades 7-12 and non-
traditional*

131,019**

Secondary student respondents to
the BH (Form B) module

***Sample is not necessarily
representative of students
statewide*

CHKS Study Sample

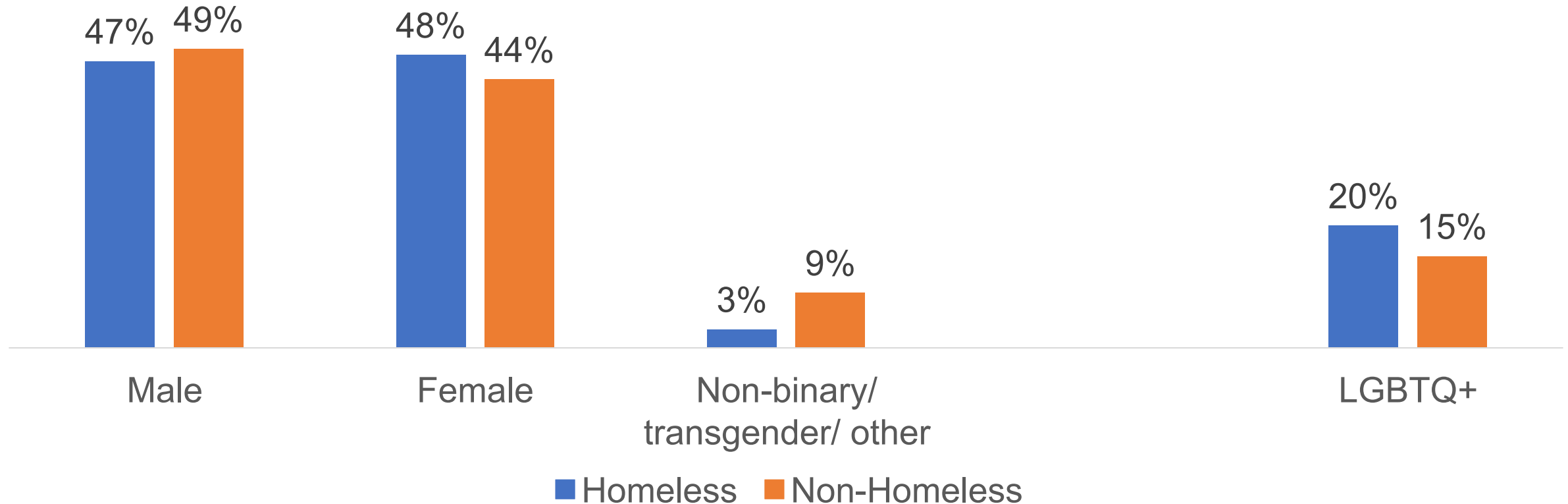
What best describes where you live? <i>A home includes a house, apartment, trailer, or mobile home (N=564,891*)</i>	Percentage	Experiencing Homelessness
A home with one or more parent or guardian	92%	No
A home with more than one family	4%	Yes**
Friend's home	<1%	Yes
Hotel or motel	<1%	Yes
Shelter, car, campground, or other transitional or temporary housing	<1%	Yes

Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24, : <https://calschls.org/>

*N=564,891; includes respondents in grades 7-12 and non-traditional; excludes respondents who selected “foster home, group care, or waiting placement,” “other relative’s home,” “other living arrangements,” and missing to the living situation question.

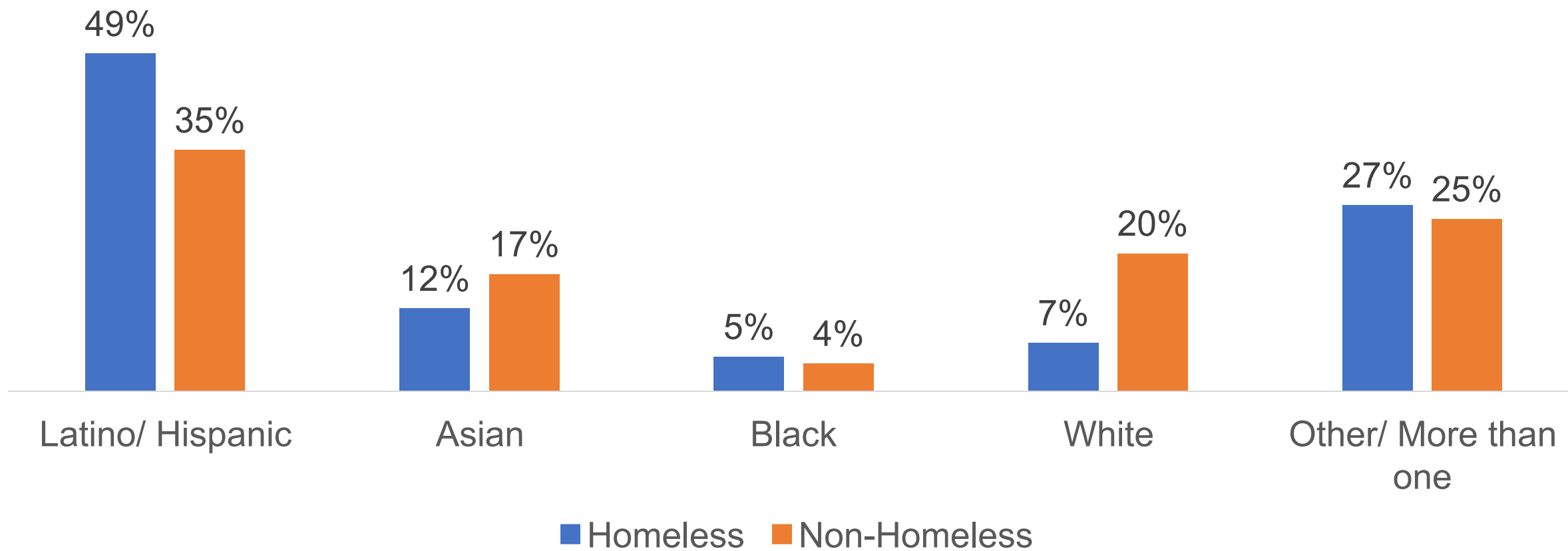
**Coded as “other living arrangement” in CHKS data dashboards

CHKS Statewide Sample: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation



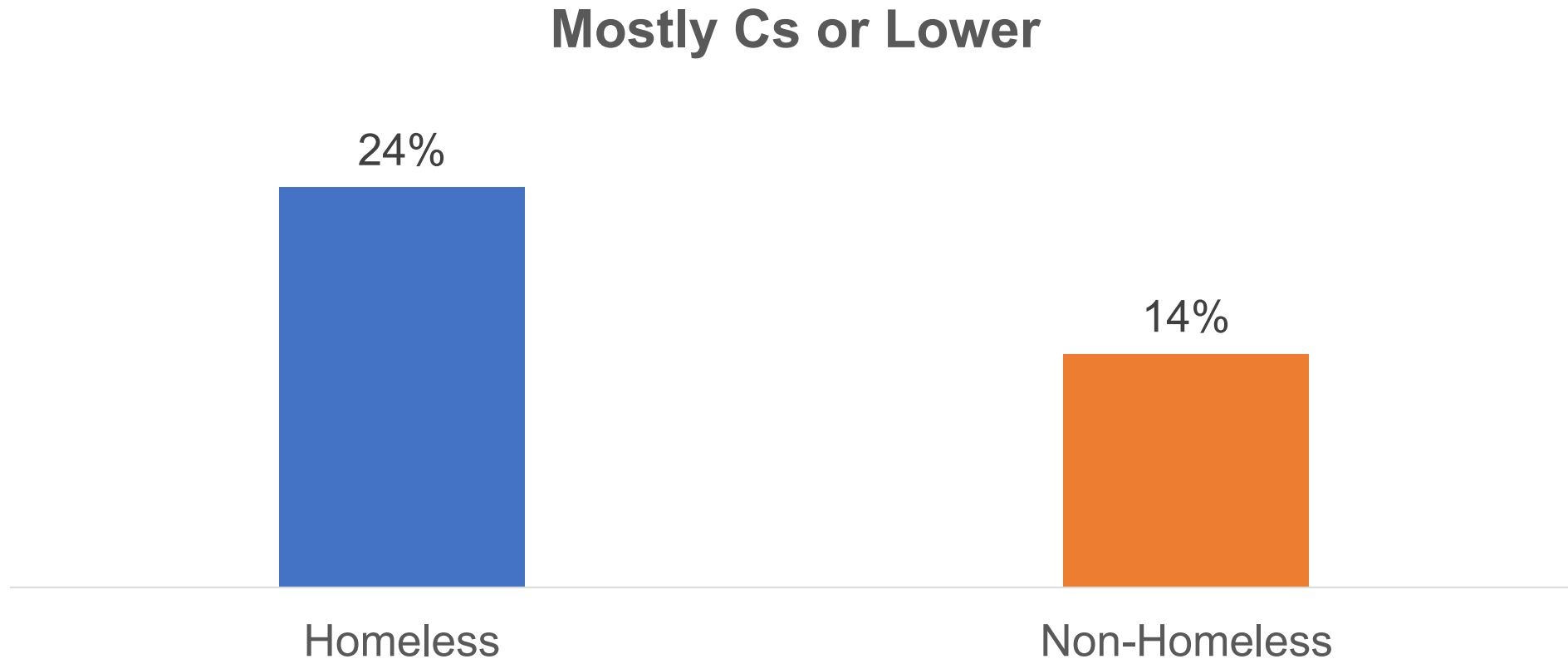
Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24:
<https://calschls.org/>

