



McKinney-Vento Act Implementation in Vermont LEAs

**CAPACITY ASSESSMENT
DATA DECK**

NOVEMBER 2023

Methodology

- Throughout 2023, Noonmark Services, a Burlington-based consulting group, worked with the Agency of Education State Coordinator for Homeless Education to design and implement a statewide assessment of McKinney-Vento Act implementation at Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Vermont
- The team conducted interviews and focus groups with LEAs' homeless liaisons, interviewed representatives from state agencies and community-based organizations external to the homeless education program, and surveyed liaisons and parents/caregivers of homeless students.

AOE Assessment Contacts

- 40 liaison
- 9 parent/family surveys
- 27 liaisons participated in focus groups
- 4 AOE staff
- 32 stakeholders & key informants
- Total contacts: 112

A photograph of four children walking on a paved sidewalk in a residential neighborhood. From left to right: a boy in a blue shirt and red backpack, a boy in a red shirt and dark backpack, a boy in a yellow shirt and blue backpack, and a girl in a grey shirt and multi-colored backpack. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The background shows houses, trees, and a clear sky.

Data Snapshot

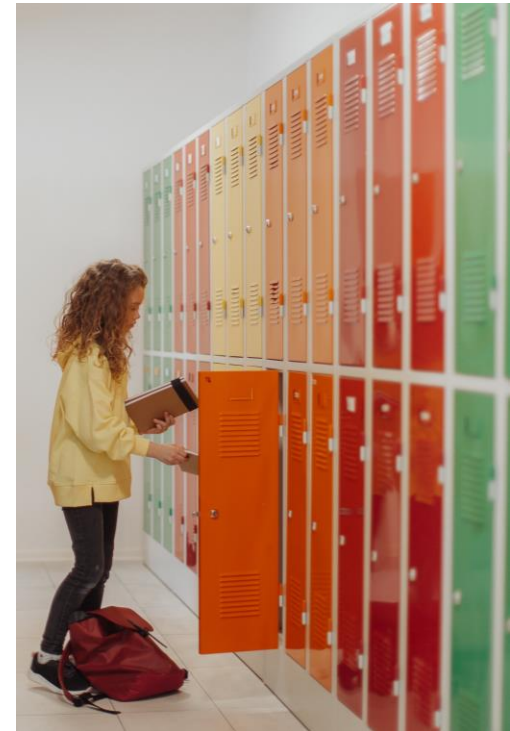


How many homeless students are there?

WHICH DISTRICTS ARE SEEING THE BIGGEST CHANGE?

Vermonters Experiencing Homelessness

- Vermont saw a 36% increase in the number of homeless families with children from 2022 to 2023
 - The 2023 Point-in-time Count identified 3,295 Vermonters experiencing homelessness (per the HUD definition)
 - Of these, 1,035 households included children
- About 1.9% of Vermont students are experiencing homelessness (per the McKinney-Vento definition), compared to 2.2% of students nationwide



McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

Children or youth who lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence, including children and youth:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a public or private place, not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances

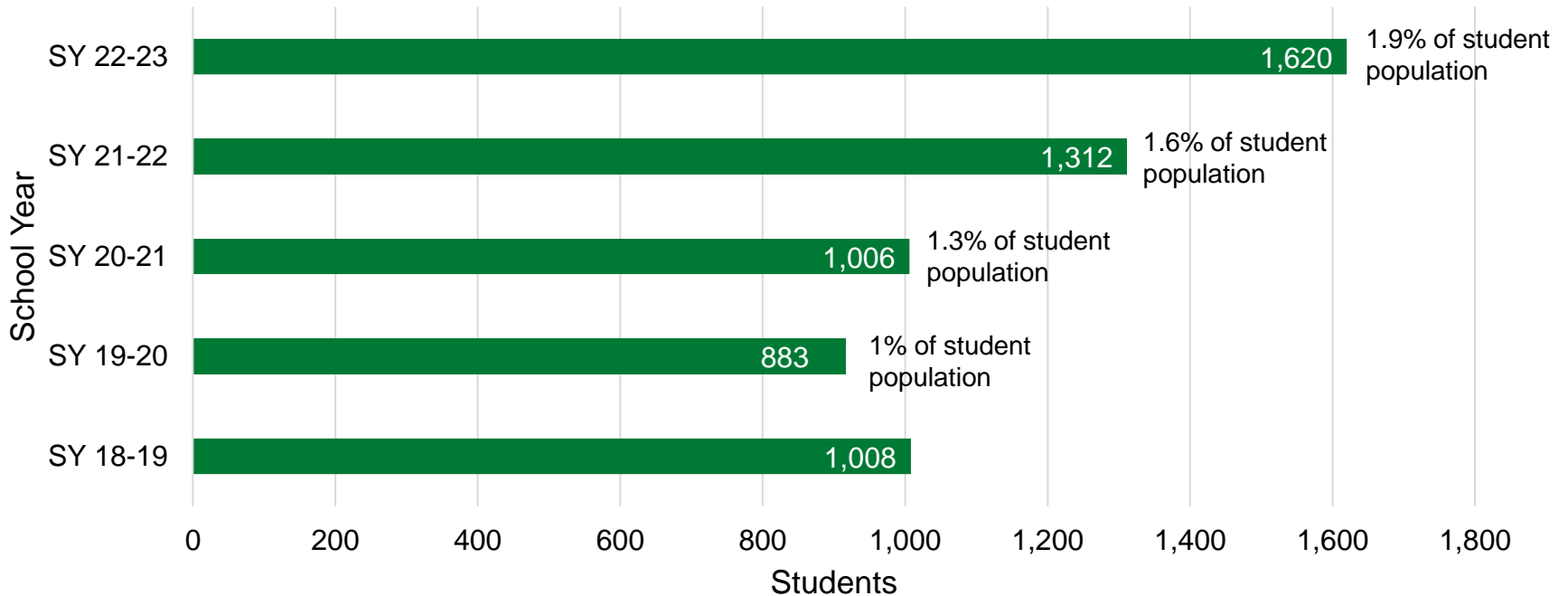
Definitions of Homelessness

Program	Unsheltered	In Shelter	Hotels/Motels	“Doubled Up” (Sharing housing)
McKinney-Vento (Education)	YES	YES	YES If due to lacking an adequate alternative (regardless of payment source)	YES If due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	YES	YES	MAYBE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If govt/charity paying (<i>cat 1</i>) • If have to leave in 14 days (<i>cat 2</i>) • If fleeing or attempting to flee violence or danger (<i>cat 4</i>) 	MAYBE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If have to leave in 14 days (<i>cat 2</i>) • If fleeing or attempting to flee violence or danger (<i>cat 4</i>)

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

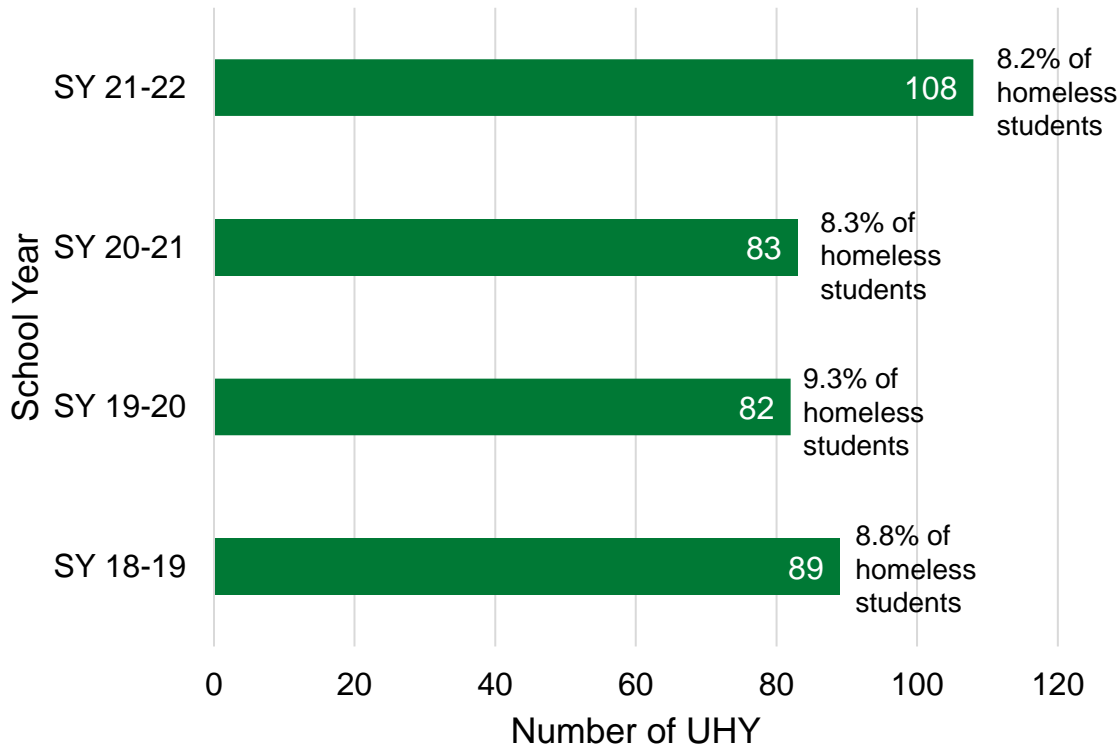
Homeless Children & Youth Enrollment Statewide in Vermont

2.2% of all students in the US are experiencing homelessness



Source: U.S. Department of Education's *EDFacts* Initiative

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY) Statewide in Vermont



- An unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) is a child or youth who meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless **and** is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian (e.g., living on their own, with a caregiver, etc.)
- 9.2% of all homeless students are unaccompanied in the US

LEA Reporting Homeless Children & Youth Enrolled in Public Schools – 1,367 in SY22-23*

LEA	# Students Reported
Southwest Vermont	179
Barre UUSD	113
Rutland City SD	95
Windham Southeast SU	84
North Country SU	73
Colchester SD	52
Burlington SD	52
Hartford SD	48
Milton Town SD	46
Washington Central UUSD	42
South Burlington SD	41
Windham Northeast SD	41
Maple Run	37
Champlain Valley SD	35
Two Rivers SU	35
St. Johnsbury SD	30
Franklin Northeast SU	27

LEA	# Students Reported
Springfield SD	27
Orleans Southwest SU	26
Rutland Northeast SU	25
Lamoille South SU	24
Orange East SU	24
Addison Central SD	23
Mt. Mansfield UUSD	22
Central Vermont SU	22
Montpelier Roxbury SD	22
Winooski SD	21
Orleans Central SU	18
White River Valley SU	17
Mill River USD	14
Windsor Central SU	14
Addison Northwest SD	13
Lamoille North SD	13
Kingdom East SD	12

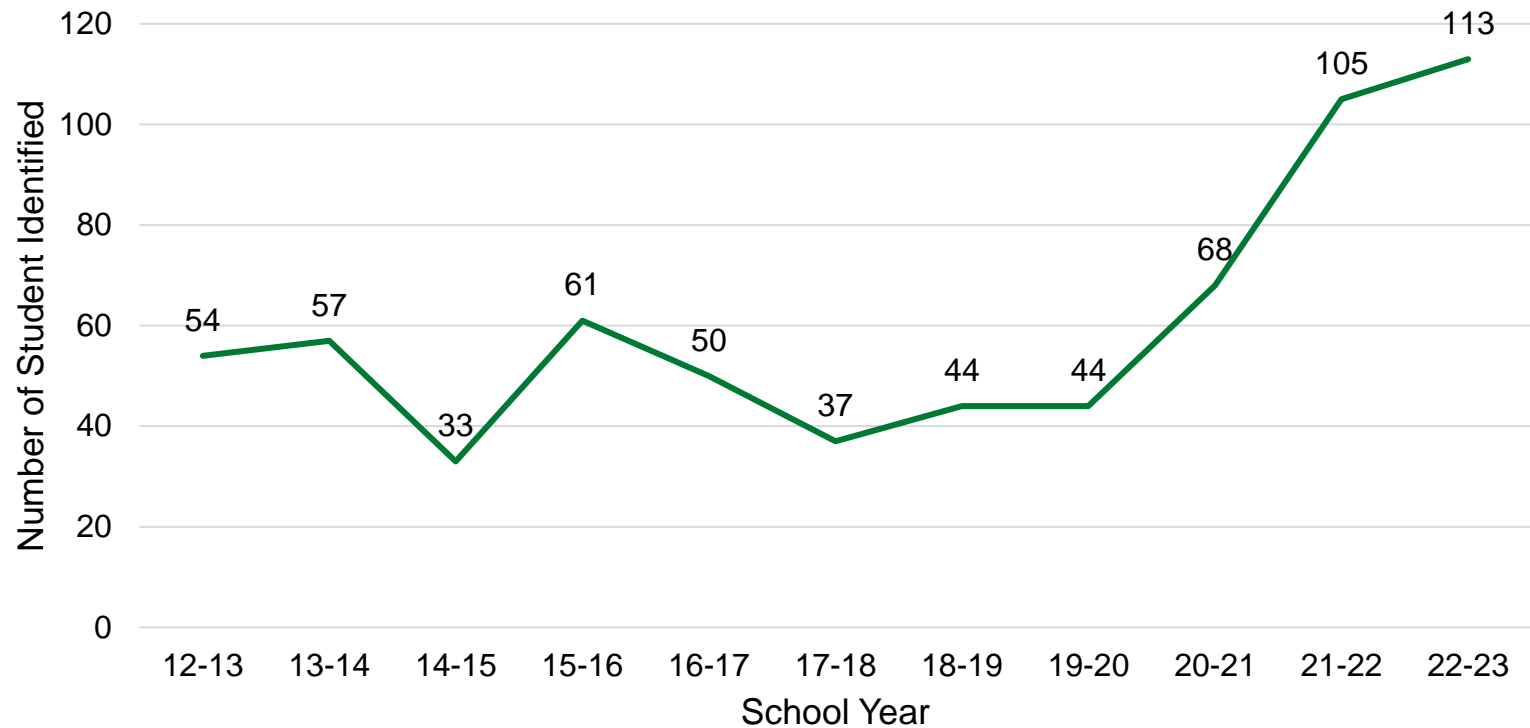
*LEAs with fewer than 10 reported cases are excluded per AOE data reporting practices

