

THE STUDENT AND FAMILY STABILITY INITIATIVE



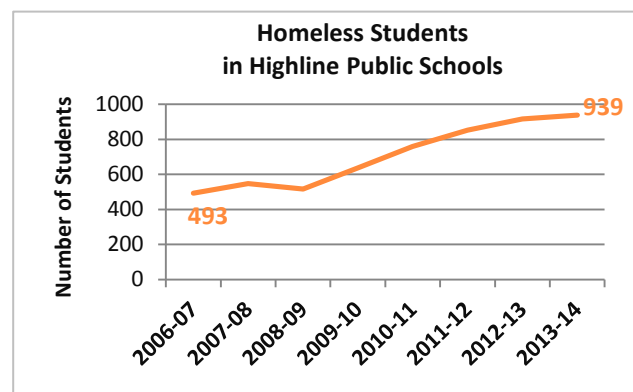
A Collaboration of the King County Housing Authority, Highline Public Schools and Neighborhood House

Student homelessness is a growing problem, and the King County Housing Authority (KCHA), Highline Public Schools (HPS) and Neighborhood House (NH) have implemented a promising solution. The McKinney-Vento Act helps achieve school stability while the Student and Family Stability Initiative (SFSI) is a program that addresses many aspects of family and student stability that can impact academic achievement.

Homelessness in King County has increased steadily over the past five years, and families in HPS are no exception. Since 2007, homelessness among students in HPS has increased nearly 13% per year, negatively impacting students and schools alike. Homeless students are more likely to miss or be tardy for school, and they experience instability in their lives that impedes academic and emotional growth. Homelessness is costly to school districts as well. The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to pay for the transportation of homeless students to and from their schools of origin to help maintain school stability. During the 2012-13 school year, the cost to HPS of providing transportation to and from school for homeless students reached \$787,600. This comes directly from the District general fund.

The Student and Family Stability Initiative

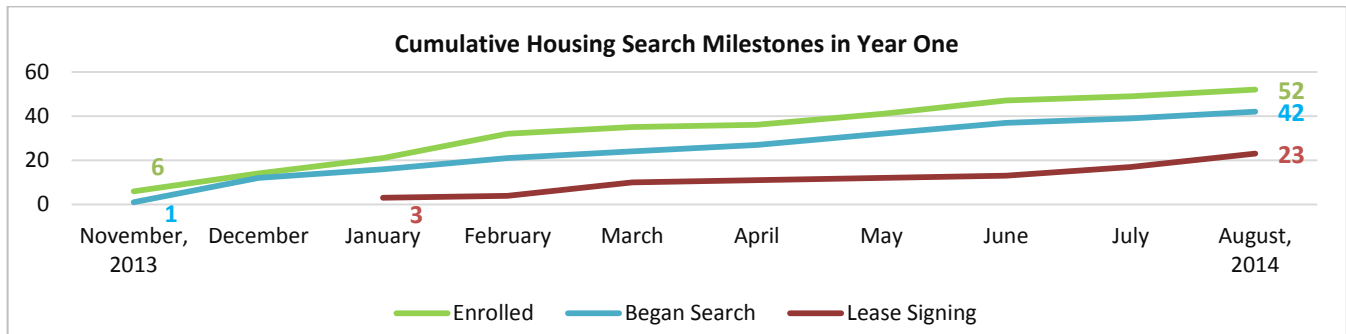
During the 2013-2014 school year, KCHA launched the SFSI under its Moving to Work (MTW) Agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program helps homeless families find and secure housing and provides both short-term (three to six months) financial assistance for rent and employment navigation services. SFSI is a collaborative effort among KCHA, HPS, and NH.



Federal agencies implementing rapid re-housing programs have identified three “core elements” of effective rapid re-housing programs:

- 1) housing identification;
- 2) financial assistance with rent and move-in costs; and
- 3) housing case management and services.

SFSI’s design meets and exceeds these core elements, adding employment navigation services to maximize families’ ability to maintain housing after rental support ends. By helping homeless families in HPS to obtain and stay in safe, stable housing, the program aims to achieve a dual purpose of improving student outcomes (in particular attendance and tardiness at school) and generating cost savings for HPS that can be redirected into educational programming.



Year One Pilot Results Show Promise

In Year One (September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014) SFSI achieved the following milestones:

- SFSI reduced the length of time that successful families in the program were homeless.
- SFSI housed 23 formerly-homeless families, including 30 HPS students. By the end of Year One, an additional 29 families were in the process of finding new housing with support from SFSI.
- SFSI positively impacted family and student stability by helping children remain in their schools of origin and find stable housing nearby.
- Among the 23 families housed, 16 parents found new employment; ten families obtained both housing and employment. These families are likely to have greater housing stability after SFSI subsidies end.
- SFSI generated up to \$81,000 in potential HPS transportation costs avoided by housing five families that used District-funded taxi cabs which translates into nearly \$30,000 in potential net savings over program costs for these families.
- SFSI established a learning collaborative that engaged program partners frequently and effectively.
- Fifteen elementary schools enrolled at least one family; 75% of them had at least one family housed.

Moving Forward

In Year Two (September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015):

- SFSI plans to house and support an additional 50 families.
- Student academic outcomes will be measured including impacts on student attendance and tardiness.
- Potential savings will continue to increase as more families that use taxis are housed.
- Quarterly follow-up calls to parents will assess families' job and housing stability for up to one year after they begin paying for their own housing.

A detailed analysis of the program's processes and outcomes can be found in the Year One Evaluation Report prepared by external evaluator Geo Education & Research. Given the large proportion of engaged Highline elementary schools, SFSI appears well poised to leverage these existing connections and further expand its reach. **SFSI currently shows great promise, both as a way to house and to provide support to families on their way toward economic and housing stability, as well as reduce transportation costs for HPS.**

"I love the program and am so thankful for my case managers. After getting into stable housing the program helped push me to go back to school so that I can make more money and take over my rent and really be able to take care of my family. Thanks KCHA for the help and our school for referring us."

SFSI Client