CHKS Statewide Sample: Race/Ethnicity



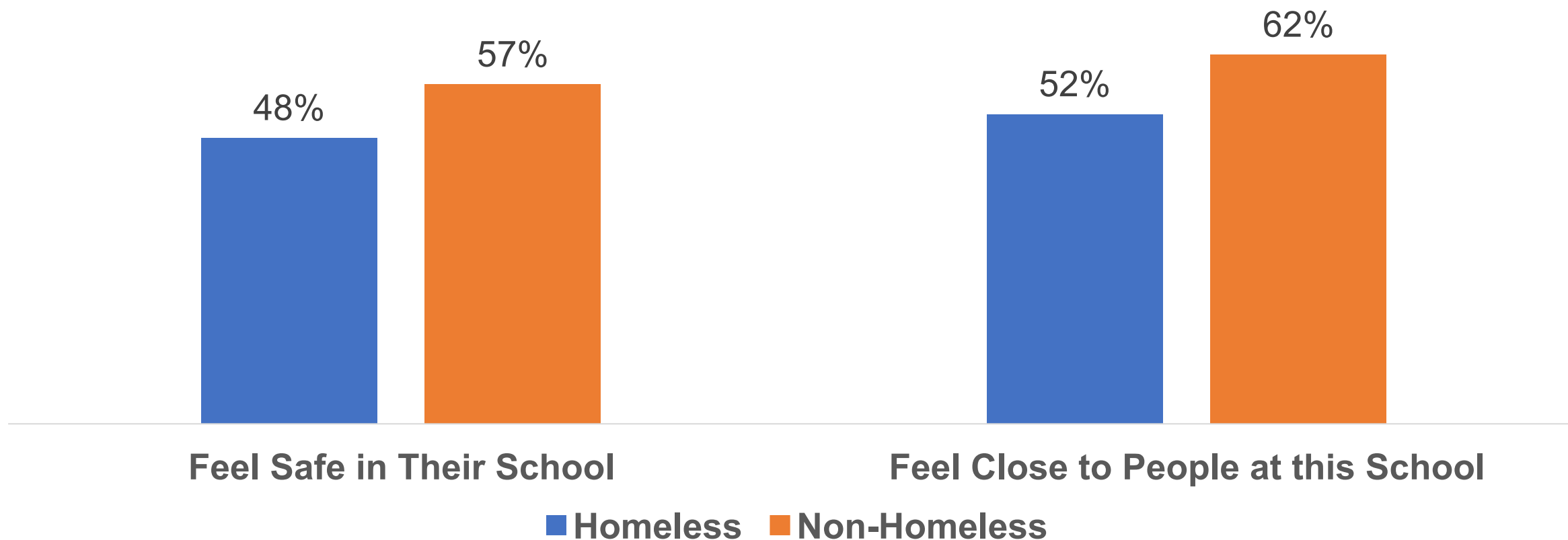
Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>

CHKS Statewide Sample: Academic Performance



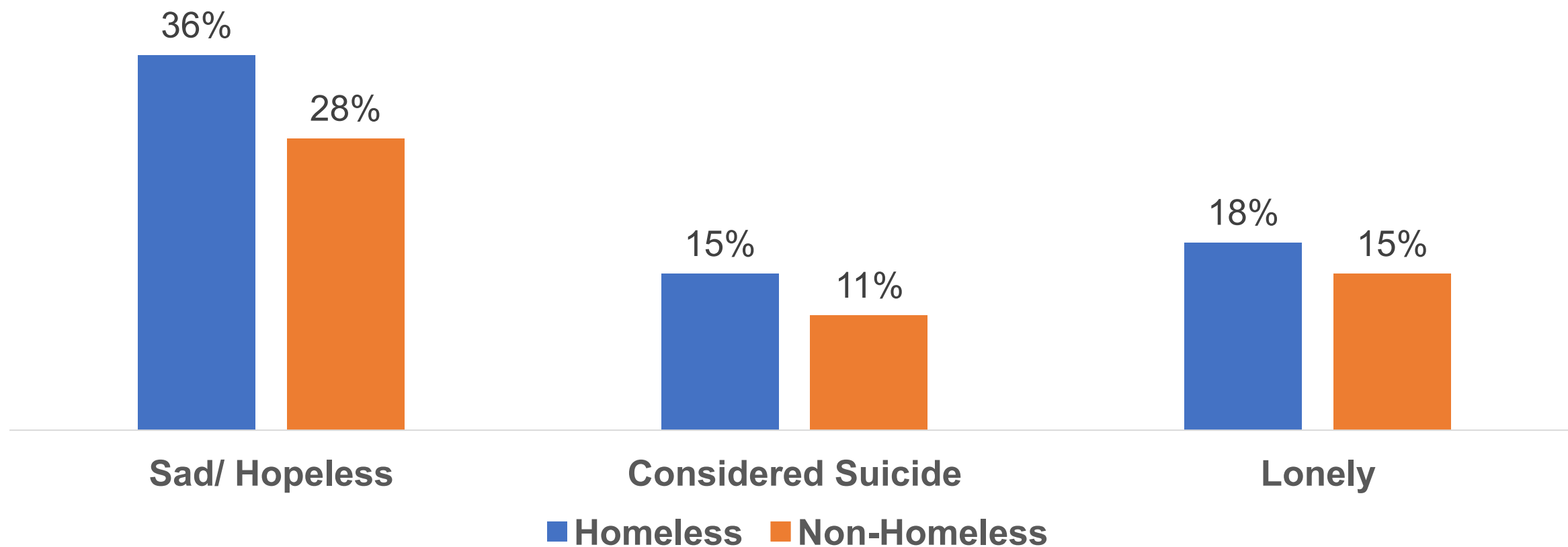
Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>

CHKS Statewide Sample: School Safety and Connections



Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>

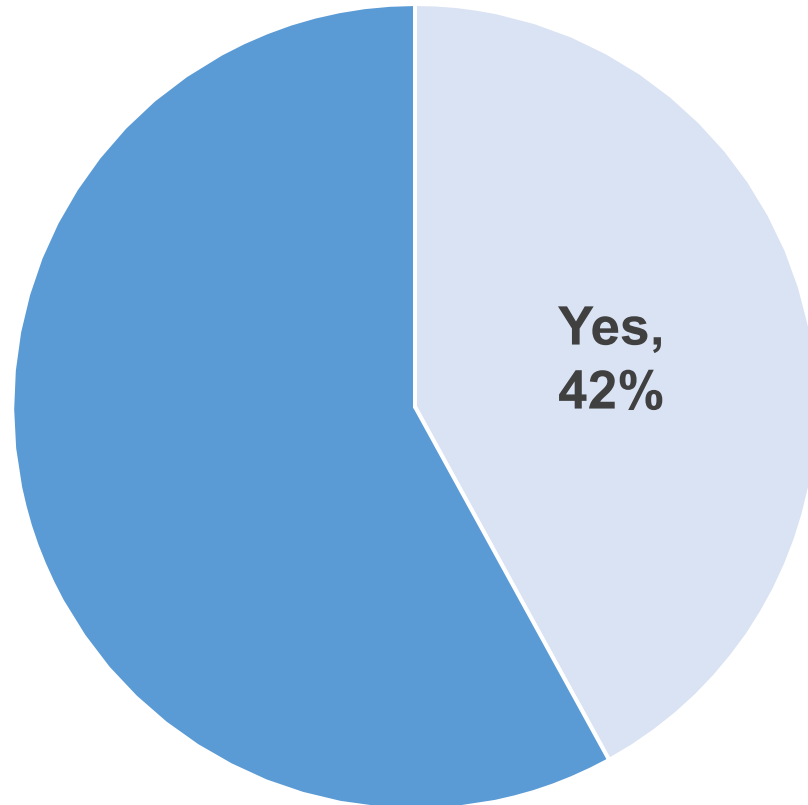
CHKS Statewide and BH Module Samples: Mental Health Indicators