A group of five diverse students (three girls and two boys) are standing in a school hallway. They are all smiling and have their arms around each other's shoulders, suggesting a supportive and friendly environment. The hallway has large windows on the right side, letting in bright light. The students are wearing casual clothing like t-shirts, sweaters, and jackets.

Some LEAs have seen significant increases in students experiencing homelessness in the past decade

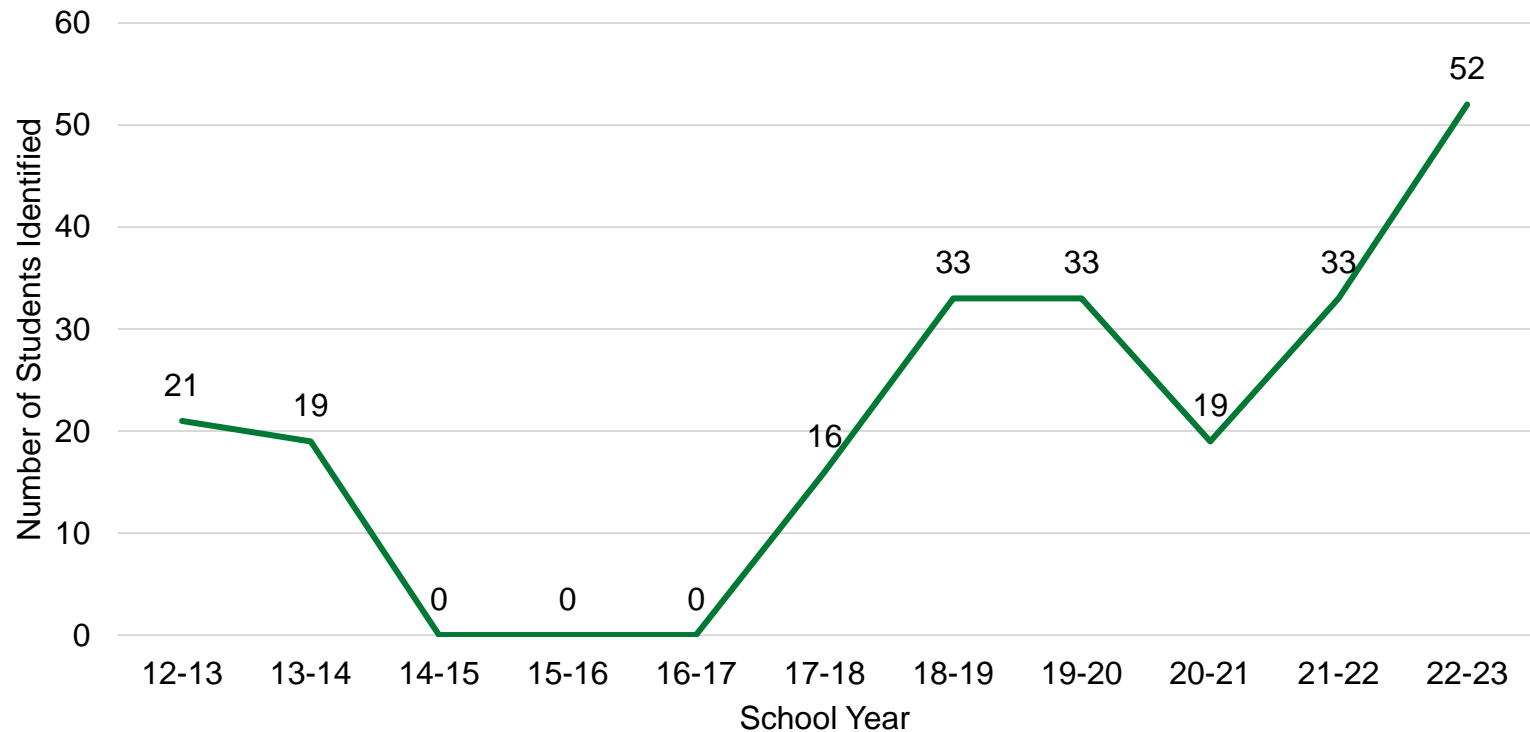
Barre UUSD

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



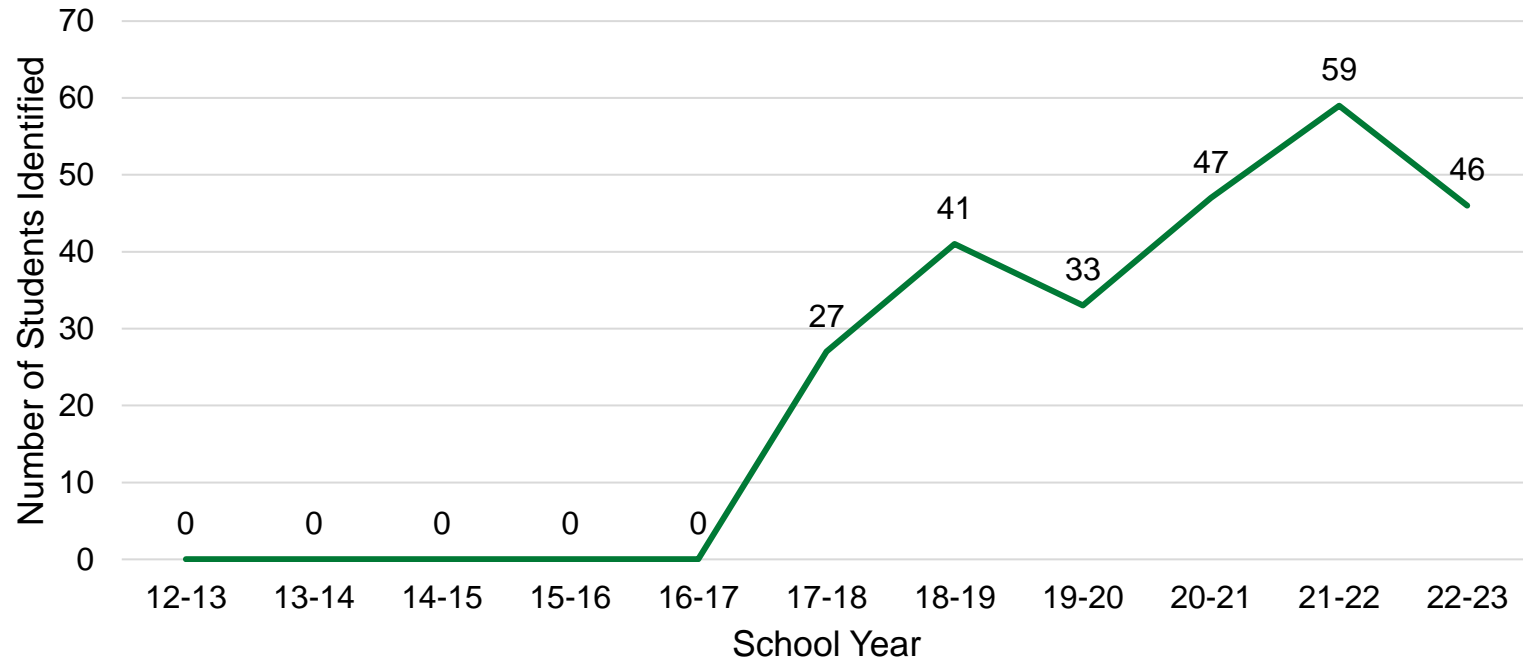
Colchester SD

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



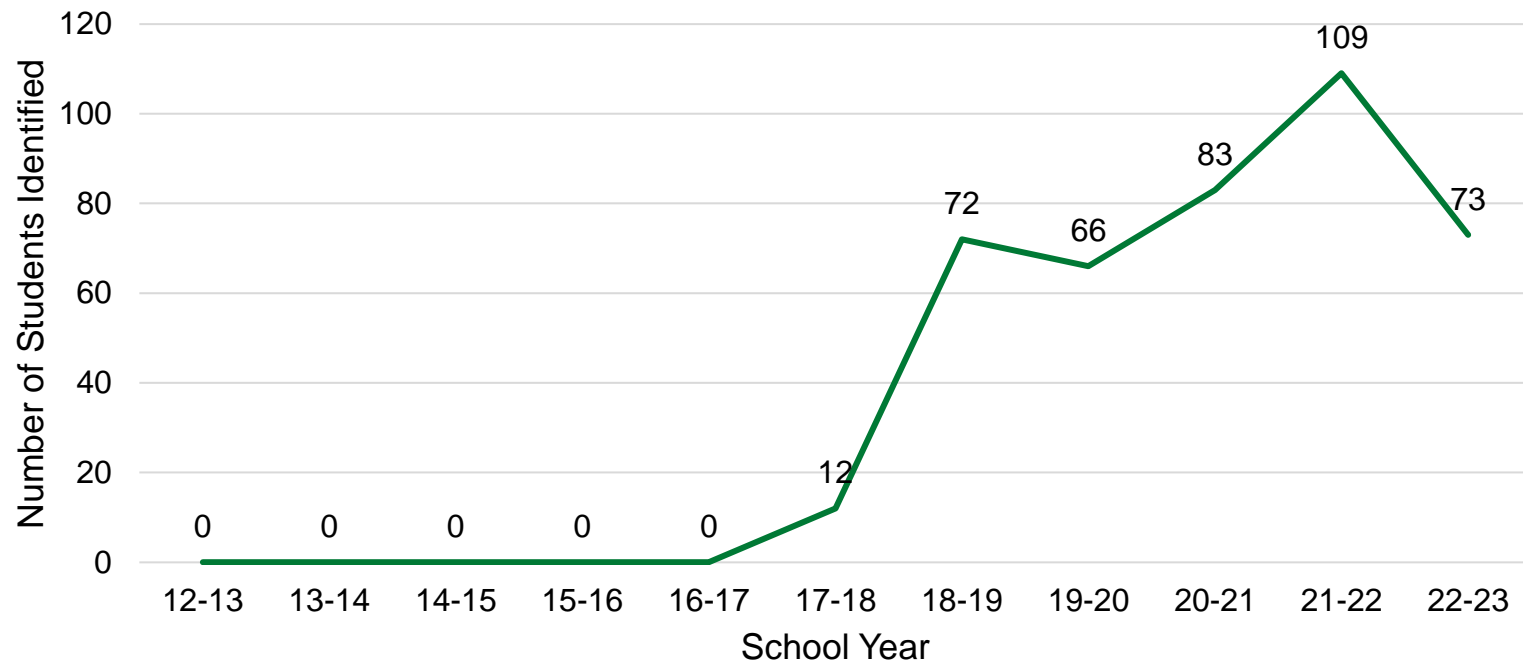
Milton Town SD

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



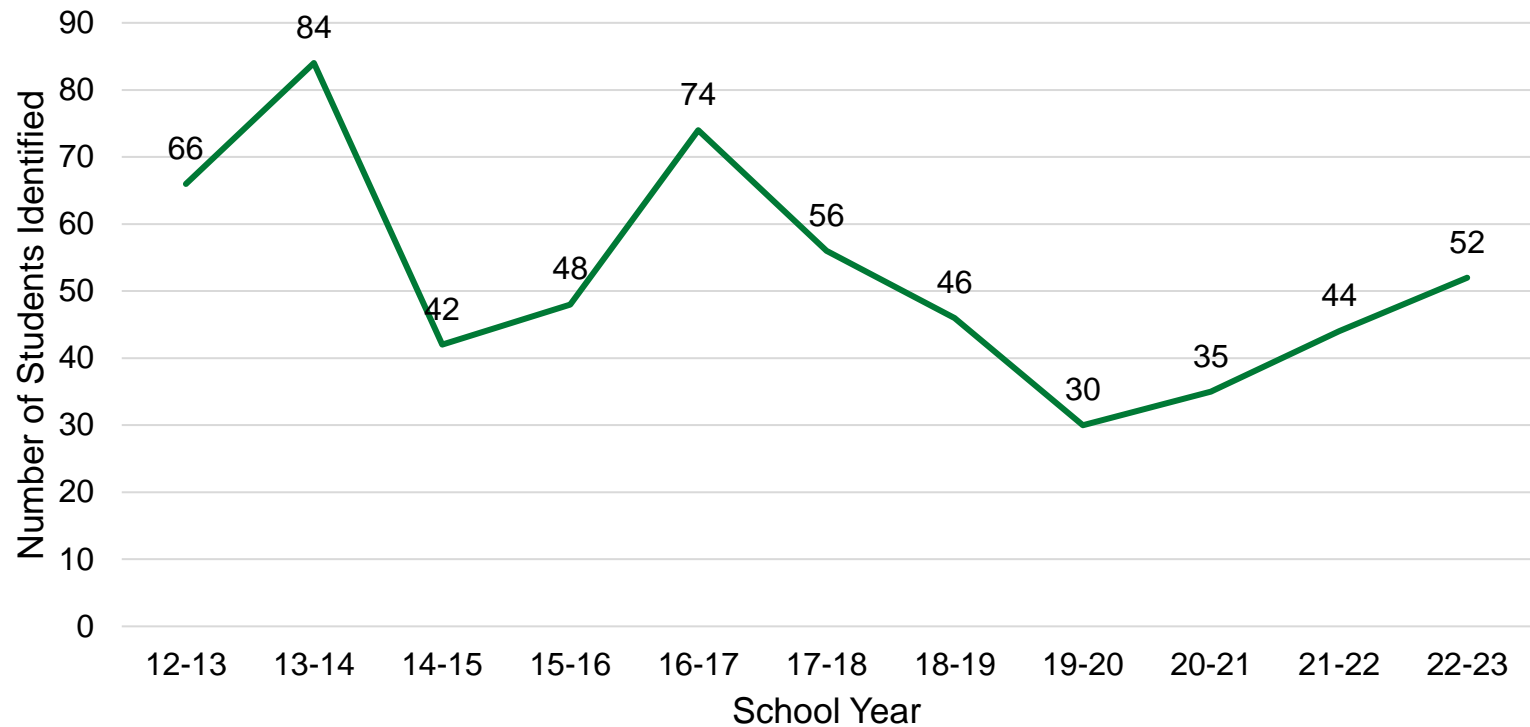
North Country SU

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



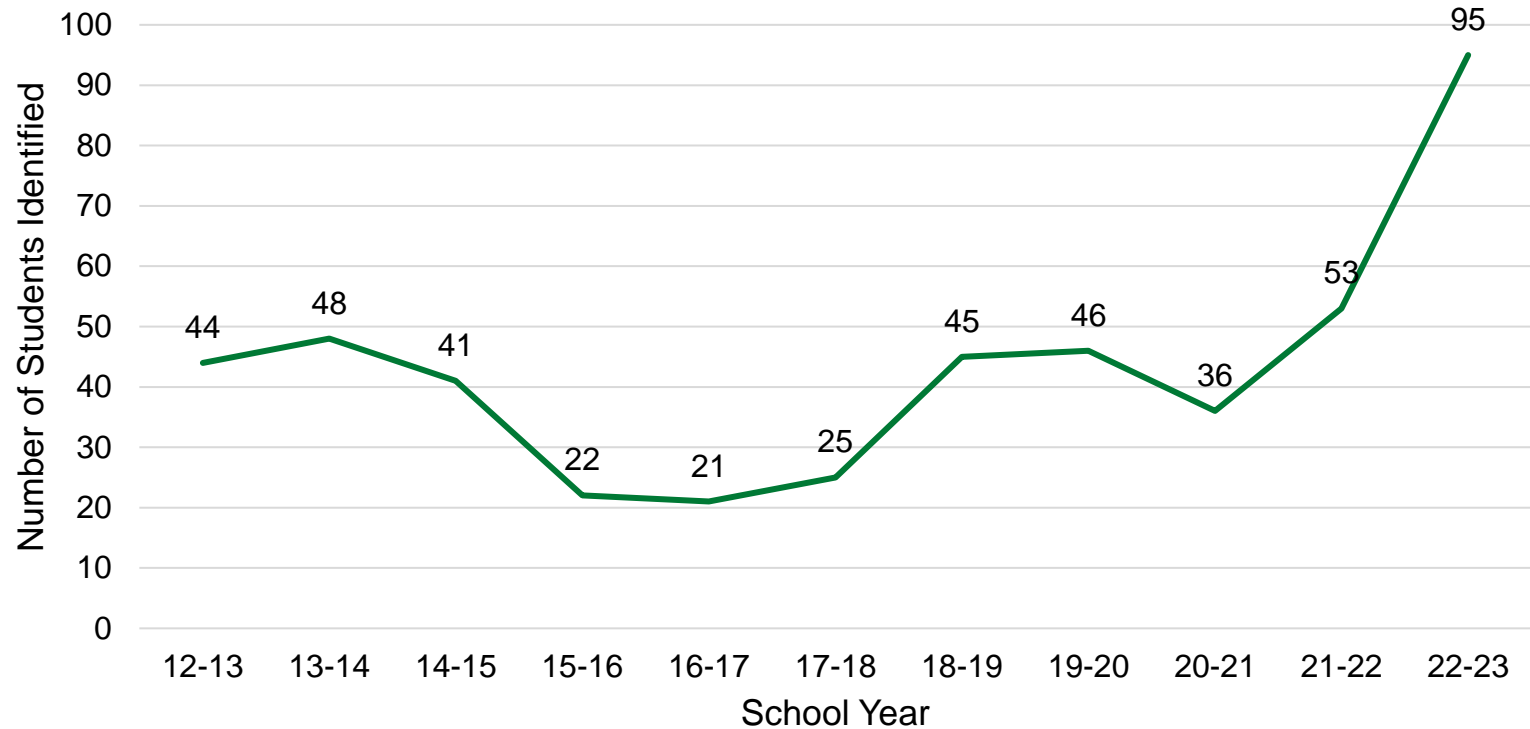
Burlington SD

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



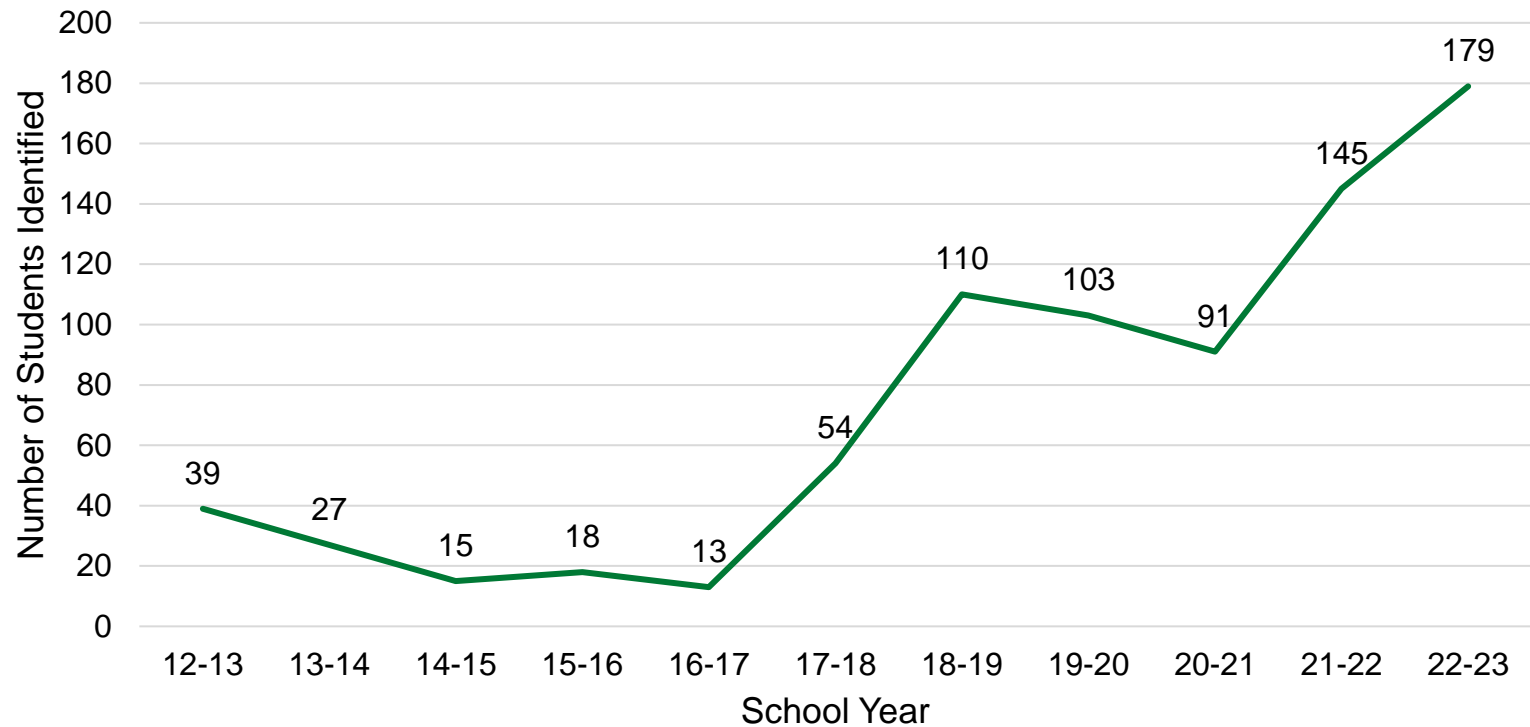
Rutland City SD