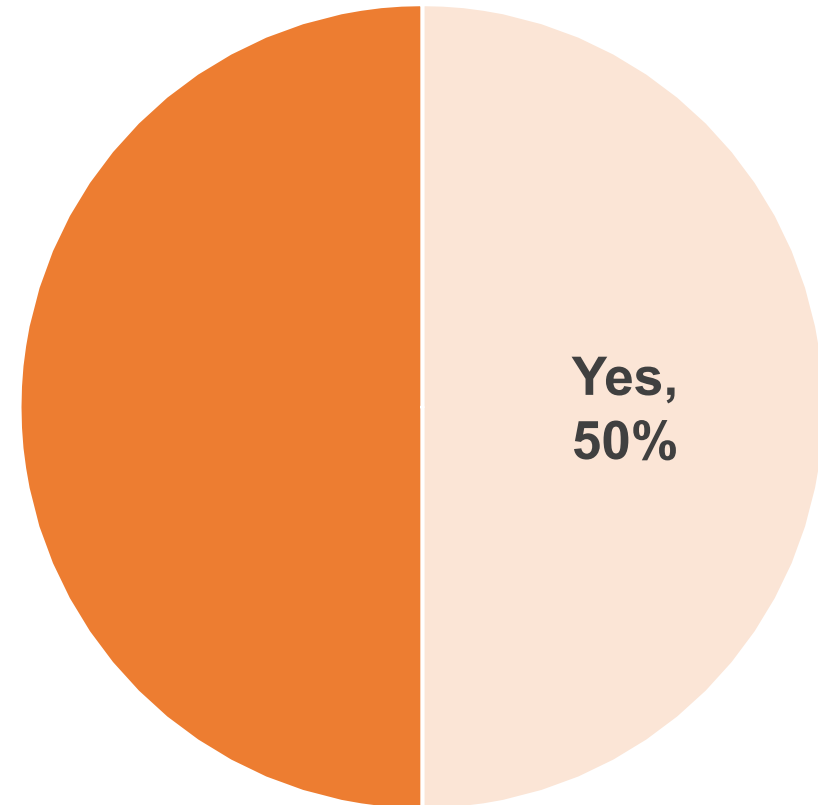
Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>
Suicide and Sad/Hopeless asked about past year (Core module); Loneliness was “often” (MHS module)

CHKS Statewide BH Module Sample: Have an Adult to Talk to at School Who Would Understand My Problems if I Shared Them

Homeless



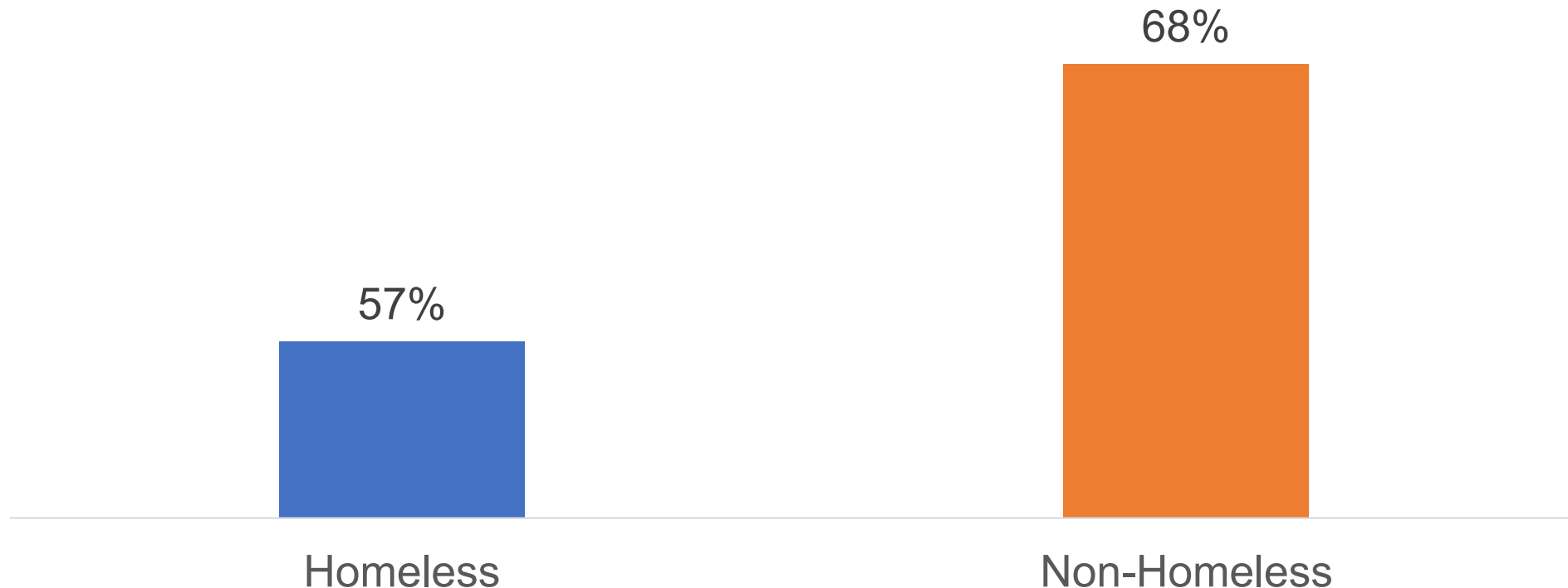
Non-Homeless



Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>

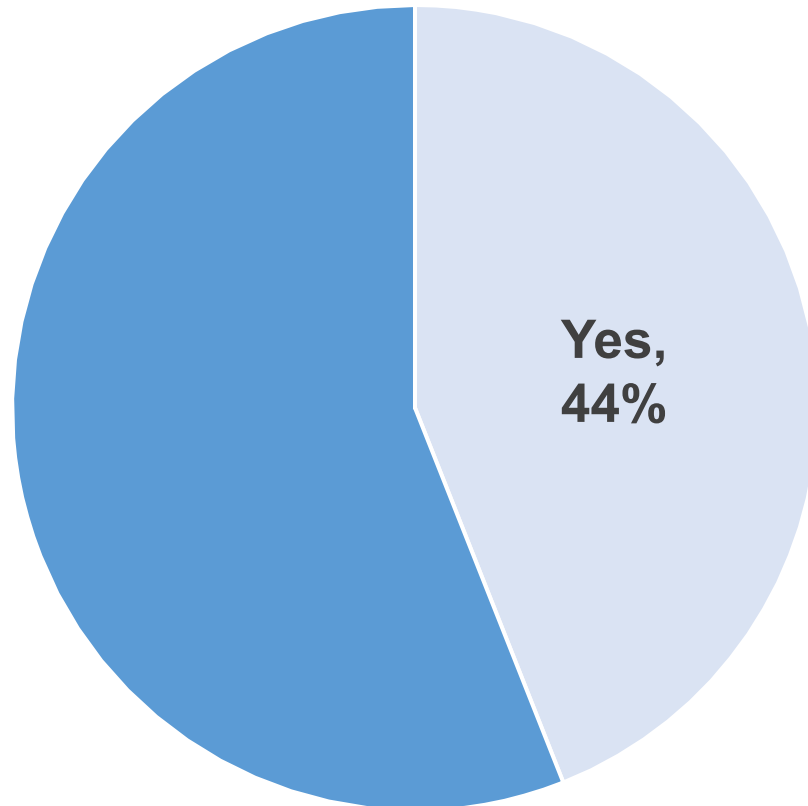
Yes= "pretty much true" or "very much true"

CHKS Statewide BH Module Sample: Know Where to Go for Help at School if Experiencing Mental Health Concerns

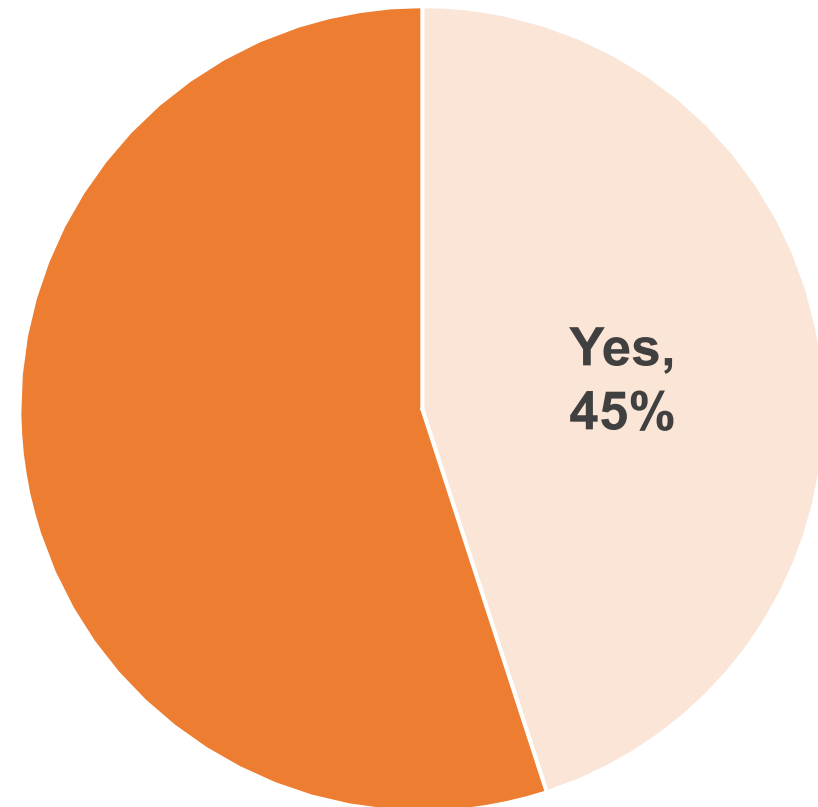


CHKS Statewide BH Module Sample: Received Help from a Counselor or Therapist When Needed