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



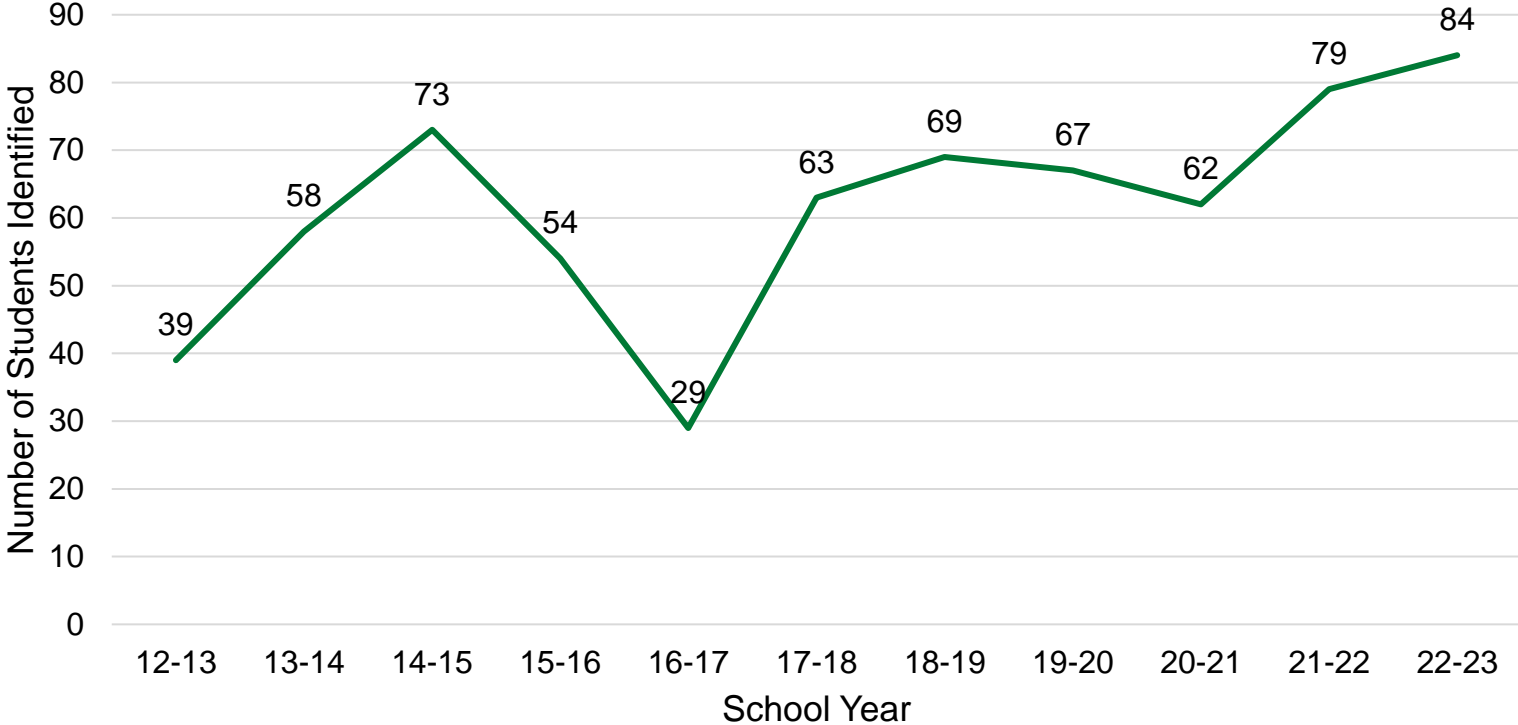
Southwest Vermont SU

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



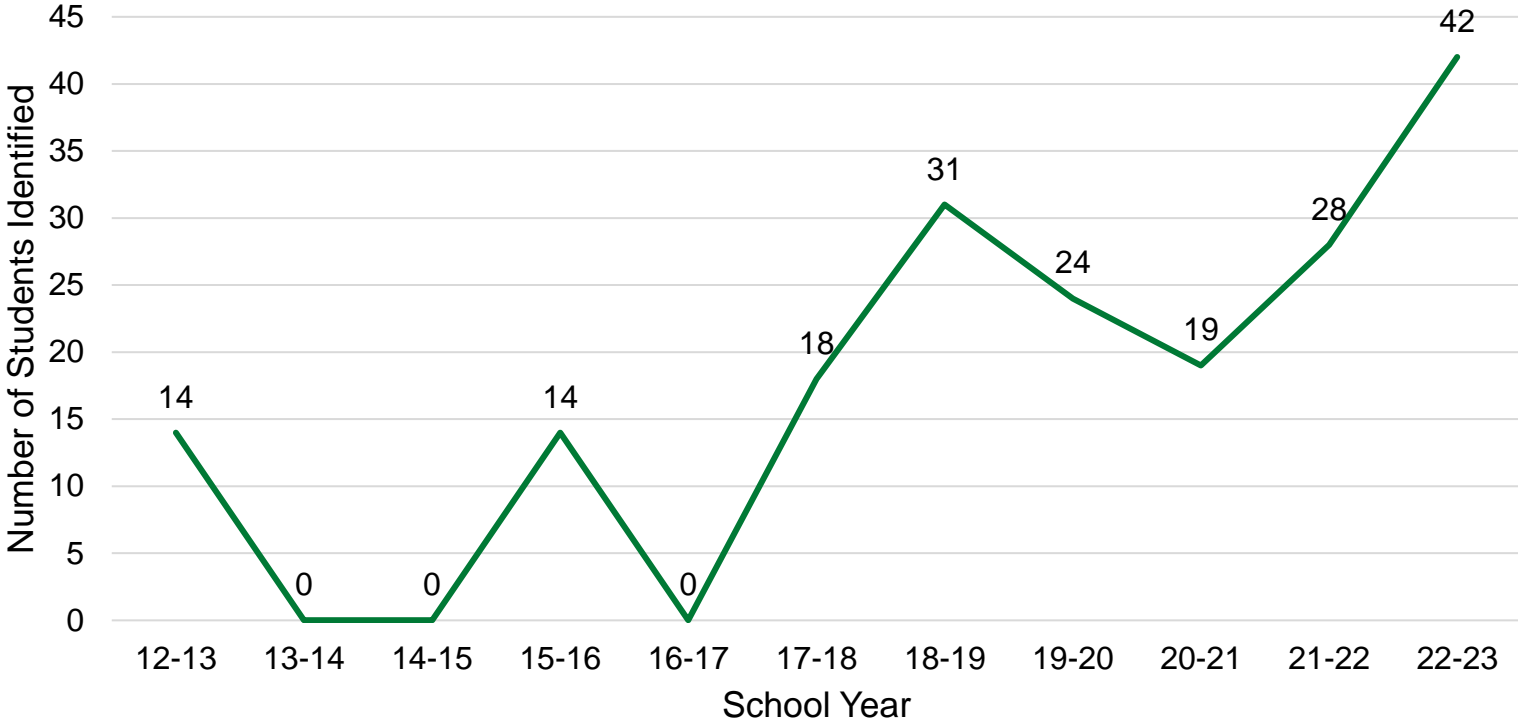
Windham Southeast SU

Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible



Washington Central UUSD

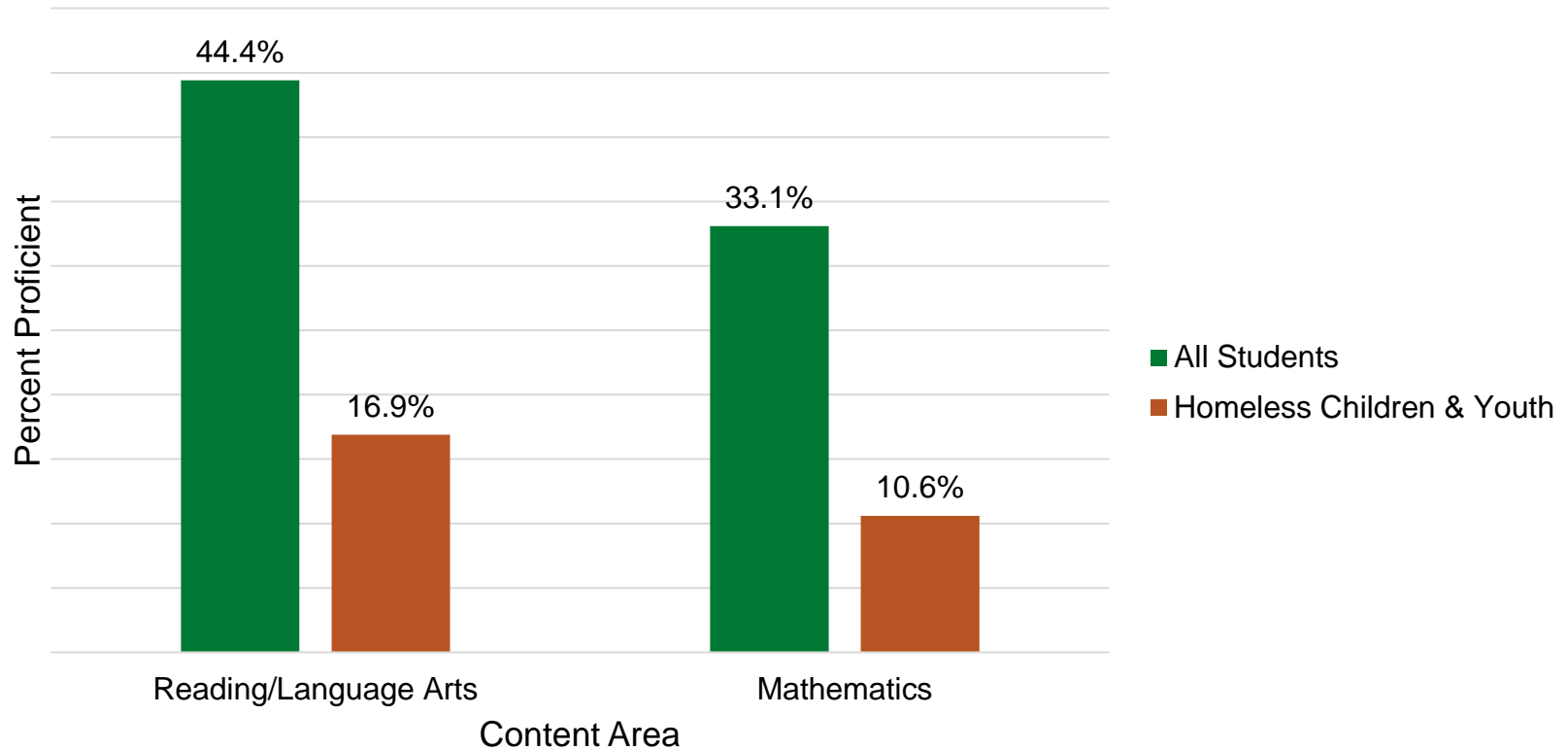
Number of Students Identified as McKinney-Vento Eligible





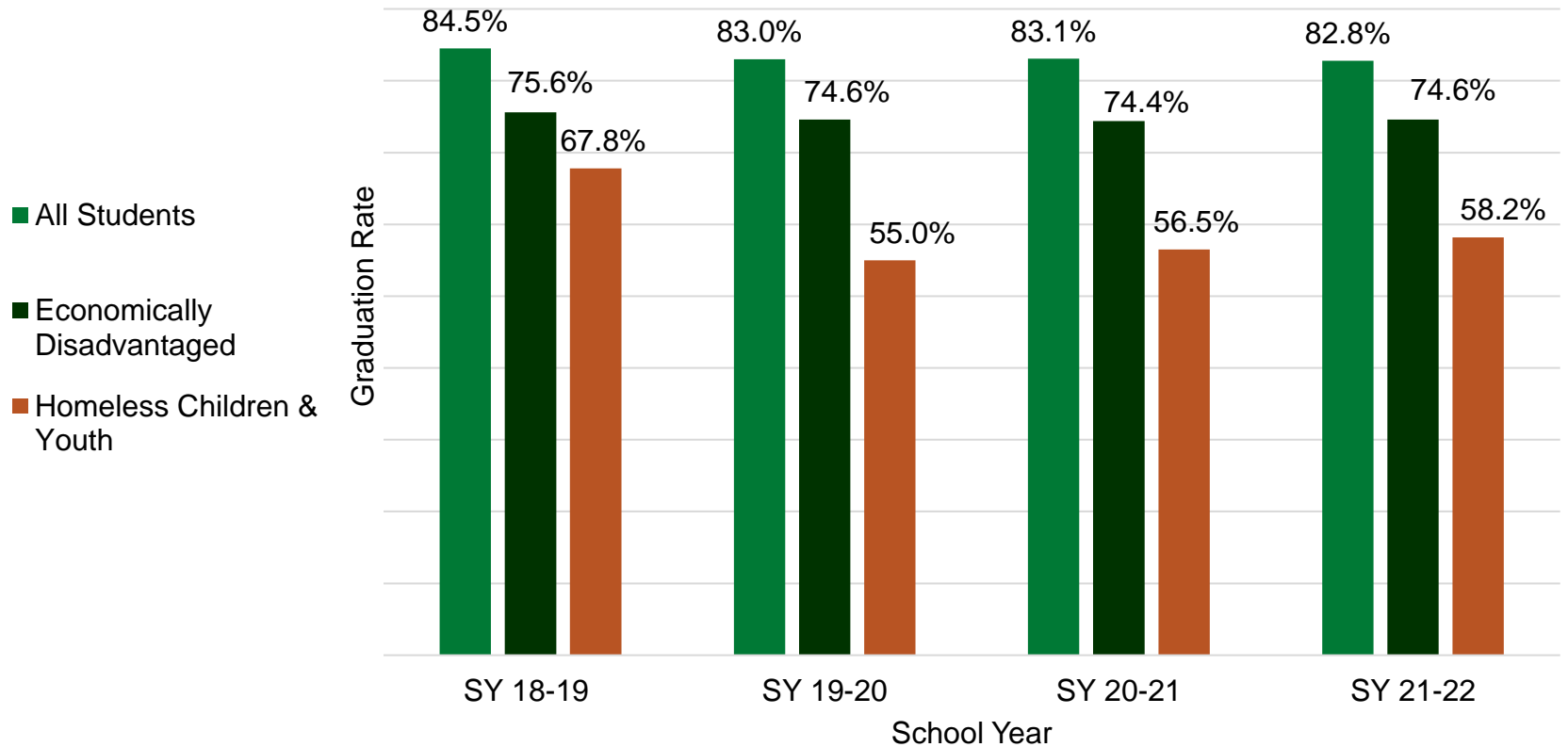
**Students who experience homelessness
are more likely to struggle with school success**