Homeless



Non-Homeless



Source: WestEd and CDE. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2023-24: <https://calschls.org/>

**Do you have questions or
insights about these findings?**





Public Sources of Data on Youth Experiencing Homelessness:

Understanding Local Needs

CHKS Public Dashboards

WestEd Public Dashboards:

<https://calschls.org/reports-data/public-dashboards/>

Follow **Steps 1-5** below to select the categories to be displayed on the charts.

Step 1:

Select State, County, or District

State

Step 2:

Select Domain

(All)

Step 3:

Select Measure

Considered suicide

Step 4:

Select Student Characteristic

- ☐ All Students
- ☐ Instructional model
- ☐ Afterschool Participation
- ☐ Breakfast
- ☐ Caring Adult Relationships Scale
- ☐ Chronic Sadness
- ☐ English Language Proficiency
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Gender Identity
- ☒ Living Situation
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Military Status
- ☐ Parental Education
- ☐ Race/Ethnicity
- ☐ Sexual Orientation

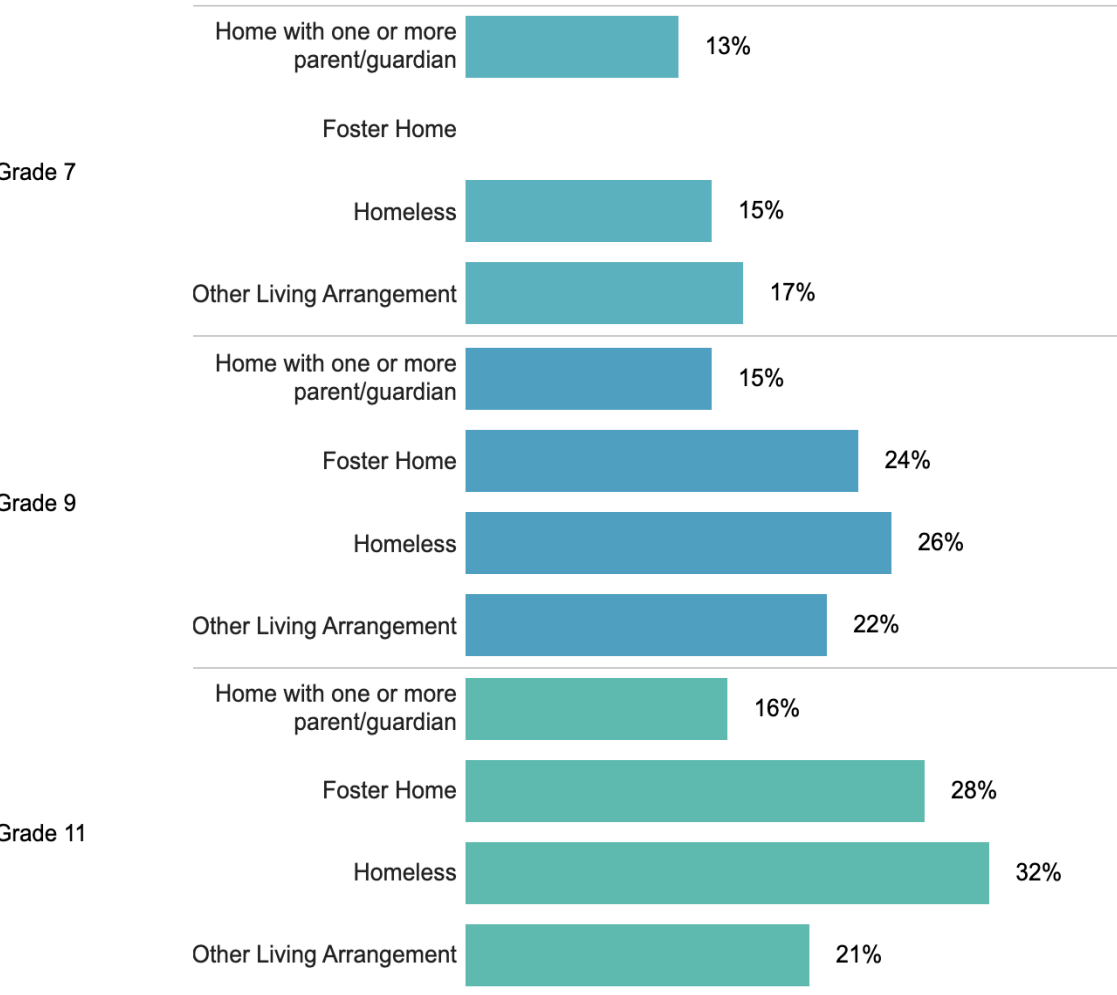
Step 5:

Select the **Most Recent** view or the **Trends Over Time** view by clicking on the corresponding tab in the upper left corner of the dashboard.

State | Most Recent Data (2019-21)

Considered suicide | Past 12 months

Results disaggregated by: **Living Situation**



CHKS Public Dashboards

WestEd Public Dashboards:

<https://calschls.org/reports-data/public-dashboards/>

Follow **Steps 1-5** below to select the categories to be displayed on the charts.