Statewide Academic Proficiency by Subject, School Year 21-22



Source: U.S. Department of Education's ED*Facts* Initiative

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates



Source: Vermont Annual Snapshot



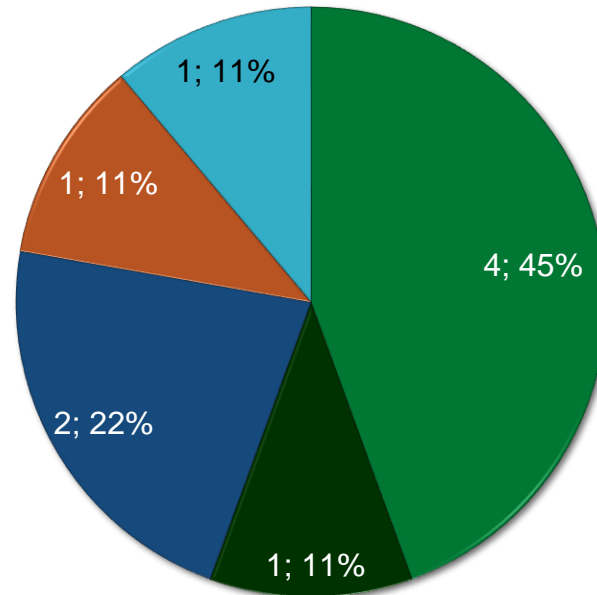
Family/Caregiver & Unaccompanied Youth Surveys

Parent/Caregiver Survey Responses



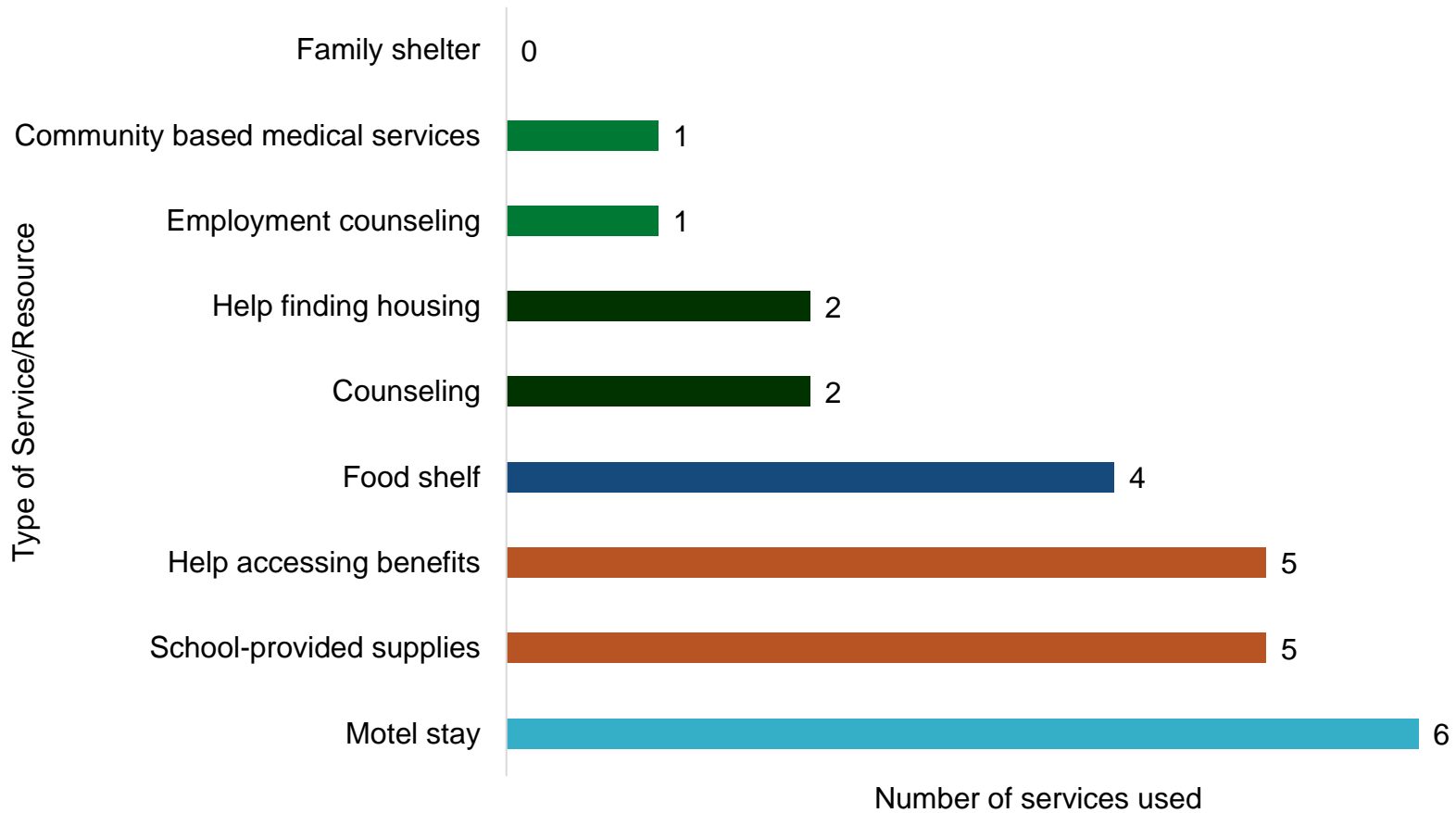
- 9 surveys were received, including 1 survey from an unaccompanied youth
- Respondents were currently living in Addison, Bennington, Chittenden, Lamoille, Washington, and Windham Counties
- The small number of responses is attributed to many factors, including significant barriers for homeless families, unavailability of incentives for participation, and limited time available for LEAs and community-organizations to support data collection

“How do you/your child usually get to school?”

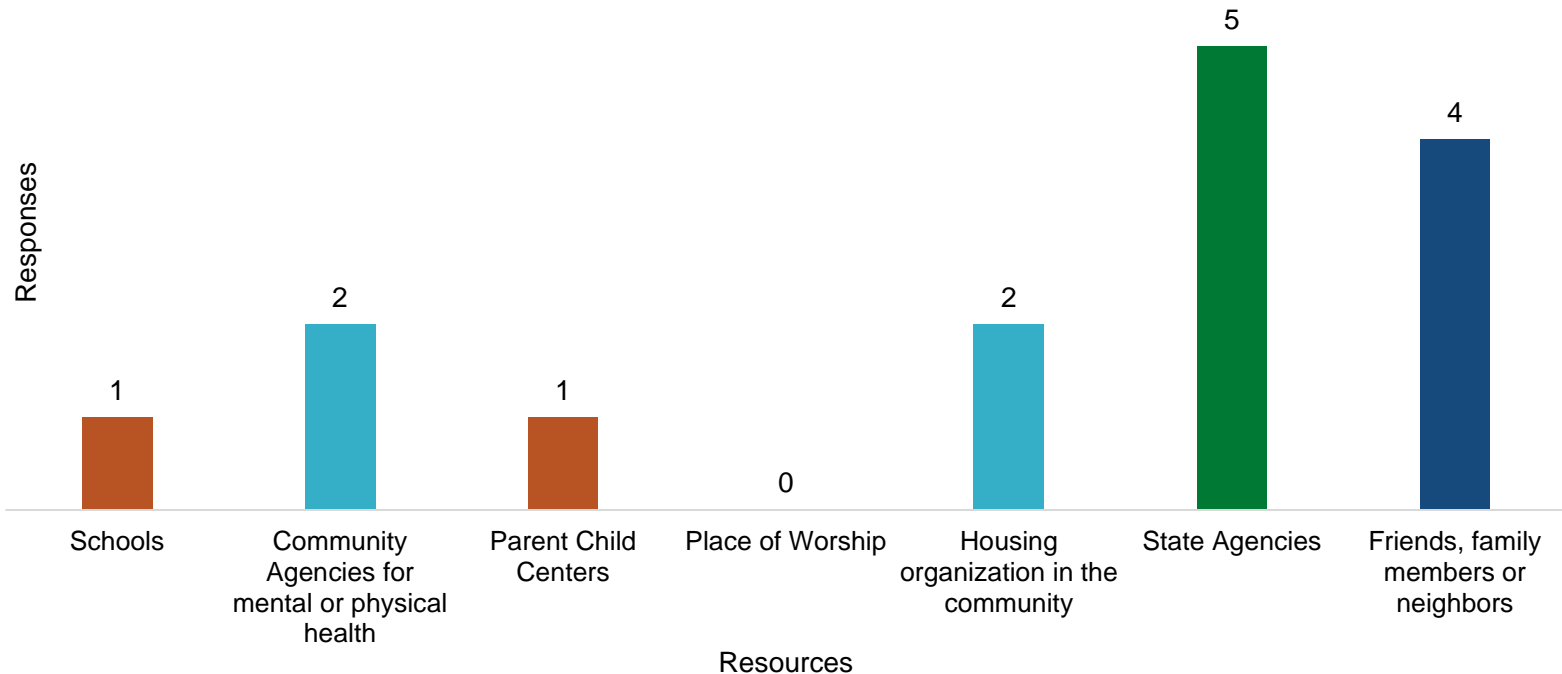


- A family member or guardian drives me/them without receiving reimbursement
- A family member or guardian drives me/them and receives mileage reimbursement
- They/I take a taxi
- They/I take a school or city bus
- No response

What services or resources have families/youth used in the last 12 months?



Where do families/youth go to receive help?



- 15 (37.5%) liaisons reported that they or other school staff go where students live to provide services
- 25 (62.5%) liaisons reported that they or other school staff do not go where students live to provide services

Comments from homeless parents/ caregivers & unaccompanied youth

“It's so hard to figure out which schools have which schedules! This was particularly important for my pre-k student. He was enrolled in a school that had pre-k in the morning and afternoon childcare. We became homeless and well after school started we ended up in another town that didn't have childcare after pre-k. And I didn't know that they let pre-k kids on the bus and had a mid-day bus! It was impossible to figure out the logistics of what school could actually look like for him. And I didn't know that he could have been transported to the school he had already been enrolled in while we were homeless. Why don't schools make the logistics of their programs easy to access? It's like they think the parents are just hanging out at home available any hour of the day for their kids...but parents have to work.”

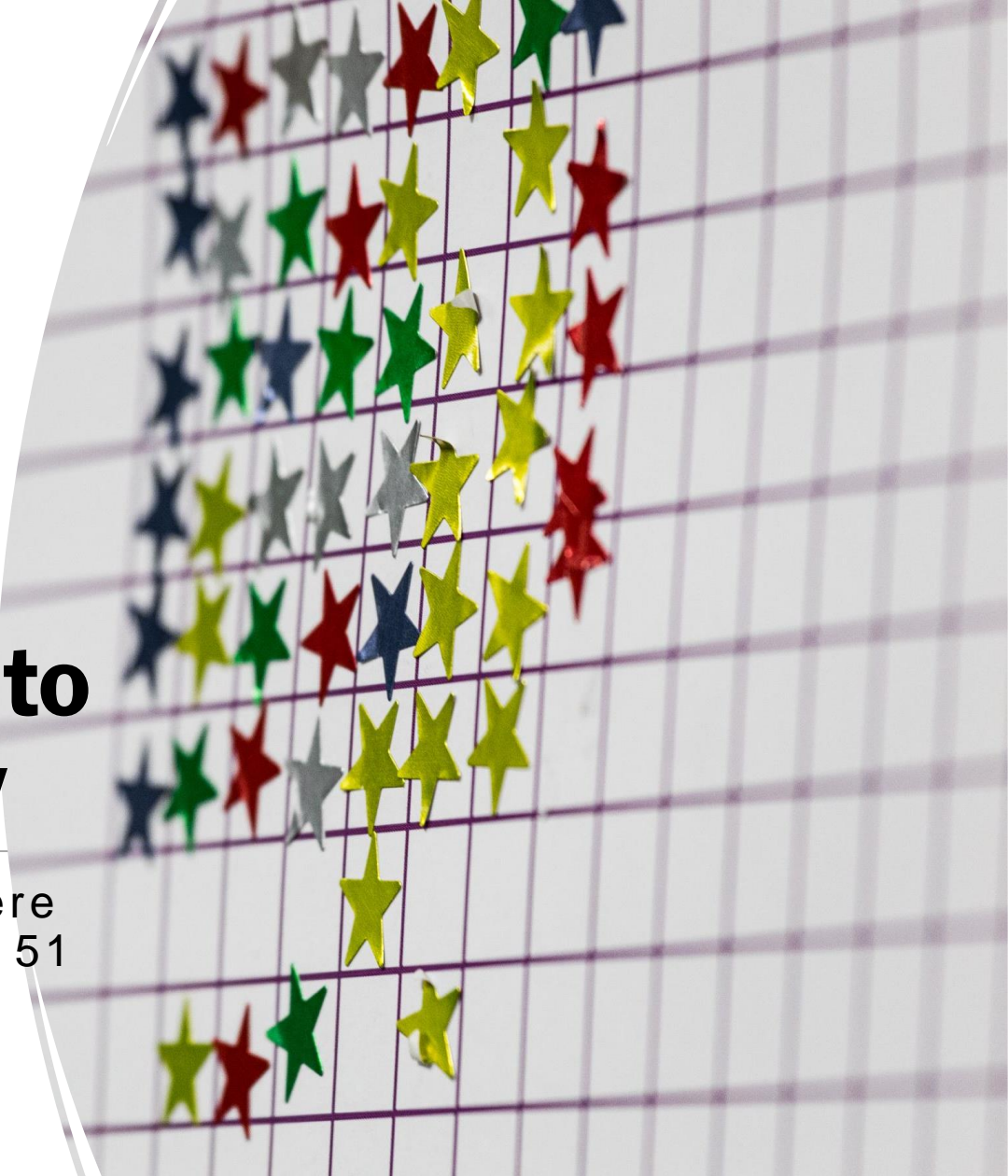
“It has been hard to access some services like food stamps as an unaccompanied minor without any parental permissions.”

“When we knew that we were needing to move before we were locked out of our apartment most help wasn't available until you reach the 'homeless' status. . . The problem is no one wants to rent to families and the fact that a portion of lower income families have bad rental records makes it difficult on all low-income families when trying to rent.”

“Economic Services would not help because I paid my first month hotel bill - I asked what happens when the money runs out? But 3 Squares helped!!”

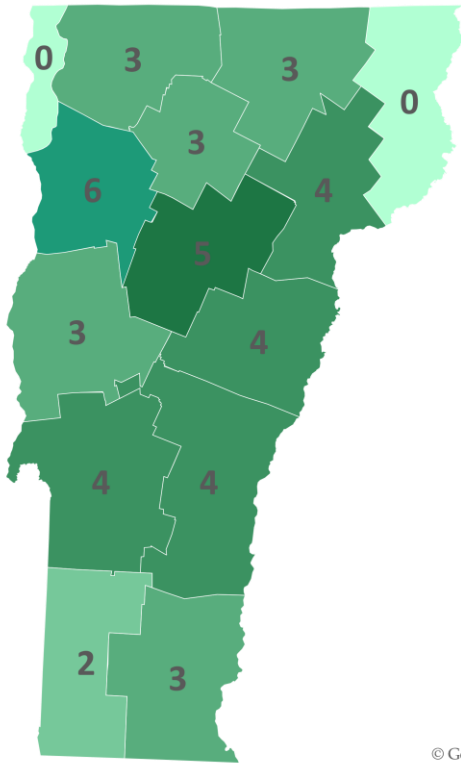
McKinney-Vento Liaison Survey

40 completed surveys were
received out of a total of 51
designated liaisons

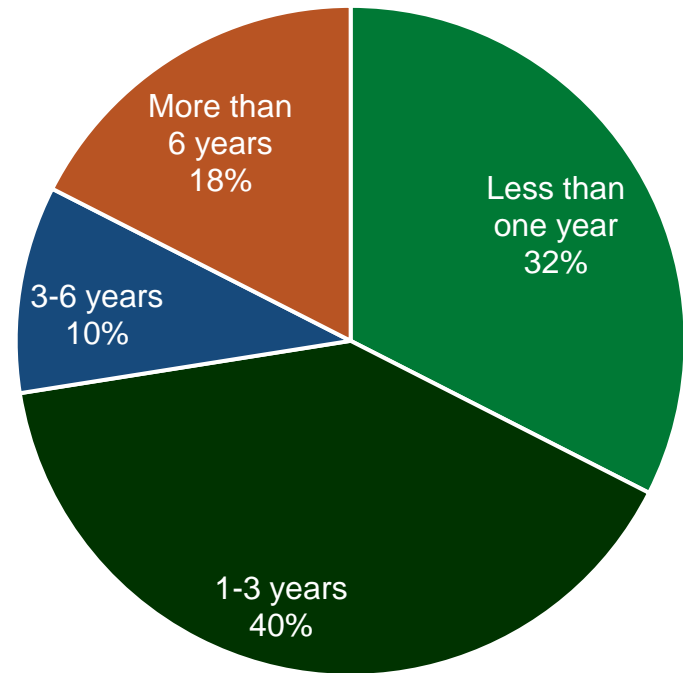


Liaison Survey Respondents (n=40)

County Served

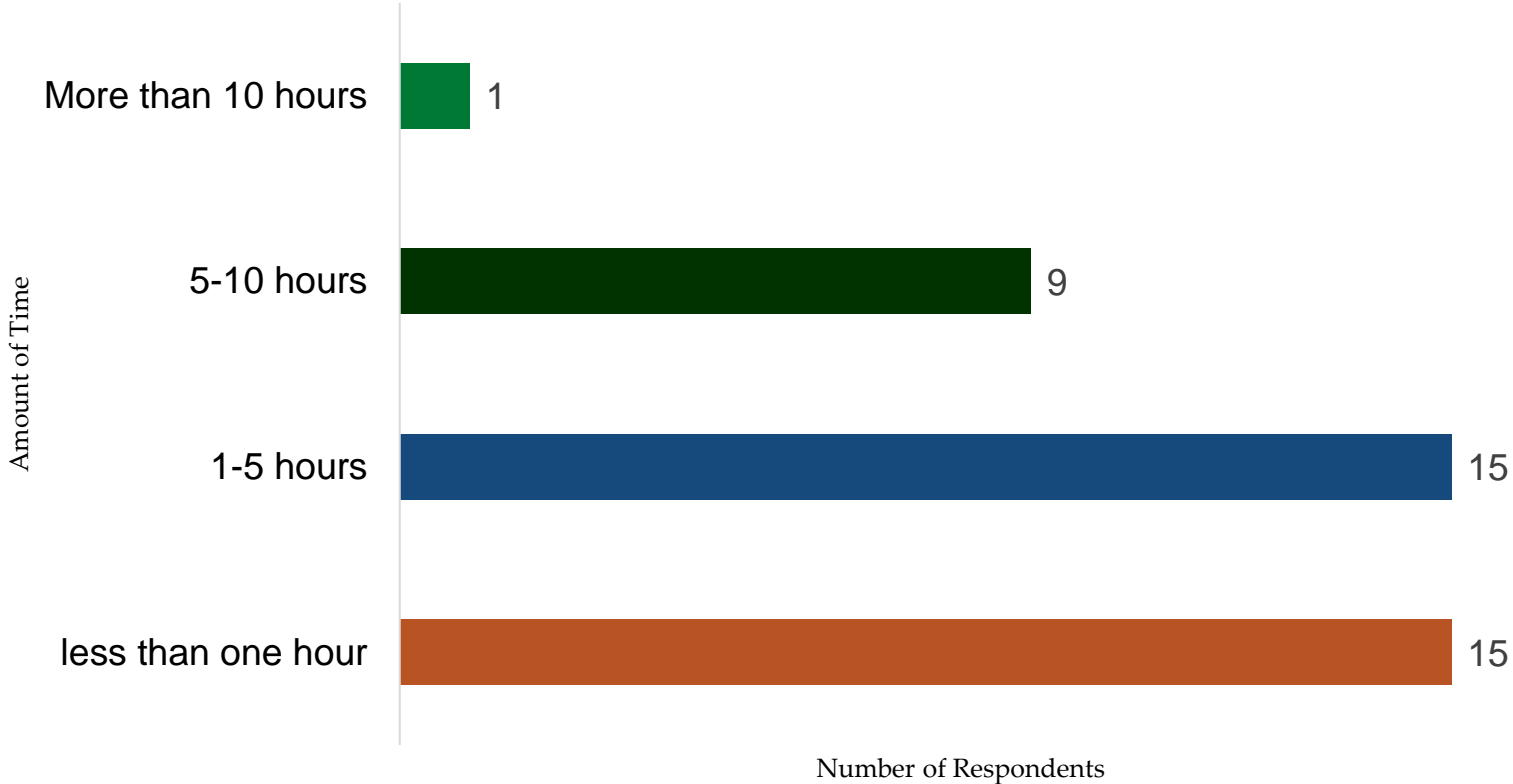


Liaisons' time in role



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How much time do liaisons spend per week with homeless students and families?



Are liaisons able to provide McKinney-Vento services in the time available for their role?

Rarely, 5

Occasionally, 11

Usually, 18

Always, 6

Comments from liaisons:

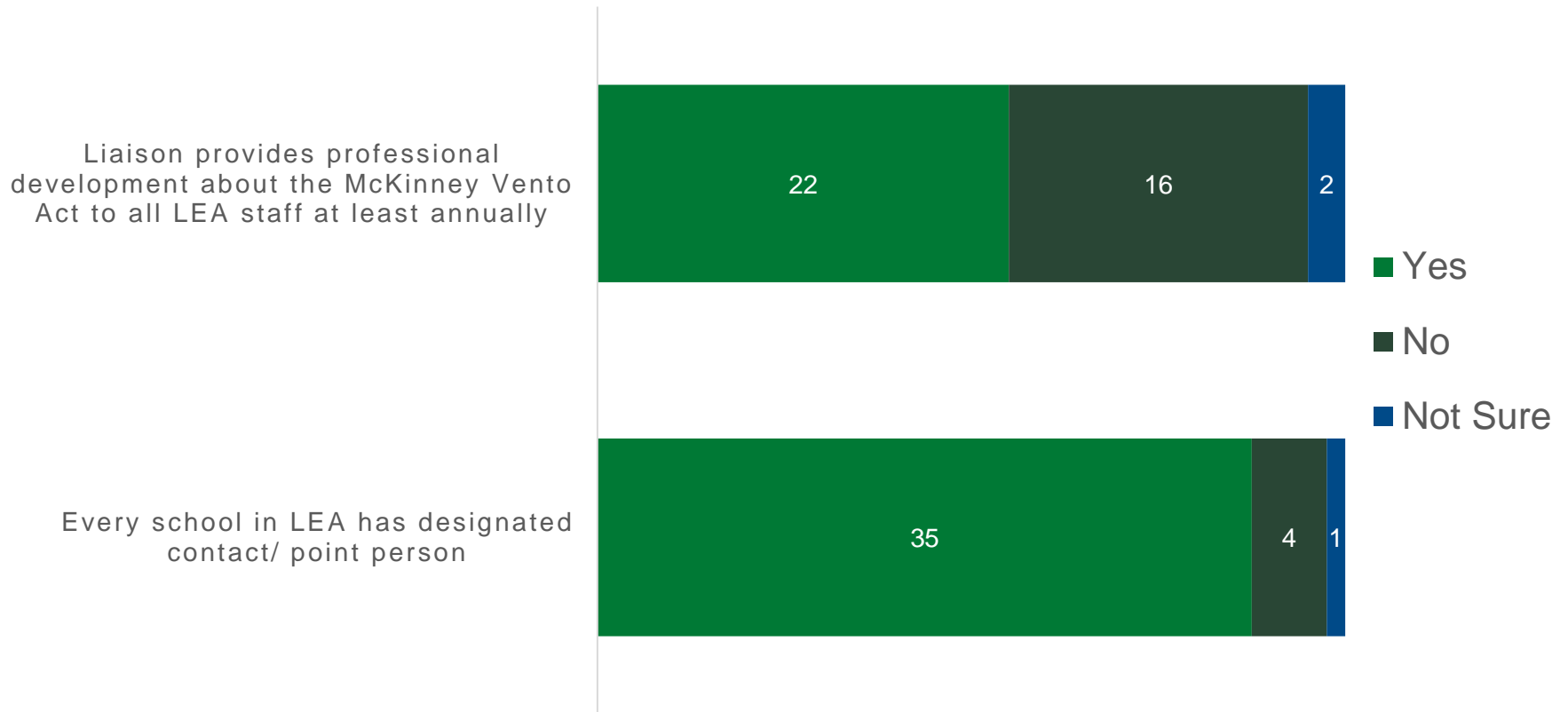
- “Schools are being asked to take on more and more responsibility in [social service] areas-- most people who work there aren't trained in, and aren't experts in”
- “Resources and time are limited - liaisons want to get out there, and they just aren't able to because of the structure of their position. . . . relationships are what moves this work forward”
- “In most districts M-V is a delegated duty to someone with a full-time job . . . but it's a hand-off that nobody wants”
- “In a role with so many responsibilities, it is hard to find time to dig into resources deeper”
- “I can't imagine having time for visits-- I rely on schools, counselors, case managers, and principals the most. They're much more likely to have preexisting relationships with students and families-- I very much have trust in school-level folks”