Step 1:
Select State, County, or District

San Diego Unified (County: San Diego) ▼

Step 2:
Select Domain

Social and Emotional Health ▼

Step 3:
Select Measure

Considered suicide ▼

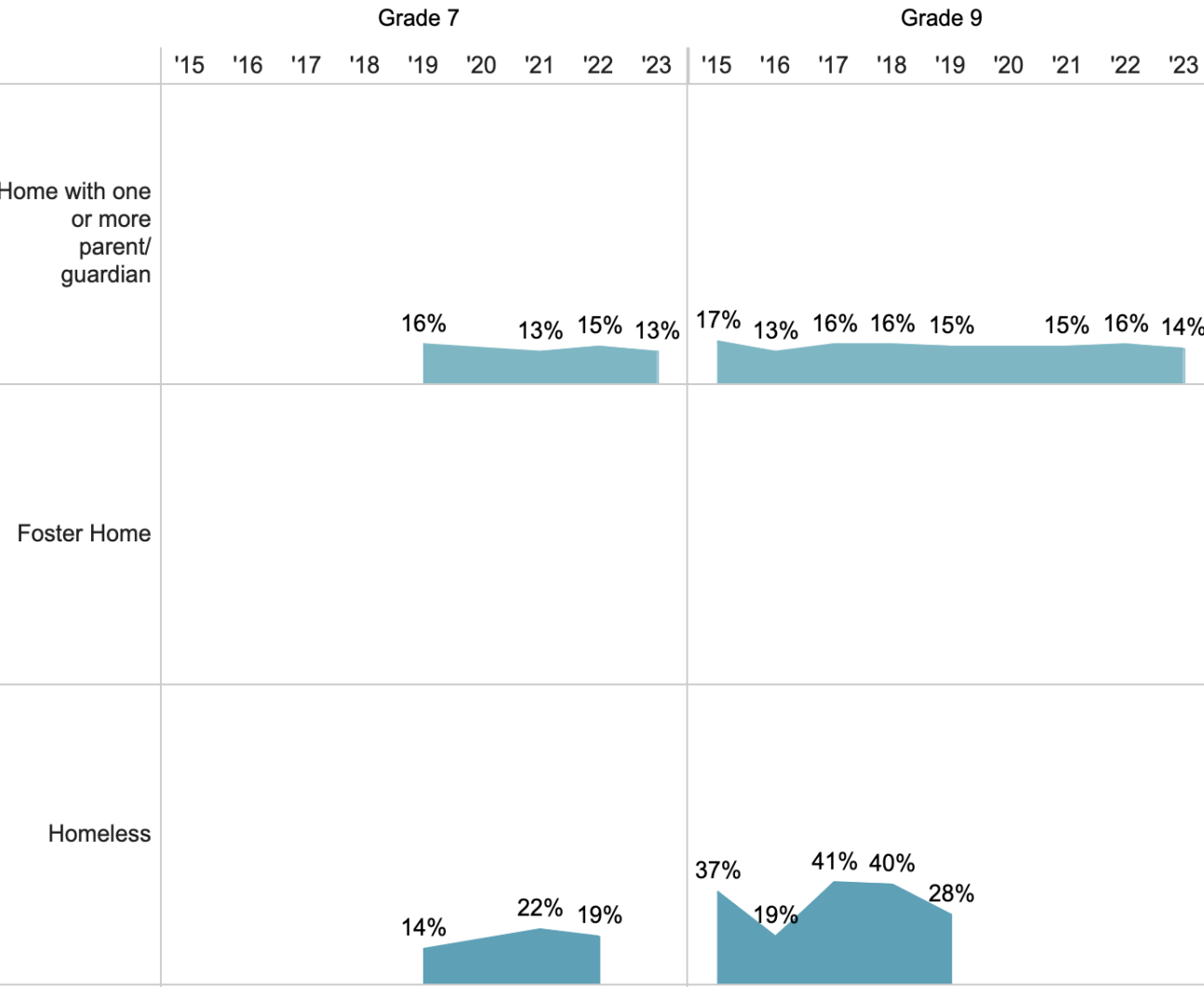
Step 4:
Select Student Characteristic

- ☐ All Students
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- ☐ Afterschool Participation
- ☐ Breakfast
- ☐ Caring Adult Relationships Scale
- ☐ Chronic Sadness
- ☐ English Language Proficiency
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Gender Identity
- ☒ Living Situation
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Military Status
- ☐ Parental Education
- ☐ Race/Ethnicity
- ☐ School Boredom Mindset Profiles
- ☐ Sexual Orientation

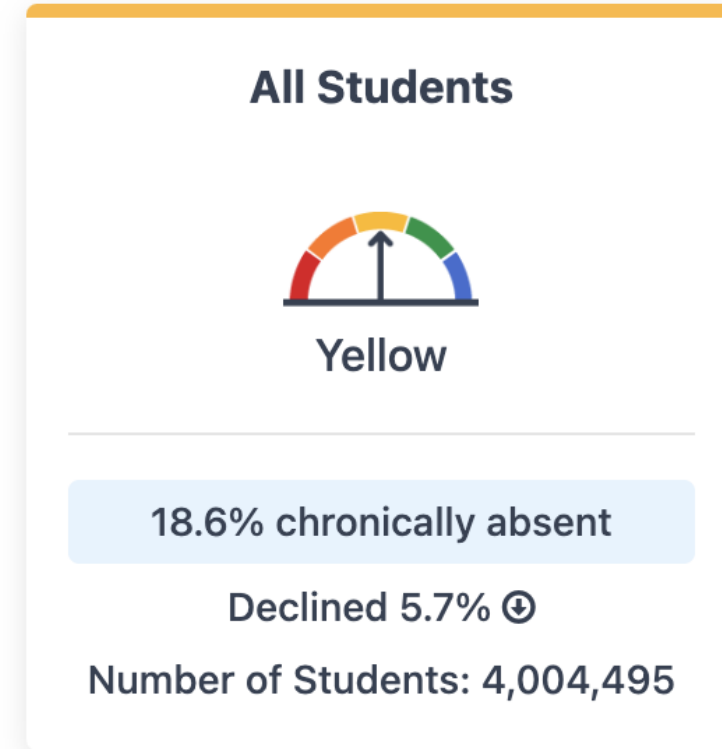
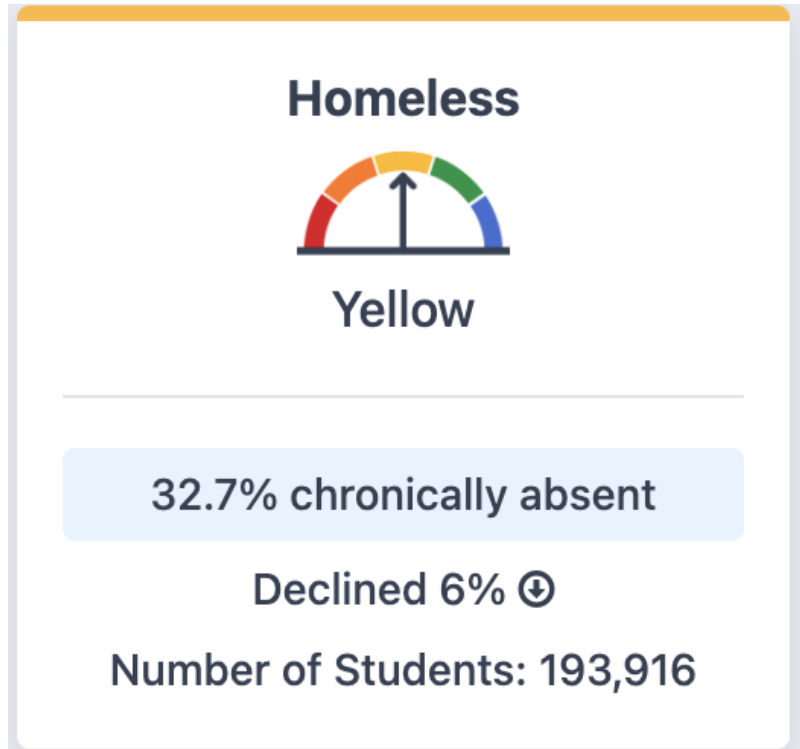
Step 5:
Select the **Most Recent** view or the **Trends Over Time** view by clicking on the corresponding tab in the upper left corner of the dashboard.

San Diego Unified (County: San Diego) | Trends Over Time

Considered suicide | Past 12 months
Results disaggregated by: **Living Situation**

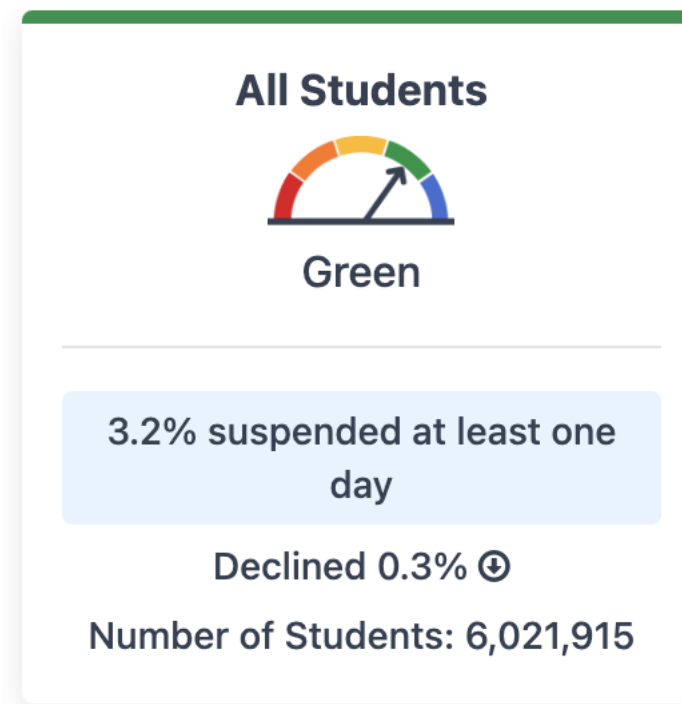
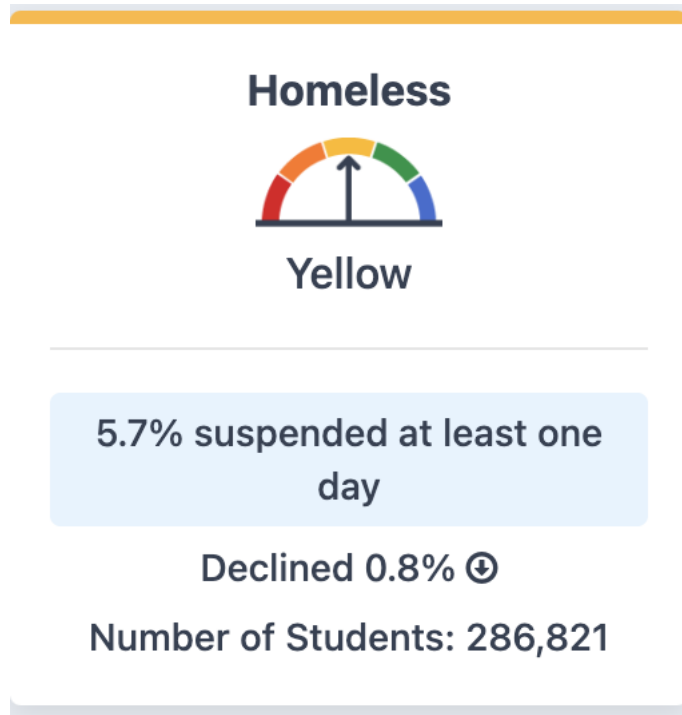