55% of SUs have a “family specialist,” “navigator,” “home school coordinator” or other social service support staff

Of the 22 liaisons in supervisory unions/districts with a specialist, responses about why these positions were created included:

- Attendance and social-emotional learning work
- We have 1.4 positions filled this year and are looking for another one.
- Reconnecting with families after COVID
- The great level of need that arose as a result of the pandemic. Access to federal money to support the role.
- We originally created a Family Outreach Coordinator position with ARPA funds and have maintained it through an AHS grant and Medicaid funding.
- Our home-school coordinator position was developed in response to a need for communication and support with families.
- Concerns related to truancy following the pandemic
- Partnership with local mental health provider– but limited caseload availability and staffing challenges have significantly reduced the capacity and effectiveness of this position as needs continue to increase.
- Lack of support from the AOE
- As the LEA Liaison, I don't have the capacity to do the boots on the ground work that is needed for this position, therefore we hired a support person to help with this.
- Increase in community needs
- Recognition of the need combined with availability of ESSER and ARP funds. But after this year I don't think all of the positions will be continued.
- We have had the position for more than a decade. This person supports [the liaison] in the provision of information and services throughout the district.
- The increased need for support of families experiencing homelessness and the inability for a person with various other duties to have the capacity to do the work effectively
- Our "Community Liaison" motivated by community input to support students and families who may be facing barriers to accessing their education.
- The district recognizes that students will thrive if we coordinate needs for their families and has invested in several positions to navigate family needs by assigning an individual to coordinate transitional housing needs and hiring multiple social workers who can visit families at home or the community to provide needed support.
- We found that our students were having increased difficulty reengaging in school during the pandemic and created a position to support their daily needs for access and academic success.
- Only in one school- not sure how this was created

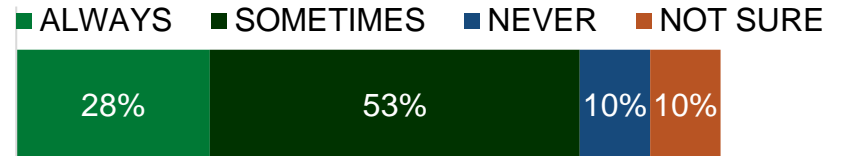
Liaison activities and capacities



Liaison capacity to carry out McKinney-Vento Act Duties (n=40)

Children & Youth...

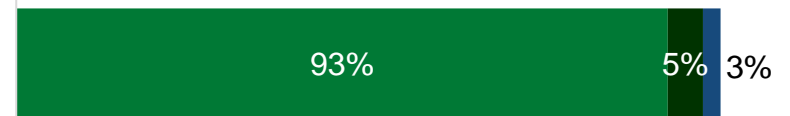
... receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing and other appropriate services



... have access to and receive educational services including Early Head Start, Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, and other preschool programs administered by the school district



... are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school within the district



... are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies



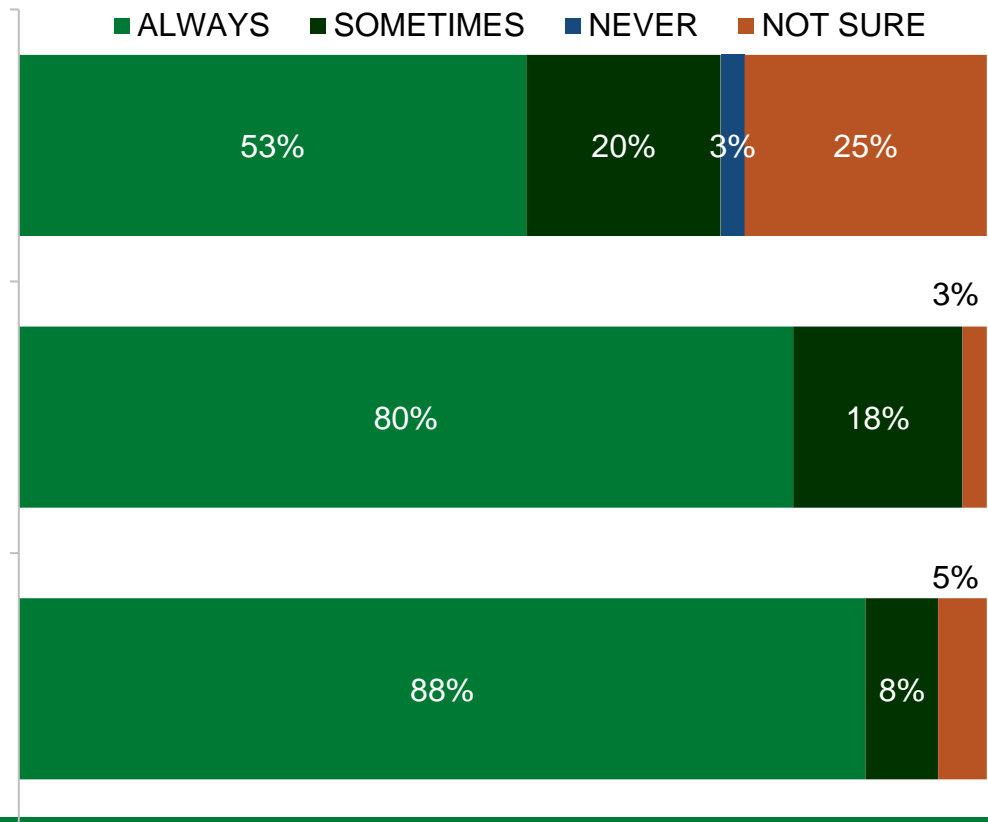
Liaison capacity to carry out McKinney-Vento Act Duties (n=40)

Unaccompanied Youth...

...are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and receive assistance verifying this status for purposes of the FAFSA

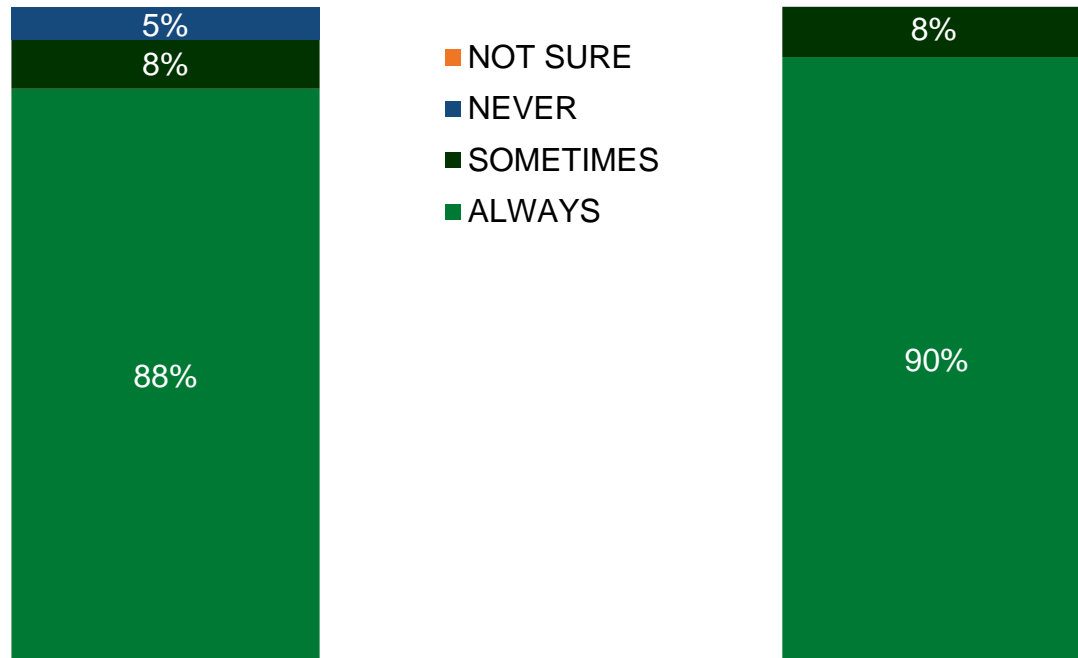
... have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as other children and youth

... are enrolled in school



Liaison capacity to carry out McKinney-Vento Act Duties (n=40)

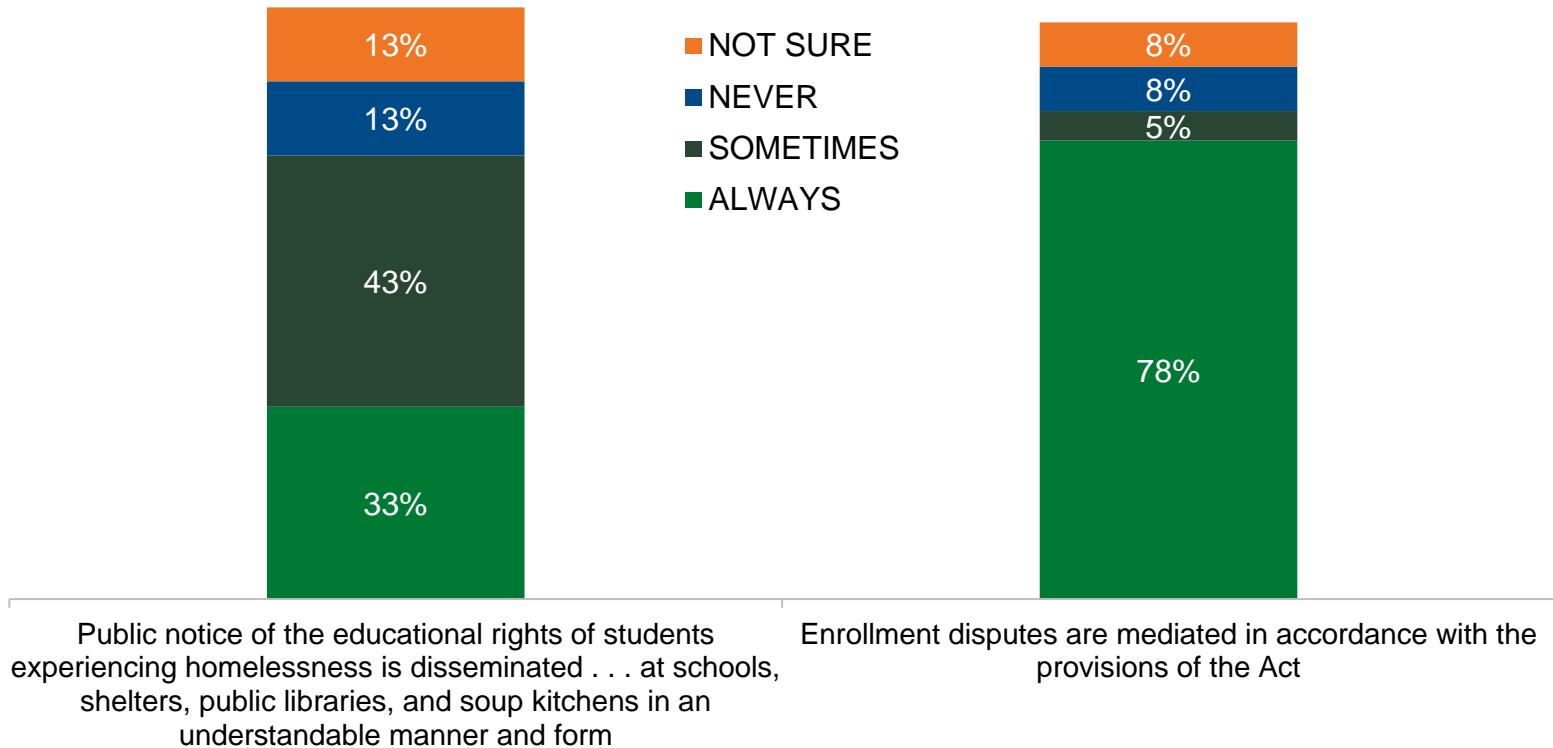
Parents/Guardians...