CDE Dashboards: Chronic Absenteeism



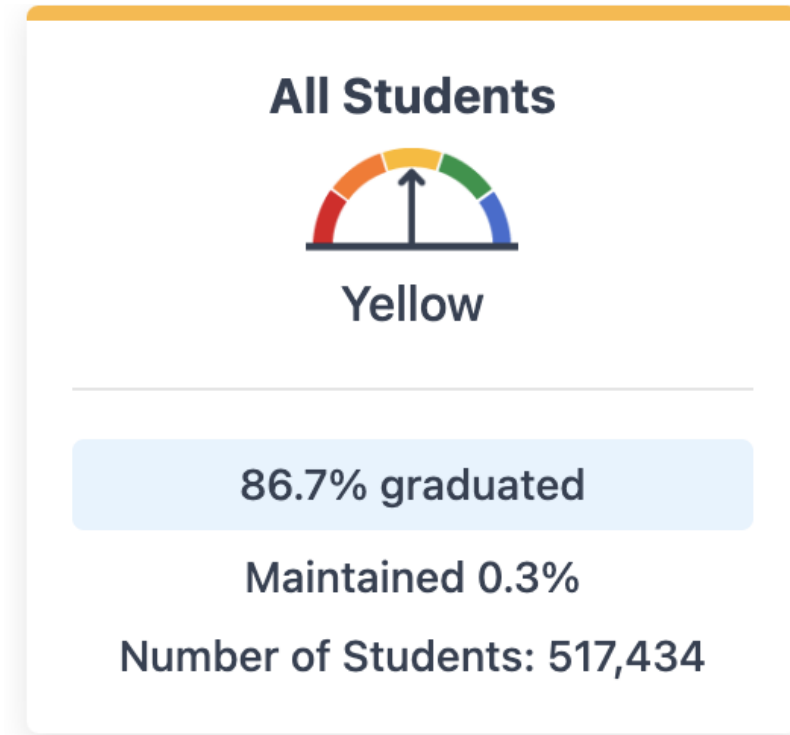
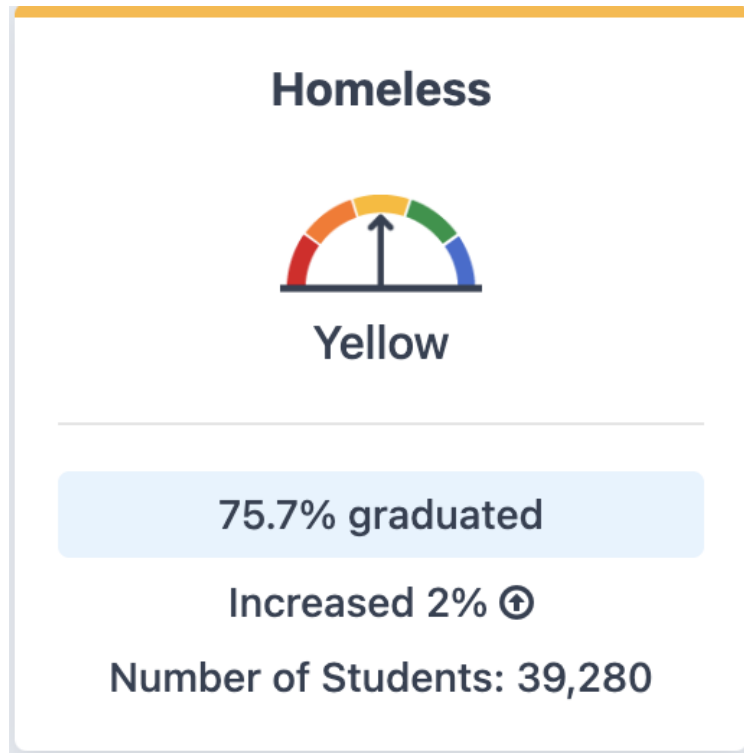
Source: California Department of Education: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/ca/2024/academic-engagement#chronic-absenteeism>

CDE Dashboards: Suspensions



Source: California Department of Education: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/ca/2024/conditions-and-climate#suspension-rate>

CDE Dashboards: Graduation Rates



Source: California Department of Education: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/ca/2024/academic-engagement#graduation-rate>

**How have you found
any of these sources to
be useful?**



Evaluation Methods to Document Reach and Impacts:

Describe your work supporting students experiencing homelessness

Sample Tracking Log

HES TA Log 2023-2024									
Date of TA	LEA, School, Agency, or Other	Recipient Organization/ Type	TA Type	Tier 1, 2, or 3 1-universal 2-personal 3-requires extra assistance	Estimated length of time	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Notes
	LEA		In person			Attendance			
	Agency		Telephone			AB 27			
	School		Video Call			ARP Funds			
	Charter School		E-mail			Data			
	School District					Dispute			
	Early Ed				0-15 mins	Early Ed			Housing Questionnaire
	Shelter				15-30 mins	EHCY grant/Title I			Legal
	Other				30-45 mins	Eligibility			Medical related
					45-60mins	Enrollment			Resources
					1-1.5 hrs	Forms			School Supplies
					1.5-2 hrs	Graduation related			Special Ed
					2+ hrs	Higher Ed			Training
									Transportation
									UAY
									Other

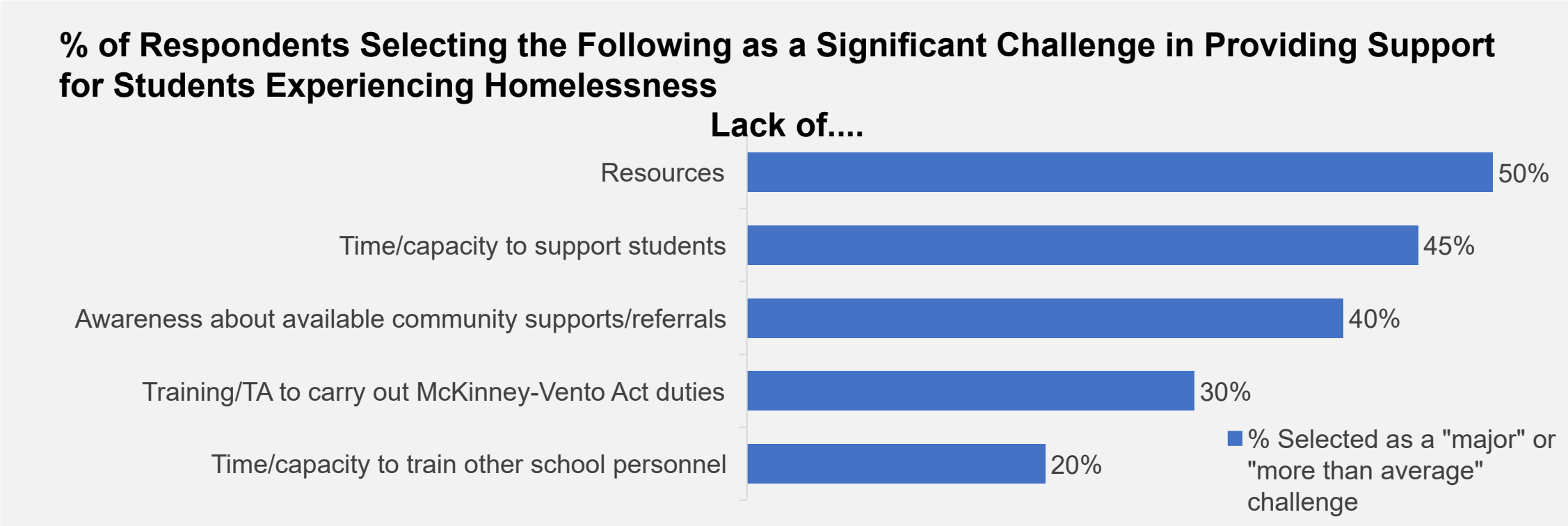
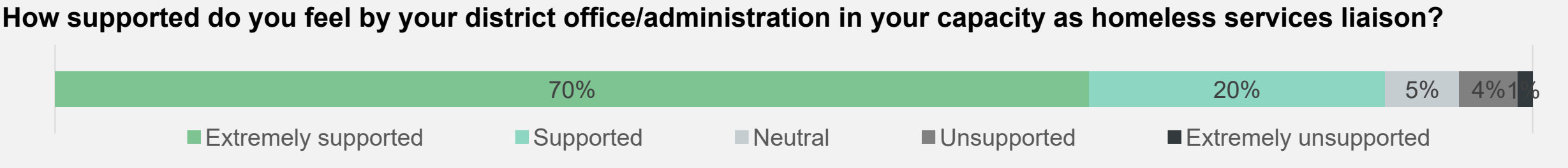
SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

Populations
to Survey

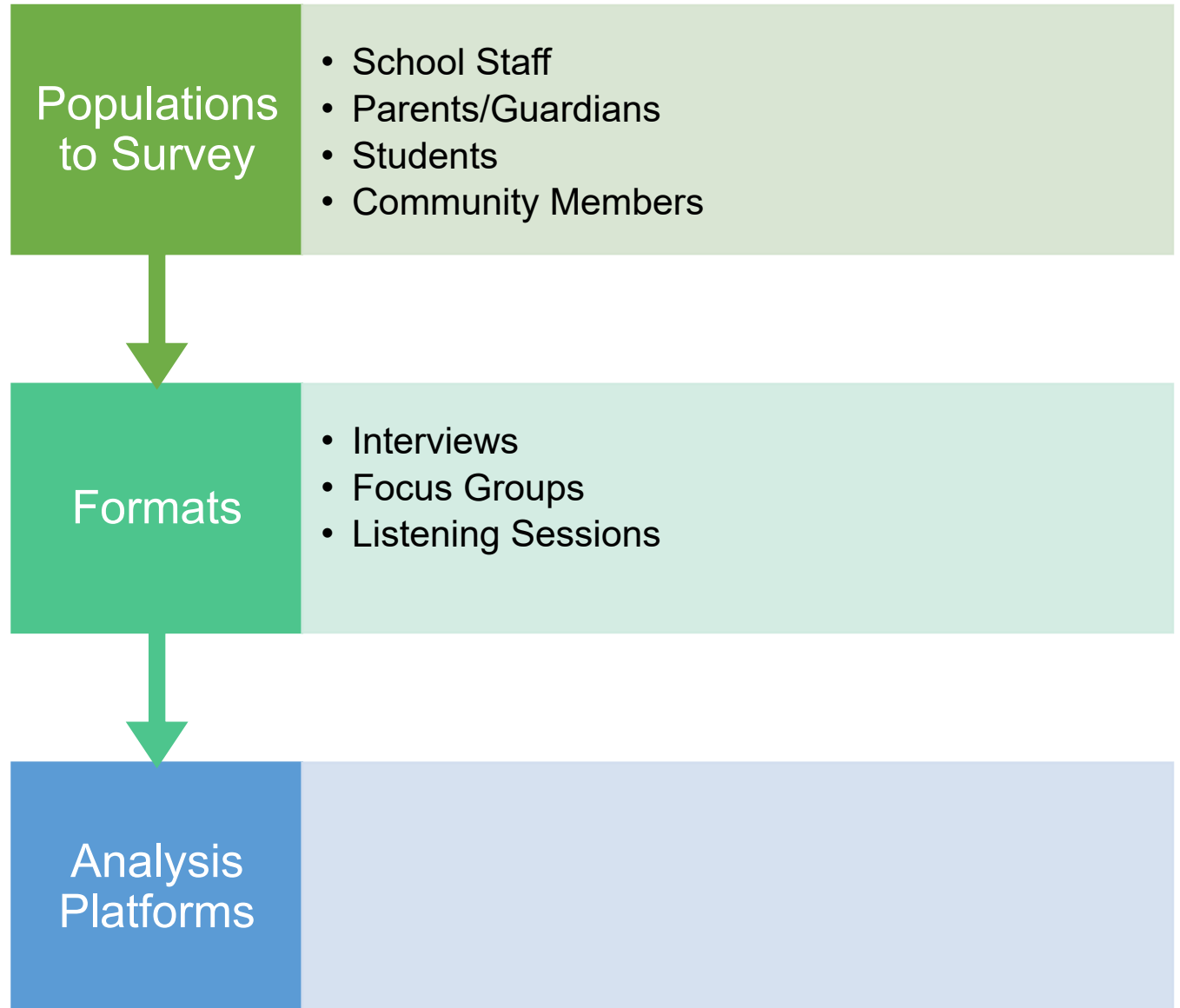
- School Staff
- Parents/Guardians
- Students
- Community Members

Analysis
Tools

Sample Survey Findings



QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION





Sample Qualitative Findings

How can schools better support youth and their families experiencing homelessness?

- *“Support with food, access to laundry, showers, and clothing.”*
- *“To continue having opportunities/options for the kids to get clothing or food like every other child in their school.”*
- *“Have more mental health support. Their schools need more support, like counselors that are available and not tied up with other students.”*
- *“A 1-on-1 with families. Every family is different and you can't categorize us under the same box. We all have different needs.”*
- *“Talk to students individually so that they do not feel embarrassed to receive help of any kind that is available through the school or helping institutions.”*

Dissemination


Los Angeles County Office of Education



2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR IMPACT

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Student Services and Programs Division's Homeless Education Program (HEP) helps to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are enrolled, attend school, and thrive during their academic experience. LACOE HEP provides support and resources to the 80 school districts in the county, Juvenile Court, Community Schools, and 371 county-wide charter schools to implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This brief summarizes the impacts of LACOE's work to support homeless education services in local education agencies (LEAs) across Los Angeles County during the 2023-24 school year.

According to a survey of Los Angeles County Homeless Education Liaisons, the **top needs of students experiencing homelessness are:**

Housing support (82%)

Transportation (60%)

Mental health services (46%)

LEA Homeless Education Liaison survey respondents reported an increase in anxiety, trauma, and social-emotional needs among youth experiencing homelessness since the pandemic, as well as issues with mental health service access at the county level.


"We don't have anywhere for families to go to if they need a changing station, if they need a shower, or somewhere to sleep in for those who do not have a car."
- LEA HEP Liaison


LACOE HEP provides **professional development, technical assistance (TA), and training** to LEA Homeless Education Liaisons and other staff and community partners who are involved in working with youth and families experiencing homelessness.

LACOE HEP provided **754 TA consultations** to homeless education liaisons and other education and community partners during the 2023-24 school year. Topics most frequently asked about during TA contacts were:

- McKinney-Vento family consultations about housing and academic support and services
- Attendance concerns, including barriers to attendance and strategies/resources to improve attendance
- Case management support for individual students and families

"I appreciate [the LACOE team] making yourselves available to us all for support. I appreciate you sharing the recent data as well as letting us know about the changes in law/policy. Thank you!" - LEA HEP Liaison


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Participants rated the training events:

4.6 out of 5 for effectiveness/helpfulness on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

"Fantastic work. So excited about the additional capacity this program has now. You can feel the difference in support and information that's provided to us. Thank you!" - LEA HEP Liaison

LEA Homeless Education Liaisons and community partners shared feedback on the **effectiveness of the support provided by LACOE HEP.**

"Dr. Kotite is amazing. I can't tell you I've called her so many times. She walks me through things. She's so patient. If I email her, she'll get right back. If I call her, she answers." - LEA HEP Liaison

"I think LACOE has done a really good job of putting out a lot of information, which is super helpful!" - LEA HEP Liaison

LEA Homeless Education Liaisons and community partners expressed strong appreciation for LACOE HEP's:

responsiveness, expertise, and dedication & effective information sharing and resource provision


to support these working with students experiencing homelessness.


LEA Homeless Education Liaisons and community partners stressed the need for:

more support and staff to help manage the workload and enhance LACOE's ability to serve students experiencing homelessness effectively

& accessible, practical resources to help staff working with students experiencing homelessness

This brief was produced by the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) School Health Evaluation and Research Team (<https://schoolhealthresearch.ucsf.edu/>) in partnership with LACOE HEP as part of an evaluation of the LACOE HEP program.


San Diego County Office of Education



2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR IMPACT

Through their Homeless Education Services Program (HES), the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Student Services and Programs Division provides support and resources to the 42 school districts in the county, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS), and county-wide charter schools to implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Each district or school designates a local liaison who serves as the primary contact to interface with the SDCOE HES. SDCOE HES provides technical assistance (TA) and training to the homeless liaisons and other staff who are involved in working with children and youth experiencing homelessness. This brief summarizes the impacts of SDCOE's work to support homeless education services in schools across San Diego County during the 2023-24 school year.

504 Technical assistance (TA) contacts provided

District and charter school staff received the largest portion of TA consultations from SDCOE HES (60%). Other recipients included agency staff, families, students, and early education representatives. The four topics most frequently asked about during TA contacts were:

- 37% Resources**, including, housing and shelter, community collaboration, academic support, and training new liaisons.
- 20% Eligibility**, including identification, reviewing McKinney-Vento and Homeless Education Services resources, and the Housing Questionnaire.
- 17% Enrollment**, including maintaining enrollment in school of origin.
- 17% Transportation**, including bus passes.

20 Trainings and webinars provided


During the 2023-24 school year, SDCOE provided the following professional development and trainings for district homeless liaisons and school staff:


Training	# of Trainings	# of Attendees
McKinney-Vento 101	5	266
Trauma, Hope, and Engagement	3	82
Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness	2	72
Identification of McKinney-Vento Students	1	62
Regional Meetings	6	58
Beyond the Mandates	1	51
Special Populations in Career and Technical Education	1	37
Homelessness and Higher Education	1	30

Total attendees: 658

"[SDCOE HES] is always prompt to respond and provide feedback and guidance when I am stuck in a difficult situation."