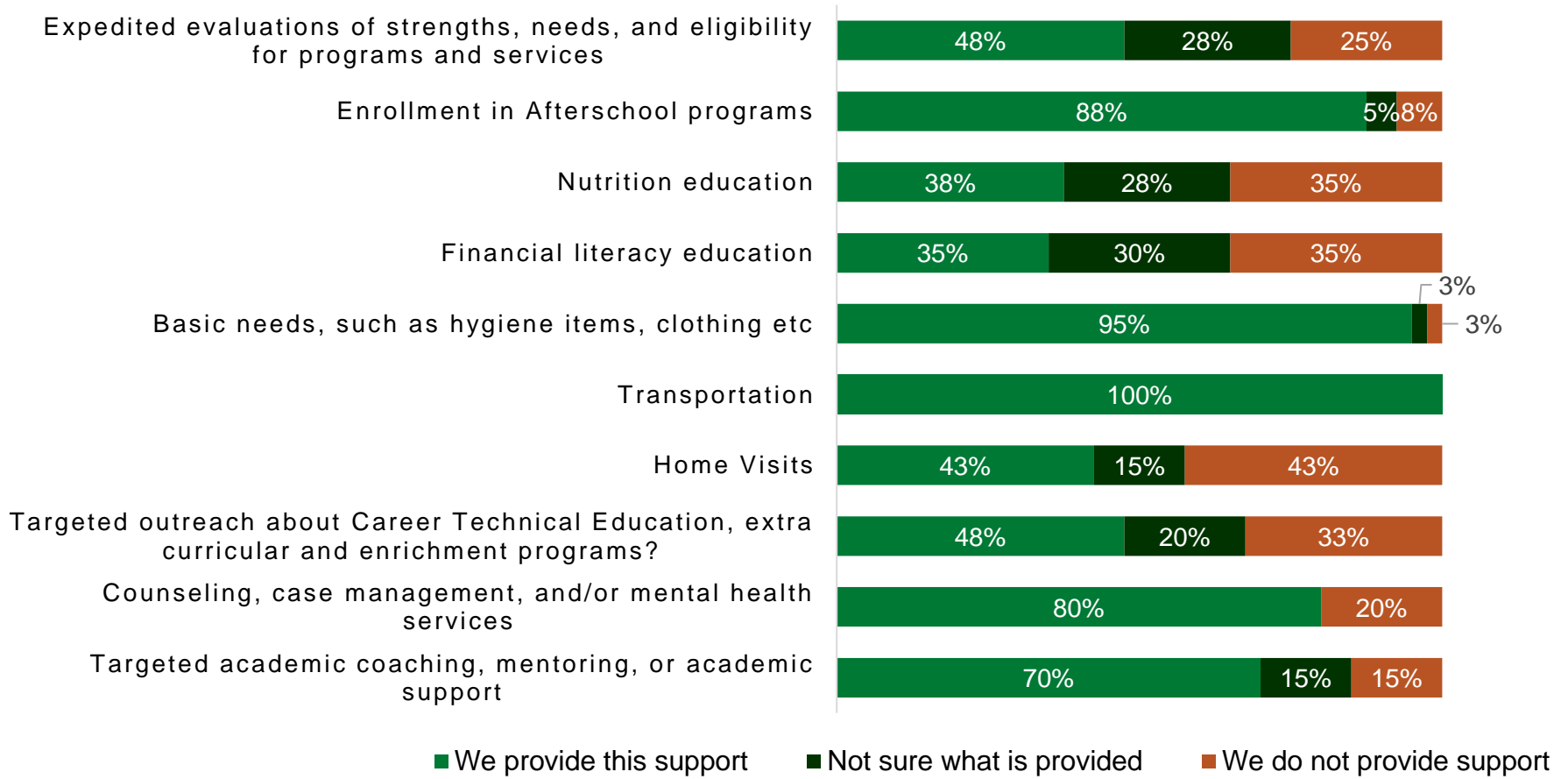
... are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children

... are fully informed of all the transportation services available to McKinney-Vento students, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation

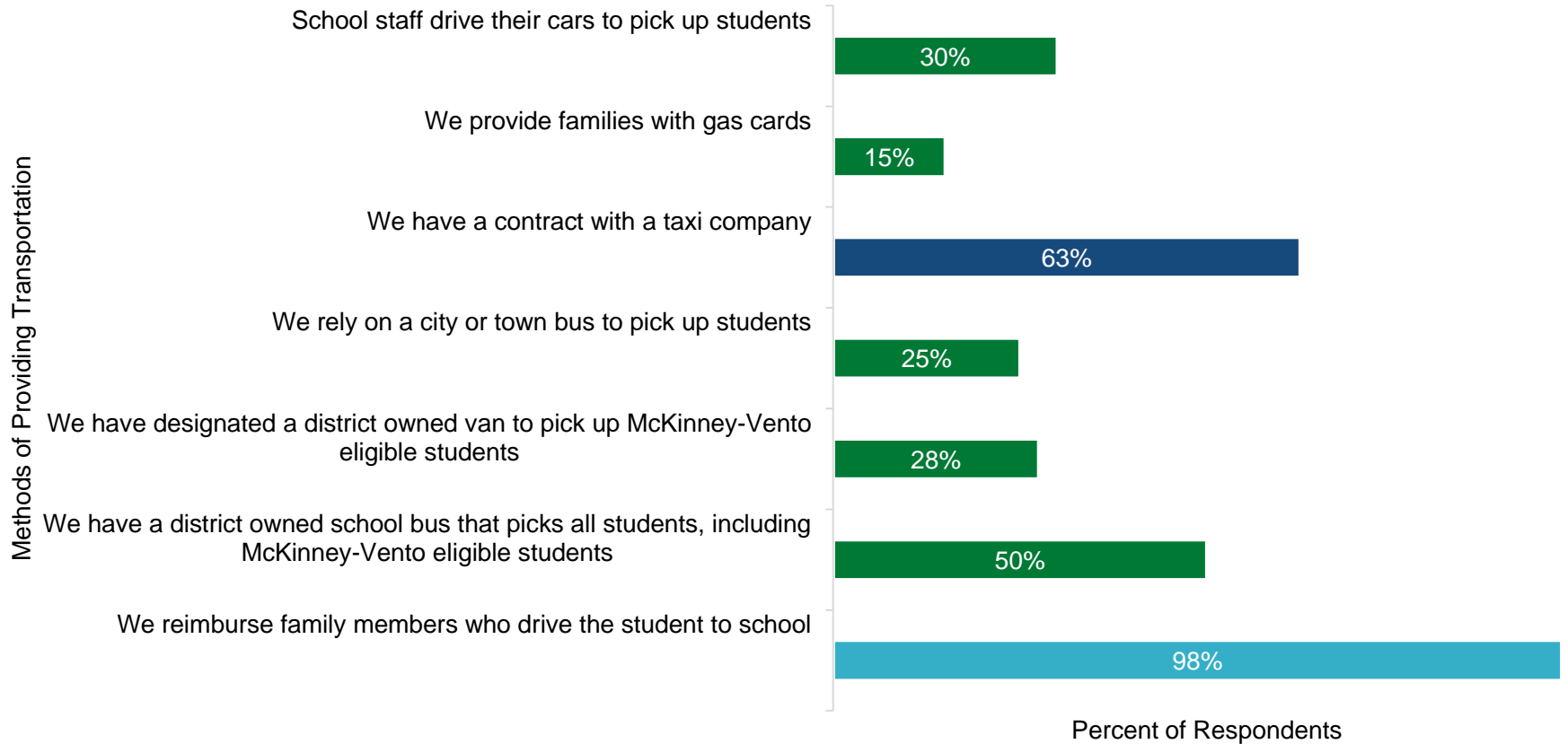
Liaison capacity to carry out McKinney- Vento Act Duties (n=40)



Which services do LEAs provide to homeless students and/or families?



How are LEAs managing transportation?



To what extent do LEAs implement McKinney-Vento services & practices?

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Staff have been trained and regularly provide trauma-informed responses to chronic absenteeism and truancy.	65%	20%	15%
Brochures, posters and/or other materials about M-V Act are posted in schools and in the community.	55%	18%	28%
LEA provides children under 6 experiencing homelessness with priority to enroll in early childhood education programs, sets aside early childhood slots for children experiencing homelessness, or moves children experiencing homelessness to the top of waiting lists.	53%	13%	35%
LEA partners with community agencies to share information about the M-V Act.	50%	15%	35%
LEA has a standard procedure to identify and refer children under age 6 experiencing homelessness to early childhood education programs.	48%	20%	33%
LEA partners with early childhood education programs to provide referrals and/or prioritize enrollment in early childhood education programs for children under age 6 experiencing homelessness	48%	15%	38%
Information about the M-V Act and available services appears on the website of every school in the LEA.	43%	23%	35%
Every school uses a housing questionnaire to identify potential homelessness for new and continuing students upon enrollment and at least one additional time in the school year.	40%	25%	35%
Information about the M-V Act and services is shared in multiple languages, and all languages spoken in the LEA.	28%	30%	43%
Information about the M-V Act and services appears frequently in communications with families and students, using emails, texts and letters sent home.	20%	45%	35%
Information about the M-V Act and services appears frequently on school and LEA social media.	13%	48%	40%

EHCY Program Funding



EHCY Program Funding

- In School Year 2022-2023...
 - Federal funding (through AOE) for LEAs to assist students experiencing homelessness amounted to about \$668 per homeless student
 - McKinney-Vento Act grants totaling \$220,468 were distributed to 7 LEAs
 - Title IA Homeless Reservation Funding totaling \$860,955 was distributed to 53 LEAs, with an average award of \$16,881
- An additional \$1.7 million in American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth Funding was awarded to 33 LEAS starting in 2021
 - These funds must be used by September 2024

McKinney-Vento Act Funding

Awarded to 7-8 LEAs each year

Amount to Subgrant	FY21 Award (school year 20-21)	FY22 Award (School year 21-22)	FY23 Award (School year 22-23)	FY24 Award (School year 23-24)
Amount to subgrant from federal fiscal year allocation	\$152,250.00	\$159,749.00	\$171,000.00	\$258,000.00
Amount sub-granted w/ carryover funds from the previous year	\$37,075.22	\$57,389.00	\$49,468.00	\$58,000.00
Total amount sub-granted to LEAs	\$189,325.22	\$217,138.00	\$220,468.00	\$316,000.00

Title IA Homeless Reservation Funding

Allocated to 50-52 LEAs each year

<i>n=53 LEAs</i>	FY20 Reservations (School Year 19-20)	FY21 Reservations (School Year 20-21)	FY22 Reservations (School Year 21-22)	FY23 Reservations (School Year 22-23)	FY24 Reservations (School Year 23-24*)
Total	\$645,575	\$598,090	\$679,523	\$860,955	\$816,257
Average amount per LEA	\$12,415	\$11,502	\$13,324	\$16,881	\$16,005

*FY24 Reservations include only those amounts reserved in the original CFP application; LEAs often increase reservation amounts throughout the year as needs change/increase and carryforward becomes available

American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children & Youth Funding

<i>n=31 LEAs</i>	ARP Homeless I Awards – 7 LEAs	ARP Homeless II Allocations – 25 LEAs)	EHCY Program Minigrant Awards (ARP-HCY state-level funding) – 12 LEAs
Total Amount Subgranted	\$350,000	\$1,050,936	\$316,705
Average amount per LEA	\$58,333.33	\$42,037.44	\$28,791.36

**ARP-HCY funds are available until September 30, 2024*



Cross-cutting Themes

Key Themes

- LEAs are resourced differently to do this work. Staff and funding are insufficient compared to the demand for help in many places.
- The resources available have not kept up with the worsening degree of needs, and the loss of some COVID-era funding is a concern going forward in LEAs that have used supplemental funding to fill gaps.
- Transportation concerns abound in all LEAs. Rural transportation options are limited, and districts have questions about what school a student should attend, what is in students' best interest, and how best to use limited resources when transportation is resource-intensive.
- 55% of liaisons reported that their school has a position such as a Family Support Specialist or Home-School Coordinator. These LEAs seem to be in the best position to provide effective responses; many LEAs rely on informal help from principals, guidance counselors and other staff. Many schools with funded positions largely used COVID funding, which means some positions may not be sustained beyond this year.
- There is a significant lack of information about the scope of the problem and readiness to support unaccompanied youth— there is a concern that many are “invisible” and could be missed.
- About half of LEAs aren't sure how much or how well they are serving families with children under age 6; more attention, training and resources are needed to connect families with young children to McKinney-Vento services as appropriate.
- AOE is providing valuable training and technical assistance to LEAs, especially in dealing with challenging cases.