-Homeless Liaison


San Diego County Office of Education



2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR IMPACT

Through their Homeless Education Services Program (HES), the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Student Services and Programs Division provides support and resources to the 42 school districts in the county, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS), and county-wide charter schools to implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Each district or school designates a local liaison who serves as the primary contact to interface with the SDCOE HES. SDCOE HES provides technical assistance (TA) and training to the homeless liaisons and other staff who are involved in working with children and youth experiencing homelessness. This brief summarizes the impacts of SDCOE's work to support homeless education services in schools across San Diego County during the 2023-24 school year.

Project Rest

Project Rest, which launched in Spring 2022 and concluded in June 2024, was a collaboration involving SDCOE, San Diego Youth Services, local school districts, and charter schools. Project REST aimed to provide temporary motel stays for homeless students and their families who were experiencing homelessness. Families were offered stays ranging from one to 15 nights, allowing them a brief period of respite and stability. By ensuring students had a stable place to stay, the project helped maintain school attendance and continuity in education. During their stay, school staff and project staff worked together to connect families with other community housing organizations, potentially offering longer-term solutions beyond temporary shelter. While nearly all youth and families needed resources for housing navigation, Project Rest also helped them secure other critical resources, including food, diapers, clothing, hygiene products, employment, and transportation.

In two years of Project Rest implementation:

- 55** districts and charters received assistance
- 2,143** temporary motel stay reservations were made for students and their families experiencing homelessness
- \$687,627** spent in total on motel stays

California Homeless Education FAFSA/CADAA Challenge

John Burton Advocates for Youth, California Department of Education, and California Community College Chancellor's Office facilitate a collaborative effort to support students experiencing homelessness who were in their senior year in completing their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Applications (CADAA) applications in California to apply to receive aid to pursue college, university or vocational school.

The goal of the challenge program was to increase the number of homeless youth completing their FAFSA/CADAA applications. SDCOE assisted school districts by providing technical assistance, promotional materials, and resources.

The program resulted in an increase the number of districts participating each school year from:

4 in 2022-23 to **13** in 2023-24

All districts reporting data were issued pre-paid cards for students who completed their FAFSA/CADAA applications for the purchase of school supplies and as an incentive to encourage completion of these forms.

Stuff the Bus

Each year, the SDCOE HES program partners with the San Diego County Credit Union (SDCCU) to collect thousands of dollars in online donations to purchase much-needed pencils, pens, binders, crayons, backpacks, and more during the SDCCU Stuff the Bus campaign. The campaign, which runs through July, also partners with Jersey Mike's and local iHeartMedia radio stations for special appearances and live interviews.


Last year, Stuff the Bus:

- raised **\$103,102** and provided **9,147** backpacks and **220,290** supplies
- to **34** school districts and **31** charter schools countywide for their students experiencing homelessness.

"[SDCOE HES] is highly responsive, provides appropriate guidance, and is just really wonderful about making sure that we have the information we need in order to better support [students experiencing homelessness]."

- LEA Homeless Liaison

Which methods do you think you might try or are you currently using?



Resources to Support Youth Mental Health

Free Resources

- **CYBHI Mental Health Digital Toolkit** promotes Mental Health Awareness Month 2025, with social media graphics and resources. <https://cybhi.chhs.ca.gov/resource/one-thing-to-support-mental-health/>

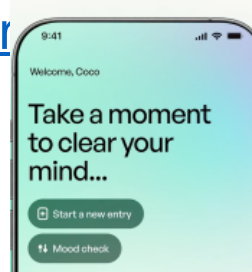


- **Cal HOPE Schools** is a California-wide program that offers free, confidential, and safe mental health support resources and services to individuals, families, and schools. <https://www.calhopeschools.org>

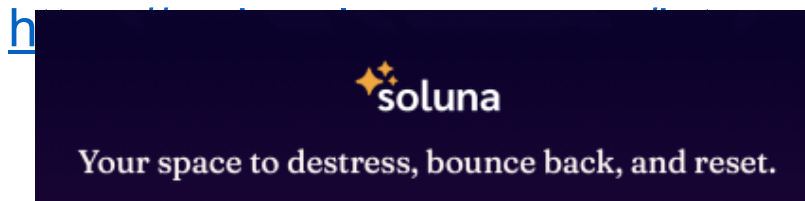


More Free Resources

- **Mirror Journal App** is a personal insights and journal app for self-care, mindfulness, and personal growth. <https://www.mirrorjour>



- **Soluna App** is a confidential mental health support service for ages 13-25 in California that offers 1:1 coaching, peer support, interactive tools, and a community forum.



- **Bright Life Kids** provides personalized support for California families with kids ages 0–12, including 1:1 video sessions, secure

<https://www.hellobrightline.com/bright>

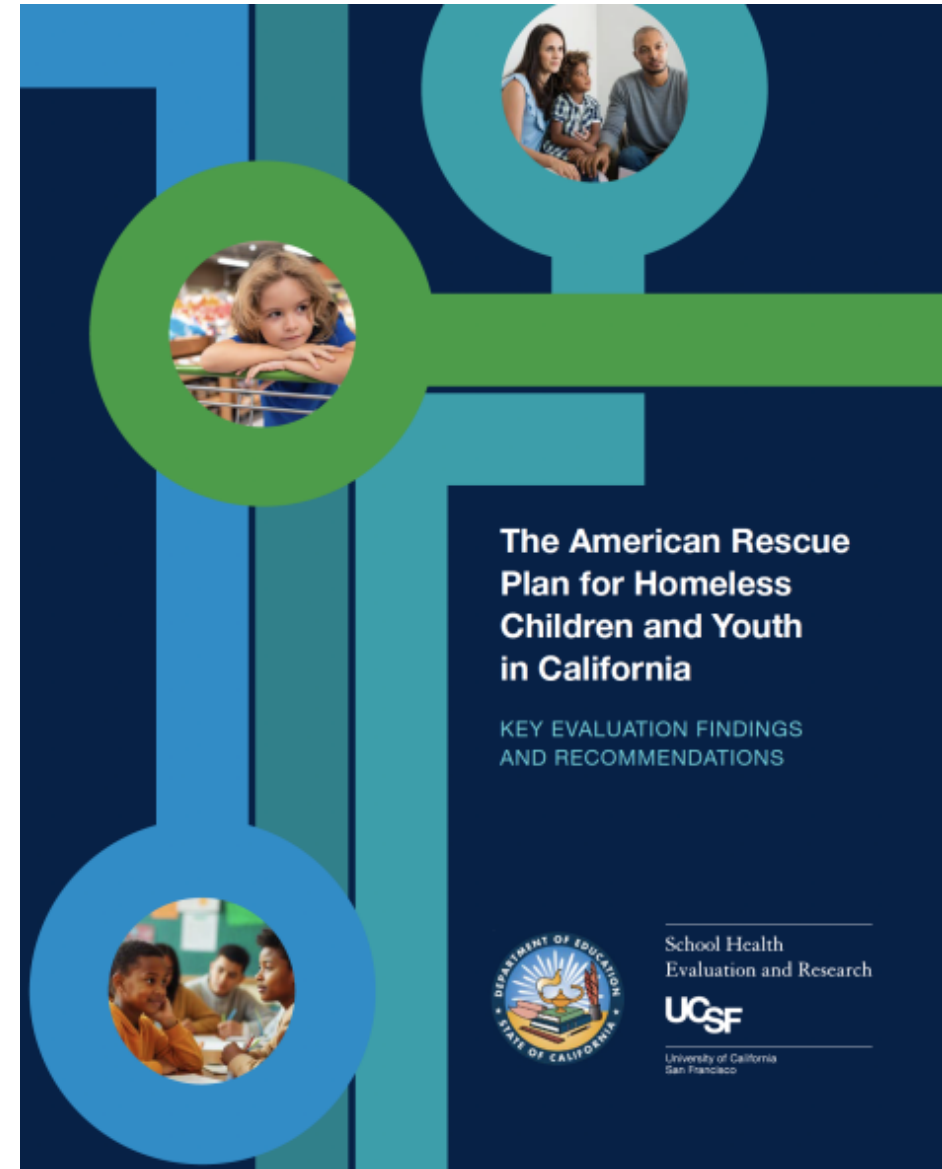


**Do you have resources
or best practices to
share?**

ARP-HCY Evaluation Report Release



<https://tiny.ucsf.edu/YZoXXh>



Questions?

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- Samira Soleimanpour, PhD, MPH:
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School Health
Evaluation and Research



University of California
San Francisco

